

Economic Performance and Political Mobility: Chinese provincial leaders

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Chinese provincial leaders, unlike their counterparts in a democratic system, are not elected but selected. Hence the criteria by which the center uses to select and retain provincial leaders would be critical for the political mobility of provincial leaders. As China has been a developmental state since 1949, it is not unreasonable to expect that the center would retain or promote or demote provincial leaders according to the economic performance of their provinces. To test the hypothesis, I conducted multinomial regressions with a data set of Chinese provincial leaders between 1949 and 1994 in thirty provincial units. As the results show, the political mobility of provincial leaders is determined not only by the political movements of the PRC but also by the economic performance of the provincial leaders. The worse the economic performance record the more likely the provincial leader will be demoted. Moreover, the revenue contributions of the province during the provincial leader's tenure are also a determinant of the political mobility of the provincial leader.