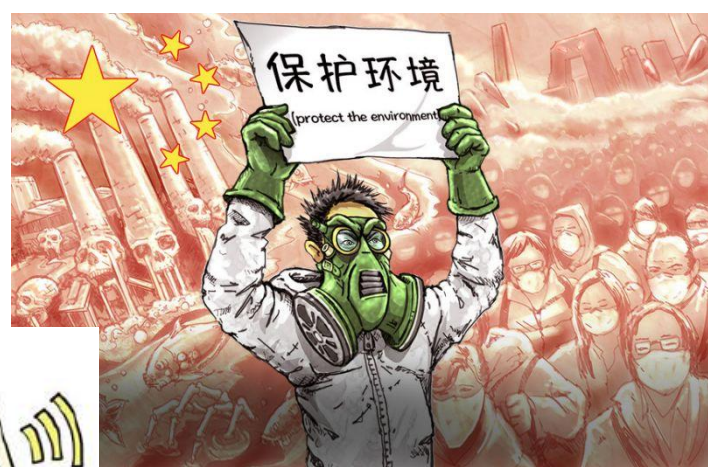


New media and political participation in China

Tse-min Lin & Shuning Lu
University of Texas at Austin



Normative debates

Pro: large-scale information flow and decentralized mode of communication -> increased transparency, egalitarian communication

Con: commercialization; state control; digital divides; social and political contexts + how people use it and what they use it for

Mixed result on new media and political participation

New media effect on political participation in China

Positive

Collective action (Lei, 2011; Huang et al, 2017)
Expressive engagement and civic group
membership (Zhou, 2015)

No/negative

Voting (Huang et al., 2017)
Petition, paying visits to
government (Qi et al.,2013)

Gap in existing studies

1. Internet usage vs. internet penetration
2. Individual participation vs. aggregate participation - provincial
3. Participation modes: institutionalized vs. non-institutionalized
4. Cross-sectional data, lack of temporal dynamic

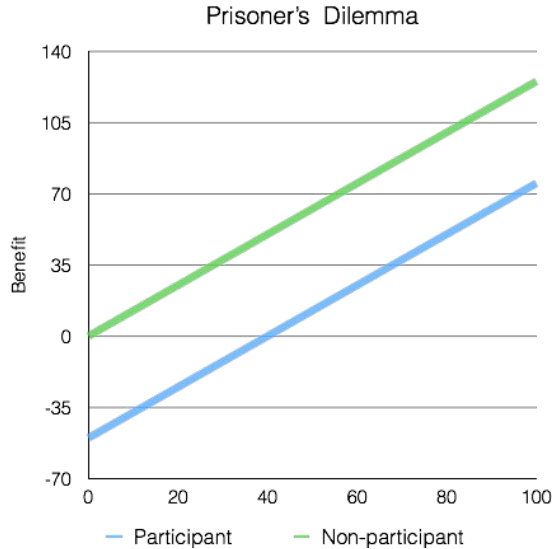
Statement of problem

Do new media (as information ecology)

affect political participation (different modes)

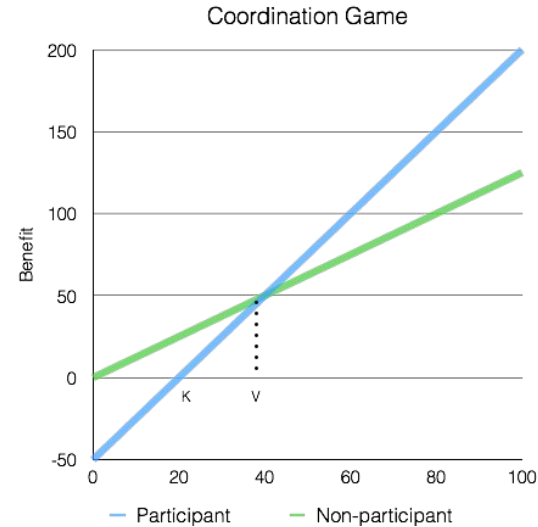
in China's provinces (at provincial level)?

Rational Choice Model of collective action



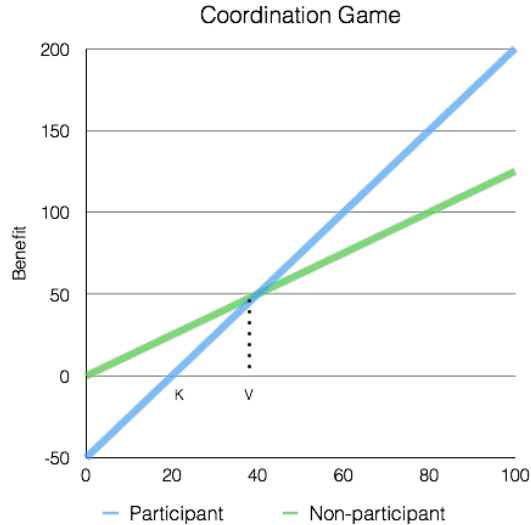
- Costly to produce public good
- Benefits go to everyone
- Benefits (np) > Benefits (p)

