THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL RULE CHANGE ON PARTY CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Hong Kong as a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In this study it is shown how party campaign strategies in three electoral campaigns in Hong Kong changed when the electoral system moved from a single-member plurality system to a proportional representation system. It is hypothesized that future party campaign strategies will change and follow a more capital-intensive and professionalized pattern, with less use of negative campaigns and less emphasis on personalities, local issues and constituency services. Empirical results show that although there was a general trend towards a more professionalized and capital-intensive campaign, the traditional labour-intensive means were more resilient than expected. Constituency services, personalized campaigns, local issues and negative campaigns still play an important part in campaigning under proportional representation. The limited nature of the elections and parameters that did not favour large parties led to single non-transferable-vote-like campaign behaviour. Unchanged voter expectations, stringent campaigning and financing laws, and the partial nature of the elections all prevented a complete switch to professionalization and capital-intensive campaigns.

KEY WORDS ▪ campaign strategy ▪ electoral system ▪ Hong Kong ▪ proportional representation ▪ strategic voting

Introduction

While parties and politicians expend substantial amounts of money and energy on campaigning during elections, the limited study of campaign strategies reflects a 'major gap' in electoral studies (Farrell, 1996: 160;

Harrop and Miller, 1987: 240). Researchers tend to focus on assessing the effects of campaigns (Ezra and Nelson, 1995; Gelman and King, 1993; Holbrook, 1994, 1996; Shaw and Roberts, 2000). Relatively little effort has been spent on explaining the different patterns of campaigning across different political systems. Although there is a global trend towards 'Americanization' in campaigning (Butler and Ranney, 1992; Plasser, 2000), different polities still demonstrate strikingly different patterns of electioneering. Electioneering involves strategic acts by political actors as a means towards maximizing their chances and gains in the electoral contest, the rules of which are defined by the electoral system of a polity. It follows that different electoral rules, or different structures of the game, will prescribe or proscribe different campaign strategies.

In this article, we assess the effect a change of electoral rules has on campaign strategy by examining how campaign strategies change when the electoral formula changes from a first-past-the-post system to a proportional representation (PR) system. We studied three electoral campaigns in Hong Kong, where the electoral formula for the geographical constituencies changed from the first-past-the-post system in 1995 to PR in 1998 and 2000. Our case study shows how the 1998 and 2000 campaigns became more professionalized and more party-centred, with less emphasis on local issues, constituency services, negative campaigns and personalities of the candidates. However, we also show how traditional campaigning tactics were more resilient than expected, as small district magnitude, restrictive campaign and financing laws, and the partial nature of the election enhanced the importance of local issues, constituency services and personality factors.

We first review the literature on the relationship between electoral system and campaign strategies and derive hypotheses about how campaign strategies change when the electoral system changes from single-member plurality (SM) to PR. We then test the hypotheses in relation to our fieldwork observations of the three campaigns in Hong Kong.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Katz (1980: 16–28) derived the most comprehensive theory about the relationship between electoral systems and campaign strategies. He claimed that, under PR, parties will try to map out the part of the political spectrum in which they believe they can capture votes; the campaign approach is therefore more defensive and ideological. Farrell (1996: 163) takes a different view of the defensiveness of campaigns under PR. As PR always brings a multiparty system and subsequently a coalition government, parties with similar ideologies will refrain from attacking other parties to make allowances for future coalition possibilities. Negative campaigns will then be less frequent under PR.

PR will also bring about a more party-centred campaign and emphasize

national issues. Under PR, the party platform will be the focus of campaigns, while single-member plurality systems (SM) will encourage single-issue campaigns and campaigns based on personality and locality (Katz, 1980: 24). The degree of centralization of the campaign will be affected by size of the district (physical or in population terms) and district magnitude. Small districts naturally bring more attention to the locality. Patronage and constituency services also work better in small districts. Large districts mean more reliance on the mass media, finance, party organization and paid workers, leading to a more 'professionalized' campaign. By controlling more financial resources and paid staff, the party will enjoy the economy-of-scale advantage when it comes to campaigning in larger constituencies. Larger district magnitude also means lesser weights for individual candidates on the party list. It follows that the campaign will be more party-centred than candidate-centred.

The ballot structure mitigates the effects of PR on campaign strategies. If ordinal choice in the party list is allowed, candidates will be tempted to bring in local and personality issues to differentiate themselves from other candidates of the same party. As much as the system allows intra-party choice or competition, the campaign will be less party-centred and more decentralized. A good example is Ireland's single transferable vote (STV) system, where constituency work and local concerns are the main thrusts of campaigns (Farrell, 2001: 145)

Kreuzer (2000) explains the difference in campaign strategies by how different electoral mechanisms create career uncertainty among politicians and affect electioneering costs. If the electoral mechanism brings high electioneering costs or provides parties with the chance to reduce the career uncertainties of candidates, the campaign will be more party-centred. Large constituencies generally increase electioneering costs and make campaigns more capital-intensive, which in turn makes individual candidates more reliant on party staff and finance. PR will bring more safe seats to parties and reduce uncertainty, especially in systems with closed lists and large district magnitudes, which renders candidates more dependent on the party for nomination and campaigning. The German dual ballot system, the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system and SM will all bring greater career uncertainty, encouraging candidates to cultivate personal votes (Cain et al., 1987) and to conduct a more personalized campaign. Besides, more restrictive rules on campaign funding and advertising will reduce electioneering costs and reduce candidates' reliance on the party.

