THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
香港理工大學

應用社會科學系
Department of Applied Social Sciences

2Chinese
0Internet
1Research
4Conference

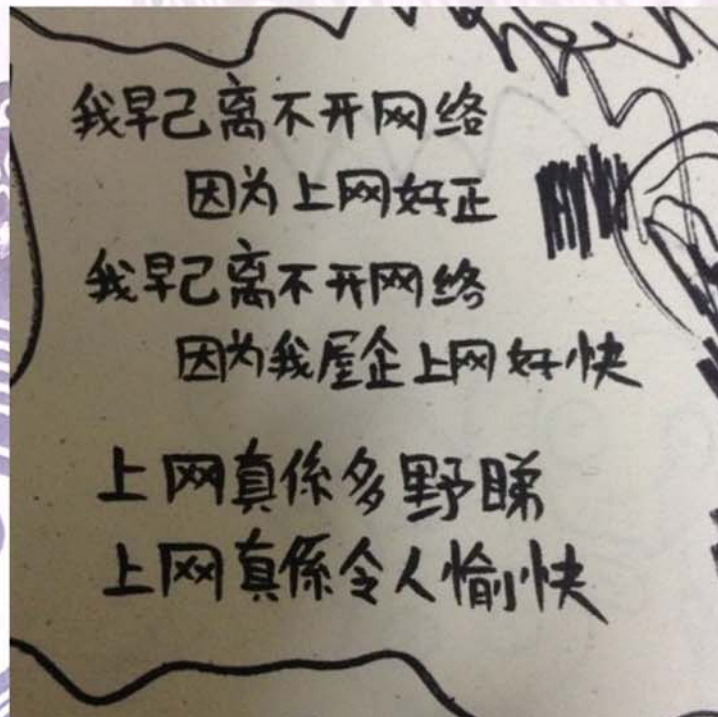# 12ᵗʰ Chinese Internet Research Conference

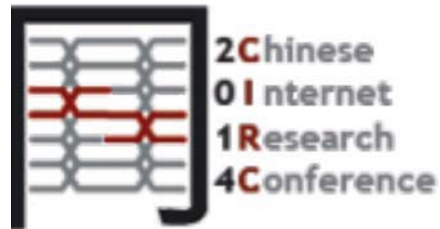Situated practices on China's changing Internets:
From the users of mobile ICTs and apps to Weibo posters and social networkers

我早已離不開網絡
因為上網好正
我早已離不開網絡
因為我屋企上網好快

上網真係多野睇
上網真係令人愉快

Pre-Conference
June 18 - 19
Rooms BC201 & GH201

Conference
June 20 - 21
Chiang Chen Studio Theatre

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CIRC12 – 2014

18-21 June 2014
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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CIRC12, 2014, is hosted by the Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS) of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

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About CIRC

CIRC (Chinese Internet Research Conference) was started in 2003, when less than 25 million people had access to the Internet in China, to study the impact this new technology might have on China's still somewhat isolated society, culture, and politics. By December 2013, the Internet in China had grown to almost 620 million Chinese Internet users whose activities have influenced Chinese society and culture in many different ways.

CIRC is an annual interdisciplinary conference that gathers researchers from diverse academic and disciplinary traditions, as well as experts from outside academia. Academics, journalists, market researchers, industry analysts, legal practitioners, business leaders and others come together at the conference to discuss the latest developments of the Internet in China.

CIRC conferences have previously been held in:

- 11th CIRC – University of Oxford, 2013

- 10th CIRC – University of Southern California, 2012

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- 8th CIRC – Peking University, 2010

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- 3rd CIRC – Michigan State University, 2005

- 2nd CIRC – UC Berkeley, 2004

- 1st CIRC – University of Southern California, Annenberg School for Communication, 2003

An Introduction to the Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS)

The Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is one of the largest and most vibrant centers in the Asia-Pacific region dedicated to the education and training of professional social workers, social policy and welfare administrators, psychologists and counselors in Hong Kong.

The Department started as the Institute of Social Work Training in 1973. It joined the Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1977 and became its School of Social Work. The School was eventually renamed in 2000 as the Department of Applied Social Sciences. This was six years after the Polytechnic converted to become a university.

In our teaching, we firmly believe that students are central to the education process and we strive to nurture human service professionals who are competent, versatile, reflective, humanistic, culturally sensitive, and possess a strong sense of vocation to social betterment.

In our academic pursuits, we strive to inter-relate theory and practice, to contextualize practice, and to develop indigenous knowledge and theories relevant to the Chinese society. In our research and scholarly programmes, we strive to bridge the theory-proactive gap through our activities. Our emphasis is on applied research which is relevant to contemporary society and can influence social policies.

> We believe that education, research, and service for the community are interrelated and we see them as mutually enhancing commitments.

In our community service, we strive to work in partnership with the community for the betterment of our society, facilitating social care, social responsibility and social justice through our collaborative endeavors.

In order to enhance the all-round development of students, particularly in the area of global outlook, our department has lined up numerous student exchange and international exchange programs in overseas countries and in Mainland China. In the recent academic years, more than 200 full-time and part-time students as well as alumni had joined various exchange programs and study tours. Formal connections on student exchange have been established with different universities including the University of Nottingham, UK; University of Queensland, Australia; University of California at Berkeley, USA; Washington University at St. Louis, USA; York University, Canada; Peking University, Zhongshan University, Sichuan University and Yunnan University, the Chinese Mainland.

In the 2013/14 academic year, the Department had a total of 267 members which included 95 academic staff, 18 part-time fieldwork instructors, 121 research and project staff and 33 administrative and supporting technical staff.

The APSS offers nearly 20 programmes for Higher Diploma, Degree, Postgraduate, MPhil and PhD students. There are currently about 1,600 students enrolled in the various APSS programmes and we have graduated 16,062 students over the years. In the academic year of 2012/13, we graduated 589 students.

Conference Programme

June 18 – Postgraduate Student Conference

Session I – BC201 – 9:30-11:00

Clement Renaud, Gabriele de Seta	Paris Tech Telecom, HK Polytechnic University	The viral vs. the vernacular: A debate between memetic and folkloric approaches to the Chinese Internet
YUAN Yuan	???	From 1994 to 2013: The Evolution of Internet Activism in China
ZHOU Yining	HK Baptist U, Hong Kong	Internet Control in China: Research, Theory, and Methodology
Jun FU	Education, U Melbourne, Australia	Participation of Internet Users in Chinese Online Events – Themes and Implications

Session II – BC201 – 11:30-13:00

Gilian Bolsover	OII, Oxford University, UK	Cross-National Comparative Research: Challenges, Limitations, Problems and payoffs
OU Weiwei	Wuhan University, PRC	Ethic Difficulties of Internet Research
LIU Ran	Sociology, U Pennsylvania	Government-dominated Governance and the Double-edged Sword: A Critical Review of the Chinese Academic Discourse on Internet Regulation

Master Class –Ethics in Internet Research – BC201 – 14:00-15:00
Jesper Schlaeger, Sichuan University, PRC

Session III – BC201 – 15:30-17:00

FAN Boyang	Journalism and Communication, Peking U, China	Tweeting Social Characteristics: How social media usage differentiate between International NGO in China and other counties
ZENG Yukun	Anthropology, Binghamton U, USA	The Edward Snowden Affair – A digital anthropological analysis
CHEN Keru	Government, Peking U, China	Online Activism Upgrading: Case Study on Environmental Collective Events

June 19 – Postgraduate Student Conference

Session IV – GH201 – 9:30-11:00

DU Juan	Communication, HK Baptist U, Hong Kong	Free Speech, Public Order and Other Interests: Analysis on Value Orientation of China's Network Real-Name Policy.
YANG Xiaonan	Management, U Glasgow, Scotland	Opinion Leadership, Seeding Strategies and Information Adoption Behaviour on Sina Weibo
CAO Xiaojie	U of Auckland, New Zealand	Discursive Events and Everyday Politics: Catchwords in the Chinese Cyberspace

Session V – GH201 – 11:30-13:00

LIU Yang	Liaoning Normal U, China	Performance and governance of micro-blog rumors
LI Ning Yi	Communication, U Macau, Macau	The Institutional Changing Of Network Real-Name System (RNS) Policy In China
HONG Tao	Media Studies, U Paris 8, France	Mapping issue publics using Sina Weibo

Master Class – Methodology in Internet Research – GH201 – 14:00-15:00
Florian Schneider, Leiden University, The Netherlands

Session VI – GH201 – 15:30-17:00

DING Fangzhou	Media and International Culture, Zhejiang U, China	Social Media as Political Arena: Framing, Discourse Competition and Power Struggling
FAN Mai	Sociology, U Virginia	Living beyond the "Great Wall" of China
SHEN Hong	Communication Research, U Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA	The political economy of global Internet governance: A China-centric study

Welcome and Spotlight Session – Chiang Chen Studio Theatre (CCST) – 9:30-11:00
Spotlight on User practices:

Tom McDonald (UCL, UK)
Little treasures: parents and their QZone baby photos in a small rural Chinese town
(Ethnographic fieldwork)

Parallel Sessions I – 11:30-13:00

Internet Culture – GH201

Katrien Jacobs	Chinese University of HK	The Art of Sexual Climax and Failure on the Chinese Internet
FENG Miao, YUAN Elaine	U Illinois, USA	Public opinion on Weibo: The case of the Diaoyu Island Dispute
Florian Schneider	Chinese Politics, U Leiden, Netherlands	Digital Nationalism in Online Networks: The Diaoyu/Senakaku Island Dispute on China's Web
LEUNG Wing-Fai	Chinese Studies, University College Cork, Ireland	Biopolitics in the blogosphere: Lou Jing, mixed heritage and the discourses of Chinese ethnicity

Mobile Internet – GH405

LEUNG Natalie, CHU Rodney, & IP David	APSS, HK Polytechnic University	Virtual driving real: can university youngsters of Hong Kong inform us about a new form of life in the mobile network era?
SUN Ping	Journalism and Communication, Beijing U, China	Mobile Terminals Usage in the Classroom: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students in Peking University
WANG Xinyuan	University College London, UK	The Portable World: the appropriation of Mobile ICTs among Chinese Rural Migrants
JIA Li	Journalism and Communication, Wuhan U, China	"New media, urban dreams and love imagination": Female migrant workers' mobile phone using and changes of marriage relationship discussion

Weibo – CCST

Adrian RAUCHFLEISCH, Mike SCHAEFER	U Zurich, Switzerland	The Multiple Public Spheres of Weibo. On the Forms and Potentials of Online Public Spheres in China.
Joyce NIP, King-wa FU	Media and Communications, Sydney, Journalism and Media, HKU	Challenging official propaganda? Public opinion leaders on Sina Weibo
ZHANG Aijun	Internet Politics, Liaoning Normal U, China	On microblog and belief
CHEN Xiaojin	Culture, Media and Creative Industries, King's College, London, UK	The Effects of the Internet on Collective Democratic Action in China: A Case Study of the 2013 Southern Weekly Incident

Debate Session – Politics – CCST – 14:00-15:00

Gilian BOLSOVER	OII, Oxford U, UK	Moving towards an appropriate theory for analyzing political speech on the Chinese Internet
Séverine Arsène	China Perspectives, Hong Kong	Tracing the Chinese government's bet on the Internet
Adrian RAUCHFLEISCH, Jean-Francois Mayoraz, Man-Ying LIAO	U Zurich, U Bern, Switzerland	Chinese social media companies between user interests and government regulations
Bo Mai Tim Libert	University of Pennsylvania, USA	Web Tracking with "Chinese Characteristics" A Critical Perspective on the Emerging Online Surveillance Market in China

Parallel Sessions II – 15:30-17:00

Internet and Development – GH405

OU Weiwei	Wuhan U, China	Spreading Internet in the Rural Areas of Western China: Internet Use and a Changing Life
LIU Tingting	Communication and Journalism, South China University of Technology	Limited Agency: Young People's Internet Usage in Rural China
Jesper Schlæger, WANG Qian	Public Administration, Sichuan U, China	Internet and Reduction of the Quality Divide in Chinese Basic Education: A case study of Qingbaijiang District in Chengdu
ZHAO Jinqiu, SUN Yi	Communication Studies, Communication U, China	A Study of the Online Radio Stations of Xinjiang Ethnicity and Their Roles in Central Asia Communication

Greater China – GH201

ZHAO Yupei	Leicester, UK	Citizen Participation in Political Communication via Weibo micro blogging: A Case Study of Chief Executive Election of Hong Kong in 2012
CAO Bolin	Media and Communications, City U, Hong Kong	Social Media Use and Immigrants' Adaption: A Primary Study of How Mainland Chinese Immigrants Use Facebook in Hong Kong
WANG Lei, JIANG Shaohai	Communication, Texas A&M, USA	The impacts of media use and social capital on civic engagement of overseas Chinese college students in America
LONG Xinxin	OII, Oxford U, UK	"Negotiating Foreign Platforms: Overseas Chinese Students use of Foreign Social Media Sites"

Politics – CCST

MIAO Weishan	Journalism and Communication, Tsinghua U, China	Between pan-politicization and de-politicization: Online Mass Incidents in China
Stefan Brehm	Lund University, Sweden	Embracing the Internet – is early adoption politically motivated?
Yuen Yuen Ang	Political Science, U Michigan	Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why "I-Paid-A-Bribe" Worked in India but Failed in China
ZHAO Wei	Wuhan U, China	Chinese Women's activism and its resistance politics online: The case of 'Guangzhou New Media for Women'

June 21 – Main Conference

Parallel Sessions III – 9:30-11:00

Gaming – GH405

Author(s)	Affiliation	Title
YU Yudong	Law, U Manchester, UK	The Chinese Gaming Industry and new competitive models
Bjarke LIBORIUSSEN	Digital and Creative Media, U Nottingham in Ningbo, China	The Farmers and Raiders of Internet-Based Gaming in China
Zhang Ge (Dino)	HK Polytechnic University, HK	Gaming in everyday life: an anthropological study of daily rhythms in a Chinese Internet café

Internet Culture – GH201

Henry HU	Law, Shanghai U of Finance and Economics, China	Public Sphere or Private Asset? A critique of digital commons in China
JIA Lianrui	Communication, Carleton U, Canada	From technology to industry: a historical analysis on the developmental logic of the Internet in China
RAO Yichen	Anthropology, Chinese U, Hong Kong	Coming of Age with 'Internet Addiction' – a will of morbidity or a will of 'transcendence'?
SUN Ruili	U Sydney	Reader-Writer Interactivity and its implications: case study on Qidian Chinese literary Website

Weibo – CCST

YANG Shen	Chinese U, Hong Kong	Political Information in Micro-blog: Who Speaks What and How It Is Spread
JIANG Min, Richard LEEMAN, King-wa FU	Communication, UNC Charlotte, USA	Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Life and Politics among Chinese Microbloggers during the Democratic National Convention (DNC)
LIN Jie	Journalism and Communication, Wuhan U, China	How the @US embassy in China carry out its micro-blog diplomacy
CHAN Chung-hong, FU King-wa	HKU, Hong Kong	Can retweeting drive Chinese citizen's opinion diversity? An 18-month panel study of over 30,000 Chinese microbloggers

Parallel Sessions IV – 11:30-13:00

Internet and Development – GH405

Cara Wallis	Texas A&M, USA	Communicative Empowerment as Emotion Work: Grassroots Media and Social Media Use among Domestic Workers in Beijing
ZHANG Lei	Communication U, China	Vulnerable to Exploitation? An analysis of immaterial labour in social network services
Lina TAO	U New South Wales, Australia	The representation of China's internal migrant children in the micro-blogsphere
Isaac Chun-Hai Fung, Yi Hao, Braydon J. Schaible, Jessica Jing-Xian Cai, Yuchen Ying, Chung-Hong Chan, King-Wa Fu and Zion Tze-Ho Tse	Georgia Southern University, U Georgia, HKU	Chinese social media reaction to infectious disease outbreaks and public health communications: avian influenza A(H7N9), MERS-CoV and 39 notifiable infectious diseases

Internet Culture – GH201

WANG Wei	Communication, Annenberg, USC	The Market-centric Logic, Neoliberalized Resistance, and Alternative Collectivity: The culture of technological entrepreneurs in China's mobile application development industry
WEI Lu, XIE Dian	Zhejiang U, China	The effect of critical thinking, anxiety and social support on individual's belief and diffusion of online rumors: An experimental study
Clément RENAUD	Paris Tech, France	Meme observation and classification on a large corpus of tweets from Sina Weibo
LIN Zhongxuan	Communication, U Macau	Fame US: The Changing Landscape of China Internet Celebrity Field

Greater China – CCST

ZHANG Bin, Han-Teng LIAO	Wuhan U, China, OII, Oxford U, UK	Academic search for Chinese-language literatures: Assessing the distribution of academic authority, platform visibility and geolinguistic preferences
Ann CHIU	Library, Chinese U, Hong Kong	The Online Social World of Fuzhou Chinese Migrants in New York, 2003-2013
SUN Yini, SA Erting	Communication, Cheng Chi U, Taiwan, State U of New York at Albany, USA	The tendency of connective action of Taiwan social movement in the new media field: A case study on the White Shirt Army rally
CHU Rodney	APSS, HK Polytechnic University	~Mobile usage

Debate Session – Internet Culture – CCST – 14:00-15:00

Silvia Lindtner	Fudan University & UC Irvine	Who are the producers of the Chinese Internet? A report from the field of hackerspaces, makerlabs, and manufacturing
Han-Teng LIAO	OII, Oxford U, UK	Chinese cultural thickening and web spheres: A few results and conjectures on the status of the Chinese cultural sphere
FANG Kecheng, ZHAO Mengyang	U Wisconsin-Madison, Chinese U, Hong Kong	The Emergence of Partisan Online Media in China
Gabriele DE SETA	APSS, HK Polytechnic University	The Great Firewall of China: The making of a national Internet from academic discourse to the 'wall-crossing' experiences of local Internet users

Spotlight and Wrap-Up Session – CCST – 15:30-17:00
Spotlight on User practices:
     Zhang Weiyu, Dai Jia (NUS, Singapore)
     Celebrity activism on Weibo
     (Network and content analysis)

Pre-Conference

Session I

Clément Renaud and Gabriele de Seta

The viral vs. the vernacular: A debate between memetic and folkloric approaches to the Chinese Internet

This paper stems from an ongoing e-mail based discussion between the authors, who have been working on the analysis of a similar body of material (user-generated content on the Chinese Internet) from two diametrically opposed theoretical and methodological perspectives: a quantitative study of the viral diffusion of memes, and a qualitative study of the produsage of digital folklore.

