2014

The politics of crisis management in post-1997 Hong Kong: a state-society interactive framework

Hin Yeung CHAN

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THE POLITICS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT
IN POST-1997 HONG KONG:
A STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK

CHAN HIN YEUNG

PHD

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2014
THE POLITICS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT
IN POST-1997 HONG KONG:
A STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK

by
CHAN Hin Yeung

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences
(Political Science)

Lingnan University

2014
ABSTRACT

The Politics of Crisis Management in Post-1997 Hong Kong:
A State-society Interactive Framework

by

CHAN Hin Yeung

Doctor of Philosophy

Most studies and research on crisis management and government crises put their focus on advanced, democratic nations, where governments have to bear the responsibility of handling a crisis through elections. However, relatively little attention has been given on the consequences of crises, particularly governance crises, in regimes without full democracy. By using post-1997 Hong Kong, a liberal society with limited democracy, as an example, this thesis aims to examine the applicability of crisis management theories and models currently available, and to introduce an entirely new State-society Interactive Framework¹ to tackle their limitations.

The Five Tasks Leadership Approach suggested by Boin, 't Hart and Stern, et al. (2005) and the Pattern of Politicization Approach of Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003), which respectively represents the top-down and bottom-up crisis management approaches, are selected as the analytical framework. This thesis begins with an application of these two approaches on an analysis of two noticeable crisis cases in post-1997 Hong Kong – the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway incident. Based on the results, this research found that the applicability of current theories and models derived from previous studies is restrictive in two aspects - First, the level of severity of the crises affects the validity of those studies. Hence, for the purpose of effective interpretation, only mega-crises are chosen for this thesis. Second, instead of explaining the incident, most of the current theories view crises as a clue for fault-finding in the aftermath, with little attention devoted to the development process.

Drawing upon different approaches in the field, this thesis has developed a heuristic

Crisis Development Ladder and the State-society Interactive Framework more relevant for limited democracies, such as Hong Kong and Mainland China. The Crisis Development Ladder refers to the flow from crisis to governance crisis and from governance crisis to change. At each stage of this process, there are interactions between the Crisis Strengthening Forces and Weakening Forces. By focusing on the Catalytic Effect of Crisis that accelerates reforms and changes, this research argues that critical crisis is politically influential and decisive in authoritarian system with an increasingly proactive civil society. This research has illustrated the deliberation of developing a crisis-driven society as an alternative to influence decision-making under non-democratic rule with valid examples. The current result suggests that crises are far beyond unfavourable situations that challenge the legitimacy of the government. More importantly, in the context of Hong Kong as well as other non-democratic systems, crises provide opportunities to initiate political changes. The current political institution in Hong Kong makes it possible for the government to pay no heed to the wants of the general public. Thus, the cases explored in this thesis show how activists and those who are not involved in the decision-making process use crises as a catalyser to impose sufficient political influence to the government so as to force a real change under a closed political system.
DECLARATION

I declare that this is an original work based primarily on my own research, and I warrant that all citations of previous research, published or unpublished, have been duly acknowledged.

_______________________
CHAN Hin Yeung
Date:
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

THE POLITICS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT
IN POST-1997 HONG KONG:
A STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK
by
CHAN Hin Yeung

Doctor of Philosophy

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<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>Centre of Health Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG</td>
<td>Central People’s Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Director of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Election Committee</td>
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<td>ExCo</td>
<td>Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Functional Constituency</td>
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<td>GC</td>
<td>Geographical Constituency</td>
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<td>HA</td>
<td>Hospital Authority</td>
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<td>HK</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>HKDF</td>
<td>Hong Kong Discussion Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKGF</td>
<td>Hong Kong Golden Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKSAR</td>
<td>Hong Kong Special Administrative Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKSARG</td>
<td>Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>HKU</td>
<td>The University of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWFB</td>
<td>Health, Welfare and Food Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCCM</td>
<td>Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KWH</td>
<td>Kwong Wah Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>LegCo</td>
<td>Legislative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>League of Social Democrats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mass Transit Railway Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POAS</td>
<td>Principal Officials Accountability (Appointment) System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARS</td>
<td>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standard Operating Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSCI</td>
<td>Social Sciences Citation Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>US/USA</td>
<td>The United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>XRL</td>
<td>Express Rail Link (High-speed Railway)</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

For a long period of time since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) in 1997, the general public does not seem to be satisfied with the performance of the government, especially on its crisis management technique. This is especially the case in recent years, as a popular discourse exists suggesting that there are many crises in Hong Kong. As scholars, politicians, and also members of society, it is of interest to investigate why some events would eventually become crises while others would not. The underlying questions would be: Who is responsible for “creating” or generating crises, and why different crises may have different outcomes.

The civil society of Hong Kong is rapidly developing. This is to some extent related to (or attributed to) the arising of different crises, among which the “1 July 2003 Demonstration” would serve as a good example. The aim of the current research is to study how the expanding civil society can influence a crisis and the crisis management of the government, with a focus on different stages of a crisis in which the public react to government decision/action. Specifically, an in-depth investigation on the extent to which those public reactions influence the next decision/action of the government is carried out. Moreover, since a crisis involves different stakeholders, including politicians, media, and pressure groups, the stakeholders’ own agenda could affect the whole crisis management process and even the outcomes of a crisis. The effects of these various forces on the decision-making process of the government are also thoroughly examined.
1.1.1 Crisis and Crisis Management: An Overview

Various scholars have attempted to provide a definition for crisis. For example, Kimenyi and Mwabu (2007, 11) addressed crisis as “an unfavourable state of instability or disequilibrium” and “something demanding for an immediate response…… [while] the appropriate response is usually unknown”, whereas Robinson (1972) emphasized crisis as an occasion for decision, and Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997, 279) considered it “the necessity to make critical choices”. Kouzmin (2008, 159) further provided three prerequisites for a crisis: A triggering event that critically destabilizes existing mechanisms of functionality to the point of seizure, affects constituency, and requires major redistribution of resources and recognition by the authority. Any happening that merely fulfills one of those three requirements should only be identified as an accident, a tragedy, or a disaster instead of a crisis.

Crisis management is a new and diversified field with different schools of perspectives. Despite the varying points of view, previous studies mostly agree that governments are the ones to take the lead in the crisis management process. While there is no clear definition for the term “crisis management”, government is expected to be responsible for managing crisis as crisis is “a situation that threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed and surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence” (Hermann 1972, 13).

From a public administration perspective, there are three features of crisis that may threaten the normal operation of the bureaucracy: Severe threat, time pressure, and high uncertainty (’t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993). The shock stemming from
crises has the ability to paralyze the daily routine of bureaucrats, and therefore, leadership and centralization of decision-making are important. As such, when investigating crisis management, the majority of literature in the field has adopted a top-down approach, which emphasizes on the leadership of governments in crises (Table 2.1). In general, the top-down approach focuses on the question of what should be done by the government during a crisis.

In contrast, the bottom-up approach focuses on how different non-state actors would react, and the effects of their reactions, during a crisis. This is especially the case during election periods, as McConnell and Stark (2002) explained in their study on the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease crisis in Britain, which suggested that crises could be highly sensitive issues during elections due to the super-sensitivity of the government, especially the ruling party, on public opinion. The bottom-up approach also associates crisis with political communication, and in this regard, decision-makers could not neglect real politics and should have the deliberate intention to explain the situation (Olson 2000). In the aftermath of crises, government officials are often faced with three political questions: 1) What happened? 2) Why were the responses inadequate? 3) What is going to happen? These questions reflect the significance of crisis communication as a topic for investigation.

Although the field is interdisciplinary in nature, the current research in crisis management is restricted by a relatively solid geographical boundary. A study on articles published by the Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management (JCCM), the only crisis management journal on the list of Social Sciences Citation Index
(SSCI)², found that there is an imbalance in the number of research articles from different parts of the world. As seen from Table 1.1, which shows the number of articles that were in print with JCCM from 2008-2012 categorized by case studies and authors from different regions, the western world (i.e. America and Europe) has dominated both in the number of case studies and authors’ affiliations. However, it is worth noting that even though research on Asia or by scholars affiliated with Asian academia are relatively thin, it is not a proof that there is no or very little crisis studies in Asia. Rather, this is to point out that current crisis management theories and models are mainly driven by western scholars. In particular, a liberal democracy is often taken for granted when the study of politics of crises is concerned, leading to a research gap for such topic in Asia, where full democracy is yet to be established in many countries.

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<th>Articles: Case study (N=85)</th>
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<th>Authors’ affiliation (N=85)</th>
<th>Authors’ affiliation (percent)</th>
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<td>22.5</td>
<td>26.5 %</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>30.5 %</td>
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<td>Europe</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>52.35 %</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>64.8 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>Oceania</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.35 %</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others / Not Specified</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.3 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The number would be less than one if authors or case studies came from different regions

Source: Data compiled by the author from the Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, 2008 – 2012 (Special issues were excluded)

**Table 1.1 Articles published in the Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management (JCCM), 2008-2012**

² Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), is a data base produced by Thomson Reuters accesses to the bibliographic and citation information from 3,000 of the world's leading social sciences journals across 50 disciplines. For details, please see: http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index/
1.1.2 Conceptualization: The Civil Society, State, and Government

The current thesis involves the development of a “State-society Interactive Framework”. As such, this section aims to provide background information, and probably a workable “definition”, for both “state” and “civil society”. In contemporary discussion, there is no agreement on the definition of civil society, which stems from various origins and varies among different schools of thoughts in disciplines as diverse as sociology, political science, and philosophy. As Fine (1997, 7) suggested, the question ‘what is civil society?’ has produced various answers.

Fine (1997) pointed out a number of features of civil society, such as free associations, social movements, and non-governmental organizations. However, he argued that merely identifying its features is insufficient for understanding what civil society is, and thus further suggested a common ground of civil society theory, which places civil society “on the side of agency, creativity, activity, productivity, freedom, association, life itself” (Fine 1997, 9).

In general, civil society and the state are put on opposite ends by scholars discussing the topic. A civil society exists when individuals and groups are free to form organizations that function independently of the state and that can bridge citizens and the state (Hann 1996, 1). In enlightenment thought, civil society is put between the poles of private property on the one side and the state on the other (Fine 1997, 16).

The origin of civil society in Europe, from the perspective of the classical school, could be dated back to the Roman Empire, in which the removal of the centralized authority of the government placed power in the several set of hands (Hall 1995, 4). Hall (1995, 1) further explained that “civil society was seen as the opposite of despotism, a space in which social groups could exist and move – something which
exemplified and would ensure softer, more tolerable conditions of existence.”

In contemporary studies, there are discussions on whether the economic domain should be part of the civil society. As Khilnani (2005, 13) suggested, from a liberal perspective, the effective powers of civil society are basically residing in the economy. In contrast, the radical perspective placed civil society in a position independent from the state and the economy. As the current study focuses on state and non-state actors, the business sector and their representatives (e.g. pro-business groups or parties) would be treated as non-state actors under the civil society from a liberal position.

Apart from the business sector, the definition of civil society would lead to confusion on the categorization of political parties. Theoretically, political parties and the members who serve in the Legislature should be regarded as state-actors or part of the government. However, in the political context of Hong Kong, the political parties, at least until now, cannot perform the full function of a “party” as understood in western democracies, as the current laws and regulations on elections do not allow them to rule and to govern. In this regard, the Pan-democrats in Hong Kong have long been described as permanent oppositions. Under an immature party politics environment (please refer to Section 1.2 below), the role of social activists, pressure groups and politicians are, to some extent, indistinguishable in the local context. With such consideration, the current study would regard the political parties in Hong Kong, especially the Pan-democrats, as non-state actors or located somewhere in-between the state and the civil society.

Two other terms that need clarification would be “state” and “government”. A state
is generally considered to have its own population, territory, sovereignty and
government. In contrast, the government is mostly referred to as an institution
consisting of the executive, legislature and judicial branches that makes and enforces
public policies for and on a society. In addition, the state is relatively permanent
and continues from time immemorial, but the government is temporary and changes
frequently. In Skocpol’s (1985, 4) words, “government was viewed primarily as an
arena within which economic interest groups or normative social movements
contended or allied with one another to shape the making of public
policy...Government itself was not taken very seriously as an independent actor.”

However, as opposed to the definitions adopted by political scientists, in Hong Kong,
the terms “state” and “government” are very often used interchangeably. In fact,
the term “state” has two meanings, “government” in narrow and “country” in general.
As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, interviewees or media reporters,
as well as common people, may use the two terms in an identical sense, and to some
extent there are overlapping areas in those concepts, especially in Chinese
expressions. Some local scholars also used “government” and “state”
interchangeably. For example, in Lee, et al.’s (2013, 9-10) recent work on “Civic
engagement and state-society relations”, the authors argued that the current HKSAR
Government is highly impervious to input from civil society, and is worsening the
state-society relations after 1997. In line with the common usage appearing in
newspaper and other media discourses, the current thesis will use the terms
“government” or “state-actors” to refer to the executive branch of the Hong Kong
SAR Government.

It is important to note that the State-society Interactive Framework proposed in the
latter part of this thesis is not aimed at dividing “state” and “civil society” into two competing groups. Instead, actors within the state and the society would have different interactions during crises, a characteristic different from the managerial approaches of crisis management, which views the government as the sole agent in tackling crises.

1.1.3 Hong Kong as a Sub-Sovereign State

As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the Basic Law. Obviously, from a normative perspective, the definition of state cannot be fully applied to Hong Kong as it is just a “region” under the rule of an internationally recognized sovereign state – the People’s Republic of China. However, in reality, Hong Kong is very different from other Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai in terms of the degree of autonomy that Hong Kong enjoys. For example, Hong Kong is allowed to issue its own currency (i.e. Basic Law Article 111) which is always viewed as an act of a sovereign state. As stated in Article 151 of the Basic Law which is listed below, Hong Kong has the privilege to join certain international organizations.

“The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may on its own, using the name ‘Hong Kong, China’, maintain and develop relations and conclude and implement agreements with foreign states and regions and relevant international organizations in the appropriate fields, including the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural and sports fields.” (Article 151)

Hong Kong is currently entitled to independent membership (separate from China) in the International Olympic Committee and World Trade Organization. However, in
recent years, the debate on Hong Kong’s “international identity” heated up on the occasion when Hong Kong tourists were being held hostage in Manila as Donald Tsang in his capacity as the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, which is a special administration region or rather say a city of China, called the Philippine President Benigno Aquino directly on 23 August 2010. The media had questioned on the appropriateness of Tsang’s action soon after the incident.

As Simon Shen argued, on newspapers and in his works, Hong Kong is a “sub-sovereign state” which “refers to the power held by some parts of nation-states which normally belong exclusively to sovereign states, such as the issuing of postage stamps, membership of international organizations, the ability to negotiate and enter into treaties with foreign government, and the like” (Shen 2013a, 105). Shen further substantiated his viewpoint in his later work that there is no clear differentiation between “foreign” relations and “external” relations in international law (Shen 2013b, 473). In the case of Hong Kong, with endorsement from Central People’s Government, the SAR government is allowed to maintain some sorts of external relations with other sovereign states (i.e. Basic Law Chapter 7).

To summarize, Hong Kong enjoys a comparatively high level of autonomy in internal affairs such as public policy and governance. For the purpose of the discussions on the “state-society” interactions in this thesis, it is important to clarify at this early stage that the application of the word “state” as referred to hereinafter should be in line with Shen’s perspective on viewing Hong Kong as a sub-sovereign state under the rule of China.
1.2  The State-society Relationship in Post-1997 Hong Kong

With some basic concepts of crisis management in mind, this section will provide an overview of the political situation in Hong Kong, especially after the return of sovereignty to China in 1997 - the focus of the current study. More importantly, as this thesis focuses on the state-society interaction in crisis management, this section aims to discuss the state-society relationship in Hong Kong, with special attention on the incompatibilities between the executive–led government and the legislature, immature party politics (weak political parties), and the vibrant civil society. In the latter part of this section, some statistical data from newspaper analysis and government documents will be presented to give a clear picture on the tense between the state and the civil society and provide a situational context for current study.

1.2.1 Hong Kong in Transformation

Hong Kong is located at the mouth of Pearl River on the southeastern coast of China. After one hundred and fifty years of colonial rule of the city by the United Kingdom, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) reclaimed the sovereignty of Hong Kong on 1 July 1997, and the city is now a Special Administrative Region (SAR) under the rule of China. As promised by the late Deng Xiaoping, former leader of China, Hong Kong would generally maintain its capitalistic systems for at least fifty years after the handover under the principles of “One Country, Two Systems”, “Hong Kong People Ruling Hong Kong” and “A High Degree of Autonomy”.

Prior to the handover, the Basic Law was passed by the National People’s Congress of the PRC to serve as the mini-constitution for Hong Kong SAR after 1997. As stated in the Basic Law, except for foreign affairs (Article 13) and defense (Article
14), the Hong Kong SAR Government is vested with executive power of its own to conduct local administrative affairs (Article 16). After fifteen years of Chinese rule, the Hong Kong SAR Government, headed by the Chief Executive, is still believed to maintain a relatively high degree of autonomy on economic and social affairs. However, the political autonomy of Hong Kong SAR is in doubt, as, since 1997, the Central People’s Government of the PRC (CPG, commonly known as “Beijing” or “the Beijing Government”) has exercised its powers to interpret the Basic Law in four occasions\(^3\) within its first sixteen years of rule. The current situation is that, although Hong Kong will not have universal suffrage until or at least 2017, the city is still a relatively liberal society from a macroscopic perspective, as Hong Kong people are enjoying a high degree of freedom of press, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

1.2.2 **The Executive-led Government under Semi-democracy**

According to the Basic Law (Article 43), the Chief Executive (CE) is the head of the Hong Kong SAR Government. The Chief Executive is elected every five years through an Election Committee (EC), currently comprised of one thousand and two hundred members categorized into four sectors, with each sector consisting of three hundred members\(^4\). However, most of the EC members are not selected by direct election but by the domination and appointment of different Pro-Beijing

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\(^3\) The first interpretation in 1999 was related to the controversies on the rights of residency. The second in 2004 was on political development, regarding the path towards universal suffrage. The third, related to the period of term for the next Chief Executive, was a result of the resignation of the first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa in 2005. The fourth, in 2011 was on whether Hong Kong should follow the practice of Mainland China on executing the absolute immunity.

\(^4\) The four sectors include 1) Industrial, commercial and financial sectors, 2) The professions, 3) Labour, social services, religious and other sectors and 4) Members of the Legislative Council, representatives of district-based organizations, Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, and representatives of Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (Basic Law Annex 1).
organizations and trade unions. Thus, the Chief Executive elections were in fact strongly influenced by the CPG. Further, the Chief Executive elected has to be appointed by the State Council of PRC before he/she could officially assume the post. Including the Chief Executive, all principal officials of the HKSAR Government have to be appointed by the CPG based on the CE’s nomination.

The legislative power of the HKSAR is vested in the Legislative Council (LegCo). The LegCo is divided into two sections, namely the Geographical Constituencies (GCs) and the Functional Constituencies (FCs). Each of the two constituencies contains thirty five members in 2012. The GCs are further sub-divided into five constituencies, and the seats are elected directly by proportional representation. On the other hand, the FCs consist of twenty nine constituencies categorized according to occupational and professional sectors in Hong Kong. Except for the newly-introduced District Council (Second) sector, all other sectors are selected by a rather small number of electors\(^5\). Not surprisingly, the FCs elections are mainly controlled by the Beijing government, and voters in some sectors would not even have the chance to vote as only one candidate would emerge after consultations among the stakeholders.

From a policy-making perspective, Hong Kong is under an executive-led or executive-driven (Li 2007, 32) system, with the executive branch being dominant in the decision-making process as compared to the legislature. The power of LegCo is tightly limited by the Basic Law:

\(^5\) Apart from the District Council (Second) FC, the remaining twenty eight traditional FCs consist of around two hundred and forty thousand eligible electors in total. But the total number of eligible voters in Hong Kong (i.e., those who can vote in the GCs) should be more than three million.
“Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may introduce bills in accordance with the provisions of this Law and legal procedures. Bills which do not relate to public expenditure or political structure or the operation of the government may be introduced individually or jointly by members of the Council. The written consent of the Chief Executive shall be required before bills relating to government policies are introduced” (Basic Law, Article 74).

Thus, it is almost impossible for a Legislative Councilor to initiate a bill related to any policy issue, as it may be treated as a matter related to public expenditure. Further, bills introduced by legislators have to garner support from the majority in both GCs and FCs to be passed. Given that the Pro-government camp always controls the majority in the FCs, those pan-democrat lawmakers elected directly through the GCs would not have much political influence in the decision-making of the SAR government.

In this regard, the policymaking process is mostly held in the hands of Chief Executive and his cabinet (i.e., the executive branch). Before July 2002, all principal officials, except for the Chief Executive, were under the civil service system. They were tenured, and should be free from bearing political responsibilities. In the beginning of his second term, former CE Tung Chee-hwa introduced the Principal Officials Accountability System (POAS) due to critiques that government officials were being (politically) irresponsible. Under the POAS, all policy bureaus are headed by a politically-appointed Secretary, while the original civil servant position of Secretary was retitled Permanent Secretary. The POAS was expanded in 2010 by adding politically-appointed Undersecretaries and Political

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6 The system was retitled “Principal Officials Appointment System” by Donald Tsang, the second Chief Executive (2005 - 2012) of Hong Kong.
Assistants to aid the Secretaries. The team of political appointees is separated from the civil servants, and is responsible for political work including the design and promotion of government policy proposals, while civil servants are only responsible for execution and operation.

The first ten years of implementation of the POAS (2002 - 2012) saw the resignation of several principal officials due to different reasons (C.-y. Cheung 2005). Of these, the stepping-down of then-Financial Secretary Antony Leung and then-Security Secretary Regina Ip are widely accepted as consequences of the 500,000-people protest on 1 July 2003 against the legislation of Basic Law Article 23 regarding the National Security Ordinance. Despite this, the effectiveness of POAS has been in doubt, especially regarding the performance of unprofessional politicians, unclear division of labour between the political appointees and senior civil servants, and the collective denial of responsibility among different officials.

The dramatic changes in the political system in the past 20 years, to some extent, have led to the incapability of institutions in Hong Kong. Great challenges can be found in the relationship between the executive and the legislature, as a non-democratic executive is now facing a more democratic legislature. Christine Loh, a former lawmaker, suggested, “the executive branch’s fear of sharing power is stunting the development of the political system … (the ExCo) sees the legislature as an inconvenience that has to be overcome rather than as an active partner to build participatory governance” (South China Morning Post, 12 April 2000). As Huque and Lee (2000, 118) observed soon after the handover, under the new political setting, “relationship between the executive and legislature emerges a critical element in the management of crises”.
In general, the institutional arrangement after the handover has proven to be incapable. The SAR Government still relies mostly on the bureaucracy and advisory committees, and efforts to rebuild strong governance have ended largely in frustration. “In the absence of more novel institutional means to link up the executive and legislature, the overall system has remained disjointed. Old-style consultative politics no longer works” (A. Cheung 2009). Besides, the Pro-Beijing bloc has controlled the appointment of personnel in almost all public sectors in such a way that even moderate Pan-democrats are largely excluded. The state’s policy network is highly exclusive and centralized. However, in return, the effectiveness of the executive-led government is declining, as the entire governance is highly impervious to input from the broader society by formal channels (E. Lee, et al. 2013). The above discussion shows that tension exists in the interactions between different actors in crisis management under the newly emerged Hong Kong political context.

1.2.3 Political Controversies and the Immature Party Politics

Hong Kong has adopted the representative political system since the 1980s. Under institutional restrictions, the party politics in Hong Kong is not as mature as some other East Asian societies (such as South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan). In general, the polity of Hong Kong can be divided into Pro-Beijing (or Pro-government / Pro-establishment) and Pan-democrats (or Anti-government, as some leftists call them). Under the current political settings, the Pro-Beijing bloc, which includes political parties serving as Beijing delegates, trade unions and professional bodies with strong Mainland China background and connections, has the privilege of holding different formal and informal positions in the government and
semi-governmental bodies. Statutory bodies, commissions, advisory committees and the District Councils with appointed members are mostly occupied by the Pro-Beijing bloc. In contrast, the Pan-democrats have been actively participating in direct elections in the LegCo GCs and District Councils.\(^7\) Due to the presence of FCs, which are always in control by the Pro-Beijing bloc, the Pan-democrats have never been able to control the majority in the LegCo despite winning the majority of votes\(^8\) in past Legco elections.

The conflicts between Beijing and the Pan-democrats are heated on the issues of universal suffrage and the democratization of Hong Kong, especially when the CPG demonstrated greater intention to intervene after the 2003 demonstration (Sing and Tang 2012). First of all, according to the Basic Law Annex I and II, the Hong Kong SAR Government is able to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executive and forming the Legislative Council after 2007. In this regard, the Pan-democrats had reasonable expectation of the democratization of Hong Kong or even the immediate introduction of universal suffrage. However, the path of democratization in Hong Kong was not as smooth as the Pan-democrats had imagined. In December 2007, the National People’s Congress announced that Hong Kong would be able to elect its Chief Executive and Legislative Council by universal suffrage in 2017 and 2020 respectively.

Owing to the great expectation gap between the two sides, the 2007 political reform package was voted down in 2005, and no amendment would be made on the methods

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7 Hong Kong is divided into 18 District Councils; they are local level administrative entities with some power on affairs related to local livelihoods. District Councilors are either directly elected every four years, or are appointed by the Chief Executive (a practice to be discontinued in 2016).

8 The Pan-democrats won 56.6% of vote in the LegCo Election 2012. See “Pan-democrats election setbacks blamed on infighting” *South China Morning Post*, 11-9-2012
of 2007 CE Election and 2008 LegCo Election. Notwithstanding of the deadlock and the proximity of 2012 CE Election, the League of Social Democrats (LSD, a Pan-democrat party) called for the resignation of five lawmakers in July 2009 in order to imply a “de-facto referendum” on universal suffrage. This “de-facto referendum” was criticized badly by Beijing\(^9\), and even the Democratic Party (DP) did not take part. Nevertheless, the “cut-off” between DP and the “referendum” provided a common ground for Beijing and DP for further negotiation (Sing and Tang 2012). Finally, they agreed on the proposal of having five FCs new seats in the LegCo - the District Council (Second) constituency\(^10\), which all popularly-elected DC members would be eligible to run for, and all Hong Kong eligible voters who do not have any other FC affiliation would be allowed to vote on.

1.2.4 Hong Kong-Central Government Relations

The Chinese Central Government has demonstrated its interest in affairs in Hong Kong since the establishment of the PRC. Over the past 60 years, in regard to the political change in Mainland China and the normalization of diplomatic relations with the British, the Chinese Government’s strategies towards Hong Kong have experienced dramatic changes. Loh’s (2010) work “Underground Front” examined the role the Chinese Communist Party has played in Hong Kong since the creation of the Party to the present day, with focus on the key targets of the party’s united front activities, which illustrated the strategies adopted by CCP in gathering political support from different sectors.

\(^9\) No party from the Pro-Beijing bloc took part in the by-election brought by the resignation of the five Pan-democratic lawmakers.

\(^10\) See Sing and Tang (2012) for details regarding to the “de-facto referendum” and the negotiation process between Beijing and DP.
In the same vein, Sunny Lo (2008) identified Beijing as the most powerful patron that dominates over any political actor in Hong Kong. In fact, the CE-Beijing relations and CE-Hong Kong people relations are in dilemma. As Lo argued, the Chief Executive is bound to be politically loyal to Beijing. Thus, comparatively, the CE is far more accountable to the central government than to the Hong Kong people (S. Lo 2008, 35), leading to the complicated interactions and tensions among CE, Beijing, and Hong Kong people during serious political crisis, as will be discussed in the case studies section.

As suggested by Loh (2010), Beijing’s involvement in local affairs has become obvious after the 2003 Protest. In line with Sing and Tang’s (2012, 153) argument, shocked by the withdrawal of the Liberal Party in the Article 23 legislation in 2003, Beijing has found the indirect control of Hong Kong via Pro-Beijing delegates ineffective. The 2012 political reform controversies have further exposed the issue of whether the CPG wished to develop a “second governing team” through the Central Liaison Office of PRC in Hong Kong (J. Cheng 2013, 24), as Beijing officials directly took part in the political reform negotiation process. The election of Leung Chun-ying as CE in 2012 was rumored to be the consequence of Central Liaison Office’s direct interference on the CE election (Apple Daily, 25 March 2012).

In fact, the tension between Pan-democrats and the Beijing Government is deeply rooted. Through the 30-year transitional period\textsuperscript{11}, two major issues had significant impact on Hong Kong-Beijing relations. First, the introduction of direct election in

\textsuperscript{11} The Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed by the People's Republic of China and the United Kingdom governments on 19 December 1984 in Beijing. As agreed in the Declaration, the PRC would resume its sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997. The period between 1984 and 1997 is commonly known as the “transitional period” in Hong Kong.
the Legislative Council in 1991 and 1995 had substantially sowed the seed of democratization in Hong Kong, as “democratization against Communism” was a notion that was widely whispered as a British tactic towards Hong Kong’s handover to China. Chris Patten, the last Governor of British Hong Kong who attempted to introduce direct democracy to Hong Kong, was even named “wrongdoer who would be condemned for a thousand generations” by Chinese official Lu Ping for his aggressive political reform on LegCo soon before 1997.

Second, the June-Fourth Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989 was a triggering point that provoked the long-term distrust between Hong Kong people and the Chinese Communist government (which is extended to the HKSAR Government appointed by Beijing) (Li 2003, 619). Even now, the Tiananmen Incident is still deeply rooted in the heart of many Hong Kong people, and a party’s stand on the Tiananmen Incident is still a clear watershed that distinguishes it between being the Pan-democrats or the Pro-establishments in the post-handover Hong Kong polity, as Pro-establishments leaders are rarely seen asking for vindication of the Incident in public or participating in the annual candlelight vigil after the handover. In fact, some Hong Kong people consider a vote for the Pan-democrats in LegCo elections a protest to China (Leung 1993), and the Anti-China syndrome (Leung 1993, J. Lee 1999, 38) brought by the Tiananmen Incident has provided consistent public support for the Pan-Democrats and the annual candlelight vigil at Victoria Park.

In general, the distrust between Beijing (and its delegates) and Pan-democrats has developed a crisis-provoking politics. The legitimacy deficit along the years of the HKSAR Government has made any sensitive political issues, be them public policy controversies or scandals on principal officials, provocative to the general public, as
well as the “permanent opposition” Pan-democrats. Thus, it is crucial to include political factors (i.e., political interactions between the state and the society) that work to complicate the development process of the crisis event itself when studying crisis management in Post-1997 Hong Kong.

1.2.5 The Corporatist Regime: Government-Business Relations

The business sector has been acting as a middleman between Hong Kong and Beijing since the 1980s. Since the colonial era, businesspersons, as political conservatives, have been actively engaged in different political institutions, such as the ExCo and the LegCo. As Ma (2007, 70) suggested, the close relationship between Beijing and the business sector has been taken as a strategy to maintain the prosperity of Hong Kong under capitalist system after the handover.

After the establishment of HKSAR, the business bloc continued to enjoy political prestige by holding positions in Election Committee, District Councils (as appointed members), advisory bodies and also the Functional Constituencies in the Legislative Council. More importantly, C H Tung (the first Chief Executive who previously was an entrepreneur) was said to be an example of “businessman ruling Hong Kong”, leading to the formation of the “Corporatist Regime” (Ma 2007, 70, Ma 2012, 71).

As mentioned, the political power of business elites is vested in different level of government institutions. In the Election Committee, they control one-fourth of the votes in electing the Chief Executive, while in the Legislative Council, lawmakers in the FCs with business background account for almost half of the total seats in the LegCo. With the aid of the separate voting mechanism, they can easily vote down
any bill and amendment proposed by the Pan-democrat lawmakers, who are mostly elected through direct election.

However, as discussed in the previous section, party politics in Hong Kong is still immature. In this circumstance, the business sectors in Hong Kong do not converge into a unified political force as in western democracies. Instead, “eclectic corporatism” is emerging, in which business elites with diverse interests seek their own particularistic rents and favour: “The eclectic corporatism brought with (the state) a form of multilateral, ad hoc, particularistic bargaining, resulting in ad hoc, particularistic and eclectic interventions in various sectors after 1997 with no clear development goals” (Ma 2012, 80).

The business sector is recognized as a key component of the Pro-establishment bloc. But in fact, the “political alliance” between the business bloc and the SAR Government has seen several challenges after 1997, as Pro-business parties, such as the Liberal Party, held different views from the government (and thus, voted differently), on some critical issues, some of which had finally led to policy failure. In this sense, the role of the Pro-business parties as a key minority has brought dramatic political consequences. This will be discussed in details in the case study of Basic Law Article 23 legislation incident.

1.2.6 A Vibrant Civil Society in the Post-1997 Hong Kong

The development of civil society in Hong Kong can be traced back to the Chinese elites’ communities developed from the assembly in Chinese temples\textsuperscript{12} in the early

\textsuperscript{12} Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs, the largest Chinese charity in Hong Kong) was set up by a
colonial era (K.-m. Chan 2010, 148). Prior to the Sino-British negotiation on the future of Hong Kong in the late 1970s, Hong Kong society was mainly described as a “refugee society” or “lifeboat” (Hoadley 1970). The most famous illustration was Lau’s (1982, 72) “utilitarianistic familism”, which described Hong Kong people as family-oriented, economic interest-driven, and lack of intention to engage in politics. In general, as K.-m. Chan (2010, 161-163) argued, Hong Kong civil society in the 1970s was diversified, uninterested in monitoring the authority, and void of active participation.

The development of civil society in Hong Kong got a significant boost after the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, and the huge demonstration was regarded as a breakthrough (Chan and Chan 2007). From an institutional perspective, as guaranteed by the Basic Law, Hong Kong people enjoy freedom of speech, publication, and assembly, making the exchange of information and ideas possible without barriers. In contrast with Chan’s (2010, 161-163) and Lau’s (1982) observations on the passive civil society in pre-1980s, Chan and Chan (2007) generalized three discourses to describe the post-handover civil society in Hong Kong:

1) Civil society as a defender of its autonomy

Chan and Chan (2007, 81-82) argued that this is “the most common function attributed to civil society”, especially after the National Security Ordinance group of Chinese elite in late 19th century. In fact, the TWGHs was a politically-influential Chinese organization that acted as a bridge between the British colonial government and the Chinese community. Its establishment could be traced back to Kwong Fook I-tsz, a small temple on Tai Ping Shan Street on Hong Kong Island in 1851. Temples were a place for making major decisions under Chinese traditions. For the political role of TWGHs in pre-WWII Hong Kong, see Elizabeth Sinn and Thomas Lau (2006)-edited “A collection of commemorative works of Tung Wah in celebration of its 135th anniversary” (in Chinese), Hong Kong: Joint Publishing.
controversy in 2003. This discourse shows the need for civil society to stand up against the interruption of civil rights and freedom enjoyed by the people. The idea of civil society becomes clearer to the people as they gain awareness of the existence and importance of the civil society. Civil society would be jeopardized if it is not defended by the public themselves.

2) Civil society as third sector and social capital

This discourse revealed the definition of Non-government Organization (NGO) - “the association of civil society with non-profit, voluntary associations as well as the notions of social capital” (Chan and Chan 2007, 83). Civil society could be a problem-solving agency especially during economic downturns. Initiated by former Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in his 2000 Policy Address, voluntary organizations would be helpful in finding solutions to problems then headstrong to both the government and market (Policy Address, 2000, para 98). In the same vein, K.-m. Chan (2010, 187) identified the roles of Hong Kong civil society in response to different social crises, such as during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003. He listed eight major roles of civil society in the fight with SARS, namely, initiating and monitoring the government, providing prevention guidance, supporting the patients, conducting research and development, providing public education, supporting health care workers, fund raising, and diminishing the damages of SARS.

3) Civil society as a partner of governance

As stated by Chan and Chan (2007, 84), it is a worldwide trend to acknowledge the role of civil society in governance, as it is increasingly desiring and demanding to have meaningful participation in the government’s decision-making process. In
recent years, the Hong Kong civil society has become more pro-active in its engagement of the policymaking process, especially on environmental protection and conservation issues. This is especially the case since 2003, when a number of urban policy issues have raised public attention on conservation, including the protection of Victoria Harbour from further reclamation, and the conflicts regarding the conservation of Lei Tung Street (also known as “Wedding Card Street”) in Wan Chai and the Queen’s Pier and the former Star Ferry Pier in Central. Compared to Discourses 1 and 2, which are more self-interest oriented, the recent movements on conservation emphasized a sense of belonging, self-expression, and quality of life. In this regard, the Hong Kong civil society now believes that “post-materialist values” (Inglehart 1981) should be considered in policymaking process along with the principle of economic efficiency (Chan and Chan 2007, 87).

1.2.7 Post-2003: the Crisis Provoking Politics and New Social Movement

The discussion on civil society development in Hong Kong in the previous section was based on the change in people’s demands and concerns. However, a number of scholars also suggested the evolution of civil society mobilization process – the usage of internet, especially with reference to recent social movements, since 2003. As argued by So (2008), recent developments in information technology, such as the popular usage of internet, have contributed to the growth of social movements - an observation in line with those of Chan and Chan (2007, 92) and Chan and Chan (2006). Furthermore, So (2008, 246-247) suggested a post-modernist approach on social mobilization with four major characteristics: First, activists depend on high-tech to spread information and mobilize people. Second, instead of having systematic organization, social activists are disorganized and spontaneous. So
(2008) drew this remark based on the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, but it was also observed in the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident in 2009-2010. Third, the movements themselves are mainly not ideology-driven, but stay close with some local and community issues such as environmental protection and conservation. Finally, although activists are in general peaceful, they dare to have confrontation with the police, as seen in the recent rapid development of radical political parties, such as the League of Social Democrats (LSD) and the People Power. LSD’s election publicity even suggested using radical politics to confront current institutions in order to fight for political changes.\textsuperscript{13}

The Anti-High Speed Railway Incident in late 2009 also brought a new term to social movement – the “Post-80s”. While there is no single definition for Post-80s, when illustrating the formation and characteristics of the Post-80s, mass media and commentators usually refer to the discussion by Lui (2007), who defined the fourth generation of Hong Kong people as those who were born after mid-1970s, and Lam (2010), who illustrated the formation of Post-80s from a social movement perspective. Despite the different perspectives on the phenomenon of Post-80s, it is generally agreed that the diminishing social upward mobility is a major reason for its formation. Compared to their parents, the Post-80s are more educated but encountered difficulties in climbing the social ladder due to the lack of opportunities nowadays in contrast with 1970s to 1980s when the Hong Kong economy was rapidly developing.

Lam (2010) conducted an in-depth analysis of the actions of the Post-80s activists in the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident and the reasons behind, and discovered some

\textsuperscript{13} “Street Protest – Philosophy of Action”, League of Social Democrats, 28 Oct 2011.
new social movement strategies that distinguish the Post-80s from their predecessors, such as carnival-style assembly, ascetic practice and “secondary creation”\textsuperscript{14} on the internet. Regarding the reasons behind, Lam shared similar views with So’s (2008) “post-modernist” mode of social movement and Chan and Chan’s (2007) idea of “post-materialist”, stating that Post-80s come from a diversified political background, have less organizational binding, lack a culture of seniority, feel dissatisfied with the current mode of political and social development, are full of creativities, and hope for a better Hong Kong (Lam 2010, 255-262). With no doubt, the rise of Post-80s activist, along with the popularization of information technology, has speeded up the development of a fruitful and diverse civil society in post-handover Hong Kong.

In summary, in line with the rapid development of civil society since the 2003 Demonstration, rally and demonstration have become a major means for different non-state actors to express their ideas. Social activists, regardless of their backgrounds, consider demonstrations a method of opposing controversial government policies, such as the National Security Ordinance legislation and construction of the high speed railway. It is foreseeable that civic engagements in different social movements or collective actions will become a trend in pushing certain political agenda that fail to attract government attention using normal channels under the limited-democratic system of Hong Kong. The observation by A. Cheung (2009, 6) would best conclude the current state-society relations of Hong Kong: “As society becomes more differentiated and politicized, sometimes not just over conflicts in interests but also in values, and as new civil society activism

\textsuperscript{14} Secondary creation is the local expression of parody or spoof. Activists would make use of different media products, such as movie clips, advertisement, and news photos, etc., to make pointed fun of the politician regarding different social and political issues through online social network sites, such as Facebook.
emerges and escalates, the traditional form of absorption politics based on the co-optation of business and professional elites has proved insufficient to carry the public view and confer policy legitimacy.”

1.2.8 Observations: Statistical Data on State-society Interactions

Before defining the research questions for the current thesis, it is imperative to understand the choice of post-handover Hong Kong as case study. According to conventional wisdom, crises happen regardless of time and location. However, the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China and the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems” have provided an unprecedented political context. Hence, it is of interest to understand the extent to which civil society development and governance crises differ during and after the colonial era. This section presents statistics on Hong Kong civil society development and governance crises, with an aim to demonstrate the rapidly changing situation in Hong Kong from a quantitative manner and to demonstrate the huge changes in crisis-provoking politics since the handover – the time frame of the current study.

On civil society

In an attempt to investigate the extent to which Hong Kong people are aware of their belonging to civil society, Chan and Chan (2007, 79-81) reviewed the number of times the term “civil society” was mentioned in local newspapers from 1998 to 2006. The current study uses the same method to extend the period of investigation to 2012, and the combined results are displayed in Figure 1.1. It can be seen that the use of the term gradually increased from 30 in 1998 to 179 in 2002, then almost doubled to

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15 Data in Figure 1.1 was obtained from WiseNews search on the term “civil society” between 1998 and 2006 (Chan and Chan, 2007: 81) and between 2007 and 2012 (by author of the current study)
304 times in 2003. In 2006, the term was mentioned 995 times (Chan and Chan 2007, 79), whereafter the number maintained between 700 and 800 for the next five years until 2012, when the number reached a peak of 1191. As suggested by Chan and Chan (2007, 19), the discourse of “civil society”, which was rarely discussed in the public a decade before, has now become an everyday expression. The data is also in line with the developmental trend of civil society after the handover. With reference to the “post-materialist” or “post-modernist” social movement, the civil society of Hong Kong reacted strongly not only during the 2003 Demonstration, but also in a number of issues, such as conservation of the former Star Ferry Pier (2006), Li Tung Street (Wedding Card Street) (2006) and the Queen’s Pier (2007).

Source: Data from 1998-2006 was collected by Chan and Chan (2007, 81), while that for 2007-2012 was collected by the current author using the same method as Chan and Chan.

