



Polarized Lens: Disinformation, Misinformation and Hong Kong's Divided Media Landscape

AUGUST 2021

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Executive Summary

Since 2019, Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement has garnered international attention both offline and across social media platforms. At the same time, the People's Republic of China (PRC) government in Beijing has increasingly utilized digital tools to influence opinion in its favor, as witnessed in Taiwan ahead of its 2018 local and 2020 national elections. To research and analyze how this once-in-a-generation movement in Hong Kong was potentially impacted by online threats, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the information environment in Hong Kong. NDI's analysis focused on the months preceding and following the July 31, 2020 decision by the Hong Kong government to postpone the September 2020 Legislative Council (LegCo) elections.¹

NDI's analysis provides an overarching view of known or suspected sources of misinformation and disinformation in Hong Kong around the time of the LegCo postponement decision. Much of the analysis is centered around pro-Beijing sources, as the propaganda disseminated by these sources has historically been more likely to contain false or misleading information than pro-democracy sources in this context. Such analysis becomes more important as the international community witnesses the further closing of Hong Kong society through increased media censorship, as displayed through the shutting down of *Apple Daily* and new film censorship guidelines.

The analysis presented provides a snapshot of a highly polarized information environment. NDI's analysis shows Hong Kong's information environment created distinct echo chambers that reinforced and amplified views across the political spectrum. While major events increased online conversations in Hong Kong, key pro-Beijing and pro-government narratives experienced greater spikes compared to pan-democratic messaging. The findings in this report offer a starting point for further analysis of how political and partisan actors seek to shape Hong Kong's information environment through diffuse online channels.

1. The spread of false information on political events without malintent, misinformation, or with malintent, disinformation, has limited virality in Hong Kong as it is quickly refuted.
2. Pro-government and propaganda narratives that decontextualize facts dominate the Hong Kong information environment as the use of true information makes it harder to challenge.
3. Facebook, Twitter and QQ were the most dominant social media platforms for potential misinformation content in the Hong Kong space. In terms of users, Twitter content is largely driven by pro-democracy accounts and supporters, which is consistent with Western and media-centric dominance of Twitter users. QQ is used by 60 percent of adults in China, thus providing a window into primarily mainland-Chinese narratives that mostly sought to discredit the protest movement.
4. On the popular messaging board LIHKG, top accounts propelled discord among the protest movement by presenting a false pro-democratic, anti-government narrative that encouraged radical actions.

Since the British handover of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997, NDI has released "The Promise of Democratization in Hong Kong" report series, documenting shifts in Hong Kong's political landscape. In 2020, Hong Kong faced a new, critical threat to its democratic development with the new National Security Law and then the postponement of the LegCo elections. While the Hong Kong government justified the decision as necessary to contain COVID-19, it was interpreted by many as the pro-Beijing government using COVID-19 to quell the growing pro-democracy movement.

¹ Ramzy, Austin. "Hong Kong Delays Election, Citing Coronavirus. The Opposition Isn't Buying It." *New York Times*, July 31, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/31/world/asia/hong-kong-election-delayed.html>

I. Introduction

The National Security Law not only has deep implications for Hong Kong's political environment, but also for its information environment. The recent targeting and shuttering of *Apple Daily*, identified in our report as a top nine source of information and one of only two balanced news sources, shows how the National Security Law is being used to limit access to independent news coverage. The June 2021 release of new guidelines to censor films on national security grounds further emphasize the attempt to limit the spread of information seen as in opposition to the Hong Kong government's political stance.

In order to better understand public sentiment on democracy in Hong Kong, NDI worked with a not-for-profit organization that specializes in researching the dynamics of online engagement and information towards two central objectives:

- Better understand the contours of the online information environment in Hong Kong, particularly with respect to the availability and nature of political information on social media platforms.
- Identify and track key topics within social media spaces in Hong Kong, including disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, and illiberal influence campaigns, with specific attention devoted to narratives that may be propagated by Beijing or its proxies.

Acknowledging that the decision to postpone the Legislative Council elections is a focal point for NDI's reporting on the state of democratization in Hong Kong in 2020, the social media analysis also gives particular weight to the months surrounding the decision, including the leadup to the National Security Law beginning in May.



March 1, 2021. Hong Kong government charged 47 democrats under the national security law on February 28, 2021. Hundreds of people and supporters stand outside the Court as they wait for a seat. | Photo credit: Ryan K.W.Lai / Shutterstock.com

II. Methodology

A mixed methods approach to social media monitoring was used to identify new and emerging narratives, track political and electoral misinformation and disinformation across most public online media channels, and monitor changes in public discourse over time. First, tailored queries and content keywords were created to generate a nuanced qualitative assessment of the online media landscape. Second, large-scale quantitative datasets from the queries were analyzed through visual dashboards.

In the context of Hong Kong, the research expanded upon initial keywords and queries to focus on both pro-Beijing misinformation narratives and LegCo elections postponements narratives specifically. This was done through the qualitative analysis of prior reports, known instances of coordinated influence campaigns by the Chinese government, and specific instances of misinformation in Hong Kong. For the purposes of this project, an instance is defined as any type of online content (text, image, video, website, etc.) associated with potential disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, or illiberal influence campaigns in Hong Kong. These instances, along with their narratives and associated keywords, then formed the basis of the queries that were used to analyze the Hong Kong online space.

Afterwards, 250 queries were transferred to Facebook's CrowdTangle tool in the form of boolean search functions. CrowdTangle collects publicly available Facebook content, including posts on public groups and pages, and posts by public users. These queries were created from a list of more than 180 unique keywords and phrases. In addition, this process was replicated using Brandwatch, a platform that captures data from Twitter and broader analysis of online forums and news sites. The data collected across both platforms provide a wide range of engagement data for impressions, comments, shares, and reactions to social media posts and shares of URLs. The not-for-profit organization also replicated its boolean queries into an internal Political Misinformation Monitoring dashboard to produce additional aggregated findings and insights not possible through CrowdTangle and Brandwatch.

Assessment of Social Media Monitoring Data

The assessment of the online information environment in Hong Kong was driven by the aggregation of data from social media monitoring dashboards. These dashboards were constructed on the basis of a list of queries related to the narratives catalogue. A detailed list of each relevant narrative typology and sub-narrative identified in this context is included in Appendix 1. For the purposes of this analysis, the disaggregated data was categorized according to six major narrative typologies:

1. Justifications and theories about why the Legislative Council elections were postponed (LegCo Election Postponement).
2. Pan-democrats intend to sabotage the Legislative Council and the state of Hong Kong (Pan-Dems Intend to Cripple LegCo/HK).
3. Countries that support Hong Kong protestors are disingenuous (Countries Supporting HK are Disingenuous).
4. The protestors in Hong Kong are disingenuous (Protestors are Disingenuous).
5. Foreign intervention in Hong Kong interferes with domestic affairs and incites protests (Foreign Intervention).
6. The National Security Law is required because Hong Kong is a weak link in China's national security (The Security Law is Required).

III. Hong Kong's Information Environment

Social media algorithms rapidly promote the most controversial and provocative perspectives on recent events, which make content timeliness a central driver of attention to posted content. Content virality is often boosted by its ability to stir emotions, particularly anger and humor. Viral posts often pander to specific echo chambers – particularly those that align with one side of a political spectrum.

In the Hong Kong political context, the most viral posts are usually designed to trigger outrage, specifically when developments do not meet the values or standards of a particular group. Across pro-Beijing pages, many posts call for support of government actions or more aggressive government actions against the pro-democracy camp. These pages act as online political cheerleaders. Posts that convey pleasure in the pain of others are most common across pro-Beijing sources, while posts that appeal to authority gather more reactions and are perceived as more persuasive. For example, some posts identified in our analysis feature quotes from influential figures such as executive council members and political party leaders like Regina Ip, a pro-Beijing lawmaker and chairwoman of the New People's Party.²

On the pro-democracy side, content that generates the most reactions are usually from more traditional media pages, notably *Apple Daily* and *Stand News*. Pro-democracy figures generally do not gain as much engagement as established media pages, potentially because there is a wider, more diverse spectrum of voices within the democratic movement. However, calls to action, such as signing online petitions, were able to attract greater interaction.

