

**Micro-Blog Use and Civic Activism in China – A Case Study of the  
Wukan Protest**

Master's Research Paper Presented By:  
**Xiaoyu Wen**

Department of Communication  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Ottawa

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**Supervisor:** Dr. Rocci Luppicini

**Committee Member:** Dr. Patrick McCurdy

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**Abstract**

Micro-blog has gradually become a main channel for netizens to get information and communicate with others in China. Drawing on participatory democracy and digital democracy theory, the following research explores how the biggest Chinese micro-blog site, Weibo, was used by activists to promote participatory democracy by examining the Wukan Protest from September, 2011 to March, 2012. To further contextualize the study, citizen activist activity on Weibo was also explored in relation to the issue of content censorship with respect to the current Internet policies in China. Using a case study research method, this study includes a content analysis of the related posts on Weibo and publicly accessible documentations of China's Internet security policy. The research provides a better understanding of the micro-blog's role in civic activism in China through a specific instance; and it also extends participatory democracy and digital democracy theory into a new area of empirical inquiry.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In July, 2006, the emergence of Twitter brought a new concept—“micro-blog” to us. It is a variant of blog, which allows its users to share brief updates (140 characters or less) on their thoughts, locations and activities through a mobile phone or the Internet (Thackeray & Hunter, 2010). After its creation, Twitter has quickly become one of the most popular social networking sites all around the world. According to the statistics drawn from ALEXA in 2010, the average visits to Twitter have approached 200 million times per day (Gao, Abel, Houben & Yu, 2012; Li, 2010).

In 2007, Wang Xing introduced this micro-blogging pattern to the Chinese Internet users and established the first micro-blog website – Fanfou in China. Within a very short time, many other micro-blog websites were created, such as Sina Weibo, Jiwai, Digu, Sohu, NetEase, and Tencent (Berry, 2013; Tong & Lei, 2013). Since then, the Chinese micro-blog market has become the most widely used social media in China. According to the “28<sup>th</sup> China Internet Development Statistics Report”, by the end of June 2011, the number of micro-blog users in China had reached 195 million, with an increase rate of 208.9% within six months. As a result, the proportion of using micro-blog by Internet users has rapidly increased from 13.8% to 40.2%, becoming the fastest growing Internet application in China (CNNIC, 2012). By June, 2012, Sina Weibo had over 368 million users, and is now the biggest micro-blog site in China (Jia, 2012).

According to my observation as a Weibo user, it was found that in addition to personal micro-blog users, a variety of traditional news media groups, social organizations, as well as government agencies have also registered for Weibo accounts and used this convenient platform to communicate with each other. For instance, as of August 2010, 466 mainstream media institutions in China opened Weibo accounts (Tong & Lei, 2013, p. 298). As of June 2012, there were “25,866 Sina-verified government microblogs, up from only 101 in 2010” (Tong & Lei,

2013, p. 309). As this micro blogging site grew, more and more activists began to use this new platform to release information and attract public attention. Therefore, many public events and civic activities, such as the Protest of Wukan, Diaoyu islands protest, have been discussed fiercely on Weibo. This appeared to have formed a strong unique public opinion field. Because of its huge number of participants, the discussions have greatly influenced some results of the public events that lead to micro changes in Chinese society (Tong & Lei, 2013; Li, 2010). In response, this study attempts to capture a better understanding of the influence of micro-blog in civic activism activities in China by focusing on “Weibo” use among those activists surrounding the Protest of Wukan.

The Protest of Wukan is chosen as the case because of its importance as the first protest event involving the Chinese government that has had a successful agreement reached in the end. Specifically, part of what makes this example of citizen activism significant is that unlike most other standoffs ending in arrests in the past, the senior Communist Party officials from the Guangdong provincial capital reached an agreement with Wukan’s self-appointed leaders, promising free elections in Wukan and an investigation into the questionable property deals (Wukan Protest, 2012). In the end, a free and democratic village election happened in Wukan which had also influenced the grass-roots political reform in China. According to the New York Times report (Wines, 2012), the *Protest’s Success May not Change China*. Rather, the author believes that “it was the first truly democratic vote here in decades, if not ever, and something of a landmark of transparency in China’s opaque politics”. According to the report from The Economic Observer *The Wukan Secret Code* (Liu, 2012), during September 2011 to March 2012, the villagers of Wukan, a fishing village in the prosperous southern Chinese province of Guangdong, started an anti-corruption protest. The main cause of the event is that the village government of Wukan and Lufeng (the higher administrative region) allegedly sold collectively owned village land to real estate developers without compensating the villagers properly.

According to *Occupy Wukan: Or What the Chinese Can Teach OWS about Democracy and Revolution* (2012), the corruption had impoverished most of the villagers and enriched the local government officials in Wukan. In order to fight for their lands and rights, thousands of the villagers gathered together to take over their village and throw out the local leaders.

During the whole protest period, it is worth noting that many activists used social networking site, Weibo, to release information about events taking place and call for help from the outside world. As a Weibo user, I also learned about developments in the protest from this micro blogging site.

### *1.1 Purpose of the study*

The purpose of this study is to deepen understanding of how Weibo was used for civic activism during the Protest of Wukan event. Existing research in related areas has found that social networking sites have accelerated aspects of the civic activities. For example, in the January 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution in Egypt, Mansour (2012) indicated that SNS played a significant role in the Egyptian Revolution as a transmission medium through which to spread anti-government perception, and provide some organization and cohesion to the protests. Even though there are studies arguing for the potential of micro blogs to influence substantive political outcomes and the development of civil society in China (Benney, 2011; Sullivan, 2013; Hassid, 2012; Lagerkvist, 2012; Leibold, 2011; Tong & Lei, 2013), there is a lack of empirical study examining Weibo and Chinese civic activism based on the theory of participatory democracy, not to mention a general lack of research conducted on the Protest of Wukan itself. Therefore, this study will remedy this deficiency and provide an original contribution to the scholarly literature by analyzing how Weibo was used by the activists to promote participatory democracy within the context of current Internet security policies in China.

## *1.2 Theoretical Perspective*

Theoretical perspectives derived from participatory democracy and digital democracy guide the research questions driving the study. Each of these is discussed below.

### *1.2.1 Participatory democracy*

In the 1960s and 1970s, participatory democracy was theorized by many political scientists as a distinct theory of democracy (Hilmer, 2010). According to Baarda (2012), the participatory democratic perspectives “envision a government in which people are able to participate in political decision-making not only through the election of representatives, but also through directly influencing government decisions” (p.11). Hilmer (2010) also states that participatory democratic theory “envisions the maximum participation of citizens in their self-governance, especially in sectors of society beyond those that are traditionally understood to be political, for example, the household and workplace” (p.43). It is a process emphasizing the broad participation of the public in various forms of public decision making (Overdeest, 2000). In other words, participatory democracy encourages individuals to make meaningful contributions to decision making process and strives to involve more people to have access to the opportunities. As the Port Huron Statement (1962) announced, the two central aims of participatory democracy is that “the individual shares in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life”, and that “society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation”. According to Overdeest (2000), the political theorists call for participatory democracy in order to “democratize nature”, “to recreate civil society through grass-roots social movements and community action groups”, “and to overhaul liberal representative democracy . . . .to prevent further erosion of civic-mindedness and community self-efficacy” (p. 686).

Barber (1995) defines participatory democracy as a “democratic system which involves extensive and active engagement of citizens in the self-governing process; it means government

not just for but by and of the people” (p. 921). In his book *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* published in 1984, Barber indicates that “strong democracy” is a superior democratic form of participatory democracy. Also, nine functions of “strong democratic talk” are named by him: articulation of interests through bargaining and exchange; persuasion; agenda-setting; exploration of mutuality; affiliation and affection; preservation of autonomy; witness and self-expression; reformulation and reconceptualization; and community building (as cited in Baarda, 2012, p.27). In the study of the Protest of Wukan, evidence of participatory democracy would be revealed through an examination of Weibo content.

### *1.2.2 Digital democracy*

With the rapid development of information and communications technologies in recent years (ICTs), more and more theorists articulate that digital communications media can help facilitate participatory democracy (Hague & Loader, 1999). According to Hague and Loader (1999), electronic democracy (e-democracy), teledemocracy, and cyberdemocracy are also known as digital democracy. Moreover, the term “digital democracy” is the “bringing together of existing electronic technologies through developments in digital data transfer that unleashes the potential of ICTs” (p. 3). The UK Hansard Society, “one of the key movers in defining and operationalizing e-democracy” (Chadwick, 2003, p.12), offers one definition: “The concept of e-democracy is associated with efforts to broaden political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their representatives via new information and communication technologies” (Hansard Society, as cited in Chadwick, 2003, p. 12).

According to Hague and Loader (1999), the Internet is “an electronic forum” used by “liberated and equal citizens” of the world who are able to debate all facets of their existence without fear of control from the authorities (p. 4). Hague and Loader (1999) also claim that interactive media has the potential to create and foster participatory democracy. They point out seven main features of interactive media to explain how this function is achieved. The first

feature is “interactivity” which means that the users of interactive media can “communicate on a many-to-many reciprocal basis”; the second feature is “global network” because the communication between users won’t be limited by nation-state boundaries; the third one is “free speech” which is to say that compared to the traditional media forms, the net users may express themselves with “limited state censorship”; the fourth one is “free association” that its users can build and join “virtual communities of common interest”; the fifth feature is “construction and dissemination of information” saying that the users can “produce and share information” at the first time as well as avoiding “official review or sanction”; the sixth one is “challenge to professional and official perspectives” revealing that the users’ opinions may in contrast to the official ones; and the last feature is “breakdown of nation-state identity” which means the users may “begin to adopt global and local identities” (p. 6).

In the Protest of Wukan, the villagers were interested in fairly being compensated for their land; and the digital technology Weibo appeared to be used by activists to improve participatory democracy. As western theoretical frameworks, the participatory democracy and digital democracy theories have been used to explore social media within a western type context such as Myspace, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter (Chadwick, 2009; Zúñiga, Veenstra, Vraga & Shah, 2010; Caren & Gaby, 2011; Loader & Mercea, 2011; Bekafigo & McBride, 2013) . This study tries to build a connection between the western participatory democracy theory and the Asian Weibo context. Guided by the theoretical framework of participatory democracy and recent applications of it to social media, indicators of participatory democracy explored in this case study include 1) allowing citizens to articulate their interests and express their feelings through posts; 2) encouraging citizens to participate more directly in politics and other areas of society; 3) persuading citizens to become more engaged in the Wukan Protest, to be more aware of the severe corruption of the local official government; 4) creating a more educated citizenry; 5) creating political virtual communities and an online public sphere; and 6) encouraging debate

and deliberation about the protest, establishing consensus and building a participatory community (Baarda, 2012, p. 31). The evidence of participatory democracy through the use of Weibo in this current study of the Protest of Wukan is revealed primarily through the examination of Weibo posts.

Based on the participatory democracy and digital democracy theory discussed above, in this case study, it is an open question as to how Weibo was employed as a digital communication tool to promote participatory democracy. This study also examines how this interactive media Weibo was used by activists to influence civic activism activity connected to the Protest of Wukan.

### *1.3 Research Questions*

This case study draws on research documentation and academic literature pertaining to the Protest of Wukan to answer the following questions:

**RQ1:** How was the micro-blog “Weibo” used by citizen activists to promote participatory democracy surrounding the Protest of Wukan?

**RQ2:** What types of information about the Protest of Wukan were posted on Weibo in terms of the theme and content and how were they aligned with the indicators of participatory democracy within the current context of Internet policies in China?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

With the rapid development of micro-blogging sites within recent years, there is a growing body of research literature surrounding this topic, including research on micro-blogging sites such as Sina Weibo in China. In terms of general research on micro-blogging sites in China, Qu, Huang, Zhang and Zhang (2011) examined how the micro-blogging sites Weibo was used by the netizens in response to particular events, such as major disasters in China. Bei (2013) investigated how Chinese journalists used Weibo for investigative reporting. The role of Weibo

as a potentially beneficial teaching tool in Chinese politics classes was explored by Sullivan (2012a). However, for the purpose of this study, the literature review deals with key research areas which focused on the use of SNS for specific social aims. First, a limited number of studies comparing Twitter and Weibo have been conducted (Yu, Asur & Huberman, 2011; Gao, Abel, Houben & Yu, 2012; Chen, Zhang, Lin & Lü, 2011; Sullivan, 2012; Berry, 2013). For instance, the trending keywords comparison between the two microblogging sites was investigated by Yu et al. (2011). Gao et al. (2012) compared the microblogging behavior between Weibo and Twitter on five dimensions: access behavior, syntactic content analysis, semantic content analysis, sentiment analysis and temporal behavior. Chen et al. (2011) identified the similarities and differences between Twitter and Weibo with a technical focus. Sullivan (2012) presented the comparison between the use of both Weibo and Twitter by Chinese netizens. Second, scholars also explored the motivations of Weibo use and its relations with different usage patterns (Zhang & Pentina, 2012; Guo, Tu & Li, 2011; Chan, Wu, Hao, Xi, & Jin, 2012). For instance, based on the uses and gratifications theory, Chan et al. (2012) examined the relationships between the different motivations of Weibo use and political attitudes and behaviors which concluded that individuals who were motivated to seek out political information and current affairs on Weibo were more likely to be engaged in political discussion and participation; and those with entertainment seeking purposes were in the opposite situation. Third, studies have been conducted to discover how the Chinese government regulated and controlled Weibo (Lee, 2012; Benney, 2013; King, Pan & Roberts, 2012). From another perspective, researchers looked into how the Chinese government integrated the use of microblog (such as register their official Weibo accounts) into their new public management strategy (Noesselt, 2013; Ma, 2012).

Beyond the relevant research literature discussed above and in line with the current research study, there are a number of recent studies which focus on the potential of microblogs, such as Weibo to influence political outcomes (Sullivan, 2013; Hassid, 2012; Lagerkvist, 2012;

Leibold, 2011; Tong & Lei, 2013). In line with the aims of this study, the review of literature that most closely links to the study context is divided into the following five sections: (1) Civic activism in China, (2) Micro-blog use in China, (3) Micro-blog activists and their online activism, (4) The relationship between micro-blog use and civic activism in China, and (5) The protest of Wukan.

### 2.1 Civic activism in China

*“Which way of life is the more desirable—to join with other citizens and share in the state’s activity, or to live in it like an alien, absolved from the ties of political society?”*

*Aristotle, Politics (350 BC/1948, p. 283)*

Why do people desire to participate in civic and political activities? In western democracies, normative thinkers borrow a teleological idea from Aristotle that civic and political activities belong to the good life itself, and that participation in community is the natural end of human beings if they wish to exercise their faculties, obtain happiness and preserve virtue. Humans were described as political animals by nature (Aristotle, Politics). Duvall and Dotson (1998) also state that the civic and political activism involvement is positively associated with people’s well-being.

According to Corning and Myers (2002), activism is defined as “the behavior of advocating some political cause (for instance, protecting the environment, human rights issues, opposing abortion, or preventing wars) via any of a large array of possible means, ranging, for example, from institutionalized acts such as starting a petition to unconventional acts such as civil disobedience” (as cited in Klar & Kasser, 2009, p. 757). This definition is broad enough to contain various contents of activism and it also focuses on the basic goal of improving society through political behavior (Klar & Kasser, 2009).

Talking about the activism in China, people may first think about the 1989 student movement. Even though it has suffered from a bloody crackdown, according to Yang (2009), the suppression of the prodemocracy student movement did not quell the spirit of contention in China. After a short hiatus, new waves of popular protests started to surge across China, beginning roughly in 1992. According to China's Ministry of Public Security, there were 8700 "mass incidents" in 1993. This number rose to 32000 in 1999, 58000 in 2003, and 87000 in 2005 (Yang, 2009, p.25). However, Yang (2009) also claims that even though the crushing of the 1989 student movement didn't stop the contention in China, "the energies of popular struggles born out of the Cultural Revolution were drained after this repression" (p. 25). "The century-long aspirations of a Chinese enlightenment project dating back to the May Fourth movement were exhausted"; and the 1989 student movement "marked both the height of China's enlightenment project and the beginning of its transformation" (Yang, 2009, pp.25-26). Yang (2009) pointed out several new features of the contention since the 1990s, which he called the "China's new citizen activism". The first feature is the sheer frequency of the contention. The second feature of this citizen activism is the proliferation of the contentious issues. He explained that most of the protests focus on struggles for the Enlightenment ideals of freedom and democracy in the 1980s and it has continued to the present day. However, many other forms of contention emerged since 1990s, such as environmental activism, consumer activism, HIV/AIDS activism, rights-protection activism, villagers' protests, religious activism, activism of ethnic minorities, women's activism, labor protest, popular nationalism and so on. The third feature is that the social basis of activism has broadened. In the past, workers, peasants, and students are the dominant forces of activism, however, since the mid-1990s, more social groups, for instance, homeowners, pensioners, migrants, consumers and farmers also got involved. The fourth feature is that the new forms of civic organizations appeared and therefore the activism since the 1990s has an organizational basis. The fifth one is that the protests have more modest goals. The central

concerns of the new citizen activism are personal rights and interests and the expression and assertion of new identities. The last feature is that the forms of contention since 1990s are typically nondisruptive which are characterized as collective civic actions and rely increasingly on indirect and legal means. In all, according to Yang (2009), the new citizen activism is a response to the negative consequences of the economic transformations in China and it also responds to the more decentralized and fragmented state power.

