

# How China Daily Uses Defensive Soft Power in its Articles About the Hong Kong Protests

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## Abstract

This paper analyses how the Chinese news media China Daily uses defensive soft power as a response to perceived attacks on China's national image in China Daily's coverage of the Hong Kong protests from 2019 onward. To analyse how China Daily responds to the perceived attacks on China's national image, the researcher applies defensive soft power and critical discourse analysis to her analysis. The researcher uses Dylan Loh as her basis for the defensive soft power theory. Furthermore, the researcher uses negative soft power as a supplement to the defensive soft power theory. The data the researcher analyses are articles from China Daily from one week in November, where the researcher found an increase in articles written about the Hong Kong protests. In total, the researcher analysed 60 articles which she categorised. The categorisation of articles reveals what China Daily perceives as attacks on China's national image. The two perceived attacks which China Daily wrote the most articles about were the US making the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill law and the pro-democracy camp winning the majority of seats at the Hong Kong local elections instead of the pro-establishment camp.

To analyse how China Daily responds to these attacks, the researcher used Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis as a theory and a method. The researcher analyses the different categories of articles through the three dimensions of critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. The researcher found that China Daily uses negative and positive words along with active sentences in their articles to ensure that the readers of the articles know who is the antagonist and who the readers should support in relation to the perceived attacks. Because of this, the US, the protestors and the pro-democracy camp are described with negative words throughout the different articles while the Hong Kong government, the pro-establishment camp and the police are described positively. By describing the two different sides like this, China Daily may create national cohesion by using negative soft power to describe the ones who attack China's national image while using soft power defensively about domestic institutions such as the Hong Kong government to show that the attack is unfounded because the Hong Kong government as an example provides a stable and prosperous region to the Hong Kongers which cannot be critiqued.

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## 1. Introduction:

In June 2019, protests broke out in Hong Kong as a response to a proposed change to Hong Kong's extradition law. This change would allow other countries to request extradition of suspected criminals for crimes of violence carrying a maximum sentence of no less than seven years. However, as this change would include China as a country which could request extradition, critics feared that the implementation of such a change could lead to extradition of individuals who could risk facing unfair trials and more in China for non-violent crimes. Human Rights Watch's China director said that people like activist and human rights lawyers would be at risk. However, supporters of the change in law say that the law has safeguards in place to protect individuals from religious and political prosecution. Nevertheless, the proposed change in the extradition law got thousands of Hong Kongers to protest. According to organisers of the protests, the beginning of the protests in June had a million people participating in the protests while the Hong Kong police said that it was 240,000 people. The protests have continued since then, however with a change in character. The protests have changed as the change in the law was first delayed and later entirely revoked. The annulment of the change in law did not end the protests as the protesters had expanded their protests to include five demands where the annulment of the extradition bill was only one of the five. The other four demands are "[...] an amnesty for those arrested, an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality, universal suffrage, and for the protests not to be characterised as 'riots'." (BBC News 2020). The protests are now commonly referred to in the West as pro-democracy protests (BBC News 2020; Li 2019).

Internationally, the Hong Kong protests, among other things, harmed China's soft power according to the Soft Power 30. Soft Power 30 characterise the Hong Kong protests as an issue with China's governmental soft power and claims that the Chinese government is what keeps China low in the international soft power index despite China's strong soft power through culture (the Soft Power 30 n.d.). The protests also received much attention in the West, where the US as example signed into law the United States of America's Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill on November 27<sup>th</sup>. This bill was proposed as a response to the protests in Hong Kong and could make the US impose sanctions on Hong Kong if Hong Kong does not uphold the rule of law or if Hong Kong violates the human rights (C. H. Smith 2019). Domestically, within the same week, Hong Kong held its local elections where Hong Kongers were to select their district councillors. At these elections, the pro-establishment camp lost its majority of seats as city councillors to the pro-

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democracy camp. This win to the pro-democracy camp has by many been credited to the protests (“HKSAR District Council Election” 2020). The win to the pro-democracy camp and the loss to the pro-establishment party could indicate that China’s government in the form of Hong Kong district councillors as a soft power source also lacks influence domestically.

The news media China Daily covers both the US bill and the Hong Kong local elections, among other things, in its articles and relates these events to the Hong Kong protests. Chinese news media outlets such as China Daily works along with the State Council Information Office (SCIO) which is an administrative office of China’s State Council. The purpose of the SCIO is according to the office itself to push the Chinese media to introduce China to the international community. According to David Shambaugh, this also includes overseeing all of China’s external communication. Shambaugh further refers to the SCIO’s former vice minister who said that the work the SCIO do is soft power. Therefore, the news that the Chinese news media publishes in English also seems to be soft power based on the SCIO understanding of its role. The SCIO also writes on its “About SCIO” page that: “The mission of the SCIO is to promote the communication, understanding and trust between China and countries across the world.” (“About SCIO ” n.d.), therefore, it is clear that the SCIO has a significant focus on China’ relationships with the world around it (Shambaugh 2015). As an example, China Daily writes that its mission is to inform the world about China’s integration into the international system (“About Us” n.d.). What this shows us is that Chinese news media’s aim at an international audience is guided by the Chinese government through the SCIO as a way to project soft power to an international audience and, therefore, the news that the news media China Daily posts correspond with the Chinese government’s politics and opinions.

However, despite China Daily being a soft power tool and having a mission to inform the world about China in the international system, China Daily also publishes articles about the protests in which the authors write negatively about other countries, as evident in the quote below:

*Under the guise of human rights and democracy, the US politicians distorted facts, beautified violence and crimes, and challenged global justice. (People’s Daily 2019b)*

Considering that the US is also part of the world, whom China Daily identifies as its intended audience, it becomes challenging to identify the articles that China Daily publishes as soft power. At least it is hard to identify China Daily’s articles like the one which this quote is from as soft

power according to the understanding of soft power aimed at an external audience. It seems that China Daily has chosen to apply a different kind of soft power strategy to its articles about the Hong Kong protests than the type of soft power strategy one would expect with Joseph Nye's, the one who named soft power, understanding of the concept. After researching soft power theory, the researcher of this paper found another branch of soft power called defensive soft power, which she believes fits China Daily's soft power strategy concerning the Hong Kong protests. Therefore, the researcher poses the following question which she will answer in this paper:

## 1.2. Problem formulation:

How does China Daily in its articles about the Hong Kong protests use defensive soft power as a response to perceived attacks on China's national image?

## 2. Literature review:

When it comes to China and soft power, much literature is available on the subject. Joseph Nye, the one who named the concept of soft power, has like many other written on soft power and China and his explanation of China's use of soft power is that China uses soft power to lessen the tension that China may experience with other countries caused by China's rapid rise and the fear, some countries may have regarding the uncertain results of China's development (Nye 2012). Shambaugh also touches upon this, however, with a rather critical understanding of China's soft power as he describes China's soft power as a mean to repair China's tarnished reputation with money, Shambaugh further says that China's attempt at soft power is an attempt to control people and not an attempt to attract people as is the original understanding of Nye's soft power (Shambaugh 2015).

While most of the China and soft power researchers have a focus on the importance of China's soft power, Jacques deLisle writes that China's soft power is declining and becoming less relevant as China's hard power is growing as China rearms its military and because of this China is turning to sharp power which is a combination of hard and soft power. deLisle further explains that cases like China's handling of the protests in Hong Kong have worsened the US audience's perception of China, thus making China less attractive (deLisle 2020). Therefore, according to Nye's understanding of why China uses soft power and deLisle's argument, China is not successful in its soft power attempt at least in the US. Joseph Nye and Wang Jisi have together also written about the US' perception of China's soft power, but also about how China and the US' soft power

affect each other in the international system. Nye and Jisi find that some elements of China's policies weaken the US' perception of China. However, Nye and Jisi also find that despite the many differences between the US and China, many of their soft power efforts benefit each other (Nye et al. 2009).

Jean-Marc Blanchard and Fujia Lu further add to Nye's understanding of Chinese soft power by addressing the issue that various internal and external factors affect China's soft power as well as China's actions internationally and third parties' opinions (Blanchard and Lu 2012). While touching upon internal and external, many researchers find that soft power does not only work externally, that is, soft power projected at other countries, but also work internally, and that China primarily utilises soft power internally (Shambaugh 2015; Callahan 2015; Edney 2015). That internal soft power is also an essential part of China's soft power, is also relevant for this paper, as Hong Kong is part of China, under China's "one country, two systems". Furthermore, China's need for projecting soft power internally may also influence how China Daily chooses to respond in its defensive soft power strategy. Camilla T. N. Sørensen also analyses internal soft power in China along with external soft power and how the two affect each other. Sørensen concludes that for China's internal soft power to be successful, which is of great necessity for what Sørensen calls regime security for China, China has a narrative about "others" as being hostile. This narrative of the other "others" being hostile is similar to the defensive soft power theory that the researcher will apply to this paper. However, the cases that Sørensen and this researcher analyses are quite different from each other as Sørensen analyses a military parade from 2015 and this researcher analyses articles about the protests in Hong Kong in 2019, this means that the soft power tools that Sørensen and this researcher analyses are different (Sørensen 2017).

William A. Callahan adds to soft power by looking at what he calls negative soft power, as he finds Nye mainly focuses on positive soft power. Negative soft power is making oneself look better by putting down others. Callahan gives an example of China doing this: "Beijing's official media narrative for Hong Kong's 'Occupy Central' demonstrations in 2014 asserts that they are not a grassroots democracy movement, but an 'American' plot to Westernise and divide China" (Callahan 2015, 5). Dylan Loh also examines Chinese soft power with an addition, here, defensive soft power concerning the 2014 Umbrella Revolution protests in Hong Kong. Loh found that Beijing used defensive soft power to project a positive national image of China and to fend off negative national images. Loh also found that China portrays itself in the official news media as a victim of Western media but also as a country with a strong relationship between the mainland and



Macau and Taiwan. Loh comes to these findings by analysing official mainland news media (D. Loh 2017). While this researcher likewise looks at official Chinese news media, protests in Hong Kong and soft power, this researcher will add an extra element by analysing internal elements as well as external elements which may influence China's defensive soft power strategy.

There is little academic literature with relevance to this paper written about the 2019 protests in Hong Kong sparked by the extradition bill. deLisle mentions in his article that mainland China's stance on the Hong Kong protests in 2019, among other things, has worsened American's image of China. However, the Hong Kong protests are not the primary concern of deLisle's article but rather one of many examples (deLisle 2020). Furthermore, the researcher has not been able to find other research on China and defensive soft power than the article by Dylan Loh (D. Loh 2017).

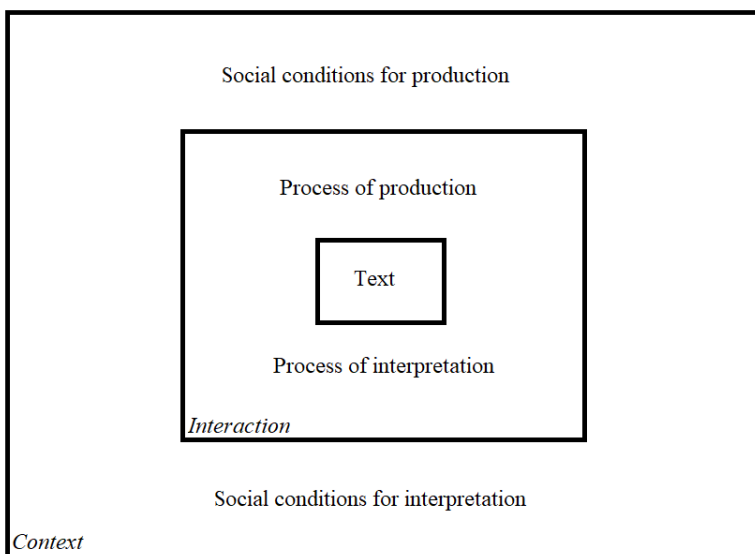
### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Method – critical discourse analysis:

The researcher of this paper has chosen to use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method for her analysis. CDA functions in this paper as both a theory and a method as there is some theory on how discourses work as well as an approach on how to analyse discourses. The researcher has described the theory in 4. Theory and will proceed with describing the method here. The researcher has chosen to structure her analysis based on Norman Fairclough's CDA as he has an easily usable approach to discourse analysis. Fairclough separates CDA into three dimensions: description, interpretation and explanation. By analysing discourses from description to interpretation to explanation, one will achieve an analysis that examines both the formal features of discourse, the context the discourse exists in and the relations that form the discourse. In previous papers, the researcher has structured her analysis with CDA in three based on the three dimensions. However, the researcher's experience with doing this is that the analysis becomes incoherent and difficult to follow. Furthermore, it often leads to a disproportionate analysis as description often would take up most space and include many irrelevant analyses of words or sentences which would not be analysed further in interpretation nor explanation. Therefore, for this paper, the researcher will analyse one aspect at a time and analyse the aspect through all three dimensions of CDA at once instead of analysing the same aspect at three different times in her analysis. Furthermore, the researcher has separated the analysis into smaller parts based on the categories which she has

separated the articles into based on the main themes of the articles. The categories and articles are available in 8. Appendix.

