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Jing Huang

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Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Factionalism is widely understood to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of Chinese politics. The Chinese Communist Party has a long history of purges and infighting among its elite members and, after 1949, of seemingly irrational and frequently vicious struggles for succession to leadership. Almost all of the successors to Mao and Deng, with the exception of China's President Jiang Zemin – including Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Hua Guofeng, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang – were purged. What is not as well understood is how this divisive feature could coexist with another linchpin of post-1949 political power and legitimacy: Party unity. Nor do scholars agree upon the exact relationship between factional politics and policy outcomes. In this book Jing Huang examines the role of factionalism in leadership relations and policy making. His detailed knowledge of intra-Party politics offers scholars and students a new understanding of long-disputed struggles behind the walls of leadership in Zhongnanhai.

Huang traces the development of factional politics from its roots in the various “mountaintops,” or power bases, headed by guerrilla leaders during the communist revolution, and describes the enduring impact of the personal bonds formed between Mao and his supporters at the Yan'an Round Table. He explains how factionalism led to Mao's unleashing of the Cultural Revolution, and how Deng Xiaoping manipulated factionalism to orchestrate his rise to power.

The nature of Chinese Communist Party politics, Huang argues – including highly personalized relationships between political contenders and their supporters, a barely institutionalized political process, and uncertain rules of decision making – has allowed factionalism to prevail. Huang's analysis concludes that it is not power struggles that give rise to factional activities, as the predominant theories on leadership relations and decision making presume; it is factionalism that turns power into an overriding goal in CCP politics. Thus, factional activities were a key source of inconsistency in Party policy; policy outcomes switched constantly between “Left-adventurism” and “Right-conservatism” under Mao's leadership and between those favoring “emancipation of the mind” and “socialist spiritual civilization” in the Deng era. Huang asserts, however, that, paradoxically, factionalism is not necessarily unstable and chaotic. In the long run, it may play a positive role in political development.

Jing Huang is Associate Professor of Political Science at Utah State University and Research Associate at the John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University.

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Frontmatter

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Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	page xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
Factionalism in Leadership Relations and Decision Making	1
Western Analysis of Factionalism in Leadership Relations and Decision Making	3
Conditions for the Development of Factionalism in CCP Politics	6
Mountaintops and Leadership Relations with Mao in Command	8
The Two-Front Arrangement, Elite Conflicts, and Policy Inconsistency	12
“Bringing Up Successors” and the Vicious Cycle of Succession Struggles	18
Continuity and Changes: Factionalism in the Deng Period	20
1 Factionalism, the Puzzle of Chinese Communist Politics	26
Conflict Models and Their Explanations of Factionalism	26
Factionalism, a Puzzle of CCP Politics	42
2 Factionalism and the Political System in China	55
Conditions for the Development of Factionalism	55
Factional Activities and the Shaping of Leadership Relations	74
3 The Establishment of the Yan’an Round Table	107
Mao Zedong Strives to Achieve the Party Leadership	107

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

The Yan'an Rectification and the Establishment of the Yan'an Round Table	119
Mountaintops under Mao's Command	141
4 The Transition of the Yan'an Round Table	159
Policy Differences: Prelude to the Gao-Liu Power Struggle	160
The Gao-Rao Affair: An Inevitable Clash	173
The Structural Change of the Yan'an Round Table	197
5 Crises in Leadership Relations with the Two-Front Arrangement	211
The Rise of the Party Bureaucrats	213
Mao versus the Party State	238
Conclusion: The Overall Crisis of the Yan'an Round Table	256
Appendix 5.1: The Game between Mao and Liu in Early 1962	260
Appendix 5.2: The Game with the Deng Factor in Early 1962	264
6 The Collapse of the Yan'an Round Table and the Unleashing of Factionalism	267
The Destruction of the Party System	268
Lin Biao's Rise and Fall: Disconnection of the Military from the Yan'an Round Table	287
Deng Xiaoping's Return and Fall: The Collapse of the Yan'an Round Table	325
7 Deng Xiaoping's Dominance: Factionalism Prevails over the Party Spirit	350
The Establishment of Deng Xiaoping's Dominance	350
Factionalism over the Party Spirit	365
Deng's Struggle to Maintain His Dominance	387
8 Conclusion	411
Factionalism and Political Outcomes in China	411
The Impact of Factionalism on Chinese Politics	417
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	429
<i>Index</i>	441

