72/1 – March 2025 issue

Mobilization of Mission Trips: The Case of Northbound Catholics in Hong Kong

Chit Wai John MOK

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Abstract

China's 'reform and opening-up' in 1978 offered new but uncertain opportunities for people in Hong Kong, then a British colony, to travel northward to mainland China. Many were to contribute to the country's economic revival. Understudied was a group of Catholics who capitalized on the new situation to reconnect the Church on the mainland with the universal Catholic Church. What motivated these 'northbound Catholics' to repeatedly embark on such short-term mission trips? This paper adopts the additive model of demand and supply developed by the social movement scholar Bert Klandermans to examine why and how these religious practitioners were recruited. Based on in-depth interviews and archival research, the paper shows that *identity*, *ideology*, and *instrumentality* on both the demand and supply sides were essential during the process. The findings suggest that the study of religious actions could benefit from social movement studies.

Keywords

Catholic Church, China, Hong Kong, mission, mobilization, religion

Résumé

Chit Wai John MOK is a research assistant professor at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He received his PhD from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. His research interests include sociology of culture, institutions, religion, Catholicism, and film production.

Mots-clés

Chine, Église catholique, Hong Kong, mission, mobilisation, religion

Introduction

In around 1979, Rev. S, a young priest from British Hong Kong, made his first attempt to visit Catholic churches in mainland China. He went to Guangzhou[1] to visit the bishop there, who was recognized by the government but not the Vatican. With an address given by an informant, he went to a small residential area next to the majestic Sacred Heart Cathedral. He found the designated place but was turned away twice. Refusing to give up, he made a third attempt. This time he was invited in. In a small room sat the bishop. After a cordial conversation, the bishop led him to visit the Cathedral.

In 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the People's Republic of China (PRC), religions soon came under different degrees of repression. The Catholic Church in China was a key target because of its alleged imperialistic origin and ties with foreign forces. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), all forms of religious activities were forbidden. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping, the Party's new leader, implemented the policy of 'reform and opening-up' to liberalize the economy and resume ties with the outside world. Many Hong Kongers capitalized on the new policy to go northward. In most cases, they went there to invest and develop businesses, bringing in capital to boost economic reconstruction. Among them was also a group of Catholics like Rev. S, who saw the opening-up as an opportunity, however uncertain, to reconnect the Church in mainland China with the universal Catholic Church. What were the motivations behind these 'northbound Catholics'?

In recent decades, short-term mission (STM) has become a common strategy adopted by mostly Protestant churches in the global north (Howell, 2009, 2012; Jenkins, 2002; Offutt, 2011; Priest, 2007, 2010; Wuthnow, 2002; Wuthnow and Offutt, 2008), as well as an important subject of scholarly research. The northbound trips made by Hong Kong Catholics share many features of the Protestant STM. For instance, both kinds of trips brought capital to the hosts, and travelers of both forms sought faithful experiences. However, the existing STM literature is largely descriptive. To further examine motivations, this paper adopts the *additive model of supply and demand* introduced by the social movement scholar Bert Klandermans (Klandermans, 2004; Van

Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017) which explains recruitment and mobilization of movements. It comprises three aspects of analysis on both the demand and supply sides: *identity*, *ideology*, and *instrumentality*. The demand side refers to a potential for change, while the supply side refers to opportunities offered by organizers. I will show that this model, slightly amended, works well in explaining the motivations behind the northbound trips.

First, the trips were heavily motivated by a demand to express two identities: a Chinese national identity and an ecclesial identity (*identity*). Second, an understanding of faith colored the trips, as travelers sought to experience, and be impressed by, a manifestation of faith that they perceived as simpler and more genuine (*ideology*). Finally, the travelers sought to address the needs of their counterparts on the mainland, namely, to rebuild churches and to renew theological teachings (*instrumentality*).

In the early phase, the trips were based on individual and voluntaristic initiatives. Later when Pope John Paul II openly called for more dialogue with Beijing, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong and several religious orders formalized many more northbound trips. Therefore, concerning *instrumentality*, the Church hierarchy acted as a supplier to lead individual Catholics. However, regarding *identity* and *ideology*, the travelers were their own suppliers. The trips were therefore partially self-mobilized.

Theoretically, this paper aims at merging social movement studies with the sociological study of religion. It will show that the study of religious actions such as mission trips, though rarely considered a movement, can be explained by mobilization

models developed by movement studies (Snow and Beyerlein, 2019). The findings also suggest how the additive model can be refined and updated to investigate decentralized movements.

The Additive Model of Demand and Supply

In recent decades, there has been a flourishing scholarship that examines short-term mission (STM), a common strategy adopted by Protestant churches in the West (Offutt, 2011). Enoch Wan and Geoffery Hartt (2008: 65) defines STM as 'intentionally limited, organized, cross-cultural mission efforts for a pre-determined length of time without participants making a residency-based commitment of more than two years.' STM is regarded as a key channel bridging Christianity between the north and the south on the one hand, and energizing new cores of Christian evangelization on the other (Jenkins, 2002). Very often, STM trips are considered 'cultural moments' (Howell, 2012) in which travelers, mediated by a strong ready-made narrative, experience a cultural journey to deepen their faith (Trinitapoli and Vaisey, 2009). In addition, STM participants also bring their receiving hosts capital, i.e., material resources and personal networks (Offutt, 2011; Priest, 2010).

The northbound trips made by Hong Kong Catholics since the late 1970s resemble many STM's characteristics. The abovementioned literature thus offers an elemental framework to investigate the nature of those trips. To further our understanding of the motivation(s) behind those northbound Catholics, I propose adopting the additive model

of demand and supply developed by Bert Klandermans (2004). Though the model aims at explaining the social movement mobilization, I will show that it also works well in examining mission trips, a religious activity.

The additive model of demand and supply is developed to study why individuals participate in social movements (Klandermans, 2004; see also Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017). Klandermans defines demand as 'the potential of in a society for protest', while supply refers to 'the opportunities staged by protest organizers' (2004: 360-361). Mobilization connects demand and supply to render a movement possible. The model covers both the antecedents of movement participation as well as persistent participation or falling out. The participants in my case were not necessarily joining the same trips. However, they together constituted a collective action that spanned decades. In this section, I will examine the additive model and explain how it can be applied to analyzing religious actions.

The Demand Side

According to Klandermans (2004), demand refers to a *potential* for change. He further breaks it down into three aspects: instrumentality, collective identity, and ideology (culture, meaning, moral reasoning, etc.). Each aspect corresponds to a 'fundamental [reason] why movement participation is appealing to people' (Klandermans, 2004: 361). The model is *additive*, Klandermans argues, as the motives can compensate one another, and that the motives may interact (2004: 362). Mobilization can still occur with just one

motive present, but it is much less likely than when all three motives are involved.

