Mobilization and Protest Participation in Post-handover Hong Kong

A Study of Three Large-scale Demonstrations

Joseph M. Chan

Francis L. F. Lee

香港亞太研究所

HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ASIA-PACIFIC STUDIES

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SHATIN, NEW TERRITORIES

HONG KONG

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About the Authors

Joseph M. Chan is professor at the School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he served as a former director. His research interests include international communication, globalization and communication, and political communication.

Francis L. F. Lee is assistant professor at the Department of English and Communication at the City University of Hong Kong. His research interests are mainly in political communication, public opinion, and public and media discourse analysis.

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Introduction

In the past two years, three large-scale demonstrations have taken place in Hong Kong. The first "July 1 demonstration," in which 500,000 citizens participated, was held in 2003. The participants protested against the passing of national security legislation, which was imminent, as well as the general incompetence of the government in dealing with social and economic matters. The demonstration was the second-largest public rally in the history of the city. It led to a series of dramatic events, culminating in the postponement of national security legislation and the resignation of a top government official. Half a year later, on January 1, 2004, 100,000 citizens joined in a demonstration calling for democratization in Hong Kong. Then, exactly one year after the first July 1 demonstration, 200,000 citizens again took to the streets to protest against the Hong Kong and Chinese governments for suppressing democratic reform.[1]

As large-scale public demonstrations have become a prominent feature of Hong Kong politics, there is an urgent need to understand their processes of formation, the characteristics of the participants, and the effects that such demonstrations have on individual citizens and political actors. The present paper aims to address some of these issues. More specifically, we examine the social and psychological factors behind the participation of individuals in protests. In addition, drawing upon onsite surveys conducted during the demonstrations

mentioned above, we analyse the processes of mass and interpersonal communications that led to the formation of the large-scale demonstrations.

In other words, the present study focuses mainly on the micro-level factors and processes that contribute to the formation of the three demonstrations. The results of the present study should lead to insights on the power and limitations of public protests in Hong Kong. It also provides a basis for further studies of other social and political protests in the city, as well as for comparisons with protests in other countries.

Factors of Protest Mobilization

Theorists studying social movements have recognized that protests can be best understood as the result of a confluence of macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors (McAdam et al., 1988; Snow and Benford, 1992; Zuo and Benford, 1995). Adverse macro-level social and political conditions can lead to grievances among citizens, which in turn become the basis for protests. At the same time, the characteristics of the political system would structure the range of the opportunities available to citizens and their possible routes of action. At the meso-level, the roles played by civic associations, social organizations, political parties, and media institutions in the formation of protests have to be considered. At the micro-level, it is likely that the decision of individuals to participate in demonstrations is driven by a number of social and psychological factors. At the same time, interpersonal communications among citizens within their social networks may facilitate the flow of social influence and information related to the protests.

Macro- and meso-level factors are certainly important in explaining the occurrence of the three large-scale demonstrations concerned. Since the outbreak of Asian financial crisis in late 1997, Hong Kong citizens have experienced years of continual economic decline. The Hong Kong government has generally been considered incompetent in dealing with a range of social and political crises.

In early 2003, the grievances of Hong Kong citizens were further aggravated by the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and by the performance of the government in the controversy over national security legislation. Before the first July 1 demonstration, the Hong Kong government was suffering a deep crisis of legitimacy (Ku, 2001, 2002; Chan and So, 2002). These situational factors constituted the macro-level conditions for the occurrence of the large-scale demonstrations.

At the meso-level, years of political development in Hong Kong contributed to the rise of a political society (Kuan, 1998). A key component of this political society is a range of civic associations, pressure groups, and political parties (Lui, 1999). Some of these groups act as organizers of political activities in which citizens can participate. However, a widely recognized weakness of many pressure groups and political parties in Hong Kong is that they have neither large memberships nor strong group or party "machines" (Choy, 1999). Except a few leftist organizations and political parties, the mobilizing power of pressure groups and political parties in Hong Kong is very limited.

Nevertheless, this weakness is partially compensated for by the news media. As the media treat pressure groups and political parties as major news sources, they legitimize the groups and parties as spokespersons on social and political matters (Chan, 1992; Fung, 1995). At the same time, researchers have found that Hong Kong people, whether they are politically active or not, pay close attention to public affairs via the mass media (Chan and Lee, 1992; Lau and Kuan, 1995). Information and persuasive messages from social and political groups, therefore, can be effectively transmitted to the wider public via the media.

The above is certainly only a very brief description of the macro- and meso-level conditions behind the large-scale demonstrations that took place in Hong Kong in 2003 and 2004. Yet it provides the context for the present study, which focuses on the micro-level processes that occurred under such conditions. Put simply, we are interested in *who were mobilized* and *how they were mobilized* to participate in the demonstrations. This can be re-stated as two major

questions for analysis: (1) What are the social and psychological factors that contributed to the participation of individuals in protests? (2) How did information and social influence flow through mass and interpersonal channels of communication in the formation of the protests? To answer these questions, we will make combined use of a survey of the public at large and three onsite surveys of three large-scale demonstrations in Hong Kong. Together, they shed light on who joined these protests, and why and how they did so.

The Resource Model vs the Deprivation Approach

As Dalton (1996) stated, explanations of the participation of people in protests can be classified into two major approaches. The deprivation approach treats protests as the result of frustration and political alienation. By implication, political dissatisfaction is a major predictor of participation in protests. At the same time, the deprivation approach also expects that people belonging to underprivileged groups in a society (e.g., those with lower levels of income and education) will participate more actively in protests.

In contrast, the resource model "does not view protest and collective action as emotional outbursts by a frustrated public. Instead, protest is another political resource…that individuals may use in pursuing their goals" (Dalton, 1996:78). This approach treats protests as qualitatively similar to other forms of political participation; they are just different means that people can use to influence the government. It follows that the factors explaining participation in protests and other forms of political participation should be very similar. More specifically, the resource model predicts that protesters are more likely than non-protesters to be better educated, have higher levels of income, to be more politically informed and sophisticated, and with higher levels of internal efficacy.

Dalton (1996) has argued that the resource model provides a better description of protests in advanced industrial democracies, as protesters are likely to be more educated. However, the deprivation approach is not completely wrong. In all four Western democracies

studied by Dalton, political satisfaction is negatively related to participation in protests, but not to voting and participation in campaign activities. In other words, protests, as non-institutionalized political activities, are indeed driven by negative opinions of the government and/or the political system as a whole (also see Seligson, 1980; Verba et al., 1995). The findings deviate from the conventional deprivation approach only in that frustrated people come from all social strata. They are not necessarily concentrated among the underprivileged groups.

