How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument

Gary King

Institute for Quantitative Social Science
Harvard University

Duke University, Machine Learning Seminar, 3/1/2017

1 Based on joint work with Jennifer Pan (Stanford) and Margaret Roberts (UCSD)
2 GaryKing.org
Papers

Empirical Results:

How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (APSR)

Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (Science)

How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (Today's talk; in press, APSR)

Automated Text Analysis Methods:

General Purpose Computer-Assisted Clustering and Conceptualization (PNAS)

A Method of Automated Nonparametric Content Analysis for Social Science (AJPS)

Computer-Assisted Keyword and Document Set Discovery from Unstructured Text (in press, AJPS)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Empirical Results:

Copies at GaryKing.org
Papers

- **Empirical Results:**
  - How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (APSR)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Empirical Results:

- How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSRE*)
- Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Papers

**Empirical Results:**
- How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSR*)
- Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)
- How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today’s talk; in press, APSR*)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Papers

- **Empirical Results:**
  - How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSR*)
  - Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)
  - How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today’s talk; in press, APSR*)

- **Automated Text Analysis Methods:**

Copies at GaryKing.org
Papers

- **Empirical Results:**
  - How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSR*)
  - Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)
  - How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today’s talk; in press, APSR*)

- **Automated Text Analysis Methods:**
  - General Purpose Computer-Assisted Clustering and Conceptualization (*PNAS*)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Empirical Results:

- How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSR*)
- Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)
- How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today’s talk; in press, APSR*)

Automated Text Analysis Methods:

- General Purpose Computer-Assisted Clustering and Conceptualization (*PNAS*)
- A Method of Automated Nonparametric Content Analysis for Social Science (*AJPS*)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Empirical Results:

- How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression (*APSR*)
- Reverse Engineering Chinese Censorship (*Science*)
- How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today’s talk; in press, APSR*)

Automated Text Analysis Methods:

- General Purpose Computer-Assisted Clustering and Conceptualization (*PNAS*)
- A Method of Automated Nonparametric Content Analysis for Social Science (*AJPS*)
- Computer-Assisted Keyword and Document Set Discovery from Unstructured Text (*in press, AJPS*)

Copies at GaryKing.org
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

What Could be the Goal?

Stop collective action

Right

Implications: Social Media is Actionable!

Chinese leaders: measure criticism: to judge local officials censor: to stop events with collective action potential

Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:

Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced

Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)

Government action outside the Internet

Dissidents to be arrested; peace treaties to sign; emerging scandals

Disagreements between central and local leaders
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

What Could be the Goal?

Stop collective action

Chinese leaders: measure criticism: to judge local officials
censor: to stop events with collective action potential

Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:

Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
Government action outside the Internet
Dissidents to be arrested; peace treaties to sign; emerging scandals
Disagreements between central and local leaders
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:
  Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies \textit{Wrong}
- What Could be the Goal?
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- *E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:* Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- **What Could be the Goal?**
  - 1. Stop criticism of the state
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state
  2. Stop collective action
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state **Wrong**
  2. Stop collective action

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders: measure criticism: to judge local officials; censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  - Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
    - Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
    - Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
    - Government action outside the Internet
    - Dissidents to be arrested; peace treaties to sign; emerging scandals
    - Disagreements between central and local leaders
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**
- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state **Wrong**
  2. Stop collective action **Right**
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**
- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state **Wrong**
  2. Stop collective action **Right**
- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state **Wrong**
  2. Stop collective action **Right**

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- What Could be the Goal?
  - 1. Stop criticism of the state *Wrong*
  - 2. Stop collective action *Right*

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state *Wrong*
  2. Stop collective action *Right*

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- **E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:**
  Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- **What Could be the Goal?**
  1. Stop criticism of the state *Wrong*
  2. Stop collective action *Right*

- **Implications: Social Media is Actionable!**
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  
  Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- **E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:** Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- **What Could be the Goal?**
  1. Stop criticism of the state *Wrong*
  2. Stop collective action *Right*

- **Implications: Social Media is Actionable!**
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  - Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
    - Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship:
Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies Wrong

What Could be the Goal?
1. Stop criticism of the state Wrong
2. Stop collective action Right

Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
Chinese leaders:
- measure criticism: to judge local officials
- censor: to stop events with collective action potential

Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
- Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
- Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies *Wrong*

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state *Wrong*
  2. Stop collective action *Right*

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  - Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
    - Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
    - Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
    - Government action outside the Internet
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies **Wrong**

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state **Wrong**
  2. Stop collective action **Right**

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  - Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
    - Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
    - Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
    - Government action outside the Internet
    - Dissidents to be arrested; peace treaties to sign; emerging scandals
Summary of Our Prior Work on Censorship

- E.g., Everyone knows the goal of censorship: Stop criticism, protest, & collective action about the state, its leaders, and their policies \textit{Wrong}

- What Could be the Goal?
  1. Stop criticism of the state \textit{Wrong}
  2. Stop collective action \textit{Right}

- Implications: Social Media is Actionable!
  - Chinese leaders:
    - measure criticism: to judge local officials
    - censor: to stop events with collective action potential
  
  Thus, we can use criticism & censorship to predict:
  - Officials in trouble, likely to be replaced
  - Policies that generate dissent (& interest of leaders)
  - Government action outside the Internet
  - Dissidents to be arrested; peace treaties to sign; emerging scandals
  - Disagreements between central and local leaders
Censorship Reveals Government Goals
Censorship Reveals Government Goals

Ai Weiwei arrested
Censorship Reveals Government Goals

Collective Support for Environmental Lottery

Count

Count Published

Count Censored

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul
Censorship Reveals Government Goals

![Graph showing Speculation of Policy Reversal at NPC over time](image)

- **Speculation of Policy Reversal at NPC**
  - Count Published
  - Count Censored
Censorship Reveals Government Goals

Power shortages
Gov't raises
d power prices
to curb demand
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Does not argue; does not engage on controversial issues
- Distracts; redirects public attention from criticism and central issues to cheerleading and positive discussions of valence issues
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants:
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies.
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies

  It’s antidisestablishmentarianism!
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies

Evidence?
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: *50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies*

  Evidence? A few anecdotes;
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies

Evidence? A few anecdotes; “no ground truth”;
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies.

Evidence? A few anecdotes; “no ground truth”; “no successful attempts to quantify” 50c party activity;
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: **50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies**

  **Evidence?** A few anecdotes; “no ground truth”; “no successful attempts to quantify” 50c party activity; even several analyses with made up dependent variables!
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies. **Wrong**
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies. **Wrong**
- Does not argue; does not engage on controversial issues
Goal of China’s 50c Party

- Prevailing view of scholars, activists, journalists, social media participants: 50c party argues with & debates against those who criticize the government, its leaders, and their policies Wrong
- Does not argue; does not engage on controversial issues
- Distracts; redirects public attention from criticism and central issues to cheerleading and positive discussions of valence issues
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

Leaked emails: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)

Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts

On the web, but overlooked and ignored

Large, unstructured, messy data → systematized (hard to do!)

2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)

1,245 contained 50c posts

43,797 known 50c cent posts

Survey 1: 50c party members

“Survey” 2: the Chinese regime

6/16
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails:** Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails**: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails**: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- Leaked emails: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails:** Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data \(\leadsto\) systematized (*hard to do!*)

---

6/16
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails**: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data ⟷ systematized (*hard to do!*)
    - 2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails:** Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data \(\rightsquigarrow\) systematized (*hard to do!*)
    - 2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)
    - 1,245 contained 50c posts
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails**: Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data → systematized (*hard to do!*)
    - 2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)
    - 1,245 contained 50c posts
    - 43,797 known 50c cent posts
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails:** Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data \(\rightsquigarrow\) systematized (*hard to do!*)
    - 2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)
    - 1,245 contained 50c posts
    - 43,797 known 50c cent posts

- **Survey 1:** 50c party members
First Systematic Evidence on China’s 50c Party

- **Leaked emails:** Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Office (网宣办)
  - Workers claiming credit for their 50c posts
  - On the web, but overlooked and ignored
  - Large, unstructured, messy data ≈ systematized (*hard to do!*)
    - 2,341 emails (covering 2013 & 2014)
    - 1,245 contained 50c posts
    - 43,797 known 50c cent posts

- **Survey 1:** 50c party members
- **“Survey” 2:** the Chinese regime
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

Who is posting?

