

A Model of Adaptive Mobilization: Implications of the CCP's *Diaoyan* Politics

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Abstract

Diaoyan (investigation and research) occupies a special place in the politics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The concept can be broken down into two distinct types: symbolic *diaoyan*, and standard *diaoyan*. The former refers to the phenomenon of top leaders promoting and initiating the coordinated implementation of a particular political line. Leaders first promote their ideas through symbolic trips and speeches, and observe the extent of support for their political line within the ranks of the party elite. If support is forthcoming, the leader will then mobilize other central leaders to carry out standard *diaoyan*. This refers to investigation carried out by the central leaders into their own area of political responsibility within the scope of this overarching political line, with the aim of accumulating information and model experiences to inform specific policy decisions. These two types function in tandem: symbolic *diaoyan* promotes an abstract political line, and standard *diaoyan* fleshes out its substance. This article uses the term “adaptive mobilization model” to denote the use of *diaoyan* in the CCP’s policy making, and discusses two specific cases of Hu Jintao’s Scientific Outlook on Development and Xi Jinping’s China Dream to illustrate how regime adaptation and legitimization of the political line occur through the process of *diaoyan*.

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Scholars argue that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime possesses a great ability to adapt (Nathan, 2003; Fewsmith, 2013; Shambaugh, 2008a; Pei, 2012). From the perspective of policy making, Sebastian Heilmann explains that the CCP adapts new reforms to the varying needs of different regions through a method known as “point to surface” 由点到面 (Heilmann, 2008: 1–4): potential policies are tested in selected regional experimental points 试点, and then, in the case of success, are gradually expanded to wider areas. Once a sufficiently large body of successful experience has been accumulated, the policy is finally written into national legislation. However, as this article will argue, in addition to experiments by regional authorities, the central leadership also plays a key role in initiating and implementing new adaptive policies. Focusing on the role of the central leadership, this article illustrates how the political elites simultaneously address areas of adaptive policy need, mobilize their subordinates, and strengthen their own political legitimacy by way of the phenomenon of *diaoyan* 调研 (investigation and research).

Heilmann refers to China’s “shadow of hierarchy” (Heilmann, 2009: 457–58; Heilmann, Shih, and Hofem, 2013: 898–901), explaining that under the conditions of uncertainty brought about by China’s changing circumstances, the central leadership retains a guiding hand over the political process and exercises background control over regional inconsistencies in order to stabilize political rule (Heilmann and Perry, 2011: 22). Some literature has considered mechanisms of imitation and learning within local governments and the innovation of policy entrepreneurs to explain policy diffusion (Walker, 1969; Mintrom, 1997), yet these approaches largely seem to overlook the crucial role of China’s national leaders. This article argues that the central authorities are in fact deeply involved in the process of adaptive policy reform and policy diffusion. Through the process of *diaoyan*, central leaders are mobilized, and in turn mobilize local leaders, both to ensure that the thread of the CCP’s guiding political party line runs through all related policy, and to variegate policy according to local developmental needs. This model of adaptive mobilization allows the central leadership to reinforce the legitimacy and implementation of the CCP’s ideology while simultaneously adapting it to varied and changing circumstances. This is an important practice that merits greater attention.

The CCP’s *diaoyan* does entail some “typical” functions of investigation and research, such as data collection or assessment of damage sustained in natural disasters, in order to provide a source of knowledge for the party

leadership. Siu-Lun Wong also argues that CCP cadres upheld the tradition of linking social investigation and research to party theory and practice throughout the era of Mao Zedong (Wong, 1979: 63–77). Nevertheless, in the political terminology of the CCP, the meaning of diaoyan goes further than the literal translations of “investigation” and “research” as they would be known in a Western context, incorporating the functions of consensus making and political mobilization. In other words, the CCP’s diaoyan, divided into two broad types—symbolic and standard—fulfills a particular and comprehensive political function. Although both types of diaoyan typically involve leaders carrying out investigative trips to gauge conditions in various policy areas in different regions, the two types are notably different.¹ The aim of symbolic diaoyan is to promote a top leader’s political line and test its acceptance within the party ranks,² whereas standard diaoyan teases out potential specific policy applications of the promoted political line in varying regional conditions and political fields through the mobilization of central and then local leaders. The two types of diaoyan are inextricably linked.

This article will first frame the two types of diaoyan as interlinked operational applications of an “adaptive mobilization model,” before moving on to separately discuss symbolic and standard diaoyan in more detail. The article will consider how the mobilization entailed in diaoyan politics combines with adaptive policy making to constitute an adaptive mobilization model. Finally, Hu Jintao’s Scientific Outlook on Development 科学发展观 and Xi Jinping’s China Dream 中国梦 will be presented as two illustrative cases of the model in practice. It will be argued that diaoyan enables the CCP to implement a top leader’s political line through mobilization of central leaders, thereby fostering the formulation of concrete policies that match the varying political needs of different regions. This demonstrates how, when faced with diverse conditions and challenges, the CCP is able to successfully implement necessary adaptive reform by drawing up policy blueprints based simultaneously on both an overarching central ideology and specific regional needs. In other words, diaoyan politics is an operational application of two topics that feature heavily in literature on the CCP—mobilization and adaptation—reflected in a concept that aptly frames and reflects the nature of the CCP system: the “adaptive mobilization model.”

Symbolic and Standard Diaoyan: Interlinked Operational Applications of the Adaptive Mobilization Model

The adaptive mobilization model encapsulates in one concept the CCP’s propensity for adaptation and mobilization. In concrete terms, the CCP regime employs two types of diaoyan to enhance policy making and implementation.

Within CCP politics, policy making traditionally entails two important aspects: the abstract political line and concrete policy applications. The former refers to the overarching central approach or political ideology during a given period, which frames the formulation of all other policies and is designed to guide the CCP's adaptations to changing economic and social conditions. The latter refers to the practical applications of policy within the framework of this guiding ideology. A similar distinction can be drawn in diaoyan politics: symbolic diaoyan is associated with the political line and standard diaoyan with the application of concrete policies.

