
## School of Social and Political Sciences

# Why Do Individuals Participate in Protest Movements under Authoritarian Regimes?

**—A Comparative Study on the Determinants of Protest Participation in Hong Kong and China**

**09/2015**

**2127643**

**Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of**

**M.Sc. in Political Communication**

# Abstract

This essay examines the determinants of protest participation in Hong Kong and China. Previous studies often focus on the predictors of engagement in democracies but neglect their effects in authoritarian regimes. This research finds that Hong Kong and China have different determinants of protest participation. Protesters in Hong Kong were mainly driven by Internet use, political grievance and political opportunity, while protest participants in China are motivated by economic grievance and political opportunity. An interesting finding is that the Internet has no impact on protest engagement in China, though it has a positive effect in Hong Kong. This finding challenges previous studies of the Internet and politics, arguing that the Internet plays a limited role in protest participation in China.



**Keywords**: protest participation, socioeconomic status, Internet use, political and economic grievances, political opportunity


Word count: 14,365

# Content

Introduction....4
Literature Review....10
The Socioeconomic Status Model....10
Internet Use and Protest Participation....13
Grievance-Based Theory....20
Political Opportunity Theory....24
Data and Method....27
Dependent Variable....28
Independent Variables....28
Descriptive Statistics....30
Results....33
Discussion and Conclusion....43
Bibliography....47

## Introduction

This essay aims to explore the determinants of protest participation in Hong Kong and China. Scholars of political science have devoted a great deal of attention to explore why individuals participate in protest movements since the 1960s (e.g. Eisinger 1973; Gurr 1970; Klandermans 1984; McCarthy & Zald 1977; Olson 1965; Tilly 1979, 2004, 2010). Many questions about the causes of participation in authoritarian regimes, however, remain to be addressed. This essay regards protest activities "as a sustained series of interactions between national power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation" (Tilly1979:12). Academically, it has been linked with the assumption that protests are essential in reshaping the relationship between the state and civil society (Jenkins & Klandermans et al. 2005:7; Van Aelst & Walgrave 2001:462).

Previous studies have found that protest movements play a vital role in enhancing democratisation in both democracies and non-democracies. In democratic contexts, protest movements are associated with the demonstration of democracy, and have become crucial channels for public voices (Norris et al. 2005:203). In the theory of liberal democracy, protests are considered as "direct action", which is "an attempt to stop a policy or practice" (Martin 1994:95). Citizens tend to choose this direct action when normal channels, such as voting and lobbying, cannot work efficiently (Martin 1994:98). From the perspective of participatory democracy, protests are expected to "build participatory democratic mechanisms for economic, social, and political justice" (Voss & Williams 2012:353). Thus, protest movements have the ability to fuel enthusiasm for democratic reforms, which expends and deepens democracy via participatory practices (Voss & Williams 2012:354).

Protest movements fighting for democracy and human rights in authoritarian regimes, by contrast, are creating "people power" to undermine the legitimacy in repressive autocracies (Norris 2011:142). It is often suggested that protest movements in authoritarian regimes considerably impact on the structure of authorities, thereby enabling political change (Vladisavljević 2014). Furthermore, Lorentzen (2013) challenges the conventional

assumption in comparative politics that the rise of protest will necessarily lead to the collapse of authoritarian regimes. He argues that protest movements serve as an information gathering tool, through which individuals' discontents are mitigated and the authorities can enforce social stability (Lorentzen 2013:128). Although protests do not necessarily undermine authoritarian regimes, they can indeed monitor government performance and impede corruption (Lorentzen 2013:129). Therefore, protest participation is a key indicator that promotes democratisation and civil society in both democracies and non-democracies. Thus, research into protest politics helps us to better understand democratic change in authoritarian regimes.

Recently, both Hong Kong and China have been experiencing an increase in protest activities (e.g. the Occupy Central Movement in Hong Kong and Wukan incident in China). It is estimated that Hong Kong has witnessed large-scale protests since 2003, and around half a million citizens have marched on the street against local authorities each year (Chan & Lee 2007). The Occupy Central Movement, for instance, occupied the city centre for three months, leading to many conflicts between protesters and the authorities. Similarity, China is also experiencing the rise and routinisation of protest movements (Chen 2012). Around 871 collective actions (involving at least one hundred participants) have been recorded by the government since 2000, and this number has shown a dramatic increase in recent years (Li & Tian 2014). Thousands of Wukan (a small village in southeastern China) villagers protested against land seizure in 2011, and forced the authorities to investigate corrupt cadres. The ongoing and sweeping protests in Hong Kong and China, however, have yet to be explored in detail. It is widely accepted that authoritarian regimes tend to repress protests, as these movements may threat political stability (Tilly 2010; Vladisavljević 2014). Thus, why has protest activity repeatedly happened in authoritarian regimes, and, indeed, shown a rising trend? Do Hong Kong and China have the same determinants of protest participation? This essay is an attempt to tackle these problems.

A growing body of literature has been conducted to examine why individuals participate in protests in democracies, and evidence regarding this topic varies. There have been four

theoretical perspectives that have analysed the rise of protest movements. Firstly, early studies drew considerable attention to the socioeconomic status (SES) model to examine the determinants of protest involvement (Acock & Scott 1980; Paulsen 1991; Verba and Nie 1972). This approach assumes that individuals with a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to take part in protest movements (Brady et al. 1995; Verba and Nie 1972). Jennings (1987), for instance, suggests that protest involvement increases with age, but has a declining trend among old people. Besides, Sherkat and Blocker (1994) have found that individuals with higher education are more easily to engage in protest movements.

With the proliferation of the Internet, many studies have highlighted its role in protest mobilisation (Bennett & Segerberg 2012; Boulianne 2009; Enjolras et al. 2013; Farrell 2012; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013). Some studies confirm that the Internet has a positive effect on protest involvement (Howard & Hussain 2013; Micó and Casero-Ripollés 2014; Norris 2012; Valenzuela 2013). Tang and Huhe (2014) argue that Internet users tend to lower their political support by alternative framing. Valenzuela (2013) finds that new media users are 11 times more likely to take part in movements than non-users. Others disagree, though, arguing that the Internet cannot facilitate protest movements (Damm 2007; Morozov 2011; Pearce and Kendzior 2012). King et al. (2013) find that Chinese authorities allow some online criticism, but restrict the diffusion of information that may lead to collective actions. Norris (2012) also argues that the effect of the Internet should not be exaggerated, as other factors can affect protest participation too.

Third, much empirical work has focused on grievances, suggesting that individuals participate in protest activity because they feel a sense of relative deprivation (Boix 2008; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Lowrance 2006). For example, Regan and Norton (2005) reveal that individuals experiencing higher economic inequality are more likely to take part in protests. Campante and Chor (2012) also find that bad economic performance enhances the involvement of protests. In addition, Hurst and O'Brien (2002) have found that protesters in China engage in activities as they feel a sense of economic deprivation, and they express deep grievances towards marketisation.

Finally, some observers concentrate on "dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success and failure" (Tarrow, 1994: 85). This approach proposes that political systems, social elites, political interest and access are important factors that contribute to protest participation (Kitschelt 1986; Meyer & Minkoff 2004; Tarrow 1996). McAdam (1982) asserts that changes of policy and political environment lower the cost of collective action, thereby enhancing protest participation. Brockett (1991) argues that the state's capacity for repression is an important factor in explaining protest movements. Further, Schock (1999) compares the effect of political opportunity in two non-democracies, arguing that protest engagement can be explained by the increase of political access.

Research on the causes of protest participation, however, still require further research. First and paramount, previous studies often focused on protest movements in democratic countries (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Gerbaudo 2012; Klandermans 1984; McAdam et al. 2004; Meyer 2004). Few studies have examined the determinants of protest emergence in authoritarian regimes. Findings from the research in Western democracies do not necessarily fit non-democratic contexts. We still know little about why individuals take part in protest in non-democracies. For example, Bean (1991) employs a causal model to explain why people engage in protest. However, we do not know whether these factors, such as orthodox political participation and orientation towards politics, have the same effect in China, because Chinese people often have few opportunities to participate in conventional politics. Furthermore, Blocker (1994) finds that individuals with higher education are more likely to engage in protests. In contrast, the levels of education are still very low in China, so it cannot be sure whether education has a positive effect. Indeed, some scholars, have examined protest participation in non-democracies (e.g. Campante and Chor 2012; Howard & Hussain 2013), but these studies do not tell us whether the factors have the same effect in different non-democracies. Howard and Hussain (2013) argue that new media played an important role in facilitating the Arab Spring. Yet it is unclear whether the Internet can promote protest engagement in China, as Internet penetration in China is less than 50%, and Chinese netizens may focus on different features. Thus, the applicability of Western theories in authoritarian

regimes needs further study.

The second problem in previous literature is that some studies often emphasise one or two factors (e.g. the Internet or economic grievances) but do not offer analysis of other factors. Thus, these findings may overestimate or neglect some determinants. Farrell (2012) states that there are three mechanisms to explore how Internet use facilitates protests. However, these mechanisms may impede protest involvement in some circumstances. For instance, lowering costs means that individuals may join in Facebook groups instead of participating in street protests. The effect of homophily may reinforce intergroup boundaries, reducing the potential to connect with different groups. Similarity, Valenzuela (2013) highlights the role of the Internet in protest mobilisation, but we do not know whether or not political opportunity and education also affect protest engagement. Moreover, Hendrix et al. (2009) find that economic growth is negatively related to protest engagement, so individuals suffering a drop in their economic standards are more likely to participate in protests. However, their research ignores the effect of other factors, such as Internet use and opportunity, and cannot explain why protest movements do not emerge from some countries with poor economic performance. Therefore, further research should avoid emphasis of one particular factor, and should provide a comprehensive explanation for protest participation.

This essay is an attempt to bridge the research gaps in previous findings by examining the determinants of protest participation in Hong Kong and China. My purpose is twofold: 1) protest participation is an important indicator of democratic quality, so research of Hong Kong and China can offer explanations for protest participation in a non-democratic context, which will broaden our understanding of protest politics. As noted previously, Hong Kong and China are experiencing the rise of protest, and we still know little about why individuals engage in protests in non-democracies. Thus, this research offers the opportunity to examine the incentives that contribute to participation in an authoritarian regime. 2) This essay regards Hong Kong as a mixed system that combines democracy and authoritarianism, because Hong Kong has a democratic system but is also controlled by the Chinese government. In contrast, China is a non-democratic country where democratic change is

repressed. They have different political systems, but a similar language and history. Some studies have found that the determinants of participation are different in non-democracies (Brockett 1991; Vladisavljević 2014). Therefore, a cross-regional comparison will able to explore whether or not Hong Kong and China have the same causes of protest involvement. This comparative research will expand our understanding of protest participation in different authoritarian systems.

Three contributions are drawn from this research. First, this research proposes two models to explain protest participation in Hong Kong and China. Protests in Hong Kong are driven by the Internet use—political grievance—political opportunity model, while protests in China are primarily motivated by the economic grievance—political opportunity model. Regression analysis shows different determinants of protest participation in Hong Kong and China, indicating that previous studies have a compelling explanation for Hong Kong but cannot offer a powerful explanation for China. Second, a somewhat surprising finding is that the Internet has no impact on protest engagement in China, although it has a positive effect in Hong Kong. This finding challenges previous studies of the Internet and politics, arguing that the Internet plays a limited role in protest mobilisation in China. Third, although some factors (e.g. demographics) do not show direct effects on protest involvement, these factors, however, may have an indirect impact on participation by affecting other factors.

This essay is organised as follows. It begins by offering a review of previous findings, suggesting that there have four approaches to explain the causes of protest participation. Using data from the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS), this essay then tests the significance of independent variables. This research is particularly concerned with four types of determinant, namely, socioeconomic status, Internet use, political and economic grievances, and political opportunity. Then, this essay progresses to explore a causal model by path analysis, examining direct and indirect effects on protest participation. Finally, the essay argues that further research should compare the differentiation of protest participation in authoritarian regimes. Only by doing so can we hope to provide a comprehensive explanation for protest participation in authoritarian regimes.

## Literature Review

Scholars have devoted much attention to explaining the likelihood of individuals' protest mobilisation. This section focuses on four aspects to review previous studies, namely, socioeconomic status, Internet use, their grievances, and political opportunity. It will discuss these four models as causes for protest participation, as well as the hypotheses based on previous findings.

### *The Socioeconomic Status Model*

Many studies have highlighted the role of socioeconomic status (SES) in explaining protest participation. The SES model was fully developed by Verba and Nie's (1972) work about political participation in the US. The basic assumption is that protest participation is mainly driven by the characteristics of individuals, such as age, gender, education, occupation, ethnicity, and parenthood (Leighley 1995:183). Verba and Nie (1972) uncover that individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to take part in politics, because their social positions reinforce their civic orientations toward politics. By adding three resources (money, time and civil skills), Brady et al. (1995) explain why the SES model is powerful in predicting participation. They assert that the SES model follows stratification theories to explain political participation, suggesting that class and status are essential features that determine individuals' political participation (Brady et al. 1995:271). Their research finds that money, time and civil skills vary among different groups defined by SES. Specifically, money and some skills are closely associated with SES, while time is less stratified (Brady et al. 1995:271). Those resources which are based on different SES, according to their research, have powerful impacts on political participation. Their findings expand explanation of the SES model, and specify a mechanism that links SES to participation (Brady et al. 1995:285).