The researcher's chosen method of CDA is suitable for her paper as the data she analyses are texts in the form of articles from the official Chinese news media China Daily. Furthermore, as CDA has a focus both on producer and interpreter of a text, the researcher will be able to analyse not only how China Daily (producer) responds to perceived attacks on China's national image in its articles but also gain an understanding of whom China Daily aims the soft power strategies of these articles at (interpreters). Naturally, CDA as a theory suits CDA as a method well, but soft power theory is also applicable to the CDA method. As Fairclough's CDA focuses on power relations, soft power will be applicable as soft power theory also, as the name suggests, relates to power. Furthermore, soft power theory may help understand the context in which China Daily chooses to write and publish articles in which China Daily responds to a perceived attack on China's national image. Now the researcher will move on to describe how to analyse the different dimensions. The dimensions are illustrated in the figure below where the inner box is description the middle box is interpretation and the outer box is explanation (Fairclough 2001, 21).



### 3.1.1. Description:

Description deals with the formal features of a text, that is the parts that make up the text and sentences in the text. To analyse these formal features, Fairclough poses ten questions in his book *Language and Power* which can help a researcher through critical discourse analysis's description. The questions examine at among other things at the value of the words and grammatical features,

metaphors and more. The questions will have a varying degree of relevance or perhaps no relevance for this paper at all. The question of interactional conventions as an example will have no relevance as the texts the researcher analysis for her research will not have face-to-face interactions (Fairclough 2001).

The researcher will not describe each question here but will instead explain the questions that are relevant for her analysis in the analysis, where she will also be able to describe the questions with examples from her data which she believes will be more understandable than describing the questions here with fictive examples. The researcher will, however, list the questions here, so that the reader of this paper will be able to identify the questions in the analysis:

A. Vocabulary

1. What experiential values do words have?
2. What relational values do words have?
3. What expressive values do words have?
4. What metaphors are used?

B. Grammar

5. What experiential values do grammatical features have?
6. What relational values do grammatical features have?
7. What expressive values do grammatical features have?
8. How are (simple) sentences linked together?

C. Textual structures

9. What interactional conventions are used?
10. What larger-scale structures does the text have? (Fairclough 2001, 92-93).

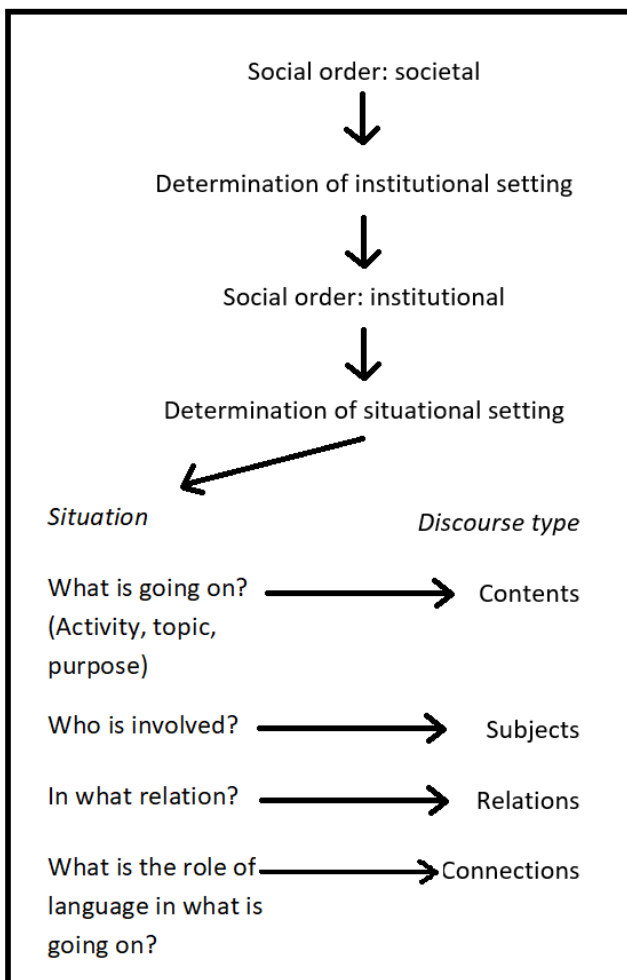
### 3.1.2. Interpretation:

Interpretation is to do with the processes that participants go through in discourse, that is interpretation and production. The interpretation dimension is concerned with the relation between text and context. Interpretations are based on what is in the text, cues, and the interpreters' MR (members resources). MR provides what Fairclough call interpretative processes; what one can use for interpretation. When participants participate in discourse, they will first make a situational context interpretation where they determine the discourse type based on social orders. Another element one encounters in the interpretation of context is intertextual context, that is an assumption about what other discourses connect to the discourse they are currently in, this creates a sense of

common experience. Participants of discourses do these contextual interpretations based on their MR. The MR is continually developed as one participates in discourses and make interpretations in these (Fairclough 2001).

In the interpretation dimension, Fairclough presents five aspects that one can analyse, the researcher will briefly describe these aspects as she believes they are not as easily understandable as vocabulary, grammar and structure from the description dimension.

**Situational context and discourse type:**



Fairclough has a figure that illustrates the situational context and the discourse type of a text, the figure is depicted on the left, and it is from now on referred to as figure 3.1.2. The model shows how the situational context is determined by interpretation of social order and the setting, and how the discourse type is determined by interpretation of the situational context of a text. Participants may draw upon different social orders which may lead to different interpretations of situational context and therefore, different interpretations of the discourse type. However, analysis of this figure will mainly be of the lower four aspects (Fairclough 2001, 122).

**Intertextual context and presupposition:**

Intertextuality is what can be presupposed in a discourse based on the context the discourse exists in. Different participants may have different understandings of what is presupposed, and powerful

participants may overpower other participants with their presuppositions. Presuppositions may, however, be challenging to identify (Fairclough 2001).

**Speech act:**

“Speech acts are a central aspect of *pragmatics*, which is concerned with the meanings which participants in a discourse ascribe to elements of a text on the basis of their MR and their interpretations of context [...]” (Fairclough 2001, 129). A speech act is the purposes for a producer to produce a text. Speech acts may have conventions which can indicate what the purpose is (Fairclough 2001).

**Frames, scripts and schemata:**

Schemata is to do with the activity of the texts, which one determines based one’s MR and what one expects of the text. With schemata, one looks at the larger-textual structures concerning MR. Frames then are the subject matters of the text, that could as an example be different people, objects such as a house and abstract concepts such as love. The frames may be referred to or evoked in the action or schemata. The scripts then are the people involved in the activity, that is the people who are carrying out the activity, and these people’s relationship. Scripts and frames may overlap (Fairclough 2001).

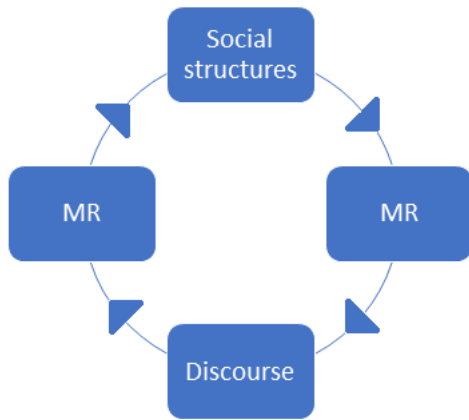
**Topic and point:**

Topic is part of point but not equal to point. Point is to do with the point that interpreters interpret from a text. This is the main element that people will usually take away from a text. Topic is, of course, the topic of the text, which sets the theme of the discourse (Fairclough 2001).

Analysing these five aspects will be an analysis of the interpretation dimension in CDA. Based on the analysis of this, one can move onto explanation which is concerned with the relation between context.

### 3.1.3. Explanation:

What explanation do that description and interpretation do not is to analyse the social struggle that



exists in the discourse, this include power relations and ideology. The purpose of explanation is to portray discourse as a social practice, that is how social structures affect the discourse and how discourse sustains or changes these structures. At this dimension, when it comes to MR, one is concerned with the social constituents and the change of MR. To portray discourse as social practice and the affect of and effect on social structures in discourse is mediated through

MR as visualised in the figure here. One should look at the social structures and practices from three different levels: societal, institutional and situational and then look at how they affect discourse and are affected by discourse. Depending on the level that one looks at discourse at it may affect the discourse differently. Furthermore, power relations and social struggle may be more evident at one level than at another and may even not be evident at all. When discourse and social structures affect each other, they do so through MR in that people use their MR to interpret social structures which may affect their discourse, and people use the MR to produce a discourse which may affect social structures (Fairclough 2001).

The dimension of explanation sees MR as ideologies. Fairclough explains this as: “[...] the assumptions about culture, social relationships, and social identities which are incorporated in MR, are seen as determined by particular power relations in the society or institution, and in terms of their contribution to struggles to sustain or change these power relations – they are seen as ideological.” (Fairclough 2001, 138). Because the explanation dimension works with power relations, ideologies and MR, soft power theory will be applied to this dimension. That soft power will be applied to this dimension is because soft power can be used to analyse the power relations that exists between the subjects in discourses and ideology and MR will help understand why different types of soft power are used. Furthermore, it may help to describe the social structures and practices at the different levels.

### 3.2. Choice of data:

#### China Daily

For the data used for this paper, the researcher has looked at articles from China Daily. On China Daily's about page, China Daily explains that it has readers all over the world in more than 150 countries and regions and gives a further description of its readers:

“Domestic readers mainly include foreigners and high-end nationals, for example, diplomats and governmental policy makers. Overseas subscribers are mostly government officials, members of parliaments, staff members of international organizations and multinationals, professors, researchers and students in universities and institutes.” (“About Us” n.d.).

This quote shows that China Daily's audience, at least according to itself, is knowledgeable. China Daily furthermore adds that two-thirds of their readers are in China. However, although the majority of the news media's readers are in China, China Daily's mission statement is, as mentioned in the introduction of this paper, to inform the world about China's integration into the international system. To write about China's integration has been China Daily's mission since 1981 around which time China started opening up to the world (“About Us” n.d.).

