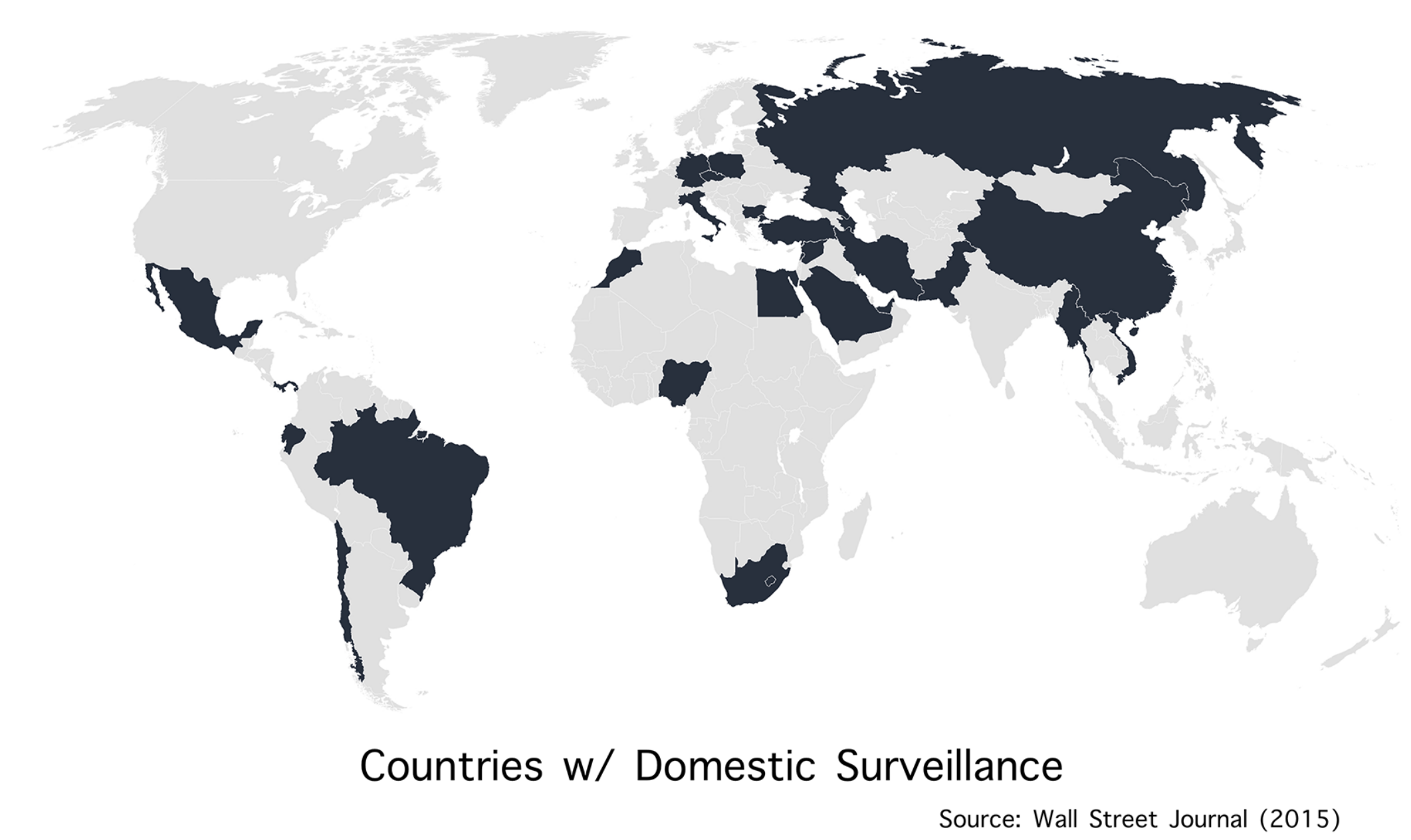


THE SOCIAL COSTS OF DIGITAL VS. IN-PERSON SURVEILLANCE

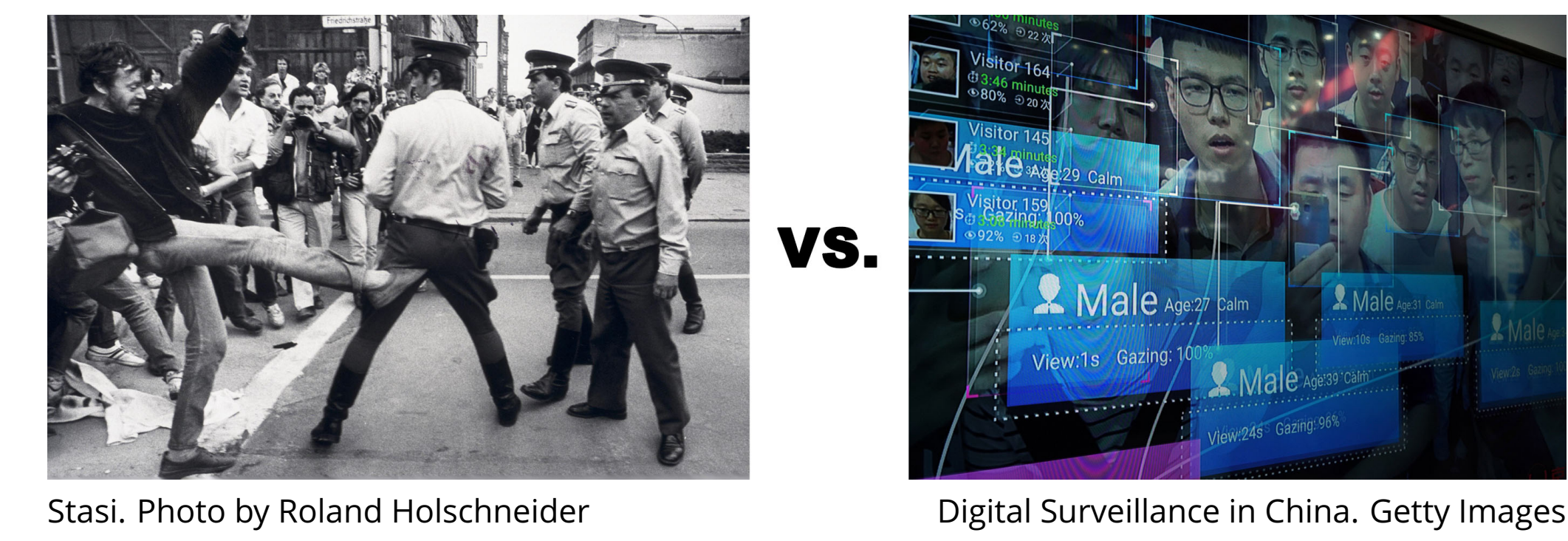
Experimental and Observational Evidence from China

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INTRODUCTION



Autocracies around the world are experiencing significant growth in domestic surveillance in the digital age.



Research Question:
What are the social costs of digital surveillance compared with those of in-person surveillance?

Social Trust Civic Participation Regime Legitimacy

Findings:

- Digital surveillance discourages protests, lowers individuals' beliefs on protest coordination, and induces self-censorship.
- Compared with in-person surveillance, digital surveillance is less likely to lower trust and regime legitimacy.

