Collecting and Connecting On and Offline Political Network Data

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my work in general

Public policy

Civic action

Social Media
today’s topic

Congress on Twitter → Policy discussions
focus of inquiry

- Whole populations
- Bounded groups with known members
connecting disparate data sources

offline data + social media data → Better insight
Does social media provide an alternate route to influence?
Nope.
My data

- Twitter
- ICPSR IDs
- Govtrack
- Co-sponsorship
- Congress.gov
First, fast movers control the discussion.
The same people wield influence **online** and **off**.
### who’s influential online?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Normalized Connectedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker John Boehner (R-OH)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA)</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD)</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Tim Griffin (R-AR)</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI)</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH)</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social media data is most useful when we connect to other data sources.

Social media is not an alternate route to influence for politicians.

Male-ness and Republican-ness are still the most reliable routes to power.
a call to action

- Respect expertise beyond the technical
- Educate students to be adequate coders and outstanding theorists
Thank you

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- Who said it first – Congress or the press?
- How do constituents lobby Congress via Twitter?
- How can we measure the impact of online protests like #stopthensa?