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Perception of Hong Kong protests

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague

3. 1. 2021

Huahua Zhang

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huahua Zhang". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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Abstract

For the purpose of probing into why there is an enormous cognitive bias amongst Mainland China citizens and Hong Kong citizens. This study used quantitative content analysis as the research tool to figure out how mainstream media outlets in Mainland China and Hong Kong frame Hong Kong protest events since the British sovereignty transfer in 1997. This paper selected three significant Hong Kong protest events as empirical cases, 1 July protest (2003), Occupy Central movement (2014), Anti-Extradition Bill movement (2019) to find out the transformation between two media outlets, *Xinhua News* and *South China Morning Post*. Framing theory, as the conceptual framework is applied to analyze all selected textual contents in this study. The result of this analysis presents two different versions of media report towards the same issues by two media outlets. And also, the research results also detect a subtle transformation of media coverage in three protest events. Eventually, the paper provides some thinking about media coverage and Hong Kong protest.

Keywords: Hong Kong, media coverage, social protest, media, internal security,

Introduction

After the sensational Occupy Central movement, five years later, a massive high-profile political protest that happened in Hong Kong in 2019 rapidly draws worldwide attention again. There have been happened several political social movements and democratic protests in Hong Kong since the British sovereignty transfer in 1997. The division and conflict between Hong Kong and Beijing no matter whether among citizens or governments are gradually intensified. From the 1 July protest in 2003 until the 2019 Hong Kong protests, the rise and development of Hong Kong protests are strongly tied up with the involvement and framing by media.

Hong Kong, as a special administrative region(SAR) where coexists two different social systems after the British sovereignty handover in 1997(Butenhoff, 1999, p. 2). Owing to this distinctiveness, how political social movements happened and developed in this place get worldwide attention. The case of Hong Kong also provides a unique and valuable sample for the study of social movement. This analysis uses content analysis to examines how the mainstream media outlets in mainland China and Hong Kong frame the Hong Kong protest events since the sovereignty handover in 1997.

There is an interesting phenomenon which is worthy paying attention to, most citizens in Mainland China express a confusing and uncomprehending attitude towards Hong Kong protest events, they do not understand why Hong Kong people went to the street and participated parades. An article from Journalist Wang (2019)

finds that, the student who has study abroad experience or even is studying overseas, express strong support for Mainland China government and denounce the behavior of Hong Kong protesters. According to the research result by Cheung and Cheung, (1997, p. 231), there is a huge difference about the perception of social studies between Hong Kong students and Chinese students, social science students in China are more likely to have a higher nationalism. To investigate the cause of this phenomenon, how China mainstream media report Hong Kong protest is exclusively crucial since the media censorship in Mainland China. What is noteworthy in the newly happened protest in Hong Kong is, not like before, Mainland China media do not use strong sense words such as “foreign power”, “illegal behavior” and so on to report this protest event. In the news report from mainstream media *Xinhua News*, an article which directly construes the deep roots behind Hong Kong Anti-Extradition bill Movement¹. Furthermore, the article analyzes the various survival dilemmas which Hong Kong people are experiencing. What kind of signal does this transformation send?

The author comes up with four research question to analyze this phenomenon:

- 1) How did Mainland China mainstream media outlet frame Hong Kong protests protesters, police and events;
- 2) Are there any differences in the way Mainland China media of framing in the past three protests events;

¹ Xinhua News (2019, September, 4)Chenzhongdediseyuniuqudefangxiang—xianggangxiulifengbobeihoudeyixilieshehuishencenggenyuan Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/gangao/2019-09/04/c_1124961699.htm

3) How did Hong Kong media outlets frame Hong Kong protesters, police and events;

4) Are there any differences in the way Hong Kong media of framing in the past three protest events.

This dissertation set a code scheme to examine how different frame works in selected contextual cases. The author classified and summarized seven generic frame categories: conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, involved participants frame, the attribution of responsibility frame, encourage frame, prognostic frame, to examine how those two media outlets adopted. Further, to classify how they frame Hong Kong protesters, protest events and police by four different tone, neutral, positive, negative and unclear.

1.Theoretical Discussion

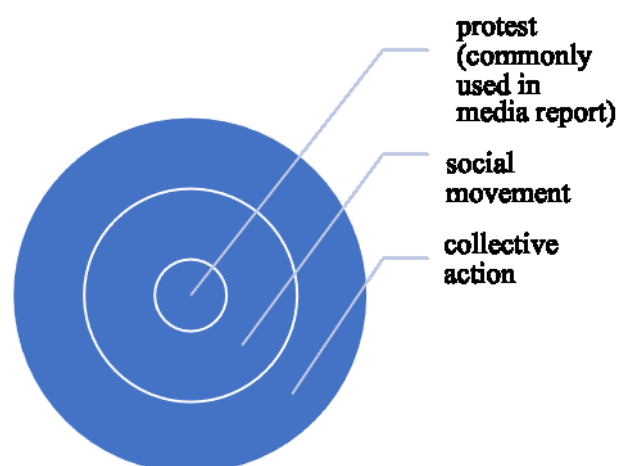
In this section of the literature review, the focuses of the research will be divided into three main parts. First of all, this part starts with defining four key terminologies: protest, social movement, collective action, and media coverage. This study figures out the definition of those four terminologies and the relationship between protest, social movement, collective action and media coverage. In this way, it can help researcher to better distinguish what kind of events happened in Hongkong can be classified as protests, social movements or collective action and what kind of events will be selected to investigate and analyze in this research. All the previous work can provide a fundamental and legible understand of the objects in this analysis. And the second step, this analysis elaborately illuminates the framing theory that is used as the conceptual framework in this analysis. In this way, it constitutes a fundamental theoretical backbone of this analysis. And the last step, this literature review part digs into the context of conflict between Hong Kong and Mainland China from three main dimensions: historical and political context, economic context and cultural context. In the same vein, this study analyzes the different media system in Hong Kong and Mainland China. In this way, the context of Hong Kong protest and the media system is clear to be presented in this study.

1.1 Protest, Social Movement, Collective Action and Media Coverage

Through reviewing and comparing existing academic literatures, “protest”, “social movements” and “collective action” always appear simultaneously. There is

no clear criterion to distinguish the difference between those three terminologies. In order to better understand and analyze this phenomenon, this study used three terminologies as keywords when doing literature review. In the aspect of scope, the range of the study in collective action is the widest, social movement is a relatively rigorous and formal manifestation on it. (Scott & Marshall, 2009, p. 96; Tejerina, 2017, p. 497). The study of political protest was nested in the field of social movements. The word of “Protest” is broadly used in illustrating an individual behavior or event. Besides that, “protest” is a way which is commonly adopted by participants in a social movement event. It is frequent to see “Protest” in media reports especially in the issue of Hong Kong. For instance, there is a series of special coverages toward Hong Kong Protest in *The New York Times* (“Hong Kong Protests,” 2020). For better understanding the relationship between both three terminologies, the author made a relation chart (see figure1).

Figure 1 The relationship between protest, social movement, collective action from the angle of scope



Collective action refers to the action taken by a group of people that shared the same interest (Scott & Marshall, 2009, p. 96). It can be presented not only by physical behavior but also mental manipulation (Tejerina, 2017, p. 497). The definition and scope of social movements can be applied are relatively wide. Comparing with “protest”, “social movements” is an official terminology in the academic field. Opp (2009, p. 42) also emphasizes, “the social movement means a kind of protest group”. “Social Movement” offers organizations that catalyze individual behavior to collective actions (Lee & Chan, 2010, p. 6). The event of Hong Kong protest is more suitable to understand as protest behavior or social movement. Hence, in this volume, all the chosen cases are based on the definition of protest behavior. The definition of protest can be understood as a kind of behavior or action that is commonly agreed upon. However, regarding the criteria of the protest behavior, scholars give different definitions from the literature. According to the study undertaken by Opp (2009, p. 50), we can summarize four traits of protest behavior:

1. the protest has to be involved by a group of people, not a single one;
2. the protest must oppose at least one decision which the targets did;
3. the participant cannot carry out their appeals independently, they have to seek help from third parties; and
4. the protest behavior is transnormal which does not happen normally.

All the selected cases based on the above four characteristics.