Identity. Collective identity takes up a central place in the mobilization literature. Citing Simon (1998, 1999), Klandermans (2004: 364) describes identity as 'a place in society.' We may have identities that are mutually exclusive, nested, or cross-cutting. A person may identify herself as a Californian and an American at the same time. An identity's salience depends on circumstances. As Klandermans argues, 'circumstances may force a collective identity into awareness whether people like it or not' (2004: 364).

More specifically, Tajfel (1978: 63) defines identity as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership'. In other words, it is based on a 'social category membership,' and can be defined as a 'social identity' (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017: 111). A person is cognitively aware of a social group that he belongs to, and develops affective ties with members of the same group. On the other hand, collective identity is shared by group members, and group identification is what links up the social and collective identity (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017: 111) Other scholars may define identities slightly differently (for example, Hunt and Benford, 2004; Snow, 2013), but the key point remains.

Movement scholars are also concerned with identity building *during* a movement (Hunt and Benford, 2004; Klandermans et al., 2002; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017). Homosexual people who identify themselves as gays may go on

the streets to fight for rights for the gay community. During the mobilization process, participants may also develop an attachment to the movement itself. Hence identity is not only a product, but also a process (Fominaya, 2010). It is always developing. A well-nurtured movement identity can produce commitment and solidarity, while conflicts or disappointment may lead to de-identification and dropping out. For example, when a movement is not yielding any visible results, some participants may be disillusioned and refrain from further participation.

We are always identified with some collectivities, but we are not always willing to take action. Group identity needs to be activated to afford actions. For political actions in general, being threatened is a common activating factor that significantly raises the a group identity's salience (Chan et al., 2021; Coser, 1998; Huddy, 2013). Besides threats, a window of opportunity may also activate an identity (Chu, 2020; Lui, 2019). Similarly, a collective identity is thus constantly shaped and 'under construction' throughout a mobilization process (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017: 108).

Instrumentality. The second component is instrumentality, which refers to 'movement participation as an attempt to influence the social and political environment' (Klandermans, 2004: 361). To put it most simply, instrumentality addresses the demand for changes. For people to take part in a collective action, they must be dissatisfied with the current situation. Usually, they believe that there are social wrongs that need to be addressed and that they believe it is necessary to take action to set things straight. In other words, they must have *grievances*.

Grievances may be first-hand experiences. Yet, one may be driven into action by witnessing some others being unjustly treated. For example, people who are sympathetic to a movement may form a 'conscience constituency' (Zwerman and Steinhoff, 2005) to offer support for core participants. Sympathizers may take action after witnessing core members being maltreated (Mok, 2022). Combining the identity and instrumentality components, it is reasonable to argue that as long as one is identified with a community, she may be motivated to take action when she sees other members suffer, even if she herself does not directly experience any unjust treatment.

The social movements scholarship has long cautioned that grievances *per se* are not sufficient in motivating collective action. To take action, one must also have a belief that the situation can be changed (Gamson, 1992). This points to efficacy. To sustain action, people need to perceive that the mobilizing group can keep operating in a somewhat united manner, and that goals can be achieved in the foreseeable future (Lee, 2005; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2019). With high efficacy perceptions, people have a stronger urge to take collective action.

Ideology. Klandermans (2004) defines ideology expansively as a want to express one's views. Hence, it does not matter whether a person is a committed Marxist or a homeless person with little ideological convictions. He may want to make known to the public his community's suffering, or their indignation against injustices inflicted upon them. The will to change the situation (instrumentality) and the want to express anger (ideology) are not mutually exclusive. Relatedly, Klandermans includes emotions in this

aspect. Expressing anger, especially moral indignation, is not uncommon in movements.

The idea of ideology as expression is highly relevant to religious action. While missionary works have specific aims, such as raising the number of believers, religious actors often do not see such works simply in an instrumental way. Participation itself is an expression of faith. This aspect will be further discussed below.

The Supply Side

The supply-side refers to the 'opportunities staged by protest organizers' (Klandermans, 2004: 360–361). It is concerned with 'action repertoires, the effectiveness of social movements, the frames and ideologies movements stand for, and the constituents of identification they offer' (Klandermans, 2004: 361). In other words, Klandermans distinguishes between organizers and potential participants. He describes the supply-side as what the organizers can offer to motivate the potential participants to take action. There is a demand for change or expression, and certain elements have to be supplied to make things happen. Such a distinction is questionable, for a movement's structure is not always clearly structured. Yet, at this point, there are still values in Klanderman's basic framework. Similar to the demand side, he breaks down the supply side into the three aspects of identity, instrumentality, and ideology.

For identity, a movement offers an opportunity for people to 'act on behalf of one's group. This is most attractive if people identify strongly with their group' (Klandermans, 2004: 366). For example, a person who identifies with the gay

community may find it attractive to participate in a movement fighting for gay rights, for that allows him to express his identification.

Instrumentality on the supply-side refers to the presence of 'an image of an effective political force' (Klandermans, 2004: 366). Such an image is usually cultivated by certain movement organizations to attract new participants and sustain existing membership. Movement organizers need to offer glimpses of success or hope to raise efficacy perceptions among potential and existing participants.

Finally, ideology points to the significance of social movement organizations offering ideas or values to motivate participants. Typically, organizers construct frames (Benford and Snow, 2000) to define a situation, put the blame on someone, and suggest possible solutions. When participants share certain ideological frames, 'meaning is given to their world' (Klandermans, 2004: 368).

Mobilization

The additive model asserts that successful mobilization is the process that brings the two sides, demand and supply, together. Take *ideology* as an example. Assuming there is a group of homosexual people who suffer from discriminative governmental policies. They yearn to be able to express their identity openly and live in an environment that acknowledges their rights (demand side). On the other hand, there are several rights advocacy groups spreading frames that promote sexual and gender equality, blame the government for spreading fear, and advocate civil action to bring about reforms (supply

side). If those who are suffering find resonance with the frames and heed the call to take action, mobilization can be considered successful.

While Klandermans (2004) presents his model as one that incorporates the presence of at least one supplier-organizer, I would argue that this is not necessary. The straightforward logic of demand and supply implicates that those who are demanding are necessarily separated from the suppliers. They are to be mobilized by established groups, such as movement organizations. However, it is possible that the suffered can mobilize themselves, form their own organizations, construct their own ideologies, or draw frames from diverse and unconnected sources. The demanders can be their own suppliers. They grieve, demand changes, and supply themselves with frames they learn out there. For instance, the group of homosexual people mentioned above can learn from the ideas they read in books in a public library, and organize themselves into activists. Thus, in some cases, empirically speaking, the demanders and suppliers may be the same people or groups.