#### Hong Kong

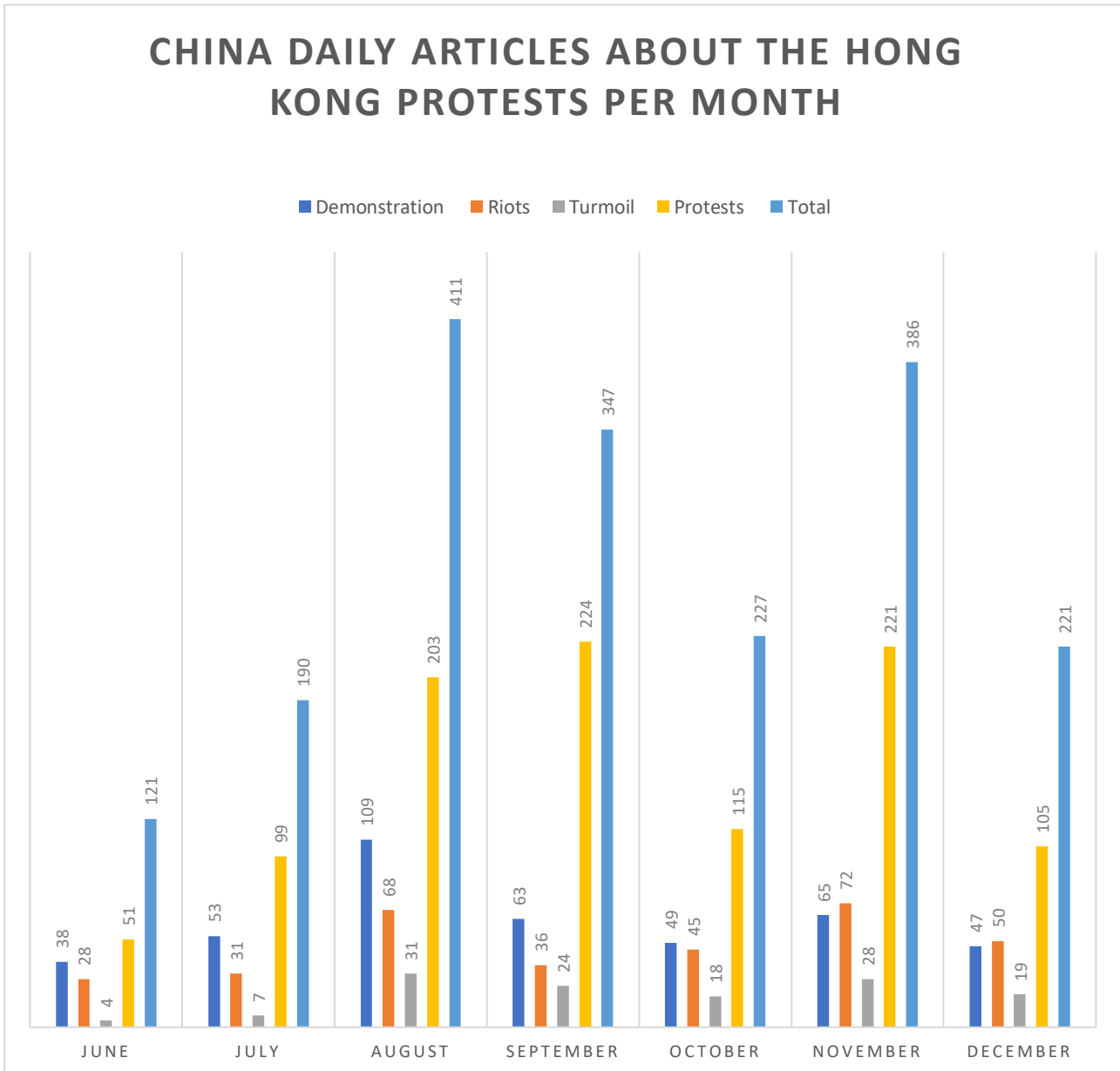
The researcher chose to analyse articles written about the protests in Hong Kong in 2019 as Hong Kong as a region has some attributes which make it interesting to analyse. First of all, Hong Kong is a rather new region in China, as it used to be a British colony until it reunified with China in 1997. In Hong Kong's reunification with China, the “one country, two systems” concept became a reality. The concept is that Hong Kong is a part of the country China; however, Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) which means that Hong Kong has a high degree of autonomy. This SAR means that among other things, Hong Kong has executive, legislative and judicial power independent from China. Being part of the “one county, two systems” is not unique to Hong Kong, as Macau is also part of this concept (Xinhua 2014). However, it seems that Hong Kong's reunification with China is more troublesome than Macau's reunification with the mainland, as there has been more social unrest in Hong Kong than in Macau since the two regions' reunification with mainland China (Wong 2019). As an example, in 2014, Hong Kong experienced pro-democracy protests known as the “Umbrella Revolution” (D. Loh 2017). Because of Hong Kong's SAR and its history with protests, Hong Kong is a unique region to China which makes up

challenges and opportunities to mainland China which may be interesting to analyse from an international relations perspective. One such case is the protests that occurred in 2019 onward in Hong Kong. As examined in this paper, the way China Daily creates narratives about the US as a response to the US's Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill.

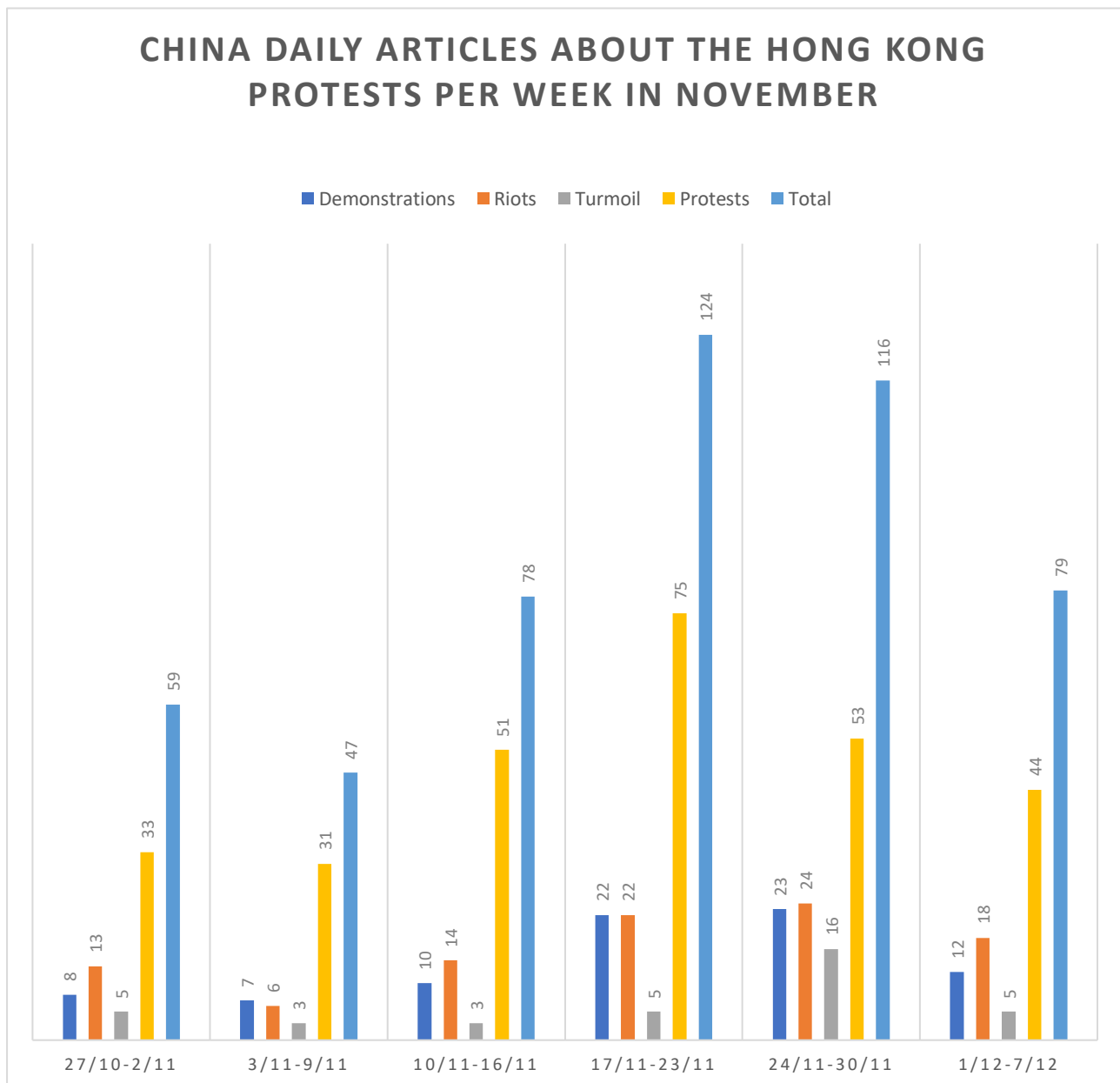
### Collecting the data

To find the articles to analyse for this paper, the researcher searched with China Daily's search engine for results for Hong Kong and protests, riots, turmoil and demonstrations, as different search terms may provide different articles. Furthermore, the researcher has chosen to focus on articles from the last week of November 2019, that is Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>. The researcher chose the last week of November 2019, although the central peak of the protests is the summer of 2019. While looking at articles from the summer seems like an obvious choice of data because one gets the first-hand reactions to the protests, the researcher decided that articles from after the peak of the protests were more suitable than those from the peak. The researcher made this decision because the articles written during the peak of the protests are likely to be influenced by the high pressure of delivering news as they were happening while articles written after the peak are likely to be less pressured as there were fewer events to report. The researcher believes that this will mean that the articles written after the peak are more reflective of the Chinese government's politics on the subject as the news media will have had more time to produce articles. As the researcher is analysing China's soft power strategies, choosing to analyse articles from a period in which the news media have time to reflect on the protests and write articles that correspond with the Chinese government's position on the protests seems like the most appropriate period. The researcher then chooses November as that period as she found there were a high number of articles written about the protests. Furthermore, at the end of November, the US Senate and House passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 bill and President Donald Trump signed this bill on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, while this bill was passed and signed, the 2019 Hong Kong local elections were held. This bill and the election seems to have a significant influence in the number of articles written about the protests as evident from the bar chart below which shows the number of articles available from China Daily's search engine per month from June to December 2019 per the search term Hong Kong + the following four words: demonstrations, riots, turmoil and protests.





As evident from the chart, there was an increase in articles about the Hong Kong protests from June to August and the following two months there were fewer articles written about the protests. November then has a significant increase of articles while December has a similarly low number of articles as October. It seems fair to conclude, based on the number of articles written per month that November is significant. The following bar chart shows the distribution of articles per week in November and the week leading up to November and the week following November.



This chart shows a significant increase of articles in the two weeks, 17/11 to 30/11, in which the US Senate and House passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 bill which President Donald Trump then signed and when Hong Kong held its local elections. To limit the number of articles the researcher will analyse to a number that she will be able to analyse within the time she has to write this paper, the researcher has chosen only to analyse one of these weeks. Although the week from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> has the most significant number of articles, the researcher has chosen the week from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> as this was the week in which President Trump signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 bill, making the bill

effective and the week in which Hong Kong held its local election (*Congressional Documents and Publications* 2019). The Hong Kong local election and the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019, furthermore, are interesting in relation to soft power and defensive soft power theory as these two events most likely will represent different versions of Chinese soft power as one event is domestic and the other event is international.

As China Daily has multiple editions in English, the researcher has decided to include articles from both the China Daily Global edition as well as the China Daily Hong Kong edition. There were a few issues when collecting the data. First of all, some articles from China Daily requires a paid subscription to access. As the researcher does not have full access to these articles, she will try to analyse what is available from these articles and perhaps be able to make some findings based on this (Jianna Liu 2019; Gu and Dai 2019; “Australia’s Spy Stories Defy Belief ” 2019; “Result of District Council Election Skewed by Intimidation, Dirty Tricks ” 2019). Second, one article had no relation to the subject at all but ended up in the search result because it included the words from the search however used differently, the researcher has excluded this article from the list of articles she will analyse. Third, some articles occur more than once between different search terms. Some articles occur twice, once from the Global China Daily edition and once from the China Daily HK Edition. Where the same article occurs twice in different editions, the researcher leaves the article from the original edition and deletes the other one from the list of articles. There are also some articles which other Chinese news media published originally, however, the researcher includes these articles in her list of data as China Daily also has published them and, therefore, can be regarded as a China Daily article. With repeats and the irrelevant article excluded from the list of data, the list includes 60 different articles from the period November 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> which the researcher will analyse in this paper. The list of articles categorised is available in 8. Appendix.

### 3.3. Choice of theories:

The researcher of this paper will use defensive soft power and critical discourse analysis as theories to answer the research question: How does China Daily in its articles about the Hong Kong protests use defensive soft power as a response to perceived attacks on China’s national image? The researcher chooses to apply soft power as based on Joseph S. Nye theory to provide a basis for defensive soft power based on Dylan Loh’s understanding of the theory. In her research leading up to her research question, the researcher found that the articles China Daily wrote about the Hong Kong protests despite China Daily’s soft power mission did not follow Joseph S. Nye’s soft power

theory. However, the researcher found the defensive soft power theory and recognised that the theory's assumptions about using soft power defensively corresponded with China Daily's articles. However, as the researcher was only able to find one paper on defensive soft power, the researcher chooses to supplement Loh's defensive soft power with William A. Callahan's negative soft power. The researcher found that defensive soft power and negative soft power corresponds well together as the Dylan Loh when describing when how states may use soft power defensively refers to William A. Callahan and his negative soft power. However, the researcher will mainly refer to defensive soft power, as negative soft power works as a supplement to defensive soft power.

