Pushing the pro-democracy agenda after the 1997 handover: protest politics, political advocacy and the media in the semi-democratic Hong Kong

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by

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Abstract

The research investigates political communication in a semi-democratic Hong Kong post 1997. It is particularly interested why and how pro-democracy agendas enter the public-media arena. The research hypothesizes that the ability to set and control the public-media agenda (what the public read and view) is not concentrated solely in the hands of the state (government and governor) but is dispersed amongst various groups in Hong Kong civil society. It argues, that despite their relative lack of resources, various political parties and pressure groups are able to bring the certain issues to public prominence. While this is a competitive struggle, such groups are aided by a largely independent media. The research challenges those who argue that Hong Kong, since 1997, is witnessing a strengthening of state power at the expense of civil society and the growth of media censorship. On the contrary this research suggests that political communication in civil society is alive and well and is often critical of the powers that be.

This research examines the formation of pro-democracy agendas in the Hong Kong media. It highlights the main political communication actors, their media centred dispositions, use of public relations strategies, and interrelationships. Drawing of a wide body of literature the study looks into the way parties, pressure groups and the government try to shape the flow nature of information in the media and how they try influence debates in civil society. It develops two case studies, in particular it focuses on the discussion of ideas and politics during the legislation of Article 23. In this setting it shows how the different political actors mentioned seek to control the public agenda and through this shape public opinion. Finally it tries to assess what implications the findings have for fledgling democracy in Hong Kong.
List of Contents
Title Page................................................................................................... i
Abstract ..................................................................................................... ii
List of Contents ........................................................................................ iii
List of Tables ............................................................................................ vii
List of Figures ............................................................................................ viii
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations........................................................... xi
Acknowledgements .................................................................................... xii

Introduction
The Context.................................................................................................... 1
Research Rationales, Aims and Questions.................................................... 2
Defining Key Terms....................................................................................... 4
The Structure of the Thesis .......................................................................... 7

Chapter 1: Political Advocates, the Media, and the Public: Agenda from Action in Democratic and Non-democratic Countries
Introduction ............................................................................................... 9
1.1. Media Democracy and Power ............................................................... 9
   1.1.1. Conceptualising Power and the Media......................................... 11
   1.1.2. Media Gatekeepers and the Formation of News Media Agenda.... 13
   1.1.3. Agenda Formation Power and Contestation.............................. 14
   1.1.4. The Relationships between Political Sources and the News Media.............................................................. 16
   1.1.5. Resources, Hierarchy and Partisanship....................................... 18
   1.1.6. Agenda Formation and Public Opinion........................................ 20
   1.1.7. The Bottom-up and Top-down Framework.................................. 22
   1.1.8. The Usage of Opinion Polls ...................................................... 24
1.2. Authoritarian Political Systems and the Media.................................... 26
   1.2.1. Political context of Present China............................................... 27
   1.2.2. The Roles of Media in Authoritarian China................................ 29
   1.2.3. Media Freedom ........................................................................ 29
   1.2.4. Power Relations: Primary and Secondary Definers ..................... 32
Conclusion.................................................................................................... 33

Chapter 2: Political Advocates, the Media and Public Opinion in Semi-democracies: the Case of Hong Kong
Introduction.................................................................................................. 35
2.1. Hong Kong as a Semi-democracy.......................................................... 35
   2.1.1. The Development of the Hong Kong Media................................... 38
   2.1.2. The Development of the Hong Kong Political System................... 41
2.2. The Main Actors in the News Agenda Formation Process .................... 46
   2.2.1. HKSAR Government .................................................................. 46
   2.2.2. The Media Freedom .................................................................... 48
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.5. Public Opinion</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8: Advocacy Coalitions and the Debates on Basic Law Article 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1. Article 23 of the Basic Law: the Context</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1. The Storm over Article 23</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2. Article 23: Its Promotion by the Government</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.1. Regina Ip’s Handing on Article 23</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3. Polarizing Controversy: Coalitions of Support and Opposition</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.1. Resources for Campaigning</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.2. Promoting Their Cause</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.3. Rival Shows</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.4. Battle of the Alternative Agenda</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4. The Media Coverage on the Legislation of Article 23</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4.1. Indexing Rules in Coverage of Article 23</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4.2. A Possible Establishment of Media Agenda</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4.3. Article 23 - A Sword above the Heads of HK Media?</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5. Public Opinion</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 9: Coalitions and Debates on Article 23: Observing the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergence of 'People Power'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1. Observation of the Protest and Protest Activism</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.1. The June 1 Demonstration – a Warm up Campaign</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2. Definers with the Most Power</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.1. Campaign Strategies on Article 23</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.2. Content Analysis</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Advocates and Values</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy Coalitions and Exercising People Power</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions and Implications of Key Findings</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Further Study</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: Interview Timetable</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: Topic Guide for Political Groups</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3: Topic Guide for Journalists</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4: Coding sheet of the Car-tax Scandal</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Coding Sheet of the Legislation of Article 23 .......................... 254
Appendix 6: Consent Statement of Interviewees ........................................... 257
Appendix 7: Consent Statement of Interviewees (Chinese version) .............. 258

Bibliography ....................................................................................................... 259
Index of Tables

Table 2.1. Distribution of LegCo seats among different parties in different grouping in 1998

Table 2.2. Owners, capital interest, political stands and readership in 1997

Table 2.3 Distribution of parties’ seats in LegCo before and after 1997

Table 3.1 Which political camp do you incline to identify yourself with?

Table 3.2 Citizens’ attitude to press self-censorship

Table 3.3 The most familiar political groups (2-7/5/03)

Table 4.1 The sample, locations and form of the interviews of political groups

Table 4.2 The sample, locations and form of the interviews of journalists

Table 4.3 Research methods under two case studies

Table 5.1 Seat shares of different parties in 1995 Legislative Council versus Provisional Legislative Council

Table 7.1 The schedule of the car-tax scandal in 2003

Table 7.2 Parties’ position on the car-tax scandal

Table 7.3 How to vote on the future of Antony Leung (per poll)

Table 7.4 Press releases of DAB, DP, LP on March & April 2003

Table 7.5 Coverage of three newspapers

Table 7.6 Usage of primary and secondary sources in three newspapers

Table 7.7 Total usage (frequency) of three sources in the three newspapers

Table 7.8 The primary and secondary sources in three newspapers

Table 7.9 The opinion polls in three newspapers
Table 8.1 Timeline for Article 23 legislation ............................................... 185

Table 8.2 The popularity of Regina Ip ........................................................ 190

Table 8.3 Parties’ opinion polls on Article 23 ............................................ 198

Table 8.4 The comparison between demonstrations of the supporting and against camps ............................................................................................ 199

Table 8.5 The stance of HK newspapers on the coverage of Article 23 (19/9-9/11/2002) ......................................................................................... 202

Table 8.6 The support and oppose rate on the Article 23 legislation in 2003 ........................................... 209

Table 9.1 The mean of page layout on stories of Article 23 in three newspapers ................................................................................................. 222

Table 9.2 The length and size of story in the three papers .................................. 223

Table 9.3 News story positions in three newspapers ....................................... 223

Table 9.4 The primary sources in three newspapers ....................................... 224

Table 9.5 The speech length of primary sources in three newspapers .......... 225

Table 9.6 The position/attitude of the primary source in three newspapers .... 226

Table 9.7 The second source in the three newspapers .................................... 227

Table 9.8 The author of editorial and forum articles in three newspapers ...... 228

Table 9.9 The position of authors in editorial and forum articles of three newspapers ................................................................................................. 228

Table 9.10 Polls weight in three newspapers ................................................ 229

Table 9.11 The conducted constitution of polls in three newspapers .......... 230
Index of Figures

Figure 4.1: The conducted research methods ............................................... 85

Figure 5.1: The relative political position of different groups in 1998-2002.... 120

Figure 6.1: The position of HK newspapers................................................. 144

Figure 7.1. The stage of incident in media coverage..................................... 169

Figure 8.1. Press releases of political groups on Article 23............................ 201

Figure 9.1. Monthly news coverage of three newspapers from Sept. to Dec. in 2002................................................................. 221
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADPL  Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood
AFA   April Fifth Action
BLDC  Basic Law Drafting Committee
CHRF  Civil Human Rights Front
CP    Citizen Party
DAB   Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong
DC    District Council
DP    Democratic Party
ExCo  Executive Council
HKCTU Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
HKJA  Hong Kong Journalist Association
HKPA  Hong Kong Progressive Alliance
HKSAR Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HKUPOP Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong
KMT   Kwok Ming Tang (a party of Tai Wan)
ISD   Information Services Department
ICAC  Independent Committee Against Corruption
LegCo Legislative Council
LDF   Liberal Democratic Federation
LP    Liberal Party
NGO   Non-government Organisation
NPC   National People's Congress of China
NWS   Neighborhood and Worker Services
PLC   Provisional Legislative Council
PRC   People's Republic of China
The Alliance The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movement in China
UDHK  United Democrats of Hong Kong
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Introduction

The Context
The transition of the power structure from the British colonial administration to the sovereign state of China in 1997 has significantly impacted on Hong Kong politics, and leads to conflicts of values, with a blurring of two discrepant perspectives of capitalism and socialism towards fundamental democratic demands. The city is placed as to a dilemma of whether its rooted western perspectives should give ways to eastern ones. Under the British educational system for over a hundred years, underlying democratic values were rooted deeply in the minds of Hong Kong people. The transfer of sovereign authority, however, means that the authoritarian regime in China can determine and control the fate of Hong Kong after the 1997 handover, although the Chinese government promised that the Hong Kong people would rule Hong Kong by the concept of ‘One country, two systems’ for fifty years. The distinctive semi-democratic political system of Hong Kong unique style thus is formed of unique components – an appointed Chief executive, a selected Executive Council and a Legislative Council elected by the proportional representation, with political parties acting as quasi-pressure groups.

Struggles and conflicts surrounding Hong Kong’s situation are embodied in an increasing number of civil protests demanding acceleration of further democracy (according to the Hong Kong Police and Security Bureau\(^1\) and Ma (2005), the total number of public meetings and processions was 1,190 in 1997, 2,293 in 2002, and 2,705 in 2003). The rise in protests which reflects increasing civil awareness of political participation strengthens the power of the pro-democracy camp, while the power of the pro-China camp has rapidly grown to be the dominant power in the Legislative Council and Executive Council since Chinese influence penetrated Hong Kong. However, a lack of government subsidies and insubstantial policy decision-making powers force both camps to seek alternative ways to acquire resources to strengthen their influences on public opinion. In a situation of the imperfect competition, the independent media in Hong Kong play a more important role as a mechanism for parties communicate with the public than in most western democracies.

\(^1\) The information was provided by the Hong Kong Police Force in November, 2005 through an on-line enquiry by the author.
Yet, the independent character of the media is confronting a great challenge, in particular, the media’s self-censorship which is derived from the media’s apprehensions towards possible revengeful actions of the Chinese government in response to their unfavourable coverage. In recent years, it has been a main matter of public concern that the prevailing self-censorship of the press will further constrain the pace of democracy. In practice, tracing back public-media agendas in the last decade, many political controversies which came onto the agenda were in relation to media freedom, election systems, universal suffrage, the SAR government’s performance and further political reform. The majority of these issues were principally linked to the pursuit of a further democracy. The evidence shows that the Hong Kong media is still independent and enjoys freedom relatively, while news coverage does not touch on issues that are political sensitive to China.

Research Rationales, Aims and Questions

Three rationales facilitate me to conduct the research in relation to Hong Kong political parties and media. Firstly, as mentioned at the beginning, the unique historical background of Hong Kong generates an interesting and unique laboratory to be worthy of investigation. Secondly, personal interests in interactions between the political groups and the media further prompt me to study about them. Thirdly, the lack of relevant literature also contributes to the design of the research. A large amount of literature on Hong Kong’s political communication puts emphasis on two aspects: one, the shift of journalistic paradigms and media freedom (Chan, 1987; Chan et al.; 1996; Chan and Lee, 1991; Chan and To, 1999; Cheng, 1986; Lee, 1998; Lee and Chu, 1998; Lo, 1998), and how the media cover news concerning the government and Legislative Council (So, 1999; Yip, 1999); and two, the parties’ politics (Cheung, 2001; Choy et al., 1995; Fung, 1998; Leung, 1998). Seldom does research investigate the media-source relations and media management tactics employed by the parties. Only a little attention was given by Kuan and Lau (1988) and Choy et al. (1995) to this dearth of research. The reasons for this could be considered extenuating. Most notable researches were conducted during the 1990s or even earlier when the Hong Kong party system had not yet been systematically formed and many parties still acted as pressure groups, or they were just newly formed. Up till now, although parties have increased their professionalism in public relations, their strategies of media management still
remain immature because of the constraint of parties' resources and a dearth of political impetus.

This study intends to understand the interaction between political groups and the media in post-1997 Hong Kong, to identify the roles the media and the parties play in the new power structure, to clarify the media strategies of the parties and their relationships with the media, to explore the parties' professionalism towards media management, and to investigate the influence of political actors and the media in the formation of public opinion.

The research hypothesizes that the ability to set and control the public-media agenda (what the public read and view) is not concentrated solely in the hands of the state, but is dispersed among various political groups in Hong Kong. It argues that despite shortage of resources, various political parties are able to bring certain issues to public prominence. The research challenges those who argue that Hong Kong, since 1997, is witnessing a strengthening of state power at the expense of civil society and the growth of media censorship. On the contrary, this research suggests that political communication in civil society is alive and well and is often critical of the powers that be.

Three key questions are raised as central concerns of the thesis: firstly, how political actors, in particular the pro-democracy camp, try to shape the flow and nature of information in the media; secondly, how effective the political parties are at shaping and controlling the news agenda; and thirdly, how the news media cover political parties and their campaigns. To explore these questions, it is essential to understand what determinants of the media and the political groups feature in the process of agenda formation and their ability to set the media agenda. Therefore, light is cast on the parties’ media-centred management and their resources, relationships with the media, the media’s rules when covering political actors in the process of gatekeeping, and how public opinion is shaped.

In order to gain detailed information about interactions among the political groups, the media and public opinion, this research was designed as a qualitative exploratory study to gather the different perspectives of the groups involved. The
research data was collected through semi-structured interviews with party members and the media and two case studies. The case of the car-tax scandal employs content analysis and textual analysis, whereas the core case of the Article 23 legislation employs the triangulation of research methods – content analysis, textual analysis, and participant observation. Detailed information regarding these procedures will be provided in Chapter Four.

Therefore, this thesis contributes to the knowledge basis and adds depth and breadth to existing knowledge of political communication in Hong Kong. The investigation of interactions between the media and political groups enables the study to gain a balanced viewpoint and develop some understanding of the strategies of the public relations of political groups and their relationships with the media. The parties and pressure groups can exploit this information to develop more systematic public relations, allocate their limited resources more effectively through management strategies, develop their management professionalism, and re-evaluate the role and influence of public opinion.

The study simultaneously systematises and provides insights into the media rules in the coverage of political groups. Through the analyses, journalists will be able to recognize their responsibilities and the roles which they play in facilitating further democracy in Hong Kong. In addition, the two critical case studies involve well-identified actors and observe social dynamics to contribute to an overall view of political communication in relation to the parties, the government, pressure groups, the media and the public.

**Defining Key Terms**

This section introduces the key terms related to the media and parties' political spectrum that are used regularly in popular political discussions and throughout this thesis. The clarification of the terms is important for better understanding the study and the ideas behind the terms used, to clarify vague ideas and to assist with coherent thinking and the development of the thesis.

In the literature, terms used to describe the political ideologies of political groups and the media in Hong Kong are often as ‘leftist/left wing’ which stands against
‘rightist/right wing’ (Chan, 1987; Chan, Lee and Lee, 1996; Lee, 1999; Lo, 1998a; So, 1996 and 1999; Tsang, 1999), or ‘pro-China/pro-PRC [People’s Republic of China]/pro-Beijing’ which stands against ‘pro-Taiwan/pro-UK/pro-democracy/pro-Hong Kong’ (Fung, 1998; Ma, 2001; Lau and Kuan, 2000; Lee, 1998; Lo; 1998a; Ma and Choy, 1999). Usually, leftist/left wing is regarded to be equal to pro-China/pro-PRC/pro-Beijing, whereas the more complex concept of rightist/right wing is regarded to be equal to pro-Taiwan or pro-UK before the form of the democracy camp, and also to be equal to pro-democracy/pro-HK after the form of the camp. The terms ‘nationalists’ and the ‘Communists’ are seldom applied because their scope is too narrow to include people who are close to either Communist or Kuo Ming Tang (a party of Taiwan) but without their membership. Indeed, apart from their core active members and loyal members, most party members of Hong Kong who tend to support the Chinese government are not Communists. Therefore, the thesis excludes the usage of the terms ‘nationalists’ and ‘Communists’.

In American political consciousness today, according to Price (2004), the current popular concept of ‘leftist’ is associated with ‘big government,’ economic regulation, progressive taxation, and progressive social policy, such as support for gay rights, unlimited free speech and affirmative action/positive discrimination. Likewise, by viewing ‘left’ vs. ‘right’ as progressive vs. conservative it insinuates that ‘rightist’ policy is about ‘keeping things the same’ and ‘leftist’ policy is about ‘change’. However, Price also indicates that such a compass of differentiation is not enough to explain the concept because they are sometimes confused and reversed. Moreover, there is the confusion caused by using a simple term like ‘left’ because it can be synonymous with ‘liberal’ and could therefore be used to describe both economic regulation and also liberal economics. Also, the concepts have a different scale in Europe vs. America, for example, in the UK gay rights are supported by the major parties, conservative and liberal, but this is not the case in the US. In other words, the identification of the concepts depends on what the political context, political status and people’s consensus is.

In the traditional sense, the identification of leftist and rightist in Hong Kong can be traced back to the time of the civil war before the establishment of the People’s
Republic of China in 1949. At the time, leftist (also called traditional leftist) indicated a group of people who desired to change the administration of the Kuo Ming Tang (KMT) and supported the revolutions and rules of the Chinese Communists. Rightist indicated people who tended to support and maintain the power of the KMT. As many residents of Hong Kong migrated or escaped from the mainland at that time, the identification was maintained and used in distinguishing the political stances of different groups in Hong Kong, although it slightly differs from the traditional sense.

Before the formation of a pro-democracy camp and the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, but after the establishment of the PRC, the divisions of ‘leftist’ and ‘rightist’ in Hong Kong were defined by their stances towards the PRC government. The ‘leftist’ desired to change the British administration and support the rules of the PRC. Most leftists came from the lower classes, joined workers’ associations, and participated in worker’s demonstrations; some of them were even communists. The term ‘rightist’ still indicated people who supported or were closely tied to the Taiwan forces (the KMT). In a strict and logical sense, the term ‘rightist’ should describe people who supported the colonial government. But oddly, the supporters of the colonial government are categorized as being pro-UK or pro-HK forces (Chan, Lee and Lee, 1996; Fung, 1998; Lee, 1999; Lo, 1998a; Ma, 2001; So, 1999; Tsang, 1999). In terms of the meaning of the Chinese character for ‘pro’, it means ‘in favour of’, with a further meaning being ‘close to’ or ‘intimate with’.

Since the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, the power structures in Hong Kong changed from a single power centre (Britain) to a dualistic centre (Britain and China). On the issue of the handover, two groups with different attitudes formed to oppose each other: the traditional sense of the leftist (supporter of the Chinese government), also called ‘pro-China’, and the supporters of the Britain, also called ‘pro-UK’. Most members of the pro-China camp were people who welcomed the return of Hong Kong to China. By contrast, the pro-UK camp was apprehensive and wished to refuse the handover; they generally suspected

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2 Kuo Ming Tang: was the party in power in mainland China before 1949, however the government was forced to move its capital to Taiwan as it lost in the civil war with the Communist.
whether the Central Chinese government was able to keep its promise to implement the formula of 'One country, two systems' it designed.

After the handover, the identification of 'leftist' and 'rightist' in Hong Kong is still followed by some scholars and media. The difference is that the 'rightist' not only indicates supporters of Taiwan, but also supporters of democratic reforms even though British and Taiwanese power has withdrawn from Hong Kong and the concepts are obviously reversed to the traditional understanding. Due to the reversed and confused concept, some scholars and media also call the forces supporting democracy as the 'pro-democracy' camp and the supporters of Taiwan as the 'pro-Taiwan' camp to distinguish the concept from that of the pre-handover period. To avoid confusion and illogical concepts of 'leftist' and 'rightist' for describing Hong Kong's political ideologies, this thesis will only use the terms 'pro-China', 'pro-Taiwan', 'pro-democracy', and 'pro-UK' in descriptions or remarks about ideologies of the media and political groups for both the pre-handover or post-handover periods.

The Structure of the Thesis
Chapter One draws upon an extensive literature on political actors who hold power over the news agenda (the government, parties and the media) in western democracies and authoritarian regimes. Through literature, it explores the relationships between political actors and the media in the process of agenda formation. Meanwhile, the comparison of perspectives between western democracies and eastern authoritarian regimes assists in understanding the dilemma of Hong Kong which is positioned in-between them.

Chapter Two focuses on the context of Hong Kong's political communication and identifies the key political actors. It also analyses the resources of the main political parties and their influence on agenda formation, and outlines key research questions. Chapter Three investigates the way that political advocates shape the media agenda, and explores the role of public opinion in Hong Kong and how political actors mobilize such opinion.

Chapter Four discusses and explains the reasons for selecting the research methods. The exploration begins from the general research purposes and questions, followed
by a discussion of the research design and the process of carrying out practical tasks
and some shifts of thoughts in the course. Afterwards, the design process of the
methods employed for the case studies is explored. Finally, reflections on the
process of fieldwork, ethical considerations and some criticisms of the study are
analysed.

Chapter Five analyses literature on party public relations in western democracies,
and information collected from interviews to explore the roles the parties play in the
Hong Kong political system, and their resources and strategies recruited to
campaign. The analyses of the resources the parties possess helps to shed some light
on how resource-poor parties gain greater resources through their various
managements.

Chapter Six, drawing on the research method of interviews with three Chinese
newspapers of different political positions, examines how journalistic paradigms
and indexing rules influence the process of gatekeeping and media coverage
through three components and patterns – the distribution of political power, market
forces, press ideology and news objectivity that affect papers. Chapter Seven
investigates media strategies adopted by the government and parties, and the rules
the media applied in a specific case – the car-tax scandal. It focuses on how these
political groups attempted to set their agenda in the media.

Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine examine the case of the legislation of Article 23
through triangulation of research methods – textual analysis, participant observation
and content analysis, to understand how public opinion is formed and how the
different political actors mentioned seek to control the public agenda and shape
public opinion. Finally, the concluding chapter aims to summarise the research
findings and the main arguments of this thesis, and provide some implications for
future study.
Chapter 1 Political Advocates, the Media, and the Public: Agenda Form Action in Democratic and Non-democratic Countries

Introduction
This chapter firstly looks into the relationships between political actors and the media by examining the process of the formation of a media agenda in western democracies. Through literature on different perceptions of the role the media and political sources play, it argues that agenda formation is a process of 'the battle of agendas' in which political sources and the media increasingly exert their influence on public opinion. It subsequently analyses the relations between the Communist Party and the media in authoritarian China. Since Hong Kong is positioned in-between the western and the eastern worlds, a preliminary understanding in the dilemma of Hong Kong is gained through a comparison between western democracies and authoritarian China.

1.1 Media Democracy and Power
In contemporary democratic societies, political issues occupy a great deal of space in public debate and public life. Extensive coverage of issues such as housing policy, social welfare, education, tax, and mortgages circulates through newspapers, radio, television, cable TV and the Internet to the public. All processes of dissemination through various channels can be simplified and understood in terms of the transmission model; as Lasswell (1948) observed, the study of mass communication is an attempt to answer the question, who says what to whom, through what channel and with what effects [five Ws]. For instance, political parties (who), communicate their party platform (what), to voters (whom), through newspapers (what channel), in order to win the poll (what effect). ‘Who’ can be any power holder that communicates any newsworthy message to their targets, to affect their targets’ behaviours or opinions. Therefore, the study of the media-sources relations inevitably involves a power interaction of key actors (political sources) and the media. Before conceptualising power and the media, the first task of the chapter is to outline the roles that the media play in democracies.

In an ideal democracy, the media are regarded as a vital means for enlightening citizens, allowing representatives to reach widespread electorates, and enabling the
electorates to gain more information because every citizen and interest group seeks out political information to analyse and judge its representatives for making decisions (Dahl, 1989). Certainly, the 'ideal type' democracy is unlikely to be found in practice, but it can be seen that there is a strong linkage between the media and democracy in the technological era. In a democracy, the media is one of the main mechanisms to bridge the division between civil society and state, because of the building of a pluralistic, self-organizing (international) civil society which is coordinated and guaranteed by multilayered (supra-national) state institutions, which are in turn held permanently accountable to civil society by mechanisms – political parties, legislatures, communications media – which keep open the channels between state and social institutions. (Keane, 1991, p.169)

As a necessary mechanism of representation, the media serve to transmit information about the government’s record on important issues, the major policy proposals of alternative parties, the competence and trustworthiness of leaders and candidates, and the probable consequences of casting a vote, to widespread people. It functions “to facilitate this intricate system of representation, and democratize it by exposing intra-organizational decision-making to public discourse and debate” (Curran, 1991, p.31). Also, they accelerate and magnify political success and failure, serve as independent advocates for victims of oppression, mobilize third parties into a conflict to be central agents in the construction of social frames about politics (Wolfsfeld, 1997)

For an effective democratic system to function, the pluralist thinks that a free, pluralistic and independent press is a necessary requirement (Jackson and Stanfield, 2004). Firstly, free access to information is required by citizens, for making informed political choices. Secondly, a plural media is required to represent various voices and different opinions. According to Mickiweicz (2000), the greater the degree of pluralism, the broader the range of views presented. Thirdly, democracies also require media editorial autonomy, or protection from interference in editorial news decisions. Media autonomy is traditionally defined as “independence from government interference but increasingly concerned as well with the influence of commerce, as the economic means for survival” (ibid., p.98). In the USA, the media see themselves as a ‘fourth estate branch’ of government, with the
responsibility to act as a check on the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Andersen and Thorson (1989 in Patterson, 2000) point out that reporters routinely question the actions of politicians and commonly attribute strategic intentions to them. Similar to American journalists, UK journalists assume that they should be independent and highly critical reporters of the political process and the behaviour of politicians.

1.1.1 Conceptualising Power and the Media
The normative theories of the role of the media and democracy need to be contrasted with realist assessments of the exercise of power in capitalist societies. In the neo-Marxist vision, heavily centred upon the role of the dominant class in the capitalist society, the media are viewed as a subordinate mechanism of the political and economic interests of the dominant class or classes, a tool of political propaganda, and a reproduction of their dominant ideological perspectives (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994). In the dominance model, the ruling class or the dominant elite possesses absolute power over the media and can manipulate and dominate the news agenda to serve their political goals.

Close to the view of neo-Marxism, Herman and Chomsky (1988) put forward the ‘propaganda model’ which focuses on the inequality of wealth and power, and its multilevel effects on mass media interests and choices. In the model, the media are regarded as serving a social purpose which is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups by manufacturing consent, such as selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises. The central argument of the model is that groups with political and economic power have the ability to filter out and marginalize dissenting ideas or information, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their message across to the public (Herman and Chomsky, 1999). In this case, the scope of the media’s agenda is defined by powerful groups to “ensure the privileged reproduction of their discourse, and by extension, significantly determine the contours of what the public may think” (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994, p.15), rather than by the media themselves.
According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), there are five key elements which determine the nature of the media as a propaganda tool: 1.) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; 2.) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; 3.) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; 4.) 'flak' as a mean of disciplining the media; and 5.) 'anticommunism' as a national religion and control mechanism. In short, ownerships, advertisers, sources, political ideologies and organizational natures of the media act as determinants to decide what dissents are marginalized or filtered out in the news-making.

By a deeper inquiry into structural power relationships between the media and sources, Hall et al. (1978) noted that the media access to sources is limited to certain social groups with special status in virtue of their institutional power, representative standing, or claims to expert knowledge. These specific powerful groups are regarded as the 'primary definers' who are able to have the primary interpretation of the topic in question. In society's institutional order, the media are the crucial 'secondary definers' in reproducing the definition of accredited sources. For example, in the news coverage of elections, political parties or candidates are the primary definers to interpret or set what the election agenda is through their campaigns, whereas the media play a secondary role, by reflecting or reproducing the information that the parties provide.

Although Hall et al.'s theory of the primary and secondary definers neglects some problems such as the initial origin of the primary definition, the 'off-the-record' briefing, problem of inequality of access and long-term shifts in the structure of access (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994), undeniably, their contention as resulted in the concern with non-authoritative sources, particularly the political parties, being one of the main issues for subsequent studies on the media-source relationship. Moreover, the concept of primary and secondary definers can be used to measure the influence of the media and party in the process of the agenda formation or analyse the media-sources relations.
In contrast to Hall et al.'s suggestion that powerful sources are the primary definers, the Agenda Setting model coined by McCombs and Shaw in their 1972 study addressed the power of the media in structuring issues. The advocates of powerful media think that the media set what the public reads in the paper and what the public should think about, know about and have feelings about (Lang and Lang, 1966 in McCombs and Shaw, 1972). The model hypothesizes that the issue priorities of the news media affect the issue priorities of the public. It shows a correspondence between the order of importance given in the media to issues and the order of significance attached to the same issues by the public and politicians (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McQuail, 2000). To put it in a simple way, the Agenda Setting model suggests that the media has capabilities to raise the importance of certain issues in the public mind (Severin and Tankard, 1997). Borrowing the Hall et al.'s concept of the definers, the journalists in the Agenda Setting model can be regarded as the primary definer to set and control news coverage, although it also points out that individuals still are free to make their own decisions.

1.1.2 Media Gatekeepers and the Formation of News Media Agenda

In the schools of thought of powerful sources or powerful media mentioned above, the news media agenda is formed simply by either the political or economic power or the media. However, apart from both the media and the sources having certain definitive powers to control the agenda, there are other internal and external forces also influencing the process of news-making. The Gatekeeping model precisely provides a different way if looking into factors influencing the process of formation. It argues that before being a news story, collected information has to go through many gatekeepers within communication organizations and various forces, such as advertisers, marketers, interest groups, the government, audiences and other social institutions. Therefore, those forces can be seen as alternative gatekeepers to influence media content.

Early studies of the Gatekeeping model only emphasize the personal and subjective aspects of decision-making in the process of news-making. Subsequent studies find that gatekeeping is influenced heavily by a variety of organizational, cultural, economic and official sources. Shoemaker (1991 in Tai, 2005) investigated the
process of gatekeeping at five different levels: the individual, the professional routines, the organizational/institutional, the external, and the ideological. In 1996, she cooperated with Reese to conduct a further exploration on the five different levels. They observed that media organizations have developed standardized and institutionalized routines in evaluating their information for news. Although a newspaper is more flexible in the number of pages it prints, the news story stays relatively steady because bureaucratic routines help ensure a steady supply (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). The routine allows journalists to cope with the uncertainties of information access, while classification or categorization helps editors understand the significance and the newsworthiness of certain events, and thereby helps them choose one story over another (Tai, 2005).

In general, routine channels of news stories include: 1.) official proceedings; 2.) press releases; 3.) press conferences; and 4.) non-spontaneous events (Sigal, 1973). Although journalists are particularly attracted to “cover intra-party conflict, gaffes and unexpected occurrences involving leadership actors” (Stanyer, 2001, p.66), they have to rely on the routine access to decide what the newsworthy events of the day or the week are going to be. In broadcast, journalists enjoy a strong routinized relationship with senior party actors. Formal professional relationships exist between editorial staff and party press officers, surrounding the routine matters of conference coverage (ibid.).

1.1.3 Agenda Formation Power and Contestation

The exploration of the models mentioned above misses the chance to give more prominence to the impact of real-world events and the influence of interactions between the journalists and the sources. In practice, the news media do not just reflect what competing political advocates tell them, but also often operate with their own agendas and news priorities. They have to follow media professionalism to decide what the main stories of the day will be, because the criteria of newsworthiness are important “as background to a consideration of the characteristics of news stories in individual media” (Lorimer, 1994, p.206). According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), prominence or importance, human

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3 The individual level refers to attitudes and values; the professional routines are deadlines and styles, for example; the organizational/institutional level points to ownership and markets; the external level comprises audience, interest groups, advertisers, and other media; and finally the ideological level includes elements in relation to news paradigms, cultural practices, and political elites.
interest, conflict/controversy, novelty, timeliness, and proximity are identified as main elements of news value which influence the judgment of journalists and editors on decisions as to what kind of information should be covered and what prominence should be given to the final reports in coverage.

For achieving their political purposes, political advocates often attempt to manage news coverage to set their favoured agenda. Coverage of legislative activities, activities of foundations, and other social movements of interest groups illustrate the efforts of sources to influence the media agenda. Inequitable power and resource distribution results in different in their abilities to control or manage the media agenda. Diverse strategies and tactics are adopted to maximize resources in the process of competition for setting the media agenda. Professionals thus are brought into the campaigns of political parties, by reason of this imperative of gaining publicity more efficiently. These professionals, such as ‘spin doctors’, not only advise other actors and committees, but also “spend a great deal of time and effort planning the delivery of policy announcements and updating and formulating news strategies to ensure that the leadership can set the news agenda more effectively”(Stanyer, 2001, p.159). The professionalized source’s strategies in setting the news agenda further reflect the concerns of the political advocates in setting the media’s news agenda. The result of the agenda setting, however, will be uncertain if the source’s strategies are only adopted in the period when political advocates seek publicity. The effort is required to be a long-term practice to achieve the most fruitful result. As Stanyer (2001, p.1) puts it,

 [...] campaigning by parties is no longer confined to the period of general elections, but is an almost permanent feature of political life [...]. The news media are the main conduit through which competing political advocates seek to reach the public on a daily basis.

The demand produces a ‘permanent campaign’, which has been a predominant topic and strategy of parties to compete continually for media coverage. Dearing and Rogers (1996) define the process of the parties’ permanent campaigns as “an ongoing competition among issues proponents to gain the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites” (p.1). The daily campaigning is an attempt by politicians to build and maintain public approval, to win and sustain
power control over media agenda, or to maximize ‘positive’ publicity with the aid of a variety of means, from leaflets and personal canvassing to advertising on bill-boards and in newspapers. Leadership speeches, rallies, public meetings and photo-opportunities are all important ways to capture media attentions. The press release provides an alternative tactical agenda which closely reflects the attempt of the parties to manage the media agenda.

Heclo (2000, p. 17) points out that, “Every day is Election Day in the permanent campaign. Such campaigning is a nonstop process seeking to manipulate sources of public approval to engage in the act of governing itself.” In the USA, Bill Clinton was the first permanent campaign president who used grassroots tactics to push his policies, established custom designed ‘war rooms’ to promote policies and built broad-based coalitions among interest groups (Jones, 2000). In permanent campaigns, the media are regarded as an alternative resource and subsidy to aid political advocates in competitions. Political groups devote great effort to gain free publicity and a subsidy by means of reducing the price of information to the media (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994). As rewards, these groups also provide information or stories which the media are likely to be interested in. The ‘information subsidies’, Gandy (1982) observes, are selectively given by powerful interest groups of would-be newsmakers to encourage the media to accept their versions of public affairs. Parties in many countries have become increasingly sophisticated in the use of strategic communications in the attempt to retain control of ‘the battle of the agenda’ or to stay ‘on message’ (Norris, et al., 1999).

1.1.4 The Relationships between Political Sources and the News Media

The question of how the media’s political agenda is formed, or the concept of agenda setting applied to media-sources relations, is quite complicated. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) point out that the process relates to two things. For one thing, the process “may be joint and interactive, with each side making significant, albeit different, contributions to the agenda setting outcome” (p.146); for another, the media “contribution can be made in different ways, yielding different messages and entailing different relations to the other interests at stake in campaign communication (those of politicians and voters)” (ibid.). While the media-sources relations are involved in the process of agenda formation, the interaction between
the two sides and the factors influencing the decision-making of both sides feature in the outcome (votes).

In literature, the media-sources relationships are often generalized to the exchange and adversary models (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995; Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994). The exchange model advocates interaction between politicians and the media, in terms of social exchange in which the media rely on politicians to provide information and politicians rely on the media for publicity. The media and parties are viewed as inseparable. Reporters develop regular relationships with parties by “sharing in their organizational culture, such as providing guidance to the source regarding how to formulate news accounts in a manner that will ensure access” (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan, 1989, p.7). At the same time, parties reciprocate in various ways by sharing organizational values and routine operations with journalists; by accepting invitations to meet with editors and management, and by writing or producing features or columns for the news organization (ibid.). By contrast, in the adversary model, the media and politician are regarded as separable individuals and journalists are presumed to dig and expose the story which is likely to lie hidden below politicians’ and governments’ constructed surface.

The media-sources relationships are not simply based on building up the ‘exchange of information for publicity’ because of incompatible goals of the media and parties or the ‘adversary of different goals’, but as Blumler and Gurevitch (1995, p.35) point out, they are often “locked into a complex set of transactions which, though mutually beneficial, also include potential for disagreement and struggle.” The potential disagreement and struggle which are assumed to be abiding stem from a conflict of interest and different perceptions of the fundamental objective of the media and parties.

Generally speaking, a routine feature of conflict inevitably arises when the political parties regard the media as a tool of persuasion to mobilize public support and attempt to manipulate news coverage, putting themselves in the best light; meanwhile, journalists try to manage the source to extract the information they want. The conflicting goals between politicians and the media produce an adversarial relationship rather than a friendly alliance, especially in the case when a
politician wants to conceal and minimize a scandal or negative story, whereas the media are eager to report it. Gans (1999) characterizes the relationship between journalists and source as ‘a tug of war’. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995, p.18) point out that the potential war will become more acute, when politicians

who commonly are disposed towards more ideological autonomy criteria of political truth, are confronted with the tendency of media professionals to adhere to more empirical, skeptical (perhaps cynical) and many-sided descriptions of political reality.

Nonetheless, from a general perspective, the relationships between the media and the political sources are established in both the exchange and adversary mode.

1.1.5 Resources, Hierarchy and Partisanship

Individually, the different media enjoy different relations with different sources. Sigal (1973) finds that the media-parties relationship is influenced by different distribution of resources. His study on the interactions between Washington politics and two elite newspapers mainly focuses on those groups of the resource-rich (official sources). The study facilitates people’s understanding of the influence of resources on the coverage the groups receive. However, it neglects those who are resource-poor (non-official sources), such as politically radical and interest groups. A subsequent research of Goldenberg (1975 in Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994) which amends the shortcoming of Sigal’s study observes that contingent upon group size, geographical location, news-management skill, expert knowledge and financial means, the resource-poor groups can gain access to the news media under favourable conditions. However, he concludes that access is not secured on a long-term basis, although occasional entry into the media is possible for those with few resources (ibid.). To summarize, variations in range and nature of resource of both the resource poor and the resource-rich groups can determine or alter the general character of the media-sources relationship.

Despite the disparities in resources availability which are one of the key factors causing the diversity of the relationship between the media and the parties, there are two other, more fixed, significant factors that Franklin (1994) emphasizes: the existence of hierarchies within the media and political systems; and the extent of overlap or dissonance between politicians’ and media partisan commitments.
Hierarchy which is constituted by such factors as social status, distribution of power and resources, competence, and knowledge, structures relationships between the media and the parties in two equally important ways (Franklin, 1994).

Reflecting their location in a political hierarchy, different politicians enjoy very different relationships with the media; the division of the political beat in the media presents this kind of hierarchy. In addition, the same politician enjoys highly variable relationships with journalists depending upon the extent of the 'match' between their positions in their respective hierarchies. Generally speaking, the more senior the party actor, the more newsworthy they are considered and the more coverage they receive. For instance, Stanyer (2001) notes the amount of coverage party actors receive at conferences conforms to a similar pattern, “with the set piece speeches by the so-called ‘big beats’ (senior ministers, their shadows and party spokespersons) receiving the most attention and the individual delegates the least” (p.49).

The degree of congruence between the partisan commitments of the two groups which Seymour-Ure (1968, in Franklin, 1994) describes as ‘press-party parallelism’ also structures both the extent and character of politicians’ relationships with the media. According to So (1999), a press-party parallelism is established when “a newspaper is closely linked to a party by organization and loyalty to party goals” (p.101). The parallelism determines whether political advocates are covered, how much they are covered, in what kind of coverage (negative or positive), and what key tones are given to them in the individual media. Partisan media intervene in politics and have always been “more overtly partisan in their approach to political affairs, perceiving their roles as very much that of opinion-articulation” (McNair, 1995, p.74). At election time, the tendency and preference of the media towards parties often becomes more intense and apparent. These partisan media often overwhelmingly support a single preferred political party and denigrate or criticize the others.

In short, relationships between parties and the media can be regarded as an antagonistic symbiosis. Where politicians and the media share similar political commitments, “there is a greater potential for relationships to be co-operative and
consensual”; where they differ, “contacts are likely to be less frequent but more conflictual” (Franklin, 1994, p.21).

1.1.6 Agenda Formation and Public Opinion

The reason for seeking power to control over the media agenda is to affect public opinion at large. In democracies, public opinion is essential to the government as a reference for its decision-making and to the parties’ policy making. To understand why and how political sources attempt to manipulate the media agenda and what the media effect is on public opinion and democracy, the primary task is to understand how public opinion is formed. The process from individual opinions to eventual aggregation into public opinion involves consideration of the role political groups play in publicizing, shaping and creating opinions, and the role the media play in shaping and accommodating opinion.

Entman and Herbst (2001, p.206-209) observe that there are four possible types of public opinion which include: 1.) mass opinion – the aggregation or summation of individual preferences as tabulated through opinion polls, referenda, or elections; 2.) activated public opinion – the opinions of engaged, informed, and organised citizens – those who are mobilizable during campaign periods and between elections as well. These citizens are party loyalists, local community activists, interest group spokespersons, opinion leaders and others who pay close attention to the political realm; 3.) latent public opinion – the fundamental public preferences that underlie more fleeting and superficial opinions found when conducting polls of the mass public. In short, latent opinion is where public opinion will ‘end up’ after a policy debate has progressed or what people truly feel beneath all the chaos and shifting opinion people see in the heat of democratic practice; and 4.) perceived majorities – the perceptions held by most observers, including journalists, politicians, and members of the public themselves, of where the majority of the public stands on an issue.

Mass opinion as a sum of individual opinion is not informed opinion; these individuals need very few cues to produce a rational opinion or an opinion that reflects their interest (Entman and Herbst, 2001). Individual opinions are more likely to be swayed by the mass media and the activated opinion holders. Unlike
mass opinion, activated opinion constitutes the coherent core of public opinion. However, the proportion of this opinion is very small. It is mostly constituted by people who are highly educated, have strong opinions, and resist messages that run counter to their belief systems. Perhaps, latent public opinion is the most important form of public opinion, but it is too elusive and complex to study, as the consideration has to be given to the cultural element. As regards the perceived majorities, media reports do shape the majority opinions that are extensively perceived to exist (*ibid*).

Public opinion dimensions depend upon the direction of public opinion; the intensity of public opinion; the stability of public opinion and informational content (Glynn *et al.*, 1999). In theories of democracies, three criteria are set for effective and valid public opinion (Lindeman *et al.*, 1999, p.249): 1.) people must have adequate knowledge of the political issues at stake; 2.) people must deliberate on these issues, weighing arguments on all sides, to arrive at thoughtful opinions; and 3.) people’s conclusions must respect crucial democratic norms such as minority rights and free speech, and they should work toward the common good as well as toward people’s personal interests. However, the majority of people do not meet these criteria in reality. One of the most prominent barriers to democratic competence is a lack of political knowledge held by the public. Lindeman *et al.* (1999) indicate that the public does not have much knowledge, at any one moment, about a wide range of political issues or related facts. They have to depend heavily on political leaders, elites, organised groups, and experts to convey messages through the mass media. Hence, the opinions of opinion leaders, political activists, parties, journalists and social observers (academicians and people who pay close attention to issues) are often regarded as the mainstream or majority opinion.

*The Formation of Public Opinion*

Public opinion derives from perceptions of the public towards issues or events. When issues are publicly debated, diverse perceptions and views produced from conflicts and consensus are generated and formed. Price (1992) suggests that public debate occurs mainly by interaction between elite political actors and their attentive spectators and is facilitated by the media. Borrowing the Trade’s formula, Katz (1995) points out that, the formation of public opinion in modern society is a process of
media-conversation-opinion-action. As an issue gains momentum in the media and table talk, this process of constructing opinion gains meaningful associations which “motivates some individuals to speak up and thus contribute to the formation of public opinion on the issues” (ibid., p.xxv). As these individuals (such as concern or interest groups) continually discuss relevant issues or events through the media, opinion is eventually aggregated and formed in the process of conversation by consolidation and with the aid of the opinions of elites or media.

When an issue enters conversations or debates, there are different reactions to the issue in different stages. Downs (1972) puts forward a theory of an ‘issue-attention cycle’ which is rooted both in the nature of certain domestic problems and in the way major communications media interact with the public. In the cycle, the media, political parties and other interest groups keep on stimulating and focusing conversations on matters of common concern. In some cases, the issue-attention cycle is a circulation in which some issues are intermittently recalled in the media, with no final solution. The cycle is divided into five developing stages (Downs, 1972, p.38-39): 1.) the pre-problem stage – the issue does not capture the public attention, except for some experts and interest groups; 2.) alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm – as a result of some dramatic series of events, or for other reasons, the public suddenly becomes both aware of and alarmed about the evils of a particular problem; 3.) realizing the cost of significant progress, the increasing recognition that there is this type of relationship between the problem and its “solution” constitutes a key part of the third stage; 4.) gradual decline of intense public interest; and 5.) the post-problem stage – the issue is replaced by other arising issues. The rise and fall of attention on issues of coverage shows that the media content becomes an indicator of opinion to measure what the public are thinking about and what issues they are most concerned with. For political elites, the routine content of the media is a crucial indicator to infer a media effect which may or may not take place and they can learn what the public desire and need from the day-to-day coverage.

1.1.7 The Bottom-up and Top-down Framework
This section concerns whether the media simply act as a mirror to reflect public opinion or as powerful agenda setters who affect the formation of public opinion.
The formation of public opinion has been viewed as taking place on in two opposite directions: 1.) bottom-up, in which the media reflect the reality and tell what opinions show, is a formation process of opinions-media-elites; and 2.) top-down, in which the media agenda is defined by the political elites and tells how political elites encode and decode polls, is a process of elites-media-opinions. At all times, and in all societies, the mass media, as Rosengren (1972 in Schoenbach and Becker, 1995) states, may have been trying to be both moulders and mirrors of public opinion.

**Bottom-up Framework**

In the bottom-up framework, the mass media serve as ‘mere conveyor belts’ which simply reflect what the reality tells them and offer information to readers or audiences without other considerations. Kennamer (1992) points out that journalists, to a great extent, reflect the societies and cultures in which they operate. So and Chan (2002) also suggest that on the whole, the media only objectively reflect what the social situation is, they do not attempt to dominate social consensus. Acting as the ‘mirror role’, the media take up what issue is of popular concern, carry it — and then pass it on to the elites (Schoenbach and Becker, 1995). In this sense, public opinion is objectively reported, subject to media professionalism and news value for deciding what is covered or explained.

**Top-down Framework**

In contrast to the bottom-up framework, the top-down framework proposes that a news story in relation to public opinion is based on the media’s reliance on political groups or sources and the media’s own choice to include or exclude some results (Lewis, 2001). These exclusions and inclusions the media make are systemic and based on an ‘elite’ orientation or authority legitimacy of the media — a built-in bias toward those in positions of power whose views are regarded as more professional, persuasive and valuable information. That said, political elites who have priorities in access to the media are able to chose the issues what they prefer to talk about and how, raise them to the public agenda and subsequently influence what the public thinks about while the media cooperate by providing routine access to these elites.
Hence, Lewis (2001, p.61) asserts that journalism is deeply tied to a ‘top-down’ political framework, in which the range of legitimate political discourse is defined by political elites. Borrowing Hall et al. ‘s phrasing, political elites who appear in the media, including members of the political elites in parties and associations, journalists, and social movement organizations, are the primary definers to construct and interpret political issues in media coverage. According to Lewis (2001), opinions are constructed and interpreted in the context of a number of encoding/decoding moments, and when they are powerfully informed by the landscape of the media and the elite discourse. There are two ways to construct public opinion: one is through the technology of polling, another is by media coverage and interpretation of polls in media coverage.

**1.1.8 The Usage of Opinion Polls**

There are two major forms of expression of public opinion: 1.) passive opinion, such as polls and electorate polls; and 2.) active opinion – more direct political actions, such as pressuring congress, lobbying, demonstrating and protesting. Most of the information about public opinion comes from analysis of opinion poll data and the media since large scale demonstrations or rallies are not often held by the public.

Polls usually are treated as being representative of public opinion and commonly used by the media and political groups to understand what the public’s perception is. Although this form of expression of public opinion which only aggregates a part of the public’s responses, but ignores the opinions of the minority has been condemned as a persistently poor method of capturing the character of public discourse (Lewis, 2001), polls have become a cultural form and a necessary mechanism in representation of public opinion because a more efficient way for measuring public opinion has not yet been discovered. In addition, Edelman (1995b in Lewis, 2001) claims that polls partly attempt to suppress the ambiguities and contradictions of public discourse in order to produce rational knowledge about a rational public.

In her research, Herbst (1998) finds that editors think of public opinion in terms of what groups have to say but do not put much faith in opinion polls or even elections.
They report that polls are not very useful in policymaking, because the public is too fickle and uninformed, and polls themselves are too vague to provide much guidance. Likewise, journalists tend to regard public opinion not as aggregate opinion, but as a ‘conversation’ sensed by members of the press. They are not systematic in their assessment of public opinion, but rely more on an ‘imagined’ public than on more careful study (Herbst, 1998). In contrast to the editors and journalists, the party activists do consult polls as a principal means for assessing public opinion and utilize opinion data in making inferences about what the public thinks and how the public perceives issues.

However, polls often only speak from the narrow confines of elite conceptions in public affairs and in a staccato voice which is selectively and purposely collected. In an earlier study, Sussman (1988 in Lewis, 2001) found that political leaders routinely ignore the results of polls that are not in conformity with their own political purposes. Similarly, Entman and Herbst (2001) observe that politicians and journalists frequently ignore survey results in characterizing public opinion, in part because the data are often so contradictory and in part because neglecting polls is strategically useful. Lewis (2001) also points out that polls are often used to “reinforce one side’s political position – to allow political leaders to speak in the public’s name and thereby to shift the media frame in their factor” (p.36).

For instance, if the predominant media frame for the coverage of welfare is to see many welfare recipients as pampered and irresponsible, the affirmative responses of polls are encoded to reinforce this preferred meaning by asking respondents whether the welfare system should be reformed to discourage indolence or abuse (Lewis, 2001), whereas the dissentient responses are neglected or marginalized. Certainly, the construction of meanings also takes place in a moment of encoding when pollsters record and interpret responses. If findings of polls do not enter into media frames, they are generally regarded as politically irrelevant and either are excluded from the dominant frame or force the dominant frame to shift. If the findings are deemed to be sufficiently newsworthy, these texts will then be decoded and re-encoded into media text. Finally, the manipulated results of polls are simply reported as unmediated public opinion in the media. Opinion polling therefore tends to steer away from measures of ordinary people’s views on issues, focusing instead
on elites-orientation polls. However, Lewis (2001) thinks that the effect of polls on political elites is complex — “not least because those elites are very much a part of the encoding process that informs the construction and content of polling questionnaires and the way they are interpreted” (p.35).

1.2 Authoritarian Political Systems and the Media
The above discussion has drawn on studies conducted in western democracies where news is a transmission process of a power struggle between the media and political actors for affecting public opinion. By contrast to the transmission process of democracies, in an authoritarian regime, every step of the process is strictly controlled by the government in order better to handle the effect. ‘Who’ is solely the politically powerful or one party leaders/cadres, ‘says what’ is manipulated by the privileged groups through the Party or government paper. Channels merely reflect the intentions and prescriptions of these privileged groups. News, thus, is seen as a propaganda tool to implement the purposes of the party or government. In communist countries, the media are not required to function as a watchdog since the state “is not seen as a potentially threatening autonomous actor, but as a class agent acting on behalf of the working class” (Scammell, 2000, p.xxi). Essentially, the media is stripped of its surveillant function on government, instead fulfilling an informational and propaganda function, such as dissemination of culture and politics. Present-day China is precisely a case in point. This has, of course, repercussions for relations between political actors and the media. In the following, these repercussions in relation to China will be examined.

1.2.1 Political Context of Present China
China is officially a communist state in which the Communist Party has monopolized power since October 1 1949, although it has steadily shifted towards a centralized ‘national’ government based in Beijing. In the regimes, the one Party pursues Marx’s version of a classless society, and ultimately aims to achieve a Communist society. Accordingly, the Party proclaims itself as representing the interest of the proletariat to be the vanguard of people (Zhao, 1998).

In practice, the Party has sought to protect its position through complete control of society (Hague and Harrop, 2001), and the vast majority of significant governmental
positions are filled by the Party members. By adopting a strong authoritarian stance—"brooking no opposition, stage-managing elections, acting above the law, modifying constitutions as they saw fit, determining all major appointments to the government, controlling the media and spying on their populations" (ibid., p.36), the ruling Communist Party holds absolute political power and dominates society, operating as a socialist dictatorship. Under the Party's guidance, the Communist state thus became an all-embracing, all-powerful presence. The reality and consequence of Communist rule in present China is far removed from that Marx advocates.

