

Can Independent Media Help Suppress Mass Protest?

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EACES-HSE, June 7, 2018

Fake agents

- Kuran (1989), Lohmann (1994): the role of public signals in political behavior
 - The key factor of the decision to act: the ability to learn the distribution of preferences
- “Fake agents” generate informational noise and can complicate political learning

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VLADIMIR PUTIN, 2000





СВОБОДУ
ЭДУАРДУ
ЛИМОНОВУ



ქვეყნის
სიღატაკის
შეწყვეტა









Thread Starter

2 replies to this topic
Total number of posts: 0
Registered on: 12/24/2012

21.02. The protest rally Antimaydan.Kr.kr. 300

□ **Irina Z** a » February 19, 2015, 23:40

21.02. Procession-the meeting is authorized under the auspices of the Kr. cross
Anti-Maidan "We will not forget . "

Pick up metro Pushkin 11:45 Up to 15 hours maximum.

We are waiting for everyone who is with us.

Last edited by **Ирина** a on Feb 20, 2015, 20:46; edited 5 times in total.

Classmates <http://ok.ru/komandakastingvariant>

Vkontakte <http://vk.com/club82644710>

Facebook facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kastingvariant/>



1 replies to this topic
Total number of posts: 1
Registered: June 26, 2013

Re: 21.02. The protest rally Antimaydan.Kr.kr. 300

□ **Zibareva Ekaterina** » February 20, 2015, 00:03

Good evening!!!

Write us, please !!! 🍷

We are from the Luhansk People's Republic the hero city of Stakhanov !!! 🍷

. Ekaterina 26 years old

. Anzhelika 39 years old

89 28

Our arrival is 100% !!

Thank you !!! 🍷



igor123

1 replies to this topic
Total Messages: 8
Registered: July 1 2014

Re: 21.02. The protest rally Antimaydan.Kr.kr. 300

□ **igor123** on **Wed** Feb 20, 2015, 00:18

Born in 1969

Height 175, size 52, shoes 41

Moskvich, m. Altufevo

Work with text

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This paper: theoretical argument

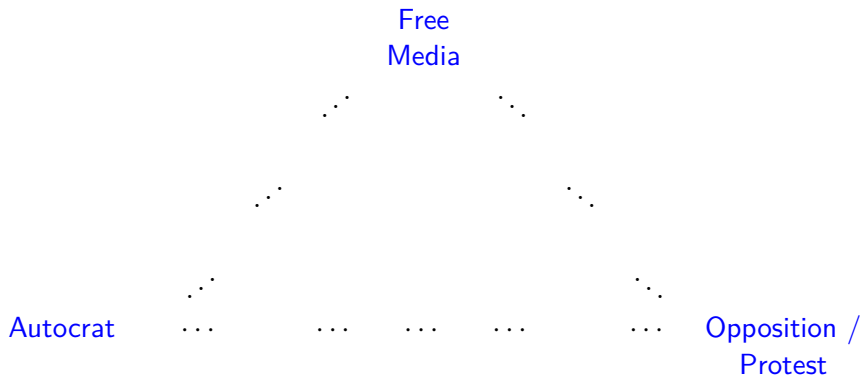
- **Argument:** *Media freedom can amplify the effect of staging pro-government rallies and discourage dissidents from protesting*
 - Conditions: **Media**
 - Media are allowed to transmit observable signal truthfully
 - But cannot conduct independent journalistic investigations
 - Conditions: **Information**
 - Private information about the popularity of the incumbent is imperfect
 - Private information about the resources of the incumbent is imperfect

This paper: empirical argument

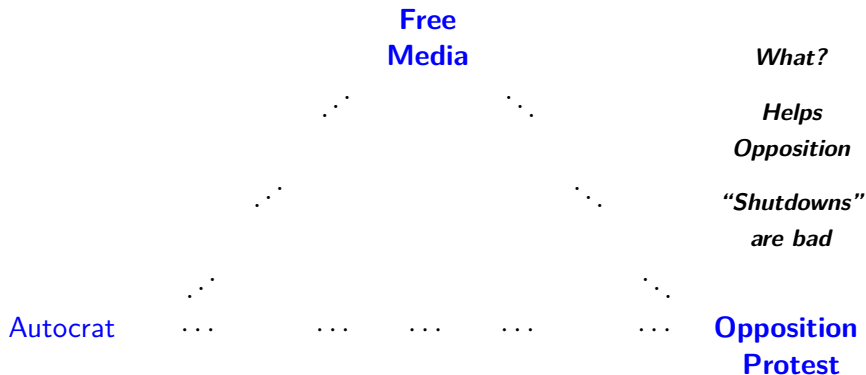
- **Difference-in-differences**

- Change in protest activity of dissidents after a pro-regime rally took place in February, 2012
- Local availability of independent radio station *Echo of Moscow* in Russia
- *Identification assumptions*: a combination of qualitative evidence and machine learning