**Figure 1.1 Number of mentions of “civil society” in newspapers, 1998-2012**

*On social movements*

Studies on social movement in Hong Kong face a challenge, as the Hong Kong government does not release a full set of data on social movement activities, such as
individual numbers of demonstrations, public assemblies, and rallies, to the public, and, considering the huge diversity on social movement formats, newspaper discourse analysis often fail to reach a high validity\textsuperscript{16}. The Hong Kong Police does release “lump-sum” data of the number of public assemblies and rallies in Hong Kong to the Legco and local newspapers, and these are summarized in Figure 1.2 and Table 1.2.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.2.png}
\caption{Number of public assemblies and rallies in Hong Kong, 1997-2011}
\end{figure}

A comparison of Figures 1.1 and 1.2 shows that along with the rapid increase since 2003 and the large number of public discourse mentioning “civil society” since 2006 (Figure 1.1), the number of protests also started to rise after 2006 (Figure 1.2). An interpretation could be that the civil society development has been represented in the

\textsuperscript{16} Chan and Chan (2007: 80) produced a table by using WiseNews search on demonstrations, rallies, and petitions in Hong Kong. The authors divided the data into sub-groups based on the participants’ demands (e.g., human rights, education and health, etc.). However, their comprehensiveness on over-detailed classification casts doubts on their data validity, and thus their results are not quoted in the current study.
form of protests. Although there is no data on the number of participants, a significant increase in protests is in the same vein as the characteristic of civil society diversities was discussed in the previous section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public assembly</th>
<th>Rally</th>
<th>Average per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-2010</td>
<td>23,422</td>
<td>12,169</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>9,340</td>
<td>2,990</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>3,670</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LegCo document CB(2)205/10-11(04)

Source: LegCo document CB(2)832/09-10(09)

Source: LegCo document CB(2)2452/11-12(06)

Table 1.2 Number of public assemblies and rallies in Hong Kong, 1997-2011

Table 1.2 shows the number of public assemblies and rallies in different time periods after the handover. It can be seen that the average number of public assemblies, rallies and all social movement activities per day has increased significantly between 2007-2009 and 2009-2011. Further, out of the total of 23,422 public assemblies from 1997 to 2010, 9,340 or 39.8%, were recorded in the three-year period between 2007 and 2009. Obviously, the civil society has become more active in social movement by using demonstrations as a means to express its opinions to the government, compared to the early post-handover era (prior to 2003). The observations also imply that sudden crises and crisis management could be possible solutions to explain why Hong Kong has become a “city of protest”\(^\text{17}\).

\(^\text{17}\) Many discourses have mentioned Hong Kong as a “city of protest”, see *The Sun (Hong Kong)*, 1 Nov 2011 and *Apple Daily*, 22 Jun 2012.
On governance crisis

Data collected from discourse analysis of four local newspapers in “governance crisis” presents similar pattern to previous studies on “civil society” and social protests. Indeed, the term “governance crisis” rarely appeared in public discourse before the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, with only less than 15 articles mentioning “governance crisis” per year. This number recorded a dramatic increase to 328 in 2003, reducing to 30 in 2006, and gradually increasing again in the recent six years (2007-2012) to 135 in 2012. Figure 1.3 shows that the trend in the number of mentions of “governance crisis” could be divided into three periods – 1) the pre-2003 period (i.e., 1998-2002), 2) 1 July 2003 Demonstration and its aftermath (2003-2006), and 3) the period from 2007 to 2012.

![Figure 1.3 Number of mentions of “governance crisis” in newspapers, 1998-2012](image)

Source: Compiled by the author from WiseNews search

Figure 1.3 Number of mentions of “governance crisis” in newspapers, 1998-2012

The four local newspapers are: Apple Daily, Ming Pao, Oriental Daily, and Wenweipo.
The data could be associated with the development of civil society with the 1 July 2003 Demonstration as a watershed, as discussed previously. Obviously, Hong Kong is now experiencing an unprecedented crisis-provoking politics, that is, the use of different kinds of crisis events to create a window of opportunity for government change, since the public is more aware of governance crises, and more protests could be seen with a proactive civil society under a limited democracy. A comparison between the data pre- and post-1 July 2003 Demonstration shows the close relationship between governance crisis and the development of civil society in post-handover Hong Kong, and justifies the necessity and empirical importance of studying the state-society interactions in crisis management, especially in the socio-political context of Hong Kong - the focus of the current thesis.

1.3 Research Questions

Regardless of their nature, crises present challenges to the government in all aspects - the political consequences of scandals and policy failure can be explosive, for example. Simultaneously, the public is also highly concerned with the performance of the government in crisis management during natural disasters. Thus, the major research question for the current study would be: “How did the state-society interactions affect the development process and outcomes of crisis politics?” Answering this question requires a review of current crisis management literature to seek for potential analytical framework(s). However, as briefly mentioned previously and would be detailed in the next chapter, current crisis management research is mostly based on western liberal-democracies, a system that Hong Kong has yet to achieve. Therefore, a sub-question would be: “What are the strengths and
weaknesses of applying western crisis management theories to a limited-democracy, such as Hong Kong?"

This thesis can be regarded as a theoretical inquiry on current crisis management theories. The current literature, which will be thoroughly reviewed in following chapter, demonstrated that current theories are inadequate for non-democracies, as both the top-down and bottom-up crisis management approaches assumed that the government is fully accountable to its people through regular elections. By adopting the suggested State-society Interactive Framework, this thesis aims to analyze the action and reaction processes between the state and different non-state stakeholders in crisis politics, given that the Hong Kong political system is not yet democratized, and the check-and-balance mechanism is not comparable to western countries.

Nevertheless, it is unwise to claim that western theories by default could not be applied to non-democratic countries. However, questions remain when studying crisis management in the absence of democracy. First, leaders are not totally responsible to the people, as they are not constrained through regular elections. Thus, channels monitoring their crisis management performance are both insufficient and ineffective. The weak linkage between leaders’ performance and their political accountability would lead to the seeking of alternative ways by non-state actors to influence the crisis politics. Second, from a policymaking perspective, in non-democratic regimes, and to a large extent in Hong Kong, policymaking is a top-down process under a closed system. The policy community (Kingdon, 1995) is controlled by a small group of political elites, and thus a gap exists between public opinions and government decisions - a political time bomb waiting to turn policy
failure into governance crisis.

At the same time, considering the observations on current Hong Kong politics, another sub-question would be: “What was the reason behind the high frequency of crises after the handover?” In the first few months after the handover, the newly-established Hong Kong SAR Government was already faced with mounting public dissatisfaction and political pressure, as cases such as the Bird Flu, chaos during the opening of the new airport, and the Asian Financial Crisis followed one another. The poor crisis management of the government was associated with the incompetent administration of the first CE, Tung Chee-hwa (J. Cheng 2007, 25). However, his unpopularity did not prevent him from being “re-elected” for a second term as Chief Executive in 2002. The crises, however, did not give a blessing to his newly-appointed cabinet under the POAS, as then-Financial Secretary Antony Leung’s Car-Gate Scandal, the outbreak of SARS, and some other serious crises exploded one after the other. Thus, this research would also explore the relationship between the occurrence of crises and the Hong Kong political system that lacks full democracy.

Last but not least, the thesis also attempts to answer a third sub-question: “Given a hybrid political system, what is the role of crises in Hong Kong politics since the handover?” This question frames crises in a rather constructive angle - as events that would trigger political opportunities for non-state actors, including the oppositions and social activists. Under the current political system, legitimacy is by default an institutional weakness of the Hong Kong SAR Government. This thesis also studies the increasingly significant role of crises in influencing the political environment of post-1997 Hong Kong.
1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter One: Introduction

A brief introduction on crisis management concepts is followed by some background information on the Hong Kong political context. More importantly, this chapter addresses the major research gaps in the field, and introduces the socio-political context that makes post-1997 Hong Kong a critical moment for studying crisis politics. The chapter also serves as a blueprint of the whole thesis by addressing the major research goals and research questions. At last, it introduces the structure of the thesis by providing an overview on each chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter is a review on the current literature on crisis management, and serves as a navigator for potential theoretical gaps in this field by pointing out the weaknesses of current theories and approaches. It begins with the definition and typology of crisis, followed by an introduction of the major crisis management models and methods. In the second section, some issue-based crisis study, including political scandal and natural disease, is presented. The third section of this chapter covers literature related to crisis and public policy, followed by a review of literature on the role of mass media and political communication in crisis management. The final part of this chapter discusses crisis research in the Hong Kong context. Since the return of sovereignty to China in 1997, Hong Kong has experienced different types of crises of varying scales. This part points out the major trend of crisis research in Hong Kong and discusses their focuses as well as the extent to which those works are theory-based.


**Chapters Three and Four: Analytical Frameworks**

Three analytical frameworks are applied in this thesis, two of which are from current crisis management literature - Boin, 't Hart, Stern, et al.’s (2005) “Five-step Leadership Approach” (Leadership Approach), in which the authors identified five major tasks to be performed by decision-makers during a crisis: Sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, termination, and learning, and Brandstrom and Kuipers’s (2003) “Pattern of Politicization Approach” (Politicization Approach).

After a brief discussion on the weaknesses of the above-mentioned approaches, the third framework to be discussed will be the State-society Interactive Framework (Interactive Framework), which is developed in the current study, and serves as an alternate model to illustrate the crisis provoking politics in non-democratic or limited-democratic regimes, such as Hong Kong. The Interactive Framework consists of four major components, namely, the Crisis Development Ladder, Crisis Strengthening Forces, Crisis Weakening Forces and the Catalytic Effect of Crisis. The Interactive Framework mostly concerns the development of crises as a battlefield for different political actors under the absence of regular elections as an effective check-and-balance mechanism. This framework will fill the current research gap, and will be a useful contribution to the crisis management literature.

**Chapter Five: Research Methods and Design**

After explaining the three approaches, this chapter introduces the research methods (i.e., documentary and archival study, in-depth interviews and media discourse analysis) and research design of using two case studies (i.e., the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident). Also, this chapter
would provide detail justification on the research methods and brief introduction on the case study arrangement.

**Case Study Part I: 1 July 2003 Demonstration**

*Chapter Six: Antony Leung’s Car Gate Scandal*

*Chapter Seven: The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Epidemic*

*Chapter Eight: National Security Ordinance Controversy*

Case Study Part I consists of four chapters. Chapters Six to Eight recount the three events that led to the 1 July 2003 Demonstration respectively: Antony Leung’s Car-gate scandal, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and the controversies regarding the legislation of the National Security Ordinance (Basic Law article 23) legislation. Each of these three chapters starts with a collection of news reports relating to each event, details of the decisions made, and a record of the critical moments. The Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach is then applied to analyze the events. The aim is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these crisis management theories as applied to different types of real cases. Finally, a brief summary identifying the important issues that have not been addressed by the theories is given.

*Chapter Nine: The 1 July 2003 Demonstration - State-Society Interactive Framework Analysis*

The 1 July 2003 Demonstration, with more than half-a-million participants, was the most eye-catching historical event and the most serious social crisis in Hong Kong since the handover. The demonstration was said to be the consequence of a chain of poor governance under former CE Tung Chee-hwa’s administration. In the first attempt on crisis management literature to assess the multi-crisis effect for a chain of
crisis events, the State-society Interactive Framework is applied to analyze the effect of these crises. In order to support the argument, data from newspaper discourse analysis is also presented to assess the changes in the different forces during different stages of the event.

Case Study Part II

Chapter Ten: Anti-High Speed Railway Incident

This chapter analyzes the crisis brought by the Hong Kong section of Express Rail Link (High speed railway) project. In a similar layout as the previous chapter, news reports is first presented, followed by Leadership and Politicization Approaches analysis and a brief summary on the analyses. Apparently, the nature of this incident is different from that of the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. By applying the State-society Interactive Framework, this case serves as a comparison to emphasize the importance of catalytic effect in influencing the crisis politics.

Chapter Eleven: Discussion and Analysis

After making a detailed analysis of the case studies by adopting the three approaches, the major strengths and weaknesses of both Leadership and Politicization Approaches are presented respectively in comparison with the State-society Interactive Framework. In this regard, this chapter explains the essential elements that distinguish the Interactive Framework from existing approaches and how it could possibly provide new perspectives for studying crisis management. This chapter serves as an overall evaluation of the three approaches as it provides detailed theoretical discussion on crisis management literature.

This chapter also presents interview data gathered from different non-state actors in
Hong Kong. The interview findings are used to support the arguments in two ways. First, it provides important evidence for the State-society Interactive Framework regarding the changes on Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces and also the Catalytic Effect as a triggering point for governmental change. Second, with reference to the current crisis provoking politics in Hong Kong, especially after the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, a phenomenon known as the politicization process with anonymous party identity is observed, in which those non-state actors intend to create or frame a party identity-free context for escalating a social issue into a crisis in order to draw public support and government attention.

Chapter Twelve: Conclusion

This chapter presents closing remarks for the current study and is presented in three parts. The first part summarizes the research findings obtained through answering the research questions and analyzing the case studies. The second part reviews the major contributions by this research, especially on how the State-society Interactive Framework links the western theories with local context. Finally, some possible directions for future studies are suggested, including an enhancement in the argument of the State-society Interactive Framework and the potential of carrying out governance crisis studies in non-democratic regimes.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review serves as a foundation of this research as it presents the major theoretical discussions in the field in crisis management\(^\text{19}\). This chapter will be divided into five sections. First, this chapter starts with “Theories on Crisis and Crisis Management” which discusses the definitions and typologies of crisis. In fact, there is no single universal definition of “crisis”. This section briefly reviews the classical studies in crisis management and tries to draw a possible definition which suitable to the current study in this thesis. More importantly, the two dimensional approaches in crisis management will be presented as they will come up with the two theoretical frameworks (i.e. Leadership Approach and Politicization Approach) which will be applied in the later case study research. It will be followed by the alternative approaches in crisis management studies (from the management school) to enrich the literature which also in line with the interdisciplinary nature of crisis management.

Second, it comes to the review of “Issue-based crisis studies”. In this section, three issues will be discussed, namely political scandal, health crisis and technological challenges to crisis management. This section aims to provide some thoughts to the case selection of this research as most of the current crisis management studies are issue-based. In the third section, it covers another major area of crisis study which relates to public policy. Policy failure is one of the reasons that lead to governance crisis while policy change is always presented as a form of post-crisis reform (i.e. policy window).

The fourth section of this chapter discusses a major component in crisis studies – the role of media. Crisis communication, a form of political communication, points out the dramatic power of media in directing the outcomes of crisis through “spin doctoring”, mediation and “mediatization”. The media effect would serve as one of the major component of the State-society Interactive Framework which will be introduced in the later chapters.

Different with the above four sections, the fifth section of this Literature Reviews focuses on the governance studies – a common form of crisis studies in Hong Kong. It starts with reviewing the crisis and governance related studies in Hong Kong. This section aims to demonstrate the various perspectives of “governance crisis” mentioned by different scholars and to distinguish the “crisis” which suggested in this research.

2.1 Theories on Crisis and Crisis Management
People encounter crises at all times: A forest fire or disorder in a city-state could be a crisis a thousand years ago. The term “crisis” or “disaster”, which appears in the research of many academic disciplines, refers to an abnormal situation that casts challenges to people. As defined in the editorial statement published in the first issue of the Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, a leading journal in the field, crisis management is an academic arena which is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 8). In previous studies, numerous scholars had tapped into the topic of “crisis situation” when they conducted research on hot topics or ad-hoc issues in their areas of expertise (Wong
and Zheng 2004, Powers and Xiao 2008). However, the field of crisis management has long been led by researchers in democratic nations. In the absence of democracy (i.e., in authoritarian regimes or limited democracies), there should be a justifiable ground to doubt the applicability of existing theories.

Extended research has been carried out by an increasing number of scholars since 1990s, and this trend will definitely continue into the 21st Century. Political occurrences such as the 911 Incident (Parker and Dekker 2008), scandals and riots that led to the Arab Spring\(^{20}\) in the Arabic world, or natural disasters such as tropical storms, catastrophic earthquakes, and tsunamis provide more than sufficient case studies for academic research. Obviously, crisis management represents a crisis situation that needs to be “managed”. However, the effect of crisis may not necessarily be negative, as it can lead to either threats or opportunities (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 1). This introduces new topics to crisis studies, such as what crisis is and how crisis and crisis management can be studied.

### 2.1.1 Crisis: Definitions and Typologies

There is no conclusion as yet on what defines a crisis. The current study considers crisis as an abnormal situation, an event or a process of a public issue that pressures an entity (mostly, but not solely, the government) to respond to it. However, as Boin (2008) mentioned, the field is ill-defined, as there has been no concrete definition on the exact meaning of a crisis, or to what extent a situation could be labeled as a crisis (or an “issue” in contrast). He even suggested that “crisis” and

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\(^{20}\) The Arab Spring refers to a chain of revolutionary demonstrations, protests, and wars that happened in the Arab world since late 2010. It began with the Mohamed Bouazizi’s (a Tunisian street vendor) self-immolation in protest of police corruption and ill-treatment, which led to mass demonstration that overthrew then-Tunisian President Ben Ali’s regime in January 2011.
“disaster” are often interchangeable. In fact, in addition to the common reference of “crisis”, other similar expressions, such as “contingency”, “disaster” and “tragedy”, can be found being used in various studies in the field. For instance, the 911 Incident was recognized as a crisis in Parker and Dekker’s (2008) work, but the same case appeared as a ‘Lesson of Disaster’ in Birkland’s (2006) book.

Traditional wisdom perceives natural disaster as “an act of god that is unwanted, unexpected, unprecedented and almost unmanageable, causing widespread disbelief and uncertainty” (Rosenthal, Boin and Comfort 2001, 5). The authors further criticized that crisis should be something beyond a discrete event, as it is an on-going process that features “complexity, interdependence and politicization” (Rosenthal, Boin and Comfort 2001, 6).

To the government, crisis should be something unfavorable (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007), but it could be argued whether other stakeholders would view crisis as truly unexpected and unwanted. This interpretation is substantiated by the multiple realities of crises as suggested by Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1993, 4), who pointed out that crises are heterogeneous in nature as the perceptions and definitions for a crisis is diverged. Crisis does not bear any connotation or orientation until human beings provide them with a meaning - a crisis to someone may be an opportunity to another (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 4, Rosenthal, ’t Hart and Kouzmin 1991).

This is especially true in the case of governance crisis. For example, the dismissal of a cabinet can be a governance crisis, but it may also be an opportunity for the opposition to gain power. In this respect, Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse’s (2002) interpretation, though still not concrete, is recommended, as it is
more neutral by attempting to define crisis in a more practical (resource distribution) manner:

“Crisis events occur whenever there is seizure of the existing mechanisms of functionality; a need for a major resource (re)distribution; and/or a constituency’s recognition (perception) of one or both of those events” (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse 2002, 39, Kouzmin 2008, 159).

This definition deviates from the historical argument on the nature of crisis by focusing on the outcomes. The three criteria mentioned are basically observable results in a crisis situation, and are highly reflective in the politics of crisis management. Nevertheless, the question of “to what extent” remains, as the meaning of “seizure of the existing mechanisms of functionality” (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse 2002, 39, Kouzmin 2008, 159) is unclear. It could be as serious as a change of a regime, such as from authoritarian to democracy, or as simple as the stepping-down of a principal government official. In fact, some previous studies in politics and public policy, such as policy fiasco (Bovens and ’t Hart 1996) and political scandal (J. Thompson 2000), shared similar features with crisis.

Apart from difficulties in defining crisis, the discussion on crisis typology - if people attempt to conceptualize crises - will also guarantee to be an endless debate. The complexity of this debate is best seen in Gundel (2005), who started the discussion by analyzing previous typologies, including the most common distinction between “man-made” and “natural causation”, as suggested by Rosenthal and Kouzmin (Gundel 2005, 107, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 2), and by extension, “social
crises” (Gundel 2005, 107, Rike 2003). Gundel pointed out that this kind of definition may not be mutually exclusive, as there may be more than one origin for crises. In addition, he also disagreed with other detailed distinctions, such as nuclear crisis, ethnic tensions, and terrorism, as decision-makers could only choose among limited instruments in tackling the great number of possible crises with similar characteristics (Gundel 2005, 107, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 1-2). Thus, it is impracticable to differentiate crises in such a detailed manner.

**Typology I: Crisis matrix by Gundel**

Instead of focusing on the nature itself, Gundel saw crisis as a relentless development, and this view led to his two classification criteria for crises, namely, the predictability of a crisis and the influence possibilities before it occurs or while it is occurring (Gundel 2005, 108). He defined predictability as a crisis that should be noted by at least a third party and the probability of occurrence should not be ignored. For influence possibilities, he defined crisis responses, such as ways of “antagonizing the causes to reduce damages are known and possible to execute” (Gundel 2005, 108-109). In this regard, Gundel concerned to what extent a crisis can be tackled.

Based on the two classifications, Gundel established a four-area crisis matrix and distinguished between four types of crises, namely, conventional crises, unexpected crises, intractable crises, and fundamental crises (Table 2.1). Conventional crises are known for being predictable and influence-possible, such as the use of ill-structured technological system. The challenges faced by decision-makers in this type of crises are minimal as countermeasures are handy. Unexpected crises are rare compared to conventional crises. They are sensitive to influence, but are mostly unpredictable, resulting in the impossibility to formulate preventive measures.
In advance. Intractable crises are those that are difficult to respond due to technical limitation or conflict of interest, and are apparently more dangerous. Social unrests or nuclear crises often create serious damage apart from unexpected crises. Fundamental crises are the most dangerous crises, as they are neither predictable nor influence-possible. Responses to such crises would be slow, as the outbreak comes suddenly without warning. The 911 terror attack would be a very convincing example (Gundel 2005, 110-113).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influenceable</th>
<th>Predictable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Conventional crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Intractable crises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.1 Crisis matrix** (Gundel 2005, 112)

Gundel considered the crisis matrix elastic and broad enough, such that all crises could be allocated to one of the four typologies, and they could be reallocated and reallocated to different typologies as new insights appear in the future. Using Titanic as an example, Gundel (2005, 114) illustrated the transformation of a shipwreck from an unexpected crisis to a conventional one. Specifically, as the most advanced sea vessel in 1912, the Titanic was not expected to sink. However, one hundred years later, sea vessel collisions are still common, and therefore, can be regarded as conventional crises. Nevertheless, the major function for crisis typology is to assist decision-makers in managing a crisis, though it is doubtful whether conventional crises and fundamental crises contribute much to crisis management studies, as they are either too simple or are impossible to tackle.
Typology II: Crisis development and termination patterns by ’t Hart and Boin

As opposed to Gundel, ’t Hart and Boin’s (2001, 31-35) proposed two classifications focusing on timing factors – the speed of development and speed of termination of crises, which also resulted in four possible typologies (Table 2.2). A “fast-burning crisis” implies that the crisis has ended as it began. Examples include plane hijacks and hostage-takings - crises that are short, sharp, and decisive. On the other hand, a “slow-burning crisis” takes years to reach the status of crisis and more years to resolve. The status of AIDS as a crisis in the western world would qualify as an example for this type of crisis, as the disease took years to spread, and is expected to fade off with breakthroughs in science and medicine. “Cathartic crises” are those in which tensions built up slowly until they reached a critical point when something snapped or some parties decided to force a break through. Finally, “long-shadow crises” are incidents that suddenly occurred and raised critical issues of a much wider scope and significance. Sometimes, this type of crises could become a trigger for a political crisis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed of termination</th>
<th>Speed of development</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast: Abrupt</td>
<td>Fast: Instant</td>
<td>Slow: Creeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Fast-burning crisis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cathartic crisis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow: Gradual</td>
<td><strong>Long-shadow crisis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slow-burning crisis</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 A typology of crisis development and termination patterns
(’t Hart and Boin 2001, 32)

There is no doubt that speed matters in crisis management. However, ’t Hart and Boin’s typology ignored the nature of crises completely. According to their typology, long-shadow crisis covers nearly all kinds of crises that happen in daily life,
such as political scandal, earthquakes, and terror attacks. On the other hand, crisis management scholars may be less interested in studying slow-burning crises, such as global warming - a long-lasting ‘crisis’ with effects extending to future generations.

*Discussions on typologies*

Classifying crises is the first step in studying crisis management, as it is adequate as an analytical framework (Gundel 2005, 106). The two typologies introduced in the previous section did not mention the nature of a crisis. Ideally, there should be fundamental differences in crises that are man-made or of natural causation. However, in real cases, all crises involve human. Thus, instead of natural causation, it might be more rewarding to redefine the two categories as man-made crisis and man-facilitated crisis. Man-made crises are merely power struggles between people (i.e., political actors), and may refer to crises such as political scandal and policy failure. These crises are considered as “pure”, as they do not involve natural causation. In contrast, crises that have certain relationship with the natural world, regardless of them being initiated by human or not, would be classified as man-facilitated crises. Examples include nuclear crises, earthquakes, and diseases.

The component of “nature” distinguishes man-made crises from man-facilitated crises, as the previous group represents crisis situations that are created or manipulated by people. Following Gundel’s (2005) idea of predictability as suggested in his crisis matrix, since an act of god implies unpredictability and uncertainty (Rosenthal, Boin and Comfort 2001, 5), natural causation represents a situation that cannot be predicted, even though it may be initiated by human beings. However, compared to the crisis matrix that emphasizes the level of hardship, it is more convincing to concern the causes behind the predictability of crises.
Man-made crises are mainly related to responses and interactions of actors and stakeholders, whereas man-facilitated crises are associated with the unpredictability power of nature.

Another important criterion is speed. In ’t Hart and Boin’s (2001) typology, crises are differentiated on their development and termination speeds. While terminating a crisis or identifying the termination of a crisis\(^{21}\) are to some extent a matter of interpretation worth studying, it is not easy to understand the speed of development. If the development of a crisis were expressed as a bell-shaped figure, how would a fast or slow developing crisis look? Since crisis recognition is very important for defining a crisis, a better alternative to the speed of development could be the speed of recognition, which could either be instant recognition in cases such as earthquakes and political scandal, or gradual recognition in crises such as disease and policy failure. Certainly, the public expects strong and timely response on instantly recognized crises, and long-lasting interactions between actors in gradually recognized crises.

The cases selected for the current research is based on the typology suggested above. This research will focus on purely man-made and non-instant crises instead of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and nuclear crisis, as these involve technical knowledge rather than interactions among actors. Thus, chaotic crises, interactive crises and indefinite crises will be the main focus, followed by detailed case selection for further investigation.

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\(^{21}\) Please refer to Boin, ’t Hart, and Stem, et al.’s (2005) illustrations on political and operational termination of crisis
2.1.2 Two Dimensional Approaches in Crisis Management

Crisis management is politically significant, as crisis calls for immediate response from the government. By revisiting current crisis management literature, two dimensions of crisis management studies involving the political aspects of crisis could be distinguished. The first one is the popular top-down versus bottom-up approaches, differentiated by who the key men are in a crisis. Specifically, the top-down approach emphasizes the leadership of government in a crisis, whereas the bottom-up approach stresses the importance of different political actors working together to shape the response of the government in a crisis. The second dimension is managerial versus political oriented approach, meaning that crisis is either a matter of matching problem(s) with solution(s), or how the government interacts with its people during a crisis.

Top-down Managerial Approach

‘t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1993) noted three features of crisis that may threaten bureaucracy: Severe threat, time pressure and high uncertainty, which work together to disrupt the routine operation of bureaucrats. In this case, leadership and centralization of decision-making are important, and the top-down managerial approach, which focuses on the question of what should be done, would be most effective in tackling the situation.

This approach views crisis management in two ways. First, it should be carried out step by step. One way to visualize this is to plot a graph of crisis situation versus time: At time zero, crisis situation also starts from zero. The situation grows until it reaches the peak as crisis, and falls back to zero again as time passes. Regarding the management of a crisis, Boin, ‘t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005) proposed five major
tasks that a leader should accomplish during a crisis: Sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, termination, and learning. The first three tasks were considered essential by 't Hart, Tindall, and Brown (2009), as sense-making is helpful for leaders to get a clear and exact picture of the event in addition to its impact and significance. The authors also drew attention to decision-making, also known as coordination, which refers to the assembling and enabling of government’s established crisis response system and network, and meaning-making, which signifies the government’s responses and announcements to calm the public.

There is no standard solution for the myriad of crises happening around the world, but it is useful to distinguish an individual crisis from a public crisis: A single hijacking case may only affect the hostages; however, a terrorist hijacking may threaten the whole society. Crisis management scholars, from a managerial perspective, tend to study the pattern of responses ('t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993), standard policy actions (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007), and steps (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997). As a prerequisite for crisis management, Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997, 290) proposed five heuristic steps for crisis management scholars or practitioners: 1) “Does a serious threat exist to the social political system?” (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1997, 290); 2) the need for response to threat; 3) the need of government decision; 4) understanding the promptness of decision; and, 5) the government’s actual action. Nevertheless, they failed to advise on the consequences of actions, and what can be done.

On the other hand, Kimenyi and Mwabu (2007) suggested three standard policy actions during a crisis. First, shock therapies are treatments for emergency case. They either cure or kill, and have no intermediate result. Second, a radical action
or policy may pose a change in almost an opposite direction. However, while achieving the intended goals, a radical policy often creates extra problems. Third, instrumentalism or gradualism is a practice that is contrary to the radicalism. It is a type of policy-making characterized by making minimal changes to the existing policy. These three measures are not mutually exclusive, and, as Kimenyi and Mwabu (2007, 16) pointed out, “an appropriate response in a crisis situation is one that addresses the urgency of the moment while at the same time searching for a better and long-term solution”. These three policy actions provide a foundation for understanding different crisis management practices, and form a base for evaluating government crisis management techniques.

The second way of viewing crisis management is as patterns. In this case, scholars focused on different crisis management measures available. Even though the personality, skills, and style of leaders were distinguished in a crisis, the advisory configurations, as highlighted by ‘t Hart, Tindall, and Brown’s (2009), also play an important role in determining the performance of leaders in a crisis. The authors further suggested that the advisory body should be empowered with three capacities, namely, analytical capacity for shaping the sense-making of leaders; managerial capacity for facilitating the leaders’ decision-making; and, communicative capacity for strengthening the meaning-making process of leaders.

An idea that follows from the importance of the advisory body is the centralization thesis (‘t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993), which proposes that major decisions tend to be made within the small group of elites comprising the chief executive and his/her advisors during a crisis. The central government, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the United States, which always intervenes
During crises, would be a typical example. The identification of the level of a crisis (either local or national crisis) may alter the level of centralization and the outcomes of crisis decision (‘t Hart, Tindall and Brown 2009).

There is no contradiction between viewing crisis management as steps (tasks) or as patterns. Rather, it is a matter of perspective. Steps (tasks) are effective in identifying the important issues that should be taken into account during the different stages of a crisis, while patterns are being supported by crisis manager as they reveal trends that could, to some extent, present a causal relationship between different actions and outcomes.

**Top-down Political Approach**

This approach views crisis in a highly politicized context. The term “politicized” here refers to an issue that is over-influenced by politics as a result of the deliberate actions of different stakeholders in the society. Scholars have, for a long time, acknowledged the importance of stakeholders (i.e. actors in the civil society) in using public relations techniques to direct public opinion. In democratic societies, their actions are even more influential during the election period, as both crises and scandals are sensitive issues that would threaten the legitimacy and popularity of the ruling party or leader, especially in the electoral system. Thus, the top agenda for leaders should be to avoid major threats that may jeopardize the acquisition of the majority votes (McConnell and Stark 2002).

As mentioned before, it is commonly assumed that the government should take the lead in managing crises, and this approach emphasizes on the political tactics that aim to “salvage” individual official(s), the ruling party, or even the legitimacy of the
whole government. Through “spin doctors” in a government, three types of symbolic “crisis handling devices”: Framing, ritualization, and masking, as suggested by ‘t Hart (1993), are performed.

Within those crisis response patterns, extra credit should be given to McConnell’s (2003) argument on agenda management, whose logic is simple: Governments do not like to deal with difficult issues. In case there is no way for a government to avoid dealing with them, the government would frame the political agenda to a direction that is beneficial or less harmful (McConnell 2003, 399). This can be achieved by suppressing initial demands for government actions, isolating demands from some groupings, performing symbolic actions, and manipulating scientific and statistical measurements.

The strength of the Top-down Political Approach over the Managerial Approach is that stakeholders are also taken into account. However, the Top-down Political Approach puts the government and public in an imbalanced relationship; the government merely acknowledges the public opinion without carefully consider the reaction of stakeholders. This deficiency could be solved by the bottom-up approach.

**Bottom-up (political) approach**

Compared with the top-down approaches, some scholars saw crisis management as something different from situational management. The bottom-up approach is known to be political oriented, as it is almost impossible to “manage” from the bottom in any real situation. Rather, crisis communication becomes important, and it is imperative for decision-makers to have a deliberate intention to provide
explanations to the public during crises (Olson 2000). In this connection, government officials are faced with three political questions: 1) What happened? 2) Why were the responses inadequate? 3) What is going to happen?

Crisis responses are shaped by many political factors, including general elections, powerful pressure groups, bureaucratic politics, and international pressure. As McConnell and Stark (2002) suggested, governments, especially the ruling party, are super-sensitive to crises, as their popularity is linked to their performance. Thus, different non-state political actors would take the opportunity to influence government decisions during crises, and these interaction and interference are the main reason for the politicization of crises (Stark 2010).

Besides, some scholars had also focused on the impact of representative institutions on crisis response. For example, Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005) mentioned that, by viewing crisis as a phenomenon of social deliberation, representative institutions have performed their functions by challenging the accountability of government officials during a crisis, and Stark (2010, 11) claimed that “party political relationships between an executive and a legislature should be considered as a significant source of variation which affects a legislature’s response to a crisis”. This is because in most countries, the congress or national assembly holds the power of investigation towards the executive branch at least to some extent. Thus, it should also be treated as an active player in managing crisis.

Moreover, the framing and blaming process should best represent the politicization of a crisis in the bottom-up approach. In developing the decision tree of constructing blame by framing political crises, Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003)
identified three elements to cast blame, including constructing severity, agency, and responsibility. Constructing severity refers to the consideration on whether an event has violated core values of the society, and whether it can draw public attention and political debates. This is followed by the discovery stage known as the agency dimension. In the politicization process, actors may seek to extend the time frame of the event backwards, which, according to Bovens and 't Hart’s (1996) interpretation, means going up the hierarchy. Ultimately, the responsible party needs to be identified to enhance accountability and lay blame on. A dispersed blame implies that sanction is avoided (D. Thompson 1980). Conversely, if an event is framed as a failure of single actors, scapegoating will be the most likely outcome (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003).

Table 2.3 is a summary of the three approaches. Although it is inaccurate to conclude that these approaches are mutually exclusive, it is also undesirable if not impossible to simply combine them and develop a “comprehensive model”. However, it is worthy to reiterate that the major drawback of the top-down managerial approach is the government’s omission of the reactions and responses of other stakeholders. This phenomenon is common in crisis studies related to natural disasters and external threats. On the other hand, the bottom-up approach, with its focus on the politicization process of crisis, is valid for explaining some man-made crises such as policy failure or political scandal. However, the effort (i.e., practical measures) of the government in crisis management is seldom appreciated.
### Managerial oriented

**Top-down**
- Government crisis decision-making: Five heuristic steps (Rosenthal and Kouzmin, 1997)
- Operational challenges in each crisis management phase (Boin, 2004)

**Steps**
- Pattern of crisis responses (McConnell, 2003)

### Political oriented

- Three types of symbolic “crisis handing device” (’t Hart, 1993)
- Foot-and-Mouth 2001 (McConnell and Stark, 2002)
- The Use of Inquiries at Times of Crisis (Resodihardjo, 2006)

### Bottom-up

- Framing and Re-framing failures: Patterns of Politicization (Brandstrom and Kuipers, 2003)
- Understanding policy fiascoes: A political process (Bovens and ’t Hart, 1996)
- The Relationship between Representation and crisis management (Stark, 2010)
- Foot-and-Mouth 2001 (McConnell and Stark, 2002)

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**Table 2.3** Summary of the approaches in crisis management
2.1.3  Crisis Management: Alternative Models from the Management School

Crisis management study is interdisciplinary in nature. Compared with the crisis management studies in business administration, there is a lack of crisis management model in the field of politics and public administration. As presented in previous sections, scholars in public administration mostly focus on developing decision-making structure (‘t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 35) and typological frameworks, and are less likely to construct a model. Even though their contemporaries in management studies have created different kinds of “models”, such as the “Coombs’s fifteen characteristics of a crisis management plan” (Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer 2003, 170) and Mitroff’s (2001, 31) “best practice model”, which includes types/risk, mechanism, system and stakeholders interconnected in a circle linked with “scenarios” placed outside the system, they are only loosely developed as an analytical framework for further studies, and most of them lack empirical research support. It seems crisis management studies in the management school focus mainly on listing key solutions, but lack explanation on the process of crisis management and the consequences.

Nonetheless, some scholars from the management school did attempt to develop or redefine some crisis management models for use in the public administration field. An example is the “Diamond Model of Crisis Management” (Figure 2.1) developed by management scholars Mitroff, Alpaslan, and Green (2004) based on Boin’s (2004, 168) observation of the three phases of crisis management – before, during, and after. The diamond model involves four broad clusters of variables, namely, crisis types, crisis mechanisms, crisis systems, and crisis stakeholders, and can be applied to understand crisis management in public sector. Through step-by-step guidance, the
model suggests actions to be taken during different phases of a crisis. The model begins with “threat sensing”, that is, to recognize potential threat(s). Based on the results of crisis audit, crisis assessment is performed in the next phase, and plans and training are necessary to ensure the capability of an organization to face crises. This is followed by the “during” phase of crisis, where damage control must be done to minimize harm and to recover. The final phase is the “learning” stage, in which the redesigning of the system would possibly be carried out to prepare for the next crisis (Mitroff, Alpaslan and Green 2004, 181).

![Diamond Model of Crisis Management: Interactive Systems Thinking](image)

To conclude, models developed by the management schools are useful in providing insights and comprehending the theoretical foundations of the field, and they are valuable as references for the development of a crisis management analytical model for use in the public sector.
The above discussed crisis management definitions, theories, models and approaches are useful to decide the analytical framework of this research. Moreover, this section also discovers the potential areas which provide directions for making theoretical contributions in the later chapters. In the coming section, different issue-based crisis studies will be introduced as it serves as important reference for case selection of this research.

2.2 Issue-based Crisis Studies

The field of crisis management studies is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993). Scholars in fields as diverse as nuclear technology, public health, and international relations can be researching on the management of nuclear meltdowns, natural diseases, and terror attacks. Moreover, most studies in this field are issue-based, the advantage of which is the ability to focus on particular crisis component or crisis management measure helpful in reflecting unique features of specific types of crises.

Of the wide variety of subjects that can be investigated, natural disasters hold an iconic position as it has long been a well-developed arena in crisis management studies. Conversely, political scandals and policy failure, two topics not bearing the exact wording of “crisis”, is seldom discussed in main stream crisis management studies but unwise to be ignored. Comparatively, natural disaster can be considered as iconic in crisis case selection as it has long become. In their canonical work “Coping with Crises: The Management of Disaster, Riots and Terrorism”, Rosenthal, Charles, and ’t Hart (1989) proposed three main kinds of crises, which will be
discussed in details in the following section to help comprehend the literature from alternate perspectives.

2.2.1 Political Scandal

Political scandals are no longer strangers to the public. From the well-known Watergate scandal to the most “dramatic” sex scandal in the 20th century involving former United States President Bill Clinton, political scandals have become a pervasive feature of modern society. Markovits and Silverstein (1988) provided a rather restrictive view of political scandal by defining it as the overlap of the logic of due process with the logic of power. That is, a “scandal” that merely involves political leaders cannot be considered as a political scandal. There has to be an abusive use of power at the expense of the process and procedure.

This definition is not agreed by Thompson, who argued power scandals (J. Thompson 2000, 94) mentioned above is merely a kind of political scandals. He adopted a broader approach in defining political scandals by proposing four characteristics: 1) An event or action that transgressed certain norms and values in moral sense; 2) the said event or action, which is supposed to be secret, is exposed, or is strongly believed to exist by non-participants, such as general public; 3) the non-participants criticize and express their disapproval by publicly condemning the event or action; and, 4) the reputation of the responsible individual(s) shall be damaged. In his view, merely defining political scandal as a scandal that involves political leader or government official was “not particularly helpful and illuminating”. Rather, social relations and institutions by virtue should be taken into account as the individual is granted with or meant to acquire political power (J. Thompson 2000,
Furthermore, Thompson added that the existence of opposition parties and other interest group have created a challenging political environment in liberal democracies, increasing the likelihood of political scandal as compared to the authoritarian regime. Political scandals could be a powerful weapon to attack and to discredit opponents, particularly during election period (J. Thompson 2000, 94), and they are no doubt events that may deteriorate into a legitimacy crisis of government.

Obviously, the consequences of political scandals can be very serious. On the individual level, political scandals can destroy one’s political career as well as the institution and policy related to him/her. On the societal level, it can heighten politicians’ sensitivity on their “private” and political life. More importantly, political scandals point out the importance of accountability and transparency of the government, and contribute to the upholding of good and clean governance (J. Thompson 2000, 234-245). J. Thompson (2000, 266-268) considered the best way to respond to political scandals and crises is to create a more open government, establish clear moral standard for public officials, and comprehend the investigating mechanism on alleged cases.

**Scandal as a mediated event**

J. Thompson (2000, 60-63) further described scandal as a mediated event that involves “interactions”, the focus of the current research. He differentiated a mediated scandal from a localized scandal by type of publicity, mode of disclosure, and mode of disapprobation. Localized scandals mainly involve face-to-face communication, and are spread by word-of-mouth, which is an implication that people should have some prior knowledge about the individuals involved. In
comparison, mediated scandals are shaped by interactional mediated communication (J. Thompson 2000, 60-63). For example, the sex scandal of Bill Clinton has spread all over the world through news media. Therefore, someone located in another part of the world may know nothing about Clinton but his sex scandal.

The relationship between media and politics is undoubtedly close, as will be further discussed in later sections. Political scandals, while unique in nature, share some characteristics with other crises. As mentioned before, political scandals are highly mediated and thus are politicized by opposition and other interest groups, making it a kind of pure man-made crisis, as defined previously. As a political weapon, the political orientation of a scandal is quite clear: Attacking the contestant in election and harming the legitimacy of the ruling party. The mediating effect of political scandals is of concern to scholars championing the interactive framework (i.e. the role of representative institute) of crisis management, and thus a topic worthy of investigation in the field.

2.2.2 Health Crisis: Man-facilitated Natural Disease

Contrary to political scandal, natural disease is a kind of non-pure man-made crisis. Alkan (2001, 277) described the golden rule for dealing with natural disease: “As viral epidemics emerge and re-emerge, it is preparedness, a high degree of suspicion, and rapid appropriate response that will limit the spread of these diseases in the future”, and called it cruel dilemmas under conditions of uncertainty that involves complex network of actors, including government, media, and professionals. With its own uniqueness, crisis management on natural disease emphasizes the role of professionals and their mathematical models, as they are the ones who provide
information and suggestions, whereas the final decision is made by government officials, who, apart from normal crisis dilemmas, face huge challenges of having to make decisions based on incomplete database. A complex situation that involves includes both political and scientific judgment makes natural disease an arena worthy of studying (Alkan 2001, 277).

By applying the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis as a case study, Powers and Gong (2008) proposed five frames describing the responses of different social actors in Hong Kong to the crisis: 1) The natural disease was treated as a state secret, reflecting its unwelcome nature to many (local) government officials; 2) it was taken as a scientific mystery to be solved by the scientist; 3) it was viewed as a medical epidemic that legitimized the use of emergency power on large scale collective action; 4) it could serve as a warning to the current public health and hygiene institutions; and, 5) it was perceived as a government failure that leads to social unrest and chaos. These five frames are useful in reflecting major issues in relation to disease management.

