

# Reverse Engineering Chinese Government Information Controls<sup>1</sup>

Gary King<sup>2</sup>

Institute for Quantitative Social Science  
Harvard University

Harvard College Summer Program for Undergraduates in Data Science, 6/11/2024

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<sup>1</sup>Based on joint work with Jennifer Pan (Stanford) and Margaret Roberts (UCSD)

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## Research Products (details at [GaryKing.org](http://GaryKing.org))

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  - How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument (*Today's talk; APSR*)
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  - General Purpose Computer-Assisted Clustering and Conceptualization (*PNAS*)
  
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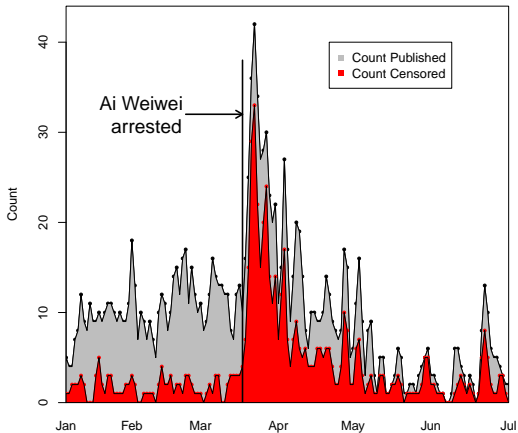
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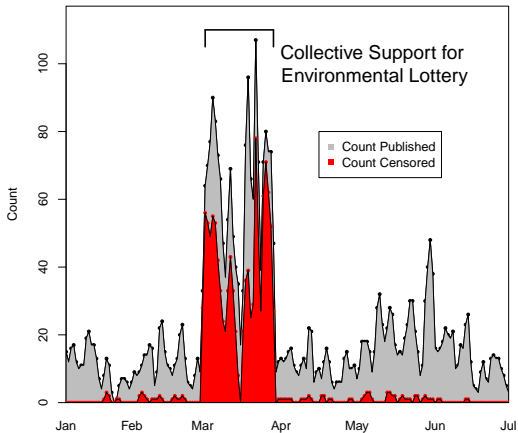
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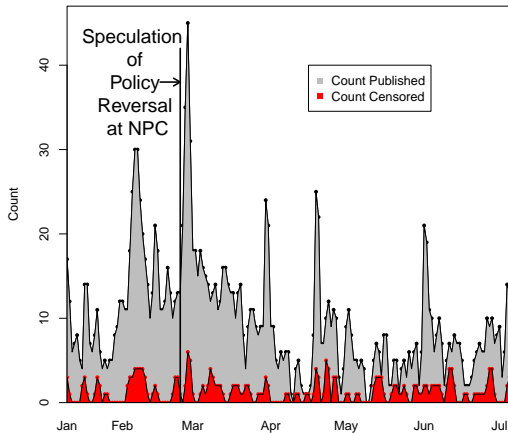
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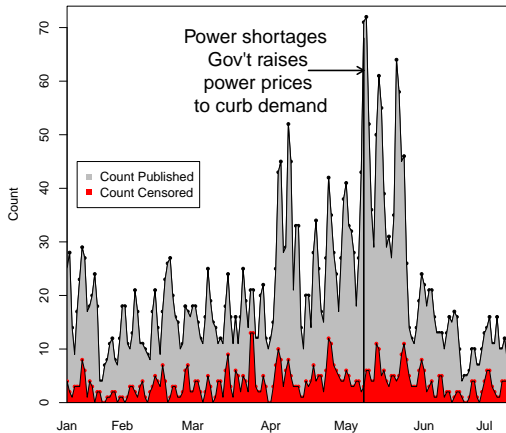
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It's antidisestablishmentarianism!

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

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- **Distracts**; redirects public attention from criticism and central issues to **cheerleading** and positive discussions of valence issues

