Hong Kong Crisis and Pandemic Game Report

Ariana Lanzer, Leonard Van Lembergen, Dany Kirilov, Zach Frazer,
Anandi Sweere, Annabelle Willeme, Tia Yang

Conflict Simulation & Negotiation

Tim Goudriaan

Utrecht University College

30th March 2020

Long Term and Short Term Objectives:

By compiling and categorizing the long term objectives and the 3 short term objectives of each group, we are able to find common trends both within groups and between them. Analyzing the objectives of the players is important because it provides insight into the motivations behind the actions they take, the alliances they may form and in general, the course of the game. First, a notable trend throughout the objectives can be seen through the long term objectives of the United Kingdom and the United States being complementary towards the long term objectives of the pro-democracy protesters. The protestors most common objective was universal suffrage for Hong Kong (Appendix 6). Similarly, the most common long term objective of the UK was to require China to uphold the Sino-British Declaration (Appendix 7). The US players also wanted to support the protesters in the long-term and their most prominent long term objective was to maintain Hong Kong's political autonomy (Appendix 8). Furthermore, Taiwan's long-term objective did not directly correspond with the UK, US or pro-democracy protesters but it shares similarities due to the desire for gaining independence from mainland China (Appendix 9).

On the other hand, it is interesting to note how the China players and the Hong Kong government players also shared very similar long-term objectives. For example, the most prominent long-term objective for China was for Hong Kong to become a part of mainland China (Appendix 10). Likewise, the objective of the Hong Kong government was to restore the order in Hong Kong (Appendix 11). Thus, it is evident that the manner in which the teams grouped together

with common long-term objectives reflects the likelihood for certain groups to team up with each other and work together to achieve these goals.

This trend is also reflected in the short term objectives of each group. First, the most important short term objective for the pro-democracy protesters was to enforce free and fair elections in Hong Kong (Appendix 6). Again, the UK is seen promoting the pro-democracy protesters as the two main short term goals were to uphold the democratic system in Hong Kong and decrease the violence that is taking place there (Appendix 7). Similarly, the short term goals of the US focused on supporting the Hong Kong protestors to achieve their 5 demands (Appendix 8). This time, Taiwan's short term goals also aligned with the goals of the protesters, the UK and the US as the most common objective was for Taiwan to support the protesters in Hong Kong (Appendix 9). The trend of creating common objectives continues even more closely for the short term objectives of China and the Hong Kong government. For instance, the most prevalent short term objective for the China players was to put an end to the pro-democracy protests that were taking place (Appendix 10). Equivalently, by a significant amount the short term goal of the Hong Kong government players was to also stop the violent protests occuring in Hong Kong (Appendix 11).

While there is a clear trend of countries grouping together based on their stance towards the pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, there are other notable similarities. For example, due to the component of the COVID-19 outbreak, all of the governments expressed some form of combating the spread of the virus both domestically and in other nations. Furthermore, all governments put an objective related to maintaining or increasing trade relations in order to benefit the domestic economy.

Trends within Player Actions and Motivations:

Analysis of the main actions taken by players provided three key insights into possible future trends within the Hong Kong simulation. First, results displayed that Hong Kong protesters used both traditional and social media sources as a primary tool for the advocacy of their cause. This was further encouraged by the presence of Coronavirus, which prevented participants from engaging in more formal means of protests (Appendix 2). The information spread primarily concerned ongoing police brutality within Hong Kong; which became a central narrative for the protests throughout the simulation. As Coronavirus becomes more severe in the coming months, the media may become an increasingly prevalent outlet used by protestors. Second, bilateral cooperation states were also commonplace within the simulation (Appendix 1). A number of countries seeking to provide medical support for other states (primarily Hong Kong) in prevention against the virus. This aid was often used as a mechanism to solidify relations between states, as well as to assert domestic interests in the global sphere. Finally, protests in Hong Kong are expected to escalate despite the ongoing Coronavirus (Appendix 1). Thus, while the Coronavirus

may cripple Hong Kong protest efforts in the short term, in the long term the protests are likely to persevere and subsequently escalate to pre-virus levels.

