Elite Network Manipulation and Regime Centralization: Central-Local Relation During the Formation of the Chinese Communist State (1949-1956)

By

Yongzhen Lai

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Faculty Advisor: John Padgett

Preceptor: Yan Xu

Abstract

Central-local relation is an essential issue in understanding elite interaction in authoritarian regime formation, while most research of state formation focuses mainly on consolidation of sovereign power. Using social network analysis in the case of the Chinese communist state (the People's Republic of China, PRC) in the early 1950s, this article analyzes regime centralization by focusing on the process of authoritarian strategies in shaping central-local co-working networks. Co-optation and re-shuffling are two major strategies in authoritarian regime survival. In the central-local relation of authoritarian state building, while co-optation produces a close central-local connection, political elites still have their own influence over their subordinates and play an important role in connecting the central and local echelon, as indicated by the case of the CCP Central promoting regional PLA military elites into the central government in 1952. Rather, through realigning with certain co-opted elites for support, central authoritarian leaders may reshape the central-local relation by reshuffling elites and the established elite co-working network is weakened. As for the Chinese communist elites, regional cadres still played a leading role in policymaking after 1952 until the abolishment of Regional Bureaus in 1954 after the intra-party cleavage of "Gao-Rao Affair".

Introduction

Elite relation is an important facet that shaped the process of regime formation. Interaction among political elites, including whether they would cooperate or form cleavage in the regime, would shape the regime type and influence the state power. Although the origin of the regime type in a state could be attributed to its long historical trajectory or "large events" such as war or revolutions, political elites still had to tackle the internal bargaining and distribution of power during the critical time of regime formation after the end of war. "In the short run, actors create relations" (Padgett & Powell, 2012). From medieval Europe to post-developing states in non-western regions after WWII, how elites interacted, or how the key political figures shaped the intra-elite relation has been a vital issue for state builders, including the central-local relation within the state territory. For authoritarian state builders emerged from war, how did political elites shape a cohesive central-local relation in a disordered territory? How did authoritarian leaders tackle the intra-elite trans-echelon confrontation and establish the dominant power?

In this research, I would use the case of China after the communist takeover in the early 1950s to explain regime centralization in authoritarian politics. Reasons for selecting the China case in understanding central-local interaction in state building is as follow: China has experienced a process from imperial collapse to a centralized modern Leviathan, while political elites in China witnessed a state transformation through protracted interstate and civil wars, ending up with a "re-centralized" party-state (the People's Republic of China, PRC) in the early 1950s in mainland China. Resulting from the collapse of imperial order, the CCP became the dominant political elite group of state transformation in 1949 and attempted to re-establish a centralized bureaucratic echelon within several years in the 1950s, which provided a case to observe how authoritarian leaders shape central-local cohesion after long-term political disorder. During the process of early regime formation, the CCP has formulated a primitive nationwide bureaucratic echelon during the transitional period of the regime from 1949 to

1956[1]. Six CCP Regional Bureaus[2] were finally established around 1949 in charge of newly occupied regions during the civil war, supervising multiple proximate provinces respectively with discretion of civil affairs administration in order to "strengthen Beijing's control over provincial governments" (Burns, 1989). CCP Provincial Committees were then under the supervision of six Regional Bureaus. Cadres, who were mostly from the PLA military ranks, were appointed in the Regional Bureaus and Provincial Committees. In 1952, regional Party chiefs were promoted into the cabinet, the State Council and the economic governmental sector, the State Planning Committee. As the PRC party-state started centralizing the function of governance, Regional Bureaus were abolished in 1954 and all provinces were directly supervised by the Party Central Committee afterwards. A more centralized cadre hierarchy was established which has driven economic collectivization afterwards.

Regarding the research method, I intend to use the network analysis and a "nested" historical analysis to interpret the logic of the Chinese regime centralization process in the early 1950s by analyzing the dynamics of CCP elites' central-local co-working network during the regime transformation. Firstly, network analysis would be used in uncovering the structure of elite co-working relations from 1949 to 1956 in demonstrating the trend of PRC regime centralization and the changing status of CCP political elites. From a hindsight perspective, the CCP maneuver of regime centralization within several years experienced a swift and transitional process driven by teleological deliberations of economic collectivization. However, as collective political behavior involves not only the reorganization of bureaucratic institutions but also the mutual bargains and interactions of individual elites, the perspective of elite interaction could help reveal the logic of political arrangement during the transient historical period. Therefore, understanding the interactive network structure could reveal the dynamics of power relations under the organizations and understand the authoritarian politics where elite

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[1] The period from the Party regime takeover in 1949 to 1956 when the state started the economic collectivization and planned economy has been denoted as the "transitional period" in the PRC. At the same year in 1956, the CCP convened its 8th National Congress in Beijing, which was also the first National Congress of CCP after 1949.

[2] The CCP Regional Bureaus were the Party bureaucratic bodies "representing" the Central Committee to monitor one or more provinces during the "transitional period", which were superior bodies of Party Provincial Committees. Six Regional Bureaus in fact owned administrative power with relative discretion of decision-making from the central regime, which were "Northeast", "North China", "East China", "Central-South", "Northwest" and "Southwest" Regional Bureaus and they were abolished in 1954 (See Burns, 1989, "Introduction").

relation reflects the power relation during policy implementation. Secondly, given that the network analysis provides the patterns of elites' co-working power positions, historical analysis could provide a substantial understanding of how elites behave within the network structure and directly speak to the two strategies of regime centralization. Indeed, an intra-Party power struggle event occurred from 1953 to 1954, "the Gao-Rao Affairs" (Teiwes, 1990; Sheng, 2011), during the PRC regime transition period. Gao and Rao are referred as two top-level CCP cadres Gao Gang (高岗) and Rao Shushi (饶漱石) in the CCP Central, who were purged in 1954 by Mao. Both had worked as the Party chiefs in the Northeast Bureau (located in Shenyang of Northeast China) and East China Bureau (located in Shanghai) respectively before being promoted in the central echelon. As there had long been controversies regarding the interpretation on the relation between the inter-elite political strife, i.e., the Gao-Rao Affairs, and the process of PRC regime centralization, my research would further delve into this case based on understanding the pattern of the party elite network. Through focusing on their patterns of political positions, social activities and strategies of political alignments, case analysis would provide substantial understanding of the elite structure and the regime centralization.

My research would speak to the theories of authoritarian regime survival of elite co-optation and elite reshuffling, and I would argue that changing of elite relation through the above two strategies also influences the central-local relation during the early stage of state formation. When the central regime intended to ensure their dominant leadership over the provinces, co-optation and reshuffling became the two choices of strategies. *Firstly*, co-optation of the local-echelon leaders into the central government by appointing them with working titles in the central regime while reserving their local seats could help the regime leader enhance central-local co-working ties and monitor the co-opted elites. In the context of Chinese communist takeover, military leaders played a dominant role in establishing the CCP regional and provincial institutions and acted as leaders in the local echelon. However, the co-opted elites also improve their own brokerage role between the central and local echelon, as they still own co-working ties in their original working sectors and cultivate their own aligned

and supportive base which potentially weaken the dominant role of regime leader, especially when political elites fell into cleavage with each other. *Secondly*, as the authoritarian leader attempts to monopolize the dominant role over the subordinates, reshuffling the elites through reorganizing the bureaucratic echelon and the co-working relation becomes another strategy for the central leader to ensure regime centralization. Nevertheless, the central leader still had to realign with part of co-opted elites to implement the reshuffling policy.

The research consists of the following sections. In the section of theoretical review, I would discuss theories on state formation and its relation and adaptations in the "central-local elite relation" occurred in large countries like China, and raised the propositions on regime centralization through elite co-optation and elite-realignment. The second section discuss the echelon of CCP Regional Bureaus inherited from the revolutionary era and the role of communist forces PLA, which had shaped the CCP as a "horizontal" instead of "hierarchical" organization before the regime takeover. Empirical analysis in the third section would provide observations on the PRC regime centralization and the change from 1949 to 1956, including the shared military experience that might influence co-working network. The last section is a case analysis of the 1953-1954 "Gao-Rao Affairs" as a significant event of political purge that predated the abolishment of CCP Regional Bureaus and entailed the PRC regime centralization. The case would focus on interaction of Gao to demonstrate his discretion of interaction with other elites when he was promoted in Beijing after 1952, which aroused Mao's paranoid and purge of Gao.

Regime centralization and adjusting central-local relations is vital for authoritarian states' survival and its quest of "regime resilience". Understanding the political logic of the reorganization of the CCP bureaucracy would provide understanding on central-local interaction during the formation of authoritarian states. Moreover, elite interaction in the nascent stage has created perhaps unintended but essential consequence in the real world: for the case of China, although it has witnessed several turns of economic management decentralization since the Great Leap Forward in 1958, vertical control of bureaucratic appointment has long been maintained, which became the organizational basis of Deng

Xiaoping's shrewd maneuver of provincial reform initiatives under the coexistence with the conservative faction in the Party (Padgett, 2012). Comparatively, regime centralization in the early 1950s' communist China also paved a trajectory divergent from Soviet Union, as regional discretion of internal affairs and personnel appointments have long existed in Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era that caused the horizontal obstruction of "infrastructural" power to Gorbachev's economic reform, and unintentionally resulted in the Soviet disintegration (Easter, 2000; Padgett, 2012).

Regime Formation and Centralization: Shaping Central-Local Elite Relations

In terms of the modern state, an essential facet of regime consolidation is the penetrative capacity from the central to the periphery of the state (Goodwin, 2001). For modern states, "infrastructural power" (Mann, 1984; 2008) denotes the materialist capacity to extract taxation and to conscript military forces within the territory, which has been commonly owned by both democratic and authoritarian states. In Mann's account (2008), a hierarchical administrative system is a crucial feature of the infrastructural power, either in the form of rationalized bureaucracies or mass mobilized party organizations. Different from ancient empires, the penetrative capacity of the modern state is also echoed in Tilly's definition of "national states" (1979), that political organizations feature "centralized" and hierarchical ruling structure within contiguous regions. In other words, a nationwide bureaucratic system is necessary for the nation-state to act as the agent coordinating the construction of infrastructural systems.

However, research on modern state formation is largely influenced by Weber's definition of state as a political organization with "legitimate monopoly of violence" within a territory (Weber, 1968). Modern sovereign states are often theoretically simplified as a "coercive-wielding organization" (Tilly, 1979). Beyond the materialist aspect, state capacity of accumulating and "monopolizing" military and economic resources of modern states derived from the consensus and cohesion of political elites within the state. For the emergence of modern states, centralization of political power stemmed from elites' interaction in resource contribution, sharing and allocations of financial and military resources, such as among the

merchants and local nobilities (Anderson, 1972; Tilly, 1979; Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992) under the pressure of military threat. However, state building theories built on cases in early modern states often focus on the influence of elite interaction on consolidation of the central sovereign power, but hardly account for how elite relations shape the hierarchical bureaucracy, which hardly appeared in early modern states.

Implementation of infrastructural power, especially for non-pluralist regimes, is based on the coordinating capability of a trans-echelon bureaucracy. Without a reliable bureaucratic network, "authoritarian resilience" might be overestimated, while local elites or subordinate bureaucrats might resist the sovereign effort of state penetration and even instigate conflicts during the formation of authoritarian states. For large authoritarian regimes or empires, tackling with elite interests in *localities* has become a vital issue as elite discretion could twist the implementation of policies, like reducing willingness in safeguarding regime security (Garfias & Sellars, 2021). However, although elitist approach is widely applied in analyzing state-building of early modern states in Western Europe and late developed non-revolutionary regimes, elites in the formation of late modern revolutionary states were often assumed as internally monolithic as they shared common ideology or submitted themselves to the core revolutionary figures, at least in the early period of state formation. Through building their own organizations and recruiting new members, new revolutionary elites could be "insulated from ties to currently dominant socio-economic interests" (Skocpol, 1979). Regime types of revolutionary states emerged from social revolution are regarded as resilient (Han & Thies, 2019) and possessed higher penetrative capability. Real cases provide a more complicated scenario since revolutionary elites still needed to interact with their colleagues, whose elite cohesiveness would influence the state capacity or policy implementation. For example, the Soviet Union has long been haunted by the elite blocs in regions since its founding history (Easter, 2000), that weakened Soviet's central policy penetration has driven Stalin's "Great Purge" and Gorbachev's radical reform (Padgett & Powell, 2012). Policy implementation would thus be twisted or "adapted" in the interests of local elites. Wang (2021) suggested that central elites in the 11th century's China who had kinship networks scattered in different regions

were prone to adopt a more national-oriented policy, which were different from bureaucrats whose family network concentrated in specific regions. Research on contemporary China has also revealed that local elites bargained and collided with each other and sometimes even formed informal networks that shaped the penetrative capacity of the central government (Zhou, 2010). Regarding the connection between state capacity and regime formation, Vu (2010) suggested that state capacity was derived from intra-elite relations and their mobilizing strategy among society during state building, with the case comparison of Nationalist and Communist China, also Vietnam and Indonesia. In his account, two modes of intra-elite relation, i.e., "elite unity" within the organization or "elite polarization" against external threats, plus the elite-dominated mass mobilization, would ultimately lead to a strong state. Nevertheless, as discussed before, Vu's argument deserves to be refined since state capability from central to local regions is over-determined by internal elite relations within the organization.

As mentioned above, shaping an extensive and monolithic central-local[3] elite relation in the bureaucratic echelon would create differences in state capability. After the imperial collapse in China, regime centralization, or "re-creating" the Chinese state, has become an issue among political elites from different parties in early 20th century's China. As elaborated in the following sections, since founding elites of the CCP party-state were dominated by revolutionary military personnel in different rural "bases" during the early 20th century, local-based initiatives had given way to regime centralization in the early 1950s for the sake of central domination. In the following section, a logic of central-local elite interaction in authoritarian regime formation would be demonstrated for understanding the process of regime building in the 1950s' PRC.

