Decentralized Authoritarianism in China

China, like many authoritarian regimes, struggles with the tension between the need to foster economic development by empowering local officials and the regime’s imperative to control them politically. Pierre F. Landry explores how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) manages local officials in order to meet these goals and perpetuate an unusually decentralized authoritarian regime.

Using unique data collected at the municipal, county, and village levels, Landry examines in detail how the promotion mechanisms for local cadres have allowed the CCP to reward officials for the development of their localities without weakening political control. His research shows that the CCP’s personnel management system is a key factor in explaining China’s enduring authoritarianism and proves convincingly that decentralization and authoritarianism can work hand in hand.

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Decentralized Authoritarianism in China

The Communist Party’s Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era

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Abbreviations

CCP  Chinese Communist Party
CLC  county-level city
COD  Central Organization Department
CYL  Communist Youth League
DIC  Discipline Inspection Commission
JES  Jiangsu Elite Study
LPC  local people’s congress
MCA  Ministry of Civil Affairs
MO   mass organization
NPC  National People’s Congress
OD   Organization Department
PBS  (Communist) Party branch secretary
PLA  People’s Liberation Army
PPC  provincial people’s congress
PPPCC provincial people’s political consultative conference
PRC  People’s Republic of China
RMB  Renminbi
SEZ  special economic zone
Subei  Chinese abbreviation for Northern Jiangsu
Sunan  Chinese abbreviation for Southern Jiangsu
TPC  township people’s congress
TVE  township and village enterprise
VC   village committee
VCC  village committee chairman
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