Motivation plays a key role in understanding player actions throughout the simulation. Five main player motivations prevailed throughout the game. Firstly, actions were aimed at putting pressure on other countries to do something, to respect an agreement, or to prevent them from doing something. Secondly, actions that were showing support, mainly for the protests or measures taken by other countries. Thirdly, keeping the protests alive which was predominantly the main goal for the pro-democracy protests. Next, many countries had their economic stability at mind in the actions they took. And lastly, the Hong Kong government and some of the other countries were focused on battling the coronavirus crisis. (Appendix 4) One interesting trend noted from player motivations was that actors were more interested in taking measures that exert pressure on other states to take action, rather than mutually collaborating to help fight common issues. This was further emphasized by the focus of states on using protectionist measures to boost their national economies, rather than instigating multilateral agreements to deal with global crises. This heterogeneous nature of state objectives will likely result in the further escalation of the spread of the Coronavirus and Hong Kong protests, as both require an international, integrated solution to be resolved. Motivation results also provided insight into another paradigm, which is that the primary focus of protests will be on keeping their cause alive. Much of the protestors' leverage is rooted in their capacity to garner international media attention and support from key actors (US, UK, and Taiwan). As the Coronavirus dominates the media and states become more inwardly focused, protestors risk losing international traction and support for their cause. Therefore, over the coming months the crucial battle for protestors will be to see if they can reinvigorate this international support to ensure their movement remains relevant.

Trends in Game Outcomes:

Overall it can be seen that player actions can be roughly categorized into 10 categories. As can be seen from Appendix 1, one of the main actions that players took was supporting one another with regards to health care. This included mainly sending medical equipment or funds to help fight the Coronavirus. Appendix 2 reaffirms this and shows that the main type of action players took was medical. Besides medical actions, other common actions undertaken included inquiries being launched into police brutality and human rights violations in Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong protestors launching social media campaigns. Another common action was a 'political' action. This includes voicing public support for other countries or outing public statements. Appendix 3 shows the outcome of these political, and other actions. Here overall, the outcomes of actions have had a more positive outcome on relations between countries. The relations between Hong Kong and China, China and Taiwan, China and the UK, the US and Taiwan, the US and the Protestors, the UK and Taiwan and the UK and protestors all got more positive when looking at the outcomes

of the player actions. The only relations that got more negative were the relations between the US and Hong Kong, the UK and Hong Kong, Taiwan and Hong Kong and Taiwan and the Protestors. Overall though, most actions aimed to strengthen economic and political relations between the countries.

Likelihood of Actions Passing

Even though many of the objectives were contradicting and the countries all had different interests, half of the actions were rated successful and from the remaining half a quarter were rated somewhat successful (Appendix 5). This was indicative of two important trends throughout the game.

First, effective framing techniques were utilized by the players, so that even if the policy stances adopted by players would be unlikely to realistically pass, they were permitted within the confines of the stimulation. This shows that whilst caught up in the game it is easy to see one's own actions in a positive light or to twist the narrative in such a way that it becomes a success anyway. Furthermore, amongst the people who rated their actions as somewhat successful, it was often followed by a reference to future rounds being the moment where they would achieve their goals. Thus even in moments when the round itself was not particularly successful, optimism remained and the participants held out hope that their next round would be the moment they would thrive. Moreover, amongst the people who said no, they often referred to either the dice being against them or others blocking their plans. It was interestingly never referred to for example actions that the individuals themselves had indicated as very unlikely to happen, which were also proposed. Thus even whilst proposing actions that they had rated themselves as being under 50% likely to be successful, the reason it happened was still based on others or the dice.

