ESSAYS ON THE RHETORIC OF CHINA'S ANTICORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

by

Yuyang Pu

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Chair of Committee: Nikolay Marinov, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Tanya Bagashka, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Francisco Cantú, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Yuhua Wang, Ph.D., Harvard University

University of Houston
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献给我的母亲，杨敏，

和我的父亲，蒲卫平。

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Soli Deo Gloria.

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I conduct a comprehensive investigation of the rhetoric of China' s anticorruption campaign. I classify different accusations against corrupt officials: descriptive accusation (DA) and rhetorical accusation (RA). I create an original dataset that covers 1,292 statements and 9,136 individual accusations of corrupt officials from 2013 to 2018. Using text-analysis methods, I find the main topics of both descriptive and rhetorical accusations. For DAs, there are three major topics: economic, political, and sexual misconduct. For RAs, there are two major topics: personal qualities and spiritual disobedience.

I argue that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses anticorruption rhetoric as a tool to frame the campaign differently, shifts blame to corrupt officials, and demonstrates its strength. Using observational data, I investigate the targets and effects of anticorruption rhetoric, which is measured by the proportion of RAs in a statement of corrupt officials. I find that it is positively associated with officials' hierarchic level. The result of aggregate data (provincial level) suggests citizens with a high exposure to anticorruption rhetoric are associated with a lower perception of corruption. Finally, I assess the causal effects of anticorruption rhetoric via a survey experiment. I find anticorruption rhetoric: 1) shifts the blame for corruption to officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions; 2) reduces citizens' perception of corruption in public service areas; and 3) raises citizens' evaluation of the risk of giving or receiving a bribe. The findings shed light on the literature on China's anticorruption campaign and authoritarian resilience. This study suggests that anticorruption rhetoric does have substantive effects on Chinese citizens' public opinion rather than just serving as a symbolic role. The CCP anticipated the potential backfire effect of its anticorruption campaign on public opinion and deployed counterstrategies.

This dissertation also examines how sexual scandals revealed during China's

anticorruption campaign impact women's willingness to work for the government. I argue that the vast majority of victims of sexual misconduct are women. Therefore, they are more sensitive to their working environment than their male counterparts. A hazardous working environment with the risk of being involved in sexual misconduct can deter young women from working for the government. On the other hand, men are less concerned about being involved with sexual misconduct. If any effects exist, men might be incentivized by potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking. The experimental evidence suggests that the exposure to a sex scandal of a corrupt official enlarges the gender gap in willingness to work for the government. The finding suggests that China's anticorruption campaign has a spillover effect that might jeopardize female representation from the supply side.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Puzzle: An Authoritarian Dilemma of Corruption

Corruption is a typical issue across countries (Rose-Ackerman and Palifka, 2016). It is commonly defined as "the misuse of public office for private gain" (Svensson, 2005). Based on Transparency International, an international organization dedicated to fighting corruption around the world, corruption comes with political, economic, social, and even environmental costs.[1] Scholars find that corruption has negative impacts on economic growth (Mo, 2001; Svensson, 2005; Treisman, 2007). Corruption is also found to exacerbate poverty and income inequality (Gupta, Davoodi and Alonso-Terme, 2002; Chetwynd, Chetwynd and Spector, 2003). Corruption is more severe in authoritarian states since the lack of opposition, rule of law, independent supervision organization, and free press (Drury, Krieckhaus and Lusztig, 2006). Nevertheless, how to deal with corruption is a dilemma for all dictators.

Based on Svolik's model of authoritarian politics, in order to survive, a dictator needs to manage to share their power with political elites (Authoritarian power-sharing) and to control citizens (Authoritarian control) (Svolik, 2012). Political elites in authoritarian states profit from corruption since it distributes exclusive and private benefits to them. However, citizens suffer the negative consequences of corruption through high transactional costs, unjust treatments, and income inequality. Although citizens lack institutional channels to hold the dictator accountable, popular uprisings are still one of the biggest nightmares of all authoritarian leaders. Grievances of corruption can even lead to revolutions against the dictator such as in Egypt and Tunisia during the Arab Spring (Cook, Moretti and Rudin, 2012).

On the other hand, fighting corruption might also jeopardize authoritarian ruling. For political elites, fighting corruption cuts their benefits, endangers their

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[1] https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption

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position in politics, and even threatens their life. Unhappy political elites are extremely dangerous to authoritarian leaders. Approximately 35 % of dictatorships end with *coup d'etat*, which is the most common ending for authoritarian leaders (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2018). Moreover, in theory, citizens should be supportive of anticorruption efforts by authoritarian governments. However, In authoritarian states with a high information control, anticorruption efforts can backfire on the authoritarian government. Revealing information about corruption can update citizens' perceptions of corruption and jeopardize public support of the government (Wang and Dickson, 2021).

In sum, dictators face a dilemma when they decide either to ignore or fight corruption. On the one hand, ignoring corruption might lead to negative economic concequences and even political instability. On the other hand, fighting corruption also comes with some unexpected impacts on the survival of dictatorships.

This dissertation investigates how dictators deal with backfire effects on public opinion during anticorruption campaigns. In this dissertation, I select China as the case to study. First, China is the largest authoritarian state and the second-largest economy. Second, the so-called "China Model" sounds very appealing to other authoritarian states. Studying and understanding politics in China might help us understand recent authoritarian resilience around the world (Nathan, 2003; Frantz, 2018). Moreover, China has developed an advanced information control system. This system can backfire if citizens have alternative channels to access information. Nevertheless, it has proven to be very helpful when the Chinese government suffers from declining support and tries to manipulate public opinion (King, Pan and Roberts, 2013, 2017; Roberts, 2018; Huang, 2015, 2018; Weiss and Dafoe, 2019). How China deals with corruption can be very informative to politicians, scholars, and citizens of authoritarian states. In the next section, I will discuss China's anticorruption

campaign.

1.2 Background

On November 15, 2012, the first plenary session of the 18th Central Committee (CC) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) elected Xi Jinping as the General Secretary. A moment later, General Secretary Xi met the domestic and international media with six other members of the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), which is the highest leading body of the CCP. In Xi's first appearance as the General Secretary, he stated that the CCP encounters many challenges and has many internal problems that need to be solved. One of them is corruption.[2]

The following January, Xi presented his signature anticorruption campaign, "cracking down on both tigers and flies," for the first time in the second plenary session of the 18th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).[3] At that time, few politicians, journalists, or academics realized that it would be an unprecedented anticorruption campaign in China. As (Wedeman, 2005, p.94) stated, many of them would consider this anticorruption campaign as another show of "Beijing Opera in which the actors rush about the stage amid great sound and fury in a drama that ultimately signifies nothing because, after the din dies down and the actors leave the stage, corruption abides." In a way, his analysis of China's anticorruption seems reasonable. Without a fundamental institutional reform, eradicating corruption seems to be "mission impossible" in authoritarian states.[4]

Nonetheless, what is the ultimate goal of anticorruption campaigns in authoritarian states? Survey studies suggest that citizens all over the world consider corruption to be a serious problem. Especially in China, corruption is considered

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[2]Source: https://rb.gy/qpvozp

[3]Source: http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/0122/c64094-20289660-2.html

[4]During this anticorruption campaign, I do not observe fundamental institutional reform, for example, the establishment of an independent judicial system or an independent investigation body.

the biggest challenge (Wike and Stokes, 2016; Fisman and Golden, 2017*b*). General Secretary Xi even warned his comrades that corruption is the greatest threat to the CCP's ruling. He argued that "a mass of facts tells us that if corruption becomes increasingly serious, it will inevitably doom the party and the state."[5] Xi Jinping is not the only authoritarian leader who has started anticorruption campaigns. Leaders such as Vladimir Putin, Russia's de facto ruler of the last 20 years, Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader in North Korea, and Mohammed bin Salman, the crowned prince of Saudi Arabia, regularly launch anticorruption campaigns in their country. They almost unanimously claim that anticorruption campaigns are a response to citizens' dissatisfaction with corruption. If the goal of anticorruption campaigns is to neutralize citizens' dissatisfaction with corruption, preemptively disincentivize their rebellion, and restore public trust in governments rather than eradicate corruption, then Xi's anticorruption "Beijing Opera" should be reevaluated.

1.3 Motivations

Lu Wei, the former vice deputy of the Propaganda Department of the CCP, was quite noticeable in Chinese politics. Lu was known for his role in managing the Chinese Internet. The New York Times called Lu "China's Web Doorkeeper."[6] While Lu Wei seems to have had a bright political career, he was reported under investigation for corruption in 2017. Lu Wei thus became the first official at the ministerial level under investigation for corruption since the 19th Party Congress of the CCP.[7]

Due to the high volume of media coverage prior to his investigation, the news of Lu's fall attracted much attention. In February 2018, three months after the announcement of Lu Wei's investigation, the CCDI published a statement. In this

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The National Supervisory Commission (NSC) was established in 2018. However, because of the *Nomenklatura* system of the CCP, the head of this commission is occupied by the deputy secretary of the CCDI.

[5]Source: https://nyti.ms/3EUaOZH [6]Source: https://nyti.ms/3vplagX [7]Source: https://www.ccdi.gov.cn/specialn/bwzp2436/wqhgbwzp/201711/t20171122_104160.html

statement, Lu was accused of engaging in bribery, power-sex exchange, and political misconduct. Moreover, Lu Wei was described as a person with awful personal qualities. For example, Lu was accused of being shameless, extremely disloyal, and losing ideals and faith, which a CCP member is supposed to have. The rhetoric in Lu Wei's statement is extremely subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable. This leads to a series of questions.

Is the rhetoric in Lu's statement a unique phenomenon or a systematic strategy of the CCP during China's anticorruption campaign? If the rhetoric in Lu's statement is systematically used in other corrupt officials' statements, what are the characteristics of accusations? Who are the targets? What are the effects of those accusations on audiences?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

I argue that anticorruption rhetoric, those subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable accusations in Lu Wei's statement, have two major effects: a framing effect and a deterrence effect.

The CCP uses anticorruption rhetoric to frame its anticorruption campaign differently so it can shift the blame of corruption to corrupt officials and counter potential the backfire effects of the campaign (Chong and Druckman, 2007). Anticorruption rhetoric emphasizes that corruption officials are morally corrupt and treats them as "bad apples". Moreover, it demonstrates that the CCP always places great weight on discipline. These officials are corrupt because first, they are "bad apples" with lower personal qualities, and second, they fail to comply with Party disciplines. As a result, their corruption and fall have nothing to do with political institutions. Citizens are expected to blame corruption on corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than potlicail institutions.

Moreover, the adoption of anticorruption also comes with a deterrence effect. It serves as a tool of "hard propaganda" to demostrate the strength of the government and the Party (Huang, 2015, 2018; Wedeen, 2015). Consequently, citizens are expected to be less likely to engage in any "rebellious behaviors" against this strong government.

This dissertation also discusses a spillover effect of China's anticorruption campaign. Many corrupt officials have engaged in sexual misconduct during China's anticorruption campaign. I argue that *ceteris paribus* women are more sensitive to their working environment than their male counterparts regarding the risk of being engaged with sexual misconduct since they are disproportionately affected by it. A hazardous working environment with the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct can deter young women from working for the government. On the other hand, men are less concerned about being involved with sexual misconduct. If any effects exist, men might be incentivized by potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking.

1.5   Roadmap

This chapter briefly discusses the background, motivations, and main theoretical framework of this dissertation.

Chapter 1 introduces the process of data collection and coding. Using text-analysis skills, I found the main topics of both descriptive accusations and rhetorical accusations. For descriptive accusations, there are three major categories: economic, political, and sexual misconduct. For rhetorical accusations, two major topics are related to corrupt officials' personal qualities and how they failed to comply with party discipline.

Chapter 2 uses observational data to explore who becomes a target of of anti-corruption rhetoric. I found that statements of high-ranking corrupt officials contain

more anticorruption rhetoric. Moreover, using WVS wave 7 data (Haerpfer, 2020), I found at the provincial level, that there is a clear negative association between exposure to anticorruption rhetoric and citizens' perception of corruption.

Chapter 3 presents experimental evidence on the causal effects of anticorruption rhetoric. This shows that anticorruption rhetoric can effectively shift the blame of corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions. Moreover, it indicates how anticorruption rhetoric serves as a tool of "hard propaganda" to deter Chinese citizens from any rebellious behaviors.

Chapter 4 explores the spillover effect of China's anticorruption campaign via a survey experiment. It provides evidence of how sex scandals revealed during the anticorruption campaign enlarge the gender gap in the willingness to work for the government and therefore jeopardize female representation in politics.

The last chapter concludes this dissertation by listing the major findings and contributions. Moreover, it discusses the implications of this dissertation. Finally, it points out potential directions for future research.

2 Chapter 1: An Inquiry into the Rhetoric of China's Anticorruption Campaign

Abstract

Why does the Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI), the disciplinary organ of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), use subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable accusations against some corrupt officials? I create an original dataset that covers 1,292 statements and 9,136 individual accusations of corrupt officials from 2013 to 2018. Using text-analysis skills, I found the main topics of both descriptive accusations and rhetorical accusations. For descriptive accusations, there are three major categories: economic, political, and sexual misconduct. For rhetorical accusations, two major topics are related to corrupt officials' personal qualities and how they spiritually failed to comply with party discipline.

Keywords: China, Anticorruption Campaign, Anticorruption Rhetoric, Text Analysis

2.1 Introduction

During China's anticorruption campaign, numerous CCP officials were investigated and then removed, including three Politburo members and one Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) member. During the campaign, the Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI) is responsible for publishing statements against corrupt officials.

Wang Gang, one of many corrupt officials investigated in China's anticorruption campaign, was the former party secretary in Zhaozhuang, Shandong Province. The Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI) of Shandong published a statement against Wang after his investigation. In this statement, the CDI accused taht "Wang uses his position to seek benefits for others, accepts large amounts of money and goods, embezzles public funds, and accepts gifts." [8] The CDI removed Wang from his public position and expelled him from the CCP.

In November 2017, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) launched an investigation against Lu Wei, also known as China's Internet Czar. The following February, the CCDI published a statement against Lu.[9] The CCDI listed Lu's corrupt behaviors as well: "(Lu) abuses his power for personal gain, deceives the Party's Central Committee, and visits private clubs frequently." In this statement, the CCDI further pointed out "(Lu) loses his ideals and beliefs, does not follow party discipline, and is extremely disloyal to the Party." Moreover, the CCDI labeled Lu as a "Two-faced man" and accused him of being "totally shameless and too ambitious." At the end, the CCDI also announced that Lu was expelled from the CCP and his public position as well.

The rhetoric in the two statements is clearly inconsistent. Wang Gang is charged only with corrupt behaviors, and his accusations are descriptive, objective, and falsifiable. On the other hand, the rhetoric in Lu's statement tends to be subjective, abusive, and non-falsifiable. Accusations against Lu not only include his corrupt behaviors but also thought crimes, moral flaws, and even name-calling.

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[8]Source: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/scdc/sggb/djcf/201607/t20160704_117347.html

[9]Source: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/yaowen/201802/t20180213_164227.html

Why does the CCP use subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable accusations against corrupt officials? To systematically investigate this question, I create a comprehensive dataset that covers statements of corrupt officials. To my knowledge, although such rhetoric has not been newly created, scholars have not yet paid attention to it.

In this chapter, I describe the data collection process and conduct a comprehensive descriptive analysis. I first collect 1,292 statements of corrupt officials from the website of the CDI. Then, I split and unitize each statement into individual accusations and further classify them into two different categories: descriptive accusations and rhetorical accusations. The result suggests that the CDI systematically uses subjective, abusive, and nonfalifiable rhetoric against corrupt officials during the campaign. More than half of the statements (669, 51.78%) contain at least one rhetorical accusation.

Moreover, the major topics of descriptive accusations are violations of the Party's economic, political, and sexual misconduct. On the other hand, the major topics of rhetorical accusations are related to corrupt officials' personal qualities and how they fail to comply with Party disciplines. I also found that both the use of descriptive and rhetorical accusations vary over time and space.

2.2 Background

According to the Constitution of the CCP, the CDI is the party organ for discipline inspection.

"*The Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection functions under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Party. The Party's local commissions for discipline inspection at all levels and primary commissions for discipline inspection function under the dual leadership of the Party committees at the corresponding levels and the next higher commissions for discipline inspection.*"[10]

During Xi Jinping's tenure, the anticorruption campaign named "cracking down on

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[10]Article 45, Chapter 8, Constitution of the CCP Source: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/toutiao/201710/t20171028_126170.html

both tigers and flies," is arguably the most remarkable political campaign of its kind. The tiger refers to high-ranking official, and the fly refers to local officials. Like many previous anticorruption campaigns, the campaign launched by Xi also highly relies on the CCP's disciplinary organ, the CDI. Once the CDI decides to investigate a case, it starts an internal disciplinary process called "Shuanggui (双规)." During the "Shuanggui" process, suspects are isolated, detained and have to respond to accusations against him/her. Once the CDI has concluded its investigation and finds the suspects guilty, the result and punishment are announced. The statement is then published in a formal written format.

Due to the CCP's control over the media, the statement of corrupt officials published by the CDI is the most reliable information source for Chinese citizens to keep updated about China's anticorruption campaign. However, existing research has not considered such a valuable data source. Therefore, I fill the gap by collecting these statements and creating a comprehensive dataset. In the next section, I will present the process of selection, unitization, and classification.

2.3   Identification Process

Selection

The first task of the selection process is to find the most credible source and location of statements of corrupt officials. I choose the website of the CCDI (https://www.ccdi.gov.cn/), which is the original source of the statements.[11] In most cases, the CCDI will publish a statement against a corrupt official after the investigation. Other media outlets will only be allowed to reshare this statement.[12]

Then, the next step is to decide the inclusion and exclusion criteria of corrupt officials. Based on the research agenda, I only include two types of corrupt officials: 1) Officials supervised by the Central Party Committee ("中管干部"); and 2) Officials supervised by the provincial Party Committee ("省管干部"). All other types of officials: officials from the

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[11]For local officials, local CDI branches will report the results and punishment to the CCDI.

[12]e.g. State-owned media outlets on social media, such as Weibo and WeChat.

Figure 1: Lu Wei's Statement

central-level party and state organs, state-owned enterprises and financial units ("中央一级党和国家机关、国企和金融单位干部") and officials supervised by the municipal Party Committee ("市管干部") are excluded since they are less relevant. Furthermore, due to limited time and resources, I restrict the time frame of this study from 2012 to 2018. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 1,262 statements of corrupt officials were collected.

The next task is to extract relevant information from each statement. A typical statement includes three components: brief introduction, accusations, and punishments. Figure 1 presents a sample of a statement of a corrupt official. Based on research interests, I only include part of the accusaiton. It is marked with a red square in Figure 1. As a result, the corpus now contains 1,281 texts with accusations against corrupt officials.

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[13]The unitization process refers to Manifesto Coding Instructions (Werner, Lacewell and Volkens, 2015).

Unitization

The next step is to unitize all texts in the corups.[13] The purpose of this step is to generate a list of accusations for further classification and discard all irrelevant information. Each unit contains precisely one individual accusation.

First, I slipt all texts in the corpus into individual phrases based on punctuations so that I have a list of phrases. Then I determine whether a phrase is an individual accusation. If so, I add this phrase to the list of accusations (List 1). Otherwise, I add the phrase to another list of phrases (List 2) for further unitization.

Second, I need to further unitize phrases in List 2. This list contains 3 types of phrases: 1) Type 1: Phrases that need to be combined into one individual accusation. Example: 1) "(Name) takes advantage of his position, provides benefits for others, and accepts bribes (利用职务上的便利，为他人谋取利益，收受贿赂)" contains three phrases, individually they are not an accusation. But if I combine them together, it is one individual accusation. 2) Type 2: Phrases are categorical accusations. Example: "(Name) violates organizational and personnel discipline (违反组织人事纪律)"; "(Name) violates political discipline (违反政治纪律)"; "(Name) violates life discipline (违反生活纪律)" are categorical accusations. A categorical accusation is an accusation of general disciplinary violation, but lacking of specific misconducts. 3) Type 3: Irrelevant phrases. Example: "(Name) is a senior party leader (身为党的高级领导干部)","(Name) should have remembered the purpose of the Party (本应牢记党的宗旨)", "Strictly abide by the party's discipline and rules (严格遵守党的纪律和规矩)", or "Exemplary compliance with national laws and regulations (模范遵守国家的法律法规)". Those phrases are not related to accusations and can not be combined into one individual accusation.

For Type 1 phrases in List 2, I combine relevant phrases into one individual accusation and add them to List 1. Moreover, I have two solutions for Type 2 phrases. First, if this phrase is followed with specific misconduct (Type 2a), I should discard it. Second, if this phrase listed as an individual accusation without any following specific misconduct (Type 2b), then I should add this one into List 1. For example: "(Name) violates life discipline,

(and) commits adultery with others (违反生活纪律，与他人通奸)", then "(Name) violates life discipline (违反生活纪律)" should be a Type 2a phrase and should be discarded. However, if "(Name) violates life discipline (违反生活纪律)" listed individually, I should label this phrase as Type 2b and add it into List 1. Lastly, I should discard all Type 3 phrases in the corpus. In Table 1, I briefly summarize the steps to process the phrases in List 2. Based on these rules, I unitize all texts in the corpus and generate a new list of 9,136 accusations. Those individual accusations will then be further classified.

