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A Study on the Relations between Information and Communication Technology and the Popular Resistance in China:
Focusing on Smartphone and Social Media and its Impact on Popular Resistance

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A Study on the Relations between Information and Communication Technology and the Popular Resistance in China:
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Abstract

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China has achieved rapid economic growth and development since the economic reform in 1978. At the same time, this massive social transformation has brought with it different kinds of stress such as growing social disparities with inefficient policy measures. In the early years of the economic reform, farmers` resistance against illegal taxes and fees by rural governments used to be a root cause of unrest in rural China. In urban China, labor disputes over SOE (State-Owned Enterprises) reform and housing issues were the other causes of unrest in this period.

Entering the 21ˢᵗ century, China has maintained a high growth rate through a government-led drive and global integration. Additionally, China faces a serious potential outbreak of social upheaval caused by exacerbating social disparities coupled with growing consciousness of human right among the public.

Meanwhile, development of Information and Communication Technology(ICT) and its mass propagation are another noteworthy change in Chinese society. Traditional communicating tools, telegraphs and wired telephones were followed by mobile phones and the Internet in the 2000s. And more recently, with the widespread adoption of smartphones, microblogging and instant messaging service have become pervasive and influential in peoples` lives.

This paper presents the evolution of Chinese ICT development since the economic reform to the present time by breaking it down to three different periods: 1) before the emergence of mobile phone and Internet (1980s-90s), 2) propagation of mobile phones and the Internet (2000s), 3) rapid diffusion of Smartphones and social media services (2010s). Through the periodization, it analyses different aspects of China`s popular resistance in each phase in the context of motivations, participants and spatial boundaries of protests. It also introduces changing role of ICT involving popular resistance and government response over time.

This study argues that continuously evolving information and communication technology have a direct and indirect impact on the changing patterns of popular contention in China. Characteristics of popular contention have been broadened to encompass various new traits added over time. Far reaching

powers represented by the immediate and easy accessibility of ICT have enabled various people with diversified motivations to participate in popular protests. In addition, the locations of protests have expanded from local boundaries to national boundaries moving across online and offline spaces.

The role of ICT in popular contention in China have been widened over decades. Traditional communicating tools were used for information distribution and protest mobilization. In the 2000s, mobile phones and the Internet bulletin boards provided space of public discourse and online activism while maintaining existing functions. More recently, microblogging and instant messaging facilitate civil journalism and provide an outlet for citizens to express their anger and discontent. Moreover, the mobilization of public opinion through the new media exert growing influence on government action.

In response to these popular contentions, the local government traditionally used a mode of suppression, when it comes to resistances that threatened social stability. Entering the information age, the central government not only maintains old-fashioned intimidation tactics, but also swiftly reacts by adopting a mix of sophisticated technologies and legislative supplementation.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Question and Background

Question about Chinese state-society relations, whether the economic reform is producing a significant change in the power of state and society in favor of the latter is one of the issues that draw the attention of numerous political scientists. Some scholars argue that social unrest represented by public resistance does not undermine state power and even undergird it by amending the misbehaviors of state authorities (Perry, 2010). On the other hand, others argue that citizens' claims about rights imply "nascent rights consciousness" and may further challenge hegemonic power (O'Brien and Li, 1996, 2006).

The study of Chinese contentious politics has become more diversified as Chinese society has been dramatically transformed socially and economically. Especially, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as represented by the Internet and mobile phones has begun to attract considerable attention in contemporary China as it becomes involved in collective actions.

There have been a number of different views around the world about the impact of ICT on Chinese state-society relations. Some believe that online activism is an important tool for citizens to participate in various fields of society including political participation (Yang, 2009a: 210-213). Other scholar also argued that "the Internet has played an important role in facilitating political liberalization in different

aspects such as political openness, transparency, and accountability" (Zheng, 2008: 11). However, some argue that "the Internet may increase the Chinese Communist Party`s ability to govern efficiency" because the government maximize the economic benefit from the Internet while effectively controlling it by installing legal measures (Shie, 2004: 16).

Even though there have been many different perspectives on the ICT`s influence in state-society relations, there is no doubt that ICT played a certain role in social movements within contemporary China. Entering the 2000s, mobile phones and the Internet have been directly and indirectly utilized in facilitating not only off-line protests but also on-line activism. Specifically, phone call, text messaging and Internet based services have been used for disseminating information, mobilizing participants, forming discourses and reporting protest scenes. More recently, as smartphones are massively distributed, smartphone based services such as social media, microblogs, and instant messages have begun to play a growing role in discourse formation and popular protests mobilization.

Nevertheless, popular debates on ICT and state-society relations in China focus exclusively on certain ICT technologies (i.e., the Internet and mobile phones), functions (phone call and text messaging) or services (BBS, forum, microblogging, instant messaging). These studies commonly do not distinctively divide and show evolving technologies and its influence on popular resistance in China.

Guobin Yang (2009b: 17) has once pointed out the necessity of periodizaion when studying Chinese Internet in his study of Chnese digital civil society. He states that current studies of Chinese Internet are often lack of historical methods. Accoding to him, the periodization makes it possible to identify changes in the continuous social phenomenon. Yang (2009b: 17) puts it in the followig terms:

"One way of infusing historical imagination into studies of the Chinese Internet is to stop viewing its history as a continuous flow of time still unfolding before our eyes. Such a view ironically gives the wrong impression of an eternity and minimizes the sense of change. Although the history of the Internet in China is short, it is possible to analyze it by breaking it down into smaller sections using the strategy of periodization, thus making it possible to highlight both continuities and discontinuities and to identify their underlying conditions. It can reveal change."[1]

For last few decades, ICT technologies has continuously and rapidly evolved and influenced not only people`s lives, but also state-society relations. To clearly see continuities and discontinuities of ICT and investigate the impact of ICT

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[1] Guobin Yang, "Historical imagination in the study of Chinese digital civil society," in *China's Information and Communications Technology Revolution: Social Changes and State Responses,* ed. Xiaoling Zhang and Yongnian Zheng (London; New York: Routledge, 2009b), 17.

on popular resistance in China diachronically, this study employs the distinction between three different time periods: 1) Pre-date the emergence of ICT (1980s-1990s) 2) Early to middle stage of ICT development (2000s) 3) Rapid diffusion of Smartphone and related social media services (2010s). Through this analysis, it introduces different aspects of China`s popular resistance in each stage in context of changing ICT technologies, strengthened or changed characteristics of popular resistance by the ICT and government`s response at each period.

Through the analysis of periodization, this research aims to find answers to the following three questions: First, what are changed or strengthened characteristics of popular resistance in China under the influence of ICT? Second, what is the role of ICT in Popular Resistance in China in each time period? Third, how the government`s response has been changed over time in relation to evolving ICT?

1.2. Literature Review

The literature review identified that there has been significant research on China`s popular resistance. The relation between state and society has been an area of substantial focus in the studies of popular resistance in China. Elizabeth Perry (2010) suggests that "China`s popular contention is driven by rules consciousness." She also states that the popular contention "serves to undergird more than to undermine, the authority of the state" (Perry, 2010: 45). According to Perry, Chinese

protestors does not challenge the legitamacy of the party-state because they "play by the rules". Furthermore, such behavior may enhance the regime's stablity.

Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li (2006: 116, 126-129) pay special attention on the notions of rights. They suggest that "if farmers` claims about rights continue to spread and escalate, it could have implications for the regime`s durability". Later, Li (2010: 58-59) defines rules and rights consciousness based on the targets of claims and acceptance of existing rules. He argues that farmers` claims which are targeting local rule-enforcement authorities and based on existing political rules are indicatives of the "rules consciousness" and the opposites are defined as "rights consciousness". He sees that "rights and rules consciousness are not mutually exclusive and argues that the mobilization of rules consciousness can contribute to the growth of rights consciousness by encouraging popular protests against local authorities, because such contention often weakens popular trust in central leaders" (Li, 2010: 65).

Some scholars are discussing the sociopolitical background of the increasing popular contention in modern China. HongYi Lai (2010) argues that uneven social development produced popular protest. The author states, "China`s model of development in the reform era is marked by an imbalance between fast opening of the economy and the society and sluggish opening of the political system" (Lai, 2010: 819). Some authors underline that main source of resistance is violated or ignored rights. Peter Ho (2003) points out that lack of clarity over "land property

rights" became the major cause of social conflict since the reform (Ho, 2010: 101-102). Yongshun Cai (2008) introduces reasons for collective resistance discovered through case studies. His study shows that most resistances were caused by "economic welfare benefits" and "cadres` abuse of power or corruption" (Cai, 2008: 25-27).

Cai (2008, 2010) studies what determines how local governments respond against popular resistance. He shows that local governments tend to choose suppression "when concessions are difficult to make and citizen resistance threatens social stability, policy implementation or local officials' images" (Cai, 2008: 30-38). Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang (2013: 1503-1504) argue that Chinese government is adopting "bargained authoritarianism". They suggest that the Chinese government manage popular unrest by "depoliticizing state-society confrontation and by allowing aggrieved citizens a certain degree of political leverage and relatively expansive opportunities to obtain material concessions and symbolic rewards from the state"

Entering the 2000s, scholars are increasingly discussing the relevance of ICT in China`s popular protest since the advent of mobile phones and the Internet. Christian Gobel, Lynette H. Ong, (2012: 10) argue that "the increase of social unrest can be explained by certain factors, which are related to the growth and spread of information and communications technology (ICT) in China". Through the improved and widespread availability of information and communication, protesters

learn from each other and become aware of their issues of well-being. They also underline that "the tactical deployment of ICT can serve to surreptitiously coordinate protesters and to outsmart government censorship which means increased costs for the government to maintain stability" (Gobel and Ong, 2012: 11).

Jun Liu (2015) focuses on phone call and text messaging functions. He suggests that the mobile phones play a role as a key facilitator in protests. In addition to proliferating mobilization information, mobile phones enable participants to "metacommunicate their mutual relationships". And this is "the pivotal driving force for protest participation" (Liu, 2015: 503, 516).

Some scholars observe the Internet as a channel for political participation. Yongnian Zheng (2008) underlines the relevance of the Internet in the state-society relations in China. He suggests that state and social forces continuously transform each other and adjust themselves to the changing conditions in "Internet-mediated public space" (Zheng, 2008: xviii). He also highlights the role of the Internet as "facilitator of political liberalization in different aspects such as political openness, transparency, and accountability" (Zheng, 2008: 11). Guobin Yang (2008: 143) shows how Chinese citizens expanded cultural, regional and political participation in the information age. He also introduces "three important ways" that Internet contention has influenced Chinese politics and society as follows:

"First, internet contention has shaped policy or the behavior of those who come under challenge. Second, internet contention both responds to and shapes mass media behavior. Third, internet contention has contributed to an informational politics in China by making the internet a new means, stake, and arena of political struggle"[2]

More recent studies show that social media services offered by the Internet and smartphones are becoming an increasingly important factor amongst popular movements in China. Some studies emphasize the relevance of digital media in the organization and mobilization process of collective action. Jun Liu (2016) studies interconnections between several cases of environmental activism in China. He argues that "the intertwining of digital media and traditional media generates the recurrent dynamics of contention and sustains the long term influence of digitally mediated environtal activism in China" (Liu, 2016: 622). JinYong Kim (2014: 167) views mobile phones and the Internet facilitate formation of protest network which transcending regional and social class boundaries. Ronggui Huang and Xiaoyi Sun (2016) narrow down the scope to the usage of Weibo in popular protests. Their study reveals that the most tweets call for personal preference revelation instead of

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[2] Guobin Yang, "Contention in Cyberspace," in *Popular Protest in China*, ed. O'Brien Kevin J. (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 143.

participation in physical protests. The social information about public preference

lead to further preference revelation and participation in offline protest. In this regard,

they argue that "social media use blurs the boundary between online individualized

expression and offline pretest, and thus enables offline protests" (Huang and Sun,

2016: 398).

Some scholars focus on specific social issues. JungNam Lee (2016)

investigated the 'new citizen movement' throughout the emergence of Internet and

social networking services. She argues that the Social Networking Services (SNS)

have become an important channel for intellectuals to actively participate in politics.

She further argues that "in the long-term, 'the new citizen movement' is an important

development that can lead to the growth of civil society and the possibility of

political change" (이정남, 2016: 305-306, 312-313). DeLuca et al. (2016) research

how social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat are utilized in environmental

protests. They view that "social media are key to China`s environmental movement

in terms of spreading awareness, mobilizing citizens, aiding ENGOs, and garnering

internal government attention and international press" (DeLuca et al., 2016: 334).

The book "The Internet, Social Media, and a Changing China" introduces

most recent studies on various social issues involving "Chinese Internet after the

social media revolution." Min Jiang (2016) shows how social media serve as a space

for public opinion in China by identifying different types of online activities.

However, the author contends that the online public opinion is unlikely challenge the

hegemonic power. According to her, social and political impact of the Internet "increasingly needs to sufficiently account for the effect of divergent cyber subjectivities and a wider range of factors beyond merely considering the Internet`s technological impact on the state or the grass roots in general" (Jiang, 2016: 48). Zhengzhi Shi and Guobin Yang (2016) states about the development of public communication enabled by social media. They argue that social media contributed to individual empowerment, which they call "self-redemption" by making individual citizens to have moral obligations and take actions (Shi and Yang, 2015: 80-81).

Ya-Wen Lei and Danial Xiaodan Zhou (2016: 108) studied "how the online public engages with law and what the political consequences are when the online public is skeptical about China`s legal system." In particular, they have conducted contents analysis of discussions made by official media and major online forum regarding famous "South China tiger" scandal. They argue that "the state`s legalistic legitimation strategy may backfire as the online public sphere enables citizens not only to uncover problems in China`s legal system, but also to connect these problems to the political regime more generally" (Lei and Zhou, 2016: 108).

Anne S. Y. Cheung (2016) introduces emerging online forces and their activities, namely "public opinion monitoring." in her study on microbloggers` battle for legal justice in China. According to the author, "the Internet and microblogs enables more direct citizen engagement with the authorities and make the judiciary

and Party authorities be more attentive to public opinion and the online public`s monitoring power" (Cheung, 2016: 148)

Peter Gries, Derek Steiger, and Want Tao (2016) analyzes anti-Japanese opinions expressed on social media and off-line space. Their finding suggests that "nationalist opinion expressed online in social media and off-line in street demonstrations played a critical role in escalating the Chinese party-state`s response to the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute" (Gries et al.,2016: 176). Chuanjie Zhang (2016) has analyzed public discourse about the Democratic People`s Republic of Korea that appeared on Weibo. One of Zhang`s findings are "microblogging activity is very responsive to major events involving the DPRK" (Zhang, 2016: 220).

MinJa Lee (2015: 163-164) compares China`s on-line to a 'space of freedom in the cage' which is controlled by the government. According to Lee, Chinese citizens are expanding the space of restricted freedom through on-line activities. She also argues that China`s on-line activism by 'Smart Mobs' is implying democratization of political process as the Internet is becoming tools to connect and mobilize the entire nation for rectifying authorities` misbehavior and social injustice (이민자, 2015: 239-240)

In summary, previous studies on popular resistance in China tend to focus on state-society relations. Furthermore, studies on popular movements involving ICT have recently emerged and mostly focus exclusively on certain technologies and certain periods. Such studies have provided an understanding the relevance of ICT

in Chinese social movements. However, it failed to explore the changing characteristics of popular resistance under the influence of evolving ICT technologies and to recognize the government`s response to changing conditions. Aiming to fill this gap, this study will employ a division of three different time frames based on ICT development stage and sociopolitical change. Through the division of time frames, this study will show how ICT changes or strengthens certain characteristics of popular protest, what the role of ICT is in popular resistance and how the government responded to these changing conditions.

1.3. Methodology and Organization

The methodology deployed in this research will mainly include literature research and case study. In terms of choosing cases for popular resistance, the use of ICT and social impacts are considered as the focal points. In addition, cases targeting public power such as central government and local government are taken into consideration as this research is focusing on state society relations as well. The cases are mainly collected from existing research, unpublished media reports, Internet forum and blogs.