Prevailing view: ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post

In fact: 99.3% of posts made by >200 government offices

No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments; probably part of their jobs
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

Who is posting?

Prevailing view: ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post

In fact: 99.3% of posts made by >200 government offices

No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments; probably part of their jobs
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

Who is posting?

- Prevailing view: ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post
- In fact: 99.3% of posts made by 200 government offices
- No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments; probably part of their jobs
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

- Who is posting?
  - **Prevailing view:**
    ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

- Who is posting?
  - **Prevailing view:** ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post
  - **In fact:** 99.3% of posts made by >200 government offices

No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments; probably part of their jobs.
The Zhanggong Internet Propaganda Operation

Who is posting?

- **Prevailing view:** ordinary citizens getting paid 50c to make each post
- **In fact:** 99.3% of posts made by >200 government offices
- **No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments; probably part of their jobs**
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories
  - "readme," Hopkins & King 2010

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  - Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  - Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  - Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists)
    - Ordinary (59%)
    - Exclusive (41%)

- Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
  - ≤ 10 followers

- Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts

- Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across **5 categories** ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism

Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
Leaked Zhanggong weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%) Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo ≤ 10 followers
Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China

8/16
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting

Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
2. Leaked Zhanggong weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists)
   → Ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
   🤝 Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
   🤝 ≤ 10 followers
4. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
5. Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:

1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
4. Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo → ≤ 10 followers
5. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
6. Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across **5 categories** ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
  4. Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo ≤ 10 followers
  5. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
  6. Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across **5 categories** ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:

1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
2. Leaked Zhanggong weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
4. Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo ≤ 10 followers
5. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
6. Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
8/16
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting (our evidence)
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:

Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
Leaked Zhanggong weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists):

- Ordinary: 59%
- Exclusive: 41%
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories (“readme,” Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting (our evidence)
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts

Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting (our evidence)
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists)
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%)
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
      - Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- **Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories** ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- **Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:**
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into *ordinary* (59%) & *exclusive* (41%)
     - Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
     - ≤ 10 followers
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
     - Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
     - ≤ 10 followers
  4. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
Categories and Analyses of 50c Party Posts

- Estimate distribution of posts across 5 categories ("readme," Hopkins & King 2010)
  - Taunting of foreign countries (prevailing view)
  - Argumentative praise or criticism
  - Non-argumentative praise or suggestions
  - Factual reporting
  - Cheerleading

- Separate analyses — from Zhanggong to China:
  1. Leaked Zhanggong 50c posts: 43,797 posts
  2. Leaked Zhanggong 50c weibo accounts: 167,971 posts
  3. Partition accounts for extrapolation (using Bayesian falling rule lists) into ordinary (59%) & exclusive (41%)
    - Accounts that engage with Zhanggong weibo
    - ≤ 10 followers
  4. Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
  5. Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

- Leaked e-mails, all sites
- Argumentative Praise or Criticism
- Taunting of Foreign Countries
- Cheerleading
- Factual Reporting
- Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions

Proportion
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

![Graph showing the content of leaked 50c Party posts. The graph includes categories such as Leaked e-mails, all sites, Leaked accounts, Weibo, Argumentative Praise or Criticism, Taunting of Foreign Countries, Cheerleading, Factual Reporting, Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions.](image-url)
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

- Leaked e-mails, all sites
- Leaked accounts, Weibo
- Leaked accounts, ordinary

Proportion

Cheerleading

Argumentative Praise or Criticism

Taunting of Foreign Countries

Factual Reporting

Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

- Leaked e-mails, all sites
- Leaked accounts, Weibo
- Leaked accounts, ordinary
- Leaked accounts, exclusive

Proportion

- Cheerleading
- Argumentative Praise or Criticism
- Taunting of Foreign Countries
- Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions
- Factual Reporting
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

- Leaked e-mails, all sites
- Leaked accounts, Weibo
- Leaked accounts, ordinary
- Leaked accounts, exclusive
- Within county prediction, all posts