First, the top leader proposes a new political line by way of symbolic diaoyan, thereby initiating discourse within the highest echelon of the CCP's leadership. The political line represents the CCP's comprehensive ideology or world outlook (*Weltanschauung*) at any given time, and is an important facet of the CCP's efforts at regime adaptation.³ Within the party, the leadership claims the right to interpret what constitutes "correct" thought or application of the party's ideology. Symbolic diaoyan can be framed as a top leader's initial propagation of a potential political line, enabling him to firmly grasp power over ideological discourse. Each new generation of leaders initiates new political lines not only to help the CCP adapt to changing environments and conditions but also to reinforce the leader's own ruling legitimacy (Dickson, 1997: 5–17). If a leader were to rashly jump into implementation of concrete policy objectives before gaining command over the ideological direction of policy, there would be an elevated risk of inner-party conflict and subsequently failed reform or even regime decay (Kotz and Weir, 2007). The promotion of a principle by symbolic diaoyan can spur the country's leading elites into reaching an ideological consensus. Symbolic diaoyan enunciates an abstract political line or ideology that will guide all policy decisions, dictate the future direction of the country's development, and work to preserve the regime's legitimacy (Holbig and Gilley, 2010). Once a consensus on the political line has been reached by the CCP's highest echelon, central leaders are mobilized by the top leader to carry out standard diaoyan in order to transform the abstract political line into concrete policies.

Standard diaoyan is a pattern of political mobilization. While the thread of the political line must run through all policies, the CCP also strongly emphasizes adaptation to regional differences. Due to the large differences between different Chinese regions, once a political line has been established, central leaders are dispatched by the top leader to investigate specific conditions in different localities through standard diaoyan. The objective is to accumulate information and scrutinize representative local experiences in different regions and political fields, in order to create locally adapted policies that give substance to the concrete application of the proposed political line. Thus,

unlike the largely emblematic nature of symbolic diaoyan, standard diaoyan deals with concrete issues and specificities.

From symbolic diaoyan through standard diaoyan, the CCP regime's strong capacity for mobilization is evident.⁴ In early mobilization methods, before top leaders mobilized the masses to carry out a political campaign, they first had to ensure that the prevailing political ideology was considered legitimate. Nonetheless, mass campaigns during Mao's era often manifested a form of populism, garnering support for individual leaders' politics and putting pressure on opposing factions. In other words, mass mobilization campaigns usually entailed political struggle and purges (Lieberthal, 1995: 65), rather than addressing the needs of national development. It was only from the Opening Up and Reform onward that mobilization of the masses or, more often, of party cadres in particular, became a major way of consolidating ideological consensus and exploring concrete policy initiatives designed to promote regime adaptation and development.

Thus, in the more subtle conditions of contemporary CCP politics, the top leadership legitimizes their political line before mobilizing central and local cadres, and diaoyan represents a crucial tool for them to do so. The top leadership mobilizes party leaders to build up a gradual consensus between central and regional authorities regarding important policies (Blecher, 1979). Importantly, standard diaoyan dispatches central leaders to better understand specific social conditions and public opinion in various representative locations in order to formulate appropriate, related policies (Thornton, 2011; Blecher, 1979). These localities are known as the leaders' "points of contact" 联系点, and here the individual central leaders investigate issues that are related to their own respective areas of political responsibility (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988: 35).⁵ In CCP terminology, this method is known as "dissecting the sparrow" 解剖麻雀.⁶ After a central leader has established a point of contact, the CCP authorities continue to use mechanisms of mobilization at all levels of government to build leaders' respective points of contact (generally counties) into model examples for other locations to imitate, and to initiate policies based on successful experimental pilots. The mobilization entailed in standard diaoyan thus helps transform the abstract political line into a series of concrete policy applications.

In this sense, symbolic and standard diaoyan can be seen as two key operational concepts of the adaptive mobilization model. Combined, the two types of diaoyan constitute a mutually complementary model of policy making. The relationship between the two types of diaoyan and their operations within the CCP's policy making are depicted in Figure 1.

Table 1 outlines key examples of diaoyan politics. On the left-hand side is symbolic diaoyan, including the political line espoused by individual

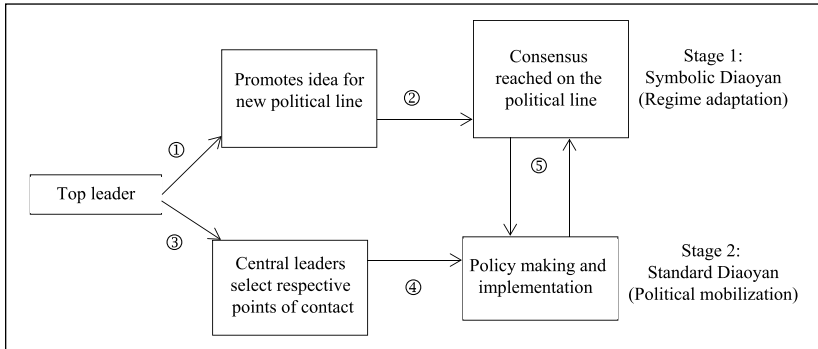


Figure 1. The two diaoyan patterns within the policy-making sequence.

- ① The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) top leader promotes his idea for a new political line, designed to bolster the CCP's regime adaptation.
- ② Once the top leader has achieved consensus among the party elite through symbolic diaoyan, the idea is established as the CCP's new guiding political line.
- ③ The top leader mobilizes central leaders to select points of contact according to their political responsibilities, carrying out specific investigations and inspections in these areas through standard diaoyan.
- ④ These central leaders create and implement policy based on their findings from the experimental points of contact.
- ⑤ These specific policies provide the concrete application of the abstract political line; the line in turn frames the specific policies.

leaders and the timing and location of the symbolic diaoyan trips associated with the line. The standard diaoyan linked to these political lines is shown on the right-hand side of the table, including the timing and the various policy foci.

Symbolic Diaoyan: A Trial Balloon

Within the CCP system, the political line is of particular importance, as it represents the ideological foundation of all policy and efforts at regime adaptation. The highest level leaders generally conceptualize a potential political line through China's national think tank network or the party school system (Fewsmith, 2003; Shambaugh, 2008b; Tanner, 2002). This embryonic principle, which will be associated with the leader personally, is first promoted by way of symbolic diaoyan. During the process of symbolic diaoyan, top leaders take trips to specifically chosen, often symbolic locations, during which they will make speeches presenting their new ideas. If his central comrades begin to make allusions to these ideas in their own speeches, the top leader can be assured of their support. Once the seeds of the idea have been sown in

Table 1. Example Policies of the Two Diaoyan Patterns.