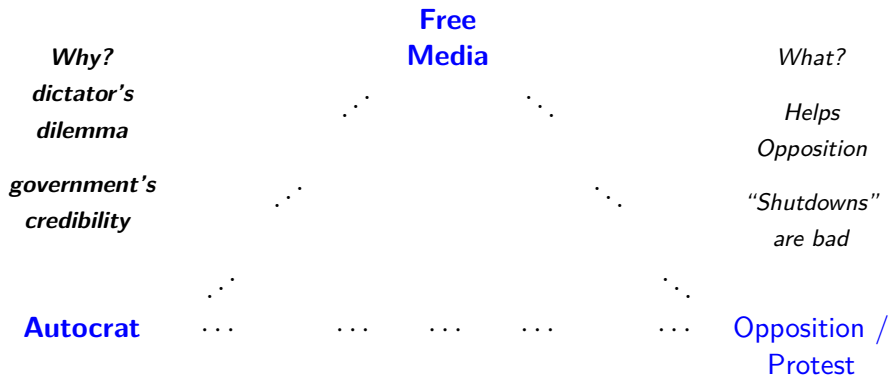
Autocrats, Media and Opposition



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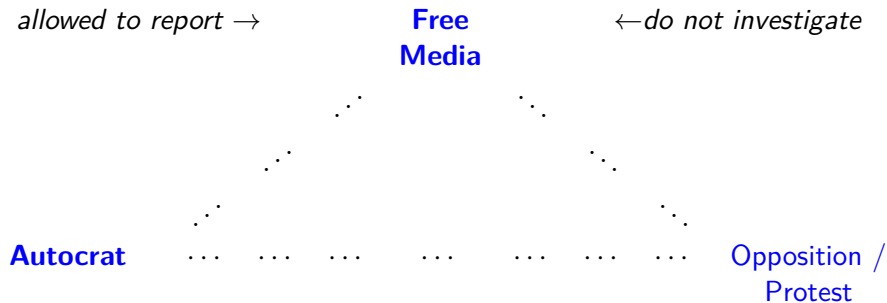
Price of media freedom

- Media freedom comes at a price:
 - Monitoring capacity: state officials, citizens
 - Government's credibility
 - Economic actors, International community

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- Price: negative attitudes ↑ & protest capacity ↑

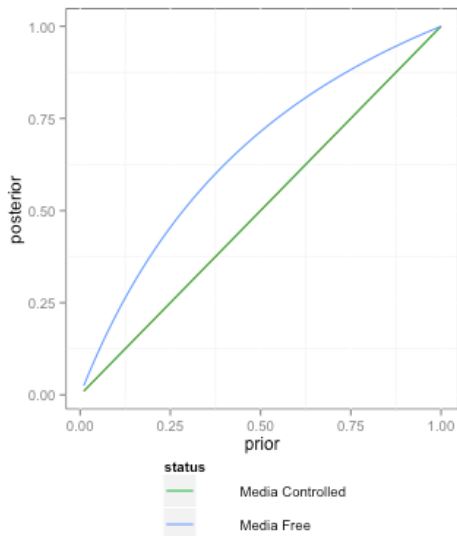
Theoretical argument



Theoretical argument



Theoretical argument



Russia's Protests 2011-2012

Echo of Moscow reports on the size rallies
February, 4th, 2012



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Echo of Moscow



Echo of Moscow

- Independent media usually depend on outside financial sources
- *Echo of Moscow* is profitable
- Broad regional network: 42 cities
- **Decision to open the local branch depends on the size of local audience**

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- Independent media usually depend on outside financial sources
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- **Decision to open the local branch depends on the size of local audience**
- **Key identification assumption:**
 - *exposure to Echo of Moscow is as good as as-if random conditional on the propensity to satisfy requirements of its management*

