Changing Manners of Displaying Loyalties through Ideological Campaigns in Post-Deng China

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Changing Manners of Displaying Loyalties through Ideological Campaigns in Post-Deng China

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ABSTRACT
Ideological campaigns in post-Deng China have a strategic function of discerning loyalties of local leaders. Previous empirical studies have found that Jiang Zemin’s followers are more likely to echo Jiang’s ideological campaigns. Through a content analysis of provincial newspapers between 2005 and 2012, this study suggests that the manner of displaying loyalties has completely changed. By employing a panel-corrected standard errors (PCSE) estimation, this study finds that protégés of both Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin are less likely to echo their patron’s ideological campaigns, suggesting the shifting function of ideological campaigns from monitoring identified followers’ loyalties to recruiting new followers. This article argues that this is a result of changing elite politics and—more importantly—the different strategic use of ideological campaigns.

Introduction
The success of the Chinese economy has prompted a sizable political science literature to contend that the economic miracle led by market reform has become a principal if not the sole pillar of legitimacy in China on the one hand, and the market reform has also rendered ideology obsolete on the other hand. Despite a few scholars, the issue of ideological changes in post-Deng China is under-researched in the English language literature. As Holbig argues,


3For example, Heike Holbig, Peter Sandby-Thomas, William Joseph, Yih-jye Hwang, Kerry Brown and Florian Schneider, among others.
Yet, in China, ideology is still considered as crucial nowadays. The author’s study of the Chinese elites’ debate on legitimacy—based on 125 articles in party school journals, university journals and public policy journals between 2008 and 2012—found that ideology is considered a leading strategy to maintain the party’s monopoly on power. The party-state in China has invested a great amount of energy and human capital in modernizing the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from Jiang Zemin’s ‘Three Represents’, Hu Jintao’s ‘Scientific Outlook of Development’ and ‘Harmonious Society’ to Xi Jinping’s present ‘China Dream’. In the meantime, both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have launched waves of ideological campaigns—involving a great amount of government instructions, numerous meetings and mobilization of thousands of propaganda units from the central government to the very bottom—to promote their new ideological banners, followed by a series of major policy shifts.

What are the functions of the ideological campaigns in post-Deng China? Previous literature suggests that a strategic function of ideological campaigns is to discern the loyalties of local leaders. Shih’s empirical study, based on provincial official newspapers between 2000 and 2004, finds that provincial units that are governed by Jiang Zemin’s protégés are more likely to echo Jiang’s ‘Three Represents’ campaigns. Building on Shih’s pioneering work, this study examines the manner of displaying loyalty through ideological campaigns in Hu Jintao’s era by analyzing the impact of factional ties on the provinces’ zeal to echo those campaigns.

This study departs from the previous study in four ways. First, instead of studying the reaction of a single political group, this study examines how major dominant political groups—including Hu Jintao’s protégés, the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and princelings—echo ideological campaigns. Second, instead of focusing on a single campaign, this study examines three ideological campaigns—including Scientific Outlook of Development, Harmonious Society and Three Represents—in order systematically to study the strategic functions of ideological campaigns in post-Deng China. Third, while the previous study observes five periods of time (2000–2004) with 22 provinces, missing important objects such as Tianjin, Guangdong and Guizhou, this study is based on eight periods of time (2005–2012) with all 31 Chinese provincial units except Shandong. Finally, this study also analyses whether the volume of patron–client ties with senior leaders has an impact on provincial leaders’ zeal to echo ideological campaigns. For example, if both the party secretary and the governor of a given province are Hu Jintao’s protégés, this

7Shih, “‘Nauseating’ displays of loyalty.’
8This study uses Li Cheng’s definition of ‘Shanghai Gang’ which is ‘current leaders whose careers have advanced primarily owing to their political association with Jiang Zemin in Shanghai’. See Cheng Li, ‘The “Shanghai Gang”: force for stability or cause for conflict?’, China Leadership Monitor 1(2), (2001).
9In this study, princeling refers to state/party/military leaders who come from families of senior party leaders (vice minister or vice governor level or above) or military generals (deputy military region level or above).
10The case of Three Represents in this article is quite different from Harmonious Society and Scientific Outlook of Development because Jiang had already stepped down several years earlier, thus the reactions of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and the variation of Three Represents during 2005 and 2012 are not the major interests of the study. The major aim of this article is to compare the reaction of Hu’s followers to Scientific Outlook of Development (2005–2012) with that of Jiang’s follower to Three Represents (2000–2004).
11The CNK database does not include the data of the Shandong provincial official newspaper Dazhong Daily during the relevant period.
province may act differently from others provinces that only have a leader who is a Hu Jintao’s protégé and differently from the provinces that are governed by Jiang Zemin’s protégés.

When the author examines the data between 2005 and 2012, this study finds that Hu Jintao’s protégés are less likely to echo Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaign and the ‘Shanghai Gang’ are less willing to echo either Jiang’s Three Represents or Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns. In other words, all identified factional members are less likely to echo ideological campaigns—either Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development or Jiang’s Three Represents—than those who have fewer connections with Jiang or Hu. These results indicate a changing manner of displaying loyalty through ideological campaigns. Nowadays, ideological campaigns play a role of ‘recruitment’ (recruiting new protégés) rather than ‘maintenance’ (monitoring the loyalty of existing protégés).

