Factional Competition and Power Sharing under Authoritarianism*

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Abstract

This paper explores the nature of factional competition under authoritarian regime from the power-sharing perspective, using novel data from China. A core proposition of stable power sharing is that the strong, often incumbent, ruling group allows political survival and challenges of weaker political groups. Employing news reports in Chinese national and local newspapers from 2000 to 2014 coupled with elite network data, we find an opposite trend in Chinese faction competition. Our analysis shows that strong factions tend to publish negative reports on smaller factions. These negative reports indeed harm the promotion prospects of reported-on province leaders, weakening the already weak factions and expanding relative power of strong factions. Our findings suggest that elite competition in China has a tendency of power concentration, rather than power sharing. They also imply that the recent trend of power personalization in China may not be just a sudden phenomenon but reveals latent patterns of Chinese elites' behavior.

Keywords: elite politics, power sharing, political faction, authoritarianism, media bias, China

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1 Introduction

To understand the unique logic of non-democratic governance and regime stability, scholars of authoritarianism have debated on the role of formal and informal power-sharing institutions in authoritarian politics. On the one hand, numerous recent studies suggest that formal power-sharing institutions, such as election, legislative, and political parties, contribute to the dictator's survival and the regime's longevity (Boix and Svolik 2013, Gandhi 2008, Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, Geddes 2003, Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014, Magaloni and Kricheli 2010, Svolik 2013). On the other hand, theoretical and empirical studies have also noted the existence and importance of factional competitions in authoritarian politics, arguing that informal competition among elites help extend and stabilize authoritarian ruling (Egorov and Sonin 2011, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012, Zakharov 2016). Although the discussions of authoritarian politics are frequently filled with unconfirmed stories and rumors on factional conflict, the opacity of authoritarian regimes prevents researchers from directly investigating the dynamics of faction politics. Thus despite an increasing number of studies highlight the power-sharing effects of informal factional competition, our understanding of the nature of factional competition and how it contributes to power-sharing remains limited due to the opaque nature of authoritarian elite politics. Through a novel approach using vast media data from China, our study offers empirical analyses examining whether factional competition among elites induce a stable power-sharing outcome, just as power-sharing institutions such as multiparty systems or competitive elections are intended to do.

China features a single-party authoritarian regime in which the Chinese Communist Party monopolizes political power.[1] While the CCP is frequently the subject of study, its exact power-sharing mechanisms remain unclear beyond the collective leadership system, as the large share of power-sharing arrangements are not specified in a formal way. The constitution does mandate a functional division of authority, and a few democratic institutions have

[1]The CCP is the largest political party in the world, with a current list of official members of approximately 90 million people, out of a population of 1.3 billion.

been adopted since the 1982 Constitutional Reform.[2] Yet, observers of Chinese politics have long noted that political power is fundamentally concentrated among a small handful of top leaders (MacFarquhar 1997, Shambaugh 2008). These leaders also have their own political followers, developed through past interactions, industrial or occupational proximity, or ideological orientation (Jiang 2017, Nathan 1973, Shih 2008, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012, Tsou 1976).

Scholars have disagreed over the character of factional politics in the country, particularly in terms of the implications for power-sharing. Some suggest that the factions create a balance of power across national leaders by inducing checks-and-balances against the strongest one (Dittmer and Wu 1995, Nathan 1973, Nathan and Tsai 1995). Li (2012) even characterizes the Chinese system as "one party two coalitions," wherein two almost equally powerful coalitions represent different political and social groups in China. In contrast, others argue that factional competition resembles a natural selection process in which the strongest faction dominates the others (Tsou 1976; 1995). Recent studies on Chinese factional politics use advanced methodological techniques to examine the role of factional connections in political promotions (Keller 2014, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012) and resource allocation decisions (Jiang and Zhang 2016, Shih 2008). Our paper shifts the focus back to the debate over the political consequences of factional competition, i.e., power concentration versus power sharing, with the goal of providing empirical evidence.

Authoritarian elites compete informally against one another, perhaps on a regular basis, for a larger share of political power, as the system lacks formal competition through election. Yet daily competition among elites, particularly that of top leaders, is largely unobservable due to tight media control over central politics and the informal nature of authoritarian political competition. Likewise, while numerous studies in Chinese politics illustrate the importance of factional competition in Chinese elite politics, observing and measuring competitive behavior

[2]To name a few, the concentration of power in one person's hands is institutionally limited (Hu 2014; pp.27-33), the power of the National People's Congress was institutionalized (Nathan 2013), and the party adopted mandatory retirement (Manion 1992). At the grassroots level, village elections (O'Brien and Han 2009, Shi 1999) and candidate nominations for local legislature (Manion 2015) were adopted.

across factions remains particularly difficult. As a result, issues related to Chinese central politics frequently serve as the subject of viral rumors among citizens, especially as social media platforms expand (Huang 2017, Zhu, Lu and Shi 2013), but less often as a topic of systematic analysis. To overcome this challenge, instead of tracing largely unobservable top-level competition among national leaders, this paper focuses on the competitive behavior of lower-level bureaucrats who are directly connected to the national leaders.[3] To measure and test such behavior, we construct a rich dataset consisting of millions of media reports in Chinese local newspapers, along with information on the political networks of elite Chinese bureaucrats. To measure the distribution of political power among national leaders, we generate various indicators of political influence capturing the power distribution among Chinese Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) members and the changes in power over time. Our principal measurement uses the frequency of a leader's name in major national newspapers as an indicator of political influence at the time. We also use alternative measurements such as the time-invariant official ranking, network-based influence, and the frequency of name appearance in the title of news articles. Using these indicators, we analyze how a patron's political influence shapes the competitive behavior of connected local leaders, measured by inter-provincial news reports on corruption investigations.

Our empirical analyses strongly support a power concentration claim: provincial leaders linked to a strong political patron publish more news on corruption investigations in other provinces. More importantly, when reporting on others, provincial party secretaries are more likely to target the provinces connected to weaker political patrons. By reducing the reported-on provincial leader's promotion chances, negative news reporting by members of strong factions indeed harms the political survival of weaker factions. Interestingly, strong political patrons do not necessarily protect their clients from getting reported on: we find that a connection to a strong patron does not reduce the probability of being reported on for

[3]From a methodological perspective, our approach mitigates the reverse causality issue, whereby the outcome variable (lower-level factional competition) could affect the explanatory variable (central power distribution).

a corruption investigation by other provincial news media conditional on a corruption investigation taking place within the province, meaning that a patron does not work as a political safety net for a client facing political hardship. We also find that competition among political elites subsides when the power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is centralized around one leader or when uncertainty over future power prevails. More specifically, competitive news reporting decreases drastically when the power of the president is much stronger than that of other national leaders and when the National Party Congress is approaching.

Our study contributes to the authoritarian politics literature in a number of ways. First, we provide empirical evidence to a current academic debate on the political outcome of informal factional competition. Our findings show that no matter how intense, informal competition among factions does not lead to a stable power-sharing outcome, as the powerful factions will consistently challenge the power-sharing status using their political resources. At the same time, we challenge the conventional wisdom that elite competition is a signal of regime weakness. In contrast, we show that strong faction leaders, having a larger stake in regime stability, allow more extensive competition among lower-level elites, rather than restraining their competitive behaviors. In doing so, the leaders can constrain the range of competition into a smaller number of regime followers. Lastly, by drawing empirical evidence from media reports, our study broadens the scope of data applied to authoritarian politics research. Instead of pointing out the limitations of biased authoritarian media (Egorov and Sonin 2009, King, Pan and Roberts 2013, Lorentzen 2014, Qin, Strömberg and Wu 2014, Stockmann 2013), this study employs those potentially biased reports in order to measure the political intentions of authoritarian elites who supervise or operate the media.

2 Informal Competition and Authoritarian Power Sharing

Popular descriptions of dictatorships have long suggested that either a weak group will be purged when it is not strong enough to survive such attempts or that even the strongest leader or faction faces the threat of being overthrown through coups or popular revolutions (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Thus, the long-held perception is that dictatorships with non-monopolized power signal a weak regime or hint at a transition toward democracy (O'donnell and Schmitter 1986, Przeworski 1991). Nevertheless, the rapidly growing authoritarian power-sharing literature challenges such perceptions, arguing that political power-sharing institutions, such as political parties, elections, and legislatures, help dictators enhance regime sustainability, by successfully limiting their unilateral power (Boix and Svolik 2013, Gandhi 2008, Geddes 2003, Magaloni 2008, Pepinsky 2014, Svolik 2009; 2013). One of the common key claims in this literature is that seemingly democratic power-sharing institutions adopted by authoritarian rulers may bolster authoritarian stability by lending credibility to the dictator's commitment to share political power when the political challengers back down from making threats of rebellion against him.

In particular, power-sharing studies link single-party or dominant-party dictatorships to regime durability as those parties contain power struggles among ruling elites more effectively (Geddes 2003, Magaloni 2008, Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). Geddes (2003) shows that party dictatorships outlive military or personalist dictatorships, which she attributes to the relative immunity of party dictatorships to internal splits among ruling elites. Magaloni (2008) further argues that the longevity of party dictatorships stems from the fact that political parties and elections are particularly useful for mitigating the commitment problem between the ruler and ruling elites, i.e. potential political competitors. A dictator's commitment to share power under party dictatorship is binding as it is conveyed through the party, which is expected to remain in power and to control access to power positions.

Extending those discussions on party dictatorships, we highlight the distinction between formal and informal institutions, which most studies do not clearly delineate. Dominant-party or hegemonic-party dictatorships, despite the trivial chance of losing to the opposition, do allow nominal yet formal competition, mostly in the form of "multiparty elections". As Magaloni (2008; p.25) emphasizes, dominant-party authoritarianism allows ruling elites "a peaceful avenue to challenge the dictator that is less costly than investing in the formation of a subversive coalition or rebelling." In turn, the single-party system, though power is not personalized, depends more on informal, within-party competition among elites. We argue that this distinction is essential for the credibility and sustainability of power-sharing mechanisms in a party dictatorship. While scholars of authoritarian power sharing emphasize different institutions as the key factor contributing to authoritarian stability, formal institutionalization in some form is commonly paramount in this literature. To be clear, our argument does not indicate that institutions face no challenge or will necessarily last for long periods. As Svolik (2013; p.54) states, "dictators' desire and opportunity" to obtain more power at the expense of their allies make it hard to institutionalize and continue power-sharing institutions under any dictatorship. Yet, as long as the dictator or the incumbent ruling group sees the advantages of formal victory through institutions over power monopoly, the power-sharing institutions will continue to exist.

In contrast, under authoritarianism where informal political competition is the main channel of power distribution, de facto power sharing does not occur through established institutions. This does not simply indicate that political power is concentrated around one person or one ruling group; it is entirely possible that power struggles might be even more intense and pervasive in this informal set-up than under an institutionalized power-sharing regime. Nonetheless, no matter how intense and pervasive political competition is, power sharing that occurs through an informal mechanism is an outcome of constantly shifting distributions of power, and thus cannot be viewed as a stable status. Power-sharing may exist and even last for a considerable period of time, but the lack of institutional guarantee leaves such power-

sharing agreements transitory and, at best, constantly threatened by a strong man or group's desire for increased power.