Second, the success of the actions of players within the simulation was representative of the moderate policy stance adopted by most players. Players tended to be relatively conservative with their actions, likely to not risk having said action rejected. This meant that for the majority of the simulation only incremental policy changes occurred. While this did result in more cautious and conservative gameplay, it is likely representative of the nature of the current global arena. States such as China, the US, and the UK are unlikely to adopt more radical policy decisions, as this would risk the security of their state and be detrimental to the welfare of the state. Therefore, the high percentage of successful actions represents the incremental policy paradigm of the global political arena.
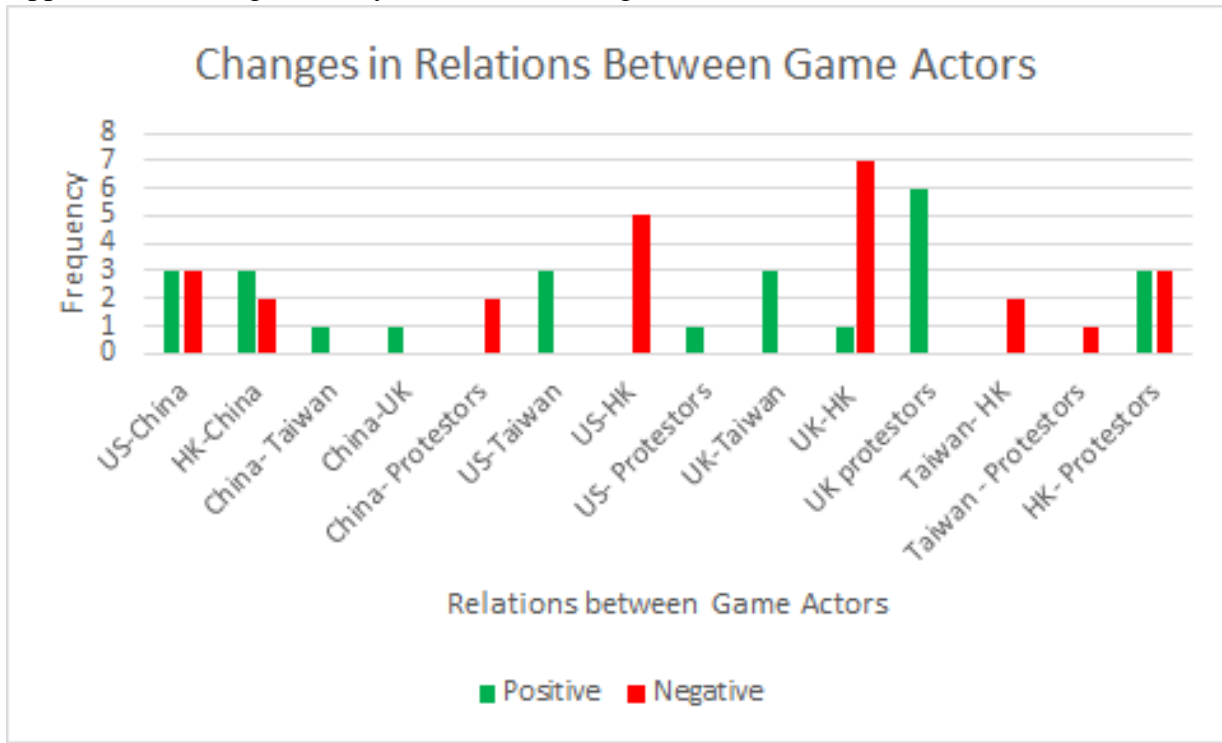
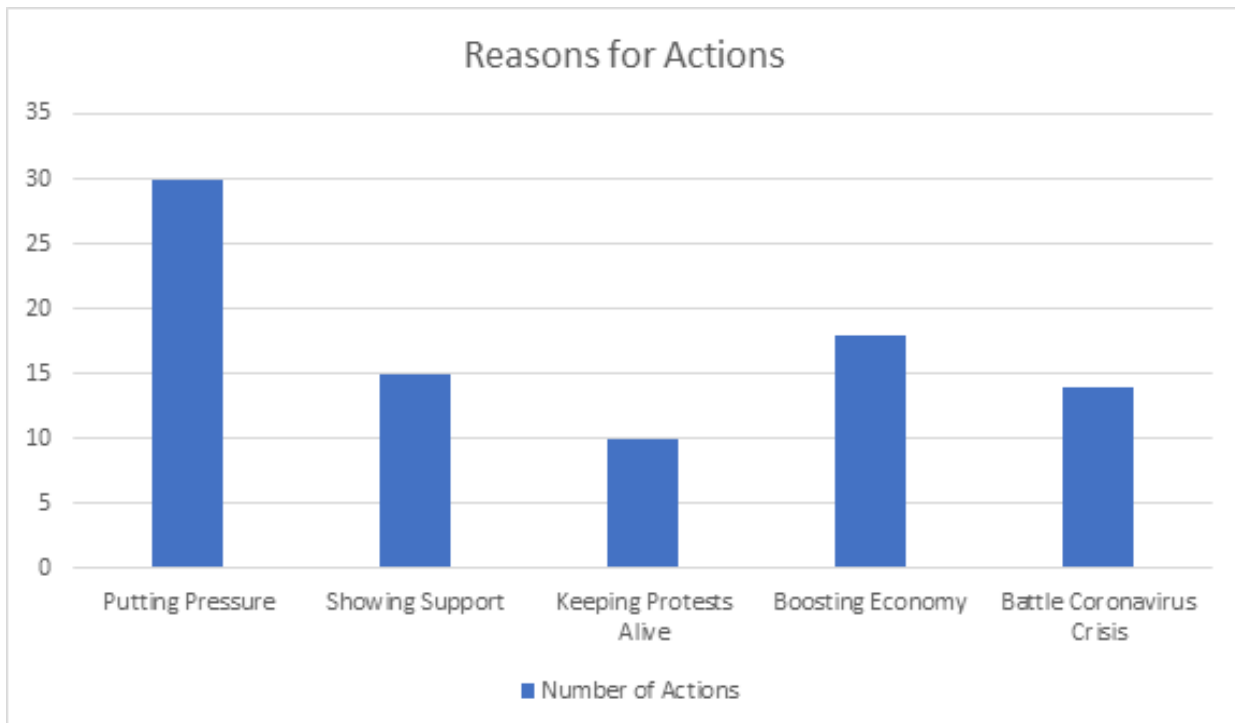**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Distribution of main actions taken by players
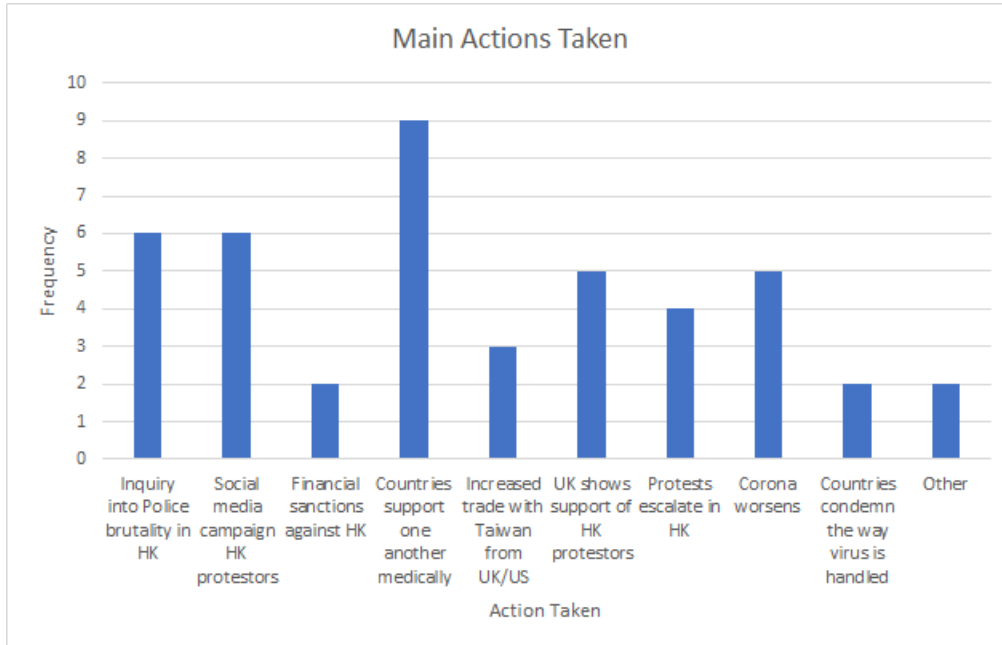
Appendix 2: Distribution of types of actions taken by players
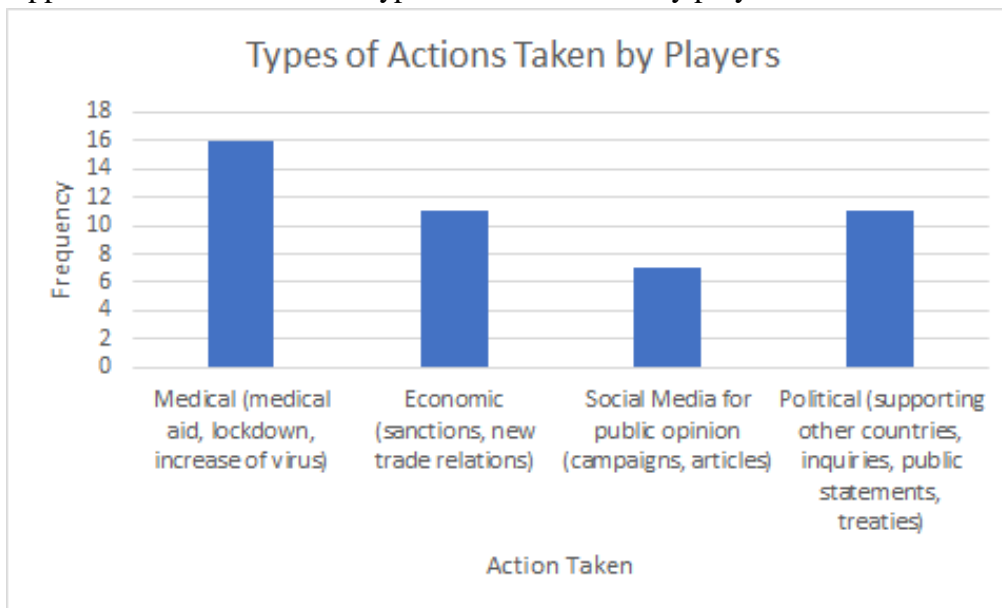
Appendix: 3: Changes in Player Relations throughout the simulation

