
Emerging Technology + International Security

17.449

Erik Lin-Greenberg

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Go online and find a protest that you could attend in the next 72 hours.

Key Questions

- What threats do states face in the social media domain?
- How does social media differ from traditional media (when it comes to international security)?
 - What features of social media invite foreign interference?
- How might social media affect crisis decision-making?
- How should states confront these threats?

Social Media as a Mobilization Tool

"Now Out of Never" (Kuran 1991)



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Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"Now Out of Never" (Kuran 1991)

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Velvet Revolution
Prague, November 1989

Image courtesy of the National Museum of Romanian History. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).



Hungarian Revolution
Bucharest, December 1989

"Now Out of Never" (Kuran 1991)

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition
New York Today, increasing clouds, mild, and High 45. Tonight, clearing, low near 40. Tomorrow, mostly sunny, mild. High 51. Yesterday High 50, low 40. Details are on page 35.

VOL. CXXIX . . . No. 48,517 Copyright © 1989 The New York Times NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1989 30 weeks beyond 75 miles from New York City, except on Long Island 40 CENTS

JOYOUS EAST GERMANS POUR THROUGH WALL; PARTY PLEDGES FREEDOMS, AND CITY EXULTS

BERLIN A FESTIVAL

Communist Leadership Announces a Program of Radical Change

By MICHAEL WINERIP

Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato urged the Federal Housing Secretary to approve a grant worth several million dollars for a Buffalo housing renovation project run in part by one of the Senator's supporters, according to a newly obtained document.

In a March 15, 1986, letter written to Mr. D'Amato's Washington office, the Federal Housing Secretary stated that the Buffalo project of the Senator's supporters, according to a newly obtained document.

The letter, checked by the Senator's staff, stated that the Senator's supporters had submitted a grant application to the Federal Housing Administration for the Buffalo project. The letter stated that the Senator's supporters had submitted a grant application to the Federal Housing Administration for the Buffalo project.

In May 1986, when the department's Buffalo office informed local officials of the moderate-rehabilitation grants that had been approved that year, that fact was mentioned by the Senator's staff. The Senator's staff had made no contact with any officials of H.U.D. or with any of the Senator's supporters as a result of the document.

Links to Projects

In May 1986, when the department's Buffalo office informed local officials of the moderate-rehabilitation grants that had been approved that year, that fact was mentioned by the Senator's staff. The Senator's staff had made no contact with any officials of H.U.D. or with any of the Senator's supporters as a result of the document.

Redefining Europe
As the Revolver Goes On, Politicians Ponder The Ramifications of Changes in Germany

By CHAKI N. WHITNEY

WEST BERLIN, Nov. 10 — By the East, who interrupted an official visit to Poland today to fly to Berlin, all in all the West German's commitment to the new European integration and the alliance remains.

But participants, diplomats and businessmen leaders all over Europe are now in a state of confusion. The East German's new position is a state of confusion. The East German's new position is a state of confusion.

U.S. ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT HAS CONCERNS
New Order in Eastern Europe Astonishes Washington

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

WASHINGTON, Nov. 10 — Like the rest of the world, Washington is scrambling to keep pace with the changes on the East in Eastern Europe.

But in contrast with the previous role of the United States in Eastern Europe, the United States is now in a state of confusion. The United States is now in a state of confusion.

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition
New York Today, sunny, continued unseasonably cold. High 22. Tonight, clear, cold. Low 13. Tomorrow, sunny, a few degrees milder. High 26. Yesterday High 18, low 8. Details are on page 36.

VOL. CXXIX . . . No. 48,053 Copyright © 1989 The New York Times NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1989 30 weeks beyond 75 miles from New York City, except on Long Island 40 CENTS

CEAUSESCU FLEES A REVOLT IN RUMANIA BUT DIVIDED SECURITY FORCES FIGHT ON

U.S. Says Noriega Seems to Direct Attacks in Panama

HIT-AND-RUN RAIDS

Bush Adds 2,000 Troops as Effort to Establish Control Is Lagging

By JOSEPH B. TREASTER

PANAMA, Dec. 22 — Panama's deposed leader, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, is believed to be personally directing a hit-and-run counteroffensive by armed civilians as he struggles to avoid capture by American troops, a senior United States military official said this afternoon.

Speaking shortly after a new mortar and machine-gun fire attack sent soldiers at the main American military headquarters diving for cover at midday, Gen. Maxwell Thurman, the commander of the United States Southern Command, said the resistance United States troops were meeting was "centrally controlled."

Serene Complaints Begin

As he spoke, the country appeared near anarchy as looting and roving gunmen moved through the city, an official of the newly installed pro-Washington Government was early assassinated and Panamanians who had opposed the Noriega Government began to complain about the results of the American invasion now in its third day.

BUCHAREST BATTLE

Provisional Government Formed — Thousands of Bodies Found

By DAVID BINDER

WASHINGTON, Saturday, Dec. 23 — After ruling Rumania as a dictator for a quarter of a century, President Nicolae Ceausescu was forced to flee Bucharest Friday when angry crowds of anti-Government demonstrators, backed by army units, took over large sections of the capital.

Reports spoke of fierce fighting in the capital between the army and the pro-Ceausescu security police, but by early today the army appeared to be winning the upper hand.

Bucharest radio said the head of the security police changed sides and ordered his forces to support the army and the Rumanian people. Leaders reported Friday evening. The broadcast also said the Interior Minister and a Deputy Prime Minister had been arrested by anti-Ceausescu forces.

"The forces of democracy are in the ascendant," a State Department official who is following the situation said Friday evening.

430 Bodies in Open Graves

Local forces also were reported Friday evening to be attacking Tim-

Wrath in East Europe

"The Year of Democracy" Will Still Leave Many Problems and Unanswered Questions

By B. W. APPLE JR.

As the year ends, the year of democracy in Eastern Europe is still in its early stages. The year of democracy in Eastern Europe is still in its early stages.

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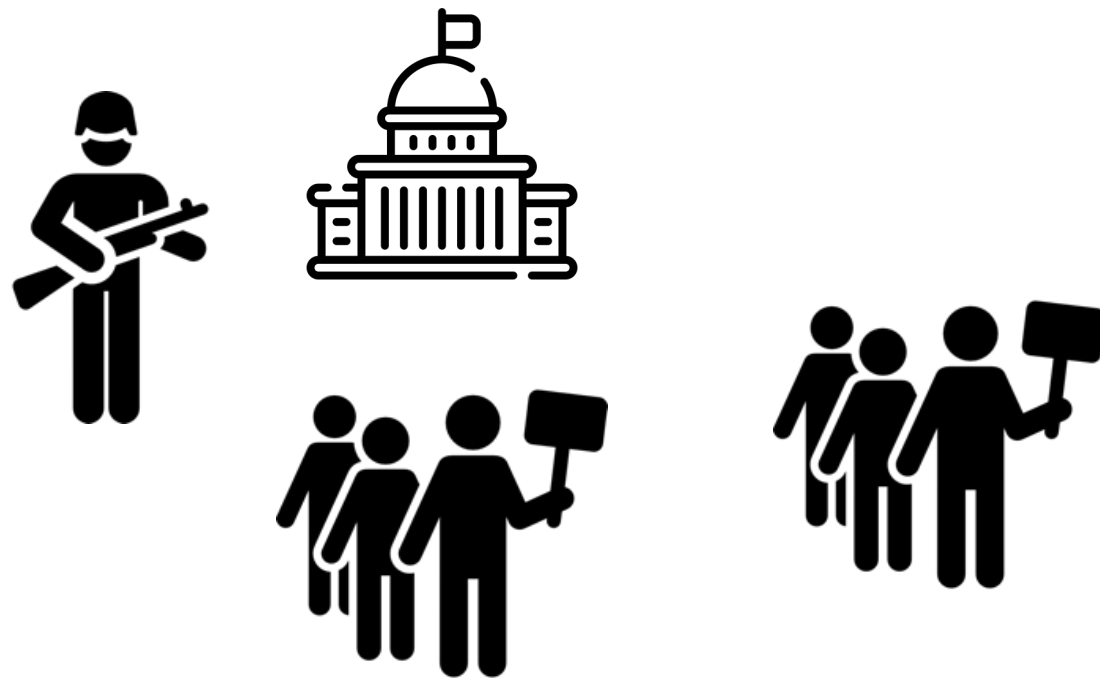
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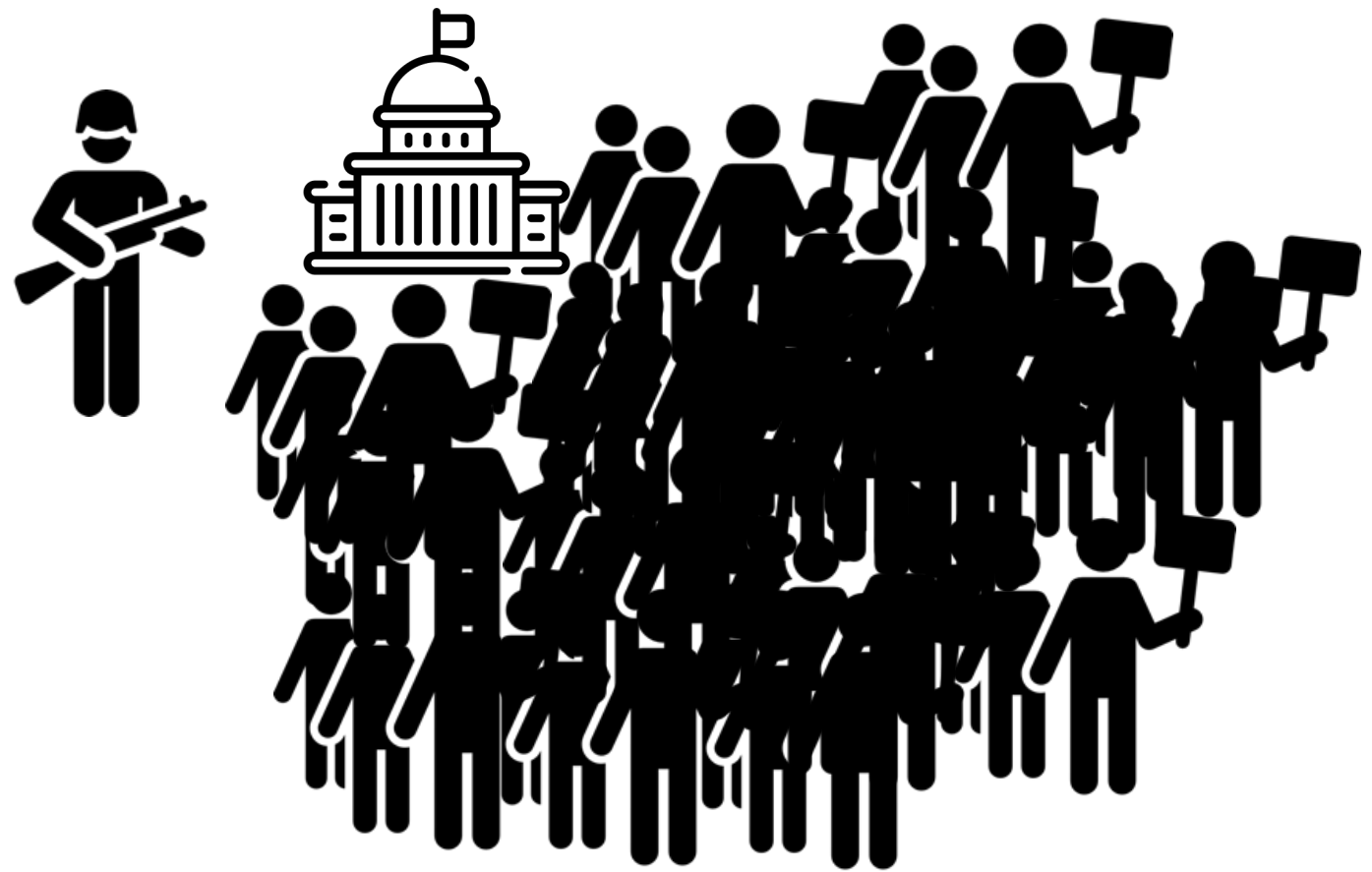
Why were these revolutions not foreseen?