2.2.3 New Challenges to Crisis Management

Political scandal and natural disease are nothing new in nature. However, they pose new challenges on crisis management under the modern fast-changing world characterized by globalization. A crisis is globalized as it is trans-boundary in nature. Not only does it have the ability to spread across geographical borders and threatens multiple cities, regions, and countries (Boin 2009), as in the case of SARS, which drew global concern (Buus and Olsson 2006), but it can also cut cross functional borders, such as from private sector to public sector (Boin, 2009, 368).
The combination of the spread of a crisis in both the geographical and functional spectrums can easily create a “power vacuum”, which allows familiar tensions to build up and feed off each other: Nations versus international organization; central authorities versus local respondents; and, public versus private interest. The modern world is becoming more vulnerable to relatively small disturbances as societies have become tightly linked to one another. Boin (2009) also emphasized the important role of technology enhancement, especially in information technology, as speed matters in trans-boundary crisis management. This will be further discussed in later sections.

Rosenthal, Boin and Comfort (2001) discovered some critical trends in crisis management. First, apart from trans-nationalization, “mediazation”, that is, the media’s recognition of crisis, plays a critical role at the time of confusion and uncertainty (Buus and Olsson 2006, 78). Second, technological developments contribute to collective actions, such as in the case of 1 July 2003 Demonstration in Hong Kong (So 2008). Third, dissipation of state authority, as the government gets smaller and the civil society becomes bigger. Finally, there is the phenomenon of “emotization”, the battlefield of subjective construction on emotion and feelings during crisis, as the role of individuals becomes more important in crisis management. These new trends are evidence that, under the current environment of increased interactions between government and public, the government can no longer dominate the crisis management process.

To summarize, this section discussed the studies which relevant to crisis management although they may not exactly bear the name “crisis”. In the coming section, crisis and public policy, a major area in crisis studies in fact, would be discussed to see
how crises are interrelated to public policy in a public administration perspective.

2.3 Crisis and Public Policy

Crisis is in fact closely related to public policy, as policy failure may lead to governance crisis, while the crisis-aftermath learning process may induce policy change (Boin, McConnell and 't Hart 2008). In other words, change can lead to crisis (policy failure), and crisis in turn induces change (crisis learning). Further, crisis and policymaking share similar characteristics. For instance, both of them are highly politicized processes that involve many actors and stakeholders. Both take time to develop and terminate, and, except for fast-burning crises, crisis management is a process that involves uncertainty, and so is policymaking. Therefore, observing the policymaking process is a constructive method to study crisis management, and this will be described further in the research framework for the current study.

2.3.1 Policy Failure as Governance Crisis

Policy failure, also known as policy fiasco by Bovens and 't Hart (1996, 15), was defined by the authors as “a negative event that is perceived by a socially and politically significant group of people in the community to be at least partially caused by avoidable and blameworthy failures of public policymaking”. A “semantic tool” used in political contestation and arguments about controversial policy episodes, Bovens and 't Hart (1996, 9) further described it as a very negative label that “serves to contest claims, to diminish power, and to weaken position”. Policy failure is

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22 Boven and 't Hart differentiated policy fiasco from policy failure, stating that the former emphasized on subjectively significant social damage and highly politicized but not the latter. However, this study will treat these two concepts as the same, under the consideration that policymaking is an entirely politicized process with subjectivity. See Mark Bovens, and Paul 't Hart. *Understanding Policy Fiascoes.* [London: Transaction Publishers, 1996]: 15.
sometimes used in conjunction with terms such as “crisis”, “disaster”, and “scandal”, and Bovens and ’t Hart (1996, 20) has noted the relationship between crisis and policy failure:

“Ironically, some policy episodes assume a crisis character precisely because they become labeled as a policy fiasco becomes apparent (e.g., being “scandalized”), since authorities may then be forced to engage in damage control under severe public and political pressure, placing them in a crisis-like predicament”

Rather than perceiving it as a “crisis-like predicament”, policy failure should be regarded as a type of crisis which may harm government legitimacy. Meaning-making is an important process to ‘discover’ policy failure, and, similar to other kinds of crises introduced at the beginning of this chapter, policy failure engages with different stakeholders in the society, including citizens, the media, and politicians, especially the lawmakers in the legislature (Bovens and ’t Hart 1996, 10). As a social construction, Bovens and ’t Hart (1996, 11-13) proposed the following four interrelated layers involving the notion of policy failure:

1) Assessing events: How bad is bad?
2) Identifying agents: Who or what brought this about?
3) Explaining agents’ behavior: What prompted their actions?
4) Evaluating agents’ behavior: Who is to blame?

The authors further illustrated the four layers with an example of algae pollution: An extraordinary large piece of algae was found covering most of the surface of a lake in a long, hot summer. The lack of oxygen thus caused had led to a massive rise in fish mortality. Bovens and ’t Hart (1996, 11) pointed out that the assessment of this event (first layer) is open to subjective interpretation, as what is upsetting and
generating strong negative feeling to some may just be regular happening to others. In this algae example for instance, fishermen might consider it a major disaster, while marine biologists, for example, might simply regard it as a common cycle in the ecosystem. The second layer concerns the identification of agents (Bovens and ’t Hart 1996, 12): What was causing the overgrowth of algae in the lake? Was it an act of god? Was it the consequence of the long and hot summer? Or was it related to the farming activities nearby? On the third layer, explanations should be given on the policy process producing the negative event (Bovens and ’t Hart 1996, 13). In this example, the water department should provide reasons for its failure to purify waste water, and the agriculture department had to explain its negligence in limiting the amount of fertilizers used in the area. The final layer would involve identifying the entity to be blamed. Bovens and ’t Hart (1996, 13-14) argued that the case could only be considered a proper policy failure when a successful claim was made stating that the situation was serious and avoidable. In practice, the blaming process might include inquiries on the possibilities and reasons for ignorance of the problem by the decision-maker, the correctness of the policy instrument chosen, and also the likelihood of implementation fault. In the algae example, the implementation gap due to an absence of sufficient personnel on law enforcement might be a possible reason.

“Failure” is seen as artifacts, as it is not inherent in the policy itself (Bovens and ’t Hart 1996, 21), but a judgment about the event (Hyatt 1988, 31-33). It should be identified as a political act instead of recognition on fact (Edelman 1988, 31). Policy failure might not necessarily become a political crisis automatically. However, it can be a political process for actors to name and to blame on (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 280).
Policymakers and government will be in great problem once an incident attracts the attention of actors who are willing and able to politicize it (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 281). From a crisis management perspective, by examining the pattern of politicization, Brandstrom and Kuipers’s (2003, 282) study suggested how actors use framing mechanisms to allocate or refract blame.

**Framing and blaming**

Based on the two case studies of navy failure in Sweden, and the Dutch and the Srebrenica massacre, Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003, 302) developed a “decision tree” (Figure 3.1) for constructing blame by framing political crises, proposing three dimensions of blame-casting. The first level is “constructing severity”, which refers to the consideration of whether an event has violated core public values (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 209) enough to draw public attention and political debates. For example, issues related to officials’ conflict of interest or corruption can be regarded as violating core public values. The crisis status is a vital factor, as the public is forgetful, and public attention on a specific event is not long-lasting. Therefore, an issue has to “catch on” as soon as possible. Otherwise, public interest on the crisis may divest quickly and shift to another “hottest” topic of the moment (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 291, Kingdon 1995, 104).

The second level is the discovery stage known as the “agency dimension”. Crisis can be an ad hoc individual event or may be a symptom of bigger systematic fault behind the scene. In the politicization process, actors may try to broaden the time frame of the event and go back in time to search for the “powerful underlining causes” (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 295), as the saying goes: Going back in time means
going up the hierarchy\textsuperscript{23}. By travelling back in time, the horizon of investigation would be broadened, leading to possible discovery of the involvement of more people or even higher ranking officials. Obviously, systematic failure shocks the current institution more seriously than an individual fault. Therefore, from the government’s perspective, it is politically safer to position a case as an “ad hoc” failure at technical and subordinate level. However, once the case has been identified as a systematic failure, policy, institution, and top level officials will be involved (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 295).

The final stage, “responsibility dimension”, follows directly from the agency dimension. The core question in this dimension is: Should blame be concentrated or dispersed? If defenders argue that the problem is due to systematic failure, they are trying to frame the blame to the chain system of complexity with many actors interplaying. This is a case of dispersed blame: A conclusion of bearing collective account means no one is accountable, and sanction is avoided (D. Thompson 1980). On the contrary, if an event is framed as a failure of single actors, scapegoating will be the most likely outcome (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 298).

The decision tree model provides fruitful analyses on frames and blame from a highly politicized and interactive perspective. However, by starting with “The problem occurs” (see Figure 3.1), the model seems to limit the crisis management of policy failure to a “blame game” (Hood 2002) between wrongdoer (government) and its opponents. While studying a failed policy is essential in this field, scholars are more interested in the process of failing of a policy. As Bovens and ’t Hart (1996, 4) argued, a policy that seems to be good in the beginning may fail later – if there is an

\textsuperscript{23} See Bovens and ’t Hart’s \textit{Understanding Policy Fiascoes}. 

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implementation gap between the policy content and the execution.

2.3.2 Crisis Aftermath: Learning and Policy Change

Learning the lesson after a crisis is a common expectation for people. There is no doubt that a government should learn from a crisis, correct anything that went wrong, and prevent similar crises from happening in the future (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, 116). According to the authors, the key to crisis learning is the “capability to learn appropriate lessons and implement the lessons learned”. However, in reality, different instructional barriers can make this difficult to achieve.

Learning and change are two closely-linked concepts in crisis aftermath studies, as scholars see crisis as an opportunity for policy and instructional change. On the positive side, crisis makes unthinkable and politically undesirable changes possible, as institutions and systems, which tend to be stable under normal situation, find their constraints loosened during crises, especially in highly politicized ones. Moreover, crisis is a time for alternatives – a time for the non-functioning old methods to give way to new changes, arrangements, and innovations. It should be noted that the political condition for change should affect all levels of the government, from its top leaders to street-level bureaucrats (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, 122). However, as pointed out by Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005, 122) and Stern (1997, 69), there can also be change without learning.

The extent to which change is happening is also of concern, and can be dealt with through two approaches, namely, the conservative approach and the reformist approach. The conservative approach focuses on maintaining the core element of
status quo by introducing incremental changes to the current institution. On the other hand, the reformist approach tends to redesign the current institution in order to respond to entirely new environment in the aftermath. The crisis mood is puffed-up in order to legitimate the new system as a kind of crisis resolution. Boin, 't Hart, Stern, et al. (2005, 128) claimed that incumbent leaders are more likely to be conservative, as they would like to maintain their vested interest.

Crisis as ‘policy window’

Crises are often conceptualized as a window of opportunity\(^\text{24}\) that creates political space for new policy proposals. In his multi-stream model, Kingdon proposed three streams: Problems, policies, and politics\(^\text{25}\), which combine to shape political agendas, and the “policy window”, which serves as an opportunity of coupling in order to produce policy outcome. Kingdon (1995, 165) defined “policy window” as “an opportunity for advocates of proposals to push their pet solution or to push attention to their special problems”, and he further illustrated the idea by applying it on different crises and disasters. For example, a collision of a commercial airliner with a private aircraft over San Diego became a policy window (i.e., political opportunity) to impose controls over private planes (Kingdon 1995, 175), and the collapse of the Penn Central Railroad provided a window to regulate the financial condition of Penn Central Railroad.


\(^\text{25}\) Problem stream concerns problem framing and identification, policy stream concerns the presentation of feasible and commonly accepted solutions, and political stream concerns the level of support from the people and different political actors in the government (i.e., “national mood”). For details, please see Kingdon (1995).
railroad companies (Kingdon 1995, 174).

Keeler (1993) also saw crisis as a policy window, albeit in a different way than Kingdon (1995), Dekker and Hansen (2004). Rather than viewing politics stream as being ready before the opportunity came, Keeler (1993, 437) suggested the crisis-mandate mechanism, stating that the severity of crisis might alter the results of elections, which in turn could directly or indirectly affect the existence of window of reform. Using Kingdon’s typology, crisis as policy window (problem window (Kingdon 1995, 173) initiated from the problems stream) may also affect the “national mood”26 (Kingdon 1995, 146) in reverse through elections by producing impressive mandate for opposition parties (Keeler 1993, 440).

2.3.3 Summary

This section introduced two angles from which to view the relationship between crisis and public policy. People who view policy failure as governance crisis will agree with the argument of “reform-induced crisis”, whereas policy scientists who consider crisis as a window of opportunity for changes will support the idea of “crisis-induced reform”. In fact, these two statements are not mutually exclusive and are open to interpretation. In Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al.’s (2005, 134) words, the study of crisis and public policy “remains an open question whether crises trigger systemic change or whether they forestall such change and to what extent these process can be channeled by good crisis governance”. This statement contains a very important component in the current research: Process. Unlike the current field

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26 Kingdon (1995, 146) defined “national mood” as “the notion that a rather large number of people out in the country are thinking along certain common lines, that this national mood changes from one time to another in discernible ways, and that these changes in mood or climate have important impacts on policy agendas and policy outcomes.”
of policy study, there is a lot of unknown in crisis management process and consequences, and a research gap exists in the current literature, which has mostly focused on analyzing crisis as a window for policy change and as an aftermath learning opportunity.

The next section will briefly discuss the importance of media in crisis management. Crisis communication is an inevitable element of an effective crisis management. It also serves as the theoretical foundation to the “forces” which directs the development process of crises and will be discussed in the State-society Interactive Framework.

2.4 Media and the Politics of Crises

The active role of the media in monitoring the government has long been discussed in literature, as Cater’s (1959, 7) classical study called it the “fourth branch of government”. Cook (1998, 3) concurred, adding that the media is not only part of politics, but also part of the government. Jamieson and Waldman (2003, 95) further described the power of the press to “both cover events and, in choosing what to report and how to report it, shape their outcomes”.

Baumgartner, Jones, and Leech (1997, 349-350) suggested that since only the most newsworthy story can stay on the headlines, and “old stories must make way for new stories”, government officials would attempt an “imitation of media attention” by choosing the most promising issue on the media and paying attention to it.

As a “problem” when identified, a crisis always draws the attention of various media as it happens. The significance of the role of the media in crisis management had
been identified as early as in 1920s, as Lippmann (1922, 362) mentioned that the media is “in charge with the duty of translating the whole public life of mankind”. This is especially the case in recent years, as the media is moving from a top-down watchdog telling the audience what they should know towards magnifying the conservations within the society (Deuze 2005, 455, Salleh 2008, 242), leading to the increase in complexity of crisis management as a process as the mass media becomes a battlefield for different actors to create and direct frames in controversies - “pictures inside the heads” (Lippmann 1922, 30), that could direct public opinion and, to a certain extent, construct crises.

2.4.1 Crisis Communication: the Mediation and ‘Mediatization’ of Crises

Political communication, in its broadest sense, refers to the interrelationship between politicians and the journalists. Specifically, “journalists needed politicians for news about government and for information about what took place in the policy process; politicians needed journalists for news about society and for media exposure” (de Beus 2011, 19). Mazzoleni and Schulz distinguished the commonly used “mediation” from “mediatization”, as the former simply describes the transmission of message by the mass media, while the latter suggests that political institutions are now more dependent and influenced by the mass media (Brants and Voltmer 2011, 5, Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999, 247). Brants and Voltmer (2011) further suggested that as contemporary political communication can be seen as the changes taking place in the two dimensions of mediatization and de-centralization. As a horizontal dimension, mediatization describes the closely-related but competitive relationship between politicians (political institution) and journalists (the mass media), while the vertical dimension of de-centralization addresses the interaction between the public
and the politicians and journalists on the one hand, and the public as the ultimate audience of these messages on the other (Brants and Voltmer 2011, 3).

‘Spin doctor’

‘Spin doctor’ refers to those communication professionals who are employed by politicians in order to “generate publicity, boost their images and manage the news” (de Vreese and Elenbaas 2011, 75). Spin doctors become exceptionally important during a crisis situation as they use the power of language to manipulate media coverage in order to protect their boss – the politicians - from negative publicity, as the politicians themselves prefer not to be associated directly with a crisis or a scandal (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 299). Spin doctors can definitely play important roles in mediatization, as they are experts in framing media coverage in a direction that favors the politician they serve. One of the tactics that is always applicable is scapegoating, which can transfer and reduce the blame towards the real power-holder.

Crisis communication

By definition, crisis communication supports crisis management through reducing uncertainty about response, public perception, resolution, blame, and consequences (Palttala and Vos 2012, 39). It should cover the whole crisis period starting from the pre-crisis perpetration to the crisis aftermath, and should be stakeholder-oriented (Palttala and Vos 2012, 41). Miller and Goidel (2009, 267) argued the media is performing better than the government in communicating and satisfying the growing hunger for information in the public during a disaster, as the media is supposed to work under professional norms and procedures.
In summary, communication is crucial to crisis management. People are eager for information and directions, especially in natural disasters. However, from a political perspective, crisis communication should be more than message transmission. It should be an important component of political communication, which, with an emphasis on mediatization, reflects the using of media to serve political agenda. Nevertheless, crisis communication maintains its uniqueness in delivering emergent information, which is not always as ‘mediatized’ as political communication.

In the coming section, the local Hong Kong studies on governance and crisis will be presented. It would provide directions to what kinds of crisis studies in Hong Kong should be enriched. It would be closely related to the justification on case selection, the research themes and focuses of the entire thesis.

2.5 Studying the Governance of Hong Kong

Crisis management studies in Hong Kong were insufficient (C.-k. Lo 2007). Alternatively, some studies focus on the “governance” of Hong Kong would be to some extent relevant. Regarding political research in Hong Kong, Lau, Wun, and Shum (1999) identified four major areas of study, namely, 1) political system and institutions; 2) organization and process; 3) external relations (including with Mainland China); and, 4) regime transition. In a later work, P. Cheung (2005, 35) suggested six major research themes in the field of political science in Hong Kong, including: 1) Political and administrative institutions; 2) state-society relations; 3) political participation and democratization; 4) public administration and public policy; 5) Hong Kong’s governance since 1997 and the implementation of the ‘One
Country, Two Systems’ policy; and, 6) China’s reform and open door policy, and mentioned that “governance problems” is a prospective area for future study (P. Cheung 2005, 41). This, to some extent, reflects the potential of conducting governance crises and crisis management research in the Hong Kong context.

As previously mentioned, studies on crises and governance crises can be found in a wide variety fields besides crisis management, and studies in the Hong Kong context is no exception. In fact, scholars from various fields have addressed the “challenges” faced by the political and administrative institutions of Hong Kong before and after the handover. For example, Burns (2004) discussed the relationship between Hong Kong civil service and governance, while Scott (2005, 2009) and Cheung and Lee (2001) are works on public sector reform in Hong Kong. An institutional study of Hong Kong by A. Cheung (2008b, 126-128) found that the institutional erosion after 1997 is a result of state-society disconnection, and, from a policymaking perspective, Scott (2007, 29) suggested the policy arena of the post-1997 Hong Kong has largely been “one of failure and paralysis”. A. Cheung (2007) explained this with the mismatch of outdated (colonial) policy system and current political environment. Finally, Chiu and Wong (2012) touched upon critical sociopolitical issues in Hong Kong such as on state intervention27 and the development of democracy28 in Hong Kong, which, to some extent, suggested that the governance of Hong Kong is now in crisis.

Obviously, the challenge that stands out in recent years is the unprecedented political

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27 Ma Ngok suggested that Hong Kong is now entering a corporatist regime that “the business-dominated and corporatist nature of the regime had led to a new legitimacy crisis for Hong Kong.” (Ma, Eclectic corporatism and state interventions in post-colonial Hong Kong 2012, 88)
28 In the line with Ma (2012), Ku argued that “the context for governance and citizenship has become much more complicated in present-day politics” (Ku 2012, 145).
context under the “One Country, Two Systems” principle after the handover, which has made the governance of Hong Kong SAR under Beijing influence a hot topic for investigation. An example is Y.-c. Wong’s (2004) study that highlighted the major events and political and legal changes that shed light on the practice of “One Country, Two Systems” and Hong Kong’s relationship with international players. M. Chan (2008) is a collection of work that illustrated the major dynamics faced by Hong Kong in different aspects, one of which is a study by A. Cheung (2008a), suggesting that Hong Kong is paying a lot of effort in attempting to find a role under “China’s overall trajectory towards affluent and strong nationhood”. Finally, So (2011) attempted to illustrate the swing between “One-country” and “Two-systems” in Hong Kong polity due to different crises from a crisis-transformation perspective.

The studies mentioned in the previous paragraph reflect the uniqueness of investigating the political environment in Hong Kong after 1997. In fact, the government was faced with a number of crises of different natures during the first one and a half decade of Hong Kong SAR. In studying these crises, scholars mostly view them as political issues for case studies instead of conducting crisis management research. For example, A. Cheung (2005a) focused on crises and the institutional system of Hong Kong, while some researchers considered those crises evidence of poor governance under a non-democratic political system (Y.-c. Wong 1998, 492). In any case, it will be helpful to review the different crises studies in Hong Kong.

### 2.5.1 Issue-based Research on Crises in Hong Kong

Crisis related studies in Hong Kong are mostly issue-based. Huque and Lee’s (2000)
work had chosen the crises of Retirement of an Immigration Chief, Bird Flu and the Opening of Hong Kong International Airport as case studies which happened during the period of handover of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China. They provided insights and suggestions to manage crises in the provision of public service. Especially, they have pointed out the changing political system would lead to an adversarial relationship between the government and the legislature (Huque and Lee 2000, 118) in which turn out to be true after 15 years of HKSAR establishment.

After the handover, more studies had mentioned the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2003 as an example of crisis (A. Cheung 2005b, Lee and Chan 2009, Powers and Xiao 2008, Baehr 2006). The outbreak of SARS from March to June 2003 was a serious public health issue, as almost 300 people died in Hong Kong as a result of the disease. Three investigation reports were published after SARS was controlled, but none of them paid serious attention from the crisis management perspective. Despite the fact that the Hong Kong Government has learnt important lessons on prevention, communication, leadership, and accountability, SARS was considered one of the direct causes of the 1 July 2003-500,000 people Demonstration, a critical event in post-handover Hong Kong, and an example of a public health crisis-turned governance-related political crisis.

Considering the shocking effect of the Demonstration, there is no surprise that it has become the main focus of a huge amount of scholarly work, from J. Cheng (2007), who provided a general account on different aspects that contributed to the

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29 After the SARS outbreak, three major investigation reports were conducted by the SARS Expert Committee appointed by the government, the Legislative Council and the Hospital Authority respectively. The reports provided detailed and comprehensive account and analysis on each response taken by the government and the Hospital Authority. See chapter 4.3.
Demonstration, to Chan and Chan (2007, 78) and So (2008, 239), who respectively described the Demonstration as a watershed of Hong Kong civil society development and an even that “raised Hong Kong social movement to a new height”.

With reference to the SARS crisis, K. Lee (2009) developed a framework to study crisis communication of the HKSAR Government, and argued that the poor performance of the government has led to a loss of public trust, as it has failed in:

1) Demonstrating effectiveness of government authorities in prevention /containment;
2) Improving its communication management;
3) Minimizing media scrutiny;
4) Reassuring the public in its ability to take preventive measures in the future;
5) Demonstrating strong leadership;
6) Demonstrating strong commitment to public good;
7) Showing flexibility and good communication between government agencies; and,

Although K. Lee’s study has provided ample results on political communication (4 viewpoints out of the 8 above), a comprehensive evaluation of government performance in crisis management is still lacking.

Apart from the SARS crisis, the Hong Kong SAR Government has seen a series of social and political crises affecting its governance in its 15 years of existence, which in turn has become the focus of studies on either ad-hoc incidents or political crises that rooted in the unique “One Country, Two Systems” polity of Hong Kong. An example is Wong and Kwan (2002), who evaluated the learning process of the
HKSAR Government in the three waves of “Bird Flu”\(^{30}\) and addressed the potential threats from other food scares. Their conclusion was that the “poor co-ordination and inefficiency … damaged the Hong Kong Government’s creditability” (Wong and Kwan 2002, 1).

On the other hand, in studying the institutional or political system of Hong Kong, Lui and Chiu (2007) pointed out that the present governance crises could not be explained simply in terms of rapid civil society development. Rather, through a political-economy perspective, they discovered that the main reason is a failure to build a new state-business alliance. In addition, A. Cheung (2005a, 146) accounted for the many failures of the government and relevant departments and agencies by the lack of contingency planning and a clear command and coordination structure, especially in-between departments, which he considered the major loopholes of the government on crisis management.

There are also studies associating the rising number of crises in recent years with the gradual increase in political influence from Beijing. For example, Y.-c. Wong (2006) argued that the Article 23 legislation, which led to the 2003 Demonstration, was a strategy adopted by the Beijing government to change the fundamentals of Hong Kong polity gradually – a strategy that he called “Leninist integration”. So and Chan (2002, 363), on the other hand, described five major crises in Hong Kong SAR in areas of democracy, constitution, governability, development, and legitimacy that has shifted the Hong Kong polity towards soft authoritarian developmentalism\(^{31}\).

\(^{30}\) The avian flu (also known as “Bird Flu”) was caused by the H5N1 virus from chicken, and was first found to infect human in 1997, leading to the mass slaughter of chicken in Hong Kong. Outbreaks occurred again in 2001 and 2002.

\(^{31}\) The idea of soft authoritarian developmentalism refers to Beijing’s strategic concerns on maintaining “an executive-led government that facilitated the state’s capacity to embark onto the
Scholars on crisis management in Hong Kong have been studying governance and the performance of the government as a whole, while treating crisis study as simply one of the elements of studying governance. That is, they have paid a lot of attention on the overall loopholes of the government (institutions) without carefully investigating and discussing the actions and responses taken. Considering the importance of government responses in crisis management, it is justified to conduct crisis management research on state-society interactions in post-1997 Hong Kong.

2.5.2 Studies on Civil Society and Social Movement in Hong Kong

According to Chan and Chan (2007, 81-82), civil society has its autonomy, and can be taken as a third sector to provide services to the public, as it is not free from the influence of the government, and it has played an active role in government policy process (Chan and Chan 2007, 81-82). These features are closely related to the government’s crisis management in two senses: First, civil society aims to fill the loopholes left by the government during crisis (mainly in disaster) by providing immediate and appropriate services to the public, and, second, to make its opinions matter in the policy process, civil society works to communicate and interact with the government. In short, since civil society tends to involve in government policymaking process, it could impact on government crisis management.

Some of the social issues that draw the attention of the civil society may become potential crisis for government. For example, historical heritage conservation cases (Chan and Chan 2007, 90-91) are related to civil society development. From the development track, and to lay the foundation of soft-authoritarianism” (So and Chan, 2002: 382), resulting in a weakened role of key players in the civil society by self-constraint.
government’s perspective, it can be a potential crisis if the cases were being poorly tackled.

The 2003 Demonstration is a prime example of the reaction of civil society on the government’s intention to tighten freedom (Y.-c. Wong 1998, 493), and its effect on the government’s decisions and actions (Chan and Chan 2007). Although the “transformation of a single anti-government rally into a continuous pro-democracy movement was not a matter of chance” (Chan and Chan 2007, 114), it, along with the development of the new and important channel of mobilization that is the internet (So 2008, Ma 2009, 59), at least provide the political opportunities for the pan-democrats to form a close-alliance with social forces outside the formal institution (Chan and Lee 2007), and help facilitate the transformation of social movement. Obviously, civil society should have a role on crisis management from the very beginning of framing the crisis and until the end.

2.6 Conclusion: Avenues for Crisis Management Research in Hong Kong

Through a review of current literature, the various definitions on the concepts of crisis are presented and definitions from different schools are evaluated. Even though the common perception for crisis is always negative, different people have different standards for good and bad. Thus, accepting crisis as a situation that demands (government) responses is a more reliable alternative. Further, the theoretical limitations of current typologies on crisis are discussed. Defining crisis typology is essential for conducting academic research on the topic, as different types of crisis may have different features and patterns, and a clear typology is helpful in determining the possible outcomes for different kinds of crisis.
The theoretical limitations on current theories for crisis studies are also explained through a discussion of top-down and bottom-up approaches in crisis management. The top-down approach mainly focuses on the managerial issues on crisis, while the bottom-up approach views crisis as a political process that exerts political pressure on government. In fact, these two approaches are neither mutually exclusive nor directly compatible, so, a new research framework is developed for the current study using them as foundation and reference.

Besides studying conventional crisis studies, the current research also devotes attention to research on related topics, such as political scandal and policy failure. This serves two purposes: First, discovering similarities in related topics could be helpful in defining, refining, developing, and expanding the field of crisis management; and, second, by organizing and gathering thoughts and ideas from studies on related topics, this thesis attempts to put different kinds of (potential) governance crisis on the same platform for analysis. For example, incorporating ideas from media and communication studies on the state-society interactive framework in crisis management is helpful for the development of a more comprehensive argument.

Lastly, a review on crisis studies in Hong Kong recognizes a lack of theory-based academic research in the Hong Kong context, as most crisis theories and models are based on Western democratic society, and may not be applicable to a non-democratic regime with a relatively high level of liberty like Hong Kong. The unique socio-political background in post-1997 Hong Kong makes the discussion on state-society interactions valuable in explaining crisis and crisis governance. By
using Hong Kong examples, the linkage among government, different political actors and the civil society, that is, the politicization in crisis management, is investigated.

In the next two chapters, analytical frameworks of this thesis will be introduced. Frist, the two contemporary crisis management approaches, namely, the Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach will be introduced in Chapter Three. Second, in Chapter Four, the State-society Interactive Framework, a useful contribution developed in this research, will be illustrated.
CHAPTER THREE: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK PART I – CONTEMPORARY CRISIS MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

Analytical framework is best described as the backbone of a research. The current study applies the Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach as the pillars for the research framework, details of both are explained in the first part of this chapter. This is followed by deliberations on the theoretical discussion on the two approaches and to gives elementary analysis on their potential weaknesses in applying to Hong Kong – a limited democracy. The discussion here also forms the theoretical bases of the useful contribution of the current work - the State-society Interactive Framework which will be presented in the next chapter.

Analytical Framework: Selection of Two Crisis Management Approaches
The analytical framework for the current research is constructed on two crisis management approaches currently available, namely, Leadership Approach and Political Approach. The Leadership Approach is based on Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al.’s (2005) “Crisis management in political systems: Five leadership challenges”, while the components for the Political Approach are generated from Brandstrom and Kuipers’s (2003) arguments on selective politicization of policy failure. As briefly discussed in the literature review, the first approach can be classified as the top-down managerial oriented approach, and the second one as bottom-up political oriented approach.

Both approaches are based on the western democratic system, in which governments are accountable to their people through periodic election, and the people generally enjoys a high level of liberty in many aspects, such as freedom of speech, freedom of
press, and freedom of assembly. However, the political system in Hong Kong is complex. As a partial democracy, Hong Kong’s executive branch is led by the Chief Executive, who is elected by an Election Committee with 1,200 members. More importantly, most of the committee members are indirectly selected by the Beijing government through a “coterie”, or “small-circle”, election system. On the other hand, the Legislative Council of Hong Kong consists of two constituencies, namely, the Geographical Constituency and the Functional Constituency. Even though both constituencies have an equal number of seats in the LegCo, only the GC adopts direct election under a proportional representative system. Most of the constituencies (“sectors”) in the FC are won by members elected through the “small-circle” election under strong Beijing influence.

Owing to the special features in the Hong Kong political system, there may be some problems in applying the two approaches to study crisis management in Hong Kong. Regarding the applicability of western crisis management theories in the Hong Kong context, three sub-questions are raised in this thesis: First, how does a non-democratically elected executive branch execute crisis management when it cannot be held accountable by the general public? Second, how does the semi-democratic legislature perform its check-and-balance role on the executive branch during crises? Third, with a high level of liberty, how do other stakeholders, such as the opposition parties and mass media, contribute to the crisis framing process?

3.1 Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al.’s Five Tasks Leadership Approach

The Five Tasks Leadership Approach (Leadership Approach) suggested by Boin, ’t
Hart, Stern, et al. (2005, hereafter BHS 2005) can be interpreted as “how crisis leadership contributes to defending, destroying, or renovating” the established political and organizational orders. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are five crucial tasks to complete when dealing with a crisis: Sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, terminating, and learning (BHS 2005, 10).

3.1.1 Sense-making

BHS (2005, 18) defined sense-making as “grasping crises as they unfold”. Using the 911 Incident as an example, the authors illustrated the importance of early recognition of a crisis. However, decision-makers always overlook available signals before the threat, which, according to BHS (2005, 28), could be due to psychological reasons that are beyond the scope of the current research, or organizational limitations, which best reflect the barriers to crisis recognition. Specifically, organizations are set up to perform tasks under normal situation, and are not designed for crisis (BHS 2005, 20). Further, their performances are measured by whether they have achieved the goals assigned to them, and thus, they may choose to ignore or have no interest in problems that are out of their mandates (BHS 2005, 21). Also, the size and complexity of modern organization makes it difficult for messages from frontline officials to reach the top levels, even if those are signals of a crisis, and with the adoption of the rational-scientific approach, some routine crises are taken as acceptable risk, thus, potential threats are possibly ignored. Recall that crisis is a name given by people. Therefore, crisis status would not be granted without the recognition of a large amount of people, and as a result people may pay no heed to it.
3.1.2 Decision-Making

In general, leaders are not the sole decision-maker in a crisis - they manage the crisis with the assistance of their crisis teams. It is impossible for the leaders to control the whole crisis response process on their own, and thus a certain degree of delegation and decentralization is important. In reality, a small group is usually formed to coordinate the crisis response effort, which was recognized as a disadvantage by BHS (2005, 45) due to the presence of group dynamics such as newness and conformity, excessive cordiality and conformity, and centrifugally and politicking. In this regard, coordination within the crisis management network is important. However, as BHS (2005, 64) stated, “an effective crisis response cannot be forced; it is to large extent the result of a naturally evolving process. It cannot be managed in linear, step-by-step and comprehensive fashion from a single crisis center”.

3.1.3 Meaning-Making

Meaning-making in crisis management is about political communication. Unlike the Politicization Approach that will be detailed later, crisis communication in the Leadership Approach is an attempt to reduce the political uncertainty caused by the crisis (BHS 2005, 69). It is mainly a top-down process, as it creates a “persuasive story line that explains what happened, why it had to be in that way, what its repercussions are, how it can be resolved, who can be relied upon to do so, and who is to blame” (BHS 2005, 69-70). Under the high pressure exerted by the mass media as the fault-finder, the government is obliged to release information. BHS05 (76-77) described three factors that are particularly important in government crisis communication: The degree of preparedness, the degree of coordination of outgoing
information, and the degree of professionalization. Crisis communication is a battle of credibility for leaders, and the three meaning-making strategies of framing, ritualization, and masking ('t Hart 1993) are usually adopted, as detailed in the literature review.

3.1.4 Terminating
Terminating a crisis is an implication that the time to assign accountability has arrived. There are two dimensions to crisis closure, namely operational closure and political closure. BHS (2005, 97) described the key challenges facing the two types of closure, specifically, “to make an accurate and balanced assessment of the need to keep the crisis response infrastructure in place” for operational closure, and “to recognize when the breakdown of symbolic order has been restored” for political closure, in which “leaders must also assess the political expediency of crisis termination. When a crisis reaches the stage of assigning accountability, the government would try to avoid the blame game, though usually without success. In this situation, government officials will defend themselves by claiming that “they made no mistake”.

3.1.5 Learning
Although crisis can be an opportunity for reforms (Boin and 't Hart 2000), in reality reform does not always follow, unless government performance deficit is discovered during the crisis, and the old routine has proven to be unfeasible in crisis. However, learning after crisis does not necessarily lead to changes, as changes can be a gesture of responsibility, a forceful action, or merely a public relations tactic, in which case the government is making changes just to please the public, rather than having learnt
a lesson. In some cases, the change process cannot be seen, as the enabling factors are aborted or subverted (BHS 2005, 122). This is in fact learning without change.

3.2 Brandstrom and Kuipers’s Pattern of Politicization Approach

Crisis, as an abnormal situation, does not only affect the government, but also other political actors and the general public. During a crisis, different actors compete for the chance to “name” the failure, and the event becomes politicized when “influential actors in the political arena succeed in framing them as blameworthy violations of crucial public values” (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 208). The politicization process is important to crisis management, as it can transform a normal incident into a governance crisis. As raised by Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003, 282), the major question to ask in the politicization process is “how do actors use framing strategies to (re)allocate blame for politicized incidents?” Obviously, political outcomes do not necessarily reflect the real performance of the government in certain crises (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 280), as the identification of failure is not the recognition of a fact (Edelman 1977), but a man-made process.

Figure 3.1 is an illustration of Brandstrom and Kuipers’s (2003, 290) three perspectives of framing and blaming in the Pattern of Politicization Approach:

1) Depicting the events as a violation of core public values (constructing severity);
2) Depicting the events as an operational incident or a symptom of endemic problems (constructing agency); and,
3) Allocating accountability and blame for the occurrence and/or “mismanagement” of crisis (constructing responsibility).
3.2.1 Constructing Severity

Based on political crisis and policy failure, the Politicization Approach was introduced to assign responsibility and blame. At the heart of the Politicization Process is the difference between an incident and a crisis, which is undoubtedly a matter of framing. Thus, as a first step, the violation of core public values serves as the watershed to distinguish a crisis from accidents or incidents. Specifically, when political actors frame an incident as a violation of public core values, the event becomes a crisis, and vice versa. The timing is important in this situation, as Kingdon (1995, 104) argued that people tend to forget an incident in a short time if there were no further decision. Political actors are easily attracted by hot topics. Therefore, the more serious the event is, the more likely they will get involved into the coupling process. For example, as Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003) argued in their Sweden and the Netherlands examples, credibility and integrity should be core values for all governments. If those values were violated, the issue would probably become politicized and gain the status of a crisis.

3.2.2 Constructing Agency

In constructing the status of a crisis, political actors would try to find out the reasons behind. A crisis can either be a stand-alone, ad hoc disturbance in a system, or a symptom of a much larger systematic failure (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 295). Political actors would try to frame a crisis as systematic failure instead of an accidental fault, so that a severe blame can be imposed. In order to make such a claim, it requires backward investigation over a broader time frame and upward investigation to senior-level officials. Specifically, going back in time is to discover the fundamental reasons behind, while going up the hierarchy of decision-making is
3.2.3 Constructing Responsibility

Regardless of the reasons behind and the level of seriousness, the most important question in the final stage of the framing and blaming process would be: Who should be punished? In this respect, a crisis can be divided into either actor failure or network failure (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 302). As discussed in the construction of agency in the previous section, if a crisis were framed as an accidental event, it is being narrowed down to an occasional wrongdoing of an individual, which is the slightest level of blame, and the result would be an actor failure, meaning scapegoating. On the other hand, the crisis would be an organization mishap if it were framed as a network failure, and the blame would be endured collectively. However, the system would not be hurt if the crisis were framed as an operational or technical fault that happened sporadically.

The blame would be tough if the crisis were found to be a symptom of a much larger systematic failure. If it were being framed as an actor failure at this stage, the decision-maker will bear the blame. However, if it were framed as a network failure, the whole institution would be responsible, as it implies an overall failure of the system. This is the most serious blame that could be framed, as the government is found to be violating public core values in a systematic manner. In this situation, the collapse of the current government may be a possible outcome.

In applying the Politicization Approach, Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003) selected a military incident in Sweden and the Netherlands respectively for illustration. The
current study attempts to testify this approach by applying it on crises with different natures. Specifically, since Hong Kong is a semi-democratic system, as opposed to the parliamentary system in Sweden and the Netherlands, the validity of the Politicization Approach in various crisis natures and political systems can be testified.

![Figure 3.1 Constructing Blame by Framing Political Crises](Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 302)

3.3 Theoretical Void in Crisis Management Approaches

The limitations discussed in this section will demonstrate the theoretical gap in the field of crisis management. These limitation would become the foundation of
constructing the State-society Interactive Framework which would be introduced in
the next chapter.

3.3.1 Absence of Multi-crisis Analysis

As discussed in the literature review, the field of crisis managements is currently
diverged. In general, approaches and models in this field could be divided into
managerial and political ones. Some models are developed for specific types of
crises, and thus, their applicability on other crises cases is doubtful. Of the more
famous studies, J. Thompson’s (2000) work on political scandal has become popular,
especially after the Clinton sex scandal in the United States in 1998, and Bovens and
’t Hart’s (1996, 20) study on policy failure (they used “policy fiasco” as more serious
failure) discussed the “crisis-like predicament” for unsuccessful policymaking.
More importantly, major political crises are usually not due to sole reasons, but a
consequence of a basket of crisis events that has led to severe public dissatisfaction.
Thus, multi-crisis analysis is important as a connection between different areas of
crisis management.

3.3.2 Severity: the Prerequisite

Most current crisis management theories and models, including the Leadership and
Political Approaches, put their focus on positive cases, that is, serious crises leading
to chaos and instability to the state and society, since their strength is in post crises
assessment, but not in explaining why a crisis happened or was being “manipulated”.
Thus, one of the major tasks for the State-society Interactive Framework is to study
how different actors intensify or distort the crisis. To do this, both significant cases
and latent crisis have to be involved, so that questions on why and how crises
emerged could be solved. In addition, it is of interest to study, especially in
man-made crises, why some crises could be successfully politicized and could exert sufficient political pressure on the government change, and why others could not.

Referring to the case studies which will be discussed in the later chapters, the Anti-High Speed Railway incident is a latent crisis, in which the perpetually eye-catching denotations and rallies could not lead to any change in the decision of the government. This is evidence that current crisis management approaches are not completely applicable to latent crises, which is one of the major limitations in this field. However, even though the severity dimension is important, it should not be treated as a threshold, as further discussion on non-crisis cases would be limited.

3.3.3 Analyzing Crises: Process versus Aftermath

Another significant attempt of the State-society Interactive Framework introduced in this research is to strengthen the explanatory power of the two theories, although the Politicization Approach seems to be able to better explain political outcomes (i.e., blame construction) than the Leadership Approach. Even though crisis management has been considered by scholars as a process of development, current theories and approaches have not considered this point seriously, as most of them view crisis management as the study of aftermath. Severity is always used as a threshold to eliminate latent crises, which should not happen if crisis were viewed as a process. Instead, the severity of crises could be a possible outcome of crisis strengthening process, as would be detailed in the next chapter.

The useful contribution of this thesis is to illustrate why only certain crises could lead to government change. In order to achieve this, crisis should be viewed as a process but not an aftermath, since not every one of them could gain its crisis status
from the very beginning. The SARS incident and the Basic Law Article 23 controversy, for example, did not gain a crisis status until the incident unfolded and became serious. The Anti-High Speed Railway movement could not even reach such level of severity. Thus, the State-society Interactive Framework, which will be introduced in the next chapter, should be constructed so that it has the strength to explain the process of crisis politics, and at the same time, coincide with the “crisis as development” principle in crisis management theories.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK PART II – THE STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK

In view of the fragmented political structure with limited democracy in post-handover Hong Kong, in which there is a lack of effective check-and-balance mechanism through regular elections of the executive branch, and the comparatively liberal and pro-active civil society, especially the development of crisis-provoking politics in the city since the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, the State-society Interactive Framework is presented as an useful theoretical contribution of this thesis. With an emphasis on the out-of-institution channels of interaction between the government and other non-state actors during crises, the State-society Interactive Framework is able to fill the gap where the Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach of crisis management are found to be inadequate – in non-democratic regimes such as Hong Kong.

