They Are Represented in the Media; Therefore They Exist: Hong Kong Protests in 2019 in *Correio da Manhã* and *Jornal de Notícias*

Célia Belim
Centro de Administração e Políticas Públicas, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualisation, writing the original draft, writing – proofreading and editing

Artur Simões
Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualisation, writing the original draft, writing –proofreading and editing

Abstract

This article seeks to understand how *Correio da Manhã* (CM) and *Jornal de Notícias* (JN) represent the Hong Kong protests between March 31 and November 29, 2019, by understanding the agenda surrounding their representation and identifying framings. Through content analysis, the results suggest a mainly neutral perspective of both newspapers, denoting a slight pro-government bias in JN and pro-democracy bias in CM. There is also a difference in the selection of sources: JN included sources in almost 75% of its news pieces, preferring anti-protest sources, whereas CM named sources in almost 60% of its pieces, with a tendency to select pro-protest sources. However, in both newspapers, there is a description of a violent scenario from both protesters and the government. The causes of the protests are almost entirely attributed to the government or individuals in Hong Kong, with rare attributions to external elements. Hong Kong and its citizens are also blamed for resolving the protests. There is a tendency towards a negative description of the government and, to a lesser extent, the protesters. Statistically significant associations are identified between newspaper and source; newspaper and mention of the protest causes; sources and description of protesters' behaviour; description of protesters' behaviour and mention of the protest causes.

Keywords

media representation, Hong Kong protests, protest paradigm, *Correio da Manhã*, *Jornal de Notícias*

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Estão Representados Mediaticamente, Logo Existem: Protestos de Hong Kong em 2019 no *Correio da Manhã* e no *Jornal de Notícias*

Resumo

Este artigo pretende entender como o *Correio da Manhã* (CM) e o *Jornal de Notícias* (JN) representam os protestos de Hong Kong entre 31 de março e 29 de novembro de 2019, conhecendo a agenda que envolve a sua representação e identificando os enquadramentos. Recorrendo à análise de conteúdo, os resultados sugerem uma perspetiva sobretudo neutra de ambos os jornais, denotando-se ligeira inclinação pró-governo do JN e pró-democracia do CM. Também há diferença na seleção de fontes: o JN incluiu fontes em quase 75% das suas notícias, preferindo fontes anti- protesto, ao passo que o CM convocou fontes em quase 60% das suas peças, com tendência para selecionar fontes pró-protesto. Contudo, nota-se, nos dois jornais, a descrição de um cenário violento quer dos manifestantes quer do governo. As causas dos protestos são quase inteiramente atribuídas ao governo ou a indivíduos de Hong Kong, sendo raras as atribuições a elementos externos. É também atribuída a Hong Kong e aos seus cidadãos a responsabilidade pela solução dos protestos. Encontra-se uma descrição tendencialmente negativa tanto do governo como, de forma menos acentuada, dos manifestantes. Apuram-se relações estatisticamente significativas entre jornal e fonte; jornal e menção das causas do protesto; fontes e descrição do comportamento dos manifestantes; descrição do comportamento dos manifestantes e menção das causas do protesto.

Palavras-chave:

representação mediática, protestos de Hong Kong, paradigma do protesto, *Correio da Manhã*, *Jornal de Notícias*

1. Introduction

The number of protests around the world more than tripled between 2006 and 2020, and we are living through a period in history similar to the years around 1848, 1917 or 1968, "when large numbers of people rebelled against the way things were, demanding change" (Ortiz et al., 2022, p. 112). This crescendo of protest may be justified, as Burke mentions in Taylor's (2021) piece, because "too many leaders in government and business are not listening" (para. 4).

The Hong Kong citizens' protest between 2019 and 2020 is unprecedented in terms of movement length, protesters' number, number of people arrested, mass vandalism, violence by protesters and police alleged excessive use of force (Shek, 2020). The history of protests by Hong Kong people, the protest being one of the few ways for these citizens to show their opinion, the disidentification as Chinese (Cheung & Hughes, 2019), and the protracted nature of the protests (Reuters Staff, 2020), indicating the resilience of the participants, are some of the factors that justify catapulting these protests onto the media agenda and setting them up as a study object.

According to Lee (2014), the frequency of demonstrations in the special administrative region under study makes it an attractive territory to analyse issues that are

the focus of protest media coverage. Kuah-Pearce (2009) also pointed to Hong Kong's activism importance in the form of influential action type. That is due to the freedom it has enjoyed since its decolonisation by the British Empire, a growing political consciousness derived from the fear of communism promoted by China — exacerbated by the 1989 Tiananmen massacre — and the expansion of Hong Kong's educated middle class, which have motivated greater political activity, resulting in several protests over the years.

In this context, this study focuses on the most recent protests in Hong Kong, which began on the last day of March 2019 after the Hong Kong government proposed an extradition bill. It was feared that this bill would open Hong Kong to the reach of Chinese law and that Hong Kongers would become subject to a different legal system, undermining the region's autonomy and citizens' rights. Reports of attacks on protesters, arrests of activists and communications problems during protests concerned United Nations (UN) human rights experts, who warned that "the way forward is neither repression of dissenting voices nor the use of excessive force" (ONU News, 2019, para. 6).

Thus, the starting question guiding the research is: how do *Correio da Manhã* (CM) and *Jornal de Notícias* (JN) newspapers represent the Hong Kong protests between March 31 and November 29 2019? It is intended to study how the protests were represented in CM and JN. The specific objectives are:

- to know the agenda surrounding the representation of the Hong Kong protests in CM and JN between March 31 and November 29, 2019; and

- to identify the adopted framings in the representation of the Hong Kong protests in CM and JN newspapers between March 31 and November 29, 2019.