Based on these considerations, we may expect protesters to be resourceful yet frustrated people. In fact, this largely corresponds to what we know about the three large-scale demonstrations being examined here. As Table 1 shows, from the three onsite surveys (methodology will be described later), we see that the protesters were mainly middle-class professionals or associate professionals with university degrees who held very negative opinions of the Hong Kong government, as shown by their abysmal rating of Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa.

While Table 1 displays the demographic background of the protesters and their evaluations of political leaders, the present study is also interested in a number of social and psychological factors that might explain the participation of Hong Kong citizens in protests. We posit a number of research hypotheses based on the argument that protesters are resourceful yet frustrated people. First, with regard to psychological factors, we expect that people who believe in their own abilities as well as in the abilities of Hong Kong people as a collectivity are more likely to participate in protests. In other words, we posit positive relationships between protest participation and levels of internal and collective efficacy. The expectation is based on a huge body of political science literature demonstrating the positive impact of efficacious feelings on political participation (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960; Fiorina, 1981; Abramson, 1983; Verba et al., 1995; for a relevant study in Hong Kong, see Shum, 1996). Therefore, our first two hypotheses are:

H1:   Internal efficacy is positively related to protest participation.

Table 1   Characteristics of the Participants in the Three Demonstrations

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Sex			
Male	60.1%	67.2%	65.4%
(N)	(576)	(774)	(607)
Age			
15-29	44.1%	23.0%	35.0%
30-49	48.9%	58.8%	49.4%
50 or above	5.5%	14.8%	12.2%
(N)	(580)	(785)	(581)
Education			
Tertiary	56.0%	55.5%	58.1%
Secondary	41.3%	39.6%	38.3%
(N)	(573)	(778)	(577)
Occupation			
Professionals and associate professionals	40.1%	41.6%	30.7%
Labourers	4.3%	5.5%	5.5%
Clerks, service workers and shop sales workers	17.5%	19.1%	29.5%
Students	20.9%	9.8%	18.0%
(N)	(576)	(778)	(566)
Self-designated social class			
Upper	2.2%	1.6%	2.5%
Middle	62.9%	70.7%	65.7%
(N)	(544)	(728)	(510)
Political evaluations			
Rating of Tung Chee-hwa (0-100)	13.8	14.3	25.9
(N)	(541)	(765)	(609)
Rating of Hu Jintao (0-100)	57.7	60.3	55.0
(N)	(508)	(322)	(608)

Note: The figures represent the percentages in respect of the total valid answers (N).

H2: Collective efficacy is positively related to protest participation.

Second, with regard to social factors, we focus on the concept of "social capital" (Putnam, 1993, 1995) and its impact on political participation. Social capital refers to the resources embedded in social relations upon which people can draw for instrumental purposes (Coleman, 1988). Such resources include information, common norms, social obligations, and interpersonal trust. They can be utilized by individuals to solve problems concerning their livelihoods and to achieve success in different social arenas.

When applied to the study of politics, social capital is considered to be important to the well being of democratic societies (Putnam, 1995; Paxton, 2002). Numerous studies have also shown that social capital is positively related to political participation (e.g., Booth and Richard, 1998; La Due Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998; Fuchs et al., 1999; Benson and Rochon, 2004). We expect this relationship to hold true with regard to protest participation in Hong Kong. For the purpose of the present study, social capital can be differentiated into two types: (1) network capital, which refers to networks of friends, relatives, and workmates, and (2) participatory capital, which refers to the participation of people in social and political organizations (Wellman et al., 2001). Hence, our next two hypotheses are:

H3: The amount of network capital is positively related to protest participation.

H4: The amount of participatory capital is positively related to protest participation.

Third, although Table 1 already shows that the protesters in the three demonstrations held very negative opinions of the Chief Executive, we are still interested in whether the relationship between discontent and protest participation will hold up in a multivariate analysis. We are also interested in the impact of the citizens' evaluation of the Hong Kong economy on their decision to participate in the protests. Therefore, our next two hypotheses are:

H5:   Attitudes towards the responsiveness of the Hong Kong government are negatively related to protest participation.

H6:   Evaluations of the Hong Kong economy are negatively related to protest participation.

Testing the six hypotheses will provide us with information about the characteristics of the participants in the protests. However, examining protest participation alone will not allow us to discern whether protest participation has any special characteristics that mark it off from other forms of political participation, such as voting. Moreover, while the present study mainly focuses on the three large-scale demonstrations that took place in 2003 and 2004, it is possible that the three demonstrations constitute special cases that do not represent protests in general. In other words, the factors predicting participation in the three demonstrations concerned may not be the same as those explaining participation in other protests. Therefore, to further our understanding of protests in Hong Kong, we will examine participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration along with participation in "other rallies and protests," June 4 commemoration demonstrations, and voting in Legislative Council elections. We have set the following two research questions:

Q1:   Are there differences between the predictors of voting and protest participation?

Q2:   Are there differences between the predictors of participation in the July 1 demonstration and participation in other rallies and protests?

Communication and Protest Mobilization

Every protest involves a process of formation that takes a certain period of time. Within the period of formation, information about the upcoming protest and messages of mobilization have to be communicated to potential participants. As mentioned above, in Hong Kong, due to the weakness of most social and political groups,

the mass media play an especially important role in disseminating such information and messages.

But mass communication only constitutes part of the environment of communication and information for citizens. In their daily lives, citizens obtain information by talking to each other. Interpersonal interactions can also be an important source of social influence. People may also obtain information from a range of accidental sources, such as from newspaper headlines glimpsed while walking past a street vendor, or from a conversation overheard while taking public transportation. As Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) have pointed out, a mix of mass, interpersonal, and impersonal communications constitutes a rich information environment from which citizens derive political information.

This is why social capital is likely to generate political participation, as hypothesized above. In fact, it is noticeable that most citizens did not participate in the three large-scale demonstrations alone. Table 2 shows that there were significant differences in the distributions of rally companions across the three large-scale demonstrations. The January 1 demonstration, which was the smallest in scale, was also the one that registered the highest percentage of "lone participants." But on the whole, in all three demonstrations, most protesters participated with their friends, family members, or spouses. The protests, therefore, were "collective actions" in two senses. Many people participated in the protests "collectively" with their acquaintances. Then, in the protests, all of the participants combined to form larger collectivities.

