

CHAPTER 15**PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS, PROTESTERS
AND GENERAL PUBLIC****Introduction**

15.1 In order to understand the perceptions of police officers on the one hand, and the perceptions of protesters and the general public on the other, the IPCC commissioned two studies independently conducted by academics. We believe that an independent survey is necessary to enable us to understand the facts on the ground we have found. Also, these surveys may provide a useful basis for the Commissioner and for the Administration to develop future policies. That said, it must be remembered that all surveys have limitations in terms of time and methodologies (including the questions asked). Thus, the reader must make his or her own judgment when considering the results of these surveys.

15.2 Complaints arise from police officers' execution of duty during their encounter with members of the public. Whilst it is natural to assume that a complaint is made on the basis of the objective facts of the interaction between the concerned police officer(s) and the complainant, the complainant's perception of (1) the legality of his own act, (2) the legitimacy of the police officer's action in response to the complainant's act, and (3) the police officer's attitude towards the complainant are actually the deciding factors leading to the complainant lodging a complaint. Conversely, the police officer's perception of and attitude towards the complainant / his act, and his role as a law enforcement officer all have bearing on the action he takes that gives rise to a complaint. The perception of the complainant and the concerned police officers on each other and their acts and action are pivotal in leading to a complaint, regardless of whether there is any substance in the complaint.

15.3 From June 2019 to February 2020, police action in the Public Order Events (POEs) gave rise to 542 Reportable Complaints (RCs) and 1 099 Notifiable Complaints (NCs), totaling 1 641 complaints. From complaints handling and complaints prevention points of view, it is useful for the IPCC to understand the perceptions of frontline police officers, protesters and general public in respect of the following, so as to facilitate the IPCC in the process of making relevant recommendations to the Force:

- (a) To find out the attitude of police officers towards members of the public, peaceful protesters, and the violent acts of some of the protesters.
- (b) To find out how police officers perceive their policing work in the POEs, the Police Force's handling of the POEs, in particular the use of force in response to the violent

acts of some of the protesters, and their supervisors and colleagues as a team.

- (c) To find out whether police officers have any job satisfaction given the high level of stress.
- (d) To find out causes as well as aspirations for actions in the POEs taken by the stakeholders (i.e. protesters) during the survey period.

15.4 To this end, the IPCC commissioned academics from the University College London (UCL) and the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey (CCPOS) of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) to conduct a survey on randomly selected police officers and to carry out a research on protesters and the general public respectively. This chapter presents a summary of the results of the two surveys.¹ Full reports of the two surveys can be found on IPCC's website.

Survey on Police Officers by Academics from UCL

15.5 The Hong Kong Police Force states the Common Purpose and Values of its members, as follows²:

“Our Common Purpose

The Hong Kong Police Force will ensure a safe and stable society by:

- upholding the rule of law
- maintaining law and order
- preventing and detecting crime
- safeguarding and protecting life and property
- working in partnership with the community and other agencies
- striving for excellence in all that we do
- maintaining public confidence in the Force

Our Values

- Integrity and Honesty
- Respect for the rights of members of the public and of the Force
- Fairness, impartiality and compassion in all our dealings

¹ In summarising the results of the two surveys in this chapter, i.e. paragraphs 15.6 -15.44, the term ‘protests’ is used to denote POEs for simplicity sake.

² HKPF Website, https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/01_about_us/vm.html

- Acceptance of responsibility and accountability
- Professionalism
- Dedication to quality service and continuous improvement
- Responsiveness to change
- Effective communication both within and outwith the Force”

The community relies upon police officers sharing the above-stated Common Purpose and Values, when they perform their law enforcement duties. The last ten months have been a time of extreme stress for members of the Police Force. The purpose of this survey is to see if the Common Purpose and the Values shared by members of the Police Force have in any way been dented.

15.6 The survey on police officers conducted by the academics from UCL is comprised of three parts:

- (a) online survey done by way of a questionnaire with 485 randomly selected frontline police officers;
- (b) face-to-face individual interviews with 18 randomly selected police officers; and
- (c) discussion with two focus groups with seven randomly selected police officers in each group.