Evidently, a significant amount of literature has empirically confirmed the positive relationship between socioeconomic status and the likelihood of participation (e.g. Acock &

Scott 1980; Klandermans & Oegema 1987; Leighley 1990; McAdam 1992; Paulsen 1991; Petrie 2004; Scott & Acock 1979; Sherkat & Blocker 1994; Verba et al. 1993). Previous research often focused on age and gender to explain protest participation. Nie et al. (1974), for example, use a curvilinear relation to explain the effect of age strata on participation—the youngest and the oldest have lower levels of participation rates, while the middle aged have the highest levels of participation. They note that the rise of participation by young people was steep, meaning that youth are more likely to easily engage in politics. By controlling education and income, Jennings (1987) finds that protest involvement increases with age, and has a declining trend among old people. Furthermore, Cable (1992) suggests that women are less likely to engage in protests, because of traditional gender roles. McAdam (1992) also finds different recruitment levels between males and female in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer movement, arguing that women had a lower level of involvement in protests. Some scholars, however, argue that different participation rates may be decided by education rather than age or gender (Nie et al. 1974; Sherkat & Blocker 1994). Hence, old people and females are less likely to engage in protests because they have less opportunity to access college education.

Evidence regarding education and social class is also abundant. It is often proposed that individuals with higher education are more likely to take part in protests. Sherkat and Blocker (1994:823), for example, assert that education has the ability to improve protest involvement by providing people with orientations toward politics. They find that 92% of protesters were college students, while only 58% of non-protesters attended college. Furthermore, college students living in urban areas with higher grades were more likely to engage in student movements (Sherkat & Blocker 1994:830). Hall et al. (1986) claim that education increases the subject's opposition to the authorities and support for protests. Moreover, Petrie (2004) employs socialisation and biographical availability to examine the determinants of protest participation. He finds that people who were younger, with a higher income and higher level of education were more likely to engage in protests (Petrie 2004:563). Campante and Chor (2012) assert that the expansion of education in Arab countries triggered political protests in these countries. Howard and Hussain's (2013:10)

findings regarding the Arab Spring confirm that the majority of protesters were college students or the young unemployed.

These previous findings, however, are not appropriate to explain protest participation in Hong Kong and China. First, the previous literature often focus on participation in democracies (e.g. Brady et al. 1995; McAdam 1992; Paulsen 1991; Scott & Acock 1979), so we do not know whether the SES model has the same impact in non-democratic contexts. Other studies do examine the relationship between SES and participation in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Campante & Chor 2012), but we still lack enough knowledge to confirm these results in China. In addition, the effects of SES may vary in Hong Kong and China. For instance, survey data from the Public Opinion Programme of Hong Kong University shows that more than 42% protesters of the Occupy Movement were young people (29 or below), and around 32% were students (POPCON, 2014). By contrast, many studies have found that protesters in China are often middle aged or retirees, and the majority of students have not participated in collective actions since the 1989 Tiananmen demonstration, as youth are more likely to be arrested or beaten by the police force (Gries & Rosen et al. 2004:168; Hurst & O'Brien 2002:354; Zhang 2015:362). Furthermore, Chan and Lee (2007:107) find that 62.5% of protesters in the 2005 Hong Kong protests were middle class, half of the participants had tertiary education, and 32.7% were professionals. Survey data also confirms that individuals with higher income and education are more likely to engage in Occupy Movement (POPCON, 2014). However, Cai (2002), Hurst and O'Brien (2002) and Chen (2012) all assert that China's protesters are often laid-off workers, pensioners, peasants and disabilities rather than members of the high income population. Chen (2009:89) also finds that 31.3% of China's protesters were peasants and 11% were workers, while only 3.8% were students. Therefore, the rich in China are less likely to engage in protests, as these people are more closely associated with the political system and beneficiaries in China's economic reform (Hurst & O'Brien 2002). Similarly, high education groups in China are less likely to take part in protests, because they are often party members or work for political institutions (Chen 2012). Therefore, this research tries to identify whether the SES model can affect protest participation in a non-democratic context, and if so, whether demographic factors have the

same impact on an authoritarian regime as democracies.

Based on the findings of the SES model, I propose two hypotheses:

H1a: individuals with higher socioeconomic status in Hong Kong should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

H1b: individuals with lower socioeconomic status in China should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

Second, the SES model highlights individual characteristics, while contextual factors are secondary forces (Leighley 1995:186). However, individuals with higher SES are more likely to participate in protests not because they have higher income and education, but because they are asked to, or have the time and opportunity. Educational attainment, for example, impacts on individuals' political interests, which in turn increases the likelihood of participation (Bean 1991:268). Besides, some demographic factors, such as age and education, may influence individuals' likelihood of participation indirectly, by facilitating or impeding grievances. Therefore, research on SES should combine with other factors to explore the determinants of participation. Another criticism is that the SES model assumes that attitudes precede behaviors, meaning that individuals' political orientations are formed prior to participation. However, Leighley (1995:188) argues that "certain types of participation enhance numerous political attitudes", so the SES model may overrate the effect of individuals' orientations.

### *Internet Use and Protest Participation*

Recent protest movements around the world, regarded as the "Facebook Revolution" or "Twitter Revolution" (e.g. the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street) have highlighted the role of the Internet in protest mobilisation. Given the dramatic increase of Internet use, it is widely accepted that new communication technology is changing the way in which individuals participate in protests. Academically, some scholars suggest that the Internet does

facilitate protest participation by lowering the costs of mobilisation and improving communication (e.g. Bennett & Segerberg 2012; Castells 2012; Howard & Hussain 2013; Valenzuela 2013; Van Aelst & Walgrave 2013; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013). Other argue, on the other hand, that the effects of the Internet are limited, as new technology also empowers the authorities (e.g. King et al. 2013; Morozov, 2011; Norris 2001; Pearce & Kendzior 2012; Stoycheff & Nisbet 2014; Yamamoto et al. 2013; Zheng & Wu 2005). This section will introduce basic theories about these two perspectives, and then discuss specific findings in China's context.

*The Positive Effects of the Internet*

Literature on the positive effects of the Internet is based mainly on three aspects (Diamond 2010; Tang & Huhe 2014; Yuan 2010; Zheng & Wu 2005). First, it is expected that the Internet enables netizens to challenge authorities by offering alternative information. Howard and Hussain (2013:96) find that protesters in the Arab Spring mainly used social media to gain information about the movement. Gleason (2012:977) also asserts that the Internet offers an "informal learning space" in which user-generated contents are diffused. Moreover, Bailard (2012) argues that online information can affect political evaluations by mirror-holding and window-opening functions, which promotes the emergence of protest. These findings are also confirmed in China. Diamond (2010:70), for example, regards the Internet as liberation technology, which can expand freedom in China due to its decentralised features. Digital communication technology is able to provide a wide variety of information that is suppressed in traditional media, which challenges the authoritarian regime's censorship of information (Diamond 2010:76). Besides, Internet use is creating an alternative framing by which netizens lower their political support and evaluations (Tang & Huhe 2014). By experimental research, Tang and Huhe (2014:563) find that China's Internet users not only access more messages than ever before, but also tend to be "opposite to the intention of the authoritarian state". Thus, online information and discussion enables netizens to distrust or oppose official propaganda and messages, which undermines China's political support and legitimacy (Tang & Huhe 2014:571). Moreover, Yuan (2010:491) asserts that the Internet

makes it difficult for the authorities to censor information diffusion because of its "decentralized, borderless, and interactive and multi-dimensional and anonymous communication". This increasing flow of online information is challenging Chinese authorities by creating "ideological alternatives" (Yuan 2010:493).

Second, the Internet is creating a public space and civil society for netizens to engage in public discussion and expression. Castells (2012:6) states that the Internet is creating "mass-self communication" by which individuals are encouraged to engage in protests. He also suggests that the use of the Internet is offering a hybrid public space of autonomy, allowing dissidents to call for actions "at the same time global and local" (Castells 2012:6). Valenzuela et al. (2012:2048) find that new communication technology allows users "access to a large number of contacts", to "promote personal and group identity construction" which increases the likelihood of protest participation. In China's context, Zheng and Wu (2005) argue that new communication technology helps to shape public cyberspace, and thus improves individuals' political participation in China. Some websites are independent from the state, thereby enhancing public discussion and engagement. Furthermore, Morozov (2011:71) suggests that Internet use promotes the rise of "online publicness", which undermines the authorities' control, and enhances public expression. The Internet is offering more rooms for China's netizens to participate in public affairs. Moreover, Xiao (2011) asserts that the rise of blogs, social media and search engines in China is creating quasi-public spaces through which individuals can criticise and challenge the state's rules. More importantly, the authorities are increasingly responding to these online expressions, as they cannot fully control online public opinion (Xiao 2011:47). Esarey and Xiao (2011) find that more than 61% of Chinese blogs contain criticism, while only 19% of newspaper articles contain criticism. Thus, the proliferation of the Internet has transformed political communication, and broken the authorities' monopoly on public expression. They believe that the Internet can "liberalize political discourse and facilitate public supervision of the (state)" (Esarey & Xiao 2011:298). In addition, Liu and Zhao (2010) investigate the Xiamen anti-P-Xylene protest, and suggest that protesters primarily adopt the Internet, especially the blog, to discuss public affairs. Their findings propose that many netizens diffused online

messages about the jeopardy of PX as they could not discuss this issue in traditional media. The Internet does offer online space for individuals to engage in public affairs.

Third, use of the Internet is able to facilitate political participation. Previous findings suggest that Internet users are more likely to engage in protest movements (Boulianne 2009; Bimber & Copeland 2013; Howard & Hussain 2013; Valenzuela 2013). Farrell (2012) argues that dissidents use social media to mobilise protests by lowering the transaction costs, offering homophilous sorting, and making preference falsification less likely. Valenzuela (2013) finds that new media users are 11 times more likely to be involved in social movements than non-users. Scholars also find a positive relationship between Internet use and participation in China. For instance, Yang (2003) suggests that China's protesters are using the Internet as the main platform to spread information and call for action, and that new technology is creating online activism in China. Additionally, Zheng and Wu (2005) states that China's protesters began to regard the Internet as an important communication tool in their protest recruitment and organisation. These Internet-facilitated collective actions allowed protesters "to react to events more quickly and efficiently", which makes it impractical for authorities to eliminate protest movements (Zheng & Wu 2005:531). Furthermore, Yuan (2010) argues that the Internet not only facilitates protest engagement, but also pressures the authorities to respond to dissidents, and to change policymaking. Protesters began to realise that the authorities have to negotiate with them if they diffuse their messages via the Internet. Liao (2012) examines the Wukan incident and finds that Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter, played an important role in protest mobilisation. He asserts that some protesters spread information about the location and time of action via the Internet, and local authorities cannot censor these online messages. By using hashtags, these protesters increase the likelihood of protest participation and avoiding official censorship.

Based on these findings, I propose the first hypothesis of this section:

H2a: individuals with more Internet consumption should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

*Limited Effects of the Internet*

However, some scholars have challenged the positive impact of Internet use, suggesting that the Internet plays a limited role in mobilising protests in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Damm 2007; King et al. 2013; MacKinnon 2011; Morozov, 2011; Pearce & Kendzior 2012; Svensson, 2014; Yang 2014). Some argue that the authorities are able to reduce the potential for protest by employing a strict censorship system. For instance, Morozov (2011) asserts that the Chinese government are using technological and sociopolitical methods, such as filtering keywords, the Great Firewall, cyber police, and "50 cent party", to censor online information. Hung (2012) also suggests that Chinese authorities employ a multi-layer censorship system to bolster their legitimacy and reduce political risks. He argues that "the Internet is a subtle and effective tool through which the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is actually prolonging its rule, bolstering its domestic power and legitimacy, while enacting no meaningful political or legal reforms" (Hung, 2012:24). Moreover, King et al. (2013) propose "the theory of collective action potential" to explain China's censorship. Their findings suggest that the censorship system allows a wide range of criticism of the authorities, such as the food price rise, one child policy and cadres' corruption (King et al. 2013:336). In contrast, Chinese governments try to restrict the diffusion of information that may cause collective actions. Thus, some information that is associated with protest activities, such as the arrest of Ai Weiwei and the Inner Mongolia protests, are strictly controlled (King et al. 2013:335). They find that "the most highly censored events are not criticisms or even discussions of national policies, but rather highly localized collective expressions that represent or threaten group formation" (King et al. 2013:333). Therefore, the Internet has a limited effect on protest participation in China. Furthermore, some observers also confirm Chinese governments' selective censorship, arguing that the authorities show tolerance towards online expression but control online activism (Harwit & Clark 2001:408; Zheng & Wu 2005:533).

