

Policing Transnational Protests in an Asian Context: The WTO Sixth Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This study utilizes the analytical framework developed by della Porta and Reiter on transnational protest management to study the policing of the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC6) held in Hong Kong, 2005. Findings show that the Hong Kong Police acted in line with the contemporary emphasis on negotiated management in dealing with its first-ever encounter with transnational protestors, partly due to institutional motivations and severe public scrutiny. Persuasive counter-insurgencies were used to ensure the smooth operation of the conference but at the same time allow the anti-globalization activists to voice out their appeals, in a tug-of-war of antagonistic local demands for freedom of expression and a low tolerance for public disorder. Three major features could be identified, including (1) urban fortification of the conference venue despite its downtown locale; (2) protest zoning with proactive mediation and intelligence gathering; and (3) avoidance of coercive force in both action and appearance. The policing of WTO

MC6 demonstrates the viability of conciliatory strategies in protest management despite hazardous terrains: shortfalls in both broad democratic accountability and internal chains of command may have inadvertently reined in a police force that sought independent claims to legitimacy in the limelight of local and international observers. Societal intolerance to “law-breaking” behaviour, the absence of strong civic movements and traditions and prudent actions by officers all assisted the Hong Kong Police in containing unrest from transnational protestors who have connected with an otherwise sympathetic local population.

Keywords: *policing, transnational protests, WTO, Hong Kong*

1. Introduction

“Asia’s world city”, as the Hong Kong government’s slogan proclaims, tried to live up to its image by hosting the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in December 2005. Delegates from 149 member states and territories and 116 observer states and international organizations sent 11,000 participants to the WTO-founding member in the largest international summit ever hosted by Hong Kong. In the streets and parks near the conference venue, however, various social movements and protestors were mobilised against the WTO activities. This study draws on the analytical framework developed by Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter (2006) on transnational protest management in order to analyse the Hong Kong events. In a series of writings, della Porta and her colleagues addressed major coercive, persuasive and information counter-insurgencies dominantly used by the Western democracies’ police in dealing with internal security events. Her analysis highlighted several strategic adaptations undertaken by modern police forces in response to counter-summits organized by the

transnational protestors, in which officers applied a mix of negotiation and coercive force as foundational tactics. This study is bolstered and supplemented by other scholarly work on the dynamics between policing and public order, given the anomalous autonomy of the Hong Kong police force from representative politicking.

Using multiple sources of data, including government documents, newspaper articles, interviews with activists and police officers and focus groups, this study aims at examining the strategic foundations of the Hong Kong Police (HKP) in its debut encounter with transnational activism in a globalized context.¹ The discussion concludes with implications for policing in post-MC6 Hong Kong and the region: how did the strategies carried out by the HKP reveal the similarities and variations between the policing environment in liberal democracies and the rest? Does the present discourse effectively explain what happened in Wanchai (灣仔), and what are the limitations of della Porta's theorization attempts on transnational policing when reviewing this especially Eurasian police force's encounters with anti-globalization protests?

2. Contemporary Overviews: Theory and Practice since the 1970s

Post-WWII policing focused on the use of “escalated force” in protest control, but since the 1970s many mature democracies have ostensibly given up the strategy of “total control” in public order policing (King and Waddington, 2005; Hoggett and Stott, 2010). Under the new conciliatory principle, the police would respond to disorder and ratchet up their responses in varying public order episodes according to the level of violence amongst protestors, but at least initially a degree of public disruption would be tolerated in an effort to avoid violence (Vitale, 2005). The new framework, which came to be called “negotiated

management”, evolved from the escalated force paradigm and was influenced by the modernist penal philosophy which shows greater respect for democratic rights, and consequently a softer protest policing developed (Noakes and Gillham, 2006; Gorringer, Rosie, Waddington and Kominou, 2012).

Naturally, civilian (and not a few scholarly) perceptions remain unconvinced that theory and practice would align. In most deconstructionist discourses, such as those by Gillham on Seattle, players in large-scale transnational protests tend to weave disparate if not outright contradictory narratives with regard to their policing experiences. Having understood from previous experiences that “escalated force” would only lead to increased violence, police authorities considered means to diffuse potential tensions with demonstrators when policing protests. The police in Western Europe and the United States generally apply soft strategies first to maintain a channel for negotiation with the demonstrators, especially when handling anti-globalization events given their experiences with escalating violence that has resulted in property destruction and loss of life, and some would only send in anti-riot squads to irreversibly break up the event as a last resort.

However, the volume on transnational social movements as compiled by della Porta and Tarrow (2005) is notably limited to a subset of nations: it depicts a norm in which the police is concerned with domestic terrorism, citizens are battling corporatism, and politicians are struggling with disenfranchised voters. While broadly useful in some WTO contexts, these assumptions nonetheless put a straitjacket on parallel policing experiences in Asia, especially in states with different widespread expectations of public order. Plainly put, what is seen as a picket scuffle in one country may be described as violent social unrest in another, with subsequent differences in demands and restraints for

officers who, as de Lint (2003) put it, are agencies of moral institutions within the state.

Nonetheless, three global strategic foundations in public order policing have become widespread at the turn of the millennium. The police would attempt to mediate with the protest organizers, avoid coercive intervention against the protests to the best of their ability, and perfect the instruments for information gathering. All these actions are aimed at garnering public approval and creating favourable conditions for subsequent police actions in protest management. This new strategy displays an obvious departure from protest policing in the 1960s which attempted to extinguish all unauthorized demonstrations with prejudice, with a tendency by authorities to posture and adopt “enforcer” attitudes towards any and all protestors.

2.1. Mediation

The first strategy is to seek consensus and common ground with the protestors. Police will take proactive steps to engineer a favourable physical and social environment for protest policing through the introduction of counterstrategies aimed to prevent widespread public disturbances. Under a peacekeeper’s banner, complicated procedures of negotiation emerged with the aim to avoid disasters. Police authorities will take proactive steps to avoid the outbreak of large-scale confrontations between protestors and the police by coordinating some form of agreement with protest organizers on demonstration routes and venues prior to the protest. Designated public protest zones may be established in some cases to give mutually acceptable places for the public to express their appeals. Meanwhile, risk assessment will be conducted by police authorities on corresponding operational plans.

