

CP² Week 4: Informal Politics and Factionalism

Dr Chao-Yo Cheng

Recap: The Party-state at glance

- ▶ Party-state helps to characterize the Party's ruling position in the Chinese political system
 - **Party committee** is present in every government department and office
 - The central Party offices "manage" and coordinate different functional government departments (e.g., Propaganda/Publicity and Ministry of Education)
 - Leading Working Groups reported to the Party center
 - Key Politburo members leaders also have posts in the government
 - Key important offices are separately listed but actually the same one (e.g., Central Military Commission)
 - Key Party and government offices work jointly despite being two different offices (e.g., Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Ministry of Supervision)

Institutionalization of the Party-state over generations

- ▶ Loyalty-competence tradeoff
- ▶ Collective leadership
- ▶ Political succession
 - Term limit (except the President and Vice-President)
 - Retirement age
 - Successor-in-training
 - Grandpa-designated successor
 - Comprehensive takeover

How Xi became the supreme leader (again)

► Summer to Autumn 2022

- Preparation: Election of delegates for the National Party Congress and the **Beidaihe Meeting**
- Oct 6-22: The 20th **National Party Congress** convenes to elect the Central Committee
- Oct 23: The **Central Committee** meets to elect the General Secretary, the Politburo and other important central leadership offices