Interview data has contributed vastly to the development of the State-society Interactive Framework. Interviews with the respondents (see Appendix II) have provided ample information and first-hand observations for understanding the interactions between state and society during crises, as the interviewees have not only shared their personal experiences on the two crises, but also their opinions on crisis politics of Hong Kong. This section provides a summary of their views to facilitate the introduction of the State-society Interactive Framework.

The State-society Interactive Framework is a development-oriented and

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multi-dimensional crisis management framework consisting of four key elements, including the Crisis Development Ladder, the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces and the most important Catalytic Effect of Crisis, each of which is detailed in the following.

4.1 Crisis Development Ladder

Crises can be private (corporate) or public (Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993). Public crisis, regardless of their nature, poses a challenge to the government, as they are occasions that demand instant actions and responses (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007). Specifically, the term “governance crisis” refers to a crisis that may possibly lead to government change - a “change” that is not merely a remedial measure, but a major and observable transformation of (or an attempt to transform) policy, government personnel and/or government structure/system. For instance, initiating an impeachment is a strong enough trigger to establish the governance crisis status. However, the advancement of a crisis to a governance crisis is not a necessity, as it depends on the case itself and the related “Strengthening Forces”, such as politicization. Further, the gaining of the governance crisis status could be immediate or at the latter stages of crisis development. When the first aircraft crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre in the 911 Incident, it was apparently taken as a crisis of air transportation. However, soon after the second plane crashed into the South Tower, the US government realized that it was a terrorist attack, and the governance crisis status was achieved.

The term “governance crisis” adopted in this Interactive Framework, in some cases, is different from the general usage which can be found in newspapers and other
related studies. In mass media, reporters and commentators always describe the poor performance of government or government wrongdoings, such as policy failure and political scandal, as some sort of “governance crisis” (in Chinese: 管治危機; Guan zhi wei ji). In this case, governance crisis is used as an expression without accurate definition (please refer to Chapter 1.2.7 – Figure 1.3 for analysis on the usage of “Governance crisis” by newspaper). However, the “governance crisis” illustrated in the Crisis Development Ladder is specific to a necessary condition that leads to government change (i.e., the third level). Governance crisis in the Interactive Framework can be treated as a warning that the Crisis Strengthening Forces are dominating as compared to the Weakening Forces. At the same time, an opportunity for government change is foreseeable, subject to the presence of Catalytic Effect.

Governance crisis might in part represent that the government has lost control of, or that the root of the crisis is an attempt to challenge, the status quo. The status of governance crisis could be granted, in the case of an internal crisis, when most people are pointing their fingers at the government, and its legitimacy is in doubt (as in the case of political scandal or policy failure), and in the case of an external crisis, when the country is facing a serious threat from an external source (e.g., terrorist attack or natural disaster). The Crisis Development Ladder (Figure 4.1) can be used to explain the development process from “crisis” to “governance crisis” and further on to “change”. Under the State-society Interactive Framework, a major change will be accomplished if the Crisis Strengthening Forces (detailed in the next section) are strong enough.

Governance crisis would not indubitably lead to change, but would probably open a
window of opportunity for change, especially for policy change in democratic systems, as described by Kingdon (1995). In contrast, the presence of “governance crisis” is particularly important in authoritarian regimes. In a democratic system, “changes” such as the stepping-down of a cabinet member or the withdrawal of controversial policy bills so as to avoid negative (electoral) consequences is often observed. However, in a non-democratic system, there is no direct relationship between the performance of the government and change. Most of the time, it is almost impossible for the government to make major concessions actively without “upgrading” a crisis to a governance crisis, such as in the cases of the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Siege of Wukan Village in Lufeng, China in 2011. The demonstration and siege rang the alarm on the legitimacy of the governments, and major changes were introduced as a result. Specifically, the demonstration has led to the stepping-down of three principal officials and the withdrawal of the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law regarding national security in Hong Kong (J. Cheng 2005). Concessions in the form of the dismissal of two local officials and the redistribution of land confiscated by the local government were observed in the Siege of Wukan Village, Lufeng.

4.2 Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces

In the political context, the framing of a crisis is an interaction between two “forces”, hereby named the “Strengthening Forces” and “Weakening Forces” (Figure 4.1). These two forces push a crisis from one step to another on the Crisis Development Ladder, and may lead to different consequences, such as a resolution or a significant

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33 The Siege of Wukan was a series of anti-corruption protests in Wukan Village in Guangdong, China. Beginning in September 2011, the event escalated to a crisis in December 2011 with the ejection of officials by villagers. Please refer to BBC News reports available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-16192541 for details.
government change. One of the strengths of the State-society Interactive Framework is its ability to explain how crises unfold at different levels. Specifically, why some crises can eventually lead to government change whereas some are forgotten shortly, and how crises that do not have a clear ending may be the symptoms of another serious crisis.

4.2.1 Crisis Strengthening Forces

There are three major sources for the Strengthening Forces, which would result in the intensification of a crisis. First, the nature of the crisis itself may worsen the situation, especially in the case of a natural disaster or disease. It could be also associated with man-made factors, such as the poor efforts of government in carrying out rescue operations. Second, it can be the deliberation of stakeholders, such as the politicization of an issue or problem by opposition parties and the “mediatisation” (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999) by the mass media. As mentioned in the literature review, the relationship between the media and politics is close (Davis 1994, Kahan 1999), as it was described as the “fourth branch of government” (Cater 1959) that wields political power far beyond that of an observer. The role of the media on crisis management is significant, as it has transformed from a watchdog telling the audience what they should know to fostering communication within the society (Deuze 2005). Third, direct responses of the people either by voting or collective actions, such as mass demonstration, may lead to governance crisis in many non-democratic societies. The Arab Spring is a prime example. The second and third sources are also referred to as the bottom-up approach in crisis management.

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34 The Arab Spring refers to a chain of revolutionary demonstrations, protests, and wars that happened in the Arab world since late 2010. It began with the Mohamed Bouazizi’s (a Tunisian street vendor) self-immolation in protest of police corruption and ill-treatment, which led to mass demonstration that overthrew then-Tunisan President Ben Ali’s regime in January 2011.
4.2.2 Crisis Weakening Forces

The Weakening Forces refer to the crisis management measures taken by the government. As mentioned, there are two types of top-down approach in crisis management, namely, managerial oriented and political oriented. The managerial oriented aspect focuses on the steps and solutions taken to solve the problem, while the political oriented aspect is sometimes described as a gesture of public relations initiated by “spin doctors”\(^\text{35}\). Regardless of their nature, these two approaches represent actions taken by the government in restoring the situation from crisis back to normal.

Moreover, the ruling and pro-government parties, particularly in one-party states, may try to uphold the popularity and legitimacy of the government by various means, such as defending the decisions of the government in the congress, or influencing news coverage with the aid of pro-government mass media. The ultimate goal for those Weakening Forces is to achieve an operational (and also political) termination of the crisis (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, 97).

In each crisis, there can be multiple sources of Strengthening Forces and Weakening Forces. Also, the same source can provide both Strengthening and Weakening Forces on different occasions depending on its nature. As A. Lee (2008) suggested, the internet can be seen as a Weakening Force during the outbreak of SARS, as it provided timely information and warnings to the public. However, people could also challenge and monitor the crisis management performance of the HKSAR

\(^{35}\) Spin doctor’ refers to those communication professionals who are employed by politicians in order to “generate publicity, boost their images and manage the news” (de Vreese and Elenbaas 2011, 75).
government through the internet, which proved to be a significant Strengthening Force in turning SARS into a governance crisis eventually. The power of the internet should not be underestimated, as online forums have played a significant role in the organization of social movements, such as mass demonstrations (So 2008).

As mentioned previously, crisis passes from one level to another as a result of the interaction between forces. A stronger Strengthening Force may intensify a crisis into a governance crisis, or even lead to major governmental change eventually. A significant Weakening Force, on the other hand, may sometimes lead to the termination of a crisis. However, compared to an operational termination, a political termination is always more difficult to achieve, especially when public dissatisfaction is deep. Specifically, an intensive Weakening Force does not necessarily mean the complete drop-out of the crisis status, as people would not completely forget the pain brought by a crisis. Instead, a pool of public dissatisfaction would be generated until a critical point is reached. This is known as the Catalytic Effect of Crisis.
4.3 Generating the Forces I: Effective Crisis Management

The government, with no doubt, is the key actor in crisis management, as illustrated in the Leadership Approach. The effective crisis management effort performed by the government is an important source of Crisis Weakening Forces, although such effort is sometimes unobservable. From the theoretical perspective, Boin (2009, 370) suggested that there are three types of challenges during a crisis. First, there are political administrative challenges as government agencies prepare to deal with the sudden adversity. Second, crises test the fabric of society – its citizens and institutions must demonstrate resilience if a society is to “bounce back” after a crisis.
and re-establish some sense of normality. Third, crises and disasters pose challenges for policy-makers, therefore deep thinking is required. Boin’s (2009) ideas provide a framework on which challenges faced by government during a crisis can be examined. Failure in tackling these three challenges by a government would definitely affect the effectiveness of crisis management.

Regarding crisis management effectiveness, Kimenyi and Mwabu (2007, 14-15) suggested three standard policy actions during a crisis. The first is shock therapy, a type of treatment for emergency case that is either cure or kill with no intermediate outcome. The second is a radical action or policy, which changes the course of action to an almost opposite direction. While achieving the intended outcomes, a radical policy often creates many other problems. The final action is instrumentalism or gradualism. Characterized by marginal changes in existing policy, it is, to an extent, the opposite of radicalism. The above-mentioned measures are not mutually exclusive and “an appropriate response in a crisis situation is one that addresses the urgency of the moment, while at the same time searching for a better and long-term solution” (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007, 16). In addition, their effectiveness would directly alter the “power” of the forces.

It should be noted that government crisis management measure is also associated with the people’s expectation, and could potentially generate Crisis Strengthening Forces in contrast. As Boin et al. (2005, 1) stated, during crises, citizens look to their leaders – the government officials and administrators. People expect these policy makers to avert the threat, or at least minimize the damage of the crisis at hand. The officials should lead their people out of the crisis, and they must explain what went wrong and convince the people that similar incidents will not happen again.
Policy making in times of crisis is even more complicated because the demand for action is very high. Policy makers are expected to act fast when dealing with the crisis, and the public demand for results exerts political pressure (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007, 13), which are linked to the “interactions” between forces emphasized in the current State-society Interactive Framework.

4.4 Generating the Forces II: Government’s Public Relations Tactics

As discussed in the literature review, through “spin doctors” in a government, three types of symbolic “crisis handling devices”: Framing, ritualization, and masking, as suggested by ‘t Hart (1993), are used as government’s public relations tactics during crises. Framing refers to the creation of an “official story” that favours the government. Ritualization can be standardized measures that are symbolic to let the people become aware of the “efforts made” by the government during crises. Masking refers to the external communication strategies of crisis stakeholders, and is different from denial, which is related to their personal beliefs and perceptions. The effectiveness of the above-mentioned strategies, especially masking, are, to a large extent, related to the influential power the government exerts on mass media, especially the pro-government ones.

From the observation of the practitioners, the interviews carried out in this study had collected first-hand information on how the government applied public relations tactics (by influencing the media) as a kind of crisis weakening measure, which is in the same vein with the theories.

“When there is a crisis or scandal, the government would directly contact our senior management or chief editor… as they have maintained a close
relationship for years. The chief editor even makes contact with the Press Secretary of CE daily... [When crisis occurred], some government senior officials would call us and request the editor to ‘play the government’s angle’... For example, they would say ‘under great social pressure, [someone from the Pro-establishment camp] is really brave to express their support for the government [on national education], which is opposite to the majority of public opinion’”. (Respondent O)

Respondent N considered this a “spinning” of the journalists during crises. In operation, according to Respondent O’s personal experience, the boss decided that some other news was more important, and that the scandal news should be moved to inner pages, in order to “play it small” (put it lightly). However, the “playing it small” strategy is not applicable to some extraordinary controversies. “We may simply choose to ignore the government’s angle, as we cannot handle it [considering the great public dissatisfaction]” (Respondent O).

In general, it could be deduced from the responses of the interviewees that the mass media could provide both Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces, depending on their political preference. Specifically, Respondent O’s interpretation is in line with Lee and Chan’s (2006) argument of the media’s political parallelism under energized public opinion. Moreover, with reference to Lau (2012, 67), political spinning is “adding flower to the embroider” (in Chinese: 錦上添花; jin shang tian hua) rather than “sending charcoal during a snowfall” (in Chinese: 雪中送炭; xue zhong song tan), meaning that it is difficult for the mass media to lend a hand to the government during severe political crises. In fact, no mass media would want to bear such a heavy political burden when the government is under heavy attack. These

36 Based on a content analysis of newspaper coverage of 1 July 2003 Demonstration, Lee and Chan (2006, 72) found out that “in the state of energized public opinion, political parallelism in the mass media diminishes and the discourses of political and social issues among the media tend to converge”.

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observations also imply a swopping of the above-discussed Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces (brought by the mass media) that was seen in the 2003 Demonstration Incident (Please refer to Chapter Nine).

4.5 Generating the Forces III: The Power of the Media

As discussed above, due to the institutional barriers of Hong Kong as a regime without full democracy, formal institutional channels of crisis politics, such as motion of no-confidence and impeachment, are almost unavailable. Thus, the role of the opposition parties in the crisis politics of these regimes is minimal as compared to democratic states that have an effective check-and-balance mechanism. Therefore, non-state actors need to make use of some out-of-institution channels to push forward their criticism on the government’s poor crisis management. In this regard, the media, including traditional mass media and new media such as the internet, plays an extraordinary role. Theoretically, the media provides a platform to generate Crisis Strengthening (and sometimes Weakening) Forces. However, in reality, negative (or positive) discourses appearing in the media do not generate those Forces directly. Rather, the key for creating real forces to influence the crisis politics is collective action. While this does not imply that media coverage does not bear any political influence, in real cases, such as the case studies discussed in this thesis, the Crisis Strengthening Forces generated by the collective action could be enough to escalate a crisis towards the next level on the Crisis Development Ladder.

4.5.1 Traditional Mass Media

The traditional mass media plays a significant role in crisis politics, as newspapers, television and radio news are still the major sources of information in daily life.
Regardless of the form of presentation, be it print media or broadcast through electronic devices, tradition mass media influences crisis politics through agenda setting. For instance, the headline on Page A1 of a newspaper is limited, and the decision on the material to be put there would be crucial, especially when there are scandals or crises. Newspaper is certainly more influential than television and radio news, in a sense that the former would carry more information with deeper analyses due to the coverage. Also, personal reflection and commentaries commonly found in newspapers would not be possible in television news, and even though they are possible in radio programs (e.g., phone-in program), the depth is limited due to schedule constraints. Newspapers can include extra pages for big news, but a day is always 24 hours for the television and radio.

The influential role of the mass media in crisis politics is agreed by almost all interviewees, regardless of their background. Respondent D, who was a journalist before joining the polity, has coined a term called “mediaucracy” – a combination of the words “media” and “bureaucracy” - to describe the strong political power of mass media resembling that of the bureaucrats. Respondents E and L, both from Pro-establishment parties, agreed with this view, and further suggested that the mass media’s role is very significant, and are now acting like opposition parties. In some extreme cases, political parties even have to follow the public opinion. In fact, mass media interacts with public opinion in various ways, such as taking an active role in agenda setting by reflecting public opinion from the civil society (Respondent F). As Respondent D added, the mass media, both actively and passively, interacts with public opinion, which, to a large extent, reflects and leads the public opinion.
Every one of the five respondents who is a current or former journalist has had experience of working in more than one mass media companies. Some even have worked in companies with totally opposite political orientations. As they revealed, different companies report crisis politics in a different way, which is highly dependent on the company’s background, or in the words of Respondent K, the political preference of the boss. However, their opinions regarding whether the mass media has a clear political agenda of its own were diverged, especially when the political influence of mass media reaches the highest point during crises, or more specifically, in political scandals.

“Mass media sometimes do not have an obvious political agenda [on news reporting], but ‘is provided with’ some political dirt [regarding CE candidate Henry Tang’s unauthorized construction scandal]…In fact, at the same time, we were unable to have balanced coverage on CY Leung’s scandal due to resource constraints.” (Respondent H)

Respondent H added that, technically, there is a pushing process in exploiting government scandals, although it may or may not mean that a particular mass media company has a very clear political agenda. Nevertheless, Respondent K, currently a reporter working in the political news section of a well-known Pan-democrat media, had a different interpretation.

“My chief editor has a very strong political agenda… For example, we were asked to explore possible political dirt in the new cabinet... in an attempt to attack the popularity of the new chief executive CY Leung, as he lacks legitimacy.” (Respondent K)

The mass media not only takes on a reporting role, but also assists by strongly pushing forward an issue with the aid of the headline. Respondent K further
mentioned that the chief editor believed that the media should take on an educating role (on civil education), and therefore, some related messages would be presented through the newspaper in order to convince the general public. As Respondent H mentioned, the reporting angle of certain media companies could be driven by their political agenda, since they know their reports would make a difference on the real politics, or at least, as Respondent E reported, make the government tired from responding to critiques from the mass media.

In regard to the State-society Interactive Framework, mass media, regardless of their mode, would contribute to the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces by asking the following questions when there is a crisis.

1) **What is the “hottest” topic at the moment?**

   As crisis status is granted by the people, it would be important to identify the most eye-catching issue. The mechanism employed is simple – the more newspaper coverage there is, the more salient the issue becomes. The cooling down of the issue or event might be an indication of effective crisis management by the government. When the crisis no longer poses a threat to the daily lives of the people, it would soon be forgotten and the people will turn their attention to other important matters.

2) **Where are the fingers pointing at?**

   In a crisis, the assignment of blame is a commonly-agreed procedure both in the leadership approach and politicisation approach. The first step is to identify the
‘culprits’ (Lee and Chan, 2011). If energized public opinion exists\(^{37}\) (Lee and Chan, 2006, i.e., public opinion that is strong and unique), there would be a deterioration of media’s political parallelism, and the culprits would easily be identified.

3) **What are the people asking for? (Solution versus Request)**

Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. (2005) pointed out that the state-society interaction in a crisis could be an endless process unless there is an operational and political termination. As a crisis unfolds, the action of the government would lead to reactions from different actors in the society whom demand further responses from the government. During the action and reaction cycle, Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces would push the crisis through different stages. The gap of expectation between the solution of the government and request of the public is an important factor in determining the Strengthening and Weakening Forces.

The mass media, to a large extent, reflects the public opinion, especially when people are unhappy with the government during crisis. Although pro-government mass media exists in every society (as will be discussed in Chapter Eleven), energized public opinion can still be a warning for the government. However, the existence of media coverage is not enough, as civil society champions the interaction and communication between different actors. Thus, the recent rapid development of new media on the internet has provided a synergy effect in generating Crisis Strengthening Forces.

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\(^{37}\) Lee and Chan (2006) define energized public opinion as a dramatic incident that receives serious debate in the general public. If public opinion was found to be strong, the divergence of political preference of different mass media on may temporarily be reduced.
4.5.2 The Internet: The New Media

The internet does not directly produce Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces, but it provides a platform for stimulating the Forces. Compared to the civil society, the government’s early usage of internet was conservative, and was difficult to be identified as “Forces”. Electronic brochures (Coleman and Blumler 2009) could be taken as a good description of traditional one-way e-communication between government and public. Owing to early technological constraints, the internet was merely a “tool of government”, as described by Margetts (2009). Governments have dominated the communication process by distributing information, notifying the public, and gathering feedback via the internet. E-petition, submission of comments through the internet, and online consultations were common moves by the government to respond to the rapid development of the internet. Nevertheless, the initiative of such gesture can be understood as the government’s attempt to influence social behaviour and shapes the outside world (Margetts 2009), in the sense that the government is still the one who set the agenda, and the internet merely serves as a means to facilitate the overall policymaking process. In this regard, government begins to learn the power of internet on influencing public opinion. However the government may oversee the potentially huge political effect of internet.

The former Premier of China, Wen Jiabao, was one of the pioneers in non-democratic regimes to broadcast through the television, as he regularly hosted dialogues with users of the internet. After screening, some questions and comments from the people were picked, and Premier Wen would answer them on television. Similar mechanisms were observed in Hong Kong. People are being informed and consulted, but their ideas are not taken into account seriously. However, as people’s expectation increase, they are no longer satisfied with such kind of standardized
political participation through the internet. The development of the internet is in line with civil society development in Hong Kong. As suggested by Coleman and Blumler (2009, 114), people are no longer satisfied with merely participating in the policy process as co-decision-makers. Instead, they want to influence those who have a power to make policy decisions. Heller (2003, cited in Coleman and Blumler 2009, 115) referred to this kind of top-down e-participation as something that makes people feel involved, although there is no evidence to suggest that online consultation would lead to output of policy decision. Coleman and Blumler (2009, 115) concluded that it “can be read as a strategy for disciplining civic energy within the constraining techno-political sphere of managed cyberspace”.

As illustrated above, the internet has gradually become an alternative political stage. Compared to the conventional ideas of polity, the internet platform is fairer to its participant, as the differences between resources are not a top priority. Instead, spreading ideas and information through the internet can be rather handy and cheap. Users of social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, can “market” themselves and their opinions at no cost. Moreover, people may respond to them instantly, which may lead to a snowballing effect – a huge number of people may discuss or even readily react to a particular issue in a short period of time. The political influence (as Crisis Strengthening Forces) of the internet is far beyond an “electronic brochure” distributed by the government online.

In operation, stimulating Crisis Strengthening Forces from the internet platform consists of two major steps. First, when people became aware of an issue and discuss about it, they have initiated the formation process of “Forces”. In Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Golden Forum (HKGF, HKGolden.com) and the Hong Kong
Discussion Forum (HKDF, discussion.com.hk) are two popular online discussion forums in Hong Kong. According to Alexa\textsuperscript{38}, a web information company, the Hong Kong Discussion Forum (HKDF) was the thirteenth most popular website in Hong Kong, while The Hong Kong Golden Forum (HKGF) was at the twenty-seventh place. Apart from these two online forums, Facebook also placed second in the Alexa site ranking, and serves as a major platform for e-participation. The “event”, “page”, and “group” functions are always used for expressing agreement or disagreement on different social and political issues.

4.6 Generating the Forces IV: Collective Action

The intensive and rapid discussion on different media should be followed by the second step – a transformation from online to offline participation, in which internet-organized social movements are turned into real political pressure. One of the main goals of social movements is to gain publicity and public exposure through the mass media, which is powerful in constructing political messages (Wicks 2010). Therefore, one of the aims of social movements would be to get reported by the mass media. In this connection, some traditional political icons, such as political parties, pressure groups, and the like will join hands with those activists to attract more people to participate, which in turn will exert more pressure on the policy makers. When the social movement is large enough to become a potential governance crisis, it forms a policy window for government to make the policy change as discussed in the State-society Interactive Framework.

Comparatively speaking, the internet provides a platform for the exchange of ideas,\textsuperscript{38} For the full ranking list of top 500 sites in Hong Kong, please visit: http://www.alex.com/topsites/countries/0/HK
and is free from the control faced when using traditional means. It provides the sufficient condition for developing a bottom-up e-participation, contributing to the mobilization power of the internet. In the beginning, people merely share their point of view toward a specific social or policy issue. However, as time goes by, they may organize themselves for collective action. This transformation from online participation to offline participation (Man 2010) constitutes a new form of social movement – the internet-organized social movement, as well as a post-modernist mode of social movement (So 2008, 241). This kind of new social movement has certain characteristics making it different from the traditional one.

First, it significantly reduces the cost of mobilization. With the aid of the internet, the organizers can now create an event page through Facebook or online forum. They can spread the details of the planned protest through e-mail. People will then be able to meet each other at the designated time and venue. The idea of cyberactivism suggested by McCaughey and Ayers (2003) is a demonstration of the influence of the internet in collective action. In a sense, the internet has regulated the political control, and provides an opportunity for collective social movement.

However, internet-organized social movements also have its weakness. Most importantly, such movements have a loose organization (So 2008, 241) compared to traditional social movements led by interest groups, pressure groups, or political parties with well-known leaders. The parties mobilize people to take part in the social movement through their membership network, which could be considered a top-down approach in mobilization. As mentioned, the traditional means of mobilization no longer dominate the process. Social movement in the internet era tends to be disassociated, non-hierarchical, and have a high feasibility network (So 2008, Coleman and Blumler 2009, Bennett 2003) that everyone can host. Details of
a planned collective action can be spread shortly through the internet even though participants may have no idea about who is hosting the event. It is common for participants in an internet-organized collective action to have no idea about any other detail, such as specific goal or exact protest activities, apart from showing up on time. The major goal of internet-organized social movement is to provide sufficient political pressure, and to gain public exposure in order to influence the government decision-making. Such a kind of a social movement shares some similarities with traditional social movements once it is transformed from online participation to offline participation. On the other hand, such a new mode of social movement has some fundamental loopholes, specifically, in its influencing power due to its internet-organized nature.

From the perspective of the State-society Interactive Framework, the internet-organized social movement has its own pros and cons regarding to the above mentioned two features. First, the internet is good at gathering a large group of people in a short period of time, as it provides instant information and real time communication. The rapid information flow would help in developing the Crisis Strengthening Forces, as mass incidents that happen suddenly always pose great challenges to the government. However, in contrast, internet-organized social movements are poorly organized, and it is difficult to find a coordinator or a leader. Thus, such movements would turn out to be rather short-lived. Unlike those conventional social movements led by political parties, it is difficult for an internet-organized social movement to maintain a large number of participants or supporters over a long period time due to the lack of systematic organization. Nonetheless, online participation would act as a warning to the government – the prelude of potential crisis. Thus, this thesis will discuss the role of the internet in
altering the development of crisis politics, and how it interacts with the real politics offline in the case study of the Anti-high speed railway movement.

4.6.1 How are People Being Mobilized? From Social Issue to Crisis

Besides understanding the role of mass media in crisis politics, the grey area between a social issue and a crisis is also an important issue worth studying. Most crises do not happen in a sudden. As mentioned previously, 't Hart and Boin (2001, 32) categorized crises based on their speed of development and termination, i.e., fast-burning and slow-burning crises. In this regard, a logical expression would be, some crises are developed and intensified from a social issue or problem.

The interview data would be helpful in understanding the process of the intensification a social issue or problem, as it was widely discussed by the respondents, especially by those who are social activists and members of political parties. For example, Respondent C suggested that, under the current Hong Kong political environment, the political influence of a social issue is hard to sustain, especially if those issues were separated from the mainstream public opinion. Usually, people are more concerned with ad-hoc issues that are highly relevant to their daily lives instead of political arguments, such as political conflicts related to institutional reforms (Respondent M).

“Exposing an ‘issue’ is very important but difficult… Unlike many foreign countries, Hong Kong people prefer a separation between politics and livelihood issues… They want ‘de-partization’ (downplaying the party identity in an issue)” (Respondent C)
In dealing with different social issues, political parties and social activists would want to push forward their political agenda to attract public concerns. However, the driving forces are diverged among different non-state actors. As shared by Respondent M, a Pan-democrat social activist:

“Social activists, political parties, and the mass media sometimes share a same target but achieve it with diverged strategies… they seldom complement with each other.” (Respondent M)

“I would say they are simply ‘out of sync’ - social activists, general public, and political parties, they are disconnected… In some cases, there would be immature cooperation between them.” (Respondent C)

According to Respondent M, political parties in Hong Kong are mostly election-oriented. They are concerned with a lot of different issues, but do not have a clear political vision and mission. Therefore, some social activists would refrain from cooperating with political parties, so as to avoid the possibility of being “milked” for vote. Nevertheless, some social activists recognize the role of parties as a source for resources:

“We need support from political parties…. We don’t really care how they are going to milk the story as long as they are helping us.” (Respondent J)

The relationship between social activists and political parties is complicated in projecting a social issue. The process and rationale of making an issue “big” was

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39 “Milking the story” was a term mentioned by Respondent D. It is to describe how do the political parties’ making use of an issue to gain publicity for election without significantly contributed into it. In Hong Kong, it is often called as “hijacking” (qi jie) or “water plumbing” (chou shui) in Chinese.
systematically addressed by Respondent G, a Pan-democrat District Councilor and an
social activist.

“It is not my intention to ‘make things big’…. However, if I follow
formal government procedures… the success rate [of moving the
government to take note on particular social issues] is almost zero
without the aid of the three parties [i.e., social activists, political parties
and the mass media]… If we don’t ‘make the case a crisis’, it is
impossible to achieve this point.” (Respondent G)

As Respondent G observed, the government will be frightened if discussions on the
issue were loud, as it would need to seriously consider how to respond to the public.
Respondent F, from a Pro-establishment party, also shared similar views with his
counterparts.

“Framing an issue into a crisis is useful in influencing government
decision-making… [The oppositions] will try to use social conflicts to
link up a social issue…in order to intensify the public dissatisfaction.”
(Respondent F)

There are different strategies to make an issue loud. With reference to the case
study on the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, protesting may be a way to visualize
political pressure. Unfortunately, as some respondents believed, it might be the
only possible way under the current Hong Kong political context. However, as
Respondents C, G, and I observed, the political influence of protest in Hong Kong is
diminishing, meaning that more participants might be needed in order to significantly
politicize an issue through protest or demonstration.
In summary, politicization is an integrative process, in which social activists, political parties and mass media all play an irreplaceable role. By investigating the interactions among them, important clues can be concluded, which is helpful in accessing the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces in the State-society Interactive Framework. Some might agree with Lau’s (2012, 7) view that part of the governance crises in post-1997 Hong Kong are framed or facilitated by the oppositions in response to the non-democratic political system. However, most of the respondents in the current study, regardless of their political orientation, thought that crises are not created by the public or the public trouble-makers. Rather, the politicization of an issue into a crisis is a strategy to press the government, given that the Hong Kong has yet to implement universal suffrage, and the government is, to a large extent, not responsible to the public.

4.7 The Catalytic Effect of Crisis

Another major finding from the interviews contributes to the formulation of a major component of the Interactive Framework: the Catalytic Effect of Crisis. Respondent C was the first interviewee to mention the word “catalyse”, saying that catalyser is a critical event that would seriously attack the status quo when there is severe public dissatisfaction. The catalyser might not be directly related to a specific crisis, but is a combination of different issues.

“You cannot know whether this issue will become ‘big’, but you need to try until you succeed… You need to wait for a critical point to build it up [into a social crisis].” (Respondent C)
Similar to the usage of disease-as-war languages by some scholars in studying health crises (Baehr 2006, 42; Sontag 1999), for the Pan-democrats, catalyser is a critical moment that leads to significant changes, be it a great step in pushing forward an issue or a fissure of government in the battle of crisis politics. To express a similar situation, the Pro-establishments used the word “bottom line”. As part of a loose alliance\(^{40}\) with the government, their reactions could be used to assess the presence of the Catalytic Effect of Crisis.

“If the bottom line were reached… using NGOs or “satellite organizations” [instead of the party itself], voicing out and imposing political pressure on the government would be a feasible alternative.” (Respondent E)

There is a Chinese saying - “look on with folded arms” (in Chinese: 袖手旁觀; xiù shǒu páng guān). If the catalytic effect appears, the cooperative partnership between the Pro-establishment parties and the government would be suspended. As Respondent F said, if the public opinion were too strong, the Pro-establishment camp would become hesitant on whether they should still side with the government. In general, the Pro-establishments would support the government through different means (e.g., distributing leaflets or explaining for the government publicly) when there are controversies. However, due to the political reality, especially on election concerns, this support is not a guarantee.

“For sure we should ‘sustain the right and blame the wrong’ (in Chinese: 是其是，非其非; shì qí shì, fēi qí fēi)… we should remind the government on their wrongdoings [when the political pressure is huge].” (Respondent L)

\(^{40}\) Respondent E, from a Pro-establishment party, commented themselves as “Three-Not” – not a real political party, not a loyal alliance, and not merely a pressure group.
The identification and assessment of Catalytic Effect of Crisis is of vital importance in the State-society Interactive Framework. However, although “boiling water” could be a metaphor for the catalytic effect, it is difficult to determine the exact point of its occurrence, that is, the critical and irreversible point when public dissatisfaction explodes, in an objective way. An alternate method that could be derived from the interviews is by observing the actions and reactions of the Pro-establishment camp (i.e., political parties and mass media). If catalytic effect is activated, the Pro-establishment camp would probably withdraw their support for the government and side with the mainstream public opinion due to different political calculations.

*How the catalytic effect works in the Interactive Framework*

In the State-society Interactive Framework, the catalytic effect frames and upgrades a governance crisis (provided that the most salient issue can always get immediate response from the government) to government change. As such, crisis can act as a catalyser for reforms (Resodihardjo 2006, 203), social unrests and changes (Powers and Gong 2008). Public dissatisfaction accumulates due to different kinds of government failure and grievances, until a level where any issue related to government wrongdoing may easily become a catalyst for serious governance crisis. Although the catalytic effect of crisis shares some characteristics with Kingdon’s (1995, 165) and Keeler’s (1993) policy window, as both of them represent an opportunity for change, they should be clearly differentiated. First, the catalyser may not serve any particular public agenda, but is a trigger point that ignites different sources of public dissatisfaction - a huge demonstration with a million participants could be a catalyser, but the action (i.e., demonstration) itself might not be directly associated with a particular social problem. Second, as compared to the policy
entrepreneur in Kingdon’s (1995) model that does the coupling, in most cases, different actors within the civil society would initiate the bottom-up crisis management process. They can be leaders of opposition parties, social activists, or owners of major mass media companies.

The Catalytic Effect of Crisis is salient in directing government decision-making in non-democratic regimes, as it can be a means to influence government decisions normally unachievable through formal channels in the institution. There are two levels of change that can be brought by the catalytic effect: The elementary level, in which the government is willing to make a major change in the current policy towards the issue(s) that caused the crisis, and the advanced level, where the legitimacy of the government, a particular leader or even the whole regime is being challenged. The concessions made by the provincial government on land sold after the Siege of Wukan Village in Lufeng, China would fall in the former level whereas the self-immolation Mohamed Bouazizi (a Tunisian street vendor) in protest of police corruption and ill-treatment followed by the mass demonstration that overthrow then-Tunisian President Ben Ali’s regime in Tunisia would fall in the latter.

Referring to Figure 4.1, the catalytic effect is represented by a dotted line, as it is not necessarily present in every crisis. It shares some features with Kingdon’s (1995) policy window, as it is an opportunity that can appear and disappear suddenly. The catalytic effect can to a large extent explain why some crises could “float” in the air for a certain period of time, gained certain level of mass media coverage and attention, but finally faded away.

In line with ’t Hart and Boin’s (2001) typology on crisis development and termination
patterns, the catalytic effect is relevant to the four types of crisis with varying speeds of development and termination. Fast-burning implies that a crisis ends almost as soon as it began, for instance, acute and decisive cases such as a plane hijack or hostage-taking. In this regard, using the 911 Incident as an example, the catalytic effect was activated almost immediately, resulting in the War on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. A slow-burning crisis may take years to reach the status of crisis and years to resolve. For example, the spread of AIDS over the years is an on-going crisis that would fade off in the future with breakthroughs in science and medicine. Cathartic crises describes cases in which tensions are built up slowly until a critical point (i.e., the occurrence of the catalytic effect), at which something may snap or some parties decide to force a break through. Long-shadow crisis can be an incident that suddenly occurs and raises critical issues of a much wider scope and significance. Sometimes, it can become a trigger point for a political crisis, playing the same role as the catalytic effect.

Before moving on to the case studies, the research method and design for the current study will be illustrated in the next chapter. Specifically, discussion on, and justification for, the research methods used (i.e., documentary and archival study, in-depth interviews and media discourse analysis) and the research design of using two case studies (i.e., the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident) will be briefly introduced and explained.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

5.1 Research Methods

In describing social science research, King, Keohane, and Verba’s (1994, 4-5) claimed that there is no fundamental difference between qualitative and quantitative methods, as “both quantitative and qualitative research can be systematic and scientific”, and suggested that, in general, qualitative research does not rely on numerical measurement, as it “has tended to focus on one or a small number of cases, to use intensive interviews or depth analysis of historical materials, to be discursive in method, and to be concerned with a rounded or comprehensive account of some event or unit”. Qualitative analysis can be used to understand a process (Marshall and Rossman 1999), and is in fact applied in numerous studies related to particular events, decisions, and issues. Examples include Kingdon’s (1995) influential streams model in policymaking and Brandstrom and Kuipers’s (2003) studies on political crises.

However, that is not to say that qualitative research is better than quantitative research, or vice versa. Instead, choosing amongst different research methods is a matter of appropriateness, and is dependent on the research topic (Babbie 2007, 286). Qualitative field research, as Babbie (2007, 287) pointed out, “is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviors best understood with their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys”. Lofland and Lofland (1995, 101-113) considered field research a suitable method for studying relationships (behavior appropriate to pairs or set of roles), and therefore, an appropriate method for the study of state-society relationship.
The current research is conducted mainly through qualitative methods supplemented with quantitative data from newspaper discourse analyses. The newspaper discourse analysis intends to provide a multi-dimensional perspective on understanding the crises events chosen as case studies in this research, with reference to Lee and Chan’s (2011) study on the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, and serves to testify the validity of the proposed State-society Interactive Framework. As different sources may lead to different interpretation of the data, this study also aims to map a comprehensive picture of crises by integrating both research methods in order to provide a foundation for the theoretical arguments.

5.1.1 Source of Data I: Documentation and Archival Records

In general, there are six major sources of evidence for conducting case study research, including: 1) Documentation; 2) Archival records; 3) Interviews; 4) Direct observations; 5) Participant-observation; and, 6) Physical artifacts (Yin 1994, 80). Specifically, documentation and archival records\(^{41}\) share similar strengths on stable, unobtrusive, exact, and broad coverage, and are thus united into the same category for this study. Hong Kong government is renowned for its transparency, and government documents, including reports from different departments and committees, press releases, and gazettes are available online. Also, the Legislative Council online archive provides helpful sources of data, such as minutes of meetings, draft and amendments of the bills, and reports by the special committees.

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\(^{41}\) Yin (1994: 81-83) defined “documentation” as data from letters, memoranda, agendas, announcement, minutes, reports, administrative documents, and newspaper clippings, and “archival records” as data from service records, organization records, maps, charts, and second-hand survey data. Following this definition, some data in the current research may fall into both categories concurrently, such as the investigation report by the Hospital Authority on the SARS incident was a report (i.e., documentation) with organization charts and service records (i.e., archival records). Thus, documentation and archival records are united into one category for easy understanding.
Information and data related to the case studies in this study come from four sources of documents and archival records: First, press releases from the Hong Kong SAR Government, including transcripts of announcements and press conference from specific government officials or bureaus, are very important source of data, especially in Antony Leung’s Car-Gate Scandal. Second, minutes and papers from LegCo meetings provide valuable information, as the monitoring role of lawmakers, to a large extent, forces the government to provide more details and materials on specific issues. Without the fruitful data from the LegCo, pattern-matching would be difficult, if not impossible. Third, the setting up of investigation committees and panels is a foreseeable consequence in the aftermath of crises, and their investigation reports, such as the three SARS reports written by the HKSAR government, LegCo, and Hospital Authority respectively, are valuable reference material. Finally, a good method of ensuring the validity of the data would be crosschecking with newspaper coverage, since the role of the mass media is particularly important in the early stages, when incidents are published and the politicization process starts (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003, 282). Therefore, besides using data from the government, articles and reports from different newspapers would be utilized to provide a better understanding of the issues.

In this study, articles from one local English newspaper - South China Morning Post (SCMP) and four local Chinese newspapers - Ming Pao, Oriental Daily, Wenweipo and Apple Daily, are used as reference. Past editions of these newspapers can be found on Wise News, an online newspaper search engine available from the electronic library of Lingnan University. In addition, specific pieces of articles from other newspapers will be cited if necessary.
As mentioned in the literature review, mass media tend to “mediatize” a crisis in three steps: Framing the issue, identifying the culprits, and addressing blames. This is an unavoidable process in the political context of crisis management. Considering the large numbers of media outlets in Hong Kong, it may be impractical to analyze all media discourses for a crisis (Lee and Chan 2011, 67). In their study of media discourse on the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, Lee and Chan (2011) chose to focus on newspapers, claiming that their reports are more valid as they “contain richer and more detailed contents than television and radio newscasts, which are much shorter in duration and thus provide fewer materials for analysis.” C.-c. Lee (2000) suggested that the local Chinese newspapers in Hong Kong can be divided into several categories. The first one is the elite-oriented newspapers, which emphasize a sense of professionalism, and the traditions of objectivity and neutrality. This is represented by Ming Pao in Lee and Chan’s (2011) study. The authors selected Wenweipo as the representative for the next category: Pro-Beijing newspapers directly under the control of Chinese Communist Government. The final category contains several of the most popular newspapers in Hong Kong. With their large number of readers, their approaches in reporting news could reflect market reality, and to a large extent, represent their readers’ perceptions. For this category, Lee and Chan (2011) chose Oriental Daily, a pro-Beijing media due to the background of its top management42, and Apple Daily, which is well-known for its firm support of the Pan-Democrats, as well as the democratization of Hong Kong.

5.1.2 Source of Data II: Interviews

Field research is good for studying dynamic or rapidly changing situations (Singleton

42 The Oriental Daily is owned by the Ma family in Hong Kong. Ma Ching-kwan, the former chairman of the company, was a member of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.
and Straits 2005, 308), which are major characteristics of a crisis. In this research, apart from the documentation and archival records mentioned in the previous section, data is collected through in-depth interviews with social activists, political party members, and journalists. The advantage of using multiple sources of evidence is that the validity and reliability of the case studies could be enhanced (Yin 1994, 90).

It should be made clearly at this point. The data collected from the interviews were mainly used for the construction of the State-society Interactive Framework. With a view to gather as much data as possible, and to prevent any potential sensitivity issues of the respondents, the interview questions (see Appendix III) mainly focus on the overall crisis politics in Hong Kong. The justification is that some of the interviewees were employees of media companies or political parties, they may not be in a good position to disclose the exact details and name of the persons who involved in a particular crisis event. Thus, asking them for their observations on general crisis politics operates in Hong Kong would be more beneficial to current study on theory construction. However, in certain possible circumstances, some interviewees were feeling free to share their information which was relevant to my case studies. The data collected may act as supplemental evidence to enrich the research findings, and to verify documentary materials for the case studies.

Interviewees were selected on purpose based on snowball sampling. In total, 17 respondents have been interviewed (please refer to Appendix II). Except the first two pilot interviews (i.e., Respondents A and B), which provided insights and directions for this research, all other interviews were recorded. Following Solinger’s (2006, 159) suggestions, the interviewer responsible for the in-depth interviews should have a very clear understanding on the literature and documentary materials, so that the respondents could gain awareness of the interviewer’s
knowledge and preparation on the issue, which would facilitate the conversation (Solinger 2006, 163). The interviews continued until no significant findings could be drawn from the new respondents.