## *2.2 Micro-blog use in China*

According to the China Internet Network Information Center report (CNNIC, 2012), by the end of 2011, the number of Chinese Internet users had reached 513 million. Among them, 249.88 million, nearly half were Weibo users. Compared to other traditional media platform, regardless of editorial filtering or intervention, every user can share news and information on their micro-blogging accounts (Deuze, 2006). In addition to the functions of Twitter, Sina Weibo has some distinct features, such as message threading and the ability to “comment directly and publicly” under another post which makes it easier for netizens to follow and participate in online conversations (Sullivan, 2012, p. 776; Qu et al., 2011). It also allows its users to upload music, pictures, videos, emoticons, and share links (Zhang & Pentina, 2012). Even though Weibo has a word limit of a post, 140 characters in Chinese is long enough to tell a whole story, so that a vast amount of information is able to be conveyed through Weibo (Chan et al., 2012; Zhang & Pentina, 2012). One could doubt that the limitation of words may still hinder the in-depth analysis of an event. However, the creation of image file of long contention function alleviated this problem to some extent; and it has become popular among the netizens.

With regard to Internet use, most studies primarily point to three perspectives—“needs for information, social interaction, and entertainment” (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; December, 1996; Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Kaye, 1998; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000, as cited in Campbell & Kwak, 2010, pp.537-538). Wei and Lo (2006) identify “social utility, affection, and

information-seeking as some of the key functions of the new media” (as cited in Campbell & Kwak, 2010, p.538). Many scholars have also discussed what the social network sites are used for. For example, Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) claim that “social media allowed users to not only seek information but also interact with others through online expression” (p. 613). boyd and Ellison (2007) explain the use of social network sites in detail, describing them as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211). As a kind of social networking site, the features of microblog appear to be in alignment with the definition of SNSs posed by boyd and Ellison. According to the research of Pongsajapan (2009), it is showed that the purpose of using micro-blog by most users is mainly for social contact and interaction, learning new knowledge, getting to know about news and current affairs, seeking advice, fulfilling one’s curiosity and following other people’s lives and so forth. Another research made by Johnson and Yang (2009) states that Twitter is primarily used as an informational source by its user. According to the study conducted by Zhang and Pentina (2012), as a synthesis of microblogging and a social network platform, Weibo has been used to facilitate the netizen’s professional development, fulfill their emotional needs, provide and seek assistance, express themselves, enhance their social status, and entertain (p. 314). Moreover, according to Guo (2005), it is claimed that the trends of Chinese Internet are dominated by entertainment. Sullivan (2012) also states that judging by the number of “followers”, the most popular Weibo users are “actresses and TV personalities”, such as Yao Chen who is known as the “queen of Weibo”. In fact, the most popular daily trends on Weibo are “generally entertainment news, gossip, commercial information and sports” (p. 776). According to the research conducted by Yu et al. (2011) examining the trends on microblogging sites, it was also stated that compared to the

trends towards current affairs and news stories on Twitter, the trends on Weibo contain more jokes, images and videos.

### *2.3 Micro-blog activists and their online activism*

According to the statistics from the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, 2012), Chinese Internet users are mostly young urban residents who have relatively higher level of education. Research shows that the average age of Chinese netizens is 28 years and the significant characteristics of Chinese netizens include those who are considered to be “voraciously” social and active consumers and producers of online content (Sullivan, 2013, p. 4). Different from the users of traditional media, the Internet users are also more “politically opinionated, critical of the state and supportive of democratic norms” (Sullivan, 2012, p.774). According to the “Chinese Internet Users and Their Use of Social Networking Sites Report in 2009”, 50.3% of the social networking sites users are students in China. A research data from CNNIC shows that China’s micro blogging group accounts for 57.2% of all the Internet users and 72.3% of the micro-blog users are college students. Also, different micro blogging platforms have distinct user profiles and demographics in China (Lukoff, 2011). Compared to other SNSs users, the Weibo user are even younger and more highly educated (Li, 2012). Sullivan (2012) and Lukoff (2011) also point out that Weibo has attracted a greater proportion of users among white-collar individuals and urban professionals. Even though the young people accounted for a large portion of Weibo users, according to Yang (2009), activists who are engaged in more contentious political activities, such as human rights protests, and ask for radical political change are often in their thirties or forties.

Yang (2009) argues that online activism is an integral part of the new citizen activism in China and it has defining characteristics which are “prevalence, issue multiplication, organizational base, modest goals, and nondisruptive forms” (p.31). Yang (2009) categorizes

main issues of online activism into seven broad categories: 1) popular nationalism, 2) rights defense, 3) corruption and power abuse, 4) environment, 5) cultural contentions, 6) muckraking, and 7) online charity. In Li's study (2012), food safety and policy related issues are pointed out as the main issues on Weibo activism. Moreover, issues that coincide with the state agenda are encouraged on Weibo, such as popular nationalism and consumer right defense. However, issues related to human rights defense, corruption and power abuse, which challenges the highest officials, are not tolerated by the government (Li, 2012, p.19).

#### *2.4 The relationship between micro-blog use and civic activism in China*

*Weibo has gone from a social, even gossipy, entertainment medium, from a sharing platform, from a tool for understanding society, and overnight has become a weapon to change society for the better, raise people's consciousness, and improve people's living environment. It is a pioneer rarely seen in the world history of new media. As a father and as a common citizen, I have gotten [from Weibo] a feeling of satisfaction and honor that I'd never enjoyed before, and appreciated the pleasure of both giving and taking.*

- Charles Xue

Mansour (2012) states that Social Networking Sites (SNS) can “facilitate communications and provide a degree of command and control for the protesters”, thereby “forming the basis for network-centric warfare” (p.148). With the emergence of Twitter, many activists worldwide have used this new micro blogging site to coordinate their protest and produce a new kind of collective intelligence (Bajpai & Jaiswal, 2011; Hands, 2011). Bajpai and Jaiswal (2011) believe that Twitter has been portrayed as an agent of consensus mobilization, an “effective publicity tool for social movements”. However, Chase and Mulvenon (2002) claim that while the Internet provides a more effective channel for dissidents of the authoritarian regime to disseminate subversive information, the government's counter-capability to control

opposition is also enhanced. Through low-tech blockades such as arrests, physical shutdowns and high-tech filtering programs, the government maintained its dominant position in the information flow (Yang, 2003).

In China, this paradoxical situation is the same. There is evidence of Weibo use to both promote citizen activism and evidence of counter measures to control citizen liberties and citizen efforts to mobilize.

According to MacKinnon (2008), the Chinese government has supported the development of the Internet as a tool for entertainment, education, business and information exchange. However, at the same time, it has also succeeded in preventing people from using the Internet to “organize any kind of viable political opposition” (p. 31). The research conducted by Open Net Initiative — *Internet Filtering in China in 2004-2005: A Country Study* claims that “China operates the most extensive, technologically sophisticated, and broad-reaching system of Internet filtering in the world” (Open Net Initiative, 2005). In order to protect the so called “Internet safety”, the Chinese Government tightly restricts the free flow of online information which becomes an unavoidable political issue that is happened in any Chinese internet services (Ding, 2011). According to Ding (2011), all the posts uploaded to Weibo are reviewed by the censorship machine; and any word contains sensitive information is blocked or deleted. Moreover, Marolt (2011) claims that in addition to the “direct censorship” of the government, there are two other important tools for supervision and censorship of online behavior. The first one is “self-censorship”. In order to prevent themselves from punishment of “wrong thinking”, the netizens remind themselves not to step beyond what the authorities consider “excessive criticism or a direct challenge of state power” even though the lines between “the acceptable and the illegal” are vague and ambiguous. The second one is “dynamic manipulation of online discourse” which means the party organizations “instigated, trained, and financed the ‘Web

commentators' and pushed them to post pro-Party content online to neutralize undesirable public opinion" and to report "dangerous content to authorities" (pp. 54-56).

In terms of censorship scope, some scholars have pointed out that even though the netizens can publicize specific and localized incidences of malfeasance, corruption or scandals on Weibo, the government will implement its rapid and strong censorship if the online content goes beyond the localized discontent and has a potential in collective action (Sullivan, 2013; Hassid, 2012; King et al., 2012). According to Marolt (2011), under the rigorous system of Internet censorship, many of the Chinese netizens choose not to challenge the control and censorship of the state power, instead, they try to avoid and bypass the surveillance.

However, according to Yang (2009), there is evidence of recent internet-driven events calling for social justice and equality. He claims that the Internet is increasingly integrated with "conventional forms of locality-specific protest in China" (p.3). Moreover, Yang (2009) argues that the "contentious character" is the most important and yet least understood aspect of the Chinese Internet (as cited in Li, 2012, p.7). Irrespective of the cat and mouse mentality, the Internet users are indeed becoming a critical force influencing the government's decision-making process (Yang, 2003). Xiao (2011) also states that state control is criticized and collective action is mobilized on the Internet where a quasi-public sphere is created. In addition, according to Rosen (2010), despite the government's efforts at regulation and control, the "Internet community", particularly the "active blogging community", considers new technology as a force for democratization who will continue to find ways to "circumvent and subvert government restrictions" (p. 510).

Compared to the traditional media system such as TV and newspaper in China, the characteristics of Weibo itself have made it a better platform for netizens to express themselves (Hassid, 2012). It can "disseminate information to the broad audience, provide a unofficial

version of live broadcasting and coverage of news, and encourage participation with low cost” (Tong & Lei, 2013, p. 298). According to Chan et al. (2012), Weibo has become one of the few places where “anti-government sentiment and comments” can be found which enables the netizens to develop a deeper understanding of politics in China (p.348). Moreover, it has put pressure on the government to pay more attention to genuine public opinion (Lagerkvist, 2012). In addition, Hassid (2012a) claims that on issues that are not allowed to discuss on mainstream media by the central government, including agricultural and rural issues, the blogosphere can “serve as a potent force for spreading sensitive information, gaining international media attention, or even coordinating domestic protests” (p.226).

According to Freelon (2011), every Weibo user can be the citizen journalist since they can post whatever they saw and thought in the first time without the censorship from the government. Even though the content they post has the risk of being blocked or deleted later on, the rapid propagation velocity of the posts makes it impossible for the state to put an end to the information before it is already spread out. Li (2012) also explains that the sheer volume and rapid speed of information transmission on Weibo make it impossible to censor everything. Moreover, the netizens have come up with various creative and skillful ways of contention to circumvent censorship. For example, according to Marolt (2011), the netizens use “irony, humor, hyperbole, satire, implicit criticism through indirect expressions, or explicit but guarded criticism” to “speak truth the opposite way” (p. 55). They also use image files of long micro blog posts with sensitive words or change sensitive words into characters with the same pronunciation in order to avoid the censorship machine (Li, 2012). As what Yang (2009) believes, the state power has forced activists to be more creative and artful. According to Sullivan (2012), it is stated that even though Weibo has developed into a “tabloid press” to some extent and has also effected “virtual mob justice” in some cases, it has become a “contested force in Chinese politics” because of its enormous number of users with social and active personalities online and their

mistrust of official information sources (p. 779). In addition, Tong and Lei (2013) claim that it would be very costly for the regime to completely shut the micro-blogging site Weibo down; therefore, the authorities are unable to thoroughly control it (p.298). Based on this review, it appears that despite government efforts to restrict Internet use in China, Weibo has presented a challenge to the state control and has played a role in shaping people's social and political attitudes. It also appears that there is still evidence of Internet use to promote citizen activism.

### *2.5 The Protest of Wukan*

According to the New York Times report, the Protest of Wukan began in 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011, when thousands of Wukan villagers took to the street to protest against the seizure of their land which they said were illegally sold to the Hong Kong real estate developers by the local government officials (Jacobs, 2011). After two days of protest, the local authorities responded first by sending in riot police; but later in 26<sup>th</sup>, September, they tried to negotiate with villagers by sending a working group composed of higher-level party officials and asked villagers to appoint 13 representatives to deal with the government. However, the working group of the government did not really investigate the event and those negotiations failed to achieve a compromise (Page & Spegele, 2011). Therefore, another large-scale protest happened in 21<sup>st</sup> November. This time, the authorities responded by sending in a group plain clothes policemen who arrested five of the thirteen representatives in 9<sup>th</sup> December. On the same day, the Shanwei Municipal Government also held a press conference, condemning that the earlier protests were illegal and accusing "Wukan's ad hoc leaders were abetting overseas forces that want to sow divisions between the government and villagers" (Wukan Protest, 2012). Three days later, 11<sup>th</sup> December, Xue Jinbo, one of the 13 representatives chosen by popular consensus to negotiate with the local Communist Party, died in the police custody, which escalated the conflict between the villagers and the government. The protest peaked after this. The authorities stated that it was the heart attack that killed the 42-year-old man, but Xue's daughter, Jianwan Xue, who was

allowed to see but not photograph his body, said his father's body "bore signs of torture, including caked blood, bruises and a broken left thumb", and believed that her father was beaten to death (Wukan Protest, 2012). After Xue Jinbo's death, the villagers rallied every day to confront the Shanwei police. As reported by the Wall Street Journal, Wukan "villagers have forced local officials and police to flee and have erected barricades to prevent them from re-entering. The police responded by imposing a blockade on Wukan, stopping food and water from entering, and preventing local fishing boats from heading out to sea" (Page & Spegele, 2011). However, the villager said they were currently being supplied by residents of neighboring villages (Page & Spegele, 2011). The protest lasted for ten days until Lin Zuluan, the main leader of the village, met with two senior officials from coastal Guangdong Province in southern China, agreeing on releasing the detainees, returning Xue Jinbo's body and promising an investigation into his death (Wong, 2011). In 2012, a series of three free elections were held in Wukan and the protest leader Lin Zuluan was selected to be the Party chief of Wukan (Jacob & Zhou, 2012).

In actuality, the land issue has been a historical problem in Wukan, as well as many other villages all over China. The Protest of Wukan was not the first action made by Wukan villagers fighting for their rights (Liu, 2012). The previous leader of Wukan, Xue Chang, had held his chief position since 1970 before being replaced after the initial wave of protests in September, 2011 (Wukan Protest, 2012). The truth is that the previous village committee had "sold off or granted long-term leases to nearly 60 percent of the village's 11 square miles over an 18-year period beginning in 1993" (Wukan Protest, 2012). Villagers of Wukan did sense that something was wrong, and had complained between July 2009 and March 2010 vigorously, "seven times to Guangdong Province officials and five times to officials of Lufeng, the county seat". It seems that none of those complaints have been addressed appropriately (Wukan Protest, 2012). However, as this study demonstrates, the Protest of Wukan in 2011 has achieved a progressive success.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher presents the methods used to conduct this research. The reasons why the particular approach and strategies are applied to this study are fully explained and all steps of the research process are described. This study of micro-blog use and civic activism in China is a case study drawing on multiple sources of data, including the Weibo posts and documentations pertaining to Internet security policies in China. The primary focus of this study is on the Weibo posts with Internet policy documentation consulted mainly to augment the analysis and further contextualize the event.

Using a qualitative case study of the Protest of Wukan, this study explores how the micro blogging site Weibo played a role in promoting participatory democracy in this event. Creswell (2007) defines case study as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (p. 73). According to Stake (1995), a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. Yin (2003) explains more specifically that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13). Furthermore, the qualitative case study contributes to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena (Yin, 2003). In addition, case studies have been largely used by scholars to understand complex social phenomena. In this particular research project, a qualitative case study research is an ideal method to apply because it provided the opportunity to use multiple information sources to explore the Protest of Wukan thoroughly, mainly through a content analysis of the Weibo posts with Internet policy documentation consulted. Therefore, the incorporation of this methodology to the study helps us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the specific complexities surrounding the role of Weibo use in the Protest of Wukan.

According to Creswell (2009), in a qualitative study, the role of the researcher is a key instrument of data collection which means the author's biases, values, and personal background may be reflexively identified, shaping interpretations formed during this study. The researcher of this study has a Chinese background and also has work experience in Chinese news organizations. Moreover, as an experienced user of Weibo, the researcher had been focusing on the activism on Weibo for more than three years. All of these past experiences enhance the researcher's knowledge and understanding of this topic and contribute to an in-depth analysis of the research questions. However, bias still exist. In order to minimize the bias to the maximum extent, a research journal is an effective way to guard against the personal judgments and partial observation. In this study, the research journal contains the data collection process, researcher's thoughts about the primary and secondary source material, the questions about the source and the tentative answers to those questions which provide a traceable log of the research process.

### *3.1 Data collection*

The main resources of data being collected and analyzed in this study are:

(1) Weibo posts about the Protest of Wukan during September 21, 2011 to March 31, 2012 (The posts were collected during this time frame because the Protest of Wukan began in 21th September 2011 and the last free and democratic village election was held in March 27, 2012).

The Weibo posts were the primary focus of this study. They were collected to examine how the use of Weibo had promoted participatory democracy in the Protest of Wukan. More specifically, indicators of participatory democracy in this study include: 1) information about the Protest of Wukan; 2) content that expresses thoughts and feelings about the Protest of Wukan ; 3) expressions of persuasion and encouragement to participate more directly in politics; 4) specific requests for

participating in the Protest of Wukan; 5) content that provides relevant professional knowledge of the law; 6) content that promotes the creation of political virtual communities and online public sphere; 7) content that encourages debate and deliberation about the Protest of Wukan.

The non-probability sampling strategy was utilized in this study. Since there are millions of posts about Wukan Protest showed up after searching key words “乌坎” (Wukan) and “WK” through the Weibo “Finding the related posts” advanced search engine, the researcher chose to look deeply into the most “active” Weibo accounts of the activists. The researcher used the Weibo “Finding the related accounts” search engine by searching key words “乌坎 (Wukan)” to narrow the scope of the related accounts.

