# Structuring Crisis: Bureaucratic Influence and Regulatory Distortion in China

By

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# 1 Introduction

On March 5, 2013, a dozen pig carcasses floated down the Huangpu River toward Shanghai. Within days, the number of pigs swelled to more than 16,000, turning a bizarre scene into a genuine public health crisis.[1] Local officials did little to mollify public concern after claiming that the pigs died from freezing temperatures. As the *People's Daily* Internet Monitoring Center recapped the mood over the incident: "Today's Public Opinion: Pigs don't fear the cold. Officials fear responsibility"![2] This was not the first time thousands of dead animals had been found in an unexpected place in China.[3] It was also not unprecedented for public outrage to challenge the official explanation of events.[4] In contrast, the event represented a broader trend of regulatory failure, blame avoidance, and crisis mismanagement in China following decades of unprecedented economic growth. In the past few years, news of ex-

[1] Davison, Nicola. 2013. "Rivers of blood: the dead pigs rotting in China's water supply." *Guardian*. 29 March. Accessed Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/29/dead-pigs-china-water-supply.

[2] He Xintian (何新田) and Qu Junmei (屈俊美). 2013. "今日舆情解读：猪不怕冷官怕担责 (Understanding Today's Public Opinion: Pigs don't fear the cold. Officials fear responsibility." 人民网舆情监测室 (People's Daily Internet Monitoring Center). Accessed Online: http://yuqing.people.com.cn/n/2013/0312/c212785-20766383.html.

[3] e.g., Chen, Stephen. 2013. "Over 1,000 dead ducks found in Sichuan river," *South China Morning Post*. 25 March. Accessed online: http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1199587/dead-ducks-china-river-swine-flow-eases.

[4] e.g., Wines, Michael and Keith Bradsher. 2010. "Workers Question China's Account of Oil Spill," *The New York Times*. 4 August. Accessed online: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/05/world/asia/05dalian.html.

ploding watermelons,[5] toxic soil,[6] foul air,[7] chemical explosions,[8] and angry protests[9] have dominated headlines about China throughout the world.

At first glance, the official government statistics tallying these incidents are staggering: In a single year, nearly 70,000 Chinese citizens die in industrial accidents,[10] millions are resettled as a result of natural disasters,[11] and security forces reportedly confront more than 500 "mass incidents" a day.[12] Indeed, the sheer number of fatalities and injuries involved in these events lead many analysts to question the durability and resiliency of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). As Andrew Nathan (2009: 40) once wrote: "The authoritarian regime must perform constantly like a team of acrobats on a high wire, staving off all crises while keeping its act flawlessly together. Today…the regime is managing to do that. But it cannot afford to slip." Yet, disaster after disaster, year after year, the CCP has (so far) defied predictions of its imminent demise. This raises two critically important questions: How does the Chinese Communist Party continue to rule against a backdrop of regulatory crises and societal anger? Alternatively, why does the party continue to struggle to improve regulatory

[5] 2011. "China farmers face 'exploding' watermelon problem. *BBC*. 17 May. Accessed Online:http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13421374

[6] Larson, Christina. 2014. "China's Polluted Soil Is Tainting the Country's Food Supply," *Bloomberg Businessweek*. 8 December. Accessed online:http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-12-08/china-s-polluted-soil-is-tainting-the-countrys-food-supply.

[7] Hauser, Christine. 2015. "'Airpocalypse': Beijing Smog Red Alert on Social Media," *The New York Times*. 8 December. Accessed Online: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/09/world/asia/airpocalypse-beijng-smog.html.

[8] 2015. "Deadly inferno: Chinese port city rocked by explosions." *Al-Jazeera*. 13 August. Accessed Online: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/08/deadly-inferno-chinese-port-city-rocked-explosions-150813072119096.html.

[9] Chin, Josh. 2016. "Chinese Protests Over Trash Incinerator Turn Violent," *The Wall Street Journal*. 4 July. Accessed Online: http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinese-protests-over-trash-incinerator-turn-violent-1467612545.

[10] As noted throughout this dissertation, industrial accident encompasses a large variety of incidents in China.

[11] In 2014, 18,584,000 were resettled as a result of natural disasters. 《中国民政统计年鉴 2015》(China Civil Affairs Statistical Yearbook 2015) Table C2.56

[12] As described in Chapter 2, mass incidents involve any collective disturbance with more than five people. The figure is calculated from the last official tally released of incidents in 2011, where supposedly there were 182,500 incidents in China. 李黎丹 (Li Lidan). 2013. "基于情感社会学研究的群体事件防治分析 (On Account of Social Science Research For Preventing Mass Incidents Analysis." 《人民日报》*(People's Daily)*. 19 December. Accessed Online: http://yjy.people.com.cn/n/2013/1219/c245082-23886809.html

standards and build viable mechanisms for expressing social dissatisfaction despite decades of institutional reform?

These questions are puzzling considering the theoretical insights available on crisis management and authoritarian regimes. The extant literature suggests that pressures from below created by large-scale crises will splinter autocrats at the top, causing the regime to collapse (e.g., Quiroz Flores and Smith, 2013; Haggard and Kaufman, 1997; Pelling and Dill, 2006). Not only has this not been the case in China, but also we lack systematic theorizing about the precise mechanisms that allow the Chinese state to manage crises such as industrial accidents and social unrest. Despite a voluminous literature on crisis management and regulatory reform, nearly all of our existing knowledge focuses exclusively on liberal democracies and cross-national aggregate effects. Apart from case studies, there is little comprehensive research into single-party authoritarian regimes and crises, let alone the Chinese Communist Party.

To be sure, scholars have spent decades detailing various institutions Chinese autocrats have at their disposal to gain information about threats to their rule. We now have considerable evidence that the cadre management system (Manion, 1985; Burns, 1994; Whiting, 2000; Edin, 2003; Zhao, 2007; Landry, 2008; Zuo, 2015), quasi-representative institutions (Tsai, 2007; Truex, 2014; Manion, 2016), censorship and public opinion monitoring (Shambaugh, 2007; Brady, 2012; Stockmann, 2013; King, Pan and Roberts, 2013; Chang and Manion, 2016), the petitioning system (Minzner, 2006; Chen, 2011; Dimitrov, 2015), and even protests (O'Brien and Li, 2006; Perry, 2001; Lorentzen, 2015) help channel information between Beijing's rulers, local officials, and citizens so that small governance problems do not turn into regime-threatening crises. Far less research, however, has been devoted to studying the institutions deliberately set up to prevent and respond to emergent events, China's emergency management system.

In view of the importance CCP leaders ascribe to the concept of "stability" in Chinese

politics, the lack of systematic investigation into these specific crisis management institutions is a noticeable shortcoming. Much of the existing literature assumes local leaders are sufficiently motivated to prioritize social stability due to China's cadre management system, where a large protest can theoretically nullify all other achievements in an official's annual performance review. The same scholars, however, struggle to explain why local officials do not meet other "imperative" goals in the target responsibility system such as resource conservation, work safety, and environmental protection with the same level of enthusiasm. Moreover, we have few realistic theories to explain how China's notoriously fragmented bureaucracy can suddenly solve the coordination dilemma in order to respond to these emergencies and potential crises.

Drawing upon the burgeoning literature on comparative authoritarianism, I argue that China's new crisis management institutions channel information up the administrative hierarchy so that central leaders are increasingly equipped to deal with emergent events. Unlike previous studies, however, I theorize that bureaucratic and party organizations vary a great deal in the degree of information they control and the influence they hold over potential crises. This variation has implications for how Beijing's rulers allocate resources for prevention and response, which officials are held accountable, and ultimately why the CCP continues its single-party dominance. Analyzing an original dataset of thousands of official emergency contingency plans and investigation reports, new biographic data on provincial bureau heads, and insights from comments made by local government officials, I identify the sources of organizational influence within China's fragmented bureaucratic system. This has allowed the CCP to punish some officials and pursue positive incremental changes while simultaneously delaying large-scale political reform.

## 1.1 Crisis and Change in China

An investigation into crisis governance in China illuminates key debates in comparative politics about the durability of authoritarian regimes and the role of political institutions. Although recent scholarship has demonstrated the importance of informal networks within local communities for crisis management (e.g., Aldrich, 2012), vested interests within the state can either complement or obstruct such resiliency. We need to clarify the conditions under which an authoritarian state like China will facilitate or impede crisis prevention, response, and recovery.

Much of the extant literature on authoritarian regimes and crises focuses on regime survival. Scholars have pointed to the destabilizing role of disasters and crises because political uncertainty and economic distress disrupts the distribution of benefits to supporters and allies (Haggard and Kaufman, 1997; Gasiorowski, 1995; Weyland, 2006), exposes preexisting divisions within the elite (Geddes, 1999), and damages the regime's coercive apparatus (Quiroz Flores and Smith, 2013). The exacerbation of elite tensions and widespread public dissatisfaction may lead to a "tipping point" for political division, thus increasing the likelihood of regime change (Albala-Bertrand, 1993; Drury and Olson, 1998; Pelling and Dill, 2006). However, as Pepinsky (2014: 37) candidly points out, authoritarian regimes do more than persist and fail. We need more nuanced explanations for how authoritarian regimes actually govern crises, not just whether they survive one.

Moreover, the existing literature on authoritarian regimes and disasters has focused almost exclusively on aggregate effects and national governments. We know, on average, authoritarian countries take longer to recover from disasters than do democracies (Kahn, 2005), experience more famines (Sen, 1981), and suffer more deaths from natural calamities (Quiroz Flores and Smith, 2013). However, much less is known about how national leaders interact with local powerholders when dealing with crises in an authoritarian setting.

Within the China-specific literature, crisis governance has long served as a benchmark for governmental performance. During imperial times, the center viewed famine relief as a core task. Successive empires differed over the level of decentralization and grain resources necessary to restore agricultural production and avert social upheaval, but the agrarian base of the Chinese economy meant that natural disasters could unsettle the empire in profound ways. Although crisis management is no less important in the contemporary era, the size and structure of the current Chinese economy has attenuated the economic effects of natural disasters, industrial accidents, and environmental degradation.

Beijing's rulers cannot simply ignore the threat of regulatory mismanagement. Crises can expose official shortcomings and systematic problems, thus worsening state-society relations. While authoritarian regimes can use repression to stymie threats, the notion that authoritarian leaders will "simply 'write off' certain people, groups, or territories, or... deal with threats regardless of the human costs or moral implications of their actions" is far from complete (Boin, McConnell and t'Hart, 2008: 4).[13] Repression carries considerable costs, and there is no evidence that the central and local governments will choose indiscriminate repression as their dominant strategy (Cai, 2008). Indeed, many studies in political economy find that autocrats are more likely to turn to policy and institutional change under threat of social unrest than indiscriminate repression (e.g., Boix and Svolik, 2013; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Dunning, 2008; Svolik, 2012). We also cannot assume that the population will suddenly "go mad" and seek to overthrow the government (cf. Bermeo, 2003: 21). These are empirical questions that need further study.

If crises do not necessarily signal the impeding demise of the regime, then what role do they play in contemporary China? Following standard political economy approaches, Dali Yang (2004) suggests that political and economic reform in China grows out of crisis. Leaders in Beijing look to crises as source of information on local government performance,

[13] I do not deny that the Chinese government uses repression to accomplish policy objectives, but it is only one strategy out of several.

allowing the center to sanction defectors and reward supporters. With new information, officials can overhaul policies and restructure bureaucratic units to deal with emergent threats. By contrast, Minxin Pei (2006) sees the mere existence of crises as a symbol of institutional weakness, not strength. If Beijing had the power to control local agents, crises would not have emerged in the first place. Other scholars suggest an ad hoc approach to crisis management in China (Nathan, 2009), which could actually create the necessary conditions for rebellion from sharp policy changes (Skocpol, 1979). While such theories depict politics during a time of heightened uncertainty, they fail to find the determinants of why the central and local governments select certain policies over others.

Still other scholars view crisis governance as an adaptation of Maoist-era mass mobilization strategies. Patricia Thornton (2009) contends that central leaders adopted strategic frames of "crisis" to gain popular support and control during the SARS epidemic. Elizabeth Perry (2011) posits that reform-era leaders use social mobilization in "managed campaigns" to push against "bureaucratic rigidity" and promote economic development policies in rural areas. As Thornton suggests, "the crisis mode of governance has been driven more by an emerging biopolitical logic of constant improvement and optimization of the population as a strategy for economic and political development than by a concern with institutional reform" (Thornton, 2009: 59). These approaches have relied largely on anecdotal evidence, however. They fail to explain clearly why people at the grassroots and local governments would follow central leaders' calls if not in their direct interest.

During the Maoist era, scholars argued that ideology served as a crucial variable for mobilizing the population during campaigns (e.g., Schurmann, 1966). While nationalism acts as a catalyst for some events (Shirk, 2008; Shambaugh, 2008; Weiss, 2014), we need better explanations to understand how these new governance campaigns solve the bureaucratic turf wars and backroom bargaining that we have longed associated with the policy process in China (e.g., Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988).

## 1.2 Argument in Brief

This study finds that different bureaucratic organizations have different sources of information about industrial safety and social stability. Prior to the 2003 SARS crisis, information collection and distribution was fragmented both vertically and horizontally. Local governments were reluctant to share information and accurately report unsafe working conditions or social dissatisfaction up through the administrative hierarchy. At the same time, information was vertically stove-piped within groups of different bureaucratic organizations (系统). This created a lack of horizontal coordination, as many officials felt only accountable to their immediate (functional) superiors.

The haphazard and chaotic response to the 2003 SARS crisis led to a political opportunity for wide-ranging reforms to China's crisis management system. Beijing's rulers sought to prioritize crisis management by creating new regulatory and security agencies, drafting a series of contingency plans, laws, and regulations, and shifting lines of authority to central nodes in the bureaucracy. To incentivize regulatory reform, they established "must-meet' objectives around industrial safety, resource conservation, and social unrest in annual performance evaluations for local officials. Theoretically, one large accident within a single year could nullify all other achievements in a leading cadre's annual evaluation.

Despite these advances, China's emergency management institutions created new distortions and amplified old ones in the political system. While all officials face common career advancement constraints under the CCP communist party's target responsibility system, leading cadres employed in different bureaucratic organizations are afforded with different opportunities to cover-up malfeasance and shield themselves from the harshest punishments. Influential bureaucratic agencies define lines of authority or act as reporting nodes for information about potential unrest or work safety issues. Moreover, they conduct accountability investigations and hold disciplinary or budgetary power over other agencies.

In contrast, other agencies have few meaningful ways to access information or influence accountability process following an accident.

These two types of organizations create different response incentives for bureaucrats. Influential agencies have ample resources to accomplish organizational objectives, hold informational advantages over other bureaus, and can investigate or discipline cadres throughout the bureaucratic system. This causes them to protect their agents and turf after an accident or protest. In Chapter 5, I demonstrate that these bureaus are better equipped at shielding themselves from the harshest penalties following industrial accidents. Therefore, influential agencies are also most likely to resist efforts to reform.

## 1.3 Sources and Methods

Primarily, this argument is explored through an analysis of original data collected during fieldwork in Beijing, Shanghai, and Jiangsu from August 2013 through April 2015. Fieldwork played a critical role in discovering new and multiple types and sources of data on China's crisis management system. In Chapter 2, I draw upon official Chinese-language standards documents to manage internal databases on emergency management and classify key events. This allows us to shed light on the types of information Beijing's rulers are to trying to gain about threats to their rule. In Chapter 3, memos written by the intellectual founders of China's emergency management system to senior officials provide new knowledge about China's response to the SARS crisis. In Chapter 4, I draw upon thousands of comments made by officials on one of China's top internet message boards for government and party officials. This helps us understand how officials view and perceive their crisis management duties. In Chapter 5, I obtained 104 accident investigation reports during fieldwork, which illuminate the degree and scope of the accountability system following industrial accidents.

## 1.4 Alternative Explanations

### Culture

A prominent explanation for the development of China's crisis management system is the catchall label of "culture." For many scholars, China stands out as an outlier or what Heilmann and Perry (2011: 4) call a "Black Swan" in comparative politics. Its policy oscillations, which tilt between deeply cautious and extraordinarily bold, are difficult to fit into routine cross-national comparisons. Culture, however ambiguously defined, fills the conceptual void where existing theories fall short.

When discussing crisis management in China, there is a generally accepted view that cultural interpretations of natural disasters, social unrest, and political legitimacy still matter. The justification for natural disasters' relationship to politics is rooted in late Confucian — actually Mencian — thought and practice, where the government holds a responsibility to provide for the people's welfare (Perry, 2001). Historically, Chinese believed earthquakes, floods, and droughts signaled heaven's disapproval of the ruling emperor and his failure to meet his obligations of the "mandate of heaven" (天命). Regime opponents seized the opportunity to use natural disasters coupled with stories of "dragon-spotting" as justification for dynastic change (Brook, 2010). Indeed, ancient historical records dating back to the Shang dynasty suggest a pronounced "reign cycle," where each new dynasty started with a drought and ended with a "natural disaster and human calamity" (天灾人祸) (Li, 2007: 38).

In addition to cosmic forces, droughts and floods posed practical problems for China's ancient rulers. Lillian Li (2007: 126) finds that natural disasters caused harvest rates to drop as much as 40 to 60 percent during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Mass starvation ensued as China's food supply collapsed. Refugees from famine flooded into cities and placed strain on disaster relief resources during the late Qing and Republican eras (Chen, 2012). Those refugees remaining in the countryside were targets of bandits and rebels seeking to overturn

the existing political order (Perry, 1980).

The practical and strategic importance of both natural and manmade crises meant that successive Chinese dynasties spent considerable energy formulating disaster response and relief policies. Historical records are meticulous in documenting government responsibilities, relief supply chains, and compensation for disaster victims. For example, the leading volume on famine relief in the Qing dynasty devotes an entire section to the ideal preparation of congee (粥) for refugees (Wang Zhijun, 1869: Scroll 7). Themes of tragedy and disaster also infuse classical poems, literary sketches (笔记小说), and travel journals where writers recounted the horrors of starvation and corrupt practices of local government officials, which made the bad worse.[14]

While these accounts provide a historical lens to view crisis management, they fail to convincingly demonstrate how or why cultural traditions matter for contemporary politics. One of the more frustrating aspects of this line of inquiry is an attempt to draw a neat line from imperial to present day China while overlooking the myriad of structural changes that have occurred in between. This is not to diminish the importance of culture in China's crisis governance. China's long tradition with disaster and protest continues to be a fixture in policy, scholarly, and even dissident accounts, but it is more often used instrumentally by elites to accomplish organizational objectives.[15]

Dissident organizations such as Falungong routinely turn to disasters to predict the timing of the communist party's downfall. According to such fortune-telling, "analysts" describe how droughts symbolize that communism has dried up with the amount of water in reservoirs reflecting the amount of time the communist party will remain in power.[16] Geomancers, in oddly dispensationalist fashion, search for other cosmic clues. For example,

[14] For a compilation of disaster-themed literature, see Chen Rong (2012*a*,*b*).

[15] For good overviews, see Wu Jen-Shu (1996); Hung (2007, 2013).

[16] 2014."河南大旱'共产主义渠'干涸之预示 (Henan Drought Forebodes that the 'Ditch of Communism' Has Dried-Up)." 《看中国》(*Vision Times*). August 9. Accessed Online:`http://www.secretchina.com/news/14/08/09/549753.html`

one article describes how three fragments of meteorites that fell to Jilin in 1976 correctly foreshadowed the deaths of Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De.[17]

While critics of the regime use disasters to delegitimize, provincial emergency management advisory boards have started to include Ming and Qing historians to legitimatize contemporary institutions. For example, in a collection of crisis-themed classical poetry, the Zhejiang emergency management advisory board adds commentary to each poem to act as cautionary tales for contemporary administrators: "This poem satirizes the government and the military exploiting times of disaster to steal from the people. In years of drought, the people endured starvation and extreme hardship, but the military plundered grain reserves, thereby exacerbating the plight of the masses" (Chen Rong, 2012*b*: 26).

Therefore, traditional culture and crisis management is a double-edge sword for the communist party. Several local governments extol the "genius" of Chinese traditional culture. For example, when flooding ravaged large parts of the Jiangxi in 2010, the city of Ganzhou with a water drainage system built in the Northern Song Dynasty,[18] vastly outperformed all other cities with modern flood control structures (Yue Qi, 2012).[19] At other times, local governments explicitly try to distance themselves with comparisons from the past. For example, Zhang Bing (张兵), director of the organization department in Zhoushan, Zhejiang angrily addressed critics of the city's grid management system (网格化管理), who were trying to draw parallels to the repressive *baojia* (保甲) system of the Ming and Qing dynasties. According to Zhang Bing, ". . . the 'Grid Management System for Organized Service' inherits some experience from China's ancient social management system such as the 'baojia' method, but the nature of the two systems are completely different. The 'baojia'

[17] 2015. "陨石与人间大事有奇妙的感应 (A Meteorite and Major Historical Events Have an Intriguing Connection)." 《看中国》 (*Vision Times*). March 26. Accessed Online:`http://www.secretchina.com/news/15/03/26/571864.html`

[18] The drainage system is known as Fushou Gou (福寿沟), which literally means the"Happiness and Longevity Ditch."

[19] A similar situation occurred during the 2012 floods in Beijing. The roads surrounding Beihai Park, with drainage systems dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties, were relatively free of water while large parts of the rest of the city were sumerged.

system was to enslave the people; the 'grid management system' is to serve the masses and resolve conflict."[20]

The reason that elites or dissident groups adopt from cultural frames when discussing crisis management in China is not surprising. Elites need to exploit frames with some probability of resonating with widely accepted attitudes in the population (Gamson, 1995), but if culture is used instrumentally to (de-)legitimatize institutions, it cannot at the same time also be the explanatory cause for the same institutions (cf. Swidler, 1986; Wedeen, 2002).

## Rational Adaption or Complete Dysfunction?

Beyond cultural traditions, two other theories provide important insights. Several leading analysts argue that the Chinese government increasingly is better equipped to deal with regulatory crises, natural hazards, and social unrest. Rather than lurching from crisis to crisis, they argue that China is building a "rational" and "modern" regulatory state. Dali Yang (2004) finds parallels between China's current regulatory woes and the Progressive Era in America where rationalized, bureaucratic institutions curtailed the excesses of market-led development. Finding a correlation between bureaucratic re-organization and a decrease in fatal coal mine accidents, Shaoguang Wang (2006) also argues that China's reform trajectory is building an effective regulatory state. To be sure, China's regulatory reforms have yielded non-trivial results. Yang is correct to point out that Beijing's rulers have undertaken bureaucratic re-structuring around regulatory oversight. Wang is also right that official statistics

[20] Zhang Bing (张兵). 2010."'网格化管理、组团式服务' 的历史必然性及其现实意义 (The certainty and reality behind the historical significance of 'Grid Management and Organized Service'. 《中国共产党新闻》(*Chinese Communist Party News*). January 14. Accessed online: `http://dangjian.people.com.cn/GB/132289/10764283.html`. Zhoushan was the first municipality to adopt the grid management system. The first experiment with grid management was Fengqiao (枫桥) township in 2003. It was selected for historical reasons, as it was the first township to develop a well-known 'conflict management' system in 1963. The slogan of the 1963 system was "Small conflicts should not leave the village; large conflicts should not leave the township. Resolve conflict at the grassroots level so the do not needed to be reported to higher level authorities (事不出村, 大事不出镇, 矛盾不上交, 解决在基)", which gained the approval of Mao Zedong. Many articles in the State Council's official emergency management journal favorably assess the Fengqiao Experience as well. See Zhuji County-Level City People's Government (2007); Editors (2007) for illustrative examples.

indicate a sizable decrease in the number of fatal coal mine accidents in China. Many Chinese scholars do remain optimistic that the institutions for industrial safety, social unrest, and natural disasters are taking root to bring positive changes.

Despite these powerful insights, there is widespread cynicism about the long-term efficacy of China's crisis management institutions. As a Beijinger skeptically said to me, "[these institutions are] like a red-painted toilet (红漆马桶). Their appearance looks good, but inside it's all shit." Some scholarly accounts complement this public skepticism by arguing that Beijing's rulers lack the means or the will to control local predation and venality. For example, Minxin Pei (2006) finds practically none of the institutional reforms that Yang documents in his book. Unlike Yang who focuses on the latent capacity of the Chinese state, Pei investigates trends on the ground and finds a lack of property rights, rampant corruption, and the unconstrained political power of the communist party. According to Pei, these factors will coalesce and cause not only "organizational involution" but also "state involution" as state agents abuse their own positions to prey on Chinese citizens. While Pei's theory about the unsustainability of the Chinese Communist Party is bolstered by numerous examples of local predation, Pei's perceptive work struggles to explain what keeps the tenuous balance between the unconstrained power of the CCP and unruly local agents in place. Absent at least semi-effective institutions, it is curious as to how the CCP continues to manage a myriad of governance problems.

In sum, I argue that these two diametrically opposed views provide critical yet incomplete conceptualizations of the Chinese state. At the deeper level, they fall short in systematically investigating how China manages its regulatory problems and social unrest. For both of these theories, the observable implications are clear: there should be no systematic variation in regulatory outcomes apart from the occasional deviation from broader trend lines. The burden for me is to not only demonstrate that there is deviation from either the optimistic or pessimistic theories above, but also to convincingly illustrate how and why China's

crisis management system is skewed.

## 1.5 Overview of the Dissertation

### Part I: Theory Building

Chapter 2 begins with a deceptively simple question: What is a crisis in China? I argue that both cross-national and China-specific conceptualizations of a "crisis" are incomplete, because they exclusively focus on events in liberal democracies or provide synopses of single incidents in China. I seek to differentiate routine emergencies from high-stakes crises in China by investigating the role of uncertainty. I argue that uncertainty is politically dangerous for Beijing's rulers and offer a series of propositions about when emergent events can transform into a crisis. My hypotheses were developed through the review of official emergency management and social order national standards documents. These documents provide a descriptive overview of the existing institutions designed to classify routine emergencies and large-scale disasters. Further, they illuminate the preferences of Beijing's rulers in gaining information about the extent and variety of potential crises.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation for why Beijing's rulers designed this particular set of crisis management institutions. I argue that two events constrained the number of available options for political leaders: the suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstration and the chaotic response to the 2003 SARS crisis. The 1989 protests allowed conservative elites to establish new coercive institutions in order to contain social unrest and allow public security to dominate the entire legal system. By contrast, the 2003 SARS crisis galvanized leaders to develop a more comprehensive emergency management system that focused more on the latent variables causing social unrest. A plethora of new rules and regulatory organizations were established, but variation in enforcement and response remained.

Chapter 4 provides descriptive evidence for the core argument that different bureau-

cratic organizations are privy to varying levels of information about potential crises. In order to determine the differential impact of any of the bureaucratic stakeholders, I develop a "bureaucratic influence index" based on a novel dataset. The dataset consists of thousands of official government and party documents along with systematic content analysis of roughly 40,000 comments posted on one of China's most popular internet message boards for government officials. I argue that all officials are subject to two main constraints: first, comparatively low base salaries; and, second, annual performance reviews. These restraints collide with different organizational capabilities and expertise to limit available options bureaucratic agencies have to evade punishment and cover-up official malfeasance.

## Part II: Empirical Testing

Chapter 5 evaluates the efficacy of accountability mechanisms following large-scale industrial accidents. I analyze more than a hundred accountability investigation reports to detail the composition of investigatory teams, the range of punishments given to officials, and the constraints placed on investigators. Using a series of generalized linear models, I then test the determinants of disciplinary punishments on 2,508 officials following industrial accidents. I find that higher ranking officials, officials affiliated with influential agencies, and communist party secretaries are better positioned to reward themselves with lighter penalties. These results upend the conventional wisdom that all Chinese bureaucrats face the same types of constraints from formal rules governing work safety and Occupational Health. Instead of a uniformly ineffective or completely rational administrative system, the logic of disciplinary punishments after industrial accidents varies depending on the official's position in China's political system.

The concluding chapter summarizes the major implications of this study. First, institutions matter. Far from mere-window dressing, China's new crisis management system have greatly increased the amount of information Beijing's rulers possess about emergencies and

potential crises in the country. In other words, "heaven may not be as high and the emperor not as far away" (i.e., 天不高, 皇帝也不远) as conventionally been assumed. At the same time, these institutions have failed to completely mitigate the fragmented nature of the China's bureaucracy. Whereas much of the extant literature focuses on the central-local dichotomy, my dissertation provides instrumental and novel conclusions about horizontal stratification across bureaucratic agencies.

# 2 *Reducing Uncertainty: Conceptualizing Crisis in China*

What, precisely, is a crisis in China? This is a deceptively simple question, which has yet to be comprehensively investigated. The only English language volume on internal crisis management in China asserts that crises are vitally important to the survival of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but it fails to offer a systematic definition (Chŏng, 2011). Instead, the authors use statistical yearbook data and journalistic accounts to provide synopses about various emergent events such as inflationary crises, natural disasters, ethnic protest, and public health epidemics in China.

In this chapter, I seek to comprehensively define the features of politically salient crises in China. My conceptualization builds upon recent work in public administration that has sought to classify a broad category of events under the rubric of "crises" (Howitt and Leonard, 2009; Haddow and Bullock, 2005; Alexander, 2003; Neal and Phillips, 1995). In particular, I seek to differentiate routine emergencies from high-stakes crises in China. I first review the existing theoretical literature. Next, I offer a series of propositions about the conditions that could transform a routine emergency into a crisis. A lack of information, scale of the initial shock, complex accidents, and events occurring during sensitive anniversaries can all create crisis conditions. These assertions rest upon the concept that substantial amounts of uncertainty are dangerous for political leaders.

The last half of this chapter discusses steps Chinese leaders have started to take to reduce uncertainty. Particularly, I outline China's emergency management classification system established after SARS to render legible the vast categories of threats to the Chinese Communist Party. I view China's emergency management system as a set of "parchment institutions" (Carey, 2000), with contingency plans and regulations that seek to structure the behavior of local governments and reduce risks stemming from emergencies. A small case study at the end of the chapter demonstrates how these institutions constrain officials in one prefecture in northwest China.

## 2.1 Theoretical Context

For decades, political scientists have employed crises as a "stress test" to study the functioning and durability of existing political institutions (Levitsky and Way, 2012: 870). Peter Gourevitch (1986: 221) famously argued for social scientists to leverage crises as a natural experiment to compare social and political outcomes. Key to Gourevitch's analysis was the assumption that economic crises were exogenous events that shocked political and economic leaders into thinking that the payoffs from existing institutional arrangements were unstable.

Yet, two problems emerge from invoking crises without further conceptualization. First, leveraging all crises as exogenous is troublesome in situations where pre-existing tensions between elites helped cause the crisis. In other words, crises may be endogenous to internal struggles within the elite. Beyond economic crises, the problem becomes patently clear in large-scale social crises. For example, factional struggle was a key component that led to the Cultural Revolution in China (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2006). Second, the failure of many scholars to define what they mean by crisis can lead to spurious findings. Frieden et al. (2011: 2-3) point to scholars using "ex-post observation" of the effects of a crisis rather than "ex ante assessment of its features." This runs of the risk of scholars selectively using

evidence to bolster causal claims.

Scholars of comparative politics generally define crises as periods of discontinuity and rupture from "normal politics." Much of the early literature took a long view of history and sought to describe the historical, material, and ideational resources available to leaders to maintain elite coalitions during uncertain times (Almond, Flanagan and Mundt, 1973; Binder, 1971). Extreme cases were selected to describe periods of war and severe financial depression. Crisis, therefore, was self-evident; there was little need to "test" if the country was really facing abnormal conditions.

With the rise of new institutionalism, scholars used crises in a wider array of contexts. Theories sought to use crises to explain large-scale institutional change. Rational choice institutionalism viewed exogenous shocks as unsettling power distributions, where elites changed the existing rules to secure their interests (Krasner, 1984). While historical institutionalists countered that institutional change is often the result of slow-moving processes rather than punctuated events, they too gave crises a role as possible critical junctures in which power holders create new institutions (Thelen, 1999). Both sets of scholars, however, largely defined crises by the institutional outcome rather than indicators surrounding a crisis.

By contrast, public administration scholars have spent decades attempting to clearly delineate the boundaries of a crisis. Disagreements abound over how to untangle the terms, "risk," "crisis," "disaster," and "catastrophe." A famous volume by leading experts on the definition of a crisis fills almost 500 pages (Perry and Quarantelli, 2005). While some scholars have argued that obtaining measurable indicators of crises require "mental gymnastics of Olympian proportion" (Dynes (1998) as cited in Boin (2005: 163)), I offer a more optimistic perspective. We can begin to understand the features of potential crises by understanding the role of emergencies, uncertainty, and risk in Chinese politics.

## 2.2 From routine emergencies to crisis: The role of uncertainty

We intuitively think of crises as something unplanned, unpredictable, and potentially unmanageable. As one grassroots official in eastern China told me, an emergency "poses a great threat to society... and requires government action and preparation... A crisis? A crisis is something like an incident that is exposed online... [It is] unexpected and difficult to control." In other words, crises and emergencies share some similar characteristics: both are "sudden," unplanned events with "substantial stakes" and a degree of uncertainty, but a key variable in differentiating emergencies from crises is the amount of uncertainty (Howitt and Leonard, 2009: 2).[1] For routine emergencies — such as small fires or snowstorms — political leaders know with relative certainty that if they follow existing contingency plans, they will be able to control the outcome. Yet, crises are different in the sense that they involve substantial amounts of uncertainty (*ibid*). This uncertainty may be politically consequential. For example, contingency plans may be seriously flawed, may never have been previously used, or may not even exist. Emergency management organizations may lack the necessary experience or expertise to respond. Bureaucratic agencies may pursue parochial interests and fail to predict emergent threats to national security accurately(Allison, 1972). Instead of rational decision-making, feelings of anxiety or anger can fill the institutional void and cause cognitive biases (Crawford, 2000).[2] Factional in-fighting can replace consensus building norms and cause dangerous divisions among the elite (e.g., Zhang et al., 2008).

For these reasons, differentiating routine emergencies and crises is critical for understanding the implications for institutional durability. On the one hand, a great deal of certainty can stabilize expectations and elongate the shadow of the future, which create the

[1] Howitt and Leonard point to "substantial amounts of novelty" as the key difference between "routine emergencies" and crises. Although I primarily adopt their framework, I highlight uncertainty instead of novelty, because it more neatly maps onto our existing knowledge about political institutions. For Howitt and Leonard, uncertainty is an indicator of novelty. I argue the opposite.

[2] Crawford correctly demonstrates that emotions can be essential to rationality, too.

conditions for institutional resiliency (Frieden et al., 2011). In contrast, large amounts of uncertainty can lead to a loss of confidence in existing institutions (Frieden, 2015). It is therefore helpful to think of uncertainty as a continuous rather than a binary variable, where uncertainty lies at one end of a continuum and complete certainty at the other (Burden, 2003: 6).

My understanding of uncertainty derives from reports written by members of the State Council Advisory Committee on H1N1, SARS, the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, and the 2008 Winter Storm in southern China, *China's Emergency Management*(《中国应急管理》), a journal affiliated with the State Council Emergency Management Office, and thousands of local government documents about emergency management and social stability. From these sources and the existing literature on crisis management, I argue that five themes emerge about uncertainty, risk, and Chinese politics:

First, *information, on average, greatly reduces uncertainty about possible crises.* This assumption might strike many as a truism (cf. Burden, 2003: 9). Of course, it is reasonable to assume that Chinese leaders will make more accurate estimates about risks with better information. This follows Douglas North's (1991: 106) assertion that institutions can help transform uncertainty, which is the inability to estimate the likelihood of an event, into known risks — the ability to make an "actuarial determination" over the probability of an event. Indeed, we find successive Chinese leaders constructing new policies to gain informational advantages about risks to their rules. In 2015, for example, Xi Jinping launched a major drive for public-private partnerships around big data analytics.[3]

Some critics, however, contend that uncertainty cannot be so easily reduced to risk (Blyth, 2006: 495). If uncertainty represents an actor's complete inability to make accurate estimates about unknown risks, then more information about already known risks does not

[3]Chinese Communist Party Central Network Safety and Information Leading Small Group Office, China Cyberspace Administration (中共中央网络安全和信息化领导小组办公室中华人民共和国国家互联网信息办公室) 2015."习近平谈网络安全和信息化 (Xi Jinping discusses network security and information)." Accessed Online:http://www.cac.gov.cn/ztzl/xzt/10/zt/index.htm

help. For some scholars, risk and uncertainty live in two distinct ontological worlds. While such views correctly point out the difficulty with conflating risk and uncertainty, they draw far too stark a line between the two terms. Following North (1991), I argue that information can transform some uncertainty into predictable risks. In other words, new data can illuminate variables that may have been previously unknown. This is potentially consequential even when the estimates surrounding these variables are highly unreliable. To be sure, new data does not entirely eliminate uncertainty. Some future events may be game-changers, which policymakers cannot predict even with the best information. But the division between uncertainty and risk may be more muddled than some authors believe.