To minimize the potential threats of selection bias and to ensure that they come from different backgrounds and status, the profiles of the interviewees were pre-screened according to three major requirements (Please see Appendix II for profiles of the respondents). First, social activists with and without political affiliation are both included, on the assumption that there are strategic differences between the two, as those who are members of political parties are either engaged in or aiming to enter formal governmental institutions, such as District Council or Legislative Council, and those with no party affiliation are mostly fighting for their interest outside the institution (through demonstration), or acting as pressure groups to influence political parties (through lobbying). In this regard, two District Councillors, and one former and one current member of the LegCo, one of whom is also currently a District Councillor (that is, three District Councillors in total) were interviewed.

Second, to reflect the differences in roles and level of engagement in decision-making in political parties, interviewees were selected from different positions (level) within political parties, including those in leadership positions (Chairperson or Vice-chairperson), and committee members or frontiers, such as convener of regional committee or supervisor in the party’s district office.

Finally, interviewees from different political backgrounds were invited. Among the 17 respondents, 10 are affiliated with a political party, with a ratio of 50:50 between Pan-democrat and Pro-establishment. In addition, four respondents are current or
former journalists from the three largest news groups in Hong Kong. It should be noted that some of the respondents may have multiple identities. For example, a former lawmaker can be currently a commentator and journalist. Interviewing respondents with a wide variety of experience is helpful for viewing an issue from different angles and forming a comprehensive picture on crises, and these respondents contributed hugely by suggesting alternate crisis management perspectives.

Considering the fact that most of the respondents are elites with a relatively high social status (e.g., LegCo member or well-known politicians), the interview questions were drafted, and run downs planned, based on the works of political scientists who are experts in conducting elite interview such as Aberbach and Rockman (2002), Berry (2002) and Leech (2002). Following their advice on question order, the usage of prompts, coding methods and issues on validity and reliability in elite interviewing, a semi-structured interview was planned, with a basic set of interview questions as listed in Appendix III.

5.1.3 Source of Data III: Media Discourse Analysis

Media discourse analysis is an important method useful in assessing the severity of crises. Altheide (2002) discussed the relationship between news and the construction of crisis on the dimension of framing and creating fear, and suggested six elements that need to be considered when conducting discourse analysis on news:

1) A comprehensive information base that is readily accessible;
2) A rationale for comparative searching over time;
3) Enumerating shifts and trends;
4) Examining denotative and connotative shifts;
5) Combining words into meaningful patterns and themes; and,
6) Expanding patterns into other mass media and popular culture.

Media discourse analysis is also useful as an alternate source of data for assessing the Strengthening Forces and Weakening Forces as suggested in the State-society Interactive Framework. In selecting among different possible methods, their ability in analysing the interaction between the state and society, and also between the Strengthening and Weakening Forces, are considered. Obviously, the political outcomes do not necessarily reflect the real performance of the government in certain crises, as the identification of failure is not the recognition of a fact but a man-made (i.e. mediatization) process (Edelman 1988). The three elements below should be identified to apply the State-society Interactive Framework.

1) Crisis management and its effectiveness: The action of the state
2) Politicization of a crisis: Reaction of the society to the crisis and to the state
3) The existence (or not) of the Catalytic Effect of Crisis

It may be impractical to analyse all media discourses as there are large numbers of media outlets all over the world. One of the possible methods would be the media discourse analysis that Lee and Chan (2011) conducted on the 1 July 2003 Demonstration in Hong Kong. The authors claimed this method to be more valid, as they “contain richer and more detailed contents than television and radio newscasts, which are much shorter in duration and thus provide less material for analysis” (Lee and Chan 2011, 67). In their study, Lee and Chan selected four local newspapers (i.e. Apple Daily, Oriental Daily, Wenweipo and Ming Pao) according to the categories they belonged to, as well as their political preferences as discussed.
The first step of the analysis was a search of relevant newspaper articles through the electronic news archive available from universities or public libraries. By setting a specific time frame, all news reports, editorials and commentaries bearing the “keywords” were chosen for the analysis. The different newspapers chosen should roughly represent the political domain in the society.

A crisis is divided into different time frames for conducting the newspaper discourse analysis. The results generated from different periods of time are compared with reference to the three questions mentioned in Chapter Four (Section 4.4.1) to identify the relationship between the Strengthening and Weakening Forces and the movement between different crisis development levels (i.e., crisis, governance crisis, and change), with special attention devoted to the presence (or not) of the catalytic effect. Based on the results from newspaper discourse analysis on the case studies as presented in the next chapter, the State-society Interactive Framework is applied to analyze the two crisis events – the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident respectively.

5.2 Research Outline

As indicated in Table 5.1, the current research is conducted in four stages. Stage One is literature review, which aims to review the most up-to-date research in the field of crisis management, examine theoretical discussion by different scholars, and identify major analytical approaches for case studies. Moreover, as the focus of this research is on the crisis management of Hong Kong SAR Government, local studies on governance and crises are also revisited to illustrate the prospect of conducting
crisis studies in Hong Kong.

Two parts of case studies, namely the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and Anti-High Speed Railway Incident, are addressed in Stage Two. With reference to the documentary and archival studies and data from interviews, the pattern-matching strategy is adopted to identify the research gap and justify for the need for introducing a new approach.

Stage Three details the development of the Framework, from identifying the limitation of current theories in explaining the Hong Kong cases, to constructing the Framework with reference to original data drawn from the interviews.

In the final stage, the case studies are analyzed again using the new State-society Interactive Framework, with results from newspaper discourse analyses serving as evidence to testify and enhance its validity. Apart from making theoretical innovation, the interview data also provides insights for understanding the crisis provoking politics in Hong Kong.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Literature Review</th>
<th>Stage 2: Case Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review crisis management literature, models, approaches, etc.</td>
<td>- Apply the analytical approaches to Hong Kong cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify major analytical approaches for conducting case studies</td>
<td>- Identify their strengths and weaknesses from case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Illustrate the prospect of crisis studies in Hong Kong</td>
<td>- Pattern-matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify room for further theoretical development</td>
<td>- Identify the gap and the need for a new approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research activities / sources of data:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research activities / sources of data:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literature review on crisis management</td>
<td>- Archival studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Literature review on HK studies</td>
<td>- Newspapers analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3:</strong> Constructing the new approach</td>
<td><strong>Stage 4:</strong> Applying the new approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Analyse the research findings</td>
<td>- Operationalize the State-society Interactive Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Introduce the State-society Interactive Framework</td>
<td>- Testify the applicability of the State-society Interactive Framework on case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comprehend the details of the approach</td>
<td>- Identify limitations and suggest avenues for future research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discuss the major theoretical contributions to the field</td>
<td><strong>Research activities / sources of data:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research activities / sources of data:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research activities / sources of data:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Model building</td>
<td>- Archival and Documentary studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interviews (major)</td>
<td>- Newspapers discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Four stages of this research

5.3 Research Design: Case Study

Case study is one of the most popular research strategies used in social science research. As stated by Yin (1994, 1), “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control
over events, and when focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” Consider the current study, in which the major research question is: “How much can the current crisis management theories, which are developed based on the western democratic system, illustrate the crisis politics in Hong Kong, where full democracy is absent? Why can (or can’t) they?”, and the focus of investigation is on contemporary crises in the real-life context. According to Yin (1994), case study would be the best choice.

George and Bennett (2005, 19-21) identified four major strengths of using the case study method. First, high levels of conceptual validity can be achieved while identifying and measuring the indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts. Second, this method has great advantages in the “heuristic identification of new variables and hypotheses through the study of deviant or outlier cases and in the course of field work” (George and Bennett 2005, 20). Third, the development process of causal mechanisms in individual case can be examined comprehensively. Fourth, case study is able to model and assess complex causal relations, such as complex interactions effects. This is highly relevant to the State-society Interactive Framework, which describes the interactions between different stakeholders during crises in Post-1997 Hong Kong.

5.3.1 Case Study and Theory Development

Theory development is an essential step in designing a case study (Yin 1994, 27), as it provides a “sufficient blueprint” (Yin 1994, 28) for study. Sometimes, theory development can be difficult when existing works provide rich theoretical framework. However, for some other topics, the existing knowledge base may be insufficient, as
the current literature provides no or little conceptual framework (Ibid). The condition for crisis management study in the current research is located in the middle of these two extremes, and thus, is rather complicated. As discussed in the literature review, current crisis management theories were developed mainly based on the western democratic system. Therefore, the applicability of these theories to a limited democracy, as in the case of Hong Kong, is questionable. In this situation, the case studies adopted in this research can serve as a basis for enriching the theory of crisis management through “analytical generalization”, defined by Yin (1994, 31) as a method “in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study”.

Eisenhardt (1989, 548) praised the strengths of theories developed from case study research, such as “novelty, testability, and empirical validity, which arise from the intimate linkage with empirical evidence”, and mentioned that case selection is an extremely important task for a successful and influential case study, as “strong studies are those which present interesting or frame-breaking theories which meet the tests of good theory or concept development and are grounded in convincing evidence” (Eisenhardt 1989, 549).

5.3.2 Pattern-Matching: Developing a New Approach

The pattern-matching strategy is adopted in this study to develop the State-society Interactive Framework. Pattern-matching is a logic that compares an empirically-based pattern with a predicted one (Yin 1994, 106). Referring to Trochim’s (Trochim 1989, 355) basic pattern-matching model in Figure 5.1, pattern-matching basically involves the specification of a theoretical pattern, the
researching of an observed pattern, and an effort to match these two.

**Figure 5.1 The basic pattern-matching model** (Trochim 1989, 356)

If the observation realm and the theoretical realm were matched, the validity of the study would be enhanced, providing a stronger basis for theoretical influence Trochim’s (1989, 355). In contrast, if the results acquired do not match the theoretic patterns, the variable becomes nonequivalent. This implies that the initial theory proposition is to be questioned (Yin 1994, 107). The current study also utilizes pattern-matching process by applying the current crisis management approaches (i.e. Leadership and Politicization Approaches) into the case studies, and the results are unsatisfactory, as deviation exists between the observed realm and theoretical realm (as detailed in Chapter Six). Therefore, based on the theory
development and pattern-matching strategies as discussed, the State-society Interactive Framework is developed with the aim to connect the missing links in current literature.

5.4 Case Selection

Four crisis cases leading to two major crisis events - the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident in late 2009 - are selected for case study. As suggested by scholars and commentators, the 2003 Demonstration is a result of a number of government failures and crises that had happened before the rally (J. Cheng 2005, A. Cheung 2005a, 2005b, Wong and Wan 2005). The conventional crisis management approaches were mostly event-based, meaning each case study focused on one single crisis event. However, since the State-society Interactive Framework emphasizes on the development of crisis provoking politics, a comprehensive study on crises with different natures that might have led to a single crisis event is conducted in the current study. Specifically, when studying the historic crisis event of the 500,000-people demonstration on 1 July 2003, the following incidents could not be ignored: 1) Antony Leung’s car gate scandal; 2) the SARS crisis; and, 3) the controversy on the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law regarding the National Security Ordinance.

The 2003 Demonstration and Anti-High Speed Railway Incident are chosen for two reasons. First, these cases are helpful in explaining the proposed “Catalytic Effect of Crisis”, as the 2003 Demonstration was stated by many as a result of the many different crises that threatened the poor governance of then - CE Tung Chee-hwa’s administration, and, while the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident was a single and
unique incident with clear goals and objectives, there should be opportunities or timing for creating a critical moment for a complex crisis or single crisis. Second, Article 23 of the Basic Law and the construction of the High Speed Railway were related to legislation and government policy respectively. The withdrawal of the legislation of Article 23 was undoubtedly the consequence of the half-a-million people protest. However, from a civil society development perspective, the Anti-High Speed Railway movement was a successful and well-organized social movement, despite the fact that no government concession was observed. As discussed in the literature review, the role of social activists in governance crisis is often neglected in conventional crisis management studies.

As outlined in Table 5.2, three incidents were identified as precursors to the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. In the following chapters, the Leadership Approach and Politicization Approach are first applied to the three incidents, in addition to the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident, to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches in illustrating the crisis politics in Hong Kong. The pattern-matching strategy is adopted with two main focuses: First, to determine whether both approaches work well in explaining different types of crises, including political

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Arrangement for Leadership and Politicization Approach</th>
<th>Case Study Arrangement for State-society Interactive Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Antony Leung’s Car Gate Scandal</td>
<td>1. 1 July 2003 Demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SARS Outbreak</td>
<td>1. Anti-High Speed Railway Incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Article 23 Controversy: The triggering event of the 1 July Demonstration 2003</td>
<td>2. Anti-High Speed Railway Incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Anti-High Speed Railway Incident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 Case Selection
scandal, man-facilitated crisis on disease, and policy failure, and second, to investigate whether there are cases in which existing theories are violated or are inapplicable. This is followed by an analysis on the four events using the State-society Interactive Framework to provide a comprehensive account of the social crisis which will be appeared in Chapter Nine.
CASE STUDY PART I: 1 JULY 2003 DEMONSTRATION

1 July 2003 was a remarkable day in Hong Kong history. Half-a-million people marched onto the streets, peacefully protesting the poor governance of then-CE Tung Chee-hwa’s administration since 1997. The implication of this rally is far-reaching and long-lasting - it was said to be the watershed of Hong Kong civil society development (Chan and Chan 2007), since after this demonstration, the entire political atmosphere of Hong Kong has changed dramatically, especially for the Hong Kong – CPG relationship, as the Hong Kong crisis has become an important issue in the eyes of Beijing (J. Cheng 2005).

Underlying cause – Economic Depression since the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis

The poor economic environment after the handover was an underlying cause of the 2003 Protest which can be dated back to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. In fact, during the first six years of HKSAR, Hong Kong economy had experienced three “plightful waves” (Ng and Ip 2005, 381). The currency attacks in Hong Kong during the Asian Financial Crisis were named as the single most important economic event in Post-1997 Hong Kong (F. Lui 2002, 243). At the same time, stock prices in Hong Kong Stock Exchange had dropped dramatically for 60% from the peak in August 1997 to the bottom twelve months later. The second wave followed the American led global recession in the wake of the collapse of the “new economy” bubble and the 9/11 episode in 2001 and the third wave was brought by SARS in 2003.

Under these circumstances, the economy of Hong Kong was in great depression. It could be reflected by the increases in employment rate of Hong Kong. The
unemployment rate was over 6% in 2002 and hit the peak of 8.8% in July 2003. “Hong Kong workers became obsessed with employment and job insecurity as the number of business closures and failures, downsizing and staff cutbacks multiples” (Ng and Ip 2005, 381). The public dissatisfaction on the poor economy has been transformed to political pressure towards the SAR Government.

Except the economic factor, many reasons have been cited to account for the outbreak of 2003 rally, including, but not limited, to the poor leadership of Tung in his first term of office (1997-2002), (J. Cheng 2005), the dynamic relationship between Hong Kong and Beijing (A. Cheung 2005a), the poor crisis management skills of the government in dealing with various crises since late 2002 (A. Cheung 2005a), and the institutional failure of the newly-implemented Principal Official Accountability System (POAS) (A. Cheung 2005b, Wong and Wan 2005). In addition to discovering the reasons, it is of interest to adopt different crisis management approaches, as discussed in previous chapters, to analyze this historic event. As mentioned previously, the aim of the crisis management models is not to judge whether the government is performing efficiently or not, but to investigate the action and reaction of different non-state actors, especially on how their performances affect the outcomes.

In this Case Study Part I, the three events identified as the major reasons leading to the 1 July 2003 Demonstration – the ultimate governance crisis – are discussed. First, the Car-Gate Scandal of Antony Leung, then-Financial Secretary, was an incident that hurt the confidence of the people in the then-newly-introduced POAS (A. Cheung 2005b), and his resignation was regarded as a direct result of the huge demonstration. The controversy related to the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic
Law regarding national security was another important element leading to the rally, and was eventually deemed a policy failure as the bill was withdrawn by Tung a week after the demonstration. In addition to these two man-made crises, the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in early 2003 was a grave public health incident that took the lives of about 300 Hong Kong people and caused billions of dollars in economic losses as a result of the travel warning issued by the World Health Organization.

The next four chapters (Chapters Six to Nine) cover Case Study Part I, with Chapters Six to Eight being the case study of the three crisis events mentioned. In each chapter, news reports of the events are first presented in order to demonstrate the development of the events. Next, by applying the Leadership Approach and Politicization Approach, the comprehensiveness and applicability of these two western crisis management approaches in Hong Kong context is analyzed, along with a brief summary concluding the major observations. After the individual case studies, a comprehensive analysis of the 2003 Demonstration is given in Chapter Nine by applying the State-society Interactive Framework.
CHAPTER SIX: ANTONY LEUNG’S CAR-GATE SCANDAL

6.1 Background

The scandal was first exposed by Apple Daily on 9 March 2003, a few days after the annual budget speech on 5 March, in which an increase in vehicle first registration tax was announced. On the headline, Apple Daily disclosed that then-Financial Secretary Antony Leung had acquired a new Lexus in January 2003, when he was preparing the budget speech. Days before the exposure, Apple Daily reporters had asked the news secretary of the Financial Secretary regarding the car purchase, and received the following feedback: 1) The Financial Secretary confirmed that he had bought a Lexus in January; 2) the new car was purchased in expectation of his new-born baby; and, 3) the tax difference before and after the tax increment was around $50,000 (Apple Daily, 9 March 2003). On the same day, Leung made a short announcement in front of the media, and agreed to donate $100,000, which he believed was twice the amount of the tax difference, to charity.

“In hindsight, I should have avoided suspicion on conflict of interest, and should not buy a new car before the potential tax adjustment. However, I really needed a car and had not meant for tax avoidance.” (Financial Secretary’s Q&A Transcript, Government Press Release, 9 March 2003)

Leung’s short explanation and his donation proved unsuccessful in curbing the spread of the scandal, and the public was waiting for then-CE Tung Chee-hwa’s response. A day later, on 10 March, Tung made a short statement stating that he believed that Leung did not have any intention to make personal gain, although the issue appeared to be a conflict of interest.
“I believe that he did not do it for personal gain, it is not deliberately done for gains. I have asked again and again all my colleagues in the Government when it comes to issues of conflict of interest, we need to be whiter than white, apply the highest standard of oneself.” (CE’s Transcript, Government Press Release, 10 March 2003)

On the same day, a car dealer claimed that the real tax difference should be $190,000 instead of the $50,000 claimed by Leung, and Leung increased his charity donation to $380,000 (double the amount of the new tax difference) accordingly.

After a few days’ investigation, the Chief Executive sent a public letter to Leung regarding his scandal. In the letter, Tung admitted that Leung’s car purchase before the tax increase “would inevitably arouse public suspicion of conflict of interest” (The Office of the CE, 15 March 2003), and Leung’s action had breached Sections 5.1 and 5.4\(^{43}\) of the Code for Principal Officials under the Accountability System. However, Tung accepted Leung’s explanation that the incident was just an oversight, and that he had no intention to evade the tax liability. Furthermore, Tung also disclosed that Leung had made a resignation on 10 March 2003, which Tung did not accept, but instead reprimanded him with a formal criticism (Perceived Conflict of Interest in Your Purchase of a Car, The Chief Executive’s Office, 15 March 2003).

According to some local newspapers (Apple Daily, Ming Pao, 16 March 2003), in the Executive Council (ExCo) meeting on 5 March 2003, Yeoh Eng-kiong, then-Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, made a declaration that he had ordered a car in January, which was confirmed by the government on 18 March 2003. This

\(^{43}\) Section 5.1 of the Code for Principal Official stated that “Politically appointed officials shall avoid putting themselves in a position where they might arouse any suspicion of dishonesty, unfairness or conflict of interest”, while Section 5.4 stated that “Politically appointed officials shall report to the Chief Executive any private interests that might influence, or appear to influence, their judgment in the performance of their duties” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau, 2002).
brought further criticism on Leung, as it implied that his “oversight” was no longer convincing. As a result, some Pan-democrat lawmakers asked for Leung’s resignation.

However, efforts to push Leung out of office were not fruitful. In the Legislative Council, there was a move to press the Chief Executive for an independent inquiry in March, a move to authorize the use of Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance to investigate Leung’s case in April, and a motion of no confidence on Leung in May, all of which were defeated by the majority (Please refer to Table 6.1 for the timeline of the scandal). As time elapsed, the scandal was no longer a headliner, and the pressure on Leung to step-down was apparently relaxed until the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. Soon after the rally, in mid-July, Leung resigned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 March 2003</td>
<td>Apple Daily exposed the scandal. Antony Leung spoke to the media and offered to donate $100,000, which he believed was twice the amount of the tax difference, to charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 March 2003</td>
<td>CE Tung Chee-hwa admonished Leung publicly through mass media. Car dealer made a call to a radio phone-in program to report that Leung had actually saved $190,000 on tax. Afterward, Leung raised his donation to 380,000 to charity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2003</td>
<td>Leung received a letter from Tung saying that the mistake warranted a form critical but not a resignation. Leung admitted that he had offered to resign if necessary on 10 March 2003, but he withdrew his offer and made a public apology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 March 2003</td>
<td>Newspaper reported that Yeoh Eng-kiong, then-Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, had declared that he had ordered a car in January in the ExCo meeting on 5 March 2003 (Budget Day).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 March 2003</td>
<td>LegCo discussed the issue. Leung was invited to testify.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March 2003</td>
<td>The government confirmed that Yeoh had made a declaration during the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 March 2003 ExCo meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 March 2003</td>
<td>A move to press Chief Executive for an independent inquiry into the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>controversy was blocked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 April 2003</td>
<td>A move to authorize the use of Legislative Council (Powers and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privileges) Ordinance to investigate Leung’s case was defeated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May 2003</td>
<td>A no-confidence motion on Leung was defeated by the LegCo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 July 2003</td>
<td>Leung resigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from local newspapers, HKSAR Government Press Releases, LegCo minutes and reports

6.2 Leadership Approach Analysis

Sense-Making

Sense-making is to grasp crisis as it unfolds (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005). In the Car-Gate scandal, there were two chances for the early recognition of crisis. First, Leung should bear the sole responsibility of being aware of a potential conflict of interest. However, he failed to reveal any information about his car purchase until the incident was exposed as a scandal by a newspaper. Second, Apple Daily reporters had enquired Leung’s news secretary, Raymond Tam Chi-yuen, about Leung’s new car purchase a few days before the scandal made the headline. Therefore, it is important to understand whether Tam and Leung understood the seriousness and the political sensitivity of the issue.

According to various sources of data, including the explanation made by Leung himself in the LegCo meeting, Leung did not recognize the possibility of conflict of interest between his car purchase and the first registration tax increase he proposed in the budget. He even claimed that his intention was to absolutely separate his private life and his public duty (LC Paper No. CB(2)1819/02-03). On the other
hand, when Tam reported to Leung about the enquires from mass media, Leung asked Tam to reply to them as follows: 1) He did buy a new Lexus in January; 2) he bought the car for his new-born baby; and, 3) there was a $50,000 tax difference (Apple Daily, 9 March 2003). On 9 March 2003, Apple Daily made the scandal a headliner, and the Car-Gate scandal officially became a crisis and “made a sense”.

**Decision-Making**

The decision-making body of this scandal was precise and clear: Leung, Tung, and Tung’s cabinet. The decision-making process was relative simple for a political scandal, with two main concerns as follows: First, the relationship between Leung’s car purchase and his decision to increase the vehicle first registration tax. As a senior financial official, Leung was responsible for the fiscal policy of Hong Kong, and should foresee the financial policies of the city. Apart from the potential conflict of interest, the extent to which he had violated the Code for Principal Official under the Accountability System was also questioned by the public. Besides, the level of “punishment” imposed by Tung was a concern. According to the POAS, political appointees are directly accountable to the Chief Executive, and the supervisor-subordinate relationship was clear and well-perceived by the general public. Therefore, any decision made by Tung regarding Leung could be regarded as an important crisis management decision, as Leung had already admitted that his actions were inappropriate in this case.

**Meaning-Making**

Political communication was crucial to the management of this crisis. Nevertheless, under the Leadership Approach, the decision on what information was to be released to the media was mainly a top-down process. In this case, creditability was
important (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005), as this is the core value for senior government officials who are politically appointed. On studying the responses from Leung and Tung, some important “meaning” can be discovered. First, Leung claimed that his aim was not to evade tax. This response can be deliberated as follows: 1) He was willing to “compensate” for the tax difference (by making a donation of $100,000, and later $380,000, to charity). He made the decision instantly, and he asked his news secretary, Raymond Tam, to emphasize the increase in the amount of money he was willing to donate, and to remind the mass media to take note of this (LC Paper No. CB(2)1819/02-03). 2) He bought the new car for his family. He further emphasized that it was strictly bought for his new-born baby, and with no intention of profit-making or tax evasion. This statement was the major focus of Leung’s explanation, and was brought up in almost every occasion until Leung resigned, either by Leung himself (Apple Daily 9 March 2003; Financial Secretary’s Q&A Transcript, Government Press Release, 9 March 2003; LC Paper No. CB(2)1819/02-03), or by Tung (CE’s Transcript, Government Press Release, 10 March 2003; Perceived Conflict of Interest in Your Purchase of a Car, The Chief Executive’s Office, 15 March 2003).

The responses by Leung and Tung can be seen as an attempt to “frame” the scandal, one of the three meaning-making strategies proposed by Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al.’s (2005). In this case, Leung tried his best to frame his wrongdoings as an “oversight” (Perceived Conflict of Interest in Your Purchase of a Car, The Chief Executive’s Office, 15 March 2003), stating reasons such as carelessness, political insensitivity, and no intention to evade tax.
**Terminating**

Regarding the termination of a political scandal, political closure, despite the uncertainty in its effect, usually draws the most attention. In this case, there were two major junctures that could be identified as (intended) political closure. The “formal criticism” (Perceived Conflict of Interest in Your Purchase of a Car, The Chief Executive’s Office, 15 March 2003) made by Tung on Leung after the investigation, and Leung’s public apology (The Financial Secretary’s Statement on the Purchase of a New Car, 15 March 2003) could be the first intended political closure aimed at resolving the crisis. However, the criticism was not well-received by the public, especially after Yeoh Eng-kiong declaration was exposed one day later (i.e. 16 March). The second political closure could be after the defeat in LegCo of the three moves related to this scandal, namely, the move to press Chief Executive for an independent inquiry into the controversy (on 21 March), the move to authorize the use of Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance to investigate the case (on 9 April), and a motion of no-confidence on Leung (on 7 May). The defeat of these three moves could also be regarded as an operational closure, as there was no way to blame Leung within the political arena. In fact, the ICAC was carrying out an investigation of the case at that time, but the Judiciary decided not to press charges on Leung. The final closure of the crisis came as Leung eventually had resigned in July.

**Learning**

According to convention wisdom, people should learn a lesson from previous mistake. However, the learning process of leaders could be internal and might not be observable. Since Leung explained his wrongdoings as an “oversight”, the principal government officials should have learnt to be more careful and be more
politically sensitive.

However, although the “Twelve-month Report on Implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau 2003), did mention “The Car Purchase Incident” and make a point on the issue of conflict of interest, it seemed to be defending, rather than discovering problems related to, the POAS. As stated in the Report, the Principal Official (i.e., Leung) was “prepared to bear the political responsibility and apologized to the public” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau 2003). He had “acted in a manner which is consistent with their role as politically-appointed officials” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau 2003). Also, “the Code for Principal Officials under the Accountability System has been accepted by the public as the basis for measuring the behavior and conduct of Principal Officials against public expectations. The Code serves as a useful yardstick for all concerned” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau 2003). Considering this, from an institutional perspective, the government seemed to have learnt nothing from this crisis.

However, from the public perspective, the Leung’s case has “sensitized the public to conflict of interest issues and to unethical practices beyond traditional concerns with bribery and embezzlement and the abuse of public office” (Scott and Leung 2012, 43) in which to some extent has drawn the public attention onto the integrity issue of public officials. In fact, a number of former and current government officials has been involved into different scandal that related to conflict of interest such as Leung Chin-man, a former Director of Housing, accepted a post-public appointment to a development company with which he had been accused as receiving potential “delayed benefit” in 2008. The increase of public awareness on integrity issue can be regarded as another form of post-crisis learning process.
6.3 Politicization Approach Analysis

**Constructing Severity**

In constructing severity, the major concern is whether the core values of the public had been violated (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003). In the Car-Gate scandal, Leung, as a senior government official and a political appointee under the POAS, was faced with two serious allegations related to core public values: Conflict of interest and the integrity of a principal official. This could explain why the case soon became the hottest topic in town through reports by mass media and inquiries from lawmakers.

**Constructing Agency**

Recall that a crisis can be framed either a stand-alone, ad hoc disturbance in a system, or a symptom of a much larger systematic failure (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003). How the crisis is framed would affect the direction of movement onto the next dimension (i.e., responsibility dimension). Although it is difficult to make a judgment, Leung’s case was apparently an ad hoc incident, especially since no similar incidents were seen afterwards. However, “going back to the history” (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003) showed that the case was more likely to be a “symptom”, as LegCo reports on the scandal showed that the discussion on reviewing the vehicle first registration tax was already in progress since July 2001, long before Leung became the FS (IN16/02-03, LegCo Secretariat 2003).

**Constructing Responsibility**

In this dimension, a crisis can be framed as either an actor failure or a network failure. At first sight, the Car-Gate scandal seemed to be the failure of an individual policy-maker – Leung himself. However, as C.-y.Cheung (2005) argued, Leung
and Tung seemed to interpret the Code\textsuperscript{44} differently in the very beginning. Specifically, Leung’s immediate resignation indicated that he believed his failure was serious enough to warrant the consideration of ministerial dismissal. However, Tung’s public letter\textsuperscript{45} indicated that he thought a formal criticism was enough, and expected only a public apology, rather than resignation, from Leung. It was not until after the 2003 Demonstration that Tung changed his mind and accepted Leung’s resignation on 16 July 2003. As a result of this, A. Cheung (2005a) argued that the POAS fell short of the requirements to take accountability seriously, and there was a grey area between actor failure and network failure, as they were not mutually exclusive.

6.4 Summary

There were both strengths and weaknesses in applying the Leadership Approach and Politicization Approach on the Car-Gate Scandal. Using the Leadership Approach, due to the nature of Car-Gate as a political scandal, sense-making and decision-making were clear and could be easily identified. The headline of the 9 March 2003 edition of Apple Daily was the prelude of Leung’s scandal, and the decision-making body was rather small and concentrated, probably consisting of Leung, Tung, a few members in Tung’s cabinet, and their subordinates in a supporting role. The meaning-making and terminating processes, in contrast, were relatively diverted. Leung’s explanation of an “oversight” was not readily accepted by the public in the meaning-making stage, and his survival in the motion of no-confidence could not even be guaranteed if there were universal suffrage in the

\textsuperscript{44} Code for Principal Official under the Accountability System (Constitutional Affairs Bureau, 2002)
\textsuperscript{45} “Perceived Conflict of Interest in Your Purchase of a Car” (The Chief Executive’s Office, 15 March 2003)
LegCo, as the public tended not to accept his explanation and apology (C.-y. Cheung 2005). Moreover, the terminating process, either operational or political, should be questioned, as the resignation of Leung (16 July 2003) came far later than the time his scandal was being made a sense. Instead, his resignation was generally perceived as a direct result of the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. Finally, in the learning process, from the institutional perspective, the HKSAR Government seemed to refuse to admit that Leung’s case was a failure of POAS. Instead, the Twelve-month Report of POAS\(^{46}\) claimed that Leung was upholding political responsibility under the POAS by resigning. Although it may be regarded political “spin doctoring”, no significant reform was being made after the scandal.

Under the Politicization Approach, constructing severity was easily done. The case had been recognized as an issue of conflict of interest, and was related to the integrity of a government official from the beginning. However, there were great difficulties when constructing agency and responsibility, as it was hard to distinguish whether the case was an incident or a symptom, an actor failure or a network failure. As mentioned, when applied to real case examples, those dimensions of Politicization Approach were not as straight forward as the two sides of a coin. It deserves further discussion in the research findings and discussion chapter.

In the next chapter, another important event that almost happened in the same time with the Car-gate Scandal – the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) will be discussed. It was said to be one of the critical health crises happened after the establishment of Hong Kong SAR.

\(^{46}\) “Twelve-month Report on Implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials” (Constitutional Affairs Bureau 2003)
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) EPIDEMIC

7.1 Background

The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was a centennial disease that threatened the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), SARS killed 774 people around the world, with 299, or nearly 40%, of them Hong Kong citizens.

Table 7.1 Summary of probable SARS cases with onset of illness
(1 November 2002 to 31 July 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>No. of deaths</th>
<th>Onset date (First probable case)</th>
<th>Onset date (Last probable case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>5327</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>16 Nov 2002</td>
<td>3 Jun 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong SAR</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>15 Feb 2003</td>
<td>31 May 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World total</td>
<td>8096</td>
<td>774</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Health Organization (Updated 21 April 2004)

The SARS outbreak was a serious public health threat to Hong Kong, as the disease was entirely new to the medical arena, even without a formal name (simply called Atypical Pneumonia from late 2002 to early 2003) at the very beginning, was fast-spreading, and had a high fatality ratio\(^{47}\). The SARS epidemic originated in the Guangdong Province, and caught the attention of the mass media in Hong Kong in February 2003. The outbreak reached Hong Kong in late February 2003, and continued until mid-June, when World Health Organization declared Hong Kong as

\(^{47}\) According to the WHO (2004), the fatality ratio of SARS in HKSAR was 17%, even higher than that in Mainland China (7%). Also, Hong Kong’s ratio was the highest in the world (along with Canada), except for those areas with a small number of cases (<10).
SARS-free. Table 6.2 shows a brief chronology of the SARS Epidemic in Hong Kong for easy reference.

After the SARS outbreak, three major investigation reports were conducted by the SARS Expert Committee appointed by the government (the “Expert Report”), the Legislative Council (the “LegCo Report”), and the Hospital Authority (the “HA Report”) respectively\(^4\). The reports provided a detailed and comprehensive account and analysis on each response taken by the government, especially the different medical decisions made by the Hospital Authority.

It is not the aim of the current research to provide an alternate report on the SARS outbreak, nor to provide a professional account from a medical perspective. Instead, it is to test the applicability of the two crisis management approaches in explaining such a large-scale social crisis. Since the following analyses are based on crisis management theories, a sub-field under political science, details related to professional judgments and medical decision made may not be included. The medical aspect of SARS could be found in the investigation report published by the Hospital Authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 January 2003</td>
<td>Health authority in Guangdong Province of Mainland China provided an expert investigation report on cases of atypical pneumonia in the Province.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) “SARS in Hong Kong : from Experience to Action” by SARS Expert Committee, HKSAR Government (October, 2003), “Report of the Legislative Council Select Committee to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority” (July, 2004), and the “Report of the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS Outbreak” by the Hospital Authority (September, 2003)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 February 2003</td>
<td>Local media began to report the atypical pneumonia outbreak in Guangdong Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February 2003</td>
<td>Stand-up media briefed by Director of Health (DH), who also issued press release on the Guangdong Province outbreak and health advice, and made a copy to the Mainland health officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 February 2003</td>
<td>A lady was admitted to the private Union Hospital after returning to Hong Kong from a trip to Guangzhou. She was later confirmed to be a SARS case in April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 February 2003</td>
<td>A professor from Guangzhou and his wife checked into Room 911 of Hotel M in Hong Kong and stayed for one night. He was later found to be the source of SARS outbreak in Hotel M and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 February 2003</td>
<td>The professor from Guangzhou, who was suspected of severe Community Atypical Pneumonia infection, was admitted to Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 February 2003</td>
<td>A brother-in-law (a Hong Kong resident) of the professor was admitted to KWH. He was later confirmed to be a SARS case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March 2003</td>
<td>The Guangzhou professor died in KWH. His brother-in-law in the same hospital was intubated and transferred to intensive care unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 March 2003</td>
<td>WHO issued global alert on cases of acute respiratory syndrome in Vietnam, Hong Kong and Guangdong Province in China with unknown aetiology that appeared to place health workers at high risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 2003</td>
<td>WHO named the illness Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and listed its main symptoms and signs. WHO also issued emergency travel advisory, but made no recommendation to restrict travel to any destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March 2003</td>
<td>A high-level SARS Steering Committee, chaired by Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and included the relevant Principal Officials, was established to steer Government response to the SARS epidemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 March 2003</td>
<td>Classes were suspended in schools and childcare centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March 2003</td>
<td>213 residents of Amoy Gardens, 107 of whom living in Block E, were admitted with suspected infection. DH ordered an isolation of the whole of Block E for 10 days. DH also appealed to residents who had moved out prior to the isolation order to report to the Department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO revised its advice to international travelers, and recommended postponing all but essential travel to Hong Kong and Guangdong Province.

Government implemented a territory-wide cleansing day.

Classes were resumed for secondary schools students in Form 3 or above.

WHO lifted the travel advisory on Hong Kong.

The Government announced the membership of the SARS Expert Committee, with the task to review the management and control of SARS outbreak in Hong Kong.

HA announced membership of its Review Panel.

WHO removed Hong Kong from the list of areas with local transmission of SARS, and declared Hong Kong as SARS-free.

The Report of the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS Outbreak was released.

The SARS Expert Report was released.

LegCo “Select Committee to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority” was established under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance.

The Report of the Select Committee to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority was released.

Yeoh Eng-kiong, then-Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, resigned on 8 July 2004 to take political responsibility over the SARS outbreak.

Source: “SARS in Hong Kong: from Experience to Action” by SARS Expert Committee, HKSAR Government (October 2003), “Report of the Legislative Council Select Committee to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority” (July 2004), and the “Report of the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS Outbreak” by the Hospital Authority (September 2003) and local newspapers.

7.2 Leadership Approach Analysis

Sense-Making

The sense-making process in SARS outbreak was blurred. In late 2002, there were
rumors about an unknown deadly disease spreading in Guangdong Province, and a few newspapers reported the panic-buying of certain kinds of medicine or Chinese herbs in order to prevent the disease, including “Rumors on virus spread Heyuan people rushes to buy drugs” (Oriental Daily, 4 January 2003), and “Mysterious pneumonia spreads in Zhongshan, strong infectious pneumonia without cure” (Ming Pao Daily, 18 January 2003). According to the Expert Report and local newspaper reports, reports of an “unusual epidemic of fatal pneumonia-like illness in the Province” received a wide range of headline coverage on 10 February 2003 (Expert Committee, 2003). Eventually, the crisis made a sense to the government on 10 February 2003:

“Acting on the media reports, the DH (Department of Health) in Hong Kong telephoned on 10.2.03 health officials in the Municipal Health and Antiepidemic Station of Guangzhou and the Director General of Department of Health, Guangdong, but was unable to establish contact. A letter enquiring about the reported outbreak was subsequently faxed to both offices. This and follow-up phone calls went unanswered. The Director of Health eventually approached the Ministry of Health in Beijing for assistance…In Hong Kong, two key events happened on 11.2.03. First, in the late afternoon, the Director of Health, with the information from Guangzhou and enquiry results in Hong Kong, conducted a media briefing. She reassured the community that Hong Kong had not identified any unusual pattern of influenza-like illness and respiratory tract infection, including pneumonia, but that DH would be monitoring the situation closely because of the pneumonia cases in Guangdong Province. She also reminded the public to take steps to prevent influenza during its peak season between January and March. Second, HA head office established a working group to step up surveillance of cases of pneumonia in public hospitals.” (Expert Report Sections 3.2, 3.5-3.6, SARS Expert Committee, 2003)

At this stage, DH merely acknowledged that there was an unusual pattern of
pneumonia infection in Guangzhou, meaning that the government had yet to recognize the new disease as a (potential) public health crisis affecting Hong Kong. The Expert Report reported a debate on whether there was a “community outbreak” in mid-March 2003, since, as of 14 March 2003, Yeoh Eng-kiong, then-Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, still refused to admit that there was a community outbreak of SARS outside of hospitals. The Expert Committee accepted that Yeoh’s discourse was made due to “an outbreak of a new and unknown disease… The really difficult challenge in such situations is how to convey messages in a way that is open, honest, clear and sympathetic, and at the same time not likely to be proved wrong” (Expert Report Section 4.23, SARS Expert Committee, 2003). Without commenting on the accuracy of this statement, it was relevant to the frontline staff dilemma on crisis recognition proposed by Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005), as organizations are created for routine but not crisis. Finally, a high-level SARS Steering Committee involving the relevant Principal Officials and chaired by Chief Executive was established on 25 March 2003 to steer Government response to the SARS epidemic (Expert Committee, 2003). SARS had eventually become a public health crisis that was to be handled by the top leader of Hong Kong – the Chief Executive.

The sense-making process of SARS epidemic could also be reflected in the alerts and warnings issued by the WHO. According to the Expert Report, on 12 March 2003, WHO issued global alert concerning cases of acute respiratory syndrome in Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Guangdong Province in China. The unknown aetiology appeared to put health workers at high risk. On 15 March 2003, WHO named the disease Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and listed its main symptoms and signs. On the same day, WHO also issued an emergency travel advisory, but made no recommendation to restrict travel to any specific locality. Finally, on 2 April 2003,
WHO revised its advice to international travelers and recommended postponing all but essential travel to Hong Kong and Guangdong Province (SARS Expert Committee, 2003). The official announcements made by WHO were able to reflect the level of seriousness of the epidemic, and at the same time indicated the outbreak of the public health crisis of SARS from the local and global perspectives.

**Decision-Making**

As mentioned in the sense-making process, it was not until 25 March 2003, in the middle stage of the SARS crisis, that the Chief Executive was formally involved in the decision-making process. In contrast, the LegCo Report and Expert Report directed most doubts towards Yeoh, a political appointee under POAS, and Margret Chan, then-Director of Health and a civil servant. As stated in the Expert Report (2003), the three main components in the public health infrastructure of Hong Kong are the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB), Department of Health, and Hospital Authority (Figure 7.1).

As one of the departments under HWFB, the Department of Health (DH) is the health adviser to the government and health advocate of the community, and DH is responsible for executing health legislation and policy. The role of DH “is to safeguard the health of the community through promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.” (Expert Report Section 2.18, SARS Expert Committee, 2003). On the other hand, the Hospital Authority (HA), which reports directly to the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF), is an independent statutory body responsible for the provision of all public hospital services in Hong Kong.
Theoretically, the changes in the commanding structure in the handling SARS outbreak had, to some extent, posed new thoughts and challenges to the Leadership Approach. First of all, it should be acknowledged that the Expert Committee’s concern on “who is leading” was absolutely important in the decision-making process. As Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005) mentioned, the top leaders form small decision groups to gather information and start coordinating the crisis response efforts. During the SARS outbreak, certain “small groups” were formed for coordination. As reported by the LegCo Report, “The HWFB Task Force chaired by DR YEOH was established on 14 March 2003 to oversee the outbreak control measures taken by DH and HA and to collate expert advice to facilitate the work of DH and HA” (LegCo Report Section 14.7, LegCo, 2004). Under the Task Force, the Inter-departmental Action Coordination Committee (IACC) chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, Carrie Yau-Tsang was set up on 24 March 2003 to

49 As the Expert Report stated, “[i]t was not clear who was in overall charge of the outbreak… Within the Hong Kong system, it is not clear who performs the function of “surgeon general” or “chief medical officer”. In other words, who is the person responsible for giving professional advice to SHWF and Government, and providing professional leadership, on public health and healthcare policy matters?” (Expert Report Section 6 and 6.3, SARS Expert Committee, 2003).
coordinate efforts and resources from twenty five governmental departments and bureaus and to implement SARS-related policy decisions and initiatives at the operation level (LegCo, 2004). To a certain extent, the formation of the IACC satisfied the argument of Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005) on crisis management network that a crisis could not be managed in a linear system from a single crisis center. In this case, the HWFB could be regarded as the center, while the IACC formed a crisis management network to coordinate the different departments concerned.