	Symbolic diaoyan		Standard diaoyan	
	Political line	Location and year	Time	Main policies and foci
Jiang Zemin	Three Represents 三个代表	Jiang Zemin (Guangdong, Feb. 2000)	Sept. 2000	Striving for clean governance Economic development Religion and united front work
Hu Jintao	Scientific Outlook on Development	Hu Jintao (Guangdong, Apr. 2003; Hunan, Oct. 2003)	Oct. 2008	Economic development Rural poverty alleviation Social security reform Environmental protection
Xi Jinping	The China Dream	Xi Jinping (Beijing, Nov. 2012)	Nov. 2012	Economic development Rural poverty alleviation Eradication of corruption Greater global responsibility for China

Data Source. Wisers Greater China News Portal 慧科大中华新闻网 (hosted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, http://wisearch.wisers.net/ws5/index.do?srp_restore=discard&new-login=true).

this way and the general concept has been accepted, a consensus on its more precise ramifications can be built up through a series of discussions and study meetings of the party elite (Tsai and Dean, 2013: 103–6), after which the concept will be formally established as the party's political line over a given time. In a sense, symbolic diaoyan releases a trial balloon within the party, putting out feelers for the elite's receptiveness to a new ideological principle. The need for symbolic diaoyan thus tends to come about when a new political line is touted within the party, generally during times of ideological conflict or leadership succession.

Symbolic diaoyan is precisely that—symbolic. Leaders often take tours and official visits to begin the process of symbolic diaoyan, and the location of these trips tends to have a deeper connection to the political line in question, acting as a political signal to give party elites a sense of the top leader's policy direction. For instance, as early as 1927 to 1930, Mao Zedong carried out diaoyan on several occasions to emphasize his hold over revolutionary rhetoric, and his favored sites particularly

included rural areas of Hunan. Mao had conceived the idea that China's massive rural population should drive the Chinese revolution, in direct contrast with the orthodox Soviet approach based on urban centers, but the CCP's internationalist faction continued to support the Soviet method (Saich, 1995).⁷ Mao's decision to carry out extensive diaoyan in rural areas represented his challenge to their ideology. In fact, Mao Zedong believed that unquestioningly accepting ideas without further investigation was a form of blind dogmatism, and that it was only possible to extrapolate the "correct" guiding principle through diaoyan. He later famously declared: "no diaoyan, no right to speak." After Mao's vigorous criticisms, backed by diaoyan, the internationalists were eventually sidelined within the CCP leadership (Gao, 2000). In 2012, Xi Jinping stepped up to the Chinese presidency, and during a trip to the National Museum in Beijing to view the "Road to Revival" exhibit, he spoke of his new ruling ideology: the China Dream. This move can also be seen as an example of symbolic diaoyan, and the location was equally important: announcing the China Dream surrounded by representations of national revival, it was clear that Xi saw China's growth and revitalization as an important governing principle.

A particularly significant example of an important location for diaoyan is Guangdong. As the initial stages of the Opening Up and Reform mostly unfolded in Guangdong, it continues to represent a key site for symbolic diaoyan designed to implicitly signify continuing support for the ideology of reform. In the early 1980s, the CCP was locked in an intense inner-party dispute about the future of the reforms; meanwhile, by the Twelfth National Party Congress in 1982, smuggling had emerged as a serious problem in coastal provinces such as Guangdong and Fujian. That year, the CCP held a conference to directly address the issue, which many conservative members took as an opportunity to attack the entire ideology of reform, insisting that activities in the Special Economic Zones be drawn to a halt. Reformist general secretary Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 was even forced to conduct self-criticism (Guan and Lu, 2008). Nevertheless, in 1983, Hu deftly communicated his unwavering support for the principle of reform by setting off south for Guangdong to carry out symbolic diaoyan (Chen, 2002). Not long after, in 1984, Deng Xiaoping followed in his footsteps, conducting diaoyan in Guangdong, Fujian, and Shanghai, and once again in his famous southern tour of 1992, thus indubitably laying down the line regarding the future of the Opening Up and Reform.

As symbolic diaoyan is associated with a particular political line, any leaders in opposition to the line itself may find a way to subtly express their

dissatisfaction. A common method is to avoid any activity taking place in the location where the symbolic diaoyan for the principle was conducted. During the beginning stages of the Opening Up and Reform, the relatively conservative leader Chen Yun 陈云 notably conducted no diaoyan in the Special Economic Zones of the coastal provinces, reflecting his reservations about the ideology of the reforms (Zhao, 2009: 101).

The itinerary of symbolic diaoyan trips is also classified and kept secret from both the public and lower-ranking officials. For instance, in 1992, Deng Xiaoping set off for the coastal provinces on his famous southern tour, aiming to confront the party conservatives' continuing doubts about the ideology of reform. The ongoing split between reformists and conservatives was the biggest political dispute since the Tiananmen incident, and Deng wanted to finally grasp incontrovertible control over the political line. The plans for the sensitive trip, perhaps the best-known example of symbolic diaoyan, were kept from all but a few central and local officials. Information regarding the itinerary was conveyed only in coded language, lest party conservatives catch wind of the plans and interfere politically. The staff of the Central Confidential Bureau directly faxed Guangdong party secretary Xie Fei 谢非, writing only that "Comrade Xiaoping is coming to the South to 'take a break,' please receive him and manage security" (Lü and Zhao, 2008).⁸ Xie Fei immediately informed a trusted aide: "The long-awaited 'old comrade' is coming." The implications of this communication would have only been readily understood by party insiders. The route of diaoyan trips may be even more secret, and is often drawn up by the top leader and his secretary; for example, the itinerary of Deng Xiaoping's southern tour was outlined by his personal secretary, Zhang Baozhong 张宝忠, then passed on to Wang Ruilin 王瑞林, the director of Deng's executive office, to make the final decisions (Lu, 2002).

Once the top leaders have released the trial balloon of their new ideological principle in this way, they must then gauge the reaction and extent of acceptance by the party. A common method is to observe whether high-ranking cadres repeat the key term or political rhetoric of the top leader in their own important speeches. In this way it can be seen whether a consensus has been achieved within the party on the political line. Once officials begin to mention the political line in discourse, it can be considered that the political line has achieved acceptance and is ready to be rolled out further. This method of testing the waters within the party before launching a reform or new political line on a wider scale has been common throughout the CCP's history (Kou, 2011: 255–31).

If the leader himself lacks the personal prestige to push a controversial idea, or if the proposed ideology is judged to be at odds with current conditions, then the prospective new political line will likely be shelved. This outcome may seriously affect the status and legitimacy of the leader associated with the idea. If symbolic diaoyan fails in its purpose to promote an ideology and achieve consensus, then a leader's prospective principle will not become the party line. An obvious example is that of the Dazhai 大寨 model associated with Hua Guofeng 华国锋. In the autumn of 1975, Hua visited Shanxi's renowned Dazhai village to conduct symbolic diaoyan; at the end of 1976, Hua reiterated calls for the whole party to "learn from Dazhai in agriculture." Hua hoped that Dazhai would not only become a role model for the entire nation's rural areas, but that it would become an emblem of the collective economic ideology behind rural people's communes. However, by the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun had instead come to support the household responsibility system, and were receiving growing backing within the elite party ranks. The implementation of the household responsibility system would invariably spell the end for the system of rural communes. Hua's "learn from Dazhai in agriculture" quickly lost ground, calling Hua's entire prestige and legitimacy as a leader into question (Vogel, 2011: 438–39, 441).