A final caveat is that abundant information is useless without the ability to process it into actionable intelligence (cf. Deutsch, 1963; Simon, 1983; Kingdon, 1984; Jones and Baumgartner, 2005). For example, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, the former director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, recently criticized the U.S. National Security Agency by saying, "[It's] a huge machine. But, its usefulness from my point of view is not only limited but it's meager. A lot of info which is absolutely unnecessary and impossible to digest. A lot of money spent just for nothing."[4] Trubnikov, of course, could be strategically slandering a formidable adversary. But he does highlight the critical role of analysis and information processing so far missing in our explanation. For uncertainty to be transformed into risks, it requires considerable technological and human capital investment to process the information. This is important to remember as we document Chinese efforts to build information gathering capabilities through its emergency management system.

Second, *the scale of a sudden incident and uncertainty about a crisis are often but not always positively correlated.* All sudden incidents (or emergencies) are frightening experiences, but their political salience depends, in part, on the magnitude of the initial shock.

[4]Kelly, Mary Louise. 2016 "Russia's Ex-Spy Chief Shares Opinions of His American Counterparts." *NPR*. 28 June. Accessed Online: http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/06/28/483734866/russias-ex-spy-chief-shares-opinions-of-his-american-counterparts

Some emergencies may be so large that they have a disorienting effect. This is even the case where existing technology provides enough information to allow Chinese officials to predict a potentially devastating flood or protest with relative accuracy. As Shan Chunchang (闪淳昌), State Councillor and the director of the State Council Emergency Management Advisory Board recalled, "Frankly, the response to the Wenchuan [Earthquake, where more than 80,000 were killed or missing] at the start was a bit chaotic... We had no experience, no idea, how to respond to this huge calamity that came out of nowhere."[5]

These massive events or what Leonard and Howitt (2012: xvii) call landscape-scale disasters disrupt political life at order of magnitudes larger than routine emergencies. This could increase the anxiety of elites over whether they can control the situation. A sizable literature in political psychology finds that large amounts of anxiety decrease a group's commitment to action and causes extreme avoidance (Huddy, Sears and Levy, 2013: 757). In these contexts, inexperience can exacerbate anxiety to possibly the point of paralysis. This could, in the end, increase the likelihood of a regime-threatening crisis.

Third, *incidents that cross-categorical boundaries will increase uncertainty about a crisis.* Emergencies can serve as focal points, which can help disparate actors solve a coordination dilemma and effectively respond (Schelling, 1980; Birkland, 1997). Yet the same focal points can cause myopia and blind responders to possible secondary effects. For example, a 2005 gas explosion in Jilin killed eight and injured more 60, but it also caused serious water pollution in the Songhua River. China's emergency managers placed all of the focus on the immediate incident, the explosion, without focusing on the latent environmental catastrophe. According to members of the State Council's Emergency Management Advisory Board, the state-owned petrochemical company knew that 100 tons of toxins dumped into the Songhua River as a result of the accident (Shan Chunchang, 2011: 165). But the provin-

[5] 2010."闪淳昌：直面危机 (Shan Chunchang: Directly Confronting Crisis)." 《世博会客厅》 (*Shanghai Expo Sitting Room),* 上海市电视台 *(Shanghai Television*). 26 September. Accessed Online: `http://www.iqiyi.com/jilupian/20100926/n41123.html`

cial government and State Council Work Safety Administration ignored the environmental assessment reports to focus only on injuries caused by the accident. It waited nine days to inform Russian authorities about the accident. Then provincial authorities denied that their initial report was true when the Russian government asked to send investigators to China (*ibid*). Jilin's deputy mayor in charge of work safety further exacerbated the situation when he refused to acknowledge any water pollution at the first news conference.

Chinese government reports also frequently worry about events that could potentially set off a "chain reaction" (连锁反应). As the following chapter describes, one of the greatest concerns about SARS, apart from the obvious health effects, was the possibility that it could cause an economic or inflationary crisis due to a sharp decline in business and tourist travel. This could eventually lead to a possible shortage of goods. Similar to the Songhua River crisis, Chinese leaders also grew concerned about the long-term impact of the crisis on China's image abroad (Chapter 3).

Fourth, *completely new types of emergencies will greatly increase uncertainty* (Howitt and Leonard, 2006: 217). Some situations are genuinely new experiences for the Chinese government. Zhong Kaibin (2014), a member of the State Council's Emergency Management Advisory Board, cites the need to evacuate more than 35,000 Chinese citizens from Libya in the middle of its civil war as unprecedented. The Chinese government never had to evacuate citizens for repatriation, but the increase in international exposure for Chinese multinational corporations created new types of risks.[6]

For Howitt and Leonard (2006: 217), novelty is *the* catalyst for transforming a routine emergency into a crisis. In their article analyzing the failed response to Hurricane Katrina, they categorize novel threats as situations "never before encountered," "of unprecedented scale," or resulting from a "confluence of forces." Indeed, these categories, in part, overlap with the some of the themes outlined previously. Leonard and Howitt also assert that nov-

[6]See also Wu Baiyi (2011).

elty can be subjective for local governments (Howitt and Leonard, 2009: 5). For example, the 2008 blizzard impacting Lunar New Year travel (春运) was novel for many local governments in southern China as they had no experience dealing with the effects of ice and snow.

Fifth, *emergencies occurring during sensitive time periods such as large-scale public events will increase uncertainty.* Chinese officials contend that holidays and public events are particularly sensitive occasions. One reason is that the anniversary or public event can serve as a focal point for collective action against the regime (Tucker, 2007). If an incident occurs during this time, it can further encourage citizens to mobilize. For example, Shan Chunchang, who served as the director of the investigation committee into the stampede on the Shanghai Bund on New Year's Eve, said his initial reaction was deep concern: "First, I was shocked. Second, I was distressed, because of three reasons. First, it happened during a sensitive time, an extremely happy time. . . Second, it occurred at a sensitive location, Shanghai at the Bund. . . Third, those primarily injured were from a sensitive group, [our country's] spirited youth, who were primarily from out of town. So all of this increased my distress." [7]

This confluence of events can enhance anxiety and uncertainty. As one street-level comprehensive management for social order director told two Chinese scholars, "Whenever a sensitive period arrives, the upper level government tells us to get everything under control! As for how we do that, they don't care" (Zhang Haibo, 2012: 140). One possible consequence of an incident occurring on a sensitive date is for local officials to attempt a cover up. This occurred when officials discovered a fatal melamine scandal in infant formula just prior to 2008 Beijing Olympics, for example.

Using a keyword search for the term, "sensitive period" (敏感期), through a corpus of more than 160,000 emergency management documents downloaded from local government

[7] 2015. "崔永元《东方眼》上海外滩踏事件调查报告公布亲历者还原踩踏事件原委伤感落泪''(Cui Yongyuan *Eyes On* (TV Program). Shanghai Stampede Investigation Report Announcement. Tearful Personal Reflections on the Stampede." 上海电视台. (Shanghai Television). January 21. Accessed Online: http://www.iqiyi.com/w_19rt82b7bd.html

Table 2.1: Sensitive Political Periods

| **Sensitive Political Periods (政治敏感期)** | |
|---|---|
| ***Anniversaries*** | |
| April 5, 1976 | 1976 Tiananmen Incident |
| April 25, 1999 | Falungong Zhongnanhai Protests |
| May 4, 1919 | May Fourth Movement |
| May 13, 1999 | Falungong Demonstrations |
| June 4, 1989 | 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests (Official Sensitive Period: May 25-June 7) |
| July 22, 1999 | Falungong Leaders Detained |
| September 18, 1931 | Mukden Incident |
| December 9, 1935 | December 9th Movement |
| ***Ethnic Minorities Dates*** | |
| March 10, 1959 | Tibetan Uprising |
| March 14, 2008 | Lhasa Protests |
| March 20 | Elections for the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile |
| July 5, 2009 | Urumqi Riots |
| ***Propaganda Campaigns*** | |
| April 15 | National Security Day |
| May 12 | Disaster Reduction Day (Wenchuan Earthquake Anniversary) |
| June | Work Safety Month |
| ***Holidays*** | |
| January 1 | New Year's |
| January-February | Lunar New Year Travel Period (春运) |
| January/February | Lunar New Year |
| March 1 | Two Meetings |
| March/April | Qingming Festival |
| May 1 | May Day |
| June | Dragon Boat Festival |
| July 1 | Chinese Communist Party Founding |
| September/October | Mid-Autumn Festival |
| October 1 | National Day |

Source: Author's Dataset

websites, I developed a list of dates considered sensitive (Table 2.1). I considered a date as authoritative when three or more localities proclaimed the same date as sensitive or reissued a central-level document citing the date(s). These dates can be divided into three broad categories: anniversaries of large scale social unrest such as the Tiananmen Square massacre, propaganda campaigns such as promoting natural disaster reduction or national security, and national holidays or important political events such as the annual meetings of the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (两会).

During these dates, local governments are subject to demanding expectations. For example, Meilan District in Haikou, Hainan announced that, during sensitive periods, there could be no mass incidents, no industrial accidents, no negative or salacious news above the Level II threshold (无重大负面新闻炒作), no petitioners reaching Beijing, and no abnormal petitioning at the provincial or municipal levels.[8] Clearly, this is extraordinarily difficult to accomplish, particularly considering that a "politically sensitive" period can span a very long duration. For example, Tonglu County in Zhejiang recently proclaimed the entire period from March 1st to August 29th as "politically sensitive" in preparation for the G-20 Summit in Hangzhou.[9]

[8] 美兰区信访局 (Meilan District Petitioning Bureau). 2014.《区信访局 2014 年工作总结及 2015 年工作计划》(*District Petitioning Bureau 2014 Work Summary and 2015 Work Plan*). 3 November. Accessed Online: http://www.haikou.gov.cn/pub/root9/mlqzf/MLQ10/201501/t20150122_836417.htm

[9] 桐庐县城南街道工作委员会 (Tonglu County Chengnan Street Work Committee). 2016.《关于城南街道 G20 峰会维稳安保工作方案的通知》(*Notice Regarding Chengnan Street G20 Summit Social Stability Work Plan*). March 26. Accessed Online: http://www.tonglu.gov.cn/issue/root/sub/xzcnjd_xzcnjd/xzcnjd_xzcnjd_bmdt/20160408/40288abc53972eaa0153f3b9202225b2/index.shtml.

Table 2.2: National Emergency Management Classification Standards

| Theme | Categories | Sub-Categories |
|---|---|---|
| **Natural Disasters** | Flood & Drought | Floods |
| | | Drought |
| | Weather Disaster | Torrential Rains, Sandstorms, Blizzards, Hailstorms, Heatwaves, etc. |
| | Geological Disasters | Earthquakes |
| | Geological Hazards | Sudden Geological Hazards (Landslides, Mudslides, & Sinkholes) |
| | Biohazards | Sudden Biohazards |
| | | Ecological Epidemics |
| | | Invasive Species |
| | Forest Fires | Forest Fires |
| **Accidents** | Mining & Work Safety Accidents | Chemical Explosions |
| | | Mine Accidents |
| | | Construction Project Accidents |
| | Fire Safety | Fires |
| | Transportation Accidents | Traffic Accidents |
| | | Urban Light-Rail and Subway Accidents |
| | | Public Bus Accidents |
| | | Rail Accidents & Emergencies |
| | | Aviation Disasters |
| | Public Utilities Emergencies | Water Quality Emergencies |
| | | Public Sewage Emergencies |
| | | Electric Power Emergencies |
| | | Gas Explosions |
| | | Heating Explosions |
| | | Pipeline Explosions |
| | | Road Quality Emergencies |
| | | Bridge Quality Emergencies |
| | | Information Technology Issues (Network Emergencies) |
| | | Civil Air Defense Engineering Accident |
| | | Special Equipment Accidents |
| | Radiation Accidents | Radiation Accidents |
| | | Nuclear Accidents |
| | Environmental Pollution | Severe Pollution |
| | | Sudden Environmental Emergencies |
| **Public Health Incidents** | Infectious Disease Epidemics | Major Public Health Epidemics: Plague, Cholera, SARS, Avian Flu |
| | Unknown Public Health Epidemics | Unknown Public Health Epidemics |
| | Food Safety & Occupational Health | Food Safety Emergencies |
| | | Occupational Health Emergencies |
| | Livestock Epidemics | Major Livestock Emergencies (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Foot-and-Mouth Disease) |
| | Other Serious Public Health Emergencies | Drug Safety Emergencies |
| **Social Safety Emergencies** | Terrorist Attacks | Terrorist Attacks |
| | Criminal Cases | Major Criminal Cases |
| | Economic Crises | "Basic Necessities" Crises |
| | | Food Security Crises |
| | | Energy Crises |
| | | Financial Crises |
| | Incidents Involving Foreigners | Emergencies involving Foreigners |
| | Mass Incidents & Other | Mass Incidents & Collective Petitioning |
| | | Ethnic and Religious Incidents |
| | | Campus Security Incidents |
| | Other | Public Opinion Emergencies /Media Scandals |
| | | Network Hacking & State Security Incidents |

## 2.3 Uncertainty Reduction: China's Emergency Management Institutions

While it is relatively easy to find cases to fit my assertions, it is more difficult to measure attempts at uncertainty reduction in a systematic fashion. As a starting point, I leverage China's own extensive emergency management monitoring and surveillance system used to track the features and effects of sudden incidents (突发性事件). The system, consisting of laws, regulations, and procedures, aims to reduce uncertainty and structure the behavior of local governments to effectively manage emergent events (e.g., North, 1990).

As described in the following chapter, China's *National Sudden Public Incidents Comprehensive Emergency Plan* (国家突发公共事件总体应急预案) was adopted in 2006 as a calculated effort to classify an extremely wide range of contingencies such as natural disasters, transportation and workplace accidents, environmental pollution, public health emergencies, and "social safety incidents," including mass incidents, terrorist attacks, media scandals, and major criminal cases as emergencies.[10] To deal with categorizing many diverse incidents under the same framework, the National Comprehensive Emergency Plan creates a taxonomy of four major types of crises (natural disasters, accidents, public health, and social safety incidents) along with more than 50 sub-categories (Table 2.2). Local-level emergency management offices down to the county-level assign responsibilities and tasks using a system of graduated levels of danger. Threshold levels are largely based upon casualty counts, economic losses, and affected population groups. To illustrate these differences, Table 2.3 displays the indicators for "Extremely Severe" and "Very Severe" mass incidents, the two highest levels in the system.

Chinese leaders justify their expansive definition of emergencies by invoking an All-

[10] State Council (国务院). 2006. 《国家突发公共事件总体应急预案》(*National Sudden Public Incidents Comprehensive Emergency Plan*." January 8. Classification categories shown in Table 4.4 are drawn from recently updated classification standards, 2016. 《国家应急平台体系信息资源分类与编码规范》(*National Emergency Management Platform System Information Source Types and Coding Scheme*). June 7. Government Document.

Table 2.3: Mass Incidents

| **Mass Incidents Levels I & II Threshold Indicators** |
|---|
| ***Level I - Extremely Severe (State Council)*** |
| (1) >5,000 participants in one incident, which threatens social stability |
| (2) Participants attack and besiege any government or military building above the county-level, or hit, smash, steal, or burn any government property above the county-level |
| (3) Participants show resistance and have already participated in illegal activities such as hitting, smashing, stealing, or arson. |
| (4) The incident is obstructing major rail lines, national highways, and important transportation hubs. The event stops city traffic for more than eight hours, or causes a halt to construction at key national construction sites for over 24 hours. |
| (5) Fatalities: >10 people or injuries of more than 30, which threaten social stability |
| (6) University assemblies, which get out of control, or where students are involved in large-scale demonstrations, assemblies, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and petitions outside of campus, which may cause a chain-reaction in neighboring areas and threaten social stability. |
| (7) >500 participants in one incident who attack or clash with an "important" figure |
| (8) >10 participants in a prison riot |
| (9) Incidents which have the potential to cross provinces, cause a chain reaction, and threaten social stability. |
| |
| ***Level II - Very Severe (Province)*** |
| (1) Between 1,000-5,000 participants, who engage in an illegal demonstration, petitioning, disturbance, strike, sit-in, or the number of participants are not many but participants have the possibility to reach Beijing in order to illegally assemble or collectively petition. |
| (2) Incident causes the deaths of 3-10 people or injures more than 30 |
| (3) University campus computer networks experience a large-scale chain reaction of information, which can stir up or excite violence; an on-campus assembly quickly grows and has the potential to cause a chain-reaction; the ordinary classroom schedule, teaching activities, and campus order is affected, even to the point of paralysis, or problems related to university student recruitment are leaked causing a mass incident. |
| (4) Between 200-500 participants clash or fight with improvised weapons |
| (5) Involves the illegal activities of a domestic or international religious organization, or an ethnic or religious issue involving ethnic unity causes a mass incident |
| (6) Property rights disputes over land, mining, water resources, forest products, delta regions, or the sea or a pollution/ecological problem leads to a serious mass incident |
| (7) The issue has crossed provincial lines affecting social stability and causing a chain-reaction, or has already led to a serious threat or loss |
| (8) Other conditions that could be treated as a very serious mass incident. |

*Source: Jiangsu Provincial Comprehensive Emergency Contingency Plan*

Hazard Approach, which is partly adapted from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's conceptualization that there are "generic processes" and common capabilities necessary to address a large share of crises and emergencies, regardless of cause (Lindsay, 2012: 1). China differs from the United States and other liberal democracies in how it categorizes risks and applies the principle, however. Most obviously, the United States does not consider negative news about national politicians to be a government crisis on the level of a tsunami or terrorist attack. In the U.S. context, there is also a clearer separation in the management of national statistics for routine emergencies like traffic accidents, heart attacks, and crime from natural disasters and large-scale terrorist attacks.[11] Also, despite lip service paid to a comprehensive system, most localities in China maintain separate structures to manage social safety incidents, which complicates the all-hazard framework.

## What constitutes a sudden social safety incident, mass incident, and social order incident?

In view of the unique characteristics of social safety incidents in China, I will briefly outline concepts found in academic and popular accounts. "Mass incident" (群体性事件) is a ubiquitous but poorly understood term in Chinese politics. Most of the existing literature simply asserts a lack of conceptual clarity and offers ad hoc definitions. The use of different definitions leads to dramatically different conclusions about the nature of social stability in China. For example, Wedeman (2009) constructs a mass incident index based on grievances and data compiled by the Dui Hua Foundation. He then concludes that mass incidents are disorganized, fragmented, and limited in scope. Tong and Lei (2013) develop their own definition and use journalistic accounts to argue that most mass incidents revolve around economic grievances, which are not currently regime threatening but have the potential to

[11] To be sure the, the U.S. may not be normatively "better" at collecting incident data. For example, the U.S. system for tracking gun violence is largely decentralized and unstandardized due to Congressional obstruction making it exceedingly difficult to track mass shootings.

be so in the future. Wei et al. (2014) develop yet another definition based on 10 participants to argue that rural mass incidents are much more threatening to the regime than some urban protests.

The confusion stems, in part, from the Chinese government's changing terminology to describe protests, demonstrations, and dissident since 1989. While the Chinese Constitution theoretically guarantees freedom of assembly and demonstration to every citizen,[12] the suppression of the 1989 student demonstrations ushered in a new wave of restrictions on public gatherings. Under the 1989 Law on Assemblies, Processions and Demonstrations, citizens must submit a formal application of assembly to their local public security bureau.[13] Any demonstration not receiving permission is technically illegal. During the 1990s, however, there was no standard framework to address these incidents. Local governments used a variety of terms such as "social order sudden incident," "emergency order incident," or a "mass social order incident" complicating efforts to understand aggregate trends and collect national statistics.

In 2000, the Ministry of Public Security offered the first standard definition for a "mass social order incident" (群体性治安事件) as a "collective incident which involves behavior that violates national laws, regulations, disturbs social order, threatens public security, violates citizens' personal safety, or threatens the financial security of companies."[14] More precisely, it detailed eight types of incidents that could be categorized as a mass social order incident, including illegal demonstrations, labor strikes, student strikes, religious or ethnic social movements, attacks against government buildings or public infrastructure, obstruction of transportation lines or hubs, looting of national reserves, riots, and mass shootings or stabbings. The regulation did not offer possible explanations for why these events occur,

[12] 2004. 《中华人民共和国宪法》(*Constitution of the People's Republic of China*). March 14. Article 35

[13] Ministry of Public Security (公安部). 1992.《中华人民共和国集会游行示威法》(*Law on Assemblies, Processions and Demonstrations* ) , Art. 2) June 16. Document No. 8, Article 2 .

[14] Ministry of Public Security (公安部). 2000. 《公安机关处置群体性治安事件规定》(*Public Security Organs Management of Mass Social Order Incidents Regulation*). April 5.

but instead determined threshold levels for local government response. At the time, county governments were supposed to be in charge of any events with less than 50 people in an incident while provinces directly managed incidents involving more than 200 people.

The term, mass incident, gained authoritative status in 2004 following guidelines for preventing and responding to illegal public assemblies issued by the Central Communist Party General Office.[15] The guidelines offered the following description of a mass incident: "Due to social contradictions, the masses believe that their personal rights have been violated and express dissatisfaction to relevant organs by illegally demonstrating or obstructing [social order]." The guidelines also provided five characteristics to determine a mass incident. First, mass incidents are defined by a group of at least five people. The group need not have the same goals, but they must partake in similar behavior that deviates from routine everyday life. Their behavior also demonstrates elements of destruction (破坏性) and complexity (复杂性) making it difficult to control. This definition is not without ambiguity, however. It was designed largely to aid local governments in responding to protests, not for data collection or analysis.

The need for standardized data collection and reporting after SARS led authorities to further differentiate between "sudden social safety incidents" (突发性社会安全事件), "mass incidents," (群体性事件), and "social order incidents" (社会治安事件). Sudden social safety incidents is an overarching category for a wide array of contingencies including mass incidents, terrorist attacks, major criminal cases, financial crises, ethnic or religious activism, publicity scandals, hacking, and "incidents involving foreigners." Each subcategory is further divided into tertiary categories. For example, the *2015 National Data Specification Standards for Emergencies* refers to 17 types of mass incidents ranging from public demonstrations to prison riots.[16] There still remains some overlap between several categories of

[15]Central Chinese Communist Party General Office (中央共产党办公厅). 2004. 《关于积极预防和妥善处置群体性事件的工作意见》(*Opinion Regarding Active Prevention and Handling of Mass Incidents Work*). 8 November.

[16]2015.《突发事件预警信息发布中心建设规范第 3 部分：信息发布与传播》(*Sudden Incidents*

mass incidents and other sudden social safety incidents like campus security incidents and ethnic or religious protest.

The third term, social order incidents, includes any expression of individual or collective grievances against the government, party, businesses, neighbors, or family members.[17] These "disturbances" are part of the Comprehensive Management for Social Order initiative, which seeks to identify possible precursors or "latent dangers" of protest. Apart from the petitions and letters bureau and mediation centers, much remains unknown about Comprehensive Management policies and the organizations behind them. Indeed, nearly all of our existing knowledge relies on ambiguously worded government pronouncements or dissident accounts of dubious quality. To gain a more detailed understanding, I turn to a government manual, *Data Specification for Comprehensive Management of Social Order* (社会治安综合治理基础数据规范),[18] which provides a coding scheme for government agencies on how to collect data and manage internal government databases for social stability.

The manual specifies that local governments must take a complete census of all residents (including local *hukou* holders, migrants, and foreigners), private businesses, social organizations, apartments for rent, schools and universities, and locations of video surveillance cameras in their communities. Besides recording basic biographic information about every resident, officials are supposed to assign potential troublemakers with a five-category "risk" rating and check the box, "Is the Person Placed Under Increased Surveillance?" (是否重点关注人员) (Sections 4.2.3.26, 4.2.5.20). Certain groups of people[19] will automatically

*Early Warning Information Dissemination Center Standards. Part 3: Information Dissemination and Broadcast*). Government Document. These categories are consistent with those outlined in 2016.《国家应急平台体系信息资源分类与编码规范》(*National Emergency Management Platform System Information Source Types and Coding Scheme*). June 7. Government Document.

[17]These categories are found in Appendix 2.A Table 2.4.

[18]China National Standards Management Committee (中国国家标准化管理委员会). 2015.《社会治安综合治理基础数据规范》(*Data Specification for Comprehensive Management for Social Order*). Government Standards Document: GB/T 31000-2015.

[19]Individuals involved in activity deemed "political" or "subversive" will be recorded under a separate classification system for subversive activity, which is managed by the Ministry of Public Security's National Security Division (国保局) and the Ministry of State Security.

receive greater attention: orphans, individuals with criminal records, people suspected of having mental health or substance abuse problems, adolescents who are deemed susceptible to criminal behavior, any resident living in the vicinity of a school or university, and ”dangerous, HIV-positive individuals” (艾滋病危险人员).[20] Supporters of the policy assert that the data are used to identify vulnerable population groups and provide better public services to them. While potentially true, the manual also explicitly states that local governments are supposed to merge this biographic data with incident reports about any disputes in the community, making the database a key part of the communist party's social stability strategy (Section 4.7.2).

## Mitigating Coordination Uncertainty

Apart from adopting the all-hazard principle, China also turned to the U.S. Incident Command System (ICS) to standardize reporting responsibilities and establish clear lines of authority during an emergency. As outlined in Chapter 3, Chinese leaders largely settled upon a crisis management model that favors hierarchical, quasi-centralized planning with clear command responsibilities.[21] Specifically, responsibilities are assigned in a top-down fashion where higher-level governments maintain a first-move advantage by setting threshold levels and bureaucratic responsibilities for the next level down in the administrative hierarchy. This provides some local government flexibility or “experimentation” for setting targets within bounds set by higher-level governments (Heilmann, 2009). Many local governments do not view this “flexibility” as necessarily advantageous. Many localities feel like a “small horse pulling a heavy cart” (小马拉大车), overburdened with tasks without the necessary

[20] HIV-positive individuals, who “partake in criminal behavior, intentionally spread HIV by visiting prostitutes, engage in prostitution or (injection) drug abuse, have a reputation for lying and spreading rumors, or engage in ‘rights protection’ and/or ‘abnormal’ petitioning.” (Section 4.3.6)

[21] There is vigorous debate in the comparative literature of whether a “command and control” or “coordination and communication” model is better for crisis management. For the debate in the U.S. context, see Moynihan (2009).

capabilities to handle their crisis management responsibilities. As one street-level comprehensive management for social order office director told two Jiangsu provincial level emergency management advisory board members:

> We [at the street level] jokingly say, "just eliminate the district level office and make the street level the center of operations"... all the responsibility falls on the street level... The central government believes that 80% of the measures adopted at the grassroots level to resolve conflict are inappropriate. [They say that] our method is not strong enough, but every year our street level office resolves between 400 and 500 incidents. In short, the center's statistics are not reliable... [Part of the problem is that] we aren't allowed to participate in the investigation process, but we need to spend local tax dollars to fund a higher level investigation into us. This process is utterly unfair.[22]

In China, the director of the bureaucratic agency most closely aligned with the type of emergency unfolding is appointed the lead commander with one or several deputy coordinators. For larger-scale incidents — above the Level III threshold — the communist party secretary or government chief executive (e.g., governor, mayor) will assume the role of incident commander and the relevant bureau director will serve as deputy. Table 2.5 in Appendix 2B illustrates incident-command leads in Hangzhou, Zhejiang for the major emergency subcategories. These commanders theoretically have full control over operations, logistics, finances, and administration of other bureaucratic resources for resolving the crisis.

In addition to the bureau director serving as the incident commander, the responsible bureaus serve as key reporting nodes. The bureaus have to file incident reports to the locality's emergency management office, normally by telephone within 20 minutes of an incident occurring, with two written reports of increasing length due within 40 and 80 minutes, respectively.[23] In addition, the bureaus file separate reports to their functional superiors up

[22] "L 主任（街道综合办主任) (Interview Transcript with Director 'L' (Street Level Comprehensive Management for Social Order Director)," (Zhang Haibo, 2012).

[23] For an illustrative example, see Liaoning Provincial Government (辽宁省人民政府). 2015. 《辽宁省突发事件应对条例》(*Liaoning Sudden Incidents Response Regulations*), Art. 3.2.1.. Government Document.

the administrative hierarchy. In the event that the scope of the incident enlarges or first responders are overwhelmed, higher-level governments will telephone ICS to survey needs local governments need to resolve the incident. Local governments can also make formal requests for more resources directly to higher-level governments.

## 2.4 Case Study of CZ Prefecture

In order to understand how China's classification system works in practice, I draw upon data on emergencies using government work and incident reports. Needless to say, it is extremely difficult to get detailed, local data on emergencies in any systematic fashion. The majority of municipalities classify key emergency management data as too sensitive for public release. In some municipalities, officials have classified all emergency management documents as "secret" (机密)[24] and provide no data whatsoever, save for listing the names of contingency plans. National and municipal-level statistical yearbooks are also of limited use as the numbers suffer from over-aggregation. More helpful are incident catalogues collected by municipal emergency management offices, which a few cities have made publicly available through China's Open Government Initiative. While I am unable to make broad generalizations from one locality, the available information merged with other data can start to illuminate China's internal crisis tracking and response system.

[24]Theoretically, classification of emergency management data is supposed to be standardized based on a three-tier official document system of internal (内部), secret (机密), and top secret (绝密). In practice, the system of classifying incident data is not always standardized. For regulations on the sensitivity of natural disaster data, see Ministry of Civil Affairs, State Secrets Administration (民政部、国家保密局). 1995 "民政部，国家保密局关于印发《民政工作中国家秘密及其秘密具体范围的规定》的通知" ("Notice Regarding the Issuing by Ministry of Civil Affairs and National State Secrets Administration of *Regulations Regarding the Scope of Ministry of Civil Affairs Work State Secrets and Other Secrets*). April 6. No. 11. and National Earthquake Administration (中国地震局). 2004. "关于印发《防震减灾工作国家秘密范围的规定》的通知" ("Notice Regarding *Regulations Regarding the Scope of Disaster Reduction and Earthquake Prevention State Secrets*."). 17 August. No. 127, which declassified casualty counts from natural disasters for the first time. For public health, see Ministry of Public Health, State Secrets Administration (卫生部、国家保密局). 1990. "关于印发《卫生工作中国家秘密及其秘密具体范围的规定》的通知" ("Notice Regarding the Issuing of *Regulations Regarding the Scope of Public Health Work State Secrets*.") 9 March. No. 10. Work safety and social safety classification standards are not publicly available.

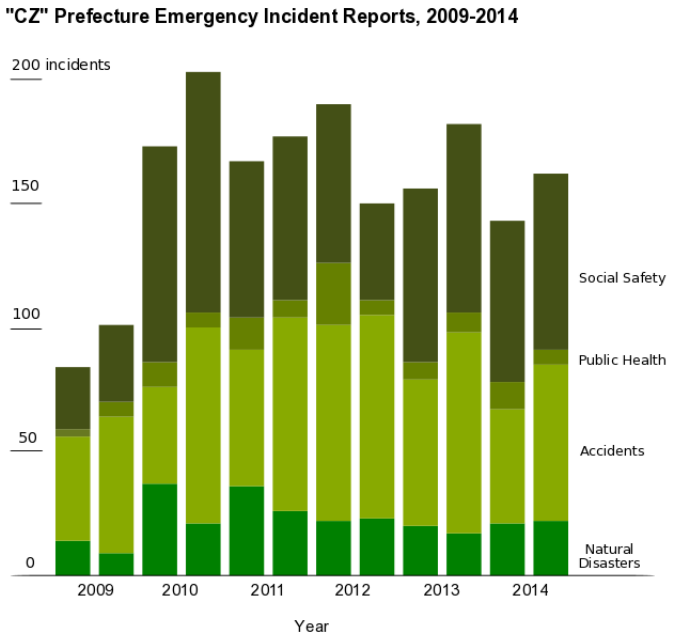


Figure 2.1: CZ Prefecture Incident Reports by Category

The most complete dataset I was able to obtain comes from monthly incident reports for one prefecture in northwest China. For the five years available (March 2009 - December 2014), the prefecture recorded 1,852 emergency incidents. The ratios across the four major categories stay largely consistent, but what is striking is how much diversity exists within these categories (Figure 2.1). The tree map (Figure 2.2) indicates that about half of the incidents stem from routine emergencies such as fatal road accidents and "abnormal deaths" rather than traditional "disasters" like floods and fires. Other incidents such as "coyote attacks" and "drowning deaths" are particularly localized concerns. Although the government recorded and then redacted — with the character "略" — information about 13 percent of social safety incidents, the reports are surprisingly forthcoming in providing information about incidents we frequently consider taboo, like Falungong activity.

At least in one sparsely populated prefecture, the most conspicuous pattern is that the vast majority of incidents are extremely small, localized concerns. Rain-related road clo-

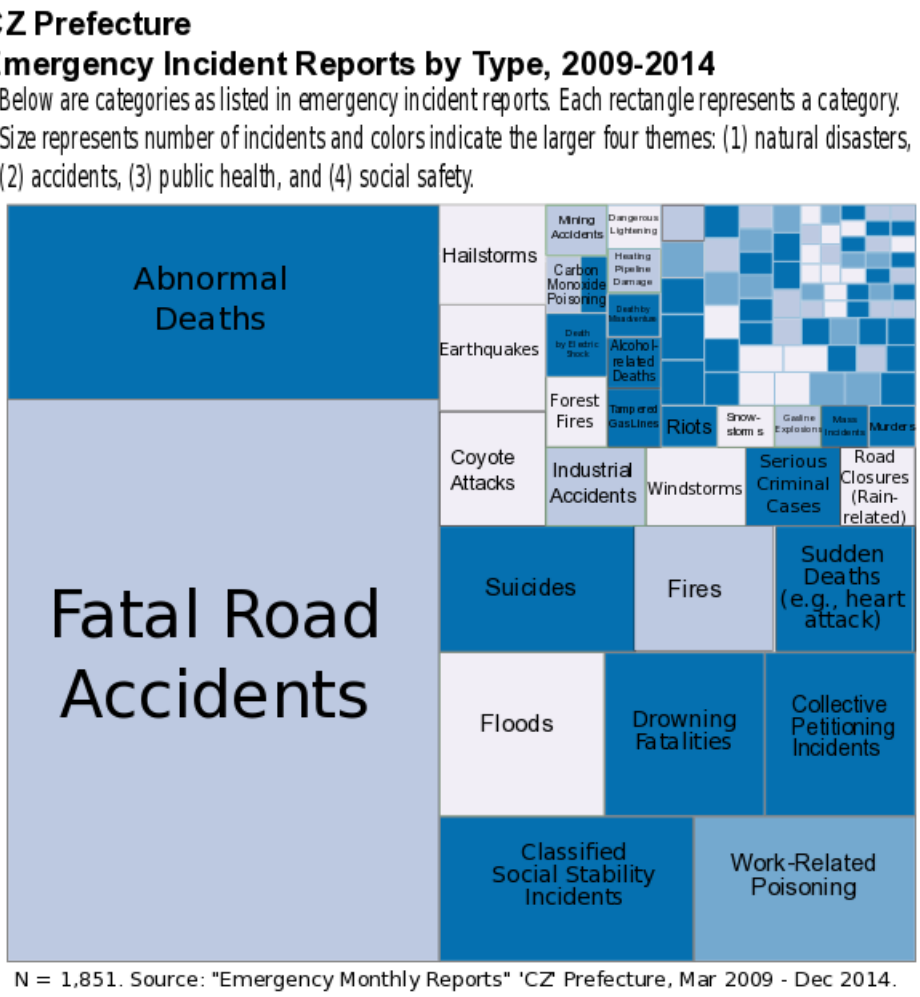


Figure 2.2: CZ Prefecture Incident Proportions

sures and heart attacks probably do not generate substantial amounts of uncertainty among local officials, let alone Beijing's rulers. In absolute terms, these do not pose large threats to the survival of the CCP. To be sure, we do not know what occurred during the 13 percent of social safety incidents that remain classified. Certainty, they touch on sensitive issues that could theoretically damage the image of local leaders. Regardless of what they involve, however, it is important to view their numbers against the larger backdrop of incidents.

In addition to a mere tally of events, the reports provide government risk assessments, damage estimates, measures taken to control an incident, and cite government bureaus and

offices directly for mismanagement. For example, when the prefecture experienced a sharp increase in drowning deaths, the emergency management office writes, "The large increase in drowning deaths is due to minors climbing over the fence to swim in the reservoir. The Public Security Bureau holds responsibility to monitor this area." Additionally, the reports provide suggestive evidence that some bureaus flaunt their reporting requirements. For example, the local land resources bureau, which is in charge of reporting landslides and property, rights disputes, frequently failed to submit either daily or monthly reports.

Of course, on the basis of a few years of data from one remote prefecture, we cannot predict the future of an entire nation. However, this evidence should force us to think about the emergency management institutions that Chinese leaders have developed to mitigate threats and build a responsive government. It should also require us to more thoroughly investigate what China-related crisis management data actually reveals.

## 2.5 Conclusions

China's emergency management system represents an effort by Beijing's leaders to transform uncertainty about threats to their rule into calculable risks. They have adopted an extensive classification scheme so that losses are reduced and surprises mitigated or eliminated. In an effort to cut through the fragmented nature of China's bureaucracy, they designated incident commanders and established an exhaustive reporting system to ensure adequate supplies. All of this, in theory, allows the CCP to maintain their rule by making the thorniest of governance problems manageable. It also helps us start to disentangle routine emergencies from actual crisis in aggregate statistics. For example, in view of the diversity of contingencies under the all-hazards system framework, many of 250,600 "emergencies " in Hunan during 2011 are likely traffic accidents and heart attacks.[25] Extrapolating this to reported protests

[25]"'武吉海在基层突发事件信息员队伍建设座谈会上的欢迎." ("Wu Jihai Opening Speech to the Sudden Incidents Grassroots Informants Conference.") 2013 January 1. Accessed Online: http://www.hunan.gov.cn/zwgk/yjgl/gzdt/201301/t20130108_801812.html 4 June, and'湖南省基层突发事件信息员队伍

nationwide, most of the 500 daily mass incidents could be fairly predictable and controllable small-scale protests.

