

At 2 am on the 23rd, January, 2020, authorities issued a notice informing residents of Wuhan that from 10 am, all public transport, including buses, railways, flights, and ferry services would be suspended. Basically, the lockdown of Wuhan consisted of two parts: 1) shutting down all transportation connecting Wuhan and other cities, including but not limited to, airport, railway station, and highways; and 2) suspending all internal transportation within the city, such as subways and buses. The second part of the policy is more contentious. For a majority of residents, commuting and essential behaviors become rather difficult to perform. Especially as the government provided no alternative solutions when the lockdown was announced, the anger of a majority was intensified the night of the policy implementation.

In my paper, I am interested investigating who is more visible in the context of a forceful, yet arbitrary lockdown? Whose needs, desires, and struggles are responded and whose ignored? What kinds of needs are prioritized over others? Through what means are they present and visible, and to what ends? Also, at a time when a distrust towards the government is intensified, how did a variety of the less visible, yet highly sophisticated networks of localized cooperation (alumni associations, fan communities, and such) emerge on existing digital platforms (for example, Weibo and Wechat) and became the means through which people make themselves more visible and their needs fulfilled when the government fell short?