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The University of Hong Kong
Department of Social Work and Social Administration

The Use of Networking by Green Advocacy NGOs under HK’s Regime: A Case Study on Clean Air Network

By LOONG Tsz Wai

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Non-Profit Management

June 2016
Supervisor: Dr. Lori M. Noguchi
Declaration

I declare that this capstone project represents my own work and has not been previously included for any degree, diploma or other qualification
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Abstract

There are many factors that can contribute to a successful campaign – external factors like social and economic background, government policy and interaction among NGOs, and internal factors like organizational capacities and expertise on agenda setting and resource utilization.

In this research, I explore in particular one set of factors that make a campaign successful – the networking capacities of an NGO. Clean Air Network (CAN), which is a local NGO focusing on air pollution issues in Hong Kong, is chosen as a case study. The project examines how CAN utilizes its networking capacities and interacts with government, corporate, other NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders in the public to push forward a particular campaign. Drawing from Lee and Liu’s (2012) research, organizational factors that affect campaign effectiveness and efficacy are studied. How resource dependency affects choice of collaboration model and networking behavior of green advocacy NGOs is analyzed in particular.

CAN was founded after some major waves of conservation movement in Hong Kong. As a small NGO, CAN needs to extensively utilize its networking capacities for advocacy campaigning in the changing local political landscape. By studying how CAN acts in response to “A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong”, the research aims to provide some insights on how green advocacy NGOs can utilize networking capacities for campaigns in Hong Kong.
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Objectives and backgrounds of the Project

The use of networking is an important tool by NGOs to pursue its advocacy goals. The networking behaviour of a particular NGO is influenced by various internal and external factors. With a review of HK’s regime characterized by its statist-corporatist nature, internal factors such as organizational size, joint-action experience and resource dependency are expected to affect the tendency of a NGO to form collaborative networks (Lee and Liu, 2012).

In this capstone project, I shall explore the use and impact of networking of green advocacy NGOs in campaigning under HK’s regime. I shall analyze the case of Clean Air Network(CAN), which is a NGO focusing on local air pollution issue.

Two specific research questions will be investigated:

1) How does CAN interact with government, corporate and foundation, media, professional and green groups, and concerned public in campaigning?
2) How do organizational factors like size, joint-action experience and resource dependency affect the networking behavior of CAN?

CAN is a good case for exploratory study on the use and impact of networking of green advocacy NGOs in campaigning. First of all, CAN was founded in 2009, right after waves of conservation events. One of the primary social objectives of CAN is to form a collaborative network with various stakeholders to tackle the pollution issues in HK. Second, the small organization size (with 6.5 staffs) and experiences in joint
actions facilitate CAN to extensively utilize networking capacity for advocacy campaign.

As Lee and Liu (2012) argue, smaller and younger NGOs established after 2000 have been experiencing a more volatile environment and the funding regime is becoming more “liberal”. Although the cases they discussed are restricted to social service NGOs after new public management reform, the situation can be applied to green NGOs as well. Given the increasing contentious nature of HK’s politics, a more “liberal” funding regime implies that NGOs in HK may have to devise multiple networking strategies to deal with the situation.

CAN does not receive any government funding and is heavily relied on networking with various stakeholders for advocacy works. In my research, I shall examine CAN’s networking strategies and identify five categories of major stakeholders for analysis: government, corporation and foundation, professional and green groups, concerned public and media.

To illustrate the dynamic and interaction among CAN with the five categories of stakeholders, I shall mainly focus on campaigns related to “A Clear Air Plan for Hong Kong”, which has been initiated by the Environment Bureau in 2013. What has CAN been doing to raise public awareness on the issue? How does CAN cooperate with and forms alliance with other professional and green groups in campaigning? What is the role of corporations and foundations in supporting CAN’s campaign? And with the networking strategies illustrated by CAN, how does the government act in response to the advocacy goals?
1.2 Chapter Outline

In chapter 2, I shall introduce the methodology that applied in this capstone project. Qualitative data shall be collected to examine the networking strategies of Clean Air Network in the case study.

Chapter 3 will review literature to devise a theoretical framework for analysis in subsequent chapters. To understand the networking behaviour of green advocacy NGOs in Hong Kong, a good starting point would be to investigate the change of funding regime in the past 20 years. The statist-corporatist welfare regime has been the dominating regime in Hong Kong for years, yet with the new management reform and the rise of contentious politics in Hong Kong, the funding and networking strategies of NGOs have to be revised in response to the changes (Cheng, 2014; Lee, 2005, 2012; Lee and Liu, 2012).

In chapter 4, the networking dynamics among CAN with various stakeholders shall be studied and analyzed. I shall examine one advocacy project of CAN on “A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong”. The government, like the Transport and Housing Bureau, Environmental Protection Department and Environment Bureau, are all important stakeholders in pushing the project forward. It seems that a closer relationship with the government could be useful in campaign advocacy, however, the analysis of CAN’s case shall show that the situation is more complex and Najam’s(2000) framework of the four-C’s of third sector-government relations shall be explored.

As the funding regime will affect the networking behaviour of a green advocacy NGO, it would be necessary to investigate the relationship of CAN with the private sectors,
including corporations and foundations. Founded initially as an advocacy group, CAN tends to posit itself to be less confrontational with the government and tries to network extensively with corporates in various projects. Yet CAN's networking strategy has been evolving in response to the changing regime in HK, and the need of forming strategic partnership with private sectors shall be investigated in chapter 4.

Three more categories of stakeholder analysis shall also be covered. The networking dynamic among CAN with professional and other green groups would be investigated. Also, media strategy and public engagement would also be discussed.

In chapter 5, I shall follow Lee and Liu (2012) definition of network formation, which can be understood as “a formal and regularized relationship of collaboration formed among NPOs regarding activities” (2012: 454). And I shall apply their research framework on networking formation to study primarily on how resource dependency affects the choice of collaboration model and networking behaviour of green advocacy NGOs, especially for small NGOs that are experienced in joint-actions. I do not include program needs as one of the parameter as CAN is not a social service NPO. Environmental uncertainty is also excluded as it is an external factor. Its assumption does not apply in CAN’s case as CAN does not receive any government funding.

Organizational size indicates organizational capacity and resource. How does size affect relationship of collaboration formed among CAN and various groups on campaign fronts? CAN has a small size and is experienced in joint actions. How do these factors affect CAN’s willingness to form networking alliances with other NGOs and business sectors? Unlike some social service NGOs, CAN does not receive any
government funding for its operational costs. How does the factor of resource dependency affect a NGO’s networking behavior? For small advocacy NGOs like CAN, is it a good strategy to maintain a higher autonomy by forming extensive network for resource sharing rather than depending on a single source of funding? These are the interesting questions that shall be explored in chapter 5.
Chapter 2 Methodology

As an exploratory study, a qualitative methodology was used in this paper. First, literatures on social origin theory, corporatist-statist regime of Hong Kong nonprofit sector, contentious politics, social-political landscape, networking formation and stakeholder analysis were reviewed (Cheng, 2014; Francesch-Huidobro, 2007; Lee, 2005; Lee and Liu, 2012; Mendelow, 1991; Najem, 2000; Salamon et al., 2000).

