

DUAL MANDATES IN CHINESE CONGRESSES: INFORMATION AND COOPTATION

Melanie Manion, Viola Rothschild, Hongshen Zhu

Survey data suggest a high proportion of Chinese congress delegates sit concurrently in two or more congresses. In democracies, dual mandates are not unusual, but the literature has failed to notice them in China, much less theorize or analyze them. We turn to the political science literature on assemblies under authoritarianism to guide analysis of survey data for 3,008 county congress delegates, half of them concurrent delegates. We show that dual mandates amplify some voices and not others in ways consistent with two perspectives in the literature. Dual mandates amplify *information* from citizens at the grassroots upward to governments: more delegates with deep community roots representing poor, rural, remote districts sit concurrently in county and lower-level congresses. Dual mandates also *coopt* into politics influential groups posing a potential challenge to ruling party power: they amplify influence of private entrepreneurs, more of whom sit concurrently in county and prestigious higher-level congresses.

Keywords: China; people's congresses; dual mandates; information; cooptation

Word count: 6,223

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1. Introduction

From the political center in Beijing down to the township, Chinese people's congresses are large amateur assemblies, numerically dominated by communist party members. Congress delegates (i.e., congressmen and congresswomen) acquire their seats in elections that are intrusively engineered by the communist party. This is the case especially at the municipal level and higher but is also true of townships and counties, the lowest two levels of the state and the only levels at which voters directly elect their representatives. In this paper, we study a subset of Chinese local congress delegates: those with "dual mandates," who sit concurrently in two or more congresses, accounting for perhaps more than 50 percent of county and municipal congress delegates (Manion 2015). In most countries where dual mandates are found, legislation stipulates the form and level of mandate permitted. By contrast, we find nothing in Chinese law on dual mandates nor any official rationale for them. Moreover, despite a sizable literature on Chinese congresses (e.g., Cho 2009; Truex 2016; Hou 2109), scholars have mostly failed even to notice dual mandates, much less analyze them. As a result, we have neither a theoretical nor an empirical understanding of dual mandates in Chinese congresses. This paper addresses these lacunae.

Taking as a point of departure the frequency of dual mandates in Chinese congresses and the communist party's management of who gets elected, we presume (but test our presumption) that dual mandates are not an unintended occurrence. We study differences between delegates who sit concurrently in more than one congress (hereafter, concurrent delegates) and those who sit only in one congress (hereafter, non-concurrent delegates) to illuminate principles of dual mandate design in China. More specifically, we look to a literature in political science to guide our investigation of how (if at all) the configuration of dual mandates in Chinese congresses conforms to either or both of two well-established theoretical perspectives on assemblies in authoritarian states. In one perspective, assemblies function as conduits of *information* upward from the citizens that congress delegates represent to the single-party governments that dominate policymaking. In another perspective, assemblies are institutions of *cooptation* that bring into the formal political arena influential individuals and groups that pose a potential challenge to ruling party power. Empirically, we analyze original data from a probability sample survey of 3,008 county congress delegates, of whom 50 percent sit concurrently in two or more congresses.

We begin by testing the null hypothesis that concurrent delegates do not evidently differ from their non-concurrent fellows. We find they differ on so many dimensions that dual mandates seem not to be a chance occurrence. For example, concurrent delegates have higher political status: proportionately more of them are communist party members, and the party invests more in them with training at higher party schools. We then formulate and test hypotheses that distinguish between what information and cooptation perspectives imply for dual mandates in authoritarian assemblies. Specifically, we analyze how delegates who sit concurrently in county and township congresses and delegates who sit concurrently in county

and higher-level congresses differ from non-concurrent delegates. The former distinction is relevant to testing implications of an information perspective; the latter distinction is relevant to testing implications of a cooptation perspective. We find significant differences in individual delegate characteristics as well as the voting districts that delegates represent. These differences suggest underlying principles of dual mandate design that reflect both information and cooptation considerations. For example, more private entrepreneurs sit concurrently in county congresses and congresses at higher levels that confer political status and generate opportunities to access higher government officials. We see this as support for a cooptation perspective on dual mandates because, since 2002, when they were officially welcomed into the communist party, Chinese private entrepreneurs constitute arguably the most influential socio-economic group the ruling party wants to engage safely in the formal political area that the party dominates. By contrast, seated concurrently in county congresses and township congresses, the two lowest levels of the state, we find more delegates with deep roots in the community, who are elected from poorer, more rural, more remote voting districts. We see this as support for an information perspective: dual mandates can only work successfully to convey local information upward to governments if they augment views from the grassroots and the periphery. We then move on to analyze legislative behaviors of delegates to study whether the underlying principles of information and cooptation in dual mandate design actually function: are the “amplified voices” that dual mandate design gives to concurrent delegates actively used by them? We find concurrent delegates indeed behave differently from non-concurrent delegates in ways that amplify their voices. For example, they are more involved in some of the most demanding congresses activities, such as writing and submitting motions. More of their motions are advanced to the congress agenda, which suggests the authorities treat the interests they represent as more worthy of consideration. Constituents also seem to recognize their own voices are amplified if concurrent delegates hear them: they seek out concurrent delegates more and concurrent delegates are better problem solvers for them.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides descriptive background on Chinese congresses in the reform era. Section 3 reviews the information and cooptation perspectives on assemblies under authoritarianism and develops their implications for dual mandates. Section 4 introduces our data. Sections 5 and 6 present hypotheses and discuss analytical findings on congress design and legislative behavior, respectively. Section 7 concludes.