Denmark (1996) studied how campaign strategies changed in New Zealand when the electoral system moved from SM to a mixed system of PR and SM. Denmark claimed that under the previous pure SM system in New Zealand a large number of seats were regarded as safe seats, so parties usually focused on only a few marginal seats. The adoption of PR forced the parties to focus more on nationwide issues and less on local issues, since swing votes in marginal seats had become less important.

The above review points to some common hypothesized effects on campaign strategies when the electoral system changes from SM to PR. PR increases electioneering costs and hence the bargaining power of the party vis-à-vis individual candidates. With larger constituencies, candidates need better economy of scale in campaigning, and the campaign will be more 'professionalized' or 'Americanized' (Butler and Ranney, 1992: 7; Farrell, 1996: 168) than under SM.[1] Trying to secure a certain vote share, parties will be more defensive, and negative campaigns will be less salient under PR. The following hypotheses can thus be drawn:

Hypothesis 1: Under PR, the campaign will be more party-centred compared to a more candidate-centred one under SM.

Hypothesis 2: Under PR, the campaign will be more capital-intensive and professionalized.

Hypothesis 3: PR drives parties to become more defensive. There will be fewer negative campaigns in the campaigning process under PR.

Hypothesis 4: There will be less emphasis on the personality of the candidates under PR.

Hypothesis 5: Local issues and constituency services will be less emphasized under PR.

The Case Study: Hong Kong

A Methodological Note

The barrier to testing the above hypotheses is obvious: we do not have too many cases of electoral systems changing from SM to PR. Comparing campaign strategies in countries that adopt SM with those adopting PR will fail to control many other political variables, such as political culture, the media system, the nature of parties, the degree of clientelism in society, all of which may affect the pattern of campaigning (Farrell, 1996: 162–4). The experience of Hong Kong in 1995–2000 thus provides a good case study in which to examine the effect of electoral formula on campaign strategies. In 1995, the Legislative Council (Legco) of Hong Kong had 20 seats or one-third of the legislature elected by geographical constituencies under a single-member, first-past-the-post system. When Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, the electoral formula for the geographical constituencies changed to a PR system, and two elections of the legislature were held under this formula in 1998 and 2000. Comparing the party campaign strategies of 1995 with those of 1998 and 2000 allows us to control the effects of other political variables: political culture, the overall political system, the nature of the parties, etc., since these did not change to any great extent in Hong Kong in the period 1995 to 2000.

The analysis was based on an extensive survey of the campaign processes in Hong Kong in the 1995, 1998 and 2000 elections. In all three campaigns, the research team sent out research assistants to visit the campaign offices of candidates, collect campaign material, record all broadcast election forums, observe field operations and interview the candidates or campaign managers of all the major parties. We also interviewed leaders of major parties to find out their overall strategies in the three campaigns. In the three elections, the research team managed to interview more than 80 percent of the candidates or campaign managers of the major parties.[2]

A caveat is in order. Only part of the legislature in Hong Kong is popularly elected, and the Legco elections have no bearing on the composition of the executive. There is thus a qualitative difference between elections in Hong Kong and those in Western democracies, where elections can bring about a change in government. As it turned out, the partial nature of election affects voter expectations and candidate and voter behaviour, which in turn affect party campaign strategies in Hong Kong.

The Political System and the Political Spectrum

Before comparing the three campaigns in Hong Kong, he should briefly outline Hong Kong's political development and traditional campaign styles. Up until the 1980s, the Hong Kong Legco was an arena through which the colonial government co-opted business and professional leaders by appointment to build a synarchy of colonial bureaucrats and local elites (King, 1975). After the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 made it imperative for Britain to return Hong Kong to China, the British began to push for democratization in Hong Kong. Local advisory bodies known as District Boards were introduced, which had two-thirds of members popularly elected after 1985. Directly elected seats by universal suffrage were introduced to the Legco in 1991, but they made up only a small proportion of Legco seats. The rest were appointed by the Governor (before 1995) and elected by functional constituencies that represented major business and professional groups or by an election committee of several hundred people. Table 1 indicates the composition of the Hong Kong Legco from 1991 to 2000.

The executive branch of Hong Kong has never been popularly elected. Up until 1997 the Governor was appointed from Britain. According to the Basic Law (the mini-constitution of Hong Kong after 1997) the Chief Executive of Hong Kong after 1997 is to be elected by an Election Committee of 800 people who in turn are elected by a fairly restrictive electorate of about 180,000 electors representing major business, professional, social and political groups. Most of the policy-making power is vested in the hands of the Chief Executive and senior officials appointed by him/her; yet the Legco still has power to veto and amend government legislation and appropriations. Although the Legco has limited power, from 1991 the

Table 1. Composition of the Legislative Council, 1991 to 2000

	1985–88	1988–91	1991–95	1995–97	1998–2000	2000–4
Government officials	10	10	3	0	0	0
Appointed	22	22	17	0	0	0
Functional constituencies	12	14	21	30	30	30
Election committee*	12	12	0	10	10	6
Directly elected	0	0	18	20	20	24
Total	56	58	59	60	60	60

*In the 1995 election, the election committee was composed of all the District Board members. After 1997, the election committee was elected by business, professional, various social groups and political institutions.

direct election part of the Legco election had been conducted in a free and fair manner. Parties and candidates vied for public support in a seven-week campaign period resembling competitive elections in the West.