As a single-party authoritarian regime, the Chinese political system does not adopt many democratic institutions which are intended to decentralize de facto political power; although a few political reforms have been attempted, the extent of institutionalized power sharing remains quite limited. Scholars have viewed the collective leadership system via the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) as a key power-sharing institution in China (Lin 2004, Svolik 2013). While we agree that the collective leadership constitutes the fundamental basis of the Chinese political system, we also emphasize that, beyond the nominal division of labor among the PSC members, the broad political process in regards to the composition and management of the PSC is not formally institutionalized and thus hinges on an informal power struggle among the past, current and potential PSC members. Furthermore, numerous political figures in China have publicly discredited the applicability of democratic institutions to the Chinese political system. For instance, in March 2005, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the National People's Congress, the nominal legislature, officially stated that "Western models of democracy, which emphasize multi-party competition for power, the separation of three branches of government, and bicameralism, is not suitable for China." A recent survey by Dickson (2016) shows that the Chinese public's perception of democracy is different from the western concept; while Chinese citizens believe that the country is becoming increasingly democratic, less than five percent of survey respondents define democracy with formal democratic institutions such as electoral competition, multiple parties, and the presence of a legislature.

In this setting, scholars of Chinese politics have discussed the possibility of systematic power-sharing through informal factional competition. The debate over factionalism has centered largely on whether power-sharing across informal political groups can create an equilibrium outcome in the Chinese authoritarian context. The seminal work by Nathan (1973) and a subsequent study by Dittmer and Wu (1995) claim that policy and ideological struggles between factions create an inter-factional balance-of-power in which plural factions compete and

maintain balance among themselves. In contrast, Tsou (Tsou 1976; 1995) argues that elite pluralism is an empirical exception in Chinese politics and that the power struggle among Chinese elites "always involves one side winning all and/or the other side losing all" (Tsou 1995; p.97). Against Tsou's point, Nathan and Tsai (1995) argue that a balance-of-power outcome is not only frequent but also stable in Chinese politics. Nathan and Tsai (1995; p.186) claim that factional competition prevents "the rise of dominant leaders who might supersede the factional system as a whole," resulting in a sustainable balance of power. Dittmer and Wu (1995) also counters Tsou (1995) by noting that, if periods of harmony serve renewed conflict as Tsou claims, periods of power dominance should also be viewed as a motivation for subsequent periods of balance. More recently, Li (2012) characterizes the collective leadership of the CCP as a check-and-balance system through "one party, two coalitions," where equally powerful factions representing different social and political groups in China hold each other in check.

Our study provides an empirical examination regarding this theoretical debate on power-sharing versus power-dominant factional politics in China. Our period of research (2000-2014) ranges from the end of the Jiang Zemin administration (1989-2002) to the beginning of Xi Jinping's regime (2012-present). The Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao administrations (2002-2012), which constitute the bulk of the period under analysis, are not typically framed as a period in which one faction or one top leader dominated the others. Furthermore, inter-party democracy (*dangneiminzhu*) was actively debated among intellectuals and within the party during this period (Bing 2014, Li 2009). If this seemingly balanced period is indeed characterized by stable power-sharing among political factions, our analyses will show that the relatively dominant factions are frequently criticized and challenged by weaker counterparts (Hypothesis I).[4] On the contrary, if the nature of Chinese elite competition is intrinsically

[4]Although not directed related, the negative media campaigning literature established in the field of western electoral studies provides a similar hypothesis to our hypothesis 1. Negative campaigning on political competitors has been a longstanding strategy in democratic elections, as a means of undermining a competitor's political competence and ethical standing. Skaperdas and Grofman (1995) theorize and Theilmann and Wilhite (1998) find that the frontrunner typically uses positive campaigning, whereas a competitor more frequently uses negative tactics. Nonetheless, scholars generally find the effects of negative campaigning to be

to despoil other political competitors in order to obtain power dominance, the analyses will reveal an imbalanced pattern of attacks whereby the stronger factions aggressively attack their weaker counterparts (Hypothesis II).

Hypothesis I: If factional competition induces stable power-sharing among the key power holders, powerful faction(s) will frequently be challenged by the other(s).

Hypothesis II: If factional competition leads to a power concentration to strong ruling group(s), weaker faction(s) will face more political attacks from powerful faction(s).

We measure the competitive behavior of Chinese political elites by observing local news reports on corruption investigations. The principal reason for relying on local news reports is the unavailability of information on central-level political competition. While autocracies are in general less transparent than democracies (Hollyer, Rosendorff and Vreeland 2015), political competition among top national leaders in non-electoral dictatorships like China tends to be even more opaque. One way to overcome this data limitation is to incorporate behavioral data from lower-level political elites who are directly connected to the national leaders. The justification is that, in a hierarchical political system such as China's, the behavior of lower-level elites ought to reflect their political patrons' incentives.

In China's pyramidal political structure, the importance and the benefits of political connections have been well-developed in the literature. Promotion is based on one's relative evaluation among an available pool of candidates, and factional connections increase the baseline probability of promotion in multiple ways. First, national leaders prefer political elites connected to themselves, as those elites will likely demonstrate greater loyalty; they may also have more information on the competence of those elites compared to others (Keller 2014,

counterproductive for the side using such tactics (Lau, Sigelman and Rovner 2007). Generalizing from these theories and findings to non-democratic settings, one can hypothesize that weaker political factions are more likely to engage in negative reporting, while the effects may not necessarily favor them.

Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012). Second, factional ties enhance the probability of better performance (Jiang 2017). Through connections, clients may access valuable resources, such as bank loans (Shih 2004; 2008) or budgetary support from the upper-level government (Jiang and Zhang 2016), more conveniently than unconnected ones. In addition, patrons may allow greater authority and autonomy to connected cadres, where success can broadly benefit the faction.

Having a factional connection cannot be a sufficient condition for promotion, however, particularly as one approaches the apex of the political system. No matter how strong a patron is, it is systemically impossible to promote all followers into the most powerful positions. Even with political connections, therefore, elite bureaucrats in China must actively work to achieve higher positions. In this context, we claim that factional clients are incentivized to publicly promote their own locality's performance while demoting others', within the explicit and implicit boundaries established by the central government and their own patrons. Given the historical and political importance of the anti-corruption campaign to the CCP, local leaders should put significant effort into spreading news on other provinces' corruption investigations, which should make their own province, faction and patron appear uncorrupt relative to the reported-on ones.[5]

To bolster the plausibility of our measurement strategy, it is worth discussing how news articles, particularly those on corruption investigations, are published in Chinese regional newspapers. It is well-known that media freedom is largely restricted in China as in many other authoritarian countries (King, Pan and Roberts 2013, Lorentzen 2014, Qin, Strömberg and Wu 2014, Stockmann 2013). However, extreme concealment of negative information on governance is not optimal to the regime (Egorov and Sonin 2009). A dictator who only

[5]Another potential benefit from elite connections may be political insurance. Adversity emerges in politics, often unexpectedly. Factional ties can thus serve as protection that helps to minimize the negative political effects of adverse events. Kung and Zhou (2017) show that during the Great Famine, significantly fewer numbers of residents died from food shortage in the hometown prefectures of Central Committee members. If this insurance mechanism is at work in contemporary Chinese elite politics, negative events, e.g. corruption investigations, that involve a strong faction's member will be less likely to be reported in other provinces' newspapers and will be less likely to affect the political careers of related provincial leaders. The empirical analyses in the subsequent section will examine the plausibility of this political insurance theory.

allows glorifying news fails to provide adequate incentives for bureaucrats to perform better. Furthermore, the information provided by such a government lacks credibility to citizens, which leads them to look for alternative channels (Huang 2017, Zhu, Lu and Shi 2013). In particular, when the legitimacy of the regime depends on internal discipline and reform efforts, information on self-discipline and reform progress must be transmitted to the public to maximize regime support through such efforts. In these regards, allowing negative and critical reports on local affairs can be a useful strategy for the state to maximize regime stability. Lorentzen (2014) theorizes that the Chinese government allows media criticism of lower-level government while also conducting extensive censorship, in order to minimize corruption while maintaining regime stability. King, Pan and Roberts (2013) extend this logic to explain the allowance of criticism along with the censoring of messages promoting collective action. The context of media reporting we discuss in this study stands in line with these studies, where the local media are allowed to reveal negative information about their own local government and those of other localities while not actively engaging in criticism of central policy.

This does not imply, however, that Chinese local media work as a watchdog on their local government. Although a wide variation is observed among local media in terms of criticizing the government or reporting sensitive social issues (Lei 2016), surveillance and criticism by media are still structurally unlikely. It is because all local media are either operated or supervised by the local propaganda department and the local propaganda department, in turn, is supervised by the party committee at the corresponding level, which is under the authority of the local party secretary.[6] Therefore, by design, few incentives exist for editors and managers of local media companies to criticize their own local government, as their career paths are largely decided by local leaders' evaluation. Conversely, media outlets have much more latitude to criticize other localities' misgovernance. Criticizing other local governments does not trespass on the political gains of their supervisor. Furthermore, it is likely to contribute to the political

[6]At the same time, local news providers are also guided by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CCPPD, *zhongxuanbu*). Sometimes, the CCPPD bans local media from reporting on certain provocative topics or allows only copy reports from the national Xinhua News or People's Daily. Otherwise, local media are generally able to publish news reports without central intervention (Zhou 2011).

success of their supervisors, as criticism against other localities disparages those local leaders who are necessarily in competitive relationships with their own leader.

3 Empirical Strategy

3.1 Data and Variables

Our key **explanatory variable** is the power distribution across PSC members. The Chinese political system depends on collective leadership at the top level; seven to nine members constituting the PSC collectively hold the central authority of the Chinese government. It is not straightforward at all, however, to measure the dynamic changes in relative political influence among PSC members. The most accessible method is to employ the official rank of PSC members. In the National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCP, hereafter), which is held every five years, the elected Central Committee members vote for the Politburo, the PSC, and the party secretary general.[7] The election outcome is usually announced by the Peoples' Daily, and the report lists the names of the elected members in the order of political ranking in the PSC.[8]

A critical limit of the power measure drawn from the official ranking is the static nature of the ranking, since the ranking of PSC members renews every five years at the National Party Congress. Furthermore, the top two leaders (president and premier) stay in office for two terms. This means that the official ranking does not change for five to ten years and thus does not reflect the dynamics of power competition and struggle within the PSC between

[7] As Shih, Adolph and Liu (2012) and Nathan (2003) describe, these electoral procedures are not democratic, but the results are not pre-determined, implying political competition behind the scene.

[8] The official rank of the latest PSC members is available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/special/18cpcnc/2012-11/15/c_131976451.htm. To calculate the relative power of each PSC member p in year t based on the official ranking, we create a power index employing the following formula.

$$\text{Official Power}_{pt} = \frac{\text{Total \# of PSC members} + 1 - \text{official ranking}_{pt}}{\text{Total \# of PSC members}} \quad (1)$$

For province leaders with ties to more than one PSC member, we employ the sum of their patrons' power, the highest-ranked patron's power and the average power of patrons in the analyses, in order to rule out the possibility that the results are driven by a particular identification strategy.

NCP sessions.