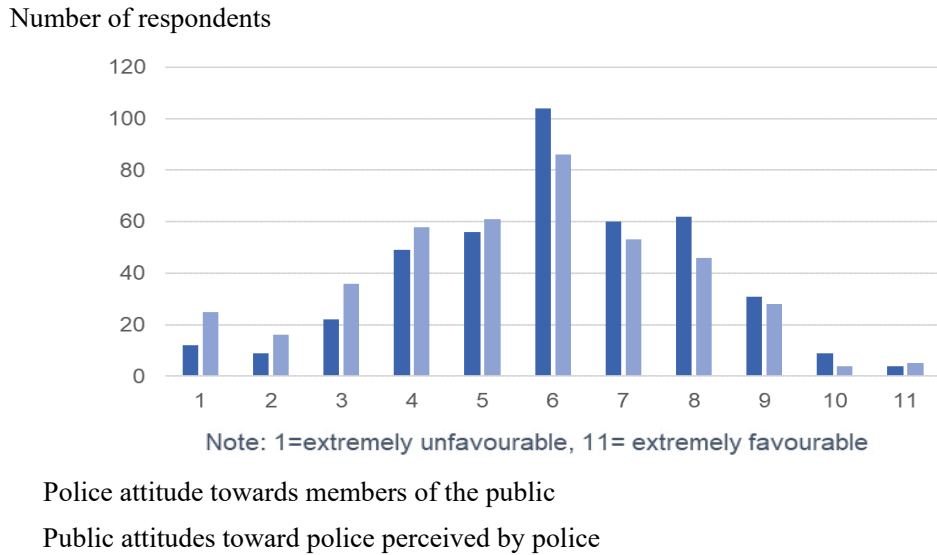
15.7 It was carried out between 21 October 2019 and 1 November 2019, at the mid-stage of the protests. The purpose of the survey is “*to provide insight into the current experiences, ideas, attitudes and perceptions of frontline police officers, many of whom had been dealing with the recent public order events.*”³ The results of the survey are summarised as follows:

Police Officers’ Attitude towards the Public

15.8 The respondents generally held positive attitudes towards members of the public and recognised the importance of having good police-public relations. They tended to think the public felt the same way about the Police. 75% agreed that it is valuable to understand the needs of communities and 59% concurred that it is important to listen to members of the public.

³ The full report is on the IPCC website <https://www.ipcc.gov.hk> (to be updated)

Perceptions of Overall Police-Public Attitudes



15.9 However, there were mixed and diversified views about whether the recent POEs had affected relationships between the Police and the public.

(The blue speaking bubbles in this chapter are selected quotes from the respondents denoting the typical or most representative responses/ views to the respective questions posted.)

“The police force has long received the very strong popular support from the public...I still believe the police force is commanding majority of support from citizens”

“I can feel that things have changed, mainly with the younger generation. They are very against the police”

Police Officers’ Perception of Peaceful Protestors

15.10 83% of the respondents concurred that peaceful protests should be facilitated and 58% agreed that ‘Police should work with these protesters to ensure peaceful protest is possible’. However, 61% were concerned that peaceful protestors did not respect the law and were ambivalent about the possibility of policing the peaceful protests by consent.

“I have no problem with them having their own ideal, their own cause, but to fight for that they have been doing something illegal and this is what I can’t accept”

“Before June we were only provoked or challenged by some gangsters or criminals. Since June, the so-called yellow camp, maybe they don’t break the laws, but even they will be radically preventing us from doing our job”

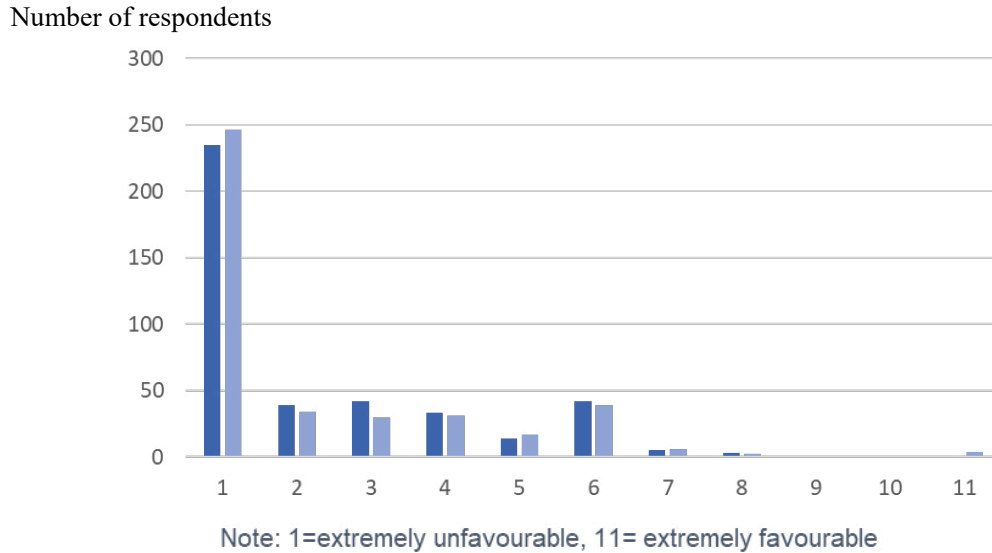
15.11 Officers felt a greater sense of distance from the peaceful protesters than from the general public. Most of the officers who had a generally unfavorable view of the peaceful protesters felt that the peaceful protesters also had an unfavourable view of the Police.