On the surface, the sweeping reforms of Deng Xiaoping (the former chief president of China) in the 1980s released the economy from control of central structures to operate according to market forces. This did not mean that the Chinese Communist Party loosened political control as well; by contrast, it tightened up in an effort to prevent any serious political dialogue and opposition from arising dissidents (Schell, 1998). Hence, two tactics are adopted by Chinese government: "'Letting go' (fang) in the economic realm while 'tightening up' (shou) in the political realm has created a cognitive dissonance and a dialectical tension that makes China both exciting and uncertain" (ibid., p.35). Nowadays, many people have questioned whether China's political system is any longer Communism as Marx advocated it in any traditional sense. Although the regime politically still remains deeply authoritarian and the Party is above the law without doubt because the Party makes the law, the economic reform has changed some fundamental ideologies of Communism, such as the notion of property.

1.2.2 The Roles of Media in Authoritarian China

In the Communist state, the dual functions of political communication are propaganda and agitation. Propaganda explains the Communist Party's mission and instructs both political elites and the masses in the teaching of three doctrines - Marxism, Leninism and Maoism (Zhao, 1998). Lenin viewed the media as the Party's collective propagandist, agitator and organiser, and this view is also instrumental in shaping the core of the Chinese Party's journalism policy. Mao thought that the role of newspapers should lie in their ability to bring "the Party program, the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the people in the quickest and most extensive way" (ibid.,
In these doctrines, the media serves as a means by which the Party maintains its power, because the Party is the people’s party and the Party’s media is the people’s media. The ruling Communist Party utilizes an elaborate network to strengthen ideological inculcation by diverse media, such as radio, posters, cinema and television to achieve its propaganda objectives.

By contrast with their role as the ‘fourth estate branch’ in western democracies, the media in the state are subservient to the state and the Party. Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model can be applied to the situation of China, where the most important and primary political role of the news media is to propagate all the principles and policies of the Party. In reality, the Chinese Communist Party has regarded the media as a tool for political propaganda and a significant and beneficial weapon to spread, control and instill political ideologies in the public throughout the period since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.

The role of the media in the process of political transmission is established on the theory of political communication – the ‘massline’. The massline, according to Pat Howard (in Zhao, 1998, p.24), is defined in three distinct power relations: between cadres (party workers in the field) and the ‘masses’ (the people as a whole), between Party cadres and ordinary Party members, and between the Party as the revolutionary vanguard and the masses. Therefore, the press performs as follows: “take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them” (Mao in ibid.), and translate them into action to test the correctness of these ideas in such action.

In recent years, compared with before the economic reform, the roles played by the Chinese media have significantly and obviously changed. According to the official China Daily, China now has more than 2,200 newspapers, 976 television stations, and 1,210 radio stations – many featuring call-in talk shows (Brauchli, 1995). The commercialization of China’s media has been a trend since the media institutions came to assume sole responsibility for their profits or losses. The growth of private owned non-party newspapers is evidence that the state has relatively loosened its financial control. A preoccupation with political ideology has relatively given way
to a preoccupation with economic gain and national stature \textit{(ibid.)}. In a sense, relaxation of financial constraints of the government implies that political constraints, to some extent, have loosened. Certainly, the fate of the newspapers is still under strict political control of the government. These commercial newspapers are forced to cover and support the Party’s guidance in political and social life. Moreover, these newspapers are also unable to get enough advertising and their journalists are often refused access to news sources, if the interviewing style of reporters is considered too intrusive by officials. Party organs still dominate the media by their size, frequency of publication, and number of employees (Zhao, 1998).

1.2.3 \textbf{Media Freedom}

Hague and Harrop (2001) observe that limiting free expression is allowed under the rule of the authoritarian, leading to journalism which is subdued even when it is not subservient. Therefore, "official television stations and subsidized newspapers reproduce the regime’s line, critical journalists are harassed and the entire media sector develops an instinct for the limits of the permissible" \textit{(ibid., p.106)}. Journalists are subjected to the belief that the media should serve the government and its political purposes. Although the newspaper facilitates communication among the people, the Party powerfully decides what experiences are to be exchanged and which are to be promoted or condemned (Zhao, 1998). Under such circumstance, it is understandable that the media is bland and practices self-censorship in political coverage.

The view of western pluralism, whereby the media acts as the fourth estate to check on the state, so far and in the short-term future, could not be imagined in Chinese journalism. The Chinese government has different criticisms on the notions of western pluralism (Xu, 1998). The core criticism, with reference to media pluralism, remains on the issue of media freedom. The Communists argue that media freedom which western capitalism advocates actually solely serves the capitalist class; and no absolute media freedom exists in western democracies, even in the USA which is regarded as a representative democratic country. Although economic reform has given a chance of relative freedom, in that the media are encouraged to compete with each other, it is a long way from the prospect of pluralist freedom such as is
experienced in the west. At present and in the foreseeable future, one thing is certain, that the Communist Party will not abandon the journalistic principle of Marx which has been embraced for decades.

In China, there are no media acting in opposition to the Party or state, because the Party would not tolerate an opposing voice to challenge the Communist regime. Speaking directly, pluralistic media are not allowed to survive in a regime where there is strict control of media publications by a general dual policy – ‘gun’ (qiang gan zi) and ‘pen’ (bi gan zi) (ibid.). ‘Gun’ indicates that the government rules the people by armed forces whereas ‘pen’ indicates that the government dominates the people through the influence of the media and propaganda to gain people’s identification and approval. These beliefs which strengthen the Party’s control on the media mainly stem from the Marxist-feminist journalist theory and experiences of the revolution in the 1950s. It works primarily through ‘Party branches’ located in every media outlet (Schell, 1998). The central concept that underlies the Party’s domination over the media is the ‘Party central principle’ (dangxing Yuanze). It comprises three basic components: 1.) the news media must accept the Party’s guiding ideology as their own; 2.) they must propagate the Party’s programme, policies, and directives; and 3.) they must propagate the Party’s leadership and stick to the Party’s organizational principles and press policies (Zhao, 1998).

To be more specific, the Chinese government’s control over the media, He⁴ (1998, p.16) points out, is mainly embodied in the following aspects: 1.) control of law – all media and publishers have to go through the censorship and registration system for approval of their publications; 2.) control of finance – the Party holds the financial resources of the state-operated media; 3.) control of human resource management – the principal figures in the media and publishings are assigned by the Party and the government; 4.) direct censorship – the Party seals off and suppresses politically sensitive news coverage when relevant departments or cadres think it is ‘inadaptable’; 5.) self-censorship – in the major or important institutions of media and publishers, there is an implicit ‘willing’ censorship. The media organizations submit their important manuscripts to governmental departments before release; 6.) executing news censorship after release; 7.) various different levels of cadres can directly

⁴ He is the surname of an author.
intervene in their subordinate news organizations and publishers; and 8.) journalists possess a sense of self-censorship to conform their reports with ‘the Party’s policy and aims’ through various training, education and practice (the control resembles propaganda mode). The Communist Party, as mentioned, has loosened some financial constraints of journalism to operate in market forces, but there are no signs of the loosening of other controls.

Certainly, there are also some forces seeking and asking for freedom in China. These forces mainly stem from: 1.) intellectuals who have different expectations from the present political system; 2.) journalists who have the same perspectives as intellectuals and recognize the necessity of freedom; and 3.) the public who have relatively higher requirements for both the quality and quantity of newspapers than others (He, 1998). These desires have been presented in different ways in different periods. The most overt case was demonstrated in the incident of Tiananmen Square on June 4 1989. However, the autonomy and freedom of the media have been not substantially improved. Obviously, most fights for freedom in the past were in vain and it is predicated that the result of fights in the future will not be different from the past if China continues under the authoritarian rule.

After the incident of 1989, the Communist Party further tightened up the control of the media. In November 1989 Jiang Zeming gave a speech on the Party’s leadership role in relation to journalism. He expressed that,

Party Committees should frequently discuss in party Committee meetings. The chief responsible comrade of the Party Committee must take personal charge of news work. He must provide timely information to the media, issues orders, [and,] ...moreover, he must personally preview important editorials, commentaries, and news reports. 

(in Zhao, 1998, p.20)

For the better control of the media, the Communist Party mainly adopts censorship strategies which are supervised by a series of strict publication laws. In 1994, the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee and the Press and Publishing Bureau, totally reorganised 158 ordinances, rules, notices and opinions of dissemination and news to restrain the media (excluding the Constitution) (Chen and Chen, 1998). The process of publicity is also controlled by the Party to suit its
propaganda purposes. In 1995, Chinese officials further tightened restrictions on press freedom, notifying the media that "they had to put a favourable spin on sensitive issues such as double-digit inflation, failing enterprises, and demonstrations by the unemployed" (Lent, 1998, p.164). Later, the Party propaganda chief banned the 20 largest national newspapers from covering issues that were "not resolved" or "impossible to resolve" and required them to use reports by Xinhua – the government news agency, for all breaking stories (ibid.). More recently, the Chinese government has issued the regulation of Internet content to website providers. These providers in China are required to adhere to the following imperatives from the Party (Financial Times, October 3 2000 in Hague and Harrop, 2001, p.107):

a) To obtain the approval of the government before cooperating with businesses overseas;
b) To avoid content that subverts the power of the state, or harms the country’s reputation with Taiwan;
c) To avoid content that supports banned cults [notably Falun Gong];
d) To record all visitors to their site over the preceding 60 days;
e) To hand over such records to the police on demand.

Under such the environment of strict control, news is often selected on “the basis of its relevance to the central task of the party and the government and reported from the Party’s perspective” (Zhao, 1998, p.27), and summarized from the quarterly and annual reports of production units and government departments. As a consequence, news as the typical Party journalism is about “Party and government policies, creative experiences and local adaptation of policies, and the achievements of individual and institutional role models” (ibid.), and reflects the Party’s conclusion and the Communist comprehension of matters.

1.2.4 Power Relations: Primary and Secondary Definers
The media-communist party relations in China are very clear; in all cases, the media is subordinate to the Communist Party. Most political news coverage derives from policy announcements of the Party or its designees. There are three main power holders exerting their influence on the news consensus or political news agenda.
First, and most significant, are the leaders of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and government, who are decision-makers of various policies and political affairs. Most of the time, the issues that they decide and mention become the news agenda (Din et al., 2001). In some cases, the leaders of regional party organizations and the government even have the power to appoint or dismiss the leader or the head of news institutions. In addition, they also have sufficient power to decide what news coverage should be about or what it should not be about, and even decide about the type of news coverage, such as feature or editorial. The second is the chief journalists who are assigned by the Party as agencies of the Party and government to direct and manage news coverage. The third is the journalists themselves, who are employed in accordance with requirements of the chief journalists and clearly understand what the Party needs and requires of journalism.

However, the latter two power holders enjoy very limited power to set the media agenda or to write the political news because “the construction of a news story is a process of abstraction, of elevation, of injection of political meaning into a news personality – or, more bluntly, of developing an example to fit the propaganda needs of the Party” (Zhao, 1998, p.28). They often write a political story with the permission of their chiefs or superordinate cadres. Because the economic power cannot filter out the political news and is still subordinate to political power and media owners and advertising do not effectively influence media content, the prototype of a typical news item is the government report, rather than an engaging story about an event, which is often the case in the west. Nonetheless, the Party has overwhelming power beyond the media to define what the political news is, what content should be covered, and what type of coverage it is.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered what the literature says on agenda formation in democratic countries. It has argued that the media in western democracies are seen as performing an important normative function of informing citizens and scrutinizing elites. While criticisms of this ideal rightly point to shortcomings, and asymmetrical power relations in capitalist democracies, they also fail to account for the increasingly competitive nature of news agenda formation. In order to shape public opinion, political actors have to compete to set the news agenda, they have to
campaign, employing a series of information subsidies when the media increasingly exercise their power as gate-keepers. The relationships political actors and the media enjoy have become crucial for understanding the agenda formation process.

In authoritarian regimes the picture is somewhat different. There is no competition to shape the news agenda. The state adopts an unchallenged primary definer role. The news media are state controlled if not state run – and reflect the party/government line on political matters. Elites do not see public opinion as particularly important in day-to-day governance. In China, the doctrines of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism are deep rooted beliefs. In the perceptions of the Party, the control of the media determines the stability of the regime to a great extent. The news is covered on a premise that the media serves as a propaganda tool for the Communist Party. Thus, the Party is the ‘primary definer’ and exerts substantial and sufficient power to determine or intervene in the features and content of news, even the fate of journalists. Although control is relatively and gradually being loosened after commercialization of the media, the Party still maintains tight political control over both the Party newspapers and commercial newspapers. Hong Kong, as a part of the territory of China since the handover in 1997, is confronting significant shifts in the semi-democratic political system and indefinable media environment. The next chapter will outline a map of Hong Kong political media environment to provide context of party and media system and sketch out key political actors.
Chapter 2 Political Advocates, the Media and Public Opinion in Semi-democracies: the Case of Hong Kong

Introduction
The previous chapter reviewed the literature on sources-media relationships in the process of the formation of media political agendas in western democracies and in authoritarian China. This chapter details the context of Hong Kong’s political and media system, and identifies the main political actors in semi-democratic Hong Kong, by analysing the resources and powers of the political actors, their media centred disposition and their influence on the formation of the news agenda.

2.1 Hong Kong as a Semi-democracy
Different systems produce different power structures, which determine the different relationships of political actors and the media. Concerns have arisen over three aspects that directly influence the source-media relationships in Hong Kong: 1.) the role political parties play in the power structure; 2.) the role the media play in semi-democratic Hong Kong; and 3.) the influence of the media and parties on public opinion.

As a former British colony for over one hundred years, Hong Kong’s underlying norms and values are closer to the democratic tradition than to the authoritarian one. News is regarded as an open space for the dissemination of ideas, rather than as a propaganda outlet of the government. However, this western journalistic ideology has faced a great challenge since the 1997 handover. Politics and the media are placed in a dilemma of whether the rooted western perceptions should give way to more authoritarian ones as the pro-China power/ideology has become strengthened. The role of political parties in the political system of Hong Kong partially embodies the dilemma. Without substantial power in policy decision-making, the parties act as quasi-pressure groups, rather than in the traditional role of parties in western democracies. They have to compete for access to the media with the assistance of various tactics and strategies in an imperfect regime where resources are in short supply and unequally distributed.
Hong Kong’s unique historical background is reflected in its unique political system. As a colony of Britain, Hong Kong did not take many advantages of democracy from its sovereign, Britain, except for economic. After 1997, the transfer of sovereignty to China further placed Hong Kong in the dilemma of political value conflict. Although there are other similar cases of the transformation between two different systems, such as the former Soviet Union, Spain and East Germany, they underwent a democratic revolution of political systems which transformed their authoritarian or totalitarian governments into democratic ones. The Hong Kong case is different. In Hong Kong, the trappings of liberal democracy coexist with and are subordinate to China, whose decisions are a significant decisive influencing factor on Hong Kong’s political environment. The characteristics of Hong Kong’s political environment determine that its political system cannot be a democratic one. Rather, it is a kind of semi-democracy.

A semi-democracy is defined by Hague and Harrop (2001, p.27) as a regime that “blends democratic and authoritarian elements in stable combination”, and it lacks the theoretical purity of either democratic or authoritarian rule. In such a system, democratic legitimacy is not wholly lacking, however, it is only acquired and exploited in certain ways and often remains contested. Moreover, by control of the media, the elected rulers of semi-democracy often govern with “little respect for individual rights and often harass opposition of even non-official groups” (ibid.).

Hague and Harrop’s concept of semi-democracy conforms well to the situation in Hong Kong. The constitution of the SAR government embodies the nature of semi-democracy. After handover, the Basic Law features elements of continuity with the elitist colonial structure of government in Hong Kong: a chief executive whose members are elected in a tightly knit clique, an appointed executive council (ExCo), and a legislative council (LegCo). Without universal suffrage, the constitution of the power structure is full of contradictions – the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government is dominated by political elites with no strong grass-roots support and political parties which are popularly supported by citizens. Although the pluralism of politics allows the existence of multiple parties, the power of the parties is considered to be relatively weak, with small parties that have minimal impact on the politically dominant and powerful administration (Lo,
The Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa set the framework for political competition and the Democratic Party acts as the opposition, but is not flourishing because of the suppressing power in the LegCo elections. All these signs indicate that Hong Kong’s democracy is still at an immature and developing stage.

The election system further embodies the insufficient democratization. On July 8, 1997, one week after transition, the first Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, and the Executive Council which he chaired, approved guidelines for electing a new legislature. There are two main explanations for the immediate change of electoral system from a single-member plurality system to a proportional representation system. Firstly, the HKSAR government attempted to reduce any influence and the remaining power of the former British colonial leaders in the Legislative Council. Secondly, the government tried to avoid the possibility that the opposition party might become dominant in LegCo by the previous election system. Although the results of the 1998 election showed that the pro-democracy camp received overwhelming support from the electorate, the electoral system ensured that this support was not converted into seats.

Table 2.1 Composition of Legislative Council membership (1991-2004)

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<td>Geographical Constituencies</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Constituencies</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Committee&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-officio Members</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed by the Governor</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chosen by the Selection Committee</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lau and Ho (2001)

<sup>5</sup> The provisional Legislative Council (PLC) was established by the Preparatory Committee for the HKSAR by resolution at its Second Plenary Session on 24 March 1996. The 60 members in the PLC were chosen on 21 December 1996 by the 400-member Selection Committee handpicked by the Chinese Government, which also chose the first Chief Executive.

<sup>6</sup> The Election Committee in 1995 was composed of all members of the District Boards. The Boards consisted of 346 elected and 27 ex-officio members in rural districts. However, the Election Committee after 1997 comprised 800 members who were returned by subsectors with voters almost identical to those of the functional constituencies, with fewer than 180,000 eligible voters.
Under the proportional representation system used after 1998, members of the various democratic parties had little chance in the refashioned nine functional constituencies. There are 30 seats in the functional constituencies; of these 21 seats go to sectors adopted for the 1991 and 1995 election, and the new nine seats are filled by corporate votes in functional constituencies (see Table 2.1). Besides this, the new eight hundred members of the Election Committee, who represent a major change from the former government, are another focus of controversy. It is apparent that as an opposition, the power of the pro-democracy camp is constrained by the system, while the power of the pro-China camp is continually growing.

However, the concept of semi-democracy is not perfectly in accordance with the case of Hong Kong, because of two differences. One is that a semi-democracy is “a more likely outcome than a return to authoritarianism for new democracies that do not consolidate fully” (Hague and Harrop, 2001, p.27). That said, a semi-democracy is formed in a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and combines some features of both systems. As a whole, the political system after the handover does not much differ from that in the colonial era of British Administration. Yet, in the sense that the regime was transformed from a new democracy to an authoritarian regime, the reunion of Hong Kong with China is a kind of democracy in recession on the surface. The other difference between Hong Kong’s situation and semi-democracy is the matter in relation to the control of media freedom. Hague and Harrop (2001) put forward that, in a semi-democracy, the state controls and exploits the media to disseminate its policy. They regard the scope of freedom of the media as an indication of different political systems. Overall, however, Hong Kong’s media enjoy a fair amount of freedom; there is no obvious sign that any state power controls the media.

2.1.1 The Development of the Hong Kong Media
Hong Kong is regarded as one of the freest cities in Asia, possessing sixteen daily newspapers, three radio stations, and three local TV stations. Apart from Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), all of them are in commercial operation, profit making is of the utmost importance for these media. The media, as Chan and Lee (1991 in Lee, 1998, p.55-56) describe, are “free yet restrained, apolitical yet partisan, timid yet bold, and culturally proud yet politically loath” and “ambivalent about
being emancipated by the motherland from the colonial grip and powerless to decide [their] own fate.”

According to the Cheung’s categorization (1997), the Hong Kong media have gone through nine stages since the 1840s. From the 1960s to the present, the decline of partisan newspapers and the rise of the commercial newspaper were most noticeable. The peak time of newspaper publication was 1977, with a total of 121 newspapers for a population of 4.5 millions. After the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, the Hong Kong media confronted significant changes in the political-economic environment.

The uncertain environment led to the commercial and locally oriented newspapers merging and firmly establishing themselves as the mainstream newspapers which tended to commercialise political events. Although these papers did not play any clear political roles, they did represent a trend toward local identity which was embodied in providing more coverage of local news, putting the elites on the front page, and introducing a reader service by reporting on citizens’ complaints against administrative misdoings and transmitting them for redress to the government departments concerned (Kuan and Lau, 1988). Before the 1997 handover, the *Oriental Daily News*, *Sing Pao*, and *Ming Pao*, with its strong China orientation but centrist proclivity, made up the major newspapers of Hong Kong.

The partisan papers, as mouthpieces for either the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) or the KMT (Kuo Ming Tang – a party of Taiwan), were compressed into a fringe position due to market forces, while the commercial newspapers dominated the market. The readerships of the pro-Taiwan papers *Sing Tao Man Pao*, *Sing Tao Yat Pao* and *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* were in decline and all the orthodox pro-China newspapers (*Ta Kung Pao*, *Wen Wei Pao* and *New Evening News*) only occupied a small market share. The transition of the power structure further influenced survival space of the partisan papers and impacted journalistic paradigms of the media, reshaping the paradigms in conformity with the ‘One country, Two Systems’ formula (Chan, 1987); even so, by comparison with China and most other Asian countries in the same period, the state’s control of the press in Hong Kong was the least direct and strict.
1995-96 witnessed the birth of several new newspapers and the demise of a few others. The change of media ecology resulted in two contradictory outcomes: on the one hand, the plural nature of the media was diminished due to the withdrawal of the Taiwan press. On the other hand, fierce competition among newspapers, in particular, Chinese newspapers, aided the launch or production of some commercial neutral papers with more critical towards China. The rise of the *Apple Daily* and *Mad Dog Daily* (the latter closed down after handover due to financial problems) precisely represented the new breed of centrist newspapers which distinguished themselves from other commercial papers by taking a sharp local stand and being critical towards China.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owners</th>
<th>Major news media</th>
<th>Capital Interest</th>
<th>Political stands</th>
<th>Newspaper readership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Next group</td>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Independent-pro-democracy</td>
<td>1360</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ming Pao group</td>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>364</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yazhou Zhoukan</td>
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<td>Ming Pao Monthly</td>
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<td>Ming Pao weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pro-Beijing</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shanghai's Wen Hui Pao holds 31% of the shares, others owned by 11 PRC-related individuals &amp; Organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sing Tao group</td>
<td>Tin Tin Daily News</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Pro-Beijing</td>
<td>443</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sing Tao Jih Pao</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hong Kong Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ho's family</td>
<td>Shing Pao</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Pro-Beijing</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental Group</td>
<td>Oriental Daily News</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Apolitical</td>
<td>1510</td>
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<td>SCMP group</td>
<td>South China Morning Post</td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin's family</td>
<td>HK Economic Journal &amp; Monthly</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fung's family</td>
<td>HK Economic Times</td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ownership decides stances and key tones in reporting on parties. From Table 2.2, it can be seen that the printed media ownership in Hong Kong is diverse. The media system coincides with the criteria of pluralism which require the plural media to represent various voices of different interests groups. The Next group is owned by Jimmy Lai who launched the *Apple Daily* and the magazine *Next Weekly*. The Ming
The Ming Pao group, owned by a Malaysian Chinese businessman, publishes the Ming Pao, Yazhou Zhoukan, Ming Pao Monthly and Ming Pao Weekly. The Wen Wei Pao, owned by Shanghai’s Wenhuipo and China-related individuals and organizations, is a mouthpiece of the China government in Hong Kong. The paper has followed its aims and principles of patriotism and loving Hong Kong since its launch in 1948, and is characterized by news coverage of mainland China. It advocates the Communist Party’s policies, programme and directives, and propagates the Party’s leadership and principles. The front page of the Wen Wei Pao is often reserved for various activities and meetings of the Chinese government even if a major local issue emerges. For example, in the front and the second pages, the paper reported the trip and activities of the Prime Minister Wenjiabao in Hong Kong during the July 1 2003 demonstration, but only little attention was gave to the demonstration. The paper even has the allowance of the Chinese government to be circulated in mainland China where the media are strictly controlled and censored. From this point, it can be seen how the Wen Wei Pao’s political stance is in line with what the Chinese government contends is the ‘Party Central Principle’ (Dangxing Yungze, see Chapter One).

2.1.2 The Development of the Hong Kong Political System

Local political parties rooted in Hong Kong were not prominent until the early 1980s. Within ten years after the top-down political reform carried out by the British government, and the lowering of barriers to entry into the political game, political parties with different ideologies were booming. However, the growth of political parties was hindered by rapidly shifting and labyrinthine electoral systems. The electoral system changed from a ‘double-seat, double-vote’ system in 1991, to a single-member plurality system in 1995, and a proportional representation system in 1998. The rapid change of the systems reflected the power-holders’ attempts to reshape and manipulate different forces in the Legislative Council (LegCo) to develop their own political interests.

During the period 1991-1995, party politics gradually emerged while the LegCo was still dominated by business leaders and appointed members (Ma and Choy, 1999). The parties were divided into three camps according to their political ideology: pro-Hong Kong/UK, pro-China and pro-Business. Pro-UK parties stood
by the side of the colonial government with a platform of further democracy and were discontented with the Chinese government's intervention in Hong Kong affairs before the handover. In contrast to the democrats, pro-People's Republic of China (PRC) groups joined to form the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), and a group of conservative, pro-China business leaders formed the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) in 1994. The pro-business camp was represented by strange bedfellows— the traditional business groups, like the Liberal Party (Tang, 1998). The camp had a slightly pro-Hong Kong tendency without a clear political stance.

Between the years 1995-1997 Hong Kong saw an increased political influence of the pro-democracy parties in the LegCo with purposive facilitation of the colonial government (Ma and Choy, 1999). With five members elected from the functional constituencies and two from the Election Committee, the Democratic Party became the largest party in the sixty-member LegCo. In the LegCo of the period, the pro-democracy camp controlled almost half of the seats whereas the pro-China political camps had only obtained seven seats. In order to prevent the consolidation of pro-democracy forces, the new SAR administration devised the election system of proportional representation, chaired the Executive Council (ExCo), and the executive cabinet of the HKSAR. The majority of ExCo seats were elected through the functional constituencies and Election Committee, in which key members were from pro-business and Beijing-loyalist parties (Tang, 1998). Moreover, the election rules of the Election Committee were changed to bloc voting, whereby each elector must cast ten votes and the winners are those with the most votes.

Confronting with the forthcoming Chinese administration and the withdrawal of the colonial power, political ideology of the parties in Hong Kong eventually changed and began to gravitate toward two camps: pro-democracy and pro-China. Serving as the opposition in the legislature, the democrats, who brought change to the functioning of the LegCo, put great pressure on SAR government officials. Pro-business groups such as LP have a tendency of pro-China since they are supportive of PRC authorities and the SAR government in many political decision-makings.

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7 Pro-People Republic China abbreviates to pro-China.
In May 1998, the first HKSAR LegCo election was conducted under the new proportional representation system. Although the election system was unfavourable to the Democracy Party (DP), the party and its allies took fifteen of twenty directly elected seats. In the 2000 election (see Table 2.3), only one candidate was nominated in each of the nine functional constituencies so the candidates, all of whom were in the last LegCo, automatically won their seats. The odd outcome of the 2000 election was generated by a unique Hong Kong political order which is a mixture reconstructed on the base of a colonial political framework, with Chinese fixtures combined with Hong Kong style (Pepper, 2000).

Table 2.3 Distribution of parties’ seats in LegCo before and after 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (DP)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party (LP)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Frontier</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Democracy and people’s Livelihood (ADPL)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliate and others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South China Morning Post (September 12, 2000), Ma and Choy (1999).

Note: The bracket shows abbreviation of the parties.

Although the LegCo is the key stage of political activities of political parties and the government, it substantially lacks the constitutional power to make and unmake governments, to propose and formulate policies, or to play a significant role in the appointment and dismissal of top officials, and to check the branch of the government, perpetuating the ‘executive dominant’ nature of the Hong Kong political system (Ma and Choy, 1999). The legislature has only performed, by and large, an oversight function since the administration of the colonial government. The former government did not intend to enlarge the power of the legislature significantly as an integral part of their reform effort, whereas the SAR government does not intend to do so either, but strives to control the power of the legislature with the majority legislator’s support. In consequence, the non-democratically selected chief executive is effectively exempted from LegCo oversight and accountability (Lau and Kuan, 2000). Today’s Hong Kong presents a curious case study of
democratic variation, which Baum (2000) comments, is a case where elections are free, fair and regular but without any particular meaning.

**Democracy in the Colonial Era**

For most of its colonial history, Hong Kong was ruled as an administrative no-party region due to the fear of advanced dominion handover and potential Chinese civil war politics. Home-grown and imported political activities were strictly constrained to prevent potential conflicts between Chinese communist supporters and their opponents until the early 1980s (Pepper, 2000). There were few formal channels for popular political participation, even the most opened channel the LegCo which was made up of three kinds of members: the governor as the president, three ex-officio members, and several official members appointed by the governor. In 1984, there were seventeen official members (including the Governor) and thirty appointed unofficial members. The government therefore could be regarded as a government 'for the people', if not necessarily 'by the people' (Chan and Lee, 1999).

Soon after the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, the British administration began to prepare for elections of different levels. The democratization programme introduced to Hong Kong a three-tier political election system: the District Boards, the Urban and Regional Councils, and the Legislative Council (Chan and To, 1999). In response to the preparation, political activists of various social strata actively organised in order to meet the challenge of the democratization and political reform. However, the non-independent democratization was constrained by various unfavourable elements, such as that the general citizen was lack of motivation for political participation and political knowledge among citizens. The result of the first district-level election in 1982 showed that the competition was limited and not much enthusiasm was generated in the polls (Leung, 1998). Nevertheless, the emergence of a number of quasi-political parties and pressure groups and increased opportunities of political participation meant the end of no-party administration and the start of Hong Kong democracy.

The 1984 change formalized the practice by creating nine ‘functional constituencies’ and giving them the right to elect twelve unofficial legislators. An additional twelve would be chosen by an electoral college composed of all members
(including both elected and appointed) in the District Boards, plus those of Urban and Regional Councils (Lo, 1995). During the term of 1991-1995, of the sixty LegCo members, three were ex-officio principal administration officials, eighteen were appointed by the governor, twenty-one elected by functional constituencies, and eighteen elected by geographical constituencies (ibid.). Consequently, the electoral system for the legislature, as Lau and Kuan (2000) indicate, was designed in such a way that the number of members directly elected by the people constituted only a minority of that body, while the majority of members were elected by functional constituencies representing business and the professions, and by a small election committee of Hong Kong’s elites. In 1997, the colonial power finally ended its 150 years of administration.

**Chinese Fixtures**

During most of the period of the political transition, China emerged as a second power centre with veto status. China’s active participation in Hong Kong’s important political affairs was based on two reasons: firstly, at the most general level, the Chinese government had to preserve the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and to ensure a smooth transfer of sovereignty and effective implementation of the Joint Declaration during the transition; secondly, it had to prevent any purposively made policy of the colonial government, which might generate an excessive growth of the colonial and pro-democratic forces and was unfavourable to its administration after handover. For its part, the Chinese government inherited all the departing sovereign’s fears that Hong Kong’s capitalism would challenge its authoritarian political system and values.

Chinese governors’ remarks in public embodied China’s intervention in Hong Kong political affairs during the transition. For example, the director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, Ji Peng-fei, addressed the necessity of preservation of the status quo and the sovereign right of the Basic Law in the design of the SAR’s political system. The influence of Chinese factors on Hong Kong politics was more prominent after the formation of the Preparatory Committee in November 1996. The committee functioned as an electoral college to elect the 400 members of the Selection Committee, which subsequently elected the first Chief executive of the HKSAR in December of the same year. By the nominal election, the Chief
Executive who was appointed by the Chinese government could only lead Hong Kong without strong support from the grass-roots and the legislature and use the existing senior officials as the governing set-up groups. As a whole, China achieved more success with grass roots leadership formation than with the territory-wide elite throughout the political transitional period (Lau and Kuan, 2000).

2.2 The Main Actors in the News Agenda Formation Process
This section attempts to sketch out the relationships between the main political actors and the media in Hong Kong by inquiry into their political power in the formation of a news agenda. Through the analysis of media autonomy, the resources of political actors and their relationships, the definers of the news agenda are identified. However, it is a difficult task to make a well-rounded conclusion since there has been little research in this field.

2.2.1 HKSAR Government
In Hong Kong, the official source of the media mainly derives from the Information Services Department (ISD) which serves as the Government’s advertising and news agency, public relations consultant and publisher. Generally speaking, the government has a relatively stable and broad bureaucracy to provide relative reliable information to the media. The ISD (before the 1997 handover, it was called the Government Information Service – GIS) launches local news bulletins broadcast on Hong Kong’s radio and television stations for direct access to the public. Inquiries from journalists are handled on a 24 hour basis including Sundays and holidays, and depending on the government’s perception of necessities in various situations, there are occasional personal interviews, briefings, and press conferences (So, 1982 in Atwood and Major, 1996).

There are thirteen teams of Information Officers serving the bureau of the Government Secretariat to advise and assist policy bureaux in the formulation and implementation of public relations and publicity matters. In total, there are 350 Information Grade Officers in the teams, with 200 deployed in government departments, the policy bureaux in the Government Secretariat and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government offices overseas (www.info.gov.hk.com). Two teams are set to deal with the media: 1.) the News Sub-division is the
department mainly in charge of issuing to the media all government announcements, varying from information on matters of government policy to routine notices. The department is also responsible for organising and conducting press conferences and meet-the-media sessions by policy secretaries and heads of government departments; and 2.) the Media Research Sub-division monitors the print and electronic media to keep the Government informed of public opinion. It produces daily reports summarising news and editorial comments as well as special reports on subjects of interest to the Government (ibid.).

**Government Strategies**

The government’s media strategies are divided into two regions – the front region (publicity) and back region (privacy). In the back region, official secrecy is protected by the Official Secrets Act to punish any unauthorized disclosure of public information. For the SAR government, it is common to adopt the strategies of censorship and publicity. For example, the government’s consultation document on obscenity has revived proposals dropped by the pre-handover government to censor the Internet (HKJA, 2000). The 2002-2003 controversy over the issue of Article 23 of the Basic Law, in which the government proposed to introduce wider national security-related offences such as subversion, also demonstrated the attempt of the government to limit the freedom of speech by law.

Regarding publicity, it has been a more common modus operandi of the SAR government after handover. For instance, in the first half-year of 1998, the press conferences arranged by the ISD increased from 70 in January to 136 in June (Sze, 1999). In a sense, the increase of number of conferences meant an increase in the transparency of the government policy, because the government had to show the public that the freedom of Hong Kong was as great as or and even greater than before the handover.

The most frequent strategy used by the HKSAR government used is to ‘leak’ messages by unnamed officials, or even the highest decision-makers. The strategy of ‘leaking’ or providing ‘scoops’ to exclusive media actors had also been adopted by the colonial government for a long time. The only difference between before handover and after is that the objects of the strategy are dissimilar – from the pro-Britain newspapers before handover to pro-China media after the handover.
(Yang, 2002). In general, the media reports this sort of news by saying ‘a source close to a government’s high position’. Besides this, on many occasions, government officials telephone news editors, using the pretext of briefing them on the complex issues involved and, in the process, present the government’s position in the most favourable light (Lau, 1987).

### 2.2.2 The Media Freedom

Due to the partial democracy of Hong Kong politics and the impotent LegCo and parties, the independent media of Hong Kong have to take more responsibility to function as the ‘fourth branch’ to oversee the government than in most countries with other systems. The development of Hong Kong democratization, to a great extent, depends upon how much autonomy the media enjoy.

Before the handover, the media enjoyed relatively free competition as Hong Kong exercised a laissez-faire policy. They were relatively free from censorship under the British administration and operated in a pluralistic press system whose constraints were similar to those in western nations. The former editor of the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Derek Davies (in Knight and Nakano, 1999, p.6) notes, the Hong Kong media were able to enjoy large freedom because the pre-Patten government thought that most journalists were socially ignored and therefore politically insignificant. The bureaucrats ignored any criticism from the media and subjectively assumed that everyone, like them, paid the press and its opinions no attention. Under a cultural environment with a great tolerance of the government, corporations and prominent personalities to criticisms, the criteria of news-making were based on news value and the watchdog function (Chan, *et al.*, 1996 in Lee and Chu, 1998). After handover, the traditional pluralistic media in Hong Kong, where pro-China, neutralist, and pro-democracy spectrum coexisted, lost its relevance because of the withdrawal of the pro-Taiwan newspapers, although neither the Chinese government nor the SAR government actually took any action to force the withdrawal of the pro-Taiwan newspapers.

**Self-censorship**

Media freedom is regarded as a baseline for the protection of civil rights; much attention and concern has been directed to the practice of self-censorship in recent
years. Many observers apprehensively indicate that Hong Kong media freedom is damaged by media self-censorship, in which the media reduce the coverage of sensitive political issues, and journalists or media organizations withhold criticism on the Chinese government in order to curry favour or avoid coercion.

Self-censorship, according to Lee (1998, p.57), is defined as "a set of editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, and change of emphasis to choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, their organizations, and even the entire media community in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment from the power structure." Herman and Chomsky (1988, p.xii) also indicate that

Censorship is largely self-censorship, by reporters and commentators who adjust to the realities of source and media organizational requirements, and by people at higher level within media organizations who are chosen to implement, and have usually internalized, the constraints imposed by proprietary and other market and governmental centers of power.

To take the Ming Pao as an example, the Ming Pao is regarded as one of the territory's most independent and critical dailies, yet, it dismissed some columnists for being too critical of Beijing during transition. The Asian Wall Street Journal in April 1997, said, "A Hong Kong Newspaper Softens Its Voice – Like Many Others in Colony, Ming Pao News is Closer to Beijing's Line" (HKJA, 1998). The article claimed that the Ming Pao had been 'retreating', becoming less opinionated and providing a more uncritical coverage of news.

Although the Chinese government has attempted to influence media affairs, Hong Kong’s media freedom under Chinese sovereignty has not been as gloomy as many people have been anticipated. In terms of diverse ownership, the present control of the Chinese authorities over the media is not obvious or sufficient to affect the operation of the media and the media structure. In practice, the SAR government has not passed laws restricting coverage of Taiwan or taken any action to punish the kind of coverage. In addition, although the media practised self-censorship more or less during the transition period, news coverage of Hong Kong local affairs has not changed much, since the phenomenon of censorship often took place in the case of Chinese sensitive political issues. Therefore, after handover, the media continue to operate under the western-style journalistic system, with the 'One country, two
systems' formula, and function as transmitters between the political actors and the public and as watchdogs of the public to oversee the government.

**Market and News Reporting**

Professional values are an important influence on the formation of news agenda and the relations between the political actors and the media. The values, Gurevitch and Blumler (1991, p.33-34) point out, "such as objectivity, impartiality, fairness, and an ability to recognize the newsworthiness of an event also serve as influential guidelines when framing stories begin to structure the process", and as background to a consideration of the characteristics of news stories in individual media (Lorimer, 1994). The value of newsworthiness is consistent with several of the organizational and genre-related selection requirements which are often influenced by the type of newspaper (market-driven or political) and its prevailing stance.

In Hong Kong, most newspapers are market-driven operation, thus market forces are often the primary consideration for these newspapers. In addition, editors and chief reporters of the Hong Kong media subscribe to the view that Hong Kong citizens are not interested in political affairs (So, 1982; Yu, 1981 in Atwood and Major, 1996). As a result, media content tends to neglect political coverage for pursuit of readerships, in which sensationalism and 'magazinisation' (becoming like magazines) by the presentation of large quantities of pictures with short articles have increasingly prevailed in the media. Infotainment has become the main style of the media, including two local TV stations and newspapers.

The Hong Kong Journalists Association 1998 Annual Report admitted that survival became the dominant concern; market considerations outweigh all so that sensationalism, violence and sex have increasingly become the language of the media – the Oriental Daily and Apple Daily leading the way. Social responsibility is neglected by Hong Kong journalists. The media, especially the newspapers, currently face a credibility crisis which could undermine public support for any moves by journalistic organizations to combat the danger of the government enacting draconian anti-subversion laws (HKJA, 2000). In short, the public may not be willing to support the media any more if they fail to take concrete action to curb their excesses.
2.2.3 Political Parties and Pressure Groups

During the transition period, the political tensions generated in the territory by the Joint Declaration and the June 4 1989 incident of Tianamen, facilitated the political mobilization of the population. Subsequently, some pressure groups developed into political parties as a result of sharing similar political values. The political parties that are, or have been, active in Hong Kong politics can be divided into two categories: pro-democracy and pro-China, as mentioned earlier.

The Pro-democracy Camp

The pro-democracy parties are the most reformist parties in the Hong Kong political system (Thomas, 1999). The Democratic Party (DP) and the Frontier are the flagships of the reformist camp. The DP was formed by the alliance of the Meeting Point and the United Democrats of Hong Kong (the UDHK) in April 1994. Through its performance and attitude towards the governments, the party has been collectively described as the opposition party. The major platform of the parties is to further unite the democratic forces in Hong Kong and promote a complete democracy with a faster pace. The DP had 600 members and around eleven Legislative Councils during 2002-2004. By comparison, the Frontier is a much smaller party, with just over 100 members and five legislators. Its major interest is the universal suffrage and it seeks the ideal that Hong Kong people should have the right to elect their own government (the resource of political parties will be more detailed in the next chapter).

The Pro-China Camp

In opposition to the democrats, political groups supporting the Hong Kong authorities are the pro-business and or pro-China parties. According to Davies et al., (1990 in Thomas 1999), the belief of these parties was that the introduction of a plural party system would destabilise the territory. The parties defined themselves as upholders of the status quo. They opposed the pro-democracy parties’ agenda which is perceived as extreme, but allow some political reform. For instance, in the case of Article 23, the Liberal party (LP) supported the Hong Kong government’s legislation in the beginning, but it made a crucial vote which changed the result and forced the government to reconstruct the Executive Council. However, the group was often regarded as allied with the pro-China camp, since it supported the government’s
decision-making most of the time. The Liberal Party is a pro-business party which was formed on July 18, 1993. Its top concerns are for the Hong Kong Community’s 3Es — enhancing Hong Kong’s international status; increasing Hong Kong’s economic competitiveness; and creating a good living environment.

The flagship of the pro-China camp is the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB). Since 1992, the DAB has participated in every election held in Hong Kong, both before and after the takeover of sovereignty. The party started with one single member in the Legislative Council. In the 1995 elections, the party secured six out of a total of 60 seats in the Council, and through the first two elections of the Special Administrative Region, the DAB further increased its share of Legislative Council seats to ten, becoming the second largest party in the Council. Voter support for the DAB in Legislative Council elections increased from 25 percent in 1998 to 30 percent in 2000.

**Pressure Groups**

From a pluralist’s perspective, pressure groups are regarded as a means of providing access to the political system and a counterweight to undue concentrations of power. In a sense, the political parties can play the double roles of the party and the pressure group. However, a clear distinction is drawn between political parties and pressure groups, that the former aims to win seats in elections, “either with the objective of forming the government or part of the government (the most usual objective) or to acquire sufficient seats to bring about or to prevent changes in the present constitutional arrangements of the country” (Grant, 1995, p.8). In Hong Kong, pressure groups’ activity constitutes an important part of the political life. These Non-Government Organizations’ (NGOs) efforts to deliver services have been recognized by an increasing number of Hong Kong people. Hong Kong has over seven hundred non-government organizations of various natures, like groups concerned with social welfare and women’s rights, political and religious groups, mainstream and alternative.

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8 Definition: In general, pressure groups are social aggregates with some level of cohesion and shared aims which attempt to influence the political decision-making process’ (Ball and Millard, 1986, p.33-34, in Baggott, 1998).
One of the most notable pressure group is the Alliance (The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China) which was established on May 21 1989 with the purpose of supporting patriotic democratic movements in China. It has become the largest grassroots pro-democracy advocacy group in Hong Kong and is composed of over 200 base level, including labour, students, councillor offices, and religious, women's and political commentary group members. The Alliance has five operational goals: the release of dissidents, rehabilitation of the 1989 pro-democracy movement, accountability for the June 4th massacre, an end to one-party dictatorship, and a democratic China.

The April Fifth Action (AFA) is another notable and active pressure group which was established in 1989 and often uses radical street protest to oppose government policies instead of supporting candidates to participate in local elections (Lo, 1998b). However, the AFA recently changed their strategies in political participation to be more actively involved in election campaigns. For example, Leung Kwok-hung, the spokesperson of the AFA, participated in both the 2001 District Council election and the 2004 LegCo election.

Media-parties Relationships

The relationship between the media and the parties in Hong Kong, as Kuan and Lau (1988 and 1999) state, is a virgin field of inquiry. The scholarly research reported in the literature was mainly focused on inquiry into the relationship between governments and the media, the media's freedom, the transition of 1997, or the politics in Hong Kong. Systematical research on parties-media relationships which only implicitly exist in both the media and parties as a common consensus has not been conducted. The lack of sufficient literature causes the analysis of media-parties relationships in Hong Kong to rely almost wholly on the inference from the western theories with reference to the field.

Lee (1999, p.423) points out that the mass media had to rely on “the political elites for information and, at the same time, to balance political and commercial considerations.” In term of consideration of information subsidies, the media and the political actors in Hong Kong establish an exchange relationship to achieve mutually beneficial purposes – one for information and one for publicity. However,
in terms of consideration of market forces, the relationship between the media and the political actors is established based on the adversary model, because the most mainstream media in Hong Kong, which are market-driven seek to uncover stories behind the political actors, such as scandals, sex, violence, and corruption, to cater to the public’s taste in order to maintain or increase their circulation or audience ratings.

Individually, it is deducible that different political groups enjoy different relationships with the individual media. The relationships are influenced by several factors, such as the parties’ ability to secure access, campaign strategies, political hierarchy and resource of the parties, the characteristics of the readership and, particularly, the political ideology of the media themselves (Kuan and Lau, 1999). For example, if Martin Lee (DP former chairman and Legislative Councillor) criticizes the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in a Legislative Council meeting, the pro-China political ideology dictates that the Wen Wei Pao and Ta Kung Pao will deal with it as negative news of Martin Lee, or a small story or even force out the story.

Fung (1998) finds that the pro-democracy camp gained less media profile because of self-censorship during the post-transition period. By comparison, the pro-China camp which had a better relationship with the media gained more profile. Fung’s findings are based on a premise that internal self-censorship of the media or constraints of the governments (both the SAR government and the Chinese government) on the media will dominate the major news outputs. However, the findings can only be applied in some specific coverage and circumstances since the self-censorship the media practice and the constraints the government impose do not apply to every kind of political coverage, but only to issues that are politically sensitive to China in relations to the unification, human rights and problems of Taiwan and Tibet.

2.2.4 The Media in Public Opinion

As in western democracies, the media is a main information conduit, playing a crucial role in constructing public opinion in Hong Kong. In the present political media context, So (1999, p.128) notes that “public opinion may not be ‘public’s opinion’ but ‘opinion made public’ by a small number of people”, such as the news
sources, media owners and influential journalists (like commentators, famous columnists) and people of certain social groupings. Public opinion, according to So (ibid.), is 'sectorial opinion'; a newspaper may essentially be a 'viewspaper', therefore news organizations tend to present news and views according to their own vested interests and ideological biases. In Hong Kong, there are some research centres which conduct regular surveys to investigate various social or political issues, such as the Hong Kong Policy Research Institute Ltd. and the Public Opinion Programme (POP) of the University of Hong Kong.

Three conduits are used to bridge between the public and the government and reflect public opinion: the media, the LegCo and parties. According to a survey called 'Media Representative Function', conducted by the Department of Journalism and Communication of the Chinese University (Leung, 2002), 46.5 percent of respondents thought that radio programmes were the most efficient channel to express public opinion, while 26.65 percent thought that the best forum was newspapers. Conversely, only 12.6 percent of respondents regarded the Legislative Council as the public representative. The legitimacy on political parties was the lowest among them. Besides this, 35 percent of respondents thought the news media dominated the agenda in society. However, on the issue of influence on policy-making, over 60 percent of citizens thought that the LegCo has more influence than the media. The result might not represent the opinions of the society as a whole, but it partly indicates that the competence of the Legislative Council is generally regarded as less than that of the media in the public’s perceptions. Some people even claim that the media rule Hong Kong. This view indicates the domination of the media in certain social issues, and their influence on policy-making (Leung, 2002). Although the remark exaggerates the function of the media, it can be seen as evidence of the significance and political status of the media in Hong Kong.

2.3 The Main Actors Power and Public Opinion
News coverage is conceived as a battlefield of alternative resources by political actors and a decisive factor that influences public opinion on a daily basis. In an imperfectly competitive field with unequal distribution of resources, a concern
which should be considered is what power the political actors have in setting political coverage which directly influences the formation of public opinion.

The power of the media in agenda formation relies heavily upon the media autonomy and the role the media play in society. After the handover, the current media system is not very different from that under the colonial administration, therefore, some optimists even claim that the Hong Kong media system is pluralistic. Certainly, the Hong Kong media do not fully stand in line with the general view of western media pluralism because the autonomy and freedom of the media is influenced by organizational self-censorship and by external pressures. However, from a broader perspective, complete media autonomy and the absolute absence of self-censorship in the media of any country are impossible to execute in practice. Hence, in a hybrid and mixed media system with mostly market-driven media (especially the newspapers) and a few cases of partisanship and self-censorship, the media are relatively free to decide news coverage.

In western pluralism, the media is required to act as the watchdog, to be socially responsible, and to oversee the potential threatening accumulations of power among interest groups (Scammell, 2000). In Hong Kong, the media are competent to perform the role of watchdog to oversee the SAR government. Although the free market economy leads that most market-driven media tend to seek to catering to the public ‘taste’, rather than considering the public good and social responsibility, in crucial moments, the economy allows them to “periodically attack and expose corporate and governmental malfeasance, and aggressively portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and the general community interest” (Herman and Chomsky, 1999, p.169). Moreover, because the executive-led government and the LegCo produced by non-universal suffrage lack public legitimacy, the public’s expectation and social consciousness of the media reinforced the media function as the ‘opposition’ against the government or overseeing the government (Yung, 2002).

From aspects of the media autonomy and functions, the Hong Kong media apparently possess a dominant power beyond the government in the agenda formation. Yet, the power of the media was influenced by other factors already
mentioned like authority legitimacy, market forces, and the trend of ‘infotainment’. In his study on the treatment of government news by the Hong Kong press in 1982, So (1999) points out that the commercial papers have more pages and a higher percentage of advertising; the elite-commercial papers usually provide more ‘hard’ news, such as international politics, social planning and issues, and economics. The popular-commercial papers seek to attract the reader by printing more ‘soft’ news.

The survey of the ‘Top Ten Legislative Councillors’ conducted by the University of Hong Kong in mid-October 2002 showed that half of the councillors with whom the public are the most familiar come from the pro-democracy camp, including Martin Lee (the former DP chairman), Emily Lau (chairman of the Frontier), Szeto Wah (DP Legislative Council and one of the founders of the Alliance), Lee Cheuk-yan and Lau Chin-shek (pro-democracy Legislative Councillors). The result suggests that the pro-democracy leaders in Hong Kong may be better at remaining ‘on message’ than those of the pro-China camp. However, another case showed that the pro-China parties were overall better at staying on message. In another survey of the University of Hong Kong on the ratings of the most well-known political groups, in mid-February, the top two were pro-business groups. The Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) and the Liberal Party (LP) ranked the fourth and the fifth, with support ratings of 54.0 marks and 52.2 marks respectively. The sixth to the eighth ranks fell to the Democratic Party (DP), Frontier and April Fifth Action (AFA) successively. The results of the two surveys reveal that the popularity of party members is uncertain and unstable; this might be influenced by topical issues in media coverage at the time.

2.3.1 State Dominance

So far, the performance of the media in coverage of the government demonstrates that the government seems to possess relatively more power to define news, because the media unduly rely on supplies of the government sources. Two reasons generate the results. Due to the availability and openness of ISD and the authority of the government sources, the media rely heavily on government sources to gain steady information, by taking into account their efficiency and credibility. As result, the government gains priority and better light in coverage. Certainly, strategic

9 Source: Hong Kong University POP site (11/02), Rating of Top Ten Legislative Councillors, Retrieved on December 12 2002, from http://hkupop.hku.hk/.
efforts made by the government also contribute to the result. The increasing number of official press conferences in 1998 reflected the efforts of the bureaucratic institution to increase its internal openness and transparency and its strategic control over the news agenda by information subsidies. Furthermore, tight schedules and a shortage of manpower in the media also contribute to the media heavily dependence on government information in order to fill news-holes and gain enough advertising. In general, the main daily newspapers of Hong Kong have at least 20 printed pages; some of them even have more than 40-50 pages. The media coverage is therefore secured by the steady and routine supplies of government information.

According to So (1999), on average, 50 percent of ISD news items are used in the media coverage. In 2000, the press enquiry desk of ISD dealt with over 300,000 enquiries. The heavy reliance on government by the media is no trade secret; some newspapers would be forced out of business if ISD stopped issuing press releases or handouts. Some officials even revealed that they did not just send the media speeches made by government officials, but also they had to write the stories for the media, or else the media would mess up the story (Lau, 1987). The case may not represent the modus operandi of the media as a whole, but it reflects that the media do heavily rely on government sources. Chan and Lee (1991, p.54) note that “the more the press is dependent on the power centres for such resources the more likely it will view them as being influential and align with them. Central actors appear even more powerful.” Borrowing the concept of Hall et al., the result and remark implies that the government is the primary definer in the formation of the news agenda.