2. Background

Chinese congresses are found at the five levels of the Chinese state: townships, counties, municipalities, provinces, and national. In official party rhetoric, they are intended to play the role of “bridges” between the governing authorities and Chinese citizens. They disappeared entirely in 1966, as part of the radical attack on institutions instigated by Mao Zedong in the Cultural Revolution. When post-Mao communist party leaders reinstated the congresses in the late 1970s, they introduced reforms such as legally mandated contestation, secret ballots, and voter nomination of candidates. They also extended upward the “direct” elections of congress delegates: in districts represented by one to three delegates, voters now elect their delegates to

township and county congresses. Above the county—at the municipal, provincial, and national levels—congresses are still “indirectly” elected: tier by tier, candidates for seats in these congresses emerge from the first post-election meetings of the congress immediately below.¹

The communist party retains strong, although imperfect, control over who becomes congress delegates, through its management of elections at all levels.² As in all Leninist-type communist polities, the party prohibits rival parties outside it and factions within it. Local authorities routinely harass independent candidates and go to great lengths to obstruct their election. The law seriously restricts electoral campaigning; in practice, most local authorities impose even more strict limits. Most importantly, party-led election committees act as effective veto players: they decide which nominees appear as candidates on the ballot.

3. Theory

In democracies, dual mandates are not uncommon. For example, in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Finland, more than three-fourths of legislators hold a local and some higher (including national) mandate; in Hungary, Sweden, Portugal, and Germany, the percentages range from about 25 to 50 percent (Navarro 2009, 2013). The local mandate usually refers to a local assembly seat or city alderman or mayoral office; the higher part of the dual mandate can be regional or national. Scholarly research on dual mandates remains scarce (Van de Voorde and de Vet 2020). Indeed, only recently have comparativists turned their attention to study behavioral consequences.

In most countries with dual mandates, legislation stipulates the form and level of mandate permitted. For the Chinese case, however, we find no official discussion of dual mandates and no scholarship on them. We turn for theoretical guidance to the literature on assemblies in authoritarian states. In particular, we look to two well-established perspectives, which are not mutually exclusive, at the assembly level at least. One perspective emphasizes the *informational* utility of assemblies under authoritarianism. Assemblies serve as a conduit of information from ordinary citizens to decisionmakers in single-party governments (Geddes 2006; Magaloni 2006; Brownlee 2007; Gandhi 2008; Malesky and Schuler 2011; Simpser 2013). Authoritarian government leaders need knowledge of public opinion as well as information to identify potential opposition. They also need information to assess the performance of subnational officials. In line with this, Manion (2015) studies Chinese local congresses as an institutionalized source of local knowledge from the grassroots to local governments. Local knowledge is valuable to governments, giving them the opportunity to use responsive governance to promote social stability in the locality, a *sine qua non* for advancement for local officials. A second perspective on assemblies in authoritarian states

¹Party leaders in county, municipal, and provincial congress meetings intrusively engineer the election of *candidates* for seats in congresses above, but the “indirect” elections that ultimately produce municipal, provincial, and national congress delegates are managed by party leaders at these higher-level congresses.

² For elaboration on the details in this paragraph, see Manion 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017.

views them as institutions that *coopt* some individuals and groups into formal politics dominated by a single party (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, 2007). Authoritarian leaders who rely too heavily on repression for survival become dependent on the security apparatus; placing a large share of resources in the hands of security elites is risky. A safer strategy is to welcome influential groups, such as those with significant socio-economic resources, into the formal political arena of assemblies. This form of cooptation encourages potential opposition to reveal their demands and negotiate agreements. In China, the cooptation of private entrepreneurs into politics began in 2002 with recruitment of them into the communist party. In the literature on Chinese congresses, one prominent view (Truex 2016; Hou 2019) describes the attraction of a congress seat for private entrepreneurs as a signal of political status and a channel to build relationships with government officials.

From the perspectives summarized above, we derive testable implications about underlying design principles for dual mandates in China's authoritarian state. In developing hypotheses, we conceive of dual mandates in Chinese congresses as a pair of analytically distinct choices by communist party managers of congress elections: (1) an assignment of some individuals to "compete" in elections for more than one congress seat, and (2) an assignment of these individuals to "compete" for seats in congresses above or congresses below (or both above and below).³ The former choice, which distinguishes concurrent delegates from non-concurrent delegates, presents us with a null hypothesis that dual mandates signify nothing at all "by design," but are a chance event yielding no discernible patterns—indeed, empirically equivalent to a coin flip in the county congresses we analyze here. The latter choice permits us to test hypotheses relevant to each of the two theoretical perspectives on assemblies in authoritarian states. We elaborate and test these hypotheses in Sections 5 and 6 below.