Some social movement scholars and sociologists of religion have long brought attention to the lack of synthesis between their subfields (e.g. Beckford, 2003; Hannigan, 1991; Zald, 1982). They attributed such 'silence' (Aminzade and Perry, 2001) to two major factors, namely a belief in the secularization thesis which suggests the declining social roles of religions (Hannigan 1991; Zald 1982), and a perception of religious movements as inclined towards conservatism and therefore obstructive to social change (Beckford, 2003). Some attempts were made to fill the gap. For example,

Mayer N. Zald (1982) utilizes the resource mobilization approach to show how religious organizations often offer a range of resources to support social activism.

The growing attention to new social movements (NSM) and new religious movements (NRM) in the 1980s offered fresh opportunities for synthesizing the two subfields, as both types of movements stressed on broadly defined cultural rights and expression of identities (Aminzade and Perry, 2001; Hannigan, 1991; Williams, 2000). John A. Hannigan (1991: 327) suggests that '[r]eligious and nonreligious social movements are thus potentially cut from the same cloth.' However, despite the attempts, synthetical research remains wanting. More recently, Andrew G. Walder (2009: 394) warns that '[t]he increasing variety of ideas about mobilization and the perennial controversies within the subfield has […] obscure[ed] the enduring narrowness of the focus on mobilization.' In addition, David A. Snow and Kraig Beyerlein (2019) again call for bringing the study of religion and social movements together.

This paper agrees with these sociologists and shows that the study of mobilization does not have to be confined to social movements or religious movements. Religious practitioners are often *mobilized* to act collectively without necessarily forming a movement. For instance, there are recent attempts to study how religious practitioners are mobilized politically (Beyerlein and Chaves, 2020) or in the nonprofit sector (Scheitle and McCarthy, 2018). Following this trend, instead of focusing on movements, this paper attempts to study the mobilization of religious activities *per se*. In the upcoming sections, I will show how the additive model is useful in explaining the

northbound trips made by Hong Kong Catholics. In some cases, the travelers were partially mobilized by the institutional Church; in others, however, they were self-mobilizers. Yet, the interaction between the demand and supply sides was clear. The trips did not themselves form a movement. However, as will be elaborated below, they collectively constituted the foundation of a 'bridge Church' (Wu, 1985) connecting the Church on the mainland and the universal Church. The findings will show how the additive model can facilitate meaningful analysis without the need to conceptualize the trips as a movement.

Background: The Catholic Church in mainland China and Hong Kong

The CCP founded the PRC in 1949. Beijing was hostile towards the Catholic Church because of its accused collaboration with imperialist powers. In 1951, the Holy See's nuncio to China was expelled. The Church in China was thus also cut off from the rest of the universal Church. Under the Party's leadership, some dioceses attempted to consecrate bishops without papal approval. A certain Catholic Laity Patriotic Association of China, later renamed the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), was founded to govern the ecclesial hierarchy. Pope Pius XII adopted an uncompromising stance and condemned the moves. When Mao Zedong started the Cultural Revolution in 1966, a policy of decimating religions was adopted (Yang 2012). All religions suffered from harsh persecution. Nevertheless, religions survived (Goossaert and Palmer, 2010; Yang, 2012).

After the chaotic period, the new leader Deng Xiaoping intended to bring the country on a relatively more liberal track. The policy of 'reform and opening-up' was implemented in 1978, and the CCP began to partially liberalize and marketize the country. With the new policy direction, religious life revived (Yang, 2012). Yet, the party also resumed its control over religious groups. The CCPA once again came forward to govern and control the Church, contributing to a split between the open and underground communities among Catholics. In some dioceses, disputes over loyalty and the legitimacy of the bishops drove the two communities further apart (Chan, 2015; Madsen, 1998). The Holy See and the PRC have not established official ties despite the new policy, as the two sovereignties repeatedly clash with each other, especially over the bishops' appointment (Mok, 2021).

The period between the late 70s and the early 90s was therefore a time of uncertainty for Catholics in China. There were new opportunities, but also confusion. Local Chinese dioceses were eager to rebuild churches, resume services, and reestablish contact with the Holy See. However, they lacked resources. Some began to reach out to the outside world in a largely informal manner. Hong Kong, as a British colony located at the southern border of the PRC and a Chinese special administrative region since 1997, served as an important window for China to meet the world. The Church in Hong Kong, unlike its counterpart on the mainland, has always been in communion with Rome. Its bishops are appointed by the Pope, and a *de facto* chargé d'affaires of the Holy See is stationed in the city (Leung, 1991). With the mainland's opening-up, some

Hong Kong Catholics utilized the open window to reach out to their fellow Catholics on the mainland.

In the early phase, individual priests and lay persons made adventurous trips to the mainland. They were there without comprehensive knowledge of the local situation. Later in the mid-1980s, Bishop John Baptist Wu (1985) of Hong Kong (later a Cardinal) positioned the Church in Hong Kong as a 'bridge Church.' The diocese and several religious orders thus began to officially send members northward. These northbound Catholics engaged in many different activities, ranging from teaching in seminaries, donating resources, passing on messages and documents from Rome, to offering social services.

It is under such a unique geopolitical and historical context that these northbound trips acquired their special characteristics. The Catholics brought not only material resources to the mainland dioceses but also cultural capital, especially updated theological knowledge, as church communities there were cut off from the universal Church for decades, including the years when the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)[2] was held. Many travelers were theologians and lecturers in seminaries. In addition, as the Catholic Church upheld the importance of universality and hierarchical governance, the northbound trips were essential in reintegrating the Church in China with the universal Church.

The question that this paper is trying to address is: *Why did those Catholics in Hong Kong decide to break their daily routine to repeatedly embark on trips to the*

north? In other words, *what mobilized them*? There was an institutional push: the Pope urged the Hong Kong Diocese to become a 'bridge Church.' However, the puzzle remains. First, especially in the late 70s and early 80s, there were already Catholics going north voluntarily. They were not asked by the diocese to do so. Second, neither the Pope nor the bishop forced their followers to go north; those who went did so voluntarily, especially laypeople who had no clerical obligations. As I will elaborate in the following sections, the three components of the additive model, namely *identity*, *instrumentality*, and *ideology*, can be applied to offer a comprehensive explanation.