Critical discourse analysis theory will work as a secondary theory in this paper. The main focus of the paper is how China Daily uses defensive soft power and, therefore, defensive soft power is the leading theory the researcher will use to answer this question. However, critical discourse analysis can help to answer this question as it provides a theory to how to understand the medium through which China Daily uses defensive soft power, that is China Daily's articles. The researcher would perhaps be able to analyse the articles without critical discourse analysis, however, in the researcher's own experience using critical discourse analysis along with another leading theory provides a more thorough analysis and better argumentations than using the other leading theory alone when one analyses texts which are discourses. Critical discourse analysis will also function as a method in the analysis, but to be able to use CDA as a method some theory about how discourses work is needed.

Furthermore, Fairclough's theory on CDA also includes certain elements that will be especially useful for this paper; Fairclough includes some paragraphs in his book *Language and Power* which is concerned with CDA and the mass media, which will be useful for this paper as the data the researcher will analyse is from a mass media. Furthermore, CDA and defensive soft power seem to match each other suitably. Both theories work with power; defensive soft power works with power through attraction, and critical discourse analysis works with how power is exercised in discourses.

The researcher would lastly like to add, that while Joseph S. Nye's soft power theory has a focus on the success of countries soft power strategies, this researcher will not analyse if China Daily's soft power strategies in relation to the Hong Kong protests are successful. Instead, the researcher focuses on how the strategies are used in China Daily's articles about the protests.

## 4. Theory

### 4.1. Soft power

#### Joseph Nye's soft power

Joseph Nye was the one who named the concept of soft power in 1990. However, as Nye mentions himself in his speech *China and soft power*, the concept of soft power can be traced back to ancient China and is evident in our behaviour long before Nye named the concept. At its core, Nye identifies power as something one can gain through coercion, payment or attraction. Nye added attraction to this list of power, as he found that military and economic power could not alone explain states' behaviour and that attraction and persuasion could also explain behaviour. One can be powerful through attraction as other countries might follow one or aspire to be more like one, and, as a result of this, it will be easier for one to get other countries to work towards the outcome one wants in international politics through attraction. States are not the only ones who can have soft power, institutions, organisations and individuals may also have soft power (Nye 2012; 2008).

Soft power is, despite the connotations one may have with soft, not necessarily easily used. To create a soft power strategy is strenuous for governments as the success of soft power will often lie with the subject or target of soft power, unlike with hard power. That the success of soft power lies with the subject is caused by the fact that subjects of soft power have subjective opinions on what is attractive to them. Relating to this issue is the issue that the success of the soft power a country project also depends on the audience's perception of the government behind the soft power's credibility. If a government is considered manipulative and a source of propaganda, the government's success will be limited, and if they broadcast propaganda, it may further harm the government's credibility. Another issue is that soft power strategies are often long-term strategies, meaning that one will have to wait for a long time to see whether one's soft power strategy was successful. That soft power strategies are long term is furthermore an issue if one is impatient for a result. Lastly, Nye identifies the issue that governments often do not have full control over their soft power instruments as these instruments are embedded in civil society. Therefore, as an example, if a government uses a particular cultural aspect of its state as a soft power instrument but the civil society is not embracing this aspect themselves or treats it differently than the government it can be challenging to promote the aspect to others. Nye, furthermore, notes that soft power is only suitable in specific situations and at times, hard power will be more suitable to reach one's goals. However,

Nye thinks that soft power will become increasingly crucial, especially in the age of information (Nye 2012; 2008).

A country has three primary sources of soft power: culture, political values and foreign policies. However, these sources are only a source of soft power where the culture is attractive to others, when the political values are lived up to at home as well as abroad and when others perceive the foreign policies as legitimate and moral. David Shambaugh further adds that foreign policies and political systems only can function as soft power when there is a separation between the state and the non-state (Shambaugh 2015). One can also find hard power sources in soft power, for example, one can use the military as soft power through cooperative training programs, and economic sources can also be soft power. Nye also adds that especially in the age of information, legitimacy is equal to having soft power. Credibility is also vital in the age of information, as everyone has access to information but not attention to process all the information. Because of this, it is those people who have credibility that people will listen to and, therefore, has power (Nye 2012).

### Defensive soft power

Another branch of soft power is defensive soft power. Defensive soft power addresses an element that “traditional” soft power does not; soft power used as a response or defence. Essentially, Dylan Loh defines this branch as the following: “[...] ‘defensive soft power’ is conceptualized as the reactionary activities that respond to perceived attacks and criticism on one’s national image.” (Loh 2017, 122). Loh further writes that for a response to be defensive soft power, the country which is responding to criticism or an attack on its national image needs to use the same sources that are usually used in soft power in its response. That is, promoting culture as an example, however, utilised defensively. In relation to defensive soft power, Loh refers to Callahan and his branch of soft power called negative soft power (D. Loh 2017). Callahan finds negative soft power a relevant supplement to the soft power theory, as he finds Nye’s original theory of soft power only focuses on the positive side of soft power. Callahan defines Nye’s soft power as positive as it focuses on obtaining what one wants through attraction. Callahan writes that countries that use negative soft power often do so to boost domestic security, as negative soft power is to make one’s country look better by promoting negative images of others. The negative part of negative soft power is to use soft power tools to create a negative image of other instead of using soft power tools to create a positive image of oneself as in Nye’s soft power (Callahan 2015).

## 4.2. Critical discourse analysis

In his book *Language and Power*, Norman Fairclough writes about the theory for critical discourse analysis (CDA). Discourse is a social practice in which participants express themselves. Fairclough calls the product of discourse a text. Discourses could, for example, be a conversation, speech or a news article. Discourse is also a social practise even when only one participant is contributing to the text, for example, the author of a news article, as the participants produce or interpret a text in a discourse based on social conditions like the relationship between the participants in the discourse. For participants to produce or interpret discourse, the participants use their member's resources, that is, participants' knowledge made through experiences in the social world (Fairclough 2001).

As evident from the title of Fairclough's book, Fairclough has a focus on language and power in discourse. Language is relevant in discourse because most of the time, people will use language in discourses. Power is relevant because power is primarily distributed in discourse, according to Fairclough. Fairclough's definition of CDA, in the following, referred to as critical language study (CLS), is as follows: "CLS analyses social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show up their gradually hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system." (Fairclough 2001, 4). The critical part of critical discourse analysis means that one looks for the "hidden" relations which exist in discourses. Hidden relations is explained further in power.

### Three dimensions of discourse:

As mentioned in method (see 3.1. Method – critical discourse analysis), Fairclough's CDA consists of three dimensions: description, interpretation and explanation. As the different dimension is described in method, the theory hereof will just have a brief reminder of the main elements of the dimensions before moving on to the theory behind the dimensions. The description dimension is the formal properties of a text, and interpretation is the relation between the text and the interaction. Explanation is the relationship between interaction and social context. To be able to analyse especially the dimension of interpretation and explanation, one must first understand what lies behind discourses. Discourse has orders, which are conventions which determine the discourse type. The conventions enable people to act but at the same time, limit people in how they can act. The social orders may influence the conventions there are in the structures of society and institutions. That is for example that a school has certain social structures unique to schools and in relations to the school's structures are certain social orders in discourse, which means that the school has its

own discourse types. The social structures set roles for people within those structures and these roles tell the people how to act. To continue the example of a school, students and teachers are roles, not only do the roles tell people how to behave but they also include power relations i.e. the teacher has the power to tell students to make their assignments and pay attention during class (Fairclough 2001).

### Power:

The following will describe Fairclough's understanding of power and discourse further. Fairclough puts power in relation to discourse in two categories: power in discourse and power behind discourse. With power in discourse, Fairclough means that people exercise power in discourse and with power behind discourse, Fairclough refers to how orders of discourse are shaped and constrained by power relations.

#### **Power in discourse:**

In discourse, there will be powerful and non-powerful participants; the powerful participants will make constraints for the non-powerful. The constraints that the powerful participants can make are on contents – what is said and done, relations – what social relations the participants bring into the discourse and subject – what subjects/subject positions are available. When participants settle on a discourse type, all participants must adhere to the discourse type and its constraints. Another concept in Fairclough's understanding of power and discourse is hidden power which one can often find in mass-media. Hidden power is one-sided as there is rarely direct contact between the mass media and the audience. Because mass media has a mass-audience, mass media creates an ideal subject/audience to whom they create media. This one-sidedness and creating of the ideal subject clearly show that in mass-media discourse, the producers have the power to control not only context but also even the subject. Furthermore, one has to consider the hierarchy that exists with the media that produces and who the media's power relations to others (Fairclough 2001).

#### **Power behind discourse:**

Power behind discourse is what makes people take up specific roles in specific discourse types and make them act and say specific things; in other words, discourse is dependent on the hidden effect of power. By hidden Fairclough means the power behind the discourse, not the power evident in discourse. Different institutions may specify a discourse type and a role for



people in discourse in the institutions. In Fairclough's own words, power behind discourse "[...] is the stake in power struggles – for control over orders of discourse is a powerful mechanism for sustaining power." (Fairclough 2001, 61).

### Ideology and common-sense:

Ideology is an essential concept in Fairclough's CDA, and it connects to power and language. Ideology, according to CDA, is the common-sense assumptions that exist implicitly in discourse. For example, the common-sense assumptions that make a teacher act like a teacher and a student act like a student. Ideology is connected to power as ideology is embedded in conventions which are dependent on the power relations the conventions exist in. Ideology is connected to language as the common-sense assumptions exist in social interactions which most often happens through language (Fairclough 2001).

Furthermore, ideology is about making one's ideas seem universal because it is cheaper to rule when people consent to one's ideas than using coercion. That it is easier to rule when people consent with one's ideas is because people in their everyday life act based on assumptions and expectations without being consciously aware of it, meaning the common sense is implicit in people's lives. If the common sense that people implicitly follow correspond to one's ideology, one will be able to control the people. Therefore, the effectiveness of one's ideology depends on how well it is merged with common sense. Therefore, ideology and power are related as one uses their ideology to use power. These common-sense assumptions which are based on ideology are also the basis for interpretation. This is because to make sense of a text, one looks at how the parts of the text connect to one's understanding of the world as this understanding includes one's common-sense assumptions. In other words, one makes coherence between what they know and the text. The assumptions and common sense are MR. One's MR can help fill in the gaps that one may encounter in a text (Fairclough 2001).

## 5. Analysis

As mentioned in 3.1. Method – critical discourse analysis, the analysis will be separated based on the categories which the researcher has sorted the articles in to. The analysis starts with the largest category and ends with the smaller categories. The order of the analysis is therefore: US meddling, Hong Kong Local Election, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Opinions, Trade hurt by HK

protest and miscellanies, that is the remaining categories which only has one article each. However, to prevent repetition, the researcher will as she progresses through the analysis only include analysis of new elements in the smaller categories. In that the articles are already in categories based on the central theme of the articles means that the researcher has already completed one part of the analysis from the interpretation dimension from CDA, that is, topic and point. Topic is the theme of the articles which the researcher has based her categories of the articles on.

### 5.1. US meddling

Of the 60 articles China Daily published about the protests in Hong Kong from November 24<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 17 articles were mainly about how the US meddled. First, the researcher will make an overall summary based on the situational context and discourse type figure from the interpretation dimension, figure 3.1.2. (3.1.2. Interpretation). The other categories of articles will likewise start with a summary based on figure 3.1.2., as by going through this figure, the reader will gain a basic understanding of the articles first instead of starting very specific with grammar and vocabulary. Starting with the situational context and discourse type figure will also provide a better transition between the description dimension and interpretation dimension as the reader will already have a basic understanding of the articles to begin with instead of gaining it in the middle of the analysis. The last element of the figure, what is the role of language in what is going on, will be analysed after analysis of the description dimension.

