



**Panel's title : ... The political participation of the Chinese from China and elsewhere – Online political expression and commitment in authoritarian context**

**Coordinator (Affiliation, University...)** : Simeng Wang (CNRS) and Emilie Frenkiel (Université Paris Est Créteil)

**Language** : English

**Topics** : (Politics, political participation, Migration, China, political expression, authoritarian context)

**Panel presentation :**

In this panel, we study the specificities of public expression and political participation for the Chinese as well as the impact of their more and more intense interaction with the outside world, whether in China, online, or when travelling, studying or working abroad. We investigate the strategies they adopt to express their opinions and participate. In the context of heavy censorship in China, we wish to open this collective discussion to papers studying Chinese citizens residing in Europe. This allows us to test widespread theses of a Chinese “political culture” and its supposed incompatibility with democratic practices. Our main objective is to investigate upward forms of participation and how Chinese youths or youths of Chinese descent navigate – especially online – between different political environments with a more or less critical stance as regards the authorities. This panel also focuses on the governments’ response to these various forms of participation. Last of all, this panel is a contribution to larger debates on the question: how to be a political scientist and a sociologist in authoritarian context, with a controversial use of statistical sources, limited access to official, institutional and private archives and available sources in the public sphere, specific interview and observation conditions and discursive tactics.

**Key words** : Politics, political participation, Migration, China, political expression, authoritarian context

**Participants :**

**Name(s) (Affiliation, University...)** : **Séverine Arsène**

Ph.D in Political Science, Chief editor of China Perspectives at CEFC - Hong Kong

**Communication's title** : **Online public opinion and the new order of the Chinese regime**

**Language** : English

**Presentation :**

This article relates the doctrines on online public opinion formulated by the Chinese authorities from the late 1990s until today. Through these doctrines, one can analyse the choice of the Hu administration to use a duly channelled online public opinion to set up a technocratic government, and to instrumentalize it to discipline the Chinese bureaucracy. More recently, censorship of online public opinion was more openly justified, in line with the movement of concentration of power by president Xi Jinping, and with his more conservative policy in the media sector.



Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : **Simeng Wang**

Ph.D in Sociology, Research Fellow at The French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)

**Communication's title : Political expression of migrants: case of young qualified Chinese in Paris**

**Language** : English

**Presentation :**

Studying migrants' expression of political opinion in different national spaces allows to observe the impact of the political context in which the individual lives on his or her political participation. Based on both observations and semi-structured interviews, this communication aims to show the ways in which the new generation of Chinese overseas elites associate political topics emerging in their host society to political events of their society of origin. In other words, how Chinese youth navigate, especially online, between different political environments – authoritarian, democratic, participatory, etc. – and express and involve themselves in politics, with a more or less critical attitude towards power. An analysis of the ascending forms of participation referred to differentiated political contexts, this paper will also examine the role played by this globalized Chinese youth in political participation.

Name(s) (Affiliation) : **Emilie Frenkiel**

Ph. D in Political Science, Associate Professor at Université Paris Est Créteil

**Communication's title : ..... Hacking to further democratic participation and deliberation in Taiwan**

**Language** : English

**Presentation :**

In April 2014, the Taiwanese Parliament was occupied for 3 weeks as students objected to the closed-door negotiations the Guomintang had led with China resulting in a comprehensive cross-strait trade agreement. In the wake of this Occupy movement entitled the Sunflower movement, a group of civic hackers have gained momentum in their endeavour to force the Taiwanese government to be more transparent and to provide convenient tools for common citizens to get involved and participate in law-making. This paper is focused on a prominent member of gov, Audrey Tang, and her trajectory from self-taught teenage start-up entrepreneur to minister in charge of digital affairs since October 1<sup>st</sup>. Based on a series of in-depth interviews, my study will focus on her efforts to create online deliberation platforms which are now in the process of being institutionalized. I will examine the weight of the looming rising People's Republic of China on the Taiwanese youth's urge to reflect on the meaning of democracy and to further democratize their country.



**Name(s) (Affiliation) : Nolwenn Salmon**

Ph. D candidate in Chinese Studies, INALCO and ENS Lyon

**Communication's title : Mobilization in environmental claims: has public opinion become an agenda settler?**

**Language : English**

**Presentation :**

In this article I aim to explain how Chinese citizens have managed to gain influence on the political agenda during the Hu Jintao's era. By examining the beginning of one of the major recent social mobilizations, the PM2.5 air quality campaign, I explain the different steps of the movement, the role played by the main stakeholders and the kinds of action they used in order to explain how and in which condition a mobilization can develop and successfully pressure local and national governments into responding to the public demand thus modifying their initial political agenda. This analysis helps to understand the degree of the government responsiveness and to discuss how Chinese citizens can use the Internet in order to take part in the political decision-making process, drawing in the same way the line between acceptable and unacceptable claims. It is also a way to understand how the internet has played a crucial role in awakening the awareness of citizens to air pollution and what the internet can and cannot reveal about the reaction of citizens to the degradation of their living environment.

**Tao Hong**

Ph. D candidate in Information and Communication Sciences, University Paris-VIII

**Communication's title : Being a student activist in Authoritarian China**

**Language : English**

**Presentation :**

This article seeks to understand the dynamics of student activism in contemporary China through the lenses of two "successful" collective actions initiated by university students, respectively related to food safety and LGBT issues. After a brief outline of the control mechanisms enacted by the Party-State through university campuses, I'll tackle both the question of "how do students mobilize" by investigating the exact circumstances and process of the two mobilizations, and the question of "why do students mobilize" by analyzing biographical information and discourses of their respective protagonist. Drawing on these observations, I offer two broad arguments concerning student activism in China. First, the authoritarian setting imposes not only practical, but also normative constraints on student activism for it threatens the very legitimacy of collective action, and as a consequence, to engage in collective action means negotiating and confronting both constraints. Second and accordingly, the process of socialization contributing to student activists' civic and political awakening plays a great role in shaping their vision of civic engagement. Born ten years apart, our two protagonists' got into activism through distinct routes and this has a direct bearing on their activism. This finding suggests that the changing context of associational lives in China, characterized in the past two decades or so by the rise of the Internet and grassroots associations, constitutes an essential structural element to be accounted for if we wish to gain a better understanding of student activism in contemporary China.



**Zhe Deng**

Ph. D in Public Management, Lecturer in Student's Affairs Office, Tsinghua University

**Communication's title : Local Officials' Tenure, Online-age and Tweeting: An Empirical Study on 98 Local officials' Microblogs**

**Language :** English

**Presentation :**

Effective interaction and communication has direct influence upon the sense of trust and support towards the administration and officials. The State Council has issued a document to encourage "to actively explore and utilize new media such as microblogs, wechat, etc....to interact and communicate with the People in good time and in good way." However, the interactive behavior and their effectiveness of the government official's microblogs varies a lot in the authoritarian context. Therefore this essay is to explain: the influence of tenure and online-age upon the tweeting behaviour of 98 local officials and local party secretaries, and how they work. The major findings of this study include: 98 local official's tenure and online age influence their behaviour of conversation process through the microblogs in a U-shape and an inverted U-shape respectively.