UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Knowing yourself, knowing your enemy:
Factional identity and elite purges in authoritarian regimes

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science and International Affairs

by

Duy Duc Trinh

Committee in charge:
Professor Victor Shih, Chair
Professor Stephan Haggard
Professor Megumi Naoi
Professor Kwai Ng
Professor Margaret E. Roberts

The dissertation of Duy Duc Trinh is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair, Professor Victor Shih, and my committee members, Professor Stephan Haggard, Professor Megumi Naoi, Professor Kwai Ng, and Professor Margaret E. Roberts, without whom this dissertation would not have existed.

I would also like to acknowledge the residents of Social Sciences Building 328, whose encouragements and distractions eased the burden of my existence. Without them, my PhD career would be half as long, twice as productive, yet immeasurably less glorious.

Chapter 2, in full, is a reprint of the material as it appears in Trinh, Duy. 2020. "The Evolution of Factional Sorting in China and Vietnam." Problems of Post-Communism 68 (3): 171–89. The dissertation author was the sole author of this paper.

Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material as it appears in Trinh, Duy. 2022. "The Where and Why of Political Protection in Vietnam's Anti-Corruption Campaign." In The Dragon's Underbelly: Dynamics and Dilemmas in Vietnam's Economy and Politics, eds. Nhu Truong and Tuong Vu. The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

Chapter 5, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. The dissertation author was the sole author of this paper.

VITA

2014 Bachelor of Arts, Colgate University

2016 Master of Arts, University of California San Diego

2021 Doctor of Philosophy, University of California San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Knowing yourself, knowing your enemy:
Factional identity and elite purges in authoritarian regimes

by

Duy Duc Trinh

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Affairs

University of California San Diego, 2021
Professor Victor Shih, Chair

Dictators initiate elite purges to count threats of coups and mass protests; at the same time, purges vary in frequency, timing, and intensity, even across regimes with similar institutions and survival threats. The dissertation proposes a theory of factional clarity to explain such variations. Factional clarity, the extent to which visible elites can accurately infer individual memberships in factions, influences elites' ability to distinguish allies from enemies and estimate the balance of power between factions. This in turn mediates their willingness to purge, as well as the strategy they use to protect allies from purges.

Factional clarity is endogenous to elite conflicts, yet also diverges across regimes and over time in response to exogenous shocks. I demonstrates this divergence through a comparative analysis of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist Party. In China, Kuomintang and Japanese offensives led to the creation of isolated Communist factions with membership based on visible geographical and professional ties. In contrast, repeated destruction of the southern revolutionary network by French and American-South Vietnamese forces homogenized Vietnamese Communist Party elites and made these ties irrelevant. I show that periods of high and low purge intensity in both regimes followed those of high and low factional clarity, respectively, and that factional clarity dictated purge initiators' behaviors during two historical purges, the Gao-Rao Affair in China and the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair in Vietnam.

Using original data on recent disciplinary investigations in China and Vietnam, I then argue that factional clarity also affects the degree and form of political protection during purges. In China, where factions have clear membership, regime leaders engage in ex post protection by intervening in ongoing investigations of officials in localities with ties to them. In contrast, under Vietnam's opaque factionalism, leaders prevent these officials from being targeted for investigations ex ante.

My findings unify bodies of literature on factionalism, elite networks, and political identities, and provide a framework to analyze authoritarian intra-elite violence. They also open an avenue for future research to explore the role of elite purges---and of factional clarity as a key mediator---on corruption, growth, as well as authoritarian legitimacy.

Chapter 1

Introduction

> I am a simple man like Zhang Fei, though I have only his roughness without his cautiousness. For this reason, whether this letter is of reference value or not is for you to decide. If what I say is wrong, please correct me.
>
> –Opening to Peng Dehuai's "Letter of Opinion," July 14, 1959

> I would advise some comrades to pay attention to the tendency of what they say. The content of your speech may be basically correct, but parts are not apposite. If you want others to stand firm, you must first stand firm yourselves. If you want other people not to waver, you must not waver yourself.
>
> –Mao's speech at the Lushan Conference, July 23, 1959

It was the morning of July 14, 1959 when Mao Zedong received a letter from a man named Peng Dehuai. Mao and Peng, together with members of an expanded Politburo and the 8th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), were convening at a mountain resort in Lushan, Jiangxi to resolve policy disagreements surrounding the Great Leap Forward. By this time, the Great Leap Forward had been in full motion for more than a year in China, and signs of an impending policy fiasco were already showing.

Peng, like many other CCP elites, was aware of the plight of the villages. And so in the letter, he warned Mao of crucial shortcomings in the implementation of the Great Leap Forward, notably the "habit of exaggeration" and "petty-bourgeois fanaticism" among Party and government officials that led the Party to divorce itself from reality.

Yet, even in this critical assessment, Peng made no attempt to lay blame upon Mao himself. Indeed, his letter had nothing but careful, moderated language. The achievements of the Great Leap Forward so far, it prefaced, "[were] affirmed and undoubted;" and the rapid economic growth that it produced had "never been achieved in other parts of the world." Peng also credited Mao's slogans "strategic and long-range policies," and insisted on no "investigation of personal responsibility" in the Great Leap Forward's aftermath. And if words were not enough to reassure Mao of the letter's benign intention, then the man behind it should suffice.

Peng Dehuai, then defense minister of the People's Republic of China, was perhaps one of the closest comrades to Mao. Peng and Mao went way back to the late 1920s when Mao was only in command of a rag-tag Communist force fighting for survival in Hunan province's Jinggang Mountains. Peng served under Mao when he created the Jiangxi Provincial Soviet Government in 1930, and stood on Mao's side during the Futian Incident in December that year when members of the Soviet rebelled against him. It was Peng, too, who supported Mao in the 1935 Zunyi Conference that gave the latter *de facto* control of the CCP (Yang 1986).

Peng's loyalty to Mao had not gone unrequited. The Chairman himself had no lack of respect or admiration for his general. Such was the sentiment in one of Mao's poems dedicated to Peng at the end of the Long March:

"High mountains, long roads and deep pits,

The army marches back and forth,

Who has the courage to strike from his horse?

Only our Great General Peng!"

Yet all these years of friendship meant nothing in the unfolding events of the Lushan Conference. In the end, Mao did not heed Peng's words. Quite the opposite, he went after his long-time comrade with all wrath and fury. Mao had Peng's private letter circulated. Then, in front of an enlarged Politburo meeting on July 23, he attacked Peng and those who agreed with him as "rightists" who formed and "anti-party clique," and equated their positions with those like Li Lisan, Wang Ming, Gao Gang and Rao Shushi, past Communist elites who once defied Mao and failed. Mao also presented the entire Party with an ultimatum: either support Mao and denounce Peng, or let Mao form his own party in the countryside to overthrow the entire government. In the end, the Politburo gave in to Mao's tantrum and removed Peng from all positions of power. The Great General Peng was now reduced to a political nobody until the end of his life.

At first glance, the downfall of Peng Dehuai seems to illustrate solely the brutality of politics in China under Mao. Yet this was not the only time a dictator sent his trusted allies and close associates to their political doom. The pre-Cold War period alone witnessed two serious purges: The Night of the Long Knives conducted by the Nazi SS against the paramilitary SA under Hitler's order, and the Great Purge in the Soviet Union, which saw the removal of hundreds of thousands of the regime's military officers and Party cadres. Nowadays, news of purges from North Korea, such as the removal of Kim Jong Un's uncle Jang Song-thaek in 2013, or from Turkey since 2016, would occupy international headlines every now and then. Indeed, elite purge—the swift and violent removal of members of a regime's own leadership—is a frequent occurrence in dictatorships both historical and contemporary. Yet, purges are far from ubiquitous among authoritarian regimes. Many autocratic regimes rose and collapsed without undergoing a serious purge. At the end of the day, they remain an extraordinary phenomenon that happened relatively few and far between. What's more, there also exists a lot of variations even among purges that had occurred. Despite being given the same name—a purge—the execution of Jang Song-Thaek

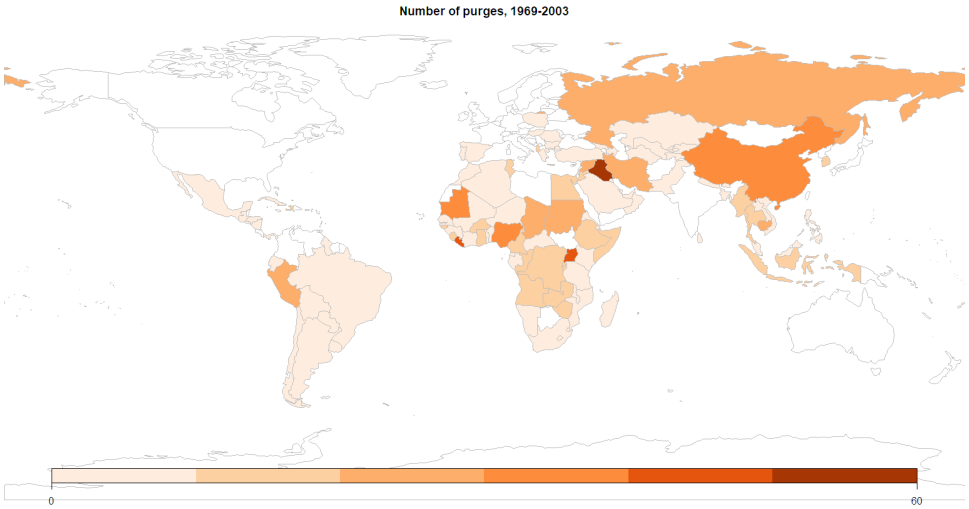

Figure 1.1: Number of purges by country, 1969-2003
Source: Sudduth (2017)

in North Korea with a death toll of one, is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from the mass torture and killing in the Soviet Union during the 1930s.

In fact, few examples better illustrate these variations than the contrasting picture of China and Vietnam. In 2012, when Xi Jinping announced his anti-corruption campaign in China, many suspected his commitment to "kill the tigers and the flies" was just lip service without any real consequence. In just five years, however, the campaign has netted more than 100,000 individuals, among which more than 100 could be considered "tigers" i.e. high-ranking officials in the Party, government, and the military (Economist 2015). Even top elites in the regimes are not safe from the campaign's reach. Investigators from the CCP's Central Committee for Discipline Inspection even targeted those such as former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang and Xu Caihou, vice-chairman of China's top military council. In the past, both of them, not to say many others who were targeted, were once superiors of Xi Jinping himself.

While the anti-corruption campaign was in full blow in China, everything was quiet inside its southern neighbor. Here in Vietnam, while the leadership also made occasional

promises to crack down on corruption and straighten up Party discipline, few elites had lost their heads. In fact, by 2016, it had been 10 years since the last ministerial level official got into trouble, following the revelation of the a million-dollar bribery scandal in the Ministry of Transportation. Even then, while the scandal initially resulted in the resignation of the Transport Minister and the arrest of his deputy, the verdict was eventually reversed. Instead, the government convicted two journalists covering the case of "abusing democratic freedoms" and "propagating false information" (BBC 2006, 2008). Since then, at least until 2016, attacks on the ruling elites have been few and far between, with only some infrequent investigations and dismissals of provincial-level officials.

The contrast between China's ferocity and Vietnam's leniency extends beyond the scope of their anti-corruption campaigns. Taking both corruption- and non-corruption-related investigations into account, during Xi Jinping's rule, elites as high-ranking as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee have been sentenced to life, whereas in Vietnam, no single Central Committee members or above has ever faced anything higher than dismissal from government and Party positions. In fact, even dismissals were rare: The most recent firing of Vietnamese Politburo member was all the way back in 1996.

Why the different outcomes? Why were regime elites targeted and punished in large number in China but left in peace in Vietnam? The contrast between the two countries does not lend itself to simple explanations. To name a few, China and Vietnam share many similarities, from history, culture to political institutions and economic development trajectory. Even corruption is not an adequate answer. It is not as if one country is massively more corrupt or have massively different forms of corruption than the other. Transparency International ranked China 37th and 40th among the most corrupt countries in 2015 and 2016, whereas Vietnam ranked 31st and 33rd, respectively.

1.1 Existing explanations for purges

Why do political purges take such a different form across two regimes that share so much similarity? And more generally, how do we explain variations in the frequency and intensity of elite purge among authoritarian regimes? When do intra-elite conflicts result in violence purge, and when do they end up with peaceful compromises?

To date, the literature has not provided a definite answer, especially with regard to the contrast between China and Vietnam. However, various formal models and historical studies of authoritarian politics present some partial clues. To begin with, existing research has proposed several motivations behind a regime's or a dictator's decision to launch a purge. First, purges can strengthen a ruling elite's hold on power by removing external enemies from within its ranks (Brzezinski 1958). Second, the threat of forcible and violent removal also deters opportunists who join the regime's leadership and bureaucracy to seek rents instead of ideological fulfillment (Hollyer and Wantchekon 2014; Manion 2016). Third, a purge can restore a regime's unity in ideology and policy by settling differences and establishing the "correct" line among regime members (Brzezinski 1958). Finally, besides benefits to the regime, an individual autocrat might also find it in his interest to initiate a purge on his own. Through a purge, the dictator can remove elite challengers to his rule and/or open up precious seats in the administration to fill with his own supporters (Svolik 2009). Furthermore, it can be used to shrink the size of a non-minimum winning coalition such that the same pie of private goods can be distributed to fewer people (Bueno De Mesquita and Smith 2015).

Besides motivations, a number of research has focused on the capacity of autocratic leaders and the constraints they face, especially when it comes to initiating violence against fellow elites. For example, Svolik (2009) argues that the regime's own elites, via the threat of staging a coup, act as a constraint against a dictator's intention to purge. The more credible the threat, it follows, the less likely it is that the dictator will target its own elites.

Others such as Gregory (2009) focus on the dictator's control and use of tools of violence such as the secret police to explain incidence of internal violence. One particular strand of this literature looks into the role of authoritarian power-sharing institutions, which include political parties, elections, national assemblies, etc. These institutions constrain the dictator by providing elites, including those opposing to the dictator's rule, with a forum to monitor the dictator's compliance as well as a means to embody the power-sharing compromises into specific formal rules (Boix and Svolik 2013). In addition, the same institutions also enable a regime's elites to better coordinate against the dictator. In doing so, they keep the threat of coup alive to deter the dictator from going after his own followers (Magaloni 2008; Myerson 2008).

Altogether, the existing literature has hinted at several potential variables of motivation and capacity to explain purges across authoritarian regimes. Yet, empirical research that pursues these directions still encounters a number of obstacles. On one hand, motivations tend to be difficult to identify empirically, let alone measure, especially prior to the fact. Even during an ongoing purge, there are reasons to suspect the sincerity of a purge initiator's publicly-stated intention. On the other hand, when it comes to power-sharing institutions, it seems that they tend to constrain some types of behaviors much better than others. It is observed that authoritarian regimes with power-sharing institutions tend to last longer and perform better economically than those without (Geddes 2003; Albertus and Menaldo 2012). It is also observed that they tend to use less violence against the mass *and* against the dictator himself (Magaloni 2008). At the same time, however, purges seem be the exception. The deadliest and most prominent purges in history had occurred in regimes with very strong party institutions such as Nazi Germany the Soviet Union, or the People's Republic of China. Indeed, the problem goes deeper than a few exceptions. If purges are a violation of the power-sharing agreements between elites and the dictator—in other words, if they are unilateral attempts of the dictator to grab power at the elites' expense—why do institutions fail to prevent them? And why do institutions continue to be upheld after they

have failed? Alternatively, if purges are disciplinary actions against elites who violated their end of the power-sharing contract, then why do institutions fail to deter these transgressions in the first place?

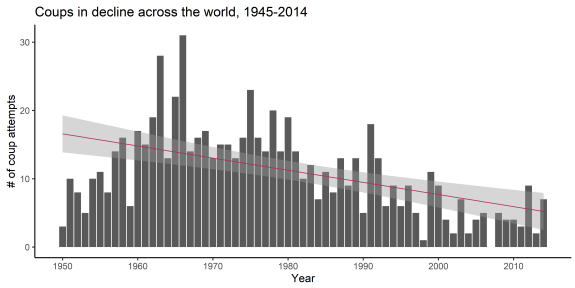

Figure 1.2: Total coup attempts in the world, 1946-2014

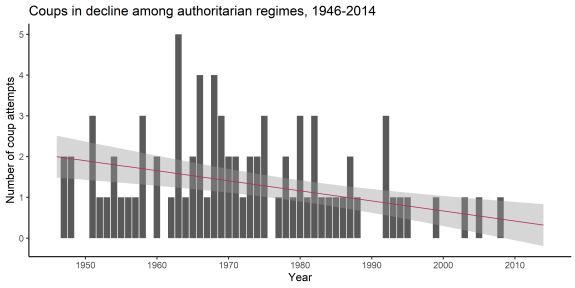

Figure 1.3: Total coup attempts among authoritarian regimes, 1946-2014

Some recent research has addressed these obstacles by incorporating both motivation and capacity in their explanation. According to this line of argument, motivation and capacity are two necessary but insufficient conditions for purge. For example, Sudduth (2017) argues that a leader does not need purge if he is very strong vis-à-vis his elite challengers (hence no motivation) and cannot realistically purge if he is very weak (hence no capacity). As a result, a purge occurs only when there is a temporary, sudden weakening of an otherwise strong opposition.

In this dissertation project, I take this line of argument one step further. While agreeing with Sudduth (2017) that neither motivation nor capacity is individually sufficient for purge to occur, I argue additionally that motivation and capacity even when combined is still far from a sufficient condition. There is another fundamental question that purge initiators have to overcome in an authoritarian regime: The question of *uncertainty* over motivation and capacity. Authoritarian politics is shrouded in mystery. Unlike political parties in democracies, which compete openly and regularly, power struggles in autocracies happen infrequently, which means that an autocrat does not have access to regular information about his level of support, not about the identity of and level of support for his challengers. Similarly, other regime elites suffer from the lack of information on the autocrat's and their own capacity, as well as on the autocrat's motivations. Repression, propaganda, and censorship, the very tools designed to help secure a dictator and his regime, also contribute to uncertainty. All in all, purge initiators in an authoritarian regime must be able to solve this informational problem before they launch a purge. A purge requires not only motivation and capacity, but also political actors' knowledge of these very motivation and capacity.

1.2 Factions, factional sorting, and purges

My dissertation focuses on the informational problem facing authoritarian elites to explain both the contrast between China and Vietnam, and general variations on purge outcomes in authoritarian regimes. It does so by presenting a new theoretical framework that describes and explains variation in uncertainty over autocratic motivation and capacity. This framework is called the theory of factional sorting.

The basis of the theory of factional sorting is rooted in the literature on factions and factionalism. Faction refers to a type of association within a community—in this case, an authoritarian regime—that engages in competition with one another over political control of the community (Nicholas 1965). Unlike similar organizations such as clubs or political

parties, factions lack permanence and are thus considered *non corporate*; in addition, a faction's membership is driven by a leader's personal relationships and activities, rather than any set of established, objective criteria.

But what is it about factions that make them the starting point of choice for my theory? The reason is two fold. First, faction offers an alternative model that takes into account both authoritarian behaviors and authoritarian institutions, something that many existing frameworks have missed. These existing frameworks include, on one hand, the selectorate theory (Bueno De Mesquita 2003), which disregard all institutions except those that define the size of a regime's selectorate and winning coalition, and on the other hand, the provincial-central model (Shirk 1993a) and the bureaucratic conflict models (Baum 2011), which tie down actors' preferences and capacity to their institutional identities. In contrast with all these theory, the faction model acknowledges the existence of institutions as a "formal" part of politics that exists alongside "informal" factional dynamics—a distinction that goes all the way back to Weber's (1958) characterization of modern vs. pre-modern loyalty. While they are separate dynamics, the formal and informal dynamics interact with each other to shape behaviors. Factions, as a result, are simultaneously constrained and empowered by institutions (Dittmer 1995).

The second reason for the emphasis on factions is that the model has demonstrated its usefulness in explaining several empirical phenomena in authoritarian regimes. Most particularly, the model is particularly relevant when it comes to single-party Communist politics: It has helped explain China's financial policies (Shih 2004, 2008b), cadre promotion and demotion (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012; Yuan 2015), and elite signaling (Shih 2008a; Chen and Kung 2016).

If factions are informal organizations recruited by individual elites that compete in an authoritarian regime, then factional sorting describes the manner in which factions relate themselves to each other. Specifically, it refers to the use of certain labels of common association by members of a faction to identify co-faction members, as well as to distinguish

themselves from members of another faction. The emergence of factional sorting is a peculiar yet natural feature of factional politics. While members of a faction can in theory come from all corners of a regime—after all, an elite can use any type of personal connection to his advantage—limited resources mean that over time, a rational, utility-maximizing elite would settle with a limited number of connections that allow him to maximize the relative size of his faction. Such connections tend to not cross salient logistical and social cleavages in the regime, since they require additional, sometimes prohibitive cost to establish and maintain.

While each individual faction in a regime can "sort" along a particular label, in general, factions in each regime tend to collectively converge on either of two primary modes. In some regimes, factions sort themselves into labels of *elective* association such as common policy preferences. In others, faction sorting instead occurs over labels of *ascriptive* connections such as common backgrounds, ethnicity, or other individual traits. Which mode each regime ends up with depends on several factors. Sorting is, to begin with, an endogenous function of a regime's own structure such as geography, technology, or demography, as well as of its elite actions. At the same time, different modes of factional sorting also emerge as the result of exogenous shocks.

Factional sorting is not just a decorative feature of an authoritarian regime: It also carries significant implications on the behaviors and preferences of both the autocrat and his political subordinates. As political actors navigate authoritarian elite politics, they rely on factional sorting to identify allies from adversaries, as well as to estimate the size and composition of the factional network behind each and every individual they interact with. This, in turn, allows political actors to acquire information about purge motivations and purge capacity. The distribution of a label associated with a faction, for example, allows an autocrat to infer this faction's size and reach. By observing and comparing how labels associated with each and every faction are distributed, the autocrat can then infer the balance of power among factions, and alert himself to his own strength, weakness, and priorities. Which faction is the biggest threat to the dictator's rule? Which faction can the dictator's

faction take on safely? And, once a purge in in motion, which individual should the dictator target, and whom should he seek to protect? Factional sorting provides a would-be purge initiator with answers to these crucial questions.

The answers are not always reliable, however. An individual elite's possession of a label hints at but does not guarantee affiliation to the faction associated with said label, and vice versa. Thus, regime elites, faction leaders, and the autocrat himself have to take the accuracy of factional labels into account while using them to make inferences about factional membership and factional balance of power. The level of accuracy of these labels, in turn, is a function of the mode of factional sorting.

Where factional sorting happens along ascriptive labels—labels that cannot be hidden, manufactured, or changed *ex post facto*—political actors gain a great deal of information from observing factional labels. Not only are factions and their strengths clearly identified, but the factional backing behind each and every individual individual members in the regimes are also visible, allowing purge initiators to identify potential "trouble-makers" to take down. Ascriptive factional sorting thus allows a purge initiator to recognize opportunities where capacity lines up with incentives, and to seize them when they arise. In essence, it provides the necessary condition for purges to occur.

In contrast, where factional sorting occurs along elective labels such as policy preferences or ideologies, labels that each political actor can choose for him/herself, perceived factional affiliation can be very fluid even if actual affiliation is not. Where individual political actors can manipulate their own labels to strategically conceal or fabricate their factional affiliation, it also becomes a lot more difficult for elites to estimate their own strengths in both absolute and relative terms. Unaware of these crucial information about purge capacity, and derived of means to identify appropriate targets for purges, elite factions have no choice but to avoid risk-taking behaviors. As a result, elite politics also leans toward compromise and away from confrontation.

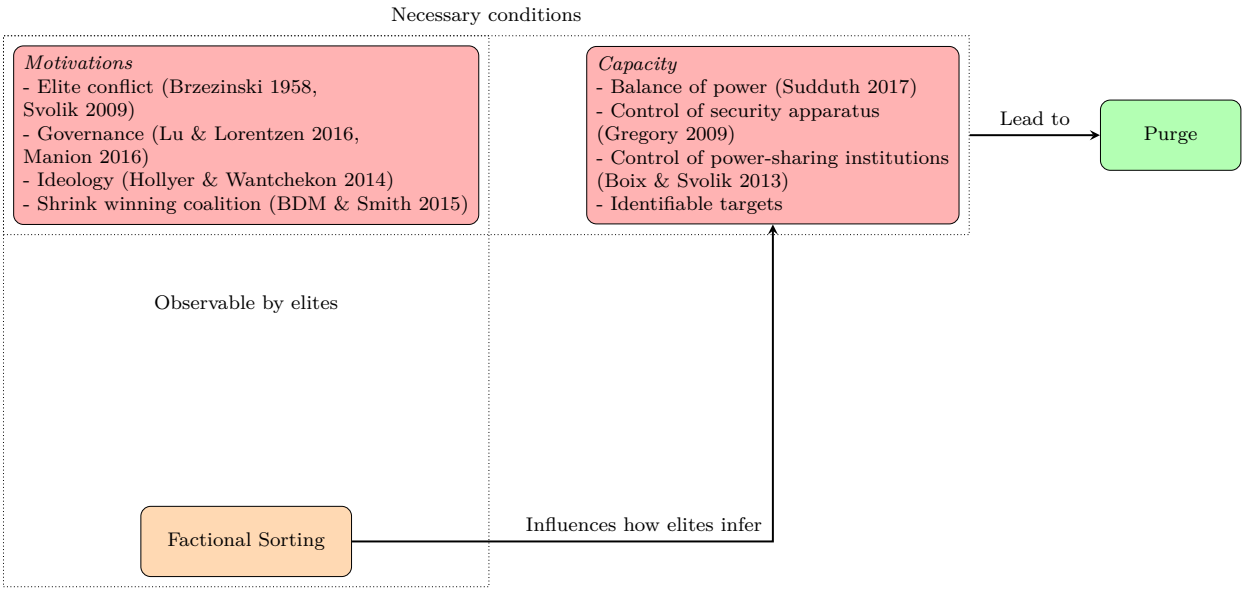

Figure 1.4: How factional sorting influences motivations of and capacity for purges

1.3 Formal theoretical framework

To lay out the core theoretical logic of my argument—that the modes of factional sorting drive variations in purge frequency and intensity among authoritarian regimes, I turn toward formal modeling. In the dissertation, I develop two models to explain the calculation of a dictator prior to and during a purge. The first model, shown in Chapter 3, describes a dictator's decision to initiate a forcible removal of a subordinate regime elite from power. Then, the second model, shown in Chapter 4, describes the various strategies of political protection that the same dictator may consider during an ongoing purge campaign.

My two models share a common setup. The political interactions take place between a dictator L and a set of regime subordinates S_i, with $i \in \{0, 1, 2..., N\}$. Each subordinate belongs to a particular faction, represented by the factional membership $\gamma_i \in \{1, 2, 3, ..k\}$ where k is equal to the number of factions that exists in the regime. For simplicity, I also represent factional membership with an alternative binary indicator $\theta_i \in \{1;0\}$that signifies whether the subordinate S_i belongs to the dictator.

Central to my theoretical argument is the role of uncertainty over political actors'

factional membership on elite political behaviors. In my models, I reflect this uncertainty by defining the two indicators γ_i and S_i such that they are never truly observed by the regime subordinates. Each subordinate knows their own membership with certainty, and the dictator may know γ_i and S_i with certainty when the subordinate i belongs to his faction. Other than these cases, factional membership is veiled: Subordinates have to rely on the labels that other actors carry and on factional sorting to infer the true factional membership. The presence or absence of labels linking a subordinate to a faction is in turn represented by $\gamma_i^* \in \{1, 2, 3, ..k\}$ and $\theta_i^* \in \{1;0\}$, both of which are observed by all political actors.

If γ_i^* and θ_i^* reflects the labels of a subordinate, the degree of uncertainty associated with these labels are described by a factor f, where $0 < f < 1$. In essence, f models the predictive power of a subordinate's observable labels on his true, yet unobservable factional membership. It can be understood as the conditional probability of a subordinate being a member of a faction given that he/she bears labels associated with that faction. Political actors cannot observe actual factional affiliation θ, but can infer it based on observed θ^* and the degree of uncertainty f. As f increases, the more predictive θ^* is of θ.

The mode of factional sorting has direct implications on this degree of uncertainty f. In regimes where factions sort along ascriptive labels, f also tends to be high. At the highest possible f of 1, a subordinate's factional affiliation can be perfectly inferred from his/her observed labels. In contrast, in regimes where factions sort electively, f tends to be low. For simplicity, f can go as low as 0.5 when it concerns θ_i^* and θ_i. This is to say that when uncertainty is highest, making a prediction of factional affiliation using factional labels is only as good as a random coin flip.

Through these models, I demonstrate two key effects of uncertainty over factional membership on elite behavior. First of all, the level of f determines the dictator's proclivity to purge. The higher f, the wider the range of scenarios in which the dictator is willing to initiate a purge. In contrast, the lower f, the more likely it is that the same dictator

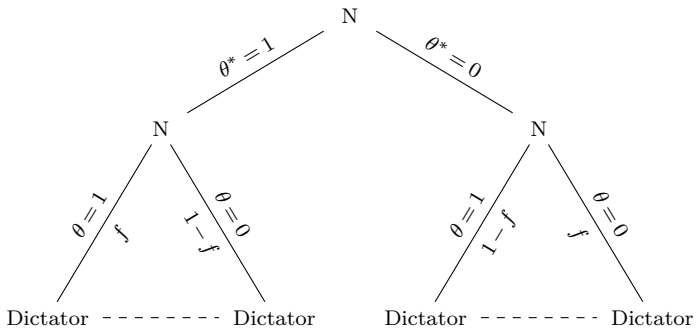

Figure 1.5: General setup of game theoretic models

will choose to co-opt a subordinate elite rather than purge him/her. Holding the set of subordinates constant, a higher f will strictly result in more subordinates being purged by the subordinate. Second, uncertainty also determines the dictator's preferred action during an ongoing purge. Specifically, the form of protection that the dictator provides to his perceived allies changes with the level of uncertainty. The higher f—the more predictive factional labels are of actual affiliation—the more willing the dictator is to provide *ex post* protection by interfering actively in ongoing investigations. This form of protection results in relatively numerous targets of purge in the public's eyes, but little actual consequences suffered by the dictator's perceived allies. In contrast, where f is low and labels of factional affiliation only provide a weak clue to one's actual membership, the dictator prefers to sit back and provide *ex ante* protection by preventing investigations from occurring in the first place. This, in turn, creates the perception of a quiet, low-intensity purge with relatively few targets.

1.4 Bringing in the cases: Vietnam and China

In conjunction with novel theories on factional authoritarian politics, I bring in original empirical data and findings both qualitative and quantitative. My research design centers around a comparative study of two contemporary Communist regimes, Vietnam and China. The choice of cases here is no accidental. The two regimes, with their noted political and

economic similarities diverge precisely in my variable of interest—the mode of factional sorting. As a result, they provide the perfect comparison for a most similar systems design. As my analysis demonstrates, this divergence in factional sorting in Vietnam and China leads to and explains the diverging ways in which historical and contemporary purges in the two regimes unfold.

In addition to this cross-national variation, the Vietnamese and Chinese Communist Party both exhibited remarkable within-country variations in factional sorting. In Chapter 1, I trace the CCP and VCP's rise from their humble beginnings to the contemporary period to reveal the process through which factional sorting in the two regimes developed. A central theme in both regimes is the role of exogenous military shocks in limiting the type of subordinates that regime elites have access to in the process of faction building. This in turn produces unique modes of factional sorting.

In China, events during the Chinese Civil War, in particular military pursuits by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) against the CCP led to the formation of multiple Communist "mountaintops" separated by vast distance and treacherous terrains. The geographic division encouraged elites who seek to consolidate power to favor patron-client networks within rather than across mountaintops. When the CCP eventually united as one, these mountaintops then became the elites' factional power bases. Following the CCP's victory over the Nationalists and the founding of the People's Republic of China, the administrative demands of the new nation meant that geographically distinct mountaintops soon found themselves in charge of the regions they themselves conquered. This reinforced the role of ascriptive revolutionary and professional ties as labels of factional membership in the CCP. These labels are self-reinforcing such that even in the present days, elites continue to recruit supporters from their own hometown and workplace, while rank-and-file members, constrained in their choice of patrons, end up supporting those who share their labels of ascriptive association.

In contrast with the CCP, the VCP's wartime experience led to no such division.

Instead, military shocks first took place in the form of French repression during the First Indochina War. These shocks concentrated the bulk of the VCP into one single location—the mountainous Viet Bac in the northwest of the country—leaving no opportunity for an independent power base to emerge. It was not until after the 1954 Geneva Conference, when Vietnam was partitioned into a VCP-controlled North and a non-Communist South, that a separate Communist power base began to emerge in South Vietnam. Even then, however, another military shock took place. US and South Vietnamese counter-offensives during and following the 1968 Tet Offensive decimated the ranks of the Southern Communists and helped render their voices irrelevant in the VCP's post-war political arrangement. All in all, no sort of ascriptive labels emerged to delineate factions in Vietnam even as factional infighting persists (Nguyen 2012a).

Moving from the historical analysis, Chapter 2 turns toward the contemporary era. It demonstrates the enduring divergence in factional sorting between the VCP and CCP with a pair of conjoint survey experiments conducted on nationally representative Vietnamese and Chinese samples. By asking respondents to provide their opinion on a series of hypothetical promotion scenarios in the Party and private sector, the conjoint experiments reveal the perceived importance of ascriptive and elective ties in guiding factional behaviors. In line with the findings of my historical chapters, I find that the Chinese public considers informal ties between a political elite and a lower-ranking subordinate to be predictive of whether the former extends patronage toward the latter. In contrast, Vietnamese respondents consider these ties to be much less predictive of patronage, and are more likely to turn toward ideological and policy alignments to make educated guesses about the presence of patron-client connection between political actors. What's more, I experimentally show that these differences in perception are specific to interactions in the Party and government sector, and not a reflection of broader cultural differences between the two countries.

After this analysis of the explanatory variable—factional sorting—Chapter 3 begins my examination of the outcome variable i.e. purges. Similar to before, I begin with a histori-

cal analysis, this time of purges that took place prior to China's and Vietnam's contemporary leadership. In this chapter, I demonstrate how these purges exhibited two patterns of variations, both of which are consistent with the theory of factional sorting. First of all, there is a cross-country divergence in both the frequency and intensity of purges. In China, the regime whose factions exhibit ascriptive sorting during much of its time, purges occurred much more often. At least one Politburo-level elite was forcibly removed during each of the CCP's leadership. In addition to that, the sentences given to purge victims in the CCP were also harsh, with frequent death and life sentences. In contrast, Vietnam's purges are much fewer and farther between. There was only one significant purge campaign in the VCP's history, the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair, compared to the dozens of purges that CCP leaders launched in roughly the same time period. This particular purge was also much milder relative to the many purges that occurred in its northern neighbors: Nobody received more than a few years of jail sentences, and even among these, many were released way ahead of schedule. Second, the frequency and intensity of purges within each regime also rose and fell as the modes of factional sorting changed. In the VCP as much as the CCP, periods of relatively frequent purges tended to fall in periods where ascriptive sorting dominates in a relative sense. In contrast, during times when elective sorting became more of a norm, intra-elite politics also tended to be less violent.

In addition to these broader trends, the chapter also focuses on two particular purges: The Gao-Gang Anti-Party Affair in the CCP in 1952-53 and the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair in 1967. Through the cases, I demonstrate how factional labels and factional sorting were used by political actors to guide their behaviors, which, altogether, manifested in purge outcomes observed. In both cases, elite actors relied on ascriptive labels that were in operation during the period—regional and professional ties in the China case and North-South origin in the Vietnam case—to search for potential allies in preparation of a purge. Once the purges were in motion, the purge initiators, Mao Zedong himself in China and the Le Duan-Le Duc Tho duo in Vietnam, also used the same ties to determine who to target as

enemies.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I examine the pattern of political protection in the two regimes. In this chapter, I introduce two original datasets: a biographic dataset of more than 1,700 VCP and Vietnamese government elites, including the Party's Central Committee members, provincial party secretaries, and cabinet ministers; and a dataset of 1,428 disciplinary activities conducted by the VCP's Central Committee for Discipline Inspection. These dataset, representing two of the most extensive datasets on Vietnamese elite politics to date, complement a vast body of literature and data on Chinese politics, including Meyer, Shih, and Lee (2016) biographic dataset and records of the still-ongoing anti-corruption campaign by China File (2016) to form the basis of my analysis.

More than just unique data, the Chapter also presents findings previously unexplored by the literature on Chinese politics or authoritarianism. I demonstrate that the two contemporary anti-corruption campaigns in Vietnam and China, despite taking place around the same time in regimes with very similar formal institutions, exhibit qualitatively different forms of political protection. In China, I observe *ex post* protection, as evidenced by slower investigation process and more lenient punishments given to officials in provinces with perceived ties to the incumbent General Party Secretary. On the other hand, in Vietnam, *ex ante* protection, which manifests as lower investigation rates in provinces with ties to the regime leader, dominates as the main mechanisms of political protection during the country's ongoing anti-corruption campaign.

1.5 The big picture

Beyond the direct questions it attempts to answer—the *why* and *how* of authoritarian intra-elite purges—the project extends our understanding of two Communist regimes, Vietnam and China. The current literature has made frequent comparisons between the two regimes, in an effort both to unpack their shared image as epitome of authoritarian

resilience (see e.g. Dimitrov 2013b; Malesky and London 2014), and to understand their divergent political and policy outcomes in the face of apparent institutional similarities (see e.g. Kerkvliet, Chan, and Unger 1998, and the associated special issue). In the first line of research, scholars have pointed, among countless arguments, to the successful withdrawal of China and Vietnam's state and party apparatus from the economic sphere (Malesky and London 2014), their strong internal control over itself (Whiting 2004; Rothstein 2015; Malesky and Schuler 2013) and external control over the society (Womack 1987; Stockmann and Gallagher 2011; Lorentzen 2013), and their adaptation of quasi-democratic institutions that encourage certain types and degrees of responsiveness (Dimitrov 2013a; Malesky and Schuler 2011; Truex 2016). In the second, studies have noted cross-regime variations in institutional arrangements, in particular in mechanisms of horizontal and vertical accountability (Abrami, Malesky, and Zheng 2013). In addition, as Kerkvliet, Chan, and Unger (1998) remark, the VCP was less strident in its emphasis on ideology, and was more tolerant of both class enemies and internal challengers to the national leadership. Factional sorting provides, at the very least, an addendum to these explanations. For the first line of research, my historical discussion of factional sorting explains the origins of the policy decisions and political arrangements that the VCP and CCP are known for today. For the second line, whereas existing studies take accountability, ideology, and violence as the explanatory variables to explain divergences in outcomes, factional sorting also helps explain how these explanatory variables come to be different across Vietnam and China in the first place.

Second, the research sheds light into the importance of informal institutions. In contrast to previous research that emphasizes formal over informal institutions (Carey 2000), my study points to a uniquely informal institution of Chinese and Vietnamese politics. What makes factional sorting even more interesting is that, at least in the particular cases of my study, it arises as strategic responses to exogenous shocks, and is not the product of any existing formal institution. More than that, factional sorting endures and engenders significant changes in formal institutions. In the CCP, the "mountaintops" continue to

survive even after the end of the Chinese Civil War, and even after the abolition of the Great Administrative Regions. In the VCP, elective sorting continues even when the Party institutionalizes norms to ensure Southern and women representation in the Politburo—in effect, acknowledging and encouraging political selection based on ascriptive identity.

Finally, the research presents a new angle on the role of critical junctures in shaping enduring authoritarian institutions. In this case, the junctures take the form of military conflicts in Vietnam and China's revolutionary history. Taking a slight deviation from previous research on the origins of authoritarian party, which highlight the effect of external threats on aspects of regime cohesion (e.g. Smith 2005; Levitsky and Way 2013), my research focuses on how external threats influence *division* within the regime. Furthermore, while much of existing research use critical junctures to explain the regime's capacity to coerce and manage external challenges, including mass unrest, I show how they can also impact the capacity to manage internal challenges from within the regime.

Chapter 2

Explaining Factional Sorting in China and Vietnam

When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) stripped Bo Xilai of his positions as Politburo member and Party Secretary of Chongqing and expelled him from the Party in 2012, the political analyst Cheng Li (2012b) remarks: "[Bo]'s story is certainly linked to China's present-day factional politics." This suspicion of factional foul play was echoed by many others (Anderlini 2012; He and Huang 2013; Bo 2017), and in fact extended beyond Bo Xilai's story. A large literature points to the role of intra-elite factional conflict behind political purges (Shih 2016; Sudduth 2017), as well as other elite behaviors, especially in the context of China, such as promotion (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012; Meyer, Shih, and Lee 2016), elite signaling (Pye 1980; Shih 2008a), media activity (Chen and Hong 2020) and political economy outcomes both local and national (Shih 2004, 2008b; Hillman 2010).

In Vietnam, China's southern neighbor, factionalism is also seen as a driving force of politics. Not only did factions shape the course of the Vietnam war (Nguyen 2012a; Asselin 2013) and the country's economic reforms in the 1980s (Quinn-Judge 2004), but studies also connect them to contemporary developments, including—in yet another striking resemblance to China—Vietnam's most recent anti-corruption campaign (Thayer 2017a). While faction-

alism is at play in both countries, it soon becomes apparent that factions in Vietnamese politics are not quite the same as those in China. Organizationally, internal conflicts in the CCP typically occur between informal groups that are rooted in ascriptive personal connections, including common geographic or professional origins. If studies of the CCP prior to 1949 speak often, for example, of the "Returned Students" faction of cadres who studied in the Soviet Union (e.g. Lubell 2002), analyses of more recent periods highlight Jiang Jiemin's "Shanghai clique" or Hu Yaobang's and Hu Jintao's "Youth League factions" (*tuanpai*) as prominent factions in the Party's elite political landscape. In contrast, Vietnamese factions are typically characterized by elective affinity, most notably common policy or ideological preferences such as moderates versus hardliners, reformists versus conservatives, or pro-China versus pro-Soviet Union or pro-United States (Vuving 2017).

The difference between Vietnam's and China's factions is even more striking in light of the two regimes' similarities. The two countries' political systems share the same blueprint; their political and economic history also saw a similar narrative—revolutionary wars followed first by post-war economic stagnation, then by marketization reforms that brought about both rapid export-led growth and a side-effect of rising corruption and inequality (Kerkvliet, Chan, and Unger 1998; Painter 2008; Malesky and London 2014). Vietnam and China also overlap in several cultural aspects, including those that have been linked to intra-elite politics such as Confucian influence, the norm of *guanxi* (Pye 1980), or, more specific to elite politics, the norm against personalism (Shih 2008a; Gueorguiev and Schuler 2020).