Strategies of Authoritarian Rulers in Regime Centralization

Regime centralization is more than accumulation of state capacity configuration, either in authoritarian states and democracies. Strategies of elites, including how they collude

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[3] Here I define "central elites" as elites who dominated in the capital region of the state, while "local" as elites in other regions of the state territory. Briefly speaking, central-local relations have been issues especially existing in large-territorial countries or unitary polities.

and compromise, separate or defect, would shape the ways of policy implementation and political arrangement (Wang, 2021; Padgett & Powell, 2012; Opper, Nee & Brehm, 2015), not to mention the process of bureaucratic state building. In authoritarian states, regime leaders promote regime centralization to ensure the domination of the central echelon by weakening the power base in the lower bureaucratic echelon. Here I define regime centralization from two aspects: the first aspect is *coherence of political elites*, that political elites in both central and local echelon could form a coherent but not internally seceded ruling group, with shared interests in supporting the central government's authority; the second aspect is *concentration of political power,* that only a few central leaders control the dominant decision-making power within the central government while lower echelons only act a subordinate role. I would use strategies of authoritarian politics, elite co-optation and elite reshuffling, to explain the process of regime centralization which appeared during the early 1950s when the Chinese communists centralized its party-state. Before discussing the evolution of the Chinese communist regime, this section will discuss the two elite interaction strategies and how they interact in the context of regime formation, especially building the central-local bureaucratic system.

Elite Co-optation and Central-Local Relation

Co-optation strategy refers to authoritarian rulers providing material or symbolic incentives in a regime (like working titles in important government sectors) to elites[4] who were perceived as stakeholders for the regime's security, while the co-opted elites would promise to support the regime (Boix & Svolik, 2013). That rulers choose to co-opt elites is largely driven by concerns over the latter's potential capability to undermine the regime, while the ruler expects that co-opted elites could guarantee more goods instead of confronting the state (Mahdavi & Ishiyama, 2020). Besides, co-optation of new elites also helps the leader

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[4] Although the term co-optation is mostly used to refer as authoritarian leaders tackling with elites "outside" the regime through granting them with benefits while elites became regime stakeholders, it denotes the strategic behavior of distributing benefits to new elites in order to ensure regime survival or dominance. In my case of PRC in early 1950s, that regional cadres were promoted in 1952 was technically a bureaucratic transfer within the party-state, but it occurred during the regime formation of PRC when bureaucracies were hardly institutionalized by laws. Party-state working titles could be set and abolished if political elites were "necessarily" promoted or demoted. In other words, whether the co-opted elites were from "inside" or "outside" the regime make few difference in terms of strategic behavior of regime survival or centralization.

balance the influence of the existing dominant elites and monitor their performance (Frantz & Kendell-Taylor, 2014). In the context of authoritarian state formation, both central and local political elites gain shared interests in preserving the regime and form a *coherent* elite group when the leader manipulates the co-working relation through co-optation. *Central* leaders use the co-optation strategy to recruit or promote credible *local* political elites into the central government. Top leaders would entitle them with multiple working titles in different organs ranging from central to local echelons, thus enhancing the central-local connections through personal co-working network (Chen, Wang & Zhang, 2021). Also, central elites could rely on local elites in local governance affairs, while the local elites were monitored by the central government. However, co-opted local elites might also increase their power from co-optation through positioning themselves in a brokerage status, since they approach "closer" to the leader in the higher echelon while reserving their original control in the localities. Co-opted elites connect their co-working ties between the central and local echelon with their multiple working titles, only on the premises of recognizing the legitimacy of the central leader as the "first-among-equals". Also, local elites still maintain either their military power and co-working networks. To some extent, regime centralization through co-optation would produce a cohabited central-local relation and the "central" sovereign becomes the "first-among-equals" in the regime.

Therefore, the co-optation strategy still leaves problems for the regime's security. Firstly, commitment of authoritarian institutions is based on the coercive power of the leader over the co-opted elites, which is not always stable (Boix & Svolik, 2013). If the rulers faced challenges or had more dependence on the co-opted elites, the latter might have a higher "bargain power" that the regime ruler had to concede the demands from the incoming elites. Secondly, as incoming elites still reserve their power base from co-optation while the leader expects that co-opted elites would not betray their new patron, co-opted elites maintain their own working discretion independent of the leader. For these co-opted elites with multiple roles, shared co-working relations could help the co-workers in the higher echelon collect information or monitor the respective co-workers in the lower echelon. Brokerage elites could

utilize their relations or even cultivate their "supportive" base through their original ties. In a worst case scenario, co-optation would create instability for the regime when elites within had political strife with each other. Insecurity still haunts the regime after co-optation if the sovereign leader hardly keeps monitoring behaviors of co-opted elites,

Proposition 1: *Regime centralization through co-optation results in close central-local co-working ties with the leader enhancing the monitoring over co-opted elites, but working networks and the discretion of co-opted elites are preserved which therefore might enhance the brokerage power of co-opted elites between the central and local echelon, and indirectly weaken the dominance of the central authoritarian leader.*

Elite Reshuffling Through "Realignment": Restructuring Central-Local Relation

Elite reshuffling is an alternative strategy for regime leaders to increase regime centralization. Reshuffling indicates that political elites are removed or transferred from their original working posts, thus their original co-working network and power bases are deprived by the central leader. In the context of state formation, authoritarian leaders reshuffle subordinated elites and even purge potential rivals to attain re-organizing the bureaucratic relations. Specifically, in the central-local relation, the central regime increases its penetrative capability over the local bureaucratic echelon and through replacing the powerful subordinate local leaders with new cadres with few power bases. Moreover, original bureaucratic institutions would be further reformed in accordance to the personnel reshuffling in order to strengthen the dominant power of the central leader while weakening the power base in the lower echelon. However, if not from a hindsight perspective, re-organizing elites is a risky strategy for the sovereign. Rulers of the regime have to consider whether reshuffling elites could trigger further elite cleavage and even coups (Bove & Rivera, 2015). If elites chose to "leave" the regime, it would directly self-destroy the regime itself as these elites would not perceive the regime as legitimate. Political elites being re-organized or expected to be purged could use their own resources to instigate political strife within the regime.

As mentioned above, since co-optation strategy leaves instability between central and local political elites, and reshuffling strategy triggered local elites to "leave" and confront the regime in the context of state formation, the central authoritarian leader tends to choose "mixed" strategies to deal with multiple rivals in regime centralization. Pure co-optation or reshuffling only receive an uncertain reaction since the central hardly rises to a dominant advantage during the early stage of state formation. Therefore, the central leaders adopt the *realignment* strategy while reshuffling elites, i.e., shifting alignment with certain groups of co-opted elites in certain issues of ideological or policy orientations and realigning with another group of elites when dealing with another policy issue, so that they could gain support for policy implementation and avoid being "isolated" from the co-opted political elites. In the central-local relation during state formation, although co-optation allows local elites to join in the central regime to form a coherent ruling group, reshuffling would lead the dominant power of the authoritarian leader over their colleagues in subordinate echelons through reorganizing the bureaucratic structure and co-working network but it might leave uncertain outcome of political cleavage. Central leaders might realign with colleagues who support the leaders' power centralization to promote bureaucratic reshuffling. Aligned with part of elites, central leaders could receive support and push for reorganizing the state bureaucratic system more smoothly while isolating certain potential opponents.

Meanwhile, one caveat should be noted that reshuffling strategy indicates that the central leader intends to rearrange the elite relation and promote regime centralization through formulating bureaucratic guidelines at his own volition. Different from co-optation strategy, reshuffling suggests an overhaul of the established bureaucratic relation, including the co-working relation, and might potentially create elite cleavage. In this way, the central leader has to manipulate elites proactively with a re-alignment strategy in order to ask for support from certain co-opted leaders. By manipulating the established elite network, the central leader reshuffles the bureaucratic system and primarily constructs his own working ties, attaining the end of regime centralization.

Proposition 2: *Besides co-optation, the central leader may choose the reshuffling strategy to reorganize the co-working network and bureaucratic structure for regime centralization. Since the leader has to resort to support from other elites, the central leader may strategically "realign" with co-opted elites to gather support for policy implementation.*

Regional Bureaus of CCP and Military Personnel: From Chinese Communist Revolution to Regime Takeover

In this section, I would demonstrate the Regional Bureaus (地方局)[5] in the CCP organizational structure during the regime takeover, which was an influential bureaucratic echelon in the early 1950s. As the Chinese party-state has witnessed an institutional transition from the scattered rural revolutionary regime to a centralized authoritarian regime during the 1950s, central-local relation has also haunted the Party politics in the early period of regime formation, centering on the establishment and abolishment of the Regional Bureaus. Elite interactions between the "central" and the "local" echelon have been embodied around cadres working for the CCP Central Committees and those promoted from Regional Bureaus, culminating in the "Gao-Rao Affair". As the Chinese communists conducted the regime takeover through the civil war in the late 1940s, officers in the communist military forces (the People's Liberation Army, PLA) became the main personnel in the communist cadre echelon. During the rural revolution, the armed forces have been entitled with discretion in decision makings of war issues. However, through the abolishment of the Regional Bureaus, the communists have curtailed the warlordism tendency simply after the regime takeover. Issues related to the PLA would therefore be discussed in this section after the organizational development of Regional Bureaus.

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[5] The term "Regional Bureaus" 地方局 was formally titled as "Regional CCP Central Bureaus" (中共各地中央局) in the 1945 CCP Constitution as "representing the CCP Central to act as leadership in different regions nationwide" (Article 27). The formal title suggested that Party Bureaus were affiliated organs of the central. From the regional perspective, however, Party Bureaus were the de facto organs that owned discretion in the regional affairs. "Regional Bureaus" would stress their actual functions and roles and their relation to the central. Similarly, the party-state in early PRC also instituted the "Regional Governments" administration (See Solinger, 1977), which were led by their respective regional Party Bureaus.

Regional Bureaus of CCP Organizations: From Revolution to Party-State

Established during the communist revolution in the 1930s and the 1940s of China, the Regional Bureaus of CCP was designated to administer the communist-occupied rural areas and authorized with discretion of decision-making in the locality. As the "representatives" of the CCP Central Committee (hereby I would use "the Central" referring to the CCPCC) and under the Party's doctrine of "connecting with the mass", Regional Bureaus were allowed to tackle with all-round affairs, including political, military and economic tasks during the rural revolution (Womack, 1994). Since discretion entitled with Regions were regarded by the Central as a "responsibility for observing the party disciplines" of local cadres instead of the "rights", discretion of decision-making in the localities is hardly defined as "autonomy" (Womack, 1994). However, as Regional Bureaus in scattered regions were granted with "free actions" faraway from the Central and thus the CCP organizations have unintentionally evolved as a constellation of "leadership cells" led by military officials. After the communist takeover, the Party also mimicked the Regional Bureaus and established regional state administrations, termed as "Greater Region Military Administrative Committees (大区军政委员会)" from 1949 to 1954, while the Regional Bureaus became the Party organization in each region.

The echelon of Regional Bureaus originated from the pre-regime takeover period when the Party fought for survival in scattered regions through guerrilla warfare during the Sino-Japanese War (WWII). With the retreat of the Kuomintang forces in the North China (including Hebei, Shanxi and Shandong Province) and Central China (mainly Hubei, Anhui and Northern Jiangsu Province) region during WWII, communist forces infiltrated and established "war of resistance base areas" in the respective trans-provincial regions (Tsou, 2000, p.224). Two Regional Bureaus[6] were designated specifically for administering the upper and lower North China region, as these regions were not coterminous with each other. In Yan'an, the CCP also established the *Northwestern Bureau* (西北局) in the 1940s administering local and ethnic group affairs. After the end of WWII, expansion of communist-controlled regions

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[6] Two Regional Bureaus in the early 1940s during WWII were called "Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Regional Bureau 晋察冀分局", which administered base areas across three provinces in the upper North China region; and the "Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Regional Bureau 晋冀鲁豫分局", administering lower North China region.

fostered the additional reorganization and expansion of jurisdiction of Regional Bureaus. After the surrender and retreat of Japanese forces during the end of WWII, the CCP found an opportunity to expand and integrate the scattered revolutionary bases in the North and Central China Region (Koss, 2018), along with Northeast China (aka. the Manchuria Region) where it had been controlled by the Japanese-sponsored state Manchukuo.

The Chinese Civil War in the late 1940s witnessed the evolution of regional Party Bureaus during the expansion of communist areas until the ultimate takeover in 1949. In August 1945, the CCP Central Secretariat convened a meeting (with Mao attended) in Yan'an and decided on selecting cadres and armies with whom from or had working experiences the Northeast Region and established the *Northeast Bureau* (东北局) in September 1945, "representing the Central to direct all activities of Party organizations and members in the Northeast Region" (Peng's Chronicle, 2012, p.297), where Gao Gang has been the chief of Northeast China after 1947. Delegated with discretion in the Northeast Region, the communists have contended for expanding the revolutionary bases in the local countryside areas and got access to the ammunition and logistic resources transferred from the Soviet forces. A point should be noted that, expanding the communist regions has been perceived by the regional cadres as a survival strategy for the local Party organizations in the local circumstance instead of implementing the Central order, which was less known by the Central (Peng's Chronicle, 2012, pp.309-310). Similarly, at the same time, the Central also established the *East China Bureau* (华东局), administering Shandong and Northern Jiangsu Provinces where have been influenced by communists through guerrilla war during WWII. Furthermore, the communist offensive from the proximate base areas in North China also encouraged the expansion of rural bases that ended up with amalgamation of the scattered areas in the late 1940s, and southern China in 1949. The *North China Bureau* (华北局) was then accordingly merged from two Regional Bureaus (as referred in Footnote 5) of North China in 1948 (CCP Central Party Documents, p.152). Later, the *Central South Bureau* (中南局) was established in May 1949 administering the newly occupied provinces spanning from Henan to Guangdong, and *Southwest Bureau* (西南局) was established in July at the same year (See Graph 1).

Under the rapid expansion of its occupied territory and its governance pressure, the CCP's organizational evolution has witnessed from a "fluid" guerrilla forces to a formalized and hierarchical regional-based revolutionary regime, while Regional Bureaus still owned de facto discretions in certain policy realms until 1954, particularly economic affairs. The intra-party "power-sharing" arrangement was indicated in a CCP Resolution in 1948 on the "request-report system". In 1948, Mao drafted a directive in the Central Committee, stipulating that secretaries of Regional Bureaus and District Bureaus, should be "responsible for submitting to the Central Committee and its chairman a comprehensive bi-monthly report" regarding "the problems and tendencies" on military, politics, land reform, economic affairs, party organizations, and propaganda affairs within their administered base areas, as Regional Bureaus which were "organs appointed by the Central Committee to carry out on its behalf the tasks entrusted to them", should "keep in the closest possible contact with the Central Committee" (Mao,1948). Mao legitimized that organizational decentralization had been authorized under the contingency of guerrilla war when base areas "were divided by the enemy", but the expansion of the Party organization and occupied regions "required us to overcome the undisciplined and 'anarchist' condition" within the organization. Later in September 1948, the CCP Politburo released a resolution on the request-report mechanism between the Central Committee and lower-echelon Bureaus by arranging a list of decision-making liabilities for the Central Committee and the subordinated bureaus. Subordinated organs of the central, i.e., the Regional Bureaus, District Bureaus and their supervised Provincial Committees, owned certain discretions of decision-making including 3/8 of the listed "general affairs" and "political affairs", 5/9 of listed "economic affairs", 8/9 of "culture and propaganda affairs" (1948 Selected Documents CCP Central, pp.356-361) and more importantly, all of the "unlisted" affairs. For the listed affairs, "(decisions) should *request* the Central for approval *before* implementation", while appointment of Regional Bureau members was categorized as the liability of the Central. Besides, the resolution also stipulated that subordinated organs should submit *reports* to the Central on implementations and outcomes on the listed issues except in the war confrontation regions where expediency was necessary.