The method used is quantitative, integrating content analysis based on the work of Du et al. (2018), which applies to the Portuguese case.

As a theoretical anchor, this research is inspired by: (a) the agenda-setting hypothesis/theory (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which allows us to understand which components of the agenda (e.g., subject, source) are presented in the news; (b) the framing approach (Entman, 1993), which densifies the study with selected and highlighted journalistic aspects; and (c) the protest paradigm approach, by Du et al. (2018), which combines it with the framing approach to analyse the journalistic representation of the Hong Kong protests named "Occupy Central", using a methodology that can be applied to the Portuguese example, as this research proposes.

2. The News Representation of the Protest: A Double-Edged Blade

Protests are strategic forms of action designed to influence decision-making, either directly or by influencing public opinion using media, including the internet (Hanna et al., 2016). News coverage is critical to a protest's viability (Kilgo & Harlow, 2019), though, paradoxically, research suggests that the media negatively represent protests and protesters who challenge the status quo — a pattern known as the "protest paradigm".

In Hall (2009), representation is the process by which members of a culture use language to produce meaning (pp. 60–61). That means the world's objects, people, and events (e.g., protests) do not have a fixed, final, true meaning.

Representations in the media ecosystem are often attuned to the most powerful groups' interests, ignoring smaller voices and minority representations (Prieler, 2020). For Prieler (2020), the problem with media representation is that it repeatedly reproduces stereotypes of less privileged groups. That is a problem compounded by the social impact of how certain groups are medially represented, especially when the audience has had few personal experiences with the represented groups or when the groups operate in distant geographical areas.

Representing implies framing, and framing implies selecting. The definition of framing pointed out as the most influential one is Entman's (Matthes, 2009): the author clarifies that framing is selecting some aspects of an interpreted reality and highlighting them in a communicative text in order to promote (a) problem definition — determining what a causal agent is doing, with what costs and benefits; (b) causal interpretation — identifying the forces that create the problem; (c) moral evaluation — assessing causal agents and their effects; and/or (d) solution indication - presenting and justifying solutions to problems and predicting their likely effects (Entman, 1993).

In the context of codification, the media agenda as it is "a hierarchised list of matters (themes, issues, problems), characters, actions, positions (of sources, for example), of decisions worthy of the media stage and spotlight" (Belim, 2014, p. 128), exposes representations. In this research, the media agenda that matters is the Portuguese one (CM and JN) on the Hong Kong protests in 2019. The media establish a pyramid with matters worthy of attention, consumption, and informative knowledge (Belim, 2014, p. 128), and this media agenda influences the public agenda — agenda-setting theory. Hence, media representations of a certain action (such as protest) influence the public agenda, noting that the way the protest message is interpreted by the public is beyond the protesters' control.

Public judgements about protests are shaped by journalists. Protesters rely on the media to communicate with potential supporters, broadening the conflict's scope and gaining legitimacy (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Lipsky, 1968). Such media attention can be a double-edged sword, as media coverage can diminish a social movement rather than strengthen it (Boykoff, 2007).

The protest paradigm is a framework that media scholars have used to understand the specific types of framing that news media often use to undermine legitimacy, obscure the social/political concerns of a protest, or both. Formulated after the study of the Golden Jubilee School protests in Hong Kong in the late 1970s, this phenomenon encompasses a pattern of news creation that focuses on the most violent aspects of protests: it describes them in a similar style used in crime news, emphasises the protesters' ignorance, characterises the protests as ineffectual, focuses on the dramatic aspects of the protests while ignoring the underlying cause, invokes public opinion against the demonstrations and prioritises sources that support the government (McLeod & Hertog, 1998). The paradigm constitutes a paradox: protests must adapt and appeal to media logic to receive coverage,

but when they do, news representation tends to demonise protesters, characterising them as threats to society, marginalising their voices and insufficiently or inadequately reporting on their grievances, demands and agendas (Kilgo & Harlow, 2019).

The research identified three approaches that journalists take when representing protests: the extent to which protest objectives and actions are (a) supported, (b) politicised, and (c) moralised within cultural boundaries (Chan & Lee, 1984). Researchers found that protest news framings imbued themselves with a newspaper's political ideology (Chan & Lee, 1984). Right-wing newspapers emphasised social order and the status quo, while left-wing newspapers favoured the protestor's perspective. However, marginalisation tactics, previously used against left-wing protests, were adopted by a left-wing cable news channel, MSNBC, to represent the Tea Party movement (Weaver & Scacco, 2013).

Many researchers have explained that social movement groups with views contrary to those of elite sources tend to receive unfavourable media coverage (e.g., Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Olien et al., 1989; Oliver & Myers, 1999; Smith et al., 2001). The American media generally serve as protectors of the status quo in cases of more disruptive protests (Chan & Lee, 1984). Research has also indicated that news media usually tend to support the status quo rather than challenge it (Donohue et al., 1995).

Support for the status quo can result from many influences that have been studied in detail, including practical factors such as journalistic practices (Gandy, 1982; Gans, 1979; McManus, 1990), media relations with elites (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993) and the influence of pre-packaged news (Turk, 1986). Moreover, while media attention is usually necessary for mobilising support for a socio-political group (Gamson & Meyer, 1996; McCarthy et al., 1996), politically "deviant" groups tend to receive disproportionately unfavourable treatment when covered (e.g., Baylor, 1996).