4. Data

Chinese counties, nearly 3,000 in all, are an important level of Chinese local governance, with powerful, fully developed governance structures. We focus on them in this paper for two reasons. First, county congress delegates are directly elected. We think this makes the information perspective more plausible than might be the case for "indirectly" elected delegates in municipal congresses and above, in which ordinary citizens play no role. Secondly, the number of delegates in the data we analyze is significantly greater for delegates surveyed in county congresses than for those surveyed in township or municipal congresses.

We analyze data for a total of 3,008 delegates surveyed in 19 probabilistically-selected county congresses in Anhui, Hunan, and Zhejiang provinces. The county congress sample is distributed across six urban districts, nine rural counties, and four county-level cities—nested in six large municipalities, two each in the three provinces. The surveys were conducted from

³ For delegates who sit concurrently in the directly elected township and county congresses, these are simultaneous choices and outcomes. For delegates who sit concurrently in township or county (or township and county) and higher-level congresses, however, the outcomes at least are sequential. As noted in Section 2, candidates for seats in congresses above the county level emerge from the first post-election meetings of the congress immediately below.

November 2006 through October 2009.⁴

Fully 50 percent of the 3,008 congress delegates surveyed sit concurrently in at least one other congress, most typically in a congress one level up or down, although over 100 of them sit in more than two congresses.⁵ Table 1 reports frequencies in our sample for non-concurrent delegates as well as different institutional configurations of concurrent delegates.

[Table 1 about here]

As shown in Table 1, the preponderance of concurrent delegates in the sample are seated in county and township congresses—a configuration we label “concurrent-downward.” This is mainly mechanical: the municipalities in which our surveyed counties are nested are many fewer than the townships nested within our surveyed counties.

The sample bias toward concurrent-downward delegates among concurrent delegates has implications for analysis, however: if we simply pool concurrent delegates to analyze how they differ from non-concurrent delegates, we are making inferences that largely reflect characteristics of the nearly 80 percent of delegates who are concurrent-downward. This ignores heterogeneity that is potentially theoretically relevant. Most importantly, we presume that “concurrent-upward” seats, such as seats in county and municipal congresses, which characterize more than 200 delegates in our sample, confer more status than no concurrent seat, but we do not make the same presumption for concurrent-downward seats. This is relevant in testing hypotheses about cooptation: if a township congress seat confers little or no added status for a county congress delegate, we think it unlikely to work to coopt powerful outsiders into the formal political arena.

Also relevant to considerations of heterogeneity, a small percentage of delegates in our sample sit concurrently in county and township congresses and one or more congresses above the county. As our hypothesis-testing mainly aims to distinguish between concurrent-downward and concurrent-upward delegates, we drop these delegates from the sample in our analyses.

5. Analysis: Dual Mandate Design

In this section, we test hypotheses about an underlying dual mandate design by comparing

⁴ Manion (2015, 155–167) presents a detailed account of the survey and its implementation.

⁵ Obviously, these categories of dual mandates depend on perspective: concurrent-downward delegates in our sample are concurrent-upward delegates in township congresses, for example. This can pose a problem for empirical analysis: simply mechanically, concurrent delegates have more constituents and more opportunities for the various delegate behaviors we measure than do non-concurrent delegates. The survey instrument mitigates this by prefacing item prompts with “as a county congress delegate.” This cannot ensure that surveyed delegates make the distinction clearly in generating their responses, but our results do not suggest a mechanical bias of this sort.

differences in mean values on 19 individual delegate characteristics and five voting district characteristics for three sub-groups in our sample: concurrent-downward, concurrent-upward, and non-concurrent delegates. Mean values are presented in Table 2. Shaded cells draw attention to difference-between-means tests that are relevant to hypotheses derived from the information and cooptation perspectives reviewed in Section 3. Bolded values indicate values that are significantly different from values for non-concurrent delegates.

[Table 2 about here]

H0: no design. Concurrent delegates do not differ from non-concurrent delegates. This hypothesis is not supported. As shown in Table 2, both categories of concurrent delegates are significantly different from non-concurrent delegates on practically every dimension. We particularly note that concurrent delegates have higher political status, by several indicators. Higher percentages of them are communist party members. Higher percentages of them hold positions as party or government officials, including positions of leadership. On average, concurrent delegates are given training at higher-ranked communist party schools, compared to non-concurrent delegates.⁶ Also, higher percentages of them are men.

We turn now to hypothesis-testing related to theoretical perspectives on dual mandates. As stated above, we presume concurrent-upward status confers something of value to influential outsiders that the party intends to coopt, but we do not presume this for concurrent-downward status. Shaded cells in the concurrent-upward column are relevant to tests related to the cooptation perspective. For tests related to the information perspective, the sub-group of interest is concurrent-downward delegates. This subgroup is better positioned to provide “extra” local knowledge to governments at higher levels. Among delegates in our sample, for example, a county congress delegate who sits concurrently in a township congress, is more connected to the grassroots in two ways. First as a township delegate, he or she is implicated in a direct relationship representing citizens in a much smaller voting district: the population represented by a township delegate is a community of perhaps 550; by contrast, county delegates are elected in voting districts with an average population of roughly 2,500 (see Manion 2015, 32). Secondly, through meetings of the township congress and dealings with fellow township delegates outside of meetings, he or she is better connected with the situation in small communities throughout the township that fellow township congress delegates represent.