Secondly, others suggest that the Internet also empowers authoritarian regimes, thereby reducing the likelihood of protest participation. Pearce and Kendzior (2012:287) find that

governments provide “selective social openings to create a semblance of transparency but in fact monitor and stifle dissent”. They argue that the state has the potential to dissuade Internet users from participation in protest. Authoritarian regimes are practicing networked authoritarianism to control online dissent and to reduce the likelihood of protest involvement. In networked authoritarianism, the government offers selective openings for Internet users, but restricts dissent. Therefore, it is difficult for the Internet to stimulate protest participation in these countries. Furthermore, MacKinnon (2011) believes that the Chinese authorities are learning to manipulate new communication technology. With the rise of networked authoritarianism in China, an individual “may feel that he has the ability to speak and be heard”, but “there is no guarantee of individual rights and freedoms” (MacKinnon 2011:33). Therefore, online activism does not mean the rise of street protests, because the authorities are adopting the Internet to bolster regime legitimacy. In addition, Chung (2011:2) asserts that the Internet offers “a safety valve for the release of public anger”, and the Chinese government is becoming more responsive. Thus, this tolerance enables “the public to let off steam before it erupts uncontrollably” (Xiao 2011:56). The authorities actually reduce political risks, as they can respond to public anger. Besides, Zheng and Wu (2005:533) have suggested that the rise of Internet use in China does not mean the increase of collective actions, although the Internet is capable of facilitating protest mobilisation. Digital communication technology also empowers the authorities to restrict the development of civil society in China.

Thirdly, some scholars have focused on the digital divide or Internet characteristics to discuss the limited effects of the Internet on protest engagement. Hachigian (2001), for instance, suggests that Internet penetration is still at a low level in China, which limits the effect of the Internet. Besides, Damm (2007:290) claims that China’s Internet is so fragmented that netizens often concentrate on entertainment and e-commerce rather than public issues. He also argues that the Internet is driven by commercial interests in China, and commercial websites are vulnerable when individuals try to encourage online activism. In addition, Pan and Xu (2015:25) find that Internet users in Eastern cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong, exhibit a more liberal ideology than users in hinterland provinces.

Their findings help us to understand why many Internet-facilitated protests often happened in Eastern China instead of the West. Furthermore, Norris (2012) argues that the role of the Internet in protest movements should not be exaggerated, and new media is not the only factor that facilities protest mobilisation. She proposes that the Internet "may function to sustain and facilitate collective action, but this is only one channel of communications amongst many, and processes of political communications cannot be regarded as a fundamental driver of unrest compared with many other structural factors, such as corruption, hardship, and repression" (Norris 2012:5). Additionally, Tai (2006) suggests that the authorities are reducing political risks by employing e-commerce and e-government. Chinese governments now offer a wide range of information via the Internet, which improves political transparency and declines the likelihood of protest engagement. Further, Svensson (2014) states that celebrities and opinion leaders are leading role models on China's Internet, while ordinary people cannot attract attention, meaning that the Internet cannot promote grassroots participation. Besides, Liao (2012) finds that protest leaders did not use social media in the Wukan incident, and that broadcasting and playgrounds still play crucial roles in mobilising protest. He argues that the old protesters primarily adopt local broadcasting in calls for action, and playgrounds in Wukan also offer public spaces for protest mobilisation (Liao 2012:57).

Unlike China, where the Internet has been experiencing censorship and control, Hong Kong is a relatively democratic city, so the government does not have the Great Fire Wall or other methods to censor Internet access. Individuals are able to use foreign websites and social media (e.g. Google, Facebook and Twitter) without control. Thus, Hong Kong protesters often employed the Internet as an important communication tool in protest engagement. They established websites for movement organisation, used Facebook groups for mobilization, and transmitted information via social media platforms (Rodríguez 2014). In contrast, the Great Firewall blocks access to foreign websites and social media platforms in China. The Internet has formed an independent market in China which is not influenced by foreign websites (Taneja & Wu 2014). It is to be expected that the Internet has a limited role in participation in China. Hence, this research tries to examine whether the Internet plays a less important role

in China:

H2b: Internet users in Hong Kong should be more likely to participate in protest activities than Internet users in China.

### *Grievance-Based Theory*

The grievance-based theory, or relative deprivation theory, proposes that individuals' grievances, such as economic inequality and political repression, are key determinants of protest participation. The basic assumption is that people tend to become involved in protest if they feel a sense of deprivation, meaning that their achievements do not meet their expectations (Gurr 1970). This section concentrates on two main grievances—economic grievance and political grievance—to introduce previous findings, and then discuss how scholars explain protest participation in Hong Kong and China.

A significant amount of literature has found that individuals with economic grievances are more likely to engage in protest movements (Boix 2008; Lowrance 2006; Muller 1986; Simmons 2014; Weede 1986). Some have put forward the J-curve hypothesis to explain the relationship between economic grievance and participation, suggesting that those who experience economic drop are more likely to take part in protests than those who witness economic rise (Ross et al. 1971). Others challenge J-curve hypothesis by offering V-curve approach, and they asserts that individuals with economic increase are also more likely to participate in protests (Grofman & Muller 1973; Thomassen 1990). By analysing cross-section data from 98 countries, Collier and Hoeffler (2004:570) reveal that economic factors do lead to protest emergence, while political and social variables have little explanatory power. Similarly, Hendrix et al. (2009) find that GDP growth is negatively related to protest emergence, while food price changes have a positive effect. Moreover, Campante and Chor (2012) find that poor economic performance enhances people's involvement in protests. Some have questioned this approach, though, noting that the grievance-based theory is not sufficient in explaining protest participation. Regan & Norton (2005:325), for instance, suggest that economic grievance does not act alone; instead it

depends on other forces, such as repression. Dalton et al. (2010) also find little evidence to support the effects of economic condition on protest involvement.

Another important factor in grievance-based theory is political grievance. For example, Shafiq et al. (2014) examine student protests in four Arab countries. Their findings suggest that lack of democracy, poor performance and government corruption are important factors in deciding protest engagement. Thus, individuals in authoritarian regimes tend to participate in protests if they feel distrust towards the authorities. Costello et al. (2015) also suggests that the Arab Spring was mainly motivated by political grievances rather than economic grievances, suggesting a positive relationship between injustice and corruption with protests in Egypt and Tunisia. In addition, Singerman (2013:1) proposes that protesters in the Arab world were "politically excluded by authoritarianism and state repression". Others, however, have challenged the effect of political grievance on protest engagement. Muller et al. (1991) find no relationship between political dissatisfaction and protest participation. Wilkes (2004) argues that grievances always exist in some countries, so this approach cannot explain why the likelihood of protest participation has increased recently. Further, Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013:4) argue that the grievance-based approach cannot answer a key question in protest participation—"why do some aggrieved people become mobilised, while others do not?"

Some scholars have examined the impact of grievances on protest participation in Hong Kong (e.g. Chan & Lee 2007, 2008; Lee 2010) and China (e.g. Cai 2002; Chen 2012; Hess 2010; O'Brien & Li 2006; Perry 2001). Chan and Lee (2007), for instance, investigated large-scale protest activities in Hong Kong from 2003 to 2007. On 1 July 2003, more than half a million people protested on the street against the national security legislation. Since then, around 100,000—400,000 citizens have occupied some streets to protest against the methods for electing the Chief Executive each year on the 1st of July[1]. Their findings suggest that these protests are "reinvigorated pro-democracy movement(s)", which are stimulated by individuals' evaluation of local government (Chan, & Lee 2007:93). They argue that evaluation of the responsiveness of the political system is negatively related to protest

participation, meaning that individuals with lower political evaluation are more likely to engage in protests in Hong Kong. Besides, they find that economic evaluation is not significant, so economic grievance does not promote protest participation in Hong Kong (Chan & Lee 2007:108-109). Similarly, Lee (2010) confirms that evaluation of political efficacy is an important predictor in explaining protest involvement in Hong Kong. He asserts that Hong Kong protesters are mainly driven by their low evaluation of the political system (Lee 2010:404). Additionally, Rodríguez (2014) finds that the main reason for participation in the Occupy Movement is political grievance—protesters were not satisfied with the election of the Chief Executive being decided by the central government.

In contrast, observers of Chinese studies have found that the majority of protests in China are triggered by economic grievance. Unlike Hong Kong protesters who fight against the authorities, China's protesters include "state-firm workers agitating against unpaid payments and privatization, city dwellers against forced demolition and eviction, and angry villagers clamoring for fair compensation in case of land seizure" (Chen 2009:88). Gries and Rosen et al. (2004:2) suggest that China has been experiencing economic growth since 1978, but this dramatic growth also produces inequality. As a result, the loss of jobs and reduction of income and pensions have created strong grievances and motivations for protest activities (Cai 2002:327). By interviewing protesters in China, Hurst and O'Brien (2002) find that protesters engaged in activities as they felt a sense of economic deprivation, and protesters expressed deep grievances towards marketisation, suggesting that China's protests are associated with economic resistance. O'Brien et al. (2009:88) suggest that the widespread protests in China can be explained by "suddenly imposed grievances" of the economy. Workers protest on the street to show their dissatisfaction with wages or pensions, while peasants launch protests to oppose taxes, land expropriation and corrupt cadres. Further, Hess (2010:912) asserts that the growing protests in China mainly result from "the expansion of income gaps and growing economic insecurity". Protesters are mainly motivated by income-related issues rather than politics-related issues. Lorentzen (2013:131) also argues that China's protesters are mainly motivated by "material interests and local grievances", so economic suffering and inequality are the main causes. Furthermore, Perry (2001) offers

another explanation for China's protest participation. He argues that the Chinese government has a certain tolerance towards economically driven protests, but represses politically driven protests (e.g. repression of the Chinese Democracy Party[2]) and religious driven protests (e.g. the repression of Falun Gong[3]) (Perry 2001:168). Therefore, China's protesters are more likely to engage in economically driven protests, while other kinds of protest are strictly controlled by the state, so individuals with political grievances cannot launch protests in China. Lorentzen (2013:143) also suggests that economically driven protests are regarded as "loyalist protests", whereas those which are politically driven are related to "revolutionary protests", and Chinese authorities tolerate the former but forbid the rise of the latter.

However, previous studies have often focused on qualitative methods, especially the interview (e.g. Cai 2002; O'Brien & Li 2006; Perry 2001). We still lack quantitative research to examine the effect of grievances on protest involvement. Besides, some quantitative studies consider economic or political grievances alone, and neglect other factors, such as Internet use (e.g. Chan & Lee 2007; Yang 2015). These studies also concentrate on the case study, rather than the combination of Hong Kong and China. It is not clear whether the differences between Hong Kong and China really exist, or just in some cases. Thus, a cross-regional study will reveal whether the grievance-based theory can explain protest participation in Hong Kong and China, and whether protesters in these two regions are motivated by different grievances.

Here I propose the hypotheses regarding the grievance-based approach as follows:

H3a: individuals with higher political grievances in Hong Kong should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

H3b: individuals with higher economic grievances in China should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

### *Political Opportunity Theory*

Another explanation of protest participation is political opportunity theory, which highlights institutional structures, political opportunity and environment. Unlike the SES model and grievance-based theory, which emphasise individual factors and internal forces, political opportunity attempts to examine the effect of exogenous factors on protest involvement. The basic assumption is that the occurrence of protest is determined by the world outside the protest (Meyer 2004:126). This section will introduce the basic findings of political opportunity, and discuss how scholars apply these theories in authoritarian regimes.

Eisinger (1973:25-28) states that a city's political opportunity structure (open or closed) is related to protest involvement, suggesting that the likelihood of protest participation is lower in both open and closed systems, and higher in a mixed system. Beginning with Eisinger's study, many studies have examined the effect of political opportunity on protest participation (Brockett 1991; Jenkins et al. 2003; Kitschelt 1986; Meyer & Minkoff 2004). McAdam (1982), for example, analyses civil rights activism in the US between 1930 and 1970. His findings challenge Eisinger's perspective, arguing that African American activism was more likely to emerge in an open political system. McAdam (1982) posits that changes of policy and political environment lower the cost of collective action. Kitschelt (1986) examines anti-nuclear movements in Sweden, France, the US and West Germany, to find that the effect of political opportunity varied among countries. There have been some criticisms of political opportunity theory. Firstly, Goodwin and Jasper (1999:31) argue that scholars have different definitions of the concept of political opportunity. Goodwin and Meyer (1996), for example, broadly define political opportunity as political institutions, political allies and culture, while McAdam (1996) narrowly regards this term as structural factors rather than cultural forces. Second, previous studies often focus on protests in democracies, while few scholars have examined this approach in non-democratic contexts. Some dimensions of political opportunity, such as political bodies, are difficult to demonstrate in authoritarian regimes, while new dimensions may play a crucial role in non-democracies. Further research should be conducted to address these questions.

This essay regards Hong Kong as an open system, as Hong Kong is a democratic city although it is controlled by an authoritarian regime, and considers China as a closed system, as China is a non-democratic state. There have been two basic expectations in this section: 1) individuals in an open system are more likely to participate in protest movements than individuals in a closed system; and 2) individuals in a closed system tend to engage in protest activities if they have more political opportunities than they had previously. The next section will discuss these two expectations.

Although political opportunities in Hong Kong narrowed when the city was returned to China in 1997, and central government issued basic laws and the method of electing the Chief Executive, opportunities for the pro-democracy activities are increasing in Hong Kong (Chan & Lee 2007:98). Unlike China, where the government strictly controls protest movements, Hong Kong has a more open system for dissidents to engage in protests. Local authorities do not have institutions and stringent regulations to ban individuals' expression and participation. Thus, the first hypothesis in this section, which is based on McAdam's (1982) findings, is related to the political opportunity structure (open or closed):

H4a: individuals in an open political system (Hong Kong) should be more likely to participate in protest activities than individuals in a closed political system (China).