Preference Falsification

Private vs. Public Preferences





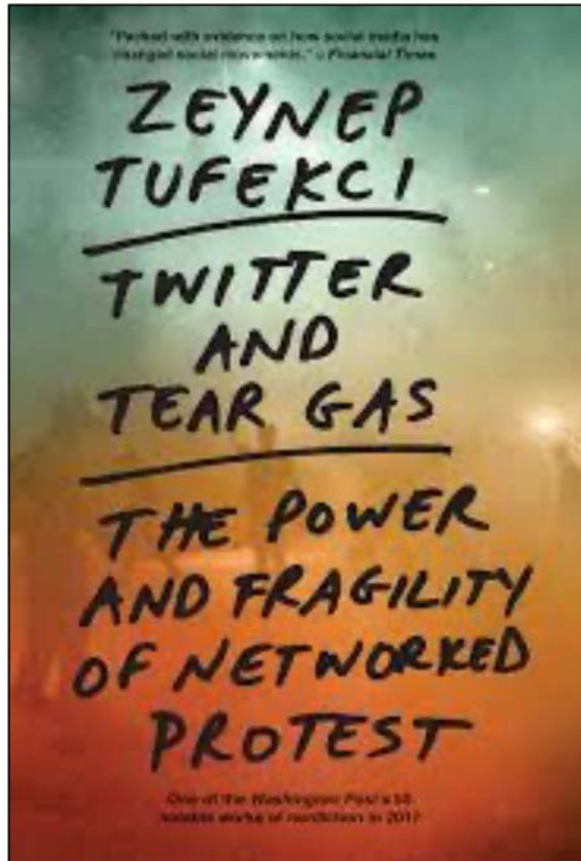


Online vs. Offline Networks



Image courtesy of [Mona](#) on Wikimedia Commons. License CC BY.

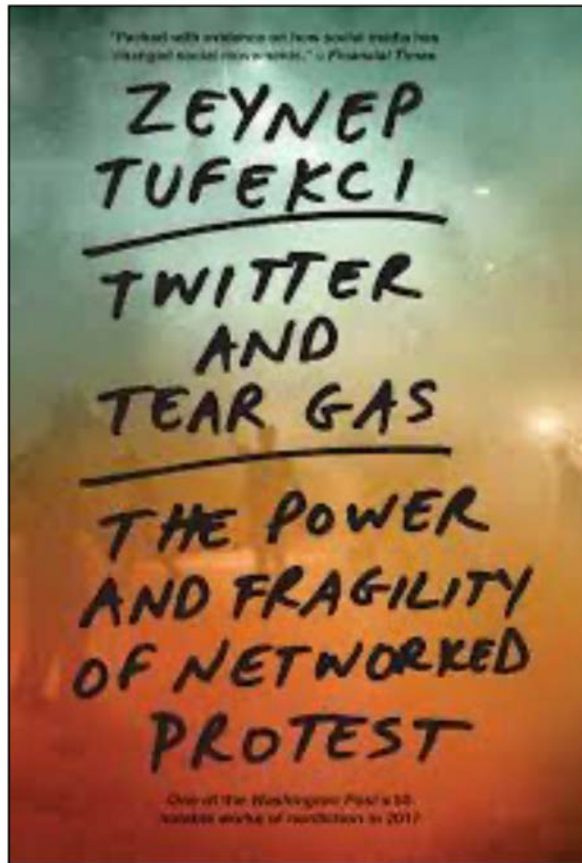
How would you figure this out?



Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Yale University Press, 2018. © Yale University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



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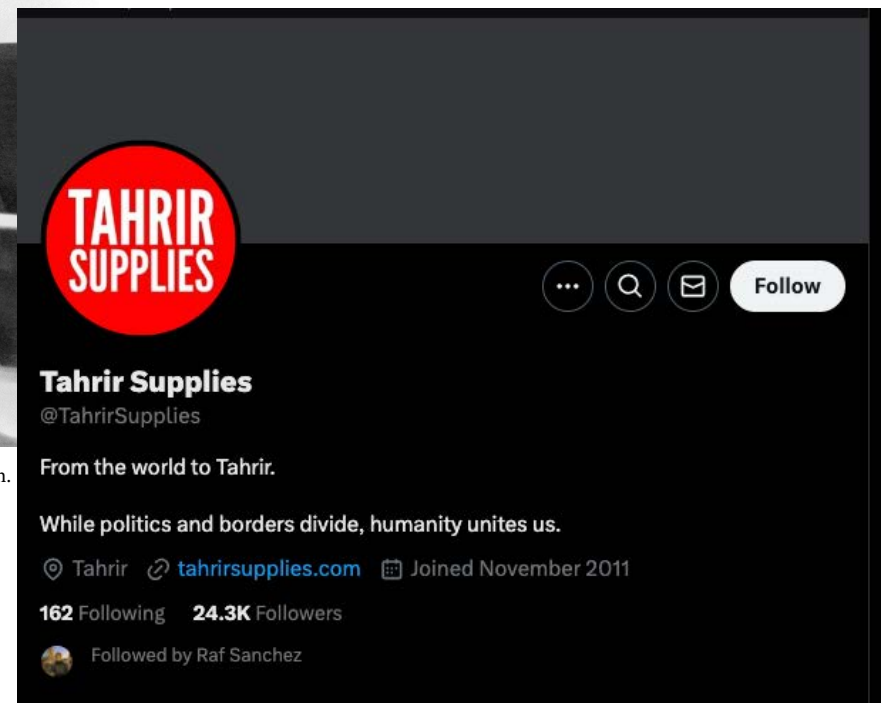
Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Yale University Press, 2018. © Yale University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



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Online vs. Offline Networks

- Explores Four Different Network Types
 - Online
 - Union
 - Community
 - Religious
- How do they operate?
 - Distinct?
 - In competition?
 - Overlapping?



Image courtesy of [Lilian Wagdy](#) on Wikimedia Commons. License CC BY.