Does this system of classification actually accord with reality? If contingency plans in liberal democracies are frequently dismissed as "fantasy documents" (Clarke, 1999), why would we expect they have any effect in a Leninist party system? If China's emergency management system is weakly enforced, and elites have substantial amounts of uncertainty, what does that mean about the likelihood of a regime-threatening crisis in the near future? These are the empirical questions that will be investigated throughout the remainder of this manuscript.

In the next chapter, I turn to two critical aspects of China's crisis management system that have so far been left unexplained. First, why did Beijing's rulers deliberately decide on this institutional design? Many of China's crisis management arrangements will sound familiar to comparative scholars of emergency management. Indeed, at least one official Chinese reporting form is a near word-for-word translation of an analogous Federal Emergency Management Agency document.[26] Despite this similarity, China's adaptation of the all-hazards principle and incident command systems occurred against the backdrop of genuine political crisis. In the next chapter, I trace the development of emergency management system development back to the suppression of national protests headquartered at Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the chaotic response and attempted cover up of the 2003 SARS crisis. The magnitude of the Tiananmen Square protests provided the opportunity for the Chinese Communist Party to reassert firm control over the country's law enforcement apparatus and prioritize personnel and financial resources toward social stability. In contrast, the SARS crisis demonstrated the failure of the bureaucracy to work vertically as well as horizontally. This allowed for more wide-reaching and comprehensive reforms. Second, I

建设情况" ("The Situation of Constructing Sudden Incidents Grassroots Informants in Hunan province.") 28 November 2012. Accessed Online: http://www.hunan.gov.cn/zwgk/yjgl/gzdt/201301/t20130108_801814.html.

[26] "Form 213."

investigate the new bureaucratic organizations and career incentives officials receive to prioritize crisis management. Specifically, the CCP turned to the cadre management system by establishing new imperative targets in the target responsibility system around emergency management.

## 2.A Appendix

Table 2.4: Social Order Incidents Classifications

**Comprehensive Social Order Categories**

| Main Category | Sub-Categories |
|---|---|
| **Domestic Disputes** | Dating and Marriage |
| | Custody |
| | Inheritance |
| | Other |
| **Neighbor Disputes** | Water, Sewage, or Ventilation Usage |
| | Land-use and Easement |
| | Pollution and Damages Prevention |
| | Other |
| **Individual Rights Disputes** | Name and Image |
| | Reputation and Privacy |
| | Personal Health and Freedoms |
| | Other |
| **Rights Deprivation** | Educational Opportunities |
| | Injuries from Medical Malpractice |
| | Traffic Accidents |
| | Pollution |
| | Product Quality |
| | Internet Rights Infringement |
| | Work-related Injuries |
| | Other |
| **Contract Disputes** | Consumer and Services |
| | Property Purchases and Rentals |
| | Exchanges and Trade |
| | Transport and Reserves |
| | Other |
| **Labor and Personnel Disputes** | Labor Contracts |
| | Social Insurance |
| | Salary and Benefits |
| | Personnel Disputes |
| **Finance and Lending Disputes** | Securities and Funds |
| | Investment and Trust Management |
| | Insurance |
| | Lending |
| | Other |
| **Land Use and Resource Rights Disputes** | Land Contract Operations |
| | Residential Land Use |
| | Forestry and Mining |
| | River Basin |
| | Other |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Other Commercial Disputes** | Intellectual property rights |
| | Company set up |
| | Maritime rights |
| | Competition rights |
| | Checking and Credit Rights |
| | Unjust enrichment |
| **Urban Construction Development Disputes** | State-owned land expropriation |
| | Village collectives land expropriation |
| | Urban planning and demolition |
| | Infrastructure, construction, and urban management |
| | Resettlement |
| | Other |
| **Civil Affairs Disputes** | Village (Community) Elections and Management |
| | Relief and rescue assistance |
| | Administrative re-districting |
| | Other |
| **Other Administrative Disputes** | Urban management (*chengguan*) |
| | Education and artists management |
| | Industry, commerce, taxation management |
| | Work safety management |
| | Transportation management |
| | Marine safety and fisheries management |
| | Population planning management |
| | Other |
| **Legal Organs and Demolition Disputes** | Disputes with Public Security |
| | Disputes with the Procuratorate |
| | Disputes with Judicial Organs |
| **Organization Dept or Discipline and Inspection Disputes** | Disputes with the Organization Department / Personnel Bureau |
| | Cadre Work Style |
| | Other |
| **Ethnic and Religious Disputes** | Ethnic Affairs Problems |
| | Religious Affairs Problems |

Source: China National Standards Management Committee (中国国家标准化管理委员会). 2015. "Data Specification for Comprehensive Management for Social Order (社会治安综合治理基础数据规范)" Government Standards Document: GB/T 31000-2015.

Table 2.5: Hangzhou Emergency Management Coordinating Bureaus

**Emergency Management Coordinating Bureaus**
**Hangzhou, Zhejiang**

| Incident | Lead Commander(s) | Deputy Coordinators |
|---|---|---|
| **Natural Disasters** | | |
| **Drought & Flood** | Water Resources | Flood and Drought Command Member Agencies |
| **Earthquake** | Science and Technology | Earthquake Prevention and Disaster Reduction Leading Small Group Members |
| **Geological Hazards** | Land Resources | Construction, Transportation, Forestry, Civil Affairs, Public Health, Weather |
| **Ecological Hazards** | Agriculture (Agricultural Ecological Hazards) / Forestry (Forest Ecology) | Inspection and Quarantine Bureau, Science and Technology, Health, Transportation |
| **Forest Fire** | Forestry | Forest Fires Prevention Command and Control Member Agencies |
| **Work Safety** | | |
| **Road Accidents** | Public Security Transport Police | Prevention of Road Accidents Leading Small Group |
| **Railway Accidents** | Railways Office | Public Security, Public Security Transport Police, Transportation |
| **Industrial Accidents** | Work Safety | Public Security, Economics & Information |
| **Construction Accidents** | Construction | Work Safety, Housing Administration |
| **Large-scale Public Events** | Public Security | Press and Publications, Sports, Construction |
| **Electric Grid Accidents** | Economics & Information | Work Safety, Electric |
| **Telecoms Accident** | Information Office | Economics & Information, Telecoms Companies |
| **Information Networks Accidents** | Information Office | Public Security |
| **Special Reserves Accidents** | Quality Inspection, and Examination | Economics & Information, Work Safety |
| **Gas, Water, and Heating** | Chengguan (Urban Administration) | Construction, Environmental Protection |
| **Boating Accidents** | Transportation | Public Security |
| **Fires** | Public Security Fire Fighting Division | Work Safety |
| **Environmental Incidents** | Environmental Protection | Economics & Information, Construction, Transportation, Work Safety, Forestry, Agriculture, Land Resources, Public Health, Tourism, Railways, Public Security, Weather, |
| **Tourism** | Tourism | Public Security, Construction, Transportation |
| **Chemical Accidents** | Work Safety | Public Security, Environmental Protection, Economics & Information, and Transportation |
| **Agricultural Products Accidents** | Agriculture | Public Security, Industry and Commerce Administration, Quality Inspection and Examination |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Public Health** | | |
| **Epidemics** | Public Health | Center for Disease Control |
| **Food Safety** | Food & Drug Safety Administration | Foreign Trade, Agriculture, Quality Inspection and Examination, Industry and Commerce, Public Health |
| **Large-scale Food Poisoning and Occupational Health Incidents** | Public Health | Food Safety Commission Members |
| **Work-Related Poisonings** | Public Health | Work Safety, Labor Resources |
| **Pathological Diseases** | Agriculture | Animal Epidemics Command and Control Unit Members |
| **Social Safety** | | |
| **Terrorist Accidents** | Public Security | Anti-Terrorism Taskforce Members |
| **Major Criminal Cases** | Public Security | State Security |
| **Mass Incidents** | Public Security | Social Stability Office |
| **Public Opinion Crises** | Propaganda | Public Security, Press and Publications |
| **Grain Reserves** | Grain Administration | Development and Reform, Statistics |
| **Campus Security** | Education | Public Security |
| **Public Spaces Order** | Industry and Commerce | Economics & Information, Public Security, Price Bureau |
| **State Secrets** | State Security | Public Security |
| **Public Information Network Hacking** | Public Security | National Security Commission, Economics & Information, Information Office |
| **Incidents Involving Foreigners** | Foreign Affairs, Overseas Chinese Affairs, Taiwanese Affairs | State Security, Public Security, Information Office, Foreign Trade |
| **Other Mass Incidents** | Social Stability Office, Comprehensive Management Office | Petitioning Office, Public Security |

Source: 杭州市人民政府 (Hangzhou Municipality Government). ND.《杭州市应急管理部门一览表》 (*Hangzhou Municipality Emergency Management Bureau Schedule).* Government Document.

# 3 *Critical Junctures and Institutional Design*

In this chapter, I argue that two watershed events, the suppression of mass protests in 1989 and the 2003 SARS epidemic, acted as catalysts for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to overhaul its crisis management system. Beijing's rulers deliberately sought to transform the uncertainty of future threats into quantifiable risks by establishing a wide array of new institutions. After 1989, Chinese leaders began to reassess the types of events that pose the greatest threat to communist party rule. An expanded concept of "comprehensive management of social order" entered public security circles to refer to a wide variety of social stability incidents that includes protests, labor strikes, petitioning, public brawls, drug use, and individuals with mental health problems. Newly established comprehensive management for social order offices were created at all levels of government to manage day-to-day conflict in society and respond to emergent events. Finally, central leaders imposed a new "imperative target" for social stability in the annual evaluations of leaders to ensure that local governments prioritize social stability policies.

China's social stability system, however, was ill-equipped to deal with non-traditional security-related threats, such as natural disasters, public health epidemics, and environmental emergencies. The 2003 SARS crisis exposed the limitations of the fragmented bureaucratic system where individual agencies designed their own contingency plans and proce-

dures. Following the crisis, Chinese leaders began to construct a comprehensive centralized crisis management system to deal with an extremely wide variety of events including natural disasters, industrial accidents, environmental emergencies, public health epidemics, and social safety. Local governments were ordered to establish permanent emergency management offices at all administrative levels down to the county to manage interagency coordination and information sharing. The number of imperative targets in local leaders' annual evaluations also proliferated as a way to meet the expanding scope of crises in China.

In order to understand why leaders deliberately decided upon these institutions and policies, we need to focus on historical choices made by CCP elites after the Tiananmen crisis of 1989 and the SARS crisis of 2003. To be sure, many events and long-term processes influenced the design of China's crisis management system, but the institutional changes after both of these events are consequential for at least two reasons. First, Tiananmen and SARS shook the foundations of political power in China. As outlined below, political elites viewed these events as existential threats to the staying power of the Chinese Communist Party and questioned the payoffs of existing institutions. Second, significant institutional change occurred at every level of government across the entire country. Unlike many important policy changes in China, which are characterized by localized experiments and then gradually expanded nationwide, the institutional changes after these two events are distinct for their scope (nationwide), their tempo (immediate), and their desired outcome (uniform implementation). By all accounts, we should consider these two events as "critical junctures," which cast a long shadow on the trajectory of crisis management in China.

To analyze the two events, I draw upon a large collection of government documents, recollections by political leaders, and memos written to Beijing's rulers by the intellectual founders of China's emergency management system during the height of the SARS crisis. This level of detail is necessary to understand institutional development and the incentives motivating official behavior. Falleti and Lynch (2009: 1151) tell us that learning about con-

text can help illuminate casual mechanisms and measurement error in our theoretical variables of interest. I demonstrate through process tracing that these events not only acted as catalysts for institutional creation, but they also established enduring beliefs among Beijing's rulers that have survived a series of future tragic accidents, protests, and scandals. In order to understand institutional reforms post-SARS, excellent Chinese accounts on the emergency management system by Xue Lan (薛澜), Shan Chunchang (闪淳昌), Hu Angang (胡鞍钢), Shi Peijun (史培军), Zhong Kaibin (钟开斌), Tong Xin (童星), Zhang Haibo (张海波), and Li Ruichang (李瑞昌) illuminate the basic institutional strengths and shortcomings of the system for me.

## 3.1 The First Critical Juncture: 1989

In 1989, protestors shocked central leaders by openly questioning the paramount importance of the Chinese Communist Party. In the view of conservative elites, former General Secretary Zhao Ziyang (赵紫阳) erred by downgrading the status of Political and Legal Affairs Committees (政法委) (PLC) and weakening the CCP's control of public security and intelligence functions. In 1987, Zhao pushed through a plan to overhaul PLCs by separating the functions of government and party and strengthening the rule of law. At the time, reports were flooding into Beijing that county-level PLCs were overstepping their mandates (越俎代庖) by monopolizing law enforcement activities, subverting regular legal channels, and exaggerating the nature of crime to inflate their own self-importance (Lin Zhongliang, 2004: 64).

The 1987 reforms restructured the role of PLCs by downgrading central and provincial-level PLCs to leading small groups with circumscribed "interagency coordination" responsibilities, while PLCs at the municipal and county levels were supposed to be abolished entirely.[1] Although the central level commission was quickly disbanded, there was consid-

[1] 《政治体制改革总体设想》(*Political System Reform Comprehensive Considerations*). 1987. Section 9.2.

erable resistance by local governments to follow suit. According to Qiao Shi (乔石), the reformist PLC Secretary for much of the late 1980s, most provincial-level committees refused to dismantle their commissions before a 1990 decision to restore PLCs nationwide (Qiao Shi, 2012: 23).[2]

Zhao Ziyang and Qiao Shi's efforts to reform the PLCs were short-lived. In the wake of the 1989 protests, social stability became the CCP's top priority and the foundation of the re-established PLCs nationwide. Former Deputy Minister of Justice, She Mengxiao (佘孟孝), recalled that there were four competing views about the direction the PLC should take after 1989.[3] Conservatives channeled Mao by asserting that the PLC should act like a "handle of a knife" (刀把子) and directly control the country's coercive apparatus; a second opinion group wanted the PLC to function as a Chinese "KGB" with enhanced intelligence functions; a third group sought to circumscribe the PLC's authority and make it exclusively focus on "mediation" capabilities to reduce the number of petitions; and finally, at least some elites wanted the PLC to be strictly a public information office for legal education.

These competing views came to light at the 1990 Political and Legal Affairs Work Conference, which pitted the hardliner former security chief Peng Zhen (彭真) against his reform-minded successor Qiao Shi. At the conference, Peng Zhen harked back to the Cultural Revolution where he placed blame for the Tiananmen massacre and turmoil in Eastern Europe squarely on American "imperialists" and lax ideology within the ranks of the CCP (Peng Zhen, 1992: 444-448). In his address, he made few concrete suggestions for reforming political-legal work besides increasing ideological training for Party members, controlling economic growth and inflation, strengthening Marxist-Leninist thought at universities, and

[2] The 1990 order is Central Chinese Communist Party (中共中央). 1990. 《中共中央关于维护社会稳定加强政法工作的通知》(*Central Communist Party Notice Regarding Protecting Social Stability and Strengthening Political-Legal Affairs*). Accessed Online: http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66683/4494084.html.

[3] She Mengxiao (佘孟孝) . 2012. "记乔石同志在主管政法工作期间抓的若干大事 (Remembering the Major Events When Comrade Qiao Shi Was In Charge of Political Legal Affairs Work" 《法制日报》(*Legal Daily*). 25 June. Accessed Online: http://epaper.legaldaily.com.cn/fzrb/content/20120625/Articel03001GN.htm.

correctly understanding the importance of the "mass line." By contrast, Qiao Shi made little mention of the "turmoil" of 1989, but instead told the attendees to focus squarely on "comprehensive social order" work (Qiao Shi, 1992).[4] While the conventional narrative posits that Qiao Shi and the reformists gained most at the 1990 conference, the scope of PLC's responsibilities actually expanded after the conference around a central idea of "comprehensive social order."[5]

## Definition of Social Stability Expands

Comprehensive social order has become the theoretical underpinning of managing a wide range of social stability incidents, including confronting citizens' grievances and petitions, political dissidence, protests, human trafficking, drugs, pornography, prostitution, mental health patients, and labor strikes. While the term first appeared in an official document back in 1981, the scope of the term's meaning and the institutions attached to it dramatically changed in the early 1990s. During the 1981 Five Cities Conference on Public Order, Peng Zhen, who was General Secretary of the PLC at the time, explained to the attendees that China was facing vast social changes after the fall of the "Gang of Four" and influx of Western capitalist ideas. Against this backdrop, "comprehensive order" was necessary to bring order to factories, enterprises, government organs, and universities.[6] In theory,

[4]Tanner (1999) analyzes the same speech and argues that Qiao Shi did not change his view before and after Tiananmen. Tanner bases this on the fact that Qiao Shi continued to stress a macro (宏观性) approach to political-legal work. If we read his 1990 speech in conjunction with his 1991 speech at the Comprehensive Social Order Work Conference, we can see that the scope of political-legal work greatly expanded around social stability.

[5]Standard accounts argue that Qiao Shi championed a "macro" approach, not the KGB or "handle of knife" roles as advocated by Peng Zhen (e.g., Tanner, 1999; Zhou Yongkun, 2009). To be sure, Qiao Shi's adopts a very broad approach to crime and instability, but the 1990 Decision on the Political-Legal Committee directly refers to the reformed Political-Legal Affairs Committee as the Party's "knife handle." Moreover, the new Comprehensive Management for Social Order Offices established in 1991 would assume large intelligence and policing in addition to mediation powers by the early 2000s.

[6]Chinese Communist Party Central Document (中共中央文件). 1981.《京、津、沪、穗、汉五大城市治安座谈会纪要》(*Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan Five Cities Social Order Conference Summary*) 5 June. 中发 [1981]21 号 (CCP Central Document 1981, Issue 21). Three sections of the document still remain confidential and are excised from the three versions I obtained. Social management manuals contend that the

comprehensive social order meant promoting moral behavior and correct political thinking among the country's youth. In practice, "comprehensive order" was applied to a fairly narrow subset of crimes. It focused mostly on fighting juvenile delinquency, recidivism, and domestic and foreign espionage.[7]

Much of the literature on comprehensive social order from the 1980s analyzed the causes and consequences of moral decay among the nation's youth. Of the reference materials housed at Zhejiang's Public Security Academy (浙江警察学院) Library, 35 separate books were published in the 1980s on managing youth offenders.[8] For example, a 1983 survey of 783 inmates at the Beijing Municipality Juvenile Detention Center concluded that Lin Biao (林彪), the Gang of Four, and Western capitalist ideology had poisoned the minds of the country's youth leading to the rise of crime (Ma Jie, 1989: 27). Throughout the1980s, local public security bureaus were told to focus their attention on the top four youth crimes: gambling, theft, fighting (殴打), and hooliganism (流氓).[9] In sum,"comprehensive social order" during the 1980s was primarily targeted against individual offenders, specifically youth, women, and the mentally ill.

After 1989, comprehensive social order extended beyond juvenile delinquency to deal with a wide range of incidents from petty theft to large-scale riots. The impetus was a 1991 Work Conference on Comprehensive Social Order in Yantai, Shandong. Qiao Shi chaired

idea was first discussed at a conference about youth crime in 1978, but it was not until 1981 where the term first appeared in a government or Party document.

[7]In most publicly available documents, counterespionage work is not specifically mention as a tenant of comprehensive social order work. In the original document around the topic, however, one out of the two sections detailing the scope of "comprehensive order" work is entirely about counterespionage; the other discusses juvenile delinquency. It also should be noted that the Ministry of State Security was established a year after the document's release in 1983 and later became subordinate to the PLC. See: 1982.《中共中央关于加强政法工作的指标》(*Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Regarding Standards to Strength Political-Legal Affairs Work*) 13 Janaury.

[8]Zhejiang University Public Security Academy Library. According to a 2008 collections list, the library holds 635 security-related items from the 1980s. Most deal with detective work and weapons management. Accessed Online:`http://www.zjjcxy.cn/zfoa/batEditor/newsUploadFile/20080408112309.xls`.

[9]The crime of hooliganism (流氓罪) referred to a wide range of activities, including instigating violence (聚众斗殴), picking quarrels (寻衅滋事), adultery (奸宿), and homosexuality (usually recorded as sodomy (鸡奸) (Wang Zhongfang, 1989: 469-471).

the conference along with PLC Deputy Secretary, Ren Jianxin (任建新). At the start of the conference, Ren Jianxin issued a lengthy report on social stability where he called the current situation "extremely complex and complicated."[10] He warned of possible turmoil again if local governments could not effectively manage mass conflicts and social discontent. During the speech, Ren lambasted local cadres for "saying [social stability] is important, but making it of secondary importance in practice, and discarding it completely when busy (说起来重要, 干起来次要, 忙起来不要)." Particularly, Ren found local leaders failing to push social stability directives down to the grassroots level. He censured local bureau heads for failing to understand that mismanagement in any bureau could endanger social stability. Ren instructed local governments to set up dedicated social stability committees by 1995. When doing so, he downplayed concerns about financing by telling attendees to make residential communities and private enterprises pay a public order fee (治安费) and expand the use of private security firms. "Money can buy security (花钱买平安)," Ren remarked, coining the phrase that would become ubiquitous in public security circles for the next two decades.[11]

## New Institutions for Comprehensive Management

The conference set in motion several important nationwide changes for managing social stability.[12] First, a new "social stability early warning system," was developed by Chinese Academy of Sciences Scholar Niu Wenyuan (牛文元) in an effort to predict areas of cities with the highest probability of social unrest (Niu Wenyuan, 2001). The system was a rudi-

[10]Ren Jianxin (任建新). 1991. "全党动员狠抓综合治理为创造良好的治安秩序而奋斗 —- 任建新同志在全国社会治安综合治理工作会上的讲话 (The Entire Party Should Resolutely Mobilize and Struggle Around Comprehensive Management to Create Good Social Order —- Speech by Comrade Ren Jianxin at the National Comprehensive Management for Social Order Work Conference)." reprinted in Nanchong District Comprehensive Management for Social Order Committee (1993: 1140-1159) .

[11]It is now more common to hear, "Money can buy stability (花钱买维稳)," where the last two characters, *weiwen* (维稳), mean maintaining social stability (维持稳定).

[12]For a recent assessment of the conference and its impact on security policies, see Minzner and Wang (2015)

mentary effort to correlate economic, social, and demographic variables of neighborhoods with unrest. It drew upon the antiquated sociological theory of "social combustion," which posited that modernization is inherently destabilizing and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics could predict an explosion of grievances and unrest (cf. Brinton, 1965; Gurr, 1970).

Next, local governments were ordered to establish new Comprehensive Management for Social Order (CMSO) offices under the direction of the PLC by the end of 1995.[13] The new offices would take the lead in managing interagency coordination among an increasingly diverse array of actors as most government bureaus and enterprises were determined to share some responsibility if a social stability incident occurred.[14]

In order to incentivize local leaders to prioritize social stability maintenance, another directive ordered "comprehensive social order" to be included as an imperative target (一票否决) in the target responsibility system for leading cadres nationwide.[15] The imperative target is considered a trump card in the annual evaluation system for leading cadres because a violation in the target can theoretically nullify any other achievements obtained in the previous year. The 1991 social stability target is also noteworthy because it is the first time central level authorities established an imperative target for uniform nationwide implementation.

The consequences of the nationwide comprehensive social order initiative were twofold. First, local governments started to upgrade a range of newly established comprehen-

[13]《关于加强社会治安综合治理的决定》(*Decision to Strengthen Comprehensive Management for Social Order*) Section 5.2

[14]An additional directive on territorial jurisdiction was put into place on December 25, 1991 to formalize the principles of "Vertical and Horizontal Together, Let Horizontal Relations Lead("条块结合、以块为主)" and "Whoever is in Charge is Ultimately Responsible (谁主管谁责任)." See Central Comprehensive Management for Social Order Committee (中央社会治安综合治理委员会). 1992.《关于社会治安综合治理工作实行"属地管理"原则的规定(试行)》(*Provisional Comprehensive Management for Social Order Work "Territorial Management" Principle Regulation (Trial)*). 25 December. No. 1.

[15] Central Comprehensive Management for Social Order Committee (中央社会治安综合治理委员会). 1991.《关于实行社会治安综合治理一票否决权制地规定》(*Implementing Comprehensive Management for Social Order Imperative Target System Regulation*) 25 December.

sive management of social order committees. Once established, these committees grew in size and diversity throughout the 1990s. As illustrated by historical data from one northeast county, its CSMO committee expanded from 28 division heads of different bureaus in 1994 to 44 bureaus in 2002 (Kuangdian County Comprehensive Management for Social Order Committee, 2004). A second consequence is that local party secretaries and chief executives increased pressure on local comprehensive management teams to clampdown on protests and other public order disputes to avoid triggering a violation in their target responsibility contract. The result was an expansion of private public security firms and contractors and a reorganization of community watch teams (群防群治队伍) in the 1990s.

## Departmentalized Management for Other Crises

While China's social stability maintenance received a forceful, top-down intervention after 1989, the impetus for early reforms to China's management of natural disasters, workplace safety, and public health epidemics derived from specific bureaucratic units and local governments. For natural disasters, the Ministry of Civil Affairs led China's participation in the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction starting in 1989. The UN's Disaster Reduction Initiative was to couple scientific development around disaster reduction with a people-centered approach.[16] Specifically, the UN hoped to make countries aware of their vulnerability to natural disasters and upgrade their scientific and technological capabilities.

Unlike arms reduction or global health initiatives, where there exists a stark tradeoff between "status concerns and material power," China's participation in the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was largely uncontroversial.[17] Xie Lili (谢礼立), a leading civil engineer at China's National Earthquake Administration, was appointed to the 40-member ad hoc advisory board, which gave China some voice about the general direction

[16] For recollections of the Brussels representative to the UNIDNDR advisory board, see Lechat (1990).

[17] cf. Johnston (2014: 78) for an analysis of China's participation in arms reduction drives.

of the initiative.[18] More importantly, China had much to gain in the way of science and technology transfer and best practices for disaster mitigation (Xie Lili, 1992).

In response, China established a National Disaster Reduction Commission to coordinate the activities of the seven different bureaus charged with natural disaster management in the UN initiative. Former vice premier Tian Jiyun (田纪云), considered a leading reformer, chaired the newly established commission. In his opening remarks, Tian warned China not to be closed off to the world again:

> When confronting a natural disaster, the entire human race —regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion —has a duty to fight together. In the past, we experienced a hard lesson on this point, especially in developing international cooperation for natural disaster management. We have made great strides on this point in recent years, but we still can open up bit more (Tian Jiyun, 1992).

Despite these lofty sentiments, the newly established National Disaster Reduction Commission faced many of the same problems of interagency coordination, funding, and bureaucratic turf wars that have long been associated with interagency commissions in China. For example, the commission met irregularly and was predominantly research-focused (Zhang Haibo, 2012: 7).[19] Actual disaster response was still maintained by the two command headquarters for earthquakes and flood control (指挥部), leaving the commission with little input in changing disaster response policies (Jiangsu Provincial "15th" Research Group on the Major Points for the Estabilishment of an Emergency Management System, 2013: 84-85). There was also no centralized plan, as mitigation policies were fragmented between seven different ministries. That said, research efforts behind the commission led to future results in quantifying risks from natural disasters.[20] Building off the commission's work, Beijing Normal

[18]UN General Assembly Economic and Social Council. 1989. "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction: Report of the Secretary General," (20 June) UN Doc A/44/322.

[19]The committee published nine volumes of China's natural disaster history (Fan Baojun and China International Disaster Reduction Decade Committee Office, 1999).

[20]In addition, the Commission managed three UN-funded projects, which included a typhoon disaster reduction in Hainan, flood mitigation on the Yangtze River, and an earthquake disaster reduction in Xinjiang (Jiangsu Provincial "15th" Research Group on the Major Points for the Estabilishment of an Emergency

University Professor Shi Peijun designed China's first risk assessments for environmental emergencies and natural disasters (Shi Peijun, 1991, 1996, 2003, 2005, 2010).

Incremental reform — with international funding — also contributed to uneven developments in managing public health epidemics. In 1991, the central government negotiated a $58.2-million loan from the World Health Organization and another $95.9-million from the World Bank to implement the Global Stop TB Strategy (DOTS). DOTS required participants to monitor TB incidence rates and supply free first-line antibiotics to patients (Core, 2014: 142). As part of its surveillance strategy, China used part of its World Health Organization funds to establish the country's first Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Shanghai in 1998. Directly modeling it after the U.S. CDC, the Shanghai CDC served as pilot to centralize the monitoring of incidence rates and epidemic patterns. Apart from Shanghai, however, most localities lacked resources to develop comparable epidemic surveillance centers. For example, a 2002 assessment report by the World Bank found many local governments either lacked counterpart funds or simply misallocated the World Bank's funds altogether.[21] In Heilongjiang, 62 percent of its planned expenditures for TB control was allocated to infrastructure spending instead.[22]

International funding was also used to establish China's first centralized emergency call center. During a visit to the United States, in 1999, former Premier Zhu Rongji (朱镕基) was reportedly so impressed by Chicago's 911 call center that he encouraged China's local governments to study it.[23] By 2001, China secured UNDP funding to build a pilot center for China's four main emergency numbers (110, 119, 120, and 122) in Nanning, Guizhou (Xue Lan, Zhang Qiang and Zhong Kaibin, 2003: 289). Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Urumqi

Management System, 2013: 84-85).

[21] World Bank. 2002. "Implementation Completion Report on a Credit of in the Amount of SDR 95.9 Million to the People's Republic of China for an Infectious and Endemic Disease Control Project." Report No. 25238. p. 7.

[22] *ibid.*

[23] Wu Xia (吴瑕) and Zhang Xinjian (张言坚). 2011. "中国第一套城市应急联动系统在南宁投入运行 (China's First Urban Emergency Call System Put Into Operation in Nanning)."《人民日报》(*People's Daily*). 12 November. Accessed Online: `http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/19/20011112/603481.html`.

in the few years following started to route social stability-related calls to one centralized call center housed within their main public security bureaus.

For workplace accidents and environmental emergencies, bureaucratic turf wars at the central level and a lack of local fiscal resources prevented much meaningful reform throughout the 1990s. For example, oversight of China's notoriously unsafe coal mines was hampered by workplace safety units being subordinate to the same administrative organizations in charge of coal production (Wang, 2006: 15). Local governments and business interests frequently colluded and covered up any wrong doing. The maxim, "report good news up [up to higher levels], don't report trouble," (报喜不报扰) became the dominant strategy adopted by many local governments.

## 3.2 Second Critical Juncture: 2003

### SARS as a Golden Opportunity for Reform

The 2003 SARS crisis illuminated the costs of a fragmented crisis management system. When the virus first emerged on November 12, 2002, local governments thought it was easier to "try to keep a lid on things" (捂盖子) than be the bearer of bad news. It was not until April 20, 2003 that the central government finally started to take decisive action. As Shan Chunchang (闪淳昌) (2011: 221), who would later become the chief advisor to the State Council Emergency Management Office, wrote about SARS, "contingency plans stopped at the edge of the piece of paper. . . ideology, technology, and material resources all were lacking. . . Local governments were made to fight a brave, lonely battle (孤军奋战) [as] responsibilities were not clear and different government departments did different things (各自为政)." He continued to identify a lack of initiative, which delayed the release of timely information. In his assessment, "information was not smooth, and it was difficult for local governments and departments to understand the scope or the nature of the threat

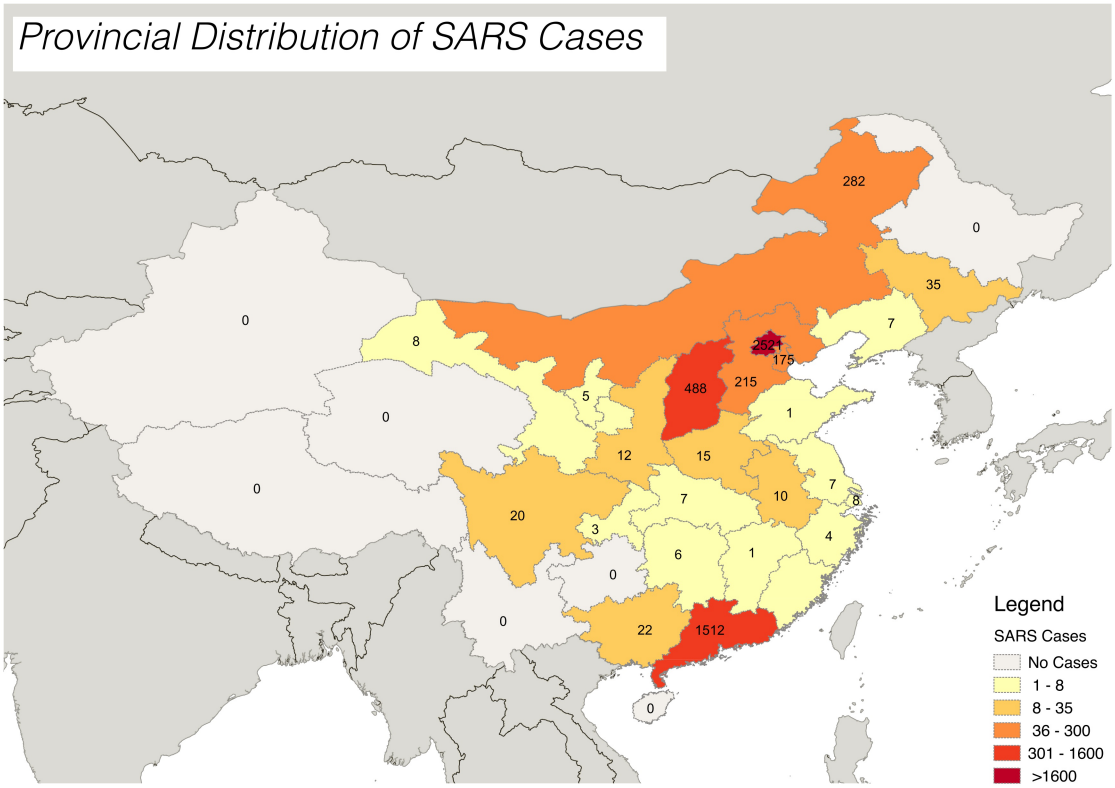


Figure 3.1: Provincial Distribution of SARS Cases

(*ibid*)."

Although SARS disproportionately affected three provinces, Beijing, Guangdong, and Shanxi (Figure 3.1),[24] the CCP's blundering response and deliberate cover-up had international ramifications for Beijing's rulers. During the onset of SARS, local leaders and the military adopted a "tightly controlled (内紧外松)" information policy. The earliest egregious example occurred in Heyuan, Guangdong in January 2003. The local newspaper reported that residents were scrambling to buy antibiotics in response to an outbreak of a mysterious disease. A week after the report, however, Heyuan's mayor and local health bureau chief held a joint press conference calling the newspaper article, "a complete fabrication," and attributed any rise in municipal flu rates to changes in the weather.[25] Some Guangdong NPC

[24]Compiled from Ministry of Health statistical reports to the Tsinghua University SARS Working Group.

[25]Xiao Ping (肖萍). 2003. "市长凌晨开会辟谣 '河源出现未明病毒' 是谣言 (The Mayor Holds an Early Morning Press Conference to Deny the Rumor: 'Heyuan Hit by Novel Virus' is False)." 《新快报》(*New Ex-*

delegates later admitted to a member of the State Council's Emergency Management Advisory Committee that they worried revealing information about SARS would detract from the province's tourism and foreign investment prospects. As justification, the officials cited Jiang Zemin's unequivocal stance in his 16th Party Congress address that "development" was the foremost goal for the country (Zhong Kaibin, 2009: 198-99).

To be sure, some local health officials took great risks in order to report information up the administrative hierarchy. According to the lead author behind the earliest investigative report on SARS, Guangdong's Deputy Director of the Provincial Health Bureau went to great lengths to push the report up to Beijing:

> On January 18, 2003, our four-person team went to Zhoushan for a second investigation. We spent all day and night on the 19th writing the report. Feng Liuxiang (冯鎏祥), who was Deputy Head of Guangdong Provincial Health Bureau, received the report the morning of the 20th and did not wait for official permission. Instead, he immediately sent the report up to the national level CDC and [ordered] the isolation and transfer of infected patients to a designated hospital. I still think that kind of courage, insight, and pragmatism deserves our respect today.[26]

Nevertheless, central-level leaders and local governments publicly remained silent until Hong Kong newspapers reported a large outbreak of atypical pneumonia outbreak in Guangdong on February 10, 2003.[27] In response to the news articles, Hong Kong health authorities called officials in Guangdong and Beijing. All calls went unanswered until Guangdong's General Office held a press briefing admitting to an outbreak of a novel disease, while at the same time claiming the situation was under control.[28]

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*press*). January 8. Accessed Online: http://www.southcn.com/news/gdnews/nanyuedadi/200301090445.htm.