It is well-known that the development and usage of information communication technologies (ICTs) bring the new manifestation for collective movements, such as

Twitter, Facebook(Earl & Rohlinger, 2012, p. 1). However, the most broadly used genre of media outlet is still traditional media in China as a result of internet censorship. Social media and traditional media are all identified as a prominent tool in mobilizing and communicating protest events. Mainstream media is not only a platform of spreading information, but also a compound which in conjunction with relatively abundant resources and production of an on-time media works. The analysis conclusion made by Lin(2016, p. 366)indicates that, during the Occupy Central Movement, the most widely used and relied platform is traditional media. One the one side, represented by newspaper and television, the traditional media reported a large amount of media coverages. On the other side, audience in Hong Kong prefer to employ traditional media to obtain social movement news. Hence, the advantage of mainstream media no matter in credibility or audience number is difficult to alleviate in a short term. In the academic field of political protest and media, Gamson and Wolfsfeld(1993)examine the mutual impact between mass media and the political-social movement. The results indicate that, the relationship between media and social movement is not equally balanced. Embedded in the whole political social movement process, the media keeps playing a vital role. Nevertheless, it is not easy for the media to be an objective and neutral platform to display social movements as a result of the constrain from different aspects. Even though how this transaction happened depends on different set of conditions, but the constraints and pressure within each side can be seen as the dominant factor to influence the whole process (Gamson& Wolfsfeld,1993). In this mass media dominated era, the participant in social movements need to mobilize and establish their status and

dominance through reports with the help of mainstream news media. There are countless things about protest and rallies happened in the world in every single day. If it is not newsworthy, Journalist is habituated to take no account of the protesters. In such case, the activist will employ strategies to get the attention from mainstream media(Earl & Rohlinger, 2012, p. 4). In this vein, the lack of clear-cut communication between journalists and protesters leads the protesters to take violent and unconventional actions to get the attention from media(McLeod, 2007).

In the previous research reveals the media coverage greatly worsens the protest(McLeod, 2007). The current research also finds that, current news coverage patterns called protest paradigm which also lead to a contradiction between protesters and journalist(McLeod, 2007). In most cases, the purpose and appeal of social movement are challenging the status quo which is dominated by the existing government. Nevertheless, mainstream media is up to the chin in the power structure. Owing to the autonomy and dependence on advertising avenue, media agency has the tendency to help the power holders. Hence, they negatively report the social movement organization and participant as an irrational object and only focuses on riots and violent behaviors. On the whole, the media coverage leads to the social movement lacks rationality and legitimacy.

1.2 Framing theory

Framing theory originally stemmed from an interdisciplinary academic field, the psychological approaches and sociological approaches(Lecheler & Vreese, 2018,

p. 18). Goffman was the first person who introduced and brought forward the framing theory to the academic field of mass communication studies. Goffman(1974) pointed out, how the social framework is presented to the audience in the end depended on how the data and resource are interpreted. The process of frame is how the data and information are reinterpreted and presented to the receiving audience by the news makers. The news which are ultimately exhibited directly influence the subjective understanding of audiences.

The research from Gamson and Wolfsfeld(1993) states that how the social movement events and media interact is structured by the way of framing. The use framing as a tactic is playing a dramatically vital role in political news coverage. The people who participated social movements can make use the approach of framing on communication to put pressure on the government to influence the decision makers(Gerhards, 1995, p. 226). The news frame process is achieved by a certain preference or prejudice from news makers. They use the selection, reinforcement, filtering, and assimilation, as well as the arrangement of headlines, introductions, quotations, and important paragraphs to present the events. Inherent experience is the main source of the frame structure. The inherent experience is always affected by the social and cultural environment.

Conceiving frame is the process that how data is interpreted to be a subjective thinking is one-sided. Entman(1993)in his research came up with the process of issue frame, which includes “in such a way as to promote a promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation

for the item described” (p. 52). This tool provides a clear measurement and inductive method for analyzing how the issue is framed. The large amounts of frames the newsmaker will use increase the difficulty of classification. The research from DeVreese(2005) came up with the notion of “issue-specific frames and generic news frames” (p. 54). The issue-specific frame only related to a specific issue or a topic, hence, each event has their own frame. Different from issue-specific frames, generic news frames existed beyond the limitation of topic and background.

2. Methodology

This dissertation employs content analysis as research tool to open up this research. Content analysis is commonly employed in the field of political science study(Neuendorf & Skalski, 2009, p. 206). Content analysis method is often used to illuminate the hallmark of news reports in the field of mass communication, further, to provide a basis understanding for analysis of its implication and extension(Riffe et al., 2005, p. 25). In this process of analyzing data, the content analysis method emphasizes the effective analytical summary ability. In the analysis of the textual contents of existing media reports on protest or social movement issues, some use quantitative analysis to summarize the transformation in characteristic parameters such as the volume of reports to reflect the development trend of social movement during a period of time, but lack of going into the meaning of each sentences and words. Meanwhile, some researchers use qualitative analysis to specifically analyze the content of protest issues, put more attention on predicting the potential influence

and results, nevertheless, the researcher will be distracted by subjective factors in a large scale. In the way of observing the presentation of words and tone in the report, to summarize the characteristics of the report and predict the reader's attitude. This article uses a more common frame analysis to interpret news reports, and finally obtain a comprehensive content analysis result through the mining of the number of article reports, the use of information sources and the attitude of the report.

In the portion of methodology, the author will go through the research design, how the sample data are collected, introduction of three empirical case studies, elaborate coding scheme: how the units of categories are classified. At the last step is to test the intercoder reliability .

2.1 Research Design and Data Collection

This study is based on rigorous reading and coding sheet. The sector of research design is a complete quantitative content analysis which can be seen as a ligament which connects conception and the specific analysis object(Abernethy, 2000, p. 33). Based on the foregoing research questions. We will nail down the scope of the research target.

In this research, all textual resources are downloaded from the online news archive sources, including opinions, editorials and so forth. This research examines media reports from two media outlets, *Xinhua News* (Mainland China, Chinese Version) and *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong, English Version). The history of Xinhua News can be traced back to 1931, it was called Red China news

Agency(Xin, 2012, p. 33). Xinhua News, even though was directly under control of the China Communist Party, the purpose of establishment is to integrate political logic and market(Xin, 2012, p. 57). The online archives from Xinhua News are downloaded from the Xinhua Multimedia Database². The South China Morning Post is an English newspaper in Hong Kong, it was purchased by Alibaba in 2016(Amer, 2015, p. 38)The digital archives for South China morning post obtained from Factiva (Global News Monitoring& Search Engine)³.

The textual content that will be investigated included both titles and articles. Each media outlet will solely compare three political protest events: July 1st Protest Rally (2003), Occupy Central (2014), Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Bill (2019) . Those three events will be empirical cases samples to be investigated in this study. For better sampling the articles, each protest events will examine since protest started until it finished. In this way, the date scope of July 1 Protest Rally is from 1 July to 3 July in 2003, Occupy Central is from 28 September to 18 December in 2014, Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Bill is from 6 June to 6 September in 2019. The sample articles selected for *South China Morning Post* by searching keywords such as “Hong Kong”, “Hong Kong protest”, “Hong Kong rally”, “Beijing”, “Mainland China”, “riot”, “domestic politics”. For selecting articles from *Xinhua News*, the author searched “**港澳台**(Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan)”, “**香港**(Hong Kong)” as keywords and “advanced research” to collect data. And then use the subjects of “Domestic Politics”,

² Xinhua Multimedia Database: <http://www.photomall.info/cn/index.jsp>

³ DOW JONES FACTIVA(Global News Monitoring & Search Engine):<https://professional.dowjones.com/factiva/>

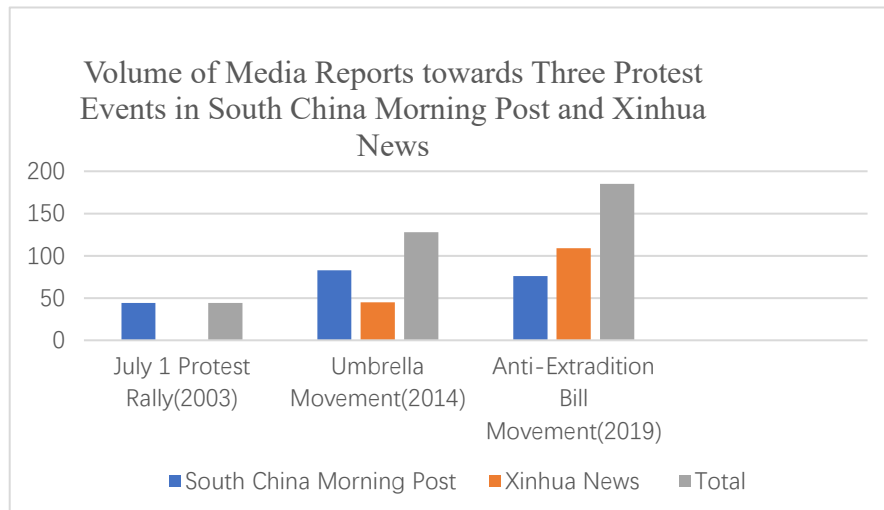
“political/general news”, “civil unrest” to make a farther classification. For better choosing sample data and get correct result, the author deleted some reports which only simply mentioned Hong Kong issues and repeated news reports. After finishing step of searching, we got 299 articles in total, 44 articles of them from South China Morning Post during July 1 Protest Rally, 83 articles during Occupy Central Movement, 76 articles from Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Bill Movement. And for Xinhua News, in the July 1 Protest Rally, there are 101 articles about Hong Kong, However, none of them are related to Hong Kong protest. The majority of those articles are about SARS and domestic livelihood. 45 articles for Occupy Central Movement, 109 articles for Hong Kong Anti Extradition Bill (see table 1 and figure 2).