From Mao's multiple concerns about "undisciplined" party cadres, policy discretion still existed for a long time after he had risen to his supreme authority within CCP during Yan'an Rectification Movement in 1942. Though Regional Bureaus were authorized under the name of representing "the will from the Party Central", they still maintained discretion of decision-making that originated from the revolution era. Especially after regime takeover, Regional Bureaus at one time gained importance due to economic recovery. As the 1948 Resolution indicated, more and half of economic affairs and cultural issues management were delegated to subordinated Party bureaus, while the two affairs have risen to main issues after the communist takeover in the urban areas and southern China, dubbed as "*new* liberated regions" different from the *old* revolutionary bases (Teiwes, 1987, p.70). Under the discretion, certain flexible policies were issued. For example, contrary to the collectivization movement in the mid-1950s, private industries were preserved simply after the communists took over the urban management affairs (Teiwes, 1987, p.75). Unlike the revolutionary base areas in Northeast region, North China and the proximity regions of Yan'an, the CCP could gain little support from local society after immediate conquest to the south of the Yangtze River, as they lacked information about the CCP's performance. Also, the local-based underground Party organizations still lacked personnel and were incapable of civil affair governance (Teiwes, 1987, p.70). Besides, anti-communist guerrilla forces supported by Kuomintang still existed and conducted sporadic offensives in the newly-occupied regions of southern and northwestern provinces of China and during the early 1950s (Teiwes, 1987, p.71). In a word, lack of support and intensive tasks of war confrontation indicated regional cadres still had relative discretion while facing expediency. With the expansion of occupied regions all over China, the CCP Central also had to send certain cadres to the southern "new liberated regions" from the base areas, taking charge of economic recovery, urban governance and the post-civil war stability maintenance.
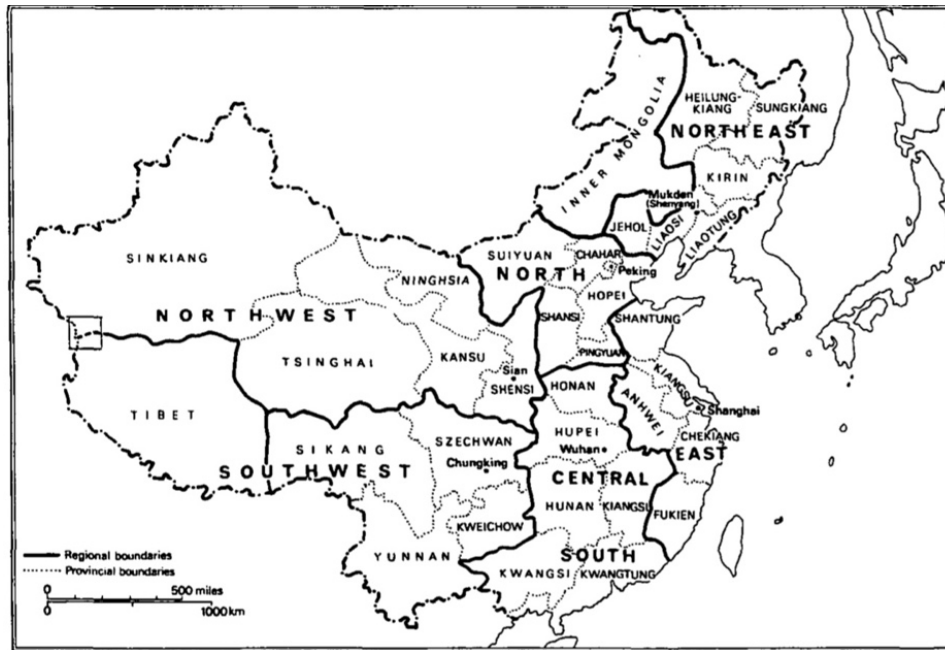
Graph 1 Administrative Jurisdiction of CCP Regional Bureaus[7], 1949-1954

Source: Teiwes, F.C., "Chapter 2 Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime", in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol.14 (The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1949-1965), ed., Twitchett, D. & Fairbank, J.K., p.80. (Provincial names are romanized in Wade-Giles version). The administrative boundary of provinces in early 1950s' PRC is greatly different from contemporary PRC.

Regionalist arrangement has also become the Party's approach in designing central-local organizations of state apparatus overseeing the large swath of territory. Two regional administrative apparatus were respectively established in the North China and Manchuria regions in 1948 and early 1949 (entitled as "North China People's Government" and "Northeast People's Government"), with most of CCP members inside appointed from the respective Regional Party Bureaus. Four "Greater Administrative Military Administrative Committees" (GAMAC, i.e., the Regional Committees) in other regions were established and functioned as both the "delegation" of the Central Government and the first-tier echelon of local administrations overseeing the provincial governments in December 1949, which has been different from post-Mao bureaucratic arrangement that province as the first-tier local echelon. Similar to the Party apparatus, regional administrations were also technically designated as the

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[7] Similar to Regional Bureaus, "District Bureaus" (地方分局) were also instituted as the delegated organs of the CCP Central Committee in the revolutionary bases, which only administered smaller jurisdiction (only one or two provinces) than Regional Bureaus. District Bureaus were instituted in frontier ethnic regions (the Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang("Sinkiang")) and certain provinces (Guangdong ("Kwangtung") and Shandong ("Shantung")) that distant from the seat of Regional Bureaus.

delegate of the central government. In terms of the Organic Law of GAMAC promulgated in December 1949, members of Regional Committees were "nominated by the State Council to the Central Government for appointment", and endowed with the power of "transmitting the decisions and orders" from the Central Government to provinces within their respective jurisdiction, drafting laws and regulations related to local administration, and the discretion of drafting budgets of the administrative region within the scope of the state budgetary plan (Solinger, 1977). While in the newly occupied regions after October 1949, regional governments were entitled with "Military Administrative Committees (MAC)", indicating that the government was dominated by the military generals to tackle the local social order.

CCP Regional Bureaus/PRC Regional State Apparatus	Party/State Chiefs
Northeast Bureau/Northeast People's Government	Gao Gang*
North China Bureau/North China Administrative Committee	Bo Yibo* /Liu Lantao
East China Bureau/East China Military Administrative Committee (MAC)	Rao Shushi*
Central-South Bureau/Central-South MAC	Lin Biao*
Northwest Bureau/Northwest MAC	Peng Dehuai*
Southwest Bureau/Southwest MAC	Deng Xiaoping*/Liu Bocheng*

Source: *Compilation of CCP Organizational History (From 1st Congress to 14th Congress)* (in Chinese), Beijing: Central Party School Publishing House, 1995.
Note: *Also the military commander or commissar of respective PLA Field Armies.

Table 1 Chief of CCP Regional Bureaus and State Regional Administrative Regions, 1949-1954

However, Party Apparatus of Regional Bureaus were still de facto organs of the chief members in state apparatus in the regional governments. In practice, leaders or deputy leaders of regional Party Bureaus (mostly also acted as military commander or "political commissars" of the PLA field army, see Table 1 and the following section) were appointed as the seat of governmental leadership from the directives of the Central Committee. For instance, In the North China region, the establishment of the North China regional government in 1948 was issued under a directive from CCP Central Military Committee regarding merging the scattered

base areas and reorganization of local Party organs. Likewise, the regional organ of the Central-South "Military Affairs Committee" was also initiated by Mao in his telegraph sent to Lin Biao in October 1949 when the communist armed forces took over southern China provinces. Moreover, as a means of showcasing the "united front" policy between communist and non-communist elites, regional state apparatus functioned more as a platform of co-opting social elites who collaborated in or were sympathized with the communist revolution, including technical professionals, intellectuals, and ex-KMT military officers. Still, regional administrations were led by their respective Party Bureaus as shown in Table 1.

The PLA Branches and the Military Districts

The communist armed forces, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), have become the important cohort of elites in the Regional Bureaus. Firstly, through the war operations in different directions conducted by different "Field Armies", the PLA forces shaped the administrative demarcation of six regional Party Bureaus. Secondly, the chief commanders of each PLA branch were therefore appointed as the Party chiefs of respective regional Party Bureaus that administered the occupied regions during the 1950s.

PLA Field Armies	Administered Military Regions
1st Field Army	Northwest Region
2nd Field Army	Southwest Region
3rd Field Army	East China Region
4th Field Army	Northeast/Central-South Region
North China Field Army	North China Region

Source: *Compilation of Chinese Communist Party Organization History,* 1995, Beijing: Central Party School Publishing House.

Table 2 Field Armies of PLA in 1949 and Administered Military Regions

From a hindsight perspective, the communist takeover led by the PLA forces has not experienced the following warlordism even after state-building, which had been a familiar scenario that occurred from imperial China to the KMT's attempt of unification in the 1920s. However, rather than attributing it to a hagiographical "intra-party solidarity", the organization

of PLA "Field Armies" had also evolved from different sections of communist forces during WWII when communist forces were separated into different rural bases in the North China region. Reorganized as the "8th Route Army" under the Banner of the Nationalist Armed Force, communist forces were divided into three divisions and they had established the Regional Bureaus in early years (See Footnote 5). After WWII, north China and south China regional communist forces were renamed as PLA "Field Armies" and designated with numeric order.[8] PLA Field Armies were directed to take over different regions of mainland China during the Chinese civil war. After the 2nd and the 3rd Field Armies captured Nanjing, the 2nd Field Army redirected the campaign into southwestern provinces, including Sichuan and Guizhou, while the 3rd Field Army expanded its occupation southward along the coastal provinces from Jiangsu to Fujian. Meanwhile, the 4th Field Army, which was the PLA Branch with the largest scale of troops, was maneuvered from Manchuria southwards to the campaigns in Central China and the 1st Field Army was in charge of battles in the northwestern provinces. Along with the takeover through military expedition by the Field Armies, regional Party Bureaus correspondingly extended its rulings all over China, with military leaders becoming the Party secretary of Regional Bureaus (See Table 2).

We could find out in the following table that during the early 1950s, military officers of different PLA Field Armies accounted for a large share in the regional Party Bureaus and their subordinated provincial Party Committees until 1954 when cadres without military background rose up in the party apparatus (Table 3). Also, some of the regional Party Bureau members were simultaneously in charge of local PLA military regions during the takeover years. For regions in "newly-liberated areas" (i.e., regions except North China and Northeast region), military-based officials accounted for at least 60 percent of local cadres in the early years, while less than 30 percent of cadres were pure civilians until the 1954 abolishment of Regional Bureaus in regions far away from the central government. Besides, we could also find a "North-South division" in terms of the role of PLA Field Armies in their conquered regions.

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[8] Specifically, Yan'an and Shanxi's 120th Division was renamed as the PLA *1st Field Army*, and 129th Division was renamed as the *2nd Field Army*. Part of the communist force of 115th Division which launched offensive in Manchuria was reorganized as the *4th Field Army*. Other communist troops in the southern provinces during WWII were organized into the *3rd Field Army*. See Whitson (1969).

In the southern Chinese regions, the occupied Field Armies had a dominant role though, they had to keep "collegial" with other branches of Field Army mutually, while in the northern regions (North China Region and the Northeast Region) military-based cadres were nearly dominated by officials from the respective local military region.

Region	Military Section	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
North China	NC Military Region	0.43	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.32	0.27	0.28	0.37
	All	0.43	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.32	0.30	0.31	0.39
Northeast	4th Field/NE Military Region	0.77	0.68	0.56	0.39	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.11
	All	0.77	0.68	0.56	0.39	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.11
East China	3rd Field/EC Military Region	0.63	0.60	0.54	0.60	0.58	0.52	0.44	0.46
	All	0.71	0.70	0.66	0.67	0.71	0.64	0.52	0.58
Central-South	4th Field/CS Military Region	0.59	0.56	0.55	0.41	0.33	0.37	0.22	0.14
	All	0.74	0.67	0.69	0.59	0.51	0.47	0.35	0.25
Northwest	1st Field/NW Military Region	0.73	0.78	0.77	0.74	0.76	0.73	0.69	0.67
	All	0.73	0.78	0.77	0.74	0.76	0.75	0.81	0.74
Southwest	2nd Field/SW Military Region	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.42	0.43	0.39	0.30	0.30
	All	0.79	0.78	0.79	0.76	0.78	0.73	0.48	0.48

Source: Nomenclature of CCP Party elites are collected from *Organizational History of CCP History* (in Chinese), Beijing: Central Party History Publishing House, 2000. Military biographical profiles are collected from the Baidu Encyclopedia website.

Table 3 Percentage Share of Cadres with Military Background in the CCP Regional Bureaus and Provincial Committees, 1949-1956

In a word, the evolution of Regional Bureaus greatly influenced the regime centralization in the early period of the PRC. The formation of 1948 intra-party "request-report mechanism" between the central and Regional Bureaus reflects the double-side role of Regional Bureaus both in organizational devolution and centralization. When facing

imperatives concerning organizational survival and limitations of gathering information, Regional Bureaus were devolved with discretions as they were more adaptive in getting access to local conditions; however, when Mao and his protégés intended to ensure intra-Party authority through centralization, Regional Bureaus were then perceived by the Central as their affiliated organs to supervise lower echelon Party organizations, and thus still entitled with certain discretions. Therefore, the promotion of regional cadres in 1952 indicated the attempt of Mao in enhancing regime centralization through building the close relation between central and regional cadres.