Media elites use "marginalising" devices to frame narratives. Coverage does not emphasise protests cause, including issues that legitimise a protest purpose, and instead emphasises the protesters themselves, especially if violence occurs. The media privileges violence to show the deviation from protest tactics (Smith et al., 2001).

Protest paradigm researchers have described a "toolbox" of media framings that journalists use to highlight deviance and/or minimise protesters' concerns, in addition to "violence" devices. Dardis (2006) identifies common tools of marginalisation focusing on protesters' appearance or mental abilities; protest events such as carnivals; public opinion and judgement; statistics, generalisations and eyewitness accounts to counter the protesters' cause; and counterdemonstrations (pp. 120–122). Journalists also tend to rely heavily on official sources, which are privileged over the protester's experience (McLeod & Detenber, 1999).

Much research has focused on media coverage of protest events and revealed that there could be delegitimisation of protesters (e.g., Hertog & McLeod, 1995; McLeod & Hertog, 1992; Murdock, 1981). For example, in Kilgo and Harlow's (2019) study, results suggest that media coverage of protests focused on racial issues (discrimination against indigenous people and anti-black racism) following more of a delegitimising pattern than

stories about protests related to immigrant rights, health and the environment. Therefore, one notes a relationship between the thematic and the delegitimisation of the protestor.

Other relationships between variables are ascertained within the protest paradigm. Lee (2014), applying content analysis to four newspapers, finds that several characteristics of the protest paradigm were more likely to emerge when protests involved radical tactics — news about these protests tended to reference violence or disruption. On this topic, Boyle et al. (2012) point to a challenge faced by protesters: news coverage helps protesters achieve their goals, but this achievement may not happen unless they resort to dramatic or even violent action.

Boyle et al. (2012) note media representation variation according to the protest's social deviance level. The authors identify, in this sense, two factors influencing the protest paradigm application: the degree of radicality of the protesting group and the type of protest. Boyle et al. (2012) note that the coverage of protests seeking moderate reform or radical change is done more critically, episodically framed and less likely to use protesters as sources. However, Lee (2014) clarifies that although news coverage of radical protests pays less attention to protesters' voices, this is not necessarily because of the media's social control function. It is due to the greater difficulties experienced by journalists in talking to protesters during radical protests: demonstrations that involve marches tend to receive more focused news coverage on the protest's perpetrators because of the convenience that marches provide for journalists who want to obtain testimonies. The author also notes that news articles that include a response from the protest's target were more likely to mention violence or social disruption in the title/lead or elsewhere in the article, share fewer testimonies from protesting sources, and provide more negative testimonies from spectators (Lee, 2014). Additionally, the author concludes that when public discontent is high, news articles contain more testimonies from protesting sources; and that the disparities between newspapers with different political positions are not totally clear but may be more evident when protests address political issues.

Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) have assembled scientific literature to describe how social movements interact with media and the effect of this interaction on both parties. They describe this interaction as a transaction between two complicated systems, each with its own intricate internal relationships. For the authors, there is an interdependence between the media and the protesters, with the latter needing the former more. This greater dependence is due to three factors: (a) mobilisation — the media are necessary for social movements because of their ability to convey a consolidated message to a segment of the public, which, through the channels available to the protest's authors, would be out of reach; (b) validation — media attention validates the importance of a social movement and is often a necessary factor for influential targets to recognise and respond to protests, so a protest without media coverage is, for the authors, a non-event; and (c) widening of parameters — making a conflict more public and involving third parties balances the power relations between protesters and protest's targets. Here, media attention matters, as does news coverage content: gaining public empathy is a protesters' need that the media can satisfy (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993).

In the opposite direction of this relationship, the media may find the opportunity for a news piece in social movements, as these involve drama, conflict, and action (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). The asymmetry in the interdependence between the two parties gives the media greater power. This power relationship leads activists to view the media as agents of the dominant groups they protest against, being both a channel and a target (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993).

Trying to understand how journalists at *The New York Times* adopted and employed different news framings during different phases of the Occupy Wall Street protests, Gottlieb (2015) resorted to content analysis. As the movement grew, the researcher concluded that journalists focused on the economic motives behind demonstrations, such as economic inequality or bank bailouts. When the movement reached its peak, journalists focused on the increasing violence between protesters and police forces. The author suggests that confrontational protest tactics (e.g., getting arrested) increase the protest's media attention at the expense of losing control over the narrative framing in mainstream news coverage. He also notes: (a) the correlation between the number of stories about the Occupy Wall Street protests and the number of arrests; (b) arrests increase given media attention to the protest and its message and additionally increase newspapers given attention to the conflict; (c) differences in the relationship between chosen journalistic genre and subject matter: news about particular events focus more on the clashes between activists and police, while editorials consider the economic issues of the protests; (d) protesters manage to make themselves heard by escalating the conflict and being arrested, but journalists tend to focus on the conflict rather than the issues that gave rise to it, in particular when the tactics used by the protesters are not innovative, when the state or other actors repress the protest, or when public interest in the protest wanes.

On the protest paradigm performance in international news coverage, Du et al. (2018) examine, through content analysis, how protests that took place in Hong Kong in 2014, Occupy Central, were framed in the news in four regions: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, mainland China and Hong Kong. They conclude that news stories produced by media in democratic societies position themselves more in favour of the protesters and critical of the actions taken by the Hong Kong government. This evidence suggests that a dominant ideology may influence media framing of politically sensitive topics.

