CITIZENS, GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN CHINA:

EVOLVING SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

by

Yingying Zeng

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Affairs and Public Policy

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ABSTRACT

The mainstream academic attention looking at citizen's use of social media in China is focusing on the discourse of using social media to challenge authoritarian governments. Looking at China only in this Western perspective, however, is misleading and this analysis tries to reconceptualize the study of social media use in China from a bottom up perspective. It examines how citizen creation, distribution, and receipt of information through social media enhance their ability to interact spontaneously and collectively in both cyber and terrestrial space in ways that increase their influence within the socio-cultural and economic as well as political dimensions.

The conceptual framework set up here includes two main components, social media infrastructure and citizen interaction, respectively. Social media infrastructure identifies the variety of and nature and effect of social media use produced by citizens and the technology itself. The citizen-related social media infrastructure includes Code Language, Human Flesh Search Engine, Surrounding Gaze, Citizen Anti-Control Strategies and Cumulative Effects of Specific Events over Time. The technology-related Social Media Infrastructure includes Time-Space Effects, Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages, and Technological Changes.

The citizen interaction dimension examines how the expansion of social media use and social media infrastructure change the interaction patterns between citizens

and citizens, between citizens and private actors, and between citizens and governments. These changes and characteristics of these new interaction patterns have been presented through a series of case studies. In the social-cultural dimension, citizens effectively make use of social media to fight what they view as social immorality, to generate and share information that is important to their lives, and to provide social good when governments inadequately respond. In the economic dimension, it changes the interaction between consumers and sellers or producers, especially in consumer self-protection by using social media; and the influence of bottom-up use of social media on the relationship between workers and employers. In the political dimension, citizens making use of social media to protest against officials' misfeasance and corruption and what are viewed as governmental irresponsible decisions have effectively held the government accountable in a number of cases. In addition, the cat-and-mouse relationship between the government's censorship and netizens' anti-control strategies on social media platforms has been identified. It shows that netizens have the ability to devise innovative strategies to resist and overcome some of the governments' control efforts.

Furthermore, by adding the time factor, the study also explores the complexity of cumulative effects. Four analyses, including cumulative changes in the technology relevant to social media and when and where it can be used by citizens, institutional reform of the railways system, charity operation change triggered by the scandal of Red Cross and the overall cumulative effects on the central government's role and position, demonstrate that cumulative effects generated from technological and spatial

aspects of social media and netizens' can be collectively involved in a number of relevant individual cases over time.

As a whole, the study supports the viewpoint that the Chinese experience does not fit with the general literature on social media and authoritarian regimes. Moreover, the study finds that, without seeking regime change, expansions have occurred and are growing in the ability of citizens, over the vast space of China, to act collectively and quickly using social media to exercise influence from bottom up in different sectors.

Finally, the reconceptualized analytic framework developed for this study can be applied in comparative research among nations to generate more adequate understanding of the extent to which citizens have or have not enhanced their influence from the bottom up in multiple sectors of governance, not just in relation to the formal state. This will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

Since the era of social media was triggered by the innovation of Web. 2.0 technologies, the political use of social media by citizens on the Internet has grown extensively in the early part of the 21st century; and a good deal of attention has been given to cases in which social media was used to communicate and organize to oppose or overthrow totalitarian regimes. The successful toppling of the government in the Philippines in 2001 was one of the first such movements that social media played a part in. More recently, considerable focus has been given to a variety of ways rebelling citizens used social media in a series of popular efforts that contributed to the forcing out of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. This wave of events, commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring" took place in Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, and Syria in the Arab world roughly from the end of 2010 to 2012.

One result of the Arab Spring experiences is that they have resulted in attention on the role of social media in regime change in academic research and literature. Many scholars believe that Arab Spring would not happen with the absent of social media (Howard & Hussain, 2011). They believe social media has played a central and pivotal role in turning sporadic dissent into widely spread movements, and eventually overthrowing authoritarian regimes through shaping political debates, linking online revolutionary conversations and ground protests, and connecting international communities (Howard & Hussain, 2011; Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, &

Mazaid, 2011). More explicit analysis or case studies indicate that social media facilitates these movement in providing an alternative to state-controlled mass media (Lysenko & Desouza, 2010; Suarez, 2011; Storck, 2011; Essam, 2012), an "organizational infrastructure" (Storck, 2011; Suarez, 2011; Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011), and the feeling of hope for successful revolution (Suarez, 2011) for mobilizing protestors and organizing activists.

Additionally, it is important to see the fact that, particularly in the Arab Spring, few overthrown governments have been replaced by a functional democratic system. Controlled democratization, such as Arab Spring, was even made use of by Arab authoritarian regimes to maintain their regime stability (Gordon, 2010).

Part of the discourse about the productive use of social media in opposing authoritarianism has focused on China. Some analysts have concluded that the powerful Chinese central government has been capable of controlling citizen political use of social media and the regime in under no threat of overthrow (MacKinnon, 2008; Wang & Hong, 2010; MacKinnon, 2011; Hassid, 2012a; Hassid, 2012b; Sullivan, 2014). This, however, is only one perspective. Looking at the views and research of other scholars concerning social media and society broadly in China as well the research in this study, there is a wide range of social media use in China not linked with regime overthrown efforts. Chinese citizens utilize social media as a means of increasing their influence over a variety of sectors in the nation as a whole and in relation to the formal structure of government. In addition, this is also true concerning some of the ways in the cumulative effects on policies of the Chinese government and of citizen uses of social media.

Furthermore, China is distinctively different from the countries in which social media have been made use of in accelerating regime change that has been covered in the literature. First, China is the world's most populous country, with a population of over 1.35 billion, and has the largest number of Internet users in the world. By the end of 2015, China had 688.26 million Internet users (see Figure1.1); and the Internet penetration rate increased to 50.3 percent (CNNIC, 2016).

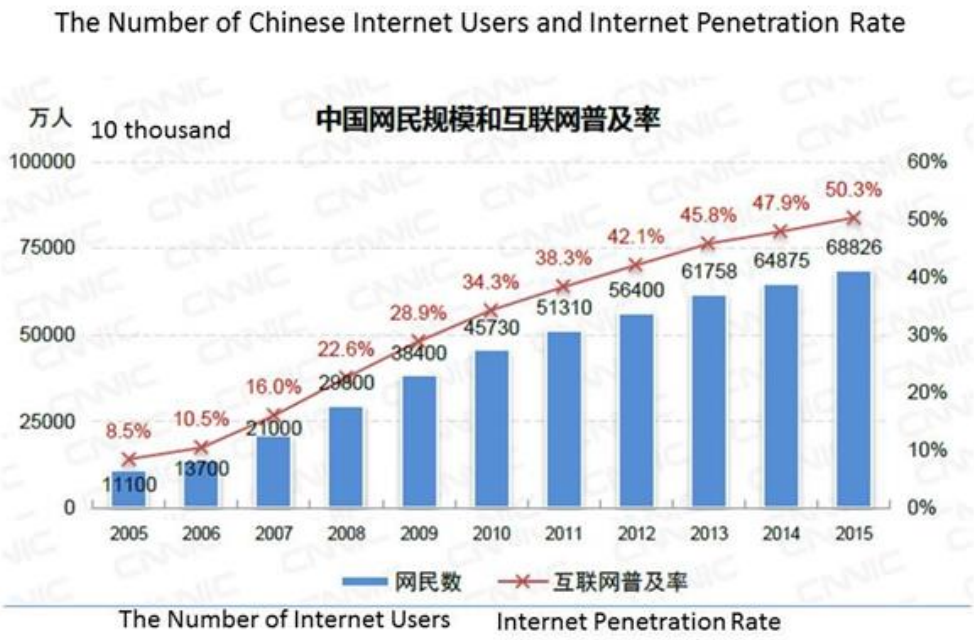


Figure 1.1: The Number of Chinese Internet Users and Internet Penetration Rate (Source: CNNIC, 2016)

Second, China has the world's second-largest economy. Its booming e-commerce market has even surpassed U.S. e-commence market since 2013 and became the largest e-commerce market in the world (Tong, 2014; Dai, 2014). A typical characteristic of China's e-commerce infrastructure is greatly integrated with

social media use. Third, China is a leading power in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) development. In terms of social media, though prevalent international platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are blocked, the scope of domestic social media in China has grown explosively in both size and type. The landscape of China social media (see Figure1.2) and social media use distribution and trends (see Figure1.3) provide an overall picture of social media use in China.

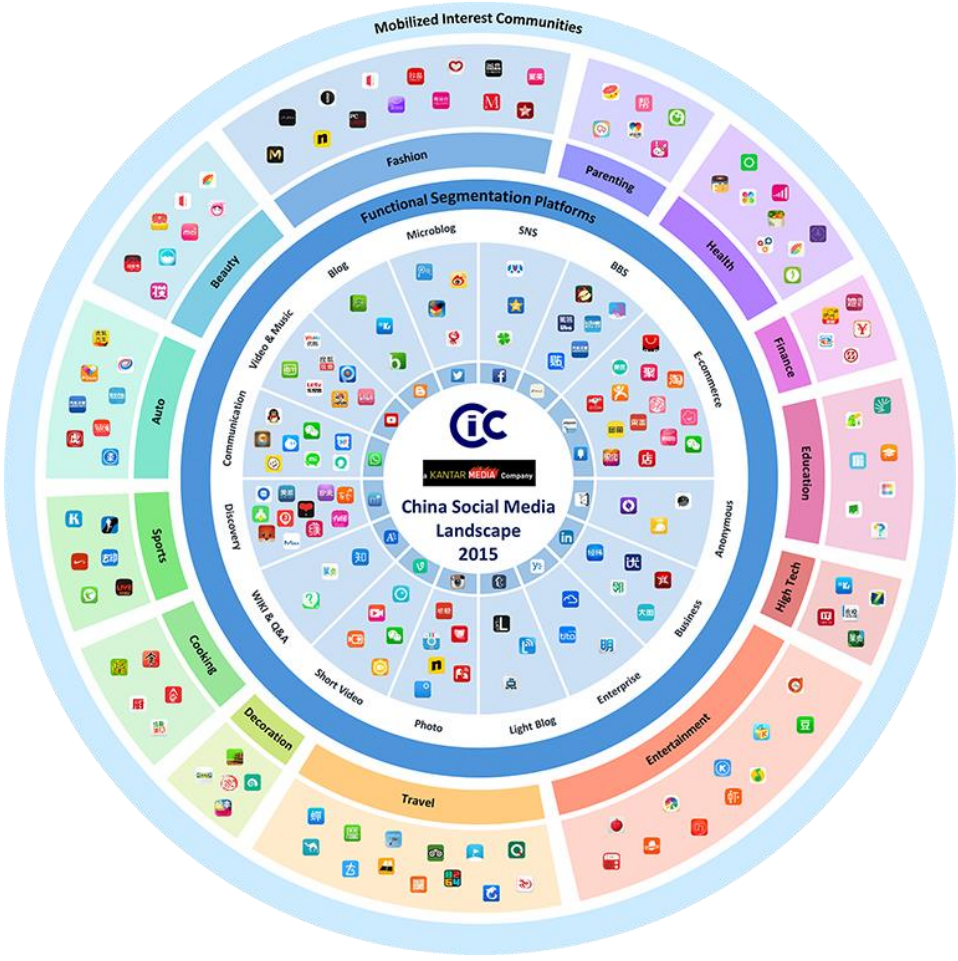
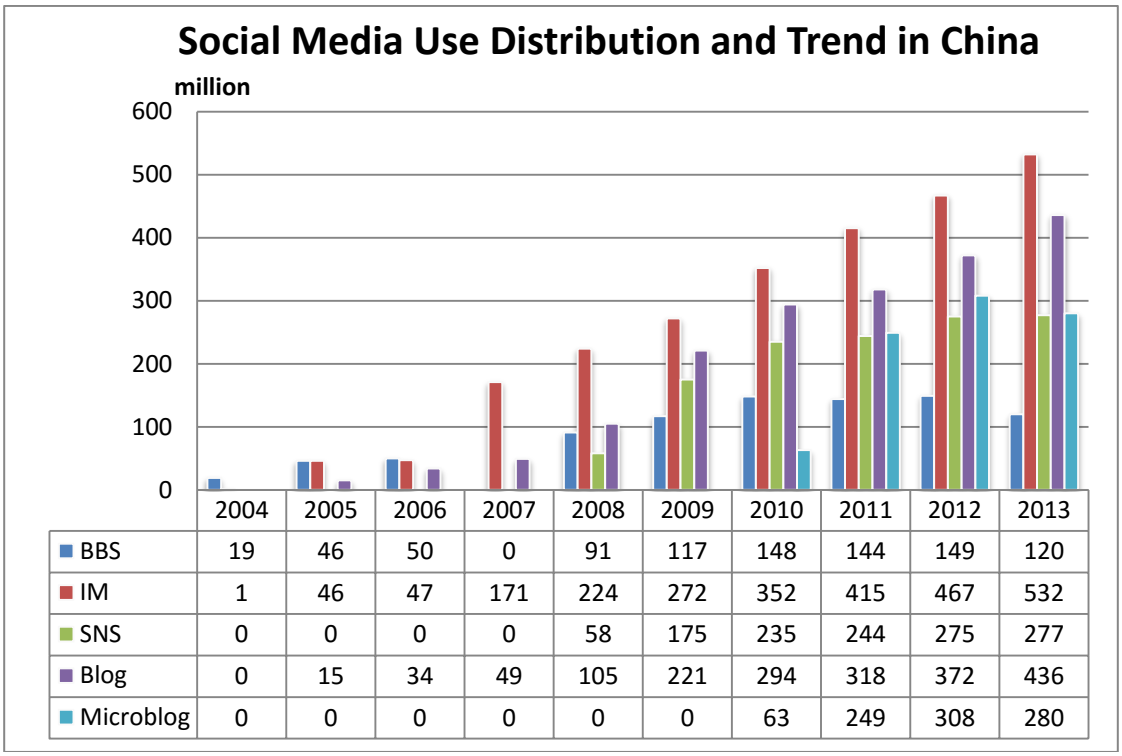


Figure 1.2: 2015 China Social Media Landscape (Source: CIC, 2015)



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
BBS	19	46	50	0	91	117	148	144	149	120
IM	1	46	47	171	224	272	352	415	467	532
SNS	0	0	0	0	58	175	235	244	275	277
Blog	0	15	34	49	105	221	294	318	372	436
Microblog	0	0	0	0	0	0	63	249	308	280

Figure 1.3: Social Media Use Distribution and Trend in China (Source: organized from the 15th to 33rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China by CNNIC, 2005 Jan.-2014 Jan.)

China also has the largest and most active social media population in the world. 89.3 percent of Chinese netizens (about 564 million) were registered on social media sites by the end of June, 2014 (CNNIC, 2014a). McKinsey found that Chinese netizens spend 46 minutes a day visiting social media sites, compared with 7 minutes in Japan and 37 minutes in the United States (Chong & Liu, 2013). And as a matter of fact, netizens in China are using multiple social media platforms at the same time; one netizen has three social media accounts on average (CIC, 2011). They actually integrate all different social media platforms into their daily lives. Thus, social media has led to a new lifestyle in China, and become a major part of Chinese citizens' lives.

Given these developments, to fully understand the relationship of social media and citizen influence in governance in China and more generally, it is necessary to reconceptualize the way governance is defined so that attention is paid to a wider range of societal sectors in which citizens make Internet-related inputs – a "bottoms up" perspective. Thus, the concern of this study is with the ways and extent to which Chinese citizens' use of social media have expanded their influence in the socio-cultural and economic sectors of the nation as well as in relation to its formal government, the State. To do this, the conceptual framework used in this study looks at selected use of social media in three sectors that involve: citizens and citizens; citizens and economic actors; and citizens and the State.

Further, in this reconceptualization, particular attention will be paid to the nature and utilization or effects of what can be called the social media infrastructure from two dimensions. These and the topics that will be focused on within them as indicated below:

Social Media Infrastructure: Citizen Related
- Code Language
- Human Flesh Search Engine
- Surrounding Gaze
- Citizen Anti-Control Strategies
- Cumulative Effects of Specific Events over Time

Social Media Infrastructure: Technology-Related
- Time-Space Effects
- Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages
- Technological Changes

Finally, the reconceptualized analytic framework developed for this study can be applied in comparative research among nations to generate more adequate understanding of the extent to which citizens have or have not enhanced their

influence from the bottom up in multiple sectors of governance, not just in relation to the formal state. This will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

1.2 Literature on Social Media in China

1.2.1 State Control and Social Media

When the Internet was first introduced into China in 1994, the socialistic philosophy that the state must control the media was applied to the Internet as well (Cullen & Choy, 1999). Since then, the tension from China's dilemma between Internet development and government's political control has become a central topic in China's Internet policy research. Most studies came to the long-held conclusion that the Chinese government embraces the Internet for the economic modernization but regulates it to limit or prevent citizen political use of it (Wu, 1996; Tan, Mueller, & Foster, 1997; Taubman, 1998; Tan, Foster, & Goodman, 1999). This is also called "two-hand strategy" – promotion on the one hand and control on the other hand (Zhang, 2006).

Within this framework, policy responses and institutional responses have been made by the state as changes and advances of the Internet technology have occurred (Tan, 1999; Zittrain & Edelman, 2003). A sophisticated Internet censorship system has been developed and implemented from different aspects such as regulation, user self-regulation, service provider, controls and filtering projects (Feng & Guo, 2013; Yang, 2011). Most undesirable or politically sensitive information from the Internet outside China are blocked by filtering systems such as the Great Firewall (Tsui, 2008).

When social media started to proliferate in China in early 2000s, both governmental practice and academic discussion about Internet control has shifted to

Web 2.0 censorship. Social media are subjected to all Internet regulations in China. In addition, the state implements specific censorship measures for social media. One of the government's strategies is controlling social media users through restricting social media service firms. In order to get a business license, Internet service companies in China, especially news portals and social media service providers, have to agree with the government's censorship guidelines and cooperate with the censorship practice. Internet service companies have to obey *the Measures on the Administration of Internet Service and the Provisions on the Administration of Internet News and Information Services* (Feng, 2010). Another necessary step is signing the "*Public Pledge of Self-Regulation and Professional Ethics for China Internet Industry*" that indicates what Internet companies can and cannot do in dealing with information (ISC, 2011). Research on a wide range of Chinese blog services revealed that some censorship towards user-generated content was through Chinese Internet companies indirectly (MacKinno, 2009).

Another censoring effort towards social media is online real-name registration. Since September 2009, the Internet authorities have been pushing forward real-name requirement for bloggers and other Internet users. The Beijing municipal government took the lead in making regulations that require all microbloggers to register with their real name and national ID number in 2011(Bischoff, 2015). In 2012, Sina Weibo ungraded their system with real-name verification function. A user can gain points for validating his or her real identity in Sina Weibo's points system; and lose points for violation defined by the government and company. And new Wechat accounts after 2013 April required a real-name verification (Bischoff, 2015). In 2015, as the government continues to tighten its grip on cyberspace, the State Internet Information

Office implemented a comprehensive real-name registration and oversight system, which forces most social media users to register with their real name (China Daily, 2015).

Both quantitative analysis of censorship and deletion practices in Chinese social media from King et al. (2013) and Bamman et al. (2012) demonstrates that most social media message with politically sensitive words lead to an anomalously higher rates of deletion. And "the censorship program is aimed at curtailing collective action by silencing comments that represent, reinforce, or spur social mobilization, regardless of content. Censorship is oriented toward attempting to forestall collective activities that are occurring now or may occur in the future—and, as such, seem to clearly expose government intent." (King et al, 2013, p1.)

Some researchers argue that the challenge brought by social media to Chinese government is manageable by the state, since, so far, no regime change or significant democratic movement has been produced by social media in China; and these censorship approaches have been successfully employed by Chinese government to stop activists using the Internet as a political tool and maintain their regime (MacKinnon, 2008). "Networked authoritarianism" that the government "embraces and adjusts to the inevitable changes brought by digital communication" was one of these explanations used to account for the failure of social media's democratic potential within Chinese authoritarian regime (MacKinnon, 2008; MacKinnon, 2011, p.33).

1.2.2 Citizens Influence and Social Media

Regime change orientation on social media in China is largely reflected in the discussion of citizen empowerment in speech, action and resistance, as well as a

positive linkage between the popularity of social media and democracy. “Digital democracy” (Yeung, 2008) or “cyber-democracy” (Zhao, 2009) are popular terms applied to reflect the belief that Internet development and social media application will bring about democratic social change or foster a democratic process in China .

However, there are also a number of ways in which citizen influence is generated through the use of the Internet, especially social media, and increasing in China, but not linked with regime change efforts. Before the era of Web 2.0, Yang paid attention to the interactive dynamics of the Internet and civil society (Yang, 2003a; 2003b; 2007; 2009a; 2009b). He argued that the development of the Internet and China’s civil society was a co-evolutionary process. “The Internet facilitates civil society activities by offering new possibilities for citizen participation. Civil society facilitates the development of the Internet by providing the necessary social basis—citizens and citizen groups—for communication and interaction.” (Yang, 2003a, p.406)

As a matter of fact, social media promotes citizen influence by providing an alternative platform for citizens to gain uncensored information, express dissenting opinions, and participate in public affair discussion in various ways previously impossible for the public (Tai, 2006; Wallis, 2011; Esarey & Qiang, 2011). Even under the government’s sophisticated Internet controlling system, Chinese netizens have responded by using “coded language, neologisms, and satire to evade censorship and repression” (Esarey & Qiang, 2011, p. 312), which was defined as “digital resistance” by Qiang (2008).

For this reason, Yang (2010) has concluded that the prevailing use of social media like Weibo has created virtual public spaces for the first time in the history of

Chinese society (Yang, 2010). Others write that the social media sphere is emerging as "an arena for political debate" (Schlæger, 2011). Based on information regime theory, Esarey and Qiang (2011) found evidence that suggests that new media has empowered China's netizens in public opinion and, thus, "diminished the state's ability to set the public agenda and shape political preferences." (p.298)

Further, this influence also reflects its significant role in promoting citizen participation, in general or politically, both online and offline. Qiang (2008) believes that it has become a training ground for citizen participation in China. While, compared to authority-organized top-down surveillance, You (2013) proposes a "bottom-up surveillance mechanism" carried out by Chinese netizens to fight with government or officials corruption and participate in other political affairs is mainly based on social media with the lead of Weibo use. For example, citizen's involvement through social media had successfully reversed China's decade-long practice of secrecy over government financial information and achieved the new policy of government fiscal transparency (Zhang & Chan, 2013). A series of grassroots environmental movements initiated by citizens through social media have forced some local governments to cancel industrial project plans that were seen as having potential negative impacts on environment and residents health (Huang & Yip, 2012).

1.2.3 Outside of the Western Focus

Taking the above into account that the citizens' Internet use within the confine of state censorship seeks to influence, in general, rather than overthrown the regime, some scholars point out that the Internet, including social media, in China must be looked at outside the "Western" generated citizen opposition to authoritarian regimes focus. Otherwise, our understanding will be skewed.

In general, given actual the checkered record of social media in regime change, Shirky (2011) concludes that the "potential of social media" is not revolutionary but "lies mainly in their support of civil society and the public sphere – change measured in years and decades rather than weeks or months." MacKinnon (2008) makes a similar point in relation to China and writes that in terms of "political change or democratization" the impact of the Internet and blogs are "most likely to be gradual and subtle."

More explicitly, Meng (2010) argues that there has been a "fixation" in research on social media in China that focuses "on whether the Internet could democratize" the governmental system (p.501). He goes on to point out that this "fixation" can misdirect research on ICT because it reflects a "Western-centric view that treats China as the inscrutable and inferior 'other' waiting to be converted to 'one of us'."(2010, p. 502) Equally basic, Meng underscores the fact that the revolutionary origin of the Chinese government "has rendered the authoritarian state historically grounded legitimacy" and "no one should assume an antithetical relationship between the regime and the Chinese people." (p. 502) All of this leads Meng to conclude "it is hugely problematic if the pre-formed lens of democratization becomes so dominant in China Internet studies that it excludes alternative ways of framing new research empirically, this could lead to oversimplification of the very diverse activities taking place in Chinese cyberspace, many of which contribute to a more inclusive communication environment without pursuing overt political agendas." (p. 501)

This is not a new critique of Internet research in relation to China. A decade ago, Yang (2003) made the point that the existing discourse centered on the political control of the Internet by the State and efforts to overcome it by dissident groups (p.

408). He went on to say that "technological diffusion is not shaped only by political and economic factors, nor is the impact of technology confined to the political sphere and state behavior." Consequently "it is crucial to examine how Chinese civil society shapes the development of the Internet, and vice versa." (p. 410)

To understand the impact of social media in China in terms of a broader concept of governance, it is necessary to go beyond the general theme of regime change and move outside of the Western framework, and systematically look at what is occurring not only between the citizens and government, but also citizen activities using social media in multiple social sectors within the country.

Although various aspects of the argument about citizen influence have been raised in some articles, few bring all of the dimensions together or provide a systematic and detailed research for one work. Most articles look only at limited cases, or one or another aspect of how citizens make use of social media to exercise some influence and only in relation to the efforts in opposition to State, not addressing the general way and which social media affecting the broad capacity of citizens to exercise influence in overall socio-cultural and economic as well as political dimensions. Therefore, to fully examine citizen influence enabled by social media, this study has developed a more nuanced framework for looking at and understand what is actually going on. To do this, a variety of interaction and infrastructure dimensions are considered in related to the use of social media by citizens to exercise influence. The infrastructure elements used here and their interrelationships have seldom been given attention within social media literature. And the identifying and elaborating of citizen interaction and infrastructure dimensions will add to our understanding of social media and its relationship with citizens, government and other social sectors.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

From a bottom-up perspective, the conceptual framework set up in this study for analyzing social media includes two main components, citizen interaction and social media infrastructure, respectively. Citizen interaction looks into different dimensions interactive relationship between citizens and citizens, citizens and economic actors, and citizens and governments. Social media infrastructure identifies a variety of the nature and effects of social media use from two dimensions, including citizen-related and technology-related. The graph (see Figure1.4) depicts the framework used here. And the following discussion provides greater definition of these social media infrastructure elements.

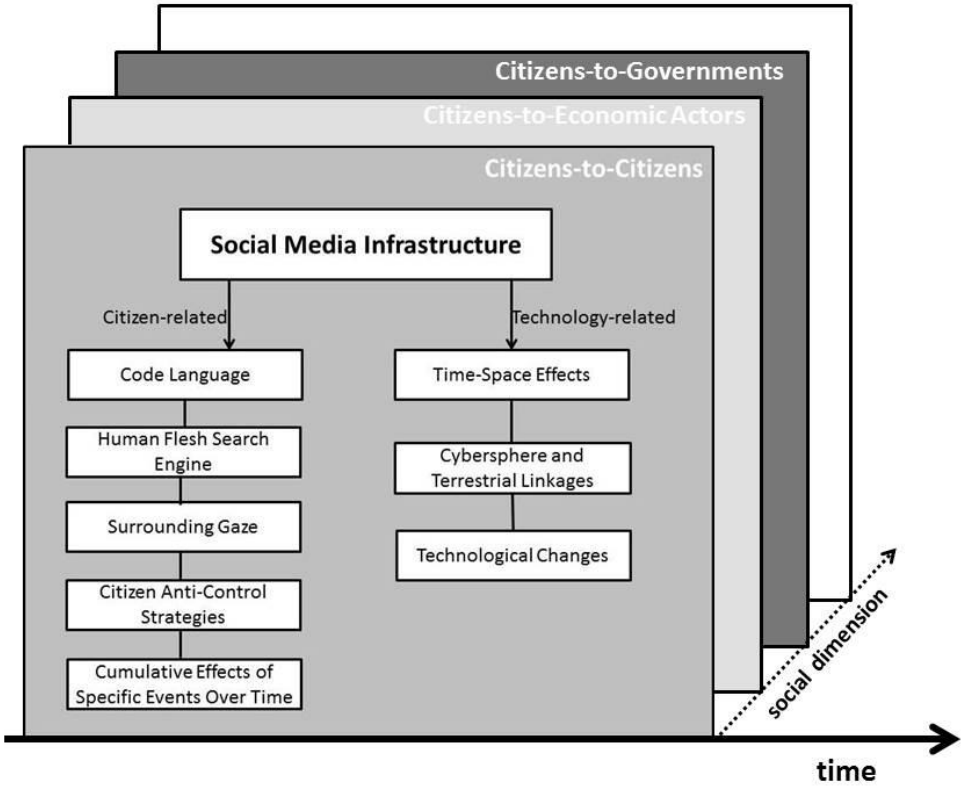


Figure 1.4: Conceptual Framework

1.3.1 Citizen-related Social Media Infrastructure

1.3.1.1 Code Language

Since messages that include sensitive words from netizens are highly possible to be blocked or deleted by the government censorship system in China, netizens create and use words and terms that have meanings only to netizens and not to the government censors, which is named as code language in this study. As a result, at least at first, the government censors don't recognize the content of the message; and netizens are able to use the Internet without blockage.

What has evolved amounts to a form of Orwellian "doublethink" but this is from the bottom up – from the people not the State. Especially, it is used for the voicing of critical comment on government in general or in relation to specific policies and actions. Further, this coded language strategy "has given rise to a surprising number of new terms for exposing, criticizing, and ridiculing" those in power that have come into offline as well as online use (Qiang & Link, 2013). For example, constructing a harmonious (和谐 Hexie) society has been a national policy vision initiated under Hu Jintao's leadership. A substantial Internet use is subject to censorship because of the inconsistence with the spirit of harmonious society. To escape this, netizens substituted the similarly sounding word "river crab" (河蟹 Hexie). Thus, someone online would say my blog was "river-crabbed" instead of censored or harmonized. Once these code terms are added to government's censorship list, netizens change their code language or use more sophisticated avoidance techniques.