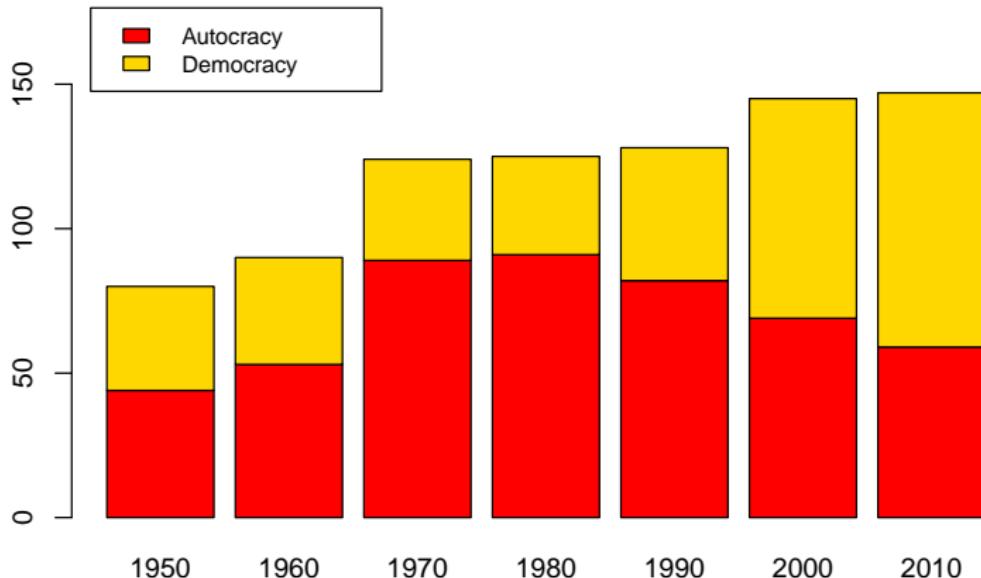
► Spring 2023

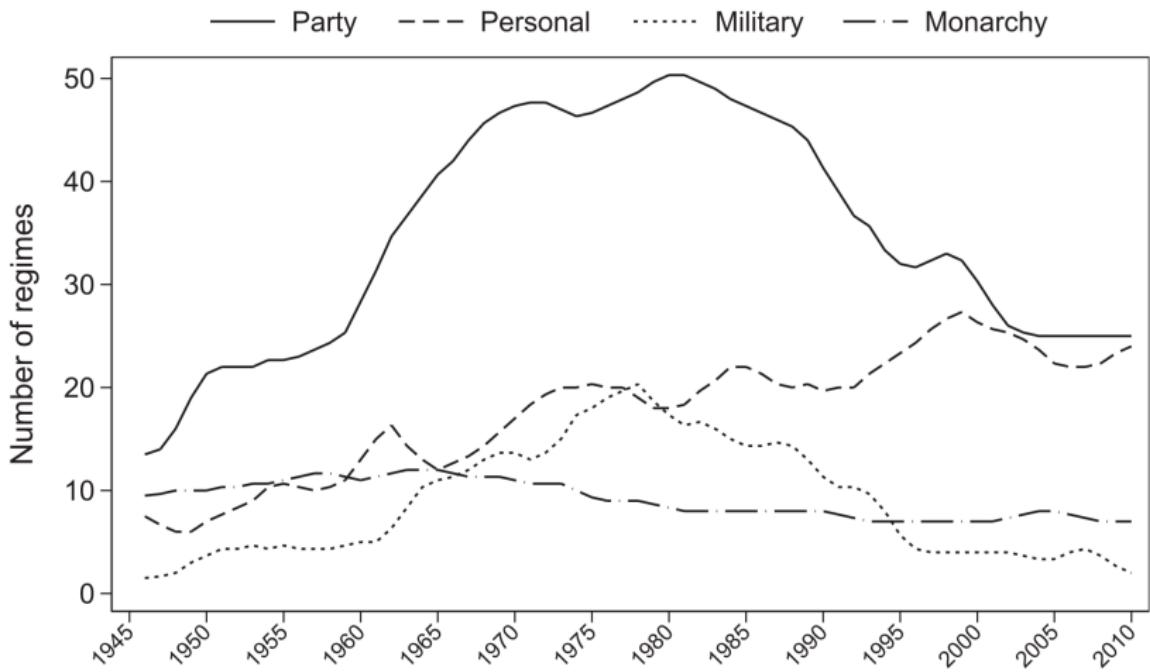
- The **National People's Congress** convenes to elect the **President** and other important posts
- The President appoints the the Premier (or the Prime Minister) of the **State Council** and confirmed by the National People's Congress

Varieties of authoritarian regimes (Geddes et al 2015)

- ▶ **Personalist**: Access to office and fruits of office depends on much more the discretion of an individual leader; not identical with **monarchy**
- ▶ **Military**: A group of officers (e.g., junta) decides who will rule and exercise some influence on policy; carrying with the seeds of disintegration on their own while elites in other two types of regime have more incentives to cooperate with each other
- ▶ **Single-party** (or hegemonic party): Access to political office and control over policy are dominated by one party, though other parties may legally exist and compete in elections
- ▶ **Mixed** or hybrid

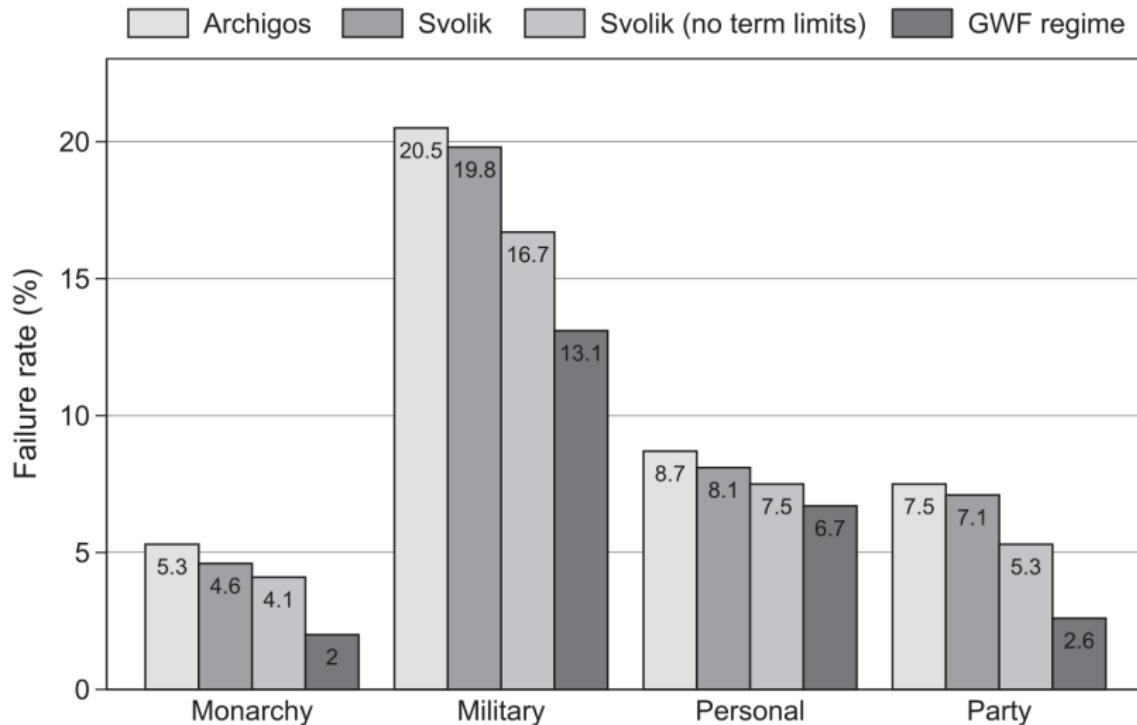
Autocracy vs. Democracy in the World (Geddes et al)