To measure the dynamic changes in the actual power distribution among the PSC members, we generate alternative power indicators. The first alternative measure is based on national media exposure of the PSC members.[9] It is well-known that the Chinese central authority has actively utilized the media to promote political propaganda (Shirk 2011, Stockmann and Gallagher 2011). Using major province-level official newspapers, a recent study by Jaros and Pan (2017) shows how aligned Chinese major media coverage is to national-level power shifts. We take advantage of the Chinese major media's tight relationship to the central authority and their adaptive tendency to power shifts to measure the dynamic changes in the power distribution among PSC members. We interpret the appearance of a PSC member's name as a signal of his political importance and influence in China's politics. In turn, when the political power of a certain PSC member declines for some reason, we expect his name to appear significantly less often in major national media.

To construct this dynamic power measure, we collect all news reports in major news media from 2000 to 2014 containing the names of PSC members during their tenure on the PSC. We select the following four national newspapers in China as major news media: *Peoples' Daily* (*Renmin Ribao*), *Guangming Daily* (*Guangming Ribao*), *Global Times* (*Huanqiu Shibao*), and *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*). All of these newspapers are national official party-line media, closely controlled by the CCPPD. To collect news articles, we use a Hong-Kong based data vendor *WiseNews*, the largest news content database of Chinese mainland media.[10]

The time trends of newspaper articles mentioning the names of top national leaders are illustrated in Figure 1, Figure A.1, and Figure A.2. Figure 1 presents the annual trend of all PSC members. It is notable that the top two leaders, the president and the premier, are

[9]Recently, the same method was used by Ban et al. (Forthcoming) to identify the relative power of political actors in the US history. The authors use newspaper coverage of major newspapers in the US as data, i.e. the relative amount of space devoted to particular subjects in newspapers.

[10]In the final dataset, observations collected from *Peoples' Daily* and *Guangming Daily* constitute the vast majority, contributing 46% each, followed by *Global Times* and *China Youth Daily*, representing 5% and 3%, respectively.

cited in the vast majority of our data. Figure A.1 shows the monthly frequency of newspaper articles mentioning PSC members, while Figure A.2 illustrates the frequency of the incumbent president and premier only. Monthly trends show large fluctuations in the media coverage of PSC members, particularly the president and premier. The peaks tend to overlap with the NCP or the Central Committee plenum, held between October and November in Beijing.

[Figure 1 about here]

Finally, we build a yearly dynamic power indicator by calculating the share of news reports on a certain PSC member (p) out of the total number of news reports on all PSC members in each year (t):

$$\text{Patron Power}_{pt} = \frac{\text{News}_{pt}}{\sum_p \text{News}_{pt}} \tag{2}$$

It is worth discussing the validity of our power indicator in the Chinese context. At the first level, our indicator corresponds well with the official ranking. In most period, the party secretaries are most frequently covered by national newspaper followed by the premier. However, Figure 1 and Figure A.1 show that the frequency of media coverage for each national leader fluctuates much over the leadership period, implying the political influence of national leaders may organically change over time. More critically, our indicator shows the rise and decline of the national leaders' political influence before and after their official leadership period. Given that no official or publicly accepted data are available on political power dynamics in China, we can only crosscheck the validity of our indicator with anecdotal stories of Chinese elite politics. For instance, it is well-known among the observers of Chinese politics that power transition in China has been different between Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao in 2002 and Hu Jintao to Xi Jinping in 2012. It is said that Jiang continued to play a critical political role after his retirement as the party secretary in 2012, while Hu Jintao's political influence

did not overflown to the subsequent leadership (Jiang 2017). As shown in both Figure 1 and Figure A.1, Jiang remained as the third strongest political figure until the 17th Congress in 2007, although the frequency dropped significantly. Even until the beginning of 2012, Jiang competed with Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang for the third place in national media coverage. In contrast, the frequency of newspaper articles mentioning Hu stayed low from March 2012 and almost disappeared since the 18th Congress.

Using this power measure, we also generate a variable measuring the power gap between the patron of a news-providing provincial leader (p_i) and that of an event province leader (p_j). For province leaders with ties to more than one PSC member, we employ the sum of their patrons' power, the highest-ranked patron's power and the average power of patrons in the analyses, in order to rule out the possibility that the results are driven by a particular identification strategy.

$$\text{Power Difference}_{p_i p_j t} = \text{Patron Power}_{p_i t} - \text{Patron Power}_{p_j t}$$

We also construct a separate variable to capture the power of the president (party secretary of the CCP) relative to that of the other PSC members. In theory, the president is beyond political faction as the leader of the politburo standing committee and, by extension, of the CCP. Three presidents served during the period of our research, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, each of whom employed a different administrative and political style. We use the relative power of these presidents as a proxy for the degree of power centralization. As a robustness check, we expand this measure to president and premier.

$$\text{President Power}_{pt} = \frac{\text{News}_{president,t}}{\sum_p \text{News}_{pt}} \tag{3}$$

In the empirical analyses, we employ these dynamic power indicators as the main independent variables. To confirm that the empirical findings are not based on a specific measurement strategy, we use the various alternative measures, including one based on the official ranking

and a power index based on the connectedness of one's political networks. In addition, we generate another power index from national news media reports, in which we restrict the media exposure to those articles mentioning a PSC member's name in the article title, instead of simply in the text.

We also adopt an alternative definition of faction. In popular descriptions of factions in China, along with many academic observations such as Li (2013), factions indicate two or three groups competing each other. For instance, many PSC members in the 15th and 16th were directly connected to Jiang Zemin personally, mostly through co-working experience in Shanghai, which is often called Shanghai clique, faced a challenge from another group of young generation having work experience in the Communist Youth League ("tuanpai"). Later the Princelings ("taizidang", the descendants of prominent senior CCP officials) arose as a competing faction with the Youth League. We collect the information from various academic works (Li 2007; 2012, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012) and media sources to identify major factions in the PSC of each congress. As a result, we merge the patrons into two or three groups as shown in Table 1, and rerun the main analysis.

Our main **dependent variable** is political competition among provincial leaders, measured through inter-provincial "negative" news reports. We employ regional news media's coverage of corruption investigations that took place in other provinces. To capture the competitive nature of corruption news reporting, we create a province dyad pairing a news reporting province (news province, i) and reported-on province (event province, j). Each province is coded as a news province and an event province each year. We include 30 provincial-level administrative divisions, excepting Beijing. Many Beijing newspapers serve as the national newspapers or are known to have a close connection to nationwide newspapers due to the geographic proximity of operation units. This design of the dependent variable results in 13,050 province dyads (30 news provinces $\times$ 29 event provinces $\times$ 15 years) consisting of 450 leader-years (30 provincial party secretaries $\times$ 15 years) from 2000 to 2014.

To collect the news reports across provinces, we scraped the news contents of 143 local

Table 1: Major Factions in the 15th - 18th Party Congress

Name	Major Factions	Name	Major Factions
15th Congress :	Jiang vs. Tuanpai	**17th Congress**:	Tuanpai vs. Jiang
Jiang Zemin	Jiang	Hu Jintao	Tuanpai
Li Peng		Wu Bangguo	Jiang
Zhu Rongji	Jiang	Wen Jiabao	
Li Ruihuan	Tuanpai	Jia Qinglin	Jiang
Hu Jintao	Tuanpai	Li Changchun	Jiang
Wei Jianxing		Xi Jinping	(Princeling)
Li Lanqing	Jiang	Li Keqiang	Tuanpai
		He Guoqiang	
		Zhou Yongkang	Jiang
16th Congress:	Jiang vs. Tuanpai	**18th Congress**:	Princeling vs. Tuanpai
Hu Jintao	Tuanpai	Xi Jinping	Princeling
Wu Bangguo	Jiang	Li Keqiang	Tuanpai
Wen Jiabao		Zhang Dejiang	Princeling
Jia Qinglin	Jiang	Yu Zhengsheng	Princeling
Zeng Qinghong	Jiang	Liu Yunshan	Tuanpai
Huang Ju	Jiang	Wang Qishan	Princeling
Wu Guanzheng	Jiang	Zhang Gaoli	(Jiang)
Li Changchun	Jiang		
Luo Gan	(Li Peng)		

mainstream newspapers, i.e. provincial and prefectural newspapers, in Mainland China from *WiseNews*. Among these 143 newspapers, 49 are party line newspapers directly controlled by the provincial or major prefectural party committees, and the remaining 94 are commercial newspapers operated by regional news corporations. After selecting newspapers, we searched for news reports on corruption investigations using the keyword "*shuanggui*."[11] We then created directed province dyad data for each year. In other words, the unit of observation is a pair of provinces consisting of one province as a news (reporting) province and another province as an event (reported) province, with a value capturing the number of news reports published by the news province on the event province's corruption investigations in a specific year.

To identify the political network between regional political leaders and top central leaders, we constructed a political elites dataset consisting of the political careers of all provincial party secretaries and all CPS members during the period 2000-2014.[12] We first incorporate the names of those provincial party secretaries from the *China Communist Yearbook* (*zhonggongnianbao*). We then extract biographic and career information from their personal biographies, including age, gender, place of birth, education and work, using the Chinese search engine *Baidu Baike*. Finally, we match the personal information and work histories of provincial leaders with information on the incumbent PSC members to construct faction networks for each provincial official. We assume a provincial party secretary is connected to a Politburo Standing Committee members if they were born in the same province, graduated from the same school, or previously served in the same work unit over a year, following Shih, Adolph and Liu (2012).

[11] *Shuanggui* refers to a unique intra-party disciplinary process of the CCP, conducted by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI, *zhongjiwei*) on party members suspected of corruption. Information on *shuanggui* is monopolized by the CCDI and any related information is released selectively by the CCDI after contemplation of the political impacts. Hence the coverage of any *shuanggui* case in any Chinese newspaper is only possible upon the CCDI's approval. One source of potential autonomy given to local newspaper editors is how deeply and frequently they cover a specific case in their media, unless directed otherwise by the central propaganda department (CCPPD) or their local leaders.

[12] The cutoff date for leadership is June 30 of each year following Li and Zhou (2005).

3.2 Specification

The analyses are based on the following empirical specification.

$$\begin{aligned} NegNewsCount_{ijt} &= \beta_1 PatronPower_{it} + \beta_2 PatronPower_{jt} + \\ &\quad \beta_3 PS\text{-}GN\ SameFaction_{it} + \beta_4 PS\text{-}GN\ SameFaction_{jt} + \\ &\quad \beta_5 AgeGap_{ijt} + \beta_6 TenureGap_{ijt} + \\ &\quad X_{ijt}\mu + \eta_{ij} + \lambda_t + \varepsilon_{ijt} \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Our key dependent variable *NegNewsCount* represents the number of bilateral news reports published in province i (news province) on corruption investigations that occurred in province j (event province) in year t. To capture the dyadic reporting dynamics, we create two different news report variables: 1) the *number* of corruption investigation reports by i on corruption scandals in j and 2) the *share* of corruption investigation news out of total news reports by i on event province j and j's prefectures.

Our independent variable is the power of patrons connected to the reporting and the reported-on provincial leaders. We additionally examine the relative power between reporting and reported-on province patrons ($PatronPower_{it} - PatronPower_{jt}$). Furthermore, to understand how the dynamics of central politics affect inter-faction competition at the lower level, we build two central politics variables: a measure of presidential power and an indicator variable for the National Party Congress year.