Because of these considerations, in the present study we will attempt to characterize the processes of formation of the demonstrations by paying attention to the flow of information and social influence through mass and interpersonal communications. We borrow a key concept in the study of communication, namely, the opinion leaders, to address the issue. In their classic study *Personal Influence*, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) argued that the media do not directly influence all of the people in a society. Rather, there is a group of opinion leaders who transmit the information and messages they have received from the media to their followers. Katz and Lazarsfeld

Table 2   Rally Companions in the Three Demonstrations (%)

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration	χ^2
No companion	7.5	25.5	17.2	75.74***
Spouse	16.1	21.7	9.0	40.87***
Family	29.0	27.8	27.4	.42
Boy/girlfriend	8.5	6.0	7.7	3.60
Friends	42.4	21.3	40.8	88.16***
Schoolmates	8.0	1.5	5.1	33.69***
Colleagues	6.2	1.3	4.3	24.31***
Social group	4.2	1.8	3.8	7.84*
(N)	(597)	(788)	(610)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: The χ^2 values were derived by cross-tabulating the variable
        "demonstration" with each of the mode of participation variables.

labelled such a flow of information and social influence through mass and then interpersonal channels of communication as a "two-step flow."

The concept of opinion leaders and the idea of a two-step flow have since been applied to studies of different types of media effects and phenomena of communication (e.g., Katz, 1957; Weimann, 1982, 1991; Weimann and Brosius, 1994). In our study, we will also separate protest participants into "leaders" and "followers," that is, those who persuaded others to participate with them and those who were persuaded by others to participate with them. By comparing the characteristics and communication behaviour of these two groups of participants, we attempt to sketch the processes of mobilization that led to the three demonstrations. In sum, the following three research questions can be stated:

Q3:   Who were the participation leaders and participation followers in the three large-scale demonstrations?

Q4: How did the leaders and followers differ in their use of the media?

Q5: Were the leaders and followers influenced by mass and interpersonal sources of information and messages to different extents?

Method and Data

We draw upon four surveys conducted within the time span of a year to address the research questions and hypotheses. To analyse the social and psychological factors leading to the participation by citizens in protests, we rely on a population survey conducted in March 2004. The survey was conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system was used. Trained interviewers conducted the interviews. The target population was all Hong Kong Cantonese-speaking residents aged between 18 and 70. Phone numbers were randomly selected from telephone directories. To include non-listed numbers, the last two digits of the selected numbers were removed and replaced by computer-generated random numbers. One respondent was selected from each household by using the "last birthday method." A total of 983 interviews were completed, yielding a response rate of 51.5%.[2]

To analyse the processes of formation of the three large-scale demonstrations, we draw upon three onsite surveys conducted at the three demonstrations respectively. Since there was no way of obtaining a comprehensive sampling frame for the onsite surveys, the best we could do was to design a sampling method that would approach a probability sampling method. More specifically, in the 2003 July 1 demonstration, data were collected when the demonstrators gathered at Victoria Park, the starting point of the march. The space where the demonstrators gathered was partitioned into nine areas (with a 3-by-3 grid system). Ten pairs of interviewers were sent to the areas, with two pairs in the central area. The interviewers were instructed to

move along a circular route, whereby they sampled one cluster of six respondents (aged 15 or above) every 10 minutes. The aim behind the use of this sampling design is to spread the selection of respondents over space and time and to minimize biases introduced by the arbitrary decisions of the interviewers. In order to catch people who might join the demonstrations en route, we deployed the interviewing teams along the marching route shortly after the marching began. They were instructed to interview the person who came closest to them one minute after an interview. All of the respondents filled out the questionnaire themselves. A total of 1,154 interviews were completed with a response rate of 87.2%. The sampling method for the two other demonstrations followed basically the same approach.[3] The number of interviews completed for the 2004 January 1 survey was 788 and a response rate of 83.8%, while there were 610 completed interviews for the 2004 July 1 survey and a response rate of 85.0%. The demographics of the participants are shown in Table 1 above.

Because of time concerns, in all three onsite surveys, a long questionnaire and a short questionnaire were prepared. Therefore, some questions were answered only by about half of the whole sample. For convenience of analysis, we examined only the long questionnaire sample in the 2003 July 1 survey (N = 597). But due to the small size of the total sample in the other two surveys, we analysed both the long and short questionnaire sample together. In any case, the valid number of answers involved in each analysis is given in the statistical tables below.

Factors of Protest Participation

The measurements discussed in this section apply to the general public survey. We will explicate the measurements for the onsite surveys when we come to them.

Method of Analysis and Operationalization

A multivariate analysis will be employed to examine the social and psychological factors underlying protests and other forms of political

participation. The analysis includes four demographic variables (age, sex, education, and monthly household income), interest in public affairs (as a control variable), and the six independent variables specified in H1 to H6. The operationalizations of the variables are as follows.

Internal and collective efficacy and system responsiveness. In the general public survey, the respondents were asked to express, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), whether they agreed with the following six statements: (1) I have enough ability to understand political matters, (2) I have the ability to talk about and participate in public affairs, (3) the collective action of Hong Kong people has a huge influence on public affairs, (4) the collective action of Hong Kong people can improve society, (5) the current political system in Hong Kong can effectively respond to public opinion, and (6) the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region can effectively respond to public opinion. Based on factor and reliability analyses, the first two items were averaged to form an index of internal efficacy (mean = 3.00, Cronbach's α = .74). The next two items were averaged for a measure of collective efficacy (mean = 3.55, Cronbach's α = .68), and the last two were averaged for a measure of system responsiveness or external efficacy (mean = 2.37, Cronbach's α = .73). System responsiveness, which refers to the people's belief in the responsiveness of the political system (Abramson, 1983), will be used in the analysis as a measure of the attitudes of citizens towards the Hong Kong government (that is, for the purpose of testing H5).

Social capital. The survey asked the respondents, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), whether they agreed with the following three statements: (1) I keep in frequent contact with social or political organizations, (2) I frequently have gatherings with my friends, and (3) I frequently have gatherings with my relatives. The first item is used as the indicator of the respondents' participatory capital (mean = 1.79). The latter two were averaged to derive a measure of the respondents' network capital (mean = 3.43, Cronbach's α = .59).

Evaluation of the Hong Kong economy. The respondents were

asked to express, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), whether they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: (1) the current economic situation of Hong Kong is quite good, and (2) the economic situation of Hong Kong in the coming five years will be quite good. Answers to the two items were averaged to form a measure of the people's evaluation of the Hong Kong economy (mean = 2.62, Cronbach's α = .73).

Interest in public affairs. The survey does not include an item directly measuring interest in politics. Hence, we use the respondents' self-reported concern, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = not at all concerned, 5 = very concerned), with the issue of national security legislation as a surrogate.