Methods and data

This paper is part of a larger project that studies the Church in China, which relies on two major data sources: semi-structured in-depth interviews and archival research. This article is based on in-depth interviews with 25 Hong Kong Catholics who traveled back and forth between the mainland and Hong Kong since 'reform and opening-up' in 1978. The interviews were conducted between the years 2020 and 2022. The interviewees ranged from high-ranking prelates to laypeople who had experiences engaging with the Church in China in different ways, such as teaching in seminaries, collecting journalistic materials, and offering counseling services. I contacted them first through personal networks, and then by snowballing. To gauge the motivations behind their sustained engagement with mainland Catholics, in general, I started by asking them about their impressions before and after having the first contact with the Church on the mainland,

as well as other relevant experiences. I would then move on to ask them to explain the reasons for initiating the engagement, despite uncertainties and difficulties.[3]

Using interviews to gauge motivated action is not without flaws. Mario Small and Jenna M. Cook (2021) succinctly present the major challenges involved: deception, recall bias, reasonableness bias, intentionality bias, and single-motive bias. To counter these challenges, I adopted several strategies. First, I tried to build trust and rapport with the interviewees by making clear my identity as a Catholic who was concerned with the Church in China. My experience is that Catholics are in general more willing to talk to a Catholic interviewer who speaks the same 'language.' For instance, one interviewee, an old priest, told me that he was glad that I, whom he presumed to be a Chinese-identifying Catholic, could write and tell foreigners about the Church in China. Rapport helps lower, though not eliminate, the chance of deception. I followed Small and Cook's advice to triangulate. For example, I often followed up why-questions with how-questions. I also tried to invite stories (Chase, 2003) and ask them to recount events and experiences.

Besides interviewing, I also conducted archival research. There were three archival sources, *Kung Kao Po*, *UCA News*, and memoirs of some northbound Catholics. *Kung Kao Po* is the official newspaper of the Hong Kong Diocese. The newspaper covered northbound trips made by Hong Kong Catholics from time to time. *UCA News* is a news agency reputed for covering stories about the Church in China. Its news is widely used by scholars studying Chinese Catholics (e.g., Madsen 1998). I use these archival

materials both as first-hand sources and for cross-referencing.

The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, and the archival materials are in either Chinese or English. In this article, I use pseudonyms throughout to protect my informants, and some personal information was altered or hidden without changing the passages' core meaning. Published materials, on the other hand, are cited without deidentification. All translations are mine.

Findings

I will break down this section into three parts according to the three aspects proposed by Klandermans (2004): *identity*, *ideology*, and *instrumentality*. A Chinese national identity was a strong pushing force behind many northbound trips. On the other hand, many travelers also referred to their Catholic ecclesial identity when recalling the trips. Relatedly, the Church's teachings on ecclesial communion and faithfulness (*ideology*) guided the travelers when they embarked on those trips. They saw the need to bridge the Church on the mainland with the universal Church, and experienced moments of the expression of the faith. For *instrumentality*, these Hong Kong Catholics did not suffer from grievances; instead, they saw that their brothers and sisters on the mainland were in urgent need of material and theological resources.

Only a few of the northbound Catholics were directly responding to the call, or sometimes order, from the leadership of the diocese or the religious orders. Most were voluntarily making the trips and found a sense of accomplishment during the

mobilization process. For them, no supplier-organizers were mobilizing them. Instead, they supplied themselves with the necessary resources (e.g., national identity, sense of communion, efficacy) to sustain their mission efforts.

Identity: The (imagined) Chinese national identity and the Catholic ecclesial identity

The interplay between two identities became a constituting component of the trips: the Chinese national identity and the ecclesial identity, i.e., the identity as a member of the Catholic Church. On the demand side, a number of the interviewees recalled their eagerness to travel to the mainland to see the country with their own eyes. Especially in the early 80s, the opening-up offered a window of opportunity for them. Some saw the trips as an expression of patriotism. At the same time, as Catholics, they had an urge to establish contact with their fellow believers who were behind closed doors for decades. In some cases, the national identity trumped the ecclesial identity as the major driving force. However, the younger interviewees in general did not have strong patriotic sentiments. They instead emphasized their ecclesial identity. On the supply side, I would argue that the interviewees largely cultivated their own national identity through imagination or memories.

In 1984, Bishop John Baptist Wu (1984) issued a statement concerning the city's future. In the document, he expressed his identification with the Chinese nation: 'As Chinese (*Zhongguoren*), we are proud of our heritage - of our long history and our rich culture, which we treasure.' He then also pointed out the responsibility of being 'people

of Hong Kong' and 'Catholics.' Indeed, Chinese nationalism laid a foundation for the diocese's visions before and after the handover. The bridge Church idea therefore had a strong nationalistic tone. Yet, the bishop's exhortation was not as powerful as the northbound Catholics' nostalgic sentiments or imagination.

The two oldest interviewees came to Hong Kong from the mainland before the Cultural Revolution. For them, their northbound trips were a kind of 'homecoming.' Rev. Z excitedly recalled his first trip back to his hometown to teach in a seminary:

> I *returned* to [my hometown], [a family member of mine] was still [there]. Especially since I was going to teach in the seminary [there], I was very happy. And the seminary was in [District X]. [X] was where [an important church] was located. On top of the mount there stood [the church], and at the foot of the hill was the seminary. When I arrived, I was very happy. Because when I was young, paying a visit to [X] was a big thing, a pilgrimage. Now I was there. [4]

His homecoming experience was closely connected to his identification as a Chinese Catholic: 'I felt like I belonged to the Church in China, right?' Rev. Y was also from the mainland, and he was straightforward in explaining his motivation: 'I came out from up there.'[5] I asked if he meant he felt he was helping the nation, and he answered: 'Of course, of course. [As] a Chinese, I also hoped that the Church in China could open up.'

However, many other younger, mostly middle-aged, travelers were born in Hong Kong or overseas. Their identification with Chinese nationalism was an imagined one.

Rev. C was born in Hong Kong. When explaining the motivations behind his repeated visits to dioceses on the mainland, he mentioned Cardinal Wu's statement regarding being Chinese and Catholic. However, it is not quite correct to say that the Cardinal's words *created* Rev. C's national identity. Even before that, Rev. C already had some imaginations about his 'motherland.' He recalled:

> When I was young, I watched a film [about Hainan Island]. Those rural sceneries and coconut trees were very special. I had a longing [to visit the mainland]. So, I remember in the year after I became a priest, or in the second year, I brought a group of people to Shangchuan Island... When you arrived, wow! Four hundred years ago, that person was martyred there, St. Francis [Xavier].

Rev. C's national identity was established during his childhood, long before Cardinal Wu's exhortation. It was an identity based on literary works and personal imagination.

Rev. G had a similar story. He explained that his identification with the Chinese nation was developed when he was very young. When he was in the seminary, he read books from the mainland secretly, for those books were banned by the rector. He used his day-offs to go to a pro-Beijing bookstore to read Chinese literature as much as possible: 'Actually, I had a kind of affection (*qing*) towards China.' The word 'affection' is indicative. Rev. S, the priest we met at the article's beginning, explained that his identity was heavily influenced by his father, who died when doing business overseas: 'For their generation, many people who migrated overseas often thought of this: If I am

to die, I would come back to die. He gave me a very, very strong impression about this. So my affection and relationship with China were affected by him.' This sentiment was there before he was ordained a priest.