Second, a case study on Clean Air Network (CAN) was developed to examine its advocacy work and investigate the use and impact of networking in campaign. From Lee and Liu’s (2012) research on factors influencing network formation, three observations were summarized in terms of organizational size, joint-action experience and resource dependency: It was found that smaller NPOs were more likely to increase size of their networks. NPOs with experience in joint actions were more likely to increase their network relationships with other NPOs. Finally, social service NPOs that were dependent on government funding did not have incentive to form networks (Lee and Liu, 2012: 459-460).

CAN was chosen as the case to explore networking behaviour in the sector of green advocacy NGOs in Hong Kong. The small size with 6.5 staffs and rich experience in joint actions facilitated the development of CAN’s networking capacity. Without government funding, CAN had to rely heavily on networking with various stakeholders for advocacy works. Analysis of CAN’s networking behaviour would provide insight on whether similar networking behaviour could be observed for small NGOs in green advocacy sector.
Qualitative data were collected through the following channels:

1) Semi-structure interview with CAN’s ex CEO Ms. Sum Yin Kwong on CAN’s networking strategies;

2) CAN’s media coverage on newspapers, TV, radio as well as social media on campaigns related to air policy;

3) CAN’s website and newsletter covering collaborative events such as forums, petitions, and pop-up actions;

4) Position papers and press release about CAN’s standpoints and recommendations on policies related to “A Clear Air Plan for Hong Kong”;

5) Submissions and papers by CAN and its collaborative partners to Legislative Council;

6) Minutes of Transport, Development and Environment Panel of Legislative Council related to air and transportation policy formulation;

7) Related policy papers and consultations from Transport Department(TD), Transport and Housing Bureau(THB), Environmental Protection Department(EPD), Environment Bureau(EB), Food and Health Bureau and Development Bureau;

8) Full paper of “A Clear Air Plan For Hong Kong” initiated by Environment Bureau; and

9) Email interview with government officials in EPD, ENB, TD or THB.

To sum up, the data in the capstone project was collected via internet from websites and internal document (like collection of press releases) from Clean Air Network, and was supplemented by interviews with CAN’s ex CEO and some government officials.

Due to time and resource limitation, I shall not further elaborate on how CAN’s differ
from other green NGOs in terms of networking strategies on advocacy. As a practitioner who works in CAN and NGOs for years, the analysis and the way to collect data may be limited by my own experiences and researches. In addition, CAN’s experience may not be typical among NGOs in green advocacy sector. As indicated in Lee and Liu’s (2012: 459) research, a U-shaped relationship was observed between the size of an organization and its network size. That means both small and large social service NGOs were found to be more active in networking when compared with medium-sized NGOs. To generalize the relations among size, resource dependency and networking behaviour in green advocacy sector, a comparative study should be carried out to consolidate what I have found in this capstone project, especially for the comparison of private public partnership model and the case of Des Voeux Road Central (DVRC) Initiative, which I shall discuss in chapter 5.
Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Overview on current funding regime in Hong Kong

The welfare regime in Hong Kong was thought to be statist-corporatist (Lee, 2005) and has been undergoing a transition to a liberal regime after the New Public Management Reform. In response, NPOs have to devise various networking strategies. On one hand, larger and older NPOs collaborate closely with the government. On the other, newer and smaller NPOs need to formulate networking strategies that enhance knowledge exchange and sharing of resources (Lee and Liu, 2012). In this section, I shall discuss how the statist-corporatist regime is challenged by the rise of contentious politics in Hong Kong, and how the change puts pressure on advocacy NGOs to devise new networking strategies.

According to the research by Salamon et al (2000), there are four categories of non-profit regime – liberal, social democratic, corporatist and statist. Each of them is characterized by the extent of government social welfare spending and the scale of nonprofit sector. Lee (2005) adopts social origins theory developed by Salamon to analyze the nonprofit sector in Hong Kong. She argues that HK’s non-profit regime to be both statist and corporatist. A historical interpretation of Hong Kong colonial regime is illustrated. The statist character, she argues, is the low commitment of the colonial state to social provision and its tendency to limit freedom of association (Lee, 2005:51). She reviewed how the early colonial state in HK performed a laissez-faire approach in social provision, and how those Chinese civic associations and church organizations complemented state failure in social service provision. Due to the historical development of co-optation between elite and colonial administration on
communal life in HK, Lee argues that the development of nonprofit sector before 1950s was rather low and minimal. (Lee, 2005: 55-60).

The colonial state gradually changed its minimal approach in social service provision starting from 1960s. After the serious riots in 1967, the government has become a major financer in housing, education, health care and social services. The increasing corporatist character of HK non-profit regime, Lee argues, was a “pragmatic arrangement adopted by the colonial state under conditions of limited financial and institutional capacity” (Lee, 2005: 60). Since then, many NGOs in HK become vehicles of social service provision and depend on government subvention for their operations like providing social services and education support.

Although it is a pragmatic arrangement initiated by the colonial government, it was a good chance for NGOs to utilize the increasing funding and resource for advocacy of social justice and reform. Many social workers, teachers and community activists organized waves of community actions for better housing conditions and labor rights in 1970s and 80s.

I shall not further elaborate on the dynamic between nonprofit sector and the state before the handover period as this is not within my research scope. However, it should be noted that the statist character of nonprofit regime remains active even after the handover period. As part of the new public management reform, the Service Performance Monitoring System and Lump Sum Grant System has been introduced and has affected the development of nonprofit sector in HK enormously after year 2000.
3.2 The rise of contentious politics in Hong Kong

With the increasing authoritarian nature of HK governance, civil society in HK has been experiencing a number of conservation related incidents and movements that change the political landscape. The statist-corporatist regime is challenged by an increasingly radical contention between civil society and the state.

The civil society in Hong Kong was thought to be “revived” after the 1st July March in 2003. The March was the largest protest ever seen in Hong Kong with 500,000 marchers against the legislation of Basic Law Article 23. Many conservation related contests, marches and actions have happened ever since. Cheng’s (2014) research examines some of the major salient contentious events between 2005 and 2014, including Preservation of Star Ferry’s Piers and Queen’s Piers, and Disrupting Northeast New Territories Development Campaign, which shaped the conservation discourse in recent years. There is an increasing wave of activism to be understood as a rise of contentious politics in Hong Kong.

Surprisingly, conservation issues have become point of focus in the public discourse. A search of the term “conservation” on WiseNews shows that how frequent the term appeared in local media after 1997. In 1998, “conservation” appeared 1189 times. The search count increased to 9982 in 2005, the year demolition of Star Ferry and Clock Tower occurred. After HK society went through a series of preservation and conservation events like the preservation of Queen’s Pier in 2006, Anti-Express Railway Link in 2009 and Disputing Northeast New Territories Development in 2012, the term “conservation” appeared 19620 times in 2014, or 53.8 times per day1.