Elite Network of the Central-Local Echelon in Early PRC (1949-1956)

Having discussed the organizational structure of CCP Party Regional Bureaus and its military ranks, in this section, I would use the network analysis to demonstrate the trend of regime centralization through analyzing the evolution of the PRC central-local relation from 1949 to 1956. As the two theoretical propositions indicate, regime centralization in authoritarian regimes is shaped by change of elite co-working relations within the institutions. Therefore, the co-working network of central-local cadres across seven years (1949-1956) in the party-state system would be analyzed with the Statnet and Igraph package in R. Following paragraphs would show the data source of elite information and the measurements of their co-working relation from 1949 to 1956.

Data

The information of individual elites is collected from cadre personnel and their working sectors. information of CCP elites is collected from the Chinese official sourcebook of *Organizational History of CCP: Transitional and Socialist Construction Period (1949.10-1966.5)*（《中国共产党组织史资料：过渡时期与社会主义建设时期（1949.10-1966.5)》），which includes the nomenclature list of Chinese communist party-state cadres from central to provincial echelon and their terms of office from 1949 to 1956. PLA military background of cadres would be collected from the Baidu Encyclopedia Website, an encyclopedia website

based in China which has collected biographical information of CCP cadres and has been used in China studies (also the information source of *China Vitae*). For information of revolutionary cadres, their revolutionary experiences and Field Army affiliation in 1949 is also recorded. In this research, cadres working in the party-state apparatus in the central, regional and provincial echelon from 1949 to 1956 are collected. Regarding the information of personnel, three echelons of CCP cadres, including central, regional and provincial cadres are collected. *Central* cadres would be composed of the CCP Central Committee standing members (named as "the Central Secretariat" 中央书记处 from 1949 to 1956), the state premier, vice premiers and sub-group directors in the cabinet, and the State Planning Committee, i.e., the state "economic cabinet", from 1952 to 1954. As the first-ranked subordinate departments of the CCP Central Committee, chiefs of CCP departments subordinated to the CCP Central Committee are also included. For the regional and provincial level organizations, only CCP Bureaus and Committees are included, since they were entitled with discretion of decision making in local affairs that had inherited from the period of revolution[9]. *Regional* elites would include the regional CCP committee members, i.e., the secretaries, deputy secretaries, standing committee members and committee members; while *provincial* elites would only include provincial secretaries and deputy secretaries (See Table 4).

Number of cadres of central, regional and provincial echelon in each year is shown in Table 5, indicating an increasing trend until 1954 when regional Echelon was abolished, as certain regional cadres were promoted into subordinated ministers of the cabinet or relocated back into the PLA military regions. Here I only observe the sectional co-working data in each current year in understanding the pattern of regime centralization through their central-local working relation, as some cadres were appointed in multiple echelons for regime coherence. An important related issue in network analysis is to define the scope of "elites". Admittedly, it would be more "comprehensive" to integrate data of *ordinary* members in provincial committees. However, as ordinary committee members (without bearing the leadership title)

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[9] Parallel state apparatus, i.e., the "Military-Civil Administrative Committees" of the local level in the early 1950s are not included, as they were consensus-building bodies consisting of members of CCP Bureaus and local non-CCP dignitaries, which were more a means symbolizing CCP's "united front" ideology than entitled with discretion of governance.

in the provincial level were not committee members of Regional Bureaus, cadres bearing lower titles or in the lower echelon had less connection with the regional Party chiefs and thus might exaggerate the co-working network of regional Party chiefs. Besides, cabinet ministers are not included, as they were less than decision-makers or less involved in the interaction of central and local Party chiefs, who had been directly promoted as state vice premiers in 1952.

Bureaucratic Echelon	Departments Included	Working Positions Collected
Central	CCP Politburo Standing Committee; the Government State Council (1949-1954)/the State Council (1954-1956), and its sub-committees (state cabinet of PRC); the State Planning Commission (1952-1956); CCP Central Office; CCP Central Committee sub-ordinated departments, 1949-1956: Central Organizational Department; Central Propaganda Department; Central International Department; Central Agricultural Affairs Department	Politburo SC Members; Premier and Vice Premiers; Chief and deputy chiefs of cabinet sub-committees; Chief, deputy chiefs and members of the State Planning Commission; Chief and Deputy chiefs of the Central departments.
Regional	CCP Regional Bureaus; CCP District Bureaus	Regional Party Secretary, deputy secretaries and members
Provincial	CCP Provincial Committees	Provincial Party secretary, deputy secretaries and members

Table 4 Data Collection Scope of PRC Party-state Elites, 1949-1956

Network (Regime) Level Measurement

Measurement of network centralization in both the general network and individual node level is generated from the central-local elite co-working relations. Reasons for defining co-working relations in the same organs as network ties are as follow: firstly, in authoritarian politics where elite relation play a vital role in shaping policies, co-worker relations in different echelon influence the central-local power relation which would further influence the evolution of regime centralization, as suggested in our theoretical framework. Secondly, it is possible

that other informal ties of affinity, like schoolmate, shared hometown origin or alumni relations, could be used by elite actors in building their political network. However, actors might only "activate" their informal ties as an instrument if only having mutual interdependence with each other for political alignment or survival, which are "embedded in a restraining or enabling" structural context of working relations (Keller, 2016). As only affinity relations *within* the working organs would thus positively or negatively influence the institutionalized centralization of regime.

As Proposition 1 shows, under the co-optation strategy, elites who were appointed with multiple job positions across different echelons could assist the top leader to monitor the elites and transmit information from their local colleagues to the central government, and thus also form a coherent elite group. However, co-optation potentially weakens the authority of the central leader since elites with multiple job titles are placed in a brokerage position that allows them with the capability of "lobbying" for support from co-workers in the lower echelon and even with their counterparts. In other words, co-opted elites may increase their personalized power base as they have co-workers both in central and local (regional or provincial) echelon. In order to observe to what extent regime centralization existed during the transformation period of PRC, I would firstly use the network *centralization*[10] value to measure the extent of regime centralization in the general co-working network. According to centralization measurements, higher value of *closeness centralization* is interpreted that individual elites are prone to form a hierarchical and star-like co-working relation while lower closeness centralization indicates a less coherent co-working relation, since when the absolute sum of difference between the node with the highest closeness centrality with each other node is larger, other nodes may hardly have closer co-working connection with the largest node; if the absolute sum is smaller in co-working network, it indicates some other individual nodes may form close co-working ties similar to the most centralized node. Another indicator,

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[10] Network centralization denotes the extent of a network structure converging to a "centralized" star-type network based on comparing the relative difference of nodes of the largest *centrality* to every other node's centrality in the network, i.e., centralization = sum(|max(C(n_max)) – C(n_i)|), C(n) refers to node centrality, while n_i refers to individualized nodes in the network graph. Different measurements of centrality produce their related centralization (i.e., closeness and betweenness) measurement. For recent application of network centralization, see Osei (2018).

betweenness centralization, denotes network centralization through comparing the difference of betweenness (similar to the "brokerage status") centrality among nodes. Higher betweenness centralization indicates the higher sum of differences between actors with the greatest betweenness value and other actors. By comparison, lower betweenness centralization infers there were still multiple rival "brokerage" within the network and thus the central authority might be weakened, as the Proposition 1 indicates.

In terms of our theoretical propositions, on one hand, regime centralization through co-optation strategy could increase co-working connection between central and local cadres and thus increase the closeness centralization of the network. However, as co-optation grants the promoted elites with more power than before while elites' established working positions have still been preserved, co-opted elites indirectly improve their "brokerage" status and play a more important role of connecting and mobilizing trans-echelon cadres. Intra-elite polarization may potentially be evolved within the co-working network if the co-opted elites fell into cleavages within the central, as indicated in our Proposition 1. On the other hand, as Proposition 2 suggests, the leader could reorganize the elites' co-working relations and disconnect the previous working ties to enhance regime centralization. In this case, co-working ties and their indicators of network centralization largely differ from situations before reshuffling.

Year	Number of co-working central & local cadres in the PRC cadre network
1949	180
1950	221
1951	228
1952	277
1953	296
1954	345
1955	212
1956	230

Table 5 Number of PRC Central-local Cadres, 1949-1956

Node (Elite) Level Measurement

Regarding node level analysis, node *centrality* helps understand the relative importance of personnel in the co-working relation. For the role of actors in the general network, closeness centrality and betweenness centrality capture the capability of node connection in the whole network. *Betweenness centrality* of nodes (individual elites) measures the role of an individual elite acting as the shortest connection for other elites have to transmit through, which denotes the extent of an individual elite in building connections and transmitting information across different sub-groups in the network community (the trans-echelon cadre network). Measured by betweenness centrality, cadres who work in more than one sector would be the most vital people since other co-workers have to contact another working sector through the brokerage cadre with multiple working titles. *Closeness* centrality measures the proximity of connection of a node (an individual elite) which directly infers the capability of an individual elite with closers co-working resources.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that node centrality only indicates the dimension of actors' co-working position in a given network structure, which provides more on nodes' connectivity in terms of its structural context than their *real* capability transferring the co-worker tie into factional mobilization. Connections in the co-worker network feature as a "cliquish" style (colleagues equally connect each other) and henceforth have the *same* closeness centrality measurement regardless of their *different* hierarchical job position and actual influence. In reality, in terms of faction building in the working network, elites with higher bureaucratic titles are more capable of building factional ties with their colleagues as they might be able to "attract" loyal subordinates with their own political influence. Besides, higher officials have privilege in decision-making discretion and increasing their influence through everyday activities, like public visiting within their own jurisdictions, or carrying "inspection tours" (Mahdavi & Ishiyama, 2020) around different regions. Therefore, I would propose a modified measurement of the aforementioned betweenness and closeness centralities by multiplying the weighted parameter of the bureaucratic titles of "nodes" (*centrality * bureaucratic parameter*), i.e., the individual elites, to denote actors' potential capability of

mobilizing factional affinity in a working relation. Ranging from central to provincial hierarchy, the coding of bureaucratic level is based on hierarchical rank in the three-level (central-regional-provincial/district level) echelon and the leader-subordinate position in each echelon (which is shown as below). Besides, referring from the bureaucratic ranking system in contemporary China, chiefs and their deputies in the CCP central departments that did not administer localities (regional and provincial chiefs) are weighted equivalently with regional leaders. Cadres with higher echelon are weighted with larger parameters as they had larger actual influential power over their colleagues compared with their subordinates, even if they shared the same number of co-workers. As a co-optation strategy, some cadres can bear multiple bureaucratic positions across different echelons, or as the "first/second-among-equal" (for example, Party chiefs and deputy Party chiefs are also part of members in their supervised Party standing committee) in the committee organs. In these circumstances, they are only coded with the highest bureaucratic position.

ERGM Test: PLA Co-working Influence in the PRC Bureaucracy

Lastly, as discussed before, the Chinese communists largely organized into PLA military groups establishing the regional and provincial party-states. Activities of military leaders, including their capability of influencing the policymaking and implementation, would be an essential and haunting concern for the regime leader, since military affiliation fosters political elites to form sub-group solidarity and leads to intra-elite cleavage in the regime. Therefore, in my research, I would use the ERGM model to detect the extent that the PRC bureaucratic co-working relation formed along their military affiliation in 1949 during regime takeover, with the network co-working relation in each year (1949-1956) as the dependent variable and the PLA military affiliations in the year of 1949 used as the independent variables. Also, as cadres differ in power according to their bureaucratic levels, variables of bureaucratic position and hierarchical binary relations would be used as controlled variables (see Table 6). By comparing the co-working network centralization each year, the ERGM model of the co-workers' network indicates the tendency that bureaucratic co-working relations were largely

influenced by the military organization during the civil war. As Proposition 2 suggests, elite reshuffling through re-organization might promote regime centralization substantially as elites are detached from their old colleagues and superiors. In this way, the yearly ERGM model may indicate the tendency that elite co-working relations are influenced by their military ties in regime takeover.

Bureaucratic Titles in the Party-State of PRC (1949-1956)	Coded Parameter
Member of CCP Politburo Standing Committee; Chief of the State Cabinet (i.e, the Government Administrative Council, 1949-1954/ the State Council, 1954-1956); Chief of the State Planning Committee (1952-1954).	10
Vice Premiers and Leaders of Committees of State Cabinet; Deputy Chief of the State Planning Committee (1952-1954).	9
Members of Committees of State Cabinet; Members of the State Planning Committee (1952-1954).	8
Regional Secretary; Chief of CCP Central Departments.	7
Regional Deputy Secretary; Deputy Chiefs of CCP Central Departments.	6
Regional Standing Committee Members	5
Regional Committee Members	4
District Secretary	3.5*
District Deputy Secretary	2.5
District Committee Members	1.5
Provincial Secretary	3
Provincial Deputy Secretary	2
Provincial Committee Members	1

Notes: *Certain provinces were instituted with CCP District Bureaus instead of provincial committees, and they were equivalent in terms of administrative jurisdictions and both were subject to Regional Bureaus. It is hard to empirically or legally differentiate the discretion level between provincial and district CCP organs though, most district bureaus were instituted in provinces located in frontier regions or ethnic regions, and generally dominated by local-experienced cadres, which were granted with more discretion than their provincial counterparts. See Vogel (1969).

Table 6 Coding of Bureaucratic Level Parameter of Party-state Elites of the PRC, 1949-1956

Results: Network Centralization and PLA Influences

By comparing the network centralization value (1949-1956) either with and without isolated nodes, we could find out that central-local co-working ties displayed a relatively loose

connection before 1952 (See Table 7), while higher centralization in 1950 is driven by the connectivity of cadres working at multiple bureaucratic sectors simply after regime takeover rather than centralization, as shown in Graph 2. In 1952, the co-working relation in terms of both *closeness centralization* and *betweenness centralization* among the CCP central and local elites greatly increased in 1952 as a result of promotion of regional Party chiefs into the central government, but revealed a diverging trend in 1954 compared with 1949. Firstly, closeness centralization shows co-working relations were relatively "centralized" during years between 1952 and 1954 when regional party chiefs were promoted into the central echelon compared with 1949, the year of PRC's regime takeover, though the promoted cadres also maintained their co-working ties with their subordinates. It suggested that the PRC regime had taken a real effort in co-opting the local elites to form a coherent ruling group. Secondly, betweenness centralization from 1952 to 1954 revealed a declining trend and even less centralized than 1949. Referring from the graph, it suggests that co-opted elites maintained their own working ties with the lower echelon cadres during the early 1950s after the regime attempted to co-opted local echelon elites to increase the co-working connection (See Graph 2, 1952-1954). After 1955 when the Regional Bureaus were abolished, working ties between central and local elites were disconnected and thus the centralization level of the elite collegial network plummeted, in terms of either centralization measurement.