Police Officers’ Perception of Violent Protestors

15.12 Respondents’ assessments of the violent protests and the violent protesters were much more negative. 90% were of the view that the violent protestors demonstrated a lack of respect for the law and only 22% agreed that ‘*Police should work with these violent protesters to ensure peaceful protest is possible.*’ Most respondents felt a great sense of distance from the violent protesters, held an extremely unfavourable view of violent protesters, and thought the violent protesters held similar views of the Police.

“For some rioters, they are actually just using lots of excuses to justify their violent acts. And for those violent people, no matter how you talk to them, I don’t think you can get your expected outcome”

Overall Perceptions of Relations between the Police and Violent Protesters



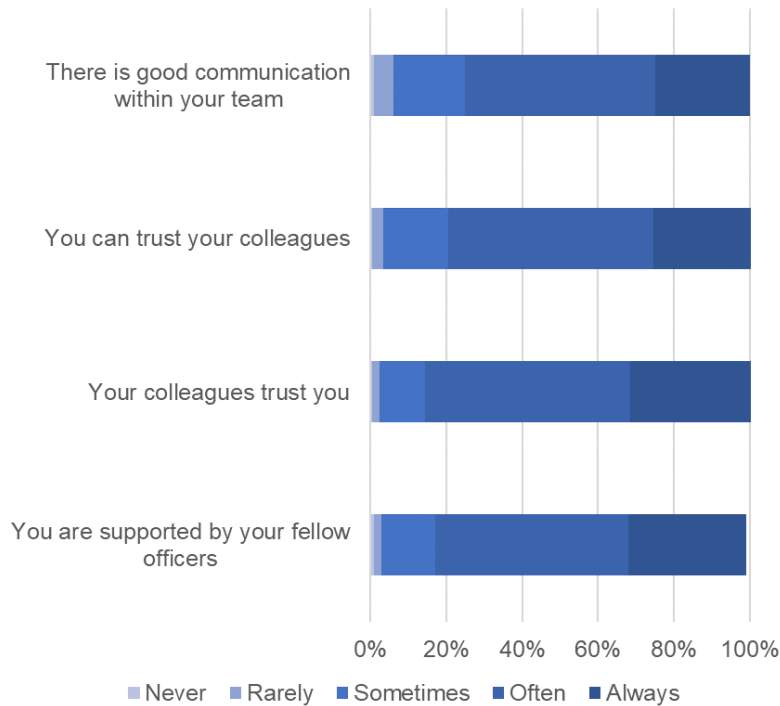
- Police attitude towards violent protesters
- Violent protesters' attitudes toward police perceived by police

Police Officers' Experience of Policing Protests

15.13 Officers in the survey spent an average 47% of their time policing POEs since June 2019 (up to the time of the survey in October 2019), overall, they worked an average of 5.6 days a week and an average of 13.5 hours a day. In the interviews and focus groups discussions, all officers spoke about the longer working hours during the protests period.

15.14 50% of the respondents had experienced at least one encounter of verbal confrontation with protesters. Use of force and being attacked and injured were less prevalent experiences – 36% reported having been attacked, and 20% injured, during protests policing, and 32% reported having used force in the POEs.

15.15 Respondents tended to have very positive experience of peer support and felt that the recent events had made relationships within the Police Force stronger by creating more opportunities for bonding with peers and more opportunities to work closer with colleagues. A majority of the respondents often felt that they were trusted and supported by fellow officers, that they in turn were trusted by their colleagues, and that there was good communication within their team (see chart below).

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

15.16 Police identity was important to most officers. 82% of the respondents agreed that ‘Being a police officer is important to who I am’ while 84% felt strong ties with other officers.

Police Officers’ Perceptions of Their Supervisors and the Police Organisation

15.17 Respondents’ opinions of their immediate supervisors tended to be positive. 71% said their supervisors always treated them with respect. Nonetheless, between one third and one half of the respondents thought their supervisors treated them with procedural fairness only sometimes or less often. Officers’ perception of distributive justice (i.e. the fairness of rewards and work allocations) was less positive. Only 33% agreed they were rewarded fairly for the work they did and 33% agreed that the amount of work they were expected to do was fair.

