



OPINION / VIEWPOINT

## Global minds interpret essence of CPC's vigor and vitality

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Illustration: Liu Rui

### Editor's Note:

The Communist Party of China (CPC), overcoming various difficulties and challenges, has led the remarkable achievements of national construction as well as the colossal transformation of China from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, industrial and post-industrial power. Decoding the CPC's success, scholars from both home and abroad believe four fundamental features of the Party have played an essential role: legitimacy, people-centered, resilience, and results-oriented. The four characteristics have contributed to maintain the Party's vigor and vitality and make the CPC into an influential internationally renowned party. How should we

understand the legitimacy of the CPC? Where does its resilience come from? How have the CPC's people-centered philosophy and results-oriented performance contributed to China's development? The following is an abstract of views from 10 distinguished scholars and former diplomats based on their interviews with the Global Times.

## **Legitimacy**

[Zheng Yongnian](#), Presidential Chair Professor, Director of The Advanced Institute of Global and Contemporary China Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen)

Where does the legitimacy of the CPC come from? I think the legitimacy of the CPC mainly comes from three points. The first point is: The CPC has achieved China's sustainable economic development. Everyone has seen this very clearly.

The second point is: The CPC has achieved sustainable social stability. This social stability was not achieved through dictatorship or a "police state" as the West says. This was not easy to do. From a global perspective, economic development and social stability are a pair of contradictions. The French writer Tocqueville put forward such a problem in his book *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, stating that there will be poverty if there is no development. But if the development process is not advanced well, then society will also be unstable. The French Revolution is a case in point. Therefore, sustainable economic development and sustainable social stability have challenges if done at the same time. It is only China that has achieved both goals in the world's major economies. Third, the CPC has realized the support and guidance of a sustainable political system. This is an important institutional source for China to achieve sustainable economic development and social stability at the same time.

[Danilo Türk](#), former president of the Republic of Slovenia

I have travelled to China regularly in the past 20 years and have met both the leaders of China as well as a number of regional and local officials and CPC members. What impressed me the most was their strong commitment to agreed policies and, above all, to achieving the stated results. The result-oriented and meritocratic nature of leadership is very visible and is the key to their success. Results are of course very important by themselves. But commitment to results reaches even further. Achieving the stated objectives, and having real results is the key to legitimacy of leadership. One could say that this type of legitimacy,

sometimes described as "performance legitimacy" is a particularly strong type of legitimacy. We have all seen this in the past year when strong leadership of China and measurable results in overcoming COVID 19 have impressed the world.

## **People-centered philosophy**

[Heinz Dieterich](#), a world renowned sociologist and political analyst from Germany who first proposed the concept of "21st century socialism"

A dictatorship exists when the people's needs are not taken into account by the power elites. That is the case in many countries today, which have formal multiparty bourgeois democracies, but not the case in China.

China is not dictated, and is not governed by an elite dictatorship. Take the US for example.

Chinese government is essentially a national vanguard. The difference between a vanguard and elites is, vanguard responds to the needs of the people and elites, on the contrary, put forward first and foremost their own particular interests.

China is not a one-party dictatorship, because it advances the material well-being of the people. In addition, it step by step advances the rule of law and the civilian rights of its citizens. That's why the CPC has the overwhelming support of the great majority of the Chinese citizens. And the support of the majorities for a government gives the system the status of being democratic in a real sense, not in a formal sense, because democracy is the rule of the majority.

The real dictatorship is in the Western democracies like the US, which cannot solve any problem: the gun problem, the racial discrimination, the unaffordable military complex, military spending and so on. They're incapable of solving any real problem that is absolutely different from the CPC today.

[George Yeo](#), former Singaporean minister of foreign affairs

My view of democracy goes back to the essence of democracy, to the Greek origin of what democracy is - which is the people as master. Abraham Lincoln talked about government of the people, by the people, for the people. By this definition, China is a democracy.

But the debate of a democracy in the West is not about its essence, but by the way

it is implemented. In Western system, voting is very important. The separation of powers, the executive judiciary... these are very important considerations in Western democratic forms.

China's philosophy about the moral basis of centralized governance goes back to Confucius and Laozi. How to govern is always at the center of Chinese philosophical thought. China will find its own way toward achieving the democratic idea.

The best democracy is the one which is for the people, of the people and by the people, according to its history and culture.

[Mick Wallace](#), an incumbent member of the European Parliament from the south constituency of Ireland

I believe in a system of government where the government works for everybody and not just for the few. And the CPC has obviously played a strong role in helping so many hundreds of millions in China to move out of poverty. That's been a remarkable achievement. It couldn't have been done under the capitalist system. China could not have made the same progress with a capitalist system. So the CPC deserves a lot of credits for the progress that China has made.