<https://sites.psu.edu/dictators/>





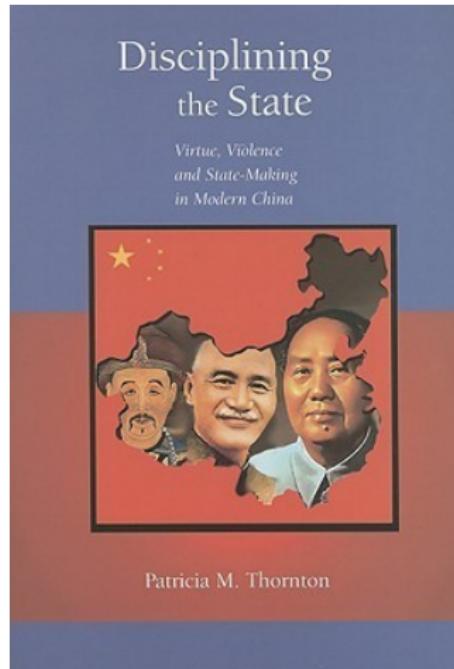
What makes single-party regimes special

- ▶ Key to survival is to make sure elite cohesion through rents and economic success (especially in the case of China)
- ▶ Single-party regimes favor internal and societal co-optation
 - Party holds organizational capacity to control the career paths of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to show support for party leaders in other ways
 - Party cadres simply want to hold their offices and tend to stand by to observe the winners of internal struggle
 - Party has broad basis of popular support and has the institutional and organizational sources to stay responsive and co-opt for greater participation (Ghandi 2008)
- ▶ Caveat: Parties with weak external rival and easy rent access (e.g., the Philippines) tend to be divided and collapse (Smith 2005)

“The Institutional Turn in Comparative Authoritarianism” (Penpinsky 2014)

- ▶ Why institutions matter for authoritarian survival?
 - Institutions are constraints: Elections, parties and legislatures contain factional conflicts while regulating the mobilization of mass support
 - Institutions are dictator's instruments: They do what their creators want them to do (e.g., co-optation and power distribution) and can be adjusted
- ▶ Why institutions are important for the study of comparative authoritarianism
 - Path dependence and increasing returns: Institutions reproduce the political and social order
 - Institutions shed light on problems of redistribution and policy making that motivate regime behavior

Discussion: “Party All the Time” (Thornton 2021)



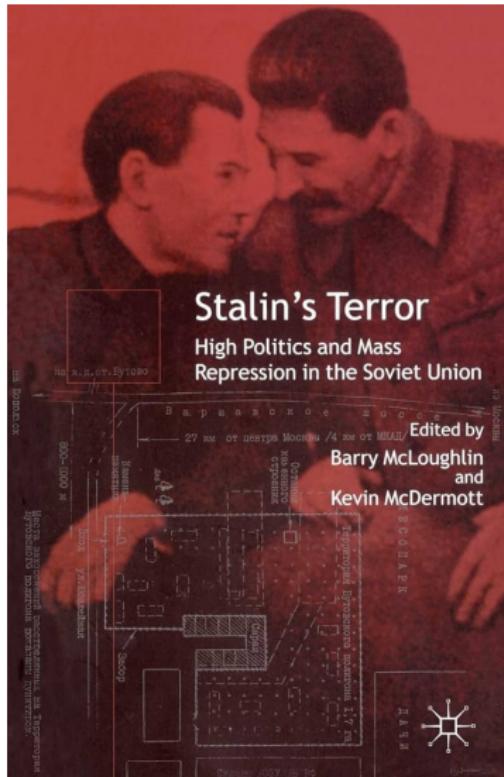
- ▶ What are some of the key differences between being a ruling party and a revolutionary party?
- ▶ How does CCP manage to "succeed" both as a revolutionary before 1949 and as a ruling party after the PRC was established?
- ▶ Why do many authoritarian leaders rule through the party? How do they build their parties?