As a fundamental component of Internet culture, memes are a quite popular topic of research in media studies and social sciences. Viral images, videos, terms and jokes are often framed as expressions of specific political and cultural behavioral patterns. The study of memes as a social phenomenon is linked to Richard Dawkins' coinage of the term meme to define any self-replicator that exists "as it is". On the Internet, a quirky naming practice has brought the word 'meme' to indicate all sorts of viral content (commercial, political, funny, trendy, etc.) that apparently flood online platforms out of nowhere according to surges of popularity. Consequently, more big data-oriented researchers have tried to develop analytics aimed at investigating the patterns of dissemination and popularization of these "online events", and to visualize them in meaningful ways. In the case of the Chinese Internet, researching viral content can also reveal the impact of censorship and control on the dynamics of online communities and discussions – the prime example here being the algorithm designed by Fu & Chan (2013) to extract meaningful information from the corpus of deleted microblog posts Weiboscope.

As a fundamental component of human sociality, jokes and humor are similarly a popular topic of research in social sciences, linguistics, and cultural studies. If Dawkins' memetic theory of evolution and other conceptualizations of information virality are cast aside, user-generated content can be framed in a completely different way: as online vernacular or digital folklore (Lialina, 2012), defined as the product of the interaction between pragmatic, amateur users and specific platforms and interfaces. Following a more anthropological tradition of inquiry into humor, folklore and other 'trivial' practices of everyday life, Internet memes can be understood as the form jokes, gossip, folksonomies, mythologies, urban legends, buzzwords, slangs and other social practices take in computer mediated interaction. This kind of approach takes a step back from large-scale corpora of data and verifies the actual production and consumption (or 'produsage') of digital folklore in the daily interactions of Chinese digital media users.

By setting up a theoretical and methodological controversy and trying to find a common ground between data-oriented analyses of viral content and ethnographic explorations of digital media practices on the Chinese Internet, this paper hopes to provide some insights about the advantages of memetic and folkloric, quantitative and qualitative approaches to user generated content. Moreover, the common focus on China's national Internet helps making a critical case regarding the fixation of academic research on political content, as well as the importance of approaching local contexts through local categories and voices.

Yuan Yuan

From 1994 to 2013: The Evolution of Internet Activism in China

The Internet was launched in China in 1994. While the Chinese government embraced the Internet as a necessary element of the information infrastructure for a modern economy, Chinese citizens utilize this new technology to obtain information and knowledge of the outside world, raise their voices in political discourse, and challenge the top-down propaganda model that was established from Mao's era from 1950s. During the past decades, the number of Internet incidents keeps growing, and there is also an increasing number of Chinese citizens who become capable of participating in online activities. According to the report of the Chinese Internet Development by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) , by the end of 2012, the number of Chinese netizens was 564 million, composing 42% of the total population. While the number of "large-scale Internet mass incidents" also increased from 0 in 1994 to 12 in 2009 (Tong & Lei, 2010)).

Considering this significant growth in Chinese citizens' online activities, we attempts to use a longitudinal study to investigate the development of online activism in China from 1994 to 2013. Through the analysis of collected secondary materials, this study will discuss the frequency, the type of event, the locations, the relations between the activism tide and political changes, and the different repertories of activism over times. Our task is to use this study to broaden our understanding of netizens activities and their impacts not in snap shots but in the big picture. The historical perspective could also help us understand how Internet activism over a long period of time, regardless of success or failure, may bring about changes to political culture and political environment in China in a gradual manner.

The first step for this study is to define what is meant by the term "online activism". Generally speaking, online activism refers to the activism enhanced by or based on new media technology, and it usually relies on a network of individuals or groups that share collective identity and attempt to bring about social, political, economic, cultural, or environmental changes. The second step is to establish a chronological index of online activism to provide a range of cases to analyze. This activism index will be built based on data collected from credible international media, including reports from The New York Time, The International New York Time, and The Guardian, and the online incidents / public opinion reports published by Chinese educational and research Institutions. Secondary data will then be collected from online records, news pieces, books and other documents to create archives for each case, providing the materials for subsequent analyses on the trend/pattern of activism over times and the change of repertories in different periods.

Zhou Yining

Internet Control in China: Research, Theory, and Methodology

Internet control study catches academic attention especially after Snowden Scandal 2013, as the control re-depicts the seemingly free information society and the promising digital world. With one of the most sophisticated Internet control system, China will be a fruitful example to the field. Chinese Internet control restricts freedom of speech and information flow technologically and institutively, while users present various attitudes towards the control and more subconsciously self-censorship mechanism. This results in broad social, political, cultural as well as psychological influence, and inspires fierce debate upon the likely policy orientation regarding future Internet in China. This article will thoroughly review previous research about Chinese Internet control, categorizing by its history, mechanism, impact and future, based on which various communication theories could be deepened, diversified, revisited or modified. The study also summarizes characteristics in previous research and compares diverse chosen methodologies, so as to present the macro view for future Internet control study.

Jun Fu

Participation of Internet Users in Chinese Online Events – Themes and Implications

The effect of the internet on civic and political participation is one of the key issues in internet studies (Boulianne, 2009). Despite the arguments that internet has detrimental impact on civic engagement (Norris, 2001; Putman 1995, 2000), the engagement power of the internet has been proved by substantial literature and electoral and democratic movements worldwide. It is certainly the case that the conveniences and new opportunities for civic and political participation brought by the internet play a role in engaging participants (Banaji, Buckingham, 2010; Rheingold, 1995), but strong civic literacy among internet users is essential for the exertion of this power.

Some literature has shown that online participation or simply internet use can play a positive role in fostering internet users' civic literacy related qualities, such as political efficacy (Cornfield, 2003; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Shah, Kwak & Holbert, 2001, 2002) and civic disposition (Wang, 2007). While other fail to establish this positive relationship simply because of the low quality of online group discussion (Conroy, Feezell, Guerrero, 2012; Wang & Bates, 2008). Beyond these ambivalent arguments, recent studies indicate that the extent to which the democratic potentials of the internet are realised may be subject to internet users' ability to pursue online social interaction under different situations and needs (Hsieh, 2012; Hsieh & Li, 2013). Although some scholars have observed similar effects among Chinese internet users (Hung, 2006; Tang, 2012; Yang, 2009; Yu, 2006; Zhu & Robinson 2010), little is known about to what extent the online participation on the internet in China can support the civic literacy development of Chinese internet users, and how this function could be better utilised.

This study wants to investigate the possible values of online participation in developing Chinese internet users' civic literacy by examining the nature of their online participatory behaviours. I will choose 2-3 online events which have provoked and attracted extensive online discussion, and will collect discussion threads from online forums, news portals and micro-blogs. I will use content and discourse analysis to identify the main themes and discourses of these online discussions, then further explore the possible values and implications these themes and discourses might have on the three essential components of Chinese internet users' civic literacy, namely, civic knowledge, skills and dispositions (Branson & Quigley, 1998).

The civic literacy level of Chinese internet users is critical for the effectiveness of online civic participation in China, which is essential for the progress of China's democracy. Meanwhile, the effect of the internet in developing participators' civic literacy depends on how it is used. The result of this study, which is based on examining the nature of Chinese internet users' online participatory behaviour, is helpful to understand the possibility of fostering Chinese internet users' civic literacy via online participation, and to find implications on how to turn this possibility into reality.

Session II

Gillian Bolsover

Cross-National Comparative Research: Challenges, Limitations, Problems and Payoffs

Nothing can be understood in isolation; it is only through comparison that the properties of even the simplest item can be evaluated. Comparison reveals both difference and similarity, and can shine a critical light on the researcher's own biases. Writing about the history of comparative politics, Wiarda goes so far as to say "political science as a discipline has always been most illuminating when it employed a comparative approach (and) that the foremost thinkers in the history of political thought have rather consistently been students of comparative politics" (2002, p. 3). This same statement could be equally true for many other fields of scholarship. However, although comparison is at the heart of all academic research, this is not always made explicit.

In researching the Chinese Internet, I believe that cross-national comparative methodological approaches are particularly useful in helping answer the question of how existing theories in Internet studies may need to be modified in order to apply in the Chinese context. Rather than arguing for exceptionalism, comparative approaches recognize that, particularly in a globalized world and on the global technology of the Internet, users will have some similarities and some differences. Comparative approaches are the appropriate method by which to illuminate and investigate these differences.

This paper will lay out different approaches to comparative research, such as most similar and most different systems designs (Przeworski & Teune, 1970), giving examples of how they could be productively applied in researching issues related to the Chinese Internet. I will outline some of the issues that must be considered when constructing a comparative methodology, such as the problems with picking comparable case studies in different countries and the issues that must be considered when selecting websites for cross-national comparison. I will also cover some of the known issues in comparing data cross-nationally, such as the fact that Chinese respondents are much less likely than respondents from many other cultures to choose extreme values in survey responses (Harzing, 2006).

However, this paper will conclude with the benefits of cross-national research and the strong contribution that they can make to academic knowledge. The Internet is a global technology and some argue that it leads to the reduction of cultural difference, yet it is also clear that many differences remain between Internet users based on their social, cultural, economic and political situations. I will argue, in this paper, that as Chinese Internet researchers, rather than restricting our studies and knowledge to this one (albeit highly important) geographic area, we should perform more explicitly comparative research in order to understand how Chinese Internet users fit in as part of a global whole and to interrogate how research conducted in other contexts can help enlighten our understanding the situation in China.

References

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OU Weiwei

Ethic Difficulties of Internet Research

Internet research is going on in-depth in China in recent years due to the rapid spreading use of Internet in China. However, the context of doing research , to a large extent, has been different, so does the methodology or ethics of Internet research. All these changing factors may exert great influence on the quality, credibility, reliability and validity of Internet research. In this paper proposal, the attention will be drawn to research ethics under the new context.

The Internet has provided the researcher with new forms of social life that are remarkable in their diversity, accessibility and persistence, and at the same time, the Internet facilitates in low-cost reproduction, instantaneous dissemination and radical decentralization. However, the very possibility of research depends on the good will of the populations studied. To needlessly alienate them by exploiting their online activities where consent and involvement might have been negotiate is not only disrespectful, but also destructive of the research enterprise(Bakardjieva and Feenberg, 2001). Moreover, representativeness of samples, sample bias and respondent bias, all of them constitutes the ethic difficulties for researchers in Internet research.

When we do quantitative research, we need to get some data or information about the real situation to help us analyze or explain what we research. Then there are several problems that we need to handle. How do we choose samples? How to get consent from the sample we studied? The consent and involvement of samples is essential to our Internet research. Anything out of the unwillingness of samples may bring a negative influence on the credibility and validity to our study. However, the Internet research usually is closely related people's personal life or something of privacy, then most people would not like to tell the truth or get involved into the research.

In addition, the current situation of Internet use in the mainland is complex. People's Internet use is associated with his social background or demographic factors. Those who show willingness to get involved into research share some similar factors, or in other words, they may have the same social background or demographic factors. Many problems, such as the representativeness of samples, sample bias and respondent bias, may arise. Any little error of them will lead to a big difference, and affect the research result, analysis or explanation directly.

In a nutshell, subtle these problems may be , but they occupy an important position in our Internet research. Therefore, we need to make a further discussion about these problems to improve our Internet research.

Liu Ran

Government-dominated Governance and the Double-edged Sword: A Critical Review of the Chinese Academic Discourse on Internet Regulation

Along with the rapid growth of Chinese netizens and the impressive development in information communication technologies (ICTs) in China, there has been an increasing academic interest in the Chinese internet, particularly in its potential of promoting social movements, democracy and human rights. However, when it comes to internet policy and governance, the voices of Chinese scholars seem to be overshadowed in the English-dominated academic world. Compared to overseas studies, articles published in Chinese are found to be more conservative, less theoretical, and focus less on the political consequences of internet. What is the major discourse constructed around internet policy, and who are the major architects? Is there a debate happening among Chinese scholars in this authoritarian regime? Is there a different story from the international narratives about internet? This research aims to critically examine and analyze current research on internet policy written in Chinese and published on Mainland Chinese journals or as degree theses, complementing the global narratives from a fresh new angle.

Combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods, this research critically analyzes the construction process of the Chinese academic discourse on internet governance. Reviewing 226 articles on internet governance drawn from the Chinese National Knowledge Institution Database (CNKI), this research particularly focuses on the authors' identities and their affiliate institutions, the subjects and objects of internet governance, the regulation frameworks analyzed in academic papers, and the image of internet as a technology. Findings indicate that the discourse on internet governance is highly coherent in mainland China. The construction of academic discourse involves not only scholars, but also a variety of government institutions; besides, a comparison with random sample shows that the presence of government affiliated authors is more significant in this particular research area. Moreover, the state government is regarded as the major subjectivity and the dominant player, while other stakeholders and the global arena are largely neglected. Overseas experiences are frequently cited to justify the role of government, while the larger global arena of internet governance discussion is basically ignored. Most importantly, by depicting the internet as a "double-edged sword" in the first place, the image of government as the major and dominated player in the regulating framework is rationalized and legitimized. Based on a guideline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this paper further explores the negative consequences of internet proposed in academic narratives, trying to map the power relations in the architect building process as well as the most urgent government concerns about the cyberspace and the information technology.

Session III

Fan Boyang

Tweeting Social Characteristics: How social media usage differentiate between International NGO in China and other counties

Social Media sites, such as Twitter, with interactivity, decentralized structure, and formal networking ties, not only boost nonprofits' capacity for strategic stakeholder communications (e.g. Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Waters & Jamal, 2011), but also provide a way to expand advocacy efforts by reaching new networks of community actors, by keeping the flame alive and by mobilizing those networks to take action (Guo & Saxton, 2012). A bunch of scholars have explored advocacy nonprofit organizations' adoption of social media (Auger, 2013; Waters & Jamal, 2011; Briones et al. 2010). However, most of these studies only examine the prevalence of social media, or whether or how nonprofit organizations use social media; they have merely touch on the difference usage between difference cultural and political background, such as whether nonprofit organizations in China and other developed countries have different type of preference in using the internet to achieve their advocacy, mobilization and organization goals? And are they using the same core dynamic feature of social media sites—the frequent brief messages, or status updates, hashtags, hyperlinks, the organization sends to its network of followers? Thus the purpose of this study is to make some effort in this direction, explore and assess the difference work on social media (Sina. Weibo and Twitter) between 22 international nonprofit organizations working in China and in parent country (44 organization in total), evaluate and compare the characteristic on different platform. After briefly examining the prevalence of previously identified communicative and advocacy constructs on organizations' media messages, including the frequent of strategies, like hashtags, hyperlinks, retweet, content analysis that explores the audience's responds and comments are conducted. The numbers of followers, tweets are also compared.

The paper finds that the international organizations in developed counties are more influential than in China. The former group has more followers than the latter group, as well as twitters. Besides, international organizations focus more on interaction with their followers, since they followed more persons and conducted feedbacks more. Even though they have same strategies on the whole, using various skills, like hashtags, hyperlinks and rewteets in 11 categories of advocacy tactics (Guo & Saxton, 2012), they have different emphasis. International organizations are more likely to focus on building community and calling to action, while Chinese international organizations are more likely to contain education and grassroot lobbing contents. However, Chinese organizations value interaction and support between peer organizations more. The article presents two characteristics of the comparison. As internet is a global platform with equal and democratic features, internet nonprofit organizations have similar advocacy tactics on social media platforms. However, as Chinese civil society is not as mature as some developed counties and has more sentimental relationship with government, like U.S.A. and UK, it is proper to use more basic function of social media to educate and inform public.

Zeng Yukun

The Edward Snowden Affair – A digital anthropological analysis

This paper analyzed Snowden affair, especially his stay, arrival and leave from China (Hong Kong), with (digital) anthropological theories and methods. In the first place, this paper traced the circulation of Edward Snowden, especially his arrival in and leaving from China. Through comparison of Chinese netizens' and American netizens' attitudes, this paper examined how Snowden's circulation in the actual world influenced people's thoughts or imaginations about his revelation. Especially, through diachronic analysis of the news and rumors around Snowden, this article showed how Snowden's leaving from China had a similar revealing function as his leaving from United States. The absence of Snowden made Chinese people rethink their "illiberal" and "undemocratic" status. Combing theories about information (Deacon 2012, Kockelman 2013), semiotics (Silverstein 1976), public secret (Taussig 1999), circulation (Lee and LiPuma 2002, Lee 2008) and value (Graeber 2013), this paper articulated how the performativity of the circulation of the whistleblower Snowden lead Chinese netizens into the a liberalist logic of whistleblower. Then, through a genealogical comparison of Snowden and previous famous exiled or escaped whistleblowers in China, this paper documents how this liberal logic between whistleblowers and their circulations (leavings and escapes) was established during the Cold War. Then, this paper also examined how digitality played an important role in Snowden affair and how China's special digitality shaped Snowden's special circulation in and around China.

Chen Keru

Online Activism Upgrading: Case Study on Environmental Collective Events

With the entwined development of online activism and contentious politics, normal people start to gain a say in public discourse and also influence the policy agenda. Environmental issue has been one of the key entry point on which society starts to bargain with the government. However, with the government become more skillful on Internet control and more willing to response social demand, the collective actions on environmental issue go beyond government expectation, and turn out to be more violent and irrational. PX protests in Xiamen and Dalian were carried out in a peaceful way labeled as "walking". In 2012, Shifang and Qidong events, quite opposite scenarios were presented with the direct violent conflicts between government and activists. There are definitely different variables in explaining the upgrading of the activism, but Internet seems to be a crucial one. From Xiamen PX event to Qidong protest, the Internet has always been in this society-state arena as widely acknowledged, but the transformation of the online network per se has been overlooked. This change of online discussion and public opinion matters in the way that people carry out their collective action.

The online public opinion focus change from "pure" environmental issue toward "anti-local government" is a necessary reason that drives environmental protests turning violent. The government and the society share the cyberspace as their virtual arena of discourse competition. Online dissemination requires eye-catching messages that rightful resistance cannot offer. Also, rightful resistance (petition, i.e. Shangfang) has been proved unproductive in fulfilling social demand and exerts pressure on the local government. Under that circumstance, activists prefer taking irrational protesting methods while producing supports from limited controlled online community. Government lost the leverage in the discourse power, meaning lost its infrastructural power to negotiate with the society, and finally lead to physical conflicting scenario.

This article does comparative case study and content analysis. Case study include four environmental collective action: Xiamen PX protest, Dalian PX protest, Shifang Event, Qidong Event. In understanding the transformation between cases, a content analysis would be carried out based on major traditional media reports, SNS network (Sina Weibo and Tencent Weibo) to analyze discourse transformation between cases and discussion focus change in the latter two cases.

This article would start from current literature, reviewing the inconsistency of the sociological emotion explanation on China's environmental collective actions in recent years and propose an Internet discourse perspective in understanding the upgrading of the contention. It would adopt a state-Internet-society structure in the second part to interpret the transformation of the collective actions by content analysis and comparative case study. Finally, it attempts to demonstrate that there is a mismatch between government Internet control and society demand raised through the Internet, thus suggesting a more deliberative cyberspace in need.

Session IV

Du Juan

Free Speech, Public Order and Other Interests: Analysis on Value Orientation of China's Network Real-Name Policy.