The remaining section will discuss some same findings in Hong Kong and China. Notably, the second expectation mentioned above assumes that the likelihood of protest participation would increase if a closed system provides more opportunities. The remaining hypotheses in this section are based on this assumption. Duerst-Lahti (1989) argues that governmental bodies play an important role in promoting women's movements in the US. These political bodies encourage women's activism by offering official data, public funding, and experts. In the Chinese context, it is widely accepted that the government has relaxed its control over the economic and social arena during the reform era (Zhao 2001). For instance, Chen (2012:13) argues that the withdrawal of the state from society has created political opportunities for protest activities, and the primary opportunity is the Xinfang system (letters and visits). Some scholars suggest that the Xinfang system, which was designed for communication

between the government and dissidents, has actually facilitated the rise of collective actions since the 1990s (Chen 2012; O'Brien & Li 2006). A key factor of the Xinfang system is problem solving, as individuals can choose Xinfang when they try to resolve local problems, such as home demolition, land seizure and corrupt cadres (O'Brien et al. 2009:56). The Xinfang offices would pressurise local authorities to fix these problems (O'Brien et al. 2009). This system provides dissidents "with quasi-legitimacy and pressuring the local government to negotiate with (them)", so Chinese protesters began to use the Xinfang system to solve local problems and challenge the authorities (Chen 2012:88). Chen (2012:88) finds that the Xinfang system promotes protest participation by offering a political channel for ordinary people, suggesting that those who engage in solving problems are more likely to participate in protest activities. Therefore, it is expected to point to a positive relationship between solving problems and protest participation.

H4b: individuals with problems solving experience should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

Another important factor of political opportunity is political interest and conventional participation. Bean (1991) has found that campaign participation and political interests are important factors that determine the likelihood of protest involvement. Norris et al. (2005) also suggest that conventional participation is positively related to protest involvement, as individuals with conventional participation regard protest movements as another way to engage in politics. In China's context, O'Brien and Li (2006:2) find that Chinese protesters began to challenge the authorities by employing "rightful resistance". These protesters are often familiar with laws, regulations, policies, and leadership speeches; and they tend to use these established principles when engaging in protests. O'Brien and Li (2006:28) argue that Chinese governments have set out a wide range of policies since 1978, but local governments do not follow these policies. Therefore, protest participants began to adopt these policies against cadre corruption, illegal elections and land seizure. Obviously, only individuals with political interests can use these policies in their protest activities. In addition, Zhang (2015:376) suggests that China's protesters, especially protest leaders, are motivated

by their political interests and participation, because some participants are party members or rural cadres. These people are not only interested in politics, but also take part in conventional politics, such as elections and campaigns. Chinese governments have promoted political elections in villages and urban neighbourhoods (Heberer 2012:79), which enhances individuals' political interest and participation. Based on these findings, I propose two hypotheses:

H4c: individuals with strong political interests should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

H4d: individuals with conventional political engagement should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

Furthermore, Bean (1991:255) suggests that participation in low-level protests has a positive effect on their engagement in radical protest. By path analysis, he finds that individuals were more likely to take part in protest activities if they had engaged in other movements (Bean 1991:266). Cai (2002:334) confirms Bean's findings in China, arguing that individuals with previous petition participation were more likely to engage in protests. Perry (2001:168) also asserts that previous successful protest experience would increase individuals' likelihood of participation, as these protesters find that protest movements can achieve their goals. Besides, Hurst and O'Brien (2002:354) also find that many protesters had engaged in protest activities several times, and were familiar with the process of protest recruitment. Based on these results, I propose the remaining hypothesis:

H4e: individuals with unconventional political engagement should be more likely to participate in protest activities.

## Data and Method

To test these hypotheses, this essay analyses survey data from the third wave Asian Barometer Survey (ABS). This survey was conducted by National Taiwan University

between 2010 and 2012. I chose ABS because 1) ABS focuses on democracy, governance and development, including a measure of protest participation and questions that tap into independent variables (e.g. Internet use and grievances); 2) ABS includes separate Hong Kong data (2012) and China data (2012), providing useful information for comparative research. The data was randomly gathered by face-to-face interviews of people aged 18 or above permanent residing in Hong Kong and China. Data from Hong Kong includes 1,207 random samples and the response rate was 52.6%. Data from China includes an effective sample size of 3,510, covering 31 provinces (expect Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao).

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable will be based on the question, "whether you have never, once, or more than once attended a demonstration or protest march". Respondents had three answers: once, more than once and never. This question is recoded as a dummy variable of protest participation, code 1 if the respondent engaged in a protest and 0 if not. The dependent variable yields a total sample size of 1,198 in Hong Kong (51 protesters and 1,147 non-protesters) and 3,409 in China (106 protesters and 3,303 non-protesters).

### *Independent Variables*

Four sets of independent variables were used in this research. The first variable is demographic factors, including measures of age, gender, education and income. Gender is represented by a dummy variable (0=female and 1=male). Education is measured by ten categories, ranging from 0 (no education) to 9 (postgraduate degree). Income is measured on a scale ranging from 0 (lowest level) to 4 (highest level).

The second independent variable is the Internet use, which will be based on question, "how often do you use the Internet". The answer is coded from '0=never use' to '5=daily use'.

To measure the respondents' grievances, the analysis concentrates on two groups of variables: political evaluation and economic evaluation. Many scholars have employed evaluations of

politics and the economy as important factors to measure the level of grievances (e.g. Campante & Chor 2012; Chan, & Lee 2007; Hurst & O'Brien 2002; Muller et al. 1991; Regan & Norton 2005). These studies assume that evaluations of the economy and politics represent individuals' dissatisfaction and grievances, meaning that lower political and economic evaluation is associated with higher political grievances. As noted previously, Buechler (2002:6) argued that the evaluation of "an earlier time, or a future possibility" is a key predictor for grievances. Chan and Lee (2007) assert that the evaluation of a political system indicates individuals' grievances towards politics. Besides, Campante and Chor (2012) also find that economic evaluation is an important factor in examining the effect of economic grievance. Political evaluation is measured through two questions, "would you say our system of government works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced" (4-point scale ranging from 0=it works fine to 3=should be replaced), and "how much trust do you have in local government" (4-point scale from 0= great deal of trust to 3=none at all). The measure of economic evaluation is based on two questions; "how would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today", ranging from very good (coded 0) to very bad (coded 4), and "what do you think will be the state of our country's economic condition a few years from now", ranging from much better (coded 0) to much worse (coded 4).

The last set of variables focuses on political opportunity. As discussed previously, four main factors will be examined: solving problems—"whether you have tried to resolve local problems" (0=no and 1=yes); political interest—"how interested would you say you are in politics" (0=not at all interested to 3= very interested); conventional political engagement—"whether you have attended a campaign meeting" (0=no and 1=yes); and previous protest experience—"whether you have signed a petition" (0=no and 1=yes).

Furthermore, this research will use binary logistic regression to test the causes of protest participation. In addition, this research will conduct path analysis to examine the causal model and indirect impact.

The relationship between dependent variable and independent variables can be written as an

equation:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Demographics} + \beta_2 * \text{Internet} + \beta_3 * \text{Grievances} + \beta_4 * \text{Opportunities};$$

where logit(p) represents the logit scale of dependent variable, $\beta_0$ is the constant, β1 is the coefficient of demographics, β2 is the coefficient of Internet use, β3 is the coefficient of grievance, and β4 is the coefficient of political opportunity. This equation reports the amount of change (increase or decrease) in the predicted log odds of protest participation would be anticipated by changes in predictors.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

A problem of survey data in authoritarian regimes is that respondents may decline to answer some sensitive questions, because of their political fears or censorship of information. The answers may be incorrect and inaccurate if the response rate is rather low. Table 1 reports the response rates in these two databases. Obviously, all questions in Hong Kong and China have a high level of response rates, especially for some political issues (e.g. protest participation and evaluation of the political system). Generally, the response rates of dependent variables are pretty high in both databases. Only 9 respondents (0.7%) in Hong Kong and 63 respondents (1.8%) in China failed to answer the question on protest participation.

Table 1. The Response Rates of Hong Kong and China

| | Hong Kong | China |
|---|---|---|
| Protest Participation | 99.3% | 98.2% |
| Internet Use | 99.7% | 99.8% |
| The Evaluation of Political System | 87.5% | 81.6% |
| The Evaluation of Local Government | 92.3% | 94.5% |
| The Evaluation of Economic condition | 97.3% | 95.8% |
| The Evaluation of Future Economy | 94.6% | 83.9% |
| Solving Problems | 99.4% | 98.4% |
| Political Interest | 99.5% | 99.3% |
| Conventional Participation | 59% | 70.6% |
| Unconventional Participation | 99.4% | 98.4% |

*Source*: Asian Barometer Survey.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of all variables used in this research. Notably, 51

respondents in Hong Kong and 106 in China reported that they had participated in protests. Additionally, the measure of Internet use shows that Hong Kong (M=2.62, SD=2.34) has a higher level of Internet access than China (M=1.34, SD=2.02). For political grievances, respondents in Hong Kong and China seem to have similar evaluations. Respondents in Hong Kong (M=2.11, SD=.76), however, obviously have a lower evaluation of their future economy than respondents in China (M=.67, SD=.70). Besides, respondents in Hong Kong have lower levels of solving problems (M=.07, SD=.26) and political interest (M=.97, SD=.85).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for all Variables Used

| | Hong Kong | | China | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Mean** | **Std. Dev.** | **Minimum** | **Maximum** |
| **Dependent Variables** | | | | | | |
| —Protest Participation | .04 | .20 | .031 | .17 | 0 | 1 |
| **Independent Variables** | | | | | | |
| ***A. Demographics*** | | | | | | |
| —Gender (1=male) | .46 | .50 | .53 | .50 | 0 | 1 |
| —Age | 50.66 | 19.17 | 45.29 | 15.64 | 18 | 96 |
| —Education | 4.36 | 2.56 | 3.86 | 2.15 | 0 | 9 |
| —Income | 1.56 | 1.24 | 1.90 | 1.40 | 0 | 4 |
| ***B. Internet Use*** | | | | | | |
| —Internet Use | 2.62 | 2.34 | 1.34 | 2.02 | 0 | 5 |
| ***C. Grievances*** | | | | | | |
| —The Evaluation of Political System | 1.13 | .60 | 1.20 | .81 | 0 | 3 |
| —The Evaluations of Local Government | 1.76 | .72 | 1.78 | .75 | 0 | 3 |
| —The Evaluation of Economic Condition | 1.67 | .82 | 2.90 | .85 | 0 | 4 |
| —The Evaluation of Future Economy | 2.11 | .76 | .67 | .70 | 0 | 4 |
| ***D. Political Opportunity*** | | | | | | |
| —Solving Problems | .07 | .26 | .14 | .34 | 0 | 1 |
| —Political Interest | .97 | .85 | 1.40 | .83 | 0 | 3 |
| —Conventional Participation | .75 | .43 | .73 | .44 | 0 | 1 |
| — Unconventional Participation | .03 | .18 | .05 | .22 | 0 | 1 |

*Source*: Asian Barometer Survey

## Results

To estimate the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables, I tested two regression models. Table 3 presents the results of logistic regression analysis. Model 1 examines the effects of independent variables on the likelihood of protest participation in Hong Kong, while Model 2 reports on the impacts in China. Log Likelihood and Nagelkerke $R^2$ are included to report the overall explanatory power of these two models, though Nagelkerke $R^2$ is not interpretable compared with adjusted $R^2$ in OLS regression.

Turning our attention first to the demographics in Model 1, H1a predicts that individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to participate in protests in Hong Kong. The coefficients of these variables, however, do not support this hypothesis. In the demographic block, none of these factors have statistical significance in Model 1, suggesting that demographic factors are not determinants of participation, and H1a is not supported in this model. Although some survey data suggests that the majority of Hong Kong protesters are young people with higher education (e.g. POPCON 2014), this research finds that participation in protest in Hong Kong is not motivated by demographic factors. Turning now to the reports in Model 2, H2b predicts that individuals with lower socioeconomic status in China are more likely to engage in protests. Similarly, none of these demographic factors achieve statistical significance, meaning that demographics have no direct effect on protest participation in China. Like Hong Kong, the SES model also cannot explain protest engagement in China.

Interestingly, Chan and Lee (2007:108) also find that demographic factors (gender, age, education and income) have no significant relationship with protest participation in Hong Kong. They suggest that some data does indicate a bivariate relationship between demographics and participation. This relationship, however, disappears when other factors are included. Hence, the relationship between demographics and participation is mediated by other variables used in this research (Chan & Lee 2007:109). Another explanation is the differences of SES between democratic contexts and non-democratic contexts. Previous research has found a curvilinear relationship (e.g. Nie et al. 1974) or a positive relationship (e.g. Hall et al. 1986; Paulsen 1991) between demographic factors and protest participation. These studies, however, often focus on democracies rather than non-democracies. Thus, they may neglect the differentiation between democratic and non-democratic systems. Chinese people, for instance, often have a strong sense

of collectivism and political fear. The effects of demographics on participation, which were found in previous research, may be diminished by these factors. In addition, some scholars find that China's protesters often come from the same stratum (e.g. workers, peasants or retirees), and these people do not cooperate with other classes in a protest (Chen 2012; Gries & Rosen 2004; O'Brien & Li 2006). Therefore, the effects of demographics may be affected and limited, as protesters do not engage in other social classes' movements. Notably, this does not mean that demographics cannot affect protest involvement. According to Bean's (1991:268) and Leighley's (1995:188) studies, demographics may have an indirect effect by influencing grievances and attitudes. As will be shown, demographic factors do have a strong effect on individuals' grievances, Internet use and political interests. Obviously, the results from Table 3 challenge previous studies, arguing that demographics have no significant effect on protest engagement in both Hong Kong and China. This finding suggests that we should reexamine the effect of demographics on protest involvement in authoritarian regimes.