As highlighted by the shaded cells in Table 2, we have only one bundle of characteristics to test implications of a cooptation perspective for dual mandates. We have three bundles of characteristics to test implications of an information perspective.

H1: cooptation. Assignments of concurrent-upward delegates draw more from influential groups that pose a potential challenge to the ruling party. We focus on occupational groups with significant socio-economic resources: private-sector entrepreneurs (including individual

⁶ A value of 1 indicates training at a township party school, 2 indicates training at a county party school, and 3 indicates training at a municipal party school.

entrepreneurs), enterprise managers, and workers (including skilled workers and industrial workers). In view of the literature, we consider private entrepreneurs the definitive target group in testing implications of the cooptation perspective. This is also the (only) group for which the perspective is supported: 21 percent of concurrent-upward delegates are private entrepreneurs, significantly more than the 15 percent found among non-concurrent delegates. We consider this as support for the cooptation perspective.

It is also worth noting that private entrepreneurs are much less likely to be found among concurrent-downward delegates, which is consistent with our intuition that a township congress seat is not a status enticement for these influential outsiders.

H2a. information. Assignments of concurrent-downward delegates draw more from voting districts in the periphery. Although we lack studies of dual mandates in Chinese congresses, scholars have studied concurrent appointments of local communist party secretaries to higher party leadership groups in China. In a recent analysis of municipal party secretaries sitting on provincial party committees, Bulman and Jaros (2019) find that subordinate localities benefit economically or politically from such concurrent appointments.⁷ At the same time, they identify different consequences, depending on characteristics of the municipality. In testing implications of the information perspective, we borrow from them the importance of the distinction between core and peripheral localities.

We identify several locality-specific measures for the 19 county-level units in our sample to distinguish between geographically and economically core and peripheral localities: (logged) distance from county to prefectural capital city; administrative classification of the county (urban district, county-level city); level of county economic development, reflected in logged DMSP-OLS satellite nighttime light; and percent of county population that is rural. We define core counties as those that are less rural, more economically developed, and more proximate to the county and prefectural capitals. Peripheral counties are more rural, more remote, and poorer.

As shown in Table 2, significantly higher proportions of concurrent-downward delegates are found in peripheral localities. This supports the information perspective, with these dual mandates carrying an extra burden of conveying information upward.

H2b. information. Assignments of concurrent-downward delegates draw more from individuals with local roots. If dual mandates are to convey information upward to governments, amplifying the voice of the grassroots at congresses, then the assignment of concurrent-downward delegates should reflect deep local knowledge. We measure this in two ways. Most simply, we consider whether delegates are “insiders,” who have lived longer in their communities and have thereby been spatially implicated in local issues for a long time. In addition, we consider whether or not delegates are elected community leaders (e.g., village

⁷ Bulman and Jaros (2019) are responding to studies by Huang (1996), Huang and Sheng (2009), and Sheng (2009), who present evidence suggesting concurrent appointments better align policy preferences of subordinates with superiors.

committee heads or urban residential community heads). Although these elections are manipulable, it is to the advantage of the regime to identify individuals who are popular, so that ordinary citizens come to them with everyday local problems that can be resolved before they worsen and provoke civil unrest. Results in Table 2 support these tests of the information perspective. On average, concurrent-downward delegates have lived in their respective voting districts for nearly 41 years, significantly longer than non-current delegates, and some 31 percent of them are elected community leaders, compared to 19 percent for non-concurrent delegates.

H2c. information. Assignments of concurrent-downward delegates draw more from governing elites. Table 2 shows that party and government elites make up significantly bigger percentages of concurrent delegates, compared to non-concurrent delegates. This is descriptively interesting for what it may signify about nesting of political leaders in congress hierarchies, but what matters for our hypothesis-testing is the percentage of governing elites among concurrent-downward delegates. From an information perspective, a congress seat for a party or government official, including a party or government leader, creates a grassroots link. It implicates him or her in a direct relationship with citizens in a spatially-defined community that is smaller than the county. Although congress standing committee members do not follow the same pattern as party and government governing elites, we see this bundle of results as support for an information perspective.

6. Analysis: Behaviors of Congress Delegates with Dual Mandates

Malesky and Schuler (2010) theorize and find sources of variation among individual delegates, voting districts, and nomination institutions for Vietnam's National Assembly that shape delegate behavior. In this section, we follow their lead and investigate the behavioral implications of dual mandates for relationships between delegates and their constituents.⁸ Concurrent delegates have higher political status than non-current delegates. Concurrent-downward delegates are closer to the grassroots. We test whether dual mandate design in Chinese congresses functions such that the "amplified voices" it gives to concurrent delegates are actively used. Specifically, we test three hypotheses:

H3a. Concurrent delegates are better problem solvers for their constituents. If dual mandates amplify constituent voices, we expect constituents to seek out concurrent delegates more and concurrent delegates to take more action to solve problems constituents bring to them.