Public relation efforts have also increased. Police authorities will try to gain public approval and acceptance for their counter-insurgencies in

protest management through media management activities (Marx, 1998). For instance, before the protest they will broadcast justifications for their plan and actions in order to win public support. Meanwhile, the police also pay increasing attention to message dissemination and management. It is now a common sight for a police spokesperson waiting in the wings to make explicit the rationale for the actions as soon as possible in order to stop the spread of rumours and accusations.

2.2. Avoiding Coercive Interventions

The second strategy is to avoid coercive intervention through selective non-enforcement of laws for minor violations. Police authorities would exercise less visible and expressive forms of coercion, instead opting for consensus where feasible. Learning from previous encounters, some forces have abandoned zero-tolerance policing in protests as research showed that the militarization of public order policing was more likely to spell catastrophe and bring casualties (Kraska and Paulsen, 1997).

The literature on anti-riot strategies indeed suggests that high-profile actions are more likely to inflame protestors' violent dispositions. With this in mind, some forces tend to install anti-riot hardware in inconspicuous places and will only dispatch anti-riot squads when the situation has gotten out of hand. If sent, the squad will subdue the protestors and escort them away from the scene using minimum force. In most cases, police officers do not put on anti-riot gear and wear only regular working dress. Various types of "less lethal" arms were often used against demonstrators, from those traditionally deployed by police public order units, such as tear gas and water cannon, to new developments like hand-held irritant sprays and rubber/plastic bullets. The police will also act discreetly when deploying anti-riot teams and heavy arms to avoid provoking the protestors. As long as the situation is under control, and unless they are ordered by their super-ordinates, the

frontline demonstration-control teams will not take any forceful actions against the crowd. But a number of anti-riot members with hardware will be standing by near the demonstration route in case of worsening situations. Meanwhile, minor law-breaking incidents will be tolerated by the police. Thus peacekeeping becomes the predominant concern of the police who aim to create a “win-win” situation in which public order is largely maintained and freedoms of expression and assembly are preserved.

The new strategic paradigm also features the deployment of special police units to selectively intervene against the violent fringes of the demonstrations in a divide-and-contain, if not divide-and-rule, tactic. It is in fact fundamental to the strategy of de-escalating force in that it combines commitment to dialogue with targeted action against militant factions in an attempt to isolate and arrest parties involved in property destruction or physical violence without restricting peaceful demonstrators.

2.3. Strengthening Intelligence

The last strategic foundation is wide-ranging collection of information and media management. The police authority’s use of intelligence in the control of protestors has received substantial attention. The police force would compile files on groups and individuals to deter the protestors. Police would place heavy emphasis on the risk assessment prior to the protest and would carry out both “Negotiated Management” and “Intelligence Collection”. Risk assessment is done in every aspect of the forthcoming demonstration; they communicate with protestors’ delegates in the hopes of reaching agreement on the route and other issues. The police also collect live information from group leaders in order to draw multiple contingency plans. Second, the police will assume the role of “Facilitator”, allowing the protestors to put forward their complaints

while vigilantly watching out for any threats to personal safety, vandalism and theft. Lastly, attempts will be made to infiltrate into the demonstration crowds. Unarmed plainclothes police, often disproportionately female, are often stationed in inconspicuous spots along protesting route, or asked to mingle with the people. They will collect information and evidence of crime and report the latest strategies of the demonstrating groups to commanders.

2.4. The ‘Two-Pronged’ Strategy: Controller to Facilitator, Intelligence and Action

This new protest policing approach was described as a two-pronged strategy originated from the principles and techniques deployed for the management of crime, namely, intelligence gathering, analysis and targeted actions (King and Waddington, 2005). The police place heavy emphasis on the risk assessment prior to the protest and will carry out negotiated management and intelligence collection, the latter of which has been receiving substantial attention amongst general and academic observers.

In general, the tactical tendencies of protest policing in Western Europe and America since the 1980s has reiterated the language of civil and/or human rights, and thus the principle of “control” was replaced by “facilitation” in protest policing. As concluded by della Porta and Reiter (2006), tolerance of minor violations of the law, selective police intervention oriented towards protecting the demonstration rights of peaceful protesters, demilitarization of police intervention and reliance upon bargaining and self-policing have become the foundational parameters in policing protests in liberal democracies – provided that they are the “familiar” kind of protestors..

3. Against Alien Citizens: Tides in Transnational Protest Policing

As identified by Greg Martin and others, however, the policing of protests at international events by transnational protesters has put pressure on and in some cases seemingly reversed the trend towards a more “democratic” protest policing style (Martin, 2011; della Porta and Zamboni, 2012). In the last two decades a rising culture of transnational social movements has gradually developed (della Porta and Tarrow, 2005); a plurality of these members speak out against globalization and its discontents. To give some contemporaneous context in the Asia Pacific region as summarized by Piper and Uhlin’s 2004 compilation, Johan Lindquist described how HIV/AIDS in the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore growth triangle was tackled in situating NGOs and networks, while Meredith Weiss examined secular rights-based and Islam-based campaigns spilling out from Malaysia (Lindquist, 2004; Weiss, 2004). Other scholars noted how the furious pace of democratization in Taiwan has taken on a transnational human rights discourse, while Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, pursues a similar course in good governance in the face of economic globalization (Lin, 2004; Jemadu, 2004).

The global pace of protest is even more hectic, with modern technological advances allowing the rapid spread of information and opinion, while veteran anti-globalization groups, anarchists, trade unionists and farmers’ leagues descend on the host countries of major international meetings. At least a vocal portion of these members call for the interruption of many international trade or financial organization meetings such as the Group of Eight (G8), World Bank, and WTO, through means of civil disobedience or outright violence. On the first day of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999, demonstrators reached 40,000 in number, and a number were injured

during police actions. The Conference's opening ceremony was postponed for five and a half hours. Eventually the mayor declared a state of civil emergency and imposed a curfew downtown. For the Cancún Ministerial Conference in Mexico in September 2003, about 2,500 non-governmental organization representatives and anti-globalization activists staged a demonstration on the opening day of the conference. The violence of the clash was compounded by the suicide of Lee Kyang-hae (이경해 / 李京海), a Korean farmer and key activist who stabbed himself during the public demonstration. In both conferences, casualties amongst both the police and protesting groups were reported and considerable economic losses were noted. In addition, the police of the host cities were criticized by protestors and observers for their responses to the demonstrators.