This study also includes a statistical review on the changes in popular protest and ICT development between 1990s and 2010s. Statistical data related to ICT is mostly collected from China Statistical Yearbook and Statistical Survey on Internet Development in China. To observe trends of poplar protest in China, data

from existing studies are referred due to limitations in the data source related to popular protest in China. This study is consisted of six parts. The first chapter contains research background and research question. It also presents a critical review of current studies of popular resistance in China with focus on ICT. Chapter two introduces a chorological analysis of statistics related to ICT and popular protest in China.

The third chapter specifies the time period and investigates several cases of popular resistance involving the use of ICT in three different periods: 1) Pre-date the emergence of ICT (1980s-1990s) 2) Early to middle stage of ICT development (2000s) 3) Rapid diffusion of Smartphone and related social media services (2010s). Background of the periodization is introduced following that chapter. The case study will focus more on the third period (2010s) to explore relatively less researched period and contribute to related studies. The fourth chapter elaborates on the government`s response against popular resistances.

In chapter five the aim is to answer the following research questions: What are changed or strengthened characteristics of popular resistance in China under the influence of ICT? What is the role of ICT in Popular Resistance in China in each time period? How the government`s response has been changed over time in relation to evolving ICT? It concludes the research by summarizing and reemphasizing the meaningful finding from the research. This study argues that continuously evolving

information and communication technology has direct and indirect impact on the changing patterns of popular protest in China.

1.4. Theoretical Background of Periodization

Commenting on the notion of "historical imagination", Guobin Yang (2009b: 17) suggests scholars to view Chinese Internet from a quite different angle. The following is a definition on the historical imagination by Yang:

"Historical imagination is not just about providing the historical background for what is happening at present. Nor is it about discovering historical precedents of a new phenomenon and thereby implying that nothing under the sun is new. Historical sociology views social formations at the outcomes of the interactions between social action and social structure. It is about how people make history under conditions not of their own making. Such analysis is about changes and processes. In them, the past is neither just data nor background, but they very conditions that constitute the present"[3]

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[3] Guobin Yang, "Historical imagination in the study of Chinese digital civil society," in *China's Information and Communications Technology Revolution: Social Changes and State Responses,* ed. Xiaoling Zhang and Yongnian Zheng (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 17.

According to him, current studies of Chinese Internet lack historical imagination because of a short history of the Internet in China and its fast-changing nature. However, such a view blurs the distinctions between changes and leads to a distorted view. To clearly see the "continuity and discontinuities" and identify change, Yang suggests analyzing it by breaking it down into smaller periods (Yang, 2009b: 17).

Regarding the periodization of the Chinese Internet, several attempts are introduced in Yang`s study (2009b). A public exhibition organized by the China Internet Network Information Center held in 2004 made an official attempt of periodization. The exhibit breaks down 16 years of Chinese Internet history into 5 stages according to a developmental stage of the Internet in China. It identifies the period from 1999 to 2002 as a time when the Chinese Internet gained momentum. From the year 2003, the Internet entered into the period of prosperity (Yang, 2009b: 20-21).

Similarly, Guobin Yang (2009b) himself also made a distinction of two periods, from mid-1990s to 2002 and from 2003 onwards for his study on development of digital civil society in China. The period from the mid-1990s and 2002 not only shows the increasing number of internet users but also the fledging digital civil society in China. For instance, BBS forum, a web-based civic organization and online activism group emerged. In Yang`s periodization, the year 2003 is the beginning of the next period when digital civil society entered a stage of

expansion. From 2003 onward, online opinion has gained greater influence and its frequency has increased (Yang, 2009: 22-27).

Even though several discussions are made about the periodization of Chinese ICT, there is currently not much research on overall history of Chinese ICT from nascent communication tools to cutting-edge smartphones. To fill this gap, this study will look back on the last four decades from the 1980s to the present and divide it into three phases.

In order to make a periodization, I will consider not only the development status of ICT but also the political and economic environment to avoid exaggerating the impact of ICT as other scholar (Hughes, 2003: 6) has pointed out. The first period is from 1980s to 2000, the economic reform era when China was marketized and the immense social change was resulted.

Figure 1. Structure of the Study

| Period 1 (1980s-1990s) | Period 2 (2000s) | Period 3 (2010s) |

Social background (political, economic)

Information & Communication Technology

| Popular Resistance | New characteristics | New characteristics |
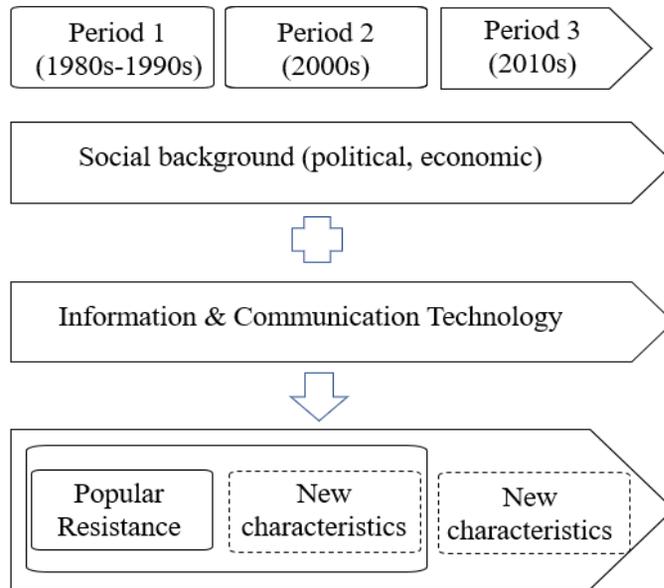
Under the Hu Jintao`s strong leadership during the early 2000s to early 2010s, China entered a new age. Since the entry or the WTO, China`s economy grew faster than ever, but the society became more contentious (Gobel and Ong, 2012: 6). As the Chinese government pursues economic growth through communication revolution, China has achieved substantial development in ICT industry. From the early 2000s, mobile telephone penetration rate and popularization rate of Internet grows remarkably (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016).

Since the early 2010s, people started using smartphones and it soon became the latest rage in China (CNNIC July, 2013: 4). Hence, Smartphone related services have influenced on ways of expression of public opinion. In this period, motivations

of popular resistance are more diversified than before.[4] President Xi Jinping stresses internal unity and the government has been introducing variety of measures to strengthen the political power. Now, fast changing ICT is not just a growth engine for the country. It is also a target to apply political regulation and control minute by minute.

2. Statistical review

2.1. Conceptualization of Popular Resistance

The term 'mass incidents (群体性事件)' is generally used in China to describe social unrest cases since 2003 (Ong, 2015: 346). Neverthelss, there is no clear definition of "mass incident' provided ethier by Chinese authorities or by shcolars (Ong, 2015: 347). A report on study of 2012 mass incident introduces that 'mass incidents' refers to:

"large scale activities that do not have legitimate basis for groups that share the same interests. The collective activities include rallies, demonstrations,

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[4] 陈锐 and 付萌, "2012 年群体性事件研究报告," *法制网*, last modified December 27, 2012, http://www.legaldaily.com.cn/The_analysis_of_public_opinion/content/2012-12/27/content_4092138.htm.

strikes, petitions, occupation of traffic or public places and other forms of social disorder that have a negative impact on society."[5]

Most recently, as the Internet has provided a virtual public sphere, new definition on popular resistance has been introduced. Guobin Yang (2008) separates contentions involving the Internet into two types: "Internet contention" and "Internet assisted contention". "Internet contention" refers to online activism which takes place in cyberspace. "Internet assisted contention" means offline protest events mobilized by the Internet (Yang, 2008: 126).

My case study will adopt both definitions from a report on study of 2012 mass incident and Guobin Yang`s study (2008): Unlawful collective activities including offline and online for groups that share the same interests, driven by anti-system or anti-government sentiments, as well as by conflicts among private individuals. This study will also contain case studies of mass incidents assisted by traditional communication tools to understand the first phase of ICT development.

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[5] Ibid.

2.2. Trend of Popular Resistance in China

China has been witnessing a dramatic increase of protests since the post-Mao era. A report released by China`s Ministry of Public Security shows that the number of "mass incidents" has been rapidly increasing from 8,700 in 1993 to 87,000 in 2005, and then to range between 180,000 to 230,000 in 2010.[6] Although there is no aggregate-level data released since 2011, statistics related to labor disputes account for the recent upward trends of collective actions. According to China Labour Bulletin, the number of strikes and worker protests recorded in 2015 has doubled over the previous year. The report states that the increasing trend can be explained by "the economic downturn" and it is happening across all key industries including "manufacturing, construction and mining" (China Labour Bulletin, 2016).

Scale of the mass incidents is also increasing as time goes by. Even though there is no statistical basis, changing perception on collective actions supports the

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[6] Jinsheng Chen, *Quntixing shijian yanjiu baogao (Research report on mass incidents)* (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe ,2004), pp. 62, 170; Murray Scot Tanner, "China rethinks unrest." *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2004): 137-156, p.139.; Robert Marquand, "In China, stresses spill over into riots." *Christian Science Monitor* 22 (2004): 1; French H. W., "Alarm and disarray on rise in China." *International Herald Tribune* (August 24, 2005); Richard McGregor, "Data show social unrest on the rise in China." *Financial Times* (January 19, 2006)*,* cited in Jae Ho Chung, Hongyi Lai, and Ming Xia, "Mounting Challenges to Governance in China: Surveying Collective Protestors, Religious Sects and Criminal Organizations." *The China Journal* 56, no. 56 (2006): 1-31, p.6.; Zhu Zhaogen, "Xunzhao Zhongguo zhenggai de "jin yaoshi" (*Searching for the 'Golden Key' to China's Political Reform), Lianhe zaobao* 14 (2010), cited in Christian Gobel, and Lynette H. Ong, "Social unrest in China." *Europe China Research and Advice Network* (2012), p.22.

assumption. Lai et al. (2006: 5) introduce an official definition of mass incidents made in 2004. They state that "Collective Public Security Incidents (群体性治安事件) refer to incidents involving more than five protesters. Furthermore, they introduce a term "large-scale Collective Public Security Incidents (大规模群体性事件)" explaining that it refers to mass incident which have more than 500 people involved (Chen, 2004, cited in Lai et al., 2006: 5)

However, more recent academic report defines "mass incidents" as larger scale of incidents - incidents involving more than 100 protesters. Even, there are some cases have more than 10,000 people involved (Hou, 2014). This trend indicates that scale of mass incidents become larger as time passes.

Graph 1. Number of Mass Incidents in China from 1993 to 2010
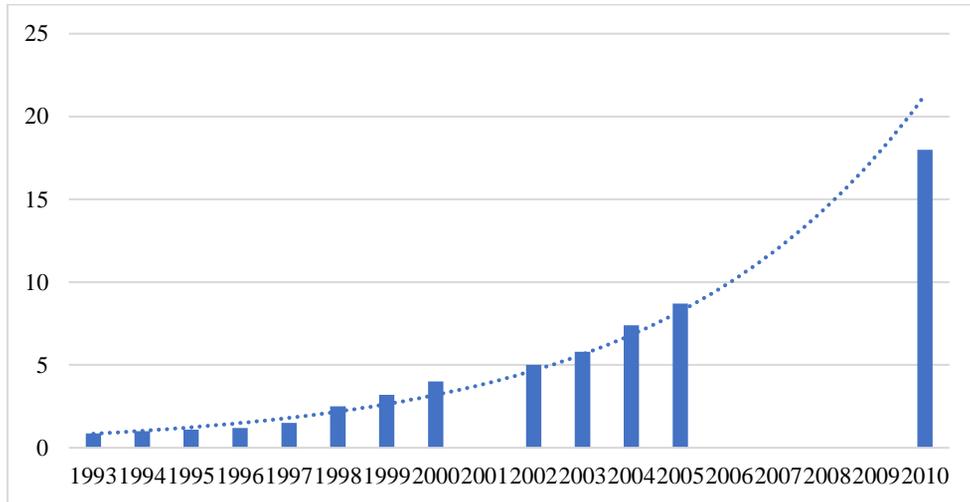
Sources: Jinsheng Chen, *Quntixing shijian yanjiu baogao (Research report on mass incidents)* (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe ,2004), pp. 62, 170; Murray Scot Tanner, "China rethinks unrest." *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2004): 137-156, p.139.; Robert Marquand, "In China, stresses spill over into riots." *Christian Science Monitor* 22 (2004): 1; French H. W., "Alarm and disarray on rise in China." *International Herald Tribune* (August 24, 2005); Richard McGregor, "Data show social unrest on the rise in China." *Financial Times* (January 19, 2006)*,* cited in Jae Ho Chung, Hongyi Lai, and Ming Xia, "Mounting Challenges to Governance in China: Surveying Collective Protestors, Religious Sects and Criminal Organizations." *The China Journal* 56, no. 56 (2006): 1-31, p.6.; Zhu Zhaogen, "Xunzhao Zhongguo zhenggai de "jin yaoshi" (*Searching for the 'Golden Key' to China's Political Reform), Lianhe zaobao* 14 (2010), cited in Christian Gobel, and Lynette H. Ong, "Social unrest in China." *Europe China Research and Advice Network* (2012), p.22.

2.3. Trend of ICT Development in China

Telephone service including fixed line and wireless became widespread by the early 2000 in China. Before 2000, there was not much telephone service provided and the penetration rate remained under 10%. During this period, face to face communication and traditional media such as newspapers, television and radio are the main sources of information disseminated (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016).

As China`s economy grew rapidly since its WTO accession in 2001, the mobile phone penetration rate also dramatically increased, and it reached almost half of the total population in 2008 (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). This surprising achievement can be attributed to scientific socialism which had long been claimed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Zheng, 2008: 27). Mobile phone calls, text messaging and mobile web browsing all began to facilitate social network formation on a large scale and with great speed. This period also witnessed fast growth of Internet propagation. Since the country was first "connected" in 1993, the number of Chinese Internet users had reached 162 million by June 2007, meaning that China ranked as the second largest size of Internet users in the world, after the United States (CNNIC July, 2007: 8).

Table 1. Penetration Rate of Telephone, Internet and Smartphone in China

Year	Total Telephone Including Mobile Telephone (sets per 100)	Mobile Telephone (sets per 100)	Popularization Rate of Internet (%)	Smartphone Rate of Penetration (%)
1978	0.38			
1980	0.43			
1985	0.6			
1990	1.11			
1995	4.66	0.3		
2000	19.1	6.72		
2005	57.22	30.26	8.5	
2006	63.4	35.3	10.5	
2007	69.4	41.64	16	
2008	74.29	48.53	22.6	
2009	79.89	56.27	28.9	
2010	86.41	64.36	34.3	15
2011	94.81	73.55	38.3	35
2012	103.1	82.5	42.1	-
2013	109.95	90.33	45.8	43
2014	112.26	94.03	47.9	48.1
2015	-	-	50.3	50.9
2016	-	-	53.2	53.3

Sources: National Bureau of statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook 2016* (Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2016), http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/statisticaldata/AnnualData/; "Share of mobile phone users that use a smartphone in China from 2013 to 2019," Statista, https://www.statista.com/statistics/257045/smartphone-user-penetration-in-china/;

雷彬, "中國城市智能手機普及率達 35%," 通信信息報, November 17, 2011 cited in 김진용, "중국 집단시위 네트워크 형성에 관한 연구." 분쟁해결연구 12, no. 1 (2014): 149-72, p.161; Trefis Team, "Rural China Gets Smartphones, China Mobile Goes to $58." *Forbes*, https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2011/10/05/rural-china-gets-smartphones-china-mobile-goes-to-58/#71383baa6502.

One thing to note is that web browsing through mobile phone should be differentiated from the one with computer (PC or laptop) in this period. Because mobile phone used different communication network, its browsing service was very limited to simple and basic level such as text centered services and low speed web browsing.