This article argues that the shifting function of ideological campaigns is a result of changing elite politics and—more importantly—a different strategic use of ideological campaigns. Through ideological campaigns, Jiang Zemin intended to maintain influence after retirement, while Hu Jintao had less desire to do so. Notably, the purpose of this article is not to dispute the major functions of ideological adaptation and campaigns. Ideology, of course, has many functions and it has been playing a highly ambiguous role in China. The main purpose of this article is to uncover and analyse the pragmatic power motivation of ideological campaigns—how factional affiliations of local leaders have influenced their zeal to echo top leaders’ ideological banners in post-Deng China.

### Ideological campaigns in contemporary China

In Mao Zedong’s era, communist ideology used to be the lynchpin of legitimation in China for a couple of decades. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, ideology and politicization became the problem rather than the solution because mass campaigns and ideology were no longer popular. Recognizing people’s changing views, Deng Xiaoping capitalized on a less political approach after the death of Mao Zedong and the fall of the Gang of Four. Deng and his supporters chose to build state legitimacy on economic performance and socialist democracy rather than ideology and political campaigns. In order to promote economic growth, the CCP had to get away from the communist doctrines.

In the post-Deng era, however, ideology has returned to the agenda of the party-state. The party-state has put great efforts—with enormous money and human capital—into reinvesting its ideology. Both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao launched costly ideological campaigns to promote their ideological banners. So, what did motivate the return of ideology in post-Deng China? So far, the existing literature roughly offers two interpretations. The first view argues that the ideological adaptation has served as a legitimizing device for the communist regime, while the second view approaches ideology from a factional perspective that ideology is a factional tool used in the struggle for power.

The above cleavage lies in the primary audience and function of the CCP’s ideological discourses. The author argues that there are two types of ideological discourses in China: formal ideology and

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informal ideology.\textsuperscript{14} Formal ideology is narrowly concerned with the CCP’s discipline and the socialist doctrines, which is incorporated in the CCP constitution such as Jiang Zemin’s Three Represents, and Hu Jintao’s Scientific Outlook of Development. Informal ideology refers to those popular ideations that are broadly concerned with the justification of the one-party rule to the entire society, such as the promotion of patriotism.\textsuperscript{15}

The most important function of formal ideology is to redefine what is meant by socialism at that moment in time, and thus to provide an ex post facto justification.\textsuperscript{16} For example, Jiang Zemin’s ‘Three Represents’—‘representing the demands for the development of advanced social productive forces, the direction of advanced culture, and the fundamental interest of the greatest majority of the people’\textsuperscript{17}—aimed to use these ‘represents’ to redefine the CCP’s commitment to socialism and thus justify why the CCP’s quasi-capitalist economic policies were not incompatible with this commitment.\textsuperscript{18} In this sense, formal ideology is primarily produced for justifying the CCP’s existence to itself. When it comes to legitimizing the authoritarian rule as a whole, this is the arena in which informal ideology takes place. In this way, formal ideology and informal ideology deal with party cohesion and popular legitimacy of the CCP, respectively.\textsuperscript{19}

Another important function of formal ideology is to establish ideological orthodoxy and leaders’ credentials.\textsuperscript{20} As formal ideology is clearly identified with specific leaders, it reflects the personal authority of Chinese leaders and thus carries a special meaning to assert their power. In this article, ideological campaigns mainly refer to the promotion of formal ideology and the author will focus on how those campaigns are used for the purpose of power.

Within the factional perspective, many argue that the adaption of ideology is an attempt to put a leader’s stamp on history and on the party.\textsuperscript{21} In this sense, the return of ideology is more about creating political legacy and maintaining senior leaders’ influence after they step down. However, it still leaves many questions unanswered. A single grand campaign is sufficient to create political legacies; so, why were ideological campaigns launched with such high frequency in post-Deng China? In addition, if Scientific Outlook of Development alone was sufficient to preserve the influence of Hu Jintao, why did the regime launch other campaigns such as Harmonious Society?

Shih’s work provides an additional dimension to the factional perspective. It is argued that political allegiance is a key function of ideological campaigns.\textsuperscript{22} Through ideological campaigns, local political actors can pander to the top leader by praising his ideological banners; however, it takes both political and social costs to do so.\textsuperscript{23} After Mao Zedong died, the CCP formed certain rules to guard against cults of personality; political actors who shamelessly praise a senior leader and thus violate this norm might be despised as boot-lickers.\textsuperscript{24} More importantly, junior leaders who pander through public grovelling to a senior leader suffer politically because they are unlikely to be recruited by another rival coalition if their patron falls from power.\textsuperscript{25} By bearing the cost of being despised by others and closing the door to alternative factions, the public grovelling through ideological campaigns sends creditable signals to senior leaders about political actors’ loyalties.\textsuperscript{26} In this way, senior leaders can identify which followers

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p.18–21; 116–122.
\textsuperscript{17} English translation: Holbig, ‘Ideological reform and political legitimacy in China’.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. p.19–23.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p.18–21; 116–122.
\textsuperscript{21} Fewsmith, ‘Studying the three represents’; Zheng and Lye, ‘Elite politics and the fourth generation of Chinese leadership’.
\textsuperscript{22} Shih, “Nauseating” displays of loyalty’; for others, please see Tatlow, ‘Allegiance, the privilege of the party’; Wang, ‘Xi follows in Mao’s footsteps on path to consolidate power’; Lieber, ‘The Chinese ideology’.
\textsuperscript{23} Shih, “Nauseating” displays of loyalty’.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
are truly loyal. In this sense, ideological campaigns serve as a way for local leaders to pander to senior leaders in order to win their trust and for senior leaders to discern loyalties of the local leaders.27

The above theory is evidenced by Shih's empirical study. By using content analysis to study provincial newspapers between 2000 and 2004, Shih finds that provinces that were governed by Jiang Zemin's protégés were more likely to echo Jiang's Three Represents campaigns. Thus, Shih concludes that Jiang Zemin's ideological campaigns have a function of monitoring followers' loyalties so that the ruler can better prevent a coup.28 How about Hu Jintao's ideological campaigns? Did Hu's campaigns also have a function to monitor followers' loyalties? There are good theoretical and empirical reasons to hypothesize that Hu Jintao's ideological campaigns have a different strategic function from that of Jiang's.