In this chapter, I propose a typology of factional sorting to capture these very differences in factionalism. Under the typology, the CCP represents a case of background sorting based on geographic and professional connections, while the VCP demonstrates, at least relative to China, a case of ideological sorting based on policy affinity. Beyond a typology, I also outline the motivations behind factional sorting and explain why factions in a regime settle on one mode of sorting over the other. Sorting arises when factions compete over membership while avoiding costly factional connections across salient logistic and social

cleavages. Military conflicts exogenously disrupt the regime's geographic and demographic structure as well as regime elites' ability to manipulate cleavages; in doing so, they magnify or lessen the salience of cleavages in the regime. Conflicts that heighten cleavages' salience constrain all factions' recruitment activity to within their leaders' ingroup network, giving rise to background sorting. In contrast, conflicts that make cleavages less salient encourage broader recruitment, which in turn facilitates ideological sorting.

The chapter illustrates this theoretical argument with a historical comparison of the VCP and the CCP from establishment to post-marketization reforms. In both China and Vietnam, the first factions that emerged were sorted along ascriptive geographical lines—Northern versus Southern cadres in Vietnam, and Soviet-trained versus native cadres in China. From this similar beginning, however, military shocks drove two Parties apart. In Vietnam, failed insurgences any enemy repression during the First and Second Indochina War twice wiped out the Southern Communist infrastructure, leaving the VCP under the leadership of a group of homogeneous northern elites who had few opportunities to cultivate separate power bases. In contrast, following the struggle between native cadres and Comintern associates, the Chinese Communist revolution entered an era of revolutionary "mountaintops" isolated by geography. These mountaintops then evolved into semi-independent military-administrative apparatuses by the end of the Chinese Civil War, preserving the Party's wartime geographical sorting. The legacy of conflicts would last until China and Vietnam embarked on their economic reforms. In Vietnam as much as in China, the deaths of wartime faction leaders and political maneuvers over the reforms issue gave rise to new political coalitions and temporarily disturbed sorting behaviors. Over time, however, professional and geographical backgrounds re-emerged as the basis of factional sorting in China, whereas in Vietnam, factions retained their emphasis on ideology.

Through this chapter, I extend a rich literature on the origins of authoritarian regimes and authoritarian institutions. Building upon cross-national studies (Huntington 1970; Smith 2005; Levitsky and Way 2013) as well as recent research on Vietnam (e.g. Dell and

Querubin 2018), which examine how historical conflicts strengthened single-party regime resilience against external challenges, I draw attention to the influence of these conflicts on internal elite politics. In addition, I also speak to a broader literature on comparative Vietnamese and Chinese politics. The subtle yet important differences underneath China and Vietnam's apparent similarity have for a long time captured academic interests (Beresford and McFarlane 1995; Kerkvliet, Chan, and Unger 1998; Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011; Dimitrov 2013b; Malesky and London 2014). Yet, attempts to untangle the cause and effect of these divergences have been frustrated by the endogeneity that connects political institutions—in this case, factions—with political outcomes. By providing insights into a pathway through which factions evolve independently of elite conflict calculations, my theoretical argument thus offers a venue to clarify the direction of causality between authoritarian institutions and outcomes.

2.1 The two faces of factions

The earliest literature on political faction approaches the concept from a normative angle. Factions, according to James Madison*'s Federalist Paper* no. 10, are subgroups within a community whose members "are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." An analytical framework of factions only emerged with Ralph Nicholas's (1965) seminal work, which contrasts factions with other types of political association, most importantly political parties. In his five-feature framework, factions are similar to political parties in that they are *conflict* and *political* groups who compete for control of political power within their broader community. Yet, unlike political parties, factions are *non-corporate groups* that lack permanence. More importantly, factions recruit members not through a well-defined process; instead, they are *organized around a leader*, who in turn *recruits members through diverse principles*, mobilizing any kind of resources

available to him/her (Firth 1957). These features of a faction, in particular its non-corporate nature and the central role of its leader, also distinguishes faction from various types of intra- and inter-party organizations such as caucuses or coalitions.

Later studies retain Nicholas (1965)'s emphasis on the personal ties between a leader and his/her followers as the defining feature of factional politics. For example, Lucian Pye (1980, p. vi) defines a faction as "personal relationships of individuals who, operating in a hierarchical context, create linkage networks that extend upward in support of particular leaders." Others, like Nathan (1973) or Shih (2008a), include "clientelistic ties" and "reciprocal patron-client relationship" in their definitions. All in all, the literature suggests, factions consist of members from diverse corners of the broader community, limited only by the extent of the leader's personal network. What distinguishes members of one faction from those of another, it follows, is ultimately the existence or absence of personal ties with faction leaders.

Empirically, this conceptualization of factions is well observed in factions within democratic political parties, including Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (Cox and Rosenbluth 1993, 1996), Italy's Christian Democratic Party (Mershon 2001; Golden and Chang 2001), or, to a lesser extent, the United States' Democratic and Republican parties (Koger, Masket, and Noel 2010). When it comes to the authoritarian context, however, the notion that factions exhibit "diverse" membership seem to apply more to some regimes than to others. The Communist Parties in Vietnam and China are prime illustrations of this variation. While elite faction recruitment still revolves around personal ties in China as much as in Vietnam, studies have relied on a smaller, more specific set of identity labels to differentiate factions in these countries. In particular, factions in China are primarily divided along geographic and professional lines; the VCP's factions, in contrast, tend to be associated with policy and ideological preferences. While studies in China point to Hu Jintao's "China Youth League faction," Jiang Jiemin's "Shanghai clique," and Xi Jinping's "Zhejiang faction" in contemporary politics (Li 2002, 2012a; Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012), the Vietnam literature makes

frequent references to conflicts between reformists and hardliners (e.g. Abuza 2002; Case 2015), or between pro-China and pro-Soviet, or pro-China and pro-United States (e.g. Morris 1999; Thayer 2014, 2017b). Where these labels prove insufficient, observers come up with even more nuanced labels, yet holding on to policy and ideology to differentiate competing factions.[1]

It is not as if geography does not matter in Vietnam. Economic, history, sociology and anthropology research on Vietnam have pointed out enduring regional differences *and* regionalist attitudes, both at provincial level and more broadly between the North, South, and Central region of the country (Rambo 1973; Beresford and McFarlane 1995; Dell, Lane, and Querubin 2018). Similarly, the intense debate over the economic reforms in China are a reminder that policy disagreements are no less divisive in the CCP than in the VCP (McCormick 1998; Shirk 1993b). Nevertheless, the literature has recognized that the gap between policy and factional relationships in China "seems to be greater than the norm" , and that "the dynamics of factional formation in Chinese political culture operate with little regard for the agenda of policy issues" (Pye 1980, pp. 16-22). Major foreign policy disagreements have also not been a part of factional conflict in China, even while they continue to define factions in Vietnam (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988).

These differences between factional politics in Vietnam and China lend themselves to no easy explanation. Vietnam and China, to begin with, share a number of fundamental political and cultural institutions. Politically, China and Vietnam's authoritarian political system has its roots in the Soviet Union, the first Communist state to have existed; the parties themselves were modeled after Lenin's theory of the vanguard party (Ven 1992). Culturally, the norm of reciprocity formalized as *guanxi* and more broadly speaking the presence of Confucianism are not unique to China: They are also found in varying shapes and degrees in Vietnam, as well as other Asian societies (Gold, Guthrie, and Wank 2002; Chua and Wellman 2015). In addition to politics and culture, Vietnam and China are also situated in close proximity; they also share a similar trajectory of economic development, and

in contemporary periods, are facing similar political and social challenges, such as corruption, rising inequality, and political dissent (Painter 2008; Thayer 2009; Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011; Malesky and London 2014).

Broad-stroke similarities aside, many of the political processes that are linked to China's particular flavor of factionalism are also observed in Vietnam. Commenting on the gap between policy and power in China's factional politics, for example, Pye (1980) proposes several causes: First, the use of code-word signals in elite politics obscures true policy preference; second, the Confucian cultural view that policy should be a manifestation of wisdom and morality undermines factions' ability to settle conflicts through policy compromises; third, the disconnection in the policy-making process where principal policy-makers are central elites who hold vaguely-defined portfolio instead of specialized bureaucrats tends to exclude those with vested interests in a certain policy from the factional discourse. All of these causes, however, are applicable to Vietnam as much as they are to China. Likewise, Gueorguiev and Schuler (2016, 2020) show that the very institutional arrangements designed to curtail the advancement of personalistic cadre in Vietnam—guidelines against personal credit-claiming, restrictions on candidate-driven campaigning, regular cadre rotation, and intra-party selectorate institutions—are also operational to varying extents in China.

2.2 A theory of factional sorting

The divergence between Vietnam and China hint at broader cross-regime variations in what I call factional sorting. Factional sorting is the phenomenon in which a regime's political factions arrive at a common type of labels to rally their members around and to distinguish themselves from each other. Factional sorting takes on two primary forms: In some regimes, factions sort themselves into labels of *ideological* association such as common policy preferences. In others, faction sorting instead occurs over labels of *background* connections such as gender, race, ethnicity, or other individual traits.

Factional sorting arises as a consequence of the factional competition over political power, and more specifically of the factional recruitment process. Here, I assume that factions seek to maximize power vis-à-vis other factions, and to do so, factions compete over membership. While this is a gross simplification, it remains reasonable that much of a faction's strength comes from the sheer size of its ranks. Even in authoritarian regimes where political actors do not exercise the power of the vote, the patron-client relationship between a faction leader and a subordinate gives the former access to the latter's authority, both informal and formal, while denying other factions of the very same resource. Thus, in a vacuum where there is no cost to recruitment, a faction leader would attempt to recruit every individual possible to maximize his faction's power in both absolute and relative terms. Factional recruitment, in turn, is conducted through "diverse principles," in other words through all possible ties that the leader has access to (Nicholas 1965). A common birthplace can connect a leader with his/her subordinates; so can family, friendship, shared upbringing, or even similar preference on issues both political and non-political. Sharing any personal tie with an elite, it follows, opens up the possibility that the individual is or will become a member of his/her faction.

Factional recruitment in a vacuum, where personal ties are the sole determinant of membership, would lead to far and diverse factions with little to no sorting. However, factional recruitment does not take place in a vacuum. It is costly, not only in terms of time and effort, but also in terms of political favors that faction leaders have to provide to subordinates in exchange for support. Moreover, because personal ties can overlap—a subordinate can have personal ties with multiple faction leaders—it is possible for a faction leader to waste resources on a subordinate that ultimately affiliates him/herself with another faction. As a result, rather than reaching out to every potential subordinate, faction leaders economize by focusing on the connections that give them access to the biggest, non-overlapping recruitment pool possible conditional on their resources.

In addition to resource limitations, I echo Tsou (1976) in proposing that a regime's

structure imposes additional constraints on factional recruitment. But while the structure in Tsou's argument—a regime's ideology, goals, and interests—forces members of the same regime to become similar to one another, my theory focuses on the structural aspects that differentiate individuals. Specifically, they manifest in the form of cleavages—existing background characteristics that separate individuals in a regime into ingroups and outgroups, while making personal connections across but not within groups costly to establish and maintain. There are two types of cleavages. First, there are logistic cleavages such as administrative, geographic or language barriers, all of which hinder physical communication between individuals (Williamson 1979). Second, cleavages can take the form of social differences in class, religion, or ethnicity, etc. (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Factional connections across social cleavages are costly due to ingroup-outgroup distrust (Brewer 1999; Dasgupta 2000); in addition, they incur a social sanction cost, where an individual's association with an outgroup member may antagonize his/her ingroup members and lead to ostracism (Brewer 2001). Notably, logistic and social cleavages are not mutually exclusive. Language and ethnic barriers often overlap, whereas geography can take on a social aspect in the form of parochialism and/or provincialism.

While an infinite number of cleavages might exist at a given time, only salient cleavages truly hinder factional recruitment. A salient logistic cleavage is one that requires significant investment in time, money, or physical exertion, for individuals to overcome, given the regime's current technology and resources. The salience of social cleavages, on the other hand, is a function of the regime's demography. While some cleavages such as race might arguably carry cultural connotations that make them idiosyncratically more salient than others (Isaacs 1967; Caselli and Coleman 2013), as a rule, a social cleavage becomes salient only if the ingroup and outgroup it defines are large enough such that either of them can provide a viable base of political support (Posner 2004).

In tandem with limited resources, the salience of cleavages influences factional recruitment calculation and in consequence the outcome of factional sorting. In the presence

of salient logistic and social cleavages, faction leaders face a prohibitive cost when recruiting outgroup members. On the flip side, each faction leader also enjoys the knowledge that other factions, deterred by the same cleavages, are unlikely to approach individuals from his/her ingroup. As a result, while leaders still recruit through personal ties both observable and unobservable, salient cleavages lead each faction to focus on a small recruitment pool that consists of connections among its leader's ingroup members. These cleavages in turn become the labels that form the basis of background sorting. In contrast, when few or no cleavages are salient, faction leaders target larger, more encompassing connections, which, among others, take the form of major opposing policies or ideologies in the regime.

2.2.1 Endogenous determinants of factional sorting

The outcome of factional sorting varies not only across regimes, but also over time within a single regime. Because cleavages determine how factions engage in sorting, it follows that factions move from ideological to background sorting as salient cleavages emerge and disappear, and vice versa. The process of cleavage formation and extinction can be traced back to three main sources: Structure, elite intervention, and exogenous shocks. Structure refers to a regime's geographic, demographic, and technological features. It also includes the regime's overall ideology, goals and objectives, or cultural institutions that exert a constraining effect of factionalism (Tsou 1976; Pye 1980). These features determine which kind of cleavages can become salient. Treacherous terrain and low transportation technology lead to salient logistic cleavages; the level of racial and ethnic fractionalization, on the other hand, can determine what groups social cleavages divide the regime into and their corresponding sizes. Structural sources are responsible mainly for across-regime variations in factional sorting, but given enough time, they can also bring about temporal variations. Economic development may render certain geographic barriers less challenging, while over-time generational changes also have implications on age, gender, ethnicity and other social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

Elite intervention includes the activities taken by faction leaders to manipulate cleavages. Faction leaders who hold policy-making power can direct investment into communication and transportation infrastructure, which in turn drives down the salience of logistic cleavages. As for social cleavages, faction leaders can attempt to downsize some groups in the regime through political violence, or enlarge others by inviting new individuals into the political arena. All of these can be done out of non-factional motivations—for example, elites might improve infrastructure simply to deliver better public goods—but often, they are strategic decisions aimed toward manipulating factions' recruitment pool, and by extension their power. As such, elite intervention is endogenous to factional conflict itself.

2.2.2 Military conflict as exogenous shock

Lastly, and most importantly to my theory, factional sorting is shaped by exogenous shocks—developments caused by events or actors outside the realm of factional conflicts and beyond the control of faction leaders themselves. Shocks can have economic origins, as is the case of economic crises or commodity price shocks (Levitsky and Way 2010; Dube and Vargas 2013); they can be environmental in nature, as is the case of natural disasters. However, for authoritarian regimes, especially those that originated as "a product of struggle and violence" (Huntington 1970, p.13), military conflicts against external enemies are one of the most common and influential form of exogenous shocks.

Military conflicts affect factional sorting through their influence on structure and elite strategy. Structure-wise, conflicts with outside communities can inflict massive casualties and cause abrupt demographic changes. Military casualties also tend to be concentrated on a specific subset of regime followers, typically those who see actual combat or operate in localities where military engagements occurred. It is therefore likely for a conflict to decimate one particular side of an existing cleavage and render it too small to sustain meaningful political support. When this happens, the cleavage also loses its salience even if the social difference remains (Posner 2004). Another common outcome of a military conflict is the

immediate expansion or shrinkage of the regime's geographic and political border. This can affect the salience of logistic cleavages while simultaneously introducing new social groups, and with them, new social cleavages into the regime.

Besides structure, conflicts also fuel a range of latent attitudes, creating conditions that enable or undermine elites' ability to manipulate cleavages, especially social ones. On one hand, revolutionary experience instills a sense of comradeship and loyalty among regime followers (LeBas 2011; Levitsky and Way 2013). This makes it difficult for leaders to play up the salience of cleavages that divide them. On the other hand, military conflicts can also be a source of internal division. Wars and revolutions do not happen overnight; rather, they take place over a long period of time and consist of smaller engagements across multiple theaters of operation. As a result, sentiments that result from participation in military conflicts—be it pride, stress, or trauma— may be experienced by one side of a cleavage but not the other. This can foster latent resentment between groups, which faction leaders might then exploit to heighten the cleavage's salience.

On top of all these effects, military conflicts are unique in that they can preserve existing cleavages by means of long-lasting institutional changes. This is because many authoritarian regimes in their early days as revolutionary, independence, or resistance movements, do not come with a complete, stable governance structure. Instead, a regime's organizational apparatuses are under constant revision in response to developments of the regime's fortune, goal, and strategy (Smith 2005). Military conflicts bring about these very developments, and oftentimes in drastic fashion. Just as a failed uprising can force a budding nationwide revolution back into clandestine operation, a surprise victory against a superior enemy may embolden a local movement to spread nationally. Because the cleavages that a military conflict engenders or suppresses are also a part of this new "normal," the conflict then creates the opportunity or the necessity for regime leaders to incorporate them into the regime's revised institutional structure. The new institutions may then outlive the conflict itself, preserving the cleavages and pattern of factional sorting that they encourage.

2.3 Military conflicts and factional sorting in Vietnam and China

It is a combination of structure, elite intervention, and exogenous shocks that contributed to cross-country variations in factional sorting between the VCP and the CCP. Multiple factors were also at play during several historical junctures where factional sorting in each regime appeared to diverge from the broader trend. However, factional sorting in Vietnam and China is above all the product of exogenous shocks in the form of historical military conflicts.

In this section, I demonstrate that the observed patterns of factional sorting—the VCP's emphasis on ideology and the CCP's emphasis on professional and geographic backgrounds—cannot be explained by the regimes' initial structure alone. In fact, the two Communist Parties, both founded in the 1920s, had a common starting point: The first factions that emerged in Vietnam and China were similarly divided by salient geographic cleavages—the North versus the South in Vietnam, and Comintern-trained versus native cadres in China. Likewise, elite intervention, when unaccompanied by exogenous shocks, also falls short at exerting durable sorting patterns. Deng Xiaoping's effort to unite provincial leaders under the banner of the economic reforms led to a short period of factional sorting along policy lines. However, the provinces quickly reverted to their geographical roots once the reforms were set in motion.

As my historical analysis reveals, it was conflicts unique to the VCP's and the CCP's revolutionary struggle that led factions in the two parties to engage in diverging forms of sorting. In Vietnam, military setbacks inflicted by the French colonial forces during the 1930s and 1940s twice wiped out the Southern Communist infrastructure, leaving the VCP under the leadership of a homogeneous group of northern elites, between whom few logistic nor social cleavages existed. For the remainder of its history, Vietnam's factions would eschew geographic or professional labels in favor of ideological sorting, except for a period in the

1960s where the North-South cleavage briefly re-emerged. In contrast, military threats experienced by the CCP produced rather than destroyed cleavages. After the Soviet-native cadre conflicts, the CCP entered an era of geographically-isolated revolutionary "mountaintops," a consequence of the Kuomintang's and the Japanese military activities. Toward the end of the Chinese Civil War, these then evolved into semi-independent military-administrative apparatuses, preserving the emphasis on geographic-professional labels in the Party.

2.3.1 The decline of geographic sorting in the VCP

2.3.1.1 North-South conflict in the Thanh Nien

The VCP originated in 1925 in Guangzhou when Ho Chi Minh founded the Thanh Nien Cach Mang Hoi (Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association or Thanh Nien for short).[2] A radical organization that championed Marxist-Leninist ideology yet never explicitly advertised itself as one,[3] Thanh Nien started with a small group of 10 emigré Vietnamese, and began to smuggle youths and members of existing pro-nationalist, anti-colonial movements from Vietnam to Guangzhou, where they received revolutionary training (Vu 2017). By 1929, it had grown to about 1000 members across the country (Vietnam Institute of History 2017, Book VIII, pp 483-484, 497).

The Vietnamese Communist movement experienced the first military shock around this time. After the collapse of the CCP-Kuomintang United Front in 1927, anti-Communist activity in China reached its height, forcing the Thanh Nien headquarters in Guangzhou into hiding.[4] As the organization's central leadership virtually broke down, disagreements within its rank over the revolutionary movement's directions also surfaced. While part of the group emphasized solving the "national question" of reclaiming national independence from the French, another was more interested in inciting a proletariat revolution in line with Marxist ideology (Huynh 1986). Another matter of contention was the decision whether to formally establish a Communist Party in the country (Duiker 1975).

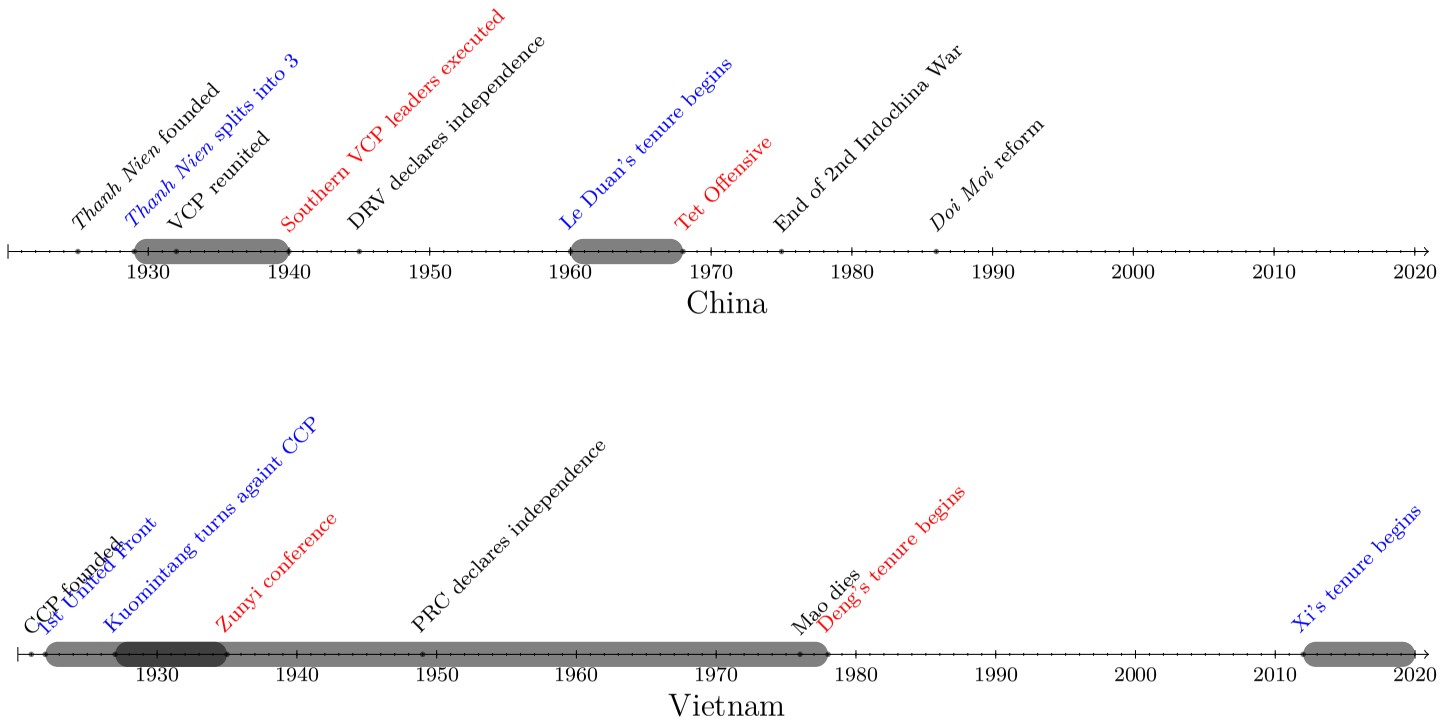

Figure 2.1: Periods of geographic sorting in VCP and CCP's history
Blue-text events give rise to ascriptive geographic sorting and red-text *events* are those that end them.

While the two views reflect different ideological positions, ultimately, it was geography that determined who identified with which view point. The Thanh Nien members in northern Tonkin were all in favor of achieving "social revolution" through the leadership of a formal communist party, whereas "national revolution first" was the consensus among all Southern members (Nguyen 1964; Vu 2017; Duiker 1996, p. 32). The conflict eventually broke out into an open cleavage during the Thanh Nien's National Congress meeting held between May 1 and 9, 1929, where three members of the northern Tonkin delegation demanded that the Thanh Nien dissolve to create a new communist party. After their request was denied, these members walked out while accusing the remaining members of being "false revolutionaries" (Huynh 1986, p. 119). Soon after, on June 17, in a conference in Hanoi, the delegates in Tonkin unilaterally declared the dissolution of the Thanh Nien and the formation of the Communist Party of Indochina. Alarmed by its popularity, the remaining Thanh Nien members in central and southern Vietnam took a 180° turn in policy—another sign that the dispute was no longer ideological in nature—and declared themselves the Communist Party of Annam (Duiker 1975, p. 17;1996, p. 31). For the remainder of the year, the two parties would continue to attack each other while vying for the Comintern's recognition as the legitimate Communist party in Vietnam (Huynh 1986, p. 120).

The cleavage, while bitter, was short-lived. Two developments contributed to disappearance of North-South cleavage in the nascent Communist movement. First, in late 1929, Ho Chi Minh returned to Hong Kong, and in February 1930 brokered the merger of the two Parties together with the League of Indochinese Communists, another Communist group unaffiliated with the Thanh Nien. The now-unified party was named the Vietnamese Communist Party.[5] Second and more importantly, two failed uprisings, the Nghe-Tinh Soviet revolt in Central and Northern Vietnam in 1930 and the Cochinchina Uprising in 1940, led to the French arrest of more than a thousand Communists each and the near destruction of the Party leadership. including the execution of Tran Phu, Le Hong Phong, Ha Huy Tap, and Nguyen Van Cu, namely the first, second, third and fourth VCP General Secretary,

Figure 2.2: Historical map of Vietnam and Indochina. Source: Wikimedia project

respectively (Chonchirdsin 1997; Duiker 1996, p. 41). The VCP thus emerged out of the period with a new, all-Northern Party leadership, none of whom save for Ho Chi Minh took part in the Party's earlier dispute. By September 2nd 1945, when the VCP-led Viet Minh front took power and proclaimed the creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), there was no trace left of the North-South cleavage that once divided the Party.

2.3.1.2 A brief re-emergence of North-South cleavage

The independence that Ho Chi Minh proclaimed did not last. The French reoccupied Cochinchina in Sep 23, 1945, and soon recaptured Hanoi. In response, the entire VCP leadership evacuated to Viet Bac, the mountainous northeastern region of Vietnam near the Chinese border, to prepare for protracted guerrilla warfare. French attacks concentrated VCP's elites into a single location where nobody could carve out his own faction, while suppressing Communist activity elsewhere in the country.

North-South cleavage only became salient again in 1951, when Le Duan, a Southern cadre, managed to put his name into the Politburo. Still, it took Le Duan nine years to rise to

the position of Party Secretary and several more years to solidify his position. While official history narrated that Ho Chi Minh entrusted power to Le Duan to preserve the Party's unity (Vietnam Institute of History 2017, p. 42), his rise was in no small part a product of violent factional infighting. This internal struggle was fought between the Northerner moderates and the Southerner hawks headed by Le Duan and supported by Le Duc Tho, both non-Viet Bac elites. While the Northerners emphasized rebuilding the North and dealing with the United States involvement in South Vietnam through diplomatic means, the Southern faction was in favor of increased military action toward a Communist takeover of South Vietnam (Nguyen 2006, 2012a).

Exacerbating this division was the creation of a series of Communist-led political apparatuses in the South. The first of these, created on December 20, 1960, was the National Liberation Front (NLF), a mass political organization purported to unite "all patriotic classes, majority and minority ethnic groups, political parties and religions, and all those against the United States and Republic of Vietnam government" (Vietnam Communist Party 2002a). While not explicitly Communist, the NLF was led by Viet Minh members, and its creation was widely celebrated by the Hanoi government (Ellsberg 1971). The NLF established its own military arm, the People's Liberation Armed Forces of South Vietnam (PLAF), in January 1961, which by 1963 had grown to about 64,000 soldiers, most of whom South Vietnamese (General Staff of Vietnam's People's Army 2015). Within the same month, the VCP also reactivated the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), and a year later established the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), a Marxist-Leninist party in South Vietnam over which COSVN presides. Finally, in 1969, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG) was created, adding an executive arms to govern Communist-controlled territory in South Vietnam, and a body to represent the Southern Communists internationally (Vietnam Communist Party 1976, p.141). By 1969, Communist forces in South Vietnam had replicated the entire political structure of the DRV in the North.

Some caution in judgment is necessary. Despite having its own political apparatuses, the entire revolutionary movement in South Vietnam from the beginning to the end was always under the close supervision of the Central Committee in Hanoi.[6] The leadership of COSVN, the highest of these organizations, was also made of Northern party veterans chosen by other Northerners. Yet, even though South Vietnam was no independent kingdom, delegation of power gave rise to a certain level of autonomy. First, the dual role of Southern elites as both leaders of Southern movement and members of the Central Committee in the North put them in a unique middleman position where they could advocate for policy and material support on behalf of fellow Southerners, so long as their demands were consistent with party guidelines (Asselin 2013, pp. 95-96). Second, because the Southern Communists had typically lacked proper channels of communication with Hanoi, they frequently found themselves having the freedom to improvise general instructions issued by the North to fit their needs, or even resisted them outright (Nguyen 2012a, chap. 2). The North, in turn, had to accept this autonomy in policy implementation as a fact of life (Duiker 1996, p.86). Finally, Southern leaders retained autonomy in personnel and financial matters, and had the opportunity to distribute political goods—in other words, to engage in revolutionary clientelism (Vietnam Communist Party 2002b).[7]

Like the first one, this second episode of North-South factionalism also featured dramatic confrontations between the regime's elites. Most notably, in 1967, the Party's security police, by order of Le Duan and Le Duc Tho, arrested about 30 senior Party officials alongside 300 rank-and-file Party members in what is called the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair (Quinn-Judge 2005; Nguyen 2017). Most of the arrested belong to one of the two groups. The first group consisted of individuals with direct professional relationship with Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, the two most prominent Northerner moderates. These included Dang Kim Giang and Le Liem, Vo Nguyen Giap's aides; Senior Colonel Do Duc Kien, Giap's direct subordinate in the General Staff; and Ho Chi Minh's former secretary Vu Dinh Huynh and his son Vu Thu Hien. The second group included military personnels not immediately

subordinate to but nevertheless under Giap's command such as Hoang The Dung and Van Doan[8], editor-in-chief and vice editor-in-chief of the military newspaper *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, as well as Le Trong Nghia and Tran Hieu, chair and vice-chair of Department of Military Intelligence, respectively (Abuza 2001; Stowe 2001, pp. 60-61). Almost all of the arrested were Northerners (Table 5).

Once again, however, the North-South division did not last. Everything the Southern leaders achieved in faction building came undone in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive in 1968. A failed military campaign jointly launched by Southern Communists and North Vietnam's regular army throughout South Vietnam, it resulted in between 44,000 and 181,000 deaths on the Communist side.[9] At least 40 percent of political cadres in the South were killed or immobilized in the aftermath of Tet, and had to be replaced with North Vietnamese regulars (Warner 1977; Duiker 1996, p. 303). The Tet Offensive also uprooted the Viet Cong's organization in the cities, exposed its informant networks and forced surviving cadres into hiding. After this failure, the Viet Cong was no longer capable of launching operations of their own, and had to depend entirely on the North.

Military losses in the South also triggered push-backs against Le Duan's faction and his own reputation. Taking the opportunity, on May 5 1968, Truong Chinh, a Northerner and Le Duan's competitor in the Politburo, turned a routine speech in commemoration of Karl Marx's 150th birthday into a fierce criticism of the Southerners' war strategy (Doyle, Lipsman, and Maitland 1986, pp. 126-127). Truong Chinh's report sparked several months of heated internal debate before it was accepted in its entirety for broadcast and publication in August—a signal of the Party's collective legitimization of Chinh's challenge to Le Duan. The Southern faction's strategy of violence also came to a halt: With President Johnson's declaration of a bombing halt and the resume of four-party talks between the US, the North and South Vietnamese governments and the Viet Cong, the VCP was brought back to the negotiation table to find a diplomatic settlement to the war. The Tet Offensive, a product of the Southern faction, had handed the North-firsters the victory they never expected.

2.3.1.3 Post-war peace

The end of the war put the nail to the coffin of the Southern faction. Quietly but unmistakably, when the country unified in 1975, the leaders of Southern movement were pushed to the sideline. Among COSVN and NLF members, only Nguyen Van Linh was added to the Politburo; PRG ministers and PLAF commanders, on the other hand, had to contend with subordinate positions to their Northern equivalents or were removed from power unceremoniously (Table 1 and 2). Notably, the subjugation of the Southern elites took place even as the key leaders of the Southern faction, Le Duan and Le Duc Tho, remained in power until their deaths in 1986 and 1990. What this demonstrated is two-fold. On one hand, the failure of the Southern faction to promote any of its member to an equal or higher position than his/her Northern equivalent confirmed that as a group, Southerners could no longer gather enough voice in the discussion table to dictate the terms of the post-war arrangement. On the other hand, the stability Le Duan and Le Duc Tho's seats despite the lack of Southern representation indicated that the Southern identity was no longer relevant. One year after the war, a new status quo had been established, one without the North-South geographical cleavage.

In the aftermath, factional politics in Vietnam gradually became the politics of temporary alliances, formed and broken over each issue of the day. The most heated policy issue of all—the battle over Doi Moi, Vietnam's economic reforms in 1986—saw not only alliances across geographical barriers, but also internal discord within them. Southerners are found both within the so-called "reformist" camp, such as Nguyen Van Linh or Vo Van Kiet, and among the conservatives, such as Le Duan and Mai Chi Tho, Le Duc Tho's brother and to whom Linh was a close associate (Crossette 1988; Nguyen 2012b). Ideology itself proved to be less than a cleavage: Truong Chinh joined force with Le Duan to force Linh out of the Politburo in 1982, but warmed up to the reformist agenda and helped re-admit Linh back to the Politburo in 1985, paving the way for his rise to General Secretary from 1986 to 1991 (Vo 2007). Toward the end of his tenure, Linh himself moved to the opposite

direction, clashing with Vo Van Kiet frequently and becoming one of the most vocal critics of the reforms (Shenon 1998; Huy Duc 2012).

2.3.2 The persistence of background sorting in the CCP

The CCP was founded in 1921 in Shanghai, 9 years earlier than its Vietnamese counterpart. Though born under a different national and international context, the CCP bore a striking resemblance to the VCP in the way its early factions emerged. Ideological in nature, the factions quickly morphed into two groups separated by geographical boundary: a group of Moscow-trained, Comintern-approved cadres and another group of native Chinese cadres. Unlike the VCP's experience with the First Indochina War, however, the military shocks that the CCP encountered during the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War did not remove or reduce the salience of the CCP's cleavages. Instead, they simply replaced the cleavage between Soviet and native cadres with that among revolutionary base areas and field armies—the "mountaintops." Spared from a military destruction similar to what the VCP Southerners experienced in the 1930–31 Soviet-Nghe Tinh revolt, the 1940 Cochinchina Uprising, or the 1968 Tet Offensive, these mountaintops became institutionalized during the final years of the Chinese Civil War as the CCP struggled to establish administrative control over its rapidly expanding political territory. Over time, they evolved into factions based on lineage and professional networks as seen during Jiang Zemin's, Hu Jintao's, and Xi Jinping's leadership.

2.3.2.1 Comintern-native split during the formation years

The CCP's first factional conflict came to the front just one year after its establishment. In 1922, a Dutch-born Communist named Henk Sneevliet, one of the Comintern

Table 2.1: Comparison of Northern and Southern government leaders' post-war fates

Northern (DRV) Ministers		
Name	Prewar Title	Postwar Title
Pham Van Dong	Prime Minister	Chair, Council of Ministers
Dang Viet Chau	Vice PM	Minister of Foreign Trade
Phan Ke Toai	Vice PM	died in 1973
Phan Trong Tue	Vice PM	Minister of Transportation
Nguyen Con	Vice PM; Minister of Mechanical and Metallurgical Industry	Chair, VCP's Central Committee on Economics
Do Muoi	Vice PM; Chair, State Committee of Basic Reconstruction; Minister of Construction	Vice PM; Minister of Construction
Hoang Anh	Vice PM; Chair, State Committee on Agriculture	died 1976
Le Thanh Nghi	Vice PM; Chair, State Committee on Planning	Vice PM; Chair, State Committee on Planning
Vo Nguyen Giap	Vice PM; Minister of Defense	Minister of Defense, Politburo member
Nguyen Duy Trinh	Vice PM; Minister of Foreign Affair	Minister of Foreign Affair, Politburo member
Tran Huu Duc	Vice Prime Minister; Minister of Presidential Palace	Chairman, People's Supreme Prosecutorate
Tran Quoc Hoan	Minister of Public Security	Minister of Interior
Hoang Minh Giam	Minister of Culture	Chair, National Assembly Committee on External Relations
Hoang Quoc Thinh	Minister of Domestic Commerce	Minister of Domestic Commerce
Nguyen Van Huyen	Minister of Education	died 1975
Ngo Minh Loan	Minister of Foodstuff	Minister of Foodstuff
Phan Anh	Minister of Foreign Trade	
Duong Quoc Chinh	Minister of Interior	Minister of Labor, Invalids and Social Affair
Nguyen Thanh Binh	Minister of Irrigation	Minister of Irrigation
Kha Vang Can	Minister of Light Industry	**Chair, Ho Chi Minh City's Committee on Science and Technology**
Duong Bach Lien	Minister of Transportation	**Vice Chair, State Committee on Planning**
Ta Quang Buu	Minister of University and Vocational Training	
Nguyen Tho Chan	Minister of Labor	Minister of Labor
Tran Danh Tuyen	Minister of Supplies	Vice-Chair, VCP's Central Committee on External Relations
Nguyen Chan	Acting Minister of Electricity and Coal	Minister of Electricity and Coal
Dao Thien Thi	Acting Minister of Finance	Minister of Finance
Vu Van Can	Acting Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
Ha Ke Tan	Minister in charge of Song Da Hydropower Project	Minister in charge of the Song Da Hydropower Project
Phan My	Minister in charge of Office of the Presidential Palace	Minister in charge of Office of the Presidential Palace
Tran Quang Huy	Minister in charge of Culture and Education of the Presidential Palace	Minister in charge of Culture and Education of the Presidential Palace
Xuan Thuy	Minister without portfolio	Vice-Chair, Council of State; Chair, VCP's Central Committee on External Relations
Dang Thi	Chair, State Committee for Reunification	Minister of Presidential Palace
Vo Thuc Dong	Chair, State Committee on Agriculture	Chair, State Committee on Agriculture
Le Quang Ba	Chair, State Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs	**Vice-Chair, Central Agricultural Committee**
Nguyen Lam	Chair, State Committee on Planning	Party Secretary of Hanoi
Tran Dai Nghia	Chair, State Committee on Science and Technology	Director, Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology
Nguyen Van Loc	Chair, State Inspection Committee	Chair, State Inspection Committee
Nghiem Xuan Yem	Vice-Chair, State Committee on Agriculture	
Ta Hoang Co	Governor State Bank of Vietnam	Governor, State Bank of Vietnam

Southern (PRG) Ministers		
Name	Prewar Title	Postwar title
Nguyen Huu Tho	President	**Vice Head of State**
Huynh Tan Phat	Prime Minister	**Vice PM; Chair, State Committee on Basic Reconstruction**
Phung Van Cung	Vice PM, Interior Minister	**Vice Minister of Health**
Nguyen Van Kiet	Vice PM, Education and Youth Minister	**Member of Fatherland Front Central Committee Presidium**
Nguyen Doa	Vice PM	
Tran Buu Kiem	Minister of Presidential Palace	**Member of Fatherland Front Central Committee Presidium**
Cao Van Bon	Minister of Economy and Finance	Died in 1972
Nguyen Thi Binh	Foreign Affairs Minister	Minister of Education
Luu Huu Phuoc	Information and Culture Minister	**Director, Institute of Music Research**
Tran Nam Trung	Defense Minister	**Head of Gov Inspectorate Committee**
Duong Quynh Hoa	Health, Invalids and Social Action Minister	**Vice Minister of Health***
Truong Nhu Tang	Justice Minister	**Vice Minister of Justice****

Note: Bold text denotes demotion

* Left the Party in 1979

** Declined; escaped from Vietnam in 1978

Table 2.2: Post-war fate of Southern VCP elites, excluding PRG ministers

Name	Role	Period	Appointment	Post war position
People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF)				
Nguyen Huu Xuyen	Commander	1961-63	Appointed locally	**Vice commander, Military Zone 9**
Tran Van Tra	Commander	1963-67, 1973-75	Sent from Hanoi	**Commander and Political Commissar, Military Zone 7**
Hoang Van Thai	Commander	1967-73	Sent from Hanoi	Vice Minister of Defense, Vice Chief of General Staff
Tran Nam Trung	Political Commissar	1962-64	Sent from Hanoi	**Head of Gov Inspectorate Committee**
Nguyen Chi Thanh	Political Commissar	1964-67	Sent from Hanoi	Died in 1967
Pham Hung	Political Commissar	1967-75	Sent from Hanoi	Vice PM
Tran Dinh Xu	Chief of Staff	1963-64	Sent from Hanoi	Died in 1969
Le Duc Anh	Chief of Staff	1964-69	Sent from Hanoi	**Commander, Military Zone 9**
Nguyen Minh Chau	Chief of Staff	1969-70, 1974-75	Sent from Hanoi	**Commander, 232 Corps**
Hoang Cam	Chief of Staff	1970-74	Sent from Hanoi	**Commander, 4th Corps; Vice chair, Military Management Committee**
Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN)				
Nguyen Van Linh	Party Secretary	1961-64	Elected locally	**Politburo , Party Secretary of Ho Chi Minh City**
Nguyen Chi Thanh	Party Secretary	1694-67	Sent from Hanoi	Died in 1967
Pham Hung	Party Secretary	1967-75	Sent from Hanoi	Vice PM
National Liberation Front (NLF)				
Nguyen Huu Tho	Chairman	1962-1976	Elected locally	Vice Head of State
Huynh Tan Phat	Vice-chairman	1962-1976	Elected locally	Vice Prime Minister
Phung Van Cung	Vice-chairman	1962-1976	Elected locally	Vice Minister of Health
Vo Chi Cong	Vice-chairman	1962-1976	Sent from Hanoi	Vice Prime Minister, Vice Minister of Agriculture

Note: Bold text denotes demotion

representatives present at the CCP establishment meeting, called a surprise Central Committee meeting in which he demanded the CCP to join the Kuomintang to establish the United Front. The motion was protested by most native cadres, including Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, two of the Party's founding members (Saich and Yang 1996). However, with the Comintern's authority at hand, Sneevliet forced the CCP to accept the decision (Schwartz 1967, p.41). Sneevliet then enlisted the help of Mikhail Borodin, Comintern advisor to the CCP, to negotiate with Sun Yatsen to reorganize both parties under Leninist principles.