Divergence of network centralization trend from 1952 to 1954 suggested that elite co-optation increased intra-elite coherence that all cadres increasingly became subordinated co-workers of the leaders, but some cadres gained essential positions in transmitting central directives to the local and assisting the central echelon for mobilizing policy implementation. In the context of the regime building, connection between central and local echelon was at one time closer through enhancing the role of the regional elites' "brokerage", but elites owned their own capability of building alignment or mobilizing support if intra-elite relation fell into cleavage. In the PRC party-state in the early 1950s, elite cleavage in the central would weaken Mao's personal authority to promote his socialist transformation. Structural basis of such "brokerage" is that every regional Party chief still left their "sub-group regional colleague

clusters" that mostly composed of cadres born out of the PLA military. Co-working ties have only greatly changed after 1955 that the regional echelon (the CCP Regional Bureaus) was abolished, with regional Party leaders losing their trans-echelon brokerage role.

	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
*Betweenness Centralization	**0.19**	0.33	0.12	**0.21**	0.15	**0.096**	0.015	0.013
*Closeness Centralization	**0.0069**	0.0084	0.0052	**0.0094**	0.0066	**0.0071**	0.0022	0.0019
Betweenness Centralization	**0.18**	0.32	0.11	**0.21**	0.15	**0.095**	0.015	0.013
Closeness Centralization	**0.0064**	0.0079	0.005	**0.0084**	0.0064	**0.0068**	0.0022	0.0019

Notes: *Removed nodes with zero degree centrality (isolated nodes).

Table 7 Centralization of the CCP Central-Local Cadre Co-Working Network, 1949-1956

ERGM results (Table 8) show that co-working network from 1949 to 1956 has hardly been randomly formed. Regardless of the stable significance that higher bureaucratic position tends to build co-working network (the node attribute of "Bureaucratic Position" based on Table 6 coding) with the lower bureaucrats (the quantitative homophily attribute of "Bureaucratic Hierarchy"), military affinity played an important role in the dynamics of cadres' co-working network. Left rows of ERGM in each year shows that military attributes influenced the formation of co-working ties in bureaucracies. We can find out that before 1954, elites from different Fields of PLA not only played significant roles in constituting co-working in the bureaucratic echelon (as shown from the 3rd to the 7th row in the ERGM Result Table). Right rows of ERGM shows the homophily test in each year, that some PLA Fields were prone to maintain their co-working ties in the party-state bureaucracy for several years after regime takeover. Since 1952 when regional party chiefs were promoted in the central echelon, cadres from PLA Field Armies still maintained their co-working ties, which were significantly existed among the First Field Army stationed in the Northwest region, the Second Field Army stationed in the Southwest Region and the Third in the East China region. Military cadres from North

China Region were also prone to work together, but less influential compared with the armed forces who had conquered huge swaths of regions during the war. In other words, it was possible that a factional tendency embedded in the working positions, which could be a latently threat for the sovereign because co-opted elites could easily resort to military leaders or simply had "private meetings" each other. Condition only has greatly shifted after 1955, that most cadres of First and Third Field Army had a less significant role in having co-working ties in the general network, while the North China Army and the Second Field Army were still prone to extend their ties (regardless of statistical significance). But comparing the bureaucratic attributes before and after 1955, the values show that co-working ties after 1955 are much higher after 1955, indicating that co-working ties after 1955 were mostly influenced by only their bureaucratic working sectors instead of military attributes.

Therefore, we could see that the central-local relation of PRC during regime formation had witnessed a fluctuated trend from 1949 to 1954. Except in 1950 when certain regional cadres were appointed in multiple regions for establishing the local Party apparatus, cadres were promoted into the central and they cooperated closer together after 1952 compared with 1949. CCP Central leaders' co-optation strategy left the promoted cadres with the capability of both assisting and bargaining with the central echelon. As Proposition 1 indicated, this may weaken the dominant role of central leaders, not to mention that subordinate cadres maintained their co-working ties inherited from the military. After 1955, bureaucratic elites generally broke the co-working affinity in military groups, as reorganization of cadres' working echelon weakened the co-working connection, with the exceptional case of North China-based cadres that still maintained their influences in the co-working connections, indicating that re-organization of bureaucratic echelon in 1954 resulted in the reserving seats from the North China Army and 2nd Field Army.

Results: Individual Level Centrality

Changes in elites' individual centrality suggested the evolution of specific elites' relative advantages in extending working ties and controlling the transmittance of information.

Table 9 shows that elites with highest centrality were the most powerful persons in terms of co-working network resources, especially those who were positioned in multiple working sectors (both central and local echelons) after 1952. Before 1952, cadres with highest betweenness advantages in the co-working network were local-echelon cadres as military leaders in charge of regime takeover in multiple localities and assisted in establishing the regional Party Bureaus. Their special multiplex co-working tie derived from their lateral sending across regions during military occupation. For instance, Chen Geng (陈赓), Zhang Yunyi (张云逸) and Ye Jianying (叶剑英) were colleagues in the South China Bureau instituted in newly occupied Guangdong Province in 1949, while the three were military leaders respectively from the 2nd Field Army, the East China Military Region (administered by the 3rd Field Army), and the North China Field Army. Nevertheless, as betweenness centrality indicated that before 1952, cadres in the North China Bureau played an advantageous brokerage role with their co-working ties in both central and local echelon. Weighted betweenness also shows even multiplied with their job title influences, regional military leaders during takeover played an essential role in maintaining connection from central to local echelon when state institutions had yet to be refined, though Mao and Zhou were always central due to their paramount status among their colleagues, while working connections still relied on the North China cadres (see Graph 2 1949-1951). In terms of closeness centrality, cadres with highest closeness centrality in 1949 and the early 1950s suggest they often had relatively more colleagues in the regional echelon across different localities. For example, in 1949, three cadres with most co-working resources were PLA Field Army leaders without co-working ties in the central regime, including Chen Geng, who simultaneously worked in the South China District Bureau and Southwest Regional Bureau with multiple military leaders still conducting civil war operations, He Long (贺龙) and Li Jingquan (李井泉), both of who worked together both in Northwest Bureau and Southwest Bureau during the regime takeover. By contrast, a few cadres underlined in Table 9 maintained co-working connections with the central echelon from the North China Bureau before 1952.
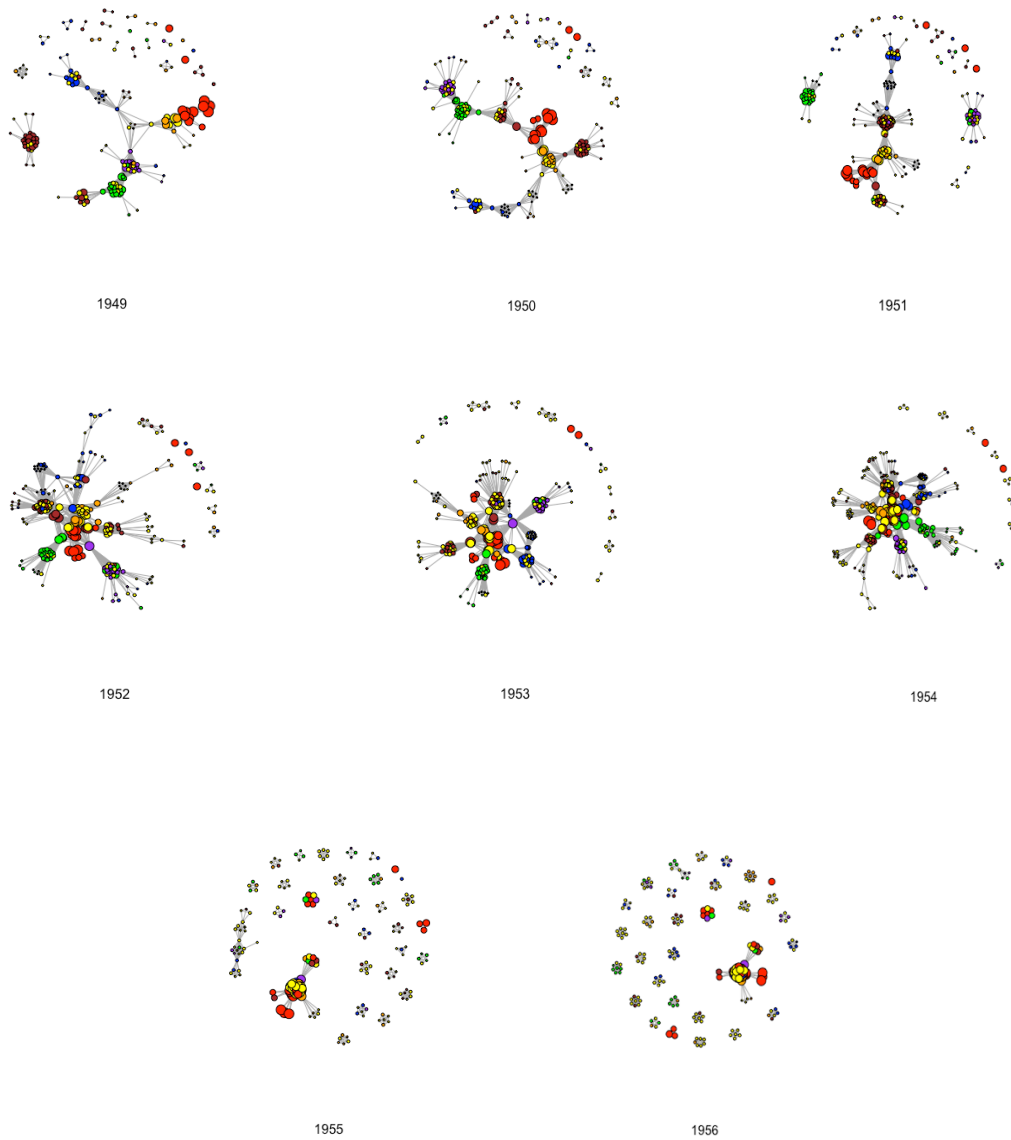
Notes: Color of nodes indicates civil-military affiliations in 1949 of cadres, including Central CCP cadres without military affiliations (red), cadres from the North China Field Army (orange), the 1st Field Army (Green), the 2nd Field Army (purple), the 3rd Field Army (blue), the 4th Field Army (brown) and other civilian cadres (yellow). Size of nodes indicate the bureaucratic title of cadres.

Graph 2 Central-Local Co-working Network in the PRC, 1949-1956

	1949		1950		1951		1952	
	*Dependent variable:*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
edges	−4.555***	−4.859***	−5.183***	−5.421***	−6.668***	−7.306***	−5.382***	−5.666***
	(0.238)	(0.271)	(0.218)	(0.242)	(0.320)	(0.381)	(0.182)	(0.205)
Non–Regular Force	0.456***	0.661***	0.538***	0.869***	1.452***	1.814***	0.540***	0.776***
	(0.126)	(0.153)	(0.113)	(0.134)	(0.162)	(0.196)	(0.077)	(0.097)
PLA 1st	0.008	0.190	0.331***	0.173	1.511***	1.666***	0.954***	0.841***
	(0.152)	(0.173)	(0.124)	(0.142)	(0.166)	(0.198)	(0.081)	(0.097)
PLA 4th	0.146	0.120	0.781***	0.505***	1.545***	1.871***	0.342***	0.384***
	(0.132)	(0.157)	(0.115)	(0.135)	(0.164)	(0.197)	(0.083)	(0.098)
PLA North China	0.229	0.412**	0.557***	0.645***	1.393***	1.743***	0.601***	0.755***
	(0.149)	(0.168)	(0.127)	(0.142)	(0.171)	(0.202)	(0.087)	(0.101)
PLA 2nd	0.360**	0.440***	0.856***	0.871***	2.085***	2.243***	0.130	0.162
	(0.145)	(0.165)	(0.123)	(0.140)	(0.168)	(0.200)	(0.109)	(0.123)
PLA 3rd	0.623***	0.735***	0.298**	0.366**	1.557***	1.740***	0.616***	0.494***
	(0.131)	(0.154)	(0.127)	(0.143)	(0.169)	(0.201)	(0.085)	(0.101)
Central Colleague		1.705***		1.805***		3.541***		1.017***
		(0.461)		(0.443)		(0.567)		(0.281)
Colleague from Non–PLA		−0.070		−0.522***		−0.077		−0.166*
		(0.168)		(0.138)		(0.122)		(0.096)
PLA 1st colleague		−0.087		1.778***		1.002***		1.297***
		(0.335)		(0.225)		(0.186)		(0.136)
PLA 4th colleague		0.917***		1.541***		0.032		0.725***
		(0.222)		(0.156)		(0.153)		(0.157)
PLA North China colleague		−0.005		0.584*		−0.123		0.128
		(0.508)		(0.304)		(0.342)		(0.258)
PLA 2nd colleague		0.831**		1.007***		1.361***		1.794***
		(0.359)		(0.252)		(0.230)		(0.357)
PLA 3rd colleague		0.320		0.427		1.151***		1.743***
		(0.224)		(0.262)		(0.232)		(0.171)
Bureaucratic Position	0.266***	0.265***	0.284***	0.287***	0.246***	0.249***	0.304***	0.308***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Bureaucratic hierarchy	−0.702***	−0.700***	−0.637***	−0.637***	−0.646***	−0.650***	−0.544***	−0.543***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,952.858	5,930.851	9,330.808	9,146.094	10,919.220	10,821.300	15,921.540	15,688.920
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	6,022.042	6,053.846	9,403.696	9,275.672	10,992.670	10,951.880	15,998.500	15,825.740

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8 ERGM Test Result for the Central-Local Cadre Co-working Relations in the PRC, 1949-1956

	1953		1954		1955		1956	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
				Dependent variable:				