Furthermore, words and phrases that gain coded meaning can originate from the offline statements of government officials and citizens as well as be "invented" by

bloggers. A well-known such term is “Fart People” which came from a statement of offical Lin Jiaxiang. A video clip from the surveillance camera captured him saying, “Do you people know who I am? … You people are worth less than a fart to me!” when he was arguing with people in a restaurant. This word has come to be used popularly as a term of pride in reference to ordinary people both on and offline.

1.3.1.2 Human Flesh Search Engine

Human Flesh Search Engine (HFSE) is a method that Chinese netizens frequently employ to generate both information and action online and offline. The term HFSE is a literal translation of 人肉搜索 (Renrou Sousuo), which means the information seeking is human detective-like activity rather than a primarily software-driven search.

The use of HFSE to identify individuals and dig up facts about them is often negatively characterized as vigilante-like. Sterling (2010) describes HFSE as “a form of online vigilante justice in which Internet users hunt down and punish people who have attracted their wrath.” Tong and Lei (2010) assert that “Language violence and ‘human flesh search’ are the worst features” of massive social media actions.” However, HFSE is an evolving phenomenon and the ways it is defined and assessed vary. The meaning adopted here is drawn from Wang et al., (2010) who define it as “people-powered” online information seeking and sharing that usually relies on voluntary crowd-sourcing and involves strong offline elements in a variety of ways.

There is no record of the exact number of cases of HFSE since the term was first applied in 2001. One empirical study done by Wang et al., (2010), focusing primarily on China, identified 404 major cases between 2001 and 2010. More than

fifty percent of the cases were first triggered by exposing information on an online forum.

1.3.1.3 Surrounding Gaze

"Online surrounding gaze" (网络围观 WangluoWeiguan) is another cyber phenomenon generated by the ways Chinese social media has affected citizen participation in a variety of sectors. In 2011, Xinhua News Agency published an article claiming that 2010 was the year that marked the entry of China's Internet culture into the era of the "national surrounding gaze." After that, this term became a popular one used to describe a mass of netizens flocking to follow or comment on certain events.

The term "surrounding gaze" comes from the writings of modern Chinese author Lu Xun's use of the phrase "culture of the gaze" (Lu, 1928) which refers to the coldness and indifference of crowds when people gather and just look at a public spectacle. However, a somewhat different meaning has developed for the surrounding gaze in its online form. It refers to new possibilities for collective influence through "surrounding gaze politics" which can influence things and result in changes by gathering digital public opinion around certain issues and events (Hu, 2011). Thus, the online surrounding gaze differs from HFSE by influencing the offline world through netizens massing public opinion in the form of social media messages on what are already defined issues and events rather than initially participating in detective work related to them.

Hu (2011) considers the online surrounding gaze as a kind of minimal form of public participation. However, he believes it is still a significant platform for citizens, without central direction, by using social media to express their views and make

demands that are recognized by those in power or others as a formidable flow of public opinion. In terms of the positive effects of online surrounding gaze, according to the survey initiated by *China Youth Daily*, 72.9 percent participants agree that it could formulate powerful public opinion and 57.1 percent say it gives normal citizens a chance to express themselves (CYD, 2011). The power of social media in China is labeled as "Wei Dongli" (literally means micro-power). And the surrounding gaze's influence on public opinion is one of them, organized strength without organization.

1.3.1.4 Citizen Anti-Control Strategies

Citizen anti-control strategies are a variety of actions and responses that citizens engage to overcome efforts by the government to reduce or limit their ability to use the Internet, especially social media, to influence policies. It is changing and evolving overtime, depending on technology development, citizens' Internet using behavior, and what kinds of censorship or control the government seeks to impose.

Code language introduced above is one of these anti-control strategies. This study discusses it as a separate infrastructure dimension because of its significance and widespread use. Besides, there are many other strategies employed by netizens to fight the censorship system. For instance, virtual private networks (VPNs) are the most common pathway Chinese netizens used to climb the Great Firewall (Xu, 2015). To avoid government blockage, bloggers have used a strategy of writing backwards. Software was used that "flips sentences to read right to left instead of left to right, and vertically instead of horizontally" and make it difficult for government software to automatically detect (Ye & Fowler, 2008). According to Ye and Fowler, an editor at the Tianya.cn forum, who had responsibilities for censoring citizen postings, said that,

in spite of the government's sophisticated censorship regime, "the country also has the most experienced and talented group of netizens who always know ways around it."

1.3.1.5 Cumulative Effects of Specific Events over Time

The cumulative effects of individual netizen actions over time can have influence on policy or social issues. Beyond the focus of individual cases there can be the combined results of netizens' involvement in the past, current, and even future activities. Over time, netizens' actions in a general area but not directly related, can result in influencing government policy.

In order to understand the netizen's use of social media and its cumulative effects, it is important to view it in a dynamic way. Looking at technology changes, netizen involvement changes, and the changes in government response can promote our understanding of the ways of citizens' bottom-up use social media and its substantial influence on policy issues can occur over time. Four analyses in Chapter 5 will illustrate what is a cumulative effect and how it works in detail.

1.3.2 Technology-related Social Media Infrastructure

1.3.2.1 Time-Space Effects

The speed with which social media report events of public importance is often faster and more complete and accurate than information provided by State and the mass media it basically controls. This is particularly important in China. Social media allows almost instantaneous communication among millions of people widely dispersed over China's vast territory. Prior to social media, many parts of the nation were provided with news of distant happenings only by officially sanctioned media, if at all. Thus, it greatly reduces time-space barriers to citizen communication and action.

As Esarey and Qiang (2011) point out, in the past, this made it very difficult for activists to create linkages with activists elsewhere, who may have had similar concerns or been willing to support a popular movement.

A classic example of this is reflected in the short-lived existence of the "Democracy Wall", where citizens were able to attach written comments, including political statements as well as poems, on a blank wall space on Chang'an Avenue in Beijing during the winter of 1978-79. This possibility was soon eliminated by the government after several months. Now, however, with access to social media and the advanced technical knowledge that many citizens have, it is possible for millions of people anywhere in China to post or receive messages – not just in word form but also video – that the State cannot fully censor or eliminate. This has created a "Digital Democracy Wall" without time and spatial boundaries. As Yang and Cao (2012) observe, with Weibo "information can be posted online anytime, anywhere and by anyone. There is no longer a hierarchy when it comes to sources of news."

1.3.2.2 Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages

The role of social media in citizens' influence can only be understood and assessed in relation to the linkage between cyber and terrestrial space and the two-way causal flows that are involved. In one case, social media information, messages, and interactions foster offline actions and, then, through providing text information, images, and video of offline actions, stimulate further terrestrial citizen actions. There are also cases in which citizen actions and demonstrations can occur first and produce social media messages related to them that also further stimulate action. In either case, it's obvious that online activity and offline activity reinforces each other because of the effect of linkage. And involved individuals, business entities, organizations or

government agencies may use social media to quickly and directly communicate to the netizens involved in terrestrial actions to negotiate or announce concessions.

Since social media has become the first channel for Chinese citizens to obtain latest first-hand information, when something happened, the communication process between online and offline enabled by cybersphere and terrestrial linkages usually starts spontaneously and continues without interruption.

1.3.2.3 Technological Changes

As all kinds of technological innovations are changing the way we live dramatically, the continuingly changes overtime in the Internet technology, including their diffusion, determine what kind social media platforms are available for citizens and how they are being used, which produce changes in the ability that gives citizens to act and generate influence from the bottom up. Treating citizens' social media use from a static view would greatly restrict the understanding. It is important to be aware of the time dimension in order to fully understand the use of social media. For example, the great use of mobile phones, especially by the working class has expanded their access to social media. According to the review of relevant literature from 1995 till present, as the changes in technology itself as well as responses from citizens (the way in which citizens using it) and the government (the way in which government controls and makes use of it), the major topics within academic research about China's Internet are changing correspondingly.

Particularly worth mentioning is the relationship between technological changes and the government' Internet policy here. It is true that the development of Internet technology and the way in which netizen making use of the Internet shape the government's control strategies as well as attitudes toward the Internet. Meanwhile,

the governments' censorship also has significant influence on the network's growth as well as Internet use. Thus, it is necessary to point out that the Internet technology and government's policy towards it are always shaping each other and this process is evolving over time.

1.4 Research Plan

1.4.1 Research Methodology and Data

Since the topic of this research remains largely unexplored, an exploratory study through the qualitative approach would facilitate the inquiry of the unknown as well as the understanding of meaning within the specific experience (Pattern, 2002). In addition to developing the conceptual framework by exploring the nature, functions and interrelationship of the infrastructure dimensions and interaction dimensions, this study draws upon a variety of cases in which netizen use social media in exercising influence and their cumulative effects in the socio-cultural, economic and political sectors and well as other relevant research and social media and Internet data concerning China. Specific research methodologies including literature analysis, mass media achieves analysis and government documents review, case studies as well as participant observation will be used to collect data from different perspectives.

The literature analysis is used to bring together a large body of existing related research on social media in China and set up a systematic conceptual framework for better understanding the relationship between social media, government and citizens. Especially, regarding to the infrastructure dimensions of social media, and the concept of social media generated infrastructure in this research are not newly discovered here and have been mentioned in the literature. However, as noted, the research commonly

has looked at only one or a few of them and rarely examines them collectively as interrelated and evolving basic elements that have been and are increasing the possibilities of citizen influence in multiple sectors of society. The data for literature analysis are mainly published research and comes from academic journals and books.

Secondly, mass media achieves analysis and government documents review is utilized to describe changes, identify influence and collect data related to these three interaction dimensions. The mass media achieves analysis will draw upon Chinese national news sources including Xinhua News (official news outlet) and Sohu News (private news portal), as well as foreign news coverage such as BBC, *New York Times* and the Routers News (in case important information is censored in China), and Internet searching with relevant key words. Government documents related to citizens' influence on governance process and policy change and relevant government official websites will be used.

Third, another important one is case studies, which is different from general case studies. Over hundred related cases have been collected to elaborate and identify how citizens use different social media infrastructures to interact and influence in different social sectors. These cases provide evidence and support for the conceptual framework newly set up in this research.

In addition, in order to fully understand and have a feeling for the nature of the social media activity, participant observation is an appropriate and efficient way to capture people's contextual experience and collect rich information through researcher's direct involvement in the environment (Kawulich, 2005). It allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of participants. In terms of online research, Kendall (1999) stresses that online participant observation

could promote researchers' understanding of Internet users' performance and its meaning for Internet users. My participant observations are used in this research to promote my experience and understanding, from the real setting, of social media generated infrastructures and how citizens utilize them to influence government and public policy.

1.4.2 Research Structure

After Chapter 1, Chapter 2 to Chapter 4 will focus on how these social media generated infrastructures elements are being utilized by citizens to excise their influence on different citizen interaction dimensions: citizens-to-citizens, citizens-to-economic actors, citizens-to-governments. These chapters will be organized as follows.

Chapter 2 will examine citizens-to-citizens interaction characterized here by the interactions of people with one another rather than with the State or other organizations. It will provide an overview of the variety of types of citizen action taking place through social media. Related cases and involving relationships will be discussed under three categories, including fighting with citizens' misconduct and protecting social moral, providing or sharing information that is important to citizens' lives, as well as creating social services and social good.

Chapter 3 looks into the interaction between citizens and economic actors. It is mainly involving with the relationship between consumer and seller or producer, and worker and employer. Starting with a background introduction to e-commerce and social media use within China's e-commerce; it will include bottom-up consumer activities (both online and offline) and bottom-up labor activities which addresses issues such as migrant workers and other individual worker rights protection.

Chapter 4 is about citizens-to-governments social media activities. It will describe citizens' influences through social media on governments or officials but not related to regime change efforts. A series of cases will be selected to present how citizens make use of social media to challenge officials' behavior, conduct online anti-corruption actions, and protest government's decisions. At the same time, this chapter will also look at the "the cat-and-mouse game" relationship between government and citizens. It mainly depicts how netizens contriving to use the Internet through creating and using different bypassing strategies in response to the government's different censoring methods.

Chapter 5 focuses on cumulative effects in policy change. Discussion about four different policy issues will illustrate how the effects of separate but not directly related netizen actions over time cumulatively influence national policy. The four policy case studies used are cumulative effects of technology on Zhu Ling's unsolved death case, railways system change in China, the scandal of Red Cross and China's charity system change, nature disaster responding policy change, as well as the overall cumulative effects on central and local strategy in using social media beyond simple censorship.

Chapter 6 will conclude with a summary of the framework and findings of the study. It will also relate the research findings to existing literature. Lastly, research implications and possible future studies will be discussed, including using the comparative reconceptualization framework created here to carry out comparative studies among nations.

Chapter 2

CITIZENS-TO-CITIZENS SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

As introduced in Chapter 1, citizen-to-citizen interaction through social media is one of these important dimensions within the conceptual framework, which is characterized by the interactions of citizens with one another rather than with business companies, governments or other organizations. After reviewing and analysis of related cases, they mainly fall into the following three perspectives. First, citizens act to identify and "punish" individuals who are judged, by netizens, to have violated social moral principles. Second, citizens make use of social media platforms to provide or share information that is important to their lives, such as information regarding food safety, air condition as well as reliable and real time information during natural disasters or emergencies. Third, many citizen initiatives through social media are dedicating to create social services and produce social good; citizens are mobilized to help socially vulnerable especially when the government don't adequately respond. The chapter is organized by these three perspectives.

Many scholars have pointed out the great difficulty in getting related quantitative data in terms of netizens' activities and, there is much less extensive quantitative data available. In order to fully understand the situation on the bases of information available, a combination of limited empirical data and a variety of individual examples will be utilized collectively. Also, attention will be paid to how the social media infrastructures, introduced in the first chapter are being utilized by netizens within the citizen-to-citizen interaction dimension.

2.1 Fighting with Immoral Behaviors

As mentioned previously, the "Human Flesh Search Engine" has the ability to mobilize a large number of netizens to conduct in-depth and specific information mining together. This social media infrastructure is frequently utilized by netizens in actions related to what is viewed as citizens' misconduct and protecting social morals.

2.1.1 Kitten Killer Case

The Kitten Killer case happened in 2006 is an example of this perspective. On Feb 26, 2006, a group of screenshot pictures of a kitten tortured by a woman using her high-heels was posted by a user ID named "broken glasses" on Mop.com, one of the largest and most influential BBS and forum in China. The post immediately invoked netizens' rage over the cruelness of this lady's behavior within online communities. The original post and discussion about it were quickly spread over other social media platforms. And the skyrocketing click and replying rate quickly brought it up to one of the top topics on many BBSes and forums (Chen, 2006).

On February 28, netizens organized spontaneously to investigate who did this and where it happened. On the same day, by analyzing the video loader's internet IP address (www.crushworld.net), a Mop user found out that the company running this website, with the name of Yinhu Tech, was based in Hangzhou City. After this information was published, netizens flocked to this website and attacked it, so that it was paralyzed very soon on March 1st (Chen, 2006).

While everyone believed it happened in Hangzhou City since it was uploaded by a Hangzhou based website, on March 2, a post from a netizen "I'm not a desert angel" claimed that he/she was very familiar with the video shooting background; and that it was not in Hangzhou, but in a small city of Heilongjiang Province. In addition,

the netizen revealed that the lady was his/her acquaintance who was working in the local hospital.

Figure 2.1: The Universe A Class Wanted Poster: an online wanted poster made by netizens to search the kitten killer (Source: www. mop.com)

On March 3, netizen “evernight” shared his findings that the person was selling this video online with an ID “liyj6868” and it was Li Yuejun, who worked for the local television station in Luobei County, Heilongjiang Province. With these two pieces of information pointing to the same place, some netizens went to the official portal of Luobei County and found a picture of local landscapes that was the same as the video shooting background. Some netizens even went to the physical place and confirmed that it had happened there (Chen, 2006).

Figure 2.2: Netizens Finding the Location by Matching Background. Left: netizens’ analysis of video shooting background. Right: a Mingshan Island picture from local official portal (Source: www. mop.com)

On March 4, “romantic night wind” confirmed the information provided by “I’m not a desert angel” and added more relevant details. According to him/her, the lady torturing the kitten was named Wang Jue. She was 40 years old, divorced her husband several years ago, and was a pharmacist in Luobei County People’s Hospital. Further the video was shot by her friend Li Yuejun (on the staff of Luobei County Television Station) in Mingshan Island located in Luobei County, Heilongjiang Province (Chen, 2006).

The overall picture was completed by contributions from many netizens. The whole "detection" process conducted by netizens took only six days. As follow-ups, local news media outlets reported this story. Local government became engaged in this case and confirmed every detail revealed by netizens. In the end, both Wang Jue and Li Yuejun apologized for their behaviors publicly. They were fired by Luobei County People's Hospital, and the Luobei County Television station, respectively. Their apology letters and walking papers were not only circulated within different social media platforms but also published on Luobei Local government official portals (China Daily, 2006).

2.1.2 Love Affair

A love affair case happened in 2007 and was mostly discussed in 2008 is another relevant case. On December 27, a 31 years old lady living in Beijing, named Jiang Yan, published her last blog regarding her despair and her husband's love affair with another woman on MSN Space "The Migrant Bird that Flies North." After being revived from overdose of sleeping pills, Jiang Yan chose to end her life by jumping out of a 24th floor apartment on December 29. Netizens knew this tragedy because of a blog posted in January 2008. The post titled "The Final Blog Diaries of the MM who Committed Suicide by Jumping down 24 Floors" was first published on Tianya Club by a netizen named "Saga's Rubber Duck". This post quickly spread over a variety of Chinese BBSes and forums, such as Tianya Club, Xici Hutong, Mop, NetEase, Baidu etc., and brought it up to a situation involving the surrounding gaze (Yu, 2008).

Figure 2.3: The Photo of Jiang Yan's Husband Wang and the Third Party Dong-Fang. It was posted at Jiang Yan's blog on December 26, 2007. (Source: ESWN, 2008)

The overwhelmed online public opinion believed the husband's love affair caused Jiang Yan's suicide; and the majority of netizens blamed the husband for a murder. Based on the photo of the husband and the mistress, as well as the blog post from "Saga's Rubber Duck", netizens started the HFSE against the husband. Very soon, they found Jiang Yan's husband named Wang Fei, the mistress was his office colleague and named Dong-Fang Enna. In addition, Wang Fei's other personal information including home address, cell phone number, and company information became available online immediately. The information about his parents was also dug up by netizens because they were in favor of Wang Fei's relationship with the mistress and let her stay at their apartment. With all kinds of personal information, irate

netizens attacked Wang Fei and his family both online and offline. Wang Fei had written blogs online to defend himself, which brought back more netizens' assaults. Harassing calls were made by netizens. Death threats signs and graffiti, such as "a blood debt must be repaid with blood," were posted by netizens in front of his and his parents apartments (see Figure 2.4). For quite a long time, he and his family suffered pressure and harassment both from the virtual online community and real world environment. Meanwhile, different forms of harassment also pointed to Wang Fei's employer, a big advertising company. Netizens wrote threatening letters, made harassing phone calls. Eventually, the company had to fire both Wang Fei and his mistress as a result of public opinion (East South West North, 2008).

Figure 2.4: Signs and Graffiti Posted by Netizens outside the Wangs' Apartment. It says: "A blood debt must be repaid with blood." (Source: East South West North, 2008)

2.1.3 Ding Jinhao was here

"Ding Jinhao was here" was a recent case that happened in May 2013. A photo of 3,500-year-old Egyptian relic with several Chinese characters on it was first taken

and posted on Sina Weibo by a user named “Kongyouwuyi.” The seven Chinese Characters said “Ding Jinhao was here.” (see Figure 2.5) This picture was shared more than 90,000 times within three days and triggered outrage in the Chinese social media sphere immediately. Human Flesh Search Engine was promoted to identify Ding Jinhao. Very soon, netizens tracked down Ding Jinhao who was a 15-year-old middle school student in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. After his school information was disclosed online, the school website was hacked by netizens. Visitors had to click on a message box saying “Ding Jinhao was here” in order to enter the website (see Figure 2.6). At the end, Ding’s parents came out to apologize to the public and ask for forgiveness for their teenage son (Zuo, 2013; Sohu News, 2013a).

Figure 2.5: “Ding Jinhao Visited here” on the Egyptian Relic. The picture was posted by a Sina Weibo user named “Kongyouwuyi”. (Source: Zuo, 2013)

Figure 2.6: A Message Box Saying "Ding Jinhao was here" popped out from the school's website, after it was hacked by netizens. (Source: Sohu News, 2013a)

2.2 Providing and Sharing Important Information

Allowing creation and exchange of user-generated content is one of social media's important characteristics. This function is extensively used by Chinese netizens since traditional media in China usually present only government approved information. This section will discuss how citizens use social media platforms to generate and share information that is important to their lives, when relative information is not available or restricted by the authorities.

2.2.1 Food Safety

Food safety has been an increasingly concerned issue in China since late 1990s. Food scandals appear on news periodically. One relates to using a carcinogenic chemical to make pork taste like beef in a Shanghai restaurant. Wu Heng, a 25-year-old graduate student at Fudan University, started to use social media when he realized that he was one of victims for quite a long time. In the absence of official information

about food safety, he decided to launch a food safety blog called “Throw it Out the Window” (http://www.zccw.info) (see Figure 2.7) and build up a database regarding food safety in China (Magistad, 2012).

He first posted his idea on Renren and Sina Blog to advocate more participants on May 11, 2011. Within a day, 33 volunteers joined him. Most of them were college students of a similar age. After reviewing 17,268 news stories about food safety, a comprehensive food safety report and a dynamic map of China pinpointing where food problems existed nationally from 2004 to 2011was generated and displayed on its home page. The database titled “the news database of food safety in China” is shared with netizens for free. A search function within this database is also available for netizens in four ways: by region, food name, food safety keywords and random search (see Figure 2.8). For instance, if you need go on a business trip to Beijing, just enter “Beijing” in the searching bar, and the results will tell you what kind of food problems you should pay attention to when you stay in Beijing.

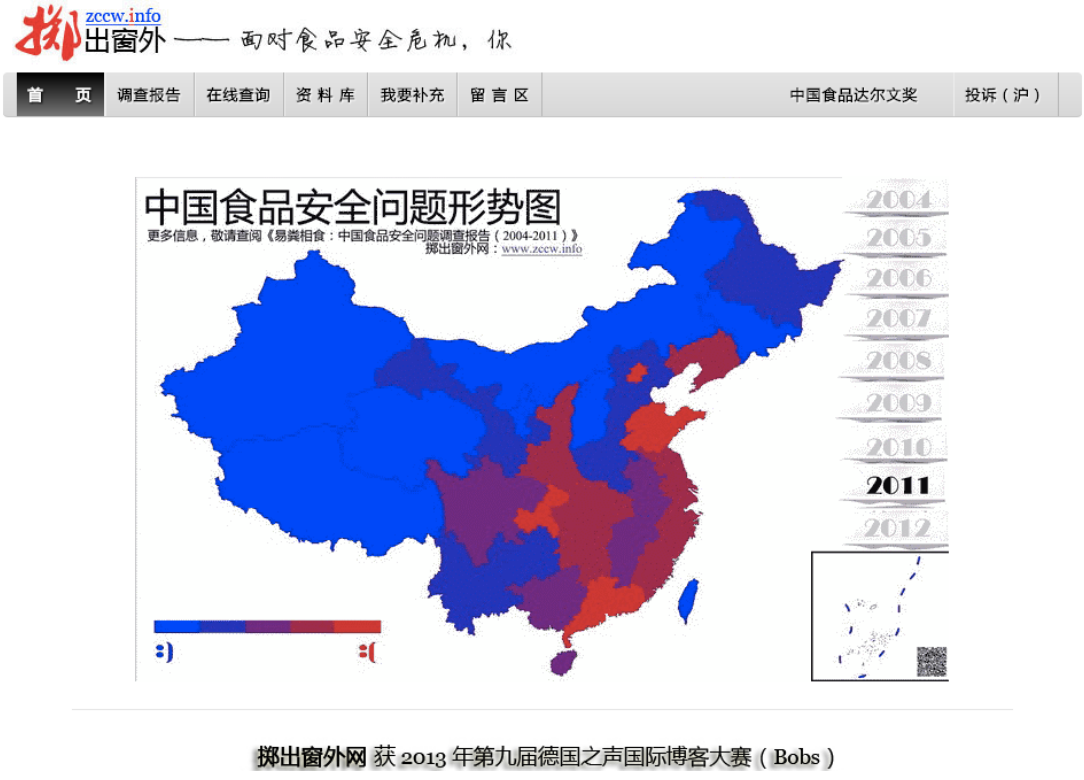


Figure 2.7: The Screenshot of the Website of "Throw it Out the Window" (retrieved on September 28th, 2014)

Figure 2.8: Search Function of "Throw it Out the Window": A. Region Search, B. Food Name Search, C. Keyword Cloud search and D. Looking Around (Random Search) (Retrieved on September 28th, 2014)

After being discovered and spread by the community on Weibo in 2012 May, Wu Heng's blog gained great popularity immediately and grew from ten thousand clicks a month to over five million in June 2012. And Wu Heng's blog had grown into a force of national influence for food safety in China in cybersphere. Charles Xue (薛蛮子), an entrepreneur and angel investor, posted on his Weibo an offer to invest in Wu's project. Meanwhile, the government offered him technology and capital support, which were refused by Wu, for the concern over whether it was in the public benefit and interest to do so (China Daily, 2012a).

In order to communicate with other netizens, Wu shares his findings in a variety of social media including Sina Weibo, Renren, Douban. In addition, to allow everyone to participate and contribute to the information collection on food safety, Wu opened his blog's access site and enable readers to add new information to it, not just leaving their comments. With over a half billion Chinese netizens online, this food safety champion, developed from a blog, is not only putting pressure on government and food companies to watch their behaviors but also making food safety information collecting and sharing a virtual platform available for citizens in China.

2.2.2 Air Quality

Beijing has been suffocating from air pollution for years. However, since 2011 air pollution (or haze) has been a daily major topic in both online and offline conversation, not confined to Beijing but nationwide. Along with the term PM2.5 (an air condition index measuring the size of particles) becoming a household one in China, air condition knowledge as well as public environmental awareness are now built up widely in China. While it was not the case before the term of PM 2.5 was put on social media by netizens.

The real-time PM2.5 data information was restricted by the Chinese government as a tradition. However, the United States embassy located in Beijing has monitored the PM2.5 level by installing an air detector on the roof of its embassy building located in the Chaoyang district, and published the data on Twitter under the user name “Beijingair” since 2008. But only a few Chinese netizens out of the mainland have access to this data since Twitter is blocked in China.

On October 12, 2011, a Sina Weibo user named “American Imperialists Embassy Air” (“美帝使馆空气”) (see Figure 2.9) was created to make PM2.5 data available for Chinese netizens by regularly (hourly) forwarding PM2.5 data from Twitter @Beijingair and U.S embassy’s portal. Ironically, it says in its profile “the behavior of US imperialism is unpopular. And it is doomed to failure. Please watch it critically.” However, it became popular very soon after its creation. By June 7, 2014, up to 17,898 netizens are following its posts. And continuing PM2.5 data has been posted by “American Imperialists Embassy Air”, which is consistent with these from U.S. embassy’s data.

Figure 2.9: Screenshot of the Weibo of "American Imperialists Embassy Air" (Retrieved on June 7th, 2014 from Sina Weibo)

Within the online campaign of clean air in China, a group of celebrity Weibo users, usually known as Big Vs (who have millions of followers), played important roles in pressuring the government to release accurate data on PM2.5. In the fall of 2011, Pan Shiyi, a real estate tycoon in China, put a short post saying "oh my! Hazardous!" with a picture showing that the PM2.5 value was 439 on his Weibo (Shang, 2014). This post, which was forwarded by netizens over 7,000 times in a short peirod, quickly drew the public's attention to PM2.5. Pan was the first public figure who took the lead in reposting PM 2.5 data from Twitter @Beijingair on his Weibo account and let netizens have access to accurate and latest information about air

condition in Beijing. Later on, a famous children's author Zheng Yuanjie joined Pan. Zheng used an online poll to ask his followers in November 2011 "what they thought of air quality in Beijing." There were 6,993 who participated and 89% of respondents voted for the option that "Beijing air quality is getting increasingly bad." (Johan van de Ven, 2014)

Since there was no official PM2.5 data available in China, or a PM2.5 index that was included in the national air quality data system at that time, civil self-testing of air quality began to occur. Certain relevant offline as well as online activities were mobilized by individuals as well as civil environmental organizations. A 25-year-old graduate student in South China Normal University located in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, initiated "Guangzhou Blue Sky Action," which mobilized citizens to measure PM2.5 voluntarily together and share the results through Weibo. This activity was also supported by Southern TV station, broadcasting timely PM2.5 results through its Channels (Shang, 2014). On December 27, 2011, Feng Yongfeng, the founder of Green Beagle, a Beijing-based civil environmental organization, started the activity named "I Measured the Air for the Motherland"; afterwards, environmental organizations in Guangzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Changsha, etc. cities joined this activity. They picked up their own detectors and shared their results online (Feng & Lv, 2011; Shang, 2014). There was even a "China First PM2.5 Map" (see Figure 2.10) made up of a large collection of sky photos (in different cities), which were taken by nationwide volunteers. Eventually, it was handed to the environmental authorities (Shang, 2014).