2.3.2 News Agendas
In between July of 1997 and February of 2000, many controversies came into the news agenda and then became part of the public agenda. As examples, the following are a few relatively controversial issues in the newspapers, and provide indications of some news agendas in Hong Kong:

Media Freedom
a.) Chief Executive Office imposes restrictions on the press:
Hong Kong Journalists Association accuses the office of infringing on press freedom and the operation of the media in Hong Kong (HKJA, 1998).

b.) Xu Simin accuses RTHK of publicly opposing SAR policies: Xu Simin, a delegate to the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in Beijing, criticizes the Hong Kong government-funded Radio Television Hong Kong for airing shows critical of Hong Kong policies while claiming to be editorially independent (March 5 1998, Hong Kong Economic Daily).

**Election**

Legislative Council opens one-third of the seats to direct election: Only regional elections are open to direct popular vote, which account for only one-third of the 60 seats of the Legislature. In 1995, direct elections, was hold the functional constituencies, but the 1998 election reverted to indirect elections.

**Parties and pressure groups**

a.) The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements (the Alliance) in China protests against Mainland China’s decision to revoke the home visit permit of one of its members (Sing Tao Daily, 1998).

b.) The District Councils Bill was adopted on March 11 by the Legislative Council due to the support of the L P, DAB and Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA). The provisions opening appointed seats and ex-officio seats were described as the ‘major setback in democracy’ (March 12 1999, Apple Daily).

c.) Hong Kong Democratic Party Legislative Councilors protest the adoption of the District Councils Bill, affording appointed seats and ex-officio seats.

**Conclusion**

Hong Kong, which can be regarded as a semi-democracy as Hague and Harrop (2001) define, is a regime that combines both democratic and authoritarian elements in stable combination, but lacks the theoretical purity of either democratic or authoritarian rule. A highly aggressive, elected legislature answerable to its
constituents in geographical or functional constituencies, rights of voting, a variety of political parties, an independent commercial media sector with mass circulation press and a growing civic space inhabited by press groups, free speech and a laissez-faire economic system, demonstrate that Hong Kong possesses important elements of liberality and equality that are essential to a democracy. Although democratic legitimacy in Hong Kong is not wholly lacking, authoritarian elements are also demonstrated from the following aspects: a largely appointed executive branch with much weaker electoral credibility and without a single assured vote in the legislature or a party which it can call its own (Overholt, 2001), and limited rights to vote for the Chief Executive elect. These authoritarian elements are derived from the colonial government’s authoritarian administration which restricted Hong Kong’s local elites ability to enter political worlds. After handover, the SAR government follows the ways of the partial democratization of the former government.

Due to the contradiction of democratic and authoritarian elements, democratic legitimacy often remains contested, particularly the issue of universal suffrage and the problems of media self-censorship. The partial democratic and authoritarian elements are composed of some specific characteristics: political parties and pressure groups lack the resources of the government when it comes to shaping the news agenda. They are more reliant on the vagueness of media gatekeeping, compared to the major parties in an established democracy. The government, while appointed, still needs to take account of public feelings. Managing the media is seen as a crucial part of maintaining a political consensus about the state of affairs; issues of freedom and democracy are at the centre of political life as pro-democracy parties challenge government and seek further reforms. The struggle for political reform is never very far below the surface of civil society and occasionally erupts to the surface, as chapters seven and eight will show.

The following chapter will analyse roles of public opinion play in semi-democratic Hong Kong, how the political actors and the media perceive it and how the public votes on the political actors.
Chapter 3 Public Opinion, Opinion Polls and Agenda-setting

Introduction
Chapter Two has drawn an overall picture of Hong Kong political media environment. This chapter examines public opinion from several dimensions – the role public opinion plays in semi-democratic Hong Kong, the formation of public opinion, the interactions among the media, the political actors and public opinion, how the media cover polls, and the political actors’ strategies on the mobilization of public opinion.

3.1 Public Opinion in the Hong Kong Context
In democracies, public opinion claims to be the voice of people, a clear statement from the public. It is indispensable to the legitimacy of the government which claims to govern with the consent of the people. Because the media is a necessary instrument of information transmission, media content becomes a centralized sphere where various opinions are gathered, concentrated and reconstructed. Numerous surveys and polls also are used as a form of representation in constructing an understanding of what people think and what they want, by the media organizations, academic institutions, governments and political groups. The public’s perspectives are not only incorporated into governance formally through elections, but also become visible on a day to day basis through a whole series of mechanisms: reports, editorials, commentaries in the mass media, and the opinions and information conveyed by organized groups and formally through polls (Glynn and Jacobs, 1999). In democracies, the media do not only transmit information and inform the public, but rather act as ‘a facilitator of public opinion’, reflecting public views (Glasser and Salmon, 1995), or a constructor through encoding and decoding processes to shape public opinion (Lewis, 2001). Whether as a facilitator, reflector or constructor, it is undeniable that the mass media play a pervasive role both in influencing the formation of public opinion and changing political attitudes, and also in reflecting opinion, through different informal and formal means.

In an attempt to affect votes, political advocates in Hong Kong not only seek to shape public opinion on key issues via the media, but also attempt to utilize and mobilize public sentiments. With weak political power and poor resources, the
parties have to devote more effort to influence, effectively mobilizing and drawing on public opinion to gain support for their actions. The Hong Kong government, although appointed, is keen to carry public opinion on issues of its concern for making decisions on policy. Public opinion, therefore, acts as a significant resource, reference, and persuasive tool for the government and the parties in combating their opponents and gaining public support or votes.

The quality and feasibility of public opinion as an input into policy is closely related to the characteristics of the public — the public’s political knowledge, deliberation on issues concerned and respect of democratic norms (Lindeman et al., 1999), as mentioned in Chapter One. In Hong Kong, the public have been regarded and assumed as apolitical. Politicians and journalists often criticize them and see people’s ignorance on politics as a main barrier to democratic development. Rooted perceptions and their experiences in the past generate this deep belief in academics, political parties, governments and journalists. However, the July 1 2003 demonstration in protest against the legislation of Article 23, in which 500,000 people participated, and the January 1, 2004 march for universal suffrage, in which 100,000 people attended, prove that the public are no longer apolitical and also illustrate the power of latent opinion in policies making. Increasing numbers of demonstrations, rallies and petitions further support a possible inference that the public shares fundamental common political values towards democracy and they will demonstrate their dissent, political demand and enthusiasm in public if there is any threat or action contrary to the fundamental values.

Public opinion is mainly presented in two ways: the passive way, such as votes and opinion polls; and the active way, like demonstrations and rallies. Both ways of presenting public opinion are significant indicators to understand the demand and the thinking of the public. Opinions are often measured via technical and scientific polls recruited by the parties, when they make their policies. Likewise, the demonstration or rally is often mobilized by the parties which claim to represent and at on behalf of the public to express the discontent and anger of the public. In Hong Kong, political protest has become prevalent. An increasing number of people prefer to use the direct way of ‘Going on the street’ (demonstration) to show their sentiments, rather than other forms of expression. However, the form of expression
is often contingent on issues. To understand the role of public opinion in Hong Kong civil society, the first task needs to be an investigation on the development of public opinion.

Under colonial rule, the British Hong Kong Government between the 1960s and 1980s practiced 'absorption politics'\(^\text{10}\) whereby administrative and political powers were centralized in the colonial government under the leadership of the Governor. The process was designed for keeping politics out of the electoral process and developed people who became adept as appointees representing the views of the economic and professional elites (David Faure, 2003 in Loh 2004). The local elites acted as the bridge to link public opinion to the administration in a bottom-up political framework. After the signing of the British-Sino Joint Declaration in 1984, this framework was gradually replaced, or enhanced, by gradual democratic reform, whereby public opinion could, to some extent, also be reflected by popular votes (Chung, 2004), although Hong Kong’s political leaders have never been subject to any popular elections.

Hong Kong’s historical background profoundly influenced the values and concepts of the public towards democracy. An education and political system run for over one hundred years in ‘Western-Hong Kong’ style shaped the unique perceptions of Hong Kong people towards politics, the government and parties. The public’s democratic values are fairly close to those in a western country. Although the former British government, like the Chinese central government, did not give opportunities for universal suffrage to the Hong Kong public to elect its own governor, a free and independent media system assists the formation of people’s tendency towards those values.

### 3.1.1 Public Participation and Cognition in a Semi-democracy

Rational and valid public opinion requires a sense of political participation in and understanding of the issues concerned. A survey of ‘Top ten news stories in the past 30 years'\(^\text{11}\) (RTHK and Ming Pao, 2003) has shown the issues the Hong Kong people are most concerned with. The top news stories are ranked as the following:

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\(^{10}\) Ambrose King in his 1973 paper *Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong* described colonial Hong Kong’s system in 1960s and 1970s as the “absorption of politics into the bureaucracy”.

\(^{11}\) Conducted in co-optation between RTHK (governmental media) and Ming Pao in 2003.
the handover of Hong Kong in 1997, the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the Asian financial storm in 1997-1998, the demonstration of a million people for the June 4 Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, the establish of the Independent Committee Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974, the controversy on the legislation of Article 23, the election of the first Executive Chief in 1996, the enactment of the Basic Law in 1988, and the 1991 direct election of the Legislative Council. Seven of these topics are political controversies which have been the focus of long-standing debates. The results show that the issues the public concerned about are close to their lives and have direct impacts on them.

Based on her studies in 1994, Fung (1998) points out that although public demand for democratic reforms has undeniably been on the rise in Hong Kong, the public's conception of democracy is full of ambiguities and their democratic aspiration has been instrumental and utilitarian rather than ideological. She views Hong Kong people as 'concerned bystanders', who in general have limited and narrow civic awareness, but retain strong concern for social affairs, and who espouse democratic values, but are weak at political participation. This view is borne out somewhat by a 1994 poll taken by the Social Research Centre of Hong Kong University (Kuan and Lau 1996 in Fung, 1998). It showed that the percentage of people intending to vote (46 percent) had not increased compared to figures in the first three-tier election in 1991, although people were aware of the high political stakes.

Similarly, according to Kwok and Chan's study (1998) on how the public viewed democratic institutions and values from 1992 to 1995, the public lack an understanding of democracy. The aspects which they investigated to understand the public's perception on democracy include political participation, political cognition, political efficacy, political liberty and political equality. Their result shows that the majority of people attached importance to specific mechanisms of democracy such as political opposition and the right to participate. It is "of interest that correlation coefficients reveal a significant relationship between desire for some monitoring mechanisms and support for a multiparty system, while the relationships between monitoring and political participation and the call for direct elections were not significant" (ibid., p.69). Kwok and Chan (1998) also indicate that such findings
imply that respondents in the study were very jealous of the right of the individual to freedom of expression and to participate, and they did necessarily have a participative orientation.

The research further found that the respondents' knowledge of political affairs and their level of political cognition were only moderate (ibid). Politically active people tended to think that they could influence government policy, and were positive about the right to demonstrate. Regarding liberty, almost all respondents agreed that everyone was entitled to freedom of speech. The individual's right to privacy was also highly valued; respondents thought the government does not have the right to intercept telephone calls or open mail, even for the purpose of maintaining law and order. This result can partly explain the public's opposition to the legislation of Article 23 which attempted to restrain people's liberty.

Political equality is another aspect that calls for special attention in the Hong Kong context. The election system, in which 30 legislation council members come from functional voting, which was originally instituted to guarantee minority rights, is criticized as violating the principle of political equality, the same as the appointment of Chief Executive and major senior officers. Less than half of their respondents agreed with the idea that those who made more contribution to society should be entitled to another vote (ibid). Although the research was conducted before the handover, the result is still in accordance with the present situation, since the actual democracy has not changed significantly.

3.1.2 Party Identity

Table 3.1 Which political camp do you incline to identify yourself with?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of survey</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Pro-China</th>
<th>Moderates</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Neutral (1)</th>
<th>Don't know (2)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-22/10/03</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HKUPOP (11/2003a)

Note: 1. Neutral or not identified with any camp
2. Don't know or hard to say

The public political identity shows public behaviour and attitudes towards the
politics affects election voting results. Table 3.1 shows the outcome of a survey conducted by the Hong Kong University to investigate the public’s voting orientation in the District Council Election of November 2003 (HKUPOP, 11/2003a). From Table 3.1, it can be seen that 36.7 percent of respondents did not belong to any political camp or have any political orientation. There is a striking contrast between the identity of pro-democrats and the pro-China camp, in that 28.5 percent of respondents identified themselves as democrats, and only 4.3 percent as pro-China. Certainly, those results probably spring from the effect of ‘the spiral of silence’ of Noell-Neumann (1984) after the July 1 demonstration. This theory assumes that the minority keep silent when they think they are not in line with the majority opinion. Another Hong Kong University survey (HKUPOP, 11/2003b), which was conducted at the same time, showed that the majority of respondents had attended the July 1 demonstration, but they voted for candidates on a livelihood basis, rather than on political alignment. These results indicate that party attachment in Hong Kong is not strong. People are more concerned with economics than politics. However, when significant issues take place with a direct impact on democracy, the public tends to be more on the side of the pro-democracy than pro-China camp.

3.1.3 The Reaction between the Public and Issues

In the past few years, the general political environment in Hong Kong has remained relatively stable, but public debates in the media are still widespread. Recent examples include question of Beijing’s control over the election of the Chief Executive; opposition to the government’s charging of Falun Gong practitioners with criminal offences; civil servants’ plans to sue the government over a reduction of salaries; the poor quality of legislative representatives; the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia; the car-tax scandal of Financial Sectary Leung; and the resignation of two senior officials. Most of these issues represent an underlying scepticism by the Hong Kong people and dissatisfaction with the HKSAR government, that significantly impacted on its administration.

Fung’s study of ‘The dynamics of public opinion, political parties, and media in transitional Hong Kong’ (Fung, 1998) reveals that, faced with taking either a position that reflected civil voices as expressed in public opinion polls or one that
defended Beijing’s interests, journalists ultimately gave favour to the pro-China DAB. In mid-1995, the DAB rose to number three among the political groups in Hong Kong. In July 25, 1995 Ming Pao’s headline gave ‘safeguarding the benefit’ of the Hong Kong people as the reason for DAB’s popularity (ibid.). However, Fung’s findings seem applicable only to the situation before the handover. Do journalists still favour the DAB after the handover, especially after the demonstration on July 1, 2003? In a survey of University of Hong Kong (see Table 3.1), only 4.3 percent respondent identified their political stance as pro-China. The increasingly number of demonstrations and petitions show that the public needs strong opponents of pro-China groups to balance power, lest excess control expected by the Chinese government on Hong Kong freedom and democracy.

To measure the exposure rating of the public in news coverage, in 1985, Kuan and Lau (1999) conducted a survey called ‘Reading a Newspaper Yesterday’. The survey found that the high exposure group in news coverage was the attentive public (people of the group closely concerned with and paying close attention to politics). The activated public opinion mainly derived from the concerned group. In addition, people who were the most frequently exposed were the young (aged between 21 and 40), better educated and employed, and with higher income. The reading habits of people in this group were different from others. They relied less on popular commercial newspapers and more on the elite newspapers. In a sense, the media can more easily set the agenda for those attentive members of the public and shape what they think about.

Generally speaking, if the agenda is closer to the public’s interest, it catches more public attention. If the agenda involves controversies and diversified interests, more opinions are voiced. In a survey conducted by the Department of Journalism and Communication of Chinese University in Hong Kong to investigate the role of a programme and the representation of public opinion in Hong Kong Radio, the result indicated that many news topics in a radio phone-in programme called “The Millennium Era” had been discussed over 140 times (Leung and Leung, 2003). These topics were divided into 29 categories. Those that most concerned the audience were ranged in sequence: local economics (23 percent), local politics (12 percent), local judiciary and problems (10 percent), healthcare and medicine (9
percent), public security (6 percent) and the problem of labour (5 percent). The popular agenda on the radio are those problems which directly affect the citizen’s personal interests – social-economic issues. Only 12 percent of agendas are related to politics. The survey results further show that, during the period of the survey, the government, the government’s policies and the governors were the most criticized targets. The number of instances of criticism reached 152 (39 percent), followed in turn by the dietetic ordinance, labour ordinance, and other ordinance.

Within total 532 individual opinions of the same survey, the department of Journalism and Communication’s analysis finds that 411 people (77 percent) gave reasons and evidence to support and justify their opinions. Another 104 people (20 percent) presented substantive suggestions after expressing opinions. In other words, if the two categories of opinions are induced to rational analysis, the quality of opinions is fairly high. At the same time, 417 respondents expressed their own opinions (76 percent), only 59 (11 percent) echoed the programme anchors, and 36 (7 percent) gave opinions opposite to the anchors’ opinions. These data seem to indicate that most audiences are not affected by the anchor’s opinion. They have enough sense to express their own opinions, and are not affected by the opinions and orientations of the anchors. From the above findings, the authors suggest that the media do not influence public opinion considerably. However, the media do set the priority of the agenda and shape what the public what to think about, although the controversies are often also affected by public opinion (Kuan and Lau, 1999).

3.1.4 Media, Political Parties and Government in Opinion Polls

Polls, as a representation of the sum of mass opinion, are often regarded as a representation of public opinion. At present, a more efficient technique of measuring public opinion has not yet been found. Polls, thus, have been necessary means to the government, political advocates, the media and common citizens as a means to evaluate public opinion.

Public Opinion and the Media

Most literature on the research of public opinion and media is based on a premise or assumption that the media have a strong influence on public opinion. However, if the public does not believe the media, it is hard for them to affect one’s beliefs or
opinions. In other words, the influence of the media also depends on the public’s confidence in the reliability of the media.

In the market economics of Hong Kong, the media are regarded as a kind of commodity. The reader or audience thereby has a stereotyped image of the media. For example, the Apple Daily is a commercial newspaper and is often regarded as a paper of anti-Beijing and anti-government sentiments, whereas the Wen Wei Pao is regarded as a mouthpiece of Beijing and the SAR government. Coverage in these newspapers is less reliable than in the elite newspapers, which gives more objective and neutral reports. A rational reader or audience can properly judge the credibility of newspapers so that the influence of the media is diminished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2 Citizens’ attitude to press self-censorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Hong Kong press have self-censorship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Hong Kong Press shift attitude to China?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Improve</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Worsen</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK press’s critique and supervision on Beijing after handover</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK press’s critique and supervision on SARG after handover</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chan et al. (1999)

Note: 1. Sample age is 18 or over 18 years old

2. Number of sampling - 656 citizens

After handover, the public lost confidence in the media when some media were practicing self-censorship, lest they offend the Chinese government. Ever since the transition, press freedom has been a long-standing debate in public discourse. Table 3.2 indicates that most citizens think the media do practice self-censorship in coverage of sensitive Chinese issues, although they have different views on the extent of the censorship. Besides this, general concerns in relation to whether the media can oversee the government as usual, remain. By comparison with the media’s criticisms of the two governments (Chinese government and the SAR government), 36 percent of respondents think that the media are able to perform as a ‘watchdog’ to criticize the SAR government. 45 percent think that the media
perform slightly better or similar as before the handover. Only eighteen percent think the media do not express much criticism of the central government. From the table, the result suggests that the media perform a better role of a ‘watchdog’ on overseeing the SAR government than on the Chinese government, and the media has less constraint in covering local issues and events.

During most of the period between 1990 and 1998, the credibility of the Hong Kong media continually declined. One reason is that the media themselves were sometimes involved in scandals, such as the purchase of a news story in a TV infotainment programme, and carrying a naked picture of a female movie star in a kidnapping affair. In response to a series of violations of the journalistic ethical codes in the kidnapping affair, the public finally forced a magazine to close down. These two cases are only the tip of the iceberg in relation to problems of media credibility. When social responsibility is neglected by journalists, and sensationalism, violence and sex have increasingly become the language of the media, the Oriental Daily and Apple Daily leading the way, the media face a credibility crisis which can undermine public support for any move by journalistic organizations to combat the danger of the government enacting any draconian law (HKJA, 2000). To put it in another way, if the media fails to take concrete action to curb their excesses on sensational coverage, the problem of credibility will damage confidence of the public to the media. The effect of the media on agenda setting is discounted.

**Opinion Polls and the Chief Executive (CE)**

When the Chief executive Tung Chee-hwa remained in his second term on July 1 2001, the Hong Kong government launched the ‘accountability system’, the establishment of a government cabinet consisting of high-ranking officials who would take full responsibility for any policy effects. Although the media and some political elites criticized the government for a lack of openness and thorough consideration in implementing the system, by not respecting the deliberation powers of the Legislative Council, and not fully reflecting the views of the public, the system was still implemented as scheduled. Apart from the government’s insistence on the system, the government’s strong attitude on the issue of Article 23 also demonstrated that the government did not seriously take account of public
opinion as an important reference in policy decision-making. The government’s disregard of the public and its incompetence, which was showed in the government’s handling with various crises and social problems, contributed to declining confidence of Hong Kong people in the Chief Executive’s and the SAR government’s administration.

According to a monthly survey on the popularity of the SAR Chief Executive by the University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP, 12/2003), the popularity of the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, decreased from a peak of 67.7 percent in September 1997 to a record low 36.2 percent in July 2003. According to Chung (2003a), a political figure with less than 50 marks can be said to have fallen into negative popularity, while a score of less than 45 points can indicate credibility crisis. When politics and economics were blooming following a smooth handover, a continual rise in the stock market, a high employment rate, advantageous economic cooperation with mainland China, and then nonintervention of the Chinese government in Hong Kong affairs facilitated to increase Hong Kong citizen’s confidence in Tung Chee-hwa, yet Tung marginally touched on the danger zone of his credibility between September and November 2001. During July 2003 and January 2004, he further sunk into a leadership credibility crisis. Hard bitten by the outbreak of atypical pneumonia, the sluggish economy, the surging unemployment rate, the Financial Secretary’s car-purchase scandal, and acting willfully in the legislation of Article 23, the public support rate remained below 45 percent. This result shows that Hong Kong residents vented their great dissatisfaction and lost their confidence in the Chief Executive in areas such as crisis management.

A more recent survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP, 03/2005) shows that Tung’s support rating remained under 50 percent in between 2002 and 2005. For his job performance, Tung Chee-hwa received a low approval rating with 27.3 percent in February 2002; his rating kept declining to 14 percent in February 2005. During the majority of Tung’s eight years of leadership, the public attitude towards his administration and political economical policy remained dissatisfied and pessimistic. The general citizens did not perceive Tung as an admired leader with a high ability and did not consider him as a reliable leader who could provide Hong Kong citizens with a prosperous economy (Lam, 1998). A
leader is expected to “engage in a number of important activities (such as crisis management, program design, morale building, priority setting, and political coalition building) in order to achieve the common good” (ibid., p.136-137). If Tung had been able to exercise his autonomy and gain the public’s support from the economic construction and improvement of livelihood his politically and economically poor performance and leadership since the handover would not have diminished his legitimacy. However, Tung obviously failed to do so.

**Public Opinion and Political Parties**

Hong Kong political groups are impeded by weak public support and strong political apathy. Parties which have the central government’s support and support most of the government’s political policies are labelled as the pro-China, although the groups themselves reject this label. Before the handover, poll data and electoral behaviour showed that the public became increasingly receptive to political groups which had pledged their determination to press China to fulfil its promise that Hong Kong people rule Hong Kong (Fung, 1998).

**Table 3.3: The most familiar political groups (2-7/5/03)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DAB</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LP</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frontier</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FTU</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ADPL</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HKCTU</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>HKPA</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>HYK</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>AFA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses 2357
Total cases 974

Source: HKUPOP (05/2003)
People's cognition of parties affects the electorate's voting behaviours. According to a survey by the University of Hong Kong in 2003 (HKPOP, 05/2003), the DP is the most familiar party in the polls, followed successively, by the DAB, LP and Frontier (see Table 3.3). Two pressure groups, the AFA and the Alliance, respectively rank tenth and eleventh, which are higher than one of the political parties – the Citizen Party, in terms of people's recognition. The popularity of the pro-democratic camp is not without reasons. As Fung (1998) said, the public demand for democracy had long been shaped by the changing political context and the ongoing political struggles, both by the increasingly interplay between the impending British withdrawal and the ever-expanding influence of China over Hong Kong's policy before handover. Although this political situation is now in the past, the DP has given every impression that it dares to fight against the HK Government and the central government, when the voices of the pro-Beijing camp are raising.

One thing is regretful that neither pro-democracy camp nor pro-China camp has strong public support. A survey carried out by the Institution of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Chinese University in August 2002 found that almost half the people questioned felt that no political party represented their interests. The findings imply that political parties do not address the public's requirements. The increasingly intense war between the pro-China and the pro-democracy camps on controversies represented in the media results in the dissatisfaction of the public. Some therefore criticize the DP as opposing government decisions purely for the sake of it, whereas the DAB accepts all government decisions politically. Although this view is somewhat exaggerated, apparently the two major parties have ignored public opinion and cannot reach the public's criteria to be an admired party in both political and economic achievement. As to the LP, it is funded by big business and former pro-British elites and politically depends on the patronage of PRC officials. The PRC appoints LP members to various committees, such as the Selection Committee which elected the Chief Executive and selected Hong Kong members to China's National People's Congress in 1997 (Lo, 1998b). Although the LP gains some legitimacy from the Hong Kong business society and middle class, as one of the major supporters of the government's political policies (particularly those policies involving the struggle for democratization and the Chinese government's
implicit consent or dissent), its tendency to fully support the Hong Kong government cannot satisfy its middle class voters who are more politically active and more concerned about the progress of democracy. Without grass-roots support and complete political legitimacy from the middle class, the LP, just like the DAB and DP, cannot gain the majority support. Moreover, in recent years, not only the war between the pro-China camp and pro-democracy camp, but also the war between the government and the pro-democracy camp, has become so severe that the Chief Executive has had many serious debates and quarrel with democrats in the LegCo since 2002. The debates to a certain extent reinforce the gap between the government and parties, while enlarging social division.

3.2 Hong Kong Parties and Media: Agenda-setters or Reflectors?
The section looks into how the media, political groups and the government interpret public opinion or opinion polls, and how polls are constructed in the media coverage. Through the analysis of issues raised in the media, the way the parties and the media manipulated and decoded or encoded news stories, the role of public opinion will be illustrated.

According to Lau and Kuan (2002), Hong Kong appears to be the most likely case for the idea of cognitive mobilization, because of the absence of socio-economic mobilization and the novelty of partisanship, but with the high level of education, and the prosperous and easily accessible mass media. The independent media have become a powerful and influential mechanism to affect the public’s attitudes and shape their opinions. For example, the less-informed voters voted for the DP solely on the basis of partisan attachment. In comparison, the vote of the better-informed voters was broadly based, with evaluative factors overtaking partisanship in importance (ibid.). Thus the media has an important role in informing and transmitting information to these people to broaden their basis of electoral choice. As a contested field, the media coverage is also shaped by competing ways of conceptualizing and ‘making sense’ of problems and ‘issues’, which the political parties keep under the spotlight to command the better-informed voter’s attention.

3.2.1 Explanation of Issues Raised in the Media Agenda
The stories that journalists prefer and put more enthusiasm into are often
sensational or dramatic news stories, which are also those every party attempts to minimize, such as election scandals. For instance, during the 2000 LegCo election, the DAB veteran councillor Cheng Kan-lam (also the party’s vice-chairman) was involved in a scandal. Eighteen days before the polls were due to open, the media revealed that Cheng sold government secrets to business giants through a consultancy he owned, but he did not declare the possession of this to the LegCo as stipulated by law (Ma, 2001). He was forced to withdraw from the election half way through and later jailed. The scandal was extensively covered and could have had a great impact on the DAB vote if the party had not handled it properly. In the Hong Kong Island district where Cheng was running, some pre-election polls conducted after the scandal showed support for the DAB list as having dropped from 31 percent to as low as 14 percent (ibid.) In response to the urgent incident, the party swiftly adopted two key strategies to reduce its damage: on the one had, the reactive devices were used— a conference was immediately held to explain the whole situation and distance itself from Cheng. Certainly, the party interpreted the incident from a relatively favourable angle and forestalled the news agenda by providing journalists with information initially. On the other hand, the party attempted to arouse the public’s sympathy and mobilize the loyal supporters of the party to vote for them, by offering the public an impression shaped in the media that the DAB was facing a critical time, thus mobilising residential associations, kinship and hometown associations. In the end, the DAB list in Hong Kong Island still attracted 27.8 percent of the total vote and won two seats in the district.

According to Ma (2001), in the election, the DP received 462,243 votes (35.04 percent), 170,000 fewer than that it had earned in 1998 or an 8 percent drop in its overall share. The pro-China flagship party, the DAB, increased its overall share of the vote by 4.5 percent, receiving 29.68 percent of the votes share. Taking these changes into account, the decrease and increase of vote shares of the DP and DAB reflected the trend of public opinion in the election. On the one hand, the votes reflected that, the DP’s strategies to change from packaging itself as a ‘green’ party by campaigning on environmental issues and over antitrust legislation at the beginning of the election to focusing on its political agenda and projecting itself in moral terms after Cheng’s scandal at the end; on the other hand, the electorate’s behaviour suggests that the strategies the DAB adopted created great success. The
information the party intended to disseminate was successfully encoded into an individual incident, irrelevant to the party itself. The public apparently accepted the interpretation with the effect that a considerable number of voters went to vote in response to the party's appeal. The election also showed that the PRC have solid organizational support and strong mobilization potential.

In this sense, the DAB was the agenda setter that it successfully directed the public attention to what it wanted the public would think about, while the media only acted as a reflector to report what the party told them although the media was also the setter at the beginning of the scandal. In Hong Kong, neither journalists nor citizens regard the District Council election as an important campaign. Generally speaking, journalists lack interest in such stories because most stories of the DC election are routinized and predictable. They, however, still have to cover and follow the election campaigns for reasons of professionalism. In the case, the media play as a reflector to reveal what happen in reality.

An online search of three Chinese newspaper's coverage of the DC election in one month in 2003, revealed that there were 26 stories (20.8 percent) in total with referring to election scandal in the three newspapers: the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Sing Tao (the total number of DC story was 125). The other key issues about the DC election were candidates' past performance, economic issues, demand for democracy, controversy over the shortened voting timetable of DC election, opinion polls, and parties' activities. In addition, it also found that news stories generally showed more objectivity than editorials. Some critical or supportive editorials and articles in the page of 'Opinion Forum' in the Apple Daily clearly presented the papers' political stance, some stories even urged the electorate to vote for the pro-democracy camp. The agendas in the coverage suggest that the media actually performed as a setter to determine what the public read and saw in the day to day stories

One case in particular showed that the media set the agenda for the public. The controversy over the legislation of Article 23 was initially generated by the

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12 Three online papers are investigated by the author – the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Sing Tao from October 22 to November 22 2003. The Apple Daily has 52 stories including news stories and editorials, the Ming Pao has 62 and the Sing Tao has 11.
declaration of Lu Ping, the director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of China’s State Council in 2002, that the media would not be allowed to advocate two Chinas. The speech was then picked up and analyzed by the democrats and the media to infer what Lu implied and what actions the Chinese government might take. Afterwards, the controversy was further raised to the top agenda of media concern when the SAR government announced its plan to launch the proposed legislation of Article 23 to redefine some ambiguous definitions. The government’s proposal led to various voices protesting against the legislation or supporting the government’s decision. Although journalists attempted to balance coverage in reporting the opinions of both opponents and supporters, the mainstream media of Hong Kong, in discussions and debates, often found themselves in disagreement with the government because these media themselves did not agree with the legislation.

The government and pro-China groups as key interpreters of the legislation failed to direct the public attention to optimistic expectation of the legislation. Their failure involved the process of encoding and decoding of the media in the coverage of the legislation. It was found that the media marginalized and filtered out contradictory voices and minority voices in the process of news-making. For example, business groups supported the government’s policies on reducing the salaries of civil servants and the enactment of Article 23. However, these sorts of supportive voices are rarely represented in the mainstream media. According to So’s study (2003) from the period of September 19 to November 9 in 2002, supportive coverage in most the mainstream newspapers including the Apple Daily, South China Morning Post, Hong Kong Standards, Economic Daily, Ming Pao and Oriental Daily occupied less than 17 percent. By contrast, the critical coverage occupied more than 30 percent in most papers. The Apple Daily, which is one of the most influential newspapers in Hong Kong, contained as much as 85 percent critical coverage. Numerous news stories stated the views of political elites – leaders or active members of democratic camps, pressure groups and professional organizations. These elites’ opinions, supported by journalists, reinforced the formation of public opinion against the government’s proposal.
3.2.2 Political Advocates in Shaping and Accommodating Public Opinion

Although parties attempt to mobilize the public effectively through polls and demonstrations, the lack of resources prevents their devoting more effort to conduct the polls and behaving demonstrations, in particular the former. According to the evidence shown on Hong Kong parties’ websites, only two main parties, the DP and DAB, have the resources and abilities to conduct opinion polls and policy researches. In 2005, the two parties in total conducted 62 opinion polls, almost one poll a week. However, the technical standard of these polls is far from the international one (Chung, 2004).

Polls conducted by political parties are of fairly low credibility. A survey by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Association of Youth and the Ming Pao in March 2002 found that respondents viewed polls conducted by academic institutions as the most credible, in contrast to parties’ polls (Ming Pao, 12/05/2002). The reason could be that parties often promote their own political cause and interpret these polls for their own purposes, rather than factually reflecting public opinion. For instance, in February and March of 1994 (before the election of the District Council), the DP respectively conducted surveys to aid the nominees in making final adjustments to their electoral strategies. Yet, some residents of the DP constituency complained that the party’s polls made big mistakes – many nominees who were predicted to dominate in votes finally lost. For the parties, shaping public opinion through day to day media content and demonstrations is more effective.

Again, to take the case of the legislation of Article 23 as an example, the DP and other pro-democratic parties claimed that the legislation was against public opinion, while the government gave a figure to show that people supported its decision. The Compendium of Submissions of the government published the classification of the 7,512 individual submissions: 51 percent supported the legislation, 34.7 percent opposed the legislation and 14.3 percent of submissions could not be classified (Chan, 2003). However, the parties had not conducted any polls to support their claim. Later on, many polls were released that completely contradicted the result of the government. In this case, it cannot be concluded to assert that the party manipulated the polls. It is the case that the polls were interpreted or encoded in a way that can support the party’s perception. At the beginning and end of October in
2002, the DP conducted surveys which showed that the number of people protesting against the legislation dramatically increased by 6.3 percent, whereas 70 percent of respondents asked the government to launch a white Bill (*Ming Pao*, 31/10/2002). Conversely, the DAB did not conduct any poll, since the government announced that the majority supported the legislation. The party probably reached a private agreement with the government on the handling of the legislation of Article 23, so that DAB councillors seldom privately talked about the issue.

Four months after the July 1 2003 demonstration, votes in the District Council election proved that public opinion tended to be on the side of the democratic camp, although its main party, the DP, is often criticized as a party of opposition for opposition’s sake by scholars and its opposite. The election was a tough war for the DAB which fielded 206 candidates, but managed to win only 62 seats (attracting only 39 percent of vote shares), 21 fewer than it holds as of May 2007. It lost a third of its local council seats, opening the door for a larger presence of the Democratic Party and its allies. The DP fielded 120 candidates and 95 won, it success rate was 79.2 percent. The DAB chairman Tsang Yok-sing therefore resigned, taking the blame on himself. The DP or more accurately, the pro-democracy camp, won the war in setting the media agenda to form public opinion by its campaign slogan of a further democracy and receiving the effect of the July 1 demonstration.

The process of decoding and encoding polls is crucial to the construction of public opinion. If the process is selectively and purposely conducted in conformity with one’s aims, then polls result in the false representation of public opinion. The Hong Kong government, in handling Article 23, attempted to encode public opinion, indicating the majority supported the legislation while only a minority were dissatisfied with it, according to the manipulation of the opinions collected. The government presumably expected that the effect of the ‘spiral of silence’ would lead the majority to misunderstand themselves as the minority, and therefore they would keep silent, to be in line with other opinions. Another assumption is that the government gains an inaccurate result of opinion polls. However, the latter, according to Chan and Chung (2003a), is unlikely to happen.
The government, under the leadership of Chief Executive Tung, seems to pay very little attention to public opinion. Neglect of these opinions and improper handling of controversies, such as the implementation of the cabinet accountability system and the case of Financial Secretary Antony Leung's car-tax scandal, caused the government finally to confront a serious crisis in its administration. The political atmosphere of 2003 was very hot and intense. A series of events conspired to reinforce citizens' impressions of the incompetence of the government's leadership and thus generated widespread dissent. The manipulation of public opinion by the government was shown to be a failure after the July 1 demonstration.

Conclusion
This chapter has examined public opinion in Hong Kong where political actors and the media both shape but also adapt to public attitudes. Drawing on Entman and Herbst's distinctions, the public support for democracy can be seen as 'latent opinion' – a fundamental value which most citizens are concerned with. Pro-democracy parties often seek to mobilize the public on this issue to gain votes and support, while the parties cannot exert their influence to the government's decision in the LegCo, such as the issue of universal suffrage and the legislation of Article 23 by utilizing the independent media. The government and pro-China parties also seek to take advantage of latent opinions, for example the DAB used the slogan of universal suffrage in 2004 and gained seats which were more than its expectation.

Although the public showed increasing scepticism about the media's self-censorship and had declining confidence in the government Tung Chee-hua led, the continual rising figures of voter turnout rate in the District Council elections demonstrated the increasing of citizen's political awareness: the rate increased from 33.1 percent in 1994 to 35.82 percent in 1999 and to 44.1 percent in 2003. The public's attitudes reflected in opinion polls and voting behavior are significant indicators of the fundamental change in Hong Kong's politics and the thinking of its public. As Hong Kong people became more democratized, their political aspirations and demands keep rising as well. The wide appeal for universal suffrage in elections, demonstration and public debates of recent years forces the government to deliberate on the appeal and take it to the agenda in LegCo. The
situation can be described as what Hall et al. (1978 in Lewis, 2001, p.34) term a "three-way spiral in which media coverage, elites response, and opinion polls reinforce on another to such an extent that the state is apparently forced to respond." The case of the legislation of Article 23 in which Tung's government was forced to withdraw its proposal to reconcile widespread dissatisfaction precisely illustrates the spiral. In general, political actors in Hong Kong possess the power to set the media agenda and shape public opinion. The success or failure of agenda setting depends on what the issue is. Chapter Four will discuss how the research was designed, what research methods were adopted, and the process of research.
Chapter 4 Research Methods

Introduction
The previous chapters have reviewed the broad theoretical framework of political communication in western democracies and eastern authoritarian regimes, and built up a general context of Hong Kong political communication and an understanding to key political actors and public opinion. This chapter discusses and explains the reasons for selecting the research methods that were carried out, as essential and controlling ideas to study and understand how the research was formed. The research methods are important for executing the research, to understand the way that the study is designed.

The explanation begins from the general research purposes and questions, followed by a discussion of the research design, including the selection of informants in interviews with the political groups and the journalists, the process of carrying out practical tasks and the pilot studies. During the fieldwork process, there were difficulties in gaining access to the research field, the respondents, the data, and ethical considerations, which required the researcher to adapt a flexible approach to complete the fieldwork. Afterwards, the design process of the methods employed for two case studies will be explored. Finally, reflections on the process of fieldwork and some criticisms of the study will be analysed.

4.1 Research Purposes and Questions
Apart from Kuan and Lau (1988) who briefly mention media-party relations, and Choy et al. (1995) who make some mention of the parties' media strategies in a District Council election campaign, reviewing the literature on Hong Kong political communication, such as Cheng (2001), Fung (1998), Ho (1997), Lau and Kuan (2000), Lee (1998), Lee and Chu (1998), Leung (1998), Lo (1998a), So and Chan (1999), it was found that many scholars focused on analysis of either the media or the parties, but seldom carried out inquiries into interactions between the two actors. Up till now, the Hong Kong media-party relationships and the parties' media-centred management is still a virgin field. This can be explained by the fact that most research was conducted during the 1990s or even earlier when the Hong Kong party system had not yet been systematically formed and many parties still
acted as pressure groups, or they were just newly formed. At present, although parties have increased their professionalism in media management, it still remains at an immature stage because of the constraint of parties’ resources.

This thesis intends to make an original contribution to add depth and breadth to the existing knowledge of political communication in Hong Kong. This study attempts to increase understanding of the interactions between the political groups and the media in a semi-democracy post-1997, to clarify the media strategies of the parties and their relationships with the media, to explore the parties’ professionalism in media management, to provide the parties with a better systematic way of management, to understand better the roles the media and the parties play in political communication, and for the resource-poor parties of Hong Kong, to show how they can better mobilize public opinion and acquire greater resources and allocate them more effectively through media strategies.

In the research, three core questions were raised:
1. How do political parties in Hong Kong shape the political agenda in the media?
2. How effective are the political parties at shaping and controlling the news agenda?
3. How does the news media cover political parties and their campaigns?

The first and second questions mainly investigate the parties’ ability at shaping media agendas in terms of the media-centred management of the parties, professionalism of the management and the parties’ resources. Several subsidiary questions were, therefore, conceived as follows:

a) Who are the parties?
b) What resources do they have? Do they have financial subsidies from the SAR government or Chinese government? How do they get funding?
c) What strategies do they use to acquire greater resources?
d) What strategies do they employ to deal with the media? How professional are they?
e) Do they employ professional communicators? If so, who are they?
f) How much coverage do their campaigns achieve?
g) Do they routinely have access to the media?
h) What alternative channels do they seek to get publicity, such as advertisements? How do they use those channels?

The third question focuses on the investigation into the media's rules for covering the parties and the relationships between the media and the political parties.

a) What rules do they apply in their coverage of the political parties?
b) How close are the relationships between the press and the parties? What level of press-party parallelism or partisanship is there?
c) What attitudes do journalists have toward political parties?
d) What attitudes do parties have toward journalists?
e) Do different political stances mean they treat different parties distinctively? What role does press partisanship play?
f) What rules do they employ to cover parties' stories in campaigns?

The research hypothesizes that the ability to set and control the public-media agenda (what the public read and view) is not concentrated solely in the hands of the state (government and governor) but is dispersed among various groups in Hong Kong civil society. It argues, that despite their relative lack of resources, various political parties and pressure groups are able to bring certain issues to public prominence. While this is a competitive struggle, these political groups are aided by a largely independent media. Even if confronting an uncertain political environment, this research suggests that political communication in civil society is alive and well and is often critical of the powers that be.

These research questions were established after the review of the research literature on the theoretical frameworks of both the western, eastern, and Hong Kong political communication. McNair's (1995) concept and the theory of journalistic paradigms were respectively used to provide a framework for conceptualising parties' strategies of public relation and rules of the media in coverage of parties. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, these questions were refined.

4.2 The Research Design

Plenty of literature has debated the merits and demerits of qualitative and quantitative research methods. However, there is no perfect research method since
every method has its own advantages, disadvantages, assumptions, biases, and degrees of usefulness (Williams et al., 1988; Hansen et al., 1998). As the research aims to investigate the form and content of the behaviours of different political groups and what such behaviour means for those groups which engage in it, and to gain a deeper understanding of the worlds of the different groups of respondents, the research was designed as an exploratory method which is able to provide a deeper insight to the behaviours of different groups.

Two qualitative methods were employed to serve different purposes (see Figure 1). Interviews facilitated obtaining first-hand data from political actors, who come from the DP, DAB, Neighbourhood Workers Service (NWS) and two pressure groups – the Civil Human Rights Front and April Fifth Action, and journalists of the three representative newspapers (the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Wen Wei Pao). Case studies provided deeper insights and in-depth understanding via two information rich cases (Patton, 2002). The studies aimed to examine the strategies of public relation of political parties, their ability to set the media agenda, the mobilization of public opinion, reporting rules in the process of gatekeeping, and the media-parties relationships in Hong Kong.

**Figure 4.1. The research methods employed**

![Diagram](image)

**4.2.1 Interviews**

In this section, I will discuss the qualitative interviewing design - the sample selection criteria, research locations, and topic guides used with the parties and the journalists.
Semi-structured interviews were conceived to gain information from two different groups – the political groups and the journalists. Interviews with the groups aimed to understand the media management of the main political parties and active pressure groups; and from their perspective, to explore the relationships they established with the media. Interviews with the journalists aimed to understand the rules the journalists applied in their coverage of the political issues; and from the journalists’ views, to explore the relationships they established with the parties.

The semi-structured interviews assisted me to observe the informants, to gauge comprehension, to follow up where beneficial, to fill in explanations as needed, and to probe to uncover accurate responses (Singletary, 1994). The method sought for an active open-ended dialogue which was controlled by the terms of the dialogue in between structured and unstructured interview. During the dialogue, I used a topic guide to set out the questions to be covered (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3), but tried to the extent possible, to maintain the casual quality in unstructured interviews to gain more information by creating an open dialogue (Berger, 2000).

**Sampling Design**

A purposive sample of respondents was initially planned for the data collection since certain people were seen “as more valuable than others for achieving the research objectives” (Lindlof 1995, p.170). The inclusion of three groups - political parties, journalists and pressure groups - was specifically structured to provide a complete portrayal of the interactions of political communication. To study the media-parties relationships and parties’ media strategies in depth and to yield more useful information than a widely distributed quantitative investigation, only a few representative groups and three papers of different political stances were selected and approached with a qualitative emphasis.

a.) Selection of Members of Political Groups

The selection of members of political groups was a two-tier process. Firstly, the selection of the groups is grounded on two standards – the political stance and resources: 1.) along the cleavage of political stance, a pro-China party and a pro-democracy party were targeted because different political stances directly affect the relations between the parties and the media and parties’ strategies; and 2). small
parties and pressure groups were proposed because resource influences on their
relations with the media and coverage they received.

Table 4.1 The sample, locations and form of the interviews of political groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview location</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAB</td>
<td>Jack*13</td>
<td>Personal Assistant of Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>Office in the Central14 government offices</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|           | Pang Cheung-wai          | - The Chairman of Communication and Public Relation Committee  
                  | - District Councillor                      | Office in the District Council               | Face to face      |
|           | Tony*                    | Personal Assistant of a Legislative Councillor | Café De Coral – a lunchroom                | Face to face      |
|           | Yeung Yiu-chung          | Legislative Councillor                   | Office in the Central government offices | Face to face      |
| DP        | Cheung Yin-tung          | Chief Secretary                          | DP headquarters                          | Face to face      |
|           | Emma*                    | Secretary of Public Relations            | DP headquarters                          | Face to face      |
|           | Szeto Wah                | - A Founder of the Alliance              | A meeting room in the LegCo building       | Face to face      |
|           | Martin Lee               | - Former Chairman of DP                  | Office in the LegCo building               | Face to face      |
| NWSC      | Leung Yiu-chung          | Legislative Councillor                    | A Meeting room in the LegCo building       | Face to face      |
| Pressure groups | Leung Kwok-hung      | Spokesperson of AFA                       | A café shop                               | Face to face      |
|           | Richard Tsoi             | Spokesperson of CHRF                      | A meeting room in Central government offices | Face to face      |

Two key parties, the DAB and the DP, were selected because they are the flagship parties of the pro-China and pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong. NWS was selected on basis of its being a small party, resource poor party and the openness of its spokesperson. The Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) and April Fifth Action (AFA) were selected for the reason that they are a type of active political pressure groups which are relatively close to the media and able to provide more information.

13 Note: * mark refers to the name being a pseudonym.
14 Central is a business district of Hong Kong.
The choice of the CHRF was made also because it played a key role in the case the legislation of Article 23.

Secondly, the selection of three kinds of members from the selected groups was grounded on their familiarity with the media: 1.) the Legislative councillors of the selected groups were chosen because they were enable to provide more information on the research questions; 2.) for a similar reason to the councillors, secretaries of the parties’ Public Relations Department, who were in charge of press conferences, tea meetings, press releases and contacting the media, were also targeted; and 3.) The councillors’ assistants were selected since they were in charge of media affairs and managed strategies for individual councillors.

Because they have great experience with the media and in attending political campaigns, the DP Legislative Councillors Martin Lee and Szeto Wah were targeted. The DAB Legislative Councillor Yeung Yiu-chung was selected by reason of his great experience in politics and the difficulties of access to the others. The spokesperson of the CHRF, Richard Tsoi, and spokesperson of the AFA, Leung Kwok-hung, were selected because they are the key persons of their groups in charge of various media affairs, and Leung Kowk-hung was also selected since he was the only formal and full-time staff member of the AFA (see Table 4.1).

b.) Selection of the Newspapers and the Journalists
The selection of the journalists was two-tier as well. The first step was to select the newspapers. The newspapers were chosen on the grounds that: 1.) the political stances of Hong Kong newspapers are more clear and apparent than other media; and 2.) access to journalists of TV or radio stations was more difficult than to journalists of the newspapers because I had no personal conduit to the former. I supposed that different political ideologies of newspapers would influence coverage of the parties and their treatments and strategies with different media. Therefore, the design of newspapers was confined to the papers of different political positions.

Reprehensive examples of three types of papers were selected, including the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Wen Wei Pao. The Apple Daily is one of two leading commercial newspapers in Hong Kong, which carries many sensational stories and
targets the general public at the middle and lower-income levels, but takes a sharp local stand and critical attitude towards China. Thus, the paper was intended to represent the pro-democracy Chinese paper. The *Ming Pao*, which positions itself as a leading 'elitist paper' and has a neutral stance, does not have any links to any political party and is advertising-supported. It was selected as the type of the neutralist papers. The *Wen Wei Pao* is a Chinese principle newspaper which is supervised by Xinhua Hong Kong Branch. It was selected to represent the type of the leftist papers. A possibility of access to the paper's journalists was provided by reason of my having been an intern at the paper for two months in 1997.

The second step was the design of journalists from the selected newspapers. In principle, I would have preferred to select some senior and junior journalists, to examine whether the two hierarchical groups received different treatment. In practice, because of access difficulties and a very limited possible sample, apart from the requirements of targeting the journalists of the political beats to address the research questions in relation to coverage of political parties, there were no other specific criteria for the selection of the journalists. Regarding the interview locations, they depended on the informants' convenience and preference. The list of the journalistic informants is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Informants15</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview Location</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Senior editor</td>
<td>McDonald's</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rony</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td>Japanese restaurant</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td>McDonald's</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>Press room in the LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Meeting room of the Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Press room in the LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 'Senior' indicates that the journalist has over five year experience in the media.

15 All journalistic informants’ names are pseudonyms.
c.) The Topic Guides

According to the categories of target groups, different topic guides were designed to suit different informants. For the informants of the parties, I listed three main topics: 1.) the parties' resources, including core and common members, offices, funding, publications, and financial subsidies from the government or other alternative subsidies; 2.) party strategies and their professionalism including public relations, advertising, image building and whether any specific person or department dealt with media affairs; and 3.) media relationship, including relationships in routine access, the ways they treat the media and treatment they receive from the media, and how to maintain the established relations (see Appendix 2).

Four topics were listed as the guide for interviews with the journalists: 1.) the personal background of the informant including the department they graduated from, the working experience and reasons for working for the papers; 2.) the general situation of the political beat of the papers including the distribution of journalists, numbers of staff in charge in the beat and the sub-beat; 3.) the journalistic factors that influence coverage of the parties, like news value, self-censorship and journalistic paradigms; and 4.) relationships with the parties, including the way the media treat the parties, treatment they receive from the parties and how to maintain the established relations (see Appendix 3). The topic guide for the pressure groups was similar to that used with the parties, in spite of the different title.

4.2.2 Pilot Studies

This section discusses how the pilot studies of interviews influenced my research design and topic guides and what the studies suggested for the subsequent fieldwork. Two pilot studies of two groups' informants (the DAB and Ming Pao) were employed to test whether the topic guides needed to be modified. The first pilot study was carried out with a Ming Pao journalist in March 2003. The second pilot study took place with a Legislative Councillor's assistant of the DAB in May 2003. The experience of the two pilot studies and the subsequent fieldwork was important for refining the research questions and methods and the research schedule after encountering difficulties of access to the parties and the journalists. A flexible strategy of data collection was thus required, as King et al. (1994) suggest that the social scientist must have "the flexibility of mind to overturn old ways of looking at
the world, to ask new questions, to revise research designs appropriately, and then to collect more data of a different type than originally intended” (p.12). There were some changes made after the pilot studies.

Firstly, original investigative targets of the study on political actors focused on the government and political parties. However, the governor and the officers of the Information Service Department had been engaged in the affair of the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia during most of the period of my fieldwork since February 2003. Starting from no connection with the government made access all the more difficult. Taking into account time constraints and the availability of the government, the initial sampling plan had to be given up. Parties with comparative more availability were made the main focus in the study of political actors.

Secondly, an early plan to inquire into the case of the District Council (DC) election was changed after the fieldwork. In fact, my initial plan was to investigate the Legislative Council (LegCo) election, which the journalists often regarded as being more newsworthy than the District Council election. However, the time lag between the period I conducted the fieldwork and the previous LegCo election was more than two years, whereas the next election would be held in 2004. Thus, before the field work, I designated the November 2003 DC election as one of the cases. The plan, however, was abandoned when I began the pilot studies of the interviews, for two reasons. In terms of newsworthiness and its significance, the DC election was often ignored and regarded as a boring and minor political event by the journalists and the parties. Furthermore, initial data analysis of the DC election suggested that personal communication in the election was likely to be more important than mass communication.

Thirdly, a research method was added in a case study – participant observation. However, the method was only designed to be included in the case of the legislation of Article 23 because I had not yet decided on another case study at that time. The idea was facilitated by the interview of my second pilot study with a DAB councillor assistant. The assistant arranged for his interview to be conducted after a District Council by-election in April 2003 and invited me to attend as an election assistant of the DAB. In the process, I found that participant observation would help
to investigate the parties' strategies and resources from a different angle in the real-life setting. The idea of conducting participant observation was reinforced in a subsequent interview, in which an *Apple Daily* journalist asked whether I had participated in any demonstration.

