

How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument¹

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University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1/23/17

¹Based on joint work with Jennifer Pan (Stanford) and Margaret Roberts (UCSD)

²GaryKing.org

Papers

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- Empirical Results:

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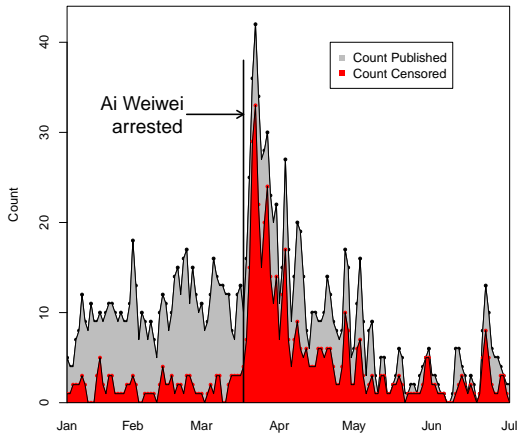
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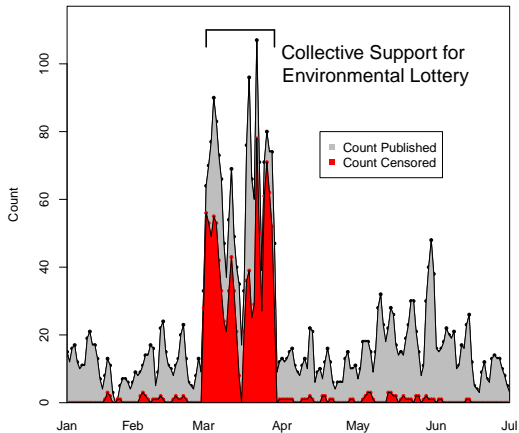
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 - Disagreements between central and local leaders

Censorship Reveals Government Goals

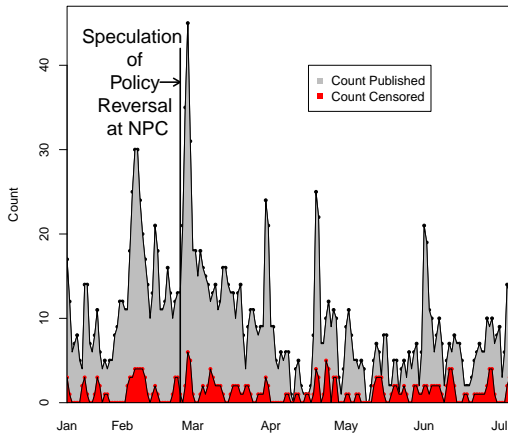
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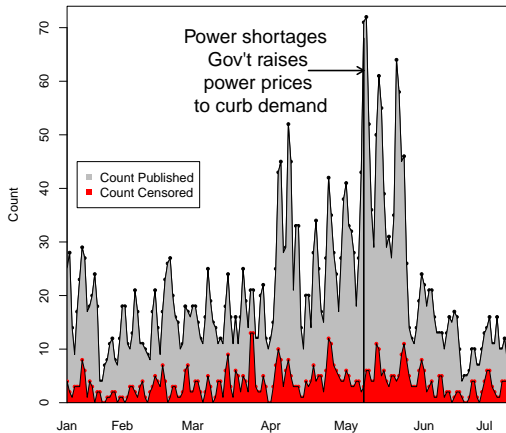
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Censorship Reveals Government Goals



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It's antisestablishmentarianism!

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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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- 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

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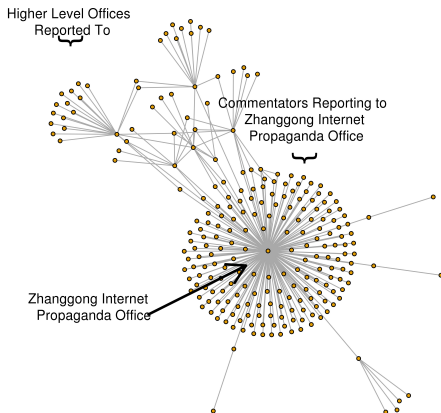
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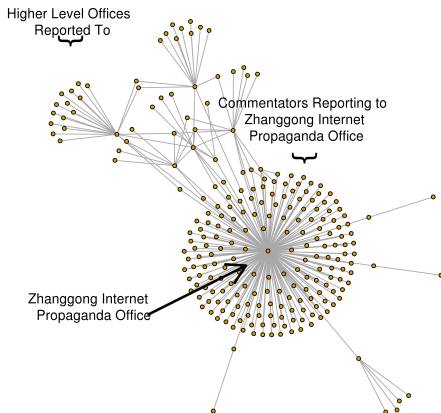
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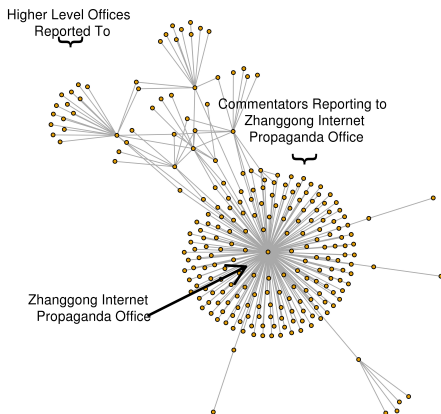