Based on the situational context and discourse type figure 3.1.2., looking at who is involved first, for all the US meddling articles, the US and Hong Kong are the main subjects of the articles. China too works as the main subject, as a minor character or is not mentioned at all, which is the case in two articles (Jianna Liu 2019; “HKSAR Govt Strongly Opposes HK-Related Bills Becoming Law ” 2019). At times the different subjects are different people or organisations which represent the states or the region. For example for the US, several people and groups of people represent the US as a whole, for example, the US President Donald Trump, Washington politicians, Washington, the US government and simply just the US are used to represent the US in just one article (China Daily Asia 2019). Other subjects are also referenced, for example, the former Bolivian President is mentioned, and the Hong Kong protests are also referenced in multiple articles, however, to a lesser degree than the US, Hong Kong and China. Knowing the subjects of the articles makes it easier to describe the activity, topic and purpose of the articles. While there are some differences in the activity and purpose the researcher has already determined the topic while

categorising the articles. Mainly the activity of the articles is to respond to the US interfering in China's domestic affairs with the two bills the US made in relation to the Hong Kong protests. In some articles only the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 bill is mentioned and in some none of the bills are mentioned, but there is a focus on the US interfering. The purpose of the articles is where there is the most variation between the articles. The researcher has identified the following purposes of the articles which are to inform about: the US's hypocrisy, the US serving its interests, the US not following international law, the HKSAR's reaction, the consequences of the bill and how Hong Kong and China's relationship is strong and cannot be affected by the US. Some articles, of course, have more than one purpose, but the purposes listed above, are the primary purposes of the articles. The purposes also illustrate the relations between the US, Hong Kong and China. Based on these articles, the relationship between the US on one side and Hong Kong and China on the other side is strained. Hong Kong and China oppose the bills that the US has made concerning the Hong Kong protests, and the US's interest in Hong Kong is only to hinder China's development which is evident in, among other articles, the article with the title: "US meddling in HKSAR affairs serves its geopolitical interests" (China Daily Asia 2019).

The description dimension starts with the vocabulary of the texts, that is the experiential, relational and expressive values and metaphors that are present in the China Daily articles about how the US meddles. In the following quote, we have an example of both experiential and expressive valued words marked below in yellow.

*However, what Hong Kong residents in general have experienced as a result of US "support for human rights, freedom and democracy" so far are political crises, economic slowdowns, social unrest, mass emotional stress and even deaths.*

(China Daily Asia 2019).

The first marking "support for human rights, freedom and democracy" is an experiential valued sentence in this quote in that it shows traces of ideologically contested words, which are commonly linked to the US and the West. That these ideologically contested words are placed in quotation marks shows that while these are the words that the US use to justify their action, China Daily do not find this to be entirely accurate. In fact, following "support for human rights, freedom and democracy" are some expressive valued words which show what China Daily finds more accurate than US's own words. These expressive valued words are rather negative and show a rather bleak outcome, which has affected "Hong Kong residents" politically, economically, socially and

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emotionally for the worse. Put together, this quote shows some relational values in that China Daily critiques the US for causing such distress to the “Hong Kong residents”.

*Under the guise of human rights and democracy, the US politicians distorted facts, beautified violence and crimes, and challenged global justice.* (People’s Daily 2019b).

Similarly, in the quote above, China Daily shows relational values by saying that the experiential valued words, “human rights and democracy” which are connected to the US, in reality, are some negative expressive valued words, “distorted facts, beautified violence and crimes, and challenged global justice.”. Furthermore, the quote starts with a metaphor which states that the US has been doing these negative things “Under the guise” of doing something positive in their ideological point of view. The metaphor is also negatively expressive in that it shows that the US has been dishonest about what they are doing concerning the Hong Kong protests.

The use of the US ideological words and negatively valued words in the same sentences shows the relationship China has to the US in the interpretation dimension. The China Daily articles do not critique the US ideology, but only critique that the US uses its ideology as an excuse to interfere in Hong Kong or critique that even if the US wanted to provide these ideological values to the Hong Kongers that is not what the Hong Kongers have gotten. An explanation for this could be that China does not want to disagree with the US ideology and, therefore, does not critique the ideology but only that the US use the ideology as an excuse to interfere. That China Daily does not want to critique the US ideology makes sense when the ideology includes values such as human rights and democracy. If China Daily were to critique democracy as an example would not make sense when Hong Kong uses democracy in the form of the Hong Kong local elections. Therefore, critiquing democracy would especially not make sense when the second largest category of China Daily’s articles analysed here is about democracy in Hong Kong. Democracy and defensive soft power will be further analysed in 5.2. Hong Kong local elections.

The two quotes above have many words which are negatively valued. The other US meddling articles likewise have a majority of negatively valued words. However, there are two exceptions where the degree of expressive valued words that are negative is low compared to the other articles. One of these articles only includes the following words which can be described as negative: “stern” and “strong protests” (Xinhua 2019a). Even as these words are somewhat negative, they seem less negative than those in the quotes above and perhaps more formal. This difference is most likely

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because the article with the words “stern” and “strong protests” seems more like a briefing or a short description of an event than an actual article like the two others. The author of this article has chosen a briefing like discourse type, which significantly limits how the author describes the event they report on. For example, the “briefing” is only 43 words long where the article from which one of the previous quotes is from is 764 words long (Xinhua 2019a; People’s Daily 2019b). The “briefing” article is the only one of that kind out of all the other 59 articles. The other of the US meddling articles which have a limited number of negative expressive valued words is a rather short article consisting of 285 words in total. Of these 285 words, the researcher would only describe seven words or clause constituents as negative, and these negative words or clause constituents seem rather formal as was the case with the “briefing” article. One of the sentences in which negative expressive valued words are present is the following:

*The HKSAR extremely regretted the US' patent disregard of the concerns and exhortations by Chinese authorities on many occasions. (“HKSAR Govt Strongly Opposes HK-Related Bills Becoming Law ” 2019).*

This sentence is the one sentence that the researcher finds to be the most negative, but it also shows the tone of the article very well. If we compare this quote to the other two quotes above, this quote represents the opinion of the HKSAR government while it is not clear whose opinion is expressed in the two previous quotes. One could assume at the interpretational level that the opinions of the two other quotes are the opinions of the authors. The tone of the article from which the HKSAR opinion is represented is rather formal compared to the two other articles. At an explanation level, this is of course because of the institutional structures in a government and at a news media company which make the differences in the choice of tone or use of negative or positive valued words. One would expect the tone of a governmental institution to be more formal than that of a news media institution. In a governmental institution, there are specific roles which the members of the government are expected to follow. When it comes to relations to another country as is the case here, one would expect the members of the government to be respectful of the other country, at least in their public opinion, as to ensure good a good relationship, even when one disapproves of the other country’s actions. In a media company, journalists are less restricted in their discourses than the government. The journalists’ published articles are aimed at an audience who perhaps expects articles which are not formal. Therefore, if the journalists find it appropriate to describe the actions

of another country negatively, they can do so because they are less constricted than a government or members of a government are.

While the tone of the *HKSAR Govt Strongly Opposes HK-Related Bills Becoming Law* article is formal and mainly neutral with a few negative expressive valued words, the article ends with some positive words.

*The HKSAR government hopes that the US government will adopt a pragmatic approach, taking into account what's mutually beneficial.* (“HKSAR Govt Strongly Opposes HK-Related Bills Becoming Law ” 2019).

The highlighted words above are the only positive words in the article. The use of these positive words in this sentence tells something about the relational values the words have as well. Especially “mutually beneficial” shows the relational values well, as a mutually beneficial relationship between the HKSAR and US government is the ideal. However, as evident from the previous quote from the same article, the reality at the moment is that the US government has caused the HKSAR government regret. The negatively valued words are connected to the US’s current actions while the positive words are used for HKSAR’s preferred US actions in the future. The use of the negative and positive valued words in this article at an interpretational level may make readers of this article create some expectations for the US, as the article presents an option in the future where China and the US could benefit mutually which is preferable to the US current actions which are harmful.

In other US meddling articles, positive and negative words are similarly used to show who is in the right and the wrong. Looking at the article from Martin Sieff (2019), multiple people and groups of people are presented throughout the article. About Washington/the US and London/the UK’s actions, Sieff use words such as “[...] slandered, sneered at and discredited” and President Trump is “volatile”(Sieff 2019). Sieff, furthermore, calls the protestors in Hong Kong “deluded radical demonstrators” among other things. On the other hand, the previous President of Bolivia, which Sieff compares to Hong Kong, was “toppled” by the US and was a “successful leader” who was elected based on “free and fair elections” (Sieff 2019). Moreover, Sieff describes Hong Kong as stable and prosperous. Throughout Sieff’s article, there is, therefore, a clear difference between who Sieff regards as victims and who is the antagonist. The use of negative and positive words to distinguish who is the victim and who is the antagonist is also used in other articles about the US meddling as well. In one article, President Trump creates “chaos” by signing the bill (Jianna Liu 2019), and in another, the bill that President Trump signed is an “attempt to incite violence” (CGTN

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2019a), and that Hong Kong is stable and prosperous appears in five other articles than Sieff's (People's Daily 2019b; 2019a; Mo and Li 2019; Mo 2019; CGTN 2019b). Therefore, one can argue that the use of negative and positive valued words also show relational value as negative and positive words are used for different groups and are used consistently throughout China Daily's articles about the US meddling in the Hong Kong protests.

There is not much to say about the grammar in the articles, but an interesting element of the articles is that they all mainly are written in an active voice. That the voice is active means that the agent of the actions in the sentences is the subject of the sentence. An example hereof is the following sentence where the subject and agent is "Some Western politicians":

*Some Western politicians, especially those from the United States, cannot accept China's rise.* (CGTN 2019b).

In this sentence, it is clear that it is "Some Western politicians" who cannot accept China's rise. If the sentence was passive one could potentially omit the agent, and then the sentence could simply just be *China's rise cannot be accepted*. The sentence without an agent sounds like a universal fact as it does not specify who cannot accept it. However, for this article and the other China Daily articles about the US meddling, it is sensible that the authors chose to use an active voice. To understand why the authors use an active voice in these articles about the US meddling, one has to move on to the interpretation dimension and the "what is the role of language in what is going on" part of the situational context and discourse type figure 3.1.2.

The role of the use of negatively valued words and the active voice makes sense when one regards it in relation to the subjects, their relations and the purposes of the articles. As mentioned first in the analysis of articles the US meddling articles, the US's relationship to China and Hong Kong is strained because the US has interfered in China's internal affairs by passing two bills. It seems that the authors of these articles want to make sure that the readers of their articles know who is the antagonist by using negative words and placing the antagonist front and centre by giving the majority of the sentences an active voice. By doing this, the authors leave no doubt about who is involved and what one should think about the involved. That the majority of the sentences are active means that when the authors write about the subjects that they want the readers to support, these subjects are also placed front and centre so that the readers do not doubt whom they are supposed to support. Especially when the authors write the subjects one is supposed to support in the sentences, positive valued words are used as is the case in the following quote:



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*She [Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor] added that pro-establishment parties will continue to serve the public with dedication.* (Mo and Li 2019).

In the subclause “that pro-establishment parties will continue to serve the public with dedication.” the pro-establishment parties are the subject and the agent of the action “to serve the public”. The action of the sentence is, furthermore, described with the word dedication, which is a positive valued word. This sentence, therefore, tells the reader that the pro-establishment parties are the ones the readers are supposed to support as they are the ones who “serve the public with dedication”.

The role of the language seems, as mentioned before, to be to show who is the antagonist and that Hong Kong and China are in the right. That the US and its actions are described with negative words while the Hong Kong government as an example are described with formal and positive words as evident in two of the quotes above makes it very clear that the US is in the wrong as the US interferes in a region in which government is well functioning and does well. It would seem, therefore, that the speech act which is the purpose for China Daily to publish these articles is to antagonise the US and promote Hong Kong as a well-functioning region of China. One of the articles shows the speech act very clearly with the title: “Hong Kong will always be an inseparable part of China”, and sentences like: “Some Western politicians, especially those from the United States, cannot accept China's rise.” (CGTN 2019b). While not all articles show the speech act as clearly as this one, they all consist of elements which point towards this speech act. Moving on to an explanation of this, it would be hard to characterise this as soft power according to Nye’s definition of the theory. It is quite apparent that China’s soft power strategy with these kinds of articles is not to attract the US and other Western countries as the US in these articles are characterised as being hypocritical, serving its own interests, using its ideology as an excuse to interfere but not accomplishing anything to do with its ideology among other things. That Hong Kong is described as stable, prosperous and an inseparable part of China could indicate that the soft power strategy that China applies to these articles is defensive soft power.