Two implications were gained from the pilot studies. Firstly, the pilot studies revealed that it was extremely difficult to recruit a reasonable number of respondents since I was starting from having no connections with any party and pressure group, and few connections with the papers. It was also found that the informants from the DAB were more difficult to access than those from the DP and pressure groups. This suggested a need to change the strategies used to gain the access to the informants by official and personal channels. Secondly, the pilot studies suggested that there was a need to redefine the term 'resources' and divide the related question into several sub-questions because an informant in the pilot study asked what 'resources' referred to (see Appendix 4).

In the next section, the research process in practice, particularly negotiating access, will be explained. Afterwards, the methods used in the two case studies will be analysed in terms of: a.) the design process of the cases and the design methods of the cases; and b.) a further tier of explanation of different methods — content analyses and participant observation in the case of Article 23.

4.3 Research Method in Practice
A research design is a blueprint for a process of data gathering and evaluation. After the design is applied in practice, the research aims, methods and samplings in the design are likely to be changed under consideration of the development of an event, new evidence and different findings. This section discusses how the design described ran in the practical operation.

The fieldwork of the study took about seven months from February 2003, when I began to build up a network to gain access to the targeted informants, to the end of August 2003. In total, twenty informants from the parties and the papers participated in the research. Some unforeseeable factors influenced the result, like difficulties of access to the journalists and overestimation of the openness and
availability of the DAB and small parties. In particularly, the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia occupied much of the time and attention of the governors, the parties and the journalists in dealing with matters related to the disease, so that their response to my requests for interview were much more lukewarm than in more peaceful circumstances. In the most intensive period of March to April, I had to divert most of my attention to collecting other data – the news stories of the legislation of Article 23 from the original newspapers, but I still continued to build up connections with the targeting interviewees at the same time.

4.3.1 Research Process: Negotiating Access

Negotiating access to the research sample is a prolonged process and one of the main tasks which determines the success or failure of a study. In the following, I will describe how I attempted to access my targeted members of the political groups and the journalist.

Negotiating Access with the Political Actors

The contact details of the parties, pressure groups and some Legislative Councillors were gained mostly from on-line search in websites. At the end of March 2003, I began to send letters which briefly explained my research purposes and main topics of investigation to the chairman of the CP, DAB, DP, NWS, key persons in charge of the Public Relations Department of these parties, secretaries, and the notable Legislative Councillors. One to two weeks, after receiving no reply from the DAB secretary or its Chairman Tsang Yok-sing and when a second letter received the same treatment, I recognized that access to the party might be more difficult than I had expected. Accordingly, I tried to negotiate with their secretaries by phone. A secretary in charge told me on the phone, “Sorry, we don’t have the time to do your interview. You should bear in mind that the DAB is a party to help citizens for solving problems they countered, it is not a party to help students finish their assignments, dissertations or whatever.” Although I introduced myself and stressed the distinction between my research and ordinary homework and assignments of the students of the secondary schools and universities, she still coldly refused. Because the only response I obtained came from the Chairman of Communication and Public Relations Department, I was forced to change my access strategy to the DAB.
to the personal channel. In the way I found two Legislative Councillors’ assistants and a councillor of the DAB who were willing to be interviewed.

There was almost no difficulty in accessing informants from the DP, NWS and CHRF through correspondence and telephone contacts. In general, I received their replies within a week or two weeks. The access to AFA took me about a month to complete because the group gave no response to my letters and emails and none even picked up any phone call I made, at least, once a day. The difficult of access was finally solved after I gained a mobile number of its spokesperson. The access to the CP was more problematic; I had to cancel my plan to include the party when I finally got access to its chairman, because he was going to have a holiday from August 26 2003, a day after I phoned.

**Negotiating Access with the Journalists**

Access to journalists was much more difficult than access to the parties. The small number and busy nature of the political beat journalists made me access difficult. Since the downsizing of manpower, the Apple Daily only had two formal journalists on the political beat who were in charge of the news both inside and outside the LegCo. At the end of April, only one of the two journalists confirmed that he would accept my interview. Regarding another one who was often assigned to do interview in mainland China, in mid-August I finally gained access to her after she came back to Hong Kong. Before that, however, I was not sure whether I would gain access to her before the end of the fieldwork. Therefore I decided to widen the sampling to the local beat, taking into account that some journalists of the local beat worked on the political beat if necessary. I successfully gained access to two other journalists of the local beat: a senior journalist and a senior editor. In total, I interviewed three journalists of the Apple Daily and one editor.

The Ming Pao of the political beat had five to six journalists in charge, including a team leader and an editor. I only gained access to two of the journalists. Although I attempted to ask for the assistance of the Ming Pao informants at the end of their interviews and the two journalists promised that they would try to ask their colleagues to participate in my interviews, I was unable to find more informants from the Ming Pao. The two journalists replied to me that their colleagues had no
time or were reluctant to do an interview. The journalists were likely to have implicit rules or tacit agreements that they would not leak the personal contact details of other journalists to the other. Throughout the whole process of the fieldwork, there was no case in which one journalist introduced another to me.

The result of access to the Wen Wei Pao journalists was worse than I expected. Initially, I anticipated that I would find someone I had known while I was an intern of the Wen Wei Pao in 1997. However, most people I knew had left the paper. The only one I knew who still stayed in the paper was an assistant who was in charge of the chore of the news page. She recommended me a director and left me his telephone number. After several calls and a fax to explain the research purposes and main topic, he agreed to participate in my interview. The other two journalists were gained through the private channel.

4.3.2 Duration and Location of Interviews

In the face-to-face interviews, a tape recorder was used since it “free[s] researcher[s] to attend more fully to the conversation, the nonverbal actions, and other elements of the situation” (Lindlof, 1995, p.209). Because of the nature of the informants’ jobs and social status, time arrangements of the interviews were decided according to their convenience and availability. For example, a telephone interview with the Apple Daily journalist even took place at mid-night because the journalist could only spare his time after work. Regarding the duration, most interviews only took about 30 minutes to 45 minutes, and few took over one hour, like the interview with the spokesperson of the AFA. The face-to-face interviews benefited me with the opportunity to provide more detailed answers, whereas telephone interviews were relatively shorter than the face-to-face interviews since they are more difficult to control. In general, answers in the three phone interviews were shorter and briefer than those of the face-to-face interviews.

Regarding the interview location (see Table 4.1 and Table 4.2), of the interviews of the political groups, four took place in the offices of the informants, two in meeting rooms of the LegCo building, two in the headquarters of DP, one in a meeting room of the government offices in Central, and two others selected a cafe shop or a lunchroom. Of the journalists, two informants chose to be interviewed in
McDonalds, one in a restaurant, two in the press meeting room of the LegCo building, and three informants could only accept telephone interviews, although principally face-to-face interviews were preferred.

4.3.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Some parties might consider the origins and amount of their funding as private matters, and some journalists were concerned about the confidentiality of heir remarks about the parties, the government, and parties. To protect the privacy right of the informants, in particular, those who agree privately to be interviewed, confidentiality and anonymity were required. However, the emphasis on ethical issues was not enough to remove their apprehension so that some journalists still had insecure feelings about the possibility of exposing sensitive criticisms of the groups. Therefore, at the beginning of the interviews, a consent statement (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7) was offered to confirm whether the informants agreed to appear under their true names or pseudonyms, and whether they would allow me to record our conversation. In addition, before the start of the interviews, I stated clearly about my research purposes, the research topics involved, and the possible usage of the research in the future, to give the right of the informants to withdraw their decisions.

Concern also arose regarding the question whether anonymity can secure protection and concealment in a tight-knitted community. A participant's identity, Punch (1998) points out, might be sufficiently concealed from the general public, however, those insiders who are close to the participants may still easily recognise them. In the research, for ordinary citizens, anonymity of the journalists and members of the parties might be sufficient for concealment. For the insiders of journalism, anonymity of the journalists from the political beat of the Apple Daily was not sufficient since there were only two journalists in the beat. In this the particular case, I revealed and explained the situation of insufficient concealment to the two Apple Daily journalists and provided them an opportunity to make a decision on whether they accepted the interview or not. The two journalists did not think that there was a problem to conceal them to the insiders of the journalism.
4.4. Case Studies

Case study, according to Yin (2003), is an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and is a method "of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context" (p.4). The observation, description, or reconstruction of a phenomenon of interest are used to systematically and deeply investigate individuals, groups, organizations, or events (Williams et al., 1988). Case study is able to arrive at descriptions and typologies of delimited entities and singular individuals and events and give detailed attention to phenomena within their everyday contexts and to their structural or thematic interrelations with other phenomena and contexts (Yin, 1994 in Jensen 2002). Therefore, the employment of case study in the research helped to illustrate the strategies of political parties in practice, explore interactions among the media and the political actors, and provide a deeper investigation of specific events.

Table 4.3 Research methods under two case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Case 1: the car-tax scandal</th>
<th>Case 2: the legislation of Article 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Method</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Content analysis</td>
<td>Period: 09/03-10/04 (1 month)</td>
<td>Period: 01/09-30/11 (3 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Textual analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Participant observation</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, the design of two case studies (case 1: the car-tax scandal; case 2: the legislation of Article 23) and the methods used in the cases will be discussed, in particular content analysis (see Table 4.3). Content analysis was designed as a main method in the two cases to investigate how the journalistic rules were applied in coverage of political actors, whereas textual analysis was designed as supplementary data to aid the illustration of how the media covers the parties' press releases by taking account into time constraints, difficulties of translation of press releases and news stories and availability of press releases. The process of site selection and the role I played in the method of participant observations, which was only conducted in the case of the legislation of Article 23, will be also discussed.
4.4.1 Design of Two Case Studies

The case of Article 23 was decided upon when the issue appeared on the media agenda in September 2002. A large-scale demonstration in December 2002, which more than 100,000 people participated in to protest against the legislation of Article 23, further encouraged my interest in the issue. Since September 2002, Hong Kong media has been full of the issue of Article 23. Through media coverage, I witnessed the proceedings of the government's concessions and the war between the pro-democracy camp and the government. These experiences gave me fresh eyes on the ecology of Hong Kong politics. In terms of its significance and influence, the case was worthy of a deeper exploration as the core case.

Taking into account that a single case in a specific setting was likely to be too restricted to one particular circumstance, another case study was planned to be developed before the fieldwork started. However, I did not decide what the substitute case study was until the selection criteria of the study were made after the fieldwork. The case of the car-tax scandal was chosen because it met the criteria of 'a recent case' – for the availability of gaining access, and further 'a relatively small-scale new case' – to avoid a massive and complex outcome and for better understanding. Moreover, the case was selected also because I witnessed the whole event, which helped me better to illustrate the entire incident. Methodologically, following both the replicated and compared logic, the two cases were designed to explore common ground and differences in coverage rules and the parties' strategies, and the ability of the groups to set the media agenda.

Different methods were recruited to serve for the two case studies. The car-tax scandal used two research methods – content analysis and textual analysis. The triangulation method, composed of content analysis, textual analysis and participant observation, was recruited for the case of the legislation of Article 23 to observe the strategies of the Alliance, the way it collected funds, and the way it mobilized the public.

4.4.2 Content Analysis

In this section, I will provide an explanation of the different methods used in the two cases. The discussion will focus on content analysis including the design of the
The most widely quoted definition of content analysis comes from Bernard Berelson in 1952. He defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative of the description of the manifest content of communication” (in Hansen et al., 1998, p.94). The method can be used in traditional and descriptive manners to identify what exists, and also to study societal change in content over time. It provides a theoretical connection between the intentions of individuals and organizations producing media content and possible social consequences related to the use of that content (Williams et al., 1988). Thus, I adopted content analysis to help study how a range of issues were presented in the three Chinese papers with three typical political stances – the Apple Daily representing the pro-democracy papers, the Ming Pao representing the neutralist and the Sing Tao or Wen Wei Pao representing the pro-China papers. The method also aided in identifying and counting the occurrences of specified characteristics or dimensions of the newspapers’ texts, and through this, inferring results about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance (Hansen et al., 1998).

Selection of the Papers and Types of News Stories
Due to the late decision made in the car-tax scandal case, all news stories related to it were gained from the on-line coverage of the three newspapers – the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Sing Tao. The reasons for choosing the Sing Tao were on grounds of that it has a pro-Beijing background, and that it was one of a few of Hong Kong’s newspapers which provided free reading of the online coverage. All news stories in the case of Article 23 were collected through photocopy from the original coverage of the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and Wen Wei Pao.

The sample stories of the case studies were confined to the following types: 1.) the editorials, which are the flagship of a paper and represent the stance of a paper; 2.) stories from news pages, including the ‘Front page’, ‘Important News’ and ‘Local News’ or ‘Political Page’16, and 3.) articles from the ‘Forum page’, including commentaries and reader letters, which showed the political tendency of the papers

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16 Among the three papers investigated, only the Ming Pao has a 'Political Page'.
according to selection of the articles. The on-line news coverage does not display page, but order. Thus, the significance of news in the car-tax scandal is shown by the news sequence, not the page position. In the case of Article 23, the significance of stories was measured by the page arrangement and the page layout, because the stories collected were from the photocopies of the three original newspapers.

**Study Period**
To avoid producing massive data and consuming extensive time, the study period was confined to one month’s coverage of three on-line newspapers according to social and political influence of the case, from March 9 2003 when the scandal was first exposed in the *Apple Daily*, to April 9 2003. The selection of the study period was based on the consideration that a comparatively complete presence of political actors often occurs at the beginning of a scandal. For the legislation of Article 23 as the core study, one month’s coverage was considered to be inadequate to catch the perspectives of different actors following the development of consultation period, but six months were too time consuming because it produced about two thousand news stories. The study period of the Article 23 was therefore designed to be for three months, from September 2002, when the government began its consultation, to the end of November 2002.

**Defining Key Words of Searching**
Case One: All stories in the car-tax scandal were selected through the key word search in on-line coverage: in mentioned pages, any story which contained over a sentence related to key words about ‘Financial Secretary’, ‘Leung Kam-chung’ scandal’, ‘Car-tax scandal’, ‘Car purchase affair’ and ‘Financial Secretary scandal’ which were the name and the title of the protagonist of the case, and the name of the case, was defined as a story on the case.

Case Two: Any story which covered over a sentence related to ‘Article 23’, ‘the legislation’, ‘the legislation of Article 23’, ‘Blue Bill of the Proposal’, ‘White Bill of the Proposal’ and ‘National Security Bill’ was defined as the case story. The key words were defined according to common phrases used in the media and relevant issues in the case.

17 ‘Leung Kam-chung’ is the Chinese name of the Financial Secretary Antony Leung.
**Pilot Studies of Content Analysis**

Values and categories of the two content analyses were designed for the pilot studies which were conducted from October 21 2003 to October 28 2003. Ten stories from each paper were randomly selected to test the adaptability of the two coding schedules for the two case studies by using the SPSS package. After the pilot studies, some changes were made:

1. Values appearing only once were categorized into 'others';
2. The category 'word number' in the case of the car-tax scandal was divided into the value 'word length'\(^{18}\) and 'story size'\(^{19}\) in the case of the legislation of Article 23 due to the difficulty of counting words in the photocopies of original papers;
3. Because of a different version between the on-line papers and the original papers, the coding sheet of the car-tax scandal slightly differs from that of the case of Article 23. In the former, the category 'story range' was used as a standard to measure the significance of a news story, in the latter, it was measured by order of the story page (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).

**Defining Categories and Values**

The 'task' of content analysis is to examine a selected body of texts and to classify the content according to a number of predetermined dimensions (Hansen *et al.*, 1998, p.106). In order to produce more valid and accurate results, some categories were defined as follows (for more details, see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5):

1.) The category 'story range' refers to the layout of stories in a page. According to the papers' categories, the stories in the news section were divided into different arrangement of pages. Stories on the 'Front page' and the bottom page were regarded as the most significant pages, followed by the 'Important News', and of equal importance, 'Local News' and 'Political Page'. 'Opinion Forum' was a different section from the news section;

\(^{18}\) 'Word length', which excluded punctuation marks, was counted by multiplying the word number in row and column together and then categorized into different values.

\(^{19}\) Story size was measured by the ruler.
2.) The category ‘Actors’ was defined according to the political or social groups to which the actors belonged;

3.) The value ‘attack’ of the category ‘position’ referred to:
   a) explicit reprimand/ criticism/ condemnation of the actor/ issue/ incident/ behaviours/ objects in relation to the case;
   b) opinions/perspectives that are presented in derogatory terms and phrases, for example, bad, wrongdoing, mistake, evil, a sword hanging over heads; and
   c) more critical/condemnatory words than supportive.

The value ‘defend’ referred to:
   a) explicit agreement with or support for the actor/issue/incident/behaviours/ objects related to the case;
   b) opinions/ perspectives expressed in commendatory term and phrase, for example, reasonable, excusable; and
   c) more supportive words than those of criticism/condemnation.

4.) Theme refers to an issue making up more than half the weight in a story/article/paragraph/quotation.

4.4.3 Participant Observation - the June 1 Demonstration by the Alliance
Participant observation, according to Berger (2000, p.161), is a qualitative research technique which provides the opportunity to study people in real-life situations and a form of ‘field work’. Under the mentioned general core purposes, observation was recruited to serve as supplementary data added to the case for more specific purposes: to observe how the Alliance raised their funding, and what campaign strategies the group used in the specific scenes of the demonstration.

Design of Setting and Gaining Access to the Field
The idea of observation of a demonstration was formed in a DAB by-election in which a personal assistant of a Legislative Councillor invited me to participate as an assistant before his interview. Two reasons prompted me to select a demonstration as an observation: firstly, it was a better place to observe the various strategies of
political groups which were employed to attract the attention of the media and the public; secondly, it was an open location without access difficulties. In the crowd setting, the demonstration offered "excellent opportunities to observe without the risks of revealing or having to account for the self" (Lindlof, 1995, p.149). The June 1 demonstration was considered because the demonstration was a relatively small-scale study which allowed me to easily observe actions of the groups that participated, and it was the earliest demonstration I found by searching on-line websites of the parties and some pressure groups. Apart from the conception of the observation, I also attempted to observe the July 1 demonstration. The observation, however, was finally given up because of a traffic jam, flooding with a stream of people and difficult movement in crowds.

The Design of the Role of the Researcher

Four research roles have been identified based on different degrees of the researcher's participation: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer (Lindlof, 1995). Despite the convenience of being a complete observer in the field, I selected to filter out the former three roles because two concerns. Firstly, although the former three roles bring the benefit them of allowing researchers to experience what the others experience in different degrees, the potential danger of 'going native' might lead to biased findings of an observation, in particular, for the complete participant and participant-as-observer (Lindlof, 1995); secondly, as a complete observer, researchers can observe dynamic, behaviours, change or conflict of others groups, construct a scenario and provide a relatively well-rounded dynamic picture without intervening.

Data was collected by means of tape recording, photograph taking and note taking. Because many journalists were doing the exact same things as I did and some citizens on the scene also took photographs or used a video camera, my action was not conspicuous.

4.4.4 Textual Analysis and Analysis of Data

A key question of the research to assess the professionalism of media management was how much coverage the parties received and how far the message, which the
parties attempted to disseminate, was actually picked up by the media. I attempted to answer the question through a comparison between press releases of the parties, which were regarded as an alternative strategy of the parties, and the coverage the three newspapers gave on the press releases. By reasons of the less significance of press releases, difficulties of text translation and to avoid the difficulty of massive data for analysis, the textual analysis was not designed as an in-depth method, but a minor method to supplement the illustration of the media rules.

In the case of the car-tax scandal, the on-line search of the websites of the two parties (the DAB and DP) found that only the DP released press releases in relation to the scandal. The textual analysis was designed to investigate the press release of the DP on March 9 2003, when the scandal was revealed on the date and the party firstly responded to it. In the case of the legislation of Article 23, I selected to analyse only the press releases on September 24 2002 when the government began its consultation with the public.

All collected data from the methods of interviews, content analysis and participant observation were in Chinese. Translation of the data from Chinese to English has been a problem since the two languages are quite different. Hence, apart from the attempt to search for related news coverage in English, I constantly made decisions about “the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate[d] the degree to which the two different worlds they inhibit are ‘the same’” (Simon, in Temple and Edward, 2002, p.5). For efficiency of analysis, the majority of the texts from the press releases, news stories, and the transcripts of interviews remained in Chinese, only selected quotations were translated into English. According to the topic guides, the analysis of transcripts was coded into different categories, such as resource, relationships, and strategies.

4.5. Reflections and Limitations of the Study
This section is divided into two parts: the first part is to reflect the fieldwork process and the second is to discuss the criticisms and limitations of the study.
4.5.1. Reflections
The quality and ability of the researcher directly featured in the research and the researched. The researcher's characteristics, identity, social status, and social political values affect the way that they perceives things, how the researcher responds to the process and how others respond to them. Most social researches involve in the interaction between the researcher and the objects. According to Morley (1997), these researches cannot be free from societal influences and the influences cannot be neutralised. Thus, the researcher should be aware about reflexivity in the process of fieldwork. Hansen et al. (1998) also notes that the self-reflection and reflexivity of one's own intellectual and emotional responses is a key to gaining insights into the norms and unspoken rules, customs and values of what is studied.

The Relationship with the Informants
Political identity was an important factor to determine the success or failure of interviews and access to possible informants of the parties in the study. In Hong Kong, there is an implicit assumption that people who have lived in or come from western countries stand on the side of the pro-democracy camp; conversely, people who migrated from mainland China are thought to stand on the side of the pro-China camp. As an overseas student, my academic background affected my access to DAB informants at the beginning of the fieldwork. From their response, the DAB informants seemed to assume that I would have a political stance as being pro-democracy stance and that this would lead to them being portrayed in a negative light in the research. If they were apprehensive at the beginning of the interviews, they then felt at ease when they recognized that I had migrated from mainland China and had studied in a pro-China secondary school. The DAB informants began seeing me as an 'insider' of the group. This shifting attitude was reflected in a shift in the use of personal pronouns from 'you' 'me' 'I' to 'we' 'us' and 'they'. In this sense, my background reduced the distance between the informants and me, and benefited me by allowing me to gain relatively more information, since the conversation became more open.

Likewise, sharing similar experiences helped me to create a rapport and more opened conversation. In the interviews with the informants of the DP and two
pressure groups, the experience of attending some pro-democracy campaigns where
my purpose was to carry out observation benefited me by establishing relatively
trustful relationships with these groups. Thus, while mentioning the topic of
'resources', most informants complained about their difficulties brought by the
limited funding and the lack of subsidies from the government, and sought my
advice by asking, "What can we do?" However, the disadvantage of this short
distance was that some informants seemed to expect that I would be better able to
handle the issue with relevance to them.

The interviews with the journalists were another story. My personal background did
not affect the interviews. In general, the journalists had higher vigilance towards the
interviews on the ground, as it was the nature of their jobs. Even if I attempted to
show them that I had been a journalist in the Wen Wei Pao and Oriental Daily for
several months, they still regarded me as the 'outsider'. However, showing my
background or experience facilitated more open interviews.

**Showing Some Knowledge**
Researchers' relevant knowledge of politics and the media determined the extent of
the openness of the informants in conversation. The main reason was that all
informants were elite and had professional knowledge in their working field and/or
enjoyed comparatively higher social status than common citizens. Inquiry into
members of these groups, some basic knowledge about Hong Kong politics and the
media directly influenced the responses and evaluation of the informants to
interview questions and to me as a the researcher, because the interviews often
involved a process of mutual observation between the informants and myself;
sometimes the interviewees took the initiative to ask me questions.

In some of my interviews with the members of political groups and the journalists,
informants questioned me: 'How do you know about me?' 'Do you know about the
proportional representation system?', 'Have you participated in any
demonstration?', 'What do think about [...] or 'Have you heard about [...]?' If
showed that I knew nothing about their questions, sometimes they jumped directly
to another topic or lacked enthusiasm to continue. Therefore, some basic knowledge
was required to sustain the informant’s interest in the discussed topics in the process of our interview.

Preparation by obtaining background information on some informants showed my respect in the course of the interviews, which promoted rapport and a more open relationship. For example, I mentioned a quarrel in a meeting of the Legislative Council between the DP former chairman Martin Lee and Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, in which Tung criticized Martin Lee for ‘bad mouthing Hong Kong’. He reacted quite strongly, and after that, the interview became obviously more open than the before. Similarly, in the interviews with the journalistic informants, some basic knowledge about the papers or common language was required. For instance, every paper has its own ‘checklist’ which lists events or issues of the next day. A paper generally assigns a journalist to confirm whether any event or issue has been missed from the list by comparing other papers after the deadline. My experience as a two-month intern in the *Wen Wei Pao* and a freelancer on the ‘Property Page’ of the *Oriental Daily* for three years benefited me as I understood the jargon of the field.

However, the disadvantage of showing my knowledge was the informants presumed that I knew about things or terms of which they were talking and offered no explanations by saying: “as you know”, “you have been a journalist, you know how it is”, or “just as what you have done”. Therefore, sometimes I had to question closely what ‘it’ was.

**Neutrality and Rapport**

Neutrality was another concern in the course of the interviews. Patton (1990 in Lindlof, 1995, p.182) pointed out that, “Rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being the interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what the person says.” Neutrality helped to facilitate rapport. Rapport was a high priority concern in the study because the time limitation was strictly under control in most of the interviews. Some informants had other arrangements after my interviews. For example, DP councillor Martin Lee had another interview with a paper following my interview. Some journalists spared their time to participate in my interview, and afterwards had to go immediately into their own interviews. Therefore, being a
listener, showing some knowledge in certain areas and respect helped to create a smooth and open interview atmosphere. In addition, I did not judge the content of what the informants said to me, although the interviews involved political stances and values. Personally, I did not have any political bias, which helped me to more easily to maintain a stance of neutrality.

4.5.2 Criticisms

Hansen et al. (1998) point out that all methods have their weakness, all give blind spots. Thus weaknesses and limitations inevitably exist in social research.

*Criticisms on Methods: Being Biased or Subjective*

The main research method recruited in this study was the qualitative approach. However, a main problem of the qualitative approach, Lindlof (1995) points out, is that it depends critically on the investigator’s interaction with the subjects under study. Berger (2000) also notes that the approach often relies more on observation, intuition, and personal insight. In other words, the research methods substantially depend on personal subjective judgement to measure and interpret what the researcher studied. Take participant observation as an example: data from the observation in the study heavily relied on my intuition and perspective to observe what the object groups did and to judge and infer what the behaviours meant in the specific setting.

That said, objectivity in any kind of scientific research is an impossible ideal (Hansen et al., 1998). Therefore, the researcher must try to minimize subjectivity through research techniques and various data from different perspectives. Documents, journals, media coverage, and other researches were collected and analysed. Moreover, different methods were used under the two case studies to help to perceive and understand events from different angles.

I employed the quantitative approach, content analysis to overcome, to a certain extent, the weaknesses of case study. Content analysis is criticized as being subjective because the researcher has to rely on his sense and judgement to make a choice to delineate certain dimensions or aspects of text for analysis (Berger, 2000). Nevertheless it is, undeniably, a reasonably systematic technique which provides a
theoretical connection between intentions of individuals and organizations producing media content, and possible social consequences and enables theories about meaning of messages to be tested (Williams, 1988, p.37).

Regarding the participant observation, I tried to minimize personal subjectivity through some basic observation questions: 1.) Who are the actors? 2.) How is the scene set up? 3.) How do initial interactions occur? 4) When and how do actors claim attention? 4.) Where and when do principal actors ordinarily congregate and interact? 5.) What communication events are significant? (Lindlof, 1995, p.155-161) These questions and data from interviews with journalists and party members facilitate of my understanding of some events and actors, such as the Alliance’s way of obtaining funds, recognition of key political actors, and understanding of the host group – the Alliance, and helped to reduce subjective judgement. In addition, other experience of participating in demonstrations or rallies helped interpretation and illustration of the observation. Therefore, different perspectives minimize the potential problem that the study will be too subjective.

**Criticism on the Sample Design: Representation**

One main limitation of the study that should be acknowledged is the scope of the study itself. The study only focused on active political groups which interact with the media, and the media who have strong political stances. Passive political groups and the media with less apparent political stances were excluded from the study.

Moreover, the sample of the interviews has a two-fold limitation. Firstly, only three parties were selected for study: the DP represented the pro-democracy camp and is comparatively resource-rich; the NWS represented the resource-poor pro-democracy party; and the DAB represented the resource-rich pro-China camp. Two pressure groups were selected as active pro-democracy groups. The selection criteria indicate that the sample cannot fully represent all political parties in Hong Kong. Parties, such as the Frontier, the CP and the ADPL which were passive or difficult to access were excluded. Similarly, the media sample was confined to the three representative newspapers – the *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*. A further restriction on the sample was that the selection of the members of the parties
was limited to those who had contact with the media and handled media affairs in order to gain more information, and the journalists of the political beats.

Limitations: Contingent on Situations

Different situations which could yield different results should also be considered. The fieldwork of the research was conducted during a critical time for Hong Kong when the SAR government confronted a series of administrative crises. In this context, the whole political environment and atmosphere was somewhat different from the peacetime. The relationship among the government, the media and the parties became more intense, in particular after the July 1 demonstration. Although most of the fieldwork was conducted before July 1, the intense atmosphere, to some extent, still slightly influenced the result of the investigation. For example, the informants might have had a more critical attitude towards those media they adopted different political stances.

Moreover, after the July 1 demonstration, both the political groups and the media in Hong Kong might have re-estimated the significance and value of public opinion, and consequently varied their strategies towards public opinion. Although the researcher has mentioned some changes that occurred after the demonstration, there is a need to do a further in-depth study.

Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining the research aims and questions based on the understanding of research literature with reference to the media political climate in historical and contemporary Hong Kong society. This was followed by the research design and methods and the fieldwork process. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to inquire into two main political parties, one resource-poor party, two pressure groups and the journalists of the three papers. Two case studies were employed to add depth to the further exploration. In both cases content analysis and textual analysis were adopted, while the case of the legislation of Article 23 also used participant observation to get alternative insights into the real-settings. The design was reshaped by the fieldwork process, which suggested a need to adopt a flexible approach for the recruitment of the respondents and the selection of cases in order to overcome barriers and the problem with access to the respondents under
the impact of political and social climate in the period of data collection. After an explanation of how the research questions were operated in the field, reflections on issues related to the relationship with the informants, showing knowledge, and neutrality which profoundly influenced the quality of research data were discussed. Finally, some criticisms on subjectivity and the limited samples of the research were considered. Chapter Five will draw on interviews to answer the first and second research questions by analysis of sampling political groups' resources and strategies.
Chapter 5 Hong Kong's Political Parties and Their Strategies of Public Relations

Introduction
This chapter seeks to provide a general introduction to the roles the political parties of Hong Kong play in semi-democratic Hong Kong, the resources they possess and the tactics employed in campaigns. It firstly analyses some literature on parties' media management in western democracies, and then looks into the development of Hong Kong parties to facilitate an understanding of their political ideologies. Afterwards, the resources of the parties will be analysed to help understand how resource-poor parties attempt to manage the media to influence the public.

5.1 Public Relations and Strategies
This section will highlight the media centred dispositions, use of public relations strategies, and the inter-relationships of main political parties in western literature. It will also explore the way parties try to shape the flow and nature of information.

Blumler (1990) points out that the modern publicity process involves a competitive struggle to influence and control popular perceptions of key political events and issues through the media. In the age of universal suffrage and an intensely competitive political environment, the media are an essential mechanism for political parties to promote or disseminate their views or policies to influence the public's voting decisions. Without the media as a bridge, parties cannot directly access widespread voters or citizens. The success or failure of a policy promotion often depends on how far parties are able to influence media publicity. This is because publicity matters can bring one's priorities to the attention of broad publics and help to order theirs (Blumler, 1990). It can also influence the public's perceptions and attitudes towards what political actors are striving to achieve and establish, or cement their political status (ibid.). For these reasons, political actors have recognized the significance of media publicity and the necessity of devoting more thought, energy and resources to media strategies and tactics.

Political parties routinely use various techniques to compete for publicity and to keep their message in the media coverage. According to McNair (1995), the
techniques can be categorized into two aspects: advertising, and public relations. The effectiveness of advertising is very limited because it is often perceived as a means of propaganda and a purposive dissemination. In general, it is believed that the strategy of public relations is able to achieve more effective and powerful publicity than advertising. In Britain, the political parties became increasingly reliant on mass media to communicate their messages to the electorate in the 1980s. They recruited small groups of marketing, advertising and public relations specialists to develop strategies for promoting positive media images of the party members and key policies (Franklin, 1994).

Competition among parties for access to limited news-holes and for more favourable treatment is intense. The competition accelerates the professionalization of the party publicity process. An essential condition of professionalization is that their messages must be tailored to journalists' formats, news values and work habits. This requires anticipatory planning, fast footwork and a range of specialist skills (Blumler, 1990). ‘Spin doctors’, publicity advisers, public relations experts, or campaign management consultants have come to meet this need. These professionals are not only good at fashioning messages for media consumption; they also engage journalists in what appears to be an increasingly manipulative opinion environment (ibid.). Meanwhile, the permanent campaign has emerged and is prevalent as a long term strategy of campaign to facilitate the professionalization of parties’ public relations and image management.

5.1.1 Party Advertisement

Party advertisement, in a strict sense, is a political product of the purchase and use of advertising space, paid for at commercial rates (McNair, 1995). The media are used to ‘differentiate’ political products (messages of parties and candidates) and give them meaning for the ‘consumer’ (voters) by the form of political communication (ibid.). Political advertising is regarded as an important tool for political communication in the UK; although advertisers are prohibited from allocating free broadcast airtime on radio and television, paid advertising presenting parties’ policies can be seen in newspapers, cinemas, and billboards. The advertisement with the function of persuasion has the clear advantage of being the completely controlled by politicians or candidates. Firstly, it enables them to
disseminate information about the candidate’s or party’s programme in a level of
detail which journalists can rarely match; secondly, the producers of political
advertisements have the freedom to say what they like; thirdly, it enables them to
replace the journalists’ agenda; fourthly, it is able to play to their clients’ strengths
and highlight the opponents’ weaknesses (ibid.).

However, the advantages of advertising have also been its disadvantages. The effect
of this form of communication is confined and cannot be mentioned in the same
breath as media coverage, on ground that it is perceived as a means of persuasion
and solely for the purpose of propaganda. Politicians, thus, have to devote great
effort to gain another form of publicity which is more effective – media coverage.
However, as a key and final gatekeeper, the media decide to a great extent what
political events or issues are covered and not covered. In order to influence media
coverage and set the news agenda, the parties attempt to recruit various strategies to
influence or ‘manage’ the way the media report the issues and events in relation to
them, in particular, public relations which can be regarded as the heart of parties’
communication campaigns.

5.1.2 Public Relations
The strategy of public relations is organized into four types: news/media
management, information management, image management and internal
communication (McNair, 1995). The management is engaged in a dual process of
party management and news management. The former includes the image
management, information management and internal management (the party’s image
or image of members of the party, the information the party provides, resource
allocation and design of campaigns). The latter management includes parties’
relationship with the media in trailing and follow-up briefing. These tactics are
designed to ensure that a party receives the maximum favourable publicity and the
minimum of negative coverage by managing the parties themselves, exploiting the
news machine, follow-up spin, targeting, photo-opportunities and managing the
interview process (Stanyer, 2001).

According to McNair (1995), public relations activities include pro-active and
reactive techniques: 1). pro-active devices, such as party conferences and news
conferences, are adopted by exploiting the competitive nature of news gathering, the accompanying pressure of multiple deadlines, and the journalists' need to check the accuracy of interpretations. Two forms of the devices are most widely used: trailing and follow-up briefing. Trailing is designed to give follow-up spin more credibility, it enables a planned favourable interpretation to be put on a loss if the results are known to be close, and enables the spin doctors to claim a victory for the leadership's policy proposal if defeat is avoided (Stanyer, 2001). Follow-up briefings are designed at one level to prevent misinterpretations arising; and 2). reactive devices are adopted when parties strive for damage-limitation. They include suppressing of potentially damaging information and the disinformation tactics such as 'leaking' (McNair, 1995). These devices are often used in crisis management as a preventative measure aimed at stopping negative or unwanted publicity dominating the news agenda (Stanyer, 2001).

**Image Management**

Image management is an important task in the process of campaigns. Despite votes' partisanship and candidates' platforms, politicians' behaviours and performances in public also influence the perceptions and attitudes of voters towards them and further influence voting decisions. In other words, what candidates say and do, and how they say and do it are perceived to facilitate decisions of who to vote for. Professionals, thus, are brought in. These experts, called 'spin doctors' or 'party managers', are active in the planning process but remain in the back region (privacy), away from the viewer. Actors in the front region (publicity) are those officials who visibly disseminate information, such as the party leader, the ministers and their shadows and a loose heterogeneous collective of recognizable personalities composed of prominent back-benchers, and external power brokers (Stanyer, 2001). Although he faced a crisis from a sexual scandal, the former USA president, Bill Clinton, successfully won a second term as the president. One of the reasons was that he deliberately shaped a favour image as an activist president by showing people what he could do for the average person. His campaign of image management deepened into molding public perceptions of the president's duties.
5.2. The Development of Political Parties in Hong Kong

This section concerns the roles of Hong Kong parties, the party system and the political stances of the parties, which directly influence parties’ resources and strategies in public relations. The emergence of political groups was facilitated by a top-down political reform in which the colonial government carried out partial democratization and decolonization to reduce constraints of entry into the political world. Grassroots pressure groups first appeared in the 1970s and slowly broadened their activities. This meant that the political development of Hong Kong had entered a new stage which was enrolled from “the scales of this society, the resources at its disposal and the respectable figures from various fields and social strata” (Cheng, 2001, p.351).

In the 1980s, the pressure groups began to sponsor candidates in Legislative Council elections. The first political party which composed of the Hong Kong People’s Association and the Association for Democracy and Justice were founded in the spring of 1984. In the following summer, the Progressive Hong Kong Society initiated its groundwork. In the next spring, there were three forces which seemed capable of forming a political group comparable to the Progressive Hong Kong Society – an elite group, a possible coalition of middle-class groups and a coalition of grassroots pressure groups (ibid.). The elite group included Legislative Councillor Allen Lee and the members of his 183 delegation to Beijing as the core, supported by the local Shanghainese business community. The middle-class group was organizing a joint committee with other political groups to discuss the Basic Law and other issues in an attempt to strengthen co-operation among them. These groups included the Hong Kong Observer, the Hong Kong Affairs Society and the Hong Kong People’s Association. A number of young candidates in District Board elections and political activists became the foundation of these groups.

Although pressure groups were limited to competing in elections with no hopes of forming the government, the colony’s first three-tier direct elections in 1991 galvanized their consolidation into political parties (Fung, 1998). Through the elections, the popularity of the parties and the public’s approvals of them increased. For instance, in the 1991 elections independent councillors received 17.55 percent of the vote in the geographical constituency elections. In 1995 five percent of the
vote which was expected to support independents was changed to votes for the political parties. The period between the late 1980s and the early 1990s did not favour the development of the pro-China groups. With apprehensions about the possible policies of the coming Chinese authority and prevailing anti-China sentiments after the incident of Tiananmen Square on June 4 1989, Hong Kong's voters tended to support pro-democracy political forces. For instance, in the 1991 election, the pro-democracy forces gained overwhelming success in contrast to the pro-China forces. Having learned from the election, in 1992, fragmented pro-China forces allied and established the DAB, in which many members were active in the Federation of Trade Unions.

However, Britain was extremely slow to introduce any democratic elements into the Hong Kong government. Plans to introduce elections after the Second World War were abandoned, partly because of a deep-seated British concern that the elections would lead to open clashes and cause deepened tension and violence between Chinese Communist and Nationalist supporters, and partly because it could lead China to invoke its claim to sovereignty over Hong Kong. Moreover, the Chinese government did not want to see a powerful pro-democracy party to interfere with the forthcoming running of the SAR government as pro-China forces had not yet been strong enough to be able to resist pro-democracy forces and support the government's policies. How to control election systems to ensure its supporters gained enough seats in the LegCo became a key way the two governments adopted to avoid a situation they viewed as unfavourable. In transition, the three shifts of the electoral systems and the emergence of the Provisional Legislation Council were a production of such competitive and apprehensive consciousnesses of the two governments. Since relations between Governor Chris Pattern and the Chinese government worsened toward the end of 1992, the majority of Pattern's polices either met with huge challenges from inception or were aborted under criticism from the Chinese government. The formation and development of political parties thus proceeded in an unfavourable environment. Problems from five dimensions hinder the growth of the parties and cause the parties to act as quasi-pressure groups in the political stage of Hong Kong.
Firstly, limited power and low legitimacy of the political parties confines their contributions to Hong Kong's democratic achievements (Lau and Kuan, 2000). In the course of fighting for further democracy, Hong Kong people often question the role and ability of the parties in policy decision-making; secondly, the parties lack a group of competent new bloods to inherit their ideal because the elite founders of the parties are also the main 'cadres' of the parties; thirdly, the rapid shift of the election systems and the current system of non-universal suffrage reduce parties' enthusiasm for further development; fourthly the 'executive-led' government, the appointment system of the major governors, and the division between legislature and the administration mean that the government is the dominant power in public policy making and promotion of policy, and this means that the parties' achievement in policy is constrained by the government; fifthly, Hong Kong has not yet constituted a systematic party law due to the short development history of the parties and the fast-changing systems. According to western democracies' standards, many parties in practice cannot be regarded as a real party.

Grant's classification of pressure groups can be applied to Hong Kong parties. He categorizes pressure groups into the insider and outsider groups. According to Grant (1995, p.15), classification is based on alternative group strategies, and "on the receptivity of government to those strategies, which in turn has an impact on group effectiveness." Insider groups are regarded as legitimate by the government and are regularly consulted. They are given access to decision markers, whereas outsider groups neither expect to become consulted during the policy-making process, nor expect to gain access to the government. They have to work outside the governmental decision making process (Grant, 1995).

In a sense, the pro-China parties can be regarded as the insider groups whose core members stand by the side of the Chinese government and HKSAR government in most policy decision-making, such as by supporting the accountability system which was advanced by the Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, and the legislation of Article 23. The chairman of DAB, Tsang Yok-sing, had been a principal of one of the very few Hong Kong schools which celebrated the Chinese national day in the days of British colonial rule, and Vice Chairman Ip Kwok-hing led a large trade union in the territory, which has a friendly relationship with the mainland
government. In addition, the members of the pro-China group have easier access to the ExCo – one of the power structures for making policy decisions.

By contrast, the pro-democracy camp can be regarded as the outsider group. The camp particularly the DP, often criticizes the performance and policies of the government, and act as the opposition group. Although the pro-democracy parties are legally approved by Chinese government, their power is constrained and reduced by the current electoral system which the government introduced to gain control of votes in the LegCo.

5.2.1 The Ideological Spectrum of Hong Kong Parties

During transition, along divisions of their political positions towards the different authorities, there were three types of political forces coexisting: pro-HK (support of the colonial government), pro-Taiwan and Pro-China.

Pro-Taiwan forces in Hong Kong have been destined to be unable to gain great room to develop both before and after handover since both the former and present government do not allow a greater pro-Taiwan force to interfere with local affairs. Before handover, the British government allowed the existence of the pro-Taiwan force because the government needed to exploit it to balance the three powers in the LegCo and curb the growth of pro-China forces. Certainly, the force itself also lacked local citizens’ support and funding. The pro-Taiwan party - 123 Democratic Alliance which was established in 1994 represented the pro-Taiwan force in the LegCo from 1995 to 1997, with an aim to strive for the unification of a free, democratic and wealthy China. However, all candidates were defeated in the 1998 LegCo elections although the party once had seven seats in the 1999 District Council elections. Due to a lack of funding, the party did not file any candidates in the 2000 LegCo election (although some of the losers continued to take part as independent participants or supporters of other parties, no participant won a seat), and was subsequently dissolved on 3 December 2000.

The political paradigms were shifted by the end of the colonial administration and the withdrawal of Taiwan forces. The main parties in Hong Kong are distinguished by their stance towards the Chinese authorities and democratic values; they are
polarized into the pro-democracy and pro-China camps. The pro-Taiwan force has vanished from the current LegCo in which none of the thirteen independent councillors are pro-Taiwan, the majority of these independent councillors stand as neutral or pro-China.

Figure 5.1: The relative political position of different groups in 1998-2002

Source: Ma and Choy (1999)
Note: * mark indicates a pressure group. The closer a group is to the intersect means that its stance is less conspicuous; conversely, a group closer to the poles means that its stance is stronger.

Figure 5.1 is a schematic representation of the relative positions of different groups on the two major cleavage axes in 1998-2002. The cleavage of the abscissa is according to groups’ political stances towards the Chinese government to divide into two positions: pro-China and pro-democracy. The ordinate is cleaved according to social policy issues to divide into pro-grass-roots and business interests. The pro-democracy camp is represented by the Democratic Party (DP), the Frontier, the Citizens Party (CP), the Alliance, the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) and April Fifth Action (AFA). Among the seven groups with a pro-grass-roots and pro-democracy stance, the CP’s attitudes toward the Chinese government is the most moderate and its social policy is the closest to business interests. The
party under Allan Chan's leadership seems oriented toward middle-class interests. The DP is less close to a pro-grass-roots position but closer to pro-democracy position. It under the leadership of Martin Lee is one of the major political parties in Hong Kong and is perceived as the Opponent of the central and local government. Since 1989, it has played an active role protesting against the policy of the Chinese government on human rights and democratic movements in China. The Frontier, led by Emily Lau, represents a more radical wing.

Regarding pressure groups, the AFA is the most radical group with the most conspicuous incline of pro-grass-roots and pro-democracy support. The pro-China camp is represented by the DAB, LP and HKPA. The Liberal Party and the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) are the major pro-business parties, but with a pro-China tendency in many decisions of government policy. The DAB is the type of the pro-China camp; it is a group representing traditional trade union and grassroots interests, and the biggest political party of Hong Kong (Tang, 1998).

5.2.2 A Tug of Power War: Pro-democracy Vs. Pro-China Camp

In 1991-1995, business leaders and appointed members dominated in the LegCo. The situation changed when the new electoral system was reformed and parties were developed. In a hope of being a popular party, the DAB decided to devote all its effort to the direct elections for competing with the DP. By using the first-past-the-post electoral system, the 1995 LegCo election which favoured the larger political parties marked the war between democrats and pro-China candidates. The pro-democracy candidates were far less successful in the functional and Election Committee constituencies, managing to win only two seats in the ten-seat Election Committee constituency (Tang, 1998), but gained 60 percent of the total seats for the geographical constituencies. Although the DAB took 7 of 60 seats in LegCo (only 2 of 20 seats in direct election, see Table 5.1), the party was considered to have gained a notable success because it was the first time the DAB had participated in an election since its establishment.

From Table 5.1, it demonstrated that the Democratic Party confronted similar outcomes that it took over 40 percent vote shares in both 1995 and 1998 elections. In direct election, the pro-democracy camp still predominated over the pro-China

121
camp in 1998 elections that the LP and HKPA gained no seats. However, under the proportional representation system, the DP found it was hard to maintain its political strength in the Legislative Council, since the system did not allow the DP to gain enough votes in the functional constituency against the pro-China force. Moreover, two-thirds of the Legislative Council seats would be returned by those representing the interests of the HKSAR. The majority in the legislature safely supported the Tung administration and they did not have the political will to challenge the ‘executive-led’ system of government (Cheng, 2001).

Table 5.1 Seat shares of different parties in the direct election of 1995 and 1998 Legislative Council election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>Seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong/Federation of Trade Unions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Democracy and Peoples Livelihood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Progressive Alliance*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier</td>
<td>Not formed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Votes share</th>
<th>Votes share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong/Federation of Trade Unions</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Democracy and Peoples Livelihood</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Progressive Alliance*</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Note: HKPA and LDF merged on May 26, 1997.

Earlier, the evidence that the SAR government suppressed the growth of the pro-democracy parties had been shown from the establishment of the Provisional Legislative Council in 1995. In that year, the electorate had to vote in twofold elections for the LegCo and the Provisional Legislative Council. In the final analysis, the elections of the year were a war game between two power structures – the colonial government and Chinese government. The colonial government attempted to retain its influence in Hong Kong by the introduction of a single-member plurality system. By contrast, the Chinese government attempted to diminish the colonial influence and pro-HK forces, and strengthen the pro-China forces in the new government by the election of the Provisional Legislative Council. The two elections directly influenced the power of the pro-China and pro-democracy camp in the forthcoming new government. After handover, the power of
the pro-democracy and pro-China camps remained unbalanced, although the former camp often dominates in constituencies of the direct elections, whereas the strength of the latter camp is in functional constituencies. The pro-China forces still dominate the majority of the votes in LegCo.

5.3 Party Organizational Resources

This section investigates the resources of the parties by looking at both financial and human resources from data obtained in the interviews of the fieldwork. Jordan et al. (1992) and Whiteley and Winyard (1987 in Grant, 1995) point out that the key variable of media management is resources, which include knowledge, technical advice or expertise, membership compliance or consent, credibility, information and implementation guarantees; resources determine the success or failure of a strategy.

Democratic counties often take the responsibility to provide political parties with subsidies for their formation and function, although they might regulate the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns to ensure competition on an equitable basis. In the case of Hong Kong, political parties are the ‘resource-poor’. The parties, as Cheng (2001) and Lau and Kuan (1999) point out, by and large remain small and weak, shallowly rooted in society, and have limited financial resources and minimal support from social and economic organizations. Although the Hong Kong government provides other subsidies for the parties and their councillors, such as offering offices to Legislative Councillors in Central (a district name) and offices at a discount rent in councillors’ constituencies, it does not provide any party any direct financial subsidies. The lack of resources is a key general feature of political groups in Hong Kong. This feature constrains their further development and political campaigns. Strictly speaking, apart from a few main political parties (such as DAB, DP and LP), most political parties which declare themselves as a party cannot be regarded as such in terms of the resources they possess.

5.3.1 Resources of the DP

Aiming at alliance with all the democratic forces in Hong Kong, the DP, the flagship party of the democratic activists, was founded on October 1994 with about 550 members. Since then its membership has remained relatively stable. In 2003, it
had 600 members and eleven legislators. Its core members plus members of Central Standing Committee in district branches do not exceed 30. In addition, the party employs about ten full-time and part-time staff working in its headquarters. According to the DP Chief Secretary, the funding of the party in 2003 was about seven to eight million Hong Kong Dollars. However, the funding was not enough for various daily expenses. The party had to broaden its sources of income, reduce expenditure and devote more efforts to rising funding. Because some business groups are apprehensive that supporting the DP in public will offend the Chinese government and bring them revenge, obtaining funding is a difficult task for the DP.

According to research on the DP’s website, www.democracy.org.hk, and Cheng (2001), the party offers all candidates who are willing to join the party the general blessing of the pro-democracy camp and the endorsement of their leading figures, such as the Legislature Councillors Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, working-class champions such as Lau Chin-shek, who is the director of the Christian Industrial Committee. However, the candidates only can obtain limited financial assistance. For example, the maximum subsidy for a candidate in the District Council election is 45 thousand HK dollars (about 3,000 pounds). Usually, the party only offers one third of this amount to candidates. If they are confirmed to have more financial difficulties, another third will be provided. In general, the fund for a candidate is less than 40 thousand HK dollars. Thus, candidates who lack financial resources have to pay for themselves or seek other organizations’ support. The efforts they devote in campaign strategies therefore are constrained.

Alternative channels of communication to the public become a main task of the parties in campaigns. Launching their own publications is one feasible way for the parties to gain publicity. For instance, the DP issues publications targeted at different groups. For party members, there is an internal newsletter, issued about once every two months. For the public (including academics, media, and government officials), they issue a policy-oriented periodical named ‘Outspoken’, which has been published since 1996. One of the purposes of publishing ‘Outspoken’ is to spell out the party’s opinions on hot topics and the rationales behind them, and to try to advocate their political beliefs and suggestions to the public.
The party has also taken advantage of the convenience of the Internet. They have issued a monthly e-newsletter since 2002 for both party members and the general public. Via the e-newsletter, the party hopes to report and promote the tasks they have achieved and to provide policy suggestions. However, apart from the limited publicity, the convenience of the Internet only offers limited benefits. Most of the time, on the grounds of the constraints on the party’s resources, motivation of the public’s political participation and their usage of the media, the Internet is only regarded as a tool for the party to inform the public on their policies and activities.

5.3.2 Resources of the DAB

The DAB was founded in July 1992, under the chairmanship of Tsang Yok-sing, with more than a thousand members. It is closely allied with the pro-China Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions. In comparison to other parties of Hong Kong, the party has considerable resources in allocation of various campaigns, by reason of its strong support of the Chinese government in private. The Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government of Hong Kong is one of the major supporters of the DAB, sometimes it even helps the party to collect donations.

DAB’s support mainly comes from two dimensions: firstly, the pro-China party directly gains funding from China, and indirectly gains alternative resources from communities and supporters who provide direct or indirect subsidies (provision of manpower, services and materials). For instance, students of a pro-China Chinese middle school called ‘Heung To’ often assist the party’s candidates as volunteers on election days. Also, in some constituencies of Hong Kong Island, China Resource (Holdings) Co. Ltd and China Merchants Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. provided transport to support the pro-China candidates on election days (Cheng, 2001); secondly, the pro-China united front could reward its supporters with honours such as memberships in the National People’s Congress, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, and the Provincial counterparts of these two bodies, as well as appointment to the Preparatory Committee for the HKSAR, as Hong Kong Affairs Advisors, and as District Affairs Advisor (ibid.). Such efforts and resources laid a strong foundation for the pro-China political party.
Like the DP, the DAB issues a quarterly newsletter for the party members, academics, general citizens, and famous politicians. Its website is also a platform for the party to advocate its policy, activities and opinions. In 2003, the DAB had around 500 core members, twelve Legislative Councillors, seventy-seven District Councillors, over 2,000 formal members and sixteen branches distributed in different districts. The DAB and DP, the two main parties in Hong Kong, claim to lack both financial and human resources. However, only in terms of manpower and mobilization, many signs show that the DAB are stronger than the DP. In sum, the two parties’ funding mainly comes from four channels: 1.) street donations and lottery ticket sales; 2.) Councillors’ contributions: one of the parties’ main resources comes from the monthly ‘hand-in’ of Legislative Councillors of the party and District Councillors. For example, District Councillors of the DAB (over 100 members) hand in about $1,000 HK dollars for funding; 3.) membership fees; and 4) sponsors’ donations.