Table 1. Volume of Media Reports towards Three Protest Events in South China

Newspaper	Protest Event	July1 Protest Rally	Occupy Central	Anti-Extradition Bill
South China Morning Post		44(100%)	83(65%)	76(60%)
Xinhua News		0(0)	45(35%)	51 (40%)
Total		44	128	127

Figure 2. Volume of Media Reports towards Three Protest Events in South China

Morning Post and Xinhua News



2.2 Case Studies

Case study is an essential sector in a complete social science research (Feagin et al., 1991, p. 2). The value of a case study is that it can present the audience a complete event, the researcher digs into the detail and get research result. In this research, there are three Hong Kong significant protests events are chosen to be as empirical case studies: 1 July Protest, Occupy Central Movement and Anti-extradition bill movement. Both of them has their own particularity and research value. This sector will go through details of each empirical studies.

1 July Protest (203) The July 1 Protest rally which happened in 2003 can be seen as the first time, Hong Kong people mobilized and remonstrated for Hong Kong political issues on a large scale. 1997, 1st July, was the date when British transferred the sovereignty to Mainland China. Since then, there are annual rallies every year, but with the characteristic of small scale. Up until 2003, more than half a million people

took to the streets under the scorching sun, protesting against the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law and appeal the Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa to step down. Since then, the July 1 movement has become a symbol of the spirit of democratic resistance in Hong Kong. The reason why Hong Kong citizens rallied is for the purpose of opposing Article 23 legislation. Since then, July 1 Protest rally became a sustained mass event for citizens to express appeal and dissatisfaction to government. During the whole process, the pro-Beijing group also unprecedentedly took action and publicly support Tung administration(CHENG, 2005, p. 2) The low competence of Tung administration, deteriorating economy and the SARS broke out in Hong Kong stirred up the dissatisfaction among Hong Kong citizens, ultimately leads to the 1 July Protest Rally.

Occupy Central Movement (2004) Before 2019, the Occupy Central movement is the largest scale social movement in Hong Kong history. In the early morning of September 28, 2014, after a week of student strikes and demonstrations, Occupy Central movement this event, which had been brewing for nearly two years in Hong Kong, was finally started when Hong Kong University legal scholar Yaoting Dai announced the official Start(李立峯, 2016, p. 12). In the initial tactic of Occupy Central, the occupation of Central was a non-violent civil movement. Fearing that violent incidents would cause the movement to lose its legitimacy and public support, the initiators of the Occupy Central Movement wanted to require a high level of discipline among the participants. For example, on September 26, the third party of

the Occupy Central published a "Handbook of Disobedience", which regulated the issue. The eight rules of violent disobedience, including "stick on non-violent resistance behavior, when confronting policemen and anti-protesters, do not speak insulting words or deeds that harm the physical body, mentality, and property of others", "form a human queue to lie on the ground when policeman arrested you, do not make a fierce struggle to prevent both sides from being injured". "Even if they are subjected to violence, they will be awe-inspiring and will not fight back with violence", and "respect for the decision of the "Peaceful Occupy Central" decision-making center."⁴

Anti-extradition Bill Movement (2019) Anti- extradition Bill movement is largest scale protest in the history of Hong Kong. On 9 June 2019, millions of Hong Kong citizens participated in the Anti-extradition bill rallies and demonstrations initiated by the Civil Human Rights groups, requesting the government to withdraw the amendment. The draft amendment to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance promoted by the Hong Kong Government was passed in the first reading of the Legislative Council in April (Purbrick, 2019, p. 470). The revised draft, which critics called the "Send to China Regulation", will allow criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China, where the judiciary is independent and has a disputed human rights record, triggering strong reactions from all walks of life in Hong Kong. Around midnight of

⁴ Civil Disobedience manual book:
http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/activity_detail&activity_id=90

the same day, some demonstrators stormed the police line in the demonstration area of the Legislative Council Building and clashed with the police.

As far as the civil social movements in Hong Kong, many of the protesters who is young generation, which can be said to be a sense of powerlessness after the Occupy Central Movement. Although they confronted face to face when police did repression movements, they still bravely won the government to suspend the promotion of this bill, which can be regarded as a partial victory.

2.3 Coding Scheme

Through observing and reviewing all selected media reports archives. A content analysis coding instruction was set. An important sector of the coding system is a comprehensive handwritten coding table. It must contain all the data that need to be analyzed, in this way to provide the researcher with a coherent research framework(Riffe et al., 2005, p. 70). On the premise that the sample is sufficiently collected, the degree of objectivity of the conclusion drawn by the content analysis method depends entirely on the objective situation of the coding. It can be seen that coding occupies a crucial core position in the research of content analysis method, because it will directly affect the objectivity of research results. After the three important factors that the coding table has been established, the sampling has been completed, and the coder training has been successful, the coder can code each sample according to the coding protocol, which is to convert the data into computer program phase of the format.

According to the collective action theory(DeMarrais & Earle, 2017, p. 189), participants and actions, the goal are three main elements in a collective action. To examine how media frame the Hong Kong protest. Based on the finding about framing social movement and political issues(Ciurel, 2018; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 100), the author classifies and summarizes seven kinds of frame type: conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, involved participants frame, the attribution of responsibility frame, encourage frame, prognostic frame.” A table was made for better presenting seven categories (see table 3)

Conflict frame. Under the use of this frame, the report focused on the clash happened between the actors, participants in the whole process of the event to manifest the severity and level of conflict(Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95).

Human interest frame. This frame can be understood as a report designed to attract attention and compassion by making it easy for people to identify the person, problem, and situation described. If a human interest frame can be used in the spread of a crisis, it will always be easier to win sympathy, no matter in terms of blame or accountability(Boukes, 2013, p. 8).

Economic consequence frame. The economic consequence frame also known as consequence frame. Nevertheless, in this study, we narrow down the scope the consequence, only focus on economic factors. Under this frame, it highlights what kind of economic effect can this frame cause and effect(Dirikx & Gelders, 2010, p. 734). Ultimately, this frame focuses on the outcome and how this issue effect people.

Involved participant frame. There are different actors which participated in an issue or phenomenon. This frame focuses on the reaction from different participants. Such as official statement which announced by each group leader and official response. This frame can directly provide audience clear standpoints from both sides.

The attribution of responsibility frame. The attribution of responsibility frame refers to the reason caused this phenomenon or who should be responsible for the caused results. The previous research finds that this frame is inevitably personal(Matthes, 2009a, p. 83).

Encourage frame. In the article by Ogbodo et al(2020), hope frame was introduced to conciliate and encourage people to fight with COVID-19 pandemic. During the Hong Kong protest, when the protest is come to a deadlock or some protesters died. Encourage was frame adopted under such a circumstance. This frame usually adopted with emotional bias. Both *Xinhua News* and *South China Morning Post* adopted this frame, but their targets are different. *Xinghua news* use this frame to encourage Hong Kong Police, nevertheless, *South China Morning Post* use it for encouraging protest participants.

Prognostic frame. The content of prognostic frame mainly provides policy recommendation and solution towards the ongoing events(Ciurel, 2018). There are some small amount contexts of analyzing the status quo and give prediction of this currently processing phenomenon. The purpose of prognostic frame is not merely focused on providing recommendation, but also necessary to evaluate the feasibility

of the response strategy according to the priority of the problem (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614).

2.4 Intercoder Reliability

The ultimate goal of intercoder reliability is to better classify and categorize the examined media reports textual contents. According to Lacy (2015, p. 10), there are two approach of examining reliability, intercoder reliability and intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability in content analysis refers the consistency of results on human coding when doing test for the same phenomenon by different coders (Lacy et al., 2015, p. 10). Due to the different understanding towards the same context by different people, the intercoder reliability can examine the interpretation by coders towards the context in a farther step. The examination of reliability standard among different approaches depends on the need of the research. The value of reliability connotes the consistency under a certain type. It does not generally apply to the universal coherency. General speaking, the wider the error acceptable to the researcher, the lower the reliability is. In this study, there are three coders, including the author, are selected to participate this research scheme. In order to avoid influencing by internal and external factors, three coders did their work individually. The overarching units of sampling are 299 reports, 10% of them, 30 reports which represents 10% of the whole sampling are randomly selected to put into use of examining intercoder reliability which. In SPSS, the sector of Analyze, the reliability analysis is defaulted to Cronbach's Alpha. The result for protester, police and protest events respectively are

0.842, 0.847, 0.864. those results shows that there is a high constituency between three coders towards 30 selected textual contents (see table 2).

Table2. Intercoder Reliability

Coding category	Cronbach's Alpha
Protester	0.842
Police	0.847
Protest Events	0.864

3. Historical and Contemporary Context of Hong Kong Protests and Politics

3.1 Historical Context of Hong Kong Protests and Politics

The sovereignty disputation between Hong Kong and Mainland China can be traced back to the First Anglo Chinese War (Opium War). On 26th January 1841, the British established a colony on an island in the pearl River which called Hong Kong now (Carroll, 2007). During the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, Japan governed Hongkong from 1937-1941 (Carroll, 2007, p. 1). The Nanking Treaty marked the start

of territorial cession, since then the British occupation lasts until July 2 1997(Tsang, 2003, p. 14).