Today's plan

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

Why informal politics and factionalism

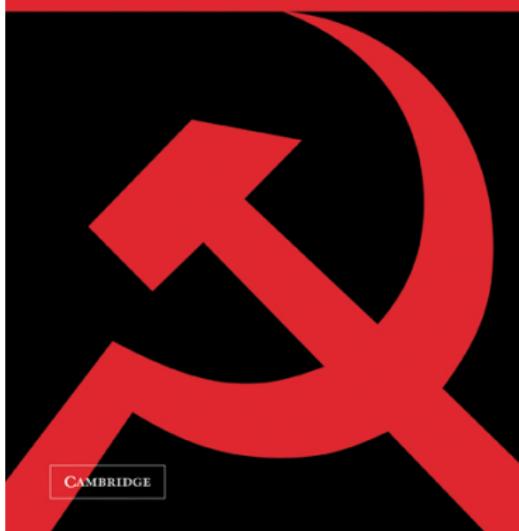
- ▶ The focus of "high" politics in the literature on comparative Communist regimes (Gregory 2009)
- ▶ Formal v informal politics: Contending and vague conceptualization
 - Formal: Political activities organized according to the principle of organizational or corporate impersonality; observable and public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

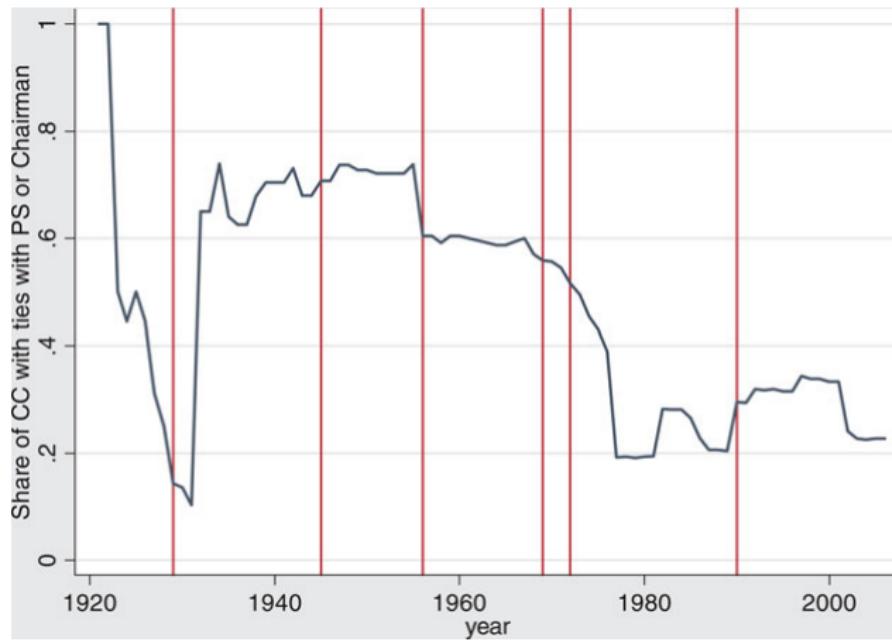
Table 1: Formal Heads of the CCP and Potential Challengers/Successors, 1921–2006

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.

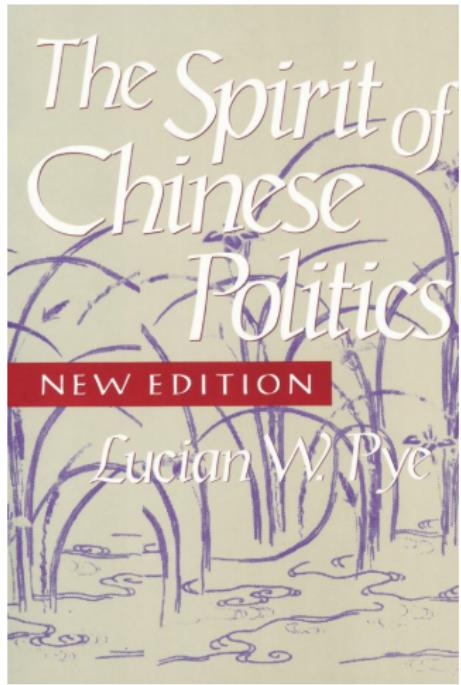
Figure 2: Share of Central Committee with Ties with the Party Secretary General or Chairman (PSGI)