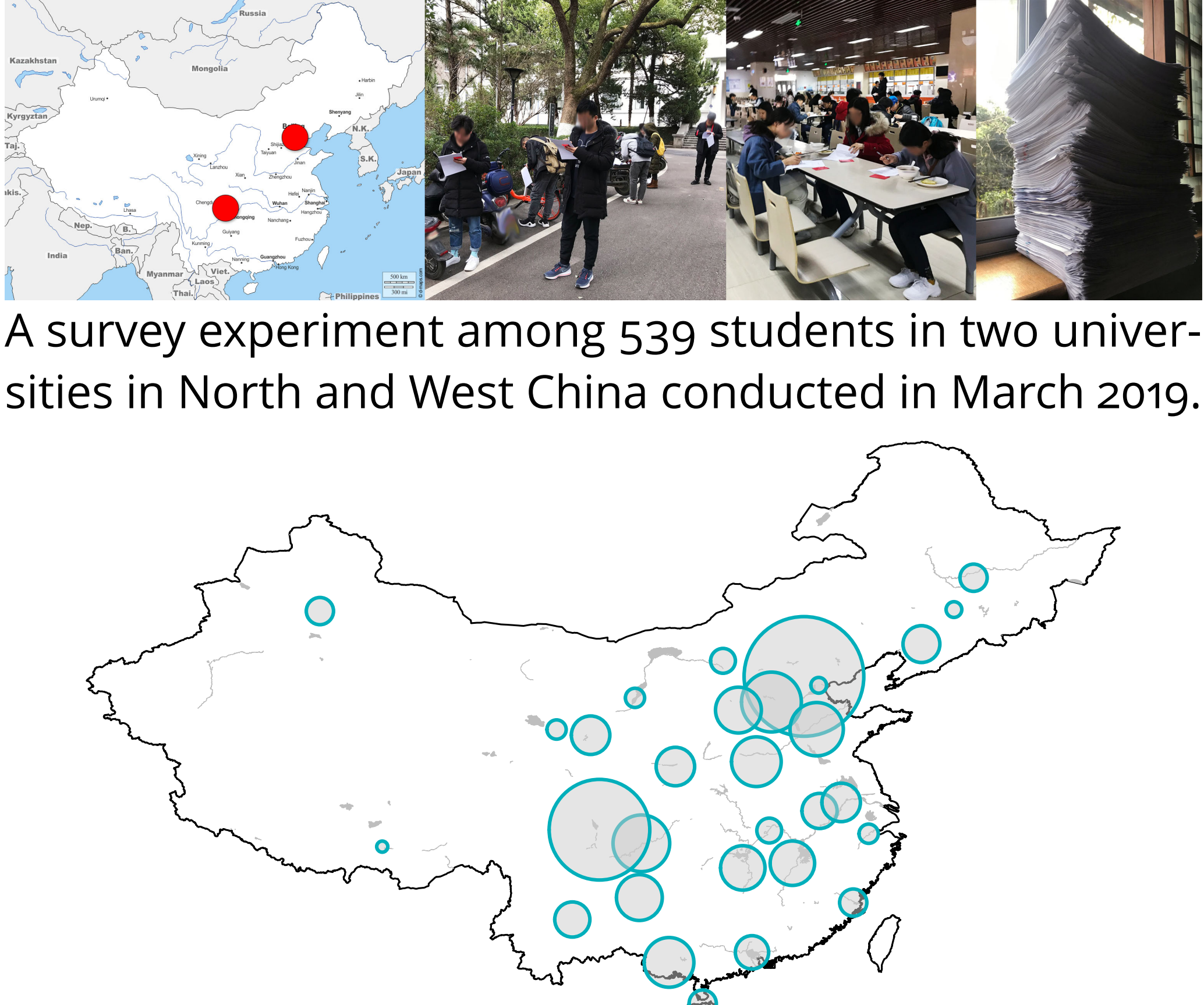
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Similarities: In-person & digital surveillance \Rightarrow *targeted repression* \Rightarrow participation (\searrow) & self-censorship (\nearrow).

Differences:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|
| In-person surveillance | vs. | Digital surveillance |
| Human intrusion | | No human intrusion |
| Trust (\searrow) | | Trust (\leftrightarrow) |
| Legitimacy (\searrow) | | Legitimacy (\leftrightarrow) |