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
edges	−3.863***	−3.911***	−4.928***	−5.079***	−6.181***	−6.002***	−6.922***	−7.532***
	(0.118)	(0.132)	(0.133)	(0.146)	(0.239)	(0.266)	(0.208)	(0.256)
Non–Regular Force	0.102*	0.094	0.437***	0.538***	0.501***	0.335**	0.194*	0.421***
	(0.056)	(0.077)	(0.068)	(0.086)	(0.106)	(0.157)	(0.107)	(0.155)
PLA 1st	−0.109	−0.815***	−0.128	−0.282***	0.048	−0.295	−0.037	0.232
	(0.067)	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.095)	(0.156)	(0.180)	(0.134)	(0.160)
PLA 4th	0.200***	0.287***	0.276***	0.313***	0.108	0.062	0.195	0.563***
	(0.063)	(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.084)	(0.135)	(0.151)	(0.137)	(0.161)
PLA North China	0.224***	0.293***	0.178*	0.247**	0.528***	0.403***	0.177	0.374**
	(0.074)	(0.083)	(0.091)	(0.098)	(0.137)	(0.155)	(0.137)	(0.163)
PLA 2nd	−0.354***	−0.328***	0.771***	0.767***	0.648***	0.540***	0.185	0.421**
	(0.093)	(0.102)	(0.081)	(0.089)	(0.172)	(0.188)	(0.172)	(0.197)
PLA 3rd	−0.389***	−0.393***	0.618***	0.568***	0.199	0.108	0.185	0.435***
	(0.076)	(0.086)	(0.079)	(0.088)	(0.153)	(0.168)	(0.132)	(0.158)
Central Colleague		0.806***		1.334***		−0.466		2.208***
		(0.228)		(0.300)		(0.398)		(0.353)
Colleague from Non–PLA		0.190**		−0.007		0.214		0.247
		(0.089)		(0.081)		(0.175)		(0.167)
PLA 1st colleague		3.375***		1.860***		2.156***		0.460
		(0.158)		(0.196)		(0.427)		(0.361)
PLA 4th colleague		−0.034		0.262**		−0.026		−0.141
		(0.154)		(0.128)		(0.521)		(0.500)
PLA North China colleague		0.257		0.590		0.743		1.248***
		(0.270)		(0.379)		(0.459)		(0.380)
PLA 2nd colleague		0.926**		1.104***		0.881		1.530**
		(0.403)		(0.226)		(0.697)		(0.619)
PLA 3rd colleague		0.858***		1.123***		0.595		0.836**
		(0.244)		(0.181)		(0.663)		(0.382)
Bureaucratic Position	0.248***	0.249***	0.294***	0.294***	0.451***	0.453***	0.550***	0.554***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Bureaucratic hierarchy	−0.599***	−0.602***	−0.638***	−0.636***	−1.406***	−1.414***	−1.753***	−1.770***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.075)	(0.077)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	17,795.670	17,275.570	21,791.420	21,645.540	4,524.187	4,507.853	5,258.122	5,208.961
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	17,873.820	17,414.510	21,872.340	21,789.400	4,596.325	4,636.098	5,331.730	5,339.820

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8 ERGM Test Result for the Central-Local Cadre Co-working Relations in the PRC, 1949-1956 (continued)

	Three Highest Betweenness Centrality	Three Highest Closeness Centrality	Three Highest Modified Betweenness Centrality	Three Highest Modified Closeness Centrality
1949	Chen Geng; Zhang Yunyi; Ye Jianying	Chen Geng; He Long; Li Jingquan	Chen Geng; Zhang Yunyi; Ye Jianying	*Zhou Enlai*; *Mao Zedong* (plus 3 Politburo colleagues); Dong Biwu*
1950	Li Fuchun*; Li Zhuoran Ye Jianying	Peng Zhen*; Dong Biwu*; Bo Yibo*	Li Fuchun*; Li Zhuoran; Dong Biwu*	*Zhou Enlai & Chen Yun;* *Mao Zedong* (plus 3 Politburo colleagues); Dong Biwu*
1951	Cheng Zihua; Zhang Yunyi; Li Fuchun*	Cheng Zihua; Ye Jianying; Zhang Yunyi	Li Fuchun*; Cheng Zihua; Zhang Yunyi	(Same as 1950)
1952	Deng Xiaoping*; Rao Shushi*; Peng Dehuai*	Huang Kecheng*; Lin Biao*; Zhang Xi*	Deng Xiaoping*; Rao Shushi*; Peng Dehuai*	Gao Gang*; *Zhou Enlai*; *Chen Yun*
1953	Deng Xiaoping*; Lin Biao*; Rao Shushi*	Lin Biao*; Deng Zihui*; Rao Shushi*	Deng Xiaoping*; Lin Biao*; Rao Shushi*	(Same as 1952)
1954	Lin Feng*; Deng Xiaoping*; He Long*	Lin Biao*; Zhang Zhiyi*; Wu Defeng*	Lin Feng*; Deng Xiaoping*; He Long*	*Chen Yun*; *Zhou Enlai*; Gao Gang*
1955	*Deng Xiaoping*; Wu Lanfu*; Zhao Lin	*Deng Xiaoping*; Wu Lanfu*; *Zhou Enlai*	*Deng Xiaoping*; Wu Lanfu*; *Zhou Enlai*	*Zhou Enlai & Chen Yun;* *Mao Zedong* (plus 2 Politburo members); *Deng Xiaoping*
1956	*Deng Xiaoping*; Wu Lanfu*; *Chen Yun*	*Deng Xiaoping*; Wu Lanfu*; *Chen Yun*	(Same as 1956)	(Same as 1955)

Notes: Cadres marked with asteroid (*) held the bureaucratic titles in both central and local (regional or provincial) echelon, underlined cadres worked in North China Bureau, which administered the PRC capital Beijing; cadres with *italicized* names held the job title(s) in the central government only; others held job title(s) in local echelon.

Table 9 Top Three Highest Centrality of CCP Cadres, 1949-1956

Regional leaders became cadres in the central government when they were promoted in the State cabinet and the State Planning Committee in late 1952. Closer ties between Mao, Zhou and regional leaders enhanced the central government to monitor provincial affairs. But as the newly promoted vice-premiers and SPC members were still entitled with Party secretary of their respective region in late 1952, new central cadres could exert influence over their old co-working relations in their locality. Also, as the betweenness centrality shows, promoted central leaders could report the information from their administered localities in the central meeting and lobbied each other in the same department. Special position of regional cadres (e.g., Deng Xiaoping, Rao Shushi and Lin Biao) is evident in their betweenness centrality. For instance, when Deng was promoted to the vice-premier in 1952 in charge of transportation and railway construction affairs, Zhou Enlai still asked Deng for issuing directives to Southwest Region beyond Deng's own duty, like rural economic collectivization. Besides, Deng still issued advices to the Southwest Bureau on other issues like crude oil mining (Chronicle of Deng, 2009, Vol.2, p.1131) and the campaign of eradicating the opium cultivation (Chronicle of Deng, 2009, Vol.2, p.1128) in southwest China. Also after 1952, regional cadres also gained advantages in lobbying colleagues for support if there were cleavages and disagreements in policymaking or ideological orientations, which is reflected in closeness centrality. Moreover, since Gao Gang held the title equivalent to Zhou Enlai after being promoted in the SPC, his top-ranking working position thus shaped his leading role among the central-local co-workers' network from 1952 to 1954.

Network analysis also shows that Gao Gang and his regional counterparts grew influential from 1952 to 1954 when Mao promoted him into the central echelon as means of regime centralization. Gao gained the critical position and he himself at one time became one of the most influential elite parallel to Mao and Zhou in terms of his co-working ties and working titles. Compared with early years, cadres from North China Bureau in the central government were downplayed as their jobs were distributed to more vice premiers and SPC members. On one hand, a more balanced elite relation in the central government formed and the central-local connection became more intense, as indicated in the higher closeness

centralization between 1952 and 1954 than before. On the other hand, a balanced composition in the Central might also create cleavage if cadres had controversies with each other. Situation has changed since 1955 based on our ERGM and graph results that central leaders maintained a dominant role over the local echelon, as the regional echelon was abolished in late 1954 after the "Gao-Rao Affairs" that would be illustrated in the following section.

In conclusion, node-based analysis revealed that Gao and his regional counterparts were placed on a structural advantage parallel with Mao after 1952, which would infer that Mao might have felt paranoid if he was concerned about his authority in the Central. In the following section, based on historical materials from different sides of political elites, I would illustrate that Gao suffered from Mao's distrust due to his rising political influences after co-optation. From the agency perspective, it was Mao's over-suspicion of Gao that drove the first political purge in the PRC. However, as one hardly "verifies" the teleological narrative of the "Gao-Rao Affair" that Mao's co-optation was for the ultimate abolishment of regional echelon, node-level analysis in this section verifies that Mao's centralization strategy of elite co-optation did not enhance Mao's personalized dominant power in terms of co-working network. Regional elites gained structural advantages when they had new co-worker relations while maintaining their old working titles, though it was ephemeral that only lasted about two years from 1952 to 1954.

Case Analysis: The "Gao-Rao Affair" and Gao Gang's Networking of Regional Officials

The network analysis above suggests that after co-optation of regional cadres in 1952 that fostered connection between the central and the regional cadres, factional tendency within the Central emerged after co-optation. A political purge towards the regional Party chief happened in 1954 after the regional Party chiefs were promoted, the "Gao-Rao Affair", named after the surnames of two purged regional Party chiefs. In March 1954, Gao Gang and Rao Shushi were indirectly "criticized" by the central in a meeting attended by high-ranked Party officials simply after the 4th Plenary of the Seventh CCP Congress in 1954 (七届四中全会) as committing "factional conspiracy" and instigating intra-party cleavages. Gao was then under

house arrest and committed suicide in August 1954 before the official declaration, and Rao was sentenced in prison after 1955 for several years and re-incarcerated during the Cultural Revolution. In the late 1954, simply after the political purge of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi, the institutions of CCP Regional Bureaus were abolished, indicating a hallmark of the regime's centralization. The two were officially and openly sentenced as an "anti-party alliance" in the 1955 CCP National Conference (1955 年全国代表会议).

Factional affinity along military affiliation still existed and regional Party chiefs gained advantages in social connections after the 1952 co-optation, which was indicated in the network analysis in the last section. In this section, I would illustrate the regime centralization strategies of the two propositions that ended up with the political purge of "Gao-Rao Affair". The case analysis would consist of three parts: (1) the 1952 regime centralization under the co-optation strategy; (2) the two major events from 1952 to 1953 provoked intra-party cleavage between Gao and Liu Shaoqi after co-optation, which aroused Mao's suspicion over Gao: the 1953 National Financial Affairs Conference and Gao's vacation trip in late October 1953 that he visited other top cadres; (3) the political purge, as an extreme case of reshuffling, of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi in 1954 and the abolishment of CCP Regional Bureaus. Gao Gang's activities happened after he and his regional counterparts were promoted into the central government in 1952. In my case illustration, I would focus on Gao Gang's working activities and figure out how Gao's interaction was featured as a factional affinity with co-working cadres, and its potential cleavage with other factions and final tragedy. Sources of history would be relied on materials from Gao Gang's side (his secretary Zhao Jialiang (赵家梁)'s memoir), sources from the "white-area cadre" Bo Yibo's memoir and some related CCP elites' biographical chronicles (*"Nianpu"* 年谱，that yearly records personal career activities for lifelong time), together with some latest historical research on Gao-Rao Affairs.

Basically, Gao's activities revealed that his strong co-working network was embedded in his double position as the chief of the CCP Northeast Regional Bureau and the chief of the State Planning Committee. However, Gao's social activity hardly indicated that he intended to

organize a "coup", or a pure inter-governmental conflict between the central and local regime[11].

The outcome of Gao and Rao's fate stemmed from Mao's co-optation strategy towards regional cadres by career promotion and the instability for regime centralization that unintentionally created. As Proposition 1 and network analysis indicated, co-optation strategy did not change the regional chiefs' working connections with their subordinates, but even increased connection with their counterparts and potentially increased the possibility of policy conflicts in the Central. Although co-optation helped rulers balance each other, co-optation strategy increased the brokerage role of the promoted cadres and triggered Mao's paranoia when these high-ranking cadres had policy cleavage and lobbied for political support, ending up Gao and Rao became the victim in the "court politics". As Proposition 2 indicates, the purge of Gao and Rao and the abolishment of Regional Bureaus thereafter helped break the co-working ties of regional cadres, thus enhancing Mao's authority over the promoted regional cadres in the Central. In this way, regime centralization of PRC in the early 1950s was mostly driven by political arrangement of cadres under authoritarian leaders' manipulation, instead of a designated adjustment of the central-local administrative functions.

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[11] Regarding the origin and outcome of the "Gao-Rao Affair", interpretation of the relation between regime centralization and the political purge varied. some historical narratives attributed the regime centralization in 1954 to an event of political purge in early months of the same year, indicating there was a "causal" connection between the two events. Since both of the two had been the Party Secretary and regional military leader in the CCP Northeast Bureau and the CCP East China Bureau respectively before promoted in the central government, interpretations varied regarding the relations between the regime centralization policy and the Gao-Rao Affair. Such narrative appeared in research (Schurmann, 1967, indicated that Gao-Rao affairs reflected the contention between the Central's collective leadership and Region's one-man leadership in industrial policy), as the two events occurred in a very close chronological order within a year. Also, Gao and Rao had worked as the chief in the thereafter-abolished regional administrations. It might be partly related to the reminiscence of regime centralization in Chinese political history, as "strengthening the trunk (central) and weakening the branch (local) (强干弱枝)" had been a statecraft of maintaining regime unity in the imperial China. However, there were few evidence that Gao and Rao were organizing their own "mountain-tops", while official denunciation of Gao and Rao might be a post-hoc legitimization of political purge. Another interpretation focuses on Mao's agency of shaping the CCP politics, and argues that the "Gao-Rao Incidence" is only an intra-party power struggle or rarely related to the regime centralization reform in late 1954. Solinger (1977) argued that the regime centralization of PRC was a gradualist momentum of institutional change after territorial unification that mimicked the imperial of China, regardless of Gao-Rao affairs. Focusing on personal motives might reach contrasting interpretations, however. For example, Teiwes (1987) argued that Mao decided to purge Gao was intended for "Party unity" and Deng was one of supporters who committed to the cause of unity. Sheng (2011) believed that the political strife between CCP elites, including Mao himself, was driven by a sense of "insecurity", thus individual elites chose to organize purge and struggles as means protecting themselves. Both of the two interpretations deserved further inquiries. Firstly, if Mao chose to purge Gao out of intra-Party solidarity, it did not explain why Mao chose to end Gao's political life and allow him to commit suicide, but not chose an alternative means, such as maintaining the balance between Gao and another suspected "faction" led by Liu Shaoqi, which had occurred in other top cadres. Secondly, struggle out of insecurity hardly explains Mao not to follow Gao's advice in excluding Bo and Liu. Promotion of Gao, Rao and other CCP Regional chiefs into the cabinet in 1952 was also a balancing tactic within the central government and centralizing the central-local relation. In other words, it was logical that the "security" for intra-Party solidarity increased after rebalancing the influences. But Mao did not continue maintaining the balance between Liu and Gao. Huang (2000) pointed out Gao's lobbying on military leaders provoked threat to Mao that ended up with being purge, but he focused more on interaction among top cadres than organizational background.