The new trend of social movements also exposed the limitations of negotiated management in protest management. The processes of negotiation, planning, prevention, citizens' involvement, and engineering could be expensive, time-consuming and insufficient in events that develop rapidly over mere days. Proactive intelligence gathering has been challenged as an infringement of civil liberty by the media, while the soft strategies may also be criticized as simply officers not doing their jobs. The tolerant attitude may also be exploited by the extremists bent on creating maximum disruption or disorder (della Porta and Reiter, 2006). The persuasive strategies also failed to prevent the disruption of law and order as policing succumbed to the urban guerrilla tactics of the transnational protestors.² This strategic adaptation by the protestors in turn has brought changes in police counterstrategies.

3.1. Fortification of Conference Venues

The first counterstrategy was fortification of the conference venue. Abundant police resources were deployed to guard the conference

venue. The aim was to insulate the conference delegates from any protests in order to facilitate the uninterrupted running of the summit. On some occasions, the authorities would select a remote spot for the conference, such as resort locales with limited land and air transport access. Since the venue was not easily accessible to all but the most determined demonstrators, police operations become more manageable. The G8 summit held at the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland in 2005 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Shanghai in 2001 are probably the best examples. The second strategy was to take stern police actions if officers perceived that the situation was about to spiral out of control, for instance if protestors were attempting to break the police cordon line. The WTO Ministerial Conferences in Seattle in USA in 1999 and Cancún in Mexico in 2003 illustrate this strategy. This new style of protest policing may be called “command and control” and is done in an effort to micro-manage demonstrations and prevent disruption of the peace (King and Waddington, 2005).

King and Waddington (2005) pointed out that police’s adaptive strategy towards the transnational protests could be described as “exclusionary fortress-oriented policing”. There has been much stronger emphasis on isolating political leaders and dignitaries from the risks of contact with demonstrators than on negotiating with organizers to define spaces and limits of protests. Summits were often moved to inaccessible areas, and no-go areas for protestors expanded ever further. Fortification of summits has become in fact the main strategic element in the policing of transnational protest, regardless of the standard *modus operandi* for otherwise conciliatory policing policies in liberal democracies: Seattle saw fences installed at the venue, trains blocked at border crossings, and *personae non grata* refused leave to enter (della Porta and Reiter, 2006).

3.2. Selective Incapacitation of “Extremist” Groups

King (1997) identified two distinct but opposing trends in policing strategies in the light of recent transnational protests. Domestic alignment with the institution and practice of more multi-agency, conciliatory, and consultative processes in some parts of the West faces an increasingly militarized and potentially overtly offensive public order policing formula for protests of a transnational nature – and the line is blurring as globalization proceeds apace. Police responses towards the transnational protestors were no longer friendly or tolerant. They inclined to make demonstrations invisible or negate their influences in the public sphere. Antagonistic interventions with a “show of force” attitude were observed and a massive, highly visible police presence is generally reserved for extremist groups in counter-summits.

Administrations would also try to make extensive use of databanks and the exchange of information amongst national police forces in order to prevent individuals deemed dangerous from participating in transnational demonstrations. Meanwhile, the police would place more emphasis on the preventive strategies not aimed at protecting the official summit but pre-emptively directed against movement activists and strategies. This strategy of isolating “symbolic places” has more recently been described as “selective incapacitation”, although it has not always proved successful in maintaining control (della Porta and Zamponi, 2013). The actions include harassing youths due to the demographic makeup of protestors, employing continuous identity checks and stop-and-search powers. To avoid clashes between police and radical protestors, some police authorities would conduct “preventive or anticipatory arrests” – as highly contestable as the concept may be – of key figures in protesting groups and even confiscate their propaganda materials like puppets or banners. Prosecutions usually take place but

oftentimes police allegations against these arrestees were not borne out by judicial authorities (della Porta and Reiter, 2006).

4. The “Siege of Wanchai” in Hong Kong

The WTO’s 6th Ministerial Conference (MC) was held from 13 to 18 December 2005 and ended with the declaration of the Hong Kong Manifesto in which delegates from the 149 voting members reached a consensus on the direction of market opening and the elimination of government farm-export subsidies. Outside the conference hall, the Hong Kong Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse Korean farmers and activists who attempted to break the police cordon line. On the second last day of conference, a large number of Korean protestors clashed with the police near the conference venue in the Wanchai area of Hong Kong island, less than 5 km from the central business district (CBD) and home to 160,000 residents. In the clashes 141 people were injured and about 900 Korean protestors were arrested.

Although many different transnational social movements have been involved in protests against the ongoing WTO negotiations over many years, the farmers from South Korea seemed to have gained a particularly strong reputation for such activism and even violence. South Korea is not alone in still maintaining a relatively protected agricultural sector, but within South Korea itself and overseas the local farmers, fearing their inability to remain competitive, have been especially vocal in warning of the dangers of both opening up the domestic Korean agricultural market to “foreign” agricultural imports and losing their own export subsidies. In the case of MC6, the farmers’ organisations were joined by a number of militant trade union groups from Korea, who had their own agenda in opposing the market-opening being discussed by the WTO.³

A variety of tactics were employed by the protestors over the days leading up to the final violent confrontation. Appendices 1 and 2 illustrate the methods adopted by the Korean and other transnational protestors in detail, but it can be said that apart from marching (often accompanied by drumming and singing) and adopting peaceful Buddhist-style kow-towing, the protestors did also throw themselves into the sea near the Convention Centre (which is bordered by Victoria Harbour on one side), attempt to snatch police shields, and forcibly try to deliver petitions to the Consulates of the major states involved in the WTO.

The Hong Kong Police force has a long and distinguished, though sometimes turbulent, history. While for the majority of its history it was led by British expatriate officers with a rank-and-file which was mixed Chinese, Indian and expatriate, with the approach of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China a considerable degree of “localization” was instituted, the recruitment of Europeans was stopped and the first ethnic Chinese Commissioner of Police was installed in 1989. Currently, the HKP is ethnically 99% Chinese, though a few expatriate officers remain awaiting retirement. Although plagued by problems of corruption and low morale even into the 1970s, reforms subsequently introduced have ensured a high degree of professionalization in the current force. The result is that, by the 2000s, in the view of one experienced observer, the HKP was “characterised by a tight organisational structure, comparatively sufficient resources, high salaries and attractive benefits, operational efficiency and effectiveness, and tremendous work pressure”, while also being “punctuated by institutional checks and balances, media scrutiny, the rule of law and a civic culture that relatively regards police work highly” (Lo, 2012). The HKP had been confronted by violent riots in 1967,⁴ but in recent decades those demonstrations that did take place, such as the 1989 mass demonstration

in sympathy with pro-democracy demonstrators being massacred by the Chinese military in and around Tiananmen Square as well as the annual 1st July demonstrations which started in 2003, had been conducted in a peaceful manner. Although the 1967 riots had led to the creation of the Police Tactical Unit (PTU) as an anti-riot force, its use had been highly circumscribed in subsequent years and, in the view of some Hong Kong residents, was largely unnecessary.