1 The WiseNews search was performed on Sep 24, 2015 by the author, using “conservation” as the keyword. As there is a copyright issue, I cannot provide the link here.
These figures show conservation has become central social issue in HK. Various networking strategies have been adopted to deal with the newly emerged political situation. For NGOs which are receiving stable government subvention, some are forced to become more “political neutral” and avoid having any connection with those newly formed initiatives (Lee, et al. 2012). For those larger NGOs, some of them choose to form private-public partnership on conservation projects (Chiu, 2012), while some of them choose a more confrontational role and actively form alliance on politically contentious issues (like the Anti Third Runway Campaign). Small and informal NGOs have proliferated. They form a lot of concern groups and alliances. An extensive network for advocacy and social movement was established, and this accounts for a relatively active sector in green policy advocacy (Goodstadt, 2005; Inglehart, 1981; Lee, et al. 2012).

The government in response devised a formal institutional structure, for example, the amendment of Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance and the appointment of senior management of modest green group as political assistant and deputy head of Environment Bureau. And it does have some impact on the collaboration of green NGOs and government on certain environmental issues, as the case of “A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong” will show.

As can been seen from the analysis above, the conflict between increasing authoritarian governance and civil society has led to waves of activism and the rise of conservation discourse in the past 15 years. The new political landscape poses a challenge to the statist-corporatist regime. The NGOs have to devise various networking strategies in response to the evolving contentious politics in HK.
The green sector is diverse in strategies and approaches on dealing with various conservation issues and policies. According to the annual report written by the Centre of Civil Society and Governance for 2010, there were 142 conservation groups in Hong Kong. Among those groups only 50% of them have full-time staff (which is basically “one-person groups”), 60% of them had less than 1 million in the previous year, 32% of them had not collaborated with peer groups, 45% ranked advocacy as primary mission yet only 15 of them had been appointed by government into various committees (Lee, et al. 2012). While authorities or private developers seek alliances with green groups which are more moderate, many advocacy groups are left out in collaboration unless they are willing to compromise their firm positions.

Despite the small overall capacity of green groups when compared to that of social service groups, the record of advocacy mobilization was quite impressive. For instance, the average number of protestors mobilized was 463, and signatures collected on streets, websites or Facebook were in the range of 8000-12000 for each event (Lee, et al. 2012: 4). The vibrant mobilization record echoes with insights from Lee and Liu’s (2012) research: smaller NGOs have a higher tendency to form collaboration network among organizations. With increasing contentious political environment, how does small green NGOs like CAN devise networking strategies on policy advocacy?
Chapter 4 Networking dynamics

CAN is a green advocacy NGO which focuses on air pollution issues in Hong Kong. The organization was founded in 2009. During the past 7 years, CAN has been engaging with the government, business sector, professional groups and the public on various issues related to air policy.

As discussed in earlier chapter, CAN was established after waves of conservation events and movements. Since then, media exposure on conservation issues has been increased significantly. There is an increasing concern from general public on issues like air quality and pollution control.

To illustrate how CAN is utilizing its networking power in an advocacy campaign, I shall focus the discussion on how CAN interacts with various stakeholders on “A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong”.

4.1 A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong – the blueprint

A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong (Clear Air Plan) is basically a blueprint for the government to tackle the air pollution issues in the region. Commissioned by the Environment Bureau (ENB) and with the collaboration from Transport and Housing Bureau, Development Bureau, and Food and Health Bureau, the Plan was released on 2013. It laid out various plans and measures on areas like air quality management system, reduction of roadside air pollution, reduction of marine emissions, emission control of power plants and non-road mobile machines, and more importantly, a timeline that monitors targets in both Hong Kong and Guangdong on regional
pollution reduction.

Figure 1. Timeline of Clean Air Plan (Adopted from Environment Bureau, 2013)

CAN has been engaging with the government closely concerning the Clean Air Plan. According to the interview with ex CEO of CAN, Ms. Sum-yin Kwong (Loong, personal communication, Jan 28, 2016), the following are the four major policy changes initiated by CAN during the 7-year work:

- Tightening of Air Quality Objectives in 2013 (which is in effect in 2014)
- Implementation of HK$10 billion subsidy under diesel commercial vehicles replacement scheme in 2014
- Government’s publication of PM2.5 real time data in 2014
- Mandatory fuel switch at berth for ocean going vessels in 2015
All of the above policy suggestions are indeed formulated in the Clean Air Plan. To understand how CAN utilizes its network for advocacy, the following framework is summarized for subsequent discussion:

1. **CAN proposes** a policy suggestion or measure according to their own research or research from other partner think-tanks or professional groups.
2. **CAN exposes** the issue via media through press conference, events or actions.
3. **CAN allies** with other green/professional groups and tries to set agenda in LegCo meetings or focus group meetings to give further pressure to the government.
4. **CAN institutionalizes** the proposal and gets involved in formulation of the Clean Air Plan under government’s framework.
5. **CAN monitors** the implementation and execution of proposed measure of the Clean Air Plan.

This seems like a traditional pressure group model of policy advocacy. In the subsequent section of the chapter, I shall analyze the networking dynamics among CAN with the five key stakeholders: government, corporations and foundations, professional and green groups, media and concerned public. The role of CAN in formulating Clean Air Plan shall be examined. The networking strategy of CAN shall be discussed and investigated.

### 4.2 The dynamic relationship with government

The relationship between CAN and the government is both complementary and confrontational. During the formulation of the Clean Air Plan, the goals that both CAN and the government looking for were the same – both aiming at cleaner air and
reduced public health risk caused by air pollution. The difference lied between the ways the two parties achieved the goal. For Environment Bureau, they relied heavily on collaboration between departments, with the help of environment experts in universities or consulting agencies. For CAN, we focused more on community level, like campaigning events, actions, media stories, press conferences and releases which increased public awareness and engagement on the issues.

The complementary relationship was initiated at the beginning of CAN’s establishment. Ms. Christine Loh Kung-wai, Under Secretary for the Environment, was the founding chairperson of Clean Air Network until 2012. Before she joined the government, she was a former Legislative Councillor and the founder and CEO of Civic Exchange, a public policy think tank that focuses on environment, conservation, and civic participation and social development. Civic Exchange was founded in 2000 and one of the main research focuses is on air quality management. CAN was established after a conference organized by Civic Exchange on HK’s air pollution situation in 2009.