Police Officers’ Perceptions of Work Related to Protests

15.18 Respondents had mixed views on their work in the protests. 51% were positive about how the Police Force had handled the POEs, but only 29% felt the Police Force had done its best to deal with the pressures the protest events had placed on the officers.

15.19 Officers thought that the use of force by the Police throughout the protests was reasonable, justified and proportionate to the situations.

“We have been very restrained in our enforcement over the past four months. We are not the kind of very violent or triad, gang-like police officers like some protesters or some people would call us. If we were really that aggressive and violent in our enforcement, this campaign wouldn’t have lasted four months”

“As a police officer, every act we take we should be held accountable to that act. So, I believe every act we have taken is based on careful deliberation and consideration”

Only 22% were of the view that they had been ordered to engage in policing activity that made them feel uncomfortable.

Police Officers’ Self-Image and Policing Ideals

15.20 Respondents had a relatively strong sense of their own legitimacy as guardian of the peace. 68% felt confident in the authority vested in them. However, many officers were less clear about their ability to assert their authority, with only 46% feeling that they had enough authority to do their job well.

15.21 Most respondents felt it was important to treat members of the public in a procedurally just way. 55% agreed ‘*We should treat everyone with the same level of respect regardless of how they behave*’.

Police Officers’ Job Satisfaction and Stress

15.22 Job satisfaction among the respondents was generally high. 64% felt satisfied with their job as a police officer and 63% said they would not consider taking another job.

15.23 Levels of stress were also high, but not overwhelming. 28% often felt tense or uptight, 43% often felt angry, and 43% often felt upset. Stress stemmed from a number of

different sources, including long working hours and exhaustion, having less time to spend with family and friends, on-the-job stress, and worry about their own and their family's safety.

Survey on Protesters and the Public by CCPOS of CUHK

15.24 The survey on protesters and members of the public conducted by the academics from CCPOS of CUHK is comprised of two parts, namely :

- i. onsite surveys interviewing 17 233 randomly selected protesters at 26 mass rallies and demonstrations held from June to December 2019; and
- ii. telephone surveys from 7 November to 13 December 2019 with 2 008 members of the public whose telephone numbers were randomly selected. Data from similar telephone surveys conducted by CCPOS between May and October 2019 were used for trend analysis, thus creating a database of 5 907 members of the public being talked to between May and December 2019.

15.25 The purpose of the survey is to (1) “*identify attitudes towards/amongst key stakeholders including views on the general protesters, protesters who took violent action, the Police, the local community etc.*” including public sentiment towards the Police and the protesters, and (2) “*to find out causes as well as aspirations for actions (violence) taken by the protesters during the study period*” and the public opinion towards the driving force for the protests.⁴ The results of the survey are summarised as follows :

Onsite Surveys Results

(I) Protesters' Protest Motivation

15.26 ‘Call for the withdrawal of the Fugitive Offenders Bill’ was the ‘very important’ motivation for the onsite survey respondents to take part in protests at an early stage, according to 85.1% to 94.8% of the respondents interviewed between June and August 2019. Despite the HKSAR government’s repeated reiteration that the bill was ‘suspended’ or ‘dead’, protesters’ demand that the bill be completely withdrawn remained strong until the HKSAR government announced the withdrawal of the bill on 4 September 2019.

15.27 Other ‘very important’ motivations for the respondents to participate in protests included (1) ‘Dissatisfaction with the Police handling of the protests’, (2) ‘Dissatisfaction with

⁴ The full report is on the IPCC website <https://www.ipcc.gov.hk> (to be updated)

Police charging arrested persons for rioting' and (3) 'Call for establishment of an independent commission of inquiry', according to 80% to 90% of the respondents. The percentage of respondents rating 'Dissatisfaction with the Police handling of the protests' as a 'very important' motivation increased from 90.4% in mid-July to 98.3% at the end of July the highest.⁵ The notable increase in July happened after the Yuen Long incident on 21 July 2019. The percentage was still high at 92.9% in early December 2019.

(II) *Protesters' Attitude towards Radicalisation of Protests*

15.28 As the protests continued, protesters increasingly believed in the efficacy of radical protest. At the early stage of the protests, 38.2% of the onsite survey respondents thought that 'radical protests could make the government heed public opinion'. The figure rose to 60% at later stages. In June 2019, around 70% agreed that 'when the government fails to listen, the use of radical tactics by protesters is understandable'. The percentage rose to over 90% from late July 2019 onward. The percentage of respondents who thought that 'radical protests could alienate the general public' correspondingly decreased from 50%-60% in the early stages (June) to 30% in the later stages (October 2019 to December 2019). The respondents were less concerned that radicalisation of the protests would distance them from the general public. Only 30% of the respondents disapproved the radical tactics of the radical protesters. A majority of 80%-90% of the respondents believed the synergy between the peaceful and radical camps.