The arguments which sparked scorching debates between Hong Kong and Mainland China for a long time are a series of contradictions regarding the sovereignty. The controversy started from the sign of the *Sino British Joint Declaration* on 19th December 1984(The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland &The Government of the People’s Republic of China,1984). The original text includes:

- “The Government of the People's Republic of China declares that to recover the Hong Kong area (including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, hereinafter referred to as Hong Kong) is the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people, and that it has decided to resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong with effect from 1 July 1997.”⁵

As the matter of fact, in the issue of the sovereignty handover, Hong Kong people did not have legal rights to participate in the whole negotiation process. Hong The Britain government did not seek for opinions from the Hong Kong people. Consequently, in this vein, the formulation and sign of the Sino Britain Joint Declaration are not by the way of a democratic approach. Hong Kong people refuse to admit the validity of this declaration.

⁵ From the “Sino British Joint Declaration”, by The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland &The Government of the People’s Republic of China,1984.
http://english1.english.gov.cn/2007-06/14/content_649468.htm

On the surface, the contradiction between China and Hong Kong is attributed to Hong Kong people's dissatisfaction with the large number of mainlanders entering Hong Kong to encroach on welfare and other resources. Virtually, it is the conflict between different political system identification under "one country, two systems". In 1978, the People's Republic of China (PRC) implemented a policy called "one country, two systems.". At that time, Mainland China still keeps a socialism system with Chinese characteristics which is led by Chinese Communist Party(Saich, 2010, p. 108). While, according to article 5 in the chapter of general principles in the *Hong Kong Basic Law*(The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, 1996), it records:

"The socialist system and policies shall not be practiced in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years."⁶

In this way, Hong Kong will maintain its capitalist system and intrinsic way of lifeway. This kind of structure of politics and law solidifies the divergence between Hong Kong and Mainland China. The current political system of the SAR government obviously does not meet the requirements of the public. The Chief Executive and associated officials have failed to discharge their responsibility. Besides that, it is also unable to obtain the trust of the general public in terms of administration management.

⁶ From the "Hong Kong Basic Law", by the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 1996
<https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/index.html>

In addition, it is impossible for the public to go through the current electoral system to replace officials and chief executives who make frequent mistakes in government issues.

3.2 Contemporary Context of Hong Kong Protests and Politics

3.2.1 Cultural Context: Identity Politics and Immigration History

Scholars have already investigated the rising localism in Hong Kong, “Hongkonger”(香港人) identity emerged since the sovereignty transfer in 1997, it rapidly escalated since 2008.(Ping & Kin-ming, 2014, p. 6; Yin & Zhang, n.d., p. 26)The impact of identity can be come into play diffusely in area of political and individual behavior(Agius & Keep, 2018, p. 1). Identity politics can be seen as a double-edged sword. On the one side, it can speed up hatred and anger mood and mobilize participants for protest movements in a short time. On the other side, it can easily tear society apart and drive a wedge between citizens from both sides. In the recent years, there have been two evident transition in Mainland China and Hong Kong relations. First of all, a variety of daily livelihood issues can be intensified and escalated to societal contradiction between Mainland china and Hong Kong. Furthermore, the chain reaction reacted to this phenomenon is that some Hong Kong people holds an attitude of one hundred percent resistance to all things in mainland China. The new pattern of contradiction between Mainland China and Hong Kong is not merely concentrate on the governance, but also have a tendency to Chinese citizens.

A long shadow which haunts Hong Kong people and Hong Kong society for a longtime is identity crisis. The estrangement between Hong Kong citizens and Mainland China society and the rebellious sentiments towards the Mainland China are long-standing and becoming intensified. According to Veg(2017,p.337), Hong Kong people give tacit consent to notion of pan-Chinese cultural identification under the existence of local Hong Kong identity for a long time. Nevertheless, in recent years we can see there is a trend that a transformation from a cultural identification to a civic based identification in a democratic community(Veg, 2017, p. 343). Nevertheless, this new civic based identity makes the relationship goes to a narrow and extreme road.

Different sociocultural environment and rising opposition emotion to China which gradually shaped Hong Kong local identity since1994. Nowadays, the two completely different living environments, education experiences, and the outlook on life in two those two places. It is inevitable to create difference and alienation. The unswerving resistance mood among Hong Kong citizens, especially young generation, and their aversion to Chinese government are hard for the mainland people to understand and imagine. Hong Kong and Mainland China respectively embarked on a diametrical different way since the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1994(Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies & Lau, 1997, p. 3). There is no connection between Hong Kong and Mainland China in any sphere during the govern by British colonial regime period. Hong Kong people are living in a western cultural environment. At the same time, China was experiencing Maoist socialism and doing social transformation which threw the country into chaos. At that time, there is no

normal order either in society production or livelihood in Mainland China. For a long time, Hongkong is far ahead of Mainland China in any sphere.

Hong Kong has a complex immigration history which shapes a diverse culture environment since the British colony in 1842. In the whole history, the purpose of the majority of immigrants from Mainland China came to Hong Kong is to avoid social change and pursue a safe place to settle down. The official statistics in 2016 by population by-census indicates, even though the amount of immigration is still a key element in the whole Hong Kong population mobility, the people who were born in Hong Kong is still has a high percentage. In past ten years, it sustained around 10%. The proportion of the population born in Mainland China, Macau and Taiwan downgraded trivially from 33.5% in 2006 to 31.0% in 2016. On the other hand, the proportion of people born in other places increased from 6.2% to 8.4%. This phenomenon was caused by a large number of foreign labors coming to work in Hong Kong during the period(Population By-census, 2016).

According to the research by Law and Lee(2006, p. 219), there are three immigration waves before the second world war. A series of policies was implemented by governments since 1950 to deal with the immigration issue. The first important quota system was implemented as a restriction regulation to limit the entry of mainland citizens(Bacon-Shone et al., 2008). From 1960 to 1980, it was also the period started from the Great Leap and the end of Culture Revolution. The policy implemented during this period was called Touch-base policy(Wong, 2007, p. 75), the deteriorating economy and social production brings on the Chinese government neglect their

management. In the great famine period in mainland China in 1962(Fuller, 2015, p. 158), a large number of Cantonese and mainland citizens from twelve neighboring areas flooded into Hong Kong from across the border overland. At that time, many Hong Kong residents brought food and beverages to the border to help them, and even led them to the city. There is a strong mood of sympathy and acceptance among Hong Kong society. The colonial Hong Kong government would also give them enough food before they were caught and sent back to the mainland. Chinese newspapers generally call it a refugee wave(Chen, 2013). Hong Kong residents called these compatriots refugees and refugees, not illegal immigrants. At the same time, With the economy rapidly developing in Hong Kong, the living quality and economy have greatly improved. The gap on level of development in Mainland China and Hong Kong is huge. The aspiration of Mainland China citizens to come to Hong Kong has changed from avoiding wars and famine to a wish for pursuing better life and income. The number and motivation of illegal immigrants is quite astonishing.

Another significant policy adjustment happened in 1983, due to the influx of mainland citizens in Hong Kong and the sudden increased amount of Children, the British government and Chinese government jointly proposed a “one-way permit quota system”(OWP) to replace the former “Touch-base policy”(Wong, 2007, p. 77). Lots of person with ability immigrated to Hong Kong which leads to Beijing tightened the immigration policy between Hong Kong and Mainland China. At this moment, the phenomenon of social exclusion in Hong Kong society regarding to new Chinese immigrants emerged(Law & Lee, 2006, p. 224). With the rising self-awareness between

Hong Kong citizen, in their point of view, the immigrants from mainland China is no longer their compatriots, but illegal immigrants or new immigrants. Faced with the pressure brought by the political, social, cultural and economic factors in Mainland China, the voice of re-advocate and uphold the local culture is rising up.