Co-optation: Regional Party Chiefs in the State Cabinet

Back to the bureaucratic promotion trajectory of Gao and Rao, two had been promoted in the Central Party and the cabinet in 1952 from the CCP Northeast Bureau and East China Bureau. Admission of Gao and Rao into the State Council indirectly reduced the discretion of Premier Zhou Enlai. Zhou has been assigned to lead the cabinet[12] after regime takeover but only four ministries related to foreign affairs were directed by Zhou. Instead, most of the ministries were under supervision of three "sub-committees" of the cabinet before 1954, i.e., the Political and Law Committee (政治法律委员会), the Financial and Economic Committee (FEC, 财政经济委员会) and the Cultural and Education Committee (文化教育委员会). Moreover, in 1952, Mao also strengthened the supervision of the Party apparatus over the GAC and Zhou was removed as the leader of the cabinet Party affairs, while the Party affairs in the cabinet was separated into Zhou and several vice premiers who were directly responsible to Mao[13]. In November 1952, Gao was designated as the chairman of the newly created decision-making organ regarding economic construction, the State Planning Commission (SPC, 国家计划委员会) and assigned to oversee several economic ministries that formerly directed by the FEC (See Graph 3). Rao was designated as the chief of CCP Central Organizational Department and a member of the State Planning Commission[14]. Both of the two were reserved their seats in the CCP Regional Bureaus. The power of the Premier Zhou Enlai was thus further separated and constrained.

Gao was entrusted by Mao with drafting the first Five-Year Plan after being promoted in the State Planning Commission as he had sophisticated experience in managing heavy industries when he worked in the Northeast Region. More importantly, Mao's increasing credibility to Gao stemmed from his perception that the tax reform initiatives in 1953 which

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[12] The PRC state cabinet was officially termed as "Government Administration Council" (GAC) 政务院 from 1949 to 1954, and "State Council" 国务院 after 1954.

[13] The Party affairs in the cabinet was divided into six realms: Gao Gang was assigned to be responsible for state planning affairs; Chen Yun, Bo Yibo and other five members in the FEC for economic affairs; Xi Zhongxun for cultural and educational affairs; Zhou Enlai for foreign affairs; Deng Xiaoping for the left miscellaneous affairs in the cabinet. Instead of an individual Zhou Enlai, multiple cabinet members were separately responsible to Mao directly regarding for the state management affairs. See Zhao (2008), p.103.
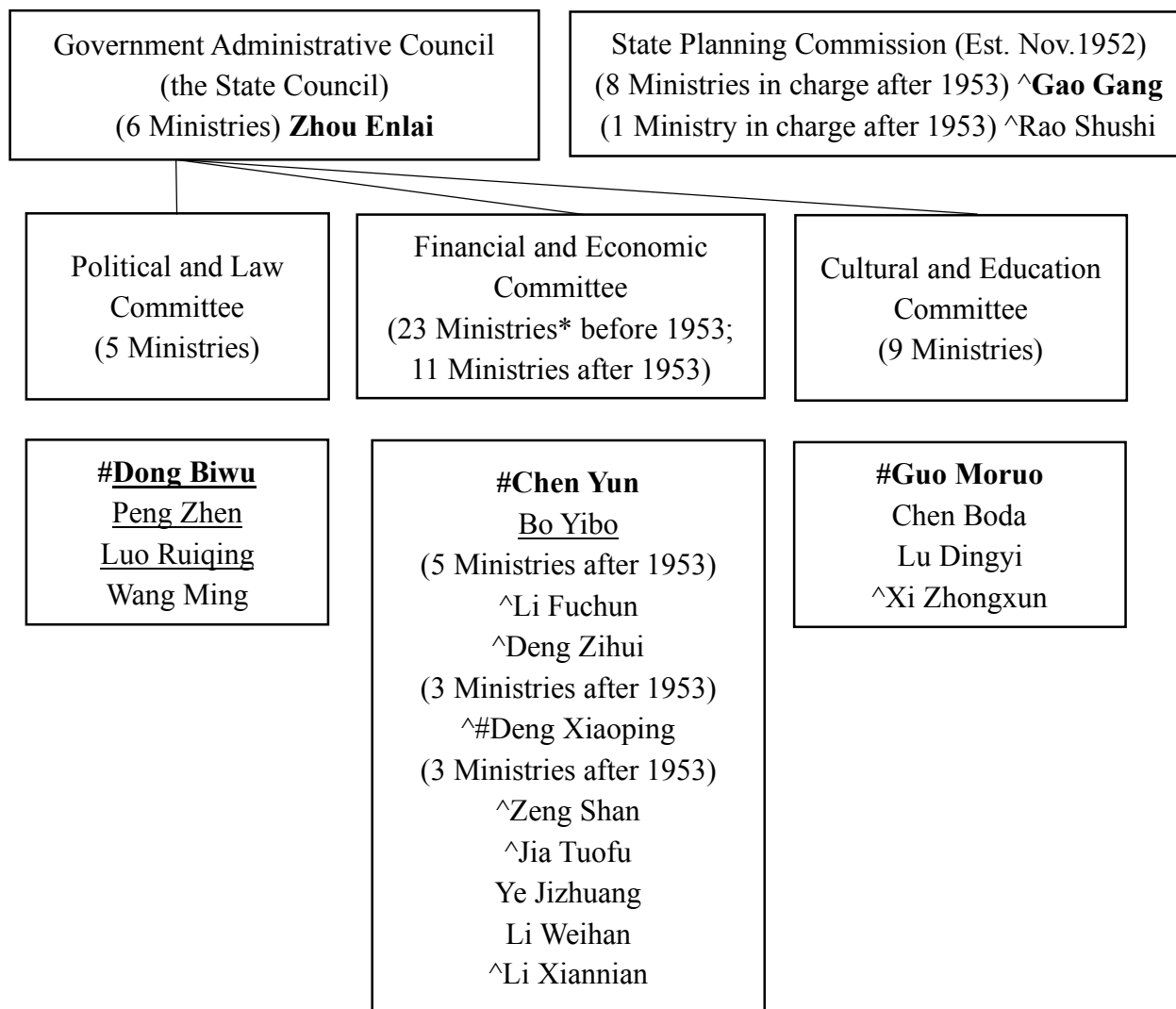
[14] Other chiefs of Regional Bureaus besides Gao and Rao were also promoted as the member of the State Planning Committee and vice premiers in the cabinet. See below.

faced obstacles in policy implementation and underperformed by his cadre colleagues in the cabinet. In order to tackle tax evasion of private firms and lack of national fiscal income, the tax reform policy, designed by the Minister of Finance and deputy chief of FEC Bo Yibo, intended to impose a new turnover tax on private firms (as the PRC was during the period before "socialist transformation") and stressed equal taxation on both state-owned and private companies. However, the new taxation policy started in 1953 got negative reactions in different localities, since it created a suddenly heavier tax burden on firms. Mao received the feedback on the new tax policy and then criticized Zhou Enlai and Bo, arguing that "I (Mao) also read and don't understand it (the tax policy)" (Bo, 1991, p.234). Bo later recalled that Mao's words made him "heavy and confused" and realized that the mishandling of the tax policy would be a severe issue. Mao later at the Politburo increasingly criticized that Bo's "equal taxation" policy on both state and private firms was "rightist-leaned opportunism". In other words, Mao's harsh criticism focused on the policy's phrasing of "the equal taxation on state and private-owned firms", which was interpreted as an indirect legitimization of the private economy status.

The conflict among tax policy between Mao and his aides partly revealed Mao's concern on whether his comrades really supported to accelerate the "socialist transformation". Mao viewed that the private-owned economy should be curtailed and would ultimately be banned after China has "transformed towards socialism", which was also agreed by Gao. However, Liu Shaoqi and other top-cadres managing economic affairs like Bo Yibo reserved that the private economy had to be legitimized for a long time when China was still in the stage of economic backwardness. Later in May 1953, according to the cabinet Party organizational reform in late 1952, the cabinet ministries were divided under multiple sectors with both premier and vice premiers separately in charge, though all ministries were still nominally under the leadership of premier (Zhao, 2008, p.103). Gao Gang was authorized to supervise eight industrial ministries in the cabinet that ended up with dividing Zhou's power of his premiership.

According to Zhao Jialiang's memoir, Mao's cabinet reform revealed his worry that state affairs' routine management might deviate from his ideological orientation. Mao promoted the regional cadres in the late 1952 to lower the influence of the central cadres and

Gao was then trusted by Mao. If adopted the words from memoir, the early regime centralization through co-optation of regional Party chiefs into the central government was mostly driven by Mao's intention to balance the elite influences within the central government. Gao was thus trusted by Mao. As Proposition 1 suggests, co-optation also helped Mao "monitor" the cadres, through Mao's own connections with different cadres, including Gao himself.

Government Administrative Council (the State Council) (6 Ministries) **Zhou Enlai**	State Planning Commission (Est. Nov.1952) (8 Ministries in charge after 1953) ^**Gao Gang** (1 Ministry in charge after 1953) ^Rao Shushi

Political and Law Committee (5 Ministries)	Financial and Economic Committee (23 Ministries* before 1953; 11 Ministries after 1953)	Cultural and Education Committee (9 Ministries)

#Dong Biwu <u>Peng Zhen</u> <u>Luo Ruiqing</u> Wang Ming	**#Chen Yun** <u>Bo Yibo</u> (5 Ministries after 1953) ^Li Fuchun ^Deng Zihui (3 Ministries after 1953) ^#Deng Xiaoping (3 Ministries after 1953) ^Zeng Shan ^Jia Tuofu Ye Jizhuang Li Weihan ^Li Xiannian	**#Guo Moruo** Chen Boda Lu Dingyi ^Xi Zhongxun

Notes: Boxes listed with respective CCP chief and deputies in listed sub-committees and their supervised ministries; Bold as the departmental chief. *2 ministries were abolished respectively in 1950 and 1953. #Vice Premiers; ^Promoted Regional Party Cadres; <u>Names Underlined</u>: Regional Party cadre also working for the North China Bureau.
Source: *Compilation of Chinese Communist Party Organization History,* 1995, Beijing: Central Party School Publishing House.

Graph 3 Structure of the Government Administrative Council of PRC, 1949-1954

Brokerage Role: Intra-Party Cleavage and Gao Gang's Social Interaction

Gao's view on economic collectivization coincided with Mao and thus won Mao's trust. During Gao Gang's working experience in the CCP Northeast Bureau, he had stressed the importance of planned economy and agricultural collectivization, while criticizing the "rightist" view of legitimizing private-owned agricultural property. After being promoted in the central government, Mao even "privately" told Gao that he might plan to "remove Zhou Enlai" from the premier seat and tentatively asked Gao if he could lead the cabinet (Zhao, 2008, p.104). In response to the controversy of tax reform, the National Financial Affairs Conference (NFAC, 全国财经会议) was initiated in May 1953 by Mao. Zhou Enlai was assigned to convene. Gao believed that it was an opportunity to express his loyalty to Mao through criticizing Bo's financial policy. During the NFAC, Bo Yibo suffered more criticism regarding the shortcomings and "wrongdoings" of financial affairs management from the Party central and regional members.

Although it is hard to reveal the complete information of the attenders and their respective comments and viewpoints, the interaction during the meeting indirectly revealed two "alignments" emerged regarding Bo's economic policy (See Table 10) by comparing the contrasting claims in memoirs from Gao's secretary and Bo. Bo claimed in his memoir (which was similar in most official version of narratives) that the NFAC has become an opportunity for Gao's attempt to indirectly "impeach" Liu Shaoqi through criticizing him, which was sympathized by other economic cadres, including Chen Yun (陈云), the chief of FEC (who was also Gao Gang's old colleague before promoted in the Central Government) and Deng Xiaoping, vice premier and CCP secretary of Southwest Regional Bureau. Chen and Deng tried to defend Bo and moderated the harsh criticism. By contrast, Gao claimed that the 1953 Conference was a routine forum of intra-party "criticism and self-criticism", and Mao had endorsed encouraging that "each region" could raise their own suggestions (Lin, 2009, p.287). Gao criticized Bo harshly by referring to Liu's "rightist" moderated economic policies, which was also supported by some cadres in the regional echelon. Gao discussed with several

colleagues in Northeast Bureau, and they also believed that his criticism and standpoint on economic collectivization actually followed Mao's intention.

From Zhao's later recollection, Gao had understood Mao's cleavage with Liu in policy orientations though, Gao misinterpreted that Mao had urgent needs in rooting out Liu's influences from the Party. In Gao's view, the Central Government has been dominated by the "*White-area Faction*" (白区党, cadres who had worked for underground subversion activities in KMT-controlled areas before 1949) led by Liu Shaoqi and his former colleagues from *North China Bureau*, in contrast to his self-identified "*Red-area Faction*" (红区党, cadres who had long worked in communist revolutionary base areas before 1949), referring to military leaders like Gao himself and all *other regional cadres*. Gao once expressed such factionalist perception when discussing with his secretary about his proposed plan of compiling the CCP history, and argued that only cadres "from the base areas" had played "important" roles in communist revolution, while white-area cadres were "less important" (Zhao, 2008, p.152). Also, Gao expressed such a view with Lin Biao, the military leader of PLA Fourth Field Army, as they had shared experiences of colleagues when they worked in the Northeast Region. During the days of NAFC in Beijing, Gao once visited Lin's residence "with other military leaders and cadres from administrative regions" when Lin was on vacation in Beijing (Zhao, 2008, p.135), and they discussed views on financial reform. According to Zhao's memoir, Wang Heshou, Gao's colleague in Northeast Bureau and one of Lin's visitors, claimed, "General Lin is really outstanding, and he often has deep, sharp and insightful perspectives on many issues. Liu and those from white-area have a dangerous tendency and possibility of usurpation, and they are dangerous persons around Chairman Mao" (Zhao, 2008, p.135). Zhao recalled that Gao became a prominent figure in Beijing during the days of NAFC when Bo and Liu were criticized. Many other cadres visited Gao's residence and thus the rumor of "two headquarters" appeared.