A significant portion of viral content in Hong Kong is disseminated through non-public channels such as WhatsApp, WeChat and Telegram. While this analysis cannot gauge the effectiveness of these non-public channels, their contagion effect should not be underestimated. The effort of sending a piece of content via instant messaging is minimal and the chance of the recipient engaging with and following up on this content is often much higher than information encountered publicly on social media.³

Misinformation, Disinformation, and Propaganda in Hong Kong

For this research project, *misinformation* is defined as any online content that presents false information without malintent. By contrast, *disinformation* is false information with malintent. Another type of inaccurate information is *malinformation*, which is defined as genuine information that is shared with malintent. These definitions are drawn largely from the Information Disorder framework, developed by researchers at Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, and First Draft News, two leading organizations focused on disinformation and information integrity issues.⁴ This framework is one which the Institute and many others⁵ base their work to explore and provide recommendations on these issues, for instance with its Guide on Countering Disinformation, developed through the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening.⁶

In Hong Kong's political context, misinformation narratives are often quickly refuted. For example, during the mob attack against civilians on July 21, 2020, live video captured a pregnant woman being beaten. Shortly after the video went viral

² HKG報 2.0 shared by 時間香港. “將夥4行會成員訪美 葉太表明反映香港實況：8.31太子站根本無死人.” Facebook, March 4, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/HongKongGoodNews/posts/3644108015663108>

³ Jeffrey Gottfried et al. “How Americans Encounter, Recall and Act Upon Digital News.” Pew Research Center, February 9, 2017. <https://www.journalism.org/2017/02/09/part-ii-characteristics-of-news-instances/#how-people-get-to-news-impacts-the-full-online-news-experience>

⁴ “Information Disorder.” Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/information-disorder>

⁵ These include the Council of Europe, which supported its development, UNESCO, and others in the research, policy and academic community; Wardle, Claire, and Hossein Derakhshan. “Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training.” UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/node/296051>

⁶ Arnaudo, Daniel, Bret Barrowman, Julia Brothers, Lisa Reppell, Victoria Scott, Amy Studdart, Kip Wainscott, and Vera Zakem. “Countering Disinformation: Introduction to the Guide.” The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS). <https://counteringdisinformation.org/introduction>

online, rumors began circulating that the woman suffered a miscarriage. The pro-Beijing side sought to refute this by stating that hospital records show no pregnant women were injured or admitted on the evening of July 21 and suggested the woman was exaggerating the extent of the attack by pretending to be pregnant. The woman in question went to *Mingpao*, a reputable Chinese newspaper, to clarify that she was only injured in the head. Due to the unprecedented nature of the July 21 attack, the event sparked many similar rumors. Nonetheless, misinformation regarding the miscarriage was quickly refuted due to Hong Kong's high flow of information.⁷

Disinformation is even easier to spot in Hong Kong's information landscape. Disinformation shared by people with political motives, such as electoral candidates and pro-Beijing social media pages, usually post very pointed attacks. An example is a post shared by Dominic Lee, a former district councilor and unsuccessful LegCo candidate in 2016.⁸ Around the time of Hong Kong's third wave of COVID-19, Lee posted an image of two maps side by side, one showing the locations of confirmed COVID-19 cases and the other showing the polling stations of the pan-democrats' primary election, suggesting the primary caused a new COVID-19 outbreak. While the post garnered over 4,500 interactions, the narrative was quickly refuted by numerous commenters.⁹

Most of the content collected in this analysis may be better classified as propaganda. Some propaganda narratives cite facts, such as pointing to New Zealand's decision to postpone the country's general election, in a decontextualized manner to support government positions or decisions.¹⁰ More common are posts calling for support for government actions, such as arresting and prosecuting pan-democrats, or celebrating the downfall of the opposition and protestors. Such propaganda narratives often use incendiary language, such as referring to the other side as "cockroaches" and "viruses," but lack a coherent supporting argument.

One of the drivers behind the high volume of propaganda in Hong Kong is the limited need for public officials to reasonably persuade the population. Decisions in Hong Kong are made by an unelected executive branch, and therefore, a shift in the electorate's preferences will have a minimal impact. Moreover, the margin in favor of the pan-democrats, as demonstrated by the 2019 district council election results where democrats took control of 17 out of 18 councils, is beginning to be too large for information campaigns to effectively bridge.¹¹ Propaganda is therefore a preferred method for pro-Beijing sources to bolster support from existing supporters and to provide justification for government actions to erode Hong Kong's democratic development, even if the narratives appear unconvincing to most.

Gender Characteristics

As seen in Figure 1, the self-reported, binary gender breakdown in the dataset from May to September 2020 averaged 31 percent female (232,547 records) and 69 percent male (526,956 records), when available. Internet demographics globally tend to skew younger and more towards males when compared to the general population, so this distribution is not atypical. However, this does not necessarily mean that significantly less women participate in online discussion on the topics at hand and instead likely points to a hesitancy among women to disclose their gender identity online due to privacy concerns and potential online harassment.¹² Additionally, the gender access gap is still prevalent, as highlighted by a study by the Web Foundation showing that men are 21 percent more likely to be online than women.¹³ Further, women protestors in Hong Kong were targeted through online disinformation campaigns as well as frequent doxxing victims during the height of the anti-extradition demonstrations.¹⁴ Differing gendered responses to a political shock, such as the implementation of the NSL in Hong Kong, is not atypical and can be particularly prevalent in the information space through medium and method of communication. These factors contributed to the dataset being unable to provide further insight into the unique characteristics that gender may play in the spread or consumption of online misinformation narratives in Hong Kong. But, such a topic would be an area of further research, using queries that are specifically designed to capture more gendered data. [Fig. 1]

⁷ “【元朗襲擊】白裙女懷孕不足3個月沒通知醫院 診所求醫證胎平安。” *Ming Pao*, July 23, 2019. <https://news.mingpao.com/ins/港聞/article/20190723/s00001/1563890883621/> 【元朗襲擊】白裙女懷孕不足3個月沒通知醫院-診所求醫證胎平安

⁸ Lee, Dominic. “一定冇關係啦。” *Facebook*, July 30, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/leetszking/posts/4723720900986708/>

⁹ 柏斯敦 plaxtonl. “大發現!!!” *Facebook*, July 30, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/plaxtonlpage/posts/10158361908683280/>

¹⁰ “【雙重標準】曾指責香港推遲選舉 新西蘭延遲大選至10.17.” *Speakout HK*, August 17, 2020. <https://www.speakout.hk/港人花生/60877/-雙重標準-曾指責香港推遲選舉-新西蘭延遲大選至10-17>

¹¹ Cheng, Kris. “Hong Kong District Council election: Democrats take control of 17 out of 18 councils in landslide victory.” *Hong Kong Free Press*, November 25, 2019. <https://hongkongfp.com/2019/11/25/hong-kong-district-council-election-democrats-take-control-17-18-councils-landslide-victory/>

¹² “Women's Rights Online: closing the digital gender gap for a more equal world.” *World Wide Web Foundation*, October 12, 2020. <https://webfoundation.org/research/womens-rights-online-2020/>

¹³ Iglesias, Carlos. “The gender gap in internet access: using a women-centred method.” *World Wide Web Foundation*, March 10, 2020. <https://webfoundation.org/2020/03/the-gender-gap-in-internet-access-using-a-women-centred-method/>

¹⁴ Leung, Hazel Wan Hei. “Where are the women? Gendering the Hong Kong anti-extradition protests.” *NDI Internal Working Paper*, Summer 2019.