Theoretically, identified factional members might have other ways of displaying loyalties, such as supporting their patron's action in the Central Committee by voting and protecting the family business of their patron in their governed areas.29 They do not have to risk the political and social cost of pandering to their patron through ideological campaigns. To those officials who are not the top leader's protégés and thus have far fewer connections to the top leader, ideological campaigns might be one of the few opportunities to pander to the top leader in order to win their favour. It is reasonable that they will be more active than identified followers in echoing ideological campaigns. If so, ideological campaigns can function as a way for local officials to pander to senior leaders in order to be recruited into a coalition. In this sense, it is theoretically possible for ideological campaigns to play the role of recruiting new followers rather than monitoring existing followers' loyalties.30

Empirically, Jiang Zemin's Three Represents campaigns are different from those of Hu. First, obtaining information about followers' loyalties was much more important to Jiang Zemin than to Hu Jintao. Elite politics during Hu Jintao's era was far more stable than during the time of Jiang. Jiang Zemin was appointed by Deng Xiaoping as the top leader suddenly because of the protest in 1989. At the beginning of Jiang's appointment, many considered Jiang to be a temporary leader who would soon be removed. This was because Jiang, as a party bureaucrat without any power bases, was too weak and vulnerable to be surrounded by his veteran colleagues, such as Yang Shangkun who was a revolutionary leader, the President of the People's Republic of China and the vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. Arguably, Jiang had to rely more heavily on loyal followers in order to stay in power; otherwise, he might be overthrown by powerful rivals.

On the contrary, Hu Jintao's position as the party head had never been seriously challenged, although factional struggle remained intense during Hu's term. Factional groups were neither willing nor able to defeat their rivals completely because of the equal balanced power and the necessity of power-sharing to maintain stability.31 Because of the more stable elite politics, Hu Jintao might be less eager to monitor followers' loyalties through costly ideological campaigns than Jiang Zemin was.

Moreover, an institutionalized power succession system also leads to less demand in monitoring followers' loyalties through ideological campaigns as well. In the past three decades, the CCP has taken impressive efforts to institutionalize its power succession system.32 As explained earlier, Jiang Zemin was appointed as the top leader by a sudden decision; however, both Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping were scheduled as heir apparent for years in advance. Thus, they had more opportunities to obtain knowledge about their existing followers before they took power than Jiang Zemin did.

Most importantly, the timings of launching ideological campaigns were very different. Jiang Zemin began to propose Three Represents and launch relevant campaigns almost at the end of his term. As a

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
departing leader, to maintain rather than to expand his power base was perhaps more rational to Jiang. At this time, Jiang might be less interested in using ideological campaigns to recruit new followers as it would not have been cost-effective. It was not very rational for provincial leaders to pander to the departing Jiang Zemin either, because no-one knew the durability of Jiang's influence after his retirement. This explains why non-Jiang protégés were less motivated than Jiang's protégés to echo Jiang's campaigns, as Shih's study finds.

The campaigns of Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook of Development and Xi Jinping's 'China Dream', however, were launched in the first few years of their terms. Both of these ideological banners clearly indicated the new leaders' attempts to carry out a new vision and walk out of the shadow of their predecessors. At that time, as new top leaders, they might have been motivated to build their power bases for their rule; thus, recruiting new protégés through ideological campaigns matched their interests. For provincial leaders who are not new leaders' protégés, they might be more willing to pander to the new leaders. Thus, they might have been more motivated than those identified protégés to echo Hu's ideological banner. In this sense, the different timing of launching ideological campaigns might completely overturn the manner of displaying loyalties in Hu Jintao's term.

In short, the manner of displaying loyalty through ideological campaigns in Hu Jintao's era might be very different from that in Jiang's era because of the different timing of ideological campaigns and the changing elite politics.

**Measurement and data**

Given the above conjectures, this study tests the hypothesis of allegiance with the data between 2005 and 2012. In order to purge the possible effects of methodological difference, this study employs similar research method and data analysis techniques to the Shih's study. This study observes the number of ideological articles that were published in official newspapers (机关报) from all 31 Chinese provincial units except Shandong. As provincial official newspapers are directly controlled by provincial propaganda departments and their content is closely supervised by the provincial standing committee (省委常委会), the frequency of relevant articles captures the willingness of provincial leaders to publish relevant items.

The campaigns of Scientific Outlook of Development and Harmonious Society are chosen because they were the most influential ones in Hu Jintao's era and the most representative in reflecting Hu's personal authority. The time period between 2005 and 2012 is chosen because it covers the life of these two campaigns. In addition, this study also observes Three Represents articles during the period of interest. The numbers of articles containing the phrase 'Scientific Outlook of Development' (科学发展观), 'Harmonious Society' (和谐社会) or 'Three Represents' (三个代表) during the period of interest are collected from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure.