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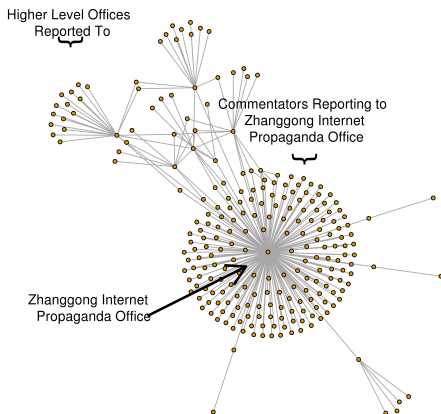
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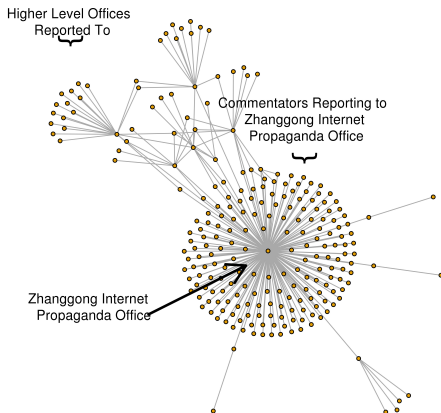
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 - **No evidence of 50c (or any piecemeal) payments;** probably part of their jobs