In dealing with the transnational protests at MC6, the Hong Kong police force was observed to pursue two objectives. The first was to ensure that the presence of police officers always outnumbered the protestors trying to encircle the conference premises. The second objective was to protect foreign dignitaries from harassment. The negotiated management strategy suffused the whole police operation. A non-confrontational approach aimed at de-escalating violence was emphasized. On the one hand, a conciliatory strategy was used to avoid large-scale, direct confrontations with demonstrators; on the other hand, the police constructed a paramilitary contingency plan to launch massive operations should events escalate.

4.1. Downtown Fort and a Show of Force

The geography of Hong Kong limited police options when they designed the public order policing strategy. The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre was (in)conveniently located at the Wanchai harbour-front, two underground train stops away from the downtown CBD and 15 minutes from millions of residents. The venue would have hindered hard-line approaches, if any were considered, because escalatory conflicts guaranteed casualties and property destruction in the vicinity. The city is also a free port and a separate customs entity from that of Mainland China, with visa-free regimes and an immense tourist footfall. A total of 10,000 local and overseas protesters were expected, although

the final number was probably closer to 5,000 (Hong Kong Police Force, 2006).

From the beginning of December 2005, HKP initiated the “Force Mobilization Order”, in which nearly all regular police officers who had received “Internal Security” (I.S.) training were formed into a platoon of an I.S. company. It was reported that the police authority had arranged a full quarter of its human resources for the police work of WTO MC6, which came to about 10,000 police officers (Hong Kong Police Force, 2006).⁵ All auxiliary officers were required to take over the assignment of regular officers who had been called up for the six-day WTO service. Given original estimates of protestor headcount, it seems that the force aimed to match or outnumber the demonstrators. Meanwhile, containment tactics were also applied to isolate the crowd and minimize potential violent escalation⁶ (Police Interview, 18 April 2006).

4.2. Avoiding Coercive Police Actions

The force announced in advance through parliamentary and public channels that they would adopt defensive tactics and strictly adhere to the principle of “exercising maximum restraint” and “using minimum force” in ensuring that only peaceful demonstrations would be held throughout the conference (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 2006).

Overseas experiences seemed to have instructed the force that demonstrators would try to get as close as possible to the conference venue to voice out their dissatisfaction. However, unlike the police in Seattle in 1999 and Mexico in 2003, the Hong Kong frontline police officers did not take on the protestors in an aggressive manner. They did not seem to be provoked when Korean farmers tackled, and in some cases by force, their full-body personnel shields outside the protest zone on day two. This defensive and reactive approach drew doubts and anger from the local media who questioned the police’s readiness to counter

the demonstrators. The police responded by saying that their strategy accommodated “cultural differences” in demonstrations and maintained their tactics of tolerance (*South China Morning Post*, 15 December 2005). The police did not ban any marches organized by Korean protestors despite the scuffles which took place on the earlier days of conference. Instead, they persisted with non-violent and non-provoking operations. During the six-day WTO meetings, the police ultimately only escalated the use of force when the cordon line was confronted outside the conference venue on 17 December, that is, the second last day of the conference. In fact, the police authority has made it clear to the public before the conference that all the front-line officers had been told to follow general orders to the letter in using force when exercising their duties⁷ (Hong Kong Police Force, 2006).

4.3. A Gendered Deployment: Female Officers in Crowd Control

Women police officers played an important role in the police tactics at the WTO Conference. At the MC6 opening ceremony, a time when radical demonstrations were likely, women officers were deployed in the frontline as the vanguard of the police. Unlike regular anti-riot frontline officers, the women officers in the Tango Police Tactical Unit (PTU) Company only carried normal sidearm. They did not carry any protective riot gear. Some protestors visibly softened their stance upon seeing women officers and revealed to the press that they would “put the women officers aside” before further acts of demonstration⁸ (Interview, 19 January 2006). Some farmers even presented flowers to women officers as a token of respect and courtesy. These gestures alleviated some tension between the two parties and may have prevented an escalation of physical commotion.

Amidst criticism against using women officers as a “human shield”, local police history provided one rationale to the tactic. The practice traced its roots to the 1967 riots when angry crowds surrounded the Governor’s House in central Hong Kong: female police officers were also deployed in the first tier. Such a tactic was successful at that time, particularly in dealing with irritated and predominantly male crowds. This tactic produced tangible results in crowd management, according to officers’ accounts. However, this approach would be replaced by paramilitary contingency plans when serious riots broke out.

4.4. Special Times Call for Special Police Units

On the one hand, the police had been undertaking close-range surveillance on local and overseas protest organizations for a period of time. They also kept regular contact with relevant consulates in Hong Kong to obtain the latest information about key protest proponents and tactics. On the other hand, the Hong Kong Police actively negotiated with the protest group about the demonstration route as well as the location of the designated public activities areas. An interviewee in the force explained:

“Our leaders put a lot of weight in communications with the protesting groups in this event. Additional resources have been allocated to the police negotiation cadre to strengthen its squad. New members were assessed with a psychological test and those with good emotional quotients were recruited. The team, led by a chief superintendent, aimed to facilitate the operation of the demonstration by taking double roles throughout the WTO.” (Police Interview, 19 April 2006)

In fact, it might be the first time the local negotiation team had assumed an intelligence role in public order policing. Members of the team liaised with the protesting camp and tried to reach some consensus. They also served at the frontline and closely monitored the activities of radical camps. All solicited information would be tape-recorded by the team members at headquarters, and the messages filtered by the headquarters would be disseminated to the on-site commanders and channelled to the top police officers during the meetings at headquarters. The new establishment, according to one interviewee, was set up based on the experience of the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong in 2003. The episode saw the police called on for assistance in much-needed errand runs. The extra requests for support demonstrated certain loopholes in their coordination work, alarming senior police officers who were determined to see that similar problems would be avoided during the WTO operation. Therefore, members of negotiation team were stationed at the frontline of policing arenas so that they could deliver the latest intelligence to decision makers.