Figure 2.10: The First PM2.5 Map from the Civil Society (Source: Shang, 2014)

With all kinds of information now available online, netizens realized that, with the same air in Beijing, the PM2.5 values from China's environmental authorities and U.S embassy were very different. Zheng advocated through his Weibo: "the first step of control air pollution in China is letting the Environmental Protection Bureau say the truth." (From Zheng Yanjie's Weibo) And within an online poll launched by Pan, nearly 32,000 participants in less than ten hours of voting said they agreed with Pan's call for China to implement a clean air law (Chin, 2013).

With debate on social media, the PM2.5 data created a public environmental awareness that was built nationwide in China. At the same time, with overwhelmingly

concerned public opinion, both national and local governments were forced to provide accurate data on PM2.5; and further reforms of air pollution policy were successfully called for in China. On December 22,2011, Environment Minister Zhou Shengxian promised that a national PM2.5 monitoring network would be set up by 2015 (Johan van de Ven, 2014). Then, through its official Weibo account, the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau announced that they would start to monitor and publish timely data on PM2.5 on January 21, 2012 (S. Wang, 2012). After that, several significant advances to deal with air pollution were made within public policy sphere. On February 29, 2012, the Central State Council urged all localities to publish PM2.5 data in their communities (Sina News, 2013). On March 2, the newly revised "Ambient Air Quality Standards" was issued; and PM2.5 was added as a new air quality index item (Y. Wang, 2012). And for the first time, PM2.5 as one of air quality objectives was written into the government work report in 2012 (Netease Turth, 2014).

2.2.3 Disasters and Emergencies

Once disasters or emergencies happen, information is crucial to situational awareness and disaster response for the communities. However, traditional media in China have tended to be tardy or provide limited information that barely meets citizens' information needs. Thus, Chinese people have turned to social media, which provides an information platform with easy accessibility and swift dissemination for citizens to generate, share, seek, gather and integrate information. For instance, a content analysis about the 2010 Yushu earthquake-related microblog posts found out that there were one quarter of the posts falling in the category of situation updates (Qu, Huang, Zhang & Zhang, 2011). The following discussion will elaborate how social

media is being utilized by citizens to providing information in both situation updates and disaster response coordination.

Before the era of Weibo in China, netizens used forums to seek information when disasters or emergencies happen. During the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, the first earthquake reporting message was posted on the Tianya forum instead of traditional media, which was about 40 minutes later. And within 10 minutes, a user-generated map reported feeling of the earthquake from different cities (see Figure 2.11) (Qu, Huang, Zhang & Zhang, 2011).

Figure 2.11: User-generated Earthquake Locations from the Tianya Forum (Source: Qu, Huang, Zhang & Zhang, 2011)

On July 23, 2011, two travelling high-speed trains (D301 and D3115) collided with each other on a viaduct in the suburbs of Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. The derailing of two trains caused four cars to fall off the viaduct, 40 deaths and more than 200 injured. Only four minutes later after the crash, a passenger on the D301 train posted the first "news" about this accident on Weibo with a user name of "Yuan xiaowan" (see Figure 2.12). That was over two hours earlier than the online newsflash from traditional media.

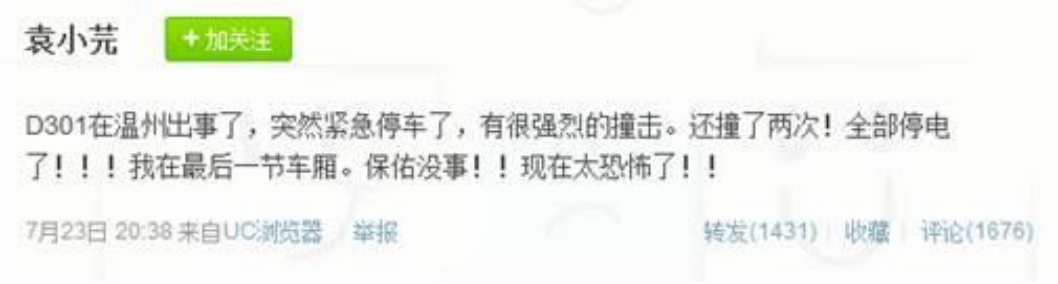


Figure 2.12: Screenshot of the First Weibo Post about Weizhou Train Crash (Source: Sina Weibo)

Later in the same day, more and more pictures, videos, and stories about the accident were posted by witnesses through Weibo. This online community not only provided first hand collective grassroots reporting about the accident but also served as a platform for finding families and friends, mourning the victims and providing different kinds of help. Only in a week, there were up to 700 million Weibo posts engaging in discussing this accident. In addition, netizens' skepticism and criticism of the authorities' irresponsible aftermath rescue operations caused an investigation and resulted in an extended rescue operation and a subsequent extensive investigation of the causes of the crash.

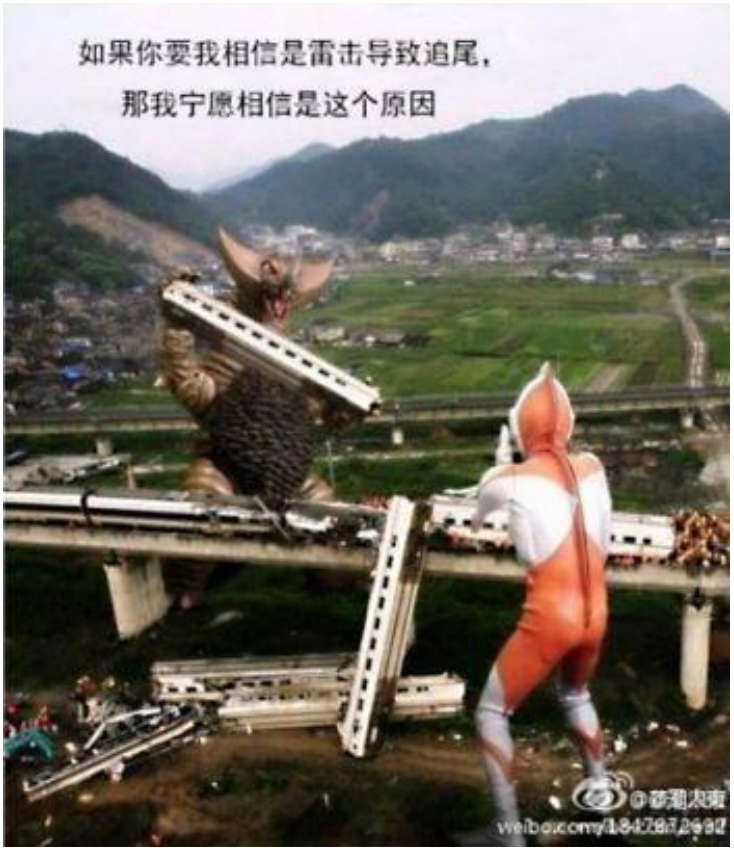


Figure 2.13: “If You Want Me to Believe the Lightning Storm is the Reason, I’d Rather Believe This is the Reason.” the text on the picture reads. A picture made by netizens and circulated online expressing cynicism toward the official’s explanation of Wenzhou train crash (Source: Sina Weibo)

Similarly, when the government failed to provide adequate information concerning deaths in Beijing’s July 2012 extensive flooding, residents in the city’s worst-affected district “took matters into their own hands and published their own death toll numbers using public and private chat rooms.” (Chong & Liu, 2013) Following the weekend of the flooding, a netizen with the Internet name of

"goldengrape" shared a self-made map marking Beijing's flood-prone roads and communities (see Figure 2.14) (Martin, 2012).

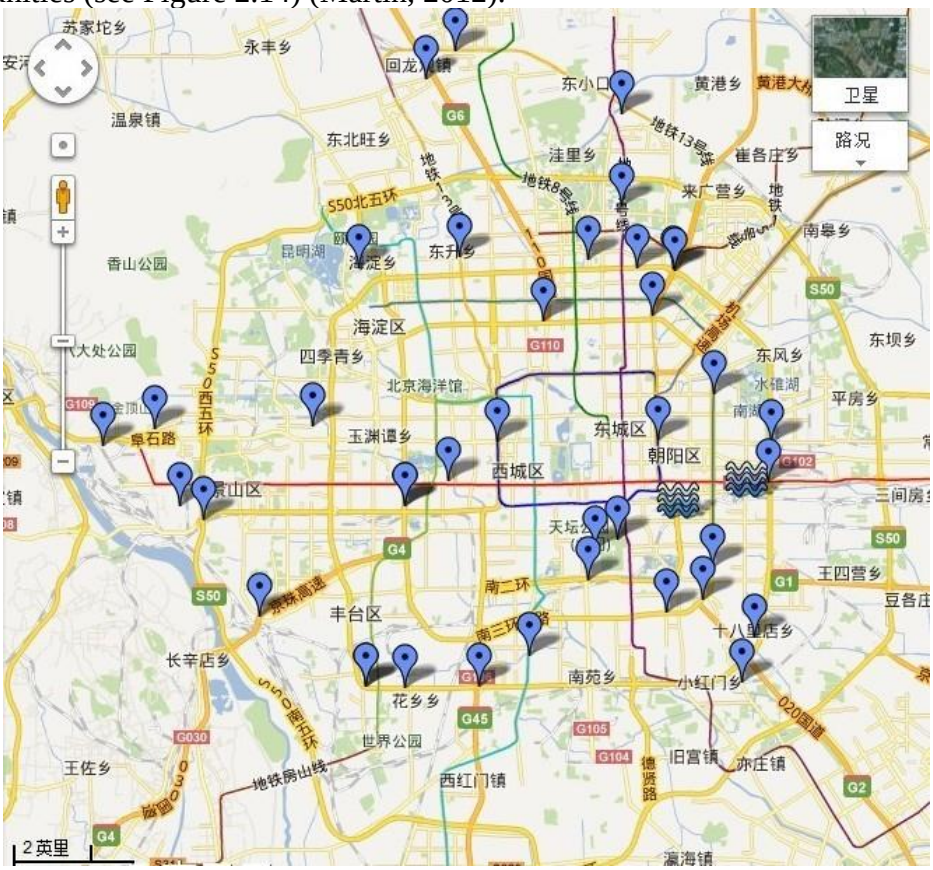


Figure 2.14: The Map of Beijing Flooding Made by Chinese Netizens (Source: Martin, 2012)

In addition to situation updates, social media also provides valuable information for disaster response coordination. It was defined as "citizen-driven emergency response" by Qu, etc (Qu, Huang, Zhang & Zhang, 2011). An example can be found during the 2010 Yushu Earthquake. A 6.9-magnitude earthquake hit Yushu in Qinghai Province on April 14, 2010. There were 2,698 people killed, 270 missing, and 12,135 injured in this disaster. In the second day after the earthquake, a Sina

Weibo post from user “adamlab” said his friend who was on the way to Yushu called him through a satellite phone, and said that the Longbao Town was severely damaged. There was a Google map attached to this post. This post was quickly circulated online and helped the China International Search and Rescue Team find this isolated disaster area. It was also helpful in citizen-driven relief. On April 17th, a Weibo post said: “there will be a private flight shipping relief supplies to Yushu departing at 4pm from Beijing Capital Airport, need more padded coats, warm scarves, tents, bottle water and so on, please contact xxxxxxx.” After several hours, this netizen updated his report on Weibo saying 8 tons of supplies had been collected, which was actually over the bearing capacity of the flight’s 4 tons.

However, information contribution from netizens is not limited to situation updates and response coordination. Engaged netizens also make use of social media to contribute valuable information to governments and rescue agencies. When a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit in Lushan County, Sichuan province on April 20, 2013, the topic of “Ya’an 7.0 earthquake” on Sina Weibo had over 70 million circulations within 24 hours. The main challenge for rescuing work in this disaster was the only road (netizens called it lifeline) leading to quake-hit areas had been blocked both by huge rocks and high volume traffic. When pictures of jammed roads circulated on Weibo, netizens found many private vehicles increased the traffic and prevented professional rescuing team and relief material from getting ahead. Then, an advocacy of “leave the lifeline for them” was launched by netizens. Immediately, the traffic authorities in Sichuan Province took netizens’ suggestion and banned private cars’ access to Lushan County in the city of Ya’an (Xinhua News, 2013a; Lu & Liu, 2013).

Similarly, the advice of "toll free and save time" from the online community also was accepted by traffic departments (Li, 2013; Xu, 2013).

2.3 Providing Social Good

Another aspect is that citizen-to-citizen interaction through social media is reflected in mobilizing collective action for social good, especially in helping the socially vulnerable when the government does not adequately respond. Some scholars defined it as "social-media driven campaigns" which relies on social media as the platform to raise awareness of these important social issues among the general population, generate funding, organize actions and solve the problems eventually (Marquis & Yang, 2013).

2.3.1 "Free Lunch for Children"

After learning the fact that many elementary students in Southwest China's villages often go hungry during lunchtimes, Deng Fei, a journalist at the Phoenix Weekly magazine initiated the "Free Lunch for Children" campaign through his Weibo account by simply soliciting donation of three yuan (about 50 cents in U.S. dollars) to provide kids in rural areas with a basic school lunch each day. Immediately, Deng Fei received strong support from a group of journalist colleagues and many media outlets. And in a few days, this idea was spread by a large number of his Weibo followers and turned into a nationwide charity program. In eight months, a fund of four million dollars was raised online from 900,000 people. And up to 25,000 children in 162 schools were helped with free lunches (Lim, 2012). According to the website of "Free Lunch for Children" (http://www.mianfeiwucan.org, retrieved on October 23, 2014), the fund was subsequently raised to 104 million yuan. There are up to 417 schools distributed among 23 providences included in "Free Lunch for Children"

program. Over 94,000 school children in rural areas benefit from this netizen-initiated online charity campaign.

This kind of Internet-based and individual-netizen-initiated charity programs is developing into a new charity model known as “micro-charities” in China (Xin & Lan, 2011). This is, in part, because some long-established government related charity organizations, such as the Red Cross Society of China are losing public support as will subsequently be discussed. Deng Fei’s “Free Lunch for Children” is running very successful due to its openness and transparency. In the website of “Free Lunch for Children”, people are able to donate money, track the money use, and get to know the whole operation procedure. And every school receiving free lunches from this program has a Weibo account, on which they list the details of money use, and what dishes are included in each lunch meal every day. An example of this can be drawn from the Guizhou Luodian Longtan Primary School Free Lunch post of October 27, 2014 (see Figure 2.15). It reported the following things. Today 56 people ate a meal. The menu: rice, meat and melon, meat and cabbage, pumpkin soup. Used Rice 15 Jin (a unit of weight, 1 Jin=1/2 kilogram), meat 5.5 Jin, melon 12 Jin, cabbage 13 Jin, pumpkin 10 Jin, and seasonings etc. In total cost 163.6 yuan, 2.92 yuan per person. Some of them even take pictures and videos to record and display how the free lunch is being provided. By using social media, “Free Lunch for Children” tries to keep its transparency to the greatest extent not only to donors but also to the public.

Figure 2.15: A Weibo Account Example of a School Participating in the "Free Lunch for Children" Program (Retrieved on October 27th, 2014)

With the effect of Deng Fei's "Free Lunch for Children" program, the government responded quickly and announced it would spend "$2.5 billion providing nutritional subsidies for 26 million primary and junior high school students in rural areas." (Lim, 2012)

2.3.2 "Taking Pictures to Rescue Missing Children"

An estimated 20,000 children are abducted annually in China. Some are sold to families and some are forced to beg on streets (SMG Research Team, 2011). Yu Jianrong, who is a professor in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was asked by a mother to help with finding her abducted boy. He first posted a request on his Sina

Weibo account asking his followers to help with the search. Immediately, thousands of netizens responded to this post. Some of them provided crucial clues for the family to find the boy. After that, many netizens asked Yu to help with searching for missing children. Then he created "Taking Pictures to Rescue Begging Children" Weibo (see Figure 2.16) on January 25, 2011, in order to post more pictures of missing children, seek tips of their location and reach a wide audience through the power of netizens. After five days, over three hundred posts were uploaded; and more than ten thousand netizens followed it. And on February 3rd, 2011, Yu posted an image (see Figure 2.17), showing a collection of pictures submitted by netizens. At the same time, the chart (see Figure 2.18) at the bottom showing regional distribution of the total 324 missing children reported by netizens nationwide from January 25th to February 2nd in 2011 (Fauna, 2011a).

Within a month this blog had over a quarter of a million followers who uploaded more than 2,500 images of children begging in all parts of China along with what information they could include about the location, age, condition, etc. of the child (SMG Research Team, 2011). And many missing children reunited with their families. Very soon, it developed into a nationwide campaign in China. In 2014, it had 229,932 followers and over 11,492 posts (retrieved on October 28, 2014). In addition, the same blog also launched in other social media platforms, including Tencent Weibo, Sohu Weibo, NetEase Weibo, Xinhua Weibo, and People's Weibo, in order to reach as many netizens as possible.

Figure 2.16: The Weibo Page of "Taking Pictures to Rescuing Missing Children" (Retrieved on October 27th, 2014)

Figure 2.17: A Collection of Pictures Submitted by Netizens in the Campaign of "Taking Pictures to Rescuing Missing Children" from January 25th to February 2nd in 2011, posted by Yu on February 3rd, 2011. (Source: Fauna, 2011a)

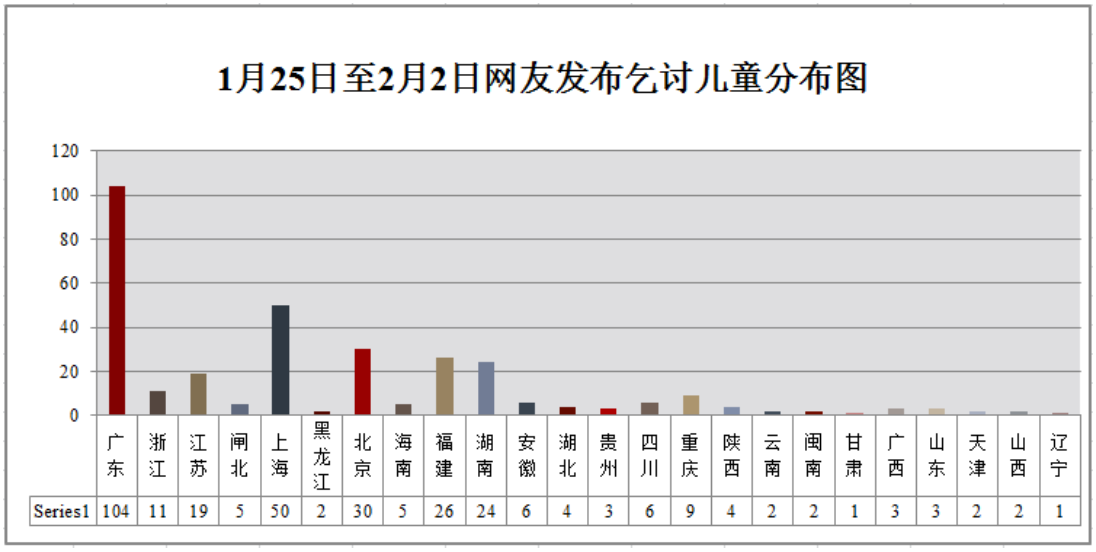


Figure 2.18: Regional Distribution of 324 Missing Children Reported by Netizens in Figure 2.17 (Source: Fauna, 2011a)

In a large geographic country of 1.4 billion people, the hope for parents to find missing children has been small. This idea works by having supporters voluntarily take photos of begging children all over China and uploading it onto the blog, including basic observable information about the child. The missing children's family can upload the missing children's information or try to find any matching information on this blog. Within this netizen initiated-campaign, social media infrastructures including Human Flesh Search Engine, Cyber and Terrestrial Space Linkages, and Removal of Space Barriers are utilized by netizens to achieve social good of finding missing children.

As Yu told China Daily in a 2011 interview, "micro-blogging may help put an end to the phenomenon of using children to beg … It also adds an immense social pressure against trafficking of children." (China Daily, 2011) The campaign "Taking Pictures to Rescuing Missing Children" inspired both the government and children related non-profit organizations in China. The government not only quickly launched their Weibo account against Child trafficking but also tried to work together with Yu's campaign. In the profile of "Taking Pictures to Rescuing Missing Children" Weibo account, it says "launched by Yu Jianrong from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, assisting with police and civil affair agency in rescuing begging and street children. If you see child beggars, please call the police first! Then take pictures, indicating time and location on your post as well as @ this account."

Baby Back Home, which was launched by the "Baby Back Home" Volunteer Association based in Beijing, is a website helping families by publishing missing children's profiles on their website. Combined with social media, they have created a Missing Children application with face recognition technology for netizens to install in

their smart phones. When taking a picture of a child, this innovation will identify a match against Baby Back Home's missing children database, show instantaneous results and then notify the family (BBH, 2014).

Therefore, as we can see from above case discussion, the interaction between citizens enabled by social media in the three different perspectives facilitates them to disclose problems (or issues), gather more facts, discuss different opinions and propose solutions with contributions from a large number of netizens. All of these cases would be impossible without the connection through social media since they involve citizens from all over China and not knowing each other. The technology-related social media infrastructures, such as Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages and Time-Space Effects, promote citizen participation on an unprecedented scale. Meanwhile, working together with citizen-related infrastructures, it empowered Chinese citizens in framing social issues, setting agendas as well as organizing actions in these public affairs independent of governments or institutions. Most importantly, by using all these social media infrastructures discussed in this study, it makes it possible for citizens to create new social mechanisms, such as the new model of charity – Micro-charity. All of these new social-media driven campaigns in China constitute a new model of civil society activism (Marquis & Yang, 2013).

In the following chapter, discussion on citizens' social media activities will continue and with a focus on interaction between citizen and private sector actors in the economic dimension.

Chapter 3

CITIZENS-TO-PRIVATE SECTORS SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

Focusing on interaction enabled by social media between citizen and private sector actors, this chapter will first discuss the general changes of market behaviors enabled by social media in the trends of e-commerce, then address the interaction between consumers and sellers or producers, especially in consumer self-protection by using social media; and the influence of bottom-up use of social media on the relationship between workers and employers.

China's booming e-commerce market is still showing explosive growth in both size and speed. According to the report from the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), China's online shopping transactions in 2013, a total of 1.85 trillion yuan (296.57 billion dollar) (CNNIC, 2014b), has surpassed 2013 U.S. e-commerce sales of 262.51 billion dollar and became the largest e-commerce market in the world (Tong, 2014; Dai, 2014). On the "Singles Day" shopping event (November 11, 2014), online shoppers spent up to 57.1 billion yuan (9.1 billion dollar) on Alibaba-owned online shopping platforms Taobao and Tmall, which was bigger than the total of Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales in US (Booton, 2014). More than 500 million packages were shipping to all over the world on that day (Sina Tech, 2014).

This phenomenon is linked with the fact that a huge number of people are connected by the Internet infrastructure through computers and mobile devices in China. There were 632 million Internet users and 527 million mobile Internet users in China by June 2014 (CNNIC, 2014a; CNNIC, 2014c). And it is also greatly driven by

the innovation of e-commerce infrastructure including online shopping platforms and digital payments platforms. In addition, since Chinese citizens are increasingly integrating social media use into their everyday lives, social media applications play significant roles in online shopper's activities by enabling new forms of communication. According to an e-commerce statistic in 2013, 40 percent of China's online shoppers read and post reviews about products, which is more than two times of the number in the US (Goglobal, 2013).

As widely recognized, all of these trends change the ways of market behaviors in general, for example, consumers' purchase behavior shifted from "buying in person" to "buying from online"; sellers' business no long needs to be arranged in physical stores; and their marketing strategies are also shifting to the Internet, especially social media space. However, more importantly, these changes in e-commerce infrastructure dimension greatly reshape the way in which consumers interact with private sector actors. Especially in consumer rights and benefit protection, social media makes possible the dissemination and discussion of unfair or illegal behavior in the private sector. In addition, social media enhances the capacity of consumers to come together and fight for their interests. At the same time, social media use from the bottom up also has effect on the relationship between workers and employers.

In China's online shopping market (see Figure 3.1), the scale of transactions increased with annual growth rate of 84 percent and continues to grow since 2006. By the end of 2013, the online transactions amount hit 1,847.7 billion yuan, which takes up to 7.9 percent of China's total retail volume (CNNIC, 2014b). And it is forecasted to reach 30 trillion yuan by 2020, and be larger than those of the US, Britain, Japan,

Germany, and France combined (CIW, 2013). Together with online shopping transactions, China's online shoppers are increasing exponentially almost at the same time .The number of online shoppers had reached about 302 million by the end of 2013, raising the proportion to 48.9 percent. Almost half netizens in China are shopping online nowadays (CNNIC, 2014b).

Figure 3.1: 2006-2013 Online Shopping Scale and Growth Rate in China (Organized from CNNIC reports)

Similar to the social media market, the main players within China's e-commerce market are home-grown companies. Alibaba is the e-commerce giant in China, which occupied 80 percent of China's e-commerce market (Lee, 2014). Its main online shopping platforms Taobao and Tmall dominate China's e-commerce landscape (see Figure 3.2). The most popular online payment method—Alipay is also created by Alibaba. According to official statistics, 93 percent of online shoppers in

China used Alipay in 2012 (CNNIC, 2013b). Combining these two e-commerce elements, online shopping platforms and the digital payment platforms, Alibaba has contributed in building up the necessary e-commerce infrastructure for Chinese society. The "11.11" online shopping festival (or Singles' Day sales), an important part of both e-commerce market and Internet culture in China, was also first initiated by Alibaba in 2009. Alibaba's total transaction value on the Singles' Day increased from $0.01 billion in 2009 to $14.32 billion in 2015 (IDC, 2014; Carsten, 2015).

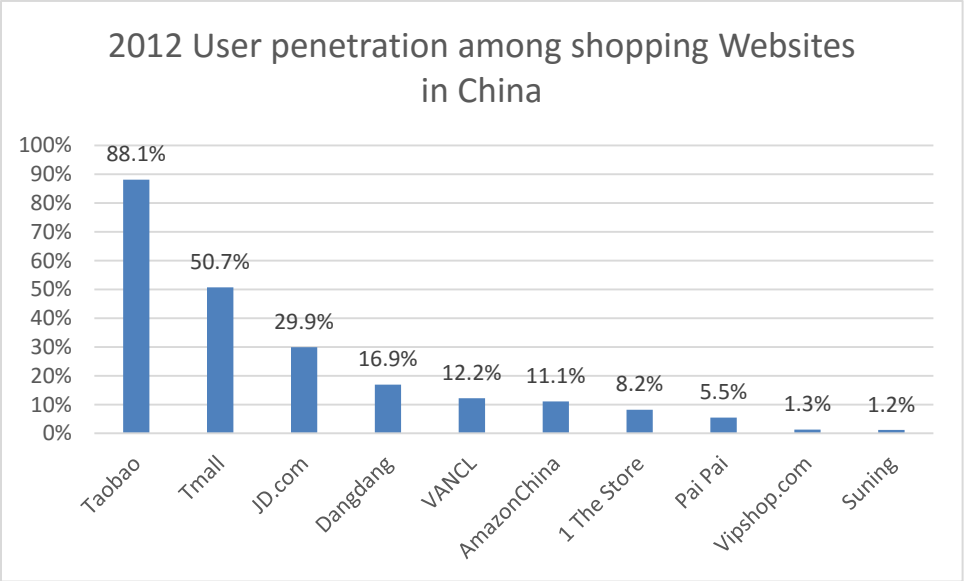


Figure 3.2: 2012 User Penetration among Shopping Websites in China (Source: CNNIC, 2013b)

Meanwhile, mobile shopping has become an important part of China's e-commerce ecosystem. Especially as 3G/4G coverage increases in China, online shopping through mobile devices is growing rapidly. In 2012, mobile transactions totaled about $7.8 billion, accounted for 3.7 percent of China's e-commerce

(Millward, 2013). In 2013, around 78.5 percent of the Chinese Internet population was using mobile internet; and the mobile shopper population reached 140 million (CNNIC, 2014b). China's mobile shopping trend also leads the world. According to a report in 2013, 55 percent of China's internet users made purchase via mobile phone, versus 19 percent of internet users in the US (eMarketer, 2013).

The rest of the chapter includes three sections. The first section will introduce the general use of social media in e-commerce and its impact on market behaviors. The discussion in the second section focuses on netizen-generated consumer activities, including individual cases of consumer protests and consumer boycotts. And the final section is about bottom-up labor activities enabled by social media.

3.1 General Use of Social Media in E-commence

As we mentioned before, Chinese are highly involved in social media as a trusted source of information in their daily lives. What to buy and how to buy things for daily life is one of these areas. The founder of Alibaba Jack Ma said, "in other countries, e-commerce is a way to shop, in China it is a lifestyle." (Group of Companies, 2013) And it could be said that social media was integrated into this lifestyle as another important element at the same time. Not only does its instantaneous message interface provide an easier and faster communication channel, but also product reviews and shopping advice on it provides useful information for shoppers' purchase decision making. According to a recent online shopping report in China, on average, 42.1 percent of online shoppers are influenced by social media when deciding to make a purchase online (CNNIC, 2014b). And Weibo is the most popular social media platform for online shoppers (see Figure 3.3). The trend that social media becomes an increasingly important role within China's e-commerce

operation fundamentally reshaped the way consumers purchase goods and services, and how businesses operate online.