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



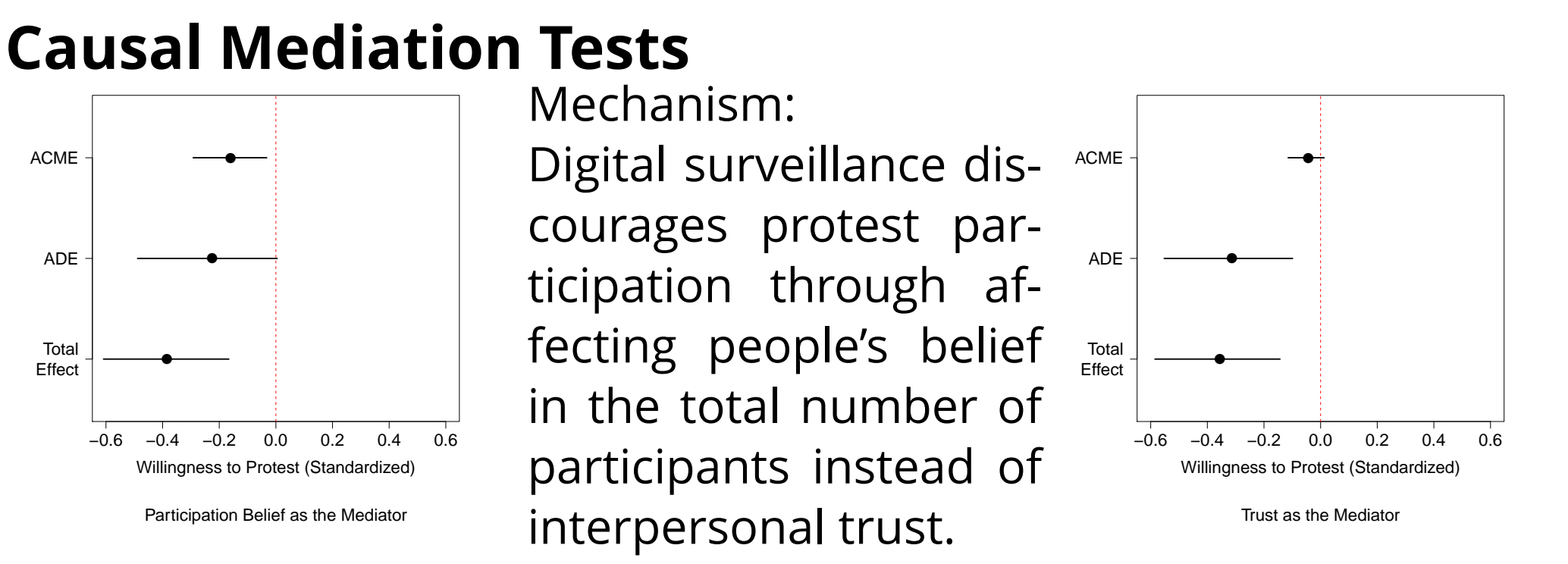
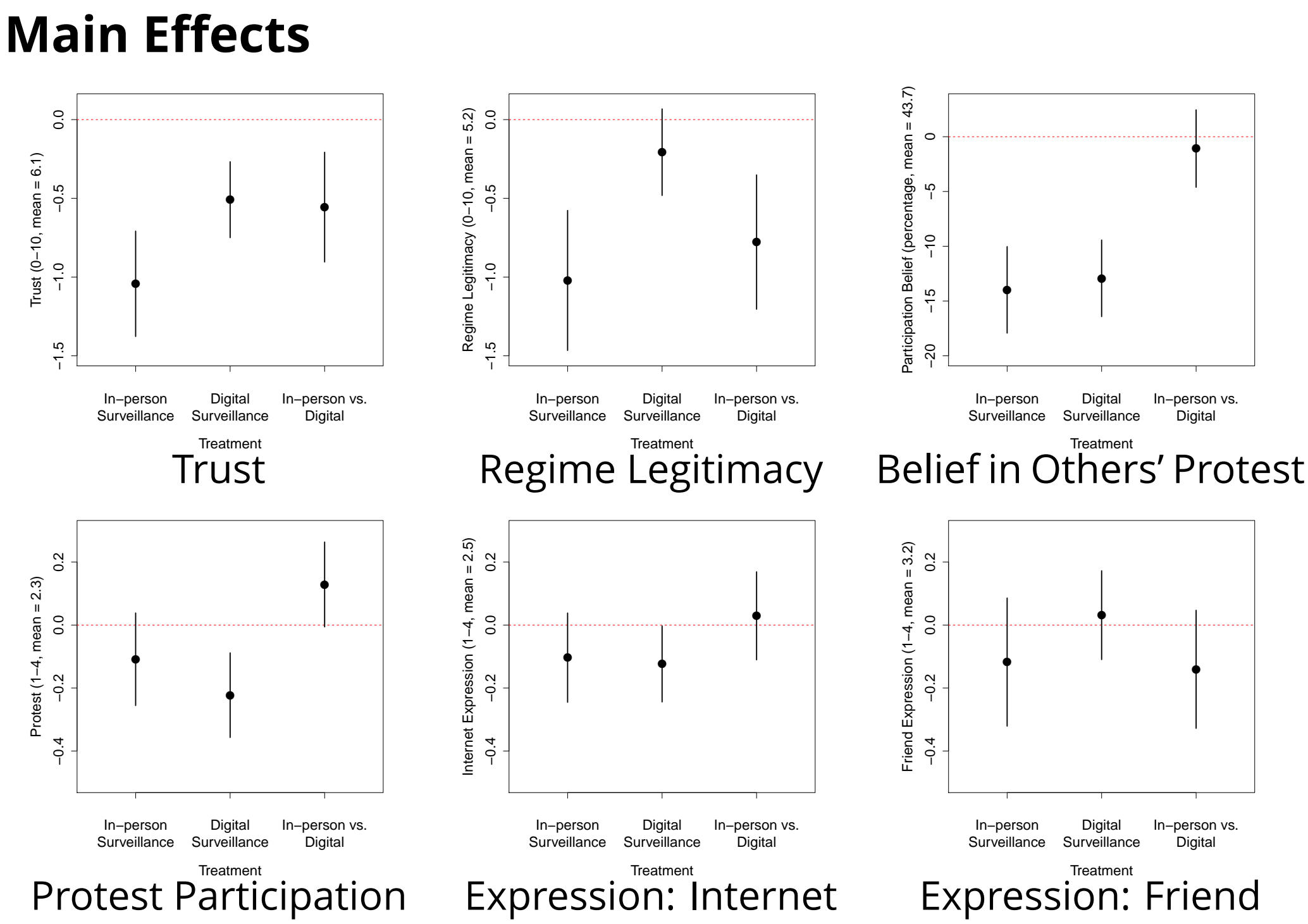
| | Within-Subjects Design | | | Between-Subjects Design | | |
|-------------|------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 | Group 6 |
| Pre-test: | Yes | Yes | Yes | -- | -- | -- |
| Assignment: | Control | Treated | Treated | Control | Treated | Treated |
| Treatment: | No Info | In-person | Digital | No Info | In-person | Digital |
| Post-test: | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| N: | 124 | 103 | 126 | 61 | 64 | 61 |