Political parties in the territory could largely be divided into two camps, each defined by its attitude to democratization and to the Chinese government (Li, 2000: 172; Ma and Choy, 1999: 77). The 'democrats' support faster democratization and have more sympathy for issues such as human rights, rule of law and autonomy from China. The 'pro-China' camp adopts a more conservative attitude towards democratization, and is on better terms with the Chinese government. The Democratic Party (DP) and the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) are the standard-bearers of the democrats and pro-China camp, respectively. In the three elections from 1995 to 2000, these two parties received between 58 percent and 68 percent of the total vote. Less popular parties and political groups include the Liberal Party (LP), The Frontier (TF) and the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL). The political positions of the major political groups could be captured by a unidimensional issue-line, as shown in Figure 1.

Pro-China   Pro-Democracy

HKPA   DAB   LP   ADPL   DP   TF

                                   CP
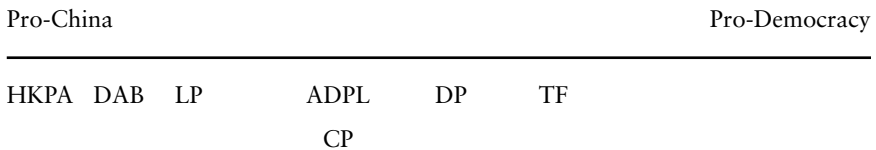
HKPA: Hong Kong Progressive Alliance; DAB: Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong; LP: Liberal Party; ADPL: Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood; CP: Citizens' Party; DP: Democratic Party; TF: The Frontier.

Figure 1. Relative political positions of major parties in Hong Kong

Campaigning Styles and Electoral Institutions

Campaigning in Hong Kong since the 1980s resembles what Butler and Ranney (1992: 5–6) labelled 'traditional electioneering': written documents, door-to-door canvassing, public meetings, billboards, posters and door-knocking on election day are the major means of mobilizing voter support. The standard means of campaigning in Hong Kong included posters, wooden billboards, banners, pamphlets and much personal and inter-personal contact through door-to-door canvassing and mobilization by intermediate organizations. Candidates in Hong Kong relied heavily on pamphlets either handed out on the streets or mailed to voters. Apart from broadcast election forums, the electronic media played a minimal role in conveying campaign messages, as political advertisements in the electronic media were not allowed. Door-to-door canvassing by the candidate and/or the campaign team was seen as a most effective campaigning means. Inter-mediate organizations such as residential associations, trade unions and village organizations played a considerable role in mobilizing support. Door-to-door canvassing by these organizations and/or party activists was vital for getting out the vote (GOTV) on polling day. In recent years, the two major parties of Hong Kong, the DP and the DAB, have begun to develop telephone banks as a major means to GOTV.

This traditional pattern of campaigning has historical and institutional roots. Historically, popular elections in Hong Kong started in 1982 with the election of the District Boards (DBs), which are local advisory bodies with limited power. The DB elections are localized, with each constituency averaging several thousand voters who elect the local representatives on a plurality basis. In densely populated Hong Kong, the constituency is usually a small district comprising only three or four housing blocks. Personal contact between the candidate and voters is easy and effective, and door-to-door canvassing is a cost-effective means of campaigning.[3] The small constituency also enhances the significance of local residential organizations, as the few hundreds of organized votes can act as significant weights tipping the balance in close contests. Some current Legco members started their political career as DB members and carried these labour-intensive techniques with them when they later ran for Legco office in larger constituencies.

Stringent electoral regulations and restrictions on party finance prevent campaigning in Hong Kong from turning capital-intensive. Candidates were not allowed to raise funds publicly before the 1990s. After the 1990s, parties were allowed to hold public fundraising activities only once a year. There was also a low ceiling for campaign expenses: in 1995, each Legco candidate was allowed to spend no more than 200,000 Hong Kong dollars[4] on the campaign. With an average of 130,000 voters per constituency in 1995, this means that, on average, a candidate can spend only 1.54 Hong Kong dollars or 20 US cents per voter. Candidates have to report every cent they spend on the campaign, including the expenditure of organizations or

individuals in support of them, and those who exceed the expense ceiling can find themselves disqualified. The low expense ceiling made it difficult for candidates to use capital-intensive means. Political advertisements in the electronic media were not allowed, which significantly reduced the role of the mass media and therefore put less pressure on campaign funds. Since 1982, the major subsidy from the government has been postage cover for one or two rounds of direct mailings to every voter.[5] This induced candidates to make careful use of this resource and to regard the mailed pamphlets as an important element of their campaign.

Institutional Changes after 1997

Electoral rules in Hong Kong underwent major change after 1997, the most important being the move from SM to a PR system. In 1995, the 20 directly elected seats were elected by the SM formula, with Hong Kong divided into 20 constituencies. In 1998, PR was adopted, with Hong Kong divided into five constituencies, each electing three to five seats. The seats in each constituency were allocated by PR using the Largest Remainder Formula with the Hare quota. The closed list was adopted, which meant that voters could only choose whole lists and could not indicate their preferences for individual candidates. However, as there is no party law in Hong Kong,[6] any collection of individuals can form their own list, and independents can also run as a single-candidate 'list'.