As the examples so far have shown, symbolic diaoyan is most often carried out during periods of inner-party conflict over momentous policy directions, or during the beginning stages of political succession, in order to solidify the general stance of a new era of leadership. Since Mao Zedong first used symbolic diaoyan trips to promote his revolutionary ideas and developmental policies after the founding of the CCP regime, successive top leaders have taken up the mantle and initiated acceptance of a new political line by way of symbolic diaoyan. From the 1980s through the early 1990s Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang promoted the Opening Up and Reform policy to counter conservative policies and the backlash following the Tiananmen incident. As this article will go on to discuss in detail, in 2003 and 2012, respectively, both Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping used symbolic diaoyan trips to lay the groundwork for their new political lines: the Scientific Outlook on Development and the China Dream. Each time there is a transition in political succession, there is a real risk of dispute or even conflict within the party. Careful to maintain a unified front and reduce risk, top leaders will not simply announce their political line outright, but will instead employ the more subtle approach of raising a trial balloon by way of symbolic diaoyan. If leaders do not first observe inner-party opinion in order to gauge the feasibility of their concept, it is likely that they might fail like Hua Guofeng.

Standard Diaoyan: Mobilizing the Central Leaders

After the top-ranking leaders reach a consensus on a political line, the next step is standard diaoyan by central leaders. The Politburo Standing Committee will convene a meeting to decide the schedule of standard diaoyan. Mobilized by the top leader, central leaders (particularly Standing Committee members) select an individual point of contact appropriate for their particular area of political responsibility in order to carry out real investigation and gather information to make policy in their respective fields (Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, 1998: 1456–57). Combined together, the amalgamation of policies in various political fields derived from these programs of standard diaoyan make up the concrete application of the abstract political line promoted during symbolic diaoyan.

This method was seen as early as the Mao era. For instance, in 1957 the central authorities, led by Mao, dispatched Politburo Standing Committee members to various regions to explain and promote the importance of Mao's policy objective "on the correct handling of internal contradictions among the people" and to outline the necessity and the proper approach for this political line (Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, 2003: 395–414, 620–62). Zhou Enlai was responsible for government affairs and the economy from 1949 to 1976, and Deng Xiaoping for party affairs from 1956 to 1966. Each would select their points of contact, often counties in Hebei or Beijing municipality, based on these separate responsibilities, and would subsequently draw up relevant policies. During the era of Hu Jintao, this method was further institutionalized. In the terminology of the CCP, this is referred to as "combining collective leadership and individual responsibilities" 集体领导与个人分工的结合 (Hu, 2013).

In general, the points of contact chosen by top leaders tend to be counties, and the choice of location is once again often symbolic or representative. For example, during the nationwide mobilization to make steel in the Great Leap Forward, Deng Xiaoping commanded the Central Secretariat to dispatch several members to the northeast—China's heavy industry center—to investigate steel-making conditions (Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, 2009: 1449). In another example, after the Opening Up and Reform policies began to take hold, many thorny issues emerged in rural areas; at this time, central leaders' standard diaoyan expeditions tended to take place in largely rural provinces such as Jiangxi and Henan. In recent years, Hunan has become a popular location for standard diaoyan, as it is seen to be especially representative of the development of China's central provinces, a current major preoccupation of the CCP (Ta Kung Pao, June 29, 2012: B8).

In addition, the location is usually relevant in some way to a leader's political responsibilities. For example, within the programs of standard diaoyan associated with the Scientific Outlook on Development in 2008, Wen Jiabao 温家宝, who was put in charge of reconstruction after the Wenchuan earthquake, visited the city of Jiangyou in Sichuan, one of the main disaster sites (Li and Zhong, 2012b). Standing Committee members also often select a county in locations where they have previously worked. In the diaoyan associated with the party's mass line education practice program 党的群众路线教育实践活动 of 2013, Xi Jinping's point of contact was Zhengding county in Hebei, where he had worked twenty years previously (Qin, 2013).

After the above considerations have all been taken into account, the final decision on points of contact is made through negotiations between the secretaries of the individual central leaders and the Central General Office and State Council Office. The points of contact might be selected directly by the leaders themselves but might equally be chosen by leaders from lists of suitable locations drawn up by the offices. In addition, the Central General Office and the State Council Office also communicate with the leaders' secretaries to set up the specific itineraries and plan the necessary security arrangements for the trip (Tsai and Dean, 2015: 161–62). As taking a diaoyan trip impinges upon the safety and security of Standing Committee members, the chosen point of contact is generally only informed of the upcoming visit a month in advance. Leaders also tend to conduct diaoyan in politically stable counties or cities with a population of roughly 300,000–400,000, in order to avoid risking the safety of top leaders in more volatile locations (Li and Zhong, 2012b: 23).

In fact, this mobilization is not just limited to central leaders. The provincial party secretary in the location of a point of contact will in turn pinpoint a township as his own point of contact (Zhao Leji, 2009). Then, each prefecture-level official will find a village for their point of contact, every level rolling out the same system promoted by the central leader. This kind of three-level "county-town-village" mobilization (Li and Zhong, 2012a) set in motion by diaoyan enables the guiding principle and specific policies of the central leadership to become a nationwide target, while also matching the real and diverse developmental needs of individual regions.

There are many reasons why cadres are willing to be mobilized in this way to carry out diaoyan for the purpose of the top leader's political line. It may be a voluntary way of demonstrating their loyalty to the leader, or on the other hand they may simply be succumbing to the pressure of the inner-party ideological consensus.⁹ Another important consideration is that by identifying or constructing model examples of successful policies through standard

diaoyan, central cadres are able to secure their hold over discourse in their own area of political responsibility.

Standard diaoyan is associated with the formulation of concrete policies, and as such, unlike symbolic diaoyan, requires specific mechanisms of data collection. The method, institutionalized during the Hu era, is for each Standing Committee member to set up a “central liaison steering group” 中央联络指导小组 (interview with a CCP think tank scholar, Aug. 1, 2013). Before the leader personally visits his point of contact, the steering group will first launch preliminary inspections in the location. Steering groups include members from the Central Policy Research Office, State Council Office, and local cadres from the point of contact. After preliminary work, they submit a report to the Standing Committee member, outlining the focus of the subsequent investigation work. For example, Xi Jinping’s point of contact for the Scientific Outlook on Development was Jiashan county in Zhejiang, focusing on transportation development, rural construction, and business reform. His central liaison steering group first conducted preliminary research on these separate foci in Jiashan county, presenting Xi with a comprehensive review in a report entitled “Fundamental Conditions in the Jiashan Point of Contact” (Xinjingbao, July 18, 2013: A9).