**Dependent variables**

The unit of analysis in this study is a province–year observation covering 2005–2012. Similar to the previous study, the author sets the Z-score of the actual amount of articles published in a given province–year observation as dependent variables. As indicated in Figures 1, 2 and 3, all three ideological campaigns have gone through a process of ups and downs. There are substantial annual fluctuations in the numbers of ideological articles published every year. If we do not take this effect into consideration, the annual difference rather than the effects of observed independent variables would explain the variation in article numbers. This article uses Z-score to eliminate the effects of the annual difference in article numbers.

\[
Z_{score} = \frac{(SOD - u)}{\sigma_i}
\]

In the above equation, $i$ is province and $t$ is year. SOD$_i^t$ is the actual article count of Scientific Outlook of Development in a given province–year observation and $u_i^t$ is the mean number of Scientific Outlook of Development articles across all provinces. $\sigma_t$ is the standard deviation of the article count in a given province–year observation across all provinces. The setting of dependent variables in Harmonious Society and Three Represents campaigns is the same:

$$Z \text{ score - HS}_{(it)} = (\text{HS}_{it} - u_i^t) / \sigma_t$$ and

$$Z \text{ score - TR}_{(it)} = (\text{TR}_{it} - u_i^t) / \sigma_t$$

**Main variables of interest**

This study observes three political groups: Hu Jintao’s followers, the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and princelings. In order to study the volume of patron–client ties, the author sets up two statistical models—the ALLTIES model and the SUMTIES model—for each group. In the ALLTIES model, the author uses a dummy variable (ALLTIES$_{(it)}$) to record patron–client ties. In a given province–year, if the party secretary or governor belongs to a political group, this province-year is recorded as ‘1’, or ‘0’ otherwise. For example, in 2009, the governor of Hunan province is Hu Jintao’s protégé but the party secretary is not, therefore, ‘ALLTIES with HJT$_{(it)}$’ in the ‘2009-Hunan’ is recorded as ‘1’. If both of them are, it would still be recorded as ‘1’.

If both the party secretary and governor in a province are, for example, Hu Jintao’s followers, this province might act differently from a province in which only one of them is Hu’s follower. The second statistical model helps to capture this dynamic. In the SUMTIES model, the author develops an accumulative variable (SUMTIES$_{(it)}$), which sums up the patron–client ties of both the governor and the party secretary in a given province–year. For example, if both the governor and the party secretary belong to the ‘Shanghai Gang’, then ‘SUMTIES Shanghai Gang$_{(it)}$’ in this province-year is recorded as ‘2’. If only one of them belong to this group, then it is recorded as ‘1’; if none, then ‘0’. The ALLTIES$_{(it)}$ variables measure whether or not patron–client ties have an impact on the provinces’ zeal to echo ideological campaigns and SUMTIES$_{(it)}$ gauges whether the volume of patron–client ties matters.

For those who favour factional conflicts between the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL), it can be argued that these two groups have different interests in publishing relevant ideological items. For example, if the governor of a province belongs to the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and its
party-secretary is Hu Jintao's protégé, how will this province react to Three Represents and Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns? For the spirit of experimentation, the author developed another accumulative variable called 'Ties Shanghai Gang vs. CCYL'. If one of the provincial leaders belongs to the 'Shanghai Gang', this variable will be recorded as ‘–1’; if both, then ‘–2’. If one of them belongs to Hu Jintao’s protégés, then it is recorded as ‘1’; if both, then ‘2’. If the top two provincial leaders belong to ‘Shanghai Gang’ and CCYL respectively, this variable will be recorded as ‘0’. This variable attempts
to capture whether the offset of patron–client ties has an impact on provincial leaders’ zeal to echo ideological campaigns. The assumption of this variable is potentially flawed in a few aspects. First, it assumes that the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and Hu’s protégés have completely contrary interests in publishing the ideological banners of Hu and Jiang. However, there is no clear line between the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and Hu’s protégés. Li Yuanchao, for example, belongs to both groups. In addition, those two groups might not be mortal enemies in such a manner. Second, it assumes that both the top officials will make the same effort to endorse their patron’s ideological item and reject that of their patron’s rival, which might not be the case.

Notably, China certainly does not have a factional politics like Western democratic parties which show clearly who belongs to which faction. There is also a distinction between the importance of patronage and the formation of factions. Political faction implies ties between members including horizontal ones, but patronage is more based on hierarchical relationships with loose or no contacts horizontally at lower levels. Factionalism also implies that people are aware that they are in a group together. As such, in this article, factional ties indeed refer to patron–client ties that created vertical links rather than horizontal ones. The patron–client ties data of this study rely on Li Cheng’s extensive studies of Chinese elite politics.

**Key hypotheses**

For the purpose of this study, the author tests the key hypotheses and alternative hypotheses to show whether provincial leaders’ factional ties have an impact on their zeal to echo ideological campaigns.

**Hypothesis 1 (Null Hypothesis):** According to this hypothesis, none of the patron–client ties variables can explain the variations in ideological articles. The implication of this hypothesis is that strategic political consideration is not a reason why those campaigns are launched.

**Hypothesis 2 (Signalling Loyalty):** According to this hypothesis, the variations in ideological articles are explained by the indicator of patron–client ties. This is to say, ideological campaigns provide a way for provincial leaders to signal their loyalty to central leaders by actively echoing those campaigns.

**Hypothesis 2a (Monitoring Loyalties):** As the previous study suggests, a factional patron uses ideological campaigns to monitor the loyalty of existing followers. If this is true, existing followers should be more active in echoing the ideological campaigns of their factional patrons. Thus, we might expect a positive and significant relationship between the indicator of Hu Jintao’s protégés and the frequency of Scientific Outlook of Development articles, between the indicator of Hu Jintao’s protégés and the frequency of the Harmonious Society article, and between the indicator of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and the frequency of the Three Represents article.