H3b. Concurrent delegates are more involved in and more successful at legislative activities. If concurrent delegates know their voices are amplified, we expect them to be more motivated

⁸ We note here that the survey of some 5,000 local congress delegates from which we draw our data was accompanied by a survey of constituents in a sub-sample of township congresses in which surveyed delegates sit. As constituents and congress delegates were asked about many of the same activities, a comparison pairing delegates with constituents in their voting district permits a reliability check on delegate self-reports. Based on a comparison of reported activities, Manion (2015, 168–169) concludes that self-reports on delegate behaviors are not self-aggrandizing.

to engage in activities such as submitting proposals, criticisms, suggestions, and motions. If dual mandates are designed to convey information and represent interests that the state considers worth aggregating and advancing, we expect delegates to be more successful in these activities.

H3c. Concurrent delegates take more actions to represent their constituents in legislative activities. In particular, the information function of dual mandate design requires concurrent delegates to connect with their constituents so we should see more representation.

We note that this is not an obvious set of hypotheses: dual mandates in liberal democracies are associated with less parliamentary activity (François and Weill 2016; Hájek 2017; Van de Voorde 2020); moreover, findings on representation by legislators with dual mandates are mixed (Brack, Costa, and Teixeira 2012; Brouard, Costa, Kerrouche, and Schnatterer 2013).

We specify linear OLS models for different delegate behaviors as our dependent variables, with categories of delegate status (concurrent-upward and concurrent-downward, with non-concurrent as the reference category, reported in the intercept) as explanatory variables. Because the prevalence of dual mandates varies across surveyed provinces, we specify municipal fixed effects in our models.⁹

Problem Solving

We measure the demand and supply side of delegate problem solving with responses to survey questions about community problems reported to delegates by constituents and constituent requests for help with individual issues. We hypothesize that constituents seek out concurrent delegates more frequently than their non-concurrent peers to handle local problems or provide particularistic constituency service—and that concurrent delegates actually do more problem solving. Columns 1 and 2 in Table 3 reflect the constituent demand side of problem solving; columns 3 and 4 reflect the supply side. Results are visualized in Figures 1 and 2. As hypothesized, concurrent delegates outperform non-concurrent delegates on all measured dimensions of constituent problem solving.

[Table 3 and Figures 1 and 2 about here]

Legislative Involvement

Problem solving happens outside of congress sessions. In congress, delegates spend much time listening to and discussing government reports. Other than this, congress activity consists of offering proposals, criticisms, and suggestions and submitting motions. The main distinction among these activities is between motions and the other three (see Manion 2015, 91). Motions are formal, written documents, with a higher threshold for delegate coordination. They can be submitted only at annual congress meetings and require at least ten signatories.

⁹ The prevalence of concurrent seats among county congress delegates surveyed is 67 percent in Anhui, 57 percent in Hunan, and 37 percent in Zhejiang. Municipal fixed effects controls for this and unspecified variation below the provincial level.

Motions supply a rationale and evidence to support a plan of action to address a general issue within the competence of the congress. Most delegate efforts at motions fail to advance to the congress agenda: congress leaders reject them. Advancement to the agenda, however, carries a strong presumption of passage.

In sum, motions, especially motions that advance to the congress agenda, demand significantly greater competence and coordination than do proposals, criticisms, or suggestions. We hypothesize that concurrent delegates, compared to their non-concurrent peers, have greater ability to originate motions and more connections with other delegates to find co-signatories for them.¹⁰ We label this “legislative involvement.”

Columns 1 and 2 in Table 4 present yearly averages of motions originated and motions that advance to the congress agenda. Figure 3 presents a visualization with confidence intervals. Both concurrent-downward and concurrent-upward delegates do better at these measures of legislative involvement than do non-concurrent delegates.

[Table 4 and Figure 3 about here]

Representation

We define proposals, criticisms, suggestions, and motions as representative when the impetus for these activities is contact with constituents. We expect concurrent delegates to have more constituent contact (the demand part of problem solving above) and greater legislative involvement to do more to represent their constituents, compared to non-concurrent delegates. Columns 3 and 4 in Table 4 present yearly averages for these activities. Figure 4 presents a visualization with confidence intervals. Concurrent-upward delegates do not perform significantly better than non-concurrent delegates at representing constituents in the less demanding congressional activity of submitting proposals, criticisms, and suggestions based on county constituent contact. Concurrent-downward delegates do perform better than do non-concurrent county congress delegates. For the more demanding activity of originating motions based on county constituent contact, both categories of concurrent delegates outperform non-concurrent delegates.

[Figure 4 about here]

7. Conclusion

Survey evidence indicates such dual mandates in Chinese congresses are common. We know that the communist party intervenes in congress elections to produce particular delegate configurations—so it seems likely that dual mandates occur by design, not chance. In this article, we show that chance occurrence is indeed improbable: concurrent delegates differ significantly from their non-concurrent fellows on nearly every dimension we observe. By

¹⁰ Here, we distinguish between originating a motion and merely acting as a signatory to a motion. The former activity, our focus here, is more demanding.

design, dual mandates “amplify” the voices of some congress delegates and not others. We analyze individual delegate characteristics, voting district features, and legislative behavior for 3,008 county congress delegates, 50 percent of whom sit concurrently in two or more congresses. We show which voices the party selects for amplification and whether these voices are actually amplified in how concurrent congress delegates do their work. More specifically, we show that differences between concurrent and non-concurrent congress delegates and across different institutional configurations of concurrent congress delegates in China are consistent with two well-established perspectives in the political science literature on assemblies under authoritarianism: information and cooptation.