Gender Breakdown of Mention Volume

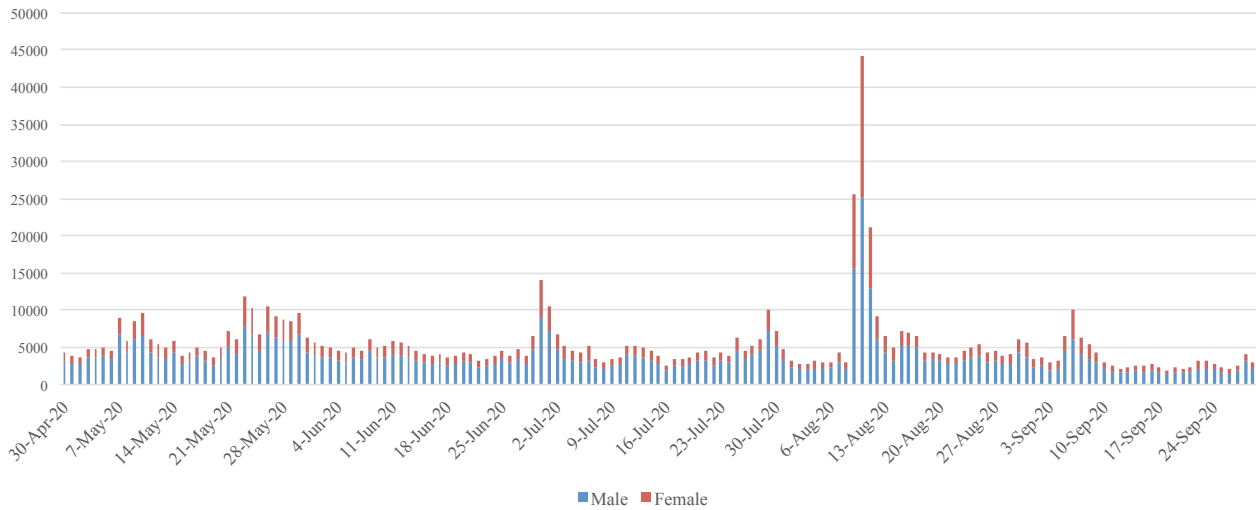


Figure 1: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Key Events Timeline

The volume of total mentions from May 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020 was mapped using data from Facebook, Twitter, online forums, blogs, and other sources. Mentions are defined as the number of times that one keyword or phrase within the queries set is recognized on social media or in online forums. Figure 2 shows mentions across all platforms for keywords associated with the six narrative typologies as well as a general narrative typology within Hong Kong and mainland China. [Fig. 2]

Total Mention Volume (not location locked)

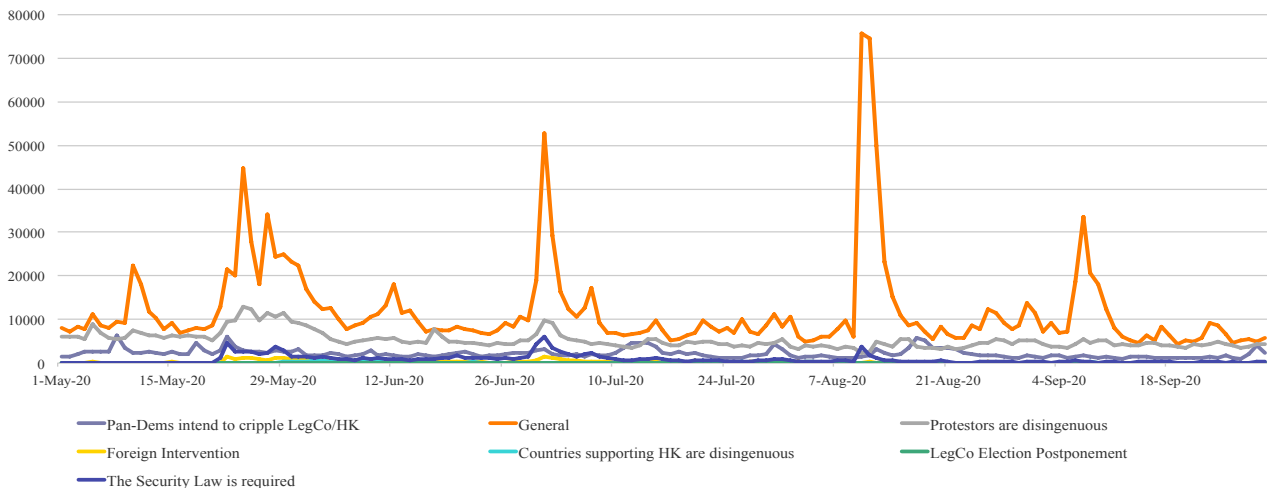


Figure 2: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Importantly, the data represented in Figure 2 is not bounded by location. Although the majority of the data originates from Hong Kong and mainland China, the total number of mentions includes posts that originate from other countries as well as those that do not have a registered location, but are recorded in our dataset due to the mention of keywords and phrases included in our queries.¹⁵ Figure 3 below shows the volume of mentions over time when setting a location lock to include data only from Hong Kong and mainland China. [Fig. 3]

¹⁵ Out of the total number of mentions registered in our dataset, approximately 47.8 percent register a location in Hong Kong, 16 percent in mainland China, and 23.6 percent do not have a registered location. The remaining 12.5 percent are from other countries outside Hong Kong and mainland China.

Total Mention Volume (Hong Kong and China)

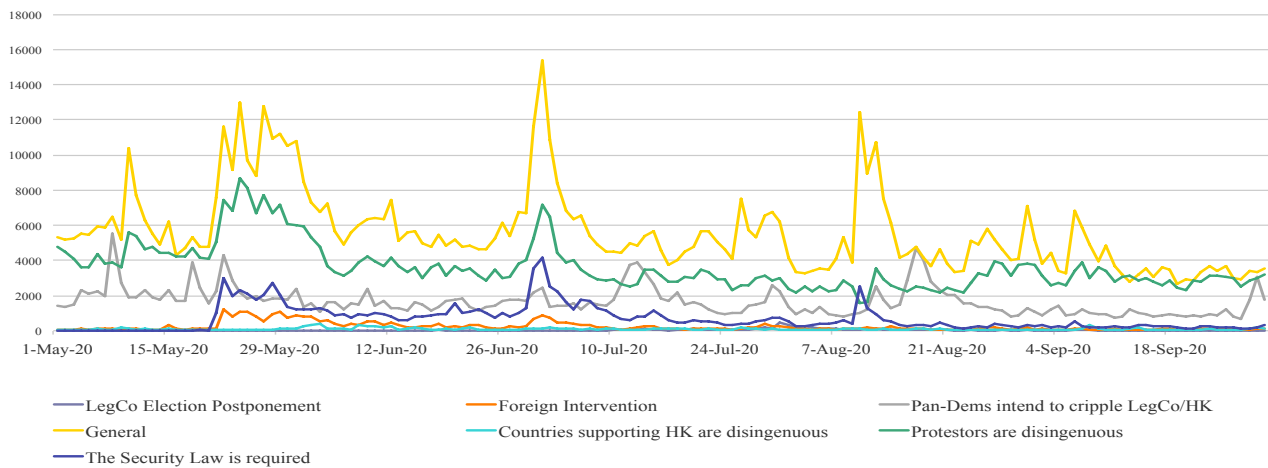


Figure 3: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

While Figure 3 appears to present a view of overall trends in keyword mentions, the location definition field used by social media platforms depends largely on users self-reporting their location, and therefore can often be an inaccurate or overly narrow definition of geographical location.

Despite this caveat, there are spikes driven by key events that are relatively consistent between Figure 2 and Figure 3. The first spike is May 24, 2020, which corresponds with widespread pro-democracy protests in response to Beijing’s move to introduce the National Security Law. Overall, search terms registered a volume of data 390 percent higher than usual for the same queries over the selected time period. A considerable amount of traffic was driven by interactions with a video of police using teargas on protestors at Causeway Bay. The video was first posted by Rachel Cheung, a culture reporter in Hong Kong and former journalist for the South China Morning Post and was shared more than 4,400 times.¹⁶

Around the same time, a similar peak is notable for “Foreign Intervention” and “Countries Supporting HK are Disingenuous,” narratives depicted in Figure 4 below. The peaks in these narratives in late May and early June 2020 correspond to the beginning of the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, and the spikes in mentions during this period is driven principally by people drawing parallels between the protests in the United States and those in Hong Kong. In particular, the “Countries Supporting HK are Disingenuous” narrative recorded online traffic approximately 509 percent higher than usual. One case study of engagement around this period was more than 207 retweets of a post from *People’s Daily*, a state-backed Chinese newspaper, on June 2, 2020 that criticized the United States as hypocritical for condemning the Hong Kong police force in light of the violence used against Black Lives Matter protests.¹⁷

¹⁶ Cheung, Rachel (@rachel_cheung1). “Teargas fired along Hennessy Road in Causeway Bay, half an hour into an unapproved march.” *Twitter*, May 23, 2020. https://twitter.com/rachel_cheung1/status/1264429794227150848

¹⁷ People’s Daily (@PDChinese). “為什麼美方對香港警察文明執法橫加指責，卻對國內抗議者威脅開槍射擊，甚至動用國民警衛隊?” *Twitter*, June 2, 2020. <https://twitter.com/PDChinese/status/1267712552995188737>

