

Academics tip Democrat losses

By Cecilia So

THE Democratic Party will be marginalised in the 1998 legislative election, academics say.

A lecturer at City University's division of social studies, Choy Chi-keung, expected the party to lose at least one-third of its directly elected seats.

The party won a landslide victory with 16 directly elected seats in the Legco poll in 1995 under the "single seat, single vote" electoral system.

The 16 seats represented 80 per cent of the 20 directly elected seats in the geographical constituencies.

The "single seat, single vote" system allows the

voter to choose one candidate on the ballot. The candidate with the most votes wins.

Mr Choy said it was unlikely the Democratic Party could win most of the directly elected seats next year under the proposed "double seat, single vote" or "multi seat, single vote" systems.

Electors would have only one vote under the two proposed systems. Depending on the number of seats in the district, the top one, two or three candidates would be elected.

"Assuming the Democratic Party remained the most dominant political force commanding the support of more than 60 per cent of the total voters,

the party could easily secure one seat in each district in 1998.

"But the second or the third seats of each district are likely to go to the pro-China candidates who could manage to win almost as many votes as the Democratic Party," Mr Choy said.

He predicted the Democrats could win only seven to nine seats among the 20 directly elected seats in 1998.

A lecturer at Lingnan College's department of politics and sociology, Dr Li Pang-kwong, said the Democrats' chances would depend on the party mobilising people to allocate their votes evenly.