The appointment of Ms. Christine Loh as Under Secretary for the Environment has created an opportunity for CAN to initiate events and campaigns that aimed at the formulation of Clean Air Plan. Campaigns were conducted to target at various policies to be included in Clean Air Plan, such as actions outside Legislative Council on phasing out old commercial diesel vehicles, petitions to cleaner fuel switch at berth, and joint actions with green groups and medical groups on Air Quality Objectives Review. From mid 2012 to 2013, CAN issued 25 press releases which indicated a bucket of proposed policies that would like to be formulated and implemented in the Clean Air Plan.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012 Jun</td>
<td>In response to Wong Kam-sing(KS Wong)’s appointment as Secretary for the Environment</td>
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<td>2012 Aug</td>
<td>In response to Christine Loh’s appointment as Under Secretary for the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012 Oct</td>
<td>In response to new Chief Executive Leung Chun-yin(CY Leung)’s speech in Legislative Council (LegCo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012 Oct</td>
<td>In response to phasing out old commercial diesel vehicles by KS Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012 Nov</td>
<td>In response to Audit Report on HK Air Quality never reach its targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Jan</td>
<td>In response to Policy Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Mar</td>
<td>Petition to cleaner fuel switch at berth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Mar</td>
<td>Welcome release of the Clean Air Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Apr</td>
<td>In response to Environmental Protection Department (EPD) report on air quality of Pearl River Delta (PRD) area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 May</td>
<td>In response to LegCo public hearing on Air Quality Objectives (AQO) and phasing out old commercial diesel vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Jul</td>
<td>In response to second and third reading of the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Bill 2013 in LegCo</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Aug</td>
<td>In response to subsidy programme for the replacement of catalytic converters and oxygen sensors on LPG taxis and light buses</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Sep</td>
<td>In response to new proposed measures for the retirement of pre-Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Oct</td>
<td>Co-press release with Friends of Earth (HK) on onshore power supply</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Oct</td>
<td>In response to the new PRD Regional Air Quality Report by EPD of Hong Kong and the Department of Environmental Protection of Guangdong Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Nov</td>
<td>Joint petition of CAN with Medical Professionals, Patients’ Organisations, Public Health Sector to urge old, polluting vehicles be eliminated</td>
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<td>2013 Dec</td>
<td>In response to the new Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) – Public education</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013 Dec</td>
<td>In response to the new Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) – CAN's Apps</td>
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Table 1: Selected list of press releases by CAN from mid 2012-2013

During the period, many important policy recommendations from CAN, such as tightening of Air Quality Objective, measures to phase out old commercial diesel...
vehicles, real-time measurement of air pollutants PM2.5 and mandatory fuel switch at berth for ocean going vessels, were all included in Clean Air Plan and later implemented subsequently from 2013 to 2015.

The success was somehow drawn on an institutionalized network among CAN, various government departments and think tanks like Civic Exchange (CE). The role of a think tank is to provide research and necessary theoretical and implementation framework for a particular policy. Owing to the connection between CE and EPD and Environment Bureau, the policy can be more thoroughly discussed during formulation process.

Just take the case of mandatory fuel switch at berth, one of the policy measures that were proposed in Clean Air Plan to lower ship emission, as an example to illustrate the situation. CE published the 1st marine emission related background study in Hong Kong in 2006 and facilitated the launch of the Fair Winds Charter, an industry-led voluntary fuel switching initiative, in 2011. In 2012 CE did a ship emissions inventory research for EPD and subsequently more researches on the topic were published throughout the year before the legislative plan to mandate fuel switch at berth was announced in 2013.

As CAN’s former Chairman, Christine Loh helped in establishing a more formal and institutionalized channels of communication between CAN, the government and also the think tank CE. In the case of mandatory fuel switch at berth, CAN and CE were collaborators which worked closely on ship emission and air quality related issues. From the research published by CE, CAN proposed a policy suggestion and exposed the issue via media through various campaigns, events and actions.
Hence many policies advocated by CAN would have a higher chance to be involved in the engagement process and eventually be included in the Clean Air Plan. In this sense, CAN's relation with the government could be regarded as complementary or even co-operative in various policy fronts, and the process of advocacy was further facilitated by the networking capability of CAN on government officials as well as think tanks.

The formation of such an institutionalized network has facilitated CAN to communicate with the government on policy advocacy as well as monitoring of policy implementation. For instance, there were Policy Address Consultation Meeting and Tea Reception right before the announcement of Policy Address to allow the government to consider CAN's proposals in formulating policies. There were meetings with Air Policy Group of EPD on issues and policies related to roadside and marine emissions.

We can further look into the Policy Address written by the Hong Kong Chief Executive and observe if the government adopted air quality issues as policy priority. In the Policy Address for year 2013-16, Air Quality has been the highlighted section written...
up in the Address, although length of the section decreased across years. In the 2013 Policy Address, the Chief Executive clearly stated important targets such as achieving new air quality objectives by 2020 and setting up emission reduction targets with Guangdong for 2015 and 2020. Key air pollutant reduction policies such as phasing out old diesel commercial vehicles and measures to reduce vessel emission were also listed in the subsequent sections in the Policy Address (HKSAR, 2013).

After the establishment of the large policy framework, such as the Clean Air Plan or written statements in Policy Address, the government may not have enough incentive to push a particular policy owing to vested interest within government departments or pressure from other interest groups. As an environmental advocacy NGO, CAN played an important role in monitoring the effective implementation of policy listed in the Clean Air Plan within a reasonable timeframe.

For instance, the $10 billion subsidy to help phasing out old diesel commercial vehicles was written in 2013 Policy Address and included in the Clean Air Plan. However, the renewal timetable was lagging behind the original plan and CAN had urged the government to phase out the vehicles within the timeline by actions and campaigns (CAN, 2013b; CAN, 2014).

Another example is the Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) Review that will take place at 2019. After successfully advocated and implemented a new AQO in 2014, CAN has been focusing on the detail of the AQOs and proposing a more stringent measure which the concentration of various air pollutants should follow strictly according to the World Health Organization Air Quality Guidelines (WHO AQGs). This has been one of the main themes of CAN’s bi-annual report on reviewing air pollution since
2014. The failure of compliance of AQOs with WHO AQGs links up with CAN’s new focus on reviewing current transport policies and planning. CAN proposes a comprehensive transportation strategy in which Transport Department (TD) should collaborate with EPD on demand-led management in transport policies, such as setting up low emission zones and a landmark pedestrian zone, which were also included in the Clean Air Plan but have not implemented effectively so far (CAN, 2015a).

The relationship between CAN and government becomes confrontational when it comes to policy related to transport planning, in which the two parties share different policy goals and priorities. Recently, CAN has set up an initiative that aims at creating a pedestrianized green artery along Des Voeux Road Central, from Western Market to Pedder Street. The DVRC Initiative is supported by a wide range of community and green groups, planning groups, professionals, academics, think tanks, business operators and property owners to target at a pedestrian and tram precinct along Des Voeux Road Central by reconsidering traffic management. As the main policy goal of the Transportation Department (TD) is to maintain an efficient, effective and a smooth transportation system that can handle the total traffic flow in Hong Kong, pursuing a landmark pedestrian zone is not the policy priority. Goal incongruence between TD and the DVRC Initiative exists, as indicated by the recent comments by the Commissioner for Transport to the Town Planning Board (DVRC Initiative, 2015a; 2015b). However, the way that DVRC Initiative operates in terms of policy advocacy may open up new opportunities for green NGOs given the rise of contentious politics in Hong Kong for recent years, and I shall elaborate more on this aspect in Chapter 5 of this paper.
In this section, the relation between CAN and the government was analyzed. It was shown to be dynamic in the sense that it could be both complementary and confrontational. The ways that CAN, CE and the government form a tri-partnership in policy advocacy were investigated. The think tank is responsible for engaging policy research exercises with the government. As an advocacy NGO, CAN proposes a policy suggestion or measure from own research or from partner think-tanks like CE. By utilizing the institutionalized channels, CAN institutionalizes the proposal and formulates policy under government’s framework, as in the case of Clean Air Plan commissioned by Environment Bureau (ENB). On the other hand, CAN does not necessarily share the same policy goal and priority with other government departments other than ENB or EPD. As in the case of DVRC Initiative, setting up a pedestrian zone was not the policy priority of TD. With less extensive institutionalized channels between CAN and TD, the role of CAN is more or less like traditional pressure groups and is more confrontational with the administration.