The emergence and penetration of the Internet provides an unprecedented and unparalleled platform for freedom of expression. It greatly reduces the threshold to access to the public and encourages the open expression. However, the negative effects brought by the Internet are obvious, mainly due to the anonymity and the near-zero cost for expression. It also challenges the existing regulation for expression. To address the problems, China proposes a series policy on network real-name system. Simply speaking, the network real-name system is an institutional design in which the virtual identities of the network users could correspond to their real identities.

However, the heated debate on network real-name policy has never been ended. Advocates usually take public interests as the start point and view the essence of network real-name system as the observance of public rules. In their opinion, the implement of network real-name policy is benefit for regulating the network and reducing the negative effects, thus protecting individuals' rights and interests.

In response to the reasons proposed by the supporters, the opponents make the targeted arguments following the totally different path based on the rights and freedoms. Among them, free speech is one of the most controversial issues, because it is a linkage of citizen's right and political freedom. It is a claim deeply rooted in liberalism. Nevertheless, it is strongly argued by the communitarians. The communitarians do not deny the freedom of expression, but they consider the public good or public interest as the priority. These totally different approaches are also reflected in the controversies on network real-name policy.

This paper examines the motivators and purposes of relevant laws and decisions dated from 2002 according to a framework constituted by individual, organizational and social levels. The result shows that current network real-name policy in China presents a rather strong administrative orientation. Although individual rights and public order are touched, they are not the first and major concerns. There is something to do with the traditional political thinking and practices, where the relationship between government and citizen is to manage and to be managed, rather than to serve and to be served.

In a democratic society, the exercise of public powers must follow the due process and respect the private rights and freedom. Nevertheless, it is not fully reflected in a series of laws and decisions concerning network real-name system; both individual rights and public interest do not receive the respects they deserve. To ensure the healthy and further development of the Internet, it is suggested to reexamine the existing real-name policy, and to reconsider the choices and allocation of values and interests among individuals, organizations, government and the society.

Yang Xiaonan

Opinion Leadership, Seeding Strategies and Information Adoption Behaviour on Sina Weibo

Consumer-to-consumer communications are growing on social networks (Alba et al., 1997), and Word-of-Mouth (WoM) is spreading marketing information (Brown et al., 2007). Viral marketing is now a feasible strategy, growing rapidly and attracting the interests of both academics and practitioners.

Viral marketing is defined as the act of propagating company-designed marketing messages through the help and cooperation of individual consumers (Liu-Thompkins, 2012), or as electronic WoM communications in an online social network context (Park & Lee, 2007). A seeding strategy, the process of selecting target individuals for the diffusion of such marketing information, is one of the crucial initial steps.

Consumers are not all equal and viral marketing requires the identification of leaders and followers. For instance, Van den Bulte (2008, P3), proposed that "some customers' adoptions and opinions have a disproportionate influence on others' adoption" and Iyengar et al., (2011) have examined this proposition. Individuals, who informally influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behaviours with relative frequency, are defined as opinion leaders (Roger, 1983). They are experts in specific product or service categories, using their informative and influential power to spread information or being consulted about certain products or services (Meera, 1989; King & Summers, 1970).

Little is known about opinion leaders in viral marketing and the results are contradictory. For example, Hinz et al., (2011) find that well-connected individuals, i.e. opinion leaders, are significant to seeding strategies and viral marketing. However, according to Liu-Thompkins (2012), these individuals have only a limited influence on subsequent generations of consumers.

In particular, the lack of a consumer perspective on viral marketing represents a significant research gap. Much research has focused on computer simulations of networks, and little is known about motivations, attitudes and the reasons behind the behaviour of leaders and followers (Iyengar et al., 2011; Watts & Dodds, 2007). Furthermore, national culture may be an important influence, but research has focused exclusively on North American consumers, and studies in other national contexts are urgently needed.

The current research aims to address these gaps by exploring followers' attitudes and motivations in adopting information provided by opinion leaders through viral marketing. The project addresses the question that to what extent are followers affected by an opinion leader's posts and why? To answer these questions, in-depth interviews with Sina Weibo users have been conducted and questionnaires are planned.

To summarise, the proposed study is intended to enrich the existing literature, which has mainly considered a Western perspective and has been limited to either computer simulation or to one industry, i.e. pharmaceuticals (Watts & Dodds, 2007; Iyengar et al., 2001).

Finally, the research would fit the theme of the conference, and CIRC tracks in terms of 1) the online practices of China's "netizens", and 2) the effects of mobile phones or computing devices on the business environment in China.

CAO Xiaojie

Discursive Events and Everyday Politics: Catchwords in the Chinese Cyberspace

Much unlike the grand events in the sense of traditional social history, discursive events play an important role in the history of cyberculture – if there is such a history for this emerging culture. The discursive dimension of the Internet and its everyday-political implications has been greatly overlooked by the present-day Internet scholars, compared with some popular perspectives such as social protest and movement which emphasize on the socio-political implications of the Internet (e.g., Yang, 2009; Zheng, 2007). Cyberculture focuses more on the discursive level and produces a new "language game" (Wittgenstein, 1967), or a digital dialect, within which lots of catchwords circulate. Through the mechanism of discursive event, a significant way of Chinese cybercultural practice, as well as the other everyday-like, trivialized online practices, this culture gradually legitimizes itself and marks itself onto the map of dominant culture.

Discursive event, within the whole logic of this paper, reveals a kind of individual "little narratives" (Malpas, 2003: 30) rather than "grand narrative" in the traditional sense. It differs from several similar concepts, which are often used by the Internet scholars or sociolinguists, for instance "internet incident (wangluo shijian)", "word medium (cimeiti)", "new media event" (Qiu and Chan, 2011), "vocabulary event" (Sokolowski, 2013), etc. This means that, as a collectively created event, it extends either the individually trivialized and banal life or the heated social issues (relevant to personal concerns) to a much broader sense: through the symbolic activities, the voice and way of thinking of ordinary people reaches to more and more people and thus gains the power to make some political or social changes.

Based on two cases, this paper will generally explore three issues: 1) the meaning of a "discursive event" and the making of catchword(s); 2) Its provocative factors and logic of diffusion; 3) the influence of a discursive event, as a symbolic event, to the political (particularly the micro everyday politics) status quo of China. Critical discourse analysis and netnography are the two main methods.

Session V

Liu Yang

Performance and governance of micro-blog rumors

Chinese micro-blog produced in 2007.It spent only a short period of five or six years from production to development ,small to large, weak to strong, the edge to the center and non-mainstream to mainstream. With the development of micro-blog, its negative factors -- micro-blog rumors -- also gradually aroused the wide attention of the community. How do we control the micro-blog rumors? The problem has an important significance for the long-term development of the micro-blog.Micro-blog has the virtual, secluded ,convenient and interactive features so it is possible for the breeding and spread of micro-blog rumors. Micro-blog rumors` manifestations are various. According to the nature, there are goodwill rumors and vitriolic rumors. According to the motivation, there are intentional rumors and unintentional rumors. According to the subject, there are micro-blog rumors, large V rumors, grass root rumors, the official rumors, the media rumors, and ordinary netizen rumors. Micro-blog users can make and spread rumors. Micro-blog users may have revolution, hatred, extreme, crowd or worship psychology. From the perspective of species, micro-blog rumors are divided into political rumors, economic rumors, culture rumors and entertainment rumors and so on. These micro-blog rumors' performances reflect that Chinese network legal system are not perfect. China citizens` legal consciousness is weak. The government crisis management ability is insufficient. Chinese democratic system and the public mechanism of information of government are not perfect. Micro-blog free boundary is the rule of law. Due to the lack of social rationality, legal awareness and sense of responsibility, citizens can not find the ways to resolve the social problems. In this case, Micro-blog rumors have a chance. Some of the rumormongers grasp the dropping characteristics of government trust to go on an orgy of releasing and spreading false information. Some of the micro-blog rumors will not only disrupt the normal order of society, but also attack viciously on individual or organization. At the same time, they may infringe upon the legitimate rights of citizens. The spread of micro-blog rumors also endangers the authority of public power, so the low trust of the government becomes more vulnerable.

Based on the above problems, China should take timely corresponding measures to solve them. We should construct legal system with the constitution as the core, and constantly enhance the legal awareness of netizen. Establishing and improving the public mechanism and feedback mechanism of government information are very important. We should cultivate independent social organization to dispel the rumors. What`s more, establishing micro-blog supervision system is necessary.

Li Ning Yi

The Institutional Changing Of Network Real-Name System (RNS) Policy In China

Ever since the Decision on regarding Strengthening the Protection of Internet Information was approved on Dec. 28 2012, the new legal document has brought the discussion on Network Real-name System (NRS) in sight again. The introduction of this decision is considered to be China's determination to implement the Network Real-name System (NRS). In fact, as early as in 2002, China has already begun to carry out NRS mandatorily in certain internet-related business. However, at that time, it is administrative regulations and local regulations that provided the legal basis for the NRS measurements. Those legal documents are in lower orders in the whole legal hierarchy; In contrast, the new Decision is promulgated by Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the permanent body of supreme legislature in China. The full implementation of the NRS seems to be a foregone conclusion. NRS assumed: anonymity is the main reason of all kinds of anomic behavior on the internet. It also leads to the legal management out of control. So it will effectively control the occurrence of misconduct in the network through real-name system, because it makes the identities of perpetrator clear. While the real-name system comes into implementation, it also has to face a few dilemmas. It claims to protect private data, but was doubted that it is spying the netizens' social behaviors, and destroying the network ecology. Also, this policy is described as the inevitable call of network economic improvement, meanwhile it is also being questioned as the abuse of power by the authority.

This article is aiming to analyze the transformation of China's NRS regulations and police in the past decade. A text analysis on relevant legal text ever since 2002 , as well as a framing analysis on news text from official news media will try to portray out the changing of the real-name system on range, intensity, means, and management targets during different stages, so that to understand the transformation of China's Internet industry management policies in the past decade.

Hong Tao

Mapping issue publics using Sina Weibo

Digital technologies change the visibility of social interactions and bring previously inaccessible venues under scholarly scrutiny. This paper seeks to apply this insight on empirical studies of civic engagement in contemporary China by using textual and topological data from Sina Weibo, the most popular of homegrown microblogging platforms. Weibo has played a pivotal role in the publication of numerous sociopolitical events since its launch in 2009 and become an integral part of associational life in China. Due to its popularity as a public media platform, we aim to analyze discussions and mobilizations around specific issues on Weibo as well as to map out the connections between those partaking in it. We argue that our issue-based methodology, exploratory in nature and largely inspired by the pioneering works of Digital Methods Initiative (1) and Sciences-Po Médialab (2), has the potential of offering a refreshing take on the question of civil society development in China, for it rejects predetermined social groupings in favor of empirical evidences of civic participation (3), echoing as it does the century-old shared understanding of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey: "Issues spark a [political] public into being" (4). In this paper, besides a general introduction into our epistemological underpinnings, we will also detail our data collection protocol, present preliminary results from our studies of two online issues publics — food safety (5) and gay advocacy — and, last but not least, discuss the various challenges and potential perils of digital methods and our future plan of complementing them with offline ethnographic studies.

Session VI

Ding Fangzhou

Social Media as Political Arena: Framing, Discourse Competition and Power Struggling

Technology is constitutive of society (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). There is a historical and social context where new information and communication technologies are used by political actors to achieve political consequences. In this sense, it is possible for communication scholars to look into the change of power structure through the texts, practices and processes provided online.

In the context of contemporary China, offline political process is seldomly transparent, thus social media may provide the best platform and plenty of empirical data to investigate how political struggling is carried out through the communication process of public issues, as well as how political actors like citizens, media, opinion leaders and government jointly construct the public discursive process.

Castells (2011) indicated that the communication realm, including the new media and the horizontal networks of communication in the new technological environment, is the field in which power relationships are played out. To follow this perspective, this study will consider social media as political arena for power struggling within the framework of political communication and address the following questions: How is the communication process of public issues work through framing construction and discourse competition on Chinese social media? What are the roles of issue public, media, opinion leaders and government in this process and the networked relationships between them? To what extent is this networked relationship reflecting the changing landscape of power structure in Chinese society?

Based on empirical data of top-ten topics on Chinese social media----sina weibo from January 2013 to September 2013, this study first investigated how major social contradictions and focus problems in the period of transitional China are demonstrated and represented in the communication process of public issues on social media. Second, by analyzing the sources of these public issues (see Table 1), this study explored the interplay between the media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda on sina weibo. Third, by framing analysis of the event of "Linwu vendor", this study interpreted the framing and discourse competition among diverse political actors and their roles in the communication process of public issues on social media.

Conclusions include: (1) Issue public is becoming the major agenda-setter instead of media organizations on Chinese social media. (2) Media thus has to maintain their authority by framing themselves as professional interpreters. (3) Opinion leaders may mobilize more actors into the deliberative process by strategically utilizing framing to push up the visibility of public issues. (4) Government learned how to directly push policy agenda into the public agenda on social media, however, the symbols created by the government were captured by other actors to form a symbolic power. (5) The union of civic discourse, elite discourse and media discourse may give pressure to the official discourse, however, this online discursive strength still could not transform into the decisive strength in the political process offline.

Theoretically, a vast number of scholars have indicated that citizens might play a greater role in the political communication process in the changing context of social media age (Lievrouw, 2011; Papacharissi, 2010; Bennett, 2012). In other words, to challenge the privileged positions of government, media and opinion leaders, and thus change the disprivileged position of themselves in power struggling practices. Nevertheless, the results of this study confirmed what McNair (2011) had claimed that social media use has become the standard communication practice for all the political actors. The change of power structure online still could not transform into the decisive strength in the Chinese political process offline.

FAN Mai

Living beyond the "Great Wall" of China

With rapid economic development, China has become an increasingly popular destination for American expatriates to seek new opportunities and life experience. This recent trend raises new empirical questions regarding how American expatriates from various social backgrounds navigate their professional and personal life in China. What role the communication technologies play in this context? Studying the media use of expatriates living in China broaden the conceptualization of "Chinese Internet" and its users. What is Chinese about the Internet in China, if the comparably more cosmopolitan users, such as expatriates living in Mainland China, are constantly straddling and blurring the distinction between "Chinese Internet" and the global Internet in their everyday lives?

This proposed paper is based on my dissertation work, which conceptualize the migration experience of expatriates and their use of media technologies through the lens of "boundary work." There are many different forms of boundaries. In this case, the focus is on language boundaries, cultural boundaries, ethnic boundaries and technological boundaries. Being a foreigner in China set an individual apart, for a number of reasons. Based on over 60 interviews with American expatriates in several major Chinese cities, this study outlines a number of major Internet-based media used by the English-speaking expatriates. Some of these media are catering particular to the interest and needs of expatriates living in China. These expat-specific media represent both the connection and conflict between the Chinese Internet and the global Internet. In specific, this study identifies two typologies to conceptualize the expat-specific media: one is the "boundary-setting" media and the other one is the "boundary-bridging" media. In this proposed paper, I will discuss one prominent example for each type in more details.

The use of Virtual Private Network (VPN) is especially prevalent among expatriates in China. Expatriates learned and adopted this network technology through their social connections within the expat community. The main reason for expatriates adopt this paid network service is to use major social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) which are blocked in mainland China. While the use of VPN enables expatriates to circumvent the "Great Firewall" in China, it reinforces the social divide between expatriates and the local Chinese community. Therefore, VPN is classified as a "boundary-setting" media in this context.

A good example representing the "boundary-bridging" media is an English blog called "ChinaSMACK." Founded by a Chinese English-leaner based in Shanghai, the website has evolved into a major media outlet for English-speaking expatriates to get "unfiltered" and trending information about China and Chinese people. The main goal of the website is to bridge the gap between the Chinese websites and the English-speaking world by directly translating the contents from the Chinese cyberspace. The contents of ChinaSMACK usually generate active discussion among its audience, mostly expatriates who live or have lived in China. Occasionally, the comments from ChinaSMACK's English-speaking audience have been translated back to Chinese and published in Chinese social media websites. This circulation of information and reactions across different languages and media platforms represents a new form of interaction in Chinese cyberspace.

SHEN Hong

The political economy of global Internet governance: A China-centric study

If the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Dubai conference in 2012 had drawn much journalistic attention to the emerging field of global Internet governance, the Snowden Leaks in 2013 further complicated the picture of contemporary geopolitical-economic struggles over the global Internet. With the increasingly growing presence and influence of the Chinese cyberspace, how to capture and understand China's complicated and evolving position toward the management of this crucial communication and information infrastructure, is of critical importance for the entire world.

Against such background, this paper explores China's stance toward global Internet governance by presenting a historical overview of its unfolding policy contour over the management of the extraterritorial Internet in the past three decades, starting from its first international email in September 1987, to the ITU's Dubai conference in December 2012. With the aim of documenting China's engagement with the extraterritorial, rather than domestic network, this paper divides the historical process into three stages, marked by three highpoints of China's frictions and adjustments with the global Internet: the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003-2005, Google versus China in 2010, and the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12) in 2012.

The first section looks at China's early efforts of network building and Internet connection in the pre-WSIS era, followed by a second section examining China's continuing efforts and experiments in hope of rebalancing the governing structure of global Internet from WSIS to 2010. The third section witnesses a more assertive as well as more sophisticated Chinese approach after the 2010 Google versus China saga into the WCIT-12. After a brief review, each section is organized according to John Mathiason's framework of global Internet governance: (1) Technical Standardization; (2) Resource Allocation and Assignment; and (3) Public Policy (Mathiason, 2008).

The historical analysis shows, being long aware of the dominant American power over the global Internet, China has been vigorously pursuing a rebalancing of the existent Internet governance system. However, with China's continuing and accelerated re-integration into the global capitalism, the popular label of an authoritarianism-based "cyber-sovereignty" is inadequate to explain the evolution of such a governance approach, which is both built upon and departed from the US-centric, market-oriented Internet governance scheme. China's position, based more on practical concerns, aims at engaging with, rather than detaching from, the existing structure and policy of the extraterritorial Internet in order to assert greater power to influence it to its preferred direction.

Main Conference

Welcome and Spotlight Session

Tom McDonald

Little treasures: parents and their QZone baby photos in a small rural Chinese town

This paper emerges from research into the use of social media in a small rural town in south-west China (www.ucl.ac.uk/social-networking). As part of this research, a visual analysis of research participants' QZone posts showed that the most popular type of status updates and photographs related to issues surrounding childbearing, or the first few months of a child's life. These posts, in which babies are often referred to as 'little treasures' demonstrate how QZone provides a space in which parents are able to portray this relationship as one of adoration.

However this paper does not restrict its analysis to the content of these posts, instead it draws on 13 months of intensive ethnographic fieldwork within the town to situate these posting practices within my participants' own lives and the society and culture of the town. The paper discusses two findings that emerge when considering the social context of these posting practices:

Firstly, the most prolific producers of posts relating to a new baby come from the child's mother, particularly during the traditional month-long period of mother-and-baby confinement at home (manyue) immediately following the birth. During this period QZone appears to have become a particularly important way in which housebound new mothers are able to maintain contact with their friends. As such this paper suggests that QZone may be helping to mitigate the effects of this isolation.