As the Comintern's influence on the CCP grew, so did the ranks of Soviet-trained cadres in the party. The most powerful of them, a group of students from the Moscow Sun Yatsen University who called themselves the "28 Bolsheviks,"[10] had by the late 1920s and early 1930s taken up leadership positions in the party while sidelining native cadres. The collapse of the United Front in 1927 and the Kuomintang's betrayal led to the deaths of hundreds or even thousands of Communist cadres and sympathizers (Barnouin and Changgen 2006, p 38), but to the 28 Bolsheviks it was a blessing in disguise. The death in 1931 of Xiang Zhongfa, the 2nd CCP General Party Secretary allowed the 28 Bolsheviks leader Wang Ming to take over the CCP as Acting General Party Secretary before formally passing the baton to Bo Gu, another of the 28 Bolsheviks in January 1934. When the CCP leadership ran from Shanghai to the Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet, the Comintern-trained cadres simply installed themselves in power, replacing the Soviet's current leaders Zhu De and Mao Zedong. The blame for the United Front's failure, on the other hand, was put on Chen Duxiu, who was expelled from the CCP (Feigon 1983). Meanwhile, native cadres would rally around Mao to resist these men, turning the differences between the Soviet and native cadres into the CCP's first geographical and salient ideological cleavage (Schram 1983, p. 23).

The cleavage would remain alive until the tide turned in the 1930s with the demise of the Soviet-trained faction—a consequence of external military threat from Chiang Kai-shek's Encirclement Campaigns. After failed attempts to break through the last Encirclement Cam-

Table 2.3: Rise of the 28 Bolsheviks in CCP Politburo of the 6th Central Committee, 1928-38

1st Plenary Session (1928)		4th Plenary Session (Jan 7, 1931)		5th Plenary Session (Jan 18, 1934)		Prior to 6th Plenary Session (Nov 6, 1938)		
Name	Title	Name	Title	Name	Title	Name	Title	Location
Xiang Zhongfa	General Secretary	Xiang Zhongfa	General Secretary*	**Bo Gu**	General Secretary	**Zhang Wentian**	General Secretary	Yan'an
Su Zhaozheng		**Wang Ming**	General Secretary (acting)**	Mao Zedong	CMC Chairman+	Mao Zedong	CMC Chairman	Yan'an
Xiang Ying		Zhou Enlai		**Zhang Wentian**		Chen Yun		Yan'an
Zhou Enlai		Zhang Guotao		Zhou Enlai		**Kai Feng**		Yan'an
Qu Qiubai		Xiang Ying		Xiang Ying		Kang Sheng		Yan'an
Cai Hesen		Xu Xigen		**Wang Ming**		Liu Shaoqi		Yan'an
Zhang Guotao		Lu Futan		Chen Yun		**Wang Jiaxiang**		Moscow
Guang Xiangying		Ren Bishi		Kang Sheng		Ren Bishi		Moscow
Li Lisan		Chen Yun		Ren Bishi		**Wang Ming**	General Secretary (Yangtze Bureau)	Yangtze Bureau
Luo Dengxian				Zhang Guotao		Zhou Enlai		Yangtze Bureau
Peng Pai				Gu Zuolin		**Bo Gu**		Yangtze Bureau
Yang Yin				Zhu De		Xiang Ying		Yangtze Bureau
Lu Futan				**Wang Jiaxiang**		Lin Boqu		Yangtze Bureau
Xu Xigen				Liu Shaoqi		Peng Dehuai		Shanxi
				Guang Xiangyin				
				Kai Feng				
# of 28 Bolsheviks	0	# of 28 Bolsheviks	1	# of 28 Bolsheviks	5	# of 28 Bolsheviks	5	

Sources: Huang (2000) for location, Kampen (2000) for 28 Bolsheviks membership
Note: 28 Bolsheviks member in bold; alternate Politburo member in parentheses
* Died in June 24, 1931
** After Xiang Zhongfa's death in June 24, 1931
+ Since November 1935

paign, Braun, Bo and Zhou had to order the retreat from the Jiangxi-Fujian Soviet in what is now known as the Long March. Taking advantage of this military disaster, Mao rallied support from other native cadres—and most crucially from Zhou Enlai—to outmaneuver Otto Braun and Bo Gu at the Zunyi Conference in January 1935, while elevating himself back to the Politburo Standing Committee and *de facto* leadership of the CCP (Sina News 2006). An even more conclusive victory against the 28 Bolsheviks came in 1938 after Japanese forces destroyed Kuomintang forces in Wuhan, rendering the CCP Yangtze Bureau, Wang Ming's rival power base to Mao's Yan'an Soviet, obsolete.[11] Wang's dismissal back to Yan'an was met with Mao's all-out assault. In the 6th Plenum of the 6th Central Committee, Mao criticized Wang as part of a "Right opportunist" faction, while transferring the New Fourth Army's control to Liu Shaoqi's Central Plain Bureau and Zhou Enlai's Southern Bureau. Wang remained in the Party, but without power nor the Comintern's support, the Soviet faction was no more.

2.3.2.2 Rise of the mountaintops

The CCP's military struggles against external enemies extinguished the cleavage between native and Soviet cadres; at the same time, however, they also set another cleavage in motion. The Kuomintang betrayal in 1927 not only decimated CCP ranks but also pushed Communist cadres into the countryside, where they formed local bases isolated from one another (Figure 2). This physical separation was, in essence, both a logistic and social cleavage: It encouraged ties between a base leader and his/her local subordinates, while fostering distrust and undermining possible allegiances across bases. Thus, when Mao's retreating army met with that of Zhang Guotao at Lianghekou in June 1935, neither leader allowed the other to dictate strategy, let alone relinquish control of his faction. In the end, the two went on separate ways: Mao headed north towards Shaanxi, while Zhang went southwest, where his forces were destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek and his allies.

Another cleavage, or at least an extension of the base areas, emerged later during the

Sino-Japanese War. This is the division between "red area" cadres in the CCP-controlled Soviets and the "white area" cadres who operated underground in Kuomintang- and Japanese-controlled areas. The two groups were separated not only by geography, but also by the red area cadres' deep suspicion of their white area counterparts and the latter's resentment toward the former. Cadres in red areas lived openly as Communists and often looked down on their underground comrades, who often had to take on a bourgeois facade to avoid capture, as "heroes of a lesser kind." (Lubell 2002, 191) On the other side, white area cadres protested their marginal representation in Party leadership and the mistreatment they suffered during the 1943 "rescue campaign" at Yan'an (Lubell 2002, pp. 192-93). So serious was the cleavage that during 1944 and 1945, Mao himself had to make several public "apologies" to white area cadres while carefully avoiding antagonizing his red area allies (Wu and Peng 1988, p. 201).

The rise of the base areas and the red-white dichotomy ensures that geographical cleavages would continue to delineate CCP factions. Unlike in Vietnam, where military defeats enabled Northern cadres to marginalize their Southern comrades in the postwar period, the CCP's military successes created logistic constraints that encouraged background sorting. Since the CCP's administrative capacity could not keep pace with the expansion of its political border, the leadership resorted to giving administrative positions to the field armies to manage the regions they recently liberated through the formal creation of six Administrative Regions in December 1949 (Steiner 1950; Solinger 1977, pp. 25-28). Additionally, in a practice called *zhuanye*, over 1.4 million PLA soldiers and officers took up civilian positions in 1949-50 alone (Nie 1983, p. 721). The army leaders and heads of the mountaintops suddenly found themselves in control of both military and bureaucratic personnel. This in turn strengthened the cleavage between mountaintops in several ways. First, it allowed faction leaders to distribute office rewards and reinforced their subordinates' loyalty. Second, it gave them administrative power in addition to military control. Third, settling down the armies in the regions they liberated—which were often not their regions of origins—had the effect

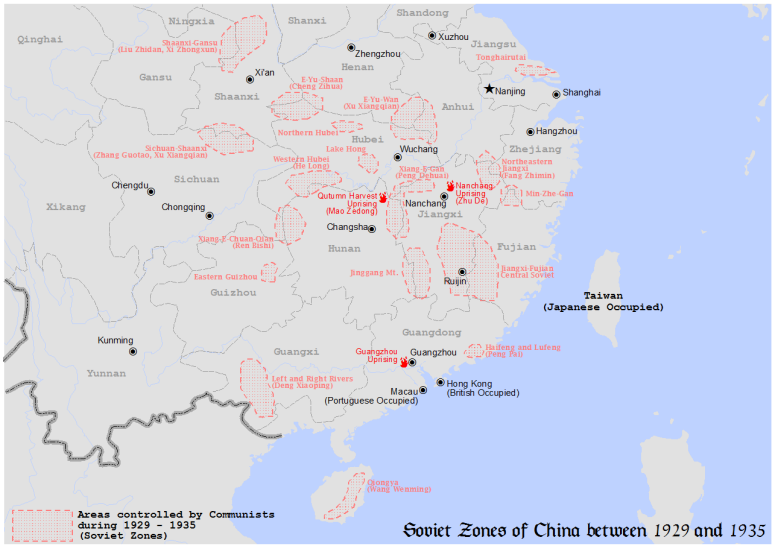

Figure 2.3: CCP base areas before the Long March. Source: Wikimedia project

of fostering intra-group cohesion. The army-civilian cadres, speaking a different accent and unaccustomed to the local environment, bonded together, making existing loyalty ties even more salient (Huang 2000). As a consequence of this policy, the People's Republic of China came into being in October 1949 with a pronounced pattern of factional sorting based on geography.

2.3.2.3 Deng Xiaoping: Mountaintops and beyond

With Mao Zedong's death in 1976, the CCP's leadership passed to Hua Guofeng, and four years later to Deng Xiaoping. Deng inherited the cleavages of Mao's era; however, unlike Mao, Deng was in a precarious position. If Mao was the undisputed leader, Deng to other CCP elites was only a first among equals: His own faction, drawing primarily from the 2nd Field Army that he commanded as Director of the Jin-Ji-Lu-Yu Bureau director from August 1945 to the end of the Chinese Civil War, had nowhere near complete control of government and Party apparatuses. Deng's successful ousting of Hua Guofeng had also raised suspicion among many of the more conservative faction leaders, who in turn became

a major obstacle in Deng's future maneuvers (Huang 2000, p. 374).

To expand his coalition, Deng introduced more groups to the elite political arena. First, he turned to cadres who, like himself, was prosecuted during the Cultural Revolution. Among high ranking cadres rehabilitated at the Fifth Plenum of the 11th Central Committee, Peng Zhen returned as the Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission; Hu Yaobang was promoted to the Head of Organization Department, then the Propaganda Department, before being elevated to the Party General Secretary seat. Among the ranks and files, rehabilitated cadres made up for about 7 percent of Party membership by 1981 (Pye 1981, p.25). Second, Deng courted provincial Party secretaries and governors, many of whom were initially opposed to reforms and Deng himself. Deng increased the proportion of provincial leaders' seat in the Central Committee to 43 percent by 1987. Additionally, from 1980-87, Deng and his allies Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang pushed forward with their fiscal decentralization program, various forms of which were proposed earlier by the provinces themselves. Under this plan, coined "eating in separate kitchens" (*fenzao chifan*), the center entered into revenue sharing contracts with individual provinces, allowing the latter to retain surplus revenues after remitting a required amount. Investment grants, traditionally a tool for the center to dictate local investment, were also phased out and replaced with bank loans. He also offered provinces the autonomy to "experiment" with new administrative and production practices and promised to protect these experiments (Shirk 1993a, chap. 9). Finally, Deng placated conservative elders by turning a blind eye to their efforts to cultivate their family (Brown 2014).[12] Benefits extended to the princelings also included simultaneous posts in the government and the private sector. [13]

Altogether, Deng Xiaoping created a coalition that extended beyond the physical boundaries of Mao Zedong-era mountaintops. The cadres, coming from a wide spectrum of ranks, locations, and institutions, were tied together by the sheer force of political debts to Deng, yet there was neither within-group cohesion to unify them nor salient cleavages to separate them from the rest of the Party. The rehabilitated cadres, for an example, included

all different shades of Cultural Revolution experiences.[14] In terms of policy, Deng's coalition also included "both the enthusiastically aggressive innovators and the most dissatisfied and complaining elements of Chinese politics" (Pye 1981, p.25).

Deng Xiaoping's effort was an example of how elite intervention could influence factional sorting. At the same time, it demonstrates that elite intervention on its own could not overcome the path dependency that military conflicts created beforehand. If in Vietnam, military casualties dealt a decisive blow to the VCP's North-South cleavage and put an end to geographical factional sorting, in China the turn toward ideological sorting was only temporary: Mountaintop-ism if not the mountaintops themselves remained in place. Slowly but surely, with the reforms already set in motion and Deng no longer in the picture, salient geographic and social cleavages re-emerged to break apart the very coalition that Deng empowered.

2.3.2.4 Post-reform consolidation

The re-emergence of background-based sorting began with the decay of Deng's reform coalitions. As time passed, old age (and, for many, injuries suffered during the Cultural Revolution) took its toll on the number and influence of political elders and rehabilitated cadres. Deng Xiaoping himself died in 1995, and Bo Yibo, the last rehabilitated cadre among the Eight Elders, died in 2007.[15] In their place, the elders left behind a factional legacy of princelings. While the princelings' influence was still minimal during Deng Xiaoping's years, it grew rapidly in Jiang Zemin's and Hu Jintao's era. Of the Eight Elders' 103 descendants and spouses, 43 became executives in private businesses (Bloomberg News 2012). Others chose to advance in the political arena. Here, the very advantages of a princeling— education, leadership experience, and young age—put them and by extension their family against one another in the fight for central leadership positions. For example, Bo Xilai, son of Bo Yibo, and Xi Jinping, son of Xi Zhongxun were under direct competition for a seat in the 17th Party Congress's Politburo Standing Committee, which Xi narrowly won due to his younger

age (Nathan and Gilley 2003). The revolutionary families, in this way, became the first salient social cleavage of China's post-Deng era.

The second cleavage emerged from Deng's effort to empower the provinces. To provincial leaders, the economic reforms not only incentivized profit-seeking but also gave them a powerful tool to build their own mountaintops. Soon enough, provincial leaders were handing out business favors—licenses, permits, exemptions—in exchange for rents and political support from private and state-owned entrepreneurs (Paik and Baum 2014). What the process resulted in were economic profits for the provinces; what it did not do, on the other hand, was bridging the conflict of interests between localities, a legacy of revolutionary mountaintop-ism. Quite the contrary, Deng's reforms reinforced the extensive networks between provincial leaders, Party cadres, SOEs and private businesses within each province, all of whom worked together to shape the province's economic activity in what's called the "local state corporatism model" (Shirk 1993b; Oi 1995). The new state-corporates then engaged in bitter competition with one another for scarce economic opportunities. During the 1980s, policy concessions that the central government granted Shanghai to modernize its economy was met with Liaoning's protest, who in turn made repeated demands for similar preferential treatment. The incident even turned into personal hostility between their two leaders, Li Changchun and Jiang Zemin (Nathan and Gilley 2003, p. 115).

Provincial origin would embed itself further in the CCP's elite cleavages starting during Jiang Zemin's tenure as General Party Secretary. Lacking revolutionary and military experience, Jiang turned to his only power base, the city of Shanghai, where he worked as Mayor (1984–87) and then as Party Secretary (1987–89), and began to elevate his followers there to positions in the center, creating a "Shanghai gang" in Beijing (Li 2002). Jiang's practice set a precedence in which central leaders, upon assuming power, would bring men from his own province to the center. The practice was continued in Hu Jintao's era, and by the time Xi Jinping—whose princeling background and promotions of old associates in Fujian, Zhejiang and Shanghai had not gone unnoticed—took power, factional sorting in the

CCP had returned to its roots in professional and geographic backgrounds.[16]

2.4 Conclusion

The two Communist Parties of Vietnam and China demonstrate that factional sorting can vary not only across regimes with similar institutional arrangements but also over time within the same regime. The paper traces the roots of these variations to historical experiences with military conflicts against external threats. In Vietnam, military casualties during the revolutionary period discouraged background sorting by erasing the salience of North-South differences as logistic and social cleavages. In China, on the other hand, conflicts with the Kuomintang and the Japanese promoted sorting through geographical and professional connections by increasing the salience of geographic cleavages while also providing conditions for them to become institutionalized in the post-war arrangement.

The effect of historical military conflicts did not unfold independently in a vacuum. As the Vietnamese and Chinese experiences reveal, structure and elite intervention also had a role in shaping the pattern of factional sorting. Even then, however, conflicts were instrumental in providing incentives for elites to manipulate factional cleavages, as well as in dictating what cleavages were available for manipulation.

These findings pave the way for future research on other aspects of factionalism in authoritarian regimes. Among others, the VCP's emphasis on faction building through policy and ideology why it is, according to Gueorguiev and Schuler's contribution to this special issue, less concerned than the CCP about charismatic individuals and "factional worship." In addition, the theory of factional sorting provides a starting point to explain the opaqueness of factional competition. In Vietnam, factions and their membership are shrouded in a veil of uncertainty. During the 1960s, scholars, Soviet intelligence, and members of the Communist movement themselves claimed the existence of a pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese faction within the VCP, yet nobody could pinpoint the identity of their leaders, nor the exact

affiliation of key regime elites.[17] In contrast, not only do political actors in the CCP display their allegiance openly through public, even sycophantic show of support (Shih 2008b), but observers both inside and outside the regime also identify existing factions and their membership with high certainty (Li 2001; Nathan and Gilley 2003). It is possible that the CCP's transparent factionalism has to do with the its reliance on geographical and professional ties, which are difficult to conceal or manipulate. The opaqueness of Vietnam's factions, on the other hand, may be traceable to the malleable nature of policy preferences. Indeed, studies have pointed to the subjectiveness contained in ideological labels such as "conservative" or "reformist:" Figures like Pham Hung or Vo Chi Cong, seen as reformist-minded due to their involvement in Vietnam's marketization reform, were also "diehard apparatchik" and "[notoriously] conservative" in other political issues (Thai 1990).

Factions has come a long way since they first emerged within the CCP and VCP; even today, factions continue to evolve. In China, the 19th Party Congress and the abolition of the presidential term limit in March 2018 have so far produced no new faction nor cleavage; yet they signal a return of personalistic rule reminiscent of Mao Zedong's era, an era where violent elite conflicts were the norm. In Vietnam, an increasing Chinese presence in the South China Sea has fueled new divisions in the Party. Some policy observers have noted (e.g. Stratfor 2014; Phan 2015), while others disputed (e.g. Thayer 2017b) the existence of a new cleavage between a pro-US and a pro-China group in the Politburo. Still others, with an eye on Vietnam's domestic politics, argue for a different split between a hardliner group and a more moderate faction, together with smaller constellations of Party elites in between (Vuving 2017). Whether these developments will transform existing cleavages or engender new patterns of factional sorting, only time can tell with certainty. What we can expect, however, is that whichever direction factional sorting in Vietnam and China is heading toward, it might trigger a ripple effect across the regimes' political economy.

Chapter 2, in full, is a reprint of the material as it appears in Trinh, Duy. 2020. "The Evolution of Factional Sorting in China and Vietnam." Problems of Post-Communism 68 (3): 171–89. The dissertation author was the sole author of this paper.

Chapter 3

Contemporary perception of factional sorting

In Chapter 2, I argue that factional sorting in the VCP and CCP diverged as a result of each Party's exogenous military threats. Whereas the Chinese Civil War and the Sino-Japanese War dispersed the CCP's elites into isolated base areas and encouraged faction building based on geographical overlaps, the two Indochina Wars put a premature end to any independent "mountaintop" outside the VCP's main headquarter in Northern Vietnam. In doing so, they led Vietnamese elites to eschew ascriptively labeled factions in favor of political competition along policy and ideological lines. Once such factional sorting behaviors became operational, they in turn catalyzed institutional arrangements that set themselves further in stone. Thus, more than just a temporary disruption, exogenous shocks during the regimes' revolutionary era continue to shape factional politics even in the present days.

This chapter demonstrates the enduring contrast in factional sorting across the VCP and CCP by through a series of two conjoint survey experiments conducted in Vietnam and China between April and June 2020. In these experiments, I examine how urban, educated citizens in Vietnam and China perceive the role of factional ties in the politics of career advancement within the Party and government sector. The experiments present a hypothetical

promotion decision within a local Party committee; respondents, upon being presented with pairs of candidates of varying qualifications and relationships with the committee's Party Secretary, are asked to choose which candidate they believe will be nominated for promotion by the Party Secretary.

Surveys conducted across different political and cultural contexts tend to lack comparability (Smith 2004). However, through a series of survey techniques, I bring the findings from my conjoint experiments as close as possible to produce a valid comparison of Vietnamese and Chinese public perception. First, I design a separate treatment condition in which respondents are asked to evaluate a hypothetical scenario in a *private sector* context. Through this treatment, I parse out the underlying differences in general cultural values and/or preference falsification across the two regimes and isolate the perception of factional ties in the Party setting. Second, I use matching to select two sub-samples from my pool of randomly sampled Vietnamese and Chinese respondents, such that the sub-samples are similar in key demographic characteristics, including age, gender, income, education, urban status, Party membership, and political experience. In doing so, I rule out these characteristics as possible explanations of the divergence between China and Vietnam. Third, I show that my Vietnamese and Chinese matched sub-samples respond similarly to survey questions about domestic and international political knowledge, despite not being matched on these specific features. Fourth, through sub-sample analysis, I demonstrate that the divergence in perception of factional ties is most pronounced among respondents who have above-average political knowledge and experience in China and Vietnam.

Consistent with my expectations, Vietnamese and Chinese respondents agree almost entirely on the value of meritocratic qualities. Both samples consider Party membership, a degree in engineering or in economics and finance, advanced educational degrees, young age, and experience working in the government to be "positive" attributes that increase a candidate's promotional likelihood. Both sub-samples also agree that Party membership and government experience in particular are especially more useful in the public setting than in

the private setting, whereas a degree in economics and finance is more useful in the private setting than in the public setting. When it comes to the influence of informal ties, the two sub-samples appear to diverge in the direction of my hypothesis. Chinese respondents perceive that a subordinate's informal ties to a local Party leader bear an influence on the latter's decision to promote the former to higher positions, both across employment settings and specifically in the political setting. Most particularly, candidates with workplace ties and family ties to a local Party secretary is seen as having significantly higher promotion likelihood than similar candidates without ties, as well as higher than candidates with similar qualities and ties in the private sector. In contrast, the same ties do not give candidates any advantage in promotional decision according to Vietnamese respondents.

The experiments provide, for the first time, a comparative look into the role—both perceived and real—of informal, relational politics in authoritarian regimes. While a wealth of literature has demonstrated that social networks, informal relationships, and political connections play an important role in political interactions (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012; Keller 2016; Liu 2019), the evidence provided in this chapter shed more light into the source of their influence. In addition to the cultural aspects of informal ties, which are present both in political and non-political settings, informal ties and the perception thereof are also shaped by uniquely political processes. In particular, the chapter further highlights the original arguments that form the backbone of my dissertation: Historical exogenous events, by setting up diverging path-dependency processes, can produce durable variations in political behavior even across regimes with very similar institutional setup. Finally, the research also informs the discussion on gender and ethnic discrimination in China and Vietnam (Baulch et al. 2007; Kuhn and Shen 2013; Mobius, Rosenblat, and Wang 2016), as well as elsewhere in the world (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Driscoll et al. 2018).

3.1 Measuring perception of ties

Despite the leadership's official "bans" on overt factionalism, the presence of factions is well recognized by experts and the public in both Vietnam and China (Nathan 1973; Pye 1995; Shih 2008b; Gainsborough 2010; Case 2015; Meyer, Shih, and Lee 2016). Factions operate as "networks of reciprocal client-patron relationships" in which faction leaders provide protection, rents, and political advancement opportunities to subordinates in exchange for support and loyalty. While the CCP and VCP are similar in this regard, the glue that connects factional members with one another manifests in different ways. As argued in the Chapter 1, factions in the two regimes "sorted" differently as each regime faced its unique exogenous military threats. Events during the CCP's revolutionary era enabled ascriptive geographic and professional ties to emerge as the main labels for factional affiliation in the CCP. In contrast, the very same relationships did not develop into markers of factions in the Vietnamese context.

In the same chapter, I also argue that through path dependency, the historical divergence in factional sorting leads to an enduring contrast between the two regimes. Leaving their revolutionary periods behind, contemporary factions in China and Vietnam continue to exhibit the same divergence, with Chinese political actors placing more emphasis on ascriptive ties in the form of hometown (*tongxiang*), education (*tongxue*) and workplace (*tongzhi*) connections than their Vietnamese counterparts. This divergence, I argue, is responsible for substantial cross-country variation in political behavior, most particularly intra-elite political violence.

While politically significant, however, this difference in factional sorting may not be immediately detectable for several reasons. Given the official bans on factionalist behaviors in the two Parties, researchers and even political actors have no access to an objective indicator of factional affiliation—an equivalent of a party membership card. As a result, one has to rely on subjective perception of factional ties, which are highly dependent on one's

own exposure to factional politics. Whereas bureaucrats and Party members, as well as those with frequent interaction with bureaucrats and Party members form their perception based on insider knowledge and first-hand experiences, outsiders can only rely on publicly available media, hearsay, and at most, daily interactions with figures of authorities, which mostly involve rank and file bureaucrats. On top of this, variations in local politics also mean that a single person's opinion may merely reflect how factionalism operates in his/her province, district, or even neighborhood, instead of any national pattern. Failures to take this variation in individual experience and perception inevitably results in a blind men and the elephant situation, where different researchers, who sample different subsets of population, arrive at different conclusions about factional politics.

The obvious solution to individual variation is to conduct a nationally representative survey that includes all corners of the population, and that incorporates a sizable portion of political insiders. However, this creates a second layer of difficulty. Compared to the general population, "insiders" are smaller in numbers and more difficult to access, especially those with extensive knowledge of elite politics. Even if they could be reached, soliciting truthful opinions regarding elite politics and factionalism without preference falsification remain another challenge. In fact, preference falsification is a well-recognized problem in studies, especially surveys, of both citizens and officials in authoritarian settings (Kuran 1991; Jiang and Yang 2016).

Thirdly, even if one were able to solicit representative, truthful, *and* well-informed opinions about how and which informal ties matter in elite factional politics, it would not be easy to tell how much these opinions are informed by factionalism, as opposed to by the general, cultural salience of informal ties. In both Vietnam and China, the general populace, whether involved or uninvolved in the political realm, places strong emphasis on the cultivation of informal relationships. The pursuit of patron-client connections through informal ties has been well documented, and has linked to a wide range of outcomes that, to different extent, resembles factional political exchanges, such as jobs, advancement, and pecuniary

benefits (Bian 1997; Larsen, Rand, and Torm 2011; Ang and Jia 2014). The similar cultural role of informal ties can in turn be attributed to aspects of Confucianism or village traditions—institutions that operate in both Vietnam and China. At the same time, each country has its unique cultural institutions as well. In fact, even among cultural institutions that are shared by both Vietnam and China, studies also suggest subtle differences in their salience and influence on political life (Hirschman and Loi 1996; McHale 2008). And since cultural institutions that affect the general population are also likely to affect the elites, they too can be a potential explanation for any variations in elite political behaviors across countries. As a result, parceling out the role of culture is a necessary yet difficult step toward measuring the cross-country variations in elite behavior caused specifically by factional sorting.

3.2 Survey design

All in all, a subjective measure of the importance of social ties in elite politics has to incorporate three features into its design. First, it has to reflect the views of broad swaths of the society, including both laypeople and political insiders with a front-row view of elite politics. Second, it has to take into account preference falsification by either measuring it directly or minimizing the respondents' pressure to falsify their preference in the first place. Third, it has to be able to separately measure, and thereby distinguish between the cultural salience of social ties and their elite political salience.

In this chapter, I set out to present a survey design that satisfies these requirements, and apply it to provide a comparison of the role of ascriptive ties across Vietnamese and Chinese political contexts. This survey design consists of two identical conjoint experiments on two representative samples of urban citizens, one in China and one in Vietnam. The conjoint experiment has been successfully applied in studies on both Vietnamese and Chinese politics (Liu 2019; Malesky and Schuler 2020). It is a survey design where respondents are presented with a hypothetical scenario and multiple sets of choice options, each of which

contains several, randomly assigned "attributes." (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). For each set of choice options, respondents are asked to either rate or identify their preferred choice option. Researchers then aggregate these *identified* preferences over choice options to indirectly infer respondents' *hidden* preferences over attributes. Originally created to measure respondents' preference over multidimensional choices, conjoint experiment is also a useful method to overcome preference falsification (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). This is achievable by allowing respondents to indicate overall beliefs about an entire set of attributes as a whole, which contain both sensitive and non sensitive items, rather than about individual, specific attributes.

The conjoint experiments presented in this chapter are noted for the three key characteristics corresponding to the three problems it seeks to solve. First, its hypothetical scenarios and choice options focus on issues related to local cadre management and promotion in the VCP and CCP. These issues are of central relevance to factional politics (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012), yet are uncontroversial, at least relative to corruption or conflict at the elite level. As a result, they enable surveyors to solicit relevant and truthful opinions from respondents. Indeed, previous surveys on authoritarian politics, especially Chinese politics, have also circumvented preference falsification and political sensitivity in the same manners—in short, by limiting themselves to low-stake scenarios involving local officials or offices (Chen, Pan, and Xu 2016; Liu 2019).

Second, with regard to sampling, I recruit two nationally representative sample of urban Vietnamese and Chinese. The samples are recruited using a stratified sampling procedure that specifically over-samples the general public as well as public servants and members of the CCP and VCP. This ensures that the opinion represented in the survey does incorporate insider information, a feature that previous works tend to overlook. In addition to this, I also ensure demographic balance across the Vietnamese and Chinese survey by performing propensity score matching to identify a subset of the Chinese respondents that resemble my Vietnamese sample. Finally, I experimental compare the perception of social ties across two

different hypothetical scenarios: a promotion scenario in a public sector office versus one in a *private* sector office. By measuring the difference in how respondents perceive the role of ties in these contexts, I can then identify the extent to which factional ties in China and Vietnam exhibit political salience on top of and in addition to their cultural salience.

3.2.1 Cadre management and promotion in the VCP and CCP

The VCP and CCP both maintain a sophisticated system of cadre management. At the top, the Department of Organization (*zuzhibu* in Chinese and *ban to chuc trung uong* in Vietnamese), an organ of the Central Committee, oversees matters pertaining to cadre evaluation, appointment and promotion. It is responsible for the staffing of most central offices in both the Party and the State, including provincial party secretaries, governors, central bank directors, ministers and vice ministers, as well as supreme court judges and even head of the legislature. The Department of Organization's *nomenklatura*—a list of offices which it directly selects, or at least approves the appointment, promotion, transfer or removal of any cadre from or into—includes about 5000 positions in China, and [...] in Vietnam. Below the Departments of Organizations, each Party Committee at the regimes' administrative divisions and government organs also possess its own *nomenklatura*. Notably, the Party Committee's authority extends not only to non-elective Party offices, but to elective offices as well (Manion 1985). In the latter case, the Party committee with *nomenklatura* authority has the power to review and amend the list of candidates to be voted, and, following election results, to decide whether it would approve the results.

Formally speaking, VCP and CCP's personnel system is meritocratic. Cadres are scored based on a formal system that keep track of their fulfillment of both political/ideological and administrative targets.[18] On the other hand, the system s are also vulnerable to non-meritocratic influences. One such vulnerability comes from the the regime's effort to ensure demographic representativeness in the Party. In choosing the top leadership posts in Vietnam, for example, observers have noted an informal "affirmative action" norm where every

Politburo would include at least a female member and a Southerner (Le 2020). Candidates are also chosen based on age, such that senior Party members would serve in concurrent with younger cadres, who are groomed for higher positions in future leadership roles (Nathan and Gilley 2003; Le 2020). Besides demographic considerations, studies on Chinese and Vietnamese politics suggest that factional considerations play a strong role in personnel matters in these regime as well. This is enabled by the fact that the Department of Organizations conduct their activities behind closed doors, with little to no media reporting. The deliberation process involves senior Party leaders, many of whom are actually in competition with one another over influence in the regime and thus have the incentive to strengthen their faction while weakening others. Works on factionalism in China provide strong quantitative evidence that political elites rely on promotion both as a "carrot" to win over their subordinates' loyalty and a tool to put loyalists into positions where they can influence policies to serve the faction's interests (Pye 1995; Choi 2012; Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012). Similarly, in Vietnam, the appointment of Le Kha Phieu into the seat of General Secretary at the fourth plenum of the 8th Central Committee in 1997 was also the product of a negotiation between major factions in the VCP, all of whom preferred to put their own member in power but detested having the other faction do the same even more (Abuza 2002).

To date, the debate as to whether meritocratic or non-meritocratic considerations dominate in these regimes' personnel decisions have yet been settled. While studies have shown a positive correlation between governance performance and local leaders' promotion outcomes (Maskin, Qian, and Xu 2000; Chen, Li, and Zhou 2005; Li and Zhou 2005), the relationship is suspect due to methodological issues such as measurement error or selection bias (Shih, Adolph, and Liu 2012). Other studies have found instead that network ties to powerful elites are linked to both a higher chance of promotion (Jia, Kudamatsu, and Seim 2015) and a lower chance of being removed from office (Yuan 2015). Notably, the current debate focuses on the outcome of personnel decisions. In contrast, this study is one of the first attempts to peek into the preferences of the decision makers in charge of personnel

decisions themselves. To my knowledge, the only similar study so far was Liu (2019), a survey experiment on a sample of CCP officials. The study examines the role of meritocracy versus informal ties in government-sector recruitment decisions. However, informal ties in this study are operationalized in generic term as a dummy indicator of whether the candidate's father is a government employee. In contrast, the relational aspects of ties, as well as the emphasis on ties particularly to the decision makers themselves, have not yet been explored.

3.2.2 Sampling

In my study, I recruit two separate samples, one of Chinese respondents and one of Vietnamese respondents using the Qualtrics platform. The Chinese sample was recruited between April and May 2020 with the support of the University of California, San Diego's 21st Century China Center. Specifically, we perform stratified random sampling to recruit 1133 urban citizens with equal proportion of male and female respondents, as well as equal proportion of residents from all of China's 31 provinces. We ensure that the sample represents a subset of the broader population who are familiar with political processes in the Party and in the government by filtering out rural respondents and respondents whose self-reported highest education attainment is below high school level. We also filter out respondents who fail our attention check during the survey. Each respondent was paid up to 4 USD for his/her participation in the survey.

The Vietnamese sample, which contains 266 respondents, was collected between June 2020 and September 2020, also using the Qualtrics platform. To ensure comparability, I also focus on urban citizens with self-reported highest education attainment at high school level or higher. I also stratify my sample by gender to secure equal representation of males and females. Due to sample size restriction and Vietnam's relatively higher number of provinces compared to China (64 versus 31), I was unable to completely balance my sample by provinces; nevertheless, I managed to ensure the representation of all of Vietnam's provinces in the sample. Each respondent was also paid up to 4 USD for his/her participation.

To account for potential cross-country imbalance in other characteristics that the sampling procedure has not accounted for, most particularly political interest and knowledge, I also collect respondents demographic data and measure their familiarity with their country's political institutions and experience with the Party and government sector through several measures. First, respondents were asked whether they themselves and/or at least one of their family members have worked or are currently working in the Party and government sector; second, they were asked to self-report their interest in current political events; and third, they were given a five multiple-choice question political knowledge quiz. Notably, the quiz includes questions on both domestic issues specific to each country, as well as questions about foreign politics that are specific neither to Vietnam nor China. The foreign politics questions are the same in both surveys. With these information, I then use one-to-one propensity score matching to match each Vietnamese respondent with a Chinese respondent who resembles him/her in key demographic characteristics: Age, gender, party membership, college education, marriage status (never married vs. married), and family relationship with current or previous Party/government employee(s). For robustness, I employ a wide range of alternative matching methods including nearest-neighbor distance matching and exact matching. As shown in the subsequent Results section, the choice of matching techniques changes the matched samples and summary statistics, yet it does not fundamentally alter the comparison between Vietnam and China.

After matching, on average, participants in Vietnam and China are similar in the matched characteristics, with no statistically significant difference in any individual characteristic. In addition, the sub-samples also have similar level of political expertise as measured by our political knowledge quizzes, as well as similar level of self-reported income level, as measured by asking respondents whether their income is "sufficient for their daily life." Since these are the characteristics that I do not intentionally match on, the fact that they become similar nonetheless lends confidence that other unobservable characteristics have also been balanced by the matching procedure.

Table 3.1: Democraphics of Vietnamese respondents

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	Min
Age	266	38.169	12.306	73	18
Female	266	0.500	0.501	1	0
College or higher	266	0.737	0.441	1	0
Party member	266	0.372	0.484	1	0
Kinh ethnic	266	0.951	0.216	1	0
Never married	266	0.252	0.435	1	0
Relative in government	266	0.575	0.495	1	0

Table 3.2: Demographics of Chinese respondents, before matching

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	Min
Age	1,133	39.411	11.789	61	19
Female	1,133	0.500	0.500	1	0
College or higher	1,133	0.224	0.417	1	0
Party member	1,133	0.132	0.339	1	0
Han ethnic	1,133	0.853	0.354	1	0
Never married	1,133	0.197	0.398	1	0
Relative in government	1,133	0.152	0.359	1	0

Table 3.3: Demographics of Chinese respondents, after propensity score matching

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	Min
Age	266	36.639	10.671	60	19
Female	266	0.391	0.489	1	0
College or higher	266	0.669	0.471	1	0
Party member	266	0.316	0.466	1	0
Han ethnic	266	0.940	0.238	1	0
Never married	266	0.244	0.431	1	0
Relative in government	266	0.391	0.489	1	0

3.2.3 Treatment conditions

For both samples, I administer an identical conjoint experiment, where the only major difference is in term of survey language (Simplified Chinese versus Vietnamese). Each

respondent is presented a hypothetical scenario through a vignette. In this scenario, a local political leader (*xianwei shuji,* or county-level Party Secretary in the Chinese version, and *Bi thu huyen uy*, or district-level Party Secretary in the Vietnamese version) is looking for a candidate among prominent Party officials in his locality to nominate as his new immediate subordinate (*xianwei fushuji,* or county-level vice Party Secretary in the Chinese version, and *Pho bi thu huyen uy*, or district-level vice Party Secretary in the Vietnamese version).

To take into account systematic differences in cultural salience of informal ties and/or meritocratic qualities across Vietnam and China, I also add an alternative treatment condition. In this condition, the vignette instead describes a promotion scenario in which a *private company director* seeks to promote one of his subordinates into company's vice-directorship. This alternative condition is designed to create a situation where the respondents' opinions are influenced only by latent cultural, and not *political* values underlying the candidates' qualities. Each candidate is randomly selected to receiving either the private sector or the public sector vignette. After reading the vignette, each respondent is presented with a series of 8 pairs of hypothetical candidate profiles. He/she is then asked to provide his/her opinion as to who has the higher likelihood of being promoted among each pair of candidate. Each candidate profile contains seven randomly-assigned attributes: Age, gender, party membership, level of education, field of study, years of government experience, and relationship with the party secretary or company director. These attributes are selected to mimic information that are available in a standard Party cadre profile *(so yeu li lich/geren jianli)*, and to act as proxies for meritocratic ability and political loyalty alongside our variables of interest i.e. personal ties. Personal ties take seven different values, reflecting (1) no relationship between the candidate and the Party Secretary/company director, (2) family relationship, (3) workplace relationship, and (4) hometown relationship, and (5) education relationship. The values for each attribute as well as the order of presentation are assigned through simple randomization.

To ensure consistent interpretation of the survey across countries, I work with three

Table 3.4: Attributes of hypothetical candidates

Attribute names	Values
Age	35
	45
	55
Gender	Male
	Female
Party membership	Yes
	Not yet
Field of study	Classical Literature
	History
	Economics and Finance
	Mechanical Engineering
Education level	High school
	Bachelor
	Doctorate
Government experience	5 years
	10 years
	20 years
Relationship with Mr. Wang/Vinh	No relationship
	Worked in same organization
	Worked in same work unit (*danwei)*
	Schoolmate
	Close relative
	Distant relative
	Came from same hometown

research assistants and use back translation[19] to ensure that the Vietnamese-Chinese translations are understood as equivalent. The only substantive differences are in the name and administrative level of the Party Secretary/company director. The name was changed from Mr. Wang in the Chinese version to Mr. Vinh in the Vietnamese version. Both are common male last names in their respective country. The Party office in which Mr. Wang and Mr. Vinh are located are changed from a county (*zhen*) in China to a district (*huyen*) in Vietnam, both of which are one administrative level directly under a province.

Vietnamese version:

Ông Vinh, **[Bí thư Huyện ủy/Giám đốc]** một doanh nghiệp tư nhân tại huyện Đức Mộ, tỉnh Xuân An đang lựa chọn một trong hai ứng viên để đề bạt vào vị trí Phó Bí thư **[Huyện ủy/Phó giám đốc]**. Anh/chị sẽ thấy hồ sơ chứa thông tin cơ bản về năng lực, trình độ của mỗi cặp ứng viên, cũng như thông tin về quan hệ của họ với ông Vinh. Dựa vào hiểu biết và kinh nghiệm của bản thân, anh/chị nghĩ ông Vinh sẽ đề bạt ai trong mỗi cặp ứng viên vào vị trí **[Phó Bí thư/Phó Giám đốc]**?

Translation:
Mr. Vinh, **[district party secretary/director of a private company]** at Duc Mo district, Xuan An province is selecting one of the two candidates to nominate into the position of **[vice party secretary/vice director]**. You will see a series of profiles containing basic information about each pair of candidates' performance and quality, as well as information about their relationship with Mr. Vinh. Based on your personal knowledge and experience, who do you think Mr. Vinh will nominate to the position of **[vice party secretary/vice director]** among each pair of candidates?