Table 1: Unitization Process

Step 1	Phrase Type	Step 2
	Type 1	Combine relevant phrases into one individual accusation and add to List 1
Determine the type	Type 2a	Discard
of phrase in List 2	Type 2b	Add to List 1
	Type 3	Discard

Classification

Now, there is a list of individual accusations. The next step is to classify each of them. The first type of accusation is **Descriptive Accusation**. I define a descriptive accusation as an individual accusation that is an objective, descriptive, and falsifiable description of a specific corrupt behavior. First, a descriptive accusation should be objective without any subjective judgments. Moreover, such behaviors should be descriptive. Lastly, these corrupt behaviors could be falsifiable by other parties.

Back to the examples of Wang Gang and Lu Wei, all three accusations of Wang Gang, "(Wang Gang) takes advantage of his position to seek benefits for others, and accept large amounts of money and goods" (利用职务便利为他人谋取利益，收受巨额钱物); "(Wang) embezzles public funds" (侵吞公款); and "(Wang) accepts gifts and gratitudes" (收受礼品礼金), should be classified as a "Descriptive Accusation." In Lu Wei's case, accusations such as "(Lu) abuses his power for personal gain" (以权谋私), "(Lu) deceives the Party's Central Committee"(欺骗中央), and "(Lu) visits private clubs frequently" (频繁出

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入私人会所), should be classified as a "Descriptive Accusation." However, other accusations, such as "(Lu) lost his ideals and beliefs"(理想信念缺失), "totally shameless"(毫无廉耻), and "too ambitious" (野心膨胀), need another label.

I define **Rhetorical Accusation** as a highly subjective, nonverifiable, and transferable accusation against corrupt officials. A rhetorical accusation normally contains a subjective judgment rather than an objective description. Moreover, it is very hard for others to verify a rhetorical accusation. The CDI can easily transfer a rhetorical accusation to any corrupt official. Instead of accusing a specific corrupt behavior, rhetorical accusations tend to be non-evidence-based.

Finally, some accusations may not be very distinctive so that I cannot easily classify them. Under this circumstance, I choose to label those vague accusations as "Descriptive Accusation," which avoids overestimating the CDI's effort to use rhetoric in corrupt officials' statements.

Based on these rules, 7,595 (83.13%) accusations are labeled "Descriptive Accusation" and 1,541 (16.87%) accusations are labeled "Rhetorical Accusation".

2.4   Descriptive Analysis

Main Topics

Figure 2 shows the top 10 most frequent accusations. For descriptive accusations, I classify them into three categories: political misconduct, economic corruption, and sexual misconduct.[14] The top 10 descriptive accusations are labeled (a), (b), and (c), respectively, in the figure. The result implies that economic corruption, that is, corruption associated with power-money exchange, is not the only concern of the CCP. It also emphasizes political discipline as well, which is even more crucial. As an example, the most common descriptive accusation is "misbehaving after 18th PC" ("党的十八大后不收敛、不收手"), which accounts for 6.64% of all descriptive accusations. This means that the corrupt official did

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[14]"Life discipline violation" is most likely a euphemism for sexual misconduct.

Figure 2: Top 10 Accusations
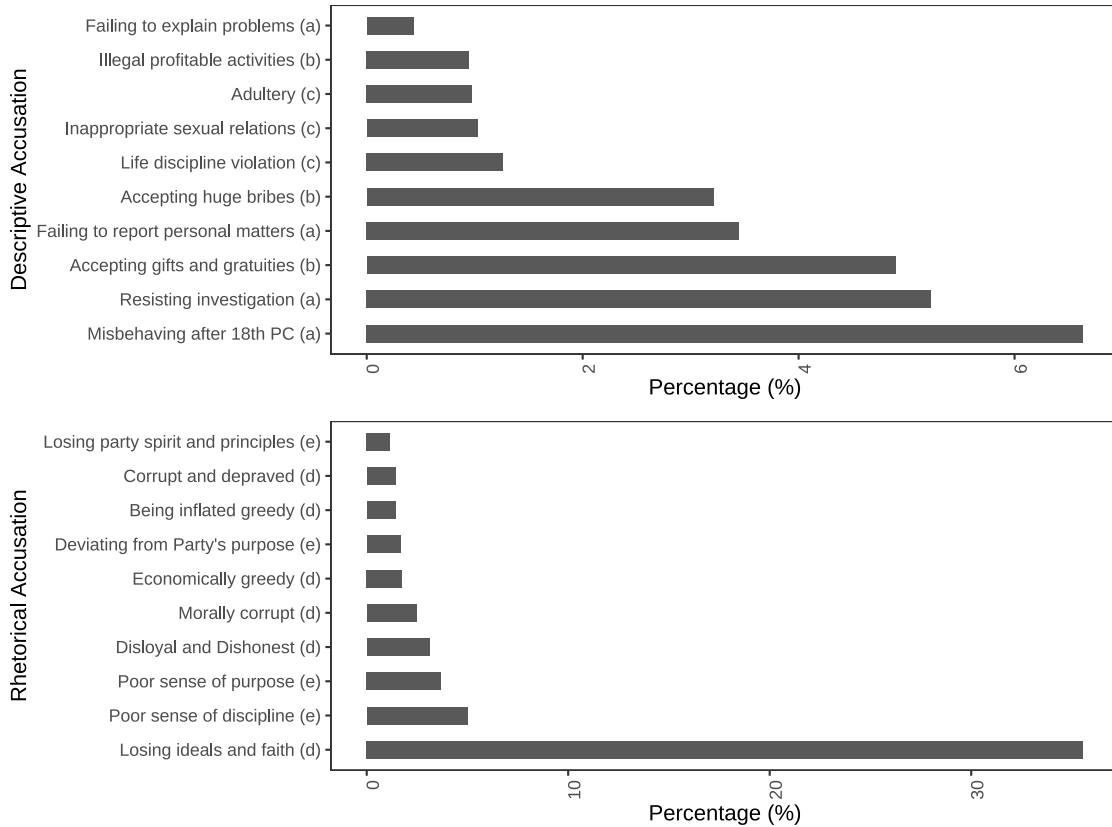
Notes: (a) political misconduct, (b) economic corruption, (c) sexual misconduct, (d) personal quality, and (e) spiritual disobedience. The percentage of descriptive accusations is equal to (Frenquency/7,595)*100%. The percentage of rhetorical accusations is equal to (Frenquency/1,541)*100%.

not stop misbehaving at the 18th Party Congress, when Xi Jinping became the General Secretary. At least from the Party's perspective, this is not only considered a crime but also regarded as one of the most common forms of misconduct among corrupt officials. In addition to economic corruption, sexual misconduct is another significant topic among all descriptive accusations. This implies that economic corruption is associated with sexual misconduct, which is well known to the public but somewhat understudied.

Furthermore, I divide rhetorical accusations into two categories, personal morality and party discipline, which have been labeled (d) and (e), respectively, in the figure. The result suggests that the CCP tends to criticize corrupt officials' personal morality in rhetorical accusations. For instance, the most common rhetorical accusation is accusing corrupt

officials of losing their ideals and faith ("丧失理想信念"), which accounts for 35.56% of all rhetorical accusations. Another topic is related to how corrupt officials are unable to spiritually comply with party discipline. These include a "poor sense of discipline" ("纪律意识淡漠") and a "poor sense of purpose" ("宗旨意识淡漠"). Rhetorical accusations either directly or indirectly attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities.

Figure 3: Descriptive and Rhetorical Accusations Over Time (Month)
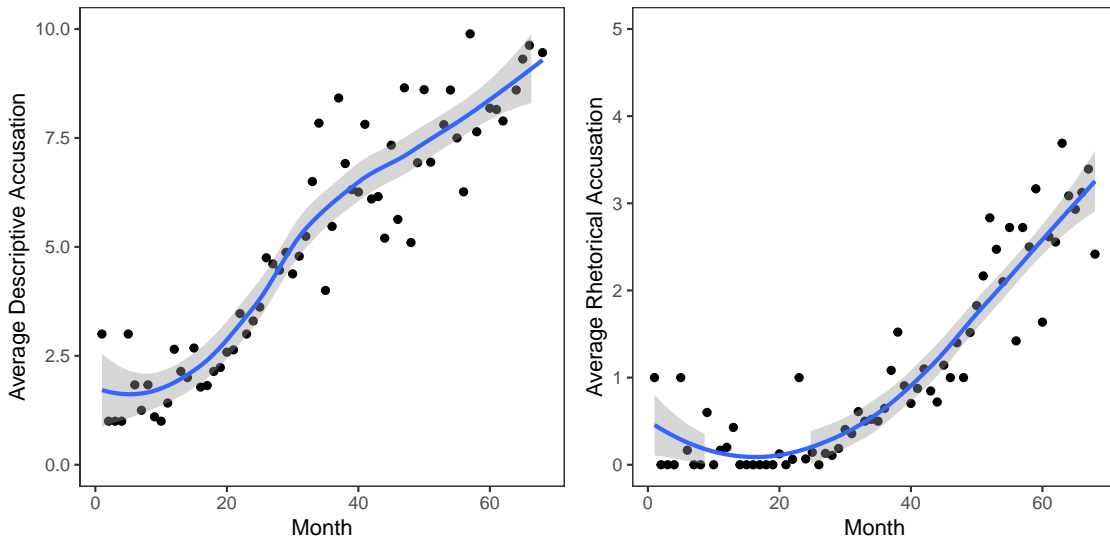
Figure 3 represents the average descriptive and rhetorical accusations in each statement of corrupt officials. In the left panel, I can see that the average descriptive accusations in each statement steadily increase over time. The campaign grew from about two descriptive accusations per statement at beginning of the anticorruption campaign into about ten descriptive accusations per statement at the end of 2018. The right panel shows average rhetorical accusations per statement by month. This suggests that at the beginning of the anticorruption campaign, rhetorical accusations are being used very very cautiously. However, after the 20th month, December 2014, I observe a steady increase as well.[15] From practically averaging zero per statement, rhetorical accusations grew into nearly four rhetorical accusations per statement.

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[15]Months without any published statements are excluded from this dataset.

Figure 4: Average Descriptive and Rhetorical Accusations by Province
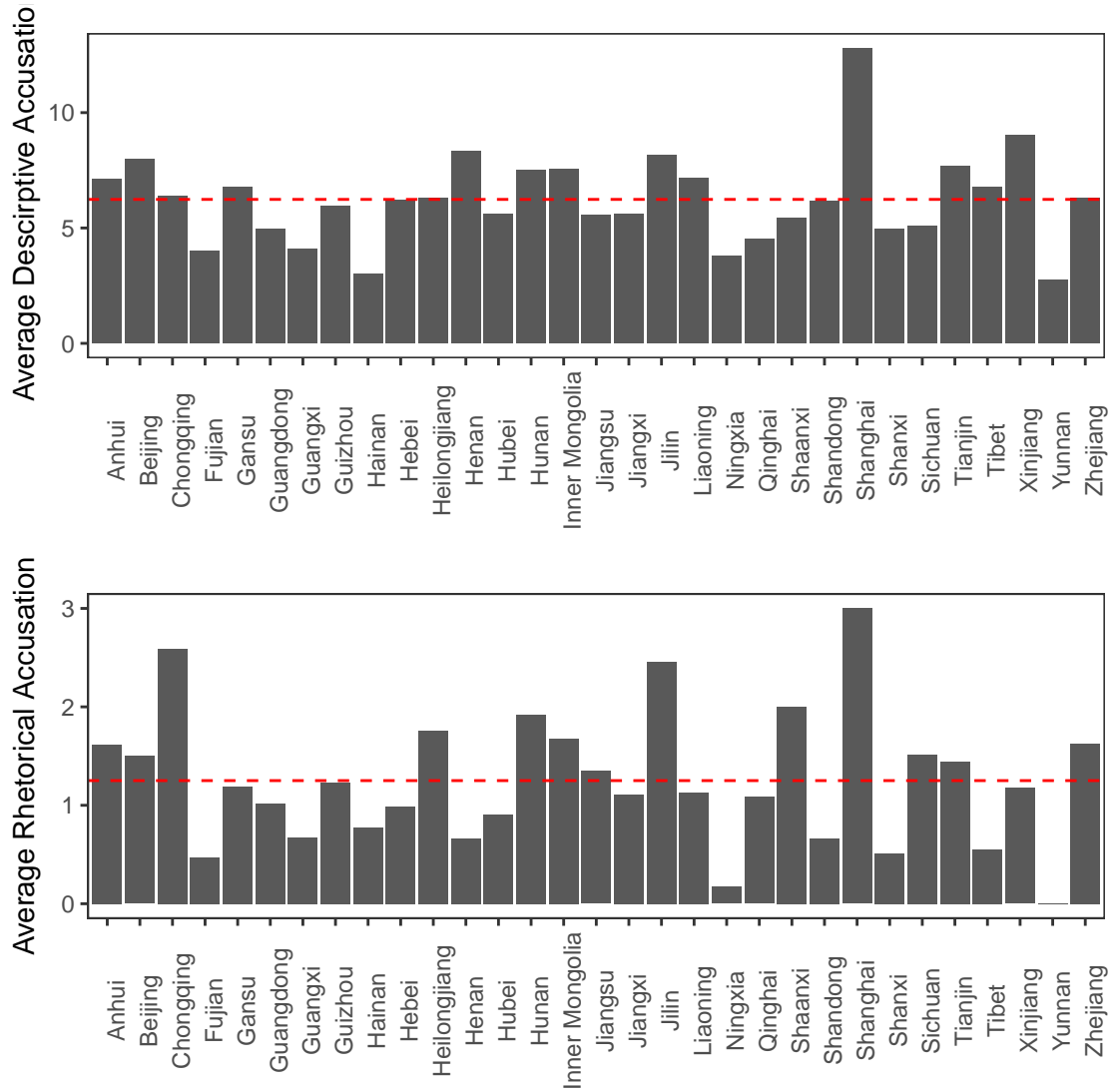
Figure 4 shows the mean value of descriptive and rhetorical accusations by province.[16] The red dashed line indicates the mean value of the number of those accusations.

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[16]Officials who work in national departments are excluded.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter 1 investigates the statements of corrupt officials during China's anticorruption campaign. I found some accusations in the statement of corrupt officials tend to be subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable. It tries to answer one main question: Do the CCP and its disciplinary organ, the CDI, systematically use such rhetorical accusations against corrupt officials? The answer is positive. I did observe anticorruption rhetoric systematically in statements of corrupt officials. Nearly half of the statements contained at least one rhetorical accusation.

Moreover, I found that the CDI did not frequently use rhetorical accusations at the beginning of China's anticorruption campaign. In the first two years (2013 and 2014), rhetorical accusations only occasionally appeared in corrupt officials' statements. Since 2014, rhetorical accusations appear at higher and higher rates and in greater numbers over time. The pattern change overlaps with the time of the fall of Zhou Yongkang, a former Politburo Standing Committee member. After his fall, rhetorical accusations are increasingly commonly used in statements. This finding might suggest that the adoption of rhetorical accusation is associated with Zhou Yongkang's fall since his removal broke a longstanding norm that Politburo Standing Committee members are immunized from corruption charges.

Furthermore, the adoption of rhetorical accusations also varies spatially. Surprisingly, not every provincial CDI has used rhetorical accusations against corrupt officials. For example, in Yunnan Province, no rhetorical accusations are found. This suggests that that different provinces enjoy a different level of "autonomy" in terms of adopting rhetorical accusations.

Lastly, I found the main topics of both descriptive and rhetorical accusations. For descriptive accusations, there are three major categories: economic, political, and sexual misconduct. For rhetorical accusations, two major topics are corrupt officials' personal qualities and spiritual disobedience.

This chapter simply provides a comprehensive descriptive analysis of anticorruption rhetoric. However, a series of questions remain unanswered: why do some statements involve anticorruption rhetoric while others do not? Who exactly are its targets? Why does CDI use it? What are the effects of anticorruption rhetoric on public opinion?

In the next chapter, I will conduct an observational study to investigate the targets of anticorruption rhetoric and its effect on Chinese citizens' perception of corruption.

3   Chapter 2: Give Up A Rook to Save the King

Abstract

Why does the Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI), the disciplinary organ of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), use abusive, subjective, nonfalsifiable rhetoric against some corrupt officials rather than others in China's anticorruption campaign? I argue that the anticorruption rhetoric is intended to resist the potential backfire effect of anticorruption campaigns. By demonizing and marginalizing corrupt officials, the CCP expects to shift blame to corrupt officials themselves instead of the CCP and its political system. I created an original dataset that covers 1,292 statements and 9,136 individual accusations of corrupt officials from 2013 to 2018. Moreover, I found high-ranking officials, traditionally perceived as less corrupt, are positively associated with anticorruption rhetoric, which is measured by the proportion of the number of rhetorical accusations among the total number of accusations in a statement. Lastly, when combining the survey data from the "World Values Survey", I find that there is a clear negative correlation between citizens' perception of corruption (aggregated) and their exposure to anticorruption rhetoric (aggregated). The implications of this study suggest that the CCP leadership takes advantage of its dominance in the political communication arena and maximizes the benefits of the anticorruption campaign. In addition, the CCP shows its responsiveness to Chinese citizens' grievances of corruption and cautiously controls for a potential backfire effect. The findings not only contribute to our understanding of China's anticorruption campaign but also speak to the authoritarian control and responsiveness literature.

Keywords: China, Anticorruption Campaign, Rhetoric, Corruption Perceptions, Authoritarian Control, Authoritarian Responsiveness, Text Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has launched a massive anticorruption campaign named "cracking down on both tigers and flies," since Xi Jinping took office in 2012. Numerous CCP officials have been investigated and removed, including three Politburo members and one Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) member. During the campaign, the Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI) is responsible for publishing statements against corrupt officials.

Wang Gang, one of many corrupt officials investigated in China's anticorruption campaign, was the former party secretary in Zhaozhuang, Shandong Province. The Commission for Discipline Inspection (CDI) of Shandong published a statement against Wang after his investigation. In this statement, the CDI accused, "Wang uses his position to seek benefits for others, accepts large amounts of money and goods, embezzles public funds, and accepts gifts".[17] The CDI removed Wang from his public position and expelled him from the CCP.

In November 2017, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) launched an investigation against Lu Wei, also known as China's Internet Czar. In the following February, the CCDI published a statement against Lu.[18] The CCDI listed Lu's corrupt behavior as well: "(Lu) abuses his power for personal gain, deceives the Party's Central Committee, and visits private clubs frequently." In this statement, the CCDI further pointed out "(Lu) loses his ideals and beliefs, does not follow party discipline, and is extremely disloyal to the Party". Moreover, the CCDI labeled Lu as a "Two-faced man," and accused him of being "totally shameless and too ambitious." In the end, the CCDI also announced that Lu was expelled from the CCP and his public position as well.

The rhetoric in those two statements is clearly inconsistent. Wang Gang is charged only with corrupt behaviors, and his accusations are descriptive, objective, and falsifiable.

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[17]Source: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/scdc/sggb/djcf/201607/t20160704_117347.html
[18]Source: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/yaowen/201802/t20180213_164227.html

On the other hand, the rhetoric in Lu's statement tends to be harsh, subjective, and non-verifiable. Accusations against Lu include not only his corrupt behaviors but also thought crimes, moral flaws, and even name-calling. The inconsistency of the rhetoric in the two statements leads us to the following question: why does the CDI use anticorruption rhetoric against some corrupt officials rather than others? The literature does not provide clear answers.

This study is aimed at investigating the rhetoric in China's latest anticorruption campaign. I argue that the anticorruption rhetoric is intended to resist a potential backfire effect of anticorruption campaigns. By demonizing and marginalizing corrupt officials, the CCP expects to shift blame to corrupt officials themselves instead of the CCP and its political system. The empirical result is consistent with the theoretical arguments. I found that the hierarchy of officials is positively associated with anti corruption rhetoric. Lastly, at the provincial level, the aggregated data suggests that citizens who are exposed to a high level of anticorruption rhetoric tend to have a low perception of corruption in China.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on China's anticorruption campaign and authoritarian responsiveness in general. The implications of this study suggest that the CCP leadership takes advantage of its dominance in the political communication arena and maximizes the benefits of the anticorruption campaign. Moreover, the CCP shows its responsiveness to Chinese citizens' grievance of corruption and cautiously controls a potential backfire effect, which restores legitimacy and increases public support for the government.

3.2   Theoretical Framework

For any politician, a basic assumption is that their primary goal is to keep their position in office (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005). This is specially true for dictators, as they are more vulnerable if they lose their power compared to their democratic counterparts. "[m]erely dying in bed is a significant accomplishment" (Svolik, 2012, p.13). Losing office could lead to imprisonment, exile, and even execution. Twenty percent of dictators are imprisoned or

executed in the first year after they lose their office. Another twenty percent of dictators are forced to leave their countries (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2018).

Why do some dictators stay in power longer than others? Scholars of political institutions argue that authoritarian states are different from one another. Elites in some authoritarian states (e.g. single-party regimes) are more capable of holding their leader accountable (e.g. personalist regimes) than others. Therefore, those regimes tend to last longer (Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2014, 2018; Levitsky and Way, 2010). Some authoritarian regimes establish some quasi-democratic institutions, such as competitive elections and partisan legislatures (Levitsky and Way, 2002). The quasi-democratic institutions help dictators detect political rivalries, build winning coalitions, and therefore lengthen their tenure in office (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007).

Political behavior scholars focus on how dictators deal with challenges from within and outside the regime. For the masses, dictators can simply use violence, "the ultimate arbiter of political conflicts," to repress them (Svolik, 2012, p.14). This strategy is highly dependent on the military and security apparatus, which is likely to backfire (Svolik, 2013). Recent studies suggest that dictators have started to repress their citizens in a "smarter" way. For example, the Chinese government deliberately uses censorship and propaganda to manipulate public opinion and to eliminate any potential coordinated actions against the incumbent (King, Pan and Roberts, 2013, 2017; Roberts, 2018). In addition, a growing body of studies suggests that authoritarian governments can be responsive to their citizens (Malesky and Schuler, 2010; Stockmann, 2013; Xu and Yao, 2015; Chen and Xu, 2017). Specifically, they tend to be more responsive to collective action (Chen, Pan and Xu, 2016).