Whether agree the statements	Early stages	Later stages
(1) 'Radical protests could make the government heed public opinion' 激進的示威手段可以令政府聆聽民意	~ 40%	> 60%
(2) 'Radical protests could alienate the general public' 激進的示威手段會令社會上其他人反感	~ 50% to 60%	~ 30%
(3) 'The maximum impact could be achieved only when peaceful assembly and confrontational actions work together' 和平集會和衝擊行動互相配合才可以達到最大效果	~ 70% to 80%	~ 80% to 90%
(4) 'When the government fails to listen, the use of radical tactics by protesters is understandable' 在政府一意孤行的情況下，抗爭者採取激烈行動是可以理解的	~ 70%	> 90%

⁵ Page 43 of the report

*Results of Telephone Surveys with Members of the Public**(I) Public's View of the Protests*

15.29 62.3% of the telephone survey respondents supported the protests for the following main reasons:

- (a) Dissatisfied with HKSAR government and the central government (33.5% of the respondents);
- (b) Oppose the Fugitive Offenders Bill (29%); and
- (c) Protect and strive for democracy, freedom, justice and rights (28%).

Dissatisfied with Hong Kong SAR government or the central government	33.5%
Oppose the amendments to FOO	29.0%
Protect and strive for democracy, freedom, justice and rights	28.0%
Identify with the movement/protesters' demands and ideas	11.5%
Dissatisfied with the police	10.5%
Protect 'one country, two systems'	4.2%
Dissatisfied with current social and political conditions	2.0%
Support young people and the protesters	0.9%
Others	0.4%
Don't know/refuse to answer	4.5%
(Sample size)	(1,251)

15.30 18% of the respondents were against the protests for the following main reasons:

- (a) Oppose protesters damaging society or harming citizens (46.2%); and
- (b) Oppose protesters' use of violence or illegal acts (25.7%).

Oppose protesters' damage to society or harming citizens	46.2%
Oppose protesters' use of violence or illegal acts	25.7%
Do not disapprove the amendments to FOO	16.7%
Do not identify with protesters' demands or their ways of protesting	14.6%
Others	2.8%
Don't know/refuse to answer	4.3%
(Sample size)	(362)

15.31 17.9% were in between supporting and not supporting the protests.

(II) Public's Attitude towards Radicalization of Protests

15.32 In spite of the protesters' positive views on radical actions, telephone survey respondents, however, largely disagreed with the radical actions taken by the radical protesters. The telephone survey respondents considered the following actions of the protestors most unacceptable:

- (a) Hurling petrol bombs at police officers or police stations (48.5% of respondents);
- (b) Use of force during conflicts against people with different views (48.4%);
- (c) Damaging MTR facilities and traffic lights, etc. (45.6%);
- (d) Use of weapons to attack police officers (45.2%); and
- (e) Vandalising specific stores (43%).

Hurling petrol bombs at police officers or police stations	48.5%
Use of force during conflicts against people with different views	48.4%
Damaging MTR facilities and traffic lights, etc.	45.6%
Use of weapons to attack police officers, such as steel pipes, slingshots, throwing bricks, etc.	45.2%
Vandalising specific stores	43.0%
Occupying the airport	39.0%
Besieging and attacking government buildings, such as police stations and central government offices, etc.	36.0%
Non-cooperation movement, such as obstructing the operation of MTR and government departments	31.3%
(Sample size)	(2008)

15.33 Most telephone survey respondents (66.8% to 82.8%) were of the view that 'when participating in protests in Hong Kong, it is a must to uphold the peaceful and nonviolent principle. However, 55.7% to 68.4 % of the respondents considered it understandable for protesters to carry out radical actions when peaceful protests failed to make the government respond to the demands. Whilst 37.7% believed that radical protests could be more effective than peaceful protests, 33.5% disagreed and 27.1% was neutral.