Total Mentions for “Countries Supporting HK are Disingenuous” and “Foreign Intervention” Narratives

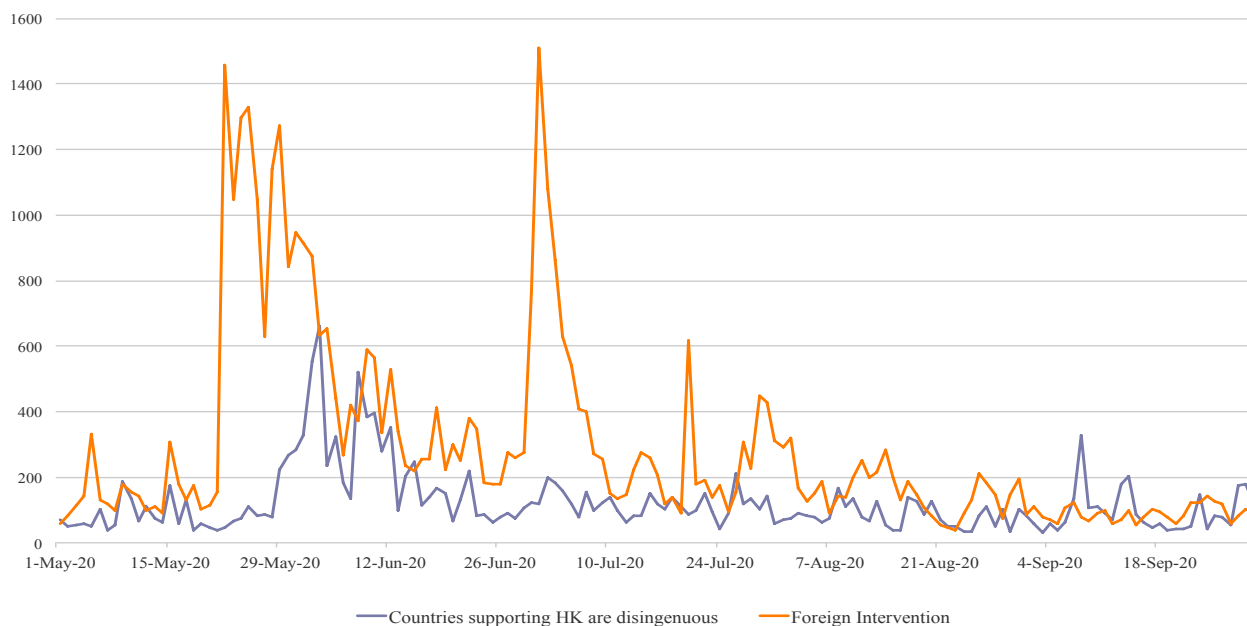


Figure 4: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

The next spike in total mentions occurred on July 1, 2020, the 23rd anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong from British rule. On July 1, just hours after the National Security was promulgated, the Hong Kong police made the first arrests under the new law, apprehending several people who were participating in peaceful protest. In Figure 2, this date reflects the largest spike in mentions, with particularly high levels of engagement with the “Protestors are Disingenuous” and “The Security Law is Required” narratives. Due to the nature of the keywords associated with these narratives, the increase in related mentions likely indicates expanded propaganda or misinformation from pro-Beijing sources as well, despite being principally driven by news reporting of the event.

Another key event, and a focal point of this report, is the decision to postpone the LegCo elections on July 31, 2020. While this event registered a moderate spike across total keyword mentions, the volume of online data registered in relation to this event was less than the volume for other key events and issues. This is likely because of the highly specific nature of the queries used to capture information around this event.

The period of August 10 to August 13, 2020 is one of the highest volume periods for the queries in this analysis. This peak corresponds to the arrests of prominent public figures such as media tycoon Jimmy Lai and pro-democracy activist Agnes Chow under the National Security Law. In particular, this spike was largely driven by a specific link to a Japanese news outlet that reported the arrests going viral on Twitter.¹⁸ This news article was shared on Twitter by Yukio Edano, a Member of the House of Representatives in Japan in a tweet condemning the arrests, which further raised the visibility of the article on social media, and specifically among Japanese Twitter users.¹⁹ Interestingly, the queries registered more than 28,682 uses of the hashtag #freeagnes, while only 530 instances of the hashtag #黎智英 (#JimmyLai). As seen in Figure 2, this period saw the largest increase of engagement by women as well. The final spike in total mentions during this period was on September 6, 2020, the day the LegCo elections were originally scheduled to be held and a day of mass protests across Hong Kong.

Key Sources

An iterative source identification methodology was used to ensure a comprehensive analysis of relevant individuals and their social media accounts, media organizations, and Facebook groups or pages. This method involved a two-pronged approach.

¹⁸ “周庭氏を逮捕 民主活動家 国安法違反容疑で香港警察.” *Mainichi*, August 10, 2020. <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20200810/k00/00m/030/275000c>

¹⁹ Yukio Edano (@edanoyukio0531). *Twitter*, August 10, 2020, <https://twitter.com/edanoyukio0531/status/1292948122927165440>

First, lists of all pro-democracy, pro-Beijing political figures and media organizations involved in discussing or disputing the LegCo postponement decision were compiled. This list of sources included only public profiles and pages, and did not include any private user information. The sources were then added to a monitored list and became the first place queries assessed for possible misinformation content. Second, leaderboard displays were constructed for all Facebook groups and pages that referenced keywords associated with the chosen queries. The leaderboards display, which groups pages that reference misinformation related keywords, received the most interactions. This process was instrumental in identifying prominent and previously undiscovered sources of misinformation in the Hong Kong social media environment. Through this approach, 144 sources associated with the potential coverage or dissemination of misinformation narratives in Hong Kong were identified.

From May 1 to September 30, the Political Misinformation Monitor dataset identified a total of 1,374,908 relevant mentions on forums, 1,321,627 on Twitter, 505,438 on news sites, 177,619 across Facebook, and 89,034 on QQ. [Fig. 5]

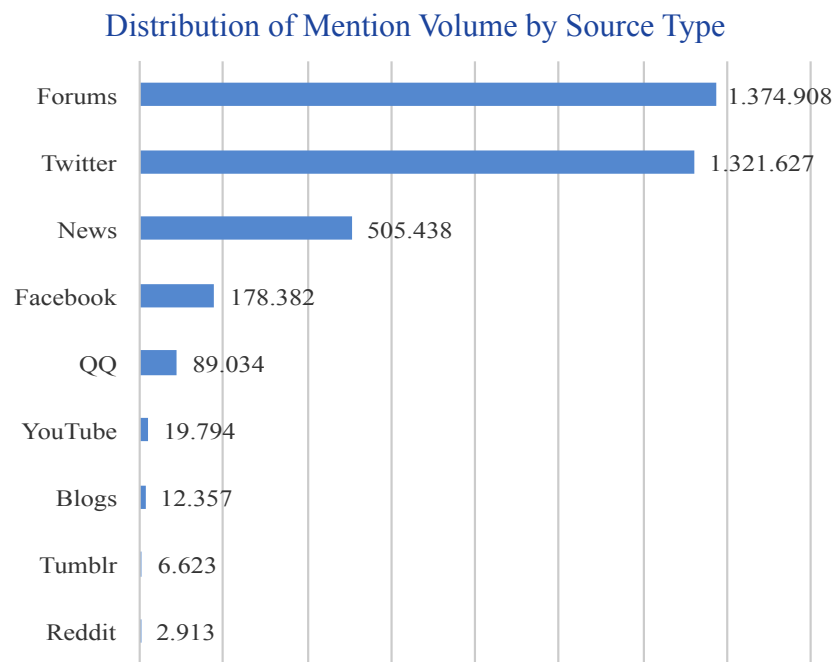


Figure 5: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Facebook, Twitter, and QQ were the most dominant social media platforms for potential misinformation content in the Hong Kong space. Specific authors or sources are explored further below, with a primary focus on Facebook and QQ as vectors for misinformation or influence. cursory exploration into Twitter content shows that, despite its overall volume, it is largely driven by pro-democracy accounts and supporters, which makes sense given the Western and media-centric dominance of Twitter users. It should also be noted that Twitter took down over 32,000 People's Republic of China-affiliated accounts and associated content in June 2020 due to coordinated activity, and thus would not be present in our dataset.²⁰ Areas for further research could include

analyzing Twitter's data set of removed posts and accounts against the established queries used in this analysis.