Chinese version:

某县**[级市委书记，王书记/某家小型私人企业经理，王经理]**，正在寻找一名候选人提名为**[市委副书记/企业副经理]**。您将会看到八对候选人的个人资料，包括年龄，教育程度，工作经验以及与**[王书记/王经理]**的个人关系。根据您的知识和经验，您认为**[王书记/王经理]**会在每对候选人中提名哪一位？请仅选择您认为将提名为市**[委副书记/企业副经理]**的候选人。

Translation:
A **[county party secretary, Secretary Wang/director of a private company, Director Wang]**, is selecting one of the two candidates to nominate into the position of **[vice party secretary/vice director].** You will see a series of profiles containing basic information about each pair of candidates' performance and quality, as well as information about their relationship with **[Secretary Wang/Director Wang]**. Based on your personal knowledge and experience, who do you think **[Secretary Wang/Director Wang]** will nominate from each pair of candidates? Please select only the candidates you think will be nominated as **[vice party secretary/vice director].**

Figure 3.1: Survey vignettes with English translations

3.3 Hypotheses

Given the cultural salience of social ties, I expect that respondents would perceive them to be conductive to a candidate's career prospect—in other words, candidates with social ties to the party secretary or company director will be seen as having a higher chance of being promoted to become his immediate subordinate. Additionally, given the historical divergence in factional sorting across Vietnam and China, I argue that only in China do informal ties carry additional elite political salience. As a result, I expect to see a positive interaction between social ties and the public sector vignette treatment among the Chinese sample: Respondents who are presented with the private sector vignette will perceive candidates with informal ties as having higher likelihood of promotion than respondents who are presented with the public sector vignette. Notably, I hypothesize that the same behavior is not observed in Vietnam—in other words, social ties will have the same effect on promotion whether the respondent is given the private or public sector vignette.

To summarize, my hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: Holding everything else equal, a candidate's informal ties increase perceived promotion likelihood
  - H1a: A candidate's informal ties increase perceived promotion likelihood among Chinese respondents
  - H1b: A candidate's informal ties increase perceived promotion likelihood Vietnamese respondents
- H2: Holding everything else equal, among Chinese respondents, a candidate's informal ties increase perceived promotion likelihood in the public sector scenario more than they do in the private sector scenario.
- H3: Holding everything else equal, among Vietnamese respondents, a candidate's informal ties neither increase nor decrease perceived promotion likelihood in the public

sector scenario compared to the the private sector scenario.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Main results

For a large part, the results are consistent, though not very conclusively, with the paper's hypotheses as well as with general expectations about the importance of meritocratic qualities and informal relationships. According to results from the China survey, respondents perceive that in both the public and private sector settings, promotion is more likely when candidates possess a degree in economics and finance or in business management, as opposed to humanities degrees such as classical literature or history. Advanced degrees also increase the chance of promotion: Candidates with bachelor degrees are more likely to be promoted than high school degree holders, whereas doctorate degree holders are more likely to be promoted than both bachelor and high school degree holders. Party members are seen as more likely to be promoted in both sectors, and so are candidates with work experience in the Party or government. Notably, higher candidate age monotonically decreases the chance of promotion, while gender is seen as having no effect.

The most important attribute in the conjoint experiment—informal ties with the decision maker—also shows results consistent with my hypotheses. The coefficient estimates for all types of informal ties are positive, suggesting that on average, candidates who have any kind of tie to the decision maker are seen as more having a higher chance at being promoted than similar candidates without ties. Among these, the estimates for work colleague and for both distant (*yuanqin*) and close relative (*jinqin*) are statistically significant at 95% confidence interval.

Similar to findings from the China survey, I find that among Vietnamese respondents, Party membership, field of study, education level, age, and work experience in the government all have the same effect sign and statistical significance. Party membership, higher education

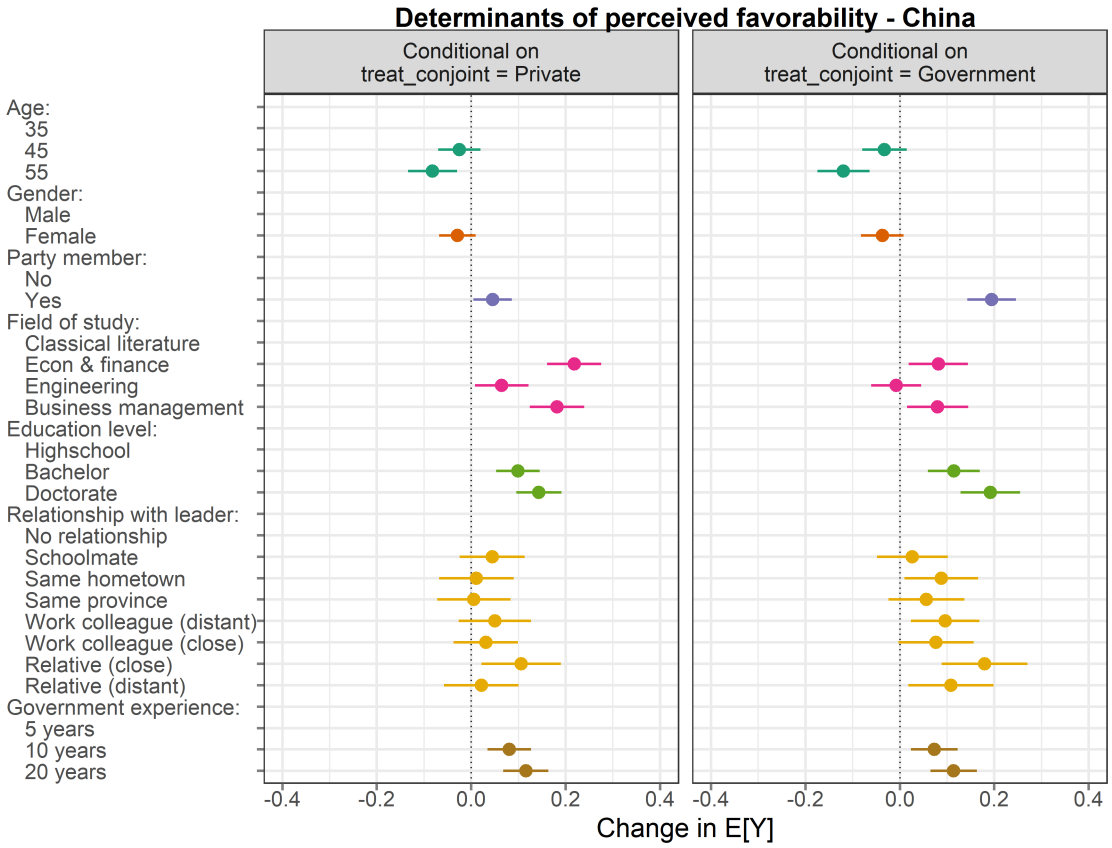

Figure 3.2: Perceived effects of candidate attributes on promotion likelihood, China matched sample

level, a degree in engineering or economics and finance, higher work experience increase the chance of promotion, while higher age decreases it. Evidence for the effect of informal ties is more mixed, however. Here, I find that the ties either have no effect or *negative* effect on promotion likelihood. Vietnamese respondents in particular believe that candidate with family ties, both distant and close, are less likely to be promoted that candidates without ties.

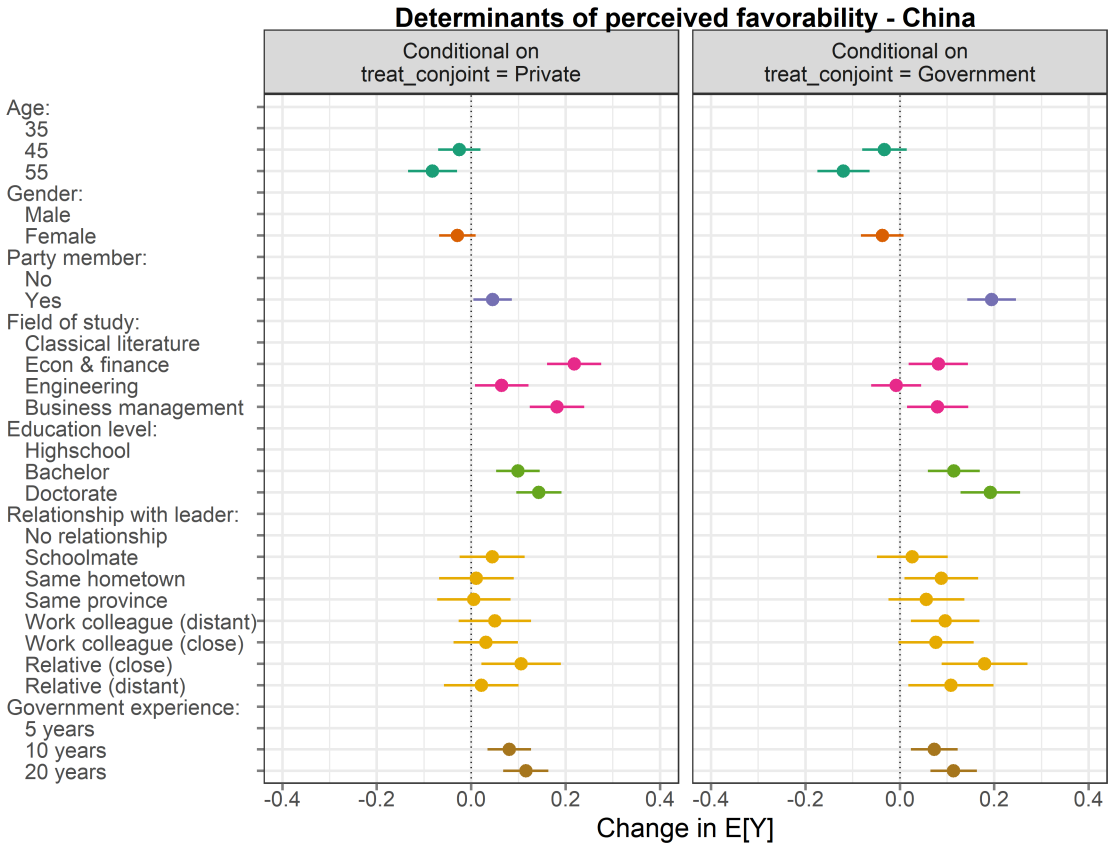

Figure 3.3: Perceived effects of candidate attributes on promotion likelihood, Vietnam sample

3.4.2 Effect of informal ties in political settings

In this chapter, I argue that informal ties have an added political salience in the Chinese context, but not Vietnamese context. If this is true, one would see a positive interaction of informal ties and the political vignette in the Chinese sample, where respondents perceive candidates with informal ties to the decision maker are more likely to be promoted in the public sector vignette than in the private sector vignette. This is indeed the case. Of the seven types of informal ties, only one has a negative conditional estimated effect (schoolmate ties); the rest all have positive estimated effects with effect size in the range of 4.1 to 9.8 percentage points. None of the interactions is statistically significant, however.

In Vietnam, most conditional effects of informal ties in the political context are also statistically non-significant. However, the effect sizes tend to be on the negative direction i.e. candidates having ties to the Party secretary are less likely to be promoted than equal candidates with ties to the company director. The one exception here is distant workplace ties. which have an effect of 0.5 percentage point, also the smallest coefficient estimate among all informal ties' estimated effect. Overall, the effect sizes of social ties in the Vietnamese survey are too small to be interpreted meaningfully, but their signs are consistent with our hypotheses.

3.4.3 Robustness checks

First, I find that the results with the China sample are resistant to choice of matching methods. While the units chosen and the resulting summary statistics do change under exact matching with replacement (using the same characteristics) compared to propensity score matching, the estimated perceived effects of informal ties, both unconditional and conditional on political context, do *not* change in sign. On the other hand, several estimates cease to be statistically significant. One possible explanation for this is the dropping of 145 units in

Table 3.5: Conditional effects of social ties in Party/government treatment condition

Social ties	China (matched)	Vietnam
Schoolmate	-0.009	-0.106
	(0.056)	(0.057)
Same hometown	0.054	-0.026
	(0.054)	(0.058)
Work colleague (distant)	0.050	0.005
	(0.057)	(0.058)
Work colleague (close)	0.054	-0.034
	(0.058)	(0.058)
Relative (distant)	0.098	-0.015
	(0.064)	(0.062)
Relative (close)	0.041	-0.147
	(0.068)	(0.064)

the Vietnamese sample due to the lack of an appropriate match in the Chinese sample.

To further support the validity of my original matching method. I compare how the matched sample of Chinese respondents perceive the attributes with the full sample's perception. Overall, the main effects are similar, while the conditional estimates change neither in sign nor in the level of statistical significance. This shows that results from the matched sample indeed can be generalized to a broader, more representative population.

To focus on the sample with the most experience with and knowledge of political processes in the government and Party, I then perform a sub-sample analysis for both the Vietnamese and Chinese survey. Specifically, from the full sample, I select only observations who are either (1) Party members, (2) current or previous employee in the Party and government sector, and (3) possess above-average political knowledge, as measured by their performance on the political quiz. The results are inconclusive, but the signs of all the meritocratic attributes do not change for either the Chinese or the Vietnamese respondents.

Table 3.6: Demographics of exact-matched Vietnamese sample

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	Min
Age	121	36.926	10.596	61	19
Female	121	0.479	0.502	1	0
College or higher	121	0.711	0.455	1	0
Party member	121	0.223	0.418	1	0
Kinh ethnic	121	0.975	0.156	1	0
Never married	121	0.223	0.418	1	0
Relative in government	121	0.355	0.481	1	0

Table 3.7: Demographics of exact-matched Chinese sample

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	Min
Age	256	39.293	11.437	61	19
Female	256	0.551	0.498	1	0
College or higher	256	0.441	0.498	1	0
Party member	256	0.082	0.275	1	0
Han ethnic	256	0.977	0.152	1	0
Never married	256	0.176	0.381	1	0
Relative in government	256	0.145	0.352	1	0

3.4.4 Alternative interpretations

3.4.4.1 Perceived versus real importance of informal ties

Besides statistical significance, one should also be cautious when interpreting the substantive implications of these findings. The extent to which the experimental results support the chapter's key argument—that the mode of factional sorting in elite politics is substantively different between contemporary Vietnam and China—depends on three interpretative questions. First, to what extent does the perceived importance of informal ties line up with their real-world importance? Second, to what extent are informal ties markers for factional ties in the respondents' minds? And finally, to what extent does a certain type of informal tie matter than others as indicator of factional ties?

With regard to the first question, the chapter's pair of surveys has revealed a contrast between Vietnam and China in the *perception* of factional ties. Yet, looks can deceive. It is possible that even without preference falsification, respondents' views might diverge

with how elite political behaviors unfold in the first-person view. Even though the surveys have attempted to target significant amounts of Party and government employees, they are unlikely to sample actual political actors in roles that are similar to our vignettes' description. As a result, they might not be aware of existing biases in the political promotion process. One indicator of this possibility is found in gender's perceived influence on promotion likelihood. While Vietnamese and Chinese respondents alike come to the consensus that neither male nor female enjoys an advantage over the other, evidence in these countries points to a stark picture of gender inequality (Liu 2004; Kuhn and Shen 2013). Notably, female respondents perceive female candidates to be at a disadvantage across vignettes in both samples, whereas both Vietnamese and Chinese males perceive no such discrimination.

3.4.4.2 Connection from informal ties to factional ties

The second interpretive question concerns the possible disconnect between informal ties and factional affiliation. The chapter's surveys show that certain informal ties are perceived as playing an influential role in raising promotional odds in the Chinese public sector. Yet, the statistically significant results themselves do not reveal how Chinese respondents form their perception, and why this perception differs from the Vietnamese respondents'. While the conditional effect of informal ties on political promotion likelihood suggests that Chinese respondents do not see informal ties as simply synonymous with *guanxi* relationships. However, it is unclear whether shared ties are indeed seen as signaling some sort of affinity or common identity, let alone factional identity between individuals. To some respondents, for example, a superior's ties to a subordinate might simply mean that the former has access to more private information about the latter, especially information not available in the survey vignettes. This, in turn, might play a role in swaying the promotion decision.

Another way one can interpret the result is to consider the perceived importance of informal ties as a function of the perceived prevalence of corruption and nepotism. In other words, the contrast between the Vietnamese and Chinese responses might reflect a

divergence not in perceived factional sorting, but in the respondents' beliefs regarding the political system in general. On one hand, Chinese respondents perhaps view local officials as more corrupt and willing to adopt non-meritocratic recruitment practices than Vietnamese audience. On the other hand, the opposite could also be true: Vietnamese respondents might also view their private sector as less meritocratic than the Chinese sample.

3.4.4.3 Differences in perceived importance across types of ties

Finally, the results establish that two types of informal ties—workplace ties and family ties—are influential in political recruitment decision in China, whereas none is influential in Vietnam. To the extent that they indeed are indicative of factional affiliation, this results adds an interesting nuance to the operationalization of factions in the literature, especially in the studies of Chinese elite politics. Earlier research on factional politics emphasizes the significance of the "three same's," namely same hometown, same school, and same workplace (e.g. Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988; Shih, Shan, and Liu 2010). This emphasis sees the three types as equally important: Any of these can indicate, or at least proxy for factional ties between two individuals. With the rise of new data, especially biographical and network data on elite politics, authors have also begun to reevaluate the equal attention given to these ties. Huang (2008) argues that with the institutionalization of meritocratic cadre recruitment and retirement rule, workplace ties have been rendered insignificant in the CCP's contemporary faction building. In contrast, Keller (2016) finds that elite alliances are most commonly found among those with current or former workplace ties; hence, looking for the presence and strength of these ties are most likely to help outsiders identify common factional membership. Finally, taking the middle ground, Meyer, Shih, and Lee (2016) argues that among various measurements of factional ties, Keller's "restrictive" definition of work ties is the most consistent predictor of promotion into and within the Central Committee in post-reform CCP. At the same time, however, a "broad ties" measurement that includes common educational and provincial origins also performs well in predicting promotion under

a certain number of leadership, including the current Party Secretary Xi Jinping. This chapter's findings are consistent with Keller, and, to a lesser extent, with Meyer, Shih and Lee, while starkly contradicting the argument raised by Huang.

3.5 Conclusion

The surveys provide a first-of-its-kind look into the salience of informal ties in Chinese and Vietnamese politics. They demonstrate, for the first time, that significant variations exist in the ways the two regimes perceive the role of informal ties; more importantly, there is evidence to show that the variation that exists within the political realm is independent of and in addition to the ties' general cultural salience. Though this evidence is insufficient to support a causal claim about the Vietnam-China contrast, it nonetheless lends credence to the arguments raised in this dissertation. Exogenous historical events engendered diverging patterns of factional sorting in the VCP and CCP, which, in turn through a path-dependency process, have set the regimes apart even in the contemporary era. While factions exist in both regimes, the way these factions and their members relate to themselves and to one another remain a point of contrast between Vietnam and China.

Nevertheless, all of these findings should be taken with a grain of salt. While the estimated effects of social ties in the Chinese and Vietnamese samples all point to the hypothesized direction, many of them do not meet the standard threshold required for statistical significance. As a result, one can neither reject nor definitely support the original hypotheses. To address this lack of significance, future research should focus on expanding the survey's sample sizes, especially with the Vietnamese survey. Indeed, in Liu (2019), the study whose design and objective is closest to this research, a total 332 respondents were recruited, with each respondents given 10 tasks in total. In comparison, our Chinese sample features 1060 respondents with 8 tasks per respondent, whereas the Vietnamese sample only has 266 respondents with 8 tasks per respondent. After matching, each sample only has 266

participants, resulting in a much lower-powered design compared to Liu (2019).

In addition to enlarging the sample, a future survey would also benefit from a more direct approach to reveal the respondents' assumptions and beliefs behind their choices. For example, optional open-ended questions should be made available to encourage respondents to explain the reasoning behind their choices, especially their thoughts about the role of informal ties. Alternatively, sample size permitting, the conjoint experiment can also include additional attributes to further compare different aspects of factional affiliation against informal and/or geographic ties. In particular, ideational attributes such as policy agreement or ideological similarity, or transactional attributes such as past *quid pro quo* exchanges, history of bribe giving/bribe receiving, etc. might be useful additions.

Despite all these shortcomings, however, the evidence is promising. Future updates to this chapter will focus on improving the strength of evidence with not only a higher-powered survey sample but also in-depth interviews collected during the political transition ahead of the 13th VCP National Party Congress. I also hope to exploit the time gap between existing surveys and the next wave to examine stability of the results over time. This hopefully will help tease out possible interference from events that happened during the surveys that could influence perception e.g. anti corruption campaign.

Chapter 4

Factional Sorting and Elite Purges

In Chapter 2 and 3, I lay out the difference in the sorting behavior of elite factions in Vietnam and China. As a whole, ascriptive sorting has become the equilibrium in the CCP, whereas the VCP eventually settles with elective sorting based on policy preferences. More than a cross-national contrast, I also reveal significant variations over time within each Party. Despite their broad-stroke equilibria, each regime witnessed its own fluctuation, with the CCP experiencing a slight resurgence of elective ties during portions of Jiang Jiemin and Hu Jintao's leadership, and the VCP leaning toward ascriptive sorting through geographical ties during the 1960's. The source of variations, both across and within regime, is traceable to the external military conflicts that each regime uniquely faced.

This chapter extends the historical discussion with an analysis of the effect of factional sorting on the occurrence of political purge. It begins by laying out the argument: The mode of factional sorting, via its effect on the uncertainty over political actors' factional membership, influences the costs and benefits and in consequence the autocrat's propensity to purge. Under ascriptive factional sorting, where factions recruit and identify members using ascriptive labels, political actors' affiliation are easily identifiable. This transparency enables the autocrats to acquire crucial information about the capacity of the autocrat and other elite factions in the regime, which, in turn, influences the former's motivation to purge.

I develop a series of game models to illustrate this particular causal argument. In these models, a dictator rules over a set of subordinate bureaucrats, some of whom belong to his faction while others belong to other factions in the regimes. The dictator seeks to strengthen his faction through two methods, namely purge and cooptation. Purge, the act of forcibly replacing an unaffiliated subordinate with one of the dictator's own faction, has high potential reward but comes with the risk of antagonizing enemies that are stronger than the dictator can handle. Cooptation, on the other hand, costs less but also provides a smaller net benefit. To maximize his utility, the dictator observes the presence or absence of individual bureaucrats' ties to elite faction leaders to infer their factional membership and subsequently decide between these two strategies for each of them. While doing so, the dictator also considers these ties' predictive power with regards to the subordinates' actual factional membership. The more ties predict factional allegiance, the more capable the dictator is of distinguishing a viable purge target from a well-protected opposition. In contrast, where factional membership is highly opaque, the dictator finds it in his incentive to coopt his subordinates rather than remove them through purge.

To provide empirical evidence for this argument, I bring in a historical analysis of political purges in the VCP and CCP from their formation to the contemporary period. Consistent with my expectation, I identify two major patterns. In both across and within country comparisons, purges tend to accompany ascriptive factional sorting. First, purges occurred more frequently and with higher intensity in China, where ascriptive sorting dominates and factional allegiance is relatively transparent, than in Vietnam, where ideological sorting was more dominant. Second, within both regimes, purges tended to occur only in periods where ascriptive sorting was on the rise, at least in a relative sense.

Still, the co-occurrence of purges and ascriptive sorting alone is not enough to establish a causal claim. If my theory— that ascriptive sorting *causes* purges, or at least, is a *necessary* condition for purge—to be correct, I also need to demonstrate that in China and Vietnam, ascriptive sorting can and indeed did sway political actors' decision making process through

the hypothesized mechanisms. To that end, I look closer at the most prominent purges in each regime—the CCP's Gao Gang Anti-Revolutionary Affair and the VCP's Revisionist Anti-Party Affair. Both purges occurred under a period where ascriptive factional sorting is dominant: The CCP's factions were sorting under geographic labels, while the VCP's were divided by the labels of Northern versus Southern cadres.

As it turns out, these causal mechanisms were operational in both of these purges. Most strikingly, when Le Duan in Vietnam and Mao Zedong in China unleashed their purges against the Ho Chi Minh-Vo Nguyen Giap duo and Gao Gang, they both went almost exclusively after lower-level officials who are ascriptively tied to these elites. In doing so, they also ignored many others who shared policy preferences but not ascriptive ties with their elite opponent, while also purging several of their old yet non-ascriptively tied allies.

4.1 Purge as high risk business

An elite purge occurs when a regime leader attempts to forcibly remove a subordinate elite from their position. Purges, according to Brzezinski (1958), can serve four main motivations in an authoritarian regime. Purges help cleanse a regime of undesirable elements, restore the regime's " vigor and monolithic unity," remove its enemies, and enable the leadership to establish "the correctness of its line." Later theoretical works have expanded on these motivations in the context of the political selectorate (Bueno De Mesquita and Smith 2015) and the principal-agent problem between autocratic leaders and their bureaucracies (Hollyer and Wantchekon 2014).

Regardless of his actual motivations, however, a dictator who considers launching a purge still faces the same political conundrum. While an elite purge can benefit a dictator and his regime immensely, it is a high risk move that concentrates the cost among a subset of "losers" who themselves are members of the elite, and who thus have both the capacity and incentive to prevent and/or resist it. As a result, purge attempts are often preceded by the

dictator's effort to minimize the cost incurred by their victims' resistance. Sometimes, dictators rely on subterfuge by launching purges quickly and quietly (Svolik 2009). When Hitler moved to remove Ernst Röhm and prominent leaders of the paramilitary *Sturmabteilung* (SA) from power, for example, he had his SS troops storm the hotel where Röhm and his followers were staying in the early morning, catching them by surprise in their sleep. Orders to round up other unsuspecting targets across the country were issued at 10:00am the same day. Altogether, the entire purge took no more than three days to conclude. Another strategy is to mobilize elite and public opinion against a purge target through the use of propaganda. Again, in the Night of the Long Knives, Hitler through Goebbels' propaganda machine emphasized the immorality committed by SA leaders, including allegations of Ernst Röhm's homosexuality, to turn the Party's opinion against them (Kershaw 1999). While addressing the Nazi crowd at the Party Headquarters in Munich the morning after the purge, he further attempted to portray the SA leadership as the regime's enemy by accusing them of committing "the worst treachery in history" (Evans 2005, p. 35).

These strategies are useful ways to ensure an ongoing purge will continue smoothly. Yet even prior to that, dictators also minimize the cost of retaliation by choosing to purge selectively and strategically. Dictators do not simply purge anyone they want; rather, they purge who they can. When a political opposition is too powerful or popular in a regime, for example, the dictator might choose to co-exist and wait for his opportunity rather than attempt to take down his opposition. This, indeed, is the crux of Sudduth (2017)'s argument. Because an opposition faction that is too weak needs not be purged and an one that is too strong cannot be purged, the autocrat chooses to launch purge when his opposition suffers a temporary decline in power.

4.1.1 Purge and factional sorting

In this chapter, I argue that factional sorting plays a crucial role in affecting the dictator's ability to strategically choose when and who to purge. It does so by regulating

the information available for the dictators to infer the balance of power between factions. In regimes where factions sort based on ascriptive backgrounds, factional membership is static and well defined. This, in turn, allows political actors to make two important inferences. First, they can infer the potential allegiance of any given individual to a faction accurately by observing whether his/her backgrounds put him/her on the same side of the cleavage with the faction leader. Second, they can also acquire a good deal of information about the potential strength of each faction by observing the size of the recruitment pool accessible to each faction leader—in other words, the size of the network of regime members who share a common identity label with the factional leader. In contrast, if factions sort instead along ideological lines, factional membership also becomes more opaque and overlapping. Unlike ascriptive backgrounds, ideological and policy preferences can be hidden; they can also change over time, either sincerely or strategically due to factional motivations. The fluidity of preferences, together with the lack of clear cleavages separating factions, makes it difficult for political actors to identify any individual's factional affiliation or the overall balance of power between factions.

The transparency of membership in turn shapes a regime leader's incentive to purge. Under transparent membership, not only are regime leaders able to identify the potential affiliation of all regime followers, but they also can perceive the balance of power between factions with a high degree of certainty. This reduces the likelihood that the purge initiator would choose a "wrong" target (relative to the purge's original intention), as well as the likelihood that he would misjudge his faction's own capacity to launch purge and his opposition's capacity to resist it. Where factions sort through elective ties, in contrast, the opaqueness of factional membership makes purges risky. At the same time, faction leaders who seek to consolidate their power also find it easier to do so through non-violent means. Ideological sorting allows members to switch factions and leaders to recruit from across logistical and social cleavages; in consequence, leaders who find it too risky to purge a target may instead choose to engage instead in political cooptation. Due to uncertainty over factional balance

of power, factions as a whole are also more keen on settling disputes through bargaining and negotiation instead of through violent conflict.

4.2 Models of purges under factional uncertainty

In this section, I model a dictator's calculations behind his decision to purge a regime elite through a sequential-move game. In this game, the dictator seeks to expand his power by filling the regime's bureaucracy with his loyalists. For each incumbent, non-allied bureaucrat in the regime, the dictator has the choice of (1) purging the bureaucrat and replacing them with someone else, (2) coopt the bureaucrat into his faction temporarily, or (3) maintain the status quo by leaving the bureaucrat alone. Each strategy has its own benefits and costs. A purge, if successful, ensures that the dictator can increase his faction's representation in the bureaucracy in the long run; however, it succeeds only so long as the targeted bureaucrat and their faction lacks the capacity to defend themselves. If the dictator attempts to purge members of a powerful faction, not only will the purge fail but the dictator will also suffer from retaliation by his target's factional allies. In comparison, a cooptation attempt carries no retaliation risk, but it requires the dictator to extend out-of-pocket financial incentives in exchange for the bureaucrat's loyalty. Furthermore, the bureaucrat also has the choice to reject the offer should they deem the incentives insufficient and/or the punishment by their own faction for the act of defection too burdensome.

To inform his decision, the dictator relies on the presence or absence of a bureaucrat's ties to leaders of powerful factions in the regime. These ties act as an imperfect signal of the bureaucrat's actual factional affiliation. Factional uncertainty determines the accuracy of this signal and in turn the dictator's behavior upon observing a signal. In the rest of the section, I detail the setup of three iterations of the game: a basic model, a model of purge with cooptation, and a model of purge with cooptation and defection penalty.

4.2.1 Basic setup

In the model, a dictator D rules over a set of bureaucrats$\{B_1, B_2, ..., B_n\}$. Within this set, B_1 to B_k where $k < n$ do not belong to the dictator's faction, while B_{k+1} to B_n are members of the dictator's faction. Each bureaucrat from B_1 to B_k is member of either a strong ($\theta_i = 1$) or a weak rival faction ($\theta_i = 0$), with $Pr(\theta_i = 1) = p$. For each round of the game, the dictator gains a payoff of $l_i > 0$ for each bureaucrat in his own faction and 0 for each subordinate who is not in his faction. l_i could be understood as the political support that the bureaucrat B_i provides to the dictator through control of their office.

The dictator observes the true factional allegiance of B_i, where $i \in [k+1; n]$. That is to say, the dictator knows with certainty who his co-faction bureaucrats are. However, for subordinates $B_1, B_2, ..., B_n$, he observes only a signal $\theta_i^* \in \{0, 1\}$ that indicates whether a bureaucrat has ties to members of a strong faction. The degree of certainty over factional membership $f, p < f < 1$ determines the extent to which the presence or absence of such ties indicates actual factional allegiance.

$$P(\theta_i = 1|\theta_i^* = 1) = P(\theta_i = 0|\theta_i^* = 0) = f$$
$$P(\theta_i = 1|\theta_i^* = 0) = P(\theta_i = 0|\theta_i^* = 1) = 1 - f$$

In the basic setup, the dictator is the only moving actor. For each bureaucrat B_i, the dictator decides whether to purge or to leave the bureaucrat alone. The purge will succeed if $\theta_i = 0$, in which case the bureaucrat B_i will be replaced with $B_{i'}$ where $i' \notin \{1 : n\}$. $B_{i'}$ belongs to the dictator's faction and will then give the dictator l_i in utility when the game ends.[20] If $\theta_i = 1$, the purge attempt will fail, and the dictator will receive a penalty of $-r_i$ where $r_i > 0$. In this model, $-r_i$ symbolizes the retaliation by B_i's faction upon its discovery of the dictator's purge attempt. Alternatively, if the dictator chooses to leave B_i alone, nothing happens and he gains an utility of 0.

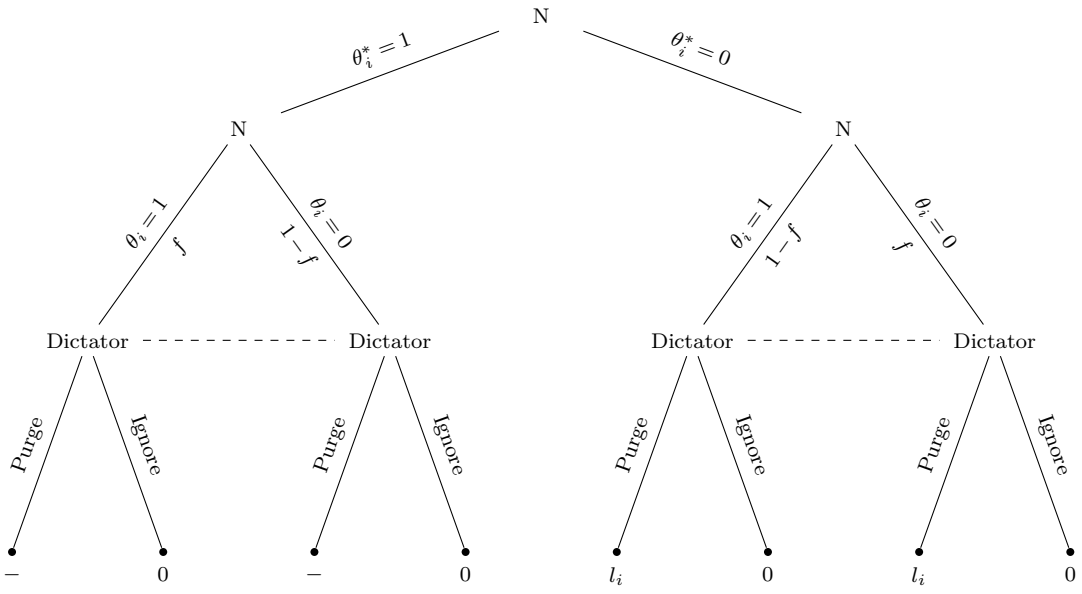

Figure 4.1: Basic game decision tree

4.2.1.1 Model equilibria

The dictator's strategy in this scenario is straightforward. At the end of the round, the expected utility associated with each of the dictator's actions are as follows:

$$u_D(purge) = (1-\theta_i)l_i - \theta_i r_i$$
$$u_D(ignore) = 0$$

We can then derive the dictator's expected utility conditional on observed θ_i^*:

- If $\theta_i^* = 0$:

$$u_D(purge|\theta_i^* = 0) = fl_i - (1-f)r_i = f(l_i + r_i) - r_i$$
$$u_D(ignore|\theta_i^* = 0) = 0$$

Upon observing $\theta_i^* = 0$, the dictator purges B_i when $f(l_i + r_i) - r_i > 0$ or $f > \frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i}$ and leave B_i alone otherwise.

- If $\theta_i^* = 1$:

$$u_D(purge|\theta_i^* = 1) = (1 - f)l_i - fr_i = -f(l_i + r_i) + l_i$$
$$u_D(ignore|\theta_i^* = 1) = 0$$

Upon observing, $\theta_i^* = 1$, the dictator purges B_i when $-f(l_i + r_i) + l_i > 0$ or $f < \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$ and leave B_i alone otherwise.

The dictator's strategy conditional on $f$and on B_i's ties can thus be summarized as follows:

	$p < f < \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$	$\frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i} < f < \frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i}$	$\frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i} < f < 1$
$\theta_i^* = 0$	Ignore	Ignore	Purge
$\theta_i^* = 1$	Purge	Ignore	Ignore

4.2.1.2 Comparative statics

These identified equilibria lead to two important implications. First, individually speaking, both the value of the bureaucrat B_i's office and the threat of retaliation from their faction monotonically influence the dictator's propensity to purge B_i. The dictator is strictly more likely to purge B_i with increasing l_i and strictly less likely to do so with increasing r_i. The interpretation is straightforward. Holding everything else constant, the more valuable it is to gain control of a certain office, the more risks the dictator is willing to take in order to fill the office with his ally. Similarly, if, either due to exogenous constraints such as institutional rules and access to means of violence or to endogenous factors such as factional balance of power, the regime elites' ability to punish the dictator is limited, the dictator can worry less about the consequences of a failed purge and be more inclined to rely on violence to gain power.

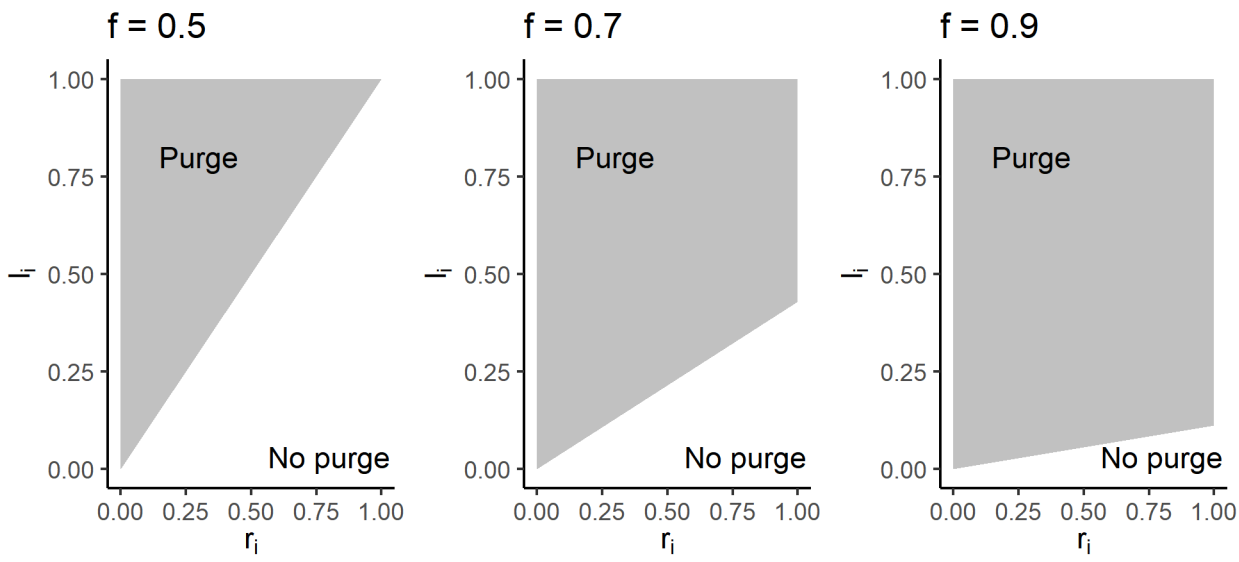

Figure 4.2: Higher f increases range of conditions in which bureaucrats without strong faction ties are purged

Second and more importantly, as f increases, the set of l_i and r_i such that the dictator purges a bureaucrat without ties to a strong faction leader expands while the set of l_i and r_i such that the dictator purges a bureaucrat with ties to a strong faction shrinks. In other words, higher certainty over factional membership means that more bureaucrats with apparent ties to weaker factions will be selected for purge. At $f = 1$, the dictator purges every bureaucrat whose $\theta_i^* = 0$ and ignores every bureaucrat whose $\theta_i^* = 1$. Notably, however, lowering f does not strictly increase the set of conditions in which the dictator purges a bureaucrat whose $\theta_i^* = 1$. At first glance, it seems that with lower levels of f, the set of l_i and r_i such that the dictator will purge a bureaucrat B_i whose $\theta_i^* = 1$ will also become larger. However, the range of f in which B_i whose $\theta_i^* = 1$ are purged is lower-bounded by p. If $\frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i} < p$, no level of f will allow the dictator to purge a subordinate with ties to a strong faction leader. This is to say, if the threat of retaliation from strong rival factions is sufficiently costly relative to what the dictator can gain from promoting an extra loyalist, he will only attempt to purge "easy" targets even if they occupy less important offices.

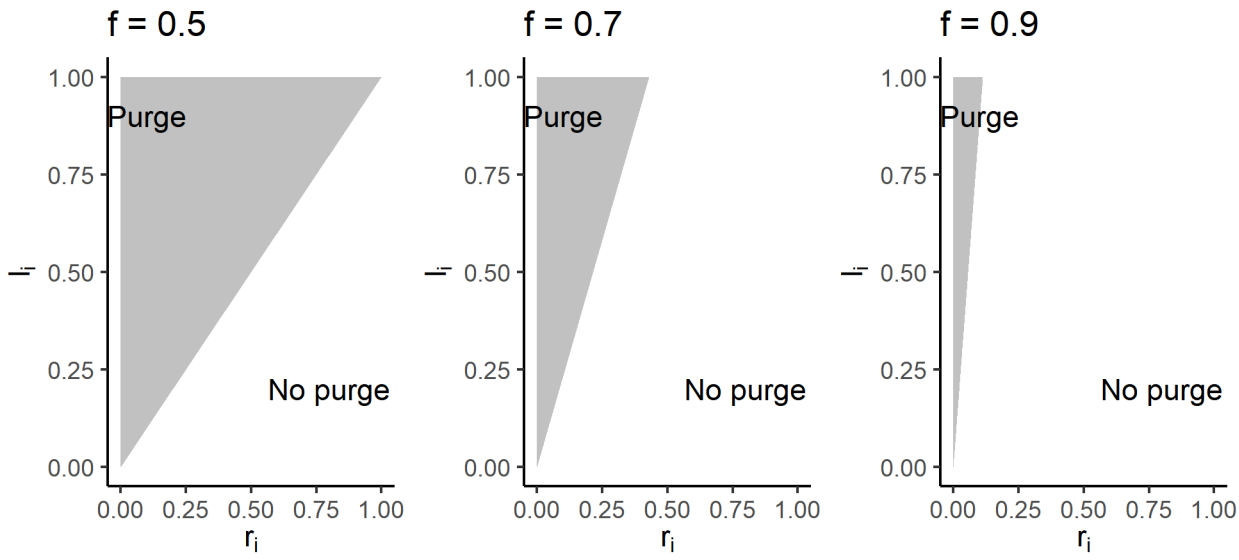

Figure 4.3: Higher f decreases range of conditions in which bureaucrats with strong faction ties are purged

4.2.2 Purge with cooptation

We now consider an extension of the basic model in section 2.1. At the beginning of the game, the dictator now has two choices. He can either purge $B_i, i \in \{1:k\}$, or coopt B_i by offering a bribe of amount b_i in exchange for their temporary support. We assume that the dictator does not offer B_i more than the worth of their office, or $0 \leq b_i < l_i$. For the sake of simplicity, we also assume that b_i is exogenously generated.[21]

Upon being offered the bribe, the bureaucrat has two options—to accept or to decline the offer. Should the bureaucrat accept the offer, he temporarily lends support to the dictator and gives him $l_i - b_i$ in utility. The game ends at $t = 0$ if the dictator decides to purge B_i, to leave B_i alone, or if he decides to offer a bribe and B_i accepts it. Otherwise, the game moves on to the second period in which the dictator plays a similar game to the basic model. Specifically, at $t = 1$, the dictator has two options: He can purge the bureaucrat, or choose to do nothing and let the game end. Again, the purge will succeed if $\theta_i = 0$ and fail if $\theta_i = 1$.

