The Political Economy of Social Media in China

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1. What is the question (of the paper)?

This paper is mainly discussing about the three areas of the social media in China.

a) Organizing collective action.

b) Surveillance of government officials.

c) Government Propaganda.

2. Why should we care about it?

From the report of Freedom House (2015) ranked China 186th of 199 countries on a scale of press freedom, which is not surprised. Most of us are all known that there exists highly restriction on the use of the social media in China, such as Facebook, etc. Also we know that WeiBo is the biggest mircroblog in China, and hence it is important to analyze the effect of this kind of social media in China.

So it is interesting to explore the political role of social media in China.

3. What is your (or the author's) answer?

a) This paper shows that the combination of social media data and machine learning techniques is useful to detect the large-scale collective action events and corrupt officials.

b) The author shows that the social media in China play a positive role in a number of important aspects of public affairs, improving the public's access to information, engagement in public debate, and their ability to coordinate massive action and respond to local problems, which enables the local government's ability to act more aggressive.

However, this study obtained little information about the central government due to the limited number of posts.

c) This study exhibits the regime and users are common interest.

Ex. Both social media users and regime are benefit from fighting local corruption and other abuse of power by local leaders.

4. How did you (or the author) get there?

The author uses the data from the posts of the most eminent Chinese microblogging platform- Sina Weibo- over the 2009-2013 period, combined with the statistical description, econometric analysis and the techniques of machine learning method to search the sensitive subjects such as conflict, corruption and etc to make an analysis.

Application:手機媒體在政府輿論引導過程中的正負作用分析

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