

Disciplining Rural Cadres: Anticorruption and Party Building in North China, 1979-1981

Author: Long Yang
Supervisor: Michael Schoenhals



Abstract

This thesis explores the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s reestablishment of disciplinary organs from the central to township/commune levels in the early post-Mao era (1979-1981). It set out to show why such organs came into being and how, with their help, the party attempted to strengthen its infrastructure and adopt specific measures to prevent the abuses of power at the grassroots level. The research undergirding the thesis is based on two types of previously unexamined primary sources: (1) official documents in the public domain and (2) selectively declassified party journals. The existing literature on anti-corruption campaigns in China since 1980s has so far paid little attention to the issue of how discipline organs at the county level put the anti-corruption policies into practice. Drawing on the theoretical resources of state building, party building, and institutional change, this research provides new insights into the CCP's efforts to deal with and eliminate rural cadres' embezzlement, mismanagement of public funds, and novel forms of corruption in the economic sphere. In response to a sharp increase in corrupt activities stemming from China's transition from a centrally planned to a market economy, the CCP adopted stiffer measures in two ways: (1) institutionalization of disciplinary organs and (2) professionalization of anti-corruption investigations. This would provide a strong foundation for China's ongoing institutional change in the supervisory agency since 2012 onwards.

Key Words: *Anti-corruption, Rural Cadres, Party Building, State Building, Institutional Change, North China*