Online vs. Offline Networks

- Different networks mobilize different segments
- Limited social media penetration
 - Facebook: 5.49% of population
 - Low internet availability
- Lots of different demographic groups protesting
 - Not just young, financially well off, internet-savvy folks
- What's the research design?

Online vs. Offline Networks



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Online vs. Offline Networks

- Explores Four Different Network Types
 - Online
 - Union
 - Community
 - Religious



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Online vs. Offline Networks

- Overlapping network membership increases protest propensity

You're a dictator.

What do you do about this pesky social media thing?

Information:
facts about something or someone

King, Pan, and Roberts (2014)

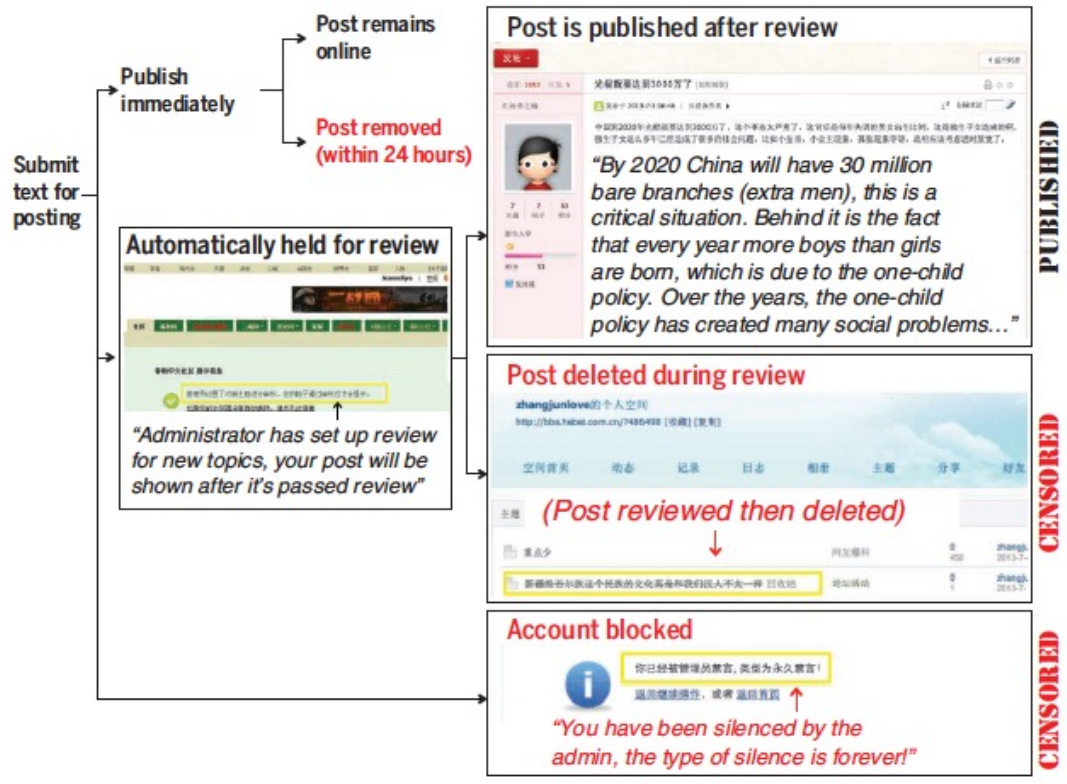
Censor

King, Pan, and Roberts (2014)

How do you study this?



King, Pan, and Roberts (2014)



King, Pan, and Roberts (2014)

- Core finding: what gets censored?

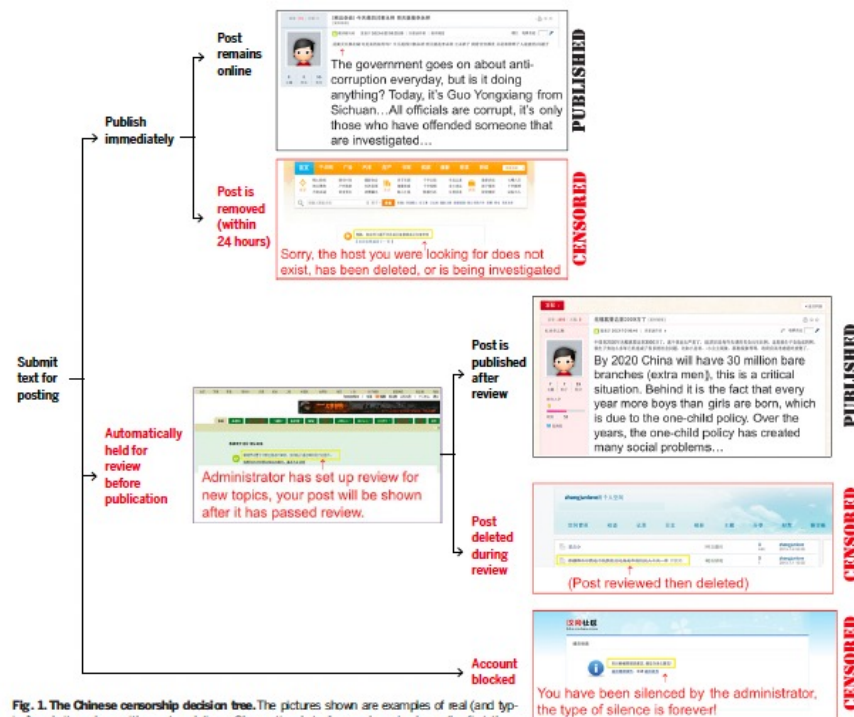
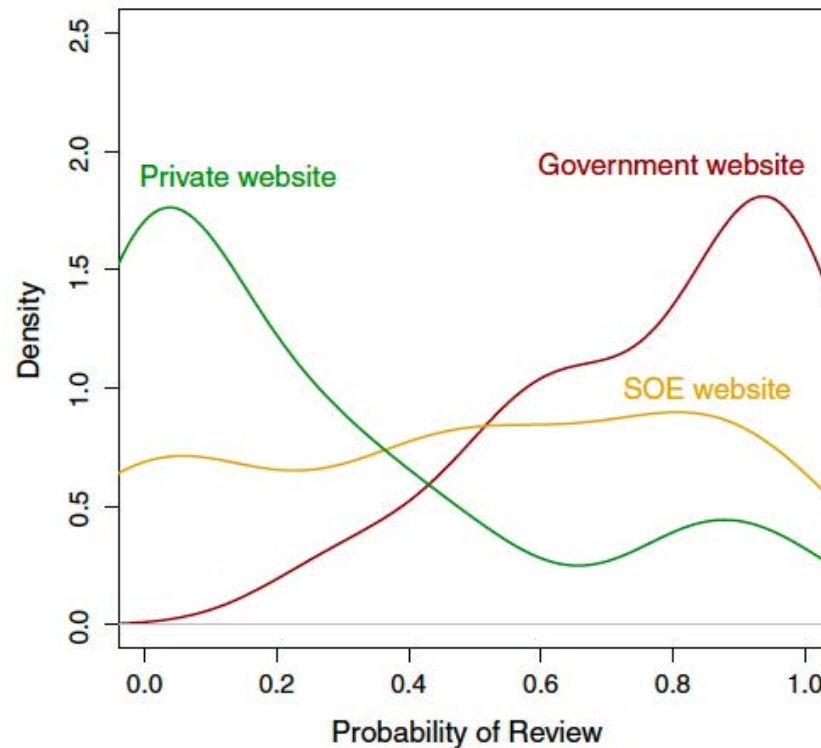


Fig. 1. The Chinese censorship decision tree. The pictures shown are examples of real (and typical) websites, along with our translations. Observational studies are based only on the first three paths through this decision tree; our experimental study includes all five. Full screenshots are in (19).

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret Roberts. Figure 1: The Chinese censorship decision tree from "Reverse-engineering censorship in China: Randomized experimentation and participant observation." *Science* 345, no. 6199 (2014): 1–10. © American Association for the Advancement of Science. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

King, Pan, and Roberts (2014)

- Variation across different types of sites. Why?



Gohdes (2020)

**Shut off telecommunications
or
Kill your enemies**

Gohdes (2020)

How do you study this?

Gohdes (2020)



Image courtesy of [Voice of America News](#). Source: Wikimedia Commons. This image is in the public domain.