What speaks for the US meddling articles being a defensive soft power strategy is, first of all, that they respond to what could be described as an attack on China’s national image. The perceived attack is the two Hong Kong related bills that the US President Trump signed into law, but especially the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 bill which are mentioned the



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most in the US meddling articles. That China perceives the bill as an attack is evident in most articles, below is a selection of a few quotes which show this:

*The statement, released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, maintains the US move is egregious interference in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs. (China Daily Asia 2019).*

*Driven by the political conspiracy to disrupt Hong Kong and curb China's development, some US officials have openly supported the Hong Kong rioters and fueled the already messed-up situation in the region. (People's Daily 2019a).*

*These two laws are legitimizing the U.S. government's attempt to disrupt the unity of China by deliberately instigating chaos in Hong Kong. (CGTN 2019c).*

*What's even worse, the US Congress passed the so-called Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 recently in an attempt to whitewash the violent acts, support the radical protesters and interfere in the internal affairs of China. (People's Daily 2019b).*

Secondly, China has decided to respond to this perceived attack through a soft power tool: the media, which the Chinese government through the SCIO and China Daily itself describes as soft power.

China's use of defensive soft power, in this case, indicates the power relations that China has to struggle with. China could have chosen to use a traditional strategy of soft power and tried to show that Hong Kong follows the human rights and has democracy to attract the US and show that there is no need for the bill. However, that they chose to antagonise the US instead indicates that it is essential for China to attract another group of people with whom it is more important to have a good relation than the US. As the negative soft power theory specifies, negative soft power is used to boost domestic security. In this case, it would make sense for China to want to create a negative image of the US and its efforts for human rights and democracy in Hong Kong as it would be favourable to make the signal to a domestic audience that the US will not bring anything good to Hong Kong with the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019 law. Some scholars on Chinese soft power will attribute this soft power strategy to China's need for what these scholars call "regime security" which is achieved through "regime legitimacy" and national cohesion (Sørensen 2017; Callahan 2015; Edney 2015). Concerning the Hong Kong protests and the US bill,

if a group of people in Hong Kong sees the US bill as support for what they are doing and, therefore, continue their protests which several US meddling articles also touch upon (Jianna Liu 2019; Goodrum 2019), then China does not have national cohesion which could affect the country's "regime security". Based on this, the power relation that China through China Daily tends to with these articles would seem to be a domestic one. As mentioned in 3.3. Choice of data, China Daily writes on its about page that the majority of China Daily's readers are in China. Therefore, it is plausible that the US meddling articles are mainly written to a domestic audience. Antagonising the US, therefore, make sense in relation to a domestic audience as this shows that what is going on in Hong Kong is not caused by domestic problems but rather international interference which increases "regime legitimacy" as it is not the Chinese nor the HKSAR government who has caused the protests. Furthermore, the use of stability and prosperity to describe Hong Kong or China also corresponds well with domestic readers, as by telling the domestic readers that Hong Kong is stable and prosperous, readers are likely not to question whether the US meddling is okay because if a country is stable and prosperous, there is no legit reason for others to meddle. In terms of the soft power sources that are used for this defensive soft power strategy seems to be the government. First of all, with creating a negative image of the US, China Daily is using the US government as a source to create national cohesion in China's defensive soft power strategy. Second of all, China Daily is using the HKSAR government as a soft power source by describing Hong Kong as prosperous and stable to attract China and Hong Kong's domestic audience and hopefully increasing national cohesion in this group.

As the researcher has touched upon the readers of these articles above, the researcher would like to add a small section here about the domestic readers of China Daily's articles. This small section will also be relevant for readers of this paper to keep in mind as they read the rest of the analysis. The researcher has throughout her analysis of the articles which she determines are a part of a defensive soft power strategy which is aimed at a domestic audience wondered why these articles are not written in Chinese if they are aimed at Chinese people. The researcher has not been able to find a suitable place to include her thoughts on this in her analysis as the method of critical discourse analysis does not include anything on the choice of language in discourses.

That China Daily uses English in some of their editions makes sense as the news media's mission is to promote China to the world. However, the choice then to publish articles which are

primarily aimed at domestic Chinese people seems odd. As one may recall from 3.2. Choice of data, China Daily does identify a majority of its readers as domestic despite its intended audience being the world. However, China Daily does also identify its domestic Chinese readers as “high-end nationals”, which the researcher believes explains the mismatch between the intended reader and the choice of language in the articles with a defensive soft power strategy. The researcher had difficulties finding any academic sources on how many people in China speaks English but based on a few non-academic articles and the researcher's experience in China, the majority of the Chinese do not speak English. Furthermore, those who do speak English seem to be people with a long education (“English Levels in China” n.d.; O. Smith 2017). That it is mainly Chinese with a long education that, according to researchers own experience, knows English corresponds with China Daily’s “high-end nationals” readers who China Daily also writes are people such as diplomats and policymakers, so people who usually have a long education. Such people are perhaps also likely to read other news than those by Chinese news media; therefore, they may also get news that the Chinese language news media do not write about or do not provide the full story of, for example, it is unlikely that the Chinese language news media provide the full scope of the US’s Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill. Because of this, it might be useful for China Daily to provide news to “high-end nationals” who may read other news than those provided by Chinese news media with news that references the events that non-Chinese English language news media reports on with a Chinese point of view. With these articles being in English, the Chinese people who do not know English will not be able to read and understand these references which may not be relevant for the majority of the Chinese. However, it could also be that the articles are mainly aimed at Hong Kongers, this is the case for the Hong Kong local elections articles, but may not be the case for the remaining articles which could be aimed at Hong Kongers as well as the mainland “high-end nationals”. Hong Kong in its special administrative region privileges has English as an official language as well as Chinese (“The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China” 1990). Therefore, the majority of the Hong Kongers would be able to read China Daily’s articles in English about the protests, and it seems that China Daily utilise the Hong Kongers English skills in the Hong Kong local elections articles (see 5.2.).

## 5.2. Hong Kong Local Elections

Starting with the situational context and discourse type figure 3.1.2. here as well, the main subjects in the Hong Kong local elections articles are the Hong Kong local elections. To create some context, the researcher will provide a brief description of the purpose and results of the elections. At the Hong Kong local elections, the Hong Kongers vote for who should take up the 452 seats as district councillors. The councillors role is advisory to the Hong Kong government on issues concerning the well being of the people from the different Hong Kong districts. The election resulted in the pro-democracy camp winning the majority of seats while the pro-establishment camp had a large setback from the last election. Of the 452 seats, the pro-democracy camp won 392 seats leaving the pro-establishment camp with 60 seats. At the previous election, the pro-establishment camp won 292 seats (“HKSAR District Council Election” 2020). The win of the pro-democracy camp is by many credited to the protests (“HKSAR District Council Election” 2020). These local elections include many different people, and the different articles include various people. Some people who appear in many articles are the Hong Kong residents/voters, various pro-establishment parties, the “opposition”, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor and rioters. The activity of these articles is to inform about the election, and their purposes vary. The purposes of these articles are to inform about the new councillors’ role, that dialogue is the way forward, that the election shows dissatisfaction of violence, the role of the pro-establishment camp after the setback, consequences of the election, that the election was well functioning and as an opposite to this that the elections were skewed. Unfortunately, the one article which is about the elections being skewed is for subscribers and, therefore, the researcher only has access to a small part of this article and may, therefore, have little to say about this article. The relations between the many different subjects in these articles are hard to describe but mainly were see two opposing sides, the pro-establishment camp and the so-called opposition camp. Additionally, a strained relationship between Hong Kongers and protestors, especially the violent protestors, are presented in many articles.

Moving on to the description dimension, one of the first thing the researcher noticed was that in most of the Hong Kong local elections articles, many of the authors use the word opposition to describe the parties which are not pro-establishment parties. 11 out of the 15 Hong Kong local elections articles use the word “opposition” to describe the non-pro-establishment parties.

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Opposition appears in various sentences; in some cases, the authors use the word in rather neutral descriptive sentences:

*The pro-establishment camp currently holds 327 district council seats, compared with 124 for the opposition. (Gu 2019a).*

However, for most of the cases, opposition is used with negatively valued words:

*District council is never a **hostage** that could be **hijacked to coerce** the Hong Kong government to **succumb** to the opposition's **irrational demands**. (Jianxi Liu 2019b).*

*The result of Sunday's district council election marks a setback for Hong Kong's democratic development, as the results were **skewed** by the **illegal activities** of the opposition camp to the **benefit** of their candidates. ("Result of District Council Election Skewed by Intimidation, Dirty Tricks " 2019).*

In that the opposition and its activities are mainly described with negatively valued words such as irrational and illegal, the opposition is, like the US in the US meddling articles, antagonised. The word opposition in itself holds some relational and experiential value. It is relational in that it tells the readers that they are opposite to the pro-establishment camp. It is experiential in that it is almost consistently used instead of the parties' actual names or the term pro-democracy parties. However, by describing the opposition as pro-democracy would indicate that the pro-establishment parties are not pro-democracy and considering that the local elections are democratic, it would be an odd choice to do so. The pro-establishment parties are mentioned by their names several times, for example, one article uses the last half of the article on describing how the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions party was affected in the election. However, when someone from the opposition is mentioned more specifically than by simply the opposition, it is done to promote a certain negative value in that person. An example hereof is the following quote where an opposition candidate is mentioned by name but also occupation to signify that the opposition candidate is less experienced in local politics than a candidate from a pro-establishment party:

*For instance, pro-establishment lawmaker Horace Cheung Kwok-kwan, who sought re-election in the Sai Wan constituency, lost by 795 votes to opposition candidate Jordan Pang Ka-ho, a university junior. (B. Li and He 2019a).*

That the opposition is inexperienced is something many of the Hong Kong local elections articles touch upon. For example, in one article, the opposition is described as “greenhorns” which, according to Oxford’s dictionary means someone inexperienced at an activity (“Greenhorn” n.d.). The author also writes that the opposition camp by winning many seats in the election is “[...] parachuted into the races.” (B. Li and He 2019a). This metaphor also indicates inexperience as the opposition camp, according to the metaphor, has appeared out of the sky into a race they were not a part of before or perhaps not even supposed to participate in. At the interpretation dimension it is clear, therefore, based on the narrative that exists about the opposition and the choice of the word opposition in itself that the opposition is someone that should be opposed and that the other parties, that is the pro-establishment parties, are the ones that one should agree with, mainly because the pro-establishment parties have experience in local politics.

Like the word opposition, the word “livelihood” appears multiple times in the Hong Kong local elections articles. The reoccurrence of the word makes it an experiential valued word. Of the 15 articles, six include the word livelihood, and the word is used similarly in all six of these articles. Serving the local community is likewise used in other articles, but the use of livelihood in many articles stood out to the researcher. In all six articles with the word livelihood, securing or improving the livelihood of the Hong Kongers is the essential goal for the local councillors reach. One article mentions that the new councillors must “dedicate themselves to the improvement of the livelihoods in their communities” and that “there are growing worries that opposition councilors’ political agenda will override livelihood issues.”(B. Li and He 2019b). Another article is about the pro-establishment camp:

*Hong Kong's pro-establishment camp pledged to continue serving the community and to proactively improve people's livelihoods after suffering a massive setback in local elections.* (K. Zhang, Gu, and He 2019).

These three quotes show the ways livelihood is mainly used: improving livelihood, the opposition may not have this goal and the pro-establishment camp will continue improving livelihood despite its setback at the election. Therefore, one can argue that there is some relational value connected to the word livelihood, in that livelihood is something that the pro-establishment camp knows how to improve and because improving livelihood is the essential goal of the councillors, the pro-establishment camp is the one to support and not the opposition as their primary goal is their politics and not improving livelihood.

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Concerning the opposition, grammar is also relevant to look at because the authors of the articles use modal verbs in many sentences about the opposition. The use of modality is expressive valued grammar. Fairclough writes about the use of modality specifically in the news: “The prevalence of categorical modalities supports a view of the world as transparent [...] without the need for interpretation and representation.” (Fairclough 2001, 107). Below are examples from one article about the Hong Kong local elections where the authors use modal verbs. The modal verbs are marked in blue.