4.5. Paramilitary Backup Plans and Actions

These anti-riot police efforts were effective in scaling down the conflicts. The Korean protestors behaved in a manner that locals and the force largely found reasonable and orderly as they protested in a somewhat responsible manner; some took a shine to their carnival style of drumming and dancing in the streets. The police emphasis on intelligence collection, communication, compromise, and public relations did help to prevent the outbreak of mass chaos during the early days of the MC6.

Behind the consistent use of the non-confrontational strategy, the Hong Kong Police had in fact devised contingency plans if things should take a turn for the worse. Faced with uncertainties, senior Hong Kong

police managers did not rule out the possibilities of heavy-hand actions. In fact, the police authority gradually revised its tactics when it predicted substantial involvement of local activist figures in the protests. A stronger line was taken in dealing with the ascending violence. Apart from the employment of higher levels of police force, promptness was emphasized in the dispersal of citizen bystanders/onlookers and observers surrounding the cordon area.

Starting from the third day of the protests, non-aligned “lay” local citizens began to participate in rallies organized by Korean protestors. The onlookers included youths, ethnic minorities (Indians, Pakistanis and Nepalese), senior citizens, parents and even children. They were in a non-confrontational, almost carnival mood and seemed comfortable with the protests that were largely led by Korean protestors. They booed when Korean protestors were subdued with fire hoses and pepper spray. They insulted and even hurled some bottles at the police⁹ (*South China Morning Post*, 16 December 2006). Seeing this, the PPRB Chief Superintendent asked citizens to be aware of the tense atmosphere and stay away from the protesting zone in Wanchai district (*South China Morning Post*, 17 December 2005).

The escalating atmosphere put the HKP in a very difficult position. A large-scale riot could occur if Korean protestors changed tactics and stepped up their violence. On the penultimate night of the Conference, more than 1,000 protestors clashed with the police near the conference venue in Wanchai. They broke through police cordons, snatched police shields, batons and helmets, and tried to overturn a police van. With metal barriers and bamboo flagpoles at hand, they went within meters of the conference venue.

The Commissioner of Police decided on escalating police force to clear the scene and restore order. The Secretary for Security made a public statement in a ministerial capacity to urge all citizens to leave

Wanchai. To speed up the dispersal, the Hong Kong Government also, for its first time, disseminated an SMS message to ask the general public to leave Wanchai district as soon as possible. Anti-personnel riot gear, incongruously nicknamed “super sock beanbags”, was used on demonstrators who successfully broke through the police cordon and closed in on the conference venue. Eventually, 141 people were injured in the clashes; they included 61 police officers, 54 Koreans and 13 locals. No serious injuries or deaths were reported.

5. “Across Whose Borders?” – Political Dimensions in Public Order Policing

5.1. Public Intolerance of Law-breaking

Della Porta and Reiter (2006) suggested that public order strategies employed by police are in fact a reflection of citizens’ perceptions of the state’s respect for their rights and freedoms. This aligns with broader power relations interpretations of the state which has a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force, as noted by Max Weber (1919). The adoption of soft approach was empowered and enabled by a consistently strong public appeal to law enforcement in mainstream Hong Kong society. Hong Kong is arguably the only “liberal autocracy” in the world, in a reversal of Fareed Zakaria’s descriptions of “illiberal democracy” (1997), as evidenced by limited popular representation in its legislature and a moderately free press, but also by a strong popular belief in the rule of law.

One of the legacies of British colonial rule, indeed, has been this firm commitment to the rule of law, and Hong Kong citizens expect the police authority to maintain public order entirely by lawful means subject to the judiciary. The level of scrutiny by a population which has extraordinary expectations of police performance and yet limited agency

to influence the force through political representation is bound to restrain the Hong Kong police from drastic actions. At the same time, the Hong Kong public expects and demands to see demonstrations allowed as long as they are conducted in a peaceful manner, seeing these freedoms as constitutional guarantees established by fiat through international treaties rather than sovereign law. This conditional support from Hong Kongers could easily be seen in the immediate withdrawal of sympathy towards Korean protestors after the outbreak of disturbances in Wanchai on the second last day of the WTO conference. The public voiced displeasure at unlawful acts by those who resorted to violence in pressing their claims (*South China Morning Post*, 18 December 2005).

The dimension of power legitimacy may be one factor which stopped the HKP from acting like the Seattle Police in the 1999 conference. Hong Kong is an international financial centre and it is often cited by both libertarian and conservative think tanks as one of the freest cities in the world for trade and business. High-profile confrontations against civil demonstrations during the WTO conference period under the limelight of international and local press posed grave risks to this reputation. Emphasis on public accountability in domestic political discourses, having spilled over to a search for accountability over all public officials, may have fundamentally reined in the new generation of police officers from taking immediate counter-attack actions when meeting with civil protests. Unless conditions had become out of control and had seriously affected the social stability of Hong Kong, the use of substantial levels of police forces in physical or otherwise authoritarian contexts would not be justified.

The conciliatory strategy reflects the strong public appeal from the mainstream Hong Kong society to govern political protests according to the law. Starting from July 2003, Hong Kong citizens had themselves organized annual large-scale peaceful demonstrations; in voicing support

for democratic reforms and other social policies, these events were marked by orderly behaviour and sensible police-public interactions despite hundreds of thousands of participants. Hong Kong citizens expect the police authority to manage the public order in accordance to laws in a manner befitting globally accepted standards in any liberal society. This means that the HKP cannot justify hardline approaches without extraordinary circumstances, and for much of the MC6 it did not consider the situation to be so.