Another strategy was also employed by the researcher to find the most “active” related accounts. Since the activists used the @ function to interact with each other on their posts, by looking into one “active” account, it was possible to find the other activists’ accounts. By examining all the related accounts showed up as a result of using the two methods above, 22 Weibo accounts were collected by the researcher after the initial screening. To further reduce the number of the accounts, the most active five accounts were chosen by placing the data set in a rank ordering according to two criteria: a) the accounts with the most followers, and b) the accounts with the most posts related to the Protest of Wukan. As a result, the most “active” five Weibo accounts that were chosen to be examined were @健婉 (Jianwan), @WK 鸡精 (WK Jijing), @WK 张建兴 (WK Zhang Jianxing), @才但猪妈 (Caidanzhuma) and @新启蒙熊伟 (Xinqimeng Xiongwei). Among those five accounts, three of them are the active villagers of Wukan (@WK 张建兴, the leader of the micro-blog group in the village; @WK 鸡精, the villager who firstly released information about Wukan Protest to the outside world through Weibo; and @健婉, the

daughter of Xue Jinbo who died in the Protest); and the other two activists are prominent key users who strongly concern about the Protest of Wukan. The researcher collected all the posts related to the Protest of Wukan between September 21, 2011 and March 31, 2012 from the five accounts above. As a result, 425 posts were collected from @WK 张建兴; 340 posts were collected from @WK 鸡精; 418 posts from @新启蒙熊伟; 73 posts from @才但猪妈; and 113 posts from @健婉. In all, a total of 1369 Weibo posts were collected. The researcher read through all the posts and added each of their number of forwarded times and comments together. The greater the number, the more popular the posts were. To ensure a rich qualitative analysis, the researcher sampled 10% of the most popular posts from each account; and a total sample of 136 posts was drawn (see **Table 1** in Appendix A). In this study, the researcher mainly focused on the text content, the text-as-image files and the picture information of the posts. Due to the timeframe and scope of the study, videos and other material linked to the outside websites were not included in the data analysis. Because of the space constraints, only the text content (including the text-as-image files) of the sample posts was presented in the Appendix A. For those posts, information about the number of comments, the times being forwarded, and the time they had been released were also collected (see Appendix A). Moreover, the five activists' user profiles, the number of the activists' followers, the number of sample posts drawn from each of them, the number of sample posts with text content and the number of posts with both text and image content were also collected (see Appendix B). Since the entire sample posts were written in Chinese, the researcher translated them into English when reporting study findings.

During the data collection process of Weibo posts, an interesting discovery was made. Weibo posts related to the Protest of Wukan from September 21<sup>st</sup> to early December of the selected five activists' accounts had all been deleted or blocked by the

authorities while posts concerning other themes and topics were still accessible. This was confirmed in a report by David Bandurski (2011). For instance, notices were shown on the screen if the original posts were already retweeted by the netizens before they were deleted stating that “according to relevant Chinese laws and regulations, this content is not appropriate for the public”. This content censorship occurred at a time when relations between the government and the villagers were particularly strained. As a result, the sample posts collected from the five accounts mentioned above were from early December, 2011 to March, 2012 which had contributed a significant limitation to the study. To overcome this obstacle, the researcher archived online documentation wherever possible to reduce the dataset loss.

At the same time, the content censorship provided a unique opportunity to examine activists’ online reactions and communication strategies employed on Weibo to circumnavigate the censorship system. It also provided an opportunity for the researcher to observe the limits of what was tolerated by the government in relation to the use of Weibo as platform for participatory democracy.

The deliberate censorship in compliance with Chinese Internet policies was addressed in this study under the second research question by examining the challenges the current Internet policies in China create for the citizen activists’ publishing on Weibo and vice versa. In order to contextualize the case under investigation and to better understand why part of the data was deleted, a consultation of the documentation of Internet policies in China was included.

(2) Documentations of Internet security policies in China released by the government in terms of online content censorship.

In this study, documentations of Internet policies were used primarily to consult and help further contextualize the event. More specifically, it helped explain why the dataset of Weibo was limited and why different types of posting strategies were employed by the activists in an effort to circumnavigate the censorship. There are many laws and regulations in different aspects of the field of Internet in China. With regard to Internet safety and content control, more than sixty government regulations both at national and local levels regulate online content (Lee, 2012, p. 610). The researcher collected the most relevant and dominant laws and regulations for analysis in this case study, which includes the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security* (National People's Congress, 2000), the *Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations* (Ministry of Public Security of China, 1997), and the *Measures for Managing Internet Information Services of People's Republic of China* (State council of China, 2000).

### 3.2 Data analysis

This study draws on multiple sources of data and mainly utilizes qualitative content analysis to examine the findings. Berelson(1952) defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”(p.18). Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p.18). Different from quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis “goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings ”

(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). When generating codes, “qualitative analysts are much more likely to use the data themselves as the source of their codes” (Morgan, 1993, p. 115).

According to Yin (2003), qualitative data analysis “consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing”, and recombining different evidence to “address the initial propositions of a study” (p.109). In this study, these data analysis procedures have been applied and the analytic strategy is to develop a descriptive framework for organizing the Protest of Wukan case. This descriptive approach helps the research to identify the appropriate causal links to be analyzed.

### *3.2.1 Weibo posts analysis*

After data collection of the 136 sample posts, the quantitative features of the posts were collected by analysing the following units: the number of comments, the number of posts being forwarded, the time they had been released and whether they were originally created or forwarded by the activists (see Appendix A).

In order to examine the major similarities and differences between the five different activists and how they used Weibo to facilitate participatory democracy, the activists’ user profiles, the number of the activists’ followers, the number of sample posts drawn from each of them, the number of sample posts with text content and the number of posts with both text and image content were analysed by the researcher (see **Table 2** in Appendix B). With regard to the qualitative analysis, the units of analysis contained the content of each post, mainly focusing on the text based information, the text-as-image files, and the picture information. The researcher created codes to describe each post in order to examine possible matches with established indicators of participatory democracy theory.

As a result, 27 codes were created by the researcher (see **Table 3** in Appendix C). Some codes summarized the main content of the post, for example, description of the real cause of Xue jinbo’s death, details about the confrontation of the villagers and the local police, updates about the elections, information about the foreign media’s work in Wukan, and insights about

democracy at the grassroots level in China. Some codes pointed out the main purpose of the post, such as persuading netizens to participate in the Book Donation Act for Wukan, encouraging netizens to forward their posts, persuading everyone to volunteer in Wukan, and appreciation for those who helped with the elections in Wukan. Some codes revealed the contradiction between the activists, for example, allegation of collusion of Zhang Jianxing (villager of Wukan) and the local police, refutation of netizen's criticism. Some codes showed the subject of the posts, such as collecting spring festival couplets for Wukan villagers act, clarification of the false information. In addition, some codes expressed the dissatisfaction with the Internet censorship. Lastly, some posts were forwarded by the activists instead of originally created by them. Therefore, those posts were coded with prefix "forwarding post". Added with the content from the original post, the code of the forwarding post might read "forwarding post: details about the confrontation of the villagers and the local police", "forwarding post: persuading netizens to forward the post in order to help the Book Donation Act in Wukan".

After various codes were generated among the posts, the researcher started to reduce and summarize the codes. As a result, six themes were created as follows: information about the Protest of Wukan, grievances and facts of Xue Jinbo's death and the memory of him, obstacles the activists encountered in the process of the protest, activists' thoughts surrounding the Protest of Wukan and ideas about grassroots democracy in China, encouragement to participate, and information and thoughts about media's work and their reports about Wukan. These categories are explained in more detail in the "Findings" section.

### *3.2.2 Documentations of Internet policies analysis*

In this study, the three most relevant and dominant legislations concerning the Internet content censorship in China were chosen as the sample documentations as mentioned in the data collection part above. These three legislations are all text based documentations and the total

length of the text is 4971 words. Therefore, the data analysis procedures were conducted based on those 4971 words gathered.

To understand what kind of online content was limited and prohibited by the government at the legal level, the researcher read through all the sampling texts and generated seven coding units in the end. Those summarized coding units were: (1) Information that subverts the state power and overthrows the socialist system; (2) Information that splits the country and undermines national unity; (3) Information that destroys social order and social stability; (4) Information that harms the honor and interest of the state; (5) Information that spreads pornography, gambling, violence, murder, terrorism and other criminal activities; (6) Information that promotes cult and superstitious beliefs; and (7) Information that damages other people's legal rights and interests. The samples of these coding units are presented in **Table 4** (See Appendix D).

The total occurrence of each coding unit in the sampling text was carried out in **Chart 1** (see Appendix E). As a result, the content that occurs most frequently is: (1) Information that splits the country and undermines national unity; and (2) Information that destroys social order and social stability. Moreover, the information that harms the honor and interest of the state also accounts for a large proportion of the content in the documentations.

If any units and individuals violate the law, the consequence can be severe. According to the legislations, “any units and corporations that use computer information networks should remove from the network and address, directory or server” which has content in violation of the regulations. For more serious violation of law and administrative regulations, “the computer and network access can be closed down for six month” and moreover, the Public Security organization may “suggest that the business license of the organization be canceled and its network registration canceled”. (Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations, Ministry of Public Security of China, 1997)

### *3.3 Trustworthiness*

The descriptive framework is conducted in order to ensure the validity of findings. Several other strategies are also conducted in this study in order to ensure the credibility of the research.

#### *3.3.1 Triangulation and Research Journal*

Used by qualitative researchers, triangulation is a method to “check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives” (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011, p.1). According to Yin (2003), using multiple sources of evidence or through triangulation is an effective way to validate findings. Yin (2003) explains that “it helps in searching converging findings from different sources and increasing construct validity which concludes data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation” (pp. 97-99). In this case study, multiple sources of data have been collected, including the posts on micro-blogging sites Weibo, and documentations of Internet security policies issued by Chinese government. Therefore, the data triangulation helps “increase confidence in research data”, “create innovative ways of understanding” the Protest of Wukan, “reveal unique findings”, and “provide a clearer understanding” of the research questions (Thurmond, 2001, p. 254). Moreover, the researcher documented all the procedures in the data collection and data analysis process. The observation and thoughts of the researcher during the whole research process has also been recorded. By keep taking notes, the researcher was less likely to forget about the observations in different phases of the research process. Therefore, the research journal helps ensure the validity of analysis.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations**

Based on the analysis of multiple sources of data, the findings of this study are presented in two main sections within the chapter, the general findings and the advanced analysis and interpretation. First, in the general findings section, the findings are divided into two parts

answering the research questions. Following this, the advanced analysis and interpretation was provided.

#### *4.1 General findings*

The general findings of this study address the two research questions as follows. After collecting and creating various codes for the 136 sample posts, the researcher started to reduce and summarize the codes for analysis in order to answer the research questions.

##### *4.1.1 RQ1: How was the micro-blog “Weibo” used by citizen activists to promote participatory democracy surrounding the Protest of Wukan?*

When the Protest of Wukan started in September, 2011, Weibo became a main channel for the citizen activists to release information about the event and call for help from the outside world. When the key word “乌坎” (Wukan) was searched by the researcher through the Weibo advanced search engine, there were more than 2.5 million posts related to the Protest of Wukan showed up. Moreover, the first-hand source of information was primarily posted by the villagers and a few public intellectuals who went to Wukan for field trips. The huge number of posts revealed that the Protest of Wukan was largely concerned by the netizens on Weibo which brought more attention and thinking of the society. Based on the 136 sample posts drawn from the five different activists, this study examined the major similarities and differences of how Weibo was used to promote participatory democracy between the activists.

##### *4.1.1.1 The major similarities on how Weibo was used to promote participatory democracy between those five activists.*

One remarkable similarity between the activists was that their posts were mainly originally created instead of forwarded. For example, among the 136 sample posts, only 4 of them were reposted, and the rest were first-hand sources of information of what was happening in Wukan created by the activists. This could be an important reason of why these posts were largely forwarded on Weibo.

In addition to the 140 word limit function, Weibo has many other additional features which include the ability to add pictures, videos, long micro-blogs and the links from outside websites. Another interesting observation was that all of the 136 sample posts contained text information (see Appendix B). Moreover, except for @健婉, the other four activists, especially @WK 鸡精, were keen on adding pictures in addition to the text content (see Appendix B). Specifically, among the collected 136 sample posts in this study, 85 of them were added with pictures. After examining all the text and picture information, it was found that the text conveyed the core information and most of the pictures were supplements of the text information which helped in explaining and presenting the content of the text. More specifically, the pictures helped to illustrate the election procedures and made it easier for the audiences to keep up with what was happening in Wukan protest. For example, there were pictures of wooden voting booths, villagers in a line to collect their ballots, voting scenes of the villagers, and open roll call. The pictures were also used by the activists to offer their audiences a chance to witness and share the acts of participatory democracy, and to add another layer of truth by illustrating the act of dissent and other real actors involved in this protest. For instance, there were pictures about the memorial of Xue Jinbo, the villagers' representative meeting, and the meeting between government officers and the villagers, police on guard and campaign speeches of the representatives, and interviews conducted by foreign reporters. As a result, it was noticed that, compared to the other features of Weibo, such as adding videos and long micro-blogs, the text and picture information were most commonly used on Weibo. One possible explanation is that it takes less time for the audiences to read the text within 140 words and see the pictures which ensures a quick reception of information. It usually takes longer for netizens to watch a video, see a long micro-blog or to open a link of outside website. Therefore, the use of text and picture information on Weibo appeared to facilitate participatory democracy since it made it easier and quicker for netizens to receive the information in a rapid speed of transmission.

Lastly, another important similarity was that the activists used the @ function to attract the attention of the most well-known micro-bloggers with tens of millions of followers and encourage them to forward their posts. If this goal was achieved, their posts would certainly reach a larger audience and had a wider influence. For instance, the villager @WK 鸡精 posted one micro-blog saying that “an eleven year old girl sobbed out her grievances about the land issues in Wukan to the reporter, and the villagers on her side could not help crying too”. In the end of this post, the blogger @WK 鸡精 @ Jianrong Yu (@于建嵘), the director of rural social issues research center of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who has over 1.78 million followers in order to attract his attention.

*4.1.1.2 The major differences in how Weibo was used to promote participatory democracy between the five activists studied.*

Since the five activists have different backgrounds with varying number of followers, their Weibo posts had various features with distinct content emphasis and different ways of using Weibo functions in promoting participatory democracy. For instance, among @健婉's (Jianwan) 11 sample posts, 9 of them were related to her father Xue Jinbo, the village representative who died during the protest. More importantly, most of @健婉's posts contained the expressions of emotions, such as her sadness about her father's death, her anger about the local government, and her anxiety and confusion about the source of income of her family. More specifically, the codes generated from most of her posts were expression of the memory of Xue Jinbo, description of the real cause of Xue Jinbo's death, and confrontation with the local government because of Xue Jinbo's death. Since the death of Xue Jinbo had caused a great stir among the netizens and brought more attention from the society, his daughter, Xue Jianwan's Weibo account @健婉 was largely followed by the Weibo users which had gained more than fifty thousand viewers. Jianwan used the text content on Weibo to promote participatory democracy mainly by expressing her feelings about her father's death and providing the information about the process

of confronting the local government as well as providing her view of the real cause of Xue Jinbo's death hidden by the authorities.

@WK 鸡精 (WK Jijing) is the activist who added most pictures in his posts. As the youngest activist among the selected five accounts and the one who first released information about the Wukan Protest to the outside world through Weibo, @WK 鸡精's role was like a citizen journalist in that he reported the latest progress of the protest on Weibo with both text and picture information. In his 34 sample posts, 20 of them released the updates about the elections in Wukan. For example, there were posts like, "more than 7000 villagers participated in the vote today", "the 109 villagers' representative meeting was held at 10:00 this morning", "the villagers lined up to collect their ballots", and "Jianwan gained 455 votes in the election" (see posts No. 35, 26, 33, 31 in Appendix A). Another five of his posts contained the live scenes of the memorial of Xue Jinbo. Moreover, some of his other posts were recording the media's work in Wukan from all over the world, such as "Lin Zuluan (the main leader of the villagers) was besieged by reporters from different countries to conduct interviews" (@鸡精, 2012, March 3).

@WK 鸡精 rarely expressed his feelings through the posts but mainly provided informational content with a large number of pictures which enabled their audiences to have a chance to witness and share the act of dissent and other real actors involved in this protest to facilitate participatory democracy. Similar to @WK 鸡精, most of the grassroots activist @才但猪妈's (Caidanzhuma) posts were presenting the scenes that she observed during the elections of Wukan which were related to the situation update. For example, one of her posts described that, "an 82 years old grandmother was participating in the vote" (@才但猪妈, 2012, March 3). Some of her other posts recorded the interviews with villagers conducted by different media organizations, such as Agence France Presse, TV Tokyo and Hong Kong Sun TV.

The villager @WK 张建兴 (WK Zhang Jianxing) was the leader of the micro-blog group in the village which consisted of young people who dedicated to disseminate the information of Wukan protest to the outside world through micro-blog sites. As another young activist in Wukan, @WK 张建兴 shared lots of links of other materials from the outside website on his posts to enrich the resources and information in relation to the protest. For instance, there were links about the video clips of Xue Jinbo's farewell ceremony, news reports and other blogs and articles related to the protest. Another significant feature of his posts was that the different ways to circumvent internet censorship were most used by him which included the adding of texts imbedded in image files and the long micro-blogs (long micro-blog is a conversion tool which can turn the longer texts –more than 140 words, and less than 10 thousand words, into the image file and makes it possible for the activists to fully express their thoughts without the limit of 140 words) as well as the replacement of sensitive words into other characters with the same pronunciation or similar look. For instance, one of his text-as-image file described the question about the cause of Xue Jinbo's death. He also used the long micro-blog function to fully express his contrary opinion with another activist. Moreover, the words “鸟茨” and “Wu KΛn” were used in place of “乌坎 (Wukan)” (@张建兴, 2011, December 19). These skillful ways were largely employed by @张建兴 to avoid the censorship machine which helped facilitate participatory democracy since it was harder for the authorities to detect and censor images and the different words with similar look.