3.2.2 Economic Context

The fluctuated development of economy and a widening gap between the rich and poor in Hong Kong further intensified the contradiction between Mainland China and Hong Kong. The economic development of Hong Kong lacks autonomy and immensely tied up with Mainland China. Scholar have investigated the fact that the economy in Hong Kong is strongly influenced by the collaboration with the People's Republic of China(PRC), no matter with business corporation or government(Hamilton, 2001, p. 94). Namely, How the Hong Kong economy developing hinged on the behavior by Mainland China. No matter from a present view or long-term view, Mainland China keeps playing a main dominant force for Hong Kong in the matter of economy development. Nevertheless, economy in Hong Kong has always been seen as a stigma which has high outwarded orientation and high internationalization. Coupled with the vital functional characteristics of Hong Kong global financial hub, peripheral economy changes and market fluctuations have had a huge impact on Hong Kong(Simonis, 2017, p. 28). For this reason, the economy development in Hong Kong is unpredictable and fickle. In the early 1970s, with the rapid economic development and a sustained growth level of resident income. Hong Kong government began to implement a strategy of developing a new economy model. Since then, economy and service industry have a

considerably go up, such as real estate, finance, trade and tourism. After the end of the Second World War, Hong Kong is a undisputed beneficiary in this unprecedented period. From an economic point of view, Hong Kong's global attention is mainly resulted from its post-World War II economic growth "miracle": high growth that lasted for more than 40 years, took over the lead in entering the row of existing emerging economies, and per capita GDP once ranked among the "four little dragons" in Asia. The first is regarded as a "Hong Kong phenomenon". While with the reform and open up policy, the mainland China is speeding up the economy development. The manufacture industry in Hong Kong which suffered from high costs, have to seek for transferring to Guangdong province in mainland China (Meyer, 2008, p. 11). At the same time, mainland China just opened up and the country is not fully open. Hence, the import and export of products are all transported via Hong Kong. Foreign financial firms chose Hong Kong as their strategical location to establish their Asia headquarters(Meyer, 2008, p. 11). Both interior factors and exterior factors facilitate the status of Hong Kong as the hub of global economy communication and cooperation.

1997, is seen as the moment of truth in Hong Kong economy history. After Hong Kong returned in 1997, the Asian financial turmoil broke out. A series of strong impact on the Hong Kong economy, which was at the peak of the bubble before the reunification, has entered a six-year adjustment period. In the article by Liu and Lau(2002) records “the average annual rate of growth of per capita GDP fell from 4.5 percent in the pre-reversion era(1983-97) to 1.9 per cent in the post-reversion era(1997-2001).(p.123). Following with the further deepening of China economy development,

the external environment for the development of Hong Kong has gone through unprecedented challenges: first, the persistent development in Mainland China has already gradually deteriorated the superiority of Hong Kong in both aspects of trade and finance. Especially after China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 (Liu & Lau, 2002, p. 133). China gradually involved in the world economic system. Secondly, more and more free trade zones represented by the Shanghai Free trade Zone were approved and established, the advantage of Hong Kong further declined.

Since the 1980s, the polarization between the rich and the poor in Hong Kong, especially the increasingly high housing prices, rents and other basic living costs, has worsened the situation of the poor in Hong Kong. The official statistics of Hong Kong Gini Coefficient (see appendix 1). Based on the line chart, on the whole, the Gini Coefficient depicts an ascending trend since 1986. From 2001, the speed of rising geared down and kept a stable posture between 0.5-0.6. Even for college students who are more likely to get high salaries, employment and life pressures are increasing. The deterioration of the housing issues in Hong Kong is related to the government's long-term land fiscal policy. With the 1997 Asian financial turmoil and the subsequent economic downturn, the growth of Hong Kong's developable land and economic activity space lags behind the sustaining population growth, directly leading to a shortage of residential land. Although the special administrative region (SAR) government has made a lot of efforts to alleviate the problem of estate and housing, it has encountered greater resistance from all parties. As a result, Hong Kong citizens can clearly notice that the renting and purchasing fees are becoming more and more

extravagant. The young Hong Kong people kidnapped by the accommodation issues and no longer believe in the "Lion Rock Spirit" and instead target outsiders, believing that the disappointing status quo is that outsiders have encroached on their resources(Kwan, 2017, p. 627). The increasing gap between the rich and the poor and the problems of intergenerational solidification have amplified the confusion of young people in Hong Kong about the future and their dissatisfaction with the Hong Kong government, providing a hotbed of ideas for Hong Kong independence. High estate price, the disparity between the rich and the poor, all these revealed contradictions make the youth generation depressed and frustrated. Nevertheless, those social problems have long been exposed for a long time. In the past few years since the reunification, Special Administration Region governments have made abundance of efforts. But up until now, the results do not have much success, and rising grievances among the citizen are difficult to clear off. It is true that the SAR government has not been able to reasonably solve Hong Kong's social and people's livelihood issues and protect people's livelihood through implementing new policies and, which has led to a strong endogenous motivation for Hong Kong to politicize economic and people's livelihood issues. By the same token, this is an important reason why the protest turmoil broke out as soon as it was instigated.

3.3 Media System in Mainland China and Hong Kong

3.3.1 Mainland China Media System

The media system in Mainland China is entirely marketization and it shows a stigma of increasingly intense censorship and directly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party and central government(Shirk, 2011, p. 5). According to Luo(2015, p. 52), the control and regulation from government and party are the most decisive factors which constructed the internal media system in Mainland China. In addition to the four primary functions of general media such as education, transfer information, monitor and entertainment. The media in Mainland China must play a role of the mouthpiece of the Party (CCP), take charge of propaganda and eliminate antagonistic public opinion. The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China is the supreme organization that dominates the media in mainland China, and it is also the specialized agency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in charge of the entire party's propaganda work(王耀焯, 2011, p. 17).

As a result of the internet block in Mainland China, *Xinhua* News is a significant mainstream media regulated by the Chinese Communist Party and central government. For the purpose of establishing the same tone to external reporting, the Chinese Communist Party stipulated that only *Xinhua* News has the right to interview or report foreign news, other media outlets can only quote from it(王毓莉, 2005, p. 13). Hence, this regulation also signifies the position of *Xinhua* News among China mainstream media outlets. In the matter of Hong Kong political protest issues, the strict censorship regime holds back the widespread dissemination of on time new reports and photos from an impersonal view. Due to the relatively blocking strategy

which adopted by Mainland China, how the Xinhua News report Hong Kong protest issues can be used to analysis how the China Communist Party and central government understand this issue. By the same token, this is also the way of how Mainland China citizens understand Hong Kong protest issues. For the ruling class, taking control of media can not only protect their dominant position, but also solidate their regulation through the way of manipulating the media, shape the understanding of citizens, so as to achieve a goal of obeying their leadership.

Regarding to the social protest and media coverage in Mainland China, Chinese leader adopted three central ideas after the 1989 Tiananmen square protests which are: “Prevent large-scale social unrest, avoid public leadership splits; keep the military loyal to the CCP(Shirk, 2011, p. 16).” For media reports of sensitive social issues and major outstanding events, attention should be paid to maintaining social stability, stable economic development and the mild progress of reform and opening up. Important figures and contents involved in news reports must be verified clearly and must be reviewed by relevant government personnel, in this way, they can be published.

3.3.2 Hong Kong Media System

In the past almost 30 years, Hong Kong has undergone a low degree of press freedom, it hits an all-time low in 2019(see appendix 1)⁷. The media system in Hong Kong both constrained by international factors and the Chinese Communist

⁷ PRESS FREEDOM INDEX, PRESS RELEASE: <https://www.hkja.org.hk/en/press-release/public-see-new-low-in-hong-kongs-press-freedom-beijing-viewed-as-the-major-factor-in-decline/#more-7018>

Party(CCP)(Chan & Lee, 2007, p. 51). After British colonial control transferred to Mainland China in 1997, it was granted a high degree of autonomy to manage its own affairs under the policy framework of “one country, two systems”. The socialism implemented in the People's Republic of China will not be implemented in Hong Kong for at least 50 years. The rights of local residents, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly, are protected by the Hong Kong Basic Law agreed between London and Beijing. The Basic Law is essentially the constitution of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, with the intensifying influence from Mainland China and the progressive communication between Mainland China and Hong Kong. The media is inevitably absorbed by politics.

South China Morning Post, as the dominant English-language newspaper, its potential development and growth are narrowed in the Hong Kong market. Hence, the newspaper is more apt to focus on overseas readers who are interested in China. Its pro-Beijing columnists and news reports uncritically elaborated on China’s behavior, thus igniting dissatisfaction from the group which hold criticism to Beijing. However, the newspaper also published some news and criticisms that could not be published publicly on the mainland China.

Against the background of increasing protests on the streets of Hong Kong, writing an analysis report for Hong Kong journalists is full of challenges. Protesters have been calling for democratic elections, the resignation of the chief executive and independent investigations of police actions. At the same time, journalists were

involved in the chaos and were beaten by police, exposed to strong light, tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets while conducting interviews.

4. Results

4.1 Units of framing Hong Kong Protest Events

The mold of framing can be classified as issue-specific or generic(Matthes, 2009b, p. 350).According to the analysis results(Ciurel, 2018, p. 9; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95), and the summarization after carefully reviewing all the selected samples, the author came up with seven generic frame forms, “conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, involved participants frame, the attribution of responsibility frame, encourage frame, prognostic frame.” A table of framing categories of Hong Kong protests media report was made (see table 3). Due to limited space, we simplify the 1 July protest as word “J”, Occupy Central Movement as word “O”, Anti Extradition Bill as “A”. The frequency and count of frames in content this study (see table 4).