In addition, the central liaison steering group will also identify certain successful grassroots examples of reform and innovation from around the nation and present them to the Standing Committee member for consideration. The group will only select experiences that have worked, have already been applied in other grassroots locations, have received central government backing, and will not run the risk of suggesting overly radical reforms. From 2000, the CCP launched an award for “Local Government Innovation”; often the winning locations of this award become points of contact, as they have already been lauded by the central authorities.¹⁰ After being presented with appropriate examples of potential reform, central leaders may consider rolling them out in their point of contact.

The point of contact selected by a leader may eventually become a model example—a policy template—for the rest of the country. As Heilmann argues, during Mao’s era the CCP used a pattern of “put templates to use, push forward across the board . . . 运用样板, 推动全盘” to guide the diffusion of policy from an isolated exemplar to a widespread program (Heilmann, 2008: 15). After diaoyan is complete, the central authorities often invest a great deal of resources in guaranteeing the continuing rapid development of a point of contact location, reinforcing its exemplary status. In February 2012, Xi Jinping’s point of contact, Jiashan county, was chosen as a national model example of the Scientific Outlook on Development. The central and Zhejiang provincial authorities invested heavily in the county’s various developmental

efforts (Jiaxing ribao, April 24, 2013: B1). Hu Jintao's point of contact was Ansai county in Yan'an, Shaanxi. Hu had previously issued directives to maintain the safety of drinking water in rural areas. In 2008, the Ministry of Water Resources and the Shaanxi provincial Office of Water Resources invested extensive capital into related engineering works in the county in order to implement the directive (Shengwei zuzhibu, 2008).

However, conducting standard diaoyan is not always a smooth procedure. A major challenge facing central leaders is how best to circumvent the rigging and preparations made by lower-level cadres in order to uncover the reality of grassroots conditions in their point of contact and thus enable the creation of appropriate policies based on factual information. Current Politburo member Li Yuanchao 李源潮 reveals that as the provincial party secretary of Jiangsu he visited a grassroots region to carry out standard diaoyan. He was later covertly sent a report detailing how residents had been notified by local officials to give only positive answers to his inquiries. Li commented that after reading the report: "I couldn't sleep all night; I felt really anxious, even frightened by it" (Yangcheng wanbao, Jan. 27, 2005: A3).

Eluding lower-ranking officials' attempts at obfuscation has become a key challenge for central-level officials. One notable method is to make ad hoc diversions from a planned itinerary. In order to gain a better understanding of true societal conditions, General Secretary Hu Yaobang and Premier Wen Jiabao often liked to change their route unexpectedly (Li, 2006). Some senior leaders also install former acquaintances and trusted aides in the point of contact. When the leaders themselves arrive in the location, they often go directly to these associates, and make sure to keep in touch when they leave. For instance, when Xi Jinping worked as Zhejiang provincial party secretary, he would often go to Xiajiang village to hear the reports of the party branch secretary Jiang Yinxiang 姜银祥 concerning development in rural areas.¹¹ Even after Xi Jinping left Zhejiang, Jiang Yinxiang has continued to send an annual report to Xi, often receiving a reply in return (Xi Jinping gei qunzhong, 2013).

The CCP has formed an interesting policy-making procedure which further engages and mobilizes local cadres. To ensure that the policies ultimately proposed match the developmental needs of different regions, the central liaison steering group of a Standing Committee member will often first invite the leaders of the regions where diaoyan is being undertaken to propose their own appropriate policies. The policy ideas and information are submitted to the steering group for review and modification, and will be passed on to the Standing Committee member responsible for the diaoyan in the area. For instance, under the principle of the

Scientific Outlook on Development, the CCP hoped to be able to trial social security reform in Shandong. Before Li Keqiang 李克强 visited Huantai county in Shandong in November 2008 to carry out standard diaoyan, the Shandong provincial party secretary distributed over 5,000 copies of an “opinion-seeking survey” to local cadres, inquiring about the major problems facing the social security system in local regions. The survey results pointed to a need to focus on health and pension system reform. The cadres were also asked for potential practical measures to combat the problems they raised (Renmin ribao, Mar. 27, 2009: 1). Local leaders are thus mobilized to provide solutions to problems in their respective areas, ensuring that any policies outlined by the responsible Standing Committee member will truly meet regional needs.

Once the central liaison steering group receives input from local cadres, trial programs will be implemented and policies drawn up. Next, the Politburo Standing Committee member responsible for diaoyan in the area will finally visit the point of contact and announce these policies. Once a policy has been officially announced, documents are drawn up for cadres at all levels of government to study—including the cadres who themselves initially proposed the policy. Although the rudimentary idea behind a policy may be that of a local cadre, centrally coordinated pilot programs in the experimental point and announcements by a Standing Committee member lend the policy high political legitimacy, in turn boosting the legitimacy of the entire abstract political line with which the concrete policy is associated.

Diaoyan Politics in China's Policy-Making Process: Two Cases of the Adaptive Mobilization Model in Practice

Thus far, this article has presented the adaptive mobilization model, demonstrating how the interlinked processes of symbolic and standard diaoyan allow the CCP to introduce policies that are adapted to varying regional conditions, under the umbrella of an overarching political line which is in itself designed to guide the CCP's regime adaptations. The functions of symbolic and standard diaoyan are respectively regime adaptation and top-down total-party mobilization. The former is concerned with leaders' new political lines, created to adapt to the needs of contemporary development; whether a political line gains inner-party approval or not can determine the legitimacy of a leader and even of the entire regime. The latter derives from the strong capacity of the CCP regime for mobilization, and ensures that a political line is maintained within concrete policies, yet carefully adapted to allow for differing regional needs. This is a particularly unique policy-making procedure, which

demonstrates clearly how the central leadership makes use of a carefully constructed model to combine ideology with practical needs, thereby strengthening the party's governing legitimacy. In order to demonstrate the operation of the adaptive mobilization model in practice, the case of Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook on Development will now be presented in depth, followed by a discussion of the latest developments of diaoyan in Xi Jinping's China Dream.

Scientific Outlook on Development

Hu Jintao hoped to address the inherent unfairness in Deng's reform policies that allowed "some people to get rich first." In 2003, after stepping into the role of CCP general secretary, Hu proposed the Scientific Outlook on Development, a new political line designed to guide the regime's adaptation to changes in China's political and economic conditions (Fewsmith, 2004). This political line stresses that China should not blindly pursue only raw GDP growth, but should instead aim for comprehensive development in all areas, presenting a more balanced approach to the economy, not least in the underdeveloped western regions, and redressing some of the aftermath of the unrestricted development of the reform era, such as social instability and environmental problems (Economy, 2004).

