

# The Strategic Coordination under Quasi-SNTV: A Case Study of Hong Kong

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## **Abstract**

This article aims to explore the effects of quasi-SNTV (Single Non-transferable Vote) under the Largest Remainder Proportional Representation (LRPR) in Legislative Council (LegCo) elections in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) after the British handover of 1997. Although the quasi-SNTV results from the inability of political parties to control their candidates, the Democratic Party (DP) and the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) can obtain more seats in total than they could by coordinating around one single list if they can successfully control their party label and the political camps can coordinate different parties and candidates. The quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong is notable for the strategic coordination found in its alliances, a key aspect that differentiates it from Colombia's quasi-SNTV. The DP's failure can be attributed to its internal conflicts and the lack of coordination among the pro-democracy alliances. In contrast to the democratic camp, which lacks any overriding authority to coordinate different parties and candidates, the pro-China's united front machinery facilitates coordination and helps the DAB perform better than the DP in quasi-SNTV.

## **Introduction**

The 2014 Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong has triggered people's concern around the world for the democratization of Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup> Although the protests are mainly about the method of electing the Chief Executive, they also call for the

<sup>1</sup> The umbrella movement, which began after the decision by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) regarding the 2017 Chief Executive Election, appeals for genuine universal suffrage for selecting the chief executive. The decision of the NPCSC alleges that the chief executive ought to be a person 'who loves the country and loves Hong Kong'. This implies that only pro-China candidates are eligible for nomination by the 1200-member Election Committee. See Article 45 and Annex I of the Basic Law for the method of selection of Chief Executive. And *Xinhua News Agency*. 'Full Text of NPC Decision on Universal Suffrage for HKSAR Chief Selection', 31 August 2014, <http://www.webcitation.org/6Vh2NRcRd> [accessed Apr. 13, 2015].

**Table 1.** *The composition of Legislative Council after 1997*

Term	1st (1998–2000)	2nd (2000–4)	3rd (2004–8)	4rd (2008–12)	5th (2012–16)	6th (2016–20)
FC	30	30	30	30	35	35
GC	20	24	30	30	35	35
EC	10	6	0	0	0	0
Total	60	60	60	60	70	70

Notes: FC - functional constituencies, GC - geographical constituencies, EC - election committee.

abolition of functional constituencies and the implementation of universal suffrage in Legislative Council elections as.<sup>2</sup> According to the Basic Law of HKSAR, members of the Legislative Council are elected by three methods: the Election Committee, functional constituencies, and the rest by geographical constituencies through direct election. The composition of the Legislative Council changes over time (Table 1).<sup>3</sup> Direct election in geographical constituencies is the most competitive and similar to national elections in democratic countries. This article focuses on these geographical constituencies only. Despite Hong Kong's limited democracy, the direct election in Legislative Council elections is essential for the evolution of political parties and groups. In other words, the democratization of Hong Kong is related to Legislative Council elections, especially for direct election. The LRPR with Hare quota is used in the direct elections in Hong Kong.

This article sets out to explore how the two main political parties – the Democratic Party (DP) of the pro-democracy camp and the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) of the pro-China camp – enter the race and how they campaign strategically under the LRPR system. Generally speaking, in the LRPR systems, a party puts forward one single list per district and votes are pooled across all candidates. However, the LRPR in Colombia before 2006 and in Hong Kong are two exceptions: a party can endorse two or more lists in a district. As Cox and Shugart note, multiple lists in one party label in the LRPR in Colombia is a result of Colombian parties' inability to organize and discipline their candidates (Cox and Shugart, 1995). While putting forward multiple lists in one party label, the LRPR resembles the SNTV system in that candidates face not only inter-party but also intra-party competition (Cox and Shugart, 1996; Cox, 1997; Ma and Choy, 2003a, 2003b; Ma, 2006; Pachon and Shugart, 2010). The situation is quite similar to that of Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, multiple lists

<sup>2</sup> See the announcement of the Alliance for True Democracy. 'Scholars Group Proposals for Universal Suffrage for Legislative Council Elections', 4 October 2013, <http://www.atd.hk/en/?p=155> [accessed 10 March 2015].

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to The Basic Law of HKSAR Annex II, Instrument 3, 4, 19, 21, and 23, <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/index.html> [accessed 8 April 2016].

under one party label are a product of factional struggle (Ma, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Choy, 2002). In other words, the presentation of multiple lists in Hong Kong is a result of the inability of political parties to control their candidates. In Hong Kong's quasi-SNTV, not only do parties campaign against other parties, but also candidates from the same party compete with each other.

In an LRPR system, seats are first allocated by quota (= total votes in a given district/district magnitude) and then by the largest remainder in descending order until all seats are filled (Cox and Shugart, 1995). The allocation of remaining seats by the largest remainders is determined by plurality, as is also the case in SNTV. Seats won by either two or more quotas or by more than one quota and a remainder can be regarded as vote-pooling (Cox, 1997). In quasi-SNTV under LRPR, seats are allocated according to plurality until all of them are filled. In this vein, votes are not pooled across all candidates since votes only benefit the head of the list (Cox, 1997). The example of Colombian quasi-SNTV, in which vote-pooling is absent, reflects parties' inability to control the party label and the candidate-centered campaign. Although some research on Colombian quasi-SNTV demonstrates that list-splitting in some cases can help parties win more seats (e.g. the district of Huila in 1990), Colombian parties would not have committed errors and lost more seats had parties been able to coordinate around a single list.<sup>4</sup>

This article proceeds as follows. First, it will examine the relevant research on Colombian quasi-SNTV and how it resembles SNTV since lessons from SNTV can help us understand how the quasi-SNTV system works. Second, it will briefly analyze the evolution of political parties in Hong Kong. The main political cleavage (camp) in Hong Kong is pro-China (or pro-establishment or pro-Beijing) vs. pro-democracy. It is essential to recognize the dominant political cleavage because it is associated with how a party coordinates with other parties/individuals in the same camp at the nomination and campaign levels. Third, this article calculates the actual allocation and the hypothetical allocation of seat shares of each party using Cox and Shugart's method to see whether they commit different types of errors or reach optimal performance (Cox and Shugart, 1995). Finally, the article concludes that quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong can help political parties reach optimal performance only if a political party can both control their party label and coordinate well with their alliances at both the nomination level and campaign level. Compared with quasi-SNTV in Colombia, a key distinction of quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong is that the strategic coordination within its alliances can help political parties succeed in this system. The DAB has done an excellent job in this regard. Otherwise, a party coordinating around a single list remains the best strategy.