Political participation. Four questions tap into the respondents' past participation in voting, protests, and public rallies. Since the survey was conducted in March 2004, we could not measure the citizens' participation in the 2004 July 1 demonstration. We also did not measure the respondents' participation in the January 1 demonstration, because the expected percentage would not be large enough for a meaningful analysis. Instead, in the survey, respondents were asked if they had: (1) participated in the 2003 July 1 demonstration (yes = 23.3%), (2) participated in any demonstration commemorating the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 after the return of Hong Kong to China (yes = 12.2%), (3) participated in any political rally and protest other than the 2003 July 1 demonstration and June 4 commemoration demonstrations (yes = 13.6%), and (4) voted in the Legislative Council elections in 1998 or 2000 (yes = 59.6%). The four items will be used as separate variables in the analysis for the purpose of answering Q1 and Q2.

Projecting from the survey results onto government census data, almost 1.5 million Hong Kong citizens aged over 15 should have participated in the July 1 demonstration in 2003. Two factors should account for the discrepancy between the findings of the survey and the "real figure" of 500,000. First, respondents to surveys in Hong Kong are generally better educated and more interested in public affairs than non-respondents. These people are also more likely to be politically active. It is likely that the protesters — the more educated

— have been over-sampled. Second, voting studies around the world have long discovered that respondents have a tendency to over-report their voting behaviour for a number of reasons, most notably because of the social desirability of voting behaviour (see Krosnick, 1999). It is possible that some of the respondents in the present survey have also deliberately misreported their participation behaviour in order to present themselves as having participated in such a historic and successful demonstration. Even celebrities have confessed that they missed attending the demonstration on July 1, 2003. The over-sampling of protest participants and the over-reporting of political participation by the respondents would lead to inaccuracies in the descriptive statistics. These tendencies would also affect the reliability of the correlational analysis. But since we are mainly interested in the relationships between different variables in a multivariate analysis, the two methodological issues should not hugely damage the validity of our core findings.

Results and Discussion

Since the dependent variables in the analysis are all dichotomous, logistic regression is used in this part of the study. Table 3 summarizes the results of the analysis.

Table 1 shows that the 2003 July 1 demonstrators were disproportionately from the well educated and middle class. In the population survey examined here, significant bivariate relationships between the two demographic factors and participation in the July 1 demonstration can also be found. However, in the first column of Table 3, the relationships between participation and the two demographic factors disappear. In other words, the relationships between demographics and participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration were mediated by the social and psychological factors under examination.

Nevertheless, not all six hypotheses with regard to the impact of the social and psychological factors are supported. The relationship between internal efficacy and participation in the demonstration was

Table 3   Predictors of Participation in Demonstrations and Voting

	Participation in			
	2003 July 1 demonstration	June 4 demonstrations	Other rallies and protests	Voting
Sex	-.10	-.14	-.07	-.08
Age	-.07	.01	.00	.24***
Education	.12	.05	.06	.01
Monthly household income	.01	-.02	.01	.05
Internal efficacy	.18	.30*	.20	.33***
Collective efficacy	.44***	.00	.10	.19*
System responsiveness	-.85***	-.62***	-.47***	-.18
Participatory capital	.18	.29**	.38***	.19*
Network capital	.00	.16	.21	.23**
Evaluation of the economy	-.24	-.03	-.02	-.14
Interest in public affairs	.85***	.46***	.41***	.15
N	933	935	935	893
Model χ^2	227.28***	79.71***	75.90***	125.02***
-2 log likelihood	801.59	648.33	696.12	1081.53

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: The figures are standardized logistic regression coefficients.

insignificant. The participants in the July 1 demonstration also did not have more participatory or network capital than non-participants.

There was also no significant relationship between the citizens' evaluation of the Hong Kong economy and their participation in the July 1 demonstration. However, this does not mean that economic evaluation is not influential. It is possible that the effect of economic evaluation on participation is mediated by the responsiveness of the system. That is, negative evaluations of the Hong Kong economy

would lead citizens to regard the political system as irresponsive, which in turn will lead to participation in protest. This argument is supported by our data. If system responsiveness is removed from the regression model, evaluation of the Hong Kong economy would have a strong and highly significant relationship with participation in the July 1 demonstration ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$).

As shown in Table 3, only collective efficacy, system responsiveness, and interest in public affairs have a strong and significant relationship with participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration. However, since we have a cross-sectional survey, we have to be careful about interpreting the causal direction involved in the relationships. While it is reasonable to expect that negative attitudes towards the political system and political interest will lead to participatory behaviour, the relationship between collective efficacy and participation may be more complicated. The July 1 demonstration was arguably a rare case of demonstration having an immediate and conspicuous political impact. Some commentators and local academics have regarded the July 1 demonstration of 2003 as an exercise in, and a victory for, "people power" (cf. Yip, 2003; Chan, 2005). It is therefore highly plausible that participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration has led to higher levels of collective efficacy, instead of collective efficacy leading to participation in the first place.

If we treat collective efficacy as an effect rather than a cause of participation in the July 1 demonstration, then what the first column of Table 3 tells us is that participation in the July 1 demonstration was not driven by the social and psychological "resources" of the participants. Rather, it was almost solely driven by political dissatisfaction.

This interpretation would produce a sharp contrast between participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration and voting participation. As the last column of Table 3 shows, voting in the Legislative Council elections is related to all of the four social and psychological resources being examined. People with higher levels of internal efficacy, higher levels of collective efficacy, more participatory capital, and more network capital were more likely to have voted. At the same

time, political satisfaction and economic satisfaction are not related significantly to voting.

Table 3 also shows that there are similarities and differences between the predictors of different kinds of demonstrations and rallies. Similar to participation in the 2003 July 1 demonstration, participation in the June 4 commemoration demonstrations and in "other rallies and protests" is driven by interest in public affairs and dissatisfaction towards the political system. However, participatory capital also plays an important role in participation in the June 4 commemorations and other rallies and protests. This can be understood in terms of the size and prominence of the demonstrations involved. The July 1 demonstration was a well-publicized demonstration that attracted an unprecedented amount of participation. Before the demonstration, relevant information and persuasive messages pervaded the whole society. Whether people belonged to and kept close contact with social and political groups thus made no difference. The other rallies and protests, in contrast, were smaller in scale and relevant information and persuasive messages might have been less widely available. People who kept close contact with social and political groups, therefore, would be in an "advantageous" position to receive the relevant information and messages.

In other words, there is indeed a major difference between the large-scale demonstrations and other rallies and protests in Hong Kong. In earlier analyses, because of the seeming ineffectiveness of social and political groups, we argued that both the 2003 and 2004 July 1 demonstrations were mainly the results of "self-mobilization" on the part of the citizens (Chan and Chung, 2004; Chan et al., 2004; Chan 2005). In contrast, Table 3 shows that social and political groups are likely to play a more important role in other rallies and protests in Hong Kong.