Treatment Vignettes:

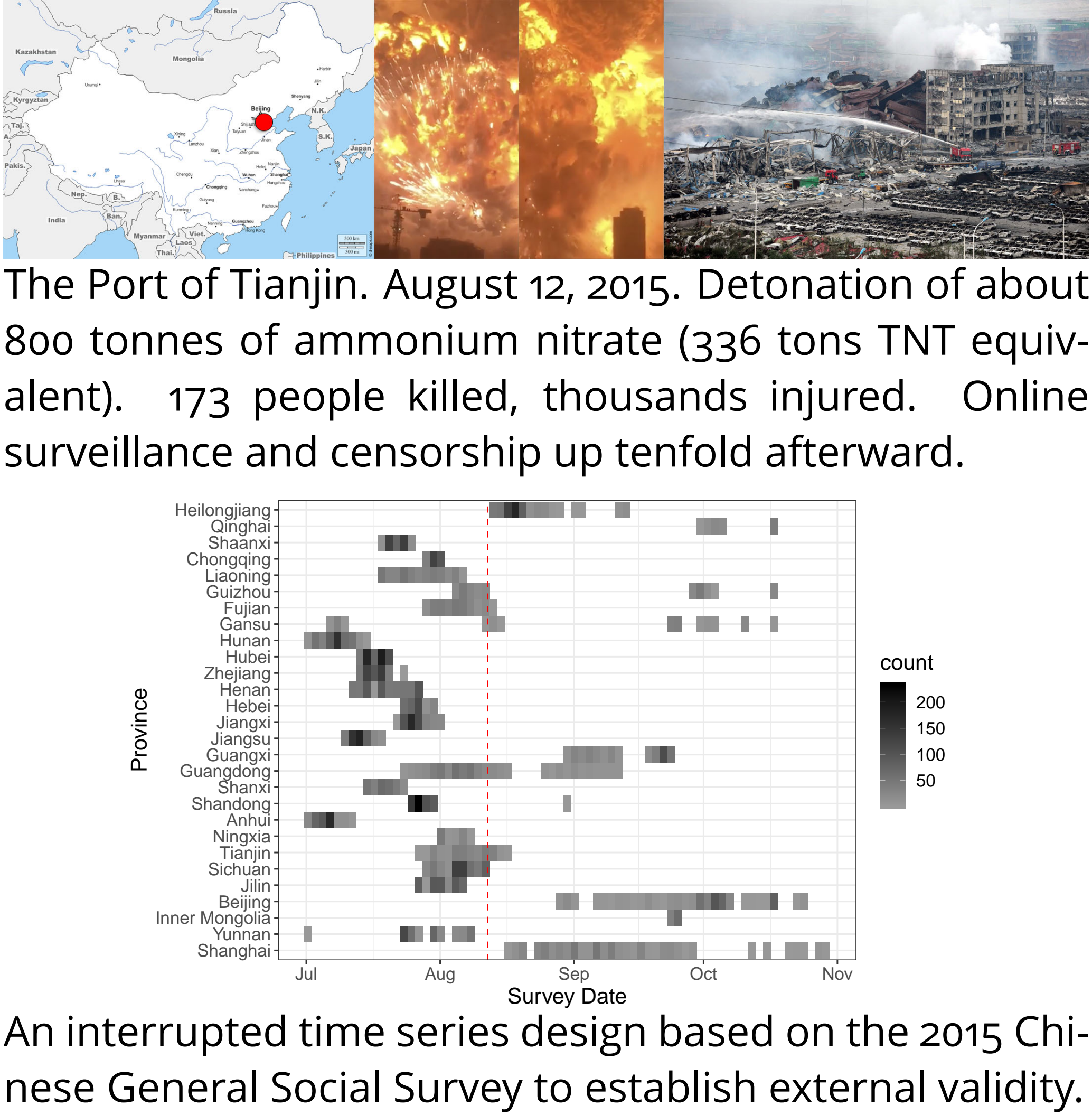
- In-person surveillance:** "The school authorities approached some of the students in your residence hall and promised them some benefits. In exchange, those students agreed to secretly investigate and report the names of the participants."
- Digital surveillance:** "The school authorities have the ability to monitor students' online activities (on social media/apps, websites, forums, etc.) through the university's Internet servers to identify the participants."