QQ is used by 60 percent of adults in China, primarily as an instant messaging platform but also for online social games, music, shopping, microblogging, news, and group and voice chat software.²¹ Therefore, this data provides a unique window into primarily mainland-Chinese opinions and narratives surrounding the election postponement in Hong Kong. Discuss.com.hk and lihkg.com were the most popular Forum sources, the latter was selected for an in-depth platform analysis and content case study to provide greater insight into how the website is used.

Facebook

The Political Misinformation Monitor was used to isolate specific date ranges across all social and news media content related to the selected queries. The monitor aggregated across all Facebook mentions to produce a comprehensive list of the most relevant Facebook accounts.

Of the top nine most popular sources, four are Facebook pages with instances of pro-Beijing misinformation narratives, two are balanced media publications, *Stand News* and *Apple Daily*, and three are tabloids that produce a significant volume of content that is not in service of any specific political narrative or ideology.

²⁰ "Disclosing networks of state-linked information operations we've removed." *Twitter Safety*, June 12, 2020. https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2020/information-operations-june-2020.html

²¹ Smith, Craig. "QQ Statistics, User Counts and Facts (2021)." *Expanded Ramblings*, May 30, 2021. <https://expandedramblings.com/index.php/qq-statistics/>

Name	Classification	Facebook / URL	Count
01News	Pro-Beijing	facebook.com/ hk01wemedia	5,827
Stand News	Balanced media	facebook.com/standnewshk	4,293
Shi Wen Hong (時聞香港)	Pro-Beijing	facebook.com/HongKongGoodNews	3,724
Avenue of the Mean	Tabloids	https://www.uwants.com/	3,234
Sing Tao Daily	Tabloids	https://www.stheadline.com/	3,202
Apple Daily	Balanced media	https://hk.appledaily.com/	3,142
Headline Daily	Tabloids	https://hd.stheadline.com/	3,049
Silent Majority for Hong Kong	Pro-Beijing	facebook.com/silentmajorityhk/	2,981
HKG News 2.0	Pro-Beijing	facebook.com/hkgpaocomhk	2,804

Table 1: Top Sources by Number of Mentions

Shi Wen Hong, Silent Majority for Hong Kong, and HKG News 2.0 were highly popular pages with less media-centric coverage, but more polarizing content that included the demonization and calls for violence against protestors.²² With 609,799 current followers, Shi Wen Hong was the second largest pro-Beijing page in the dataset and received prominent interactions with its posts demonizing pro-democracy candidates such as Nathan Law who fled Hong Kong and was granted asylum in the United Kingdom.²³ Silent Majority for Hong Kong was the third largest of these three with 343,816 current followers and focused on more prominent pro-police content and narratives during the May to September 2020 period. All of these Facebook pages continue to operate and post daily.

QQ

Analysis of content on QQ shows a number of unique elements regarding the narratives, timing and virality of content. The “Protestors are disingenuous” theme was by far the most prominent narrative, totaling 69,060 mentions, more than three times as many query mentions than the next narrative.

In comparison, the “Protestors are Disingenuous” narrative received only 7,410 mentions on Facebook during the same period, while “The Security Law is Required” narrative dominated the conversation on Facebook with more than 74,091 mentions. This substantial difference in themes is notable as it reflects, in part, where the fundamental concerns lie amongst the user base. On QQ, the concern was largely that Hong Kong protestors were exploiting vulnerable youth and co-opting them into their radical and violent opposition to a rightful transition of power. One example of this sentiment is shown below.

²² Pro-Beijing classification does not mean all or even the majority of content published was misinformation content or overtly political. HK01, for example, is the largest pro-Beijing Facebook group in the sample with 693,111 followers, and produces largely balanced coverage. However, HK01 has strict policies forbidding advertising “Hong Kong independence-inclining political parties and other pro-independence enterprises or organisations” and previously stated that it was “consistently opposed to Taiwan independence.” Cheng, Kris. “News outlet HK01 blacklists pro-Hong Kong independence groups from ad deals and partnerships.” *Hong Kong Free Press*, February 22, 2019. <https://hongkongfp.com/2019/02/22/news-outlet-hk01-blacklists-pro-hong-kong-independence-groups-ad-deals-partnerships/>.

²³ Hong Kong Good News. “請全球最大債仔美國盡快放棄在港利益，不要再又食又撿。” May 26, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/HongKongGoodNews/posts/3962806723793234>



Additionally, the observed spikes in online mentions around mid-May and June 2020 highlighted above are not seen in the QQ content. Rather, the vast majority of popular threads and most referenced keywords on QQ came at the very beginning of May, right as protest activities saw a resurgence in Hong Kong. However, within a week there was a substantial drop in activity that resulted in a 250 percent reduction in mentions and a steady decline of further relevant mentions until September. This rapid increase and decline in mentions for a very short period of time presents the possibility that not all traffic on QQ in early May was organic traffic and that concerted efforts to spread a specific narrative were employed.

Finally, of the 35,252 unique threads that made up the QQ content in the query hits, only 61 of the threads recorded more than 100 query matches. Of those 61 threads, only one saw over 1,000 mentions, suggesting an extremely viral thread, with the rest below 360 mentions. These threads are the viral content that solidified the “protestors are disingenuous” theme on QQ at the immediate outset of the renewed protest and set the tone for the majority of relevant content that followed.

LIHKG

One of the major online forums that began to receive a lot of attention during the Hong Kong protest movement is LIHKG (連登). Founded as an alternative to the more historical Golden Forum, LIHKG features a simple and easy-to-use interface on internet browsers, iOS, and Android. Members on LIHKG express their views through a simple voting mechanism similar to upvotes and downvotes on Reddit. There are no hierarchical distinctions among LIHKG members, creating a very horizontal environment for members to express their views.²⁴

Dubbed “the invisible Godfather” behind the protest movement by the pro-Beijing camp, LIHKG was one of the main organizing platforms for the anti-extradition bill protests that evolved into the larger ongoing pro-democracy movement, where outcomes can be swayed by online discussions. The most active members on LIHKG are young people, especially high school and university students, many of whom appear to be participants in the protest movement.

Starting an account at LIHKG requires an internet service provider (ISP) or school email account that is traceable to the user. At the height of the protest movement, new account registrations were restricted, and new members had to go through a probationary system that showed their username with a “P” to display their new arrival status and were

²⁴ Shen, Simon. “連登大數據(沈旭暉).” Hong Kong Economic Journal, August 20, 2019. <http://startupbeat.hkej.com/?p=77134>

restricted from upvoting or downvoting. These measures were taken to prevent meddling or swaying the deliberation process of LIHKG members.

Within the number of posts made on LIHKG by public users that included keywords or phrases from the selected queries, only 19 of the top 100 authors on LIHKG in our dataset were women, highlighting the gender imbalance of this particular online forum. From May 1, 2020 to September 30 2020, the top three users within the search parameters were “*Shitnoopy*” (『屎』路比) with 1,542 counts; “*Intel for Peter*” (Peter擺料) with 1,343 counts; and “*A Guest at CCP’s Table*” (中共座上客) with 1,301 counts.