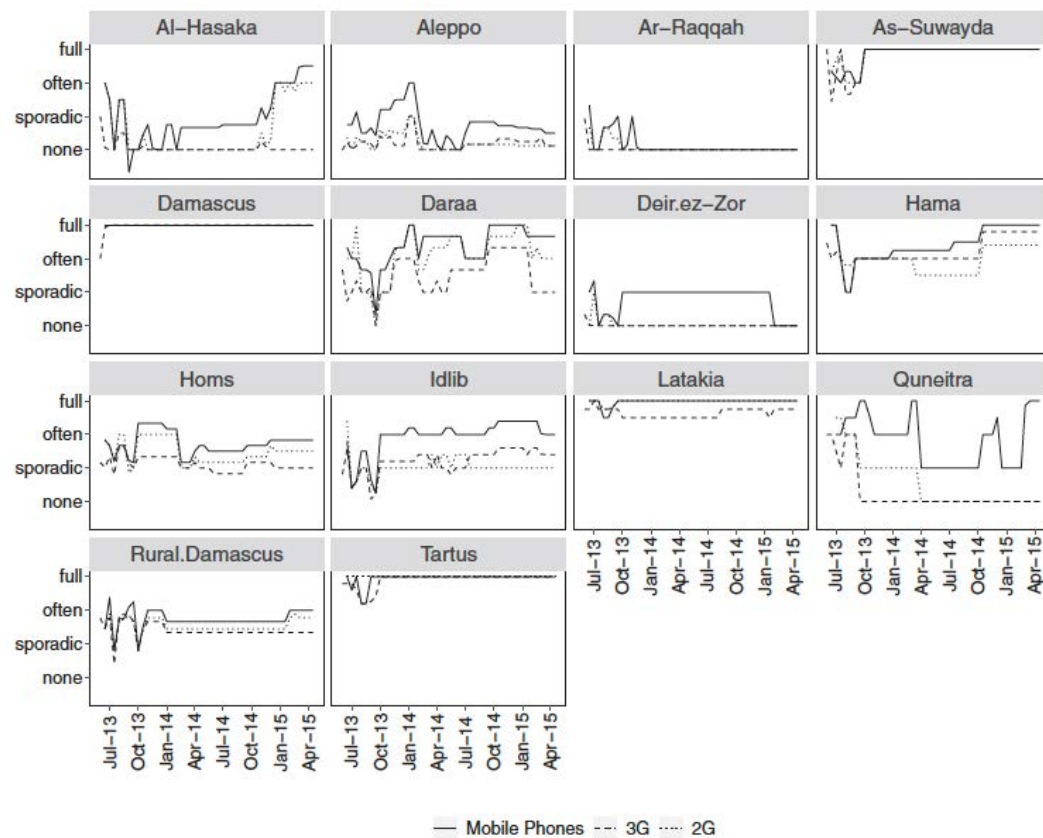
Gohdes (2020)

Tradeoff in telecommunications access:

Monitoring vs. Mobilization

Gohdes (2020)

FIGURE 1 Network (Mobile phones, 3G, and 2G) Accessibility by Syrian Governorate, June 2013–April 2015



Gohdes (2020)

Relationship between telecommunications access and type of violent repression

Gohdes (2020)

Targeted

In the hand-coded training set, records are classified as *targeted* killings if the circumstances described in the aggregated report (1) indicate that the victim was selected based on his or her specific characteristics (e.g., “killed because he refused to [...],” “dissent”) and/or (2) indicate that the method of killing was of a selective nature (e.g., executed by sniper, hanging, beheading, set afire), and/or (3) indicate that the method of killing was accompanied by other violations of a selective nature (e.g., arrest, detention, prison, “found with hands/legs tied”). The majority of targeted killings are classified based on method of killing, or accompanying violations (e.g., torture) that indicate targeting.

vs.

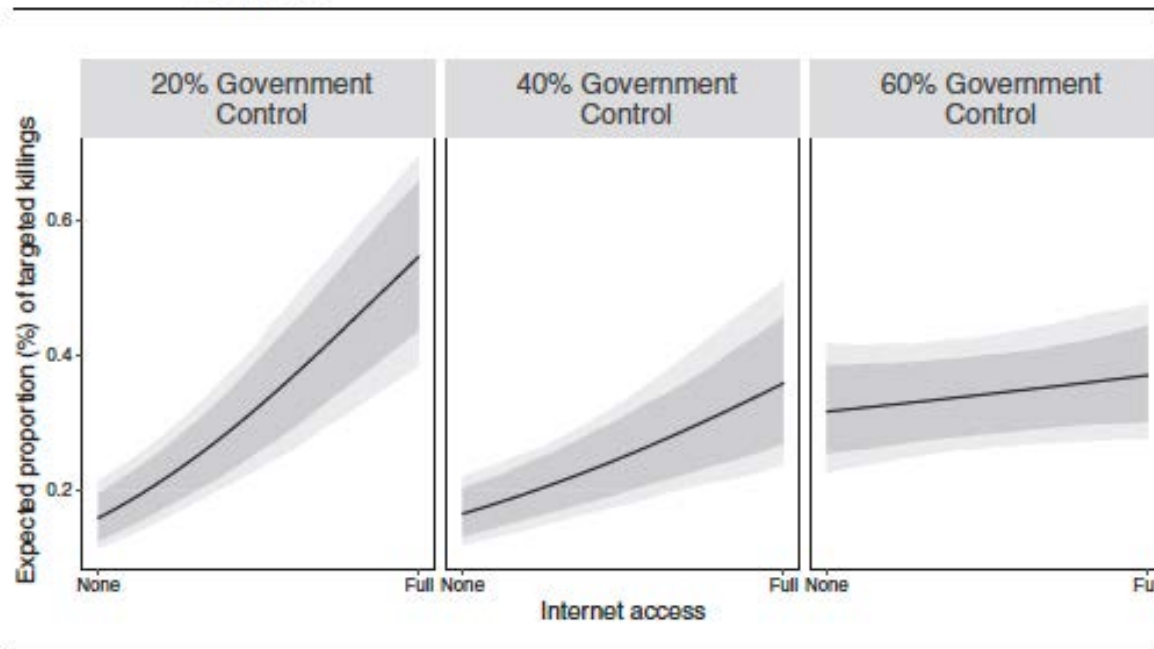
Untargeted

Records are classified as untargeted killings if the circumstances described in the aggregated report (1) indicate that the victim was not selected based on his or her specific characteristics (e.g., “stepped on a landmine”), and/or (2) indicate that the method of killing was not selective (e.g., explosion, bombing, shelling, mortar, chemical, toxic cases), and/or (3) indicate that the method of killing was not accompanied by other targeted violations.¹⁰

Gohdes, Anita R. From “Repression Technology: Internet Accessibility and State Violence.” *American Journal of Political Science* 64, no. 3 (2020): 488–503. © Midwest Political Science Association. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Gohdes (2020)

FIGURE 4 Expected Proportion (83% and 95% confidence intervals) of Targeted Killings, Given Internet Accessibility and Different Levels of Government Control



Social Media (Part 2)

International Security

THE WHITE HOUSE



BRIEFING ROOM

Statement by President Biden on Chemical Weapons Use by Syrian Government

APRIL 09, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

The U.S. condemns Syria's brutal use of chemical weapons against civilians. If the Assad regime does not immediately halt ongoing chemical attacks on Idlib, I will order the Pentagon to conduct targeted strikes on Syrian military and government facilities.

###

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology



President Biden ✓

@POTUS

The U.S. condemns Syria's brutal use of chemical weapons against civilians. If the Assad regime does not immediately halt ongoing chemical attacks on Idlib, I will order the Pentagon to conduct targeted strikes on Syrian military and government facilities.

1:07 PM · Apr 9, 2021

15.1K Retweets

5.2K Quote Tweets

82.7K Likes

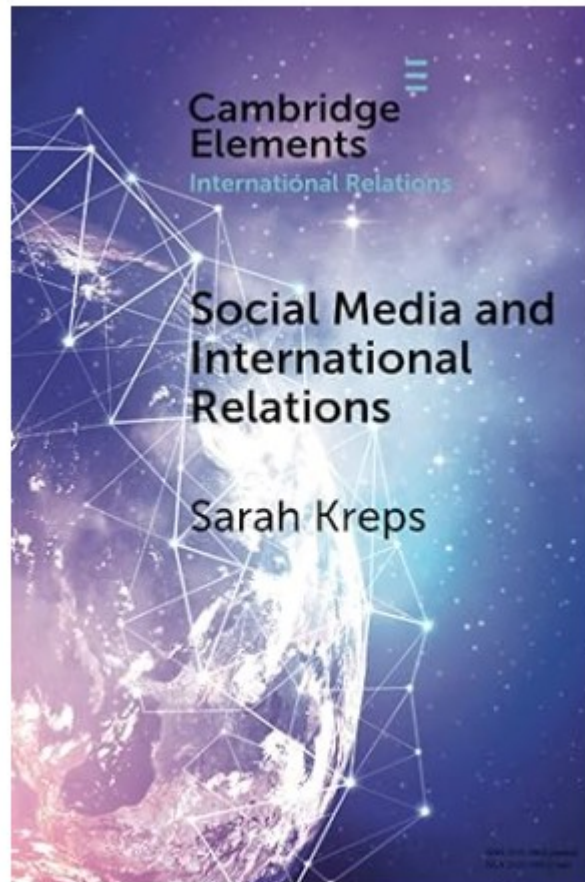


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Which threat is more credible?

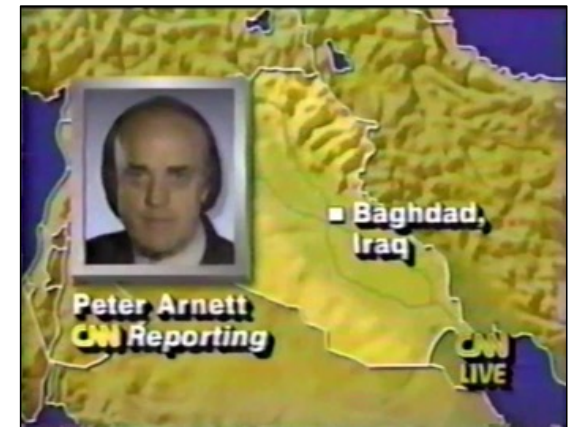
How does social media affect international security?