Focusing on the Portuguese media discourse (Lusa, newspapers, television) about police activity during major political events in 2012, Pais et al. (2015) tried to characterise it using content analysis. They found that newspapers discourses emphasis is more negative than positive, unlike the other media, giving slightly higher prevalence to police sources and pointed out that news media paid little attention to the objectives pursued with the events, with a residual mention in the news (Pais et al., 2015).

3. Method

In the conducted content analysis, two qualities pointed out by Bell et al. (2018) were met: objectivity and systematisation (p. 280). Objectivity means that the rules called for choosing the material for analysis (such as newspaper news) are specified a priori. Thus, the authors refer to the transparency of the procedures that guide the organisation of the analysis material into categories so that the analyst's personal bias has the least possible impact on the process. The "systematisation" means that the application of the rules is made consistently to, again, minimise bias.

The newspapers CM and JN were chosen because they are the most sold daily newspapers on newsstands (Durães, 2022). The study of the two most sold newspapers enables the analysis of how the protests were described to a considerable number of readers. In addition to this prominence, in the year of the Hong Kong protests outbreak, and therefore in the year under study, CM is the most read newspaper on the internet and JN the fifth (Correio da Manhã, 2019). Editorially, Correio da Manhã (2015) defends "the absolute value of news, as an essential component of democratic transparency" (para. 1), "the necessary independence (…) before all forms of power" (para. 1) and the value of pluralism, and cultivates investigative journalism "for the necessary scrutiny of public life and as a form of control by citizens against possible abuses of power, authority or dominant position" (para. 3) seeking "a Portuguese look at the continuous pulse of the Country and the World" (para. 6). In turn, JN (Jornal de Notícias, n.d.) defines itself as "an informative and non-doctrinaire periodical publication" (para. 1), "independent from political power (…) and economic, social and religious groups" (para. 2), "governed by criteria of pluralism, exemption and non-partisanship" (para. 2) and adopting "rigorous and competent", "balanced" and "objective" information (para. 3).

The period considered in this analysis, and reflected in the corpus, comprises the period between the first major protest on March 31, 2019, and the last day of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) police siege on November 29, 2019 (Reuters Staff, 2020). Thus, the movement's most high-profile incidents are encompassed, such as the June 9 protest that saw over half a million protesters, the first student death during the protests on November 8, and the police siege of PolyU between November 17 and 29 (Reuters Staff, 2020). The overwhelming victory of the pro-democrats in the district elections on November 31, and the defeat of the barricaded students at PolyU in the face of police forces, motivated a fading of the protests in the following months (Reuters Staff, 2020; Taylor & Zhao, 2020).

Both newspapers offer digital versions, equivalent to print editions, from which news items are obtained. The digital edition of CM includes the option of searching by keyword in a particular time range. The keyword used in the search is "Hong Kong", assuming that any article about the protests will mention Hong Kong in the news story title or body. After this search, any articles not pertinent to the study will be manually discarded (e.g., news stories that refer to mainland China's threats to countries supporting the

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protests and other pieces that focus on the protests' impact on international relations rather than the protests themselves). JN does not offer such a search option, so news items were extracted by scrutinising all daily editions of the period under analysis. After the described process, the corpus comprises 71 articles from CM and 67 from JN, noting a numerical balance between the two newspapers.

The methodological inspiration for the present article's analysis is primarily based on the study by Du et al. (2018). In this study, the authors combine the concept of framing and the protest paradigm, questioning the latter's performance in international news coverage, with an opportunity to apply this study's analytical logic to the Portuguese case. The analysis unit is the item, in this case, the news article.

Kobland et al. (1992), on which Du et al. (2018) draw, point to some challenges that arise with different methodological approaches to media messages content analysis. One such approach involves applying a content analysis in which enumeration is constructed from discrete or quantifiable data, a method called into question by its assumption that frequency is a sufficient condition for drawing conclusions from the material under analysis — the result of an analysis based on data such as words or phrases can only make explicit the surface structure of terms used in the press, failing to capture more subtle semantic implications present in journalistic discourse. On the other hand, there is the approach in which the text is analysed as a whole, revealing the way events are presented throughout the text. This option may, however, enable an analysis too reliant on fleeting impressions or casual generalisations emerging from single instances (Kobland et al., 1992). The authors then suggest a thematic analysis that combines both approaches: interpreting the binary symbols offered by the text that serve to organise action by opposing "good" to "evil", where, for example, a government presented as "resisting the protesters" is seen as "good" and a government presented as "threatening the students" is interpreted as "evil". In relation to the actions of the protesters, they point to descriptions such as "violent", "unruly", "militant" (bad), or "pro-democracy", "peaceful", "organised" (good). The sum of these terms is then measured concerning whom they apply and in which context (Kobland et al., 1992). Through this approach, it is possible to identify, appropriately code and quantify the themes presented in the articles. The analysis includes eight variables (three are interval, and five are categorical or nominal; Table 1 and Table 2).