In 2003, Hu conducted symbolic diaoyan in Guangdong and Hunan, during which he gave speeches introducing his idea of a Scientific Outlook on Development (Wen Wei Po, Oct. 5, 2003: 1; Nanfang ribao, Mar. 6, 2005: 5). Carrying out symbolic diaoyan in Guangdong signaled Hu's continuing support of and commitment to reform. After raising the trial balloon of this new approach to development, Hu observed the reaction of central cadres to his ideology. Between late 2003 and 2004, Politburo Standing Committee members began to mention the Scientific Outlook on Development during important meetings or speeches on trips, revealing their support of Hu's new political line. The date and occasion of these first mentions is shown in Table 2.

However, Scientific Outlook on Development was not met with such enthusiasm by everyone in the party, particularly some cadres from the wealthy eastern regions of the country, such as Shanghai (Huang, 2008: 210–12). Shanghai municipal party secretary Chen Liangyu 陈良宇, a crony of Jiang Zemin and member of the Shanghai clique, stated at the first Politburo meeting of 2004 that the speed of development in a minority of wealthy regions should not be seen as negative; he argued that Shanghai's development should not be reined in, and that it was not the responsibility of richer localities to wait for backward provinces to catch up so that all regions could develop in tandem. Hu Jintao, chairing the meeting, countered that nationwide development must aim for fairness and regionally coordinated development. He firmly

Table 2. Date and Occasion of First Mention of “Scientific Outlook on Development” by Politburo Standing Committee Members.

Standing Committee member	Date	Occasion
Li Changchun	Oct. 24, 2003	Investigating water conservancy projects in Henan
Wen Jiabao	Oct. 31, 2003	Meeting academics in Beijing
Jia Qinglin	Nov. 7, 2003	Participating in a United Front work conference in Beijing
Wu Bangguo	Nov. 29, 2003	Investigating coal mine safety management in Anhui
Huang Ju	Dec. 13, 2003	Investigating SOE reform in Tianjin
Zeng Qinghong	Dec. 16, 2003	Investigating party organization projects in Sichuan
Wu Guanzheng	Jan. 22, 2004	Spending Chinese New Year with local people in Jiangxi
Luo Gan	April 12, 2004	Chairing a cadre training class in Beijing

Data Source. Same as Table 1.

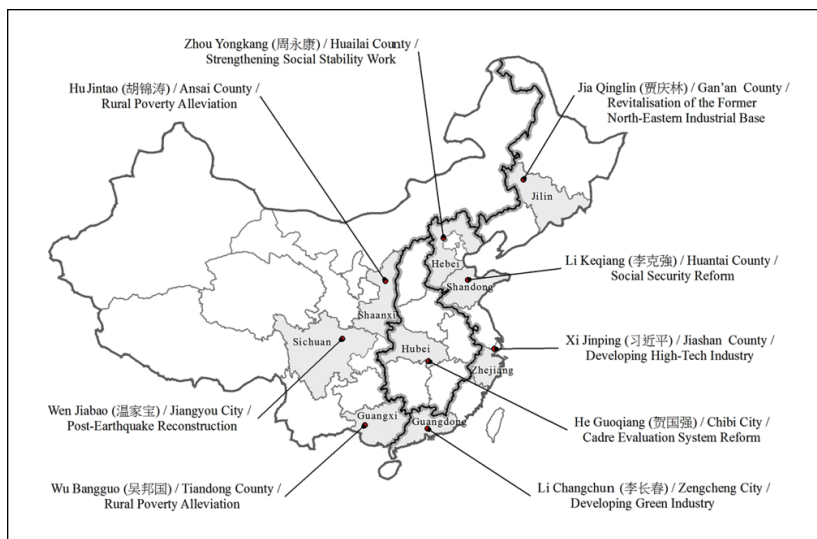
stated that this macroeconomic regulation and control was the collective decision of the CCP, and that all levels of government in all regions must resolutely implement the measures of fair and comprehensive development (Xin bao caijing xinwen, Aug. 23, 2004: 11). It was clear that Hu and Chen were at odds ideologically; Chen had openly opposed Hu Jintao’s political line. In 2006, Chen was purged from the CCP and arrested on charges of corruption. Hu Jintao had employed symbolic diaoyan to test the waters, and having been accepted by the Politburo Standing Committee members, he could not allow an important cadre to oppose his ideological stance. In this way, Hu Jintao strengthened the legitimacy of his Scientific Outlook on Development and thereby the likelihood of its successful implementation.

Comprehensive development thus represented Hu Jintao’s accepted political line. The idea became the party’s political line; thereafter, policies were to be drawn up according to both specific regional conditions and the guiding tenets of the Scientific Outlook on Development. In order to do so, the following stage was to conduct standard diaoyan, which allows leaders to carry out the necessary investigations to pad out an abstract political line with clear and concrete policies adapted to the different needs of regions. In terms of the Scientific Outlook on Development, the CCP currently divides China into four broad regions according to levels of economic development, applying different policy aims to each area. First, in the east, the CCP is pursuing “a

new leap forward” 东部新跨越. As the east already has achieved high levels of economic growth, the focus now is on promoting environmental protection by developing high-tech, low-pollution industries. Second, the CCP is aiming for “vast development of the western regions” 西部大开发. In the poverty-stricken provinces of the west, rapid economic development remains the principal goal. Third is the “rise of the central provinces” 中部崛起. The central region, sandwiched between the wealthy east and the unstable west, has long been somewhat overlooked. Now, to continue driving growth in the central provinces, reform is vital. The CCP is concentrating on the reform of cadre selection procedures in particular, in the belief that highly competent cadres will spur the needed development. The final regional target is “revitalization of the northeast” 振兴东北, the aim of which is to restore the area’s former status as a center of industry.¹²

The CCP, targeting these different characteristics and needs, mobilized the nine Standing Committee members at that time to draw up specific policies to meet the diverse developmental conditions of each region. To this end, after October 2008 the CCP central leaders began to conduct standard diaoyan associated with the Scientific Outlook on Development. The Standing Committee members promoted policies suitable to the developmental needs in their respective points of contact. For example, Li Changchun 李长春 promoted green industry in Zengcheng city, Guangdong, consistent with the “new leap forward in the east,” and Wu Bangguo 吴邦国 opted for a policy of rural poverty alleviation in Tiandong county, Guangxi, which falls into the category of “vast development of the western regions.” Typically, the locations chosen for standard diaoyan were closely linked to the careers or areas of responsibility of the Standing Committee members. Li Changchun had been Guangdong provincial party secretary from 1998 to 2002, and was thus au fait with Guangdong’s political affairs. Wu Bangguo had been the State Council vice-president, responsible for transportation, labor, social security, and importantly, economics and trade. As such, it was logical for him to promote sweeping economic development in a western region. The policies subsequently espoused by the nine members of the Standing Committee are shown in Map 1.