The strong sense of national identity was also developed *during* the trips. Very often, the travelers did not just visit dioceses. They also use the opportunities to travel across the country. They were captured by the natural sceneries and cultural heritages. For instance, Sister Emily Wong (2004: 16), who taught frequently in seminaries on the mainland, wrote retrospectively, 'I have been to Beijing no less than ten times. I have a special affection for this city.' The city of Beijing similarly fascinated Rev. G: 'I always wanted to go back to Beijing.'

One point to emphasize is that very often, the imagined Chinese identity was expressed in terms of *affection*. Besides the abovementioned cases, several others also used this expression: 'I study in Chinese language schools, receiving Chinese language education. I think I have an affection for China' (Rev. D); 'I would remember the trip I went with Cardinal Wu to eastern Guangdong. […] The speech that the Cardinal made in his hometown Meixian was both well written and full of affection.' (Tong, 1995: 319–320).[6]

We can see how the northbound trips were heavily influenced, or even constituted, by a national identity. However, on the other hand, the identity as a Church member also had its impact. Rev. C's experience was, again, illustrative. During the interview, he narrated a trip to the Silk Road via Lanzhou, where he entered a small church. He

connected his special feeling to an earlier experience: a retreat at the Taizé Community in France:

> The feeling was like when I stayed in Taizé for several weeks. On Sundays, I prayed. And one time when I was praying, I saw an Asian in the front, and on this side was an African, on that side was a European […] Suddenly I felt a sense of the Church, very strong. […] In the same vein in Lanzhou, I also felt that the Church was present. […] But it was not just the building structure. There were people present. Then I felt: Wow!

That the Church was present even in a relatively less-developed region in China left him with a deep impression.

The interplay between these two identities worked out differently for different people. While my data set is not large enough to derive a statistically representational analysis, it hints at possible generational differences. Sometimes the national side overrode the Catholic side. For example, Ms. K was a lay journalist who was in her old age when interviewed. Before describing her trips, she spent a long time explaining how she grew up under colonial rule and was deprived of the chance to know her nation.

In a few cases, the Catholic identity was more powerful. Rev. X was in his early sixties when interviewed. When describing his trips, he stressed his ecclesial identity over the national identity: 'The 'China element' was not that profound.' Mr. P, a lay Catholic in his forties, was a reporter. In the late 2000s, he spent two years reporting on the situations of mainland dioceses. He was ambivalent about his Chinese identification:

'I am not sure whether [the engagement] was because of a nationalistic awareness, or because I was a Church member.' As the number of Hong Kong people who identify themselves as Chinese has kept dwindling since 2008 (Steinhardt et al., 2017), northbound trips based on nationalism are likely to diminish over time.

Ideology: The quest for spiritual experiences

Howell (2012:21-22) argues that the Protestant STM trips he studied were often cultural moments in which participants were mediated to leave the daily routine and transcend. They were to assist fellow Christian brothers and sisters in need and, more importantly, they should be able to experience faith transformation through 'life-changing' experiences, which many of them did. Similarly, the northbound trips were moments of faith. The travelers often exclaimed how the receiving communities manifested a simple but devout faithfulness, which, they believed, was lacking among Hong Kong believers.

In 1991, a Catholic youth organization in Hong Kong organized a field trip to Shengsancun village (literally the Village of the Holy Trinity) in the Province of Sichuan. The Diocesan newspaper *Kung Kao Po* covered the trip with interviews of the participants. One of them was touched by the villagers' devoutness (Kung Kao Po, 1991a: 3):

> I feel like they have a very different mindset from us. Enthusiastic believers in Hong Kong also spend a lot of effort and money […] but what we offer

> are our surpluses. […] On the contrary, for the believers at the Shengsancun, if they spend less time farming, their families may suffer from hunger. So we know that they are really obeying the First Commandment: You shall not have strange gods before me.

Another member also expressed admiration: 'In terms of material, they were lacking. Their homes were empty. But spiritually, they were rich' (Kung Kao Po, 1992: 2). Similarly, a group of 18 religious sisters visited five mainland cities earlier in the same year. One exclaimed that she was impressed by how Catholics there kept a 'pure and steadfast faith' despite challenges (Kung Kao Po 1991b: 1)

Howell (2012: 32) argues that in the case of Protestant STM, the narrative of life-changing experiences was 'produced by elites and brought to the traveler in text and tradition are powerful mediators of the traveler's experience.' The elites of the institutional churches were the suppliers of the ideological frame. However, in the case of the northbound Catholics, many travelers were themselves Church elites, and they were influenced by the same narratives. They often contrasted the devoutness of mainland Catholics they encountered with the relatively lapsed practices of Hong Kong Catholics.

Rev. Y, who taught in seminaries, related the seminarians' devoutness to the lack of reforms based on Vatican II: 'Hong Kong was more open. They (the mainland Catholics) [in contrast] were very much like our old days, the ways before the Ecumenical Council (Vatican II), that kind of life. They were very devoted.' Catholics in

mountainous areas also manifested a devoutness that northbound Catholics found respectable.

Interestingly, this narrative, which has lost its colors due to China's rapid economic development in the past decades, continues to shape the experiences of some northbound travelers. Mr. C was still traveling to the mainland before the COVID-19 pandemic made that impossible in 2020. Even in the 2010s, he still admired the devoutness and simpleness of some mainland Catholic communities: 'I can see that the biggest difference between lay people on the mainland and that in Hong Kong is that they are very devout in […] chanting, and are loyal and obedient to the Church.'

These narratives have a basic storyline: Mainland Catholics are simple and more devout because of a lack of economic development or cultural differences, while Hong Kong Catholics are less ardent because the city has undergone rapid social transformation. Whether this portrayal is accurate is beside the point. The significance is that the travelers saw a kind of spiritual superiority on the mainland which attracted and sustained their engagement.

Instrumentality: The bridge Church and the transfer of capital

During the Cultural Revolution, Catholics in China were severely oppressed. Churches and other properties were emptied. Some were torn down, while others were left in ruins. When Beijing began to implement a policy of partial liberalization, for many Catholics, rebuilding churches and reestablishing community services were the

top priorities. Needless to say, they lacked the economic ability to do so. Moreover, as seminaries were shut down during persecution, very few young clerics were trained for a whole decade. Priests and nuns were released upon opening-up. Yet, many were old.

Both Rome and the diocesan leadership in Hong Kong were aware of the difficult situation in China. In 1984, Pope John Paul II (1984) openly called for Chinese diasporic Catholics to act as a bridge Church to connect Catholics in mainland China with the universal Church. Bishop John Baptist Wu (1985), upon his visit to the mainland, echoed the Pope: 'We learned that Pope John Paul... had addressed the Catholics of Taiwan and all overseas Chinese Catholics, and urged them to assume the task of being a bridge Church for our mainland compatriots […]. We are encouraged and honoured by being entrusted with this role.' The concept of the bridge Church was then formalized by the diocesan leadership. Religious orders followed suit. Thus, in terms of instrumentality, the Church institution acted as a supplier to mobilize Hong Kong Catholics to address the grievances experienced by their counterparts on the mainland.