Table 3 Logistic Regression Models Predicting Protest Participation

| | **Model 1 Hong Kong** | | **Model 2 China** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **B** | **(SE)** | **B** | **(SE)** |
| **A. Demographics** | | | | |
| —Gender (1=male) | -.070 | (.505) | .119 | (.385) |
| —Age | .015 | (.016) | .002 | (.014) |
| —Education | .090 | (.150) | .106 | (.114) |
| —Income | -.093 | (.187) | -.103 | (.138) |
| **B. Internet Use** | | | | |
| —Internet Use | .391** | (.192) | -.015 | (.114) |
| **C. Grievances** | | | | |
| —Political System | .739** | (.377) | .322 | (.211) |
| —Local Government | .623* | (.324) | -.252 | (.304) |
| —Economic Condition | -.121 | (.316) | .057 | (.228) |
| —Future Economy | .487* | (.285) | .585** | (.264) |
| **D. Political Opportunity** | | | | |
| —Problem Resolving | 1.348** | (.518) | 2.239*** | (.385) |
| —Political Interest | 1.151*** | (.326) | .175 | (.227) |
| —Conventional Participation | 2.347** | (.984) | -.127 | (.374) |
| —Unconventional Participation | 1.511** | (.618) | 2.095*** | (.400) |
| **Constant** | -10.387*** | (1.803) | -5.928*** | (1.003) |
| **Log Likelihood** | 138.840 | | 257.606 | |
| **Nagelkerke R square** | .492 | | .340 | |
| ***N*** | 512 | | 1,216 | |

*Notes*: ***p≤0.01, **p≤0.05, *p≤0.1.

H2a anticipates a positive relationship between Internet use and protest participation in Hong Kong and China. As expected, Internet use has a significantly positive relationship with protest engagement in Model 1 ($\beta$=.391, $p \leq .05$). Thus, Internet users in Hong Kong are more likely to engage in protest movements than non-users, and the likelihood of protest involvement increases if individuals increase Internet use. However, Model 2 does not achieve statistical significance for H2a, suggesting that use of the Internet does not increase the likelihood of protest participation in China. This result does not support previous findings about the positive effects of the Internet in other authoritarian regimes (e.g. Howard & Hussain, 2013; Norris 2012; Tufekci & Wilson 2012; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013). The outcomes of Model 1 and Model 2 in the Internet block indicate that the Internet plays different roles in Hong Kong and China. Thus H2b, which assumes that Internet users in Hong Kong are more likely to participate in protest activities than China's users, is supported in this research. However, this research still needs to explain why Internet use does not affect protest mobilisation in China.

As noted above, the Chinese government allows some criticism but restricts online information that may lead to collective actions (King et al. 2013). This selective censorship may explain why Internet use does not have a significant effect on protest participation in China. As King et al. (2013) found, some messages of collective action are strictly censored by the authorities. Hence, it is difficult for China's Internet users to call for action via the Internet, as they cannot exchange information that is associated with protest movements. Moreover, networked authoritarianism means that the authorities are trying to bolster their legitimacy by using the Internet, which also undermines the positive effects of the Internet (Chung 2011; MacKinnon 2011; Pearce & Kendzior 2012). Chinese authorities are competing with online dissidents by using e-government and e-commerce. In addition, many protesters, especially protest leaders, are middle-aged or old people, and do not know how to use the Internet (Liao 2012). These protesters have employed local broadcasting and playgrounds as the main communication means, so that the Internet cannot really promote protest participation (Liao 2012). Another explanation is the digital divide in China. As mentioned earlier, China's Internet is fragmented, so that Internet users pay more attention on entertainment and online shopping than politics (Damm 2007). The different ideologies between the East and West may also limit the Internet's mobilisation effect in China (Pan & Xu 2015). As Norris (2012:5) argued, the Internet is "only one channel of communications amongst many". We cannot exaggerate the effects of the Internet on protest

mobilisation, especially in an authoritarian regime where the authorities have a system of strict censorship.

In terms of grievances, both political and economic grievances remain a significant predictor of protest participation in Model 1. Increases in individuals' grievances against the political system and local government emerge as significantly increasing the occurrence of protest (β=.739, p ⩽.05 and β=.623, p⩽.1, respectively). Besides, grievances for the future economy are also significantly and positively related to the likelihood of protest involvement (β=.487, p⩽.1), suggesting that the rise of grievances in economic change increases the odds of protest participation in Hong Kong. Grievances of economic conditions, however, fail to achieve statistical significance in this model. Obviously, the findings on grievances support H3a, which anticipates a positive relation between political grievance and protest participation in Hong Kong. Thus, individuals with grievances, especially political grievances, are more likely to engage in protest activities in Hong Kong. Grievances about the future of the economy remain marginally significant in Model 1, suggesting that economic grievances play a less important role in encouraging protest participation. Turning to the grievance block in Model 2. It is clear that grievances about the future economy are significantly and positively associated with protest participation (β=.585, p⩽.05). As expected, individuals with higher economic grievances are significantly more likely to take part in protests in China. These evaluations of the political system and local government, however, do not achieve statistical significance in this model, which means that protesters are not motivated by political grievance. Thus, H3b is also supported by this Model. Notably, Mode 1 reports that political grievance is a crucial factor in explaining protest participation in Hong Kong, while Model 2 indicates that economic grievance plays a significant role in China's protest engagement.

H4a assumes that individuals in an open political system are more likely to participate in protests, as they have more political opportunities. As anticipated, the results from Model 1 and Model 2 support this hypothesis as four factors achieving significance in Model 1, whereas only two factors show a significant relationship in Model 2. Specifically, participation in protests is positively associated with solving local problems (β=1.348, p≤.05). Hence, individuals are more likely to engage in protest movements if they have solved local problems, because they have more opportunities to access politics and to find an alternative channel for their demands. Additionally, being interested in politics increases the odds of protest participation and the coefficient receives statistical significance at .01 level in Model 1 (β=1.151, p≤.01). Therefore, as

people with a strong political interest have more opportunities to learn and engage in political activities, they are more likely to participate in protests if conventional channels cannot meet their demands. Further, conventional participation (attending campaigns) also achieves statistical significance in Model 1 ($\beta$=2.347, $p \leq .05$), meaning that engaging in conventional politics will increase the likelihood of protest participation. Therefore, individuals are more likely to be involved in protest in Hong Kong if they have participated in conventional politics. Finally, previous protest participation (signing a petition) is positively and significantly related to protest engagement in Model 1 ($\beta$=1.511, $p \leq .05$), so individuals are more likely to take part in protest if they have engaged in low-level protest.

In contrast, Model 2 reports that solving problems and previous protest participation are positively and significantly associated with protest involvement in China. Compared with those who do not engage in local problems, those who have solved local issues are significantly more likely to participate in protest movements ($\beta$=2.239, $p \leq .001$). In addition, previous protest participation is also positively related to protest involvement, meaning that individuals' likelihood of protest participation increases if they have participated in petitions ($\beta$=2.095, $p \leq .001$). Therefore, engaging in solving problems and low level activism have the potential to increase protest involvement in China. Individuals have more opportunities to engage in politics if they have taken part in local issues or petitions, which in turn increase the odds of protest participation. Political interest and conventional participation, however, do not receive statistical significance in Model 2. Unlike Hong Kong, where people can discuss and learn politics with little control, individuals in China still have many barriers when they express political issues. As discussed above, political grievance does not have a significant effect on protest participation. Hence, the rise of political interest does not mean the increase of protest participation. An interesting finding is that attending campaigns is negatively associated with protest engagement in China, although the coefficient is not significant. This suggests that conventional participation may have different impacts on unconventional participation in Hong Kong and China. Obviously, four variables retain statistical significance in Model 1, and two variables are significant at .01 level in Model 2. Therefore, political opportunity is the most important and powerful factor that contributes to protest participation in Hong Kong and China. These findings suggest that individuals' political engagement and access (solving problems and unconventional participation) are crucial conditions in explaining protest participation in Hong Kong and China. In addition, political interest and conventional participation seem to have greater effect on protest in an open system (Hong Kong), while their effects may be restricted in a closed system (China).

Overall, Hong Kong protesters are often Internet users with political grievances, political interests and access, while China's protesters have economic grievances and political access. Based on these analyses, this research proposes two models to explain protest participation in Hong Kong and China. First, protest participation in Hong Kong is primarily stimulated by the Internet use—political grievance—political opportunity model. Use of the Internet has a positive effect on protest involvement in Model 1, meaning that the Internet does facilitate the development of protest movements in Hong Kong. Besides, grievances about the political system and local government are positively related to protest engagement. Hence, individuals with more serious political grievances are significantly more likely to participate in protests. In addition, increases in political interest and access also provide an opportunity for individuals to engage in protest movements.

Second, the economic grievance—political opportunity model can be used to explain protest participation in China. A surprising finding is that Internet use is not statistically significant in Model 2, challenging previous findings of Internet use in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Howard & Hussain, 2013; Valenzuela 2013; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013; Yang 2014). This finding suggests that the Internet may have a limited role in encouraging protest participation in China. It would be naive to expect that China will experience a "Facebook Revolution" or "Twitter Revolution "in the future. The digital divide and networked authoritarianism enable the authorities to reduce the likelihood of protest participation. Furthermore, economic grievance has the potential to facilitate protest engagement, whereas political grievance has no effect on the occurrence of protest. As outlined above, China's protests are mainly motivated by economic inequality rather than political repression. Moreover, political opportunity is the most important factor in explaining protest involvement in China. Both solving problems and unconventional participation have the capacity to encourage protest participation. Therefore, individuals in an authoritarian regime will increase their likelihood of protest participation if they have more political opportunities.

Thirdly, it is worth noting that political opportunity achieves statistical significance in both Hong Kong and China. Thus, the structure of political opportunity is the most crucial determinant in this research. On one hand, the rise of political opportunity has the potential to increase protest participation, and some variables are significant at .01 level, which means that political opportunity has the explanatory power to examine protest involvement. On the other hand, political interest and conventional participation do not receive statistical significance in Model 2, suggesting that political opportunity may have different impacts. Future research should pay

attention on the different effects of political opportunity on protest engagement.

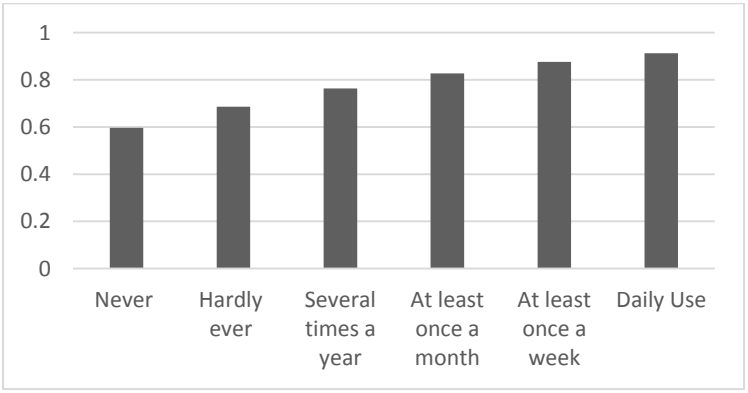


Figure 1 Predicted Probabilities of Internet Use for Participation in Hong Kong

*Note*: Predicted probabilities are calculated by data from Model 1, Table 3.

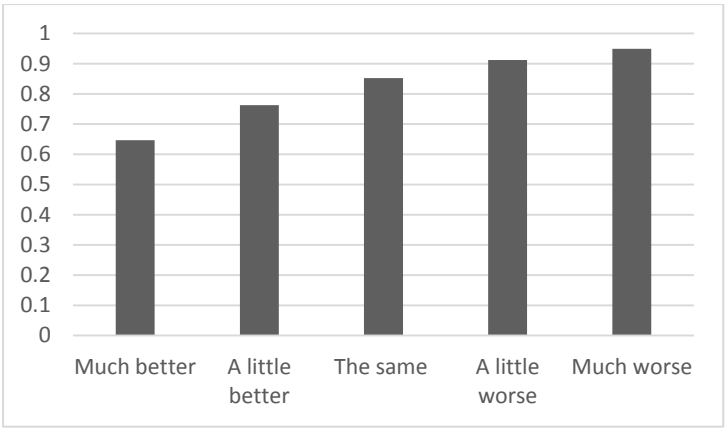


Figure 2 Predicted Probabilities of Economic Grievance for Participation in China

*Note*: Predicted probabilities are calculated by data from Model 2, Table 3.

This section first uses the results of Table 3 to calculate predicted probabilities for the likelihood of protest participation in Hong Kong and China. Then, it will conduct a path analysis to explain protest participation. As discussed previously, Internet use plays a key role in explaining protest participation in Hong Kong, and economic grievance is positively related to protest engagement in China. To calculate predicted probabilities, this section adopts data from Table 3 (Internet use in Model 1 and economic grievance in Model 2). Figure 1 reports the predicted probabilities of Internet use for protest participation in Hong Kong. Consistent with H2a, Figure 1 indicates that Internet use is positively associated with protest involvement. Compared to those who do not use the Internet, frequent Internet users have around a 31% higher likelihood to participate in protest in Hong Kong.