Map 1 can be seen as a condensed representation of the current key reforms and systems promoted across contemporary China. These policies have been drawn up through the process of standard diaoyan by central leaders, who have been mobilized and have in turn themselves mobilized local leaders, to bulk out the concrete content of the Scientific Outlook on Development, transforming it from mere empty political rhetoric. The symbolic and standard diaoyan associated with the Scientific Outlook on Development are therefore illustrative of the combination of adaptation and mobilization inherent in the adaptive mobilization model.



Map I. Mobilization and regional adaptation in the Scientific Outlook on Development.

Source. Compiled from “Study and Practice the Experience and Effectiveness of the Scientific Outlook on Development,” People.com, <http://kxfz.people.com.cn/GB/150313/> (accessed Oct. 2, 2013).

Notes. 1. The thick gray lines denote the boundary lines of the four different economic regions and their respective developmental approaches: a new leap forward in the east (Beijing, Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Hebei, Jiangsu, Shandong, Shanghai, Tianjin, Zhejiang); the rise of the central provinces (Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Shanxi); revitalization of the northeast (Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning); and the vast development of the western regions (Chongqing, Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Yunnan).

2. The provinces where the Standing Committee members' points of contact are found are shaded in gray. According to the “county-town-village” model of mobilization, new policy models initiated in these points of contact will be expanded across the province.

The China Dream

It would appear that after ascending to the position of general secretary at the Eighteenth National Party Congress, Xi Jinping has inherited the adaptive mobilization model of diaoyan. After coming to power in 2012, Xi Jinping's major ideological contribution has been the China Dream. This abstract concept has received a great deal of attention, and represents Xi's political line for his coming period of governance. To a certain extent, the China Dream is a continuation of Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook on Development, with a focus on comprehensive development and tempering runaway economic

growth. But in addition, the China Dream also emphasizes that China must take on weightier global responsibilities and begin to fulfill the role of a great power on the international stage.

Interestingly, after proposing the China Dream in 2012, Xi has observed not only the reactions of party cadres but also the trend of public opinion of his ideology. After discovering that many people felt corruption would be the biggest obstacle to successful pursuit of the China Dream, Xi moved to put greater emphasis on eradicating corruption (Shenzhen wanbao, May 19, 2014: B14). By doing so, he acknowledged the public's concern and incorporated it into his political line, thereby reinforcing his governing legitimacy and attracting increased public support. In terms of the party's reaction, at a working conference on December 26, 2012, Liu Yunshan 刘云山 was the first Standing Committee member to raise the idea of the China Dream in his own discourse, revealing the close political relations between Liu and Xi (Cheng Pao, Jan. 21, 2013: A1). Subsequently, all the members of the Standing Committee members have mentioned the China Dream in their own speeches.

Following this acceptance of the China Dream, Xi Jinping has begun to mobilize important cadres to begin standard diaoyan to flesh out the specific policy implementation of the abstract China Dream concept. For instance, Politburo Standing Committee member Li Keqiang has carried out diaoyan in Jiangsu and Shanghai; Yu Zhengsheng 俞正声 has visited Guizhou; Liu Yunshan has been to Tianjin; and Zhang Gaoli 张高丽 has inspected the Zhongguancun National Innovation Demonstration Zone in Beijing. During these separate diaoyan trips, the central leaders have announced various policies, including a transition in the economic development model of the developed eastern regions of the country driven by energy-saving, environmentally friendly, and high-tech industry. Policies to accelerate economic growth in the poorer western regions have also been announced, with the aim of decreasing the yawning wealth gap between rich and poor (Xin lingdao, 2013). In essence, these policies barely differ from the main policies of the Scientific Outlook on Development.

However, there are two additional facets to the China Dream: eradicating corruption and emphasizing global responsibilities. First, Xi Jinping has cleverly linked the China Dream with the dissatisfaction of grassroots society with the rampant corruption in the CCP. The leaders and the masses believe that by reducing corruption in the party it will be possible to boost the national revival at an institutional level. As the anti-corruption drive has been so closely tied to Xi's political line and therefore to the legitimacy of his rule, it comes as no surprise that standard diaoyan has also focused on this issue. Politburo Standing Committee member Wang Qishan 王岐山 headed to

Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia to carry out standard diaoyan. He reiterated the importance of stamping out corruption and outlined measures to reduce it, repeating Xi's principles of simultaneously opposing "flies" (grassroots cadres) and "tigers" (high-ranking officials) (*Lianhe zhaobao*, Nov. 29, 2013: 21). Previous anti-corruption drives in China had largely swatted flies and did not hunt down powerful and influential tigers. But in 2014 Xi Jinping demonstrated his ambition to weed out tigers by orchestrating the corruption case of former Central Military Commission vice-chairman Xu Caihou 徐才厚. Xu had close relations with Jiang Zemin, so the investigation of Xu was also indicative of the weakening of gerontocracy and its influence on the military, allowing Xi to strengthen his sway over the army (Jiang, 2014). This notorious case shows how the CCP uses both standard and symbolic diaoyan to direct discourse within the party and in public, which has been conducive to implementing real reform and strengthening the legitimacy of the political line, the China Dream.

Second, the China Dream emphasizes that China must shoulder more global responsibilities. Xi Jinping's embrace of this approach suggests a gradual turn away from the foreign policy stance of "hiding one's capabilities and biding one's time," which has been the accepted *modus operandi* since the Deng Xiaoping era. Nonetheless, it has been framed that a strong military is a prerequisite for China to participate comfortably in world affairs. After the Eighteenth National Party Congress, Xi Jinping and many other important Central Military Commission leaders have carried out standard diaoyan in military affairs units, and have conceived the idea of the "Strong Army Dream" 强军梦 to mirror the China Dream (*Jiefang ribao*, Dec. 13, 2012: 1). In fact, this has come about through the input of military leaders themselves, who have submitted their ideas to Xi Jinping. Through Xi's diaoyan speeches, the military is "guided," and thus the whole army is mobilized to collectively study Chairman Xi's speeches.¹³ As it was PLA (People's Liberation Army) leaders themselves who proposed the ideas that Xi has legitimized, the policies match the military's developmental needs and allow the PLA to achieve its aim: "the more you study the more you want to study; the more you study the more you love to study; the more you study the brighter your mind" (*Jiefangjun bao*, Mar. 21, 2014: 2). In other words, by promoting the Strong Army Dream as an interpretation of his China Dream, Xi Jinping is to a large extent endorsing the policies called for by the military. This is an example of a concrete manifestation of the China Dream to simultaneously adapt to developmental needs and increase Xi's legitimacy.