@新启蒙熊伟 (Xinqimeng Xiongwei) is the director of the thinktank Beijing Xinqimeng citizen participation in legislation research center who has the most followers (over 280 thousand) among the five activists. As a researcher who focused on citizen participation in legislation, the characteristics of @新启蒙熊伟's posts were distinct from the villagers and the grassroots activists which helped promote participatory democracy in different layers. The most prominent

feature of his posts was that except for providing the informational content of what was happening in Wukan, many posts were focused on persuading the netizens to become more engaged in the protest of Wukan in various ways. In other words, the information of his posts was more action-related. For example, the codes generated from his posts included persuading netizens to participate in the Book Donation Act for Wukan, encouraging netizens to forward his posts related to the protest, persuading netizens to volunteer in Wukan, collecting Spring festival couplets for Wukan villagers act, encouraging netizens to donate a video camera in order to make a documentary about the protest, and encouraging netizens to donate a computer for Wukan library. Moreover, except for the action-related content, the opinion-related posts were another important part of his Weibo. Various thoughts concerning the protest of Wukan were expressed through the posts, such as his point of view about the value of the elections in Wukan, the criticism of the reports made by the state media in China about the protest, the compliment of the Wukan villagers' unity, the appreciation of those who helped with the protest spontaneously and insights about the grassroots democracy in China. In addition, he also posted the relevant knowledge of the law in order to increase the netizen's understanding of the legal process which helped create a more educated citizenry in promoting participatory democracy. Since he had the most followers among the five activists, the three most popular posts (the one with the largest number of forwarded times and comments) of the 136 sample posts were drawn from him (post No. 86, 67, 76, see Appendix A). However, instead of the ones with the content of encouragement to participate, expression of thoughts and ideas or the promotion of more educated citizenry, the most popular posts were the informational content which showed the significant change in different stages of the protest. More specifically, they were describing the agreement reached between the government and the villagers which was intended to satisfy the villagers' requirements; the decision made to re-elect the members of the electoral committee,

village representatives and the village committee according to the organic law of village committees; and the success of the electoral committee election.

*4.1.2 RQ2: What types of information about the Protest of Wukan were posted on Weibo in terms of the theme and content and how were they aligned with the indicators of participatory democracy within the current context of Internet policies in China?*

In order to answer this question, the following section is divided into three parts: 1) what types of information about the Protest of Wukan were posted on Weibo in terms of the theme and content; 2) how the posts aligned with the indicators of participatory democracy; and 3) challenges current Internet policies in China created for citizen activists' publishing on Weibo and vice versa.

*4.1.2.1 What types of information about the Protest of Wukan were posted on Weibo in terms of the theme and content*

In terms of the theme and content, the posts were grouped into six categories as follows.

Category 1: Information about the Protest of Wukan

The first category included more posts than any other category. Among the 136 sample posts, 54 of them were classified under this theme. This category included the updates of the Wukan elections, introduction about the relevant knowledge of the election, the government's response and action, and the villagers' announcement.

Updates of the elections accounted for a large portion of the content. Every key development concerning the election process was covered by the activists. The most common "updates" was presented in the form of a descriptive sentence with pictures in order to explain what was happening in real in Wukan. For example, one post described the details of an election process on one day morning:

The following pictures showed the election process sequentially: (1) There were armed police and public security team on guard for the election meeting; (2) A large number of reporters were registering in order to get the interview permit card; (3) The election workers were preparing to work; (4) The domestic and foreign reporters set up their filming equipment and waited for the election begin; (5) The election started with the playing of the national anthem; (6) Checking the ballot boxes; (7) The election officials were delivering ballot tickets; (8) The villagers collected their ballots orderly in line; and (9) The villagers cast their precious vote. (@WK 鸡精, 2012, March 3)

Some other posts announced the results of different stages of the election process. For instance, one post articulated the decisions of a village electoral committee meeting:

News flash – in the village electoral committee meeting that just ended, it was decided that the public speeches of the candidate would be held in February 29<sup>th</sup>. Any elector can be a candidate of a certain position. Since there are going to be many applicants signed up, it is highly probable that the candidate cannot win half of the votes in the election held in March 3<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, another by-election will take place the next day. The news media are welcome to attend the speech convention. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 24)

In addition, some posts summarized the main thoughts of the villagers' speeches at the assembly meeting. Some of them also stated the changes of the election calendar promptly.

Another type of the information was used to introduce the content and the method of the elections which helped to explain how the elections were conducted step by step and what functions each of them had played. For example, one activist wrote:

Tomorrow's election is going to elect the members of the electoral committee, instead of the village committee. The electoral committee is of great importance which will preside

over the elections of the village representatives and the village committee. Eleven election committee members will be elected in the end. There might be thousands of candidates which are going to be a huge challenge for the tellers. Therefore, the ballot is designed in a more scientific way. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 31)

The government played an important role in the whole course of the Wukan Protest. The measures taken by the activists were largely dependent on the attitude of the government. Every reaction of the government appeared to have significantly influenced the development direction of the event. As a result, the responses and actions of the government were recorded by the activists instantly. For instance, when a government official came to the village to negotiate with the villagers and to solve the problems, a series of posts were posted by an activist: “A large number of villagers and reporters were waiting for the deputy secretary of the provincial Party committee to come” (@WK 鸡精, 2011, December 20); “The villagers warmly welcomed the arrival of the deputy secretary of the provincial Party committee” (@WK 鸡精, 2011, December 22). Another activist also posted the result of a meeting between the government and the villagers:

A favorable turn has taken place of the Protest of Wukan ... Zhu Mingguo, the deputy secretary of the Guangdong provincial Party committee led a working group to communicate with the representatives of Wukan village. An agreement was reached after the meeting—no action will be taken against the participants and organizers of the riot and the government will make effort to satisfy the villagers’ requirements. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2011, December 22)

In order to focus on their fundamental appeal – getting their land back and to have a positive interaction with the government, the villagers also wrote an open letter to the media and revealed it to the public through posts on Weibo. It was announced that:

We are glad that there are so many media reported on the protest. However, the Protest of Wukan is about the agricultural land issue instead of splitting the country. We sincerely hope that the word ‘uprising’, ‘revolt’ and ‘insurrection’ can be avoided in the news reports. (@张建兴, 2011, December 19)

## Category 2: Grievances and facts of Xue Jinbo’s death and the memory of him

The death of Xue Jinbo was a turning point in the Protest of Wukan since a lot more public attention was attracted because of his death. The villagers and the activists treated him as a hero and had published a lot of posts about him.

This second category contained the villagers’ strongly grievances and doubts about Xue Jinbo’s death. They provided plenty of evidence to seek clarification from the government in order to prove his innocence. Xue Jianwan, the daughter of Xue Jinbo, accused the government of covering up the truth of her father’s death:

There’s no quibbling over whether my father was beaten up while in police custody. The truth was in the surveillance video that the officials refused to make it open to the public which contained the entire process of how my father was tortured to death. (@健婉, 2012, January 4)

Other activists also provided various reasons to resist the opacity of the government. For instance, one post listed five doubtful points of Xue Jinbo’s death raised by the local leaders:

... (1) Was the trial lasted for more than 30 hours continually? (2) Why the local government refused to release the surveillance video from 7 am to 9:53 am on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011? (3) Xue Jinbo was sent to hospital by 9:53 am on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, but why it took one hour and fifty-two minutes for him to get there? (4) There were more than ten people knocking on the iron gate of the cell that locked up Xue Jinbo, but why

the guards came almost an hour later? (5) What's the explanation of the screaming coming from the cell around 7 am on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2011? (@新启蒙熊伟, 2011, December 26)

Also, in this category, the activists deeply cherished the memory of their “hero”—Xue Jinbo. The posts that received the most attention in this theme are the ones from Xue Jianwan who expressed her deeply longing for her father. For example, she wrote, “Dad, you are the hero... We miss you so much. It is so unused to live without you. I never thought you would ever leave us... How I wish you could come back home!” (@健婉, 2011, December 25) Jianwan also posted that:

Today, my father was buried... His appearance was distorted beyond recognition the last time I saw him... Now he can rest in peace. Dad, we will continue to complete your unfinished dream... Wait for us, as a family we will get together one day. (@健婉, 2012, February 16)

The other activists also extended their sincere respects to him. For example, one post read, “All the villagers were sitting together and listening to the stories of Xue Jinbo. He will remain in our hearts forever” (@WK 鸡精, 2012, February 17). Many of them posted the site conditions of Xue Jinbo's farewell ceremony with pictures. There were other related posts that expressed respect, including “the villagers were standing in silent tribute” (@WK 鸡精, 2011, December 16), “people attending the farewell ceremony all wept bitterly”, and “let's remember today, February 25<sup>th</sup>. He will be remembered throughout the ages” (@WK 鸡精, 2012, February 16).

### Category 3: Obstacles the activists encountered in the process of the protest

During the whole process of the Protest of Wukan, the activists encountered various kinds of problems which included the confrontation between them and the local government, the

scepticism concerning activist intentions and actions and their dissatisfaction with the Internet censorship policies.

Findings revealed that activists believed that the local government was interfering in the affairs of activists in many different ways. One instance involved getting the family of Xue Jinbo to accept that he was dead of an illness. In Xue Jianwan's posts, she stated that:

The government officials said they could help clear the charges of my father. But this was how they were going to clear it—my father was asked to assist the public security organs with their investigation, and in the meantime he was dead of an illness. Were they trying to prove my father's innocence or getting themselves off with it? (@健婉, 2012, January 14)

According to Jianwan's post, her family was also forced to accept the compensation; otherwise they were not able to see Xue Jinbo's body.

In the early stage of the protest, the government had also sent thousands of police to arrest the activist leaders in order to pacify the situation. One post described the details of the confrontation:

According to the Hong Kong media reports... all the villagers were collected by beating the gong. They threw stones and bricks at the police, and the police fired tear-gas and water cannon at the villagers. The other day, the villagers set up barricades to prevent the police from entering the village. However, the police cut off the water and electricity as well as the food supplies of the village in order to force the villagers into submission. The villagers lamented that the authorities were 'killing them' and called the attention and help from the outside world. (@孔庆东, 2011, December 16, forwarded by @新启蒙熊伟, 2012, March 9)

Even though the villagers tried to fight against the local government and protect themselves, five of the activist leaders were arrested by the authorities. One post declared the strongly dissatisfaction with the arrests, “There was no police wagon, police uniform, handcuffs, and warrant when they arrested the activists. The authorities didn’t even notify their relatives within 48 hours” (@张建兴, 2011, December 22). Some other posts expressed the experience of the detainees during detention, “Hong was under interrogation continuously for more than 30 hours. He was also forced to sit on a punishment chair and questioned whether he had ties with foreign forces or not” (@新启蒙熊伟, 2011, December 23). In the later stages of the protest, even though the activists had reached an agreement with the government, they were still under the threat of been arrested. One activist posted that:

In fact, some government officials did not want to see the electoral success. I know they were investigating me since I corrected the problems in the preparation phase of the elections many times which guaranteed the victories of the elections. In order to ensure my personal safety, I will change places to sleep every day. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 25)

In addition, the government had also tried to prevent the foreign media from entering the village to conduct interviews. For example, one post stated, “The foreign journalists were forbidden to enter the village by the government. However, the local reporters were allowed to enter which aroused the public indignation” (@WK 鸡精, 2012, February 10).

During the Protest of Wukan, there were also signs of scepticism concerning activist intentions and actions. For instance, the villager Zhang Jianxing questioned the real intention of the activist Xiong Wei’s staying in the village who came from Beijing. Xiong Wei also accused Zhang Jianxing of colluding with the local authorities. Moreover, the activists also had to face

the queries from the netizens. For example, facing the question that if he really played a role in the Wukan elections, the activist Xiong Wei announced through his posts that:

Before the election of villagers' committee, the electoral committee decided that the self-nomination of the village head must accompany a joint recommendation of at least 500 voters.... I pointed out that this was in violation of article 15 of the organic law of the villagers' committee which prescribed that 'the candidate of the members of the villagers' committee can be directly nominated by the voters'. In order to improve the villagers' knowledge about the law, I wrote articles about it and distributed them to more than one hundred village representatives. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, March 9)

The Internet censorship policies had also been a huge challenge for the activists. Most of the related posts in the early phase of the protest had been deleted. Many activists expressed their dissatisfaction about it through follow-up posts, "Faithful admonitions are always unpleasant to hear. Will this post be deleted too?" (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 15) Some posts also declared that activists believed they were under pressure of the local authorities because of their online activities. For example, the activist Xiong Wei announced that the micro-blogs he posted on Weibo were entirely created according to his own preferences. However, the local government believed that he was instructed by Zuluang Lin, the new village head elected by the villagers. One of his posts stated that, "...My online posts had nothing to do with Mr. Lin. I sincerely hope the authorities can stop put pressure on him" (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 15).

Category 4: Activists' thoughts surrounding the Protest of Wukan and ideas about grassroots democracy in China

Even though each post of Weibo has a limit of 140 words, the activists tried to make the most use of it to express their thoughts about the Protest of Wukan. Multiple strategies had been

adopted, naming, the long micro-blog function and sharing the links of their writing from the outside websites. In this category, the activists discussed the value of the Protest of Wukan and their ideas about grassroots democracy in China. They also expressed their appreciation to the people who helped with the protest.

After continuously fighting for their legal rights, the villagers reached an agreement with the government in the end. Free elections were held in Wukan and the activists stated their expectation of the elections and their thoughts about the value of it:

...Tomorrow, the election of villagers' representatives will be held on the basis of one person, one vote. The elected representatives will compose the highest organ of authority in the village. In the history of Wukan village, this has never happened before. The people of Wukan are making history. If the villagers' representative meeting is exercised in accordance with the law, the agricultural land will no longer be sold by the corrupt officials without the villagers' knowledge. This is the value of democratic elections in Wukan. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 10)

The other activist expressed their excitement about the occurrence of the democratic elections that they had finally implemented a decades old dream. After the election of the villagers' representatives, the villagers who were successfully elected were less than three people; therefore, a by-election would be conducted. An activist commented that, "Although the result is not as good as what we expected, but this is democracy. We know there will be a lot of difficulties ahead; however, we'll keep walking on this road" (@张建兴, 2012, March 3). Many of them had also shared their ideas and comments about grassroots democracy in China in the process of the elections. For example, one activist conveyed that, "If there is no procedural democracy, there is no substantive democracy" (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 10). Another post read, "An old grandmother got the elector's certificate today which was brand new to her.

The vote is the bridge that leads us to the grassroots democracy. It is closely related to the land rights of the villagers in Wukan” (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 31).

During the Protest of Wukan, many people took strong interest in it and some of them directly came to the Wukan village to help with the protest. The activists expressed their appreciation to them through the posts. For instance, one post wrote that:

In the election meeting, there is a young man who wears a red t-shirt with the logo Shenzhen Volunteer on it. He was picking up the garbage on the ground and putting it into the dustbins. He also helped with the preparation for the elections. In fact, there were many other volunteers like him helping with the protest in different ways. We really appreciate your help! (@WK 鸡精, 2012, March 3)

More importantly, except for the ones who directly came to the Wukan village, there were a lot more netizens who supported the protest through the Internet. Many activists spoke highly of the role of the netizens and showed their appreciation to them on the posts. For example, one post wrote, “The spread of the Protest of Wukan event was closely connected to the extensive concern and support of the netizens. They had played an important role in the protest” (@张建兴, 2011, December 22).

#### Category 5: Encouragement to participate

Another important category among the posts was about encouragement to participate. Any post encouraging netizens to get more involved in the protest or to participate in the donation activity was grouped into this category.

Some posts encouraged the netizens to participate in the Book Donation Act for Wukan. For example, the initiator of this act Xiong Wei explained that if the villagers of Wukan wanted

to take control of their own destiny, it was very important for them to read more books, learn more things and improve their comprehensive qualities. He posted that:

Some of my friends and I are collaborating with the villagers on building a Wukan library. Until now, we have received strong support from different sectors and we really appreciate their help. Also, we warmly welcome netizens to donate books for the Wukan library. The mailing address is ... (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 28)

The BooksChina.com also supported this activity by launching a campaign on Weibo. It was announced on their official Weibo account that:

Wukan event has profound significance for the rural reform in China. The activist Xiong Wei strongly felt that the villagers were craving for good books after his investigation in Wukan village since December 22th, 2011. Therefore, we hope to help the villagers build a library with the influence of Weibo. Every time this post is been re-tweeted, the BooksChina.com will represent you to donate one yuan to the Wukan library with a maximum limit of one hundred thousand yuan. Please support the villagers of Wukan with your forwarding action. (@中国图书网官方微博, 2012, January 6, forwarded by @新启蒙熊伟, 2012, March 2)

Many activists had re-tweeted this post and they also encouraged netizens to forward it as well. As a result, the total number of this post being forwarded was 47,934. Moreover, the activist Xiong Wei had asked for help on Weibo that “the Wukan library needed a desktop computer”. He explained that the key of the backwardness of rural life lies in its backward culture. During his stay in Wukan, he deeply felt the villagers’ thirst for knowledge, especially the knowledge about the law. Having a computer would help the peasants to know more about the legal

knowledge and improve their understanding about the importance of protecting their legitimate rights and interests according to the law (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 13).

The activist had also encouraged netizens to donate a video camera in order to make a documentary about the Protest of Wukan. One post emphasized the importance of having it, “Recording the Protest of Wukan, especially the process of the one-month Wukan elections and editing it into a documentary which can be broadcasted on television will become the valuable historical material” (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 29).

In addition, the activists also used Weibo to encourage netizens to volunteer in Wukan. For example, in the process of the Protest of Wukan, the activists found out that it was extremely important to enrich the villagers’ cultural activities in order to improve their cultural qualities. One post read, “Now various kinds of volunteers are needed in Wukan urgently, such as teachers for literacy education, Tai Chi teachers, dancing teachers, computer training teachers, assistants of women’s rights protection training and so on... Volunteers, Wukan needs you” (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 29).