4.3 Support from Foundation and Corporation

According to a survey, 39.3% of conservation groups did not cooperate with the business sector in the last twelve months, and only 10.7% of them kept a list of regular corporate donors (Lee et al, 2012). CAN is of one the organizations that receives grants from foundations and sponsorships from corporations in events as CAN does not receive any government funding at the moment.

Unlike the public-private partnership (PPP) model in which the participating NGO receives large grant from the government, the fact that a NGO operation is not solely dependent on government funding allows that NGO larger autonomy in advocacy campaigns.
CAN has a good relationship with foundations and corporations. The former CEO of CAN, Ms. Joanne Ooi, is an art dealer and marketing expert and she helped to build the commercial network that is necessary for fund-raising. For instance, in 2011 an environmentally theme art exhibition and auction was held, with the sponsorship and support from of Sotheby’s and BSI Investment Advisors, IFC, the International Herald Tribune, and the South China Morning Post (CAN, 2013a).

CAN’s advocacy work is also supported by foundations, such as ADM Capital, the Fu Tak Iam Foundation Limited, Riverstar Group and WYNG Foundation. The reason for the foundations to support CAN is that environmental conservation is the common cause for both CAN and the foundations. Many family foundations in Hong Kong do not think about environmental issues as potential philanthropy, however, the foundations that support CAN are those few atypical examples that would support campaigns on creating community network against air pollution. For instance, ADM Capital has been supporting CAN’s advocacy and capacity building campaigns since 2009 by providing grant funding and fundraising assistance (ADMCF, 2015).

Airmazing Race, the flagship fundraising programme of CAN, together with the operations of some other projects and programmes, has been supported by Fu Tak Iam Foundation (CAN, 2015b). And CAN is also one of the WYNG urban initiatives (WYNG, 2013).

There are two observations concerning the use of networking. First, CAN has access and could formalize channels to work with government and foundation by utilizing the networks of former CEOs. Second, CAN is able to actively identify grant givers with a shared agenda and networking with them.
In the previous section, I analyzed the tri-partnership among CAN, CE and the Environment Bureau on Clean Air Plan. A similar network could be observed among CAN, CE and WYNG Foundation. Ms. Christine Loh, the Under-Secretary for Environment, was one of the founding trustees of WYNG Foundation and founding chairperson of CAN and CE. Dr. Anthony Ng, the current board of trustee of WYNG Foundation and board member of CE, is the Secretary of CAN. Ms. Lisa Genasci, the CEO of ADM Capital Foundation, is the current CAN’s advisors and CE’s board members. The strong network among board members between CAN, CE, and foundations greatly supports CAN’s advocacy work by providing both financial resources and social capitals required for campaigning.

Recently, Social Impact Partners has announced to provide CAN with 2.55 million grant funding and value added support on communication strategy, financial review, internal management audit to aids CAN’s corporate development (Social Impact Partners, 2015). This aims to strengthen CAN’s current fundraising capacities by allying with more corporate donors.

Some of the CAN’s projects are supported by corporate sponsors for their operations. For instance, the Airmazing Race that I mentioned earlier were supported by CLP Power HK Ltd, Towngas, LUSH, Intercontinental Hong Kong and Pizzaexpress. This is not a usual phenomenon among green groups, especially for advocacy NGOs, and I shall elaborate further on how this affect CAN’s advocacy strategy in chapter 5.

4.4 Media strategy – exposing the issue

As explained earlier in previous sections, CAN has been exposing air policy related issues via various media platforms. The below table shows a summary of media
coverage from Jan 2014 to Jan 2016, the period after the Clean Air Plan has been formulated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>No. of media coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Annual Air Quality Review</td>
<td>Jan 2014</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul 2014</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul 2015</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Response to air news or policy</td>
<td>AQHI launched</td>
<td>5 – 7 Dec 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High AQHI incidents</td>
<td>31 Dec- 1 Jan 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guangdong HK AQ monitoring Network</td>
<td>1 May 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EPD air quality review</td>
<td>24-25 Feb 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action on onshore Power Supply</td>
<td>28 May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response to EPD press conference</td>
<td>5 -7 Jan 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Media events</td>
<td>Marathon</td>
<td>14 – 22 Feb 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On Air</td>
<td>15 Mar – 30 Apr 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmazing Race 4</td>
<td>5 – 9 Jul 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pollution levels rise as traffic returns after Occupy Central</td>
<td>16 -21 Dec 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boat Trip on marine emission</td>
<td>1 – 2 Mar 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kai Tak Art Picnic</td>
<td>5 – 30 Mar 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Des Voeux Road Central – tram removal</td>
<td>22 – 30 Aug 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are three main media strategies. Firstly, CAN tries to be authoritative in air quality monitoring by setting up a bi-annual press conference which publishes a report commenting air quality of Hong Kong. From the table, it can be observed that the Annual Air Quality Reviews result in 76 media coverage in 2 years for 5 conferences, which accounts for 30% of total coverage. The bi-annual Air Quality Review has also becoming a platform where reporters can exchange information and gain specific knowledge from CAN, and this is an important brand building exercise to build up CAN’s image as an alternative source of information concerning air quality rather than from government source.

CAN also responds quickly to air quality related issues and incidents. Whenever the government has implemented (or fails to implement) a specific air quality policy, like the launching of AQHI, CAN reacts by writing press release and informs concerned public via various social media platforms. This is also an important strategy as public would rely on channels and platforms that can respond quickly in the era of social media. Besides Facebook Page (with over 20k fans), Twitter and Weibo accounts, CAN also has its own accounts on local social media platforms like the StandNews, Pentoy, Inmedia and VJmedia.

The last strategy is probably more important in terms of networking – CAN tries to pitch media with stories and events for creating public discourse and narratives. The
five steps of advocacy framework listed at the beginning of the chapter can be adopted to analyze this pitching strategy.

In the case of marathon air pollution issue, CAN made onsite investigation and established the link between public health and marathon. For instance, we collaborated with School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong on collecting information of air pollutants’ concentration in Hong Kong. We also utilized the Hedley Environmental Index and made infographics that related public health and air pollution. Onsite investigation was performed to see which part of marathon routes was more highly polluted. Professional runners and volunteers were recruited to monitor air pollution level of the route. CAN collected and analyzed those information, and in turn pitching media for exposing the issue via investigative reporting.