We control for the covariates affecting local leaders' political incentives and competitive behavior. First, *PS-GN Faction* is an indicator variable for cases where the party secretary and the governor have the same factional tie in the province. The rationale behind this variable is that belonging to the same faction may encourage the leadership team to attack the other province more frequently or may insulate the province from negative media reports. It is also necessary to consider other individual-level confounders that may lead certain leaders to be more competitive toward each other. For instance, all else equal, public officials with similar

ages or tenure years are more likely to be considered together as candidates competing for promotion in the following evaluation cycle. To address these incentives, we control for the age gap and the years-in-current-office gap between the two party secretaries in the provinces that form each dyad. Our variables are summarized in Table A.1.

Furthermore, to control for any unobserved characteristics specific to individual provinces, inter-provincial relationships, or a particular year, we employ two sets of fixed effects: for province dyad (η_{ij}) and for year (λ_t). Province dyad fixed effects address not only province-specific effects but also dyad-specific effects. Province-specific effects are particularly important to address because Chinese provinces enjoy considerably different levels of media freedom (Lei 2016, Stockmann 2013). Addressing dyad-specific effects is also crucial because some geographically neighboring provinces are often considered more competitive than dyads of other provinces, regardless of the changes in leadership. Province dyad fixed effects will absorb the potential bias created from the negative media reports from these rivalry-prone provinces. Province dyad fixed effects with year fixed effects also prevent the possibility that certain events, i.e. a major event such as Bo Xilai's corruption case, drive our results. Finally, we use a linear model for panel data in the main analysis.[13] All errors are clustered at the dyad level to address the unique structure of dyadic data (Aronow, Samii and Assenova 2015, Cameron and Miller 2014).

4 Results

4.1 Media Reports Analysis

Table 2 presents our main analysis. The results show that a patron's power does matter for regional leaders' negative media campaigning on other provincial leaders. The findings strongly support Hypothesis II: when a local leader is connected to a PSC member with greater political influence, he is more likely to promote negative news reports on corruption

[13] We employ a linear regression with many levels of fixed effects using the command *reghdfe* in STATA (Correia 2015), as we regress with multiple levels of fixed effects and clustered standard errors.

investigations in other provinces. This suggests that factional competition encourages strong factions to more frequently and aggressively attack other weaker factions. The political effects of negative campaigning are evident in the competitive bureaucratic system in China: later in this section, we show that negative news reports reduce the reported-on cadre's probability of promotion, even after accounting for the magnitude of negative incidents (i.e. corruption investigation), while increasing the promotion prospects of the reporting provincial leader. In short, the positive link between a news province patron's power and negative news reporting on other provinces' corruption investigations supports the power concentration perspective that strong factions behave in a way that further undermines the already weaker faction. The pattern is clear in Models (1) to (3) where we use the absolute number of negative reports and in Models (4) and (6) where the share of negative reports in total news articles is employed.

The analysis in Table 2 presents another interesting and important finding. While a strong patron facilitates negative news reporting on other provinces, having a strong political patron does not prevent the connected provincial leaders from being reported on by other rival regional leaders. The patron power of an event provincial leader is positive but fails to pass standards of statistical significance in Models (1) to (3). In Models (4) to (6), in which we employ the ratio of negative news, the event province's patron power is again not statistically significant. These results suggest that even powerful patrons cannot deter other faction members from reporting on their clients' defects. This finding implies that a factional relationship between patron and clients does not or cannot offer political insurance that would protect clients who experience political failure. At the same time, this finding exclude a potential alternative mechanism that corrupt politicians simply attract more attacks, in the form of corruption reporting, which in turn weakens their patrons. If this is the case, we should see the patron power of an event province leader to be negatively associated with other provinces' corruption reporting. This hypothesis is reject by the results in Table 2, as we find no significant correlation between the patron's power and the probability of being reported on.

To investigate whether the pattern of negative news reporting relies on the type of factional

tie, we further examine the details of factional ties across provincial dyads. Models (2) and (5) in Table 2 further control for the factional ties of each provincial dyad to see if a peculiar type of dyad leads to more hostile news reporting against each other. We control for the cases where only the event province party secretary has a factional tie, only the news province party secretary has a factional tie, and where both the event and the news reporting province party secretaries have a factional tie; the reference category consists of dyads in which neither party secretary has any factional tie. The analysis indicates that no particular type of dyad is more likely to promote negative news reports in terms of the absolute number of reports (Model (2)). Regarding the share of negative news, whereas this is the only model in which no significant effect of the patron's political influence is found, connected province leaders are more likely to report negatively on other provinces (Model (5)). In addition, we test whether factional ties to a single or multiple patrons affect the behaviors of provincial party secretaries (Model (3) and Model (6)). Again, the reference categories are the provincial leaders with no factional ties. We find no statistically significant difference emerging from a multiplicity of factional ties in terms of the number of negative reports (Model (3)), while, in terms of the ratio of negative news, provincial leaders with single and multiple patrons are both more negative in their local media coverage of other provinces, compared to those with no factional ties (Model (6)).

[Table 1 about here]

In Table 3, we examine whether relative power differentials between the patrons of an event province and a news province affects the behaviors of clients, measured by negative media reports toward other provinces. The analyses in Table 3 potentially reveal the motivation behind the promotion of negative news reports in regional newspapers, and the nature of elite competition. As we hypothesize, on one hand, if a power struggle among factions relates

to policy or ideological competition, one should expect more negative reporting among the provincial leaders whose patrons have similar political influence, and strong factions should be challenged. On the other hand, if factional competition is undertaken to achieve smaller winning coalitions (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003), province leaders are more likely to attack other clients with weak patrons than they are to attack clients backed by a strong patron. The results in Table 3 shows that the bigger the power gap is between the patrons, the more frequent the negative reporting is, rejecting the former hypothesis and support the latter: provincial leaders connected to a strong patron are more likely to target the weakest faction's members.

One may argue that the behavioral pattern targeting members of weaker factions reflects the provincial bureaucrats' fear of political retaliation if they highlight negative events related to strong factions. We argue that this claim is not qualitatively different from our theory. Our core argument is that informal power competition does not induce a stable power-sharing outcome as formal power-sharing institutions intend to. The key role of formal institutions in authoritarian power-sharing is to facilitate political competition among power holders by providing a safe place for political challenges and preventing the winner's, i.e. powerful factions', political retaliation against the losers through formal rules. Without formal institutionalization, the credibility of power-sharing arrangements is lower because the powerful factions would not allow their weaker counterparts to sustain political power and attempt to challenge them when the distribution of power favors the powerful. Weaker factions being afraid of retaliation indicates the lack of credibility in this informal power-sharing arrangement based on factional competition.

[Table 2 about here]

4.2 Promotion Analysis

Finally, we analyze whether these negative reports indeed harm the reported-on cadres and their factions. Our theory states that implicit trends in informal factional competition, measured by inter-provincial news reporting on corruption investigations, impair political power-sharing in an authoritarian regime. To support the argument, we should not only show that strong factions target weaker counterparts, but also that the consequence of such negative reporting is indeed to diminish the political power of weaker factions. To elucidate this link in our empirical data, we examine how the promotion prospects of provincial party secretaries are affected by negative news reports from other provinces, above and beyond the negative effects of the corruption investigations themselves. To capture the effects of actual corruption cases, we collect data on all provincial- and prefecture-level corruption investigation cases from *Procuratorial Daily* (*Jiancha Ribao*) and include this number of corruption cases within a province each year as a key explanatory variable in promotion regression. By including this variable, we attempt to distinguish the impact of faction politics on anti-corruption investigations, a long-standing rumor on anti-corruption campaign supported by a recent empirical study by Zhu and Zhang (2017), from the effect of factional politics on regional media reporting. We also control for a number of covariates that previous studies have found to be related to cadre promotion such as local GDP growth, local GDP per capita, cadre's factional ties, age (in quadratic form), and education level (Li and Zhou 2005, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012, Yao and Zhang 2015).

The results in Table 4 highlight several notable features of factional competition and promotion mechanisms in China. First, corruption investigations conducted within a province significantly diminish the promotion prospects of the provincial party secretary. In all models, we consistently find significant negative effects of corruption cases within a province on the promotion of the party secretary. In China's hierarchical leadership system, the regional leaders, especially party secretaries, who are considered to be a political leader, rather than an administrative leader, are more likely to hold political responsibility and get substantial

disadvantage for promotion if more corrupt cadres are busted within their region. Second, a patron's political influence, i.e. a faction's power, *per se* does not systematically increase the client's promotion probability. In all models, the estimates for patron's power is positive but statistically insignificant.[14] This finding supports our argument that factional connections cannot be a sufficient condition for promotion, particularly when one approaches the peak of the political pyramid. This does not mean, however, that there is no benefit to belonging to a strong faction. Our results in Table 4 show that corruption reports by other provinces substantially reduce the promotion chances of a reported-on province's party secretary, while provincial leaders reporting on other provinces' corruption cases enjoy a higher probability of promotion. In previous analyses, we showed that provincial party secretaries connected to strong patrons publish more negative news articles on other provinces. Together with the results in Table 4, our analyses suggest that imbalanced negative reporting indeed work positively for the promotion of strong faction members. As a result, such reporting patterns strengthen the strong faction while weakening weaker factions. Our finding implies that not only corruption investigations, but also regional level reaction to such investigations affect the political consequences of those investigations, i.e. provincial leader's promotion. We do not intend to claim that negative news reporting "determines" the promotion probability of provincial leaders. Rather, together with existent studies on factional ties and career advancement in China, this study sheds light on another channel through which faction network affects the promotion probability.[15]

[Table 3 about here]

[14] We also examine whether the number of major corruption cases is correlated to patron's power and find no correlation.

[15] We find no interactive effects of corruption cases or news reports with the patron's power (Model (4)), suggesting that no qualitative difference exists in the effects of negative reporting conditional on a faction's strength. This means reporting by strong and weak factions carries the same weight in terms of its impact of promotion probability.

It is worth discussing how the cumulative effects of regional news reports may affect the promotion probability of provincial cadres. It is well-known that the career paths of public officials are determined by the organization department of the upper-level government, in our case the organization department of the CCP. It is unlikely that the organizational department follow all regional newspapers in China. Then how does reporting on other province's negative news or being reported by others affect the promotion prospect? Chinese personnel system, including promotion, demotion and allocation of party cadres, are not transparent, which led numerous scholars have intensively debated what fundamentally determines career advancement in China (Li and Zhou 2005, Shih, Adolph and Liu 2012, Yao and Zhang 2015). One of the factors that the CCP formally emphasizes in cadre evaluation is the public perception. Nonetheless, without an electoral mechanism, it is not straightforward to collect the public's evaluation on a cadre or on her governance. In such circumstances, media's role is critical as a channel through which not only the information from the government is delivered but also the public's evaluations of the government are also conveyed. Lorentzen (2014) theorizes that this is why the CCP allows limited media freedom, particularly freedom to criticize the lower-level administration.

4.3 Robustness checks

We conduct a series of robustness checks to confirm that our findings are not driven by a specific measurement decision or a particular specification. All tables are available in the Online Appendix.

