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# Baidu, Weibo and Renren: the global political economy of social media in China

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## Abstract

The task of this work is to conduct a global political-economic analysis of China's major social media platforms in the context of transformations of the Chinese economy. It analyses Chinese social media's commodity and capital form. It compares the political economy of Baidu (search engine), Weibo (microblog) and Renren (social networking site) to the political economy of the US platforms Google (search engine), Twitter (microblog) and Facebook (social networking site) in order to analyse differences and commonalities. The comparative analysis focuses on aspects such as profits, the role of advertising, the boards of directors, shareholders, financial market values, terms of use and usage policies. The analysis is framed by the question to which extent China has a capitalist or socialist economy.

Keywords: [social media](#) [China](#) [capitalism](#) [Weibo](#) [Baidu](#) [political economy of communication](#)

[Previous article](#)

[View issue table of contents](#)

[Next article](#)

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes on contributor

Christian Fuchs is a professor of media studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, and the Centre for Social Media Studies (CSMS) at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He is also a senior research fellow at the Centre for Social Media Studies (CSMS) at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He is the author of <http://fuchs.cymc.at/> and the Centre for Social Media Studies (CSMS) at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He is also the author of <http://fuchs.cymc.at/> and the Centre for Social Media Studies (CSMS) at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

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