Table 3. Frame Categories of Hong Kong Protest

Frame Categories	Definition	Example
Conflict	Focuses on the clash and ongoing stage between participants from both sides.	“2000 police to guard flashpoints while students and government meet”
Human interest	It is commonly used to illustrate the emotion and suffer from ordinary people in daily life to resonate audiences.	“记者手记：被“黑色恐怖”笼罩的香港(Journalist notebook: the dark horror shrouded Hong Kong“
Economic consequences	This frame refers to the economy results of a focusing objects, such as region, country, event.	“‘占中’影响深远 零售餐饮业首当其冲（Retail and restaurant will be effected the most in Occupy Central Movement）”
Involved participants	It is used for describing the official statement and situation of government or groups which participated this event	“Carrie Lam ‘helpless’ over talks deadlock”, “ ‘The sun rises as usual’: Beijing official’s response to Occupy Central
The Attribution of Responsibility	It refers to the reason or who should be responsible for this issue or situation.	‘占中’破坏特区政府运作动摇法治根基（Occupy Central destroys government operations and shake the foundation of the rule of law”
Encouragement	The report focuses on providing a support and encouragement inspiration to the protest participants	“occupy supporters march to liaison office”.
Prognostic	According to Ciurel(2018, p. 8) , this frame provides a strategy recommendation and thinking about the status quo.	“For the people; Michael C. Davis says leading occupy protester should now focus on winning public support for their campaign, while putting pressure on official to act in Hong Kong’s best interests

4.2 Units of framing protesters

Based on the collective action theory, Francisco(2010, p. 4) points out three objects to examine collective action empirical cases: action, tactics and face to the state or government. Protester is the individual or group of people who take actions. Hence, protesters are chosen to be as the units of framing are essential to analyze.

In table 4, the table summarized the amount of frame units of protester by reporting. Due to limited space of the table, the author simplifies the seven general frames categories, conflict frame as word “C”, human interest frame as word “H”, economic consequences frame as “E”, involved participants frame as “I”, the attribution of responsibility frame as “R”, encourage frame as “EN”, prognostic frame as “P”.

Table 4: Units of Frequency and Counts of Frame Categories in Hong Kong Protests

		Newspaper									
		Xinhua News		J	O	A	South China Morning Post		J	O	A
Frame categories	C	0	3	2		12	30	29			
			6.7%	3.9%		27%	36.1%	38%			
	H	0	9	18		0	0	3			
			20%	35.3%		0	0	4%			
	E	0	2	3		1	0	0			
				4.5%	5.9%		2.2%				
	I	0	0	0		4	14	0			
					9.1%	16.9%	0				
R	0	20	17		17	0	0				
		44.4%	33.3%		39%						
EN	0	5	13		0	0	0				
		11%	25.5%								
P	0	6	8		10	39	44				
			17.3%	15.7%	22.7%	47%	58%				
Total		45	51		44	83	76				

Table 5: Tone of Framing Protesters

		Newspaper							
		Xinhua News	J	O	A	South China Morning Post	J	O	A
Tone of framing protesters	positive	0	0	0		0	1	0	
	unclear	0	0	3		2	10	2	
			0	2.8%		4.5%	15.7%	2.6%	
	negative	0	45	97		0	3	5	
			100%	90%		%.	3.6 %.	6.6%	
	neutral	0	0	9		42	70	69	
			0	8.3%		95.5%.	84.3%.	90.8%	
Total		0	45	109		44.	83	76	

4.3 Units of framing Police

According to the collective action theory, Under the context of Hong Kong Protest, the function and value is police is a crucial factor. When the clash happened, how Hong Kong police react and what the standpoint should they stand is controversial. In the article which published from *Xinhua News*, they affirm the law enforcement of the Hong Kong police and express strong support and respect.

After reviewing all textual archives, this paper summarized four tone regarding framing of police in Hong Kong Protest: positive, unclear, negative, neutral.

Table 6. Tone of framing Police

		Newspaper							
		Xinhua News	J	O	A	South China Morning Post	J	O	A
Tone of framing Police	positive	0	36	95		0	0	3	
			80%	87.2%		0	0	3.9%	
	unclear	0	8	4		6	1	3	
			11.1%	3.7%		13.6%	1.2%	3.9%	
	negative	0	0	0		25	21	15	
						56.8%	25.3%	19.8%	
	neutral	0	1	10		13	60	55	
			2.2%	9.1%		29.6%	72.2%	72.3%	
Total		0	45	109		44	83	76	

4.4 Summary of Findings

Research question 1: How did Mainland China mainstream media outlet frame Hong Kong protests protester, police and events?

From the foregoing analysis results of media coverage of mainstream media outlet in Mainland China. The tone of framing police is positive both in 2014(80%) and 2019(87.2%). In the coverage of police, *Xinhua News* illustrates police as “legal”, “comply their duty”(依法律行义务) and to recover the order of transportation(恢复交通). The tone of framing protesters is negative in 2014(100%) and 2019(90%). In the reports of *Xinhua News*, it is common to see “protester caused the riots and break the public order” 占中行为破坏香港公共秩序) and “we should punish the protesters severely(严惩占中叛乱分子). In the case of Anti-Extradition bill Movement, there are eight articles applied neutral tone. Such as “Carrie Lam will represent the Hong Kong Special Administration to talk with student group”(林郑月娥将代表特区政府与学联对话). This has never happened in the previous protest movement. In all the textual articles, the tone applied in three of them are unclear.

In the earliest happened protest event, *Xinhua news* keeps silence, the volume of reports is 0 on 1 July Protest. And then in the issue of Occupy Central, up until 4 October, *Xinhua News* firstly reported this event and applied conflict frame type (see table 3). There are six types of frame are adopted in Occupy Central Movement by *Xinhua News*, which are conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, the attribution of responsibility frame, encourage frame, prognostic frame. The attribution of responsibility frame which takes a dominant role in the two protests event happened in 2014(44.5%) and 2019(54.9%). Followingly, is human interest frame, which constitutes 20% in Occupy Central Movement, 21% in Anti-Extradition Bill movement. The attribution of responsibility frame indicates that

the reason of a certain issue and who should be responsible for causing this situation. Human interest frame often refers to the report which is reported from an individual side(De Vreese, 2005, p. 56). Such as the situation from the side of citizens, injured common people, destroyed shops and their owners to open up related event. This frame obviously can lead the receivers to have a one-sided feeling(Boukes, 2013, p. 4). Different with the human interest frame of police by South China Morning post, the encouragement frame was used for supporting Hong Kong police. Hong Kong police is legally complying their duty and guard the safety in Hong Kong.

In the issue of Anti- extradition Bill movement, from July 2 to 4, the quantity of reports by Mainland China media outlet has soared up regarding Hong Kong protest, which contrasted with the earlier indifference or vague treatment. Xinhua News issued a condemnation late at night on the day after Hong Kong calling the demonstrators "radicals against the anti-extradition bill" and the incident as "violent attack and occupation of the Legislative Council. The reports and framing of Hong Kong in mainland media newspapers have become increasingly fierce. In the face of protesters who came up with demanding for complete withdrawal of the extradition bill and reinvestigation of police abuses, the official media accused them of disrupting national solidarity, and the patriotic mood between Mainland China citizens sentiment was unprecedented high.

In the light of the textual content and slant of the report, the official mainstream media in Mainland China continued the "public opinion guidance" strategy used since the Hu and Wen period-fuzzy state of affairs, selective reporting: mentioning

"protests," but simplifying the causes and consequences, equating the anti-extradition bill movement with the symbol of violating the law(Tai, 2014, p. 186). In terms of reporting protesters, Xinhua News keeps an accordant negative frame towards protesters. It is diverse with the essence of Hong Kong independence and the pro-democracy movement. After the situation escalated, the destructive power of the intensified behavior was rendered, the official media in Mainland China took selective reporting and avoid reporting protest reason strategy towards protest issues. Since the beginning of June in 2019, various media outlets in the Mainland China have strictly guarded against the introduction of information related to the anti-extradition bill movement. The only official media that can release information is keeping a vague tone in reporting on the reason of the social movement and violent enforcement by the police. A great abundance of mainland China citizens who do not have other channels to obtain information, they do not even know what are Hongkong people protesting for and what is the reason. At the same time, the government selectively allowed non-governmental self-media platforms to take out of context, amplify and arouse negative emotions. Since the Occupy Central movement happened in five years ago, the media in Mainland China have long been familiar with the public opinion war.

On July 1 ,2019, the 22nd anniversary of the transfer of Hong Kong sovereignty to Mainland China, protests escalated. Some demonstrators rushed into the Legislative

Council, leaving behind the words "no rioters but tyranny"⁸ and read the five major demands: withdrawal of the amendment, withdrawal of the 612 riots definition, and withdrawal of the charge of protesters, investigated the abusing power behavior of the police, and general elections, and then evacuated. Spokespersons of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong, and the Liaison Office all condemned the demonstrators on July 2nd, calling them "a blatant challenge to the bottom line of "One Country, Two Systems"," From July 2 to 4, the mainland media reported a significant increase in Hong Kong's anti-extradition bill incidents, which was in contrast to the earlier indifference or vague treatment. Xinhua News Agency issued a condemnation late at night on the 2nd, calling the demonstrators "radicals against the amendments" and the incident as "violent assault and occupation of the Legislative Council."