Secondly, QZone also becomes an important means by which parents in the town share the growth of their child with others. The most notable example of this is the 'baby 100-day photograph' (baobei baitian zhao), where the baby attends a photo-session at a local photo studio. The tradition of the 'baby 100-day photograph' has always been aimed at producing a book of edited photographs which are normally kept by the parents and grandparents in their homes. However, in recent years, QZone has also become an important secondary destination for the 'baby 100-day photograph'.

QZone can thus be seen to have an effect on the role of the town's photography studios, who have had adapted their services and the final images that they produce in response to customers' requirements that the images be uploaded onto QZone pages. Furthermore, these photos have, in recent years, become ever more fantastical in nature, employing increasingly fanciful and psychedelic effects. I suggest that these decorations contribute to potential for Chinese baby photos produced in photo studios to have a 'magical efficacy', in which parents intentionally seek to place their child within an illusory world and experiment with different imaginations of the child.

Aside from illustrating the importance of understanding the meaning of these postings by situating them within wider social practices, the paper combines the above two findings to suggest that QZone becomes not only an important avenue through which parents document their child's early life, but also one in which QZone allows parents space to explore the possibilities of what kind of person their child may become.

Parallel Sessions I

Internet Culture

Katrien Jacobs

The Art of Sexual Climax and Failure on the Chinese Internet

This paper delves into the digital sex lives of young women in China and Hong Kong who have projected fantasies of sexual climax and failure onto homo-erotic fictions and animations (Boys' Love.) I will analyze how a type of feminine pornography is expressed in online storytelling and fan comics, and how it differs from heteronormative pornography such as Japanese AV. The paper envisions digital youth's sexually explicit knowledge as a contradictory impulse towards glorifying orgasm and admitting failure. I envision this theme as an ethnographic project or ongoing dialogue with yaoi fans in Guanzhou and Hong Kong. The backdrop of this study is mainland China's ongoing "war on pornography" and how the definition of pornography is being reconfigured by various online communities. Since China has never allowed internet porn industries such as current porno-tube models to be legalized, there is an opportunity for micro-niche producers and cottage industries to provide sexual knowledge and entertainment.

Feng Miao, Yuan Elaine

Public opinion on Weibo: The case of the Diaoyu Island Dispute

The century-old dispute between China and Japan over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) islands in East China Sea was rekindled when news of an attempt by the Japanese government to "nationalize" the islands in September 2012 incited strong responses in China. The Chinese government quickly denounced the attempt and refuted Japan's territorial claim over the islands. Grassroots activists from Hong Kong took the more radical action of landing on the islands, which had been in the effective control by Japan. Yet the agitation, similar to that of previous anti-Japanese popular movements, was most palpable online. Infuriated reactions to the news once again took the Internet by storm.

This chapter traces and analyzes the sentiments and reactions of Chinese citizens to the events in the dispute over the Diaoyu islands on Sina Weibo, China's largest social media network. The Internet and social media have emerged in recent years as an alternative discursive space for the public expression of opinions in China. In the case of the dispute, the Internet not only provided a symbolic space for expressing nationalist sentiments, but also served as a platform for formulating and organizing protest actions.

The analysis situates the observed popular sentiments and opinions in the structural constraints of historical memories shared by Chinese online users. Such memories provide the context for understanding the online nationalist tendency with regard to the historical development of sovereignty of the Chinese state. The analysis also makes the case that these sentiments and responses not only reflect the objective socio-economic positions of the online population but also result from their subjective consciousness of their material positions.

This chapter further argues that the online opinions and voices about the Diaoyu islands dispute are variegated manifestations of bottom-up spontaneous popular nationalism, which should not be dismissed as simply an outcome of government manipulation or official ideology. Nor can it be understood as unified, passive and reactive. Instead, the online users demonstrate unique characteristics in engaging in national politics.

Florian Schneider

Digital Nationalism in Online Networks: The Diaoyu/Senakaku Island Dispute on China's Web

Over the past years, a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea has emerged as the object of arguably one of the most explosive security conflicts in Asia. The islands, called Diaoyu in Chinese and Senkaku in Japanese, have long been an issue of contention between China, Japan, and Taiwan, with each side claiming sovereignty over these territories. Recent developments, however, have been driven by dynamics that are significantly more complex than those that International Relations scholars have explored for past standoffs over these islands. Today, it is not merely the different governments who have been clashing over who owns these contested territories, but private actors and organizations have also contributed to the issue by constructing this conflict over national sovereignty online. In China, netizens commenting on the issue have been advocating their personal vision of patriotism (aiguo zhuyi), some angrily denouncing Japanese authority over the islands as a humiliation for the Chinese nation (guochi), others calling for restraint or collaboration across national borders. The outcome of these complex processes is a mix of conflicting statements and actions that at times seem to assuage the tensions, at other times seem to escalate the situation to the point that the online anger spills into the streets as public protest.

By examining the current territorial dispute in the East China Sea, this paper asks: How do networked actors use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to shape nationalist discourse in the People's Republic of China (PRC), vis-à-vis Japan as foreign Other? Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, it examines how the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands issue is shaped on the Chinese side through the digital interactions of different actors. Using digital tools, such as the issuecrawler software, the paper shows how these various actors are linked together, and how interest groups and individuals use digital infrastructures to construct a discourse on national history and sovereignty. It further explores what statements actors make on the topic by subjecting the relevant websites to a qualitative multi-modal discourse analysis. The case study will demonstrate how Chinese animosities towards Japan are reworked in the service of community building, an activity beneficial both to the state and to private actors, although often for very different reasons. It will further show how this digital discourse creates the backdrop before which Chinese politicians have to negotiate their actions vis-a-vis Japan, and will discuss how this dynamic adds a layer to political decision-making that needs to be systematically explored if we are to understand how conflicts over sovereignty play out in the information age.

Leung Wing-Fai

Biopolitics in the blogosphere: Lou Jing, mixed heritage and the discourses of Chinese ethnicity

Lou Jing was born in Shanghai to a Chinese mother and an African American father. Her father left China before Lou was born and she had never met him, and Lou's mother brought her up as a single mother. In 2009, the 20-year-old entered the Shanghai television company Dragon TV's talent show Go Oriental Angel! and became one of five finalists from Shanghai. On the show, she was nicknamed 'Black Pearl' and 'Chocolate Girl' - Lou's skin colour became an issue among netizens after a blog entitled 'Is it possible Lou Jing's father is Obama?' engendering heated debates between those in support of her and racist slurs of Lou and her mother. The negative reaction to Lou Jing in the Chinese blogosphere (including the initial trolling and human flesh search activities) generated numerous debates and positive support from both within China and abroad, the majority of the discussion covering three main topics namely racism, gender politics in China and Chinese ethnic identity from a range of posters and from different perspectives. The current study is the result of discourse analysis of over 100 websites (written, verbal and visual texts) searched using the Chinese terms and their English translations: 'Lou Jing', 'Eurasian', 'mixed race, China' and 'hunxueer' (literally, mixed-blood children, the Chinese term for someone of mixed heritage).

The study reveals how the case of Lou Jing subverts the overlapping boundaries of gender, race and Chinese ethnicity, demonstrated by online debates on mixed Chinese/black heritage which reveal the persistent influences of historical and contemporary discourses in a rapidly globalizing China. What becomes apparent in this case study of Lou Jing is that her mixed-race-ness destabilizes the discursive delineation of group boundaries, and demonstrates the instability of the civilization/barbarian categories and political distinctions created and maintained discursively in dichotomies: domestic/foreign, China/West and pride/humiliation. Numerous netizens evoked tropes of race which were aligned with natural sciences as in Michel Foucault's conceptualization of biopolitics (1990). In the formation of the nation state, unity might be thought to be threatened by alien elements, so these tropes of race were justified by scientific and technological progress, finding expression in the discourse of racial superiority, eugenics and racism (Macey, 2009, p. 186).

The case of Lou Jing interrogates Chinese ethnic identities and is a prime example of the contestation of biopower practised on the internet as 'bottom-up grassroots nationalism', expressed through the civilization/barbarian distinction and manifested in narratives of national pride and national humiliation (Callahan, 2010). Conversely, the online arguments, especially those challenging the trolls, interrogate Chinese ethnic identities and assert that these ethnicities had always been unstable. Hence, the 'Cultural Chinese' internet has provided a forum for heated debates of biopolitics in a globalizing China, in which 'the meaning of being Chinese' (Tu, 1991, p. 1) is continuously contested.

Mobile Internet

Natalie Leung, Rodney Chu and David Ip

Virtual driving real: can university youngsters of Hong Kong inform us about a new form of life in the mobile network era?

There is a prevailing notion saying that whereas in the old days (perhaps it is referring to just a decade ago) people solve problems in real life with the help of communication network, now is the era that people (youngsters in particular) go online to check what kind of problems they have to deal with in everyday life. This is what is meant by 'virtual' driving 'real', or to say, instead of shaping the means, the internet shapes the aims, or at least the agenda, of youngsters of the contemporary era. This paper is the first of a series in trying to capture how youngsters have experienced a paradigm shift brought on by a combination of portable communication devices and the internet. To examine in what ways "virtual" is driving "real", we conduct in-depth interviews via convenience sampling with youngsters currently studying in the tertiary sector. The findings are somehow stunning, showing that the traditional worries about Internet addiction and difficulties to get back to the real world are of much less relevance. Instead, most youngsters hop between real and virtual, and virtual life is no more "leisure-only" but an important lens for them to interpret the real world, or even a key driver of their actions in real life. The paper is concluded by raising the possibility of identifying a new form of democracy that we may come to terms with the youngsters of this cyber generation.

Sun Ping

Mobile Terminals Usage in the Classroom: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students in Peking University

As mobile phones and computing devices become ubiquitous on college campuses, the behaviors of undergraduate students during the lectures have changed significantly. They use these devices in a variety of ways, from collecting information about the topics to connecting their friends out of class, or just playing games. Intrigued by the fact that undergraduate students use mobile terminals more or less openly during the lectures in different ways, we want to examine the reasons behind such behaviors.

In the last few years, there has been a growing interest from the researchers to explore students' usage of mobile devices in the process of learning. Some researchers defined this behavior as "m-learning", which means the use of wireless transmission and mobile devices such as PDAs, mobile phones, laptops and tablet PCs for learning. J. Cheon and S. Lee investigated the current state of college students' perceptions toward mobile learning in higher education. They found that although mobile devices are ubiquitous on college campuses, student readiness for mobile learning has yet to be fully explored in the United States. Željka Požgaj and Vesna Bosilj Vukšić found that a majority of students use their mobile phones to access the educational materials and information, but data also show a very frequent mobile phones' adoption for a wide range of inappropriate purposes (such as entertainment and social networking) during the classes. In most of these studies, data were gathered by questionnaires.

In pre-observations, we found that some students used mobile devices for learning, while some just used them for entertainment. Under these conditions, this study attempts to explore: (1) how the mobile terminals have changed undergraduate students' behavior during the lectures; (2) what do they do when they use mobile terminals; (3) what aspects affect their mobile usage? (3) what are their attitudes towards using mobile terminals?

Wang Xinyuan

The Portable World: the appropriation of Mobile ICTs among Chinese Rural Migrants

This paper draws from a long-term ethnographic research into the use of social media among Chinese rural migrant people in a south-east China factory town. China now has 130 million rural migrants, which means the biggest migration in human history. The rural-to-urban migration not only indicates a grand social transformation of Chinese society, but also a significant life transformation of millions of people's life. One of the major problems Chinese rural migrants face is that they have been uprooted from their social networks back in their home villages, which has deprived them of essential support. As a result, rural migrants can be the people who need Internet most in terms of all kinds of information and support. In addition, because of the high mobility of their living situation and inadequate financial capacity, a remarkable percentage of rural migrant's Internet experience started from the ownership of Mobile ICTs. For these reason the paper focuses upon mobile ICTs as the point of entry to look into the daily encounter of the Internet (and especially social media) for Chinese rural migrants and the social consequence of such practices.

This paper will explore three findings as follows: First, an inquiry into the dynamics of the low-end smartphone market in a fast-developing Chinese factory town, as a key component within the digital landscape of the developing China. This is based on the researcher's part-time work experience at a local mobile phone shop and in-depth interviews of local telecom agents and customers. Second, a close-up study of the daily usage of mobile ICTs among selected informants. Most of these rural migrants are closely bound to their work and this section provides a vivid picture of those 'work bound' people's daily appropriation of mobile ICTs who employ them strike a balance between work and life, as well as personal development and financial strategies. Finally, based on the contextual understanding of rural migrants' living experience, an analysis of the role of mobile ICTs among digital have-less populations sheds a more general light on the experience of Chinese rural migrant people. This paper shows how mobile ICTs are now integral to Chinese rural migrants' everyday struggles and living experience, rather than external artifacts seen as separate from an otherwise apathetic mundane life. A systematic content analysis of people's QQ and Wechat posts online reveals complex discrepancies and connections between people's 'portable world' constructed on social media via their mobile ICTs and their offline daily life. The conclusion presents some preliminary thoughts of how the understanding of mobile ICTs usage might contributes to the improvement in the welfare of these diasporic Chinese rural migrants.

Jia Li

"New media, urban dreams and love imagination": Female migrant workers' mobile phone using and changes of marriage relationship discussion

This study explore the mobile phones using (mainly about WeChat and MobileQQ) of young unmarried female migrant workers, who move between city and country, affect their relationship of marriage and love standpoint. The literatures reveal differences of opinion on the adaption methods and body as social capital in their daily life. The urban social experiences and using of modern communication tools, obviously changes have taken place in female workers' subjectivity, and even changed their personal identity and gender relation. Through empirical depth interviews and observation in period of the new generation of migrant workers return home, survey on the marriage and intimate life of these unmarried female workers. This research emphasis of these people's using motivation and how to develop the function of mobile phone to adapt to the new urban life and maintain social networks. The research highlights their living on the edge of vulnerable identity and special quality. In the background of social transformation and modernization process, communication technologies build resistance consciousness in country's unmarried female migrant workers and reconstruct their status and identity. The edge and weakness of the group in the urban and rural duality appears more divided and struggling. New media, like WeChat and MoblieQQ can enlarge acquaintance dating person channel. Connection of Technology capital and physical capital offer them subjectivity of dating appeal and discourse power. New media penetration in life and interpersonal relationship mode changing really refactor the images in the community .The discussion is about under mediated social context, unmarried migrant female's individual consciousness how to happened and changed.

Weibo

Adrian Rauchfleisch, Mike Schaefer

The Multiple Public Spheres of Weibo: On the Forms and Potentials of Online Public Spheres in China.

Public Spheres – where political actions are made transparent, where citizens can inform themselves about decision-makers and critically evaluate their actions – are important facets in modern societies. The advent of social media with its interactive, many-to-many communication in which user-generated content is exchanged and the distinction between senders and receivers is blurred (Kaplan and Haenlein2010) – has led to fiery debates about their democratic potential and the deep-rooting changes they might bring about in many societies (see, e.g. Papacharissi, 2002).

China as an authoritarian country is a particularly interesting case when assessing the potential of online public spheres, because it has the world's largest population, has established its own microcosm of social media and rather successfully limits the reach of outside, non-domestic services such as Facebook or Twitter within its borders (Canaves, 2011).

The question of an emerging or existing online public sphere in China has been the object of considerable scholarly interest. Especially Sina Weibo as one of the most popular social media platforms has been the main focus of many studies. On the one hand, some scholars argue, that Weibo is unable to facilitate a public sphere, because it is an apolitical space where strong censorship is executed and debates are only allowed as a mechanism to stabilize one-party control (MacKinnon, 2011; Sullivan, 2013). On the other hand, some scholars emphasize that the Chinese Government has allowed a limited sphere for public discussion and deliberation in the Internet (Jiang, 2010), where online protest is regularly taking place (Poell, Kloet, & Zeng, 2013; Yang, 2011). Both lines of thinking certainly have merits. In our presentation, we will show that Weibo gives birth to different kinds of public spheres. We will introduce seven conceptual ideal-types of such public spheres, explain their logics and potentials, and illustrate them with examples from our own research as well as from the literature. Some of this evidence will remain fragmentary, but it should demonstrate that it would be worthwhile to empirically analyze where, to what extent and with what effects these forms of public spheres exist.

Joyce Nip, King-wa Fu

Challenging official propaganda? Public opinion leaders on Sina Weibo

This article seeks to understand the implications of the Internet on freedom of information and opinion in China by studying the mechanism of formation of public opinion in 29 corruption cases exposed within two months after the Chinese Communist Party's 18th Congress in 2012. Focusing on Sina Weibo, it examines the relative prominence of various actors as public opinion leaders in the cases. It found that government bodies, followed by news organizations and news workers, were the most important initiators of the cases on Sina Weibo. However, news organizations and online media were the main actors that set the agenda and disseminated information about these cases, suggesting that the media, under the control of the party-state, have continued its dominance of public opinion. This differs from the seemingly agreed position that the party-state has little influence on Weibo. It argues that China's official propaganda has incorporated Weibo into its landscape and is maintaining its dominance in public opinion at least in some issues on the platform.

Zhang Aijun

On microblog and belief

The Internet provides a new platform, new appeal and chance of expression for people's belief. The internet enhances cohesion of belief and centripetal force. Microblog is one of the most important components, and a collection and distribution point for different beliefs. Different beliefs are expressed through microblog by the way of media and fragmentation. Some of them are strong ideological, such as Marxism, Socialism with Chinese characteristics, Democratic Socialism, Liberalism, Nationalism, and Neo-conservatism. They are agitated and formed into equal and plural situation. Compared with the ideological beliefs, non ideological religion beliefs have a weak interaction situation. But different religious values also have their own followers and believers, like Christianity, Buddhism and Islamism. In addition, the rate of thread and repost is relatively high. Every doctrine has many followers and believers, on basis of which, comprehensive culture is gradually formed. So it is important to construct the platform of belief and appeal for microblog, mediate cultural conflict, and stipulate the freedom of speech and religious belief.

Chen Xiaojin

The Effects of the Internet on Collective Democratic Action in China: A Case Study of the 2013 Southern Weekly Incident

Mainland Chinese are forbidden to use Facebook in the territory of PRC. However, with the prevalent of global population flow, the number of mainland Chinese immigrants has gradually soared up from 2000. Nowadays, social media play an irreplaceable role in individuals to maintain the social relations, get informed and entertained. Particularly, the immigrants who are out of the home country require more emotional attachments from the social media. The use of social media helps immigrants retain the old friendships, and also create more connections with the new friends.