The reason that we can learn something from China is because Europe is not doing a great job serving the interest of its people. I think facing great challenges, the Chinese have done remarkably well, given the size of the population. The system of the government is serving the people better whereas the system of governments in Europe is serving its business first. I think we can learn lessons from China who are doing a better job in looking after the concerns of the ordinary citizens than the Europeans are doing at the moment.

When the people need help, the government of any country should be there for the people. They should prioritize the interest of the people. And that's the approach that we should have. For me, you don't measure the quality of a government by the size of GDP, you measure it by how well it looks after those who most need help.

## **Resilience**

[Kishore Mahbubani](#), Singaporean political scientist and distinguished fellow at the Asia Research Institute

The biggest misunderstanding of the CPC in the West comes from its failure to realize that the CPC has improved the standard of the living of the Chinese people more in the last 40 years, than any other Chinese government has in 4,000 years of Chinese history. 800 million Chinese people have been rescued from absolute poverty. China now has a middle class of 300 to 400 million people. Sadly, many in the West don't understand how much the CPC has done.

Another big mistake that the United States is making is that it doesn't understand that the Communist Party of China has changed and adapted in many significant ways. Hence, for example, the Chinese Communist Party is one of the most meritocratic political parties in the world. It selects the best people to join the party. This is absolutely unknown to many Americans. They don't understand how the CPC has changed and adapted. Also, if you judge the CPC by its performance, in terms of how much it has improved the livelihood of the Chinese people, there is no question that it has done a tremendous job. I believe that's why it remains popular within China. The CPC is in power because it has improved the livelihood of the Chinese people and continues to enjoy the support of the Chinese people.

Yuri Tavrovsky, head of the Expert Council of the Russian-Chinese Committee for Friendship, Peace and Development

The CPC is the ruling party in China. It has earned this status during many trials and tribulations over the past 100 years. It has chosen the path of socialism, and after several experiments it improved to achieve fast development since launching reforms and opening-up. It offered the nation new perspectives of rejuvenation by putting forward the long-term program of the Chinese Dream. It continues to prove it is right to rule over the past few years uniting and leading the nation under harsh conditions of the natural disaster called COVID-19 and a man-made calamity called the Cold War.

The CPC's self-motivation comes from the deep feelings of patriotism. It was the love of their motherland that had helped Communists "to build the Great Wall with our flesh and blood" during the fight against the Japanese invaders. It was patriotism that helped the Communists to fight, sometimes barehanded, against American tanks during the Korean War (1950-53). It is patriotism that had made possible formulation of the Chinese Dream, which is about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Patriotism is the essence of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." This patriotic formula and obvious practical results of the Chinese Dream allow the CPC to rule 1.4 billion Chinese in the 21st century with all the information technologies and artificial intelligence.

[Evandro Menezes de Carvalho](#), director of the Center for Chinese Studies at the Brazilian college Getulio Vargas Foundation

The CPC's history is the testimony of a party that was founded in defense of the interests of the Chinese people. It is not a party born from a formal foundation, but a party born in the struggle to defend the independence of the Chinese people in the face of external aggression and internal groups that did not have the capacity to resist foreign pressure. This makes all the difference when comparing the CPC with the parties of Western democracies. In this sense, the Chinese people know that the CPC has a greater commitment to maintaining the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the case of a pandemic, the enemy is a virus, invisible and deadly. A sense of collectivity and unity, and an understanding of the importance of strong leadership in dealing with this challenge, were essential to the CPC to bring the Chinese people the best it can.

I understand that five fundamental qualities explain the CPC's success: patience, resilience, intelligence, science and efficiency. Resilience is a formidable quality of the CPC. It can be understood both as the ability to adapt to the most difficult circumstances and the ability to start over even after having suffered the most severe humiliation and aggression and submitted to the most adverse conditions.

### **Results-oriented performance**

[Martin Jacques](#), a former senior fellow at the Department of Politics and International Studies at Cambridge University

The CPC does enjoy the great support of people. And that is why it is managed to maintain its rule for so long.

The CPC is not like the Soviet Communist Party. The Soviet Communist Party did not have deep roots across Soviet society. The CPC does. The Soviet Communist Party represented a very small group, the working class. The CPC has really a deep root and represented the vast majority of the Chinese people. This speaks to the deep roots and also the self-confidence of the party and also the recognition that the party always has to earn its right. The government, in other words, has to deliver.