[26]He Xuehua (何雪华). 2013. "专家:'非典" 从何而来仍是谜 (Expert: Why and How SARS is Still a Mystery)." 《广州日报》 (*Guangzhou Daily*). September 27. Accessed Online: http://scitech.people.com.cn/n/2013/0227/c1007-20613378.html

[27]Hong Kong SARS Expert Committee (严重急性呼吸系统综合症专家委员会). 2003. *SARS in Hong Kong: from Experience to Action(*《汲取经验防患未然》. October 10. Accessed Online: http://www.sars-expertcom.gov.hk/.

[28]*Ibid.*

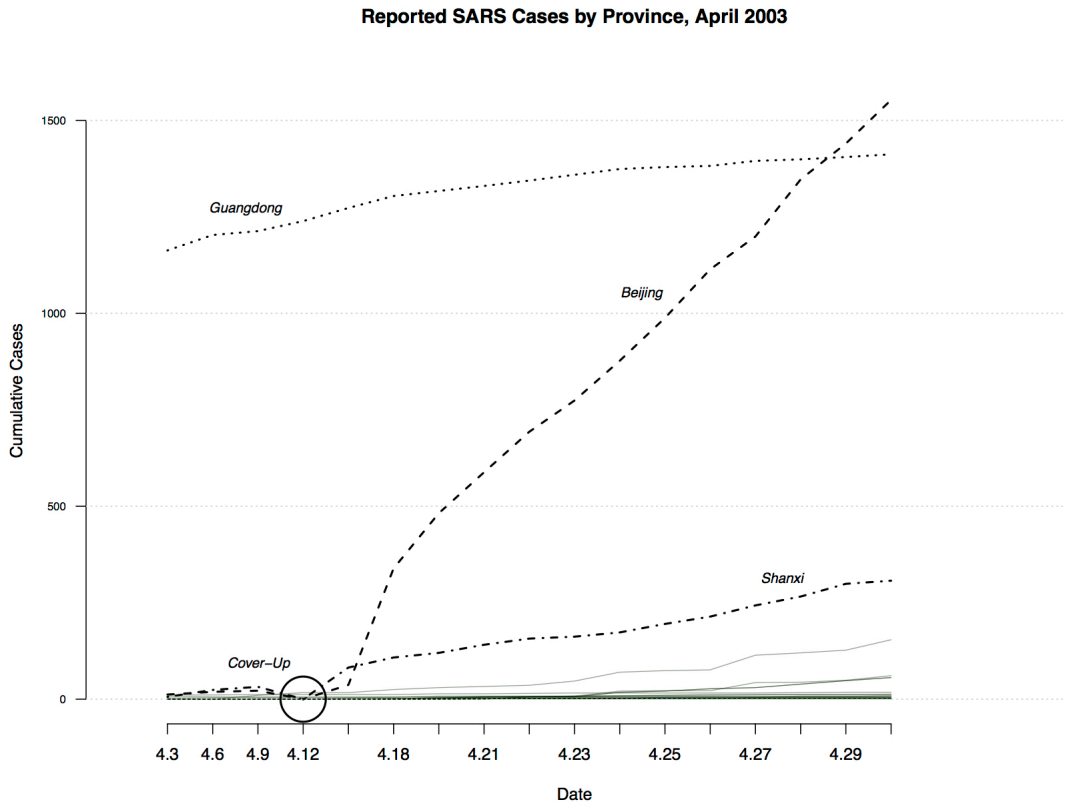


Figure 3.2: Reported SARS Cases by Province, April 2003

The course of events changed when Jiang Yanyong (蒋彦永), a surgeon at the PLA General Hospital No. 301 in Beijing revealed to the media that the Ministry of Health was drastically under-reporting the number of SARS cases in Beijing. He claimed that there were 60 SARS patients at his hospital alone, far more than the 12 patients that Minister of Health, Zhang Wenkang (张文康), reported for the entire city a day earlier.[29]

Jiang Yanyong's revelations threw the Chinese leadership into disarray. While it is difficult to know with certainty the extent of the cover-up, a number of facts illuminate features of the information mismanagement. First, patients suspected of being infected with SARS were isolated in both military and civilian hospitals, but the Ministry of Health's reporting

[29] Jakes, Susan. 2003. "Beijing's SARS Attack," *Time*. April 8. Accessed Online: `http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,441615,00.html`.

system for infectious diseases did not regularly link up with the military health surveillance system. This allowed the central and local governments and the military to withhold critical information from one another (Feng et al., 2009: 6). Compounding the problem was that Jiang Zemin had yet to retire as chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which meant that China's leadership was split between three members: CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao, CMC Chair Jiang Zemin, and Premier Wen Jiabao. Indeed, Ministry of Health data from April 2003 reveals a mysterious gap for cases in Beijing and Shanxi from April 10, 2003 through April 12, 2003, immediately after Jiang Yanyong's whistleblowing (Figure 3.2).[30] Moreover, the PLA General Hospital No. 301 in Beijing has long maintained that they reported accurate statistics to the PLA General Logistics Section, suggesting that the information was grossly mismanaged at the highest levels.[31]

Complicating the official line, the disgraced former Minister of Health Zhang Wenkang has alluded that he intentionally misrepresented the data. In an interview with *Phoenix News* in 2013, he remained largely unapologetic for his actions: "The situation in China does not really allow a newspaper to report an epidemic everyday. I should still say I'm sorry, [but] we cannot permit reports everyday flying all over the place, creating panic, and disrupting social order."[32]

Information mismanagement was even more worrying to leaders, because it was first revealed by the foreign media. At the height of the SARS crisis, the Tsinghua Crisis Management Working Group on SARS submitted a report to Zhongnanhai warning:

> . . . the Western mainstream media is making full use of our mistakes and inadequacies to air a huge number of negative reports in front of the entire inter-

[30] Data drawn from Tsinghua Crisis Management Working Group on SARS reports as outlined below.

[31] 卫毅 (Wei Yi.). 2013. "蒋彦永真话的力量 (The Power of Jiang Yanyong's Honesty)"《南方人物周刊》(*Southern Weekend People*). April 5. Accessed online: `http://www.nfpeople.com/story_view.php?id=4284`.

[32] Wang Dongya (汪东亚) and Chen Fang (陈芳). 2013. "被免部长张文康十年后回首: 向前走, 莫回头 (Dismissed Minister Zhang Wenkang Looks Back Ten Years: Moving Forward, Not Repenting)"《凤凰网》(*Phoenix News*). May 7. Accessed Online: `http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/feidian10nian/content-3/detail_2013_05/03/24906283_0.shtml`

> national community. The trend of 'Quarantine China,' 'Bombard China,' and 'Annihilate China' is exaggerating the Chinese government's inefficiencies with malice and unwarranted contempt, and directly slandering and attacking our country's political system. This has created the biggest wave of anti-Chinese public opinion since 1989.[33]

The confusion for central leaders lasted until at least April 17 when Hu Jintao in a speech before the Politburo warned officials that concealing evidence or misrepresenting data was unacceptable.[34] Three days later, the CCP General Office announced the removal of the former Minister of Health Zhang Wenkang and Beijing Mayor Meng Xuenong (孟学农) from their positions. Official assessments of SARS mark this as the turning point for the crisis. In public reports, credit is overwhelming given to Wu Yi (吴仪) and Wang Qishan (王岐山) as the country's "chief firefighters" (救火队长) and "master problem solvers" (解困高手) after assuming their new roles as director of the SARS Command Headquarters and Beijing mayor, respectively.[35]

## A New Definition of Crisis

As central leaders scrambled to understand the extent and gravity of the epidemic, a new book about crisis management was in press that would have far-reaching consequences on how China would restructure its crisis management system. *Crisis Management: The Challenge of Transition in China* (《危机管理转型期中国面临的挑战》) was written by Xue

[33] Tsinghua University School of Public Administration Working Group on SARS (清华大学公共管理学院课题组). 2003. "为何中国政府被动挨打——评F方媒体对中国密集型负面报道 (Why is the Chinese Government Facing a Beating — Evaluating the Western Media's Intensely Negative Reports)."《SARS 专刊》(*SARS Bulletin.*) 第 4 期 (No. 4).

[34] Xinhua News Agency (新华社). 2003. "胡锦涛主持政治局会: 不得瞒报 '非典' 疫情 (Hu Jintao Chairs a Meeting of the Politburo: Do Not Cover Up the 'SARS' Virus)." August 17. Accessed Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2003-04/17/content_838063.htm.

[35] Wang Dongya (汪东亚). 2013. "抗击 '非典' 中声名鹊起的王岐山 (In the Resistance Against SARS, Wang Qishan Quickly Achieved Fame)."《凤凰网》(*Phoenix News*). May 7. Accessed Online: http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/feidian10nian/content-3/detail_2013_05/07/25032801_0.shtml, and "吴仪的非典时刻：'家宝找到我时，真的压力不小' (Wu Yi During SARS: 'Jiabao Found Me, the Stress Was Really Not Small,'" 《凤凰网》. May 7. (*Phoenix News*). Accessed Online: http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/feidian10nian/content-3/detail_2013_05/07/25033391_0.shtml.

Lan (薛澜), Dean of the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University, along with colleagues Zhang Qiang (张强) and Zhong Kaibin (钟开斌). It depicted the destabilizing effects of modernization and need for a comprehensive and technologically sophisticated crisis management system for China.[36]

According to the authors, China's vast economic and social changes gave "special meaning to the phrase, 'stability above everything else'" (Xue Lan, Zhang Qiang and Zhong Kaibin, 2003: 7). Directly citing Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968), the authors warned that unprecedented economic growth and globalization have transformed the natural and social environment in possibly destabilizing ways (23). For traditional disasters like earthquakes, floods, and wildfires, anthropogenic climate change promised to exacerbate their effects. Moreover, globalization and modernization had ushered in a host of new threats like surging demand for electricity, cultural wars, cybersecurity, and transnational crime, and terrorism. In order to confront such challenges, the authors argued that China needed new centralized, comprehensive crisis management to deal with complex threats. They juxtaposed the Chinese system, which let individual departments and local governments design their own planning and response procedures, with favorable assessments of national security and emergency management structures in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Russia.

Through an accident of scheduling and the onset of SARS, the new research agenda made its way to central leaders. The CCP General Office invited nine leading economists, including Tsinghua professor Hu Angang (胡鞍钢) to a forum on economic policy with Wen Jiabao on April 9, 2003.[37] During the meeting, Wen Jiabao reportedly said:

[36]The book was written as part of a '985' grant awarded to Xue Lan and Hu Angang (胡鞍钢) to study the world's response to the 9/11 terror attacks and its implications for China. The two had previously collaborated on a project analyzing China's response to HIV/AIDS pandemic and jointly established Tsinghua's Center for Crisis Management. Liu Dongmei (刘冬梅). 2003. "清华社科学者开展 SARS 应对研究 (Tsinghua University Social Scientists Initiate SARS Response Research)," 《中国教育和科研计算机网》 *China Education and Computer Science Network*. May 27. Accessed Online: `http://news.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/thunews/9740/2011/20110225231351687699556/20110225231351687699556_.html`.

[37]The next two paragraphs are based on Hu Angang's recollections in (Hu Angang, 2003: 232-233).

> We have already predicted some problems. For example, we have plans for the short, immediate, and long-term effects of the Iraq War on [global] oil prices. This instance of SARS, however, we never predicted. This administration has only been in office for 18 days and has held four standing committee meetings; three of those were devoted to understanding and discussing the SARS issue and how to quickly adopt effective measures (Hu Angang, 2003: 232).

Wen Jiabao then asked the economists what the effects of SARS would be on tourism, aviation, domestic consumption, trade, and FDI inflows. This question left nearly all the economists stumped and lost for words. Only Wu Jinglian (吴敬琏) spoke up. He recommended immediately opening up vital epidemic statistics to the public. Wu Jinglian argued that the current attitude by officials in handling the SARS crisis was a severe problem, and the policy of closing off information to the public at the early stages greatly mistaken.

Following the meeting, Hu Angang said he was deeply disturbed that an entire room filled with China's foremost economists were unable to make any concrete suggestions, save for Wu Jinglian (*ibid*). Upon returning to Tsinghua, he found Xue Lan and suggested that they should use Xue's crisis management research as the theoretical framework for a new crisis management research center at Tsinghua. The purpose of the center was to submit policy recommendations to central CCP and government leaders to battle the SARS crisis. Xue Lan agreed and the two recruited other Tsinghua professors and doctoral students to "study and be involved in politics" (边学边干). Within the day, they were processing and analyzing SARS data directly from the Ministry of Health.

Tsinghua's new working group submitted its first assessment on SARS to Zhongnanhai on April 13.[38] In the 27-page report, the Working Group argued that there were three major deficiencies in the government's approach to combatting SARS. First, China lacked a national emergency management system, which made it exceedingly difficult to warn of impeding crises. Without national-level surveillance structures, the central government could

[38]Tsinghua University School of Public Policy and Management Working Group (清华大学公共管理学院课题组). 2003."对 SARS 事件的初步评估与建议 (An Initial Assessment of and Recommendations for the SARS Incident)"《SARS 专刊》(*SARS Bulletin*) No. 1.

only passively react to crises, not proactively prevent them. Second, the report warned that the current interagency coordination mechanisms for managing complex or international crises were poor. While the government could react fairly quickly to respond to simple incidents, the report found large shortcomings in the current "huge crowd strategy (人海战术)," where every government department dispatches responders to an infected area without clear responsibilities. Third, China's propaganda system has not kept pace with the diversification and globalization of media trends. While the report admitted that China's media is the mouthpiece of the CCP and the government, the group argued that this model was hampering higher-level governments' abilities to get information. Additionally, it argued that the exclusive reliance on Xinhua news service during disasters was mistaken as it constrained the leaders and society's ability to get information. On this point, the report cited a survey of Guangzhou residents, which found that 45 percent of residents were getting SARS-related information only from their friends and family members.

The working group's recommendations received further central-level attention when Xue Lan participated in a Politburo Collective Study Session on April 28. The CCP Central General Office had originally scheduled Xue Lan to discuss science and technology policy, but asked him instead to lecture on rationalizing the official response to SARS after receiving the Tsinghua Crisis Management Working Group report.[39]

According to Xue Lan, Politburo Members were overwhelming concerned with two pressing issues.[40] First, how contagious was the disease and was the virus airborne? The fact

[39] 2003. "中央政治局集体学习 (Collective Study Session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party)"《中国共产党新闻网》(*Chinese Communist Party News*). Accessed Online: `http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/66214/index.html`. Wang Enge (王恩哥), then director of physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Zeng Guang, Chief Epidemiologist at China's Center for Disease Control, also participated in the meeting.

[40] "薛澜: 非典疫情爆发后集体学习中及时加入抗击 (Xue Lan: After the Eruption of the SARS Crisis, A Timely Collective Study Session to Join the Resistance)." 《十八大：十年向前方——凤凰视频》(*18th CCP Congress: Recalling 10 Years — Phoenix News Videos*). Accessed Online: `http://v.baidu.com/kan/yqTz/yqTc?fr=v.hao123.com/search&page=videoMultiNeed` and 2003. "薛澜: 胡锦涛总书记强调应对突发事件应遵循自然规律加大力度进行科学研究 (Xue Lan: General Secretary Hu Jintao Emphasized the Need to Scientifically Research and Strengthen Confronting Sudden Incidents)." 《十八大：十年向

that the Politburo was still uncertain about basic science of transmission a full six months after the first case of SARS is telling about the institutional limitations of the former system. Indeed, since January 2003, the Ministry of Health had been focusing on a virulent strain of chlamydia as the primary cause.[41] Second, what policies could be adopted to immediately and effectively control the spread of SARS? Relatedly, what policies can be enacted after SARS to prevent this from reoccurring? Zeng Guang, lead epidemiologist at China's CDC, fielded the first question, followed by Xue Lan.

During his presentation, Xue Lan summarized the Working Group's nine recommendations for short-term measures: building an early warning system; establishing a new interagency coordination body for crisis management; adopting transparent information policies by releasing accurate statistics; holding regular press conferences between central leaders and the domestic and international media; restricting most travel during upcoming the labor day holiday; establishing SARS communication channels between mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; requesting and accepting international assistance and expertise; and directly countering the "conspiracy" and "quarantine China" theories circulating in the Western press.[42]

For longer-term reforms, Xue Lan argued for a complete overhaul of the current crisis management system in order to improve contingency planning, interagency coordination, and information sharing. The Working Group presented SARS as a "golden opportunity" (良机) for the Politburo. Unlike the Tiananmen protests of 1989, they argued that SARS was an exogenous shock devoid of ideological and political divisions. Central leaders could utilize the government's full resources to turn the crisis of SARS into an opportunity for reform.[43]

前方——凤凰视频》(*18th CCP Congress: Recalling 10 Years — Phoenix News Videos*). Accessed Online: `http://v.ifeng.com/news/society/201209/aaaf39aa-af6e-467c-b394-4be8c8828b7f.shtml`.

[41] Hong Kong SARS Expert Committee Report, *Op Cit*.

[42] cf. Tsinghua University School of Public Policy and Management Working Group (清华大学公共管理学院课题组). 2003. "全面、积极因对全球性 SARS 危机 (An All-Out, Aggressive Response to the Global SARS Crisis)." 《SARS 专刊》(*SARS Bulletin*). 第 1 期 (No. 1).

[43] This is the traditional play on words for the Chinese characters for crisis (危机): "... 还可以利用

Specifically, it recommended overhauling six major areas of crisis governance, including the overall institutional frameworks, rule of law, contingency planning, preparation, response, and recovery.

It is not known for certain how much influence these recommendations had on central leaders in designing China's new crisis management system. Much of our knowledge from these events comes from Hu Angang and Xue Lan themselves. However, various events suggest the impact of the reports. In the short term, the Tsinghua SARS reports became the lead article in the next several issues of *Essential Economic Reference Materials* (《经济要参》), a highly influential circular distributed by the State Council Development Research Center.[44] Second, Xue Lan was nominated to the drafting committee for re-writing the *Regulation on the Urgent Handling of Public Health Emergencies* (《突发公共卫生事件应急条例》), which would become the framework for guiding the country's response to SARS. Third, even as press restrictions were tightened for many domestic media outlets during the height of SARS, Hu Angang was permitted to publicly call for the overhaul of China's crisis management system in interviews with both the domestic and international media.[45]

## 3.3 Institutional Reforms for Emergency Management

The Tsinghua Group's recommendations also included the expansion of the official classification of crises under the country's first emergency response law in 2006. The State Council created a National Emergency Planning Task Force in the fall 2003 to restructure the system China's under the guiding principle of One Plan, Three Systems (一案三制). It refers to a comprehensive system of contingency plans (一案) supported by specialized emergency

SARS'危害' '转化为'机遇'... (... it is still possible to use the SARS 'crisis' and transform it into an 'opportunity,'...)." Tsinghua University School of Public Policy and Management Working Group (清华大学公共管理学院课题组). 2003. '"如何正确认识 SARS 危机 (How to Correctly Understand the SARS Crisis)" 《SARS 专刊》(*SARS Bulletin*). 第 9 期 (No. 9).

[44] At least issues 1356, 1359.

[45] 2003. "胡鞍钢现象说明了什么 (What the Appearance of Hu Angang Explains" 《联合早报》(*United Morning News*). April 10. 2003. 《北京青年报》(*Beijing Youth Daily*). May 2.

management organizations (体制), operational measures (机制), and a legal framework (法制).

The State Council's Task Force formally adopted a National Comprehensive Emergency Plan' at the start of 2005. The plan developed an overall framework to guide the country's response to various "emergencies," regardless of cause or size. Similar to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Response Framework, China's plan is designed around the principles of preparedness, monitoring, response, and recovery. It aims to facilitate interagency cooperation, define consequence planning and management, strengthen local government capabilities, and safeguard information. The national plan is complemented by local government plans down to the county and contingency-specific plans made by government agencies, hospitals, SOEs and large businesses, and schools. By March 2006, more than 24,000 contingency plans had been formulated (State Council Emergency Management Office, 2007: 23). This number has ballooned to presently millions of plans nationwide. The National Sudden Incidents Response Law adopted in late 2007 provides a legal framework for assigning the emergency management responsibilities of local governments.

The unique institutional design of China's crisis management system provides local governments with room to adapt plans to meet local conditions, but privileges higher-level governments with a first-move advantage over local governments to directly manage crisis response and recovery. Contingency plans set targets for lower-level governments one administrative level down and determine death/injury/participant threshold levels for when higher-level governments most likely will need to provide support. The process is consistent vertically up to the State Council, where the Premier and the State Council Emergency Management Office theoretically hold responsibility for managing the most pressing crises. In principle, the plans are intended to solve the bureaucratic turf wars, backroom bargaining, and slow-moving processes that we have longed associated with the "fragmented authoritarian" nature of China's bureaucracy (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988).

In practice, how does "flexibility under hierarchy" work? Much of the burden for crisis management is placed at the grassroots level. In part, this is for practical reasons. First responders will always be street or village-level officials. But the participation of grassroots officials is also vital in order to prevent contagion. The paradox, however, is that local governments are increasingly laden with tasks but face resource constraints. This is colloquially known as "few employees and established posts, heavy responsiblities" (人手少、编制少、任务重).

In a 2014 *China's Emergency Management* article, Song Jinsong, who teaches emergency management at the China National Academy of Governance, finds five deficiencies in existing contingency plans (2014.11.17-21). First, he faults local governments for simply copying higher level plans word for word rather than tailor to their local conditions. Understandably, some localities wish to change threshold levels, a key item that should be standardized because they link higher and lower governments, to lessen their burden. At the same time, they leave the rest of the contents nearly identical. Second, Song argues that local plans are programmatic (纲领性) and good as propaganda (宣言性) but not for reality. Third, he finds that local governments are spending time developing plans for events that are not likely to occur, but fail to think about emerging risks to their own locality. Fourth, many local governments simply write the plan and shelve it (束之高阁), rather than hold training exercises to see if the plan is realistic or effective. Finally, he says that many local governments fail to digitize their plans compounding the difficulty for local government departments to work together.

Despite the number of plans, other officials have also suggested a mismatch between the comprehensive plans and the contingency-specific plans. As one grassroots official noted, "Most crises are very complex and it's not as simple as written in the contingency plans. . . [For example,] our township experienced continuous rain last year, but the rain was not the major cause of the flooding. The flooding was due to rainwater accumulating on the

street and having nowhere to flow. Our water drainage system is not well developed. After a couple days, the water on the road just kept on rising and then we had a major flood." Rather than a coordinated response from the county's emergency management office, he stated that various departments developed ad hoc measures to manually clear the water from the streets.

## Four Big Committees and One Small Office

The 2003 National Emergency Planning Task Force recognized the need for a specialized bureaucratic unit to coordinate crisis planning, response, and recovery. The new body had to simultaneously accomplish two notoriously difficult goals: First, the body needed to ensure that information moved vertically through the administrative hierarchy without distortion or omission (i.e., solve the functional jurisdiction problem [职能管辖, 条条, 线]. Second, it needed to break down turf wars at the same administrative level (i.e., solve the territorial jurisdiction problem [地域管辖, 块块 or 属地管理]. In addition, the Task Force recommended creating institutions in order to motivate local governments to prioritize emergency management.

Interagency coordination is an enduring problem in the Chinese bureaucratic system where the fragmented structure makes horizontal coordination at the same administrative level (i.e., kuai-kuai [块块]) difficult and slow-moving. The problem is particularly acute during emergencies and crises where success depends on a clear chain of command. To break through the bureaucratic inertia, political leaders historically have set up leading small groups (领导小组), commands/headquarters (指挥部), deliberation and coordination agencies (议事协调机构), and ad hoc committees (临时机构). These structures often lack permanent offices, and success depends on a number of idiosyncratic factors like "putting the leader in charge"(领导挂帅) rather than institutionalized mechanisms.[46] Ac-

[46]Many practitioners consider "administration reverts to the leader" (归口领导) as the mechanism. Even

cording to Shanghai Jiaotong University public policy scholar Fan Bo (樊博), "the leader energizes the group in the short term; there are a lot of meetings, documents, and inspections. . . but in the long term everyone becomes lazy. . . [resulting in] no documents, no research, no meetings, and no implementation."[47]

An additional problem is the sheer number of interagency groups created, especially at lower levels. Xinhua in 2015 opined that party secretaries, mayors, deputy mayors, and secretary generals (秘书长) would need "superhuman powers" (三头六臂) to physically attend all these meetings.[48] As such, many groups never actually meet; the groups are "created on paper, stay on paper, and disbanded on paper," writes a leading expert on leading small groups (Zhou Wang, 2010: 5). Other interagency offices face widespread ridicule for their frivolous nature such as the coordination offices for steamed buns, pigs, and watermelons. Responding to a concern over government waste, the State Council ordered an immediate reduction of 130,000 interagency units nationwide in October 2014.[49] Some of the more frivolous offices had a revenue-generating capacity and thus are not easily disbanded (Ang, 2009: 23).[50] As such, local discipline and inspection committees took the lead in cutting down the number of these agencies.

Central reformers thought that the "three big command centers" for flood and drought,

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if we accept this as fact, however, a group's overall success is still dependent on the characteristics of individual leaders

[47]Zhou Lin (周琳) and Zhu Hong (朱㠯). 2014. "领导挂帅" 频现背后是无奈还是无能? (Background Behind "Put the Leader in Charge:" Hopeless or Ineffective?" 《新华社》(*Xinhua News Agency*). 22 October. Accessed Online: http://media.china.com.cn/yxzg/2014–10–22/315167.html.

[48]Chen Wenguang (陈文广). 2015."湖南省纪委、监察厅议事协调机构精简率达 9 4 % (Hunan Provincial Discipline and Inspection Commission, Supervision Bureau: Reduction of Deliberation and Coordination Agencies Has Received 94%)." 《新华社》(*Xinhua News Agency*). April 28. Accessed Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015–04/28/c_1115115243.htm.

[49]The first major clean up of these groups was in 1986. There were further re-consolidation attempts in 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, and 2008. The logic of these attempts were different, however. In 1988, re-organization consisted of management (代管) where lead agencies where assigned to manage the leading small group. In 1993, the trend was to move bodies inside larger bureaucracies (内设). For example, the anti-narcotics leading small group was placed inside the Ministry of Public Security. In 1998, the move was to consolidate (合并) agencies. For example, merge all media oversight groups into one large group. See (Zhou Wang, 2010: 86-88).

[50]An additional problem is that there is no legal framework for their dismantlement Zhou Wang (2010: 185-186).

earthquakes, and wildfires at the State Council level worked quite well once they were activated, but they required higher-level attention as an initial condition. The key concern was how to adapt these institutions to fit local levels as well. In order to overcome previous problems of interagency coordination, the State Council assigned national-level government committees to oversee each of the four categories: the National Committee on Disaster Reduction to manage natural disasters, the National Committee for Work Safety to oversee accidents, the National Committee for Food Safety to manage public health crises, and the National Committee for Comprehensive Management for Social Order to manage social safety.

To act as an organizational lynchpin, the State Council also set up the country's first Emergency Management Office in 2005 and instructed all local governments down to the county to set up local emergency management offices. These offices serve as a "coordinator of coordinators," managing all of the work of the four committees. They oversee the drafting of 50-90 different types of contingency plans[51] as well as tens of thousands of individual agency, school, and business emergency management plans. They monitor risks and threats, plan and execute emergency drills, coordinate crisis response and recovery, and launch investigations. Moreover, they establish emergency performance targets (应急工作考核指标) for government departments at the same administrative-level and for all local emergency management offices one administrative level down.

Most but not all emergency management offices are placed inside local government general offices (政府办公厅/室) and took over responsibility for managing the existing general on-duty office (总值班室). For this reason, the EMO consists of One Team, Two Signs (一套人马、两块牌子).[52] The general on-duty office has been historically known as the 24-hours operations center for a locality's leadership squad. It serves as the coordinator for receiving

[51] The number of contingency-specific local plans vary by locality.

[52] In some localities, the EMO merges multiple divisions together and thus is One Team, Many Signs (一套人马、多块牌子).

information from bureaus and lower-level governments and channeling urgent information up and down the administrative hierarchy. Although the general on-duty office gained its modern structure in 1986, it had a reputation of being a "little slow, exaggerating the positive, and downplaying the negative," thus earning of the ire of many political leaders (Zhang, 1994: 127). The 2005 reform sought to upgrade the general on-duty office technologically as well as create incentives for the quick and accurate dissemination of information.

## Structure and Size of Emergency Management Offices

On paper, the powers and responsibilities of emergency management offices (EMOs) are extraordinarily broad, but their size is small relative to the considerable task of managing and overseeing the multitude of agencies and threats under their purview. For example, the State Council's Emergency Management Office's personnel quota (编制) is only 26 full-time staff members. Allocated quotas at the provincial level range between 10 and 45 (Shan Chunchang, 2011: 110) and municipal level EMOs range from 6 to 25 (Author's Fieldwork). Most but not all EMO directors are part-time (兼职), largely with mayors, deputy mayors, secretary generals, or deputy secretaries taking over the role. EMO offices also do not get a public, separated budget item: they are aggregated with funding for other municipal general office functions.

The office's small size presents considerable obstacles in how EMOs distribute funds and wrangle with multiple agencies with established reputations and turf. For this reason, anecdotal evidence suggests that the emergency management office is not the most desirable post for staff in the government general office. According to one provincial-level advisory board member, "If there's no incident, no one wants to listen. When there is an incident, the blame falls on the EMO." In order to raise the EMO's status, a fair number of municipalities have tried upgrading the office a half-step higher than most general office departments (副处级). However, EMO staffers still face resistance from other departments, as they remain

a half-step lower than most bureau department heads at the same administrative level (正处级).

## Emergency Management Evaluations: Aiming for Advanced Recovery

The emergency management evaluation system is part of a broader initiative to assess overall government work and should be distinguished from leading cadre evaluations, with which we are much more familiar. EMOs define standards by using set categories of Planning and Preparation, Monitoring and Surveillance, Response and Rescue, Recovery and Rebuilding, and Law and Responsibilities are found in the National Sudden Incidents Response Law. The assessments mirror FEMA's Capability Assessment for Readiness, which are used by U.S. state governments to assess overall preparation and mitigation levels. Yet, there is considerable variation in how local EMOs assign targets and judge performance. Some municipalities emphasize actual crisis response, while others emphasize training. Some evaluate governments on grassroots efforts, quality of regulations, the building of shelters, and public opinion surveys; while others focus solely on traditional categories. To illustrate the range of targets, the table at the end of this chapter provides a translation of Hunan's 2007 Provincial *Emergency Management Evaluation*.

To date, it is unclear how effective these assessments are at motivating officials to prioritize emergency management and develop long-term strategies for mitigation and advanced recovery. Unlike leading cadre assessments, which provide clear incentives to steer policy objectives, emergency management targets are secondary in importance to an agency's primary mission. In other words, there are fewer material or political rewards for scoring at the top of the annual emergency management assessment. Moreover, there are few — and in most cases no — penalties for ranking towards the bottom.

### Imperative Targets in Leading Cadre Evaluations: Defining Accountability

While the emergency management work evaluations aim to prioritize risk mitigation and good governance, imperative targets (一票否决) in leading cadre evaluations attempt to foster accountability around emergency management. The history and scope of imperative targets will be expanded upon in the next chapter, but, in addition to social stability, local governments began to add imperative targets around work safety and resource conservation as early as 2003. In recent years, environmental protection, water quality, and safety of consumer and food products have joined the roster of "must-meet" objectives. In sum, these imperative targets provide the vital career incentives to align local leader's behavior with the preferences of Beijing's rulers.

## 3.4 Conclusions

Beijing's response to both the protests at Tiananmen Square in 1989 and SARS in 2003 demonstrate the foundational assumptions of a crisis. Contingency plans were either seriously flawed or in the case of SARS did not exist. Elite divisions between conservative and reformers were exposed during Tiananmen, whereas parochial interests caused the PLA and Ministry of Health not to communicate during SARS. Elites expressed shock at the government's incompetence and anger toward the international media for what they considered unfair reporting.

In sum, these events burned into the psyche of the CCP that "stability was above everything else," and China needed strong institutions to respond to emergent events. This shared understanding prioritized social stability and crisis management in a distinct way apart from other policy objectives. Despite the robustness of this understanding, these institutions fall short from completing mitigating risks associated with emergencies. Why?

In the next chapter, I argue that the new institutions coupled with the nature of China's fragmented political system leads to behavioral distortions by bureaucratic stakeholders.

## 3.5 Appendix

# Table 3.1: Tsinghua Working Group Recommendations

**Tsinghua Crisis Management Working Group**
**Evaluation and Recommendations for**
**Improving SARS Crisis Response in China**

| Area | Ideal System | Evaluation of China's Crisis Management System |
|---|---|---|
| Institutional Framework | 1. A permanent crisis management body at the central level that covers a broad range of issue areas | Currently, no such system in place. |
| | 2. Crisis management mechanisms for different issue areas | Before SARS, no crisis management institutions for dealing with public health epidemics. During the crisis, our country has started to build mechanisms managing emergencies in public health at the national level, which should be gradually improved. |
| | 3. Well-equipped communications network and information management center. | Before the onset of SARS, interagency communication was not smooth, we lacked a complete information management system, and no scientific method for providing information to the public. |
| Legal Framework | Legal Protection for Crisis Management | We currently lack an overall "Emergency Response Law," thus denying a legal framework for crisis management at the national level. The 1989 "Infectious Disease Protection Law" is not sound and has many loopholes. |
| Crisis Prevention | Comprehensive Early Warning Surveillance System | We lack a good grasp of relevant information, which hampers our abilities for accurate analysis. Reporting up the hierarchy is particularly strained. Without a public health crisis management system, it is not possible to respond strategically, our reaction will be delayed, and we will miss opportunities for containment. |
| Crisis Preparation | Contingency plans and auxiliary preparations. | No contingency plans or contingency plans are not sound. Inadequate preparations for material resources or budgeting. During the incubation period in affected areas, we face panic buying or severe shortages in reserves. |
| Crisis Response | 1. The highest level policymakers can quickly evaluate the severity of a crisis and develop strategic policies. | Currently, there is an exchange of power between China's new and old leaders. The highest policymakers in their initial tenure cannot put forward strategic policies, but after April 10th there has been a break in policymaking and our policymakers' abilities have received domestic and international recognition. |
| | 2. Immediately establish a crisis management leadership organization, with the highest policymakers taking charge with sweeping emergency management powers. | On April 14th, the Vice Premier of the State Council Wu Yi took charge of the State Council SARS Prevention Working Leading Small Group. |
| | 3. Formulate bills and confer extraordinary powers to response agencies according to the law. | On April 8th, the Ministry of Health put forward a SARS *Infectious Diseases Prevention Law* for prevention of infectious diseases.<br><br>On May 9th, Premier Wen Jiabao signed a State Council Order and issued "Sudden Pubic Health Incidents Emergency Regulations"<br><br>On May 12th, the Ministry of Health issued "Infectious Diseases and SARS Prevention Management Procedures"<br><br>On May 14th, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Procuratorate jointly issued, "Regarding the procedures to prevent harm and control sudden infectious disease and disasters criminal cases, specifically an explanation of legal response problems." |
| | 4. Build an information collection channel. Put forward correct and accurate tactical policies. | Build a severe, emergency disease information reporting system. Establish a sudden incidents reporting system. Publicize standardized sudden incidents reports, tips and complaints hotlines, and relevant tactics. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 5．Perfect crisis management and emergency mechanisms. Establish front line incident command centers, dispatch crisis management officials, dispatch crisis management reserves and supplies. Halt an atmosphere of crisis. | On April 14th, China established the National Sudden Public Health Incidents Emergency Response Mechanisms. Provincial-level governments established local sudden incidents emergency incident command centers.<br><br>On April 23rd, Wu Yi established the State Council SARS Command and Control Center.<br><br>On April 26th, Wu Yi assumed the office of Minister of Health and lead SARS crisis management work. |
| | 6．Establish regular press conferences, provide accurate projections of crisis developments quickly. Provide on-the-ground accurate, reporting to the public whenever possible. | On April 3rd, Former Minister of Health convened a press conference, which caused an international uproar. Afterwards, the Ministry of Health held multiple press conferences and established a daily report of new information. This allowed for publication of information about the severity of the virus. Beijing also established a regular news reporting system about the disease. |
| | 7．Quickly dispatch officials to dead, and supply emergency rescue support for the injured. Perfect the information system. | At the above mentioned press conferences, relevant information was provided which strengthened confidence in our government. The public encouraged the government and actively partook in the response. |
| | 8．Widespread use of societal resources to participate in crisis management. | Active societal participation in crisis management by using the traditional [social] management institutions. Social cohesion was strengthened and confidence in the government restored. There is still some room for public opinion toward our government to be improved. |
| | 9．Prevention of foreign interference in domestic affairs, while at the same time expressing sympathy for similar situations abroad and providing foreign assistance. | Because of the inappropriate initial response to the crisis, the foreign media launched a vicious attack against China. Numerous reporting involved the China threat narrative and China's international image received a severe beating. After April 10th, China put a stop this behavior and received the international community's approval and active support. China established close cooperation with the WHO and received important international rescue support. The international situation is starting to improve. |
| Crisis Recovery | 1. Restoration of Social Order | During the course of crisis management, social order must be restored. |
| | 2. Lessons learned and further improvement of the crisis management system. | Presently, there have been no suggestions put forth, but there must be an overall plan with careful consideration and analysis... |
| | 3. Blame and Accountability | On April 20th, the Minister of Health and Mayor of Beijing were removed of their party posistions due to their responsibility in the spread of the SARS crisis.<br><br>On April 26th, the two individuals were removed from their administrative positions.<br><br>Local governments have already initiated stern punishments against responsible officials. |

Source: Tsinghua University Crisis Research Working Group (清华大学危机研究小组). 2003. "SARS Crisis Management in China: Theoretical Framework and Practical Evaluation ("中国 SARS 危机管理：理论框架与实践评估")," *SARS Special Bulletin*《*SARS* 专刊》, No. 24.