Lastly, an online activity through Weibo– collecting spring festival couplets for Wukan villagers was launched by the activists in order to encourage the netizens to get more involved in the Wukan event. The post stated that:

As the Spring Festival is approaching, the villagers of Wukan are preparing to change their Spring Festival couplets. We are now collecting the new couplets for the villagers in Wukan which contains the content about villager autonomy, protecting the land issue and democratic elections. Please do not hesitate to participate. The villagers need your advice. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 18)

Category 6: Information and thoughts about media’s work and their reports about Wukan

Even though the protest of Wukan was rarely reported by the mainstream media in mainland China, it had attracted a lot of attention from the foreign media all over the world. In this category, the activists revealed the media's work in Wukan, and they also expressed their thoughts towards different reports about the protest.

First of all, the most common posts in this category showed the scene of the interviews with short introductory text and pictures. For example, the text included "Xue Jianwan was surrounded by the reporters to conduct interviews" (@WK 鸡精, 2012, March 2); "the reporters set up their equipment and got ready to report the news" (@WK 鸡精, 2012, March 2); and "a little girl sobbed out her grievances about the land issues in Wukan to the reporter, and the villagers on her side could not help crying too" (@WK 鸡精, 2011, December 19).

The activists also showed their appreciation to the foreign media's work in Wukan. For instance, one activist described that:

After my roughly counting, there were more than twenty media organizations here in Wukan. They came from Denmark, Finland, Israel, Singapore, Hong Kong and so on... They are our 'new weapons' to fight for the legal rights. We really appreciate their concern about the Wukan event. (@张建兴, 2011, December 19)

Since the protest was widely reported by the foreign media, the local authorities once accused that some of the activists colluded with the "foreign forces" to cause unrest in China. Facing the accusation, the activists expressed their dissatisfaction and refuted this argument on their post, "Were you saying that BBC was the 'legendary foreign forces'?" The official press Global Times even published an editorial entitled, "it was odd that the foreign media unduly praised the Wukan elections". The activist also pointed out that the editorial of Global Times was distorting the truth:

It was said in the editorial that the Wukan elections were held under the safeguard of the armed police; otherwise, it would be chaos. However, the truth was that on the Election Day, the villagers of Wukan broke through the police barrier and escorted the Hong Kong journalists to the election meeting place. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 25)

Another state-run news agency People's daily online also published an article saying that the villagers of Wukan were extremely satisfied with the Party's policies and the solutions provided by the provincial Party committee. An activist also refuted this argument on Weibo with a simple question, "Could you announce the name list of the villagers who felt satisfied?" (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 18)

#### *4.1.2.2 How the posts aligned with the indicators of participatory democracy*

Based on the different categories discussed above, how weibo posts were aligned with the indicators of participatory democracy is examined in the following section.

First of all, the Weibo posts showed that they allowed citizen activists to provide information about the Wukan protest and express their thoughts and feelings. Five out of the six categories of the posts were aligned with this indicator which included information about the Protest of Wukan, grievances and facts of Xue Jinbo's death and the memory of him, obstacles the activists encountered in the process of the protest, activists' thoughts surrounding the Protest of Wukan and ideas about grassroots democracy in China, and information and thoughts about media's work and their reports about Wukan. In the categories above, the activists showed their strongly concern about the Protest of Wukan and also expressed their various thoughts and feelings about the event. For example, many activists were very concerned about the first democratic elections in Wukan; therefore, they posted every key development in the election process on Weibo. They had also expressed their feelings about the occurrence of the democratic

elections. For instance, one activist wrote that they had finally implemented a decades old dream. Many other issues had been covered by the activists as well, such as the real cause of Xue Jinbo's death, confrontation between villagers and the local government, activists' dissatisfaction with the Internet censorship policies, appreciation to the people who helped with the protest, and media's work and their reports about Wukan.

Second, the posts were also used by the activists to persuade netizens to become more engaged in the Wukan Protest and to be more aware of the severe corruption of the local official government. One important category of the posts was encouragement to participate. In this category, the activists had tried to persuade netizens to become more engaged in the Protest of Wukan in many different ways. For example, the activists had encouraged the netizens to 1) participate in the Book Donation Act for Wukan; 2) create spring festival couplets for villagers in Wukan; 3) donate a video camera in order to make a documentary about the Protest of Wukan; 4) donate a desktop computer for Wukan library; and 5) volunteer in Wukan. Moreover, the activists had also encouraged the netizens to forward their posts in order to expand its' influence and let more people get involved in the protest. For example, in order to build a library in Wukan, the activists had persuaded their followers to forward the post created by the official account of BooksChina.com since it launched a campaign on Weibo with a promise that "every time this post is been re-tweeted, the BooksChina.com will represent you to donate one yuan to the Wukan library with a maximum limit of one hundred thousand yuan" (@中国图书网官方微博, 2012, January 6, forwarded by @新启蒙熊伟, 2012, March 2)

Third, some of the posts were trying to help create a more educated citizenry by providing profession knowledge of the law. In terms of the democratic elections, some activists used their posts to introduce the relevant knowledge of the law to the netizens in order to increase their understanding of the legal process. For example, one post read:

Tomorrow's election is going to elect the members of the electoral committee, instead of the village committee. The electoral committee is of great importance which will preside over the elections of the village representatives and the village committee. Eleven election committee members will be elected in the end. There might be thousands of candidates which are going to be a huge challenge for the tellers. Therefore, the ballot is designed in a more scientific way. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, January 31)

Another post also indicated that in the electoral committee election, the percentage of voter turnout had exceeded 70%. According to the law, the election is effective if the voter turnout is over 50%. Therefore, the electoral committee election was successful. A week later, the village representatives were elected. After that, the election of village committee were held on March 1<sup>st</sup>. (@新启蒙熊伟, 2012, February 1)

From what is discussed above, it was found that most of the posts were aligned with some certain indicators of participatory democracy mentioned above; however, several other indicators of participatory democracy were not shown through the Weibo posts apparently which is explained in more detail in the advanced analysis and interpretation section. Moreover, these findings only reflected a partial set of the actual data since the sample posts only started in December, 2011 which limited the analysis that can be made.

#### *4.1.2.3 Challenges current Internet policies in China created for citizen activists' publishing on Weibo and vice versa*

Study findings indicated a number of challenges that current Internet policies in China created for citizen activists' publishing on Weibo. According to the analysis of the documentations about Internet policies in data analysis section above, it is obvious that the authorities have strong control over the online content, especially the information that splits the

country and destroys social order and social stability. Moreover, according to the content regulations, they can directly remove or block the information which is considered offending the legislations. In case of more serious violations, the business license of the organization and its network registration can be canceled by the authorities.

According to the Freedom House's "Freedom on the Net 2012" report (2012), the Chinese government had created a new agency, the State Internet Information Office (SIIO) to "streamline censorship procedures" in May 2011 which included "managing online propaganda directives, punishing violators of online content rules, and overseeing the country's telecommunications companies" (p.137). It also increased "pressure on leading internet firms to tighten self-discipline" in order to deal with the explosion of public opinion in micro-blog (p.137). Meanwhile, the Sina executives announced that "the firm had a very powerful content censorship system in place, which included both automated and human monitoring 24 hours a day, run by hundreds of employees" (p.134).

During the early phase of the Protest of Wukan, relations between the government and the villagers were strained; and most of the activists' publishing on Weibo was considered releasing the inappropriate content. For example, the accusations of the local government officials and the grievances of Xue Jinbo's death posted by the activists were considered inappropriate. The most common measure employed by Sina was deleting individual posts. As a result, many posts related to the Wukan incident from September to early December, 2011 were deleted.

Except for directly deleting the posts, deceiving the users by making them believe that their posts had been published successfully but in fact turning them invisible to all the other users is also applied by Sina Company. For example, according to the description of David Bandurski (2011), a researcher in the China Media Project, it was declared that the online content control

over the Wukan incident had been very robust. When he posted a Chinese-language summary of a *Telegraph* news report and a photo about the protest to Sina Weibo, it was “quarantined in under a minute” which meant the post was “hidden from all Sina Weibo users” but himself without any notice from Sina.

In addition, searching for key words associated with the Wukan incident had been shut down by Sina Weibo. According to the China Media Project’s report written by David Bandurski (2011), until December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the searches for “Wukan” remained blocked on Sina Weibo, yielding notices that, “According to relevant Chinese laws and regulations, search results for ‘Wukan’ cannot be shown.” According to another sensitive keywords test conducted by the China Digital Times on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the following words were blocked as well: “Lufeng”, “9.21”, “Shanwei”, “Xue Jinbo”, “Zhuang Honglie”(Village representative who was arrested by the authorities), “Secretary of the Party committee”(The villagers wanted to vote out the Secretary of the Party committee Xue Chang who was in the position for more than 30 years), “Amnesty International”(Amnesty International issued a statement calling for an independent investigation into the death of Xue Jinbo immediately) , “sudden death”(The officials announced that Xue Jinbo was diagnosed as sudden cardiac death), “oppose dictatorship”, “assault”, “sit quietly”, “demonstration”, “confrontation”, “suppression”, “blockade”, and “protest”.

Lastly, what is more serious was that not only had the posts related to the Wukan incident been deleted, some of the activists’ account had been blocked because they were considered to have created a large amount of content that violates the censorship rules. For example, @WK 鸡精 announced that his previous five accounts had all been blocked and @WK 鸡精 was his sixth Weibo account.

Study findings also indicated a number of challenges that citizen activists’ publishing on Weibo created for the current Internet policies in China. Even though the content regulation of online publishing in China was severe, and the Sina Company had employed various measures to

prevent the circulation of “inappropriate” content, the features of micro blog itself had challenged the restrictions of Internet policies in China. First of all, the propagation velocity of the information on Weibo was fast which enabled its users to outpace censors. Within one or two minutes, a post could reach millions of people. In addition to the rapid speed of the information transmission, the huge number of the posts also made it impossible for the authorities to censor everything. The most common phenomenon was that the information had already been spread out before it was deleted or blocked later on.

Despite government efforts to control online content, there were millions of Weibo posts discussing the Protest of Wukan and many deleted posts had been archived by different users. For example, according to the report *The Legacy of Wukan* (Bandurski, 2012), the activist Yuan Yulai had posted part of the speech of an unnamed senior leader at a “meeting on stability preservation, the mobilization of domestic security forces to combat social unrest” which stated that, “...The Wukan incident is far from finished. Can challenges to the leadership status of the Chinese Communist Party evade retribution? That is a page we cannot open, that no one dares open...” The deleted posts also included the content which expressed the inspirational emotion that the Wukan event could be “an impetus for broader democracy in China”. For instance, a post published by a VIP user Zhang Nong who has more than 24,000 followers read:

Wukan is not Beijing or Shanghai. It is not Guangzhou or Tianjin. Not Chongqing or Shenyang. It is not a major city where we might say that those of culture are numerous and few are illiterate. It is a tiny fishing village. But in such a little village as this, the villagers have begun to vote in elections, governing and taking care of themselves. Does this not tell us that Chinese in other areas can do this too? If Chinese in other areas cannot, then I want to ask everyone why they can't. (as cited in Bandurski, 2012)

More importantly, the activists had employed various creative and skillful ways to circumvent Internet censorship. Firstly, in order to avoid the censorship machine, the activists replaced the sensitive words into other characters with the same pronunciation or similar look. For instance, they used “鸟坎”, “鸟欠”, “乌土欠”, and “鸟菝” instead of “乌坎 (Wukan)”. They also used “WK”, “Wu KAn” “W-kan”, and “Wu-K” in place of “Wukan”. Moreover, some of the activists used the text-as-image files and the “long micro-blog” function to avoid the censorship since it turned texts into image files. In addition, although the activists’ accounts had been shuttered by the authorities over and over again, it didn’t stop them to open new accounts with different names. In all, the activists had become more creative and artful under the force of state power.

#### *4.2. Advanced analysis and interpretation*

Based on the findings of this study, several insightful interpretations were drawn to reveal how the Weibo posts were used by the activists to promote or hinder participatory democracy.

First of all, based on the various features of Weibo use by different activists, it was shown that the more activists were involved professionally in organized organizations dedicated to citizen participation, the more various ways they would use Weibo to facilitate participatory democracy. The activists with less professional involvement in related research institutions (@健婉, @WK 鸡精, @WK 张建兴, @才但猪妈) facilitated participatory democracy mainly by providing the informational content about the progress of the event and the expression of their feelings on their posts. By contrast, the activist with the most professional involvement — the specialist in the citizen participation area, @新启蒙熊伟 promoted participatory democracy by adding other important ways which included, encouraging and persuading its audiences to be more engaged in the protest, and providing relevant knowledge of the law in order to increase the netizen’s understanding of the legal process. Moreover, it was also revealed that the activist with

the most professional involvement in citizen participation research institutions appeared to create more action-related and opinion-related information, instead of the emotion-related content.

Second, except for the three most popular posts drawn from @新启蒙熊伟 which informed the netizens of the significant progress of the protest, the second most popular posts contained the emotional expressions from @健婉 (see post No. 1, 7 in Appendix A). It seems that the netizens were more likely to be infected by the emotional expression compared to the content focused on calling for help or opinion expression.

Thirdly, one significant situation was that even though many of the posts were aligned with the indicator of participatory democracy – articulating and expressing themselves, it didn't mean that the activists articulated and expressed themselves freely through the posts. Because of the strict Internet censorship and the severe outcome of violations, the activists may very well have applied what Marolt (2011) called “self-censorship” to protect themselves in a safe region. In order to not go beyond the lines drawn by the government, the activists considered deliberately about what could be posted and the “right” way to organize it. This “mental firewall” had actually hindered the “self-expression, the diversity of thought and the development of creativity that form the basis for genuine social development” (Marolt, 2011, p.55).

Moreover, even though most of the sample posts were aligned with some aspects of participatory democracy, several other indicators of participatory democracy were not shown through the Weibo posts. For instance, although the posts were used by the activists to persuade netizens to become more engaged in the Wukan Protest, they did not encourage citizens to participate more directly in politics and other areas of society. The villagers and activists mainly focused on the protest itself and tried to avoid discussing political system in China. Although some posts had pointed out the confrontation between the villagers and the government, it was mainly about the local government instead of the central government. More specifically, the

information that the villagers wanted to express was that even though they fought against the local government in order to get their agricultural land back, they supported the rule of the central government. According to their posts, it was the local government which illegally sold their land to the real estate developers; and they hoped the central government would pay attention to the issue and help them solve the problem. For example, one villager stated his stance, “We’re not uprising. We’re not anti-Communist. We’re not splitting the country. It’s purely a land issue. I’m a league member. I love the communist party. I love my country. And I love my hometown” (@张建兴, 2011, December 19). The villagers also wrote an open letter to the media and revealed it to the public on Weibo which announced that:

We are glad that there are so many media reported on the protest. However, the Protest of Wukan is about the agricultural land issue instead of splitting the country. We sincerely hope that the word ‘uprising’, ‘revolt’ and ‘insurrection’ can be avoided in the news reports. (@张建兴, 2011, December 19)

The reason could be that the content censorship is severe in China. Any information discussing about the political system or any other radical political issues can easily be deemed as “information that subverts the state power and overthrows the socialist system” (Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations, Ministry of Public Security of China, 1997). This might cause more serious antagonism between the villagers and the government which might bring a more severe crackdown. More specifically, the results could be more activists being arrested which comes with the situation that they cannot control. Therefore, the villagers and activists mainly focused on the agricultural land issue which was most relevant to their immediate interests. This finding echoed with the study conducted by Sullivan (2013) who argued that only the specific and localized incidents of low level malfeasance would be tolerated by the government; and any information touching upon the radical political

system or having the potential of promoting collective action would be stifled by the authorities. Moreover, this phenomenon also revealed that the activists were employing “self-regulation” to stay away from the risk of being arrested by the government.

In addition, the posts did not encourage open “debate and deliberation” about the protest. Most of the posts played the role of informing netizens. Among the six categories of the posts, five of them were informational content. For example, “the information about the Protest of Wukan” and “obstacles the activists encountered in the process of the protest”. The other theme encouraged political participation which was classified as “encouragement to participate”. As a result, most of the posts were expressing their own ideas instead of forming a discussion or promoting open debate. Even though a post may have received hundreds or thousands of comments, most of the comments were articulating their own thoughts and real discussions were rarely formed. According to Papacharissi (2002), it is stated that as online public sphere, “the internet could facilitate discussion that promotes a democratic exchange of ideas and opinions” (p. 11). Therefore, since political discussion and open debate were not promoted by the posts, an online public sphere was not fully created.

From what was discussed above, it was shown that even under the rigorous Internet censorship system, there was still evidence showing that the Weibo posts had promoted several aspects of participatory democracy. It had created “virtual communities” mainly by providing political information and encouraging political participation. However, from the limited data that can be accessed, the Weibo posts did not promote certain other aspects, such as encouraging netizens to participate more directly in politics, promoting political discussion and creating online public sphere. As a result, the microblog’s influence on participatory democracy might be best considered a gradual and subtle evolution instead of a direct revolution which echoes with Hassid’s (2012) research finding stating that micro-blogging sites, such as Weibo will

supplement other social media in “slowly helping in open China’s social and political systems” (p. 20). In addition, one thing that needs to be paid attention to is that this case study only dealt with the selected activists and selected posts which might limit the generalizations that can be made.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between the Weibo use and civic activism in China based on a case study of the Protest of Wukan. The research findings revealed the main themes of the activists’ Weibo posts which illustrated that the Weibo posts had successfully promoted several aspects of participatory democracy. It mainly included providing political information and encouraging protest participation. The research findings of Mansour (2012) corresponded with this result which announced that SNS can “facilitate communications and provide a degree of command and control for the protesters”. However, the Weibo posts failed to promote some other aspects of participatory democracy, such as encouraging netizens to participate more directly in politics, promoting political discussion and creating online public sphere. Moreover, the major similarities and differences between the five activists of how they used Weibo to promote participatory democracy were also examined in the study.