<sup>4</sup> The electoral quota in Huila is 36,501 and the fifth (and final) seat gained by the remainder is 20,239. The vote shares of three lists/candidates of the Liberals are 34,840, 33,996, and 22,942, which are lower than the quota. If the three lists of the Liberals were merged into a single list, the Liberals could only get two seats by quota and the remaining votes (18,776) would not exceed the 20,239 needed to get an additional seat (Cox and Shugart, 1995).

### The effects of SNTV and quasi-SNTV

In SNTV, voters cast a single vote for a candidate in a multimember district and votes are non-transferable. Each party may put forward more than one candidate in each district. Seats are allocated by the plurality rule until all seats are filled (Carter and Farrell, 2010; Farrell, 2011). The advantages of this system are that it tends to produce a more proportional outcome and improve the representation of small parties and minority representation than a single-member plurality system (Wang, 2008; Farrell, 2011). However, SNTV often suffers from the problem of super-proportionality, especially in districts of large magnitude. Election results in Japan (till 1993) and Taiwan (through 2004) demonstrate that large parties are likely to commit errors of overnomination (the party's candidates exceed the MAXS,<sup>5</sup> and the party ultimately gets fewer seats than the MAXS), undernomination (it could have won more seats by nominating more candidates), and misallocation (the party's candidates are equal to the MAXS, but the party obtains fewer than the MAXS), while small parties usually can benefit from this and obtains seats with small vote shares. (Lijphart *et al.*, 1984; Hsieh, 1992; Wang, 2008). In particular, when one of the large parties commits errors (loses seats), other large parties are likely to benefit from this and become over-represented (advantage ratio > 1), especially when small parties are not viable (Cox and Niou, 1994; Wang, 2008).<sup>6</sup> In this sense, SNTV is likely to be super-proportional, especially in a given district of large magnitude.

Cox and Shugart (1995) have conducted extensive investigations into the effects of quasi-SNTV. According to their case study of Colombian quasi-SNTV prior to 2006, it resembles SNTV in Japan in that there are multiple lists under the same party label and votes cannot be transferred from one list to another.<sup>7</sup> Multiple lists under one party label is a result of weak party discipline. The absence of vote pooling in SNTV, just as in Colombian quasi-SNTV, makes it more difficult for a party to control its candidates. While the maximum of district magnitudes is six in Japan, district magnitudes in Colombia range from 1 to 29. Similar to Japan's SNTV, the larger the district magnitude, the more errors parties commit in Colombia. Errors rates of major Colombian parties are even higher than those of Japan since weak party discipline makes Colombian parties unable to control their increasing party lists (Cox and Shugart, 1995; Pachon and Shugart, 2010). Although the quasi-SNTV emerges because of weak party discipline, Colombian parties became familiar with the quasi-SNTV and managed to win more seats by putting forward multiple lists from 1990 to 1998. Nearly all advantage

<sup>5</sup> MAXS means the 'maximum number of seats that the party could have won' (Cox and Shugart, 1995). According to the definition by Cox and Rosenbluth (1994) and Cox and Niou (1994), MAXS assumes the party can equalize votes across candidates. In this paper, MAXS is the maximum number of lists through which a political party could have obtained one seat each. In other words, seats obtained are from the tops of the lists. My calculation follows Wang's (2008) method of calculation.

<sup>6</sup> "Over-represented" means the advantage ratio  $[(\% \text{seats})/(\% \text{votes})]$  of a given party is larger than one. The party is under-represented while the advantage ratio < 1 (Shugart *et al.*, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Now the post-reform PR system uses the D'Hondt formula and each party can only endorse one list (Cox and Shugart, 1995; Pachon and Shugart, 2010).

ratios of major parties (Liberal Party and Conservative Party) are over 1, and those of small parties or independents are below 1. Clientelism enabled the large parties to attract voters to support particular candidates and thus made it easier for parties to allocate votes (Shugart *et al.*, 2007). It is evident that large parties in Columbia are over-represented as well. The super-proportionality of Colombian quasi-SNTV substantiates that it is very similar to SNTV.

The absence of vote pooling in SNTV or quasi-SNTV has contributed to personalized electoral machines since the competition is among individuals in SNTV and those heading each list in quasi-SNTV (Cox and Shugart, 1995; Cox, 1997; Pachon and Shugart, 2010). There are few incentives for candidates to be loyal to their parties because the weak party discipline in SNTV enables candidates to cultivate their votes through their personal networks (*koenkai* in Japan) (Baerwald, 1986; Hrebendar, 1986; Curtis, 1988; Shugart *et al.*, 2007). In Taiwan's SNTV, both marginally elected and so-called national celebrities switched their partisanship or became independent in order to win reelection since they can win by their strong clientelistic networks (Chang and Tang, 2015). Scholars of Hong Kong politics such as Ngok Ma and Ivan Choy also claim that quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong is quite similar to SNTV in that many lists run in a district are under the same party label (Ma and Choy, 2003a). Also, the study of campaign advertising in the 2004 and 2012 Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong also demonstrates that there is more advertising focusing on a candidate's image than on policies or issues (Niu, 2008, 2013). In this sense, quasi-SNTV can promote candidate-centered campaigns and party-switching happens frequently as well in Hong Kong's quasi-SNTV, such as Chin-shek Lau and Albert Wai-yip Chan in 2004, Albert Wai-yip Chan and Audrey Eu in 2008, and Cyd Ho and Emily Lau in 2012.<sup>8</sup> In particular, Kwong (2010) also discovers patron–client networks facilitate candidates' personal support in Hong Kong's Legislative Council elections.

