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978-1-107-08202-1 - China's Party Congress: Power, Legitimacy, and Institutional Manipulation

Guoguang Wu

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## China's Party Congress

Nominally the highest decision-making body in the Chinese Communist Party, the Party Congress is responsible for determining party policy and the selection of China's leaders. Guoguang Wu provides the first analysis of how the Party Congress operates to elect Party leadership and decide Party policy, and explores why such a formal performance of Congress meetings, delegate discussions, and nondemocratic elections is significant for authoritarian politics more broadly. Taking institutional inconsistency as the central research question, this study presents a new theory of "mutual contextualization" to reveal how informal politics and formal institutions interact with each other. Wu argues that despite the prevalence of informal politics behind the scenes, authoritarian politics seeks legitimization through a combination of political manipulation and the ritual mobilization of formal institutions. This ambitious book is essential reading for all those interested in understanding contemporary China, and an innovative theoretical contribution to the study of comparative politics.

GUOGUANG WU is Professor of Political Science, Professor of History, and Chair in China and Asia-Pacific Relations at the University of Victoria, Canada. He was involved in China's Party Congress as a policy adviser to then Party chief Zhao Ziyang, and a member of the draft group of the Central Committee's report to the Congress. The author, coauthor, and editor of twenty-two books in both English and Chinese, he is also a contributor to journals including *Asian Survey*, *China Quarterly*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Pacific Review*, *Social Research*, and *Third World Quarterly*.

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*University of Victoria*



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## Acknowledgments

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With an atypical career of a scholar, I write this book not only as a research monograph but also as a kind of record of my life journey, for which I owe so much to so many. I am glad to have this opportunity at last to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of them.

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My interest in the CCP's National Congress can be traced back even further, to 1969, when the official news broadcast of the 9th Party Congress was poured into the ears of an eleven-year-old boy living in a remote village during the turbulent Cultural Revolution. The broadcast repeatedly announced those names of the newly elected Central Committee members in alphabetical order, with the exception of Mao Zedong and Lin Biao, who held the leading positions. Who were those persons? Why were they so important? How could they obtain such important positions? When I came to conceive the current book, I recognized that these questions were not new to my curiosity but had re-emerged from the distant past.

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All errors and mistakes, of course, belong to me, which I hope to have an opportunity in the future to correct and revise.