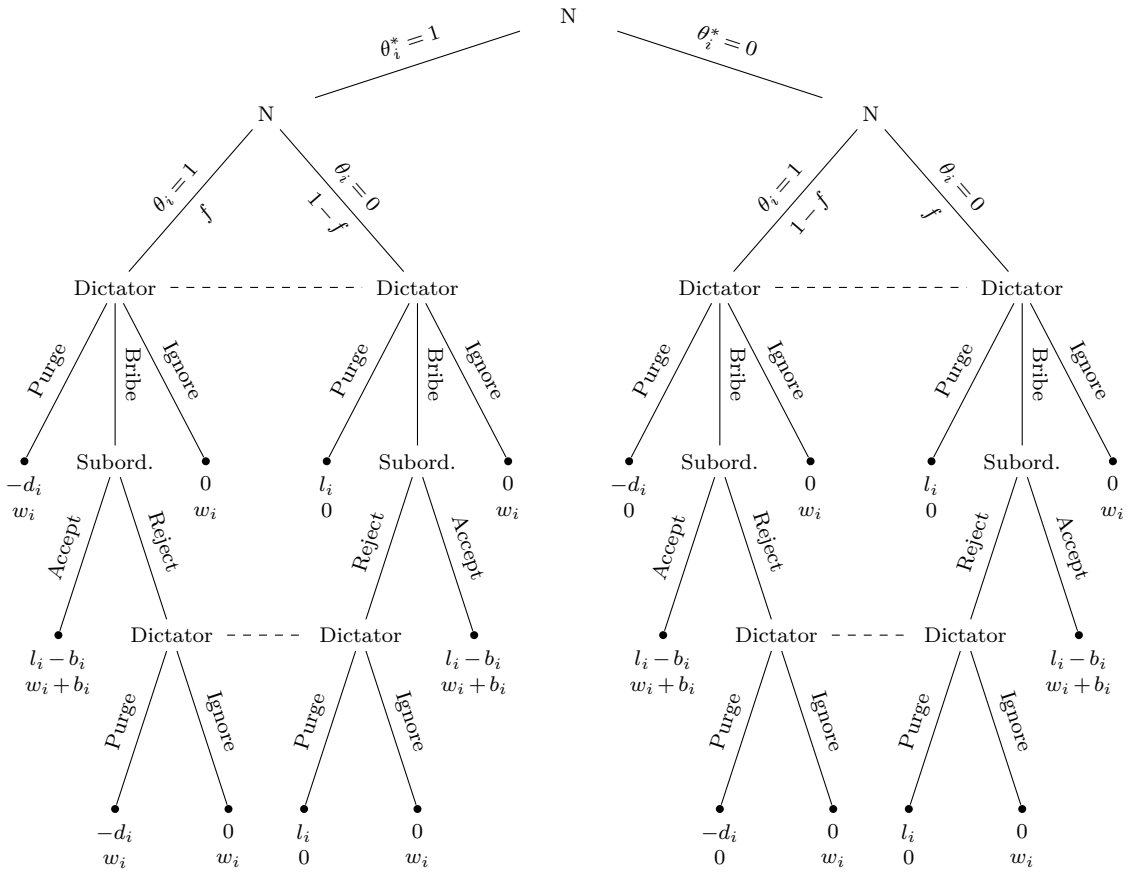

Figure 4.4: Purge with cooptation game tree

In addition to these extensions, I also introduce the bureaucrat B_i's payoff structure. Each bureaucrat earns 0 if they are purged, a wage of w_i where $w_i > 0$ if they are not successfully purged, and finally, $w_i + b_i$ if they accept the dictator's cooptation offer.

4.2.2.1 Model equilibria

The dictator's sequential game with B_i can be solved through backward deduction. At $t = 1$, each bureaucrat B_i is faced with two possible outcomes: either they will be purged or will be left alone by the dictator. Regardless of θ_i and θ_i^*, B_i is better off with accepting the bribe offer at $t = 0$ than with either of these options, since $w_i + b_i \geq w_i > 0$. This also makes intuitive sense in that if there is no cost to defection, every bureaucrat will defect if

given any offer greater than 0 to do so. As a result, at $t = 1$, the dictator's payoff structure is as follows:

- If $\theta_i^* = 0$:

$$u_D(purge|\theta_i^* = 0, t = 0) = fl_i - (1-f)r_i = f(l_i + r_i) - r_i$$
$$u_D(bribe|\theta_i^* = 0, t = 0) = l_i - b_i$$

  Upon observing $\theta_i^* = 0$, the dictator purges B_i whenever $f(l_i + r_i) - r_i > l_i - b_i$ or $f > \frac{l_i + r_i - b_i}{l_i + r_i}$, and attempts to coopt B_i otherwise.

- If $\theta_i^* = 1$:

$$u_D(purge|\theta_i^* = 1, t = 0) = (1-f)l_i - fr_i = -f(l_i + r_i) + l_i$$
$$u_D(bribe|\theta_i^* = 1, t = 0) = l_i - b_i$$

  Upon observing $\theta_i^* = 1$, the dictator purges B_i whenever $-f(l_i + r_i) + l_i > l_i - b_i$ or $f < \frac{b_i}{l_i + r_i}$, and attempts to coopt B_i otherwise.

The dictator's strategy conditional on $f$and on B_i's ties can thus be summarized as follows:

	$p < f < \frac{b_i}{l_i+r_i}$	$\frac{b_i}{l_i+r_i} < f < \frac{l_i+r_i-b_i}{l_i+r_i}$	$\frac{l_i+r_i-b_i}{l_i+r_i} < f < 1$
$\theta_i^* = 0$	Coopt	Coopt	Purge
$\theta_i^* = 1$	Purge	Coopt	Coopt

4.2.2.2 Comparative statics

When the dictator has access to cooptation, the range of conditions under which the dictator chooses to purge a bureaucrat shrinks. Instead of purging B_i whose $\theta_i^* = 0$ whenever $f > \frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i}$, the dictator now purges only when $f > \frac{l_i + r_i - b_i}{l_i + r_i}$. Similarly, for bureaucrats whose $\theta_i^* = 1$, the dictator purges whenever $f < \frac{b_i}{l_i + r_i}$ instead of when $f < \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$. However, compared

to the basic game, the effect of f, l_i,r_i on the dictator's preference remains unchanged. In other words, where dictators have access to cooptation, purge becomes less popular but its factional logic remains the same.

Notably, factional membership uncertainty affects the viability of not only purge but also cooptation. The dictator chooses to bribe a bureaucrat when $u_D(bribe|t=0) > u_D(purge|t=0)$. For this condition to be satisfied, b_i has to be also smaller than $(1-f)(l_i+r_i)$ when the bureaucrat does not have ties to strong faction leaders and smaller than $f(l_i+r_i)$ when they do. Therefore, the higher f, the smaller the set of b_i that allows the dictator to coopt B_i with $\theta_i^*=0$ and the larger the set that allows him to coopt B_i with $\theta_i^*=1$. All in all, higher certainty over factional membership makes the dictator less likely to coopt and more likely to purge subordinates without ties to strong faction leaders.

4.2.3 Purge with cooptation and defection penalty

In the previous model, the bureaucrat B_i suffers from no penalty whatsoever if they decide to defect from his faction and lend support to the dictator temporarily. We now consider an extension of this model where B_i receives a defection penalty of $-(d_i+D_i\theta_i)$, where $d_i>0$ and $D_i>0$. Here, D_i signifies the difference between a weak and a strong faction in the capacity to discipline their members. Should B_i accept the dictator's bribe offer, their expected utility is as follows:

$$u_{S_i}(Bribe, Accept) = w_i + b_i - (d_i + D_i\theta_i)$$

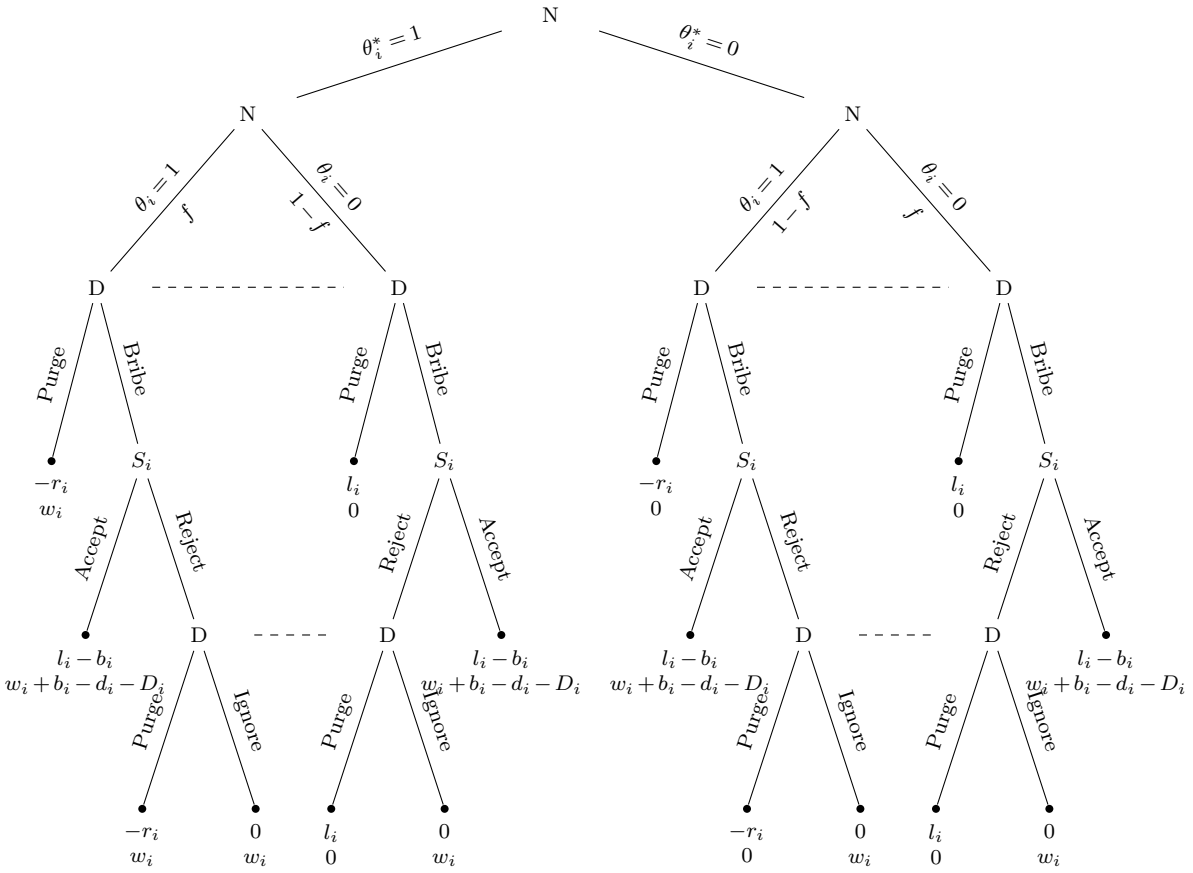

Figure 4.5: Purge with cooptation and defection penalty game tree

4.2.3.1 Model equilibria

Depending on the values of d_i and D_i, the second period's sub-game might have a pooling equilibrium.

- If the penalty is less than what the dictator offers for both types of bureaucrats (such that $d < d_i + D_i\theta_i < b_i$), the second period's sub-game has a pooling equilibrium: B_i always accepts the bribe if offered, and the game is reducible to model 2.2. At $t = 0$, the dictator chooses to purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 0$ when $f > \frac{l_i + r_i - b_i}{l_i + r_i}$, and purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 1$ when $f < \frac{b_i}{l_i + r_i}$.

- If the penalty is higher than the total of the bureaucrat's wage income and the dictator's bribe for both types of bureaucrats (such that $d_i + D_i > d_i > b_i + w_i$), the second period's sub-game has another pooling equilibrium: B_i always rejects the bribe if offered, and the game is reducible to model 2.1. At $t = 0$, the dictator chooses to purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 0$ when $f > \frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i}$, and purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 1$ when $f < \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$.

In addition, the sub-game might also have a separating equilibrium.

- If $d_i < b_i < d_i + D_i$, the bureaucrat always accepts the bribe if $\theta_i = 0$ but always rejects it if $\theta_i = 1$. This scenario happens when only the strong faction has sufficient capacity to deter its member's defection. As a result, the dictator knows B_i's type with certainty as soon as he reaches the decision node at the beginning of the second period. The dictator thus chooses to ignore any bureaucrat who rejects the bribe. At $t = 0$, the expected payoffs of the dictator's moves are as follows:

  - If $\theta_i^* = 0$:

$$u_D(purge, \theta_i^* = 0, t = 0) = fl_i - (1 - f)r_i = f(l_i + r_i) - r_i$$
$$u_D(bribe, \theta_i^* = 0, t = 0) = f(l_i - b_i) + (1 - f)0 = f(l_i - b_i)$$

The dictator chooses to purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 0$ when $f(l_i + r_i) - r_i > f(l_i - b_i)$ or $f > \frac{r_i}{r_i + b_i}$.

– If $\theta_i^* = 1$:

$$u_D(purge, \theta_i^* = 1, t = 0) = (1 - f)l_i - fr_i = -f(l_i + r_i) + l_i$$
$$u_D(bribe, \theta_i^* = 1, t = 0) = f0 + (1 - f)(l_i - b_i) = -f(l_i - b_i) + l_i - b_i$$

The dictator chooses to purge every B_i with $\theta_i^* = 1$ when $-f(l_i + r_i) + l_i > -f(l_i - b_i) + l_i - b_i$ or $f < \frac{b_i}{r_i + b_i}$.

Finally, if $b_i < d_i < b_i + w_i < d_i + D_i$, every bureaucrat whose $\theta_i = 1$ rejects the bribe. Bureaucrats with $\theta_i = 0$ accepts the bribe [if the condition is such that the dictator purges at $t = 1$]. At $t = 1$, the dictator's payoffs are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} u_D(purge, \theta_i^*, t = 1) &= -r_i Pr(\theta = 1 | \theta_i^*, Reject) + l_i(1 - Pr(\theta = 1 | \theta_i^*, Reject) \\ &= l_i - (l_i + r_i) \, Pr(\theta = 1 | \theta_i^*, Reject) \\ u_D(ignore, \theta_i^*, t = 1) &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

The dictator thus purges at $t = 1$ if $Pr(\theta = 1 | \theta_i^*, Reject) < \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$. Should $Pr(\theta = 1 | \theta_i^*, Reject) = \frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$, the dictator plays a mixed strategy where he chooses to purge with probability of $\frac{l_i}{l_i + r_i}$ and ignore with probability of $\frac{r_i}{l_i + r_i}$.

4.2.3.2 Comparative statics

In general, the higher the defection penalties d_i and D_i facing B_i, the less they are willing to accept a cooptation offer. This in turn makes the dictator more likely to end up purging the subordinate. Another notable insight of this model is that the defection penalty is only informative if it deters one type of bureaucrat from accepting an offer but not the

other. If $d < d_i + D_i\theta_i < b_i$ or if $d_i + D_i > d_i > b_i + w_i$, a bureaucrat behaves the same way in response to a bribe offer regardless of their actual factional membership. In consequence, the dictator can only rely on the bureaucrat's ties θ_i^* to inform his decision. On the other hand, where the defection penalty is sufficient to deter one type of bureaucrat, specifically those from a strong faction, the dictator learns of the bureaucrat's type as soon as his cooptation is accepted or rejected.

Yet, even when bureaucrats face possible punishment for defection from their faction to the dictator's cause, factional membership uncertainty still drives the dictator's behavior in the original direction. Higher f makes it more likely for the dictator to purge bureaucrats, especially those with no ties to strong faction. Lower f, on the other hand, makes purging less attractive and bribery more viable. Besides factional membership uncertainty, the capacity for retaliation as well as the size of the bribe that the dictator has to offer to the bureaucrat also influence his decision in the same fashion as in the previous models.

4.3 Historical purges in Vietnam and China

Altogether, the game models in this chapter suggest two sets of hypotheses. First, at the macro level, as factional membership becomes more transparent, purges also become more prevalent, while regime leaders also become less inclined to leave suspected members of rival factions in peace or to coopt their support peacefully.

The evolution of factional sorting in the VCP and the CCP as outlined in Chapter 1 provides an excellent test of the macro level predictions, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the micro level predictions as well. In the rest of this chapter, I provide two pieces of historical evidence to demonstrate the co-occurrence of ascriptive factional sorting and purges. First, in a cross-country comparison between China and Vietnam, one sees a consistent preponderance of purge in China compared to Vietnam that mirrors their contrasting levels of factional membership uncertainty. The CCP as a whole arrested its elites more often and sentenced

them to harsher terms than its Vietnamese counterpart. In fact, even the most serious purge campaign in Vietnam, the Anti-Party Revisionist Affair in 1967, pales in comparison to many "average" purges in China even after taking the difference in sizes between the two Parties into account. Second, within both countries, periods of high purge closely match periods where background sorting dominated over ideological sorting. This is especially true for Vietnam, which saw the Anti-Party Revisionist Affair in 1967, the high points of North-South party division.

On top of these evidence, I also analyze events surrounding some of the most historically significant purges in Vietnam and China. In doing so, I reveal evidence of extensive uses of ascriptive geographic labels as the means through which political actors—both purge initiators and purge victims alike—identified potential allies and enemies.

4.3.1 Cross national variation

A recount of the major purge campaigns that occurred in Vietnam and China hints at the first piece of evidence. Throughout its history, the CCP has witnessed more than a dozen of elite purges. The first one took place in 1929, when the CCP, then controlled by the 28 Bolsheviks, expelled Chen Duxiu, one of the two founders of the CCP, from the Party. Chen was blamed for the collapse of the United Front between the CCP and the KMT in 1927, despite having objected to the formation of the Front himself. Later on, when the Party spread itself out across the countries to escape the KMT's pursuit, local purges also occurred in several newly formed base areas. The most notable of these was Mao Zedong's purge of the Jiangxi Soviet from 1930 to 1931 under the guise of a hunt for members of the hostile "Anti-Bolsheviks League" among Party ranks. The purge removed Li Wenlin, head of the Jiangxi Provincial Action Committee and Mao's direct rival in the Soviet from power, along with several hundred local Party cadres in the Action Committee and its Youth Corps. According to the CCP's own documents, it also implicated thousands of officers and soldiers in local Red Armies, including 4,400 in the First Front Army, one fifth of the 7,000-strong

Fourth Army, about 1,000 in the 20th Army and between 2,000 and 3,000 in the Third Army (Ch'en 1994).

Mao Zedong would reside over many successive purges, including the CCP's first Rectification Movement that took place in Yan'an between 1941 and 1945, as well as several Rectification Campaigns and Anti- Campaigns following the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Yet while the majority of purges indeed occurred under Mao, they were not exclusive to this period. Each CCP General Secretary succeeding Mao launched at least a major political purge campaign in his career; and with the sole exception of the 15th CCP from 1997 to 2002, every single Politburo since 1945 has purged at least one of its members from its ranks (see Table 4.1).

Besides frequency, purges in the CCP were also noted for their severity. Often, individuals implicated in purge campaigns were not only removed from power, but also subject to expulsion from the Party, and in many cases, to physical harm as well. For publicly voicing his criticism of the Great Leap Forward, Peng Dehuai, China's Defense Minister since 1954 and Mao's long-time supporter, was removed from all positions in 1959, and later arrested, beaten, and sentenced to life imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, Liu Shaoqi was removed from the Politburo in 1966. In 1968, as the Cultural Revolution began, Liu was publicly denounced, expelled from the Party, and placed under house arrest under harsh treatment. This brutality was not unique to the CCP under Mao Zedong: The purge of the Gang of Four following Mao's death included 2 death penalties and one life imprisonment sentence. Similar fates also befell many high-ranking cadres during later generations of leadership (see Table 4.3).

In stark contrast with China, there were very few instances where elite cadres in the CCP came under their own comrades' attack. Though the Party lacked no moment of hostility—the intra-party schism in 1930 was so serious that the Party practically broke into two—there was almost a total absence of purge campaign in its entire history. A list of significant purges in the would be mostly empty, except for a single entry dedicated to the

Revisionist Anti-Party Affair, Vietnam's closest equivalent to the CCP's many purges. The Revisionist Anti-Party Affair, taken place around mid 1967, involved the arrests of about 30 senior Party and military officers (Quinn-Judge 2005; Nguyen 2017), alongside about 300 rank-and-file individuals, including newspaper editors, secretaries, and Party intellectuals. Outside this particular incident, very few high ranking Party members ever got in serious trouble with the Party, and even if they did, it was only the results of isolated incidents. Throughout the VCP's 12 Party Congresses, from 1935 to 2020, only 5 incumbent Politburo members were ever subjected to disciplinary action. Among these, two got away with a mere reprimand (Truong Tan Sang in 2002) and a warning (Hoang Trung Hai in 2020). Only three—Tran Xuan Bach in 1990, Nguyen Ha Phan in 1996 and Dinh La Thang in 2019—were formally removed from power (see Table 4.4). In fact, the most frequent reason for premature exits from power among the VCP's Politburos were deaths due to natural causes, or at the hands of the French, as was the case of Tran Phu, Le Hong Phong, Ha Huy Tap, and Nguyen Van Cu, the first four General Secretary of the VCP. In contrast, the most severe disciplinary action handed to a Party member in the Central Committee or above was a single death sentence; yet, it too was an extraordinary exception. The sentence was given *in absentia* to Hoang Van Hoan, ambassador to China between 1950 and 1957 and Politburo member from 1960 to 1976, after his defection to China in 1979.

In general, unlike the bloody transitions of power after Mao in China, power struggles in the VCP tended to resolve themselves peacefully. When Nguyen Van Linh succeeded Truong Chinh as Party General Secretary in 1986, for example, the former received the latter's blessings despite their previous spar during the debate between the Party's reformist and conservative camps over the direction of the economy. Ten years later, at the 8th Party Congress of the VCP, when the reformists and conservatives—this time led by Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet and Head of State Le Duc Anh, respectively—struggled for power once more, both sides again settled for a compromise instead of conflict. Under this compromise, each faction leader managed to put his own successor into leadership positions for the next ten

years: Phan Van Khai replaced Vo Van Kiet, while Tran Duc Luong replaced Le Duc Anh (Largo 2002). The final seat of the VCP's ruling troika, that of the Party General Secretary, was decided later at the 4th Central Committee plenum of the 8th Congress, taken place 26 December 1997. Again as a compromise, the conservatives and the reformists agreed on the choice of Le Kha Phieu. Through hailing from a military background—Phieu headed the Political Department of the People's Army of Vietnam before his election—his background also seen as somewhat reform-minded, at least relative to the alternative candidates such as Nguyen Duc Binh, then head of the Party school, or (arguably) Nguyen Van An, head of the Central Committee's Organization Department (Abuza 2002).

4.3.2 Temporal variation in purges

The second piece of evidence to support the theory of factional sorting has to do with the timing of purges in China and Vietnam. In both countries, periods where purges became frequent and intensified tended to fall on times where background sorting dominated over ideological sorting. For China, an overwhelming proportion of forced removals from power occurred at the high point of mountaintop-ism in the CCP—in other words, the period during and immediately after Mao's tenure. These removals are also significant for their violence.

After succeeding Mao and Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping brought ideological sorting back to the table, through his attempts to enlarge his coalition and rally his support of under

Table 4.1: CCP Politburo membership, 1945–2017

7th	8th		9th	10th	11th		12th	13th		14th	15th	16th	17th	18th
1945-1956	1956-1966	1966-1969	1969-1973	1973-1977	1977-1982	1982-1985	1985-1987	1987-1989	1989-1992	1992-1997	1997-2002	2002-2007	2007-2012	2012-2017
Mao Zedong	Mao Zedong	Mao Zedong	Mao Zedong	Mao Zedong (until 1976)	Hua Guofeng	**Hu Yaobang**	**Hu Yaobang (until 1/1987)**	**Zhao Ziyang**	Jiang Zemin	Jiang Zemin	Jiang Zemin	Hu Jintao	Hu Jintao	Xi Jinping
Zhu De	**Liu Shaoqi**	Lin Biao	Lin Biao	Zhou Enlai	Ye Jianying	Ye Jianying	Deng Xiaoping	Li Peng	Li Peng	Qiao Shi	Li Peng	Wu Bangguo	Wu Bangguo	Li Keqiang
Liu Shaoqi	Zhou Enlai	Zhou Enlai	Zhou Enlai	**Wang Hongwen**	Deng Xiaoping	Deng Xiaoping	Zhao Ziyang (Acting GS after 1/1987)	Qiao Shi	Qiao Shi	Li Ruihuan	Zhu Rongji	Wen Jiabao	Wen Jiabao	Zheng Dejiang
Zhou Enlai	Zhu De	**Tao Zhu**	**Chen Boda**	Kang Sheng	Li Xiannian	Zhao Ziyang	Li Xiannian	Yao Yilin	Yao Yilin	**Hu Qili**	Li Ruihuan	Jia Qinglin	Jia Qinglin	Yu Zhengsheng
Ren Bishi (died 1950)	Chen Yun	Chen Boda	Kang Sheng	Ye Jianying	**Wang Dongxing**	Li Xiannian	Chen Yun		Song Ping	Li Ruihuan	Hu Jintao	Zeng Qinghong	Li Changchun	Liu Yunshan
Chen Yun (since 1950)	Lin Biao (since 1958)	**Deng Xiaoping**		Li Desheng	Chen Yun	Chen Yun			Li Ruihuan	Zhu Rongji	Wei Jianxing	Huang Ju	Xi Jinping	Wang Qishan
	Deng Xiaoping	Kang Sheng		Zhu De	Hu Yaobang					Liu Huaqing	Li Lanqing	Wu Guanzheng	Li Keqiang	Zhang Gaoli
		Liu Shaoqi		**Zhang Chunqiao**	Zhao Ziyang					Hu Jintao		Li Changchun	He Guoqiang	
		Zhu De		Dong Biwu								Luo Gan	Zhou Yongkang	
		Li Fuchun		Deng Xiaoping										
		Chen Yun		Hua Guofeng										
Chen Yun (until 1950)	Lin Boqu	Dong Biwu	Ye Qun	Wei Guoqing	Wei Guoqing	Wan Li	Wan Li	Wan Li	Wan Li	Ding Guangen	Ding Guangen	Wang Lequan	Wang Gan	Ma Kai
Kang Sheng	Dong Biwu	Chen Yi	Ye Jianying	Liu Bocheng	Ulanhu	Xi Zhongxunu	Xi Zhongxun	Tian Jiyun	Tian Jiyun	Tian Jiyun	Tian Jiyun	Wang Zhaoguo	Wang Lequan	Wang Huning
Gao Gang	Peng Zhen	Liu Bocheng	Liu Bocheng	**Jiang Qing**	Fang Yi	Wang Zhen	Fang Yi	Jiang Zemin	Li Tieying	Li Lanqing	Li Changchun	Hui Liangyu	Liu Yandong	Liu Yandong
Peng Zhen	Luo Ronghuan (died 1963)	**He Long**	Jiang Qing	Xu Shiyou	Liu Bocheng	Wei Guoqing	Tian Jiyun	Li Tieying	Li Ximing	Li Tieying	Li Tieying	Liu Qi	Liu Qibao	Liu Qibao
Dong Biwu	Chen Yi	Li Xiannian	Zhu De	Ju Dengkui	Xu Shiyou	Ulanhu	Qiao Shi	Li Ruihuan	Yang Rudai	Wu Bangguo	Wu Guanzheng	Liu Yunshan	Hui Liangyu	Xu Qiliang
Lin Boqu	**Li Jingquan**	**Li Jingquan**	Xu Shiyou	Wu De	**Ji Dengkui**	Fang Yi	Li Peng	Li Ximing	Yang Shangkun	Yang Baibing	Chi Haotian	Wu Yi	Liu Qi	Sun Chunlan
Zhang Wentian	**Peng Dehuai**	**Tan Zhenlin**	Chen Xilian	Wang Dongxing	Su Zhenhoa	Deng Yingchao	Yang Shangkun	Yang Rudai	Wu Xueqian	Wu Bangguo	Zhang Wannian	Zhang Lichang	Liu Yunshan	**Sun Zhengcai**
Peng Dehuai	Liu Bocheng	Xu Xiangqian	Li Xiannian	Chen Yonggui	Li Desheng	Li Desheng	Yang Dezhi	Wu Xueqian	Qin Jiwei	Zou Jiahua	Luo Gan	Zhang Dejiang	Liu Yandong	Li Jianguo
Lin Biao (since 1955)	He Long	Nie Rongzhen	**Li Zuopeng**	Chen Xilian	**Wu De**	Yang Shangkun	Wu Xueqian	Song Ping		**Chen Xitong**	Jiang Chunyun	**Chen Liangyu**	Li Yuanchao	Li Yuanchao
Deng Xiaoping (since 1955)	Li Xiannian	Ye Jianying	**Wu Faxian**	Li Xiannian	Yu Qiuli	Yang Dezhi	Hu Qiaomu	Hu Yaobang		Qian Qichen	Jia Qinglin	Zhou Yongkang	Wang Yang	Wang Yang
	Ke Qingshi (since 1958, died 1965)		Zhang Chunqiao	**Yao Wenyuan**	Zhang Tingfa	Yu Qiuli	Nie Rongzhen	Qin Jiwei		Wei Jianxing	Jia Qinglin	Yu Zhengsheng	Zhang Gaoli	Zhang Chunxian
	Li Jingquan		**Qiu Huizuo**		Cheng Yonggui	Song Renqiong	Ni Zhifu			Xie Fei	Qian Qichen	He Guoqiang	Zhang Dejiang	Fan Changlong
	Tan Zhenlin		Yao Wenyuan		**Chen Xilian**	Zhang Tingfa	Peng Zhen			Tan Shao Wen	Huang Ju	Guo Boxiong	Meng Jianzhu	Meng Jianzhu
			Huang Yongsheng		Geng Biao	Hu Qiaomu	Liao Chengzhi			Huang Ju (since 1994)	Wen Jiabao	Cao Gangchuan	Zhao Leji	Zhao Leji
			Dong Biwu		Nie Rongzhen	Nie Rongzhen					Xie Fei	Zeng Peiyan	Yu Zhengsheng	Hu Chunhua
			Xie Fuzhi		Ni Zhifu	Ni Zhifu							Xu Caihou	Li Zhanshu
					Xu Xiangqian	Xu Xiangqian							Guo Boxiong	Guo Jinlong
					Peng Chong	Peng Zhen							**Bo Xilai**	Han Zheng
					Deng Yingchao	Liao Chengzhi								
					Wang Zhen									
					Peng Zhen									

Bold text marks Politburo members purged while incumbent

Table 4.2: Purge campaigns aimed at Party members in China

Time	Campaign name	Number of victims	Notable target(s)	Leader in charge	Sources
1930–1931	Anti-Bolshevik League incident	2,000–4,400 Red Army soldiers arrested	Li Lisan's followers	Mao Zedong (as leader of Jiangxi Soviet)	(2), (7), (9)
1941–1945	Yan'an Rectification Campaign	10,000 deaths; 40,000 cadres expelled	Wang Ming 28 Bolsheviks	Mao Zedong	(1)
1950–1953	Three Anti Campaign	173,000 cadres faced disciplinary punishment 105,000 faced criminal punishment (including non-Party bureaucrats)		Mao Zedong	(9)
1951–1954	Party Rectification	3–5% Party membership expelled 5–7% forced to resign		Mao Zedong	(9)
1955–1956	Sufan Campaign	81,000 arrests		Mao Zedong	(4)
1957	Party Rectification	300,000 Party and State officials dismissed		Mao Zedong	(6)
1957–1959	Anti-Rightist Movement	Hundreds of thousands prosecuted	Zhu Rongji Peng Dehuai Zhang Bojun Luo Longji Zhang Naiqi	Mao Zedong	(4)
1961	Reeducation of Party Members			Mao Zedong	
1963–1966	Socialist Education Movement			Mao Zedong	
1964	Party Rectification			Mao Zedong	
1966–1976	Cultural Revolution	730,000–2 million persecuted 35,000–1.5 million died	Liu Shaoqi Deng Xiaoping Bo Yibo Chen Yun	Mao Zedong	(8)
1969	Party Rectification			Mao Zedong	
1973–1975	Criticize Lin, Criticize Confucius		Zhou Enlai Hua Guofeng	Mao Zedong	
1975–1977	Criticize Deng, Counterattack the Right-Deviationist Reversal-of-Verdicts Trend		Deng Xiaoping	Mao Zedong, Hua Guofeng	
1976	Smash the Gang of Four		The Gang of Four	Hua Guofeng	
1983–1987	Party Rectification			Deng Xiaoping	
1983–1984	Anti-Spiritual-Pollution Campaign			Deng Xiaoping	
1986–1992	Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization		Hu Yaobang	Deng Xiaoping	
1998–2000	"Three Stresses" party rectification			Jiang Zemin	
2005	Campaign to Maintain the Advanced Nature of Communist Party Members			Hu Jintao	
2012–present	Anti-corruption campaign	1 million Party members investigated	Zhou Yongkang Ling Jihua Guo Boxiong Xu Caihou Sun Zhengcai	Xi Jinping	(3)

Source: (1) Kucha and Llewellyn (2016); (2) Carter (1979); (3) China File (2016) (4) Courtois et al. (1999); (5) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals (2006); (6) Saba (1968, chap 11); (7) Schram (1966); (8) Sterba (1981); (9) Teiwes (2016a)

Table 4.3: CCP Politburo and Central Committee Members Arrested, 1989-2012

Name	Arrest Year	Eventual Sentence
Chen Xitong	1995	16 years in jail
Xu Yunhong	1999	10 years in jail
Xu Penghang	2000	death sentence with reprieve
Shi Zhaobin	2001	13 years in jail
Wang Xuebing	2002	15 years in jail
Gao Yan	2003	fled China
Liu Fangren	2003	life imprisonment
Li Jiating	2003	expelled from Party
Tian Fengshan	2003	life imprisonment
Cheng Weigao	2003	expelled from Party
Zhang Guoguang	2004	expelled, don't know if charged
Han Guizhi	2004	death sentence with reprieve
Chen Liangyu	2006	18 years in jail
Wang Wulong	2006	expelled from CCP
Du Shicheng	2007	life imprisonment
Yu Youjun	2008	2 years Party membership probation
Sun Shuyi	2009	don't know
Chen Shaoji	2009	death sentence with reprieve
Huang Yao	2010	expelled from CCP
Kang Rixin	2010	expelled from CCP
Bo Xilai	2012	life imprisonment
Li Chuncheng	2012	13 years in jail
Liu Zhijun	2012	death sentence with reprieve

Table 4.4: Full list of disciplined Politburo members in the VCP

Name	Positions held when disciplined	Disciplinary action	Year disciplined
Hoang Van Hoan	Vice chairman of National Assembly	Death sentence *in absentia*	1979
Tran Xuan Bach	Head of VCP Propaganda Committee	Removed from Politburo and Central Committee	1990
Nguyen Ha Phan	Vice chairman of National Assembly Head of VCP Central Economic Committee	Removed from all party and government positions	1996
Truong Tan Sang	Head of VCP Central Economic Committee	Reprimanded	2002
Dinh La Thang	Party Secretary of HCM City	Expelled from Party 13 years in jail	2017
Hoang Trung Hai	Party Secretary of Hanoi	Warned	2019

the banner of the reform. What followed, then, was also a winding down of violent elite purge. Deng himself purged two of his right-hand men, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. However, these purges were much milder in comparison to the previous purges. Hu was forced to resign as CCP General Secretary in 1987, but was allowed to retain his seat in the Politburo. The case of Zhao Ziyang was more complicated. Zhao's downfall came together with the CCP leadership's decision to impose martial law in response to the 1989 Tiananmen protests. For his sympathy with the student protesters and refusal to order a military crackdown against them, Zhao was dismissed of all his positions and put under house arrest all the way until his death in 2004. However, Zhao was never formally expelled from the Communist Party, nor did he receive any formal indictment. Alongside Zhao, Hu Qili, who abstained from voting for the martial law, was also removed from the Politburo Standing Committee. Other than these three figures, no other Politburo member was purged. There was also no major, wide-spreading rectification campaign against lower-ranked Party elites in this period, except for an anti-corruption campaign orchestrated by Hu in 1986 to target a number of children of the Party's conservative elders (Central Intelligence Agency 1987).

The relative lull in purge frequency and violence continued for a while under Jiang Zemin, but as factional politics returned to its geographical roots, it soon faded away. In 1995, Jiang Zemin and his allies launched an attack against Chen Xitong, then the Mayor of Beijing and member of the Politburo. The attack resulted in a 16-year jail sentence for Chen, as well his son Chen Xiaotong (Independent 1998). Under Jiang Zemin's successor, Hu Jintao, two violent purges against key Politburo members also occurred: one of Chen Liangyu, Party Secretary of Shanghai, in 2006, and one of Bo Xilai, Party Secretary of Chongqing, in 2012. Chen was expelled from the CCP and sentenced to 18 year in jail, while Bo received a life imprisonment. Finally, the turn toward violence picked up the pace under Xi Jinping, when he announced his anti-corruption campaign in 2012. The campaign represented one of the largest to date, and have by 2018 punished close to 2.5 million Party cadres (Yiwei 2020). Among the elites, it had targeted at least three former Politburo

members: Zhou Yongkang, Minister of Public Security from 2002 and 2007; and Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, Vice-Chairmen of the Central Military Commission in from 2005 to 2013.

Similar to China, in Vietnam, purges also followed the rise and fall of background sorting. The deadliest purge in the VCP's history, the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair, took place in 1967, just during the high point of North-South factional division. When this geographic cleavage subsided, beginning with the decimation of the Southern ranks following the Tet Offensive in 1968 and sealed by the takeover of all leadership positions by the Northern elites in the postwar unified government in 1976, intra-elite violence among elites also calmed down in the CCP. During the 1970s, the only remarkable episode of elite power struggle was a small and relatively peaceful purge of pro-Chinese cadres, a consequence of rising tension between the CCP and the VCP. In 1976, Hoang Van Hoan, the VCP's ambassador to China, was quietly removed from the Politburo. This removal did not come with any formal sanction: Only later in 1979, when Hoan defected to China, did the Vietnamese leadership sentence him to death *in absentia*. Besides Hoan, the purge involved two individuals in the leadership body, none of whom suffered any serious punishment. One of them, Tran Quoc Hoan—Minister of Internal Affairs[22] since 1952 and Politburo member since 1960—was forced into early retirement in early 1981. The other was Xuan Thuy, Vice-chair of Council of State and previously Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1963-1965: He received a demotion in 1982 and had to step down from most government positions (Szalontai 2010).

This wave of disciplinary actions would be the last in Vietnam, at least until the present time. Through the 90s, 2000s, and 2010s, the VCP only witnessed sporadic removals of individual high-ranking cadres. 30 years since 1986, the date of the 6th VCP National Congress and the start of *Doi Moi*, only three Politburo members have been removed from power. They were (1) Tran Xuan Bach, Politburo member since 1982, who were removed from both the Politburo and the Central Committee for "propagating pluralist ideas" in 1986, (2) Nguyen Ha Phan, Politburo member since 1993 and Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress since 1992, who were expelled from the VCP in 1996 after accusations of

his confessions while imprisoned by South Vietnam's government came to surface; and (3) Dinh La Thang, Politburo member and Ho Chi Minh City's Party Secretary since 2016, was removed from the Politburo in 2017 and subsequently prosecuted for his role in the economic mismanagement of the state-owned Vietnam Oil and Gas Group which he headed from 2005 to 2011. With the exception of Dinh La Thang, none of these removals were part of a large scale purge.

4.3.3 Use of ascriptive labels during purges

Whereas the cross-national variation in purge across China and Vietnam, and the over-time variation within each regime suggest a strong relationship between political purge and factional sorting, a closer look at individual purges reveal the causal dynamics that lead factional sorting to manifest in purge. During purges, political actors rely on the dominant ascriptive labels of the time to identify their targets and track down their potential associates. In addition, the labels are also used to rally allies. These strategic uses of ascriptive labels are reflected both in the profiles of individuals involved in the purges, both on the attacking and defending side, as well as in the discourse used by these actors.

Here, I focus on two significant purges in the VCP and the CCP: The Anti-Party Revisionist Affair in Vietnam and the Gao-Rao Anti-Party Alliance in China. Both purges are chosen due to the wealth of documentation available on them. This allows one to examine in detail the actions of key decision makers. Furthermore, the targets of these purges are also well documented, which enables a complete analysis of their profiles. More importantly, these represent two two modal cases of high factional sorting. Priors to both purges, the ascriptive labels that divided the VCP and CCP were very salient. In Vietnam, conflicts of interest over the strategy of the Second Indochina War as well as the creation of an extensive communist political-military apparatus in the Republic of Vietnam-controlled South have led to a sharp cleavage between a faction of Northern and one of Southern VCP cadres. The two Northern and Southern factions were further divided by an ever-growing divergence

in interest. Whereas the Northerners, who lived in the relative safety of North Vietnam, prioritized rebuilding the North and preferred to achieve national unification through a political struggle, the Southerners, who suffered from anti-communist repression and dreaded the ever-increasing stability of the South Vietnamese government, supported a military escalation to liberate the South. In China, the swift end to the Chinese Civil War had kept not only the revolutionary-era base areas but also, in many instances, expanded their influence by giving them administrative controls of the areas they conquered. Furthermore, the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 also, for the first time since the Chinese Civil War, brought underground and above-ground cadres to the same table where they competed for political influence. In more than one occasions, these divisions had come out in the open and sparked intense internal conflicts between feuding factions.

In both purges, I expect to see political elites approach and strike an alliance with those they share the same labels in preparation for a purge, while disregarding possible allies to whom they are not ascriptively tied. Furthermore, once the purge is in motion, I expect that the purge initiators would attack those who are on the same side of the geographic cleavage with their elite target, while disregarding possible officials to whom the elite target is not ascriptively tied.