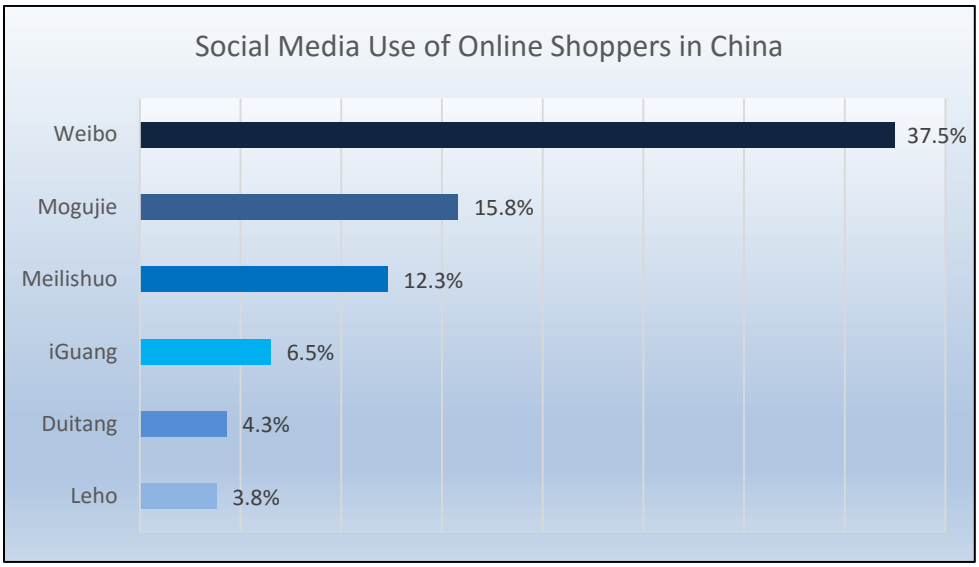


Figure 3.3: 2013 Social Media Use of Online Shoppers in China (organized from CNNIC reports)

A good way to illustrate the change is to describe what and how social media are used by online shoppers currently. First, social media including forums, blog and Weibo usually serves as important information-seeking platforms before purchase. In China, in addition to shopping programs or topics in comprehensive social media platforms, there are also some domestic social media specialized in online shopping. Mogujie, Meilishuo, iGuang, Duitang and Leho listed in Figure 3.3 belong to this category. Product knowledge, reviews and purchasing advice from friends or even just online bloggers provides reliable information from the perspective of consumers and help shoppers make right decision. In this sense, social media use makes a new layer of product information available in addition to what is provided by business.

Especially in buying unfamiliar products, 37.5 percent online shoppers said that user review on social media was the major consideration in their shopping decision making (CNNIC, 2014b). Moreover, the fact that sharing on social media drives netizens' involvement in online shopping is another way of promoting e-commerce. Second, the innovative integration of e-commerce platforms and other social media make the interaction between "customers" and "business" more convenient and efficient. For example, Taobao Wangwang is the corresponding communication tool attached with each merchant's or brand's online store. Through this instant messaging program, both sides can interact just like in a physical store. Consumers can double check the quality of products, ask questions about how to use, and consult about the price. This makes the online consumption experience very similar to physical store, or even more, since you can "talk" with vendors pre-purchase, during-purchase and after-purchase without going out of home. Another example is about the integration of mobile commerce into social networking platform. By first enabling mobile payments on social media platform, Wechat becomes an all-in-one platform offering a variety of services. Users can make purchases directly from the application, at the same time, chat with the vendors freely (Millward, 2014). Hence, because of innovations in social media, online shoppers' usage patterns of Internet have shown a shift from simply information-seeking to the combination of information-seeking and interaction. And the interaction between "customers" and "business" has developed into a level without restrictions of time and place. Hence, it optimizes China's e-commerce infrastructure by adding a layer of interaction.

From the perspective of business, another point to mention briefly here is that the Internet, especially social media, is becoming an increasingly important marketing

arena, since consumers rate the credibility of forums, blogs, and Weibo higher than traditional advertisements (Crampton, 2010). A survey analysis from KMPG found that social media platforms have proved to be a powerful mechanism for brands to promote their products in current China (KMPG, 2013). More and more advertisement and marketing initiatives are shifting from traditional media including newspapers, magazine and television, to the Internet, especially social media platforms.

3.2 Interaction: Netizen-generated Consumer Activities

3.2.1 Consumer Protests

Discussion in this part brings together case examples of consumer activities and illustrates how netizens bring their consumer complaints online and take actions to fight against specific business.

In 2008, two students in Zhengzhou, Henan Province were required to pay an extraordinary high price, 200 times the advertised cost, for haircuts at a local salon. In their efforts to force this payment, salon staffers threatened to use their personal connections with local officials. After social media reporting of the story, citizens started both online and offline HFSE to identify the salon staff and what connections they had with officials. Street protests were also staged in front of the salon. Ultimately, a government investigation resulted in the salon being closed and the owner fined for illegal pricing and tax dodging (CNW News, 2010).

More recently, on March 4, 2013, a 17-year-old girl was poisoned to death after dining in “Pot Heroes” hot pot restaurant also in Zhengzhou, Henan province. The preliminary identification said it was caused by a high concentration of carbon monoxide poisoning (Sohu News, 2013b). This food safety incident was spread over

the Internet as well as traditional media in the same day. The public's concern over the quality of the restaurant was immediately raised both online and offline. In addition to apologies and cause investigation, the person in charge of "Pot Heroes" restaurant told the media that the business had declined by 20 percent on the same day, and 50 percent on the next day (Sohu News, 2013b).

On March 6, 2013 a user of Dahe Bangbang forum with the ID name "Living in Zhengzhou" published a post with a Zhengzhou "poison" hot pot map drawn by netizens collectively. In addition to the "Pot Heroes" restaurant, ten other hot pot restaurants with problems were labeled in the map (see Figure 3.4). This map collects netizens' hot pot dining experience in Zhengzhou city. These restaurants were marked with either food poisoning complains or fake meat in the pot (Sohu News, 2013b).

Figure 3.4: Zhengzhou "Poison" Hot Pot Map Made by Netizens (Source: Sohu News, 2013b)

The combination of food poison incident and Zhengzhou "poison" hot pot map immediately put Zhengzhou and even the nationwide hot pot industry in crisis. Facing netizens' complaining and questioning, many restaurants on the map and even others not listed on the map, responded with self-examination and posting results online. Some even sought to prove their food quality by showing supply channels, government inspection results or inviting customers to visit kitchen and watch food

processing. But some denied netizens' disclosures online, for example, the Jingfuhua restaurant declared they never used fake beef (China Daily, 2013a). In order to better solve the problem, on March 12, a hot pot industry food safety seminar was organized by the Henan Catering and Hotel Industry Associations, the Chamber of Commerce of the Hotel Industry in Henan, and Henan Hot pot Industry Special Committee (Sohu News, 2013b). Twenty hot pot restaurants in Zhengzhou participated in this event and discussed how to deal with this crisis and provide better service.

The punishments of the bullying hair cut salon and the actions about Zhengzhou's hot pot industry stirred up by the netizen drawn map indicate the scale of power that can be generated from consumers' social media use. And this consumer-initiated right protection through social media has become a quasi-mechanism in China. Chinese consumers are using it skillfully, and more frequently than knocking the door of consumer rights protection bureaus.

The following case shows how netizens have been fighting with dog-meat eating businesses through generating different kinds of protests on social media over time.

On April 15, 2011, a netizen, who happened to be an animal-rights activist, noticed a truck on a highway outside of Beijing loaded with over 500 caged dogs and concluded that they were going to be killed for human food. He stopped the truck and highway traffic by parking his car in front of the truck. At the same time, he put photos of the truck as well these caged dogs on his Weibo account that were seen by hundreds of thousands of netizens across China and "at least 100 animal lovers quickly answered an appeal to jump in their cars and block the truck's path…." (Hewitt, 2012) During the time period of negotiation, with more pictures, as well as

updates regarding the dogs' situation from netizens who arrived at the scene, donation was organized online immediately. As the conflict continued, spring water, dog food, medicine and rescue tools were delivered to the scene (Zhou, Mu & Huang, 2011). The matter was resolved when these animal-rights activists paid about 17,000 dollars to the trucker to have the dogs taken to an animal protection shelter (Zhou, Mu & Huang; 2011; Hewitt, 2012).

Since then, this process has become quasi-institutionalized and there have been a number of similar dog rescues carried out via linked Weibo and terrestrial action. For instance, In October, 2011, 1000 dogs that were being shipped from Sichuan to Guangxi were rescued by over 200 dog-lovers after organizing their action quickly through Weibo (Wang, Mao, Tang, 2011). Another case occurred in December 2011 in Eastern China's Jiangsu Province. When Dai Huajing saw a truck filled with dogs and the truck driver was negotiating a price with butchers at a roadside market, Dai put this news on Sina Weibo. Within several hours, about 150 activists arrived there and demanded the dog release. At the end, nearly eight thousand dollars were paid by these activists to buy these dogs' lives (Langfitt, 2012).

The use of social media has become part of dog rescuing strategy since 2011 and has been supported by bigVs on Sina Weibo. This had created waves of public discussion about the ethics of dog-eating in China. The heated debate reached its peak in June 2014 during Yulin's annual lychee and dog-meat festival. This is a local folk custom in which people get together and eat lychee and dog meat on the summer solstice day (June 21 every year) in Yulin, Guangxi providence. Before this festival, netizens claimed that there were up to 10 thousand dogs going to be killed on that day and initiated protests to "Ban 6.21 Yulin Dog Meat Festival" online, many celebrity

Weibo bigVs joined this campaign including Zhaowei, Yangmi, and Feng Shaofeng (Sina News, 2014).

Figure 3.5: The Poster of "Ban 6.21 Yulin Dog Meat Festival" circulated over social media, Says: "Ban 6.21 Yulin Dog Meat Festival. Please don't eat human's friends." (Source: Sina Weibo)

Although dog-lovers tried their best to stop it, the Yulin Dog Meat Festival was held on time. And many online protesters went to it to try to stop dog-eating. The conflict between protesters and dog-eaters even evolved into violence (He, 2014), which provoked another national wave of protests and resistance to eating dogs. Netizens in China also have used Weibo to call for laws to combat animal cruelty (Gabriel, 2014). For example, the following post put on Weibo by Xiamen Siming Police says:

“Recent years, we have had enough of the cruel treatment of animals. Over 100 countries in the world have adopted anti-cruelty laws. Yet, there is no such legislation on mainland China to prosecute those who abuse animals intentionally. @xiamen siming police appeal for your support today. By clicking with your mouse on Weibo, you can urge for the amendment of China's criminal laws and the promulgation of anti-cruelty legislation to ban acts abusive of animals, promotion of videos glorifying animal cruelty and abandonment of companion animals, a prosecutable crime.”

Figure 3.6: The Original Weibo Post from Xiamen Siming Police. It calls for laws to combat animal cruelty (Retrieve on November 6, 2014)

This post was retweeted 34,839 times and more than 2,789 netizens commented in support of the appeal. Although laws to combat such animal cruelty are still being called for and people still eat dog meat, these actions organized through the platform of Weibo have helped increasing the awareness of animal welfare nationwide and even changing some people’s attitude towards dog-eating.

Another national consumer scandal happened in 2011 was involved with Da Vinci furniture, which was a retail store selling what it claimed to be imported luxury furniture in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong and China. However, it was

reported that some of Da Vinci's imported Italian furniture was produced in Guangdong province. Then it was transported to the Shanghai's Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, where the furniture was labeled as "imported." Then the counterfeit furniture was sold as "Made in Italy" products at a price ten times higher than if it had been labeled "Made in China" (Fauna, 2011b).

The Da Vinci held a news conference in Beijing soon after. And the chief executive, Doris Phua, insisted that "the allegations were false." (Barboza, 2011) However, the details of shoddily quality and stink lacquers consumers posted online confirmed Da Vinci furniture's quality problems (Barboza, 2011). But Da Vinci refused to give refunds to consumers even after the Shanghai Industrial and Commercial Administrative Bureau investigated and officially confirmed that into Da Vinci furniture sold were fake products (Barboza, 2011).

Da Vinci consumers, then, got together on social media to fight for refunds collectively. Although consumers barely received refunds from Da Vinci, the information sharing on popular social media, such as QQ, has upgraded the scale of the sandal to a consumer protest, and spread from Da Vinci furniture to other European brands (Barboza, 2011). This damaged the reputation of Da Vinci and greatly impacted other European brands' sales in China.

3.2.2 Consumer Boycotts

Consumer boycotts facilitated by the Internet, is another dimension of consumer activities in China. Different from general consumer complaints on product or service quality, this kind of consumer initiative is usually driven by nationalism or cultural protectionism in China. It can involve a certain political element with the government trying to manipulate Chinese consumers' nationalism in some cases.

However, all of these customer boycotts discussing in the following are independently generated by netizens and reflect citizens' influence from below.

Most Chinese people were enthusiastic about hosting the 2008 Olympics Games in Beijing. Thus, when the pro-Tibetan independence groups attacked the disabled athlete torch bearer, Jin Jing, during the Paris leg of the carrying of the torch on April 7th, 2008, it caused resentment in China. On 10 April, a post was published on Tianya BBS calling for boycotting French products including Louis Vuitton, Peugeot and Citroen cars and Carrefour, the French chain supermarket with over one hundred stores in China. On the same day, a post named "Boycott French Product, Start with Carrefour" was issued by "Shuiying" on Mop Forum (Sina News, 2008b). The call to boycott Carrefour immediately spread over most popular forums, blogs and QQ chat groups. In addition to the accusation of supporting pro-Tibetan independence groups seeking to disrupt this year's Beijing Olympics, Carrefour become the target also because its parent company, Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy (LVMH) was reported to be financially supporting the Dalai Lama.

The boycott started to shift from online to the street after the post from "Kitty Shelley" published on Tsinghua University's Shuimu BBS. It suggested the boycott needed to be reinforced by street demonstrations (Nyíri, 2009). In turn, Chinese netizens' nationalist sentiment was greatly increased by a picture of a half-masted flag in front of Carrefour's Wuhan local store, which was posted on April 17 by a netizen. And on the same day, Carrefour's websites were hacked (Sina News, 2008a). Further, millions of protestors were mobilized through the Internet and cell phone texts. Demonstrations were organized spontaneously by netizens outside the company's outlets in dozens of cities across China. During these protests, they were carrying

banners of “Say no to French goods”, singing the Chinese national anthem, burning the French flag and calling on the French government for apologies to “all Chinese people” (Eimer, 2008). On 15 April, the Foreign Ministry’s spokeswoman, Jiang Yu, called for “calm”, “rational” and “lawful” protest, and suggested that “the French side should do some deep and hard thinking about it.” (Chang & Wei, 2008) With the official endorsement of the boycott against Carrefour, the boycott became more visible, and it spread from forums to the main stream news portals. A national demonstration on the Labor Day, May 1st was even planned online (Eimer, 2008).

The boycott campaign greatly impacted Carrefour’s business in China. Some branches were forced to close temporarily. Carrefour’s chief executive Jose-Luis Duran denied what Chinese netizens said online and said his company was “taking the situation very seriously.” To further explain, he said that “Carrefour has not given any direct or indirect support to any political or religious cause” during the interview with Journal de Dimanche (Forbes, 2008). Similarly, the chairman of the luxury group Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy, Bernard Arnault, also denied the allegation that he had supported the Dalai Lama in the interview with Le Figaro (Forbes, 2008). They also repeated that they support the Beijing Olympics.

During the high anti-France sentiment, France’s president apologized to Jin Jing, who had become a national celebrity for defending the Olympic torch during the Paris leg of its relay. On 21 April his letter of apology was delivered to her in person by French Senate President Christian Poncelet. Jin Jing was invited by President Nicholas Sarkozy to visit France again (Sina News, 2008b). To soothe Chinese sentiment, French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and Sarkozy’s diplomatic

adviser Jean-David Levitte made a special visit to China during that time (Zhang, 2008).

Another example is Chinese citizen opposition to the Starbucks coffee shop in Beijing's Forbidden City palace, which was triggered by a blog post from Rui Chenggang, an English news anchor with CCTV. On 15 January 2007, he posted a blog titled "Why Starbucks Needs to Get Out of the Forbidden City?" And claimed that a Starbucks near the nearly 600-year-old Chinese imperial palace was a mockery and "trampled over Chinese culture." This provoked heated debates among Chinese netizens (Wang, 2007). This online protest also attracted national and international media's attention.

Although the Starbucks shop responded immediately and took off its conspicuous sign, an online poll on the Sina website still found that 84 percent of over 10,000 respondents agreed that Starbucks should move out (Nyíri, 2009). Starbucks company first sought to defend its palace shop and said "Starbucks appreciates the deep history and culture of the Forbidden City and has operated in a respectful manner that fits within the environment" in a written statement (McDonald, 2007). However, it eventually closed the coffee shop in the Forbidden City palace because of netizens' strong support backing Rui's advocacy on preserving China's culture integrity (Fox News, 2007).

In addition, the boycotts of Japanese products have a history going back to 1915 in China. Whenever Japan does something hurt Chinese people's feelings, especially over Diaoyu island dispute, anti-Japan sentiment will be ignited in China. In a survey conducted by Searchina in Shanghai and Nippon Research Center in Tokyo, two-thirds of Chinese boycotted Japanese products and almost all Chinese feel anti-Japan

sentiment has intensified in China since Japan government purchased three the Diaoyu islands in September, 2012 (The Japan Times, 2013). On the waves of 2005 and especially 2012 anti-Japan protests, Chinese citizens made use of the Internet as well as mobile devices to organize their demonstrations. “Cyber-nationalism” has even become a new word to describe China’s popular nationalism on the Internet (Liu, 2006). As Liu concluded, such online campaigns are characterized by free exchange of information and lively debate over the boycott strategy (Liu, 2006).

3.3 Interaction: Bottom-up Labor Activities

In addition to the relationship between consumers and business, the penetration of social media use among workers also generates significant impact on the relationship between workers and employers in China’s private sector. For one thing, the labor movement mobilized through social media has become a clear phenomenon. Using the strike map offered by China Labour Bulletin, the search shows there are up to 2873 strike incidents found over China from 2011 January to 2015 January. And 781 of them happened in Guangdong area, where China’s industrial cluster is located and the majority of China’s migrant workers found their jobs (see Figure 3.7). Although there are no statistics indicating how many of them are related to social media use, the graphic shows an increase with the innovation and prevalence of social media in China. Another example, taxi drivers’ strikes across the country highlight the ability of drivers to use social media to communicate, as well as the organizational power of social media (Jacobs, 2015). For another thing, vulnerable workers have found that the Internet or social media is an effective tool they could use to fight for their rights or benefits. The discussion below will focus on these two perspectives.

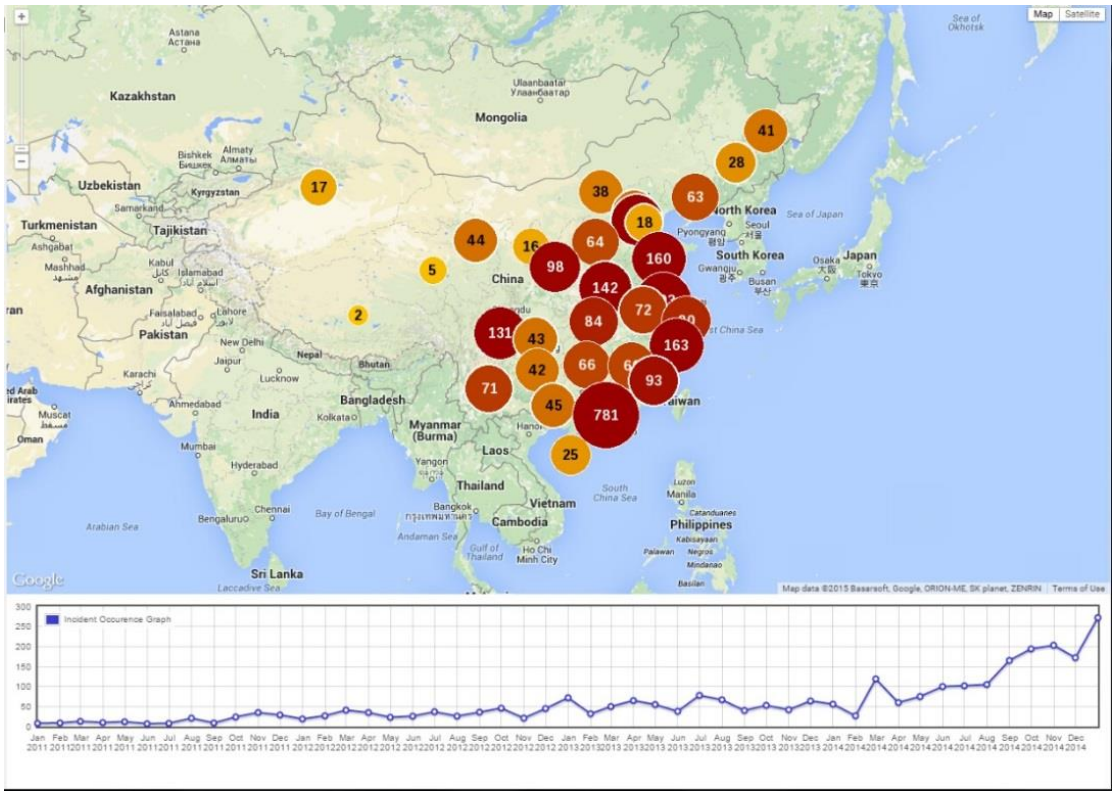


Figure 3.7: Strike Map in China from 2011 January to 2015 January (Source: China Labour Bulletin)

3.3.1 Empowered Migrant Workers

Since reform and openness were set up as the main economic agenda in 1978, the urbanization and industrialization in east coastal areas generated a vast amount of opportunities and a huge labor demand there. Migrant workers from inner providences become the majority of factory workers in the coastal areas. According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, the number of rural migrant workers reached 269 million at the end of 2013 (NBSPRC, 2014). Almost half of the migrant workers left their home towns and clustered around eastern coastal industrialized providences, such as Guangdong.

The report from the National Bureau of Statistics indicates that the new generation of migrant workers, who were born in 1980 or after are having a higher level of education than the previous generation. The population of the new generation has reached 125 million, and accounted for 46.6 percent of the whole population of migrant workers (NBSPRC, 2014). A study conducted by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in Guangdong Province in 2012 concluded that the younger generation of migrant workers "often have mobile phones and communicate with other workers from the same province by texts, reading micro-blogs and spending time on the Internet. Some choose to live outside the factory rather than in dormitories, and are not willing to accept the same working conditions as their parents." (FIDH, 2013, p.12) And they are much more aware of labor rights and more likely to voice their demands and take action (FIDH, 2013). As Guobin Yang said, "This is something people haven't paid attention to — migrant workers can organize using these technologies", and "usually we think of this kind of thing being used by middle-class youths and intellectuals." (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b)

A good example is the 1,700 workers striking over low wages and poor working conditions at several Honda factories in China. The Honda strike was first initiated by two workers through QQ chat group in Foshan Nanhai on May 17, 2010. The night before the strike, one of them, Xiao Lang, created a 40-people QQ chat group and discussed when to meet, when to walk out and how much pay they want with his coworkers. This social media tool helped Foshan strike leaders to organize and communicate with more than 600 workers in following days. During the demonstration, strikers posted striking details on blogs, took photos and videos with their cellphones and uploaded them online (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b). After

strikers found that QQ was infiltrated by Honda officials and government officials, they used alternative methods, such as mobile phone text messaging, as well as code language to discuss protest gathering and strategies (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b).

Figure 3.8: Migrant Workers Took Photos and Videos with Their Cellphones during the Strikes (Source: Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b)

Following the strike developments in Foshan Nanhai online, workers at other Honda factories located in Foshan, Zhongshan and Guangzhou, Guangdong Providence, as well as Wuhan, Hubei Providence started to take up their own strikes (Radnika, 2011). Due to these strikes, these auto parts plants were shut down temporarily. And it was the first time a strike had stopped Honda's local auto production (Bloomberg News, 2010).

In addition to the strikes, a pay stub posted by a Honda employee online also greatly drew netizens' attention as well as of mainstream media outlets. The Honda pay stubs showed that an average worker was paid 1211 yuan (about 200 dollars) per month, (Sohu News, 2010), while Honda's employees doing the same work were paid

fifty times of this salary in Japan. During the pay increase negotiation with Honda, several wage increase offers provided by the company, such as 11 percent salary increase for the Honda Lock workers, were refused by strikers (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b). Their demand would be increasing the average pay to the range between 2000 and 2500 yuan. As one young worker said in an interview, he got to know from the Internet that significant higher wages paid in at other factories and expected Honda to match them with an immediate pay increase (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010a). After nearly three weeks of a strike, negotiation between manufacturers and workers in Foshan Nanhai ended up with a 500 Yuan wage increase as well as bonuses twice a year, which brought the base pay to more than 2000 yuan (Radnika, 2011). Workers' demands in other factories also were met in certain degrees.

The influence of Honda strikers has gone far beyond the one company. The wave of strikes progressively swept the industry hubs in the Pearl River Area, then spread to other regions of China, and generated the nationwide Chinese labor unrest in 2010. According to an incomplete list of strikes summarized by Radnika (2011), at lease twenty-two strikes happened in over a dozen cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shenzhen, Xi'an, Suzhou, and Guangzhou. Factory workers resistance not only hit other automaker factories such as Toyota in Guangzhou, but also electronic factories, computer companies, textile and fast food industries. Unlike most traditional strikes organized by labor union, these strikes were barely formally organized. These strike actions were called spontaneously through social media, QQ chat was mentioned many times as well as mobile phone text (Barboza & Bradsher, 2010b).

During the same time period, a number of suicides occurred in Foxconn, the world's largest electronics contractor manufacturer having1.4 million Chinese workers

and providing products and components for Apple, DELL, SONY and others, was also included in the 2010 Chinese labor unrest. Although most content about Foxconn suicides was censored online, pay stubs with wages less than the legal minimum and overtime hours exceeded the legal limit, as well as worker required no-suicide pledges (see Figure 3.10) were posted online through social media by Foxconn employees.

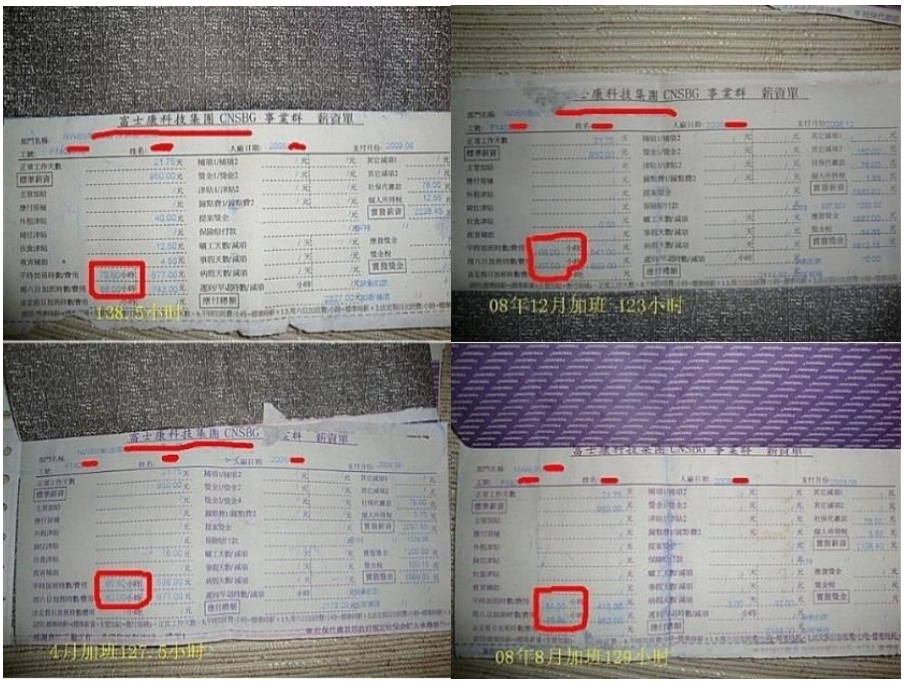
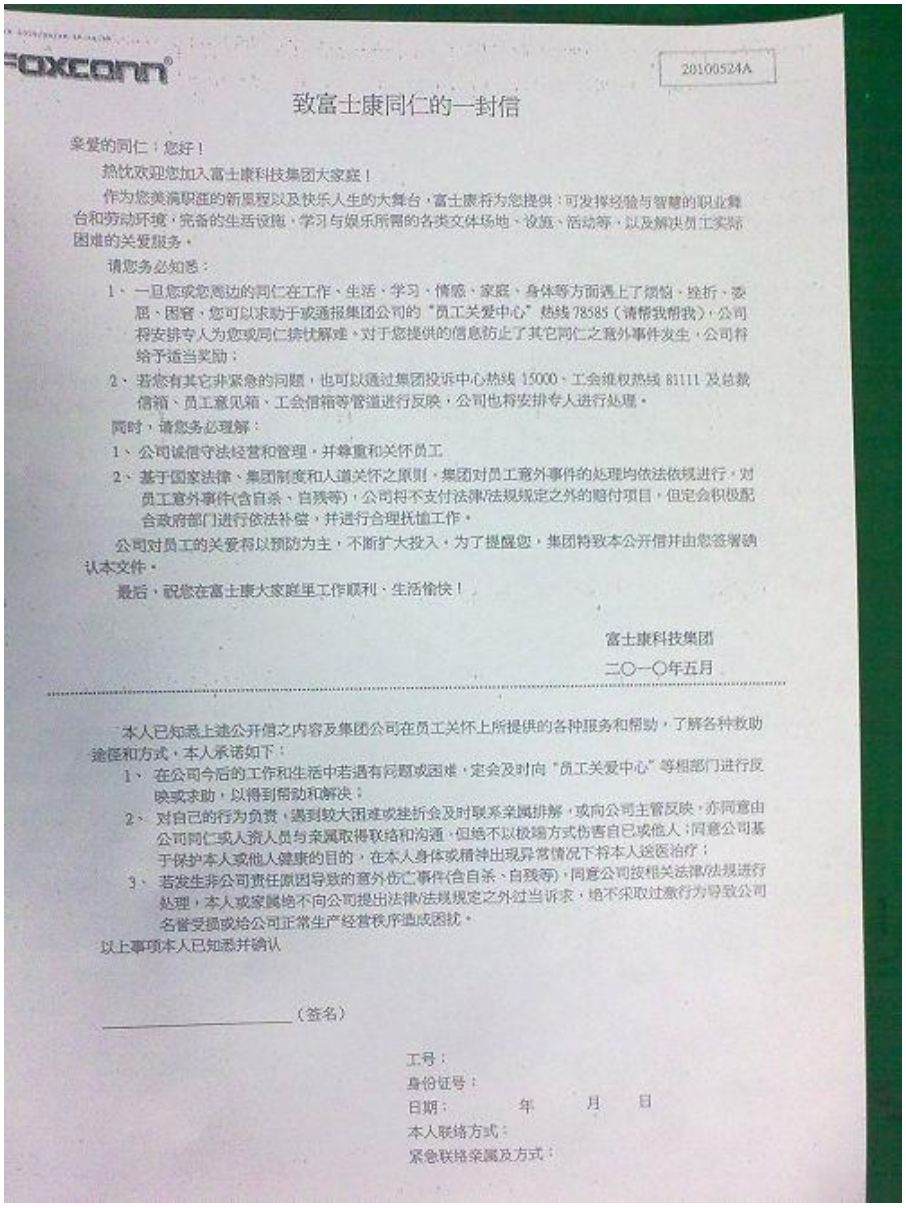


Figure 3.9: Pay Stubs Posted Online by Foxconn Employees (Source: www.ahlife.com)

Meanwhile, a bulletin board focusing on the daily lives of Foxconn workers (www.foxlife.cn), was set up by Zeng Zhaolue who used to work for Foxconn until he quit the job and opened an Internet bar near the factory. It has been used by 65,000 Foxconn employees. The site provides a platform for Foxconn workers to share their working complaints as well as life trivia (Pierson, 2009). There were no strikes in

Foxconn factories in 2010. But workers are skilled in using social media and during 2012 a Foxconn labor movement happened in its factory in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, although the government tried to remove relevant posts on Sina Weibo and stop mass communication (Roeder, 2013).