Leaders and Followers in the Mobilization of Protests

Leaders and Followers in the Three Demonstrations

We now turn to analysing the processes of formation of the three

large-scale demonstrations. As stated in Q3 to Q5, we will attempt to characterize the processes of formation by analysing the characteristics and communication behaviour of "leaders" and "followers" in the demonstrations. In our onsite surveys, we asked those participants who had participated with others whether they or their companions were the ones who had proposed the idea of participation. We also allowed for the possibility that people might simply have simultaneously arrived at the idea of participating in the protests.

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents' answers to this question. In all three demonstrations, a significant proportion of the participants reported that they and their companions came up with the idea of participation at the same time. Apart from these "co-participants," we found more self-reported "leaders" than self-reported "followers" in all three demonstrations. This imbalance between the number of leaders and followers can be explained by two major factors. First, although all three onsite surveys had a very high response rate, the non-response rate for each of the surveys was still 10% to 15%. It is very probable that these non-respondents were mainly "followers" rather than "leaders" in the demonstrations. Second, the imbalance can also result from the perceptive bias of individuals. When person A suggests to person B that they participate in a demonstration, and person B agrees to do so, person A may perceive himself/herself as the one who made the proposal first, and may thus report himself/herself as a "leader." But person B may already have had the idea of participation in mind before person A made the suggestion, and thus may report himself/herself as having come up with the idea at the same time as person A. In any case, the figures in Table 4 mean that, in all three demonstrations, not many people acknowledged that they were merely following the suggestions of other people with regard to participation.

Table 5 illustrates another important point about the relationship between leaders and followers. In all three demonstrations, leaders held more negative attitudes towards the Chief Executive than the followers (but the difference is not significant in the case of the 2004 July 1 demonstration). They were also more likely to have decided to participate in the demonstration early on. Nevertheless, it is noticeable

Table 4   Types of Participants in the Three Demonstrations (%)

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Leaders	32.5	45.5	29.9
Co-participants	48.6	39.7	55.6
Followers	18.9	14.9	14.5
(N)	(523)	(605)	(498)
		$\chi^2 = 40.35$***	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: The χ^2 value was derived by cross-tabulating the variable "demonstration" with the variable concerned.

Table 5   Political Attitudes and Time of Decision of Three Types of Participants in the Three Demonstrations

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Rating of Tung			
Leaders	10.0	12.3	25.7
Co-participants	14.5	14.4	26.3
Followers	16.2	21.2	29.7
(N)	(472)	(590)	(498)
F-value	4.99**	8.70***	1.15
% of early deciders			
Leaders	43.0	60.2	49.2
Co-participants	30.7	45.7	43.4
Followers	10.3	12.9	22.4
(N)	(513)	(223)	(214)
χ^2	61.66***	46.26***	23.01*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Notes: Early deciders refer to people who decided to participate in the demonstration three weeks or one month before the demonstration.
The F-values were derived from one-way ANOVA tests.
The χ^2 values were derived by cross-tabulating the type of participant variable with the original time of decision variable separately for each demonstration.

that the followers in the three demonstrations also held very negative attitudes towards the Chief Executive. In other words, although some people might have been persuaded by others to participate in the demonstrations, they could be successfully persuaded largely because they were also holding similarly negative attitudes towards the government and its leaders. People would not be mobilized to act unless they were already holding a specific type of attitudes that predisposes them to act.

Table 6 shows the demographic characteristics of the different types of participants. In all three demonstrations, the leaders were generally older and more likely to be males than followers. However, the different types of participants did not differ significantly in terms of their self-designated social class and education, although the leaders in the 2003 July 1 demonstration did seem to be better educated than the followers.

Despite the general conception that more educated people are more likely to be politically active and thus more likely to be leaders in political participation, the findings of Table 6 are actually understandable. Most people interact with people of a similar socio-economic status. Hence "leaders" and "followers" are likely to exist in each social stratum. This, in fact, was also the conclusion reached by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) in their original study. Nevertheless, in the three demonstrations, influences within given social networks were more likely to have flowed from older people to younger people and from men to women.

Communication Behaviour and the Perceived Influence of Leaders and Followers

As stated in Q4 and Q5, in the present study, we are most interested in the communication behaviour of the different types of participants. In the conventional two-step flow model, opinion leaders are those who receive messages from the mass media and transmit them to their followers. Opinion leaders, therefore, should be those who are more exposed to the mass media (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Katz, 1957). Yet opinion leaders and followers may not differ from each other in terms of their engagement in interpersonal communication.

Table 6   Demographic Characteristics of Three Types of
Participants in the Three Demonstrations (%)

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
% of males			
Leaders	64.5	72.8	73.6
Co-participants	56.4	59.3	58.2
Followers	49.0	42.7	55.6
(N)	(505)	(597)	(495)
χ^2	6.28*	28.30***	11.51**
% of aged 29 or below			
Leaders	42.5	20.5	33.8
Co-participants	45.6	25.4	41.0
Followers	60.0	41.1	49.2
(N)	(512)	(603)	(472)
Linear-by-Linear association	5.18*	14.58***	7.31**
% with university education			
Leaders	61.9	58.5	55.9
Co-participants	54.1	55.0	63.8
Followers	47.4	59.1	55.1
(N)	(503)	(598)	(474)
χ^2	5.38	.76	3.34
% of middle class			
Leaders	69.9	72.5	68.8
Co-participants	64.4	70.9	67.5
Followers	54.4	77.2	70.3
(N)	(479)	(560)	(423)
χ^2	5.93	1.19	.20

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: The χ^2 values were derived by cross-tabulating the type of participant
variable with the demographic variables separately for each
demonstration.

We employed a number of measures in the three onsite surveys to examine the respondents' social connections and use of the media. With regard to the 2003 July 1 and 2004 January 1 demonstrations, we asked the respondents, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), whether they agreed with the statement "I frequently have gatherings with my friends and relatives." In addition, in all three surveys, we asked the respondents if they belonged to any social or political groups. If the reply was yes, they were asked, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = very frequently), whether they participated in the activities of the groups frequently. People who scored 4 or 5 in the group activity variable were defined as "active group members."

Table 7 shows the results related to these two variables. As expected, there was no significant difference between leaders and followers in the extent of their social connections and group participation. For both the 2003 July 1 and the 2004 January 1 demonstrations, all three types of participants were equally likely to state that they did have frequent gatherings with friends. And in all three demonstrations, we found that only a small percentage of the respondents were active group members.

We then turned to examining the respondents' use of the media. In all three onsite surveys, we asked the respondents to report their habits of reading the newspaper and watching television news (in terms of days per week). We also asked the respondents if they had online access (with the scale ranging from 0 = not online to 3 = online for more than two hours per day). For the 2003 July 1 and 2004 January 1 demonstrations, if the respondents were online, we further asked them to indicate, with a five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = very frequently), the degree to which they used the Internet for a number of purposes. Three purposes are related to politics and public affairs: (1) sharing information about public affairs, (2) sharing opinions about public affairs, and (3) sharing information about the demonstration. The three items were averaged to form an index on "Internet use for public affairs" (Cronbach's α = .89).