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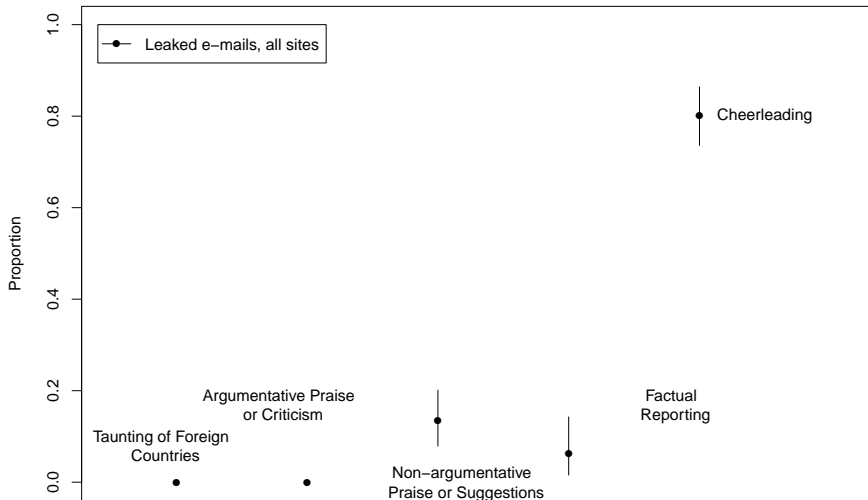
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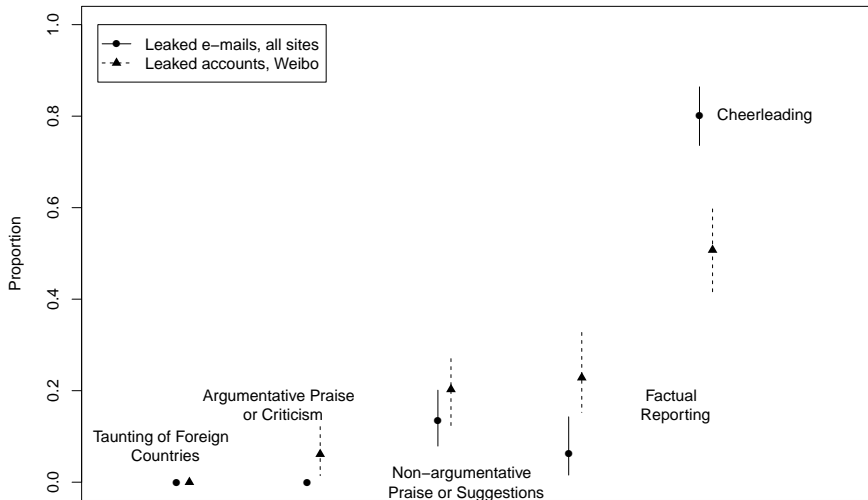
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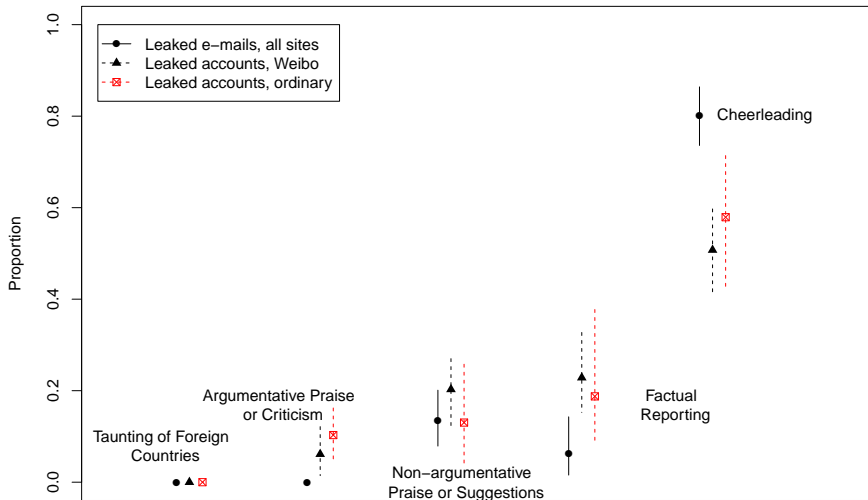
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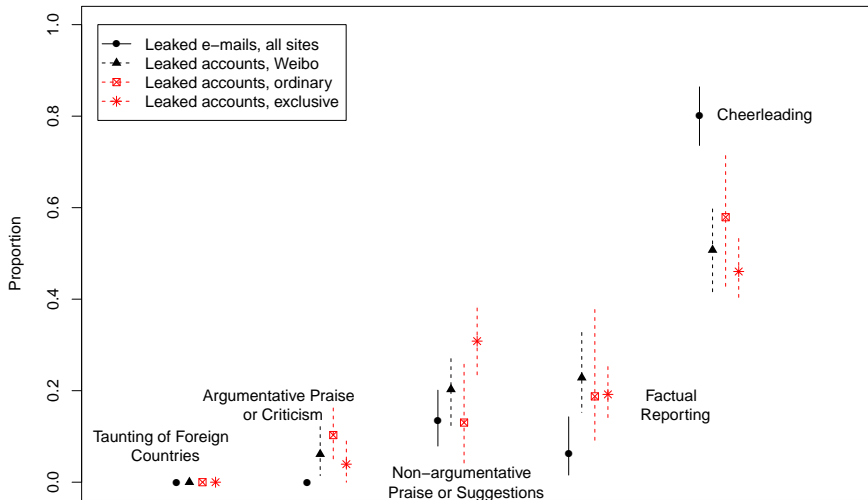
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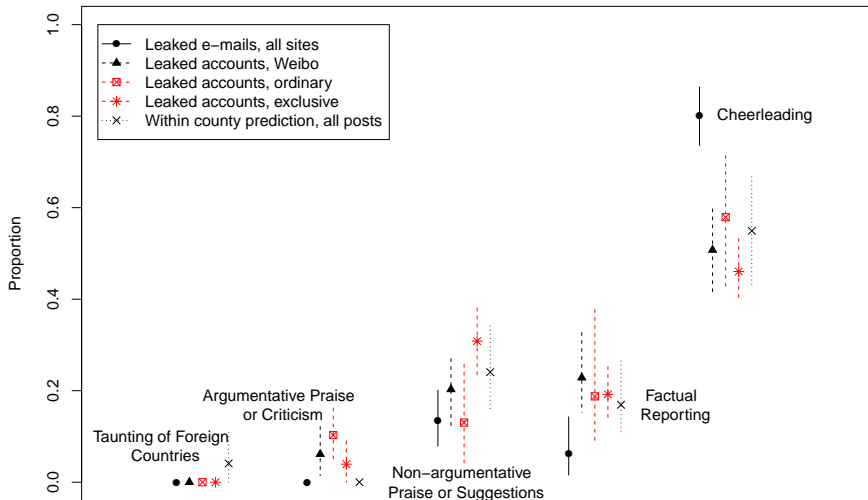
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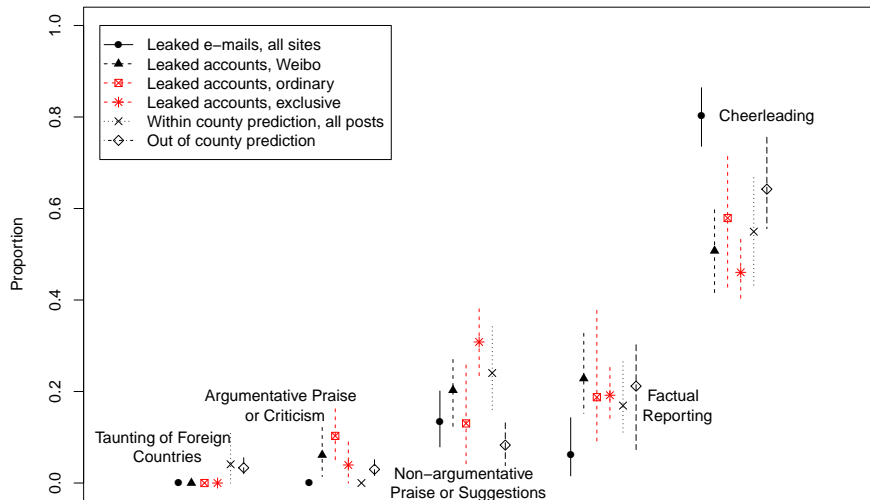
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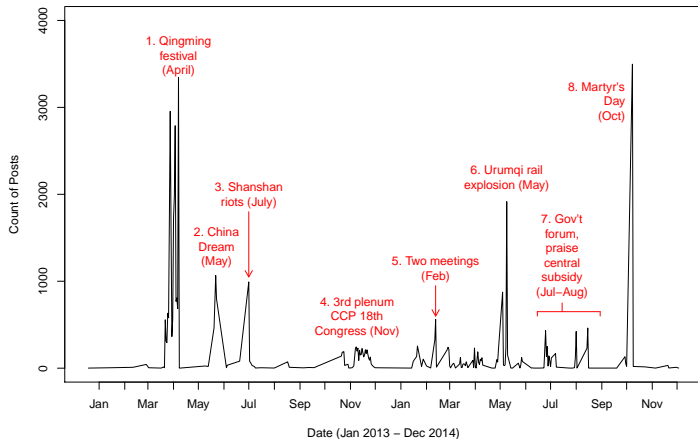
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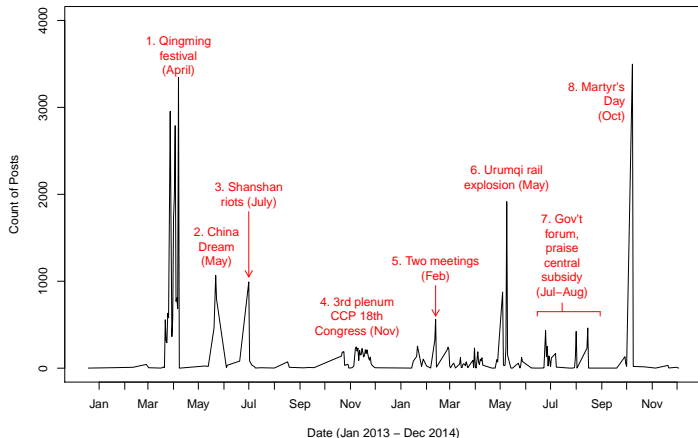
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 - 53% on government sites (a noticeable proportion of all)
 - 47% on commercial sites (1 of every 178 posts)