| Table 2: Balance Check, Within Subject Sample | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|---------|-------|---------|---------|
| | obs. | Control | Human | Digital | p-value |
| Age | 425 | 20.59 | 20.67 | 20.73 | 0.852 |
| Female (F=1) | 431 | 0.52 | 0.48 | 0.51 | 0.864 |
| Income (1-9) | 428 | 6.69 | 6.72 | 6.78 | 0.909 |
| Income Sat. (0-10) | 433 | 6.68 | 7.19 | 6.79 | 0.179 |
| Party (Yes=1) | 434 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.831 |
| Offical Org. (Yes=1) | 434 | 0.47 | 0.51 | 0.53 | 0.542 |
| Stud. Org. (Yes=1) | 433 | 0.64 | 0.65 | 0.59 | 0.521 |
| Commu. Serv. (1-5) | 434 | 2.49 | 2.56 | 2.51 | 0.761 |
| Speech (1-5) | 433 | 3.14 | 3.15 | 3.06 | 0.549 |
| Media: News (1-5) | 423 | 2.06 | 2.18 | 2.11 | 0.476 |
| Media: TV (1-5) | 426 | 3.09 | 3.03 | 3.02 | 0.818 |
| Media: Phone (1-5) | 434 | 4.70 | 4.74 | 4.80 | 0.218 |
| Distrust (0-10) | 433 | 4.38 | 4.53 | 3.72 | 0.051 |
| Diss. Politics (1-5) | 432 | 2.34 | 2.18 | 2.25 | 0.392 |

