

*The Political Influence of Mainline Protestant Churches in Hong Kong**

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of the mainline Protestant churches' influence on their church members' political opinions in Hong Kong using Paul Djupe and Christopher Gilbert's theory of church-centered influence on political behavior. The contextual factors of the theory are formal and informal social networks, church environment, and orienting forces, while the individual factors are personal attributes and religious resources. The findings show that social networks had a strong influence on the church members' sense of issue importance, whereas church environment had a moderate influence on its members. Orienting forces had almost no effect on the church members' political opinions, while personal attributes and religious resources showed modest effects on certain issues, but not consistently across issues.

Churches and civic engagement has become an increasingly important research topic in the literature of social sciences. In Asian countries and cities, a number of social movements have been closely related to Christians and churches.¹ In Hong Kong, a good example is the Occupy

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