Similarly, dictators always reserve the use of violence when they are facing challenges from regime insiders. Dictators purge disloyal elites by removing them from key positions(Sudduth, 2017; Easton and Siverson, 2018). Nevertheless, this option is risky since it might provoke political elites and ultimately might lead to a coup d'etat (Sudduth, 2017). Moreover, dictators can also deliver private goods to members of the winning coalition in exchange for loyalty (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2005).

As General Secretary Xi warns his comrades, corruption is arguably the most dangerous threat to the survival of the CCP. "Numerous facts tell us that if the corruption problem keeps growing," Xi said, "it will ultimately lead to the downfall of the party and state."[19]

The existing literature on China's anticorruption campaign debates the issue of whether this campaign is a sincere fight against corruption and a credible commitment to good governance or a simply factional purge and power struggle among Xi and top political elites. Some scholars see this campaign as a rigorous fight against corruption. For example, Manion (2016) argues that this campaign is unprecedented and different from other previous campaigns not only because it lasts longer and reaches the highest level, but also because it "has significantly changed the structure of Party and government incentives". She concludes, therefore, that the CCP is taking more steps toward institutionalizing anticorruption (p.3). China's anticorruption campaign also shows some positive effects on the economy, according to economists (Xu and Yano, 2017; Pan and Tian, 2020). However, other scholars view this anticorruption campaign with less enthusiasm. In their view, this anticorruption campaign does not differ fundamentally from previous ones. It is just another power struggle and political purge operating within the CCP as part of Xi's efforts to consolidate his power (Li et al., 2017; Zhu and Zhang, 2016; Zhu, Huang and Zhang, 2017). Nonetheless, the rhetoric of China's anticorruption campaign and its effects on Chinese citizens' perception of corruption are somewhat understudied.

Leaders in authoritarian states regularly launch anticorruption campaigns. Kim Jong-un, the supreme leader in North Korea, Mohammed bin Salman, the crowned prince in Saudi Arabia, and Xi Jinping, the leading core in China. They almost unanimously claim that launching anticorruption campaigns is a response to citizens' dissatisfaction with corruption. Citizens around the world agree that corruption is a major challenge to development (Fisman and Golden, 2017a). In democracies, when citizens perceive incumbents to be corrupt, they are more likely to punish incumbents in subsequent elections

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[19]Source: http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2016-08/12/c_1119378149.htm

(Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer and Tavits, 2016). In addition to elections, other democratic institutions, such as the separation of power and free press, make citizens in democracies more informed so that they are more capable of making rational choices and holding politicians accountable during elections.

In authoritarian states, the situation is more complicated. Citizens of those authoritarian states share the same negative attitude toward corruption as their democratic counterparts, however, they lack a transparent information environment and an effective means to directly hold the government accountable. Consequently, public opinion is considered less significant in authoritarian states in general. Nevertheless, a growing body of literature has started to investigate public opinion in authoritarian states. Although citizens are not able to vote their government out easily via elections, their opinion can affect policymaking and implementation (Weeks, 2008; Weiss, 2013). Moreover, studies find that authoritarian governments adopt different strategies, such as censorship and propaganda, to manipulate public opinion in order to retain political stability (Roberts, 2018; Huang, 2015, 2018; Pan and Siegel, 2020). In addition, mass public dissatisfaction with the government can lead to protests and even might trigger revolutions (Chen, 2011; Svolik, 2012). In sum, recent studies indicate that authoritarian governments care about public opinion and are willing to be responsive, at least partially, to their citizens.

Then, what are the sources of authoritarian responsiveness? There are two main sources of authoritarian responsiveness: pressure from above and below (Chen, Pan and Xu, 2016). Pressure from above refers to local governments being responsive to upper-level governments because local officials want to impress their factional sponsors or respond to incentives provided by centralized political institutions (Nathan, 1973; Pye, 1980; Edin, 2003). On the other hand, authoritarian governments, in general, are very sensitive to the threat of rebellion. Therefore, they tend to be responsive when the threat of collective action from the below is detected (Svolik, 2012; Boix and Svolik, 2013; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Chen, Pan and Xu, 2016). As a result, citizens' dissatisfaction with corruption may provide strong incentives for authoritarian governments to be responsive and fight against

corruption.

However, anticorruption campaigns may backfire and jeopardize public support for the government in authoritarian states (Wang and Dickson, 2021). In their model, each citizen has a prior belief about corruption, which affects one's support for the government. The anticorruption campaign reveals more details about corruption, which is hardly accessible in normal times, to the public. Citizens then use their updated information to adjust their support for the government. If information about corruption exceeds citizens' expectations, it may cause them to doubt the government's impartiality and thus reduce their support. Therefore, Wang and Dickson (2021) argue that anticorruption campaigns may eliminate rivals, signal strength, and consolidate power but at the expense of the government's popular support (p.8).

Public opinion in authoritarian states is very much influenced and manipulated by the government. How the government frames events also affects how citizens form their attitudes, which are known as framing effects (Zaller, 1992; Chong and Druckman, 2007). Authoritarian governments should be more likely to take advantage of framing effects since citizens have little access to alternative media outlets other than state-controlled ones.[20] During anticorruption campaigns in authoritarian states, citizens are exposed to more details, which may cause them to update their previous perceptions of corruption and further undermine public support. However, they are also exposed to the government's attempts to counter such a backfire effect. Given the CCP's dominance of the domestic media, citizens' perception of corruption should take into account how the CCP frames this event.

The citizens' assessment of the government's performance in fighting corruption is dependent not only on their perception of corruption (Wang and Dickson, 2021), but also on the government's framing of the causes of corruption. If the CCP's frame indicates that corruption is caused by the incompetence of the political system, then citizens may think the government is more corrupt than they thought and therefore are less likely to support the

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[20]In China, the vast majority of media outlets are controlled by the Propaganda Department of

anticorruption campaign and the government. However, if the CCP attributes corruption to some factors that the Party cannot control, such as officials' personal characteristics, then citizens may appreciate the government's efforts to fight corruption and be more supportive of the CCP.

I argue that the CCP uses anticorruption rhetoric to demonize and marginalize corrupt officials and attribute corruption to officials' personal characteristics rather than the incompetence of the political system.

As a result, although China's anticorruption campaign reveals more details of corruption, which might be beyond citizens' expectations, Chinese citizens are still supportive of the government since they consider it.

3.3   Testable Implications

The Chinese political system is centralized. Under such a centralized political system, high-ranking officials hold the power to appoint and remove lower-ranking officials. This system allows the leadership to incentivize local officials to implement the leadership's policy preferences (Huang, 1996; Bo, 2002; Cai and Treisman, 2006; Xu, 2011). Chinese citizens have a high level of confidence in the central government but a low trust in local governments (Li, 2013; Lü, 2014).

If anticorruption rhetoric indeed can effectively resist the backfire effect of anticorruption campaigns, I expect the CDI to strategically use more anticorruption rhetoric against high-ranking officials. In contrast, if anticorruption rhetoric has nothing to do with citizens' perception of corruption, I expect the CDI to indiscriminately use anticorruption rhetoric.

Hypothesis 1: The CDI uses more anticorruption rhetoric on high-ranking officials rather than local officials.

Furthermore, if anticorruption rhetoric indeed can effectively resist the backfire effect

the CCP.

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of anticorruption campaigns, I expect that citizens who are exposed to more anticorruption rhetoric have a lower perception of corruption. Therefore, citizens in provinces with a high anticorruption rhetoric should have a lower perception of corruption.[21] On the other hand, if anticorruption rhetoric does not affect citizens' perception of corruption, I expect citizens' perceptions of corruption in different provinces to be unrelated to the exposure of anticorruption rhetoric.

Hypothesis 2: Citizens in provinces exposed to a higher anticorruption rhetoric have a lower perception of corruption.

3.4 Data and Empirical Strategy

The first outcome variable is **Anticorruption Rhetoric**, which is measured by the proportion of the number of rhetorical accusations among the total number of accusations in a statement.

Equation 1 shows the calculation of **Anticorruption Rhetoric**.

$$AR_i = \frac{RA_i}{DA_i + RA_i} * 100 \tag{1}$$

- AR = Anticorruption Rheotoric

- DA = Number of Descriptive Accusations

- RA = Number of Rhetorical Accusations

- i is the index of individual statements

Another outcome variable, **Average Corruption Perception**, is an aggregated variable that measures citizens' perception of corruption at the provincial level. The data come from "World Values Survey Wave 7" (Haerpfer, 2020). The survey in China was

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[21]The assumption here is that citizens in each province received the same level of anticorruption rhetoric for national officials, but they are exposed to a different level of anticorruption rhetoric for local officials. For example, if officials in Chongqing received more anticorruption rhetoric on average, residents of Chongqing should be exposed to more anticorruption rhetoric in general.

conducted in 2018. It includes a set of questions that measure citizens' perceptions of corruption in China. I focus on one specific question that asks respondents to place their views on corruption in China on a 10-point scale.: " '1' means 'there is no corruption in [my country]' and '10' means 'there is abundant corruption in [my country]' ". The original data are at the individual level. I aggregate the data to the provincial level.

$$ACP_j = \frac{\sum CP_j}{N_j} \qquad (2)$$

- ACP = Average Corruption Perception

- CP = Corruption Perception

- N = Number of Respondents

- j is the index of provinces

The first explanatory variable is a dichotomous variable that measures the level of an official. 1 means that this official is supervised by the Central Committee (High-ranking Official), whereas, 0 means that this official is supervised by the Provincial Party Committee (Low-ranking Official).

I also include a set of control variables at the individual level, which includes: **Age**, **Party Age**, **Gender**, **Education**, and **Minority**. I collect data for those control variables from *Baidu Baike*, which is an online encyclopedia similar to Wikipedia.

The second explanatory variable is an aggregated variable: **Average Anticorruption Rhetoric**. Since the WVS wave 7 was conducted in China in 2018, I only include all statements before 2018 (2012-2017). This strategy can avoid potential reverse causality.

$$AAR_k = \frac{\sum AR_k}{N_k} \qquad (3)$$

- AAR = Average Anticorruption Rhetoric

- AR = Anticorruption Rhetoric

- N = Number of Corrupt Officials' Statements

- k is the index of provinces

The second set of control variables is at the provincial level, which includes: **Log(GDP per capital)**, **Log(population)**, and **Number of Cases**.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Individual Level					
Anticorruption Rhetoric	12.26	14.62	0	100	1262
Age	56.88	4.91	35	73	1102
Education	1.58	0.50	0	2	1061
Party Age	32.76	6.28	14	52	859
Gender	0.04	0.19	0	1	1182
Minority	0.08	0.27	0	1	1123
Provincial Level					
Average Corruption Perception	6.49	0.54	5.38	7.66	29
Average anticorruption Rhetoric	8.95	5.40	0	20.44	29
Number of Corrupt Officals	31.31	22.57	2	99	29
Log(GDP per capita)	10.92	0.41	10.24	11.83	29
Log(Population)	8.23	0.76	6.37	9.40	29

In Table 2, I present descriptive statistics. There are two sets of variables including variables at the individual level and provincial level. The outcome variable at the individual level, **Anticorruption Rhetoric**, covers 1,262 statements of corrupt officials from 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) and national level governmental departments. The range of anticorruption rhetoric is from 0 - 100 (mean: 12.26, standard deviation: 14.62). Moreover, the outcome variable at the provincial level, **Average Corruption Perception** (ACP) covers 29 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities).[22] The range of ACP is from 5.38 to 7.66 (mean: 6.49, standard deviation: 0.54).

[22]Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions are missing since WVS wave 7 did not include respondents from those two regions

Figure 5: Histogram of Outcome Variable
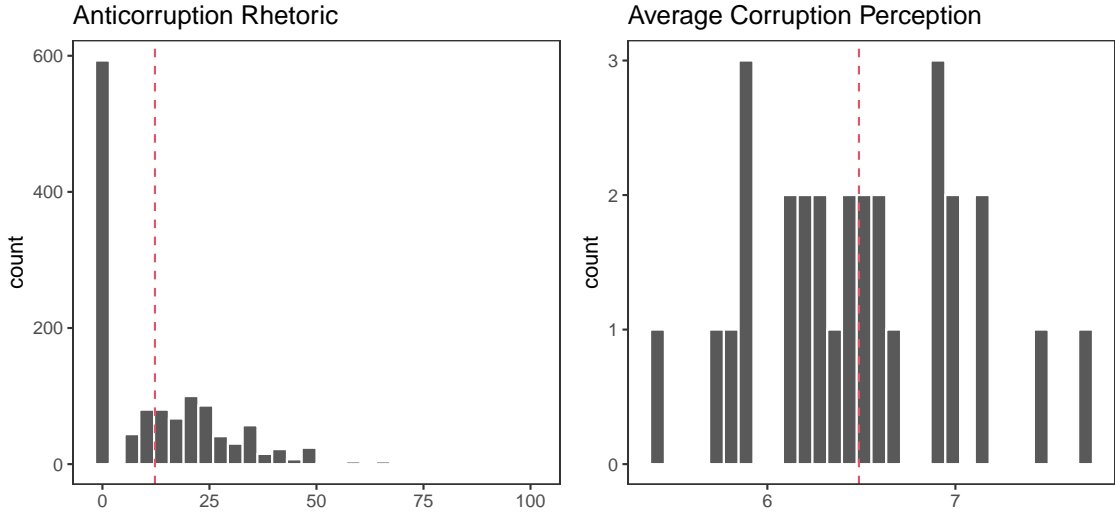
Figure 5 shows the histogram of outcome variables: **Anticorruption Rhetoric** and **Average Corruption Perception**. The red dashed line indicates the mean value of each outcome variable. The left cell shows that nearly 600 statements (N= 593) are anticorruption rhetoric-free. On the other hand, 669 statements contain at least one rhetorical accusation.

3.5 Results

Table 3 presents the regression results at the individual level. The result suggests that the official level is positively associated with anticorruption rhetoric across different model specifications. Being a central official is associated with an increase in anticorruption rhetoric. Model 1 only includes the main explanatory variable. The association is not statistically significant.

Figure 6 presents anticorruption rhetoric by month. Each point represents the mean value of anticorruption rhetoric of corrupt officials' statements for that particular month. In the first two years (2013 and 2014), there were 12 months in which the mean value of anticorruption was equal to 0. The CDI clearly did not systematically use anticorruption rhetoric at the beginning of the anticorruption campaign. This can explain why the

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Table 3: Central Official and Anticorruption Rhetoric

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
| | Anticorruption Rhetoric | | | |
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Central Official (Yes/No)	1.275	3.643***	2.703**	2.655*
	(1.221)	(1.033)	(1.238)	(1.380)
Age				0.156*
				(0.091)
Education				−0.865
				(0.898)
Gender				3.845*
				(2.238)
Party Age				0.004
				(0.004)
Minority				−1.425
				(1.580)
Constant	12.095***	3.685	6.097**	0.707
	(0.441)	(2.381)	(2.856)	(6.471)
Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,262	1,262	1,262	853
R^2	0.001	0.296	0.363	0.360
Adjusted R^2	0.0001	0.293	0.343	0.327

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

association is not statistically significant if I do not control for year fixed effects.

After controlling for year fixed effects in Model 2, the association becomes statistically significant. In Model 3, I control both year fixed effects and province fixed effects.[23] In the last model, I add a set of demographic control variables.

The result is consistent with the hypothesis that the CDI uses more anticorruption rhetoric against high-ranking officials (tigers) than local officials (flies). As indicated by Model 4, holding other variables constant, being a central official is associated with an increase of 2.655 units in anticorruption rhetoric.

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[23]The units of officials from central level governmental departments are labeled as "national".

Figure 6: Anticorruption Rhetoric Over Time
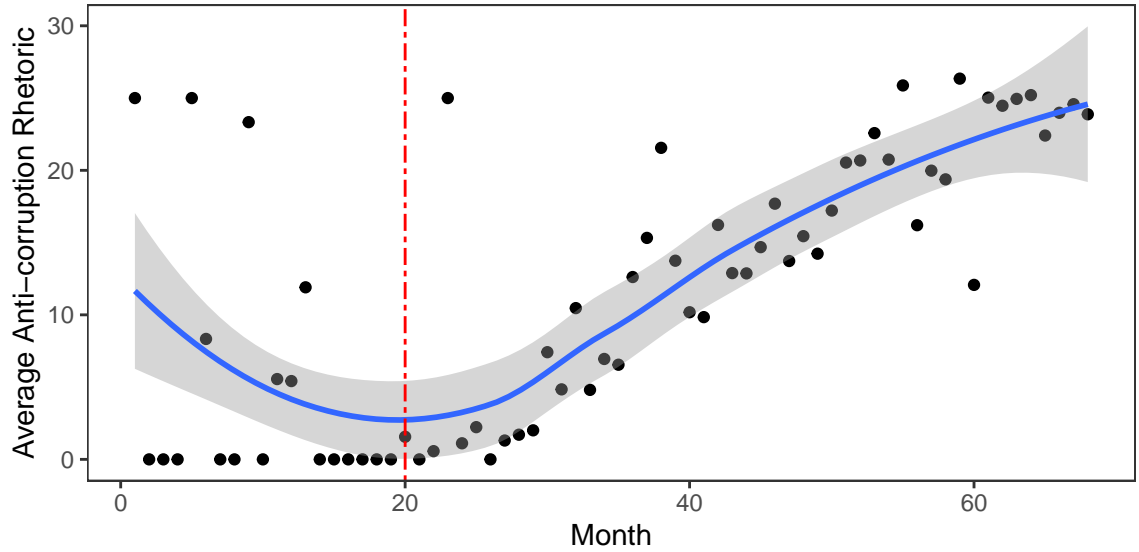
Table 4 presents the regression results at the provincial level. This shows that there is a negative association between AAR and ACP. Model 5 only includes the main explanatory variable, average anticorruption rhetoric. In Model 6, I control for the number of corrupt officials. In the last model, I add other socioeconomic variables: the natural logarithm of GDP per capita and the natural logarithm of population. Across different model specifications, AAR is negatively associated with ACP. The association is statistically significant. Based on Model 7, holding other variables constant, a 1 unit increase in AAR is associated with a decrease of 0.05 units in ACP.

It is worth noting that there is indeed a positive relationship between the number of corrupt officials and the average corruption perception, which implies that as more corrupt officials are investigated, citizens' perceptions of corruption as a whole are elevated. This pattern is consistent with Wang and Dickson (2021)'s story and findings.

Figure 7 visualize the effect of average anticorruption rhetoric on average corruption perception based on Model 7.

Table 4: AAR and ACP

	ACP		
	Dependent variable:		
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
AAR	−0.040**	−0.042**	−0.050***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Number of Corrupt Officials		0.006	0.009**
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Log(GDP per Capital)			0.547**
			(0.216)
Log(Population)			−0.129
			(0.122)
Constant	6.842***	6.685***	1.753
	(0.182)	(0.212)	(2.414)
Observations	29	29	29
R^2	0.160	0.218	0.394
Adjusted R^2	0.129	0.158	0.293

Note: AAR = Average Anticorruption Rhetoric, ACP = Average Corruption Perception.*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 7: AAR and ACP
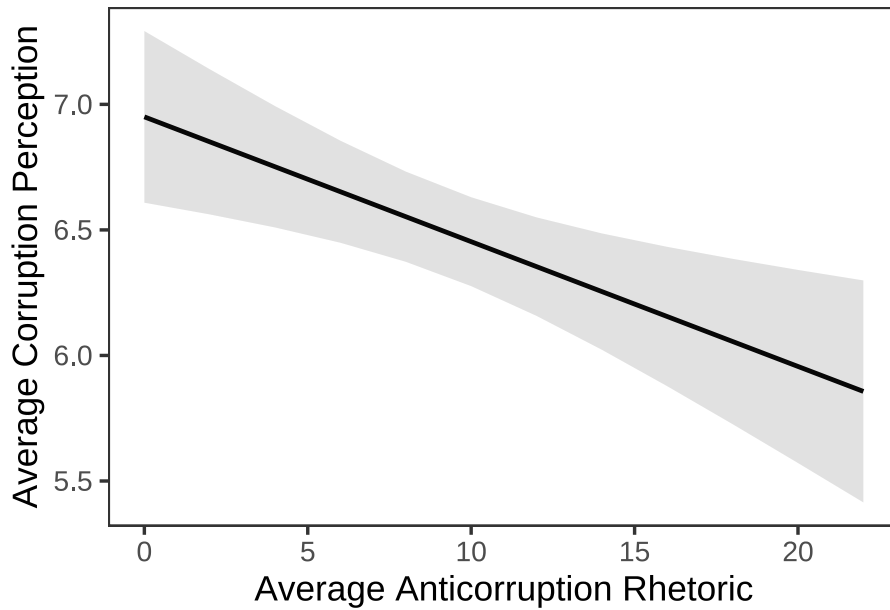
3.6 Conclusion

Although China's anticorruption campaign hardly eliminates corruption since there were no fundamental institutional changes, the CCP found a smart way strategically using anticorruption rhetoric to resist a potential backfire effect and lower citizens' perceptions of corruption. Arguably, lowering citizens' perception of corruption is more important than eliminating it in terms of regime survival, at least in the short term. Fundamental institutional reforms, such as an independent anticorruption agency, may be very risky to authoritarian rulers. After all, citizens in authoritarian states cannot hold the government accountable through elections, and launching a revolution to overthrow the incumbent is extremely costly.