The adoption of PR brought larger constituencies and higher expense ceilings. The average number of voters per constituency increased from 130,000 in 1995 to 560,000 in 1998 (4.3 times that of 1995) and 610,000 in 2000 (4.7 times that of 1995). The enlarged constituency was accompanied by a raised ceiling of campaign expenses, from 200,000 dollars in 1995 to 500,000 dollars per seat for each candidate list in 1998. That is, in 1998 a three-seat constituency had an expense ceiling of 1.5 million dollars, while a five-seat constituency had 2.5 million dollars as the ceiling for each candidate list. This increased the expense per voter 2.3 times from about 20 US cents per voter in 1995 to 46 US cents in 1998. Parties that field candidates in all five constituencies can also pool resources to employ more capital-intensive means.

These changes in electoral institutions led us to expect changes in party campaign strategies in Hong Kong. With bigger constituencies and higher spending limits, it is expected that parties will run more capital-intensive campaigns. The campaign will be more 'professionalized', with less reliance on interpersonal contact, written documents and door-to-door canvassing, and more emphasis on paid staff and the mass media. The nature of PR should also drive the parties to run a more party-centred campaign, with reduced significance of local issues, candidate personality and constituency services. The strategy of parties is also likely to be more defensive with less use of negative campaigns.

Continuity and Change in Campaign Strategies:
Empirical Results

Party-Centred versus Candidate-Centred

In 1995, candidates of the major parties in Hong Kong always promoted their own personalities in the campaign. Our study of the campaign literature shows that a great deal of space was used for personal image-making. Most billboards, posters and pamphlets had the candidates' names, pictures, past records and character as the focus. Candidates talked about childhood dreams of a career as a football referee, attacked the character of their opponents and introduced their family lives to project a softer image. Party candidates invariably put themselves first, and the party label second, when they canvassed.

The campaign became more party-centred in 1998, especially for the major parties. For the two major parties, DP and DAB, campaigns were largely party-centred. To begin with, almost all their billboards and posters chose to promote the party label rather than candidate names and personalities. In most of the campaign materials (e.g. billboards and posters), there were almost no personal details of the candidates. Campaigns of smaller parties were more candidate-centred. The Liberal Party and The Frontier both focused on the individual personalities of their party leaders or political megastars, resembling campaigns under the SM system.

The campaign pattern in 2000 was largely the same as that in 1998, but we saw more personalized than party-centred campaigns. An important reason was that the DP split into more than one list in two constituencies trying to win one extra seat.[7] The top candidates of different lists of the same party would promote their own personalities and not just the party label. For example, in the New Territories West constituency, the DP split into three different lists, each with a 'responsibility zone' in the constituency. Fieldwork observation shows that while all three lists would promote the party label, the leading candidate was the focal point of the campaign in their respective responsibility zones.

The above discussion shows that the change to PR has not completely transformed the campaign to a party-centred one in Hong Kong. We argue that a major factor is the small district magnitude of the Hong Kong PR system. With a district magnitude of three to six, even the two major parties can at best get only the top one or two candidates in the list elected. For the small parties, only the top candidate on the list has a chance, which drives parties and voters to focus on personalities. Moreover, the parameters of the Hong Kong PR system (Largest Remainder, Hare Quota, small district magnitude) disadvantage large parties in their quest to win the extra seat, and drive them to split into different lists just as is the case under SNTV. The splitting of lists is tantamount to offering ordinal choices within the same party for voters, which will encourage personalized campaigns by individual party candidates (Katz, 1980: 29).

Professionalization

The 1995 campaign was a typically 'traditional' one in Hong Kong. Candidates and their campaign teams canvassed on the street every day from early morning to late afternoon, shaking hands with constituents, handing out pamphlets and making short speeches with amplifiers. They canvassed in multi-storeyed buildings almost every night, reaching voters one by one on the doorstep. On polling day, door-to-door canvassing and telephone banks were major means of getting out the vote. Intermediate organizations such as residential associations and trade unions played crucial roles in GOTV. As far as manpower was concerned, the parties relied heavily on volunteers. Pro-China candidates usually had help from pro-China trade unions, residential associations and other clientelist networks. Pro-democracy parties relied mostly on party activists and paid staff to do campaign planning; canvassing was mostly left to volunteers. Our records did not show any candidates hiring professional companies to help in the 1995 campaign, other than in the production of campaign material such as posters and billboards.

The mass media played a limited role in the 1995 campaign. Advertising spots in electronic media were not allowed. The three TV channels and the radio stations organized broadcast forums in every constituency. Candidates and parties would create campaign events to attract media coverage, but the media were extremely careful and tried to provide balanced coverage. In 1995, DP was the first party to post newspaper advertisements (only one half-page advertisement days before polling day), with its major rival DAB retorting with an advertisement of its own days later. Overall, the use of media advertising in 1995 was negligible.

In 1998, there were observable trends towards professionalization: more paid staff, more media advertisements, more capital-intensive means and less reliance on labour-intensive means. DP made the first step towards professionalization in 1998 by hiring an advertising agency to design and produce posters, advertising panels in subway stations and newspaper advertisements. Two other major parties, LP and DAB, quickly followed suit. Unlike some Western countries, where marketing expertise plays an important role in designing campaigning strategy, the role of commercial agencies was largely confined to technical production in Hong Kong. Major campaign decisions were still made by party personnel in the 1998 campaign.

