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## Ideological Polarization Over a China-as-Superpower Mind-set: An Exploratory Charting of Belief Systems Among Chinese Internet Users, 2008–2011

*Angela Xiao Wu*

### Abstract

This study explores ideological polarization among Chinese Internet users by examining both the structure of local belief systems and temporal changes of opinions. It implements research tools investigating voters' cognition and behavior in democratic societies, including those concerning Internet use and political polarization. To probe this sensitive terrain, it employs network and relational class analysis to a unique historical data set: online records of the Chinese Political Compass self-assessment (2008–2011). Results demonstrate that the overarching ideological division of the Chinese Internet is split between nationalism and cultural liberalism. Groups of "ideologues" and "agnostics" that differentially contributed to overall rapid polarization are also identified. The study further speculates how, in nondemocratic societies, Internet use may influence people's political views through different mechanisms.

### Keywords

belief system; China; Internet; nationalism; polarization; political culture; public opinion; semantic network

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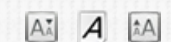
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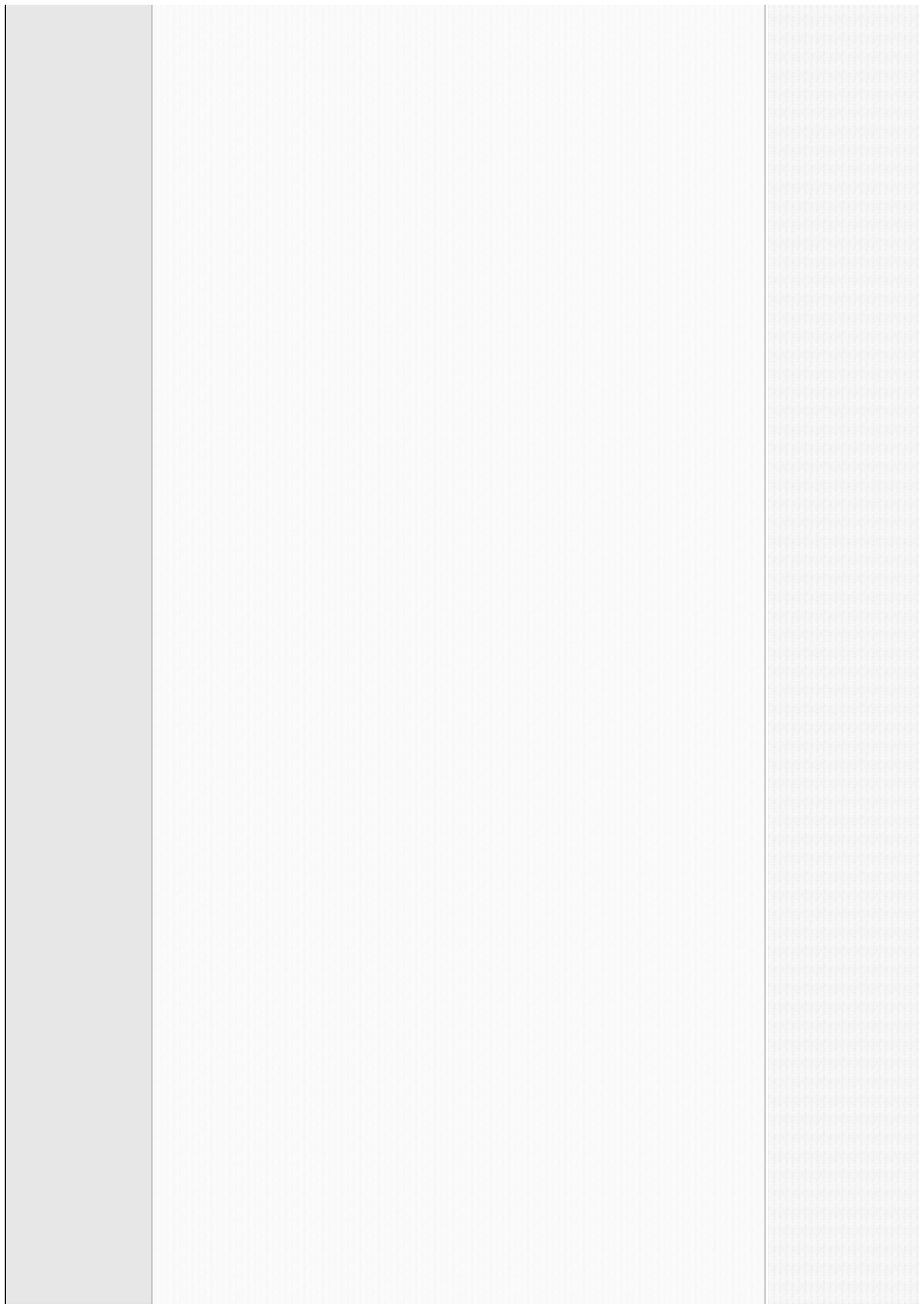
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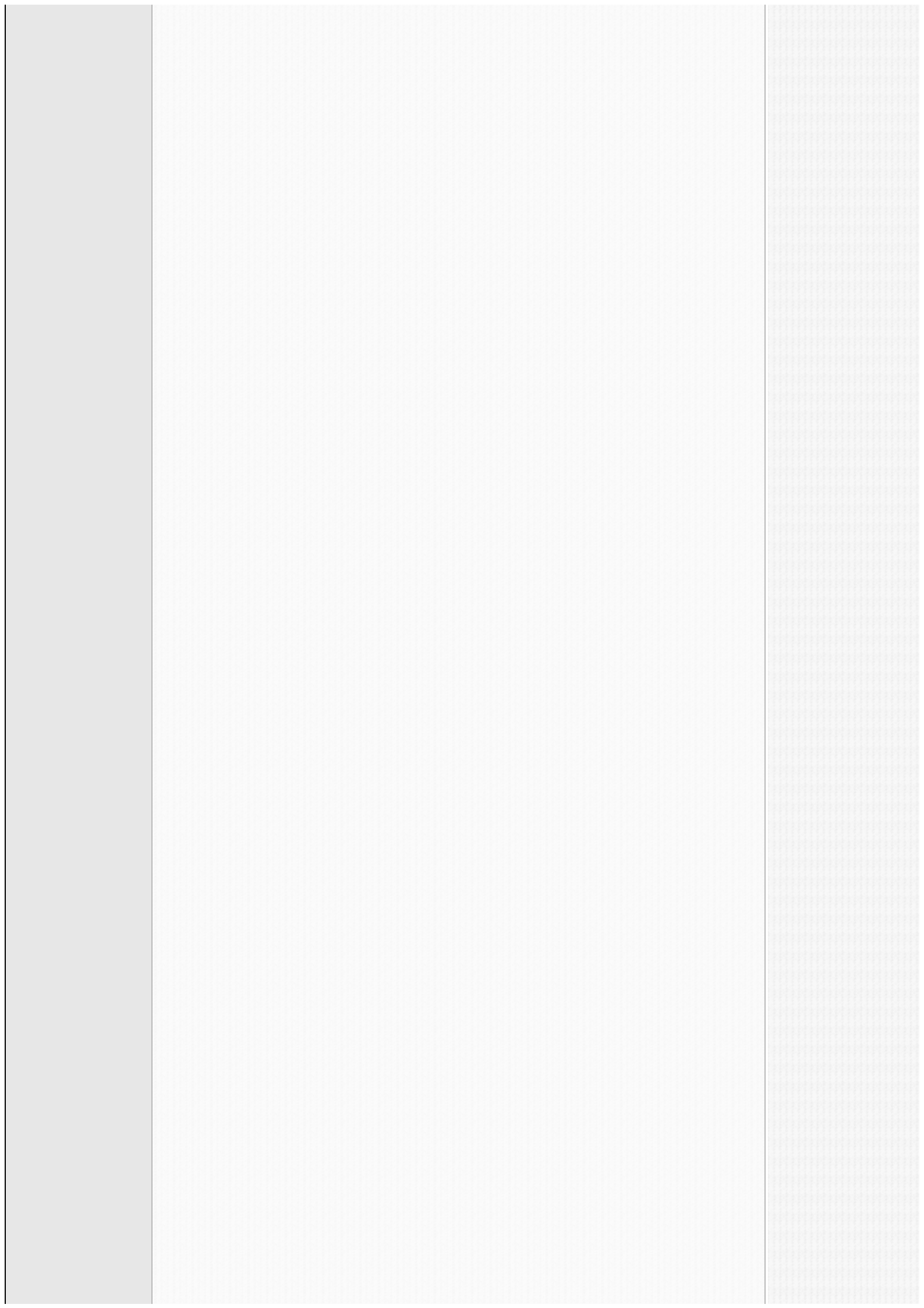
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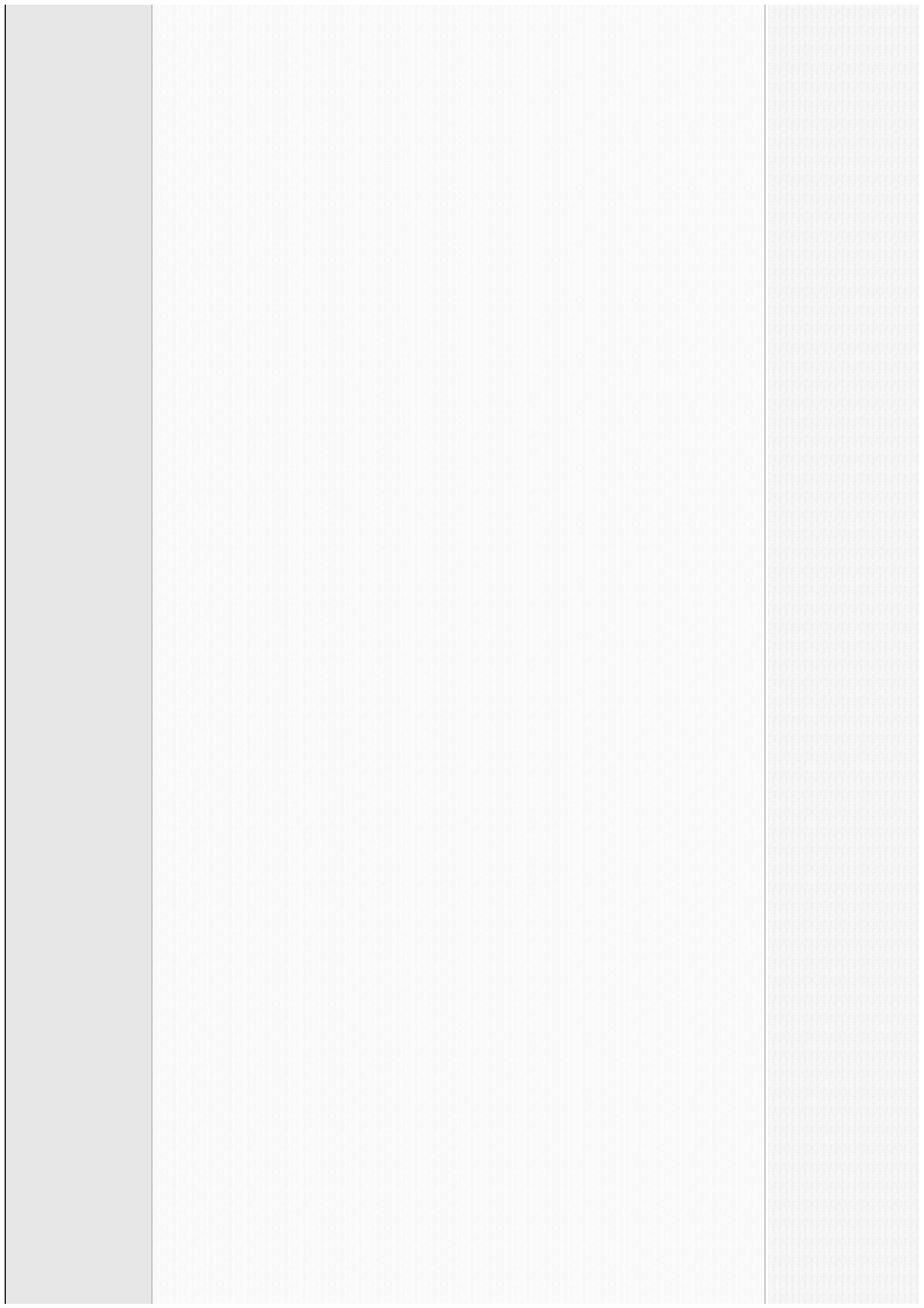
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Ideological polarization over a china-as-superpower mind-set: An exploratory charting of belief systems among Chinese Internet users, 2008–2011. AX Wu. *International Journal of Communication* 8, 30, 2014. 38. 2014. Reimagining Internet geographies: A user-centric ethnological mapping of the World Wide Web. AX Wu, H Taneja. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 21 (3), 230-246, 2016. 31. 2016. Rethinking the generational gap in online news use: An infrastructural perspective. H Taneja, AX Wu, S Edgerly. *New Media & Society* 20 (5), 1792-1812, 2018. 28. 2018. 2019. Historicizing Internet use in China and the problem of the user figure. AX Wu. *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 37 (4), 2-4, 2015.