FOXCONN

20100524A

致富士康同仁的一封信

亲爱的同仁：您好！

热忱欢迎您加入富士康科技集团大家庭！

作为您美满职涯的新里程以及快乐人生的大舞台，富士康将为您提供：可发挥经验与智慧的职业舞台和劳动环境，完备的生活设施，学习与娱乐所需的各类文体场地、设施、活动等，以及解决员工实际困难的关爱服务。

请您务必知悉：

1、一旦您或您周边的同仁在工作、生活、学习、情感、家庭、身体等方面遇上了烦恼、挫折、委屈、困窘，您可以求助于或通报集团公司的"员工关爱中心"热线 78585（请帮我帮我），公司将安排专人为您或同仁排忧解难。对于您提供的信息防止了其它同仁之意外事件发生，公司将给予适当奖励；

2、若您有其它非紧急的问题，也可以通过集团投诉中心热线 15000、工会维权热线 81111 及总裁信箱、员工意见箱、工会信箱等管道进行反映，公司也将安排专人进行处理。

同时，请您务必理解：

1、公司诚信守法经营和管理，并尊重和关怀员工

2、基于国家法律、集团制度和人道关怀之原则，集团对员工意外事件的处理均依法依规进行，对员工意外事件(含自杀、自残等)，公司将不支付法律/法规规定之外的赔付项目，但定会积极配合政府部门进行依法补偿，并进行合理抚恤工作。

公司对员工的关爱将以预防为主，不断扩大投入，为了提醒您，集团特致本公开信并由您签署确认本文件。

最后，祝您在富士康大家庭里工作顺利，生活愉快！

富士康科技集团

二〇一〇年五月

本人已知悉上述公开信之内容及集团公司在员工关怀上所提供的各种服务和帮助，了解各种救助途径和方式，本人承诺如下：

1、在公司今后的工作和生活中若遇有问题或困难，定会及时向"员工关爱中心"等相部门进行反映或求助，以得到帮助和解决；

2、对自己的行为负责，遇到较大困难或挫折会及时联系亲属排解，或向公司主管反映，亦同意由公司同仁或人资人员与亲属取得联络和沟通，但绝不以极端方式伤害自己或他人；同意公司基于保护本人或他人健康的目的，在本人身体或精神出现异常情况下将本人送医治疗；

3、若发生非公司责任原因导致的意外伤亡事件(含自杀、自残等)，同意公司按相关法律/法规进行处理，本人或家属绝不向公司提出法律/法规规定之外过当诉求，绝不采取过激行为导致公司名誉受损或给公司正常生产经营秩序造成困扰。

以上事项本人已知悉并确认

_____（签名）

工号：

身份证号：

日期：　　年　　月　　日

本人联络方式：

紧急联络亲属及方式：

Figure 3.10: Foxconn Employee No-suicide Pledges. In this letter, Foxconn asks its employees to sign a pledge that they will not kill themselves. And it also asks to promise that the families of workers who do commit suicide will not sue the company and seek more than minimum legal demands. (Source: www.sohu.com)

A more recent case happened on April 14, 2014. In protest of the Yue Yuen company's failure to its pay employees' social security and housing allowances, about 40,000 workers left assembly lines and demonstrated at the Yue Yuen shoe factory in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, a large sports shoe manufacturer supplying Adidas, Nike, Puma, and many other brands. Similarly, strikers turned to social media to communicate and discuss strategies (Caster, 2014). The only difference in this strike in using technology lays on the platform they choose. Instead of QQ chat for Honda strike, workers were using the popular social media Wechat in Yue Yuen protest to spread messages, which was faster than government censoring them (Levin, 2014).

3.3.2 Individual Worker Rights Protection

The implication of workers' use of the Internet or social media on the relationship between workers and employers is not confined to labor movement. Vulnerable employees making use of it to fight for their individual rights and benefits is another perspective.

Coal miner, Zhong Guangwei, for example, found he didn't even have a labor contract with his employer in Datong, Shanxi, when he was suffering from pneumoconiosis disease after working half year in extremely noisy and dusty conditions. Then Zhong tried to seek assistance from the government, first the South District Labor Bureau of Datong city, the court later. The court confirmed the

employment relationship between Zhong and the coal mine owner. And Zhong was diagnosed with Stage II Pneumoconiosis in late 2008, which confirmed that Zhong was suffering an occupational disease caused by his previous work in the mine.

After his condition aggravated into stage III industrial injury, he lost the ability to work and decided to submit a claim for industrial injury compensation. In January 2010, a court judgment stated that the coal mine owner pay Zhong Guangwei 490,000 yuan in compensation (Xinhua News, 2010). However, the coal mine owner refused to pay Zhong a penny. And the court explained that "the mine had been shut down and the owner had given the mining equipment to others as collateral and thus could not pay the stipulated compensation" (CLB, 2013, p.11). After lengthy waiting as well as arduous enforcement procedure, Zhong received nothing from the coal mine owner.

Figure 3.11: Coal Miner Zhong Guangwei's Sina Weibo Account Opened on September 1st, 2010 (Source: Sina Weibo)

At this time, suggested by a friend, Zhong opened his Sina Weibo account with ID name "ZhongGuangwei2010" and posted its first message on September 1st, 2010 through his phone. Till now, Zhong Guangwei has 11,045 fans and posted 13,493 messages. Zhong's suffering shared on Sina Weibo attracted netizens' surrounding gaze immediately. In addition to help offered by netizens, the furious public opinion in favor of Zhong generated in cyberspace drew media outlets as well as governments' attention. All of these effectively pushed the enforcement of compensation (Xinhua News, 2010). In October 2010, Zhong received a court mediated compensation of 270,000 yuan (about half the original judgement amount). With this money, Zhong was able to have medical treatment in 2010 winter. After two hours operation, 8 liters of murky liquid were lavaged from his left lung. Zhong broadcasted all of this progress through his Weibo account (Xinhua News, 2010). But Zhong couldn't afford to treat his right lung.

Similarly, Jiang Dabao, who lost his right hand when he was working with a molding machine in a factory, counted on social media in fighting with the factory boss for compensation. Before the tragedy, Jiang didn't know how to use a computer; neither had he used the Internet. To his surprise, his use of QQ, where he joined a worker advocacy group had changed his case significantly. He received a total of $30,000 compensation in the end (Pierson, 2009).

In sum, with all kinds of social media platforms, the general use of e-commerce by citizens has greatly increased. Importantly, the balance of power

between citizens and private sector has improved for consumers and employees. Equipped increasing social media infrastructure options, citizens' complaint letters are no longer necessary to submit to business' customer service department or relevant government monitoring departments. In assessing the overall importance of netizens in generating critical information about businesses, Esarey and Qiang (2011) compared the content of blogs and articles in newspapers in China. They concluded that "bloggers, more than journalists, appear to be acting as watchdogs in a country plagued by faulty products, hazardous business practices, and corporations engaging in illegal pollution." (p. 309) Inspired by netizens, on January 22, 2015, an e-commerce union has been established as a public service platform to share product quality information and identify blacklisted businesses (Xinhua News, 2015a). This platform not only enables citizens to share product information in the market but also facilitates the government's management towards e-commerce.

So far, the characteristics of social media activities in socio-cultural and economic dimensions have been discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The next chapter will explore the social media enabled interaction between citizen and government in detail through three categories, including using social media from bottom-up to challenge officials' misfeasance and corruption, to protest government's decisions and to create counter-strategies in response to government's censorship system.

Chapter 4

CITIZENS-TO-GOVERNMENTS SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

In China, there are numerous examples of citizens using social media to uncover, protest against, and modify the actions and policies of governments and individual officials that are not related to regime change efforts. And it also has become a phenomenon that netizens create and utilize a variety of counter-strategies to fight the government's efforts to control social media.

As noted in the first chapter, in terms of social media activities between citizens and governments, many studies tackle the general theme of regime change, how social media is being used by citizens to oppose or topple authoritarianism. However, limited research attention has been paid to citizens' influence enhanced by social media without regime changing purposes, especially in relation to China. One of the important dimensions for indicating this kind citizen influence lays in interaction between citizens and governments. Regarding this perspective, this chapter is mainly about citizens' bottom-up use of social media to challenge officials' behavior, uncover corruption online, protest government's decisions, and the cat-and-mouse relationship between them and government in response to censorship.

Based on Tong and Lei's (2010, p.4) study, which was using data from 2003 to 2009, there were up to 24 "large-scale internet mass events" that were critical of government behavior and had over one million clicks. They suggest that events have generally involved "exposing corrupt cases, supervising officials' behavior, interfering with judicial processes, and pressing for policy adjustments."

To better understand this phenomenon, this chapter is divided into three sections, relating to the use of social media to challenge officials' misfeasance and corruption; influence on government policies and actions; and netizens' anti-government control strategies.

4.1 Behavior and Corruption of Officials

In recent years, with the development of social media, online disclosure of officials' misfeasance and corruption has become a trend in China. And it proved to be a very convenient and effective means for the public to expose and fight against misconducted or corrupted officials. Numerous officials from different levels were identified for their misfeasance or corruption in collection of bribes, luxury accessories, mistresses, as well as owning extensive real estate.

Looking only at cases related to the behavior of officials, Esarey and Qiang (2011, p. 300) found that more than 80 local government officials had become the target of questions by bloggers and one- third had "lost their positions due to exposure of the misconduct online." They also note that there has been a steady increase in what they call "'mass Internet incidents' that involve one million visits by users" and go on to say that in relation to policy issues

> "These mass incidents have contributed to the abolition of the custody and repatriation system for migrant workers, the halting of state-sponsored urban development projects, the overhauling of the criminal justice system to reduce the abuse of inmates in prisons, the reconsideration of a murder case involving the slaying of a local official, and the investigation and dismissal of numerous local party officials." (p. 300)

In addition, according to the statistics collected by a journalist, 39 online anti-corruption cases were identified and collected from 2008 to 2012. The data shows that more and more corrupt officials were exposed as the social media penetration rate increasing in the nation. In 2012, there were up to 19 cases, which almost equaled the total of the prior four years (X. Li, 2012). Even offenses by high-profile officials such as Liu Tienan, former director of the National Energy Bureau and deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, have been reported. In Liu's case, it was reported by a blogger in 2012 (Luo, 2013).

All of these 39 cases uncovered and followed closely by netizens have had administration and judicial actions at the end. After netizen disclosure, a great deal of further detail is usually yielded through netizens' Human Flesh Search. This forces the next step of official investigation intervention. This has changed the tradition of no action and became a new anti-corruption mechanism in China. The cases in the following discussion help to illustrate how this netizen-innovated anti-corruption mechanism works.

4.1.1 Officials' Behavior

Two well-known cases involved police officials' cover-up behavior towards these with family connections. In October 2010, a young man hit two students (one was killed and the other was injured) while he was driving drunk on a university campus. When campus security guards tried to block him, he attempted to escape and shouted: "my dad is Li Gang!" After public outrage erupted on the Internet, the Human Flesh Search Engine was generated spontaneously by netizens. And the driver's identity was revealed as Li Qiming, the son of the deputy director of the local public security bureau (Wang, 2010). The effort of cover-up failed because of the

netizens' Surrounding Gaze and Human Flesh Search. Li Qiming was arrested and was jailed for six years eventually.

The other case happened in Beijing on September 6th, 2011, when a teenager and his friend drove in a residential area and found a car in front of them slowed down and blocked their way. One of them jumped out of his customized BMW vehicle and assaulted the driver in the front car and threatened bystanders: "who dares call 110?" (110 is the police hotline as 911 in United States.) Bystanders blocked the way through which two teenagers had tried to escape from the scene and someone did call 110. At the same time, pictures of the scene were sent to the Internet and spread across different social media. Netizens identified the teenage driving the BMW as Li Tianyi, the son of Li Shuangjiang, who is a People's Liberation Army general and singer, and very famous for singing patriotic songs at public events in China (Huang & Buckley, 2011). Although the father expressed his apologies, it failed to stop the tide of public anger stirred by the son's road rage assault and the phenomenon of power abuse. On Sina Weibo, countless outraged netizen joined in a discussion about the injustice phenomenon in which the children of rich, officials, or celebrities break laws and try to get away from punishment by using their family's connections. Since then, the words "my dad is Li Gang!" and "who dares call 110?" have become popular internet terms; and netizens and citizen in dairy life use them to express their discontent or the gulf between the privileged and ordinary people in China.

Netizens not only challenge officials' professional conduct but also criticize their inappropriate behaviors out of their workplaces. In 2008, Lin Jiaxiang, a government administrative official, appeared to be molesting an 11-year old girl in a restaurant. When others there came to stop it, Lin, as noted earlier, said to them, "Do

you people known who I am?....You people are worth less than a fart to me!" This exchange was recorded by a surveillance camera in the restaurant and subsequently a video clip that included Lin's statement, was put online. In turn, Lin was fired from his government position and "fart people" has come to be used as a term of pride in reference to ordinary people both on and offline (Fenghuang News, 2008).

Among these cases, words and phrases that gain coded meaning can originate from the offline statements of government officials and citizens as well as be "invented" by bloggers. Code language, as an important social media infrastructure, functions very well together with Human Flesh Search Engine, Surrounding Gaze and Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages. They facilitate netizens communication and enhance their abilities to exercise influence.

4.1.2 Corruption: Luxury Accessories

On August 26, 2012, a tragic traffic accident with 36 deaths happened in Yan'an, Shanxi Province (Xu & Shi, 2012). Pictures of the accident began to circulate on Sina Weibo, where most Chinese go for latest news as well as different opinions. However, soon Weibo users' attention was not drawn to the accident itself but to a "smiling" male showing up on the accident pictures (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Yang Dacai was Photographed Grinning Widely at the Crash Scene (Source: people.cn)

According to the news content, the man, who was photographed grinning widely at the crash scene, was the chief of the Shaanxi Provincial Bureau of Work Safety. As netizens tried to figure out who this "smiling brother" was, a series of pictures of Yang wearing luxury watches went viral. Further "Human Flesh search" tracked down many images of Yang wearing various luxury brand watches and they circulated among different social media (see Figure 4.2). Netizens summed up that Yang owned at least 11 pricey watches (see Figure 4.3) including a $63,000 Vacheron Constantin and a $10,000 Rolex (Gu, 2012). In addition to luxury brand watches, netizens found that Yang also wore other luxury accessories including costly belts, bracelets and glasses (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.2: Netizens Profiled Yang Dacai's Luxury Watch Collection (Source: Sina Weibo)

Figure 4.3: Netizens Sort out Yang Dacai's Luxury Watch Collection (Source: Sina Weibo)

Figure 4.4: The Collection of Yang Dacai's Luxury Accessories including Watches, Belts, Bracelets and Glasses (Source: www.news.ifeng.com)

As the "smiling brother" gained the new nickname of "watch brother", netizens doubted how Yang could afford so many branded watches with his public servant's salary. On August 29, Yang apologized for his smiling face and said he was trying to make his colleagues feel more comfortable. And he explained that he bought these watches with his savings of ten years (J. Liu, 2012). Unfortunately, he could only afford five of them with these savings depending on the math done by netizens. The CPC Shaanxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection began to investigate Yang's case on August 30. On September 21, Yang was removed from his position and accused of serious discipline violations (Gu, 2012). After a year, on

September 5, 2013, Yang was sentenced to 14 years in prison because of taking bribes and holding a huge amount of property which he cannot account for (Shi & Liang, 2013).

In a similar case in 2008, netizens spotted Zhou Jiugeng, who was the director of Nanjing's property bureau, wearing a Vacheron Constantin watch and using a package of Nanjing 95 Imperial cigarettes in a news photograph. Further Human Flesh Search found Zhou driving a Cadillac car and having a luxurious lifestyle (Moore, 2008). In the same year with Yang Dacai's "watch brother" scandal, netizens noticed a news picture showing that Li Dejin, the "watch uncle" who is the former transportation bureau chief of Fujian province, was wearing a 50,000-yuan diamond-studded Rado wristwatch and a 15,000-yuan Hermes leather belt. But what caused waves of scandal and outrage among Chinese netizens was his cross-province censorship efforts, which killed the story, entitled with "Here Comes Fujian's Watch Uncle Director" on the original version of page A30 of *Yunnan City Times* and destroyed hundreds of thousands of printed newspapers for October 9, 2012 at midnight (Y. Li, 2012).

4.1.3 Corruption: House Collectors

On October 9, 2012, a netizen posted a document entitled "Personal Name Queries Real Estate Registration Certificate" (see Figure 4.5) on the Tianya forum as well as Sina Weibo, showing that Cai Bin, who was a senior urban management official with the city's Panyu District in Guangzhou, owned 21 pieces of real estate including villas, houses, shops, factories, and parking facilities. As the housing list went viral on the Internet, Cai Bin was nicknamed as "Uncle House" by the netizens (Sina News, 2012a).

The list of Cai's 21 properties includes detailed information such as registration number, householder, address, type of property, and unit size. Bloggers summed up that Cai's properties were mostly located in Panyu and Nansha districts with a total of 7203.33 square meters. Some local netizens even visited Cai's houses and took picture by following these listed addresses. A real estate agency estimated that the total market value of Cai's houses could be 40 million yuan ($6.3 million) (Sina News, 2012a). However, Cai's monthly pay is around 10,000 yuan according to the local government (C. Zheng, 2012).

第1页 共3页

个人名下房地产登记情况查询证明

经查询，蔡彬(440126195601200037)、时丽英(440126195601110023)、蔡展培(440181820801811)名下房地产登记情况证明如下：

序号	状态	登记字号	姓名及证件号码	房地产地址	用途	性质	建筑面积(平方米)
1		fc0188796	蔡强(440126212150O1) 蔡雄(440126571118007) 刘永(440126341116002) 时丽英(440126560111002)	蔡边一村三经新区大街2号	非居住		541.1
2		YS1066513	蔡彬(440126195601200037) 时丽英(440126195601110023)	富怡路罗家村段鑫润花园56座2梯180[illegible]	多层住宅		240.42
3		0228716	时丽英(440126560111002)	金山路兴泰大街18号东方花园又一居地下室第45号小车位	车位		15.8
4		0253079	蔡展培(440181820801811)	富怡路罗家村段64号铺	商铺		105.6
5		0454287	蔡展培(440181820801811)	富怡路罗家段8号桥虹花园8-19	居住		441.2
6		fc0208971	时丽英(440126560111002)	富怡路罗家段8号桥虹别墅2街6号	非居住		243.6
7		0324979	蔡展培(440181820801811)	富怡路罗家村段82号东方白云花园2座首层62号铺	非居住		106.5
8		20090406997	时丽英(440126195601110023)	广华南路71号东瀚园68号	车位		13
9		0137983	蔡俊生(440126590915009) 蔡展文(440126620913007) 时丽英(440126560111002)	龙岐村西环路东侧(A2厂房)	厂房		3405.3
10		南登记字2005000865	时丽英(440126560111002)	南沙区南沙经济开发区进港大道明珠花园怡乐楼6层0号	居和非居:	商品房	121.98

说明：
1. 证明范围谨包括广州市辖区范围(含10区2个县级市)内的房地产登记记录。
2. 申请人对查询证明负有妥善保管、正当使用的义务。因保管不当或不当使用而造成的损害或损失责任自负。

电脑查册人：[redacted]　　查询日期：2012年[redacted]　　证明流水号：201209[redacted]

第2页 共3页

个人名下房地产登记情况查询证明

经查询，蔡彬(440126195601200037)、时丽英(440126195601110023)、蔡展培(440181820801811)名下房地产登记情况证明如下：

序号	状态	登记字号	姓名及证件号码	房地产地址	用途	性质	建筑面积(平方米)
11		fc0199292	时丽英(440126560111002)	康乐路78号铺	非居住		104
12		0137984	陈俊杰(440126590915009) 刘展文(440126620913007) 时丽英(440126560111002)	龙岐村西环路东侧(A1综合楼)	厂房		853
13		20100404789	时丽英(440126195601110023)	富怡路罗家村段182号地下车库15号	车位		11.88
14			蔡斌(440126195601200037)	查无房地产情况记录			
15		0320651	时丽英(440126560111002)	沙溪大道32号5座12号铺	非居住		110.[illegible]
16		20070802467	时丽英(440126195601110023)	锦绣花园西区菁华轩3座201之9号	商铺		55.22
17		20090406991	时丽英(440126195601110023)	广华南路71号东畔园67号	商铺		12.1
18		0320659	时丽英(440126560111002)	沙溪大道32号5座11号铺	非居住		80.7
19		南登记字20050000882	时丽英(440126560111002)	南沙区南沙经济技术开发区进港大道[illegible]园怡乐楼4层D号	居住用房；商品房		121.98
20		南登记字20050000878	时丽英(440126560111002)	南沙区南沙经济技术开发区进港大道[illegible]园怡乐楼5层D号	居住用房；商品房		121.98
21		20080600651	时丽英(440126195601110023)	朝阳东路443号	商铺		58.87

说明：
1. 证明范围请包括广州市辖区范围(含10区2个县级市)内的房地产登记记录。
2. 申请人对查询证明负有妥善保管、正当使用的义务，因保管不善或不当使用造成的伤害或损失责任自负。

电脑查册人：[redacted] 查询日期：2012-9[redacted] 证明流水号：201209[redacted]

第3页 共3页

个人名下房地产登记情况查询证明

经查询，蔡彬(440126195601200037)、时丽英(440126195601110023)、蔡展培(440181820801811)名下房地产登记情况证明如下：

序号	状态	登记字号	姓名及证件号码	房地产地址	用途	性质	建筑面积(平方米)
22	已注销	0317563	蔡展培(440181820801811) 时朝晖(440126450602001) 时建欣(440126760717003)	东环路164号	居住		439.1

广州市房地产档案馆

广州市房地产档案馆

说明：
1. 证明范围请包括广州市辖区范围(含10区2个县级市)内的房地产登记记录。
2. 申请人对查询证明负有妥善保管、正当使用的义务，因保管不善或不当使用造成的伤害或损失责任自负。

电脑查册人：[redacted] 查询日期：2012-9[redacted] 证明流水号：201209[redacted]

Figure 4.5: The "Personal Name Queries Real Estate Registration Certificate" Posted Online by Netizens (Source: Sina Weibo)

Subsequently, official investigations verified that Cai and his family owned 22 houses, one more than the number claimed by the whistleblower who brought the case to light in cyberspace (China Daily, 2012b). 13 days after netizens revealing his real estate on the Internet, Cai was dismissed from his position. A year later, Cai was sentenced to 11 and a half years for accepting bribes totaling 2.75 million yuan ($446,000) from 1993 to 2012 (China Daily, 2013b).

In the same year, a 52-year-old village official in Shenzhen named Zhou Weisi was revealed by netizens to owning 80 properties and 20 luxury cars (Y. Zheng, 2012). And "House Aunt", 68-year-old Li Yunqing, was found to have 24 properties registered under her name in Guangzhou (Xi, 2012). In 2013, "House Sister", Gong Aiai who is the former deputy head of a rural bank, was reported by netizens to own 41 properties in Beijing (Fung, 2013). In all three cases, the authorities immediately responded with official investigation. Zhou Weisi's was charged with accepting 56 million yuan in bribes (Sohu News, 2014). In Li Yunqing's case, the official investigation found that Li and her family owned 16 properties, but not 24 reported by netizens, and affirmed that they were all legal properties (Wang & Ji, 2012). And Gong Aiai was sentenced to three years (Jacobs, 2013a).

4.1.4 Corruption: Sexual Scandals

One third of these 39 corruption scandals mentioned previously were related to sexual indiscretion (X. Li, 2012). As an article commented they were "sometimes too numerous to seem plausible." (Ramzy, 2012)

On November 20, 2012, a series of hotel room sex screenshots titled "Lei, the secretary who accepts sex bribes" were first published on jdwsy.com, a grassroots anti-corruption website called "civil supervision", by blogger Zhu Ruifeng who

described himself as an independent investigative journalist. A few hours later, these lurid images from a sex tape recorded in 2007 went viral online after it was forwarded to Sina Weibo by blogger Ji Xuguang. And Lei's sex tape scandal became an internet sensation immediately (Li, C., 2012).

Lei Zhengfu, who claimed the tape was fake at first, is the former Communist Party Secretary of the Beibei District of Chongqing. In response, Chongqing's Discipline Inspection Commission started their investigation and announced that the video was not manipulated. At the same time, netizens verified that the naked male shown in the video was Lei Zhengfu by matching these screenshots with his image among different news pictures. They even gave him a nickname of "Edison Lei" in reference to the Edison Chen sex-tapes scandal, a Hong Kong celebrity's hundreds of sex photos with multiple actresses leaked online in 2008 (C. Li, 2012). Additional investigation revealed that the video was recorded secretly by Lei's 18-year-old mistress, who was sent by a property developer to shoot the sex video. In order to obtain a land use contract, the property developer used these videos to blackmail Lei (Ramzy, 2012). This online anti-corruption case has thrown a light on links between sex, money and power as a symbol of party corruption.

The official investigation towards Lei Zhengfu began right after the release of the sex video since it captivated public opinion in no time. On November 23, Chongqing Municipal People's Government information office issued the announcement of removing of Lei Zhengfu from his official position and a pending investigation. The whole process took only 63 hours and seen as be a result of "Network supervision by public opinion." (Xiao, 2012) According to the court's judgement in June 2013, Lei Zhengfu was sentenced to 13 years in jail for accepting

bribes of around 3.16 million yuan ($510,000). At least 10 other officials have been dismissed as a result of the scandal (BBC News, 2013b).

In addition to Lei, seven other officials were exposed with sexual scandals by netizens in 2012, according to an inventory of network anti-corruption from china.com (http://news.china.com/focus/wlffpd/). In January, Duan Yizhong, an inspector from the Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision in Guangxi province, was involved with a set of nude photos posted online; and in December, Li Junwen, a former head of the village of Xicuan in Shanxi Province, was revealed to have four wives and 10 children. Well-known similar cases happened from time to time. In 2010's "Diary Gate", Han Feng, the chief of Tobacco Bureau in Laibin, Guangxi province, became a figure in cyberspace after his diary that describes his relationships with mistresses and bribery behaviors leaked and spread on the Internet (Hong, 2010). In 2011, Xie Zhiqiang, who was a head of the local sanitation bureau in Jiangsu providence and used Sina Weibo as a private chatting platform to talking about hotel dates with his mistress, was the focus of a surrounding gaze by netizens (Li, 2011). Liu Zhijun mentioned earlier was reported to have had 18 mistresses (Ramzy, 2012).

After reviewing those cases, a pattern of the netizens' online anti-corruption process can be outline in Figure 4.6. With the characteristics of people participation and interaction, and low cost, online anti-corruption plays a more and more important and powerful role in China's anti-corruption campaigns.

