

How is the “Ministry-Level Official” Made?: From the Perspective of Human Capital Value

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ABSTRACT

As a key elite group, political leaders and officials play a critical role in the course of China's reform and the performance of holistic governance. Taking the "first level officials" of China, namely the ministerial level officials, as the research object, this study attempts to analyze the composition of human capital of Chinese political leaders and officials and explore the capabilities of Chinese senior political leaders and officials, in order to provide support for the official selection and appointment of modern governance in China. Public personal résumés of 239 ministry-level officials and 36 ousted province- and ministry-level officials were gleaned and started from the analysis of their personal information, educational background, professional competence, experiences of studying or working abroad and position transfers. Thereafter, on the one hand, descriptive statistics were used to describe a general picture of these officials, analyze unique traits of ousted officials and attempt to explore cumulative factors of these officials' human capital; on the other hand, correlation tests and hierarchical regression analysis were used to analyze the influence of variables on political promotion. Finally, we believe that the human capital of public-sector political leaders and officials mainly accrues from general human capital based on personal traits, cultural capital, technical capital, social capital and political capital. Moral virtues and professional competence ministry-level officials should be possessed of and the human capital they should accrue for their current positions has been explored with a view to making them overcome weaknesses and become more competent.

Keywords: *Ministry-level Officials, Human Capital, Résumé Analysis, Proper Official Selection and Appointment*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

The report to the 19th CPC National Congress clarifies that Party officials as the mainstays supporting the undertakings of the Party and the state should maintain political loyalty as well as possess superb professional competence. This reflects that the central government puts special emphasis on talent cultivation by local governments. CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping also points out, "it is essential that we pool all kinds of talents and put them to the best use", "it is essential that we create a comfortable living environment for talents; urge society to recognize, respect, and recruit talents" and "it is essential that we put strong emphasis on talent cultivation, making utmost efforts in recruiting and discovering talents, recommending talents of different kinds and putting them to the best use." Province- and

ministry-level officials who lead the administrative staff across the country are especially important and their competence is critical to China's social, economic and cultural undertakings. Therefore, it is of epoch-making significance to study personal growing experiences of Chinese ministry-level officials and factors influencing their competence.

As a key elite group, political leaders and officials play a critical role in the course of China's reform and the performance of holistic governance. However, as there are no specific provisions on selecting and appointing ministry-level officials, what is the path of growth necessary for becoming competent ministry-level officials? Does this path reveal certain law? What personal qualities do their cumulative human capital call for? According to the dual requirements of good morality and professional competence, what are the differences revealed by the human capital of corrupt officials? What human capital should ministry-level officials possess to overcome their own weaknesses and become more competent? These have always been the key concerns in public-sector human

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resources management and this paper will discuss them based on the perspective of the match between leadership development and competence.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. The influence of personal traits on the promotion of political elites

Personal traits are basic signature factors. An empirical study was carried out by an scholar on the résumés of political elites to analyze the correlation between their personal traits (including age, ethnicity, gender, birthplace, the first degree, the highest degree, professional background and years of membership in the Party) and promotion. His results reveal age has a negative influence on their promotion to deputy state-level officials, while their birthplace has a significant influence on an official's promotion prospects and the influence will be positive if it is in Eastern China[1]. Gender is a main influencing factor. Female officials need higher quality human and social capital to be promoted [2]and face many restrictions that hinder their promotion, such as social cognitive biases rooted in traditional values, excessive expectations held by their leaders or subordinates and inherent weaknesses in female personality[3]. Regarding the influence of ethnicity on an official's promotion prospects, relevant studies are not limited to officials who are Han people but also deal with characteristics of and obstacles in the personal development of ethnic minority officials and their countermeasures[4].

The promotion of political elites can be influenced by knowledge and skills, which can be factored as educational background in the assessment of cumulative human capital. Educational background is a key standard for talent selection and China emphatically requires that officials should possess a wide range of knowledge and professional competence. As the transition of the Chinese market progresses, educational background has gradually taken the place of political loyalty as the key standard for an official's promotion[5]. It is higher academic degrees, which are a direct reflection of educational level, that make the new generation of Chinese elites gain more political power[6]. Educational background can be further divided into personal educational level and family educational background. Except for province- and ministry-level officials, personal educational level has a positive correlation with political promotion[7]. Moreover, a family's cultural capital also plays some role. More cultural capital means longer period of education, thus creating greater positive influence on promotion[8]. However, in today's society where most people own academic degrees, more than 60% of mayors have received part-time education, indicating the supervisory role of systems and institutions[9]. The assessment of professionalism starts from the assessment of professional background[10] which can systematically influence political promotion[11].

Logically, a professional background of natural sciences is helpful to an official's promotion[12].

