



**21ST CENTURY
CHINA CENTER**

Co-sponsored by:

Center on Global Transformation

Fudan-UC Center on
Contemporary China

Korea-Pacific Program

Pacific Century Institute

Workshop on The Evolution of Communist Political Systems

Conference Room 107

Social Science Building, UC San Diego

Oct. 8-9, 2016

Oct. 8, 2016

Evolution of Communist Political Systems: The Cases

12 p.m.	Lunch and a brief introduction to the project
12:45 p.m.	The Soviet Template: Phil Roeder
1:30 p.m.	China: Susan Shirk
2:30 p.m.	Coffee Break
2:45 p.m.	North Korea: Steph Haggard
3:45 p.m.	Vietnam: Eddy Malesky
4:45 p.m.	Coffee Break
5:00 p.m.	Cuba: Scott Morgenstern
6:00 p.m.	Transportation to dinner, Home of Susan Shirk and Sam Popkin

See back page for Oct. 9 agenda



Oct. 9, 2016

The Evolution of Communist Political Systems: Analytic Questions

8:30 a.m. Continental breakfast

9:00 a.m. **From Collective Leadership to Personalistic Dictatorship**

Discussion lead: Milan Svobik

The starting point for this project is that all communist states began with an organizational template that was strikingly similar, including a particular set of formal institutional arrangements within the party and between party and state. Yet these systems appear vulnerable to the concentration of personal power. How and why does this occur? What permits—or blocks—efforts at the consolidation of personal power? What role does control over the coercive apparatus or other organizations within the party play in this process? What strategies do leaders use to consolidate personal power? What do these transitions to personal dictatorship tell us about the ambiguity of authority within communist party institutions?

10:30 a.m. **Coffee break**

10:45 a.m. **Institutionalization of collective leadership**

Discussion lead: Pei Minxin

At the same time, we have also seen crucial transitions from personal dictatorship to more collective forms of rule: after Stalin, after Mao and in Vietnam nearly from the outset. What gives rise to transitions from personal to more institutionalized rule? How are collective leadership institutions structured? How do authoritarian “checks and balances” actually work? For example, how important are formal and informal rules as opposed to patronage? Once institutionalized, what prevents party organizations from fracturing? What are the benefits or risks of “intra-party democracy”? How does the economic or media environment affect the potential for leadership splits?

12:15 p.m. **Lunch**

1:30 p.m. **Personalistic Dictatorship, Institutionalization and the Broader Institutional Context**

Discussion lead: Scott Gelbach

Our intuition—and still not more than that—is that there are important relationships between personalistic dictatorship, institutionalization and the broader institutional structure of the state and party. Some of this is virtually definitional—that concentration implies less delegation. But we would like to think about how this plays out in party-state relations, decentralization to regional authorities, and the role of legislatures and courts.

3 p.m. **Coffee break**

3:15 p.m. **Outcomes**

Discussion lead: Daniel Treisman

These institutional changes are important for purely political reasons, including the level of economic and political freedom in the society. But we are also interested in how these structures might be related to policy outcomes of various sorts, from economic development and inequality, to the prospects for wider political reform and the conduct of foreign policy.

4:30 p.m. **Workshop Ends**

6 p.m. **Dinner at Chinese restaurant**