4.3.1 Power concentration

Our findings may counter the views of many China scholars or researchers of authoritarian regimes, who have often observed a pattern in which the top political leader tends to suppress power struggles and political disputes in the name of national integration, if only as a matter of political rhetoric. More specifically, when the top central leaders amass significantly more

power than other potential challengers, they tend to publicly stress strength in unity. For instance, immediately after the Ukraine Crisis and a landslide win in the Duma elections, Vladimir Putin repeatedly stressed the importance of unity. In his first visit to the United States as the president in 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping publicly dismissed allegations that the current anti-corruption campaign is driven by a power struggle. In Table A.2, we test whether power concentrated in a top leader has a repressive effect on competitive behaviors within the ruling party.[16] The findings are somewhat mixed. Models (1) to (3) show that a powerful president, measured by the degree of media exposure, significantly reduces the number of negative media reports among political elites. While provincial leaders connected to relatively powerful patrons are still more likely to promote negative news on other provinces, the relative power of the president has a clear negative effect on the number of local news reports on corruption investigations conducted in other provinces. Nevertheless, interestingly, the share of negative news (corruption reports divided by total news reports on the event province) significantly increases when the president's political power is larger compared to other patrons, indicating that the proportion of negative reports increases when the president is powerful. One possible explanation is that when the president exerts greater influence, news reports concentrate on the president rather than on local issues in the other provinces. Figure A.3 provides suggestive evidence supporting this explanation: when the relative power of the president is high, local newspapers publish fewer newspaper articles on the other provinces and more on the president.

4.3.2 Political uncertainty

What about politically critical periods for the collective leadership of China? Do political elites behave in a more competitive or cooperative manner during these time periods? The demands from the top level might be more obvious given the importance of the period for the entire Communist Party. We thus test whether the pattern of negative news reporting

[16] Year fixed effects are excluded in this set of analyses because our main explanatory variable, president's power, is a year-specific variable. It is measured yearly and shared by all units of our analyses.

changes in the year of the NCP, which is held every five years. The NCP is considered the most important event in Chinese politics, mostly because it selects the central leadership, including the PSC members. In other words, the distribution of power is most uncertain in the NCP year, as a number of PSC members are about to be replaced but future leadership remains as yet unappointed. In our period of analysis, three NCPs were held, in 2002, 2007, and 2012. The current leader of China, Xi Jinping, entered the PSC during the 17th NCP in 2007 and was elected to the top post by the 18th Central Committee's full members, who were elected during the 18th NCP in 2012. In Table A.3, we use an interaction term between NCP year variables and the patron power of provincial leaders.[17] In all analyses, we find that political elites refrain from reporting negative news on one another as the next NCP approaches. While in non-NCP years the patron power of news provincial leaders remains significantly positive in its relationship to negative reporting, during the NPC year, there is a clear repressing tendency: strong faction members are less likely to report on corruption investigations in other provinces.

4.3.3 Type of newspaper

In addition, we examine how the unit of operation matters in the inter-provincial reporting patterns we find above. In China, while all local newspapers are supervised by the local government agency, the operating unit varies, especially across the commercial news press and the party or government press (Stockmann 2013). Our argument is that inter-provincial new reporting reflects the self-interested political agenda of provincial leaders. If this is true, we should expect the findings to be clearer in party-line newspapers than in commercial newspapers, as party-line newspapers reflect the voice of local leaders more directly. The results presented in Table A.4 support our claim that the political motivations of provincial leaders drive our findings. Analyses restricted to party-line newspapers show much larger effects than those of commercial newspapers.

[17]The direct measure of NCP (a dummy variable for the NCP year) is absorbed by the year fixed effects.

4.3.4 Alternative measure of faction

We adopt an alternative definition of political faction. We define factions as two or three major groups involved in top-level politics of China, such as Shanghai Clique, The Youth League, and Princelings. Table 1 reports how group the PSC members under this new definition. Table A.5 replicates the main analyses in Table 2 using the new definition of factions. We find the findings remain similar using the alternative measure of faction. When we group the top leaders into two or three competing groups, we still see the strong faction, whose patron is more frequently covered by national representative media, tend to spread negative news on the members of weaker faction. One difference from the previous results is that the patron power of event province is also positively associated with negative reports from other provinces, though the size of effect is substantially smaller than that of news province patron power. This indicates that clients of strong faction are not only target the other provinces but also likely to be negatively reported by others. Comparing the estimates of Model (1) and Model (2), our interpretation is that the ones with factional ties are more likely to be negatively reported than those without any factional ties. Using ratio measure, the results are the same as the previous baseline analyses that strong faction members tend to use local news papers to report on other provinces' corruption cases, yet being in strong faction does not protect one from being reported.

4.3.5 Alternative measures of patron power

Next, we pay special attention to examining alternative measures of patron power to show that an arbitrary definition of the distribution of power does not drive our core findings.

First, we employ a power measure based on PSC members' official ranking (Table A.6). As we noted above regarding the construction of these variables, we use the total and average ranking of connected patrons (Model (1) and Model (2)). We additionally test if the findings hold when we count only the patron with the highest ranking (Model (3)). Finally, we test the power gap between news and event province patrons (Model (4)). The outcomes from

the official rankings are consistent but somewhat weaker than the previous findings. For both measures of negative reporting, the patron power of news province leaders still has a significant and positive correlation with news reports on the other provinces. In terms of the quantity of negative news, the patron power of event provinces also appears to have significant and positive effects with smaller coefficients than those of news provinces (Models (1)-(4)), although this effect is not found in the alternative specification (Models (5)-(8)). In addition, consistent with the main findings, we find the gap in patrons' official rankings to be positively associated with inter-provincial reports.

Second, in the main results section, our measure of patron power was based on the total number of all newspaper articles on all of a client's connected patrons. This measurement method inevitably assigns much greater patron power to clients with multiple factional ties. While there is no conclusion in the literature regarding whether multiple ties indicate more political resources for clients, we nevertheless wish to prevent any potential bias stemming from our measurement strategy. To this end, we employ the average of patron power instead of total patron power as the independent variable. In other words, when a client is connected to more than one patron, we take the average power of patrons, not the sum of their power index. Table A.7 replicates the main analyses in Table 2 and 3. We find the results are qualitatively identical: provincial party secretaries connected to strong central leaders tend to publish more newspaper articles on other provinces' corruption investigations, while powerful patrons do not prevent connected provincial leaders from being reported on. We also confirm that negative reporting targets weaker counterparts.

Third, in Table A.8, we use the appearance of a patron's name in the title of major newspaper articles, not the full contents, to construct a more conservative measure of patron power. A considerable number of newspaper articles mentioning the PSC members' names simply refers to the participation of the PSC members in a political event. In this sense, focusing on the title of articles delivers a more refined message than the articles themselves, as reporters and editors must carefully select the wording of titles, frequently with important

political considerations in mind. Using this more conservative measure of patron power based on the frequency of exposure in major newspaper titles, we find that the results remain the same as the main findings.

Lastly, we generate and employ a power index for connectedness. We take the number of connected provincial party secretaries in a PSC member's network as a proxy of his political power. Table A.9 shows that the results from this network measure confirm that faction members of well-connected patrons are more likely to report negatively on other provincial leaders.

5 Conclusion

Unlike in democracies, where the top leaders are selected through popular elections, the appointment and promotion process for high-ranking bureaucrats in authoritarian regimes rests largely in a black box and is best described as an outcome of power struggles among high-profile political elites. While scholars have focused on various power-sharing institutions to explain the regime resilience of contemporary dictatorships, how informal power struggles among ruling elites affect power-sharing arrangements has rarely been systematically examined. Extending the research in the literature on power-sharing institutions, this paper addresses whether sustainable authoritarian power-sharing can be achieved through informal factional competition.

To overcome the opaque nature of power struggles in autocracies that precludes the ability to trace competition among top leaders, we use observations of competitive behavior among regional leaders who are directly connected to national leaders, using inter-provincial news reports on corruption investigations. Our analyses show that provincial leaders connected to politically strong patron(s) are more likely to promote negative news reports on other provinces. They are more likely to pick up negative news when the political power of an event province leader's patron is far weaker than theirs. While we do not intend to argue

that local media competition determines the promotion prospect of public officials, promotion probability of reported-on cadres diminishes with the reports. Finally, we find that a strong president and uncertainty in the central leadership has a deterrent effect on elite competition through the media. These findings imply that competition among informal political groups tends toward power concentration rather than power sharing.

Our findings suggest that informal factional competition does not function like a formal power-sharing institution. We also raise the importance of reevaluating the stability of political power-sharing in the Chinese Community Party based on formal institutionalization, not just on the phenomena or practices that have continued for the last two decades. More importantly, our study suggests that recent power personalization in China's central politics might not reflect a unique feature of the current leadership, but an outcome of latent behavioral pattern in China's elite politics.

Our study leaves a few critical questions for future research. First, we take our key explanatory variable, the power distribution among national leaders, as given. Yet distributions of power may not be exogenous but rather an outcome of complex and consistent political interactions among elites at various levels. While our research design attempts to circumvent the reverse causality problem by using competitive behavior among lower-level cadres as the dependent variable, we refrain from labeling the findings as causal, as we do not address the endogeneity of national leaders' power distributions. Second, and more fundamentally, we do not address the conditions under which some authoritarian regimes introduce formal power-sharing institutions while others allow transitory power-sharing outcomes as a consequence of internal competition. We also do not address how this difference affects long-term regime stability. Future research might build on our study to examine these aspects of power-sharing and elite competition in authoritarian regimes.

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6 Tables and Figures

Table 2: Patron's Power and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
Patron Power (News)	1.136**	1.103**	1.079**	0.216***	0.046	0.273***
	(0.394)	(0.399)	(0.373)	(0.062)	(0.071)	(0.081)
Patron Power (Event)	0.181	0.208	0.007	-0.040	-0.058	-0.112
	(0.281)	(0.283)	(0.273)	(0.060)	(0.071)	(0.109)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.185	0.171	0.166	-0.088**	-0.164***	-0.140***
	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.132)	(0.034)	(0.045)	(0.039)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.085	0.096	0.071	0.072	0.064	0.062
	(0.125)	(0.139)	(0.147)	(0.079)	(0.076)	(0.074)
Age Gap	-0.017	-0.017	-0.014	-0.002	-0.004	-0.009
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.093***	-0.093***	-0.095***	0.005	0.007	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.062			0.490	
		(0.269)			(0.312)	
News=1 and Event=0		0.050			0.891*	
		(0.208)			(0.390)	
News=1 and Event=1		0.004			0.817*	
		(0.237)			(0.335)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.048			0.596***
			(0.129)			(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.081			0.212*
			(0.125)			(0.099)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.164			0.014
			(0.149)			(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.112			0.092
			(0.221)			(0.081)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.351	0.351	0.351	0.123	0.125	0.126

Standard errors clustered at the diad level are reported in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: Power Gap between News and Event Patrons and Interprovincial News Report on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
ΔPatron Power	0.477*	0.448*	0.536**	0.127**	0.052	0.195**
	(0.194)	(0.211)	(0.201)	(0.047)	(0.050)	(0.070)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.283+	0.230	0.195	-0.075*	-0.165***	-0.133***
	(0.162)	(0.152)	(0.141)	(0.030)	(0.045)	(0.038)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.183	0.155	0.100	0.083	0.064	0.066
	(0.126)	(0.140)	(0.149)	(0.077)	(0.073)	(0.072)
Age Gap	-0.013	-0.016	-0.011	-0.001	-0.004	-0.008
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.084***	-0.087***	-0.093***	0.006	0.007	0.008
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		0.065			0.489	
		(0.277)			(0.308)	
News=1 and Event=0		0.177			0.890*	
		(0.217)			(0.387)	
News=1 and Event=1		0.263			0.815*	
		(0.269)			(0.327)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.085			0.601***
			(0.130)			(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.244			0.233*
			(0.152)			(0.094)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.126			0.019
			(0.150)			(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.276			0.117+
			(0.234)			(0.069)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.350	0.350	0.351	0.124	0.126	0.126