Figure 2. Evolution of Information Communication Technologies
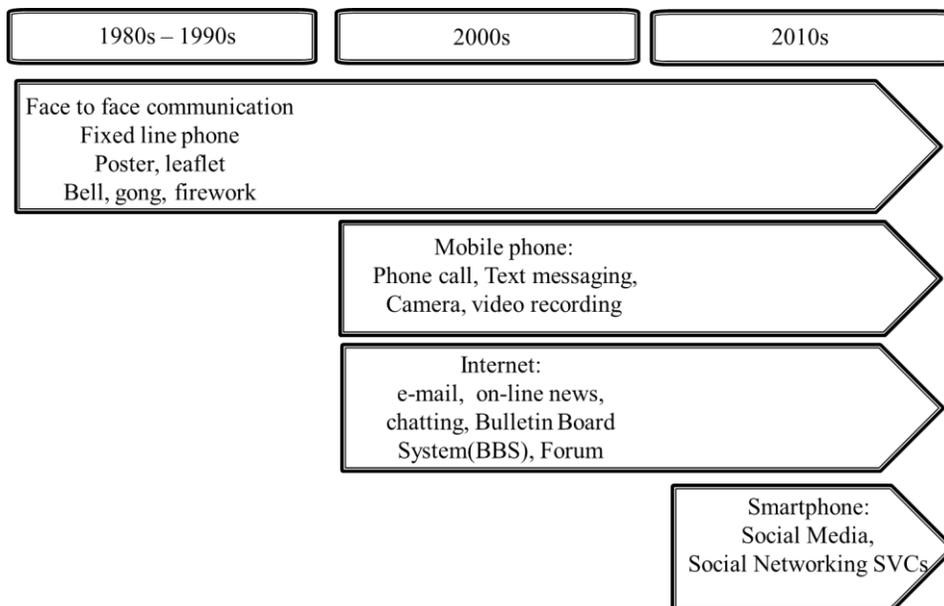
Year 2011 is considered as a starting point of mass distribution of Smartphone in China. Smartphone penetration rate grew explosively from 1.6% to 35% in one year (雷彬, 2011, cited in Kim, 2014: 161). Different from normal mobile phones, Smartphones provided easy and fast Internet access through 3G and wireless LAN network. Accordingly, Smartphones has become the most predominant Internet access device. Up to June 2016, China had 710 million Internet users (with 51.7% of Internet penetration rate). Among the total Internet users, the number of people using Mobile phones to access the Internet accounted for 95.1% (695 million users). This proportion is much larger than those of using desktops and laptops as a means to access the Internet (60.1% and 36.8% respectively). The number of Mobile Internet users are continuously growing due to the increasing new Internet users and former PC users who are choosing to Mobile phones in their way of access the Internet (CNNIC July, 2016: 1)

Figure 3. The Size of Mobile Internet Users in China and Its Proportion
in Internet Users
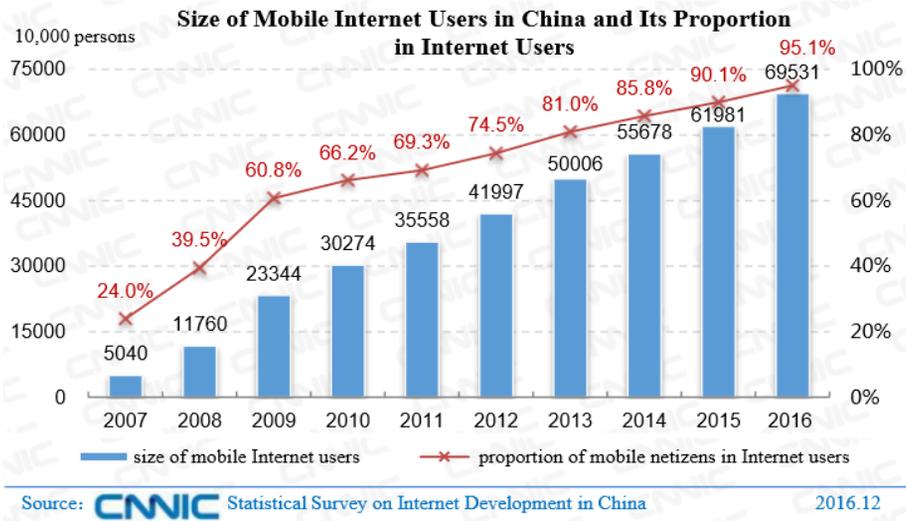
Source: China Internet Network Information Center, "The 39th Statistical report on internet
development in China," January, 2017. http://www.cnnic.net.cn/

With the improvement of mobile communication networks and the popularization of Smartphones, the mobile Internet application penetrated into every aspect of users' livelihood. One of the key application services provided by Smartphone is social networking services represented by WeChat, Qzone and Weibo etc. These services facilitate real-time information exchange with images and video clips among many and unspecified individuals.

Figure 4. Usage of Internet Access Device
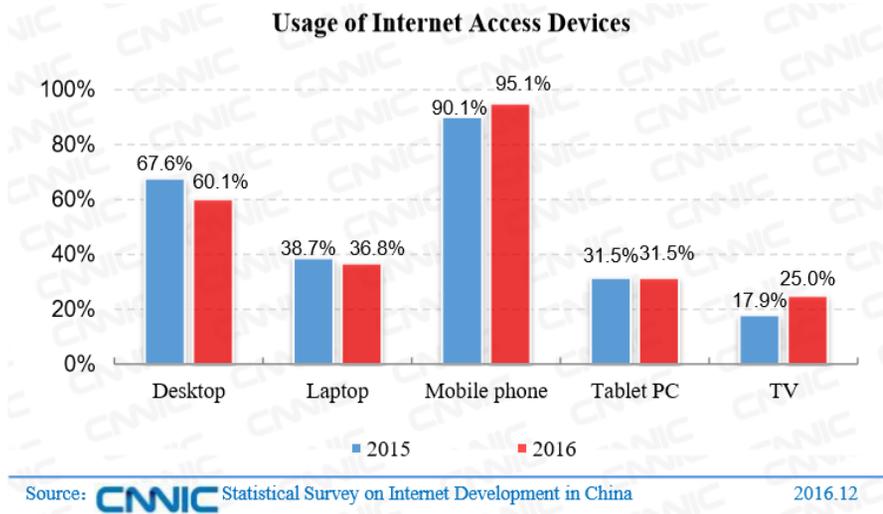
Source: China Internet Network Information Center, "The 39th Statistical report on internet development in China," January, 2017. http://www.cnnic.net.cn/

WeChat is mobile instant messaging service launched by Tencent in 2011. WeChat has its origin in QQ which is a computer based messenger service. WeChat has maximized its influence in Chinese citizens by providing not only profile and moment functions but also convergent services such as On-line shopping, payment and games. Through WeChat, users who made friends exclusively communicate with each other (김남영, 2014).

Different from WeChat, Weibo offers an opened on-line space. Since 2010, Weibo has become one of most influential Internet based mass media outlets with news and forum. Simple and convenient methods of use, free expression of opinions

and frequent information acquisition are the key reasons for many netizens use Weibo. As Weibo users take the role as opinion leaders, the Chinese government has begun to perceive Weibo as strong mass media outlet that challenges the Communist party`s media blackout efforts. Since Xi Jinping strengthened its control on Weibo, the number of Weibo users has been decreasing since December, 2012 (이민자, 2015: 42-47).

Figure 5. Usage Rate of Typical Social Networking Applications
(Dec. 2015 – Jun. 2016)
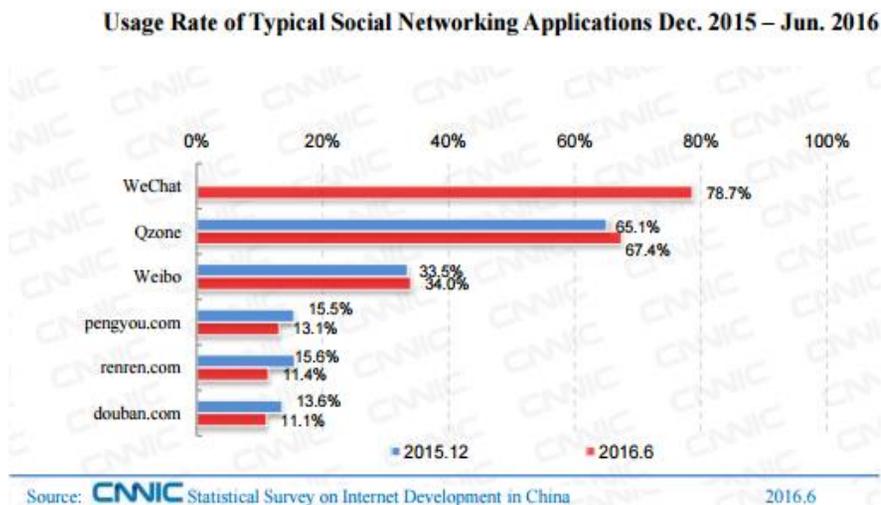
Source: China Internet Network Information Center, "The 38th Statistical report on internet development in China," July, 2016. http://www.cnnic.net.cn/

3. Characteristics of ICT and Popular Resistance over Three Time Periods

Influence, Role of ICT and Government`s Response based on Case Studies

This chapter will explore characteristics of popular resistance assumed to be influenced by ICT in each period. Popular resistance is an output of the interaction of multiple conditions in a society, and the ICT`s effect on popular resistance is difficult to prove as a causal relationship (Yang, 2009b: 18).[7] Therefore, this study assumes that the ICT is one of several conditions influencing popular resistance in China, and tries to find out changed (strengthened or weakened) characteristics of popular resistance through the introduction of new technology.

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[7] Yang (2009b: 18) states that "Political, economic, technological and social conditions act on development of digital civil society, but also react to it."

3.1. Pre-date the Emergence of ICT (1980s-1990s)

3.1.1. Socioeconomic Background and Communication Methods

The economic reform provided a structural condition for popular protest in rural and urban China during the post-Mao era. Rapid marketization and modernization led to all kinds of contradictions in Chinese society (郭纯平, 2013: 38). The number of annual protests has grown steadily since the early 1990s. The motivations of popular resistance are practical and economical. Chen and Kang (2016: 601) point out that "the market economy has transformed China`s social and economic landscape, engendering means of articulating interests that are in many ways distinct from those of the pre-reform period."

In rural China, disputes surrounding the economic interest and burden after the agricultural reforms were major causes of popular unrest. After de-collectivization, land disputes and higher taxes or surcharges were main grievances raised by farmers (Perry, 2010: 19). Associated with the villagers` economic burden, corrupted and unresponsive local cadres were additional sources of grievances (Cai, 2008: 26). Rapid socioeconomic transformation together with "the lack of a strong legal system" caused local governments` misconduct (Cai, 2010: 22).

In urban China, state-owned enterprise (SOE) reform followed in 1980s. To enhance the competitiveness and efficiency, many small and medium sized SOEs have been converted into private ownership, merged into a large one, or even go

bankrupt. The restructuring led to collective layoffs, violation of workers` benefit and labor abuses (Chen, 2003: 237-238). Many of the workers whose interest was damaged have raised their voices and protested. Despite the brutal suppression of June 4th in 1989, workers' protests grew in frequency and scale in the 1990s (Perry, 2010: 22). Between the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, massive lay-offs were made in state sector and urban collective sector (Cai, 2010: 22). Workers and retired workers who failed to receive living allowances, pensions and other necessary welfare benefits presented collective petitions and even provoked social unrest.

3.1.2. Communication Methods and Popular Resistance

Before 2000, telecommunication services were not widely propagated and the penetration rate remained under 10% (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). During this period, traditional communication channels and traditional media outlets such as newspapers, television and radio are the main sources of information. Information and news broadcasted through traditional media are tightly controlled by the state (Zheng, 2008: 58). Public grievance issues are assumed to be disseminated through traditional channels such as face to face communication, liaison networks, posters and telegraphy etc.

Li and O'Brien (2008) provide some clues about how telecommunication was involved in protest mobilization in this period. In Hengyang county, Hunan, for instance, protest leaders often utilized "mobile phones and a telephone tree" to seek

to avoid surveillance when they built "multi-village or multi-township" networks (Li and O'Brien, 2008: 9). However, the telecommunication did not take a large role in most cases of mass demonstration until the late 1990s or early 2000. During the mobilization of public or activists, the leaders often relied on "existing social networks, such as fellow clan members, friends or acquaintances" probably because there was not much modern telecommunication medium propagated (Li and O'Brien, 2008: 6)

Instead, the role of protest leadership was relatively important in the age of traditional communication. In rural China, protest leaders who are "long-standing public figures" or "ordinary villagers evolve into protest leaders" shape villagers` grievances into collective action (Li and O'Brien, 2008: 1). Under the protest leaders` orchestration, participants and activists were mobilized and collective actions were organized. The leaders even organized multi-village and multi township contentions (Li & O'Brien, 2008: 9). Cai (2010: 34-35) also elaborates several important roles performed by leaders in collective actions such as "participants mobilization, information dissemination, inspirational acts, and negotiation with the government or other social actors on behalf of participants."

Cui Luokun in Ningxiang county was one of such protest leaders. He took a leading role in mobilizing a large demonstration against local government's excessive taxation known as the Daolin incident (1999). Similarly, Xiong Maisheng in Taojiang county raised an objection to the county government when the authorities

suddenly increased township surcharges in 1997. He was a successful entrepreneur and respected by other villagers (Li and O'Brien, 2008: 12-13).

When the protest leaders disseminate information, and mobilized participants, they utilized many traditional communication tools. In small communities, gongs, bells, and fireworks were utilized as a signal of an action based on an agreement made in advance. Hebei riot is one of the cases that fireworks were used to mobilized participants. One day in September, 2000, a few activists set off fireworks to gather the villagers and approach the township government to complain about their financial burden. On the second day, fireworks were set off again and more than 40 villagers gathered. However, the villagers' petition was ignored by the local government consecutively. On the third day, after fireworks were set off again, peasants from neighboring villages also flocked and the demonstration turned into a riot (Cai, 2010: 38-39).

Yang village (1993–2000) incident introduced by Cai (2010: 83-85) was a case of using a bell as a communication tool. Whenever township cadres enter the village to collect taxes and fees, "villagers would ring a bell, and women, old people, and children would first rush out to surround the cadres and their vehicles." In a county in Hunan province, gong sound signaled a collective action. Cai (2010: 97) states that "On July 5, 1996, when township official cadres went to a village to check on the progress of fee collections, the villagers struck gongs, and 700 villagers came

to surround the township cadres, smashing the windows of their car and throwing their motorcycles into the river."

Factory worker leaders sometimes made use of leafleting when they make claims and mobilize participants. Chen (2008) states that "Like other ordinary citizens in China, workers have limited access to the media or other channels to express grievances and mobilized contention. Leafleting was an alternative through which worker leaders could present their views in written form to rank-file workers." The main task of the leaflets was to disseminate information and propose alternative measures to convince workers and local government. Leaflets were also used to deliver slogans and mobilize workers (Chen, 2008: 97).

Poster notice was widely used in students and workers` resistance during the reform period. Democracy Wall Movement (1978-1979) is a typical case of social movement through posters (Perry, 2010: 21). Since the 1978, big character posters were widely spread on major universities of Beijing under the influence of the official discussion of the CCP which recommended adding the "Four Freedoms" the constitution. Thousands of posters containing thoughts on political and social issues were put on a wall of Xidan Street, Beijing. The wall posters soon became widespread in other major cities in China. On November 23,1978, Lu Pu`s poster ("Fire Lighter of Democracy Wall") on the Democracy Wall in Xidan which critiqued Mao and the government led to real demonstration movement. Since then,

student and urban workers in the 1970s to 1990s Movement (1978-1979) intensely expressed their thoughts and claims on the posters (Brodsgaard, 1981; Wei, 1999).

At times, popular protests occur accidently without existence of leaders and prior mobilization. Some scholars argue that strong social ties of China such as families, lineages, villages provide foundation for mobilization of the masses (Perry, 1985: 439, 김진용, 2014: 156). In addition, profound social grievances seem to be a spark of accidental protests. In many cases, participants took the opportunity to "vent out their anger against the authorities" even though they did not have any direct interest in the incident (Tong and Lei, 2010: 487).