Rev. C was a young diocesan priest during the 80s and 90s, and he held a not insignificant role in the diocesan hierarchy. He explained that Hong Kong Catholics were going north to raise funds to help rebuild churches and educate talents: '[The clerics on the mainland were either] very, very old, or were very, very young. So, we Hong Kong also sent some priests and sisters to teach.' Rev. L also saw the same issue: 'Their seminaries lacked teachers and professors. They therefore invited people from the

outside.' Ms. K, the lay journalist, was as well very concerned with the lack of priests and bishops. She recalled: 'At the beginning of the 80s, there were no young people. […] Even if those aged priests persisted, how many years could they stand?' As for material assistance, Mr. C, who once worked for the Hong Kong Diocese, recalled an experience of being asked by a Church person to bring cash secretly northward.

There was also a theological gap: The Church in China was isolated from the world when Vatican II took place. Vatican II implemented historic changes to the Church's approaches to engaging with the secular world. It also ushered in reforms in liturgies. Isolated from the universal Church, even in the 80s, mainland Catholics were still following pre-Vatican II theologies and liturgies (Madsen, 1998). There was an urgent need for updates. Many who taught in seminaries emphasized their mission to offer 'new' theological curricula. These lecturers usually stayed and taught in a seminary for three to four weeks each time. One interviewee, Rev. T, dedicated himself to liturgical reforms based on Vatican II.

Those who taught in seminaries often found satisfaction during the process. Rev. N proudly recalled his experience: 'In the beginning, those old people (on the mainland) were all out of touch, only those from the outside could catch up with the times. […] Those from the outside were always very popular. So I was very happy. The seminarians were very welcoming.' Rev. Z shared the joy: 'Wow! There were so many seminarians! You felt like you were very useful!' In other words, these lecturers believed that they were making real changes. They experienced a sense of efficacy.

When China's economy became more developed in the 90s and 2000s, the Church there also became more well-off. On the other hand, training offered by Hong Kong Catholics started to bear fruits. In addition, mainland dioceses began to send seminarians overseas. The need for cultural and material capital from Hong Kong therefore dwindled. Yet, new needs emerged. With economic growth, mainland dioceses saw the need for family and marriage counseling services and spiritual formation for lay people. Some lay Catholic groups in Hong Kong were invited north to offer training and hold retreats. These groups are still making northbound trips as of today. A small number of interviewees traveled north to offer journalistic coverage. For example, both Mr. P and Ms. B felt an urge to report on the repression faced by underground Catholic communities. Both mentioned how some mainland Catholic friends they made during the trips asked them to tell people outside more about their situations.

China remains authoritarian despite partial liberalization. The Holy See does not have formal diplomatic ties with Beijing, and thus has no official representatives stationed in mainland China. The Vatican's *de facto chargé d'affaires*, officially known as the head of the Holy See Study Mission, stations in Hong Kong. Since information and documents cannot be exchanged through normal diplomatic channels, the *chargé d'affaires* entrusts certain personnel from Hong Kong to do the channeling job. The bishops of Hong Kong also rely on them. Rev. L, for instance, once worked closely with successive *chargé d'affaires*. He was charged from time to time to bring letters of apostolic appointment and ecclesiastical rings to the designated bishops-elect on the

mainland. These trips formed the agentic foundation of the 'triangular relation' (Leung, 1991) between mainland China, Hong Kong, and the Holy See.

Discussion and conclusion

The study of Protestant short-term mission (STM) has been flourishing in recent decades. Scholars focus on explaining the trips' characteristics and their impacts on global Christianity (Howell 2009, 2012; Jenkins, 2002; Offutt, 2011; Priest, 2007, 2010; Wuthnow, 2002; Wuthnow and Offutt, 2008). Many participants (usually young people) expected to experience transformation (Howell, 2009, 2012). The transfer of capital is also considered a major objective (Offutt, 2011; Priest, 2007, 2010). The northbound trips of Hong Kong Catholics depicted above share some features with STM. This paper tries to take one step further to analyze the travelers' motivations. The additive model of supply and demand in movement studies (Klandermans, 2004; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017) presents a useful analytical framework.

Summarizing previous literature on movement recruitment, Klandermans (2004) proposes three aspects on both the demand and supply sides. They are *identity*, *ideology*, and *instrumentality*. Mobilization is the process that brings the two sides together. The model sharply differentiates the demanders from the suppliers. It posits the existence of movement organizations that supply relevant opportunities, images of effectiveness, and frames to match the demanders' yearning for changes.

Mission trips aim at making changes. Like movement participants, travelers break

their daily routine to address grievances and/or to express certain convictions. While the travelers do not necessarily travel together at the same time and to the same place, individual trips together amount to collective action. The proposed model of recruitment is therefore highly relevant in explaining what motivated the northbound Catholics.

In terms of *identity*, a large number of my interviewees pointed to their Chinese national identity to explain their motivation. Many also referred to a sense of belonging to the same Church, i.e., an ecclesial identity, when describing their experiences. For *ideology*, the Catholic faith played a strong role. For instance, some passionately explained how they were impressed by the 'pure and strong faith' manifested by mainland Catholics they met with. These Hong Kong Catholics yearned to express their patriotism and/or their sense of belongingness to the Church and sought to deepen their faith. However, unlike what Klandermans (2004) posits, at least with regard to identity and ideology, there were no mobilizing organizations explicitly supplying resources for the interviewees. Instead, they, as demanders, were also their own supplier-mobilizers.

The travelers also sought to address what they perceived as grievances experienced by their mainland brothers and sisters. They brought both material and theological resources to help rebuild and renew churches there. The Church hierarchy acted as a supplier by positioning the Diocese of Hong Kong as a bridge Church, further encouraging Hong Kong Catholics to extend their helping hands. Many interviewees recalled how they felt being 'useful' during the processes.

The findings manifest how frameworks or theories developed by social movement

studies can be applied to study religious actions. Future studies could extend the inquiry by looking at other forms of religious activities through the lens of movement theories. For example, scholars may explore the successes and failures of missionary strategies by employing the concept of 'political opportunity' (Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). Such an inquiry could extend to other empirical cases of mobilization of religious activities, such as Muslim participation in *Hajj*. On the other hand, social movement studies could also benefit from the examination of religious experiences. This paper's findings help refine the additive model. While we can conceptually distinguish between the demanders and the suppliers, empirically speaking, they can be the same people. The refined model will work better at explaining recent movements that are considered decentralized and leaderless/ful, such as Hong Kong's 2019 Anti-extradition Movement (Ho, 2020; Holbig, 2020).