Although the absence of vote-pooling is the major mutual characteristic between SNTV and quasi-SNTV, votes can be pooled in quasi-SNTV once there are excess votes in one list. Take the DAB in 2008 for example. The DAB put forward one list in New Territories East and got 102,434 votes. Though votes could not be transferred to the independent Scarlett Oi-lan Pong, whom the pro-Beijing united front endorsed, votes could be pooled across the candidates on its list (Cheng, 2010). The total votes allowed the 1st seat (Kong-wah Lau) to win by quota and the 2nd seat (Gary Hak-kan Chan) to win by remainder. Nevertheless, votes are wasted on excessively popular candidates in SNTV while other candidates under the same party label have too few votes to be elected. The example of the 1998 Legislative Council election in the South District of

<sup>8</sup> Chin-shek Lau and Albert Wai-yip Chan withdrew from the DP and ran for election as independents in 2004. Albert Wai-yip Chan joined the LSD and Audrey Eu left the Frontier and participated in the Civic Party in 2008. Cyd Ho left the Frontier and ran for election as a member of the Labor Party in 2012. The Frontier was merged into the DP in 2008 and Emily Lau (a member of the Frontier) ran as a DP candidate in 2012. Please refer to the website of Registration and Electoral Office in Hong Kong, <http://www.reo.gov.hk/> [accessed 21 May 2016].

Taipei City can demonstrate this. While the DPP's top-ranked candidate Fu-hsiung Shen got 86,900 votes, his colleague Tien-fu Huang obtained only 28,179 votes and was defeated only by a margin of 2,324 votes (Yu, 1999). The excessive votes in SNTV cannot be pooled and this is the distinction between quasi-SNTV and SNTV. Since the seats are more expensive in vote-pooling in LRPR, seats are cheaper while putting forward multiple lists (quasi-SNTV). This probably explains why the DAB ran multiple lists in three districts in 2012.

This article intends to explore how quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong takes place, whether the DP and DAB put forward multiple lists or cooperate with their respective alliances or not, and the aftermath of multiple lists and coordination or failure of coordination. In order to maximize seats in one district, parties may cooperate with fellow parties or independent candidates in the same camp to have one list or one party can have two or more lists. Except in 2004, the pro-democracy camp lacks an overriding authority to coordinate with different parties or candidates in the same camp. In contrast, the pro-China camp seems less divided than its rivals because it adopts the electoral strategy of a united front (Cheng, 2010). The quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong features the strategic coordination of the two political camps, which is different from that in Colombia.

### **Political/social cleavages in Hong Kong**

The main political cleavage in Hong Kong is pro-China vs. pro-democracy. The major distinction between these two sides is their attitude toward political reform (especially the issue of universal suffrage) (Cheng, 2010). The pro-democracy camp appeals for rapid and radical political reform while the pro-China camp emphasizes the importance of political stability and advocates for political reforms to proceed gradually (Yip and Yeung, 2014). The emergence of this political cleavage can be traced to Hong Kong's unique political background and development. Therefore, it is important to understand the evolution of Hong Kong's political parties because this is directly related to the political cleavages.

#### *The pro-democracy camp*

The DP, which attracts middle-class voters, is the major party in the pro-democracy camp. The rise of the DP in 1994 can be traced back to the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 (Scott, 1992). Also, the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) often supports and cooperates with the DP (Ma, 2001). In addition, the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL), founded in 1986, regards itself as a party serving the lower-classes. Two other parties, the Frontier and the Citizens Party, were established before 1997. In particular, the Frontier, founded in 1996, has a simple and small organization and is more radical than the DP (Yang, 1997). In addition to those pro-democracy parties founded before 1997, the Civic Party and the League of Social Democrats (LSD) were established in 2006. The LSD is more radical than other pro-democracy parties or groups and is the only party in the pro-democracy camp that has

been successful in attracting young voters. The LSD often attacks other pro-democracy leaders especially in campaigns (Cheng, 2010).

The Citizens Party did not run in elections after the first Legislative Council election in 1998. After 2000, the HKCTU has begun not to support the DP because it thinks that the DP is alienating members of the working and lower classes. Moreover, the chairman of the HKCTU, Chin-shek Lau, who had been a member of the DP, was expelled from the party as a result of a factional struggle (Ma, 2001). Some DP members (mainly those who make up the Young Turks) withdrew from the DP and formed the New Democrats in 2010 because they did not agree with the DP's support of the political reform of HKSAR in 2010 (Ma, 2011). The LSD fractured in 2011 and some members formed a new coalition, People Power, in 2011. The radical pro-democracy parties (LSD, People Power, and the New Democrats) often attack fellow pro-democracy parties when campaigning.<sup>9</sup> Also, some Frontier members formed the Labor Party in 2011, following the Frontier's merger with the Democratic Party in 2008.

### *The pro-China camp*

The DAB, founded in 1992, is the main party of the pro-China camp and focuses on the interests of the lower classes. In addition to the DAB, other pro-China parties were established prior to 1997, including the New Hong Kong Alliance (NHKA),<sup>10</sup> the Liberal Democratic Federation (LDF),<sup>11</sup> and the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA).<sup>12</sup> These new parties participated in the District Board election in 1994 and the Urban Council and Legislative Council elections in 1995. Furthermore, the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (HKFTU), which represents labor interests and has a solid grassroots base, usually cooperates with the DAB in Legislative Council elections (Cheng, 2010).

In addition to the development of these two camps, the Liberal Party (LP), a conservative and pro-business party, was founded in 1993. Similar to the HKPA, the LP mainly stands for functional constituency seats. The LP has tried to run for geographical

<sup>9</sup> Take People Power for example. They attack the DP for their support of the 2010 political reforms during the campaign. See *South China Morning Post*, 'Pan-Democrats Election Setbacks Blamed on Infighting', 11 September 2012, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1033707/pan-democrats-election-setbacks-blamed-infighting> [accessed 18 November 2014].