However, the delegation and decentralization processes during a crisis as suggested by the Leadership Approach were not completely applicable in this case. At the very beginning, there was a clear division of labor between the HWFB and DH. However, as Yeoh told the LegCo Select Committee, “HWFB began to take on a more participatory and direct role in assessing and managing the outbreak when the number of persons infected continued to increase” (LegCo Report Section 14.8, LegCo, 2004). As the disease continued to spread rapidly, both centralization and decentralization processes could be seen. The centralization process continued until the top leader of Hong Kong – the Chief Executive - formally took a leading role in coordination:

“[A]s the magnitude of the SARS outbreak escalated and the social and economic impact of the outbreak became more severe, issues which arose in the decision-making processes required input from public officials responsible for various policy areas. It was therefore necessary for a forum of a level higher than that of the HWFB Task Force to be set up to coordinate the Government’s overall response more effectively. On 25 March 2003, the Chief Executive set up and convened the first meeting of the Chief Executive’s Steering Committee (CESC) for that purpose.
The membership of CESC included the relevant Principal Officials” (LegCo Report Section 14.7, LegCo, 2004).

As LegCo Report added, the “CESC took over the HWFB Task Force’s role as the overall commanding body in steering the Government’s response to the SARS epidemic” (LegCo Report Section 14.15, LegCo, 2004). To conclude, delegation and decentralization could be found in the commanding structure of the SARS epidemic. In real situations, top leaders may not always get involved at the very beginning, and not until the crisis is severe enough. In this case, the decision-making process, to some extent, had interacted with the sense-making process: The top leader did not handle the case from the first day. But when the crisis was being recognized as serious, the top leader would take charge.

**Meaning-Making**

The government’s intention to reduce public uncertainty caused by SARS was obvious. The argument related to the definition of “community outbreak” was one of the key issues being investigated in the Expert Report, as the situation turned very bad two weeks after Yeoh claimed that “there is no pneumonia outbreak in Hong Kong” (Transcript of Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, 14 March 2003). The Expert Committee accepted that the government “was genuinely intended to allay public panic, but with hindsight, a more prudent phrase could have been used. There is no evidence to suggest that this debate in any way lowered public alertness to the public health threat of SARS” (Expert Report Section 4.25, SARS Expert Committee, 2003). As Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005) suggested, meaning-making in crisis management is about political communication, and crisis communication is a battle of

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50 All schools in Hong Kong were suspended on 29 March 2003, and the 10-day isolation of Amoy Gardens Block E was put into effect on 31 March 2003, as the SARS epidemic became more serious.
credibility. Obviously, reports in the mass media about Yeoh’s speech on 14 March 2003 “had given the impression that he was trying to downplay the seriousness of the outbreak and that he had been too reassuring” (Expert Report Section 4.24, SARS Expert Committee, 2003). Although Yeoh’s public relations skill was not the target of this comment, his quote was definitely a failure on crisis communication.

Associated with the media’s fault-finding characteristics as stated in Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005), Betty Tung (Tung Chee Hwa’s wife), who was the president of Hong Kong Red Cross at that time, visited Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate during the SARS outbreak to demonstrate her support to the community. However, her visit had eventually led to public criticism due to her improper “appearance”, as she was “heavily armed” by wearing a full set of protective clothes with mask and goggles. Through different channels of media, some health workers complained that they were not that “fully equipped” even when working in isolation wards (Apple Daily, 14 April 2003). Although Mrs. Tung’s incident, apparently a public relations disaster, was not discussed in any of the three investigation reports, it created a negative “persuasive story line” (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, 69) that Hong Kong was an infected area. From the crisis communication perspective, Mrs. Tung’s action affected the public’s confidence on the government.

**Terminating**

The crisis termination process of SARS was quite dramatic. After reaching its peak in early April, the SARS crisis started to step into its aftermath in May. The operational termination of SARS outbreak was clear and easily identified. It started with the end of the 10-day isolation period of Amoy Gardens Block E on 9 April,
followed by the reopening of schools starting 22 April\textsuperscript{51}, after a one-month suspension. More importantly, WHO lifted the travel advisory on Hong Kong on 23 May, and later removed Hong Kong from the list of areas with local transmission of SARS. Eventually, WHO declared Hong Kong as SARS-free on 23 June 2003 (Expert Committee, 2003).

However, political termination did not come with the operational termination, as the political process of assigning responsibility and accountability began near the end of operational termination. On 28 May 2003, the government announced the membership of the SARS Expert Committee responsible for reviewing the management and control of SARS outbreak in Hong Kong. Two days later, the Hospital Authority announced the membership of its Review Panel, and in October 2003, the LegCo Select Committee inquiring the handling of the SARS outbreak by the Government was established under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, with its report being released in July 2004. According to the report, Yeoh, as a political appointee, was being criticized on the four counts below.

1) Did not show sufficient alertness to the atypical pneumonia (AP) outbreak in Guangdong in January and early February 2003 (Section 15.8).

2) Regarding to Yeoh’s statement on “no community outbreak” on 14 March 2003, he did not show that he had the communication skills of a policy secretary as expected by the public. (Section 15.10)

3) Held responsible for failing his monitoring role on Hospital Authority, as HA did not have a territory-wide contingency plan for public hospitals to deal with large-scale outbreaks of infectious diseases (Section 15.12).

4) The Select Committee found Yeoh’s performance not satisfactory in

\textsuperscript{51} Starting 22 April 2003, classes began to resume in secondary schools for students in Form 3 or above. By 19 May 2003, classes for all schools resumed (Expert Committee, 2003).
the handling of the SARS outbreak in the above aspects. (Section 15.13)

Eventually, under such serious critiques and political pressure, Yeoh was forced to resign on 8 July 2004 to take political responsibility over the SARS outbreak. This marked the complete termination of the SARS crisis.

**Learning**

In fact, the learning outcomes of SARS were fruitful, as the three investigation reports provided recommendations to different actors and departments (especially to Hospital Authority) on disease prevention and control. However, the Expert Report paid the most attention to the learning process, as can be seen from its title: “SARS in Hong Kong: from Experience to Action”. The Expert Report consisted of eighteen chapters in total, with twelve of those categorized as “Lessons and Themes”, and two of them on “Conclusions and Recommendations”. In general, the Expert Report provided advice to the government on: 1) Organization of health and healthcare system for the control of an outbreak of communicable disease; 2) health protection functions; 3) coordination within Hong Kong; 4) collaboration within Pearl River Delta Region and with international community; 5) surveillance; 6) information and data management; 7) surge capacity; 8) clinical management; 9) hospital infection control and occupational health; 10) research and training; 11) communications; 12) engaging the Community; and, 13) the impact and after-effects of SARS on the community. (SARS Expert Report, SARS Expert Committee, 2003)

One of the significant institutional changes in the Hong Kong health care system after SARS outbreak was the establishment of the Centre of Health Protection (CHP) in...
June 2004. The CHP “is a professional arm of the Department of Health for disease prevention and control” (Centre of Health Protection, 2004) through “establishing a disease surveillance system, strengthening infection control, enhancing laboratory diagnostic capacity, conducting risk communication and health promotion, developing applied research and training programs, and preparing emergency response plans” (Centre of Health Protection, 2004). The learning effort by the government in the SARS outbreak was reflected in the crisis management of Swire Flu pandemic in 2009, in which the government received positive comments for its fast responsive actions, an experience gained from the handling of the SARS outbreak.

7.3 Politicization Approach Analysis

*Constructing Severity*

The SARS epidemic was definitely a severe public health crisis. However, its effect on “core public value” (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003) was ambiguous. It is clear that the SARS epidemic fulfilled the requirements of “hot topic”, that is, as the event got more serious, more people would be affected and more actors (i.e., senior level government officials) were likely to get involved in the crisis management process. Regardless, SARS was an epidemic that killed 299 people in Hong Kong within a few months. It was not a crisis that started with core public value violation, but it did affect people’s lives and the fundamental safety needs of human being (Please refer to Maslow’s Needs Theory). If the massive loss of lives due to an epidemic were considered as a violation of crucial values, the severity dimension of Politicization Approach would still be substantiated.
**Constructing Agency**

The agency dimension of SARS epidemic was complicated. Obviously, the handling process of SARS outbreak contained elements of both “incident” and “symptom”, as the epidemic itself was an incident, while its negative socio-economic impact was a symptom which led to the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. The construction of agency could be multidimensional in this case, as the HA Report discussed the operational and technical aspects, and the LegCo and Expert Reports focused on the political, higher-level actors, such as Yeoh, the SHWF, and Tung, the CE. In addition, blames could be allocated according to the status of the personnel involved, as could be observed from the LegCo Report. Yeoh, as a political appointee, was asked to bear a different level of responsibility from DH Margret Chan, a civil servant. Thus, in real situations, the distinction between incident and symptom is not necessarily clear-cut. Although the dichotomy method is not always applicable in real case examples, it provided insights on how blames are being allocated, especially for actors holding different positions during a crisis.

**Constructing Responsibility**

The construction of agency directly affects the consideration in responsibility dimension. As mentioned, the SARS epidemic contained components of both incident and symptom, which could provide different outcomes in constructing responsibility. However, a review of the blame allocation process showed that the stepping-down of Yeoh was obviously a result of the failure of a policy-maker as defined by Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003). However, the LegCo Report also mentioned that working relationship among relevant parties, including the government, HA, and other organization concerned should be clearly set out (Section 15.46), which, to some extent, supported the case the epidemic was also a network
failure. Considering the large number of recommendations and suggestions for improvement from the three reports, it was obvious that there were limitations in the health care system of Hong Kong, which were clearly revealed in the SARS outbreak. These fruitful recommendations also served as a proof that SARS could be a network failure.

7.4 Summary

The Leadership Approach was satisfactory in analyzing the SARS epidemic, with all its five components clearly answered by the three investigation reports. However, there are two points that warrants further discussion. First, as mentioned in the sense-making analysis, the decentralization and delegation processes were, to some extent, contradicting the “going up” process as argued in the Politicization Approach. In reality, the top leader would not be there to wait for a crisis, but instead, only step in when the crisis is serious enough. Second, in the crisis terminating process, it was observed that political termination happened a long time after the operational termination. Apparently, for a natural disaster, there would not be a full-fledged investigation until after the operational termination. The responsibility-assigning and blame process could take time, which is the reason for the delay of political termination. In the case of SARS outbreak, the political termination (Yeoh’s resignation) was observed almost a year after the operational termination of SARS.

On the other hand, the outcome of applying the Politicization Approach on the SARS case is not satisfactory, with the “either/or” phenomenon being the major problem. In a large-scale crisis, it was nearly impossible to dichotomize the dimensions of incident versus symptom, and actor versus network failure, due to the complexity and
involvement of many actors, ranging from senior government officials to front line health workers. Thus, constructing blame and framing in a natural disaster is an uneasy task. Obviously, the Politicization Approach works better in political crises involving fewer people.

The coming Chapter Eight will illustrate another triggering issue of the 2003 Protest – the controversy on National Security Ordinance (Basic Law Artic 23) legislation. Afterwards, the State-society Interactive Framework analysis will be presented in Chapter Nine.
CHAPTER EIGHT: NATIONAL SECURITY BILL CONTROVERSY

8.1 Background

According to Article 23 of the Basic Law of Hong Kong, it is the constitutional responsibility of the Hong Kong SAR Government to “enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies” (Basic Law of HKSAR, Article 23). The controversies began when then-Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa started to spearhead the legislation process in his second term of office in 2002. The consultation paper on proposals to implement Article 23 was released on 24 September 2002. The proposed legislation prohibited activities including treason, secession and subversion, sedition, theft of state secrets, and foreign political organizations conducting political activities in the HKSAR.

According to A. Cheung (2005b, 37), the HKSAR government was “heavy-handedness in Article 23 legislation and the backlash”, and had underestimated the opposition from the general public while overestimating the support from pro-Beijing parties in passing the bill. He further suggested that the proposed bill had startled the pan-democrats as well as the general public, as they have been openly asking for the termination of the one-party rule of the Chinese
Communist Party (CCP), especially after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident\textsuperscript{52}.

Then-Secretary of Security, Regina Ip, was responsible for moving the bill. Debates between supporters (including government officials) and the opposition were long-lasting and harsh, especially between September 2002 and July 2003, and public forums, newspaper columns, radio phone-in programs, LegCo meetings, and government press conferences became battlefields for both camps. The dissatisfaction of people towards Article 23 was first shown in the 60,000 people demonstration\textsuperscript{53} on 15 December 2002. To fight back, the pro-government camp organized an assembly with about 40,000 participants to support the legislation on 22 December 2002. However, there was doubt that some of the participants were there because of the free transportation by shuttle bus and the free lunch (\textit{Apple Daily}, 23 December 2002). According to the opinion poll conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in December 2002, 68.6\% of respondents opposed to the legislation, in contrast with the 19\% supporting it (\textit{Apple Daily}, 24 December 2002). The consultation period for the legislation ended on 24 December 2002.

In January 2003, the government announced some clarifications and amendments to the legislative proposals regarding the implementation of Article 23, which included the abolition of the offence of misprision of treason and abolition of the offence of possession of seditious publications. (Government further clarifies legislative proposals to implement BL 23, Government Press Release, 28 January 2003)

\textsuperscript{52} This kind of request may be identified as a kind of subversion against the Central People's Government, and would be prohibited and even sanctioned after the legislation of Article 23.

\textsuperscript{53} 60,000 was the number provided by the organizer. The number was about 12,000, according to Hong Kong Police.
These further clarifications were believed to be concessions by the government in response to the strong opposition towards the original proposal (Apple Daily, 29 January 2003), but the government refused to admit this. Soon afterwards, without further in-depth consultation, the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill was published in the Hong Kong Gazette on 14 February 2003, and introduced to the Legislative Council on 26 February 2003. However, the draft bill suffered severe critique on those sections related to secret hearing\(^{54}\). The bill was scheduled to be passed in July 2003, resulting in those opposition parties and groups calling for a protest on 1 July 2003, the HKSAR Establishment Day.

The 1 July protest rally in 2003 was certainly a historic event in Hong Kong (J. Cheng 2005, Chan and Chan 2007), with half-a-million people marched towards the government offices in Central in a peaceful manner, in protest of the poor governance of Tung, especially during the outbreak of SARS. However, it was clear that the main reason was the people’s antagonism towards Article 23. Despite of the rally, Tung’s government still insisted on moving the third reading of the bill on 9 July 2003, after making further amendments\(^{55}\) on some controversial sections. However, the passage of the bill was found to be impossible on 6 July, when Executive Council\(^{56}\) member James Tien, Chairperson of Liberal Party (LP) from

\(^{54}\) “If in the course of any proceedings before the Court of First Instance the Court is satisfied, upon application by the Secretary for Justice, that the publication of any evidence to be given or any statement to be made in the course of the proceedings might prejudice national security, the Court may order that all or any portion of the public shall be excluded during any part of the hearing so as to avoid such publication” (Section 8D (5), Part 4: Amendments to the Societies Ordinance, National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill).

\(^{55}\) “1) Delete the provision regarding a local organization subordinate to a mainland organization which has been proscribed by the Central Authorities. 2) Introduce “public interest” as a defense for unlawful disclosure of certain official information, in order to protect and alleviate the concerns of the public, particularly those of the media. 3) Delete the provision which confers on the police a power to search without court warrant in the exercise of their emergency investigation powers” (Chief Executive's transcript on Basic Law Article 23, Press Release, 5 July 2003).

\(^{56}\) Executive Council (ExCo) is the highest decision-making body in HKSAR government chaired by the Chief Executive.
the pro-Beijing camp, tendered his resignation to the ExCo and declared that all LP lawmakers would not support the bill in LegCo. The government postponed the legislation the next day as there were insufficient votes to support the bill in the LegCo after the U-turn of Liberal Party. The National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill was eventually withdrawn from the legislative program by the CE on 5 September 2003.

8.2 Leadership Approach Analysis

Sense-Making

The further clarifications released in January 2003 on the original proposal could be perceived as the government’s response to the worries and dissatisfaction of the public towards the legislation. It could be seen as the government’s recognition of the opposition towards the law, but was far from the sense-making of a crisis. However, the government did not foresee the failure of proceeding with the third reading on time (i.e., 9 July 2003) until the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. More accurately, from a policymaking perspective, the policy did not fail until James Tien resigned from the ExCo and directed his party to oppose to the legislation, which made the passage of the bill in LegCo impossible. If this were the case, the real crisis duration from the government perspective would be short (from 1 July protest until the resignation of both Regina Ip and Antony Leung on 16 July 2003). As commented by many scholars, the half-a-million people protest rally was a result of the many issues that gathered severe public dissatisfaction. Thus, the sense-making for the Article 23 case, as a triggering reason for the rally, was difficult to analyze independently, without considering the whole picture with all other crisis events.

57 See Government further clarifies legislative proposals to implement BL 23, Government Press Release, 28 January 2003
**Decision-Making**

In this case, Tung was solely accountable for the decision-making process, although Regina Ip was the principal official responsible for promoting the legislation of Article 23. It was because the decision-making power of postponement and withdrawal of the bill were in the hands of the Chief Executive-in-Council. Tung’s leading role in this crisis as the top leader of HKSAR Government was as appropriate as suggested in the Leadership Approach. Under the executive-driven (Li 2007, 32) tradition, the Chief Executive’s prominent role in policymaking is unquestionable. Moreover, apparently there was a miscalculation in the level of opposition and dissatisfaction among the general public in Hong Kong, given that Hong Kong had just emerged from the SARS outbreak and was in a great economic depression. The uncertainty and inaccuracy in catching “national mood” (Kingdon 1995) in policymaking and decision-making might, to some extent, be related to the non-democratic system in Hong Kong, and could serve as evidence that the Leadership Approach, as a western-based crisis management theory, might not be fully applicable to non-democratic systems, such as Hong Kong.

**Meaning-Making**

Although Regina Ip’s tough image, strong words, and weird examples given during the consultation process received wide criticism, there was no direct relationship between the policy failure and her political communication skills, as it was obvious that the nature of this critical and highly controversial law has angered the people, and they were opposed to those terms and sections inside the bill that would harm their freedom. Ip’s public relations skill was just a part of the issue, but certainly not a

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58 One of the famous quotes from Regina Ip was a democracy, such as Germany before World War II, could still elect a devil like Hitler. Ip later apologized for her statement, and promised not to use Hitler as example (*Apple Daily*, 31 January 2003).
sufficient factor that led to such a huge opposition. This is an example of a case that even spin doctoring could not help, as it is neither helpful in passing a “disgusting” policy, nor useful in safeguarding a critical governance crisis. To some extent, spin doctoring is not really responding to nor tackling the core issue. In the Hong Kong context, it has become a tactic for the government to “wait until” the LegCo pass the controversial policy, as technically the pro-establishment camp is always controlling the majority in the legislature.

**Terminating**

It was easy to identify the operational termination of a policy failure, in this case, the postponement and withdrawal of the legislation. However, the political termination process was unclear and could be long lasting. Of course, the resignation of Ip could be one of the possible terminating points, as she was the political-appointed principal official responsible for the whole legislation process. However, the aftermath impact of such a “collapse” of the cabinet (i.e., the resignation of Leung, later, Yeoh, and finally, Tung) would have really harmed governance prestige and public confidence, and was not covered in this approach. Furthermore, the issue of Article 23 still exists, as it is the constitutional obligation for HKSAR government to legislate the Article as stated in the Basic Law. The nature of a policy failure is, to certain extent, different from a scandal or a disease, as a policy process would never end, since the government can restart anytime it wants to. The relationship between crisis nature and crisis management is an important issue to be discussed in latter chapters.

**Learning**

Rather than learning, the aftermath of this policy failure could better be described as
changing of political environment and social atmosphere, which are more significant than those experiences learnt by the government in this failure. As Chan and Chan (2007) argued, the 2003 incident was a watershed of Hong Kong civil society development. Not only did the government learn a lesson, but the whole society also learnt a lesson, especially on how to bargain with the government by mobilizing the masses. Obviously, the top-down perspective of Leadership Approach failed to address this issue. If the political environment changes dramatically after a crisis, the learning efforts of the government would become minimal, given that there would be new challenges next time.

8.3 Politicization Approach Analysis

Constructing Severity
The severity of this crisis was not simply because the violation of core public values (i.e., freedom) stemming from Article 23 itself, but also the shock and political pressure brought by the half-a-million people protest. The shockwave of the protest even counter-affected the framing role of mass media (Lee and Chan 2009), as newspapers in Hong Kong were found to be politically indifferent for a period of time just after the rally, when all of them, even the Pro-Beijing ones, were criticizing the poor performance of Hong Kong SAR Government and Tung. In general, the crisis status was gained not by the nature of the event (Article 23 legislation), but by the scale of the protest.

Constructing Agency
The agency dimension in this case was quite simple and direct, as it was clearly not a technical incident involving lower-level actors. As mentioned, the Article 23
incident was a highly politicized policy failure directly caused by the top leaders of the HKSAR Government - the Chief Executive and his cabinet. Also, it should be related to the overall governing ability of Tung’s administration. In the policymaking cycle, the agenda setting process is in the hands of the policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 1995), and thus, it is not surprising that all focuses were on the major policy actors, in this case, Tung and Ip.

Constructing Responsibility

There were both actor failure and network (policy) failure in the Article 23 controversy, as observed from Ip’s resignation and the withdrawal of the bill. However, there was a saying that Leung and Ip resigned in order to save Tung from the political pressure of stepping-down, which would have made this a case of “scapegoating”. Once again, the politicization was challenged for its “either/or” phenomenon, as it is difficult to make an absolute judgment on the category in each dimension.

8.4 Summary

A policy failure is entirely different from other types of crisis in view of its man-made nature. Although the legislation of Article 23 was the direct reason leading the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, the Leadership Approach has underestimated the complexity of this governance crisis, which included, but was not limited to, the two crisis events discussed before. This crisis is a proof that the Leadership Approach was not designed for analyzing crises with multiple reasons and backgrounds. In general, it is difficult to sense a crisis stemming from a policy failure in advance in the Hong Kong context, as technically, policies proposed by the government would
not fail in the LegCo, given that the pro-establishment camp is always in control. Also, the process of meaning-making is not as useful as the theory suggested, as it is doubtful whether such a controversial bill could be framed to “look normal” from a political communication perspective. One of the possible reasons could be that there could not be such a controversial policy in western democracies. The idea of constitutional obligation is strange in policy formulation, and is, to some extent, related to the non-democratic system in Hong Kong. National mood is not one of the major concerns, but the leader perspective is. The deadlock between the state and the society has created new challenges in studying policy failure as a governance crisis, as would be further discussed in the coming chapters.

After the discussion on the three cases, the historical event of 1 July 2003 Protest will be introduced by adopting the State-society Interactive Framework in the coming chapter.
CHAPTER NINE: THE 1 JULY 2003 DEMONSTRATION - STATE-SOCIETY INTERACTIVE FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

As discussed in Chapters Six to Chapter Eight, three major events are considered to have led to the 1 July 2003 Demonstration: The Car-Gate scandal, the outbreak of SARS, and the controversy on the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law. In current literature, crises are mostly regarded as an individual event, although scholars might agree that there are many reasons behind. In fact, the half-a-million people protest in July of 2003 was a catalyst that linked the three events, even though the events were almost unrelated with one another. The Car-Gate scandal was obviously a political scandal related to the misconduct of a high-ranking official – Antony Leung, then-Financial Secretary. The outbreak of SARS was a natural disaster-turned-man-made crisis due to the ineffective crisis management of HKSAR government. Finally, the controversy on the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law, believed to be the direct reason for the protest, was definitely a policy failure.

The above mentioned three crisis events were in the same line with C-y. Cheung’s (2005) illustrations which appeared in the book titled “The July 1 Protest Rally” edited by J. Cheung (2005). It can be sure that C.-y. Cheung was not the only scholar or commentator who had associated those three crisis events with the demonstration. In fact, numerous newspaper articles had reported the anonymous participants’ point of view towards the demonstration.

“In fact, after 1989, I have never tried to take to the streets as I think the government will turn good. However, the recent Antony’s car scandal, SARS incident and Mrs. Regina Ip’s remarks [on Article 23] has shown that governance problem would only be intensified. My hopes have been dashed.” (HK Economic Times, 2 July 2003)
The 1 July Demonstration also shocked the Pro-establishment camp. Oriental Daily, a Pro-Beijing newspaper, in its editorial on 4 July 2003, blamed the government badly on their poor crisis management in the above mentioned three crisis events which directly led to the rally of half-a-million people on the street. The editorial emphasized that the demonstration happened not only because of the Article 23 controversy, but it could also be the result of a chain of crises and wrongdoings which was observed after Tung launched the POAS in 2002. A few days later, the Oriental Daily (9 July 2003) interviewed some LegCo members, and among them some Pan-democrats suggested that Leung and Ip should be “fired” after the demonstration. Almost at the same time, Chan Yuen-han, a Pro-establishment lawmaker, argued that the Article 23 controversy was the catalytic event of the demonstration. However, the Leung’s scandal and poor crisis management of Yeoh’s had also triggered public dissatisfaction towards Tung’s administration (Apple Daily, 7 July 2003).

Obviously, after the demonstration, major public opinion has pointed their fingers towards Tung. As such, the Pro-establishment camps began to blame Tung’s government intensively. From the perspective of State-society Interactive Framework, the “u-turn” of the Pro-establishment camp marked a significant decrease in Crisis Weakening Forces. Indeed the demonstration as a catalytic event escalated the situation into the governance crisis level that the governmental change would be a reasonable expectation of the general public in order to solve the crisis.

In the next section, the data collected by Lee and Chan (2011) can be a strong evident to show how Crisis Weakening Forces (i.e. the supporters of the government)
diminished significantly after the demonstration. The data had provided invaluable insights for understanding the operations of Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces and the Catalytic Effect of Crisis which were the key components of this State-society Interactive Framework.

9.1 Results from Newspaper Discourse Analysis

After analyzing the three events with the Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach respectively in the above three chapters, newspaper discourse analysis is now adopted to attempt to capture the Strengthening Forces and the catalytic effect of the 1 July 2003 Demonstration in a more objective way. With reference to Lee and Chan’s (2011, 68) study, the time range of the crisis is divided into three periods as follows:

1) The pre-protest period: 1 April to 30 June
2) The event period: 1 July to 9 July
3) The post-protest period: 10 July to 22 November

Lee and Chan (2011) first used the Chinese keyword “July 1 protest” to sort out related articles, which were coded using the coding scheme from their readings of the materials, focusing only on those articles with very specific “answer” to the questions they had set. For example, “who was the culprit of the protest?” Articles that simply presented different points of view without a clear stand point were not included.

The search for culprits could be regarded as an assessment of the Strengthening Forces. As Lee and Chan (2011) argued, the choice of “culprits” is, to some extent,
a reflection of the wants of the people. For example, an attack on the political system may move democratization forward by a step, and laying the blame on the leader may create sufficient political pressure to press for changes in the government (e.g., stepping-down of the official). Thus, the strength and concentration of the Strengthening Forces are important factors in determining the level of a crisis (i.e., crisis, governance crisis, or change) in the development process.

Table 9.1 Identification of the culprits – 1 July 2003 Demonstration (percent)

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Note: Number of articles does not include those without relevant information to the question. Sum of percentage can be larger than 100% since one article can be coded under multiple categories.

Source: (Lee and Chan, Media, Social Mobilization, and Mass Protests in Post-Colonial Hong Kong 2011, 71)

Table 9.1 is a summary of the discourse analysis by Lee and Chan (2011) on the
major culprit in the 1 July 2003 Demonstration. It can be seen that the discourses of *Apple Daily* and *Ming Pao* were quite similar, as both identified the “Hong Kong government” as the major culprit in all three periods, followed by “Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa”. It should be pointed out that, in all three periods, more than 80 percent of their discourses pointed out that the “Hong Kong government” should bear responsibility for the social crisis.

As for *Oriental Daily* and *Wenweipo*, there was a significant increase in the percentage of discourses identifying “Hong Kong government” and “Tung” as the top two culprits from the pre-protest period to the event and post-protest periods. One important point to note is that, before the protest, a majority of their discourses was putting the blame on “politicians destroying Hong Kong/ foreign forces”, an option that saw a sharp decrease in the post-protest period to a percentage much smaller than the “Hong Kong government”.

9.2 Methods to Resolve the Crisis

The solution for resolving a crisis could be closely related to the possibility of a change in the government, which could be a major policy change, institutional change, personnel change in high-ranking officials, or even a regime change. Thus, a strong catalyst for a crisis would be the lack of positive response of the government regarding the clear and strong expectation for change by the public.
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| (Est. Gov Mouthpiece)          | China refrains from Intervention (China Refrains) | Clear Positioning of |

**MING PAO**

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**APPLE DAILY**

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Table 9.2 shows a summary of the discourse analysis by Lee and Chan (2011) on the possible methods to resolve the social crisis of 1 July 2003. The discourses of *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao*, and *Oriental Daily* quite constantly mentioned “Postponing Article 23 legislation” as a method, especially during the protest period, while some mentions of “revising the proposed law” appeared in *Wenweipo*. Regarding to the notion of change, a high percentage of discourses in *Oriental Daily* and *Wenweipo* mentioned the need for “Government to respond to the public”, especially after the protest. In the long run, most newspapers asked for “democratic reform/development” or an “administrative reform”, with the percentages of these two categories increasing noticeably during and after the protest. Also, it is worth noting that *Wenweipo*, as a CCP party newspaper, expressed its views on “democratic development” and the need to “rebuild government authority” after the protest.

### 9.3 State-society Interactive Framework Analysis

The analysis of newspaper discourse in the previous section indicated that there were changes in the strengthening and weakening forces in the case of 1 July 2003 Demonstration due to the various external and internal factors. Originally, according to Hallin and Macini’s (2004) idea of political parallelism in the media, the four local newspapers in Hong Kong selected for the analysis could be roughly divided into those supporting the pan-democrats (i.e., *Apple Daily* and *Ming Pao*) and those that are pro-Beijing (i.e., *Oriental Daily* and *Wenweipo*). They represent
the Strengthening Force and Weakening Force in the State-society Interactive Framework. Specifically, pro-government newspapers always side with, and hold a positive view of, the government, with discourses asking for the “solidarity of Hong Kong people” and focus on “developing economy”, and a description of the culprits as “Politicians destroying Hong Kong / foreign forces”. However, newspapers supporting the pan-democrats would point their fingers at the “Hong Kong government” as a whole, or specifically at “Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa”, and their strong sense in postponing the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law was definitely a major source of Crisis Strengthening Force.

In the State-society Interactive Framework, the power of the two forces would change according to different external and internal factors. The crisis management efforts made by the government in the three events leading to the 1 July protest (i.e. the Car Gate scandal, the outbreak of SARS and the controversy of the Security Ordinance) was presented in the previous chapters. Hence, they will be repeated in details here. By adopting the State-society Interactive Framework, major observations are summarized in Figure 9.1 below to explain the huge influence of the protest to the whole crisis development process in the crisis management perspective.

9.3.1 The Change of Force: U-turn of the Pro-Business Party

One of the critical political impacts brought by the 1st July Protest was the U-turn of Pro-Business lawmakers. As discussed in Chapter One, the pro-business bloc, since the colonial era, has been a political conservative that supports the government. Their support has continued after the handover under the united front strategies adopted by Beijing (Loh 2010). However, as Ma (2012) argued, the political
support from the pro-business bloc is sometimes fragmented as the party politics in Hong Kong is immature and the pro-business block unable to form a stable and trustworthy “political alliance” with the government. Thus, the U-turn of pro-business bloc in critical issues such as Article 23 became possible under their ad hoc relations.

Soon after the Protest, a number of pro-business lawmakers suggested to suspend or to further amend the National Security Ordinance Bill. For example, David Li, a lawmaker who is also a banker claimed that Regina Ip’s performance was unsatisfactory and the government should evaluate the process (Apple Daily, 3 July 2003). On the other hand, James Tien, chairman of Liberal Party, a pro-business party, suggested that the government should postpone the legislation to next legislative year. He further claimed that he had discussed the issue with some Beijing officials and his idea was acknowledged by them (Wenweipo, 5 July 2003).

Finally, an urgent ExCo meeting was called in 6 July night. At the same time, the Liberal Party announced that they supported the deferral of the legislation. After four hours of ExCo meeting, the government announced that the legislation will be suspended and James Tien had been resigned from his ExCo membership. In reality, without the support of Liberal Party (with 8 votes in the LegCo), passing the bill had become impossible. In this case, the pro-business bloc represented by Liberal Party had performed as a critical minority that alters the government final decision. The retreat of Liberal Party has changed the Crisis Weakening Force into Crisis Strengthening Force as they “chose to stand by the people” (Lee Cheuk-yan, 7 July 2003, Apple Daily).
Figure 9.1 summarizes observations from the three events leading to the 2003 Demonstration, and serves to explain the huge influence of the protest to the whole crisis development process from the crisis management perspective. Before the protest, public dissatisfaction was already at a high level due to various reasons, such as distrust in the Tung administration stemming from the Car-Gate scandal, the extremely poor economic and social condition brought by SARS, and the threat on human rights and freedom in connection with the possible legislation of Article 23. These are all regarded as Strengthening Forces of the crisis. However, the relationship between those crises was unclear until the appearance of the catalyzer – 1 July protest. Thus, the 1 July protest had finally become a social crisis as
described by Lee and Chan (2011), or a governance crisis under the Crisis Development Ladders.

Based on the results of newspaper discourses analysis, Chan and Lee (2006, Lee and Chan 2011) argued that there was an energized public opinion during the protest, and observed a diminished political parallelism in the media, which, they explained, was a reflection of public opinion influencing the mass media in the short run, leading to an amendment in the media’s political orientation. From the perspective of the State-society Interactive Framework, public opinion was strong enough to cause a decrease in the weakening force (i.e., coverage by the pro-government newspapers) for a short time, as some actors chose to take side with the view of the majority of the people in the final stage. In this regard, the Crisis Strengthening Forces were united to exert sufficient pressure on the government.

It is difficult to make a conclusion on whether the Strengthening Forces have led to the catalytic effect or vice versa, though it seems a stronger Strengthening Force may lead to the catalytic effect. Also, the presence of the catalytic effect would enable the Strengthening Forces to operate in full capacity to possibly force changes in the government. Thus, the end of the 2003 Demonstration crisis saw the postponement of the Article 23 legislation process and the stepping-down of Antony Leung and Regina Ip.

In the coming chapter, the case study part II – the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident will be discussed. Compared with the 2003 Protest, the Anti-High Speed Railway Incident was said to be a latent crisis. In fact, there were intensive state-society interactions. However, it failed to reach to the level of governance crisis. Thus, it
would be an useful case to investigate how do different crisis management approaches are going to illustrate the latent crises which were seldom appeared in current literatures.
CASE STUDY PART II

CHAPTER TEN: ANTI-HIGH SPEED RAILWAY INCIDENT

10.1 Background

In 2009, the Hong Kong government proposed the construction of a high speed railway, the 26-km Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (commonly known as High Speed Railway or XRL) running from West Kowloon in Hong Kong to the boundary of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, from where it will connect to the 16,000-km National High-speed Railway Network (MTR Corporation, 2010). The construction of the High Speed Railway began in January 2010, and is targeted for completion in 2015. The total cost of the project was estimated to be 66.9 billion, and the funding was appropriated by the Legislative Council on 16 January 2010.

The huge construction cost was one of the major concerns for those who were against the High Speed Railway. The Anti-High Speed Railway movement was an opposition against one of the most controversial urban policies – the XRL, which had created great dispute before and after its appropriation by the Legislative Council in 2009. The movement was viewed as another watershed of social movement in Hong Kong after the 1 July 2003 Demonstration, as, for the first time, a group of young people, commonly referred to as the “Post-80s” (meaning they were born after 1980), were considered the initiator of a new mode of social movement, which involved spreading information through the internet and actually taking part in demonstrations at different localities. However, the definition of “Post-80s” was unclear, and the mass media and general public had never paid special attention on this group of youngsters.
**Phase 1: Anti-Express Railway Appropriation**

After the announcement of the government’s request for appropriation of the railway project, a Facebook group named “Against 66.9 billion Express Railway, calling for demonstration outside the LegCo on 15/1/2010” was set up, attracting more than 50,000 members. A pressure group known as the League of Anti-Express Rail Link was responsible for most of the Facebook groups’ actions. It was a very different kind of set up from the traditional social movement, as a “virtual” group was taking the lead in the very beginning, instead of a political party. The League was “virtual” in that only a spokesperson, instead of any executive, was speaking on its behalf to the mass media. It had no formal membership, organization chart, or code of formation, not even an office mailing address. Almost all of its announcements were distributed through Facebook and other web pages, such as “Hong Kong Discussion Forum” and “Golden Forum” (The Encyclopaedia of Virtual Communities in Hong Kong, 2010).

The League of Anti-Express Rail Link organized a series of activities through the internet, among them a demonstration outside the LegCo Building with 1,700 participants. Later, the League organized the “Five Districts Tapas” to explain their standpoints to the general public. The “Five Districts” refers to the five geographical constituencies of LegCo, as the majority of the LegCo members who support the bill were from the functional constituencies. The activists also called for universal suffrage with the Tapas. The first tapa was held on 16 December 2009, and the second was held on 5-8 January 2010, in which the participants knelt each time after walking slowly for 26 steps (a reference to the 26km Express Rail Link).

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59 Based on information collected during an interview with Respondent C, a Pan-democrat party leader
At the same time, university students also organized the “University Student Tapas” on the campus of six public universities in Hong Kong. Besides the tapas, activists also called for a hunger strike from 12-17 January 2010 outside the LegCo Building. The hunger strike was organized by the “Post-80s Anti-Express Railway Youngsters”, who also pled for support through the internet. Despite these actions, the bill was eventually passed by the LegCo without any amendment on 16 January 2010 by simple majority.

**Phase 2: Against the Removal of Choi Yuen Village**

After the appropriation of funding from the LegCo, the focus of the Anti-High Speed Railway movement turned to protecting Choi Yuen Village, a village that would be demolished for the construction of the stabling siding for the railway. There were two main arguments against the demolition of Choi Yuen Village. First, most of the villagers were seniors who either did not want to move or were incapable of doing so. Second, the villagers were opposed to the compensation package, as they found the amount insufficient for them rebuilding a farm of the same size on a new site.

An online interest group called the Choi Yuen Village Concern Group was set up on Facebook, gathering around 3,000 members. As the villagers were mainly old people, most of the protests were organized by the “Post-80s” through the internet. Respondent I, a leader of student movement at that time, admitted that although some of the protesters knew each other personally, they could not confirm whether everyone who signed up would appear until they actually arrived at the venue, because all protesters got the protest information online. According to So (2008, 242), the post-modern mode of social movement had assorted some spontaneous and
creative elements which “turned the protest into a seemingly joyful and even festive event”. In the movement to defend Choi Yuen Village, protesters became creative in their methods of expressing their ideas. For instance, a community market was set up to sell featured items such as “Express Rail Link boiled eggs” (the Cantonese for “boiled eggs” is the same as that for “scram” or “leave”) and a rice cake that mocked the “functional constituency as good-for-nothing”. The main strategy of the protesters was to gain publicity in order to draw the attention of the society to the group of under-privileged villagers whose rights were neglected. With the passage of the appropriation bill in the LegCo, the construction of the High Speed Railway was impossible to stop, and the demolition of Choi Yuen Village could not be prevented. Thus, the activists turned to preserving the culture of Choi Yuen Village by cooperating with the villagers to set up a mini museum nearby with photos and exhibits related to the rural life, in hope of letting the public know more about Choi Yuen Village, and helping the villagers fight for more compensation from the government through protests and various collective actions.

In conclusion, it was surprising that such a large-scale social movement could not influence the decision of the government, as the appropriation bill was passed by the LegCo without any amendment and delay, except for the postponement due to the filibuster tactic adopted by the Pan-democrats in the debating process.

10.2 Leadership Approach Analysis

*Sense-Making*

It is difficult to determine whether the incident could be defined a crisis from the government’s perspective. Unlike the legislation of Article 23, which was definitely
a policy failure, the LegCo appropriated the funding for the High Speed Railway without any amendment or significant delay on 16 January 2010. Although it was hard for the government to deny that they had paid attention and responded to the Anti-High Speed Railway movement, it was also difficult to measure what the government had done from a crisis management perspective, except for the reiteration of their standpoint in order to satisfy the general public in different occasions. The objective of the government had been simple and clear – to have the appropriation bill passed in the LegCo on time, so as to prevent the activists from ultimately escalating the issue into a (potential) policy failure. Theoretically, potential threat would easily be ignored at this stage, since the top leader of the government would not be involved unless the issue was “big enough”. The government announced its intention to construct the High-Speed Railway and requested for appropriation from the LegCo Financial Committee on 20 October 2009. However, before late November 2009, anti-High Speed Railway activities were mostly quiet and small-scale, with the joint declaration made by 69 scholars from Hong Kong universities on 4 November 2009 and the two small-scale demonstrations (less than 100 participants) outside the Government House on 16 November 2009 and LegCo on 22 November 2009 being more noticeable ones.

Crisis status was entitled by the people (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005). The 3,000-people “Anti-High Speed Railway, Stop appropriation” demonstration on 29 November 2009 was the first large-scale social movement related to the issue. However, the response of the government afterwards did not “make a sense” for

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60 Please refer to the Secretary of Transport and Housing (STH) transcript on Hong Kong Express Rail Link Forum (30 October 2010), Speech by STH on “Express Rail Link: The Fast Track to Future Economic Growth” at the luncheon meeting of the Hong Kong Institute of Directors (14 December 2010), and numerous LegCo Q&A sections.

61 See “ExCo approves implementation of high-speed rail link” (Transport and Housing Bureau, 20 October 2010)
entitling the movement to the crisis status. The spokesperson for the Transport and Housing Bureau argued that the project was supported by the general public since it would bring enormous social and economic, so the government had submitted the proposal to the LegCo as scheduled (Apple Daily, 30 November 2009). It appeared that the continuous protests and demonstrations against the building of the railway had not “threatened” the government. Although the filibustering of Pan-democrat lawmakers had delayed the appropriation process twice (18 December 2009 and 8 January 2009), the government was confident from very beginning that there would be enough votes to pass the appropriation in the LegCo with firm support from mainly Pro-establishment lawmakers. Therefore, the movement could only be defined as a potential crisis, as the government in fact did not admit that it was a governance crisis.