As Table 8 shows, there are indeed some differences between leaders and followers in their use of the media. In the January

Table 7   Social Connection and Group Membership of Three
Types of Participants in the Three Demonstrations

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Connection with friends			
Leaders	4.11	3.61	—
Co-participants	4.05	3.75	—
Followers	3.91	3.72	—
(N)	(501)	(590)	—
F-value	2.28	1.02	—
% of active group members			
Leaders	7.1	11.6	13.4
Co-participants	7.9	13.3	9.0
Followers	8.1	13.3	8.3
(N)	(523)	(605)	(498)
χ^2	.12	.39	2.37

Notes: The F-values were derived from one-way ANOVA tests conducted
separately for each demonstration.
The χ^2 values were derived by cross-tabulating the type of participant
variable with the group membership variable separately for each
demonstration.

1 demonstration, leaders and co-participants read newspapers
and watched television news more frequently. In the 2004 July 1
demonstration, the leaders and co-participants also reported more
frequent newspaper reading. In the other cases, the descriptive
statistics still show that leaders paid more attention to the news media
than followers did, although the differences are not statistically
significant. These findings support the conventional wisdom that
opinion leaders in a society are those people who pay more attention
to the mass media.

However, there was no significant difference between the three
types of participants with regard to their online access. Certainly,
since people can use the Internet for many different purposes, there

Table 8　Media Use of Three Types of Participants in the Three
Demonstrations

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Watching TV news			
Leaders	6.17	6.55	6.21
Co-participants	6.17	6.58	6.29
Followers	5.74	5.85	6.07
(N)	(511)	(236)	(497)
F-value	2.51	3.88*	.64
Reading newspaper			
Leaders	5.88	6.11	6.19
Co-participants	5.79	6.02	6.07
Followers	5.32	4.69	5.25
(N)	(511)	(245)	(496)
F-value	2.80	7.30**	7.10**
% online			
Leaders	90.8	82.5	80.0
Co-participants	85.2	73.5	86.0
Followers	87.8	84.8	81.8
(N)	(503)	(238)	(322)
χ^2	3.27	7.50	6.52
Internet use for public affairs			
Leaders	3.27	3.01	—
Co-participants	2.99	2.97	—
Followers	2.75	2.75	—
(N)	(421)	(177)	—
F-value	5.52**	.56	—

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Notes:　The F-values were derived from one-way ANOVA tests conducted
separately for each demonstration.
The χ^2 values were derived by cross-tabulating the type of participant
variable with the Internet use for public affairs variable separately for
each demonstration.

is no reason to expect opinion leaders on public affairs to have more online access. Rather, what we expect is that these opinion leaders will tend to make more use of the Internet for political purposes than the other types of participants. Table 8 supports this latter expectation. In the 2003 July 1 demonstration, leaders reported using the Internet for public affairs more frequently. The same pattern exists in the 2004 January 1 demonstration survey, although the differences between the three types of participants are not statistically significant.

Finally, we are interested in the extent to which the participants recognized the influences from different sources on their decision to participate in the demonstration. In all three onsite surveys, the respondents were asked to indicate, by means of a five-point Likert scale (1 = very unimportant, 5 = very important), whether the calls to action issued from or through different sources were important in their decision to participate in the demonstration. For presentational purposes, we constructed three indices for analysis: (1) calls from the mass media, which is an index derived from averaging the importance of calls from newspaper news, television news, radio news, and radio talk shows (Cronbach's α = .94), (2) calls from interpersonal sources, which is an index derived from averaging the importance of calls from family members and "friends, colleagues, and schoolmates" (Cronbach's α = .78), and (3) calls from public figures, which is an index derived from averaging the importance of calls from "individual public figures," "political parties," and "the groups to which one belongs" (Cronbach's α = .88).

We are concerned with whether leaders and followers would rate the influence of calls from different sources differently. Consistent with the two-step flow model, we would expect leaders to rate the influence of calls from the mass media as more important to them, while calls from interpersonal sources of communication should be more important to the followers. At the same time, based on our discussion of the weakness of social and political groups in Hong Kong, we would expect people to rate calls from public figures as, relatively speaking, the least important among the three.

Table 9 shows the results of the analysis, which largely support such expectations. In all three demonstrations, leaders were more

Table 9   Perceived Influence of Calls for Three Types of
Participants in the Three Demonstrations

	2003 July 1 demonstration	2004 January 1 demonstration	2004 July 1 demonstration
Leaders			
From the mass media	3.92_a	3.51_a	2.85_a
From interpersonal sources	3.73_a	3.33_a	2.79_b
From public figures	3.44_a	3.15_a	2.55_{ab}
(N)	(515)	(582)	(495)
Co-participants			
From the mass media	3.98_a	3.57_a	2.72_a
From interpersonal sources	3.91_b	3.63_b	2.68_b
From public figures	3.35_{ab}	3.14_{ab}	2.36_{ab}
(N)	(510)	(580)	(490)
Followers			
From the mass media	3.86_a	3.68_a	3.18_a
From interpersonal sources	3.83_b	3.99_a	3.44_b
From public figures	3.33_{ab}	3.20_a	2.77_{ab}
(N)	(499)	(564)	(490)

Notes: The figures are mean scores.
Figures sharing the same subscript differed from each other significantly
(at .05 significance level) in paired-sample t-tests.

likely to rate the influence of calls from the mass media as the most
important, even though the levels of importance of calls from the
mass media and calls from interpersonal sources differed significantly
only in two of the three surveys. Followers in the 2004 January 1
demonstration, on the contrary, were significantly more likely to rate
calls from interpersonal sources as the most important. For the co-
participants in all three demonstrations, calls from the mass media
and interpersonal sources were similarly important. Last, but not
least, in all three demonstrations and for all types of participants, calls
from public figures were rated as significantly less important than
calls from the mass media or interpersonal sources.

Discussion

In sum, our analyses have shown that the participants in the 2003 July 1 demonstration were driven overwhelmingly by their negative opinions of the Hong Kong government and political system. Social and psychological resources have only very limited power to explain their participation. Instead of the resource model, a deprivation or grievance approach to protest (Dalton, 1996) seems to be more suitable for characterizing the 2003 July 1 demonstration.

From both the population survey and the onsite surveys, we see that social and political organizations had limited power to mobilize people to participate in the three large-scale demonstrations. The population survey showed that social and political group membership did not explain the participation of individuals in the 2003 July 1 demonstration, while the onsite surveys showed that participants in the three large-scale demonstrations rated the influence of calls from public figures and political groups as less important than the calls from the mass media and interpersonal sources.