1.2.2. The influence of social capital on the promotion of political elites

The use of social capital as an exogenous variable in tackling interpersonal social connections requires coordinative actions to improve social efficacy [13]and internalize human capital in the aspect of social connections[14]. From lateral connections determined by productivity to vertical bureaucratic organizations and to the introduction of political systems and legal relations[15], social capital plays a noticeable role in the promotion of political elites.

Social background is the basis of social structure which plays certain role in the shaping of an individual and the change of his social class, both of which are factors influencing an official's promotion. Born in an environment which offers them a different way to be brought up, political elites are endowed them with traits different from social masses, and exploring the social background of them is the first step of the research in this section[16]. In terms of stratification, there are two types of stratification interrelated with each other: social-economic stratification and political stratification, and there are two models: the "independent model" and the "cumulative model." While the former indicates whether a citizen can enter into the elite group is irrelevant to his personal traits, while the latter indicates the monopoly of political power by social-economically privileged group.[17]

The construction of a two-dimensional social network exerts an important influence on an official's promotion. The model of relationships between senior CPC political elites built on the dimensions of instruments, understandings, morality and justice and emotions clarifies the dimension of courtesies concerning the building of harmonious relationships and the dimension of instruments concerning the calculation of personal interests are the lowest dimensions in personal social networks[18]. However, the measurement of relationships is subjective efforts and its results are difficult to be verified. Experiences of working in functional departments are a variable for us to study social capital. Since officials in organizational departments play a critical role in personnel appointment, dismissal and transfer, experiences of working in functional departments have certain influence on an official's promotion[19]. Experiences of working as a secretary serve to accrue more interpersonal bonds for further promotion.[20]

1.2.3. The influence of the career path on the promotion of political elites

The study on the career path can be further divided into two sub-sectors: the study on static factors including position

setting and promotion standards and the study on dynamic factors including interaction and exchange.

Position setting and promotion standards are set by the government for an official's promotion. Based on the path dependence theory, it has been discovered through realistic political observation that an official's promotion can be influenced by career path related factors such as institutional nature and position setting. Those who have worked in Party committees, political departments and organizational and personnel departments have a higher chance of being promoted[21]. In terms of the career path, there are multiple models of promotion which can be generalized into the mixed-track type and the single-track type, and the most common model of promotion is a spiral-track type of promotion alternating between the government and the Party committee. Institutional nature and position setting have an influence on an official's promotion. For example, government offices, public security organs, procuratorial organs and people's courts are the prolific cradles of senior officials[22]. Administrative performance can serve as the promotion standard, and the tenure and origin of government officials will influence the expected goal of economic growth which relates to an official's promotion 23. Tenure is a period of time in which officials can display his competence and other qualities and it can be divided into fixed tenure and flexible tenure. The majority of Chinese local officials have fixed tenure and their performance reveals an increasing trend during the tenure[24]. In order to open up more channels of promotion, government departments will designate deputies and non-leadership positions to provide more incentives[25]. However, current studies on government officials mainly focus on top leaders of the Party committee and the government without sufficient efforts being put into the in-depth study on deputies and the whole leadership team. An in-depth study on the structure, function and influence of the leadership team is also subtle and complicated[26]. Therefore, it is necessary to further explore the influence of past leadership teams on an official's promotion.

The interaction and exchange between elites serves to gain power for them. There are two ways of interaction and exchange: internal interaction and exchange and external interaction and exchange. External exchange refers to cross-field and international exchange. *The Power Elite* by Charles Wright Mills focuses on the interaction and exchange between members of the American upper and ruling class in the political, economic and social structures for the purpose of gaining more say and acquiring decision-making power and even dominant power. Their bonds based on economic strengths leads to a balance between political and economic competition and cooperation[27]. In terms of international exchange, the most typical case is the exchange between EU countries, which leads to a reduction in the number of senators of various member countries with contradicting interests[28]. Internal exchange means exchange within a country. At different periods, Denmark, German and the United States all carried out the study on the flow model[29]. Within the government, experiences of working in different functional departments play a key role

in political promotion[30]. When the central government selects and appoints new officials, parallel exchange between province-level officials serves to increase the chance of promotion and improve government performance[31].