4.3.3.1 *The VCP's Revisionist Anti-Party Affair*

The Revisionist Anti-Party Affair took place in 1967, at a crucial juncture of the VCP's grand strategy in the Second Indochina War. The debate between the "North-firsters" and the Southern militants had appeared to end by 1963 with the Southern faction gaining the upper hand. At the Ninth Plenum of the 3rd Central Committee, the VCP adopted Resolution 9, declaring the total mobilization of the population for a "General Offensive and General Uprising" against the South Vietnam government and its United States ally. Yet, even though the Southern faction had won the policy debate, the conflict between it and the Northern faction was far from over. At the moment of Resolution 9's adoption, nearly half of

the Politburo was still in favor of "peaceful coexistence" with South Vietnam (Nguyen 2006, p. 17); and after the adoption, many members of the Central Committee such as Hoang Minh Chinh, Chair of the Party's Institute of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy and Ung Van Khiem, Minister of Internal Affairs, continued to voice dissent against the Southern faction's strategy.

The Southerners' plan to unite the country through military means culminated in the General Offensive and Uprising of Tet Mau Than, or Tet Offensive, scheduled for the Lunar New Year's Eve of 1968. As Le Duan and other Southern leaders readied their forces for their great gamble in the South, they also moved swiftly to silence their domestic opponents in the North. In 1967, while Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap were both away—Ho in Beijing and Giap in Hungary for medical treatment—Minister of Public Security Tran Quoc Hoan's security police were sent out to arrest more than 300 individuals (Quinn-Judge 2005). The non-elites among those arrested hailed from several backgrounds, from journalists and editors of the Party's journal *Hoc Tap* and the military's newspaper *Quan doi nhan dan* to "yellow" musicians and writers. Those higher up in the Party ranks belonged to two well-defined clusters. The first cluster consisted of individuals with direct professional relationship with Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap. These included Dang Kim Giang and Le Lien, two of Vo Nguyen Giap's aides; Do Duc Kien, Giap's direct subordinate in the General Staff; as well as Ho Chi Minh's former secretary Vu Dinh Huynh and his son Vu Thu Hien. The second cluster included people who had past and present connections to the Soviet Union (Stowe 2001, pp. 60-61). Most if not all of the arrested were Northerners.

That Le Duan and his Southerner allies chose to silence objection to their policy by attacking targets who shared backgrounds rather than policy preferences with their opposition revealed their understanding of factional association in the VCP. They were aware that support for Ho Chi Minh and Giap did not necessarily come from like-minded individuals in the Party. Instead, their power base, much like Le Duan's himself, came from those who shared origins and experience with them. At the same time, the Southern faction's

choice of targets also illustrated that shared backgrounds, while being the main mode of factional recruitment, had to work within limits. Ultimately, it was the salient cleavages of the day—in this case, the North-South cleavage—that determined the boundary of factions. Even Northerners who shared experiences or common backgrounds with the Southern leaders themselves were not spared from the purge: Vu Dinh Huynh and Dang Kim Giang actually spent the first months of 1940 as inmates with Le Duc Tho (Phan 2017).

4.3.3.2 *The CCP's Gao-Rao Anti-Party Alliance*

Similar to the VCP's Anti-Party Revisionist Affair, the Gao-Rao Affair was an example of how salient cleavages informed the target of purges. The Affair began when Gao Gang, then head of the CCP Northeast Bureau, was promoted to Beijing in 1952 to head the State Planning Commission (SPC). the chief body responsible for organizing China's first Five Year Plan. With this increase in authority, and under the impression that he had Mao's backing (Huang 2000, p. 173), Gao began to challenge the leadership positions of Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, who by then held the titles of Chairman of the Central Advisory Commission and Premier, respectively. The challenge started with Gao's taking advantage of Bo Yibo, Vice-Chairman of Liu's Central Advisory Commission and author of the controversial revision to the CCP's tax law published on December 31, 1952. Building upon the public sector's objection to the law and Mao's personal objection to the law's implementation without his approval, Gao directed a series of public criticisms toward Bo, coupled with veiled attacks against his superior (Huang 2000, p. 173). Then, joining forces with Rao Shushi, chair of the CCP's Organization Department, Gao actively approached several senior Party elites under the table to rally their support for his proposal to remove Liu from his position.

What Gao and Rao's activities demonstrated is the central role that salient cleavages played in faction building and factional competition. To begin with, it was thanks to the existence of salient divisions between the base areas that Gao was able to identify the target

of his initial attack. The strategy of "criticizing Bo to shoot at Liu, denouncing An [Ziwen] to attack Liu" (*pi Bo she Liu, tao An fa Liu*) (Zhao 2013) was made possible because of the common backgrounds that linked Bo Yibo with Liu's faction. Like Liu, Bo was a white-area CCP cadre; in fact, he worked under Liu while the latter was the Party Secretary of North China between 1936 and 1939. Gao, on the other hand, rose to eminence in the northwest Shaanxi guerrilla base far from Liu and Bo until his promotion to Politburo in 1945. When Mao held Bo Yibo responsible for the tax law blunders, Gao was thus able to infer, quite accurately in fact, that Liu's faction was temporarily falling out of Mao's grace (Huang 2000). In addition, salient cleavages in the CCP also aided Gao Gang in his search for allies. During the struggle against Liu Shaoqi, Gao and Rao Shushi not only emphasized the distinction between red-area and white-area cadres through their "theory of the army's party" rhetorics, but they also actively lobbied along this division as well. All the elites he approached—Peng Dehuai, Lin Biao, Luo Ronghuan, Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping among others—were mountaintop leaders in CCP-controlled areas (Huang 2000); in contrast, white-area elites were sidestepped, even though throughout the events surrounding Bo Yibo's error, none of them displayed overt support for Liu and his subordinate. In doing this, Gao was evidently confident that the people he approached would be amiable to his cause; at the very least, they would not turn against him to support Liu.

Gao's assessment was mostly correct. While all elites whom Gao approach all claimed to have rejected Gao's advances in the aftermath of the incident, it was clear that none of them immediately rebuffed his advance, nor did they turn to alert Liu of Gao and Rao's secret plot against him. It was only in late 1953 that Mao himself caught winds of Gao's secret activities, after words got to him from Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping.[23] Gao and Rao's fall followed swiftly. In a Politburo meeting on December 24, 1953, Mao confronted Gao, charging that "there are two headquarters in Beijing", one of which "stirred up a sinister wind and lit up a sinister fire" (Teiwes 2016a). Then, during the Fourth Plenum of the 7th Central Committee in February 1954, under Mao's instructions, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai

fired salvoes after salvoes at Gao and Rao, accusing of "establishing independent kingdoms" among other charges (Huang 2000; Teiwes 2016b). Refused an audience with Mao to explain himself, Gao committed suicide on August 17 and was posthumously expelled from the Party. Rao was also expelled and put in jail until 1965.

The cleanup of the Gao-Rao affair once again demonstrated the role of factional sorting in shaping purge outcomes. This time, it was Mao, Liu and Zhou who followed the trail of Gao Gang's backgrounds to locate his supporters. Notably, they did not spend much effort in pursuing the under-the-table ties between Gao and the elites: Peng Dehuai and Lin Biao were quickly absolved of any involvement, even though it was known that Gao approached both of them directly (Teiwes 2016b, p.113). Instead, the investigators focused their punishment mostly on cadres with work experience in the Northeast, where Gao and Rao had primarily operated (Teiwes 2016b, p.132). In fact, other than these connections, there were little signs that they actively conspired with Gao and Rao in the affair, especially considering their relatively junior status. That these cadres were relatively junior were considered striking by some (Teiwes 2016b, p. 130), but this was hardly surprise when one considers the logic of political purge earlier laid out. These cadres, due to their status and exclusive experience in the Northeast, displayed not only potential membership in Gao and Rao's faction, but also the lack of protection by any other elite. Hence, they became easy targets for the purge.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provide game theoretic models to demonstrate the causal link between factional sorting and purge outbreak, and back them up with empirical evidence from historical purges in Vietnam and China. Variations in the modes of factional sorting are not cosmetic differences; quite the contrary, they have real consequences on elite political outcomes. The primary causal mechanism here is through the transparency of factional

membership. Where factions sort along ascriptive ties, membership becomes transparent; where factions sort along elective ties, membership becomes opaque. Factional membership transperency in turn influences the strategic calculation of both would-be purge initiators and purge targets. As uncertainty over individual's factional membership increases, political elites become more reluctant to risk initiating a purge, and instead will rely more on cooptation to increase their power in the regime. In contrast, when factional membership can be observed with high certainty, elites have easy access to information that can help them rally allies and identify enemies, and can thus launch purges with less fear of backlash. No wonder, then, that in both Vietnam and China, purges occur during periods where background sorting is the norm. No wonder, too, that even when factional conflicts were ostensibly about policies, purges still targeted individuals along ascriptive, and not elective cleavages.

It should be reminded, once again, that the mode of factional sorting is not the only determinant of purge outbreak. The two purges highlighted in this chapter, the Anti-Party Revisionist Affair in the VCP and the Gao-Rao Anti-Party Alliance Affair in the CCP, both required special conditions to materialize before they could manifest in full force. Timing mattered; resources mattered; moments of opportunities mattered; and balance of power too mattered. Nevertheless, it was factional sorting that allowed—or disallowed—political actors to identify and respond to these conditions when they present themselves.

Chapter 5

Factional Sorting and Selective Protection

To stay in power, a dictator has to ward off a dual threat: the threat of mass revolt and the threat of elite coup (Blaydes 2010; Svolik 2012). The former threat requires them to credibly threaten sanction against agents who attempt to appropriate public goods. In doing so, however, the dictator gives up a key defense strategy against elite coups, namely the provision of rent-seeking opportunities to allies in exchange for loyalty (Wintrobe 1998; Bueno De Mesquita 2003). This trade-off between punishing and protecting rent-seekers is the dictator's sanction dilemma.

The existing literature argues that the dictator ultimately has to make do with the lesser evil—namely, risking either public or elite dissent by protecting or sanctioning their agents, respectively (Hollyer and Wantchekon 2014). In this paper, I argue for an alternative strategy of selective protection. Under this strategy, the dictator limits protection to a subset of the regime's agents who are allied with the dictator while targeting the rest of the bureaucracy with anti-corruption activity. Factional clarity, the extent to which membership in the dictator's faction can be accurately identified by elites as well as rank-and-file enforcers of anti-corruption activities, then determines the type of protection that is selec-

tively provided. Where factional clarity is high, the dictator engages in higher cost, higher reward *ex post* protection; where factional clarity is lower, the regime relies more on less risky but less rewarding *ex ante* protection.

The paper provides supporting evidence for the theory of selective protection with a comparative analysis of political sanctions in the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist Party (CCP and VCP). The two parties share similar political institutions, socioeconomic conditions, levels and forms of corruption, as well as an underlying cultural emphasis on informal ties as building blocks of patron-client relationships. However, on top of these, elite politics in Vietnam and China diverges in terms of factional clarity. Due to unique experiences with external military threats during the two regimes' founding era, elite factions in the CCP solidified around concrete and highly visible geographic ties, whereas Vietnam's factions are more flexible and opaque (Trinh 2020). This leads factional membership in contemporary China to be much more transparent in comparison to its Vietnam counterpart.

By running a series of panel fixed-effects regressions on a recent dataset on anti-corruption investigations in China and an original dataset of disciplinary activities conducted by the VCP's and CCP's Central Committees for Discipline Inspection, I find a divergence in investigation outcomes across the two regimes. In China, disciplinary investigations show evidence of *ex post* but not *ex ante* sanction. Investigations are no less likely to take place in provinces whose party secretaries have shared hometown, workplace, and education ties with the incumbent CCP General Secretary than in provinces without such ties; however, once they occurred, investigations in provinces with perceived factional affiliation are more drawn out and result in more lenient sanctions compared to their counterparts in provinces without informal ties. In contrast, I observe *ex ante* but not *ex post* sanction in Vietnam. Sanctions are less likely to occur in provinces with ties to the incumbent VCP General Secretary than in provinces without; yet once an investigation has taken place, shared ties no longer explain variations in political sanction outcomes. All of these results remain statistically and substantively significant after controlling for provincial-level variations in economic

performance, governance capacity and perceived corruption; individual-level variations in investigated officials' characteristics; and investigation-level variations such as case seriousness or authority of investigation agency.

5.1 Selective protection solves the sanction dilemma

Dictators cannot rule alone (Bueno De Mesquita 2003). Just like in a democracy, the dictator delegates power to a bureaucracy who implements policy and provides public goods to citizens on their behalf (Rauch and Evans 2000; Egorov and Sonin 2011). Delegation of power is a risky business, as it exposes the dictator to various forms of agency loss (Strøm, Müller, and Bergman 2006). Bureaucrats can seek private rents by diverting some of the public goods intended for the citizens into their own pocket (Shleifer and Vishny 1993). In itself, corruption can erode a regime's legitimacy as well as citizens' trust in the government. Furthermore, rent-seeking activities undermine a dictator's ability to placate the citizens, who, even without the power of the votes, can still punish them through mass protests (Wintrobe 1998; Acemoglu and Robinson 2005; Desai, Olofsgård, and Yousef 2009). Sun (1991) argues for example that the Tiananmen protest in 1989, the most serious threat to the CCP's survival since the founding of the People's Republic, has corruption as its "most salient and explosive" underlying cause. It is therefore in the dictator's interest to implement sanction mechanisms to hold their bureaucrats accountable.

At the same time, the dictator has many reasons to *not* clamp down too harshly on corruption. To begin with, an autocrat might prefer to keep some rent-seeking opportunities available to attract and retain capable bureaucrats. Oftentimes, they are cheaper for the autocrat to provide than wage incentives (Hollyer and Wantchekon 2014). Second, fighting corruption might divert resources from activities that are also crucial to a regime's survival such as censorship or repression. Third, the dictator might be interested in seeking rents himself, and is therefore unwilling to implement policing mechanisms that would tie their

own hands. Most importantly, manipulating access to corrupt rents is a key component of the dictator's survival strategy. Dictators, who need the support of a regime's elites to stay in power, often promise their supporters with private goods in exchange for their loyalty (Wintrobe 1998). Because strong anti-corruption institutions limit the availability of these very goods, they make the dictator's promise less credible and could prompt the regime's elites to withhold their loyalty. In the worst case scenario, they might be encouraged to collude with a challenger to overthrow the dictator (Egorov and Sonin 2011; Boix and Svolik 2013). In fact, Svolik (2009) estimates that of all 316 autocratic rulers who lost power through non-constitutional means between 1945 and 2002, only 68 were related to mass protest; 205 were ousted by insiders.

The need to simultaneously limit and allow rent-seeking activities presents the dictator with a sanction dilemma. A number of studies frame the solution to this dilemma as a binary choice between sanction and no sanction and focus on the conditions that lead a dictator to prefer one option to the other. Hollyer and Wantchekon (2014) argue that the decision to set up credible anti-corruption institutions depends on a regime's ideological base. Credible sanctions take away an incentive with which the regime entices individuals to enter bureaucratic careers. However, when the regime's pool of bureaucratic recruits consists of a small but ideologically zealous minority and an apathetic or hostile majority, the autocratic leader can call on these zealots to fill in the ranks. In other words, zealots enable the dictator to retain loyal supporters while committing to fighting corruption. In a separate argument, studies on independent anti-corruption commissions, notably in Hong Kong and Singapore, point to the necessity of credible sanctions in the face of pervasive corruption (Lethbridge 1985; Quah 1995; Heilbrunn 2004; Manion 2009; Speville 2010). Where corruption generates so much public discontent, and where conditions restrict the use of repression or other tactics against mass protest, the regime has no choice but to tie its own hands and enact credible anti-corruption mechanisms.

But what happens in regimes where these conditions are not satisfied, or where, for

any other reason, the dictator finds it too costly to credibly sanction all anti-corruption activities? In this paper, I argue that between two extremes—a wholly credible anti-corruption regime and a wholly non-credible anti-corruption regime—an autocratic leader also has access to another strategy. This strategy, defined here as *selective protection*, entails a divide-and-conquer approach: The dictator initiates an anti-corruption activity that targets the majority of regime bureaucrats, while simultaneously shielding a smaller subset from the same activity's repercussions. This smaller subset ideally includes the entirety of dictator's faction, which consists of both their elite allies and their followers. Selective protection is possible because the dictators do not need the support of all of the regime elites to survive. Rather, they only need to be backed by a winning coalition (Bueno De Mesquita 2003, 2012). So long as a dictator's faction can provide him with this winning coalition, the dictator can crack down on rent-seeking activities committed by factionally unaffiliated elites with little fear of an elite coup.

Selective protection, at least in the immediate term, is a lower cost alternative to a wholly credible anti-corruption regime. The cost can be further decreased by choosing short term anti-corruption activities such as an anti-corruption campaign as opposed to more comprehensive institutional reforms (Wedeman 2005; Manion 2009). More importantly, selective protection allows a dictator to communicate the intended target and extent of their anti-corruption activity to their faction as a whole. This is particularly important because the dictator's supporters might interpret anti-corruption measures, especially those that involve removing a significant number of regime bureaucrats, as serving other ulterior motives such as purging the dictator's winning coalition to shrink its size (Bueno De Mesquita and Smith 2015). To make matters worse, both the dictator and their supporters know that the former has an incentive to hide their true motives from the latter when launching a purge—for instance, to prevent its intended targets from engaging in preemptive countermeasures (Svolik 2012).

5.1.1 Factional clarity determines the method of selective protection

In practice, it is difficult for anti-corruption activities to perfectly discriminate between a dictator's faction and non-faction members. Unlike a democracy, political support in an authoritarian regime does not come with transparent party labels, and there are few opportunities for political actors to reveal and acquire information about political loyalty (Cox and Rosenbluth 1996). Political actors under authoritarian regimes also have the incentive to conceal or lie about their factional affiliation (Wintrobe 1998). Furthermore, even if a dictator possesses perfect knowledge about their faction, the same cannot be said of rank-and-file investigators, judges, and other enforcers of the anti-corruption activity, nor of the dictator's factional followers themselves, who often have no connection to one another except indirectly through the dictator (Nathan 1973; Nathan and Tsai 1995). In fact, studies of intra-party factions across both democratic and authoritarian contexts show a wide variation across regimes and political parties, in which some parties exhibit very well-defined factions e.g. Japan's Liberal Democratic Party prior to 1994 electoral reform versus pre-Thaksin Thailand (Cox, McCall Rosenbluth, and Thies 1999; Chambers and Waitoolkiat 2020). All in all, due to this uncertainty, selective protection is prone to both Type-I and Type-II error—in other words, protecting some unallied officials while leaving some allies vulnerable to persecution.

Here, I argue that the presence of uncertainty over factional affiliation does not invalidate the overall strategy of selective protection. However, it influences the methods through which a dictator provides protection. Specifically, the dictator can choose either of two methods. First, they can turn a blind eye when an official they protects engages in rent-seeking, or purposefully obstruct an investigation before it begins. This is a form of *ex ante* selective protection. Alternatively, the dictator can let the official's rent-seeking behavior be discovered, but subsequently interfere in the investigation to rescue the official

from further trouble. This is a form of *ex post* selective protection.

Ex ante and *ex post* protection differ in cost. Of the two, *ex post* protection is the costlier option, since it requires the dictator to build up investigation capacity to detect corruption among both non-faction and co-faction subsets of the bureaucracy. In addition, because the dictator interferes in a publicized investigation that the mass can observe in *ex post* protection, they runs a higher risk of incurring unrest than when relying on *ex ante* protection. In exchange, *ex post* protection communicates an unequivocal message about the dictator's intention to protect to its beneficiaries. In contrast, because an official who is protected *ex ante* is observationally equivalent from one who does not seek rents, or one whose rent-seeking activity has not been detected, *ex ante* protection may go unnoticed by its beneficiaries as well as by fellow co-faction members. Officials who have not yet been investigated will continue to live in fear, and will remain suspicious of the dictator's intention.

Because of the high-cost, high-reward nature of *ex post* protection compared to *ex ante* protection, holding everything else equal, *ex post* protection becomes more widely used when membership in a dictator's faction can be clearly identified not only by the dictator himself, but also by rank-and-file political actors. Under this condition, a regime is said to have high factional clarity. High factional clarity prevents lower level anti-corruption enforcers from wasting resources on protecting officials who are not factionally affiliated to the dictator. In contrast, as membership in the dictator's faction becomes less clear, the dictator also relies more on *ex ante* protection. While e*x ante* protection does not communicate the dictator's intention to protect as effectively as does *es post* protection at individual level, it is less costly and less vulnerable to waste, while still allowing the dictator to demonstrate their commitment to selective protection at regime level.

5.2 Selective protection in Vietnam and China

The crux of the paper's argument is that among regimes that employ selective protection, different levels of factional clarity will engender different forms of protection. As the factional clarity increases, a regime relies less on *ex ante* protection and more on higher-cost, higher-reward *ex post* protection.

To test this argument, I bring in a comparison of disciplinary investigations in contemporary Vietnam and China. The two regimes, with their similarities in history as well as in current political and economic institutions, offer an excellent most-similar-case comparison. Historically, both the VCP and the CCP were founded in the early 1920s and rose to power through a series of revolutionary wars, the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War in China and the two Indochina Wars in Vietnam. Both regimes experienced economic stagnation under central-planned economies before embarking on marketization reforms in the 1970s and 1980s. The two reforms followed a similar formula that involved, sequentially, the dismantling of agricultural collectives and state-owned enterprises, the acceptance of private enterprises, and a move toward an export-oriented economy (Kerkvliet, Chan, and Unger 1998).

In Vietnam as much as in China, economic liberalization took place without significant political reforms. The VCP and CCP's political institutions today follow the same principles of democratic centralism, where every five year, a National Party Congress elects a Central Committee who in turn elects its members into the Politburo (VCP) and Politburo Standing Committee (CCP). Members of these bodies assume the most important positions in the government. The highest-ranking member and *de facto* regime leader, the General Party Secretary, controls the military through their concurrent seat as Secretary of the Central Military Commission. Down below, the Parties control all governmental organs through embedded Party cells. Both government and Party apparatuses are organized in a quasi-federal arrangement (Lieberthal, Lampton, et al. 1992).

Table 5.1: Vietnam and China in indices

	China	Vietnam
2018 Freedom in the World	14	20
(0 = least free, 100 = most free)	(Not free)	(Not free)
2018 World Press Freedom Index	74.93	78.92
(0 = most free, 100 = least free)	(rank 176/180)	(rank 177/180)
2018 Corruption Perceptions Index	39	33
(0 = most corrupt, 100=least corrupt)	(rank 87/198)	(rank 117/198)

Vietnam and China are even more comparable in that both regimes are undergoing a period of intense anti-corruption efforts. China's ongoing anti-corruption campaign began in November 2012, when the incumbent CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping vowed to "kill all tigers and flies alike" in their inauguration speech (Branigan 2013). Subsequently, the campaign has netted around 172,000 in 2013, 330,000 in 2015, and 527,000 individuals in 2017 (Wang, Zou, and Wing 2014; Wang 2016; Xinhua 2018) Similarly, in 2016 the incumbent VCP General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong also warned corrupt officials of an "anti-corruption oven" that "would burn even wet firewood" (Vietnamnet 2018). By 2018, Vietnam has disciplined more than 35,000 Party cadres and arrested several high-ranking officials, including an incumbent Politburo member, two provincial Party Secretaries, one deputy minister, and several military commanders (Nguoilambao 2018; Vietnamnet 2018). At the same time, both campaigns have been criticized as veiled excuses for political infighting (Thayer 2017a; Zhu and Zhang 2017).

When it comes to factional politics, Vietnam and China also bear strong similarities. The CCP and VCP's party guidelines prohibited factionalist behaviors (*chia be ket phai* in Vietnamese, or *tuanpai* in Chinese); yet in both regimes, factions operate as "networks of reciprocal patron-client relationships" in which faction leaders provide protection, rents, and promotion opportunities to subordinates in exchange for support and loyalty (Shih 2008a). The networks themselves do not come with official labels of membership; however, in both

regimes, political actors, expert observers, and the public have been able to rely on social ties between individuals to infer the presence of patron-client relationships between them. Indeed, empirical evidence points to an imperfect but strong link nevertheless between social ties, most specifically kinship ties as well as the "three common's"—common hometown origin *(dong huong* or *tongxiang*), common school (*dong hoc* or *tongxue*) and common workplace (*dong nghiep* or *tongye*)—and patron-client exchanges in both private and public sector (Bian 1997; Appold and Dinh 2001; Larsen, Rand, and Torm 2011; Ang and Jia 2014).

The usefulness of social ties in Vietnam and China as signals of political connections is traceable to underlying cultural institutions that span across both countries, such as Confucianism (McHale 2008) and strong village traditions (Little 1989; Dell, Lane, and Querubin 2018). In addition to this cultural salience, however, the same social ties have another layer of political salience in the Chinese context, making them an even better indicator of factional membership. This political salience has roots in the historical developments of factionalism in the two Parties, which led contemporary Chinese factions to form dominantly around ascriptive geographic and professional ties and factions in the VCP to revolve more around elective policy ties (Trinh 2020). Notably, the divergence was exogenous to the two Parties' early origins. In fact, the very first factions in both China and Vietnam took on a geographical character. While the Communist movement in Vietnam during the late 1920s was split into two regional Communist Parties in the North and the South (Huynh 1986), the first factional conflict in China in 1922 was fought between a group of Soviet-trained cadres and another of home-grown cadres that included Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, two of the CCP's founding members (Saich and Yang 1996).

Factions, when defined by geographical origins, have very high clarity. A Party cadre's affiliation can be easily inferred by other cadres not only through their biographic record, but also visual traits, accent, or even their own name. However, high factional clarity persisted only in China and not Vietnam. Following the struggle between native cadres and Soviet-trained associates was an era of revolutionary "mountaintops," during which military

offensives by the Kuomintang and the Japanese separated the CCP into geographically isolated base areas all across China. These mountaintops then evolved into semi-independent military-administrative apparatuses by the end of the Chinese Civil War, preserving the clarity of factional membership. In contrast, the North-South division in the VCP was short-lived, owing to the repeated destruction of the Southern communist network following the Communist-backed Nghe-Tinh Soviet revolt in 1930-31 and the Cochinchina Uprising in 1940. The Southern faction would re-emerge during the Second Indochina War; however, it would again decimated by an exogenous threat, this time the joint US-South Vietnam military during the 1968 Tet Offensive. The Offensive's aftermath saw the immobilization of 40% of political cadres in the South. It also led to the takeover of the Southern Communist network by Northern cadres sent from Hanoi. The Northern takeover was completed by the end of the Vietnam War, when Southern elites were sidelined from Vietnam's unified government (Trinh 2020).

Due to this exogenous divergence, contemporary factions in the CCP continue to be distinguished by clear ascriptive backgrounds. Elites actively recruited from the places they worked and studied, forging patron-client relationships that can be reliably inferred based on the common affiliations (Meyer, Shih, and Lee 2016). In contrast, elite conflicts in Vietnam since the 1980s are dominated less by regionalism and more by opaque disagreements over ideology and policy, most notably along the reformist-versus-conservative and China-versus-US spectra (Vuving 2010; Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011; Thayer 2017b). The CCP and VCP today thus constitute cases of strong and moderate factional clarity, respectively.

5.2.1 The Central Commissions for Discipline Inspection

To examine whether Vietnam and China's divergence in factional clarity indeed leads to a corresponding divergence in selective protection methods, the paper presents a comparison of disciplinary activities conducted by the two regimes' Central Commissions for Discipline Inspection (CCDIs). In both Vietnam and China, the CCDIs are mandated to inspect

a wide range of violations among Party members and organs that include ideological infractions, violations of government policies, moral and lifestyle offenses, as well as other offenses already governed by the Criminal Codes (Wedeman 2004; Vietnam Communist Party 2017). The CCDIs are not the only relevant sanction institutions—bureaucrats in each regime are also subject to legal sanction by the judiciary branch, as well as by government inspectorate bodies such as the Government Inspectorate in Vietnam, and the Ministry of Supervision in China.[24] In practice, however, because the heads of executive and judiciary organs at almost every administrative level are required to be Communist Party members, and because of single-party dominance in both countries, the CCDIs' activities take precedence over the executive and judiciary sanctions.

Organizationally, each CCDI is divided into a central office and local Inspection Commissions (ICs) from province down to district (Vietnam) or county level (China). The central office is responsible for the supervision of central officials; local ICs, on the other hand, supervise and investigate Party members and Party cells that rank equal to or immediately below it . Whether at local or central level, however, the CCDIs cannot independently sanction cases that they investigate. When an IC in China discovers a disciplinary violation, it must secure approval from the locality's Party Committee before starting a formal investigation, and report on "the results of their handling of cases of special importance or complexity" afterwards (Communist Party of China 2012, chapter VIII, article 44).[25] Similarly, in Vietnam, an IC can issue only lesser sanctions (warnings and reprimands) against Party cadres in organs immediately below it. For major sanctions, or for sanctions against cadres and organs at the same administrative levels, it has to refer the case to the locality's Party Committee and its higher-level IC for final decision.

5.2.2 Central and local interference in political sanctions

The structure of Party control over the CCDIs in Vietnam and China leaves them exposed to political interference. At the top of the leadership chain, each Party's General Secretary, as first-among-equal in the Central Committee and the Politburo or Politburo Standing Committee, holds the power to protect Party officials suspected for violations in two ways. First, both Party guidelines have stipulations requiring the CCDI to seek the Politburo or Politburo Standing Committee's approval before initiating a formal investigation against members of the Central Committee.[26] Even after the conclusion of a formal investigation, the CCDIs still require further approval if the investigation leads to major sanctions against central-level cadres (Guo 2014; Vietnam Communist Party 2009, chapter VII, article 36).[27] These stipulations enable the regimes' highest leaders to collectively delay or even put an end to investigations that they deem undesirable. CCDI investigators, expecting possible intervention from the top, are also incentivized to propose minor sanctions even if a violation warrants a more serious punishment (Guo 2014). Second, the regime leaders exert indirect control of the CCDI through their authority over its personnel matters. In Vietnam and China, the CCDI head is required to be a member of the Politburo or Politburo Standing Committee respectively.

Below the Politburo, similar channels exist for local leaders to interfere in the activities of their jurisdiction's IC. During an investigation—which requires many steps, from preliminary review to case opening, evidence collection, case hearing, sanction implementation, and appeal (Guo 2014)—local Party Committee heads can create delays by withholding approvals, or modifying and vetoing sanctions. Local leaders also hold informal influence through the Party Committees' control over IC personnel. CCDI staff at all levels are rotated on a five-year basis, and many end up working in the same locality and/or with the same Party cadres they used to investigate. This creates a pressure for disciplinary inspectors to avoid "stirring the pot" and prioritize local Party cadres' goodwill over their responsibilities

(Guo 2014, p 611).

5.3 Empirical analysis

In this section, I combine CCDI disciplinary investigation data with original biographical data of VCP and CCP elites to examine how diverging forms of selective protection manifest in China and Vietnam. In line with the paper's argument, I hypothesize that there would be evidence of *ex post* selective protection under China's high factional clarity and of *ex ante* protection in Vietnam, where factional clarity is lower. Consistent with my expectation, I find that disciplinary sanctions in China are no less likely to take place in provinces whose party secretaries have informal ties to the incumbent General Party Secretary than in provinces without such ties; however, they take longer to conclude and result in more lenient punishments—an observation consistent with *ex post* protection. In contrast, Vietnamese provinces with ties to the incumbent VCP General Secretary have fewer sanctions than provinces without such ties; yet sanctions in these provinces are neither more nor less severe than sanctions elsewhere.

5.3.1 General approach

To detect the diverging manifestations of selective protection in Vietnam and China, I focus on the profiles of individuals targeted for investigations by the two CCDIs. While *ex ante* and *ex post* protection ultimately serves the same purpose, they take place at different stages of the disciplinary investigation process and influence these profiles in different ways. Because *ex ante* protection excludes officials from being investigated in the first place, beneficiaries of this strategy will not be listed among those investigated in the first place. On the other hand, *ex post* protection will manifest specifically *among those already investigated* in the form of more lenient sanctions. Thus, even when without access to the full population of officials who seek rents, we can examine the extent and target of these selective protec-

tion strategies by identifying, statistically, those who are underrepresented from the ranks of investigated officials, and those who are given abnormally lenient punishments.

My empirical analysis follows with an analysis of investigation targets in Vietnam, followed by another of the Chinese sample. I make two important assumptions about corruption investigation's data generation process. First, with regard to *ex ante* protection, I assume that the incidence of investigations across localities is a function of four inputs: Latent rent-seeking level, which determines how frequently disciplinary violations occur; latent anti-corruption effort, which determines how frequently such violations are detected; socioeconomic performance, which influence a range of mediators including rent-seeking incentives and disincentives as well as policing and governance capacity; and finally *ex ante* protection. Once the first three sources of confounds are controlled for, the remaining variations in the exposure rate of rent-seeking incidence are explainable only by variations in *ex ante* protection.

Second, I similarly assume that once investigated, an individual's sanction outcome is a function of four inputs: The nature of the violation itself; the locality's socioeconomic performance; individual characteristics, which affect personal political clout and subjective judgment of the individual's criminality (Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2006); and finally *ex post* intervention. Again, holding the first three inputs constant, the remaining variations in sanction outcomes reflect variations in *ex post* protection.

Given the difference between Vietnam and China in factional clarity, I propose the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is *ex ante* protection but not *ex post* protection in Vietnam
  - H1a: In Vietnam, holding everything else constant, there are fewer corruption investigations provinces with factional ties to the regime leader than in provinces without ties
  - H1b: In Vietnam, holding everything else constant, investigated officials in provinces

with factional ties to the regime leader receive no more lenient punishments than officials in provinces without ties

- H2: There is *ex post* protection but not *ex ante* protection in China
  - H2a: In China, holding everything else constant, there are no fewer corruption investigations provinces with factional ties to the regime leader than in provinces without ties
  - H2b: In China, holding everything else constant, investigated officials in provinces with factional ties to the regime leader receive more lenient punishments than officials in provinces without ties

5.3.2 Ex-ante protection under weak factional clarity: Vietnam analysis

5.3.2.1 Data

There is an emerging literature on disciplinary investigations in China and particularly on General Party Secretary Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign (Manion 2016; Lorentzen and Lu 2018). Yet, little research has been done on Vietnam—owing partly to the recency of its own anti-corruption campaign and partly to data unavailability. In this paper, I collect an original dataset of the Vietnamese CCDI's disciplinary activities by developing a web scraper to retrieve all official releases ever published on its website since it first went online in June 2016. The scraper yields 1428 official releases between June 2016 and October 2018, which report on various activities conducted by the central office as well as local ICs. To narrow down on political sanctions, I categorize these releases by type of activity. First, I and two research assistants select a sub-sample of 10% of the original dataset and manually classify each article into one or a combination of up to four content categories. Then, for each category, we identify a list of discriminatory words that are most associated with articles

within the category, and then use keyword search to categorize the rest of the dataset. An article is selected into a category if it contains at least one of the discriminatory words in the corresponding list. The categories, definition, lists of discriminatory words and number of classified articles are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Categorization rules for CCDI's public news releases

Categories	# of articles	Condition	Keywords
Sanction	477	Article reports on results of an investigation	*ky luat, khai tru, mien nhiem, khien trach, canh cao, kiem diem, khuyet diem, cach chuc, sai pham*
Inspection	702	Article reports on the commencement of an inspection, including routine inspections	*kiem tra, giam sat, lam viec voi, lam viec tai*
Meeting	308	Article reports on a press conference, a regular meeting, or a visit by foreign delegates	*giao ban, hoi thao, hoi nghi, so ket, tong ket, hop, dai hoi*
Training	87	Article reports on training activity conducted by or for CCDI staff	*tap huan, boi duong, dao tao*

This paper's analysis focuses on articles in the Sanction category. From these articles, I identify the locations in which all disciplinary violations took place. I also identify the names of 537 investigated Party members mentioned in these articles and collect information on their current position and workplace. I also identify the level of the IC that issued the sanction, the sanction issued, and details on their violations. From the dataset, I derive two key measures of political protection. The first measure, *Case Count,* is aggregated at province level, and captures the number of investigations that result in at least a sanction in a province at a given period. If, indeed, that *ex ante* selective protection takes place in Vietnam, the number of cases would be lower in provinces whose leaders have informal

ties to the regime leader than in provinces without such ties. The second measure, named *Sanction Level,* captures *ex post* selective protection. An official who has been found to have violated Party discipline is subject to one of four levels of Party sanctions, ranged from the least to the most serious: reprimand, warning, demotion, and Party expulsion (Vietnam Communist Party 2016). In an alternative coding scheme, I also code sanction level as a dummy that indicates whether the official receives an immediately career-consequential sanction i.e. demotion or expulsion.

For data on informal ties, I develop another web scraper to extract information from the Vietnamese-language Wikipedia, as well as the official website of the VCP (`www.dangcongsan.vn`). This web scraper allows me to construct an original biographical dataset of more than 1700 Vietnamese elites, including all Politburo, Central Committee and Alternate Central Committee members from the first to the most recent (12th) Party Congress; all provincial party secretaries elected between the 10th and the 12th Party Congress (from 2006 to 2020), as well as the members of the National Assembly from 1946 to 2018. For each individual, I collect data on their name, gender, birthplace, religion, and ethnicity. Wherever available, I also record their career trajectory in the Party and government. Information on VCP cadres' career history is uneven across individuals: Profiles of Politburo members and more recent cadres tend to be very detailed, whereas older and lower-ranked officials often have missing details. To fill in missing details for these cadres, I look up mentions of their names and biographies in official newspapers of provinces in which they are or were located. All in all, this dataset represents one of the most up-to-date, most detailed, and most expansive records of Vietnamese elites using publicly accessible data.

Similar to existing research on CCP factional networks (Shih 2008b; Meyer, Shih, and Lee 2016; Keller 2016), I use biographical data of VCP leaders and provincial Party secretaries to derive a measure of informal ties. An investigated official is coded to have ties to the General Party Secretary if the party secretary of the province in which the violation occurred (1) is born in the same province as General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong,

or (2) has worked at the same ministerial-level unit with them for at least a year. To avoid over-identifying ties, I do not include Central Committee career overlaps, since the General Secretary and all provincial party secretaries, by default, are included in the Central Committee. We also do not count university tie due to data constraints.

5.3.2.2 Models

To see whether provinces with informal ties to the General Secretary were selectively excluded from sanctions, I run the following model:

$$CaseCounts_{ij} = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta} Tie_{ij} + \boldsymbol{ProvChars_{ij}} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

In the model, *Tie* is a dummy that indicates whether a province i's party secretary has informal tie to General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong in year j. $\boldsymbol{ProvChars_{ij}}$ is a control vector that accounts for variations in corruption level, anti-corruption efforts, and socioeconomic performance in the same province-year period. I control for the number of activities that were announced in the same province in a given year, as a proxy for both latent corruption level and/or anti-corruption efforts. This includes not only disciplinary inspections and sanctions, but also other routine activities such as non-disciplinary visits, trainings, and workshops. In addition, I control for variations in provincial socioeconomic performance by including provincial GDP and population size, as well as central-to-local targeted transfers, expressed as share of total revenue. Targeted transfers include equalization grants and earmarked transfers, given to local governments whose expenditure needs are greater than their revenues (Malesky 2009; Malesky, Abrami, and Zheng 2011); thus, they serve as a proxy for budgetary constraints, central government dependence, and to a lesser extent, poverty level. Also included is the aggregate score of the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) (Malesky et al. 2020), or, alternatively, the Provincial Governance and Public

Administration Performance Index (PAPI) (CECODES et al. 2019), which further accounts for governance and/or anti-corruption capacity.

To test the second half of my prediction—that VCP leaders do not engage in *ex post* protection—I run another model using *Sanction Level* as the dependent variable:

$$P(y_{ijk} \hat{=} m|x_{ijk}) = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta}Tie_j + \hat{\gamma}_1 \boldsymbol{IndChars_i} + \hat{\gamma}_2 \boldsymbol{ProvChars_j} + \hat{\gamma}_3 \boldsymbol{InvChars_k} + \epsilon_{ijk}$$

The explanatory variable is informal ties to General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong in province *j*. In addition, I include three control vectors to account for individual, provincial, and investigation variations. Controls for individual characteristics include an indicator for the administrative level of the investigated official's office where the violation occurred, and a dummy for whether the official has left the position during which violation occurred. Provincial controls include the variables used in the previous model, namely revenue, population, targeted transfer, and governance capacity measured by PCI and PAPI scores. Among investigation-specific controls, I include an indicator for the responsible IC's administrative level, and an indicator for its designated seriousness of the violation based on the text of official release. According to the VCP's Decision No. 30-QD/TW, an IC can assign three levels of seriousness to a violation, based on, among other things, the culprit's intention and the violation's political and economic consequence: "of little seriousness" (*it nghiem trong*, or no mention), "serious" (*nghiem trong*), "very serious" (*rat nghiem trong*), and "extremely serious" (*dac biet nghiem trong*). The specific criteria for these designations are in turn stipulated in the VCP's Decision No. 102-QD/TW. Finally, I control for idiosyncratic over-time variations and for differences in data coverage with year fixed effects.

Table 5.3: Descriptive statistics for socioeconomic and governance indicators

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Province mentions in sanction cases	189	2.37	2.68	0	13
Province mentions in all CCDI-V reports	189	7.99	8.46	0	65
Ties to General Secretary	189	0.02	0.13	0	1
2011 population (thousands)	189	1,394.29	1,188.85	299	7,521
Lagged GDP (billion VND)	180	334,858.80	3,339,917.00	7,873.72	44,850,176.00
Lagged targeted transfer (share of total revenue)	189	0.41	0.47	0.002	2.78
PCI score	189	61.53	3.34	52.99	70.69
Unweighted PAPI score	189	36.24	1.83	25.33	39.57

5.3.2.3 Ex ante protection results

Overall, the results are consistent with the paper's expectation. When it comes to *ex ante* protection, provinces with informal ties to the VCP General Secretary experienced 0.91 to 1.64 fewer sanction cases than provinces without such ties every year. The results are statistically significant after controlling for the number of province mentions in all CCDI activities, as well as for provincial socioeconomic differences. The estimates are also substantively significant, given that the mean number of sanctioned investigations are only 2.59 cases per year. Other than informal ties, there are also more sanction cases in provinces with more CCDI activities and provinces with lower governance capacity as measured by the PCI score. Surprisingly, bigger provinces with higher populations experience fewer sanction cases.

