

*Borrowing Wisdom from Abroad: Overseas Training for Political Elite in Reform-Era China**

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Abstract

Overseas cadre training is a highly institutionalized arrangement that the Chinese Communist Party has employed to learn state-of-the-art governing skills from around the world. One of the greatest challenges of dispatching numerous party and state cadres abroad is to ensure their faithfulness to authoritarian rule without being “infiltrated by the West.” By examining the routine management of overseas training programs and the state control mechanisms toward trainees, this article suggests that immersing in the Western environment and being trained at established democracies does not necessarily give rise to an appreciation of democratic values and norms among Chinese political elites. On the contrary, overseas training, as a means of nurturing talented cadres, rewarding loyal veteran party members, and shaping trainees’ perceptions of democratic societies, plays a pivotal role in strengthening the attendees’ confidence in the party-state, which may eventually assist the Communist Party in consolidating its ruling ideology and authoritarian rule.

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