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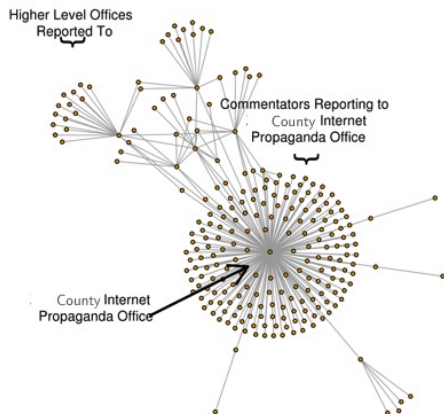
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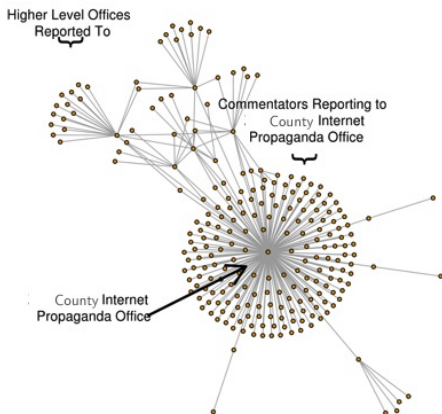
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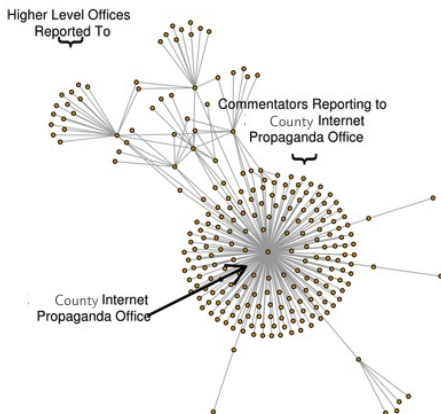


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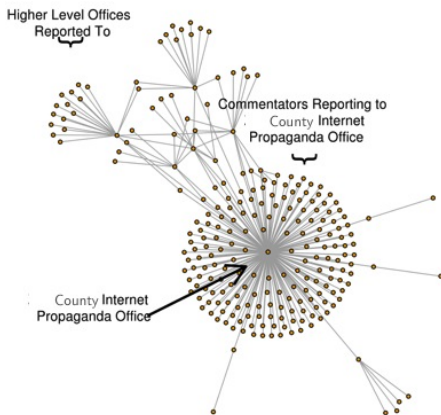
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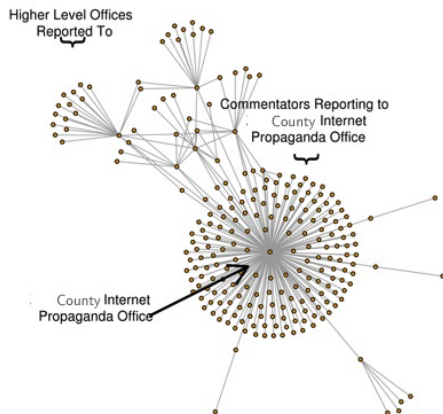
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  - **No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments;** probably part of their jobs