In this chapter, the main findings suggest that the CDI systematically uses anticorruption rhetoric against corrupt officials. At the individual level, tigers, high-ranking officials, received more anticorruption rhetoric than their local counterparts. Lastly, at the provincial level, higher exposure to anticorruption rhetoric is associated with a lower perception of corruption.

There are several questions beyond the scope of this chapter that should be addressed in future studies. First, given that anticorruption rhetoric is effective in terms of opposing the backfire effect and lowering citizens' perception of corruption, one might wonder why CDI does not use anticorruption rhetoric indiscriminately. Using intense harsh rhetoric indiscriminately may trigger people's memories of a series of brutal political purges in Chinese history. A survey experiment suggests that citizens are less likely to support an anticorruption campaign if they are informed that it is motivated by political reasons and targets political rivals (Dai, 2019). Moreover, this chapter is more descriptive rather than causal. Then how does anticorruption rhetoric affect Chinese citizens' perception of corruption, and their attitudes toward this campaign, the government, and the leader? A survey experiment study may be helpful to fill this gap.

4 Chapter 3: The Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric: A Survey Experiment in China

Abstract

Why does the Chinese Communist Party use anticorruption rhetoric, subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable accusations against its corrupt comrades? Previous studies of China's anticorruption campaign haven not provided answers to this question. This chpater investigates the effects of anticorruption rhetoric on public opinion. I argue that the CCP takes advantage of the framing effects of anticorruption rhetoric to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions. As a result, it reduces Chinese citizens' perception of corruption and increases their support for the anticorruption campaign. Moreover, anticorruption rhetoric also serves as a tool to demonstrate the strength of the government (the Party), which leads Chinese citizens to be less likely to engage in rebellious behaviors. I conducted a survey experiment to test the theoretical implications. The results partially support my arguments. I found that anticorruption rhetoric 1) shifts the blame for corruption to officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions; 2) reduces citizens' perception of corruption in public service areas; and 3) increases citizens' perception of the risk of bribery.

Keywords: Anticorruption Rhetoric, Corruption Perception, Blame Shifting, Hard Propaganda, Survey Experiment

4.1   Introduction

During China's anticorruption campaign, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has used different forms of rhetoric against its corrupt officials. Some are accused of only objective, descriptive, and falsifiable accusations, such as economic, political, and sexual misconduct. However, other officials are accused of additional subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable accusations including personal attacks and thoughtcrimes (Pu, 2022b). In previous chapters, I found that anticorruption rhetoric is negatively associated with Chinese citizens' perception of corruption with observational data. In this chapter, I explore the effects of anti-corruption rhetoric via a survey experiment.

Theoretically, I argue that the CCP strategically uses the framing effect of anti-corruption rhetoric to shift the blame of corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions. Anticorruption rhetoric portrays corrupt officials as "bad apples". As a result, it reduces Chinese citizens' perception of corruption and increases support for the anticorruption campaign since those "bad apples" are removed by the Party during this campaign. Moreover, anticorruption rhetoric is used as a tool of "hard propaganda"(Huang, 2018), which demonstrates the strength of the government and the Party. Therefore, anticorruption rhetoric reduces the likelihood that citizens engaged in any rebellious behaviors.

The experimental results partially support my theoretical arguments. I found that anticorruption rhetoric in fact generates a framing effect whereby respondents, who are exposed to anticorruption rhetoric, tend to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions. Consequently, anticorruption rhetoric reduces respondents' perception of corruption in the area of public service. Moreover, anticorruption rhetoric comes with a deterrence effect: respondents who are exposed to anticorruption rhetoric perceive giving or receiving a bribe as riskier.

The findings of this chapter shed light on the logic of the adoption of anticorruption rhetoric. Anticorruption rhetoric does not just serve as a symbolic role, as other scholars have suggested (Wedeman, 2005). It comes with substantive consequences to public opinion.

Last but not least, it weakens the potential backfire effects of anticorruption campaing (Wang and Dickson, 2021) and maximizes its positive effects in favor of the government and the Party.

4.2   Theoretical Framework

China's anti-corruption campaign has received much attention from scholars of politics in China. The main debate focuses on whether this anti-corruption campaign is a genuine fight against corruption or a political struggle by Xi Jinping to consolidate his personal power. Some scholars point out that the current anticorruption campaign is unprecedented in terms of its quality and quantity (Manion, 2016). It has generated positive effects on China's economy(Xu and Yano, 2017). Others treat it as a purely political purge (Zhu, Huang and Zhang, 2017; Zhu and Zhang, 2016). Nevertheless, China's anticorruption campaign can serve both purposes: cracking down on corruption, on the one hand, removing political opponent, and consolidating power, on the other hand (Lorentzen and Lu, 2018). These purposes are not mutually exclusive.

Recent studies suggest that China's anti-corruption campaign may have some backfire effects, such as jeopardizing popular support for the government (Wang and Dickson, 2021), and endangering political selection at the entry-level (Jiang, Shao and Zhang, 2022). However, scholars have not noticed how the CCP has responded to the potential side effects of this anti-corruption campaign. This chapter focuses on one counter strategy the CCP used during the campaign: the adoption of anticorruption rhetoric.

Anticorruption Rhetoric and Framing Effects

Citizens' attitudes toward a certain event are largely affected by political elites, such as politicians and media outlets, which are commonly known as framing effects (Chong and Druckman, 2007). When an event is presented in different ways, citizens' interpretations and opinions about this event can be very different. This phenomenon is common in democratic states, such as the United States, where citizens enjoy free press and have alternative

channels to receive information (Rasinski, 1989; Sniderman and Theriault, 2018). For citizens in authoritarian states, their opinions are more easily manipulated by different frames of a single event since authoritarian governments usually take control of media outlets.

The existing literature on China's anticorruption campaign provides evidence of some potential backfire effects. For example, Wang and Dickson (2021) found that China's anticorruption campaign might increase citizens' perception of corruption, which endangers popular support for the government since it reveals information about corruption, which is not previously accessible to Chinese citizens: similarly Dai (2019) found that if citizens perceived China's anticorruption campaign to be motivated by political reasons, they would tend to be less supportive of the government.

I argue that anticorruption rhetoric is designed to change the frame of China's anticorruption campaign. It can serve as a tool to counter the potential backfire effects of China's anticorruption campaign. Based on my previous research (Pu, 2022b), there are two major topics of anticorruption rhetoric. The first one focuses on corrupt officials' personal morality and the other one is related to the discipline of the CCP. More specifically, I point out how corrupt officials are unable to spiritually comply with party discipline. Anticorruption rhetoric presents a frame in which the government and the CCP places great weight on discipline. These officials are corrupt because first, they are "bad apples" with lower personal qualities, and second, they are not able to live up to the requirements of the government and the Party, which has nothing to do with the political institutions. Therefore, citizens are expected to attribute corruption to corrupt officials rather than to political institutions, thus reducing the risk of backfire.

Anticorruption Rhetoric and Hard Propaganda

Propaganda is traditionally considered a tool of indoctrination. The government uses sustained and mass communication to affect citizens' thinking, emotions, and even behavior via media under its control (Lasswell, 1938; Kenez, 1985; Elshehawy et al., 2021). Although all types of governments might be involved with propaganda, one would expect it to be

more effective in authoritarian states since citizens do not have access to alternative media outlets such as their democratic counterparts. Nevertheless, recent cross-national studies on the effectiveness of propaganda have mixed results. Some studies found that authoritarian propaganda does affect public opinion and political behavior, which is in favor of the government (Adena et al., 2015; Cantoni et al., 2017). Others, however, pointed out that citizens are often capable of identifying the contents of government propaganda, and therefore can effectively counter government efforts at persuasion (Chen and Shi, 2001; Shih, 2008; Wedeen, 2015)

Moreover, authoritarian propaganda can serve as a tool for demonstrating the strength of the government (Huang, 2015, 2018; Wedeen, 2015). Signaling theory, presented by Huang (2015), argues that authoritarian governments have incentives to use "seemingly dull and unpersuasive" content as a tool to send out an implicit message that the government is powerful enough to mobilize the resources and capacity of the whole society to deliver such information. Thus, it can deter the audience, citizens in authoritarian states, from engaging in anti-government activities.

Based on Huang's model (Huang, 2015, p.422), a strong government is more capable of overcoming challenges against it than its weak counterpart. If citizens believe the government is weak, they will challenge it. A strong government, on the other hand, will not be challenged by its citizens.

I argue that anticorruption rhetoric is one of those messages to demonstrate the strength of the government. Anticorruption rhetoric contains subjective, abusive, nonfalsifiable accusations. Compared with objective, descriptive, and falsifiable actions, these can be easily identified by citizens as propaganda rather than legal content. These accusations could have been easily used against any government official. The indiscriminateness of anticorruption rhetoric then implicitly implies that the government is strong enough to adapt unnecessary force to achieve its goals.

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4.3 Testable Implications

Framing Effects Hypotheses

If anticorruption rhetoric indeed is designed to frame China's anticorruption campaign differently, I expect different frames to lead to different opinions toward the anticorruption campaign. First, I expect that citizens who are exposed to anticorruption rhetoric are more likely to attribute corruption to corrupt officials rather than political institutions. Moreover, if anticorruption rhetoric frames corrupt officials as "bad apples," I expect that it reduces citizens' perception of corruption since those "bad apples" have been removed by the Party during the anticorruption campaign. In addition, citizens exposed to anticorruption rhetoric are more likely to support China's anticorruption campaign, as they will view this campaign as effective.

Hypothesis 1: *Anticorruption rhetoric leads citizens to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than to political institutions.*

Hypothesis 2: *Anticorruption rhetoric reduces citizens' perception of corruption.*

Hypothesis 3: *Anticorruption rhetoric increases citizens' support for China's anticorruption campaign.*

Hard Propaganda Hypothesis

If anticorruption rhetoric serves as a tool to demonstrate the strength of the government, I expect it to increase Chinese citizens' belief in the strength of the government. A government that uses anticorruption rhetoric is more likely to be a strong government compared to a government that only uses objective, descriptive, and falsifiable accusations. Citizens who are exposed to anticorruption rhetoric, therefore, should be more likely to consider rebellious behaviors are riskier than those who are not exposed to anticorruption. In the case of corruption and anticorruption, giving or receiving a bribe can be considered rebellious behaviors, which are prohibited by the government.

Hypothesis 4: *Anticorruption rhetoric increases citizens' perception about the risk*

of bribery.

Political Knowledge

Political knowledge affects citizens' ability to perceive information and to distinguish propaganda. In a survey study, Pan and Xu (2020) find that citizens with high levels of political knowledge tend to have stable policy preferences. It suggests that citizens with high political knowledge should be better at interpreting information from the government and less likely to be manipulated. On the other hand, citizens with low political knowledge are more likely to be indoctrinated by government propaganda since they are inconsistent and easily manipulated.

Hypothesis 5: *Citizens with low political knowledge are more likely to be affected by framing effects of Anticorruption rhetoric.*

Hypothesis 6: *Citizens with high political knowledge are more likely to detect and to be affected by hard propaganda messages.*

4.4 Data and Empirical Strategy

I conducted an online survey experiment in March 2022. Participants, who are current students in Chinese universities, were recruited online via a professional Chinese survey company.[24] This survey experiment was conducted on a U.S.-based survey website, Qualtrics, to maintain the confidentiality of respondents. First, participants were asked sociodemographic questions and political knowledge questions. Then, participants were randomly assigned into four groups and subsequently were shown a vignette about a statement of a corrupt official called Zhang Wei, which is one of the most common Chinese male names.

Participants were shown a statement of a corrupt official that was investigated during China's anticorruption campaign. The factorial design is presented in Table 5. In the first group, Zhang Wei, the corrupt official, was designated as a local official. The statement

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[24]The name of the survey company is hidden given that conducting a political survey is sensitive. Due to financial and time constraints, a student sample was used for this survey experiment.

Table 5: Treatment

	Descriptive Acc.	Descriptive & Rheotorical Acc.
Local Official	Group 1	Group 2
Central Official	Group 3	Group 4

against Zhang only contains descriptive accusations.[25] In the second group, respondents were shown a similar statement. In addition, Zhang's statement also contains rhetorical accusations. In the third group, Zhang Wei was designated as a central official. His statement only includes descriptive accusations. In the last treated group, Zhang Wei, the central official, was charged with both descriptive accusations and rhetorical accusations. After respondents read a statement against Zhang Wei, they were asked a series of questions related to corruption including: 1) the blame attribution of Zhang's corruption, 2) their perception of corruption in China, 3) their perception of corruption in public service, 4) their support of China's anticorruption campaign, and 5) their evaluations of the risk of being caught if one was involved with bribery.

I exclude all respondents who 1) failed to consent, 2) failed to answer the attention checker question, 3) failed to complete the survey, and 4) spent either too little (less than 3 minutes) or too much time (over 16.67 minutes) answering the survey. After these exclusions, the dataset contains 937 respondents.[26]

Political Knowledge

Political Knowledge is measured by 4 political questions.[27] Two of them relate to domestic politics in China. The other two relate to international politics. Respondents who correctly answered 3 and 4 questions are considered to have high political knowledge. Others, who correctly answered 0,1, and 2 questions, are considered to have low political knowledge.

Figure 8 demostrasts the histogram of **Political Knowledge**. It suggests that the

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[25]See the wording in Appendix.   [26]Sociodemographic distribution and balance checks are shown in Appendix C   [27]The wording of all four questions are presented in Appdenix C.

Figure 8: Political Knowledge
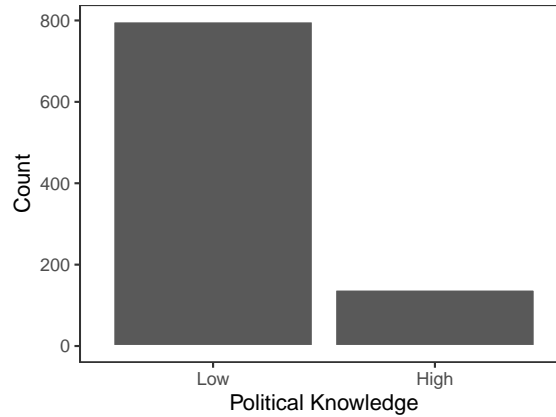
majority of respondents in my sample are not politically knowledgeable. Less than 200 respondents are labeled high political knowledge.

Outcome Variables

Figure 9 presents the histograms of the outcome variables. All outcome variables, except for **Anticorruption Campaign**, are measured by questions from the World Values Survey Wave 7 (Haerpfer, 2020).[28] The red dashed line in each cell marks the mean value of each variable.

The top left cell presents the histogram of **Blame Attribution**. This indicates either participants blame the corruption on personal qualities or political institutions. The range is from 1 to 4. 1 means totally on (Zhang Wei's) personal qualities and 4 means totally on political institutions (monitoring system). The mean value of **Blame Attribution** is 2.18.

The top right cell presents the histogram of **Corruption Perception**. It indicates respondents' perception of corruption in China. The range is from 1 to 10. A value of 1 means respondents evaluate that "there is no corruption in China" and a value of 10 means "there is abundant corruption in China". The mean value of **Corruption Perception** is 4.88.

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[28]**Anticorruption Compaign** is measured by a question which comes from Huang (2018)'s

Figure 9: Histograms of Outcome Variables
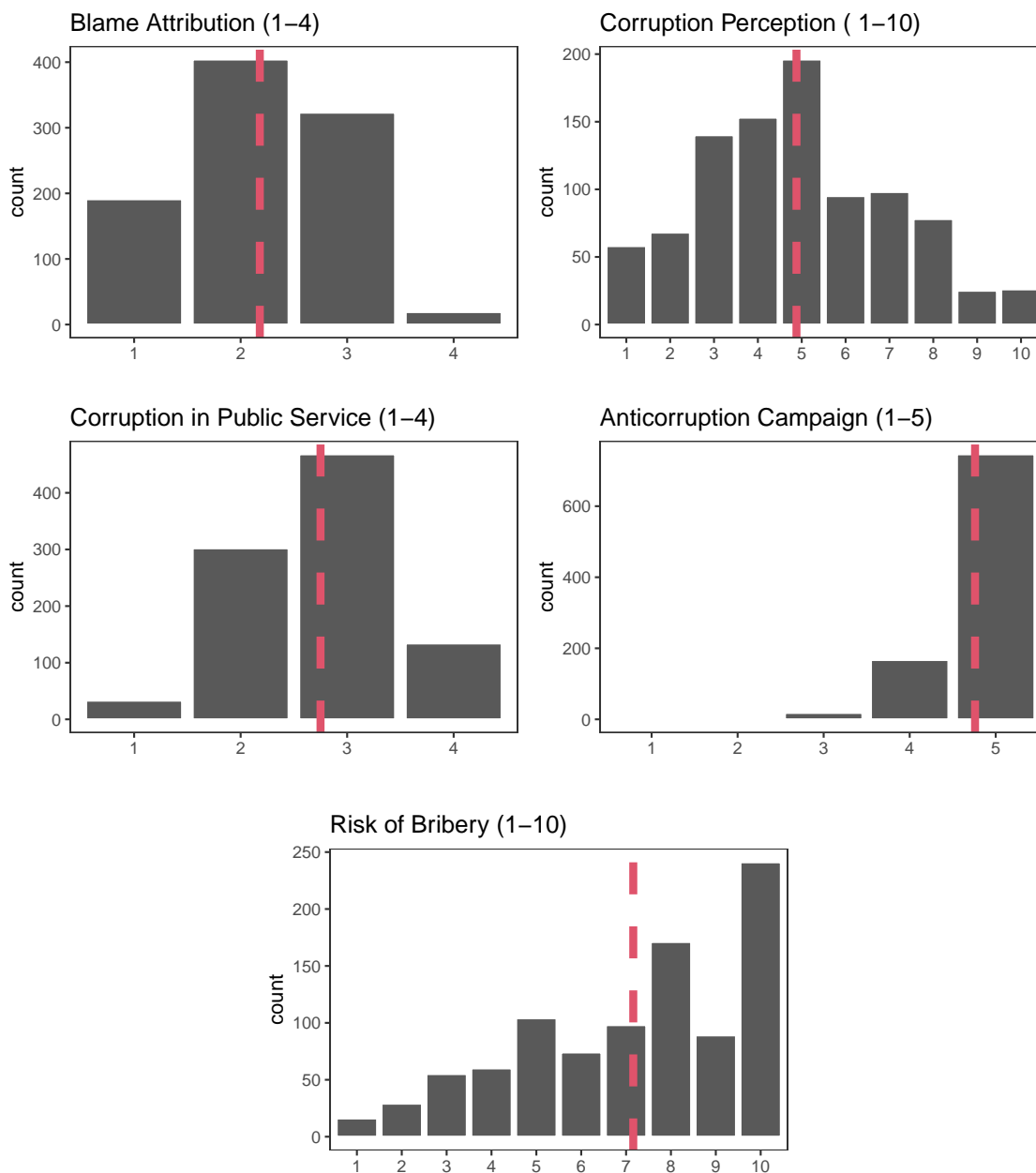
The middle left cell presents the histogram of **Corruption in Public Service**. It shows participants' perceptions of corruption in public service areas. The range is from 1 to 4. 1 means people "never" need to pay a bribe or give a gift to local bureaucrats for public services. 4 means they "always" need to do so to exchange for public services. The

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survey. The wording of all questions are presented in Appdenix C.

mean value of **Corruption in Public Service** is 2.75.

The middle right cell presents the histogram of **Anticorruption Campaign**. This demonstrates respondents' support for China's anticorruption campaign. The range is from 1 to 5. 1 means not supportive at all and 5 means very supportive. The mean value is 4.76.

The bottom cell presents the histogram of **Risk of Bribery**. This variable shows respondents' perception of the risk of giving or receiving a bribe. Its range is from 1 to 10. 1 means no risk at all and 10 means very high risk. The mean value is 7.16.

In general, the results suggest participants 1) tend to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions; 2) have a relatively moderate perception of corruption in China; 3) show that corruption in public service areas is relatively frequent when they are engaging with local bureaucrats; 4) are overwhelmingly supportive of China's anticorruption campaign; and 5) consider giving and receiving a bribe as relatively risky behaviors.

4.5   Results

Table 6: Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric: Group Mean Differences

	Treated - Control	LD - LR	CD - CR
Blame Attribution (1-4)	−0.101** (0.050)	−0.066 (0.071)	−0.138* (0.072)
Corruption Perception (1-10)	−0.048 (0.143)	0.130 (0.204)	−0.229 (0.200)
Corruption in Public Service (1-4)	−0.092* (0.048)	−0.048 (0.068)	−0.141** (0.068)
Anticorruption Campaign (1-5)	0.055 (0.035)	0.083* (0.047)	0.026 (0.052)
Risk of Bribery (1-10)	0.358** (0.163)	0.475** (0.225)	0.241 (0.238)

Note: L= Local Official, C= Central Official, D= Descriptive Accusation, R = Descriptive Accusation + Rhetorical Accusation. "Treated" combines LR and CR Groups. "Control" combines LD and CD gourps. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6 demonstrates the effects of anticorruption rhetoric on public opinion about corruption. In the column on the left, I compare respondents in the treated and control groups. In terms of the corruption of perception in China, the results suggests that anticorruption rhetoric does not cause a significant difference between the treated and control groups. However, it reduces respondents' perception of corruption in public service areas

in the treated group. Furthermore, for the hard propaganda hypothesis, I found that anticorruption rhetoric significantly increases respondents' perception of the risk of giving or receiving a bribe. Third, respondents in the treated group tend to blame (Zhang Wei, the corrupt official in the vignette) corruption on the personal qualities of the official rather than the political system compared with respondents in the control group. Lastly, the results suggest that anticorruption rhetoric does not change respondents' support for China's anticorruption campaign between the treated and control groups.