After investigation, CAN believed that there was not enough information of air quality for marathon runners to decide whether to run or not before the race. There are only 15 air monitoring stations in Hong Kong and none of them is located near the marathon routes. The policy suggestion was the introduction of real-time measurement of air quality data along marathon routes. A warning should be issued at least 2 hours before the race if the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is higher than 7 (which means high air pollution) so that the runners can make informed decisions.

After proposing policy suggestion, CAN exposed the issue via media through press conference, events and actions. We collaborated with On.cc and Apple Daily News on investigative reporting on how marathon runners were exposing themselves in great
health risks. CAN continuously exposed the issue of marathon air quality by pitching media stories in different angles. In the case of marathon air quality, CAN introduced new angle to the media on how marathon runner would inhale air pollutants as if a vacuum cleaner did in household cleaning. Besides talking about the bad air quality of marathon route, CAN explored the issue of rise of pollution levels as traffic returned after Occupy Central. This demonstrated the need of re-designing marathon route.

The government finally agreed to set up four AQHI-Green Marathon Monitoring Locations for 2015 Green Marathon organized by Standard Chartered. This indicated that with a planned campaign strategy and continuous media exposure, it is possible to execute a successful green advocacy campaign in Hong Kong given the limited amount of resource of small NGOs (CAN, 2016; Loong, 2016).

4.5 Ally with green and professional group – and utilizing public support

As discussed in the tri-partnership relations among CAN, CE and the government, the role of professional groups like think tanks and planning groups for advocacy is that they provide research support, resource sharing and professional network to CAN. During formulation of Clean Air Plan, CAN has been allying with various green and professional groups to push forward the campaign. For instance, CAN worked closely with Friends of the Earth (HK) on issues such as phasing out old commercial diesel vehicles and joint statements has been submitted to the Legislative Council and respective government departments.

An important case derived from Clean Air Plan is the DVRC alliance which aims to set up a green pedestrian and tram-only precinct for Des Voeux Road Central (DVRC).
This is a good example on how the business sectors, professional and green groups, media and public could work together on advocacy.

The issue of DVRC has become a public concern since Aug 2015, when a planner tried to submit an application to the Town Planning Board (TPB) to rezone the road usage of DVRC. The implication would be the removal of tram operation and this resulted in a mass objection from the general public.

On the other hand, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP), together with Civic Exchange, City University of Hong Kong and transport consultants MVA, proposed for a pedestrian and tram-only precinct proposal in 2014. CAN saw the concern of public on the tram issue as an opportunity to bring the DVRC pedestrianization topic on the table, and liaised with three other civic groups including Designing Hong Kong, the Conservancy Association and Friends of the Earth (HK) to submit another rezoning application to rezone DVRC into “Pedestrian Area and Environmentally Friendly Public Transport System” (DVRC, 2015c). The application collected over 1900 supporting petitions to the TPB. Totally 62 media coverage was resulted for just 2-3 weeks of time and some of the FaceBook post reach of CAN on the issue was over 300k. Based on the network built on the rezoning campaign, DVRC Initiative was established in late September, 2015.

In this chapter, the networking dynamics of CAN among five important stakeholders were discussed and analyzed. There is a tri-partnership network among CAN, CE and the government in terms of formulating policies in Clean Air Plan. The network is further strengthened and complemented by the support from corporation and foundations which share similar vision and mission with CAN. Professional and green
groups are crucial in the formation of advocacy alliance and research supports, while media serves to co-create narratives and discourses, and helps to expose the issues to the public for amplification.

Yet the relationship between CAN and the government is dynamic. The role of CAN is more confrontational in the area of policy implementation as well as policies which are more transport and planning related. Given the increasingly contentious political environment in Hong Kong, green advocacy NGOs are facing a dilemma in choosing an appropriate collaboration model – either they rely on government funding or private-public partnership initiated by the government, risking challenged by general public on NGOs’ credibility; or they seek out alternative sources to government, given the government may want to seek moderate NGO partners. In the next chapter, I will compare CAN’s collaboration model with other green NGOs which rely on government funding, and see how this would affect the networking behaviour and campaign effectiveness, as exemplified by DVRC Initiative.
Chapter 5 Collaboration model, networking behaviour and campaign effectiveness

In this chapter, various collaboration models that affect networking behaviour of advocacy green NGOs shall be discussed. Lee and Liu’s (2012) theory shall be adopted to study CAN’s networking behaviour: how small size NGOs like CAN utilizes its extensive joint-alliance experience in campaigning giving a limited amount of resources. Under the challenge of contentious politics, I shall argue that resource dependency will affect campaign effectiveness of green advocacy NGOs, as the case of public-private partnership (PPP) by green NGOs and land developers under New Nature Conservation Policy will show. We shall see how CAN develops a strategic partnership with business sectors and green and professional groups without adopting PPP model, and forms an initiative that proposes pedestrianization in Central under the framework of the Clean Air Plan.

5.1 PPP model under contentious politics

As mentioned earlier, Hong Kong’s non-profit regime was understood to be statist-corporatist. Many large service sector NPOs are supported mainly by the government with lump-sum grant and they usually established a long-term cooperative relationship with the government. However, a new “liberal” funding regime emerged with the New Public Management reform, where smaller NPOs cannot get long-term contract from the government under the “quasi-market” mechanism of funding allocation (Lee and Liu, 2012). Although it is less stable for the smaller and younger NPOs in terms of financial resource, this also gives them a
higher autonomy to devise campaign strategies for advocacy.

The green sector is different from social service sector in the sense that environmental protection was not a high priority of the colonial administration. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) was established in 1986, and the focus was mainly on cleaning up pollution resulting from rapid urbanization. The government reacted passively to environmental issues until conservation became the issue of public concern after the movement of preservation of Star Ferry Pier and Queen’s Pier. The Environment Bureau was finally set up in 2007 as a result of the increasing public awareness of environmental issues.

Without a direct support from the administration, the green sector is much less developed than the social service sector. Many green NGOs in Hong Kong do not have stable funding resource. An exception will be Greenpeace East Asia. They received $144million HK dollars in terms of donation and more than 50% were from individual donation (Greenpeace, 2014). With the concrete basis of donation, Greenpeace does not rely on government for funding and acts more independently in advocacy campaigns.

For other green NGOs, it will be necessary for them to devise other networking strategies for campaigning. For instance, they may engage in Management Agreement(MA) scheme and assist land developers under New Nature Conservation Policy, or apply funding from government’s Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) on community campaigns. Many green advocacy NGOs in Hong Kong, such as Green Power, Friends of the Earth (HK) and the Conservancy Association, are the partners of Environmental Protection Department led community programmes funded by ECF.
However, there are many challenges to this public-private partnership model. One problem is the credibility issue of participating green NGOs. Under such model, the NGO may apply funding from the government via ECF and become “conservation agents” to assist developers in PPP projects. However, some NGOs were questioned by public whether they could make a fair judgment on conservation issues in such partnership. In Lok Fung Wai case, WWF was thought to be involved in advising Cheung Kong on property development. They were forced to quit the PPP project as they were suspicious to have conflict of interest in the case (Chiu, 2012).