The Hengyang county accident, for example, is a typical case of accidental outbreak. A man having a grievance against higher taxes heard neighbors arguing with township cadres who came to levy illegal fees. He rushed to the scene and the dispute turned into a brawl with dozens of villagers` participation (Li and O'Brian, 2008: 4). Jiangxi riot (1999) is another case that occurred accidently. On a market day, a man was pulling a two-wheeled cart riding his wife in it. At that moment, a car driven by government officials collided with the cart. The man who was pulling the cart was injured in the collision. When the man and his wife demanded for compensation, the township officials refused. Then, the wife loudly explained to bystanders about illegal tax collection by the township officials. Hundreds of villagers at the scene were agitated and joined the condemning the township officials.

Angry villagers turned violent and raided the local government building (Li and O'Brian, 2008: 5).

Table 2. Cases of Popular Resistance (1980s-1990s)

Year	Protest Name	Communication Methods	Motivations
1978-1979	Democracy Wall Movement	'Wall poster' critiques Mao sparks street demonstration with more than ten thousand people marched in Tiananmen square	Under acquiescence of the Chinese government, citizens raised voice for democracy and human rights.
1993-2000	Yang village riot	Whenever township cadres enter the village to collect taxes and fees, villagers would ring a 'bell' to mobilize protestors surround the cadres and their vehicles	Excessive agricultural tax by local government
1996	Hunan province riot	Township cadre hit a 'gong' to mobilize villagers	Excessive agricultural tax by local government
1999	Factory workers` protest	Using 'posters and leaflets', workers disseminated information, expressed their opinion and mobilized protestors	Unpaid wage and pension, lay-off by SOE reform

Year	Protest Name	Communication Methods	Motivations
1999	Hengyang town riot, Jiangxi riot	Accidental outbreak of riot by witness on the scene	Excessive agricultural tax and corruption of local government
2000	Hebei riot	Mobilized demonstrators by setting off 'fireworks'	Excessive agricultural tax by local government

Sources: Yongshun Cai, *Collective Resistance in China : Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 38-38, 83-85, 97; Lianjiang Li, and Kevin J O'Brien. "Protest Leadership in Rural China," *The China Quarterly* 193, no. 193 (2008): 1-23, p.4; Feng Chen, "Worker Leaders and Framing Factory-Based Resistance," in *Popular Protest in China*, ed. Kevin J. O'Brien (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2009), p.97; Wei JingSheng, "Unorthodox Opinions Are Heard on the Street." Time, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2054308,00.html.

3.2. Early to Middle Stage of ICT Development (2000s)

3.2.1. Socioeconomic Background and Emergence of ICT

Over the last 30 years of the economic reform, China had achieved unprecedented economic growth. As of 2003, China became the world`s second largest economy. However, the ongoing economic transformation had resulted in socio economic polarization which is one of the main causes of social unrest. Joining the World Trade Organization is a key event for China`s economic development and social transformation at the beginning of the 21st century.

In the 2000s, China was facing a number of urgent challenges such as urban-rural disparity, worsening gap between the rich and the poor, lack of a social safety net, mounting social unrest and the destruction of the environment etc. Hu Jintao – Wen jiabao`s leadership had to focus on improvement of people`s livelihood (조영남, 2008: 59). Lai (2010: 821) states that Chinese citizens have become more conscious of their "legitimate social and economic rights." He further argues that "imbalance between fast opening of the economy and the society and sluggish of the political system" result in frequent popular protest with high economic growth (Lai, 2010: 819).

Guobin Yang (2009a: 9-10) points out the "growing complexity" in the age of globalization as a factor of triggering popular contention. And he defines the on-line activism as one of the ways of response to the changing society. He states, "At

the macro and micro level, Chinese on-line activism is a generalized response to consequences of Chinese modernity. It is a countermovement rooted in material grievances and an identity movement born out of the identity crisis associated with dramatic change" (in political, cultural, social, economic and global dimensions) (Yang, 2009a: 209).

In the second phase of ICT development, land disputes, urban demolition, SOE reform and environmental degradation were major factors causing popular protests. Although several important measures have taken place since the 1990s, the root cause of land disputes was still unresolved. According to Ho (2010: 105), "the vague definition of collective ownership and the collective`s inability to protect and represent its members" are main causes of the rural land disputes. Consequently, the illegal expropriation and lack of compensation continuously led to mounting grievances in rural China (Gobel and Ong, 2012: 37). Higher taxes and surcharges had been another source of grievances in rural area and fortunately, it was eliminated by the central government`s tax and fee reform since 2000s (Gobel and Ong, 2012: 29).

3.2.2. ICT and Popular Resistance

The Chinese communist party has relied on economic growth to retain its legitimacy (Zhu, 2011) and they believed that by joining the WTO and other international organizations, China could more "efficiently and quickly" reach the goal of "rich nation and strong army" (Zheng, 2008: 27). China`s efforts to make scientific and technological progress to reach their nationalist goal was characterized by a "Techno-Nationalism" (Suttmeier and Xiangkui, 2004). Since 2001, the telecommunication penetration rate of China dramatically increased. As of 2008, almost half of the population was using mobile phone (China Statistical Yearbook, 2016). Mobile phone call, text messaging and mobile web browsing all began to facilitate social network formation on a scale and with a speed.

It is noteworthy that web browsing via mobile phones had to be differentiated from the one with computer (PC or laptop) in this period. During the 2000s, mobile phones were connected through mobile network such as CDMA (code division multiple access) and GSM (global system for mobile communication). The CDMA and GSM network mainly supported phone call and text messaging, but provide very limited Internet browsing due low speed and higher charges. The development of the Internet and mobile telecommunication technology had brought some changes in popular contention. Gobel and Ong (2012: 19-20) explains the increase of social unrest in China by the growth of ICT:

1. The improved availability of information about issues at the heart of people`s well-being;

2. The ability to learn from the success and failure of previous initiatives;

3. The improved ability of protestors to communicate grievances and strategies and to organize protest activities; and

4. The stagnation or even retrenchment of formal channels of participation that could 5. relay popular discontent to the authorities in a more institutionalized and controllable fashion.

Yongnian Zheng (2008) examines how the internet as a form of information technology affects the state, society and the relationship between the two in China. He states that "the state and social forces are mutually transformative via their interactions in Internet-mediated public space" (Zheng, 2008: xviii). This chapter examines how the ICT affected the state-society relationship through the findings of some characteristics of popular resistances newly emerged under the influence of ICT in the 2000s. It also analyzes role of ICT involving the popular resistances in this period.

Influence of Popular Resistance (Participants, Motivations, and Location)

To present changing characteristics of popular protest during this period, this section examines case studies involving the use of mobile phones (excluding smartphones) and the Internet as means of communication and direct mobilization of protestors.

First, participants of popular protests had been more diversified in this period. Aggrieved factory workers and farmers whose land is requisitioned continuously existed since the previous period. In addition, homogeneous occupational groups began to raise their voices. For example, taxi drivers, migrant workers, intellectuals, private entrepreneurs and even former People`s Liberation Army soldiers demonstrated for their own rights. Intellectuals are another groups of activists who are emerged through the introduction of the Internet. They were advocates for rights and interests of socially disadvantaged groups. And the rights defense movement in this period were limitedly engaged by intellectuals.

Second, other than occupational motivations, which is closely related to economic concerns, other social issues became another source of contentions. For instance, nationalism, rights defense for vulnerable social groups and social injustices committed by social elites were newly appeared motivations of contentions taken place mainly in cyberspaces (Yang, 2008: 129).

Third, different from previous period, locations of protests began to be expanded to several regions. The taxi drivers' strike illustrates a case involving phone calls and text messaging communicated among homogenous occupational group in several regions. Strikes by taxi drivers had become more frequent due to soaring costs of fuel and rigid traffic laws in the late 2000s. Taxi drivers in several cities made phone calls and sent messages to others to call for strike actions between 2008 and 2013. They even used their own acronyms such as "hecha" (drinking tea) to evade the government`s censorship (Liu, 2013: 205).

With rapid development of the Internet, popular resistance has evolved into new forms in the new space. Guobin Yang (2008: 126) differentiated "internet contention" from "internet-assisted contention". The former involves popular resistances which are taken place in cyberspace and the latter is off-line protest events which were initiated in cyber space and then spilled over offline. To provide a nuanced picture of how the internet has affected popular resistance in China, this section examines case studies of the "internet contention".

The 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) event was a representative case of the "internet contention". The information about the SARS was controlled by the local government and this led to the rapid spread of the disease from Guangdong province to other parts of the country and the world. This incident has been widely spread through the Internet and text messages. It has also created much controversy on the Internet. Chinese netizens raised their voices through on-

line signature campaign and Internet petition to protect their civil rights in health care (Zheng, 2008: 159; 이정남, 2016: 290).

Similarly, the Sun Zhigang incident (2003) received massive attention and on the Internet. Sun, a 27-year-old migrant worker died of physical abuse in a custody and repatriation center in Guangzhou. At this time, Custody and Repatriation system (C&R, hereafter) had been enforced under the strict household registration system, implemented in 1958. In the 2000s, as the economic reform deepened, the number of rural migrant workers dramatically increased and the regime had become more rigid (Zhao, 2008: 246). Sun was born in a poor village in Hubei Province, but he acquired urban citizenship status by passing the university entrance exam. After graduation from Wuhan University of Science and Technology, he found a job in Shenzhen and went to Guangzhou in early 2003. On the night of March 17, he left home without carrying a temporary residence permit, caught by local police and detained at a C&R center. On March 20, he died in the infirmary of the C&R center. When the incident was reported, the related Internet activities began to soar. Hundreds of messages and comments wanted the government take some action. Some intellectuals questioned the constitutionality of the C&R regulation, which violates personal freedom. In the end, the case resulted in the abolition of the C&R system (Zhao, 2008: 246-264).

Role of ICT in Popular Resistance

In the early to middle period of ICT development, mobile technology not only served the same role as what it did in previous period – information dissemination and protestor mobilization, but it also facilitated raising issues and mobilizing mass public in many different cases (Liu, 2015).[8] First, mobile phones and its functions (phone call and text messaging) made it possible for the information to be disseminated widely and politicized among unspecified masses. Second, in relation to the first characteristics, mass gathering demonstrations were often facilitated through the use of ICT.

ICT played a key role in spreading the news in the case of SARS (2003). Yongnian Zheng (2008: 159) states that "When all newspaper reports on the SARS were suppressed in Guangdong, information on the SARS did not stop circulating among people, regions, and even countries via emails, short message services(SMS) transmissions, and other Internet-based communications." One example is the message stated "fatal viruses appear in Guangzhou," which had been transmitted more than 120 million times for three days from April 8 to 10, 2003 (Zheng, 2008: 159; Zheng, 2009: 151). In early April, the domestic situation was opened to the

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[8] Jun Liu (2015) describes the role of mobile technologies as a "key facilitator" of popular activism through generating favorable conditions for popular protest such as "information dissemination" and "metacommunication, which embodies interpersonal relationships"

world through email and overseas media. Many government officials were punished for their irresponsibility, and infectious disease related law was revised (Zheng, 2008: 161).

In the case of Weng'an mass incident, mobile messages about teenage girl`s suspicious death fueled public anger across the small county of Guizhou in 2008. On 21 June 2008, a high school female student, Li Shufen was found dead. The victim's relatives claimed the girl had been raped and killed by two men who allegedly had familial ties with the local officials. However, the local police protected the suspects by asserting that the girl committed suicide (Lai, 2010: 832; Liu, 2015: 509). Related rumors have been circulating through text messages across the county. Liu (2015: 509) introduces one mobile message which was actually circulated during the incident:

> "Without conducting a full autopsy, the police asserted that the girl committed suicide by jumping in a river, and they did not take mandatory measures against the suspect and ignored the family's call for a full autopsy."

A crowd of about ten to twenty thousand people were mobilized by text messages and calls (Liu, 2015: 509). According to an official investigation, the real causes of the Weng'an incident were villagers` violating interests in the extraction of minerals and their distrust over public security (Lai, 2010: 832-833). And mobile

text messages spurred villagers to vent their deeply rooted feelings and eventually led the incident to escalate into a massive riot which was recorded as one of the largest cases provoked during the 2000s.

Mobile phones and the Internet exert more far-reaching power when they are used concurrently in the communication and mobilization process. The synergy effect of the Internet and text messaging has been well reflected in the case of Xiamen anti-PX protest. In 2006, the city government of Xiamen, Fujian allowed the construction of Para-Xylene chemical plant in their region with the expectation of high economic performance and their own achievement. Although the construction was strongly opposed by experts and some local people because of its pollution risk, local government ignores the voices. However, the Internet and mobile phones changed the situation (Liu, 2015: 508-509). On May 28, 2007, an Internet user posted a message which is warning about the dangers of the construction project and calling for a demonstration. The message stated:

"Title: A Million Citizens Spread the Word through SMS Like Crazy

Xianglu Company has stated the construction of a chemical project in Haichang district. When the massive toxic chemical products go into production, it will mean an atomic bomb has been released over all Ximan Island. It will cause leukemia and deformed babies among the Xiamen people. We want to live, and we want our health. International

organizations say that such projects should be located more than 100 kilometers away from a city. But this project is only sixteen kilometers away from Xiamen. For the sake for future generations, please pass this message to call your Xiamen friends. For the sake of our dependents, please take action and join the 10,000-people demonstration. It will start at 8 o'clock on June 1. Please go to the city government from where you live. Send this message to all your friend"[9]

The Internet message, which contained time and location of the rally, was forwarded by millions of Xiamen residents via text messages and it resulted in a two-day street demonstration with over twenty thousand participants at the beginning of June 2007 (Liu, 2015: 509). Eventually, Xiamen government had to suspend the project (Cai, 2010: 40).

In addition to mobile phones, the Internet functioned as another tool for facilitating social movements during the 2000s. Yongnian Zheng (2008: 41) defines the Internet as "a form of technology itself does not produce social movements, but it is a tool that can be used by various social actors to facilitate social movements."

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[9] Lan and Zhang, 2007, cited in Jun Liu, "Communicating Beyond Information? Mobile Phones and Mobilization to Offline Protests in China." *Television & New Media* 16, no. 6 (2015): 503-20. P. 509. : 509

He states that the Internet today has enabled any Chinese citizens with good IT knowledge to rapidly transfer and discuss ideas including economic and beyond the economic issues (Zheng, 2008: 40). In the case of Sun Zhigang in 2003, the Internet played a key role in discourse formation and encouraging journalist to report the incident and publish through newspapers. Although Sun`s case became a national issue through the local and national newspapers, it was the netizen who initiated the discussion and encouraged journalists to publish the news report (이민자, 2015: 186-188).

As several cases show, new communication tools such as mobile phones and Internet have become important means to communicate with each other, disseminate information and directly mobilize protest. As mobile phone call, text messaging and Internet facilitated rapid and massive dissemination of information, larger scale protests took place and its spatial boundary was broadened interregional level. In addition, location of the popular contention has been expanded from off-line space to cyberspace in this period.

Table 3. Cases of Poplar Resistance (2000s)

Year	Protest name	Use of ICT	Motivation
2002	Retrial of Liu Yong	Internet	Liaoning Higher Court`s injustice, local government`s protection of powerful people
2003	BMW incident in Harbin	Internet	The light sentencing of a wealthy woman who killed a poor farmer in Harbin drew internet protests. Court judgment was unfair to the victims, who was killed by BMW car.
2003	Against the release of private entrepreneur Sun Dawu	Internet	The release of private entrepreneur Sun Dawu who illegally absorbed more than 10 million yuan of public funds. The attack was directed at the government regulations that prohibited private enterprises from getting loans from state banks.
2003	Sun Zhigang Incident	Internet	An outraged online public protested the death Sun Zhigang, an apparently harmless vagrant (without temporary residency permit), while in police custody in Guangzhou
2003	SARS event	Internet and text messages	Guangdong local government's control of SARS epidemic and irresponsibility
2005	Daye city protest	Internet and offline notice	Local government`s decision on changing Daye city to Daye district (⊠)

Year	Protest name	Use of ICT	Motivation
2005	Anti-Japanese	Internet	Against Japanese school textbooks that whitewashed Japan`s wartime actions and Japan`s quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council
2007	Anti-PX protest	Internet and Text messages	Protest against local government`s decision of paraxylene(PX) chemical plant construction
2008	Weng'an riot	Text messages and Call	Cover-up over a teenage girl`s death & grievances against local government
2010	Taxi drivers` strike	Mobile call	Rigid traffic regulation, high fuel prices, high rental fees

Sources: Guobin Yang, "Contention in Cyberspace," *in Popular protest in China*, ed. Kevin J. O'Brien (London, Harvard University Press, 2008), 126-43; Yongnian Zheng, *Technological Empowerment: the Internet, state, and society in China* (Stanford University Press, 2008)﹔ Jun Liu, "*Mobile communication, popular protests and citizenship in China*" (2013); 이민자, *중국 인터넷과 정치 개혁 : 새장 속의 자유* (서울 : 서강대학교출판부 2015).