The recent trend of the northbound trips is worth further observation. As the Church in China became far more well-off since the 2000s, the need for the trips greatly dwindled. Yet, some needs remain, and new needs emerge. As long as Beijing and the Holy See remain to have no official diplomatic ties, Rome continues to charge certain personnel from Hong Kong to act as middlemen/women. Also, as mainland dioceses become more affluent, the demands for counseling services, such as that for married couples and spiritual formation, increase. We can expect that some Hong Kong individuals will continue to go north to offer assistance.

Another trend worth observing is the nationalistic element of the trips. Since 2008,

the number of Hong Kongers who identify themselves as only Hong Kongers but not Chinese has been increasing gradually (Steinhardt et al., 2018; Yew and Kwong, 2014). This is especially true among young people. While no research specifically looks into the national identity of only Catholics in Hong Kong, we can cautiously expect that it is similar to the general public and that we may therefore observe a drop in demand.

On the other hand, Beijing heavy-handedly imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong in 2020, followed by a series of high-profile arrests. The repression had created high intent among self-identified Hong Kongers to migrate overseas (Wong et al., 2023). The recent wave of migration also alarmed local Church leaders (Ha, 2022). Future research could look into how changes in the composition of rank-and-file Church members and new understanding of national identity affect the development of northbound trips.

In 2023 and 2024, Cardinal Stephen Chow SJ, the Bishop of Hong Kong, led two official delegations to Beijing and Guangzhou respectively (Mares, 2024). The trips were high-profile and political in nature. When the expression of the Chinese national identity becomes more state-dominated, Catholics may rethink their multiple identities. Recent research shows that Catholics in China overwhelmingly stand with the Church's discourse in the face of Beijing's top-down 'Sinicization' campaign (Mok, 2024). This suggests that the ecclesial identity may become more salient if the national identity becomes more politically demanding. This prompts further research into how it might affect future trips.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments. The author is also grateful to Stanley R. Bailey, Yang Su, Francesca Polletta, Kim Fortun, and David A. Snow for their guidance on the research which contributed to the writing of this article.

Funding

The research is supported by the Kugelman Research Fellowship from the UCI Center for Citizen Peacebuilding, and a grant from the Long US–China Institute.

ORCID

Notes

1. A large city in Guangdong, a southern Chinese province bordering Hong Kong.

2. The Second Vatican Council, formally known as the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, was held between 1962 and 1965. It led the Church to implement drastic reforms to both its structure and teachings. More will be explained below.

3. See Appendix A for the full list of interviewees.

4. Emphasis added.

5. Hong Kong is located on the southern border of China. ‘Up there’ (*shangmian*) is a common expression indicating the mainland in the north.

6. The author, Rev. John Tong, was appointed Bishop of Hong Kong in 2008 and made a Cardinal in 2012.

References

Aminzade R and Perry EJ (2001) The sacred, religious, and secular in contentious politics: blurring boundaries. In: Aminzade R (ed) *Silence and Voice in The Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.155–178.

Beckford JA (2003) *Social Theory and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Benford RA and Snow DA (2000) Framing process and social movements: an overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611–639.

Beyerlein K and Chaves M (2020) The political mobilization of America's congregations. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 59(4): 663–674.

Chan SH (2015) Changing church–state relations in contemporary China: a case study of the Cangzhou Diocese. *Journal of Church and State* 57(2): 243–267.

Chan, NKM, Nachman L and Mok CWJ (2021) A red flag for participation: the influence of Chinese mainlandization on political behavior in Hong Kong. *Political Research Quarterly* 74(1): 3–17.

Chase SE (2003) Taking narrative seriously: consequences for method and theory in interview studies. In: Lincoln YS and Denzin NK (eds) *Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*, AltaMira Press, pp.273–296.

Chu MP (2020) Leveraging mega-events to embrace Chinese national identity: the

politics of Hong Kong's participation in the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the Shanghai 2010 World Expo. In: Lu Z (ed) *Chinese National Identity in the Age of Globalization*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan Singapore, pp.309–332.

Coser LA (1998) *The Functions of Social Conflict*. London: Routledge.

Fominaya CF (2010) Collective identity in social movements: central concepts and debates. *Sociology Compass*. 4(6): 393–404.

Gamson WA (1992) The social psychology of collective action. In: Morris A and Mueller CM (eds) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.53 – 76.

Goossaert V and Palmer DA (2010) *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Ha JCS (2022) Yimin chao yingxiang jiaohui? [Does the wave of migration affect the Church?]. *Kung Kao Po*, 19 August. Available at https://kkp.org.hk/node/detail/48384/ (accessed 3 October 2024).

Hannigan JA (1991) Social movement theory and the sociology of religion: Toward a new synthesis. *Sociological Analysis*. 52(4): 311–331.

Ho MS (2021) How protests evolve: Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement and lessons learned from the umbrella movement. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*. 25(SI): 711–728.

Holbig H (2020) Be water, my friend: Hong Kong's 2019 anti-extradition protests.

International Journal of Sociology, 50(4): 325–337.

Howell BM (2009) Mission to nowhere: putting short-term missions into context. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33(4): 206–211.

Howell BM (2012) *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Huddy L (2013) From group identity to political cohesion and commitment. In: Huddy L, Sears DP and Levy JS (eds) *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.737–773.

Hunt SA and Benford RD (2004) Collectivity identity, solidarity, and commitment. In: Snow DA, Soule SA and Kriesi H (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Malden; Oxford; Vitoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp.433–457.

Jenkins P (2002) *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Klandermans B (2004) The demand and supply of participation: social-psychological correlates of participation in social movements. In: Snow DA, Soule SA and Kriesi H (eds) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Malden; Oxford; Vitoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp.360–379.

Klandermans B, Sabucedo JM, Rodriguez M, and de Weerd M (2002) Identity processes in collective action participation: farmers' identity and farmers' protest in the Netherlands and Spain. *Political Psychology* 23(2): 235-251.

Kung Kao Po (1991a) Guonei shegnzhao pengbo, jiaoyou xinde jiangu, jiaohui chongman xiwang [Vigorous Vocation on the mainland, the Faithful with Steadfast Faith, and a Church Full of Hope] 1991. *Kung Kao Po*, 7 June: 1.

Kung Kao Po (1991b) Xuemai xianglian: Shegnsancun shenghuo tiyan (yi) [Connected by Blood: Experience Life in Shengsancun (I)], 6 December: 2–3.

Kung Kao Po (1992) Xuemai xianglian: shegnsancun shenghuo tiyan (er) [Connected by Blood: Experience Life in Shengsancun (II)] 1992. *Kung Kao Po,* 3 January: 2–3.

Lee FLF (2005) Collective efficacy, support for democratization, and political participation in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18 (3): 297–317.