5.2. Deaf Ears: Managing Antagonistic Actors

The success of the HKP can also be attributed to the benevolence of overseas activists who were not bent on wreaking havoc in the first place. Korean protestors were organized in their pursuit to garner maximum exposure – and sympathy – to the plight of farmers back home and thus refrained from extreme acts of disruption until the final evening. A concrete piece of evidence is a concise declaration: their enemy was the WTO but not the HKP¹⁰ (*South China Morning Post*, 15 December 2005). They even privately claimed that they have only used “30%” of their normal strength in Hong Kong.¹¹ Although they damaged the barriers and boards and used wooden sticks to strike the police, neither massive property damage nor permanent injury materialized. Protestors proclaimed that they exhibited restraint compared to what they would have done on “home turf”. All police shields were returned in a symbolic act, in stark contrast to hostilities in previous WTO conferences

However, the ways in which the police handled the anti-WTO protests aroused fierce criticisms from civil libertarian groups in Hong Kong. In a report submitted to the Hong Kong Legislative Council, the city’s parliament, they accused the police of using excessive force against the protestors. The police were also condemned for deliberately

blocking rallies by delaying approval of venue requests, using intimidating measures, and mistreating detainees (Hong Kong People's Alliance on WTO, 2006). Among those criticisms, the most vocal one was made by Joseph Zen (陳日君), Bishop of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, who referred to the mass arrests as "the shame of Hong Kong". The HKP responded by quoting a magistrate who praised the devotion, measured response and outstanding performance of front-line officers. In their evaluation report, the police claimed that its entire operation had been very successful, despite admitting to the need for improvement in certain areas.¹² The HKP also quoted a survey from the University of Hong Kong which found a record high of 81.7 per cent public satisfaction with the HKP after the WTO operations (Hong Kong Police Force, 2006).

6. Conclusion

Protests and remonstrations are an expression of objections by words or actions to events and policies. Demonstrations, being a collective and an often emotive form of protesting, have become a popular strategy around the world for individuals and groups to bond through shared political, economic and ideological demands. Freedom of protest is explicitly or implicitly guaranteed by legislation in many countries and serves as an instrument to ensure liberty and citizens' rights in keeping with the spirit of democratic rule.¹³ However, as protestors step up the game from expression to action along the rungs of civil resistance/disobedience, citizens' lives face a parallel sliding scale of risk from inconvenience to bodily harm – whether the demonstrators actively seek escalation or not. Thus, protest policing in democracies is intrinsically morally ambiguous (Waddington, 1994). Police in liberal regimes and administrations are often frustrated by their dual roles to respect freedom of expression and

preserve public order; “command and control” thus slowly gives way to negotiated management. Growth and institutionalization of citizenship as a maturing social construct has restrained states from administering swift force to its own citizens. More efforts are paid by police authorities to legitimize their operations due to increasing public acceptance for political protests (della Porta and Reiter, 2006).

Postcolonial Hong Kong toed a thin line between annexation and independence during the sovereignty transfer to China in 1997. Local libertarians voiced popular concerns that the “highly autonomous” administration would merely reproduce or even strengthen past colonial controls on civil liberties.¹⁴ The establishment countered that the citizens remain free to assemble in public and have always enjoyed the freedom of speech.¹⁵ Against the backdrop of these alarming discourses frontline officers ironically find it increasingly difficult to keep the peace as their powers are gradually worn thin.

In the WTO MC6 policing assignment, senior Hong Kong police managers placed great attention on ground appreciation (the proper use of ground and cover during operations) before and throughout the conference. Other than the physical presence of police as seen through the media, the HKP also emphasized “invisible” anti-riot measures. They included intelligence collection, communication and compromise, and public relations work. Contemporary literature suggests that “intelligence-led policing” has been widely adopted as the guiding framework for policing political protests in developed countries. Hong Kong was no exception to that rule.

Martin (2011) has argued that the governments of otherwise established democratic states have increasingly allowed the police to use undemocratic tactics during international events in order to sustain public order and national image. The MC6 experience in Hong Kong shows us that conciliatory approaches are still viable in even the most

disadvantageous settings, but are liable to several prerequisites. Namely, they are (1) the political will to restore social order through para-military means, if necessary; (2) the availability of human and monetary resources for the authorities; and (3) the timely competence of police commanders to de-escalate the violence.

This article reviews the first-ever transnational protest in Hong Kong that occurred in 2005. I made use of some protest policing literature to analyze the counter-insurgency strategies of Hong Kong Police. A lot of Asia-Pacific researchers are aware of the protesting trends emerging in Hong Kong since the early 2010s, and the outbreak of “Umbrella Movement” in the fall of 2014 even captured the eyesight of academia fellows all over the world.¹⁶ This study on the protesting episode in a decade before 2014 would be a useful piece of reference for them to have a better capture on the background of the SAR’s political and social development, as well as the transformation of government-society relations over these years. The relatively successful experience of Hong Kong Police in 2005, however, exposed the fragility of the “negotiated management” strategy in the increasing dynamics of protest policing context. My analysis provides a gateway to understand the saga of policing strategies on the series of local protests in the 2010s, and a primary idea for the readers who are keen on understanding the policing of the Umbrella Movement that is worth a thorough and comprehensive analysis in another study.¹⁷

Supplementary Tables and Appendices

Table 1 Protest Control Strategies

	Escalated force model	Negotiated management model	Transnational protest policing
Coercive strategies	Massive use of force to deter even minor violations	Coercion a last resort; tolerance of minor breaches	Selective toleration and massive use of force against targeted protesting groups
Persuasive strategies	Intimidating use of relations with organizers	Partnership aimed at ensuring the right of assembly and expression	Low trust in negotiation, confined to protest routes and logistics management
Information strategies	Generalized information gathering	Information gathering focused on punishable offences	Generalized information gathering; establishment of databank and exchange of intelligence with other states; refusal of leave to enter

Source: Adopted and revised from della Porta and Reiter (2006).

Table 2 Coercive Strategies in Policing the WTO MC in Hong Kong

Dimensions	WTO MC 6 in Hong Kong, 2005
Massive police presence	Yes. Full mobilization order.
High visibility of police	Yes. Conference venue, Designated protest zone, Route of rally.
Plainclothes policemen	Yes.
Anti-riot gear	Yes. Deployed in selective episodes.
Special police units	Yes. G4 (à la US Secret Service), Transportation team, Negotiation team.
Units from more than one police force	No.
Police with visible identification	Yes.
Mass arrests	Yes. After the outbreak of violence.
Unconfirmed arrests (i.e. arrests made without informing public)	No.
Encircling / penning in of demonstrators	Yes.
Excessive use of force	No.
Water cannons	No.
Tear gas	Yes.
Handheld spray cans with irritants	Yes. Excessively used.
Rubber bullets	No.
Live ammunition	No.