## Table 3.2: Hunan Provincial Emergency Management Standards

**2007 Hunan Provincial Government Emergency Management Evaluation Standards for Municipal/ Prefecture Governments**

| Section | Categories | Description | Evaluation Conducted by: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Organizational Leadership (20 pts)** | Distribution of Work (4 pts) | The government clearly divides work between vice mayors/prefecture heads (2pts) | Formal Documentation |
| | | The government clearly divides work between vice municipal secretary-general (2pts) | Formal Documentation |
| | Establishment of an Emergency Management Office (8 pts) | The government clearly establishes an emergency management office (8 pts) | Formal Documentation |
| | Completion of Tasks Assigned from Above (8 pts) | The government completes tasks assigned from the Provincial Level (8 pts) | Provincial Government Investigation |
| **Emergency Management Duties (30 pts)** | Regulatory Framework (4 pts) | Duties are assigned according to existing codes (4 pts) | Formal Documentation |
| | Record-Keeping (4 pts) | Events are recorded accurately and timely (4 pts) | Actual Ledgers or Copies |
| | Information Reporting (12 pts) | Information is reported in a timely matter to higher authorities (12 points). Public leaks will result in a 2 point deduction each time. Failure to completely record information will result in a 1-3 point deduction. | Provincial Government Investigation |
| | Emergency Response (10 pts) | Adequate response to actual emergencies (10 points). If response is inadequate or not timely, 2 points will be deducted each time. | Provincial Government Investigation |
| **Crisis Planning System (20 pts)** | Crisis Planning Management (10 pts) | Crisis plans are drafted as assigned (10 pts) | Formal Documentation |
| | Crisis Training and Study Sessions (10 pts) | Timely and public reporting of crisis training, propaganda, and study sessions (10 pts) | Formal Documentation |
| **Crisis Public Propaganda and Instruction (30 pts)** | Propaganda and Instruction Planning (1 pt) | Printing of a plan to deal with crisis propaganda and public instruction (1 pt) | Formal Documentation |
| | "Propaganda Month" Activities (10 pts) | Public announcement of "Crisis Month" propaganda work (10 points); 1-10 points deducted for failure to adequate publicize | Provincial Government Investigation |
| | Emergency Management Website (3 points) | The government has set up an emergency management website (3 points) | Website Exists |
| | "The Public Emergency Handbook" (10 points) | The government distributes 100% of the handbooks (10 points); 1 point deducted for each instance of inadequate distribution. | Provincial Government Investigation |
| | Training Plan (1 point) | The government has published a training plan (1 point) | Formal Documentation |
| | Training Activities (5 points) | The government has formally conducted training activities (5 points) | Provincial Government Investigation |
| **Awards** | Publishing provincial government work reports will add 3 points for every instance; publishing central government reports will add 5 points for every instance | | Formal Documentation |
| **Punishments** | Late reporting or a failure to report of a major public emergency to the Central Government, or if the State Council evaluates the government as not up to standard [will result in punishments]. Explanation: For each small instance, the government will deduct points up to the entire 100 points | | Provincial Government Investigation |

Source: Hunan Provincial Emergency Management Office (湖南省应急管理办公室公室). 2007.《关于开展应急管理工作项目管理考核的通知》*(Notice Regarding the Initiation of Emergency Management Targets Management*). Accessed Online: http://www.hunan.gov.cn/zwgk/yjgl/gzdt/201301/t20130108_801828.html.

# 4 *Investigating Bureaucratic Influence*

Bureaucratic reputations pervade discussions of Chinese politics: the "all-powerful" (Mulvenon and Yang, 1999: 30; Walter and Howie, 2011: 189) and "highly trusted" (Nathan and Gilley, 2003: 3) organization department; the "formidable" public security bureau (Thornton, 2007: 172; Schoenhals, 2013: 180); the "biggest [and] most powerful" development and reform commission;[1] and the "weak" justice (Liu, 2011: 291), environmental protection (Economy, 2011: 277), and foreign affairs (Lampton, 2001: 176) bureaus. Indeed, few would question the importance of China's fragmented authoritarian model, where bureaucratic interests compete for resources to render the policy process disjointed and protracted (cf. Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988). Much more contentious is precisely how different bureaucratic stakeholders vary in influencing the policy environment (cf. Hillman, 2010). Are certain agencies "all-powerful" across issue areas or does influence vary depending on the policy domain? Under what conditions does one "formidable" agency become subservient to another "omnipresent" agency? The answers to these questions are critical for understanding whether Chinese bureaucratic agencies can solve the coordination dilemma to handle their new crisis management responsibilities effectively.

Our knowledge falls short, in part, because our focus has largely and understandingly been on central-local relations and state-society synergies. We have learned much about

[1] Roberts, Dexter. 2013. "China's Economic Policy Factory: The NDRC," *BloombergBusinessWeek*. 20 June. Accessed Online: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-06-20/chinas-economic-policy-factory-the-ndrc

the influence of interest groups or the mass public on the policy-making process (Kennedy, 2009; Wang, 2008; He and Warren, 2011; Chen, Pan and Xu, 2015; Balla, 2012), as well as the relative strength of the center vis-à-vis local discretion (e.g., Montinola, Qian and Weingast, 1995; Shirk, 1993; White, 1998; Cai and Treisman, 2006; Huang, 1999). However, if bureaucratic autonomy can vary, and capacity is vertically stove-piped, what are the consequences for horizontal relations? Can certain agencies insulate themselves from local predation better than others? Or does the "top leader" (一把手) and communist party leadership group always trump bureaucratic discretion (Smith, 2010)?

To investigate these questions, I develop a measure of bureaucratic capacity and expertise at the provincial level in China. In doing so, I shed light on how well bureaucratic actors can "get along and ahead" (Oksenberg, 1970) in handling their new crisis management responsibilities. The model builds on empirical work seeking to measure bureaucratic influence cross-nationally (Fukuyama, 2013) and within individual states (Carpenter, 2001; Lewis, 2010; Bersch, Praça and Taylor, 2016). Although we lack the same types of high quality data in China that many comparative scholars have to precisely measure individual agency capacity, this study demonstrates that we can utilize official documents, public biographies, and comments made by officials to construct comprehensive empirical measures and draw decent — but far from ironclad — inferences. Specifically, I argue that all officials are subject to two main constraints: comparatively low base salaries and annual performance reviews. These restraints collide with different organizational capabilities and expertise to limit available options bureaucratic agencies have to implement or evade their crisis management responsibilities.

By narrowing the focus to formal bureaucratic agencies, some may worry that this study runs the risk of anachronistically returning to an outdated view of Chinese politics when policymaking was "politically closed." To be sure, the Chinese state is increasingly interacting with the mass public and interest groups . Crucially, however, we have yet to see convinc-

ing evidence that this "consultative" authoritarianism reaches higher levels of the political system in a consequential way. This is particularly true for crisis management where most of the policymaking process occurs in secrecy behind closed doors.

This chapter draws upon three main data sources. First, it analyzes thousands of official documents, regulations, and notices about China's *bianzhi* (allotment of official posts) and cadre management system to draw inferences about the institutional sources of influence. Second, it uses public biographies on every provincial head of 39 core bureaucratic units since the 17th Party Congress to illuminate the cohesion and expertise behind different bureaus. Third, in an effort to understand how Chinese officials view different bureaucratic agencies, it pulls insights from more than 23,000 discussions and over 43,000 comments from one of China's most popular discussion forums, Tianya.cn.

This chapter draws upon a sub-forum of Tianya.cn designed for officials to exchange views about possible upcoming work transfers. The work transfer sub-forum was selected because there is a higher probability that officials using the forum have been working in public office for some time. Many of the other "cadre" sub-forums are frequented by applicants studying for the civil service exam. The forum is also beneficial for comparing views of different agencies, because about a quarter of all discussions in the dataset explicitly discuss the relative tradeoffs between different bureaucratic units (e.g., "Land Resources vs. Industry and Commerce?").

There are limitations of using semi-anonymous Internet comments to proxy the attitudes of Chinese government officials. The most glaring shortcoming is that we cannot independently verify the accuracy of a user's online identity or claims about place of employment. Yet, we do find instances where users flagged suspicious comments for deviating from established norms. For example, one discussion about whether an applicant should join the state security agency or the technology giant, Huawei, aroused deep suspicion among netizens after the user listed a Gmail address as his or her contact information. Despite these limi-

tations, the dataset sheds light on attitudes about bureaucratic units such as China's social stability office and intelligence agencies that are difficult for foreigners to obtain through interviews and impossible to capture through surveys relying on random probability samples.

## 4.1 Common Constraints: Compensation and Career Advancement

In order to contextualize the sources of bureaucratic reputation and influence, I assume that Chinese officials are motivated by a desire to advance their political careers and augment their official salaries with monetary and/or non-material benefits.

Theoretically, all officials in China benefit from a uniform pay system under the Civil Service Law with salaries comparable to analogous positions in the private sector.[2] Official salaries were traditionally divided between basic wages (基本工资), post wages (职务工资), salary grade step wages (级别工资), and length-of-service wages (工龄工资).[3] Under 2006 reforms to the pay system,[4] length-of-service and basic wages were supposed to be scrapped, but anecdotal evidence reveals that at least some localities still adopt the old divisions. Table 4.1 [5] details 2015 post wages for leading and non-leading officials, which are informative only for gauging differences between administrative rank. Post wages are poor indicators of the actual amount officials have at their disposal, however.

The bulk of an official's monthly take-home pay comes from a range of subsidies and allowances. According to one Chinese media account,[6] subsidies can consist of more than

[2] 2005.《中华人民共和国公务员法》(*People's Republic of China Civil Service Law*), April 27. Article 73.

[3] State Council (国务院). 1993.《机关工作人员工资制度改革方案》(*Administrative Organs Employee Pay System Reform Plan*).

[4] State Council (国务院). 2006. 《国务院关于改革公务员工资制度的通知》(*State Council Notice Regarding Civil Servant Pay System Reform*). June 14.

[5] Source: Henan Provincial Government. 2015.《公务员职务级别工资套改表 (*Civil Servants Post and Step Salary Reform Form*) Accessed Online: `http://www.henan.gov.cn/att_default/0/10/00/22/10002277_463617.xls`.

[6] 2013. "媒体披露公务员工资：推算国家主席月薪约万元" (Media Reveals Civil Servants' Pay: Estimating National Leader's Monthly Salary to be Approximately 10,000 RMB). 《中国新闻周刊》(*China Newsweek*) April 8. Accessed Online: `http://news.qq.com/a/20130408/001243.htm`.

Table 4.1: 2015 Monthly Post Wages in RMB

| Leading Cadres | | | | Non-Leading Cadres | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Salary Guide | Rank Name | Chinese | Leading Cadre Salary | Non-Leading Cadre Salary | Rank Name | Chinese |
| 1 | National Rank (Full) | 国家级正职 | 4,000 | – | – | – |
| 2-4 | National Rank (Deputy) | 国家级副职 | 3,200 | – | – | – |
| 4-8 | Ministerial Level (Full) | 省部级正职 | 2,510 | – | – | – |
| 6-10 | Ministerial Level (Deputy) | 省部级副职 | 1,900 | – | – | – |
| 8-13 | Bureau Level (Full) | 厅局级正职 | 1,410 | 1,290 | Inspector | 巡视员 |
| 10-15 | Bureau Level (Deputy) | 厅局级副职 | 1,080 | 990 | Associate Inspector | 助理巡视员 |
| 12-18 | Division Level (Full) | 县处级正职 | 830 | 760 | Investigator | 调研员 |
| 14-20 | Division Level (Deputy) | 县处级副职 | 640 | 590 | Associate Investigator | 助理调研员 |
| 16-22 | Section Level (Full) | 乡科级正职 | 510 | 480 | Principal Staff Member | 主任科员 |
| 17-24 | Section Level (Deputy) | 乡科级副职 | 430 | 410 | Senior Staff Member | 副主任科员 |
| 18-26 | – | – | – | 380 | Section Staff | 科员级 |
| 19-27 | – | – | – | 340 | Ordinary Staff | 办事员级 |

80 per cent of a cadre's income. Allowances vary by locality and work unit, but normally are divided between wage reform subsidies (工改补贴), work premiums for the difficulty of the job (工作津贴), transportation allowance (交通补助), mobile phone and internet allowance (通讯补助), home purchase subsidies (购房补贴), and Chinese New Year allowance (过节补助). Deductions and withholdings normally include income tax and a pre-tax matching housing fund (住房公积金). In addition, officials can receive small cash bonuses tied to their yearly performance in the target responsibility system.

Despite considerable evidence that the civil service has experienced a series of "aggressive pay rises" (Wu, 2012: 255), Chinese officials generally hold a dim view of the current salary system. As one netizen wrote on Tianya's cadre exchange forum:

> I am a civil servant. My close friends constantly taunt me: "Do you people do anything besides be corrupt?" In my heart, there is such bitterness that I can't [even begin to] express: My annual total income (including salary, bonuses, subsidies, and holiday assistance) doesn't even reach 40,000 RMB [US$6,120]. Every year, my monthly food, clothing, and other daily expenses are approximately 2,000 RMB [$306]. Over the New Year, I require nearly 10,000 RMB [$1,530] to give to my relatives, boss, close friends, and *hongbao* [red envelopes] for the children. This year [I have] even less [due to educational expenses]... Nowadays, life is miserable. My heart is hurting to no end! (No. 35192)

The uniform dissatisfaction with the official pay system is compounded by pay disparities in different localities. For example, Yuen Yuen Ang (2009: 78) uncovered that the average official in the poorest county in Shandong received 86 per cent less in wages and benefits than his or her counterpart in the wealthiest county in 2005. Similarly, a number of scholars have documented provincial-level differences in base wages (e.g., Chan and Ma, 2011; Yang and Wang, 2013; You and Zhang, 2016; Ma, 2016).

Recent work demonstrates that the gap in remuneration between the public and private sectors is closing (Wu, 2014: 45), but key grievances remain. As one official in Guangzhou weighed the benefits of remaining in public office or joining the private sector explains:

> I am a civil servant in a provincial-level agency in Guangzhou. My monthly salary is a bit more than 3,000 and I constantly consider working for a foreign company. The monthly salary in the private sector, on average, is about 8,000 and this really sways me, but it is really worth it to sell myself out for 6,000 RMB [sic]. I have a former classmate who is a civil servant in Shenzhen who makes between 5,000-6,000 a month (at the same rank). In sum, the average civil servant salary is Shanghai > Shenzhen > Guangzhou > Beijing; the Central Government < Province < Large Municipality < District < Township, where the base salary is really high and "grease" is plentiful. (No. 13520)

Despite the lack of systematic evidence on the magnitude of these differences, there is

a widespread perception that low base salaries affect the behavior of officials in discernible ways. On the basis of discussions on the Tianya.cn cadre exchange forum, officials generally believe that variation in remuneration creates inequities across agencies and localities. One implication for this disparity is that bureaus are categorized, in part, by their ability to offer material inducements. As detailed later in this chapter, some agencies provide officials with greater subsidies and allowances and, therefore, offer more attractive posts. Other bureaus are viewed as having opportunities to obtain side payments through the issuing of fees, licenses, or approvals. These bureaus are colloquially known as "greasy offices" (油水部门). Finally, a third category of bureaus lack large enough budgets to provide generous subsides and have fewer avenues for side payments.

## *Bianzhi* and the Cadre Management System

In addition to material incentives, bureaucratic agencies offer distinct opportunities for career advancement. Specifically, bureaus hold reputations for either allowing cadres to quickly advance in administrative rank or endure longer periods before promotion due to more competition. To understand why, we need to briefly investigate the interlocking connections between the *bianzhi* system, or the number of established posts, and cadre management systems in determining how personnel appointments are allocated and staffed.

The *bianzhi* system refers to the number of established posts in administrative (i.e., government and party), extra-bureaucratic (事业单位), and state-owned enterprises that receive official approval. *Bianban* (编办) or establishment offices are party organizations at every administrative level. Through three separate lists, administrative, extra-bureaucratic, and enterprise, *bianban* determine the number of posts and funding sources for every unit under their territorial jurisdiction. Funding sources for units vary from having their entire budget allocated by the finance bureau (全额拨款) to entirely self-funded (自收自支). As explained below, the ability to have independent revenue streams is a determining factor of

the amount of grease (油水) or side payments available for officials.

In many ways, *bianzhi* reflects the preferred size of bureaucratic organizations in an effort to limit government waste. But it is a poor indicator of the actual number of employees on government or party payrolls (cf. Brødsgaard, 2002). Bureaucratic agencies have a number of ways to exceed (超编), borrow (借编), or mix (混编) their *bianzhi* with other units causing widespread disparities (Ang, 2012: 634). Yet, employees holding positions off of the official *bianzhi* (编外) often feel as if they are non-equals. For example, as one temporary secretary (临工 (文员)) in a petitions and letters bureau writes:

> I meet petitioners everyday requesting assistance for pensions or health insurance. The depressing thing is that I have worked here for more than a year, and, after spending my income, I basically have no pension or health insurance! Petitioning work requires us to solve other people's problems, but [the bureau] treats its own employees so harshly! (No. 40080)

Unfortunately, public employment figures have historically been aggregated to the provincial level, administrative numbers lumped together with extra-bureaucratic employment, and party organizations excluded from the total. As a result, the seminal article Ang (2012) on the public employment and *bianzhi* only investigates aggregate totals in one province (Fujian) for one year (2004). This provides crucial, albeit incomplete findings.

## Target Responsibility System (TRS)

The *bianzhi* system restricts appointments by determining the number of authorized posts for leading and non-leading positions (编制), number of actual positions (职数), and vacancies (职位空缺). However, local party committees (党委员会) or party fractions (党组) have ultimate authority in appointments, transfers, and dismissals. Since August 1984, a key feature of the cadre management system is for CCP organization departments at each administrative level to directly manage the personnel changes for leading positions at the next level down. The organization department will develop a list or nomenklatura of posts

of politically important posts, including the party secretary, government chief executive, bureau directors and vice-directors. It will then evaluate candidates to fill posts upon vacancy. Regulations stipulate that officials need two years of experience at the deputy (副) level before being promoted to full rank or three years at full rank before a promotion to the next administrative level.[7] For non-leading positions, the local personnel bureau will select candidates either through direct appointment or open-selection. Critically, however, the organization departments maintain veto power over other personnel appointments even if positions are not part of the *nomenklatura* (Huang, 1995: 829).

Depending on the nature of the position, appointments are theoretically made through an (intra-party) election or committee appointment. Ostensibly, only "good cadres" (好干部) are selected to leading positions. Xi Jinping in 2013 defined good cadres as ideologically loyal (信念坚定), who serve the people (为民服务), and who are honest and diligent (勤政务实), do not shirk responsibilities (敢于担当), and incorruptible and upright (清正廉洁).[8] The basic qualifications for a leading position are more than five years of work experience with two years of grassroots work below the county level (《党政领导干部选拔任用工作条例》, Art. 8). An assessment group will first evaluate eligible cadres by talking to their superiors, co-workers, cadres at other party and government institutions, and ordinary residents (Zuo, 2015: 959). The most important aspect of the assessment is the target responsibility system (TRS), which evaluates the cadre's work performance along a number of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

The TRS divides work performance goals into three categories of increasing importance: soft targets, hard targets, and imperative targets. Hard targets are core tasks such as economic growth and revenue collection. They normally have clear quantitative indicators that

[7] Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (中共中央). 2014.《党政领导干部选拔任用工作条例》(*Party and Government leading Cadres Appointments and Work Regulations*), January 16. Article 8.

[8] 2013. "习近平提'五条标准'当成'好干部'自觉追求 (Consciously Strive toward Xi Jinping's "Five Standards" to Become a 'Good Cadre')"《中国共产党新闻网》(*Chinese Communist Party News*). June 30. Accessed Online: `http://cpc.people.com.cn/pinglun/n/2013/0630/c241220-22022184.html`.

can be unambiguously judged as being satisfied or not. Soft targets reflect general policy initiatives such as government transparency and ideological work. Imperative targets are "must meet" objectives. Failure to meet them can theoretically result in loss of bonuses, incursion of fines, demotion, or even dismissal. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence find some support that Chinese officials, especially at lower levels, are motivated to meet targets in order of importance so as to increase their probability of promotion, financial bonuses, and praise from superiors .

In sum, annual performance reviews and low salaries act as common constraints for officials, but what opportunities do different bureaus provide? One Tianya.cn contributor offers the following advice to an official considering a transfer to one of several bureaus:

> If you want to be a poser (装逼), join discipline and inspection; if you want to be awesome (牛逼), the procuratorate . . . if you want a political future, the party research office; if you want actual money, go to the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. (No. 3067)

The above view accords with subjective beliefs of the differential impact of bureaus in the political system and on the career trajectories of civil servants. For example, one of China's leading test preparation companies for the civil service exam, Offcn (北京中公教育科技股份有限公司), provides a ranking of different bureaus based on their relative "political power," "financial opportunities," "work complexity," and "promotion potential."[9] Many of their assessments of bureaus are shockingly bold: "The Statistical Bureau: Source of Fraudulent Data; The Love of Every Leader." Although similar opinions are commonly heard when talking to Chinese officials, scholars, and experts, are they valid? And, if so, what are the institutional sources of influence behind specific bureaus?

[9]"公务员各部门政治前途、经济待遇分析 (Analysis of Civil Servant's Political Prospects and Compensation at Every Bureau)," Offcn (北京中公教育科技股份有限公司) Accessed Online: `http://nanchong.offcn.com/html/2012/zxdt_0730/65.html`. (July 3, 2016).

## 4.2 Organizational Capacity

The remainder of the chapter seeks to investigate the sources of bureaucratic capabilities and expertise at the provincial level. The provincial level was selected due to data availability, as biographic data for most bureau directors below the provincial level are not publicly available.

### Vertical Administration (垂直管理) and Number of Political Principals

Conventional wisdom posits that Chinese leaders are "hyper-sensitive to the level above them" due to the broad powers that higher-level governments hold over their appointments and dismissals (O'Brien and Li, 1999: 171). Yet, the "level above them" varies due to the use of vertical administration (垂直管理), where lines of authority are shifted upward for greater central oversight. In China, leadership relations (领导关系) that refers to the organizations which can issue binding orders and make authoritative decisions, for line ministries often rests with party and government leaders at the same administrative level rather than their direct (functional) superiors. In an effort to insulate certain bureaus, Beijing's rulers have shifted leadership lines upward so that budgetary allocation, staffing decisions, and revenue collection are less prone to local protectionism.

Andrew Mertha (2005) and Martin Dimitrov (2009), in important work on the subject, explain variation in enforcing intellectual property rights, where the provincial level directly managed industry and commerce administrations and quality, examination, and inspection bureaus before 2015. The two authors also describe how the central government continues to directly manage the securities, banking, and insurance regulatory commissions.

To date, however, we lack a comprehensive, system-wide understanding of which bureaus directly report to what level. Even in Chinese, only two books have been published with the phrase "vertical administration" in their titles since 1990, according to the academic

database, *Duxiu*. Many of the 345 journal or magazine articles on the subject are strictly theoretical — describing the benefits of vertical administration — or limited in scope to a single agency in one locality.[10]

As a starting point, this study draws upon the descriptions of vertically-managed agencies by Fudan University professor, Li Ruichang (李瑞昌). Li Ruichang (2012: 96) describes the initial impetus for vertical management as a means to separate civilian and military-use railway traffic and airspace following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. He then argues that vertical management before 1997 was either to assert greater central control over state finances (e.g., customs administration, taxation administration) or national security (e.g., state security). The explosion of newly established organizations to regulate banking, securities, industrial safety, and consumer products in the late 1990s and early 2000s led to a third wave of soft-centralization in order to insulate regulatory institutions from local interference.

The third wave of soft-centralization ran into trouble by 2015. After a series of well-publicized food safety scandals, Beijing's rulers reverted the industry and commerce administration and quality examination and technical supervision bureau (QTSB) back to territorial governance. The new food and drug safety administration encountered numerous difficulties coordinating with other bureaus, because some regulatory agencies such as QTSB were vertically managed, while others such as food and drug safety administration are not.

While vertical management might improve regulatory oversight, it can complicate crisis prevention and response. This became apparent during SARS, when information reporting was vertically stove-piped and hampered horizontal coordination. Figure 4.1 details vertically managed agencies or offices and whether they report to the province or the center. In some agencies, only certain divisions are centralized while the remainder of the agency is

[10] Keyword searches on China National Knowledge Network (CNKI)《中国知网》and Duxiu《独秀》in May 2016.


Figure 4.1: Vertically-Managed Agencies (Author's Dataset)

territorially managed. Further complicating the classification of vertical management is the concept of "dual management" (双重管理) where the bureau is subject to oversight both from its territorial jurisdiction and superiors from its own bureaucratic agency. Theoretically, territorial leadership is supposed to work in coordination with functional bureaus, but the local government maintains a first-move advantage as the first reporting node for local bureaus.

In sum, vertical management reduces the number of political principals for a bureau. Vertically-managed bureaus also have a modicum of bureaucratic discretion by design. This reduces the risk of regulatory capture by local businesses or political leaders while at the same time concentrates resources within single agencies.

## Imperative Targets (一票否决)

We now turn to a systematic investigation of imperative targets in the target responsibility system. Despite a voluminous literature about the effects of hard targets such as economic growth on career advancement, there has been much less research on imperative targets and their effects on the policy process. In fact, most authors simply assert that imperative targets act as hard constraints on leaders by threatening to nullify any other achievements in an official's annual performance review (Edin, 2003; Whiting, 2000). For example, O'Brien and Li (1999) attribute the "excessive enthusiasm" around population planning by local leaders to the family planning imperative target. Shukai Zhao (2007: 65) in a thorough investigation of imperative targets in 20 townships concludes that the targets made "everyone feel insecure," intensified work to "unrealistic levels," led to "frequent levels of commandism and compulsion," and "encouraged fraud, trickery, and formalism (*xingshi zhuyi*)."

While local organization departments and evaluation and performance target offices (考核办) maintain ultimate authority to determine imperative targets in leading cadres' performance contracts, I argue that imperative targets create complexity in the policymaking process by allowing some bureaus to set indicators, which trigger a violation in imperative targets. Conventional wisdom assumes a linear relationship between imperative targets and performance. Following this logic, a new imperative target will lead to an observable behavioral change in line with the target. However, the extant literature assumes that imperative targets are relatively few. Since the early 2000s, there has been an explosion of new imperative targets and new ways for certain bureaus to influence the policy process.

Consequently, local officials face problems of policy prioritization. As Liao Musheng (梁木生), a professor at China Central Science and Technology University, recalls a township-level official saying, "If everything is important, then nothing is important... Each bureau competes to insert an 'imperative target' [in the evaluation system], but actually this creates political inertia. Additionally, this becomes a reason to find an excuse when an investigation is launched and makes asking for bribes easy."[11] For these reasons, several provincial governments launched campaigns to limit the number of imperative targets.[12] For example, Hubei restricted the use of imperative targets to population planning, social stability, environmental protection, work safety, and anti-corruption.[13] Xinjiang went farther by prohibiting all targets, save for population control and social stability.[14]

In view of these policy initiatives, how many imperative targets and influential bureaucratic players exist in China? An authoritative list of imperative targets in leading cadre evaluations is not publicly available. The largely unconstrained ability of local governments to add imperative targets to the TRS further obscures what we know. In order to understand how imperative targets vary by issue area and geographically, we use government notices that publicize the inclusion of imperative targets in leading cadre evaluations. Specifically, I conducted keyword searches on 20 provincial websites for documents containing the phrase, "one-strike veto" (一票否决). If the result yielded a notice about leading cadre evaluations, I recorded the type of imperative target and the responsible agency or agencies for setting threshold levels. I also recorded the administrative level for the target because provincial-level websites included notices about targets at the provincial, municipal, and county levels. In total, I manually coded 3,298 imperative target notices. After the initial search at the

[11] Wu Qiqiang (吴齐强). 2011."清理'一票否决'之后 (After the Clean Up of 'Imperative Targets')."《人民日报》(*People's Daily*). October 12. Accessed Online: http://dangjian.people.com.cn/GB/15867683.html.

[12] Su Yongtong ( 苏永通). 2011. "否决'一票否决' (Veto the 'Veto Targets)'," 《南方周末》(*Southern Weekend*). Accessed Online: http://www.infzm.com/content/54591.

[13] 2015. "湖北清理一票否决考核保留计生治安等 5 项 (Hubei Cleans up Imperative Targets, Keeps Five Targets including Population Planning and Social Stability)," 《湖北日报》(*Hubei Daily*). July 24. Accessed Online:http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2015-07-24/095232143195.shtml.

[14] Su Yongtong, *Opt Cit.*

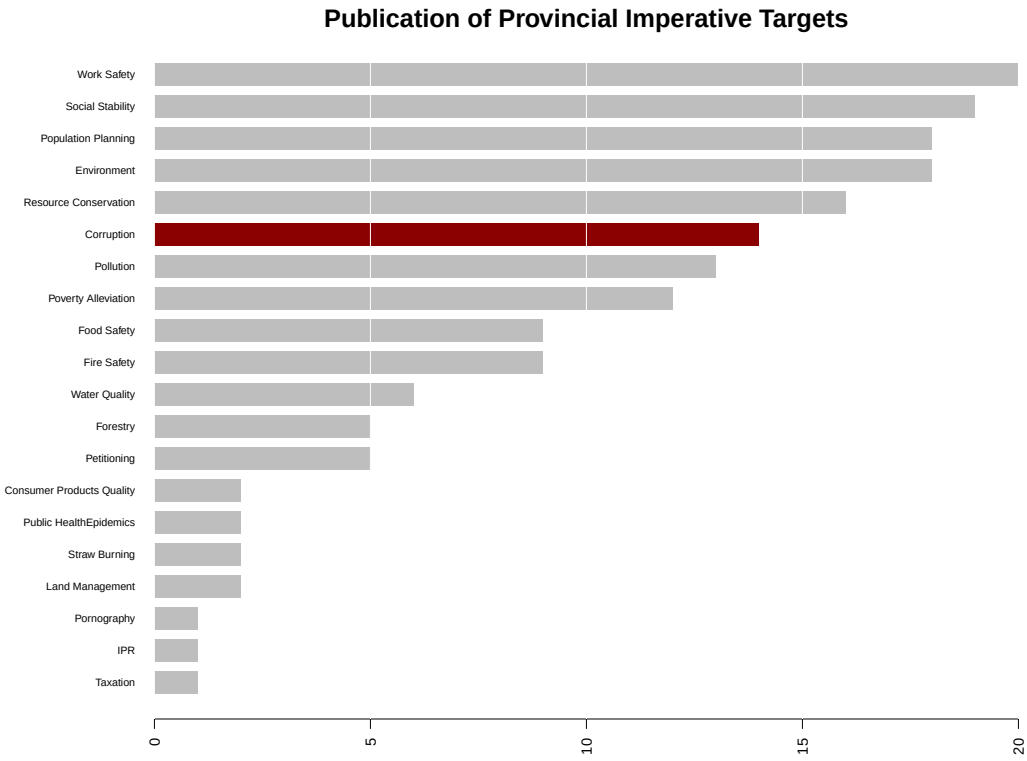


Figure 4.2: Province Imperative Targets: Types

provincial level, more targeted keyword searches for the top 20 types of imperative targets found on provincial-level websites were conducted on 84 municipal government websites. An indicator was recorded if a notice was found for those imperative targets.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 display the number of targets for a random selection of 20 provinces. With a low of four targets in Beijing, Inner Mongolia, and Yunnan to 15 targets in Gansu, there is considerable evidence that provincial-level governments are burdening lower level governments with numerous new veto players. At least based on public notices, nearly all provinces in the sample have imperative targets for work safety, social stability, population planning, and environmental protection (4.2). More than half of the provinces sampled also publicize targets for resource conservation, anti-corruption, and air pollution emissions. While many of the same targets are publicized for the municipal and county levels, there

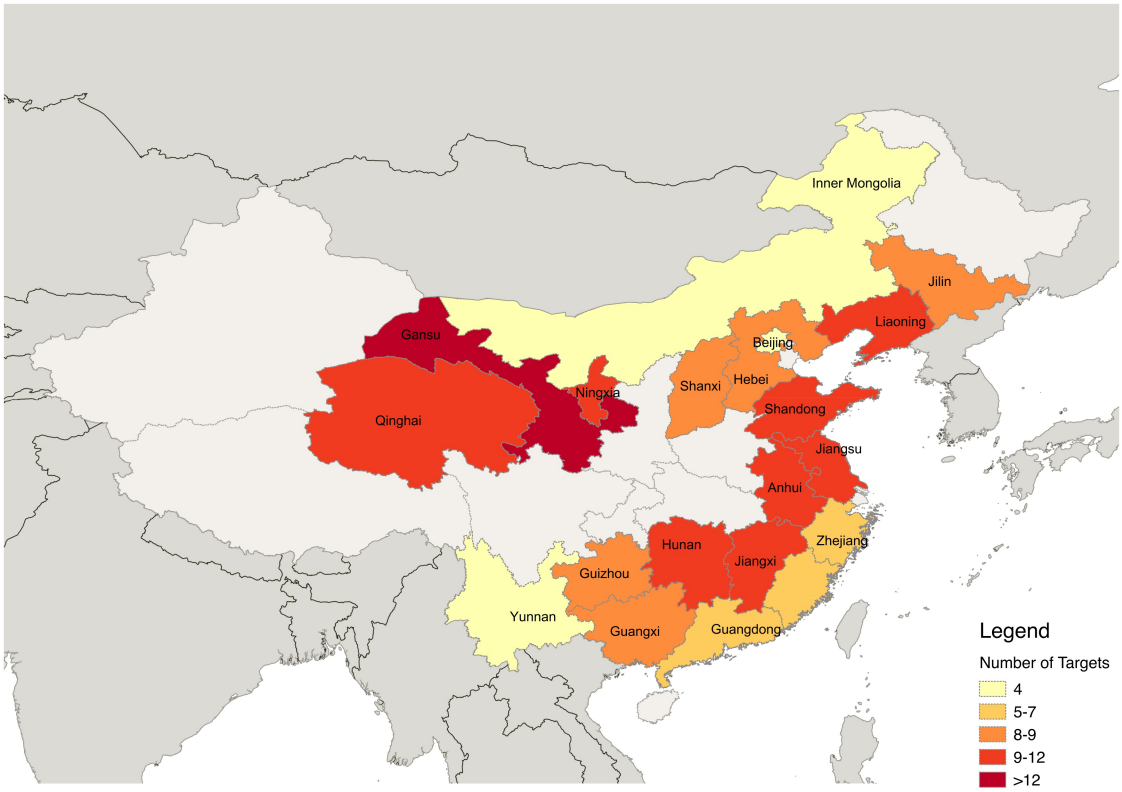


Figure 4.3: Province Imperative Targets: Geographic Variation

are some differences as well. Municipal and county level governments highly incentivize their subordinates to attract more investment into the locality, solve petitioning requests before petitioners reach higher-level governments, and improve consumer product quality (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

Based on these observations, I argue that bureaucratic units can hold disciplinary power by setting threshold indicators for triggering a violation in targets. For example, the Work Safety Bureau sets threshold levels for violations in the work safety imperative target. Public security and political and legal affairs commissions set thresholds for violations in the social stability imperative target. This enhances their influence in the policymaking process.