For the mainland Chinese immigrants, however, the use of social media tells more stories. The main stream of social media within and out of mainland China is different. While Facebook is very popular overseas (including Hong Kong), Sina Weibo is the substitute of Facebook in mainland China. When the immigrants reside abroad (including Hong Kong), they can readily get access to Facebook; and meanwhile, use the Chinese Sina Weibo. The two platforms of social media are similar in fundamental functions; however, they make difference for immigrants' lives. Assuming that people spend fixed time on social media, the use of Facebook is likely to significantly decrease that of Weibo. The ways immigrants' uses of Facebook may be a perspective to reflect the immigrants' survival conditions.

This study attempts to focus on examining how the Chinese immigrants use Facebook in Hong Kong (Compared with Sina Weibo)? Media use is a way of social adaption and represents immigrants' psychological belongingness and identification. Whether they register an account on Facebook and frequently use it are likely to be manifestations of their attitudes towards the culture of Hong Kong. Based on the interviews on 20 mainland Chinese immigrants, this study will be a primary study on Chinese immigrants' use of Facebook and its relationship with identification and adaption to new society.

Debate Session – Politics

Gilian Bolsover

Moving towards an appropriate theory for analyzing political speech on the Chinese Internet

The bulk of academic scholarship is highly Western-focused and the problem is particularly acute in Internet studies, where Internet connectivity was initially concentrated in the US and Western Europe. This focus has been slow to change, even as China overtook the US to become the world's largest Internet population in 2008. This imbalance between scholarly focus, and the identities and lived conditions of Internet users often leads to theories generated in one context uncritically applied in others.

This paper will concentrate, in particular, on theories of online political speech, using data drawn from microblogs to assess differences in online political speech between Chinese and Western netizens and, based on these differences, make suggestions for what theories are appropriate to assess online political speech in China.

Online political discussions on Chinese microblogs are an extremely hot topic towards which a lot of research effort is directed. However, a theoretical basis for properly evaluating this speech is often lacking. One concept that has been widely used is that of the public sphere (Habermas, 1996), even though this normative concept was developed only in reference to democracies. Its use is often justified based on the argument that the Chinese have embraced the concept (Yang & Calhoun, 2007) or that weak publics, who have little effect on decision making, are a prerequisite for deliberation that will influence decision making (Jiang, 2009). However, others have argued that the public sphere not appropriate in China and that new theories need to be developed for the Chinese context (Huang, 1993).

In communications scholarship more generally, many have emphasized differences between Eastern and Western styles of communication (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) and have called for the generation of new communication theories that would apply in an Eastern context (Chen, 2009). Two methods are often used to approach the generation of new theories, returning to traditional philosophies and critiquing current theories to make way for indigenous alternatives, with the former more prominent in communications studies and the latter in area studies (Dissanayake, 2009). However, it remains to be established whether in an increasingly globalized world and, in particular, on the global technology of the Internet, communication patterns actually align with traditional conceptions of communicatory differences.

This paper will be based on data that I have collected that assesses whether political speech on news stories on Facebook and Sina Weibo align with traditional conceptions of communicatory differences. Two coders, one Chinese and one British, performed a content analysis of 835 comments on stories posted by The New York Times on Facebook and Southern Weekend on Weibo. Stories were chosen such that they were likely to represent similar social and political issues at the time of collection. Preliminary analysis of this data suggests that differences in political speech on microblogs do not align with traditional conceptions of communicatory differences (on which so many current justifications are based) and may be more a reflection of current social and political conditions.

However in my paper for the CIRC, I will move beyond simple quantitative analysis of this data, using this comparative analysis to evaluate the appropriateness of different theories of online political speech on the Chinese Internet and to suggest how current theories might need to be modified in order to be applicable in the Chinese context.

This is an intellectual inquiry about which I am very excited and I hope that I will have the opportunity to present it at the 2014 CIRC conference.

Séverine Arsène

Tracing the Chinese government's bet on the Internet

This communication will focus on the Chinese government's strategy of development of the Internet and the digital during the last 30 years. Most academic works on this topic focus on the Chinese censorship system (« Voyage au coeur de la censure » 2007; « China » 2009; Ng. 2013), which gives the impression that Internet usage has developed despite efforts of the government to curb it. However the Chinese government has massively invested in this sector all along the period and encouraged the people to take over the Internet, while implementing legal and material ways to control critical speech (Mueller et Tan 1997).

My intention is to highlight the political and ideological motives that underlie the decision of the Chinese authorities to bet on the development of the Internet despite the inherent political risks and that explain the Internet governance strategies they have undertaken since then.

The Chinese Internet infrastructures were developed along the 1990's, that is right after the 1989 crackdown and during a decade when the Chinese Communist Party was trying to renew its legitimacy by promising economic development and modernization. I will argue that the Internet was seen as an instrument of economic and cultural development which could help improve living conditions, provide opportunities and enable access to a "middle-class" lifestyle. It has also been conceived as an element of a new type of technocratic governance which includes proclaiming accountability, transparency and attention to public opinion. For example, the Internet has played a critical role in the modernization of Chinese administrations via the implementation of e-government (Lagerkvist 2005; Zhang 2002; Damm 2006). In other terms, the Internet is one of the ways through which the Chinese Communist Party intends to legitimate and stabilize the regime.

This official Chinese vision of the role of the Internet is sometimes mentioned by scholars, but it has not been systematically, historically documented and its implications on the analysis of the Chinese social contract have not been entirely unfolded. In this communication I intend to take a step in this direction through the analysis of official declarations, editorials and other official documents concerning the development of the Internet which have been published in the Chinese press, as well as press accounts of Internet infrastructure and usage development since the late 1980's. My communication will also be informed by previous research involving a regular watch of online mobilizations in China as well as interviews with Internet users in Beijing.

Adrian Rauchfleisch, Jean-Francois Mayoraz and Man-Ying Liao

Chinese social media companies between user interests and government regulations

Sina Corporation, a Nasdaq listed company in form of a variable interest entity, operates with its Weibo platform one of the most important social media platforms in the Chinese Internet with already over 54 million active users per day (Sina Hubei, 2013). On the one hand, as a commercially oriented platform, Weibo relies heavily on advertising revenues and supports celebrities and entertainment related content (Sullivan, 2012). On the other hand, since the beginning, the platform has quickly developed into a contentious space with political debates (Noesselt, 2013).Yang (2009) early recognized the potential connection between social media platform's revenue model and the user interest to post contentious content which in return creates traffic. This notion is in stark contrast to an understanding, that the commercialization of the (digital) public sphere will lead to a negative outcome (e.g.: McChesney, 2013; Habermas, 1989).

Still, in an authoritarian country like China the Internet is a strongly regulated space, that heavily influences the business practice of companies like Sina. Self-censorship is a common phenomenon and has been empirically analyzed in many studies (e.g.: Zhu, Phipps, Pridgen, Crandall, & Wallach, 2013). This threatens the freedom of expression for users on Weibo. So far studies have focused on the impact of regulations on classic blogs (Wang & Hong, 2010) or on search engines (Jiang, 2012), but not on Weibo. Our main research question is: Which instruments is the Chinese government using to control and influence public opinion on Sina Weibo? In order to answer the question we first address the Internet regulation model of China and review previously in the literature discussed concepts. This approach should help to clarify vague concepts such as self regulation, which is often mentioned (e.g. Endeshaw, 2004; Zhang, 2006), but in fact is not clearly defined and misleading in the Chinese context. Concerning Internet regulation, China can still best be classified with the Gateway Model of Internet Regulation (Eko, 2001).

In a second step we analyze the different instruments the government has implemented in order to influence and control the public opinion on Weibo. We focus on laws and regulations, which directly or indirectly (e.g. self-censorship of Sina) affect the users. By analyzing a selection of laws and regulations, which are mentioned by Sina (2013), we ask what kind of information (e.g. state secrets, national interest) the government tends to prevent of being published on social media platforms and how it defines them. Furthermore, we look at the impact of these regulations on Human Rights, particularly on freedom of expression (United Nations, 1976). Lastly, the active participation and intervention of government actors on the Weibo platform as propaganda strategy will be assessed.

Sina as a commercial actor between the interests of its users and the government has to keep a balance, which allows some freedom for its users. Furthermore users are constantly adapting to the changing environment and find ways to circumvent the restrictions on Weibo.

Bo Mai and Tim Libert

Web Tracking with "Chinese Characteristics" A Critical Perspective on the Emerging Online Surveillance Market in China

Though many used to predict that the marketization of the Internet in China would undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and facilitate the process of democratization, one of the most mind-bending puzzles for China observers is that CCP still rules while the Internet blooms. Some attribute this seemingly beguiling equilibrium to Chinese government's ability to orchestrate highly effective Internet censorship on one hand, and Chinese Internet Services Providers (ISPs)'s inability to challenge the surveillance scheme on the other. Current trends cast doubt on this argument. Internet companies in China have localized web-tracking technologies and perfected surveillance as a business model, resulting in what we call "web tracking with Chinese characteristics". In order to determine the nature of these unique characteristics, we have empirically examined the current development of the web surveillance market in China by analyzing the presence of web tracking technologies on the most popular Chinese and US websites. Our findings indicate that while there is actually more surveillance in the US, Chinese companies are implementing the same technologies and strategies as their Western counterparts. Another focus of our study is the role of Chinese government in the emerging surveillance market. Relying on a database of government procurement records, we were able to identify corporations who supply web surveillance services to government agencies. These findings show that market forces have accelerated both commercial and political surveillance in China. We conclude with a discussion on the significance of our discoveries as well as proposals for future areas of research.

Parallel Sessions II

Internet and Development

Ou Weiwei

Spreading Internet in the Rural Areas of Western China: Internet Use and a Changing Life

As the communication technology develops rapidly, the communication facilities in the rural areas of western China have been improved by leaps and bounds. And this brings great conveniences and benefits to those people in the rural areas of western China. According to the CNNIC report, the rural netizen of China has reached 1.65 million, accounting for 27.9% of China's Internet users in 2013. According to the statistics, Internet users in the rural areas are different from the urban network users. In this research, we'll investigate the current situation of Internet use in the rural areas of western China, further study the effects brought by the differences in Internet access and devices, the extent of usage and their different Internet activities and eventually find out the relationship between the Internet use and their changing lives.

The Internet can have notable implications for the social and economic lives of those Internet users in the rural areas of western China. But how the Internet use change their lives, to what extent the Internet use changes their lives and what factors would lead to their changing lives remain a question for researchers.

This study's research site is Yuliang village, a small village in Zunyi city, Guizhou province (a western developing province in mainland). The researcher chooses this village for the following reasons: First, Yuliang village, in terms of population size, economic conditions and other social background, is just a common village like other villages in Guizhou province. To some extent, it shows the representativeness. It reflects a whole picture of the rural areas of western China. Second, the newly emerging use of Internet in this village may do some help to the study. Third, Yuliang village is the researcher's hometown, therefore, the researcher has a relatively sound knowledge about this village.

In this study, the researcher will gather the information in need by questionnaire and face to face survey. Participation in the survey was voluntary. The design will use probability sampling.

Based on the survey, the researcher will discuss the questions mentioned above in hope that the present research can do help to figure out the current situation of Internet use in the rural areas of western China and how are different people in these areas using the networked services and how are their Internet uses affecting their lives(such as work, leisure, relationship, families or studies etc.)

Liu Tingting

Limited Agency: Young People's Internet Usage in Rural China

The past decade has seen a rapid expansion of the Internet in China. Internet expansion was not only witnessed in big cities, but also in remote rural areas. Previous research either regards the emancipatory impact of the Internet in China in such a utopian way that they ignore the differences among individuals, and the specific social context of and its restriction to each individual; or they simply construe rural young as passive objects who can only be shaped by political, economic and cultural factors, thus depriving each individual of his/her agency.

Basing itself on social constructionist approach, this article investigates rural young people's usage of the Internet. In particular, the context in which young people's Internet usages take place, and the complex relations between their online activities and everyday offline lives have been paid close attention to. This article not only probes into what being a rural resident means in China and how being a rural resident restricts the possibilities of benefiting from the Internet, but also how each rural young resident re-interprets their "rural/urban resident" identity by using the Internet creatively.

Inspired by the Miller and Slater (2000)'s assertion that "the Internet as a meaningful phenomenon only exists in particular places", an ethnographic approach will be adopted. One month of field research in Longli County, Guizhou Province (2012.7-2012.8) and another month of field research in several villages of Jianshui County, Yunnan Province, such as Baijiaying Village, Baishuihe Village, Xitu Village and Tuanshan Village (2013.7-2013.8) have been carried out. The field work involved participant observation in several rural Internet cafes, informal and selective in-depth interviews with young adults and teenagers, and their parents or family members.

It is concluded that in spite of the real shortages of social, economic and educational resources, young people in rural areas can make good use of the Internet and avoid the drawbacks brought about by Internet addiction through self-conscious arrangements, thus showing their productive agency.

This can be reflected from the fact that new migrant from rural areas to urban areas can better adjust to their rural-urban identity transition process through the adoption of this new media usage, and teenagers and their families do have the capacity to make a choice to avoid the pathological drawbacks of Internet addiction. What's more, young adults and teenagers who have difficulty in fitting in the macro urban-rural dual structure, can benefit from the Internet, too, for Internet use can create a space for them where they can actively adopt a new "modern" lifestyle, make use of their limited life options and re-interpret their rural resident identities.

However, Internet does not erase pre-existing social political systems, most apparently, the effect of a secondary "rural" identity and a sexual double standard still prevail. Thus, the autonomy that young people can gain from Internet usage is tempered.

Jesper Schlæger and Wang Qian

Internet and Reduction of the Quality Divide in Chinese Basic Education: A case study of Qingbaijiang District in Chengdu

Large inequalities exist in basic education in China, in particular between rural and urban areas. From international schools in Shanghai and Beijing, that reach world-class level of teachers and cutting-edge pedagogics, to schools in remote villages whether in the central or western provinces of China where teacher skills are considerably lower. Cities indeed offer a concentration of resources of learning, but often it is enough to visit schools in the rural outskirts of cities to observe a large gap in quality. In spite of mobility programmes providing favourable conditions for teachers who are willing to teach in remote villages for a long term, it has proven ineffective as a general solution to the problem. Consequently, the challenge of assuring equity in basic education needs to be addressed through other means.

Accordingly, central government has announced the Internet as part of a solution to overcome the educational quality divide. Since 2003, central level educational policy has integrated informatization as a cornerstone of reform, and recently a number of trial-policies that combine rural informatization with school reforms have been adopted in various locations in China. "Sending down the Internet" could ideally help overcome some of the most pressing issues connected to the lack of skilled teachers in the village schools by reducing the importance of physical presence of teachers. In an even more radical sense, it could also reshape the whole process of learning by turning towards peer-based learning thus drastically reducing the need for teachers.

This article reports on a case study of such experimental policies for informatization of basic education of Qingbaijiang District in Chengdu Municipality. One of the cornerstones is the Qingniao Project, which aims to accumulate educational resources, above all good teachers and teacher training, at the district level to ensure an equal division across all the local schools. Another program is the Jin-Qing e-learning platform, which lets schoolchildren from Qingbaijiang share teachers with a class in Jinjiang through a virtual classroom applying video-conferencing technology. Studying these policies special analytical attention is given to the role of the Internet both on a macro-policy level and on village-school level.

From the outset, we raise a simple hypothesis: The affordances of the Internet enable a new management model that equalizes basic education quality. Given that the empirical research will likely provide a qualified corroboration, we also examine in more depth the mechanisms behind the Internet impact on basic education quality. In other words, we have paid particular attention to how, why, and in which context changes to current practices occur. Thereby we aim to provide theory to support a broader research agenda answering concrete questions of how government can develop Internet-mediated programs of equalization of educational quality in rural China.

Zhao Jinqiu and Sun Yi

A Study of the Online Radio Stations of Xinjiang Ethnicity and Their Roles in Central Asia Communication

Known officially as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Xinjiang constitutes about one-sixth of China's landmasses, borders on eight Central Asian countries, and is also home to a number of non-Hans, primarily Turkic peoples. Besides a Uyghur population of officially 10.06 million (as of the 2010 census), Xinjiang is also home to smaller populations of Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Oyrat Mongols, Sibes (related to Manchus),Chinese Muslims (Huis), and other groups. The intricate linkages between Xinjiang ethnicities and those of the border countries in terms of similar historical origins and cultural practices such as religion, language and conventions make the region extremely sensitive to external influences, which in turn pose intermittent threats to national unity.

The radio broadcast in Xinjiang has been characterized as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-language since its establishment in December 1949. Indeed, the geopolitical position of the region as a 'Eurasian-crossroad' combined with the ethno-cultural dominance of Turkic and Mongol peoples result in the significant and delicate role that mass media has been entrusted with in securing ethnical and racial harmony and building national identity. Therefore, the strategic importance of ethnic radio broadcast in Xinjiang goes beyond the sense of domestic and regional broadcast and has become an integral part of public diplomacy as well as transnational communication.

Departing from the discussion of their national and international strategic importance, the paper aims to map out and document the emergence and flourish of online radio stations of Xinjiang ethnicity across China, and capture the multi-media platforms webcasters employ to reach the maximum coverage in terms of time and space.

The methods of case studies and content analysis have been adopted to shed light on the online radio websites of Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station, China Radio International and China National Radio. Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station and China Radio International have collaboratively initiated online radio broadcasts in Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Kyrgyz languages since 2004. Likewise, China National Radio (CNR) has set up China Ethnicity Radio Website to offer users a host of news and feature programs conveyed via CNR broadcast since December 2010. The website targets listeners of ethnicities in frontier regions and broadcasts in Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, Uyghur and Kazak languages.

The preliminary findings of the study show that the going online of radio stations of Xinjiang ethnicity provides users with a globalized, multilingual, and multi-terminal public webcast service platform. The ethnic webcasters are playing a pivotal role in not only promoting social progress and economic development in Xinjiang, but also enabling people from neighboring countries to have a better understanding about the political and socio-economic transformations Chinese society is undergoing and China's standpoints in key international issues. Transcending regional communication, the webcasts in Xinjiang ethnic languages have been used as an effective tool in mitigating and combating the influences from western media and become an integrated part in the whole modern international broadcasting system of China.

Greater China

Zhao Yupei

Citizen Participation in Political Communication via Weibo micro blogging: A Case Study of Chief Executive Election of Hong Kong in 2012

The aim of the research is to examine the different ways of contributing to cyber social netwok- Chinese micro blogging Weibo, but focusing on the case study of Chief Executive Election of Hong Kong in 2012; topic discussion and topic orientation expression will also be highlighted in a quantitative way (content analysis) and qualitative way (critical discourse analysis), then analysing different types of contributions from different status of user on Weibo will help to generate potential targets for interview and potential questions to ask. In some senses, representing the different degrees of citizen participation and measuring the extent and distributions of these over time could illustrate the nature and motivations of citizen participation in political communications.