Figures and Tables

FIGURES

I.1	The Structure of the Yan'an Round Table	<i>page</i>	9
I.2	The Two-Front Arrangement, 1954–1966		13
2.1	The Process of <i>Zhengdun</i> (Rectification) Campaign		84
2.2	Prisoners' Dilemma between the Leader and His Successor		89
2.3	The New Player in a Succession Struggle: Working Model		94
2.4	Extensive Form of the Game: Players Move Simultaneously		101
2.5	Extensive Form of the Game: Deng Moves First		103
3.1	Reorganization of CCP Forces under Mao's Command, August 1937		109
3.2	A Tentative Yan'an Round Table after the Sixth Plenum, November 1938		118
3.3	The Yan'an Rectification under Mao's Command		123
3.4	The Yan'an Round Table under Mao's Command		137
4.1	Civilian Leaders and Their Policy Areas (<i>kou</i>) in 1953		182
4.2	The Transition of the Yan'an Round Table at the Eighth Party Congress, 1956		208
5.A1	Normal Form of the Game between Mao and Liu		262
5.A2	Extensive Form of the Game between Mao and Liu		262
5.A3	The Game between Mao and Liu with the Deng Factor		266
6.1	The Ties between PLA Leaders and Their Mountaintops		288
6.2	A Transformed Yan'an Round Table after the Ninth Party Congress		315
7.1	Leadership Relations under Deng Xiaoping's Dominance, 1982		384

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Figures and Tables*

8.1	Factionalism and Power Struggle in CCP Politics	413
8.2	Factionalism and Policy Outcomes in CCP Politics	415

TABLES

2.1	Elite Conflicts and <i>Zhengdun</i> (Rectification) Campaigns since 1949	83
2.2	Preference Orders of Leader and Successor in a Prisoners' Dilemma	92
2.3	Hardliners' Preference Order on the Outcomes of a Succession Struggle	99
2.4	Strategies, Outcomes, and Payoffs of a Succession Struggle in Deng's Period	100
3.1	Major Mountaintops under Mao's Command (1949–1952)	152
4.1	An Ziwens List of CCP Politburo Members	178
4.2	Positions of the Military Leaders after the Gao-Rao Affair	205
5.1	Changes in Production Targets for 1967	214
5.2	High-Ranking Officers Implicated in Peng's Case	229
5.A1	Outcome, Strategy, and Payoffs in the Mao-Liu Game	261
5.A2	Outcome, Strategy, and Payoffs with the Deng Factor	265
6.1	Liu's Whereabouts and the Happenings in Beijing, March 26–April 19	279
6.2	Factional Conflicts in the PLA RMCs (1967–1968)	297
6.3	The Leadership Formed at the Tenth Party Congress (August 24–28, 1973)	327
6.4	Deng Xiaoping's Return and the Decline of Zhou Enlai's Power (1971–1973)	336
6.5	Deng's Progress and Mao's Criticism of the Gang of Four (1974–1976)	340
7.1	Personnel Arrangements at the Politburo Meeting (December 25, 1978)	364
7.2	Power Struggles between Deng and the Hardliners (1978–1987)	408

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

My interests in Chinese politics started in 1973–5 when I was receiving “reeducation” in a remote mountain village in Yunnan Province. In addition to heavy manual labor in the field, all the readings available to me there were the four-volume *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, and the *Yunnan Daily* and *People’s Daily*, which always arrived a week late. A teenager hungry for everything, material and spiritual, I virtually devoured every word in these publications. What fostered my interests in CCP politics, however, were the many questions I had in reading Mao’s works and the gap between the newspaper propaganda and reality. I soon indulged myself in frequent correspondences with my friends in which we exchanged our ideas, knowledge, and opinions drawn from questions in Mao’s works and the constantly changing situation during those turbulent years. Although such exchanges would continue for years, I actually tried to suppress my interests in CCP politics after I entered college, where I majored in English literature and later earned an M.A. degree in history. An essential reason was that the study of CCP politics was seen as a dangerous activity in China, for any steps outside the official line could result in a purge. Yet I could not really give up my interests in Chinese politics because my life experiences in the CCP political system made my desire for the answers insuppressible.