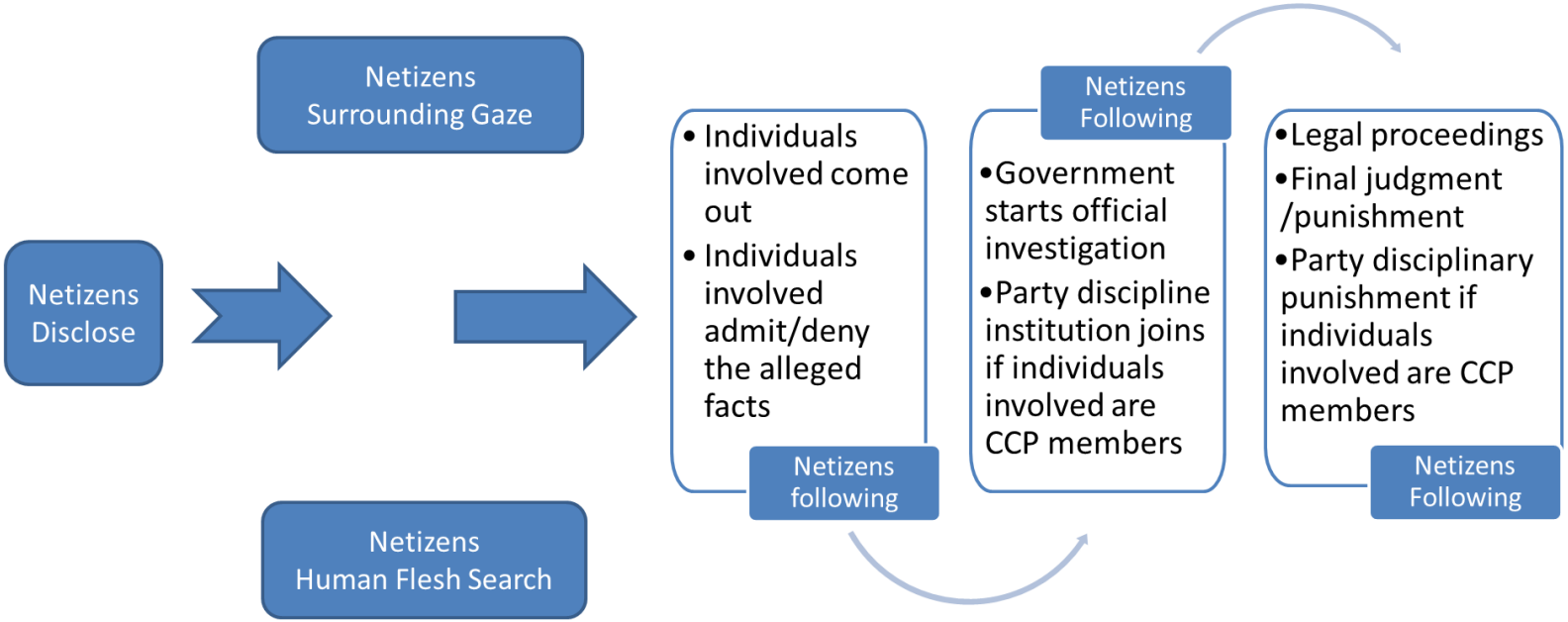


Figure 4.6: Netizens' Online Anti-corruption Pattern

4.2 Netizen Influence on Government Policies and Actions

4.2.1 Protesting Governments' Irresponsible Actions

A number of relevant cases are involved with local police actions. One well known example happened in 2009 when police in Yunnan Province initially said the death of a 24-year-old man who died while in jail was caused by an injury he received while playing "Duo Maonao" (躲猫猫), the Chinese name for hide-and-seek, (literally "eluding the cat") with other prisoners. This explanation quickly produced extensive negative online comments and "Duo Maonao" has become a term or code language widely used to criticize the lack of credibility, fairness, and transparency in law enforcement and other public agency statements (Schott, 2009; Tong & Lei, 2010). In 2008, a teenage girl was drowned in a river in Guizhou Province. According to the police report, after she had a quarrel with two boys there, a boy began doing push-ups and the girls jumped in the river and drown. In turn, "doing push-ups" has become another widely used code phrase for questionable official explanations (Ye & Canaves, 2008). Online discussion believed that the girl was raped and murdered by the boy who had familial ties with the local public security bureau. Soon after, over 10,000 local residents (also with a name of 2008 Weng'an riot) were mobilized through social media to protest against the alleged police cover-up of the girl's death (Li, 2008).

In these two cases, the code language, "Duo Maonao" and "doing push-ups", which had built-in governmental criticism and other meanings shared by netizens, helped netizens spread the information, continue the discussion and generate their street actions. To avoid being blocked, new strategies such as writing about the

incident on video game bulletin boards and other unrelated sites instead of social discussion forums, using jocular code words for the incident and reversing sentence order were also innovated and deployed by netizens during Weng'an event (Elegant, 2008).

Many of the cases that arouse bloggers involve how government agencies and officials treat ordinary people, take actions, and relate to major policy issues. In the fall of 2012, staff members of a local Civil Affairs Bureau refused to accept the small donations that elementary school students had collected to aid people to recover from the Yi Liang earthquake. The Weibo posting of this refusal produced a great number of online messages critical of the Civil Affairs Bureau's action, forcing it to apologize, punish and re-train the staff involved, and promise to provide better service (Sina News, 2012b).

On July 23 2011, as previously noted, two high-speed trains crashed in the suburbs of Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province. This accident caused 40 deaths and 192 injured. While the accident site was still being cleared away, a reporter asked a Railway Ministry spokesperson why the government had so quickly given orders to bury the derailed train cars rather than continue rescue efforts to find possible survivors. When his answer was met with skepticism, he said "whether you believe it or not, it's up to you, but I do anyway." The quote is now widely used online and offline to indicate that the explanations and answers given by a person, especially by officials, are questionable (CDT, 2012). Bloggers' questioning and closely following the event forced the government to continue the rescue operation and extend the cause investigation.

The 2012 outrage of netizens over a forced abortion has contributed to the growing demands for change in the government's one child policy. In that year, a woman, in the seventh month of pregnancy with a second child, was required to have an abortion by a local government in Shanxi Province. Virtually immediately, her family posted a photo online of the mother lying on a hospital bed next to the body of her seven-month-old fetus. This produced a vast number of social media responses expressing strong opposition to the forced abortion along with many comments that the one child policy should be ended or relaxed (Johnson, 2012).

4.2.2 Protesting Government's Decisions

One of the side effects of China's economic growth is environmental problems. Public concerns about environmental pollution have increased over time as the situation has deteriorated. A Pew Survey carried out in 2013 indicated that the environment moved up to fourth place on the list of Chinese public concerns (PRC, 2013). And waves of grassroots environmental movements were mobilized to protest, particularly local government economic proposals that threaten the environment and residents health. For example, in 2008, the project of a high-speed rail line using the magnetic levitation technology in Shanghai was forced to suspend after residents demonstrated on streets and complained about its radiation risks (Jiang, 2012). In the northeastern port city of Dalian, the government was forced to stop the construction of a petrochemical (PX for short) plant in 2011 after local residents protested against it due to environmental concerns (Perlez, 2012). Other proposals to build PX plants in Xiamen, Kunming, and Maoming cities have been forced to be called off by large-scale mass protests since 2007. Protesters in Jiangmen, in Guangdong province,

similarly succeeded in getting a proposed Uranium plant abandoned after expressing worries about its safety and potential environmental impact in 2013 (Mullany, 2013).

It is said environmental protests were “at the heart of half of all the protests in 2013 that had over 10,000 participants.” (Smart, 2014) Social media were utilized extensively during these protests in coordinating demonstration, spreading information, continuing discussion even as governments try to prevent it, generating online public opinion different from the agenda set by official news outlets, and eventually forcing the authorities to abandon their plans. This section will discuss three protests including the Shifang, the Qidong, and the Maoming protests in detail to indicate the way in which social media infrastructures are being used by citizens both online and offline to challenge governments’ decisions that they don’t agree with.

4.2.2.1 The Shifang Protest

As part of the efforts to revitalize the local economy in Shifang, located in Sichuan providence, the government approved the Sichuan Hongda Co. Ltd to build a copper smelting plant, which was going to be one of the largest in the world. Hongda Co. Ltd started to set up the factory’s foundation on 29 June 2012. With concern about the factory’s environmental impacts, a group of high school students in Shifang submitted a petition to the local government, calling for construction cancellation. However, no reply was given to the petition. On 1 July, hundreds of student started to gather in front of Shifang municipal government buildings to protest the project. Meanwhile, they distributed pamphlets, and posters as well as social media posts or messages over the entire city and cyberspace to raise awareness and mobilize local residents to protest against the copper plant.

On 2 and 3 July, it developed into a large-scale environmental protest as thousands of participants, including high school students, college students and local residents, joined in the demonstration on the streets and in front of government offices asking for suspension of the project (Branigan, 2012). The protest turned violent as protesters attacked police vehicles and government buildings, and police used tear gas and stun grenades against crowds, which left some citizens injured and 27 arrested (McDonald, 2012; Branigan, 2012).

As usual, traditional media and mainstream news portals under the governments' control were largely silent toward "mass incidents." Among hundreds of mainland papers, only *Shanghai's Oriental Morning Post* and *the Global Times* mentioned the protests in Shifang briefly on July 3 (Gang, 2012). However, the flow of protests information was extensive on social media platforms such as Weibo, in spite of censorship. Posting pictures and videos taken from the protest, social media platforms and text messaging became the primary means of information sharing, spreading and communication for both protesters and citizens outside of Shifang. During that time, the word "Shifang" became the most-searched term on Sina Weibo. A report of the University of Hong Kong's China Media Project indicated that "between July 1 and the evening of July 4, there were around 5.25 million posts on Sina Weibo containing 'Shifang'. Of these about 400,000 included images and close to 10,000 included video." (Gang, 2012)

The social media infrastructure of Cyber and Terrestrial Space Linkages worked well in this protest largely due to the "post 90s" generation, who were also the generation of social media in China. They not only organized their gatherings and demonstrations through social media but also sketched out a general picture of what

was happening for Chinese netizens by publishing on-site pictures and videos, many of which were used by foreign media (Hook, 2012; Gang, 2012). The interactions between protesters and netizens were also notable. After protesters publishing a picture showing a police officer in the act of chasing and beating protesters (see Figure 4.7), netizens immediately initiated Human Flesh Search and found out this fat police officer's name was Liu Bo (Carter, 2012). However, the fervor of "fat police officer" in Chinese social media didn't end with his personal information; netizens adopted their mocking tactics by making pictures showing the "fat police officer" chasing after Olympic winner Liu Xiang, practicing kung Fu in a Jackie Chan movie, and running on a soccer field and so on (see Figure 4.8). And it has quickly turned the "fat police officer" into a symbol of government brutality (Mozur, 2012; Carter, 2012).

Figure 4.7: The Pictures of the "Fat Police Officer" Liu Bo (Source: Sina Webo)

Figure 4.8: Photoshopped “Fat Police Officer” (collected from different social media platforms)

Under the pressure both from online public opinion and offline street demonstrations, the local government announced it would suspend the copper plant construction on the morning of July 3. But protests continued into the evening until the government released 21 of the 27 detained protesters (Bradsher, 2012a; Spegele, 2012).

4.2.2.2 The Qidong protest

On 28 July, 2012, thousands of Qidong (located in east China's Jiangsu province) residents took to the streets to protest about a proposed waste water pipeline project, which was owned by Japan's Oji Paper Group. This planed 110-kilometer pipeline was designed to carry about 150,000 tons of waste water a day from a paper factory in Nantong to the coast off Qidong. Local residents were concerned it would contaminate the fishing harbor and local water supply (Jiang, 2012). And according to a picture netizens published on Weibo, protest organizers had tried to apply for a protest permit from the local government, which was rejected on July 21st, 2012 (see Figure 4.9) (Offbeat China, 2012).

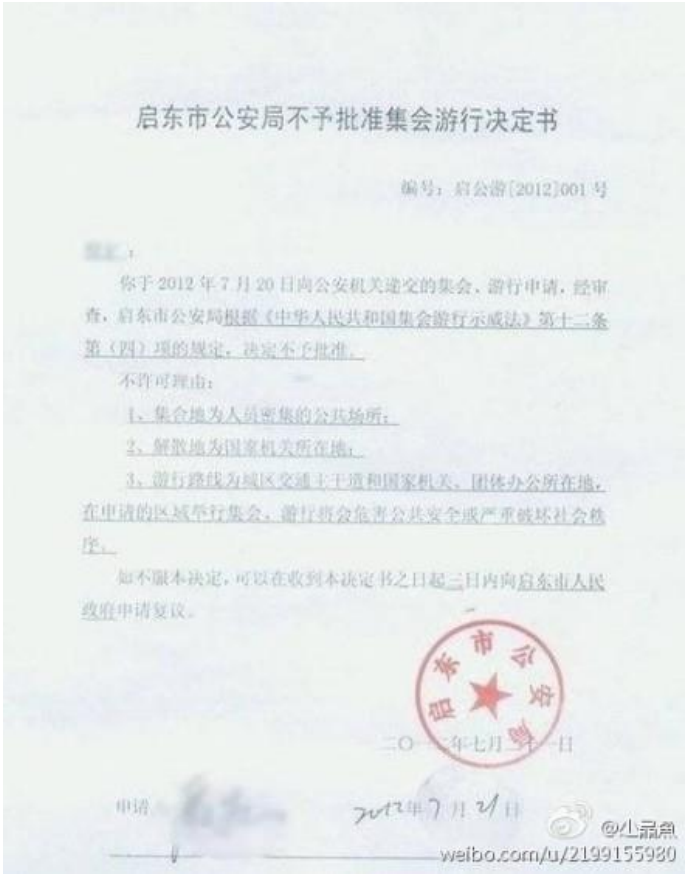


Figure 4.9: Protest Application Rejection Letter Issued by Qidong Authorities (Source: Offbeat China, 2012)

Inspired by Shifang protest, protesters here made use of social media to mobilize and organize their demonstration. Before the protest day, a well-made poster titled "Protest OJI Pollute Qidong" was put online and circulated among different social media platforms. It explained "where was Qidong, what happened in Qidong, what environmental harms the sewage plant would bring, why local residents opposed the construction" and so on (Offbeat China, 2012). Early in the morning of July 28th, thousands of protesters "went for a walk" (the coded language protesters used in referring to protest) in front of the government building and in the surrounding streets. According to pictures and videos posted by protesters on Sina Weibo, protesters stormed and occupied the government building, ransacked government offices, and overturned police vehicles (Bi, Evans & Ma, 2012). During the clashes, Qidong's CPC secretary, Sun Jianhua, was even stripped of his shirt in front of the crowds, and the mayor, Xu Feng, was forced to wear a protesting T-shirt with "Strongly oppose pollution by Oji" slogans. In this case, the authorities didn't order any tear gas or police violence to crack down on the protest. Soon, the government announced that the pipeline project was permanently canceled after the protest lasted for hours. Netizens applauded the way that the Qidong government handled this protest and loved "the shy smile" of leader Sun Jianhua (see Figure 4.10) (Offbeat China, 2012).

Figure 4.10: Protesters-generated On-site Pictures in the Qidong Protest (collected from different social media platforms)

Although netizens were able to generate pictures of the protest based on protester-generated information during the morning, a lot of material had been removed and the term “Qidong” was not searchable on Sina Weibo by the late afternoon. Continuing online discussion about the protest was censored including netizens transforming texts into picture formats. For example, a most-forwarded blogger’s thoughts in an image format, which was reposted over 25,000 times and received over 6,000 comments, was deleted by censors, according to Hong Kong University’s Weiboscope project (Yeh, 2012).

The Qidong protest became the second case in one month in forcing a local government to cancel its industrial project plans after residents expressed their

environmental concerns through both on and offline protests. An editorial from the Global Times' on July 30, 2012 said: "the two protests have together left the impression that the fastest way to change a government policy is to hold a violent demonstration." (Global Times, 2012)

4.2.2.3 The Maoming protest

An editorial from *the Global Times* in 2012 concluded that Chinese citizens have found strategies to challenge governments' decision on large-scale industrial plants they don't like. Further, according to Xinhua News, at least three proposed paraxylene (or PX for short) projects have been cancelled in recent years because of citizens' protests (Duggan, 2014). The Maoming protest happened in 2014 was one of them.

Maoming is a city located in the southwestern of Guangdong province. The Maoming government decided to construct a 3.5 billion yuan PX refinery as a local industry project. Thousands of brochures were sent in a public relations campaign, to the residents in order to inform them of the economic benefits the PX factory would bring to the community (Smart, 2014). However, paraxylene is dangerous to produce. It is not only easily flammable and explosive, but also affects people's health. As waves of environmental protest and civil rights activities rocking China in both online and offline, environmental awareness and the willing to fight for rights increased among Chinese citizens. In this context, Maoming residents, became concerned about the environment damage as well as health hazard (Duggan, 2014). The brochures handed out by the government backfired and provoked residents' anger.

On March 30, 2014, hundreds of Maoming residents gathered on the streets and "went for a walk" demanding the suspending of the PX plant, which they described as illegal

(Duggan, 2014). Protesters reported on social media saying that police used tear gas towards protesting crowds and it turned into violent clashes. Protesting pictures circulating on Weibo showed that protesters were holding banners marching through the streets of the city, and police chasing protesters with batons (see Figure 4.11). More and more people took part in the demonstration. Thought these pictures were deleted by censors later in the day, the information of over one thousand people participating in the demonstration was circulated online (J. Li, 2014).

Figure 4.11: Maoming Protest Pictures Circulated Online (collected from different social media platforms)

Online information said tens of protesters were injured and several were killed during the clash. However, the local authorities said 11 protesters were injured accidentally by the police and apologized, but denied netizens' claims that several protesters were killed in the protest (J. Li, 2014).

The influence even spread out of Maoming, in the second day, protesters in Shenzhen gathered outside of Luohu train station in order to demonstrate over Maoming PX factory, which also brought a heavy police presence (J. Li, 2014). As a result, the government held two press conferences and declared to stop the PX plant without residents' consent (Duggan, 2014).

In addition to information channeled, Coded Language, and Surround Gaze, social media infrastructure Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages played a significant role in the protest's scale and development.

4.3 Netizen Anti-government Control Strategies

4.3.1 Government Control Efforts

A great effort of the government's Internet management is put into censorship. Any online information or websites considered as a threat to "social stability" is attempted to be controlled by the Communist Party's Central Propaganda Department (CPD) and the General Administration of Press and Publication and State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT). To cope with new challenges brought by the Internet development, agencies focusing on Internet management were set up by the central government in recent years, including the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) (www.cac.gov.cn) in 2011 May and the Office of the Central Leading Group for cyberspace Affairs in 2013 December, which is led by Xi

Jinping. It is widely believed that a sophisticated Internet censorship system has been developed and implemented by the government (Feng & Guo, 2013; Yang, 2011). Roughly about 100,000 people are hired both by the state and private companies to monitor the Internet 24 hours in China (the Economist, 2013). After elaborate literature reviewing, censorship tactics deployed by the Chinese government can basically be summarized into four categories including access control, service provider control, legal restriction and administration regulation, and online public opinion containment.

The Golden Shield Project, widely known as the Great Firewall, is the major censorship effort government put on Internet access control. Since 2003, this project, which is directly operated by the Ministry of Public Security of China, enables the authorities to use different technical methods, including blocking websites, filtering keywords, deleting content, etc. to control Internet use and online information (Xu, 2015).

According to GreatFire.org, which has monitored blocked websites and keywords since 2011, there are over 2,701 websites being blocked in mainland China (GreatFire, 2015). Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google (partial), are well-known websites that are not accessible for Chinese netizens. After over ten years' experience, a list of blacklisted keywords has been developed from the governments' filtering practice. It includes general concepts such as despotism, events such as the Tiananmen Square event, places such as Tibet, dissident groups such as Falun Gong, and dissident news sources such as China News Digest. In addition, sensitive words or terms change from time to time. For instance, during the period of the attack on Tiananmen Square

by individuals from Xinjiang province in October 2013, anything that mentioned it was subject to censorship (Xu, 2015).

In addition to the huge and powerful physical censorship infrastructure, service provider control is another monitoring strategy utilized by the authorities. In order to get a business license, any Internet service company in China, especially news portals and social media service providers, have to agree with the government's censorship guidelines and cooperate with the censorship practice. As mentioned earlier, Internet service companies have to obey *the Measures on the Administration of Internet Service and the Provisions on the Administration of Internet News and Information Services* (Feng, 2010). Another necessary step is signing the "*Public Pledge of Self-Regulation and Professional Ethics for China Internet Industry*" that sets out what Internet companies are required to do and what not to do in dealing with information (ISC, 2011). Back in 2009, to obtain the authorities' permission to set up Sina Weibo, the first micro-blogging service platform in China, the Sina Corporation had to assure the government that information flows on Weibo platform will be under government control rules (He, 2013). From time to time, censorship guidelines or notices are also handed out from the government to Internet service providers. A notice from 2008 sent to an Internet forum in Tangshan, Hebei province, says:

> "In accordance with the requirements of the Public Security Network Monitoring Office of the City of Tangshan, this discussion forum will make strict inspections for harmful information. The administrator must immediately remove any of the following harmful information discovered and notify the management, and will close the account of the person posting such harmful information. Serious cases will be referred to the Tangshan Municipal Public Security Network Monitoring Office for handling according to the law." (Qiang, 2008a)

At the same time, the notice also claimed that “the Municipal Public Security Network Monitoring Office already possesses the Web sites and codes of the managers of this forum; it will be able to handle harmful information and has the authority to inspect and view the accounts, IP addresses, posting times, and other key information about those posting harmful information.” (Qiang, 2008b) After reading this notice, it’s not surprising to see Weibo users’ complaint of post deletion. Also, when you try to find some information, it’s not a surprise to see searching results such as “according to relevant laws and regulations, results are not displayed”, or “Sorry, unable to find related results of ....” The example of search “Chen Guangcheng” on Sina Weibo search engine shows as follows (see Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: The Searching Result of “Cheng Guangcheng” on Sina Weibo. It says: “Due to relevant laws and regulations, results of ‘Chen Guangcheng’ are not displayed.”

Apart from access control and service provider control, Internet use legislation and regulation is another important part of government’s Internet censorship system. In May 2010, the first white paper on the Internet from the government stressed the

term of “Internet sovereignty” and requiring Internet users to observe laws and regulations in China. Internet use seven guidelines were drafted by Lu Wei, the head of the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC). At an Internet conference, he listed them as dealing with the legal standards, the socialist system standards, the national interest standards, the legitimate interest of citizens’ standards, the public order standards, the moral standards and the authenticity of information standards (FlorCruz, 2013).

According to a judicial interpretation targeting Weibo users from the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate published on September 9, 2013, Internet users sharing defamatory information that harms the national interest or others face up to three years in prison if the same post is viewed 5,000 times or forwarded 500 times (The Supreme People’s Court & the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, 2013). This judicial action, which is part of the online rumors crackdown campaign, also defines the Internet offense of defamation in harming social order or national interest, which includes causing a mass incident, disturbing public order, inciting ethnic and religious conflicts, and damaging the state’s image (The Supreme People’s Court & the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, 2013). Part of this crackdown initiative on Weibo aims at clamping down on high profiled users, known as the “Big Vs”, including celebrities, public figures, and grassroots opinion leaders who have millions of followers. For instance, Charles Xue was one of these “Big Vs” arrested for putting out criticizing posts (Hatton, 2015). These government actions also greatly toned down ordinary netizens’ use of Weibo. Over 450 netizens have been arrested or detained by the government in this campaign (Mckenzie, 2013). Thus, netizens tend to shift their social media use from Weibo to other platforms. A

CNNIC report indicated the number of Weibo users had decreased to 281 million from 308.8 million by the end of 2013, which declined 9 percent compared with 2012 (CNNIC, 2014a). A more recent Internet regulation released by the Cyberspace Administration of China, aimed to ban social media fake accounts and started to take effect on March 1, 2015(Mamiit, 2015). This rule forces netizens to register with their real name on social media platforms.

In order to "contain" and "balance" online public opinion, the government also expanded the use of "50-centers" to generate social media messages and comment on issues from the government's perspective. These are persons who were initially paid by the national and local governments to plant propaganda items in the print media and television (Sullivan, 2014, p. 9). Estimates say there are up to 250,000 to 300,000 "50-centers" working with 30,000-50,000 skilled Internet police in China's cyberspace (Chao, 2012). It's worth mentioning here that China's Internet police have become more publically acknowledged after working on the backstage for years. On June 1st, 2015, the Ministry of Public Security announced the launch of Internet police's social media accounts, which will tell the public about their work and response to public concerns. The ministry also reported that "the government has already deleted some 758,000 pieces of illegal and criminal information from the Internet and investigated more than 70,000 cybercrime cases since the start of this year." (Blanchard & Tait, 2015) In addition to human being Internet police, Jingjing and Chacha (see Figure 4.13), which are from the Chinese word of police "jingcha" are the cartoon Internet police officers. The two cartoon characters were first introduced by the Internet Surveillance Division of Shenzhen's Public Security Bureau in 2006 (Chao, 2012). They usually pop up on the screens to watch and warn Internet users. In 2006 July, a

notice from Guangzhou Municipal Public Security Network Monitoring Division said "each web site shall place a police alert in a visible location on the lower portion of its homepage, and cartoon police alert icons on the homepages of its blogging, discussion forum, and social and other networking pages, which shall lead directly to the designated Web sites of the public security authorities." (Qiang, 2008b)

Figure 4.13: Image of Internet Police: JingJing and Chacha (Source: www.china.org.cn)

More recently in 2015, extensive new efforts on media censorship and cultural tightening were made to set back netizen use of social media to exercise influence under Xi's "continuing to deepen socialist ideological and moral" campaign (People's

Daily, 2015). Stricter culture policies and online restrictions are reflected in widespread banning of so called “vulgar” culture from televised cleavage to netizens’ “not favorable” posts within their social media accounts (Chin, 2015). A few foreign observers point out that the grip of censorship is tightening under Xi’s government, who was titled as “the chairman of everything.” (Wasserstrom, 2015)

4.3.2 Netizen Counter-Strategies

However, government-to-citizens interaction generated from Internet control is an “a relationship between cat and mouse” in China. The government’s censorship system forces netizens to find ways to use the Internet more creatively. Any censoring method deployed by the authorities usually produces corresponding bypassing strategies devised by netizens.

To climb the Great Firewall, free or paid-subscription virtual private networks (VPNs) are the most common channels for Chinese netizens to access blocked websites. Some popular software including Ultrasurf, Psiphon, and Freegate also enable Internet users to get over controls by installing proxy servers (Xu, 2015). A U.S. Congress research report issued in 2012 states that 1 to 8 percent Chinese Internet users employ VPNs and proxy servers to bypass the Great Firewall (Congressional Research Service, 2012). An analysis focusing on Chinese Twitter users, who circumvent filters by using different tools, indicates that users from mainland China use Twitter as an alternative public sphere. By circumventing content restrictions, they actively discuss political topics typically not permitted in China (Song, Faris, & Kelly, 2015). The government started to shut down VPNs services for ideology control in 2015 (Chen, etc. 2015), which impacted millions of Internet users in China. Xiaoqiang quoted Fang Binxing, the father of the Great Firewall, as saying there was “a ceaseless

war between the GFW and VPNs" and the Great Firewall was "gaining the upper hand" but it would be temporarily (Chen, etc. 2015). He was so right. Shortly after the banning, netizens reacted with new methods, such as inserting new IP addresses into host files, new software programs Tor and SSH tunnels, appeared which could route all Internet traffic through a remote server (Xu, 2015).

The cat and mouse game is even more interesting in relation to netizens' responses to blacklisted words filtering and sensitive content censoring. Their creativity helps them invent a variety of ways to express themselves in spite of strict censorship. These strategies have successfully cloaked millions of netizens in their "exposing, criticizing, and ridiculing" those in power "in the form of political satire, jokes, drawings, videos, songs, popular poetry, jingles, fiction, sci-fi, code words, mockery, and euphemisms." (Qiang & Link, 2013; CDT, 2015) Even when the topic is political taboo, Chinese netizens have found critical ways to comment on authorities. For instance, Chinese usually use "June 4th" or simply "64" referring to the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. After those becoming sensitive words, netizens use "Thirty-Fifth of May" to mark the day. After a short time, "Thirty-Fifth of May" was also included into the sensitive words list by the censors. To survive in the "cat and mouse" game, netizens kept changing their coded language for "64", ranging from "63+1", "65-1" to "Today", "Tomorrow", "That year", and "the special day." The coded language and implicit metaphors generated under the censorship system are considered as a new form of social resistance, or the digital resistance (Esarey & Qiang, 2011; Qiang, 2008a; 2011). Leaded by Xiao Qing, Chinese Digital Media built the Grass-Mud Horse Lexicon (the Grass-Mud Horse is also a coded online term to represent Chinese netizens' resentment and struggling over Internet use), which is a

glossary of coded terms created by netizens and circulated widely on websites inside China . It has collected up to 360 terms and focuses only on political discussion related online terms that reflecting netizen resistance. Its introduction says: “without understanding this coded but widespread ‘grass-mud horse discourse’ through the lens of censorship and resistance, one cannot fully understand the contradictions in Chinese society today, nor the possibilities for tomorrow.” (CDT, 2015)

Again, when a crackdown campaign was initiated towards Weibo use, big Vs, as well as ordinary netizens responded with their surviving strategies. Some big Vs tended to change their verified status to regular status (Muncaster, 2013). At the same time, a large number of netizens shift their social media use from Weibo to other social media platforms, such as Zhifu (a social media debate platform) and Wechat, a more private instant messaging service platform. As mentioned earlier, it caused Weibo use to shrink considerably. But, at the same time, the number of WeChat user increased to 272 million users in a short time (Chao, 2014). However, all of these hardly change the trend of social media use in China and the general situation of citizens’ influence enabled by social media. No matter what social media platforms they use or what strategies they innovate, in the long run, citizens can always survive and exercise some influence by making use of all kinds of social media infrastructures. As Chang Ping comments, the crackdown on big Vs, can actually be a good thing of by promoting greater diversity of online public opinion. It changes the situation of Weibo’s opinion leaders monopolized by big Vs and gives ordinary netizens more opportunities in shaping the public opinion. And it makes it more difficult for the government to control public opinion (Ping, 2013).

