

## Mengqing (Maggie) Zhang

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### EDUCATION

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**The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong** **Expected July 2020**

- *M.Phil in Communication at the School of Journalism and Communication.*
- Main courses: Communication Theories, Quantitative Communication Research, Writing for Research and Publication, Digital Research, Advanced Social Science Research Methods

**Tsinghua University, Beijing, China** **July 2015 - July 2018**

- *B.A in Journalism at the School of Journalism and Communication.*
- Main Courses: Social Statistics, Empirical Media Research Method, Communication Research Methods, Academic Research Workshop

**George Mason University, VA, U.S.** **January 2017 - May 2017**

- *Exchange student.*
- Main Courses: Social Network Analysis (Using Python), Marketing Analytics (Using R)
- Full scholarship provided by China Scholarship Council

**Tsinghua University, Beijing, China** **July 2013 - July 2015**

- *Two years' undergraduate study at the Department of Hydraulic Engineering.*
- Main Courses: Calculus, Linear Algebra, Probability and Statistics, Programming in Visual Basic

### PUBLICATIONS

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Jiang, H., Qiang, M., Fan, Q., & **Zhang, M.** (2018). Scientific research driven by large-scale infrastructure projects: A case study of the Three Gorges Project in China. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 134, 61-71.

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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**Zhang, M.** (2019, May). *Understanding Rumor Retransmission Mechanism on Social Media in Crises Events: An Empirical Study of the China Child Abuse Scandal on Weibo.* Paper presented at International Communication Associations (ICA) 69th Annual Conference, DC Washington (**Top 2 Student Paper Award in the Mass Communication Division**)

**Zhang, M & Jiang, H.** (2019, March). *What Influences Information Adoption about Environmental Issues in a social Q&A Site?* Paper presented at the 5th CoHASS Graduate Conference at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

### WORKING PAPERS

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**Strategy Matters but Varies: A Structural Topic Model Approach to Analyzing China's Foreign Propaganda Machine on Twitter**

*With Wang X and Hu Y.*

China's state media have been essential tools for the state's foreign propaganda machine to disseminate pro-state voices on Twitter. Based on the general framing package together with the two overarching strategies, this study builds up an integrated framework of analyzing propaganda frames and strategies of China's state media coverage on Hong Kong protests. Structural Topic Model is adopted to analyze 8,223 tweets from 13 state media accounts, and 11 frames are identified. We also investigate how bureaucratic rank of media influence the selection of frames in news coverage and how different frames result in different level of audience engagement. Results suggest that: (1) problem definition and supporting remedies prove to gain more salience in state media propaganda; (2) the combination of all framing tactics conforms to the "protest paradigm" which marginalizes and delegitimizes protesters that pose threats to the status quo; (3) topical prevalence is closely associated with both the bureaucratic rank of state media and the engagement rate of tweets.

*Paper submitted to International Communication Associations 70th Annual Conference.*

## Exploring the effect of government propaganda: the case of China's twitter trolls targeting Hong Kong protests

Information manipulation has become a key tool for regimes to guide public opinion and collective attitude. In the digital era, computational means including propaganda trolls and social bots are frequently used to influence people's perception in political events. The effect of such large-scale computational propaganda remains rarely explored. The case of China's state-backed information operation focused on the Hong Kong protests on twitter provides an opportunity for us to observe people's opinion change under such influence. In this study, we use the troll accounts suspended by Twitter as a starting point to further investigate how public perception of Hong Kong protests is changed after interactions with government trolls.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Research Assistant, *Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford***

**June - August 2017**

***Envisioning the Sustainable City in China: Green Development as Imagined in the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center (EU Horizon 2020 GREEN-WIN research project)***

- Conducted field work at Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center in June 2017.
- Reviewed literature on newspaper and other media coverage, and government policy paperwork on planning and sustainability. Drafted the first version of the working paper.

## OTHER RELATED EXPERIENCE

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**China Central Television, Beijing, China**

**June - August 2016**

Intern Journalist, Social News Department, News Channel

- Assisted in the interviewing work and finished video clips editing work and news writing independently in *Weekly Quality Report* program.

**Qingbo Big Data Technology Co., Ltd., Beijing, China**

**August 2017 – January 2018**

Intern Researcher, Qing Bo Big Data Institute

- Analyzed public opinion on major social events and completed reports.

## AWARDS & GRANTS

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### Awards

- Top 2 Student Paper Award, ICA the Mass Communication Division, 2019
- Thesis Award with Excellence, School of Journalism and Communication, Tsinghua U, 2018
- Sino Group Innovation Contribution Award, Tsinghua U X-lab, 2018
- Renmin Scholarship, People.cn, 2017

### Grants

- Tsinghua Top-Open Undergraduate Overseas Academic Training Fellowship, \$3000, 2017
- Tsinghua Undergraduate Research Advance Fellowship, \$2000, 2016

## SKILLS

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### Languages

- Mandarin (Native); English (Proficient)

### Computational method

- Web data collection
- Text mining including supervised and unsupervised machine learning
- Social network analysis

### Statistical Programming Languages

- R, Python, SPSS

## RESEARCH INTEREST

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- computational social science, social network, networked communication process
- political communication, public opinion, media effect
- propaganda and censorship, rumor, fake news and misinformation, social bots and trolls