Leung B (1991) The triangle relation: Hong Kong, China, and the Vatican. *Missiology*, 19(2): 217–229.

Lui TL (2019) Flexible and plastic national identification in Hong Kong: its historical configuration and changes since 1997. *Journal of Asian Sociology* 48(1): 71–89.

Madsen R (1998) *China's Catholics : Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mares C (2024) A look at the bishop of Hong Kong's recent visit to mainland China. *Catholic News Agency*, 15 May. Available at https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/257697/a-look-at-the-bishop-of-hong-kong-s-recent-visit-to-mainland-china (accessed 3 October 2024).

Meyer DS and Minkoff DC (2004) Conceptualizing political opportunity. *Social Forces* 82(4): 1457–1492.

Mok CWJ (2021) Sino-Vatican rapprochement: an assessment of Pope Francis' realpolitik and the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops. *Journal of Contemporary China* 30(129): 386–401.

Mok CWJ (2022) Violent repression, relational positions, and emotional mechanisms in Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 27(3): 297–317.

Mok CWJ (2024) (En)countering state-led Sinicization: Critical discursive responses from Roman Catholics in China. *The China Quarterly*. Available at DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S030574102400078X

Offutt S (2011) The role of short-term mission teams in the new centers of global Christianity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50(4): 796–811.

Pope John Paul II (1984) *Address of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the Regional Conference of China in Taiwan*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-Is it (Oii/en/speeches/1984/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19840228_vescovi-taiwan.html (accessed 20 June 2024).

Priest RJ (2007) Peruvian churches acquire 'linking social capital' through STM partnerships. *Latin American Theology* 2(2): 175–189.

Priest RJ (2010) Short-term missions as a new paradigm. In: Kalu OU, Vethanayagamony P and Chia EKF (eds) *Mission After Christendom: Emergent*

Themes in Contemporary Mission. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, pp.84–99.

Priest RK, Dischinger T, Rasmussen S and Brown CM (2006) Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement. *Missiology: An International Review* 34(4): 431–450.

Scheitle CP and McCarthy JD (2018) The mobilization of evangelical protestants in the nonprofit sector: parachurch foundings across U.S. counties, 1998–2016. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57(2): 238–257.

Simon B (1998) Individuals, groups, and social change: on the relationship between individual and collective self-interpretations and collective action. In: Sedikides C, Schopler J and Insko C (eds) *Intergroup Cognition and Intergroup Behavior*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp.257–282.

Simon B (1999) A place in the world: self and social categorization. In: Tyler TR, Kramer RM and John OP (eds) *The Psychology of the Social Self*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp.47–69.

Small ML and Cook JM (2021) Using interviews to understand why: challenges and strategies in the study of motivated action. *Sociological Methods and Research*. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124121995552 (accessed 20 June 2024).

Snow DA (2013) Identity dilemmas, discursive fields, identity work, and mobilization: clarifying the identity–movement nexus. In: Van Stekelenburg J, Roggeband C and Klandermans B (eds) *The Future of Social Movement Research: Dynamics, Mechanisms, and Processes*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp.263–280.

Snow DA and Beyerlein K (2019) Bringing the study of religion and social movements together: toward an analytically productive intersection. In: Snow DA, Soule Sa, Kriesi H and McCammon HJ (eds) *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Hoboken, NJ; West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., pp.571–585.

Steinhardt HC, Li LC and Jiang Y (2018) The Identity shift in Hong Kong since 1997: measurement and explanation. *Journal of Contemporary China* 110: 261–276.

Tajfel H (1978) Social categorization, social identity and social comparison. In: Tajfel H (ed) *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. London: Academic Press, pp.67–76.

Tong J (1995) *Yu Jiaoqu Yiqi Zouguo De Rizi (My Days with the Diocese)*. Hong Kong: Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong.

Trinitapoli J and Vaisey S (2009) The transformative role of religious experience: the case of short-term missions. *Social Forces* 88(1): 121–146.

Van Stekelenburg J and Klandermans B (2017) Individuals in movements: a social psychology of contention. In: Roggeband C and Klandermans B (eds) *Handbook of Social Movements Across Disciplines*. Gewerbestrasse: Springer International Publishing, pp.103–140.

Van Stekelenburg J, Klandermans B and Walgrave S (2019) Individual participation in street demonstrations. In: Snow DA, Soule Sa, Kriesi H and McCammon HJ (eds) *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*. Hoboken, NJ; West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., pp.371–391.

Wan E and Hartt G 2008. Complementary aspects of short-term missions and long-term missions: case studies for a win-win situation. In: Priest RJ (ed) *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right!* Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, pp.63–98.

Walder AG (2009) Political sociology and social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 393–415.

Williams RH (2000) Introduction: Promise Keepers: A comment on religion and social movements. *Sociology of Religion* 61(1): 1–10.

Wong FYE (2004) *Changban Meihua: Tanqing Shuoai Pian [Accompanying the Plum Blossoms: Affection and Love]*. Hong Kong: The Lichen Publishing Co. Ltd.

Wong STH, Ho K, Clarke HD and Chan KCM (2023) Does loyalty discourage exit? Evidence from post-2020 Hong Kong. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 58(1): 101–119.

Wu JBCC (1984) *Statement on The Catholic Church and the Future of Hong Kong by The Most Reverend John Baptist Cheng-Chung Wu Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong*. Available at: https://archives.catholic.org.hk/Online%20Exhibition/JB-WU/Pastoral%20Letter/19840815E.pdf (accessed 20 June 2024).

Wu JBCC (1985) *Visit China*. Available at: https://archives.catholic.org.hk/Online%20Exhibition/JB-WU/Pastoral%20Letter/1985E-1.pdf (accessed 20 June 2024).

Wuthnow R (2002) Religious involvement and status-bridging social capital. *Journal for*

the Scientific Study of Religion 41(4): 669–684.

Wuthnow R and Offutt S (2008) Transnational religious connections. *Sociology of Religion* 69(2): 209–232.

Yang F (2012) *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Yew CP and Kwong KM (2014) Hong Kong identity on the rise. *Asian Survey* 54(6): 1088–1112.

Zald MN (1982) Theological crucibles: social movements in and of religion. *Review of Religious Research* 23(4): 317–336.

Zwerman G and Steinhoff P (2005) When activists ask for trouble: state-dissident interactions and the new left cycle of resistance in the United States and Japan. In: Davenport C, Johnston H and Mueller C (eds) *Repression and Mobilization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp.85–106.

Author's Biography

Chit Wai John MOK is a research assistant professor at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He received his PhD from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine. His research interests include sociology of culture, cognitive sociology, religion, Catholicism, and film production.

Address: General Office, Department of Applied Social Sciences, HJ402, 4/F, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong

Email: chit-wai-john.mok@polyu.edu.hk