

# Analyzing Social Media in China<sup>1</sup>

Gary King<sup>2</sup>

Institute for Quantitative Social Science  
Harvard University

Peking University, 7/26/2017

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

<sup>2</sup>GaryKing.org

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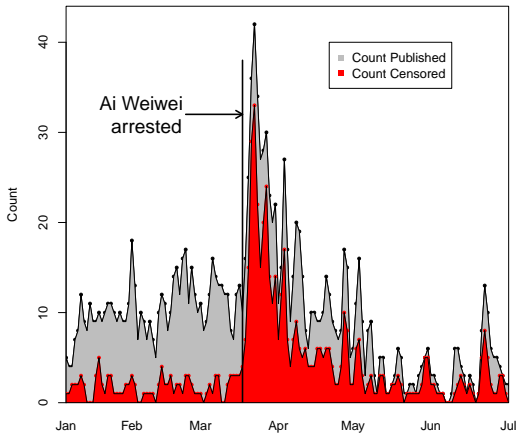
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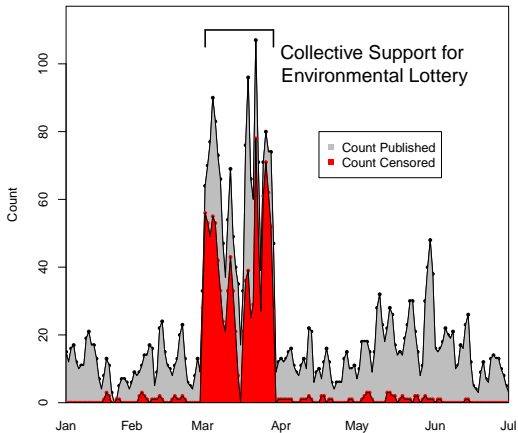
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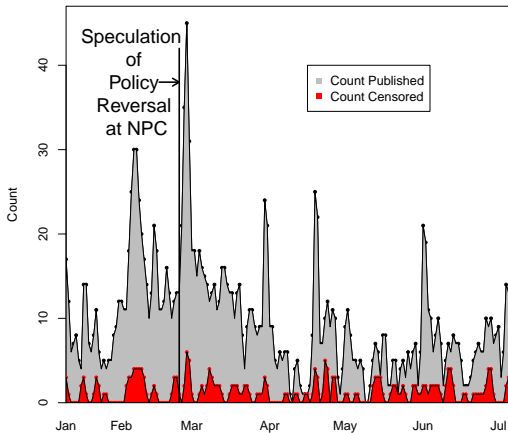




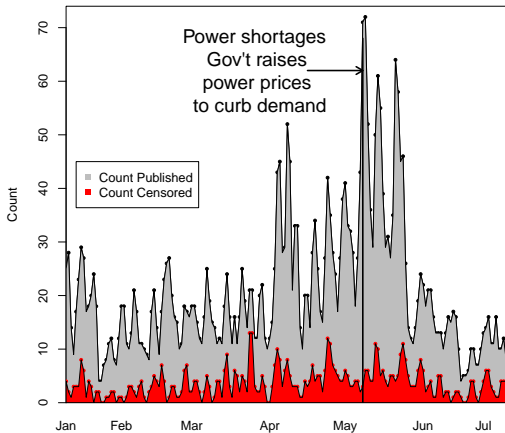
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- **Distracts**; redirects public attention from criticism and central issues to **cheerleading** and positive discussions of valence issues

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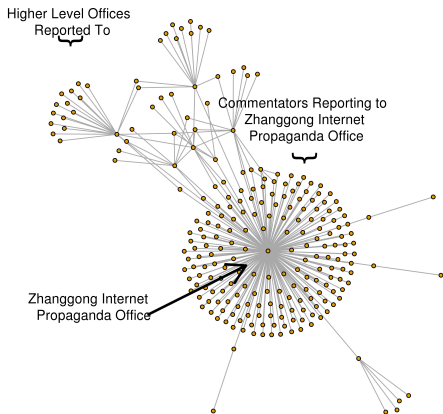
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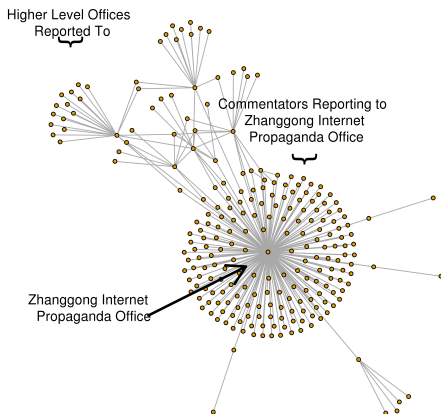
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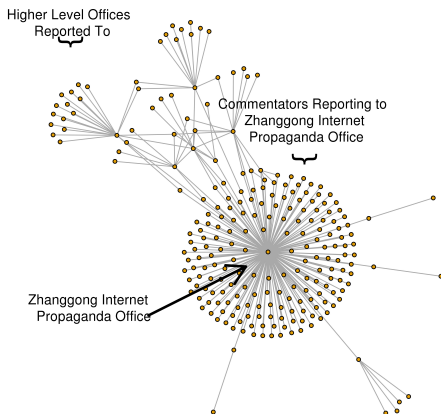