43,797 Zhanggong 50c Posts: Highly Coordinated

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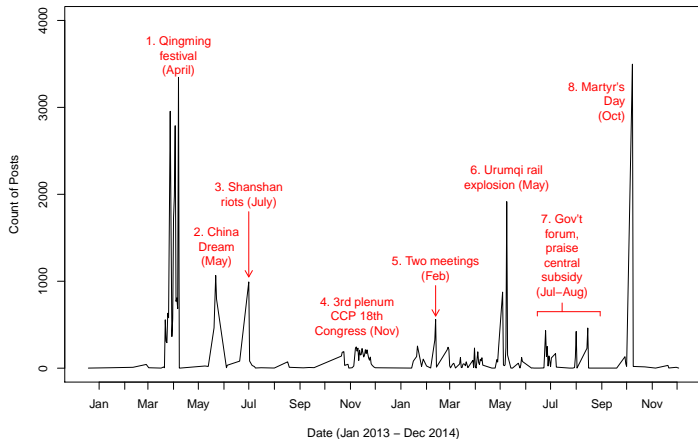


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 - Ask same question of accounts *known not to be* 50c

Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

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50c Status

Origin

Percent Yes

Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
Predicted 50c	Across China	

Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

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

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Survey Validation of 50c Party Membership Predictions

50c Status	Origin	Percent Yes
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not significantly different



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 - No 50c posts arguing against criticism

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- Respond to grievances to prevent collective action
 - Censor discussion of real-world collective action
 - Distract with cheerleading and positive valence

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For more information



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