1.2.4. The influence of working competence on the promotion of political elites

Motives play certain role in an official's promotion. According to the content-based incentive theory, motives can be stimulated by an official's strong internal desire and necessary external incentives and inducements[32]. The motive of public service is a special motive in the public sector which serves as the subjective psychological basis of an official's promotion system. However, a lack of close integration with emotional motives results in less positivity at work and poorer performance[33]. In the bargain, political motive is a key factor influencing an official's promotion. An official is required to be true to his aspirations and beliefs with trustable political quality, a strong sense of being a public servant and clean, honest and self-disciplined personality[34]. The factor of political quality is emphasized in the proposal for the reform of the leadership system—the induction of more learned, professional and revolutionary young leaders and officials into the leadership team. It can break down into variables involving educational background, professional background, age and years of membership in the Party, and other variables related to the aforementioned proposal[35]. Political competition also functions in an official's promotion. In the aspect of “systems”, the promotion of Chinese political elites can be influenced by “promotion competition” and economic performance is positively correlated to their promotion. In order to get promoted, lower-ranked officials will seek higher-speed economic growth and their actions will exert spillover effects on neighboring regions—incentivizing their neighboring regions and prompting cooperation between each other[36]. Due to “promotion competition”, officials tend to be younger when they take office. However, competition-based promotion can influence the overall strategies used by lower-ranked officials to get promoted. Some have taken risky strategies like “pulling some strings and bribery.” Therefore, it is not easy to determine either the career path of or the age limit for an administrative official under the phase-out system. [37]Moreover, some scholars challenged the “promotion competition theory”, holding that it is difficult to measure an official's promotion prospects by provincial GDP growth under the interference of power allocation of the authoritarian political system like political promotion, indicator distortion by power and the strong political network of some officials.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Research Hypothesis

Through literature review, this study proposes five factors influencing an official’s promotion, including basic personal information, educational background, professional background, experiences of working or studying abroad and position transfers. The assessment of all these five factors can break down into the assessment of indicators under each factor. In order to assess key factors influencing an official’s competence and promotion, we postulate hypothesis related to these five factors as shown in Table 1. The model of promotion built on hypothesis and indicators under each factor is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1 The Hypothesis for the Model of Promotion

Research Hypothesis (Whether it is related to the time consumed to ascend to the ministry-level)	References
H1 Basic Personal Information (Personal Traits): Gender, ethnicity, and birthplace have no significant influence on an official’s promotion; the older the age, the larger the number of years of membership in the Party, and the longer the length of service, the faster an official will get promoted.	Literatures [1]-[4]&[35]
H2 Education Background (Cultural Capital): The higher the first degree and the higher the highest degree, the faster an official will get promoted; the younger age at which an official finishes his master’s/doctor’s degree, the faster he will get promoted.	Literatures [6]、[7]
H3 Professional Background (Technical Capital): The higher an official’s professional and technical titles, the faster he will get promoted; the more the number of positions matching an official’s major, the faster he will get promoted; the more types of professional degrees an official achieves in different educational stages, the faster he will get promoted.	Literatures [10]-[12]
H4 Overseas Experience (Cultural and Social Capital): Officials with experiences of studying or working abroad will get promoted in a faster way.	Literatures [28]
H5 Position Transfers (Social Capital): The more frequently an official changes his positions in the public sector, the faster he will get promoted; the less the number of positions in different sequences, the faster an official will get promoted; the more the number of positions and the longer the tenure in the functional department which an official is working for, the faster he will get promoted; The	Literatures [19]-[26]&[30]

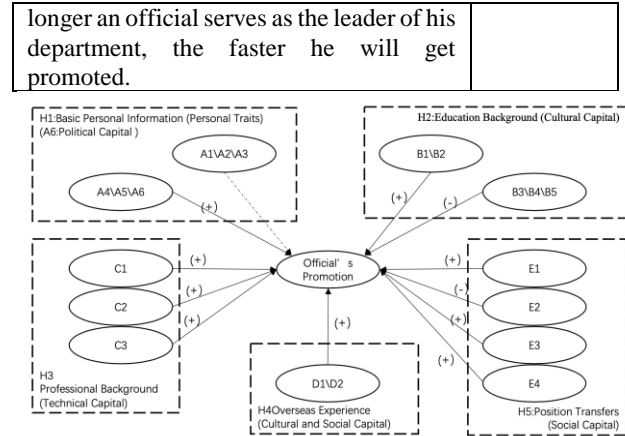


Figure 1 The Model of Promotion Based on Hypothesis and Indicators under Each Factor

2.2 Variable Explanation and Measurement

2.2.1 Dependent variable: the speed of promotion

The reason why the speed of promotion is a factor to be assessed is that positive factors conducive to an official’s promotion to his current position will serve his future development. Some scholars assess an official’s promotion prospects by his length of service—the time length after he begins work and before he ascends to the corresponding position[38]. This factor can better reveal various political resources an official accrues for promotion. The speed of promotion is disproportionate to the period of time consumed to ascend to the ministry level, so the measurement standard is as follows:

$$v = s_0 / (t_1 - t_0)$$

v: The Speed of Promotion; s₀: Experiences Before an Official Ascends to the Ministry Level
 (t₁-t₀): The Period of Time Consumed to Ascend to the Ministry Level
 t₁: Age When an Official Ascends to the Ministry Level
 t₀: Age When an Official Begins to Work

2.2.2 Independent variables: based on the framework of human capital theory

2.2.2.1. Personal traits

Human capital theory generally takes the factor of labor as the core, and human capital is defined by Don E. Schultz as the stock of skills and knowledge on production possessed by a person. Human capital investment covers medical care and health care, activities related to one’s lifespan, strength and other four aspects[39]. Lifespan is factored as a person’s age, and some current studies have explored

whether human capital will influence economic growth according to the age structure of a population[40]. It is suggested that the study on the promotion of province- and ministry-level officials attempt to explore the influence of gender, ethnicity, birthplace, age, years of members in the Party and length of service on the accumulation of human capital.