**Hypothesis 2b (Recruiting New Members):** As explained earlier, for those identified protégés who have other ways of signalling loyalties, they do not have to grovel publicly to their patron through ideological campaigns. Ideological campaigns, however, are one of the few opportunities for those officials who have fewer connections with top leaders to which they can pander. In order to join the top leader’s coalition, they might be more motivated to echo ideological campaigns than identified protégés. If true, it will produce a negative and significant relationship between the indicator of Hu Jintao’s protégés and the frequency of Scientific Outlook of Development articles, between the indicator of Hu Jintao’s protégés and the frequency of Harmonious Society articles, and between the indicator of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and the frequency of the Three Represents articles.

**Hypothesis 2c (Political Struggle):** According to this hypothesis, political conflict plays a role in explaining the variation of ideological articles. If we assume the coalitions of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have conflicting interests, their protégés might tend to discourage them from publishing ideological items belonging to their patron’s rival. As they have already been protected by a powerful coalition, they do not have to pander to their patron’s rival. In addition, besides the normal cost of public grovelling as explained earlier, they might bear extra costs of betraying the original coalition if they choose to over praise their patron’s rival. If this is the case, we might expect a negative and significant relationship between the indicator of Hu Jintao’s protégés and the frequency of Three Represents articles, between the indicator of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and the frequency of the Scientific Outlook of Development articles, and between the indicator of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and the frequency of the Harmonious Society articles.
Three control variables

In addition to patron–client ties, Shih's study finds that the level of economic development, professional experience in propaganda work and fiscal dependence of a province also play roles in affecting the provinces' zeal to publish ideological item.\(^3\) As ideological shift is often followed by a series of policy changes, new ideological banner is often related to new economic policy. Thus, the level of economic development might affect the provinces' zeal to echo certain ideological campaigns. Provincial leaders' professional experience in a propaganda unit also plays a role as they may tend to publish more ideological items simply because of their expertise and experiences no matter whose the ideological banners are. Fiscal dependence of a province also matters as it may affect the province's zeal to support policies from the central government. As those variables might affect the frequency of ideological articles in a given province-year, it is very necessary to control their effects in order to know the actual impact of patron–client ties.

For example, if we find that the provincial units of 'Shanghai Gang' are less likely to echo ideological campaigns, we cannot reach the conclusion that this is owing to 'Shanghai Gang' membership unless we purge the effects of economic development. As most of the 'Shanghai Gang' members are governing affluent areas, their provinces' willingness to echo ideological campaigns is not only affected by their patron–client ties but also by the level of economic development in their governed regions. Similarly, as most of Hu Jintao's protégés who rose from the Communist Youth League have usually worked in the propaganda area,\(^3\) their desire to publish ideological items might be affected by their past work experience. Thus, it is important to purge this effect in order to capture the actual impact of their ties with Hu Jintao.

In order to capture the actual impact of patron–client ties, this study retains all those control variables for eliminating the effects of other variables. The collection of relevant data strictly follows the method of the previous study in order to eliminate the effects of methodological difference.

Data

Table 1 lists the summary statistics of the relevant variables. For the dependent variables, the mean and the standard deviation of all Z scores should be 0 and 1 respectively. The category of the actual account of articles lists the numbers of relevant ideological articles. The average numbers of articles mentioning ‘Three Represents’, ‘Scientific Outlook of Development’ and ‘Harmonious Society’ in provincial official newspapers between 2005 and 2012 are 93, 459 and 226, respectively. The mean of GDP per capita in the observation is 26,104 yuan while the standard deviation is 17,090 yuan. Fiscal dependence is counted by local revenue minus local expenditure divided by local revenue in a given year. The average province ran a 169% fiscal shortfall (Fiscal Dependence,\(^\text{it}\)) in a given year, while the standard deviation was 2.42109. The variable of propaganda is the combined years of the governor and the party secretary’s experiences in areas of propaganda work.\(^3\) While the average of this variable is 3.1 years, that of Henan province from 2005 to 2012 is 30 years. Finally, the variable ‘AllTIES with HJT,\(^\text{it}\)’ shows that 51% of the observed provincial leadership (province-year) has existing ties with Hu Jintao. The provincial leadership in 6.6% and 11% of the observation (province-year) belongs to the ‘Shanghai Gang’ and princelings respectively.

Data analysis: PCSE-AR 1

Similarly to Shih's previous study, the author employs estimations with panel-corrected standard errors and first order autocorrelation (PCSE-AR 1) to test thoroughly the AllTIES model and SUMTIES model. PCSE provides more accurate results than ordinary least squared (OLS) when dealing with time-series

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\(^3\) Shih, “Nauseating” displays of loyalty.


\(^3\) It includes experiences of various propaganda units (宣传单位).
Given the panel nature of the author’s dataset, OLS is not optimal because it assumes there are no serial correlation and spatial correlations of the dataset. Thus, Beck and Katz’s PCSE is employed to correct within the group heteroskedasticity and cross-section of error. The first-order autocorrelation coefficient (AR1) is used to deal with serial correlation of the data.

