

## **The Political Mobility of China's State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) Executives in the Post-Deng Era**

### **Abstract**

Chinese business groups have grown into huge enterprises with significant economic and political clout. As a result of institutional reform, corporate restructuring, and listings in China and abroad, these business groups, especially within the energy sector, have become so big, profitable and well-connected that they are challenging the authority of the central government. Yet, increasingly, business leaders are appointed to government positions as vice ministers or provincial vice governors and they have in increasing numbers entered the elite Central Committee. What is the mechanism of this elite circulation and how does it impact the power relations between Party-state- business in China? What are the criteria for promoting SOE leaders to government and Party positions – political connectedness, patronage relationships or economic performance? Will increasing rotation between leading positions in the Party, government, and business strengthen Party and government control of the corporate sector or will it strengthen big business' influence on the decision-making processes and policy outcomes in the Chinese polity? The seminar addresses these questions based on in-depth studies of the Chinese nomenklatura system as well as prosopographical studies of the Chinese political and business elite. At the theoretical level the talk advances the notion of fragmented integration and business-political ambidexterity to characterise the evolving relationship between SOE executives and the Party-state.