

Module 2: Hong Kong Today

Socio-political participation

To fight for their rights, some people actively participate in social and political affairs. Socio-political participation has different meanings and impact for individuals, groups, the government and society. The table below shows a few examples of socio-political movements in recent years to help students better understand discussions around these movements and the common arguments for different types of questions on this topic.

		More updates	
		Hong Kong	Hong Kong
		Mong Kok conflict	Assembly against the 'Article 23 of the Internet'
Background		In February 2016, some people were dissatisfied with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for cracking down on unlicensed cooked food hawkers in Mong Kok during Lunar New Year, which triggered severe conflict between the police and the citizens. A policeman fired warning shots while protestors attacked the police with debris. The government later described the event as 'riots'.	The second reading of the <i>2014 Copyright (Amendment) Bill</i> (referred to as the 'Article 23 of the Internet' by netizens) at the Legislative Council began in December 2015. Internet group Keyboard Frontline organised an assembly outside the Legislative Council Complex to require the addition of 'contract override' in the Bill to protect netizens' interests.
Reasons for socio-political participation	Credibility of the government	✓	✓
	Political culture	✓	✓
	Popularity of communication technology	✓	✓
	Rights granted by the law	✗ (considered illegal by law)	✓
	Personal factors	✓	✓
Impact of socio-political participation	Affecting personal growth	✓	✓
	Enhancing community cohesion	✓	✓
	Affecting government legitimacy	✓	✓
	Upsetting social stability	✓	✓
Concerns arising from socio-political participation	Effectiveness of governance	✓	✓
	Means of protests	✓	✓
	Impact on the rule of law	✓	✓
Values	Business operators give priority to personal gain	✓	✓
	Protesters give priority to the overall social interest	✓	✓
	The government gives priority to legality	✓	✓
	Some people give priority to social justice	✓	✓

Hong Kong	Anti-parallel trading movements	Hong Kong	Occupy Central	China	Protest against PX project in Maoming	World	Protests in Europe regarding the refugee influx
	In recent years, the problem of parallel traders has become a nuisance to people in Hong Kong. In 2012 and 2013, some local residents initiated the Restoration campaign at the Sheung Shui MTR station to protest against parallel traders. Later, similar campaigns appeared in Shatin, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and other districts that were also affected by the problem.		The political movement was initiated by Associate Professor of Law Benny Tai Yiu-ting, Professor of Sociology Chan Kin-man and pastor Chu Yiu-ming on 28 September 2014 to demand for genuine universal suffrage. The protest turned into an Occupy Movement that lasted for over 70 days. The affected areas include Admiralty, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok.		On 30 March 2014, protestors gathered in front of the city council building in Maoming, Guangdong to protest against the PX factory construction project in the city. The protest lasted for several days with several thousand to ten thousand protestors taking part. Some protesters threw eggs, water bottles and stones at the police outside the city council building. Over 1,000 armed policemen and special force members were sent to clear the site.		In 2015, a large number of refugees escaped from war zones in the Middle East to Europe with the hope of a stable life in Europe after a long journey. While some humanitarians think the European countries should accept the refugees, others think the refugees cause security problems. Later, protests supporting and opposing refugees broke out in various European countries.
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✗ (Internet censorship in China)		✓
	✓		✗ (considered illegal by law)		✗ (considered illegal by law)		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✗ (N/A)
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓		✓

Students can first grasp the common points listed on the far left column by looking at the local cases, and then extend the reasoning to China's and global cases at large. Students can freely add more examples to enrich this table.

Point Analysis

Students can tackle questions on socio-political participation by examining the related reasons, impact, concerns and values. There are common rules for various question types:

Topic: Reasons for socio-political participation

Question type	Point	Explanation
Reasons	Credibility of the government	A government gains the trust of people through its policies. If people have low confidence in the government, they will try to restrict its power and socio-political movements are more likely to occur.
	Political culture	If members of a society do not trust their government and think they should play an active role in political affairs, they will be more enthusiastic about taking part in socio-political movements.
	Popularity of communication technology	The Internet allows people to use the new media to release information to raise public awareness of social issues, leading to more socio-political movements.
	Rights granted by the law	Hong Kong people enjoy the right of assembly, of procession and of demonstration. They can exercise these rights to voice out their demands to the government to improve their quality of life.
	Personal factors	When individuals believe that socio-political participation can change the political situation and development, they will be more enthusiastic in taking part and will gain satisfaction from it, which is a form of self-actualization. The higher the education level of a person, the higher incentive for him/her to participate in socio-political affairs.

Topic: Impact of socio-political participation

Question type	Point	Explanation
Impact	Affecting personal growth	Exercise of civil rights can enhance people's understanding and awareness of their society. They may meet similar minds during socio-political participation and satisfy their social needs. However, lack of response from the government can cause some people to become radical.
	Enhancing community cohesion	Participation in group activities can enhance members' sense of belonging to the group. Unity among members enhances the group's appeal and cohesion.
	Affecting government legitimacy	People's expression of their views allows governments to better understand their needs. Corresponding policies can reduce people's resentment and help to maintain social stability.
	Upsetting social stability	Protests upset social stability. Failure of governments to respond to people's demands may lead to more radical movements.

Topic: Concerns arising from socio-political participation

Question type	Point	Explanation
Concerns	Effectiveness of governance	The more effective the governance is, the better a government can respond to people's needs, and the less chance for protests to occur.
	Means of protests	Failure of governments to respond to people's requests and the urgency of issues can lead to radical and even violent protests.
	Impact on the rule of law	Inappropriate ways to handle conflicts between protesters and governments damage the rule of law.

Topic: Values reflected by socio-political participation

Question type	Point	Explanation
Values	Business operators give priority to personal gain	Whether businesses support socio-political movements depends on their personal interests. If a movement harms their interests, they are likely to oppose it.
	Protesters give priority to the overall social interest	Protesters' participation in socio-political movements depends on whether the issue benefits society as a whole. If individuals agree with the issue, they are more motivated to join a protest.
	The government gives priority to legality	Governments tend to believe all those who voice their opinion by means of protest should abide by the law.
	Some people give priority to social justice	Some people are willing to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of others, even when they are well aware of the price they have to pay and the low effectiveness of their struggle.

Skill Transfer

Topic: What **conflicts may arise among different stakeholders** from socio-political movements in Hong Kong?
 Explain your answer. (10 marks)

Skills for answering questions about 'stakeholders conflicts'

- Different stakeholders have different interests, demands, expectations and values, thus leading to conflicts.
- Cite the views of different stakeholders to highlight the conflicts.

Students can try to identify the conflicts by looking at the values of the various stakeholders explained in the previous pages:

