

CP² Week 5: Informal Politics and Factionalism

Dr Chao-Yo Cheng

Event: “Unpacking the 2024 Taiwan Elections”

- ▶ **Date:** 20 March 2024 (Wed)
- ▶ **Time:** 6-7:30pm
- ▶ **Location:** Clore Management Centre B01
- ▶ **Speakers and topics**
 - Dr Chao-Yo Cheng (Birkbeck): "Taiwan and Contemporary global democratic development"
 - Dr Monique Chu (Southampton): "Future of Cross-Straits relations and the international order"
 - Dr Tao Wang (Manchester): "The framing of the elections by China's state media and the responses from the Chinese populace"

Birkbeck, University of London > Events > Unpacking the 2024 Taiwan Elections

UNPACKING THE 2024 TAIWAN ELECTIONS

When: 20 March 2024, 18:00 — 19:30

Venue: Birkbeck Clore Management Centre

[Book your place](#)

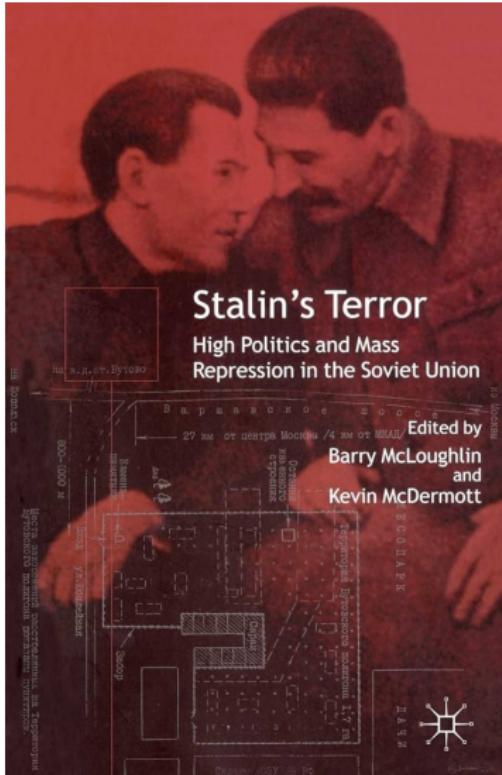
https://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/remote_event_view?id=41131

Today's plan

- ▶ Why informal politics and factionalism
- ▶ Elite politics in post-1949 China: From Mao to Xi
 - Mao Zedong (1949-1976)
 - Deng Xiaoping (1978-1989)
 - Jiang Zemin (1989-2002)
 - Hu Jintao (2002-2012)
 - Xi Jinping (2012-present)
- ▶ Theoretical reflections and empirical debates: Waning institutionalization?

Why informal politics and factionalism

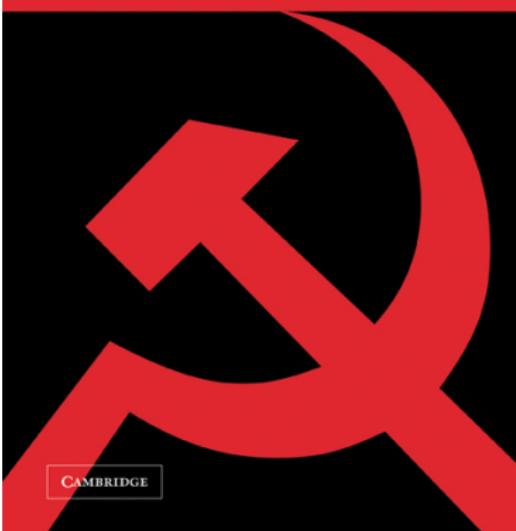
- ▶ The focus of "high" politics in the literature on comparative communism (Gregory 2009)
- ▶ Formal v informal politics: Contending and vague conceptualization
 - Formal: Political activities organized according to the principle of organizational or corporate impersonality; observable and public
 - Informal: Political activities identify by the elements of face-to-face relationships and exchanges of either traditional or charismatic authority; background and implicit



The Political Economy of Stalinism

Evidence from the Soviet Secret Archives

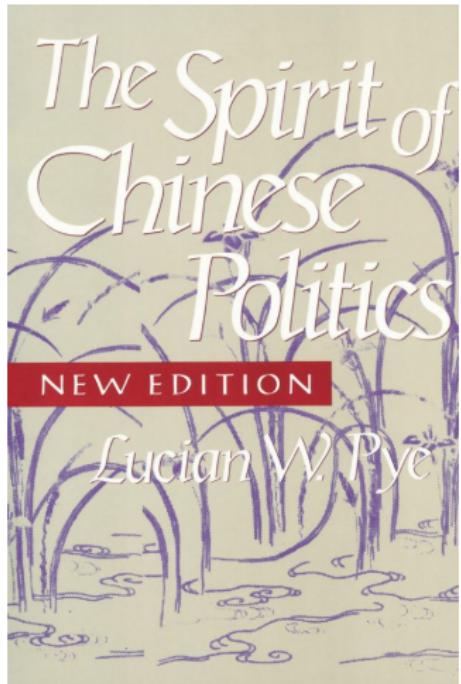
Paul R. Gregory



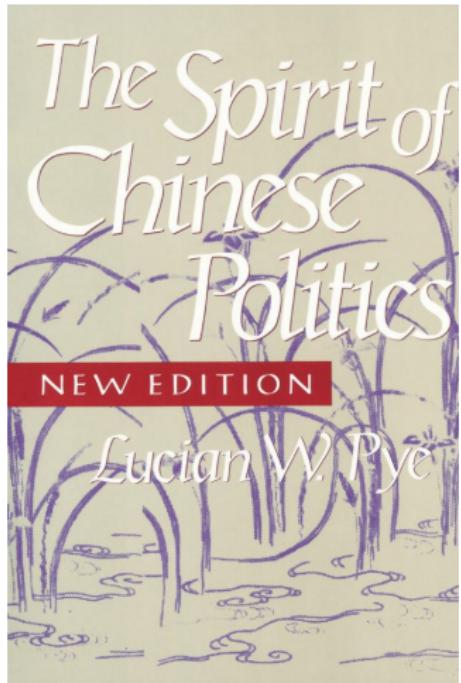
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1823-2023

Informal politics and factionalism in post-1949 China

- ▶ Andrew Nathan (1973): Factional politics is the core of informal politics; a faction is a vertically organized structure of face-to-face (in contrast to corporate) clientelistic ties between leaders and led
- ▶ Tsou Tang (1976): The struggle for power has resulted in the victory of one group or a coalition of **informal** groups (i.e., winner-takes-all)
- ▶ Ditmmer and Wu (1995): Chinese politics is *relational*, which can either be **value-rational** (informal, personal) or **purpose-rational** (formal, organizational)
- ▶ Victor Shih et al (2010): Using biographical characteristics of CC members to measure relative factional influence of the Party's central leaders and their potential contenders and successors



"The prime basis for factions among cadres is the search for **career security** and the **protection of power**..."



“The extraordinary force that holds together the **networks of officials** is the intense attraction of mutual dependency in Chinese culture between superiors and subordinates, each of whom needs the other for his own protection and each of whom is vulnerable to the other, which means **they both must be loyal to each other**” (Pye 1980).

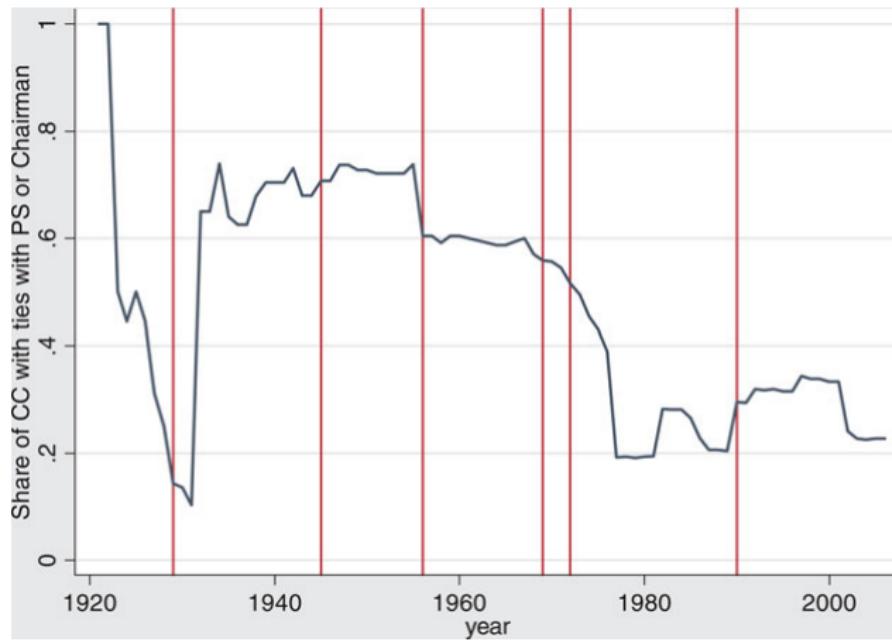
Table 1: Formal Heads of the CCP and Potential Challengers/Successors, 1921–2006

Party secretary/chairman (Figure 2)	Tenure	Potential challengers/successors (Figure 3)
Chen Duxiu	1921–27	
Qu Qiubai	1928–28	
Xiang Zhongfa	1929–31	
Qin Bangxian (Bo Gu)	1932–34	
Zhang Wentian	1935–42	Mao Zedong
Mao Zedong	1943–76	Liu Shaoqi 1943–66 Lin Biao 1967–71 Hua Guofeng 1972–76
Hua Guofeng	1977–81	Deng Xiaoping 1977–81
Hu Yaobang	1982–86	Deng Xiaoping 1982–86
Zhao Ziyang	1987–89	Deng Xiaoping 1987–89
Jiang Zemin	1990–2002	Deng Xiaoping 1990–94 Hu Jintao 1995–2002
Hu Jintao	2003–06	Zeng Qinghong 2003–06

Note:

These dates are years used by the data set, which do not always match the actual year of ascension. As a rule, dates after September of a year are pushed forward to the subsequent year. This is done so we do not have overlapping leaders in a given year.

Figure 2: Share of Central Committee with Ties with the Party Secretary General or Chairman (PSGI)



Notes:

Vertical lines starting from the left:

1. 1929 Xiang Zhongfa appointed Party secretary
2. 1943 Mao officially took over as Party chairman
3. 1956 Eighth Party Congress
4. 1969 Ninth Party Congress
5. 1972 After the Lin Biao Incident
6. 1990 Appointment of Jiang Zemin after 1989

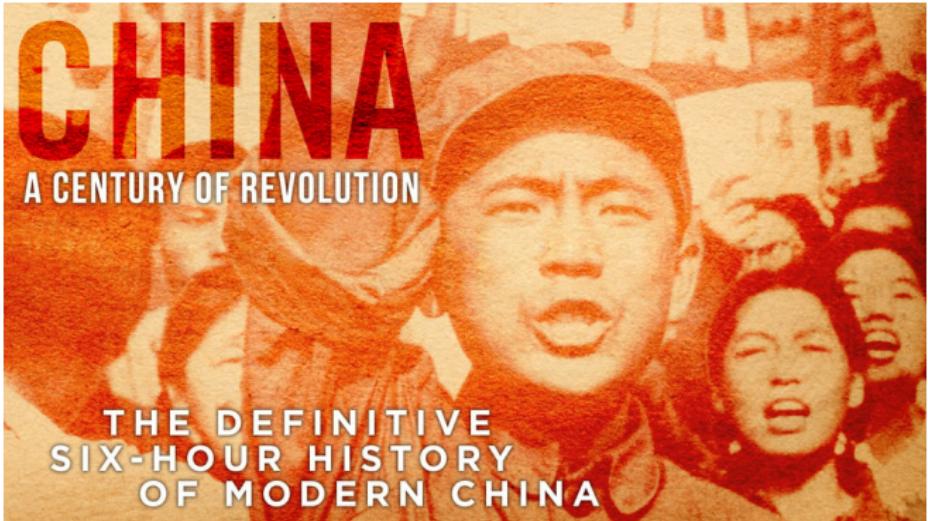
Supreme or “paramount” leader of China

	Mao Zedong	Deng Xiaoping	Jiang Zemin	Hu Jintao	Xi Jinping
					
In power	1949-1976	1978-1989	1989-2002	2002-2012	2012-present
Born in	1893	1904	1926	1942	1953
Still alive?	Died in 1976	Died in 1997	Died in 2022		
Joined the Party in (or started working for the Party)	1921	1922	1943	1965	1969
Birthplace	Hunan	Sichuan	Jiangsu	Anhui	Shannxi
Education	Traditional education	Study and work abroad	Shanghai Jiaotong	Tsinghua	Tsinghua
Highest Title(s)	Chairman of CPC and PRC	Chairman of CPC and PRC Military Commission	President of PRC General Secretary of CPC Chairman of CPC and PRC Military Commission		
Premiers	Zhou Enlai	Zhao Ziyang Li Peng	Li Peng Zhu Rongji	Wen Jiabao	Li Keqiang Li Qiang (2023-)
Other key figures	Liu Shaoqi Lin Biao Jiang Qing Hua Guofeng	Chen Yun Hu Yaobang Zhao Ziyang			

Any key observations? To be a Chinese leader...

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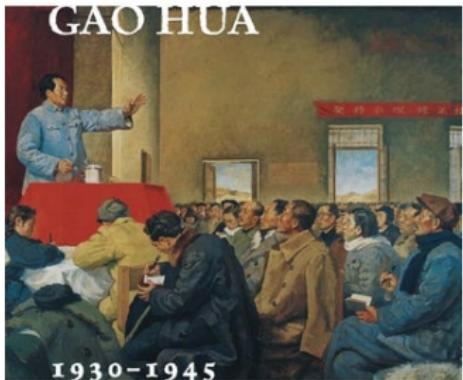
- ▶ When you joined the Party (and what you have done) matters
- ▶ What title(s) you held matters
- ▶ Where you came from matters
- ▶ Who you worked with also matters
- ▶ and....?



- ▶ Ep 2: The Mao Years, 1949–1976
- ▶ Ep 3: Born Under the Red Flag, 1976–1997

Mao (1949-1976): Code of civility v winner takes all

- ▶ Mao managed to obtain dominance within the Party during the Long March (Zunyi Conference) and in the 1940s (Yan'an Rectification Movement), see Gao (2018)
- ▶ The revolutionary success granted Mao and senior cadres supreme positions in the Party's central leadership, and Mao's power was far from invincible
 - "Gao-Rao" Incident (1954)
 - Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957)
 - Great Leap Forward (1958-1962), also the Lushan Conference (1959)
 - Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)
- ▶ Mao's position in the Party became a cult and led to several violent episodes of succession crisis: Liu Shaoqi (1968), Lin Biao (1971) and Hua Guofeng (1978)



HOW THE RED SUN ROSE

The Origins and Development of the
Yan'an Rectification Movement

TRANSLATED BY Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian

HARVARD PRESS

MAO'S LAST REVOLUTION

Roderick MACFARQUHAR ★ Michael SCHOENHALS



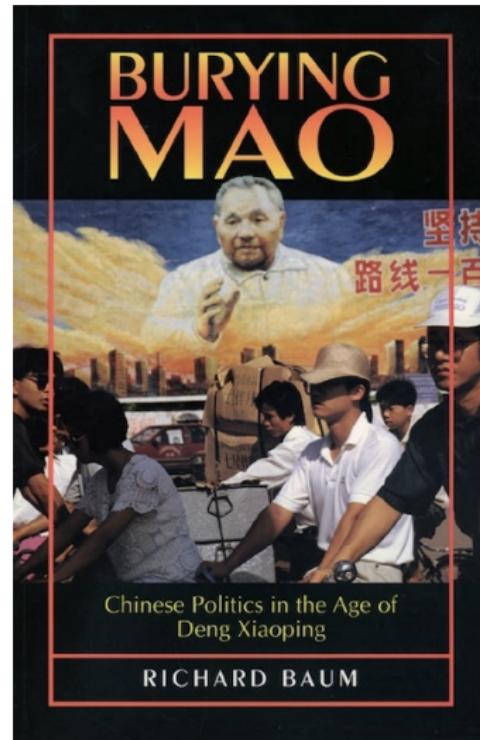
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Deng (1981-1992): Collective leadership behind the scene

- ▶ Deng managed to defeat Hua and established a "collective" leadership in 1980, consisting of
 - Hu Yaobang: General Secretary of the CPC
 - Zhao Ziyang: Premier of the State Council
 - Deng Xiaoping: Chairman of the CPC and PRC Military Commission
- ▶ "Institutionalization" and "professionalization" of cadre management and selection system was established
- ▶ Overshadowed by factional competition as senior cadres in the **Central Advisory Commission** could not agree with the market reform, which led to the **June-Fourth Incident** (1989)
- ▶ Resigned as Chairman of the CPC and PRC Military Commission in 1990, and yet remained influential thanks to the Yang brothers in PLA