One prominent context of this study is that the Internet censorship is severe in China which echoes with the study conducted by Li who stated that issues related to “human rights defense, corruption and power abuse, which challenges the highest officials, are not tolerated” online (Li, 2012, p.19). However, the features of micro blog itself had challenged the restrictions of Internet policies. Moreover, the activists had employed various creative and skillful ways to circumvent Internet censorship.

Another remarkable phenomenon is that even though the posts had provided political information and encouraged political participation, it was all about the protest itself. Specifically,

information had focused on the agricultural land issue instead of the political system at a deeper level. Moreover, although the corruption of the official government had been condemned by the villagers, they only intended to mention the local government and tried to avoid criticizing the central authorities. As Sullivan (2013) argues, systematic problems that allow corruption or other societal ills to flourish on a national scale were not addressed by the activists on Weibo (p. 7). This phenomenon echoed with the claim made by Marolt (2011) that under the state's rigorous Internet regulations, the netizens employed "self-censorship" to avoid the unwanted influences in their everyday lives. It illustrated that the activists knew precisely that challenging the rule of the central authorities would definitely not be tolerated. The result of challenging this bottom line could be a more severe state repression and they might fail to achieve anything. Therefore, the communication strategy the villagers had applied was to court the central government and put pressure to the local government.

### *5.1. Significance*

A study of Weibo use connected to the Protest of Wukan makes a novel contribution to research knowledge on micro-blogging and activism in China. Compared to other protests happened in China prior to 2013, a prominent feature of the Protest of Wukan is that it was made known to the public largely through the micro-blogging site "Weibo", rather than through mainstream media. Moreover, the success of the Protest of Wukan triggered many other villages to fight for their rights too, such as in Haimen, Baiyun, and Panhe village. Specifically, according to Wertime (2012), the villagers in Panhe, Zhejiang Province, said that Wukan uprising's ultimate success had inspired them to decide to hold widespread demonstrations starting February 1. Many netizens cited Wukan as a "good model for dispossessed villagers to follow" and they had "expressed almost universal admiration for the alleged protesters" (Wertime, 2012). In this study, how the micro-bogging site Weibo was used by the activists to conduct online activism was revealed, especially under the restrictions of Internet censorship

policies. Moreover, this study helps to examine the relationships between the use of digital media and participatory democracy within a specific Chinese context which extends participatory democracy and digital democracy theory into a new area of empirical inquiry. It is found out that the use of digital media Weibo had successfully promoted several aspects of participatory democracy which included providing political information and encouraging protest participation. However, it also failed to promote some other aspects of participatory democracy, such as encouraging netizens to participate more directly in politics, promoting political discussion and creating online public sphere.

To summarize, this study helps us to take a closer look at the real situation of online activism in China through Weibo. On the one hand, the features of Weibo itself had provided an excellent platform for the activists to perform. On the other hand, the activists had also encountered unprecedented challenges under the restrictions of Internet censorship policies. This study also leverages understanding of the micro-blog's influence on civic activism in China. Insights may be drawn to help people enhance their sense of civic activism through micro-blog use and promote the democratization of society in China.

### *5.2. Limitations and future research recommendations*

First of all, this study examined the research questions by looking into a specific event in China by mainly focusing on Weibo use since it had the largest number of users in China and was considered the most influential micro-blog site in China. One limitation could be that this study only focused on one micro-blogging site instead of looking into other social networking sites. Secondly, in order to narrow down the scope of the data to make it possible to analyse in the timeframe available, the sample posts were collected from the most active citizen activist Weibo accounts, which may restrict what this study can contribute in terms of providing complete coverage. Moreover, the original sample posts contained texts, pictures, video content,

and the links of other material from the outside website. Due to the timeframe of the study and the difficulty in analysing the video content and other material from the outside website, the researcher mainly focused on the text information, the text-as-image files and the picture information as the object of analysis which may contribute to a study drawback. Also, it would have limited the study to have additional links between theoretical concepts and the analysis. In addition, because of the limited scope of this study, even though each sample post had hundreds or thousands comments made by other netizens, they were not included in the analysis section. Lastly, one significant limitation of this study is that due to the internet censorship in China, posts related to the Protest of Wukan on Weibo from September 21<sup>st</sup> to early December have been deleted or blocked by the authorities, thus limiting the data collection to what is currently available for examination. To compensate, the researcher archived online documentation wherever possible to reduce dataset loss.

In future studies, a sample of the comments of the posts can be added into the analysis in order to provide a more comprehensive knowledge of how the netizens interact on the micro-blogging sites. Moreover, since the content analysis of the Weibo posts and documentations of Internet security policies was the only data analysis strategy applied in this study, interviews of the activists can be conducted in future studies which helps to investigate deeper about the relationship between micro-blog use and civic activism in China. In addition, since the findings of this study showed that the use of Weibo had successfully promoted several aspects of participatory democracy and also failed to promote some other aspects of participatory democracy, such as promoting political discussion and creating online public sphere, the reasons of why this would happen can be delved deeper in future studies. Lastly, the relationship between the online activism and the activism in real in China can also be examined in future research.

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## Appendix A

Table 1: Sample posts

No.	Sample posts	Times being forward ed	Number of comment	Time released (Y-M-D)	Weibo account
1	爸爸你是英雄！你的家人也不会是狗熊...我们会坚持，会听妈妈话，会照顾好妈妈的，你放心！可是，我们都好想你！没有你真的不习惯，从没想过爸爸会离开我们...爸爸你什么时候回来！	3124	1536	2011-12-25 13:14	@健婉
2	现在想让我爸回来的话，那他就必须的“病死”的...想让我爸不是“病死”的回来...那就必须让他们把我爸“千刀万剐”的解剖...如果这时候爸爸能再对我说一次“别怕！有爸爸在...”那该多好！	1973	1042	2012-1-1 12:42	@健婉
3	（接上条微博）我爸有没有被打不用狡辩，真相就在他们那至今还不肯完整交出来的录像上，里面是我爸从进去到被他们折磨致死的全过程！再者，我认为解剖出的是陷阱，还是真相，真的很难说！所以，没有万全的把握...我不想接受解剖！希望大家能理解，支持我们的决定！谢谢！爸爸没感觉了，我们比爸爸痛...	1007	555	2012-1-4 12:48	@健婉
4	他们说可以帮我爸洗清那些子虚乌有的罪名...然而他们打算这么洗...说他们请我爸去协助公安机关办案，在此期间我爸病逝！大家猜猜他们是洗清我爸的罪，还是他们在为自己脱罪？	1029	473	2012-1-14 12:25	@健婉
5	我当选村代表了...	1567	1179	2012-2-11 06:49	@健婉
6	爸爸还在的时候，我有一个最平凡幸福的生活！我是一个平凡的教师，从小有疼爱我们的父母，有感情要好的弟妹，全家无不良嗜好，有一个快乐和睦的家。而现在.....狗官们别笑得太过得意，十年风水轮流转，报应一定不会缺席...	900	453	2012-2-10 12:50	@健婉
7	就在今天，爸爸已经安葬了.....最后一次见到爸爸，爸爸的样子已经让人无法想象。为什么爸爸要受这样苦，这样的委屈...爸爸作为爱你的家人，让你一直受苦到现在，我们对不起你！现在你可以安息了，以后的事，我们帮你完成...等等我们，总有一天我们一家人会再相聚。爸爸，我们想你！	2300	1431	2012-2-16 08:35	@健婉
8	对了！我们家收...政府给了我们家 90 万的赔偿金，说是爸爸的善后费，弟弟妹妹的教育费，作为家庭补偿...难道说的就是这笔钱？可是不签收，他们“不敢”让我们见爸爸，爸爸也要继续给他们关起来冻，当然也就不能下葬了...不收那怎么办？害大家失望了吗？	1269	903	2012-2-23 00:53	@健婉
9	大家先别紧张，辞就辞吧，有手有脚饿不死的。确实有规定公职人员不能参加村委选举，他们要抓住这一条来逼我，那谁也没办法.....不就是一个工作嘛！那如果能为我爸完成遗愿，能和村里人齐心协力讨回土地.....那可比一个公职职位有价值多了。大家同意吧？😄嘻嘻.....	2222	1405	2012-2-28 02:43	@健婉
10	我就要没工作了！我们家即将失去经济来源了.....	3955	1991	2012-2-27 23:02	@健婉
11	有领导来我家关心，劝我仔细考虑取舍。答复：“我参选没有什么政治目的，爸爸我已经没机会孝敬他了，我只想去完成一些事报答爸爸。所以有心照顾我家，就特殊一点，让我停薪留职参选村委，一两年后我该做做完了，再去复职。如若不行，我是一定要参选的了，你们觉得该怎么办就怎么办吧！我无话可说。”	1767	905	2012-3-1 12:13	@健婉
12	今天下午选委会在村委会会议室宣布与村委会成员工作交接.并颁发当选证书 (图有村委会成员其中六人当选证书)	250	79	<a href="#">2012-3-6 04:32</a>	@WK 鸡精
13	再次献上选举高峰图。	108	37	<a href="#">2012-3-4 11:20</a>	@WK 鸡精
14	参选村委会成员的得票数:参选主任的林祖鑫得票 6205 票当选,参选副主任的杨色茂得票 3609 票当选,其余不过半的有参选副主任的@洪锐潮 得 2919 票.参选副主任的薛@健婉 得票 2118 票.参选委员的@WK 庄烈宏 得 3292 票 参选委员的孙文良得 1728 票,选委员的@WK 张建城 得 2226 票,不过半的候选人明天会再次选举。	61	12	<a href="#">2012-3-3 10:22</a>	@WK 鸡精
15	转发微博 <a href="#">@aside</a> 中国的这个下午：北京现场（CNTV 截图）；乌坎现场（微博@新启蒙熊伟 @WK 鸡	50	15	<a href="#">2012-3-3 04:45</a>	@WK 鸡精

	精)：香港现场 (RTHK 幸伟雄摄)   转发(869) / 评论(149)				
16	林老也去投票了，被记者们的围住了。记者们的长枪短炮时刻记录着林老，记录着这位爱笑的老人。	166	42	<a href="#">2012-3-3 00:49</a>	@WK 鸡精
17	会场左右图	103	23	<a href="#">2012-3-3 00:34</a>	@WK 鸡精
18	上午至中午过程图按图片顺序:(1):选举会场门口，武警跟村的治安队把守(2):大批记者在登记，拿取采访证(3):选举工作人员等就位准备工作(4):中外记者长枪短炮大部队等候选举大会开始(5):选举开始,奏国歌(6):验箱封箱(7):工作人员发票:(8)：村民依然有序排队领票(9)投出了珍贵的一票!!!	72	19	<a href="#">2012-3-3 00:32</a>	@WK 鸡精
19	在选举会场,看到一个身穿红衣写着深圳义工的一个人,在把地下的垃圾捡起来扔到垃圾桶里.熊老师叫他不用捡了,他还是一直在捡.他早上还在写票区里帮忙.还有其他的志愿者一直在帮忙.乌坎谢谢你们 感谢!!!	134	39	<a href="#">2012-3-3 00:23</a>	@WK 鸡精
20	@健婉 健婉每次来投票都是被记者围住采访，这次也一样，投完票被一群记者围住采访，之后被村民护送回家。	76	31	<a href="#">2012-3-2 22:33</a>	@WK 鸡精
21	中外长枪短炮大部队...	57	22	<a href="#">2012-3-2 20:04</a>	@WK 鸡精
22	村委会竞选演讲大会过程,按图顺序说:(1)演讲会场,村民记者等待大会开始.(2)村民有序的坐好看听演讲.(3)林祖銮书记开始演讲.(4)杨色茂主任宣布自己退出选委会,副主任@水土不服洪天彬 当选选委会新主任.以及宣布大会秩序.(5)村民认真听各代表演讲.(6) @洪锐潮 等代表开始演讲.(7)演讲大会结束	58	20	<a href="#">2012-2-29 04:50</a>	@WK 鸡精
23	演讲结束 在演讲中掌声最为激烈的也属@洪锐潮 @庄烈宏 了 WK 张建城虽然只说了两句话，掌声也是挺多的！为他们感到高兴！最后献上会场结束图...	166	41	<a href="#">2012-2-29 03:18</a>	@WK 鸡精
24	@洪锐潮 锐潮一上场就迎来一阵掌声！村民对他的演讲很满意...迎来一阵又一阵的掌声！	122	45	<a href="#">2012-2-29 02:46</a>	@WK 鸡精
25	现场 很久没看到乌坎这种场面了...演讲已经开始，演讲演讲人由抽签顺序演讲，每人演讲不得超过八分钟！	133	47	<a href="#">2012-2-29 01:56</a>	@WK 鸡精
26	今天上午十点召开 109 位村民代表会议。场地在仙翁戏台，当时的全民大会也是在这里开。会议内容是讨论策划下个月的选举大会。（会议笑点：政府官员想要参与会议，被众村民代表笑称：我们的会议关你什么事阿，然后无奈转头回去，各村民代表高兴大笑！）	315	115	<a href="#">2012-2-20 21:54</a>	@WK 鸡精
27	村民静坐...静听杨色茂主任诉说锦波叔！锦波永远留下我们心中！	165	45	<a href="#">2012-2-17 02:51</a>	@WK 鸡精
28	薛锦波先生追思大会	155	48	<a href="#">2012-2-17 01:52</a>	@WK 鸡精
29	今天锦波叔的告别仪式，众人痛哭一片。 <a href="http://t.cn/zO2WoLt">http://t.cn/zO2WoLt</a>	119	49	<a href="#">2012-2-16 07:02</a>	@WK 鸡精
30	今天锦波叔告别仪式过程 2 月 25 号记住今天 锦波叔入土为安 万古流芳!!!	391	124	<a href="#">2012-2-16 05:55</a>	@WK 鸡精
31	@健婉 薛锦波之女 得票 455 票！	187	54	<a href="#">2012-2-11 06:14</a>	@WK 鸡精
32	政府居然不让记者进入采访...却让陆丰汕尾记者进 引起公众的愤怒之后才让记者自由采访！	189	48	<a href="#">2012-2-10 23:08</a>	@WK 鸡精
33	村民排队领票 很有秩序。	108	24	<a href="#">2012-2-10 20:39</a>	@WK 鸡精
34	@健婉 也来投票了 被一群记者围堵 眼眶还是湿润着...	233	80	<a href="#">2012-1-31 22:22</a>	@WK 鸡精
35	今天有七千多人投票 从早上九点到下午四点	266	78	<a href="#">2012-1-31 21:41</a>	@WK 鸡精
36	有七个村口领票点 图为一村	411	111	<a href="#">2012-1-31 20:59</a>	@WK 鸡精
37	大批记者涌入	114	27	<a href="#">2012-1-31 20:06</a>	@WK 鸡精
38	省委副书记到场村民热烈欢迎！	173	86	<a href="#">2011-12-22 02:38</a>	@WK 鸡精
39	大量村民跟记者等候省委副书记到场！	221	72	<a href="#">2011-12-20 20:45</a>	@WK 鸡精

40	大陆媒体全部失声，BBC 就是传说中的境.外.势力？	649	134	<a href="#">2011-12-20 05:14</a>	@WK 鸡精
41	警察退去了 道路也通了	102	35	<a href="#">2011-12-20 08:24</a>	@WK 鸡精
42	亚洲新闻	218	29	<a href="#">2011-12-19 02:21</a>	@WK 鸡精
43	大会现况！	256	58	<a href="#">2011-12-19 01:38</a>	@WK 鸡精
44	两点全民大会 一位 11 岁小女孩向记者哭诉 WK 冤屈 村民也一同哭了起来 @于建嵘	332	71	<a href="#">2011-12-19 01:33</a>	@WK 鸡精
45	全体默哀	200	57	<a href="#">2011-12-16 10:55</a>	@WK 鸡精
46	@wk 张建兴，我知道今天公安去村里了。你是个男人就不要撒谎，你给我的公开信是不是公安授意你发的？目的是破坏刚刚开始装修的新启蒙乌坎图书馆？村里骨干都知道你和公安很熟。我们两个人对天发誓：谁是汕尾陆丰的线人、谁提供记者特别是境外记者的信息谁就遭雷轰；谁收了汕尾陆丰的线人费谁遭天谴。	602	219	<a href="#">2012-3-20 22:28</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
47	诚心帮助乌坎选举，春节都没有回家，初二就开始工作。没想到乌坎真正的骗子 @WK 张建兴 发公开信诽谤我。说一件事。乌坎村选委会选举时，当地要村党支部确定推荐名单并拟定好，我坚决反对，要求采用自荐与他荐的方式选举选委会，后林祖奎采纳。如果不是我反对，选委会的选举有效吗？后面的选举是否有效？	251	167	<a href="#">2012-3-20 20:06</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
48	有网友攻击我在乌坎选举没发挥作用。说一件事。3 日村委会选举前，选委会决定自荐村主任要有 500 选民联名推荐，副主任 400 人委员 300 人。我指出这样做违反村组法第十五条“选举村民委员会，由登记参加选举的村民直接提名候选人”规定，编写普法文章发给 100 多村民代表，在林祖奎支持下召开村民代表会议纠正	226	101	<a href="#">2012-3-9 19:46</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
49	收藏资料。孔庆东当时支持乌坎村民的微博。 <b>@孔庆东</b> 据香港传媒报道，当局派出近千名军警出动数百军警闯村，欲捉拿维权首领，平定局势，但遭村民鸣锣聚众，以砖头石块击退，警方则发射催泪弹及水炮；村民昨设路障阻警方入村，警方则封村并断水断电断粮，逼村民就范；村民哀叹当局「要逼死人」，吁外界关注救援。   转发(16050) / 评论(2507)	26	11	<a href="#">2012-3-9 10:54</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
50	今晚选举结果，和薛锦波一起被捕的乌坎四君子中的三位@洪锐潮，@wk 张建城，@wk 庄烈宏，均当选。洪为副主任，另两位为委员。另一君子薛锦波长眠地下，死因不明。坐在张建城的摩托车上，建城说：熊老师，你知道我当选后想起了一个人。他落泪了。乌坎，前方的路，艰难而曲折。祝福乌坎！	1131	357	<a href="#">2012-3-4 21:11</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
51	乌坎最新消息，林祖奎当选主任，杨色茂当选副主任。票数有待最后确认。	770	307	<a href="#">2012-3-3 19:05</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
52	乌坎现场。公开唱票有序进行。	644	180	<a href="#">2012-3-3 16:37</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
53	乌坎选举现场。我设计的秘密写票箱，经过一个月的抗争，这次全场使用了。	899	296	<a href="#">2012-3-3 14:49</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
54	请大家转发支持。在乌坎建一座图书馆，其价值不低于帮助一名患病的儿童，为何转发的人会少很多呢？//@健婉：乌坎图书馆 <b>@中国图书网官方微博</b> 支持乌坎百姓，请转发。乌坎对中国农村改革有深远意义。@新启蒙熊伟 12 月 22 日进入乌坎村调查至今，深感村民在维权中对好书的强烈渴求，希望借助微博力量，帮助乌坎村建立一个图书馆。因此您每转发一次本微博，我们将代表您捐赠 1 元码洋图书给新启蒙乌坎图书馆，10 万元封顶（上中国图书网，淘 2 折绝版书）   转发(48296) / 评论(10517)	226	67	<a href="#">2012-3-2 07:00</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
55	丰富乌坎村民的文化活动，提高文化素质，对当今的乌坎，特别重要。现在乌坎迫切需要各类志愿者，如扫盲教育，太极拳教师，群众舞教师，电脑培训，妇女权益保障培训等等，有意者请速和我联系。非常感谢。志愿者，乌坎需要你们。诚请转发。	673	193	<a href="#">2012-2-29 08:33</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
56	乌坎村民要能把握自己的命运，多读书，多学习，提高综合素质，是非常重要的。我和一些朋友正和村民合作创办新启蒙乌坎图书馆，得到各界的大力支持，非常感谢。很多朋友准备向图书馆捐书，只要是正版书即可，邮寄地址：广东省陆丰市东海镇乌坎六村洪锐潮收，邮编 516500.如快递请自付快递费。诚请转发。	705	189	<a href="#">2012-2-28 20:20</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
57	看了环球时报的评论《外媒拔高乌坎选举很蹊跷》，知道确实在混淆黑白。例如评论	1373	392	<a href="#">2012-2-25 21:04</a>	@新启蒙

