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Go

[ABOUT](#) | [UNDERGRADUATE](#) | [GRADUATE](#) | [PEOPLE](#) | [RESEARCH](#) | [WORKING PAPERS](#)

[NEWS & EVENTS](#) | [VIDEOS](#) | [CONTACT](#) | [SUPPORT](#)



[Faculty](#) | [Affiliates](#) | [Staff](#) | [Visitors](#) | [Graduate Students](#)



## FACULTY | LILY L. TSAI

**Lily L. Tsai** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at MIT. Her research focuses on issues of accountability, governance, and political participation in developing countries with a particular emphasis on Chinese politics. Her book, *Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China*, was published in Cambridge University's Studies on Comparative Politics and received the 2007-08 Dogan Award from the Society of Comparative Research for the best book published in the field of comparative research. Tsai has also published articles in *The American Political Science Review*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *The China Quarterly*, and *The China Journal*. Tsai is a graduate of Stanford University, where she graduated with honors and distinction in English literature and international relations. She received a M.A. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in government from Harvard University in 2004. She is the recipient of

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fellowships from the Fulbright program and the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies.

## **Research**

### **Governance, accountability, and public goods provision**

Using both quantitative and qualitative data, my research seeks to identify the factors that lead to better governmental performance and accountability for the provision of public goods and services such as education and basic infrastructure in developing countries. Such factors include processes of decentralization, the implementation of democratic reforms, informal institutions and nongovernmental actors, and economic development.

### **Social capital and civil society**

Scholars and policymakers often argue for the promotion of civil society and social capital as necessary for development and democratic consolidation. My research suggests that different types of social capital and social groups – including those that link state and nonstate actors – may have positive as well as negative impacts on social and political outcomes.

### **Political attitudes and behavior in nondemocratic and transitional systems**

Using a variety of approaches – survey research, case studies, in-depth interviews with individuals, and field experimentation – I seek to understand how and when relatively powerless individuals in developing countries and transitional political systems decide to participate in

politics and articulate their interests.

## **Recent Publications**

"Friends or Foes? Nonstate Public Goods Providers and Local State Authorities in Nondemocratic and Transitional Systems," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, January 2011.

"Quantitative Research and Issues of Political Sensitivity in Rural China," in *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies*, edited by Allen Carlson, Mary Gallagher, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Melanie Manion, Cambridge University Press, July 2010.

"Understanding the Falsification of Village Income Statistics," *The China Quarterly*, 196, December 2008.

*Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China* (Cambridge Studies on Comparative Politics, Cambridge University Press, 2007). Winner of the 2007-08 Dogan Award from the Society of Comparative Research for the best book published in the field of comparative research.

"Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China", *American Political Science Review*, vol.101, no.2 (May 2007), pp.355-372.

## **Subjects**

17.850 Graduate Scope and Methods  
17.869 Political Science: Scope and

Methods

17.905 Forms of Participation: Old  
and New

17.952 The Rise of the Modern State

17.955 Civil Society, Social Capital &  
the State in Comparative Perspective

17.962 Second-Year Paper Seminar



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