

IDEOLOGIES IN CHINESE CYBERSPACE

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Executive Summary

1. The Chinese Communist Party has taken considerable efforts to unify ideology among party members and the general public, showing great determination to achieve broad social consensus on the nation's future.
2. Yet ideologies in Chinese society are far from unified, especially in online debates. There are at least 10 over ideological clusters in Chinese cyberspace.
3. Politically, Chinese netizens debate on whether the country should maintain the authoritarian system or introduce the Western system or a Confucian meritocracy.
4. Economically, debates are mostly around the role of the state in economy, namely, whether China should develop a free market with dominantly private enterprises or maintain a strong state sector as well as government intervention.
5. In foreign relations, there are clusters which favour globalisation and welcome the spread of Western values, and clusters which hold nationalistic stance and defend Beijing online on international issues.
6. The diversified ideologies in the Chinese internet are a product of increasing heterogeneity of Chinese society. Globalisation and the rise of the internet economy have also contributed to the plurality of ideologies.
7. China's vibrant pop culture and fan culture have facilitated netizens in the organisation and mobilisation of their political expressions in online debates.
8. The ideologies are rarely involved in offline collective action and are therefore not a direct threat to the regime.

9. As the Chinese Communist Party has reinforced efforts to control and guide online political expression, the sustainability of ideological diversity is still in question.