By means of the Standing Committee members' standard diaoyan approaches, Xi Jinping's China Dream is gradually developing from an abstract and vague ideological notion into a more concrete conception with

specific applications. The China Dream follows on from the Scientific Outlook on Development, but brings in new elements such as the determination to eradicate corruption and a greater emphasis on China's growing international responsibilities. Xi still relies heavily on the functions of both symbolic and standard diaoyan both to ensure that the party elite reaches a political consensus to commit to the China Dream, and to formulate specific policies under the auspices of this political line to promote national development. Although there is some way to go in the development and consolidation of the China Dream political line, through diaoyan Xi appears to have successfully mobilized many Standing Committee members and other high-ranking cadres to begin the process of transforming his grand vision into reality.

From this new wave of diaoyan in the new era of Xi Jinping it is possible to discern a continuity and consistency in the political operations of the CCP. Successive leaders have employed this approach to their advantage, combining symbolic and standard diaoyan to mobilize the party to create adaptive policies meeting local needs. This complex policy-making procedure is captured in the "model of adaptive mobilization."

Conclusion

CCP policy making is complex, shaped by the diverse regional conditions across China and the need to maintain the party's legitimacy. This article underlines Heilmann's "shadow of hierarchy," demonstrating how the diaoyan politics of the CCP's top central leaders play an instrumental role in setting in motion and guiding adaptive policy transfer and diffusion across the nation. The top CCP leader first proposes a new political line to guide the regime's development and adaptation to new conditions. After introduction and promotion of this political line through symbolic diaoyan, a consensus on the regime's ideological direction can be reached by the top central leaders, reinforcing the regime's unified legitimacy. Thereafter, high-ranking leaders select regional points of contact to conduct standard diaoyan, introducing model experiments and putting forward concrete policies adapted to the diverse needs of each region based on the information gathered. These models are also expanded regionally through the mobilization of lower-ranking cadres.

This method of mobilization of cadres to fulfill the political purposes of the central CCP authorities has been continually employed and adapted since the time of Mao Zedong, emerging into an increasingly institutionalized system of policy making and implementation. As Elizabeth Perry emphasizes, the political present in China continues to exhibit vestiges of the CCP's

revolutionary past (Perry, 2012). The trend of mobilization is a legacy of the party's revolutionary origins, but it continues to shape policy making even today. Diaoyan politics and its inherent processes of mobilization can thus explain further how the CCP is able to produce flexible policies suited to each region while simultaneously promoting the overall development of China under a universal political line.

China's modern reform cannot be regarded as simply a gradual process of policy innovation. Instead, as this article argues, the adaptation and mobilization inherent in the CCP can be encapsulated in the "adaptive mobilization model"; and diaoyan politics is a key operational application of this model. The CCP makes ingenious use of diaoyan to mobilize for political purposes, develop regionally adapted policy innovations, and enhance the legitimacy of the party's political guiding ideologies.

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Notes

1. Although *diaoyan* can be split into these two "ideal types," there may in certain cases be crossovers between the types.
2. In the CCP, the political "line" is the prevailing political thinking or ideology, usually designed and put in place by a specific top leader. For more on this topic, see Schurmann, 1968: 17–104; Guo, 2013: 21–32.
3. Significant examples include Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening Up, Jiang Zemin's Three Represents, Hu Jintao's Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping's China Dream.
4. For instance, after the SARS epidemic broke out in 2003, the CCP mobilized the masses into a new "people's war" to eradicate the virus. See Saich, 2006: 86.
5. In the CCP leadership structure, there are 25 to 35 people responsible for different areas of governance. These key leaders hold the policy decision-making power for their respective areas of political responsibility (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988: 35).

6. This phrase is derived from a Chinese proverb “The sparrow is small, but perfectly formed” (literally: although the sparrow is small, it has its five vital organs 麻雀虽小, 五脏俱全). Figuratively, China is the sparrow; by carrying out diaoyan in different areas, the Chinese leadership are effectively “dissecting” the sparrow into its constituent parts. From a statistical perspective, this process refers to selecting a representative area (sample) which must ultimately be generalized to comprehensively reflect the nature of China as a whole (population).
7. The internationalist faction refers to cadres who studied at the Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow. They argued that the Chinese revolution should follow the Soviet model, whereas Mao Zedong advocated a revolution based on China’s conditions. For more, see Saich, 1995.
8. The Confidential Bureau is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of Central General Office 中央办公厅 documents. The important units within the Central General Office include the Secretarial Bureau 秘书局, Security Bureau 警卫局, Complaint Letters and Visits Bureau 信访局, Confidential Bureau 机要局, and Confidential Communication Bureau 机要交通局. See Li, 2006: 55.
9. Once the top leader has announced a new potential political line, if other central leaders praise the top leader or mention the line in their own speeches, this is a key signal of their support. For more on this, see Kou, 2011: 223–31.
10. The awards are co-sponsored by the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Central Party School, and Peking University, and have been awarded biennially since 2000. The hosts of the awards are Yu Keping 俞可平, director of the Comparative Politics and Economy Research Center of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau and director of the China Government Innovation Research Center of Peking University, and Wang Changjiang 王长江, director of the World Party Comparative Research Center of the Central Party School.
11. Jiang Yinxiang and Xi Jinping met in 2003, when Xi was the Zhejiang provincial party secretary. Jiang was a village party secretary in Zhejiang, and the work reports he submitted at the time received great approbation. When Xi left Zhejiang, he maintained contact with Jiang, and after being appointed general secretary, Xi relied on trusted local cadres such as Jiang to report the truth about regional conditions to him. Jiang is permitted to send correspondence directly to the Central General Office to pass on to Xi whereas most cadres or even the general public are not able to contact Xi in this manner. In general, letters sent to the Central General Office rarely find their way to Xi’s hands, but are instead dealt with by the office staff. In fact, many are directly archived and never processed (Qianjiang wanbao, June 7, 2012: A11; Interview, Shanghai cadres, May 31, 2013). Jiang has now retired from his role as party branch secretary.
12. For more on these regions, see “Luoshi kexue fazhan guan” (Implementing the scientific outlook on development),” *Zhongguo jingji wang*, May 18, 2010, <http://www.ce.cn/ztpd/kxfzgz/> (accessed Jan. 1, 2014).
13. This point came from an idea raised in a speech by Singapore scholar Bo Zhiyue at National Chengchi University (Taipei) on May 27, 2014.

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