Free-rider problem: reap w/o sowing



- Expressive benefits (speaking out -> efficacy, identity)
 - ◆ Selective - gain via participation
 - ◆ ++ by #. of participants
- #. of participants -> critical mass
- Benefits (p) > Benefits (np)

New Media Information Ecology



- Expressive benefits +++++
- perceived likelihood of critical mass +++++
- Cost - - -

Internet > Cell phone

Type of information

Volume

Vast Low

Social networks

Open Close

Communication capacity

Mobility

Low High

Communication mode

Mass Interpersonal

Media-system relationship

Government control

Tight Loose

New Media on Political Participation in China

	Petition (Letter, visits)	Protest
<i>Government attitude</i>	Legally protected	Illegal
<i>Scale</i>	Individual, small group	Collective, large group
<i>Nature</i>	Individual grievance	Social grievance
<i>Sociability/publicness</i>	Low (no ready audience)	High (an audience)
<i>Consequence</i>	Maintain social order	Disrupt social order
<i>Expressive benefits</i>	Limited and constant	Potentially far-reaching
<i>Perceived likelihood of critical mass</i>	Social influence	Contagion effect by new media
<i>Cost</i>	Partly reduce	Ease coordination & mobilization

Methods : Data



Table 4 Panel Corrected Standard Error (PCSE) with AR1

	Letters		Individual visits		Group Visits	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Social economic						
GDP	2.70 (5.63)	0.63(5.15)	0.72(0.62)	0.56(0.68)	0.67(0.40)	-0.00(0.33)
Education	11.35(87.17)	11.20(86.96)	-5.09(5.33)	-5.24(5.30)	6.40(6.26)	6.47(6.90)
Industrial wastes						
Air	214.80(50.64)***	219.35(55.03)***	5.89(4.72)	6.59(4.78)	9.66(3.02)**	11.45(3.35)**
Water	60.16(154.53)	56.89(158.88)	2.10(15.41)	-0.08(15.01)	-8.06(12.83)	-10.80(13.45)
Solid	-145.44(95.60)	-156.57(90.76)	4.96(10.71)	4.57(10.70)	11.28(7.87)	8.65(7.56)
Institutional						
Staff	-430.33(540.26)	-456.45(532.85)	-36.84(103.74)	-36.00(101.41)	-37.36(84.86)	-47.96(85.94)
Processed penalty	-9.61(171.2)	-3.49(174.62)	80.00(41.43)*	80.72(41.51)	59.50(28.03)*	60.36(29.12)*
NGOs	-231.31(265.82)	-247.93(282.02)	-36.17(0.14)	-36.29 (23.99)	-12.05(25.57)	-28.39(25.58)
Info. ecology						
Internet	-0.57(0.53)	-	-0.10(0.06)	-	-0.17(0.05)**	-
Cell phone	-	.18(0.23)	-	-0.05(0.04)	-	-0.05(0.03)
Constant	176.41 (106.87)	193.08*** (116.82)	77.11*** (17.31)		62.89*** (15.72)	67.66*** (17.80)
Adjusted R ²	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.12	0.19	0.15
N	403	403	403	403	403	403
rho	0.47	0.49	0.54	0.54	0.45	0.46

Note: Main entries are the coefficients of the regression model – OLS with PCSE and Correlation Correction (AR1). Standard errors are reported in parentheses * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 5 Fixed Effect with Autoregressive Distributed Lag

	Letters		Individual visits		Group visits	
	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Information ecology						
Internet	0.27 (0.48)	-	-0.23** (0.07)	-	-0.30*** (0.06)	-
Internet _{t-1}	0.51 (0.49)	-	0.26*** (0.07)	-	0.27*** (0.06)	-
LRSS	0.78* (0.35)	-	0.03 (0.04)	-	-0.03 (0.05)	-
Cell phone	-	-0.65 (0.43)	-	-0.07 (0.06)	-	-0.08 (0.05)
Cell phone _{t-1}	-	0.75 (0.45)	-	0.11 (0.06)	-	0.10 (0.06)
LRSS	-	0.09 (0.24)	-	0.02 (0.03)	-	0.04 (0.03)
DV _{t-1}	0.13** (0.04)	0.14** (0.05)	0.14** (0.05)	0.15** (0.50)	0.06 (0.05)	0.06 (0.06)

Spatial diffusion of protests in China (2015)