Table 3 Persuasive Strategies in Policing the WTO MC6 in Hong Kong

Dimensions	WTO MC6 in Hong Kong, 2005
Pre-event negotiation	Yes. Designated public protest zones.
Negotiation (during)	Yes. After the outbreak of Wanchai disturbances.
Barriers	Yes. Restricted areas.
Control at the borders	No.
Denial of entrance at the borders	Selective: Jose Bove, whose refusal to grant leave to enter was rescinded after French diplomats intervened.
Blocking access to protest areas	No.
Preventive arrests	No.
Harassment	Inquiries made with regard to supporting group.
Entering and search of protestors' office	No.

Table 4 Information Strategies in Policing WTO MC6 in Hong Kong

Dimensions	WTO MC 6 in Hong Kong, 2005
Massive collection of information	Videotape.
Use of alarmist information	No.
International exchange of information	Yes.
Plainclothes policemen	Yes. Interpreters and negotiation cadre members.
Infiltration and/or agent provocateur	Yes.

Table 5 Comparing Differing Experiences in Policing

	WTO in Hong Kong	In “Western Democracies”
Preparation	1.5 year, study tour in Western Europe and the United States	?
Force strength	Full Mobilization	Partial mobilization
Special police units	Anti-riots squad (PTU) established since 1968 The women PTU company (Tango) Negotiation Cadre Special Duties Unit	Anti-riot squad Intelligence officers
Protesting venue	Urban centre with high traffic velocity and dense population	From centre to outlying resorts
Political leaders’ will	Ensure the smooth operation of the conference, honouring citizens’ freedom of expression, rule of law	Honouring citizens’ right of expression, ensure the smooth operation of the conference
Public opinion	Show sympathy with the demonstrators but strong appeal to the rule of law	No excessive use of police power, freedom of expression
Foundational parameters of anti-riot tactics	Containment Facilitating demonstrations Intelligence and publicity Paramilitary contingency plan	Encirclement Pre-event negotiation Selective incapacitation Preventive arrest Deportation
Typical strategies by protesters to break police blockade	Plunge to sea Three steps and nine kowtows Raid and attack	Human blockade Vandalism Raid and attack Paralyzing social and economic activities
Local civil societies	A coordinating group with some identifiable key figures, not very high participation rate from local populace	Strong mobilization power, high participation rate
Overseas protesting groups	Presence of violent groups, but declare “not aim at destroying HK” before setting out	Strong mobilization ability, new means of mobilization in which the police face difficulty in working out counter-insurgencies

Appendix 1 Tactics Adopted by Korean Protestors to Gain Media Coverage and Public Support towards Their Causes

Conference day	The featured tactics adopted by the Korean protestors
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plunging into the Victoria Harbour on the first day of conference - Burning a wooden coffin in memory of Lee Kyang-hae, the union leader who committed suicide at Cancún 2003 in protest against trade liberalization
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chanting “I love Hong Kong” when marching to the protest zone along the thoroughfare Lockhart Road - Seizing police shields, but returning them to police once the protest was abandoned
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Genuflecting “three steps and one bow” in a Buddhist gesture of deep respect during the third day of the WTO conference - Giving flowers to female officers - “Raiding” (outside) the US and South Korean Consulates and petitioning diplomats
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female protestors bursting into tears in vox pop interviews
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attempting to storm to the conference venue by diversionary tactics - Causing the outbreak of “Wanchai Disturbances”

Appendix 2 Key Policing Events in the WTO MC6 Hong Kong, 14-20 December 2005

Date	Major Issues
11 Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First large-scale anti-globalization protest from Victoria Park 2 km away. - About 4,700 protestors gathered in the waterfront protest area outside the Wanchai venue. Protestors leapt into the sea, burnt a coffin, and crashed the cordon to global coverage.
13 Dec (Day 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WTO ministerial conference began. - 4,000 protestors marched peacefully from Victoria Park. - 200 Asian fishermen staged protest at sea against WTO. - Dozens of Korean protestors leapt into the harbour. - Korean protestors clash with police as they try to breach police defences. - Police use of pepper spray.
14 Dec (Day 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The protestors, mainly from South Korea and other Asian countries, divided into four groups and marched to US, Japanese, South Korean Consulates and European Union representative office to petition. Others distribute leaflets in Causeway Bay and Wanchai areas. - Korean protestors clashed with police as they try to break away from police defences. They used plastic wrap, scarves and handkerchiefs to protect their eyes from pepper spray and slammed their bodies into the police line at the end of the cargo area. - Korean protestors snatched the riot shields from police during a heated demonstration but later returned the shields to police. - About 100 protestors demonstrated outside Sogo department store at night after a scuffle outside the protest zone.
15 Dec (Day 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oxfam launched protest at sea with an old Chinese fishing boat traveling around Victoria Harbour. - More than 100 Indonesian fishermen and Filipino workers marched from Victoria Park to Wanchai cargo handling area; one jumped into the harbour. - Police allowed 12 Filipino and Indonesian fishermen protestors to go closer to WTO meeting venue, where Filipino Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban accepted their petition. - About 300 Asian women farmers marched from Victoria Park to Wanchai cargo handling area against the WTO; they sang, drummed and danced peacefully. - Another 1,000 Korean farmers marched to Wanchai protest zone in a Buddhist-style protest, kneeling and kowtowing every three steps. - 200 Latin American and African farmers protested in Victoria Park and went to Wanchai. Three leapt into the harbour, while others held a carnival. - The Koreans marched to the Consulates General of US and South Korea and handed over petitions to their representatives. The "raid" caused short-lived chaos in both locations. - After two days of violent clashes, police stepped up control measures at the scene of the scuffles, installing water-filled barriers and metal fences on Hung Hing Road outside the convention centre.
16 Dec (Day 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Female Korean protestors broadcasted the popular TV theme tune of "Jewel in the Palace" while chanting slogans in the busy streets of Causeway Bay.
17 Dec (Day 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police used tear gas, fire hoses and pepper spray to drive the protestors back - The demonstrators tried to storm the Convention Centre but were pushed back to Gloucester Road by riot police. - More than 1,000 anti-WTO protestors clashed with police in the worst outbreak of mass unrest Hong Kong has seen in decades. - Demonstrators broke through police cordons, snatched police shields, batons and helmets, and repeatedly tried, but failed, to overturn a police van. They pulled metal barriers apart to use as weapons, along with bamboo flagpoles, and came within metres of the Convention Centre. Police responded with tear gas, pepper spray and water cannon. - The riots disrupted traffic and public transport. Roads were blocked or gridlocked and Wanchai MTR station was closed, with trains skipping the stop. - Finally, the Security Bureau sent mass SMS messages to the public, urging them to avoid Wanchai and leave the area. Commissioner of Police Dick Lee also appeared on television early in the evening urging people to avoid Wanchai. - 900 protestors were arrested in night riot in Wanchai along the Gloucester Road area. - 141 people reported injuries in the clashes, including 61 police officers, 54 Koreans and 13 locals.
18 Dec (Day 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police released 188 of the 900 protestors arrested from the previous night.