A similar pattern emerges in Figure 2, which shows the predicted probabilities of economic grievances for protest participation in China. For those who do not have economic grievances,

the likelihood of protest participation is about 30% lower than those who have the highest level of economic grievance.

The results of regression analysis indicate that Hong Kong and China have different determinants of protest participation. However, the causal order (direct and indirect effects) is not clear in Table 3. As noted previously, demographic factors may affect protest involvement by influencing political interest or Internet use, though they do not show a direct impact. Based on the studies of Bean (1991), Stern and Rookey (2012), this section employs path analysis to examine the causal model of protest participation in Hong Kong and China. Apart from direct effect on protest participation, only those coefficients significant at .01 level are considered in this section.

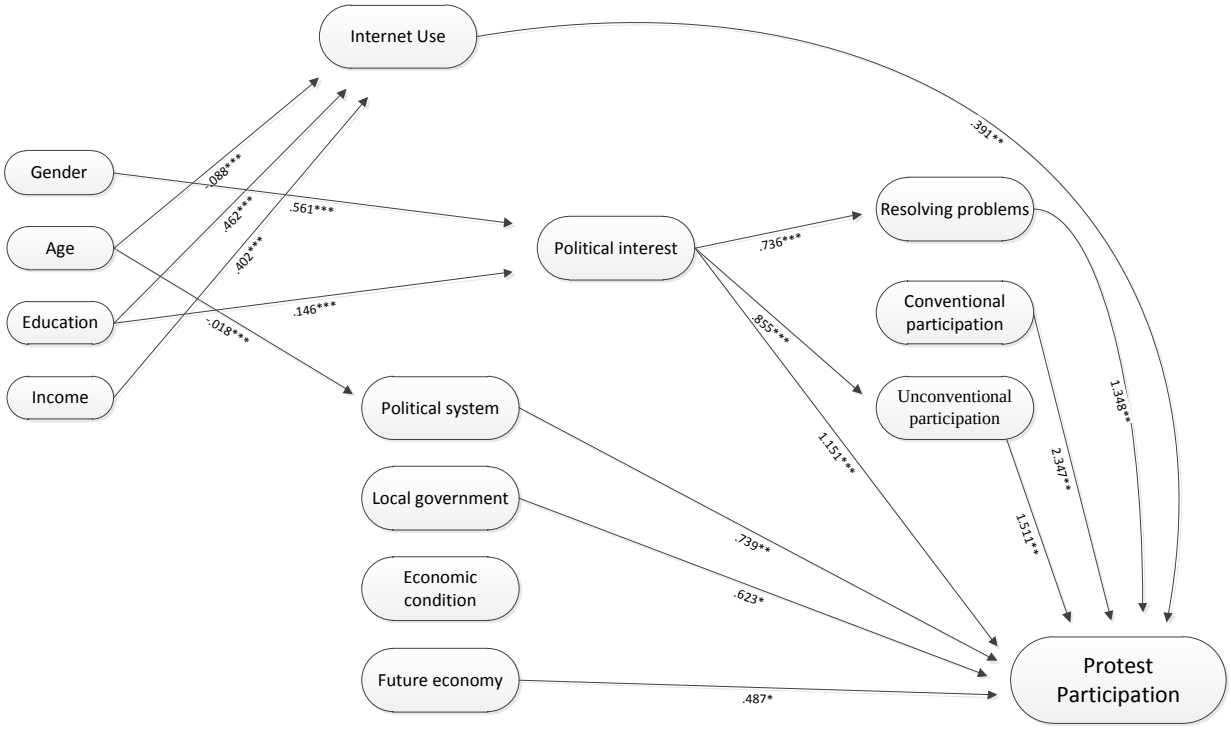


Figure 3 Path Model for Determinants of Protest Participation in Hong Kong

*Note*: Appendix Table 1 includes the full set of coefficients.

Figure 3 shows the path analysis for protest participation in Hong Kong. It is obvious that demographic factors have significant effects on Internet use, such as political interest and political grievance. Specifically, gender is positively associated with political interest, so men are more likely to have a strong interest in politics (β=.561, p≤.01). Age is negatively and significantly related to Internet use and evaluation of the political system (β=-.088, p≤.01 and β=-.018, p≤.01, respectively), suggesting that young people are more likely to use the Internet and have more political grievances. Further, education and income have positive effects on Internet use (β=.462 and β=.146, β=.402, p≤.01, respectively), therefore individuals with higher

education and income are more likely to use the Internet. A somewhat interesting finding is that demographics do not have a direct effect on economic grievance, conventional and unconventional participation, which means that demographic factors cannot impact directly on economic evaluation and political behaviour. Besides, the Internet does not achieve significant impact on other independent variables in Figure 3, indicating that Internet use does not affect political interest and political grievance in this model. Overall, three demographic factors have significant impacts on Internet use, two have effects on political interest, and one is negatively related to political grievance. Meanwhile, Internet use, political interest and grievance are significantly associated with protest participation in Hong Kong. Thus, it is no doubt that demographic factors have the potential to affect protest engagement indirectly by influencing Internet use, political interest and political grievance in Hong Kong.

Moving along the causal model, political interest is an important factor in this model, as two variables have a positive effect on political interest, and political interest also affects three factors (solving problems, signing petitions and protest participation). As noted before, the coefficient of political interest is significant at .01 level in the regression analysis (Table 1, Model 1), and demographic factors have a significant effect on respondents' political interest. Therefore, some independent variables do not have a direct impact on protest participation, but have a significant effect on political interest. It is fair to say that these factors are able to influence protest engagement in Hong Kong by increasing individuals' political interest. In addition, political interest not only affects protest participation directly, but also impacts on resolving problems and previous protest experience. It is not surprising that political interest has an indirect impact on protest involvement, by influencing conventional and unconventional participation. Thus, individuals with higher political interest are more likely to take part in conventional and unconventional politics, further enhancing their likelihood of protest participation.

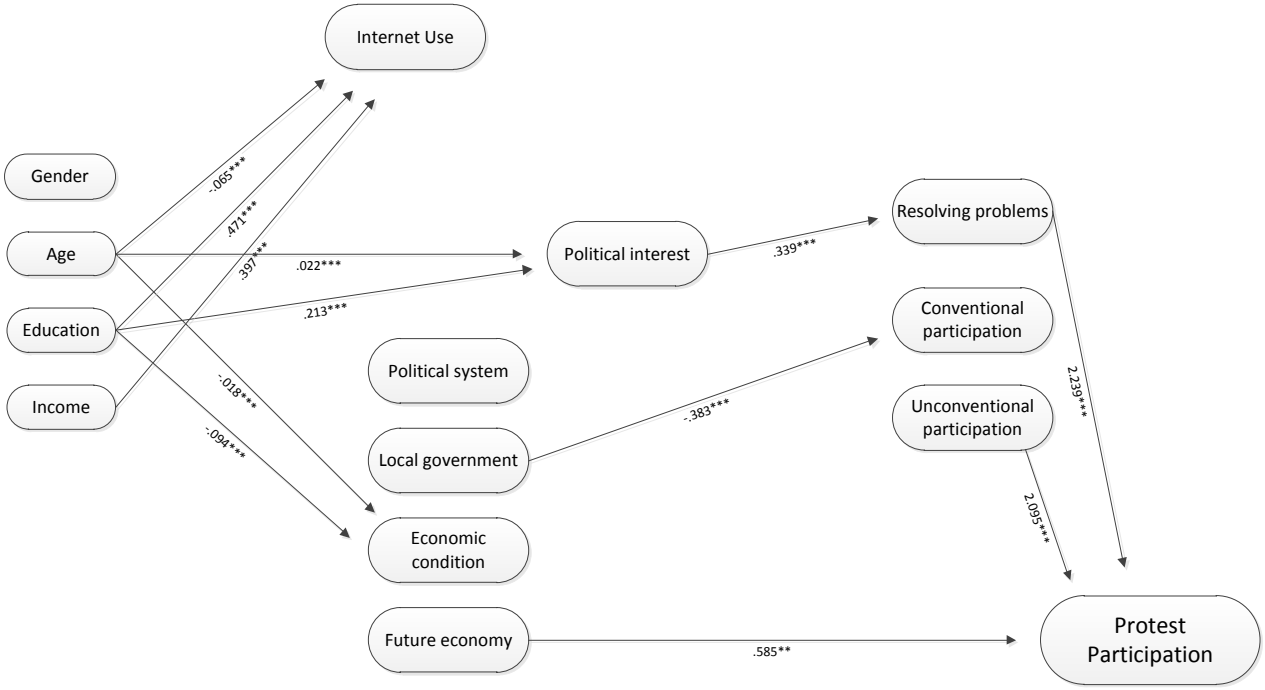


Figure 4 Path Model for Determinants of Protest Participation in China

*Note*: Appendix Table 2 includes the full set of coefficients.

Figure 4 reports the result of China's path analysis. Three demographic factors play key roles in deciding individuals' Internet use. As with the outcome in Hong Kong, age has a negative effect on Internet use, while education and income is positively related to Internet consumption. Internet use, however, does not achieve any statistical significance in this model, suggesting that the Internet has no effect on political interest, grievances or conventional participation in China. This finding suggests that further research should reconsider the role of the Internet in democratising China. In addition, age and education are significantly and positively associated with political interest, which means that political interest is driven by individuals' characteristics. Political interest, indeed, has a positive relationship with resolving problems, and the latter is significantly related to protest participation. Thus, it is worth noting that political interest has an indirect effect on protest involvement, by encouraging solving problems. Another interesting finding is that demographic factors have significantly impact on economic grievance rather than political grievance. As outlined before, the model of Hong Kong shows that individuals' characteristics (age) are negatively associated with political grievance. This differentiation indicates that individuals have different grievances when they engage in protest movements in Hong Kong and China. Furthermore, political grievance has a negative effect on conventional participation, which means that individuals with a higher level of political grievances are less likely to participate in conventional politics in China.

Overall, the evidence of path analysis helps to prove two models, indicating that Hong Kong and China have different determinants of protest participation. Figure 3 highlights the role of the Internet, political grievance and political interest to explain protest engagement, so it supports the Internet use—political grievance—political opportunity model in Hong Kong. Figure 4, in contrast, emphasises the effect of economic grievance on protest involvement, suggesting the economic grievance—political opportunity model in China. Besides, some factors, especially demographics, do not have direct effect on the dependent variable, but they have the potential to affect protest involvement indirectly. Compared to Figure 3, demographic factors, especially age and education, have greater impact in Figure 4. However, it is not clear that whether demographic factors have indirect effect on protest participation in China. Unlike Hong Kong where demographics indirectly affect protest engagement by influencing Internet use and political grievance, China seems to lack these intermediate variables as Internet use cannot impact protest involvement. Furthermore, political interest play a more important role in Figure 3. Individuals' political interest can not only affect the likelihood of protest participation, but also indirectly affect protest engagement by influencing solving problems and unconventional participation. By contrast, political interest in Figure 4 only has a positive effect on solving problems but cannot influence other factors. Finally, one demographic factor (age) in Hong Kong has a negative effect on political grievance, and two (age and education) in China are negatively related to economic grievance. Political grievance is positively related to protest participation in Figure 3 while economic grievance has a positive effect in Figure 4, suggesting the different determinants in Hong Kong and China.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This essay begins with the question about the determinants of protest participation in authoritarian regimes. Both Hong Kong and China has been witnessing the rise of protest participation, so the explanation of this phenomenon is an interesting question. However, there have some research gaps in the literature because 1) previous studies often focus on protest engagement in democracies rather than non-democracies; 2) scholars often concentrate on one or two factors to explore why individuals engage in protest activity but neglect other factors; and (3) these studies often ignore the analysis of indirect influences and causal model. Therefore, this essay tries to examine the factors of protest participation in Hong Kong and China.

Four broad conclusions drawn from this research. First, the findings of regression analysis suggest that Hong Kong and China have different determinants of protest participation. Hong Kong has more factors that contribute to protest involvement than China. Specifically, Internet use, individuals' grievances and political opportunity are crucial determents in Hong Kong, while only economic grievance and political opportunity remain significance in China. Obviously, protesters in Hong Kong are mainly motivated by political grievance, while protesters in China are associated with economic grievance. Another noteworthy finding is that political opportunity is the most important factor in both Hong Kong and China, meaning political interest and participation play a key role in encouraging protest participation in these two regions. Based on these findings, this essay proposes two models to explain protest engagement in Hong Kong and China. Protest participation in Hong Kong can be explained by Internet use—political grievance—political opportunity model and protest participation in China is related to economic grievance—political opportunity model.

Second, this essay finds that demographic factors (age, gender, education and income) do not affect individuals' likelihood of protest participation in both Hong Kong and China, which challenges traditional SES model and previous literature on socioeconomic status. A possible explanation is that the bivariate relationship between demographics and participation disappears when other factors are included. Another explanation is that previous studies do find a relationship between SES and participation in democratic contexts. These factors, however, may have limited effect in authoritarian regimes due to different cultures and systems. For instance, Chinese people often have a high level of political trust and individuals with high income often have a strong relation with the authorities. Therefore, these people are less likely to engage in protest movements. Generally, we cannot directly employ SES model, which is found in democratic contexts, in non-democracies without examining the differences that exist in demographics. This finding suggests that further research should reexamine the role of socioeconomic status in authoritarian regimes.