Delegates who sit concurrently in county congresses and congresses at higher levels differ from non-concurrent delegates in *who* they are: more of them are private entrepreneurs. This supports a cooptation perspective of dual mandates. Since 2002, the party has made strong efforts to coopt this influential socio-economic group into the formal political area. Higher-level congresses are relatively attractive, as they confer political status and generate opportunities to access higher government officials. Delegates who sit concurrently in county and township congresses differ from non-concurrent delegates in *who* they are and *where* they are elected. More of them have deep roots in the community and are elected from poorer, more rural, more remote voting districts. This supports an information perspective: dual mandates convey information upward to governments by amplifying voices from the grassroots and the periphery.

Concurrent delegates also differ from non-concurrent delegates in what they *do* in congress. Their amplified voices are reflected in greater legislative involvement in some of the most demanding congress activities, including writing and submitting motions. Relatively more of their motions are advanced to the congress agenda, an indication that the authorities consider the voices they represent relatively more deserving of consideration. Not least of all, the constituents of concurrent delegates seem to recognize their own voices are amplified if they reach the ears of concurrent delegates. They seek out concurrent delegates more and concurrent delegates outperform their non-concurrent fellows at representing them.

Table 1. Congress Seats of 3,008 Delegates Surveyed

Congress Level		%
non-concurrent: county only	1,233	41.0
township + county	1,189	39.5
county + municipality	201	6.7
township + county + municipality	91	3.0
county + province	6	0.5
county + province + at least 1 additional congress	9	
missing	279	9.3
TOTAL	3,008	100

Table 2. Differences between Concurrent and Non-Concurrent Delegates, Mean Values

	Downward	Non-Concurrent	Upward
age	52.64	54.53	56.85
sex	0.84	0.69	0.85
education	4.65	4.84	5.07
communist party member	0.92	0.73	0.85
highest communist party school	2.39	1.93	2.73
years lived in voting district	40.60	35.51	35.96
elected community leader	0.31	0.19	0.15
congress standing committee	0.03	0.10	0.24
party or government leader	0.25	0.15	0.32
party or government official	0.15	0.11	0.15
individual entrepreneur: 个体户	0.02	0.02	0.01
private entrepreneur	0.06	0.15	0.21
enterprise manager	0.05	0.10	0.08
skilled worker or professional	0.01	0.03	0.01
industrial worker	0.01	0.02	0.00
teacher	0.04	0.10	0.02
agricultural worker	0.06	0.06	0.02
enterprise or agency staff	0.01	0.01	0.00
military or police	0.01	0.03	0.01
distance to prefectural city	0.98	0.42	0.54
urban district	0.20	0.28	0.30
county-level city	0.19	0.22	0.18
county economic development	1.35	1.68	1.43
% rural population	80.91	74.18	75.94

Education is measured on a 6-point scale, with 4 as senior middle school (高中) or technical secondary school (中专) and 5 as technical college (大专). Economic development reflects nighttime coverage in satellite images. Concurrent-spanning delegates are dropped.

Shaded: hypothesis testing, implications of information and cooptation theories

Bolded: different from non-concurrent at $p < .05$

Table 3. Constituent Perceptions and Actual Problem Solving

	Constituent Perceptions		Problem Solving	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
concurrent-downward	2.086 (0.404)	2.849 (0.383)	1.904 (0.343)	2.376 (0.304)
concurrent-upward	1.972 (0.737)	2.394 (0.704)	2.075 (0.622)	1.723 (0.557)
intercept	10.247 (0.264)	7.211 (0.250)	6.845 (0.224)	4.760 (0.198)
R-squared	0.115	0.081	0.082	0.069
Observations	2,729	2,720	2,586	2,695

Dependent variables: (1) yearly times problems reported by county constituents, (2) yearly number of county constituents seeking individual help, (3) yearly number of delegate actions on problems reported, (4) yearly number of delegate actions on help sought

Reference category is non-concurrent delegates.

City fixed-effects in all models

Standard errors in parentheses, bolded: $p < .05$

Figure 1. Constituent Perceptions

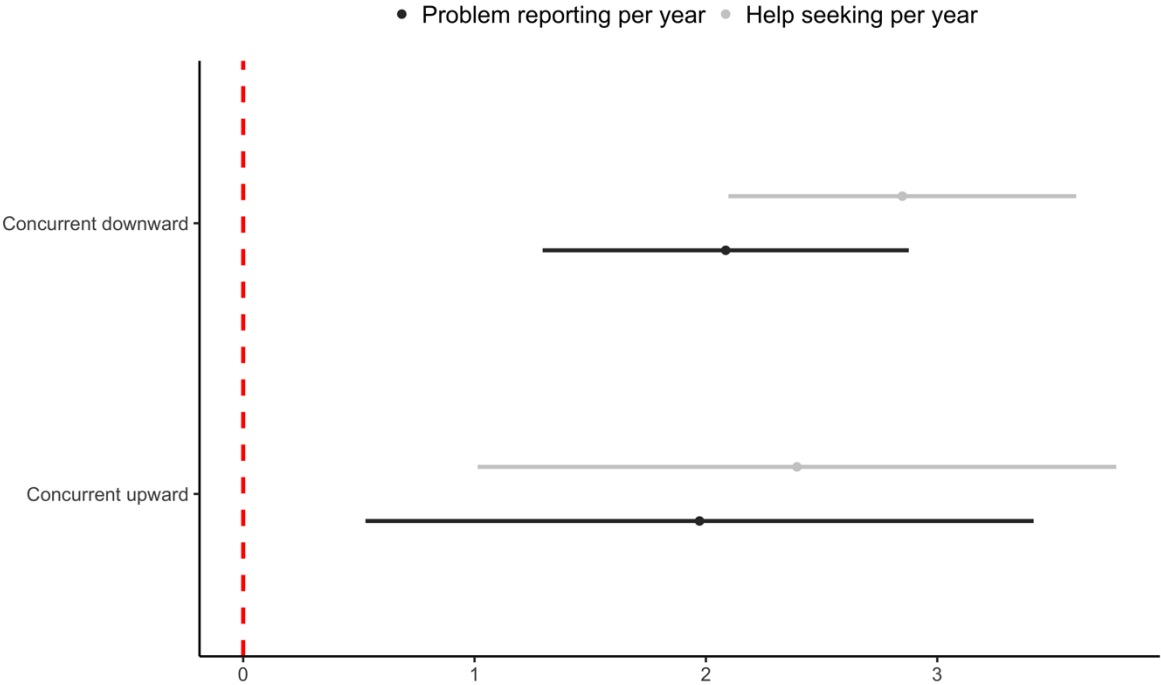


Figure 2. Actual Problem Solving

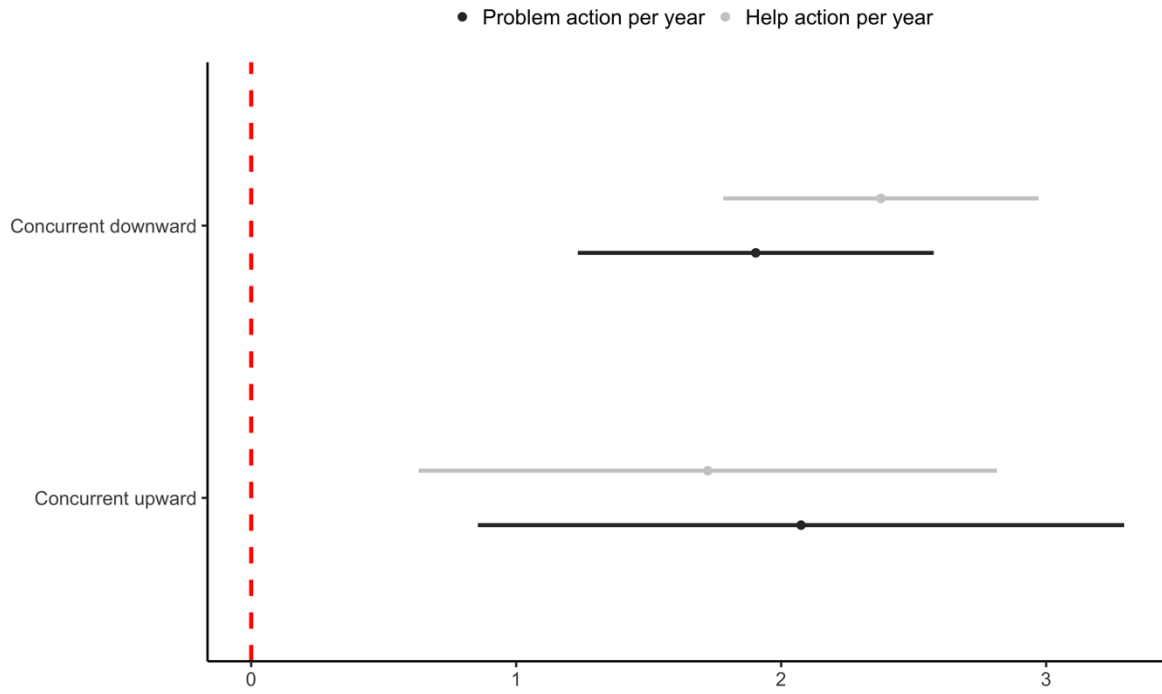


Table 4. Legislative Involvement and Representation

	Involvement		Representation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
concurrent-downward	0.671 (0.140)	0.348 (0.084)	0.231 (0.079)	0.352 (0.112)
concurrent-upward	1.266 (0.259)	0.385 0.155)	0.225 (0.149)	0.623 (0.205)
intercept	2.117 (0.092)	0.820 (0.055)	1.183 (0.052)	1.561 (0.073)
R-squared	0.094	0.027	0.027	0.034
Observations	2,678	2,509	2,421	2,643

Dependent variables: (1) yearly motions originated, (2) yearly motions originated advanced to agenda, (3) yearly proposals, criticisms, and suggestions based on county constituent contact, (4) yearly motions originated based on county constituent contact

Reference category is non-concurrent delegates.