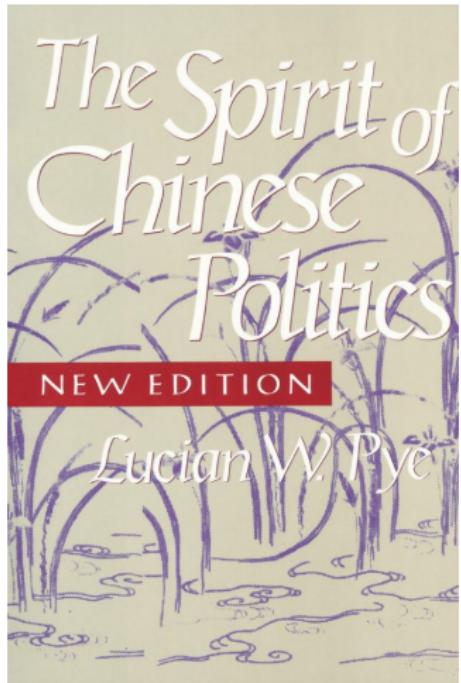
Notes:

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



"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).

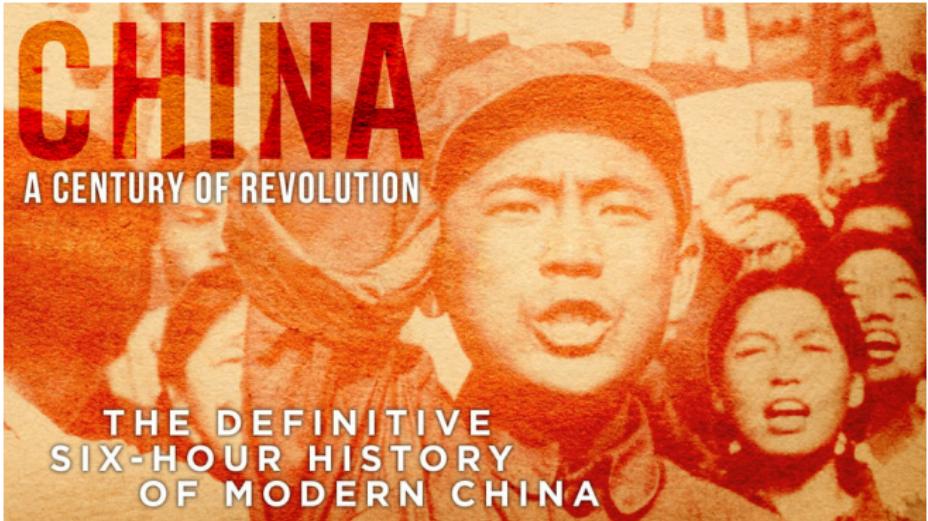
Supreme or “paramount” leader of China

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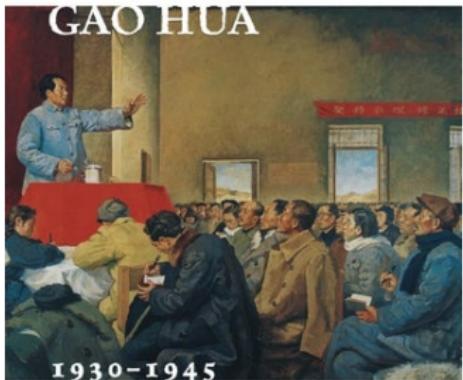
- ▶ When you joined the Party (and what you have done) matters
- ▶ What title(s) you held matters
- ▶ Where you came from matters
- ▶ Who you worked with also matters
- ▶ and....?