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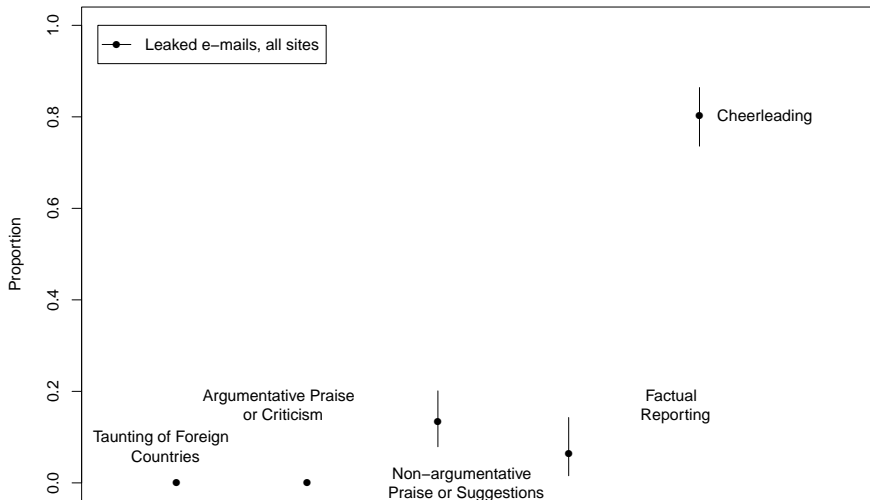
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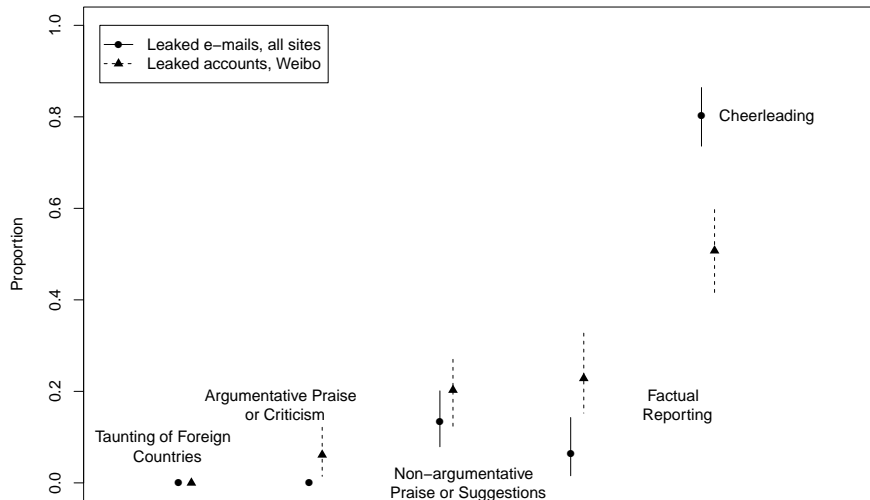
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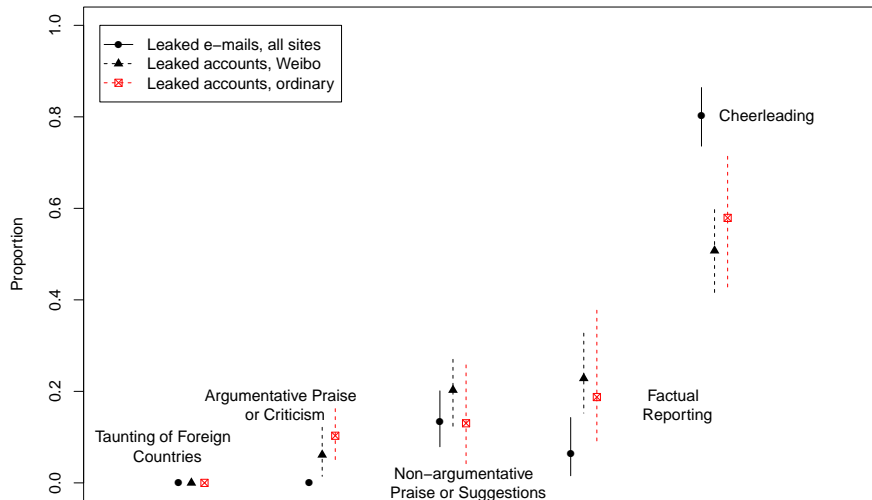
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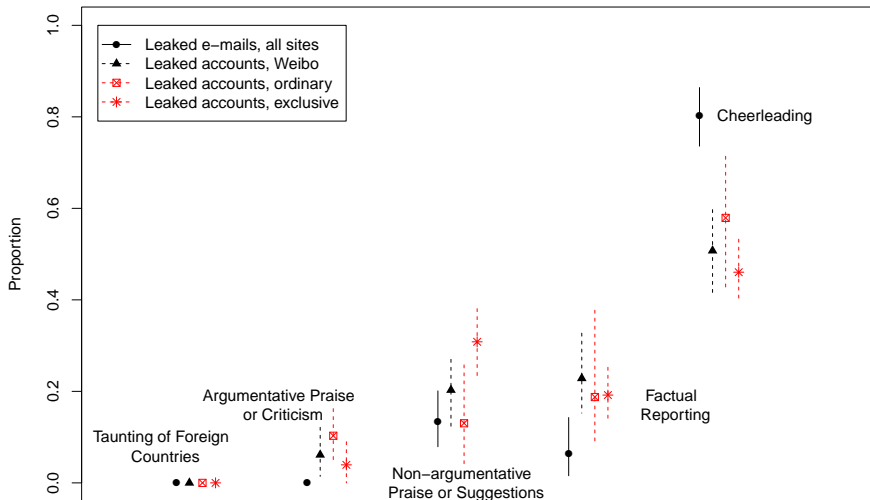
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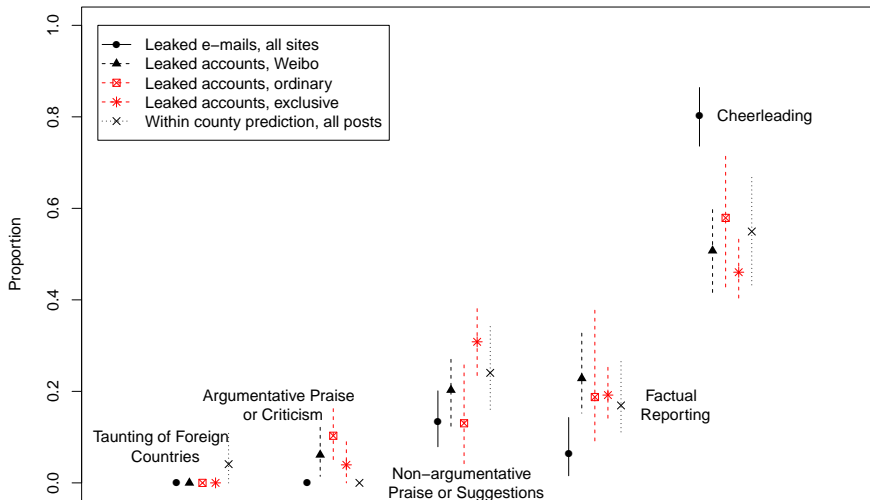
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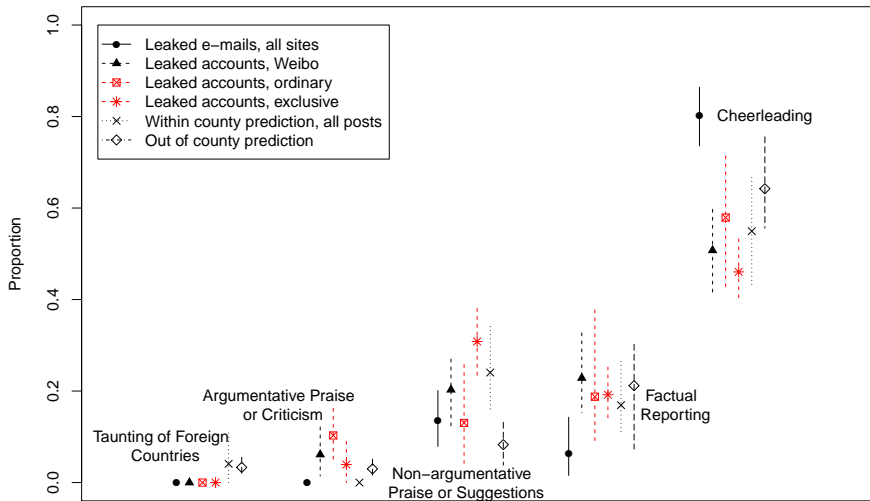
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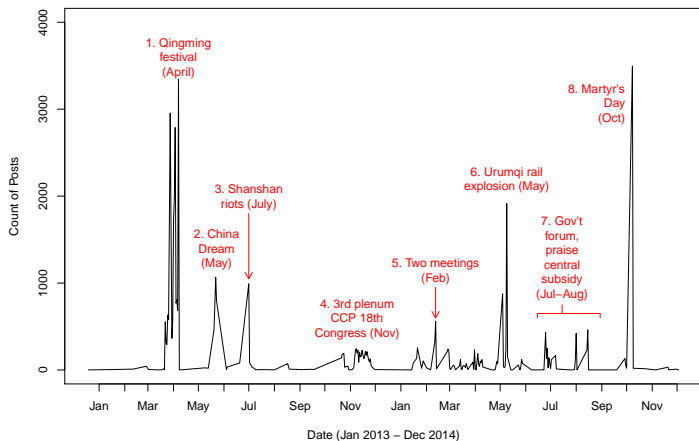