Kreps, Sarah. *Social Media and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. © Cambridge University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Social Media + International Security

- How does social media differ from traditional media?
- Open access: Lacks central management
 - What are the risks here?
- Directionality + speed of information flow
 - Bi/Multi-directional vs. unidirectional
 - What does this mean for information cues?
- Role of AI/Algorithms
 - Amplifying messages
 - Diffusion: Time-space



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Social Media + International Security

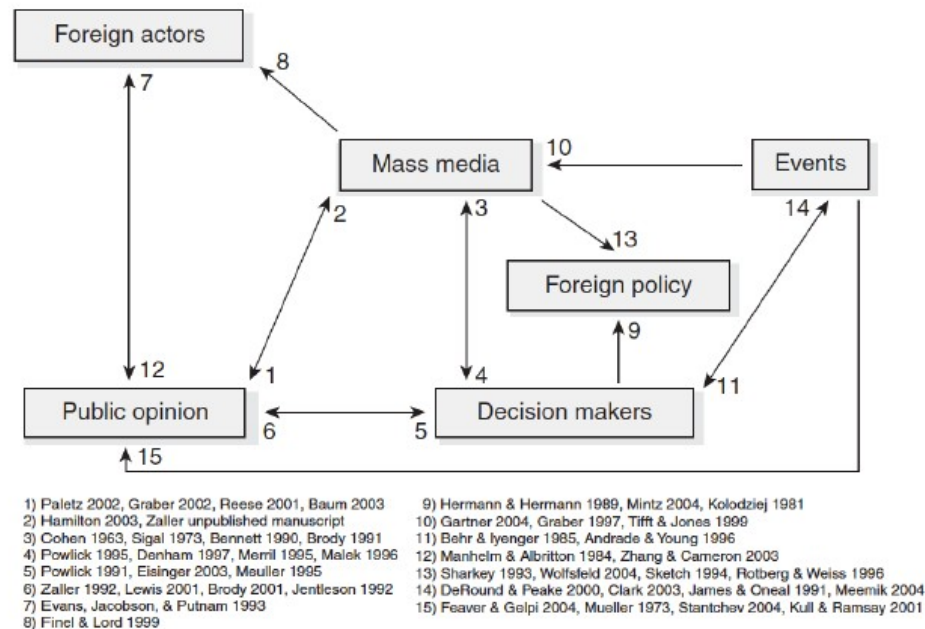


Figure 2 "Web of causal arrows" linking media, the public, and decision makers. Baum and Potter, 2008.

Kreps, Sarah. Figure 2: "Web of Causal Arrows" linking media, the public, and decision makers. Baum and Potter, 2008. From *Social Media and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. © Cambridge University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Social Media + International Security

- “Single most disruptive force for the sovereign state since the idea was founded with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia.”
- How do states use social media?
 - Disinformation (Lowers barriers)
 - Signaling/Diplomacy
 - Intelligence collection
- Who are the actors?
 - Social media audiences
 - Social media producers



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Social Media + International Security

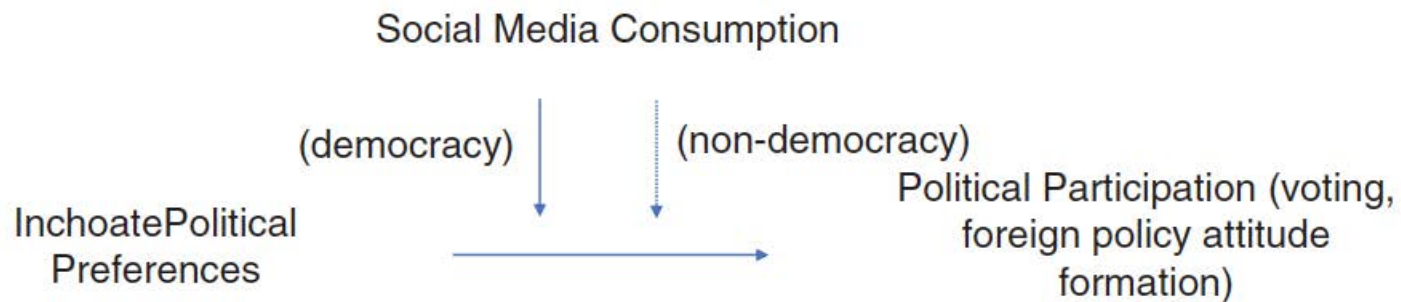


Figure 3 The role of social media as a moderator between political preferences and participation

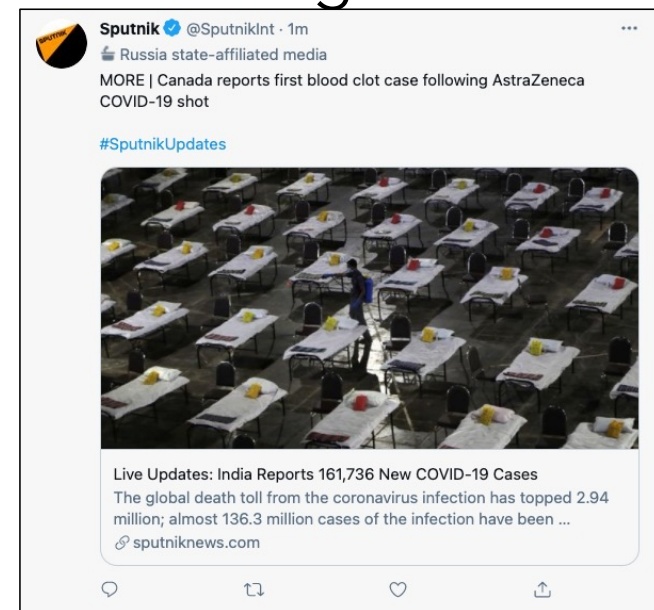
Kreps, Sarah. Figure 3: The role of social media as a moderator between political preferences and participation. From *Social Media and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press, 2020. © Cambridge University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Social Media + International Security

- Democratic advantage or a disadvantage?
- Democratic advantage:
 - Open press → accountability → prevents “foolhardy wars”
 - Good governance
- But how does social media affect this?
 - Uncontrolled media space → opens up room for disinformation
 - Sizable portion of population gets news from social media
- **Leads to a disadvantage for democracies**

Social Media + International Security

- Autocratic Advantage
- Autocracies and Hybrid Regimes can leverage social media
 - Cut Access/Censor
 - Intelligence Gathering
 - Controlling the narrative



Twitter and International Crises

- Messaging has long been a part of international **crises**

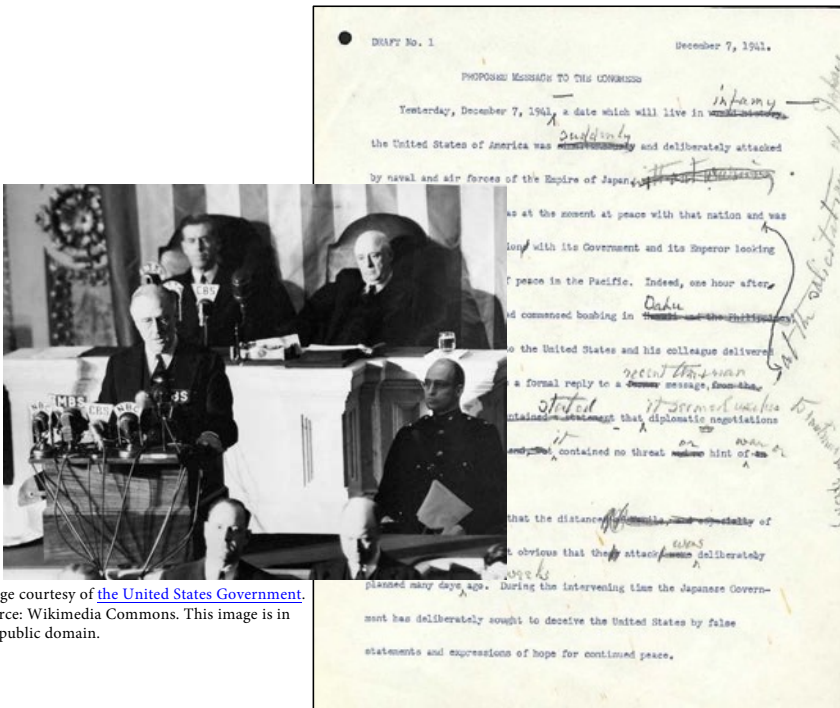
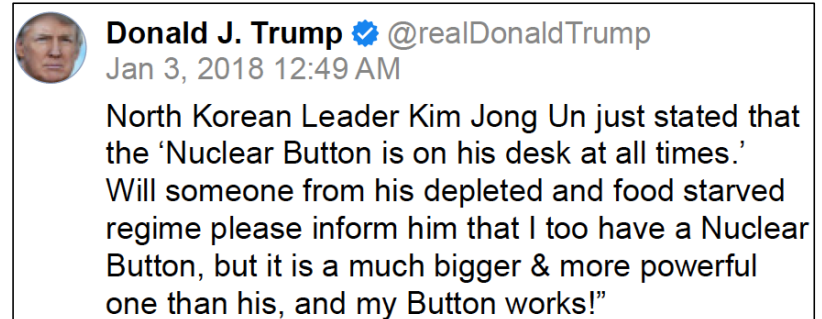


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Twitter and International Crises

- Messaging has long been a part of international **crises**
- Allows leaders to communicate to:
 - Domestic audiences
 - Rivals
 - Third party international actors
- Distinction between “cheap talk” and “costly signals”
 - Cheap talk: Words without consequences?
 - Costly signals: “Sunk Costs” or “Tied Hands”

Twitter and International Crises

- Historically, signaling is a drawn out process
 - Before modern communications, getting signals from A to B took time
 - Signals go through a long staffing process
- Leaders turning to social media
 - 189+ World leaders on Twitter
 - Why? What are the benefits?
- Tweeting: Speed + Audience size
 - But Tweets go through staffing too...
 - Most of the time...