- ▶ 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 central leadership, and yet 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

HARPER

MAO'S LAST REVOLUTION

Roderick MACFARQUHAR ★ Michael SCHOENHALS



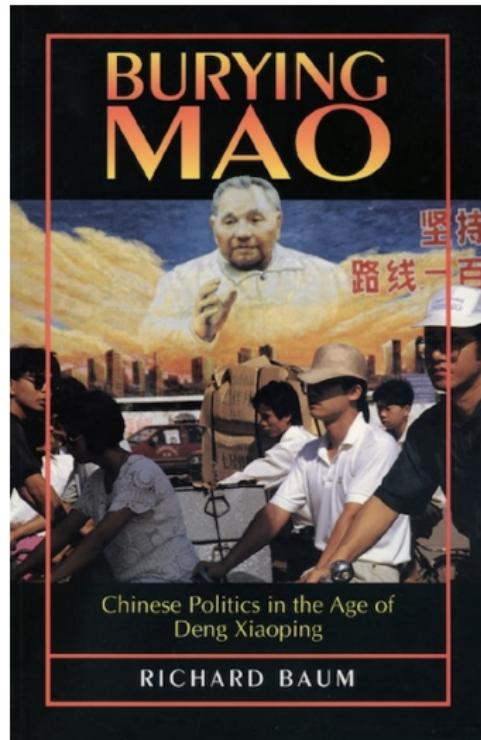
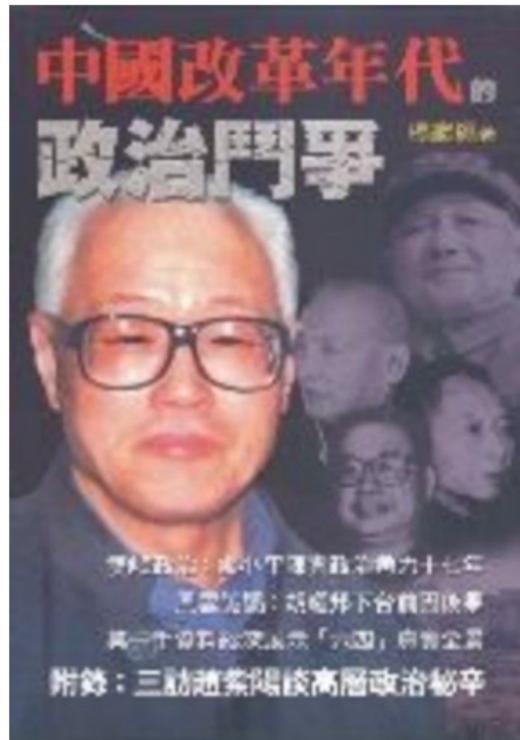
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Deng (1981-1992): Loyalty-competence dilemma and collective leadership

- ▶ 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 on the market reform, which led to the **June-Fourth Incident** (1989)
- ▶ Deng 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 June-Fourth 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

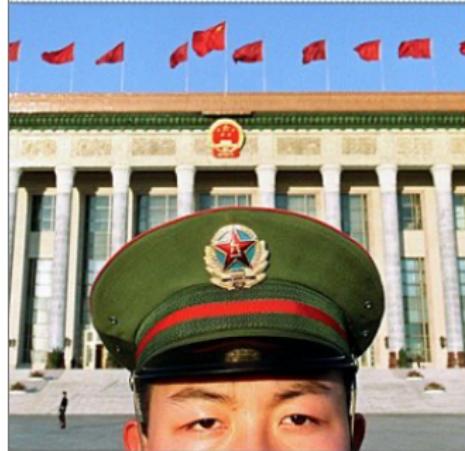
Bo Zhiyue

CHINA'S NEW RULERS

THE SECRET FILES

A NEW YORK REVIEW
BOOK

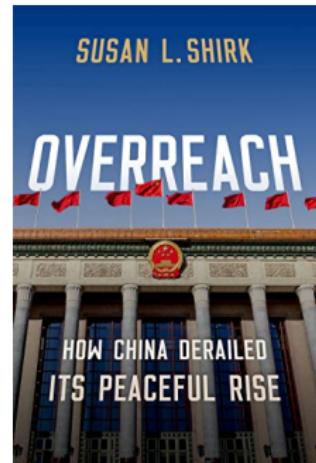
ANDREW J. NATHAN
AND BRUCE GILLETT



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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 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" (?)