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Whether agree the statements	Second wave (June 17 – June 20)	Third wave (August 7 – August 13)	Fourth wave (September 5 – September 11)	Fifth wave (October 8 – October 14)	Sixth wave (November 7 – December 13)
(1) 'When participating in protests in Hong Kong, it is a must to uphold the peaceful and non-violent principle' 在香港參與抗議活動，一定要堅持和平非暴力原則	82.8%	71.7%	69.4%	66.8%	68.1%
(2) 'When large-scale peaceful protests fail to make the government respond to demands, it is understandable for the protesters to carry out radical actions' 當大型和平示威都未能令政府回應時，示威者有激烈行動係可以理解	--	--	55.7%	59.2%	68.4%
(3) 'Radical protests are more effective than peaceful, rational and non-violent protests' 激進示威手段比起和平、理性、非暴力抗爭行動更有效用	--	--	--	--	37.7%

(III) *Public's Perception of Police Performance*

15.34 72.6% of the telephone survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the overall performance of the Police during the protests. 69.5% of the respondents attributed the main reason of their dissatisfaction to 'Police use of excessive force', 13.2% to 'abuse of power / violation of protocol' and 12.6% to 'arbitrary arrest'.

	Daily policing unrelated to POE	Overall performance during the movement	Handling fierce conflicts
Very satisfactory	8.9%	6.8%	6.7%
Somewhat satisfactory	14.3%	6.9%	6.9%
So-so	28.9%	13.0%	14.8%
Somewhat unsatisfactory	12.7%	13.0%	15.4%
Very unsatisfactory	33.0%	59.6%	55.2%
Don't know/refuse to answer	2.2%	0.7%	1.1%
Total (Sample size)	100% (2,008)	100% (2,008)	100% (2,008)

Use of excessive force/too violent	69.5%
Abuse of power/violation of protocol	13.2%
Arbitrary arrest	12.6%
Lying/poor response to public criticisms	12.5%
Unfair or selective law enforcement	7.8%
Excessive use of tear gas	6.2%
Bad attitude/emotionally out of control	4.6%
Hiding identity (i.e., non-disclosure of Police Warrant Card and police identification number/wearing masks)	2.7%
Poor or unreasonable handling of the protests	1.5%
Unable to control the protests or deal with the protesters	1.3%
Others	4.5%
Don't know/refuse to answer	1.8%
(Sample size)	(1,458)

15.35 Public perception on Police performance in daily policing work was moderately on the positive side when compared with that during the POEs, with 45.7% of the respondents expressing dissatisfaction. 33.1% of the respondents attributed the main reason of their satisfaction (on overall performance of the Police) to ‘*Police maintain public safety and order / protect people’s livelihoods*’ and 32.8% to ‘*Police have exercised restraint / Police performance meets the standards*’.

Maintain public safety and order/protect people’s livelihoods	33.1%
The police have exercised restraint/their performance meets the standards	32.8%
They perform their job according to the law/they have a duty to conduct law enforcement	23.8%
There is a need to deal with the protesters	9.2%
Others	3.8%
Don’t know/refuse to answer	2.8%
(Sample size)	(275)

(IV) Public’s Perception of Police Actions

15.36 The telephone survey respondents were largely displeased with many police actions in the protests. 78.9% and 77.3% of the respondents respectively considered “*Firing live rounds during confrontations*” and “*Non-disclosure of police identification numbers on uniforms*” as the most unacceptable police actions. On a scale of 0 to 10, the scores of the police actions that the public was discontented with are as follows:

- (a) Firing live rounds during confrontations (1.66 – most unacceptable);
- (b) Non-disclosure of police identification numbers on uniforms (1.78);
- (c) Handling conflicts between people with different political views (2.19);
- (d) Dealing with journalists in conflict situations (2.32);
- (e) Disguising as different identities at protest scenes (2.33); and
- (f) Dispersing protesters with tear gas, rubber bullets, pepper spray, etc. (2.54).

(V) Public’s Trust in the Police

15.37 On a scale of 0 to 10, the score of public trust in the Police dropped from 5.6 in May 2019 to 2.6 in October 2019. Between September and October, roughly 50% of the telephone survey respondents gave a zero to the trust score. Although the trust score climbed back to

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

2.85 in November and December, it was still low in comparison with that before the protests started.

(VI) *Public's Perception of Police's Image*

15.38 68.8% of the telephone survey respondents stated that their image of the Police had worsened as the protests evolved. According to the respondents, the following events impaired the image of the Police:

- (a) The Yuen Long incident on 21 July 2019 (according to 82.2% of respondents);
- (b) The Prince Edward MTR Station incident on 31 August 2019 (according to 49.8% of respondents); and
- (c) The firing of live round at a protester on 1 October 2019 (according to 38.3% of respondents).