In the middle column, I present the difference between the control and treated groups among statements of local officials. I found that anticorruption rhetoric increases respondents' perception of the risk of being involved with bribery. The difference is even larger than that of the general group, which contains both central and local officials. Moreover, I found that anticorruption rhetoric against local officials also increases respondents' support for China's anticorruption campaign. All other effects of anti-corruption are not statistically significant among statements of local officials.

In the right column, I compare the difference between the control and treated groups among statements of central officials. I found that anticorruption rhetoric decreases respondents' perception of corruption in public service. Further, it also shifts the blame to the corrupt official rather than the political system. Other effects are not statistically significant.

In sum, the results suggest that anticorruption rhetoric, first, did have a blame-shifting effect. The effect is driven by statements of central officials. Given the centralized political system of the CCP, the finding is reasonable. Local officials are supervised by high-ranking officials. Then respondents are more likely to attribute the corruption of local officials to the political system. Anticorruption rhetoric, therefore, is less effective regarding blame-shifting among statements of local officials. However, anticorruption rhetoric effectively shifts the blame of corruption to central officials' personal qualities from the political system.

Moreover, regarding corruption perception, I found some evidence consistent with

the blame-shift effect. Although anticorruption rhetoric does not cause a significant difference between the control and treated groups in terms of corruption perception in China, it does reduce respondents' corruption perception in public service areas. Moreover, the effect of anticorruption on reducing corruption perception is consistent with the effect of the anticorruption rhetoric of blame-shifting. The major driver also come from the comparison among statements of central officials.

Third, I also found evidence to support the hard propaganda effect of anticorruption rhetoric. It significantly increases respondents' perception of the risk of giving and receiving a bribe. Because using anticorruption rhetoric against high-ranking seems to be a stronger signal to demonstrate the strength of the government. It is slightly counterintuitive that the effect mainly comes from the comparison among statements among local officials. This result can be caused by the question which measures risk, which asks respondents about the risk of bribery in public service areas. Respondents, a sample of students in Chinese universities, are more likely to be engaged with public service at the local level. Therefore, only the strength of the government at the local level has substantive meaning to them. On the other hand, the strength of the central government may not necessarily be relevant in this case since the central government is not the main provider of public services.

Lastly, I found that anticorruption rhetoric does not increase the support for the anti-corruption campaign in general. This can be caused by the already high level of popular support for this campaign. Nearly 80 % (79.61 %) of respondents answered that they are very supportive of our country's current anticorruption campaign.

Table 7 demonstrates the heterogeneous effects of political knowledge. The framing effects are consistent among respondents with low political knowledge. However, they are not significant among respondents with high political knowledge. The results are consistent with my expectations. Respondents with low political knowledge are more likely to be manipulated by the framing effects of anticorruption rhetoric. On the other hand, respondents with high political knowledge are more capable of distinguishing propaganda and resisting framing effects. Model 4 suggests the effect of anticorruption rhetoric on attitudes toward

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Table 7: The Heterogeneous Effects of Political Knowledge

			Outcome Variable:		
	BA	CP	CPS	AC	RB
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Anticorruption Rhetoric	−0.093*	−0.021	−0.104**	0.074*	0.243
	(0.055)	(0.154)	(0.052)	(0.038)	(0.177)
Anticorruption Rhetoric * Poli. Know.	−0.037	−0.063	0.081	−0.122	0.778*
	(0.142)	(0.400)	(0.136)	(0.098)	(0.461)
Political Knowledge	0.121	0.830***	−0.027	0.096	−0.374
	(0.097)	(0.274)	(0.093)	(0.067)	(0.315)
Constant	2.212***	4.770***	2.801***	4.717***	7.040***
	(0.039)	(0.109)	(0.037)	(0.027)	(0.126)
Observations	937	937	937	937	937
R^2	0.007	0.017	0.004	0.005	0.008
Adjusted R^2	0.003	0.014	0.001	0.002	0.005

Note: Outcome Variables: BA = Blame Attribution, CP = Corruption Perception, CPS = Corruption in Public Service, AC = Anticorruption Campaign, RB= Risk of Bribery.*$p<0.1$; **$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.01$

the anticorruption campaign. It is statistically significant among respondents with low political knowledge, which was previously not significant among all respondents in general.

Although respondents with high political knowledge are able to immune from the framing effects of anticorruption rhetoric, they are also more likely to receive hard propaganda messages from the government. Model 5 demonstrates that respondents with low political knowledge are not affected by anticorruption rhetoric via the hard propaganda channel. Only respondents with high political knowledge are able to detect the implications of anticorruption rhetoric and raise their evaluation of the risk of giving and receiving a bribe.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter investigates the effects of anticorruption rhetoric on public opinion in China. First, I argue that anticorruption rhetoric frames China's anticorruption campaign differently. Its framing effects can shift the blame for corruption from political institutions to corrupt officials' personal qualities since it explicitly points out that officials are "bad apples" with personal moral issues and deviate from the Party's requirements. Moreover,

anticorruption rhetoric serves as a tool of "hard propaganda" to demonstrate the strength of the government (the CCP). As a result, citizens are deterred from engaging in rebellious behaviors.

To test the empirical implications of the theoretical arguments, I conducted a survey experiment in China. The results are consistent with the hypotheses and partially support my theoretical arguments. I found that anticorruption rhetoric indeed generates a framing effect. Respondents who are exposed to anticorruption rhetoric tend to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities rather than political institutions. Moreover, it reduces respondents' perception of corruption in the area of public services. Lastly, anticorruption rhetoric increases respondents' perception of the risk of bribery. Nevertheless, I did not find statistical differences between the treated and control groups regarding corruption perception in China and support for China's anticorruption campaign. Moreover, the result establishes a causal link between anticorruption and respondents' perception of corruption, which is a valuable addition to previous findings (Pu, 2022*b*). Lastly, I found that political knowledge plays a significant role in the effects of anticorruption rhetoric on public opinion. Citizens with low political knowledge are more likely to be affected by its framing effects. On the other hand, although citizens with high political knowledge can be immune from the framing effects of anticorrution rhetoric, they are more likely to receive the implications of government hard propaganda messages. Thus, they are more likely to be affected by hard propaganda.

Due to financial and time constraints, there is still room for improvement in this chapter. For example, the sample of the survey experiment is a student sample, which may compromise the representativeness of the survey results. Moreover, some measurements of outcome variables come from the WVS and other studies. Potentially, this may compromise the validity of those measurements for this study. Lastly, I only include economic misconduct for descriptive accusations in the vignette. It may disregard the potential effects of political and sexual conduct misconduct on respondents' responses (Dai, 2019; Pu, 2022*a*). In sum, future studies could 1) use a more diverse sample of the population, 2) adopt measurements

with higher validity, and 3) design more complicated treatments.

The findings of this chapter contribute to the existing literature on China's anti-corruption campaign by investigating the logic of the adoption of anticorription rhetoric. This suggests that anticorruption rhetoric did have substantive effects on Chinese citizens' public opinion rather than just serving as a symbolic role. The implications suggest that the CCP anticipated the potential backfire effects of its anticorruption campaign on public opinion and deployed counterstrategies.

5 Chapter 4: Corruption, Sex Scandals, and Female Representation: A Survey Experiment in China

Abstract

This chapter explains female (under)representation from the supply-side and examines one factor that might affect women's willingness to participate in politics, namely the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct in the workplace. I argue that women are more sensitive to their working environment than their male counterparts since they are disproportionately affected by sexual misconduct. A hazardous working environment with the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct can deter young women from working for the government. On the other hand, men are less concerned about being involved with sexual misconduct. If effects exist, men might be incentivized by potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking. I conducted a survey experiment to investigate how sex scandals revealed by China's anticorruption campaign affect women's willingness to work for the government. The experimental results partially support my theoretical arguments. I found that the gender gap in willingness to work for the government indeed exists in the treated group. However, the gap did not exist in the control group. The findings suggest that China's anticorruption campaign has a spillover effect that might jeopardize female representation in politics.

Keywords: China, Anticorruption Campaign, Sex Scandals, Gender, Female Representation, Survey Experiment

5.1 Introduction

Female representation in politics is crucial. Previous studies suggest that male legislators are more likely to ignore serving women's and children's interests when they make legislative decisions (Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Childs and Withey, 2004; Taylor-Robinson and Heath, 2003). Moreover, scholars indeed find that when women actually participate in politics, they tend to have different policy preferences than their male counterparts (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006; Gerrity, Osborn and Mendez, 2007).

Nevertheless, female underrepresentation is common around the world (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020). Mainstream studies explain women's underrepresentation from 1) the supply side: women lack political knowledge, interests, political ambitions and resources to run for office;[29] and 2) the demand side: women representation has been impacted by regime type, electoral rules, gender quotas, political parties and political leaders[30].

Traditional studies of female political participation and underrepresentation tend to focus on democratic states (Matland, 1998). Women in politics in authoritarian states remain understudied. These factors that cause this gap. Fisrt, female representation has not progressed much over time due to the institutional constraints in many authoritarian states. Second, even if women are more represented in some authoritarian states, women are only granted symbolic power. This kind of female representation tends to be descriptive representation rather than substantive representation and therefore does not necessarily translate into policy differences (Goetz, Hassim and Luckham, 2003; Wängnerud, 2009). Third, empirically, it is relatively difficult to gain information regarding female representation from authoritarian states due to their untransparent nature.

This chapter is intended to fill this gap by investigating female underrepresentation in China. Moreover, it follows the supply-side story of women's underrepresentation and examines one factor that might affect women's willingness to participate in politics: namely

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[29]For example: Fox and Lawless (2004); Burns, Schlozman and Verba (2021); Chhibber (2002); Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995); Corrin (1992).

[30]For example: Howell (2002); Matland and Montgomery (2003); Kenworthy and Malami (1999); McAllister and Studlar (2002); Welch and Studlar (1990); Matland (2005).

the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct in the workplace. I argue that women are more sensitive to their working environment than men regarding the risk of being exposed to potential sexual misconduct since women are disproportionately affected (Feigenblatt, 2020). Therefore, "ceteris paribus", women would prefer to work in a more woman-friendly environment than a hazardous working environment with the risk of being involved in sexual misconduct. On the other hand, men are less concerned about this issue when they are making their career decision. If affected at all, in China's context, men might be incentivized to seek a job position in politics if they are informed there are potential sexually rent-seeking opportunities.

I conducted a survey experiment with a student sample to test the empirical implications of the theoretical arguments in China. The results showed that women are discouraged from working for the government when they are exposed to a sex scandal of a corrupt official compared to women in the control group. Moreover, men in the treated group are more likely to work for the government than men who are not exposed to the information regarding a sex scandal. However, both the discouragement for women and encouragement for men are not statistically significant. I will discuss potential issues with the survey design in the last section. Lastly, I found that the gender gap does exist in the willingness to seek a job in the government between male and female respondents in the treated group. However, the gender gap was not statistically significant in the control group. This suggests that the gender gap in willingness to work for the government has been enlarged by the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct in the workplace.

This study sheds light on female underrepresentation in authoritarian states, which explains it from the supply side. This implies that China's anticorruption campaign might come with an unexpected spillover effect, which might discourage women from participating in politics and endanger China's female representation in the government.

5.2 Theoretical Framework

The Determinants of Female Underrepresentation

Women are underrepresented in politics across countries around the world. According to Paxton, Hughes and Barnes (2020), the average percentage of women in the legislature is approximately 22%. Among over 190 countries, only 12 women act as the head of the executive branch. Only 21% of world cabinet ministers are female.

Scholars explain female underrepresentation from both the supply side and the demand side. The supply-side story examines the pool of qualified female candidates and emphasizes women's willingness and ability to participate in politics. Running for office not only requires personal characteristics, such as political interest, knowledge, and ambition but also resources such as time and money (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes, 2007). Cross-national studies find that women are less interested in politics and have less political knowledge than men (Burns, Schlozman and Verba, 2021; Chhibber, 2002; Frazer and Macdonald, 2003). This gender gap partially accounts for female underrepresentation. A series of survey studies of political ambition suggest that women are less politically ambitious and less likely to run for office because they tend to doubt their abilities even when they are as qualified as their male counterparts (Fox and Lawless, 2004, 2010). Moreover, scholars find that women are less willing to be representative when the selection process is through an election due to the competitive and strategic nature of electoral politics (Fox and Lawless, 2011; Kanthak and Woon, 2015).

It is also difficult for women to run for office since they lack resources. Participating in politics is time-consuming and costly (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995). Women are found to have less time than men because they are the key providers of housework and childcare (Corrin, 1992; Chhibber, 2002; Burns, Schlozman and Verba, 2021). Money has been considered as one of the most important resources to run political campaigns. Women earn less than men despite doing the same job. The income gap, therefore, also blocks women from running for office (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020).

The demand-side story interprets female underrepresentation from regime type, electoral rules, gender quotas, and political parties and their leaders (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes, 2007). First of all, scholars find mixed results of female representation across democratic and authoritarian states. In democratic countries, women are more likely to be informed and to participate in politics since the democratic system tends to be more transparent and inclusive (Paxton, 1997). On the other hand, in authoritarian states, women can be placed into public positions even if they are not elected in authoritarian states (Howell, 2002; Matland and Montgomery, 2003).

Furthermore, electoral rules affect women's representation. Scholars find that women are performing better to gain public offices in proportional representation (PR) systems than those in plurality-majority systems (Kenworthy and Malami, 1999; McAllister and Studlar, 2002; Paxton, Hughes and Green, 2006). Women are underrepresented in single-member districts because elections under such a system are a zero-sum game, and one more female candidate means one fewer male candidate. PR systems are more welcoming to women due to higher district and party magnitudes. In multimember districts, party gatekeepers are more likely to consider balancing their lists (Welch and Studlar, 1990; Matland, 2005).

Third, the adoption of gender quotas, rules that require a certain number of female members, leads to a slow and steady expansion of female representation (Paxton, Hughes and Barnes, 2020). The design of gender quotas also matters. Schwindt-Bayer (2009) points out that the location of female candidates on the ballot (placement mandates) and sanctions against noncompliance (enforcement mechanisms) affect the effectiveness of gender quotas in terms of increasing female representation.

Lastly, as gatekeepers, political parties decide who is running for office (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes, 2007). Regardless of the gender, a candidate must be selected and endorsed by a political party (Kunovich and Paxton, 2005; Kittilson, 2006). Studies show that left parties tend to support female candidates, a traditionally underrepresented group, due to their egalitarian ideals (Matland, 1993; Caul, 1999). Furthermore, the presence of female party elites can also contribute to female representation (Caul, 1999; Kunovich and

Paxton, 2005). If political parties fail to improve female representation, women may seek alternative options, such as forming "women's parties" (Moser, 2003; Ishiyama, 2003).

Political Selection and Female Underrepresentation in China

Political selection is quite different in authoritarian states than in democratic states due to the absence of meaningful elections. Especially in China, at the entry level all political personnel, also known as "civil servants", have to be recruited via Civil Service Examinations (CSE). High-ranking officials are selected from this pool. Therefore, for any Chinese youth with political ambitions, taking the CSE is the first step to enter the political arena.

According to Liu (2018), the introduction of the CSE system in the 1990s has deeply changed political selections at the entry-level in China. First, it expanded the supply side of political recruitment and opened job opportunities in the government for those who did not have access due to traditional unilateral selections by the authorities. Moreover, the CSE system institutionalized the political selection process, which became more transparent and fair.

Figure 10: Female Representation Within the CCP

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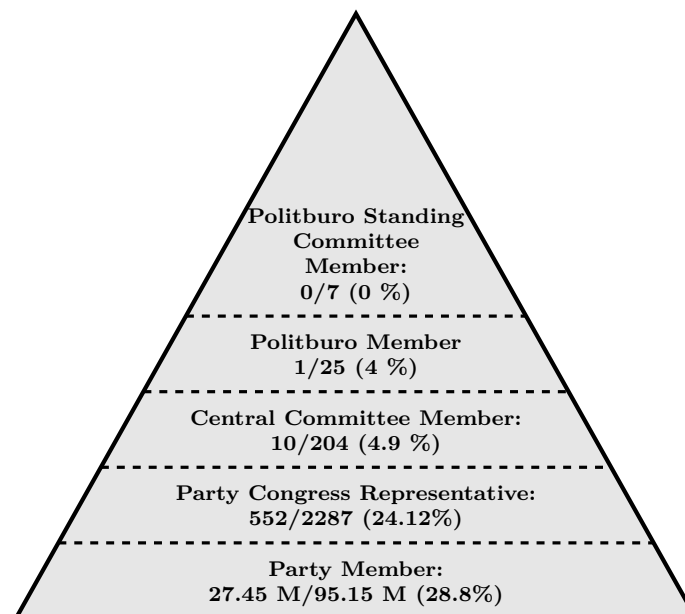
Despite the inclusiveness of the CSE system, women are still severely underrepresented in politics in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) plays the most significant role in politics in China, which is a single-party regime. Figure 10 shows female representation within the CCP. At the bottom level, women's representation with the CCP is no worse than other democratic states, which might be because of affirmative action strategies within the Communist Party (Norris and Inglehart, 2001). A total number of 28.8% of the members of the CCP are female.[31] There are 552 women serving as Party representatives in the 19th Party Congress, which accounts for 24.12 % of the total number.[32] Women are represented at the level of the Party Congress as much as they are at the level of party members. However, as politicians move upward in the hierarchic system, women become less and less represented. In the 204-member Central Committee of the CCP, there are only 10 female members (4.9 %).[33] Among them, only one woman, Sun Chunlan, was in the Politburo, which consists of 25 members (4 %).[34] There have never been any women elected to the Politburo Standing Committee, which is the highest ruling body of the CCP. The underrepresentation of women within the CCP directly translates into the underrepresentation of women in public office because of the *Nomenklatura* system of the CCP.

Sex Scandals and Women's Willingness to Work for the Government

On November 20, 2012, an explicit video was posted on Chinese social media. In this video, then the Party Secretary of Beibei District, Chongqing, Lei Zhengfu was captured having sex with a young woman. Three days later, the Commission of Discipline and Inspection (CDI) in Chongqing announced that it started an investigation against Lei.[35] Lei was one of many corrupt officials who were involved with sex scandals in China's anticorruption campaign since 2012. For example, tigers, high-ranking officials, such as Zhou Yongkang, a former Politburo Standing Committee member, Sun Zhengcai, a former Politburo member, and

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[31]Source: http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-06/30/content_5621583.htm

[32]Source: http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-09/29/c_1121747855.htm

[33]There are 172 alternate members of the Central Committee. 20 of them are women (11.6 %). Source: http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/19cpcnc/2017-10/24/c_1121848883.htm

[34]Source: http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/dhgjjg/940713685.htm

[35]Source: https://nyti.ms/3vNmJV6

Ling Jihua, a former vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), were all involved in sexual misconduct. Accusations include adultery and power-sex exchanges. Based on previous studies of statements of corrupt officials published by the Central Commission of Discipline and Inspection (CCDI), one of the main three topics of corrupt officials' accusations was related to sexual misconduct. How do sex scandals in politics affect women's willingness to participate in politics and female representation in the governmet?

The media has provided comprehensive coverage of corrupt officials since the beginning of China's anticorruption campaign. In particular, when a corrupt official is investigated and removed from the CCP and his/her public position, the CDI usually issues a statement that lists corrupt behaviors. According to my previous study, sexual misconduct is one of the most common corrupt behaviors along with economic corruption and political misconduct (Pu, 2022b). Information about corruption during the campaign provided a great opportunity for ordinary Chinese citizens to update their knowledge about China's political arena. What impact may this new information have on the political participation of Chinese youths? Specifically, how do sex scandals, revealed by investigations against corrupt officials, affect their willingness to work for the government?

Scholars found that China's anticorruption campaign came with some backfire effects. For example, Wang and Dickson (2021) found that China's corruption campaign updated Chinese citizens' knowledge about the integrity of the government and its officials, namely the government is actually more corrupt than people expected. Therefore, it jeopardized public trust in the government. Xi's anticorruption campaign also negatively affects political selection. It deterred more competent candidates from entering the political system, discouraged lower-class candidates, and favored those who are wealthy and politically connected (Jiang, Shao and Zhang, 2022).

Deterrence Theory

China's anticorruption campaign publicizes many insider stories of corruption within the government, which is commonly difficult to acquire by Chinese citizens.

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Women are more vulnerable to sexual misconduct in the workplace because they are disproportionately affected (Feigenblatt, 2020). "Ceteris paribus", women shold choose a more woman-friendly working environment than a hazardous one wchi includes the risk of being involved in sexual misconduct.

Therefore, when women are exposed to sex scandals within the government, they are more likely to evaluate their potential risk of being involved in sexual misconduct in the workplace. Young women in China have more reasons to consider the risks when they are considering their career choice. China is a centralized authoritarian system. This means that when women are involved in sexual misconduct, such as sexual harassment from their male superiors, they have fewer means to hold the "sexual predator" accountable compared with their democratic counterparts.

On the other hand, although men could be the victims of sex misconduct as well, the risk is significantly lower for men than for women (Feigenblatt, 2020). Working for the government in China means working in a male-dominant environment. The risk is even lower. Thus, they are less likely to consider the risk of encountering sexual misconduct as a factor when they are making their career choice. When men are exposed to information about sex scandals within the government, they should be less concerned about being sexually abused.