2.2.2.2. Cultural capital

Cultural capital theory proposed by Pierre Bourdieu is an in-depth exploration of human capital theory based on accumulated knowledge and a typical case of the successful application of economic concepts into cultural studies. Cultural capital refers to symbolic goods of a person such as works, diplomas and academic titles and institutional recognition of a person such as academic degrees[41]. In this study, an official’s educational background can be considered as cultural capital and factors such as the first degree and the highest degree were explored to reveal the influence of cultural capital on an official’s promotion. Academic degrees achieved abroad are also included into cultural capital as it is also a part of a person’s academic degrees.

2.2.2.3. Technical capital

Professor Luo Fukai explores technical capital, the fourth capital of social economy, based on the factor of professional skills. While it is different from human capital as a tangible asset, technical capital is associated with human capital as an embodiment of traits. If a company wants to strengthen innovation, it needs to expand investment in technological research and development to ensure the constant efforts of senior R & D fellows in prompting innovative development[42]. This requires people with professional skills to promote the management, operation and conversion of technical talent using the mobility of human capital to make for a win-win situation

between human capital and technical capital. Public servants are required by government department to possess professional skills, which can be reflected in their professional level. Therefore, professional background is explored in this research to reveal the importance of technical capital in an official’s promotion and competence.

2.2.2.4. Social capital

Social capital can be divided into institutional capital promoting mutually beneficial group actions and relational capital including values and attitudes generated in one’s interaction with the others[43]. Personnel transfers between the central government and local governments, experiences of working in functional departments, cross-field and cross-sequential position relationships and the research on the leadership team based on path dependence all reflect “social capital” in an objective manner through the combination of lateral connections, vertical bureaucratic organizations, social connections and political power. In this paper, it manifests itself position transfers. Experiences of working abroad are also a part of social capital as it is based on the relationship network.

2.2.2.5. Political capital

Political capital is a derivative of social relational capital based on the relationships between the Party and the government as well as Chinese political relationships. It refers to the identity, power, resources and resulting deterrence and influence provided by a political party and its political power[44]. In this study, years of membership in the Party are a key variable in measuring the influence of political capital in an official’s promotion. Although it is a personal trait, it needs to be put under the category of political capital in human capital theory because it is also a political trait.

Table 2 A Summary of Variables for the Study on the Promotion of Ministry-level Officials

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Assessed Indicator	Variable No.	Independent Variable	Assessed Indicator	Variable No
The Speed of Promotion (The Period of Time Consumed to Ascend to the Ministry Level)	Personal Traits	Gender	A1	Cultural Capital	The First Degree	B1
		Ethnicity	A2		The Highest Degree	B2
		Birthplace	A3		The Age of an Official Finishing a Bachelor’s Degree	B3
		Age	A4		The Age of an Official Finishing a Master’s Degree	B4
		Length of Service	A5		The Age of an Official Finishing a Doctor’s Degree	B5

	Political Capital	Years of Membership in the Party	A6	Position Transfers	Experiences of Studying Abroad	D1	
	Technical Capital	Professional and Technical Titles	C1		Experiences of Working Abroad	D2	
			The Number of Positions Matching an Official's Major		C2	Basic Position Transfers	E1
		Professional Degrees			C3	Position Transfers to Different Sequences	E2
						Experiences in the Functional Department an Official is working for	E3
		Experiences in the Leadership team	E4				

2.3. RESEARCH PROCESS

2.3.1. Research methodology

This study mainly uses quantitative methods in analysis. Firstly, a database of personal résumés is constructed to present a general picture of them, followed by the exploration of factors influencing an official's promotion through correlation analysis and regression analysis. The next step is the assessment of an official's morality. Personal profiles of ousted province- and ministry-level official are collated for a comparison with the overall traits of ministry-level officials to reveal the differences between the two group's respective factors of human capital. Lastly, basic principles and technical standards of statistical analysis are used to verify initially postulated research hypothesis.