Standard errors clustered at the diad level are reported in parentheses

$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4: Patron Power, Corruption News Reports and Provincial Party Secretaries' Promotion

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Political Turnover (4=Promotion; 3=Lateral Transfer/Stay in Office; 2=Retirement; 1=Termination)							
Major Corruption Cases	-0.028***	-0.027***	-0.026***	-0.031***	-0.027***	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.040***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Patron Power	0.078	0.133	0.027	0.029	0.073	0.095	-0.032	0.029
	(0.143)	(0.166)	(0.140)	(0.155)	(0.150)	(0.193)	(0.169)	(0.182)
Corruption News by Other Province	-0.156**		-0.188***	-0.196***				
	(0.048)		(0.036)	(0.046)				
Corruption News on Other Province		0.071*	0.120***	0.160***				
		(0.034)	(0.031)	(0.038)				
Corruption Cases×Patron Power				0.122				
				(0.075)				
Reported×Patron Power				0.096				
				(0.116)				
Reporting×Patron Power				-0.134+				
				(0.073)				
Corruption News by Other Province (normalized)					-0.960		-1.135	-1.002
					(0.773)		(0.753)	(0.707)
Corruption News on Other Province (normalized)						0.000	0.000	0.001
						(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Reported×Patron Power (normalized)								-1.678
								(1.580)
Reporting×Patron Power (normalized)								-0.028+
								(0.016)
Province Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	420	420	420	420	406	308	295	295
Adjusted R^2	0.252	0.213	0.277	0.282	0.227	0.198	0.248	0.248

Notes. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses. Variables not shown include factional ties (single tie, multiple ties), GDP growth, local GDP per capita, cadre's age, age^2, and cadre's years of education. $^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

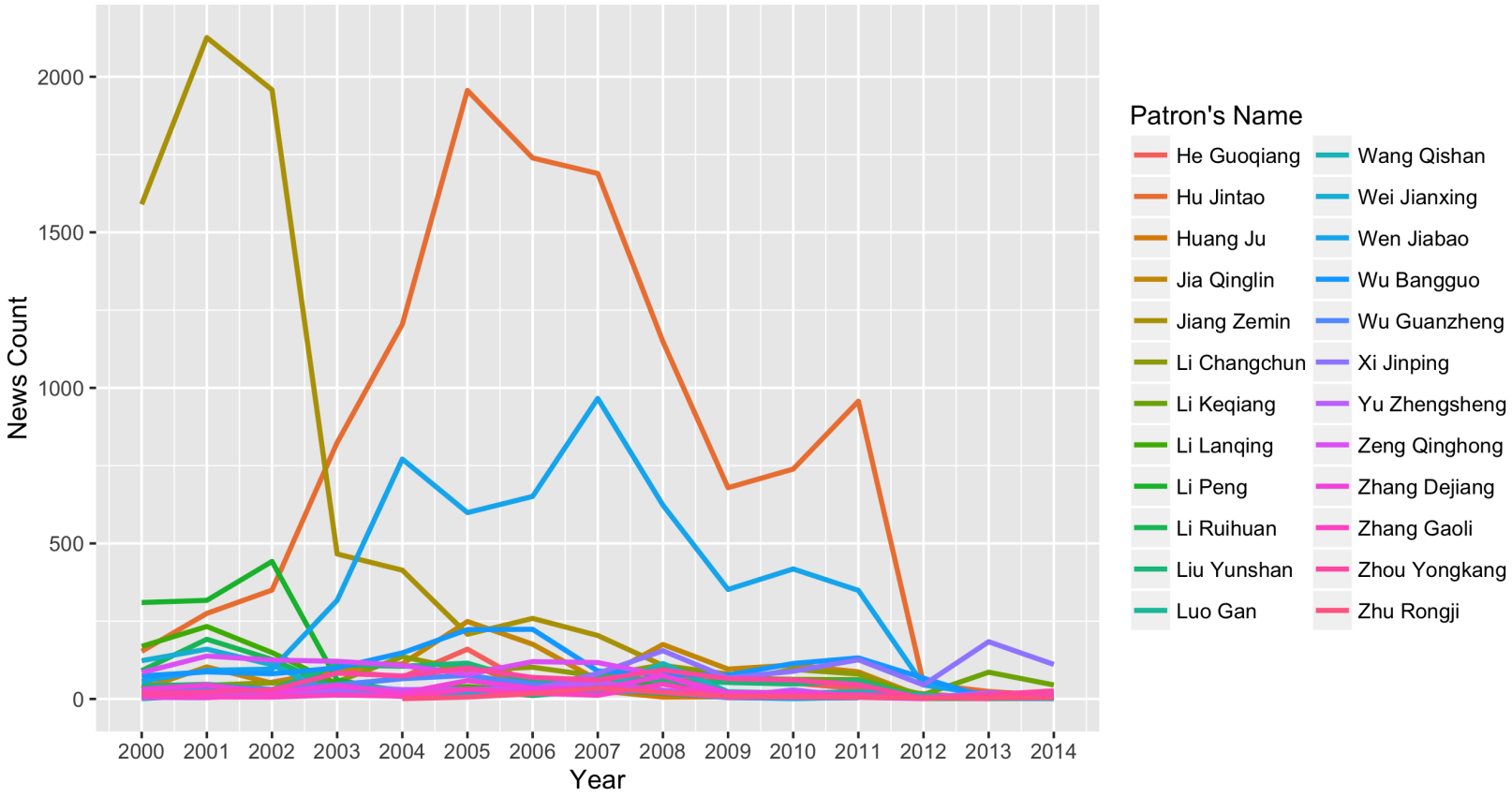

Figure 1: Annual News Reports on the Politburo Standing Committee Members

APPENDIX

Table A.1: Summary Statistics

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**N**
Corruption News	1.211	4.743	0	161	13050
Corruption News/Total News	0.14	3.469	0	200	9396
Total News	727.257	1302.433	1	14217	8795
Patron Power (News)	0.156	0.24	0	0.9	13050
Patron Power (Event)	0.156	0.24	0	0.9	13050
Power Difference	0	0.342	-0.9	0.9	13050
President Power	0.53	0.095	0.304	0.653	13050
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.229	0.42	0	1	13050
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.229	0.42	0	1	13050
Age Gap	4.414	3.59	0	18	12992
Years in Office Gap	2.236	2.168	0	13	13050

Table A.2: President's Power and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
President Power	-4.934***	-4.867***	-4.868***	0.349**	0.302**	0.333**
	(0.590)	(0.593)	(0.593)	(0.116)	(0.107)	(0.114)
Patron Power (News)	1.212**	1.287**	1.333***	0.212**	0.023	0.227*
	(0.391)	(0.405)	(0.387)	(0.065)	(0.086)	(0.089)
Patron Power (Event)	0.257	0.392	0.261	-0.014	-0.047	-0.131
	(0.268)	(0.272)	(0.263)	(0.058)	(0.070)	(0.111)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.189	0.220	0.225	-0.074*	-0.152***	-0.130***
	(0.134)	(0.139)	(0.138)	(0.030)	(0.040)	(0.035)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.090	0.146	0.130	0.066	0.053	0.049
	(0.125)	(0.137)	(0.145)	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.073)
Age Gap	-0.015	-0.012	-0.010	-0.005	-0.007	-0.011+
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.066***	-0.065**	-0.066**	0.007	0.011	0.012
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.274			0.537+	
		(0.259)			(0.323)	
News=1 and Event=0		-0.162			0.946*	
		(0.205)			(0.408)	
News=1 and Event=1		-0.423+			0.896*	
		(0.216)			(0.360)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			-0.127			0.618***
			(0.133)			(0.179)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			-0.190			0.278*
			(0.133)			(0.121)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.338*			0.024
			(0.143)			(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			-0.159			0.147+
			(0.200)			(0.087)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	No	No
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.338	0.339	0.339	0.114	0.117	0.117

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.3: Political Cycle and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
Patron Power (News)	1.308**	1.274**	1.252**	0.277***	0.113	0.333***
	(0.440)	(0.445)	(0.418)	(0.079)	(0.083)	(0.097)
Patron Power (Event)	0.336	0.361	0.159	-0.044	-0.062	-0.116
	(0.307)	(0.305)	(0.286)	(0.073)	(0.082)	(0.120)
Year of NPC x Patron Power (News)	-0.739+	-0.740+	-0.737+	-0.249***	-0.277***	-0.251***
	(0.410)	(0.409)	(0.408)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.070)
Year of NPC x Patron Power (Event)	-0.664**	-0.663**	-0.650**	0.017	0.017	0.020
	(0.241)	(0.241)	(0.239)	(0.059)	(0.060)	(0.065)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.176	0.162	0.157	-0.092**	-0.169***	-0.144***
	(0.128)	(0.132)	(0.130)	(0.035)	(0.046)	(0.040)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.077	0.088	0.064	0.073	0.065	0.062
	(0.124)	(0.139)	(0.147)	(0.080)	(0.076)	(0.074)
Age Gap	-0.017	-0.017	-0.014	-0.002	-0.004	-0.009
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.092***	-0.092***	-0.094***	0.005	0.007	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.064			0.490	
		(0.268)			(0.312)	
News=1 and Event=0		0.049			0.893*	
		(0.208)			(0.391)	
News=1 and Event=1		0.005			0.819*	
		(0.236)			(0.335)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.051			0.597***
			(0.128)			(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.080			0.215*
			(0.125)			(0.099)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.161			0.014
			(0.149)			(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.112			0.092
			(0.220)			(0.081)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.352	0.352	0.352	0.123	0.125	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses, Year of NCP and Years to NCP are dropped because of year fixed effects.
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.4: Media Types and Interprovincial News Report on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	Party Line Newspaper						Commercial Newspaper					
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News			Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
Patron Power (News)	0.948**	0.891*	0.868***	2.908**	2.743**	4.703***	0.188*	0.212**	0.211**	-4.833	-0.078	0.379
	(0.354)	(0.355)	(0.153)	(1.059)	(1.016)	(0.612)	(0.079)	(0.070)	(0.075)	(8.548)	(6.658)	(6.070)
Patron Power (Event)	0.159	0.178	0.042	-0.355	-0.270	-0.383	0.022	0.030	-0.035	-1.933	-3.289	-0.932
	(0.213)	(0.215)	(0.153)	(0.571)	(0.583)	(0.645)	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.099)	(7.263)	(7.009)	(8.901)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.175^{+}	0.151	0.147^{+}	-0.830	-0.900	-0.756*	0.010	0.020	0.019	-3.744	-1.945	-1.785
	(0.105)	(0.108)	(0.077)	(0.585)	(0.601)	(0.327)	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(5.713)	(4.933)	(4.906)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.080	0.087	0.071	-0.016	0.024	0.025	0.005	0.009	0.001	-2.599	-3.320	-2.955
	(0.100)	(0.113)	(0.077)	(0.317)	(0.311)	(0.333)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.043)	(3.377)	(3.822)	(3.759)
Age Gap	-0.017^{+}	-0.018^{+}	-0.016^{+}	0.101^{+}	0.101^{+}	0.058	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.097	0.226	0.145
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.038)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.279)	(0.312)	(0.294)
Years in Office Gap	-0.078***	-0.079***	-0.080***	-0.143^{+}	-0.139^{+}	-0.115^{+}	-0.015*	-0.014*	-0.015*	0.081	0.099	0.154
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.074)	(0.073)	(0.069)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.916)	(0.920)	(0.907)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.040			0.101			-0.022			8.910	
		(0.257)			(0.398)			(0.119)			(9.770)	
News=1 and Event=0		0.103			0.693			-0.052			-5.726	
		(0.186)			(0.494)			(0.120)			(5.525)	
News=1 and Event=1		0.071			0.443			-0.067			-4.068	
		(0.233)			(0.341)			(0.113)			(5.405)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.095			1.798***			-0.047			-10.518*
			(0.094)			(0.410)			(0.059)			(5.090)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.126			-1.503***			-0.046			-12.130^{+}
			(0.101)			(0.433)			(0.057)			(6.387)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.111			-0.223			-0.053			4.340
			(0.094)			(0.409)			(0.035)			(4.543)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.076			-0.042			0.037			0.293
			(0.101)			(0.439)			(0.060)			(3.434)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	8364	8364	8364	12992	12992	12992	2460	2460	2460
Adjusted R^2	0.347	0.346	0.348	0.066	0.066	0.081	0.193	0.193	0.193	0.009	0.010	0.010