However, from a societal perspective, the movement had made a sense for a crisis. There were continuous demonstrations and protests outside the LegCo building and the Government House, with protesters using different means of demonstration, such as the ascetic practice by university students and the booths selling goods and food outside the LegCo and at Choi Yuen Village, which were widely reported by the mass media. The 2003 Demonstration was a single event that terminated the Article 23 legislation, while the Anti-High Speed Railway movement was a process in which the activists tried to force the government into conformity in a way similar to the 2003 incident, that is, by using the so-called “people power”. The slow-burning nature of the Anti-High Speed Railway movement made it difficult to determine whether it should be classified as a crisis in the sense-making process.
**Decision-Making**

The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link was one of the largest infrastructure projects in Hong Kong after 1997. As an urban policy, the High Speed Railway went through the policymaking process, in which the policy entrepreneur (Kingdon 1995) was Eva Cheng, who was completely responsible for this project as the Secretary for Transport and Housing. In this regard, the crisis management term in this incident was small. Although there was no prior signal that the request for appropriation from the LegCo would fail, Cheng never wasted any opportunity in lobbying different social groups to support the project, including the speeches she delivered at Hong Kong Express Rail Link Forum (30 October 2009), the luncheon meeting of the Hong Kong Institute of Directors (14 December 2010), and the numerous LegCo Q&A sections. In this case, the major “battlefield” was the LegCo, and the government’s effort in pushing the bill forward and its awareness in the need to lobby for support from LegCo members could be reflected in the large number of administrative papers submitted by the Subcommittees on Matters Relating to Railways to the LegCo, as listed in Table 10.1.

<p>| LegCo Reference       | Title                                                                 | Date               |
|-----------------------|                                                                      |                    |
| CB(1)356/09-10(01)    | Administration's paper attaching a draft Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) paper on special ex-gratia payments | 13 November 2009   |
|                       |                                                                      | 16 November 2009   |
|                       |                                                                      | 17 November 2009   |
| CB(1)361/09-10(01)    | Administration's paper attaching two draft PWSC papers on the construction of the railway works and non-railway works respectively | 13 November 2009   |
|                       |                                                                      | 16 November 2009   |
|                       |                                                                      | 17 November 2009   |</p>
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<td>Administration's paper on Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (Chinese version only)</td>
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<td>CB(1)400/09-10(03)</td>
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<td>CB(1)503/09-10(01)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on funding arrangement of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link: Supplementary information on the increase in costs of the railway and non-railway works (Follow-up paper)</td>
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<td>CB(1)398/09-10(01)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (powerpoint presentation materials) (Chinese version only)</td>
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<td>CB(1)503/09-10(03)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link: associated traffic facilities for the West Kowloon Terminus (Follow-up paper)</td>
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<td>CB(1)503/09-10(02)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link: patronage forecast, economic benefit and operational viability (Follow-up paper)</td>
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<td>CB(1)423/09-10(01)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on briefing on the planning of the West Kowloon Terminus (powerpoint presentation materials)</td>
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<td>CB(1)423/09-10(03)</td>
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passenger traffic forecast (powerpoint presentation materials) (Chinese version only)

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<td>CB(1)423/09-10(02)</td>
<td>Administration's paper on pedestrian linkages and road schemes adjacent to West Kowloon Cultural District (powerpoint presentation materials)</td>
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Source: Legislative Council, 2012

Compared to another important infrastructure – the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, in which the government submitted only six administration papers to the LegCo within the entire 2008-2009 legislative year before its funding was appropriated in May 2009, the large number of papers related to the High Speed Railway, as listed in Table 10.1, was an indication that the government attempted to defend the project by providing details on items such as “Supplementary information on the increase in costs of the railway and non-railway works” (CB(1)503/09-10(01)), “associated traffic facilities for the West Kowloon Terminus” (CB(1)503/09-10(03)), “patronage forecast, economic benefit and operational viability” (CB(1)503/09-10(02)), and “cross-boundary passenger traffic forecast” (CB(1)423/09-10(03)). It was obvious that the government was trying hard to explain and answer all enquiries in order to ensure a smooth appropriation request.

To conclude, the decision-making of the government in this incident was to monitor the issue, so as to make sure that the bill could pass successfully in the LegCo, and at the same time, prevent any policy failure. However, the government had demonstrated its concern on public opinion, which will be detailed in the following part.
Meaning-Making

Theoretically, the main function of crisis communication is to reduce public and political uncertainty (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005). However, in this incident, the major concern of the government was to make sure that LegCo would pass the bill smoothly in order to prevent policy failure. Therefore, the strategy of the government was to persuade the lawmakers so as to influence the general public to support the High Speed Railway project.

As suggested by Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005), the three factors important to government crisis communication are the degree of preparedness, the degree of coordination of outgoing information, and the degree of professionalization. The Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, published by the Highways Department, was an example of the communication effort made by the government in this case. From June 2009 to November 2010, fifteen issues of newsletter were published62, with the aim of providing relevant information to the villagers of Choi Yuen Village, and informing them of the arrangements made by the government for the affected bodies (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 1, 24 June 2009). Despite the claim that the newsletter was an informative publication, the persuasion effort made by the government in the newsletters was obvious, as could be seen from the headline of Issue No. 1, which suggested that the Choi Yuen Village locality was the best choice for building the High Speed Railway depot among the other possibilities (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 1, 24 June 2009). In addition, although the publisher of the newsletters was a civil services department (Highways Department), the

62 Please go to http://www.expressraillink.hk/en/multimedia-gallery/publications-and-publicity.html for accessing the Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters (Chinese version only)
political orientation was apparent. Issue No. 2 of the newsletter included a “sharing” by a District Councillor on how he had helped a villager to communicate with the government through peaceful means in order to achieve some requests of the villagers (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 2, 6 July 2009). The discourses of “communication achieving win-win situation” could be found in Issues No. 2 to 6 in January 2010, when the LegCo approved the appropriation.

The earlier newsletters could be regarded as a sort of propaganda, especially when compared to those published after the funding approval (Issues No. 7 to 15). Starting from Issue No. 7, which was published a few days after the appropriation, no more interviews, sharing, or persuasive articles (for supporting the project) was found. The newsletter had simply become a medium for the government to make announcements, such as asking the villagers to register for the resettlement scheme as soon as possible (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 7, 20 January 2010). The content of the newsletters had also become straightforward, such as: The option of “village relocation” would not be considered (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 8, 30 January 2010); there was no room for further negotiation with the government (regarding compensation) (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 9, 12 February 2010), and no more delay would be allowed for the villages to move out (Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletters, Issue No. 13, 17 June 2010).

It can be concluded that the political communication effort made by the government was aimed at preventing a policy failure as a result of the inappropriate handling of the incident. By using different means, such as the lobbying done by Eva Cheng and corresponding government officials (as mentioned in the sense-making part), and the newsletter publication, which were unusual for other government projects, the
government’s meaning-making attempt on smoothing the policymaking (cum appropriation request) process was noticeable. Although these preventive communication strategies could not be directly regarded as real crisis communication, they should be considered as essential parts of the meaning-making process, which was closely related to the sense-making process.

**Terminating**

The termination of a crisis meant the start of the assignment of accountability. Technically, Eva Cheng, as a political appointee under the Principal Official Accountability System (POAS), was undoubtedly accountable for political consequences of the High Speed Railway project. However, the policy process was a success, as the bill was passed by the LegCo with no amendment or significant delay. Thus, there could not be a blame assignment.

The operational closure and political closure assessment were complicated. The date on which the LegCo appropriated the funding, 16 January 2010, could be regarded as an operational closure. However, the conflicts related to the removal of Choi Yuen Village lasted for almost 10 more months. The first phase of the removal was carried out on 4 November 2010, while the second phase was on 19 November 2010 (*Choi Yuen Tsuen Newsletter*, Issue No. 15, 12 November 2010). Both phases saw strong resistance from the villagers and social activists, and the land reclaiming process had not been successful (*Oriental Daily*, 20 November 2010).

The political closure could not be assessed without mentioning the rise of the new group of social activists known as the “Post-80s”, who have become the new pillars for social movements. Their organizations and networks in the protests related to
the 2012 National Education controversy were viewed as the legacy of the Anti-High Speed Railway movement (Respondent C). Thus, even though the railway issue was over, the “Post-80s” organizations are still in place and are ready for future incidents. As such, political closure could not be measured clearly.

To conclude, crisis termination in the Leadership Approach mainly focuses on the settlement of a crisis. Identifying a closure would be difficult if the crisis were not severe enough. Moreover, a clear distinction between operational closure and political closure is not always achievable, and the end of the blaming process does not automatically mean a complete political closure, as the dissatisfaction of the public or activists could extend into future actions. Once the blame shifts to the system (i.e., political institution), the incident itself would no longer be the major focus, as what the public is actually eager for are reforms and real changes behind the scene.

**Learning**

The learning process in this incident was not obvious due to the reality of policy success - passing of the bill by the LegCo. The old way of doing things, that is, garnering the support of pro-establishment camp, was proven to be effective. As such, there was not a strong incentive for the government to make a genuine change, except as a public relations tactic. Characteristics of cyberactivists, defined by McCaughey and Ayers (2003) as internet users who actively participated in the online social movement and transformed the virtual movement to a real social movement by using internet as a channel for organizing, were observed in the Anti-High Speed Railway movement, and thus, there was a voice asking the government to respond to this new trend. As a result, the government launched a
Facebook page called “Upper Albert Road” (later retitled as “Office of the Chief Executive”\textsuperscript{63}), though its effectiveness in gathering opinions from social activists of the new generation (i.e. cyberactivists or the Post-80s) was doubtful. From a decision-making perspective, there was no real change in the government policymaking process, but a rather interactive framework could be seen. The learning process, which was not obvious, could be considered a result of the positive policy outcomes of the High Speed Railway project, as it had proven that the old way of policymaking was still useful.

10.3 Politicization Approach Analysis

\textit{Constructing Severity}

The process of framing in the Anti-High Speed Railway incident was diverged. In the severity dimension, it was crucial to define whether the incident had violated the core values of the public. From the perspective of the social activists and pan-democrats, the High Speed Railway incident was framed as a malfunction of the LegCo, with the passage of the appropriation guaranteed due to support from the Functional Constituency, which was described as a rubber stamp, or a “voting machine” (\textit{Apple Daily}, 23 January 2010). Moreover, the FC was also blamed for being a kind of “business-government collusion”, as most of its members are from various business sectors (\textit{Ming Pao}, 20 January 2010). On the other hand, some newspapers described the activists as merely anti-government, and that in fact, the majority of the people were supporting the project (\textit{Oriental Daily}, 23 January 2012).

In reality, the incident could not be classified as a policy failure due to the passage of

\textsuperscript{63} The page was closed after CY Leung took the office of CE
the funding request. At the same time, framing the High Speed Railway project as a violation or threat to core public values was inappropriate, especially when compared to the Car-Gate scandal, in which a conflict of interest was observed. In the whole policymaking process, the absence of public participation (Ming Pao, 20 January 2010) and overemphasis on the importance of “development” (Ming Pao, 26 January 2010) might be the only reasonable critiques on the government, and was clearly not strong enough for the incident to be framed as a violation of core public values. According to the blame constructing model (Brandstrom and Kuipers 2003), the incident could not proceed to the agency dimension and responsibility dimension when severity could not be constructed.

10.4 Summary on Leadership and Politicization Approaches Analyses

There were difficulties in applying the Leadership and Politicization Approaches to analyze the Anti-High Speed Railway movement, as both models emphasize on the severity of the crisis. Since the Leadership Approach focuses on what should be done by the government, and the Politicization Approach focuses on who should be blamed, the more severe a severe crisis is, the better it would fit into the models. However, as discussed previously, the Anti-High Speed Railway incident was not severe enough to attain the status of a crisis, making the results of applying the models insignificant. Specifically, the Leadership Approach is government-oriented, focusing mainly on the leaders in crisis management. However, the government is only one side of the story. As can be seen in the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, state-society interactions are crucial to the development of a crisis. On the other hand, the Politicization Approach is a blame-allocating model aimed at studying the politicization of crisis aftermath, but not the crisis itself. Thus, it is not useful in
discussing how a not-so-serious incident would advance to a crisis. In summary, when applied to the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, both models performed unsatisfactorily and their explanatory power is weak.

10.5 State-society Interactive Framework Analysis

Many of the respondents had participated in the Anti-high speed railway movement with different levels of involvement. Respondent G, as one of the coordinators from a Pan-democrat party, was greatly involved since the very beginning. Respondent G said that the movement could be dated back to late 2008 when the Choi Yuen Villagers learnt from the government about the high speed railway project. They were asked to move out within two years. Respondent G stated that the issue was neglected until late 2009 since no one knew what high speed railway and Choi Yuen Village were. Thus, the major role for them was to make the issue public. They tried to collect signatures through a “street station” (a booth with banners and leaflets). However, the outcome was insignificant until some of the Post’s 80 began to expose the issue on the internet.

In contrast, one of the Pan-democrat party leaders (Respondent C) admitted that the role of the party as a whole was rather supportive throughout the movement as the party had participated in actions such as mobilization, coordination and liaison especially at the beginning. Respondent C observed that the Choi Yuen Villagers and those young activists who highly concerned about conservation issues were the initiators of the movement. In fact it all started with those victims, (i.e. Choi Yuen Villages) and later on spread over to other stakeholders (i.e. conservation activist) and finally the so called “Post 80’s” young activist joined.
From the observations of the respondents, the development of Anti-high speed railway incident was a slow-burning crisis as it did not catch much public attention until much effort was made to escalate the issue into the public agenda. Different actors and activists were trying to develop sufficient Crisis Strengthening Forces in order to push forward their wants and demands.

Compare with the 2003 Demonstration, the Anti-high speed railway incident happened carried a special feature. The rapid and intensive use of internet as a means of communication among different non-state actors especially by the Post 80s’ was surprising. Almost all respondents who participated in the movement gave credits to the mobilization power through internet. On the other hand, during this incident, the government had first attempted to make use of the internet in response to the public demands. At the beginning of the outbreak of the incident, the government started to realize the importance of the internet on policy development and governance. Instead of merely using internet as a tool for distributing information through government official website and taking in public opinion and enquiry though e-mail, the Hong Kong government began to use the internet in a more creative and “interactive” manner.

For instance, the Transport and Housing Bureau had set up an “online forum” through Facebook for three hours on 6 February 2010 to collect comments on different policy issues especially on building the Express Rail Link. This was a typical one-way “e-participation” as no “response” could be made on others’ posts, (i.e. can be done by internet settings), and it was aimed at providing a platform for the public to express their opinions (Apple Daily, 16 February 2010). It was taken
as public relation tactics instead of sincerely listening and consulting the public in an interactive way as the page was created after the funding bill has been submitted to the LegCo waiting for appropriation. Obviously, it was part of the lobbying instead of a true heart consultation. At the same time, the government did not respond after getting comments from its Facebook. In this regard, on the other way round, it showed that the government has acknowledged internet as a new media which has becoming a new battlefield between both parties on different political and social issues. It creates the elementary stage for generating the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces as discussed in Chapter Four.

**The Movement: Success or Failure?**

Respondent G suggested that the movement was a “fifty percent success” - to some extent, the emerging of Post 80’s activists, the claiming of more compensation and the relocating of Choi Yuen Village were regarded as partial success. However, the appropriation of the funding in LegCo with no delay has made the movement “fifty percent failure”. In general, according to Respondent G, it was the result of collective effort made by institutional channel (political party inside the LegCo), civil society mobilization and the drive of villagers.

Both Respondent G and J (J is a social activist on railway affairs) suggested that the fail to stop the high speed railway project was mainly because of the time limitation. The government officially announced the funding bill for building the high speed railway in October 2009 while the funding was approved by the LegCo in January 2010. As mentioned, this incident was a slow-burning crisis in which the short time frame eliminated the further development of crisis politics and manipulation. The approval of funding by the LegCo was a significant Crisis Weakening Force as it was
nearly impossible to “undo” it under current institutional setting.

Respondent J also mentioned that the focus of the event was not that touching upon the core values of the general public. In fact, the protests and collective actions took place during the movement has attracted the public attentions as discussed in the earlier section. Recapping some of those, the “Five Districts Tapas”, hunger strike and the surrounding of LegCo building by the activists were all Crisis Strengthening Forces which successfully drew the public attention onto the incident. Apparently, Crisis Strengthening Forces of this issue were multi-dimensional and they could be reflected by the increasing newspaper coverage as listed in Table 10.3. However, if went back to the core issue, the bill was approved with no delay. That was why some respondents admitted it was a partial failure. Except the reason of time limitation which was counterfactual, the newspaper discourse analysis conducted below would provide a better understanding on the operation of Crisis Strengthening (and Weakening) Forces. The Anti-High Speed Railway Incident can be seen as a latent crisis for the State-society Interactive Framework – a crisis failed to reach the level of government change.

10.5.1 Results from Newspaper Discourse Analysis

Using a method similar to that of Lee and Chan (2011), “anti-high speed railway” was chosen as a keyword for searching related articles on Wise News. It should be noted that, as mentioned in Lee and Chan (2011), even though this process may not be able to gather all articles related to Anti-High Speed Railway movement, it is useful for obtaining a comprehensive set of data without any systematic research bias. All news reports, editorials, and commentary columns were selected, and the time
range for the current search was chosen to cover the period of the whole movement, that is, from the initiation of the project on 20 October 2009 to the passage of the appropriation bill in LegCo on 27 January 2010. This period was further divided into four sub-periods according to the five major events during the movement listed below:

1. 20 Oct 2009 - the HKSARG announced the funding arrangement of the Express Rail link
2. 18 Dec 2009 - funding application was debated in the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the first time
3. 8 Jan 2010 - funding application was debated in the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the second time
4. 16 Jan 2010 - the LegCo appropriated the funding application
5. 27 Jan 2010 - the construction work started

Period 1 covered the time between events 1 and 2, and Period 2 covered the time between events 2 and 3, and so on. The analysis was conducted in an inductive manner, with an aim of determining which groups of people were referred to in reports of Anti-High Speed Railway incidents on newspapers, regardless of them being mentioned in a formal news report, or just in editorials, Op-Eds, or commentaries. In total, seven categories of activists were recognized:

1) **Tai Kok Tsui Residents (TKTR)** - As the railway will pass under Tai Kok Tsui, those residents might be potential victims of possible structural damages to their homes.

2) **Internet Activists (IA)** - The cyberactivists who were opposed to the project and participated actively online and/or offline.

3) **Choi Yuen Villagers (CYV)** - Choi Yuen Village had to be demolished and its residents relocated, as its site would become the stabling siding
for the express railway. This group was the direct victim in this project.

4) **Professionals (PFs)** – Experts from different sectors, including engineers, scholars, and architects, who sometimes expressed their opinions individually or as representatives of their respective professional associations.

5) **Post-80s youngsters (P80)** – Young activists who were sometimes referred to as (post-secondary) students, youngsters, or teenagers.

6) **Pan-democrats (PD)** - Lawmakers coming from, and members of, Pan-democratic parties, also called “opposition parties” by Pro-establishment media.

7) People who were called anti-express railway groups or organization, but without sufficient information to be identified, would be coded under **Union and others (U&O)**.

How activists are identified can directly influence the opinion of the public towards the movement. According to two opinion polls conducted by the University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Poll (HKU POP) at the end of 2009 to early 2010, around 47% of the respondents supported the project during the first poll, increasing to 50% after one week (Table 10.2). It was surprising that as the Anti-High Speed Railway movement gained higher media exposure and the protests outside the LegCo stepped up in severity and variety, more people began to support the project.
Table 10.2 HKU Public Opinion Poll on High-Speed Railway appropriation

| Question: The government is seeking for LegCo funding of HK$ 66.9 billion, which is equivalent to HK$10,000 per HK citizen, for the Express Rail Link construction project. Do you incline to support or oppose the funding, or prefer to suspend it? |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer/Date of survey** | **1<sup>st</sup> Survey: 29/12/09-5/1/10** | **2<sup>nd</sup> Survey: 11-13/1/2010** |
| Support | 47% | 50% |
| Oppose | 23% | 20% |
| Suspend | 22% | 24% |
| Don't know/ Hard to say | 9% | 6% |
| **Total (N)** | 100% (1,018) | 100% (1,008) |


Table 9.3 shows the results of the newspaper discourse analysis, and attention should be devoted to three of the groups: Tai Kok Tsui Residents (TKTR) and Choi Yuen Villagers (CYV), who were supposed to be the victims of this project, and the Post-80s young activists (P80), who were very active in different aspects, including online and offline participation. A comparison of data for Periods 1 and 2 with Periods 3 and 4 shows that in the earlier periods, more newspapers tended to identify Choi Yuen Villagers or Tai Kok Tsui Residents as the activists, while in the latter periods, after the public began to pay attention to the movement when the LegCo was debating the proposal followed by approving the appropriation, less focus was given to those victims. Instead, the Post-80s were regarded as the movement activists. Specifically, the change in Wenweipo was the most significant, as its identification of Post-80s as activists increased from 0% in Period 1 to more than 90% in Period 3.
Table 10.3 Identification of the movement activists (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/Period</th>
<th>TKTR</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>U&amp;O</th>
<th>CYV</th>
<th>PFs</th>
<th>P80</th>
<th>PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WENWEIPO</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIENTAL DAILY</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/Period</th>
<th>TKTR</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>U&amp;O</th>
<th>CYV</th>
<th>PFs</th>
<th>P80</th>
<th>PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MING PAO</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLe DAILY</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Tai Kok Tsui Residents (TKTR), Internet Activists (IA), Choi Yuen Villagers (CYV), Professionals (PFs), Post’s 80 Activists (P80), Pan-democrats (PD)

Note: Number of articles does not include those without relevant information to the question. Sum of percentage can be larger than 100% since one article can be coded under multiple categories.

Source: Self-collected data from the four local newspapers in Hong Kong through WiseNews

10.5.2 Discussions

From the State-society Interactive Framework analysis (Figure 10.1), the media exposure failed to form sufficient political pressure towards the government as it missed the focus. The Choi Yuen Villagers and Tai Kok Tsui Residents should be the victims, and thus, their fight for their own interest through different kinds of Anti-High Speed Railway movement was completely legitimate. The results from
Period 1 show that most newspaper articles identified these two groups as the activists at the very beginning of the movement. However, in the latter periods, Post-80s activists were labeled as the new blood of social movement, and hence had dominated the news reports, as newspapers shifted from reporting the opposition of victims to reporting the new generation of social movement, with special focus on the different social movement activities. Some articles in Wenweipo even argued that the Post-80s activists were manipulated by opposition parties (Pan-democrats). The legitimacy of the whole movement had been reduced, as newspapers focused on reporting their tactics as a new format of social movement, or labeling them as radical or being manipulated, all of which had no relationship with the controversy itself. The final outcome was that support for the railway project had increased during the movement, and the crisis was significantly weakened.
Based on the analyses with both the Leadership and Politicization Approaches and the newspapers discourse analysis in the previous section, it can be concluded that the Strengthening Forces in this incident was not strong enough to escalate it to a governance crisis. Although the Anti-High Speed Railway movement gained plenty of media exposures, the media discourse had missed the focus of the incident, and thus, the Strengthening Force was significantly reduced. At the same time, the government had maintained a sufficient level of Crisis Weakening Forces through various means. First, the government had guaranteed enough votes in the LegCo to pass the appropriation of funding for the project. Second, there was an increase in the rate of support for the project as newspapers shifted from reporting on the project...
itself to focusing on the movement, which, along with the rise of the Post-80s that had drawn the attention of the public, had diminished the Crisis Strengthening Forces. Although there were some eye-catching protests outside the LegCo Building and the Government House, the catalytic effect did not exist. After the funding had been approved, the Anti-High Speed Railway issue gradually dropped out from the scenes, even though some of the activists had changed their battlefield to the conservation of Choi Yuen Village.

The above four chapters has demonstrated the two parts of case study. In the next chapter, discussion and analysis on findings and observations will be presented. It is important to under what has yielded by this research in order to contribute to the theory discussion in crisis management.
CHAPTER ELEVEN: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

11.1 Overview

In the previous chapters, the two conventional crisis management approaches, namely, the Leadership Approach and the Politicization Approach, were applied to the analysis of different crises. In general, the two approaches were applicable to some, but not all, types of crises. The Leadership Approach was strong in analyzing large-scale crises involving a large number of people and a distinctive crisis management core group, such as natural disasters or diseases (e.g., SARS), whereas the Politicization Approach was designed to assign blames to specific government official, such as Antony Leung in the Car-Gate Scandal.

While their contributions should be acknowledged, weaknesses were also observed in both approaches, as both of them were not explanatory in nature, and failed to properly address questions such as “why was there a crisis?” The Leadership Approach, for example, was an aftermath review of crisis, and while the Politicization Approach could explain how blames were being assigned after a crisis, it still failed to explain why a crisis had become so serious that the officials should be blamed, and further discussion using the Politicization Approach would be unfruitful if the incident was not serious enough.

It is these limitations that led to the formation of the State-society Interactive Framework to illustrate the development of a crisis. As mentioned previously, it is reasonable to expect that governance crises in Hong Kong, a limited democracy, are completely different from those under the full democratic context, which western
scholars have always taken for granted. The current research has also interviewed 17 respondents to obtain enough data to form a solid empirical basis for constructing a new crisis management framework.

11.2 The Leadership Approach

11.2.1 Crisis Management as Procedures

The Leadership Approach consists of five elements, namely sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, terminating, and learning (Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005), which could be understood as the essential procedures of crisis management, and are commonly described as steps or patterns in current literature (‘t Hart, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, Boin 2004, Boin, ’t Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, Rosenthal and Kouzmin 1993, 1997). From a managerial perspective, these steps and patterns form a crisis management cycle, and are guidelines developed by scholars for crisis managers, who are most likely government officials. Discovering a crisis (as sense-making) is always the most important issue, as crisis management should start with crisis recognition. Learning, as an aftermath of crisis, is necessary for preventing similar crises from happening in the future. However, the significance of these five elements may vary between crises. For example, sense-making can either be minor or unobservable if the crisis happened too fast or too strong. Further, hindsight is always perfect, as in the case of the 911 terrorist attacks. No one could have predicted such a tragedy beforehand. However, tracing the clues in the aftermath is always easy, as argued in Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al. (2005, 23), in the United States, if the information collected by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) were pieced together with that from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the authorities could have been alerted before the attack.
Even though the Leadership Approach is a comprehensive set of procedures covering most aspects of managing a crisis, its weakness is that it is not explanatory in nature. Rather than explaining “what would happen if something was done”, it is more similar to a handbook or guideline on “what should be done”. In Boin, ’t Hart, Stern, et al.’s (2005) words, the main theme of this approach is to advise those leaders to avert threat or at least minimize the damage of the crisis, and to explain what went wrong so as to convince the public that it would not happen again. It should be noted that the five stages in the Leadership Approach is comparable to the stages model (Jones 1984) in public policymaking. However, a more interesting topic to political scientists would be the interaction between different actors during a crisis, as in Kingdon’s (1995) Multi-Stream Model describing agenda setting and its relations with policy change.

11.2.2 Top-down: Government or Leader-oriented

As an approach and a checklist of “must do” in crisis management designed for the leaders, the main focus or target audience of the Leadership Approach is the government officials, and thus, this method could be described as a top-down approach, which assumes that the government (the leader) is the major actor in crisis management and should take a prominent role. The problem is that the responses of other actors are not taken into account. Although meaning-making (i.e., crisis communication) focus on how the public perceive the government’s responses, there is no interaction between the two, meaning that it should be regarded as a one-way top-down communication.
Crisis communication is a big issue in crisis management, and is a highly sensitive topic in real politics. As discussed in the literature review, messages that have gone through mediation and mediatization (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999) may be perceived very differently from the original meaning that the government has intended to deliver. This is evidence of the active role of mass media in the transmission of information in a crisis. Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) further argued that the mass media is more eager to frame (or manipulate) the news story, a view supported by many of the interview respondents in the current study who are reporters (Respondents K, N, and O). Respondent D even used the word “dramatization” to describe the story-making strategy by the mass media to attract audience, and accounted for it by the need for the mass media to make profit as privately-owned organizations. Thus, it is impossible to ignore the effect of the mass media’s proactive role, which is one of the weaknesses of the Leadership Approach, as it could only represent the government leaders’ perspective of crisis management.

11.2.3 The Issue on Severity

The level of seriousness of a crisis plays a significant role in assessing the efficacy of Leadership Approach. In general, the more severe the case is, the more powerful the model becomes, as in the incidents of the Car-Gate Scandal and the SARS outbreak. The Car-Gate Scandal had been a serious case since its first day of exposure, as it was a violation of public value – conflict of interest by a senior government official. On the other hand, the SARS outbreak, though not as serious as the Car-Gate Scandal at first, became much more critical in mid-March 2003 along with the global alert issued by the WHO.
The comprehensiveness of the Leadership Approach analysis is dependent on the severity of the crisis, as when the crisis is “serious enough”, more resources would be involved and more attention would be drawn. However, apart from the severe crises, scholars are also interested in topics in grey areas (e.g., potential crises or social issues) that finally dropped out from the scene. In this regard, the Anti-High Speed Railway incident could serve as an example, as an analysis on it suggested that the incident was not serious enough, and as such, failed to fit into the Leadership Approach. This example shows that the level of severity would be the major limitation for this approach, as it had decided what should be “managed” as a crisis theoretically. Through efforts of prevention – those “minor” steps taken beforehand to avoid the intensification of an issue into a crisis, topics in grey areas could be screened out due to its lack of severity, which also answers an important question in crisis management – why only some issues could become crisis.

11.2.4 Dependence on a Clear Start and a Clear End

Severity, to some extent, is linked to the emphasis of a clear start and cut off of a crisis. Sense-making is related to how a crisis started – either by being recognized or gained a crisis status, whereas both operational and political termination concern with how a crisis ended. It is much easier to identify the beginning and the end of a serious crisis, which usually creates an abnormal condition by distracting the daily operation of the government and leading to chaos. Similarly, the end of a crisis can be determined by whether conditions have “returned to normal”. Both the Car-Gate Scandal and SARS outbreak should fall into this category, as their start and end could be recognized without much difficulty. However, the starting points of the Article 23 legislation controversy and the Anti-High Speed Railway movement were more ambiguous. Specifically, the Anti-High Speed Railway movement could not
be considered as a significant governance crisis but a latent crisis, and the assessment of learning process in the Leadership Approach became meaningless, as the government believed that its “vote counting” tactics in policymaking was proven to be functioning properly. In general, analyses based on sense-making and terminating are effective for serious crises with clear starts and ends. In contrast, starts and ends could not be easily recognized in cases that are potential or “unsuccessful” governance crises.

11.2.5 The Leadership Approach: Summary

As Boin, ’t Hart, Stern et al. (2005, 9) mentioned, the Leadership Approach aims to “find out what crises ‘do’ to establish political and organizational orders”. Although the authors criticized the overtly instrumental orientation of those self-help and how-to books that call for a crisis free environment, the Leadership Approach still could not escape from the issue of “what should be done”. The five elements the authors suggested are still instrument-oriented, and could not solve the question of “why crisis had happened or was created”. In summary, the Leadership Approach is useful for analyzing large-scale crisis with high severity, such as political scandals and natural disasters. The clear start and clear end brought by the severity also fit into the comprehensiveness of the Leadership Approach. However, as its name suggests, the Approach is mainly government- or leader-oriented, and therefore, actions and reactions of other actors are either briefly acknowledged or completely neglected. This is the limitation of the Leadership Approach.
11.3 The Politicization Approach

11.3.1 Path Dependence

The Politicization Approach is based on a blame constructing chart derived by Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003), which contains three levels, namely, severity dimension, agency dimension and responsibility dimension (Figure 3.1). Every dimension represents a yes or no question, and the answer to the previous question would directly affect the next dimension (i.e., path dependence). The tree starts with “the problem occurs,” and the first level (i.e., severity dimension) is to decide whether crucial public values are violated or threatened. If no violation or threats were found, the crucial values would not be at stake, and the blaming process would be stopped. However, the definition of crucial value is confusing. As stated in Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003), when a situation is viewed as non-political with no threats to core values, the events would be eliminated from the blame game. Based on this mechanism, there exists a threshold to initiate the blaming mechanism – harm to public values. Thus, the Car-Gate Scandal was turned into a huge crisis, as it involved a conflict of interest by a senior government official. On the other hand, core public values are not clearly defined in the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, and therefore, the Politicization Approach could not be applied.

Apart from the severity dimension in the beginning, it is also difficult to make a strong judgment in the agency dimension and responsibility dimension. Brandstrom and Kuipers (2003) divided the agency dimension into an incident or a symptom. In the incident dimension, the case is framed as an operational and a technical issue focusing on lower-level actors, whereas the symptom dimension interprets the issue as a strategic and political issue focusing on higher-level actors. Sometimes a case could be consisted of both components, leaving a grey area
in-between the incident and symptom dimensions. For example, in the SARS outbreak, there were operational issues as stated in the Hospital Authority Report. At the same time, the SARS outbreak was a political symptom of Tung’s poor administration. The non-exclusive nature of the dimensions would significantly weaken the explanatory power of Politicization Approach.

### 11.3.2 Core Public Value: a Hard and Fast Rule

The vital component in deciding whether a crisis deserves the blame is a violation or threat to core public values, though it is doubtful that every crisis starts with a violation of public values. Generally, it could be expected in all political scandals, but not in policy failures and natural disasters. Although the SARS case is widely accepted as a crisis due to its severity, it did not violate public values. On the other hand, the legislation of Article 23 and High Speed Railway incident were truly political, and the Article 23 incident was a very exceptional case in which a bill was blamed for its attempt to restrict human rights and freedom. Alternatively, policy failure could be a mistake in grasping the national mood as Kingdon’s (1995) stream model suggested. The definition of severity should be multidimensional, as death on a large-scale or huge loss of public money are all reasonable possibilities to start the blame constructing process.

### 11.3.3 The Aftermath Blame Game

The major contribution of the Politicization Approach is showing how blames are assigned. The blame constructing chart mentioned five possible outcomes, namely,

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64 As stated in Kingdon (1995, 146), national mood was defined as “the notion that a rather large number of people out in the country are thinking along certain common lines, that this national mood changes from one time to another in discernible ways, and that these changes in mood or climate have important impacts on policy agendas and policy outcomes”.

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crucial values at stake (no blame was being constructed), scapegoat, organizational mishap, failing policy-maker, and policy/system failure. In general, this approach focuses on the post-crisis arrangement (blaming), with little attention paid on the crisis management efforts being made during the crisis. In real politics, assigning accountability to officials after every serious incident is an unavoidable task. In fact, the blaming game (Hood 2002) is just part of the crisis management process. More importantly, blaming always happens in the aftermath. For example, the post-SARS outbreak investigations lasted for a year after the disease was under control, and it was also a year after the end of the crisis that Yeoh Eng-kiong, the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food resigned.

The five possible outcomes mentioned in the previous paragraph could be categorized into three sub-sets – no blame assigned, actor failure (either top-level or front-line staff), and network failure (either implementation failure or policy/system failure). In this regard, two important questions are neglected – how was the blame constructed? What would happen after blames had been constructed? Similar to the Leadership Approach, the Politicization Approach is also limited in that its results are always non-self-explanatory. A not-so-serious crisis would not bring about any blame. If someone stepped-down due to accountability, it should be regarded as a failure of the actor. In general, the approach is useful in justifying the outcomes instead of explaining them.

11.3.4 The Politicization Approach: Summary

The Politicization Approach is innovative in the field of crisis management in that it provides a political account to the construction of post-crisis blame that is distinctive from the instrumental-oriented theories (Boin, 't Hart and Stern, et al. 2005) that has
been dominating the field. The step-by-step model is supposed to be clear and easy to apprehend, but the non-exclusive feature of three dimensions has weakened the explanatory power of this approach. Also, a thing that could be concluded from the analyses of case studies is that it is difficult to determine whether an incident is an actor failure or network failure, as most crises are caused by multiple reasons. In fact, of the four incidents discussed in the previous chapters, none had a definite conclusion.

Owing to its step-by-step feature, if an incident failed to pass the severity dimension, it would not be able to reach the other dimensions, and no blame would be assigned. In other words, an assumption of this approach, which has also confined its applicability, is that there has been a serious mistake leading to a severe crisis. Therefore, this approach was unable to explain the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, which was only a potential crisis with no violation of or threats to core public values. Moreover, even if a crisis is severe, it would still be excluded if it did not go against public values. Thus, it is clear that a violation of core public value is definitely important in distinguishing the severity of a crisis. However, most violations of core public values are found in political crises related to the misconduct of government officials, such as sex scandal and corruption, whereas crises brought by natural disasters might not be suitable.

From a macro perspective, the Politicization Approach principally focuses on one particular step – construction of blame in the whole crisis management process, which is also the most politicized part. However, it is impossible to see the full picture without studying and analyzing the managerial aspect. Thus, the Politicization Approach, though essential, has to be supplemented by other models or
theories, such as, the Leadership Approach, so that a comprehensive account could be given.

11.4 Core Strengths of the State-society Interactive Framework

One of the reasons for the existence of a theoretical gap in the current theories is the emergence of pro-active non-state actors due to the rapid development in information technology and communications. The State-society Interactive Framework is developed with filling this theoretical gap in mind, and has the following three features:

11.4.1 Amalgamation of Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches

Complimentary contribution does not simply mean combining the top-down (leadership) and bottom-up (politicization) approaches. Instead, some components of both approaches have been integrated into the Crisis Strengthening Forces and Weakening Forces. In general, the leadership and crisis management efforts made by the government, including those observable actions as decisions on policy, rescue efforts in disaster, allocation of resources, communication during crisis, and the supportive actions performed by pro-government parties and organizations (i.e., positive media exposures), are regarded as Crisis Weakening Forces that attempt to bring the crisis back to normal situation.

On the contrary, blaming and accountability issues are categorized as Crisis Strengthening Forces. Crisis is always a political sensitive issue. When the government is criticized for not doing a good job in crisis management, public dissatisfaction and hardship in the aftermath (e.g., the extremely poor economy after
SARS in Hong Kong) would emerge as political pressure, with manipulation of opposition parties and organizations possibly further worsening the situation. The public would call for actions, such as independent investigation, assignment of responsibilities to different officials involved, press for the resignation of particular key actor(s), or even try to achieve policy change or institutional change from the government. In cases of diseases or natural disasters, even the natural environment could act as a Strengthening Force. If the crisis worsens to a level that is uncontrollable, the anger of the people would be further intensified.

The State-society Interactive Framework could be regarded as a comprehensive crisis management analytical approach. Although crisis management is conventionally seen as the responsibility of government, the analytic power of the Leadership Approach is questionable, as it is similar to a handbook instructing the government on what should be done when there is a crisis. On the other hand, with its focus on the blame and accountability assignment process, the Politicization Approach is more analytical, though it could not truly reflect the efforts made by the government in managing the crisis. To cover for these limitations, the Framework integrates elements of both approaches, and is able to provide a foundation for full assessment on crisis politics.

11.4.2 Crisis Politics as Battles: Multi-crisis Effect

The textbook description of crisis as a cycle or in bell-shape is actually a simplification of a crisis into the beginning, peak, and termination. There is no doubt that all crises consist of the three mentioned components, but in the real world, crisis management is neither a cycle nor a bell-shaped distribution.
development process of a crisis is in fact dramatic and sometimes unforeseeable, and it is possible to have different “waves” of threats in one crisis, especially in the unpredictable natural disasters.

The Interactive Framework includes a key element called the Crisis Development Ladder. The ladder consists of three steps, namely, crisis, governance crisis, and government change. Depending on the power of the Strengthening and Weakening Forces, an issue would move along the three steps of the ladder, until there is government change or termination of the crisis. One of the strengths of the Crisis Development Ladder is its ability in explaining crisis with multiple reasons, which is important as a certain low-profile event in one crisis might be a symptom of future crisis development. For example, the Car-Gate scandal had nearly died down and was replaced by other hot issues (the SARS outbreak) before it was brought up again during the 1 July protest. However, no one knows at the moment that these two events would jointly become the symptoms of 2003 demonstration. The multi-crisis analysis suggested by the State-society Interactive Framework is also the first in kind among the crisis management theories.

Moreover, when a suitable situation arrives, such as the existence of catalytic effect (in this case, the 1 July protest), an event that seems to have disappeared could instantly be revived and move the whole crisis to the higher step. Compared to the five elements in the Leadership Approach and the blame constructing chart of the Politicization Approach, the Crisis Development Ladder of the Interactive Framework can better reflect the real world situation.
11.4.3 Catalytic Effect of Crisis: A Window for Government Change

The Catalytic Effect of Crisis is the most distinguishable feature of the Interactive Framework. It could be defined as a sudden huge event or issue that creates and gathers sufficient Strengthening Forces from different arenas to push the crisis to the final stage of government change. The catalytic effect is unique in its ability to answer the major research question in this thesis, that is, why could some crises lead to change, but others could not.

In the Politicization Approach, the blame constructing chart is an attempt to allocate blames in the crisis aftermath by asking three yes-no questions directing the issue to different outcomes, instead of explaining the reasons behind such consequences. The major difference between the Politicization Approach and the Interactive Framework is that the latter is able to provide a multi-dimensional analysis on a crisis, which is helpful in the more complicated political and social environment of Hong Kong, and also in the real world with rapid globalization due to innovations in information technology and communication. In addition, as people become more educated and better informed, they will no longer completely follow the arrangements of the government without raising questions when there is a crisis. Thus, the Interactive Framework is able to respond to the new political and social environment, in which the civil society is stronger and more influential than before.

11.5 Limitations

Conducting research in crisis management in Hong Kong is a challenging task, given that there are only a few academic studies focusing on the topic. As the field of crisis management is multi-disciplinary in nature, the current study mainly focuses
on the political and leadership perspectives in crisis management. Although it is not the aim of this research to study the performance of the government during the crises, a lack of professional knowledge in fields such as public health (the SARS case) or urban planning (the High Speed Railway case) may, to some extent, affect the depth of the study. However, the valuable opinions and information from informants and various sources, including the internet, library and archives, have been extremely helpful as building blocks for the development of the Interactive Framework.

The common pitfall for field researches in political science is the lack of interviewees, especially government officials who are directly in-charge or involved in the political process. Thanks to interviews with LegCo members and political news reporters, who interact closely with the government, and the availability of government reports, committees’ minutes, and even written version of speeches, information in the current study could be deemed reliable. Moreover, key informants have also provided details and perspectives not covered in documents, but it is unavoidable that some interviewees had failed to recall their memories on events that happened almost 10 years ago. To increase reliability, all information collected from the interviews is cross-checked with news reports and other sources of information to ensure exactitude.

As shown in previous chapters, current approaches are met with limitations in their explanatory capacity on crises in non-democratic regimes, such as those in Hong Kong. Comparatively speaking, the limitation of the Interactive Framework, which is developed to reflect the political context in non-democratic regimes, such as Hong Kong and Mainland China, may be its applicability and validity in explaining the
situation in an absolute authoritarian state, though it is doubtful that a state without any state-society interaction exists. Therefore, although the level of democracy and freedom may vary in different societies, the State-society Interactive Framework should, to great extent, be useful in explaining crisis management in different types of regimes.