2.3.2. Research samples

This study mainly focuses on ministry-level officials after the 19th CPC National Congress. Local ministry-level officials include leaders of the Party committee, the government, the People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Conference in provinces, direct administered municipalities and autonomous regions; ministry-level officials of the central government include leaders and officials of ministries, committees, direct-controlled institutions, offices, bureaus and social groups under the State Council. Leaders of the armed forces and enterprises are not involved in this study. March 2018 (after the 19th CPC National Congress) is a key juncture for our résumé collection when the central government and provincial and municipal government released their personnel appointment notices according to which we formulated our list of ministry-level officials.

In order to guarantee the reliability of documented information we collected, we compared personal résumés of province- and ministry-level officials acquired from various channels. These résumés mainly came from People's Daily Online, China Economic Net, government websites and Baidupedia. After sorting out these résumés, we acquired a list of 102 local ministry-level officials, 137 ministry-level officials of the central government; 36 ousted province- and ministry-level officials, of which six are officials. As some information is not publicly available, there is a lack of data for some indicators in statistics, but we put all data into statistics to explore the overall level.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. The Description of the Latest Résumés of Ministry-level Officials

We mainly described the résumés of ministry-level officials based on various factors of human capital, and explored their obvious traits.

Through the analysis of personal traits according to the résumés of ministry-level officials, it can be found that 90.8% are males and 9.2% are females, indicating the majority of them are males; 91.6% are Han people, indicating the majority of them are Han people; the majority of them (58.6%) are born in counties or townships ; 34% of them are born in 1960s, and 64.7% are born in 1950s, indicating the majority of them are born in 1950s; 98.2% of them have more than 30 years of service, and 65% have 40 to 49 years of service; the majority of them have 30 to 39 years of membership in the Party and the proportion is 94.9%.

Educational background, a part of cultural capital, mainly breaks into four indicators: the highest degree, the first degree, the age of an official finishing his master's/doctor's degrees; experiences of studying abroad. 39.6% of them have their first degrees achieved from ordinary universities,

and more than half of province- and ministry-level officials have their first degrees achieved from Project 985 and 211 universities. 80.5% of them have master's/doctor's degrees as their highest degrees, indicating they generally have a high educational level. After the analysis of their age at which their finish their bachelor's/master's/doctor's degrees, it can be found most of them finish their bachelor's degree at the age between 20 and 30, and the proportion is 74.2%; a large number of them finish their master's degrees at the age of over 40, and the proportion is 41.3%; the majority of them finish their doctor's degrees at the age of over 40, and the proportion is 69.5%. The analysis of their experiences of studying abroad reveals that only 13% of them have experiences of studying abroad, and only 5.4% have obtained master's/doctor's/post-doctoral degrees abroad. Officials who have studied abroad for one to two years and those who studied broad for three years account for 28.6% respectively.

According to the statistics of their professional background, a part of technical capital, it can be found that 53.1% of them have professional and technical titles, 8.4% have deputy senior titles, and 39.7% have senior titles, indicating the necessity for them to have professional and technical titles. The analysis of the types of their academic degrees reveals that, among those who have bachelor's degrees, 39.1% have bachelor's degrees of sciences, agronomy and engineering, while 25% have bachelor's degrees of arts; among those who have master's degrees, 43.4% have master's degrees of economics and management, and 22% have master's degrees of sciences, agronomy and engineering; among those who have doctor's degrees, officials who have doctor's degrees of economics and management account for the largest proportion—48.8%, and 26.8% have doctor's degrees of sciences, agronomy and engineering. Overall, officials who have degrees of medicine, education, and military science account for the lowest proportions. The analysis of the number of positions matching an official's major reveals that, when only undergraduate majors are taken into consideration, the average number of matched positions is 17.68.

The influence of social capital can break down into five indicators, basic position transfers, position transfers in the same sequence and between different sequences, experiences in the functional department an official is working for, experiences in the leadership team, and experiences of working abroad. 1. Basic Position Transfers. The average times of position transfers are 18.88, and for 52.7% of them, the times range from 13 to 21. This indicates ministry-level officials generally undergo frequent position transfers. The average times of interdepartmental transfers are seven, and for 77.8% of them, the number ranges from four to ten. 2. Position Transfers in the Same Sequence and to Different Sequences. The determination of whether position transfers happen in the same sequence is based on whether they happen within the civil service system of government departments. Position transfers in the same sequence can be divided into three types: inter-provincial transfers, transfers from the provincial government to the central government and transfers from the central government to the provincial government. The first type of transfers happens most frequently, and the second most frequent is the last type. For inter-sequence position transfers, 83.5% of them have undergone transfers to different sequences, 75.3% have undergone one to three times of transfers, and the average tenure of positions in a different sequence is 4.95 years. 3. Experiences in the Functional Department an Official is working for. It is found that the average tenure in the functional department an official is working for is 9.59 years, indicating that functions and positions are highly matched. 4. Experiences in the Leadership Team. Our measurement in this part is based on the experiences of working as a chief/deputy leader in the government and the Part committee. It is found that they averagely have assumed leadership for 26 years, and worked in 15 positions. 5. Experiences of Working Abroad. The results show that only 7.1% of them have experiences of working abroad, and among those who have, medium title holders and deputy senior title holders account for 14.3% respectively.