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.5: Alternative Definitions of Factions and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
Patron Power (News)	0.856*	0.746*	0.588+	0.308***	0.066	0.457***
	(0.363)	(0.359)	(0.309)	(0.076)	(0.087)	(0.110)
Patron Power (Event)	0.485	0.555	0.364	0.008	-0.014	-0.071
	(0.366)	(0.353)	(0.309)	(0.065)	(0.074)	(0.124)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.205	0.176	0.167	-0.115**	-0.170***	-0.180***
	(0.129)	(0.129)	(0.127)	(0.038)	(0.046)	(0.045)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.027	0.045	0.035	0.066	0.062	0.064
	(0.136)	(0.147)	(0.151)	(0.078)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Age Gap	-0.015	-0.015	-0.012	-0.002	-0.004	-0.009
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.092***	-0.093***	-0.095***	0.005	0.006	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.119			0.481	
		(0.253)			(0.309)	
News=1 and Event=0		0.146			0.891*	
		(0.216)			(0.390)	
News=1 and Event=1		0.048			0.807*	
		(0.235)			(0.332)	
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.088			0.596***
			(0.127)			(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.266+			0.190*
			(0.143)			(0.095)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.191			0.010
			(0.147)			(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.023			0.074
			(0.200)			(0.077)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.123	0.125	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses, Year of NCP and Years to NCP are dropped because of year fixed effects.
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.6: Official Ranking of Patrons and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Case

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Corruption News				Corruption News/Total News			
Total Patron Official Rank (News)	0.347**				0.099**			
	(0.124)				(0.031)			
Total Patron Official Rank (Event)	0.238*				-0.041			
	(0.118)				(0.050)			
Average Patron Official Rank (News)		1.242***				0.113		
		(0.340)				(0.140)		
Average Patron Official Rank (Event)		0.647**				-0.056		
		(0.208)				(0.120)		
Highest Patron Rank (News)			0.490**				0.122+	
			(0.160)				(0.070)	
Highest Patron Rank (Event)			0.229+				-0.062	
			(0.124)				(0.091)	
diffClanRank				0.055				0.072*
				(0.061)				(0.029)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.116	0.160	0.157	0.207	-0.158***	-0.122***	-0.137***	-0.146***
	(0.122)	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.144)	(0.043)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.042)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	-0.003	0.041	0.041	0.088	0.069	0.060	0.066	0.078
	(0.150)	(0.150)	(0.150)	(0.149)	(0.079)	(0.074)	(0.078)	(0.075)
Single Faction Ties (News)	0.077	-0.141	0.030	0.118	0.600***	0.594**	0.596***	0.604***
	(0.127)	(0.152)	(0.129)	(0.128)	(0.167)	(0.182)	(0.171)	(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)	0.086	0.036	0.109	0.357*	0.193+	0.258*	0.221+	0.219*
	(0.132)	(0.126)	(0.150)	(0.164)	(0.100)	(0.120)	(0.116)	(0.093)
Single Faction Ties (Event)	-0.200	-0.303*	-0.209	-0.159	0.012	0.016	0.017	0.016
	(0.148)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.148)	(0.068)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)	-0.109	-0.082	-0.027	0.163	0.095	0.073	0.094	0.124+
	(0.195)	(0.194)	(0.205)	(0.211)	(0.090)	(0.074)	(0.093)	(0.072)
Age Gap	-0.016	-0.020+	-0.016	-0.011	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.008
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.094***	-0.085***	-0.093***	-0.093***	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.351	0.353	0.351	0.350	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
$^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.7: Patron's Power and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases (Average of Patron Power)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Corruption News				Corruption News/Total News			
Average Patron Power (News)	3.240***	3.252***	3.135***		1.019***	0.641+	0.670*	
	(0.885)	(0.906)	(0.852)		(0.301)	(0.337)	(0.329)	
Average Patron Power (Event)	0.227	0.267	0.103		-0.180	-0.239	-0.253	
	(0.525)	(0.500)	(0.482)		(0.213)	(0.250)	(0.266)	
Average Power Difference				1.516**				0.467*
				(0.469)				(0.202)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.254+	0.256	0.226	0.223	-0.072*	-0.160***	-0.116***	-0.116***
	(0.154)	(0.158)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.028)	(0.044)	(0.035)	(0.035)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.110	0.117	0.075	0.072	0.074	0.061	0.057	0.056
	(0.126)	(0.142)	(0.152)	(0.153)	(0.078)	(0.072)	(0.070)	(0.070)
Age Gap	-0.022+	-0.022+	-0.017	-0.011	-0.004	-0.005	-0.009+	-0.008
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.086***	-0.086***	-0.090***	-0.093***	0.007	0.008	0.009	0.008
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.046				0.499		
		(0.268)				(0.318)		
News=1 and Event=0		-0.025				0.854*		
		(0.208)				(0.394)		
News=1 and Event=1		-0.050				0.790*		
		(0.239)				(0.344)		
Single Faction Ties (News)			-0.103	0.012			0.571**	0.584***
			(0.141)	(0.137)			(0.175)	(0.169)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.081	0.249+			0.238*	0.253*
			(0.128)	(0.147)			(0.108)	(0.099)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.167	-0.053			0.024	0.038
			(0.149)	(0.153)			(0.072)	(0.071)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			0.103	0.271			0.083	0.104
			(0.208)	(0.226)			(0.075)	(0.065)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.352	0.352	0.353	0.351	0.124	0.126	0.126	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.8: Patron's Power and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Cases (Patron Power in News Title)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Corruption News				Corruption News/Total News			
Patron Power (News Title)	1.193**	1.166**	1.126***		0.203***	-0.028	0.221**	
	(0.363)	(0.366)	(0.322)		(0.058)	(0.080)	(0.082)	
Patron Power (Event Title)	0.473	0.552+	0.400		-0.027	-0.044	-0.114	
	(0.312)	(0.298)	(0.259)		(0.073)	(0.088)	(0.138)	
Power Difference (Title)				0.363*				0.172*
				(0.144)				(0.077)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.152	0.144	0.139	0.197	-0.088**	-0.156***	-0.137***	-0.132***
	(0.130)	(0.133)	(0.130)	(0.143)	(0.034)	(0.044)	(0.039)	(0.038)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	0.031	0.055	0.040	0.098	0.071	0.064	0.064	0.067
	(0.135)	(0.146)	(0.152)	(0.150)	(0.082)	(0.077)	(0.076)	(0.073)
Age Gap	-0.015	-0.014	-0.012	-0.011	-0.002	-0.004	-0.008	-0.008
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.094***	-0.093***	-0.095***	-0.093***	0.006	0.007	0.009	0.008
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
News=0 and Event=1		-0.122				0.487		
		(0.255)				(0.313)		
News=1 and Event=0		0.045				0.903*		
		(0.208)				(0.393)		
News=1 and Event=1		-0.081				0.826*		
		(0.223)				(0.339)		
Single Faction Ties (News)			0.019	0.092			0.595***	0.599***
			(0.128)	(0.130)			(0.168)	(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)			0.073	0.300+			0.224*	0.238*
			(0.126)	(0.160)			(0.102)	(0.096)
Single Faction Ties (Event)			-0.205	-0.132			0.015	0.019
			(0.146)	(0.148)			(0.069)	(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)			-0.007	0.220			0.091	0.107
			(0.197)	(0.218)			(0.087)	(0.070)
News-Event Province Dyad FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.351	0.351	0.352	0.350	0.123	0.125	0.126	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.9: Patron's Network Power and Interprovincial News Reports on Corruption Case

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Corruption News			Corruption News/Total News		
Total Patron Network Power (News)	0.027**			0.011***		
	(0.010)			(0.003)		
Total Patron Network Power (Event)	0.024*			-0.004		
	(0.011)			(0.004)		
Average Patron Network Power (News)		0.062***			-0.002	
		(0.018)			(0.009)	
Average Patron Network Power (Event)		0.043*			-0.004	
		(0.018)			(0.005)	
Network Power Difference			0.002			0.007**
			(0.006)			(0.003)
PS-GN Same Faction (News)	0.128	0.173	0.219	-0.162***	-0.113**	-0.147***
	(0.125)	(0.136)	(0.146)	(0.043)	(0.034)	(0.040)
PS-GN Same Faction (Event)	-0.015	0.035	0.076	0.068	0.059	0.080
	(0.163)	(0.155)	(0.156)	(0.078)	(0.072)	(0.074)
Single Faction Ties (News)	0.042	-0.116	0.122	0.589***	0.624**	0.597***
	(0.129)	(0.155)	(0.132)	(0.167)	(0.190)	(0.167)
Multiple Faction Ties (News)	0.135	0.199	0.393*	0.196*	0.291*	0.224*
	(0.146)	(0.150)	(0.181)	(0.099)	(0.115)	(0.096)
Single Faction Ties (Event)	-0.243+	-0.337*	-0.163	0.014	0.015	0.023
	(0.144)	(0.131)	(0.147)	(0.069)	(0.071)	(0.069)
Multiple Faction Ties (Event)	-0.131	-0.035	0.127	0.090	0.068	0.125+
	(0.176)	(0.191)	(0.192)	(0.087)	(0.067)	(0.071)
Age Gap	-0.012	-0.010	-0.011	-0.009	-0.008	-0.008
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Years in Office Gap	-0.095***	-0.090***	-0.093***	0.009	0.007	0.009
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	12992	12992	12992	9380	9380	9380
Adjusted R^2	0.351	0.352	0.350	0.126	0.126	0.126

Standard errors clustered at News-Event province dyad in parentheses
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