The enlarged constituency made it less feasible for parties to rely on volunteers to handle field operations such as putting up posters, billboards and mailing pamphlets. In 1998, the DP and the DAB, with better manpower resources, still relied on volunteers and party activists to handle field operations. For candidates who had weaker manpower resources, i.e. almost *all* other candidates, the labour-intensive campaign jobs were largely handled by hired temporary workers. Usually, canvassing was carried out

by volunteers and party activists, but there were also candidates who hired part-time staff to canvass before and on polling day.

The two major parties were still reliant on the traditional labour-intensive methods in 1998. An average DP campaign team would make sure that their door-to-door canvassing reached every household in public housing estates.[8] Street-level canvassing was still the major campaigning activity. The two major parties also relied heavily on door-to-door canvassing and telephone banks to GOTV on polling day. Most small-party candidates (including those of the Liberal Party, the Citizens' Party and The Frontier), in contrast, switched to more 'long-distance' means of promotion. They tended to give up door-to-door canvassing[9] and instead campaigned 'whistle-stop' by travelling on decorated buses with amplifiers that helped them to relay campaign messages to voters. Neither did small-party candidates canvass door-to-door to GOTV on polling day.

The media played a bigger role in the 1998 campaign. The DP started with a series of newspaper advertisements in the early campaign period to attack their main rival DAB, which quickly retaliated with its own advertising. In later stages of the campaign, the pro-business LP made most use of newspaper advertising, buying space in several major newspapers almost every day. Even some independents spent money on newspaper advertising. Candidates also focused more on attracting media coverage by packaging their campaign events. Some candidates organized colourful parades that attracted extensive coverage. DAB Chairman Jasper Tsang admitted in interviews with the authors that his campaign team would think of some 'gimmicks' to attract media coverage every week, including Batman and Robin appearing in a campaign event; some DAB candidates dressed up to sing Chinese opera.

After the 1998 campaign, the question was raised whether the traditional campaigning methods had become obsolete in Hong Kong (Ma, 2001: 158), but the 2000 campaign was no more professionalized than the 1998 one. There was no significant increase in professional involvement. More candidates hired temporary workers in 2000, but some DP and DAB candidates still relied exclusively on volunteers to handle field operations. We even saw a reversal to more traditional methods in some cases. Some candidates who did not canvass door-to-door in 1998 made this part of their strategy in the 2000 campaign. Many also made less use of 'whistle-stop' campaigning and preferred to do more street canvassing.

The 2000 campaign was no more media-intensive, because we witnessed a reduction in the number of media advertisements. The big spender in 1998, the Liberal Party, bought little newspaper advertising space in the 2000 campaign. The two major parties only had two or three half-page advertisements – negligible compared to the resources they spent on door-to-door canvassing and pamphlets. A new medium was the Internet. All major parties set up their own home page, which was used mostly for posting basic information about the candidates and party platforms.

Judging from the hit-rates, these websites were not influential campaigning tactics.[10] No parties used electronic mail as an important publicity tool.

A closer look at the campaign expense patterns testifies to the argument that the campaign did not change capital-intensive to any great extent after PR was adopted. Table 2 gives the campaign expenses of candidates in 1995, 1998 and 2000 and shows that while in 1995 each candidate spent only a palpable 1.26 dollars on each voter, with the change to PR in 1998 on average each list spent just 32 cents or 25 percent more on each voter. In 2000, each list spent even less money per voter than in 1998. Undoubtedly, under PR the overall expenses by each list were much higher than under SM, thus creating a barrier for candidates short of monetary resources. But this was mostly due to the increase in the absolute number of voters in each constituency rather than to the adoption of more capital-intensive means.

We can see from Table 3 that only a small proportion of the campaign expenses in 2000 was spent on capital-intensive means. Paid staff made up only 12 percent of total expenses in 2000, while printed documents took up 35.6 percent. Combined with other traditional means, such as banners, billboards and posters, these traditional media took up about half of total campaign expenses (48.5 percent). Advertising catering for larger audiences, including advertisements on public vehicles, newspapers, subway and railway station panels and websites answered for only 11.8 percent of total expenses.

Interpersonal contact was still an effective means of mobilization, as testified by DAB's experience in 2000. Eighteen days before polling day, the media revealed that Gary Cheng, DAB Vice-Chairman, sold government secrets to business giants via one of his consultancies, the ownership of which he had not declared to the Legco as required by law. At first this was taken as a major scandal that would severely damage DAB's vote. However, it triggered a sense of crisis among DAB supporters, and the party stepped up its mobilization efforts through its organizational networks in the last week of the campaign. Interviewed DAB candidates said they had no special trick, but mobilized all those in their clientelist networks to 'make an extra phone call' to mobilize support via interpersonal ties. Among the organizations, the most effective might have been the Fujianese hometown

Table 2. Total expenses by all candidates, 1995 to 2000

	Total expenses by candidates ($)	No. of candidates/ lists	Average expense per candidate/ per list ($)	Total no. of voters	Average expense per voter ($)
1995	8,083,023	50	161,660	2,572,124	1.26
1998	31,937,928	34	939,351	2,795,371	1.68
2000	34,972,569	36	971,460	3,055,240	1.59

Source: Authors' calculations from reported campaign expense figures in the Electoral Commission, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.