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Twitter and International Crises

- What are the risks of Twitter (and social media more broadly) during crises?
 - Mixed signals
 - Unintended signals
 - Risk of disinformation campaigns
 - Tweets lack nuance—280 characters!
- Rivals are prone to misinterpret signals
 - Leaders/decisionmakers often rely on heuristics
- Immediate dissemination
 - No need for media filtering



US Strategic Command @US_Stratcom · 3h

#TimesSquare tradition rings in the #NewYear by dropping the big ball...if ever needed, we are #ready to drop something much, much bigger.

Watch to the end! @AFGlobalStrike @Whiteman_AFB
#Deterrence #Assurance #CombatReadyForce #PeacelsOurProfession...



0:20 102K views



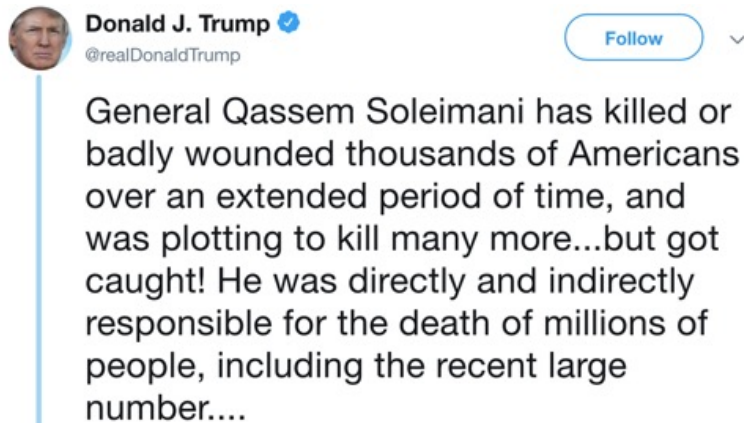
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Twitter and International Crises

- Timing matters
 - Bureaucracies might miss broader strategic issues
 - Timing of tweet may send unintended signal
- Historical parallel: Oct 27, 1962 U-2 Mission
 - JFK: "There's always some son of a b**** who doesn't get the message."
 - Soviets thought this was impending attack

Twitter and International Crises

- Sending mixed messages
 - Poor coordination? Mad man theory?
 - Effect on credibility
- US messaging surrounding Qassem Soleimani



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Twitter and International Crises

- Does Twitter escalate or de-escalate crises?
 - Under what conditions?



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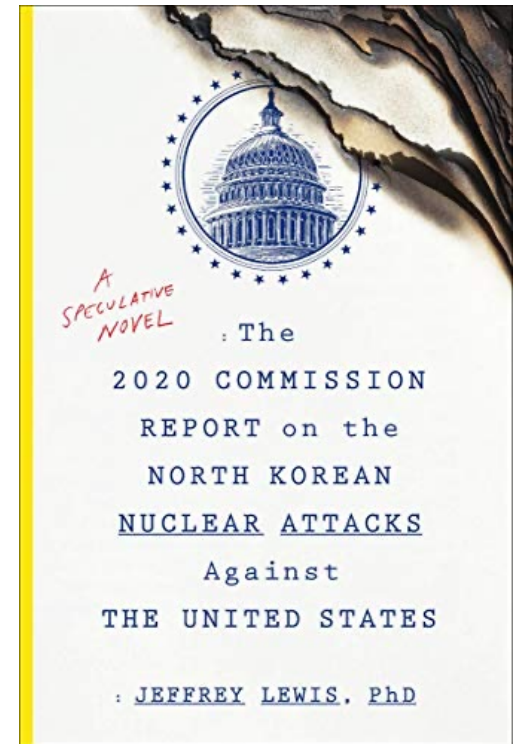
Image courtesy of [Shealeah Craighead of the Executive Office of the President of the United States](#). Source: Wikimedia Commons. This image is in the public domain.



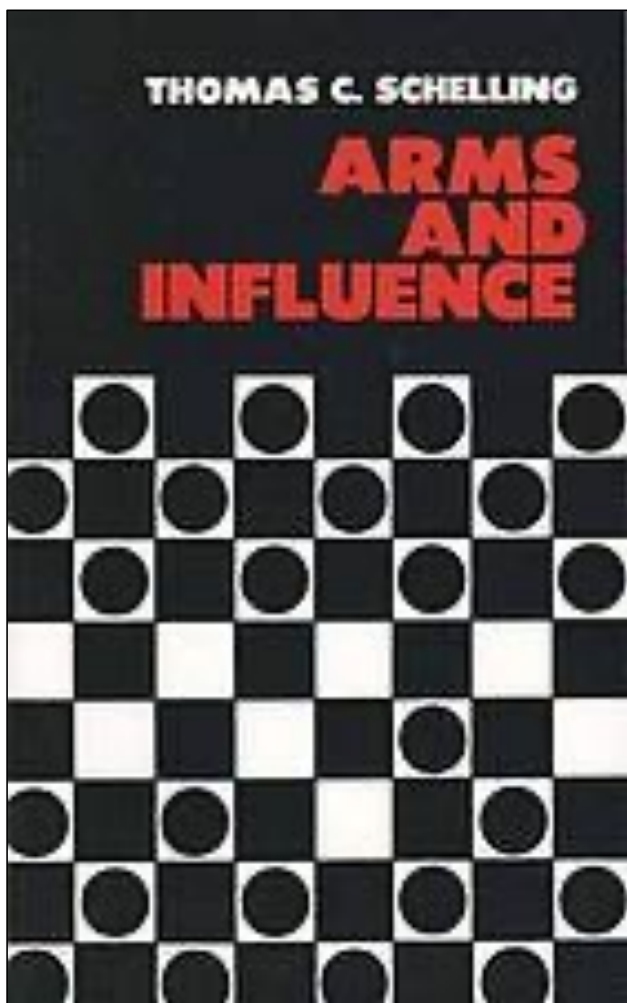
Image courtesy of [the White House](#). Source: Wikimedia Commons. This image is in the public domain.



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Lewis, Jeffrey. *The 2020 Commission Report on the North Korean Nuclear Attacks Against the United States: A Speculative Novel*. Harper Paperbacks, 2018. © Harper Paperbacks. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. Yale University Press, 1967.
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Signaling Foreign Policy Interests

TYING HANDS VERSUS SINKING COSTS

JAMES D. FEARON

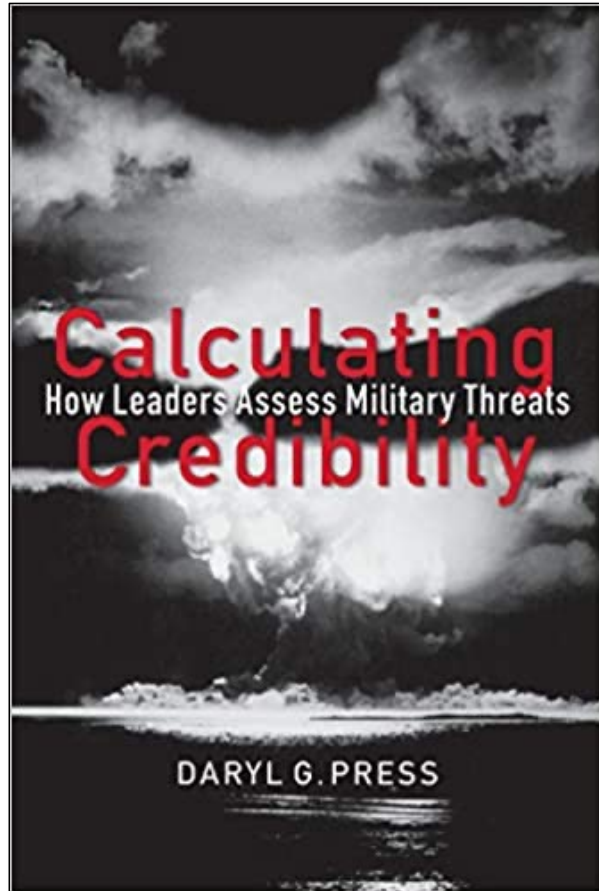
Department of Political Science
University of Chicago

The author distinguishes between two types of costly signals that state leaders might employ in trying to credibly communicate their foreign policy interests to other states, whether in the realm of grand strategy or crisis diplomacy. Leaders might either (a) tie hands by creating audience costs that they will suffer *ex post* if they do not follow through on their threat or commitment (i.e., costs arising from the actions of domestic political audiences) or (b) sink costs by taking actions such as mobilizing troops that are financially costly *ex ante*. Analysis of a game model depicting the essentials of each case yields two principal results. First, in the games' equilibria, leaders never bluff with either type of signal; they do not incur or create costs and then fail to respond if challenged. Second, leaders do better on average by tying hands, despite the fact that the ability to do so creates a greater *ex ante* risk of war than does the use of sunk-cost signals. These results and the logic behind them may help explain some empirical features of international signaling, such as many crises' appearance as competitions in creating domestic political audience costs. They also generate empirical puzzles, such as why the seemingly plausible logic of inference that undermines bluffing in the model does not operate in all empirical cases.