Findings

Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 report the estimated effects of provincial leaders’ patron–client ties on their zeal to echo ideological banner between 2005 and 2012. First and most importantly, this study finds a negative relationship between the patron–client ties of provincial leaders and their zeal to echo ideological campaigns. Table 2 reports the robust and striking patterns. The ALLTIES model shows that provincial leadership’s ties with Hu Jintao significantly reduce their zeal to echo the Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns. If one of the provincial leaders is Hu Jintao’s follower, the main provincial newspapers will produce on average 22.6% Scientific Outlook of Development articles fewer than the province in which none of the provincial leaders is Hu Jintao’s follower, all else being equal. This finding remains robust at the 0.05 level even if we remove all other control variables save only the variable of GDp per capita. The SUMTIES model shows that the volume of patron–client ties with Hu Jintao did not have a significant impact on provincial leaders’ zeal to echo Scientific Outlook of Development.

Table 3 reports the estimated effects of provincial leaders’ membership of the ‘Shanghai gang’ on their provinces in publishing Three Represents articles. The negative coefficient of the ‘Shanghai gang’ denotes that provincial leaders of the ‘Shanghai gang’ are less likely to publish Three Represents articles. If one of the provincial leaders belongs to the ‘Shanghai gang’, the main provincial newspapers on average will produce 43.77% fewer Three Represents articles in a given year, all else being equal (ALLTIES model). In addition, the volume of the ‘Shanghai gang’ membership has a significant impact on their zeal to echo the Three Represents campaigns. If both the party secretary and governor belong to the ‘Shanghai Gang’, the official newspaper of this province will produce 23% Three Represents articles fewer than the province in which only one of its leaders is a ‘Shanghai Gang’ member (SUMTIES model).

The above two findings confirm the previous conjectures that the manner of displaying loyalty changed in Hu Jintao’s term. Hu Jintao’s followers were less likely to echo Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development. The statistical outcome is available at the author’s research page.
Development campaign and the ‘Shanghai Gang’ was less motivated to praise Jiang’s Three Represents campaign. In other words, the role of ideological campaigns had shifted from ‘maintenance’ (monitoring loyalties of followers) in Jiang Zemin’s era into ‘recruitment’ (recruiting new protégés) in Hu Jintao’s era.

In addition to clients’ responses to their patron’s campaigns, the author also examines their reaction to the ideological banners of their patron’s rival. Table 4 reveals the impact of ‘Shanghai Gang’ membership on the provincial leaders’ zeal to echo Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns. It shows that provincial leaders of the ‘Shanghai Gang’ are less likely to echo Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns. The ALLTIES model shows that if one of the provincial leaders is a ‘Shanghai Gang’ member, the main provincial newspaper on average publishes 46.23% fewer Scientific Outlook of Development articles than a province which does not have a leader belonging to the ‘Shanghai Gang’. The SUMTIES model denotes that the volume of ‘Shanghai Gang’ membership has a significant impact

\[ p < 0.05, \quad **p < 0.01. \]


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Z score–SOD( (i,t) )</th>
<th>ALLTIES model</th>
<th>SUMTIES model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coefficient (Standard Error)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLTIES with ( HJT_{it} )</td>
<td>–0.2261232**</td>
<td>–0.1013375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMTIES with ( HJT_{it} )</td>
<td>–0.113</td>
<td>–0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capital( (i,t) )</td>
<td>–8.98e–06</td>
<td>–8.18e–06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.92e–06)</td>
<td>(3.81e–06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal dependence( (i,t) )</td>
<td>0.0001795**</td>
<td>0.1303515**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.016)</td>
<td>(–0.048)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum propaganda( (i,t) )</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>–0.0003309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.1357</td>
<td>0.0532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( N = 210 )</td>
<td>–0.127</td>
<td>–0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( Rho = 0.5927615 )</td>
<td>( Rho = 0.5883423 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p < 0.05, \quad **p < 0.01. \]


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Z score–TR( (i,t) )</th>
<th>ALLTIES model</th>
<th>SUMTIES model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coefficient (Standard Error)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLTIES Shanghai Gang( (i,t) )</td>
<td>–0.4377569*</td>
<td>–0.2396642**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMTIES Shanghai Gang( (i,t) )</td>
<td>–0.195</td>
<td>–0.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capital( (i,t) )</td>
<td>5.50e–06</td>
<td>4.84e–06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.56e–06)</td>
<td>(3.49e–06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal dependence( (i,t) )</td>
<td>0.2829655**</td>
<td>0.2825434**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.003)</td>
<td>(–0.034)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum propaganda( (i,t) )</td>
<td>0.0297698*</td>
<td>0.0257952*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>–0.6809872**</td>
<td>–0.6576854**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( N = 210 )</td>
<td>–0.14</td>
<td>–0.137</td>
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<tr>
<td>( Rho = 0.4855273 )</td>
<td>( Rho = 0.4981485 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p < 0.05, \quad **p < 0.01. \]

\[ p < 0.05, \quad **p < 0.01. \]

\[ 43 \text{This finding has taken the level of economic development (GDP per capita) into consideration.} \]
as well. If both provincial leaders are members of the ‘Shanghai Gang’, the main provincial newspaper on average publishes 24.72% fewer Scientific Outlook of Development articles than the province in which only one of its leaders is a ‘Shanghai Gang’ member. This pattern matches the previous conjecture that protégés of a senior leader do not have to pander to other senior leaders at their own expense because they have already received their coalition’s support.