Table 3. Breakdown of campaign expense of all candidates, 2000 campaign

Items	Expenses ($1,000)	% of total
Paid staff	4,226	12.1
Election advertisements	23,337	67.0
Posters	1,002	2.9
Pamphlets	2,478	7.1
Handbills	8,498	24.4
Billboards	1,248	3.6
Banners	2,241	6.4
Other printed matter	1,439	4.1
Newspaper ads	1,570	4.5
Ads on public vehicles	709	2.0
Home pages	497	1.4
Subway ads	1,353	3.9
Candidates' personal expenses	513	1.5
Rent, office expenses and transportation	4,114	11.8
Others	2,625	7.5
Total	34,815	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations from reported campaign expense figures in the Electoral Commission, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.

associations, which claimed to have the support of 60,000 Hong Kong residents of Fujian ancestry. Anecdotal evidence had it that efforts reached as far as to parents in the mainland province of Fujian, who were told to call their relatives in Hong Kong to vote for DAB. Some voters received as many as 10 telephone calls from different sources on polling day, all soliciting their vote for DAB. In the end, DAB obtained 29.5 percent of the total votes, 4.5 percent more than in 1998.

The above discussion shows that the traditional means of campaigning were more resilient than expected. Candidates moved away from traditional labour-intensive means in 1998 not because they believed that media-intensive and capital-intensive means were more effective, but because of the lack of manpower to carry out labour-intensive tactics.[11] In the end, some of them reverted to more traditional methods in the 2000 campaign.

Negative Campaigns

Negative campaigns were common in 1995. A survey of the campaign materials and election forums showed that candidates from all parties resorted to personal attacks and negative campaigns. These could be directed against the personality and credibility of the opponent (e.g. an ADPL candidate attacked the DAB Chairman for having applied for Canadian citizenship and lied to the media when this was uncovered). It could be name-calling (e.g. a DP candidate labelled his DAB opponent a 'communist female cadre') or questioning of past track records.

Negative campaigns still played a certain role in the 1998 campaign. DP and ADPL attacked each other relentlessly for their past records in the Kowloon West constituency. Small-party candidates and less prominent independents usually adopted a more aggressive attitude towards the front-runners and other small-party candidates. However, on the whole there was less use of negative campaigning than in 1995. A good indicator was that while in 1995 many DP candidates used mailed pamphlets to attack the track records of their pro-China opponents, none of them used this medium for negative campaigns in 1998. Mailed pamphlets mostly focused on positive image-building and party platforms.

To the surprise of many, the 2000 election saw an unprecedented level of negative campaigning. In the first few weeks of the campaign, the two major camps attacked each other in forums. The democrats labelled DAB 'the Royalists', as they often adopted a pro-government position, while DAB accused the democrats of being a destabilizing force that confronted the government at any cost. But the negative campaigns stopped at mutual criticisms in the forums, as printed documents were not used for negative campaigns.

The turning point was the Gary Cheng scandal. At first the democrats picked up on the scandal to attack DAB as a 'corrupt' party. About 10 days before the election, a counter-attack of negative campaigns against the democrats appeared. An independent democrat, Tsang kin-shing, was the first to bear the brunt of the attack by being accused of embezzling public donations. Then the DP was attacked for using six million dollars of public money on hiring a consultancy, and for not clearly disclosing this service to the public. These were followed by reports that Albert Ho, DP Vice-Chairman, had a mistress. Most of these accusations were not substantiated, but they did trigger more negative campaigns and turned some election forums into ugly mud-slinging.

How can we account for this 'rebirth' of negative campaigning? The 2000 campaign obviously was affected by the Gary Cheng scandal, which focused public attention on the integrity, credibility and financial records of candidates. But the persistence of negative campaigns in Hong Kong had to do with the partial nature of the elections. Since legislative elections in Hong Kong will not bring about changes in government, voters are tempted to focus more on personalities than on party policy platforms. The small district magnitude also means that even the major parties can only have one or two candidates elected in each constituency, driving voters to focus on individual personalities and render negative campaigning more effective than in most European PR systems.

Local Issues and Constituency Services

For most candidates, local issues and local constituency services were major emphases in the 1995 campaign. The platforms of candidates always

included solutions to local problems as well as to territory-wide policy issues, and local issues were always a central topic of debate in election forums. Campaign pamphlets would carry in detail the past service records of the candidates in the constituency, and constituency services formed an integral part of campaign operations during the campaign period.[12]

In 1998, parties paid much less attention to local issues. Only the two major parties, DP and DAB, emphasized their local service records and allocated space in their campaign literature to local issues. However, as far as the overall campaign theme was concerned, both parties admitted that in 1998 they paid more attention to territory-wide issues than to local issues. A good indicator was that while in 1995 some candidates would prepare platforms for every District Board precinct, this was seldom done in 1998.[13] Most small parties, for want of a strong local network, gave up on local constituency services and local issues, and chose to campaign on catch-all policy issues only. Local issues were almost totally neglected in election forums.

In the 2000 campaign, there was almost no discussion of local issues in the election forums. Judging from the campaign literature, most independents and small-party candidates spent almost no resources on local issues and constituency services. DAB, however, still emphasized constituency services in the campaign period. The candidates would focus on the party platform in forums, while the party's local networks were responsible for extending various services to the localities during the campaign period. In an interview, one DAB candidate said that continuing normal constituency services was an important part of the party's campaign strategy, to convey the message that DAB could help voters solve real-life problems amidst economic adversity.