3.3. Rapid Diffusion of Smartphone and Social Media Services (2010s)

3.3.1. Socioeconomic Background and ICT

In the third phase of ICT evolution, motivations triggering mass incidents are even more diversified. Existing problems such as land disputes, labor strikes, urban demolition and environmental protests still continued from previous phases (于建嵘, 2016). Additionally, new social problems were resulted from social development and growing people's consciousness on rights and interests (廖灿亮, 2016).

The explosive growth of China`s middle income class has expanded the range of social issues. Specifically, medical, personal safety, fair education and other topics related to people`s livelihood reflected anxiety and insecurity feelings of middle income group whose interest is damaged (廖灿亮, 2016).

The advent of ICT based industry and insufficient legislation is another cause of mass incidents. As online financial services are gaining popularity, related crimes such as fraud, money laundering and illegal fund-raising have been growing phenomenon in China in recent years. Accordingly, jilted investors staged a nationwide "rights protection" movements (于建嵘, 2016). Since 2015, online transportation services have been new source of social conflicts in China. Aggrieved

traditional taxi drivers went on national strike to demand lower franchise fees and compete with online taxi services (Huang, 2015).

Lastly, a check on the abuse power of government authority has emerged as another sphere of public opinion. Several cases triggered people`s claims on judicial justice, standardized law enforcement and information transparency (陈锐, 2012; 清博研究院, 2016). People were agitated over the news about victims of unfavorable measures by law enforcement authorities, and they were concerned that they might become the next scapegoat (廖灿亮, 2016).

Globally, Smartphones became widespread in the late 2000s. Distribution of Smartphones have begun to influence peoples` lives with its related services such as messaging apps, video-streaming and other social media services. Furthermore, Smartphones have become a primary tool for many kinds of collective actions. Through the services provided by Smartphones, like-minded people are quickly connected to each other and easily share the information to mobilize the masses. It also made it possible for collective actions to be carried out "without leaders or formal organizations" (The Economist, 2016). As social media began to be used widely in relation to the social movements, there is increasing literature studying the way it is used in communication, coordination and mobilization (Huang and Sun, 2016: 385-387).

In China, the Smartphone began to be rapidly diffused since 2011 (김진용, 2014: 161). The advent of Smartphones led to popularization of Mobile access to

Internet in China. As of the end of 2011, China had 513 million Internet users. While the Internet users using desktop decreased to 73.4%, 5 percent reduced compared with previous year, Mobile Internet users increased to 69.3%, 3 percent increase compared with those of 2010 (CNNIC January, 2012: 11, 17). At present, Smartphones and Mobile Internet became primary means of communication in Chinese society. Up to December 2016, the number of mobile Internet users in China reached to 95.1% of the total netizen population (CNNIC January, 2017: 1).

Since 2011, growing popularity of Smartphones has brought on explosive growth of social media services in the form of Mobile platform. Since 2009, Utilization ratio of traditional communication applications such as email, Forum and BBS began to be reduced: utilization ratio of e-mail dropped from 54.6% to 47.9%; Forum and BBS reduced from 32.4% to 28.2% in 2010. On the other hand, social media services including instant messaging, microblog and social networking sites attracted more users (CNNIC January, 2012: 31).

Ye et al. (2017) make a distinction between three developmental phases of social media. In the early 2000s, the bulletin board system (BBS) belong to major portal sites was the main gate of discourse formation. Between the year 2006 and the year 2008, "multiple social media" sites were introduced. These services facilitated interaction among users by sharing "posts, pictures, status and comments" (Ye et al., 2017: 706). A chatting software QQ and Renren.com were widely used during this phase. Since 2009, with the expansion of the Internet and emergence of Smartphones,

now famous social media services were launched and began to penetrate Chinese people's everyday lives. Weibo (micro blogging service) and Weixin (an instant messaging Smartphone service) began to attract a substantial number of users from this time (Ye et al., 2017: 706, 713).

Figure 6. Evolution of On-line Public Space (2000s – 2010s)
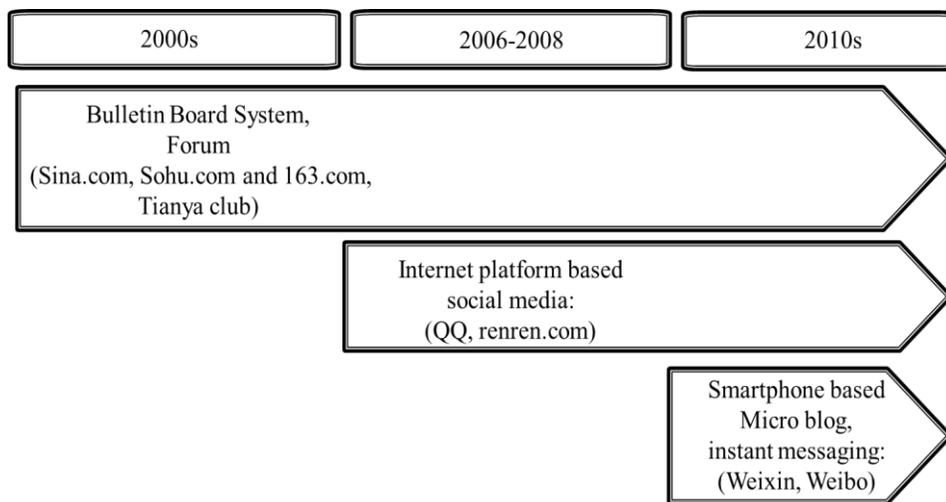
It is noteworthy that number of Weibo users grew explosively in the 2010s. Weibo (微博 in Chinese) refers to Chinese local microblog service initially launched by Sina.com(新浪）in response to Chinese government's ban on Western SNS (Social Networking Services) such as facebook and twitter (于绍宗, 2012). As of the end of 2011, the number of Weibo users rose to 250 million, increasing 296% compared with that of last year. Over one-year, Weibo subscribers have grown

exponentially to nearly half of total Chinese internet users (CNNIC January, 2012: 40).

Weibo is more suitable service for mobile device than computers because it offers converged services of mobile phone and the Internet. Through Weibo, users are able to share the latest news but in a short length form of information (within 140 letters) with other multiple users (이민자, 2015: 37-38).   In this regard, Chinese users use Weibo with a slightly different purpose from other social media services. Ye et al. (2017) elaborate that "while Chinese netizens use other social media to upload pictures, post their diary and update their status, they use Weibo to obtain news and monitor the status of people whom they are interested in (Ye et al., 2017: 706)."

Since late 2010, Weibo began to draw attention as the most influential mass medium in the formation of public discourse. The strong influence is attributed to huge information amount and rapid diffusion speed. Due to such characteristics, Weibo plays an important role in on-the-spot report of breaking news and its progress. Another reason for the popularity of Weibo could be that Weibo delivers the "truth" while official Chinese news media keep silence about sensitive issues (이민자, 2015: 38, 43).

Smartphone based social media services (third phase of ICT development) can be distinguished from those based on the Internet (second phase of ICT development) as follows: First, the portability of Smartphones enhanced

accessibility to social media services. Consequently, the accessibility enabled users to be more exposed to various social information and engaged in online discussion. Second, with the help of a large user base, social networking applications helps users to form an even stronger social relationship chain, and can disseminate information rapidly on a wide scale. Furthermore, it makes the government difficult to control immediately. For instance, when a certain commentary is posted on Weibo, it is rapidly diffused to a large volume of users by sharing and re-sharing (Ye et al., 2017: 707). Third, integrated digital media functions of Smartphones facilitate quick and vivid information transmission and trigger public engagement. For instance, in case of anti-PX protests, information in the form of "photos, videos, and on-the-spot reports" spread in real-time via Weibo or Wixin and led citizens to be engaged in environmental activism (Liu, 2016: 611).

As Smartphone based social networking services have created new form of public discourses, public activism has been directly and indirectly influenced. Huang and Sun (2016: 385) argue that "social media play an important role in the development of protests through the mechanism of preference revelation, which blurs the boundary between offline protests and the individualized expression of preferences on social media." New rules and regulations on cyberspace issued since the 18th China's National People's Congress also throw a sidelight on the growing role of ICT involving social unrest (Wade, 2012). Following section examines case studies involving the use of social media as means of popular resistance in China.

3.3.2. ICT and Popular Resistance

Influence of Popular Resistance (Participants, Motivations, and Location)

Growing consciousness on rights and interests together with a lack of effective communication route led new ICT platforms to play an important role in the occurrence and expansion of influence of mass incidents (清博研究院, 2016). More cases of popular resistance involving ICT are observed in the third period. Especially, social media platforms, represented by Weibo and Weixin have played an increasing role of information source and dissemination. During the first half of 2016, out of 400 topical incidents, 212 cases (53%) were exposed by the online sources (8% increase compared to the previous year). Moreover, among the 212 cases, 91 cases (43%) were exposed by Weibo and Weixin respectively (廖灿亮, 2016; 人民网舆情监测室, 2016).

This chapter will investigate the distinguishing characteristics of popular resistance involving ICT in the third period. The characteristics described in this chapter may not be universal features of Chinese popular resistance because of the limited size of cases. However, it will provide a rough understanding of recent trend of popular resistance. The characteristics will be scrutinized from a social structural and spatial point of view.

First, several resistance cases show that participants are broadened to various social groups over age, level of education and occupation. The most

noticeable social group in this change is the middle class. Social media has provided the Chinese middle class a place of public discourse and outlet for political participation. Until recently, the Chinese middle class had been ignored as a political group and they had no power and no voice. There was no outlet for political participation for them. However, largely due to the advent of social media platforms, their complaint about state affairs was widely discussed and had been broadened into a collective action.

'Parents demonstration in Jiangsu and Hubei' was a typical case where the interests of the Chinese middle class were politicized through social media. In May, 2016, thousands of parents staged protests against gaokao(高考) admission reduction in the capital cities of Hubei and Jiangsu provinces. Under the new scheme, leading universities in 14 developed provinces such as Hubei, Jiangsu, and big cities must admit a greater number of non-local students from poorer inland provinces. The parents fear that the new admission rule will make it more difficult for their children to find a place at schools close to home. This incident was discussed widely on social media and has helped to develop a sense of political solidarity in the Chinese middle classes with other similar cases (Teixeira, 2017; He, 2016).

The 'Lei Yang(雷洋) incident', in May 2016, also reflected the growing political conciousness of the middle class which was stimulated by social media. Lei Yang, a 29 year-old young enviornmental researcher who graduated from a prestigious colleage, suddenly died after being detained by police. His death shocked

other middle-class urban residents. They feared of the fact that ordinary middle class like themselves can be a victim of brutal and capricious legal system. Lei Yang case was widely discussed and shared on social media. His alumni and mourners launched online petition, condemning abuses of public power and questioning police`s investigation (Denyer, 2016).

The 'Death of Wei zixi (魏泽西)', April 2016, similary sparked widespread public attention from Chinese middle class. Weizixi (魏泽西) was a 21-year old university student in Shaanxi province. He dieded after recieving experimental treatments at a hospital which was recommended by China's largest search engine, Baidu. Through the incident, the unethical ties between Baidu and hospitals was revealed. Internet users expressed anger and denounced the search engine company and China`s poor healthcare system. Dr. Wu Qiang, a researcher of social movement interprets that "beneath it all is the deep sense of anxiety of the Chinese middle class, worrying about its personal safety, health, and livelihood" (Wu, 2016).

Some argue that "when changes occur that challenge middle class families` wealth or status, they can take a social media to complain and organize demonstrations. After such crises occur, the participats become more concious of themselves as a political class" (Teixeira, 2017).

Grwoing consciousness on individual rights, remarkably expressed by the Chinese middle class also observed from other social groups including marginalized

groups in this preiod. 'PLA vegerans', 'single child parents', 'homosexuals' and even 'dog lovers' have formed a group and tried to express their opinions. Most recently, school chidren stirred widespread discussions after they revealed physical and emotional abuses that they have received from school and teacher. In August 2017, a 'primary school student's essay' about a teacher's scolding and beatings posted by the child`s parents had gone viral on Chinese social media. It was soon shared from group to group and made its way to Weibo, where some threads on the matter received over 450,000 comments and 22,000 shares. The story was soon picked up by a national media and the school has openly spoke out that they sincerely apologize to the student. Then they guaranteed that the child will have a different teacher after the summer vacation. Following is a part of the child`s essay wrote to his teacher (Koetse, 2017a).

> *"Teacher, I really do not know what I did for you to be so dissatisfied with me. I clearly remember when I first had you as my teacher in the first grade, on the fifth day you flung my book in my face (..) I will never forget your expression at that time. I have been scared of you ever since..."*

Netizens have shown their anger by posting their comments on social media as follows;

Figure 7. Capture of Weibo Comment about Primary School Student`s Essay (1)

晴姐评股 : 这种老师还有资格教学生？

8-10 13:34   Reply | 18146
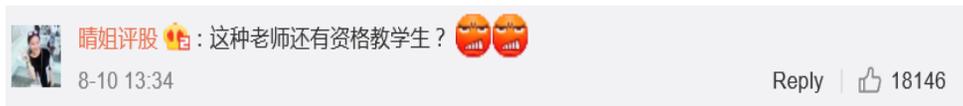
"Is this kind of person qualified as a teacher?"

Figure 8. Capture of Weibo Comment about Primary School Student`s Essay (2)

控股天师-凉雁卿 : 真不知道这样的素质和职业素养是怎么当上老师的 职业资格证是买来的吗

8-10 13:38   Reply | 10828
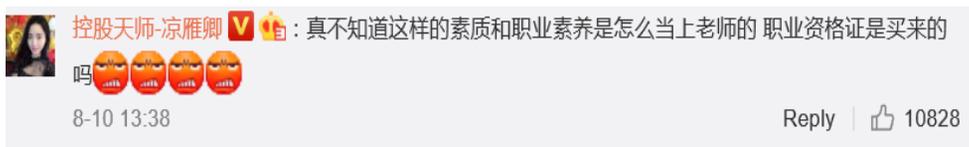
"I really do not understand how this quality of person worked as a teacher?

Is the teaching certificate purchased?"

Secondly, motivations of protests and resistances have been diversified. While economic dispute, labor strike and environmental protests have been continued, the Chinese public have actively engaged in various social issues. The motivations include immaterial and indirect values, and the two noticeable issues are social justice and rights. Some examples are judicial justice, protection of the weak, consumers` rights, patients` medical rights, fair educational opportunity, and students` right. And the internet and social media have served as an outlet for Chinese people`s claims.

The 'Heilongjiang gun shooting incident (2015)' stirred outrage among many Chinese over what they saw as abuse of public power. On May 2nd, 2015, 45 years old man in one of Heilongjiang`s train station was shot and killed by local police (蔡岳, 2017). He was traveling with his 81-year-old mother and three children. Even though the police claimed that he was uncompliant, Internet users have expressed outrage on Weibo. Many criticized that the shooting illustrates the widespread sense of impunity among police officers. There also have been a big controversy regarding reasonable use of guns by the police. The issue was among the most talked-about topics on Weibo (Reuters, 2015).