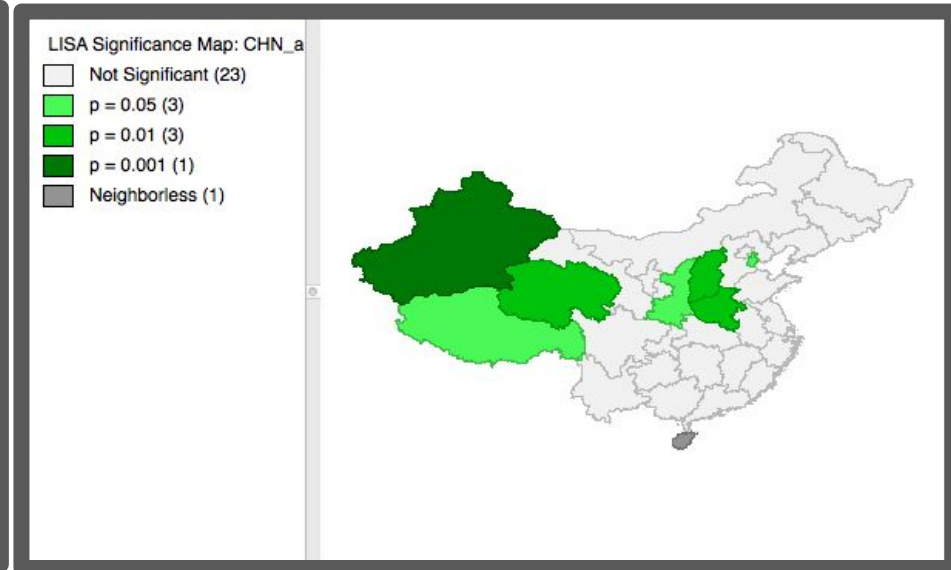
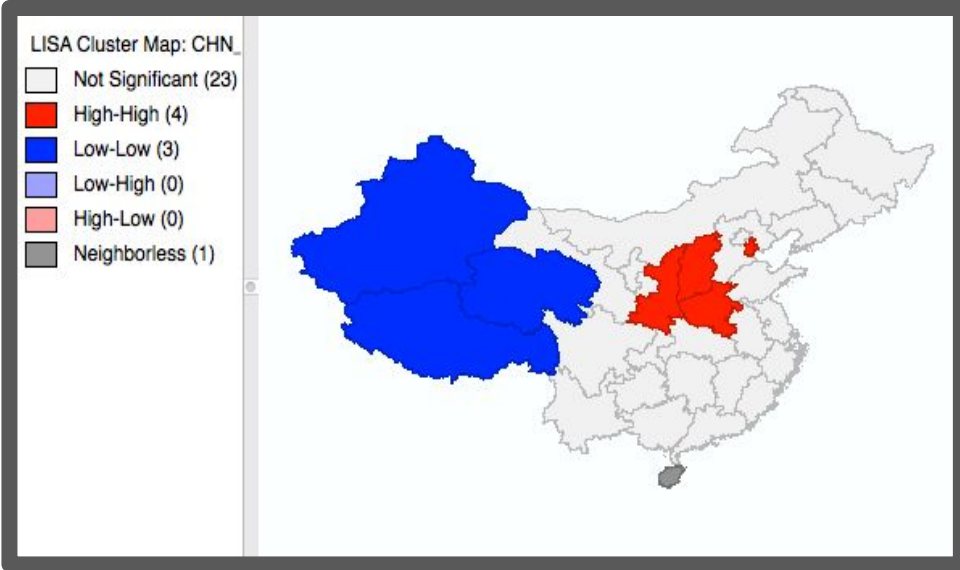


Table 6 Spatial Regression Models

	Spatial Lag Model		Spatial Error Model	
GDP	-0.07(0.10)	-0.05(0.08)	-0.07(0.09)	-0.05(0.08)
Education	1.34(1.91)	0.04(2.06)	0.46(1.65)	-0.63(1.91)
Internet	0.02(0.02)	-	0.02(0.02)	-
Cell phone	-	0.01(0.01)	-	0.03(0.02)
Lag <u>coeff</u>	0.52(0.16)**	0.56(0.16)***	0.71(0.13)***	0.71(0.13)***
Constant	0.75(6.68)	-0.51(5.75)	7.86(6.94)	9.20(5.97)
R ²	0.36	0.39	0.46	0.47
N	31	31	31	31

Note: Main entries are the coefficients of the spatial regression model. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Recap: **New Media** on Political Participation in China

	Petition (Letter, visits)	Protest
<i>Government attitude</i>	Legally protected	Illegal
<i>Scale</i>	Individual, small group	Collective, large group
<i>Nature</i>	Individual grievance	Social grievance
<i>Sociability/publicness</i>	Low (no ready audience)	High (an audience)
<i>Consequence</i>	Maintain social order	Disrupt social order

<i>Expressive benefits</i>	Limited and constant	Potentially far-reaching
<i>Perceived likelihood of critical mass</i>	Social influence	Contagion effect by new media
<i>Cost</i>	Partly reduce [Letter writing]	Ease coordination & mobilization

[No effect, why?]

- A designated channel by gov
- spillover effect of online activism & expression

- Repression tool
- New media ≠ **enhancer**

Discussion and future directions

1. Enrich and Refine the Data source

Both provincial level and individual level data

Longer time span of aggregate protest data

2. Multilevel Analysis

Linking new media information ecology back to individual level action

3. Cross national comparison

ABS data on China and Taiwan and beyond (will be released in early 2019)

Thank you!

For further questions:

tml@austin.utexas.edu

shuninglu@utexas.edu