Jiang (1992-2002): Comprehensive takeover and further institutionalization

- ▶ Jiang was called to take over Zhao from Shanghai before the Incident; despite the senior cadres' nominal support, his power remained precarious
- ▶ The 14th Party Congress (1992) is a watershed
 - Deng used his influence in the PLA to "coerce" the consensus among the senior cadres about the market reform as well as retirement (and yet not without sacrifice)
 - Jiang managed to take over all leading Party and military posts while becoming the "President" of PRC
- ▶ Institutionalized succession: "comprehensive takeover" (though not without doubt) and grandpa-designated successor
- ▶ Known for his ideas of "Three Represents," which opened the Party's door to entrepreneurs (Dickson 2008)



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Hu (2003-2012): Social “governance” and Hu-Wen system

- ▶ Handpicked by Deng and other senior cadres as a "potential" technocrat successor, unlike his predecessors:
 - Started working for the Party after 1949
 - Had an engineering university degree from Tsinghua
 - Established many important Youth League and local experiences, including the provincial Party secretary of Tibet
- ▶ Worked with **Wen Jiabao** (the Premier) closely to cope with many governance challenges, such as
 - Three Rural Issues (2000s)
 - SARS outbreak (2002-2004)
 - Wenchuan earthquake (2008)
 - Ethnic violence in Tibet (2008) and Xinjiang (2009)
- ▶ Never considered as a strong leader ("internal" democracy), as the Party center was fraught with "factional" divisions, such as the Tsinghua Gang, the Youth League gang and the Princelings (Bo 2003)



CHINA'S ELITE POLITICS

Political Transition and Power Balancing

Bo Zhiyue

CHINA'S NEW RULERS

THE SECRET FILES

A NEW YORK REVIEW
BOOK

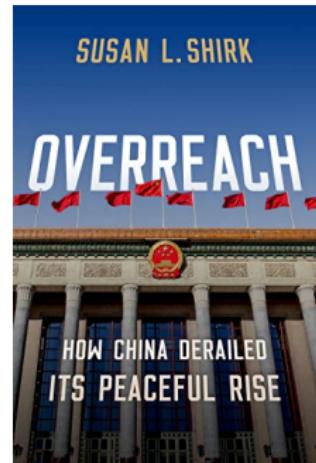
ANDREW J. NATHAN
AND BRUCE GILLETT



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Xi (2013-present): Return of “strongman” politics

- ▶ Handpicked by Jiang (allegedly) and other senior cadres in Hu's first term; the son of **Xi Zhongxun**, a key cadre taking active role in the Chinese Communist revolution (1921-1949)
- ▶ Smooth "comprehensive takeover" from Hu and was put together with Li Keqiang (Premier)
- ▶ Key developments signaling the "rise" of strongman politics
 - Anti-corruption campaigns, many of which involved those close to Jiang – the Central Inspection Department gained its prominence (Wang Qishan)
 - Campaign-based governance, with the construction and teaching of Xi Jinping thought (Wang Huning)
 - Removal of term limits through constitutional amendment (for the President and Vice President) in 2018



"When Xi Jinping took power in 2012, he capitalized on widespread official corruption and open splits in the leadership to make the case for more concentrated power at the top. In the decade following, and to the present day-the eve of the 20th CCP Congress when he intends to claim a third term-he has accumulated greater power than any leader since Mao."

Rethinking institutionalization (Fewsmith 2023)

- ▶ Recent developments under X have pushed against the optimistic view for institutionalization
 - The typical characterization of authoritarian institutions and their contribution to regime durability is not suitable, as authoritarian rule is a "residual" category
 - The conventional characterization of the promotion-based incentive mechanism for Chinese officials is questionable
 - Factionalism and informal politics remain prevalent and collective leadership may be unstable due to the absence of effective "third-party" enforcement

Rethinking institutionalization (Fewsmith 2023)

- ▶ China as a Leninist Party regime (Jowitt 1992)
 - Defined by the "correct line" as an organizational characteristic (Yang Xueguang 2022)
 - The Party "controls" the cadres and a common ideology is enforced on the basis of a correct line
 - Ideology is an instrument of control and may not have much to do with indoctrination – signaling v cheap talk
- ▶ Institutionalization and balance: "Leninism transforms society and then rules through penetration of the basic social institutions" and "their power is more derived from who they are than from the offices they hold" (?)

See you after Reading Week!