I was fortunate to sit in Roderick MacFarquhar’s class at Harvard University in 1987. His exhaustive analyses and his insights of political affairs in China have benefited my study tremendously, and his constant encouragement and unwavering support have always been a great source of inspiration. As my mentor, he read each chapter of my manuscript with such care that even a punctuation error would not escape his attention, and his advice and comments were perceptive and to the point. Working with MacFarquhar has been the most exciting and satisfactory

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

experience in my academic life. My gratitude to him is beyond expression.

My heartfelt thanks also go to Timothy Colten, whose expertise in Soviet politics has broadened the prospective of my study; to Jean Oi, whose sharp and apropos comments and critique have forced me to clarify my ideas more accurately with rigid analyses; and to Kenneth Shepsle, from whom I have learned not just game theory per se but what it can reveal so eloquently – that is, depending on the players' preferences, the rules and procedures determine the final outcomes. Thus, a political crisis is caused essentially by the failure of the process rather than by conflicting interests or policy disputes. Factional politics is prone to crisis not necessarily because of constant factional struggles, but because personal ties, or *guanxi*, often override the adopted rules and procedures in political interactions.

This book would not have been completed but for the generous support and help from numerous people and organizations. A Harvard-Yenching scholarship in 1986–8 permitted me to study at Harvard in the first place. Fellowships from the Mellon Foundation enabled me to concentrate on my research and writing in 1991–3. The late Professor Hu Hua in China gave me good advice on source materials. The more than two dozen people whom I interviewed in China – some of them are prominent Party historians – not only provided me with firsthand information and access to source materials but also shared their insights with me. Nancy Hearst at the John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University has offered the most crucial help in locating and sorting out source materials. She also edited the drafts of my first two chapters with painstaking care. In various stages of my work on this book, I have benefited from discussions with Ellis Joffe, Hao Yufan, and Wu Guoguang; from the thoughtful suggestions of Edward Steinfeld, who read the drafts of Chapters 4 and 5 with great care; and from the constructive comments and critiques of Andrew Nathan, who read the first draft of the manuscript in late 1994. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to the anonymous manuscript reviewers from whose relentless critiques and perceptive comments I have profited in revisions of the manuscript.

I am also indebted to a greater circle of friends, scholars, and colleagues from whose works and wisdom I have drawn in this study and to whom I can only express my gratitude by their acknowledgment in

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

my footnotes and bibliography. Any errors that remain are, of course, all mine. I am also grateful to those whose help was indispensable in bringing this book into print. Mary Child at Cambridge University Press has played an essential role in converting the manuscript into a publishable book. Brian MacDonald has been a truly devoted production editor, who made a painstaking effort to ready the manuscript for publication; working with him has not only been a pleasant experience but also a learning process. Anne Holmes has made an excellent index, which I believe has enhanced the general quality of this book.

My ultimate thanks, however, go to my wife, who sacrificed her own chances for an advanced degree so that I could fully concentrate on my work. With a full-time job as a librarian assistant, two young children, and a husband who usually showed up at midnight, she somehow managed to help me out, working as my research assistant, librarian, typist, and file keeper. This book is dedicated to her.

Abbreviations

<i>AJPS</i>	<i>American Journal of Political Science</i>
<i>APSR</i>	<i>American Political Science Review</i>
<i>AS</i>	<i>Asian Survey</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Beijing Review</i>
<i>Cankao</i>	<i>Zhonggong dangshi jiaoxue cankao ziliao</i> (The CCP History Teaching Reference Materials), compiled by <i>Guofang daxue dangshi dangjian zhenggong jiaoyanshi</i> (Teaching and Research Office of the Party's History, Construction, and Political Work, National Defense University), 27 vols., 1986
<i>CB</i>	<i>Current Background</i>
<i>CC</i>	Central Committee of the CCP
<i>CCB</i>	Central China Bureau
<i>CCP</i>	Chinese Communist Party
<i>CFEG</i>	Central Financial and Economic Group
<i>CFEC</i>	Central Financial and Economic Commission
<i>CLG</i>	<i>Chinese Law and Government</i> , a journal of translations, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp, 1968–
<i>CLOPCG</i>	<i>The Collection of Laws and Orders of the People's Central Government</i> , Beijing: Law Press
<i>CMC</i>	Central Military Commission
<i>CO</i>	(military) commander
<i>CPB</i>	Central Plain Bureau
<i>CPSU</i>	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
<i>CQ</i>	<i>China Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	Cultural Revolution
<i>CRG</i>	Cultural Revolutionary Group
<i>CYLC</i>	Communist Youth League of China