This research will not measure the specific level of democracy but will draw on the interactive model of theory of democracy in terms of agreeing with the views from Schudson (2004) and Astrom (2004), focusing on citizen information dissemination through online debate and discussions (Weibo) and efficiency of citizen participation to strengthen their civic society and the several participatory forms of citizenship (Schuler, 2004, Hague and Loader, 1999). This research will highlight how the users playing a role as freedom seeking netizens and making use of Weibo to challenge the Party-state on their own perspective to enhance the democracy, as the same time, how the internet playing a ultimate tool to manipulate the censorship and self-censorship practice. The result of analysis demonstrates that forwards were the most popular type of contribution rather than comment or comment on comment, and there is a considerable gap between forwards were done by casual users rather than that by Weibo Got Talent or VIP of person, or VIP of organizations.

Cao Bolin

Social Media Use and Immigrants' Adaption: A Primary Study of How Mainland Chinese Immigrants Use Facebook in Hong Kong

Mainland Chinese are forbidden to use Facebook in the territory of PRC. However, with the prevalent of global population flow, the number of mainland Chinese immigrants has gradually soared up from 2000. Nowadays, social media play an irreplaceable role in individuals to maintain the social relations, get informed and entertained. Particularly, the immigrants who are out of the home country require more emotional attachments from the social media. The use of social media helps immigrants retain the old friendships, and also create more connections with the new friends.

For the mainland Chinese immigrants, however, the use of social media tells more stories. The main stream of social media within and out of mainland China is different. While Facebook is very popular overseas (including Hong Kong), Sina Weibo is the substitute of Facebook in mainland China. When the immigrants reside abroad (including Hong Kong), they can readily get access to Facebook; and meanwhile, use the Chinese Sina Weibo. The two platforms of social media are

similar in fundamental functions; however, they make difference for immigrants' lives. Assuming that people spend fixed time on social media, the use of Facebook is likely to significantly decrease that of Weibo. The ways immigrants' uses of Facebook may be a perspective to reflect the immigrants' survival conditions.

This study attempts to focus on examining how the Chinese immigrants use Facebook in Hong Kong (Compared with Sina Weibo)? Media use is a way of social adaption and represents immigrants' psychological belongingness and identification. Whether they register an account on Facebook and frequently use it are likely to be manifestations of their attitudes towards the culture of Hong Kong. Based on the interviews on 20 mainland Chinese immigrants, this study will be a primary study on Chinese immigrants' use of Facebook and its relationship with identification and adaption to new society.

Wang Lei and Jiang Shaohai

The impacts of media use and social capital on civic engagement of overseas Chinese college students in America

We propose that media use and social capital are associated with the level of civic engagement which is mainly involved with engaging social public issues online or offline. Thus, the article investigates how Chinese overseas college students use media and develop social capital and its impact on their level of civic engagement. The study will employ an objective questionnaire to determine participants' use of different media across various social contexts.

Long Xinxin

Negotiating Foreign Platforms: Overseas Chinese Students use of Foreign Social Media Sites

This case study examines the tension of power between the top-down agenda of media agencies and bottom-up struggles of individuals trying to express themselves. Triangulation relationships between Weibo, Nan Fang Zhou Mo, one of the most independent and influential newspaper in china, and its Weibo subscribers were constructed in order to better understand Weibo's alleged social role in contributing to a vibrant society. This is carried out through the collection and analysis of textual data in terms of topics and comments on Nan Fang Zhou Mo's Weibo account supplemented by semi-structured interviews with Weibo subscribers, and a user interface analysis of news presentation on both the official website's front page and the Sina Weibo page. The results demonstrate that Weibo facilitates news organization's to have a stronger power in agenda setting on Weibo and reinforces old problems from the news media including sensationalism and superficiality. This attributes to individual's feeling a loss of hope in voicing their say in society. These findings inform the current media literacy in China and can make contributions to build a more vibrant online society in China in this critical political social reforming period.

Politics

Miao Weishan

Between pan-politicization and de-politicization: Online Mass Incidents in China

Compared to the localized and depoliticized trend of mass incidents in reality (Tannery，2004；Sun,2008;Shan,2009;Yu,2010), online mass incidents present the characteristics of nationally involved and pan-politicization(Zhao,2013;Wang,2013;Mu,2013), and some quantitative researches were conducted to verify the existence of people's political internet use (Wang,2009), the process of online ideological debate (Le, Yang,2009), and the political consequences of internet in China(Lei,2011),etc. How to explain the difference and interplay of mass incidents between in real life and in virtual online community? According to Gary King' big data analysis (2013), social media in China "allows government criticism but silences collective expression", which inspired us to explore the problem from the political perspective.

While a large body of researches focusing on the implications of internet on society, especially in the domain of social movement and collective action, can be summarized as internet-enthusiasts and internet-skeptics if oversimplified, some scholars raised the statement that politics should be the first consideration when talking about the role of social media in collective action (Gadi Wolfsfeld, etc, 2013), which are also greatly emphasized in Chinese internet study (Zhou, 2006).

Although the political feature of Chinese internet has been realized, there are few article exploring the relationship of online discussion and offline activities, especially the paradoxical phenomenon of online pan-politicization and offline de-politicization. And this is what this paper tries to study, two questions are put forth, the first is why the online mass incidents are highly politically involved, the second is what is the role of politics in facilitating or hindering online mass incident into practical action in real world.

The theme determines the structure of this paper, related literature will be reviewed as the first part, which will focus on the political implication of online mass incidents in China. Then, research questions will be put forth, operations will be explained. Case study and in-depth interview will be combined to probe the problem. Finally, the paper comes to result discussion, conclusion and implication for future research.

Stefan Brehm

Embracing the Internet – is early adoption politically motivated?

In 2008 China just passed the inflection point of early Internet adoption. At that time the user crowd already outnumbered the official US population, put at 307m by the US Census Bureau. Since then the number of Internet users more than doubled. Many policy makers and social scientists held the belief that the Internet will be an important ally pushing for political reforms in China. The Central Leadership in Beijing by contrast, came to the conclusion that the Internet is 'essentially controllable'. But what were the motives for Internet adoption of early users after all? The agency of first adopters may add a piece to the puzzle when and why technologies become deliberative or repressive actants. This study, therefore, sets out to conceptualize the role of early adopters for what I call 'the politics of use', that is to say the political economy of encouraging 'good use' and constraining 'bad use'. I then analyse how political beliefs of 'good use' and 'bad use' influence technology adoption based on the '2008 China Survey' with about 4000 respondents.

Yuen Yuen Ang

Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why "I-Paid-A-Bribe" Worked in India but Failed in China

Authoritarian states restrain online activism not only through repression and censorship, but also by indirectly weakening the ability of netizens to self-govern and constructively engage the state. I demonstrate this argument by comparing I-Paid-A-Bribe (IPAB)—a crowd-sourcing platform that collects anonymous reports of petty bribery—in India and China. Whereas IPAB originated and has thrived in India, a copycat effort in China fizzled out within months. Contrary to those who attribute China's failed outcome to repression, I find that even before authorities shut down IPAB, the sites were already plagued by internal organizational problems that were comparatively absent in India. The study tempers expectations about the revolutionary effects of new media in mobilizing contention and checking corruption in the absence of a strong civil society.

Zhao Wei

Chinese Women's activism and its resistance politics online: The case of 'Guangzhou New Media for Women'

The Internet has created opportunities for various activisms on a global scale since websites and blogs have become crucial mobilization tools for activists to perform their resistance to the authoritarian regimes. To some extent, online activism becomes a common land held not only by some big NGOs any more. For the same reason, in China, a wide range of traditional social activism also takes on a new look after being engaged in the use of social media such as Sina Weibo and Weixin (Miniletters). According to the previous studies, Chinese people protest mainly for two categorical reasons: "protest against discrimination" and "protest of desperation" (Lee, 2007). The former belongs to the identity politics and cultural problems, while the latter originates from the hatred caused by economical exploitation and structural inequalities.

As more activism goes online, the regulation and control from the Chinese authority become more sophisticated and rigid. Consequently, many activisms dying away shortly after their appearance online, whereas some other activisms survive successfully and at the same time grow inconspicuously in the cyberspace. This result changes not only the media ecology system, but also the power structure of the Chinese society. Among all these remaining activisms, women's online activism is one of them.

How Chinese women's online activism maintains its growth securely and reproductively? This paper will narrates this story from the social movement's perspective by a close observation of "Guangzhou New Media for Women", an aboriginal, grassroots like feminist group established in Guangdong Province from November 2004 till now. And this paper will focus on its alternative way of using internet when it pursuing its priority outcomes.

Parallel Sessions III

Gaming

Yu Yudong

The Chinese Gaming Industry and new competitive models

Using economic theory, this paper sets out to evaluate strategies that might be employed by the Chinese video-game industry if it is to take advantage of the opportunities provide by the internet and the growth in on-line gaming.

The analysis and evaluation relies on a 'dynamic capability' framework. As with all resource based approaches, this framework emphasizes the importance of specialized assets or competencies in securing competitive advantage. The dynamic component of the evaluative framework looks to the capacity to adjust a changing marketplace as an important element in maintaining market power. The importance of possession dynamic capabilities has exceeded the importance of traditional elements, such as maintaining incentive alignment, owning tangible assets and controlling costs, etc., in determining an enterprise's performance, especially in the global context. As David Teece has observed, a firm's dynamic capabilities relate to what he labels as process, position and paths.

The paper goes on to explore the importance of 'complementary assets' in maintaining market power. It is noted that significant market power arises if a firm operating at only one level in a stream of production controls a so-called 'bottleneck' asset. Understanding complementary and bottleneck assets serves to explain many current features of the emerging Chinese game industry. Perhaps more importantly, it provides a strong predictive framework for understanding the likely effects of investment in innovation on individual firm's competitive positions within the global game industry. Based on these arguments, the paper concludes that if Chinese firms are to take advantages of the opportunities provided by the internet and other gaming platforms based on mobile technology, they must develop the dynamic elements of the core competencies but also seek to identify and exploit core bottleneck assets in these emerging markets.

This predictive framework is crucial to the Chinese domestic game industry for two reasons. One is the trend that Chinese government seems to relax the regulations on the video game. A good example is that there is a removal plan for thirteen-year game console ban in China. Another reason is that the development of internet and relevant technologies gradually accelerates and expands the global competition to the domestic market though Chinese internet community remains an isolated environment compared with global internet communities. However, the significant improvement in broad band and the increasing use of other platforms that access to the internet are gradually changing this environment. These two reasons both contribute to the challenging competitive model in Chinese domestic game market. Chinese firms must identify and control the core bottleneck in order to grasp opportunities and survive in such a potential environment.

Bjarke Liboriussen

The Farmers and Raiders of Internet-Based Gaming in China

The Internet has been used as a gaming platform since the late 1970s (see Bartle, 2004 and Donovan, 2010 for historical overviews). Today, the combination of the words Internet, gaming and China is likely to produce the association gold farming in the minds of media scholars, technology journalists and gamers. Gold farming is 'the production of MMOG virtual currencies, items, and services for financial gain' (Heeks, 2010, p. 5; MMOG stands for Massively Multi-Player Online Game). Basing his 'guesstimate' on other estimates, and acknowledging that '[this] is a very weak basis for statistics but, in the absence of field data, the least worst option', Richard Heeks (2008: 12, n. 19; 14) suggests that at least 400,000 people are employed as gold farmers worldwide and that 80-85% of them are working in China, typically for small companies.

Although there does not appear to be hard data to sustain the notion, China is so tightly associated with gold farming that the Chinese gold farmer has become a very strong stereotype (Yee, 2006, Nakamura, 2013) - or 'imaginary', a related term preferred by Bonnie Nardi and Yong Ming Kow (2010) in their critical analysis of 'the Chinese gold farmer' and how it resonates with, and is reinforced by, general Third World images of poor living conditions and low culture. As this paper will argue, 'the Chinese gold farmer' also resonates more specifically with notions of China as a country of copycats behaving parasitically in the realm of ICT innovation (cf. the notion of shanzhai; see, for example, Keane, 2013).

Like the works cited immediately above, this paper is motivated by unease with the Chinese gold farmer stereotype. But rather than deconstructing the stereotype, this paper seeks to add nuance through interviews with young, middle class, Chinese World of Warcraft (Blizzard, 2004-) players who engage in gold raiding, a practice which differs from gold farming in two ways: it is not motivated by financial need and virtual currency is transferred directly into fees for continued play without becoming real currency. I explore the non-financial motivations behind this practice as well as my interviewees' attitudes towards the professional gold farming performed by their poorer countrymen. The relationship between gold raiders and gold farmers offers an Intern-based snapshot of the social complexities, if not tensions, in today's China.

Zhang Ge

Gaming in everyday life: an anthropological study of daily rhythms in a Chinese Internet café

"Daily Daka (touch on/ scan card)" (日常打卡) originally refers to a daily procedure of work, the beginning of disciplinary measuring of work time. But now it is also used in other settings: in Internet cafés, for example, regular patrons would first scan their ID card (and pay) at the counter before settling down. This is only one of the many examples of rhythmical structures of time and space taking place in the Internet cafés. During my two month ethnographic participant observation in an urban Chinese Internet café, I gradually came to realise the regularity and tempos of everyday life of gamers in the Internet café. I have categorized the collected data (in various forms such as interviews, spectating, informal conversations, and my own experiences in participation) into two major themes: spatial settings (focusing on the ambience, scenes of spectating, maintenance of the space, production and collection of rubbish, and patterns and irregularities of uses of space); bodily rhythms (in the aspects of food and defection, physical exhaustion and tempo at the different time of the day, and emotions of rage and gratification).

Internet Culture

Henry Hu

Public Sphere or Private Asset? A critique of digital commons in China

Since its introduction into China, the Internet is said to bring in a robust force of commons in cyberspace, voluntarily contributed by numerous ordinary users. Netizens are deemed able to freely get great amount of useful information from the Internet and they all take it for granted. It is thus unsurprising that Chinese cyberspace has been filled with online piracy and unauthorized infringing materials everywhere. New services like Baidu Wenku and Sina iAsk started to rise to further encourage users to upload and download various documents and files without any charge, in the name of sharing. Once sued for copyright infringement, these Internet companies have their legal tools such as "safe harbor" rules for defense, that is, only if copyright holders notify them and provide preliminary proofs could they take down the materials in question. They claimed that during the whole process, they are not liable for any infringement accusation, because they had no idea what the users uploaded. What's more, they were not making money from such free downloading services. In other words, it seems these services in particular and the Internet in general are providing a kind of valuable commons to the whole society.

However, if placed against the background of the business model of the Internet, such commons could be attributed with another interpretation. The core characteristic of the new economy is "cross subsidy," that is, to provide free contents and services to attract people's eyebrows and attention at first, and to earn money from them in the form of advertisement and value-added income later. Baidu and Sina's practices are in nature the free side of its strategy, meanwhile making all users their free labor.

Furthermore, we could find the rise of the Internet in China has been following such "illegal" model all the time. To provide something free through the Internet means to clear all the legal barriers of authorization for online contents. This paper would discuss the legal environment and conditions for such use. It also tries to explain why the new economy is able to arise—from a legal perspective—rather than being killed by those powerful traditional economic interests with traditional laws ruling information flow in the physical world, such as copyright, personal data and advertisement.

The tentative conclusion of this paper is that seemingly public sphere in Chinese cyberspace has been dominated by commercial interest, with a stable legal foundation for private use of online information and personal data, which is, paradoxically, also the foundation for innovation and economic growth through information technologies.

Jia Lianrui

From technology to industry: a historical analysis on the developmental logic of the Internet in China

Contrary to many countries' "hands off" approach to Internet regulation, the Chinese model of cyberspace governance stands as a distinctive model where many countries start to emulate and slowly emerges as a global norm. The assertion of state power, nation sovereignty, and national identity over the cyberspace characterizes the Chinese model of Internet regulation. Many studies on the Chinese Internet regulation have delved into the formation of such logic. However, these studies mostly focus on the impact of traditional culture (Chu & Cheng, 2011), or more recent development and its global implications (Herold, 2013; Arsene, 2012). This study aims to explore the Chinese-ness of the developmental logic of Internet in China by looking at its early development, especially from year 1987 to 2002, the process where the Internet grew from a technology to a formalized Internet industry in China.

This paper contextualizes the formation of the Chinese government's "hand-on" approach in regulating and directing the development of Internet by looking at the role of three important forces: firstly is the historical legacy of nationalism and pragmatism in the view towards new technology; secondly is the bureaucratic rivalry in fighting over regulatory authority of the Internet and thirdly, the commercial imperative in driving the demand for modern communications technology and in financing the development of the Internet. Together, these three elements influence the idiosyncratic way the Chinese Internet develops over time. By examining the interplay of these three aspects in the early stage of Internet development in China help us to better understand the status quo and identify the disjuncture, breaks, and continuity in formation of the Chinese Internet regulation logic.

Rao Yichen

Coming of Age with 'Internet Addiction' – a will of morbidity or a will of 'transcendence'?

In 1998, Kimberly Young introduced what she believes to be a new concept of addiction disorder—"the Internet addiction". The title of her book—Caught in the Net—compared the Internet to a snaring cobweb that captures weak-willed individuals who escape from "the real world". Since this initial psychological inquiry into the Internet use, the cyberspace has become a susceptible object of desire, especially for the "weak-willed" young people as in China's context. My presentation seeks to correct a common assumption that the Internet is a poison of the will for young people and propose an alternative interpretation of Internet surfing as originally a normal will toward a "free transcendence". The online activities of the youth in a local context is far more complicated than is cautioned against by the party-state, labelled by the psychiatrists and interpreted by the educators.

During 1990s, the Internet became popularized from workplace to household and from adults to youngsters in China. The young generation born in late 1980s to early 1990s belonged to the first cohort of teenagers in contemporary China to get in touch with the Internet. Years later, as the Internet Cafes "blossomed" into every corner of the cities, the problematic youth behaviors on the Internet became an increasingly severe "social morbidity" in contemporary China. Terrible stories were heard concerning children "addicted" to online games sit before the computer screen inside an Internet cafe for weeks without eating or drinking. In 2006, "Internet addiction" was first treated as a "mental disorder" in China, as led by psychiatrists like Tao Ran. Since then, millions of youngsters in China are socially convicted of being a "sick, abnormal child" because they spent too much time on the Internet entertainment which was believed to contaminate their characters. Laws were also issued by the party-state to discourage the Internet game playing as well as video-watching and to keep the Internet Cafes away from the school kids. In 2009, the government requested a content-control software called Green Dam Youth Escort to be mandatorily pre-installed in personal computers sold in mainland China to help parents monitor what their children are doing on the Internet. This was then publicly criticized as a violation of human rights and information privacy.

This paper, based on a review of the changing social expectations of youths (qingnian) from "revolutionary agents" (1919 to Maoist China) to "unstable objects" (post-socialist China), will discuss how the cyber-culture of the youths is related to this transformation. The discourse of "Internet Addiction" invented by Chinese psychiatrists, reproduced by educators and media, and strengthened by the government, is actually a medicalization process with local features. A critical lens, based on an ethnographic study, is to be used in examining the discursive formation and the social meanings of their behaviours online despite the over-reducing psychiatric labels.