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Designation (levels)	Guidelines
Article's perspective (clearly anti-protest/ neutral/clearly anti-government)	It refers to which side is presented less favourably, considering the "binary symbols" analysis (the "good" vs. "evil") present in the text proposed by Kobland et al. (1992). Examples: "violent protests cause chaos in Hong Kong" would be considered anti-protest, as it implies a violent intention (an "evil") on the protesters' part. On the other hand, "dozens of students injured" will be considered anti-government, as it implies that excessive force was used against defenceless protesters. In the case of symbols' absence or numerical equality, the perspective will be considered "neutral".
Description of government actions (peaceful/neutral/violent)	Whether the government is presented as approaching the protests peacefully or as a suppressive force vis-à-vis the protesters (Kobland et al., 1992). Examples of peaceful actions: intention to dialogue; granting the demonstrators' demands. Examples of violent actions: police charges against protesters, protesters injured by official forces, and arrests. Example of neutral action: the government is not explicitly presented as addressing the protests in any of the above ways.
Description of protesters' behaviour (negative/neutral/positive)	Whether demonstrators are portrayed as protesting in a peaceful, organised manner in a quest for democratic reform (positive form) or whether they are portrayed as chaotic, violent, and seeking revolution (negative form; Kobland et al., 1992). Neutral: protestants are not explicitly presented as adopting positive or negative behaviours.

Table 1 *Interval variables and coding guidelines*

Source. Based on Du et al. (2018); Kobland et al. (1992)

Name	Guidelines
Causality (internal/external/mixed)	Cause/origin of the conflicts. An internal cause means that the conflict's origin is attributed to the Hong Kong government or residents, while an external cause accuses the Chinese government of being at the conflict's origin. A mixed cause refers to a split attribution of responsibility for the conflict's origin.
Value judgement in the headline (present/absent)	Whether there is a value judgement expressed in the news headline (e.g., a headline such as "More Than 1,7 Million People on the Streets Launch Chaos in Hong Kong", will be considered as having a value judgement present, representing the protesters as chaotic) or not (e.g., "Protests Do Not Fade Away" which is guided by the absence of a value judgement).
Responsible for the solution (individuals/Hong Kong government/ central Chinese government/ other government/institutions)	Who is assigned the responsibility for resolving conflict and easing tensions. By "institutions", we mean organisations, parties, or other present groups.
Mention of the protest cause(s) (present/absent)	Whether the reasons that led to the protests (e.g., the new extradition law applied by China to Hong Kong or the anti-masking law) are mentioned in the news.
Sources (government only/pro-movement only/anti-movement only/equilibrium/non-existent)	Sources explicitly cited in the news: the aim is to reflect the perspective from which the news are created. Balance: the presence of at least two sources of different origins (e.g., pro-movement and anti-movement).

Table 2 *Nominal variables and coding guidelines*

Source. Based on Du et al. (2018)

Of the eight variables (Table 1 and Table 2), only one was not taken from the study by Du et al. (2018): the variable "mention of the protest cause(s)". This variable was

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introduced to understand whether the aspect of the protest paradigm concerning the lack of mention of the protest causes is present in the analysed newspapers. While Du et al.'s (2018) analysis incorporates a five-level scale in the interval variables, the present study considers a three-level scale to streamline the analysis and reduce the analyst's subjectivity. As in Du et al. (2018), this scale was constructed so that 0 translates as a pro-manifesto value and 2 as a pro-government value. With the variables "article's perspective", "description of government actions", and "description of protesters' behaviour" and "sources", and given the agenda composition (Belim, 2014, p. 128), it is intended to respond to objective 1. The indicator "non-existent" was added to the variable "sources" to ascertain whether or not sources were used in the newspapers under analysis. With the variables "causality", "mention of the protest cause(s)", "responsible for the solution", and "value judgement in the headline", it is intended to answer objective 2. Entman's (1993) framing approach is used, namely the four functions that framings play: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and suggestion indication, is used to meet this objective.

Coding data were entered into SPSS software to conduct the statistical analysis. A t-test for independent samples is applied to detect differences between the newspapers in the interval variables. The chi-square test is applied for the remaining categorical variables, for it allows the analysis of the differences between groups in which the dependent variable is measured at a nominal level. This approach is similar to that used by Du et al. (2018). However, the ANOVA test the authors applied was replaced in the present study by the t-test due to the difference between the number of groups under analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Agenda Involving the Representation of the Hong Kong Protests in *Correio da Manhã* and *Jornal de Notícias* Between March and November 2019

In relation to the interval variables, the t-test revealed no statistically significant differences regarding the article's perspective ($p = 0.947$), government's actions description ($p = 0.155$), and protesters' behaviours description ($p = 0.176$), as shown in Table 3.

	Average		
	Article's perspective	Description of government actions	Description of protesters' behaviour
Jornal de Notícias (N = 67)	0.99	1.40	0.76
Correio da Manhã (N = 71)	0.96	1.44	0.90
Significance	0.947	0.155	0.176

Table 3 *T-Test of the interval variables*

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The most notorious difference suggested by the results resides in the "description of protesters' behaviour" variable as in CM, this variable's average is closer to 1 (*M* = 0.90), while in JN, it is mildly lower (*M* = 0.76). That suggests that JN, compared to CM, tends to describe the protesters slightly more negatively (JN: 46.3%; CM: 33.8%; Table 4).

		JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS	CORREIO DA MANHÃ	TOTAL
Description of protesters' behaviour	Negative	31 (46.3%)	24 (33.8%)	55 (39.9%)
	Neutral	21 (31.3%)	30 (42.3%)	51 (37.0%)
	Positive	15 (22.4%)	17 (23.9%)	32 (23.2%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 4 *Description of protesters' behaviour in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

Regarding the "article's perspective" variable, results suggest that both JN (*M* = 0.99) and CM (*M* = 0.96) rarely adopt a valued perspective, taking a neutral position. As for the "description of government actions" variable, JN (*M* = 1.40) and CM (*M* = 1.44) are also in tune, tending towards a violent description of the government's actions (JN: 55.2%; CM: 52.1%; Table 5).

		JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS	CORREIO DA MANHÃ	TOTAL
Description of government actions	Violent	37 (55.2%)	37 (52.1%)	74 (53.6%)
	Neutral	20 (29.9%)	28 (39.4%)	48 (34.8%)
	Peaceful	10 (14.9%)	6 (8.5%)	16 (11.6%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 5 *Description of government actions in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

An interpretation of the three interval variables suggests a violent scenario description on both the protesters and the government's side by both newspapers, with CM tending to describe the protesters as less violent than JN, even though the latter describes the government's actions as slightly less suppressive than CM.

For the "sources" variable, the chi-square test was used, with a significant statistical association (*p* = 0.004) result between the "newspaper" and "source" variables. In Table 6, the source choices by each newspaper can be observed, with JN opting more for a greater balance between sources (38.8%) and CM for the absence of sources. In the case of source presence, a preference from JN to maintain a balance is noticeable, with 38.8% of the JN articles explicitly citing at least two sources. When only one source was explicitly cited, JN preferentially opted for anti-movement sources (14.9%) and CM for pro-movement sources (21.1%). Overall, CM has a greater tendency to exclude any explicit source, with 40.8% of its articles not mentioning any source, diverging from JN, which cited sources in 74.6% of its news items. By adding the "balance" and "only pro-movement" variables, it can be observed that activists were given a voice in at least 49.2% of the JN articles and 32.4% of the CM articles.

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Sources		JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS	CORREIO DA MANHÃ	TOTAL
	Balance	26 (38.8%)	8 (11.3%)	34 (24.6%)
	Pro-movement only	7 (10.4%)	15 (21.1%)	22 (15.9%)
	Anti-movement only	10 (14.9%)	11 (15.5%)	21 (15.2%)
	Government only	7 (10.4%)	8 (11.3%)	15 (10.9%)
	Non-existent	17 (25.4%)	29 (40.8%)	46 (33.3%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 6 *Sources in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

4.2 ADOPTED FRAMES IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HONG KONG PROTESTS IN *CORREIO DA MANHÃ* AND *JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS* BETWEEN MARCH AND NOVEMBER 2019

When applying the chi-square test and compared to the "causality" variable, no statistically significant relation was found ($p = 0.447$). Observing Table 7, both newspapers pointed out an internal causality in most articles (90.6%), with an external causality ascribed to only 8.7% of news items.

Causality		JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS	CORREIO DA MANHÃ	TOTAL
	Mixed	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)
	Internal	59 (88.1%)	66 (93.0%)	125 (90.6%)
	External	7 (10.4%)	5 (7.0%)	12 (8.7%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 7 *Causality in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

As for the "mention of the protest cause(s)" variable, the chi-square test reveals a significant association ($p < 0.001$). Observing Table 8, we identify differences: while JN mentions protest causes in 73.1% of news items, CM mentions protest causes in less than half of the articles (32.4%).

Mention of the protest cause(s)		JORNAL DE NOTÍCIAS	CORREIO DA MANHÃ	TOTAL
	Absent	18 (26.9%)	48 (67.6%)	66 (47.8%)
	Present	49 (73.1%)	23 (32.4%)	72 (52.2%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 8 *Mention of the protest cause(s) in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

As for the "value judgement in the headline" variable, there is no statistically significant association ($p = 0.130$). Both newspapers prefer to omit value judgements in the headline, though CM presents value judgements in 19.7% of headlines, while JN only does it in 10.4% of news items (Table 9).

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		Jornal de Notícias	**Correio da Manhã**	**Total**
Value judgement in the headline	Absent	60 (89.6%)	57 (80.3%)	117 (84.8%)
	Present	7 (10.4%)	14 (19.7%)	21 (15.2%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 9 *Value judgement in the headline in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

Finally, concerning the "responsible for the solution" variable, the chi-square test does not reveal a statistically significant association ($p = 0.774$). Observing Table 10, it can be noted that, again, both newspapers agree, with the Hong Kong government being pointed out as the main responsible for the solution in both newspapers (65.9% of the total), followed by individuals (17.4%), other governments (5.1%) and, finally, institutions (2.9%).

		Jornal de Notícias	**Correio da Manhã**	**Total**
Responsible for the solution	Individuals	10 (14.9 %)	14 (19.7%)	24 (17.4%)
	Hong Kong government	44 (65.7%)	47 (66.2%)	91 (65.9%)
	Chinese central government	6 (9.0%)	6 (8.5%)	12 (8.7%)
	Another government	4 (6.0%)	3 (4.2%)	7 (5.1%)
	Institutions	3 (4.5%)	1 (1.4%)	4 (2.9%)
Total		67	71	138

Table 10 *Responsible for the solution in* Jornal de Notícias, Correio da Manhã *and total*

Based on Lee's (2014) observation that a news story including a response from the protest target is more likely to mention violence somewhere in the article, the chi-square test was applied to the "sources" and "description of protesters' behaviour" variables. That revealed a statistically significant association between variables ($p = 0.001$).