5.3.3 Resources of Other Parties
If the two main parties have resource problems, then it is supposed that the smaller groups and the pressure groups are facing worse conditions of competition. In the following section, the resources of some smaller parties and pressure groups will be analysed.

The Liberal Party’s Resources
The LP has seven seats in LegCo, coming after DP and DAB in the 2000 election. They publish a Newsletter monthly that is routinely sent to their party members and interested organizations to keep them informed of the party’s activities and views on public policies. Their website, www.liberal.org.hk, is available to the public, providing information and activities in relation to the party. Like the DAB and DP, its financial resources mainly come from voluntary services and donations by the party members and supporters.

Resources of Citizen Party and the Frontier
The Citizen Party (CP), which allies itself with the DP, is the smallest party in Hong Kong. In the 1998 LegCo election, the Frontier (a small party, led by a Legislative Councillor – Emily Lau) and the CP won only four seats. They have an
e-newsletter and also publish policy papers to publicize and disseminate the party's positions.

**Neighbourhood Workers Service (NWS)**
The NWS was established in 1985. Funding mainly comes from the tuition fees of retraining courses the party provides for the citizen. It only has about 30 formal staff members, and another 30 staff are employed to manage its retraining courses. Its founder, the Legislative Councillor, Leung Yiu-chung, said two thirds of the NWS's funds came from these courses and the income was very unstable.

### 5.3. 4 Resources of Pressure Groups
Pressure groups are suffering a more severe shortage of resources. They have to find alternative ways to struggle for survival. Before the handover, some of Hong Kong's grassroots community organizations could get financial aid from United Nations-related agencies and from Western church agencies. However, funding has increasingly become a pressing problem for these organizations. Financial support has declined since 1997, the main reason being that Hong Kong's parties are supposed to be able to fund their own groups (Cheng, 2001).

The major funding of the AFA comes from the donations on the annual June 4 candlelit Vigil, and a very few organizations' donations and membership fees. Apart from the only full-time member – the spokesperson Leung Kwok-hung, all of the twenty active core members of the group are party time members. The assistance of its volunteers depends on the features of events and their timing. In 2002, the group had seven or eight demonstrations and activities.

In general, most activities of political groups are severely limited by their relatively small workforce and shortage of funds. According to its spokesperson Richard Tsoi, the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) only employs one full-time staff to carry out all of its activities. Richard Tsoi himself has to take the responsibility to write the majority of press releases. Its funding comes from: 1) membership: every member of the group submits HKD $300-500; and 2) donations: in 2002, the group raised

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20 Leung Kwok Hung who has a nickname, 'long hair', is the founder of April Fifth Action and was elected as a Legislative Councillor in 2004.
funding of about one million HKD, of which, 300-400 thousand dollars paid for leaflets, staff salary and large scale campaigns.

5.4 Campaign Strategies of Parties

Because the parties are immature, more or less marginal in character, and resource-poor, they have to deploy their resources with efficiently and minimize and control the cost of communication and dissemination. Media publicity, undoubtedly, provides political parties of Hong Kong with an alternative resource for mobilization and arising funding. Therefore, all political groups are skilled in attracting media attention and in using opinion surveys (Cheng, 2001). However, a full review of the campaigns and media strategies in Hong Kong has not yet been prepared in the literature since the development history of the parties is relatively short. This section attempts to analyse the parties’ public relations strategies in aspects of image management and media management, internal management and advertising, and resource management, by drawing on data from the fieldwork interviews.

5.4.1 Image Management

The public’s impressive of the DAB is that the party is a ‘pro-China party’ which often stands by the side of the government and is concerned less with democratic and libertarian issues, and more with the economic, livelihood and social matters. The image management of the party fails politically, but is economically successful. Politically, its Public Relations Department Chairman suggested that the label of ‘pro-China party’ has a wide effect, such that they cannot not avoid offensive attacks from the media and are often perceived to approve any government’s policy for support. A councillor assistant of the party thought that the DAB’s image of being pro-China influenced the tone of newspaper coverage and was unfavourable to gaining the votes of the middle class. He said, “The media favour councillors who are anti-government and like to give more coverage to councillors with prominent performances, like taking a radical opposition role in the Legislative Council.” However, the built-in image of the party is not easy to shift unless the party changes its political stance, although it has devoted great efforts to break away from this label. Economically, the party has successfully built its image as a party which is concerned with issues like welfare, unemployment, housing and
trade. For instance, in 2003, the DAB built up an image as a party concerned with healthy by holding dietetic festivals, exhibitions on the preventing of diseases and various residential conferences.

The DP has two to three meetings per week to conduct a total review of its image. The image the DP attempts to build up is that of a party of openness and a fighter for democracy. One of the DP’s main platforms is to advocate further democracy at a faster pace. The votes and the seats of the DP gained from direct constituency elections in the LegCo prove the success of the party in the management although the party is perceived as ‘an opposition party for against’. The party has successfully caught the public’s psychology, in the sense that, the public needs to hear different voices and is eager to have the Opponent combating against the government, in order to prevent a possible constraint on freedom, to curb the growing power the pro-China forces and to oversee the governments. Accordingly, the DP’s campaign agenda mainly focuses on political policies, the government leaderships’ performance, and the pace and pace of democracy (concerning the issues of press freedom). Many issues of concern to the parties ultimately amount to controversies on democracy. In contrast to the DAB, the DP politically gains the approval of the public, but economically fails. The Chief Secretary of the party said, “Many people recognize and attach their attention to that we’re an opposition party, but often overlook our effort in likelihood, social and economic aspects.”

The DAB and DP have regular surveys of opinion in order to shape their policy in conformity to their image. Although the parties do not have their own research centres, they employ professional research centres to conduct small-medium scale surveys to understand the needs of the public and their attitudes to the party. Sometimes, councillors have to conduct policy research by themselves because of the shortage of resources. In the LegCo election campaigns, the two parties often help their candidates to design an image or provide them with advisers. However, in the District Council elections, candidates have to rely on themselves to deliberate on their image building. A DP secretary said,

We don’t have enough resources to employ a designer and to deal with requirements of all candidates; however, we will consult for some individual candidates without great experience of election to train them in
what to be aware of, how to dress and speak and what attitude is proper during the elections. Sometimes, we will prepare some standard answers for them.

(20/05/2003)

Likewise, the chairman of DAB’s Public Relations Department pointed out, they could not consult for all candidates in elections. However, the department provides some training course and conferences to candidates about the image they should build up the constituency, what attitude they should have towards the media what form of campaigns they can use and what technical assistance the DAB will offer to candidates. Regarding the small party, NWS, its councillor, Leung Yiu-chung, said he did not attempt to manage any image and also did not have sufficient strength to do so because with their limited resource it was even difficult to deal with daily affairs. Leung thought that his public image mainly derives from his performance in the LegCo and past contributions in district affairs. Likewise, the image of the resource poor CHRF and the AFA is based on their performance in campaigns. The two groups do no employ any expert to design image but depend on their experience, intuition and members to shape their image.

5.4.2 Media Management

The proactive devices of media management are adopted through press conferences, press releases, ‘trailing’ or ‘leaking’, and following-up briefings. For routine access, both DAB and DP write a press release three to four times per month and send them by fax. The frequency of press conferences depends on the nature of an issue. A councillor assistant of the DAB said, “It is very important whether an issue or event involves public interest, whether it has selling points and news value, whether it is a hot topic in relation to livelihood, and whether it is unique. These elements are the keys to arouse the interest of the media.” If an important issue appears and generates wide public concern, the parties will hold relatively more conferences to explain their policy and state their stance. In the peacetime, the media take the initiative more than the parties, seeking their opinions or comments. Regarding press releases, according to the assistant, they are presented in a way which caters to the media’s taste and values, in particular creating a lively effect. If any survey with unexpected results or findings can attract the attention of the media and also be in line with the parties’ goals, it will be primarily presented in their press releases.
Reactive devices are used in a crisis as ‘damage’ management, in order to minimize negative coverage. The informants of both the DAB and DP thought that there were few wrong reports on them and no fabricated coverage, what the media usually do is to ‘garble’ their statements. In such cases, the parties do not and also cannot take any action against the media. The reactive devices are generally adopted in crisis management, when the parties are attacked by opponents or when scandals in relation to them occur. For example, in the 2000 LegCo election, some people suggested that the DP candidates had embezzled party funds. The DP immediately opened a press conference and took the initiative to offer relevant information to the media. The Chief Secretary of the party said,

We can’t control the coverage of the media. What we can do is to try our best to reduce the damage. The media like to report some whipped-up controversy to attract the readers. But this kind of coverage really damages our image. The positive coverage is to report the policy suggestions, research results and activities. Yet these issues don’t attract the media much […] The DP has some members who are relatively adept at crisis management. We often ask these members to impart their experience to other members about be aware of and how to respond to enquires by the media.

(17/07/2000)

5.4.3 Internal Management and Advertising

Two main devices are used for internal management: information management and resources management. In a permanent campaign, parties usually assign have a specialized spokesperson who is an expert or professional of a political and socio-economic issue to unify their speeches in public. For example, the DAB divides issues into eleven categories, like justice and legal service, public service and constitutional affairs, security and information. Different spokespersons are in charge of an issue which they are familiar with or have great experience in. For example the chairman Tsang Yok-sing was in charge of the issues of the justice and legal service. The DP has a similar arrangement to the DAB’s. However, due to the limitation of resource, the spokesperson Richard Tsoi of the CHRF has to be in charge of all conference speeches, briefings, trailing, and all large scale campaigns in relation to Article 23.
Resources, as mentioned previously, are a key element in determining the media-parties relations and parties’ strategies. The relatively resource-rich parties can more easily access the media and gain more attention from them. The resource-poor party and pressure groups find that the media coverage they receive relies heavily on issues by comparison. Both groups re-allocate and acquire resources in two ways: mobilization of volunteers and public opinion, and coalition of groups sharing with similar political values. Mobilization enables them directly or indirectly to strengthen the power of the parties and/or increase the media coverage. These include symbolic forms of demonstrations and rallies designed to attract media attention. These strategies are used particularly by the resource-poor groups, such as the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF), the Alliance, and the AFA often exploit the strategies to gain publicity. Regarding coalition of groups, it often takes place for important political agendas and events. For instance, the CHRF is a platform of the coalition including over thirty groups and parties for protesting against the legislation of Article 23. However, Richard Tsoi indicated that the media will ignore the coalition if they do not have any activity or campaign. In this sense, the issue-basis coalition is relatively dependent on the media’s initiative.

In election campaigns, various parties disseminate their policies and promote their party or candidates by different forms of advertising, such as posters on buses and mini-buses, websites, party leaflets, and advertising boards. However, dissemination is not allowed via broadcast media, in order to give a fair forum to all candidates who present their platforms in the weeks before an election. By reason of resource shortage, the parties or councillors cannot afford to spend much on advertisements. A council assistant of the DAB said,

> Usually, we seldom carry out advertising in newspapers because it is too expensive to us. Taking into account the problem of funding shortage, we mainly carry out advertising in election campaigns. Our councillors use more street advertising boards, dissemination by station stations and regular meetings with residents (twice a week).

(06/04/2003)

According to the chief secretary of the DP, the party used about one million Hong Kong dollars for advertising in 1998, but they only used some tens of thousands in
2002. They did not employ an expert to deal with every item, but only did so for a few single items did so. They often design advertisements by themselves or have them done by friends or experienced party members, in order to economize their expenses.

5.4.4 A Case of the DAB’s Strategies

A notable recruitment of media strategies occurred in the District Council election of 1994. The DAB joined the election for the first time, but most people’s predictions for it were gloomy. However, the DAB, by using various systematic media strategies and mobilization of public opinion, was able to influence the unfavourable situation. The result of the election proved that the party had to a great extent achieved success as a newly emerged force, although its ambitions in the LegCo were not satisfied. Consequently, the DAB infused new vigor into local election campaigns and election culture through media management. Confronted with the oncoming offensive of the DAB, the DP had to change their conservative election strategies. In response, they also adopted diverse strategies against the DAB offensive. The election established a new model for local political campaigning. Today it is taken for granted that political groups will seek more popular appeal through the mass media in the future (Tang, 1998).

In the 1994 election, the DAB carried out the most centralized and carefully coordinated campaign. It was the first of the parties to organize in such a way. Firstly, the party unified its slogans and used other means of communication as much as possible; for instance, posters, leaflets and streamers were disseminated everywhere, which created a great momentum. Secondly, the party knew about how the media operated and what concerned the public the most. In particular, the party raised some issues in relation to Hong Kong people’s concerns in media agenda, for instance, old age pensions, supermarket sales of date-expired food, and pornographic VCDs. It successfully built up a positive image of the party and impressed the public by addressing their concerns. Thirdly, they provided information subsidies to build up exchange relationships. The party understood the news value of the media and attempted to maximize it to manage the media agenda by providing stories which they thought were newsworthy.
Hence, they took the initiative to provide information for the convenience of the media by offering press releases, prepared stories, and hot issues which were rising in public agenda, ‘leaking’ news, and creating photograph opportunities for the candidates. These strategies increased their chances of free publicity in the news media coverage. Furthermore, in the election, the party also exploited its victim candidates who suffered from violent incidents to gain the public’s sympathy via the media.

From the interviews of the fieldwork and the above analysis, it is found that the professionalism of the parties is confined to their resources, cognition of strategies, and perspectives on media publicity. Strictly speaking, the professionalism of the parties’ public relations, in particular, media management is rudimentary. According to a councillor assistance of the DAB, there is no specific department or person who is in charge of media affairs because they have branches and diverse affairs to deal with and only a few staff in the headquarters of the party are in charge of all relevant affairs. In the 1995 LegCo election, the DP had employed image consultants to take charge of public relations and design the logo and image of the party, but the cost was too expensive to continue. Currently, the party’s Public Relations Department seeks the helps of some members who are engaged in the profession of public relations or familiar with it. Regarding the small party NWS and pressure groups - the CHRF and the AFA have to rely on their core members to deal with media affairs. All interviewees did not think that they employed any strategy of media management, spin doctors as advisers or image consultants, apart from the early instance by the DP, mention above. The Communication and Public Relations Committee or Communication Department of the parties play the role of spin doctors to design the parties’ image, plan their strategies, and deal with the media. In addition, researchers and personal assistants work closely with their councillors in analysing public issues and mapping their strategies.

Conclusion
Because there is no literature in relation to the public relations strategies of Hong Kong parties, this chapter firstly looked at the strategies western political parties routinely employ in campaigning activity. It then turned to analyse the resources
influence of the parties and pressure groups in Hong Kong, and to understand how the resource influence on the parties' campaigns since it becomes the biggest barrier of the parties which are facing and constraining their professionalism in public relations strategies. With the development of political parties in Hong Kong, the parties increasingly employ the campaign strategies and advertising to gain more publicity. Their strategies were analysed by using McNair's concept of public relations.

The two biggest parties, the DP and DAB, with greater resources, run a relatively effectively professionalized campaign. The resource-poor parties are particularly reliant on the free publicity of the media, as they have few other forms of resource. These have no large membership base and often have to think on their feet, exploiting government unpopularity and using a charismatic spokesperson to gain coverage. However, the situation is understandable, in the light of the mentioned brief illustration of Hong Kong's political environment. In short, there is wide scope to improve the professionalism of the parties' management in the future. Chapter six will continue to draw on the interview data to answer the main subsidiary questions of the third question – how the news media covers political groups, and their campaigns and the media-parties relationship.
Chapter 6 Journalistic Paradigms and Media-parties Relations in Hong Kong

Introduction

This chapter, drawing on interviews, firstly highlights how journalistic paradigms and news objectivity influence media coverage in political groups, in particular how three main components of journalistic paradigms — distribution of political power, market forces and press ideology — influence coverage about the parties. Then, it explores the relationships between the media and the political actors in Hong Kong.

6.1 Journalistic Paradigms and Hong Kong Media

The previous chapter has shown the strategies the parties adopted in order to manage the media coverage. However, although politicians largely decide what issue or event is important, in no case is there a “guarantee of publicity for the image-seekers and there is as yet no evidence that any local political organization has secured a permanent access to (or for political control of) any particular media” (Kuan and Lau, 1988, p.33) because journalists define what is interesting and what is the political ‘reality’ through the processes of newsgathering and production (Cook, 1989). Political news is not only influenced by public relations of parties, but also decided by journalistic paradigms and news values, since the media are a key gatekeeper in the process of the news-making and the final decision-makers to decide what the reader sees in the paper. This section analyses the influence of journalistic paradigms in media coverage of political groups, which includes social power distribution, market forces and press ideology, and news professionalism.

The concept of ‘journalistic paradigm’ was put forward by Chan J.M for his thesis in 1981. The concept of paradigm, which Chan borrowed from Thomas Kuhn, was further developed by his cooperation with Lee in 1984 and 1991. It was defined by Chan and Lee (1991, p.23) as

a set of taken-for-granted and unspoken assumptions, cognitive maps, or gestalt world views that inform the media as to what “social facts” to report (and what not to report) and how to interpret them. The Journalistic paradigm, thus, is a way of ‘seeing’ that defines the entities of journalistic concern and results in patterns of selective coverage, interpretation, emphasis, and exclusion.
To put it simply, journalistic paradigms determine how the media cover political issues, and what is covered or not covered in the process of newsmaking. Chan (1987) found that different press ideologies largely decided media coverage in the three power structures (the colonial government, the Chinese government and the Taiwan government) during transition. The leftist papers, acting as the Chinese government’s propaganda mouthpiece, gave highly supportive reports of the Chinese government, critical coverage of the colonial government, and sharp and critical coverage of the Taiwan. The centrist papers, which were market-orientated, ad-supported and not linked to any political party, remained comparatively balanced in reporting stories of the three governments. In contrast to the leftist papers, the rightist papers, which included mainstream papers with a tilt to Taiwan and ultra rightists’ propaganda outposts of the KMT, covered the Chinese government with sharp and critical tones, while they were less critical towards the colonial government, and largely supportive towards Taiwan (ibid.). Based on these findings, a further study was conducted by Chan and Lee in 1991. They identified three major determinants that jointly and interactively shape the formation of journalistic paradigms — the larger pattern of power distribution, market forces and press ideology.

In the transition from a dualistic power structure (British/Hong Kong and Chinese government) before 1997 to a single power structure (Hong Kong/Chinese government) after the handover, the Hong Kong media took several years to prepare and adjust their perceptions towards different political forces in the new political environment. The tradition of the leftist, centrist and rightist journalistic paradigms eventually diminished in the late 1980s, and is replaced by the pro-China, neutralist and pro-democracy paradigms after handover.

6.1.1 Distribution of Social Power
Media coverage is largely decided by how political power is distributed. The division of the political beat is strong evidence which shown the relationship of the media trail to the power distribution. For example, in the Ming Pao political beat, journalists have their own interview sub-beats according to the division of districts and the parties. Some are in charge of the DAB beat, and some are in charge of DP or Breakfast Group (a party). Politically, the government with extensive resources
holds most of the power in its hands. As the most powerful actor, it receives extensive coverage on the grounds of power dependence and authority legitimacy of the media. A Ming Pao journalist evaluated the ratio of coverage of the government to the parties as 7:3. He said,

The power is in the hands of the government. If you read the news daily, you are very clear who holds the most of the power in Hong Kong. The news with bigger layout, headline, banner and picture certainly is more important. Who goes with this kind of news ahead? The officers, parties' scandals and corporations go. Simple and thoroughgoing party news is impossible to be edited in the front page. We have to consider what is important and what is influential.

(Ming Pao journalist, 30/03/2003)

This journalist’s evaluation might not be accurate or applicable to every case, but it gives an indication to what extent the media give priority to the government stories. Political parties, in particular, those that are resource-poor, find that it more difficult to attract the media’s attention. These groups have to keep active contact with newspapers, such as writing forum pages for the media to ensure their publicity. According to its resources and hierarchy, the DP is relatively resource-rich, and thus regarded as a group with more newsworthiness. The media are more likely to contact them for their opinions or comment, although coverage is often concentrated on the remarks of its famous Legislative Councillors. As a resource-poor group, the AFA receives little coverage by comparison. Its spokesperson, Leung Kwok-hung, said,

Basically, the media seldom covered us at the beginning of establishment of the group. Sometimes we wrote letters to them, but they had no response at all, in particular, at the early stage from 1989 to 1992. [...] At present, most of the time, the media cover campaigns which they are interested in and judge newsworthy. However, resources constrain us from holding more campaigns.

(19/05/2003)

According to the current structure of power distribution, media coverage of political actors receive basically follows the sequence as below in routine access:

SAR government > political parties > pressure groups
In other words, the government often receives the most of the coverage, political parties are the next, and pressure groups are received the least. In the power structure, public opinion is a catalyst or variable that could change this sequence. The extensive coverage parties and pressure groups received in the case of Article 23 demonstrated this potential of shift.

6.1.2 Market Forces
Hong Kong's media operate under the notion of a market economy, and therefore are highly commercialized and largely dependent on advertising revenue and circulation for their existence. Apart from RTHK (Radio and Television of Hong Kong) which is owned by the government, and a few party newspapers (pro-China papers), all the media are privately owned and dominated by market forces. Speaking from an optimistic perspective, the free and competitive media system are favourable to the development of media pluralism because diverse media ownerships mean that the opinions the media cover and present do not concentrate on a few specific groups, but on comparatively broad interest groups. For instance, the opinions of pro-democracy groups can be presented by the Apple Daily (mass circulation), South China Morning post (middle class/elitist) and the RTHK; the Wen Wei Pao (elitist), Oriental Daily (mass circulation) and Sing Tao (elitist) reflect the interest of pro-China groups; the Ming Pao (elitist), Hong Kong Economic Daily (elitist) and Hong Kong Standards (elitist) represent interests of the middle class.

However, intense competition of the media has resulted in a tendency for that most of the mainstream media increasingly to cover sensational items to cater to the public's tastes, at the expense of covering political issues. For example, the most popular daily of Hong Kong – the Apple Daily, which was launched by controversial entrepreneur Jimmy Lai who sold out the 200,000 copies of its first issue, cut off its manpower of the political beat and news pages to feed readers' insatiable appetite for crime and horse racing. In the sense, the media have diminished the chances of presentation of the individual's voice in politics as limited news-space does not provide them with many chances. Meanwhile, the media shows a preference for covering 'nosy' news such as the personal life of political leaders, scandals, sensational speeches, and corruption. Thus, the coverage
the political groups have received in recent years has tended to be more 'soft' features. This situation is exacerbated by the stimulation of two impulses.

Firstly, intense competition increases operational difficulties of the media. In 1995, commercial wars exploded, resulting in several newspapers and magazines closing down because of financial problems. After the handover, the media faced a more difficult the operational environment as a result of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1998 and the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia in 2003. Many newspapers were forced to make cutbacks in order to tap new resources and economize on expenses.

Compared with before the handover, pro-democracy and neutralist newspapers are generally concerned more with market than political forces. Newspapers reserve less space for political coverage and allocate less 'manpower' to the political beat. For example, before the handover, eight to nine journalists worked for the political beat of the Apple Daily. After handover the team members were reduced to two formal journalists, and the page on 'China News' was cancelled on the grounds of various financial considerations. The beat now only covers LegCo and some important political events. In addition, to save manpower, the political page has been merged as a part of Hong Kong News. If there are significant political events or issues, journalists from the 'Local News' page will help the journalists of the political beat to deal with these issues. The prevailing phenomenon of tapping new sources and economizing on expenses also influences the Wen Wei Pao. The paper has approximately ten journalists in charge of the political beat, a decline since the handover. In the Ming Pao, six people are in charge of the political beat, including one editor, one team leader and four journalists. The cutting of manpower directly influences the media coverage of political groups, because the decrease of labour numbers inevitably leads to a decline in the amount of coverage.

Secondly, the editors and chief reporters of many Hong Kong newspapers have a common assumption that audiences in Hong Kong are not interested in political affairs (So, 1982; Yu 1981 in Atwood and Major, 1996). This belief bolstered their pursuit of sensationalism and tendency to 'magazinize' news layout; news coverage is presented with more extensive picture coverage and short articles. Infotainment has become a mainstream prevailing trend among the media. The Hong Kong
Journalists Association, in its 1998 Annual Report, admitted that survival had become the dominant concern; market considerations outweigh all.

### 6.1.3 Press Ideology

In Europe and some developing regions, press ideology has been the most important determinant of the media structure. In Hong Kong, press ideology also plays a significant role in influencing media coverage, even with the rise of the commercial press and decline of the political media (Chan and Lee, 1999; So, 1999). The ideology is represented by a set of assumptions, attitudes and orientations which affects the conception of politics and determines political behaviours. Ideology could define journalist’s news sense, influence their news judgement and even determine the angle of story writing.

(So, 1999, p.101)

### Press Ideology in the Colonial Era

The Hong Kong press ideology can be traced back to the 1840s, when Hong Kong was just ceded to Britain. Media partisanship existed, but with an external reference, as there was no local party in Hong Kong. According to So and Chan (1999), the early press was closely tied to the colonial and business elites, the newspapers of this century served as the propaganda means of various Chinese parties and interests. Commercial newspapers in Hong Kong firmly established themselves as the mainstream newspapers when *Wah Kiu Yat Pao* and the *Kung Sheung Daily News* started publication in 1925 (Chan, Lee and Lee, 1996). Over the decades, these newspapers were joined by the *Sing Tao Jih-Wen Pao*, the *Sing Tao Daily News*, the *Oriental Daily News*, and the *Ming Pao Daily* to make up the major newspapers of Hong Kong (ibid.). The primary concern of the commercial papers was to provide the public with information about local affairs and daily entertainment.

At the time, Mitchell (1969 in Kuan and Lau, 1999) found that the Hong Kong government could afford to grant the press a substantial degree of freedom of expression due to the indifference of the press to local politics but, editorials critical of the Hong Kong government were rare. Since the late 1960s, the media-political system had been subjected to rising social pressures to change. From a review of
the 1966 riot by Communists aimed at toppling British rule, the self-confidence of
the colonial government was boosted because the local population forcefully
demonstrated its determination not to ‘rock the boat’ (Chan and Lee, 1999). This
made the colonial government realise that its major cause was the communication
gap between it and its people because there was no pressure groups or political
organizations to counter the government and no political elites to represent the
lower classes. The press began to move away from its obsession with Chinese
politics and turned its attention toward local communication by proving more
coverage and putting more relevant news on the front pages (Kuan and Lau, 1999).

Before the 1970s, news about the government was controlled by the Department of
Information Services, which the media had to rely on for news (Lee, 1999). The
basic news paradigms tended to be identification with the colonial government and
to accept its legitimacy (Chan, 1992 in Kuan and Lau, 1999). In the 1970s, the
increasing number in proportion of the locally born population increased the growth
of the advertising industry, which in turn facilitated the rise of commercial
newspapers. The Hong Kong government also became more active in recruiting
social elites into the decision-making process and into gathering public opinion to
increase legitimacy and gain acceptance for government policies from citizens
(ibid.). Neutralist commercial newspapers appeared to speak for the local people
and focus more on the rising grass-roots representatives. However, popular
organizations could not compete with the government and the newspapers seldom
criticized government policies (Lee, 1999). Basically, the press ideologies were
divided into three groups: pro-Taiwan (the rightist), neutralist, and pro-China (the
leftist).

Since the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, the political
environment began significantly shifting due to the Chinese government’s entry
into Hong Kong politics. The media tried to find “a political role in the changing
political process, with some avoiding politics altogether, while others
commercialized it to suit market demands” (So and Chan, 1999, p.18). According to
Chan (1987), journalistic paradigms as manifested in organizational strategies,
editorial policies and symbolic contents, showed a general shift to accommodate
Xinhua (China) as the political masters to be. Overall, the press responded
positively to Xinhua's cooperative strategies: the mainstream newspapers switched from an initial stance that favoured continual British rule to one that concurred with China's plan of retaking Hong Kong. Publishers and journalists were officially incorporated into political institutions which Xinhua (China) had established for the transition (ibid.).

The media became publicly more outspoken and Hong Kong's citizens became more active in asserting their rights by the mid-1980s. According to Hutcheon (1998), the major impetus for more democratic procedures came in reaction to the Chinese military crackdown on protestors in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, when over one million of Hong Kong's six million population demonstrated and demanded more democratic institutions to protect themselves from similar crackdowns after the takeover. After Christopher Patten became the last British governor in Hong Kong in 1992 the pressure for democratic elections increased and, in 1995, the first democratic elections took place.

During the transition, the set of assumptions, attitudes and orientations of the media in Hong Kong was facing a great challenge. Facing the growing influence of the Chinese government and the forthcoming 1997 handover, pro-Taiwan and pro-democracy newspapers in Hong Kong adopted a moderated brand of anti-Communism whereas the neutral papers were less critical of the emerging Chinese authority but more skeptical of the withdrawing British-Hong Kong government (Kuan and Lau, 1999). The phenomena of media self-censorship meant that the media adjusted their stance to ensure their business with China would be continued. This self-censorship was reinforced by changes in the ownership structure of the media in the 1990s when overseas Chinese business magnets, who held substantial commercial interests in China, bought up important Hong Kong media outlets. They cared more about winning favor with China's leaders (Hutcheon, 1998).

**Hong Kong Media after Handover**

On grounds of apprehension about possible Chinese coercion after 1997, press ideology eventually shifted. The withdrawal of the rightist newspapers is a sign of the shift, whereas the neutralist newspapers do not toe any party line or systematically support or attack a particular position (Lee and Chu, 1998). The
neutralist papers are critical of the Hong Kong government, but they practise self-censorship to avoid showing their political stance on sensitive Chinese political issues. At present, only a few non-mainstream leftist newspapers remain in the printed media marketplace of Hong Kong. For example, both the *Wen Wei Pao* and *Ta Kung Pao* are mouthpieces of the Chinese central government. The *Wen Wei Pao*, which was launched in 1948 by staff members of the Shanghai *Wenhuipao*, together with the *Ta Kung Pao*, are supervised by the Xinghua Hong Kong Branch in Hong Kong. As a mouthpiece, the newspaper's overall tone has to be consistent with that of Beijing, therefore it prefers to employ leftist journalists who come from mainland China or graduate from universities. However, after handover the partisan papers, as the listener and the propagandist of the Chinese government, lost their advantages and play less important roles than before.

![Figure 6.1 The Position of the Main Newspapers in Hong Kong](image)

The division between elitist and popular newspapers is apparent. Figure 6.1 draws a schematic representation of the relative positions of different media on the two cleavage axes in 2001. The abscissa divides the media's political ideologies towards

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21 Note: On the abscissa, the lower score represents proximity to the Pro-China pole, the higher is closer to pro-democracy. On the ordinate, the lower score represents proximity to popular position, the higher is closer to elitist.
the Chinese government into two poles: pro-China and pro-democracy, meanwhile
the ordinate is divides papers' market positions into two poles: elitist (targeting at
the middle class) and popular papers (targeting at the grass-roots citizens). From the
figure, it can be seen that most of the newspapers are categorized as elitist
newspapers; only three papers (the Apple Daily, The Sun and Oriental Daily) are
popular newspapers. The cleavage between the pro-China and pro-democracy camp
is even more apparent. Apart from the Apple Daily, all other papers tilt to pro-China,
although the extent of their political leaning is different. However, the division is
based on the editorial tones of the newspapers; the political tendency of the papers
in news coverage might be slightly less.

The influence of the press ideology on media coverage, sometimes, even exceeds
that of news objectivity. One-sided or biased reporting due to the ideology can be
seen in media coverage. The pro-China newspapers, in particular, often only report
what they agree with. The influence of press ideology on the angle of a news story
is illustrated by an example a Wen Wei Pao journalist provided. In coverage of a
pro-democratic demonstration, he said, many papers might focus on coverage, such
as comparing the number of the marchers with other years, the purposes of the
demonstration and views of participants, whereas the Wen Wei Pao would present
the stories from an angle of the action's impact on social stability, pointing out the
negative effects of the demonstration, such as a traffic jam or the amount of refuse
produced. The explanation of the journalist clearly illustrates the way pro-China
papers handle coverage of pro-democracy activities, event and members. Although
the Wen Wei Pao in such a case does reflect a side of the reality, it does not offer a
relative thorough picture to readers and a chance to the marchers to explain
themselves. In general, the pro-China paradigm dominates the decisions of
journalists and editors in the paper, causing them force out or marginalize events
and issues in relation to pro-democratic activities which are unfavourable to the
government or pro-China camp.

The way of disposal in relations to other similar issues or events is implicitly
approved by the journalist. A senior journalist of the Wen Wei Pao said that
journalists would not work for a paper if they did not accept the nature of the paper.
"Just like the Apple Daily, if it employs a journalist who said he doesn't like to
criticize Tung Chee-hwa or blame the government, so what is the journalist employed for?” he asked. What the journalist implied is that journalists are regarded accepting to the political ideology of a paper as long as they accept the job the paper provides. A remark of another senior journalist of the paper proved the point,

I have worked for the *Wen Wei Pao* for over ten years; I approve its editorial strategies all the time. [...] My position is in line with the paper’s position and view throughout. [...] I follow the principle and position of the paper when doing interview and collecting or selecting information.

*(Wen Wei Pao* journalist, 04/05/2003)*

However, occasionally, journalistic paradigms do not guarantee the media coverage of parties. For example, in 1996, the Democratic Party, which attempted to challenge the undemocratic process of choosing the Chief Executive, sponsored a mock campaign to nominate its own candidate, the party whip, Szeto Wah. The aim of the campaign was to collect at least 100,000 signatures from the middle of September. This campaign was confrontational to the government and, in terms of its social meaning, it was newsworthy. The media started to give candidates full coverage almost every day, especially Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa and Sir Yang, T. L. Surprisingly, most of the polls reported did not include Szeto Wah (Lee and Chu, 1998).

Additionally, Fung (1998) finds that Hong Kong journalists sometimes were critical toward the democratic camp. The critical attitude provoked negative feelings among DP organizers during a campaign. The organizers strongly felt that the journalists’ reports were deliberately biased against them. According to Fung (1998), the adversary attitude may be generated partly by utopian and romantic expectations about democracy. When the performance of the pro-democracy camp tells short of the expectations of journalists or is perceived as undemocratic, they will receive critical coverage because journalists need unexpected and interesting events in accordance with news value in their news routine. In general, the media follow their political ideology when covering political issues and groups.
6.2 News objectivity

The notion of objectivity represents a major component in Western journalistic paradigms, as well as Hong Kong. A study in 1990 showed that 95 percent of Hong Kong journalists considered ‘objective reporting’ and ‘rapid dissemination of information’ important (Lee and Chu, 1998). Although most of the journalists I interviewed admitted that they had propensities towards party identification, an Apple Daily journalist said, “I tend to the side of pro-democrats … but my coverage will be kept in a balanced way. If you [the journalist] report on an event, you have to give a chance to both sides to explain for themselves.” Another informant of the paper indicated,

What I consider is whether the reader can understand the story which I am going to write. Personal stance and my newspaper’s stance do not appear in or influence my interviews. If there is an opposite opinion, at the same time [I] will try to find out whether there is a supporting opinion to balance my reports.

(Apple Daily journalist, 22/08/2003)

A similar view was held by a Ming Pao journalist. He asserted, “Bias never influences what I do. Because we are very clear what we do must be objective, fair and report the facts. If our report is confined by our political stance, or personal stance, you can say that we are abusing the privilege of the journalist.”

However, objectivity is not an unchangeable component. According to So (1999), it is conditional upon different specific journalistic paradigms of different cultures. To be more precise, its value depends on “the dominant institutional nature of the press and the situational context of reporting” (So, 1999, p.131). When journalists take up employment with a paper, they should have some acquaintance with the paper’s culture and stance towards political groups. Under the influence of the organizational culture, the journalist’s personal political stance sometimes will be assimilated into that of the paper they work for and be in line with its paradigms to a certain extent. As a senior Apple Daily journalist said:

To be honest, you should be very clear what kind of newspaper you are going to work for before you are employed. Every newspaper has its own editorial position. The Wen Wei Pao has its position, so do the Apple Daily and Oriental Daily. If you don’t accept the organizational culture, it will
be difficult for you to continue your job. If you don’t like the paper, you wouldn’t choose to enter it.

(Apple Daily journalist, 01/05/2003)

Moreover, commercial interests mean that political coverage sometimes has to give way to other more sensational interest news which is often presented with large photos and headlines. Journalists of the political beat find that it is hard to maintain a balanced report, since the space the paper reserves for them is often not enough to give balanced coverage of both sides of the story. In summary, there is an uneven impact of journalistic paradigms on the media endorsement of news objectivity. The neutralist and pro-democracy media pay more attention to market forces and report news in a more balanced way than the pro-China media.

6.3 Media-source Relations

In theory, from a macro-point of view, the relationship between the Hong Kong media and the government is established on the principle of ‘business is business.’ The principle reflects the view that the media act as a ‘reflector’ of society. However, political or press ideology determinates relationships between the media and political parties. In general, the media-government relationship tilts to the adversary model rather than the exchange one. The nature of media-parties relationships can be partly seen from this description give by a DAB councillor assistant,

Every candidate and party likes the media but hates them at the same time. On the one side, the media help us to disseminate, to increase the popularity and to get publicity; on the other side, the media tend to cover more negative coverage than positive. You have to be aware that you might be given the wrong speech or a garbled statement. Our coverage of the Wen Wei Pao and Ta Kung Pao is more positive. But our relations are unlikely to be very good. They don’t cover some of our activities [...] whereas the Apple Daily gives very rare coverage about us; if it does, the report tends to be negative.

(DAB councillor assistant, 23/05/2003)

In routine media coverage, the pro-democracy camp simultaneously establishes both exchange and adversary relations with the neutralist papers, the pro-democracy papers, and the pro-China papers of mass circulation, but establishes adversary relations with the pro-China papers of non-mass circulation. Most of the time, pro-
China parties have an intense adversarial relationship with the pro-democracy papers and exchange relations with the pro-China papers.

How open or closed the source is and its availability is another consideration of the media in deciding their coverage. Sources that are more open get more coverage. By contrast, if one source is closed, the journalist will seek another source, although it might lead to unbalanced and unfair coverage. A Ming Pao journalist said,

> We have to cover what the audience or reader is interested to know and have the right to know. Even if you [I] know that it [the coverage] might not be fair and balanced enough, if the source does not want to speak, what can we do? The only thing we can do is as far as possible to put a phrase like ‘Until the deadline, the source has not yet responded.’

*(Ming Pao journalist, 30/03/2003)*

### 6.3.1 Source Channels

The government sources of the media are the ISD (Information Service Department), Information Officers, political parties, pressure groups, journalists and some citizens who actively provide anonymous information. The media mainly collect information through official channels such as press conferences, briefings and routine meetings (the Wednesday legislative meeting) and non-official conduits, such as leaks from officials. Information from these channels occupies the great weight of the media. The *Apple Daily* journalists point out that the citizen hot-line gives them some exclusive news coverage, for example, the news of the car-tax scandal involving the Financial Secretary Antony Leung was provided by a citizen via the hot-line (see Chapter 7 for the case of the scandal).

As the most powerful political actor, the SAR government is often the primary media source because “it is the final decision-maker, its influence is the most significant”, a senior Ming Pao journalist said. The authority legitimacy facilitates journalists providing the government the priority in coverage. Regarding the *Wen Wei Pao*, its pro-China tendency benefits the paper by easily gaining sources from the mainland Chinese press station and officials. It is notable that there is prevailed information exchange is prevalent among the media of Hong Kong, even if their political stances are conflicting. For instance, the *Wen Wei Pao* and the *Apple Daily* take opposite sides, but their administration or senior officers have established a
close relationship. However, such the exchange does not exist among the media where there is a conflict of economic interest.

6.3.2 Media-government Relations

The main ways that journalists gain access to the local government are through official channels, like press conferences, briefing, press release, and telephone enquiry of the ISD. Apart from routine official access, tea meetings are regularly arranged to maintain media-government connections and introduce new faces to each other. To compare with before the handover, some journalistic informants find that the governor uses more ‘question and answer’ strategies to face the media and has become less transparent. On these grounds, journalists find that they are burdened with more difficulties in their tasks.

The Higher in the Hierarchy, the More Difficult it is to Gain Access

The treatment journalists or the government receive depends on their position in the hierarchy. Overall, it tends to be that the government dominates the media-government relations. Individually speaking, from the journalists’ point of view, officials in higher position mean more difficult access. From the governor’s point of view, a higher position means being easier access to the media. An Apple Daily journalist said,

There was no problem in the relation to the common officers since they had a more open attitude than the senior officers. I feel that they [the main senior officers] always go with the purpose of what they did and what they said, they never really want to be a friend of you, this is impossible.

(Apple Daily journalist, 01/05/2003)

A similar view with more details was put forward by a Ming Pao journalist as a further explanation,

The Information Service Department (ISD) is very passive, namely, the journalist has to take the initiative to enquire and contact them. Personally, I seldom initiate contact with them. [...] they don’t have the responsibility to explain or ‘leak’ the information to you. Therefore, the news source rarely comes from the Information Officer (I.O.) unless you have something to ask.

Certainly, it [the relationship to the governors] depends on the situation. Some good I.O.s – generally, the common I.O.s are more willing to tell you what happened, talk a bit more. Some bad I.Os, most of them are in
higher positions, only earn their salary and make no contribution and they only pay attention to what they want and keep their mouths tightly shut. [They] just ignore you even if you ask some simple questions. Indeed, it is very difficult to rely on them for providing information now.  
(Ming Pao journalist, 30/03/2003)

It is not only the pro-democracy and neutral papers that have the problem of access, but also the Wen Wei Pao, which is assumed to have a better relationship, also faces similar problems. A journalist of the paper commented that governors are actually reluctant to talk with the Wen Wei Pao journalists, although the situation has recently improved slightly. In the light of Hong Kong’s history, it is understandable that some officers and departments still resist the paper because SAR officials who have just transferred from the colonial British administration are not used to specifically taking care of the non-mainstream paper.

The Less Experience the More Difficult to Access
Not only do officials in different hierarchical positions treat the media differently, but also differently ranking journalists receive different treatment. Junior journalists generally have access to two relatively familiar officers. Without a certain prestige, it is difficult for ordinary journalists of the political beat to find officers outside the regular channels. Senior journalists can relatively more easily find senior officials and check information with them, even out of office hours. They are able to build up a closer network with officials. Although some officials are willing to pick up the phone and talk to junior journalists, they often 'leak' less information or only provide official statements. A junior Wen Wei Pao journalist who had only worked on the beat for a couple of months said that he was only familiar with two DAB councillors. A junior journalist with experience of less than two years has to work at making an impression on officials: “Let your name fits to your face in their mind,” a junior Ming Pao journalist said.

The Less Circulation the More Difficult Access is
Journalists receive different treatments on the basis of different circulation of papers they work for. Journalists from papers with low circulation receive worse treatment. A senior journalist of the Wen Wei Pao stated,

Before handover, government officers preferred to leak information to the Ming Pao, Economic Daily, Oriental Daily or Apple Daily which have
more circulation than ours. Now, the situation has become better, they have slightly increased the equality of information leaking.

(Wen Wei Pao Journalist, 04/05/2003)

However, as a non-mainstream paper, the pro-China papers’ popularity in the government is lower than that of other mass circulation newspapers. One of its senior journalists explains,

What the government wants to say and sell, it prefers to appear in a paper with more readers. The influence of a same story with similar sentences in the Wen Wei Pao is obviously less than in the Ming Pao, even if she [the governor] knew that papers like the Ming Pao or the Sing Tao might not follow the angle that she would like them to take.

(Wen Wei Pao journalist, 06/05/2003)

From the above explanations, it is surprisingly found that media-government relations did not display clear alignment with the press ideology, although the governors face the pro-China papers with less vigilance. Rather, their relationships are established taking into the consideration the power hierarchy and the readership of the papers. The major reason is that most of the governors and senior officers are appointed, so that they do not need to concern themselves with publicity to affect their votes. By contrast, Hong Kong parties are generally resource-poor, thus, media publicity is regarded as an important kind of alternative resource subsidy. Providing more information and being more open-minded than the government, the parties have a relatively better media relationship which assists them in minimizing negative coverage and maximizing positive coverage.

6.3.3 Media-parties Relations
Overall the media-parties relationships are established in a more friendly way than those between the media and the government. To compare with the government-media relations, the media-parties relationships more clearly show a cleavage along the party lines.

Dependence on Press Ideology
The responses of the DAB informants revealed that they had established better relations with the Wen Wei Pao, Ta Kung Pao, Oriental Daily, the Sun and other pro-China papers, but had rarely made contact with the Apple Daily. Consistent
with this view, the chairman of the DAB Communication and Public Relations Committee commented that the pro-China papers which share similar political values with the DAB are easier to talk to.

By comparison, the DP has established friendly relations with the Apple Daily, Ming Pao and South China Morning Post, but unfriendly with the Wen Wei Pao, Ta Kung Pao and the Sun. Surprisingly, the DP and DAB have contradictory views towards the neutralist paper – the Ming Pao. Two DAB informants think the paper’s position tends to be rightist, rather than neutralist, but the DP interviewees think the paper is even handed in most of the time, although its editorial tone tends to be leftist. Sharing a similar belief on democracy, the pro-democracy have media established a closer linkage with the pro-democracy camp; meanwhile, the pro-democracy media seldom initiate contact with the pro-China camp. The Wen Wei Pao journalists admitted that they had a better relationship with pro-China parties, in particular the DAB. Preconceived impressions, whereby political groups presume that the media with different political stances will give them negative coverage, are firmly held. Their previous experiences also facilitate the formation of their assumptions.

Certainly, personal factors and issues can somewhat change the situation. There are some exceptional cases where individual journalists of the Apple Daily have established good relationships with members of the pro-China camp. However, personal relationships do not have much influence on coverage of the political group. The neutralist paper, the Ming Pao, does not show a clear political stance, although the paper’s editorial tone tends to be pro-China. Coverage of parties in the paper is largely situationally contingent on issues and individual factors. A senior Ming Pao journalist admitted that she had attended some official tea meetings or dinners with councillors and the more familiar they became, the more leaks she gained. A conclusion was made that the position of the paper [party-press parallelism] was the most important element for party-media relations, with the personal factor being next. A DAB informant said, “If the paper has a bad relationship with us, the journalist can’t write positively about us even if we have good relations.”
**Dependence on Resource**

The distribution of resources is an essential factor influencing the media-parties relationship. Parties' human resources (including number of councillors, staff, policy researchers, volunteers and supporting voters), parties' financial resources (including funding, facilities and number of offices) and political power affect media willingness to build up a relationship with parties. Resource-rich parties have more influence and significance to the public. An *Apple Daily* journalist says, “What parties say is very important since they hold votes in their hands; the political world which is very pragmatic is built up with money and votes. If you [parties] don’t have money and votes, you gain nothing.”

Resources in the political world are equal to power and votes. In this sense, it is understandable why the media coverage of the DAB and DP is much more than that given to other parties. A small party like the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People’s Livelihoods only has one representative in LegCo, so for journalists, the party plays an insignificant role most of the time. They seldom contact it. Unless small parties have good and valuable stories, the media do not like to cover their news. However, there are few such opportunities. Another example is the Citizen Party, which struggled in the recent election campaign, although its district exerted much effort to help residents to solve problems. The limitation of the party’s resources made it unable to present any newsworthy proposal or activities to attract media attention, and the party was completely forgotten by the media. A *Ming Pao* journalist emphasised,

> We definitely give more coverage to the resource-rich parties than the resourceless. If everyone can give you a news story, then for us, a big party certainly costs more attention and time to establish relations than the small party does. Big parties possess other benefits. For example, governors contact them more frequently before a policy is prepared to go to LegCo. Officers usually try to leak the proposal to big parties as a test of public opinion for their response.

*(04/05/2003)*

**Advertising and Media’s Political Stance**

Although the front journalists do not feel direct pressure from their superiors or advertisers, the influence of advertising cannot be ignored since readership is not the only source of media income. Advertising plays a decisive role even if it is not
the most important element of survival for some media. Advertisers in the gatekeeping model are regarded as one of the key gatekeepers who are able to influence the process of newsmaking or to filter out news stories; particularly in toady's intense competitive market where media organizations have to make profit and compete for survive. Sometimes, the media have to ingratiate themselves with advertisers to avoid coverage which advertisers are not in favour of. Hong Kong is a highly commercialized society in which the competition among the media is extremely intensive, these market-driven media inevitably pursue a high advertising revenue. According to Choy (2004), the total advertising revenue of the newspaper industry is estimated at over 4.3 billion Hong Kong dollars in 1995 and about 14.46 billion in 2003. From these figures, the increasing importance of advertising in the industry can be seen.

Cases of advertisers' interference in news coverage are not lacking in Hong Kong. For example, the chief editor of the Ming Pao Cheung made it editorial policy maintain the front page as the news page but was forced to abandon his intention to accept that advertising can be published on the page under great pressure from advertisers and a consideration of making profit for the paper. Moreover, according to the Hong Kong Journalists Association (2001), a July 2000 article in the Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ) reported that the chief executive's personal assistant, Andrew Lo, had prompted some property developers to boycott Apple Daily's advertising pages - a campaign that achieved limited, short-term success. This certainly is not an individual case which demonstrates advertisers interfering with the newsmaking process in Hong Kong.

Since transition, a wide concern has been cast on the Hong Kong media's exercise of self-censorship in reducing certain 'no-go' subjects related to the independence of Taiwan and Tibet and marginalizing relative negative news of the Chinese government. Journalists who are sometimes quick to pick up on what their editors want will simply never suggest articles on these topics and the media withholds criticisms on the Chinese government in order to curry favor with her or avoid coercion of the government. Apart from a few partisan newspapers such as the Wen Wei Pao and Ta Kung Pao, most newspapers in Hong Kong are privately owned and market-driven, thus how to increase their circulation and advertising revenue is
often their primary concern. With the growing influence of the Chinese government, on the one hand, media organizations exercise self-censorship lest the Chinese government negatively reacts to their coverage; on the other hand, the great potential market of mainland China is obviously an attractive opportunity to every Hong Kong media company. If a media organization wants to enter the Chinese market, supportive coverage of the Chinese government is precisely a pay to curry favor with the government. During the transition the Chinese government adopted conciliatory strategies in order to soften the media’s overall tones on the issue of handover, such as allowing some electronic media to launch services in the mainland and the mainland’s companies to subscribe to Hong Kong’s newspapers or magazines.

However, as mentioned, the Chinese government’s control on advertising in Hong Kong’s media mainly aims at the ‘no-go’ area which the government strongly resists. There is no obvious evidence which shows advertising directly influencing media coverage on local political parties or local political affairs. There are some cases in which the Chinese government expressed its discontent with the Hong Kong media and stepped into local affairs, such as supporting the Hong Kong government’s intervention in the stock market during the Asian financial storm and explaining the right of abode of Basic Law; however, the central government, on the surface, did not take any severe actions to boycott or financially punish any media organizations in Hong Kong.

Several rationales facilitate the result that advertising does not affect the media stances on local political groups to a great extent. Firstly, local political groups lack sufficient power and only act as ‘watchdogs’ to supervise the government. This means that local parties’ actions have not formed threats to the Chinese government. In addition, the majority of the local media are pro-China, thus the basic principles and directions of coverage will not challenge or conflict with the bottom line of the Chinese government. It is not necessary for the government to exploit the media against local parties. Secondly, if the media always tend to accommodate themselves to advertisers’ demands to sacrifice their purpose of mass communication, the circulation will be reduced because of customer dissatisfaction. This will lead to a vicious circle to decline of its circulation and advertising
interests. This is unlikely to be a cost-effective strategy. An *Apple Daily* editor of Hong Kong news said, "Of course, we sometimes have to consider economic benefits and circulation of our papers, however, right and wrong on issues of major importance and fundamental principles we’ll always follow our own direction – the public’s interest is everything". Thirdly, competitive pressures lead the media to seek audiences or readers for their advertisings. Although a Chinese background advertiser might withdraw its advertising, other potential advertisers would step forward to fill the void since Hong Kong is a plural society.

In summary, media-party relationships are based on political ideology and resource dependence. Personal factors, to a limited extent, can influence the relationships, but political beliefs have the strongest influence.

6.3.4 Media-pressure Group Relationships

The media-pressure group relationship is very similar to the media-parties relationship because many active members of the pressure groups are derived from parties. For example, the Civil Human Rights Front is formed from the Democratic Party, the frontier, Neighbourhood & Workers Service Centre (NWS) and other groups. Pressure groups can be divided into two types: 1.) active groups such as Hong Kong Civil Human Right Front, April Fifth Action and the Alliance; and 2.) passive groups, such as women’s rights organization. Active groups gain more coverage through their diverse political activities. To compare the *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*, perhaps the *Apple Daily* gives the most coverage to pressure groups. An *Apple Daily* journalist suggested a reason from this

*We are a bit rebellious on ground of the organizational culture. We are sympathetic to weak groups like Long Hair’s pressure group and the June Fourth Force. This reflects the public’s feeling too. Many citizens sympathize with them, feeling the government suppresses them, we reflect what citizens think and worry about*

(*Apple Daily* journalist, 01/05/2003)

In the neutralist papers, coverage of the pressure groups is contingent on issues and journalists’ personal relationships with members of pressure groups. The *Wen Wei Pao* seldom pays attention to pressure groups because of conflict of political belief. Human resources and column space do not allow the paper to cover small groups
with little newsworthiness. Thus, the paper often ignores the activities of pressure groups, in particular the pro-democracy ones. In terms of daily contact, they never initially connect with groups like the April Fifth Action. Usually, the paper’s journalist waits passively for the groups to send notices, or negative coverage is drafted if the journalist has to do interviews with their members. Pro-China pressure groups receive different treatment, as do the pro-China parties. For example, the Lawyer Society Association is one of the main sources with regard to Basic Law Article 23. However, coverage depends on the issue since the groups are often passive and work behind the scenes.