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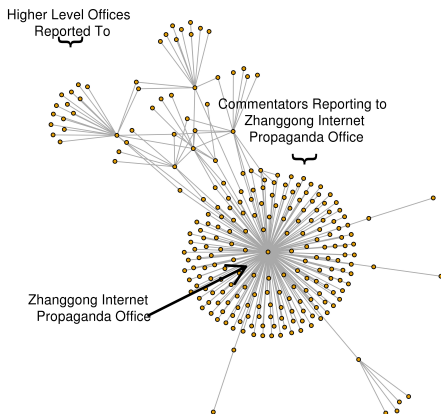
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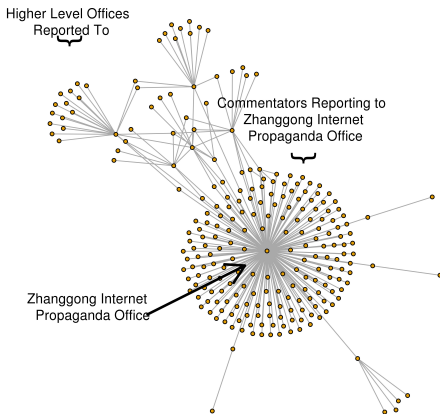
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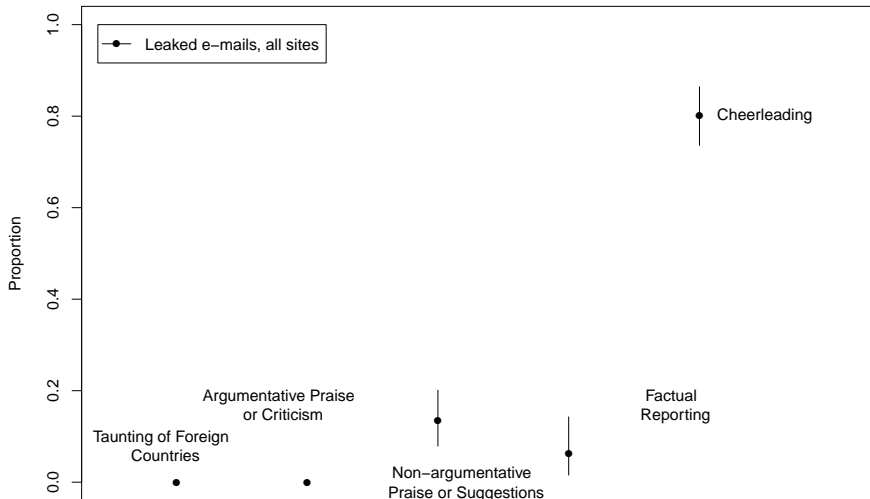
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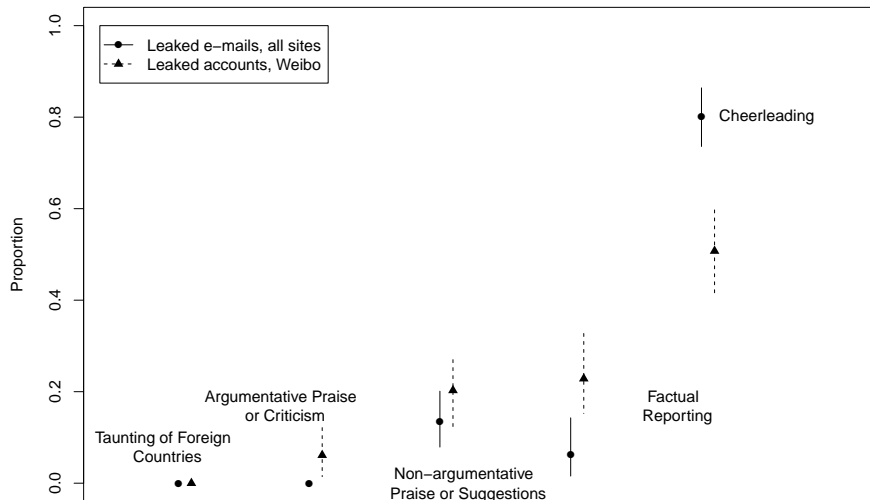
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    - ↪  $\leq 10$  followers
  - 4 Unleaked posts from Zhanggong exclusive 50c weibo accounts
  - 5 Unleaked posts from exclusive 50c weibo accounts across China