Even within President Xi's strict policies, netizens are still able to exercise some influence and adopt new strategies through new technology advances. For instance, in January 2015, nationwide taxi driver strikes happened in China due to soaring expenses, shrinking incomes and the competition coming from new ride-hailing apps (Jacobs, 2015). The pervasive smartphones access and mobile social media applications allowed the drivers to spread their complaints quickly and widely and mobilize the strikes. Later on, even truck drivers, construction workers and miners joined the strikes to protest their low income and unpaid wages. As a result of strikes, the government released new regulation online that said only licensed taxis could use ride-hailing apps; and privately owned vehicles were prohibited from using such apps to offer rides (Jacobs, 2015).

When explosions, which killed over 100 and injured hundreds of others, happened at the Port of Tianjin on August 12, 2015, almost immediately, eyewitness pictures, chats, and video from nearby residents were widely circulating on different social media platforms. But the government, as usual, struggled to control the Tianjin narrative through prohibiting news media gathering information on the scene, blocking social media post online, and distracting the public's attention by focusing on human interest stories (Levin, 2015a). The government even made a great effort on social media to praise firefighter heroes. The firefighter's WeChat exchange promoted by the government was forwarded millions of times in a short time and successfully got netizens' attention (Moriey, 2015). However, netizens started to realize the governments' strategy of distracting by using sensational stories, and started to say "we are touched by them, but we want more at the same time", by confirming the public perception of the tragedies, and questioning the second huge explosion and

freighters operation and management. Under this pressure, the government had to provide some facts and started to send soldier specializing in handing toxic substance from Beijing (Middleton, 2015).

After the accident, the governments made a variety of efforts to threaten or even force victim residents to accept the government calculated compensation for their damaged apartments (Levin, 2015b). In response, homeowners from different complexes organize their own discussion groups on social media application, such as WeChat and QQ, doing research about government payouts to previous disasters victims, and finding out negotiating strategies (Wong, 2015).

Thus, there is a continuing conflict between the government's censorship and netizens' social media use. And netizens have been able to find new ways over time to assert some influence in different sectors. For example, as part of Xi's socialist culture and moral campaign, the Ministry of Culture launched its official account on Weibo. Its first three posts attracted over 100,000 comments in the same day. However, there were thousands of unfavorable or outright hostile comments, and made an embarrassing grand opening for the Ministry of Culture website. One comment from a netizen with 23,000 likes says: "you manage what we read, what we watch on TV, what movies we see, what we do online, when we drive our cars, what we say, but you don't manage the quality of our food or housing, our health, or our children's ability to attend school. Everything you should manage, you don't and what you shouldn't manage, you do!" (Chin, 2015) And censors had to give up their comments deleting at the end, because of too many negative comments and netizens' accusations (Chin, 2015).

And noted in many examples, anti-control strategies can reach outside of the area where the events are taking place. Working together with the infrastructure of Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages, an example of this can be seen in a recent dispute over the censorship by the Guangdong provincial government of an editorial in the Southern Weekly, one of China's more freewheeling papers. Many throughout China first learned about the censorship conflict online. According to Mozur (2013), one person who was involved for several days in street demonstrations outside the paper's offices in Guangzhou, indicated that this loosely organized group was "reaching out to others, contacting thousands on China's instant-messaging service QQ and Sina Weibo microblogging service." In reporting on this conflict, Mozur (2013) goes on to say:

> In an earlier era of protests, their voices would have been lost in the vastness of China. The Internet has provided the platform to turn local protests national, with instant mobs able to form and activists able to bring their protest experience to bear at the latest political hot spot.

In sum, the continuing influence of netizens from the bottom-up indicates that netizens have been able to find ways to get around continuing and changing government efforts to eliminate citizen influence on governments and policies. But, this cat and mouse relationship involving the government is less related to citizen use of social media in social-cultural and economic sectors, in part, because the government has not clamped down as much as on citizens' online activities in government and political sector. Furthermore, as the technical infrastructure dimensions change, the way the government tries to control and the netizens efforts to

influence change as well. By adding the time dimension into the analysis, the next chapter will explore the cumulative effect of social media use in police change.

Chapter 5

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS IN POLICY CHANGE

To fully understand the citizens, social media, and governance in any nation, it is necessary to examine their overall dimensions and patterns of development over time and possible future directions. To do this, the cumulative technological and spatial aspects of social media and their use must be considered in addition to their dynamics at any one point in time. The cumulative effect, by adding the time factor into the analysis of social media use, is another important aspect within this study.

The occurrence over time of a number of individual cases involving netizens that are in the same policy area but seldom directly related to one another can have important cumulative policy and governance effects. Looking at the long run, it can provide more understanding than the analysis of only individual cases. And it helps to see the ways citizens' bottom-up use social media evolves and how it can produce substantial changes towards important policy aspect of governments over time. An example can be seen in the one-child policy change process, from easing some restrictions in 2013 (Xinhua News, 2013b) to completely ending the one-child policy in 2015(Xinhua News, 2015b). Over these years, continuous social media comments calling for a change were triggered and connected by relevant cases, which have been a cumulative influence in support of the government policy change.

The following four analyses, including cumulative changes in the technology relevant to social media and when and where it can be used by citizens, institutional reform of the railways system, charity operation change triggered by the scandal of the

Red Cross and the overall cumulative effects on the central government's role and position, will illustrate how cumulative effects are generated from technology change, netizens' use of social media overtime and its influence on national policy and governance.

5.1 Cumulative Effects of Technology Changes

To a great extent, the development of Internet and social media determines what citizens can do with it. A case related to the poisoning of a young woman provides an example. Two decades ago, in order to help solve the Zhu Ling thallium poisoning case, a few people at Tsinghua University in Beijing, posted her symptoms to the Internet via a Usenet newsgroup (The Beijing News, 2013). This was an early form of social media and a hybrid between email and web forums. By making use of little Internet technology and access to it in 1995, netizens' first efforts were made to gain knowledge about her death. At that time, there were only 400 computers in Beijing that were connected with the Internet. However, with a great array of technology now available at present time, there has been renewed interest and a large number of netizens are using all kinds of social media and strategies to seek official responses and re-investigate the unsolved case. It has become a major public opinion issue that involved the initiation of HFSE to identify the suspect's new name, online ID, address, pictures as well as information for other related people to join together with different backgrounds (such as lawyers, doctors, criminal psychology experts) and analyze the case word by word just like doing detection work. Even though Zhu Ling's case remains unsolved, with advanced Internet technology, more netizens get to know and be involved with the case; and recent efforts made by netizens to solve the mystery of her death have expanded greatly (The Beijing News, 2013).

Zhu Ling's case reflects an example of the far more extensive cumulative technological developments of the Internet in the technology and uses of it in time and spaces in China. The following detailed description shows how technology changes influence who can have access to and how they use the Internet. By October 1997, there were only 4,066 registered domain names of CN and 1,500 websites. 620 thousand Internet users were using 299 thousand computers connected to the Internet in several key cities in China (CNNIC, 1997). In 2015, according to a CNNIC statistics report, China had 16.36 million registered domain names of CN, 4.23 million websites and 688 million Internet users getting access to the Internet through innumerable devices including PC, laptop, phones, tablet and TV (CNNIC, 2016). And the Internet penetration rate reached 50.3 percent by the end of 2015, which was 1006 times of that rate in 1997 (0.05%) (CNNIC, 1997; CNNIC, 2016).

Along with the Internet evolution process, structural features of Internet users in terms of who has access to the Internet changed tremendously. First, the Internet popularization trend has gone from urban to rural areas. There were up to 195 million Internet users by the end of 2015 from rural areas. And it is believed that this number will increase consistently in future years (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Second, the sharp initial gender imbalance tends towards equilibrium. In 1997, the Internet was a man's world; up to 87.7 percent of Internet users were male. While by the end of 2015, the gender ratio of Internet users was 53.6 to 46.4 percent (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Third, the age range of Internet users has expanded in two directions: younger and aging. In 1997, the majority of China's Internet users were employed middle age people. The number of teenage (below 15 years old) users was only 1,860, and there were no statistics about people over 60 years old. A decade and a half later, the group of young

user below 20 years old rose up to 165 million; and the number of senior netizens over 60 years old reached 26.8 million (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Fourth, the occupational structure of Internet users has changed from the computer industry and academia-centered professional to people working in all walks of life. Back in 1997, up to 54.7 percent of Internet users were engaging with scientific research, education and computer industry. Few users could afford access to the Internet just for personal entertainment (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Fifth, in the early 1990s, high-level education seemed like a necessary condition for using the Internet. Up to 89 percent of Internet users had college-level education and above in 1998, while the percentage of this group is only 19.6 percent at present. By the end of 2015, the percentage of people with elementary school education and below took up to 13.7 percent (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Sixth, according to the statistics in 1997, 93 percent of Internet users were from middle and high income family. Currently, the Internet has become affordable to ordinary people (CNNIC, 1997-2016).

In addition to the above summarized penetrating trends from urban towards rural area, from male-dominated towards gender balance, from middle age towards all age groups, from professional use to general use, from training needed to easy access, and from unaffordable to affordable for ordinary people, technology development also generated changes on Internet use patterns in China. For instance, more and more people get access to the Internet at home. In 1997, the majority of Internet users (46.7%) could only get access to the Internet in their working places (CNNIC, 1997). By the end of 2015, 90.3 percent of Internet users went online at home (CNNIC, 2016). The percentage of Internet users who went online at Internet bars and computer rooms in the past has dropped considerably as the household Internet access rate

increased. This change not only embeds the Internet into netizens' family life but also promotes the privacy of Internet use. And people spend much more time online right now. According to the report in 1997, up to 53.6 percent of Internet users spent less than five hours online per week; while the weekly average of time spent online in 2015 was 26.2hours (CNNIC, 1997-2016). Last but not the least, with the innovation of smart phones and mobile Internet, more and more people use mobile phones to access the Internet. By the end of December 2015, China had 620 million, accounting for 90.1 percent, mobile Internet users (CNNIC, 2016). This not only provides Internet access for people and areas with limited Internet access and terminal availability such as rural areas, but also greatly promotes Internet use convenience. With the mobile Internet, netizens connect themselves with the online community without time and space restriction. Nowadays, Chinese citizens are living their lives through smartphones, which integrate all kinds of social media and provides a variety of mobile services, including messaging, social networking, mobile wallet, messaging, finance management, hotel, air tickets, shopping, gaming, TV, taxi, and even food delivery (Fowler & Stern, 2015).

However, it's not simply increasing new types of technology available for more people in China. As a matter of fact, netizens have cumulated a tradition and adopted new strategies to exercise influence that has drawn on earlier experience. It also dramatically changes the ability of citizens to adopt new technologies to avoid or overcome the government's censorship. Meanwhile, it increases the ability for the government to engage with citizens outside of direct control efforts.

5.2 The Institutional Structure Reform of China's Railways System

The Ministry of Railways, which was set up in 1949 during the founding of the People's Republic of China, was one of these earliest ministries under the State Council. It was responsible for rail regulation formulation, rail infrastructure construction, as well as rail industry operation. Over decades, it has developed into a gigantic system that runs its own police, courts, schools, hospitals, telecommunications, and construction companies. This "big brother" of government agencies roughly had two million people working for it, according to estimates in 2008 (Zhong, 2008). Its power across the nation enables it to resist calls for its restructuring that have occurred for decades.

People came to realize that fundamental problems were inherent in a railway system in which fatal train accidents happened frequently. It was said that an average of 20 people were killed in train accidents per day in China, according to the statistics from the State Administration of Work Safety (Zhong, 2008). In order to change the situation in which the Ministry of Railways acts as regulator and operator at the same time in the railway industry, the proposal of merging the Ministry of Railways into the Ministry of Transportation and Communication was placed on the agenda of the March 2008 session of the National People's Congress, although it failed to restructure it at that time. However, the train accident that happened in Shandong province on April 29th, 2008, which caused 70 dead and 416 injured, once again drew public attention to the fundamental problems of the railway system. To call for reforming China's railway system, netizens listed the other fatal accident occurred in Shandong within three months, and the train accident in 1988 that led 90 passengers death. This greatly increased people's awareness of the problem (Zhong, 2008).

In addition to these tragedies, the system's failing to provide adequate service for passengers, especially during the Chinese New Year travel seasons, provoked the public's complaints. The Chinese New Year travel season, also called spring migration or Chunyun (春运) in Chinese, has been described as the largest annual human migration in the world (Bristow, 2009). During the 40-day period around the Spring Festival, China's transportation system faces extremely high traffic load challenges. College students are returning home for winter vacations; and migrant workers are heading for home to reunite with their families. For many migrant workers, this is the only time in the year they can go home and see their children who were left with grandparents. Every year during this time, the number of passenger journeys usually surpasses the whole population of China, which hit over 3.7 billion in 2015 (CNN News, 2015). And the train is the main form of transportation used because of its big passenger capacity and affordable price. However, the train tickets are always scarce not only because of ticket scalpers but also because of the shortage of railway resources. Frustrated passengers have to wait in lines for up to a day, or even several days just for a ticket home (Gao, 2012). This situation gets even worse in bad weather, especially as the railway system lack of emergency measures. In 2008, a series of snow storms hit southern and central China from January 25 to February 6, which was during Chunyun period. The heavy snows, ice and low temperature damaged many railway links, which caused about 6 million railway passengers to be left stranded in railway stations for days (Foreman, 2008). Citizens were furious with the railways' slow response and poor management. For years, the railway system's inability to improve conditions for the Chinese New Year travel seasons has disappointed the public and generated intensive grievances.

The public's complaint and voice of reforming it grew in 2011 after the Wenzhou train collision, not only because the number of Internet user increased 215 million from 2008 to 2011, but also because Weibo had developed into a mature social media platform for Chinese netizens. Thus, as previously noted, when the two high-speed trains collided in the suburbs of Wenzhou with 40 passengers killed and more than 200 injured, news of the accident and photos were put on Weibo by citizens more than two hours earlier before reports were carried by mass media.

Afterwards, officials responded to the accident by intending to hastily end the rescue effort after less than a day and ordering the burial of the derailed cars. However, hours after the rescuers were ordered to stop searching for survivors, a 2-year-old girl was found alive in the wreckage. Meanwhile, as usual, the government issued directives to restrict media coverage and hastily announced that the crash was caused by a lightning storm. These highly questionable aftermath handlings stirred an explosion of public outrage and skepticism. Dominant public opinion was reflected in questions and criticism raised online about serious inefficiencies in the rescue operation, lack of transparency is reporting about passenger deaths and injuries, and the adequacy of the initial investigation into the causes of the accident. In the following press conference, Wang Yongping, the spokesman of the Railway Ministry, explained that the burial was in order to facilitate the rescue work. It seemed no journalist believed this reason. Wang then, as noted earlier, added: "whether or not you believe (this explanation), I believe it," and this phrase rapidly became an Internet meme. And the video clip of spokesperson Wang Yongping was spread over Weibo. Millions of Weibo posts blamed the authorities' irresponsibility and called for thorough investigation of the crash's causes. Within the pressure of public criticism,

former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited the crash site soon after and promised an in-depth, full, and public government investigation.

This social media discourse played an important role in the government's undertaking a more extensive investigation into the causes of the crash, especially when the government's initial explanation wasn't consistent with passengers' detailed online description of what happened in the accident. The resulting government report found mismanagement and flaws in equipment design in relation to the collision and contributed to the government's taking a more general look at corruption throughout the management and operation of the railways (Watt, 2013). 54 officials were listed on the investigation report as responsible for the accident. Liu Zhijun, the head of the Ministry of Railway who had been detained on corruption charges before the accident, was removed due to accusations he received extensive bribes to influence the awarding of contracts. Further investigation showed that Liu had collected bribes of more than 64 million yuan (about $10 million) over 25 years (BBC News, 2013a). Online criticism against Liu also pointed out that he had repeated marriages and over 18 mistresses.

Public complaints and criticism against the Ministry of Railways continued after 2011 Wenzhou train collision. In order to avoid long waiting lines at the windows, the Ministry of Railways launched an online booking system, named 12306.cn in early 2012. However, the system was inadequate to handle the ticket purchases surges, and almost collapsed. People's complaint about their difficult and frustrating experience with the online booking system ran high on the Internet. A Sina Weibo user "Yuandian Yinxiang" used screenshots to illustrate vividly how painful it was to book a train ticket after nine hours of trial and error. Some people were even charged for

tickets that would not be issued to them (Gao, 2012). Ironically, beyond complaints, netizens with IT backgrounds tried to help people who needed to order train tickets online by hacking into the online booking system. Different strategies of online train ticket booking came out and circulated among different social media platforms. One of most frequently reposted Weibo said: to whom using the 12306 online booking systems, if page loading slowly occurs, please add "122.228.243.22dynamic.12306.cn" or "61.183.42.94 dynamic.12306.cn" on C:\WINDOWS\system32\drivers\etc\hosts (Xinhua News, 2012a). Meanwhile, angry netizens questioned why an expensive system, which was reported costing 330 million yuan (about $49 million), failed to work properly for the public. A college student from the Northwestern Normal University, Huang Huanting, asked the Ministry of Railways to disclose the bidding process for its costly ticket booking system. This request was backed by thousands of netizens online. The critic, Zhou Xiaoyun, used his Sina Weibo account to ask the Ministry of Railways to disclose bidder names, their project details, quoted prices, reasons to select the bidders and the name of the evaluation committee. Zhou's post was reposted over 27,000 times within two days (Xinhua News, 2012b).

Netizens become sensitive to the Ministry of Railways' financial expenditures, as it generated a series of scandals and corruption cases. When the ministry published its advertising film, with a name of "China Railways", and claimed it costed 18.5 million yuan, netizens doubted it and evaluated the less than five minutes film as needing to cost less than 250 thousand yuan (Sina News, 2012c). Another and long-standing critique of rail service on social media concerned the food, drink, and other services on trains as being very poor (Watt, 2013). All of these things experienced by

netizens accumulated and generated huge pressure on the Ministry of Railways and pushed the door of reforming it. They are independent of one another but related with each other. Although, no single one action could shake the status of the Ministry of Railways, the netizen influence cumulated from one set of protests to another. Thus, the extensive critical online comment about the operation of rail transportation was an important factor in the Central government's 2013 announcement of its major reorganization (Watt, 2013). The Railways Ministry, which had been in control of the most used rail system in the world, was dismantled. The management of the railway services went to a newly created China Railway Corporation and authority to set and enforce technical standards moved to the Transport Ministry. The aggregate significance of extensive negative social media comments on rail management and services, according to Watt (2013), is suggested by the fact that the Railways Ministry had been able to resist government efforts to reform its operations for a decade-and-a-half.

5.3 The Scandal of Red Cross and Charity System Change in China

Another cumulative impact of social media relates to the status of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) and the number and role of non-governmental charity agencies involved in natural disaster responses. A Red Cross agency has existed in China since the early Twentieth Century. In 1949, with the creation of the People's Republic of China, the RCSC became "a pseudo-governmental aid organization" and has been the primary agency recognized by the State and dominant in charity and disaster relief (Sauer, 2013). However, after the RCSC raised several hundred million dollars in donations in 2008, primarily in response to the Great Sichuan earthquake,

"rumors began to spread about graft within the organization" that were fueled by the lack of financial records open to public (Sauer, 2013).

Adding to this, in April 2011, a photo was put online that showed a restaurant bill of $1,500 paid for by a small group of people working for the Red Cross in Shanghai (BBC News, 2011). The pivotal social media event, however, was in June 2011 when an Internet mass incident caused trust in the RCSC to further drop and its ability to raise funds to be seriously affected.

Guo Meimei, an attractive young woman, put several little noticed posts on Weibo showing her enjoying a lavish life with ultra-expensive sport cars, luxury brand handbags and top-of-the-line clothes. She identified herself as the "commercial general manager at the Red Cross" (Wong, 2011). When an Internet user reposted Guo's blogs, there was immediate and massive public outrage and she and the Red Cross became "the most talked-about subjects on the Chinese Internet" (Wong, 2011). Initial online responses included calls for digging up information about Guo and within hours "netizens began a massive human flesh search" (Fauna, 2011c). An array of personal information was soon put online that showed she had, in less than two years, moved from ordinary housing and no evidence of wealth to a large villa and now had luxurious belongings. Both Guo and the Red Cross issued statements denying any connection but that did little to reduce public suspicion and negativity toward the latter.

As Kazar noted in 2013, the RCSC still has not been able to fully regain public confidence. When its Weibo site called for donations to aid people affected by the 2013 Lushan earthquake, many who made donations chose online charity platforms other than RCSC (Low, 2013). Further, online responses to the RCSC contained

"thousands of caustic replies" (People's Daily, 2013a), a flood of "thumbs-down icons" (Kazar, 2013) and a "resounding chorus of…get lost" (Brown-Inz, 2013) (see Figure 5.1). Further, pedestrians generally ignored RCSC's traditional sidewalk collection boxes (Kazar, 2013). Although, based on incomplete data, the China Charity and Donation Center reported several months after the quake that the Red Cross received only about 40 percent of all money raised by charities to aid Lushan victims (China Daily, 2013c).

中国红十字会
Red Cross Society of China
+加关注
发私信 | 推荐给朋友
主页
留言板
地图
雅安地震发生后，总会立即与四川省红十字会取得联系了解灾情。四川省，雅安市红十字会已派出工作组赶赴雅安，省红十字会救援队已集结完毕，做好出发准备。总会工作组正在赶往机场赴灾区考察灾情。
今天 09:59 来自BlackBerry客户端 | 举报
转发(65676) | 收藏 | 评论(6655)
评论(6655) 转发(65676)
评论加强隐私设置选项啦。保护隐私防骚扰，更加hold住。立即查看»
由于用户设置，你无法回复评论。绑定手机后可以更多地参与评论。
全部 | 认证用户 | 关注的人 | 陌生人
银河发呆指南：滚了远 (10秒前)
回复
中雅文化ccy：考察你妹。。。吃吃喝喝逛逛看看考察？？？ //@云碧丹华:滚 //@DoDoAlan:滚 //@罗永浩:滚 //@宁财神:滚 //@周21cbh斌:滚 //@40000km:滚 //@北京厨子:滚 //@孟浩然-在司考:滚 //@孟然:滚 //@司令本:滚 //@电影发狂:滚 //@祝勇w:滚 //@赵小波:滚 (10秒前)
回复
看起来好像一条狗哎：
(10秒前)
回复
梦剧场的清洁工：回复@蔡国境:也可以见得这些老百姓有多无聊，有多不分青红皂白。(10秒前)
回复
陈天鹏Laki：好悲剧啊，骂声一片。这个发微博的人缺少水平啊。(10秒前)
回复
小食神-沉默：滚 滚 滚

The Red Cross's reputation had so deteriorated that, according to Sauer (2013), any rumor about it was being taken as the truth. Then, yet another Guo-related incident negatively affected the RCSC. Early in 2013, Guo, as part of an "online spat" with a boyfriend, posted a photo of herself with hundreds of thousands of dollar worth of chips in a Macau casino. The spat became "a top trending topic on Weibo" for several weeks immediately prior to the Lushan earthquake in April and this timing of Guo's return to public attention was detrimental to the Red Cross (Sauer, 2013). Immediately after the Lushan quake and the poor response to calls for donations, officials from the Red Cross supervision committee, a third-party watchdog group created in 2012, announced there would be a reopening of the probe into the 2011 Guo case (People's Daily, 2013a). Many netizens saw this as an effort to rebuild public trust but three days later the RCSC's general secretary stated online that news reports were inaccurate and there would be no new investigation.

On the day prior to this denial two things happened online that further undermined the Red Cross. A netizen's post quoted Guo as saying that if the Red Cross dared to harm her, she would "immediately expose insider stories of its corruption." On the same day "rumors of a sex tape featuring Guo and a few high-ranking China Red Cross officials started to go viral" online (Offbeat China, 2013). Although there was no verification of either Guo's statement or the existence of the sex tape, one report concluded that most netizens believed the Red Cross reversed its decision in fear that online revelations by Guo would make things worse (Offbeat China, 2013).

Given this history, it is clear that blogging from the bottom-up and the use of HFSE have influenced the structure and governance of the charity sector in China. The Red Cross no longer has a near-monopoly position and the government has become more willing to allow the creation and operation of more charity organizations. The One Foundation, founded by martial artist and actor Jet Li, is the first privately founded foundation to obtain a "public foundation" status from the government that allows public fundraising. It raised 25 million yuan on the first day after the quake and has implemented transparency in its operations "intended to offer a professionalized alternative to organizations such as the Chinese Red Cross" (Brown-Inz, 2013). Some observers have suggested that the significant increase in funds collected by privately-created charities may have received some help from the government. In the past it had only encouraged direct citizen contributions to the Red Cross and several other organizations it controlled. This was the first-time it recommended that the public donate to "social organizations with a background in disaster relief" (Brown-Inz, 2013).

5.4 The Overall Cumulative Effects on the Central Government's Role and Position

Since considering social media as a fast and effective way of communicating as well as interacting with citizens, the government has integrated its own administrative practice and public relations. In 2013 October, the State Council released an announcement of requesting governments at all levels make use of social media, such as Weibo and WeChat, to disseminate information and interact with citizens (G. Li, 2014). Premier Li Keqiang, highlighted the importance of transparency in the era of Weibo, during a speech in the State Council's meeting on clean governance in March,

2013. He warned that delay in disclosure would lead to rumor and speculation, even dissatisfaction and panic among some sections of the public, and leave the government in a passive position (Guo, 2013).

Started in 2009, local governments in China were encouraged to set up verified Weibo accounts. And verified official Weibo accounts in the central government started to appear in 2013. By the end of 2014, the number of governments' verified Weibo accounts reached up to 130,103. Among them, 94,164 (about 72%) belonged to government institutions and 35,939 (about 28%) to individual government officials (POMO, 2015). Governmental Weibo (or microblogging) has become a "new normal" in China (Liu, 2015). Behind these numbers, the role of Chinese government and its overall action pattern related to the Internet and social media changes gradually over time as well. Through adaptive behaviors, it has evolved from initial Internet control and censorship to a far wider range of ways in dealing with the Internet and social media, which is also a reflection of cumulative effects.

There are a variety of dimensions in the governments' adaptive behavior. First, the most visible efforts made by the central government are changes in the language style and the new image construction through social media. The fact that social media is influencing the style of language people use in ways that make the "official talk" of State agencies increasingly ineffective is being recognized. A 2011 article in the People's Daily underscored the importance of the "language environment of the grassroots" and went on to advise Communist Party and State officials that "only by abandoning bureaucratic or empty talk can one's microblog message resonate with the public" (Bristow, 2011). The government takes advantage of the popular and vivid online language in both online Weibo and Wechat communication and offline talk and

conversations. In response to a question on the anti-corruption campaign, Lv Xinhua, a spokesman of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said that the governments and people's attitudes towards the anti-corruption issue is consistent, "we are all very capricious." (The Chinese original expression is Renxing, many news articles used the word "headstrong" instead of "capricious.") His expression surprised the interpreter, who had to confirm the meaning with Lv before translating it into "capricious", which made everyone in the press conference room laugh (Zhang, 2015). "Renxing" is a popular Internet buzzword to describe someone's strong desire for something no matter whatever the difficulty or cost. Another example is "the song of 13.5", through which the central government makes use of psychedelic and Internet language to promote political affairs, in relation to China's Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (NPR News, 2015). This turns "the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" into a buzz term immediately among cyber communities in both domestic and overseas, which didn't happen in any of these previous twelve plans and would never happen if the government did not adapt a social media culture orientation. President Xi Jinping also uses popular expressions and Internet memes, such as "thumbs up for Chinese people", in his 2015 New Year speech. His speech became unprecedentedly popular and yielded thousands of positive feedbacks (thumbs up) from netizens (Li, 2015). The shift of language style from perplexing and political to understandable and interesting helps in building the government's image as responsive and citizen-friendly leadership.

Furthermore, President Xi's nickname given by Chinese netizens, "Xi Dada", which means "Big Xi" or "Uncle Xi" in Shannxi dialect, has been utilized successfully to create and boost a favorable social media image of Xi Jinping. It is the image of a

citizen-friendly leader rather than the stereotype image of a stern political Chinese leader. This nickname first appeared in a Sina Weibo account titled “Xuexifensituan” (or “Leaning from Xi fan club”), who claimed himself as a big fan of Xi Jinping. Surprisingly, this Weibo has not been blocked by censors. In contrast, this Weibo immediately caught netizens’ attention and its number of followers reached up to 2,826,948 on July 9th, 2015. When netizens asked the blogger the same question “who are you” on his page, he or she has denied netizens’ guess and claimed to be ordinary office worker, but not a government official (China Daily, 2013d).