This argument about the lack of power on the part of social and political groups, however, has to be qualified in a number of ways. First, the three demonstrations were, after all, organized by social and political groups in Hong Kong. Even though the groups might not have the power to directly mobilize citizens to act, they did precipitate the demonstrations by providing a rallying point in the first place. Second, in Hong Kong, except for a few media outlets, most news organizations mainly played the role of disseminators of information rather than proactive mobilizers in the build-up to the demonstrations. The media transmitted information and messages from the social and political groups to the general public. Hence, what the demonstrators recognized as calls from the mass media might indeed have been calls from social and political groups. Last, but not least, although the three large-scale demonstrations constituted cases in which citizens "self-mobilized" to participate (Chan and Chung, 2004; Chan et al., 2004), mobilization by social and political groups may remain important in other rallies and protests of a smaller scale, as the participatory capital

of people has been shown to relate to their participation in June 4 commemoration demonstrations and "other rallies and protests."

We have mixed evidence from the population survey and the onsite surveys regarding the importance of social networks. On the one hand, from the population survey, we saw that network capital was not an important factor to predict the participation of citizens in demonstrations. From the onsite surveys, on the other hand, we noted that some of the participants were following suggestions from their acquaintances to participate in the demonstration. These people were also more likely to regard interpersonal sources of influence as the most important in their decision to participate, thus pointing to the role of network capital in the decision.

It should be noted that the population survey mainly measured the size and density of people's networks. Therefore, what the population survey showed is that demonstration participation was not generated by people locating within a larger and denser social network. Nevertheless, while size and density are not important, social networks can facilitate the participation of people in demonstrations through other mechanisms. Judging by the results of the onsite surveys, what matters to demonstrators seems to be the existence of common opinions and attitudes within a social network. In the onsite surveys, we found only a small proportion of "opinion followers" in each demonstration. Instead, the majority of participants reported that they and their friends and family members simultaneously came up with the idea of participating in the demonstrations. In other words, in the three large-scale demonstrations, social networks served as the conduit through which people with similar opinions and attitudes came together to participate in the demonstrations. This function of social networks is not dependent upon the size and density of a network. Neither was the social network a channel through which the opinions and attitudes of people were altered. In this sense, social networks and interpersonal communications played a more important role in facilitating the formation of the demonstrations rather than in generating participation from a larger number of citizens.

Our onsite surveys show that the processes of mobilization that led to the three demonstrations involved a mix of mass and

interpersonal communications. The organizers of the demonstrations and other leaders of social and political groups provided information and messages of mobilization to the mass media. A group of "opinion leaders" among the citizenry derived the information and messages from the media. They then further transmitted the information and messages to the followers. The step-by-step process was most apparent in the 2004 January 1 demonstration, in which leaders were found to pay significantly more attention than followers to the news media. They were also more likely to regard the mass media as the most important source of influence to them. In the same demonstration, the followers were more likely to regard interpersonal influence as the most important.

Admittedly, the pattern of findings is less clear-cut in the other two demonstrations. In the 2003 July 1 demonstration, for instance, the difference between the media use habits of leaders and followers was not significant, although leaders did seem to pay more attention to newspaper and television news. Leaders acknowledged the influence of the mass media as more important than the influence of interpersonal sources. Followers, on the other hand, rated the influence of the mass media and interpersonal sources as similarly important.

What these findings suggest is that the role of the mass media in the build-up to social protests will differ according to the scale of the protests and the social atmosphere prevailing at the time. In small-scale demonstrations, social and political groups are likely to rely on their limited resources to mobilize their members to participate. They may also transmit information and messages via the mass media, but the information and messages may not be prominent. The mass media are likely to play a limited role in the formation of these demonstrations. In larger-scale demonstrations, in which a larger number of ordinary citizens are expected to participate, the mass media will play a greater role in transmitting relevant information and messages. However, the first ones in a society to receive these mass mediated messages will be the "opinion leaders." Therefore, in these demonstrations, the mass media play a role in informing the citizens, but their main impact is upon the opinion leaders. Lastly, in cases in which an upcoming protest and the issues it addresses are overwhelmingly prominent in

the public arena, mass mediated messages may pervade all corners of a society, so that people who normally pay little attention to the mass media will still receive the relevant messages. In these cases, the mass media influence not only the opinion leaders, but the citizenry at large.

As pointed out at the beginning of this paper, protests and demonstrations can best be understood as outcomes of a confluence of macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors and processes. The present study mainly illustrates the micro-level factors that contributed to the three large-scale demonstrations in Hong Kong. Given the macro-level conditions of Hong Kong society and politics in the past few years, Hong Kong citizens had many grievances, which overwhelmingly became the basis for the participation of individuals in these protests. Through mass and interpersonal communications, angry citizens were mobilized or mobilized each other to participate in the protests. Nevertheless, the mobilization did not seem to reach beyond the group of citizens who were holding highly negative opinions of the government.

This last statement is a point that needs to be recognized by academics as well as activists and politicians. After the three large-scale demonstrations, some academics and politicians seemed to have overestimated the effects of the demonstrations on society. From our study, we see that what the demonstrations mainly did was to drive people with certain attitudes to act. The demonstrations might not have had an impact on anyone who did not share such attitudes in the first place. The three demonstrations, therefore, might have led to changes among supporters of democracy or people who disliked the Hong Kong government. For instance, it is likely that the experience of the demonstrations will cause such people to become more active about participating in protests in the future. But the three demonstrations may do little to "convert" non-supporters of democracy or pro-government citizens.

Certainly, the above discussion is confined to the level of the individual. It should also be recognized that these huge demonstrations might have had a significant impact at the organizational and societal levels (Chan, 2005). For example, the 2003 July 1 demonstration, as

an integral part of Hong Kong's collective memory, may become a source of inspiration for pro-democracy groups and citizens in their future struggles over rights and in other efforts to assert the autonomy of civil society. At the same time, the July 1 demonstration prompted the Beijing authorities to take a policy turn, moving from allowing Hong Kong to run its own affairs to heavy engagement (as evident in the debate on democratic reform in Hong Kong in early 2004), thereby reducing Hong Kong's autonomy. The resulting tension between the nation-state of China and the civil society of Hong Kong is expected to play a critical role in shaping the future development of this Special Administrative Region. How these tensions and corresponding societal changes will in turn affect the participation of people in protests will remain important questions for us to ponder in the years to come.