In the presence of sources balance, the description of the protesters' behaviour tends to be negative (52.9%). The description is, however, more positive when there are only pro-movement sources (40.9%) or when there are no sources (32.6%). Pro-movement sources predictably tend to generate positive descriptions of protesters (40.9%), noting the opposite when sources included are anti-movement only or governmental only — these lead to negative descriptions of protesters 71.4% and 53.3% of the time, respectively. There were 0% positive descriptions of activists in articles with exclusively anti-movement sources and 13.6% negative descriptions in sources exclusively pro-movement. Adding this to the negative portrayal of the protest authors when there is a balance of sources and with neutrality when there are no explicit sources, one can problematise to what extent the anti-movement sources will have a greater weight in the description of the protesters' behaviour — Table 11.

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		DESCRIPTION OF PROTESTERS' BEHAVIOUR			TOTAL
		NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE	
Sources	Balance	18 (52.9%)	10 (29.4%)	6 (17.6%)	34
	Pro-movement only	3 (13.6%)	10 (45.5%)	9 (40.9%)	22
	Anti-movement only	15 (71.4%)	6 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	21
	Government only	8 (53.3%)	5 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	15
	Non-existent	11 (23.9%)	20 (43.5%)	15 (32.6%)	46
Total		55	51	32	138

Table 11 *Cross-referencing between "sources" and "description of protesters' behaviour" variables in both newspapers*

The chi-square test did not reveal a statistically significant association between the "sources" and "description of government actions" variables (p = 0.190). Regardless of sources, government actions are mostly never described as peaceful, even when the only source is the government itself (Table 10). In cases where only pro-movement sources have a voice, government actions are described as violent in 77.3% of articles. Even when only anti-movement sources are used in the news, the government is described as suppressive in more than half of the articles (57.1%). The only cases where a violent description of the government's actions is not mostly observed are when only government sources are invoked, with the government being described in a neutral way (40.0% versus 33.3% violent actions and 26.7% peaceful actions) — Table 12.

		DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS			TOTAL
		PEACEFUL	NEUTRAL	VIOLENT	
Sources	Balance	4 (11.8%)	12 (35.3%)	18 (52.9%)	34
	Pro-movement only	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	17 (77.3%)	22
	Anti-movement only	2 (9.5%)	7 (33.3%)	12 (57.1%)	21
	Government only	4 (26.7%)	6 (40.0%)	5 (33.3%)	15
	Non-existent	4 (8.7%)	20 (43.5%)	22 (47.8%)	46
Total		16	48	74	138

Table 12 *Crossing between variable "sources" and variable "description of government actions" in both newspapers*

Under the observations of Lee (2014) and Boyle et al. (2012) that violent actions by activists lead to focus less on the reasons triggering demonstrations, a chi-square test was conducted on the "description of protesters' behaviour" and "mention of the protest cause(s)" variables. The test revealed a statistically significant association (p = 0.024).

The probability of mentioning the protests' causes is higher when protesters are described as peaceful (71.9%) — Table 13. Interestingly, in the analysed articles, the neutral description of the protesters' actions is the most related to the absence of mention of the cause of the protests (58.8%), even more than a negative description (49.1%).

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		Mention of the protest cause(s)		Total
		Absent	Present	
Description of protesters' behaviour	Negative	27 (49.1%)	28 (50.9%)	55
	Neutral	30 (58.8%)	21 (41.2%)	51
	Positive	9 (28.1%)	23 (71.9%)	32
Total		66	72	138

Table 13 *Cross-referencing between the "description of protesters' behaviour" and the "Mention of the protest cause(s)" variables in both newspapers*

4. Conclusive Discussion of Results

Results overall suggest a similar representation between both newspapers, characterised by a tendentially negative description of both protesters and government actions, a characteristic of protests' description in print journalism predicted by Pais et al. (2015). We tried to understand if this similarity could be due to the news items' authorship. In this sense, making a tabulation, it is noted that, in CM, 14 are signed by journalists, and, in JN's case, nine pieces identify the nominal author. This practice indicates the dependence of national newspapers on news agencies for international news stories and may justify the similar representation between both newspapers. For example, Shaheen et al. (2021), based on the concept of media power and the theory of media imperialism, seek to find out the dependence level of three leading English newspapers in Pakistan on international news agencies regarding three central issues of the post-9/11 phase in 2001. The authors find a dependency at over 90% and provide some arguments justifying the dependency: lack of financial resources, human resources (minimum number of foreign correspondents) and scope of coverage. Also, the results of Boumans et al. (2018) study on the Dutch news landscape suggest that particularly online news (such as those under analysis in this study) is highly dependent on agency content, with the agency accounting for up to 75% of online news articles.

In either newspaper, there does not seem to be a preference for a particular perspective, as in the study on international news, by Du et al. (2018). There is, however, a slight difference in the selection of sources: JN included sources in 74.6% of its news stories — preferring anti-protest sources — whereas CM only chose sources in 59.2% of its news stories — with a tendency to select pro-protest sources. That does not necessarily suggest an ideological preference or an inherent conservatism in JN. The presence of the dominant ideology that media in democratic societies are more pro-protest and critical of the actions taken by the Hong Kong government does not seem to be expressive (Du et al., 2018).

As explained by Lee (2014), protests' coverage can be more favourable to its target and thus less favourable to the protesters if that target is willing and prepared to communicate with the media. This result is not surprising because the media tend to seek responses from protest targets (Lee, 2014), who expectedly take an anti-protest position. Regarding CM, the same can be said: counting the number of protesting sources does

not reveal how their words are represented in the news (Lee, 2014). However, we cannot forget that activists depend on the media to communicate (Gamson & Wolfsfeld 1993; Lipsky 1968), knowing that the way the media agenda sets and represents the protest influences the public apprehension of the phenomenon.