Incentivization Theory

Men might be incentivized to work for the government by potential opportunities for sex rent-seeking. First, due to the impact of the "one-child policy" in China, the gender ratio disfavores men regarding the marriage market. Being exposed to information about potential opportunities for sex rent-seeking within the political system might incentivize men to work for the government. This does not necessarily mean men want to be a "sexual predator" if they are in power. They might also consider holding power to help them gain bargaining chips in the marriage market.

5.3 Testable Implications

If the theoretical arguments hold, I expect a heterogeneous effect of a sex scandal on willingness to work for the government by gender. Women who are exposed to a sex scandal are less likely to work for the government than women who are not exposed to such information. Moreover, I expect men are similar in terms of working for the government regardless of whether they are exposed to a sex scandal.

Hypothesis 1a: *Women, who are exposed to a sexual scandal of a corrupt official, are less likely to work for the government than their counterparts who are not exposed to any information regarding sexual misconduct.*

Hypothesis 1b: *There is no difference in the willingness to work for the government among men regardless of whether they are exposed to a sex scandal or not.*

Furthermore, men might be incentivized to work for the government if they believe it brings potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking.

Hypothesis 2: *Men, who are exposed to a sexual scandal of a corrupt official, are more likely to work for the government than their counterparts who are not exposed to any information regarding sexual misconduct.*

Another empirical implication of the theoretical arguments is related to the gender gap in the willingness to work for the government. If the theoretical arguments hold, on the one hand, men are incentivized to work for the government or indifferent when they are considering their career choice, on the other hand, women are discouraged by a sex scandal of a corrupt official. As a result, I expect a sex scandal to enlarge the gender gap in willingness to work for the government.

Hypothesis 3: *The gender gap in willingness to work for the government is larger when respondents are exposed to information regarding sexual misconduct compared with respondents in the control group.*

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[36]The name of the survey company is hidden given conducting a political survey is sensitive.

5.4 Data and Empirical Strategy

To test the hypotheses, I conducted an online survey experiment in March 2022. Participants, Chinese college students, were recruited online via a professional Chinese survey company.[36] This survey experiment was conducted on a U.S.-based survey website, Qualtircs, to maintain the confidentiality of respondents. This study investigates the effect of sex scandals during China's anticorruption campaign on Chinese youths' willingness to seek a public career. The minimum requirement for the CSE is usually at least a 3-year college degree. Therefore, a college student sample is appropriate although it is not a nationally representative sample.[37]

The process of this survey is as follows: first, participants were asked sociodemographic questions, political knowledge questions, and gender stereotype questions. Then, participants were randomly assigned to two groups. Participants in the control group directly went to the last section of this survey. Participants in the treated group were shown a piece of news that a corrupt official was investigated during China's anticorruption campaign. He was accused of being involved with sexual misconduct and was removed from the Party and his public office.[38] In this study, I tried my best to provide a real-life scenario to participants. Therefore, I did not vary the gender of the corrupt official. In China's case, citizens are most likely to consume information about male corrupt officials involved with sex misconduct rather than their female counterparts.[39] Lastly, participants were asked whether they would like to seek a position at government and party branches.

In total, this survey recruited 1,306 participants. I only include respondents who 1) consented 2) passed the attention checker question, 3) completed the whole survey (100 % completion), and 4) spent over 3 minutes (180 seconds) and under 16 minutes 40 seconds (1,000 seconds). After screening, the dataset contains 937 respondents.

The outcome variable, the willingness to work for the government, is captured by a

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[37]Due to the limitations of time and financial resources, the student sample is the best option I can afford.

[38]See the wording and balance checks 19 in Appendix D.

[39]The impacts of female corrupt officials with sex scandals is beyond the scope of this study and should be studied in the future.

question that asked respondents their willingness to seek a job position in the government. The wording is as follows "Would you be willing to work for a government/party branch after graduation?" There are five options: yes, maybe, not sure, probably not, and no.

Figure 11: Histogram of Willingness to Work in the Government
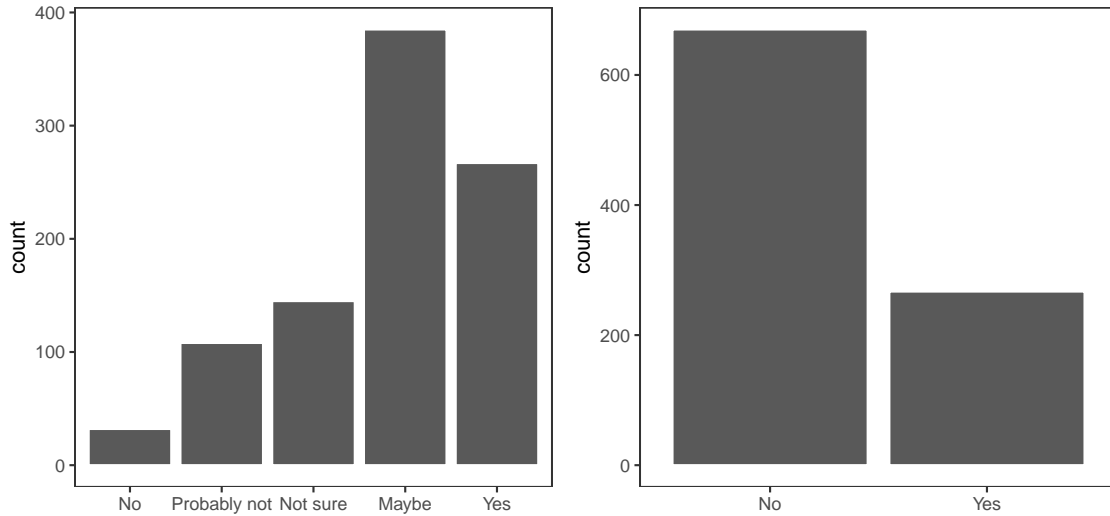
The left panel of Figure 11 presents the histogram of the dependent variable. In general, participants in this student sample show that they are very positive about the idea of seeking a job in the government after graduation. The high willingness to participate in politics might be caused by their high level of education. Almost all of them, at least, are attending a three-year college, which meets the minimum requirement to take the CSE. In addition, 40.98 % of respondents are student cadres, who are commonly more politically ambitious. Second, in China's case, working for the government also provides job security and stability, which makes being a "civil servant" and holding a "golden rice bowl" very attractive. Lastly, as I discussed, at the entry-level, Chinese citizens are able to work for the government as long as they pass the CSE and the interview aftermath. The costs of working for the government are relatively low compared to citizens in democratic states who have to run for office.

I recoded this categorical variable as a binary variable considering the high willingness to work for the government. Only participants who answered "Yes" were coded as

"Yes", and other options, "Maybe", "Not sure", "Probably not", and "No", are coded as "No". The right panel of Figure 11 shows the histogram of the recoded variable, *Willingness*. In this dateset, 267 participants answered "Yes" and 670 participants chose other options.

I estimate the following regression model with an interaction term.

$$\textbf{Willingness}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \textbf{Sex Scandal}_i + \beta_2 * \textbf{Gender}_i + \beta_3(\textbf{Sex Scandal}_i * \textbf{Gender}_i) + u_i \tag{4}$$

In which $Willingness_i$, a binary variable, denotes the willingness to work for the government for respondent i; $SexScandal_i$ is a dummy variable indicating whether respondent i is in the treated group, where respondents read a sex scandal of a corrupt official; and $Gender_i$ indicates the gender of respondent i. β_0 gives the willingness to work for the government when $SexScandal_i$ and $Gender_i$ both equal 0, which means men in the control group.[40] The estimated coefficient on $SexScandal_i$, β_1, gives the estimated effect of sex scandal on the willingness to work for the government when $Gender_i$ equals 0, which means respondents are men. The estimated coefficient β_2 refers to the estimate of the effect of gender when $SexScandal_i$ equals 0, which means respondents in the control group.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Willingness	0.29	0.45	0	1	937
Age	21.4	2.33	18	35	937
Female	0.60	0.49	0	1	937
Minority	0.06	0.24	0	1	937
Rural	0.36	0.48	0	1	937
Student Cadre	0.41	0.49	0	1	937
CCP Member	0.18	0.38	0	1	937
Family Income	4.70	1.58	1	10	937
Political Knowledge	0.32	0.28	0	1	937
Gender Stereotype	2.07	0.60	1	4	937

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[40]The interpretation of coefficients follows the instructions from Kam and Franzese (2007).

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics. First of all, *Willingness*, the outcome variable, is a dummy variable. The mean value is 0.29 with a 0.45 standard deviation. The sociodemographic variables suggest that respondents are very young, ranging from 18 to 35. The mean value of age is approximately 21. About 60% of the respondents are women. The minority respondents are 6% of the sample. 36% of the respondents come from rural areas. Student Cadre is overrepresented (41%) in this sample. Party members are 18% of the sample, which is also overrepresented. The mean value of family income is 4.7. The mean value of political knowledge, which is measured by 4 general political knowledge questions, is 0.32. This suggests that participants in this sample are not well knowledgable regarding politics. The mean value of gender stereotype is 2.07, which means that the respondents in this sample generally are not biased against females.

5.5 Results

Table 9: Logistic Regression Results: Sex Scandals, Gender, and Willingness

	Dependent variable:
	Willingness
Sex Scandal	0.270
	(0.219)
Female	−0.280
	(0.210)
Sex Scandal * Female	−0.299
	(0.293)
Constant	−0.809***
	(0.159)
Observations	937
Log Likelihood	−554.764
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,117.528

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

Table 9 presents the logistic regreesion results. This suggests that men are more likely to choose "Yes" when they were asked whether they are willing to work for the government in the treated group. Moreover, women in the treated group are less willing to

work for the government compared to their counterparts in the control group. The directions are consistent with the theoretical arguments. Nonetheless, those two coefficients are not statistically significant. I will discuss potential insignificant results in the next section.

Figure 12: Sex Scandal, Gender Gap, and Willingness
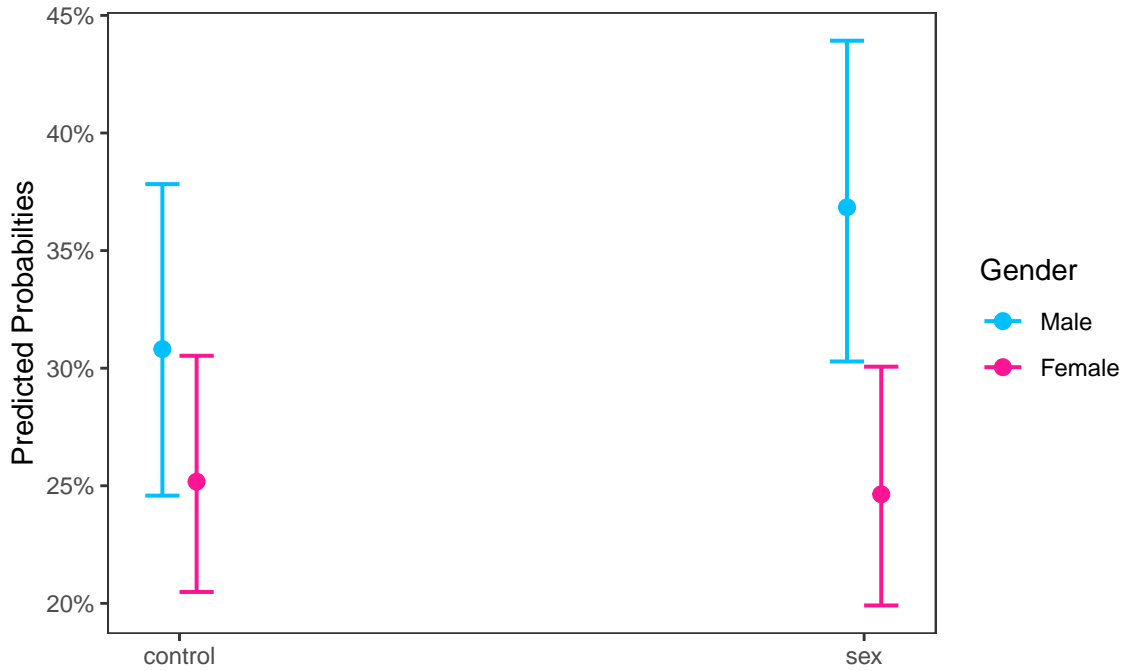
Figure 12 shows the predicted probabilities in willingness to work for the government. It demonstrates that there is little difference statistically insignificant in willingness to work for the government of male and female respondents in the control group. However, the gender gap does exist in the willingness to work for the government between men and women in the treated group. Therefore, the gender gap is thus contingent on the treatment, namely a sex scandal of a corrupt official. This result is consistent with Hypothesis 3 that being exposed to a sex scandal of a corrupt official will enlarge the gender gap in the willingness to work for the government.

It is worth noting that the main driver of the enlarged gender gap comes from men. Men in the treated group are more likely to work for the government than those in the control group. Among women, there was only a small difference bewtween the control

group and the treated group. However, due to the design of the treatment, it is difficult to conclude that men are incentivized to work for the government because of potential opportunities. One alternative explanation is that the treatment led men to believe the government is responsive to discipline corrupt officials. Therefore, they are more likely to work for a just and reposensive government. On the other hand, women are more hesitant to believe this story. A follow-up study should consider adding a "purer" treatment, which means sex scandals without officials being held accountable.

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter explores an understudied subject, female (under)representation, in politics in China. It investigates how sex scandals revealed in China's recent anticorruption campaign affect women's willingness to work for the government. I argue that women might be discouraged from working for the government if they are exposed to a sex scandal of a corrupt official since women are primary victims of sexual misconduct and therefore care more about their working environment. On the other hand, men should be less concerned about the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct in a male-dominant working environment. Men might even be incentivized by potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking.

I conducted a survey experiment to test the empirical implications of the theoretical arguments. The results partially support my arguments. Women are slightly discouraged from working for the government when they are exposed to a sex scandal of a corrupt official compared to women in the control group. Men are more fairly incentivized to seek a job in the government in the treated group than those who did not read the treatment information. However, both effects are not statistically significant. Last, the gender gap in willingness to work for the government is not statistically significant in the control group. It does exist in the treated group. This change suggests that the treatment, a sex scandal of a corrupt official, enlarged the gender gap.

This study is not flawless, and it demonstrates some potential for further investigation. A follow-up study might focus on improving the survey design from three perspectives:

1) sampling, 2) the treatment design, and 3) the measurement of outcome variables.

The insignificant results, first, might be caused by the sampling strategy. The student sample is not representative of all potential candidates to take the CSE and work for the government. Almost all respondents in this sample meet the minumun requirments to take the CSE. Student cadres are overrepresented (42.10 %) in this sample. They are more politically ambitious comparing to non-cadre students. As a result, respondents in this sample may be very determined to seek a position in government compared to potential candidates in the true population and, therefore, may be less sensitive to treatment. The recruitment for the following study should be more inclusive and contain all potential candidates for government positions, not just this select group.

The design of the treatment could also compromise the effectiveness. The treatment is a piece of information revealed by a corrupt official who is involved with sexual misconduct and is investigated and cracked down by the CDI. The original intention of this treatment was to simulate a real-world event. Nevertheless, this piece of information contains a mixed signal. One is the potential risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct if working for the government. Another is that the CDI is holding sexually misbehaving officials accountable. Therefore, respondents can interpret this treatment as a signal that the government is being responsive. Moreover, this treatment does not include situations in which a corrupt official is involved with sexual misconduct and even is reported by the victim(s) or journalists but somehow is not investigated by the CDI. For example, in the recent "Peng Shuai and Zhang Gaoli" case, where Peng accused Zhang, a former Politburo Standing Committee member, of having an inappropriate relationship with her and allegedly being involved with sexual misconduct.[41] However, to date, there has been no public investigation against Zhang. In the follow-up study, I would like to add another treatment that covers this scenario. If my theoretical arguments are correct, this treatment should affect respondents' willingness to work for the government more effectively.

Lastly, in this survey, I only used one question to measure political participation,

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[41]Source: A Chinese Tennis Star Accuses a Former Top Leader of Sexual Assault

which can be problematic. Moreover, I also offered the "maybe" option in the question. Given the popularity of being a civil servant and answering this question costs almost nothing, respondents have strong incentives to choose "maybe" as their answer. In the following study, I will add multiple questions to measure respondents' willingness to work for the government. For example, I would add "Are you going to take the CSE?" and "What is your career plan?". The answer to the first question may come with potential costs for the respondents since taking the CSE requires time and money. The other question would offer respondents alternative options rather than working for the government. Those questions would help me to capture respondents' true preference to work for the government.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Findings and Implications

In this dissertation, I conducted a comprehensive inquiry into the anticorruption rhetoric of China's anticorruption campaign. I employed observational and experimental data and different methodological approaches, such as text-analysis and survey experiments, to investigate anticorruption rhetoric and its causal effects on public opinion in China. Additionally, I explore a spillover effect of China's anticorruption on female representation.

I presented two potential effects of anticorruption rhetoric. The first effect is a framing effect. The CCP took advantage of its dominant role in the political communication arena and used anticorruption rhetoric to shift the blame of corruption to counter potential backfire effects. The main ingredients of anticorruption rhetoric comprise accusations attacking corrupt officials' personal qualities and accusations describing how corrupt officials spiritually failed to comply with the Party's requirements. The CCP, therefore, uses anticorruption rhetoric implicitly to attribute corruption to corrupt officials rather than its political institutions. Corrupt officials were described as "bad apples" and the Party on the other hand was idolized as a "great, glorious, and correct" image.[42]

My findings in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 backed the framing effect of anticorruption rhetoric. The observational study in Chapter 2 suggests that the statements of high-ranking officials contain a high anticorruption rhetoric. My interpretation is that high-ranking officials are traditionally considered less corrupt than their local counterparts. Therefore, revealing objective, descriptive, falsifiable details about them is more likely to trigger a backfire effect and jeopardize popular support for the government (Dai, 2019; Wang and Dickson, 2021). Moreover, I also found that prior exposure to a high anticorruption rhetoric is negatively associated with citizens' perception of corruption in different provinces. The experimental study in Chapter 3 further discovers the causal effects of anticorruption rhetoric.

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[42]The CCP has long been described as great, glorious, and correct by its leaders. For example Xi Jinping's Speech on the 100 anniversary of the establishment of the CCP https://language.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202107/02/WS60de676ca310efa1bd65f4fe.html

I found that respondents who were exposed to anticorruption rhetoric tend to attribute corruption to corrupt officials' personal qualities than those who only were only exposed to objective, descriptive, and unfalsifiable rhetoric. Anticorruption rhetoric reduces respondents' perception of corruption in the area of public services.

Anticorruption rhetoric, second, has a deterrence effect. Anticorruption rhetoric serves as a tool of "hard propaganda" to demonstrate the strength of the government and the Party (Huang, 2015, 2018; Wedeen, 2015). Since it is subjective, abusive, and nonfalsifiable, anticorruption rhetoric could have been used against any officials. Its indiscriminateness implies that the government is strong enough to use unnecessary force to achieve its goals. Therefore, any "rebellious behaviors" would not be tolerated and would be cracked down.

In the survey experiment in Chapter 3, I found evidence to support the deterrence effect of anticorruption rhetoric. Respondents who were exposed to a statement with anticorruption rhetoric perceived that giving or receiving a bribe would be risker than those who were only exposed to an objective, descriptive, falsifiable statement. This finding indicated that citizens consider a government adopting anticorruption rhetoric to be more capable of detecting and counteracting any "rebellious" behaviors.

The findings of anticorruption rhetoric shed a light on the existing literature on China's anticorruption campaign and general authoritarian resilience. Propaganda as one of the most essential tools of the CCP still plays an important role in its ruling.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I focused on female (under)representation in China in the political arena and discovered a potential spillover effect of China's anticorruption campaign. I argue that sex scandals revealed by the anticorruption campaign have heterogeneous effects on women and men. Women are more sensitive to their working environment than their male counterparts since they are disproportionately affected by sexual misconduct. A hazardous working environment with the risk of being exposed to sexual misconduct can deter young women from working for the government. On the other hand, men are less concerned about being involved with sexual misconduct. If any effects exist, men might be incentivized by potential opportunities for sexual rent-seeking.

Due to the design issue of the experiment, I did not find evidence to support the deterrence effect of sex scandals. However, I found that the exposure to information about sex scandals of corrupt officials enlarged the gender gap in willingness to work for the government. The main driver of the enlarged gap came from men. The findings of Chapter 4 contribute to an understudied area of Chinese politics, namely female representation in politics.

6.2 Future Research

Due to time and money constraints, this dissertation is far from flawless. I provide three potential paths for future research.

First, a future study can explore the deterrence effects of anticorruption rhetoric on Chinese officials. This topic is important yet extremely difficult to study given the accessibility of investigating the opinions of Chinese officials. Chinese officials' opinions matter since they are arguably the main customers of anticorruption rhetoric. Is anticorruption rhetoric deterring them from corrupt behaviors or disincentivizing them from fulfilling their duties? Moreover, does anticorruption rhetoric promote political loyalty among them or provoke them to plot a potential coup against the incumbent for the sake of their own safety? A large-scale survey study among Chinese officials seems to be slightly impractical. However, a small-scale study with interviews might be accomplishable. Specifically, retired officials seem to be a good group for conducting interviews since they are 1) more likely to reveal their true opinions given their interests at stake are lower than those officials in office. 2) They should be more experienced and therefore are more likely to provide us with valuable insights.