White-shirted people attacking citizens in Yuen Long on July 21	82.2%
Arrest operations at Prince Edward MTR station on August 31	49.8%
Firing of a live round at a protester on October 1	38.3%
The handling of detained people at the San Uk Ling Holding Centre	29.0%
A female protester suffering a severe eye injury on August 11	22.3%
Firing of tear gas at Kwai Fong MTR station on August 11	18.6%
Dispersion of protesters surrounding the Legislative Council on June 12	13.5%
Dispersion of protesters occupying the Legislative Council on July 1-2	9.8%
Others	3.8%
Don't know/refuse to answer	1.4%
(Sample size)	(1,382)

15.39 Some respondents had a better impression of the Police as the protests evolved. Most of them said police officers performed their duties conscientiously and dutifully despite the difficulties faced by them. 40.3% of those respondents appreciated the Police because police officers had to endure insults from the protesters. 38.5% appreciated the Police because police officers and their families were subject to harassment and doxing.

Have performed the job conscientiously and dutifully despite difficulties	67.6%
Had to endure insults made by protesters	40.3%
Had to endure harassment and doxing of themselves and their families	38.5%
Have suffered injuries while on duty	23.8%
Others	0.0%
Don't know/refuse to answer	0.5%
(Sample size)	(146)

(VII) Public's Perception of Protesters' Image

15.40 33.9% of the respondents thought the image of the protesters were undermined by the following radical actions, in the order of the most to the least unfavorable :

- (a) Use of force against people with opposing views (52.7%);
- (b) Damaging MTR facilities and traffic lights (45.5%);
- (c) Arson (44.7%); and
- (d) Hurling petrol bombs (42.5%).

Use of force against people with different views during conflicts	52.7%
Damaging MTR facilities and traffic lights, etc.	45.5%
Arson	44.7%
Hurling petrol bombs	42.5%
Vandalising specific stores	30.4%
Occupying the airport	27.5%
Violent attacks on police officers	24.5%
Non-cooperation movement	18.5%
Other	1.1%
Don't know/refuse to answer	2.2%
(Sample size)	(681)

(VIII) Public's Views on Police Use of Force

15.41 More respondents perceived that the Police, rather than the protesters, had exercised excessive force. In the surveys from August to December, 67.7% to 71.7% of the telephone survey respondents opined that the Police had used excessive force against protester, whereas 17.4% to 22.7% disagreed. Respondents who were of the view that the Police had used excessive force were asked in the last survey whether they had experienced or witnessed any Police excessive use of force, 67.5% replied 'no' and 32.3% said 'yes'.

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Police use of excessive force⁶

	(August 7 – August 13)	(September 5 – September 11)	(October 8 – October 14)	(November 7 – December 13)
Strongly agree	51.4%	57.1%	53.7%	58.1%
Somewhat agree	16.3%	14.6%	15.3%	13.0%
So-so	8.3%	7.3%	9.5%	10.5%
Somewhat disagree	7.7%	5.9%	5.7%	5.9%
Strongly disagree	15.1%	14.7%	14.9%	11.5%
Don't know/ Refuse to answer	1.2%	0.4%	0.9%	1.0%
Total (Sample size)	100% (842)	100% (623)	100% (751)	100% (2 008)

Question: Do you agree with the statement, 'The police have used excessive force'? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, so-so, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?

Whether the respondents had experienced or witnessed any Police excessive use of force

No	67.5%
Yes	32.3%
Don't know/refuse to answer	0.2%
Total (sample size)	100% (1,428)

(IX) Public Views on Protesters' Use of Force

15.42 In the surveys between August and December, 32.8% to 41.4% of the telephone survey respondents considered that the protesters had used excessive force, whereas 29.3% to 37.4% did not think so. In October, the figure was the highest at 41.4%, but it dropped to 32.8% in November and December.

⁶ Table 43 of the Report

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Protesters' use of excessive force⁷

	(August 7 – August 13)	(September 5 – September 11)	(October 8 – October 14)	(November 7 – December 13)
Strongly agree	22.1% } 39.5%	21.2% } 39.4%	22.0% } 41.4%	17.1% } 32.8%
Somewhat agree	17.4%	18.2%	19.4%	15.7%
So-so	29.4%	26.6%	28.7%	28.3%
Somewhat disagree	14.7% } 29.8%	16.1% } 31.5%	13.8% } 29.3%	17.2% } 37.4%
Strongly disagree	15.0%	15.4%	15.5%	20.2%
Don't know/ Refuse to answer	1.4%	2.5%	0.6%	1.5%
Total (Sample size)	100% (842)	100% (623)	100% (751)	100% (2 008)

Question: Do you agree with the statement that *'the protesters have used excessive force'*? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, so-so, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?