In addition to the impact of factional factors, the policy preference perhaps also discourages ‘Shanghai Gang’ leaders’ zeal to echo Scientific Outlook of Development. Scientific Outlook of Development promotes a fairer distribution of resources among Chinese provinces. Under Scientific Outlook of Development, the administration of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao intended to promote regional equality in order to achieve more sustainable development. Specially, they designed many economic and social policies to increase the flow of resources to poorer inland provinces and thus lead to a more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: ( Z_{\text{score–HS}} )</th>
<th>Coefficient (Standard error)</th>
<th>( p ) value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{ALLTIES with HJT} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.0985</td>
<td>0.461</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \text{ALLTIES Shanghai Gang} )_{it}</td>
<td>-0.1068175</td>
<td>0.682</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \text{ALLTIES Princeling} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.2589</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{GDP per capital} )_{it}</td>
<td>-1.42e–06 (4.19e–06)</td>
<td>0.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Fiscal dependence} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.1667347**</td>
<td>0.024</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \text{Sum propaganda} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.0159</td>
<td>0.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.2661044</td>
<td>-0.162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 210 \)

\( \text{rho} = 0.5691604 \)

\( ^* p < 0.05, ^{**} p < 0.01. \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: ( Z_{\text{score–SOD}} )</th>
<th>ALLTIES model</th>
<th>SUMTIES model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \text{ALLTIES Shanghai Gang} )_{it}</td>
<td>-0.4623632***</td>
<td>-0.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{SUMTIES Shanghai Gang} )_{it}</td>
<td>-0.247273**</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{GDP per capital} )_{it}</td>
<td>-6.43e–06 (3.63e–06)</td>
<td>-7.07e–06 (3.73e–06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Fiscal dependence} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.1300964**</td>
<td>0.1308801**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{Sum propaganda} )_{it}</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
<td>0.0078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.0116</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 210 \)

\( \text{rho} = 0.5691604 \)

\( \text{rho} = 0.5779312 \)

\( \text{Rho} = 0.5779312 \)

\( \text{Rho} = 0.5677991 \)

\( ^* p < 0.05, ^{**} p < 0.01. \)
redistributive overall budget.\footnote{Barry Naughton, ‘China’s left tilt: pendulum swing or midcourse correction?’, in Cheng Li, ed., China’s Changing Political Landscape (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).} This rebalancing of resources has led to some discontent of leaders in affluent areas, especially those who rose from Shanghai. For example, the fall of the former head of Shanghai, Chen Liangyu, is known for his opposition to the macro socio-economic policies of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao that are less favoured in coastal regions.\footnote{Cheng Li, ‘Was the Shanghai Gang Shanghaied? The fall of Chen Liangyu and the survival of Jiang Zemin’s faction’, China Leadership Monitor 20, (2007).}

The variables ‘Ties Shanghai Gang vs. CCYL’ and ‘ALLTIES Princeling’ do not show significant impacts on either Scientific Outlook of Development or Three Represents.\footnote{Statistical outcome is available on the author’s research page.} Provincial leaders’ ties with Hu Jintao also do not have a significant impact on their zeal to echo the Three Represents campaigns.

Moreover, Table 5 reports the impact of patron–client ties on the standardized frequency of Harmonious Society articles. It finds that there is no evidence that provincial leaders’ patron–client ties play a role in affecting the variation of Harmonious Society articles. This finding suggests that monitoring loyalties of local leaders is not a reason why Harmonious Society campaigns were launched. Then, why did patron–clients with Hu Jintao and ‘Shanghai Gang’ membership matter to Scientific Outlook of Development but not to Harmonious Society? A possible interpretation is that Hu Jintao staked more of his personal authority on Scientific Outlook of Development rather than Harmonious Society as demonstrated by the fact that the CCP Constitution incorporated Scientific Outlook of Development instead of Harmonious Society in 2012.

### Conclusion

This article studies the manner of displaying loyalties through ideological campaigns in Hu Jintao’s era. Through a content analysis of provincial official newspapers between 2005 and 2012, it finds a completely contrary impact of patron–client ties with the previous study. Several key findings can be highlighted. First, Hu Jintao’s protégés are less likely to echo Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaign. Second, ‘Shanghai Gang’ members are less willing to praise both Jiang Zemin’s Three Represents and Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development. Third, the volume of ‘Shanghai Gang’ membership has a significant impact on the variations of Three Represents and Scientific Outlook of Development articles. These findings suggest that the strategic function of ideological campaigns has completely changed from monitoring the loyalties of existing followers in Jiang Zemin’s era into recruiting new followers in Hu Jintao’s era. Finally, the variables of patron–client ties cannot explain the variation of Harmonious Society articles. This is to say, unlike the campaigns of Three Represents and Scientific Outlook of Development, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that the Harmonious Society campaign was launched to discern local leaders’ loyalties.

This article argues that the decreasing need to monitor followers’ loyalties because of a more stable elite politics on the one hand, and the increasing need to recruit new protégés (owing to top leaders’ different strategic uses of ideological campaigns) on the other hand, led to the changing manner of displaying loyalties through ideological campaigns in post-Deng China. The weakness of authoritarian regimes lies in their power distribution. The majority of authoritarian leaders are overthrown by the ruling elites rather than the masses.\footnote{Milan Svolik, The Politics of Authoritarian Rule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 5.} The CCP knows its weakness well. Since the 1980s, the CCP has made impressive efforts to institutionalize its power succession system in order to ensure a smooth cycle of political elites and reduce the negative effects of power struggles.\footnote{Zeng, ‘Institutionalization of the authoritarian leadership in China’.} Institutional development has dramatically changed China’s elite politics, as evidenced by the second smooth and orderly leadership transition in 2012. The author’s empirical study on the selection bias of the 18th Politburo Standing Committee members demonstrates that institutional rules have become a key factor in selecting Chinese top leaders.\footnote{Jinghan Zeng, What Matters Most in Selecting Chinese Top Leaders? Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Journal of Chinese Political Science, 18(3), (2013) 223–239.}
Arguably, the institutionalization of power succession has produced a more stable elite politics in Hu Jintao’s era. Jiang Zemin was forced to put his protégés into the vital sectors in order to stay in power. By contrast, Hu Jintao was known as a master of maintaining consensus among factions. This is because a more stable elite politics had allowed Hu to do so. Unlike Jiang, Hu Jintao’s position as the party head had not been seriously challenged, although the power struggle remained intense. In Hu’s term, factional groups were neither willing nor able to defeat their rivals completely because of the equal balanced power and the necessity of power-sharing to maintain stability. As a consequence of a more stable elite politics, Hu Jintao did not have to rely on his coalition as heavily as Jiang Zemin did. It dramatically led to the decreasing need to identify loyal followers through costly ideological campaigns.

