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**" Factionalism and the Exit of Central Committee Members in China:  
A Network Approach"**

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the effect of factions on the exit of Central Committee (CC) members in China. I argue that factionalism partly substitutes formal institutions in regulating elite competition by making the attempts to enhance one's power through expanding factional ties visible to other members in the ruling coalition. Using a biographical dataset (Shih et al., 2008) covering career trajectories of Central Committee members from the 7-16th Central Committee (1945-2008), I constructed a network of personal connections based on ties formed through shared attributes and experiences (e.g. birthplaces, princeling status, educational institutes, revolutionary experiences and work units). I then used the CC members' network positions to predict the probability that they will exit Central Committee given that they have survived until then. I argue that higher degree centrality (capturing the direct connections an official has) increases an official's chance of being purged by making the official look more threatening to other members in the ruling elite. Higher centrality (defined as the number of the shortest paths between any pair of nodes a node sits on), on the other hand, decreases an official's chance of being purged, since it increases the number of indirect connections one can mobilize, which are much less observable than direct ties. In other words, like degree centrality, higher centrality increases one's power, but does so in a less transparent way. In addition, I explored how factionalism operates differently in different political environments in the Mao's era and the post-Mao era.