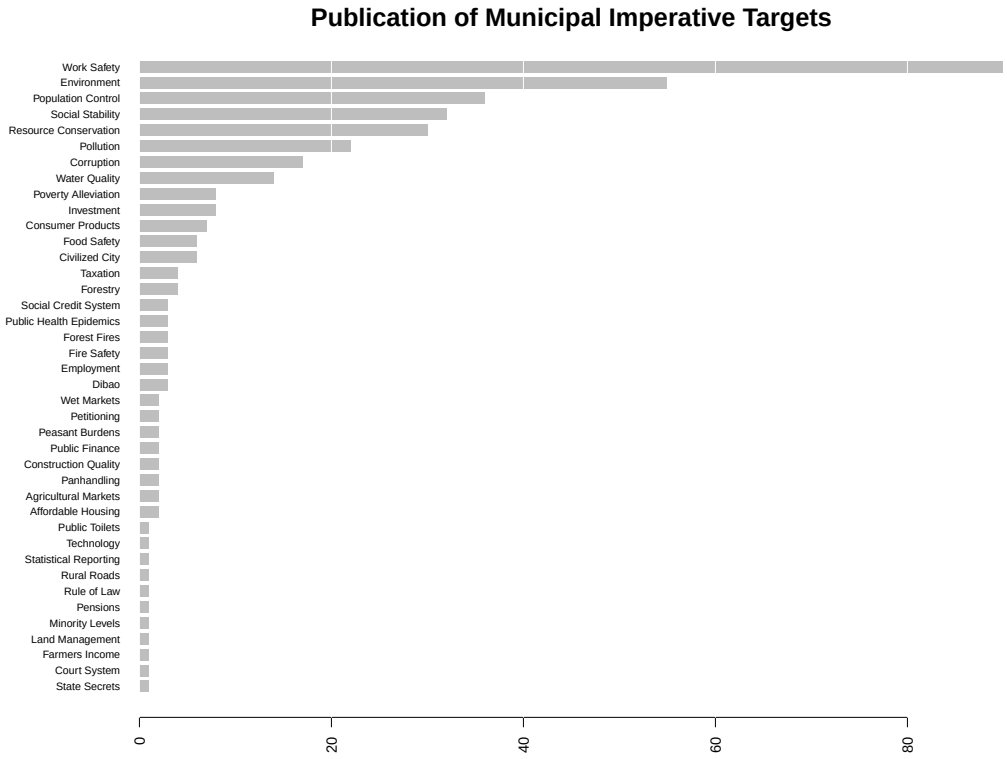


Figure 4.4: Municipal-Level Imperative Targets (Provincial Websites)

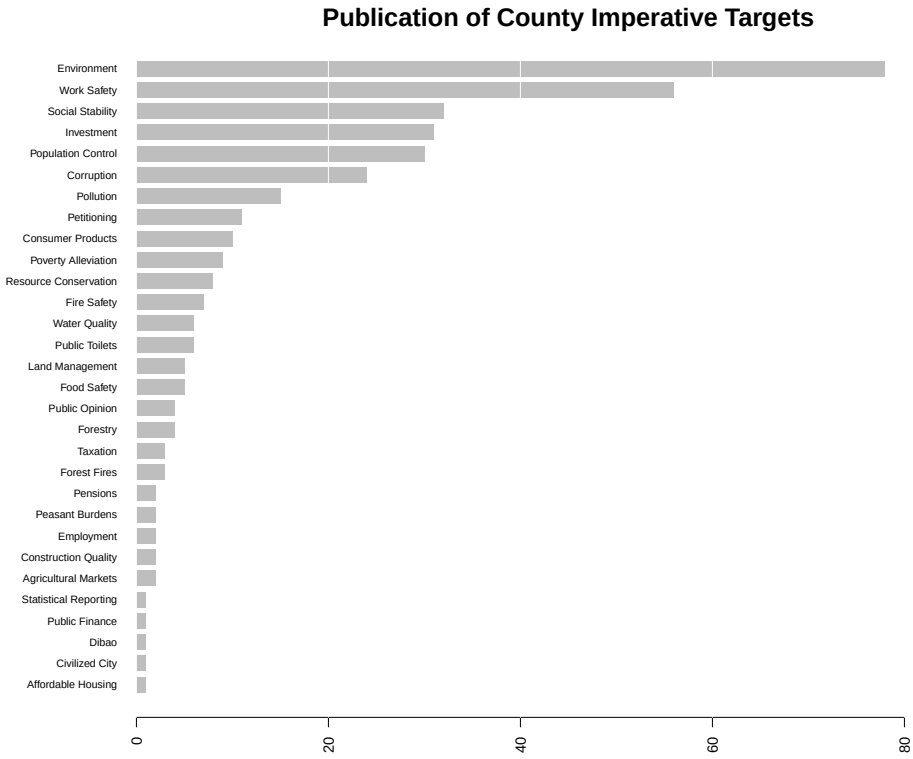


Figure 4.5: County-Level Imperative Targets (Provincial Websites)

## Grey Income (灰色收入), Fiscal Autonomy, and Wealthy Bureaus

As stated earlier, certain posts carry revenue-generating functions, which allow cadres to extract rents from their positions. These functions cover a wide range of activities including licensing fees (press and publications administration), import tariffs (customs), levies and fees (work safety), and lotteries (civil affairs). Theoretically, these rents provide "grease" (油水) to make officials malleable in bending rules and contravening institutions. Burns and Wang (2010: 69) tie greasy offices to the purchase of offices, theorizing that rent-generating offices will fetch the highest prices. Similarly, Ang (2009) and Smith (2010) point to the "inter-bureaucratic disparity" between revenue- and non-revenue-generating posts, arguing that there exists a clear connection between wealthy bureaus and extra-budgetary revenue. This accords with the wider literature on bureaucratic fiscal autonomy. Extra-budgetary revenue generation can provide bureaus with a level of discretion and even autonomy from local finance bureaus by insulating them from budgetary cuts (Caughey, Chatfield and Cohon, 2009: 12). With increased discretion, these bureaus can theoretically exert outsized influence when responding to a crisis.

To investigate which bureaus hold a greasy reputation, I turn to the Tianya.cn dataset. Basic keyword searches over the corpus of 43,046 comments yields 232 results for "grease" (油水) and 247 results for "clear water" (清水). After removing duplicate entries and false positives, there were 151 greasy posts and 162 clear water posts. In the next step, I recorded the name of the bureau(s) and their association with rent-extracting opportunities. The top five greasiest offices include the development and reform commission, customs administration, national taxation administration, public security, and local courts. By contrast, netizens on the cadre exchange forum cited the statistical bureau, discipline and inspection commission, procuratorate, united front, and party general office as so-called "clear water offices" (清水衙门).

At first glance, the extant literature is correct that certain greasy offices are also viewed

as widely influential. Development and reform commissions, with their authority to approve large public infrastructure projects, and public security bureaus, with numerous fee-generating capacities, are considered both greasy and influential. Yet, the close connection between grease, power, and corruption makes many of these bureaus risky for cadres. Consider this quote about the prospects of joining a local land resources bureau: "Land Resources — [you'll] have one foot in the bank, and the other foot in jail" (No. 185). Moreover, the conventional wisdom that greasy offices are perfectly correlated with bureaucratic influence over-simplifies and possibly incorrectly assesses a more complex relationship. Commentators on China would not generally consider education bureaus (ranked 9th), local courts (5th), or environmental protection bureaus (11th) as influential, despite their greasy reputations.

On the basis of 162 clear water comments, we also find three possibly different types of clear water posts. The first type consists of bureaus with poor financial resources, little power (无权无势), and offer virtually no avenues to make additional income. As one netizen cautions another against joining the petitions and letters bureau, "No power, no money. . . Absolutely do not go. I would rather smash my iron rice bowl than do petitioning work" (No. 42030). This accords with the existing literature that clear water posts make for abysmal appointments. Yuen Yuen Ang (2009: 76) quotes one township-level official claiming that "even a fool knows" the archives office has zero influence and no grease, whereas the construction bureau provides abundant grease and influence. Graeme Smith (2010: 609) goes so far to assert that clear water bureaus in townships are so unattractive that they are the only agencies not under direct county-level administration.

However, many clear water offices are not dismissed as unattractive agencies. Some agencies are basically a sinecure, effectively paying cadres to do little work and providing investment opportunities. As this Tianya.cn user writes:

> If you're appointed to a so-called "clear water bureau," it's fine. . . Everyone reads a newspaper and drinks tea. If you arrive early or late, no one cares. Work is easy and there are no risks. If you make a mistake, no one is coming after you. Invest in some stocks and you'll make a lot of money. . . . (No. 1268).

The benefits of clear water bureaus may also extend beyond just being suitable for lazy employees. For example, clear water bureaus, on average, have smaller bianzhi than greasy bureaus making internal competition for advancement less fierce. While a limited bianzhi makes bureaus understaffed, it may be advantageous for future career prospects. One official points out, "The Establishments Office [编办] is good. The work is easy, the organizational rank is high, [and] the number of employees is fairly small. Although there is no 'grease,' you'll rise quickly through the ranks" (No. 4850).

A final category of clear water posts include agencies that have been conventionally considered some of the most powerful in China: the organization department, discipline and inspection commission, and political and legal affairs commission. While these bureaus lack extra-budgetary revenue generation, they do not necessarily have diminished levels of power, money, or venality. In fact, their reputations are among the strongest. As one user, who claims to work at an organization department, says, "Have you not heard of the adage: 'Stay with the organization department and you'll advance every day!'" (No. 42391).

As for actual financial resources, there is good reason to be skeptical of the claim that greasy bureaus are among the wealthiest. One reason for the possible spurious finding is that prior work does not look at party organizations when evaluating the level of grease. I seek to remedy this oversight by investigating different bureaus' automobile and banquet expenditures per employee. Car and banquet spending can almost always be considered a luxury for bureaus. In 2011 the Chinese government began to make each bureau's "Three Publics Expenditure" (三公经费), which includes vehicle, overseas travel, and banquet costs, open to public scrutiny. While the vast majority of localities have complied with releasing at least part of their data, nearly all localities have yet to release data related to party organizations.

To my knowledge, only one province, Shaanxi, and two municipalities, Wuhan and Yulin, have made most of their budgets — including CCP organizations and *bianzhi* numbers — available in the last two years. The data contained are considered the most comprehensive available and include *bianzhi* numbers, actual number of employees, and individual budget line expenditures for nearly all CCP and government agencies, save for intelligence organizations such as state security and paramilitary units such as the people's armed police. While this convenience sample cannot be viewed as representative for the entire country, the relative ratios can help us shed light on the gap between wealthy and poor bureaus and their relationship to grease.

Table 4.2 presents vehicle and banquet results per cadre (actual employees, not *bianzhi*) for Yulin, Shaanxi. The results are unsurprising based on conventional wisdom: the party general office, discipline and inspection commission, and organization department rank among the wealthiest and are widely considered "powerful." The ranking is surprising, however, considering our knowledge of greasy offices. Nearly all of the lowest expenditures on car and banquet spending per official have ample streams of extra-budgetary revenue.

Finally, the lack of extra-budgetary resources does not mean an absence of corruption. But the avenues for corruption may be narrower to senior leadership in the bureau. This is illustrated by a Tianya.cn user describing a local discipline and inspection commission:

> Every time our discipline and inspection commission goes down to the township level, the gifts come flooding out. But speaking of dirty money (黑钱) or *hongbao* [red envelopes stuffed with money], the lower ranking cadres (小兵) are certainly not given even the smallest portion of it, nor do [we] dare to take any (No. 2699).

In sum, extra-budgetary revenue provides additional revenue streams for bureaus and possible opportunities to extract rents for officials. In line with comparative studies of bureaucratic discretion, this may provide greater bureaucratic discretion. Contrary to conventional wisdom, however, greasy bureaus may not be the wealthiest or the most influential.

Table 4.2: Vehicle and Banquet Spending per Employee in Yulin, Shaanxi, 2014 (RMB)*

| *Bureau* | *Sangong Spending* |
|---|---|
| *Top 10* | |
| 1. Development and Reform Commission | 25,200 RMB |
| 2. CCP General Office | 23,200 RMB |
| 3. Propaganda Department | 18,900 RMB |
| 4. Political and Legal Affairs | 18,400 RMB |
| 5. Government Counselors' Office | 16,700 RMB |
| 6. Organization Department | 16,400 RMB |
| 7. Transportation Bureau | 16,200 RMB |
| 8. Overseas Chinese Affairs | 14,900 RMB |
| 9. Discipline and Inspection Commission | 14,700 RMB |
| 10. Establishments Office (编办) | 13,900 RMB |
| *Bottom 10* | |
| 40. Chengguan (Urban Administration) | 6,800 RMB |
| 41. Food and Drug Safety Administration | 6,500 RMB |
| 42. Water Resources | 5,500 RMB |
| 43. Housing and Urban-Rural Development | 4,800 RMB |
| 44. Culture | 4,100 RMB |
| 45. Labor Resources and Social Security | 3,700 RMB |
| 46. Civil Affairs | 3,600 RMB |
| 47. Sports Administration | 2,800 RMB |
| 48. Education | 1,900 RMB |
| 49. Forestry | 1,100 RMB |
| 50. Public Health & Population Planning Bureau | 600 RMB |

*Notes:* Actual employees on agency's payroll.
Source: Author's Calculations

In fact, based upon at least conspicuous bureau spending in one city, they are among the poorest.

## 4.3 Expertise and Bureau Cohesion

While budgetary resources and institutional endowments provide the basic capabilities necessary for coordination, they do not alone determine whether a certain agency will collab-

orate in a crisis. I theorize that bureau leaders' attachment to a particular agency will help determine the strategies they wish to adopt during a crisis. On average, some agencies have leaders with long experience with the agency and smaller, tighter networks of association with other bureaus. This affects their career incentives, because it is likely that they will continue to advance within the same bureau or a small number of alternate bureaus. By contrast, other administrative agencies have leaders with career backgrounds that have little to do with the bureaus that they govern and broad, weak connections with other agencies. For these agency heads, it is not clear which agency they will be transferred to next.

The difference in career trajectories and time horizons may yield different crisis response strategies. Theoretically, longer-tenured officials in the same bureau may possess a better sense of an organization's culture, internal procedures, and technical capabilities (Carpenter, 2001: 26). They could have a keen sense of organizational mission and tie their chances of promotion to distinct political achievements (政绩) by their agency. Leaders with little experience at the bureau may naturally have short time horizons, which hamper long-term planning. The volatility within the agency also may demoralize the staff and lead to a permanent leadership vacuum (Lewis, 2010: 144-145). Lacking site-specific knowledge, agency heads with outside experience might be uncertain about how to formulate a response. If leaders' work experience is also fragmented among a number of different agencies or general management experience as a party secretary or government chief executive, then there are weaker ties between the bureau and other agencies. In the high-stakes, fast-paced world of crisis management, there is little time for leaders to learn on the job and solve deficiencies.

For those steeped in the politics of U.S. political appointees to administrative agencies, all of this will sound strangely familiar. Politicized agencies where agency heads have short tenure or little experience with the bureau often encounter more difficulties, exemplified by the inexperience of Michael Brown and FEMA's bungled response to Hurricane Katrina (Lewis, 2010: Chapter 6). The obvious difference between the United States and China, how-

ever, is the dominance of the organization department in making personnel appointments for leading officials in China. There is not the same "exit" option for career bureaucrats, who feel crowded out by political appointees and thus leave the public sector.

To determine which agencies have the greatest turnover and weakest networks, I gathered data on the career backgrounds for all provincial bureau heads since the 17th Communist Party Congress. The personnel changes before 17th Party Congress in 2007 are not considered, because local emergency management offices were not fully established until 2006-2007 thus removing the key node of authority in China's crisis response network. The dataset was put together from authoritative lists of provincial agency heads in annual administrative yearbooks and biographies were pulled from official government websites and Baidu Baike, a Chinese language web portal similar to Wikipedia, which has the most extensive set of biographies on Chinese personalities available. In recent years, Baidu has started to "lock" the biographies of most government officials making it impossible for the average website user to edit.

Whereas existing biographic datasets on China focuses either on the apex of power, the Central Committee (Shih, Adolph and Liu, 2012), or local party secretaries and government chief executives (e.g., Landry, 2008), I place attention on local bureau chiefs. The provincial level is the lowest level of government in China where complete biographic information is available for most administrative agency personnel. For agencies below the provincial level, there is spotty coverage in the biographies of personnel besides the party secretary, government chief executive, and (some) members of the leadership squad (领导班子). Table 4.5 shows the average length as well as the top five agencies where agency heads have work experience. Generalist refers to a position as the party secretary or government chief executive of a county or municipality.

It is important to reiterate that the focus here is at the provincial level, not on the central-level bureaucracy. At the center, heads of ministries and central agencies are unique because

most are also Central Committee members and their career backgrounds have little relationship to the bureaus that they govern. Central-level divisional managers, on the other hand, are suspected to have spent most of their career in the central-level bureaucracy. Both of these qualities are not found in provincial level bureaus. At the provincial level, the ratio of careerists and general managers fluctuates between different bureaus, not between administrative ranks. As shown in Table 4.5, careerists dominate bureaus such as public security where agency leaders have almost exclusive backgrounds at local public security bureaus throughout a single province. Other bureaus such as civil affairs have leaders with shorter tenures and experience spread out between a number of different bureaus.

Correlations between agency directors are extremely weak. Apart from some exchange between the culture, commerce, and propaganda chiefs as well as the justice, public security, and political and legal affairs directors, few other bureau directors rotate within or outside their bureaucratic system (系统).

Table 4.3: Background of Provincial Agency Heads

| Bureau | N | Tenure | Generalists | Network Ties - 1 | % | Network Ties – 2 | % | Network Ties – 3 | % | Network Ties – 4 | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Commerce** | 84 | 3.88 | 15% | General Office | 34% | Trade | 27% | Communist Youth League | 14% | Development & Reform | 11% |
| **Ethnic Affairs** | 69 | 4.96 | 47% | Organization Dept | 15% | General Office | 15% | Propaganda | 13% | Discipline & Inspection | 9% |
| **Tourism** | 68 | 5.04 | 26% | General Office | 33% | Propaganda | 19% | Development & Reform | 15% | Organization Dept | 15% |
| **SASAC** | 69 | 5.21 | 26% | Development & Reform | 26% | General Office | 26% | SOE-Energy | 22% | Industry & Information | 22% |
| **Civil Affairs** | 73 | 5.24 | 48% | General Office | 33% | Discipline & Inspection | 9% | Organization Dept | 9% | Communist Youth League | 9% |
| **Work Safety** | 71 | 5.31 | 31% | Organization Dept | 23% | General Office | 23% | SOE-Energy | 23% | Discipline & Inspection | 12% |
| **Culture** | 72 | 5.91 | 16% | Propaganda | 72% | General Office | 20% | Education | 16% | Communist Youth League | 16% |
| **Forestry** | 74 | 5.92 | 48% | General Office | 37% | Organization Dept | 15% | Communist Youth League | 11% | Agriculture | 7% |
| **Justice** | 78 | 6.2 | 17% | Political-Legal Affairs | 35% | Public Security | 28% | General Office | 22% | Discipline & Inspection | 17% |
| **Science & Technology** | 70 | 6.52 | 23% | General Office | 17% | University Administrator | 14% | CASS | 11% | Education | 8% |
| **Economics & Information** | 77 | 6.57 | 45% | General Office | 45% | Development & Reform | 25% | Organization Department | 13% | SOEs-Energy | 13% |
| **Land Resources** | 71 | 6.81 | 41% | General Office | 24% | Agriculture | 10% | Organization Department | 9% | Mining | 9% |
| **Propaganda** | 81 | 7.03 | 54% | General Office | 32% | Communist Youth League | 13% | Media Agency | 8% | Communist Party School | 8% |
| **Education** | 69 | 7.11 | 14% | University Administrator | 71% | Science & Technology | 15% | Organization Department | 12% | Propaganda | 3% |
| **Environmental Protection** | 50 | 7.48 | 33% | General Office | 20% | Development & Reform | 11% | Communist Youth League | 9% | Organization Department | 9% |
| **Discipline & Inspection** | 75 | 7.83 | 47% | Organization Dept | 29% | General Office | 29% | Political-Legal Affairs | 15% | Propaganda | 11% |
| **Human Resources** | 70 | 8.08 | 23% | Organization Dept | 36% | General Office | 19% | Discipline & Inspection | 6% | Propaganda | 6% |
| **Organization Department** | 87 | 8.1 | 47% | General Office | 47% | Communist Youth League | 23% | Propaganda | 16% | Politica-Legal Affairs | 13% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Agriculture** | 69 | 8.16 | 45% | Organization Dept | 16% | General Office | 16% | Forestry | 5% | Water Resources | 5% |
| **Transportation** | 78 | 8.47 | 28% | General Office | 19% | Development & Reform | 13% | Construction | 9% | SOE-Construction | 6% |
| **Development & Reform** | 82 | 8.66 | 53% | General Office | 35% | General Office | 19% | Industry & Information | 19% | Communist Youth League | 9% |
| **Political-Legal Affairs** | 71 | 8.7 | 48% | General Office | 42% | Public Security | 42% | Discipline & Inspection | 19% | Organization Dept | 16% |
| **Housing & Construction** | 69 | 9.32 | 26% | General Office | 15% | Development & Reform | 11% | Transportation | 6% | CASS | 6% |
| **Water Resources** | 64 | 10.71 | 33% | General Office | 11% | Human Resources | 9% | Development & Reform | 7% | Construction | 7% |
| **Public Health** | 75 | 11 | 39% | General Office | 39% | Hospital Administrator | 21% | Organization Department | 11% | Tourism | 11% |
| **Finance** | 70 | 12.16 | 11% | General Office | 16% | Local Tax Office | 16% | Generalist | 11% | Transportation | 6% |
| **State Security** | 65 | 12.42 | 3% | Public Security | 32% | Political-Legal Affairs | 16% | General Office | 6% | Propaganda | 3% |
| **Public Security** | 75 | 13.35 | 36% | Political-Legal Affairs | 22% | General Office | 19% | Procuratorate | 8% | Organization Dept | 5% |
| **People's Armed Police** | 87 | 25 | 0% | Public Security | 2% | Political-Legal Affairs | 2% | n/a | … | n/a | … |

## 4.4 Data and Analysis

These descriptive accounts provide possible ways bureaus vary in capacity and expertise, but measuring the magnitude of differences across stakeholders in a comprehensive way is more difficult. I identify structural features, budgetary capacity, and biographies of agency heads in 39 current government and communist party organizations. The list of core agencies was drawn from a comprehensive list of more than 200 bureaucratic agencies and organizations at the local level.[15] There exists little public information for many of the smaller offices like the performance standards and evaluations office (考核办) or government liaison offices to Beijing (政府驻北京办事处). In order to narrow the list to core agencies with a suitable amount of available data, I compare agencies listed on provincial government websites, the 2009 version of *Local Government Public Finance Statistical Materials* (《2009 年地方财政统计资料》), and the name list of bureau heads and posts in annual provincial yearbooks. In total, my dataset includes eight communist party organizations and 31 government line agencies.

For each organization, I measure across two dimensions, capacity and expertise. In order to judge capacity, I created an index of six variables, including whether the agency could set

[15] Central Organization Department (中央组织部). 2014.《全国公务员管理信息系统信息采集、报送标准》(National Civi Service Information Management System, Collection and Reporting Standards). Government Document.

threshold levels for imperative targets, whether the organization could make personnel or financing decisions for other bureaus, the popularity of a bureau in civil service exams, car and banquet spending per employee, and whether the agency was under the direct control of a higher-level functional organization due to "vertical administration"(垂直管理). To measure expertise, I use both the number of generalists in a bureau and the average length of tenure for bureau heads with the organization.

Table 4.4: Bureaucratic Influence Index

**Bureaucratic Influence Index**

***ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY***

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DISCIPLINARY POWER** | Imperative Targets | Binary | Does the agency have veto authority in the target responsibility system? |
| **PERSONNEL & FINANCIAL RESOURCES** | Personnel Authority | Binary | Does the agency set personnel quotas (编制) or budgetary decisions for any other administrative agency? |
| | Revenue Generation | Binary | Does the agency have the ability to generate off-budget revenue through fines, fees, or another mechanism? |
| | Slack Resources | Continuous | What is the ratio of automobile and banquet spending per employee? **(Measure is only from Yulin, Shaanxi) |
| **REPUTATION RESOURCES** | Bureau Popularity | Continuous | How many page views per post did the agency receive on Tianya.cn cadre exchange forum? |
| **NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS** | Vertical Administration | Binary | Is the agency subjected to vertical administration (垂直管理), thus reducing the number of political principals? |

***POLITICAL DIFFERENTIATION***

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CAREER STABILITY** | Agency Careerists | Continuous | What is average tenure of provincial agency leaders in the bureau? |
| **POLITICAL STABILITY** | Generalists | Proportion | What is the proportion of provincial bureau heads with experience as Party Secretary, Chief Executive, or Security General? |

## Exploratory Analysis

In view of the large amount of uncertainty with many of these measures, I forgo cutting-edge methodological approaches such as Bayesian latent variable analysis, which comparative scholars have used to study bureaucratic capacity in the United States (Selin, 2015; Arel-Bundock, Atkinson and Potter, 2015) and Brazil (Bersch, Praça and Taylor, 2016). Instead, I use an averaged, unweighted index after normalizing each indicator on a 0-1 scale. For example, the scores reputation resources and slack resources were normalized on a 0 to 1 scale and then added to disciplinary power, reputation resources, and number of principals. I then created an indicator using the top ten bureaus ranking in the index. The most influential agencies are communist party organizations: the organization department, central and discipline inspection commission, political and legal affairs commission, and propaganda tops the ranking.

## Alternative Analysis

As an alternative analysis, I conduct standard principal component analysis (PCA) to discover possible correlations between variables. PCA is widely used to transform a large number of correlated variables — such as our indicators of capacity and expertise — into "composite variables," known as principal components (Pan and Xu, 2015: 14). Each of the principal components depict a particular dimension of bureaucratic influence. For this dataset, PCA reveals that car and banquet spending is highly correlated with disciplinary power, and those bureaus with personnel power tend to be highly correlated with director tenure. Figure 4.6 plots each bureau along the two most informative dimensions, explaining 33.1 percent and 17.5 percent of the total variance. The visual depiction largely confirms the additive index findings with a clustering of influential bureaus diagonally across from greasy, albeit low capacity agencies. In terms of generalists and technocrats, we find large differ-

ences between those in finance, security, or public goods provision (e.g., water resources, environmental protection, education) and civil affairs, propaganda, and ethnic affairs.

While PCA scores could be used directly as measures for bureaucratic influence (cf. Arel-Bundock, Atkinson and Potter, 2015), there are a number of reasons to suspect that these findings may be highly unstable. First, PCA performs case-wise deletion of observations for missing data, meaning that entire bureaucratic units have been deleted from our analysis. The small number of observations and nature of "missingness" (i.e., not random) makes standard imputation techniques like out of sample prediction inappropriate. Moreover, PCA is designed to find a low dimensional subspace in a high degree of complexity (Pan and Xu, 2015: 15). Although the minimum number of observations for PCA is vigorously debated (e.g., MacCallum et al., 1999), eight items with 39 observations would appear to fall well below all standard recommendations.

In short, the PCA analysis provides a partial validation of the additive index. It also provides an illuminating depiction of variation between bureaucratic stakeholders. Two findings are particularly striking: First, there is a large separation between communist party organizations such as the discipline and inspection commission and organization department, with most of the government line agencies. Second, security-related organizations such as the public security and state security along with public finance fall at the higher end of capacity and technical epxertise — and possibly more influential than the remainder of government line ministries.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Bureaucratic stakeholders vary in capacity and expertise. That is true in any political system. But how does a Leninist party system affect the differential influence of bureaucratic agencies in China? We have rich, qualitative fieldwork to suggest ways China's administrative agencies vary, but the extant literature is contradictory at times or incomplete. I

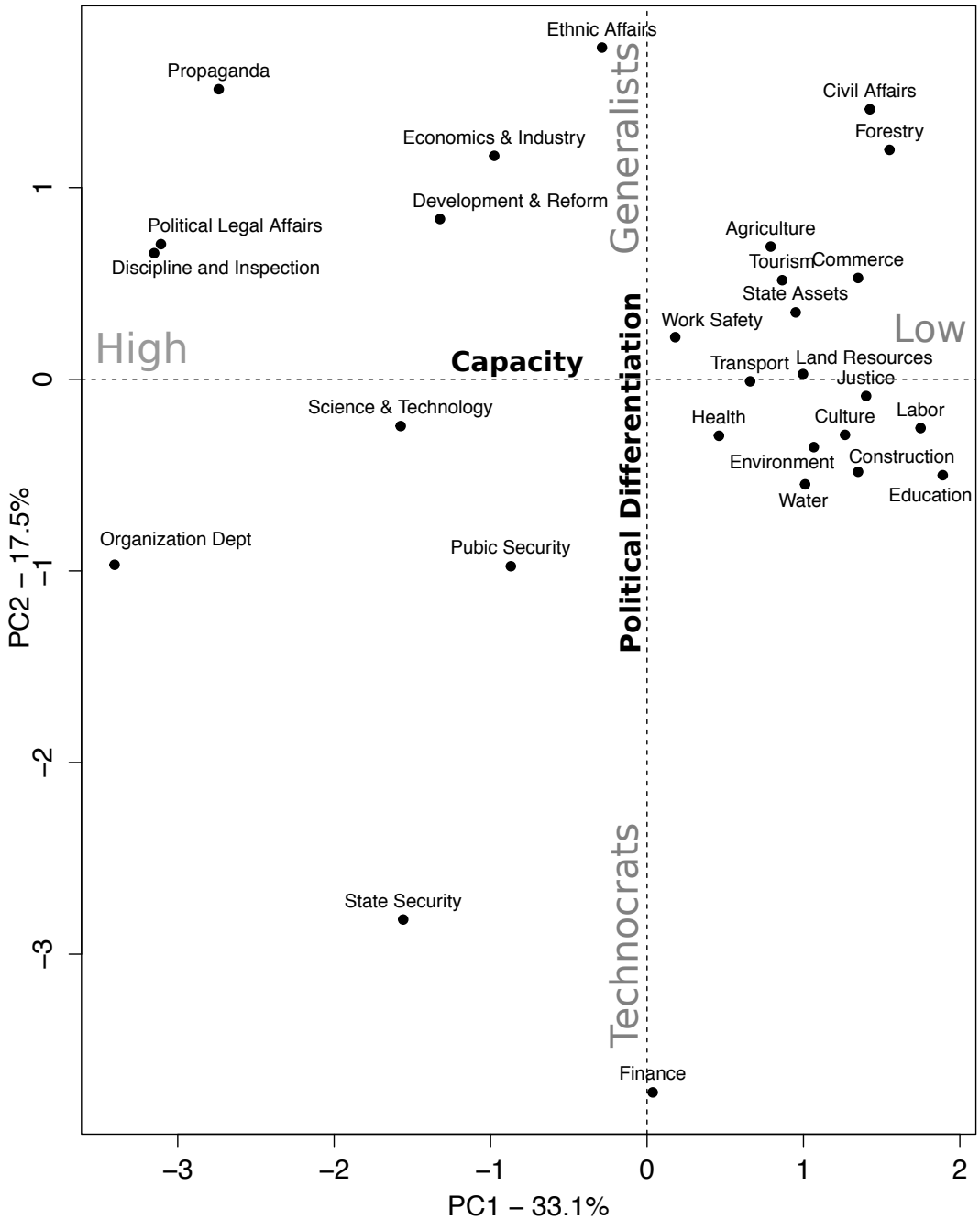


Figure 4.6: Principal Component Analysis

supplement existing qualitative explanations with theoretically-motivated and empirically-grounded measures of bureaucratic influence. Through the construction of influence index, I illustrate the structural features and sources of influence, which separate most communist party, security, and finance-related agencies from the remainder of agencies. In the next chapter, I use administrative sanctions after large-scale industrial crises as an empirical test for these effects.

## 4.A Appendix

## Table 4.5: Administrative Ranks

| Salary Guide | Rank 级别 | Party 党 | Center 中央 | Local 地方 | | Military* 军 | Enterprises 企业、社会组织等 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1**<br>**国家级**<br>**(2-4)** | National<br>Full (正职)<br>(Deputy (副职)) | General Secretary<br>Member of the Politburo Standing Committee | State President<br>Premier<br>National People's Congress Chair<br>China Consultative People's Congress Chair | | | Central Military Commission<br>Military Regional Commands | *Includes state-owned enterprises, non-party newspapers, temples, churches, and other social organizations* |
| **4-8**<br>**省部级**<br>**(6-10)** | Ministerial<br>Full<br>(Deputy) | Provincial Party Secretary | Ministers<br>Central Gov't Office Chiefs | 22 Provincial Governors<br>4 Provincial-Level City Mayors<br>5 Autonomous Regions Chief Executives<br>Special Administrative Zones (Hong and Macau)<br>(15 Deputy Provincial Cities) | | Provincial Military Garrison Commands | 106 Central SOEs<br>(53 on Central Organization Department's Nonmenklatura) |
| **8-13**<br>**厅局级**<br>**(10-15)** | Bureau<br>Full<br>(Deputy) | Municipal Party Secretary<br>Departments and Bureau Heads | Central Government Ministries<br>Bureau Heads | Provincial-Level Bureau Heads | Mayors/Chief Executives from:<br>288 Municipal-Level Cities<br>10 Prefectures<br>30 Autonomous Prefectures<br>3 Leagues<br>(Deputy Municipal Cities) | Military Districts | Provincial-Level SOE Chiefs |
| **12-18**<br>**县处级**<br>**(14-20)** | Division<br>Full<br>(Deputy) | County Party Secretary<br>Division Heads | Central Government Ministries<br>Division Heads | Provincial-Level Division Heads<br>Municipal-Level Bureau Heads | Chief Executives from:<br>1,425 Counties<br>361 County-Level Cities<br>897 County-Level Districts<br>117 Autonomous Counties<br>49 Banners<br>3 Autonomous Banners<br>12 Agricultural Areas<br>2 Special Zones | Divisions/ Regiments | Municipal-Level SOE Chiefs |
| **16-22**<br>**乡科级**<br>**(17-24)** | Section**<br>Full<br>(Deputy) | Township Party Secretaries<br>Section Chiefs | Central Gov't Ministries<br>Section Heads | Provincial-Level Section Heads<br>Municipal –Level Division Heads<br>County-Level Bureau Heads | Chief Executives from:<br>20,401 Townships Type I (镇)<br>12,282 Townships Type II (乡)<br>7,696 Street Communities | Platoons | County-Level SOE Chiefs |
| **18-26** | Section Staff (科员级) | | | | | | |
| **19-27** | Ordinary Staff (办事员级) | | | | | | |

Sources: "The Order of China's National Administrative Ranking" 《中国国家干部的等级序列》from Lynn White's 2008 Chinese Politics Syllabus (Princeton University), *China Statistical Yearbook* (2015), and *Civil Affairs Yearbook* (2015). *Military personnel are ranked outside the official civil service administrative system. ** Group Rank (股级) is a de facto but non-official rank between Full-Section (乡科级正职) and Deputy-Section (乡科级副职) level.

Table 4.6: Appointment Mechanisms

| Cadre Type | (Intra-Party) Election | Committee Selection |
|---|---|---|
| Leading Members | (1) Party Committee:<br>Party Secretary, Deputy Party Secretary,<br>Standing Committee Members<br>(2) People's Congress/Consultative Congress:<br>Chair, Deputy Chair, Mishu General,<br>General Office Deputy Director,<br>Committees Chair and Deputy Chairs;<br>(3) Government:<br>Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Mishu General,<br>Bureau Directors;<br>(4) Justice:<br>People's Court Director, Vice Director;<br>Proc. Director, Vice Director | (1) Party Committee:<br>Party Committee Mishu General,<br>Deputy Mishu General,<br>Bureau Directors, Vice-Bureau Directors,<br>Bureau Mishu General,<br>Bureau Mishu Vice Director;<br>(2) Government:<br>Bureau Vice Directors,<br>Social Organizations Directors and Vice Directors,<br>All Division Directors;<br>(3) Justice:<br>Discipline & Inspection Secretary,<br>Deputy Secretary, Political Bureau Director;<br>People's Court Secretary, Deputy Secretary;<br>Procuratorate Secretary, Deputy Secretary.<br>(In instances for LPCs are not in session,<br>the Party Committee at the<br>next higher level can approve transfers) |
| Non-Leading Members | Judicial Organs:<br>Court Party Committees, Court Leaders, and<br>Deputy Court Leaders, Judges,<br>Procuratorate Committee Members | Inspectors and Deputy Inspectors;<br>All other leading and non-leading<br>Party and Government posts<br>(not including judicial and legal organs) |

Table 4.7: Zhejiang Social Stability Evaluation Standards

**2013 Zhejiang "Peace" City and County Examination & Evaluation Standards**

| Imperative Target | Indicators | Responsible Bureau |
|---|---|---|
| **National Security Incident** | A terrorist attack within provincial boundaries, or a local organized attack. Any terrorist activity, which causes a credible threat to national security. | Public Security<br>Homeland Security (国土安全厅)** |
| | Discovery of espionage against national workforce or other activities by foreign enemy forces; Very severe leak or stolen documents causing great loss to national interests | State Security, Public Security, Deputy: State Secrets |
| | Large-scale illegal protest or activity caused by foreign enemy forces, organized cults, religious extremist plots. Any other dangerous national security incident causing severe political consequences | Social Stability Office, State Security, Public Security<br>Deputies: 610 Office, Ethnic Affairs, Foreign Affairs |
| | Severe demonstration which obstructs rail lines or rail transport, freeways, national roads, or national transport for more than two hours | Railways Office, Public Security<br>Deputies: Social Stability Office, People's Armed Police, Transport |
| **Social Stability Incident** | Demonstrators attack or besiege government offices causing a negative impact on a mass incident. | Public Security<br>Deputies: Social Stability Office, Petitioning Bureau, People's Armed Police |
| | Mass incidents involving smashing, looting, or arson, which causes injury, death, or economic losses. | Public Security<br>Deputies: Social Stability Office, Petitioning Bureau, People's Armed Police |
| | More than 10 "abnormal" petitioners repeatedly attempt to reach Beijing or more than 100 collective petitioners reach the provincial level, petition during large-scale national events, petition outside petitioning bureaus or public security bureaus during "sensitive periods," or display "abnormal" behavior which could cause immediate danger. | Petitioning Bureau, Public Security |
| **Criminal Incidents** | Criminal incident impacts a nursery, elementary, or middle school; More than five people die in a single incident or more than 3 people in two separate incidents; More than three people are involved in a campus security incident; financial theft, which impacts the entire country. | Public Security, Education Bureau |
| | A social order disturbance outside of the local office of the Central Comprehensive Management for Social Order Committee | Comprehensive Management Office |
| **Economic Order Incident** | Incident adversely affects economic order, which causes central-level ministries or offices to investigate | Development and Reform, Commerce, Financial Affairs Office, Public Security |
| | Fraudulent products causes serious brand reputation loss or loss in consumer confidence after three die or more than five are injured | Industry and Commerce, Quality Examination and Inspection, Food Safety<br>Deputy: Public Security |
| **Industrial Accident** | One industrial accident above the Level II threshold; or two accidents within the same industry above Level III | Work Safety<br>Deputy: Public Security |
| | Mass incident causes an industrial accident causing at least one death or three injuries | Public Security |
| **Public Safety Incident** | Food safety accident or poisoning causing a very severe consequence above the Level III threshold | Food Safety, Quality Examination and Inspection, Work Safety<br>Deputies: Public Health, Agriculture, Public Safety |
| | Environmental safety accident above the Level III threshold | Environmental Protection<br>Deputies: Work Safety, Public Security |

** This is an unknown bureaucratic agency. No other information is available about its organizational structure or mission.
Source: 《2013 年度浙江省平安市、县（市、区）考核评审条件》 as cited in 钟伟军. 2014.《稳定的逻辑:一个县级政府的社会管理样本》 杭州：浙江大学出版社, pg. 143-144.