# Content of Leaked and Predicted 50c Party Posts

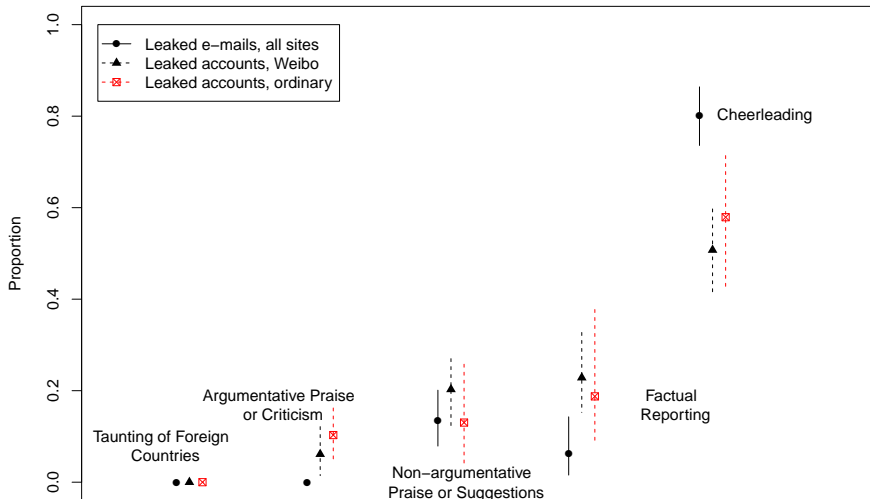
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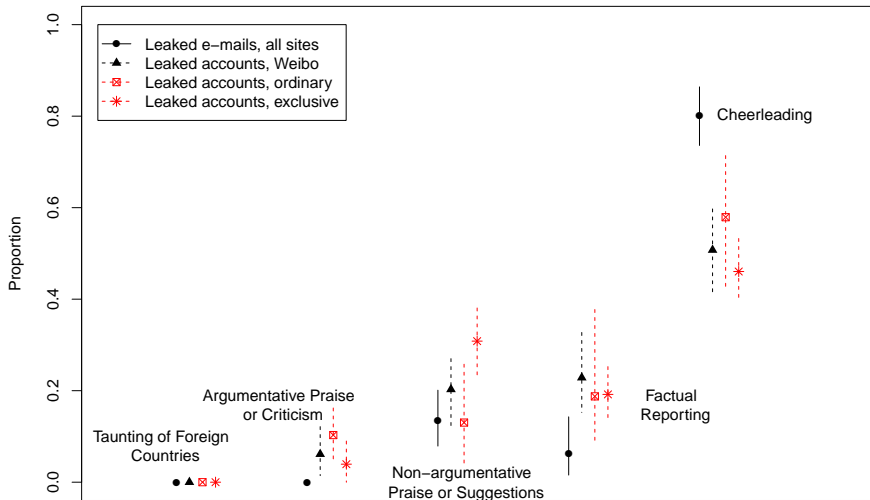
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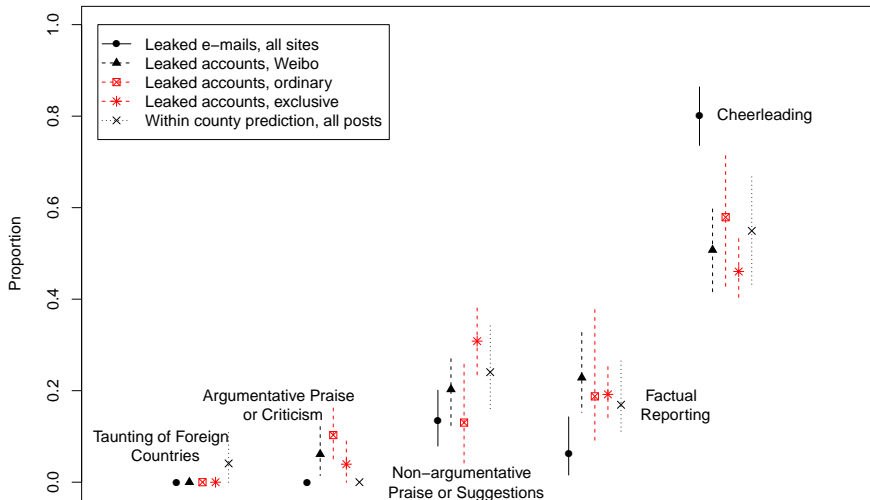