- Cheerleading
- Argumentative Praise or Criticism
- Taunting of Foreign Countries
- Factual Reporting
- Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions
Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

- Leaked e-mails, all sites
- Leaked accounts, Weibo
- Leaked accounts, ordinary
- Leaked accounts, exclusive
- Within county prediction, all posts
- Out of county prediction

Legend:
- Cheerleading
- Argumentative Praise or Criticism
- Taunting of Foreign Countries
- Non-argumentative Praise or Suggestions
- Factual Reporting
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China:
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: $>80.4\ B$
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: >80.4 B
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong:
Number of social media posts in China: >80.4 B
Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: >80.4 B
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province:
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: $>80.4 \times 10^9$
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province: 10.65 M
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: \( \geq 80.4 \text{ B} \)
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province: 10.65 M
- Number of 50c Posts in China:
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: $>80.4$ B
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province: 10.65 M
- Number of 50c Posts in China: 448 M
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: \( >80.4 \text{ B} \)
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province: 10.65 M
- Number of 50c Posts in China: 448 M
  - 53% on government sites (a noticeable proportion of all)
Size of the 50c Party (in 2013)

- Number of social media posts in China: >80.4 B
- Number of 50c Posts in Zhanggong: 154,216
- Number of 50c Posts in Jiangxi Province: 10.65 M
- **Number of 50c Posts in China:** 448 M
  - 53% on government sites (a noticeable proportion of all)
  - 47% on commercial sites (1 of every 178 posts)
43,797 Zhanggong 50c Posts: Highly Coordinated
43,797 Zhanggong 50c Posts: Highly Coordinated

1. Qingming festival (April)
2. China Dream (May)
3. Shanshan riots (July)
4. 3rd plenum CCP 18th Congress (Nov)
5. Two meetings (Feb)
6. Urumqi rail explosion (May)
7. Gov’t forum, praise central subsidy (Jul–Aug)
8. Martyr’s Day (Oct)

Coordinated bursts, many for events with collective action potential. A clear measure of government intent.
Coordinated bursts, many for events with collective action potential
Coordinated bursts, many for events with collective action potential
A clear measure of government intent.
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions?

Let's ask them(!)

Not your optimal survey respondents:

Their job:
to intentionally
mislead
about the subject of the survey
Take orders from an
uncompromising government

Their employer:
The government

Potentially at stake:
their job, or more

The Survey:
Random sample
of predicted 50c accounts
Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
Carefully study local social media context
Administer
double blind
survey via direct messaging
Specially designed, pre-tested survey question:
"I saw your comment,
it's really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion
guidance management, or online commenting experience?"

Validating the Validation
Ask same question of random sample of
known
50c (from Zhanggong)
Ask same question of accounts
known not to be
50c
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

Not your optimal survey respondents:
- Their job: intentionally mislead, about the subject of the survey
- Take orders from an uncompromising government

Their employer: The government

Potentially at stake: their job, or more

The Survey:
- Random sample of predicted 50c accounts
- Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
- Carefully study local social media context
- Administer double blind survey via direct messaging
- Specially designed, pre-tested survey question:
  “I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?”

Validating the Validation
- Ask same question of random sample of known 50c (from Zhanggong)
- Ask same question of accounts known not to be 50c
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions?
Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:

  - Their job:
    - to intentionally misleading
    - about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an uncompromising government

  - Their employer:
    - The government

  - Potentially at stake:
    - their job, or more

The Survey:
- Random sample of predicted 50c accounts
- Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
- Carefully study local social media context
- Administer double blind survey via direct messaging
- Specially designed, pre-tested survey question:
  
  "I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?"

Validating the Validation
- Ask same question of random sample of known 50c (from Zhanggong)
- Ask same question of accounts known not to be 50c
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job:

  - to intentionally mislead about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an uncompromising government

Their employer: The government

Potentially at stake: their job, or more

The Survey:

- Random sample of predicted 50c accounts
- Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
- Carefully study local social media context
- Administer double blind survey via direct messaging
- Specially designed, pre-tested survey question:
  "I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?"