<sup>10</sup> The New Hong Kong Alliance was dissolved in 1999. See *Hong Kong Headline Daily*, 'Chun Ying Leung Avoids to Discuss His Participation in the Establishment of the New Hong Kong Alliance', 5 April 2012, [http://news.stheadline.com/dailynews/content\\_hk/2012/04/05/185948.asp](http://news.stheadline.com/dailynews/content_hk/2012/04/05/185948.asp) (in Chinese) [accessed 18 November 2014].

<sup>11</sup> The Liberal Democratic Federation (LDF) was merged into the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) 35 days before the handover of 1 July 1997. See *Sun Daily*, 'On the Failure of the New Hong Kong Alliance and the Liberal Democratic Federation: Pan-Alliance Will Form the Conservative Party', 11 March 2016, [http://the-sun.on.cc/channels/news/20061103/20061103021222\\_0000.html](http://the-sun.on.cc/channels/news/20061103/20061103021222_0000.html) (in Chinese) [accessed 18 November 2014].

<sup>12</sup> HKPA was merged into the DAB on 17 February 2005. See *People's Daily*, 'The DAB and the HKPA Announced to Merge Together', 17 February 2015, <http://www.people.com.cn/BIG5/42272/42273/3182571.html> (in Chinese) [accessed 18 November 2014].

constituency seats, but its efforts have not been as successful as other parties. Although the LP is a pro-China party as well, it usually does not cooperate with other pro-China parties in direct elections (Cheng, 2010). It won two seats in the direct election in 2004, but then lost them in 2008. Some members of the LP have withdrawn from the party and formed other parties (e.g. the New People's Party in 2011 and Economic Synergy in 2009).<sup>13</sup>

### *Summary*

Although parties in both camps cooperate with other parties of the same camp in the legislature most of the time, they do not necessarily coordinate with each other in Legislative Council elections all of the time. Because of factional struggles and conflicts among pro-democracy parties, the pro-democracy camp is more internally fragmented than the pro-China camp. Generally speaking, the pro-China camp is more prone to cooperation than the pro-democracy camp. The internal fragmentation of the pro-democracy camp and the internal coherence of the pro-China camp have a great influence on the DP's and the DAB's strategies under quasi-SNTV.

### **Methodology**

In order to determine whether quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong can help the DP and the DAB equalize votes and maximize seats, I explore whether each of them commits errors of undernomination, overnomination, misallocation, undernomination, and misallocation (the number of lists are fewer than MAXS, and the party wins fewer seats than the number of lists of the party) or reaches optimal performance (the number of seats a party wins is equal to the MAXS). In other words, this article analyzes and compares the strategic entry of the two parties and whether they can equalize votes well.

### *Hypothesis*

Weak party discipline had contributed to a quasi-SNTV system in Colombia prior to 2006. As the district magnitude increases, the quasi-SNTV can lead to high error rates as is evident in Cox and Shugart's case study of Colombia. However, parties eventually became acquainted with quasi-SNTV and determined how to better allocate votes and as a result obtained more seats. Similar to Colombian quasi-SNTV, quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong emerged because of factional struggles and parties' inability to control their candidates. Considering the special political background of Hong Kong, this article hypothesizes that a political party which facilitates coordination well with its alliances commits fewer errors and obtains more seats than a political party which lacks

<sup>13</sup> See *Wen Wei Po*, 'The New People's Party Discusses about the Reorganization of Government', 11 January 2011, <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2011/01/11/HK1101110027.htm> (in Chinese), [accessed 18 November 2014]; *South China Morning Post*, 'Liberals Fall out of Favor', 7 August 2012, <http://www.scmp.com/article/1014223/liberals-fall-out-favour> [accessed 18 November 2014].



**Table 2.** *The district magnitudes in geographical constituencies in Hong Kong Legislative Council Elections (2000–12)*

	HKI	KE	KW	NTE	NTW
2000	5	4	4	5	6
2004	6	5	4	7	8
2008	6	4	5	7	8
2012	7	5	5	9	9

Notes: HKI = Hong Kong Island, KE = Kowloon East, KW = Kowloon West, NTE = New Territories East, NTW = New Territories West.

coordination within its political camp. In other words, I surmise that the pro-China camp's united-front strategy helps the DAB win more seats, while the DP commits more errors and obtains fewer seats because of less coordination among its alliances.

### Data

This article employs the election data from the Registration and Electoral Office in Hong Kong, and district magnitudes from 2000 to 2012 are shown (see Table 2).<sup>14</sup> Using this data, error rates and optimal performance rates of the DP and the DAB in quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong from 2000 to 2012 are calculated. The calculations are as follows. First, the actual allocation (of those which put forward multiple lists) and the hypothetical allocation (one single list) of the seat share of each party are calculated using Cox and Shugart's method to see whether parties commit different types of errors or reach optimal performance (Cox and Shugart, 1995). Second, the MAXS of each party in each geographical constituency is calculated.<sup>15</sup> The definition of MAXS in this article is the maximum number of seats that each party can win if they put forward multiple lists, equalize votes well, and assume that only one candidate is elected in each list and all other lists' votes are fixed. In other words, the MAXS are the cheapest seats which are won by the remainder. According to the MAXS and the actual seat share, the analysis explores what kind of errors each party commits and whether the party reaches optimal performance. Third, the error rates and the optimal performance rates of the two parties are compared to discover which party wins more seats in quasi-SNTV.

<sup>14</sup> The DP begins to put forward multiple lists in 2000, so the analysis starts from 2000. Actually, the first party splitting lists is the Frontier in New Territories West in 1998. They could have won only one seat if they had put forward only one list. The quota is 75,034 and the total votes for the two Frontier lists are 85,323. They got 38,627 and 46,696 for each list, which is nearly half of the quota. The website of Registration and Electoral Office in Hong Kong, <http://www.reo.gov.hk/> [accessed 21 May 2016].

<sup>15</sup> The calculation of MAXS in this paper follows Wang's formula which is quite similar to D'Hondt's formula. The first step is to calculate the party's vote share in the district and divide the vote share by integers from 1. Second, assuming all other lists' votes are fixed; the denominator which can maximize the seat share for that party is the maximum seats that the party can get in that district (Wang, 2008; Farrell, 2011).