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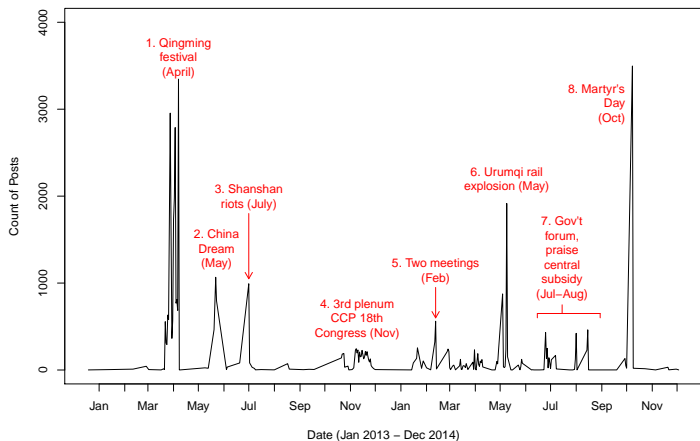
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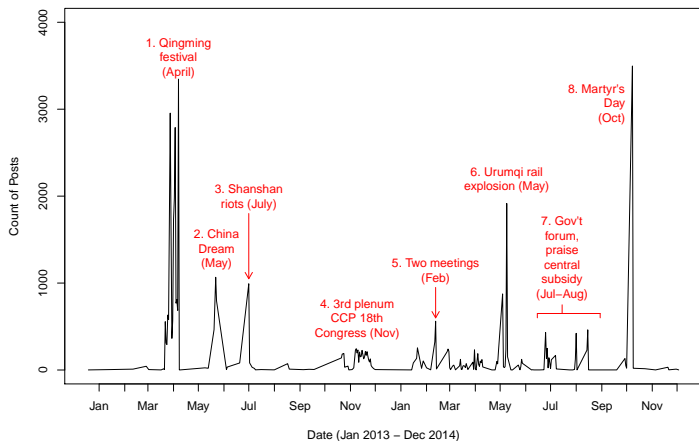


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50c Status

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---

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- 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!
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## For more information



[GaryKing.org](http://GaryKing.org)



[JenPan.com](http://JenPan.com)



[MargaretRoberts.net](http://MargaretRoberts.net)