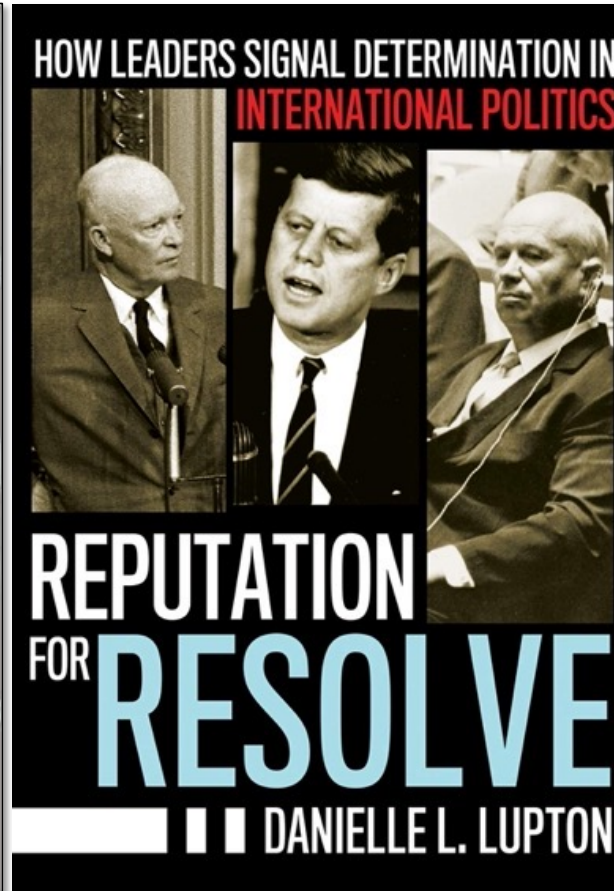
When a state's leaders threaten to use military force against another state, they generally would prefer not to carry out the threat, even if they would, in fact, be willing to. This is true not only in common cases of coercive diplomacy, such as that intermittently practiced by the Western powers in Bosnia, but also for would-be conquerors. As Clausewitz ([1830] 1984, 370) observed, "The aggressor is always peace-loving; he would prefer to take over our country unopposed." It seems quite likely that the main reason for this preference not to have to resort to force is that military operations are typically expensive and risky, obviously so for the soldiers who must be coerced or otherwise convinced to fight, but also for the leaders who order war.¹

1. Fearon (1995) develops the general implications of this point for the problem of explaining why wars occur. See Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson, and Woller (1992) and Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson (1995) for some interesting evidence on the risks run by state leaders who engage in wars. Sometimes, of course, a leadership desires to use force simply to reveal its (privately known) military capabilities and strength to others, despite the immediate costs (Fearon 1995, 400-401).

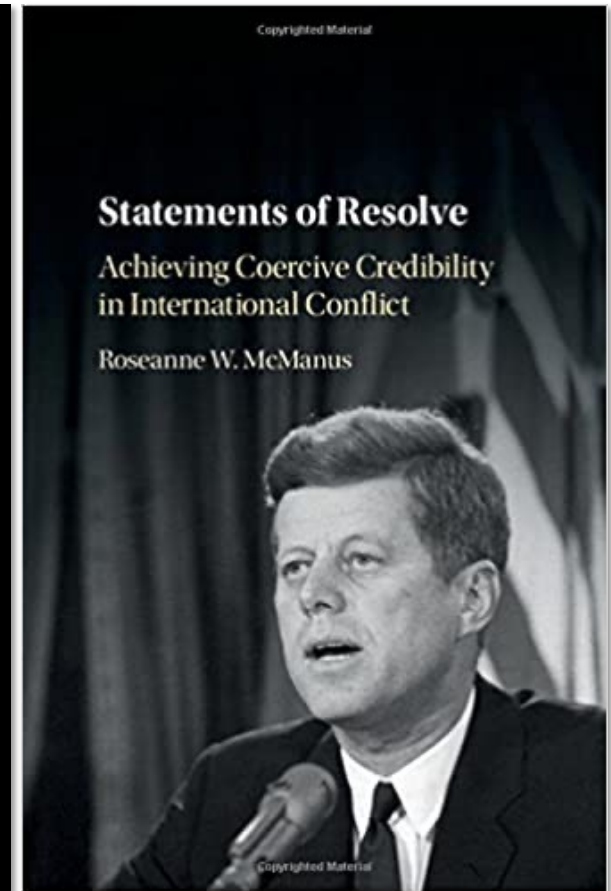
Fearon, James D. "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 68-90. © SAGE Publications. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Press, Daryl G. *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats*. Cornell University Press, 2005. © Cornell University Press. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



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Covert Communication: The Intelligibility and Credibility of Signaling in Secret

Austin Carson and Keren Yarhi-Milo

ABSTRACT

Can states credibly communicate their intentions through covert policy tools, despite the absence of credibility-enhancing publicity? Most extant research suggests covert action and secrecy in general are uniquely uninformative and often used as an alternative to signaling. Yet episodes such as Richard Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia suggest that leaders have used covert action to convey intentions and coerce adversaries. This article builds a theoretical framework for understanding signaling in the covert sphere, developing reasons why states find covert communication both intelligible (that is, the basic intended message is understandable) and credible (that is, the message is believable). We argue that two target audiences—local allies and strategic adversaries—tend to observe covert action and that the costs and risks incurred by initiating and expanding covert action credibly convey resolve. We assess our arguments empirically through careful process tracing of a set of nested covert interventions by Soviet and American leaders in conflicts in Angola and Afghanistan. Drawing on a trove of recently declassified material, we assess intentions and inferences related to covert signaling. We find that both strategic adversaries and local partners observed and drew inferences about resolve. Covert lethal aid programs thereby served as a credible indicator of resolve through three mechanisms we identify in the paper: sunk costs, counter-escalation risks, and domestic political risks. These findings have important implications for the study of coercive bargaining, secrecy, and reputation. They also shed light on an important policy tool contemporary policymakers will likely use, suggesting the kinds of effects covert action has and elucidating the basic interpretive framework needed to communicate messages with new methods like covert cyber attacks.

In March 1969, US B-52 Stratofortress bombers conducted secret raids on Vietcong targets in Cambodia.¹ These massive bombers, capable of carrying seventy thousand pounds of explosives, conducted raids that could not feasibly be kept

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Efficient Secrecy: Public versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy

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This paper explores when and why private communication works in crisis diplomacy. Conventional audience-cost models suggest that state leaders must go public with their threats in international crises because leaders cannot tie their hands if signals are issued privately. I present a crisis bargaining game where both the sender and the receiver of signals have a domestic audience. The equilibrium analysis demonstrates that a private threat, albeit of limited credibility, can be equally compelling as a fully credible public threat. The analysis suggests that secrecy works in crisis diplomacy despite its informational inefficiency. Secrecy insulates leaders from domestic political consequences when they capitulate to a challenge to avoid risking unwarranted war. The logic of efficient secrecy helps shed light on the unaccounted history of private diplomacy in international crises. The Alaska Boundary Dispute illustrates this logic.

Secrecy is the very soul of diplomacy.

—François de Callières, 1716

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy went on TV and publicly confronted Chairman Khrushchev with military threats and a blockade. Eight years later, when the United States discovered that the Soviet Union was constructing a submarine base in Cuba, Henry Kissinger and President Nixon settled the Cienfuegos Submarine Base Crisis through diplomacy that was almost entirely private. Kissinger (1979, 651) later wrote, "Rather than a dramatic confrontation on the order of 1962, we considered that quiet diplomacy was best suited to giving the USSR an opportunity to withdraw without humiliation." This incident could have escalated to a second Cuban crisis, but secret diplomacy successfully persuaded the Soviet Union to concede without raising the risk of war.