“Xi Dada” became one of the hottest Chinese buzzword of 2014 (CCTV, 2014). There are cartoons, photoshopped pictures, songs and videos of “Xi Dada” that have gone viral in cyberspace. It becomes a common term used by both media outlets and ordinary citizens. In China, everyone on the street knows who “Xi Dada” is. Comments from *New York Times* said it portrays a leader “far more familial and down-to-earth than his recent predecessors” (Ramzy, 2014). And President Xi showed positive acknowledgement when a teacher called him “Xi Dada” on the national teacher symposium in 2014 (Ding & Feng, 2015).

Another evolving dimension comes out of the pattern of using social media during conflicts. The central government has overtime increasingly pressured the local governments to make more information available through the Internet or social media. In Kunming, Yunnan Province in 2009, for example, thousands of shop owners in a wholesale market area went to the streets to protest what they viewed as unsatisfactory government compensation for them when it demolished their market place for redevelopment. They blocked traffic and had battles with the police. Initially, the government and official media provided no credible information about the protests. As

the conflict grew, however, the Yunnan Government started its own Weibo account and began to provide accurate reports of events. The results were looked upon as a positive step for the government in dealing with crisis management through social media (Y. Liu, 2012).

Announcing government concessions online to citizens engaged in protests has also come into use. During street and online protests in Shifang, the government used Sina Weibo to make an official announcement that it was cancelling plans for the plant to be constructed (Goldman, 2012). Similarly, in response to demonstrations against the waste discharge plant in the city of Qidong, local officials used their website to tell citizens that it had abandoned plans for the facility (Perlez, 2012).

These and other environmentally related mass protests led national environmental minister, Zhou Shengxian, to comment that the growing local protests and their extensive discussion on Sina Weibo, tend to happen because of "governments' mistakes that involve projects that start without official approval, without proper environmental impact assessments and without an assessment of community sentiment...." (Bradsher, 2012b) Relatedly, in 2012, the Central Government's State Council ordered relevant government agencies' to "make public all environmental impact assessments by posting them on the Internet, with a description of what the government planned to do about the assessments." (Bradsher, 2012b) Such directives, however, have far from eliminated environmentally related protests. As noted in Chapter 4, several major online and offline conflicts occurred in 2012 and 2014 in Shifang, Qidong, and Maoming city over city approved but environmentally harmful factories.

Another example happened in 2013, the government of Jiangmen City in Guangdong Province announced approval of building a uranium processing plant without notifying local residents (Jacobs, 2013b). Soon, citizens then staged a protest against the plant that was made known on social media "despite government efforts to censor the discussion on Sina Weibo" (Mullany, 2013). One day after hundreds of people marched in protest, the Jiangmen City web site carried news that the project had been canceled. Therefore, local residents cancelled the second "walk" that had been planned (Mullany, 2013).

Those examples illustrate the fact that social media is playing an increasing important role in the government's public relations crisis management. The speed of Internet-sent messages and the virtual guarantee that citizen protesters will be reached by this means has resulted in a growing government strategy of using social media during conflicts (Young, 2013).

Furthermore, this also increases the central government's control over local government indirectly by encouraging Internet and social media use in relation to local government. As Young (2013) notes, Chinese leaders have discovered that "social media can be an effective tool in gauging public opinion on everything from broader national topics…down to very local issues." Young continues, "Such feedback was difficult to get in the past due to interference by local officials, who tried to filter out or downplay anything with negative overtones and play things up to their own advantage." Hassid (2012a, p. 226) makes a similar point, explaining that the Internet is "one of the few tools Beijing can rely upon" to obtain the information and commentary from the periphery needed to monitor and try to control "otherwise unaccountable local officials…."

For instance, before the 2011 Wukan's protest in Guangdong that local official sold Wukan villagers' land to real estate developers without compensating the villagers properly, villagers were angry about the local official's corrupt action for years but chose to complain privately and be silent in the public (Patience, 2011). At this time, the central government had no idea about what happened in Wukan village. The decision of protest came from villagers' QQ group discussion, which connected both residents living in the village and residents working out of village. The anonymous and relative private villagers' discussion on a social media platform facilitated their protest and made it known nationwide. Therefore, from the central government's perspective, it helped in revealing local official's misuse of power and strengthening of central control.

In a more recent case that citizens' influence was allowed through social media by the government occurred in 2015. A 31-year-old mother was killed by a mall escalator in Hubei providence, and a "man-eating escalator" post was widely spread among social media platforms. Netizens' comments on this post were allowed in censored information flows. And netizens' questioning and calls for investigating whether leaders in business and local government adequately maintained operation and control of the escalator were tolerated by the regulated social media (Hernandez, 2015).

Third, another dimension lays in governments' increasing efforts in obtain citizens' views and participation through Internet or social media in policy making processes. During the 2013 National People's Congress (NPC), 2987 delegates from across the country gathered together in Beijing to make decisions about public policy and central leadership. A number of the delegates were active on the Internet. Most

made use of Weibo to communicate policy proposals they favored, interact with the netizens, and ask for public opinions (People's Daily, 2013b).

Beyond the delegates' individual online presence, a number of Weibo platforms were set up by the Central government to provide the public with multiple channels to ask questions and contribute their suggestions. Examples are, "NPC (National People's Congress) & CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) Micro Scene" in Xinhua Weibo, "NPC & CPPCC Press Conference" in Tencent Weibo, and "Focusing on NPC & CPPCC, Micro-NPC & CPPCC" and "Weibo Questioning" in Sina Weibo. In turn, in March 2013, after the NPC & CPPCC 2013 Annual Sessions, a Weibo account, "State Council Bulletin," was created on Tencent Weibo for the highest level National government agency, the State Council. This was considered a milestone in China's governmental micro-blogging (Xinhua News, 2013c).

In normal times, the governments also try to consulate the public in policy-making through the Internet. For instance, from June 16 to 25 in 2015, the public was invited to help with reviewing and commenting on 54 policies and regulations in a variety of areas related with citizen's daily life. The government said that the State Council needed citizens' comments on these policies in order to better update them (Wang, 2015).

In addition to policy making, the large number of corrupt official exposed online has both been facilitated by the Central government's tolerance of such citizen initiatives and, in turn, influenced the Central government's anti-corruption campaign. In 2009, CPC Central Party School Press included the word "network anti-corruption" into *the Dictionary of CPC Party Construction* marked the authorities' fully

recognition towards the new anti-corruption pattern (He, 2014). Other evidence in the anti-corruption campaign was initiated during the latter part of Xi Jinagping's leadership and is being continued. A report in the Xinhua Press in December 2012 concluded that online anti-corruption campaigns have "forced China's disciplinary authorities to combat corruption in a more proactive way." (Xinhua News, 2012c) Furthermore, the central government set up websites or social media platforms to promote citizens' participation in the anti-corruption campaign. During Xi's anti-corruption campaign, The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), which is the party's anti-corruption institution, not only opened a website page for the public to report corruption (Xinhua News, 2013d) but also launched a mobile application "e-touch" for the public to install on their smartphones and report corruption around them through uploading texts, pictures, and videos (Hewitt, 2015). And this app was greatly welcomed by Chinese citizens. CCDI received up to 1,033 cases on the first day of the new app, and subsequently around 250 to 300 in an average day (Global Times, 2015). As the comments from a Pengpai editorial article entitled "Making Good Use of ICTs in Anti-corruption" says: "the Internet is changing the vast country's governing patterns; 'e-touch' (by CCDI) is the latest example." (Pengpai, 2015)

Thus, the central government is now engaged in both increased efforts to control and creating opportunities for citizens' influence and participation, instead of simply trying to prevent or manipulate citizens' use of the Internet. On one hand, they are fostering citizen use in the relation to local government, although they are trying to crack down on citizens' use in relation to central sensitive policies; on another hand, they are monitoring citizens' online behavior, although they are directly seeking or

creating websites opportunities for citizens. It's very important to understand the government's evolving role overtime of the cumulative effects and realize the importance of identifying and understanding how they influence the roles and interactions of both the government and netizens.

Based on discussion from Chapter 1 to Chapter 5, the following chapter will conclude this study by summing findings and contributions and suggesting future research directions.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Importance of Reconceptualization

The mainstream academic attention looking at citizen's Internet use of social media in China tends to do so through the perspective of a Western "fixation" which deals with regime change of an authoritarian government, often in the context of the Middle Eastern countries were regime overthrow involved social media facilitated citizen movements. Consequently, the perspective of this research was to reconceptualize the study of governance in China so that it is possible to examine the actual citizen bottom-up influence through social media. It not only refocuses a skewed Western-oriented research frame but also fills a knowledge gap in identifying and understanding the human and technical social media infrastructures that exists and netizens use of them in China from the bottom-up.

Thus, it's crucial, as this study does, to look outside of a Western-centric view and reconceptualize and expand the concept of governance to include the ability of ordinary citizens, netizens, to use social media to exercise influence from below in the socio-culture, economic and formal government sectors, and which does not involve regime overthrow efforts. The definition and description of the Social Media Infrastructure and of the citizen and technological dimensions of it are important to this framework. The same is true of the finding of the research that citizen influence exerted in unrelated cases over time in the various sectors can, without specific intent, have cumulative effects. Further, there is clear evidence that citizens have had the

ability of devising ways to get around many of the efforts by government to control their use of social media and, at times, are successful. Finally, the rapid and extensive changes in Internet and social media technology have and continue to produce new options for citizens to exercise influence in the governance process and for government policies to seek to exercise social media control.

The conceptual framework created for this study has made two major contributions to the literature. The first is to provide a more accurate description and understanding of the ways in which social media in China has been used by citizens from the bottom up to significantly increase their ability to exercise influence in multiple sectors of the society, not just in relation to the formal government. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the reconceptualized theoretical and research framework used to analyze citizen use of social media in China can be applied to broaden the analysis and accuracy of the extent to which social media use by ordinary citizens from the bottom up can be increased or not within multiple sectors of any nation, not just in relation to the formal government sector or to China.

6.1.1 The Concept of Social Media Infrastructure

This reconceptualization focuses on and identifies the variety of and nature and effects of social media use from two dimensions, citizen-related and technology-related. They are produced by citizen actions and by effects of the technology itself, respectively.

In the dimension of the citizen related social media infrastructure, a set of five social media infrastructure elements have been constructed and examined. These include (1) Code Language, which is created and used by netizens to by-pass the censors' filter of sensitive words and developed into a systematic cyber language with

coded meaning to netizens only; (2) Human Flesh Search Engine that allows citizens to spontaneously do "detective" work collectively on the Internet; (3) Surrounding Gaze, which generates massive online public opinion very quickly on a specific issue; (4) Citizen Anti-control Strategies, including the range of citizens' actions and responses to fight the government's control efforts over Internet use; and (5) Cumulative Effects of Specific Events over Time, which looks at how a set of individual netizen-generated initiatives can over-time influence specific policy or social issues in a dynamic way.

Furthermore, three social media infrastructure elements in the technology-related dimension have been summarized, including (1) Time-Space Effects, which greatly reduces or even clears time-space barriers for citizen communication and action; (2) Cybersphere and Terrestrial Linkages that enable online-offline interaction; and (3) Technological Changes, which shape citizens' social media use behaviors and government' Internet policy reciprocally.

6.2 Findings from Case Studies

As noted, from a governance perspective, the Chinese experience does not fit with the general literature on social media and authoritarian regimes and also, in many ways, is unique. First, the central government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have general legitimacy with the population and there have been no social media initiatives to overthrow it. In a study seeking to measure the state legitimacy of 72 national regimes from the global viewpoint, China was ranked 13th highest, ahead of western democracies such as the UK, Switzerland, Ireland, Australia and France, as well as Japan (Gilley, 2006).

Meanwhile, the regime keeps reforming itself to adapt to the changing environment from different aspects. Ideology adaptation, institutional innovations and reform, liberalism strategies, and social justice improvement are all involved in these efforts made by the CCP to reinforce its legitimacy (Gilley & Holbig, 2009). All of above have effectively prevented social unrest or revolution calling for a new form of government in China.

China is the most populous nation in the world and also is a leading global economy and military power in the international community. It is well acknowledged that China's powerful economy is one of the important sources of regime and party legitimacy. According to recent data for the world economy released by the International Monetary Fund, China produced 17.6 trillion dollars goods and services in 2014, compared with $17.4 trillion for the United States, and became the world's largest economy (IMF, 2014).

In terms of military might, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the largest army in the world, which has about 2.3 million active forces. In recent years, massive military spending has been invested in high-tech and advanced weapons, which greatly increased China's real military strength. In 2015, the government announced raising the defense budget by 12.2 percent to 131.57 billion dollars (Martina & Torode, 2014).

Of particular importance for this study, China is a globally leading country in the development of Internet and social media technology and in the number of citizens who have access to and are using them. In 2014, the number of netizen in China (about 642 million) accounted for over one fifth of the number of Internet user in the

world (2,925 million). And China has more users than the sum of United States, India, and Japan (ILS, 2015).

The popularization of social media use has greatly changed the interaction patterns between citizens and citizens, between citizens and private actors, and between citizens and governments. These changes and characteristics of these new interaction patterns have been presented through case studies in this research. This has provided detailed analysis about how citizens make use of social media infrastructures to enhance their influence in the socio-culture, economic and formal government dimensions.

Citizens-to-Citizens

In the socio-culture dimension, citizens-to-citizens social media activities has been explored. First, the cases including tracing a kitten killer, the husband having an affair and the boy who defaced an Egyptian artifact, have shown how netizens react against what is viewed as immoral behavior, mainly through making use of the social media infrastructure of Human Research Search Engine and the Surrounding Gaze. Second, citizens employ social media platforms to provide or share information that is important to their lives, such as information regarding food safety and air quality as well as reliable and real time information during natural disasters or emergencies including 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, 2010 Yushu earthquake, 2011 Wenzhou high-speed train collision, and 2012 Beijing flooding. Third, two cases of social-media driven campaigns, “Free Lunch for Children” and “Taking Pictures to Rescuing Missing Children” have illustrated how citizens spontaneously and effectively make use of both human-related and technology-related Social Media Infrastructures to provide social good by raising awareness, generating funding, organizing actions and

helping social vulnerable groups. Most cases occur in areas where social mechanisms are imperfect, public information is limited, or the government provides inadequate service or response.

Citizens-to-Private Actors

In the economic dimension, the phenomenon of adopting social media use in e-commerce has significantly changed market behaviors as well as the relationship between citizens and the private sector.

On one hand, consumers' self-protection ability has been greatly enhanced after being equipped with social media. More and more consumer activities mobilized through social media help to bring consumer complaint online and organize actions to fight for consumers' rights and interests. Consumer Protests being discussed in this section include the Zhengzhou "poison" hot pot case that happened in 2008, nationwide protests fighting with the dog-meat eating business over time, and the scandal of fake importing Da Vinci Furniture in 2011. In addition, social media and the Internet have been used in a series of consumer boycotts induced by nationalism or cultural protectionism in China, such as the boycotts against Carrefour and other French goods because of Chinese citizens' nationalist sentiment was offended by the disruption of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay in Paris, Chinese boycott against the Starbucks coffee shop in Beijing's Forbidden City palace, and the historical boycotts against Japanese products whenever anti-Japan sentiment is ignited in China.

On the other hand, this study shows that social media strategies are widely used by workers to fight for their rights and interests in bottom-up labor activities. Among cases such as strikes at various Honda factories in Guangdong province, a string of employee suicides and protests at different Foxconn factories, and

demonstration at the Yue Yuen shoe factory in Dongguan City. Migrant workers made use of social media such as QQ and Wechat through their smart phones to communicate and organize their movements. It brings thousands of migrant workers together and empowers their negotiation with employers over wage and other benefits. In addition to the labor movement, individual workers such as coal miner, Zhong Guangwei, who was suffering from pneumoconiosis disease, and Jiang Dabao, who lost his right hand when working with a molding machine, have successfully used social media as a useful tool in fighting with the business owners for their deserved compensation.

Citizens-to-Governments

A variety of social media activities indicate that citizens' influence in the governmental dimension has been greatly enhanced with the social media facilitated interaction at both central and local government levels, but not related to any regime change efforts. First, in the similar cases of "my dad is Li Gang!" and "who dares call 110?", citizens used social media as an effective means to expose and fight with police officials' cover-up towards traffic offenders because of family connections. Then, based on the analysis and assessment of 39 anti-corruption cases including the "watch brother" Yang Dacai case, "Uncle House" Cai Bin case, Lei Zhengfu's sexual scandal and so forth, a predictable pattern of grassroots-initiated anti-corruption has been successfully carried out. It usually starts with netizens disclosure, and comes up with further details from the Human Flesh Searching, and then Surrounding Gaze and netizens' other activities. These working together with netizens' continuing to follow up bring the case at the forefront of public opinion, and force the authorities to intervene and impose legal or administrative punishment.

Besides, both online and offline citizens' protests against governments' irresponsible actions enabled by social media have effectively held the government accountable, including "Duo Maomao" case, which the official falsely explained the death of an arrested suspect due to playing hide-and-seek, but police brutality in fact. The 2008 Weng'an riot occurred because local police harbored a criminal having familial ties and sought to cover up his murdering a teenage girl. Another case involved protests against a local Civil Affairs Bureau's refusal to accept small donations. Further, making public the government's irresponsible rescue operation caused an investigation in Wenzhou high-speed train collision. A picture of the result of the forced abortion in 2012 contributed to the more recent change in the One Child Policy. Moreover, among the Shifang protest, the Qidong protest, and the Maoming protest, citizens were able to successfully stop local governments from approving environmentally undesirable industries.

Finally, the cat-and-mouse relationship is another significant perspective in the dimension of citizen and government interaction. A continuing conflict between the government's censorship and netizens' anti-control strategies on social media platforms has been identified in this study. It shows that netizens have the ability to devise innovative strategies to overcome some of the governments' efforts to stop citizen use of social media to influence government policies. And even with President Xi's recent strict policies of stopping citizen influence in relation to government policies, netizens still are able to exercise some influence from the bottom-up.

Therefore, the experience of governance and citizen's Internet use of social media in China doesn't fit the Western-centric perspective in the general literature. Citizens' extensive social media use in China is mainly in regard to social morality,

social good and social justice in social-cultural dimension, and citizens' rights and interests protection as consumers or workers in economic dimension; even in formal governmental dimension, citizens' concern about the transparency and accountability in governance and better decisions in governments' action and policy making are highlighted, instead of political democratization or democratic movements causing regime upheaval. However, on the contrary, some of citizens' social media campaigns, such as civil online anti-corruption initiatives and callings for change and reform in imperfect policy areas, have made a positive contribution to the government legitimacy objectively.

6.2.1 Cumulative Effects

A particularly important part of this study has paid attention to and explored the complexity of cumulative effects from technological and spatial aspects of social media and netizens' involvement in relevant cases over time. For example, citizens started to realize and discuss the fundamental problems of the Ministry of Railways online several decades ago when frequent fatal accidents happened. And the public's complaints continued as the system failed to provide adequate service, especially during Chinese New Year travel season. Criticism against it and Social Media voices for reforming it grew in 2011 after Wenzhou train collision, and reached to climax after online disclosure of several corrupt operations related to it in following years. The overall cumulative effect has eventually led to the dismantlement of the Ministry of Railways in 2013. Similarly, since apparent corruption within the Red Cross Society of China was revealed in "Guo Meimei" Social Media event, the Red Cross's reputation started to deteriorate and largely lost the public's trust after a series of further questions about it were raised online. Citizens chose to donate through online

charity platforms instead of the Red Cross for the Lushan earthquake that happened in 2013, which marked the collapse of its dominate status and fundamental shift within China's charity system.

At the same time, the overall cumulative effects on the central government's role and position have been analyzed and evaluated, which indicates that it has adapted behaviors and action patterns that have evolved from Internet censorship only to a wide range of service-to-self strategies in response to the development of the Internet and social media. For instance, changing the language style and leadership image have been strategies adopted in order to cater to the fashion of social media era, fostering reduced conflicts at local levels through social media platforms, utilizing social media to promote citizen participation in policy decision making and anti-corruption campaigns, and providing more online information that citizens demand, in such as areas about air pollution, environmental related industry projects, and the government's financial statements.

6.3 Future Research

A significant contribution of this research is providing a variety of empirical evidence for the study of citizen influence and social media use in China, which not only support the utility of the conceptual framework constructed in the beginning of this research but also in its valuable for future studies in this area. It has brought together a variety of available empirical data on Internet and social media use in China, including empirical research results from literature, statistical data from China's administrative agency CNNIC, data from mass media achieves and other data released by governments.

Although this study has provided detailed observation on citizens' bottom-up influence from different social dimensions, citizen influence that results from the use of social media in China has many features that have not been adequately examined. Further, the study makes clear that the conceptual framework created for the study of Chinese citizens' use of social media can and should be used for such research in other countries as well.

As one of the first studies of social media in China with focus on bottom-up citizen influence, more extensive and detailed research is needed to improve our understanding of the complexity of the constantly changing situation. Further rethinking is needed about the conceptual framework on social media research in China to break through the prior pattern of research within this area. It is very important to look at the social media infrastructure dimensions, pointed out in this study, from the bottom-up. More empirical research can be undertaken on the dynamics of how citizens' influence is generated from their social media behaviors. It will be useful for further research in collecting first-hand data through surveying or interviewing Chinese netizens, to see how they make use of social media to exercise influence and what other patterns exist in Chinese netizens' social media behavior. This kind of research can provide additional data to support or modify conclusions drawn in this study, and improve our understanding of citizens' social media use.

Further, the government authorities' attitudes and policies towards the Internet and social media are continuingly changing along with the development of technologies, and netizens' Internet and social media use behaviors. Thus, research on Chinese government's Internet policy and media environment adaption will need more

attention in further research. The concept of cumulative effect proposed in this study will be a needed dimension for further exploration.

Perhaps even more important, it would be desirable to conduct more research about bottom-up use of social media in comparative perspectives using the reconceptualized framework of this study. For example, similarities exist in the ways that citizens are able to use social media in the United States and China to oppose illegal and inappropriate government actions. When a grand jury decided not to charge the white officers who killed an unarmed black citizen in Ferguson, Missouri as well as in New York City in 2014, citizens mobilized their protests both online and on streets. They filmed police brutality and circulated the videos online. A video of a white undercover officer pulling a gun and threatening protesters during a protest to end racist policing and police brutality in Oakland, California was such an example (Rosenfeld, 2014). Meanwhile, citizen initiatives such as the Peaceful Streets Project and innovations such as the ACLU's Mobile Justice App (Tashea, 2015) were launched online by American citizens to film and provide evidence of police brutality. In addition, netizens in both countries make use of social media to "punish" individuals who are judged, by netizens, to have conducted immoral behaviors. After Dr. Walter Palmer was identified as the killer of the lion Cecil, netizens made use of the Human Search Engine to find more information about his family and business and shared it through social media (Capecchi & Rogers, 2015). This is quite similar to the kitten killer case mentioned in Chapter two. And both killers' reputation was seriously damaged by netizens' outrage.

At the same time, the reconceptualized framework would direct research to the governmental efforts in the United States to control citizens' use of social media in

relation to policy issues. For example, there are a number of examples of local police seeking to prevent citizens and media reporters from making video records of questionable police actions that could be put on social median and the national government tightening control of citizen access to government documents that could be made public on the Internet. Further, the influence, control and use related to social media of the corporate sector is far different from China. The same is true of criminal hacking in the commercial sector in the United States than in China.

A variety of relevant examples also exist in other nations. For instance, when terrorist attacks happened in Paris in November, 2015, netizens utilized the Safety Check tool on Facebook to locate loved ones and provide updated information and initiated an “Open Door” campaign to help those in Paris who needed shelter (Goel & Ember, 2015). The way French netizens made use of social media in the crisis is very much like the way Chinese netizens used social media during earthquakes and the Beijing flood. Thus, the application of research using the broader governance and netizen bottom-up perspective not only lies in citizen influence and social media use in China, but also in other countries and the global community.

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Appendix A

INTERNET USE EXPANSION AND STRUCTURE CHANGE IN CHINA

Table A.
Internet Use Expansion and Structure Change in China

Year	Device	Domain names	Websites	Internet user	Urban-rural structure		Gender Structure		Weekly hours	Penetration rate	Urban -pene rate	Rural-pene rate	Mobile user	Use at Home	Dominant -occup
					Urban	Rural	Male	Female							
199710	0.299m	4,066	1,500	0.62m	x	x	87.70 %	12.30%	x	0.05%*	x	x	x	25.30 %	Compt science 15%
199812	0.747m	18,396	5,300	2.1m	x	x	86.00 %	14.00%	x	0.17%*	x	x	x	44.00 %	Compt science 17.4%
199912	3.50m	48,695	15,153	8.9m	x	x	79.00 %	21.00%	17h	0.7%*	x	x	x	50.00 %	Student 21%
200012	8.92m	122,099	265,405	22.5m	x	x	69.56 %	30.44%	13.7h	1.7%*	x	x	x	60.27 %	pros & techs 24.84%
200112	12.54m	127,319	277,100	33.7m	x	x	60.00 %	40.00%	8.5h	2.6%*	x	x	x	61.30 %	Student 24.1%
200212	20.83m	179,544	371,600	59.1m	x	x	59.30 %	40.70%	9.8h	4.60%	x	x	x	62.60 %	Student 28%
200312	30.89m	340,040	595,550	79.5m	x	x	60.40 %	39.60%	13.4h	6.20%	x	x	x	66.10 %	Student 29.2%
200412	41.60m	432,077	668,900	94m	x	x	60.60 %	39.40%	13.2h	7.20%	x	x	x	67.90 %	Student 32.4%

Table A.
Internet Use Expansion and Structure Change in China

Year	Device	Domain names	Websites	Internet user	Urban-rural structure		Gender Structure		Weekly hours	Penetration rate	Urban-pene rate	Rural-pene rate	Mobile user	Use at Home	Dominant-occup
					Urban	Rural	Male	Female							
200512	49.50m	1,096,924	694,200	111m	x	x	58.70%	41.30%	15.9h	8.50%	16.9%*	2.6%*	x	70.50%	Student 35.1%
200612	59.40m	4,109,020	843,000	137m	83.10%	17.90%	58.30%	41.70%	16.9h	10.50%	20.2%*	3.1%*	12.40%	76.00%	Student 32.3%
200712	PC,laptop, phone	11,930,000	1,500,000	210m	75.00%	25.00%	57.20%	42.80%	16.2h	16.00%	27.3%*	7.1%*	24.00%	67.30%	Student 28.8%
200812	PC,laptop, phone,PDA	16,826,198	2,878,000	298m	71.60%	28.40%	52.50%	47.50%	16.6h	22.60%	35.9%*	11.6%*	39.50%	78.40%	Student 33.2%
200912	PC, phone, laptop, other	16,818,401(without IPv4)	3,230,000	384m	72.20%	27.80%	54.20%	45.80%	18.7h	28.90%	45.7%*	14.8%*	60.80%	83.20%	Student 28.8%
201012	PC, phone, laptop	8,656,525 (without IPv4)	1,908,122	457.3m	72.70%	27.30%	55.80%	44.20%	18.3h	34.30%	53.4%*	17.5%*	66.20%	89.20%	Student 30.6%
201112	PC, phone, laptop	7,748,459 (without IPv4 & IPv6)	2,295,562	513.1m	73.50%	26.50%	55.90%	44.10%	18.7h	38.30%	56.7%*	20.2%*	69.30%	88.80%	student 30.2%
201212	PC, phone, laptop	13,412,079 (without IPv4 &	2,680,702	564m	72.40%	27.60%	55.80%	44.20%	20.5h	42.10%	59.1%*	23.7%*	74.50%	91.70%	student 25.1%

Table A.
Internet Use Expansion and Structure Change in China

Year	Device	Domain names	Websites	Internet user	Urban-rural structure		Gender Structure		Weekly hours	Penetration rate	Urban-pene rate	Rural-pene rate	Mobile user	Use at Home	Dominant-occup
					Urban	Rural	Male	Female							
		IPv6)													
201312	PC, phone, laptop, tablet	18,440,611(without IPv4 & IPv6)	3,201,625	618m	71.40%	28.60%	56.00%	44.00%	25h	45.80%	60.31%*	28.11%*	81.00%	89.80%	student 25.5%
201412	PC, phone, laptop, tablet, TV	20,600,526(without IPv4 & IPv6)	3,348,926	649m	72.50%	27.50%	56.40%	43.60%	26.1h	47.90%	62.87%*	28.77%*	85.80%	90.70%	student 23.8%, freelancer 22.3%
201512	PC, phone, laptop, tablet, TV	31,020,514(without IPv4 & IPv6)	4,229,293	688m	71.60%	28.40%	53.60%	46.40%	26.2h	50.30%	x	x	90.10%	90.30%	student 25.2%, freelancer 22.1%

Note 1: data was organized from the 1st to 37th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China by CNNIC from 1997 to 2016 January.

Note 2: * there is no existing result in CNNIC reports. These are calculation results based on census statistics from National Bureau of Statistics of China and CNNIC.

x No information available

Appendix B

SOCIAL MEDIA USE DISTRIBUTION AND TREND IN CHINA

Table B.
Social Media Use Distribution and Trend in China
Unit: million people

	BBS	IM	SNS	Blog	Microblog
2004	19	1	0	0	0
2005	46	46	0	15	0
2006	50	47	0	34	0
2007	0	171	0	49	0
2008	91	224	58	105	0
2009	117	272	175	221	0
2010	148	352	235	294	63
2011	144	415	244	318	249
2012	149	467	275	372	308
2013	120	532	277	436	280

Note 1: data was organized from the 15th to 33rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China by CNNIC from 2005 January to 2014 January.

Note 2: BBS: bulletin board system; IM: instant messaging; SNS: social networking service

Note 3: 0 means no related data available. It Could be the social media platform not exist yet or exist but without statistics available.