11.6 Observations on the Crisis Politics in Hong Kong

11.6.1 Politicization Process with Anonymous Party Identity

The observations of non-state actors also provided an answer to one of research questions: Why are there so many crises happening after the handover? As mentioned in the Introduction, Hong Kong is currently a limited democracy with a comparatively high level of liberty. That is to say, Hong Kong people enjoy a relatively high level of freedom and autonomy in different aspects, such as freedom of speech, publication, and assembly, under a political system that is neither authoritarian nor democratic. Fifty percent of the seats in the Legislative Council are elected through direct election, while the rest is elected through small-circle elections with strong Beijing influence. Moreover, the Chief Executive is elected by an Election Committee commonly regarded as a rubber stamp of Beijing, and Hong Kong people could not directly elect the Chief Executive until at least 2017.

Therefore, the political context in Hong Kong is complicated, as the people could enjoy limited democracy through the existence of opposition parties in the LegCo, but have no access to the executive power, as the Chief Executive is not directly elected, and can govern without effective check-and-balance from the LegCo, which is always controlled by his alliances (i.e. the pro-government camp). Thus, to force
a government change, the only thing the people can do is to construct crisis provoking politics, that is, the use of different kinds of crisis events to create a window of opportunity for government change, through politicization.

By observation, the crisis politics in Hong Kong is under the politicization process with anonymous party identity. This observation was firstly inspired from a conversation with Respondent G, a Pan-democrat District Councilor who is also actively involved in social movements:

“If I were to participate in the social movement, I need to be “de-politicized”… [As the public may think that] you have a party agenda behind … [The initiative] made by a “pure” non-party social activist could be eye-catching for the public, but they still need the support of a political party. However, if you carry the party flag from the very beginning, you may lose public attention in just thirty seconds… If you want to succeed, you need to be “de-partized”, and have to use some “soft tactics” to catch public attention and support… [It is] a politicization process without evident party identity.” (Respondent G)

What Respondent G mentioned is a dynamic situation. As discussed previously, most respondents agreed that making an issue loud and “big” (i.e., politicization) is a common tactic for different non-state actors to push forward their agenda through social movements. However, political party members, regardless of their political orientation, suggested that their attachment with the political party is, to some extent, embarrassing during the politicization process. Using Respondent C’s words, Hong Kong people are in general separating “politics” and “livelihood” (policy) issues, and they have a relatively negative feeling towards political parties. Similar interpretation was also made by Respondent F, a committee member of a Pro-establishment party. “Not bearing the name of the party is to prevent from
being blamed for milking the stories” (Respondent F). On the other hand, Respondent M tried to explain this observation by arguing that political parties are mostly election-oriented and lack clear political ideologies, making people think that they are milking the stories merely for votes.

Therefore, the current conservation is in contrast with party politicization, which means having a very clear political party identity when pushing political agenda towards social issues or problems. Political parties promoting themselves by delivering their policy platform clearly with distinctive political ideological background (e.g., the conservatives and the social democrats) is commonly observed in democratic countries. Their message is simple – “vote for us if you support our stand”. However, under current political context in Hong Kong, policy change cannot be achieved through regular elections, leading to the need for crisis provoking politics. As some respondents mentioned, party politics in Hong Kong is immature due to the lack of trust from the general public - a view shared by some scholars, such as Choy (1999, 121), who argued that political parties in Hong Kong are mostly election-oriented, and has never been too ideological-oriented or politicized. Mass political mobilization by parties is rarely seen. Rather, social pressure groups and individuals have picked up this role, as in the case of the 1 July 2003 protest. In general, political parties in Hong Kong are still suffering from low legitimacy after 1997 (Ma 2007, 135).

The soft process in politicization observed in Hong Kong can be accounted for by the following three unique conditions:

1) A limited democratic system with political parties that are isolated from the
executive power;
2) An immature party politics due to most people not having trust in political parties, or thinking that parties are not that influential (Respondents C and M);
3) A crisis provoking politics, making projection of social problems into crises much feasible in influencing government decision than through formal institution (e.g., elections and petitions) (Respondent G)

The major goal of the activists is to fight for government change. In the short term, it aims to achieve policy breakthrough in some “deep-level social conflicts”, especially when groups with vested interest are concerned, while in the long term, it tries to break the deadlock in Hong Kong political reform. The democratization process in Hong Kong has been a tough and slow process. Due to the absence of universal suffrage, activists, especially the Pan-democrats, have been trying their best to criticize the low legitimacy of the current Hong Kong SAR Government. The legitimacy crisis of the government is nearly always bundled with social crises, especially when the government is found to be ineffective and inefficient in crisis management. The poor capability of the government can be the result of both incompetence of its top leaders and its bias towards certain influential groups (i.e., the Pro-Beijing camp and the business sector). Thus, activists have been working hard to impel political crises, so as to force possible government change. In fact, a majority of the interviewees admitted that their reason for opposing to government decisions or policies is the nondemocratic political system in Hong Kong. They are waiting for a catalyst (i.e., the Catalytic Effect of Crisis) in order to impose sufficient political pressure (i.e., the Crisis Strengthening Forces) to accomplish government change.

Therefore, in the Hong Kong context, crisis is not only an abnormal and unpredictable situation threatening the government, but also a catalyst for
government change. The nondemocratic executive branch in Hong Kong makes it possible for the government to ignore the real needs of the majority of people. The politicization process with anonymous party identity in Hong Kong illustrates how the non-state actors, who are not involved in the decision-making process, use crisis as an opportunity to impose sufficient political influence on the government to lead to a real change for the good of the general public under a system without full democracy.

11.6.2 The Crisis Politics of Hong Kong under the State-society Interactive Framework

As a means of politicization, the politicization process with anonymous party identity is a Crisis Strengthening Force under the State-society Interactive Framework, and thus, a strategy to achieve government change. To accomplish this, non-state actors would try to project the seriousness of a crisis in order to impose sufficient political pressure on the government for changes. Two of the common strategies used are continuous mass media coverage and collective actions.

Politicization processes are different among regimes depending on their socio-political context. As mentioned previously, Hong Kong’s politicization is rooted in the immature and, to some extent, unpopular political party politics. As such, it is a politicization strategy that tries to downplay party identity during the process. Support from the people, that is, public opinion, is with no doubt the core of the Crisis Strengthening Forces, and, as observed by the respondents, politicization without party identity is the most effective way to achieve this in the Hong Kong context, especially after the 2003 Demonstration.
Politicization process without party identity is highly relevant to the State-society Interactive Framework, as both of them view crisis as a development process. More importantly, it explains the deliberate effort from non-state actors in framing and escalating an issue into a social crisis (i.e., Crisis Strengthening Forces), in order to have more chances to influence government decision-making under a closed political system without full democracy.

11.7 Comparative Perspective on Crisis Politics: SARS Experiences

The State-society Interactive Framework has demonstrated its strength in explaining crisis politics in non-democratic regimes. Although the Interactive Framework is developed based on the fragmented system in post-1997 Hong Kong - a semi-democratic system with high level of freedom and liberty, it is still applicable to other non-democratic, semi-democratic, and also some newly developed democratic systems. In this section, the SARS outbreak is selected as an example to illustrate the crisis politics in three other Asian states, including Mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore. The main goal of this section is to identify the possible political forces (i.e., Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces) that may affect the crisis politics in those nations, which could provide valuable insights and form a solid foundation for the further development of the State-society Interactive Approach.

11.7.1 Mainland China

The People’s Republic of China is generally regarded as an authoritarian state under the dominant rule of Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and China’s party-state nature has been one of the spotlights in studies on crisis management of SARS. Identified
as the origin of the disease, the Chinese province of Guangdong saw a total of 5,328 SARS cases, with 3,250 deaths as of May 2003\(^{65}\) (Cheng and Lye 2005, 208), the highest number in the world.

The SARS outbreak in China was a hot topic in crisis management studies, with analyses from various angles, including media control (Powers and Xiao 2008), public health management (Tang 2003, Wong and Zheng 2004), and SARS elite politics (Loh 2004, Loh and Yip 2004, Saich 2006). From a crisis politics perspective, the media control and elite politics in China is highly relevant to the State-society Interactive Framework. Specifically, the tight control on media is an effective tool to suppress the Crisis Strengthening Forces, especially when the Chinese government started to realize that the SARS outbreak could become a political problem, rather than merely a medical problem (Cheng and Lye 2005, 211). The observations on media control during SARS outbreak is summarized as follows.

**Media Control during SARS**

The issue of freedom of press in China has been widely criticized by the international community, and the country was evaluated as “not free” by the Freedom House (He 2004, 182). As argued by He (2004), the CCP has developed a systematic media control network through different means, such as license granting, censorship system, “clean up” and crack down” of illegal publications, management and “rectification” of newspapers and periodicals, and cyber censorship.

Indeed, the period between late 2002 and early 2003 was extremely sensitive to the CCP leadership, as it was the time when the fourth generation leaders, led by Hu

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\(^{65}\) Data obtained from Ministry of Health, PRC, and cited in Cheng and Lye (2005, 208).
Jintao, was taking over the power (Zheng and Lye 2004, 50). In this regard, it is not surprising that some journalists in Guangdong were being criticized for their reports of the appearance of an “atypical pneumonia” on local newspapers during the early stages of the outbreak. As Zheng and Lye (2004) added, the Chinese government at that time aimed to create a “conducive environment” to ensure a national-wide stability that would facilitate the smooth transformation of power to Hu. After suppressing the news for a few months, eventually, on 3 April 2003, almost half a year after the first SARS case in Guangdong, the Chinese government held its first press conference on SARS, announcing that there was no SARS case in Beijing, and that the disease was under control in China (Eckholm 2006, 122).

Besides, the media control of CCP on newspaper could be identified through newspaper discourse analyses conducted by some scholars. For example, Huang and Hao (2008) examined how People’s Daily, a CCP propaganda newspaper, and Beijing Youth News, a market-oriented newspaper, covered the SARS crisis, and found that both newspapers were consistent with the stance of CCP in handling SARS, which is a reflection that the “newspaper censorship and publicity of information about the epidemic were based on the Party’s strategies rather than their own editorial decisions” (Huang and Hao 2008, 93).

From the perspective of the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces, the media control tactics had sufficiently dampened the state-society interactions, as not many people (except those living in affected areas) realized the seriousness of SARS at the very beginning. The sharp awareness of the potential political threat to the new Hu-Wen leadership has forced the CCP to maintain a tight control on the spread of information related to SARS. In this case, media control was an effective and
strong Crisis Weakening Force that had prevented the SARS outbreak from becoming a huge political crisis that might affect the power transition to the fourth generation of leadership.

*SARS and the Hu-Wen New Leadership*

The outbreak of SARS had given a great challenge to the new leadership of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. However, in contrast with Tung’s failure in Hong Kong, SARS had, to some extent, strengthened the Hu-Wen leadership, as they presented a more people-oriented and caring manner during the incident. As Eckholm (2006) observed:

“In many countries, a similar deadly fiasco might overturn the government. In China, government credibility was low to begin with, and my impression, based on widespread interviews in May and June of 2003, is that President Hu and Prime Minister Wen were, on balance, personally strengthened by the events, even if broader trust in the system sank to a new low. Their counterattack on SARS, if belated, came across as strong and in keeping with the image the new leader had cultivated of being more in touch with ‘the people’ than their predecessors” (Eckholm 2006, 129).

The Hu-Wen’s public relations tactics were quite effective in upholding the dampened creditability of the Chinese government during SARS. As mentioned in the previous section, the political sensitivity at the time of SARS had made the incident not merely medical issue, but a potential political crisis. Thus, neglecting the public health perspective, the CCP leadership had tried their best to minimize the political influence of SARS on the new leadership. There could be multiple conclusions towards China’s public health system on disease control, however, from a crisis politics perspective, the SARS outbreak did not reach the level of
Governance Crisis in the State-society Interactive Framework.

In fact, the political impact of SARS on China’s new leadership was relatively minor. It was to large extent associated with the long history of keeping public health matters as top state secrets by the CCP (McNally 2003, 72). In this regard, a tight media control is an effective tool to maintain this phenomenon. Media control in China has not merely performed the role of “filter”, but is also in line with the old Maoist way of propaganda, as McNally (2003, 73) observed: “The party and media mass mobilized society into confronting the SARS crisis… Media outlets also portrayed the battle against SARS as a test of whole nation, exhorting people to rally around the communist leadership to overcome the country’s hardship.” Thus, in general, the crisis management of SARS in China was a battle of information flow and propaganda. Although the health system of China has been widely criticized by the outside world, the media control of China and the public relations tactics performed by the new leadership had kept the Crisis Strengthening Forces at a low level, and thus governance crisis was not observed in China in the SARS incident.

11.7.2 Taiwan

Taiwan was one of the most severely affected regions of SARS, with Taipei city and Taipei county (now New Taipei city) recording the highest number of SARS cases (Figure 11.1). The crisis politics of SARS in Taiwan was completely different from its counterparts of Hong Kong and Mainland China across the strait. Since 1996, Taiwan people have experienced full universal suffrage in electing their own President. In fact, all levels of government bodies, from the President to City mayors, and from Legislative Yuan members to City Council members, are returned
by direct elections. At the time of SARS outbreak, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was the President, while the Taipei City was headed by Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang (KMT, or the Chinese Nationalist Party). As some scholars suggested, the battle of SARS crisis was in fact a battle of publicity between the DPP’s central government and the KMT’s Taipei city government. The creation of public fears towards SARS by the Taipei city government was a weapon to attack the DPP’s central government (Gao 2003, 66).

Figure 11.1 Geographical Distribution of SARS Probable Cases in Taiwan
Source: (Chen, Chien and Yang 2003, 308)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of SARS Politics in Taipei

Gao (2003) provided detailed analyses of the de-crisis strategies of the Taipei city government in dealing with SARS, and argued that the SARS crisis management of Ma’s Taipei city government was completely a political operation campaign in order to demonstrate their prestige over the DPP’s central government headed by Chen.
Under the “Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of SARS Politics in Taipei” suggested by Gao, the Taipei city government had constantly adopted and reinforced the shock therapies (Kimenyi and Mwabu 2007) to distinguish themselves from the “gradual reaction” of Taiwan central government.

The SOP started with the emotional appearance on the mass media, which created a sense of public fear. It was followed by a series of shock therapies\(^{66}\) that made the Taipei city government “battlefront fighter” of the SARS crisis. In contrast, regardless of whether the central government followed the city government’s shock therapies or not, the city government would always win – if the central government followed, it means the city government was acting more quickly. If the central government did not follow, the consequences of the disease would be borne by the central government, not the city government.

From the angle of State-society Interactive Framework, the Taipei city government managed by the KMT, an opposition party, was an extraordinary “non-state actor”, in contrast with the DPP’s central government. Making use of Taipei city as a platform, the KMT was trying to project the seriousness of the SARS crisis to attack the DPP’s popularity in order to increase their own. Although the SARS crisis eventually did not reach the critical level of Governance Crisis, Ma’s Taipei city government successfully transferred part of the political responsibility of the crisis, and his performance during SARS as Taipei city mayor did not become a political burden for his Presidential campaign in 2008.

\(^{66}\) For example, without coordinating with the central government, the Taipei city government extended the home-isolation period from 10 days to 14 days and reduced the body temperature for home-isolation from 38°C to 37.5°C, both of which were not based on the professional standard of WHO, but to differentiate themselves from the central government (Gao, 2003: 78-79).
There is no evidence that the KMT tried to make use of the SARS incident to overthrow DPP’s regime. In fact, they did not need to, as Taiwan is under full democracy. Thus, in this case the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces were mostly provided by the KMT’s Taipei city government. On the one hand, they projected the seriousness of SARS. On the other hand, KMT offered shock therapies through the Taipei city government. In democratic regimes, with the presence of regular elections, it is not necessary for the oppositions to make use of crises to impose government change. Rather, they would want to gain as much publicities as they could during the crises. This is especially true if the state control part of the institution is controlled by two major parties, as in the Taiwan case of central government versus the capital city government, or maybe the Executive versus the Legislative. Indeed, KMT had been in control of the Legislative Yuan for most of the time during Chen’s presidency (2000-2008).

11.7.3 Singapore

Singapore was another Asian country that was significantly affected by the SARS outbreak, with a total of 238 cases and a fatality rate of 13.9% (33 deaths) (Teo, Yeoh and Ong 2008, 88). Among the four regions discussed in this thesis (i.e., Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore), the political impact of SARS on Singapore’s ruling People’s Action Party 67 (PAP) was minimal, although then-Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong labeled SARS a “national crisis” with “catastrophic consequences” in a parliamentary speech in April 2003.

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67 The People’s Action Party (PAP) has been Singapore’s ruling party since 1959. Since the 1963 general elections, the PAP has dominated Singapore’s parliamentary democracy. Although there is universal suffrage, the PAP has been criticized for the passing of laws that suppress free speech and other civil liberties.
Of course, credit should go to the crisis management efforts made by the Singaporean government, as they enforced strict measures to contain the outbreak, for which they received praised from the WHO as a “model” of crisis management for other nations to emulate (Weber, Law and Tan 2008, 146). As mentioned in the State-society Interactive Framework, government crisis management measures could be a strong Crisis Weakening Forces, especially in the case of natural disease. Once the spread of the disease has been controlled, there is no room for further political manipulation. The effective crisis management also made it hard for the oppositions to attack the popularity of the ruling party. On the other hand, media control in Singapore is also very tight, and Singaporeans enjoy much less freedom of speech and assembly compared to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

“Triumph over Adversity”

Weber, Tan, and Law’s (2008, 152) study suggested that the success of Singapore in the battle of SARS was mainly because of the Singapore government’s ability to gain public compliance with directives on public and personal health. They argued that the government had successfully framed communicative responses to the crisis in terms of “social responsibility” and “sacrifice”, under girded by “government paternalism”. Through different mass media, Singaporeans were told to be community-oriented by truthfully reporting their symptoms and history of contact, with no regard to their self-interest (i.e., social responsibility). Moreover, as illnesses such as SARS were usually given the “war” metaphors (Baehr 2006, Sontag 1999), the notion of “sacrifice” was rooted into the public and to those who worked in the medical community. All medical practitioners, victims of SARS, and survivors are described as “war heroes”. Moreover, the Singaporean leaders had
practiced what themselves preached to promote the importance of the directives (i.e.,
government paternalism), such as the self-quarantine of a Parliament member when
he found that he had treated a SARS-infected patient (Weber, Law and Tan 2008,
156).

In fact, state-society interactions in Singapore were positive, as most of the people
supported their government during the SARS incident. With the cooperation of the
people, the Crisis Weakening Forces directed by the government was extremely
effective, and Singapore was safe eventually. In this case, the Crisis Strengthening
Forces were weak, and the crisis politics was not obvious, evident from the fact that
the SARS incident was not linked up with some critical political issues, such as the
long paternalist rule of PAP. In contrast, the paternalistic governance was said to be
quite effective in handling natural disease. Thus, SARS in Singapore was totally a
medical issue without any political implication.

11.7.4 Summary
This section serves as an evaluation on the application of the State-society Interactive
Framework on various governmental systems (partial democracy with a relative high
level of liberty in Hong Kong, authoritarian with very limited of freedom especially
on freedom of speech and political participation in Mainland China, liberal
democracy in Taiwan, and a relatively democratic parliamentary system in which
freedom is being restricted by the government under paternalistic rule in Singapore),
and discusses the potential for further studies. Due to limitations in the scale of
research, a comprehensive analysis was not possible on the three regions other than
Hong Kong (Mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore). Instead, the crisis politics of
SARS in the four regions, associated political issues, and a brief illustration on Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces are given in Table 11.1. The Forces are categorized as “Weak”, “Moderate” and “Strong” for easy understanding.

In conclusion, crisis politics happens in all types of regime, especially if the crisis were serious enough. It is the relationship between crisis politics and the Crisis Strengthening and Weakening Forces that is of interest. For example, in Singapore, the crisis politics of SARS was not obvious, which might be related to the effective crisis management efforts of the government (i.e., very strong Crisis Weakening Forces). If the Singapore government performed poorly in crisis management, the outcome could be totally different, and might even become a “political bomb” that would affect the People's Action Party’s paternalistic rule.

The State-society Interactive Framework is a total crisis management framework that puts all the political factors (i.e. Forces) that may contribute to a crisis into consideration. As could be seen from the real world examples, crises are not individual cases. In this regard, the Interactive Framework could provide a comprehensive analysis on different actors and issues that might contribute to the development of crisis politics. Specifically, poor crisis management by the government on any particular social problem could bring unexpected political consequences, as can be seen from the Arab Spring. The multi-crisis effect consideration and the “battle” between different Forces are original contributions brought by the State-society Interactive Framework to the field of crisis management.
**Table 11.1 Summary Table of the SARS Politics in the Four Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Mainland China</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime type</strong></td>
<td>Partial democracy</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Paternalistic democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis Politics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political issues that associated with SARS</td>
<td>- Poor governance under Tung</td>
<td>- Fourth generation of leader assuming power (i.e., beginning of the Hu-Wen era)</td>
<td>- Party struggle between DPP (central gov’t) and KMT (Taipei city gov’t)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Car-Gate scandal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Article 23 Legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis Strengthening Forces</strong></td>
<td>Very Strong (severe public dissatisfaction)</td>
<td>Weak to Moderate (tight media control, imperfect information of the public)</td>
<td>Moderate (struggle between central and Taipei gov’t, KMT challenged DPP)</td>
<td>Weak (tight media control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis Weakening Forces</strong></td>
<td>Weak (crisis management measures were seriously criticized, <strong>multi-crisis effect</strong> that severely damaged gov’t legitimacy)</td>
<td>Moderate (ineffective and delayed crisis management measures, but quite successful public relations performance by leaders)</td>
<td>Moderate (crisis management effectiveness affected by party struggle)</td>
<td>Very Strong (effective crisis management measures, paternalistic rule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catalytic Effect</strong></td>
<td>Yes (1 July 2003 Demonstration)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Stepping-down of principal officials and CE, postponement of Article 23 Legislation</td>
<td>Stepping-down of front line officials (no great impact to ruling party)</td>
<td>Stepping-down of front line officials (no great impact to ruling party)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER TWELVE: CONCLUSION

The field of crisis management has been dominated by western scholars, and as such a liberal democratic system of government is taken for granted. However, as a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong would not be able to enjoy a full democracy at least until 2017. Thus, it is doubtful that current crisis management models and theories can be applied without modification in the Hong Kong context. In an attempt to develop a framework suitable for use in a limited democracy, such as Hong Kong, the current thesis first applied two crisis management approaches, that is, the Leadership Approach (top-down) and the Politicization Approach (bottom-up) to the Hong Kong context to identify their weaknesses and limitations. With these in mind, the State-society Interactive Framework is introduced.

The two crisis incidents selected as case studies in this thesis are the 1 July 2003 Demonstration and the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, both of which saw active civic participation and involved controversies in different political aspects. In fact, the 1 July protest was a direct result of three crisis events, including the Antony Leung Car-Gate Scandal, the outbreak of SARS, and the proposed legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law (National Security Ordinance), all of which happened in the first half of 2003. On the other hand, the Anti-High Speed Railway incident that extended from late 2009 to early 2010 was related to the controversy on building the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. The crisis in 2003 had led to a major policy change (i.e., the postponement of Article 23 legislation) and the resignation of government officials, whereas the Anti-High Speed Railway movement ended with no change in the government. Granted, there
was a significant difference in the number of participants between these two movements. However, other than simply focusing on the number of people, a more valuable study would be to understand to what extent the crisis management theories could explain the phenomena.

There are five elements in the Leadership Approach: Sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, terminating, and learning, and three dimensions in the Politicization Approach: Constructing severity, agency, and responsibility. Analyses of the case studies discovered two major limitations regarding to the applicability of both crisis management approaches. First, both approaches were found to be in excellent in understanding conventional crises, such as political scandals or natural disasters, but are not applicable to policy failure, since both approaches depend significantly on the seriousness of the crises. If the “culprit” could be clearly identified, and the crisis development process simple and direct, both approaches would be extremely helpful in understanding the whole crisis management process. If the crisis were more serious, it would be easier to divide it into different stages for analysis. However, there is no clear standard of what constitutes a serious crisis. Some challenges to the government, or so-called “social events”, might not necessarily be the crisis scholars had in mind when they developed their theories. For example, the Anti-High Speed Railway incident had not been taken to the level of governance crisis. In fact, it did not even reach the threshold for initiating an analysis under the Politicization Approach (i.e., serious violation of core public values).

Second, both approaches are useful in the aftermath assessment of the crisis development process, but are not explanatory enough to answer the current research
question: Why could some crises lead to change, but others could not. Although the Leadership Approach claimed to be a step forward of other crisis management approaches (Boin, 't Hart and Stern, et al. 2005, 9) that are in traditional handbook style, it is, to a large extent, still thinking within a set of guidelines. Specifically, the five elements in the Leadership Approach, though demonstrating the major components to be concerned by the government during a crisis, have failed to explain why different crises would lead to different (political) consequences. The Politicization Approach, while more explanatory in nature, has a threshold requirement on severity (i.e., core public values violation), which has limited its application to assessing potential crises or other types of crises.

There are two reasons regarding the shortcoming of both approaches in the Hong Kong context. On the one hand, both approaches are unable to reflect the complexity of Hong Kong’s political structure, that is, a semi-democratic legislature under the administration of an almost authoritative executive branch. It is obvious that, without regular elections of the executive body, the survival of government officials has no direct relation with their crisis management performance. However, the political sensitivity of crisis management to elections is a major concern in the theories developed by western scholars (McConnell and Stark 2002). Thus, the absence of a well-developed electoral politics has made it hard to associate the situation of Hong Kong with the theories. On the other hand, the crisis management approaches are unable to provide a comprehensive assessment on the highly-politicized incidents in Hong Kong, as both of them view crisis and crisis management from a particular perspective. The Leadership Approach focuses on what should be done by the government during a crisis, whereas the Politicization Approach, while famous for its illustration of blame construction, could not
completely reflect the politics of crisis management.

The State-society Interactive Framework proposed by the current study is able to tackle the limitations of both Leadership and Politicization Approaches. There are four elements in the Interactive Framework. First, a Crisis Development Ladder has been developed to illustrate the relationship between crisis, governance crisis, and government change. Governance crisis is now described as a crisis that provides sufficient threats on the legitimacy of the government or the survival of the regime, and is differentiated from a simple crisis, which in its broadest sense, is defined as an out of normal situation that requires government intervention. Government change can be regarded as a kind of termination for the crisis, as it involves either a stepping-down of a particular government official, or a change in the institution (including policy change) as a whole. The Crisis Development Ladder serves as a path to demonstrate the possible political outcomes of a crisis.

The two other major components of the Interactive Framework are the Crisis Strengthening Forces and Crisis Weakening Forces. These two forces represent the interaction between the government and the public in a crisis. Crisis Strengthening Forces are regarded as the efforts made by different actors in the society, including opposition parties, mass media, and pressure groups, who want to take the crisis further up the Crisis Development Ladder. Crisis Strengthening Forces include, but are not limited to, the political power of actors within the institution, such as impeachment initiated by the oppositions in the legislature, the negative reports in newspapers, the exposure of scandalous materials, and the collective actions (i.e., protest and demonstration) organized by different social groups. On the other hand, the Crisis Weakening Forces mainly come from the government or pro-government
parties or groups. They include supportive votes in the legislature that protect the officials involved from the impeachment or motion of no-confidence. The supportive and positive mass media exposures also play an important role in convincing the public that everything is under control. The struggles between the two forces would determine whether a crisis would lead to a government change.

The most distinguishable feature of the Interactive Framework is the Catalytic Effect of Crisis, which is similar to the policy window of opportunity suggested in Kingdon’s (1995) Multi-stream Model. It is inspired by the word “catalyzer”, as suggested by Respondent C. The Catalytic Effect of Crisis is defined as the prominent event that intensifies in a very short period of time and creates an opportunity for government change. In most situations, the catalytic effect is associated with the immense growth of Strengthening Forces and the decline of Weakening Forces, and is, thus, an alternate way of viewing crisis as a means leading to government change, especially in a limited-democracy like Hong Kong.

In order to make the State-society Interactive Framework more scientific and objective, the newspapers discourse analysis method similar to that of Lee and Chan (2011) was adopted, with an aim of measuring the changes in Strengthening Forces and Weakening Forces in the mass media and identifying the existence of Catalytic Effect of Crisis. With reference to the two case studies, the 1 July 2003 protest was definitely a catalyst that led to the postponement of the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law and the resignation of two officials. This suggestion is substantiated by the results of the newspaper analysis, which indicated a major shift of intensity from Weakening Forces to Strengthening Forces during the protest period. However, in the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, Strengthening Forces were
insufficient, and hence, the incident was unable to move on to the stage of governance crisis. Moreover, there was an absence of catalytic effect, thus no change was made by the government eventually.

This thesis has yielded three theoretical contributions to the arena of crisis management and one empirical contribution to the study of Hong Kong politics. First, the Interactive Framework is theoretically a complimentary contribution of both top-down and bottom-up approaches, as it attempts to unite them on the same playfield. The Interactive Framework is an approach of multi-dimensional crisis management, which intends to illustrate the relationship between the state and the society during a crisis by using the two crisis forces. Second, compared with the current approaches that view crisis management as an assessment in the aftermath, the Interactive Framework describes crisis development with respect to the changes in Strengthening and Weakening Forces throughout the entire crisis. It can also explain the occurrence of multi-crisis effect. Third, the Catalytic Effect of Crisis is an original finding in crisis management studies that associates crisis with the possibility of bringing government change. Instead of perceiving crisis as an abnormal situation, the catalytic effect emphasizes the importance of crisis in directing the decision-making of the government. Turning an issue into a crisis is definitely helpful in drawing public and government attention, as it may result in a real change in the policy or the institution. This crisis manipulating process by different non-state actors is observed as a politicization process without party identity under crisis provoking politics. It refers to the creation of crisis, or making a crisis more serious and notable, in order to serve certain political agenda.

Finally, the introduction of a new perspective on crisis-provoking politics in Hong
Kong is the empirical contribution of this thesis. People are unable to influence political affairs effectively through formal means, given that universal suffrage is not yet available in Hong Kong. The observed crisis-provoking politics could due to the presence of incapable government officials that are able to survive under the lack of an effective check-and-balance mechanism, though this point of view could be disputed with reference to the colonial administration operated by the British. In contrast, the politicization process without party identity would possibly be changed by the continual enlightenment of the civil society and party politics.

Until this moment, Hong Kong people are still enjoying a relatively free and liberal society. This is the soil for civil society development, and is also an essential condition for the crisis provoking politics of Hong Kong. A limited-democracy with liberty allows Hong Kong people to escalate different social problems to the level of social crisis, which provides sufficient Strengthening Forces to take the agenda further. If the catalytic effect were activated, as in the case of the half-a-million people protest on 1 July 2003, there would be a good opportunity to force the government to make major concessions. In conclusion, with the political development of Hong Kong towards democracy at stake, there will definitely be increasing number of social and political crises. The current political scandal related to the unauthorized construction in the apartment of the Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying is a predictable development under the crisis provoking politics. Crisis is powerful, especially when the people realized that they can neither choose their leader nor change the government without one.
12.1 Avenues for Future Research

It is impossible to have a perfect model. However, efforts should be made to the continuous improvement of a model. The State-society Interactive Framework would be more impeccable with the incorporation of different mechanisms of force assessment, of which newspapers discourse analysis as adopted in this research is one, as newspapers coverage represents an important element in the analysis of Crisis Strengthening or Weakening Forces. Nevertheless, there should be other potential methods of assessment, qualitative or quantitative, available from different disciplines, such as management studies or psychology. With their help, the Interactive Framework would definitely become more scientific and objective. Moreover, borrowing ideas from different areas would help make the arena of crisis management more multi-disciplinary, and will contribute to the creation of new knowledge and new perspectives in this field.

Scholar should associate knowledge with the real world situation. The soft politicization under crisis provoking politics would be helpful for understanding the power relationship between the state and society during periods of democratization and political reform. The Interactive Framework could be applied to those countries and regimes that are newly democratized or are in the transitional period, especially Asian countries, such as Burma. Besides, countries that are now in the elementary stages of democratization or are having an ineffective “democratic” system should be also targeted, as in China and Singapore. However, the value of the Interactive Framework in Western societies should not be underestimated. In

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68 A blame response analysis of the newspapers was conducted after a riot in the Netherlands. The two basic questions the authors suggested were in line with the state–society interactive framework: (1) What kind of blame can one be facing?; and (2) How is one to respond to blame?’ Please refer to Resodihardjo et al. (2012, 231).
fact, further studies should be made to investigate the necessary conditions for
government changes in democratic countries, for example, with limited time before
the next election, it is interesting to know how the government is going to deteriorate
the Strengthening Forces in order to minimize the possible damage to the popularity
during and after the crisis. The ideas presented in the current study could be put to
test under different contexts, both theoretically and empirically. Although the field
of crisis management is comparatively new at this stage, it is full of potential for
further development, and it would definitely be beneficial to the academia and also to
the wellbeing of the people in the world.
APPENDIX I: REFERENCE LIST - OTHER SOURCES

Government Documents
(Only list out those without properly cited inside the main text or footnote)
1. CE’s Transcript, Government Press Release, 10 March 2003
2. Financial Secretary’s Q&A Transcript, Government Press Release, 9 March 2003
5. Report of the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS Outbreak, Hospital Authority, September 2003
6. SARS in Hong Kong: from Experience to Action, SARS Expert Committee, HKSAR Government, October 2003
7. The Basic Law, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
8. The Financial Secretary’s Statement on the Purchase of a New Car, 15 March 2003

Legislative Council Documents
1. Report of the Legislative Council Select Committee to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority, July 2004
2. Various Legislative Council Papers (please refer to the in text citation and footnote for the reference code)

Web Sites
(Only list out those without properly cited inside the main text or footnote)
1. MTR. Express Rail Link. Available at:
   http://www.expressralink.hk/tc/database/faq.html
2. The Encyclopaedia of virtual communities in Hong Kong. Express Rail Link. Available at:
   http://evchk.wikia.com/wiki/%E5%BB%A3%E6%B7%B1%E6%B8%AF%E9%AB%98%E9%80%9F%E9%90%B5%E8%B7%AF
Newspapers
2. Hong Kong Economic Times (2003-2012)
5. Sing Tao Daily (2003-2012)
8. The Sun, Hong Kong (2003-2012)
10. Wen Wei Po (2003-2012)

(please refer to the in text citation and footnote for exact date and/or article)
## APPENDIX II: PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Interview Details</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent A (Preliminary)</td>
<td>26 Apr 2011 (11:00)</td>
<td>Defendant A is a former LegCo member and a senior politician who has served the Hong Kong polity since colonial era. Being a former leader of Pro-establishment Party E1, A is currently a commentator in the mass media. The interview with A was a preliminary one, with an aim to identify potential research focuses for the study of crisis management in Hong Kong. A mentioned the significant role of mass media during the crises, which ignited the idea of conducting the newspaper discourse analyses.</td>
<td>Commentator / Consultant</td>
<td>Former Leader of Party E1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent B (Preliminary)</td>
<td>19 Sep 2011 (19:45)</td>
<td>As a social activist currently working for a human rights pressure group, B has been taking part in social movements in opposition to major government infrastructure projects. The interview with B was the second preliminary interview. As a very vigorous social activist, B discussed some tactics for pushing forward policy agenda, which served as a guide in the study of crisis politics from a policymaking perspective.</td>
<td>Campaigner of a human rights NGO</td>
<td>Member of Party D2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent C</td>
<td>14 May 2012 (17:30) Party D1 Headquarters</td>
<td>As the leader of Pan-democrat Party D1, C is an active social activist who is continuously taking part in social movements regarding civil disobedience. C was the first respondent participating in a semi-structured interviewed using the set of research questions listed in Appendix B. During the interview, C mentioned the importance of “catalyzer” in crises, which inspired the idea of the Catalytic Effect of Crisis as a triggering point for government change.</td>
<td>Social Activist, Politician</td>
<td>Leader of Party D1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent D</td>
<td>24 May 2012 (15:00) Party D2 District Office</td>
<td>D is a LegCo member from Pan-democrat Party D2. Before becoming a politician, D worked as a reporter and commentator in international news agencies. D analyzed the relationship between mass media, social activists, and political parties during SARS based on personal experiences. As a media practitioner and politician, information provided by D was essential to understand the interactions between different stakeholders in the event.</td>
<td>LegCo Member</td>
<td>Committee member of Party D2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent E</td>
<td>28 Feb 2013 (16:00)</td>
<td>E is a senior officer of Pro-establishment Party E2, as well as a researcher. E also serves as a commentator on newspaper for political and social affairs in Hong Kong. E was the first respondent from the Pro-establishment camp, and illustrated the complexity of “weak alliance” between government and Pro-establishment parties. E’s observations provided insights to study crisis development as changing of “forces” – party support during a crisis is not a commitment, but is highly dependent on the political environment and public opinion.</td>
<td>Senior Officer of Party E2</td>
<td>Senior Officer of Party E2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent F</td>
<td>7 Mar 2013 (16:00)</td>
<td>As a committee member of Pro-establishment Party E3, F is also a freelance column writer who is interested in various social issues. F is a current supervisor of a LegCo member’s district office. F’s commentaries and interviews appeared on mass media recurrently. As a member of the Pro-establishment, F admitted that they need to mind their words when discussing controversial issues. F shared the same conservative mind set with E in supporting government during political crises.</td>
<td>Supervisor of a LegCo member’s district office</td>
<td>Committee member of Party E3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Respondent G | 15 Mar 2013 (14:30) | In addition to being a District Council member from Pan-democrat Party D3, G is an active social activist with concerns for a variety of social issues. G has been deeply involved in the Choi Yuen Village incident.

G served as key informant for the Anti-high speed railway incident. Moreover, G addressed the challenges and obstacles of politicizing social issues to social crises based on experience in different social movements. As a committee member of a major Pro-democrat party, G is in good position to illustrate the complicated relationship between social activists and political parties, especially regarding controversial issues. | District Council member, Social activist | Committee member of Party D3 |
| Respondent H | 15 Mar 2013 (21:00) | As a reporter who had worked in a major newspaper in Hong Kong, H is now working for a new media online, in addition to being a current reporter of social and political issues.

The new media that H is working for has a strong pro-democrat background. H explained how new media can mobilize people in different social issues through internet platform, such as Facebook, and could easily gather a critical mass in short time. | Reporter | N/A |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent I</td>
<td>21 Mar 2013 (16:00)</td>
<td>Lingnan University</td>
<td>Leading the Pan-democrat Party D4, I is a politician and a social activist with great concerns on issues related to the minorities and grassroots. I was active in leading students’ movement. I illustrated the interrelations between government legitimacy deficit and governance crisis, and believed that the lacking of universal suffrage in Hong Kong has provided a political environment for a crisis provoking politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent J</td>
<td>22 Mar 2013 (15:30)</td>
<td>A café in Causeway Bay</td>
<td>In addition to playing the role of an internet social activist, J actively participates in different online new media. J is also the manager of a website that monitors the service of public transport. J was a key actor in the latter stage of the Anti-High Speed Railway incident, serving as informant and consultant for Pan-democrat LegCo members. J’s major responsibility was to provide data and information, and to draft questions regarding the potential loopholes of the project for the LegCo members during the filibustering of funding appropriation stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent K</td>
<td>25 Mar 2013 (15:30)</td>
<td>A café in Causeway Bay</td>
<td>K works as a reporter of political news for a major pan-democrat news group in Hong Kong. K has previously worked for a major Pro-Beijing newspaper in Hong Kong. By comparing the two media companies that K worked for, K experienced how the strong political preference of the supervisors and editors influenced the news reporting style and frames.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent L</td>
<td>27 Mar 2013 (17:30)</td>
<td>A café in Central</td>
<td>Other than being a District Council member from Pro-establishment Party E4, L is a committee member who often acts as the party’s spokesperson and commentator with high media exposure. Similar to Respondent F, L is a party spokesperson who always expresses opinion in front of the media on behalf of the party. L said that party support is, to some extent, helpful to the government during political crises or scandals. However, in line with other Pro-establishment respondents, L admitted that the actions of the party are heavily influenced by public opinion, and they would not support the government if the government were being criticized badly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent M</td>
<td>28 Mar 2013 (15:30)</td>
<td>A café in Tai Wai</td>
<td>As a member of Pan-democrat Party D5, M is a social activist and author of books on social movements and political issues, on top of being a commentator who appears on internet radio programs. M has worked among the group of social activists, political parties and media, and identified the uncompromising actions and directions of these three groups. The distrust among the three groups is deeply-rooted due to the short-term ad-hoc-based orientation of different actors and a lack of comprehensive political discourse towards the democratic development of Hong Kong. Non-state actors worked according to their best benefit, such as for vote or for individual popularity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent N</td>
<td>29 Mar 2013 (19:30)</td>
<td>A café in Yau Ma Tei</td>
<td>Besides being a chief reporter of local news of a Pan-democrat newspaper in Hong Kong, N is experienced in reporting on a wide range of policy issues. In this interview, N disclosed internal practices of how government promotes its political agenda to the public through mass media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent O</td>
<td>29 Mar 2013 (19:30)</td>
<td>Having a strong connection with government officials and LegCo council members, O is a senior reporter of political news in a Pro-establishment newspaper in Hong Kong. In this interview, O disclosed the internal practices of how government influences newspaper reports towards different crises and controversial issues. The mass media “frames” has become a major force that influences the development of crisis politics.</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent P</strong></td>
<td>15 Apr 2013 (18:00)</td>
<td>As an active social activist who engages in a variety of social movements regarding to democratization and labor issues, P is in the head of a joint university student association. Based on experiences gained as a social activist and student movement leader, P analyzed the political culture of Hong Kong regarding how an issue has to be framed and politicized under a “pure” and “politics-free” environment, as the general public has strong negative impression towards political parties and political controversies. Only issues that are framed as close to people’s livelihood and “apolitical” could reach the critical mass attention and support.</td>
<td>Social activist, Student leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent Q</td>
<td>19 Apr 2013 (15:00) LegCo Complex Building</td>
<td>With expertise on labor issues and poverty policies towards grassroots, Q is a senior LegCo Council member, as well as the party leader of Pro-establishment Party E5. Q commented that governance crisis in Hong Kong is highly dependent on the “bottom line” – if the interest of majority Hong Kong people were being affected, the issue would substantially become huge social and political crises that could destroy the legitimacy of government.</td>
<td>LegCo and District Council member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All interviews were confidential; the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

For political parties, “D” stands for Pan-democrats, “E” stands for Pro-establishment.

For respondents’ party affiliations, “Leader” stands for President or Vice-President of a party, “Committee member” stands for Executive/Central Committee Membership of a party.
APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was your role in the incident/crisis/event?
2. Do you think that the incident/crisis/event was successful / serious?
3. To what extent do you think the incident altered government decision?
4. During the incident/crisis/event, could you observe any critical point?
5. What are the major goals for social movement? How to achieve such goals? Are there any helping hands?
6. How would you comment on the relationship between mass media and social movement? How would you comment on the relationship between political party and social movement?
7. How would you comment on the roles of political parties in current Hong Kong polity?
8. How would you comment on the roles of political parties in crises and scandal?
9. Under the current political context, what would be the most feasible method to alter government decision?
10. In general, are there any governance crises in Hong Kong currently? Why?
11. Do you think some issues are being politicized? How would you comment on this phenomena?
12. Do you think crises would lead to government change?


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