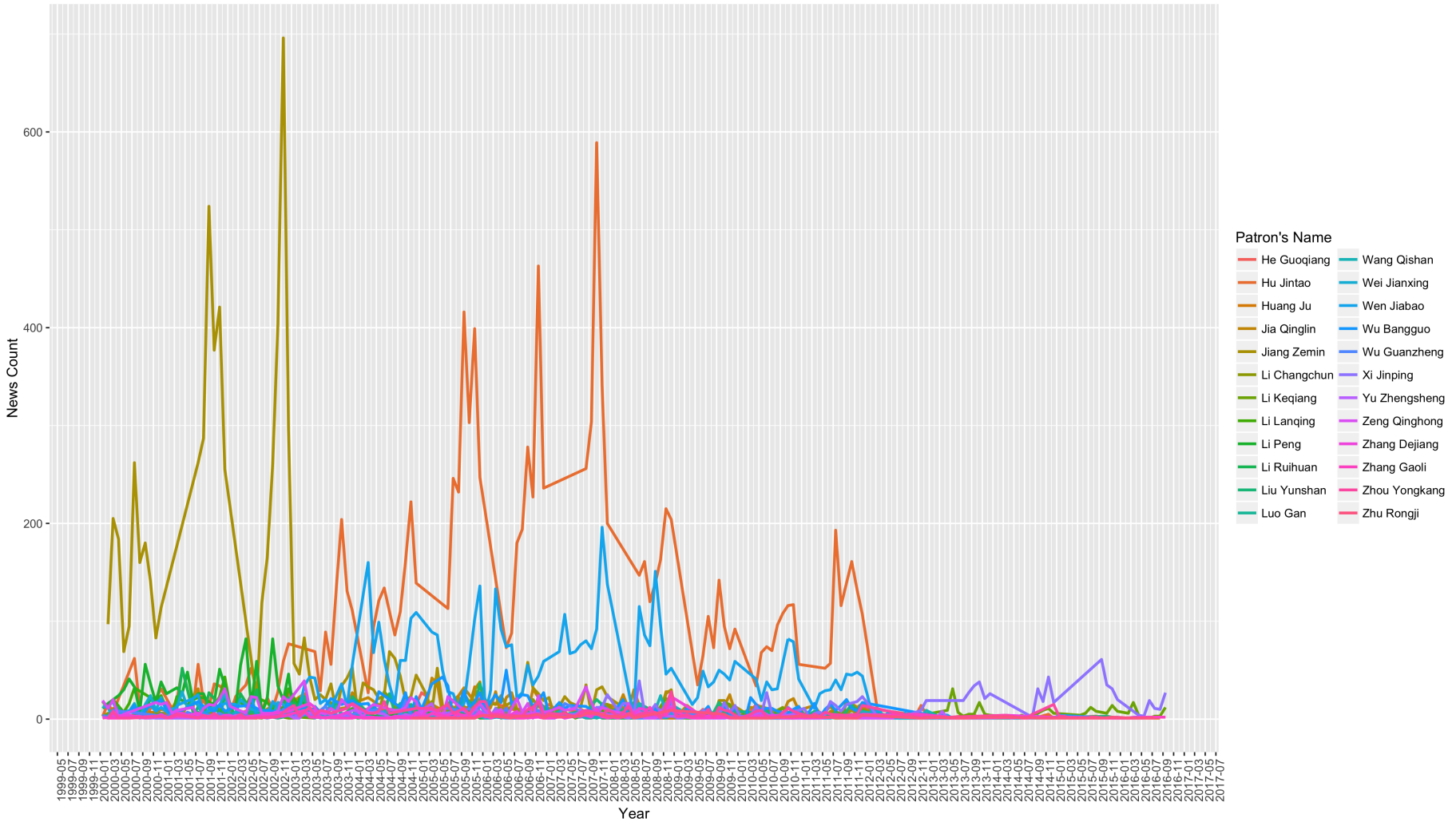

Figure A.1: Monthly News Reports on the Politburo Standing Committee Members

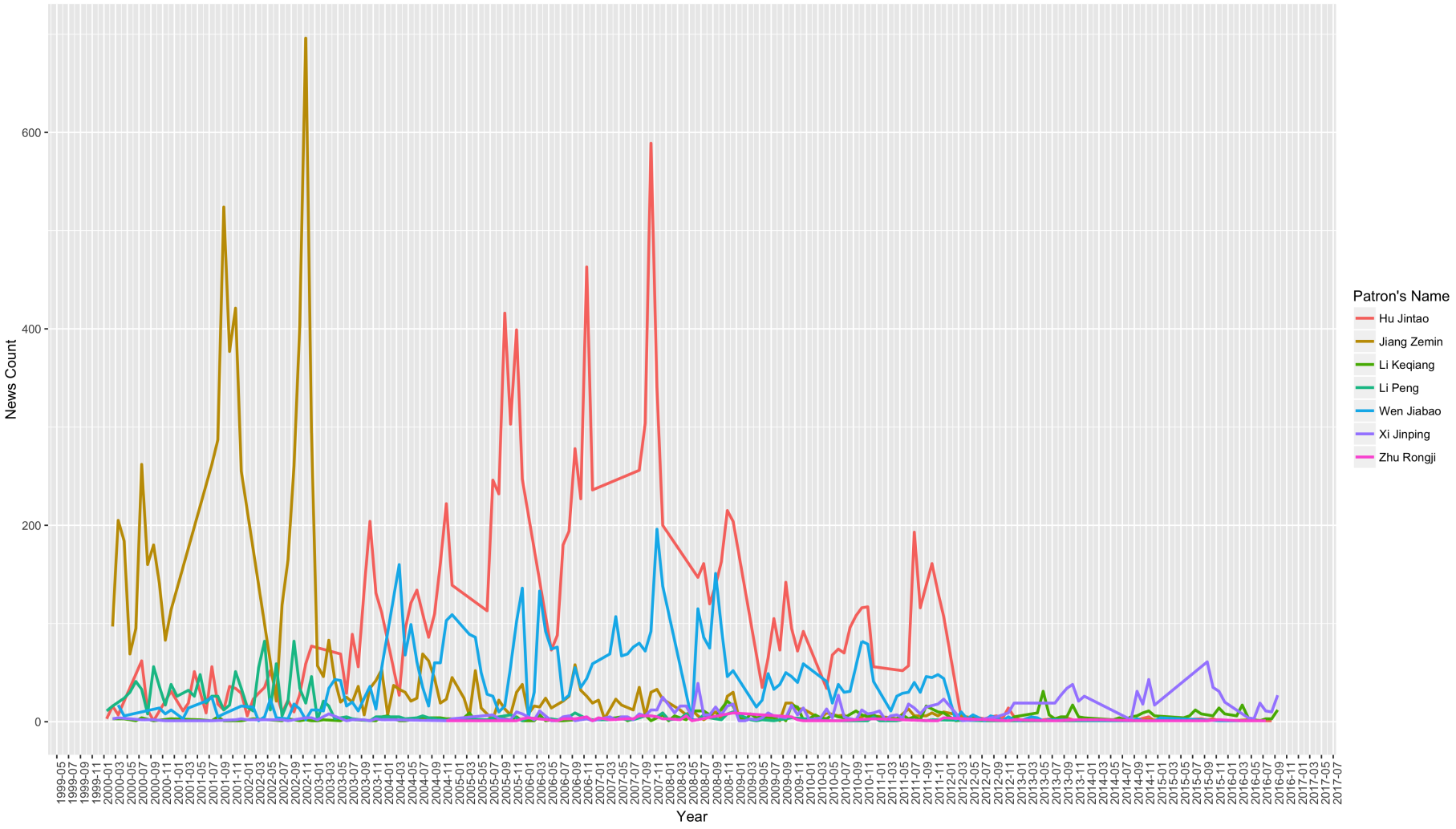

Figure A.2: Monthly News Report on the President and Premier

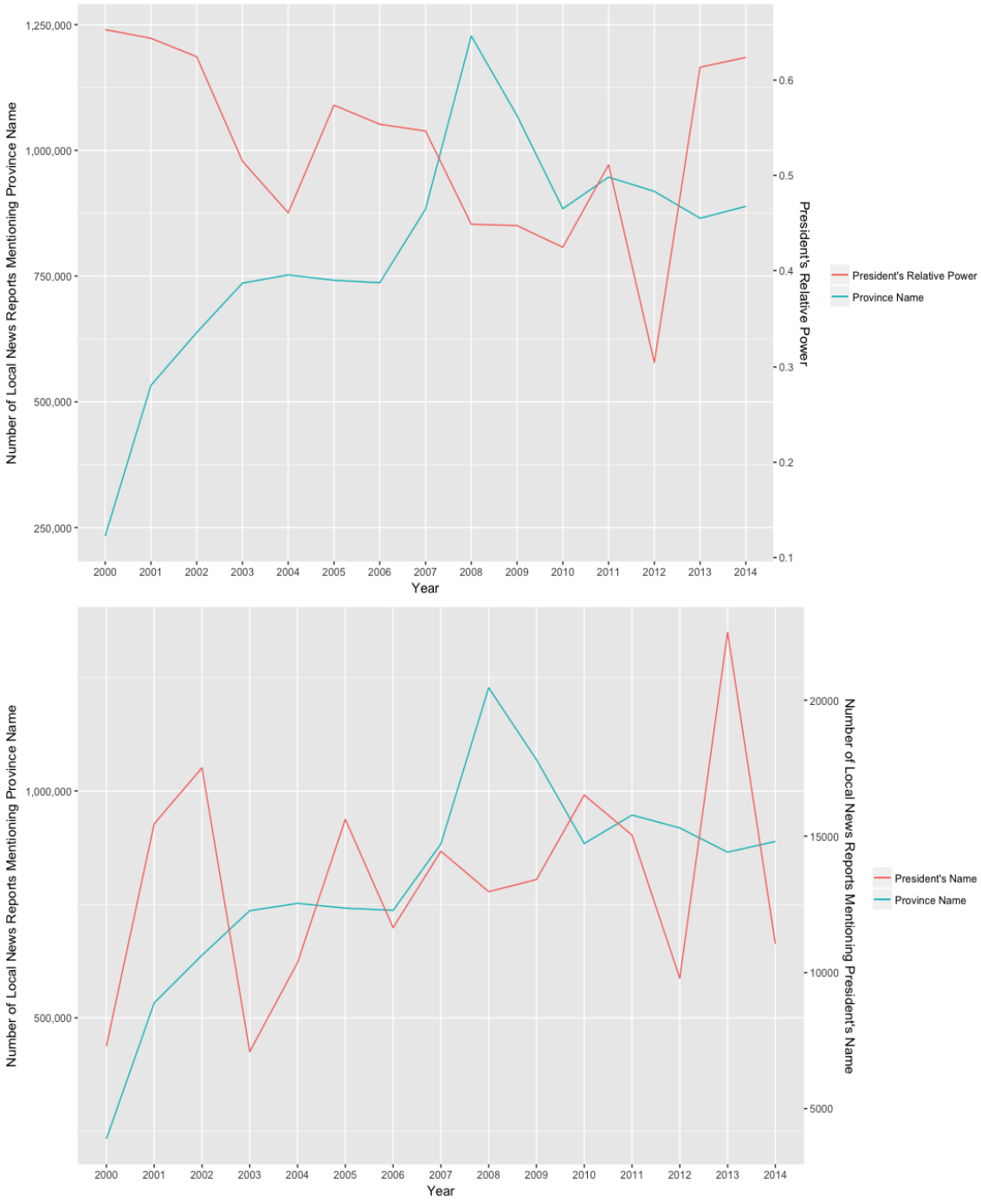

Figure A.3: President's power and local news on other provinces and the President