Different DP candidates adopted varied strategies towards local issues and constituency services. Some hardly mentioned local issues in their campaigns, and did very little constituency work during the campaign period (e.g. Party Chairman Martin Lee). Candidates such as Albert Chan in the New Territories West constituency devoted most of their resources to constituency services and local issues. As the top candidate of one of the three split DP lists in New Territories West, Chan used constituency services and local issues as the central thrust of his campaign. About 80 percent of his campaign pamphlets were devoted to these issues, ranging from the site of a public library, improvement of minibus services in a new town and public housing maintenance, to preservation of wetlands in the rural areas of his constituency. Chan also focused on cultivating the support of residential associations that helped him to GOTV on polling day. Chan's was very much a traditional campaign stressing personality, local issues, interpersonal mobilization, *and he won*.

Inducing Strategic Voting

In both 1998 and 2000, we observed a new unexpected campaign strategy: inducing strategic voting.[14] Although strategic voting is common voting

behaviour in various electoral systems, it is seldom reported that candidates explicitly encourage voters to vote strategically in campaigns. One exception may be campaigns in Taiwan, where inducing strategic voting was the centrepiece of candidates' strategies in both the 1994 Taipei Mayoral Election and the 2000 Presidential Election (Hsieh, 2001; Hsieh et al., 1997; Rigger, 2001). Candidates tried to send signals to manipulate voters' perception, to lure them into 'dumping' (qi) the weaker candidate to 'save' (bao) an ideologically closer but more viable candidate. The campaign team of Chen Shui-bian, winning candidate of the 2000 Taiwan Presidential Election, revealed that this *qibao* (dump-save) manoeuvre was the most important campaign operation in Chen's 2000 campaign (Zhang et al., 2000).

Politicians in Hong Kong were clearly greatly influenced by their Taiwan counterparts; since the early 1990s they had been making frequent visits to Taiwan to study their mobilization tactics at elections. However, in the 1995 campaign in Hong Kong there were few signs of candidates inducing strategic voting amongst voters. Our observation of the campaign process in 1995 did not find any candidates urging voters to give up on 'hopeless' candidates in favour of him/herself in the campaign. Under PR, however, the Hong Kong candidates sent bolder and more unambiguous messages than their Taiwan counterparts.

In 1998, DP was the only party that tried to induce strategic voting. In the last stages of the campaign, DP tried to convince voters that in New Territories West, four of the five seats had become safe seats for different parties, and the last seat was in fact a contest between the third-ranked candidate on the DP list and a rural conservative. They sent out handbills to call on pro-democracy voters to give up on weaker pro-democracy candidates and pool all their votes to DP, so that the pro-democracy camp could win one more seat. The tactic eventually fell through. It was believed that many pro-democracy voters practised strategic voting the other way round: they did not vote for DP, since they believed DP could secure two seats. They voted for other 'weaker' democrats. In the end, DP only got two elected, while The Frontier, another pro-democracy group, also got two elected with a lower vote share.

Inducing strategic voting was a major part of some candidates' strategies in 2000. The common strategy of these candidates was to tell voters that some front-runners 'had won', that they had more than enough votes, and/or some weaker candidates had no chance of winning, thus voters should give up on them. For example, in New Territories West, a DP candidate told voters during door-to-door canvassing that all the major pro-democracy candidates 'had won', and that he was fighting a rural conservative for the last seat, and urged pro-democracy supporters to swing the votes towards him. In New Territories East, a DP candidate sent out handbills claiming that other democrats 'had won' or 'had no problem', but the DP candidate himself 'is still a little bit short . . .'. Both DP candidates

in the end received a marked increase in voter support in the final two weeks and were both elected.

Conclusion

The Hong Kong experience provides support for the five hypotheses raised at the beginning of this article. In general, under PR the campaign did become more party-centred, more capital-intensive and media-intensive, with less emphasis on personalities, local issues and constituency services, and fewer negative campaigns – at least in 1998. Yet the traditional campaigning style was more resilient than expected. While we saw marked changes in 1998 towards more defensive and party-centred campaigning, more professionalism, and lower salience of personality, local issues and constituency services, the trend did not continue in the 2000 election. Instead, we saw a reversal to more interpersonal contact, negative campaigning, constituency services and local issues in the 2000 campaign compared to 1998.

The resilience of traditional campaign styles can be explained by various factors: institutional legacy, unchanged campaign laws, peculiar system parameters and the partial nature of the election. In interviews, some candidates said they *believed* the traditional means were in fact more effective in attracting votes, but they did not have the resources to run intensive traditional-styled campaigns in the enlarged constituencies. Their impression was that Hong Kong voters were easily affected by interpersonal contact, and they *expected* candidates to visit them at their doorsteps. While the prominence of interpersonal ties may be a Chinese cultural trait, this voter expectation is also partly created by institutional legacy. Years of local elections created expectation among Hong Kong voters that candidates would provide good constituency services and maintain close contacts with them. This implies that electoral rule changes do not immediately bring about a sea change in campaign strategies. Old electoral institutions shape political culture and create voter expectations that linger on after rule changes. As rational agents, parties and candidates will not make a wholesale strategic switch if they find an old trick useful under new rules.

Moreover, the change in electoral rules was not accompanied by change in some campaigning laws. The ban on electronic media advertising prevented the campaign from turning drastically capital-intensive or media-intensive. Although the ceiling for campaign expenses was raised, most candidates did not use the total allowable amount of funds (see Table 2). For want of effective electronic media means, most candidates chose to spend more resources on labour-intensive but effective traditional channels. This led to less dependence on party finance and to preventing the campaign from turning totally party-centred.