The successful implementation of PPP projects assumes a high level of trust among various stakeholders in the project, and this was not the case given the increasing wave of activism in campaign and advocacy due to the rise of contentious politics. In these ten years, the discourse of conservation has been changing. Conservation no longer just means a balance between development and nature conservation. PPP cannot resolve the fundamental difference in the way citizens participate in a sustainable development and planning of our city (Loong, 2015). The reason of failure is not just an issue of accountability nor transparency. Rather the change of discourse has invalidated the “consultative consensus” behind PPP model.

5.2 DVRC Initiative – a collaboration model worth evaluation

CAN does not adopt any PPP model in advocacy campaigns. As discussed in chapter 4, the relationship between CAN and the government is dynamic. In one hand, CAN forms a tri-partnership in policy advocacy with CE and the bureau on formulating the framework of the Clean Air Plan. On the other, CAN is more confrontational on policy implementation and issues related to sustainable transport and planning.
Going back to year 2000, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) proposed for a pedestrian precinct in Central. 14 years later, HKIP worked with CE, City University and transport consultant MVA to update the 2000 proposal. The proposal laid out the feasibility of such planning to mitigate air pollution and traffic congestion in Central. The parties kept engaging the government on the issue but the progress has been slow.

It was out of public concern until a planner tried to submit an application to the Town Planning Board (TPB) to rezone the road usage of DVRC and literally abolish the operation of tram in Central. The application received mass objection from the public, mainly because tram is the important icon of Hong Kong, and perhaps more importantly, people with increasing conservation awareness cannot accept planning ignoring heritage preservation and sustainable transportation (see, for instance, Chan, 2015).

For small green NGOs like CAN, this would be a good chance to utilize the incident to raise public awareness on issues like sustainable transportation. With the support of nine green, professional and community groups, including Designing Hong Kong, Sai Wan Concern Group, Central and Western Concern Group, Land Justice League, The Conservancy Association, Green Sense, Friends of the Earth(HK), Hong Kong Cycling Alliance, and Greenpeace HK, the “Save the Tram” Campaign was initiated against the proposal to remove tram in late August, 2015(Designing Hong Kong, 2015).

HKIP’s proposal on pedestrianization was included as an alternative to “tram removal” proposal.

After receiving nearly 2 thousand of petitions in just 2 weeks, CAN submitted a joint
12A planning application to the Town Planning Board (TPB) to counteract the original “tram removal” proposal. The joint application was initiated by CAN with three other NGOs from the “Save the Tram” Campaign and the technical input was facilitated with the help of professionals like members from HKIP. As CAN has been working with the groups on various campaign fronts, such working group can be formed very quickly.

While the joint application was being processed by the TPB, the organizations involved recognized the need to form a closer strategic partnership via a common platform. The DVRC Initiative was thus established in September 2015, which is a collaborative platform to create a pedestrianized green artery along Des Voeux Road Central. To increase the representativeness of the Initiative, business sectors, academics, foundations and social innovation incubators were also involved as DVRC supporters (see DVRC 2015a; 2015b; 2015c). A public pressure had been generated on the issue, and totally 62 media coverage was resulted in just 2-3 weeks of time, the likes and FaceBook post reach of CAN on the issue increased significantly. Finally, the “tram removal proposal” was rejected by the TPB, with over 20k objection comments from the public (SCMP 2015).

Figure 3. A schematic diagram representing joint application to TPB on DVRC pedestrianization. Adopted from DVRC (2015c).
5.3 How DVRC Initiative differs from PPP model

The Initiative is responsive to the new conservation discourse that developed in HK recent years. Although CAN focuses mainly on air pollution policy, both the board directors and the management are aware of the increasing need to address transport issues, especially on sustainable transport and urban planning. The case of DVRC is not “traditional” conservation issue like the preservation of nature habitats. Rather, it is addressing the conservation discourse that criticizes the premise of dominant development view in Hong Kong. Creating a landmark pedestrian zone at the heart of Hong Kong is not just an environmental measure to alleviate air pollution; nor is it another transportation measure to tackle traffic congestion in central business district. More importantly, city development is for the people, neither for the cars nor property owners alone.

CAN takes the advantage of forming partnership or soliciting supports from various stakeholders, but not in the way suggested by the PPP model. Green groups participated in PPP model do not have enough power to influence developers to adopt conservation guidelines. As green groups are conceived as consultants in those projects, the public has good reasons to be suspicious on the possible conflict of interest between the parties. In contrast, there is no conflict of interest among the green groups and business groups involved in DVRC Initiative, as the fund raised would be used mainly for outsourcing consultants for transportation feasibility study of implementation of pedestrianization plan. The money would not be used to support for CAN’s operation and the green groups would form a monitoring group to oversee the progress. Any plan resulted from the research of the Initiative would be under public scrutiny through a series of public consultation workshops.
Although CAN has a good relationship with corporations, CAN does not depend on corporate sponsorship as the major funding source. For most cases, the role of corporate is to sponsor education and community programmes, but not advocacy campaigns. In the case of DVRC Initiative, the operation is mainly supported by the three organizers, namely CAN, Designing Hong Kong and Hong Kong Public Space Initiative. Indeed, many events and activities are jointly organized by the three organizers and are utilizing the organization’s own manpower and networks. For instance, organizers of DVRC Initiative lined up with Faculty of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong and the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation of the Columbia University on urban design model. The effectiveness of mobilizing such campaign depends very much on the organization own capacities in networking and resources utilization, if the government does not get involved directly in the process.

Two foundations, namely ADM Capital Foundation and WYNG Foundation, are also involved as DVRC supporters. It is very important for CAN as the two foundations share the same vision with CAN on the importance of sustainable transport on combating air pollution. Hence the events and activities organized by DVRC Initiative are also regarded as part of the campaign strategies led by CAN. Without the support from Foundations, the DVRC campaign would become unsustainable.

I shall conclude the chapter by making a further distinction between the case of DVRC Initiative and the PPP model on the relationships among green groups, government and corporate. One may argue that the partnership among green groups, professionals and business sectors is not categorically different from those observed in PPP model. The only difference is that such partnership is institutionalized in PPP
but not in the case of DVRC Initiative. While the observation may be true in the sense that DVRC Initiative would like the government to take the lead to pedestrianize Des Voeux Road Central, yet the power relationship among those groups is more equal in DVRC Initiative than those engage in PPP. The green NGOs would not become a “rubber stamp” and be forced to endorse any kind of development project that NGOs do not fully agree with. In other words, the flexibility of a less rigid and institutionalized network allows NGOs a larger sphere of autonomy for policy advocacy. A diversified funding strategy without solely dependent on neither government nor business sector is crucial to maintain autonomy in advocacy campaigns.