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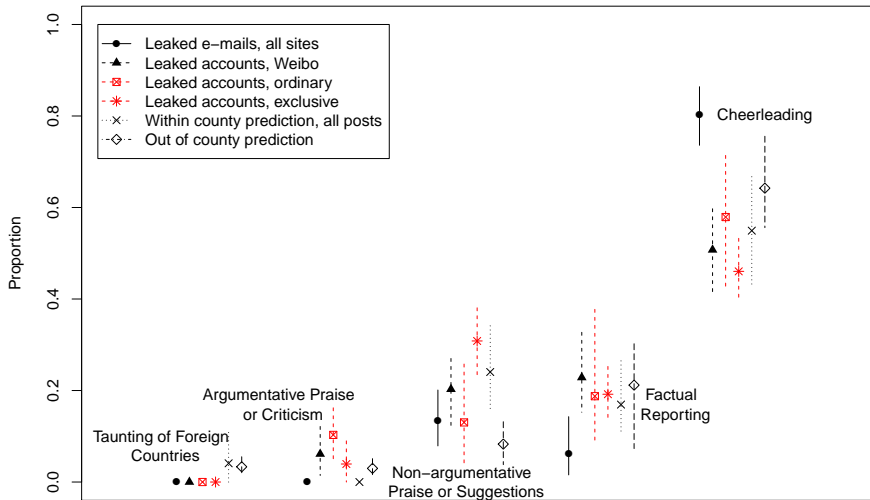




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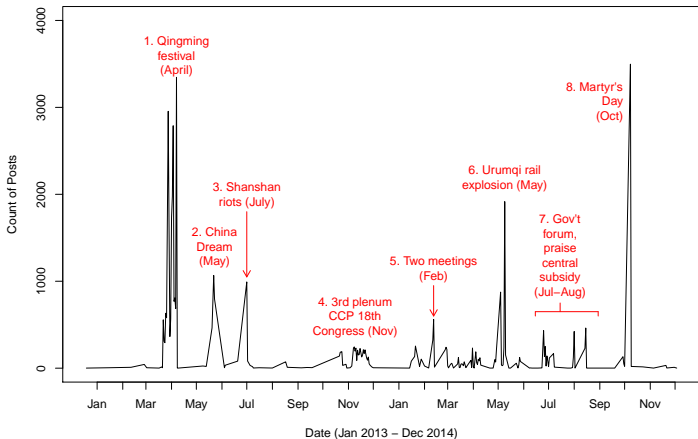
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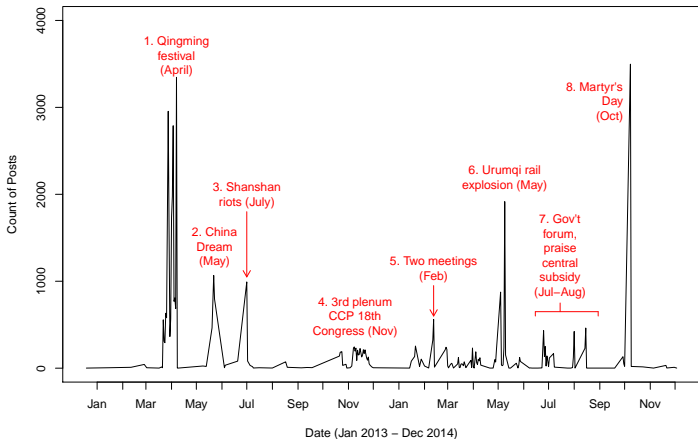
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  - 47% on commercial sites (1 of every 178 posts)

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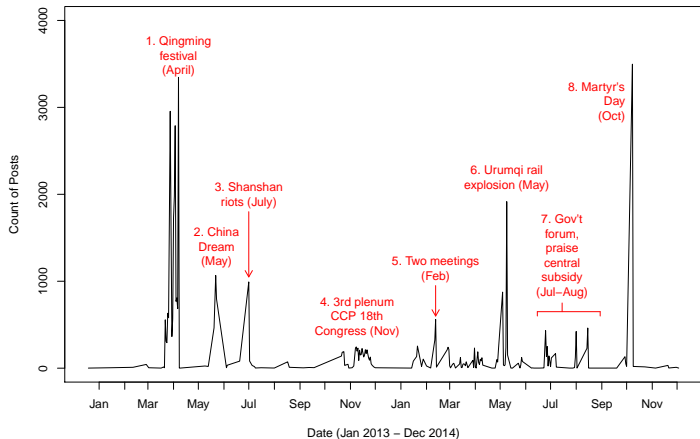
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# Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

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50c Status

Origin

Percent Yes

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## Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
Predicted 50c	Across China	

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50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
Predicted 50c	Across China	59%

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50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
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50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
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not significantly different



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    - Collective action (not allowed)

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    - 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  $\rightsquigarrow$  ↑ 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

# 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
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  - 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 more information



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



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



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