	说“如果所有村庄都这样公平地选举村委会，全国上下真是巴不得。但前提是，不能每个村庄选举都派武警保障秩序”。派武警看守大门是村民的要求吗？真相是：2月1日的选举，是乌坎村民冲破武警阻挡将香港记者护送进会场。				熊伟
58	昨晚换了村民家睡觉。乌坎选举一天天临近，暗流涌动。昨天村民告诉我，有人在多方了解我的情况，因为我多次指出选举准备中存在的问题，保证了选举的成功。村民说，他们已商量好，要绝对保证我的安全问题，因为政府中有人不希望选举成功。从昨晚起，我每天都会换一个村民家睡觉。真心感谢乌坎村民！	1072	422	<a href="#">2012-2-25 10:11</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
59	乌坎快讯。刚刚结束的乌坎村选举委员会会议，决定2月29日举行候选人演讲大会。乌坎选举采用无候选人选举方式，任何选民都可以报名定职位参选。由于报名的人较多，3日的选举极其可能得票数不过半，已决定4日另行选举（补选）。演讲大会欢迎媒体参加。	818	231	<a href="#">2012-2-24 18:25</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
60	乌坎什么问题解决了？满意的村民的姓名能否公布一下？我不多说了。 <b>@头条新闻</b> <b>【广东政法委书记称民众对乌坎事件处理很满意】</b> 广东政法委书记表示，乌坎事件后，广东省委非常重视，成立专门工作组，由省委副书记任组长解决民众提出的土地问题、账目问题和村领导班子选举问题。百姓对党的政策、对省委的处理办法非常满意。对目前的选举，百姓也非常满意。人民网 <a href="http://t.cn/zO2d2pp">http://t.cn/zO2d2pp</a> <b>  转发(683) / 评论(370)</b>	76	45	<a href="#">2012-2-18 16:57</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
61	看了（关于薛锦波逝世善后工作处理的协议书），只是处理薛锦波遗体问题，没有涉及薛的死因的条款。英雄离世两个多月了，让逝者先入土为安吧。薛的家人和乌坎村民并没有放弃追查锦波死亡真相的要求，仍在努力，请社会各界不要误解。在林祖銓先生的坚持下，“村民诉求合法无罪”写入协议书，还锦波清白。	424	108	<a href="#">2012-2-18 09:52</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
62	正式声明一下，本人所发微博，完全是本人根据自己喜好所发，与乌坎林祖銓先生没有关系，请领导们不要向林先生施压。一直没有搞懂，乌坎选举如果失败，你们能得到什么好处？3月3日的村委会选举，如果按你们的工作计划，肯定失败，你们如何向汪洋先生交差？（这条也会被你们删吗？忠言逆耳。）	906	286	<a href="#">2012-2-15 08:16</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
63	<b>@WK 鸡精</b> 正在张贴温家宝关于村民自治的宣传材料。乌坎村民很关心温家宝的广州关于村民自治的讲话。确实，没有程序民主，就没有实质民主。	688	164	<a href="#">2012-2-10 17:19</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
64	早安，乌坎。明天乌坎就要一人一票选举村民代表，组成乌坎的权力机构村民代表会议。在乌坎的历史上，这是从没有过的，乌坎人民正在创造历史。乌坎村民代表会议如果依法运行，乌坎村将不会再发生个别贪官私自出卖百姓土地而百姓不知情的事情。这，就是乌坎民主选举的价值。让我们共同期待。	450	133	<a href="#">2012-2-10 05:37</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
65	紧急更正。经乌坎村选举委员会决定，乌坎村村民代表选举定于2月11日进行。将以村民小组为单位，以村民会议的形式，一人一票，选举出100多名村民代表，组成村民代表会议，将是乌坎村的主要权力和监督机构，比村委会更重要。原定于2月8日进行，但因时间太紧，工作量太大，改在2月11日进行。	914	281	<a href="#">2012-2-3 10:22</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
66	乌坎选委会的结果已出来，张建城的父亲张水妹得票2069， <b>@洪锐潮的父亲</b> 得票1812票第二名，共11人当选。乌坎村委会的选举进入第二阶段。祝福乌坎人民。一个多月的辛劳没有白费，明天还不能休息，要赶稿子，还文债。	507	204	<a href="#">2012-2-1 23:23</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
67	乌坎喜讯。刚才总监票员杨色茂告诉我，投票率已超过七成。按法律规定，投票率过半选举就有效，选委会成员按简单多数票顺序当选。可以说，乌坎选委会选举基本成功了。祝贺乌坎人民。大概一星期后，将要选举村民代表。初步计划3月1日选村委会。今天，乌坎阳光灿烂，好一个艳阳天！	5083	1494	<a href="#">2012-2-1 15:13</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
68	乌坎这次选举，吸引了不少外媒的关注。	512	147	<a href="#">2012-2-1 11:33</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
69	乌坎村选举会场，新一村的选举分会场由村民自己布置，在会场设立了数十个秘密写票箱，初步保证了写票的秘密性。	566	172	<a href="#">2012-2-1 11:16</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
70	在乌坎，老奶奶领到了选民证，这对她来说，是新事物。选票，是通向基层民主的桥梁，和乌坎村民的土地权益密切相关。	461	175	<a href="#">2012-1-31 18:46</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
71	乌坎村明天一人一票选举村民选委会的选票。明天的选举是选举乌坎村民选举委员会，而不是村委会。选委会很重要，负责主持村民代表、村委会的选举工作。选举采用海选的方法，选举11名选委会成员，可能会出现数千名获选人，对唱票是巨大的挑战。选票设计，有更科学的方法。附图选票我将公章盖住了防伪造	606	218	<a href="#">2012-1-31 11:18</a>	@新启蒙 熊伟
72	明天就要选举了，选举工作千头万绪。上午，乌坎村的小学生志愿者仍在加紧向选票	2615	672	<a href="#">2012-1-31</a>	@新启蒙

	上加盖印章，有 7000 多选民呀。11 点，将要在选举现场培训选举工作人员。			10:52	熊伟
73	12 月 22 日进入乌坎村，我就被这个村迷住了。将乌坎村委会一个月的选举全过程拍摄下来制作成一部能在电视台播放的纪录片，将成为珍贵的历史。为此，发起微博募捐购买一台好摄像机，请博友支持我。工商银行陆丰支行户名熊伟账号 6222022009004296470。捐款信息除捐款人要求保密外将全部公开，并请博友监督	1166	454	2012-1-29 20:22	@新启蒙 熊伟
74	早安。乌坎还很安静，摩托声偶尔响起，应当是早起的人出门了。听得见滴水声，也听得见早起人的响动。公鸡开始打鸣了。不知平静后，蕴藏着什么？昨天下午，传出风声，有人要到村委大院找林祖銮的麻烦，一些年轻人赶到大院门口保卫林叔，巡逻队也加强了戒备。虽是虚惊一场，但这股力量选举日会有动作吗？	628	159	2012-1-28 05:58	@新启蒙 熊伟
75	春节临近，乌坎村民正在换新春联了。和林祖銮先生商量，他也很希望今年的新春联能有宣传村民自治、人大制度、保护土地等新内容。前日和@笑蜀先生商量共同发起为乌坎村民征集新春联的活动，但事多，一直未开展。现在也想征求博友的建议。我胡编了一个：一人一票选代表（村民代表），村民自治喜洋洋。	423	128	2012-1-18 10:21	@新启蒙 熊伟
76	【乌坎村民获得阶段性胜利】上午的省工作组情况通报会，东海镇党委负责人宣布林祖銮担任乌坎村党总支部书记，乌坎村村委会重新选举筹备小组组长，负责领导乌坎村村委会重新选举工作。下一步，乌坎村将按照《村组法》的规定，选举村民选举委员会、村民代表、村委会等。现场村民一片欢腾。赞省工作组一个	4617	1287	2012-1-15 11:50	@新启蒙 熊伟
77	【求助：乌坎新启蒙图书馆需要一台电脑】在乌坎 20 多天，深感乌坎村民对知识、特别是法律知识的渴求。长期的农村调研，也深深理解掌握法律知识对农民依法保护自己合法权益的重要性。一名县委书记曾对我说：农村的落后，关键在于文化的落后。很有道理。图书馆现需要一台台式电脑，请帮助乌坎村民，诚谢。。	308	107	2012-1-13 14:11	@新启蒙 熊伟
78	<a href="http://t.cn/SJmJol">http://t.cn/SJmJol</a> 在这里，读懂乌坎。关注乌坎的朋友必看视频，听听乌坎村民的心声吧。2011 年的最后一夜，和乌坎村民一起迎接新年的到来。大家大声地唱歌，当新年的钟声响起时，大家兴奋地干杯。话题不由自主地谈到薛锦波之死，村民都哭了。我突然发现，薛锦波之死，已成为乌坎村民心中抹不去的阴影	1176	329	2012-1-2 00:04	@新启蒙 熊伟
79	今天是 2012 年第 1 天，也是我进入乌坎村第 11 天。和村民朝夕相处，越来越发现乌坎村民真的很了不起，患难与共的精神强烈体现在他们身上，这保护了他们，免于大的灾难。昨晚和 10 多名乌坎年轻人一起迎接新年钟声，他们说起薛锦波，泣不成声：锦波在另一个冰冷世界，我们不服！高呼：打倒贪官，还我土地！	1307	365	2012-1-1 13:36	@新启蒙 熊伟
80	在今天上午的乌坎村村委换届情况通报会上，乌坎村临时理事会理事长杨色茂受省工作组邀请，上台发言。他说：感谢省工作组支持村民的合理诉求，依法对乌坎村第五届换届选举作出整体无效的处理，我们乌坎村真正的基层民主很快将得到落实。希望尽快使其他诉求早日解决，将乌坎建设成幸福、安定的新乌坎。	969	272	2011-12- 28 11:31	@新启蒙 熊伟
81	乌坎好消息。上午 10 点，省工作组在乌坎村召开“省工作组村委换届选举问题小组情况通报会”，宣布乌坎村第五届村委会换届选举工作违法，村委会、村民代表、村民小组长、副组长选举整体无效，重新选举。广东省组织部领导等参加。在现场，感觉省工作组是有诚意的。村民说：我们不知道村委会是怎么产生的。	1021	259	2011-12- 28 11:03	@新启蒙 熊伟
82	乌坎村民领袖质疑薛锦波死因：1.是否连续审讯 30 多小时；2.播放 11 日上午 7 时至 9 时 53 分的监控录像；3.11 日上午 9 时 53 分看守所将薛锦波送往医院，为何 1 小时 52 分后才到达？4.薛锦波监仓十几个人敲打铁门，为何几十分钟才有人到达？5.11 日早晨约 7 时听到哀叫声，怎么回事？	648	188	2011-12- 26 19:35	@新启蒙 熊伟
83	被关 20 天的乌坎村维权领袖庄烈宏上午也在村民大会讲话，村民热烈鼓掌，他现在成了乌坎村的英雄。他说：我在里面很想念大家，乌坎村要团结起来，把我们村的事情办好。昨天下午和他交流，感觉是一个很朴实的青年。乌坎村土地维权，他出力甚多，无畏不惧。	1805	440	2011-12- 24 11:20	@新启蒙 熊伟
84	上午，乌坎村召开清查土地村民大会。临时理事会根据省委工作组提供的名单，要求村民将自己购买宅基地和建设用地的面积及金额进行登记，配合工作组调查原村委会卖出多少土地及收钱不入帐的情况。村里有大量土地被卖给外人。村民说，我们的土	707	251	2011-12- 24 10:51	@新启蒙 熊伟

	地都被卖光了，我们都不知道。				
85	今天下午，乌坎村被抓的两位村民洪锐潮和庄烈宏回到家，都是取保候审的，但他们都不认罪。洪锐潮是9日中午12点和薛锦波、张建城一起被抓的。洪也被连续审讯30多小时，问有没有和境外势力联系。坐在一条一条不锈钢焊接的凳子上(称为"老虎凳")，坐久了很难受。薛锦波先生是否同等待遇？左为洪锐潮右为庄烈宏。	883	272	<a href="#">2011-12-23 20:10</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
86	乌坎村事件出现重要转机。刚才，下午4点多钟，广东省委副书记、中纪委委员朱明国带领工作组和汕尾、陆丰市负责人来到乌坎村，和村民代表对话，离开时大声宣布：对有打砸行为的参与者和组织者一律不追究责任，对乌坎村事情的处理一定让村民满意，祝愿村民过一个好冬至。在之前广东说是给参与者出路。	5240	1837	<a href="#">2011-12-22 17:08</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
87	我上午已进入乌坎村。省委工作组已到达东海镇，警察已解除对乌坎村的封锁，可以自由出入。村里很平静，村民很友好。镇工作组在村里和村民谈判，村民在等待。见到薛锦波的女儿薛健婉，她在一所学校当小学语文教师，平静、美丽的一位女孩。她说：很感谢大家对她的关心。乌坎问题正在法制的轨道上解决。	1743	558	<a href="#">2011-12-22 14:19</a>	@新启蒙熊伟
88	<b>回@新启蒙熊伟的话</b> 	186	99	<a href="#">2012-3-20 20:42</a>	@张建兴
89	发表了博文《乌坎村民给新启蒙熊伟的一封信》- 尊敬的@新启蒙熊伟老师，乌坎村民从来没有以这种方式对你说过话，但今天看到你新发表的一则微博，乌坎村民必须向您说出久埋心里的一番话。您12 <a href="http://t.cn/zOJjRk">http://t.cn/zOJjRk</a>	1568	670	<a href="#">2012-3-20 13:36</a>	@张建兴
90	今晚，[乌坎第五届村委会第五次村民代表大会]召开，会议座位布置为“圈形”，暂由选委会主任洪天彬主持，会议决定明天早上村民的代表带头对全村街道大扫除、明天下午由村民代表投票选举产生[乌坎村村务监督委员会]，乌坎村委成立后逐步完善的监督机制更好的防止两委、小组长处理事务工作不到位等情况。	122	38	<a href="#">2012-3-6 21:18</a>	@张建兴
91	今天的选举结果，我们都高兴不起来，失去得比得到的多，在共同奋斗的日子，还有我们的薛锦波先生，他今天没有站在我们眼前。大会结束后，林老讲那一番话的时候，我们都在落泪。锦波叔，你知道吗，您的义子张建城、洪锐潮当选村委会成员了，还有您最尊敬的林老，还有其他兄弟姐妹们！我们有今天，我想哭	146	79	<a href="#">2012-3-4 23:43</a>	@张建兴
92	乌坎七"犯罪分子"成立村委会：乌坎第五届村委会重选结束，主任林祖鑫，副主任杨色茂被通缉过，副主任洪锐潮取保候审中，委员张建城、庄烈宏也取保候审中，孙文良、陈素转是前临时代表理事会、妇女会成员，此两机构也属非法。但是，他们在全世界见证下被一人一票推选为领导班子，这是民主，乌坎的民主	551	188	<a href="#">2012-3-4 23:16</a>	@张建兴
93	热烈祝贺乌坎村第五届村委会、村小组长重新选举顺利结束。主任：；林祖鑫；副主任：杨色茂、洪锐潮；委员：庄烈宏、张建城、孙文良、陈素转。这是乌坎几十年来首次民选班子。乌坎的未来，我们寄托在他们身上。	568	197	<a href="#">2012-3-4 20:34</a>	@张建兴
94	发表了博文《民主，正在进行时》- 乌坎！乌坎！全世界的欢笑给你祝福，全世界的歌声唱你成功。我们怀着怎样的心情，去连接普世价值的出口。民主，这不一定最好，但一定不会最坏！迎来日出，送走晚霞。 <a href="http://t.cn/zO5rNMv">http://t.cn/zO5rNMv</a>	314	78	<a href="#">2012-3-4 10:49</a>	@张建兴
95	热烈祝贺林祖鑫成功当选乌坎村委会主任，杨色茂当选副主任，洪锐潮当选副主任候选人，庄烈宏、张建城、陈素转等人当选委员候选人。因成功当选人数不足三人，明天将补选。这结果虽然不是我们预想的那么好，但这就是民主，这就是我们共同前进的荆棘路，我们走得很开心。	727	224	<a href="#">2012-3-3 20:28</a>	@张建兴
96	发表了博文《张建兴--乌坎，挣扎中的民主》- 2月29日，乌坎再次聚集了超过20家媒体，吸引外界眼球的，是乌坎村自广东省委书记汪洋直面乌坎时间以来，再次以2000多人聚集的场面和活灵活现的民主向 <a href="http://t.cn/zOqrLFI">http://t.cn/zOqrLFI</a>	171	66	<a href="#">2012-3-2 09:19</a>	@张建兴
97	昨天，薛锦波的女儿薛健婉去陆丰市「龙山学校」注册上学，向学校申请单亲助学金，而学校以由学校学生作决定而不是政府或校方资助为由推脱，且要求健婉打扫清	237	108	<a href="#">2012-2-29 03:45</a>	@张建兴