Let's look at the results. What the CPC has done since 1949 is an epic story. Now

extreme poverty has been abolished. The living standards of the people have been transformed. China has been utterly transformed, China is no longer weak; China is very strong. It's now on par with the United States. Who isn't going to support the Chinese Communist Party under these circumstances?

**Robert Kuhn**: chairman of The Kuhn Foundation and recipient of the China Reform Friendship Medal (2018)

**The structural similarities between China's anti-pandemic and anti-poverty campaigns are striking: CPC leadership, General Secretary Xi's commitment, CPC mobilization.**

**First, the operational leadership of the CPC - not just giving directives and making pronouncements, but implementing programs and operating projects through the CPC organizational structure - central government and five levels of local government (provincial, municipal, county, township, village).**

**Second, the commitment of Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee - who sets an example that leaders and officials must follow. Almost everywhere Xi goes, he stresses poverty alleviation and encourages Party officials to visit impoverished areas regularly and interact with poor people directly. Xi has made the remarkable statement: "I have spent more energy on poverty alleviation than on anything else." I know no other national leader who has made such an assertion. Similarly, during the pandemic, when Xi visited hospitals and spoke with frontline workers, the whole country got the message.**

**Third, the mobilization capacity of the CPC - commanding the country's resources in personnel and materials. To contain the epidemic, China's mobilization was unprecedented in global**

**health history: locking down Wuhan and neighboring cities, 60 million or more people; house-to-house temperature checks; the CPC's grid management system of social control; postponing the return to work after the Lunar New Year break of hundreds of millions of travelers; recruiting major companies, state-owned enterprises and the private sector, for support and logistics; assigning "sister" relationships between strong provinces and hard-hit cities in Hubei, a strategy long employed in poverty alleviation between eastern and western provinces and cities.**

**Similarly, the success of China's targeted poverty alleviation campaign, bringing about 100 million people out of abject poverty since 2012, included the complete relocation of millions of poor farmers from remote mountainous villages to newly constructed urban and suburban residences.**

**Nowhere else could such mega-projects work like they worked in China. And the reason they worked is because the Party-led system works for mega-projects. Going beyond the great good of poverty alleviation and pandemic containment, understanding how the CPC accomplished both provides insight into the CPC's governance structure and organizational capabilities. This is especially important at this time of heightened awareness of China's increasing role in international affairs and the increasing sensitivities to it.**

**<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202106/1227465.shtml>**



# INFLUENCE

BEYOND COMPARISON



The CPC's history is the testimony of a party that was founded in defense of the interests of the Chinese people.

**Evandro Menezes de Carvalho,**  
Director of the Center for Chinese Studies  
at the Brazilian college Confucius Yunnan  
Foundation



The Chinese government led by the CPC is essentially a national vanguard. The vanguard responds to the needs of the people.

**Helmut Dieterich,**  
a world-renowned biological and political  
analyst from Germany who first proposed the  
concept of "iron-clamp socialism"

China has been utterly transformed. China is no longer weak, China is very strong. It's now on par with the United States. Who isn't going to support the Chinese Communist Party under these circumstances?



**Martin Jaquest,**  
former senior fellow at the Department  
of Politics and International Studies at  
Cambridge University



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**Robert Kahn,**  
founder of The Kahn Foundation and  
recipient of the China Reform Foundation  
Award (2015)

The CPC is one of the most mathematically political parties in the world. It selects the best people to join the party. This is absolutely unknown to many Americans.



**Kishore Mahbubani,**  
Singaporean political commentator and  
strategicist fellow at the Asia Research  
Institute



The result-oriented and meritocratic nature of leadership is very visible and is the key to the CPC's success.

**Danilo Turk,**  
former president of the Republic of Slovenia

The CPC's self-motivation comes from the deep feelings of patriotism.



**Yuri Tsvetkovsky,**  
head of the Expert Council of the Russian-  
Chinese Committee for Friendship, Peace  
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The CPC has obviously played a strong role in helping so many hundreds of millions in China to move out of poverty. That's been a remarkable achievement. It couldn't have been done under the capitalist system.

**Mick Wallace,**  
an independent member of the European  
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Abrukam Lincoln talked about government of the people, by the people, for the people. By this definition, China is a democracy.



**George Yeo,**  
former Singaporean minister of foreign affairs



Where does the legitimacy of the CPC come from? The CPC has achieved China's sustainable economic development, sustainable social stability, and the support and guidance of a sustainable political system.

**Zheng Yongqian,**  
honorary professor of the Advanced Institute of Global  
and Contemporary China Studies, the  
Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen)