Another interesting argument can be made is that the Internet plays different roles in Hong Kong and China. This essay shows that Internet use is positively associated with protest engagement in Hong Kong. This, in fact, is consistent with some scholars' argument that the Internet has the potential to facilitate protest participation (e.g. Bennett & Segerberg 2012; Farrell 2012; Howard & Hussain 2013; Valenzuela 2013; Wolfsfeld et al. 2013). Internet use in China, by contrast, does not receive significant effect in this research, suggesting that Internet use has limited role in

encouraging protest mobilization in authoritarian regimes. This finding supports other scholars' statement that the Internet cannot really promote protest engagement in authoritarian regimes (e.g. Morozov, 2011; Pearce & Kendzior 2012; Stoycheff & Nisbet 2014). This essay further argues that this different results of Internet use can be partly explained by digital divide and networked authoritarianism. On the one hand, Hong Kong does not have censorship system and the Internet penetration is 73% (Go-Globe, 2014). Thus, protesters in Hong Kong can freely access to social media and spread information to call for action. On the other hand, Chinese government tries to restrict the distribution of information that may lead to protests (King et al. 2013) and to compete with online activism (Zheng & Wu 2005). Besides, the Internet penetration is less than 50% and the gaps between urban and rural areas are huge in China (CNNIC 2015). Therefore, this essay suggests that the effect of Internet in China should not be overestimated and exaggerated. In addition, further research should be conducted to examine the specific effects of Internet in China. As mentioned before, Chinese netizens have huge differences in terms of ideology (Pan & Xu 2015) and utilizations (Damm 2007), so it is important to do not treat Chinese Internet as an entirety. Rather, Internet use in China is fragmentary and unbalanced, so scholars should focus on specific regions, cases and details to explore the political potential of Internet in China.

Finally, this essay develops a causal model to examine direct and indirect effects on protest participation. By using path analysis, this research finds that demographics have a strong effect on Internet use, political grievance and political interest in Hong Kong (Figure 3). The factors of Internet, grievance and interest, in fact, are significantly related to protest participation. Thus, demographic factors have indirect effect on protest involvement by influencing these factors. Additionally, political interest is an important factor in Hong Kong as it has both direct and indirect impact on protest participation. By contrast, the path analysis in China indicates that demographic factors do not have the same indirect impact compared to Hong Kong (Figure 4). Moreover, political interest does have an indirect impact on protest engagement by affecting resolving problems. These findings broaden the understanding of protest participation in authoritarian regimes. Some factors do not have direct effects on protest participation. However, these factors have the ability to affect other factors that are strongly related to participation. This finding suggests that the combination of factors offers a comprehensive explanation for protest engagement in authoritarian regimes.

One limitation is that this research does not focus on specific protest movements, so it only provides a broad explanation rather than case studies. This model may not explain some protests

in these two regions. Another problem is that this essay lacks a time-series research, so it cannot tell us whether some determinants have changed over time. Further research should be conducted to address these problems.

In conclusion, these findings suggests that Hong Kong and China have different determinants of protest participation. This research provides a good explanatory power for protest participation in Hong Kong, because Internet use, grievances and political opportunity are significantly related to protest involvement in Hong Kong. However, it seems to have limited effect in explaining China's protest participation as only economic grievance and political opportunity receive statistical significance in this research. More broadly, many determinants from previous research are capable of explaining protest participation in Hong Kong, but these findings cannot provide a powerful explanation for China. This essay suggests that further studies should realize the differentiation and find alternative models to explain protest engagement in non-democracies.

# Bibliography


Acock, A. C., & Scott, W. J. (1980). A model for predicting behavior: The effect of attitude and social class on high and low visibility political participation. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59-72.

Bailard, C. S. (2012). A Field Experiment on the Internet's Effect in an African Election: Savvier Citizens, Disaffected Voters, or Both?. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 330-344.

Bean, C. (1991). Participation and political protest: A causal model with Australian evidence. *Political Behavior*, 13(3), 253-283.

Bennett, W. L., Breunig, C. & Givens, T. (2008). Communication and Political Mobilization: Digital Media and the Organization of Anti-Iraq War Demonstrations in the U.S. *Political Communication*, 25:3, 269-289.

Bennett, W. L & Segerberg, A. (2012). The Logic of Connective Action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politic. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15:5, 739-768.

Bimber, B., & Copeland, L. (2013). Digital media and traditional political participation over time in the US. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 10(2), 125-137.

Boix, C. (2008). Economic roots of civil wars and revolutions in the contemporary world. *World Politics*, 60(03), 390-437.

Boulianne, S. (2009). Does Internet use affect engagement? A meta-analysis of research. *Political Communication,* 26, 193–211.

Brady, H. E., Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. L. (1995). Beyond SES: A resource model of political participation. *American Political Science Review*, 89(02), 271-294.

Brockett, C. D. (1991). The structure of political opportunities and peasant mobilization in Central America. *Comparative politics*, 253-274.

Breuer, A., Landman, T and Farquhar, D. (2014). Social media and protest mobilization: evidence from the Tunisian revolution. *Democratization*, 1-29.

Buechler, S. M. (2002). Toward a structural approach to social movements. *Sociological Views on Political Participation in the 21st Century*, 10, 1-45.

Cable, S. (1992). Women's social movement involvement: The role of structural availability in recruitment and participation processes. *Sociological Quarterly*, 35-50.

Cai, Y. (2002). The resistance of Chinese laid-off workers in the reform period. *The China Quarterly*, 170, 327-344.

Campante, F. R., & Chor, D. (2012). Why was the Arab world poised for revolution? Schooling, economic opportunities, and the Arab Spring. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 26(2), 167–188.

Castells, M. (2012).*Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chan, J. M., & Lee, F. L. (2007). Political opportunities, social mobilization and collective action: The re-invigorated pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. *China Review*, 93-121.

Chan, J. M., & Lee, F. L. (2008). Who can mobilize Hong Kong people to protest?. In M. Sing (Ed.), *Politics and government in Hong Kong: Crisis under Chinese sovereignty*. London: Routledge, 14-37.

Chen, C. J. J. (2009). Growing social unrest and emergent protest groups in China. in Hsiao, H. H. M., & Lin, C. Y. (Eds.). *Rise of China: Beijing's Strategies and Implications for the Asia-Pacific*. London: Routledge., 87-105.

Chen, X. (2012). S*ocial protest and contentious authoritarianism in China.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center) (2015). Statistical Report on Internet Development in China (35). http://www.cnnic.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/201502/P020150203551802054676.pdf.

Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4), 563-595.

Corrigall-Brown, C., & Wilkes, R. (2014). Media exposure and the engaged citizen: How the media shape political participation. *The Social Science Journal*, 51(3), 408-421.

Costello, M., Jenkins, J. C., & Aly, H. (2015). Bread, Justice, or Opportunity? The Determinants of the Arab Awakening Protests. *World Development*, 67, 90-100.

Curran, J. et al. (2013). Internet revolution revisited: a comparative study of online news. *Media, Culture and Society*, 35(7), 880-897.

Dalton, R., & Van Sickle, A. (2005). The resource, structural, and cultural bases of protest. Center for the Study of Democracy. 1-23.

Dalton, R., Van Sickle, A., &Weldon, S. (2010). The individual–institutional nexus of protest behaviour. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40, 51–73.

Damm, J. (2007). The Internet and the fragmentation of Chinese society. *Critical Asian Studies*, 39(2), 273-294.

Diamond, L. (2010). Liberation technology. *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3), 69-83.

Duerst-Lahti, G. (1989). The government's role in building the women's movement. *Political Science Quarterly*, 249-268.

Eisinger, P. K. (1973). The conditions of protest behavior in American cities. *American Political Science Review*, 67(01), 11-28.

Enjolras, B., Steen-Johnsen, K., & Wollebæk, D. (2013). Social media and mobilization to offline demonstrations: Transcending participatory divides?. *New Media & Society*, 15(6), 890-908.

Farrell, H. (2012). The consequences of the Internet for politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15, 35-52.

Gamson, W. A., & Meyer, D. S. (1996). Framing Political Opportunity. In McAdam et al. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities*, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings. Chicago: Cambridge University Press, 275-290.

Gerbaudo, P (2012). *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism.* New York: Pluto Press.

Gleason, B. (2013). # Occupy Wall Street: Exploring informal learning about a social movement on Twitter. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7) 966–982.

Go-Globe. (2014). Hong Kong Internet and Telecommunications Reports. http://www.go-globe.hk/blog/Internet-usage-hong-kong/

Goodwin, J., & Jasper, J. M. (1999). Caught in a winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory. *Sociological Forum*, 14(1), 27-54.

Gries, P. H., & Rosen, S. (Eds.) (2004). *State and Society in 21st Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*. London: Routledge.

Grofman, B. N., & Muller, E. N. (1973). The strange case of relative gratification and potential for political violence: The V-curve hypothesis. *American Political Science Review*, 67(02), 514-539.

Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Hall, R. L., Rodeghier, M., & Useem, B. (1986). Effects of education on attitude to protest. *American Sociological Review*, 564-573.

Harwit, E., & Clark, D. (2001). Shaping the Internet in China. Evolution of political control over network infrastructure and content. *Asian Survey*, 41(3), 377-408.

Hendrix, C., Haggard, S., & Magaloni, B. (2009). Grievance and opportunity: Food prices, political regime, and protest. In presentation at the International Studies Association Convention, New York, 1-36

Heberer, T. (2012). Creating Civil-Society Structures Top-Down? In Yu Jianxing and Guo Sunjian (ed.), *Civil Society and Governance in China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 63-84.

Hess, S. (2010). Nail Houses, Land Rights, and Frames of Injustice on China's Protest Landscape. *Asian Survey*, 50(5), 908-926.

Howard, P. N. & Hussain, M. M. (2013). *Democracy's fourth wave?: digital media and the Arab Spring*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hurst, W. (2004). Understanding contentious collective action by Chinese laid-off workers: the importance of regional political economy. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 39(2), 94-120.

Hurst, W., & O'Brien, K. J. (2002). China's contentious pensioners. *The China Quarterly*, 170, 345-360.

Jenkins, J. C., Jacobs, D., & Agnone, J. (2003). Political Opportunities and African-American Protest, 1948–19971. *American Journal of Sociology*, 109(2), 277-303.

Jenkins, J. C. & Klandermans, B. (Eds.). (2005). *The politics of social protest: Comparative perspectives on states and social movements*. London: UCL Press Limited.

Jennings, M. K. (1987). Residues of a movement: The aging of the American protest generation. *American Political Science Review*, 81(02), 367-382.

King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(02), 326-343.

Kitschelt, H. P. (1986). Political opportunity structures and political protest: Anti-nuclear movements in four democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 16(01), 57-85.

Klandermans, B. (1984). Mobilization and participation: Social-psychological expansions of resource mobilization theory. *American Sociological Review*, 49: 583–600.

Klandermans, B., & Oegema, D. (1987). Potentials, networks, motivations, and barriers: Steps towards participation in social movements. *American sociological review*, 519-531.

Le Bon, G. (1897). *The crowd: A study of the popular mind*. Fischer.

Lee, C. K. (2000). The Revenge of History: Collective Memories and Labor Protests in North-Eastern China. *Ethnography*, 1(2), 217-237.

Lee, C. K. (2007). *Against the law: labor protests in China's rustbelt and Sunbelt*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lee, F. L. (2010). The perceptual bases of collective efficacy and protest participation: The case of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 22(3), 392-412.

Lee, F. L., & Chan, J. M. (2008). Making sense of participation: The political culture of pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong. *The China Quarterly*, 193, 84-101.

Lei, Y. W. (2011). "The Political Consequences of the Rise of the Internet: Political Beliefs and Practices of Chinese Netizens", Political Communication, 28:3, 291-322.

Leighley, J. E. (1990). Social interaction and contextual influences on political participation. *American Politics Research*, 18(4), 459-475.

Leighley, J. E. (1995). Attitudes, opportunities and incentives: A field essay on political participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, 181-209.

Li, L. (2013). The Magnitude and Resilience of Trust in the Center Evidence from Interviews with Petitioners in Beijing and a Local Survey in Rural China. *Modern China*, 39(1), 3-36.

Li, L., Liu, M., & O'Brien, K. J. (2012). Petitioning Beijing: the high tide of 2003–2006. *The China Quarterly*, 210, 313-334.

Li, L., & O'Brien, K. J. (1996). Villagers and popular resistance in contemporary China. *Modern China*, 28-61.

Li, L., & Tian, H. (Ed.) (2014). *Blue Book of Rule of Law in China*. Beijing: Social Science Academic Press.

Liao, W. (2012). Strategies for spreading information from local to global in social complex networks, cases from a village in China. In Proceedings of the First ACM International Workshop on Hot Topics on Interdisciplinary Social Networks Research, 57-60.

Liu, J. (2013). Mobile communication, popular protests and citizenship in China. *Modern Asian Studies*, 47(03), 995-1018.

Liu, J. and Zhao, H. (2010). Mobile communication, public participation and e-governance in China: a case study of Xiamen anti-PX demonstration. In Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, 327-332.