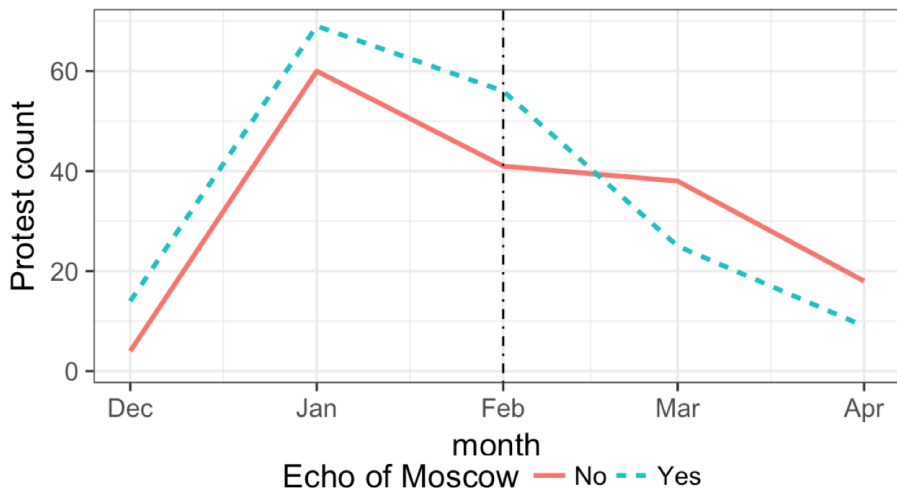
Hypotheses

- ① After pro-regime rally takes place:
 - ① ***maximal protest turnout declines more in cities exposed to Echo of Moscow reports about size of the pro-regime rally;***
 - ② ***number of anti-government protests declines more ~~~***
- ② Timeframe: 40 days

Empirical strategy

- ① Check if *Echo of Moscow* personnel does not lie about it's decisions
 - Predict availability of the station with bootstrap LASSO selection model
 - no significant political predictors
 - Temp in January, Distance to Moscow, Population size
- ② Dif-in-Dif while using Inverse Propensity Score Weighting (Imai and Ratkovic, 2014)
 - Parallel trends

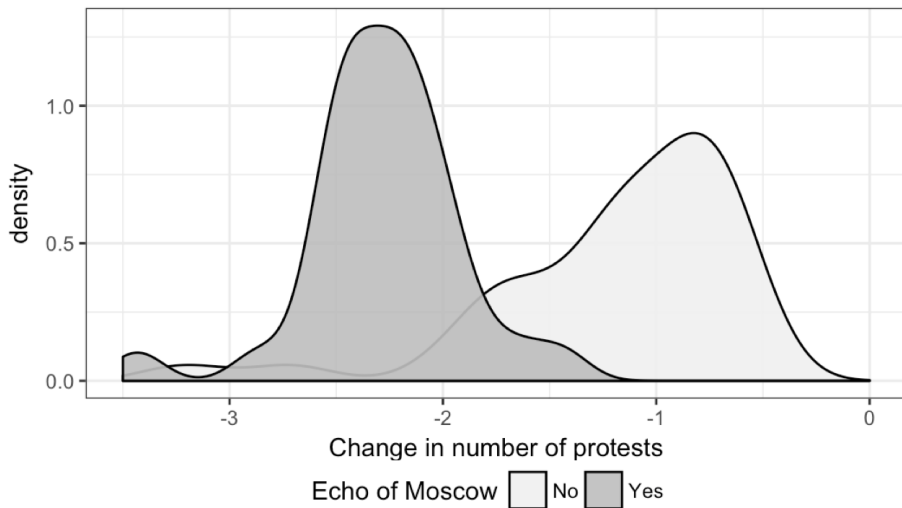
Protest Dynamics



Protest Dynamics



Protest Dynamics



Results

	Change in Protest Turnout ⁺		Change in Protest Count	
	IPW ⁺⁺	Unadjusted	IPW	Unadjusted
<i>Echo of Moscow</i>	-0.36** (0.15)	-0.23 (0.19)	-1.51*** (0.52)	-1.31** (0.58)
Observations	76	76	76	76
Log Likelihood	-100.5	-93.8	-164.8	-152.8
Akaike IC	211.1	197.7	339.6	315.7

*Note: Standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$,*

⁺ Protesters per 1000 citizens, ⁺⁺ Inverse Propensity Weighting.