Cadres who advised Gao in criticism against Bo Yibo in NFAC (Lin, 2009; Zhao, 2008)	
Gao Gang	Chair of State Planning Committee (SPC); Secretary of CCP Northeast Bureau
*An Zhiwen	Member of SPC; Former deputy directive of Policy Research Office of CCP Northeast Bureau
*Ma Hong	Member of SPC; Member of CCP Northeast Bureau
Zhang Xi	Member of SPC; Secretary of CCP Henan Province Committee
*Wang Heshou	Minister of Heavy Industry (subordinated to the SPC); Member of CCP Northeast Bureau
*Zhang Wentian	Ambassador of China to Soviet Union; Former Secretary of CCP Liaodong Province Committee (Northeast Region)
Regional cadres who criticized against Bo Yibo in NFAC (Lin, 2009)	
#Li Xiannian	Deputy Secretary of CCP Central-South Bureau
#Huang Kecheng	Member of CCP Central-South Bureau and CCP Hunan Province Committee (Central-South Region)
#Tan Zhenlin	Secretary of East China Bureau and CCP Zhejiang Province Committee
#Rao Shushi	Director of CCP Central Organizational Department; First Secretary of CCP East China Bureau
Cadres who sympathized Bo in NFAC (Bo, 1991)	
Chen Yun	Chief of FEC (Former Deputy Secretary of CCP Northeast Bureau, pre 1949)
#Deng Xiaoping	Vice Premier; Secretary of CCP Southwest Bureau
#Tao Zhu	Secretary of South China District Bureau
Cadres Belonged to the Claimed "White-Area Faction" (Zhao, 2008)	
An Ziwen	Deputy Director of CCP Central Organizational Department; Member of CCP North China Bureau
Peng Zhen	Member of CCP North China Bureau; Secretary of Beijing CCP Committee
Bo Yibo	Deputy Chief of FEC; Minister of Finance; Secretary of CCP North China Bureau

Notes: *Colleagues of Gao Gang in Northeast Bureau and SPC. #Other cadres from Regional Bureaus (North China Bureau excluded).

Source: Extracted from Zhao (2008), Lin (2009), Bo (1991).

Table 10 Cadres in NFAC and their CCP Working Positions in 1953

Gao's social activities in Beijing and in different provinces indicated his network within the Party. Interactions during the NFAC show that Gao was mostly supported by his co-workers in the Northeast Bureau and other regional cadres except those from North China Bureau. Meanwhile, Bo was supported by North China cadres and top leaders in the State Council. After the NFAC, Gao went for leave on vacation outside Beijing from October to November 1953 (which was authorized by Mao) and he "disseminated the information" about the concern on Mao-Liu factional tendency with the regional and provincial cadres every time every time staying in different provinces (See Table 11). Meanwhile, during September, Bo was also permitted to "do some inquiries" in localities on his economic policy. But he went only around cities in the North China Region (Bo, 1991, p.251). When Tan Zhenlin also had similar concerns on Liu's factionalism and suggested to Mao after the NFAC, Mao replied that he himself "was the only headquarter in the Party" (Zhao, 2008, p.141), denying that there were "two headquarters" within the Party.

As Proposition 1 indicated, after regional chiefs were "co-opted" into the central echelon in late 1952, active social activities of Gao Gang indicated his increasing influence in the Central. Through co-optation, Gao's ability was built on his structural advantage of his multiplex bureaucratic role as the chief of the SPC and the Northeast Bureau. A tendency of regionalist affinity gradually formed in social activities of both Gao Gang and managerial elites. Meanwhile for Bo Yibo, he got support from colleagues from North China Bureau colleagues and a few regional cadres like Deng Xiaoping, but Gao not only owned his bases in the Northeast Bureau, but also had the capability to motivate other cadres for his own support. Therefore, when regional cadres met policy debates, especially between the newly promoted cadres and the original central cadres, instability might emerge among elites while "regionalism" played as the organizational affinity for cadres to motivate their own support from their previous colleagues in the shared echelon. Specifically, when facing policy debate with Liu and the "North China Faction", Gao's social activity might help him win support or at least sympathy from his regional counterparts, which might indirectly create a potential cleavage between the regionalist cadres and the "managerial elites" in the cabinet (Sheng, 2011), i.e.,

the cadres worked in the State Council led by Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi. Therefore, although Gao was originally trusted by Mao, Mao's distrust was embedded in structural instability of centralization through co-optation in 1952. Also, Gao's personal intention of "pleading for allegiance" to Mao through informing Liu's factional tendency worsened Mao's distrust. In a word, the regional echelon played a closer organizational affinity for Gao's interaction along with other cadres in the central government.

Place	Cadres whom Gao Met	Job Positions in 1953
Shanghai	#Chen Yi	First Secretary of CCP East China Bureau and Shanghai Committee
	#Tan Zhenlin	(See Table 10)
	#Chen Pixian	Member of CCP East China Bureau; Secretary of Shanghai CCP Committee
Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province	#Lin Biao	Secretary of CCP Central-South Bureau
	*Zhao Dezun	Member of CCP Northeast Bureau; Secretary of Heilongjiang CCP Province Committee
	*Ma Hong	(See Table 10)
	*Chen Zhengren	Minister of Architectural Engineering (Subordinated to the SPC), Former Secretary of Jiangxi Province
Guangzhou, Guangdong Province	#Tao Zhu	(See Table 10)
	#Ye Jianying	Same as Tao.
	#Tan Zheng	Same as Tao.
Wuhan, Hubei Province	#Li Xuefeng	Deputy Secretary of Central-South Bureau
	Li Shuiqing	PLA Commander of 119th Division, 67th Army
Zhengzhou, Henan Province	Wu Zhipu	Secretary of CCP Henan Province Committee

Notes: *Colleagues of Gao Gang in Northeast Bureau and SPC. #Cadres from other Regional Bureaus.
Source: Extracted from Zhao, 2008.

Table 11 Social Connections during Gao Gang's Vacation Trip, October-November 1953

Reshuffling: The Purge of Gao-Rao and Abolishment of Regional Echelon

By comparison, sources are fewer in terms of Rao Shushi's experience in Beijing and his relation with Mao before being purged. According to CCP's official documents, Rao was

attributed to his "collaboration" with Zhang Xiushan (张秀山), one of Gao Gang's colleagues in Northeast Bureau simply after the NFAC. Following the NFAC, Mao initiated the National Organizational Affairs Conference (NOAC, 全国组织工作会议) discussing Party organizations and recruiting personnel for the coming socialist transformation. Rao was designed to convene the conference. According to Zhang Xiushan's recollection, Zhang was allowed by Mao and Liu to raise suggestions and criticisms on CCP's organizational affairs during the convention, and he criticized that CCP organizational affairs was led by a "rightist" ideological tendency including legitimizing party members in owning private firms and allowing personnel who had left CCP before to freely re-register in the Party after 1949. Zhang then criticized that such policies were conducted by An Ziwen (安子文), the deputy minister of CCP Central Organization Department and one of Liu's intimate colleague. Moreover, Rao "encouraged" the criticism against An during the meeting (Bo, 1991, p.317), which polarized the suspected cleavage within the Party between Gao and Liu. Zhang's criticism against An Ziwen won support from cadres of "Northwest, Central-South and East China Region" (Zhao, 2008, p.169). From the short event we could believe that Gao's frequent social activities also arouse Rao Shushi's motive to establish a close connection that alienated Liu.

Gao and Rao's political fate changed in late 1953 after Gao-Liu polarization and Gao's vocational trip. Regarding Gao, although there was no evidence that Mao's distrust was triggered by Gao's social activities, Gao's secretary Zhao believed that he abused Mao's political trust to interact with other cadres beyond the Party norms. According to Gao's own confession when he was finally under house arrest (Zhao, 2008, p.120), what made Mao concerned about Gao's loyalty was the issue related to a proposal of promoted Politburo members in the forthcoming 8th CCP Congress. A proposed reshuffle of the Politburo was drafted by An Ziwen in April 1953. An drafted a proposal that included Bo Yibo in the Politburo but did not include Lin Biao. Mao sent the information to Gao "privately" for feedback, but Gao did not directly reply. Instead, Gao inferred from the information that it revealed Liu Shaoqi's intention of sidelining other factions, and he circulated the information and his own speculation voluntarily to other cadres during the vacation. Mao later in November

1953 received Gao's spread rumors from Ye Jianying and Tan Zheng, two military leaders working in Guangdong, and asked them "where they got the information". Mao became more concerned about Gao that he might leak out the private communication to other military leaders in Regional Bureaus.

Simply before Gao's final house arrest was a "tip-off" from Chen Yun to Zhou Enlai regarding Gao's dissatisfaction with the plan that allowed Liu to convene the CCP Central meeting. In December 1953, Mao held a small discussion with other officials including Gao, saying that he would be "on leave" for vacation for several days and asked who would act on behalf of Mao to convene the meeting. In terms of precedent, Liu Shaoqi, the second rank in the Politburo, would act for Mao when Mao was on leave. However, Gao and some cadres proposed a rotational plan that allowed all members in the Central Secretariat in Beijing to convene the meeting. Though Gao had asked Chen Yun for support beforehand that they two would object to Liu dominating the meeting, Chen did not support Gao during the discussion. Gao then told his dissatisfaction to Deng Xiaoping, but Deng objected. Gao's cleavage with Liu became widespread among Chen and Deng, both of whom interpreting this as a "wrong" behavior in the Party. According to Zhao's record, it was Chen that later informed Mao on Gao's preference, and then Mao has discussed with Chen, Deng and other top officials consecutively for several days (Zhao, 2008, pp.184-185).

Chen's information to Mao triggered the leader's suspicion about Gao's loyalty. Compared with the prior elite interaction that triggered factional tendency, now Mao found it was Gao tried to interfere with the personnel arrangement in the central. If Liu Shaoqi and Bo Yibo only had a difference of policy orientation with Mao, they only had their basis from the North China Bureau that was mostly composed of civilian cadres. However, Gao's tour in October 1953 and his unattempt lobbying for Deng Xiaoping's support also revealed that his interaction mostly focused on other cadres with similar working positions and regional experiences, even some of whom were from military background. Gao's activities with his colleagues aroused Mao's concern over intra-party factional tendency that was beyond Mao's control. Not only Gao's connection with regional cadres, but also his connection with cadres

from military backgrounds which might undermine the regime's stability[15]. As Proposition 2 suggests, in this time, Mao "realigned" with Liu Shaoqi and other cadres that supported Liu, which simultaneously isolated Gao. Mao criticized Gao on December 23rd, 1953, but Gao still insisted that he was loyal to Mao and believed that Liu did not purely uphold Mao's orientation of communism. Instead of Liu Shaoqi, now it was Gao that faced open criticism during the 4th Plenary of CCP Congress in 1954. However, Gao believed that he was always loyal to Mao, and did not submit to the accusations of organizing factional conspiracy. However, Mao's charismatic legitimacy won back his support from other regional cadres. Gao committed suicide in August 1954. In the late 1954, after Gao and Rao became first victims of Mao's manipulation of factional balance within the central government after 1949, Regional Bureaus as a bureaucratic echelon was officially abolished and military-based officials dissociated the co-working relation with the provincial cadres.

Conclusion

What is the logic of regime centralization for authoritarian states during the process of state building? The case of the Chinese party-state (PRC) centralization in the early 1950s sheds light on the elite interaction for state building in the aspect of central-local relations. In this research, elite interaction below the institutions play a leading role in driving the process of regime centralization, as authoritarian leaders need assistance of affiliated elites to ensure regime security.

Influenced by elite co-optation and elite reshuffling in the research of authoritarian politics, the research raised two propositions of elite interaction in authoritarian regime centralization. First, co-optation strengthens the relation between central and local elites through granting higher bureaucratic promotion, but working ties of local elites are preserved and co-opted elites indirectly increase their own importance of multiplexity, which weaken the dominant role of the central leader if elites fell into cleavage. Second, the central leader would

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[15] Such concern has also existed among top cadres. Chen Yun once claimed in the 4th Plenary of CCP Central that, "to prevent the cleavage of the Party... is to arouse the revolutionary awareness among the hundreds of *provincial secretaries* and *military cadres*. If there were big chaos and it would originate only from these hundreds of people." (Chen Chronicle, p.196).

realign with co-opted elites to reshuffle or reorganize the co-working network to enhance regime centralization. In the case of the Chinese communist state, granted discretion in decision-making of CCP Regional Bureaus and the PLA military rose as dominant elite groups during regime takeover in 1949, which became an issue of an expected centralized rule.

Co-working network analysis in the third section reveals the trend of central-local relations in different years. Network centralization reveals that although China has witnessed a regime centralization after 1952, regional cadres grew an important role in communicating between central to local echelon. Also, military cadres were still prone to act as colleagues in the bureaucratic system across their own military sections. Only after 1955 the pattern of network witnessed a great change of central-local co-working dissociation while the military affinity in the bureaucratic system reduced, still existed among the "North China faction". Node-level analysis also indicates that regional cadres grew as an important role from 1952 to 1954 as they acted as multiple working positions, while Gao Gang became one of the most prominent figures in the communist regime.

Case research of the "Gao-Rao Affair" further indicates regime centralization through co-optation and reshuffling consecutively. Both Gao Gang and Bo Yibo's factional tendency was embedded in their affinity of working ties in the Regional Bureaus. As regime centralization became an issue for the CCP to promote the "socialist transformation" policy after communist takeover, Gao was co-opted into the regime in order to balance the influence of Zhou Enlai. However, as Proposition 1 indicates, co-optation did not ensure the regime's security while bringing closer to the central-local relation and might cultivate loyalty. Connection between central cadres and regional chiefs also created potential "blocs" between the "North China" cadres and other regional Party chiefs. Network description shows that both Gao and other regional cadres, including cadres from North China Bureau, had dominant "betweenness centrality" to lobby their co-workers for support. but Gao was entitled to higher positions equivalent to premier and he had more influence over other cadres. For an authoritarian state, regime centralization concerns more on shaping a "secure" intra-elite interaction that "minimize" the possibility of building factional ties than institutional and legal

arrangement. When Mao believed that Gao intended to "intervene" the central policy from the military leaders, Gao was excluded instead of the North China cadres in 1954 since Gao's social activity revealed the instability of co-optation in the authoritarian regime, which is suggested by Proposition 2. In other words, the outcome of "Gao-Rao Incident" was largely triggered by Mao's distrust and suspect of Gao Gang's social activity which was embedded in the conflictual organizational structure between the Regional Bureaus inherited from revolutionary era and the Central echelon which promoted regime centralization. When Gao, as the regional Party chief, was excluded and purged from the Party, Mao legitimized his political maneuver and finally Regional Bureaus were abolished, accelerating the party-state regime centralization and Mao's personalist authority.

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