### The strategic coordination of the parties in Legislative Council elections

The direct election in Hong Kong's Legislative Council (or LegCo) election uses a closed party-list LRPR with Hare Quota. Given the similarities between quasi-SNTV and SNTV, either the DP or the DAB puts forward multiple lists in a given district. In particular, the DP has observed vote division strategies under SNTV by political parties in Taiwan. There are two main vote division strategies in Taiwan's Legislative Yuan elections. The first is the 'vote responsibility zone' of the Kuomintang (KMT); the second is the vote division strategy preferred by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the New Party (NP) (Choy, 2002; Ma and Choy, 2003a).

The KMT, which had more resources and consolidated local and social networks, usually divided a geographical constituency into several small zones and assigned different candidates to different 'spheres of influence' so that they could campaign and mobilize in their assigned district. In contrast to the KMT, the DPP and the NP had fewer resources and were not as well organized (Choy, 2002). Therefore, the DPP and the NP adopted different vote division strategies from the KMT. In this special vote division strategy, which was innovated for Taiwan's Legislative Council elections in 1995, the DPP and NP canvassed their supporters to equalize votes through the media.<sup>16</sup> This vote division strategy was shown to be very successful in 1995 because it helped to reach high rates of optimal performance. However, the vote division strategy of the DPP did not really work well in the 1998 Legislative elections in the South District of Taipei City because the division strategy was usually difficult to put into practice. The success or failure of the strategy depended on many factors, such as the changing of candidates, strengths of different candidates, factional struggles, the adherence of voters to the party's vote division strategy, and other parties' strategies (Yu, 1999).

The DP decided to adopt the KMT's 'vote responsibility zone' strategy since it began splitting lists in 2000. Occasionally, some pro-democracy marginal candidates may ask voters to vote strategically; however, this has actually shown to be ineffective since there are relatively few voters (only 7% at most) who engage in strategic voting (Choy, 2002; Ma and Choy, 2003a).<sup>17</sup> In 2004, the DP cooperated with some of their

<sup>16</sup> Vote division has been done according to supporters' month of birth or the last digit of their ID number (Ma and Choy, 2003a). If party A has three candidates in a district, the party may suggest supporters to vote for candidate no. 1 if their birthday falls between January and April, candidate no. 2 if it is May to August, and candidate no. 3 if it is September to December. Another strategy sees the party asking its supporters to vote for a certain candidate according to the last digit of their ID number. Suppose party B has two candidates in a district, party B will ask supporters to vote for candidate no. 1 if the last digit of their ID is from 0 to 4 and vote for no. 2 if the last digit is from 5 to 9.

<sup>17</sup> Marginal candidates may canvass supporters in two ways. One is to ask voters to abandon runaway candidates and shift votes to them; the other is to ask voters in the same family to equalize votes. Consider the New Territories East in the 2000 Legislative Council elections for example. Kar Foo Cheng asked pro-democracy supporters to equalize votes among pro-democracy party lists. If there are four people in a family, the father and son vote for Kar Foo Cheng and the mother and daughter vote for the Frontier's Emily Lau (Choy, 2002; Ma and Choy, 2003a).

**Table 3.** *The quasi-SNTV and errors by district magnitudes*

		HKI	KE	KW	NTE	NTW
2000	N	5	4	4	5	6
	DP	–	–	–	OP	OS
	DAB	–	–	–	–	–
2004	N	6	5	4	7	8
	DP	–	–	–	–	U
	DAB	–	OP	–	–	–
2008	N	6	4	5	7	8
	DP	–	OS	–	OP	OS
	DAB	–	–	–	–	–
2012	N	7	5	5	9	9
	DP	–	–	–	O	O
	DAB	OP	–	–	U	OP

Notes: N = district magnitudes; U = undernomination, O = overnomination, OS = overnomination but safe, OP = optimal performance, – = not applicable.

pro-democracy colleagues to run in the LegCo elections by either coordinating around one list (e.g. the Diamond list in New Territories East in 2004) or putting forward multiple lists. Similar to the pro-democracy camp, the DAB has split two lists (both are under the combined label of DAB/HKFTU) in Kowloon East starting in 2004.

Table 3 shows errors under quasi-SNTV the parties committed by district magnitudes in five districts. First, the actual and hypothetical results of the two parties are calculated if they were to put forward multiple lists in each district to determine whether multiple lists can help to win extra seats. If any of them has engaged in vote-pooling (put one list in a given district only), then it is not counted since I assume that votes are not pooled and seats which are won by remainder are the cheapest. The strategic coordination around a single list either by a party or even by a camp (e.g. the democratic camp's Diamond list in NTE in 2004) makes votes pooled and seats the most expensive. In this sense, the party or the camp cannot commit errors. The next step is to calculate the MAXS, error rates, and the optimal performance rates for each party.<sup>18</sup> The 2012 LegCo election in New Territories West is an example of the calculation in Table 4. Each row shows the lists, actual vote share and seats the list got; the total votes for the DP and the DAB from column 4 to 7 are the hypothetical allocation if they ran one list. Since

<sup>18</sup> According to Wang's (2008) definition, overnomination although safe means the party has more candidates than MAXS, but the actual seats they get is equal to MAXS. This is neither an error nor the optimal performance. Also there should be two types of misallocation. One is the failure to equalize the votes. This means that the number of candidates equals the MAXS, but the actual seats the party obtained eventually are fewer than the MAXS. The other type of misallocation is called 'undernomination and failure to equalize votes'. In this case, not only is the number of candidates less than the MAXS, but also the number of actual seats is less than the number of candidates. This type of error can lead the party to lose at least two seats. In Quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong, neither the DP nor the DAB commits errors of misallocation and undernomination and failure to equalize votes according to my calculation.