Second, a future study can investigate the substantive implications of descriptive and rhetorical accusations in the statements of corrupt officials. For example, scholars can explore how the number of descriptive and rhetoric affect corrupt officials' legal sentences. Does political misconduct play a role in their trials? Do their personal qualities increase their prison time despite being irrelevant to their sentence? If personal qualities could

be capitalized as legal punishments, how would it affect officials' incentives and political outsiders' willingness to participate in politics?

Lastly, I will continue to investigate how sex scandals in politics affect women's willingness to work for the government. I will add one more treated group in which respondents are shown a sex scandal in which the misbehaved politician is not held accountable (For example, the Peng Shuai and Zhang Gaoli case). Moreover, I can also manipulate the gender of the suspect and the victim in the vignette. This strategy can help us to explore potential heterogeneous effects. Finally, I need better measurements of the willingness to work for the government. For example, instead of simply asking respondents whether they are willing to work for the government, I can use questions such as "Are you planning to take the CSE exam?" The answer should be more costly regarding time and money and therefore more credible.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Appendix A

Table 10: Top 10 Most Frequent Accusations

Ranking	Descriptive Accusations	Freq. (%)	Rhethrical Accusations	Freq. (%)
1	Did not stop misbehaving after 18th Party Congress 党的十八大后不收敛、不收手	504 (6.64%)	Losing ideals and faith 丧失理想信念	548 (35.56%)
2	Resisting organizational investigation 对抗组织审查	397 (5.23%)	Having a poor sense of discipline 纪律意识淡漠	77 (5.00%)
3	Accepting gifts and gratuities 收受礼品、礼金	372 (4.90%)	Having a poor sense of purpose 宗旨意识淡漠	57 (3.70%)
4	Failing to report personal matters 不按规定报告个人有关事项	262 (3.45%)	Being disloyal and dishonest to the Party 对党不忠诚、不老实	48 (3.11%)
5	Accepting huge bribes 利用职务便利为他人谋取利益收受巨额财物	244 (3.21%)	Being morally corrupt 道德败坏	38 (2.47%)
6	Violating life discipline 违反生活纪律	96 (1.26%)	Being economically greedy 经济上贪婪	27 (1.75%)
7	Having inappropriate sexual relations with others 与他人发生不正当性关系	78 (1.03%)	Deviating from the Party's purpose 背离党的宗旨	26 (1.69%)
8	Committing adultery 与他人通奸	74 (0.97%)	Being inflated greedy 贪欲膨胀	22 (1.43%)
9	Illegally participating in profit activities 违规从事营利活动	72 (0.95%)	Being corrupt and depraved 腐化堕落	22 (1.43%)
10	Failing to explain problems 在组织函询时不如实说明问题	33 (0.43%)	Losing party spirit and principles 毫无党性原则	18 (1.17%)

8.2 Appendix B

Wang Gang's statement

经查，王刚利用职务便利为他人谋取利益，收受巨额钱物；侵吞公款；收受礼品礼金。王刚的上述行为构成严重违纪违法，涉嫌犯罪。

DeepL Translation: *After investigation, Wang Gang used the convenience of his position to seek benefits for others, receiving large amounts of money and goods; embezzling public funds; accepting gifts and gratuities. Wang Gang's above-mentioned behavior constitutes a serious violation of discipline and law and is suspected of a crime.*

Lu Wei's statement

经查，鲁炜严重违反政治纪律和政治规矩，阳奉阴违、欺骗中央，目无规矩、肆意妄为，妄议中央，干扰中央巡视，野心膨胀，公器私用，不择手段为个人造势，品行恶劣、匿名诬告他人，拉帮结派、搞"小圈子"；严重违反中央八项规定精神和群众纪律，频繁出入私人会所，大搞特权，作风粗暴、专横跋扈；违反组织纪律，组织谈话函询时不如实说明问题；违反廉洁纪律，以权谋私，收钱敛财；违反工作纪律，对中央关于网信工作的战略部署搞选择性执行；以权谋色、毫无廉耻。利用职务上的便利为他人谋取利益并收受巨额财物涉嫌受贿犯罪。鲁炜身为党的高级干部，理想信念缺失，毫无党性原则，对党中央极端不忠诚，"四个意识"个个皆无，"六大纪律"项项违反，是典型的"两面人"，是党的十八大后不收敛、不知止，问题严重集中，群众反映强烈，政治问题与经济问题相互交织的典型，性质十分恶劣、情节特别严重。

DeepL Translation: *It was found that Lu Wei seriously violated political discipline and political rules, followed the rules and deceived the central government, disregarded the rules, acted recklessly, deliberately discussed the central government, interfered with the central inspection, had inflated ambitions, used public instruments for personal use, used any means to create personal momentum, had poor conduct, anonymously and falsely accused others, formed cliques and engaged in "small circles"; seriously violated the eight provisions of the central government He violated the spirit of the Central Committee's eight provisions and the discipline of the masses, frequenting private clubs, engaging in privileges,*

rude and domineering style; violated organizational discipline, not truthfully explaining the problems when the organization talks and consults; violated integrity discipline, using his power for personal gain, collecting money to enrich himself; violated work discipline, selective implementation of the strategic deployment of the Central Government on the work of the Internet; used his power for sex, without shame. Using the convenience of his position to seek benefits for others and receive large amounts of money suspected of bribery. Lu Wei, as a senior cadre of the Party, lack of ideals and beliefs, no party principles, extreme disloyalty to the Party Central Committee, the "four consciousnesses" are all absent, the "six disciplines" each violation, is a typical "two-faced people The "two-faced person" is a typical "two-faced person", is not convergence after the 18th Party Congress, do not know stop, the problem is seriously concentrated, the public reflects strongly, political problems and economic problems intertwined typical, the nature is very bad, the circumstances are particularly serious.

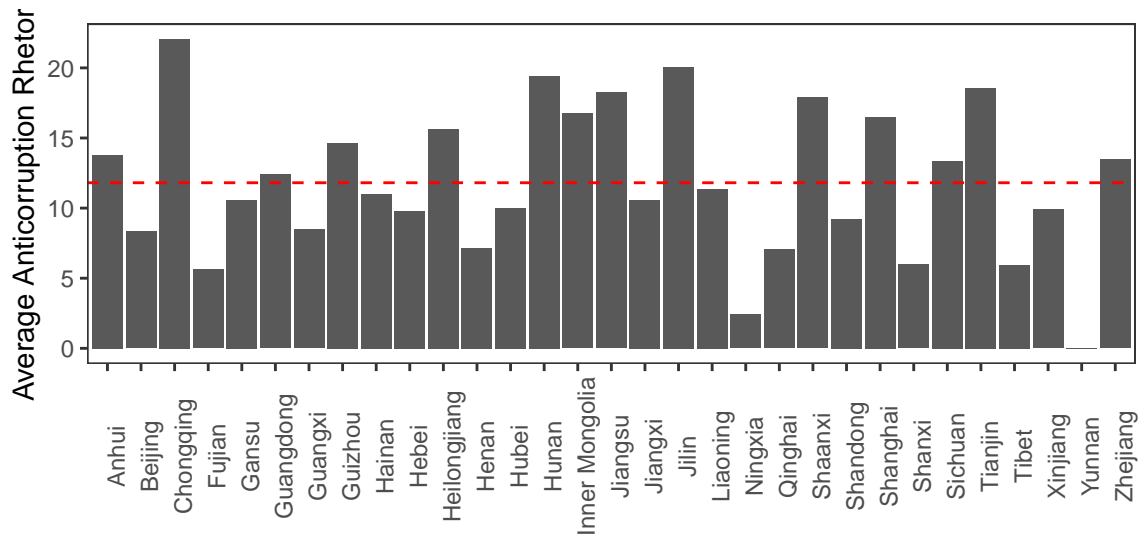Figure 13: Average Anticorruption Rhetoric by Province

Table 11: Province and Abbreviation

Province	Abbreviation	Province (Chinese)	Abbr. (Chinese)
Anhui	AH	安徽	皖
Beijing	BJ	北京	京
Chongqing	CQ	重庆	渝
Fujian	FJ	福建	闽
Guangdong	GD	广东	粤
Gansu	GS	甘肃	甘
Guangxi	GX	广西	桂
Guizhou	GZ	贵州	贵
Henan	HA	河南	豫
Hubei	HB	湖北	鄂
Hebei	HE	河北	冀
Hainan	HI	海南	琼
Heilongjiang	HL	黑龙江	黑
Hunan	HN	湖南	湘
Jinlin	JL	吉林	吉
Jiangsu	JS	江苏	苏
Jiangxi	JX	江西	赣
Liaoning	LN	辽宁	辽
Neimenggu	NM	内蒙古	蒙
Ningxia	NX	宁夏	宁
Qinghai	QH	青海	青
Sichuan	SC	四川	川
Shangdong	SD	山东	鲁
Shanghai	SH	上海	沪
Shaanxi	SN	陕西	陕
Shanxi	SX	江西	晋
Tianjin	TJ	天津	津
Yunnan	YN	云南	云
Zhejiang	ZJ	浙江	浙

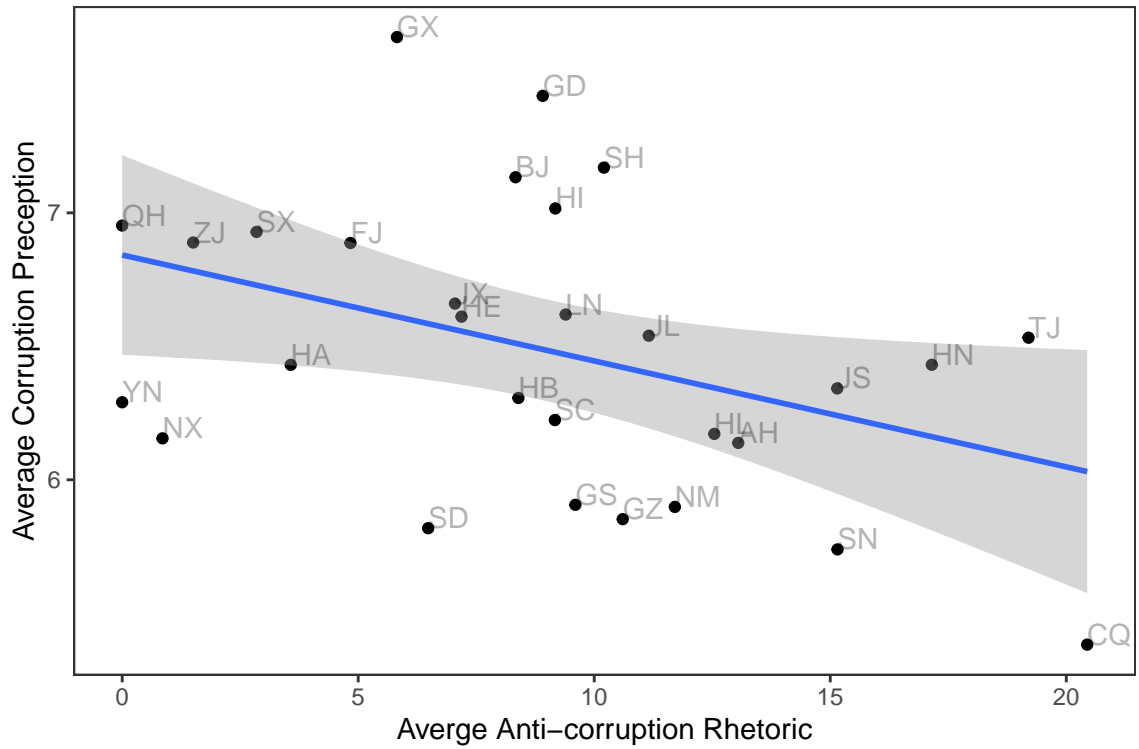Figure 14: Scatter Plot of AAR and ACP

Figure 14 presents the scatter plot of AAR and ACP. This shows that there is a clear negative association between AAR and ACP.

8.3 Appendix C

Treament Wordings

LD GROUP

Chinese:

请仔细阅读以下声明。自党的十八大以来，我国开展了声势浩大反腐败运动。近日，经中共 A 省委批准，A 省纪委对张伟（省管干部）的违纪违法问题进行了立案审查调查。经查，张伟利用职务之便，为他人谋取利益，收受大量财物，收受礼品和礼金，非法参与营利活动。根据有关规定，张伟被开除党籍处分和开除公职处分

English Translation:

Please read the following statement carefully: Recently, approved by the CCP province A Committee, the province A CDI conducted a investigation of Zhang Wei, a local official, for serious violations of discipline and law. After an investigation, the CDI found out Zhang Wei takes advantage of his position to benefit others to receive large amounts of money and property; accepts gifts and gratuities; participates in profit activities illegally. According to the relevant provisions, Zhang Wei was expelled from the Party and dismissed from his public office.

LR Group

Chinese:

请仔细阅读以下声明。自党的十八大以来，我国开展了声势浩大反腐败运动。近日，经中共 A 省委批准，A 省纪委对张伟（省管干部）的违纪违法问题进行了立案审查调查。经查，张伟利用职务之便，为他人谋取利益，收受大量财物，收受礼品和礼金，非法参与营利活动。张伟丧失理想信念，道德败坏，经济贪婪。根据有关规定，张伟被开除党籍处分和开除公职处分

English Translation:

Please read the following statement carefully: Recently, approved by the CCP province A Committee, the province A CDI conducted a investigation of Zhang Wei, a local official, for serious violations of discipline and law. After an investigation, the CDI found out Zhang Wei takes advantage of his position to benefit others to receive large amounts of money and property, accepts gifts and gratuities, participates in profit activities illegally. Zhang Wei loses his ideals and faith, is morally corrupt and economically greedy. According to the relevant provisions, Zhang Wei was expelled from the Party and dismissed from his public office.

CD Group

Chinese:

请仔细阅读以下声明。自党的十八大以来，我国开展了声势浩大反腐败运动。近日，

经中共中央批准，中纪委对张伟（中管干部）的违纪违法问题进行了立案审查调查。经查，中纪委发现张伟利用职务上的便利，为他人谋取利益，收受巨额财物；收受礼品、礼金；违规参与营利活动。根据有关规定，张伟受到开除党籍、开除公职处分。

English Translation:

Please read the following statement carefully: Recently, approved by the CCP Central Committee, the CCDI conducted a investigation of Zhang Wei, a central official, for serious violations of discipline and law. After an investigation, the CCDI found out Zhang Wei takes advantage of his position to benefit others to receive large amounts of money and property; accepts gifts and gratuities; participates in profit activities illegally. According to the relevant provisions, Zhang Wei was expelled from the Party and dismissed from his public office.

CR Group

Chinese:

请仔细阅读以下声明。自党的十八大以来，我国开展了声势浩大反腐败运动。近日，经中共中央批准，中纪委对张伟（中管干部）的违纪违法问题进行了立案审查调查。经查，张伟利用职务之便，为他人谋取利益，收受大量财物，收受礼品和礼金，非法参与营利活动。张伟丧失理想信念，道德败坏，经济贪婪。根据有关规定，张伟被开除党籍处分和开除公职处分

English Translation:

Please read the following statement carefully: Recently, approved by the CCP Central Committee, the CCDI conducted a investigation of Zhang Wei, a central official, for serious violations of discipline and law. After an investigation, the CCDI found out Zhang Wei takes advantage of his position to benefit others to receive large amounts of money and property; accepts gifts and gratuities; participates in profit activities illegally. Zhang Wei loses his ideals and faith, is morally corrupt and economically greedy.According to the relevant provisions, Zhang Wei was expelled from the Party and dismissed from his public office

Question Wordings

Political Knowledge

Which of the following options is NOT a permanent member of the United Nations? (If you feel unsure, please select not sure)

How many members are currently on the Standing Committee of the Central Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China? (If you feel unsure, please select not sure)

In the past 3 years (2018 - 2020), what was the average annual real GDP growth rate in China? (If you feel unsure, please select not sure)

Which of the following options is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom? (If you are not sure, please select not sure)

Outcome Variables

Now I'd like you to tell me your views on corruption –when people pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favor to other people in order to get the things they need done or the services they need. How would you place your views on corruption in China on a 10-point scale where "1" means "there is no corruption in China" and "10" means "there is abundant corruption in China". If your views are somewhat mixed, choose the appropriate number in between. Options: 1-10 (World Vaule Survey Wave 7 (Haerpfer, 2020)).

How high is the risk in this country to be held accountable for giving or receiving a bribe, gift or favor in return for public service? To indicate your opinion, use a 10-point scale where "1" means "no risk at all" and "10" means "very high risk" . Options: 1-10 (World Vaule Survey Wave 7 (Haerpfer, 2020)).

We want to know about your experience with local officials and service providers, like police officers, lawyers, doctors, teachers and civil servants in your community. How often do you think ordinary people like yourself or people from your neighbourhood have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favor to these people in order to get the services you

need? Does it happen never, rarely, frequently or always? Options: "Never", "Rarely", "Frequenly", and "Always" (World Vaule Survey Wave 7 (Haerpfer, 2020)).

Do you think Zhang Wei's corruption should be attributed to his personal qualities or to the failure of monitoring institutions? Options: "Totally his personal qualities", "Somewhat his personal qualities", "Somewhat the failure of monitoring institutions", and "Totally the failure of monitoring institutions".

Do you support our country＇s current anticorruption campaign? Options: "Very Supportive", "Supportive", "Not Sure", "Not Supportive", and "Not supportive at all" (Huang, 2018).
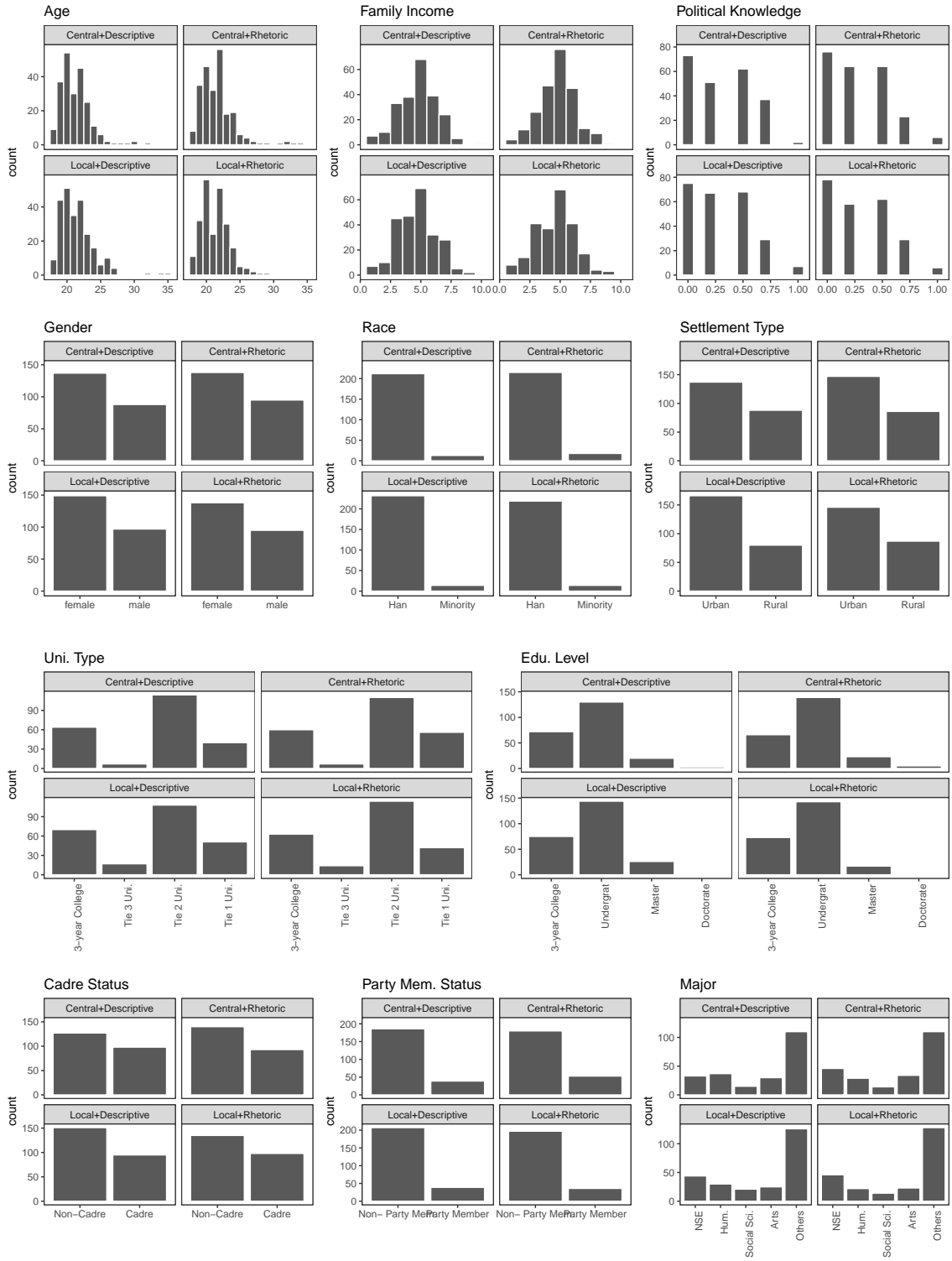
Figure 15: Balance Checks

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Table 12: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Blame Attribution	2.18	0.77	1	4	937
Corruption Perception	4.88	2.19	1	10	937
Corruption in Public Service	2.75	0.74	1	4	937
Anticorruption Campaign	4.76	0.53	1	5	937
Risk of Bribery	7.16	2.51	1	10	937
Age	21.4	2.33	18	35	937
Female	0.60	0.49	0	1	937
Minority	0.06	0.24	0	1	937
Rural	0.36	0.48	0	1	937
Student Cadre	0.41	0.49	0	1	937
CCP Member	0.18	0.38	0	1	937
Family Income	4.70	1.58	1	10	937
Political Knowledge	0.32	0.28	0	1	937