Under the context of contentious politics in Hong Kong, it may be a better strategy to establish hundreds of small green NGOs which differentiate in specific areas, and ally with each other for a particular campaign, rather than focus on tens of large green NGOs which engage in PPP and cannot react quickly to the complex social-economical situation nowadays. It is much easier to operate small NGOs with smaller budgets from a variety of sources, whereas large NGOs are inclined to depend heavily from large government grants, which means their autonomy in policy advocacy is much constrained by government’s agenda.
Chapter 6 Discussion

The paper reviewed the development of statist-corporatist regime in Hong Kong and how it was challenged by the increasing contentious political environment. Since conservation has become one of the dominant paradigms in public discourse, NGOs in green sector developed diverse strategies and approaches on dealing with conservation issues and policies.

CAN was selected as a case study to explore its networking behaviour in green advocacy sector. Five key steps were identified in CAN’s advocacy. First, a policy suggestion or measure was proposed based on research. Second, the issue was exposed with planned media strategies and actions. Third, an ally with other green or professional groups was formed based on campaign needs. Fourth, the proposal was institutionalized and included in government’s framework and policy agenda. Finally, the implementation of policy was monitored to ensure effective execution.

To illustrate CAN’s networking strategies in advocacy campaigns, the relationships of CAN with five key stakeholders were discussed. It was found that the relationship between CAN and the government was dynamic in nature. It was complementary when the policy proposed by CAN was within the Clean Air Plan, which the policy goal was to reduce air pollution and lower public health risk. CAN’s advocacy campaigns were facilitated by a tri-partnership between CAN, CE and the ENB in a complementary manner – whereas CE was responsible for engaging policy research exercises with the government, CAN was more focused on exposing the issue and engaging community via media coverage, events and actions. In addition, CAN had
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access and could formalize channels to work with government because a former CEO was appointed to a critical and relevant position in formulation of the Clean Air Plan. Hence the proposal suggested by CAN had a higher chance to be formulated as policy under government’s framework.

However, the relationship became confrontational when it came to transport policy, in which CAN and Transport Department did not have the same policy goal and priority. It was crucial that CAN was supported by foundations that shared agenda and network to enhance its advocacy works. It was illustrated by the example of DVRC Initiative, which was supported by ADM Capital Foundation and WYNG Foundation that shared the same vision with CAN on the importance of sustainable transport on combating air pollution.

Readers may argue that the government and foundation networking strategy adopted by CAN seemed not viable for smaller NGOs without influential founders or chairpersons. The personal connection among key people was important in formulating and implementing CAN’s proposal in the Clean Air Plan, but it was not the only factor that contributed to policy changes initiated by CAN during the 7-year work. Media strategy and cross-sector collaboration were paramount to effective implementation and monitoring of CAN’s policy proposals. Small green advocacy NGOs with good network among smaller organizations in the sector should devise a suitable board strategy and invite key players in the field to serve on their boards. This is an important topic that could not be further discussed in length and should be explored in further research related to board governance and development of NGOs.

Media strategy played a crucial role in CAN’s campaigns. There were three major
strategies in terms of media networking. First, CAN established itself to be an authoritative commentator by conducting a bi-annual conference on reporting air quality of Hong Kong. This was an important brand building exercise which alternative data analysis on air quality was provided rather than from government source. Second, CAN acted as a responsive platform and responded quickly to air quality-related news and incidents. CAN wrote press releases and issued short responses on FaceBook page whenever the government proposed any new policy or any interesting topic was discovered on media. Third, CAN kept pitching media with stories and events for creating public discourse and narratives. The integration of three media strategies exerted continuous pressure on government policy formulation and helped to institutionalize CAN’s proposal with a planned campaign strategy (Loong, 2016).

The two strategies of collaboration were also analyzed and discussed in chapter 5, which illustrated a possible dilemma when small NGOs like CAN tried to negotiate its sphere of autonomy in policy advocacy given a resource constraint. Large NGOs were more inclined to adopt PPP model to get more sustainable funding from government fund like ECF. Nevertheless, adoption to PPP model might compromise organization’s credibility and autonomy in advocacy decisions. The DVRC Initiative represented an alternative collaboration model, which CAN enjoyed a more equal relations among various collaborating professional groups, commercial sectors as well as government departments. Due to time and resource limitation, a comparative analysis on PPP model with other possible collaboration models could not be further elaborated in this capstone project. A more diversified funding strategy had yet to be developed to maintain autonomy of small green groups in advocacy campaigns.
Chapter 7 Final Words

In this capstone project, I reviewed how CAN utilizes its network for advocacy campaigns. There are many factors for the successful implementation of policy suggestions by CAN in the Clean Air Plan. As the research has shown, an extensive support from the public, green and professional groups, a carefully devised media strategy, independent funding support from like-minded foundations, and institutionalized channels established between NGOs and government can greatly enhance the networking capacity of an advocacy group. These internal factors partly contribute to a successful advocacy campaign.

Due to resource stress, it seems that there is an increasing tendency for green groups to focus less on advocacy. It is hoped that this exploratory study can shine light on the way to utilize networking capacity, given the fact that the dominating model of green advocacy may not be able to deal with new societal-economical situation in a contentious political context.
Appendix: Summary of MNPM 7013 Project Deliverable

A very brief summary of your research project

The research project explores the networking capacities of green advocacy NGOs by conducting a case study on Clean Air Network (CAN). It studies how CAN utilizes its networking capacities and interacts with government, corporate, other NGOs, media and other relevant stakeholders in campaign advocacy. Organizational factors that affect campaign effectiveness and efficacy are studied. The research will focus on how resource dependency affects choice of collaboration model and networking behaviour of green advocacy NGOs.

The key issue/findings/gap that your deliverable addresses

The deliverable focuses particularly on media strategy in advocacy. Among the five key steps in policy advocacy, developing appropriate media strategy is very important for small NGOs like CAN to amplify the issue and keep the advocacy momentum going. The deliverable aims to discuss some common strategies of media campaign by CAN. Using the case of air pollution issue of marathon in Hong Kong, the deliverable covers and discusses three media strategies utilized by CAN, namely authoritative commentator, responsive platform and media pitching, in the format of YouTube video and user manual.

A description of the how the deliverable addresses the gap

The video\(^2\) aims to illustrate how CAN develops media strategy in exploring the issue of air pollution along marathon route, and how such continuous media exposure supplement a planned campaign strategy in institutionalizing proposal.

The written manual provides additional information and background on planning a campaign and discusses common strategies of media campaign of CAN.

Altogether the video and manual serve to allow amateur activists or any newcomers to understand the know-how of media strategy in campaigning. After watching and reading the deliverable, they should have some ideas of how to expose and amplify an issue, and execute a green advocacy campaign in Hong Kong given the limited amount of resource of small NGOs.

\(^2\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLgwJnsSIAU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLgwJnsSIAU)
Abbreviations, list of tables and figures

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References


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http://www.designinghongkong.com/edm/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=115&key=d1ea2f7d02cee5ef272ffe054d5ad5d7&subid=62392-f83a59d596714de2f1b9c201a3462ddd&tmpl=component


Loong (2015). Exploring organizational alliance strategy of HK’s environmental awareness and conservation campaign. Integrated Paper of Master of Non-Profit Management course 7001, Department of Social Work, HKU.