**Table 4.** *The example of actual and hypothetical results of the DP and the DAB in New Territories West in 2012*

Hypothetical allocation in one list

District magnitude: 9, Total votes: 498,610, Quota: 55,402, the last seat won by remainder: 33,777

Actual allocation	Seats won	Seats by Quota	Remainder	Seats by Remainder	Total Seats
<b>The DP (MAXS: 2)</b>					
1 Chan (DP)	25,892	0			
2 Lee (DP)	32,792	0			
Total	58,684	0	1	0	1
<b>The DAB (MAXS:3)</b>					
1 Leung (DAB)	33,777	1			
2 Chan (DAB)	36,555	1			
3 Tam (DAB)	43,496	1			
Total	113,828	3	2	0	2
Other Pro-Democracy Candidates					
Albert Chan (People Power)	44,355	1			
Tsang (LSD)	9,280	0			
Kwok (Civic)	72,185	1			
Leong	43,799	1			
Lee (Labor)	40,967	1			
Other pro-China candidates					
Mak (HKFTU)	35,239	1			
Tien (NPP)	37,808	1			

each election presents a different scenario with respect to coordination, the situations of each Legislative election are outlined briefly before hypothetical and actual results are calculated and errors rates and optimal performance rates of both are analyzed.

#### *The strategic coordination of the DP*

The DP began to put forward multiple lists in New Territories East and New Territories West in 2000. In fact, multiple lists of the DP are a result of factional struggles between the mainstream and the Young Turks.<sup>19</sup> Similar to the Quasi-SNTV

<sup>19</sup> Factional struggles result from several factors: ideological differences, dissatisfaction among lower party echelons towards the party leaders, personal rivalry, the introduction of LRPR after handover, the abolition of the municipal councils (Ma, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Choy, 2002).

in Colombia, it implies that the DP cannot effectively control the party label so it splits lists in LRPR as a result. However, the absence of vote pooling has made seats won by the remainder cheaper than those won by quota. In New Territories East, they could only win one seat if they had not split lists. In New Territories West, the DP put forward three lists but won only two; they could have reached optimal performance if they had put forward only two lists (MAXS=2). The three DP candidates' 'scrambling for vote-responsibility-zone' in New Territories West reflects the weak party control of the DP (Choy, 2002).

In order to have enough bargaining/veto power in the Legislative Council, the pro-democracy camp began to coordinate at the nomination level in each geographical constituency in 2004. The liaison group (the strategic coordination organization in the pro-democracy camp) determined the number of candidates and endorsed the viable candidates according to polls, the pro-China camp's strategies and nominated candidates, and past election results (Ma, 2006).<sup>20</sup> In New Territories East, the pro-democracy camp coordinated around one single list – the so-called 'Diamond List' – and two seats were won by quota and the third one was won by the remainder. In contrast to New Territories East, the pro-democracy camp endorsed five lists in New Territories West and they won five seats successfully. If the pro-democracy camp is defined as a relevant actor to put forward multiple lists or one single list, the pro-democracy camp reaches optimal performance in New Territories West. However, the DP commits the error of undernomination and could have won the third seat if it is considered as an actor to campaign strategically. For the other three districts (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, and Kowloon West), the pro-democracy camp won all seats they had endorsed. It seems that the liaison group worked very well on strategic coordination in 2004.

Table 3 shows that the DP split lists in Kowloon East, New Territories East, and New Territories West in 2008. In Kowloon East, the MAXS of the DP was one, but they ran two lists, eventually getting one seat. Similar to the situation in Kowloon East, the MAXS was 2, but the DP nominated three lists and got 2 in New Territories West. The DP neither committed errors of overnomination nor reached optimal performance. The situations in Kowloon East and New Territories West are overnomination but safe. Instead of coordinating around one single list in 2004, the DP ran only two lists and they reached optimal performance in New Territories East. The other pro-democracy parties, such as the Frontier, LSD, and the Civic Party won one seat each. Compared with coordinating around one list in 2004, it seemed that there was not really a liaison group to coordinate parties or candidates in the pro-democracy camp in 2008. The pro-democracy camp won more seats by splitting lists in 2008 rather than coordinating

<sup>20</sup> The DP, the Frontier, HKCTU, Article 45 concern group, and some pro-democracy independents (i.e. Albert Wai-yip Chan in New Territories West) are endorsed by the liaison group; the ADPL and some independent candidates (i.e. Kwok-hung Leung and Andrew Wang-fat Wong in New Territories East, Kin-shing Tsang in Hong Kong Island) are not endorsed by the liaison group (Ma, 2006).

around one single list. The seats won by remainder were cheaper than those won by quota.

Five additional seats are added to the total seats of geographical constituencies in 2012, so there are more lists and candidates in the direct election, which makes this election very competitive. The DP put forward multiple lists in New Territories East and New Territories West and commits errors of overnomination in both districts. In New Territories West, the DP ran two lists but did not win any seats. The total vote share of the two DP lists (Chan and Lee) were 58,684 which was higher than the quota of 55,402. They could have won one seat if they had not split lists (Table 4). In New Territories East, the DP nominated three lists, eventually winning one seat. They would have won two seats if they had run two lists only. The split of the DP and the rise of new pro-democracy parties may account for the decline of its vote share and seat share. Some radical pro-democratic parties, such as the LSD (split from the DP), People Power (split from LSD), and New Democrats (split from the DP), adopt a radical position on the issue of political reform and seldom cooperate with other pro-democratic parties or candidates. Moreover, they have even launched a serious attack on the DP during the campaign (Niu, 2013). In addition, candidates of the Civic Party worried they might be defeated and urged pro-democracy supporters to vote for them in the campaign (Chuang, 2012).

Except in 2004, when there was a liaison group to coordinate different parties and candidates in the pro-democracy camp, there was no evidence demonstrating that the DP cooperated with its alliances either in coordinating around a single list or running multiple lists in a given district. The attacks from other parties or candidates during the campaign can substantiate that there was not really a united electoral machinery to coordinate pro-democracy alliances at both the nomination level and the campaign level. This is perhaps the reason why the DP were more likely to commit errors, especially in large district magnitudes such as New Territories East and New Territories West in 2012.

#### *The strategic coordination of the DAB*

In contrast to the pro-democracy camp, the pro-China camp is more conservative and cooperative. In the 2000 LegCo election, the HKPA mainly ran for seats in committee elections and functional constituencies instead of geographical constituencies to avoid competing with the DAB (Wei, 2001). In fact, they joined the DAB lists in the direct election in 2000 (e.g. HKPA's So-yuk Choy in Hong Kong Island and Siu-tong Tang in New Territories West) (Ma and Choy, 2003a). In other words, the DAB and the HKPA cooperated to put forward one list in these two districts. Furthermore, Yuen Han Chan (in Kowloon East) intended to run under the HKFTU banner from the DAB. The DAB official dissuaded her from doing so and she eventually ran under the DAB banner, but she alleged that she would definitely run as a candidate of the HKFTU in 2004 (Choy, 2002).

The DAB began to split lists in Kowloon East just as Yuen Han Chan had planned in 2004. The DAB cooperated with the HKFTU and they put forward two lists in Kowloon East under the united label, DAB/HKFTU. The pro-China camp got two seats in Kowloon East as expected.

Although the DAB only ran one single list in each district, the pro-China camp adopted the united front's electoral machinery in the 2008 direct election. In addition to the DAB and HKFTU, the pro-Beijing united front also supported pro-China independents such as Regina Suk-ye Ip Lau in Hong Kong Island, Priscilla Mei-fun Leung in Kowloon West, and Scarlett Oi-lan Pong in New Territories East (Cheng, 2010).<sup>21</sup> While Pong did not win a seat, the other two independents, Ip and Leung, were successful in this election. The DAB won one seat each in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, and Kowloon West, and they won two each in New Territories East and New Territories West. The HKFTU also won one seat each in Kowloon East and New Territories West. The united front electoral machinery succeeded in 2008.

Except in New Territories East, the pro-China camp's united front electoral machinery seemed effective again in the 2012 direct election. Three new political parties and groups formed before the 2012 LegCo election in the pro-China camp: the New People's Party (NPP), Civic Force, and Economic Synergy (which mainly ran for seats in functional constituencies). As was the case in 2008, the Liberal Party again was not endorsed by the pro-Beijing united front machinery (see Note 22). The DAB reached optimal performance in Hong Kong Island and New Territories West. The DAB especially did an excellent job of vote allocation in New Territories West given that vote share was allocated nearly evenly across three lists. If they had run only one list, seats would be expensive and they would only have achieved two seats [Table 4]. Although the DAB ran two lists and won two seats in New Territories East, it committed the error of undernomination. The total votes of the two lists (87,116) were enough for three candidates to be elected if votes had been allocated equally.

From the perspective of the pro-China camp as a whole, however, the pro-Beijing united front machinery did not work well in New Territories East. If the pro-China camp was considered as a relevant actor to put forward multiple lists, they had committed the error of misallocation. The MAXS are four, and they endorsed four lists (2 DAB lists, 1 HKFTU, and 1 Civic Force). They eventually got 2 DAB lists only. Elizabeth Quat (DAB) was worried that she might be defeated and urged pro-China supporters to vote for her. Actually her vote share (46, 139) and Gary Chan's (40, 977) ranked second and third in

<sup>21</sup> There are two main reasons that explain why the Liberal Party is not endorsed by the pro-China camp's united-front electoral machinery. The first is that the LP supported fewer than half of the government-sponsored bills in 2011–12, compared with the first two years of Tsang's administration when they supported more than three-quarters of the bills. Also see Note 14 for more information. The second reason is that the LP announced they would not support Chun Ying Leung in the 2012 Chief Executive election. This is the formal announcement of the LP by the leader Kin-ye Lau. Please see the news release on the LP's website, 'The Liberal Party's Position on the 2012 Chief Executive Election', 21 March 2012, [http://liberal.org.hk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=408&mid=49&lang=tc](http://liberal.org.hk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=408&mid=49&lang=tc) [accessed 27 April 2014].

**Table 5.** *The error and optimal performance rates of the DP and the DAB*

Year	Party	U	Over	Over but safe	Misallocation	Total Errors	OP	Total Strategies
2000	DP	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
	DAB	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
2004	DP	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	DAB	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
2008	DP	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
	DAB	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
2012	DP	0	2	0	0	2	0	2
	DAB	1	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	DP	1	2	3	0	3(37.5%)	2(25%)	8(100%)
Errors	DAB	1	0	0	0	1(25%)	3(75%)	4(100%)

Notes: 1. U = Undernomination, Over = Overnomination, OP = optimal performance.

2. Overnomination but safe is not counted as an error as in Wang's definition since the MAXS is still reached.

New Territories East. If both of them had coordinated to release some excess votes for Wai-ming Ip (HKFTU) and Scarlett Pong (Civic Force), the pro-China camp might have won two additional seats and reached optimal performance.<sup>22</sup> Despite this, the pro-Beijing united front machinery succeeded perfectly in the other four districts. The candidates (DAB, HKFTU, and some pro-Beijing independent candidates) endorsed by the pro-Beijing united front were all elected.

### The error and optimal performance rates under quasi-SNTV

Table 5 shows the error and optimal performance rates of the DP and the DAB. Lists which are not engaged in vote pooling (multiple lists in one party label-Quasi-SNTV) are counted as the party's strategies; lists engaged in vote pooling either under any party label or a camp's coordination around a list (e.g. the 'Diamond List' in New Territories East in 2004) are not included since a single list under one party label is normal under LRPR globally and seats become expensive. As Table 5 shows, multiple lists do not always maximize seats for the two parties. If coordination is not done well either at the nomination level or the campaign level, the situation becomes even worse than coordination around a single list (e.g. see Table 4: the DP in New Territories West in 2012). The information in Table 3 also substantiates that parties are less likely to commit different types of errors when the district magnitudes are small, such as in Kowloon East and Kowloon West. In contrast, the error rates are higher when district

<sup>22</sup> See *Now TV* website, 'Some Marginal Candidates Solicit Votes Urgently in New Territories East', 4 September 2012, <http://news.now.com/home/local/player?newsId=44710> (in Chinese) and 'The Top-Ranked Elizabeth Quat Was Blamed', 12 September 2012, <http://news.now.com/home/local/player?newsId=45493> (in Chinese) [accessed 19 April 2016].



magnitude increases such as in New Territories East and New Territories West (Cox and Niou, 1994; Cox and Shugart, 1995; Wang, 2008).