In the case of 'Nie Shubin`s exoneration (2016)', not only police but also prosecutors and judges have come under fire from the public. Nie was executed for murder in 1995 at the age of 20. But, in 2005, another man confessed to murdering the victim who had been allegedly killed by Nie. And after a long campagining by

his family, the Supreme Court finally cleared his name in December 2015 (BBC News, 2016). The case generated a heated discussion on social media. Two major issues have been discussed related to Nie`s case. First was the fact that the wrongful conviction was resulted by confession made under duress. Nie was not the first person to be posthumously exonerated by a Chinese court. Second point was that it took 11 years to be redressed the worngful conviction because of resistance from the local police and prosecutors who handled the Nie`s original case (Forsythe, 2016; Huang, 2017).

Recently, some incidents related to vulnerable social groups have triggered nationwide outrage on perpetrators or even on government authorities who failed to prevent certain accidents. The rights defense movement in 2000s was spread by limited intellectuals who attempted to help lower classes. On the other hand, most recent rights activism is led by general public or victims themselves. For example, in Cizhu village in Guizhou province, one of the China`s poorest province, 'four left behind children' committed suicide by drinking pesticide after being abandoned by their migrant worker parents in June, 2015. The deaths highlighted problems at every level of society with the plight of the estimated 60 million children who are left behind. The seriousness of the controversy was outlined by the aftermath of the incident. Several local government staffs and educators were punished. Moreover, premier Li Keqiang called for "immediate steps to prevent similar incident" (Phillips, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

Chinese people empowerd by new technology have raised their voices on 'social rights' related to their lives through social media. 'Over priced prwan scandal in Shandong (2015)' and 'Overpriced fish restaurant in Harbin (2016)' both caught the attention from the public who have accumulated distrust on consumer rights in China. Public outrage and their demand for protecting consumer rights led to government investigations. In the end, prawn restaurant has been imposed a fine, and fish restaurant has been shut down (Wong, 2015).

A recent 'death of a pregnant woman (2017)' incident caused uproar across the Chinese internet. The 26-year-old pregnant woman jumped to her death from a hospital window after her family repeatedly refused to allow her to have a cesarean section. In China, family members must give consent before a patient undergoes surgery, so the doctors' hands were tied. Linder (2017a, 2017b) introduces Weibo comments that received thousands of "likes". Many netizens expressed their anger and called for protection of patients` rights as follows:

"Besides the pregnant woman, there's no need to ask anyone else their opinion,"

"A married woman is not some tool for producing babies, how can people still be so ignorant these days!"

Thirdly, popular resistance in this period often occurs not only across regional boundaries. It sometimes happens across online and offline spaces. In many

cases involving ICT, protests occurred in several different locations or all over the nation simultaneously. In Changsha, A 19-year-old 'gay rights activist' was arrested for organizing illegal protest in May, 2013. He organized a protest with 80 to 100 participants through a commercial community website 'Hunan With Love' in the name of a marketing event. They called for "an end to anti-homophobia and non-discrimination." On the same day, the demonstrations took place around 10 major cities simultaneously across China such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu and so on (Boehler, 2013).

A 'Teachers` protest against low wages' in 2014 also rapidly spread out across Northeastern China in a short period of time. The initial strikes were rooted in a government plan that requires teachers to contribute to their pension plans. It later intensified and spread to half a dozen cities near Harbin in mid-November 2014. It is known that across the whole country, at least 30 similar strikes occurred in that periods. Some specialist at China Labor Bulletin said that such worker strikes in the past would have received little attention, the prevalence of social media has helped protests spread quickly from city to city. Because of mobile phone and social media, teachers are fully aware that their colleagues in other parts of China are taking action (Sant, 2014).

'Protest against the Hague`s ruling on the South China Sea' – a protest related to the South China Sea – broke out at about a dozen cities on July 19, 2016.

Chinese people gathered at KFC outlets in Hangzhou, Changsha, and other cities. They shouted slogans with banners calling for a boycott (Ramzy, 2016).

A 'Taxi drivers` strike' against high franchise fees and taxi-hailing apps have continuously occurred in multiple cities and provinces since the late 2014. Thousands of taxi drivers went on strike in more than ten Chinese cities over a few weeks in January, 2015. Local media states that "the wave of protest was the biggest cab driver strikes in China's history" (Huang, 2015; Rose, 2015). In case of Shenzhen taxi drivers' strike launched in June, 2016, hundreds of taxi drivers gathered at multiple spots in Shenzhen: citizen center, Longhua new district, Luowu border checkpoint.

Similarly, the protests against finance "scams" on peer-to-peer (P2P) lending platforms have been sweeping across China over in the late 2015. Some resistances cross online and offline boundaries. Since December 2015, tens of thousands of small investors from Ezubao staged protest demanding the return of their investments. They had gathered outside the company's offices in various provinces at least seven provinces and 34 cities all across the country. The protestors not only staged demonstration at key sites but also uploaded protest photos to social media platforms (Lam, 2016).

Figure 9. P2P Lending Platform Ezubao's Investors Uploaded Protest Photos

to Weibo.

Source: Oiwan Lam, "Why Millions of Chinese Are Victimized by the Blooming Peer-to-
Peer Lending Business." https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/01/05/why-millions-
of-chinese-are-victimized-by-the-blooming-peer-to-peer-lending-business/.

Table 4. Cases of Popular Resistance (2010s) (1)

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Abuse of public power	2013	Haizhu female fruit vendor handcuffed by police	Photos of the incident circulated around the Internet. Internet users have expressed outrage on Weibo	Policeman's violent actions without concern for a child
Abuse of public power	2015	Heilongjiang gun shooting incident	Photos of the incident circulated around the Internet. Internet users have expressed outrage on Weibo	Abuse of public power and widespread sense of impunity among police officers
Abuse of public power	2016	Lei Yang incident	Public discourse was formed through social media	The abuse of the police power, middle-class Chinese citizens fear their vulnerability to abuses of power
Abuse of public power	2016	Nie Shubin case	Public discourse was formed through social media	Innocent death of Nie Shubin. Widespread skepticism regarding the credibility of China's legal system
Abuse of public power	2016	Yu Huan case	Public discourse was formed through Weibo	A threatened debtor killed collector and was given a severe sentence. It triggered debate over right to self-defense

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Abuse of public power	2017	Shanghai Policeman Pushing Woman with Baby to the Ground	Condemnation and debate	Policeman's violent actions without concern for a baby
Abuse of public power	2017	Professor Brutally Beats up Female Street Cleaner	Condemnation and claims for punishment of perpetrator	Unfair treatment of vulnerable social group
Consumer rights	2015	Qingdao prawn scandal	Publicize the matter, and try to get redress through social media	Overcharged restaurant bill and irresponsible local authorities Accumulated distrust of consumer rights in China
Consumer rights	2016	Harbin overpriced fish	Publicize the matter, and try to get redress through social media. Public debate sparked	Overcharged restaurant bill and irresponsible local authorities

Table 5. Cases of Popular Resistance (2010s) (2)

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Education	2016	Parents demonstration in Hubei and Jiangsu	Demonstration was discussed and organized by social media	Protest against reduction of university admission quotas
Environmental problem	2012	Shifang protest	Images and video of the protest were posted and shared on the Weibo and other SNS sites nationally	Protest against a copper plant. Concerns on environmental deterioration and public health risks
Environmental problem	2012	Qidong protest	Information of the protest circulated on Sina Weibo	Protest against a proposed waste water pipeline. Concerns on water pollution in the region
Environmental problem	2013	Anti-uranium plant construction in Jiangmen	Posts were shared and protestors were mobilized through on-line forums, Tianya and Weibo	Spread to outside of the region, local government's decision to cancel the plan
Environmental problem	2015	"under the dome" documentary film on severe haze in China	As the documentary went viral, On Sina Weibo alone, there were 280 million posts related to the topic	Concerns on the degradation of the environment
Environmental problem	2016	Lianyungang anti-nuclear protest	Photos and condemnation were widespread on social media. Street protestors were mobilized through Weibo	Lianyungang protest possible China-France nuclear project

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Environmental problem	2016	Hubei`s Xiantao anti-waste incinerator plant	Reporting the demonstration scene	Environmental concern
Environmental problem	2016	Hubei's Qianjiang anti-chemical plant protest	Reporting the demonstration scene	Environmental concern
Environmental problem	2017	Chengdu air pollution protest	Photos and condemnation were widespread on social media. Street protestors were mobilized through Weibo	Worsening air pollution in Chengdu, Pengzhou petrochemical project, which produces
Environmental problem	2017	Heilongjiang, Daqing against an aluminum plant	Photos of demonstrators being cracked down by police are spread on Weibo	Footage of police taking away protesters, including several elderly ones, was widely circulated on social media.

Table 6. Cases of Popular Resistance (2010s) (3)

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Health and medical	2016	Shandong illegal vaccine scandal	Condemnation and claims for improvement of national health care system	Circulation of illegal vaccine and poor supervision of local authorities
Health and medical	2017	Death of pregnant woman	Condemnation and debate	Patients' medical rights
ICT industry	2015-2016	taxi drivers` protest against taxi-hailing apps	The collective protest was triggered by an online post. Bloggers posted photos of the protest scenes on microblogs	Protest against low pay, high fees charged by taxi companies and competition from taxi-hailing apps that link private cars with commuters
ICT industry	2016	Wei Zixi case	Public discourse was formed through Zhihu, Weixin and Weibo	Death of patient resulted by false information of hospital recommendation in Baidu search engine
ICT industry	2017	Ezubao financial fraud scandal	Online protest and offline protest	Online financial scam and lack of legal foundation
International affairs	2012, 2016	South China Sea dispute	Protestors were mobilized through Weibo	Dispute over islands in the East China Sea
International affairs	2016	Boycott of KFC over South China Sea dispute	Reporting the demonstration scene	South China Sea dispute
International affairs	2017	Protest against THAAD system and calling for a boycott of Lotte group	Public discourse was formed and street protest was mobilized through Weibo	Against South Korea`s deployment of THAAD system. Mobilized through Weibo

Issue category	Year	Incident name	Use of ICT	Motivation
Special interest groups	2011-2017	PLA veterans, single child parents, gay rights, anti-dog meat protest, students` accusation	Issues were shared through social media Protestors were mobilized through social media and Internet forums	Claims for special interests
Vulnerable social groups	2015	Guizhou left behind children committed suicide	Public discourse was formed through social media	Public outrage over the tragedy and government negligence

Role of ICT in Popular Resistance

Smartphones and social media have powerfully influenced people`s lives in China. What kind of roles do social media and wide access to social media through smartphones play in popular resistance movements in China? One feature is to view it as a broadened role such as the dissemination of information, formation of public opinion, mobilization of protest, report of on-the-scene incidents and exerting pressure so as to rectify deep social problems.

First, information dissemination is one of the major roles of ICT in the third period. Information dissemination in this period has following characteristics – real time, vivid and massive - which are facilitated by the combination of 3G and LTE networks, powerful multimedia functions of smartphone and social networking

service. It has made it possible for anyone to disclose or share information which would have never been known to the general public in past decades. The vivid multimedia images easily shared by social media to the masses help to contribute to emotional responses and proactive civic engagement (Svensson, 2016: 53-54). Representative examples include police abuse cases such as 'Haizhu female street fruit vendor with daughter (2013)' and 'Shanghai Policeman Pushing Woman with Baby (2017)'.

Both cases were publicized through shocking images and video clips. The violence and cruelty inflicted upon women and children shocked Chinese web users. What angered the netizens the most was the harsh treatment that was done in front of innocent children. Following are some of the web users` comments (Chinafile, 2013).

> "When I saw that last photo (of the daughter hugging her mother), I couldn't stop my tears from falling…we need law and order, but we also need humanity,"
>
> "During the 24-hour detention, the police forbade anyone from even changing the one-and-a-half-year-old girl's diaper,"
>
> "The key point is that the kid is completely innocent!"
>
> "Regardless of whether or not the peddler has violated regulations, *chengguan* should not have strangled the peddler or demonstrated their power in front of a small, weak child."

Figure 10. On-the-Scene Images of the Abusive Public Power

Secondly, social media has provided a virtual space for public discourse on diverse social issues which was not available in previous decades. deLisle et al. (2016) state that China`s integration with the international community and the Internet gave rise to an exchange information and opinion about China`s foreign policy during the 1980s. Most recently, new media services with ubiquitous access through smartphones "increased the ability for Chinese netizens to spread information about and share their views on international affairs" (deLisle et al., 2016: 19)

The 'South China Sea' dispute has been a heated topic amongst public opinion in 2010s. In July 2016, the Chinese government announced that "it neither

accepts nor recognizes the ruling of an arbitral tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration established at the request of the Philippines." Chinese web users actively responded with supportive comments on social media. A post containing the government's statement "won't accept, won't participate, won't recognize" has been circulated more than 400,000 times on Weibo. Boycott campaign against Philippine products took place on Weibo, too. Slogans like "If you want to eat mango, buy Thailand's" and "Starve the Filipinos to death" have been widely circulated (Jing, 2016; Ramzy, 2016).

After South Korea approved 'deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system', and South Korean retail giant 'Lotte group' agreed to provide land for the system in 2017, ideological conflict among Chinese has triggered online. Most people who are influenced by state media, expert observers and commentators, strongly opposed the deployment of THAAD in South Korea (Swaine, 2017). Some Chinese people called for protests and boycotts against South Korean and its products. However, some counter argue that people should not pour all their anger and discontents towards a scape goat, without talking about North Korea and the US (Koetse, 2017b; Zhang, 2017).

'Environmental concerns' not only led people took to the street but also triggered heated online discussion. After the pollution-themed documentary 'Under the dome' was released on renminwang (人民网) in 2015, which was said to have 200million hits, there were 280 million posts related to the topic on Sina weibo alone.

In China where people are not free to express their opinions, environmental resistances traditionally go as far as their own backyard. However, when the 'under the dome' opened the floodgates, people began to talk about it (Koetse, 2015; Bell, 2015). Heated arguments have raged online including blaming air pollution and the government`s lack of accountability (Jiang, 2015).

Besides, Chinese people have become more proactively discussing civil rights and the abuse of public power. Examples include as 'Lei Yang`s death', 'Heilongjiang gun shooting' incidents and other similar cases (Wen, 2015; Koetse, 2016).

Third, digital media services have been used as a direct tool for protest organization and mobilization. As China`s economic boom has greatly accelerated the devastation of its environment, protest against it have grown accordingly. And digital media played a prominent role in movement mobilization for many environmental protests. Liu (2016) has conducted case study of seven recent anti-petrochemical (PX) protests occurred in China. He proves that people spread mobilizing messages for "strolls" (散步) via group based media platform such as QQ, Wechat, and mobile phones (Liu, 2016: 613). He argues that "the easy-to-use feature of digital media allows people to invite their social networks into collective action mobilization without much effort." Case studies include Ningbo(2012) and Maoming(2014) (Liu, 2016: 614)

In addition, there are other cases in which social media have been used to mobilize participants. In January, 2016, several hundred taxi drivers went on strike and gathered several places in Shenzhen to protest against issues of livelihood that were caused by on-line hailing apps such as Uber, Kuaidi Dache and Didi Dache (Kondalamahanty, 2016). The collective action was believed to have been triggered by an online post, which called on drivers to go on strike.

Fourth, civil journalism has been vitalized. People directly involved with incidents or witnesses now became a reporter of the issues or the scene and it sometimes affects the protest in a number of ways. Two environmental protest in Shifang(什邡) and Ningbo(宁波) and workers` strike in Chengdu were representative cases. When the demonstrations broke out, the news was swiftly shared by Weibo to unspecified masses. And it led to follow-up activism (Liu, 2016: 614).

'The Shifang protest (2012)' was a large-scale environmental protest against a proposed copper plant in Sichuan province. In contrast to the official media outlets who mostly declined to report on the protests, social media platforms became the primary channel of news dissemination. The number of Weibo posts related to the "Shifang" protest recorded 5.25 million posts for four days. The posts contained 400,000 related images and 10,000 videos (Levine, 2012; McDonald, 2012).

Similar environmental movement broke out in Ningbo in October, 2012. Outraged residents took to the street to protest against the Ningbo government`s plan

to build a refinery in the region. The protest turned into a violent demonstration. The real-time news with images that show protesters suppressed by riot police - tear-gas canisters, police beating residents and detained people were posted on social media and spread like wildfire (Fang, 2012).