Two of the top three LIHKG accounts identified by the queries – *Intel for Peter* and *A Guest at CCP’s Table* – were recently banned. Since banned users’ previous posts get removed, inferences about the content posted by these accounts can only be based on their post frequency and posts by other public users commenting on the accounts’ disappearance. As discussed in the following case studies, each of these accounts has been accused of being paid to post content that incites division, particularly in alignment with major events in Hong Kong. While these remain accusations, Figure 6 below shows the volume of posts per day made by each of these users that include queried keywords or phrases. Notably, this graph highlights that many of the peaks in mentions correspond to the major events mentioned in the key events timeline section. [Fig. 6]

Number of Mentions on LIHKG, *Intel for Peter* (Peter擺料) and *A Guest at CCP’s Table* (中共座上客)

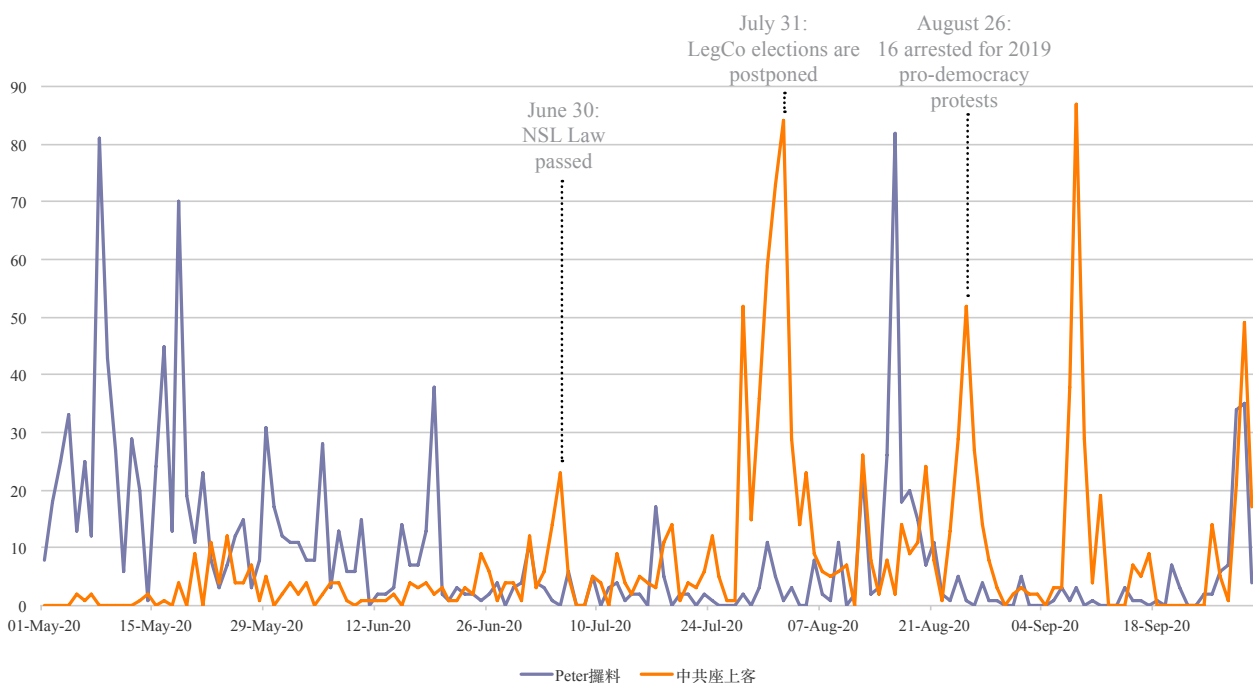


Figure 6: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Case Study: *Intel for Peter*

One of the top posts commenting on the disappearance of *Intel for Peter* describes the account as “Usually pretending to be yellow (pro-democracy), but always out there to sow divisions; new ways for 50-cents to muck around.”²⁵ One of the comments in this thread adds “that guy finds ways to sow division in every post.”²⁶ In another post, *Intel for Peter* is described as always picking a fight and sowing divisions, followed by a list of posts the account made (which have since been removed) as proof of his divisiveness. Some of the titles of these posts, which are still visible, include phrases like “feeling hopeless yet?”; “if John Tsang becomes Chief Executive, might as well give up the fight”; “I have the right to dine at a blue [pro-Beijing] restaurant.” Another commenter shared screenshots from previous posts by *Intel for Peter* that encouraged vandalism against HSBC after they froze a bank account used to support prosecuted protestors. While some members defend *Intel for Peter*, saying the account’s posts are more sarcastic than genuine, the overall sentiment on LIHKG celebrates the account’s expulsion.²⁷

²⁵ 趕盡殺絕. “Show Blocked User - Peter擺料.” LIHKG, May, 2020. <https://lih.kg/1995485>

²⁶ 社會低下階層. “Show Blocked User - Peter擺料.” LIHKG, May, 2020. <https://lih.kg/frokxT>

²⁷ 斬支. “Peter擺料收得皮未.” LIHKG, March, 2020. <https://lih.kg/1894231>

Intel for Peter is accused of encouraging radicalism, endorsing vandalism, and swaying discourse during the protest movements. Vandalism against targets encouraged by *Intel for Peter* risked turning local and global public opinion against the protests, especially when the justification for these specific targets of vandalism is lacking. As a result, figures like *Intel for Peter* work to damage the reputation of the pro-democratic movement, focused on non-violence. In addition, *Intel for Peter* engaged in “fanning pro-democracy fundamentalism” by criticizing or questioning pro-democracy supporters for not being pro-democratic enough. In the case of *Intel for Peter*, the user’s dogmatic approach to the movement likely intended to discourage and deflate supporters. Based on the analysis of public commentary, the tactics used by *Intel for Peter* can be described as trying to add inertia to the pro-democracy movement by swaying discourse towards a more attritional path and deflating support by sowing discord and division among supporters.

Narrative Analysis

Table 2 summarizes the number of keywords used to collect data across each of the six narratives and the general narrative. The number of keywords used for each narrative varies according to the specificity of the narrative and the level of conversation around related topics online. For example, the “Legislative Council Election Postponement” narrative has the fewest number of keywords due to the highly focused lens applied when assessing conversation related to this narrative during the qualitative assessment and catalogue development phase. By contrast, the narrative “Countries Supporting Hong Kong are Disingenuous” is much more broad, as it pertains to references of numerous different countries, each with a slightly different lexicon. While narratives in this analysis with fewer keywords and phrases are likely to identify fewer posts as relevant, they are also likely to be less noisy.

Narrative	Number of Keywords
Legislative Council Election Postponement	18
Pan-Democrats Intend to Cripple the Legislative Council/Hong Kong	23
Countries Supporting Hong Kong are Disingenuous	41
Protestors are Disingenuous	20
Foreign Intervention	35
The National Security Law is Required	17
General	36

Table 2: Number of Keywords Employed for Each Narrative

LegCo Election Postponement Narrative

The volume of mentions pertaining to the LegCo election postponement narrative is highest on July 31 and August 1, as depicted in Figure 7 below. In addition to these peaks in conversation, there is a much smaller spike recorded on July 14, which corresponds to commentary around the legality of the unofficial pan-democrat primaries held on July 11, and speculation that the government would move to postpone the general election scheduled for the end of the month.^{28,29} [Fig. 7]

²⁸ “加罪之城,” *The Stand News*, July 16, 2020. <https://thestandnews.page.link/qXCyLc3iDEtvkApk7>

²⁹ Willingham, AJ. “5 things to know for July 14: Covid-19, stimulus, Hong Kong, Roger Stone, in memoriam.” *CNN*, July 14, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/14/us/five-things-july-14-trnd/index.html>

Total Mentions for “Legislative Council Election Postponement” Narrative

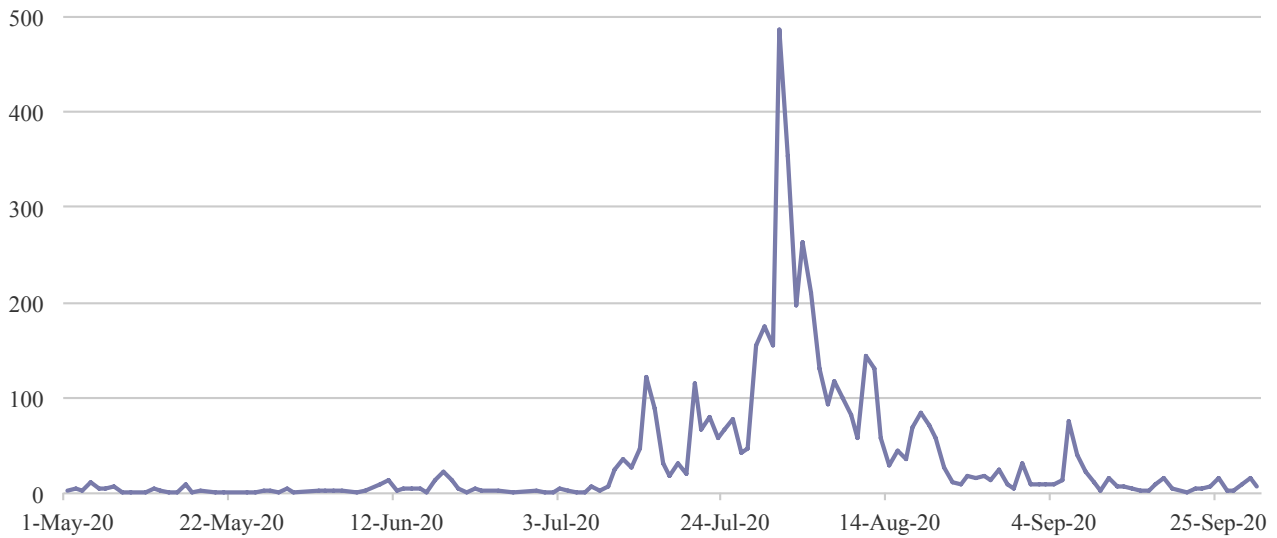
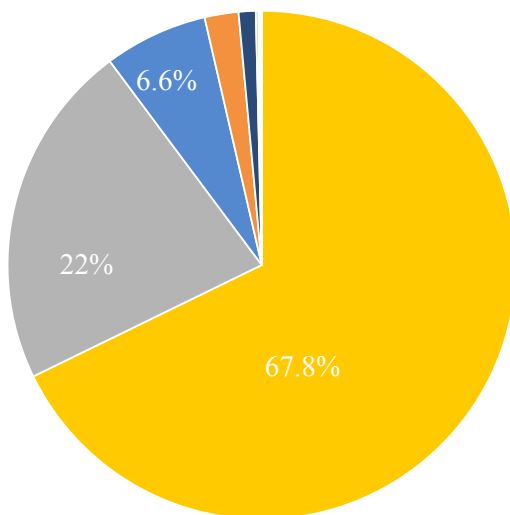