Notes

1. In demonstrations around the world, the exact number of participants is often a topic of politically discursive struggles (see Herbst, 1993). The three demonstrations mentioned here are no exceptions. Most research teams have agreed that 500,000 citizens did indeed participate in the first July 1 demonstration. Research carried out by the Public Opinion Programme at Hong Kong University shows that only about 60,000 to 70,000 people participated in the January 1 demonstration. Yet, in this paper, we stick to the figure of 100,000, since the figure remains largely unchallenged in public discourse. Regarding the second July 1 demonstration, the organizers originally claimed that 530,000 people participated. However, the organizers' method of calculation was soon proven to be wrong. Instead, a number of research teams from local universities all came up with figures of around 200,000, which was also the figure given by the police force. We therefore use this figure in this paper.

2. The average age of the respondents was 38.9 years. Of the respondents, 21% held a university degree, 50.1% were males, and 57.1% reported monthly household incomes higher than

HK$20,000. In 2001, the average age of the Hong Kong population between 18 and 70 was 39.8, and 48.6% were male. Larger discrepancies existed in education and income. Only 12.7% of the Hong Kong population had a university education and 47.7% of households had a monthly income higher than HK$20,000. However, weighting was not applied since the discrepancies are not huge and the analysis using the population survey adopts multivariate methods.

3. The methods are not detailed here for reasons of space. Information can be obtained from the authors.

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Mobilization and Protest Participation in Post-handover Hong Kong

A Study of Three Large-scale Demonstrations

Abstract

Post-handover Hong Kong has been marked by the occurrence of huge demonstrations, notably on July 1, 2003, January 1, 2004, and July 1, 2004. Drawing on a general public survey and onsite surveys of the afore-mentioned demonstrations, this paper examines the social and psychological factors behind the participation of individuals in demonstrations. It also analyses the processes of mass and interpersonal communication that led to the formation of the large-scale demonstrations.

Both the population survey and the onsite surveys demonstrate that the power of social and political organizations to mobilize people to participate in the three demonstrations was limited, although they did provide a rallying point for the public. The participants in the 2003 July 1 demonstration were found to have been driven overwhelmingly by their negative opinions of the Hong Kong government and political system. The results support the deprivation approach to protests rather than the resource model.

The evidence regarding the importance of social networks is mixed. On the one hand, the population survey shows that network capital is not a significant factor in predicting the participation of citizens in demonstrations. On the other hand, the onsite surveys indicate that many participants joined the demonstrations with, and in some cases at the suggestion of, their acquaintances. Taken together, these seemingly conflicting findings imply that social networks are embedded in the mobilization process, although they are not exclusive to mobilization. Given that both the "opinion leaders" and "opinion followers" among the demonstrators held negative opinions

of the Hong Kong government, we can conclude that these social networks were more of a conduit through which people with similar opinions came together to participate in the demonstrations than a channel through which their opinions were altered. In other words, social networks served as facilitators, instead of generators, of the formation of demonstrations.

The onsite surveys show that the processes of mobilization involved a mix of mass and interpersonal communications. The organizers of the demonstrations and other leaders of social and political groups provided messages of mobilization to the mass media which then served as an important source of information for the group of "opinion leaders," who in turn transmitted the information to the "opinion followers." This stepwise process was most apparent in the 2004 January 1 demonstration, in which opinion leaders were found to pay significantly more attention to the news media and were more likely regard the mass media as the most important source of influence. The followers rated interpersonal influence as the most important. However, this pattern of findings is less clear-cut in the other two demonstrations. Taken as a whole, the findings suggest that the role of the mass media in the build-up to social protests will differ according to the scale of the protests and the social atmosphere prevailing at the time. For smaller protests, organizational mobilization tends to play a more important role, while the mass media have limited influence. In contrast, in larger protests and controversies, the mass media's role in the transmission of information and messages of mobilization is larger, especially among the "opinion leaders" in society.

香港回歸後的社會動員與抗議參與
三宗大型示威的研究

陳韜文　　李立峰

（中文摘要）

　　大型示威在回歸後的香港此起彼伏地發生，其中最惹人注目的要數發生在二〇〇三年七月一日、二〇〇四年一月一日和同年七月一日的三次。本文通過一項全港性問卷調查及幾項在上述大型集會現場進行的問卷調查，檢視個人參與抗議行動背後的社會及心理因素，並分析促成該些大型集會的大眾及人際傳播過程。

　　上述全港性問卷調查及現場問卷調查均顯示，社會及政治組織雖然起著登高一呼的號召作用，但它們實質動員公眾參與該三次示威的能力有限。調查發現，二〇〇三年七一遊行的參與者，絕大多數是由他們自己對香港政府及政治制度的負面看法所驅使，此結果顯示「剝奪理論」（deprivation theory）比「資源模型」（resource model）更能解釋這些大型抗議行動。

　　在社會網絡對示威動員是否重要的問題，調查得到較參差的證據。全港性問卷調查顯示，網絡資本並非公民參與抗議行動背後的顯著因素。但現場問卷調查卻指出，很多參與者跟相識的人一起參加集會，一些參與者更是在相識的人提議下參加的。綜合來看，這些看似矛盾的發現意味示威動員大體上都經過社會網絡進行，雖然網絡的存在不會必然導致動員的結果。基於示威者中的「意見領袖」和「意見追隨者」均對香港政府持負面意見，我們可以推論，這些社會網絡似一條將擁有相近意見的人集合以參與示威的導管，多於似一條將人們的意見改變的管道。換言之，社會網絡在抗議行動的形成過程中，主要起促進而非生成的作用。

　　現場問卷調查顯示，動員過程涉及大眾及人際傳播的交集互動。示威組織者和其他社會及政治團體領袖向大眾傳媒提供動員信息，而大眾傳媒則是市民之間「意見領袖」的重要消息來源，「意見領袖」繼而再將消息傳遞給「意見追隨者」。這個逐級傳播的過程在二○○四年一月一日的示威中最是明顯。研究發現，該次示威中的「意見領袖」較留意新聞媒介，並更傾向視大眾傳媒為最重要的感召之源，而「意見追隨者」則較重視人際間的影響。但這模式在另外兩次示威則沒有那樣明確。綜合而言，這方面的研究結果意味著，大眾傳媒在社會抗議行動的醞釀過程中扮演那一種角色，是取決於抗議的規模和當時的社會氣氛。在規模較小的抗議行動中，組織性動員往往扮演更重要的角色，大眾傳媒的影響力有限；相反，在較大型的抗議和爭論中，媒介在傳遞消息及動員信息方面，則會扮演較為重大的角色 — 對社會的意見領袖而言，情況更是如此。

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Director: Yeung Yue-man, PhD(*Chic.*),
            Research Professor

Associate Director: Sung Yun-wing, PhD(*Minn.*),
            Professor, Department of Economics