Similarly, in the case of 'Chengdu workers strike' in 2014, it was social media which spread the news while states media kept silent. Factory workers went on strike to demand higher wages, and the government contained the protest. Social media disclosed the news on the ruthless suppression by public power along with the images of the scene. Eventually the pressure of public opinion led the dispute to a concession and workers received a raise (Junor, 2014).

At times, social media play a role as an outlet for the public to express their own grievances. There is series of events related consumers' rights that attracted the attention of netizens. 'Qingdao prawn scandal (2015)' was one of such cases. In October, 2015, a man ordered a dish of prawns marked as '38 yuan' at a seafood restaurant in Qingdao. After the meal, and receiving the bill, he was shocked to see the given bill which charged 1,520 yuan. It turned out that the '38'yuan was price for one prawn. The man confronted the restaurant owner but he was more of threatened by the owner and had to pay the bill. The Local police were called but they could not resolve the dispute. Eventually, the man had to pay the bill. The aggrieved man posted his posted his story on Weibo and it was spread out SNS. An outburst of anger on the Social media followed. Netizens blamed not only the

deceptive restaurant but also local officials who failed to help the diner. Many netizens called for "local officials to be held responsible, punished, and even sacked." At the end, fines imposed on the restaurant to answer the wave of criticism. The scandal illustrated people`s accumulated distrust of consumer rights in China. Some scholar states that "many people now have a smartphone and know how to use social media. The biggest thing is that they can now go online, publicize the matter, and try to get redress this way" (Wong, 2015).

A few months later, a similar incident aroused public opinion in Chinese social media. In Harbin, a man was charged over 10,000 yuan ($1,600) for a meal at a seafood restaurant, with a significant part of that total coming from an endangered and expensive species of fish costing 5,731 yuan ($872). The man posted the bill on his Sina Weibo account and this event triggered heated public discussion known as 'Harbin overpriced fish scandal (2016)'. However, this time, the investigation conducted by Harbin Market Supervisory Authority confirmed that the fish was sold at reasonable prices (Shanghailist, 2016; Xu, 2016).

Lastly, public opinion sometimes exercises influence on government`s policies or administrative measures to some extent through condemnation, online signature movement or petition campaign. For some tragedies of vulnerable social groups such as 'deaths of four left behind children in Guizhou (2015)', the central government came forward as public outrage grew. Li Keqiang called for immediate steps to prevent similar incidents. "Those who fail to act or pretend to act must be

held responsible. Such tragedy cannot be allowed to happen again." Li said (The Guardian, 2017).

For incidents related to the abuse of public power such as 'Lei Yang incident', online condemnation and petition eventually led to the central government`s intervention. More than 15,500 comments expressed skepticism at local police who denied accusation of their brutality (Kaiman, 2016). It led to further investigation and it found that Lei was choked to death by police who were slow to seek medical treatment for him. After Lei`s death, President Xi jinping emphasized "the importance of strictly supervising law enforcement and resolving prominent problems"(CECC, 2017). Professor Minxin Pei said that "Lei's tragedy had forced the Communist party to choose between angering urban residents and punishing the police" (Mitchell, 2016).

As criticism of the 'ezubao scandal' increased by victims and the online public, the Chinese government released a new regulation on P2P lending. The new regulation requires the online finance platform to keep certain portion of investors' money in the custody of banking institutions and to set upper limits on each deal (Lam, 2016). However, public was still sceptical about government`s buck passing measure.

"It is too late to talk about this. Why not comment on Ezubao? It had ads on the doors of government offices (meaning government-affiliated media outlets), and now you tell me all these platforms are illegal."

"Now playing smart (after making all the mistakes) and what about us — tens of thousands of families? We're to be scattered to the wind? What have you been working on? Do you even have credibility? How can we feel safe again? How can society be stable? Does Uncle Xi (Jinping, president of China) know that we are suffering???"[10]

To sum up, the ICT`s role in popular resistance has been widened in recent years. ICT disseminates information and provides space for public discussion. People use Smartphones and social media services when they voice their grivences and disclose social events that happens around them and it sometimes exerts considerable influence on governement policy.

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[10] Oiwan Lam, "Why millions of Chinese are victimized by the blooming peer-to-peer lending business," January 5, 2016, Accessed on October 21, 2017, https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/01/05/why-millions-of-chinese-are-victimized-by-the-blooming-peer-to-peer-lending-business/.

3.3.3. Case Study

Death of Lei Yang (2016)

Internet contention triggered by civil rights violations began to appear with advent of Internet in the second phase of ICT development. Entering the Smartphone and social media era, location of the cyberspace activism has been extended from Internet BBS and Forums to social networking sites. Civil rights violations committed by government agencies had been inflicted on vulnerable social groups. However, most recently, some middle-class citizens are also victimized by the public powers. The incidents are publicized by the social media, and sometimes challenge to the legality of government policy.

The Lei Yang incident was a typical case reflecting middle-class Chinese citizens vulnerable to abuses of power by unaccountable authority figures. Lei Yang was an environmentalist who graduated from Renmin University, one of China`s most prestigious universities. On May 7, 2016, Lei was arrested on suspicion of prostitution offences at a foot massage parlor. After being detained, Lei began to complained pain. Even though he was sent to a hospital, he died later that night. When Lei`s family saw the body, there was multiple bruises and injuries. The unclear circumstances have cast doubt on the cause of Lei`s death. Chinese netizens accused the police of brutality. They feared that anybody could be "the next Lei Yang" (Koetse, 2016).

Four on-line petitions were filed from various groups of alumni at Lei's alma mater, Renmin University. Some links to these petitions were deleted by Chinese censors. The petition, named "We Must Speak Out — Statement by some 1988 Alumni of Renmin University of China on Fellow Student Lei Yang's Death", appeared on a Baidu website on May 12, but was deleted soon. Lei`s wife also appeal to the public through Weibo site "LeiYang family`s only microblog - 雷洋家属唯一微博" (Weibo, 2016).

Lei's death has been exposed by national headlines and has been the focus of intense social media discussion. Many netizens demanded for the truth and argued for a thorough investigation of the case. Some Weibo comments about Death of Lei Yang are as follows (Koetse, 2016):

"I don't care if this gets censored, but since Lei Yang's wife and her lawyer have taken action, you hear all kinds of things coming from the police about visiting prostitutes so and so, but the fact remains that he died. No matter what crime he committed, this family has the right to call his death into question, and we support this right!"

"Without investigation, there is no truth. Without the truth, we could be the next Lei Yang."

"We are angry and scared because we all could be the next Lei Yang,"

"We follow this case because of our sense of justice, but also because we're afraid and angry. In a society without respect for life and no dignity and human rights, we could all be led to our death by police – whether we're visiting a prostitute or not."[11]

Lei's death aroused middle-class fears about personal safety and capped years of discontent over police abuses of power. Traditionally, China's middle class has been politically passive. However, they are now keep raising their expectations on social security in particular (Pei, 2016). The Lei Yang case has opened the floodgates. Facilitated by social media, they began to talk about ongoing concerns regarding detainee abuse, police impunity, and lack of basic civil rights protections in China (CECC, 2017; Mitchell, 2016).

Agitated online public opinion and a petition movement led to a thorough investigation of the Lei`s death. Even President Xi Jinping convened a "leading small group" meeting. The meeting emphasized stricter police supervision, regulated law enforcement (CECC, 2017). Further investigation including an independent autopsy was conducted at end of May 2016, and the result found that Lei Yang was apparently choked to death by the police.

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[11] Manya Koetse, "We Could All Be the Next Lei Yang" – Chinese Netizens on the Lei Yang Case," What`s on Weibo, May 18, 2016, Accessed on October 28, 2017, https://www.whatsonweibo.com/lei-yang-case/.

Nevertheless, the online activism failed to establish justice. On December 2016, the Beijing procuratorate declined to press criminal charges against the police officers who used excessive force against Lei. To calm down the public uproar, the government censored online activities involving Lei`s case (CECC, 2017; Mitchell, 2016).

Lei`s case has important implications for Chinese society. First, this case brought the Chinese middle class to talk about their widespread and sustained concern on social security. According to an Chinese academic, Lei`s case sparked "unprecedented and new forms of organization and protest, with China's social elites taking the central role" (Wu, 2016)

Second, social media platforms have performed an official role in raising their demand to the central government. The series of peitions filed from Lei`s alumni groups at Renmin University represented the first time that the middle class collectively expressed concerns about threatened basic rights (RFA, 2016). After the procuratorate's decision not to punish the police officers, Chinese netizens filed additional two open letters which gathered "over 3,000 signatures, asserting that the decision violated Chinese law" (CECC, 2017; BBC, 2016).

Third, the online activism formed a public opinion which exerted certain influence in politics. Shortly after the Lei`s death, the Chinese government has reaffirmed "the importance of strictly supervising law enforcement" and thoroughly investigated the case again. Even though, the Beijing procuratorate decided to drop

charges against the police officers, it is clear that the case has publicized China`s deeply entrenched problems in law-enforcement. And it also prompted the attention from high-level of the government (CECC, 2017).

On-offline protest against deployment of THAAD system (2017)

The rapid spread of the Internet, social media and China`s interaction with the outside world have created unprecedented possibilities for the public to participate in the formulation of foreign policy (Jakobson and Knox, 2010). The 2017 anti-THAAD protest provides a new and consequential case study to explore this influence and the role of new media in international affairs.

The year 2017 witnessed a flare-up of anti-Korean sentiment in China, due to the US and South Korea`s decision to deploy a U.S Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (hereafter 'THAAD'). American and Korean officials claim that THAAD serves to protect against increased threats from a North Korean missile attack. However, China perceives THAAD as mostly directed at China and as a regional security concern. In response to South Korea`s decision to install THAAD, China has launched an aggressive public campaign of economic coercion including retaliation against Lotte, a South Korean conglomerate (Meick and Salidjanova, 2017).

In early 2017, Lotte group, South Korean conglomerate handed over its land in Seong Ju to the government for installation of THAAD system. In addition to the government, the Chinese public showed extreme anti-Korea sentiment. Big and small on-line and off-line contention followed in China (Meick and Salidjanova,

2017). On sadeba(萨德吧) in Baidu online community, 66,915 posts were posted until October, 2017 (萨德吧, 2017).

Figure 11. "Began Installing THAAD" - Weibo Number 1 Ranked Search on

March 7, 2017

实时热搜榜	更多 >
1. 萨德开始部署 热	48万
2. 欧阳娜娜女女吻照 热	47万
3. 宋慧乔宋仲基 热	41万
4. 张一山萌照	17万
5. 紧急招聘汪星人演员	16万
6. 蔡艺侬回应胡歌读书	16万
7. 校长签章为周桀伦	13万
8. 女子20岁就有5个儿子 热	12万
9. 泓沅沫 新	12万
10. 泰国一男孩的妖娆妆容	11万

Source: "[영상중국] '사드 배치 시작' 웨이보 실검 1 위." *아주경제*. March 07, 2017, http://www.ajunews.com/view/20170307170218378.

Most nationalists have taken up the anti-THAAD mental, protesting and boycotting South Korean business and tourism (Woody, 2017). Several demonstrations have sprouted across the country. Purportedly the protestors were mobilized through social media. Furthermore, video and images of the demonstration scene were circulated on social media and stirred anti-Korean sentiment among the netizens. For instance, A video circulated on social media

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showed a scene from a plaza in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, where heavy equipment

was used to crush bottles of Cheoeum Cheoreom soju (the Korean liquor) and other

Lotte products as Chinese flags were displayed and the national anthem played (The

Japan Time, 2017; 네이버 차이나랩, 2017).

Several Chinese companies have also cut ties with Lotte and posted their

decision on social media. For a post on Weilong group`s Weibo (卫龙食品), more

than 350,000 users had liked it, leaving more than 70,000 comments praising the

company (Kim, 2017).

Some criticize the government`s inability for handling diplomatic issues.

"THAAD, Diaoyu Dao (Senkaku islands), Vietnam, and Philippines. These conflicts

let us see that our country does not have a strong foreign policy" (Baidu Tieba, 2017).

At the same time, anti-nationalists have raised dissenting voices against the

blind nationalism. They sneer at the nationalists as "irrationally and flamboyantly

patriotic" who should be called "nationalists" rather than "patriots." Some anti-

nationalist denounces the nationalists that "If they want to protest, target the

government, rather than companies and the public" (Zhang, 2017).

Wang Wusi, a blogger, has just written an article on WeChat in a similar

tone as follows:

"If you want to boycott Korean products, you should burn all of yours!"

"They only have one gesture all the time. They always say, 'get out of China, boycott something.'"

"Whenever you love your country, you don't let us eat KFC or Japanese food … but has any country's economy flopped because of your boycotts?"[12]

Kalathil and Boas (2009), in their book, "Open networks and closed regimes," state that Chinese political leaders are sensitive to critics of nationalism using the 2001 Hainan Island Incident as an example (Kalathil and Boas, 2009: 69). The 'Strengthening Nations Forum' (Chinese: 强国论坛)[13] was flooded with uninhibited discussions and sometimes extremely strong criticism of the Chinese government. The extreme messages were promptly deleted by the moderators, as the government feared it would cause civil unrest. This case illustrates just how nationalism can be amplified and how public grievances can be specified through the Internet. The authors argue that "when public grievances and nationalism are

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[12] Zhang Yiqian, "Boycotting Korean Firms, Products over Thaad Triggers Ideological Conflict Online in China," *Global Times*. March 8, 2017, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1036693.shtml.

[13] Chinese bulletin board on the website of the People`s Daily, an official newspaper of the Communist Party of China

overlapped each other, it can severely challenge to the national authority" (Kalathil, 2009).

THAAD case has peculiar significance toward the political participation of social media users. First, netizens have launched boycotting campaigns using the social media platform. The economic retaliation against South Korea had been initiated by the government, but the social media users have urged follow-up actions for the government`s move to each other.

Second, social media was used for organization and mobilization of protesters and even reporting the scene. This shows how the foreign affairs can be amplified and lead to social unrest by social media.

Third, some of the discussions entailed a balanced argument between pros and cons of such boycotts. Regarding the Korean product boycott campaign, some people made rational arguments that their protest should target the Korean government, rather than companies and the public. This shows Chinese netizens become more mature when they discuss public affairs.

4. Government`s Response

4.1. Pre-date the emergence of ICT (1980s-1990s)

Suppression and Concession

Cai (2008) explains three modes of government response; suppression, concession and combination.   To deal with many of the mass incidents, the government often used suppression as a mode of response. Concession was a difficult mode because local governments lack of financial resources. Moreover, concession required local policy change and punishment of local officials. On the other hand, by adopting suppression, local governments were able to "maintain social order, ensure policy implementation and protect the local government`s image." Nevertheless, suppression had limitations due to limit of the local government`s capacity and participants` ignorance of possible risks (Cai, 2010: 31-38).

4.2. The Advent of Mobile phone and the Internet (2000s)

Regulatory Agencies and Great Firewall of China

In the 2000s, Internet censorship has been led by the 'Office of the Central Leading Group for Informatization（国家信息化领导小组）', which was established by the Central Committee of CPC (中国共产党中央委员会) and the State Council (国务院) in August 2001. In addition, Central Publicity Department （中宣部）and several affiliated organizations under the State Council collaborated with each other in order to effectively control online news and information (이민자, 2015: 88).[14] The 'Office of the Central Leading Group for Informatization', which is headed by Hu Jintao, was involved in the formulation of informatized society and implementation of policy on a variety of issues related to the Chinese Internet (이민자, 2015: 88).

Entering the 2000s, the Chinese government began to regulate the Internet by implementing technical measures, which is called 'Great Firewall of China'. Its role in Internet censorship is to block access to selected foreign websites. Politically sensitive websites were shut down (western news or human rights related websites). It also filters and deletes problematic text, audio and video contents such as 'Tibetan

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[14] The affiliated organizations include 'The Cyberspace Administration (国家互联网办公室)', 'State Council Information Office (新闻办公室)', 'Ministry of Industry and Information (工业和信息化部) ', 'Ministry of Public Security (公安部)' etc. See 이민자 (2015: 88).

independence' and 'Falun gong'. When Guangzhou teachers` protested demanding for higher pay sprouted online in 2007, the government shut down their online forum (이민자, 2015: 105-113).