For robustness checks, I replace the count of province mentions in all CCDI activities with mentions only in inspection announcements. I also use lagged revenue, expenditure and GDP per capita as alternative measures of provincial economic performance, both in place of and alongside GDP; substitute PCI and PAPI scores with individual sub-scores of these indices; and include a measure of revenue sharing, measured as the share of a province's collected revenue that it is allowed to retain (and not remit to the center), both in place of and alongside targeted transfer share. It is suggested that provinces that retain less than

Table 5.4: Informal ties to General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong associated with fewer sanction cases

	Dependent variable:			
	Number of mentions in CCDC investigation reports			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Tie to Nguyen Phu Trong	−0.91**	−1.60***	−1.64***	−1.58***
	(0.39)	(0.62)	(0.61)	(0.60)
Province mentions in all reports	0.18***	0.18***	0.18***	0.18***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Lagged GDP (logged)		0.55	0.52	0.55
		(0.43)	(0.49)	(0.44)
2011 population (logged)		−1.42**	−1.46**	−1.36**
		(0.64)	(0.64)	(0.58)
Lagged targeted transfer (share of revenue)			−0.21	−0.61
			(0.40)	(0.39)
PCI score				−0.16**
				(0.07)
Unweighted PAPI score				−0.003
				(0.08)
Constant	0.67***	4.80**	5.61*	14.15**
	(0.25)	(2.03)	(2.93)	(6.10)
Observations	189	180	180	180
R^2	0.37	0.40	0.40	0.42
Adjusted R^2	0.36	0.38	0.38	0.39
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

100% of their revenue has more bargaining power versus the center compared to provinces that are allowed to keep all of its collected revenue. In addition, because the center benefits from these provinces' good economic performance, they have an interest in encouraging investment, by either cracking down *or* encouraging corruption (Malesky 2008). None of these modifications changes the statistical significance of informal ties to Trong.

To verify that this finding is attributable specifically to informal ties to the VCP General Secretary and not another confound, I perform a series of tests. First, I include a dummy indicator for Vietnam's two biggest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. It is possible that the two cities, owing to their "special importance to the country" (Malesky 2008), might receive special scrutiny with regards to anti-corruption efforts, leading to higher number of sanctions. Furthermore, unlike other provinces, Hanoi's and Ho Chi Minh City's provincial party secretaries also hold a concurrent seat in the Politburo. Including this dummy indicator can thus capture their personal clout, which might be an alternative source of *ex ante* protection on top of informal ties to the dictator. Second, to further explore the influence of provincial leaders' power bases, I also control for whether the province's Party Secretary holds a concurrent seat as the Chairman of the People's Council or the People's Committee in the province. These are the top seats of a province's legislative and executive branches, and are typically given to a vice Party Secretary as a division of power arrangement. The fact that a Party Secretary holds a concurrent seat in either of these positions suggests a greater-than-usual concentration of power. Third, I include an indicator for Southern provinces—provinces that lie south of the 17th parallel and were under the Republic of Vietnam's control during the Vietnam War—to reflect the possibility that sanctions may simply reflect a regional rather than factional bias. I find that all these three variables are statistically significant, which suggest that there might be some truths to these concerns. Nevertheless, even with these variables, informal ties to the VCP General Secretary continue to be statistically significant.

I also perform three placebo tests to see whether the effect comes from informal ties

to the regime leader himself and not just an artifact of ties to central leaders in general, or to another central elite with power over the regime's disciplinary effort. Specifically, I replace ties to Nguyen Phu Trong with ties to (1) the previous Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who left office in 2016 after a failed bid to take over Nguyen Phu Trong's Party leadership (Vuving 2017), (2) the current Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, and (3) Tran Quoc Vuong, the Director of the CCDI during the data's time period. As it turns out, informal ties to none of these individuals are statistically significant explanation for variations in sanction cases.

5.3.2.4 Ex post protection results

When it comes to the level of sanction, I find no evidence that informal ties to the incumbent General Party Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong explains variation in sanction severity. Instead, the main predictors of sanction outcomes are the seriousness of the violation, as well as the administrative level of the IC in charge. Lower level ICs are much less likely to give out severe warnings than higher level ICs. This is consistent with the general understanding of the division of power between local and central levels of the Vietnamese CCDI. [28]

Again, I replace the original provincial-level controls with alternative measures, and include dummy indicators for the South, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and for provincial party secretaries' holding of concurrent Chairmanship in the People's Committee or the People's Council. In none of these model configuration do informal ties to the General Secretary become significant. Placebo tests that replace ties to Trong with ties to the current and previous Prime Ministers, and the Director of the CCDI also show no significant results of informal ties.

It is possible that the granular measure of sanction in Vietnam obscures the basic difference between a serious sanction and the lack thereof. Yet, even using a binary indicator

Table 5.5: Informal ties to Nguyen Phu Trong uncorrelated with sanction outcome

	Dependent variable:			
	Sanction level - odds ratio			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ties to Nguyen Phu Trong	1.102	1.333	1.602	1.619
Investigated office level (district)		0.288***	0.228***	0.211***
Investigated office level (province)		0.100***	0.061***	0.057***
Investigated office level (center)		1.402	0.051***	0.037***
Official left office		2.018***	1.666*	1.720**
IC level (district)			0.334	0.257
IC level (province)			0.219	0.178
IC level (center)			1.238	1.091
Violation consequence (serious)			1.959**	1.896**
Violation consequence (very serious)			16.819***	21.235***
Violation consequence (extremely serious)			49,043,201.000***	16,557,020.000***
Lagged GDP (logged)				1.635
2011 population (logged)				0.512
Lagged targeted transfer (share of revenue)				2.688
PCI score				1.018
Unweighted PAPI score				0.892
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	395	395	395	391

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

of sanction, the paper finds no effect of informal tie to the General Party Secretary on sanction outcomes.

5.3.3 Selective protection under strong factional clarity: China analysis

5.3.3.1 Data

To compare selective protection in China with that in Vietnam, I draw on several sources of data. First, I take advantage of official announcements of disciplinary sanctions conducted by the Chinese Communist Party as collected by China File, an online magazine owned by the Center on US-China Relations (China File 2016). China File's data includes 2,447 individuals investigated until July 31, 2018 as part of General Party Secretary Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign. These investigations include party and government officials, as well as employees of state-owned enterprises whose cases "have been reported publicly either by the CCDI, by a Chinese government organ such as a court or prosecutor's office, or by one of the official media organizations that the CCDI lists on its website as media partners." The dataset contains the name of the each investigated official, as well as their biographical details. These include year of birth, native province and city, last workplace and position at the time of investigation, and the province in which the violation occurred. Information pertaining to the investigation such as the start date, official description of the violation, as well as the date of Party expulsion, arrest, and judicial sentence are also included.

Admittedly, the 2,447 individuals in this dataset represent a minute and sample of the total number of investigations conducted. Unlike the million investigated individuals whose names remain unknown to the public, these cases have been featured in official media, and have garnered a certain level of public attention. The cases featured here also tend to

Table 5.6: Informal ties to Nguyen Phu Trong and sanction outcome - binary DV

	Dependent variable:			
	Probability of serious sanction			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ties to Nguyen Phu Trong	−0.087	−0.070	−0.014	−0.017
	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.067)
Investigated office level (district)		−0.298***	−0.293***	−0.309***
		(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.072)
Investigated office level (province)		−0.305***	−0.357***	−0.356***
		(0.070)	(0.078)	(0.079)
Investigated office level (center)		0.232*	−0.450***	−0.444***
		(0.130)	(0.163)	(0.167)
Official left office		0.045	0.013	0.012
		(0.049)	(0.045)	(0.045)
IC level (district)			−0.463	−0.556
			(0.372)	(0.374)
IC level (province)			−0.504	−0.571
			(0.374)	(0.374)
IC level (center)			−0.081	−0.143
			(0.394)	(0.394)
Violation consequence (serious)			0.042	0.034
			(0.050)	(0.050)
Violation consequence (very serious)			0.479***	0.479***
			(0.089)	(0.089)
Violation consequence (extremely serious)			0.879**	0.720*
			(0.367)	(0.372)
Lagged GDP (logged)				0.015
				(0.079)
2011 population (logged)				0.069
				(0.104)
Lagged targeted transfer (share of revenue)				0.201*
				(0.119)
PCI score				−0.016*
				(0.010)
Unweighted PAPI score				0.001
				(0.015)
Constant	0.253***	0.467***	0.958***	1.186
	(0.052)	(0.073)	(0.366)	(0.944)
Observations	344	344	344	342
Adjusted R^2	0.028	0.120	0.285	0.298
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

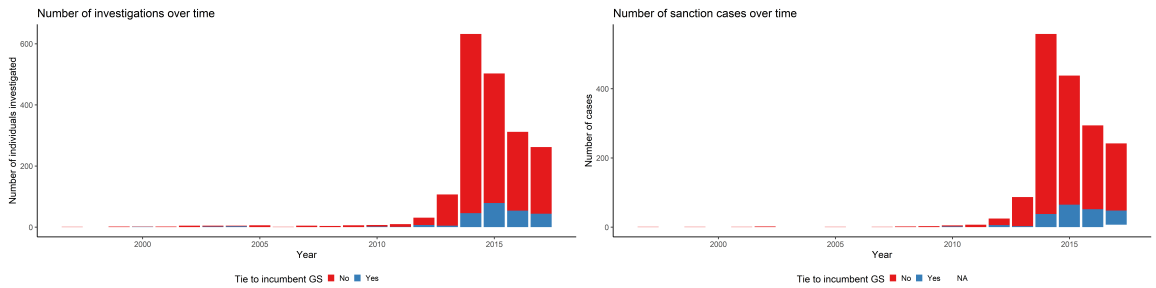

Figure 5.1: Investigations by CCP CCDI, 2000–2018

be larger in scale and involve more senior officials compared to the average corruption cases, they might also occur in more urban areas, which allow for easier news coverage by national newspapers. Due to these differences, the results found in this sample cannot be generalized to corruption investigations across the country. At the same time, due to their high public profile, offering political protection, especially *ex post* protection, to these individuals are particularly costly. As a result, there is reason to believe that if *ex post* selective protection can be observed within this sample it would also be observed elsewhere in the regime.

Using information from the data, I again derive two similar sets of measures for *ex ante* and *ex post* selective protection. Measures of *ex ante* protection include *Case Count* and *Individual Count*, which count the number of unique sanction cases and the number of individuals investigated in a province in a given year, respectively. The majority of sanction cases involves only one single individual, but can involve as many as 43. In an alternative coding scheme, I also count the raw number of investigations for each province-year combination.

Measures of *ex post* protection include two variables. The first variable, *Investigation Status,* indicates whether an investigation has completed and has resulted in sanction against an individual in the form of Party expulsion or judicial sentence by July 2018. The fact that an investigation did not result in either of these sanctions means that it ended with a lenient punishment such as a mere warning. These punishments are recorded in an individual's Party

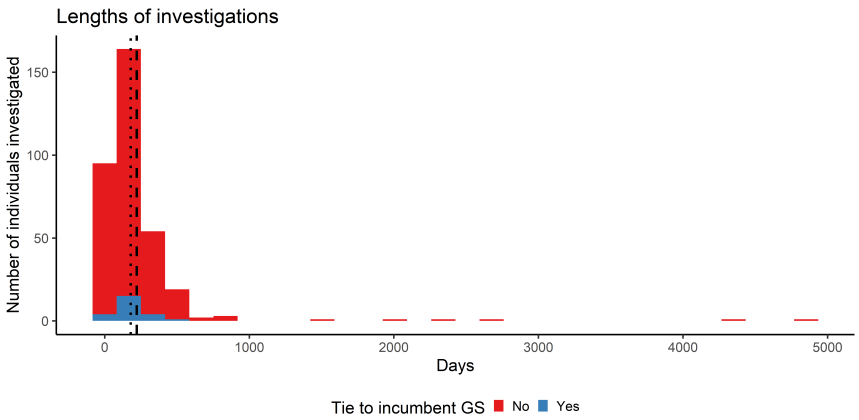

Figure 5.2: Lengths of CCP CCDI investigations

record and could affect their future promotion, but carried no immediate consequence to their current position. Alternatively, the investigation could still be ongoing, either because it was held back by the IC in charge and not forwarded to upper-level IC and Party Committee, or because the relevant Party Committee or IC have not approved the proposed sanction. In either case, this indicates that some degrees of interference have taken place to protect the investigated individual. The second variable, *Investigation Delays,* provides a more granular measure of *ex post* political protection. This measure counts the number of days between the start of investigation and the date when the sanction was announced. For the most part, investigations in the dataset tend to conclude quickly: The median investigation length is 132 days, and 75% of investigations lasted no longer than 247 days. Nevertheless, there are also 47 extremely delayed investigations lasting more than a year. Investigation delays can eventually lead to a case being dropped. Even if it eventually resulted in sanction, a delayed investigation allows the case to escape public scrutiny, allowing for a more lenient sanction. In addition, it also offered investigate individual the opportunity to destroy evidence, move assets, or even escape.

Besides China File's biographic data of investigations, I draw on a biographical dataset of Chinese elites by Meyer, Shih, and Lee (2015). The data include biographical

information of more than 4500 individuals, including all Central Committee and Alternate Central Committee members from the first to the current (18th) Party Congress, provincial-level Standing Committee members from 1976 to 2015, directors and deputy directors of ministry-level offices, and high-ranking officers in the People's Liberation Army from 1992 to 2015 (Lee 2016). For each individual, the data records their birth year, gender, ethnicity, birthplace, education level attained and universities attended, as well as Party and government career trajectory since 1949.

Using this data, I derive an indicator of informal connection with the incumbent CCP General Secretary. An individual is coded to have tie with the incumbent if the provincial party secretary where the violation occurred (1) was born in the same province with the General Secretary who was incumbent when the investigation started (*tongxiang*), (2) attended the same higher education institution (*tongxue*), or (3) worked in the same ministerial-level work unit at the same time with the incumbent for over one year (*tongye*). The definition is conventional in the Chinese factionalism literature (Shih, Shan, and Liu 2010). Similar to the Vietnam analysis, this variable denotes informal ties between the regime leader and the provincial party secretaries, and not between the regime leader and the investigated individuals themselves.

5.3.3.2 Models

Altogether, I run three models, one to examine the effect of informal tie on the number of sanction cases, and two to examine its effect on investigation status and investigation delays. First, for sanction cases, I run the following model:

$$CaseCount_{ij} = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta} Tie_{ij} + \hat{\boldsymbol{\gamma}} \boldsymbol{ProvChars_{ij}} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

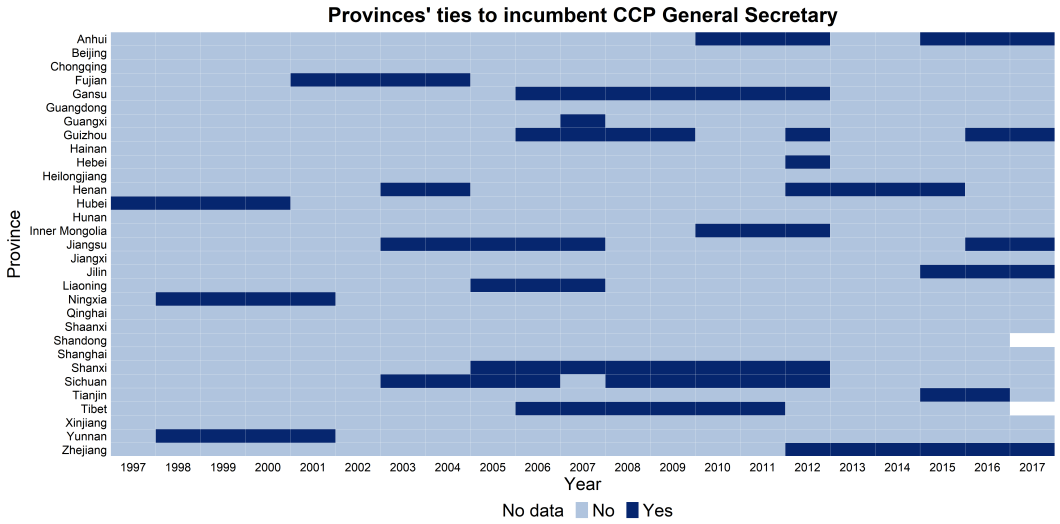

Figure 5.3: Provincial party secretaries' ties to incumbent CCP General Secretary

In this model, Tie_j is the explanatory variable of interest. It indicates whether the party secretary of the province i has informal tie to the then-incumbent General Party Secretary in year j. In addition to this variable, I control for provincial-varying, time-constant variations in latent corruption level and anti-corruption effort, as well as for provincial- and time-varying socioeconomic characteristics. Unlike my original data in Vietnam, China File's data does not measure the frequency of general inspections and disciplinary activities in a province. Thus, to account for latent corruption level and anti-corruption effort, I draw on Zhu (2017)'s survey data of corruption perception and corruption experience conducted in 2002 and 2008 and use the author's corruption experience measure as proxy. As acknowledged by its original author, the measure has a number of drawback—for example, they are " largely influenced by respondents' cultural backgrounds, identity, and social norms." Nevertheless, they outperform naive measures of "objective" corruption that rely on actual, published records on corruption cases or convictions, and that are susceptible to manipulation by *ex ante* protection.

To proxy for provincial variations in the economic capacity, I use government revenue. I also control for a province's population size, which again contribute to how frequently violations and by extension sanctions can occur. I also capture provinces' dependence on

and closeness to the central government, which can influence the former's incentives to follow the latter's instruction regardless of factional affiliation using central-to-local transfer as share of the province's revenue. Data on provincial revenue, population, and transfer are collected from the CEIC China Premium Database (Euromonitor Institutional Investor 2018). Finally, several authors (e.g. Manion 2016) argue that Xi Jinping's ongoing anti-corruption campaign marks an unprecedented turning point from previous anti-corruption efforts. If these arguments are true, the campaign could create a pressure for local ICs to step-up disciplinary efforts, hasten investigation, and increase the number of investigations and sanctions. To account for this possibility, I include a dummy indicator for the period pre- and post- campaign, which started late 2012.

In the second model, I estimate $P(y_{ij} \hat{=} 1|x_{ij})$, the probability that the investigation against an individual i in province j had completed and had resulted in sanction, using a fixed effects linear probability model. The model is as follows:

$$P(y_{ijk} \hat{=} 1|x_{ijk}) = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta} Tie_j + \hat{\gamma}_1 \boldsymbol{IndChars_i} + \hat{\gamma}_2 \boldsymbol{ProvChars_j} + \hat{\gamma}_3 \boldsymbol{InvChars_k} + e_{ijk}$$

Other than Tie_j, the model includes$\boldsymbol{IndChars}_i$, $\boldsymbol{ProvChars_j}$, $\boldsymbol{InvChars}$, three vectors of controls for the investigated individuals' personal idiosyncrasies, the provinces' socioeconomic conditions, and the investigations' characteristics, respectively. Individual idiosyncrasies include the individual's age, gender, a dummy for whether the person is native to the province in which the violation occurred, and a dummy for whether they/she had left the position at which they/she committed the violation. To control for the personal clout of the investigated individual as well as for the seriousness of the case, I use the designation of "tiger" versus "fly" as found in the China File dataset. An official is considered a "tiger" if they are ranked at or above deputy ministerial, deputy provincial level, or Major General and above (China File 2016). Provincial controls include similar variables to the previous

models. Finally, I include year fixed effects.

Finally, to test the effect of informal ties on investigation delay, I use a Cox proportional hazard model as follows (Broström and Lindkvist 2008; Andersen and Gill 1982):

$$\begin{aligned} \lambda(t|\boldsymbol{X_{ijk}}) &= \lambda_0(t)e^{(\boldsymbol{X_{ijk}\beta'})} \\ \boldsymbol{X_{ijk}\beta'} &= \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\beta}Tie_j + \hat{\gamma}_1\boldsymbol{IndChars_i} + \hat{\gamma}_2\boldsymbol{ProvChars_j} + \hat{\gamma}_3\boldsymbol{InvChars_k} \end{aligned}$$

In this model, $\lambda(t|X_{ijk})$ is the hazard at year t for individual i with covariate vector X_{ijk}. The hazard denotes the probability that an investigated individual will be sanctioned at time t given that they/she has not been investigated so up to year $t-1$. The baseline hazard for every individual is $\lambda_0(t)$, and is estimated non-parametrically, while the hazard ratio is expressed by $e^{(\boldsymbol{X_{ijk}\beta'})}$. The variables that affect this hazard ratio is similar to the previous model.

5.3.3.3 *Ex ante* protection results

My analysis reveals no effect of informal ties to the incumbent General Secretary on either measure of *ex ante* protection. Instead, the number of cases and of individuals sanctioned in a province are positively related to provincial revenue, corruption experience, as well as to central-to-local transfer's share of provincial revenue. These results show a marked divergence from the situation in Vietnam, in which provinces whose party secretaries are tied to the General Secretary experienced much fewer sanctions than those without. This is consistent with the paper's main hypothesis, which is that *ex ante* protection is less likely to take place under high factional clarity.

Similar to the analysis on Vietnam data, I perform a series of robustness checks. Specifically, I substitute provincial revenues with alternative measures of economic perfor-

Table 5.7: Informal ties to incumbent CCP General Secretary uncorrelated with number of cases or sanctions

	Dependent variable:					
	Case count			Sanction count		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Province's tie to incumbent PS	−1.531	−1.869	−1.966	−1.184	−1.903	−1.974
	(1.744)	(1.571)	(1.594)	(1.767)	(1.862)	(1.897)
Corruption experience	35.592***	40.282***	40.476***	52.542***	44.148***	44.333***
	(11.576)	(12.518)	(12.569)	(13.178)	(14.068)	(14.120)
Anti-corruption campaign		10.628***	10.223***	13.014***	11.746***	11.454***
		(1.154)	(1.260)	(1.375)	(1.307)	(1.446)
Revenue (logged)		2.196**	2.772*		2.669**	3.059*
		(1.114)	(1.475)		(1.326)	(1.820)
Population (logged)		0.626	0.572		0.786	0.755
		(1.598)	(1.569)		(1.833)	(1.797)
Transfer from Center (share of revenue)			0.672			0.468
			(1.090)			(1.316)
Constant	5.076***	−33.610***	−40.830**	−6.743***	−40.320***	−45.231**
	(1.307)	(11.164)	(18.118)	(2.250)	(13.769)	(22.633)
Observations	153	153	152	153	153	152
R^2	0.067	0.309	0.306	0.263	0.297	0.294
Adjusted R^2	0.054	0.285	0.277	0.249	0.273	0.265
Residual Std. Error	9.546 (df = 150)	8.301 (df = 147)	8.351 (df = 145)	9.743 (df = 149)	9.581 (df = 147)	9.644 (df = 145)
F Statistic	5.360*** (df = 2; 150)	13.118*** (df = 5; 147)	10.645*** (df = 6; 145)	17.760*** (df = 3; 149)	12.441*** (df = 5; 147)	10.065*** (df = 6; 145)
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

mance, including government expenditure, GDP, and GDP per capita. I also replace these controls with their one-year lags, and use their growth rates instead of logged RMB figures. For an alternative measure of central-local dependency, I include a measure of bureaucratic integration, as originally found in Sheng (2007).[29] This variable captures the extent to which local party officials' "future career prospects or prior career trajectories" are integrated with the central government. I also include a dummy indicators for China's two biggest cities, Beijing and Shanghai, to account for their unique size, influence, and the political standings of their local leaders. Alternatively, I include a dummy indicator for whether the provincial party secretary is also a member of the CCP Politburo. None of these modifications changes the statistical insignificance of informal ties to the incumbent General Secretary.

5.3.3.4 *Ex post* protection results

Whereas there is no evidence of *ex ante* protection among provinces with informal ties to the CCP General Secretary, I find strong evidence of *ex post* protection in the CCP. Investigations in a province whose party secretary has informal tie to Xi are on average 6.8 to 11.2 percentage points less likely to result in sanctions. This effect size is comparable in size,

if not larger than those of individual characteristics such as "tiger" (6.9 to 7.4 percentage points effect size) or native official status (9.4 to 10.z percentage point effect size).

Table 5.8: Informal ties to incumbent CCP General Secretary associated with lower likelihood of Party expulsion or jail sentence

	Dependent variable:			
	Probability of sentence/expulsion			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Province's ties to incumbent GS	−0.068**	−0.112***	−0.095**	−0.095**
	(0.033)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Tiger		0.069**	0.074**	0.074**
		(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Male		0.045	0.009	0.009
		(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Age		0.006***	0.005**	0.005**
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Native official		0.094***	0.101***	0.101***
		(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Retired		−0.037	−0.060	−0.060
		(0.038)	(0.043)	(0.043)
Corruption experience			0.007	0.007
			(0.205)	(0.205)
Revenue (logged)			−0.156***	−0.156***
			(0.059)	(0.059)
Population (logged)			0.063	0.063
			(0.039)	(0.039)
Transfer from Center (share of revenue)			−0.122**	−0.122**
			(0.054)	(0.054)
Constant	0.691***	0.271**	1.130**	1.130**
	(0.011)	(0.131)	(0.538)	(0.538)
Year FE	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	1,908	1,367	1,238	1,238
R^2	0.002	0.023	0.087	0.087
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.019	0.067	0.067
Residual Std. Error	0.465 (df = 1906)	0.444 (df = 1360)	0.435 (df = 1210)	0.435 (df = 1210)
F Statistic	4.567** (df = 1; 1906)	5.443*** (df = 6; 1360)	4.282*** (df = 27; 1210)	4.282*** (df = 27; 1210)
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 5.4 plots the predicted probabilities of sanctions of investigated individuals in provinces with versus without informal ties to the incumbent General Secretary. In provinces without ties, the median probability is slightly above 0.75 percent, whereas in provinces with informal ties, the median individual is less than 60% likely to be sanctioned.

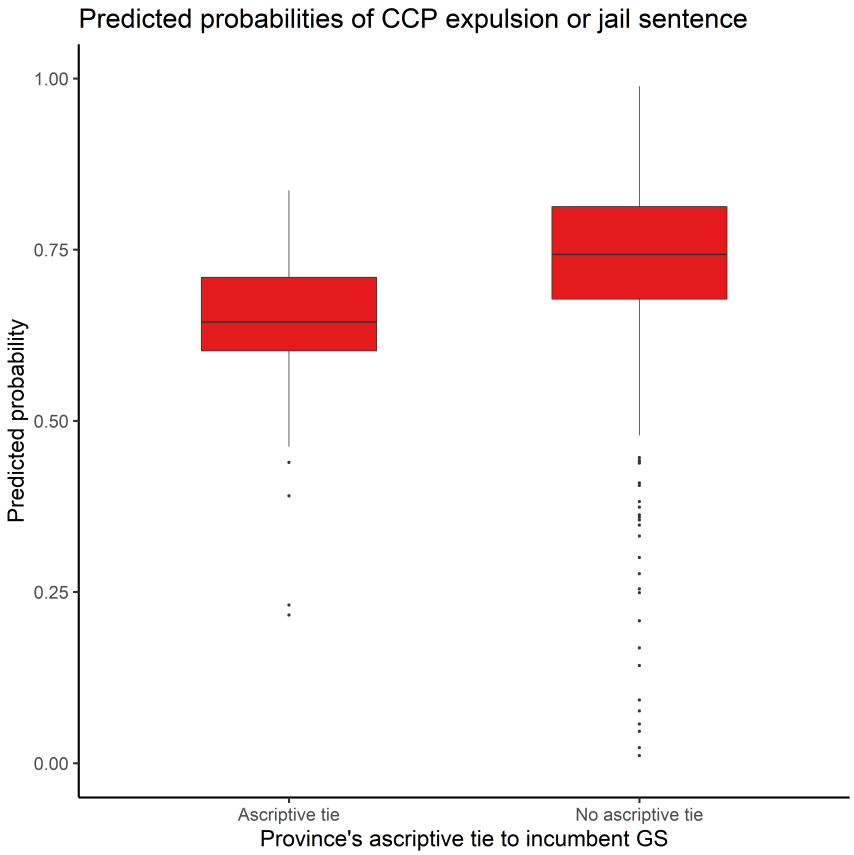

Figure 5.4: Predicted probabilities of sanctions for individuals in Xi-affiliated vs. unaffiliated provinces

When it comes to investigation speed, I observe a similar outcome. The hazard ratio of informal ties to the incumbent General Secretary ranges from -0.174 to -0.269, which means that investigated officials in provinces with informal ties are 15.9 to 23.6% less likely to be sanctioned at any point during the data's time period, holding other variables constant. The difference in sanction risk translates into a substantial difference in investigation delays. As seen in Figure 6, individuals in provinces with tie to the incumbent leader have longer predicted "survival" than those in provinces without such ties. The gap between two groups can be quite large—it takes, for example, around 90 more days, or 3 months, for officials in "tied" provinces to reach 50% survival rate than for those in "untied" provinces.

For robustness checks, I first test for the validity of the proportional hazard assumptions, per Grambsch and Therneau (1994). A violation of this assumption suggests that an explanatory variable's effect size does not stay constant, but varies as a function of time. Such a violation, if not accounted for, can lead to biased estimate of the violated variable's true effect, as well as to an overall decrease in the model's power. As it appears, all our variables except for tiger status and investigated date, do not violate the assumption. The fact that these two variables violate the assumption is unsurprising, especially in light of the ongoing anti-corruption campaign since 2012. It is likely that the campaign, which is aimed to target "both the tigers and flies," lead to higher hazards among tigers than before. In addition, the campaign's intensity might mean that cases investigated during the campaign are proceeded faster than before it. To account for this, I interact both variables with a dummy indicator for the campaign. The modified regression results are consistent with my

Table 5.9: Informal ties to incumbent CCP General Secretary associated with longer investigations

	Dependent variable:		
	Expulsion/Sentence log hazard ratio		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Province's ties to incumbent GS	−0.174**	−0.269***	−0.268***
	(0.087)	(0.101)	(0.103)
Time trend (day)	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Tiger		0.592***	0.663***
		(0.098)	(0.107)
Male		0.086	0.071
		(0.148)	(0.154)
Age		0.020***	0.023***
		(0.006)	(0.007)
Native official		0.181**	0.207**
		(0.076)	(0.092)
Retired		−0.237**	−0.275**
		(0.102)	(0.107)
Corruption experience			−0.009
			(0.569)
Revenue (logged)			−0.250
			(0.166)
Population (logged)			0.118
			(0.106)
Transfer from Center (share of revenue)			−0.168
			(0.147)
Observations	1,908	1,367	1,238
R^2	0.372	0.405	0.422
Max. Possible R^2	1.000	1.000	1.000
Log Likelihood	−8,311.043	−5,938.077	−5,241.870
Wald Test	555.680*** (df = 2)	430.370*** (df = 7)	424.930*** (df = 11)
LR Test	886.430*** (df = 2)	708.680*** (df = 7)	677.977*** (df = 11)
Score (Logrank) Test	351.326*** (df = 2)	340.120*** (df = 7)	365.381*** (df = 11)
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

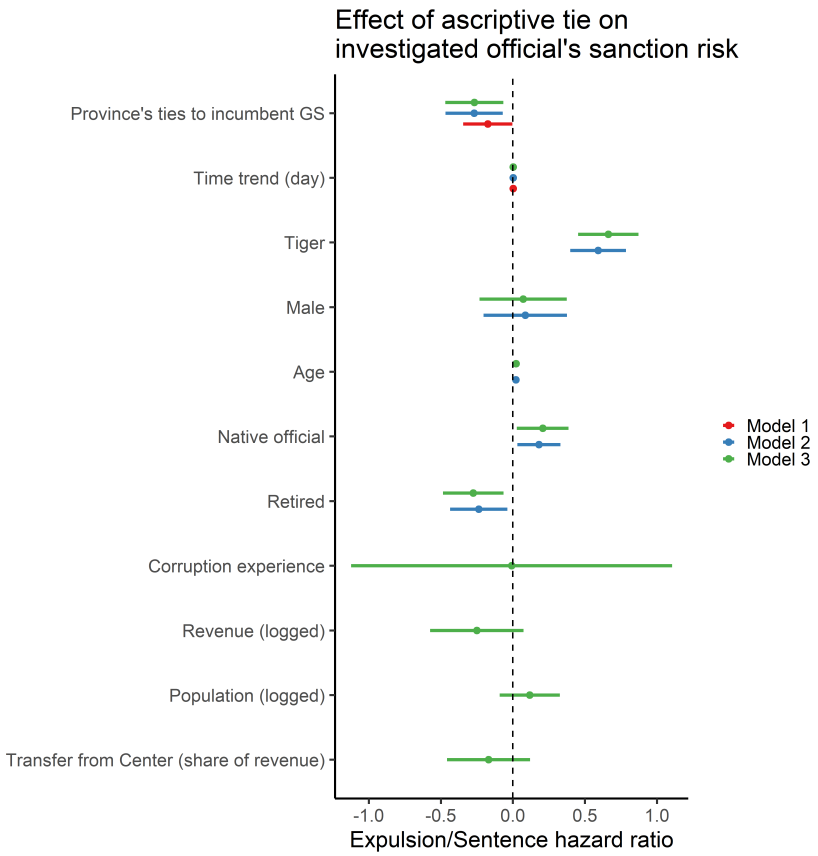

Figure 5.5: Estimated effect of informal ties, individual and provincial characteristics on expulsion and sentence hazard ratio

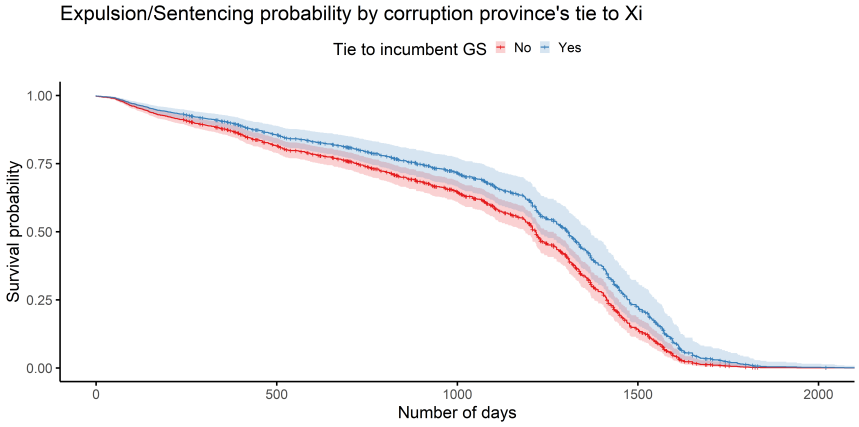

Figure 5.6: Predicted survival for individuals in provinces with versus without informal ties to Xi

expectations: The interaction effects of both variables with the dummy are positive. At the same time, including these variables do not diminish the statistical significance of informal ties to the incumbent General Secretary.

As with the paper's previous analyses, I also check for model misspecification by substituting provincial-level controls with alternative measures, and by including additional controls such as Beijing-Shanghai dummy and the Politburo dummy. None of the modifications changes the significance of informal ties. In addition to these tests, I also examine whether the observed *ex post* protection effect is specifically attributable to the regime leader himself, and not simply to any elite connections. For that purpose, I test whether informal ties to the incumbent Premier, the second most powerful elite in the regime, as well as ties to the previous General Party Secretary and ties to the then-incumbent Director of the Chinese CCDI have any impact on sanction likelihood. In all of these cases, we find no evidence of any difference. In addition, informal ties to these leaders also have no effect whatsoever on investigation delays using our Cox proportional hazard models.

5.4 Conclusion

The paper adds a twist to the understanding of the political motives behind anti-corruption efforts in Vietnam and China, and more generally in authoritarian regimes. First, while previous studies such as Lorentzen and Lu (2018) and Zhu (2017) have focused only on the presence versus absence of adverse disciplinary consequences, I show that political calculations are present both leading up to and following disciplinary activities. Second, China's and Vietnam's ongoing anti-corruption campaigns have attracted both praises of their meritocracy (Manion 2016) and suspicions that they are factionally motivated (Stratfor 2016; Thayer 2017a). The two views, in light of this paper, are not as contradictory as they appear. Corruption investigations can indeed serve to address agency loss; at the same time, so long as the dual threat to authoritarian survival remains, elite political calculations

will also operate alongside principal-agent concerns and manifest in sanctions against some individuals and protection for others.

Still, the findings of this paper should only be accepted with great care and caution. While the analysis indeed shows patterns of selective protection consistent with the theory, it has yet to demonstrate the specific causal mechanism through which selective protection manifests. What role, for instance, do factional ties to the incumbent regime leader play in reducing sanction rate (for *ex ante* protection) and punishment severity (for *ex post* protection)? Might it truly be a story of factional politics in which the dictator provides protection in exchange of support, or are ties instead a proxy for access to information, or ideological alignment? Moreover, the audience should keep in mind the scope conditions of this paper's findings. The corruption investigations examined here are cases that the regimes' central authorities—the CCDIs and national media outlets—consciously choose to report. One might have rough ideas about how these cases differ from unreported corruption investigations elsewhere in case seriousness of investigated official's seniority. Yet, it remains unknown what specific considerations are at play in the choice of case. Factional politics may play a role in determining which investigations become featured in the sample; at the same time, other political and non-political confounds may also exist to limit the generalizability of these findings. Finally, there is much work to do to ensure the validity of the paper's Vietnam-China cross-country comparison. To avoid comparing apples to oranges, greater care is required to statistically control for other differences between the regimes other than factional clarity. Alternatively, the comparison should be supplemented with closer in-country comparisons within Vietnam and China. Future research could explore, for example, cross-provincial variations in factional clarity, or over-time variations that exploit abrupt changes in factional clarity within a locality.

To an authoritarian leader, corruption is a double-edged sword: It is a valuable carrot to recruit crucial political support for their survival, yet also a potential reason for their downfall. Selective protection provides a solution to manage this tool. It allows the dictator

to simultaneously rein in the majority of agents and put a limit on rent-seeking activities, while still ensuring the loyalty of a co-faction minority whose allegiance is essential to avoid elite coups. In addition, it is also not a one-size-fits all solution, but can be customized to fit the specific political contexts of a regime—in this case, the level of factional clarity. Despite its uses, selective protection is still an imperfect solution at best. There remains much to research on the side effects of *ex ante* and *ex post* selective protection on the level and pattern of corruption in a regime. This is especially relevant, given that selective protection can be seen both as a tool to limit the extent of corruption, and a means to redistribute rent seeking behaviors from one set of actors to another. Along that line, future studies can examine the effect of these two forms of selective protection on public perception of corruption, regime legitimacy, and, in light of the debate on whether corruption "greases" or sands the wheels of development (Leys 1965; Leff 1964; Mauro 1995), the effect of corruption on growth.

My paper also sheds light into the variations in informal elite behaviors, in particular factionalist behaviors. Much of the literature on elite factions has so far focused on China (Nathan 1973; Pye 1980; Dittmer 1995; Shih 2008b), yet there is evidence that elite informal networks exist elsewhere, both in the authoritarian and democratic world (Lee and Oh 1968; Belloni and Beller 1978; Cox and Rosenbluth 1993; Golden and Chang 2001). In addition, it also builds upon an extensive literature on clientelism, elite networks, and political identity (Posner 2005; Stokes et al. 2013). In particular, studies on elite networks are dominated by two separate interpretations of networks, one based on ideological affinity and cooperative behaviors such as co-sponsorship networks (Fowler 2006), and one based on shared political experiences (Keller 2016; Francois, Trebbi, and Xiao 2016; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). My paper argues that these interpretations are not antagonistic to one another; rather, these forms of networks can be summarized under the unifying framework of factional clarity. This, in turn, can pave the way for a much wider, more generalizable agenda on the effect of network characteristics on political outcomes.

Chapter 5, in part, has been submitted for publication of the material as it appears in Trinh, Duy. 2022. "The Where and Why of Political Protection in Vietnam's Anti-Corruption Campaign." In The Dragon's Underbelly: Dynamics and Dilemmas in Vietnam's Economy and Politics, eds. Nhu Truong and Tuong Vu. The dissertation author was the sole author of this material.

Chapter 5, in part, is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. The dissertation author was the sole author of this paper.

Chapter 6

Closing remarks

Why and when do intra-elite purge turn violent? How to explain the frequency and intensity of these purges? In my dissertation, I attempt to answer these questions with my novel theory of factional sorting. Regimes whose factions sort along different types of labels end up with different levels of uncertainty over factional membership. Ascriptively sorted factions, such as those defined by common geographic, ethnic, or ancestral origins, tend to have transparent membership, whereas regimes whose factions sort along elective labels such as policy or ideology end up with more opaqueness. The level of uncertainty in turn affects elites' ability to identify purge opportunities and purge targets, as well as the ability of other actors in the regime to correctly interpret the objective and target of purges and political protection during purges. I then test this theory against the two cases of Vietnam and China, taking advantage of their institutional, historical, economic, and cultural similarities. In four Chapters, I present four comparisons of the two countries' ruling Communist Parties that span both the historical and contemporary period.

In Chapter 1, I show that factions in the Vietnamese and Chinese Communist Party sorted in qualitatively different ways, with the CCP's factions emphasizing ascriptive labels of common professional and geographic backgrounds, while the VCP's factions relied on more elective and flexible ties. More importantly, I argue that the divergence is generated exoge-

nously as the result of each Party's unique struggles with external military threats. Whereas military threats dispersed CCP elites into separate, autonomous base areas, they concentrated VCP elites into one same geographical region while suppressing all Party activities elsewhere. This is particularly important, not only for explaining how the two Parties came to diverge in the first place despite institutional similarities, but also for theory-building. The exogenous variation helps overcome a reverse causality relationship between the configuration of factions and elite behaviors, and allows for subsequent causal arguments about the effect of factional sorting on the VCP and CCP's divergent patterns of political purge.

In Chapter 2, I take the historical comparison of Vietnam and China to the contemporary period. Here, through two conjoint experiments conducted on matched samples of Vietnamese and Chinese urban citizens, I demonstrate that the variations in factional sorting are alive and well even today, at least in the eyes of the public. Respondents are presented with a hypothetical vignette describing a senior political leader and pairs of junior candidates for political promotion, and prompted to think about which of the candidates' characteristics matter in this promotion decision. While respondents in both countries value meritocratic attributes, such as education level, field of study, or work experience similarly, only Chinese respondents perceive ascriptive ties between the senior politician and the candidates to play a positive role in public-sector promotion decisions. Vietnamese respondents, in contrast, do not attach similar weight to these ties. Notably, in this chapter, I also demonstrate, through an alternative treatment vignette describing a private-sector promotion scenario, that the difference persists *after* one has accounted for variation in the general, non-political salience of these ties.

Chapter 3 moves back to the past for a discussion of the VCP and CCP's historical purges. Through this chapter, I make three important arguments, all of which, though not conclusively, support my argument of a causal link between factional sorting and intra-elite violence. First, there is a persistent variation across Vietnam and China in the level of intra-elite violence, with the CCP purging its elites much more frequently and brutally than

its Vietnamese counterpart. Second, within each countries, over-time variations in violence also matched the fluctuations in each regime's mode of factional sorting as well. Finally, the two key purges, the Gao-Rao Affair in the CCP and the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair in the VCP, show that the behaviors of elites, both purge initiators and purge targets, took factional sorting into account. The chapter also includes a formal model that demonstrates the causal link between the degree of certainty over factional membership and a dictator's propensity to purge.