Validating the Validation

- Ask same question of random sample of known 50c (from Zhanggong)
- Ask same question of accounts known not to be 50c
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*,

```
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions?
Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their employer: The government
  - Potentially at stake: their job, or more

- The Survey:
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- **The Survey:**
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more
- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
  - Specially designed, pre-tested survey question:
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
  - Specially designed, pre-tested survey question: “*I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?”*
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their *employer*: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
  - Specially designed, pre-tested survey question: “*I saw your comment, it's really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?*”

- Validating the Validation
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions?
Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their employer: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
  - Specially designed, pre-tested survey question: “I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?”

- Validating the Validation
  - Ask same question of random sample of *known* 50c (from Zhanggong)
How Can We Validate 50c Party Membership Predictions? Let’s ask them(!)

- Not your optimal survey respondents:
  - Their job: to intentionally *mislead*, about the subject of the survey
  - Take orders from an *uncompromising government*
  - Their **employer**: The government
  - *Potentially at stake*: their job, or more

- The Survey:
  - *Random sample* of predicted 50c accounts
  - Follow extensive literature on asking sensitive questions
  - Carefully study local social media context
  - Administer *double blind* survey via direct messaging
  - Specially designed, pre-tested survey question: *“I saw your comment, it’s really inspiring, I want to ask, do you have any public opinion guidance management, or online commenting experience?”*

- Validating the Validation
  - Ask same question of random sample of *known* 50c (from Zhanggong)
  - Ask same question of accounts *known not to be* 50c
Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known &quot;Not&quot; 50c</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50c Status</td>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Percent Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known “Not” 50c</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known “Not” 50c</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known “Not” 50c</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

not significantly different
## Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50c Status</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Percent Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted 50c</td>
<td>Across China</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known 50c</td>
<td>Leaked Zhanggong Archive</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known “Not” 50c</td>
<td>Random sample</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significantly different*
Validation by the Chinese Government

The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled Global Times:

- Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
- Admits to the existence of the 50c party
- Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
- Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
- Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential

≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”

Why would they do this?

Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!

Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%

Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%

Results indicate:
- figures are accurate,
- the regime has a problem
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues...
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled Global Times:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions

Why would they do this?

Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’”

— a testable hypothesis!

Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%

Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%

Results indicate:

- figures are accurate,
- the regime has a problem
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled Global Times:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- $\approx$ posing a survey question to the government,
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \( \approx \) posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?”
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \( \approx \) posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government,
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said:
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’ ”
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ positing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
Private sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last

The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
- Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
- Admits to the existence of the 50c party
- Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
- Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
- Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential

≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”

Why would they do this?
- Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
- Supportive comments on the nationalist website:
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \(\approx\) posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
  - Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \approx\ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
  - Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
  - Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo:
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \( \approx \) posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’ ” — a testable hypothesis!
  - Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
  - Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ≈ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
  - Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
  - Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%
  - Results indicate:
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled *Global Times*:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- \(\approx\) posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”
- Why would they do this?
  - Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
  - Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
  - Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%
  - Results indicate: figures are accurate,
Validation by the Chinese Government

- Privately sharing draft paper among colleagues... does not last
- The Chinese government responds with an editorial in the nationalist, CCP-controlled Global Times:
  - Published only in Chinese, revealing a focus only on their own people
  - Admits to the existence of the 50c party
  - Confirms veracity of our leaked archive
  - Summarizes our results, takes no issue with any of our conclusions
  - Acknowledges the purpose of public opinion guidance is to stop the spread of “grassroots social issues” with collective action potential
- ∼ posing a survey question to the government, “Do you agree with our results?” And the government, effectively said: “yes”

Why would they do this?