Lorentzen, P. L. (2013). Regularizing rioting: Permitting public protest in an authoritarian regime. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 8(2), 127-158.

Lowrance, S. (2006). Identity, grievances, and Political action: Recent evidence from the Palestinian community in Israel. *International Political science Review*, 27(2), 167-190.

MacKinnon, R. (2011). China's" networked authoritarianism". *Journal of Democracy*, 22(2), 32-46.

Martin, B. (1994). Protest in a liberal democracy. *Philosophy and Social Action*, 20(1-2), 93-117.

McAdam, D. (1982). *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D. (1989). The biographical consequences of activism. *American Sociological Review*, 744-760.

McAdam, D. (1992). Gender as a mediator of the activist experience: The case of Freedom Summer. *American Journal of Sociology,* 1211-1240.

McAdam, D. (1996). Conceptual origins, current problems, future directions. In McAdam et al. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities,* mobilizing structures, and cultural framings. Chicago: Cambridge University Press, 23-40.

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., and Tilly, C. (2004). *Dynamics of Contention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 1212-1241.

Meyer, D. S. (2004). Protest and political opportunities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 125-145.

Meyer, D. S., & Minkoff, D. C. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunity. *Social Forces*, 82(4), 1457-1492.

Meyer, D. S., & Staggenborg, S. (1996). Movements, countermovements, and the structure of political opportunity. *American Journal of Sociology,* 1628-1660.

Micó, J. L. & Casero-Ripollés, A. (2014). Political activism online: organization and media relations in the case of 15M in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17:7, 858-871.

Muller, E. N. (1986). Income inequality and political violence: The effect of influential cases. *American Sociological Review,* 441-445.

Muller, E. N., Dietz, H. A., & Finkel, S. E. (1991). Discntent and the expected utility of rebellion: The case of Peru. *The American Political Science Review,* 85, 1261–1282.

Nie, N. H., Verba, S., & Kim, J. O. (1974). Political participation and the life cycle. *Comparative Politics*, 319-340.

Norris, P. (2001). *Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty and the Internet worldwide.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2012). The impact of social media on the Arab uprisings: the Facebook, twitter, and YouTube revolutions. Joint sessions of the ECPR, Antwerp, Belgium, 1-29.

Norris, P., Walgrave, S., & Van Aelst, P. (2005). Who demonstrates? Anti-state rebels, conventional participants, or everyone?. *Comparative politics*, 189-205.

O'Brien, K. J. (2002). Collective action in the Chinese countryside, *The China Journal*, 48, 139–154.

O'Brien, K. J. (2009). *Popular protest in China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

O'Brien, K. J., & Li, L. (2006). *Rightful resistance in rural China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olson, M. (1965). *The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Opp, K. D., & Kittel, B. (2009). The dynamics of political protest: feedback effects and interdependence in the explanation of protest participation. *European sociological review*, 26(1) 97-109.

Pan, J., & Xu, Y. (2015). China's Ideological Spectrum. Research Paper, 1-58.

http://www.jaredchung.com/jen_pan/manuscript_ideology.pdf.

Paulsen, R. (1991). Education, social class, and participation in collective action. *Sociology of Education*, 96-110.

Pearce, K. E., & Kendzior, S. (2012). Networked authoritarianism and social media in Azerbaijan. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 283-298.

Perry, E. J. (2001). Challenging the mandate of heaven: popular protest in modern China. *Critical Asian Studies*, 33(2), 163-180.

Perry, E. J. (2002). *Challenging the mandate of heaven: social protest and state power in China*. ME Sharpe.

Petrie, M. (2004). A research note on the determinants of protest participation: Examining socialization and biographical availability. *Sociological Spectrum*, 24(5), 553-574.

POPCON (2014). PopCon survey on Occupy Movement. see: http://popcon.hkupop.hku.hk/popcon_v1/index_proposedQuestResult.php?lang=ch#OMResults3w

Regan, P. M., & Norton, D. (2005). Greed, grievance, and mobilization in civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(3), 319-336.

Rodríguez, S. M. (2014). Has social media fundamentally altered the role of the media in conflict, or simply speeded up the normal process of communication? Case study: Umbrella 2014 Hong Kong Protests.http://www.academia.edu/12078491/Has_social_media_fundamentally_altered_the_role_of_the_media_in_conflict_or_simply_speeded_up_the_normal_process_of_communication_Case_study_Umbrella_2014_Hong_Kong_Protests._Theoretical_approach_Johan_Galtung

Ross, M., Thibaut, J., & Evenbeck, S. (1971). Some determinants of the intensity of social protest. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 7(4), 401-418.

Schock, K. (1999). People power and political opportunities: Social movement mobilization and outcomes in the Philippines and Burma. *Social Problems*, 46(3), 355-375.

Scott, W. J., & Acock, A. C. (1979). Socioeconomic status, unemployment experience, and political participation: A disentangling of main and interaction effects. *Political Behavior*, 1(4), 361-381.

Shafiq, M. N., Mason, J., Seybolt, T., & DeLuca, K. (2014). Are Student Protests in Arab States Caused by Economic and Political Grievances? Empirical Evidence from the 2006–07 Arab Barometer. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 89(1), 141-158.

Sherkat, D. E., & Blocker, T. J. (1994). The political development of sixties' activists: Identifying the influence of class, gender, and socialization on protest participation. *Social Forces*, 72(3), 821-842.

Shi, F. Y. (2014). Improving Local Governance without Challenging the State: The Middle-Class Protest in Urban China. *China: An International Journal*, 12(1), 153-162.

Simmons, E. (2014). Grievances do matter in mobilization. *Theory and Society*, 43(5), 513-546.

Singerman, D. (2013). Youth, gender, and dignity in the Egyptian uprising. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 9(3), 1-27.

Stern, M. J., & Rookey, B. D. (2012). The politics of new media, space, and race: A socio-spatial analysis of the 2008 presidential election. *New Media & Society*, 15(4), 519-540.

Su, Y., & He, X. (2010). Street as courtroom: State accommodation of labor protest in South China. *Law & Society Review*, 44(1), 157-184.

Taneja, H., & Wu, A. X. (2014). Does the Great Firewall really isolate the Chinese? Integrating access blockage with cultural factors to explain Web user behavior. *The Information Society,* 30(5), 297-309.

Tang, M., & Huhe, N. (2014). Alternative framing: The effect of the Internet on political support in authoritarian China. *International Political Science Review*, 35(5), 559-576.

Tarrow, S. (1994). *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. (1996). States and opportunities: The political structuring of social movements. In McAdam et al. (Eds.). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings.* Chicago: Cambridge University Press, 41-61.

Tilly, C. (1979). Social movements and national politics. Social Organization, Center for Research on Working Paper Series (CRSO), 1-30.

Tilly, C. (2004). *Social Movements, 1768-2004*. London: Paradigm Publishers.

Tilly, C. (2010). *Regimes and repertoires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thomassen, J. (1990). Economic crisis, dissatisfaction and protest. In Jennings, M. K., & van Deth, J. (Eds.). *Continuities in Political Action*. New York: Walter de Gruyter. 103-134.

Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 363-379.

Van Aelst, P., & Walgrave, S. (2001). Who is that (wo)man in the street? From the normalization of protest to the normalization of the protester. *European Journal of Political Research*, 39(4), 461-486.

Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2013). The social psychology of protest. *Current Sociology,* 1-20.

Valenzuela, S., Arriagada, A., and Scherman, A (2012). The Social Media Basis of Youth Protest Behavior: The Case of Chile. J*ournal of Communication*, 62, 299–314.

Valenzuela, S. (2013). Unpacking the use of social media for protest behavior the roles of information, opinion expression, and activism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7), 920-942.

Van Aelst, P., & Walgrave, S. (2002). New media, new movements? The role of the Internet in shaping the 'anti-globalization' movement. *Information, Communication & Society,* 5(4), 465-493.

Verba, S., & Nie, N. H. (1972). *Participation in America: Social equality and political democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H., & Nie, N. H. (1993). Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?. *American Political Science Review*, 87(02), 303-318.

Vladisavljević, N. (2014). Popular protest in authoritarian regimes: evidence from communist and post-communist states. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 14(2), 139-157.

Voss, K., & Williams, M. (2012). The local in the global: Rethinking social movements in the new millennium. *Democratization*, 19(2), 352-377.

Weede, E. (1986). Income inequality and political violence reconsidered. *American Sociological Review*, 438-441.

Wilkes, R. (2004). First nation politics: deprivation, resources, and participation in collective action. *Sociological Inquiry*, 74(4), 570-589.

Wolfsfeld, G., Segrev, E., & Sheafer, T. (2013). Social media and the Arab Spring: Politics comes first. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(2), 115–137.

Yamamoto, M., Kushin, M. J. and Dalisay, F. (2013). Social media and mobiles as political mobilization forces for young adults: Examining the moderating role of online political expression in political participation. *New Media & Society*, 1– 19.

Yang, Q., & Tang, W. (2010). Exploring the sources of institutional trust in China: Culture, mobilization, or performance?. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 2(3), 415-436.

Yang, R. O. (2015). Political Process and Widespread Protests in China: the 2010 labor protest. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24(91), 21-42.

Zhang, W. (2015). Protest Leadership and State Boundaries: Protest Diffusion in Contemporary China. *The China Quarterly*, 360-381.

Zhao D. X. (2001). *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Zheng, Y., & Wu, G. (2005). Information technology, public space, and collective action in China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(5), 507-536.

Zhou, X. (1993). Unorganized interests and collective action in communist China. *American Sociological Review*, 54-73.

# Appendix

Table 1. The Results of Regression Analysis for Hong Kong

| | Internet use | Political system | Local government | Economy | Economic change | Political interest | Resolving problems | Attending Campaigns | Signing petitions | Final model |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Independent variables** | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***A. Demographics*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| —Gender (1=male) | .321** | .033 | .015 | -.323** | -.067 | .561*** | .017 | .135 | -.889** | -.070 |
| —Age | -.088*** | -.018*** | -.012** | -.001 | -.001 | .001 | -.006 | .021 | -.004 | .015 |
| —Education | .462*** | .081** | .053 | -.063** | -.029 | .146*** | -.089 | -.285 | .123 | .090 |
| —Income | .402*** | -.016 | .031 | .016 | -.011 | .102 | .118 | -.109 | -.161 | -.093 |
| ***B. Internet use*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| —Internet use | | | | | | .085** | .137 | -.138 | .024 | .391** |
| ***C. Grievances*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| —Political system | | | | | | -.102 | .153 | -.123 | .784** | .739** |
| —Local government | | | | | | .288** | .283 | -.460 | -.334 | .623* |
| —Economic condition | | | | | | -.244** | .177 | .562 | -.224 | -.121 |
| —Economic change | | | | | | .003 | -.093 | -.383 | .449* | .487* |
| ***D. Political opportunity*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| —Political interest | | | | | | | .736*** | 1.009** | .855** | 1.151*** |
| —Resolving problems | | | | | | | | | | 1.348** |
| —Attending campaigns | | | | | | | | | | 2.347** |
| —Signing petitions | | | | | | | | | | 1.511** |
| **R square** | .054 | .032 | .016 | .078 | .002 | .141 | .126 | .159 | .218 | .492 |

*Notes*: ***p≤0.01, **p≤0.05, *p≤0.1.

| | Internet use | Political system | Local government | Economy | Economic change | Political interest | Resolving problems | Attending Campaigns | Signing petitions | Final model |

Table 2. The Results of Regression Analysis for China

| **Independent variables** | | | | | | | | | | | *N* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***A. Demographics*** | | | | | | | | | | | *otes*: |
| —Gender (1=male) | .116 | .093 | .230** | -.267** | -.120 | .310** | .384** | -.026 | .455* | .119 | ***p |
| —Age | -.065*** | -.011** | -.011** | -.018*** | -.005 | .022*** | -.012** | .014** | -.001 | .002 | ≤0.0 |
| —Education | .471*** | .030 | .079** | -.094*** | .082** | .213*** | -.074* | .121** | .114** | .106 | 1, |
| —Income | .397*** | .063* | .049 | .50 | .038 | -.029 | -.075 | -.010 | -.138 | -.103 | **p≤ |
| ***B. Internet use*** | | | | | | | | | | | 0.05, |
| —Internet use | | | | | | .019 | .056 | -.011 | .113* | -.015 | *p≤0 |
| ***C. Grievances*** | | | | | | | | | | | .1. |
| —Political system | | | | | | .000 | .202** | -.197** | .140 | .322 | |
| —Local government | | | | | | .168** | .019 | -.383*** | -.108 | -.252 | |
| —Economic condition | | | | | | -.144** | .097 | -.088 | .062 | .057 | |
| —Economic change | | | | | | -.168** | -.018 | -.258** | .062 | .585** | |
| ***D. Political opportunity*** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —Political interest | | | | | | | .339*** | .179** | .252* | .175 | |
| —Resolving problems | | | | | | | | | | 2.239*** | |
| —Attending campaigns | | | | | | | | | | -.127 | |
| —Signing petitions | | | | | | | | | | 2.095*** | |
| **R square** | .433 | .015 | .027 | .056 | .018 | .069 | .044 | .063 | .049 | .340 | |

# Notes

1 See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_1_July_marches

2 See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Party_of_China

3 See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falun_Gong