Table 3 The Study on the Influence of Social Capital on an Official's Promotion

	Ministry-level Officials			Ousted Officials		
	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average
E1:The Times of Position Transfers (Overall Level)	6	42	18.88	8	26	16.09
E1:The Times of Interdepartmental Transfers(Overall Level)	0	27	7.17	2	14	7.37
E2-1:The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (Inter-provincial)	0	8	0.85	0	2	0.17
E2-2: The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (from the Provincial Government to the Central Government)	0	3	0.69	0	2	0.31
E2-3:The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (from the Central Government to the Provincial Government)	0	3	0.38	0	1	0.17
E2: The Number of Positions in Different Sequences (Overall Level)	0	16	2.13	0	12	2.4

E2:The Tenure of Positions in a Different Sequence (Overall Level)	0	40.92	4.95	0	33	6.6544
E4:The Number of Positions in the Leadership team (Overall Level)	3	32	14.98	6	22	12.14
E4:The Tenure in the Leadership Team (Overall Level)	3.75	62	25.98	12	35	25.1959
E3:The Tenure in the Functional Department an Official is Working for	0	60	9.6	1	35	20.1568

3.2. The Difference in Résumés of Ousted Province- and Ministry-level Officials

There have been 36 ousted province- and ministry-level officials since the 19th National Congress. Six of them are ministry-level officials and two of them were promoted to the ministry level after the 19th National Congress. Through the descriptive statistics of the résumés of ousted officials followed by the comparison of their résumés with the résumés of ministry-level officials, the salient traits of ousted officials were explored.

The personal traits of ousted officials are as follows: 100% of them are males; 77.8% of them were born in counties and townships; 38.9% of them are aged between 56 and 60 years old; their ethnicity, years of membership in the Party and length of service are similar to ministry-level officials. In terms of cultural capital, 27.8% of them have doctor's degrees as their highest degrees, and 63.9% have master's degrees as their highest degree, indicating they generally have a high education level; most of them have achieved their first degrees from ordinary universities and the proportion is 63.9%; 66.7% have master's degrees, all of which are on-the-job, and they generally finished them at an older age. In terms of technical capital, there are a large of number of both officials with senior titles and those without them. The former group accounts for 42.9% and the latter group accounts for 48.6%. However, there is no significant difference judging from the types of degrees and the number of positions matching an official's major. In terms of social capital, there is a big difference in the term of positions in a different sequence, which is 6.7 years for ousted officials, and the tenure in the functional department an official is working for is 20 years. This indicates experiences in the functional department an official is working for and experiences of working outside the government can make a difference.

According to investigation, the main reasons that caused these officials to be ousted include bribery, corruption, abuse of power, attempts to harm elections, and weak leadership. They were ousted due to the commitment of corruption, the outbreak of an accident, or the failure to follow the instructions of the superior leaders, so they generally need to improve their sense of morality. Since self-interested motives and personal choice affect an individual's behaviors, senior officials should personally overcome their proclivity towards corruption on his mind,

and enhance their personal competence in governance to precaution against the outbreak of accidents. Efforts to improve the overall sense of morality are an important manifestation of fulfilling the requirements of "high-quality" for officials.

3.3. Discussion on the Key Factors Influencing an Official's Promotion

In reality, senior officials must meet the rigorous requirements of "high quality"; how an official's performance is assessed in the process of promotion needs to be studied from multiple dimensions. In this study, an in-depth analysis based on human capital was carried out to describe key variables in the process of promotion with a view to exploring whether there is some special law revealed in an official's path of growth.

3.3.1. A summary of relevant factors influencing an official's promotion based on cross analysis

Based on factors in the résumés and the dependent variable "the period of time consumed to get promoted to the ministry level", factors related to an scholarly official's basic personal information, educational background, professional background, experiences of working and studying abroad, and positions transfers were summarized for significance tests to determine the level of their influence. Pearson's chi-squared test is the significance test adopted in this study. If the p-value (corresponding probability) is lower than 0.05, then there are significant differences between the independent variable and the dependent variable, so we will accept the original hypothesis that the independent variable and the dependent variable are not independent but correlated.

The results of significant tests on the influence of various objective factors on an official's promotion are shown in the table. Among all these factors, age, years of membership in the Party, the length of service, the times of interdepartmental transfers, the times of position transfers, the tenure in the functional department an official is working for, the number of positions in different sequences, the number of positions matching an official's major all have a significant influence on "the period of time consumed to get promoted to the ministry level."