Conclusion
This chapter has shown that journalistic paradigms have been key considerations and rules in the media’s coverage of parties in post-1997 Hong Kong. According to press ideology, the media are mainly split along pro-democracy, neutralist and pro-China lines. The papers with a sharper political stance, give more weight to political ideology. Initial concerns about the intentions of China have not been realised and the press is free to, and does, perform a political role. At the same time the media are also commercial organizations and are aware of the limited political appetite of their readers. Overall, while the more serious papers devote less attention to market forces, the popular papers devote more in routine coverage.

The Hong Kong media generally do not have clear guidelines on how to deal with news about political groups. The only standard seems to be that coverage is not allowed to seriously conflict with the organizations’ position. Apart from that standard, journalists have relative freedom to deal with the news in their own way, since the mainstream commercial media do not have any clear political roles and they tend to commercialise political events. In routine access, although a few papers adopt a clear political stance, most commercial media in coverage of political parties which do not subscribe to fundamental democratic values are influenced by a hierarchy of power/resource and market forces more than press ideology. Senior and active councillors receive the most attention, the passive and the functional constituency’s councillors the least. News objectivity is a second determining criterion in coverage of political groups.
The relationship between the government and the media is established on the principle, 'business is the business.' Press ideology does not significantly influence the relationship, but it is affected by hierarchy in both organizations. Some journalistic informants indicate that government-media relations are worse than before the handover, as the government is less transparent. The media-party relationships depend on press ideology and the resources or power of the parties. The relationships between the media and press groups are contingent on the issue and campaigns of the groups. Chapter Seven will explore what strategies political actors used and what rules the media applied in the case of the car-tax scandal.
Chapter 7 Generating Controversy: the Car-tax Scandal

Introduction
This chapter sketches out three political groups involved in a specific political event – the car-tax scandal. It investigates the strategies the three groups adopted to handle the event, and the ways journalists covered the political scandal. It focuses on how the political groups attempted to set their agenda in the media in order to mobilize public opinion. Afterward, it analyses how three newspapers covered the stories through two research methods – content analysis and textual analysis.

7.1. Political Advocates and the Media Agenda
In 2003, a series of political controversies led the Hong Kong government to face an unexpected and unprecedented administrative crisis. The coverage of these political controversies in the news agenda generated subsequent consequences, such as the withdrawal of Basic Law Article 23, the resignation of two top ministers under public pressure, reformation of the Executive Council and the resignation of the DAB chairman Tsang Yok-sing for the party’s failure in the November 23 2003 District Council election. Outside government behaviour there are other long running controversies in the media agenda, such as the demand for universal suffrage for the post of the Chief Executive in 2007, the long-standing discord between Chief Executive and the Democratic Party, and protests against the appointment system of District Councillors. These issues are kept on message through parties’ campaigns that reflect the growing technique of public relations by the parties. The vital roles the media, parties and public opinion play feature in these controversies.

The agenda-setting ability of the pro-democracy camp is proved in the way that the issues raised in the media coverage were mostly associated with its demand for the increased pace of democracy. However, although the camp has the ability to set the media agenda, they encounter a great challenge, that they have to compete for media attention with a range of other issues, such as crime, economic affairs, unemployment, health and family violence. In addition, the Hong Kong media do not reserve enough space for the parties in their routine coverage due to their
assumption that the Hong Kong people are apolitical. The results of the polls in relation to reader/audience interest or habit, votes and their experience reinforced this assumption. Although the agendas arising in 2003 proved this assumption was inaccurate, based on the consideration of market forces the media still gave more attention to social-economic issues and regarded political issues as less newsworthy. The media treatment of political issues is illustrated by the decline in the number of journalists in the political beat and diminution of the political pages.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Apple Daily*, one of the most popular newspapers in Hong Kong, only assigns two formal journalists to the political beat. The *Ming Pao*, an elitist newspaper, allocates five or six journalists and usually reserves only half a page for daily political reports. The shortage of manpower causes the media to apply strict rules in the process of gatekeeping and in deciding the priority of the sources. These rules, with reference to political values, are shaped by the paper's political attitudes towards the SAR government and China. In routine access, the political parties cannot gain the specific attention of the media by virtue of the power they hold. In general, the government is able to gain the most media attention, whereas the parties have to rely heavily upon issues, strategies and resources, behaving like issue-entrepreneurs or claims-makers to project issues into the public domain (Anderson, 1997). Nevertheless, both parties and pressure groups play vital roles in attempting to keep issues on the media agenda through activities inside and/or outside the Legislative Council.

### 7.2 The Context of the Car-tax Scandal

On March 9 2003, the *Apple Daily* carried an exclusive news story which revealed that Financial Secretary Antony Leung had bought a Lexus LS430 costing HK$790,000 on January 23, just weeks before he announced an increase in the first registration tax. By the next day, almost all of Hong Kong's mainstream media noticed the affair and prepared follow-up coverage. Overall, the media aroused suspicions that Leung intended to avoid paying tax and called his integrity into question. In the morning of March 10, Leung called a briefing to simply explain the affair to the media. He admitted being grossly negligent over his decision to buy a new car ahead of his announcement of the increasing tax for luxury vehicles. In
response to his explanation, the Democratic Party sent a letter to the LegCo’s Finance Committee, requesting them to form an investigation committee to hold an inquiry into the Antony Leung affair. The Party also strongly reprimanded Leung’s behaviour and pointed out that the incident had damaged his integrity (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 The schedule of the car-tax scandal in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/01</td>
<td>Antony Leung bought LS430 for the reason of looking after his wife and newborn daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/03</td>
<td>Leung introduced the Budget at Executive Council, but he did not report the purchase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/03</td>
<td>Media revealed the affair. Leung explained to Executive Chief Tung Chee-hwa and offered to resign, but Tung refused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/03</td>
<td>In the morning, Leung asked his political affairs assistant to type his resignation, then submitted it to CE in person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/03</td>
<td>CE formally reprimanded him for “improper” behaviour, then retained Leung. Later, Leung admitted being grossly negligent over his decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/03</td>
<td>1.) The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was required by statute to investigate complaints filed against Leung. 2.) Inquiry into the car-tax scandal was voted down by legislators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04</td>
<td>LegCo rejected the suggestion of DP to form a special committee to investigate into Leung’s car purchase affair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/05</td>
<td>Hong Kong’s financial secretary survives no-confidence vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07</td>
<td>ICAC report on FS car purchase goes to Justice Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/07</td>
<td>The Financial Secretary resigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On March 11, the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, made a formal statement reprimanding what the Financial Secretary had done as highly ‘improper behaviour’, and described Leung’s behaviour as a perceived conflict of interest. Afterward, Antony Leung announced that he had just donated about 100,000 HK dollars to charity – double the amount he had saved on tax (Apple Daily, 10/03/2003b; Ming Pao, 10/03/2003b). The next morning, Leung submitted his resignation to Tung Chee-hwa. However, Tung stopped short of asking the financial secretary to step down and Leung withdrew an offer to resign over the controversy ‘at the request of’ Tung.

On March 21, Antony Leung came under investigation by the ICAC over
allegations that he had abused his power for personal gain. Although the DP suggested holding an inquiry into the scandal, the motion was voted down by Legislative Councillors. On May 7, Legislative Councillors voted down another DP motion of 'non-confidence in Antony Leung'. The public also raised their concern on the issue of the Leung's resignation in a series of demonstrations, rallies and petitions generated by the parties and pressure groups, although the issue was a by-theme in most of these campaigns. However, Leung decided to resign after facing great pressure from wide-ranging public appeals against him at the end of June. Two weeks later, the government formally announced his decision.

7.3 Media Management and Political Groupings
Apart from the media, two major political groups were involved in the controversy of the car-tax scandal in the media coverage: the group that defended Antony Leung, such as the government and the pro-China parties; and the group that attacked Leung and/or the government, such as the pro-democracy parties, the active pro-democratic pressure groups and some independent councillors.

Table 7.2 Parties' position on the car-tax scandal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Suspicious points still exist in the affair, urges Chief Executive to form an investigating committee to discuss the incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Frontier</td>
<td>Requests formation of an investigating committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAB</td>
<td>The incident ended. Not necessary to form the committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKPA</td>
<td>The incident has a clear ending. The public attention should focus on the Budget rather than following the affair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>Still considered whether it was necessary to form the committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *the Ming Pao* (18/03/2003).

Table 7.2 lists the different positions of Hong Kong's main political parties on the scandal. The attacking group includes the Democratic Party (DP) and the Frontier. The defending group includes the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) and the Liberal Party (LP).
7.3.1 The Failure of the Reactive Device

The key themes of the scandal in the media coverage surround criticisms towards Antony Leung’s behaviour and the government’s decision to retaining Leung in his position. The incident the government faced was a credibility crisis. The government thus had to seek a strategy of damage-limitation. The reactive strategy the government adopted included the lobbying of journalists, the ‘spinning’ of potentially damaging stories; the suppression of potentially damaging information, and ‘leaking’ positive information. Reactive public relations of the government’s damage-limitation were presented in two ways. Firstly, media management – the government attempted to minimize the negative coverage in the media by setting its own news angle from briefings and ‘leaking’. In the early morning of the day of exposure, Antony Leung immediately held a briefing to explain the incident to the media. Aiming at minimizing accusations of deliberate dishonesty, he provided his explanation of ‘gross negligence’. In addition, a number of unrevealed official sources leaked information to defend or explain Leung’s behaviour to the journalists.

Secondly, image management – the crisis seriously damaged Leung and the government’s image. The government strove for the public’s forgiveness and generated sympathy by building up a fair judge. The Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa reprimanded the ‘improper’ behaviour of Antony Leung in public and asked Leung to apologize to the public. The government attempted to give the impression that Leung had paid for his behaviour (by losing his face \(^{22}\) in public) to gain the public’s forgiveness. At the same time, Leung also attempted to manage endangered his image by providing a story about his personal-life that he often worked too hard to spare time for his wife. He sought to build up an image of himself as a responsible minister, to invite the public’s sympathy.

The final purpose of the strategies the government adopted was to manipulate the media agenda and direct public attention or opinions to its own angle and story. On the surface, the reactive strategies the government adopted to minimize the negative coverage were successful because the media did gave a respectable amount of

\(^{22}\) Traditionally, Chinese people attach great importance to their reputation and honour in society.
coverage to the government’s explanations, Antony Leung’s apologies and his personal life he mentioned. However, three problems existed in the strategy of the government which largely reduced the efficiency of the government’s strategy.

Firstly, Leung lost the initial opportunity of setting the media agenda. When the car-tax scandal was exposed by the *Apple Daily* on March 10, it appeared as if Leung had immediately responded to the media’s suspicion on the same day. However, the journalists of the papers revealed that they actually had asked for the relevant information two days before its exposure. The Financial Secretary’s office did not pay any attention to the inquiry. After the exposure, the office had been late in responding to the journalist’s questions and lost the preemptive opportunity to set the primary agenda. In addition, the media thought that the government’s formal response and Leung’s explanation, which only took about 10 minutes was too short to give a detailed explanation.

The second problem is related to the government’s internal communication in the crisis. The government did not unify the comments that were ‘leaked’. The media coverage of ‘leaked’ information included some that was not in line with the stance of the government – some criticizing and some defending Leung. The internal disagreement among the government reduced the feasibility of setting the media agenda.

Thirdly, the response of the government could not meet the expectation of the public. Tung’s verbal admonition and criticism was not strict enough to diminish the public’s resentment. Regular surveys conducted by the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme during September 2002 and June 2003 (see Table 7.3) showed that 65 percent of respondents disagreed that Leung should retain his post in June. However, the government still stood by its decision. The survey result revealed that the government failed to manipulate the media agenda and mobilize public opinion. Apart from the three reasons analysed, another reason for the government’s failure is that its agenda had to compete with those of the political parties and scholars. Other groups, in particular the pro-democracy camp, devoted great efforts to set their own stories.
Table 7.3 How to vote on the future of Antony Leung (per poll)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Survey</th>
<th>Reappointment</th>
<th>Dismissal</th>
<th>Abstention</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6/6/03</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13/3/03</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4/3/03</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6/12/02</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5/9/02</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HKUPOP (03/2003)

7.3.2 The Strategies of the Pro-democracy Camp

The DP exploited any chance meeting with the media to compete with the government’s agenda and gain publicity for themselves, further raising the public’s concerns by media management. For instance, on the day the story was initially exposed, the DP responded immediately by issuing a press release entitled ‘Concerning Leung’s involvement: the conflict of interest’ to reprimand Leung in public’. From the press release, it can be seen that the party attempted to raise two issues in the media agenda, to arouse public concern: the question on Leung’s integrity and the request for his resignation. Subsequently, a ‘resignation drama’ was produced. In due course, the DP and other pro-democracy actors raised another agenda with reference to the exact date of submission of Leung’s resignation (the aim was to criticize Leung for being irresponsible and reluctant to resign).

Despite continually raising new issues to attract the media’s attention, the DP also adopted two other proactive strategies of public relations to set the media agenda. Firstly, resource management – a coalition of the pro-democracy parties was implicitly formed to reinforce the power of protesting against the government and Leung. In order to allocate resources and mobilize public opinion more efficiently, a broad pro-democracy alliance including most of the pro-democracy parties and the active pressure groups was naturally formed to gain more publicity by sharing similar views on the incident.

Secondly, media management – despite press releases, briefings and conferences, the camp held a series of campaigns inside and outside the LegCo to attract media attention. Outside the LegCo, the camp adopted opinion polls and signature
campaigns to facilitate the public’s support for the party’s actions and decisions towards the Leung scandal. Inside the LegCo, councillors of the camp carried as many motions as possible to request for an investigating committee on Antony Leung, and urged the government to accept Leung’s resignation. For example, the chairman of the Frontier, Emily Lau, the chairman of Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU), Lee Cheuk-yan, and the DP chairman, Yeung Sum, put forward motions requesting Leung’s resignation in a LegCo meeting. Based on the principle of newsworthiness, the journalists inevitably covered these motions carried in the LegCo. From the media management perspective, it can be seen that the broad pro-democracy alliance unified their remarks to assist the formation of opinions against Leung.

7.3.3 A ‘Low Key’ Response

At the beginning of the incident, the strategy the DAB recruited was not to set the media agenda, but rather to avoid declaring its position, lower its tone and keep its distance from the media. The strategy adopted by the party, or speaking more accurately, the pro-China camp, was based on the following considerations: 1) they had to be line with the government. Before the government took action, they could not make any hasty decision or statement in the media lest it conflict with the stance of the government; and 2) daily media content and some poll results suggested that the government’s decision was likely to be contrary to public opinion. If they took an openly supportive position, it might influence the electorate against them. Based on these considerations, the DAB, the biggest political party in Hong Kong, played a passive spectator role in the affair, observing the developments and avoiding expressing its opinions, considering the possible conflict between the government’s decision and public opinion.

The closure device the pro-China camp adopted caused the media to cover only a few sources from the camp. The media had to seek other available and open sources, like the pro-democracy parties. After March 15 the government’s position and attitude on the Leung’s affair became clear, and the pro-China camp began to face the media. The DAB deputy chairman, Ip Kwok-him, noted that Antony Leung had no reason to give up the highly paid job of Financial Secretary for saving a small
amount of money. However, apart from a few pro-China papers, opinions in the coverage of the scandal tilted to favour the pro-democracy camp, which apparently gained much more coverage than the pro-China camp (as will be demonstrated by the content analysis in the next section). The mainstream opinions in the media had tended to criticize the government and Leung.

Table 7.4 Press releases of DAB and DP on March & April 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DP</th>
<th>DAB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern about FS Leung on the affair of the conflict of interest (09/03)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming an investigated committee on Leung’s case (23/03)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result of a phonetic survey on Leung’s car purchase affair (26/03)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral question on the matter of Tung retaining FS Leung on his position (14/04)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming an investigated committee on Leung’s case (25/04)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the DAB and DP websites

The press releases of the DAB and DP also confirm the strategies the parties adopted in the scandal. An on-line search on the websites of the DAB and the DP (see Table 7.4), revealed no DAB press release with reference to the Leung affair. In contrast, the DP has five press releases on the affair. The party even conducted a survey to prove its stance was in line with the majority opinion.

7.4 The Scandal in the Media Package

The previous section analysed the public relations strategies used by the government, the pro-democracy camp and the pro-China camp to set the media agenda and shape public opinion. Although these political actors showed their influence in the coverage of the affair, the media also showed their influence in determining the nature and the angle of a news story in the process of encoding and decoding, and in the form of commentaries, editorials, and interview questions.

7.4.1 The Agenda Cycle

According to increase and decline in the amount of coverage of the scandal, the media coverage in-between March and April can be divided into six development stages as Figure 7.1 shows.
After an exclusive story in the Apple Daily revealed the Antony Leung purchase affair on March 9, 2003, the other mainstream media immediately sensed that it was worth following-up the scandal and digging deeper. The next day, on March 10, most of the media in Hong Kong focused strongly on the scandal. The issue was getting into the media agenda. In the first stage (three days), the Apple Daily and the Ming Pao on average carried eight stories per day. In the second stage, the parties and the media were observing, and waiting for further action by the government. The third stage was another climax in coverage of the affair. The dramatization of the interaction between the actions of the government and the response of the pro-democracy parties prompted increased public and the media interest. In this stage, the Ming Pao and the Apple Daily on average carried six or seven stories per day. However, the Sing Tao carried fewer by comparison with the first and second stage. It only contained about two stories a day, in the ‘Local News’ page.

The result suggests that press ideology was probably taken into account in the coverage of the affair by the Sing Tao (the paper is a pro-China elite paper). In general, when the parties and the government took different actions or made a new
decision, the new agenda which was brought into the media coverage prompted increase in the amount of coverage. By contrast, the coverage declined when no action or new topic was brought. The result suggests that the parties can set their agenda in the media through their activities and campaigns.

Page Disposal and Press Ideology

Table 7.5 Coverage of three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>No. of stories</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>No. of stories</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing Tao</td>
<td>No. of stories</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
<td>No. of stories</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) Coverage of three newspapers in between 09/03-09/04/2003
2) A= Front story; B= Important News; C= Local News; D= Political section; E= Editorial; F= Opinion forum

Table 7.5 shows that the news coverage in the Ming Pao and the Apple Daily was about three times the coverage in the Sing Tao. On average, the Ming Pao and the Apple Daily covered two or three stories a day. 46.5 percent of stories in the Apple Daily were on the ‘Front page’ or the ‘Important News’, whereas 14.6 percent of stories in the Ming Pao were dealt with as ‘Important News’. There were no stories on either the ‘Front Page’ or ‘Important News’ page of the Sing Tao. Reflecting the orientation of the paper, stories in relation to the scandal were only allocated to the ‘Local News’ and editorial section. The result suggests that the layout of stories and the way the stories were presented in the paper was based on their political stance. The pro-democracy paper attached the most attention to the story which was unfavourable to the government, the neutralist paper attaches less and the pro-China paper attached the least. By reason of the innate character of the incident, the

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23 The importance of news can be seen from the disposal of pages. The front story is the most important and the next is Important News. The Local News, political section and opinion forum are in an equal position. The Apple Daily has cancelled the political section for a couple of years.
pro-China paper tended to minimize the coverage. In contrast to it, the pro-democracy paper tended to maximize coverage of the scandal.

**Editorial and Press Ideology**

The editorial presents a paper’s stance, and is its flagship. Table 7.5 shows that the *Ming Pao* carried the fewest editorials among the three papers; by contrast the *Apple Daily* carried the most, it carried almost two critical editorials a week. In general, the editorial stances of the papers are in line with the paper stances. Take *Ming Pao*’s editorial as an example:

Nevertheless, we do not think the FS [Financial Secretary] will be given the sack on that account. According to a poll we have done, more than 50% of citizens think he should remain in his post. However, the government must handle the aftermath of the affair very carefully, for, its prestige having suffered heavy blows, may face a deeper crisis any time unless it tries hard to regain the public’s trust. [...] We believe he inadvertently did what was improper, but can citizens not have been angered? It is beyond dispute that the government’s prestige is in tatters [...]  

(*Ming Pao* editorial, 12/03/2003)²⁴

The overtone of the *Ming Pao* editorial tends to be critical but also shows its mercy to Financial Secretary Antony Leung’s behaviour. The editorial analyses the crisis the government faced and provides the government with suggestions, rather than criticizes Leung’s ‘improper’ behaviour. A poll figure is mentioned in the editorial to persuade the public to forgive Leung, the reason being that over half the people were satisfied with Leung’s competence and approved the decision of the government on retaining Leung in his position. The overall tone of the *Ming Pao* editorial illustrates its pro-China orientation, and is in accord with its background.

The following is the *Sing Tao*’s editorial on March 11 2003:

The storm of the car purchase of Financial Secretary Antony Leung is rising. Leung raised the donation to HKD$380,000 and donated it to the charity yesterday. However, can he barricade the scandal by suffering

²⁴ The editorial was carried in Chinese on March 11 2003, and in English on March 12 2003.
money loss? Under the political environment where discontent among the people is boiling, his ‘negligence’ has been Leung’s biggest crisis since he entered the political world.

Although Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said yesterday that the incident was an ‘unwitting negligence’, he unusually publicly criticized that Leung’s behaviour as ‘improper’ and ‘negligent’. According to his usual style, it can be said that his remark is quite severe, that shows he understands the potential political crisis can not be underestimated. […]

(*Sing Tao* editorial, 11/03/2003)

From the two paragraphs, it can be seen that the editorial of the *Sing Tao* adopts a very similar stance to the *Ming Pao*. The paper thinks that Leung did not abuse his power for personal gain, but what he did was an unwitting negligence, and Tung’s government has given Leung a severe punishment. The remark shows that the paper is standing by the side of the government and sympathizes with Leung. The overall tone of the paper shows a slightly more moderate attitude to the government and Leung than that of the *Ming Pao*, in conformity with its political orientation.

To compare with the *Apple Daily*’s editorial on the same day:

What Leung did was not enough and could not quell the public’s suspicion although he was willing to confess to his mistake. In a further disappointment, Chief Executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa only verbally criticized Mr Leung’s mistake lightly. He did not inquire into his [Leung’s] responsibility for the mistake, but also did not give any penalties. With such attitudes, how can he [Leung] easily admit the mistake, how can [the government] burden responsibility and how can [the government] establish the credibility in the accountability system? […]

(*Apple Daily* editorial, 11/03/2003.)

The *Apple Daily* strongly criticized Leung’s behaviour and Chief Executive Tung’s decision. The paper sent out appeals calling for a further investigation into the scandal and the resignation of Antony Leung. The appeals were in conformity with the pro-democracy camp’s opinion on the scandal. Apart from the *Ming Pao*, the editorial tones of the other two newspapers are in line with their political stances, showing their reserved and radical attitudes respectively. In the *Ming Pao*, the
allocation of the outlet and the presentation of the stance in the editorial and news stories are somewhat different. Its news stories tend to be more neutral and less considering of political factors.

7.4.2 Routine Source
The inquiry into one month’s coverage of the three papers reveals that the papers rely heavily on a few fixed sources. They are likely to seek familiar sources on the grounds of the convenience of information gathering and more ‘leaks’. For example, when talking about the government’s interpretation of the scandal, public opinion and the parties’ motions, journalists of the pro-democracy and neutralist papers often quoted a lecturer at City University of Hong Kong’s Division of Social Studies, Ivan Choy, as a neutral authority to balance their coverage. Their party sources often come from the DP, such as the chairman Yeung Sam, the pioneer of the party Martin Lee, and Legislative Councillors James To and Cheung Man-kwong; those from the DAB such as chairman Tsang Yok-sing and deputy chairman Ip Kwok-sing; and others, such as the chairman of the Frontier, Emily Lau, and the chairman of LP, James Tien.

The reason for using routine political sources is that established relationships between the media and sources, and availability of access allow the journalists to gain a steady supply of information from the familiar sources. Some commentators have criticized journalists for making too much use of a few limited sources on different issues. The routinized sources makes it difficult for the media to sustain a neutral stance of news coverage when journalists only provide a few opportunities to other sources or interest groups to express for themselves and provide different voices. In addition, the sources often have their own political bias. However, speaking from another angle, these sources can more easily set the media agenda.

Getting into the Source of Official and Political Parties
The media treatment towards sources can be seen from the sources’ order of precedence in a story. The primary and secondary sources are selected to analyse articles, on the grounds that these sources are relatively more influential in a story.
Table 7.6 Usage of primary and secondary sources in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Apple Daily (%)</th>
<th>Ming Pao (%)</th>
<th>Sing Tao (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary source</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK government</td>
<td>16 28.1%</td>
<td>19 29.7%</td>
<td>13 59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-democracy camp</td>
<td>14 24.6%</td>
<td>13 20.3%</td>
<td>3 13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China camp</td>
<td>2 3.6%</td>
<td>4 6.3%</td>
<td>1 4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>2 3.6%</td>
<td>1 1.6%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars /Experts</td>
<td>5 8.8%</td>
<td>7 11%</td>
<td>2 9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>5 8.8%</td>
<td>2 3.1%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13 22.8%</td>
<td>18 28.1%</td>
<td>4 18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57 100%</td>
<td>64 100%</td>
<td>22 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary source</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No source</td>
<td>13 22.8%</td>
<td>16 25%</td>
<td>2 9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HK government</td>
<td>11 19.3%</td>
<td>14 21.9%</td>
<td>8 36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-democracy camp</td>
<td>6 10.5%</td>
<td>13 20.3%</td>
<td>4 18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China camp</td>
<td>3 5.3%</td>
<td>4 6.3%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>1 1.8%</td>
<td>3 4.7%</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars /Experts</td>
<td>6 10.5%</td>
<td>3 4.7%</td>
<td>1 4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>4 7.0%</td>
<td>3 4.7%</td>
<td>1 4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13 22.8%</td>
<td>8 12.5%</td>
<td>6 27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57 100%</td>
<td>64 100%</td>
<td>22 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6 shows the usage of the government, the pro-democracy camp and the pro-China camp as primary and secondary sources in the three newspapers. 59.1 percent of stories in the Sing Tao presented the governments as the primary source, ahead of 29.7 percent in the Ming Pao, and 28.1 percent in the Apple Daily. In the Apple Daily, the pro-democracy actors appear as the primary source more than in the other papers, with 24.6 percent, followed by the Ming Pao and the Sing Tao. As the primary source, the pro-China camp only receives a few exposures which are slightly more than those of the press groups in all three newspapers. The data reveals that the government has the priority as the primary source in the three newspapers. It also reflects press ideology, since the pro-China paper covers the government the most, the neutralist covers it less, the pro-democracy paper covers it least.

Regarding secondary sources, the situation is quite similar to the primary sources.

25 1.) The number of news stories is 57 in the Apple Daily, 64 in the Ming Pao, 22 in the Sing Tao;
2.) The percentage in bracket is within the paper;
3.) Other indicates to trade/business groups, independent legislative councillors, media, ICAC, anonymous, and other;
Apparently, the government still receives the most coverage among various actors in the three papers. The Sing Tao leads with 36.4 percent usage, the Ming Pao with 21.9 percent, the Apple Daily with 19.3 percent. Overall, the government sources are presented quite frequently in the newspapers. The usage of this source by the pro-China camp is relatively similar and low among the three newspapers because of its closure device. The Ming Pao only uses the pro-China sources in 6.3 percent of its coverage, compared to 4.5 percent in the Sing Tao and the Apple Daily uses this source the least, with 3.6 percent. As for the pro-democracy camp, it is utilised more as a secondary than a primary source in the Ming Pao and Sing Tao, and somewhat less in the Apple Daily. These two results in relation to the usage of pro-China and pro-democracy sources do not clearly suggest that usage of these two sources is linked to the ideology of the papers. However, combining the results and the analysis in the previous section, it reveals that the closure or openness of the source also features in the usage of sources.

Table 7.7 shows the total source usage of the three actors. From the table, it can be seen that pro-democracy sources are most frequently presented by the Apple Daily, with 94.7 percent, even ahead of the government sources, followed in turn by the Ming Pao with 81.3 percent, and the Sing Tao with 72.3 percent. The percentages mean that pro-democracy sources are frequently used by the three papers, in about one out of one or two stories. Surprisingly, the Sing Tao uses the pro-democracy sources to a relatively high degree. Therefore, the result confirms the research hypothesis that the political parties have the ability to bring certain issues into the public discussion.

**Table 7.7 Total usage (frequency) of three sources in the three newspapers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Apple Daily (%)</th>
<th>Ming Pao (%)</th>
<th>Sing Tao (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK Government</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-democracy</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) Study period of the Apple Daily, Ming Pao, Sing Tao starts from 09/03 to 09/04 in 2003
2) The percentage in bracket shows the usage from the primary source to the eighth source in news stories. In general, a story has more than three sources.
Regarding the usage of pro-China sources, the data shows that the papers give them moderate coverage although they receive little coverage as primary and secondary sources. This result might be because the sources received more coverage at the late stage of the scandal when they were more open. However, the Apple Daily gave the most coverage to the pro-China sources, with 56.1 percent, the Sing Tao the next, the Ming Pao the least.

Within the Apple Daily, press ideology is clearly reflected in the different coverage of the three political groups, as pro-democracy sources received the most coverage and pro-China sources received the least. Regarding the Sing Tao and the Ming Pao, the figures show that they used pro-democracy sources more than pro-China sources. There might be two explanations for these results. Firstly, they reflect the openness of the pro-democracy camp and the secretiveness of the pro-China camp; secondly, the scandal itself in nature was negative news and did not directly involve conflicts of political ideology. Moreover, on the grounds of news objectivity and market force, both the Ming Pao and Sing Tao as the mass circulation papers had to cater their readers' interest to give more coverage to the pro-democracy camp since many poll results showed the majority of people were dissatisfied with Leung.

The papers' usage of the sources also includes the weight of quotation from the sources, contained in the papers. The more remarks are quoted, the more likely the source is to be able to set the media agenda. From Table 7.8, the priority of the government as the primary source is demonstrated by the number of words quoted. The Sing Tao gives very heavy weight to the government's statement, leading with 213 words, while the Ming Pao quoted 152 words, and the Apple Daily 78. The manner of presentation of stories clearly reflects press ideology. The pro-China newspaper provides more chances to the government to explain or present itself, the neutral paper gives less, and the pro-democracy paper gives the least. The remarks of the pro-democracy camp are quoted most extensively in the Apple Daily, with 128 words, the Ming Pao quotes slightly less, with 127, and the Sing Tao least with 113. Although the distinction of the source usage is not apparent among the papers, the results suggest that the papers' coverage of sources cleavage along the line of press ideology: the pro-China paper gives the least chance to pro-democracy
sources and the most chance to the government, the neutralist papers give more chance to the former and less to the latter, and the pro-democracy papers give the most to the former and the least to the latter.

**Table 7.8 The primary and secondary sources in three newspapers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Sing Tao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean of story no.</td>
<td>Mean of story no.</td>
<td>Mean of story no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary source A</td>
<td>78.3 16</td>
<td>152.79 19</td>
<td>213.25 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>128.36 14</td>
<td>127.7 13</td>
<td>113.3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>59.5 2</td>
<td>113.5 4</td>
<td>395 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary source A</td>
<td>58.17 11</td>
<td>36.8 13</td>
<td>71.5 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>54.8 6</td>
<td>58.6 14</td>
<td>47.4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>51.33 3</td>
<td>58.8 4</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) A= Government  
   B=Pro-democracy camp  
   C=Pro-China camp  
2.) The number of new stories in the *Ming Pao* is 64, in the *Apple Daily* 57, in the *Sing Tao* 22.

The number of words by the sources quoted in the papers also shows press ideology. The *Sing Tao* quotes 395 words from the pro-China source; the *Ming Pao* 113, and the *Apple Daily* 59. Regarding secondary sources, in general, the three papers give more weight to the government than the pro-democracy camp as either a primary or secondary source. The result also suggests that the papers rely heavily on government sources, and shows a clear and close tie to press ideology in their coverage of the government, the pro-democracy camp and the pro-China camp.

### 7.4.3 Press Releases

Party press releases reflect campaign battles with their strategical demands. The comparison of press release and their coverage in the media provides an insight into how the journalists decode and encode information. Table 7.4 in the previous section shows that the DP issued five press releases whereas, by contrast, the DAB made no press release on the scandal. Therefore, taking the DP's press release of March 9 and stories in the *Ming Pao* and *Apple Daily* in relation to the press release as an example:
Concerning Leung's Involvement and the Conflict of Interest

DP is very concerned and surprised about the media reports on the Financial Secretary car-purchase affair today. DP chairman Yeung Sum has sent a letter to the chairman of the LegCo Financial Committee to ask for the opening of an investigation committee in which the Financial Secretary will attend to explain matters to the committee and the public [...] DP doubts Leung, and has suspicions of a conflict of interest and his role.

(DP press release, 09/03/2003)

DP and some councillors have had a strong reaction. DP said that it will send a letter to the chairman of LegCo Financial Committee to ask for the opening of an investigation committee in which FS will explain the affair [...] 

(Ming Pao, 10/03/2003b)

The DP chairman Yeung Sum yesterday sent a letter to the chairman of LegCo Financial Committee Wong Y-Y to ask for opening of a special committee at which Financial Secretary will be called to explain the affair [...] 

(Ming Pao, 10/03/2003a)

DP, Frontier, ADPL and LP have respectively requested LegCo and the government to form a committee to investigate the affair in order not to allow abuse of power for personal gain [...].

(Apple Daily, 10/03/2003c)

In the press release, the DP attempts to send out two messages: one is the call for formation of an investigation committee; the other is the question of conflict of interest in Leung’s behaviour. The Ming Pao paid a fair amount of attention to the release. In two stories, it mentioned the message about forming an investigation committee. However, the other message about the conflict of interest is not brought into the agenda. By comparison, the Apple Daily paid less attention to the press release. It only covered the DP’s reaction to the affair, without even mentioning the letter the DP sent out, but both messages the DP attempted to convey were covered.

The result shows that, to a certain extent, a press release can set the media agenda. However, the impact of press ideology on coverage of the press release cannot be seen from the case. The kind of coverage might be influenced by the availability of other sources.
7.4.4 Voices of the Pressure Groups

The performance of pressure groups was not prominent in the affair. The media only reserved a small amount of space to deal with stories of the groups. Access to the media is a major barrier for these groups. The media have generally established stable relationships among the parties along the cleavage of their political lines, while the pressure groups have to rely on their activities to attract the media’s attention. However, constrained by limited resources, most pressure groups’ activities are contingent on issues. Occasionally, pressure groups can get easier access to the media while a significant issue is ‘on-going’. According to some journalists, media coverage of pressure groups is based on sympathy or personal political stance, rather than journalistic paradigms. For example, the spokesperson of AFA, Leung Kwok-hung, often takes radical actions against the government’s policy. His name appears relatively more often than most pressure group leaders in media coverage. On the Leung’s affair, the AFA only held one demonstration and a small signature campaign to call for Leung’s resignation. Both the Ming Pao and the Apple Daily covered the stories but with allocate them very little space.

7.5 Public Opinion

The car-tax scandal immediately entered the media agenda after the story broke on March 9 2003, and it became part of the public agenda. At the initial exposure stage, the agenda remained focused on Leung’s incompetence and the question of his integrity; the public’s discontent had not yet risen to more intense appeals, for action against Leung. The activities of the pro-democracy camp contributed to shape these agendas. However, following the government’s decision making, the debates ongoing in the LegCo, and the actions of the pro-democracy camp, the themes in the media agenda were shifted to the conflict of interest, the irresponsibility of Antony Leung, criticism of the government’s decision, and controversy over the submission date of Leung’s resignation. Finally, a wide range of people ‘went on the street’ to appeal for Leung’s resignation in the July 1 and July 9 demonstrations.

Looking back two years previously, when the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa appointed Antony Leung as the Financial Secretary in 2002, 62 percent of
respondents to a poll thought he was the right person for the job, which placed him in the third rank among fourteen officials, right behind Donald Tsang’s 79 percent\textsuperscript{26} and Regina Ip’s 75 percent\textsuperscript{27}, making Antony Leung a very well received official (Chung, 2003). Table 7.3 indicates a shift in the poll results in September 2002, which is completely opposite to the results in June 2003. Leung’s support rating dramatically declined from 41.4 percent to 19.0 percent, and respondents who supported Leung’s dismissal were in the majority, with 46.1 percent, excluding those who abstained.

Opinion polls are often regarded as a more efficient and accurate way to measure public opinion on an issue or event, and this case is no exception. The three newspapers used polls to bring out the agenda of what the public thought about the scandal. The papers conducted twelve polls in a total of 193 stories (see Table 7.9). The \textit{Ming Pao} used five polls, ahead of the \textit{Apple Daily}’s four and \textit{Sing Tao}’s three. This means that, on average, polls were used about once a week. These polls were conducted by three different groups — the media, the parties and professional institutions. The \textit{Ming Pao} conducted four opinion polls, while the \textit{Apple Daily} only conducted one poll, and no poll was conducted by the \textit{Sing Tao}. Both the \textit{Apple Daily} and \textit{Sing Tao} reported one poll by the pro-democracy camp. The rest were from the professional institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Opinion polls</th>
<th>Total story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing Tao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentage is within the medium

From the websites of the parties, it can be found that the DP actually conducted two

\textsuperscript{26} Donald Tsang becomes the Chief Executive in 2005 after Tung Chee-hwa stepped down.

\textsuperscript{27} Regina Ip was the Security secretary who was in charge of the promotion of the legislation of Article 23.
polls to prove that there was a majority of dissent for the government's handling of Leung's behaviour and the retention of Leung in his position, as mentioned in the previous section. However, only one poll entered the media agenda. There is no evidence of a link between poll institution and the media. However, the result shows that the media prefer to use polls that they have themselves conducted. The reason is likely to be that the credibility of a party poll is relatively low because the party poll is often conducted for purposes of bringing a more persuasive message.

Conclusion
In Hong Kong's semi-democratic society, both the media and political groups play a crucial role in constructing public opinion by setting the media agenda. The media are fairly free as long as the issue does not conflict with the Chinese central government; the parties try to manipulate media coverage in order to gain maximum publicity through different strategies.

From the case of the car-tax scandal, some findings emerge. Pro-democracy groups seek to keep negative and damaging issues active as long as possible to harm the government. Government and pro-China groups try to close them down to limit any damage in two ways: by hoping the story dies and by not talking about it, while pro-democratic groups strive to mobilize public opinion, and gain public support. The media play a crucial role in each advocacy coalition, making the case for a particular stance. The relationship between members of a coalition is not necessarily formal but is based on a similarity of outlook, and shared goals - a democratic Hong Kong or closer ties with China - coming together for convenience. However, participation of the news media in either coalition is determined in part by the news-worthiness of the issues. On a newsworthy political issue, they are likely to get involved, devoting much coverage to their side's views, although not ignoring the opposition. In this way, the opposition coalition could try to embarrass the government as part of its wider agenda of political reform. The following chapter examines the case of the legislation of Article 23, provides the context of the legislation and analyses the strategies the government, pro-democratic and pro-China groups adopted to try to defeat their opponents.
Chapter 8 Advocacy Coalitions and the Debates on Basic Law

Article 23

Introduction
This chapter follows up on some issues raised in the previous chapter. It examines how political advocacy mobilized public opinion in campaigns of opposition or support to the legislation of Article 23, and what the strategies the government adopted to persuade the public to support the legislation. Unlike the previous case, the legislation of Article 23 directly challenged fundamental political values and would impact the lives of Hong Kong citizens, if it was enacted. In regard to this newsworthy political issue, the chapter shows that the pro-democracy advocacy coalition was successful in defeating the government and its supporters – a resource richer actor.

8.1 Article 23 of the Basic Law: the Context
Since the drafting of the Basic Law, Article 23 has been a controversial issue for more than a decade. Most speculation over the legislation of Article 23 remains on its effect to Hong Kongers' rights, freedoms and ways of life. The potential conflict between civil liberties and the legislation of Article 23 becomes a key issue of public concern. The accumulative conflict generated a series of demonstrations and rallies in 2003. Over half a million citizens participated in the July 1 demonstration protesting against the legislation. The significance of the demonstration is embodied in two dimensions: for one, the demonstration is strong evidence to prove the existence of the citizen's baseline belief in democracy; for another, it suggests that the government and the parties should not only regard public opinion as a mechanism but pay more attention to it.

The July 1 2003 demonstration and its follow-up campaigns on July 9 and July 13 proved that the pro-democracy political groups successfully mobilized public opinion, and influenced the public's motivation for political participation through setting and shaping the media agenda. Although the victory of the pro-democracy camp was temporary and the fight over the legislation of Article 23 has not finished,

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28 Article 23 of the Basic Law does not clearly define acts of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets; the SAR government thinks that the law should be amended to incorporate a new Article 23 with a clear definition.
the demonstrations became one of the most effective and direct ways for the parties to persuade the government to listen. As one of the most notable political issues in 2003, the series of campaigns brought many significant consequences that impacted Hong Kong’s political ecology, the Hong Kong government was led to an unexpected and unprecedented administrative crisis. These consequences included the withdrawal of the legislation of Article 23, the resignation of Security Secretary Regina Ip and Financial Secretary Antony Leung, the reform of the Executive Council, and the victory of the pro-democracy camp in the District Council election on November 23 2003. In order to understand why the legislation generated the dissent of the public, it is necessary to know what Article 23 of Basic Law is.

The Basic Law is a constitutional document for the HKSAR. It enshrines within a legal document the important concepts of ‘One country, two systems’, ‘a high degree of autonomy’ and ‘Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong’. It also prescribes various systems to be practised in the HKSAR. The Basic Law was drafted by a Committee composed of members from both Hong Kong and the Mainland. A Basic Law Consultative Committee formed purely of Hong Kong people was established in 1985 to canvass views in Hong Kong on the drafts. The first draft was published in April 1988, followed by a five-month public consultation exercise. The second draft was published in February 1989, and the subsequent consultation period ended in October 1989. Finally, the Basic Law was formally promulgated on April 4 1990 by the Chinese National People Congress. It came into effect on July 1 1997. In Chapter II\(^{29}\) of the Basic Law, Article 23 states that

\[\text{The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.}\]

The Article gives ambiguous explanation on ‘any act of treason, secession, sedition or theft of state secrets’. Some questions, such as ‘Who will be responsible for

\(^{29}\) Chapter II of Basic Law is the “Relationship between the central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.”
defining to such acts?’ and ‘Will speech, publication and artistic creation within this realm be prohibited?’ are raised to due to the ambiguity of the text. Thus, the government decided to redraft the National Security Article. After a three-month consultation from September 24 to December 24 in 2002, the SAR government drafted the prohibition of acts endangering national security. Article 23 prohibits acts such as treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s government and the theft of state secrets. However, secession and subversion are not considered crimes in Hong Kong and other common law jurisdictions according to original law. Disputes over Article 23 exploded.

8.1.1 The Storm over Article 23

In February 2002, the vice-chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of Chinese National People Congress, Qiao Xiaoyang, said in public that the question of enacting National Security Laws should be dealt with as soon as possible. After his remark, Hong Kong Justice Secretary Elsie Leung for the first time began to discuss the issue with the chairman of Chinese National People Congress, Li Peng. The Hong Kong government’s response to such reports was standard — that it was researching the laws and the reform proposals of other jurisdictions, as well as relevant human rights principles, and that there was no firm timetable for legislation. Nevertheless, the government quickly began to propose the legislation of Article 23.

Presently the SAR government released a consultation document which drafted a clear definition of what acts would be prohibited, and sought to win over public opinion for the draft. However, the document roused a strong public reaction and some critics warned ‘the devil is in the detail’. Pro-democracy parties, journalists, lawyers, and citizens were concerned that the introduction of new concepts inevitably would adversely affect freedom of expression. The government therefore announced that September to December in 2002 would be a stage for public consultation on the proposal. Meanwhile, Security Secretary Regina Ip began selling the proposal and revealed that the government expected to pass the legislation in July 2003.

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30 Article 23 is an act related to behaviours that affects the national security. Therefore it is also called the National Security article.
### Table 8.1 Timeline for Article 23 legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/09/02</td>
<td>The government released “Proposals to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law” Consultation Document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/12/02</td>
<td>End of the three-month consultation period. The government received a total of 97,097 local submissions, involving 340,513 signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/01/03</td>
<td>The government further clarified legislative proposals to implement the Basic Law Article 23 and the release of “Compendium of Submissions”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/03/03</td>
<td>First Bills Committee meeting was held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/06/03</td>
<td>The government announced draft amendments to the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-25/06/03</td>
<td>The government proposed the first, second and third draft of Committee Stage Amendments to the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/06/03</td>
<td>Secretary for Security tendered her resignation on personal grounds (set aside till July 16th 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/06/03</td>
<td>The Chairman of the Bills Committee submitted the Report of the Bills Committee on National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill to the House Committee meeting. The House Committee agreed to the resumption of the Second Reading debates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/06/03</td>
<td>The government proposed the 4th draft of the proposed Committee Stage Amendments to the Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/07/03</td>
<td>Protest with more than 500,000 people participating, opposing the legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/07/03</td>
<td>The government decided to introduce the final amendments to the three most controversial areas of the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/07/03</td>
<td>The government decided to defer the resumption of the second reading of the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/07/03</td>
<td>The Chief Executive decided to accept Secretary for Security’s resignation and recommended to the Central People’s Government the removal of Regina Ip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/07/03</td>
<td>The Chief Executive announced the reopening of consultation on Article 23 legislation and that the schedule of the legislative process would depend on the progress of the consultation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On January 28 2003, the government further explained to the public about the legislative proposal, and released a ‘Compendium of Submissions’ which indicated that over half of people supported the legislation. One and a half months later, the

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31 Namely, the public interest defence, withdrawing the proposals to give the Police the power to make emergency investigative entry and arrest without judicial warrant and removing the mechanism whereby Hong Kong organizations subordinate to a Mainland body banned on national security grounds could be banned by the Secretary for Security.
First Bills Committee meeting was held. Speaking on May 4 2003 at a public location, Gao Siren, the director of the central government’s liaison office in Hong Kong, asserted that the legislation of the bill reflected the majority voices of Hong Kong society. However, his assertion roused a widespread question so that some opinion surveys were conducted by professional institutions and parties, and even the media, the results of which contradicted Gao’s statement (see Table 8.1).

Under great pressure from different communities, the government had to make its first concession by amending parts of the proposed anti-subversion law, but it still insisted on reading the fourth draft after giving this concession. The government sequentially proposed the first, second and third draft amendments to the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill. Meanwhile, the Secretary for Security privately submitted to the government her resignation on personal grounds, but the information was withheld until July 16 2003. The government introduced final amendments to the three most controversial areas of the Bill by taking a wide range of opposition appeals into account.

On July 1, 2003, the sixth year after the Hong Kong handover, over half a million citizens took to the streets in protest against the Article 23 legislation. Eight days later, on July 9, 50,000 citizens assembled in front of the LegCo building to further protest against Article 23. On July 7, the LP held an internal party consultative meeting. Its chief, James Tien, who had supported the legislation of Article 23 before July 1, 2003, decided to resign from the Executive Council and from the position of LP chairman at the same time. The government finally decided to scrap its Article 23 proposal, but it did not rule out the possibility of the resumption of a new round of public consultations on Article 23. The withdrawal only represented a temporary set-back in the government strategy, the long-term fighting still wages.

8.2 Article 23: Its Promotion by the Government

In January 1998, the government established a Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee, comprising both official and non-official members. The Steering Committee provided the necessary guidance on the overall programme and strategy for promoting the Basic Law, and supplied an organizational focus for coordinating the efforts of various parties concerned, both in the government and in the
community. During the Article 23 promotion, the government launched fourteen television advertisements on both Cantonese and English television stations. In addition, it disseminated a large number of leaflets and booklets in relation to the explanation of the legislation in Metro stations.

**Strategies of Public Relations and Setting Media Agenda**

In terms of the development of the event from consultation to withdrawal, the government’s strategies on handling Article 23 can be divided into four stages. The first stage is the sale phase (or the consultation period): the government mainly adopted three pro-active devices to promote its proposal in regard to Article 23. The strategies include three aspects. 1.) Media management – A couple of weeks before the proposal was launched, the Security Bureau ‘leaked’ relevant contents of Article 23 to the press saying the draft was “less scary” than some media reports had suggested. Apart from the ‘leaking’, hundreds of press releases and briefings, and dozens of press conferences were also held in order to seize the chance to influence the public and build up a positive preconception.

2.) Information management – Officials of the Security Bureau and the Department of Justice attended more than 250 seminars, public hearings, meetings and media interviews to explain the concepts behind the proposals and listen to public views. A series of meetings with representatives from a wide range of sectors and professional groups, including legislators, academics, businessmen, media, lawyers, consulate-generals, chambers of commerce, District Councils, district community organizations, arts and religious organizations was also held.

In additional, before the government’s announcement of its proposal, its first step was to test the public’s response. The ‘Regina Ip test’ received fairly satisfied response from the media. Although the *Apple Daily* strongly opposed the legislation, other media outlets expressed ‘less intense’ objection than the government expected. For instance, the *Ming Pao* thought that the proposal was a feasible scheme at that stage.
3.) Image management – Security Secretary Regina Ip, on behalf of the government, attempted to build up a positive image for the government proposal and strove for public support on the legislation of Article 23.

The day after the government released the consultation document on September 25, 2002, the public did not pay much attention, as their attention was diverted by media coverage of the housing market. Soon after, media coverage of diverse elites’ opinions and views from political parties, pressure groups and scholars towards the legislation aroused public’s attention. Most of the mainstream and partisan papers covered a story almost every day. However, the majority of the citizens remained as bystanders, observing the consultation and waiting for further developments before the result of the consultation was released.

At the second stage (from January to February), the government adopted the strategies of the defence-as-axis and the promotion-as-supplement. The reactive devices aimed at minimizing the effect of the December 15 demonstration in 2002, in which over 100,000 people participated to express their dissent and indignation to the government’s claim that the Hong Kong majority supported the legislation. Confronting intense controversies over the legislation and challenges from opponents, the government made the first strategic concession at the end of January 2003. It promised to abolish or amend some controversial clauses, such as the regulation regarding possession of seditious publications. The actions the governors took included relevant governors frequently participating in various debates to take advantage of any chance meeting with the media. The agendas the government attempted to set had in three dimensions: 1.) the inevitability of the legislation; 2.) the benefits of the legislation; and 3) the supportive majority on the legislation. In this phase, mainstream opinions eventually concentrated in the media coverage.

The third stage was the break time (from March to May): Between February 2003 and May 2003, the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia created a break for the government, enabling it to divert the media spotlight. The attention of the whole city was directed to the impact of the fatal disease, which brought about widespread panic in Hong Kong. Although the media still covered the issue of the legislation, the issue of the public’s most concern at that period was the government’s handling
of the disease, the daily death toll, and the methods of prevention. In the lull, the
government attempted to close the controversy and gained legitimacy as far as
possible. The second concession was made, in which phrases such as ‘on purpose’
and ‘quite possible’ were deleted to shape an image that the government was
tolerant to the different voices. Afterward, the government announced that the
regulation had been loosened to reduce apprehension, although opponents argued
that the Security Bureau had actually tightened other provisions, for instance, the
investigating power of the police.

In the fourth phase (from June to July), the government had to adopt reactive
devices to minimize damage. The outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia had eventually
been brought under control. The government deadline for passing the legislation in
the LegCo was approaching. Confronting the government’s imperative decision, the
opposition coalition adopted a series of campaigns to protest against the legislation,
including demonstrations, rallies, petitions, signature campaigns and conferences.
Discontent among the people was boiling. The government, however, did not
realise the situation and still insisted on passing the legislation before the proposed
deadline. Its insistence finally caused the largest demonstration in Hong Kong since
the handover, to protest against the government’s proposal. The demonstration
affirmed that the efforts the government made in the past ten months to promote the
legislation and set the media agenda had failed.

8.2.1 Regina Ip’s Handing of Article 23
Security Secretary Regina Ip was one of the key governors in the course of
promotion of the legislation. She might have been an excellent officer, but she was
not a good ‘policy-seller’, at least in terms of the promotion. During the proposal
consultation, she attended many public occasions, including TV programmes, radio
programmes and University forums, to bring the public persuasive messages and
seize opportunities of publicity. She held a strong attitude towards opponents such
as the pro-democracy camp. Her strong style suited the stance of the Central
government, but some media and citizens criticized her ‘iron hand’.
Table 8.2 The popularity of Regina Ip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of survey</th>
<th>Support Rating</th>
<th>Recognition Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4/7/03</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6/6/03</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7/5/03</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9/4/03</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4/3/03</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7/2/03</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7/1/03</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6/12/02</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5/11/02</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7/10/02</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5/9/02</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HKPOP (07/2003)

Table 8.2 shows the shift of Regina Ip’s popularity across the period from the proposal consultation of September 2002 to the July 1 demonstration of July 2003. From September 2002 to March 2003, Regina’s support rating continuously declined, although it slightly increased in the minimizing damage phase. To compare September 2002 and July 2003, however, her support rating rapidly decreased by about 28 points. By contrast, her recognition rate continually increased. Basically, the shift of the support rate followed the different development phases of the promotion. In the first phase, Regina’s supporting rate remained on over 55 percent; in the second phase, it declined to 50 percent; during the break time, it increased slightly. In July 2003, her 34.6 support rate shows that the public’s resentment towards the Article 23 legislation had reached a peak.