City fixed-effects in all models

Standard errors in parentheses, bolded: $p < .05$

Figure 3. Legislative Involvement

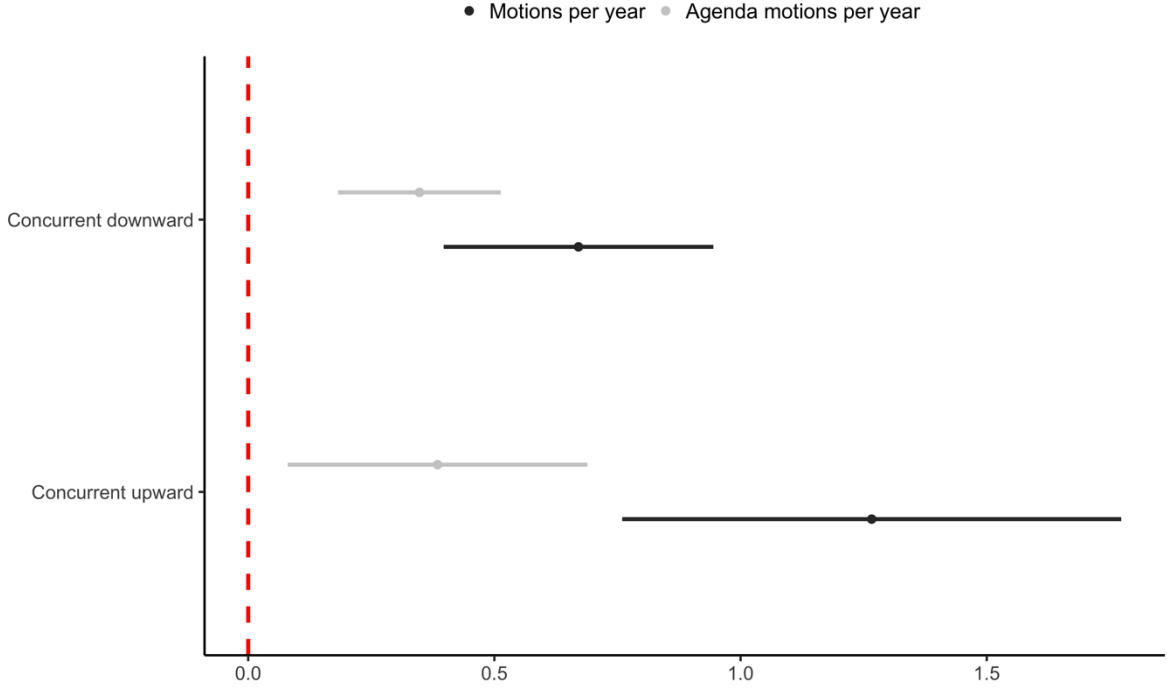
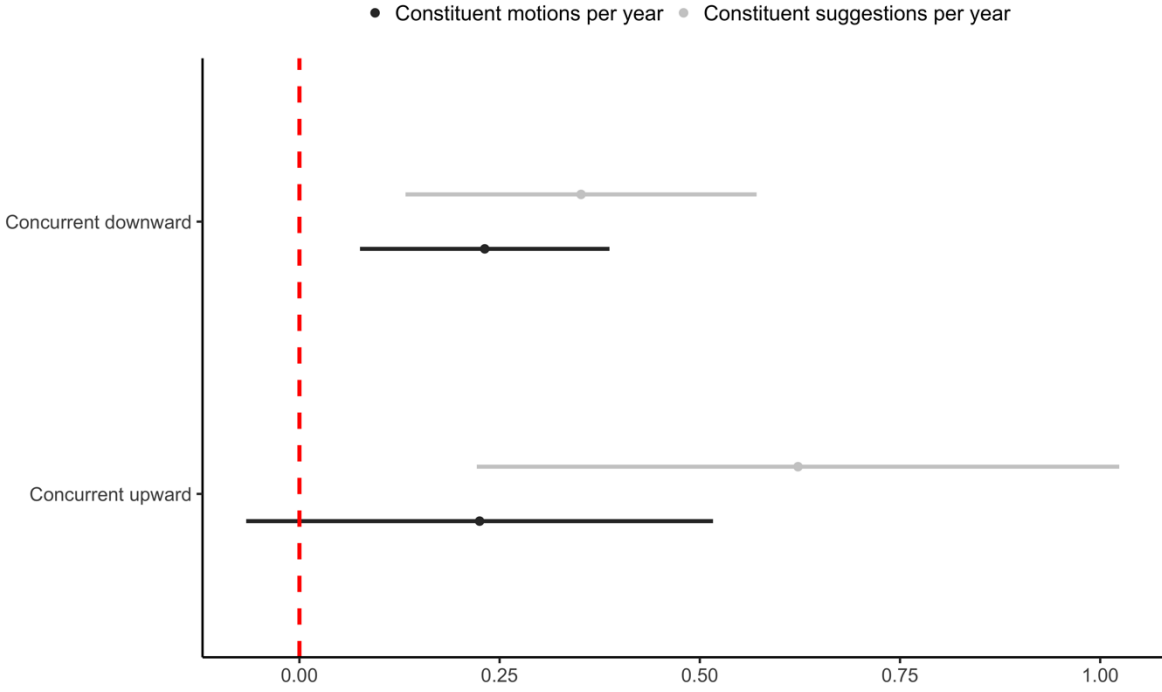


Figure 4. Representation



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