# 5 *Bureaucratic Influence and Accountability Following Industrial Crises*

In this chapter, I explore the link between bureaucratic influence and accountability following large-scale industrial accidents in China. While the previous chapter was primarily inductive and exploratory of different ways capacity and expertise varies between agencies, this chapter assesses the hypothesis that officials with posts in influential bureaus distort the accountability system following industrial crises. Not only can they exert outsized influence on the investigatory process, but they also are better equipped to shield themselves from the harshest administrative penalties.

Scholars simultaneously use China's industrial safety record as a litmus test for either successful crisis management policies (e.g., Wang, 2006) or regulatory incompetence and inertia (e.g., Pei, 2006). Official government statistics reveal a striking reduction in the number of fatal industrial accidents annually from 2000 to 2015, but three of most fatal accidents during the same period of time occurred in 2015 alone. In this chapter, I question the conventional wisdom of administrative reforms to the accountability system following industrial crises as either uniformly rational or entirely unsuccessful. Rather, I argue that the new rules governing accountability following crises matter. A sizable number of officials will receive formal sanctioning, regardless of their rank or post. Officials in influential bureaucratic units, however, hold an "organizational advantage" and reward themselves with

milder penalties.

In order to investigate the extent to which rules matter in the accountability process, I draw upon a list of disciplinary actions for 2,508 officials contained in an unique dataset of accident investigation reports obtained during fieldwork and from government websites. The 104 investigation reports cover approximately 78 percent of all the "extremely severe" accidents — more than 30 fatalities in a single incident —- in China since 2000. According to my theoretical predictions, disciplinary action should be rule-based, that is, significantly correlated with the number of fatalities and whether officials engaged in a cover-up or not. At the same time, officials in influential bureaus should receive lighter punishments. I test these arguments using a series of generalized linear models. I also examine a number of alternative hypotheses as well, including whether simply the "top leader" or the communist party secretary is the only one spared from the harshest sanctioning.

To preview the results, new rules in China's emergency management appear to matter. Officials receive harsher penalties following an attempted cover-up, for example. On the other hand, bureaucrats in influential organizations systematically receive milder punishments following an accident. This is true even when controlling for the number of fatalities, the rank of the official, and even the individual incident.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the historical context of the accountability process for industrial accidents in China. I then describe the institutional design for disciplinary action following industrial crises and theorize about potential avenues of political obstruction to the impartiality of the investigatory process. Finally, I empirically test these propositions through statistical analysis and conclude.

## 5.1 Historical context and signifcance

For much of the early reform period, personal interests and elite conflict largely characterized the accountability process following industrial accidents and other emergent events.

Chinese communist party scholars trace the origins of the accountability system for "sudden incidents" to the 1979 Bohai Number 2 Oil Rig disaster (Dalian Municipal Communist Party School, 2013). The capsizing of the rig caused 74 workers on board to lose their lives after responders lacked the basic training and equipment needed to rescue the men. Following the incident, *The Worker's Daily* objected to the official line that the accident was an "unprecedented incident" and argued that leaders had consistently failed to take work safety as a serious issue (*Gongren Ribao* 1979). In the accident's aftermath, two leading members of the so-called "Petroleum Clique," Vice Premier Kang Shi'en and Minister of Petroleum Song Zhengming, received official reprimands. Song also lost his ministerial position and Party membership. Astute observers, however, viewed these official reprimands as simply reflecting conflict at the top of China's political system. As Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988: 47) write, the Bohai accident helped erode the influence of Kang's patron, Yu Qiuli, in the "Petroleum Clique," thus allowing Li Peng to dominate China's energy sector.

Although there was a general notion of "whoever is in charge is ultimately responsible" (谁主管、谁责任), much of the logic behind the application of administrative penalties following sudden incidents during the 1980s was based on informal networks and factional politics. Following 1986 student demonstrations, Guan Weiyan and Fang Lizhi, president and vice-president of the Science and Technology University of Hefei, both lost their positions and party memberships for allowing the protests to flourish. The ministers of forestry and railways as well as the head of the Civil Aviation Administration were all dismissed from their posts following a series of accidents and scandals in 1987 and 1988. The trend continued in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, when Premier Zhao Ziyang; Politburo members Hu Qili and Yan Mingfu; and a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, Rui Xingwen; among others were all purged and stripped of their positions.

As described in Chapter 3, the capricious nature of the accountability system began to change in the 1990s. At the time, the communist party's perception was that economic

reforms and globalization were transforming Chinese society in possibly destabilizing ways (Xue Lan, Zhang Qiang and Zhong Kaibin, 2003). Communist leaders saw a potential threat to their rule from technological, economic, and social changes occurring at the grassroots level. In response, they designated new "imperative targets" (一票否决) in China's personnel system to prioritize social stability, work safety, and most recently environmental protection. The new arrangements were designed to incentivize local officials as part of the target responsibility system noted throughout this dissertation.

Historically, the first imperative target to be added to the leading cadre evaluations was for population control in 1982. At the time, administrators in Changde, Hunan were distressed by their continual failure to meet family planning targets and designed a system. By 1988, local governments across the country caught on and the objective became a defining feature of the target responsibility system. Social stability –- the nation's second imperative target — was a top-down initiative after the establishment of National Comprehensive Management Committee for Social Order in 1991. At the time, the Social Order Committee sent a clear message to include the target but was not entirely lucid about the specific indicators to use to measure performance. In practice, this meant a broad and nonstandard view of "stability," where local governments developed ad hoc measures in an attempt to stop protest and dissent.

Local governments have been expanding the number of imperative targets in annual individual leading cadre contracts. Since the early 2000s, most localities have added industrial safety as an imperative target and pegged the trigger for a "yellow card," which acts as a warning, to all accidents above the "routine" (Level IV) threshold level and veto target violations to accidents above the "rather severe" (Level III) threshold level. Table 5.1 details the indicators used for both imperative targets and responsibility within the administrative hierarchy.

## 5.2 Investigations and Penalties following Industrial Accidents

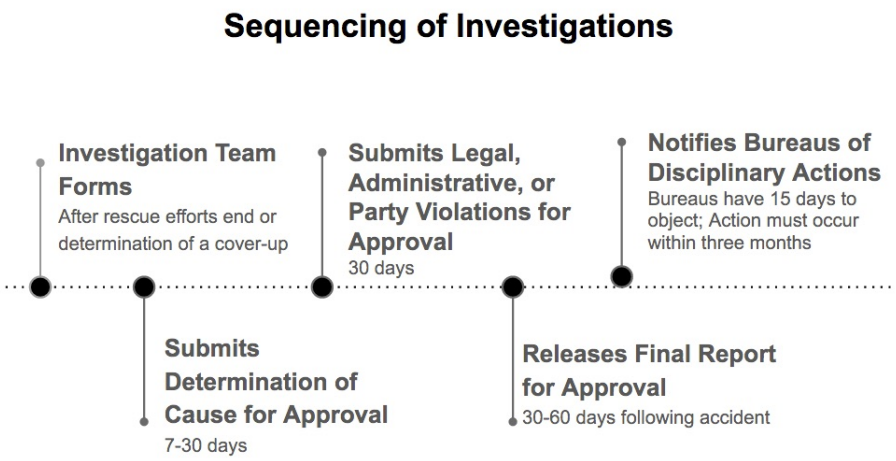


Figure 5.1: Sequencing of Investigations

Accidents and violations of imperative targets from industrial accidents are supposed to be reported up through the administrative hierarchy, depending on the number of fatalities and losses. In an effort to curb local protectionism, the State Council directly investigates extremely severe accidents (Level I), with local governments responsible for investigating other large and more routine accidents. Upon receiving the report, the work safety bureau at the appropriate administrative level should immediately launch an investigation and dispatch at least two investigators to the scene of the accident. For Level I accidents, the number of principal investigators generally exceeds 25 with a support staff numbering in the hundreds. The composition of investigators will theoretically vary with the need for technical expertise, but there is a core group of bureaus that are almost always represented: the communist party general office, government general office, discipline and inspection commission, organization department, work safety bureau, and public security bureau. The investigation team is tasked with sealing off the accident scene, collecting evidence, and

conducting preliminary interviews to determine factors contributing to the accident and criminal and administrative culpability.

For most types of accidents, investigators have between seven and 15 days to determine the direct and indirect causes of the accident.[1] Investigators will issue opinions as to whether the accident was the result of human negligence or a combination of environmental, material, or mechanical factors. They also will determine any technical or design flaws, inadequate contingency planning, safety training, or labor conditions contributing to the accident. Finally, after recovery efforts end or they provide verification of a cover-up, they have between 30 and 60 days to submit their report to local party committees. Upon approval, the report is supposed to be made public and agencies and companies have 15 days to object to the findings or begin to carry out the disciplinary actions listed in the report.

In order to provide a window into this review process, I provide an example of comments written by provincial-level officials on the cover page of a 2010 State Council Work Safety Investigation Notice. The notice includes two investigation reports of coal mine accidents in Puding county, Guizhou and Dazhou, Sichuan as attachments. Although the fatalities in both accidents fell below the Level I threshold, the State Council directly investigated these accidents due to extenuating circumstances. Local officials attempted to cover up the deaths of all 12 miners killed in accident in Puding county, whereas officials in Dazhou attempted to conceal the illegal mining activities leading to the deaths of eight miners. The following is a translation of written comments in one provincial government general office:

- September 11, 2010. "This file is to be submitted to Deputy Provincial Governors L and J for review" – (Name Illegible)
- November 8, 2010. "A request for review to the Secretary General S and Deputy Provincial Governor J" – Secretary Z

[1](生产安全事故报告和调查处理条例, Art. 32)This can be extended to 30 days under extenuating circumstances

- November 10, 2010. "Coal Production Bureau and Work Safety Bureau: Please collaborate and research. Make sure our safety concerns are heard and understood in the solution of this coal mine accident" – Secretary General S
- November 11, 2010. "File reviewed and approved." – Deputy Provincial Governor J

For work safety accidents, investigators can recommend criminal punishments for negligence that resulted in death or severe injury. Under the Severe Labor Safety Accidents Law (重大劳动安全事故罪), criminal punishments can be assessed for vaguely defined reasons such as "numerous fatalities" (致多人死亡) or "especially evil" criminal behavior (行为人的犯罪行为特别恶劣的). The work safety investigation regulations, however, provide more concrete reasons for recommending criminal prosecution: failing to organize rescue efforts; late, leaked, or false reporting,; deliberate interference in an investigation; falsification of company or government records; and the shielding of fugitives.[2] In instances where the investigation uncovers other violations of the Criminal Law (刑法) such as bribery, tax evasion, or economic crimes, investigators recommend transferring the official to the procuratorate for prosecution. In a few instances where investigators uncovered serious allegations of corruption among senior officials, such as the former Minister of Railways Liu Zhijun (刘志军) after the 2011 Wenzhou High-Speed Rail Accident, the investigators simply noted, "other serious economic irregularities" were uncovered and recommended that the discipline and inspection commission pursue the matter in a separate case.[3]

In addition to determining criminal culpability, the investigators decide on administrative and party disciplinary actions for officials working in party, government administrative organs, and state-owned enterprises. Communist party members can and often do receive both administrative and party disciplinary actions. Penalties follow a graduated scale of severity: warning (警告), stern warning (严重警告), demerit (记过), major demerit (记大

[2] This is inline with Article 12 of the Civil Administrative Disciplinary Code.

[3] State Council. 2011. *7/23 Ningbo-Taizhou-Wenzhou Railway Extremely Severe Transport Accident Investigation Report* ("7.23" 甬温线特别重大铁路交通事故调查报告). December 25.

过), demotion (降级), dismissal from post (撤销), probationary expulsion for party members (留党察看), and expulsion from civil service and/or the communist party (开除). Moreover, industrial accident regulations stipulate that investigators can force leading officials to issue public apologies or resign from office when the committee discovers violations in party discipline or national laws during the course of the investigation.[4] Quite reasonably, any official receiving a criminal penalty will also be expelled from their government position.[5] In nearly all cases, a criminal punishment will also result in expulsion from the communist party.[6] The one exception is where an official is charged with official misconduct and negligence (玩忽职守) and sentenced to less than three years or only receives a fine. In these cases, the party committee at the next highest level will determine whether to expel the official or place the official on probationary expulsion.[7]

For each of these disciplinary actions, there are specific consequences for an official's career advancement in line with the punishment's severity. An official cannot be recommended for promotion within six months of receiving an administrative warning or one year for a stern administrative warning, party warning, or demerit. In addition to being ineligible for promotion, an official cannot receive a wage increase for a year and a half following a major demerit. More seriously, officials who have been demoted or dismissed from their position cannot receive a promotion for two years following the punishment.[8] Party members who are expelled cannot seek to rejoin for five years, but the possibility of rejoining the party following expulsion appears to be exceedingly rare in practice.

Investigators may choose to give less severe punishments called "organizational punishments" (组织处理) and general admonishments to discipline party members. Organiza-

[4]These include interfering or obstructing an accountability investigation, fabricating or concealing information from superiors, threatening, abusing, or attacking investigators, or any other violations in party discipline or national laws after the incident.

[5]行政机关公务员处分条例, 2007, Art. 17

[6]中国共产党纪律处分条例, 2015, Art. 33.

[7]中国共产党纪律处分条例, 2015, Art. 32, 33

[8]行政机关公务员处分条例, 2007, Art. 7, 8, 9. 中国共产党纪律处分条例, 2015, Art. 9, 10, 11, 12)

tional punishments include job transfers (调离岗位), public acknowledgement of wrongdoing and resignation (引咎辞职), forced resignations (责令辞职), dismissal without demotion (免职), and "organizational" demotions (降职). Similar to administrative and party disciplinary actions, organizational penalties theoretically will delay any promotion. For job transfers, the official cannot be considered for promotion for one year.[9] For resignations and dismissals, the official cannot resume the position for one year and cannot be considered for promotion for two years. The least severe punishment an official can receive is an admonishment. There is large geographic and workplace variation in the form and use of admonishments, but they generally consist of the official being called into a meeting with his or her superiors in order to be criticized and warned (约谈).[10] The official will be made to acknowledge improper conduct and write a rectification and reform plan to prevent the problem from occurring again. In a 2015 statement, the Central Discipline and Inspection Bureau said that the hope of these "discussions of admonishment and encouragement" (诫勉谈话) is to "prevent small mistakes turning into large problems."[11]

In sum, there is a clear hierarchy in the assignment of administrative penalties. First, general admonishments are the mildest form of punishment as they have no formal waiting period before a possible promotion. Second, administrative and communist party warnings and demerits carry a short waiting period. Third, a formal demotion in rank will theoretically cause a longer waiting period of two years before promotion. Fourth, a dismissal from cause the official to formally removed from his or her post, without a waiting time of two years before re-appointment. Finally, expulsion from the civil service or the communist party will likely mean the end of one's political career.

[9] 《党政领导干部选拔任用工作责任追究办法（试行》, Art. 16)

[10] Anonymous. 2015. "Monthly 'Select Replies' (Issue 7): To Answer Your Difficult Questions: What is the relationship between disciplinary punishments, organizational punishments, and discussions of admonishment and encouragement' (每月"回复选登"第 7 期为您解答: 纪律处分、组织处理、诫勉谈话是什么关系)". Central Discipline and Inspection Commission Website. October 17. Accessed online: http://www.ccdi.gov.cn/xwtt/201509/t20150916_61979.html

[11] *ibid.*

## 5.3 Potential Avenues of Political Interference

However, we cannot assume that there will be an automatic dismissal or other behavioral consequences from a violation in the criminal code, administrative regulations, party discipline, or imperative targets. Numerous administrative bodies need to investigate and agree before any sanctioning actually takes place. In particular, I theorize that three types of officials are provided advantages to interfere in the independence of any investigation: those affiliated with widely considered influential agencies, higher-ranking officials, and communist party secretaries.

First, the politicization of an investigation process can be compounded by the differential influence of bureaucratic agencies. As outlined in Chapter 4, functional vertical units, such as party organizations and government ministries, have the same bureaucratic ranking under China's fragmented political system, where institutional power is vertically fragmented or stove-piped. This complicates lines of authority and often results in a protracted, disjointed, and incremental political process (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988; Landry, 2008; Mertha, 2009). This could have key implications for bureaus to influence the disciplinary process following industrial accidents. The two general offices, discipline and inspection commission, organization department, and public security are all given a distinct advantage by almost always serving as investigators for any accident. They therefore may seek to assert their influence by protecting their own organizations during an accountability investigation. Qualitative evidence implies that officials not associated with influential bureaus feel doomed by their prospects:

> I work in [Work Safety]: the work will exhaust you, the responsibilities will suffocate you, the low benefits will kill you. We ranked last among all the government bureaus no matter if it's at meetings, events, or issuing documents. Even on the government website ranking, we are last. The leader responsible for work safety is also ranked at the bottom... Normally, if you do a good job should indicate job stability; if you do poorly and deaths are too numerous, then you

> will have to be held accountable. But regarding fatalities, it's not that we can just control the number of deaths if we want to. The factors [causing fatalities] are just too numerous. Additionally, the incidents we manage are just too many: fires, traffic accidents, construction accidents, and power surges. They euphemistically refer to this as "comprehensive management," but not a single day is easy to manage. [You] need to choose carefully! (No. 2312)

Second, higher-ranking officials maintain an advantage in any accountability investigation. By virtue of China's emergency management system, the administrative level leading investigators are determined by severity of the accident, specifically the number of fatalities. These threshold levels are determined top-down, providing a distinct advantage to high ranking cadres after an accident. Qualitative evidence provides some support for this hypothesis. One work safety bureau official writing on the Tianya.cn message board describes the effects on rank following an accident: "When an incident happens, all the responsibilities fall on the lower ranking cadres, nothing happens to the bureau director!" (No. 8110)

The third possible avenue for political interference is through local party committees. Similar to anti-corruption investigations (Manion, 2004), ultimate decisionmaking authority in work safety investigations always rests with local party committees, specifically party secretaries. Approval at every step of the way needs the consent of the party committee. In cases of extremely severe accidents (Level I), the Politburo, is rumored to make the final determination on penalties for high ranking officials. For example, in case of Meng Xuenong's second removal as Shanxi governor following the Linfen landslide, Politburo Standing Committee Member, Xi Jinping, told Li Yuanchao, then head of the Central Organization Department, that the Standing Committee would like Meng to step down his position.[12]

For the theoretical reasons outlined above, I propose to test the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis.* Bureaucratic organizations possess differential degrees of influence on the accountability process. Officials' connection to organizations with investigatory powers,

[12] 2013. '盘点"卷土重来"官员最快两月就复出' 《财新》.21 January. Accessed Online: `http://special.caixin.com/2013-01-21/100484643.html`

ample budgetary resources, and influential reputations will distort the accountability process. Specifically, the probability of a severe administrative penalty will decrease for officials in influential bureaus.

## 5.4 Data & Measurement

I test this hypothesis using an original dataset of 2,508 officials sanctioned for their roles inin 104 accidents. These data are derived from three main sources: First, I downloaded and cleaned more than 26,000 records in the public database on industrial accidents maintained by the State Administration of Work Safety since 2000.[13] The database only records basic statistics about each accident, including the date, location, number of fatalities, and type of accident for accidents crossing the "Level III Rather Severe" threshold of more than three fatalities. After removing duplicate entries and adding incidents excluded from the database but for which there are accident investigation reports available, there were 25,539 records with 134 incidents crossing the Level I (extremely severe) threshold level. Out of these 134 accidents, I was able to obtain 104 accident investigation reports in full or fragments. The State Administration for Work Safety has published 30 of these reports on its website; the remainder were obtained during fieldwork in China from 2013-2015 or from local government websites and Chinese media reports.[14]

From these reports, I recorded basic information about the accident including type, list of causes for the accident, fatalities, injuries, economic damages, location, and any information about a cover-up. Next, I recorded the names, administrative rank, work units, position(s), criminal punishment (if any), and administrative penalty for every person listed in the report. Complete information was collected on 2,508 individuals working in party, gov-

[13] State Administration of Work Safety Government Website Accident Inquiry System (国家安全生产监督管理总局政府网站事故查询系统). http://media.chinasafety.gov.cn:8090/iSystem/shigumain.jsp. Please note that the database is only searchable with Internet Explorer.

[14] The 30 reports are available at http://www.chinasafety.gov.cn/newpage/zwgk/tdsgdccl/zwgk_tdsgdccl.htm

ernment, or state-owned enterprises. In some reports, individuals were identified only by surname, no biographic information was given (e.g., work unit, position), or the disciplinary action was unclear (e.g., the report only mentioned the official received a punishment) and excluded from the final analysis. In some reports, only a fraction of the total number disciplined were named.

In view of concerns over the quality of official Chinese statistics, I examine possible biases in the dataset by aggregating fatalities by quarter over time. The graphs are presented in the appendix, but there are strong reasons to believe an under-reporting of accidents prior to September 2003. The existing research (e.g., Wright, 2004; Wang, 2006) as well as annual statistical reports by the State Administration for Work Safety both indicate that fatalities should be higher in 2000 than 2003. Particularly, it appears that smaller accidents are excluded during the 2000-2003 period. This is not particularly surprising as reporting requirements were not standardized until after emergency management reforms following the 2003 SARS crisis. For these reasons, it is not recommended to use the database to evaluate *all* accidents in China over the entire 16 year period, but the database still serves as the best authoritative source currently available to investigate the distribution and frequency of large accidents with more than three fatalities in a single accident.

## The Numbers

In this section, I investigate systematically the variation in disciplinary actions and reasons provided in the 104 accidents. In a single accident, on average, 5 officials faced criminal prosecution and 25 officials received administrative or party disciplinary action. Yet, there is sizable variation between accidents. For example, in cases such as the 2015 stampede on the Shanghai Bund, no officials were criminally prosecuted. By contrast, 51 individuals associated with the 2008 landslide in Linfen, Shanxi, which killed 277 people, were charged with criminal wrongdoing. In the report, the investigators charged that dereliction of duty

and official misconduct was uncovered at "every level of government in Shanxi."[15] As shown in Table 5.2, when I sum up the number of cases in which there was names in the report, 938 party, government, or state-owned enterprise officials were transferred to judicial organs for criminal prosecution.

In nearly half of the total number of cases, investigators charged officials with "negligently causing a serious accident." Specifically, this charge refers to Article 135 of the Criminal Law where lax safety standards failed to meet national work safety laws and regulations and led to an accident. In practice, however, it has been used against anyone involved in an accident which causes more than one death or three injuries, more than 1 million RMB in economic losses, or a "severe consequence."[16] One problem with this charge is that the standards overlap with both the official misconduct and abuse of power charges meaning that the precise nature of the crimes are often muddled.[17]

From the summary statistics alone, it is difficult to make solid conclusions about the types of crimes leading to an accident. Consider two examples. In the first case, Lu Yan (陆彦), the head of the work safety unit at a state-owned mine took the entire on-duty safety office out drinking at the time of the accident, which led to 214 deaths. This caused the initial rescue operations to be led by a drunken workforce after they made it back to the mine (Incident No. ). In another case of "official misconduct," public

There is considerable range in both the severity of administration disciplinary actions and the types of officials receiving administrative penalties. Much in line with our expectations, the most penalties fall on the work units with direct relationships with industrial safety. Public security, transport, work safety, coal production, and the deputy mayor or chief executive in charge of work safety make up 56 per cent of all administrative penalties

[15] 关于山西省襄汾县新塔矿业公司"9.8"特别重大尾矿库溃坝事故结案的通知

[16] 刘云昌. "事故调查与分析" (State Administration for Work Safety PowerPoint Presentation). Accessed Online: http://www.chinasafety.gov.cn/newpage/newfiles/1123spjz.ppt

[17] State Administration for Work Safety newsletters frequently discuss the nature of criminal charges to use during an investigation, but the official standards have considerable overlap. For example, see: 《最高人民检察院关于渎职侵权犯罪案件立案标准的规定》

received by cadres.

## Empirical Strategy

The dependent variable measures the harshness of the administrative penalty provided to an official after the accident. As stated earlier, the severity of penalty increases from verbal warnings or admonishments to expulsion from the civil service or communist party. Therefore, I recorded this hierarchy on a 7-scale ordinal range with 0 representing an admonishment to 6 representing expulsion from the civil service or communist party. As noted earlier, the 938 officials, who received criminal penalties were expelled from the civil service or communist party. These officials were coded as a 6.

Because the dependent variable is ordinal, I estimated the models using logistic regression.[18] To control for time and space heterogeneity among accidents, I also use accident-level fixed effects.

The main key explanatory variables are measured as follows:

*Bureaucratic Influence.* Comparative studies find that bureaucratic capacity and autonomy are crucial for understanding bureaucratic organization and influence both cross-nationally (Fukuyama, 2013) and within individual countries (Lewis, 2010; Bersch, Praça and Taylor, 2016; Carpenter, 2001) In the previous chapter, I construct an original index to measure bureaucratic influence at the provincial level within China. I measure 39 core government and communist party organizations on two dimensions, capacity and autonomy, to judge variation in resources and influence. In order to judge capacity, I created an index of six variables, including whether the agency could set threshold levels for imperative targets, whether the organization could make personnel or financing decisions for

[18] Due to the number of thresholds within the dependent variable and number of observations, I also estimated the models using ordinary least squares. The results are comparable. I use logistic regression for orthodoxy, because we should not assume the degree between admonishment (0) and warning (1) is the same as space between demotion (4), termination (5), and expulsion (6)

other bureaus, popularity of the bureau in civil service exams, fiscal resources per cadre, and whether the agency was under the direct control of a higher-level functional organization due to "vertical administration" (垂直管理). To measure autonomy, I look at both the number of generalists in a bureau and the average length of tenure for bureau heads with the organization to judge whether the bureau leaders have similar technical expertise. In order to measure these attributes, I collected the biographies of every head of the 39 bureaus for every province since the 17th communist party congress. I then took the average scores for each bureau. I used an averaged, unweighted index after normalizing each indicator on a 0-1 scale. I then created a binary variable for the top ten bureaus.

*Administrative Rank* measures the administrative rank of the official at the time of the investigation. Administrative rank varies from an ordinary cadre to an official at provincial or ministerial rank. To capture the ordinal nature, I code ordinary, non-leading cadres as 0 and officials with full ministerial rank (省部级正职 *shengbuji zhengzhi*) as 4.5. The measure increases by .5 increments to distinguish between deputy-level (副 *fu*) and full (正) rankings.

*Party Secretary* is an indicator variable for whether or not the official is a communist party secretary.

## Control Variables

*Company Employee* is an indicator variable for whether the person is employed by a state-owned enterprise. Yuen Yuen Ang (2012) argues that state-owned enterprise employees should not be counted as a "cadre," because SOE leaders may be managed differently. Yet, we also know that heads of both central and local state-owned companies are on central and local nomenklatura lists. An additional concern, however, is that these officials are employed with the company or a close-associate of the site of the work accident, which might make us suspect that penalties will be harsher for these officials.

*Mine Accident* is an indicator variable for whether the industrial accident was a mine

accident. Coal mining accidents might present unique opportunities for officials to conceal information about the accident. In many mining towns, there also might be a close relationship between the mine's owners and political leaders. One perspective is that because of this state-business collusion, officials involved in these incidents will receive lighter penalties. On the other hand, China's notoriously poor safety record in coal mining has been documented by both scholars (Wright, 2004; Wang, 2006) and the international media. Therefore, we might expect that investigators will want to make an example of those officials involved with in a mine accident.

*Fatalities.* In view of China's emergency management system, which ties administrative responsibilities and sanctions to the number of deaths, it is reasonable to assume that as the number of fatalities increase so will the harshness of the penalty.

*Cover-up* is an indicator variable for whether the official was involved in an accident where there was an effort to conceal information about the accident to investigators. According to official regulations, failure to report an accident, underreport fatalities, or withhold information from investigators can lead to loss of an official's position and possibly criminal prosecution. Analyzing more than thirty investigation reports involving official attempts to conceal deaths, I also find that cover-ups — or at least those uncovered by investigators — follow similar patterns. First, local governments tended to underreport deaths so that the total number of fatalities falls two threshold levels (Figure 5.2). Second, local governments need to gain support from the same types of bureaucratic agencies to assist in the cover-up. In nearly all of the cases, public security bureaus issued fraudulent death certificates, civil affairs bureaus provided fake cremation orders, transportation and railways officials transferred the victim's bodies to different cities in order to limit suspicion, hospital workers looked the other way when bodies arrived at the morgue, finance bureaus doctored the salary ledgers, and grassroots cadres with company managers sought to pay off the families of victims for their silence. For these reasons, it is reasonable to assume that people

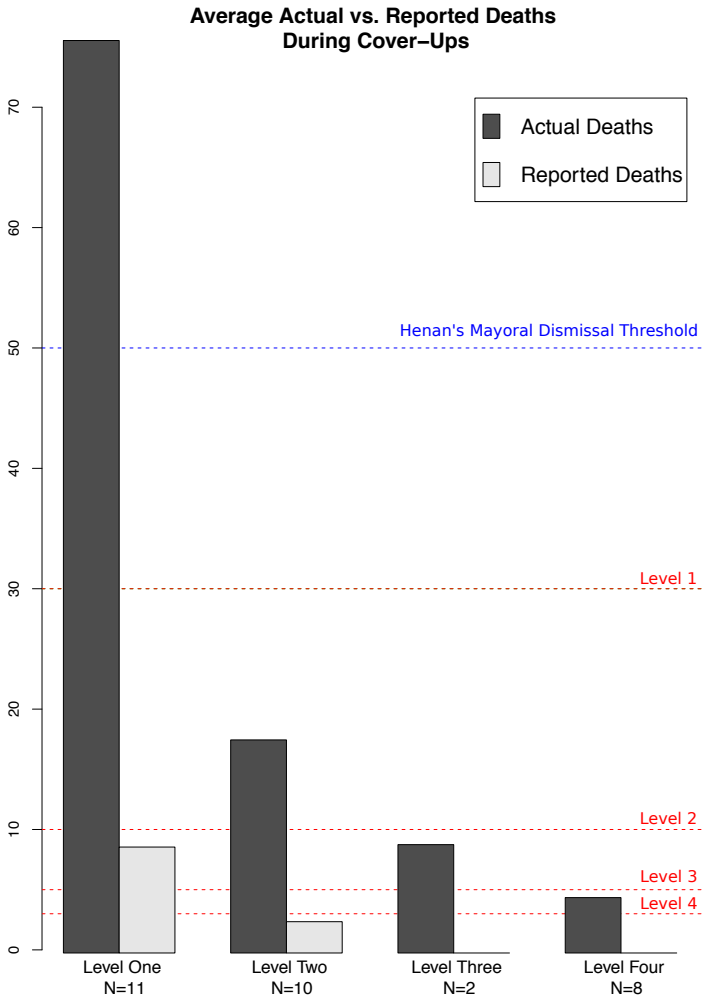


Figure 5.2: Relative Differences between Actual and Reported Death Tolls

involved in such accidents might face more severe penalties.

## 5.5 Empirical Strategy and Results

I provide regression results in Table 5.4 and 5.5. The results largely support the theoretical predictions. I begin by estimating the null hypothesis that "rules matter," by estimating the effects of the number of fatalities in an accident, whether the accident involved mining, and whether there was an attempted coverup. The results in the first model indicate that there is

support for the null hypothesis. Rules seem to matter in the sense that officials involved in a cover-up will receive harsher penalties.

Next, I estimate a parsimonious model, where the only variables included are whether the official's post is in an influential bureau, whether he or she was a party secretary, and his or her administrative rank.[19] In these models, as well as in subsequent models where I control for a number of other covariates, all of the coefficients for the independent variables of interest are negative and significant at the 0.01 level. In other words, holding a post in an influential bureau will decrease the probability of receiving a harsher penalty. This is true even when considering the rank of an official or whether he or she was a party secretary.

The coefficients for the full range of covariates are all highly significant in Table 5.5 as well. The results in the more-demanding accident-level fixed effects model suggests that the results are consistently stable as well. This bolsters our confidence that the effects of bureaucratic influence is not caused by unexplained spatial, temporal, or accident-type heterogeneity that is perhaps correlated with the severity of administrative penalties. However, normal model diagnostics of AIC and BIC scores indicates that full model with controls (model 4) is preferable.

Because it is difficult to measure the substantive effects of the ordered logit in a straightforward manner, I used Zelig to estimate the predicted probabilities of penalties based on a number of hypothetical scenarios. For the effects of being in an influential bureau, a deputy-section level official, who did not attempt cover-up, while taking the other covariates at their means, has a decreased probability of .07 of receiving a harsher punishment, all else equal. For those officials in an influential bureau at the ministerial rank, there is a larger decrease in the predicted probability in receiving a severe penalty such as expulsion or dismissal from their post.

I also conducted several robustness tests in order to more completely evaluate the validity

[19] These variables were regressed one-by-one as well on the dependent variable. The results are consistent.

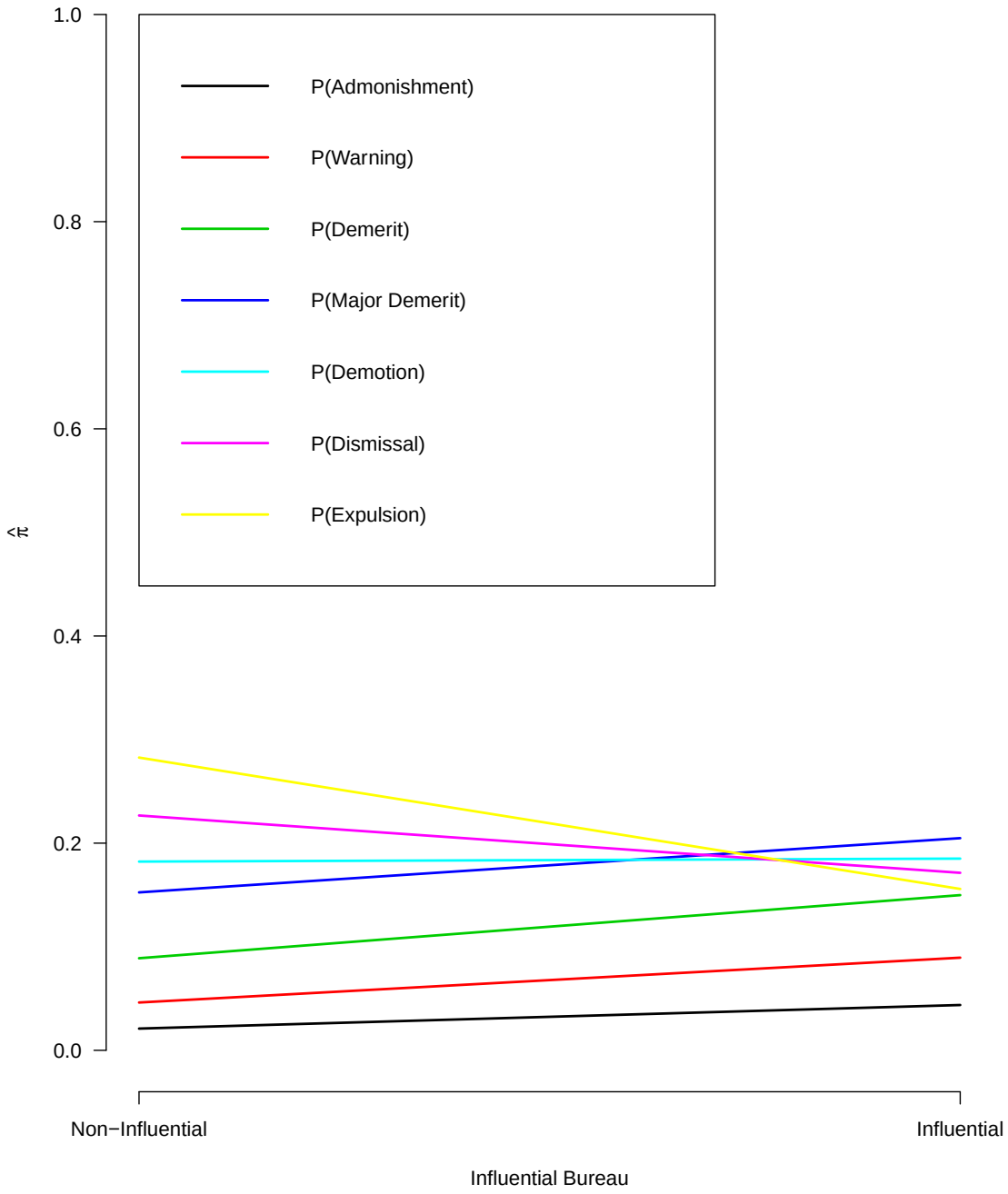


Figure 5.3: Predicted Probabilities of Bureau Influence on Administrative Penalties

of the findings. First, I use robust standard errors instead of classical standard errors to ensure that the coefficient estimates are comparable. This follows King and Roberts (2014) argument that robust standard errors may actually cover up rather than correct for model misspecification. The results yield nearly identical results.