- Editorial: “Chinese society is generally in agreement regarding the necessity of ‘public opinion guidance’” — a testable hypothesis!
- Supportive comments on the nationalist website: 82%
- Supportive posts on (more representative) Weibo: 30%
- Results indicate: figures are accurate, the regime has a problem
Theoretical Implications

For China:
- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:
- Scholars have thought autocrats want to
- ↓
  - common knowledge of grievances
  - ⇝
  - ↑
    - cost of coordination
- We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
  - Grievances (allowed)
    - no problem, already well known
  - Collective action (not allowed)
    - big problem, emergency action required
- Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

For future research:
- When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

For China:

- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism

- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action

- Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:

Scholars have thought autocrats want to:

↓ common knowledge of grievances
⇝ cost of coordination
↑

We find: China has two versions of common knowledge:

- Grievances (allowed) - no problem, already well known
- Collective action (not allowed) - big problem, emergency action required

Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

For future research:

When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to achieve common knowledge of grievances, but this can increase the cost of coordination. We find that China has two versions of common knowledge: grievances (allowed) with no problem, already well known, and collective action (not allowed) which is a big problem, requiring emergency action.
  - Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does.

- For future research:
  - When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism

- For authoritarian regimes:
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
  - common knowledge of grievances
  - \( \Rightarrow \)
  - cost of coordination
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
    - Grievances (allowed)
      - no problem, already well known
    - Collective action (not allowed)
      - big problem, emergency action required
  - Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

- For future research:
  - When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
Theoretical Implications

For China:

- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action

- For authoritarian regimes:

  Scholars have thought autocrats want to
  ↓
  common knowledge of grievances
  ⇝
  ↑
  cost of coordination

  We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
  - Grievances (allowed)
    - no problem, already well known
  - Collective action (not allowed)
    - big problem, emergency action required

For future research:

When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action

- **For authoritarian regimes:**

  Scholars have thought autocrats want to:

  >> common knowledge of grievances

  ⇝ cost of coordination

  We find: China has two versions of common knowledge

  - Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
  - Collective action (not allowed) big problem, emergency action required

- **For future research:**

  When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

**For China:**

- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

**For authoritarian regimes:**

Scholars have thought autocrats want to common knowledge of grievances \( \Rightarrow \) cost of coordination

We find: China has two versions of common knowledge

- Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
- Collective action (not allowed) big problem, emergency action required

Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

**For future research:**

When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - common knowledge of grievances
Theoretical Implications

For China:
- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:
- Scholars have thought autocrats want to
  - common knowledge of grievances $\sim$ cost of coordination
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - down common knowledge of grievances ~> up cost of coordination
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - ↓ common knowledge of grievances $\sim$ $\uparrow$ cost of coordination
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
    - Grievances (**allowed**)
Theoretical Implications

For China:
- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:
- Scholars have thought autocrats want to ↓ common knowledge of grievances ⇝ ↑ cost of coordination
- We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
  - Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - **Do not engage on controversial issues:**
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - **Stop collective action:**
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - \( \downarrow \) common knowledge of grievances \( \leadsto \) \( \uparrow \) cost of coordination
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
    - Grievances (**allowed**): no problem, already well known
    - Collective action (**not allowed**)

Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - ↓ common knowledge of grievances \(\sim\) ↑ cost of coordination
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
    - Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
    - Collective action (not allowed) big problem, emergency action required

Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

For future research:

When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.
Theoretical Implications

- **For China:**
  - Do not engage on controversial issues:
    - No censoring of criticism
    - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
  - Stop collective action:
    - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
    - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
    - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

- **For authoritarian regimes:**
  - Scholars have thought autocrats want to
    - \[ \downarrow \text{common knowledge of grievances} \rightleftharpoons \uparrow \text{cost of coordination} \]
  - We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
    - Grievances (**allowed**) no problem, already well known
    - Collective action (**not allowed**) big problem, emergency action required
  - Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does
Theoretical Implications

For China:
- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:
- Scholars have thought autocrats want to
  ↓ common knowledge of grievances ⇝ ↑ cost of coordination
- We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
  - Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
  - Collective action (not allowed) big problem, emergency action required
- Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

For future research:
Theoretical Implications

For China:
- Do not engage on controversial issues:
  - No censoring of criticism
  - No 50c posts arguing against criticism
- Stop collective action:
  - Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
  - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
  - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

For authoritarian regimes:
- Scholars have thought autocrats want to
  \[ \downarrow \text{common knowledge of grievances} \sim \uparrow \text{cost of coordination} \]
- We find: China has two versions of common knowledge
  - Grievances (allowed) no problem, already well known
  - Collective action (not allowed) big problem, emergency action required
- Arguments never end arguments; but distraction does

For future research:
- **When studied at scale, Chinese government information controls leave big footprints.**
For more information

GaryKing.org

JenPan.com

MargaretRoberts.net