Finally, Chapter 4 presents a theory of selective political protection, backed by another formal model. Its main contribution lies in the distinction between the two different strategies *ex ante* and *ex post* protection. In addition, the Chapter also explains the costs and benefits associated with each strategy, and a regime's uncertainty over factional membership during an ongoing purge motivates the choice between them. Bringing in novel biographical and disciplinary investigation data from contemporary Vietnam and China, I then show that each regime indeed exhibits a unique form of political protection consistent with my theoretical prediction. Vietnam, where factions sort electively and where factional membership is highly uncertain, exhibit signs of *ex ante* protection, whereas in China, *ex post* protection dominates. These diverging strategies, in turn, contribute to diverging *perceived* intensity of purges across regimes.

6.1 Looking forward: Extension projects

This dissertation project is still in development. My priority in the immediate future is to dedicate time and resources toward improving existing chapters. In particular, I would like to support the survey evidence in Chapter 2 with qualitative interviews, particularly of mid-ranking public officials who are involved, even if remotely, in personnel decisions at their workplace. The interviews will establish whether the divergence between Vietnam's and China's importance of informal tie is merely a matter of diverging perception (or of

survey implementation), or indeed a reflection of their values in actual political interactions. Furthermore, they will also prove useful in helping identify and interpret recent events or institutional changes that might have influenced the perception of factional ties in one country and not other. Among these possible confounds, new developments in Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign and Vietnam's power transition prior to its 13th Party Congress in 2020 come to mind.

For Chapter 3, I hope to include an additional pair of cases, with a focus on more contemporary purges. The Gao-Rao Affair and the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair represented two of the most iconic purges in the VCP and CCP's history. Due to their extraordinary nature, however, they might be seen as exceptions to the rule rather than illustrative examples of Vietnamese and Chinese elite politics. In addition, these purges also took place within their unique historical contexts, thus limiting generalizability. The Gao-Rao Affair occurred just years after the PRC formed, while the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair took place during an ongoing Second Indochina War, with pressure from the VCP's international allies also playing a role in the unfolding events (Nguyen 2012a).aa. To provide more breadth to my analysis, new cases will focus on smaller, more recent purges in China and Vietnam, such as the removal of Ling Jihua, CCP Director of the General Office in 2014, or the investigation and subsequent trial of Dinh La Thang, Party Secretary of Ho Chi Minh City between 2018-2020 in Vietnam.

Looking beyond existing chapters, I also hope to develop two additional chapters to explore the consequences of intra-elite purges on political economy outcomes. Specifically, to what extent does the ability to perceive factional membership regulate the responses, first of firms and second of citizens, to news of political purges? Regarding firm responses, in a concurrent project coauthored with Victor Shih we argue that private investors are able to respond pre-emptively to the rises of an elite faction even before its leader acquired formal power by shifting investment toward provinces governed by subordinate members of the faction. However, the ability to shift resources depends on firms' recognition of factional ties

between a rising political leader and other local elites. Would the same phenomenon hold true in Vietnam, where factional sorting along elective lines makes it much more difficult to identify alliances among regime elites?

An opportunity to test that question arises in Vietnam's recent disciplinary actions against several provincial elites, beginning with Trinh Xuan Thanh of Da Nang in 2016, Dinh La Thang of Ho Chi Minh City in 2018, Hoang Trung Hai of Hanoi in 2020. Rumors have linked these punishments with the current VCP General Party Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's purge against allies of the former Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. At the same time, both scholars and the public have also disputed this characterization. Indeed, the factional link between Dung and some recent disgraced officials, as well as between these officials, remains inconclusive. Taking advantage of this variation in uncertainty over these individuals factional affiliation—which can be measured, among other ways, by co-occurrences of their names in prominent non-governmental news media outlets—I hope to explore how their investigation changes Vietnamese firms' perceived local corruption and willingness to engage in future corrupt activities. The data for this analysis comes from the annual firm surveys conducted by Provincial Competitiveness Index, which includes questions about corruption experience and perception measured through a list experiment.

In addition, I would like to examine how citizens respond to news anti-corruption investigations, and how this response is mediated by the degree of uncertainty over the investigated official's factional relationship. A particular aspect of this response is trust in the legitimacy of the government's anti-corruption campaign. I plan to address the question through a survey experiment. In the experiment, respondents will be presented with vignettes about a corruption investigation, written in the same format as a news article authored by the Central Committee for Disciplinary Inspection. The vignettes contain randomized information about the rank, workplace, and alleged violation of the investigated official, as well as references of his/her tie to a real life corruption case. In one condition, there is no mention of this real life corruption case; in the second, the article makes describes

the investigated official as having ascriptive ties with individuals implicated in the real life corruption case, and in the third, the article explicitly describe the investigated official as members of the same faction with individuals implicated in the real life corruption case. Respondents are then asked to provide opinions about the intention of the investigation and trust in the government. To avoid preference falsification, I expect to use a list experiment design, where the "hidden" item mentions factional infighting (for the question about the investigation's intention) and eroding trust in the government's partiality (in the question about trust).

6.2 Beyond China and Vietnam

Does the story of factional sorting, factional information, and factional purges hold any relevance beyond the two single-party regimes of China and Vietnam? There are plenty of reasons to believe to. To begin with, factionalism while particularly well-studied in the Chinese politics literature, is unique neither to China nor to authoritarian regimes. Intra-party factions exist and are studied not only in non-autocracies, but also regimes in transitions as well as fully-fledged democracies. [30] They also exhibit significant variations in factional sorting behaviors, ranging from the highly personalistic factions seen in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party prior to the 1994 electoral reform, to ideologically-oriented factions observed—arguably—in the case of the Tea Party in the United States (Blum 2020).

Similarly, when it comes to intra-party purges, there is no shortage of examples. In addition to the authoritarian purges documented in existing studies (e.g. Sudduth 2017), there is also evidence of purges occurring in more democratic contexts as well. The extent to which these purges are comparable and hence explainable by the theory of factional sorting is promising, though not without a caveat. On one hand, democracies tend to have norms and institutions in place to limit the extent of violence that one can exact against fellow members (or ex-members) of the regime. In the United States, for example, a Supreme Court

(*Nixon v. Fitzgerald)* decision protects the President is protected from civil litigation from acts that he/she undertake while in office. Notably, protection against intra-elite violence is common among but not exclusive to established democracies. A Library of Congress (2017) legal report lists 32 countries that contain constitutional or statutory provisions that provide former presidents with immunity from criminal prosecution. While many of these, such as France, Chile, Malta, or Uruguay, score highly on measures of democracy and freedom, the list also contains mixed regimes such as Russia, or autocratic regimes such as Syria. Such protection institutions can put an upper limit on possible variation in intra-elite violence. Nevertheless, even with them in place, the key ingredients of intra-elite purges, namely motivations and capacity, remain; and so does the problem of factional membership uncertainty. The nature of single-party politics, which fuses control of the Party with that of the State and gives the dictator access to a wide range of tools for violence, makes intra-elite conflicts easier to observe, but the same logic of factional sorting should remain the same elsewhere. Opportunities to test it are abound, both among the autocratic and democratic worlds.

Bibliography

Abrami, Regina, Edmund Malesky, and Yu Zheng. 2013. "Vietnam through Chinese Eyes: Divergent Accountability in Single-Party Regimes". In *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, ed. by Martin K Dimitrov. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Abuza, Zachary. 2002. "The Lessons of Le Kha Phieu: Changing Rules in Vietnamese Politics". *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24 (1): 121–145.

— . 2001. "The Nhan Van–Giai Pham Affair, the 1967 Purge, and the Legacy of Dissent". In *Renovating Politics in Contemporary Vietnam*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2005. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 136:1–360. Cambride, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Albertus, Michael, and Victor Menaldo. 2012. "Dictators as Founding Fathers? The Role of Constitutions Under Autocracy". *Economics and Politics* 24 (3): 279–306.

Anderlini, Jamil. 2012. *The Bo Xilai Scandal: Power, Death, and Politics in China*. Penguin Books Limited.

Andersen, Per Kragh, and R D Gill. 1982. "Cox's Regression Model for Counting Processes: A Large Sample Study". *Annals of Statistics* 10 (4): 1100–1120.

Ang, Yuen Yuen, and Nan Jia. 2014. "Perverse complementarity: Political connections and the use of courts among private firms in China". *Journal of Politics* 76 (2): 318–332.

Appold, Stephen J., and The-Phong Dinh. 2001. "Patron-client relationships in a restructuring economy: An exploration of interorganizational linkages in Vietnam". *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 50 (1): 47–76.

Asselin, Pierre. 2013. *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954-1965*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Barnouin, Barbara, and Yu Changgen. 2006. *Zhou Enlai: A Political Life*. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

Baulch, Bob, Truong Thi Kim Chuyen, Dominique Haughton, and Jonathan Haughton. 2007. "Ethnic minority development in Vietnam". *Journal of Development Studies* 43 (7): 1151–1176.

Baum, Jeeyang R. 2011. *Responsive democracy: Increasing state accountability in East Asia*, 1–192. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

BBC. 2006. *Vietnam ministry hit by scandal*.

— . 2008. *Vietnamese media trial condemned*.

Belloni, Frank P, and Dennis C Beller. 1978. *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*. Studies in International and Comparative Politics. Santa Barbara, CA: American Bibliographical Center–Clio Press.

Beresford, Melanie, and Bruce McFarlane. 1995. "Regional inequality and regionalism in Vietnam and China". *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 25 (1): 50–72.

Bian, Yanjie. 1997. "Bringing strong ties back in: Indirect ties, network bridges, and job searches in China". *American Sociological Review* 62 (3): 366–385.

Blaydes, Lisa. 2010. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bloomberg News. 2012. *Mapping China's Red Nobility*.

Blum, Rachel M. 2020. *How the Tea Party Captured the GOP: Insurgent Factions in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bo, Zhiyue. 2017. "Factional Politics in the Party-State Apparatus". In *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Communist Party*, ed. by Willy Wo-Lap Lam, 122–134. London: Routledge.

Boix, Carles, and Milan Svolik. 2013. "The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships". *The Journal of Politics* 75 (2): 300–316.

Branigan, Tania. 2013. *Xi Jinping vows to fight 'tigers' and 'flies' in anti-corruption drive*. Guardian. Beijing.

Brewer, Marilynn B. 2001. "Ingroup identification and intergroup conflict". *Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction* 3:17–41.

— . 1999. "The psychology of prejudice: Ingroup love or outgroup hate?" *Journal of Social Issues* 55 (3): 429–444.

Broström, Göran, and Marie Lindkvist. 2008. "Partial partial likelihood". *Communications in Statistics: Simulation and Computation* 37 (4): 679–686.

Brown, Kerry. 2014. *The New Emperors: Power and the Princelings in China*. New York: I. B. Tauris.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1958. "The Pattern of Political Purges". *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 317:79–87.

Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce. 2012. *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*. 352. PublicAffairs.

— . 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce, and Alastair Smith. 2015. *Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics*, 61:707–743. 4.

Carey, John M. 2000. "Parchment, Equilibria, and Institutions". *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (6-7): 735–761.

Carter, Peter. 1979. *Mao*. New York: New American Library.

Case, William. 2015. "Vietnam in 2015: Factional Battles, Economic Tailwinds, and Neighborhood Jitters". *Asian Survey* 56 (38): 93–100.

Caselli, Francesco, and Wilbur John Coleman. 2013. "On the theory of ethnic conflict". *Journal of the European Economic Association* 11:161–192.

CECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA, and United Nations Development Programme. 2019. *The 2018 Viet Nam Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI): Measuring Citizens' Experiences*. Hanoi.

Central Intelligence Agency. 1987. *Key Questions in the Fall of China's Hu Yaobang*. Tech. rep.

Ch'en, Yung-fa. 1994. "The Futian Incident and the Anti-Bolshevik League: The "Terror" in the CCP Revolution". *Republican China* 19 (2): 1–51.

Chambers, Paul, and Napisa Waitoolkiat. 2020. "Faction Politics in an Interrupted Democracy: the Case of Thailand". *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 39 (1): 144–166.

Chen, Jidong, Jennifer Pan, and Yiqing Xu. 2016. "Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness: A Field Experiment in China". *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (2): 383–400.

Chen, Ting, and Ji Yeon Hong. 2020. "Rivals Within: Political Factions, Loyalty, and Elite Competition under Authoritarianism". *Political Science Research and Methods*: 1–16.

Chen, Ting, and James Kai-Sing Kung. 2016. "Do land revenue windfalls create a political resource curse? Evidence from China". *Journal of Development Economics* 123:86–106.

Chen, Ye, Hongbin Li, and Li-An Zhou. 2005. "Relative performance evaluation and the turnover of provincial leaders in China". *Economics Letters* 88 (3): 421–425.

China File. 2016. *Visualizing China's Anti-Corruption Campaign*.

Choi, Eun Kyong. 2012. "Patronage and Performance: Factors in the Political Mobility of Provincial Leaders in Post-Deng China". *The China Quarterly* 212:965–981.

Chonchirdsin, Sud. 1997. "The Indochinese Communist Party and the Nam Ky Uprising in Cochin China, November–December 1940". *South East Asia Research* 5 (3): 269–293.

Chua, Vincent, and Barry Wellman. 2015. "Social Networks in East and Southeast Asia I: National Characteristics, Institutions, Network Capital, and Guanxi". *American Behavioral Scientist* 59 (8): 903–913.

Communist Party of China. 2012. *Constitution of the Communist Party of China*.

Courtois, Stéphane, Nicolas Werth, Andrzej Paczkowski, Jean-Louis Panné, Karel Bartosek, and Jean-Louis Margolin. 1999. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression (Livre Noir Du Communisme: Crimes, Terreur, Répression)*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cox, Gary W, Frances McCall Rosenbluth, and Michael F Thies. 1999. "Electoral reform and the fate of factions: The case of Japan's liberal democratic party". *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (1): 33–56.

Cox, Gary W, and Frances Rosenbluth. 1996. "Factional competition for the party endorsement: The case of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party". *British Journal of Political Science* 26 (2): 259–269.

— . 1993. "The Electoral Fortunes of Legislative Factions in Japan". *The American Political Science Review* 87 (3): 577–589.

Crossette, Barbara. 1988. *Vietnamese Chief Building Political Base in South*. New York Times.

Dasgupta, Partha. 2000. "Trust as a commodity". In *Trust: Making and breaking cooperative relations*, ed. by Diego Gambetta, 4:49–72. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Dell, Melissa, Nathan Lane, and Pablo Querubin. 2018. "The Historical State, Local Collective Action, and Economic Development in Vietnam". *Econometrica* 86 (6): 2083–2121.

Dell, Melissa, and Pablo Querubin. 2018. "Nation building through foreign intervention: Evidence from discontinuities in military strategies". *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 133 (2): 701–764.

Desai, Raj M, Anders Olofsgård, and Tarik M Yousef. 2009. "The logic of authoritarian bargains". *Economics and Politics* 21 (1): 93–125.

Dimitrov, Martin K. 2013a. "Vertical accountability in communist regimes: the role of citizen complaints in Bulgaria and China". *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*: 276–302.

— . 2013b. *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*. Ed. by Martin Dimitrov. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Dittmer, Lowell. 1995. "Chinese Informal Politics". *The China Journal* 34 (34): 1–34.

Doyle, Edward, Samuel Lipsman, and Terrence Maitland. 1986. *The Vietnam Experience: The North*. Boston Publishing Company.

Driscoll, Amanda, Gabriel Cepaluni, Feliciano de Sá Guimarães, and Paolo Spada. 2018. "Prejudice, Strategic Discrimination, and the Electoral Connection: Evidence from a Pair of Field Experiments in Brazil". *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (4): 781–795.

Dube, Oeindrila, and Juan F Vargas. 2013. "Commodity price shocks and civil conflict: Evidence from Colombia". *Review of Economic Studies* 80 (4): 1384–1421.

Duiker, William J. 1975. *The Comintern and Vietnamese communism*. Papers in international studies: Southeast Asia series. Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program.

— . 1996. *The communist road to power in Vietnam*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Economist. 2015. *Robber barons, beware*. Shanghai.

Egorov, Georgy, and Konstantin Sonin. 2011. "Dictators and their viziers: Endogenizing the loyalty-competence trade-off". *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9 (5): 903–930.

Ellsberg, Daniel. 1971. "Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam, 1954-1960". Chap. 5 in *The Pentagon Papers*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Euromonitor Institutional Investor. 2018. *CEIC China Premium Database*.

Evans, Richard J. 2005. *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939*. Penguin Books. London: Penguin Press.

Feigon, Lee. 1983. *Chen Duxiu, Founder of the Chinese Communist Party*. Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Firth, Raymond. 1957. "Factions in Indian and Overseas Indian Societies, Part 1: Introduction". *The British Journal of Sociology* 8 (4): 291–342.

Fowler, James H. 2006. "Connecting the congress: A study of cosponsorship networks". *Political Analysis* 14 (4): 456–487.

Francois, Patrick, Francesco Trebbi, and Kairong Xiao. 2016. "Factions in Nondemocracies : Theory and Evidence from the Chinese Communist Party".

Gainsborough, Martin. 2010. *Vietnam: Rethinking the State*. London: Zed Books.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, 27–88. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

General Staff of Vietnam's People's Army. 2015. *History of Department of Warfare 1945-2015 (Lich su Cuc tac chien 1945-2015)*. Hanoi: NXB Quan doi Nhan dan.

Gold, Thomas, Doug Guthrie, and David Wank. 2002. *Social Connections in China: Institutions, Culture, and the Changing Nature of Guanxi*. Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences. Cambridge University Press.

Golden, Miriam A, and Eric C Chang. 2001. "Competitive Corruption: Factional Conflict and Political Malfeasance in Postwar Italian Christian Democracy". *World Politics* 53 (04): 588–622.

Grambsch, Patricia M, and Terry M Therneau. 1994. "Proportional hazards tests and diagnostics based on weighted residuals". *Biometrika* 81 (3): 515–526.

Gregory, Paul R. 2009. *Terror by quota: state security from Lenin to Stalin*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gueorguiev, Dimitar D, and Paul J Schuler. 2020. "Collective Charisma: Elite-Mass Relations in China and Vietnam". *Problems of Post-Communism*.

— . 2016. "Keeping your head down: Public profiles and promotion under autocracy". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16 (01): 87–116.

Guo, Xuezhi. 2014. "Controlling corruption in the party: China's Central Discipline Inspection Commission". *China Quarterly* 219 (6): 597–624.

Hainmueller, Jens, and Michael J Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment". *American Political Science Review* 104 (01): 61–84.

Hainmueller, Jens, Daniel J Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2014. "Causal inference in conjoint analysis: Understanding multidimensional choices via stated preference experiments". *Political Analysis* 22 (1): 1–30.

He, Pin, and Wenguang Huang. 2013. *A Death in the Lucky Holiday Hotel: Murder, Money, and an Epic Power Struggle in China*. PublicAffairs.

Heilbrunn, John R. 2004. *Anti-Corruption Commissions Panacea or Real Medicine to Fight Corruption ?*, 1–22. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Hillman, Ben. 2010. "Factions and spoils: Examining political behavior within the local state in China". *China Journal*, no. 64: 1–18.

Hirschman, Charles, and Vu Manh Loi. 1996. "Family and household structure in Vietnam: Some glimpses from a recent survey". *Pacific Affairs* 69 (2): 229–248.

Hollyer, James R, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2014. "Corruption and ideology in autocracies". *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 31 (3): 499–533.

Holzer, Harry J, Steven Raphael, and Michael A Stoll. 2006. "Perceived criminality, criminal background checks, and the racial hiring practices of employers". *The Journal of Law and Economics* 49 (2): 451–480.

Huang, Jing. 2000. *Factionalism in Chinese Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

— . 2008. "Institutionalization of Political Succession in China: Progress and Implications." In *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. by Cheng Li. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1970. "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems". In *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, ed. by Samuel P Huntington and Clement Moore. New York: Basic Books.

Huy Duc. 2012. *The Winning Side: Power Game (Ben thang cuoc: Quyen binh)*. Nguoi Viet Books.

Huynh, Kim Khanh. 1986. *Vietnamese Communism, 1925-1945*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Independent. 1998. *Peking Party Boss is Jailed for Corruption*. Beijing.

Isaacs, Harold R. 1967. "Group identity and political change: The role of color and physical characteristics". *Daedalus* 96 (2): 353–375.

Iversen, Torben, and Frances Rosenbluth. 2006. "The political economy of gender: Explaining cross-national variation in the gender division of labor and the gender voting gap". *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 1–19.

Jia, Ruixue, Masayuki Kudamatsu, and David Seim. 2015. "Political selection in China: The complementary roles of connections and performance". *Journal of the European Economic Association*, IFN Working Paper, 13 (4): 631–668.

Jiang, Junyan, and Dali L Yang. 2016. "Lying or Believing? Measuring Preference Falsification From a Political Purge in China". *Comparative Political Studies* 49 (5): 600–634.

Kampen, Thomas. 2000. *Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and the Evolution of the Chinese Communist Leadership*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies monograph series: Studies on China. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Keller, Franziska Barbara. 2016. "Moving Beyond Factions: Using Social Network Analysis To Uncover Patronage Networks Among Chinese Elites". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16 (01): 17–41.

Kerkvliet, Ben, Anita Chan, and Jonathan Unger. 1998. "Comparing the Chinese and Vietnamese Reforms: An Introduction". *The China Journal* 40 (40): 1–7.

Kershaw, Ian. 1999. *Hitler 1889-1936: Hubris*. Vol. 86. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Koger, Gregory, Seth Masket, and Hans Noel. 2010. "Cooperative Party Factions in American Politics". *American Politics Research* 38 (1): 33–53.

Kucha, Glenn, and Jennifer Llewellyn. 2016. *The Rectification movement*. Alpha History.

Kuhn, Peter, and Kailing Shen. 2013. "Gender discrimination in job ads: Evidence from china". *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128 (1): 287–336.

Kuran, Timur. 1991. "The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989". *World Politics* 44 (01): 7–48.

Largo, V. 2002. *Vietnam: Current Issues and Historical Background*. Nova Science Publishers.

Larsen, Anna Folke, John Rand, and Nina Torm. 2011. "Do recruitment ties affect wages? An analysis using matched employer-employee data from Vietnam". *Review of Development Economics* 15 (3): 541–555.

Le, Hong-Hiep. 2020. "Previewing Vietnam's Leadership Transition in 2021". *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 41: 1–9.

LeBas, Adrienne. 2011. *From protest to parties: Party-building and democratization in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lee, Chong-Sik, and Ki-Wan Oh. 1968. "The Russian Faction in North Korea". *Asian Survey* 8 (4): 270–288.

Lee, Jonghyuk. 2016. *CCP Elite Database: Introduction*.

Leff, Nathaniel H. 1964. "Economic Development Through Bureaucratic Corruption". *American Behavioral Scientist* 8 (3): 8–14.

Lethbridge, Henry J. 1985. *Hard Graft in Hong Kong: Scandal, Corruption, the ICAC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2013. "The durability of revolutionary regimes". *Journal of Democracy* 24 (3): 5–17.

— . 2010. "The Dynamics of Competitive Authoritarianism in Low-Linkage Regions". In *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leys, Colin. 1965. "What is The Problem About Corruption?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3 (02): 215.

Li, Cheng. 2001. *China's Leaders: The New Generation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

— . 2012a. "The battle for china's top nine leadership posts". *Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (): 131–145.

— . 2012b. *The Bo Xilai Crisis: A Curse or a Blessing for China?* Brookings: On the Record.

— . 2002. "The Shanghai Gang: Force for stability or cause for conflict". *China Leadership Monitor* 2:1–16.

Li, Hongbin, and Li-An Zhou. 2005. "Political turnover and economic performance: the incentive role of personnel control in China". *Journal of public economics* 89 (9-10): 1743–1762.

Library of Congress. 2017. *Immunity from Prosecution for Former Presidents*. Tech. rep. Library of Congress.

Lieberthal, Kenneth, David M Lampton, et al. 1992. *Bureaucracy, politics, and decision making in post-Mao China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lieberthal, Kenneth, and Michel C. Oksenberg. 1988. *Policy making in China: Leaders, structures, and processes*. Princeton University Press.

Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives*. New York: Free Press.

Little, Daniel. 1989. *State and Peasant in Contemporary China: the Political Economy of Village Government*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Liu, Amy Y C. 2004. "Gender wage gap in Vietnam: 1993 to 1998". *Journal of Comparative Economics* 32:586–596.

Liu, Hanzhang. 2019. "The logic of authoritarian political selection: Evidence from a conjoint experiment in China". *Political Science Research and Methods* 7 (4): 853–870.

Lorentzen, Peter L. 2013. "Regularizing Rioting: Permitting Public Protest in an Authoritarian Regime". *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 8 (2): 127–158.

Lorentzen, Peter L, and Xi Lu. 2018. "Personal Ties, Meritocracy, and China's Anti-Corruption Campaign".

Lubell, Pamela. 2002. *The Chinese Communist Party and the Cultural Revolution: The Case of the Sixty-One Renegades*. St Antony's Series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

MacFarquhar, Roderick, and Michael Schoenhals. 2006. *Mao's Last Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2008. "Credible power-sharing and the longevity of authoritarian rule". *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4-5): 715–741.

Malesky, Edmund. 2009. "Gerrymandering- Vietnamese style: Escaping the partial reform equilibrium in a nondemocratic regime". *Journal of Politics* 71 (1): 132–159.

— . 2008. "Straight ahead on red: How foreign direct investment empowers subnational leaders". *Journal of Politics* 70 (1): 97–119.

Malesky, Edmund, Regina Abrami, and Yu Zheng. 2011. "Institutions and Inequality in Single-Party Regimes: A Comparative Analysis of Vietnam and China". *Comparative Politics* 43, no. 4 (): 409–427.

Malesky, Edmund, and Jonathan London. 2014. "The Political Economy of Development in China and Vietnam". *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (1): 395–419.

Malesky, Edmund, and Paul Schuler. 2020. "Single-Party Incumbency Advantage in Vietnam: A Conjoint Survey Analysis of Public Electoral Support". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 20 (1): 25–52.

Malesky, Edmund, and Paul J Schuler. 2013. "Star Search: Do Elections Help Nondemocratic Regimes Identify New Leaders?" *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13 (1): 35–68.

— . 2011. "The single-party dictator's dilemma: Information in elections without opposition". *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36 (4): 491–530.

Malesky, Edmund, Anh Tuan Dau, Ngoc Thach Pham, Thanh Ha Le, Minh Thu Tran, Thi Le Nghia Nguyen, Le Ha Nguyen, and Duc Trong Truong. 2020. *The Vietnam Provincial Competitiveness Index: PCI 2019*. Tech. rep.

Manion, Melanie. 2009. *Corruption by Design: Building Clean Government in Mainland China and Hong Kong*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

— . 2016. "Taking China's anticorruption campaign seriously". *Economic and Political Studies* 4 (1): 3–18.

— . 1985. "The Cadre Management System, Post-Mao: The Appointment, Promotion, Transfer and Removal of Party and State Leaders". *The China Quarterly* 102 (102): 203–233.

Maskin, Eric, Yingyi Qian, and Chenggang Xu. 2000. "Incentives, Information, and Organizational Form". *Review of Economic Studies* 67 (2): 359–378.

Mauro, Paolo. 1995. "Corruption and growth". *The quarterly journal of economics* 110 (3): 681–712.

McCormick, Barrett L. 1998. "Political Change in China and Vietnam: Coping with the Consequences of Economic Reform". *The China Journal* 40:121–143.

McHale, Shaun F. 2008. *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam*. Southeast Asia: Politics, Meaning, and Memory. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Mershon, Carol. 2001. "Contending Models of Portfolio Allocation and Office Payoffs to Party Factions: Italy, 1963-79". *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (2): 277–293.

Meyer, David, Victor C. Shih, and Jonghyuk Lee. 2016. "Factions of Different Stripes: Gauging the Recruitment Logics of Factions in the Reform Period". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16 (01): 43–60.

Meyer, David, Victor Shih, and Jonghyuk Lee. 2015. *An Updated Database of Central Committee Members of the CCP*. San Diego: Institute of Global Conflict / Cooperation.

Mobius, Markus, Tanya Rosenblat, and Qiqi Wang. 2016. "Ethnic discrimination: Evidence from China". *European Economic Review* 90:165–177.

Montgomery, Jacob M, and Brendan Nyhan. 2017. "The effects of congressional staff networks in the us house of representatives". *The Journal of Politics* 79 (3): 745–761.

Morris, Stephen J. 1999. "The Soviet-Chinese-Vietnamese Triangle in the 1970's: The View from Moscow". Washington, D.C.

Myerson, Roger B. 2008. "The Autocrat's Credibility Problem and Foundations of the Constitutional State". *American Political Science Review* 102 (01): 125–139.

Nathan, Andrew J. 1973. "A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics". *The China Quarterly* 53 (53): 34–66.

Nathan, Andrew J, and Bruce Gilley. 2003. *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files*. New York: New York Review Books.

Nathan, Andrew J, and Kellee S Tsai. 1995. "Factionalism: A New Institutionalist Restatement". *The China Journal* 34 (34): 157–192.

Nguoilambao. 2018. *Close to 1300 cadres disciplined for corruption, malfeasance. [Gan 1300 dang vien bi thi hanh ky luat do tham nhung, co y lam trai].*

Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. 2012a. *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

— . 2017. *North Vietnam Had an Antiwar Movement, Too.*

— . 2006. "The war politburo: North Vietnam's diplomatic and political road to the Tet Offensive". *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1 (1&2): 4–59.

Nguyen, Luan C. 2012b. *Nationalist in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Nguyen, Nghia. 1964. "The unification of the first Commnunist organizations in Vietnam and the role of Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc (Cong cuoc hop nhat cac to chuc cong san dau tien o Viet Nam va vai tro cua dong chi Nguyen Ai Quoc)". *Nghien Cuu Lich Su*, no. 59: 3–8.

Nicholas, Ralph. 1965. "Factions: A Comparative Analysis". In *Political Systems and the Distribution of Power*, ed. by Michael Banton, 21–62. London: Tavistock Publications.

Nie, Rongzhen. 1983. *Nie Rongzhen's memoirs (Nie Rongzhen huiyi lu)*. Vol 1. Beijing: Zhanshi chubanshe.

Oi, Jean C. 1995. "The role of the local state in China's transitional economy". *The China Quarterly*, no. 144: 1132–1149.

Paik, Wooyeal, and Richard Baum. 2014. "Clientelism with Chinese Characteristics: Local Patronage Networks in Post-Reform China". *Political Science Quarterly* 129 (4): 675–702.

Painter, Martin. 2008. "From command economy to hollow state? Decentralisation in Vietnam and China". *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 67 (1): 79–88.

Phan, Ba. 2017. *50 years after the Revisionist Anti-Party Affair [50 nam vu an Xet Lai Chong Dang]*.

Phan, Cong Chanh. 2015. *Vietnam After 2016: Who Will Lead?* The Diplomat.

Posner, Daniel N. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

— . 2004. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi". *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529–545.

Pye, Lucian W. 1995. "Factions and the Politics of Guanxi: Paradoxes in Chinese Administrative and Political Behaviour". *The China Journal* 34 (34): 35–53.

— . 1981. *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain.

— . 1980. *The dynamics of factions and consensus in Chinese politics*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

Quah, Jon S T. 1995. "Controlling corruption in city-states: A comparative study of Hong Kong and Singapore". *Crime, Law and Social Change* 22:391–414.

Quinn-Judge, Sophie. 2004. "Rethinking the history of the Vietnamese Communist Party". In *Rethinking Vietnam*, ed. by Duncan McCargo, 43–55. London: Routledge.

— . 2005. "The Ideological Debate in the DRV and the Significance of the Anti-Party Affair, 1967–68". *Cold War History* 5 (4): 479–500.

Rambo, A Terry. 1973. *A comparison of peasant social systems of Northern and Southern Viet-Nam: a study of ecological adaptation, social succession, and cultural evolution*. Carbondale: Center for Vietnamese Studies, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Rauch, James E., and Peter B. Evans. 2000. "Bureaucratic structure and bureaucratic performance in less developed countries". *Journal of Public Economics* 75:49–71.

Rothstein, Bo. 2015. "The Chinese Paradox of High Growth and Low Quality of Government: The Cadre Organization Meets Max Weber". *Governance* 28 (4): 533–548.

Saba, Paul. 1968. "On the Situation in the People's Republic of China". Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line.

Saich, Tony, and Benjamin Yang. 1996. "Letter from Chen Duxiu to G. Voitinsky (6 April 1922)". In *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party*, 34. New York: M.E. Sharpe.

Schram, Stuart R. 1966. *Mao Tse-tung*. Penguin Books.

— . 1983. *Mao Zedong: A Preliminary Reassessment*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Schwartz, Benjamin Isadore. 1967. *Chinese communism and the rise of Mao*. Vol. 4, 258 p. Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass.

Sheng, Yumin. 2007. "Global Market Integration and Central Political Control". *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (4): 405–434.

Shenon, Philip. 1998. *Nguyen Van Linh, Vietnam's Ex-Party Chief, Dies at 82*. New York Times.

Shih, Victor C. 2008a. ""Nauseating" Displays of Loyalty: Monitoring the Factional Bargain through Ideological Campaigns in China". *The Journal of Politics* 70 (4): 1177–1192.

— . 2016. "Contentious Elites in China: New Evidence and Approaches". *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16 (01): 1–15.

— . 2008b. *Factions and finance in China: elite conflict and inflation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

— . 2004. "Factions matter: Personal networks and the distribution of bank loans in China". *Journal of Contemporary China* 13 (1): 3–19.

Shih, Victor C., Christopher Adolph, and Mingxing Liu. 2012. "Getting Ahead in the Communist Party: Explaining the Advancement of Central Committee Members in China". *American Political Science Review* 106 (01): 166–187.

Shih, Victor C., Wei Shan, and Mingxing Liu. 2010. "Gauging the Elite Political Equilibrium in the CCP: A Quantitative Approach Using Biographical Data". *The China Quarterly* 201 (2010): 79.

Shirk, Susan. 1993a. "Playing to the Provinces: Fiscal Decentralization and the Politics of Reform". In *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

— . 1993b. *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shleifer, Andrei, and Robert Vishny. 1993. "Corruption". *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Sina News. 2006. *The Long March's turning point 1935/1/15 - 1935/6/14 (Changcheng zhuanzhe jieduan 1935/1/15 - 1935/6/14)*.

Smith, Benjamin. 2005. “Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule”. *World Politics* 57 (3): 421–451.

Smith, Tom W. 2004. “Developing and Evaluating Cross-National Survey Instruments”. Chap. 21 in *Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questionnaires*, ed. by Stanley Presser, Jennifer M Rothgeb, Mick P Couper, Judith T Lessler, Elizabeth Martin, Jean Martin, and Eleanor Singer. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 1977. *Regional Government and Political Integration in Southwest China, 1949-1954: A Case Study*. University of California Press.

Speville, Bertrand de. 2010. “Anticorruption commissions: The "Hong Kong model" revisited”. *Asia-Pacific Review* 17, no. 1 (): 47–71.

Steiner, H Arthur. 1950. “New regional governments in China”. *Far Eastern Survey* 19 (11): 112–116.

Sterba, James P. 1981. *Mao’s Widow Sentenced to Death, But Penalty is Suspended 2 Years*. New York Times.

Stockmann, Daniela, and Mary E. Gallagher. 2011. “Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China”. *Comparative Political Studies* 44 (4): 436–467.

Stokes, Susan C, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. 2013. *Brokers, voters, and clientelism: The puzzle of distributive politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Stowe, Judy. 2001. “Revisionism in Vietnam (Revisionisme au Vietnam)”. *Communisme* 65-66:233–249.

Stratfor. 2014. *Hanoi’s Internal Divisions Hinder Its China Policy*. Stratfor Worldview.

— . 2016. *In China, Ulterior Motives in the Fight Against Corruption*.

Strøm, Kaare, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman. 2006. *Delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies*. Ed. by Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sudduth, Jun Koga. 2017. “Strategic Logic of Elite Purges in Dictatorships”. *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (13): 1768–1801.

Sun, Yan. 1991. “The Chinese protests of 1989: the issue of corruption”. *Asian Survey* 31 (8): 762–782.

Svolik, Milan. 2009. “Power-sharing and leadership dynamics in authoritarian regimes”. *American journal of political science* 51 (November): 477–494.

— . 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge studies in comparative politics. Cambridge University Press.

Szalontai, Balazs. 2010. *Hoang Van Hoan and the purge after 1979 (Hoang Van Hoan va vu thanh trung sau 1979)*.

Teiwes, Frederick C. 2016a. *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950-65*. Routledge Revivals. Taylor & Francis.

— . 2016b. *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s*. Taylor & Francis.

Thai, Quang Trung. 1990. "Factions and Power Struggle in Hanoi: Is Nguyen Van Linh in Command". In *Vietnam Today: Assessing the New Trends*, ed. by Quang Trung Thai, 1–22. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2014. *4 Reasons China Removed Oil Rig HYSY-981 Sooner Than Planned*. The Diplomat.

— . 2009. "Political Legitimacy of Vietnam's One-Party-State: Challenges and Responses". *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 28 (4): 47–70.

— . 2017a. "Vietnam: Dinh La Thang Victim of Factional In-Fighting?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*.

— . 2017b. "Vietnam's Foreign Policy in an Era of Rising Sino-US Competition and Increasing Domestic Political Influence". *Asian Security* 13 (3): 183–199.

Trinh, Duy. 2020. "The Evolution of Factional Sorting in China and Vietnam". *Problems of Post-Communism* 68 (3): 171–189.

Truex, Rory. 2016. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. 213. London: Cambridge University Press.

Tsou, Tang. 1976. "Prolegomenon to the Study of Informal Groups in CCP Politics". *The China Quarterly* 65 (65): 98–114.

Ven, Hans J van de. 1992. *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920-1927*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vietnam Communist Party. 1976. *An Outline History of the Viet Nam Workers' Party (1930-1975)*. Hanoi: Foreign Language Press.

— . 2002a. *Complete Party Documents (Van Kien Dang Toan Tap)*. Vol. 21. NXB Chinh tri Quoc gia.

— . 2016. *Decision 30-QD/TW: On Implementing Party Statute Chapter VII and VIII on Party Disciplinary Inspection.*

— . 2017. *Regulation 102-QD/TW: Quy dinh xu ly ky luat dang vien vi pham.*

— . 2002b. "Secret Cable from the Center Sent to the Executive Committees of Nam Bo, Interzone V, no. 28/DM, 14 March 1961 (Dien mat cua Trung uong gui Xu uy Nam Bo, Lien khu V, so 28/DM, ngay 14 thang 3 nam 1961)". In *Complete Party Documents (Van Kien Dang Toan Tap)*, vol. 21, 263–65. NXB Chinh tri Quoc gia.

— . 2009. *Vietnamese Communist Party Statute [Dieu Le Dang Cong San Viet Nam].* Hanoi: National Political Publishing House.

Vietnam Institute of History. 2017. *History of Vietnam (Lich su Viet Nam).* Ed. by Duc Cuong Tran. Hanoi: NXB Khoa hoc Xa hoi.

Vietnamnet. 2018. *One year since General Secretary's "even wet firewood would burn" campaign [Mot nam 'Lo nong, cui tuoi cung phai chay' cua Tong bi thu].*

Vo, Van Kiet. 2007. *Truong Chinh - The General Secretary of the Reformation (Truong Chinh - Tong Bi Thu cua Doi Moi).* Vietnamnet.

Vu, Tuong. 2017. *Vietnam's Communist Revolution: The Power and Limits of Ideology.* Cambridge Studies in US Foreign Relations. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Vuving, Alexander L. 2017. "The 2016 Leadership Change in Vietnam and its Long-Term Implications". *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2017:121–435.

— . 2010. "VIETNAM: A Tale of Four Players". *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2010 (1): 367–391.

Wang, Jiayuan, Yang Zou, and Qingbing Wing. 2014. "Fiscal Transfers From the Central Government to Provinces in China: Potential influence of the Native-place Connections of Politburo Members". *Journal of Chinese Economics* 2 (3): 4–17.

Wang, Yuhua. 2016. "Beyond Local Protectionism: China's State–Business Relations in the Last Two Decades". *The China Quarterly* 226 (May): 319–341.

Warner, Denis. 1977. *Not With Guns Alone: How Hanoi Won the War.* London: Hutchinson.

Weber, Max. 1958. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology.* Ed. by Richard Swedberg. 490. 5. Princeton: Routledge. arXiv: `arXiv:1011.1669v3`.

Wedeman, Andrew. 2005. "Anticorruption campaigns and the intensification of corruption in China". *Journal of Contemporary China* 14 (42): 93–116.

— . 2004. “The Intensification of Corruption in China”. *China Quarterly* 180:895–921.

Whiting, Susan H. 2004. “The cadre evaluation system at the grass roots: The paradox of party rule”. In *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era*, ed. by Barry Naughton and Dali L Yang, 101–119. September 2002.

Williamson, Oliver E. 1979. “Transaction-cost economics: the governance of contractual relations”. *The Journal of Law and Economics* 22 (2): 233–261.

Wintrobe, Ronald. 1998. *The Political Economy of Dictatorship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Womack, Brantly. 1987. “The Party and the People: Revolutionary and Postrevolutionary Politics in China and Vietnam”. *World Politics* 39 (4): 479–507.

Wu, Linquan, and Fei Peng. 1988. *Springs and Autumns in Caolan (Caolan chun qiu).* 1st ed. Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe.

Xinhua. 2018. *CCDI announces review of national discipline inspection and suvervision organs in 2017 [Zhongyang jiwei tongbao 2017 nian quanguo jijian jiancha jiguan jilu shencha qingkuang].*

Yang, Benjamin. 1986. “The Zunyi Conference as One Step in Mao’s Rise to Power: A Survey of Historical Studies of the Chinese Communist Party”. *The China Quarterly* 106 (106): 235–271.

Yiwei, Hu. 2020. *In numbers: China’s anti-graft campaign after achieving ’sweeping victory’.* China Global Television Network.

Yuan, Yin. 2015. “Factionalism and the Exit of Central Committee Members in China: A Network Approach”.

Zhao, Jialiang. 2013. *Insider: Gao Gang’s "Criticize Bo to Attack Liu" is the Chairman’s decision, how can it be anti-party? [Zhiqing ren: Gao gang pi bao she liu shi zhuxi ding diao zen shuo fan dang?]*

Zhu, Boliang. 2017. “MNCs, Rents, and Corruption: Evidence from China”. *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (1): 84–99.

Zhu, Jiangnan, and Dong Zhang. 2017. “Weapons of the Powerful: Authoritarian Elite Competition and Politicized Anticorruption in China”. *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (9): 1186–1220.