Figure 7: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Facebook was the primary driver of online conversations around this narrative. It was the source of more than 67 percent of the total volume of mentions related to this narrative from May 1 to September 30. Interestingly, news sources, which include traditional media and the social media accounts of established news outlets, were the second-highest driver of mentions for this narrative. The breakdown of mentions by source type for the “Legislative Council Election Postponement” narrative is presented in Figure 8. In contrast to source types across all narratives, there was a significant difference in the arenas in which conversation about the LegCo Postponement Narrative took place. [Fig. 8]

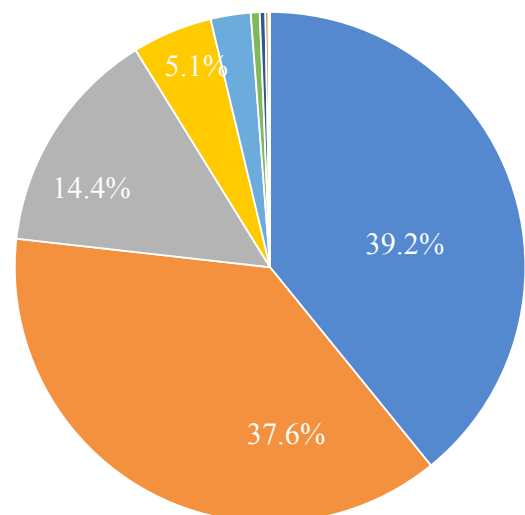
Volume of Mentions by Source Type

Legislative Postponement Narrative



Facebook
News
Forums
Twitter
Blogs
YouTube
Tumblr
QQ
Reddit

All Narratives



Forums
Twitter
News
Facebook
QQ
YouTube
Tumblr
Reddit
Review

Figure 8: May 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020.

Case Study: Political Disinformation About the LegCo Postponement

The Hong Kong government's justification for postponing the LegCo election was to prevent further COVID-19 outbreaks in Hong Kong. At the time of the decision in July 2020, Hong Kong was experiencing a new wave of COVID-19 cases with average daily case counts higher than they were at the beginning of the pandemic. Prior to the announcement, the pro-Beijing camp launched an onslaught of disinformation attacks that accused pan-democrats and their supporters of causing the outbreak by holding an unofficial July primary election and attending mass protests.³⁰ To examine this specific disinformation narrative in more detail, this case study dissects the post depicted below. This post, disseminated by a pro-Beijing media source, received the most interactions of posts relevant to this narrative according to our social media analytical tools, generating over 2,100 interactions, 107 comments and 233 shares.

Background and Context

The man in the picture is Dr. Ko Wing-man, orthopedic specialist and former Secretary for Food and Health. He served under the administration of former Hong Kong Chief Executive CY Leung. Thus far, his public opinion polls are the highest compared to all former and incumbent policy bureau heads, which can be attributed to the apolitical nature of his job. He left the government after the end of CY Leung's tenure and speaks occasionally for the pro-Beijing side. He is currently a standing committee member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPC) and a consultant for the New People's Party alongside Regina Ip. Some of Dr. Ko's most notable public stances include speaking out against an independent inquiry into allegations of brutality by the Hong Kong police during the early days of the anti-extradition bill protests and criticizing medical staff who went on strike to protest against the Hong Kong government's refusal to close the border with mainland China to reduce the COVID-19 outbreak in February 2020.³¹

The post shared on July 20 is by Shi Wen Hong (時聞香港), a popular pro-Beijing Facebook page. The meme featured in the post depicts a quote from a media interview with Dr. Ko through which he claimed, "based on COVID-19's general incubation period of 4-7 days, the outbreak dates of the third wave does match with the illegal assembly on 1st July." Underlining this quote in the meme is the caption, "Recognize the Truth Fight the Virus Together." The accompanying text from the original post, made by Today Review (今日正言), a less popular pro-Beijing Facebook page, on the same day, reads:



"[#TodayReviewHighlights] July 1st protest triggering the outbreak? Ko Wing-man: the timing matches. Former Secretary for Food and Health Ko Wing-man pointed out during an interview that based on the usual 4-7 days incubation period of COVID-19, the 3rd wave outbreak of local confirmed cases matches the date of the July 1st protest."

³⁰ “【極醜】中聯辦喉舌被踢爆屈初選播毒 藍絲除單熱舞慶回歸 疫隻字不提.” *Apple Daily*, July 19, 2020. <https://hk.appledaily.com/local/20200719/5BZNTNN4X62RH62PCRCIPHIZIE/>

³¹ “出席建制集會 高永文：如獨立調查，警察不敢執法 盧龍茂：對暴力零容忍.” *The Stand News*, July 20, 2019. <https://www.thestandnews.com/politics/出席建制集會-高永文-如獨立調查-警察不敢執法-盧龍茂-對暴力零容忍/>

Analysis

This case study reflects an array of characteristics of the broader information environment in Hong Kong. A common strategy adopted by the pro-Beijing camp is to appeal to authority. Ko Wing-man was chosen for this piece of content because he is a doctor and a former politically appointed minister. This gives credibility to the partisan accusations he makes. The post also reflects the politicization of language. First, the Chinese term used by pro-Beijing media for COVID-19 translates to “new corona pneumonia virus,” whereas pan-democrats sympathizing media still refers to COVID-19 as “Wuhan Pneumonia” in Chinese. The post describes the protest on July 1, 2020 as the “July 1st illegal assembly.” Moreover, the term “The Opposition” in Chinese has a far greater suggestion of obstructionism than in English; the more neutral expression would be “pan-democrats” or the “non-pro-establishment camp.”

Second, the post also conveys the partisan accusation that the pan-democrats caused the outbreak, suggesting causation and ignoring correlation. The caption in the picture below the quote suggests that the truth has been obfuscated. Part of Dr Ko’s quote suggests that the Department of Health has been withholding information to avoid laying the blame on the pan-democrats, a more mild but similar version of the “deep state” conspiracy.

As shown, the post is shared from another Facebook page, a typical practice among pro-Beijing social media pages. In addition to saving the effort of generating original content, the sharing of posts among pro-Beijing pages is also a risk management tactic. It ensures the message does not veer too far from the official position and the momentum generated by various social media points towards a unified and desired direction.

Using the same keywords employed to identify this instance of disinformation also identifies a report from *Apple Daily* refuting the narrative that the pan-democrat primary election and protests caused the outbreak.³² *Apple Daily* is not the only notable source that refutes this accusation, nor is Dr. Ko the only one spreading this narrative. For example, aspiring pro-Beijing politician Dominic Lee shared a map of confirmed cases alongside a map of pan-democrat primary voting locations, again suggesting causation and ignoring correlation.