Table 4 The Analysis of Relevant Factors Influencing an Official’s Promotion Based on Cross Analysis

Indicator	Significance Level	Indicator	Significance Level
Age	0	Experiences of Studying Abroad	0.158
Years of Membership in the Party	0	The Period of Time Spent on Studying Abroad	0.235
Length of Service	0	The Age When an Official Finished His Bachelor’s Degree	0.265
The Highest Position Abroad	0	The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (Inter-provincial)	0.285
The Times of Interdepartmental Transfers (Overall Level)	0	The Period of Time Spent on Working Abroad	0.359
The Times of Position Transfers (Overall Level)	0.007	Experiences of Working Abroad	0.563
The Tenure in the Functional Department an Official is Working for	0.016	Birthplace	0.605
The Number of Positions in Different Sequences (Overall Level)	0.021	The Tenure in the Leadership team (Overall Level)	0.663
Number of professions matching an official’s major (Overall Level)	0.029	The Highest Degree	0.717
The Age When an Official Finished His Master’s Degree	0.056	Gender	0.755
Degree Achieved Abroad	0.062	The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (from the Central Government to the Provincial Government)	0.822
The Number of Positions in the Leadership Team (Overall Level)	0.062	Bachelor’s Degree	0.95
The First Degree	0.079	The Times of Transfers in the Same Sequence (from the Provincial Government to the Central Government)	0.964
Doctor’s Degree	0.106	Gender	0.978
The Age When an Official Finished His Doctor’s Degree	0.125	The Tenure of Positions in a Different Sequence (Overall Level)	0.994
Master’s Degree	0.153	Professional and Technical Titles	0.996

3.3.2. *The in-depth exploration of factors influencing an official’s promotion based on hierarchical regression analysis*

Table 5 Model Abstract and Estimated Parameters of Each Group in Hierarchical Regression Analysis

In-model variable	BLOCK 1			BLOCK 2			BLOCK 3			BLOCK 4		
	Personal Information			Professional Background			Overseas Experience			Position Transfers		
	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p
1 Age	-0.54	-1.082	0.34	-0.44	-0.694	0.538	-0.202	-0.317	0.781	0.178	.	.
Years of Membership in the Party	-0.058	-0.297	0.782	-0.046	-0.203	0.852	0.107	0.424	0.713	-0.012	.	.
Length of Service	1.433	3.116	0.036	1.305	2.05	0.133	1.24	2.041	0.178	1.23	.	.
Number of professions matching an official’s major (Overall Level)				0.081	0.348	0.751	-0.134	-0.465	0.688	0.385	.	.
3 The Highest Position Abroad							-0.427	-1.151	0.369	0.236	.	.
The Times of Interdepartmental Transfers (Overall Level)										-0.614	.	.
The Tenure in the Functional Department an Official is Working for										-0.718	.	.
R2			0.922			0.925			0.955			1
F			15.765			9.256			8.474			.
P			0.011			0.049			0.109			.
ΔR2			0.922			0.003			0.03			0.045
ΔF			15.765			0.121			1.326			.
Δp			0.011			0.751			0.369			.

The multiple linear analysis of factors influencing an official's promotion requires a set of models for further explanation. In this study, hierarchical regression was applied to explore in-depth explanation of the dependent variable by independent variables including basic personal information, educational background, professional background, experiences of working and studying abroad and positions transfers. Through previous chi-squared tests, educational background is factored out, so there are four hierarchical factors left. The coefficients of determination for the remaining four hierarchical variables are combined to reveal that the overall coefficient of determination is 1.000, indicating the overall explanatory power is high. Through significant tests on the overall explanatory power in these four hierarchies, we obtain: f -value = 15.765, 9.256, 8.474, and $R^2 = 0.922, 0.925, 0.955$. The significance test ($R^2=1.000$) reveals the overall explanatory power for the model in the third hierarchy is not statistically significant. The estimated coefficients of each hierarchy are shown in the following table.

As can be seen from the table, only the explanatory power of the variable "length of service" is statistically significant in the first group. Beta is -0.54 for "age" and -0.06 for "years of membership in the Party", indicating that these two variables are negatively correlated with "the period of time consumed to ascend to the ministry level." Beta is 1.433 for "length of service", indicating that it is positively correlated with "the time consumed to ascend to the ministry level." Although the explanatory power of "age" and "years of membership in the Party" are not statistically significant, the first group has strong overall explanatory power.