**Image Building**

Regina’s unpopular hardliner image was one of causes of her failure. During the promotion of the legislation, Regina Ip’s image changed from a soft governor to a hardliner. When she first accepted the job of promoting the legislation, she tried to shape her image as a kind governor with close ties to the citizens. Her effort gained success to a certain extent, in particular, after she explored her personal life and thinking in a TVB interview programme. After the consultation, Regina Ip’s

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32 TVB is the most popular local Cantonese TV station.
image changed to a strong personality – an ‘iron woman’. Her hair style – ‘broom hair’ strongly impressed citizens and was the most prominent sign of her image.

The shift in her image placed Regina Ip in a dilemma between standing on the side of the public or the government. On the one hand, the controversy about the legislation restraining the rights of Hong Kong people remained ongoing. Although the government’s poll showed a supportive majority, a survey of the University of Hong Kong found that 52 percent of the citizens opposed the legislation in principle, and only 20 percent supported (So, 2003a). As a hardliner, Regina Ip’s insistence on the legislation without any concession inevitably conflicted with the opinions of the majority. On the other hand, the government hoped the legislation could be passed the LegCo fast as possible to diminish uncertainties. This expectation required Regina Ip to take a hardliner stance, which culminated in Regina Ip choosing to satisfy the government, not the public.

Regina Ip’s hardliner image was shown when she reprimanded the media and the opposing camp who vilified the government with exaggerated reports and accusations. She argued that “Those descriptions [media coverage and remarks of the opposing camp] which were exaggerated, untruthful and completely detached from reality, involve deceiving people. So we have a responsibility to raise this” (Hong Kong Standard, 17/01/2003). Her reprimand caused widespread resentment among the media, the pro-democracy camp and the legal community. In response to this, more verbal wars took place. Stories of mutual attacks became another agenda of the media.

_Bargaining Impression_

One main task of the government promotion was to shape the impression that only a minority opposed the legislation of Article 23. The impression the government attempted to shape generated different responses. The government’s attempt proved to be a failure after successive polls were conducted by media organizations, political groups and professional institutions. Although no concession was in the initial plan of the government, strong opposing opinions forced the government to make certain concession, cancelling some provisions and relaxing others. At the

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33 It is a nick name as Regina IP’s hair style looked like a broom.
same time, the government undertook the strategy of 'two concessions, one forward move' to tighten up the legislation content. The public was discontented with the strategy and considered the government to be was bargaining instead of sincerely doing a good job for the well-being of the public (So, 2003a).

Another reason for the government's strategic failure was that its public relations strategy polarized opinions. The participation of Regina Ip in the quarrel between the two different camps facilitated the polarisation of opinions and aggravated the hostile political atmosphere. When the government was challenged and criticized by its opponents, Regina was too often drawn into personal attacks. One of the example was her criticism of twenty-one legislators who walked out of the meeting to display their dissatisfaction with her speech on the legislation when she was about to present the anti-subversion Blue Bill\textsuperscript{3} to the Legislative Council on February 26, 2003, as 'disgraceful and deplorable'.

8.3 Polarizing Controversy: Coalitions of Support and Opposition

Public opinion was eventually formed in the course of the debate, but polarized into for and against camps. The supporting camp included members of the pro-China parties, such as the DAB and groups with a pro-China background. The agendas the pro-China groups attempted to bring into the media were: firstly, under the Basic Law, the national security legislation was a constitutional enactment of Hong Kong which had to be implemented; secondly, the timing the government proposed was the most opportune moment to implement the legislation; and thirdly, as the Blue Bill took account of citizens' opinions, a White Bill was not necessary.

Opposing groups were the pro-democracy parties, such as DP, the Frontier, and the Citizen Parties, pressure groups including AFA, the Hong Kong Alliance in support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in China, and Falun Gong, as well as activists such as lawyers and the pro-democracy scholars. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a practice of meditation that was taught in private for thousands of years before being made public in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. Since its introduction, it quickly spread throughout China by personal communication. With government

\textsuperscript{3} A Blue bill is launched with the nature of consultation; it can be amended or withdrawn. A White Bill is a document which has been submitted to the LegCo and has entered the formal process of legislation, Only the Legislative Council can amend it after votes, but the possibility of this happening is very slight and it is difficult to withdraw.
estimates of approximately 100 million people practicing Falun Gong, in July 1999, China’s President Jiang Zemin outlawed the practice and stipulated it as a heterodox religion in order to intensify negative public opinion against the practice. Falun Gong’s practitioners were also censured by the Chinese government, quietly being imprisoned or tortured and in some cases even murdered. Although the group is legal to proceed with their activities in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong government began to prosecute sixteen practitioners in a demonstration to protest against imprisoning Falun Gong followers in March 2002.

The agendas the pro-democracy camp attempted to bring were: 1.) three-months consultation was not enough; 2.) Hong Kong needed a White Bill; and 3.) proposed offences were not clearly and tightly defined, so the ordinary citizens did not know whether they were committing an offence. In order to mobilize public opinion and allocate resources more efficiently, these opponent groups were allied into a broad coalition combining 31 non-governmental organizations sharing similar goals and values. The coalition included Amnesty International, the AFA, the Citizens Party, Rainbow Action, the Alliance, and the professional Teachers’ Union. There were other groups formed specifically to protest against the Article 23 legislation, such as the Article 23 Concern group, and the CHRF which is formed of more than 40 civic associations and social organizations in Hong Kong, including labour groups, women’s associations, grass-roots and neighbourhood organizations, religious associations, and student groups. Among them, the two political parties – the Democratic Party and the Frontier, and a pressure group – the Alliance had extensive experience in mobilizing the public and collective actions.

According to So (2003b), the anti-legislation camp was a broad and cross-class coalition, while many of the twenty percent firm supporters of the legislation were older males, aged 50 and above, and with primary education or less. Most people of the camp did indeed share a common view regarding the legislation. However, mobilizing the power of the coalition was not without problems. Coalitions such as CHRF and the Alliance of Support Legislation and Protect National Security were ad hoc and issue-based; in particular the latter was definitely formed on an issue-basis; it was able to coordinate individual activities for short-term campaigns, but it was not a well-developed and structured organization.
8.3.1 Resources for Campaigning

Political groups' resources and the strategies of acquiring greater resources determined their success in the fight against the legislation. As discussed in Chapter Five, a shortage of resources is a feature of both parties and pressure groups in Hong Kong. This constrains political groups to take further actions and organise more activities. Although the pro-China groups possess more resources, without the government's subsidies they face similar challenges.

The main sponsors of the pro-China camp are Chinese investment corporations of Hong Kong and business communities of Chinese background. The pro-democracy camp also has the support of some business groups, but they are usually sponsored anonymously, for fear of offending the central government. Although the pro-China coalition is dispersive, they are fairly united. For example, 1,500 groups (about 40,000 people) attended the assembly of the Alliance to Support Legislation and Protest National Security Bill on 22 December 2002. The power of the group is notable. Group members of the pro-democracy camp share the same political values of democracy, but there are potential conflicts influencing the coalition's cooperation. The conflict is rooted in the time of the last governor Chris Pattern's political reform, and their conflicting plans for democratizing Hong Kong. However, on the issue of Article 23, the democratic alliance finally overcame their differences on Hong Kong's democratization and adopted a united stance. These groups joined together to avoid overlap of resources, increase the efficiency of mobilizing the public and consolidate their power if large scale activities or campaigns were to take place. Most campaigns of the coalition went through its unique platform – the CHRF. Individually, its member groups also held their own activities and demonstrations.

The mobilization ability of the pro-China camp and pro-democracy camp on the legislation was considerably different. In general, the DAB has a stronger ability to mobilize the public in district campaigns. In particular during election campaigns, the party can mobilize a large number of people with a pro-China background to volunteer to be assistants and vote. Undeniably, the party puts much effort into district affairs and helping residents solve various residential problems. In response,
district residents give considerable support to the party, showing approval of what it has done. However, the case of the legislation was different.

Unlike other political controversies, comprehension in the case of Article 23 required some law-based knowledge. Although many critics, media and parties criticized Security Secretary Regina Ip’s comment that not many citizens had read the law very carefully or understood it very well, there was some truth in it. This does not mean that Hong Kong’s grass roots know nothing about law, but their comprehension of the law is generally weaker than that of people from the well-educated middle class, as the law is expressed in legal jargon and abstract words. The grass-roots’ opinions in relation to the legislation of Article 23 were mainly derived from the media coverage and political elites by reason of a lack of profession knowledge on the law.

Furthermore, if a political issue does not directly affect their interests and life, the grass-roots are less politically active than the middle class. In other words, they are concerned more about economic and livelihood problems than politics. The government’s incompetent performance had caused widespread disappointment among the public since the 1997 handover. The Hong Kong economy took a downturn after the 1998 Asian Financial Crisis. Afterwards, the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia destroyed the recovery. These events had a profound effect on the livelihood of Hong Kong’s grass-roots. Therefore mobilization of this group to support the Article 23 legislation became more difficult.

By contrast, the DP’s targeted group is the middle class (although the DP is trying to widen its target class, the current division of the parties’ targeting groups is difficult to change in the short term, due to stereotyped party images). The middle class is more likely to be motivated towards political participation and to demand democracy. This indicates that mobilizing this group to protest against the legislation was perhaps easier than mobilizing the grass-roots to support the legislation. Although the pro-democracy camp has the advantage of mobilization, the shortage of talent impedes them from doing so.
Timetable of Campaigns in June and July 2003

After the Atypical Pneumonia crisis had somewhat subsided, the pro-democracy camp, from June to July in 2003, held a series of campaigns calling for the media and public’s attention. Their campaigns were as follows:

June 1 – A warm up campaign, 2,500 people marched from Victoria Park in Causeway Bay to the Government Secretariat in Central.

June 4 – Anniversary of June 4th 1989 incident in Tiananmen Square, the Alliance added anti-Article 23 as another theme of the rally.

June 27 – Members of the Democratic Party started a 100-hour hunger strike.

June 28-29 – Exhibition, anti-Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa T-shirt sale and publicity for the march around Hong Kong.

July 1 – Prayer gathering at 1.30pm in Victoria Park hosted by Catholic and Protestant groups and 500,000 people marched from Victoria Park to the Government Secretariat at 3 pm.

July 7-9 – Representatives of the Federation of Students held a sit-in and hunger strike outside the LegCo. 50,000 gathered in the front of the LegCo building.

July 11 – Catholic and Protestant groups held a 7.30 p.m. gathering outside the LegCo to pray for the future after the enactment of the bill.

July 13 – More than 50 groups held a democracy rally in Central, demanding for universal suffrage by political reform in 2008.

8.3.2 Promoting Their Cause

Demonstrations or rallies for both pro-democracy groups and pro-China group were the main channels available for mobilizing the public to achieve their political purposes, in particular for the pro-democracy camp. Without the support of the public, the insufficient power of the pro-democracy camp in the LegCo could not bring meaningful changes on the issue.

On the basis of sharing similar political values, some political parties and pressure groups allied against the government and pro-China groups. The strategies the coalition adopted to distribute resources more efficiently included: firstly, all of campaigns behaved under clear goals of protesting against the Article 23 legislation. The clear and unified goals throughout most of the collective actions in 2002 and 2003 facilitated more effective mobilization of public opinion. For example, the
organisers of the July 1 demonstration used the slogan 'Against Article 23, return power to the people', 'Against Article 23' is a very concrete and clear goal. 'Return power to the people' seems to be relatively more abstract, involving an opposition to Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa and a support for expanding democratic elections in Hong Kong. Overall, the goals of the camp were clear (So, 2003b).

Secondly, the CHRF acted as a unified platform to bridge different pro-democracy groups. Most activities in relation to the Article 23 legislation were led by the management of the CHRF in order to maximise their limited resources. Some of the most well-known and trusted leaders from churches or community organizations led the campaigns, the media gave fair coverage to the coalition on the principle of 'more people concerned, more newsworthiness, more coverage'. According to So's investigation of Hong Kong's fourteen mainstream newspapers (So, 2003c) the coverage the media gave to opponents of the legislation was more than that given to supporters between September 2002 and November 2002. The result shows that the strategies of the pro-democracy coalition were fairly successful in promoting their cause.

Thirdly, the coalition arranged large-scale core campaigns and small-scale campaigns as a supplement. Despite the large scale campaigns managed by the CHRF, the member groups continually expanded their own campaigns to reinforce the power of the anti-legislation coalition, such as advertising in newspaper or magazines, writing to the media with reference to the legislation, carrying motions in LegCo meetings, holding conferences, conducting opinion polls and attending radio programmes. As a result of concrete action by core large scale campaigns and dispersive small-scale campaigns, the camp gained widespread publicity, even more than the government.

The DP, as one of the most active member groups, was vigorously involved in the coalition to arouse the public's concern over the affair through the following strategies: 1.) conducting surveys to obtain media publicity and prove that the government held a pseudo-consultation. The party conducted six polls to prove that the government's conclusion about the supportive majority of the legislation distorted the facts (see Table 8.3). The party also extended its activities to the
international stage, raising potential international concerns; and 2.) increasing motions and actions in the LegCo. For example, legislators of the party displayed their resentment by walking-out when Regina Ip was about to present the anti-subversion Blue Bill on February 26 2003.

Table 8.3: DAB and DP’s opinion polls on Article 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DAB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey on Article 23 (17/10/2002)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on Article 23 (30/10/2002)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on Article 23 (14/02/2003)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on 7.1 demonstration (30/6/2003)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on Tung’s response to 7.1 demonstration (07/07/2003)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey on 7.1 demonstration (07/07/2003)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: websites of DAB and DP

As the biggest supporter of the government in the LegCo, the DAB was coherent in its position, as usual supporting the government’s decision. The party insisted on the inevitability of the legislation under the concept of ‘one country, two systems’ throughout nearly ten months of controversy on the legislation, although it was forced to keep silent after the July 1 demonstration lest the public’s discontent was diverted to the DAB. The media strategies the DAB adopted on the issue of Article 23 reflected its usual reserved style. With regard to opinion polls, the DAB did not conduct any relevant poll on the issue of the legislation. However, the pro-China camp also formed a coalition of the pro-China background. For instance, the supporting camp took the initiative through a campaign called ‘a group, 100 Hong Kong dollars’ to raise funds to support the legislation. Another pro-China organization, Kowloon Alliance Society, went to the LegCo to support Regina Ip before the LegCo adjournment, yelling ‘support the Article 23 legislation, it is fair and reasonable.’

8.3.3 Rival Shows

Campaigns from both supporters and opponents on the issue of the legislation produced rival shows between the two camps. Table 8.5 below shows that a rally and a demonstration were held on consecutive Sundays – the first one by the critics and the second by supporters of the legislation. The December 15 rally involved a
march from Victoria Park in Causeway Bay to the Government Secretariat in ‘Central’. The participants were pro-democracy activists – some from groups which were newly formed to address this specific issue (for instance, the CHRF and the Article 23 Concern Group). On the following Sunday, pro-Beijing and business groups organised their own counter-rally, supporting the proposed legislation. Their organisers claimed that 40,000 marchers attended. The slogan the camp adopted was “National security is everyone’s responsibility”. The alliance emphasised that they welcomed the legislation of Article 23 and they saw it as a necessary law to protect Hong Kongers’ homes.

On July 1, the opponent group led a demonstration, whereas the supporting coalition organised a celebration of the sixth anniversary of reunification in the Victoria Park. It was an apparent comparison. On one side of the park, thousands and thousands of marchers were waiting to depart on the demonstration. On the other side of the park, only hundreds of people were attending the anniversary. The rivalry had the result that the media gave extensive coverage to these campaigns, but the coverage sometimes focused more on the competition than on the messages these groups aimed to convey.

Table 8.4 The comparison between demonstrations of the supporting and against camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Opponent groups</th>
<th>Supporting groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organiser</td>
<td>Civil Human Rights Front</td>
<td>The Alliance of Support Legislation and Protect National Security Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>15/12/2002</td>
<td>22/12/2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of marchers</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending groups</td>
<td>Under 100</td>
<td>About 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Against the Article 23 legislation</td>
<td>National security is everyone’s responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ming Pao (23/12/2002)

The LegCo was another significant scene of debates on the proposed legislation. In March 2003, the LegCo set up a bill committee, comprising a record 50 councillors. The establishment of the committee immediately generated controversy over the government’s appointment of its supporters on the vital positions of appointed chair
and deputy chair; the controversy remained ongoing even after the bill committee decided to hold two meetings to hear public views. Under public pressure, the committee allowed two more hearing sessions – attracting more than 50 mainly pro-democracy organizations. Each group was given five minutes to present its case. Critics condemned the committee’s actions as a political show because the government and its supporters knew that they had sufficient votes to endorse the draft law. The pro-democracy camp brought forward a motion reprimanding the deliberately ambiguous attitude of the government which had compiled its compendium of public submissions; the motion was rejected by 35 votes to 22 – reflecting the split between pro-government and pro-democracy members, and dominance of the pro-China camp.

8.3.4 Battle of the Alternative Agenda

Press releases of the government and parties also embodied a part of the campaign battle. From September 1, 2002 to July 17, 2003 (see Figure 8.1), the government released 40 press releases, the DP 32, and DAB 7 each on their websites. These press releases showed that the government and the DP adopted more active media management to gain publicity on this issue. By contrast, the DAB showed less initiative in releases to the media because it had to consider its position in between the government and voters. As the strongest supporter of the government in LegCo and an advocate of the Chinese government’s policies, the DAB was forced to stand in line with the SAR government and take a unified tone on the legislation. Individually, its legislators were reluctant to express their personal opinions on the legislation, lest their remarks conflict with the party’s position.

Figure 8.1 compares press releases issued by different groups between September 2002 and July 2003. The government and the DP respectively released twenty-four and sixteen press releases in the three-month consultation period (September to December in 2002). In the fourth stage, both the government and the DP released ten press releases, whereas the DAB only released a few releases at each stage. The figure clearly shows offensive and defensive strategies of the government and parties in setting the media agenda at different stages. It suggests that the rise and fall of amount of the press release followed the development of the strategies of different groups and an issue-attention cycle.
8.4 The Media Coverage on the Legislation of Article 23

The printed media of Hong Kong performed differently as controversies raised over the legislation. Some newspapers supported and some strongly protested against the legislation, while some gave tentative support, some did not manifest their position and some shifted their tone. In general, the media paid fair attention to the issue of the legislation of Article 23. However, when the media's interest shifted to the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia, coverage of the Article 23 debates was relegated to the inside pages of the newspapers.

8.4.1 Indexing Rules in Coverage of Article 23

The media coverage shows that their stance was in line with their press ideology. The pro-China papers, such as the Wen Wei Pao and the Ta Kung Pao supported the legislation, while the neutralist papers, like the Ming Pao, observed the professional code of journalism and remained neutral. The Apple Daily tended to stand by the side of the opponents. According to the research conducted by Clement So and thirty-three research students between September 19 and November 9, 2002 (So, 2003c), 85 percent of Apple Daily stories were critical of the bill, ahead of other papers; the South China Morning Post, with 53 percent, was the closest partner of the Apple Daily (see Table 8.5).
The table shows that only one percent stories of *Apple Daily* was supportive, whereas of the *Wen Wei Pao* coverage, 71 percent was supportive while only two percent was opposed. In general, the Hong Kong media gave extensive coverage to the issue. In particular, the *Apple Daily* and the *Wen Wei Pao* paid large attention, with 202 and 237 stories respectively. Apart from the *Sing Tao* and the *Wen Wei Pao*, other newspapers had more opposing articles than supporting.

8.5: The Stance of HK newspapers on the coverage of Article 23 (19/9-9/11/2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stance</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>SCMP</th>
<th>HK standard</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Oriental Daily</th>
<th>Sing Tao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of article</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/DK</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: So (2003c) in *Media Digest*.

Note: 1. Articles includes news, editorial, analysis, features and comment and so on.
   2. SCMP: *South China Morning Post* is an English-language newspaper.
   3. DK= Don’t know

The results suggest that press ideology determines the main coverage of the legislation. For example, the day after the December 15 demonstration, pro-Beijing newspapers criticized the organizers of the march. The *China Daily* alleged that “most of the participants were incited and misled by a handful of demagogues.... The anti-legislation protest was on all counts a muddled farce.” The *Wen Wei Pao* said it “lamented the irrational behaviour of opposing for the sake of opposing.” The paper shared a common view with papers in China that Hong Kong’s political movement or policy cannot conflict with the Chinese government’s orders, if there is any conflict, the decision shall be made by the Chinese government.

By contrast, the *Apple Daily* shared similar political values with the pro-democracy parties. They challenged the government’s decision-making, and stood opposed to it. As for the centralist and other papers with less political tendencies, the determinants of coverage on the issue are more complex. They are a combination of journalistic paradigms, which decided overall tone towards the Article 23 legislation. Some indexing rules Bennett (1997) puts forward can explain the media’s focus and theme in coverage of Article 23:
Firstly, keeping the focus on democracy – mainstream media put fair weight on the would-be effect of the legislation on freedom of Hong Kong, for example, the freedom of speech and human rights, press freedom, the right of democracy, and conflicts of “One country, two systems”;

Secondly, coverage of conflicts – coverage of conflicts is a major theme on the issue of the legislation. Conflicts between the pro-democracy and pro-China parties and supporters, between public opinion and the government opinion, or between governors and pro-democracy LegCo councillors, were extensively covered, even if some conflicts developed into personal attacks. For instance, Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa described the DP flagship Martin Lee as ‘bad mouthing Hong Kong’, when Martin Lee sought international help. In response, the pro-democracy camp accused Tung of incompetence. All these actions attracted media attention.

Thirdly, following the trail of power – the concept is close to the ‘distribution of social power’ of press ideology. In Hong Kong, power is concentrated in the hands of political elites and this is implicitly understood by journalists when deciding their coverage. Authority legitimacy caused coverage of sources in the media to be very concentrated. According to So (2003c), most of the media relied heavily on information from the Security Secretary Regina Ip when she explained the legislation to the public. Pro-democracy newspapers (such as the Apple Daily and South China Morning Post) tended to use more sources from the pro-democracy camp, such as legislator Alan Leung Kat-kit (the former chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association), DP legislator Martin Lee (the former chairman and flagship of DP), DP legislator James To, Bishop Zen and legislator Margaret Ng. The pro-China newspapers chose to interview the former chairman of the DAB Tsang Yok-sing35, Secretary of Justice Elsie Leung and Gao Siren (the director of the central government’s liaison office in Hong Kong). Occasionally, they also quoted Martin Lee’s speech, but the focus was more on criticisms towards Lee’s trip to the European Union and United Nations in Geneva on November 2002.

35 Tsang Yok-sing resigned after the November 23 2003 District Council election.
8.4.2 A Possible Establishment of Media Agenda

Despite press ideology and indexing rules, the success of press releases entering the media agenda is likely to be contingent on more complex factors, such as the information journalists collected, the nature of the issue, the space available, and journalists' personal factors. When journalists have different sources on one event, they are likely to ignore the press release, as it is regarded as being too official and tactical. By contrast, when there are few sources, the press release is likely to be considered as a supplement.

The following press release was released by the DAB on 24 September – the day the government released the consultation document.

**DAB welcomes the government release of the consultation document of Article 23**

DAB thinks that the legislation of Article 23 is the right of the Central government delegated to HKSAR government, also is the responsibility that the government has to implement.

DAB will be earnest to investigate the document content and address our opinions. We also appeal to Hong Kong citizens as a whole to adequately express their opinions on the legislation of Article 23 in order to ensure the legislation is in accord with the regulations of Article 23. Meanwhile, it will not affect the rights, freedom and way of life that the Hong Kong citizens currently enjoy.


On September 25, three papers, the *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*, all used the press release. However, all dealt with the press release on the inside the pages. The *Ming Pao* only mentioned, “but the three big parties DAB, LP and HKPA and pro-China citizens agreed that the legislation of Article 23 is the government’s responsibility. They do not worry that Article 23 will reduce the citizen’s human rights and freedom of expression.” The *Apple Daily* was likely to directly quote the DAB former chairman Tsang Yok-sing’s speech from interview, “If the legislation is not set up, the public will guess that a sword is hanging above
heads would not know when it will fall down. DAB welcomes the government release of the consultation document." Apart from the last sentence, there is no other strong evidence showing the newspaper used the press release. The Wen Wei Pao used the release as the first source of its article, changing very few words of the press release, then copied the release verbatim. The DP's press release on the same day is quoted for comparison.

**DP's preliminary response to the proposal of Article 23**

On Article 23 of the Basic Law, DP chairman Martin Lee thought that Hong Kong is politically stable; there is no necessity for the government to gain more power to restrain Hong Kongers' freedom. In terms of the consultation content, the government should firstly enquire whether Hong Kong citizens needed the legislation and whether now was the proper time to legislate. The self-legislation of the Article 23 of Basic Law contains these elements, hoping Hong Kong people will express their opinion.

Martin Lee noted that the principle of the legislation of any law should not affect human rights and freedom in Hong Kong. However, whether the law can be enacted and whether the promise would hurt the freedom of Hong Kong people depend on the details of its provisions. DP legislator Ho added that the devil lies in the details [...] (DP press release 24/09/2002)

The Wen Wei Pao covered the DP's release by using exactly same words as the press release. The Ming Pao stated:

DP chairman Martin Lee thinks: the government should firstly consult with the public to see whether the legislation is needed. The next step is the discussion of the provision. He thinks that the consultation document, which only states overall principles without clear details, is perceived as unproblematic by the citizens so that it is difficult to protest against it. He exhorted citizens to read the document content narrowly, lest they fall into 'traps' [...] (25/09/2002)

36 Sword refers to the legislation. The sentence implies that citizens will worry about the coming deadline of enactment all the time if the government does not legislate for the National Security.
The paper quoted Martin Lee's speech as the primary source in the coverage. Although the story did use some information from the press release, the quotation was combined with other information. According to the political stance of the Apple Daily, it was expected to place more emphasis on the DP press release. Surprisingly, the Apple Daily (25/09/2002) only quoted two sentences of Martin Lee's remarks, "The government did not show evidence to the public. Five years after handover, Hong Kong politics is completely stable, it runs well without the Article 23, then why [does the government] still legislate?" The usage of press releases was in neither case in line with the cleavage along party lines. This element, however, cannot be excluded because partisan papers often place journalistic paradigms as their primary consideration in deciding who should be covered and who should not. In this case, the higher usage in the Wen Wei Pao might be on the grounds that they could not find other sources, and thus some 'news-holes' are needed to be filled.

8.4.3 Article 23 — A Sword above the Heads of HK Media?
During the post-handover period, Chinese officials frequently made remarks warning the Hong Kong media not to advocate issues which are unacceptable to the central government in China. Media professionals were worried that political intimidation and the legislation of Article 23 would further constrain press freedom and worsen self-censorship. According to the 2003 Annual Report of HKJA, many journalists were very concerned about the new offence of handling seditious publications. They worried that any reporting, publishing, printing or distribution of speeches, comments or other forms of expression would land media workers in trouble, if the expression was deemed to be seditious by the authorities.

Except the pro-China papers, most newspapers had a similar apprehension that the legislation would reduce the freedom that Hong Kong people are now enjoying and also influence human rights. Once the law was enacted, the restraint on freedom would generate public dissatisfaction and distrust of the government, and further impact upon the concept of 'one country, two systems'. For example, in proscribing theft of state secrets, the government proposed that the existing Official Secrets Ordinance be retained. The document said only five categories of secrets should be protected — information related to international relations, defence information,
security and intelligence information, information related to criminal investigations, and information related to relations between the central authorities and the HKSAR. However, the government proposed tightening up the laws on unlawful disclosures of official secrets on the grounds that it was necessary to stop legal loopholes. It sought to make the applicable laws water-tight. The press would effectively come under more stringent control. As journalists would be less likely to succeed in their defence, grey-area reports might just disappear.

When Justice Secretary Elsie Leung met the chief directors of media organizations, the media expressed concern about what constituted sedition. Did advocacy of ‘Taiwan independence’ constitute an offence of sedition? The press feared that political censorship would be rampant if the government failed to define clearly various meanings of sedition and subversion in its consultation paper on the subversion law. Would shouting ‘Down with Jiang Zemin’ constitute a seditious act? Could Hong Kong people openly talk about the independence of Taiwan or Tibet? Could an investigative article about Xinhua, or an editorial calling for a Chinese leader to resign, be ‘subversive’? Cheung Man-yee, director of broadcasting at Radio Television Hong Kong, called Article 23 the ‘one thing that hangs over our heads’ (HKJA, 2003).

The pro-China press had fewer problems of self-censorship, because its political stance had determined that its journalists would not challenge the Chinese central government’s decision. According to a chief director of the Wen Wei Pao, self-censorship existed in the paper, but they would choose the professional norms if there was a conflict which challenged or subverted to the bottom line of fundamental political values. In addition, the Wen Wei Pao had recently begun taking responsibility for its profits or losses, so it had to broaden its readership. This meant the newspaper had to pursue and cater to the public interest, it could no longer be purely a propaganda tool of the Chinese government. However, its long-term pro-China image hindered such a shift.

Although the controversy over the legislation of Article 23 in 2002 and 2003 were so intense and involved, the vigorous debate also partly demonstrated the robustness of freedoms. In addition, some journalists from the Apple Daily, Ming
Pao and Wen Wei Pao unanimously thought that the dispute over the legislation actually did not interfere with their daily interview activities; these debates and concerns were necessary for future freedom.

8.5 Public Opinion
The HKSAR government expected to pass the proposal of the legislation and end the controversy over Article 23 before the recess of the LegCo in July 2003. Its rationale was that many citizens supported the scheme, or at least did not oppose it in principle. However a series of campaigns showed that the majority of Hong Kong citizens opposed the legislation. Although the government had spent about ten months persuading the public, and had even made some concessions, the citizens still could not accept the legislation.

From September to December 2002, the government collected citizens' opinions on the legislation of Article 23, and published a 19-volume Compendium of Submissions on Article 23 of the Basic Law. Altogether, citizens handed in 100,909 submissions, involving 369,612 signatures. Then, Security Secretary Regina Ip announced that the majority of the citizens who had expressed their opinions did not oppose the legislation in principle. Therefore, controversy arose to question the representation of the consultation. On the one hand, the government insisted that the public had generally accepted the necessity of enacting the law since the release of the Consultation Document. On the other hand, some critics were concerned whether the public actually understood the law because many citizens were not familiar with the original law.

A research team from the University of Hong Kong, comprising a group of scholars, re-analysed the submissions collected by the government and found a different result. The team indicated that at the beginning of the consultation exercise, no explanation was offered on how the submissions would be handled, thereby giving too much room for the government to interpret the public opinion. The government has never openly explained the methodology adopted for analysing the submissions. Neither the coding system nor any explanation regarding the quality control measures for ensuring the reliability of the analysis was found in the compendium of submissions (Chan and Chung, 2003).
A survey by Hong Kong University (see Table 8.6) shows that between June 23 and June 25 2003, the Hong Kong people were opposed to the legislation of Article 23 both in principle and in practical terms. The results show that 55 percent opposed the legislation in principle, 49 percent opposed the government's original proposal, 45 percent opposed the "National Security Bill", and 64 percent opposed the 9th July deadline for passing the legislation.

Table 8.6 The support and oppose rate on the Article 23 legislation in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very support</td>
<td>68 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite supportive</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-half ? Non-decisive?</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very opposed</td>
<td>256 559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite opposed</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know / hard to say</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>1,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing case (s)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HKUPPOP (07/2003)

The above survey also investigated people’s views and attitudes to Hong Kong’s overall situation in 2003. It found that people who opposed the legislation were those who were dissatisfied with Chief Executive Tung’s policies, dissatisfied with the overall performance of the SAR government, did not trust the SAR government, and did not have confidence in either the prospect of Hong Kong or the ‘One country, two systems’ policy (So, 2003a).

According to Chan and Chung’s survey (2003), 65 percent of the July 1 demonstrators read newspapers every day, while 73 percent watched TV news on a daily basis. More than 60 percent of the demonstrators regarded information and messages from newspaper editorials, newspaper column articles, newspaper news stories, radio talk shows, radio news, TV news and TV public affairs programmes as having influence on their decision to participate in the rally. In the run up to July 1, the Apple Daily and particular programme hosts on Commercial Radio made clear attempts to mobilize the public to join the demonstration. Among the
demonstrators, over 50 percent of respondents said that they most frequently read the *Apple Daily*, while those that read the *Oriental Daily* and *Ming Pao* lagged far behind at 22 percent and 16 percent respectively. In terms of the Hong Kong people being keen newspaper readers, the printed media and political elites do shape public opinion.

**Conclusion**

Political coalition has become a strategy of the government’s opponents to strengthen their power and resource. In the case of Article 23, camps of both the supporters and opponents formed alliances to combat rivals and mobilize the public. In 2002 and 2003, demonstrations and rallies were a major form of political expression for political groups to attract media attention and persuade the government to listen to their demands.

The political advocates fought for the media agenda and publicity to gain the public’s support. Following journalistic paradigms and indexing rules, Hong Kong newspapers paid great attention to the issue of the Article 23 legislation. The media placed substantial weight on news stories, comments and analyses in relation to the issue. On balance, the media also gave enough analytical suggestions to the government. In sum, opposing opinions were reported more than those of supporters in the mainstream newspapers, and even in some papers with pro-China tendencies, such as the *Oriental Daily* and *Sing Tao Daily*.

Whatever their difficulties with the media, parties can obtain privileged treatment. The failure of the government’s strategies on the issue of Article 23 was mainly because of their refusal to understand public opinion and hear the public’s demands. The pro-democracy camp gained success because they successfully set the media agenda and acquired greater resources, through campaigns and concentrating their resources, to do so. The next chapter will continue to investigate the case of the legislation of Article 23 by three research methods – participant observation, textual analysis and content analysis.
Chapter 9 Coalitions and Debates on Article 23: Observing the Emergence of 'People Power'

Introduction
Chapter Eight has illustrated how political coalitions were formed by both pro-democracy and pro-China parties, both seeking to strengthen their resources and mobilize the public. It also showed how the media covered these political groups and what the public opinion was towards the legislation of Article 23. This chapter continues to provide a deeper insight into public relations of the political groups, the mobilization of public opinion and how the media covered the legislation of Article 23 through three different methods – two major methods (participant observation and content analysis) and one small scale method (textual analysis). The questions of the news definer and the ability of political groups to set the media agenda are finally explored.

9.1 Observation of the Protest and Protest Activism
The July 1, 2003 demonstration witnessed the growth of ‘people power’ and affirmed the opponents of the legislation of Article 23 as the majority voice. A year later, on the same date, 530,000 people stood on the street again to appeal for further democracy by returning power to the public. The two large scale demonstrations showed that the coalition for demanding a fast pace of democracy had become more united and centralized. They also verify that a large number of people are willing to stand out to present their opinions and strive for their interests and rights when the baseline of democratic values in Hong Kong is challenged. Before the demonstration, based on a long-term assumption that Hong Kong people are apolitical, neither the political groups nor the government expected much public opposition to the legislation of Article 23.

The effect of the July 1 demonstration and its follow-up rallies forced the Hong Kong government and political groups to reassess the power of public opinion. Demonstration – an active form of public opinion presentation – has been a substantial power for Hong Kong’s resource-poor parties and something the central government cannot ignore. The concentration of the people’s power also contributed to the resignation of the Chief Executive – Tung Chee-hwa in 2005.
Mobilizing public opinion has become an essential tool for political forces in the future fighting for further and more rapid democratic reform; it will also become a main consideration in the Hong Kong government's decision-making, whereas demonstration has become part of the political culture in Hong Kong.

A single incident, such as the July 1, 2003 demonstration, might be regarded as an isolated success, but the July 1, 2004 demonstration revealed that the public were prepared not just to voice their temporary resentment towards the legislation of Article 23, but also to the demand further democracy. These campaigns imply that the public's democratic awareness has increased. Hong Kong people are more active to strive for their rights and skeptical of any form of political or economic reforms without public consultation. The mobilization of pro-democracy parties and pressure groups featured in these campaigns and the formation of people power.

The following section observes the June 1, 2003 demonstration, a warm-up campaign with dual theme to attract the public's attention – the incident of June 4, 1989 in Tiananmen Square and protest against the Article 23 legislation, was the first media campaign since March 2003.

9.1.1 The June 1 Demonstration – a Warm Up Campaign

At 1:42 p.m. on June 1, 2003, on both sides of the entrance of Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, some temporary donation stations were set up by the Alliance (Hong Kong Alliance in support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in China). Several members wearing their group's uniform were selling June 4 souvenirs – mobile phone cards, T-shirts, breastpins, plastic cardcases and other items. Most workers in the stations were quite young, around 20 years old or less, probably university or secondary school students. Some workers were asking for donations; some leafleting and appealing to passers-by to participate in the demonstration in the afternoon.

On the football field in the park, a few groups were waiting for the demonstration – about 30-40 Falun Gong members dressed in yellow T-shirts, holding banners of 'Don't forget June 4th, protest against Article 23'; some groups in black T-shirts with anti-Article 23 slogans. These hundreds of marchers included different age groups such as three to five year-old boys with their parents, 60 year-old men, and
seventeen to eighteen year-old secondary students, but most marchers were about 30-50 year-olds. In the front of a temporary speech stage, a crowd gathered. Some of them were wearing masks, since warnings of the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia had still not been withdrawn. A man carried on his back an effigy of the Executive Chief Tung Chee-hwa, over three metres tall, on which was written, ‘I am incompetent, you are superficial’

A few minutes later, the spokesperson of the April Fifth Action – ‘Long hair’ Leung Kwok-hung, entered the field with another five or six members of the group. Two of them carried a cardboard image of a coffin with a knife embedded in it. On the coffin was written ‘The people’s hero is remembered forever’. On both sides of knife was written, ‘A knife hangs over the head of Hong Kongers, Overthrow the SAR government’. Obviously, the coffin represented Hong Kong’s democracy, while the knife represented the legislation of Article 23. Several journalists immediately rushed to take photos. A journalist interviewed ‘Long Hair’, taking notes.

At 2:31 p.m., after some chaos in arranging the line of marchers, core members of the Alliance stood on the stage, including Chairman Szeto Wah and Vice chairman Lee Cheuk-yan (also the chief of Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, namely HKCTU), and Legislator Leung Yiu-chung. An older man wearing a yellow cap and white T-shirt spoke to the man next to him: “It’s hot, isn’t it?” “Yes, too hot, about 31-2 degree. I think not many people will attend the campaign, the night of June 4th might be better.” “Could be, I’ll attend with my family members, my daughter said she’d attend.”

At 2:45 p.m., Lee Cheuk-yan and Szeto Wah began briefly speaking in turn and called for memories of June 4. Another theme of the demonstration – Against the Article 23 legislation was shouted out: “Against Article 23, it is reasonable against the evil law. [We] are already prepared to pay for that at any cost... Release democrats in the Democratic Movement of China [...] Don’t forget the 4th of June Incident”. The marchers took up the shouts loudly.

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37 On 15th May 2003, Tung Chee-hwa answered to a question from a councillor of Democratic Party Chan Wai-yip in the LegCo meeting: “You are superficial.”

38 In the incident of June 4 1989, some students and democrats were arrested, some of them fled from China to other countries, some are still in jail.
At 3:10 p.m., the marchers left via a right side door of the field. The queue extended all the way from the field to the street. Some marchers held banners with slogans, some hung placards round their necks, and some handed out leaflets. Outside the football field, four escort vehicles were waiting for departure, aimed at the building of the Government Secretariat.

Fourteen youths and six core members of the Alliance, wearing white or black T-shirts with anti-Article 23 slogans, holding a large black banner, moved ahead of the marchers. Just a few minutes after departure, the march stopped. Two journalists next to me asked, "What's up?" "I don't know", a female journalist answered and went towards one of the lead vehicles immediately. We followed her across the marchers. However, I could not reach the vehicle since some policemen were stopping people. About three minutes later, she came back and told us, "Oh, nothing’s special, just the police warned the group that they might charge the driver not having a valid driving licence." Soon, a female core member of the Alliance replaced the car driver in the driver’s seat. The march started again.

On the way, different media could be seen, about 50 to 60 journalists from TV stations, newspapers and radio stations running around the line, with TV cameras, digital cameras, recorders and mini video cameras. Six to eight journalists followed two escort vehicles; some of them walked with marchers, listening to what they said; some of them ran along the street or walked up passenger bridges to find a good angle to take photos. As I could see, the Wen Wei Pao, the Ta Kung Pao and other pro-China papers (most journalists hung their press cards around their necks) were likely to assign one or two journalists only; other newspapers might assign more, about three to four excluding photo journalists. Sometimes, three to four journalists gathered as a small group chatting and exchanging information.

Staff of protest groups handed out several different versions of leaflets; I also received six leaflets which mostly asked for donations and introduced their groups. As the marchers passed along Hennesy Road of Wan Chai, an incident took place in which someone threw soft drink cans and rubbish from an adjacent building down onto the street. The marchers were in an uproar for several minutes, then kept going tranquilly. Some core members of the Alliance kept ahead shouting slogans
throughout, such as 'Demand Responsibility for the Massacre', 'Object to Article 23' and 'Protect Democracy in China'. Many bystanders were watching the march on both sides of the road: some people followed the marchers shouting, "Protest against the legislation of Article 23", some shouted, "Traitors, Jackals".

At about 5:00 p.m., the procession finally arrived outside the building of the government Secretariat. Iron gates had been built around the building lest the marchers get in, over twenty policemen were keeping order. When the procession settled down, they started singing a theme song under the lead of Lee Cheuk-yan. Then Szeto Wah read the statement, “Hong Kong is standing at the frontier of democracy movement in China; the Alliance is the frontier of protecting Hong Kong democracy and freedom. [...]” Lee Cheuk-yan then appealed to participants to attend the June 4 candlelit vigil and the July 1 demonstration against the legislation of Article 23.

A group of journalists surrounded Szeto Wah near the flag-rising stage. However, few journalists who only keep watching or chatting with others were likely from the pro-China papers. A journalist from Cable TV immediately stepped onto an aluminium ladder to report the scene. Several journalists phoned their companies to report developments in the demonstration. Meanwhile, some journalists attempted to find interviewees, while others took pictures. A 30-40 year-old woman brought a petition forward, asking for signatures protesting against the legislation of Article 23. Nearby me, two journalists signed it, one refused. After singing a theme song and with the announcement that the number of marchers was 2,500, the demonstration finally ended. The procession was immediately dispersed by the police.

**Keeping on Message**
The warm-up campaign of the Alliance achieved two main purposes: 1.) reminding the public about the incident of June 4, hoping to attract more participants to attend the assembly of June 4 in Victoria Park by utilising more media coverage; the campaign was a quasi-announcement or alternative notice to tell the public that the anniversary time of the of Tiananmen Square incident was approaching; and 2.) keeping the message in the media coverage. Because a series of following
campaigns hosted by the pro-democracy coalition would be taking place in the coming weeks, the host continually mentioned these campaigns in order to set the media agenda and gain publicity.

The organization and its coalitions disseminated their clear message and purposes through any possible channel to express their dissatisfaction with the Chinese government’s handling of the June 4 incident and the legislation of Article 23. Advertising, posters, Internet notices, radio programmes, e-mails and leaflets were all utilized to mobilize the public. In addition, different groups designed their own leaflets. For example, April Fifth Action, the Democratic Party, and the Civil Human Rights Front distributed a large number of leaflets to the public. Although the campaign’s themes were to show people’s dissatisfaction with the Chinese government’s handling of the June 4, 1989 incident and protest against Article 23, the main purpose of the warm-up campaign was to remind the public to attend the 4 June candlelit vigil. The demonstration had been announced about two to three weeks before it was to take place so that the issue could be continually recalled by the media. Every year the Alliance collects donations from the public by the rally. On the June 4 candlelight vigil 2003 the group received $56,650 Hong Kong dollars.

In order to cater to the public’s taste, journalists tend to catch distinctive and interesting stories. To attract media attention, resource-poor individuals or small pressure groups act sensational or oddly to keep their message in the media’s eye. For example, journalists were keen to take pictures of the person who carried an effigy of the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. On June 2, 2003 – the day after the demonstration, the Apple Daily gave over a half of its front page to cover it. For publicity, the AFA often acts in a radical way. However, the group faced a dilemma of whether to pursue sensational and radical ways to keep on message or adopt more non-sensational campaigns but less on message. They likely wanted to emphasise an appeal related to its main theme, thus some alternative ways were adopted to attract people’s attention. However, if they only confine themselves to thinking about publicity stunts, the group will lose the original purpose of transmitting the message. For them, stunts are a double-edged sword. If the group does not adopt sensational ways to attract the media, the message they attempt to
spread cannot reach the public; but if they do, either the media or the public could divert their attention to the group’s sensational behaviour and ignore the message the group is trying to convey.

Only the *Apple Daily* responded to the AFA action in the June 1 campaign, although only giving them about 100 words in its lead story, whereas the *Ming Pao* did not mention anything about it. It is perceived that the actions in the media coverage also depended on considerations of journalistic paradigms, indexing rules and the media internal resources. The group is often seen as a weak and radical group because of being resource-poor and because of its general performance.

As can be observed, over twenty different media organizations followed the demonstration. Some papers were likely to assign three to five journalists, including photographers. But coverage in the *Ming Pao* and the *Wen Wei Pao* shows that these two papers did not pay much attention to the AFA action. The *Ming Pao* placed it as the second story on page three (A3) of ‘Local News’, about third-quarters of a page with 800 words and covering three opinions from participants. The *Wen Wei Pao* only gave a 200 word report from the angle of the decrease in the numbers of participants and the conflict between the police and the Alliance. Conversely, the *Apple Daily* gave the story two full pages, in the front page and the second page. The results showed that the different layouts and dispersal of the story in the three papers depended on press ideology, rather than the consideration of news objectivity. The groups who shared similar values with the media gained more positive coverage.

**Findings**

According to my observation, the host organization and its coalition groups are likely to follow routine steps to manage the media and mobilize the public. Towards the media, the organizations adopted a pro-active strategy for keeping on message and disseminating their message with reference to the campaigns.

Towards the public, the groups attempt to find issues which are close to the citizens’ concerns which related to the public’s livelihood and their fundamental political rights. In the view of the pro-democracy camp, the legislation of Article 23
is a challenge and constraint on democracy, whereby the government is trying to test civil power, and the pro-democracy groups have to defend the baseline. That is the reason why most warm up campaigns by the pro-democracy groups before July 1 added the anti-Article 23 theme. The strategies were fairly successful as both the Apple Daily and the Ming Pao carried over three news stories, in particular the Apple Daily gave about two full pages, the Ming Pao only covered half a page, although the Wen Wei Pao kept its style as usual to give it very little space. From the coverage, the papers’ stances are apparent. Before July 1, some campaigns of political organizations, deliberately or otherwise, paved the way for the July 1 demonstration. The issue of the legislation of Article 23 was kept in the media agenda for about ten months, from the beginning of the proposal consultation in September 2002 to the withdraw of the legislation. In the course of continued debates, public opinion eventually became mature and was formed via media coverage. Pressure groups, the pro-democracy and pro-China camps continually led relevant campaigns, such as residential meetings, forums, exhibitions, leaflets, petitions, signature campaigns and demonstrations to add fuel to the flames. In response, the media placed substantial emphasis and attention to Article 23, even if there were other issues rising on the media agenda at the same time.

From the above observation, some findings can be concluded. Firstly, press ideology determines coverage of the media weight on the political groups: pro-China papers marginalize campaigns for democracy and forces out the pro-democracy groups in their coverage; neutralist papers and pro-democracy papers give fair coverage on campaigns, but the former covers the event less than the latter. Secondly, journalists of the pro-China papers tend to display estrangement from the host group by comparison with papers of different political ideologies. Thirdly, the host organization uses pro-active devices of public relations in the campaigns including advertising, briefing, mobilising public opinion and managing resource through coalition. Small-scale warm-up campaigns are wanted to raise funds, remind the public, raise media attention and keep the organization’s message on media agendas. Fourthly, people power is eventually concentrated throughout a series of distributed campaigns with a similar and unified political goal, and erupts through the appeals on a suitable issue.
9.2 Definers with the Most Power

The pro-China party, the DAB, endeavoured to promote the article and persuade the public to accept the legislation. On July 1 2003, the day of the demonstration, the pro-China camp held a ceremony to celebrate the 6th Anniversary of Handover, on the other side of the football field in Victoria Park. However, the response was poor by comparison with the number of participants in the demonstration against Article 23.

From the analysis in the previous chapter, it can see that the media coverage on Article 23 was generally more opposed than supportive. If the DAB only relies on its own power and effort at present, the party will be difficult to change the unfavourable coverage since the label of the pro-China party has deeply rooted in publics' mind, whereas Hong Kong citizens obviously attach great attention to freedom. Even Radio and Television of Hong Kong (RTHK), which is a government stations only gave slight coverage to explain the government’s promotion of Article 23. At the same time, some anchormen of phone-in programmes took an attitude of opposition to the legislation to cater to the audience’s taste. So the party’s tactics sometimes only yielded half the result with twice the effort.

9.2.1 Campaign Strategies on Article 23

To manipulate the media agenda, the DP controlled its publicity through the following ways: 1.) attracted attention through the performances and motions of councillors in the LegCo; 2.) being active and attending the deliberation of the draft proposal and broadening the opportunities for international publicity through the media; and 3.) holding district campaigns, such as exhibitions, or sending leaflets to explain the law to the public.

Other resource-poor groups adopted similar strategies to the DP. They disseminated fewer booklets, but more leaflets and statements, and only had a few press conferences due to the limitation of resources. Most of the time, the media took the initiative to contact them, but there were some occasional cases. For example, the AFA sometimes phones familiar journalists to ask about governmental news and activities. As a member group of Civil Human Rights Front, the Neighbourhood
and Worker Service Centre has fewer campaigns since the resources of the centre are very limited. They only held two or three residential meetings, and two public meetings because they did not have the resources to deal with media affairs.

Functioning as a platform, the CHRF aims to integrate different groups for mutual communication. In the case, if the member groups had enough resources, they would take responsibility to mobilize the public. The LegCo councillors or famous activists of the coalition managed the media, since they are more familiar with it. The CHRF also tried to gain publicity by using street boards, leaflets and signature campaigns. However, most of the time, the media are likely firstly interview councillors, parties’ members, the legal community, Bishop Chan or relevant groups and individuals who hold power or are able to affect the legislation of Article 23. When the CHRF was first formed, the media seldom interviewed them. Because the group focused their efforts on internal connections and civil campaigns, the media doubted their social reputation, so the media turned to seek other sources from the legal community, who were acknowledged authorities and experts on the law, such as Bishop Chan, who has a high social standing, and from parties who could vote on the legislation and represent public opinion. For the media, the CHRF’s position was difficult to define. However, the group increasingly received publicity and interview requests from the media, after several medium to large scale campaigns and an increase in popularity.

The next section explores how the media cover stories of the legislation of Article 23. It examines three months news coverage in three typical newspapers by content analysis, from September to November 2003, a total of 785 stories.

9.2.2 Content Analysis

Three newspapers with different political stances were investigated: the Apple Daily – a tabloid or rightist paper; the Ming Pao – an elitist or neutralist paper; and the Wen Wei Pao – a pro-China or leftist paper. The examined period is from September 2002 to November in 2002 (three months). Stories investigated included news stories, editorials, and commentaries on the forum page which contains the readers’ letters. Content analysis can show how the different media deal with coverage of different sources and how they use the sources.
Figure 9.1 Monthly news coverage of three newspapers from Sept. to Dec. in 2002

Figure 9.1 displays the amount of coverage by the three papers in four months. It shows that the coverage of the *Apple Daily* and *Wen Wei Pao* basically increased, except for the *Ming Pao* with slight shift, and the *Wen Wei Pao* which has fourteen fewer stories in November. The coverage by the *Wen Wei Pao* is greatest in every month, with a dramatic increase from 89 stories in September to the highest point, 183, in December. The *Apple Daily* increases from 49 stories to 91. The *Ming Pao* does not have a dramatic rise, with only 61 stories in December.

The figures suggest that coverage in the media is issue-based. When Article 23 was proposed by the government in September 2002, the media began to pay attention to it, yet parties, pressure groups and the public had not digested the news and did respond immediately, as the stories had not aroused wide concerns. Despite of partisan papers, the media generally observed and covered the issue objectively. Subsequently, opinions were polarized: some people found that the legislation would conflict with their rights and interests; some people thought the legislation was necessary and was the responsibility of Hong Kong. The coverage rose as different groups began to speak out for their interests. Close to the end of the three month consultation period, the media and the public were waiting for the results of the government’s consultation, thus the *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao* coverage fell slightly with this uncertainty in November. Afterwards, the outcome was produced, with the announcement by the SAR government that the majority of people...
supported the legislation. The opposition camp therefore held a large-scale demonstration in December. Coverage rose rapidly, as various critics emerged with different opinions towards the demonstration and the government's response.

Recognizing the difficulties of promotion of the legislation, the government was preoccupied with promoting the proposal. Accordingly, the *Wen Wei Pao*, as a mouthpiece of the Chinese government, gave very heavy weight to coverage of relevant stories. The *Apple Daily* in December did not cover many stories, possibly because of the staff shortage in the political team, but as a rightist commercial paper and labelling itself as the fighter of public interests, the paper covered more stories in the following months.

Table 9.1 The mean of page layout on news stories of Article 23 in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Mean of story page</th>
<th>Mean of range number</th>
<th>Story number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>5.2675</td>
<td>2.7325</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>8.0851</td>
<td>2.5319</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>7.0508</td>
<td>3.1172</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) The smaller mean represents that the news is closer to the front page
2) The smaller range number represents the news is closer to the lead story.