	洗教学楼。这是怎么一回事，请龙山中学的同学或领导作解释！				
98	我的微博部分功能用不到了，我希望新浪不要挑拨我与政府目前的关系，你封得了我一个微博，但你封不了我十几个推特和搜狐 25 万粉，11 点之前如未恢复我微博功能，我向外界公开某偷拍视频，看看够不够给力，请考虑。	120	27	<a href="#">2012-2-28 10:02</a>	@张建兴
99	还以为村民会因为选举而出现分化，今天看到国土局针对乌坎的土地管理宣传材料，完全在掩盖自己的罪行，村民有的用火烧，有的撕掉，有的贴出温家宝「耕地一寸不能丢」的宣传材料，见到国土局长又吵又闹，大批村民又开始嚷嚷要再上访。乌坎持续的团结着，他们已经快用尽分化的手段，选举一过，土地来了！	237	78	<a href="#">2012-2-24 18:08</a>	@张建兴
100	这是乌坎人民的手段，这是乌坎人民对某些人架设的巨炮，这是新世纪新青年的新抗争方式，这是乌坎之崛起的伟大工程，我们理直气壮的对“一小撮人、不明真相、境外势力、煽动”等词说不！我们真诚的感谢各国媒体！！	119	34	<a href="#">2012-2-23 00:31</a>	@张建兴
101	今天的代表会议，果然是我博客里写的一样，林老表示：很好，代表们的责任感很强。一记者说：跟美国当时一样，这是活生生的民主。	154	45	<a href="#">2012-2-12 17:24</a>	@张建兴
102	武警严把会场出入口	470	171	<a href="#">2012-2-11 07:57</a>	@张建兴
103	此时此刻，没写完的博文不知如何写下去，只想平静。林老宣布：“...选举结束！”话音刚落，手机显示的时间马上跳转至 0:00，远处的钟声给此次选举画上了一个圆满的句号。也就是说，新的明天，开始了！！一天！我们实现了几十年来的实现不了的梦想！自己拍了选举前前后后全程记录片，几天后面世！！	92	46	<a href="#">2012-2-2 01:19</a>	@张建兴
104	发表了博文《乌坎选举ing》- 历时两年 10 个月零 28 天，乌坎村在一张传单之后开始了一连串的抗争，直至今日，我们高兴的拿着选票，送进投票箱，让公平、公正、公开的选举，民主的选举在我们手上发生，这 <a href="http://t.cn/zOPlv2z">http://t.cn/zOPlv2z</a>	230	77	<a href="#">2012-2-1 14:19</a>	@张建兴
105	乌坎的后备军如此强大，单是一个中学生，说出的话体现他的思绪已经牵扯着家乡的一草一木和国家民生的跟进。林老给予很高的评价。	109	26	<a href="#">2012-1-23 14:38</a>	@张建兴
106	发表了博文《致薛锦波》- 12 月 11 日，你走了，有点匆忙。还记得 11 月 24 日，你在全民大会上说：“我们都不能怕他，哪怕他们拿着机关枪来，我冲前面，要死我先去死，我不怕...”那是我写的演讲稿， <a href="http://t.cn/zOkUpAE">http://t.cn/zOkUpAE</a>	361	111	<a href="#">2012-1-20 15:17</a>	@张建兴
107	我村将实现民主选举，今晚会议，镇副镇长，村党总支人员，村民代表，村民女性代表，乌坎青年，选委会人员等人参加。共同决议关于选举人资格，选前工作，选举日期等工作。现决定在正月初十（2 月 1 日）举行选举。	184	73	<a href="#">2012-1-18 23:46</a>	@张建兴
108	发表了博文《我村乌坎党支部一事》- 2012 年 1 月 15 日。省工作组在通报会上宣布，乌坎党支部成立，党支部书记为林祖銮，其 1964 年参军，1965 年入党，倡导村民理性维权...其条件符合.. <a href="http://t.cn/z0eaMvc">http://t.cn/z0eaMvc</a>	251	83	<a href="#">2012-1-16 22:54</a>	@张建兴
109	目前在微博上见到一个博名为“薛锦波基金会”的东东,这不是我们设立的,也没有他们家属的认同,我们不要受骗,在他家人需要资助的时候,我们会在电视台公开,希望大家帮忙转发,对于这类人,我们严打严查!	281	76	<a href="#">2012-1-2 17:24</a>	@张建兴
110	各位博友，我的微博名 MR 张建兴要改为 WK 张建兴，庄烈宏也已经开微博，博名 <a href="#">@WK 庄烈宏</a> ，希望大家多多支持我们！	146	46	<a href="#">2012-1-1 22:28</a>	@张建兴
111	薛锦波在被抓的时候说出的话：你们要抓就抓我一个人，不要抓他们...我自己会走，不用你们动手...	245	91	<a href="#">2011-12-24 12:24</a>	@张建兴
112	我的兄弟回来了，还有兄弟，已经不在，宏哥，教授用他的生命，换回了你们，换回了乌坎的土地!	147	68	<a href="#">2011-12-23 15:18</a>	@张建兴
113	<a href="#">@地球 OL 攻略专家</a> 进我村予以微博报导，我代表 WK 村民感谢他，但有谣言称他意图骗取钱财，可我并未见其有此心思，在此，我想说，难得各界网友的关注和支持，我们不能随便听取对方意图分化的谣言，一个地区的时事得以传播，离不开博友们的	212	107	<a href="#">2011-12-22 23:37</a>	@张建兴

	广泛关注和支持。在 WK 里，网友的支持对我们起到了极大的作用！				
114	朱书记进入虚设的老人活动中心，空无一人，市杨书记马上说，快去叫点老人进来	252	119	<a href="#">2011-12-22 16:14</a>	@张建兴
115	朱明国在乌坎村与村民见面	262	119	<a href="#">2011-12-22 15:56</a>	@张建兴
116	我哥张建城取保候审，我想说的是，当时抓人，无警车，无警服，无手铐，无拘捕令，48 小时无通知亲属，我哥何罪之有？以这种方式强制减少一个“爱乡人士”吗？如此窝囊？我哥对记者说：现在是取保候审，有些不能说...	232	109	<a href="#">2011-12-22 15:06</a>	@张建兴
117	今天，又是一个 21 日，历经几个世界瞩目的 21 日之后，这个 21 日，WK 村终于取得阶段性胜利，实现村民自治，放人，查尸，无罪。我的心情，无比激动！	695	363	<a href="#">2011-12-21 16:12</a>	@张建兴
118	全世界关注一个农村人	1706	555	<a href="#">2011-12-21 11:09</a>	@张建兴
119	会谈归来	1753	460	<a href="#">2011-12-21 11:06</a>	@张建兴
120	大家自发的出来欢迎工作组，并保护林老先生	294	110	<a href="#">2011-12-21 09:49</a>	@张建兴
121	欢迎中纪委	292	150	<a href="#">2011-12-21 09:35</a>	@张建兴
122	讲话中	190	94	<a href="#">2011-12-20 22:23</a>	@张建兴
123	邻近村 21 位支书，村长表明为友善听取坞坎后面的安排，代表明确表示市俯必须先放入，不然任何商谈机会都没有！	463	189	<a href="#">2011-12-19 12:32</a>	@张建兴
124	邻村 21 个村长、支书进坞坎村与代表商谈，具体商谈事项目前不明...	274	94	<a href="#">2011-12-19 11:22</a>	@张建兴
125	致媒体朋友 	2641	613	<a href="#">2011-12-19 10:05</a>	@张建兴
126	发表了博文《我与乌坎》-我读的书不是很多，我走过的桥也非常少，在家乡需要我的时候，我站了出来... 之前不说，2011 年 10 月 8 日，辞职回到家，饭还没吃，匆忙的赶到林伯家：“我带来 <a href="http://t.cn/SVLMCl">http://t.cn/SVLMCl</a>	503	163	<a href="#">2011-12-19 04:07</a>	@张建兴
127	我们不是起义，我们不是反共，我们不是分裂国家，我们是单纯的土地问题，我是共青团员，我爱党，我爱国，我爱家乡！	802	342	<a href="#">2011-12-19 02:51</a>	@张建兴
128	简单的算了一下，有 20 几家媒体，附近都不够睡，丹麦，芬兰，以色列，新加坡，8 国，TVB，香港不计其数，哇``世界名村-Wu Kan``乌坎	418	124	<a href="#">2011-12-19 02:42</a>	@张建兴
129	他们已经封到高速路口，严密查车，查村民和媒体朋友，要小心！	341	89	<a href="#">2011-12-18 19:50</a>	@张建兴
130	谁有耐心读我的又长又乏的流水帐：<一个微博控的乌坎选举观摩>?转发者立粉。 <a href="http://t.cn/zOJHBnT">http://t.cn/zOJHBnT</a> @WK 鸡精 @WK 张建兴 @WK 庄烈宏 @水土不服洪天彬 @洪锐潮@wk 林淑慧 @WK 吴广霖 @WK 张少娜 @WK 陈素转 @张倩焯 @兔佛 @新启蒙熊伟	98	45	<a href="#">2012-3-21 05:05</a>	@才但猪妈
131	这也是上大学。中断学业的 16 岁乌坎少年@WK 吴广霖 向香港阳光卫视记者请教电影剪辑。围村以后就没有上学的广霖与@WK 鸡精等少年一起在@WK 张建兴 的领导下成为乌坎村围村期间乃至目前选举对外微传播的骨干力量。他准备下学期返回校园，他现在愈加感到学习的需要。	168	37	<a href="#">2012-3-4 18:58</a>	@才但猪妈
132	法新社记者采访乌坎 16 岁少年@WK 鸡精，他通过去年底乌坎封村期间网络信息的对外发布体会到年轻人的责任感，目前是乌坎微博总管，负责在乌坎推广微博宣传。面对记者，这个只上到初一的少年毫不羞怯，沉静应答。	134	57	<a href="#">2012-3-4 15:07</a>	@才但猪妈

133	刘萍在接受完采访后被当地官员礼貌式轰出，约十分钟后又被村民领进来，武警和官员干瞪眼。	126	43	<u>2012-3-4</u> <u>13:31</u>	@才但猪妈
134	林祖鑫先生宣布本次选举有效，同志们辛苦啦！全场雷动。二人当选。	98	28	<u>2012-3-3</u> <u>20:05</u>	@才但猪妈
135	乌坎选举，东京电视台住北京记者正采访帮父母写投完票的小男孩，一旁的老父亲一个劲鼓励大声点。记者的普通话很奇妙。	139	38	<u>2012-3-3</u> <u>10:26</u>	@才但猪妈
136	这位 82 岁的老太太真幸福，第二次参加这样的选举，旁边的小朋友担任她的翻译！呜呼！我白活了 50 多年。	164	53	<u>2012-3-3</u> <u>10:05</u>	@才但猪妈

## Appendix B

Table 2

Weibo accounts	Activist profile	Number of the activist's followers	Number of sample posts	Number of posts with text	Number of posts with both text and image files
@健婉 (Jianwan)	Wukan villager; the daughter of Xue Jinbo who died in the Protest; in her twenties	53704	11	11	0
@WK 鸡精 (WK Jijing)	Wukan villager; the villager who firstly released information about Wukan Protest to the outside world through Weibo; 16 years old	4004	34	34	32
@WK 张兴建 (WK Zhang Jianxing)	Wukan villager; the leader of the micro-blog group in the village; in his twenties	21322	42	42	24
@新启蒙熊伟 (Xinqimeng Xiongwei)	Director of the thinktank Beijing Xinqimeng citizen participation in legislation research center; activist who went to Wukan for field trip; middle-aged	287646	42	42	22
@才但猪妈 (Caidanzhuma)	Grassroots activist who went to Wukan for field trip; middle-aged	1514	7	7	7

## Appendix C

**Table 3: Codes of Weibo posts**

1	Expression of the memory of Xue Jinbo
2	Description of the real cause of Xue jinbo's death
3	Experience of the villagers when they were arrested by the local police
4	Details about the confrontation of the villagers and the local police
5	Confrontation between the activists and the local government
6	Announcement of the nature of Wukan Protest – it's about the agricultural land issue instead of splitting the country
7	Updates about the elections
8	Value of the elections in Wukan
9	Information about the foreign media's work in Wukan
10	Criticism of the reports made by the mainstream media in China about the Protest of Wukan
11	Insights about democracy at the grassroots level in China
12	Ideas and comments about the election process
13	Persuading netizens to participate in the Book Donation Act for Wukan
14	Encouraging netizens to forward their posts
15	Encouraging netizens to pay more attention to Wukan event
16	Persuading everyone to volunteer in Wukan
17	Encouraging netizens to donate for a video camera in order to make a documentary about the Protest of Wukan
18	Encouraging netizens to donate a computer for Wukan library
19	Appreciation of foreign media's reports about the Protest of Wukan
20	Appreciation for those who helped with the elections in Wukan
21	Allegation of collusion of Zhang Jianxing (villager of Wukan) and the local police
22	Refutation of netizen's criticism
23	Collecting spring festival couplets for Wukan villagers act
24	Clarification of the false information
25	Dissatisfaction with the Internet censorship
26	Forwarding post: details about the confrontation of the villagers and the local police
27	Forwarding post: persuading netizens to forward the post in order to help the Book Donation Act in Wukan

## Appendix D

Table 4: Coding units of Internet policies documentation

Coding Units	Examples
Information that subverts the state power and overthrows the socialist system	For the purpose of preserving the security of the State and maintaining social stability, anyone who commits any of the following acts, which constitutes a crime, shall be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Criminal Law: [...] making use of the computer network to spread rumours, libels or publicize or disseminate other harmful information for purpose of whipping up attempts to subvert state power and overthrowing the socialist system ( <i>Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security</i> ).
Information that splits the country and undermines national unity	No unit or individual may use the Internet to create, replicate, retrieve, or transmit the following kinds of information: [...] Inciting division of the country, harming national unification; Inciting hatred or discrimination among nationalities or harming the unity of the nationalities ( <i>Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations</i> ).
Information that destroys social order and social stability	IIS providers shall not produce, reproduce, release, or disseminate information that contains any of the following: [...] Information that disseminates rumors, disturbs social order, or undermines social stability ( <i>Measures for Managing Internet Information Services of People's Republic of China</i> ).
Information that harms the honor and interest of the state	Stealing or divulging State secrets, intelligence or military secrets via the computer network shall be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Criminal Law ( <i>Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security</i> ); No unit or individual may use the Internet to create, replicate, retrieve, or transmit the following kinds of information: [...] Injuring the reputation of state organs ( <i>Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations</i> ).
Information that spreads pornography, gambling, violence, murder, terrorism and other criminal activities	For the purpose of maintaining order of the socialist market economy and ensuring the administration of public order, anyone who commits any of the following acts, which constitutes a crime, shall be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Criminal Law: [...] establishing on the computer network pornographic web sites or web pages, providing services for connecting pornographic web sites, or spreading pornographic books and periodicals, movies, audiovisuals or pictures ( <i>Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security</i> )
Information that promotes cult and superstitious beliefs	Making use of the computer network to form cult organizations or contact members of cult organizations, thus obstructing the implementation of State laws and administrative regulations shall be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Criminal Law ( <i>Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security</i> ) IIS providers shall not produce, reproduce, release, or disseminate information that contains any of the following: [...] Information that undermines the state's policy towards religions, or that preaches the teachings of evil cults or that promotes feudalistic and superstitious beliefs ( <i>Measures for Managing Internet Information Services of People's Republic of China</i> )
Information that damages	Making use of the computer network to jeopardize another person's business

other people's legal rights and interests	<p>credibility and commodity reputation; making use of the computer network to infringe on another person's intellectual property right; making use of the computer network to humiliate another person or to libel another person with fabrications; and in violation of the law, intercepting, tampering with or deleting other persons' emails or other data, thus infringing on citizens' freedom and privacy of correspondence shall be investigated for criminal responsibility in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Criminal Law (<i>Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Preserving Computer Network Security</i>);</p> <p>No unit or individual may use the Internet to create, replicate, retrieve, or transmit the following kinds of information: [...] openly insulting other people or distorting the truth to slander people (<i>Computer Information Network, and Internet Security, Protection, and Management Regulations</i>)</p>
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## Appendix E

Chart 1: Statistical analysis of Internet policies documentations