³² Hong Kong Apple Daily, “【極醜】中聯辦喉舌被踢爆屈初選播毒 藍絲除罩熱舞慶回歸爆疫隻字不提。” Facebook, July 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/hk.nextmedia/posts/10159272856782448>

IV. Conclusion

This analysis considers the nature of viral content in Hong Kong, and the political and contextual factors that shape how narratives are created and consumed. There are important nuances between misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda that need to be understood in order to draw appropriate conclusions about social media content in this complex information landscape.

The key events timeline sheds light on how the social media landscape in Hong Kong responds to major political events, and how conversation around these events are driven. The highest peaks in conversation during this period are most often driven by a tweet going viral on Twitter. Examining the LegCo election postponement narrative in greater detail reveals that this narrative received substantially less engagement than others, even when it would be expected to have the highest traffic, such as on July 14, 2020 and July 31, 2020.

There are several driving factors behind this finding. First, the LegCo election postponement narrative was much narrower in scope than many of the others, such as “Foreign Intervention” and “Protestors are Disingenuous.” The queries used to inform data collection for this narrative were fewer and much more specific than the queries used for other narratives. However, while the LegCo election postponement narrative may receive less engagement than others, it likely created knock-on effects for the volume in posts related to other narratives in the dataset due to the highly interrelated nature of narratives observed.

This analysis also reveals interesting findings about the use of LIHKG as a potential vehicle for the spread of posts intended to incite division and social discord. In future analyses of Hong Kong’s information environment, this platform should be considered an important vector for the potential spread of misinformation as well as an arena in which political actors may seek to sow unrest through targeted information campaigns.

Together, this analysis provides a snapshot that highlights some of the major narratives related to important social and political issues in Hong Kong. The findings from this report offer a starting point for further analysis into how major actors may seek to shape Hong Kong’s information environment through diffuse online channels. As the political uncertainty and tensions in Hong Kong continue to rise, the characteristics of the information environment can offer unique insight into how the population perceives and responds to current events.

V. Appendix 1: Narrative Catalogue

After engaging in extensive qualitative research on the Hong Kong information environment between June 2019 and January 2021, six narrative typologies were identified, each including a set of sub-narratives. While some of the narratives included in the lists below are more obvious examples of misinformation or disinformation, others fall more squarely within categories such as propaganda, dubious claims used to justify government action, misleading criticisms, conspiracies, or malinformation (information grounded in reality that is intended to inflict harm). Importantly, while many of the narratives seem to originate from the pro-Beijing camp and are targeted at protestors or pan-democrats in Hong Kong, there are a number of narratives that emerge from the pro-democrat camp. Therefore, neither side can be said to be the sole perpetrator of harmful information in this environment, with or without intent.

This appendix specifies each narrative's sub-narratives, primary target of the narratives, and type and classification: misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, conspiracy, propaganda, dubious justification, and/or misleading criticism. The narratives were used to construct queries and identify new sources to be fed into social media monitoring dashboards over the course of the project.

Narrative Typology 1:

Justifications and theories about why the Legislative Council elections were postponed.

- A.** The pan-democrat primary election led to the COVID-19 outbreak in Hong Kong.
 - Target: Pro-democrat supporters; pan-democrat politicians
 - Category: Disinformation
- B.** The Hong Kong government deliberately spread COVID-19 to justify postponing the 2020 Legislative Council elections.
 - Target: Pro-Beijing government figures
 - Category: Conspiracy
- C.** Western countries have also postponed major elections due to COVID-19.
 - Target: Western governments; people who condemn the postponement of the Legislative Council elections
 - Category: Malinformation; misleading criticism
- D.** Postponement protects Hong Kong residents' voting rights, especially vulnerable groups and seniors.
 - Target: Pan-democrats; people who condemn the postponement of the Legislative Council elections
 - Category: Malinformation; dubious justification
- E.** Postponement will allow Hong Kong residents in mainland China and abroad to vote.
 - Target: People who condemn the postponement of the Legislative Council elections
 - Category: Malinformation; dubious justification
- F.** Election postponement is constitutional (in accordance with the Basic Law, Hong Kong's de facto constitution) with a decision from the National People's Congress Standing Committee.
 - Target: Pan-democrats; people who condemn the postponement of the Legislative Council elections
 - Category: Propaganda; dubious justification

Narrative Typology 2:

Pan-democrats intend to sabotage the Legislative Council and the state of Hong Kong.

- A.** Liaison Office attacks pro-democratic lawmaker Dennis Kwok for delaying Committee Chair election.
 - Target: Pan-democrat politician
 - Category: Propaganda; misleading criticism
- B.** The resignation of the pan-democrats en masse is a challenge to the Basic Law and a confrontation with the

Central Government.

- Target: Pan-democrat supporters
- Category: Propaganda; disinformation
- C.** The pan-democrat camp trying to fight for the right to govern amounts to subversion.
 - Target: Pan-democrat supports; pan-democrat politicians
 - Category: Propaganda; disinformation; dubious justification
- D.** Pan-democrats' agenda is obstructionist to the LegCo and District Council.
 - Target: Pan-democrat supports; pan-democrat politicians
 - Category: Propaganda; disinformation; dubious justification

Narrative Typology 3:

Countries that support Hong Kong protestors are disingenuous.

- A.** Taiwan and Western countries are rejecting Hong Kong refugees.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Misinformation; misleading criticism
- B.** Western double standards in dealing with domestic protests and riots.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Misleading criticism
- C.** Western countries do not provide full rights of citizenship to Hong Kong refugees.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Misleading criticism

Narrative Typology 4:

The protestors in Hong Kong are disingenuous.

- A.** People are protesting because they cannot afford to live in Hong Kong.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation
- B.** The protestors are all young people who have never worked and do not pay taxes in Hong Kong.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation
- C.** Protest leaders incite youth to take to the streets, but do not actually participate themselves, nor do they allow their children to do so.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation
- D.** Protestors pressure or lure underage girls into sexual activity.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation; conspiracy
- E.** Protestors are descendants of Vietnamese refugees.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation
- F.** Public figures of conscience in the West, such as journalists and the general public, do not approve of the violent protests in Hong Kong.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Disinformation

Narrative Typology 5:

Foreign intervention in Hong Kong interferes with domestic affairs and incites protests.

- A.** Protestors and pan-democrat politicians receive foreign funding.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Conspiracy; disinformation
- B.** Foreign countries are providing residency and work permits for Hong Kong residents who have participated in protests.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Malinformation

- C. Sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials are blatant intervention in domestic affairs.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Misleading criticism; propaganda
- D. Protestors (especially those involved in more violent activities) receive foreign agents' training.
 - Target: Protestors; pan-democrat supporters
 - Category: Conspiracy; disinformation
- E. The equipment used by Black Lives Matter protesters is the same that was used in Hong Kong.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Conspiracy
- F. Britain buried various "political time bombs" in Hong Kong before the handover designed to destabilize the CCP.
 - Target: General population
 - Category: Conspiracy
- G. Foreign judges undermine the Central Government's sovereignty over Hong Kong.
 - Target: Western governments and those who agree with Western countries' position on Hong Kong
 - Category: Disinformation; dubious criticism

Narrative Typology 6:

The National Security Law is required because Hong Kong is a weak link in China's national security.

- A. The National Security Law only prosecutes an extreme minority of people who committed crimes endangering national security, with no effect on the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong, or the business environment in Hong Kong.
 - Target: People who oppose the National Security Law
 - Category: Dubious justification; propaganda
- B. The opposition and radicalists forced the Central Government's hand to legislate the National Security Law.
 - Target: People who oppose the National Security Law
 - Category: Disinformation
- C. Western countries also have laws regarding national security.
 - Target: Western governments who condemn the National Security Law; people who oppose the National Security Law
 - Category: Dubious justification; misleading criticism

Narrative Typology 7:

General

- A. In addition to these six narrative typologies, we have also included a seventh, general typology in our data collection process, which captures keywords that were relevant to our context and time period, however did not fit within one of the typologies outlined above. This "general" category often captures the greatest amount of data, given that the keywords included under this typology are the most broad, and likely to pick up the greatest amount of data.

The National Democratic Institute:

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to strengthen and respond to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Founded in 1983, NDI has worked with local partners in 156 countries and territories, bringing together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. NDI works with political parties, civic groups, parliaments, and other organizations and individuals to strengthen democratic institutions, safeguard elections, advance citizen engagement, and promote open and accountable government. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.



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