



***Between participation and paternalism:
A study of Sina Weibo and disruptive innovation in disaster
response in China***

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- China is one of the countries that have experienced the most disasters

Report of UNISDR in 2018

Top 10 Countries by Number of People Affected (2018)

	Country	Total Number of People Affected
1.	India	23,900,348
2.	Philippines	6,490,216
3.	China	6,415,024
4.	Nigeria	3,938,204
5.	Guatemala	3,291,359
6.	Kenya	3,211,188
7.	Afghanistan	2,206,750
8.	USA	1,762,103
9.	Japan	1,599,497
10.	Madagascar	1,472,190

Source: EM-DAT (International Disaster Database)

- Types of Disasters in China:

Earthquakes, Floods, Typhoons and Storms, Wildfire





Different Social Media Use Environment

- In 2009, Twitter and Facebook is blocked and Sina Weibo is created by Sina Company, its format is similar to Twitter.
- Over 600 million registered users, Monthly active users (MAU) is 462 million, while the total population of mainland China released by the Chinese government is 1.39 billion (Sina, 2019). Twitter MAU Worldwide: 330 million (Zephoria, 2019)
- Weibo users' practices under a state-controlled system is significant different from the western countries.
- The new media censorship and moderation activities in China: Remove posts, delete topics, and lock user accounts...
- The public can engage in debates online, the topics they can discuss and the opinions they can express are severely restricted but not totally banned due to the government has to maintain the stability of public online communication mood.



This study focuses on the question:

What is the innovated role of Sina Weibo for different stakeholders in negotiating on how to respond to natural disasters in China under paternalism?

This study takes data mining and qualitative interviews to discuss the innovated role of Sina Weibo in Chinese disaster communications under paternalism:

- *the innovated role of Sina Weibo platform,*
- *the cooperation and collective work of different disaster stakeholders,*
- *the public specific practice on Sina Weibo platform.*

- ***Public's trust*** is an information challenge on Weibo platform in natural disasters.
- ***Contestation of facts and responsibilities***: When the descriptions of natural disasters and responsibilities from Chinese government and state media are different from the online fact providers, **time, time-space compression, liability and scales of risk responsibility** emerge as critical points of friction.
- The divergent constructions online of facts could be a resource for better collective risk governance to understand the importance of collective disaster response on social media platform which is an aspect of the disruptive innovation in disaster response study.

From this study:

- This study will help both Europe and China in understanding the disruptive innovation of public engagement through social media in disaster risk management :

As Europe struggles with how to regulate social media, it might be possible to learn from China, such as techniques for monitoring and analysing messages and build the awareness of censorship in some certain speech which may impact on disaster response.

As China struggles to find ways of engaging communities in disaster risk governance, it might be possible to learn lessons from Europe, such as practices of managing free speech and dialogic approaches to disaster management.



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