According to the recent rationalist literature on crisis bargaining, the Cienfuegos crisis should not have ended in the way it did. This literature turns to credible revelation of commitments as key to understanding state behavior in crises (e.g., Powell 2002; Schultz 2001a). A well-established way to reveal information or to establish commitments is to invoke the so-called *tying-hands mechanism* (Schelling 1966), and a common method of doing so is to generate *audience costs* (e.g., Fearon 1997).¹ Recent audience-cost models typically claim that state leaders should go public with their demands and engage their domestic audience to com-

municate their levels of resolve or capabilities. These models further suggest that normal forms of diplomacy, such as the one Nixon and Kissinger turned to, cannot credibly convey one's resolve in crisis bargaining in the presence of strategic incentives to misrepresent or withhold private information (e.g., Fearon 1994, 1995; Ramsay 2004).

The audience-cost story helps us explain why state leaders go public with military coercion and provoke public confrontations. However, it has yet to explain another class of cases, including the 1970 Cienfuegos crisis, where state leaders go against the logic of the tying-hands mechanism and secrecy plays an important role in settling a dispute. The historical record shows that the use of private tactics and quiet maneuvers is common practice in crisis diplomacy, and raises serious concerns about the robustness of the conclusions on private diplomacy derived from existing studies. This presents a puzzle: When and why do state leaders rationally conclude that staying private is desirable, as opposed to going public, despite the suggested benefits of the tying-hands mechanism?

Despite the importance and prevalence of the private signaling in international crises, few if any studies in international relations address this puzzle. While existing audience-cost models offer some idea about the incentives that leaders face in deciding to go private (e.g., Leventoglu and Tarar 2005), these models are not best suited for a rigorous investigation of this puzzle because they are not explicit about how crisis diplomacy unfolds in private, but instead assume that crises are public events (Fearon 1994).

This paper presents a formal model to bridge this gap by exploring the rationality and effectiveness of private signaling in international crises. Building on a standard audience-cost model, I show that going private with one's challenge not only can effectively compel an opponent to capitulate, but also can make both parties to a crisis better off. The model offers a reason why leaders cannot rationally ignore private threats simply because they avoid costs of going public.

The model augments the literature on crisis bargaining and audience costs by bringing in several perspectives. First, the explicit analysis of actors' decisions to go public or private allows us to simultaneously explain why earlier models concluded that quiet diplomacy is

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¹ Fearon (1997) shows that the so-called sunk-cost mechanism can also transmit information in international disputes. Shantchev (2005) shows that purely military instruments can also invoke the tying-hands mechanism in crises without audience costs.

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Potential Outcomes

- **Cheap talk (<)**

- Low "cost"
- Perceived lack of coordination vs. official statements
- Numerous tweets per day

- Just as credible as official statements (=)

- Ties hands: visible to millions
- Written record: harder to deny
- Perceived as going through same vetting process

- More credible than official statements (>)

- True thoughts of leader

Selfies and Citizen Journalism

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teargas and Selfie Cams: Foreign Protests and Media in the Digital Age

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of repression of foreign protests and the media source reporting the news upon American foreign policy preferences for democracy promotion abroad. We use two survey experiments featuring carefully edited video treatments to show that even short media clips presenting foreign protests as violently repressed increase American support for targeted sanctions against the hostile regime; however, these treatments alone do not inspire respondents to political action. Furthermore, we do not find evidence that mobile treatment magnifies the effects of violence.

Keywords: Public opinion; media effects; foreign policy; protest

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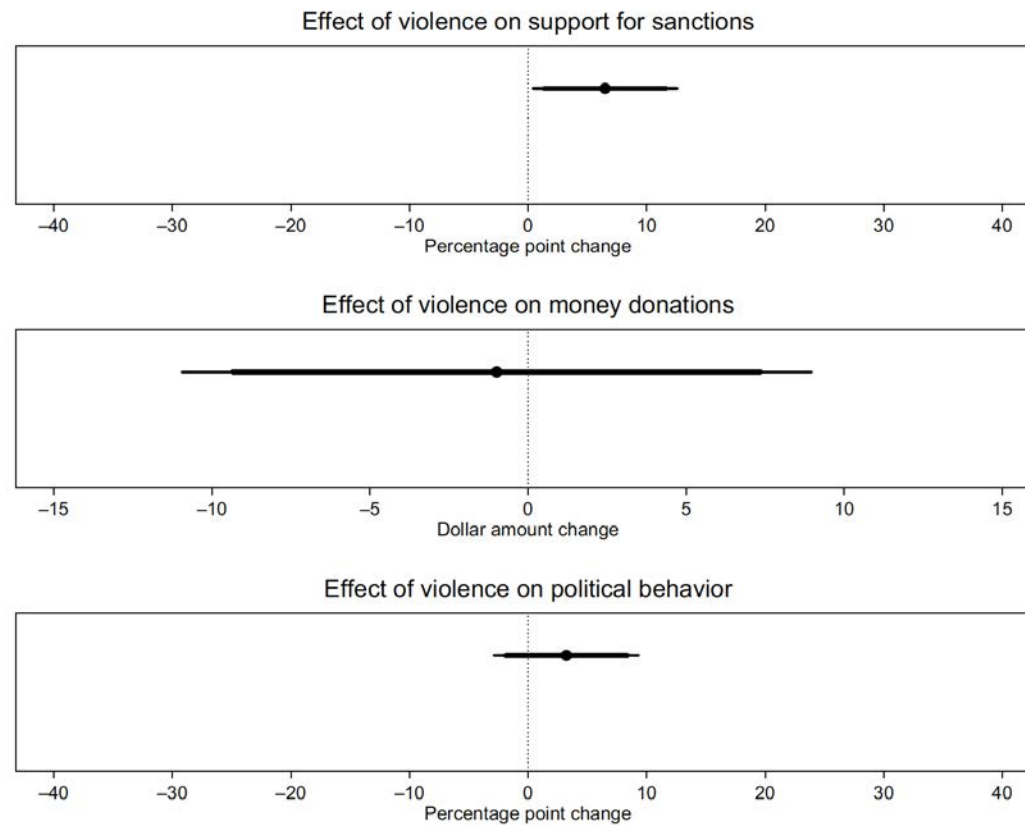
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Selfies and Citizen Journalism

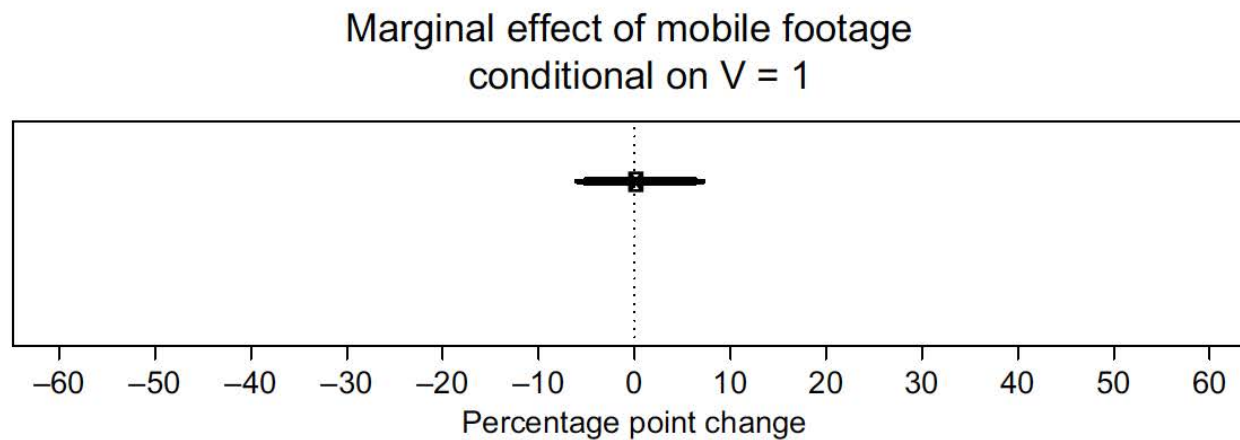
Two Experiments

- 1) Studies Violent/Non-violent repression
- 2) Effect of Medium (news v. selfie)

Selfies and Citizen Journalism



Selfies and Citizen Journalism



How to Confront the Social Media Threat

- What do deterrence and compellence look like?
 - Will continue this conversation next week (Cyber)
- Who are the new actors in this challenge?
 - What ethical and legal issues does this raise?
- How have organizations changed?
- What are the tradeoffs of using social media during crises?

How to Confront the Social Media Threat



Nakashima, Ellen. "U.S. Cyber Command operation disrupted Internet access of Russian troll factory on day of 2018 midterms," *Washington Post*, February 26, 2019. © Nash Holdings. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

How to Confront the Social Media Threat



Facebook takes down Russian operation that recruited U.S. journalists, amid rising concerns about election misinformation

Dwoskin Elizabeth, and Craig Timberg. "Facebook takes down Russian operation that recruited U.S. journalists, amid rising concerns about election misinformation," *Washington Post*, September 1, 2020. © Nash Holdings. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



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A Final Question...

“Twitter is the single-most disruptive force for the sovereign state since the concept was founded with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. I don’t think the internet will take an eraser to state sovereignty, but it is inherently anti-state.”

-Alec Ross

Patrikarakos, David. From *War in 140 Characters: How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century*. Basic Books, 2017. © Basic Books. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

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