*Newly elected district councilors **must** take a harsher stance against violence and dedicate themselves to the improvement of livelihoods in their communities, or they **may** lose the public's trust and also their seats, political observers said. (B. Li and He 2019b).*

*To respond to the call of voters, new councilors, regardless of their political stance, **must** firmly reject violence, Tien said, adding that the public's supervision **will** help regulate their behavior. (B. Li and He 2019b).*

*Tien said all newly elected councilors, especially some from the opposition camp, who have little experience in community service **should** be fully aware of their responsibilities and try their best to fulfill them. (B. Li and He 2019b).*

Looking at these examples with the quote from Fairclough in mind, it is evident that there is no need for interpretation and representation in this article. When the authors of this article write that the “councillors must take a harsher stance against violence”, the authors leave no doubt for the readers as to if the councillors need to take a harsher stance on violence. Furthermore, the sentence has no representation in that there is no mention of who thinks or decides that the councillors must take a harsher stance because the sentence is written as if a universal truth with the use of a modal verb.

At the interpretation dimension, the use of these modal verbs gives the readers expectations about what to expect from the opposition now that they won a majority of seats at the local elections. By setting up expectations about how the opposition members must carry out their term as councillors, China Daily will be able to critique the opposition if they do not live up to these expectations. Furthermore, if the Hong Kongers find that the opposition councillors do not live up to the expectations, they are perhaps likely to not vote for the opposition at the next local elections.

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It would seem, therefore, that the audience that China Daily is trying to reach with these articles are all Hong Kongers who can vote. As English is an official language of Hong Kong it would, therefore, be likely that most Hong Kongers could read the articles about the Hong Kong local elections.

At an explanation level, this could point towards that the articles which are written similarly as the one from which the examples are from are examples of China's defensive soft power strategy. This article can be described as a defensive soft power strategy, as the opposition's win at the election can be regarded as an attack on China's national image in that the pro-establishment parties did not win the majority of seats at the local elections and these parties are the ones whose goal is, as the name suggests, to be a part of China. Therefore, to secure national cohesion in Hong Kong, it makes sense to use the media as a soft power tool to create high expectations which if not met could cause the voters to vote for the pro-establishment parties at the next election as the opposition did not fulfil the expectation set by the Chinese government through the media. Furthermore, when the pro-establishment parties are described as experienced while the opposition parties are described as inexperienced, if the opposition does not live up to the expectation, perhaps the voters will vote for the more experienced alternative at the next election because they know how to improve livelihood. The audience that China tries to project soft power on with this defensive soft power strategy is a domestic audience, specifically in Hong Kong.

Moving on to expressive valued words, the researcher found that compared to the US meddling articles, there are fewer articles in the Hong Kong local elections articles which mainly have negatively valued words. That does not mean that the Hong Kong local elections mainly have positively valued words but rather that there is a more even balance between negative and positive valued words. An article in which the balance between positive and negative valued words is quite even is the *Dialogue is crucial to political reconciliation, district improvements* article. This balance between negative and positive is represented well in this sentence: “**Meaningful dialogue** is the alternative to **violence**.” (C. Loh 2019). The positive valued words “meaningful dialogue” is seen in reference to the negative valued word “violence” making the sentence even. Furthermore, despite the clear positive and negative meanings of the words, neither represent strong emotion and the sentence, therefore, seems quite neutral. The author could have chosen to use bloodshed, assault or cruelty instead of violence to create a worse image of the protests and used words such as essential or crucial instead of meaningful to increase the importance of what is President Xi Jinping's advice to use dialogue to improve livelihood.



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In a few of the article's sentences, there is less of a balance between the positive and negative words. In the following example, there are three words which the researcher identifies as positive.

*Xi's call for dialogue was significant. He expects the authorities in Hong Kong to engage the public because it is through discussion with the community that improvement to their well-being can be achieved. In other words, Lam and her governance team have to up their game when it comes to talking and listening to the people. (C. Loh 2019).*

That these sentences have positive valued words and no negative valued words, while many of the other sentences in the article have a mixture of both is interesting. From the interpretative dimension, the subjects of the sentences are perhaps the reason for the choice to not include any negatively valued words in the sentences. First of all, one of the subjects is President Xi Jinping and his "call for dialogue". It makes sense for China Daily to promote President Xi's ideas with positive valued words if China Daily's mission is to promote China in an international context. Second of all, what is described in this paragraph and throughout the article is democracy. Democracy in relation to the Hong Kong protests is of relevance as the protests in Hong Kong, as described in 1. Introduction, has evolved into pro-democracy protests. The article also references this in the following sentence:

*Hong Kong people want greater democracy because they believe being able to choose their political leaders will bring about better policies. (C. Loh 2019).*

However, if one reads this article with the power relations of the international society in mind, the US's Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill may also come into mind. Looking at the power relations in the international society, of course, means that we have moved on to the explanation dimension. With the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, the US made it clear that the US believes that Hong Kong has some issues when it comes to democracy. Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction (1. Introduction), Soft Power 30 describes China's government as China's weakest soft power source. The article promotes that China's President encourages democracy in Hong Kong and dedicates the entire article to explain why having a dialogue between the government and the Hong Kong residents is good and how to have a good dialogue. This promotion could be a soft power strategy aimed at the West or the US specifically, where democracy is generally praised. What is more, in this article, the "opposition" is not mentioned. Instead, the author writes that many new councillors were elected and that they are

young and energetic, and the protests are described as an opportunity. That the opposition and the protests are described with these somewhat positive words unlike in many of the other Hong Kong local elections articles could point towards the intended audience of this article is different from the intended audience in the other articles analysed before this one. As mentioned in the introduction, the general opinion of the Hong Kong protests in the West seems to be with the protestors. One could, therefore, argue that this article reflects a “traditional” soft power strategy from China’s side, as the article seems to be intended to an audience who generally supports the protestors and who value democracy highly. The author may, therefore, try to attract said audience by promoting how President Xi and Hong Kong values democracy. The intended audience could also be the protestors, and the purpose then is to show the protestors that their demands are taken seriously. As the pro-democracy camp and the protests are not described negatively also points towards this article being a “traditional” soft power strategy as there is no apparent attack presented in this article. In other Hong Kong local elections articles, the pro-democracy camp and the protests are perceived as an attack on China’s national image.

### 5.3. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

About the Polytechnic University and the remaining articles, the researcher makes the analysis of these articles shorter than the analysis of the two previous categories, as the two previous categories were the largest and therefore the ones that seemed to be the most vital in China’s defensive soft power strategies in relation to the Hong Kong protests. The researcher uses her analysis of the two first categories as a basis for her analysis of the remaining articles. That means that she will draw on her findings from the first categories to make findings in the remaining articles to avoid repetition of analysis of especially the description and interpretation dimensions and move on to the explanation dimension where the defensive soft power theory can be applied. However, when the researcher finds elements from the description or interpretation dimension which she has not analysed in the two first categories and which she deems relevant to answer her problem formulation she will, of course, analyse these elements.

About the Polytechnic University articles, it is relevant to identify the activity, subjects and relations from the situational context and discourse type figure 3.1.2 in the articles. First of all, the activity of the articles is mainly that the protestors barricaded themselves in at the Polytechnic University (PolyU) and that the police is trying to negotiate with the protestors to leave the area. The activity also identifies the main subjects, namely the protestors, who are barricading the

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university, and the police. The relation is strained as the police wants the protestors to leave the area but if the protestors leave they may be arrested (“HK Police to Enter PolyU to Investigate and Handle Hazardous Items ” 2019). Moving on to a brief analysis of the discourse in these articles, we see that they similar to the other articles describe the protestors negatively. About the protestors, in one article, the authors write: “[...] removing dangerous items left on campus by the radical protesters. (Gu and Dai 2019). The police, on the other hand, is described positively:

*Police said they are taking this action out of concern for the protesters' physical and mental health. (“Police Negotiators Preparing to Enter PolyU Campus ” 2019).*

Again, in these articles like in the US meddling and Hong Kong Local Elections articles, it is made obvious who one is supposed to support and who is the antagonist in this situation with the use of positive and negative valued words. That the police is the one to support in these articles can be explained with what it seems that China perceives as an attack on its national image. The perceived attack, in this case, is two things, first of all, as mentioned in the 1. Introduction, the protestors are demanding that “[...] an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality [...]among other things (BBC News 2020). Accusing the police of police brutality could be perceived as an attack on China’s national image, as the police is a part of China’s state and, therefore, the national image. Therefore, the defensive soft power strategy is to create a negative image of the protestors who are accusing the police of police brutality, when the reality is that the police actually cares about the protestors as evident in the quote above.

Another, perceived attack on China’s national image is mentioned in one of the articles: *HKSAR gov't rejects The Lancet article about standoff at PolyU* (Xinhua 2019b). The attack is mentioned in the title and the beginning of the article: “The Lancet article”. The Lancet article refers to an article written by a doctor who entered PolyU to treat protestors who needed medical attention. In the article, the doctor critiques the police for arresting his colleagues at the university. In the article, the doctor writes among other things that “The actions of the Hong Kong Police Force have fallen far below accepted international norms for the handling of volunteer emergency medical providers.” (Mann 2019). In the article from China Daily, it is mentioned that the doctor critiques the police but in the same sentence it is said that the HKSAR government rejects the doctor’s claims and in the next sentence the author writes that police acted “peacefully and flexibly”. What exactly the doctor critique is not mentioned anywhere in the article, so if one wants to learn what

specifically he critiques, one needs to search for the article oneself. This is a case of intertextuality; however, the researcher doubts if the readers of this articles know exactly what is written in the article which this article references. However, the readers may have heard of it and heard that the article is about how the police treats medical volunteers. The researcher bases this assumption on the fact that the article presents as little information about the Lancet article as possible because if the Chinese do not know of the specifics of the Lancet article, there is no need to inform them about it because that might work against a defensive soft power strategy where the author tries to make the police, as a public institution, look attractive. The rest of the article is about how the police and other public institutions such as the “Fire Services Department” helped the injured at the university. In this defensive soft power strategy, the author is not directly critiquing the one who “attacked” China’s national image but is rather just undermining the doctor’s critique by showing how well the public institutions are treating the protestors. Therefore, one can argue that the soft power source the author is using is political values, in that these public institutions are following the human rights and treating the protestors well.

#### 5.4. Opinions

The opinion articles are articles which do not fit into any of the other article categories as they are about more than one topic. However, they all have the fact that they represent the opinions of one person in common, so these articles are grouped. As these articles consist of many different opinions and references many different events and elements of the Hong Kong protests, it will be difficult to draw any conclusion based on the discourse in the opinion articles. Unlike some of the articles in the other categories, the people whose opinions are represented in the opinion articles are evident. Some of the articles from the other categories do not have an author but only the original publisher of the article, for example, China Daily or Xinhua. That the person whose opinion is represented is apparent in these articles, unlike in some of the other articles, is quite interesting, therefore, the analysis of the opinion articles will be about this.

All of the five people who represent their opinions on the Hong Kong protests in these articles have names which look western: Grenville Cross, Dr. Summer, Bill Condon, Colin Speakman and Tom Fowdy. In one of the articles, it is mentioned that the author Tom Fowdy is British. The Western-looking names are not seen in many of the other articles which have an evident author as these names are usually Chinese looking or a mix of a Western and Chinese looking name such as Zhang Kathy or Loh Christine. That China Daily chooses to publish articles from people whom its

readers may presume are Westerners based on their names could be done to show that some Westerners agree with the Hong Kong government or the Chinese government in relation to the protests. This assumption is likely, especially when the opinions expressed in these articles are either with China or Hong Kong concerning the protests or against the protestors or the US's bills. The need to show that some Westerners agree with the Chinese and Hong Kong governments is likely because of the critique that China and Hong Kong have experienced from Western countries concerning the protests as described in 1. Introduction. For China Daily to choose to publish these articles which generally agree with China and Hong Kong in the same week that the US passes the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill which as mentioned in the analysis of the US meddling articles China perceives as an attack on China's national image, could be a defensive soft power strategy because these articles illustrate that the US or generally the West's political values are not shared with everyone in the West. Highlighting these people who one may presume are Western, could perhaps ease a domestic Chinese population, as the US bills and other Western countries opinions on the Hong Kong protests are not shared by all in the West. Furthermore, two of these people from the opinion articles have a brief introduction which describes their work for example that Dr. Summer works with communication and international journalism and Tom Fowdy is an international relations analyst (Summer 2019; Fowdy 2019a). That Dr. Summer and Tom Fowdy are presented with such introductions makes their opinions on the Hong Kong protests trustworthy as these two people have experience working with cases similar to this one. That it is knowledgeable people who do not agree with the general Western opinion could further ease a domestic Chinese audience and make them not take the US's bill as seriously, thus increasing national cohesion. Because of all of this, the opinion articles could also be a part of China Daily's defensive soft power strategy.