After July 7th, Hong Kong anti-regulation campaigns blossomed everywhere. There were Lennon Walls spontaneously posted by citizens in 18 districts, and all districts began to organize local demonstrations spontaneously. On July 14th, during a demonstration in Sha Tin District, the police cleared the scene at night to chase the demonstrators and blockade them into the new town square, triggering intense police-civilian conflicts. During the conflict, a demonstrator who was subdued by the police

⁸ CNN: Hong Kong protesters storm government building over China extradition bill

https://edition.cnn.com/asia/live-news/hong-kong-july-1-protests-intl-hnk/h_50dfc6359859cd4dc421017891fd6625

bit the police officer's finger while being pierced by a police officer's finger, causing the officer's finger to become bloody. This incident was quickly amplified and spread in the mainland media.

Research Question 2: Are there any differences in the way Mainland China media of framing in the past three protests events?

According to the research result of framing protesters, *Xinhua News* keeps a consistent negative tone in 2014(86.7%) and 2019(97.2%). However, what is noteworthy is, there are three articles used positive tone to frame protester. Comparing with Occupy Central movement, in the issue of Anti-extradition Bill movement, the media reports distinguished the student group and young generation with the protesters. With the title of “ Hong Kong government is seeking for talk with student groups”, “ the youth generation both in Hong Kong and Mainland China are family and friends”(香港年轻人和内地年轻人是家人，朋友). Not like before the stigma of keeping a consistent negative tone, Xinhua News started to transfer the tone towards protesters.

In the matter of frame categories volume, the amount of the attribution of responsibility frame keeps playing a dominant proportion in Occupy Central movement and Anti-extradition bill movement, followingly is human interest frame., the frequency of the latter increased. The frequency of conflict frame and prognostic frame has a slight rise.

Research Question 3: How did Hong Kong media outlet frame Hong Kong protesters, police and events?

Framing of protester in the previous research result shows that, on the whole, the *South China Morning Post* keeps a neutral tone when framing, such as “Mass appeal”, give an account of protesters in an objective way. Nevertheless, there is 5 reports which adopted negative tone of framing the issue of Anti-extradition Bill Movement such as “Hong Kong police anger has reached boiling point after force is cast as public enemy in extradition bill fiasco while protesters break law at will, insiders say”⁹, which attributes the police as a catalyzer to provoke violent clash.

On the aspect of framing police, *South China Morning Post* consistently keeps a neutral tone of framing police. There is still part of article used negative tone to illustrate police. Such as in Anti-extradition bill, “Give peace a new chance; Kerry Kennedy says Hong Kong is now in need of its own truth and reconciliation commission”¹⁰. There are three newly articles used positive tone towards framing police which constitutes the same portion as unclear tone.

When reviewing the results of frame categories, *South China Morning Post* keeps a high frequency on employing prognostic frame. The related articles calmly construe the status quo of ongoing protest and provide related resolution recommendation. Such as, “Say no to populism; protesters are demanding political reform, but there are nine reasons why Hong Kong should go down the path of

⁹ South China Morning Post: <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3018890/hong-kong-police-anger-has-reached-boiling-point-after>

¹⁰ South China Morning Post: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3019737/repression-begets-violence-and-more-violence-hong-kong-must-give>

populist democracy.” There is no human interest frame ever adopted in the former two protests in 2003 and 2009. Conversely, there are three articles used human interest to illustrate the event.

Research Question 4: Are there any differences in the way Hong Kong media of framing in the past three protest events?

From an overall view, *South China Morning Post* keeps adopting a neutral tone when framing media coverages which remains unchanged. On the aspect of framing police, not like before, there are 3 articles (3.9%) in *South China Morning Post* framed police in a positive tone. Such as in the event of Anti-extradition bill, “Give peace a chance; Kerry Kennedy says Hong Kong is now in need of its own truth and reconciliation commission”. On the framing of protesters, the frequency of negative tone used in framing has a mild grow up.

In the matter of framing protesters, the negative tone both adopted in 2014 and 2019. Comparing with the protest happened in 2014, the frequency Anti-Extradition bill movement adopted goes up slightly. The neutral tone dropped a little.

In terms of volume of frame categories, the count of using conflict frame and human interest has a modest growth. It is noteworthy that it is the first time that *South China Morning Post* adopted human interest frame., such as “Time for forgiveness; Phil Chan and Paul Serfaty urge the government to heal wounds by not prosecuting protesters.” It leads the audience to a commiserative mood towards protesters. The usage of prognostic frame shows a sustained growth.

5. Conclusion

After figuring out four research questions, the research results depict two different version of media report towards the same Hong Kong protest event by mainstream media outlets in Hong Kong and Mainland China. In addition, when reviewing three protest events, the result also detects a mild transformation on both media outlets, Xinhua News and South China Morning Post.

The official media in Mainland China shaped a unilateral and biased public opinion environment in internal China. One the one side, the standard path of official media is to attribute Hong Kong matters to a deep level issues such as "经济和民生 (economy and the livelihood of Hong Kong people) ", meanwhile, to point the spearpoint to "外国势力插手 (foreign force intervention) ," "颜色革命 (color revolution) ," and "颜色革命祸国殃民 (The color revolution harms the country and the people) ". on the other side, reports adopted abundant human interest frame, illustrate Hong Kong movement as a chaotic and wild movement; the people who lives there is suffering from violent protest; the protest paralyzes transportation system and leads to the disorder of people daily life. In this way to increase hatred mood among mainland towards citizens protesters and sympathy for Hong Kong people. There is no doubt that the two versions created by both media outlets deepen the emotional rift between Hong Kong citizens and Mainland Chinese citizens. The tone of media coverage in Mainland China is consistently keeping the same negative tone regarding the protest events, protesters. The media report labels the protester as

“terrorism” and illustrates their behavior as merciless and illegal. The information exchange between the mainland China and Hong Kong is asymmetric for a long time. Compared with Hong Kong, which enjoys more freedom of speech and freedom of the press, the report stance of Mainland China towards Hong Kong protest is one-sided. As the conflict between the Hong Kong and Beijing escalated, the strengthening constrains implemented by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and censorship of Hong Kong news were also escalating. It also leads to the tension between Beijing and Hong Kong.

Through reviewing the transformation of media reports in the past three events. We can discover, the reaction of Mainland China outlet transferred from a keep silent, ambiguous tone to an actively report situation. *Xinhua News* did not response on the day since the protest started shows that Chinese government did not expect the protest will develop to such a huge scale. This transformation happened by the pressure from Hong Kong protest. In this vein, Anti-Extradition Bill movement successfully pushed Mainland China government to adjust their propaganda and media strategy.

With China increasingly intensifying media pressure on Hong Kong local media, press freedom in Hong Kong has been curbed in a large scale. The work which the China Communist Party (CCP) is doing now, is to commit to assimilate the values of Hong Kong people through comprehensive political propaganda and infiltrate the education system to achieve the “return of hearts and minds”. When it can successfully change the values of most Hong Kong people, the awareness of Hong Kong independence will disappear. However, it is not possible to achieve.

Interestingly, when there are major political changes in China, the awareness of Hong Kong independence may promote Hong Kong independent movement, but it may also have a more profound effect at the same time. It is precisely because the consciousness of Hong Kong independence originates from the conflict of values. If the values of people in other parts of China become similar to those of Hong Kong people after being hit by this big political change, then the consciousness of Hong Kong independence will be separated. The tendency will also decrease. The current situation of Hong Kong media directly reflects the polarized political environment in the region: the pro-Beijing mainstream media and the scattered self-independent media are tit-for-tat, while other media outlets try to survive between the two (Chan & Lee, 2007, p. 52). In addition to being frightened when reporting the turmoil, local journalists are also afraid that negative reports on Mainland China will ruin their chances of going to the mainland for interviews and endanger the jobs they depend on for their livelihood. At this moment, when Hong Kong is politically divided and went through democratic movements, the media is under double attack from both sides. On December 11, 2015, Alibaba Group announced that the group has reached an agreement with the *South China Morning Post* shareholders to acquire the South China Morning Post and other media assets under the South China Morning Post Group¹⁴. Chinese government affected the articles when journalists reported and even tried to manipulate the public opinion. Alibaba stated that the acquisition will combine the tradition and superior editing capabilities of the South China Morning

¹⁴ South China Morning Post: <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1890059/statement-alibaba-group-acquisition-south-china-morning-post>

Post with the advantages of Alibaba in the digital field, providing readers a comprehensive and novel news and analysis of Mainland China and Hong Kong. This move is undoubtedly constraining the freedom of reporting for South China Morning Post.