The Chinese government has introduced specific legal regulations after the Falun Gong case in 2000. By passing a series of regulations, the government established a legal basis upon which to control online rumors and punish violators (이민자, 2015: 115; Kalathil and Boas, 2009: 64-68). According to a related law, 15 years of prison sentence is imposed upon propagation and agitation. On December 2004, as university BBS (Bulletin Board System) had become a place for public discourse, a real-name registration system was implemented. Consequently, the access to BBS became limited to university students and faculties. As a result, the number of visitors declined quickly and BBS had lost its function for political debate (이민자, 2015: 116-123).

The real-name system was initially implemented to mobile phones in 2010. It stipulated that SIM card buyers (SIM: Subscriber Identification Module) have to show an ID card and seller have to retain a copy of the ID card. This enabled the government to identify individuals with call lists, text messages and data exchange and propagation (Ziccardi, 2013: 252).

In the 2nd phase of ICT development, as Kalathil and Boas stated, the Chinese government tried to contain the new patterns of public resistances facilitated

by new communication technologies. The containment measures included "mixture of regulation, policy and punitive actions" (Kalathil and Boas, 2009: 27).

4.3. Smartphone and Social Media Services (2010s)

Control on Social Media and Limited Freedom

President Xi Jinping has emphasized control of thought and public opinion during the nationwide conference on ideology and propaganda held on August 19, 2013. Since then Xi`s administration has established 'Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs (中央网络安全和信息化领导小组)' on February 28, 2014, with President Xi Jinping himself heading up the group. As Xi told the group members, the Internet has become "major strategic issue concerning a country`s security and development as well as people`s life and work" (Tiezzi, 2017).

Since 2010, the Chinese government was faced with new challenges as microblogs took a leading role in the formation of the opinion (이민자, 2015: 139). After the 2011 Chinese pro-democracy protest, the government strengthened monitoring and censorship of Chinese social networking services such as Weibo. Inspired by the 'Jasmine revolution' in Tunisia in January 2011, netizens raised voices demanding democracy in China. Centered around on-line community, the pro-democracy movements spread-out from 19 February 2011. The next day, off-line demonstration took place in major cities in China. Participants and journalists had been beaten and arrested by authorities. There was a well-known blogger among the leading Chinese activists who have been arrested. At the same time, on China's largest microblog, Sina Weibo, searches for the word "jasmine" were blocked. On

Chinese social networking site Renren, when users tried to update status containing the forbidden words, an error and warning message appeared: "political, sensitive ... or other inappropriate content." Police strengthened its security measures across 20 Chinese cities in China. President Hu Jintao ordered senior management to "solve prominent problems which might harm the harmony and stability of the society" (이민자, 2015: 140-145; Chang, 2011)

After the China`s Jasmin protest, the government has implemented various new measures to prevent social media from being used for political activism. Beijing Municipal Provisions for Microblog Development and Management was promulgated on December 16, 2011. The provision required microblog service providers to implement a real-name system. In September 2013, China`s highest court announced stringent punishments against cyber rumor (Jiang, 2016: 41-45)

In June, 2017, the country`s first national cyber security law passed, which prohibited major social media platforms from streaming politically sensitive video content (Sacks, 2017). In August 2017, the Chinese government has investigated its largest three social media platforms – Weibo, WeChat and Baidu Tieba - for violations of cyber security laws (BBC, 2017). Commentators view this move as a warning to social media users and providers ahead of the 19th Party Congress (Li, 2017).

At times, the Chinese government would acquiesce to certain political issues that were not particularly sensitive while they tightly control and suppress

politically sensitive popular resistance (이민자, 2015). In the case of the Shifang protest (2012), the police attempted to control the information by warning that "anyone using the Internet, cellphones or text messages to spread news about the protest would be severely punished" (McDonald, 2012). During the QianJiang anti-chemical plant demonstrations (2016), city police warned people against using text messages and the internet to organize "illegal gatherings" (Wen and Lin, 2016). However, in the case of teacher protests in 2014, some teachers have received a pay raise, albeit a small one, out of this. The government said it was reviewing their demands, and the teachers' strikes temporarily ended (Sant, 2014).

Some scholars argue that Chinese leadership allow a certain degree of public criticism expressed through social media to help improve bureaucratic performance and legitimize the state and maintain its power (King et al., 2013). However, Lee (2015) viewed it is as a 'freedom in a cage'. Because the Internet is controlled by many different technologies, Chinese netizens have only limited freedoms of online activities (이민자, 2015: 239-240)

5. Findings and Conclusion

5.1. Diversified Characteristics of Popular Resistance

Different from other current studies on ICT and political activism that focus on a singular ICT technology with contentious events, this research studied how ICT has evolved and influenced China`s popular resistance over time by employing 'periodization': 1) Pre-date the emergence of ICT (1980s-1990s) 2) Early to middle stage of ICT development (2000s) 3) Rapid diffusion of Smartphone and related social networking services (2010s).

I argue that ICT has direct and indirect influences on the ever-changing characteristics of popular resistance in China. In addition, the role of ICT in popular resistance movements will broaden as technology evolves over time.

Motivations of popular resistance have been extended from economic interests to immaterial values over time. During the 1980s and 1990s, the public resistance movements have occurred mostly due to violations of economic interests. Such violations included seizures of land, excessive taxes and fees in rural China. In urban China, layoff and overdue wages caused workers protests. In the 2000s, mobile phone and internet improved the availability of information about the society. The ICT technology (mobile phone and the Internet) intertwined with social and economic condition led to increasing civil consciousness. This encouraged people to raise their voices not only for economic concerns but also for other immaterial issues

such as social justice and environmental problems. Entering the 2010s, consciousness of rules and rights were even more widely spread to the public. This change is attributed to propagation of Smartphone and social media services to some extent. Individual and group specific rights were newly emerged motivations of popular contention in the 2010s.

Participants of popular resistance have been diversified as time passes. ICT has disseminated information to the masses (even to unspecified masses) and provided an outlet for expressing their opinions. People who can access ICT facilities and devices are naturally given the opportunity to lead or join the social movement. In the 1980s and 1990s, protestors were rural farmers, urban workers and urban residents who were threatened by demolition. At times, leaders took important roles in popular resistances by organizing and mobilizing protests. In the 2000s, social elites and the intellectual class appeared as a new group of social movement activists. They led civil rights movement seeking social justice for vulnerable social groups. In addition, using mobile phones and the Internet, homogeneous occupation groups went on strike demanding improved treatment. Most recently, participants of protests have broadened to people from all ranks and classes, over age, education, wealth and sex etc.

The ICT has also broadened spatial range of popular resistance. In the 1980s and 1990s, the protests usually occurred at the local level. Without distribution of communication devices, protesters were organized and mobilized through word

of mouth or traditional communicating methods. In this sense, information on social issues was disseminated within narrow limits. Thus, protests occurred at the village and township level, or company level in most cases. In the 2000s, the advent of mobile phones and the Internet facilitated quick and mass propagation of information. As a result, the range of collective action broadened to provinces, cities and even on a national level. The activism also crossed over virtual (off-line) and real space (on-line). Today, this trend continues to strengthen. National level of collective actions and online activism continues to grow.

Figure 12. ICT Evolution and Broadened Characteristics of Popular Resistance in China
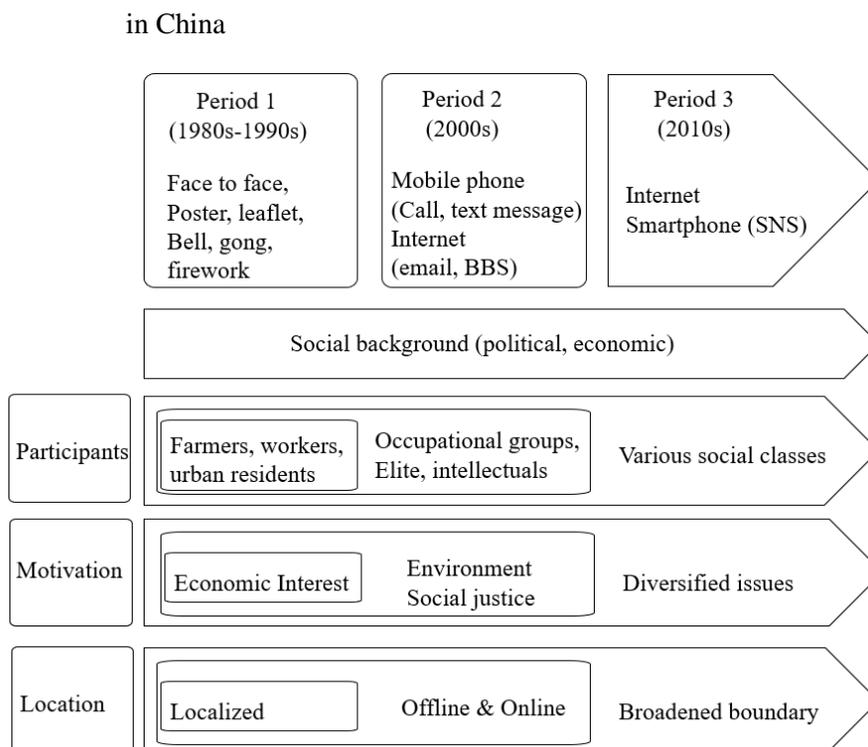
5.2. Broadened role of ICT in Popular Resistance

The role of ICT in popular contention in China has widened over the decades. Traditional communication tools such as bells, gongs, leaflets and telegraph mainly functioned as tools for information dissemination in popular protest. Those communication methods were sometimes used for protest organization and mobilization. In the 2000s, mobile phone call, text messaging and Internet services (Bulletin boards and forums) maintained existing functions with increased effect. The far-reaching power of the ICT facilitated mobilization of large number of public in a short time. In addition, the Internet has provided a space for public discourse and online activism. In the third period of ICT evolution, microblogging and instant messaging facilitate civil journalism and provide an outlet for citizens to express their anger and discontent. Moreover, the mobilization of public opinion through the new media exert growing influence on government action.

Figure 13. Broadened Role of ICT in Popular Resistance in China

Period 1 (1980s-1990s)	Period 2 (2000s)	Period 3 (2010s)
Face to face, Poster, leaflet, Bell, gong, firework	Mobile phone (Call, text message) Internet (email, BBS)	Internet Smartphone (SNS)

• Information dissemination • Protestor mobilization	• Massive dissemination of information • Place of public discourse • Protestor mobilization	• Instant, vivid information dissemination • Public discourse for diverse issues • Nationwide mobilization of protestors • Civil journalism, outlet for individual grievances • Increasing influence on government polices or administrative measures

5.3. Changes in Government`s Responses

Some scholars mentioned that "social unrest becomes dangerous if organizers are able to reach out beyond their core group and mobilize other social groups in a show of solidarity (Gobel and Ong, 2012)." In this sense, diffusion of ICT devices might pose a threat to the Chinese government since it can facilitate mobilization of heterogeneous social groups. However, it does not seem to be happening in the near future. In response to these popular contentions, the local government traditionally used a mode of suppression, when it came to resistances that threatened social stability. Entering the information age, the Chinese government is actively adopting new technologies and legislative measures to effectively control modernized communication networks. Moreover, it is using modes of suppression and tolerance in an appropriate manner.

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국문 초록

중국의 정보통신기술 발달과 대중저항에 관한 연구:
스마트폰과 소셜미디어를 중심으로

황은미

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1978 년 이후 중국은 개혁 개방을 통해 괄목할 만한 성장을 이루어 가고 있다. 그러나 이러한 급격한 변화는 사회 불균형 및 관련 법제 미비 등으로 인한 문제를 동반할 수 밖에 없었다. 개혁개방 초기 중국은 경제적 이익 분배의 불균형으로 인한 사회 갈등이 농민과 도시 근로자들을 중심으로 표출되었다. 21 세기에 들어선 오늘날의 중국은 정부 주도의 급속한 경제성장과 대외 개방에 의해 사회 양극화가 더욱 극심화 된 반면, 시민들의 권리의식은 한층 더 고양됨에 따라 다양한 형태의 저항이 확대되고 있다.

21 세기의 정보통신 기술 발전과 대중적 보급은 중국 사회의 또 하나의 주목할 만한 변화이다. 중국의 정보통신 기술은 80~90 년대의 전통적 통신수단 및 전보, 유선전화에서 시작하여, 2000 년대에는 휴대전화와 인터넷, 그리고 2010 년대의 스마트폰과 소셜미디어

서비스로 발전하였다. 이러한 통신기술들은 중국 시민의 삶에서 없어서는 안될 존재로 자리매김 하며 그들의 일상은 물론 집단적 저항 운동에 있어서도 크고 작은 영향을 미쳐 왔다.

　　　본 연구는 개혁개방 이후부터 가장 최근까지의 40 년여간의 중국 대중 시위의 역사를 정보통신 발달의 3 가지 단계로 구분하여, 각 시기별로 벌어진 시민 저항운동이 기존 시기와 비교하여 어떠한 특징을 지니는가, 또 해당 시기에 정보통신 기술이 대중 시위에 있어 어떠한 역할을 하였는가에 초점을 맞추어 사례 연구를 하고자 한다. 마지막으로 중국 정부는 각 시기별로 정보통신과 관련된 시위에 대해 어떻게 대응해왔는지, 그 변화를 고찰하고자 한다.

　　　본 연구를 통해 발견한 바는 다음과 같다. 정보통신 기술은 중국 시민 저항에 직간접적 영향을 미쳐왔으며, 그에 따른 대중 시위의 특징은 기존 시대에서의 특징에 새로운 특징이 추가된 '확대'된 특징을 갖는다. 정보통신 기술을 통한 정보 전달의 파급력, 그리고 접근의 용이성 등을 통해 대중 시위는 보다 다양한 동기를 가진, 다양한 계층의 참여자와 확대된 장소에서 이루어지는 양상으로 확대되었다.

　　　중국 대중 시위에 있어서의 정보통신기술의 역할 또한 기존 시기로부터 확대되는 양상으로 변화해왔다. 80~90 년대에 정보 전달, 시위 모집 위주로 사용되던 통신기술은 2000 년대 들어 인터넷

게시판(BBS), 포럼을 통한 담론의 장 및 온라인 시위 공간 제공이라는 새로운 기능을 추가하며 시위에 관여하게 되었다. 2010 년대 들어서는 스마트폰과 소셜미디어를 통해 시민기자의 활성화 및 개개인의 불만 표출의 창구 역할을 하게 되었고, 정부에 미치는 영향력 또한 더욱 커지게 되었다.

중국 정부는 시민 저항에 영향을 미치는 정보통신 기술의 변화를 분주히 따라가며 진압 위주의 대응을 해 오고 있다. 하지만 민생 문제, 공권력 남용과 같은 몇몇 심각한 사안에 대해서는 중앙정부의 주도하게 시민의 입장에서 신속하게 문제를 해결하려는 모습도 보이고 있다.

개개인의 주장 표현이 자유롭지 못한 중국 공산주의 체제에서 누구에게나 접근이 용이하고 시민들의 담론 형성과 의견 개진의 창구역할을 한다는 점에서 중국 정보통신 기술과 시민 저항에 관한 본 연구는 그 의의를 찾을 수 있겠다. 또한, 선행 연구가 상대적으로 적은 세번째 시기 (2010 년대)의 사례 연구는 관련 연구 분야에 기여할 수 있을 것으로 기대한다. 앞으로의 정보통신 기술은 현재 보다 더욱 빠른 속도로 (5G network) 개개인의 삶 가까이에서 접할 수 있는 다양한 기기를 통해 (Internet Of Things) 보다 진화된 서비스를 (Artificial

Intelligence) 제공할 예정이다. 이에 따라 중국 시민의 저항운동과 정부의 대응에도 어떠한 영향을 미칠지 주목할 필요가 있다.

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