### 5.5. Trade Hurt by HK Protests

The Trade Hurt by HK Protests articles do not offer new findings to answer the problem formulation. Mainly the researcher found that two of the articles are very critical towards the protestors as seen in many of the other articles from the other categories, and the purpose of these articles seems to be to blame any economic downturn or potential downturn on the protestors (Zhou 2019; Chan 2019a). The other two articles are more neutral in their tone, and the purpose of these seems to be to ease concerns about Hong Kong's economy (Lu 2019; HK Edition 2019d). Both

articles seem to follow a defensive soft power strategy, two of the articles use primarily negative soft power to create national cohesion, whereas the other two are responsive to the attack on China's national image that the protests are by saying that the situation is still in control.

## 5.6. Miscellanies

For the miscellanies articles, the researcher found one article which she finds add something new to the analysis. This article's title is *Garrison's acts show the love for SAR people* (Zhao 2019). The article is in many ways very similar to the PolyU articles, in that the purpose is to show the good of the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison in relation to the protests like in the PolyU articles where the purpose was to show the good of the police. The perceived attack that the articles respond to differs somewhat. In the Garrison article, the perceived attack or critique is hinted in the article in that it seems that some have critiqued or questioned whether the PLA Hong Kong Garrison's involvement in the protests is legal. Therefore, this article is dedicated to showing that the PLA Hong Kong Garrison's involvement is legal and that the garrison's involvement is purely for the good of the people. This is evident in the following quote: "The spokesman said such moves, like planting trees and donating blood, represented the soldiers' love and care for the Hong Kong people." (Zhao 2019). The defensive soft power strategy is, therefore, very similar to the one that the researcher found in the PolyU articles (see 5.3.). This article furthermore includes a hard power source in its soft power strategy as the military is usually a hard power source.

However, despite the many similarities to the PolyU articles, the garrison article has an element which the researcher has not touched upon throughout her analysis before now. The new element is China's ideology. Ideology is an essential element of Norman Fairclough's CDA. However, the researcher has found little ideology in the articles, despite the few ideological contested words in the US meddling articles which were about US's ideology. Considering that a Chinese news media publish these articles, and many of the articles seem to be aimed at a domestic audience, the researcher has found few traces of China's ideology in the articles. China's ideological standpoint in relation to the Hong Kong protests are very evident in this article in the following quote:

*The Chinese government is firmly resolved to safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests, implement the principle of "one country, two systems"*

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*and oppose any external forces interfering in Hong Kong affairs, Xi said. (Zhao 2019).*

This quote briefly sums up the ideological values which concern Hong Kong in relation to the protests. While many of these values have been mentioned in other articles, they have not been presented so clearly in their own paragraph and all together in the other articles before, which is why perhaps, that the researcher has not found the other articles particularly ideological. “One country, two systems” and non-interference from external forces appears most often in the other articles, where non-interference, of course, occurred more often in the US meddling articles. In the US meddling articles, including China’s non-interference from external forces in US meddling articles makes sense in a defensive soft power strategy, because reminding the domestic readers that this is China’s ideology makes the US’s actions look more transgressive. Making the domestic readers aware of this violation of their ideology could unite the people further. That this article highlights these Chinese ideological values could likewise be to remind the domestic readers that these are the ideological values that the readers should keep in mind when reading this article and when considering the PLA Hong Kong Garrison’s involvement in the protests. Essentially, by placing these ideological values in this article about the garrison, the readers might think that the garrison is there to uphold these ideological values which the protestors are threatening which the article is also implying. That it is implied that the protestors are threatening these ideological values is likewise evident in the fact that the protestors are described as escalating violence, as radical and as harming the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. As the protestors are the only ones, who are described negatively and as harming the prosperity and stability, which importance is described in US meddling (5.1.), the readers of the article might think that the protestors are the ones who are threatening the ideological values. Therefore, likewise, with the US meddling articles, the use of ideology here could be seen in relation to a defensive soft power strategy to create a negative image of the protestors and at the same time promoting and justifying the PLA Hong Kong Garrison’s involvement. One could argue that the soft power source which is used in this strategy is political values in that it is China’s ideology which is used to create a negative image of the protestors and a positive image of the PLA Hong Kong garrison.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the findings from her analysis, the researcher is now able to answer how China Daily in its articles about the Hong Kong protests uses defensive soft power as a response to perceived attacks on China's national image. In the analysis, the researcher found that China Daily responds to many different perceived attacks on China's national image. The protests in Hong Kong, the US's Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill and the pro-democracy camp winning the local elections are the perceived attacks that China Daily most often responds to in its defensive soft power strategies.

The use of negative expressive valued words is most frequently used in articles aimed at a domestic audience. The researcher determined these articles to be a part of China's defensive soft power strategy. That negatively valued words were often used in articles which are part of China's defensive soft power strategy makes sense as they may also use negative soft power to create a negative image of the ones who are perceived as attacking China's national image, such as the US and the protestors. Using negative words to respond to a perceived attack, therefore, makes sense as China wants to make sure that China's domestic audience also perceives the attack as an attack as this will increase national cohesion.

In the one article which the researcher found may be part of a "traditional" soft power strategy, positive valued words were more frequently used than in the other articles which are a part of a defensive soft power strategy. The one article which the researcher has determined as a "traditional" soft power strategy is the Hong Kong local elections article about dialogue. Elements which are in the defensive soft power strategy articles described negatively are described positively in traditional soft power strategy article if these elements correspond to Western ideology, for example, are the protestors described positively. This is because the West generally supports the protestors and, therefore, critiquing the protestors would counteract the purpose of the soft power strategy as this would not be attractive to a Western audience. Sometimes positive valued words are also used in defensive soft power strategy articles when the authors need to show who are the ones that the domestic audience should support instead of the ones who have attacked the Chinese national image.

Hong Kong's government, politics and other Hong Kong public institutions are used as soft power sources in China Daily's defensive soft power strategy. Especially that Hong Kong is prosperous and stable, and the pro-establishment camp's work for improving livelihood in Hong Kong are used to attract Hong Kongers and Chinese. This is because by telling China Daily's



domestic readers that the Hong Kong government has been able to ensure prosperity and stability and the pro-establishment camp works for improving livelihood increases national cohesion because there is no need to challenge these institutions when they are providing good lives for the Hong Kongers. The promotion of the HKSAR government and the pro-establishment camp providing good lives for the Hong Kongers is, of course, a response to the perceived attacks on China's national image.

Therefore, one can say that China Daily responds to perceived attacks on China's national image by using negative soft power to create a negative image of the ones who attack which may increase national cohesion or China Daily tries to increase national cohesion by promoting elements especially of the HKSAR government which undermines the perceived attacks. Alternatively, China Daily uses a mix of both to increase national cohesion.

## 7. Further research

For further research on this subject, the researcher would recommend two approaches to continue this research. The first approach would be to include articles from a news media outside of China about the external perceived attacks that China Daily responds to. With external perceived attacks, the researcher refers to the attacks which originated outside of China, that is in this case, the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 bill. The researcher would recommend applying critical discourse analysis theory and method to articles from the US about the bill. Doing this would provide more insight into discourse types and power relations, as one would be able to compare how a China Daily and an American news media draw on the same or different discourse types, how the different news media use intertextuality, and how the news media relates to other subjects such their countries' governments which may reflect some power relations. The researcher would not recommend creating a comparative analysis between China Daily and another news media but would recommend using discourse analysis of the other news media to support the discourse analysis of China Daily. Making a comparative analysis would, the researcher believes, make critical discourse analysis the leading theory and leave defensive soft power as a secondary theory.

The other approach the researcher would recommend for continuing this research would be to apply the theories and method to other events in which China may perceive itself as attacked or

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critiqued. So far, in the year 2020, China has received much attention worldwide because of COVID-19, as the virus started in Wuhan in China and have since developed into a pandemic. With as much attention as China has received concerning the virus, it is likely that China, like with the case of protests in Hong Kong, has felt the need to protect itself with defensive soft power through news media like China Daily. The researcher in her everyday consumption of news about the virus has been able to draw parallels between her research and events in the course of the virus's development which China may perceive as attacks or criticism of China's national image. As an example, it would seem that China Daily perceived a Danish Cartoonist' drawing of the Chinese flag with the coronavirus placed instead of the stars as a criticism of China's national image (Z. Zhang 2020). The researcher believes that by applying defensive soft power and critical discourse analysis to China Daily or other Chinese news media's articles about the coronavirus, one is likely to receive similar results to the researcher's results in this paper. However, perhaps with slight changes as the coronavirus concerns the entire world, whereas, the Hong Kong protests mainly concerned China and countries with interests in Hong Kong.

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## 9. Appendix

### 9.1. Categorisation of articles. Sorted from most results to the least results.

#### US meddling

1. (Jianna Liu 2019)
2. (China Daily Asia 2019)
3. (CGTN 2019c)
4. (Goodrum 2019)
5. (Xinhua 2019a)
6. (People's Daily 2019a)
7. (People's Daily 2019b)
8. (Mo and Li 2019)
9. (Mo 2019)
10. (Sieff 2019)
11. (Gong 2019)
12. (HK Edition 2019a)
13. (CGTN 2019a)
14. (Jia 2019)
15. (CGTN 2019b)
16. (HK Edition 2019c)
17. ("HKSAR Govt Strongly Opposes HK-Related Bills Becoming Law " 2019)

#### Hong Kong Local Election

18. (B. Li and He 2019b)
19. (C. Loh 2019)
20. (HK Edition 2019b)
21. ("Carrie Lam Says Poll Peace Voice against Violence " 2019)
22. (Jianxi Liu 2019b)
23. (K. Zhang, Gu, and He 2019)
24. (B. Li and He 2019a)
25. ("Smooth Election despite Challenges, Says EAC Chair " 2019)

26. (“Lam Hopes HKers Continue Expressing Views in Peace ” 2019)
27. (Gu 2019a)
28. (“An All-out Effort” 2019)
29. (“HK Govt’s Joint Efforts Ensure Orderly Polls ” 2019)
30. (Jianxi Liu 2019a)
31. (“Result of District Council Election Skewed by Intimidation, Dirty Tricks ” 2019)
32. (“Hong Kong Needs to End Violence, as Peace and Stability Indispensable for Prosperity: China Daily Editorial” 2019)

#### The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

33. (Gu and Dai 2019)
34. (“Police Retreat from PolyU, Lift Cordon” 2019)
35. (Xinhua 2019b)
36. (“HK Polytechnic University Takes First Steps Back towards Normal Life” 2019) (Video)
37. (Gu 2019c)
38. (“Police Negotiators Preparing to Enter PolyU Campus ” 2019)
39. (“Peaceful End to HK Standoff Reflects Police Restraint ” 2019) video

#### Opinion

40. Grenville Cross (K. Zhang 2019b)
41. Dr. Summer (Summer 2019)
42. Colin Speakman (Speakman 2019a)
43. Bill Condon (Condon 2019)
44. Tom Fowdy (Fowdy 2019a)
45. (Speakman 2019b)

#### Trade hurt by HK protest

46. (HK Edition 2019d)
47. (Chan 2019a)
48. (Lu 2019)
49. (Zhou 2019)

#### Garrison’s act

50. (Zhao 2019)

Riot insurance

51. (Chan 2019b)

Rioters vs protestors

52. (Fowdy 2019b)

Public servants' illegal action

53. ("Public Servants' Illegal Action Will Not Be Tolerated" 2019)

Mong Kok riot 2016

54. (Gu 2019b)

Cross-Harbour Tunnel

55. (Gu and Chen 2019)

The Basic Law

56. (Ho 2019)

Anti-mask law

57. (K. Zhang 2019a)

Riot

58. (Thomas 2019)

Italy meddling

59. ("Chinese Embassy Slams Italian Politicians for Giving Platform to HK Separatist" 2019)

Chinese "spy" in Australia

60. ("Australia's Spy Stories Defy Belief" 2019)