The DP's error rate is 37.5%, and the optimal performance rate is only 25% ('overnomination but safe' is neither counted as an error nor optimal performance); the DAB's error rate is 25%, while their optimal performance rate is 75%. It is evident that the strategic coordination of the DAB is better than that of the DP. In particular, the pro-China camp is more internally cohesive, which helps the strategic coordination succeed. The DP's failure can be attributed to its internal conflicts and the lack of coordination among pro-democracy parties and candidates in the nomination and campaign stages. Take 2012 for example, the DP committed errors of overnomination in the nomination stage in New Territories West and in New Territories East. In the campaign stage, the Civic Party and the DP suffered from attacks by their radical colleagues in the LSD, People Power, and New Democrats (Yip and Yeung, 2014). In addition, the Civic Party asked the DP supporters to vote for them which caused the pro-democracy camp as a whole to lose some seats (Cheng, 2010).<sup>23</sup> This situation is especially apparent in the 2012 LegCo election, as is evident in Table 4.

Although multiple lists of the DAB starting from 2004 are the result of some candidates' insistence (Yuen Han Chan in Kowloon East), actually the DAB has fewer internal conflicts than the DP. In addition to the DAB's long-term community service endeavors, their success can also be attributed to the pro-China camp's united-front machinery. This canvassing machinery enables the pro-China camp to allocate votes equally and maximize seats (Cheng, 2010). From the experiences of the DP and the DAB, quasi-SNTV is more effective whenever the political camp is more internally coherent and there is an overriding authority to boost coordination in both the nomination and campaign levels.

## Conclusions

Cox and Shugart's (1995, 1996) research on Colombia finds that quasi-SNTV is a result of parties' inability to control their party labels and the competition is similar to that of SNTV. Moreover, quasi-SNTV and SNTV are prone to exhibit different types of errors (undernomination, overnomination, and misallocation) because a vote division strategy is often difficult to accomplish (Yu, 1999). Lots of factors have to assist the vote division strategy simultaneously in order for it to reach optimal performance.

Cox and Shugart's argument has been substantiated in LRPR in the LegCo elections in Hong Kong. Similarly, factional struggles between the mainstream and the Young Turks of the DP led to multiple lists in one party label (Ma, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Choy, 2002). Although the DP occasionally wins more seats by multiple lists than one list, their error rates are higher than the optimal performance rate. As the DP's failure in New Territories West (Table 4) shows, sometimes even coordination around one single list would be better than multiple lists. Except 2004, in which there was a liaison group to

<sup>23</sup> Also see *South China Morning Post* on Note 9.

coordinate pro-democracy parties and independents, there was not really an overriding authority to organize the strategic coordination. In this sense, pro-democracy parties or independents often fail to coordinate at both the nomination and campaign levels. Moreover, the moderate pro-democracy parties such as the DP are often attacked by their radical colleagues (e.g. the LSD) during campaigns.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the DP often loses seats by a narrow margin and the lack of strategic coordination in the pro-democracy camp may be a main factor resulting in the DP's failure.

The DAB began to split lists in Kowloon East upon its member's request in 2004. They did not put forward multiple lists in 2008, but they ran multiple lists again in 2012. Since 2008, the pro-China camp adapted the united-front strategy and the DAB was obligated to obey it. Except New Territories East in 2012, the DAB's multiple lists succeeded. In particular, the pro-China camp's united-front strategy not only facilitates positive coordination in both the nomination and campaign stages but also helps the DAB reach optimal performance. The success of the DAB demonstrates that the pro-China camp's united front machinery can help it succeed under quasi-SNTV.<sup>25</sup>

Quasi-SNTV appears in the pre-reform system in Colombia when Colombian parties cannot control their party label. Because of the absence of vote-pooling, which is similar to that of SNTV, parties are likely to commit errors. If parties can allocate their votes equally across their lists, multiple lists can help them obtain more seats than putting forward one single list since parties can win with the cheapest seats (won by the largest remainder instead of the quota) and gain the most seats. Similar to the experience of Colombian parties, multiple lists in the DP and the DAB in Hong Kong result from their inability to control their party label. As a result, multiple lists do not always work well. In some cases, multiple lists can sometimes result in a worse performance than coordinating around one single list. Although there was strategic coordination in the pro-democracy camp in 2004, the coordination in general was nevertheless weak among pro-democracy parties. The errors in the nomination stage and lack of coordination in the campaign stage indicate that there is not an overriding authority to coordinate pro-democracy parties and candidates and thus they are not under any obligation to coordinate strategically. In contrast, the pro-China camp's strong capability for strategic coordination – the united front machinery – has performed very well.

In conclusion, the quasi-SNTV in Hong Kong offers two important implications for the literature of electoral systems and electoral coordination. First, similar to Colombian parties, multiple lists result from the political parties' inability to control its lists. Although the presentation of multiple lists is not a deliberate strategy in the beginning, both the DP and the DAB find that multiple lists can help them gain more seats while winning by remainders than by quotas. Second, the key difference between the

<sup>24</sup> See *South China Morning Post* on Note 9.

<sup>25</sup> *South China Morning Post* (2012c) 'LegCo Election Offers Lessons to Both Political Camps', 11 September, <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1033668/legco-election-offers-lessons-both-political-camps> [accessed 18 November 2014].

quasi-SNTV systems found in Colombia and Hong Kong is that in the latter, better strategic coordination and stronger alliances among political parties lead to more successful election results than in the former. The political party can reach optimal performance not only by putting forward adequate number of lists (MAXS) and allocating votes evenly but also by strategic coordination with its alliances. The united-front machinery of the pro-China camp is a good example of strong strategic coordination in both levels which facilitates the DAB's optimal performance.

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## **Appendix: The Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

The Basic Law Annex II: Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region and Its Voting Procedures.

Instrument 3: Proclamation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (11th National People's Congress) No.15

Intrument 4: Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region and Its Voting Procedures (Recorded at the 16th Session of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress on August 28, 2010).

Instrument 19: Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2007 and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2008 (Adopted at the Ninth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on April 26, 2004), <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/index.html> [accessed 24 April 2014].