Sun Ruili

Reader-Writer Interactivity and its implications: case study on Qidian Chinese literary Website

In the mass print age, the reader and writer are separated in literary production and consumption, whereas the new interactive media can now provide possibilities of connecting the two. Through the case study on Chinese literary website Qidian, this research investigates interactive features, interactions between readers and writers, and the implications of these interactions. Grounded Theory is applied as the main method. The results indicate that interactive features in Qidian websites facilitate interaction between readers and writers, and that this interactivity has impacted the ways of literary production and consumption, making them a shared and transparent process more and more driven by commercial wheels. Consequently, the literary products generated in Qidian and other similar literary websites in China increasingly reflect social and entertainment qualities.

Weibo

Yang Shen

Political Information in Micro-blog: Who Speaks What and How It Is Spread

Micro-blog has played a central role in online discussion in contemporary China. This study aims to examine what is the most widely spread political information in Chinese micro-blog, who creates these political information and how the information is disseminated. This article used the method of computation, content analysis and statistical analysis to analyze the popular political posts in Sina Weibo. This study finds that there is a partial shift of discursive power from media to individuals in micro-blog. While media remains to be one main provider of popular political information, people like anonymous netizens, scholars and lawyers are able to contribute the popular political posts in micro-blog too. This study further argues that there is a rise of critical super-netizens who are critical towards the Chinese government with a huge number of followers. Statistical analysis illustrates that netizens of certain professionals are more likely to write or transmit critical posts towards the government. The scholars and lawyers are more likely to write critical information, while the businessmen are more likely to disseminate critical information. The rise of critical super-netizens adds difficulty to the state's information control efforts and might undermine the legitimacy of the Chinese state in the long run.

Jiang Min, Richard Leeman, King-wa Fu

Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Life and Politics among Chinese Microbloggers during the Democratic National Convention (DNC)

In an era of information abundance and instantaneous communication, social, political, and cultural events that occur at one place often have unintended audiences and consequences at another. International events are also important occasions through which domestic audiences make sense of their own lives and politics. While previous studies of US-China relations tend to focus on the two peoples' perceptions of one another through surveys, expert interviews and analysis of media discourse, this study chooses to examine the rippling effect of international events on domestic political and civil discourses and we do so using real-time social media data.

The 2012 Democratic National Convention (DNC) is one such global event whose occurrence prompted Chinese microbloggers to discuss domestic politics, social issues and US-China relations. While information about American politics has largely been mediated and filtered through state-controlled mainstream media previously, the rise of the Internet and particularly social media in China recently has changed how Chinese microbloggers obtain information about transnational events, express their opinions, and reflect on their own conditions. The new media ecology has also introduced changes to how such a phenomenon can be studied. During the DNC, what aspects of Chinese politics and society did the Chinese microblog public talk about in comparison to the American political process? What do they think of their own leaders with regard to such American leaders as Barack and Michelle Obama? What opinions do they have about US-China relations? Who are behind these microblogging posts? What are some of the characteristics (e.g. gender, geographical, educational and ideological) of such a microblog public? This study seeks to begin answering such questions through a thorough analysis of relevant Chinese microblogging posts.

For this project, we will perform a qualitative/quantitative discourse analysis of Chinese microbloggers' reflections on Chinese politics, society and U.S-China relations during the 2012 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Sina Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter, is chosen as the social media proxy. Since its inception in 2009, Sina Weibo has become the most heavily subscribed Chinese microblogging service, now boasting 500 million users. Specifically, we use data from Hong Kong University's Weiboscope Project that has been tracking tweets from Sina Weibo via Sina's API since 2011 by regularly sampling more than 350,000 Chinese microbloggers with over 1,000 followers. So far, the database has stored over 500 million Weibo tweets since January 2011. We focus on these "star" users because Sina Weibo use appears to be highly centralized: 4.8 percent of the posters account for some 80 percent of the content (Fu, Chan, & Chau, 2013). Microblogs containing "Obama" or "Michelle," including the microblogging posts, reposts, comments, time, location and user ID, have been archived. Altogether, 1618 Sina Weibo posts containing "Obama" or "Michelle" are collected. The ones pertaining to the focus of this study will be selected.

Our paper will not only lend insight into how a small but important Chinese microblog public relates U.S. politics to Chinese society and politics, but will also address some of the issues rising from empirical online public opinion studies and web data analysis.

Lin Jie

How the @US embassy in China carry out its micro-blog diplomacy

Today the New Information Technology has been widely used, and diplomacy is not only the communication and influence between governments and officials, media also originate diplomatic affairs.Media could also initiate diplomatic events, mobilize people to participate in foreign affairs, affect the people all over the world and even governments through guide the public opinions. In this new communication system, communication and dialogue faster than ever before. This paper pay attention to the official micro-blog and micro-blog data released in Sina of the US embassy in China from May 21, 2010 to October 15, 2011.

In May 21, 2010, USA embassy opened its official micro-blog, the @US embassy in China in Sina. The first text of this official micro-blog introduced the work for Luo Jiahui, the USA Minister of Commerce, in preparation for the Tsinghua University speech. By the end of October 4, 2011 (Beijing time), the @US embassy in China has owned 322,687 fans, followed 122 micro-blog users, released 2,315 micro-blog texts, included the original texts, forwarding texts, and pictures. The @US embassy in China owned the largest amount of fans in all the foreign official micro-blog of diplomacy in Sina. As a tool for dialoguing with Chinese public directly,the @US embassy in China in Sina is an important part of American public diplomacy to China.

According to the theory of political communication and public diplomacy, this paper·classified the texts of the @US embassy in China, and analyzed how the @US embassy in China edited its micro-blog and informed the important diplomatic information of USA,·researched the fans that the @US embassy in China owned and followed to analyze the the audiences and main objects of American public diplomacy,·analyzed what was the mainly communication channel the @US embassy in China used,·researched the link of the @US embassy in China to analyze the its ability of Information expansion,·investigated why the US embassy in China opened the official micro-blog in Sina, and how to run this public diplomacy platform,·and, what opinion it wanted to achieve, which information have been fed back, and what communication effect it got?

The new media run up by Internet dispersed the political authority from states, and endowed public more power, the public became the important participants of international affairs. This means that the public obtains the ability of intervention of international and domestic affairs through Internet.Public use the Internet to access information, put forward the goals, and pressure or affect the policy makers. They could verify the official informations easily which were provided by governments , and urged officials to explain these policies publicly , even set the agenda setting to the foreign affairs. The old theories and approaches of international communication were changed by the conveniently and variedly information flowing and fragmentation more and more. The stage, tools and participants of the foreign information communication of governments are required to adapt to the smoother, faster, more to meet the demand of information disposing for the global public. And this is why foreign micro-blogs are flourishing.

Chan Chung-hong, King-wa Fu

Can retweeting drive Chinese citizen's opinion diversity? An 18-month panel study of over 30,000 Chinese microbloggers

Some people believe in a purported theory that social media can serve as a "marketplace of idea" in authoritarian countries, bringing in new value and ideology from the "outside world" and thus empowering citizens' opinion expression and pluralism. However, this theory is largely anecdotal and has not yet empirically tested.

Sina Weibo is the major social media platform in China. Previous studies have found that the content creation of weibos is dominated by a small group of microbloggers and, in contrast to the Western social media, the involvement of the majority users is mainly retweeting other's messages. Then, it comes to a question that whether or not Chinese microblogger's exposure to and retweeting other's weibos can actually influence one's online opinion expression and consequently make China become a more plural society.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between individual microblogger's opinion diversity and the topical diversity of one's retweets. By analyzing over 30,000 active Chinese microbloggers over a period of 18 months, we hypothesized that microbloggers who retweet a larger variety of message topics are more likely to create original messages with a wider range of topics, i.e. opinion diversity.

In order to test this hypothesis, a topic model of weibo messages was established by using an unsupervised machine learning method, namely LDA (Latent Dirichlet allocation) model, by drawing data from 1 million randomly selected weibo messages from the HKU Weiboscope project. The topic model was trained to classify a weibo into 30 topics based on the tokenized keywords of the message. We sampled 30,000 active microbloggers, which are defined as those who had published at least two weibos every week during the study period from 1-Jun-2011 to 31-Dec-2012. Each microblogger's whole timeline during the study period was extracted from the HKU Weiboscope database. All original and retweeted weibos were categorized into topics. For each microblogger, cumulative weekly topic diversity indices (CWTDI) were calculated for one's original messages and retweeted messages respectively. The CWTDI were calculated based on the distribution of messages across the 30 topics, as classified by the LDA model, and were quantified using the concept of Shannon's information entropy.

As a result, two time series will be generated for each microblogger: the CWTDI of one's original messages and the CWTDI of one's retweets. Cross correlation function (CCF) between these two indices will be calculated. The overall CCF of all microbloggers will be combined using random effect meta-analysis. Subgroup analysis will be conducted. The summary CCF can help determine the time lag between the diversity in original messages and that of the retweets.

Parallel Sessions IV

Internet and Development

Cara Wallis

Communicative Empowerment as Emotion Work: Grassroots Media and Social Media Use among Domestic Workers in Beijing

As low-end smartphones and inexpensive wireless internet continue to diffuse in China, increasing numbers of those who have been marginalized within China's network society are engaging with digital media. However, while the use of new media technologies by rural residents, rural-to-urban migrant workers, and older urban adults has been the focus of scholarship (Law & Peng, 2007; Oreglia, 2013; Qiu, 2009; Wallis, 2013), very little research has been done among older migrant workers. This paper seeks to fill this gap by presenting an ethnographic study of the diverse media practices of a group of middle-aged female domestic workers in Beijing. These women tend to live in their urban employers' homes, cleaning, cooking, and caring for children and the elderly, and thus their lives are characterized by intimate, affective labor (Boris & Parreñas, 2010). They have very little leisure time, but during short breaks and especially at night after work, they all use social networking sites and mobile applications, in particular Tencent's Qzone and WeChat, to connect with loved ones or to post status updates that express their feelings. On their one day off a week, they are also involved in another type of media, a grassroots drama program sponsored by a local NGO. At the weekly activity, through dance, narrative, and other types of performance, they are encouraged to give voice to their urban experience in often very emotional ways.

Based on six months of fieldwork, this research explored the grassroots theater and the women's social media use as potential forms of communicative empowerment. I ask, what does it mean to empower migrant women as speaking subjects and what formal methods are used to achieve this? Moreover in which ways do these organized forms of communicative empowerment intersect, or not, with these women's individual use of social media? To answer these questions, I unpack the multiple motivations, agendas, and tactics of the organizers and the participants in the drama club and put these in conversation with the women's social media usage. Grounding my analysis in notions of emotional labor (Hochschild, 2012), I argue that although the community theater functions as a form of empowerment, the rewards of such empowerment come at the cost of great emotion work on the part of these women, whose work lives are already characterized by the expenditure of much emotional labor. I also argue that while the performance may serve as a form of catharsis, it presents a singular view of domestic workers that contrasts with the diversity of their lives and emotional expression found on their virtual platform. At the same time, while these virtual spaces offer an important outlet for the women to express their daily struggles and small triumphs among a relatively small circle of friends and relatives, their voices are rarely heard beyond their small personal networks and thus mediated forms of empowerment remain individualized. Through comparing these diverse types of media involvement, this paper seeks to add to our understanding of the challenges of communicative empowerment among marginalized populations in China.

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Zhang Lei

Vulnerable to Exploitation? An analysis of immaterial labour in social network services

The concept of immaterial labour, together with other similar concepts, has become increasingly prominent in critical political economy, global capitalism analysis and media studies. Within the context of proliferation of Internet and other ICTs, this research examines whether the immaterial labour can contribute to the contemporary understanding of the global capitalism in the web 2.0 age. In an attempt to do this, this research employs Marx's basic understanding of labour and Christian Fuchs's theoretical analysis of digital labour values to examine the social media practices. I use www.douban.com as a case and collect data from its users with the methods of in-depth interview and online observation. The users are divided into five groups, including web surfers group, content contributors group, developers group, 'douban writers' group and professional employers group. The research finds three major types of exploitation on users' labour. However, most of interviewees were astonished when they were asked whether they consider their practices free labour. The research finds that two characteristics are located in the core understanding of the immaterial labour. One is the volunteering nature of this kind of practice, with contrary to wage system. The other is the possibility of new types of social organization based on the social networking. This paper argues that the lack of self-consciousness, together with an illusion of gaining free content and social capital, covers up the fact of exploitation on web 2.0 contributors, and calls for reflexivity which might leads to organized social movements and structural changes of social network productions.

Lina Tao

The representation of China's internal migrant children in the microblogsphere

The fundamental development of China's microblogsphere may give rise to new patterns of representation. The research serves as an empirical and comparative study that examines whether China's vibrant micro-blosphere, in contrast to the conventional media, has developed alternative and diverse discourses about a minority group, i.e., China's internal migrant children (liudong ertong). Through systematic discourse analysis of Sina Weibo micro-blogging posts, the study identifies the stereotyping practices against such children, and reveals the inextricable interplay between the microblogsphere, the conventional media, and power. It also allows a reappraisal of the impact of China's microblogsphere from a micro-analysis approach.

Given the proliferation of media and communication technologies, minority groups now have the means to produce their own messages; this has been explored in extensive media studies in recent years. This research, however, takes a step back to examine media representation and its relation with power, which are important concerns in traditional media research. It is located within the context of radical socio-economic changes in post-reform China. There are currently 35 million internal migrant children in China, who typically move from rural to urban with their employment-seeking parents. Their encounter with the majority urban population occurred in mid-1990s when rural migrant workers started to bring their children to cities, giving rise to a great deal of representation based on the marking of urban-rural differences. Such children are often stereotyped in the media as passive receivers of charity, a quiet group with low self-esteem, or ignorant country bumpkins. Together with their parents who typically work as low-skilled and low-paid laborers, rural migrant children are often labeled in public discourses as notorious 'low quality' (di sushi) ones.

The development of digital media constitutes a key element of the socio-cultural context into which internal migrant children have arrived. Particularly, micro-blogsphere, a relatively new phenomenon in Chinese Internet culture, has quickly become the most influential site for public debates in the cyberspace. The diffusion of new media forms may convey alternative knowledge and opinion, which are not necessarily contained within the conventional media discourses. But it may facilitate the expression of biases and discrimination against a minority. For instance, when some urban public schools first opened their doors to rural migrant children in early 21st century, city parents used the Internet to protest against the reform; they voiced prejudice with no uncertain terms, blaming the rural kids for overstretching local educational resource and leading urban children astray. This is to say, China's micro-blogsphere may offer channels for new patterns of representation.

The project deploys the discourse analysis approach, which has been widely used in racism and minority representation studies. A website, Sina Weibo, is selected as the source of data as it has the largest user base in the country. The selected posts have been analyzed according to the topics, quotations, meanings of specific sentences and words, micro-blogger's social status, and style and rhetoric. Comparisons are made between the micro-blogsphere and the conventional media with regard to the representational patterns, with the purpose of unveiling the continuity and change between the so-called 'old' and 'new' media.

Isaac Chun-Hai Fung, Yi Hao, Braydon J. Schaible, Jessica Jing-Xian Cai, Yuchen Ying, Chung-Hong Chan, King-Wa Fu and Zion Tze-Ho Tse

Chinese social media reaction to infectious disease outbreaks and public health communications: avian influenza A(H7N9), MERS-CoV and 39 notifiable infectious diseases

Background. As a result of the phenomenal growth of internet and social media use, epidemiologists have begun using online data such as Twitter trends and search engine query data to track the activity levels of, and online discussions about, infectious diseases. Weibo is a very popular Chinese microblogging site that is equivalent to Twitter. Capitalizing on the wealth of public opinion data contained in Weibo posts, we studied the Chinese social media reaction to the avian influenza A(H7N9) outbreak in 2013, the Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak in 2012, as well as news and public health information about 39 infectious diseases that are notifiable under the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases.

Methods. We performed keyword searches in Weibo data collected by the Weiboscope project of the University of Hong Kong. We determined the baseline values for different keywords and quantified the reaction towards disease-specific news and information among Weibo users. We also analyzed the contents of the Weibo posts to elucidate the nature of these phenomena.

Results. Our results show that Chinese people reacted significantly to both the outbreaks of avian influenza A(H7N9) and MERS-CoV. Weibo users reacted more significantly to an outbreak in China than one far away from China. We also identified news and public health campaigns about other infectious diseases that led to significant Weibo reaction.

Conclusions. Our results demonstrate that social media such as Weibo can be used as a means to measure public awareness and reaction to public health information released by public health authorities.

Internet culture

Wang Wei

The Market-centric Logic, Neoliberalized Resistance, and Alternative Collectivity: The culture of technological entrepreneurs in China's mobile application development industry

Accompanying the recent rise of the mobile Internet industry, there is an entrepreneurial boom in China. Many well-educated young people become mobile application developers and enter into the army of entrepreneurs. This paper attempts to analyze the culture of these entrepreneurs. Through interviews, startup stories posted online, and news reports, I argue that the culture of these entrepreneurs is a hybrid of market-centric logic, neoliberalized resistance, and alternative collectivity. First, market-centric logic is at the core of these young entrepreneurs. Their dreams of both personal achievement and the public good are envisioned to be realized through the efficiency of the market. Second, it is also a culture of resistance to both corporate bureaucracy and existing status quo. However, their resistance takes place in the capitalist market system and is neoliberalized. Third, there also emerges alternative collectivity among these young entrepreneurs. They have a strong sense of belonging to the entrepreneurial community, and care about the public good. These findings further our understanding of the changing culture of technological entrepreneurs in China.

Wei Lu and Xie Dian

The effect of critical thinking, anxiety and social support on individual's belief and diffusion of online rumors: An experimental study

With the development of information technology, rumors based on face-to-face communication become more dependent upon social media interactions. At the individual level, who is more likely to accept and deliver online rumors, and why? This study aims to answer these questions through the method of experiment. According to the previous literature, critical thinking, anxiety and social support are three potential factors that may influence individual's belief and diffusion of online rumors. In the experiment, we simulated a micro-blog environment by creating 55 Sina-Weibo accounts that were mutually followed without following any external accounts. Among them, 5 accounts were operated by the researchers who posted 10 messages, including 5 factual information and 5 rumors, within 30 minutes on each account. 50 participants were asked to communicate on their assigned accounts freely, including posting new tweets, sending re-tweets, making comments, and showing likeness. The results show that: 1) Critical thinking was associated with the acceptance of, but not the diffusion of online rumors. 2) Anxiety had a significant positive effect on both acceptance and diffusion of online rumors. 3) Subjects with weaker social support (both online and offline) were more likely to deliver online rumors than those with stronger social support, while social support did not significantly influence individual's belief of online rumors. 4) Participants were more likely to disseminate online rumors they believe. To a certain extent, these findings demonstrate some significant individual factors that influence the spread of online rumors in Mainland China, especially among college students. The psychological process of the acceptance and diffusion of online rumors deserve more scholarly and policy attention.