Various parameters of the Hong Kong PR system mitigated the effect of

the change of electoral rules and induced SNTV-like campaign behaviour. The Largest Remainder formula, the Hare quota, plus the small district magnitude make it difficult for large parties to win extra seats. Large parties are then tempted to split into different lists to try to win an extra seat. Under SNTV, where large parties always split into different lists, the paramount campaigning problem for large parties is 'vote division': how to divide the votes according to a particular formula in order to maximize seats. Experiences from Japan and Taiwan show that 'responsibility zones', based on pork barrel politics and personal votes, are the most reliable means of vote division (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth, 1993). This forces the candidates to cultivate their own personal network and offer constituency services. After the constituency is partitioned into different responsibility zones, local services that focus only on one-third or one-fourth of the constituency also become manageable. The splitting of lists, just like providing ordinal choices within party lists, drives candidates of the same party to stress their personal character and local constituency services to differentiate themselves from their fellow party candidates. For the small parties, small district magnitude means that only the first candidate on the list has a chance of being elected. This also drives them to focus more on personalities rather than on the party label.

The partial nature of the legislative elections in Hong Kong also enhances the significance of personality, constituency services and negative campaigns. As the Legco elections will not bring about changes in government, voters will naturally pay more attention to the personalities of candidates and the services they offer. Negative campaigns will be more effective as voters pay more attention to personalities. The partial nature of the elections also annuls future coalition possibilities; parties of a similar political spectrum can thus attack each other relentlessly during the campaign. Partial elections also provide incentives for strategic voting. Since major parties cannot form the government no matter how many seats they win, there is an incentive to desert runaway party lists. When voters see that a list led by their favoured political star has a runaway lead, they will be tempted to shift their support to marginal lists. There will be a 'vote-equalization' tendency just as under SNTV, and the small district magnitude helps voters gain more accurate information about the race to facilitate strategic voting (Cox, 1997). This drives the parties to induce strategic voting, a common campaign strategy in Taiwan's SNTV elections.

The case of Hong Kong shows that voter expectations created by past electoral experiences and institutions can linger, which means that candidates will not make a full swing in campaign strategies as predicted by theory. In Hong Kong, a combination of partial election, parameters that disfavoured large parties and restrictive campaign laws suppressed the impacts of electoral rule change on campaign strategy. The rule structure creates a disincentive to vote for strong runaway lists, inducing SNTV-like campaign behaviour, which in the end reinforces traditional campaigning

styles (such as interpersonal networks and constituency services) and creates new phenomena (e.g. induces strategic voting). The campaign strategy of every polity has a complex pattern, i.e. the result of a complex mix of factors: institutional legacy, political culture, campaign laws and other parameters. The electoral formula plays only a limited, but not insignificant, role.

Notes

1 'Professionalization' is defined here as the replacement of traditional campaigning means of interpersonal contact, door-to-door canvassing, written documents by the mass media, professional marketing skills and campaigners, and use of the Internet and email.

2 The parties studied included the Democratic Party (DP), the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), The Frontier (TF), the Liberal Party (LP), the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL), the Citizens' Party (CP) in 1998 and the New Century Forum in 2000.

3 Electioneering 'manuals' state that door-to-door canvassing is effective only in small districts (see Danquin, 1985).

4 Throughout this article, 'dollars' stands for Hong Kong dollars, the exchange rate since 1983 being around 7.8 dollars to one US dollar.

5 The candidates pay for the printing of the pamphlets themselves. The government subsidizes one mailing in the District Board elections and two mailings in the Legco elections.

6 Most 'political parties' in Hong Kong register as societies or companies.

7 The electoral law in Hong Kong does not forbid a party from fielding more than one list in a district, so any party can field two or three lists in the same constituency with the same party label on the ballot paper. Under the Largest Remainder formula, large parties are disadvantaged in winning the extra seat, and are thus tempted to split into different lists (if allowed) to maximize their remainders to win the last seat. For example, the DP obtained 39 percent of the votes in a 5-seat district in 1998 and won 2 seats in the district. The Frontier, however, fielded 2 separate lists that won 12 percent and 10 percent of the votes, respectively, in the same district, and also won 2 seats. The DP thus figured that if they split into 3 lists in 2000 and equally split the vote between them (which means 13 percent each), they would have the chance to win one more seat. This logic lures the large parties into splitting into different lists, which is an uncommon phenomenon under PR.

8 As for private premises, it depends if the owners' associations grant access to the candidates. About 40 percent of Hong Kong's population live in public housing.

9 Note that some of these candidates, such as Emily Lau (TF) and Andrew Wong (independent), campaigned door-to-door extensively in 1995.

10 For example, the relatively attractive website of The Frontier had only 10,000 visitors during the campaign period.

11 Some interviewed campaign managers told us that they always think the labour-intensive means are more effective in attracting votes, but they did not have the resources to do it in 1998.

12 For details, see Ma and Choy (1999) and Ma (2001).

13 The size of each District Board precinct was usually down to several housing blocks that had only several thousand voters.

14 Strategic voting here is defined as a voter choosing a less preferred candidate instead of the most preferred one, because the former has a better chance of winning (Cox, 1997).

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