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-03258-2 - Factionalism in Chinese Communist Politics

Jing Huang

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

ECB	East China Bureau
FCP	Four Cardinal Principles
FYP	Five-Year Plan
GLF	Great Leap Forward
ICC	investment in capital construction
<i>Jueyi</i>	The CCP Central Committee, <i>Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi</i> (The Resolution on Several Questions of Our Party's History since the Establishment of the PRC), Beijing: Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee, June 27, 1981
KMT	Kuomintang (National Party)
MZT	Mao Zedong Thought
NB	North Bureau
NCFEC	North China Financial and Economic Commission
NEB	Northeastern Bureau
NPC	National People's Congress
NWB	Northwestern Bureau
PB	Party bureaucrats
PC	National Party Congress of the CCP
<i>PC</i>	<i>Problems of Communism</i>
<i>PD</i>	<i>People's Daily</i>
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	Politburo Standing Committee
RMC	Regional Military Command (<i>da junqu</i>)
<i>RWZ</i>	Hu Hua, ed., <i>Zhonggong lishi renwu zhuan</i> (Biographies of Personalities in CCP History), Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Press, 1978–
SEC	State Economic Commission
SPC	State Planning Commission
<i>SWCY</i>	Chen Yun, <i>Selected Works of Chen Yun</i> , 2 vols., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984
<i>SWDXP</i>	Deng Xiaoping, <i>Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1982</i> , 2 vols., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984
<i>SWLSQ</i>	Liu Shaoqi, <i>Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi</i> , 3 vols., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984
<i>SWMZD</i>	Mao Zedong, <i>Selected Works of Mao Zedong</i> , 5 vols., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981

Abbreviations

- SWZEL* Zhou Enlai, *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai*, 2 vols., Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1989
- Wansui* *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (Long Live Mao Zedong Thought), 3 vols., n.p., 1967, 1969
- Wengao* *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* (Manuscripts of Mao Zedong since the Establishment of the PRC), compiled by Department for Research on Party Literature, CCP Central Committee, 13 vols., Beijing: CC Document Press, 1987–98
- Xuanbian* *Shierda yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* (Selection of the Important Documents since the Twelfth Party Congress), compiled by Department for Research on Party Literature, CCP Central Committee, 2 vols., Beijing: People's Press, 1989
- Xuandu* *Shiyijie sanzong quanhuo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuandu* (Selected Readings of the Important Documents since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Congress), compiled by Department for Research on Party Literature, CCP Central Committee, 2 vols., Beijing: People's Press, 1987
- Xulie* *Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun fazhan xulie 1927–1949* (The Development of the PLA Organizational System), Beijing: PLA Press, 1985
- Yanjiu 1* *Dangshi yanjiu* (The Study of the Party History)
- Yanjiu 2* *Zhonggong dangshi yanjiu* (The Study of the CCP History)
- YB Yangtze Bureau
- YR Yan'an Rectification
- Zhuanji* *Xuexi "lishi jueyi" zhuanji* (Monograph on the Study of "The Resolution on Several Questions of Our Party's History"), compiled by the Association of the CCP History, 3 vols., Beijing: Press of the Central Party School of the CCP, 1982
- Ziliao* *"Wenhua da geming" yanjiu ziliao* (Research Materials of "the Cultural Revolution"), compiled by Guofang daxue dangshi dangjian zhengong jiaoyanshi (Teaching and Research Office of the Party's History, Construction, and Political Work, National Defense University), 3 vols., 1988