

*Movement–Press Dynamics and News Diffusion: A Typology of Activism in Digital China**

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Abstract

By bridging the news diffusion perspective with collective action studies, this article examines how collective action stories flow between websites and how such diffusion trajectories are shaped by the nature of protests and the institutional features of Chinese media. We first propose a dynamic typology to map China's activism in the digital era within two dimensions: action logic (collective versus connective) and event entrepreneurs (with versus without). We then analyze the news trajectories of three prominent cases and find a strong association between the nature of collective action and state-media interactions. When event entrepreneurs—sympathetic elites such as journalists, lawyers, academics, and netizens—compete to narrate the reality through a protest, political control serves as the dominant mechanism of movement–press dynamics. As activism moves from collective logic toward connective action, the influence of journalistic professionalism on news trajectories can be seen. This study offers a contextualized account to understand the nuanced dynamics between the state, the media, and social movements, and it also presents a framework for analyzing how activism plays out in China in the digital era.

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*This research was fully supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (Project No. CityU 11406014). Earlier versions were presented at the International Association of Media and Communication Research annual meeting and the American Sociological Association annual meeting.