15.43 Most of the respondents, from 82.8% in June the highest to 66.8% in October the lowest, held that protestors should uphold peaceful and non-violent principles.⁸ Nonetheless, 55.7% to 68.4% expressed understanding and/or sympathy towards violent actions taken by the protesters.⁹

Views on upholding the peaceful and non-violent principle

	(June 17 – June 20)	(August 7 – August 13)	(September 8 – September 11)	(October 8 – October 14)	(November 7 – December 13)
Strongly agree	65.0% } 82.8%	52.3% } 71.7%	47.8% } 69.4%	45.7% } 66.8%	42.2% } 68.1%
Somewhat agree	17.9%	19.3%	21.6%	21.1%	25.9%
So-so	10.4%	17.7%	18.3%	19.2%	18.7%
Somewhat disagree	4.1% } 6.2%	6.5% } 9.6%	7.2% } 10.5%	9.0% } 13.5%	9.0% } 12.5%
Strongly disagree	2.1%	3.1%	3.4%	4.5%	3.5%
Don't know/ Refuse to answer	0.6%	1.0%	1.7%	0.5%	0.8%
Total (Sample size)	100% (635)	100% (842)	100% (623)	100% (751)	100% (2 008)

Question: Do you agree that *'when participating in protests in Hong Kong, it is a must to uphold the peaceful and non-violent principle'*? Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, so-so, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?

⁷ Table 45 of the Report

⁸ Table 38 of the Report

⁹ Table 39 of the Report

CHAPTER 15 • PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS,
PROTESTERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

Whether agree the statements	Second wave (June 17 – June 20)	Third wave (August 7 – August 13)	Fourth wave (September 5 – September 11)	Fifth wave (October 8 – October 14)	Sixth wave (November 7 – December 13)
(1) 'When participating in protests in Hong Kong, it is a must to uphold the peaceful and non-violent principle' 在香港參與抗議活動，一定要堅持和平非暴力原則	82.8%	71.7%	69.4%	66.8%	68.1%
(2) 'When large-scale peaceful protests fail to make the government respond to demands, it is understandable for the protesters to carry out radical actions' 當大型和平示威都未能令政府回應時，示威者有激烈行動係可以理解	--	--	55.7%	59.2%	68.4%
(3) 'Radical protests are more effective than peaceful, rational and non-violent protests' 激進示威手段比起和平、理性、非暴力抗爭行動更有效用	--	--	--	--	37.7%

(X) Accountability for the Escalation of Violence

15.44 In terms of accountability for the escalation of violence in the POEs, 50.5% of the telephone survey respondents in September 2019 to 58.9% in November and December 2019 opined that the Government should bear the major responsibility. Only 18.1% to 22.5% thought it should be the Police and 9.6% to 12.7% said the protesters. 17.8% to 23.8% said the Central Government and 9.4% to 11.6% thought foreign forces should be responsible.

	First to third wave May 23 – Aug 13	Fourth wave (September 5 – September 11)	Fifth wave (October 8 – October 14)	Sixth wave (November 7 – December 13)
Central government	--	17.8%	19.3%	23.8%
SAR government	--	50.5%	52.5%	58.9%
Hong Kong police	--	18.5%	18.1%	22.5%
Pro-establishment legislators	--	4.9%	5.4%	7.0%
Pan-democratic legislators	--	9.8%	8.4%	6.8%
Protesters	--	12.7%	9.6%	11.0%
Foreign forces	--	11.6%	9.4%	9.9%
Others	--	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't know/refuse to answer	--	2.5%	5.7%	3.4%
(Sample size)	--	(623)	(751)	(2,008)

IPCC Observations

15.45 The results of the survey with the police officers by academics from UCL and the surveys on the protesters and the general public by CCPOS indicate a considerable gap on how they perceive one another and the POEs.

15.46 Police officers believe that they rightly take enforcement action in response to the violence and destruction caused by the protesters. They see their job as enabling peaceful protest, but when the protest turns violent, their duty is to take action to maintain law and order. The survey shows that police officers certainly felt that they were under stress but they feel that they have remained true to their professional calling as police officers.

15.47 The survey showed that protesters and a majority of the general public believed that the Police had exercised excessive force. A majority of the public does not agree with the use of force by the protesters but a significant percentage of those surveyed considered that the violent acts of the protesters was understandable.

15.48 It is not the purpose of the Study and the IPCC has no power to investigate into the reason for the great disparity between Police's self-perception and the public's perception on them. We believe the Government and the Police Force should consider how to mitigate this disparity of perception between officers and the general public. It is important for the Police Force to review on how to regain the public trust, by building on the professionalism of the Police Force.