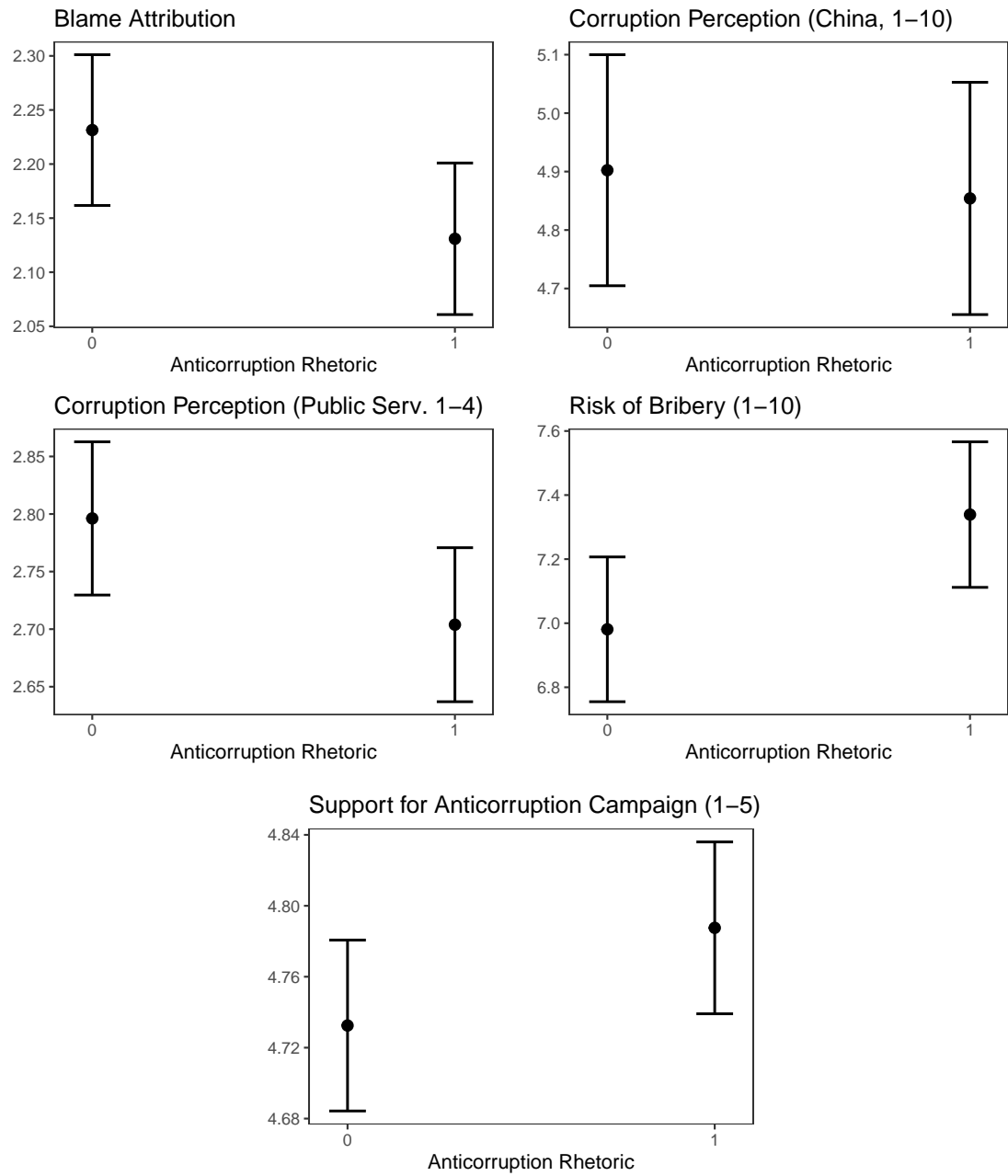Figure 16: The Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric
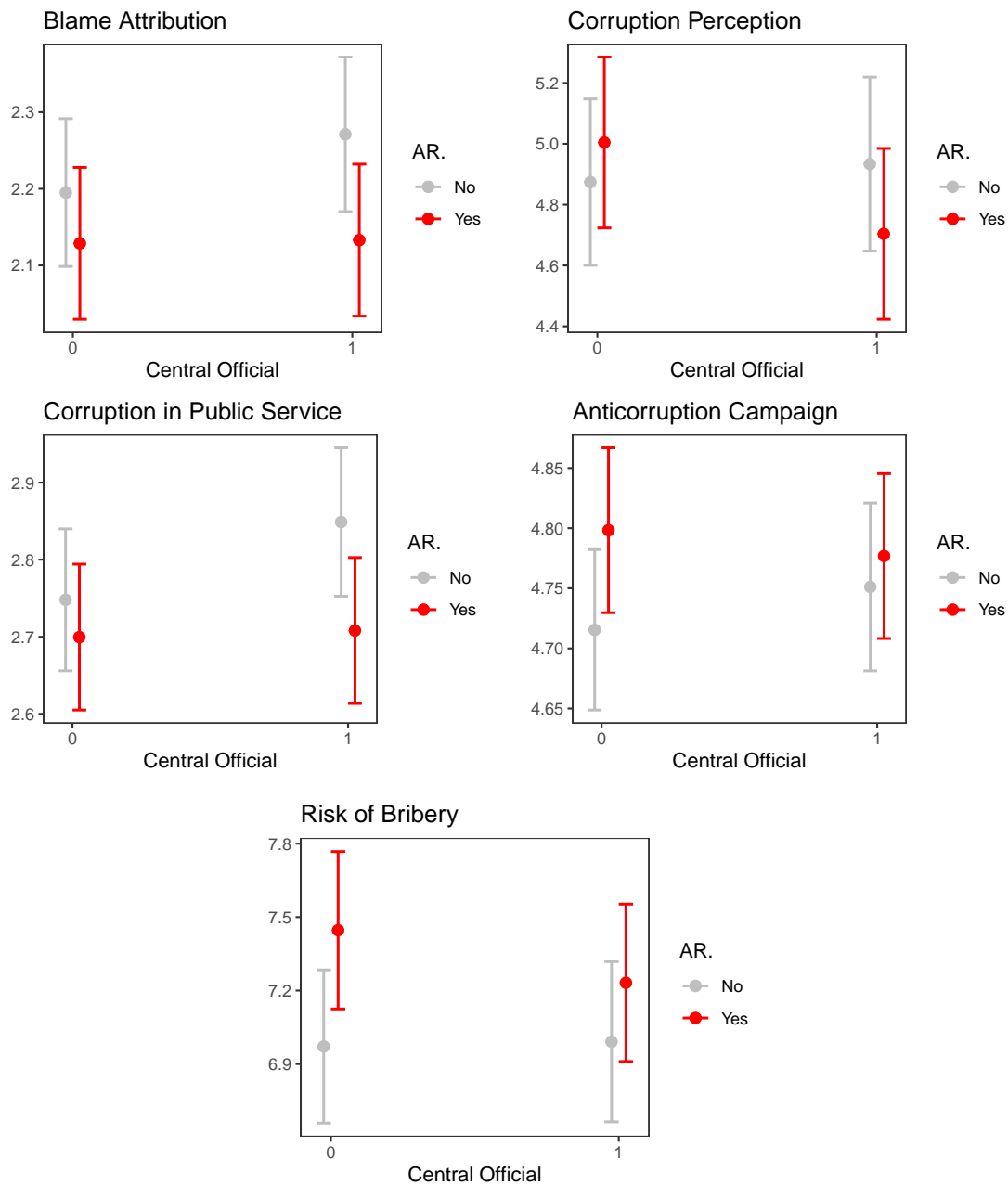
Figure 17: The Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric (Interaction)

Table 13: The Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric: Regression Results (with Demographic Controls)

	Outcome Variable:				
	CP	RB	CPS	BA	AC
Anticorruption Rhetoric	−0.070	0.344**	−0.095**	−0.099**	0.055
	(0.140)	(0.163)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.035)
Female	0.136	0.095	0.060	0.053	0.003
	(0.144)	(0.168)	(0.049)	(0.051)	(0.036)
Age	0.132***	0.073*	0.018	−0.002	−0.001
	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.009)
Minority	0.586**	0.632*	0.133	−0.052	−0.084
	(0.291)	(0.338)	(0.099)	(0.104)	(0.072)
Rural	0.269*	0.011	0.077	−0.012	0.020
	(0.163)	(0.189)	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.040)
Education	0.210	−0.402**	0.096**	0.139***	0.026
	(0.141)	(0.164)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.035)
Student Cadre	−0.044	0.163	−0.062	−0.074	0.059
	(0.148)	(0.173)	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.037)
CCP Membership	0.091	0.197	−0.054	−0.006	0.044
	(0.196)	(0.229)	(0.067)	(0.070)	(0.049)
Family Income	0.120**	0.073	0.009	0.030	−0.002
	(0.051)	(0.059)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Constant	0.922	5.610***	2.170***	1.897***	4.687***
	(0.727)	(0.847)	(0.248)	(0.260)	(0.181)
Observations	937	937	937	937	937
R^2	0.049	0.018	0.024	0.028	0.010
Adjusted R^2	0.039	0.009	0.014	0.018	0.001

Note: Outcome Variables: CP = Corruption Perception, RB= Risk of Bribery, CPS = Corruption in Public Service, BA = Blame Attribution, AC = Anticorruption Campaign.*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 14: The Heterogeneous Effects of Political Knowledge: Regression Results (with Demographic Controls)

	Outcome Variable:				
	CP	RB	CPS	BA	AC
Anticorruption Rhetoric	−0.048	0.217	−0.107**	−0.091*	0.074*
	(0.152)	(0.177)	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.038)
Political Knowledge	0.607**	−0.418	−0.053	0.060	0.080
	(0.275)	(0.321)	(0.094)	(0.099)	(0.069)
Anticorruption Rhetoric * Political Knowledge	−0.056	0.859*	0.080	−0.050	−0.125
	(0.395)	(0.461)	(0.136)	(0.142)	(0.099)
Female	0.172	0.109	0.060	0.054	0.002
	(0.144)	(0.169)	(0.050)	(0.052)	(0.036)
Age	0.124***	0.073*	0.018	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.036)	(0.042)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.009)
Minority	0.617**	0.656*	0.135	−0.052	−0.086
	(0.290)	(0.339)	(0.100)	(0.104)	(0.072)
Rural	0.287*	0.007	0.076	−0.010	0.021
	(0.162)	(0.189)	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.041)
Education	0.178	−0.409**	0.096**	0.138***	0.026
	(0.141)	(0.165)	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.035)
Student Cadre	−0.059	0.168	−0.061	−0.075	0.057
	(0.148)	(0.173)	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.037)
CCP Membership	0.071	0.203	−0.053	−0.007	0.042
	(0.196)	(0.229)	(0.067)	(0.070)	(0.049)
Family Income	0.101**	0.073	0.009	0.028	−0.002
	(0.051)	(0.059)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.013)
Constant	1.138	5.675***	2.170***	1.907***	4.685***
	(0.730)	(0.852)	(0.250)	(0.262)	(0.182)
Observations	937	937	937	937	937
R^2	0.057	0.022	0.024	0.028	0.012
Adjusted R^2	0.045	0.010	0.012	0.017	0.0003

Note: Outcome Variables: CP = Corruption Perception, RB= Risk of Bribery, CPS = Corruption in Public Service, BA = Blame Attribution, AC = Anticorruption Campaign.*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 18: The Effects of Anticorruption Rhetoric by Political Knowledge (Interaction)
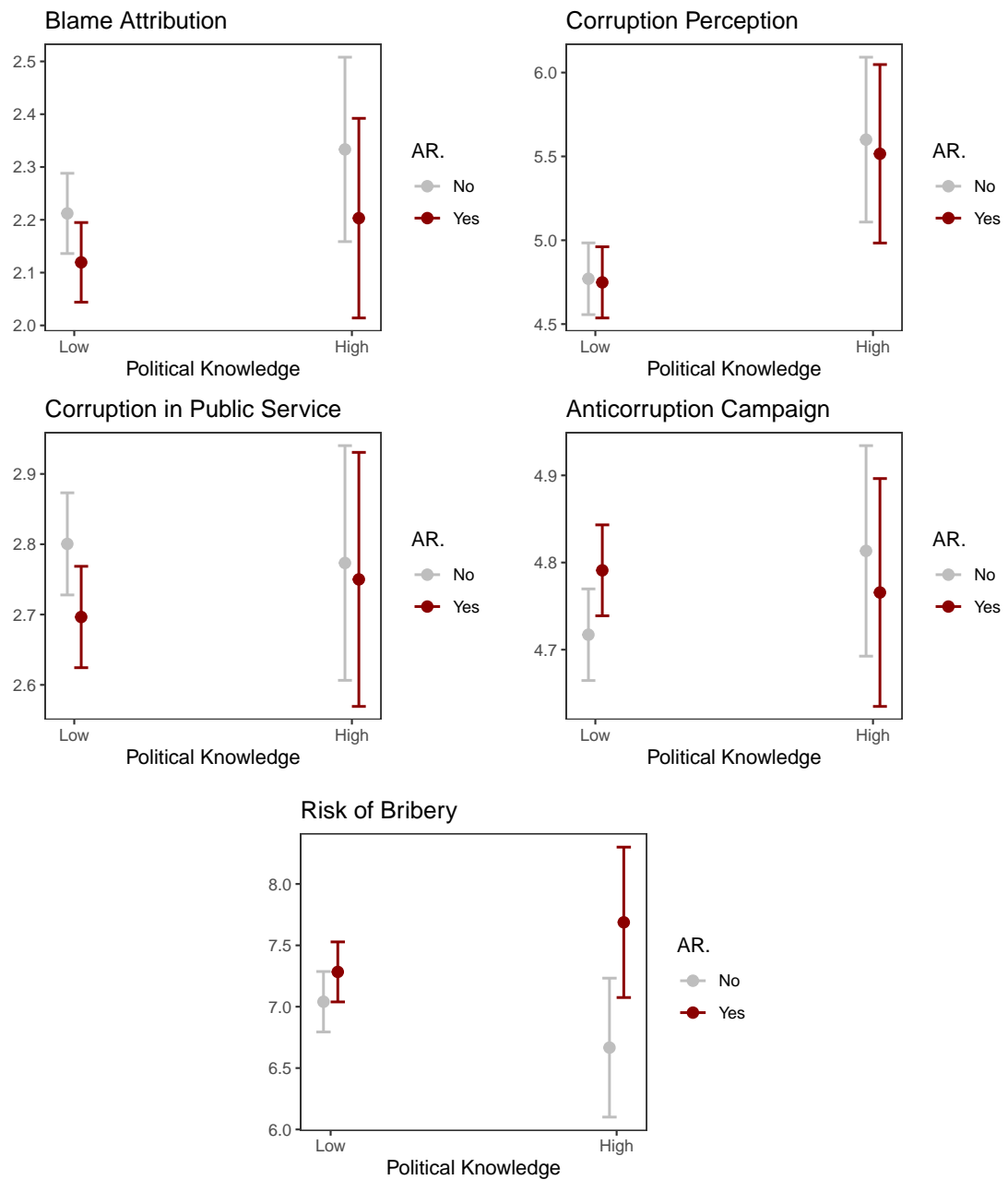
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

March 1, 2022

Yuyang Pu

ypu3@uh.edu

Dear Yuyang Pu:

On March 1, 2022, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	An Inquiry into the Rhetoric of China's Anti-corruption Campaign
Investigator:	Yuyang Pu
IRB ID:	STUDY00003504
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Anti-corruption_Rhetoric.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Consent Form_Pu.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • HRP-503 Protocol_Pu_revised.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Recruitment_Pu_revised.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • TranslationAssurance_Pu.pdf, Category: Translation Assurance;
Review Category:	Exempt
Committee Name:	Not Applicable
IRB Coordinator:	Sandra Arntz

The IRB approved the study on March 1, 2022 ; recruitment and procedures detailed within the approved protocol may now be initiated.

As this study was approved under an exempt or expedited process, recently revised regulatory requirements do not require the submission of annual continuing review

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documentation. However, it is critical that the following submissions are made to the IRB to ensure continued compliance:

- Modifications to the protocol prior to initiating any changes (for example, the addition of study personnel, updated recruitment materials, change in study design, requests for additional subjects)
- Reportable New Information/Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others
- Study Closure

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/

8.4   Appendix D

Treatment

Chinese:

请认真阅读以下材料。随着反腐败运动持续深入，大量腐败官员被揭露出牵涉不正当性行为。例如，B 省官员，顾某某。B 省纪委在调查中发现顾某某利用职权" 潜规则 "多名女下属（利用职权与多名女下属发生不正当性关系），玩弄女性，搞权色交易。根据相关规定，顾某某被开除党籍和开除公职。

English Translation:

Please read the following statement carefully: As China's anticorruption campaign continues, a large number of corrupt officials have been exposed as being involved in sexual misconduct. For example, Gu XX, an official from Province B. During the investigation, Province B CDI found Gu XX took advantage of his power to have inappropriate sexual relations with a number of female subordinates, play with women and trade his power for sex. According to relevant regulations, Gu XX was expelled from the Party and dismissed from public office.
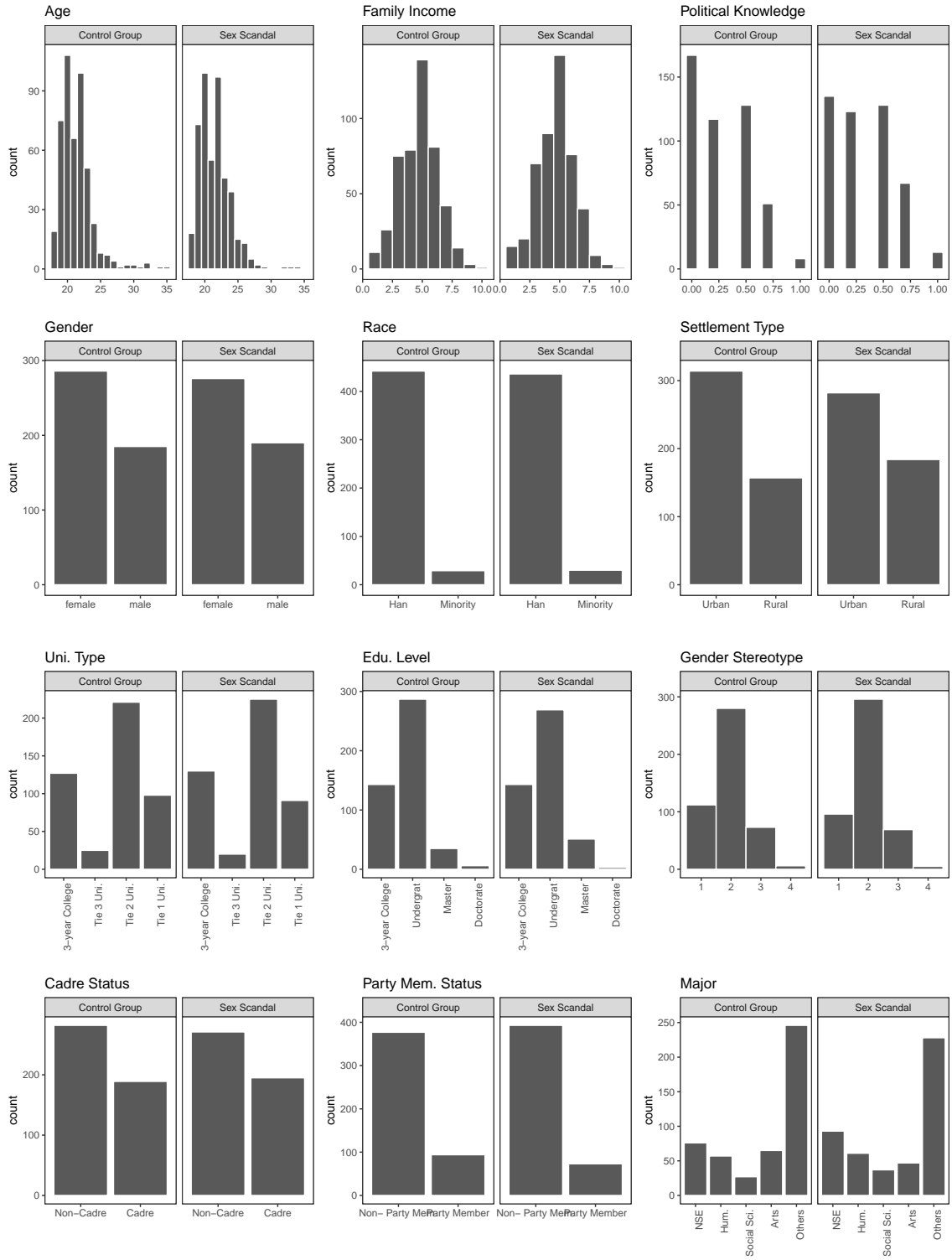
Figure 19: Balance Checks

Table 15: Sex Scandals and Willingness: Logistic Regression (with Demographic Controls)

	Outcome Variable:
	Willingness
Sex Scandal	0.194
	(0.225)
Female	−0.277
	(0.214)
Sex Scandal*Female	−0.239
	(0.300)
Age	0.078**
	(0.037)
Minority	−0.580*
	(0.349)
Rural	0.292*
	(0.171)
Education	−0.347**
	(0.148)
Student Cadre	0.753***
	(0.156)
CCP Member	−0.093
	(0.207)
Family Income	−0.015
	(0.053)
Constant	−2.173***
	(0.762)
Observations	937
Log Likelihood	−536.551
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,095.102

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