There is a dilemma which is exposed in the Hong Kong protests that needs our attention. Peaceful and non-violent protest cannot attract the attention from Mainland China, Mainland Chinese government will keep silent and ignore their protest. Whereas, the more fury the protester behavior is, the more favorable for CCP to shape their own media coverage. Radical and drastic protest behavior will be covered as illegal and violent. In the case of Anti-Extradition bill movement, the media coverage by *Xinhua* news laid stress on highlighting the legitimacy of Hong Kong police. In a report from South China Morning Post about Occupy Central, the author suggested students to take non-violence protest no matter what happened. In other words, you cannot hurt others in your speech and actions. However, the large-scale rallies launched by Occupy Central and acts hostile to the police violated the law and violated the freedom and rights of other people. Such actions are clearly can be defined as violent behavior. Their actions truly divided society and affect the daily lives and livelihoods of the people. From this perspective of analyzing media report, China is reporting the truth without bias.

It is impossible to influence the media coverage in Mainland China via third party or Hong Kong. However, the transformation which is observed in the research result shows a good indication that Mainland China is adjusting their attitude. From

the previous experience, only when the scale and severity step up, the Mainland China media would report related news. Nevertheless, this process of framing started since the information of Hong Kong protest entered the mainland and caused discussion, it was already framed in the discourse system of "pathological demonstrations, disrupting the normal operation of society", and it was often accompanied by videos of demonstrators with the title and description of "how to disrupt, how to be unreasonable, and how to hurt ordinary citizens". Hence, most people did not even know why they were protesting, that there had been happened several peaceful rallies, but the Hong Kong government did not respond, and they did not know how the 612 demonstrators were treated by the police. The basic tone of "violence(暴力)" and "chaotic Hong Kong (混乱的香港)", "Atrocities (暴行者)" has generated disgust mood towards the demonstrators. At this time, the reports from *Xinhua News*, in the name of analyzing the reason why Hong Kong has protests¹⁵, illustrated Hong Kong in a negative tone and attribute all the reasons to the housing and society pressure. They also reported news from the angle of the students and persuade students to stop protesting.

It is not possible to recede the divergence between Hong Kong citizens and Hong Kong government in a short term. It is hard to predict if the participants and scale of pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong will be added and greater. Frequent arrests and prosecutions employed by Hong Kong government have a certain deterrent

¹⁵ Xinhua News (2019. September. 4) Chenzhongdediseyuniuqudefangxiang—xianggangxiulifengbobeihoudeyixilieshehuishencenggenyuan Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/gangao/2019-09/04/c_1124961699.htm

impact. The record of going to jail and for young people undoubtedly has a considerable negative impact on their future life. In the face of the tough attitude by government, the biggest challenge of the democracy movement is the lack of goals that can be achieved in the near future. Citizens no longer believe that democratic demands can be achieved through the way of protesting and rally.

After the sovereignty transfer in 1997, many large-scale movements that broke out in Hong Kong, including the 1 July protest in 2003, the Umbrella Movement in 2014, and a series of resistances caused by the 2019 Fugitive Offenders Ordinance Amendment were all related to the tension and contradictions in the practice of "One Country, Two Systems". The democracy movement in Hong Kong has always tried to ensure as much as possible the autonomy of Hong Kong in the political field under the principle of "one country, two systems." However, as far as Beijing is concerned, the function of "One Country, Two Systems" is only for using Hong Kong system and special position to help Mainland China to develop economy. The political system is merely the surface layer, and the bottom layer is the comprehensive power. As long as the territory of Hong Kong is still stable, the downward trend of economy is not reversed, and economic and trade exchanges between the two places remain frequent, Hong Kong will still be affected by the Mainland China, regardless of whether Hong Kong has democracy or not.

5.1 Limitation and Planned Future Work.

In the sector of designing conflict frame categories. It is impossible to determine the degree of influence of a certain content on the audience based merely on quantitative content analysis. Generally, it can only draw conclusions about the more superficial and direct effects of sampling objects. As for the conclusions of in-depth and indirect effects research, content analysis is not enough. When examining the intercoder reliability, there still existed some divergence and deviation among the three coders. If possible, the study needs more time and effort to achieve a high reliability among three coders. In the step of analyzing different categories of frame, this research result finds that even though two media outlets adopted the same type of frame, but their targets are different. Hence, to build up a second level of frame code is necessary.

In the plan of future work, the research about social media and the rest of social movements events in Hong Kong will be analyzed, besides that, one more Western English newspaper will be also added in the empirical cases. In this way, this study can clarify different framing types towards Hong Kong protests, hence, to provide a full-scale understanding from a global perspective. Social media as a new emerging platform is diffusely used in democratic movements happened in Hong Kong in recent years. In this Anti-extradition Bill Movement, many people mainly connected via social media platforms and went to streets. There was no specific organizer and leader which is different from the Occupy Central Movement that happened in five years ago. From the perspective of media communication and propaganda, the functions of social media such as the internet have increasingly evolved from sharing and

disseminating information to the pillars of participated actors and groups. It is becoming an indispensable part of social movements. It is particularly worthy to pay attention, as a result of the powerful organization and mobilization function of an emerging new type of media platform, the social movement is also transferring to a new pattern of social movement.

From the analysis towards the angle of mainstream traditional media outlet, we can understand the dominant thought from the official government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In Mainland China, there are still some people who want to know more information about Hong Kong protest and show their support. And in the famous social media, Weibo, we can still find hashtags and opinions related to Hong Kong protests, even though they are identified as illegal information and blocked. Inside Mainland China under the internet censorship, it is instilled worldviews and historical events that are different from reality, and it is difficult to observe the real public opinion inside Mainland China from outside. If we want to have a comprehensive and entire understanding of Media and social Movement in Hong Kong, the research of social media must be included. By the same token, Twitter is seen as the battlefield of Hong Kong social movements. Hong Kong people mobilized and spread information via social media channel. There are only three Hong Kong protests are examined, there are still other protests such as, 2016 Mong kok civil unrest.

The investigated newspaper *Xinhua News* in this research is the Chinese version, namely, the audience of this newspaper is the people who can understand

Chinese, mostly are Chinese people. The South China Morning Post is an English newspaper which mostly oriented to foreigners who can understand the English. I prefer to investigate English version of *Xinhua News* to have an outlook of how Chinese mainstream media frame Hong Kong protests and shape the international image in overseas. By doing so, to have a comparative perspective of analyzing the framework of the Hong Kong protest issues.

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List of appendices

Appendix 1: Gini Coefficient in Hong Kong from Census and Statistics

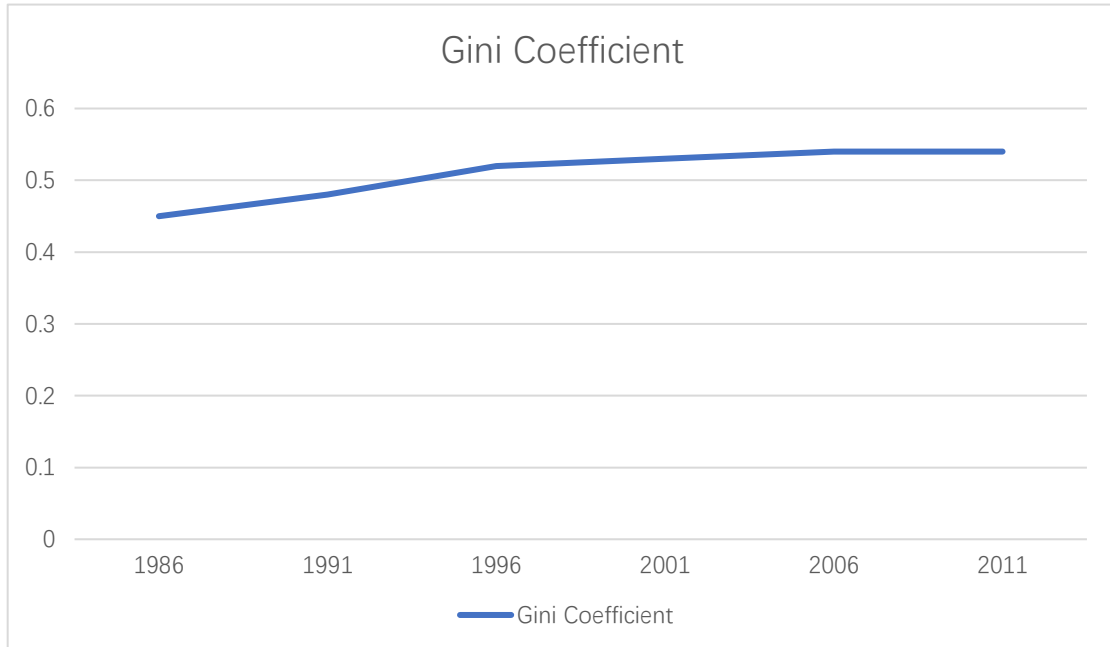
Department

Appendix 2: Hong Kong Press Freedom Index from Press Freedom Release

Appendices

Appendix 1: Gini Coefficient in Hong Kong from Census and Statistics Department

(line chart)



Appendix 2: Hong Kong Press Freedom Index from press freedom release