More importantly, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao had very different strategic goals in launching campaigns for their ideological innovation: Jiang wanted to maintain his influence after retirement, whilst Hu was less motivated to do so. As explained earlier, Three Represents was first proposed by Jiang Zemin in 2000 and Jiang handed over the top positions of the party and the state to Hu Jintao two years later. Towards the end of his term, it was important for Jiang to select loyal followers to put into leading bodies in order to maintain his influence. To achieve this goal, promoting identified protégés was more effective than promoting junior protégés who only joined Jiang’s coalition because of reliability and political capital.

As identified protégés followed Jiang Zemin for many years and Jiang knew their weaknesses well, they would pay a higher cost than junior protégés if they betrayed Jiang. Thus, generally speaking, identified protégés tend to be more loyal and reliable than junior protégés. In addition, identified protégés tend to have more political capital than junior protégés because they usually have higher party ranks and more experience in dealing with political conflicts, so promoting those identified protégés into top positions of authority usually meets less obstacles. In this sense, at the time of launching the Three Represents campaign, Jiang might have been more interested in monitoring the loyalties of identified protégés who were more reliable and eligible for the top leadership, rather than recruiting new follower who still needed Jiang’s protection.

Observing followers’ reactions to Three Represents campaigns provides a way to identify who is loyal. As explained earlier, followers bear the social cost of being dispersed by others and—more importantly—the political cost of forgoing the opportunities of joining other coalitions. Thus, their echoing of Three Represents campaigns sent credible signals to Jiang Zemin. Those identified protégés might have taken this as an opportunity to win Jiang’s trust so that they could be promoted to a higher position. From the perspective of provincial officials who were not Jiang’s protégés, to praise Jiang’s Three Represents was costly because Jiang Zemin would retire soon and no-one knew the durability of his post-retirement influence. For those who had not joined any coalition, to pander to the coming leader rather than a departing leader was more rational. This explains why Jiang Zemin’s protégés were more likely to echo Three Represents campaigns in the previous study.

The factional calculation of Hu’s ideological campaign is different from that of Jiang. Scientific Outlook of Development was mainly proposed after Jiang’s full retirement in 2004. At this time, by promoting Hu’s own formula of the party’s guiding ideology, Hu Jintao intended to build his personal authority as the new top leader. The ideological campaigns of Hu’s Scientific Outlook of Development serve as a tool to carry out a new vision and walk out of the shadow of the predecessor Jiang Zemin. To Hu Jintao and his coalition, Scientific Outlook of Development campaign helped to identify the political stance of local officials and to recruit active respondents selectively. Identified protégés of Hu Jintao had many connections with Hu, so they had other ways of displaying loyalties. Thus, they did not have to over-praise Scientific Outlook of Development in public at their own expense. Those who had not joined Hu’s coalition, however, had far fewer connections, and thus ideological campaigns were one of the few channels through which they could pander to the then new leader Hu Jintao. Thus, they were more motivated to echo Hu Jintao’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns.

50 Li, ‘The powerful factions among China’s rulers'; The battle for China’s top nine leadership posts; The Washington Quarterly; Li and Cary, ‘The last year of Hu’s leadership'; Li, ‘China’s fifth generation'.
‘Shanghai Gang’ members’ identity undermined their willingness to pander to Hu because of the risk of losing trust in Jiang’s coalition and their close ties with Jiang would make it harder for them to win Hu’s trust. Thus, ‘Shanghai Gang’ members were less likely to echo Hu Jintao’s Scientific Outlook of Development campaigns. Similarly to the pattern of Hu’s protégés’ reactions to Scientific Outlook of Development, the ‘Shanghai Gang’ had already been identified as members of Jiang Zemin’s coalition, and they had many other ways to signal their loyalties to their coalition. On the contrary, for those who wished to join Jiang’s coalition, they might be more active in publishing Three Represents items. As such, ‘Shanghai Gang’ members were less likely to praise Jiang’s Three Represents item in Hu’s era.

All in all, the strategic function of ideological campaigns has changed in Hu Jintao’s era. While Fukuyama’s ‘The end of history’ essay predicts the ‘end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’, ideology has been constantly adapting in China. The party-state has put great amounts of energy and human capital into modernizing ideology from Jiang Zemin’s ‘Three Represents’, Hu Jintao’s ‘Scientific Outlook of Development’ and ‘Harmonious Society’, to Xi Jinping’s ‘China Dream’. As Shih points out, ‘ideological campaigns are by no means obsolete’. In addition to its legitimizing function, Chinese top leaders continue to rely on it to build personal authority and to claim their right to rule. Will the shifting elite politics further change the manner of displaying loyalties through ideological campaigns in China? Future research could look into the strategic use of Xi Jinping’s ideological banners.

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Notes on contributor

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52 Shih, “Nauseating” displays of loyalty’, p. 1186.