Second, there is some debate among China scholars whether state-owned enterprise employees should be treated as "cadres" or outside the normal ranks of officials. To to be sure, managers of state-owned enterprises are on local government's nomenklatura lists –- 53 central SOEs are also on the central government's nomenklatura –- and therefore face the same constraints as any other official in the system. In order to test whether the two samples are different, I subset the pooled sample to test only government or communist party (non-SOE) officials without the "company employee" variable. My results again hold for all covariates across all thresholds of the dependent variable.

Finally, there is the possible criticism that my "bureaucratic influence index" is purposefully constructed with the intent of yielding significant results for certain bureaus. Perhaps, this is due unknowingly to confirmation bias. I attempt to mitigate this concern by using an extremely parsimonious and replicable indicator of "organizational wealth" to proxy for bureaucratic influence. I use the average banquet and car spending per official from Yulin, Shaanxi as a proxy for organizational wealth. After using the organizational wealth measure, the results are significantly strong and do not deviate from the initial findings. While these results are still supportive for the general findings, there are contextual reasons to assume "organizational wealth" is not a better measure than the full index. Most obvious, the measure is only from one locality. Moreover, the transport bureau appears as one of most wealthy bureaus, but this could reasonably be a function of programmatically having to spend more on cars than other bureaus. Therefore, there are strong reasons to suspect more measurement error in the parsimonious "organizational wealth" variable than the bureaucratic influence index as a whole.

## 5.6 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter presents a variety of evidence indicating that certain bureaus hold an organizational advantage following large-scale industrial accidents in China. An analysis of penalties given to 2,508 officials following 104 accidents indicates that new accountability institutions in the emergency management system do seem to matter, but their efficacy is distorted by different bureaucratic advantages. This is not surprising, considering the historical context outlined in Chapter 3, which afforded certain bureaus like public security with increased influence, or the variety of structural features of wealth and capacity described in Chapter 4 that afford some agencies outsized influence.

Table 5.1: Industrial Accidents Threshold Levels

| Level | Investigation Lead | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| I Extremely Severe (Imperative Target) | State Council | (1) More than 30 fatalities or 100 severely injured<br>(2) Evacuation of more than 50,000 people<br>(3) Economic losses >100 million RMB<br>(4) Threatens the extinction of protected biodiversity species<br>(5) Drinking water disruption at or above a municipal-level city<br>(6) Level I or II radiation leak with fatalities<br>(7) Losses cover a very large area |
| II Very Severe (Imperative Target) | Province | (1) Between 10 and 30 fatalities or 50-100 severely injured<br>(2) Evacuation between 10,000 and 50,000 people<br>(3) Economic losses between 20-100 million RMB<br>(4) Destroys a large portion of protected species<br>(5) Drinking water disruption at or above a county-level city<br>(6) Level I or II radiation leak with more than 10 injured<br>(7) Losses cover multiple provinces |
| III Rather Severe (Imperative Target) | Municipality | (1) Between 5-10 fatalities or 10-50 severely injured<br>(2) Evacuation of 5,000-10,000 people<br>(3) Economic losses between 5-20 million RMB<br>(4) Damages a protected area or species<br>(5) Drinking Water Disruption at the Township-Level<br>(6) Level III Radiation Leak<br>(7) Losses cover multiple cities<br>(8) Failure to follow Safety Cleanup Order results in fatal accident<br>(9) Received two yellow cards in one year<br>(10) Late, Distorted, or False Reporting |
| IV Routine (Yellow Card) | County | (1) More than three fatalities or 10 severely injured<br>(2) Less than 5,000 people evacuated<br>(3) Less than 5 million in economic losses<br>(4) Causes a routine mass incident<br>(5) Level IV or V Radiation Leak<br>(6) Any incident that fails to meet Level III threshold<br>(7) Safety Committee orders a clean up and later discovers<br>(8) Failure to achieve 80 points on annual review |

Source: Work Safety Administration Investigation Standards

Table 5.2: Criminal Penalties

| *Accusation* | *Chinese* | *Freq* | *Proportion* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Negligently Causing a Serious Accident | 事故罪 | 443 | 0.47 |
| Official Misconduct | 玩忽职守罪 | 231 | 0.25 |
| Abuse of Power | 滥用职权罪 | 66 | 0.07 |
| No Crime Specified | | 54 | 0.06 |
| Illegal Purchase of Explosive Material | 非法买卖爆炸物品罪 | 33 | 0.04 |
| False Reporting/Coverup | 不报、谎报 | 29 | 0.03 |
| Document Fraud | 伪造公司、单位印章罪 | 16 | 0.02 |
| Harboring Fugitives | 包庇罪 | 15 | 0.02 |
| Accepting Bribes | 受贿 | 15 | 0.02 |
| Illegal Mining | 非法采矿罪 | 12 | 0.01 |
| Dereliction of Duty | 渎职犯罪 | 5 | 0.01 |
| Offer Bribes | 行贿 | 4 | 0.01 |
| Tax Evasion | 偷税罪 | 3 | 0.01 |
| Money Laundering | 赃款转移 | 3 | 0.01 |
| Favoritism leading to Malpractice | 徇私枉法罪 | 2 | 0.01 |
| Illegal Production of Explosives | 非法制造爆炸物 | 2 | 0.01 |
| Counterfeiting National Documents | 伪造国家公文罪 | 1 | 0.01 |
| Arson | 放火罪 | 1 | 0.01 |
| Failure in Firefighting | 消防责任 | 1 | 0.01 |
| Concealing Documents from Authorities | 窝藏罪 | 1 | 0.01 |
| Illegally Operating a Business | 非法经营罪 | 1 | 0.01 |
| *TOTAL* | | 938 | |

Table 5.3: Administrative Disciplinary Actions

| *Penalty* | *Chinese* | *Count* |
|---|---|---|
| *Organizational Penalties and Admonishments* | | |
| Disciplined through Warning | 惩戒 | 1 |
| Job Dismissal | 解聘 | 2 |
| Organized Investigation | 组织调查 | 5 |
| Education through Criticism | 批评教育 | 10 |
| Admonishment | 诫勉谈话 | 39 |
| Forced Resignation | 出引咎辞 | 3 |
| *Subtotal* | | *60* |
| | | |
| *Administrative Penalties* | | |
| Administrative Warning | 行政警告 | 20 |
| Administrative Demerit | 行政记过 | 222 |
| Administrative Major Demerit | 行政记大过 | 329 |
| Administrative Demotion | 行政降级 | 355 |
| Administrative Termination | 行政撤职 | 418 |
| Administrative Expulsion | 行政开除 | 17 |
| Expulsion following Transfer to Legal Organs | | 938 |
| *Subtotal* | | *2,299* |
| | | |
| *Communist Party Penalties* | | |
| Party –Delayed Admission | 党内延长预备期 | 1 |
| Party Warning | 党内警告 | 93 |
| Party Stern Warning | 党内严重警告 | 598 |
| Party Termination | 撤销党内职务 | 199 |
| Party Probationary Expulsion | 党内留党察看 | 34 |
| Party Expulsion | 党内开除党籍 | 9 |
| *Subtotal* | | *934* |

Table 5.4: Baseline Logistic Models

| | *Dependent Variable:* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Penalty (Ordinal) | | |
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
| | Null | Baseline A | Baseline B |
| Mine Accident | 0.436*** | | |
| | (0.075) | | |
| Deaths(ln) | −0.001** | | |
| | (0.0005) | | |
| Cover-Up | 0.514*** | | |
| | (0.098) | | |
| Influential Bureau | | −0.889*** | −1.051*** |
| | | (0.114) | (0.119) |
| Administrative Rank | | | −0.818*** |
| | | | (0.035) |
| Party Secretary | | | −0.782** |
| | | | (0.315) |
| AIC | 8422.63 | 8437.52 | 7846.83 |
| BIC | 8475.08 | 8478.31 | 7899.28 |
| Log Likelihood | −4202.32 | −4211.76 | −3914.42 |
| Deviance | 8404.63 | 8423.52 | 7828.83 |
| Num. obs. | 2508 | 2508 | 2508 |

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

Table 5.5: Full Logistic Models

| | Penalty (Ordinal) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Model 4 | Model 5 |
| | Controls | Fixed Effects |
| Influential Bureau | −0.794*** | −0.983*** |
| | (0.124) | (0.135) |
| Administrative Rank | −0.759*** | −0.811*** |
| | (0.038) | (0.042) |
| Party Secretary | −0.779** | −1.126*** |
| | (0.317) | (0.327) |
| Company Employee | 0.462*** | 1.241*** |
| | (0.087) | (0.115) |
| Mine Accident | 0.318*** | |
| | (0.078) | |
| Deaths(ln) | −0.001** | |
| | (0.001) | |
| Cover-Up | 0.507*** | |
| | (0.102) | |
| AIC | 7762.00 | 7331.06 |
| BIC | 7837.75 | 7925.44 |
| Log Likelihood | −3868.00 | −3563.53 |
| Deviance | 7736.00 | 7127.06 |
| Num. obs. | 2508 | 2508 |
| *Note:* | | *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 |

# 5.A Appendix

Table 5.6: Deadliest Industrial Accidents and Disciplinary Actions, 2000-2015

| Type | Date | Location | Fatalities | Injuries | Crim | Adm | Cover Up |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boat | 2015 | Jianli, Hubei | 442 | 0 | 2 | 43 | No |
| Fire | 2000 | Luoyang, Henan | 300 | 34 | 31 | 26 | No |
| Landslide* | 2008 | Lifen, Shanxi | 277 | 33 | 51 | 62 | Yes |
| Explosion | 2003 | Kai, Chongqing | 243 | n/a | 6 | 165 | Yes |
| Mine | 2005 | Fuxin, Liaoning | 214 | 30 | 4 | 29 | No |
| Mine | 2005 | Qitaihe, Heilongjiang | 171 | 48 | 11 | 19 | Yes |
| Mine | 2004 | Tongchuan, Shaanxi | 166 | 45 | 9 | 15 | No |
| Explosion | 2015 | Tianjin | 165 | 798 | 48 | 123 | No |
| Mine | 2004 | Zhengzhou, Henan | 148 | 32 | 5 | 16 | No |
| Mine | 2005 | Meizhou, Guangdong | 123 | n/a | 41 | 22 | No |

Table 5.7: Summary Statistics

| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative Penalty | 2,508 | 4.358 | 1.722 | 0 | 6 |
| Influential Bureau | 2,508 | 0.096 | 0.295 | 0 | 1 |
| Bureau Wealth | 871 | 1.075 | 0.402 | 0.060 | 2.520 |
| Administrative Rank | 2,508 | 1.090 | 1.116 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Party Secretary | 2,508 | 0.017 | 0.128 | 0 | 1 |
| Company Employee | 2,508 | 0.377 | 0.485 | 0 | 1 |
| Mine Accident | 2,508 | 0.435 | 0.496 | 0 | 1 |
| Deaths | 2,508 | 80.499 | 74.916 | 30 | 442 |
| Cover-Up | 2,508 | 0.204 | 0.403 | 0 | 1 |

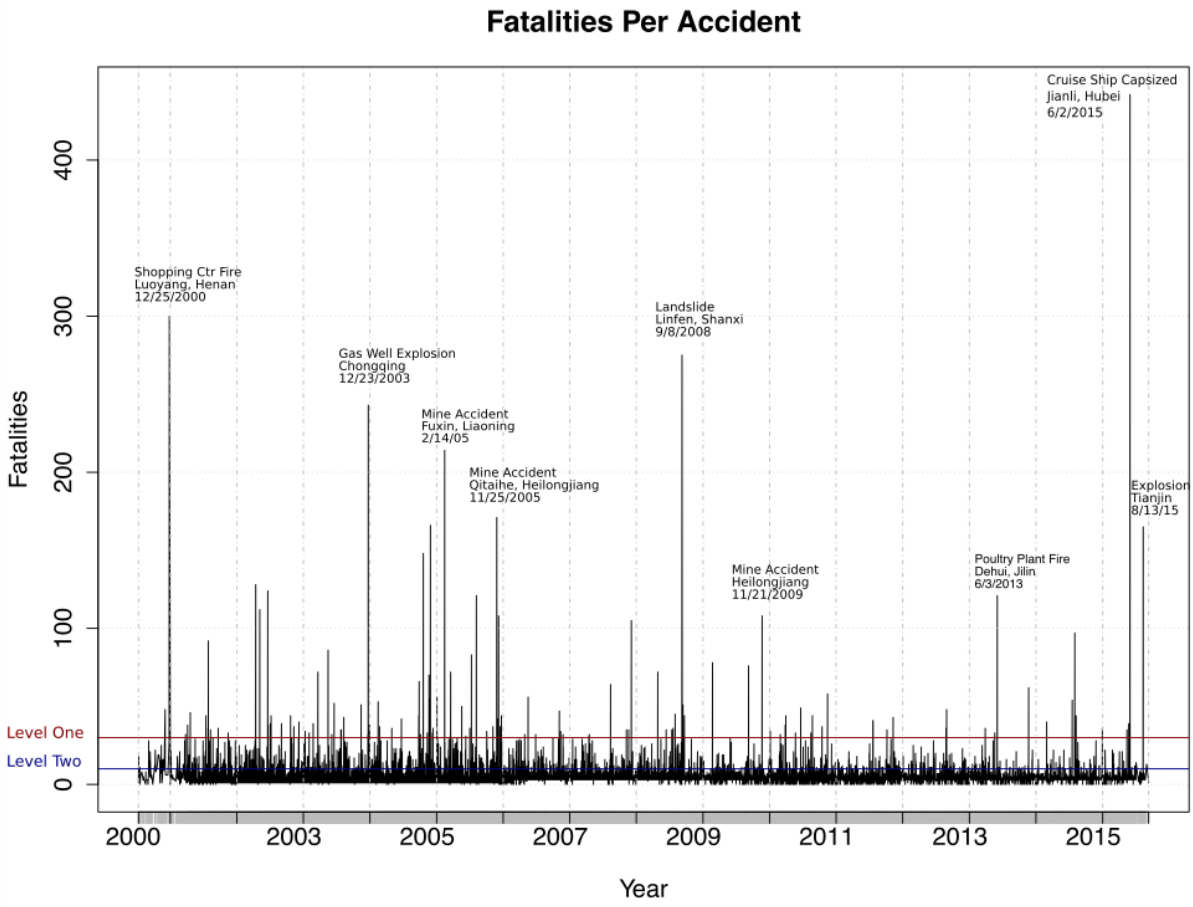


Figure 5.4: Fatalities Per Accident

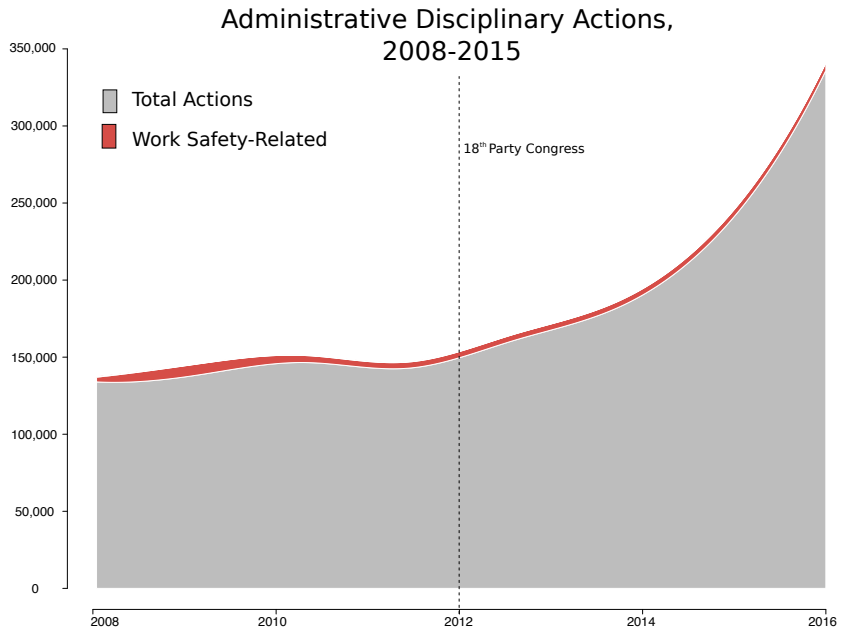


Figure 5.5: Administrative Disciplinary Actions, 2008-2015

Table 5.8: Bureaus of Disciplined Officials

| Bureau | Count | Ratio |
|---|---|---|
| Public Security | 199 | 0.14 |
| Transport | 178 | 0.12 |
| Work Safety | 177 | 0.12 |
| Coal Production | 141 | 0.10 |
| Deputy Chief Executive (e.g., Deputy Mayor) | 118 | 0.08 |
| Land Resources | 96 | 0.07 |
| Chief Executive (e.g., Mayor) | 85 | 0.06 |
| Party Secretary | 54 | 0.04 |
| Railways | 38 | 0.02 |
| Quality & Technical Examination Supervision | 37 | 0.03 |
| Economics & Information | 25 | 0.02 |
| Industry & Commerce | 25 | 0.02 |
| Construction | 23 | 0.02 |
| Environmental Protection | 20 | 0.01 |
| Customs Administration | 20 | 0.01 |
| Urban Planning | 18 | 0.01 |
| Marine Affairs | 17 | 0.01 |
| Civil Affairs | 15 | 0.01 |
| Public Health | 13 | 0.01 |
| Government General Office | 11 | 0.01 |
| Local People's Congress | 10 | 0.01 |
| Party General Office | 9 | 0.01 |
| Mining Prospecting Office | 8 | 0.01 |
| Development & Reform | 8 | 0.01 |
| Political & Legal Affairs | 8 | 0.01 |
| Civil Aviation Administration | 8 | 0.01 |

Table 5.9: Bureaus of Disciplined Officials (cont.)

| Bureau | Count | Ratio |
|---|---|---|
| Chengguan | 7 | 0.00 |
| Culture | 7 | 0.00 |
| Propaganda | 7 | 0.00 |
| Commerce | 6 | 0.00 |
| Water Resources | 6 | 0.00 |
| People's Court | 5 | 0.00 |
| Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference | 7 | 0.00 |
| Labor Resources | 5 | 0.00 |
| Oil Office | 5 | 0.00 |
| Tourism | 5 | 0.00 |
| Agricultural Bank | 4 | 0.00 |
| Discipline & Inspection Commission | 4 | 0.00 |
| Electric Board | 4 | 0.00 |
| Enterprises Office | 4 | 0.00 |
| Logistics | 4 | 0.00 |
| Organization Department | 3 | 0.00 |
| People's Armed Police | 3 | 0.00 |
| Science & Technology | 3 | 0.00 |
| Foreign Trade | 3 | 0.00 |
| United Front | 3 | 0.00 |
| SASAC | 2 | 0.00 |
| Agriculture | 1 | 0.00 |
| Archives | 1 | 0.00 |
| Artists Association | 1 | 0.00 |
| Economic Reform Commission | 1 | 0.00 |
| Forestry | 1 | 0.00 |
| Housing Administration | 1 | 0.00 |
| Justice | 1 | 0.00 |
| Labor Union | 1 | 0.00 |
| Migrants Office | 1 | 0.00 |
| Rural Affairs | 1 | 0.00 |
| Urban & Rural Development Board | 1 | 0.00 |
| Petitions & Letters Bureau | 1 | 0.00 |

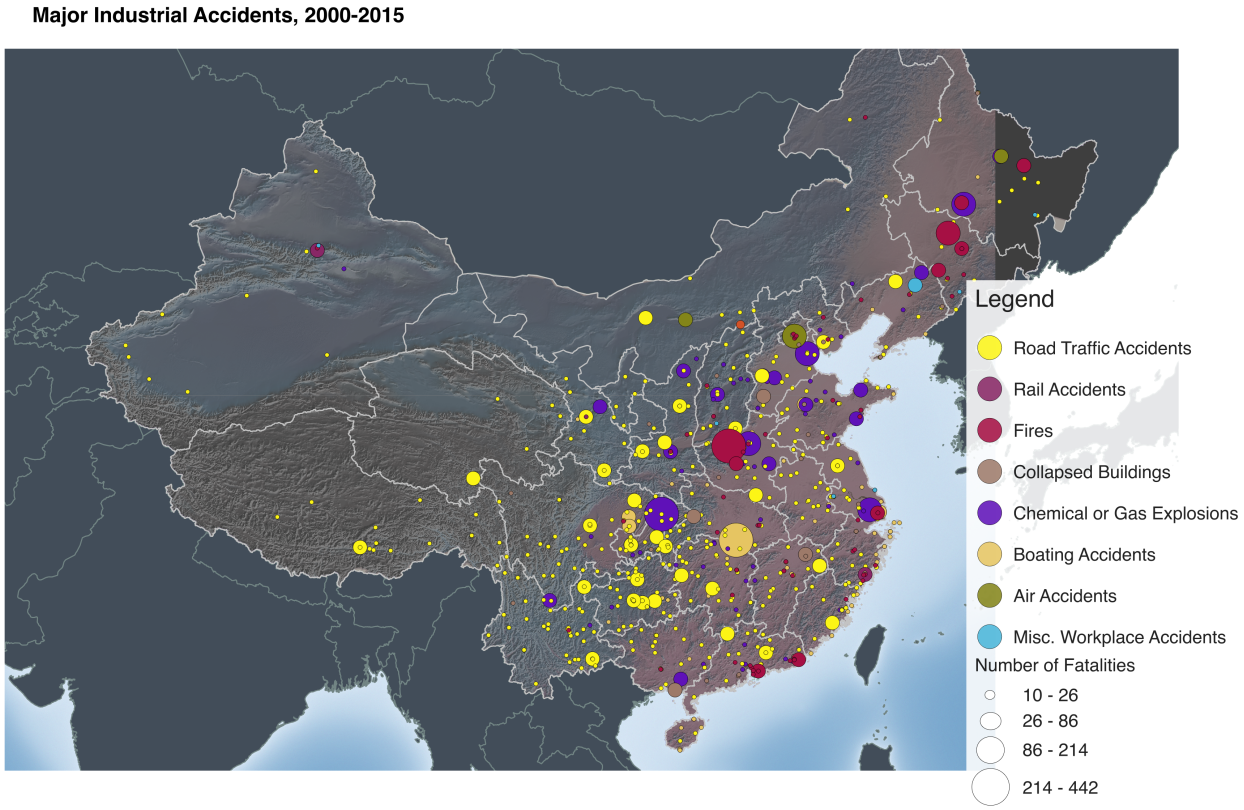


Figure 5.6: Map of Major Industrial Accidents, 2000-2015

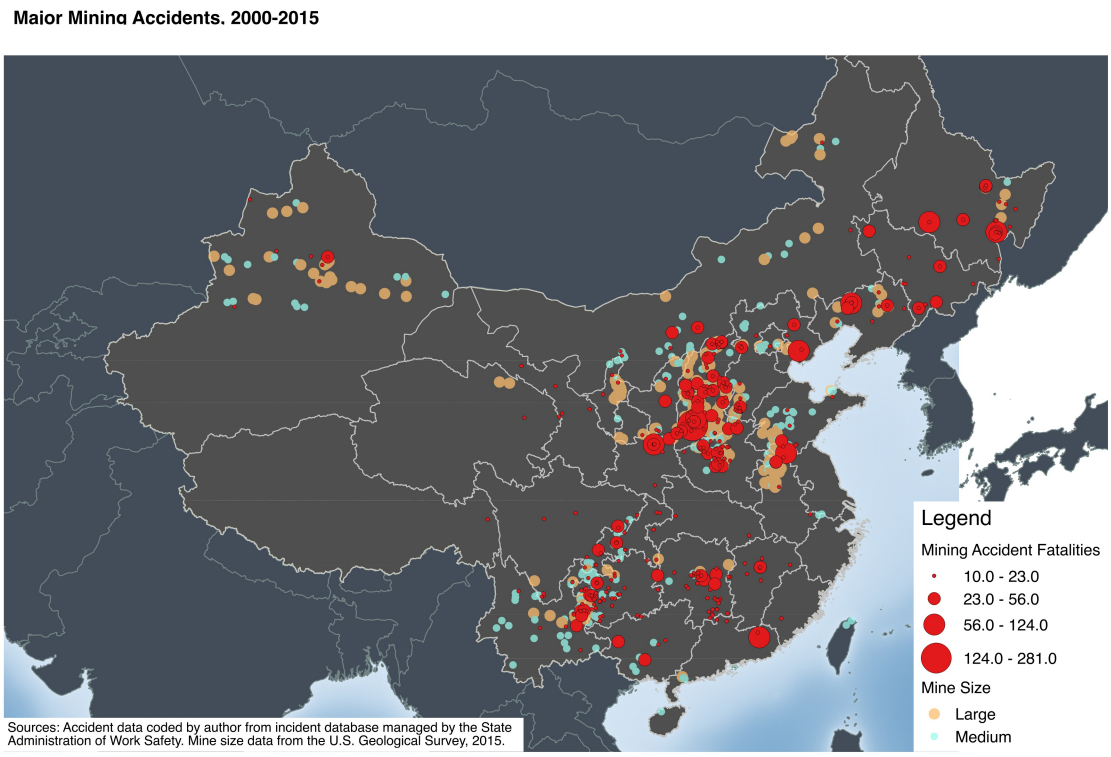


Figure 5.7: Map of Major Mining Accidents, 2000-2015

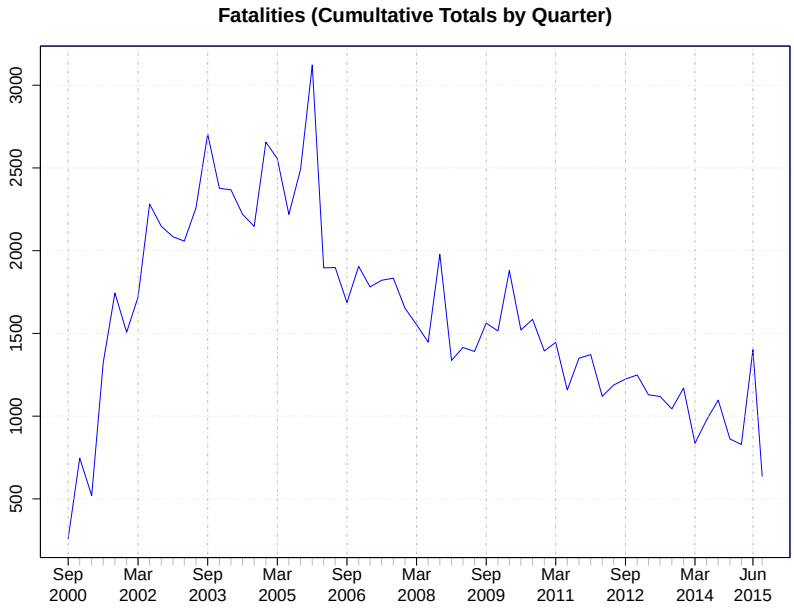


Figure 5.8: Work Safety Database Fatalities by Quarter

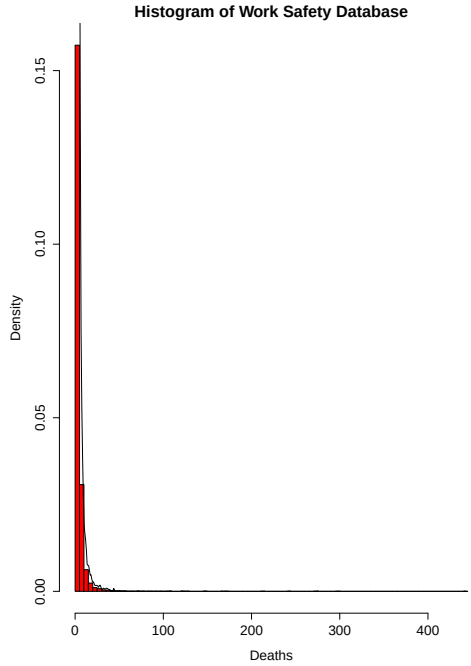


Figure 5.9: Work Safety Database Histogram

Table 5.10: Accident Investigation Report Translation

**WORK SAFETY ACCCIDENT**
**INVESTIGATION REPORT STRUCTURE**

Source:
"Work Safety Accident Reporting and Investigation Regulations"
《生产安全事故报告和调查处理条例》[1]

**Section I. Summary of Accident**

1. Accident Date and Time
2. Company Name
3. Accident Location
4. Accident Type
5. Number of Fatalities
6. Direct Economic Losses
7. Level of Severity:
    a. Level I – Extremely Severe
    b. Level II – Very Severe
    c. Level III – Rather Severe
    d. Level IV – Ordinary

**Section II. Work Unit Description**

1. Parent Company (if any)
2. Company
3. Mining Division (if a mine accident)
4. Date of Company Establishment
5. Type of Industry
6. Number of Company Employees
7. Independently Verified Number of Work Units under the Company
8. Number of Production Mines (if a mine accident)
9. Number of Accidents per Production Output in Previous Year
10. If a mine accident:
    a. Mine's Development History
    b. Mine's Establishment
    c. Date of First Operation
    d. Designed Production Capacity
    e. Verification of Mine Production Capacity
    f. Verification if the Mine has the Required "6 [Safety] Documents" for Operation
    g. Actual Annual Production Output
    h. Number of Employees and Description of Labor Organization
    i. Type of Mine Tunneling
    j. Excavation Arrangements and Type of Mining
    k. Type of Pit Ventilation and Description of Ventilation Situation
    l. (Safety Video) Monitoring System

[1] Investigation procedures are under review and a provisional new set of regulations were released for comments in August 2013 (《生产安全事故调查处理规则（征求意见稿）》). They do not substantially change the structure of the report.

Table 5.11: Accident Investigation Report (cont.)

m. Pit Waste Water System and Amount of Waste Water
n. Verification and Documentation of Gas Explosion, Coal Dust Explosion, Fire ignited by natural or hydrographical geological conditions

**Section III. Accident Discovery, Rescue Operations, and Cover-Up**

1. Accident Reporting and Rescue:
    a. Reporting of Accident: Description of how the accident was reported from the initial report to the On-Duty Office thru initial rescue operations
    b. Disaster Response and Rescue Operations: Description of the command and control structure of rescue operations, rescue team members, and result of rescue operations
    c. Description of Situation Following the Initial Rescue Operations
2. Accident Fatalities, Injuries and Economic Losses:
    a. Tally deaths and injuries according to National Standards Document #GB6422 *Company and Work Injury Accident Investigation and Analysis Regulations*
3. If the accident was attempted to be covered-up (Omit if no cover-up):
    a. Description of the course of events involving an effort to conceal information about the accident. Description of the involvement of company employees, government workers, and any other officials.

**Section IV. Determination of Accident Causes**

*(Must be submitted for approval 30 days for most accidents; 7 days for road accidents and ordinary fires. [Translator's Note: This is before the submission of the final report for approval])*

1. Direct Causes
    a. Mechanical
    b. Environmental
    c. Material Conditions
    d. Human Factors
2. In-Direct Causes
    a. Technological or Design Flaws
    b. Work Safety Training Insufficient
    c. Labor Organization not Appropriate
    d. Work Site Mismanagement
    e. No Safety Procedures in Place
    f. No Prevention Measures or Failure to Discover Hidden Dangers
    g. Emergency Contingency Plans Not Implemented
    h. Other

**Section V. Criminal and Administrative Penalties**

1. Criminal Penalties
    a. If government workers, work safety bureau officials, or other officials engaged in behavior directly causing the accident or otherwise directly engaged in criminal activity, ascertain criminal behavior, photocopy evidence, and submit to legal organs. Specifically, investigate the following crimes:
        i. Failure to Organize Rescue Operations

Table 5.12: Accident Investigation Report (cont.)

ii. Late Leaked or False Reporting
iii. Prevented or Interfered in an investigation
iv. Falsified Records
v. Withheld pertinent information from investigators
vi. Shielded fugitives

2. Criminal and Administrative Penalties:
    a. Formatting of Name List:
        i. Name
        ii. Political Affiliation
        iii. Job Position
        iv. Description of violating laws, regulations, or verifiable mistakes
        v. Major Work Responsibilities Involvement in the Accident, noting inappropriate direct, principal, or leadership activities
        vi. For criminal penalties, when the person was submitted to legal organs for processing
        vii. Communist Party Penalty Recommendation
        viii. Administrative Penalty Recommendation
3. Organizational Penalties:
    a. Penalties and reasoning for individuals and work units
4. Financial Penalties
    a. 40-60% of annual salary for officials failing to quickly organize a rescue or doesn't report the accident in a timely manner
    b. 60-100% of annual salary for officials reporting false or distorted information, fabricating documents, tampering with the accident scene, burning documents and evidence, removing bodies, transferring wealth, fleeing the accident scene, telling false statements to investigators.
    c. 100,000 – 2 million fine for work unit of involved person(s)

**Section VI. Prevention and Rectification Measures**

i. Description of measures to be adopted to be prevent the accident from occurring again

**Attachments:**

i. List of Investigation Group Members with Signatures
ii. The Provincial Government's Opinion about the Accident

# 6 Conclusion

Contemporary China is often depicted in contradictory terms, a rising superpower but fragile state (cf. Shirk, 2008). By investigating the development of China's crisis management institutions, this dissertation provides one explanation for the persistence of the Chinese Communist Party against a backdrop of regulatory disorder. In contrast to the idea that Chinese political institutions are increasingly "rationalized" or mere window dressing, this study finds that China's emergency management system is assisting Beijing's rulers to prevent normal governance problems from becoming regime-threatening crises. To return to beginning, where Andrew Nathan compared Chinese leaders to "acrobatics" lurching from crisis to crisis, this study argues that China's new crisis management institutions may provide elites with at least a modicum of protection.

At the same time, Beijing's rulers, like all autocrats, face a vexing problem of institutional design: they need strong institutions to structure political order, but these institutions are prone to "strategic manipulation" by the same elite (Pepinsky, 2014: 631). In other words, the incentive structure in authoritarian countries is skewed so that elites will create and re-design institutions when it is in their favor to do so, but do not always feel that these institutions act as hard constraints on their behavior (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010; Svolik, 2012). I find that China's fragmented bureaucracy distorts crisis management in discernible ways. Influential bureaus, particularly organizations associated with the Chinese Communist Party, seek to upend the rules of the game in their favor, by shielding themselves from

the deleterious effects of regulatory failure and passing the buck onto lower governance levels and less desirable agencies.

That different bureaucratic stakeholders pursue parochial interests and officials seek political power is unremarkable. However, a critical lacuna in the study of the bureaucratic politics is that the observable implications are often muddled. A key goal throughout this dissertation was to demonstrate how China's bureaucratic agencies vary in influencing coordination around crisis management. In Chapter 4, I measured bureaucratic influence comprehensively across a core group of agencies. I focused on two dimensions of capacity and expertise and argued that communist party organizations, on average, exert more influence on the policymaking process. Chapter 5 vividly illustrated how some bureaus are limited by new disciplinary rules, whereas others exert undue influence on the accountability process following large-scale industrial accidents.

In sum, crisis management institutions matter for how the Chinese Communist Party governs. They matter for how rulers gain more quantifiable information on regulatory failure, environmental challenges, and social unrest. They matter for which bureaucratic actors are given more influence in the political system. In light of these findings, however, it is important to note the limitations of this dissertation. A large proportion of this study was exploratory and inductively derived. It was deliberatively focused on context and process in order to illuminate the strengths and shortcomings of the existing knowledge about Chinese crisis management and, more broadly, the country's fragmented bureaucracy. It differs from many studies on China that investigate a limited issue area in order to isolate variables and determine causal effects. In an effort to be descriptively accurate and comprehensive, this dissertation may have been too encompassing of the wide array of contingencies under China's emergency management system. At the same time, it did not consider potential crises, which may be politically consequential, but outside the scope of the official emergency management system. These are issues for future study.

Studies of crisis management and authoritarian regimes overwhelmingly focus on regime type to argue that regime persistence may wane or collapse following a crisis. China's experience, however, has defied these theoretical expectations. How do Beijing's rulers maintain order? Why is there still regulatory disorder? This dissertation makes a contribution to the study of China's political development and comparative studies of crisis management by addressing these two questions.

# 7 *

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