Changes in Relations Between Game Actors

Appendix: 4: Motivation for player actions throughout the simulation

Reasons for Actions

Appendix 5: Probability of success of player actions

Successful action?

Response	Number of Actions
Yes	40
No	24
Somewhat	16

Appendix 6: The pro-democracy protester's long term and short term objectives

Protestors Long Term Objectives	
Universal sufferage for Hong Kong	3
The 5 demands	2
Protestors Short Term Objectives	
Amnesty for arrested protestors	3
A revival of pro-democracy protests	1
Free and fair elections	5
Make Carrie Lam resign	3
Hold Carrie Lam responsible for HK injustice's	3

Appendix 7: The UK's long term and short term objectives

The UK's Long Term Objectives	
Make China uphold the Sino-British Declaration	3
Secure global trade	1
The UK's Short Term Objectives	
Keep British residence save	2
Uphold the democratic system	3
Decrease violence in Hong Kong	3
No intervention until end of COVID-19	1
Inquiry into police brutality	1
Cooperate with the US to stop China	2

Appendix 8: The US's long term and short term objectives

US Long Term Objectives	
Maintain Hong Kong's political autonomy	2
Maintain global hegemony	1
Maintain trade with HK and China	1
US Short Term Objectives	
Support Hong Kong protestors	5
Support COVID-19 efforts in Hong Kong	1
Support COVID-19 efforts in Taiwan	1
Fight COVID-19 domestically	3
Increase trade with Taiwan	1

Appendix 9: Taiwan's long term and short term objectives

Taiwan's Long Term Objectives	
Independence	3
Support democracy in HK	1
Increase economic relations	1
Taiwan's Short Term Objectives	
Avoid miliary conflcit with China	3
Increase trade	2
Discussions between Tsai Ing-Wen and Xi	1
Carrie Lam resigns	1
Support the protestors	3
Maintain Taiwan's democratic system	2

Appendix 10: China's long term and short term objectives

China's Long Term Objectives	
Hong Kong becomes part of mainland China	3
Maintain a pro-Beijing Hong Kong gov	1

China's Short Term Objective	
Improve China-US trade relations	2
Teach Chinese history in Hong Kong	2
Strong military presence in Hong Kong	1
End pro-democracy protests	3
Maintain Carrie Lam's position	2
Help HK in economic downfall	1
Fight COVID-19	1

Appendix 11: The Hong Kong government short term and long term objectives

HK Gov Long Term Objectives	
Restore the order in Hong Kong	3
Strengthen relations with mainland China	2
Restore the trust in HK gov	1

HK Gov Short Term Objectives	
Attract more foreign investment	3
Carrie Lam for re-election	1
Fight COVID-19	4
Stop HK protests	5
Keep the border with mainland open	1
Maintain close HK and China relations	1