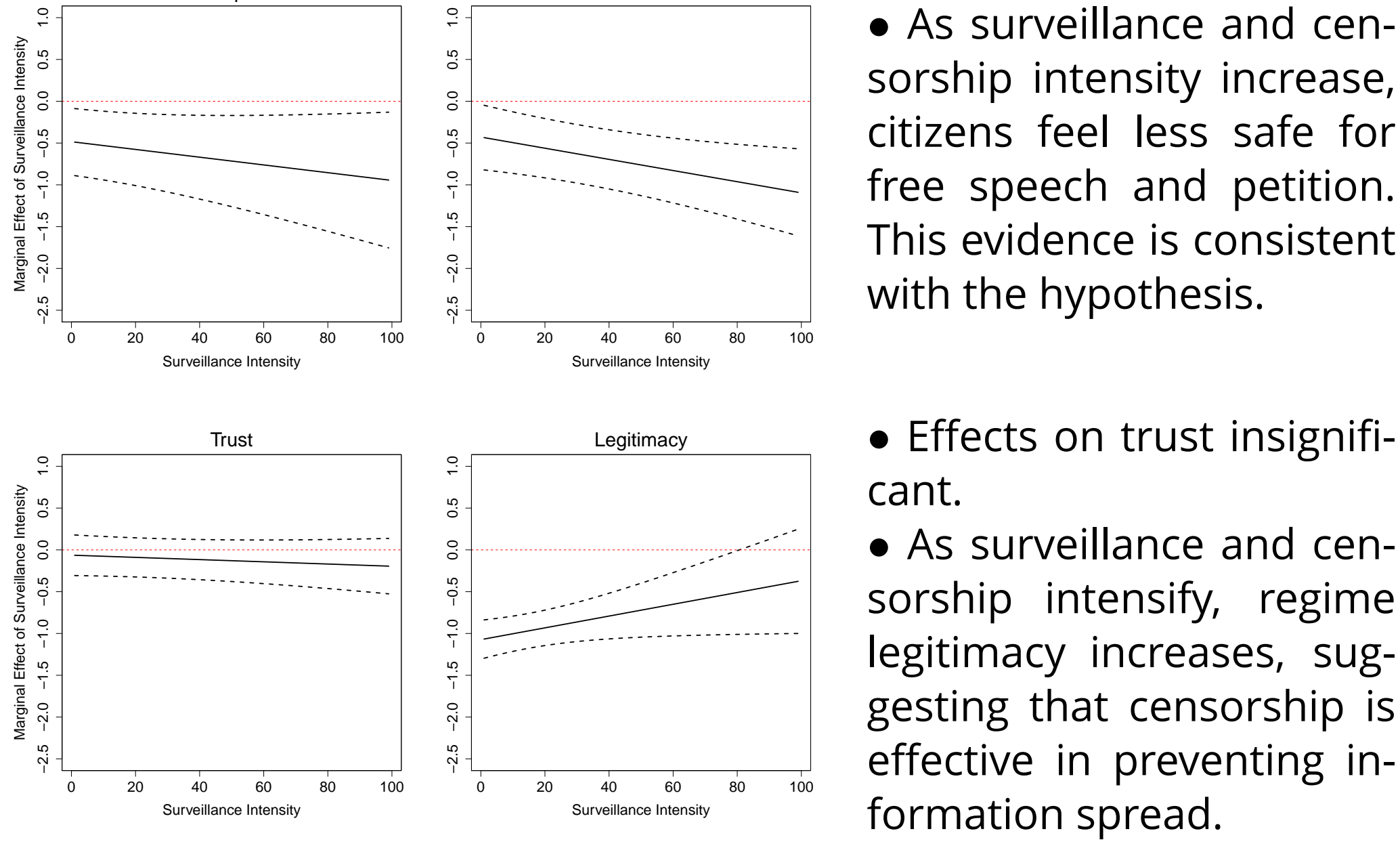
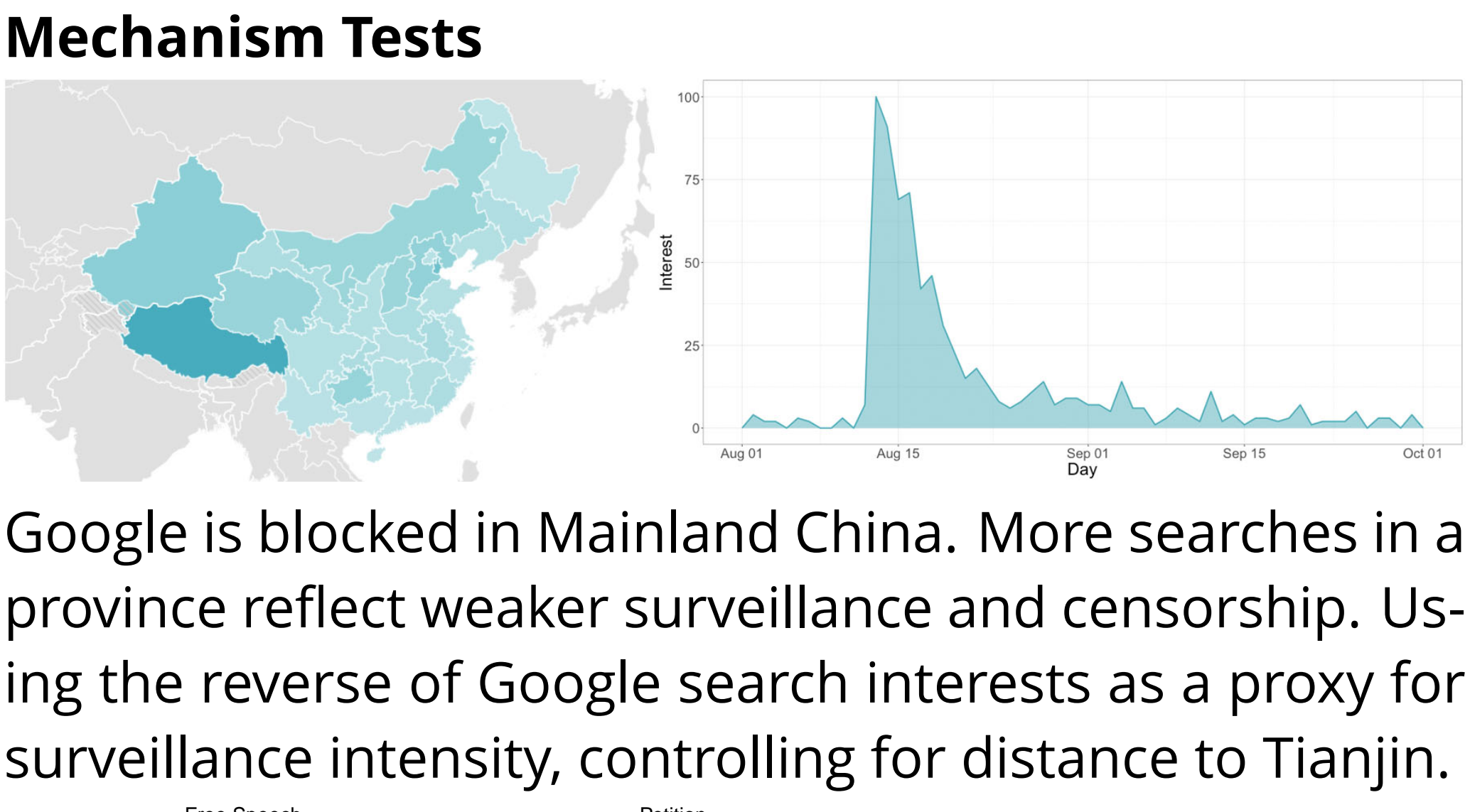
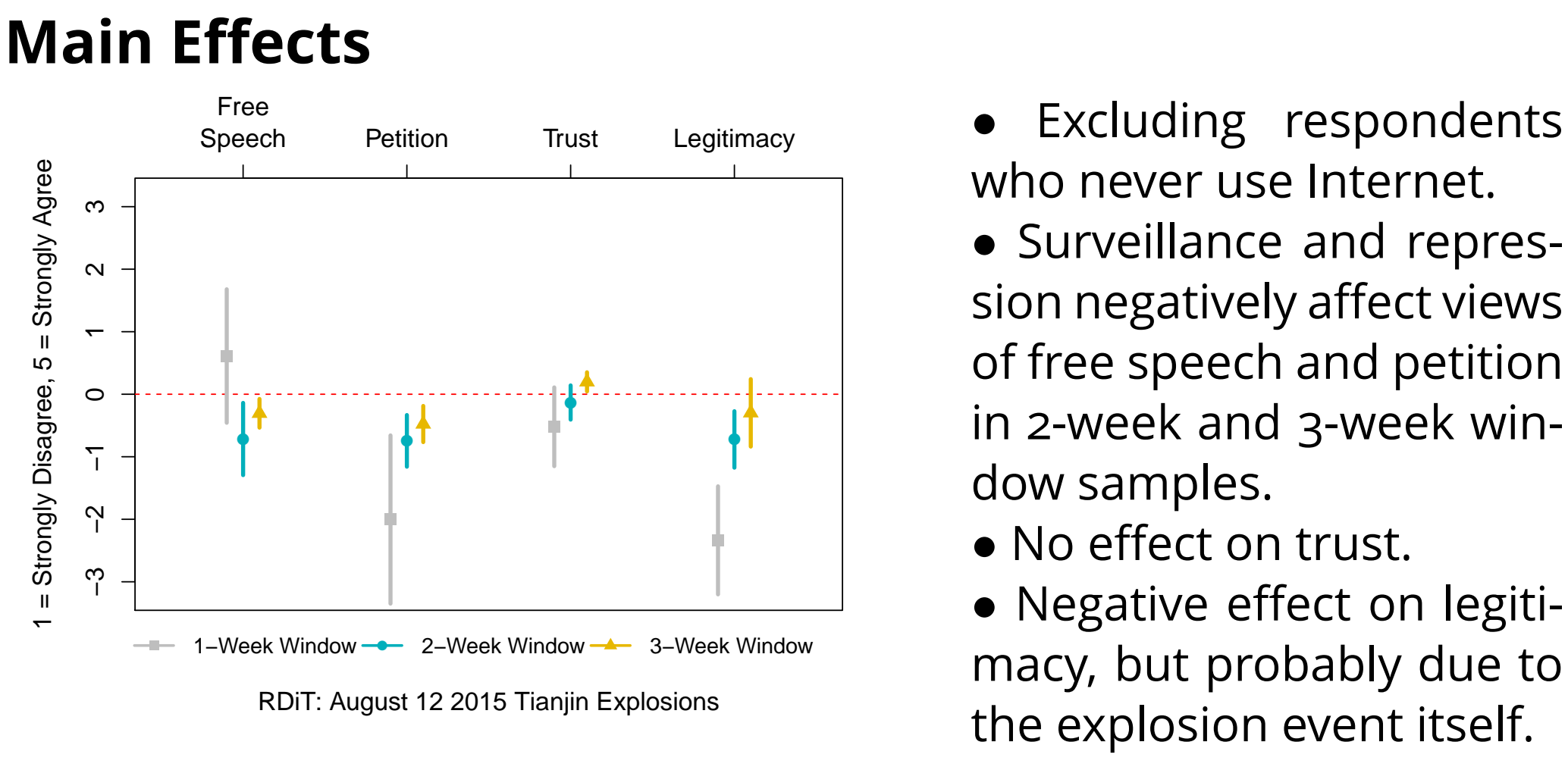
EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS



INTERRUPTED TIME SERIES ANALYSIS



ITSA FINDINGS



CONCLUSION

- Experimental and observational evidence suggests that both digital and in-person surveillance are effective in inducing self-censorship and deterring protests.
- Experimental evidence suggests that digital surveillance is less likely to lower trust and reduce regime legitimacy than in-person surveillance.
- The reduced social costs of surveillance in the digital age imply that dictators might be more likely to rely on digital surveillance for social control.