Table 9.1 shows the mean of layout in the three papers. Stories in the *Apple Daily* tended to be closer to the front page, followed by the *Wen Wei Pao* and the *Ming Pao*. The *Ming Pao* gave the issue the least weight, with 141 stories, the *Apple Daily* had 157, and the *Wen Wei Pao* leads with 256 stories. These two results show that the *Wen Wei Pao* paid the most attention to Article 23, the *Apple Daily* next, and the *Ming Pao* the least. However, the story range of a page shows a different result. The mean of the *Ming Pao* was 2.5319, slightly higher than the *Apple Daily* and the *Wen Wei Pao*. That means the story is given comparatively more attention in the former than in the other two. The mean, however, cannot clearly show the significance of stories. Table 9.2 gives more details.

Table 9.2 shows that the *Apple Daily* leads with full page stories, with seventeen stories (10.9 percent), followed by the *Ming Pao* with ten (7.1 percent) and the *Wen Wei Pao* with 10 (3.9 percent). The value of 'one eighth to half page' is the most frequently occurring in all three papers. The *Apple Daily* had 57.9 percent of its stories in this category. The figures show that the *Apple Daily* paid the most
attention to the issue; the Wen Wei Pao is the next, and the Ming Pao the least. The results suggest that papers with more clear political stances gave the issue more weight than the paper with a less apparent stance.

Table 9.2 The Length and size of news stories in the three papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (words)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1000</td>
<td>10 (6.4%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>11 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>42 (26.8%)</td>
<td>32 (22.7%)</td>
<td>70 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-499</td>
<td>90 (57.3%)</td>
<td>86 (61.0%)</td>
<td>151 (59.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 99</td>
<td>15 (9.6%)</td>
<td>16 (11.3%)</td>
<td>24 (9.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157 (100%)</td>
<td>141 (100%)</td>
<td>256 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size (page)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full page</td>
<td>17 (10.9%)</td>
<td>10 (7.1%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8-1/2</td>
<td>91 (57.9%)</td>
<td>66 (46.8%)</td>
<td>144 (56.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/8</td>
<td>49 (31.2%)</td>
<td>65 (46.1%)</td>
<td>102 (39.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157 (100%)</td>
<td>141 (100%)</td>
<td>256 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) 'Over 1,000' is defined as a lengthy story/full quotation; 2.) 500-999 is as a medium-length; 3.) 100-499 is a short medium; 4.) Under 100 is a mentioned story/quotation

Table 9.3: News story positions in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack government/ Article23</td>
<td>46 (29.3%)</td>
<td>11 (7.8%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack pro-China parties</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack pro-democratic parties</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend government/Article23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>87 (34.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend pro-china parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend pro-democratic parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>109 (69.4%)</td>
<td>126 (89.3%)</td>
<td>160 (62.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157 (100%)</td>
<td>141 (100%)</td>
<td>256 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Neutral means the story does not clearly show attitude towards the legislation.

Table 9.3 compares the political stances of newspapers in the coverage of Article 23. In the Apple Daily, 69 percent of stories took a neutral stand, but 29 percent attacked the government. In the Ming Pao, 89.3 percent of stories remained neutral. Only eleven stories attacked the government or the legislation, and three defended the government. Conversely, in the Wen Wei Pao 160 stories (62 percent) were
neutral, while 34 percent defended the government or the legislation and 7 stories attacked the pro-democratic camp. The data suggests that the *Ming Pao* is the most objective among the three papers and the *Wen Wei Pao* is the most subjective. Not surprisingly, the result shows that these papers cover stories in accordance with their pro-democracy, neutral and pro-China political stances respectively.

Table 9.4 The primary sources in news stories of three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
<td>Story no. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>37 (23.6%)</td>
<td>48 (34.0%)</td>
<td>135 (52.7%)</td>
<td>220 (39.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-democratic parties</td>
<td>17 (10.8%)</td>
<td>16 (11.3%)</td>
<td>11 (4.3%)</td>
<td>44 (7.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China parties</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>25 (9.8%)</td>
<td>29 (5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>36 (22.9%)</td>
<td>26 (18.4%)</td>
<td>28 (10.9%)</td>
<td>90 (16.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars/expert</td>
<td>15 (9.6%)</td>
<td>23 (16.3%)</td>
<td>26 (10.2%)</td>
<td>64 (11.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor/media</td>
<td>11 (7.0%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>18 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>8 (5.1%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>13 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Law</td>
<td>4 (2.5%)</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
<td>19 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>27 (17.2%)</td>
<td>16 (11.4%)</td>
<td>14 (5.5%)</td>
<td>57 (9.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157 (100%)</td>
<td>141 (100%)</td>
<td>256 (100%)</td>
<td>554 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) Government includes officers of HKSAR officers and officers of the central government
2.) Others indicate actors from business society, other countries or the story has no actors.

Table 9.4 shows that the government has the priority as the primary source, being the source used most by all three papers. Over 50 percent of stories in the *Wen Wei Pao* used the government source as the primary source, followed by, the *Ming Pao* with 34 percent, and the *Apple Daily* used it the least, with 23.6 percent. This result proves that journalists possess the sense of authority legitimacy. Although the political values of the *Apple Daily* conflict with the government’s on the legislation, it cannot avoid giving the most weight to this source. Surprisingly, pressure groups are covered as the primary source more than either pro-democracy or pro-China parties. Pro-China parties are seldom covered as the primary source, except in the *Wen Wei Pao*:

In the case of Article 23, pressure groups played a very important role in explanation of the law. For instance, the professional organizations the Hong Kong Bar Association and Hong Kong Law Society acted as pressure groups to oppose or
support the legislation; the Hong Kong Journalist Association is another case in point. The opposition camp – the pro-democracy camp – is used as the primary source less than the government, pressure groups and scholars. This might be because the Civil Human Rights Front integrates all groups sharing similar political values together to reinforce their power, so the media attention in part was diverted from the parties to the groups’ actions.

Table 9.5: The speech length of primary sources in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Over 500 words</th>
<th>100-499 words</th>
<th>50-99 words</th>
<th>Less than 49 words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govern.</td>
<td>Story no (%)</td>
<td>Story no (%)</td>
<td>Story no (%)</td>
<td>Story no (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>11 (7.8%)</td>
<td>24 (17.0%)</td>
<td>11 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (2.3%)</td>
<td>79 (30.9%)</td>
<td>50 (19.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-demo parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (6.4%)</td>
<td>6 (3.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>8 (5.7%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>6 (3.6%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (5.9%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16 (10.2%)</td>
<td>12 (7.6%)</td>
<td>8 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>13 (9.2%)</td>
<td>8 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13 (5.1%)</td>
<td>15 (5.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>6 (3.8%)</td>
<td>6 (3.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 (7.1%)</td>
<td>11 (7.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>13 (5.1%)</td>
<td>10 (3.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>41 (26.1%)</td>
<td>36 (22.9%)</td>
<td>29 (18.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>32 (22.7%)</td>
<td>57 (40.4%)</td>
<td>24 (17.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12 (4.7%)</td>
<td>126 (49.2%)</td>
<td>87 (40.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) MP= Ming Pao; AD= Apple Daily; WWP=Wen Wei Pao; pro-demo.= pro-democracy
2.) In total, the Ming Pao has 141 stories, Apple Daily 157, and Wen Wei Pao 256
3.) The number is the source number of different papers;
4.) The percentage in the bracket is total percent of every paper.
5.) AG= Attack government; AC= Attack pro-China parties; AD= Attack pro-democracy parties, DG= Defend government/Article23; N= Neutral; O= Others.

Table 9.5 shows the coverage weight of sources in stories. It is crucial to the question of the significance of sources. The coverage weight of sources in the three papers is concentrated in the value 'length under 499 words'. In the Ming Pao, 24
stories quote the government as the primary source in pieces of about 50-99 words; lengthy quotations and short quotations each are 7.8 percent. In the *Apple Daily*, more government speeches are presented in the form of a ‘short quotation’ (10.8 percent), while short-medium stories are 7 percent, and medium-short are the least frequent. The figures reveal that the *Apple Daily* tried to quote speeches of the government as little as possible, since most government speeches presented a message in favour of Article 23, which was contrary to the position of the *Apple Daily*. By contrast, the *Wen Wei Pao* gave the government’s speeches as much coverage as possible. As to the pro-democracy parties and pressure groups, the *Apple Daily* gave more weight to their speeches, with ten stories of ‘100-499 words’, and only one story of less than 49 words.

### Table 9.6 The position/attitude of the primary source in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Govt.</th>
<th>Pro-demo . parties</th>
<th>Pro-China parties</th>
<th>Pressure groups</th>
<th>scholars</th>
<th>Citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AG</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (9.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33 (21%)</td>
<td>10 (6.4%)</td>
<td>7 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>9 (6.4%)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>17 (12.1%)</td>
<td>15 (10.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>7 (2.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 (3.1%)</td>
<td>8 (3.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DG</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>27 (17.2%)</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>35 (24.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1(0.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>118 (46.1%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>22 (8.6%)</td>
<td>20 (7.8%)</td>
<td>12 (4.7%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>7 (4.5%)</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (1.9%)</td>
<td>4 (2.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>7 (5.0%)</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>7 (5.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>13 (5.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (2.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>1(0.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>1(0.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) MP= *Ming Pao*; AD= *Apple Daily*; WWP= *Wen Wei Pao*; 2.) The number is the source number of different papers. 3.) AG= Attack government; AC= Attack pro-China parties; AD= Attack pro-democracy parties, DG= Defend government/Article23; N= Neutral; O= Others

Generally speaking, the more sources from different groups cited, the greater the balance of stories. However, over half the stories in the *Wen Wei Pao* did not have a
second source (see Table 9.7). This means the paper often only uses one source, and the source’s statement will affect the angle and objectivity of the story. 32.5 percent of stories in the *Apple Daily* are without a second source, as are 27.7 percent of those in the *Ming Pao*. In other words, the *Ming Pao*’s coverage is the fairest and most balanced in terms of using the sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No actor</td>
<td>51 (32.5%)</td>
<td>39 (27.7%)</td>
<td>136 (53.1%)</td>
<td>226 (40.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>23 (14.6%)</td>
<td>35 (24.8%)</td>
<td>47 (18.4%)</td>
<td>105 (19.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-demo. Parties</td>
<td>22 (14.0%)</td>
<td>15 (10.6%)</td>
<td>9 (3.5%)</td>
<td>46 (8.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China parties</td>
<td>2 (1.3%)</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>21 (8.2%)</td>
<td>28 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>24 (15.3%)</td>
<td>17 (12.1%)</td>
<td>17 (6.6%)</td>
<td>58 (10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>15 (9.6%)</td>
<td>10 (7.1%)</td>
<td>9 (3.5%)</td>
<td>34 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor/media</td>
<td>7 (4.5%)</td>
<td>8 (5.7%)</td>
<td>5 (2.0%)</td>
<td>20 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent councillor</td>
<td>4 (2.5%)</td>
<td>5 (3.5%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>10 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>5 (3.2%)</td>
<td>4 (2.8%)</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>13 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8 (5%)</td>
<td>8 (5.6%)</td>
<td>8 (6.7%)</td>
<td>24 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157 (100.0%)</td>
<td>141 (100.0%)</td>
<td>256 (100.0%)</td>
<td>554 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The number is the source number of different papers; the percentage in the bracket is total percent of every paper.

As a secondary actor, the government sources are given heavy weight. The *Ming Pao* gives them 10.6 percent of coverage, the *Apple Daily* gives 14 percent, while the *Wen Wei Pao* gives them 18.4 percent. Pro-China parties are relegated to a minor position in the *Ming Pao* and the *Apple Daily*, but placed in a comparatively higher position in the *Wen Wei Pao*. These results suggest the political tendency significantly affects the coverage weight of the government source.

Table 9.8 shows that scholars’ articles occupy 47 percent of the coverage in the *Ming Pao*. These scholars mainly came from professional organizations such as research centres or universities, or are topical critics. The rest of the coverage is distributed over other actors – the governments, pro-democratic parties, the paper itself, the pro-China parties, pressure groups, independent councillors and citizens to a comparatively equal degree. The *Apple Daily* has over 60 percent of articles from scholars, while the *Wen Wei Pao* has 45 percent. Citizens’ letters are another
main source of the forum articles in the *Apple Daily*. The data shows that the *Apple Daily* paid a fair amount of attention to readers’ opinions, whereas the *Wen Wei Pao* gave more weight to articles from the government and the pro-China parties. In fact, many articles on the *Wen Wei Pao*'s forum page came from Chinese government officers in Hong Kong.

Table 9.8 The author of editorial and forum articles in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (11.8%)</td>
<td>23 (27.4%)</td>
<td>29 (12.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-demo. Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-China parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>13 (15.5%)</td>
<td>15 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>1 (10.4%)</td>
<td>3 (5.9%)</td>
<td>4 (4.8%)</td>
<td>8 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>58 (60.4%)</td>
<td>24 (47.1%)</td>
<td>38 (45.2%)</td>
<td>120 (51.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor/media</td>
<td>10 (10.4%)</td>
<td>7 (13.7%)</td>
<td>3 (3.6%)</td>
<td>20 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>27 (28.1%)</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>3 (3.6%)</td>
<td>32 (13.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96 (100%)</td>
<td>51 (100%)</td>
<td>84 (36.4%)</td>
<td>231 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1.) The number is the actor number of different papers;  
2.) The percentage in the bracket is the total percentage in every paper.

Table 9.9 The position of authors in editorial and forum articles of three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Ming Pao</th>
<th>Apple Daily</th>
<th>Wen Wei Pao</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attack Govt./Article 23</td>
<td>26 (51.0%)</td>
<td>88 (91.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>117 (50.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attack pro-demo. parties</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (7.1%)</td>
<td>7 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend Govt./Article 23</td>
<td>10 (19.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75 (88.2%)</td>
<td>85 (36.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defend pro-demo. parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14 (27.5%)</td>
<td>6 (6.3%)</td>
<td>3 (3.6%)</td>
<td>20 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51 (100%)</td>
<td>96 (100%)</td>
<td>84 (100%)</td>
<td>231 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 9.9, it can be seen that the editorials and forum articles in the three papers apparently show much more political bias than news stories. 91.7 percent of the articles in the *Apple Daily* take an attitude opposed to the government or the legislation, and in the *Ming Pao* over half the articles are opposed to the government legislation. In contrast, the *Wen Wei Pao* does not have any article criticizing the government or legislation. Likewise, the *Apple Daily* does not have any articles defending the government or legislation; whereas in the *Wen Wei Pao*, 88 percent of the articles display a supportive attitude. Although the defending
articles in the *Ming Pao* are fewer than the attacking, the paper displays balanced and neutral coverage.

The data suggests that the *Apple Daily* has a strong pro-democracy tendency. Sources from the pro-democracy camp are easier to keep on message and they receive comparatively more positive coverage than the pro-China camp. In line with the paper's journalistic paradigms, the government sources are likely to be filtered or minimized as much as possible, since the value conflicts occur between the paper and the government. However, due to the principle of targeting the power holder and the sense of authority legitimacy, the government is the predominant overall source. By contrast, the pro-democracy parties and pressure groups could not easily access the *Wen Wei Pao*, which completely advocated the government's decision on Article 23. These groups often received negative coverage and few or no neutral reports in the pro-China paper. The government is the main and primary source of the paper. The *Ming Pao* retains a neutral stance in coverage of the issue. However, on average, the paper carries more negative than positive coverage. It shows that, in the case of Article 23, the paper tends to oppose the legislation.

**Table 9.10 Polls weight in three newspapers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No poll</td>
<td>Full poll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>181(94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>238 (94.1%)</td>
<td>3 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWP</td>
<td>332 (97.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>751 (95.7%)</td>
<td>7 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MP= Ming Pao; AD= Apple Daily; WWP=Wen Wei Pao

As a cultural form of representation of public opinion, polls on the legislation have been a necessary mechanism to evaluate public opinion. Table 9.10 shows that the three papers did not use many polls in the three months investigated. The *Ming Pao* carried eleven polls, the *Apple Daily* fifteen, and the *Wen Wei Pao* eight. Although the *Apple Daily* uses polls the most, more than half are only mentioned. Polls are used as evidence to support the paper's views that the majority opinions were opposed to the legislation. However, polls are not often used because conducting polls is time and resource consuming. In addition, polls cannot cater to the public's taste on grounds of the market forces consideration; intensive commercial
competition between the market forces the papers to provide more ‘infotainment’ than ‘boring’ polls.

Table 9.11 The conducted constitution of polls in three newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polls sources</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The paper</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-demo. parties</td>
<td>2 (1.0%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Institution</td>
<td>6 (3.1%)</td>
<td>6 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No polls</td>
<td>181 (94.3%)</td>
<td>238 (94.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192 (100%)</td>
<td>253 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.11 shows that most polls in the three papers are provided by professional institutions, less by the media themselves and the parties. All three papers used polls from the pro-democratic parties and pressure groups, but to a much lesser extent than the professional institutions. Polls conducted by professional institutions are more convincing to the public because they have a less overt political purpose. In the case of Article 23, the pro-China parties conducted no polls.

Conclusion

In the campaigns protesting against the legislation, the pro-democracy pressure groups and parties played very similar roles in condemning the government’s policy. Pressure groups played an even more important role than the parties because the performance of the parties was less effective than the public expected. The coalition of both pro-China and pro-democracy camps, to a very large extent, depends on issues. When an issue eventually subsides, the coalition ends, but implicit common consensus exists among the groups with similar political values and prepares for a next important issue. The coalition ties of the camps are not tight enough for permanent coherence. The advocacy coalition, on the one hand, integrates the power and resources of political groups with similar political values to reinforce the power of protest against the legislation; on the other hand, it saves resources in case of overlap. The pro-democracy group displayed great ability to set the media agenda in this case.
Meanwhile, content analysis of 785 stories shows the government has priority as the primary source in media coverage. Thus, the government possessed greater power to set the agenda by comparison with the pro-democracy camp. However, it still failed in the fight over the legislation because it neglected public opinion. The withdrawal of the legislation in July 2003 illustrates its failure. The reason is that the opposition camp, including the pro-democracy camp, some individual councillors, scholars and even some media, formed a stronger and more concentrated power against the legislation. Public opinion is the key factor in influencing political advocates' power over the agenda.

The large amount of coverage on Article 23 aroused the public’s concern, provoked controversy and shaped what the public were concerned about. According to a survey by the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme on the demonstration of July 1 2003, as mentioned in Chapter Eight, over 50 percent of respondents who attended the demonstration said that they most frequently read the Apple Daily and sixteen percent read the Ming Pao. Following the demonstration, the turnout rate of the District Council Election was as high as 44 percent, with 27.4 percent of voters thinking this was because of the effect of the July 1 demonstration, by comparison with 25.4 percent thinking the people were dissatisfied with the SAR Government, 15.8 percent thinking they were fulfilling civic responsibility or civic consciousness, 14.9 percent thinking people wanted to improve the social condition, livelihood and economy, and only 0.4 percent thinking they supported the principle of the 'Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong' or 'One country, two systems'. This is a proof that the media and groups can set the agenda and influence the public's actions.

The media, on the one hand as information conveyors, provided relevant information, such as interpreting the law, analysing the problems and conflict among the public, the parties and the government; on the other hand, the media collected opinions from the public, and shaped the political reality. The partisan media carried stories with a strong political stance on the legislation. The Apple Daily even urged the public to attend the July 1 demonstration. The neutralist paper with less bias displayed its objective coverage, although it showed a slight political tendency. The pro-China paper, the Wen Wei Pao, as a mouthpiece of the
government, strongly adhered to the government line. The following final chapter will conclude key themes of previous chapters, analyse some finding from the research methods and provide some implications for future studies.
Conclusion

Introduction
The Hong Kong media are full of political reports but a distinction needs to be drawn between their coverage of government performance, the bread-and-butter social and economic issues, and those core issues that relate to SAR’s relationship with Beijing. These core issues touch on fundamental democratic values and reveal a cleavage in Hong Kong civil society between pro-democracy and pro-China forces. The idea of “One country, two systems” under the guarantee of the Chinese government in practice faces many challenges, with the tacit approval of the central government, such as, the National People's Congress's attempt to explain the Basic Law and the Hong Kong government’s attempt to introduce Article 23. These demonstrate that the Chinese government finds it difficult to let Hong Kong completely run its own affairs. However, the democracy and freedom that Hong Kong people currently enjoy does not appear less than it was in the time of the British government, and people’s political consciousness has increased as a result of the impact of different political events. This has led to political reforms.

Political Advocates and Values
An executive-led government, an appointed Chief Executive, and elections without universal suffrage, reflect the characteristics of the Hong Kong political system – a semi-democracy. The system does not allow the parties to have substantial political power in policy decision-making. The parties thus lack the initiative to develop maturely and only act as quasi-pressure groups. In line with their political ideological cleavage, pro-democracy parties act as ‘watchdogs’ overseeing the government, while pro-China parties adopted reserved attitude, standing by the side of the government. Citizens believe in the competence of the pro-democracy parties on issues of the pace of democracy, but they are dissatisfied with the parties on fundamental social and economic issues. Pro-China parties gain comparatively more approval for their competence on social and economic issues, but citizens are dissatisfied with them for lack of initiative and aspiration to strive for democracy, being constrained by the party line. As a result, from the views of the public and the media, the social reputation and the position of political parties is relatively low. The media do not attach much attention to political parties in terms of the power the
parties hold and their hierarchy in society. The situation is consistent with So’s (1999) perspective that market forces in routine coverage may be more decisive than the press’s ideology in the context of capitalist Hong Kong.

Facing a reluctant media, parties have to devote greater efforts to public relations to gain publicity and set the media agenda to be able to oppose the double forces of the pro-China camp and the government. However, although the parties are skilled to attract media attention, neither the pro-democracy nor the pro-China camp has clear strategies and is professional on media management; the ‘spin doctor’ is a fairly new concept for most of them. According to eleven informants from parties and pressure groups in semi-structured interviews, they have not yet developed media management in a systematic way, even though the two main parties, the DAB and DP, actually have a Department of Public Relations.

There are two major reasons that generate this low level professionalism of public relations. One is the parties’ lack of inclination to fight because of their insufficient power to constitute the government in the current political system. The media are power-biased: less power means less coverage. Some informants complain of getting half the result with twice the effort on media management. Moreover, the changeable political system and short developmental history of political parties does not allow them to devote more effort to concentrate on the management. Many strategies or plans of the parties and pressure groups are adopted based upon their accumulated experiences and intuition rather than theory.

The other reason is that parties in Hong Kong are resource poor, they do not have sufficient resources to systematically develop media management or relevant affairs. The pro-democracy parties have relatively limited resources. By comparison, the pro-China camp possesses more resources than the pro-democracy camp because of their strong supporter – the Chinese government. Although they comprehend that resources are a key determinant of a party’s media treatment, immature party politics and the lack of government subsidies characterise the generally resource-poor parties. The professionalism of press groups on public relations is much lower than that of the parties. The spokesperson of the Civil Human Rights Front, Richard Tsoi said, “Media management is only a small part of our job, what
we want is to gain public attention and influence them.”

However, without publicity in the media, the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong cannot find an efficient way to access the public as a whole. In the District Council election, media coverage might not give candidates much help or substantially influence the electorate’s votes, as the effort of candidates in district affairs and their relationship with residents are more decisive. Yet in the coverage of the LegCo election and other campaigns, the media perform a more important function as a conduit to disseminate candidates’ message to the public. For parties, every day is an election day; publicity thus is grounded on long-term activities or what is called ‘permanent campaign’. Although they cannot devote adequate resources to media management, they have begun to recognize its importance.

In semi-democratic Hong Kong, media coverage in political issues is substantially determined by the political environment and journalistic paradigms. Under the promise of “One country, two systems”, the media system is more liberal and democratic than the political system in the capitalism notion. The pluralistic system allows the media to represent different views on ideological spectrums and speak for different political interests. They enjoy virtual freedom, there being hardly any difference from the age of British colonial administration. According to a report by ‘Reporters Without Borders’ in 2003, Hong Kong’s media freedom was ranked eighteenth in the world, just next to the United States but ahead of Britain. The ranking is according to the whole range of press freedom violations such as murders or arrests of journalists, censorship, pressure, state monopolies, punishment of press law offences and regulation of the media. Britain’s ranking is largely due to the situation in Northern Ireland, where journalists are constantly threatened by paramilitary groups, furthermore, the investigation into the 2001 murder of Sunday World journalist Martin O’Hagan has come to a complete standstill. The relative high ranking of Hong Kong is mainly because the media in the case of the legislation of Article 23 performed well and are free to present their opinions. However, the media operate freely yet restrainedly. Practising self-censorship has been a widespread phenomenon in media organizations since the period of the post-transition, lest they offend the Chinese government.
The Chinese government manipulate the media of Hong Kong, mainly through ways of punishment and reward. A newspaper like the Apple Daily was not allowed to conduct interviews in mainland China when its boss Jimmy Lai criticized the officers of the government in handling issues of democracy and human rights. By contrast, the pro-China papers are privileged with interviews. Sensitive political issues, such as the problems of Taiwan and Tibet, have been ‘no-go’ areas for the media. Facing such constraints, some media choose either to follow the Chinese government’s line or to be passive and reduce coverage when these sensitive issues emerge in the public agenda. However, when the issue is related to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, the media almost entirely set aside their apprehension to function efficiently as the ‘watchdog’ overseeing the government’s performance. Therefore, some critics even put forward the concept of the ‘media ruling Hong Kong’. Such a concept certainly cannot be practised, but it illustrates the media’s freedom and their roles in Hong Kong.

Media coverage is decided on consideration of journalistic paradigms, which contain three core determinants – distribution of social power, market forces and press ideology. Social power is determined by political hierarchy and resources. More power represents more influence on votes and more coverage in the media. The division of the political beat in media organizations reflects their perceptions of where power lies in. In a market economy circulation determines the survival of the media, so the media sometimes consider economic rather than political factors when determining their coverage. In most cases, press ideology is still essential to the media for deciding their overall tone on political issues. In line with the ideological cleavage of political parties, the media are divided into different political positions: the pro-democracy – the Apple Daily, and to a lesser extent the South China Morning Post, the neutralist – the Ming Pao, Sing Tao and Oriental Daily (in practice Sing Tao, Oriental Daily, and the editorial of the Ming Pao tend slightly towards a pro-China stance), and the pro-China – Wen Wei Pao and Ta Kung Pao. Pro-China papers act as mouthpieces of the Chinese government. They also strongly support the policy decision making of the Hong Kong government.

The HKSAR government is often criticized as inefficient. Although the government tries hard to accommodate the perception of the media and the public, neither the
media nor the public are satisfied after its incompetent performance in dealing with many crises and events, such as the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia, the handling of Anthony Leung’s car-tax scandal, and the legislation of Article 23. In cases of scandals and crises of the government, media-government relationships are established on the adversary model. However, in routine access, media-government relationships are established on the exchange model rather than the adversary. On the ground of authority legitimacy, government sources are given privileged access to the media. Basically, the relationships are established on the principle of “business is the business”. From the journalists’ view, governors of higher rank are more difficult to access. From the government’s view, media circulation and journalists’ experience determines their different treatment – more circulation, more ‘leaks’; less experience, less ‘leaks’.

In general, the mainstream papers benefit from more ‘leaks’ of information, while the non-mainstream papers have less. For the government, the media’s political ideology is not perceived as a major factor in according different treatments. For the media, the paper’s political ideology is crucial to decide coverage of the government. Pro-China papers tend to use government sources more as their primary source. Conversely, pro-democracy papers attempt to minimize the use of government sources. The exchange model is shifted to the adversary mode in crisis management. In crisis, the media that assume that something is being hidden under the surface aspire to dig deeper. In such a case, the government adopts re-active devices to minimize media negative coverage. For example, in the case of the car-tax scandal, the government tried to limit negative coverage of Anthony Leung. Regarding the case of the legislation of Article 23, the government used similar strategies to limit the damage after the July 1 demonstration.

Party-media relationships are established on the ground of more complex variables. Different political values between the media and the parties mean an adversary relationship. In the media, journalistic paradigms determine the basic lines of a paper’s party coverage (cover or not, the angle of a story, weight of coverage, and the layout), while indexing rules determine the theme a paper covers (democracy, freedom, conflicts between the government and the pro-democracy camp, and between the pro-China and the pro-democracy camp). In general, pro-China papers,
in particular the partisan papers, have a better relationship with pro-China parties, and a worse relationship with pro-democracy parties. The pro-China journalists rarely initiate interviews with the pro-democrats; if they give coverage to them, most do so from a negative angle. Pro-democracy papers take a converse position to pro-China papers. Neutralist papers consider indexing rules and market forces over press ideology. Their relationship with parties is established more on journalistic doctrines of newsworthiness and issue-dependence than papers with clear political stances.

Apart from papers with sharp political stances, the other mainstream media are more commercialized than politicised in peacetime. The relationships between these media and political parties are grounded on the principle of 'business is the business.' The media aim to cater to the public's tastes rather than consider political ideology. In such a situation, media coverage is conditional upon specific journalistic paradigms of different organizational cultures. More specifically, its value depends on the dominant institutional nature of the press and the situational context of reporting (So, 1999). However, when an issue is closely related to the baseline of democratic values and press freedom, the media consider politics over economics.

**Advocacy Coalitions and Exercising People Power**

Resources as a component of power have become a significant factor in the media coverage of parties' activities. However, the parties' campaigns and media management are constrained by their resource poverty. The resource-poor parties receive less coverage than the comparatively resource-rich. Allocating their resources is a major task for parties and pressure groups; for better mobilizing public opinion, these groups consolidate their power to form advocacy coalitions. Although this kind of coalition often is tied to a single issue, it serves as a platform for strengthening the power of member groups.

From the findings of the two cases from Chapter Seven to Chapter Nine, it is perceived that Hong Kong journalists' relations with parties are basically established in line with the cleavage of political values. However, a weak political party system has made the media reluctant to report parties' movements. Attention
is diverted from political coverage to 'infotainment' news, such as personal life stories or 'nosy' stories of governors and Legislative Councillors, on grounds of the consideration of intensive competition. Nevertheless, as important actors on the political stage in Hong Kong, parties and pressure groups in some cases are accorded privileged treatment, although in most cases, the government is dominant in this respect. In other words, parties are able to set the media agenda when issues touch the line of democracy, but the government, often beyond the parties, has dominant power to define the agenda.

Although the government defines what the news is, the media decide what angle to take and how to present it. For example, the proposal of the Article 23 legislation was launched by the government in September 2002, different papers with different positions began to cover the news in accordance to their organizations' political nature - pro-China papers approved the legislation; pro-democracy papers opposed it, while the neutralists kept observing or adopted a moderate stance. Opinions eventually solidified in the course of an encoding and decoding process. A large amount of coverage carried a persuasive message and mobilized information coming from different news sources - such as the government, DAB, DP, LP, Frontier scholars, and the legal community. The opinions of political elites, such as the core member of the Democratic Party, Martin Lee (the former Chairman of DP), Leung Kah Kit (the former chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association), Security Secretary Regina Ip, legislative councillors Audrey Eu and Margaret Ng, were extensively covered in the mainstream media. As the controversy became more intensive, the media coverage increased. Through the different themes of debates in different periods, the agenda was set for the public. For example, after three months consultation on the proposal, the media covered the question of the government's conclusion that the majority people supported the legislation. Subsequently, the timing of the drafts and the requirement for a 'Blue Bill' were successively respectively put on the agenda. It can be seen that at different stages the media set different debate themes for the public, telling them what to think about.

Various responses of the public, collected by the media, interested groups or academic institutions, such as opinion polls (as a passive form of expression), and demonstrations and rallies (as an active form of expression), were covered and
interpreted in the media. At the beginning of the consultation, the Hong Kong government attempted to manipulate public opinion, but the effort was soon proclaimed a failure. Controversy was raised on the issue of the supposedly majority view on the legislation, as Chan and Chung (2003c) said that the government was too used to twisting and manipulating public opinion, sometimes taking it seriously, sometimes ignoring it. Nonetheless, opinions finally are formed and polarized into supportive and oppositional camps, with the neutral voice marginalized or even faded out in the course of debate. Likewise, the media's overall tone is cleaved in line with their political stance. Although the media are supposed to hold a strong norm of objectivity, some media, like Apple Daily and particular programme hosts on Commercial Radio, made clear attempts to mobilize the public to join the demonstration in the run up to July 1. Supportive and oppositional camps were locked in a stalemate. Both camps were resistant to rendering concessions. Public opinion became a major determinant and significant resource for deciding success or failure of both groups. Accordingly, rivalry wars broke out between the two opposing camps to gain support from the public.

In the July 1 2003 demonstration, Chan and Chung (2003c) find that many participants did not attend in the name of pro-democracy groups or the coalition of Civil Human Rights Front, and over sixty percent of participants used the media such as television and newspapers, on a daily basis. They conclude that the public is not mobilized by groups, but rather attends by initiative. Although the result cannot show whether the power of the pro-democracy coalition was enough to mobilize the public, it can show that the public were affected by the mobilization of the coalitions. The result of the reading habit of demonstrators shows that the majority frequently use the media. This means that participants' opinions are likely to be shaped by the media. The media agenda are affected and shaped by the political elites. In the case of Article 23, the opponent camp devoted great effort to bringing a persuasive and mobilizing message to set the media agenda. Public opinion is eventually formed in the course of various controversies over the legislation and formation of the media agenda. The two cases analysed in the thesis show that public opinion plays a significant role in influencing the success or failure of the government's strategies on setting the media agenda.
A key factor in understanding the emergence of issues on the local agendas in a semi-democratic region, is the dynamism of civil society. The semi-democratic system, with pluralized representative political interests and a liberalized media sector, means that the government – appointed Chief Executives, despite resource advantages, cannot act with the autonomy of despots. In addition, citizens are accumulating experience in political participation, raising their political awareness and exercising their power. As for political parties, the absence of socio-economic mobilization and the novelty of partisanship intensify the difficulty of parties’ coordination with the public. Thus, raising the public’s awareness on political participation and partisan attachment will be an important task for the parties.

Discussions and Implications of Key Findings
The previous sections summarized the political context of Hong Kong, key political actors and the general conceptual frameworks of media-power relations, agenda setting and public opinion. These help gain a better understanding of political groups’ resources, their campaign strategies and interactions between these groups and the media in Hong Kong. The concept of resources gives insights into which resources these political groups possess and how these groups maximize limited resources to gain public support. It also assists in the understanding of the difficulties of political communication and the problems of political groups and the media confronted in the semi-democracy of Hong Kong. This section will highlight some potential implications related to the theoretical literature from the key findings. Implications arising from the study will enrich the knowledge base and suggest directions for further research.

Political Power of Political Groups and Their Public Relation Strategies
The findings of Hong Kong parties with a general characteristic of being resource poor illustrated a fundamental problem, that Hong Kong’s electoral systems suffer significant threats on the development and implementation of democracy. This is due to the colonial authoritarian administration of politics in the earlier stage and the apprehension of the Chinese government towards a different system in its regime. The problems of the parties without substantial power deeply reflects unease about two aspects which undermine equality and liberty of democracy:
Firstly, parties cannot gain widespread legitimacy from Hong Kong’s citizens since most policies are proposed by the government and also launched by the government. Poor parties’ membership and low party identities facilitate their difficulties to further develop and also diminish their enthusiasm to develop. Secondly, parties are mainly regarded as a key mechanism to bridge the gap between the government and civil society because of the appointed system of key governors. However, social division will be enlarged and irrational social movement might increase, once problems and conflicts emerge between the government and parties as the government and the citizens lack a direct channel of good communication. Since 1998, the rising number of street demonstrations and irrational quarrels between the government and pro-democracy parties in the LegCo evidence the point. These suggest that citizens and parties desire to change their status quo and acquire a more representative and direct electoral system. This would provide an attractive avenue for participation by Hong Kong’s political elites from a wide diversity of businesses, sectors and professions and would arouse the interests of citizens to implement their political rights. The government also needs to take the possibility of providing subsidies for parties into consideration in order to assist them to communicate with citizens better.

The insufficient professionalism of parties’ public relations strategies is another derivative of semi-democracy. Undoubtedly, resources are a key factor in creating the deficiency in professionalism, but a lack of knowledge and being earnest about media management is also a problem. Members or councillors of parties often emphasis the personal communications and substantial efforts of their constituency in supporting electorates and improving their livelihood. They ignore the importance of media communication in Hong Kong as a whole but, depend more on personal intuition and experience in campaigns. In District Council elections, the method of election engineering may not be a problem to attract or mobilize their voters. In direct elections of LegCo or the forthcoming universal suffrage which the SAR government will carry into execution in 2012, without the assistance of professional media management, candidates may cause resource waste and a lack of popularity to attract voters; in particular those come from functional constituencies have not experienced LegCo election campaigns.
The findings of the coalition of different forces demonstrate the importance of coherence for maximizing resource and mobilizing public opinion for political groups in approaching their campaign aims. The study of the issue-based coalition indicates a need to establish a permanent partnership or platform by different groups sharing similar values for the better mobilization of member groups and to save resources. Besides, in a sense, the polarization of pro-China and pro-democracy forces impedes the development of a pluralistic society in which the voices of the minority are marginalized or entirely ignored in order to reach a social consensus. Giving comprehensive consideration to both the majority and minority is a difficult task, the rights and interests of the minority should also be accommodated while the majority opinions are emphasized and complied with.

Journalistic Paradigms

Analysing press ideologies of Hong Kong’s media, the pro-China newspapers are in an overwhelming majority, as the Apple Daily is the only pro-democracy paper in Hong Kong. Although some of the pro-China papers with a less obvious tendency can be regarded as neutralist papers, one fact is notable that media pluralism is diminished by the withdrawal of the pro-Taiwan papers and media self-censorship. Evading or reducing coverage on sensitive issues of Chinese government, weakening political pages, giving more space to social news, cutting the political pages, and softening overtones of criticisms or even shifting their stances has been a prevalent way for the media to cater to the Chinese government’s taste. This will be a prolonged and tough war between the Chinese government and the Hong Kong media — the former seeks to control the media for hope of creating a tool of propaganda and the latter fights to gain a change or compromise from the Chinese government. If the media voluntarily abandons the bottom-line of press freedom because of a threat, more advertising revenue or a larger potential market, it means a step closer to the death of a fledgling democracy in Hong Kong. In so far, the media urgently needs to firmly defend its basic freedoms.

Moreover, the findings also illustrate that the Hong Kong media is very power dependent, extensively using government sources and key political figures, and unduly focuses on a fixed pattern of routine access to these figures. Biased or unfair coverage thus is inevitable. Partisan papers speak for forces they represent as a
matter of course. However, either partisan or neutralist papers need to use a more even hand on coverage of different forces so that the news principles of fairness and objectivity are better expressed and voices of different interests groups gain a channel to represent them.

Implications for Further Study
The demand of further democracy in Hong Kong facilitates the rapid changing of the political environment. The change will yield different findings on the study of political media management and media-party relationships, in particular, Hong Kong political reform proposed to take place in 2012. If the reform is guaranteed, universal suffrage will be implemented. The power and resources of parties and their relationships with the media will be very different from present. Thus, further studies need to pay more attention to parties’ media management, which is increasingly influencing Hong Kong’s political ecology.

The study only focuses on traditional media, however, the Internet has become part of our lives, and it will play an increasingly important role in the field of political communication to provide the parties and pressure groups with a broader and freer public sphere. This field requires more effort devoted to investigation. 2003 witnessed a series of political campaigns and the emergence of people power. In the future, the Hong Kong media and political groups will re-evaluate and give more attention to these events. The government, the parties, and pressure groups have devoted more effort to mobilizing public opinion and setting the media agenda. Future studies should cast more light on the mutual influence of people power and the media and provide a deeper investigation into the role of people power in post-1997 Hong Kong.

Both case studies in this research investigate the Hong Kong government’s crisis. Although critical case studies provide well-identified actors to observe, election campaigns offer other perceptions of the comprehensive activities and strategies of political parties. When 2012 draws closer, the competition between the pro-China and pro-democracy camps will become more intense. Hong Kong will become a livelier political laboratory for observations.
### Appendix 1: Interview Timetable

#### Table 1 Interview timetable of political groups’ informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview location</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAB</td>
<td>Jack*¹</td>
<td>Personal Assistant of Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>Office in the Central² government offices</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pang Cheung-wai</td>
<td>– The Chairman of Communication and Public Relation Committee – District Councillor</td>
<td>Office in the District Council</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tony*</td>
<td>Personal Assistant of Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>Café De Coral – a lunchroom</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeung Yiu-chung</td>
<td>Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>Office in the Central government offices</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Cheung Yin-tung</td>
<td>Chief Secretary</td>
<td>DP headquarters</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emma*</td>
<td>Secretary of Public Relations</td>
<td>DP headquarters</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Szeto Wah</td>
<td>– A Founder of the Alliance – Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>A meeting room in the LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martin Lee</td>
<td>– Former Chairman of DP – Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>Office in the LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWSC</td>
<td>Leung Yiu-chung</td>
<td>Legislative Councillor</td>
<td>A Meeting room in the LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure groups</td>
<td>Leung Kwok-hung</td>
<td>Spokesperson of AFA</td>
<td>A café shop</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Tsoi</td>
<td>Spokesperson of CHRF</td>
<td>A meeting room in Central government offices</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Note: * mark refers to the name being a pseudonym.
² Central is a business district of Hong Kong.
Table 2 Interview timetable of journalistic informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Informants 3</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Form of interview</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Senior editor</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>16/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
<td>18/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
<td>03/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rony</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td>A sushi restaurant</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>01/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming Pao</td>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>30/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>A press room in LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>04/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Junior journalist</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
<td>28/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>Meeting room of Wen Wei Pao</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>06/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denny</td>
<td>Senior journalist</td>
<td>A press room in LegCo building</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>04/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Senior’ indicates that the journalist has over five year experience in the media.

3 All journalistic informants' names are a pseudonym.
Appendix 2: Topic guide for the political groups

Date of the interview: 
Time of the interview: 
Locations of the interview: 

Introduction 
Purpose of the research 
Confidentiality and anonymity 
Consent form of informants

1. Party resources 
   a) How many party members do you have? (active core members, total members) 
   b) How many district offices? 
   c) Does the HKSAR government or Chinese government provide financial subsidies to your party? If yes, to what extent? If no, how do you get the funding? 
   d) Do you have your own local publications, such as magazine, newspaper (weekly/monthly) or others (e.g. on-line publications)? 
      - target, numbers and frequency of publications 
   e) If yes, how do you use them? (or when and why do you use it?) If no, why don’t you use them? 

2. Strategies and professionalism 
   a) How do the party/group/you gain publicity? 
   b) Do you have carry any advertising? 
   c) What image do the party/group/you attempt to build up? How? 
   d) Is there any specific person or department deal with media affair? If yes, who are they? What responsibility do they take? If not, how does your party/group deal with it? 
   e) What job does the Department of the Public Relations usually do? 

3. Party/group-media relationships
a) How do you describe your relationship with the media?
b) What relationships have you established with the media?
c) What relationships between you/the party/the group and the media, such as the *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*?
d) Do they often contact you? If yes, how do they contact you? If not, how do you maintain the relationship?
e) What treatment do you receive from the media? Such as the *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao* and *Wen Wei Pao*?
f) How do you treat them?
g) On the average, how many political coverage does you launch to the media every day/ every month? What are your selective criteria of the political news release (news value)?
Appendix 3: Topic guide for the journalists

Date of the interview:
Time of the interview:
Locations of the interview:

Introduction
Purpose of the research
Confidentiality and anonymity
Consent form of informants

1. Background information about political beats
   a) How many journalists in the political beat?
   b) How does the beat distribute the journalists?
   c) Do the different journalist in charge of different interview area/sub-beat?
      - If yes, what area/sub-beat are you in charge?
      - If not, how does the beat assign the interview?

2. Background information of the journalist
   a) Which university did you graduate from? What department?
   b) How many years have you been a journalist?
   c) Have you worked for the paper since you are the journalist? If not, why left that paper?
   d) Why do you choose the paper?

3. The rules apply in coverage of the parties
   a) Is there any rule/criterion which you apply to cover the parties/government/pressure groups? If yes, what rules/criteria do you apply? If not, what make you decide to cover them or conduct an interview?
   b) How do you write a news story of the parties?
   c) Is there any factor which influences your political coverage?
      - If yes, what factors affect the coverage? What problems have you countered? How do they affect your coverage?
      - If not, have you paper intervened your coverage? Or told you how to do?
If yes, does it often happen? What do you do?

b) Is there any self-censorship in your paper?
   - If yes, how is it? Do they influence your job? If yes, how?

4. The relationship between the journalists and the political actors

a) How do you describe you relationship with the government? Do they often contact you? If not, how do you maintain the relationship?
   - What treatment do you receive from the government? From your points of view, what elements influence the treatment you receive?
   - How do you treat the governor?

b) How do you describe your relationship with the parties? Do they often contact you? If not, how do you maintain the relationship?
   - Do you receive different treatment from different parties? If yes, what treatment do you receive? And which party treats you in this way? From your points of view, what elements influence the treatment you receive?
   - Do you establish any better relationship with a party? If yes, what relations do you establish? Why?

c) How do describe your relationship with the pressure groups? What kind of relationship do you establish? Do they often contact you? If not, how do you remain the relationship?
Appendix 4: Coding Sheet of the Car-tax Scandal

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<th>Case Number</th>
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### News

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### Editorial/Opinion/Letter/Comment article

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Does the story use the opinion poll as the evidence?
1. Yes 2. No

If yes, it is conducted by
1. Media; 2. Pro-democracy parties; 3. Pro-China parties; 4. Professional institution; 5. Government; 6. Press groups; 7. Other

It is
1. A full poll;
2. A poll mentioned over half weight of the story;
3. A poll less than half of the story;
4. A poll just mentioned
The categories of the case of car-tax scandal

1. Medium
   a) Apple Daily
   b) Ming Pao
   c) Sing Tao

2. Story range/page
   a) Front page story;
   b) Important news;
   c) Local news;
   d) Political section;
   e) Editorial;
   f) Opinion forum.

3. Actors/authors from
   a) The government: Governors from the HKSAR government and Chinese government including Financial Secretary Antony Leung/Leung’s subordinate in his office and the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government of Hong Kong were categorized into the category of ‘the government’;
   b) Pro-democracy parties: included members from the DP, Frontier, NWS, HKCTU, and CP;
      Pro-China parties: party members from the DAB, LP, HKPA and breakfast Group were categorized to ‘the pro-China parties’;
   c) Pressure groups: the CHRF, AFA, Falun Gong, the Alliance, Rainbow Action, Amnesty International, the Article 23 Concern groups, HKJA, Christian communion, the legal community such as Hong Kong Bar Association etc. were categorized to the category;
   d) Scholars/experts: refers to person who came from professional organisations, such as lecturers or professors of the university and research centres, commentator and a lawyer who did not belong to any political group;
   e) Journalists/media: journalists who appeared in the title of HKJA was excluded from the category;
   f) Ordinary citizen: refers the citizen appearing with his/her full name or surname in a story;
g) Others: refers independent councillors, sources from the Independent Committee Against Corruption (ICAC), and anonymous source and actors from business organisation and other countries.

4. Position of the source/article
   a) Attacks/to be dissatisfied with Antony Leung’s behaviours/explanation;
   b) Attacks/to be dissatisfied with the government’s decision/explanation
   c) Attacks/to be dissatisfied with both the government and Leung’s behaviours/explanation;
   d) Defends Leung’s behaviours/to be satisfied with Leung’s explanation
   e) Defends the government/to be satisfied with the government’s decision/explanation
   f) Defends both the government and Antony Leung
   g) Self-defending: the category only refer to Antony Leung
   h) Neutral: refers the story give the similar weight of coverage to sources who attack or defend the scandal/government/Leung;
   i) Do not state/not clear: the actor or story do not show its clear position or did not mention about the position;

5. Theme
   a) The car-tax scandal: refers to any story/quotation with over half of the weight on the scandal;
   b) Accountability system and democracy in Hong Kong;
   c) Debates between the government and pro-democracy camp: mainly focus on criticisms or wars between the two groups.
   d) Opinion polls: polls showed perspectives of the public, the rating of Antony Leung’s popularity, or the supportive rating of the government’s handling to Leung’s scandal and so on;
   e) Demonstrations/campaigns protest against Antony Leung/government’s handling;
   f) Antony Leung’s personal life: including stories about his marriage, his wife and job in the past and background;
   g) Others refers to corruption law and information which is not relevant to the scandal, including information of cars, the outbreak of the disease, and the other government policies;

253
## Appendix 5: Coding sheet of the legislation of Article 23

### News

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Does the story use the opinion poll as the evidence?

1. Yes  
2. No  

If yes, it is conducted by

1. Media;  
2. Pro-democracy parties  
3. Pro-China parties;  
4. Professional institution;  
5. Government;  
6. Press groups;  
7. Other  

It is

1. A full poll;  
2. A poll mentioned over half weight of the story;  
3. A poll less than half of the story;  
4. A poll just mentioned.
The case of the legislation of Article 23

1. Medium
   a) Apple Daily
   b) Ming Pao
   c) Wen Wei Pao

2. Word length
   a) Over 1,000 words
   b) 500-999
   c) 100-499
   d) 50-99
   e) less than 49

3. Story size
   a) Full page
   b) half-3/4
   c) 1/4-half
   d) 1/8-1/4
   e) less than 1/8

4. Actors/authors
   a) The government
   b) Pro-democracy parties
   c) Pro-China parties
   d) Pressure groups
   e) Scholars/experts
   f) Editor/journalist/media
   g) Citizens
   h) Statement of law
   i) Others

5. Position of the source/article
   a) Attack the government or the legislation of Article 23
   b) Attack pro-China parties
   c) Attack pro-democracy parties
d) Defend the government or the legislation of Article 23

e) Defend pro-China parties

f) Defend pro-democracy parties

g) Neutral

h) Other

6. Theme

a) The Legislation of article 23/ National Security Bill: any definition, explanation, statement about the law, and any policy, action, campaign, perspective, decision and strategy adopted by the actor of the ‘actor/author’ category were defined to the value;

b) Debates between the pro-China parties and the pro-democracy parties or between the government and the pro-democracy parties: quarrel or rival show amongst the three groups;

c) The concept of ‘One country, two system’: the fulfilment of the concept on the legislation

d) Democracy and media freedom

e) Opinion polls

f) Economic or financial issues/ policy

g) Law comparison with other countries

h) Others
c) Attack pro-democracy parties
d) Defend the government or the legislation of Article 23
e) Defend pro-China parties
f) Defend pro-democracy parties
g) Neutral
h) Other

6. Theme
a) The Legislation of article 23/ National Security Bill: any definition, explanation, statement about the law, and any policy, action, campaign, perspective, decision and strategy adopted by the actor of the ‘actor/author’ category were defined to the value;
b) Debates between the pro-China parties and the pro-democracy parties or between the government and the pro-democracy parties: quarrel or rival show amongst the three groups;
c) The concept of ‘One country, two system’: the fulfilment of the concept on the legislation
d) Democracy and media freedom
e) Opinion polls
f) Economic or financial issues/policy
g) Law comparison with other countries
h) Others
Appendix 6: Consent statement of interviewees

I consent to participate in the research of Hong Kong political parties and media and consent to that in the thesis,

1. my true name will be used

2. a pseudonym will be used

The pseudonym is __________

In the process of interview, I consent to that

1. The conversation can be recorded

2. The conversation can not be recoded

Signature of Participant: __________ Name (In Print): __________

Signature of Researcher: __________ Name (in Print): __________

Date of interview: _________________
Appendix 7: Consent form in Chinese version

同意聲明

A. 我同意接受有關香港政黨和傳媒的研究調查，並同意在該調查的論文中，

1) 以我的真實姓名出現 □

2) 以假名出現 □ 該假名為____________________

B. 在訪問過程中，

1) 我同意我們的談話被錄音 □

2) 我不同意我們的談話被錄音 □

受訪者簽名____________________ 姓名（正楷）______________

訪問者簽名____________________ 姓名（正楷）______________

日期____________________
Bibliography:


Chan, J. M. (1987), *Shifting Journalistic Paradigms: Mass Media and Political Transition in Hong Kong*, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.


262


265


Li, P. K. (1997), *Political Order and Power Transition in Hong Kong*, the Chinese University Press.


Ma, N. (2005), *Social movement, Civil Society and Democratic Development in Hong Kong*, University of Hong Kong.


270


Newspapers:


*Apple Daily*, (31/10/2002), 最新民調兵遣將逾半數反 23 條立法 葉太貶反對聲音無論據, Local News (page 8).


Useful Websites:

Political groups
April Fifth Action Group http://member.hknet.com/
Civil Human Rights Front http://www.civilhrfront.org/aboutus/
LP http://www.liberal.org.hk/contents/
HKJA http://www.hkja.org.hk/
HKCTU http://www.hkctu.org.hk/
The DAB http://www.dab.org.hk/tr/index.jsp
The Democratic Party http://www.dphk.org/
The Frontier http://www.frontier.org.hk/
The Alliance http://www.alliance.org.hk/
NWS http://www.leungyiuchung.com.hk/
SAR government http://www.info.gov.hk/
http://www.article23.org.hk

The Media
Apple Daily http://www1.appledaily.atnext.com/template/apple/sec_main.cfm?
RTHK http://www.rthk.org.hk/
Media Digest http://www.rthk.org.hk/mediadigest/
Ming Pao http://www.mingpaonews.com/
Oriental Daily http://orientaldaily.orisun.com/
Sing Tao http://www.singtao.com/
South China Morning Post http://www.scmp.com/
Sing Pao http://www.singpao.com/
Ta Kung Pao http://www.takungpao.com/
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