Clément Renaud

Meme observation and classification on a large corpus of tweets from Sina Weibo

In the growing field of Internet studies, social network analysis and Internet memes are topics that attract much attention. In this paper, we will introduce an algorithm to detect and visualize memes from a large data set of tweets. Using the Weiboscope corpus made by tweets from the Chinese social network Sina Weibo (Fu&Chan, 2013), we use the concept of protomemes to identify forming memes in conversations (Ferrara, 2013). Based on Support-Vector Machines (SVM) and Chinese Natural Language Processing (NLP), the algorithm detects clusters of similar tweets to create meme-specific data sets. To observe specific features in each meme, we visualize geographical (geo-localization, named location entities) and conversational patterns (spread graph).

How to observe a meme properly ?

Since its definition as a cultural replicator (Dawkins, 1989), the concept of meme has been subject to large controversies regarding its scientific value. More recently, it has become a widely used term to describe digital objects that spreads through the web and therefore has gain more attention (Shifman, 2013). Computer scientists have started to use it to modelize the evolution of digital objects (Weng, 2011) while a more ethnographic approach have been investigating its content to understand how it relates to social practices (Knobel, 2007).

Nevertheless, even as interest is rising quickly for this seductive concept of "online meme", its floating definition leads to a disparate literature dealing with quite different objects under the same name. The purpose of the present research is to provide an empirical approach to consider online memes by designing a tool to observe patterns and structures in conversational data, without prior definition of its content or purposes. We want here to provide a systematic way to review and classify a corpus of memes. The development of a specific tool allow us to create reproducible procedures to observe different memes. This approach try to tackle the bias of meme selection that has lead for instance to an over-representation of memes with political tenure in the field of Chinese Internet studies. By describing and observing social network data and content, we want to look at different specificities of online memes in an attempt to observe emerging feature for classification.

Meme classification: From protomemes to visualization

Visualizing different important events on Twitter (Arab Spring, Syria, OGP political controversy in the US, etc.), the Truthy project (Weng, 2013) show how large-scale conversational patterns reflects specific engagement of users in discussions (mass media, small groups, etc.) Our current work tends to extend this process further to detect items that are not news-based by using a clustering algorithm. The minimum unit of a forming meme, called "protomeme", is defined here as hashtags, urls, keywords and mentions pattern (Ferrara & al., 2013). Protomemes are represented by sets of tweets that contains a specific protomeme (a single tweet can have several). Using vectorial representation (SVM), we compare similarities between those different protomemes to detect "clusters" (do they have common tweets? common time frame? common set of users? common keywords?). Clusters with high similarity and enough tweets are then identified as "memes". For each meme, we extract keywords and time patterns, visualize the discussion graph and map the spatial dynamics (geo-localizations and places quoted in the text). Therefore, we can proceed to the analysis of the meme corpus to identify specific patterns.

Lin Zhongxuan

Fame US: The Changing Landscape of China Internet Celebrity Field

This study defined Chinese Internet celebrity as kind of cultural producer in the field of cultural production, thereby examining their cultural practice through the analysis of their field, habitus, and capital. The relationship between this celebrity field and the field of power was explored firstly. This was accomplished by socio-historical analysis of the dominant power relations in Chinese context, especially the political authority, the economic reform and the media control. The structure of this field, the positions and the characteristics of the celebrity, were also examined. The study then focused on celebrities' practice within this field, examining how they employ strategies to accumulate, invest and convert their capital to struggle for their positions and position-takings.

Besides the cultural practice, this study also focused on the neglected but essential political dimension, the "spectral", of Chinese Internet celebrity, inquiring how the field of Chinese Internet celebrity opens up a new arena of political possibilities between the state and the civil society, a new infrastructure and struggling field for the state and civil society in their engagement with – and disengagement from – each other. Firstly, this study argued that the field implicates possible political paradigm shift from the politics of the governance to the politics of the governed. Secondly, this study argued that he field of Chinese Internet celebrity has involved into a site of popular politics of, by and for the "people" – the netizens. Finally, this study argued that the changing landscape of the field connotes a crisis of hegemony – an organic crisis in China, and suggests a more dynamic relationship of full inner entwining and coupling – like Tai Chi – between the state and civil society.

Greater China

Zhang Bin, Han-Teng Liao

Academic search for Chinese-language literatures: Assessing the distribution of academic authority, platform visibility and geolinguistic preferences

Despite the recent research on Chinese-language search engines (e.g. Jiang & Akhtar, 2013; Liao, 2013), few have examined the scholarly ones systematically. As the recent growing Chinese-language scholarly knowledge production coincide with the developments of "national" citation index systems (e.g. CSSCI in China and TSSCI in Taiwan), commercial academic search platforms, and the increasing information and academic exchanges across various Chinese-speaking regions, a timely assessment of Chinese-language academic search results should provide interesting insights on the current status of Chinese-language knowledge production and dissemination. Using methods of webometrics, this study compares search query results on the targeted topic of "Internet Research Methods and Social Science" across three major scholarly search platforms and three regions: CNKI and Sciinfo.cn in China, Google Scholar in mainland Chinese setting, Google Scholar in Hong Kong setting, and Google Scholar in Taiwan setting. The systematic approach is expected to provide findings regarding the distribution of academic authority (which academic journals and or publications dominate), platform visibility (which information platforms become more visible than the other), and geolinguistic preferences (whether and how geolinguistic variation of Chinese setting and queries matter). By conceptualizing the different search outcomes as examples of different "information spheres" constructed by different recommendation systems, this research will analysed and visualized the findings using digital methods and "cross-spherical analysis"(Rogers, 2013), demonstrating the differences and commonalities among the spheres. Since the academic publishing environments across Chinese-language regions have experienced some fundamental changes (e.g. the use of citation index for academic performance evaluation, the digitization of academic work, etc.), the findings will be further interpreted in the context of Chinese-language knowledge production and dissemination, thereby assessing the role of academic search engines (and the Internet in general) in the process.

As the Internet has shaped the research and study environment for Chinese-language users, it is expected that academic search engines will play a significant role. As Chinese-language knowledge production and dissemination has different historical, political and ideological contexts than, say, English-language or Spanish-language one, the findings should indicate the boundaries, the centre of gravity, and the cultural-political inclinations of the information spheres. The usefulness and limitations of applying webometrics method for comparative media research will be also discussed, suggesting a few possible cross-fertilization possibilities for Chinese Internet research to integrate information science literature and media research literature.

Ann Chiu

The Online Social World of Fuzhou Chinese Migrants in New York, 2003-2013

Throughout the Internet age, people have surfed the Internet only to learn that Fuzhou migrants in the United States are associated with the largest Chinese source of illegal emigrants since the 1980s. Scholars have tended to analyze these migrant workers from politico-economic perspectives, while the socio-cultural dimension has not received adequate attention. As for these marginalized emigrants themselves, despite the fact that they represent the absolute majority of transmigrants in the first decade of the twenty-first century, they scarcely appear in cyber discussions. Based on her fieldwork in Manhattan Chinatown and interviews with the members of the website built by this silent group in New York City, the author finds that Fuzhou migrants have been trying to update the development of this speech group and elevate its profile via Fujianese.com since 2003. The online social world of this e-forum also displays how its members aspired to engage in community participation after 9/11.

Unlike the cyber communities such as Chinese News Digest (CND) maintained by professional Chinese immigrants, Fujianese.com is staffed by many migrant workers from Fuzhou. Fujianese.com shows a practical interest different from the CND's well-established elite site based in North America, which cultivates an ethnic awareness towards certain historical events like the Nanjing Massacre of World War II, the Cultural Revolution, or the Tian'anmen Square Incident of 1989, and appeals to democracy and humanitarianism. Fujianese.com shows a more practical orientation without such grave historical events. They do not address such pan-Chinese issues, and their electronic ethnic mobilization is not in pursuit of political participation or civil engagement in mainstream society via social actions. As the author observes, the project of MissFujianese.com lasting from 2004 to 2006 was the only large mobilization in the history of Fujianese.com. This research will identify the online persona of Fujianese.com, whose spirit is continued by Yidonglou (88chinatown.com) as of 2011. Online discourse analysis reveals the emotional attachment of Fuzhou migrants. It helps us better understand the social networking system of a Chinese speech group which deserves our scholarly attention in global migration and the Internet.

Sun Yini, Sa Erting

The tendency of connective action of Taiwan social movement in the new media field: A case study on the White Shirt Army rally

It is of paramount importance to explore the relationship between the usage of new media and the mechanism of social movement with regard to the contemporary communication and social studies. And the transformation of the social collective mobilization pattern caused by social media is, in particular, worth further consideration and empirical research.

We can observe the correlation between social media and social movement from "Taiwan White Shirt Army rally"3, which has become the biggest and most surprising social movement in Taiwan's recent history. Some experts believe their emergence not only represents a shift in the mobilization mechanism and organizational pattern of social movement, but also changes the political thinking and direction of Taiwan.

By studying the case of "Taiwan White Shirt Army rally" which caused by the death of Hung Chung-chiu, this article aims at illustrating the influence of social media on organizational pattern and mobilization mechanism of social movement and investigating how the new media generates the transformation of social movement pattern and the logic of collective action in Taiwan.

From the perspective of "Connective Actions theory "which is proposed by Bennett and Segerberg, this study aims to reconstruct the "White Shirt Army rally" by content analysis and literature analysis, inquiring how the traditional social movements present different logics in the field of new media to lead the transformation of social movement pattern. As a result, this article will demonstrate the process of interplay among new media, the organization form and the mobilization mechanism of White Shirt Army rally. Also, it will discuss the participants' practice logic and the meaning of collective identification by depth interviews and content analysis of social media. Moreover, it will make a contribution to the study of the transformation of Taiwan social movement: interpreting the process of the logic of social movement transformation from the collective action to the connective action.

Rodney Chu

Title:

Abstract:

Debate Session – Internet Culture

Silvia Lindtner

Who are the producers of the Chinese Internet? A report from the field of hackerspacs, makerlabs, and manufacturing

In efforts to understand the rapidly changing Internet and wider technology landscape of China, we tend to begin by asking: who are the users of these new technologies and how is their use shaping and in turn shaped by China's political regime, societal norms, and economic changes? Often overlooked in this quest for understanding the unique manifestations of Internet use are those who make, code and design Internet and other digital technologies in China today. In this paper, drawing from long-term ethnographic research with a collective of technology producers, geeks, bloggers, entrepreneurs, makers, and tinkerers since 2010, I will shed light on the values and visions as well as the technological innovations of Chinese Internet producers. In particular, I will focus on a rapidly growing sub-movement of "makers," i.e. technology producers committed to the design of digital technology that is open and modifiable by other users. In this paper, I will trace what gave rise to the birth and proliferation of this maker movement in China. China's makers believe that earlier efforts in Internet development and open source software can be fruitfully extended into hardware by taking advantage of China's history of and expertise in manufacturing and industrial production. Similar to Internet users, these producers of contemporary technologies in China are motivated by diverse ideals and goals. What brings them together, however, as a larger like-minded collective is the belief that China itself is an authentic site of making due to its repair workshops on the streets and its factories that produce for the world. They propose harness China's own history and culture of making in order to not only produce new technological innovations, but also alter China's image from a place of manufacturing for others into a place where innovation and creativity thrives. I will tease out how China's makers implement this vision in practice by starting-up new businesses, opening hackerspaces, partnering with government institutions, and manufacturing industries.

Han-Teng Liao

Chinese cultural thickening and web spheres:A few results and conjectures on the status of the Chinese cultural sphere

Guobin Yang (2003) argued that the Internet contributed to a transnational Chinese cultural sphere that fulfilled political functions within and beyond mainland China. However, a decade of development of the growth of Chinese Internet users and the sophistication of the filtering and censorship regime demands more empirical and critical assessment on the status of Chinese cultural sphere. For example, based on the clustering analysis of traffic data, Taneja & Wu(2013) argued provocatively that the decade-long blockage of the Great Firewall of China (GFW) has insignificant impact on the browsing behaviour of mainland Chinese users and the formation of a Chinese "culturally defined market". With the aim to update the status of the Chinese cultural sphere, this paper uses the concepts of "cultural thickening" and "web spheres" and examines the recent empirical results. The theoretical work of "cultural thickenings"(Löfgren, 1997) has resulted in a research agenda on comparing media cultures "transculturally": seeing media cultures as "thickenings of translocal processes of meaning articulation that themselves are more (or less) locally specific"(Couldry, 2012; Hepp & Couldry, 2009; Hepp, 2009). By defining "cultural thickening" as translocal or national processes of articulation and expressions of meaning, this approach views "media cultures" as the outcome of thickenings of "cultural patterns" of mediated interactions, thereby avoiding methodological nationalism of "container-based" perspective to (national) society, culture and media.

This paper argues that the concept of cultural thickening can clarify some of the interpretations on the status of the Chinese cultural sphere. First, based on a more clearly defined notion of "web spheres" inspired by digital methods (Rogers, 2013), researchers should specify the communicative and/or information spaces of a collection, or selected parts, of websites as different "web spheres" that encourage certain thickenings of certain cultures. Second, based on historical development of Chinese-speaking regions and varied situated practices of Chinese-language users, each major Chinese-speaking regions have a web sphere that can be identified by their geolinguistic identifier: e.g. zh-cn for mainland China, zh-hk for Hong Kong and zh-tw for Taiwan. Constructed often by localization of websites and influenced by the situated practices of Chinese-language users, these geolinguistic kind of web spheres are expected to be more or less congruent with their own media and state systems, as visualized at the bottom of the Figure 1. Third, by analysing cultural thickening patterns, researchers can better situate the scope, the centre of gravity, and the embedded normative cultural-political values of each thickening patterns constructed by different web spheres, as exemplified by the user-generated encyclopedias in Figure 1, showing two cultural thickening patterns 'a'(by Baidu Baike) and 'b'(Chinese Wikipedia).

By analysing the intensified and/or routinized processes and patterns of communicative and symbolic ties produced by Web spheres, researchers can better assess how different "cultural thickening" patterns shape the Chinese cultural sphere. This paper concludes with a discussion on the impact of the GFW, suggesting an alternative view that GFW fostered two major cultural thickening patterns in the Chinese cultural sphere.

Fang Kecheng, Zhao Mengyang

The Emergence of Partisan Online Media in China

More than two decades after Deng Xiaoping proposed the strategy of "bu zhenglun" (no debating) on ideological issues, ideological and partisan debates are far from drawing to an end in China. In fact, debates on critical issues in contemporary China have been increasingly salient. The proliferation of new media, though still censored, has provided much room for conflicting political discourse to battle for legitimacy online. One of the major phenomena is the emergence of what we call in this study "partisan online media" in China, which include various socio-political websites (as well as their apps, weibo and weixin accounts, etc.) that not only offer news, but more importantly, express opinions in a much more politically polarized way than traditional media and news portals.

Using computer-assisted content analysis and semantic analysis of articles appearing in six websites in China (21ccom.net, guancha.cn, aisixiang.com, zhongdaonet.com, wen.org.cn, m4.cn), this study provides empirical evidences for the partisan characteristics of these sites: they adopted a coherent liberal or conservative vision of the news and were biased in favor of certain political viewpoints; they frequently selected and cited particular one-sided sources; they downplayed stories and commentaries that contradict their points of view; they created closed echo chambers, rather than open platforms for argument and for achieving mutual understanding. We also seek to find the discourse strategy of each website, gauging the extent of variation in online political discourse in China. Analysis of website ownerships and interviews with staff editors help to further explore the driving forces of the emergence of partisan online sources and their day-to-day work routines.

While previous Chinese Internet studies frequently adopted the liberal pluralistic model and focused on the clash between online activism and the oppressive party-state, internal ideological variations and conflicts were largely overlooked. This study, therefore, fills the gap by approaching the Chinese Internet as a contentious sphere not only characterized by the resistance towards authority but also the denial of consensus.

Gabriele de Seta

The Great Firewall of China: The making of a national Internet from academic discourse to the 'wall-crossing' experiences of local Internet users

"Wait a minute, I have to fanqiang."

In Mandarin, fanqiang ("crossing the wall") means activating a VPN (Virtual Private Network) or other proxy tunneling software in order to open content not accessible from Internet providers in the mainland. More famously, the bundle of filtering infrastructure, blacklists and bandwidth limitations set up by the relevant authorities and imposed on Chinese Internet companies has come to be ironically hailed as The Great Firewall. In most academic analyses, the Great Firewall of China is presented as a pervasive and proactive form of control, inevitably stifling democratic transformation and freedom of speech for hundreds of millions of Mainland Chinese Internet users.
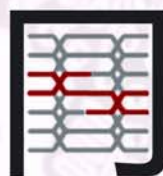
This paper presents an alternative hypothesis: what if this metaphor is interpreted through Kafka's imagination of a Great Wall of China that does actually reveal itself to be composed of spaced out fragments, useless ruins and holes? By drawing on an ongoing ethnography of digital media use in China, the author follows the actual experiences of Mainland users as they cross the virtual border through software, and the physical border during visits or periods of residence in Hong Kong. How does this wall-crossing practice impact on the materialities of digital media use? How are personal identities and social networks reshaped by the movement between national Internets? What does the practice of fanqiang, rather than theory, say about borders, surveillance and consumption?

Spotlight and Wrap-Up Session

Zhang Weiyu, Dai Jia

Celebrity activism on Weibo

The boundary between popular culture and political communication is getting blurred. The roles of politicians and superstars become increasingly interchangeable. Some believe that popular culture that is aimed to entertain turns rational citizens into passive spectators and fanatic followers. Others disagree. Street (2013) argues that "popular culture has always been a part of political communication," and what has changed is our approach to understanding the relationship between political communication and popular culture. A traditional approach tends to normalize politics with rationalist expectations and demean popular culture as threats to the rational model of democracies. The recent approach, in contrast, reverts to an understanding of politics as performance that contains aesthetic, emotional, and personalized dimensions (Corner, 2003). This paper attempts to zoom in an important component of contemporary popular culture, celebrity culture and focuses on examining how Chinese celebrities perform social activism through the mediation of Weibo. We sampled the top 100 celebrities according to Weibo's popularity rank and searched through their Weibo updates using key words regarding a prominent social issue, PM 2.5. Using this dataset of tweets, we did two steps of analyses: First, we analyzed the social network that is mobilized by these celebrities when they tried to influence the public discussions about PM2.5; second, we textual analyzed the public comments under the tweets in order to gauge the actual influence these celebrities' tweets have on the public. Based on these analyses, we aim to answer the following questions: To what extent, are Chinese celebrities getting involved in social activism? When they are involved, do their performances of social activism manifest a unique style? How do they take advantage of their popularity to mobilize social support? And finally, what are the observable effects of their performances of social activism on the public?

2**C**hinese
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