The protests' causes are almost entirely attributed to the Hong Kong government or individuals, with rarely attributed external elements. Hong Kong and its citizens are also blamed for resolving the protests. Despite the Chinese government's influence in Hong Kong, it was rarely singled out as the cause of the tension in the territory and rarely given responsibility in both newspapers for resolving it. In their study on newspapers in which the same thing happened, Du et al. (2018) suggested that the influence of mainland China's political intervention, which may have permeated the media, motivated the protests' responsibility or causality deflection. That occurred in the mainland-based newspaper, *People's Daily*, and the Hong Kong-based newspaper, *Ming Pao Daily*, the former being a Chinese government propaganda platform, and the latter, due to its proximity to mainland China, a newspaper that revealed sharing some of its ideology (Du et al., 2018). However, the analysed newspapers did not avoid a critical description of the Chinese government's actions, with the latter mentioned as applying violent measures in over half of the observed news stories. This tendency towards a negative description of both the government (Table 5) and, to a lesser extent, the protesters (Table 4), together with the neutrality of the adopted perspectives (Table 3), may indicate an attempt to address the protests impartially by both newspapers. It is also a phenomenon predicted by Boyle et al. (2012), who indicated that protests' coverage seeking reform or radical change is more critical and less likely to give voice to protesters.

Lee (2014) pointed to three characteristics of news coverage used to indicate the protest paradigm presence: (a) emphasis on violence; (b) exclusion of protesters' voices; (c) sharing of testimonies primarily critical of the protests. In this light, given the findings regarding the Chinese government and activists' actions description, some emphasis on violence can be noted when portraying the protests. As Lee (2014) noted, political protests in Hong Kong may be more likely to contain violence. As for the exclusion of protesters' voices, this can be observed in more than half of the articles in both newspapers, particularly noticeable in CM, where only 32.2% of articles contained pro-protest sources. The adoption of testimonies primarily critical of the protests can be observed above all in JN, which, choosing to give primacy to a particular source, tended to prefer anti-protest sources. Besides the three characteristics above, Lee (2014) also indicated the absence of mention of the issues that led to the protests as a factor associated with the protest paradigm. This absence was particularly seen in CM, in which 67.7% of articles did not mention the motivating causes of the protests, while JN only suppressed them in 26.9% of the articles. It was also CM that employed more value judgements in news titles.

Although none of the newspapers explicitly favoured either side of the protests, JN revealed a slight anti-protest bias suggested by its preference for anti-protest sources and a more critical description of protesters' behaviour. In contrast, CM leaned slightly

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more in the pro-protest direction, giving more voice to pro-protest sources. Neither of these two trends is strong enough to be considered ideological favouritism, which aligns with the ethical stance of a journalistic organisation's impartiality.

A protest without media coverage is a non-event (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993), assuming the logic that it exists if the protest is represented in the media. Indeed, a protest's visibility depends on its media representation (Kilgo & Harlow, 2019), but this can be treacherous, as it can diminish a social movement rather than strengthen it (Boykoff, 2007). It is up to the protest organisers and journalists to reassess the intricacies of this media representation and framing to avoid contributing to distorted portrayals of reality, which do not favour the essence of the causes under protest. From the perspective of the defence of the cause, it may be recommended that protesters invest in clarifying the advocated cause with journalists, inviting their understanding and even sensitivity and that they avoid violent acts so that the protest's media representation is not overshadowed and reduced to violence, which is desirable in the news. From the social responsibility of journalists' perspective, it is recommended that these professionals, knowing the protest paradigm and the disadvantage to the causes advocated by activists, do not easily give in to the representation of violence to the detriment of the pertinence and motives of the protesting cause. That is a need of the protesters that the media can satisfy by strengthening their position (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Also, agencies' dominance over international news (e.g., Shaheen et al., 2021) and over online newspapers is alarming in the context of news diversity (e.g., Boumans et al., 2018), recommending the construction of original pieces that cultivate the newspaper's identity and editorial policy and foster variety in news representations, framings, and coverage. With this precaution, the protests' authors may be heard, contributing to a society that is better represented in the media, more satisfied, fairer, and more democratic.

A possibility for future studies might be to understand how the protest paradigm applies in Portuguese newspapers' representation of protests in Portugal. It would also be important to deepen studies like this and that of Du et al. (2018), which deal with Western coverage of pro-democracy protests in foreign countries.

Translation: Maria João Cunha

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Biographical Notes

Célia Belim is an assistant professor in communication sciences at the Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa, teaching since 2000. She holds a PhD in communication sciences, a master's degree in political science and a post-graduate degree in political science and Islamic studies. Currently, she is the executive coordinator of the 1st communication sciences cycle. She coordinates the *Agendas e Comunicação* (Agendas and Communication) and *Comunicar a Saúde* (Communicating Health) projects and has oriented research in the three education cycles. She has participated in conferences and has published on her thematic interests. She is a researcher at

the Centre for Public Administration and Public Policies of Institute of Social and Political Sciences. She has received four academic awards, three for research.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9927-8018

Email: cbelim@iscsp.ulisboa.pt

Address: Rua Almerindo Lessa, 1300-663 Lisbon

Artur Simões has a degree in communication sciences from the Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa. He has been a radio announcer and content producer at Cidade FM since 2017.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5670-7182

Email: artur.nsimoes@gmail.com

Address: Rua Almerindo Lessa, 1300-663 Lisbon