Table: Effect of local availability of *Echo of Moscow* on change in protest activity

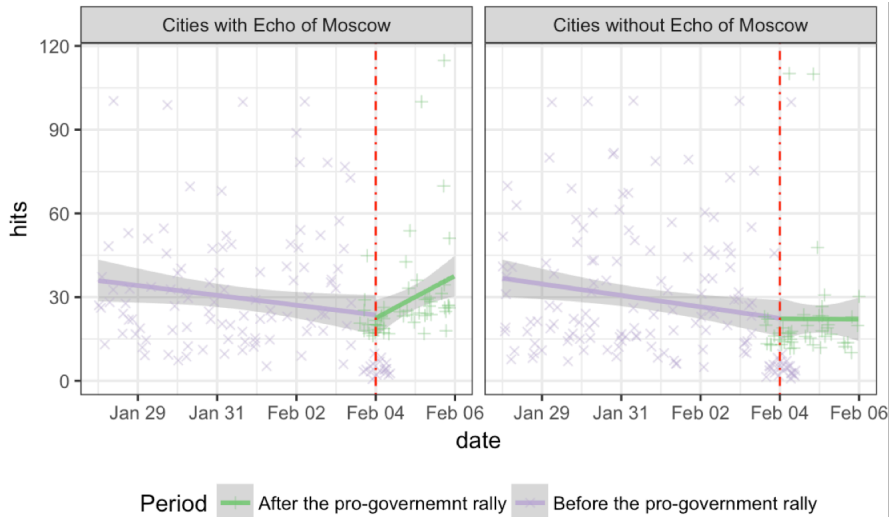
Threats to validity

- Timeframe is broad

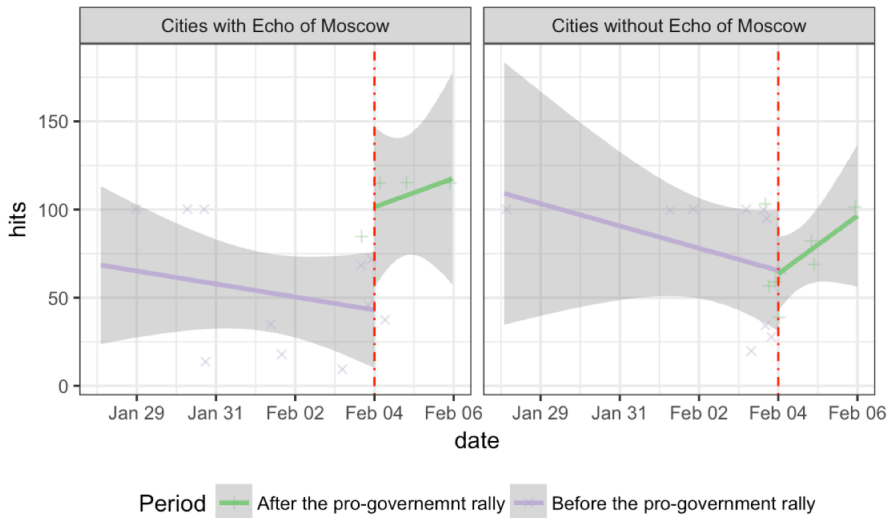
Threats to validity

- Timeframe is broad
 - Vacations
- Alternative mechanisms with respect to *Echo of Moscow* broadcasts
 - Change in editorial policies
- Regression to the mean

Threats to Validity



Threats to Validity



Conclusions

- Evidence that the credibility of independent media outlet can amplify the discouragement effects of pro-government rallies on dissidents
- Exposure to *Echo of Moscow reports*:
 - decline in the mean protest turnout (-.36 per 1000 citizens)
 - decline in the number of protest: (-1.51)

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- Evidence that the credibility of independent media outlet can amplify the discouragement effects of pro-government rallies on dissidents
- Exposure to *Echo of Moscow reports*:
 - decline in the mean protest turnout (-.36 per 1000 citizens)
 - decline in the number of protest: (-1.51)
- Was Putin strategic?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE!

WWW.ASOBOLEV.COM



K. Imai and M. Ratkovic, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Statistical Methodology) **76**, 243 (2014).