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Analysis of Discourse about Five-Jiao-Gang in Chinese BBS Deliberation

The phrase Five-Jiao-Gang refers to internet users who are mistrusted as being hired and paid by government so as to speak for government in internet deliberating groups. It is shown that Chinese netizens are becoming increasingly active in internet deliberations (Tai, 2006), however, exclusion, polarization and other problems are concerned as they harm deliberations. (Sunstein, 2003) This paper attempts to study on posts in one of the largest college students BBS in China, focusing on discourse about the “Five-Jiao-Gang”. The paper analyzes how netizens use the phrase to defend or even offend during internet deliberations. As a result, it is argued that the discourse is to display resistance and deconstruction of government authority, but on the other hand, it is also shown how netizens take use of the parody to exclude certain users, and polarize discussions.