Notes

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1. The individual and group interviews with police officers who engaged in the WTO MC6 operation took place during 2006-2010. Directorate-grade officers, Commandant of the Police Tactical Unit (PTU), Commanders of Police Divisions, and patrol sub-units were interviewed and asked about their perspectives on several key strategic dimensions as addressed in della Porta's analysis on transnational policing. The official evaluation report published by the Hong Kong Police on this WTO MC 6 operation in 2006 was also adopted as another principal reference of this study.
 2. The new social movements target influential international institutions, and the transnational protestors usually adopt an innovative repertoire of action that sets them apart from the established movement pattern. Examples include the use of toy water pistols, buzzing helicopters and paper airplanes (della Porta and Reiter, 2006).
 3. The South Korean groups included: Korean Catholic Farmers Movement, Korean Advanced Farmers Federation, Korean Peasants League, Korean Workers' Struggle delegation, Korean Struggle Mission, Korean Federation

of Transportation, Public and Social Service Workers Union, and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

4. The 1967 riots were in part a spill-over from the Cultural Revolution in China. For details on the police actions, see Ho and Chu (2012).
5. An anonymous police interviewee explained that the internal security structure in the WTO operation was the largest in recent years. A three-tier internal security structure had been set up and more than 40 platoons of anti-riot police had been turned out on 17 December 2005. It composed of both regional “Police Tactical Unit” and “Emergency Unit”, “Quick Reaction Force” and three companies of “Force Escort Companies” formed from regional and district traffic units. (Police Interview, 19 January 2006)
6. As explained by a graduate trainee of the police anti-riot squad (PTU), the successful use of the containment tactic could de-escalate potential violence by (1) preventing disorder from spreading; (2) separating rival groups within crowds; (3) tranquilizing or pacifying the crowds; and (4) removing uninvolved persons.
7. In the Police General Order Chapter 29 – 01, it has been laid down that Officers should display self-discipline, exercise a high degree of restraint and not resort to the use of force unless strictly necessary; only the minimum degree of force necessary to achieve the objective may be used; whenever possible, warning on the degree of force intended to be used shall be given and persons shall be given the opportunity to obey police orders before force is used; force will cease immediately when the objective has been achieved; and force used must be reasonable in the circumstances.
8. A police interviewee pointed out that the “Tango” platoon was not regarded as a riot-suppression unit in the internal security assignments. The female platoon members have all undergone crowd management training emphasizing the use of soft approaches, like hand belt grip, resistance control and removal tactics. During the MC 6, the platoon was deployed as

a support team to other platoons of the three tiers, in particular when the handling of female demonstrators was required.

9. For example, the Hong Kong supporters shouted “shame on you” and “you are not human beings” when the Korean protestors were sprayed with pepper spray. According to reports, some Hong Kong citizens took fruit and water to the Koreans at Victoria Park before the march. Those onlookers at the confrontation scene also rushed to offer water, tissues and towels to the Koreans whenever a protester was hit with pepper spray or fell back under the blows of police batons.
10. The Korean protestors repeatedly emphasized that the HKP were not their enemies, but rather the WTO. They said they had “no bad feelings towards the Police”; they described the police as “soft, gentle and merciful” and even claimed that the HKP officers were better than those in Korea.
11. An anonymous police officer who established close contact with the protest group quoted the words from Korean protest leaders that they had not exercised their full strength in Hong Kong. (Personal interview, 19 April 2006)
12. Police evaluation reports argued that all the officers had maintained their cohesion and upheld their discipline in the face of violence. But at the same time, the police admitted that some lessons have been learnt. Aspects that should be improved in the future included the availability of interpretation service, handling of arrested persons, collation of detention locations, vehicle deployment, supporting services and evidence gathering.
13. The concept of civil liberty derives from the idea of individual freedom, which can refer to one’s capacity to take advantages of opportunities, as well as the absence of impediments, constraints, or interferences. A crucial component of realizing civil liberties in democratic countries is the citizens’ right of association and assembly, which refers to the possibility of individuals to impart information and ideas and disseminate their view (Haubrich, 2006).

14. For example, the regulations under the public order ordinance which stipulated that large-scale processions organizers must seek the letter of “no objection” from the police authority before the activities take place is widely regarded by the civil libertarians as a “draconian legislation” to suppress the freedom of assembly.
15. The SAR government often quoted the provisions in the Hong Kong Basic Law to refute these accusations. The Hong Kong Basic Law guarantees the majority of the civil and political rights as stipulated in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, which had been implemented by the Hong Kong government through the 1991 Bill of Rights Ordinance. Citizens are still basically free to take part in any assemblies and have enjoyed freedom of speech.
16. The 79-day “Umbrella Movement” witnessed the police-protestors confrontation in central business districts, and was named after the episode that most demonstrators used their umbrellas to encounter police’s pepper spray tactics in crowd dispersal. The official press release issued by the Hong Kong SAR government did not use “Umbrella Movement” to describe this territory-wide mass demonstration which has come under the spotlight of international media. The official line was that the demonstration and subsequent sit-in protests were “illegal occupation activities” and emphasized that it was an offence obstructing the law and order of Hong Kong that was beyond freedom of expression. The discourse was backed up by Beijing’s propaganda.
17. Studies on “Umbrella Movement” of Hong Kong have gradually been published in academic journals over these years, e.g. Yuen and Cheng (2017) analysed the regime reactions towards the protests; Cheng and Chan (2017) studied the discourses from protestors; and Lee (2018) focused on the impacts of media on mobilization. See: Samson Yuen and Edmund W. Cheng (2017), Neither repression nor concession? A regime’s attrition against mass protests, *Political Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 611-630;

Edmund W. Cheng and Wai-yin Chan (2017), Explaining spontaneous occupation: Antecedents, contingencies, and space in the Umbrella Movement, *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 222-239; and Francis L.F. Lee (2018), Internet alternative media, movement experience, and radicalism: The case of post-Umbrella Movement Hong Kong, *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 219-233.

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***Trade, Investment and
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