In the second group, the overall influence of the first group is reduced, and the independent variable "professional background" is not statistically significant. Beta is 0.081 ($t = 0.348, p = 0.751$) for "the number of positions matching an official's major", indicating it is positively correlated to "the time consumed to ascend to the ministry level", and this value is the result obtained after controlling variables in the first group, which is used for the purpose of control. In the third group, the level of independence is also greater than 0.05 and Beta is -0.43 for "the highest position abroad", so this variable is positively correlated with "the time consumed to ascend to the ministry level." However, the fact that the overall significance level is greater than 0.05 indicates that although the third group generally has a strong explanatory power, "the highest position abroad" is of no value after controlling "age", "years of membership in the Party", "length of service", and "the number of positions matching an official's major." The reason is a lack of cases under this indicator in résumés we collected.

In the fourth group, it is found that the overall model has a extremely strong explanatory power. However, during the operation of SPSS, two variables "the times of position transfers" and "the number of positions in a different sequence" were factored out while variables in the third group was being controlled. Beta is -0.61 for "the times of interdepartmental transfers" and -0.72 for "the tenure in the functional department an official is working for",

indicating they are both negatively correlated with "the time consumed to ascend to the ministry level."

4. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. Personal Traits and an Official's Promotion: Seniority is a Positive Factor

Significance tests show there is high significance between age, years of membership in the Party, length of service (factors of general human capital based on basic personal information) and the speed of promotion while there is low significance between gender, ethnicity, birthplace and the speed of promotion. Descriptive statistics reveal males and Han people are more likely to get promoted. "The time consumed to ascend to the ministry level" is disproportionate to the speed of promotion, indicating that an official who can be promoted in a short period of time possesses better human capital.

The results of regression analysis reveal age and length of service are positively correlated with "the time consumed to ascend to the ministry level", which is inconsistent with Hypothesis H1. This discloses the fact that China leadership team is becoming younger due to policy factors. However, there is a correlation between age and length of service: length of service increases as age increases. Therefore, it is found after hierarchical regression analysis that length of service plays a big role and is the most direct reflection of seniority in the process of an official's promotion. The results demonstrate the importance of work experiences.

Since China's policies call for a younger public servant team, it is easier for younger province- and ministry-level officials to get promoted. However, through descriptive statistics, it is also observed that the leadership team is generally a little too old. Among ministry-level officials, the majority were born in 1950s, accounting for more than half. This reflects ministry-level officials are a little too old and that age plays a restrictive role in an official's promotion within the bureaucratic system.

It is found through the analysis of ousted officials' résumés that their personal traits are similar to those of the ministry-level officials except gender: they are all males. This serves as a warning that comprehensive factors must be taken into account for the appointment and promotion of an official.

4.2. Cultural Capital and an Official's Promotion: There's no Strong Correlation

Independence Tests show there is no significance between indicators related to cultural capital, such as the highest

degree, the first degree, the age of an official finishing his bachelor's/master's/doctor's degree and experiences of studying abroad, and an official's promotion. This goes against the hypothesis that if an official has a high degree from a famous university and finishes his bachelor's/master's/doctor's degree at a younger age, he will get promoted faster.

Today, as the development of society continues to progress, the requirements for educational background are increasingly higher, and ministry- and province-level officials generally have high degrees. Through a summary of the educational background of ministry-level officials, it is found that 47.9% have master's degrees as their highest degrees, 32.6% have doctor's degree as their highest degrees, and only 15.7% have bachelor's degrees as their highest degrees. Among ousted officials, an overwhelming proportion—91.7%—have master's or doctor's degrees. This clearly demonstrates the importance of a high degree to ministry-level officials. The analysis of the age of an official finishing his bachelor's/master's/doctor's degree shows that most of officials finished his master's/doctor's degree at an age of over 35, the best age for building up their career. This echoes the call of CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping for lifelong learning.

Then you might wonder: why a high degree from a famous university does little help to a ministry-level official's promotion? It is observed from data that most ministry-level officials finished his master's degrees at the age of 40 or above, and his doctor's degrees at the age of 45 or above. It can be seen that most of province- and ministry-level officials achieved on-the-job master's/doctor's degrees. This reflects the pursuit of province- and ministry-level officials for high degrees. The reason why their degrees are mostly on-the-job degrees is that they are aware of the importance of cultural capital in their political career.

4.3. Technical Capital and an Official's Promotion: The Need for Inter-disciplinary Talents

In Independence Tests, the “number of professions matching an official's major” is a significant variable, while other variables such as professional and technical titles and the types of degrees obtained at each educational stage are of little significance. This reflects the importance of match between major and positions in technical capital. In the regression analysis, the number of professions matching an official's major is negatively correlated with the speed of promotion.

Descriptive statistics show that the academic majors of province- and ministry-level officials appointed after the 19th CPC National Congress reflect distinctive features of a specific era. Chinese province- and ministry-level officials pay high attention to cultural connotation, economic development and stable industrial growth. Many of them (39.1%) chose majors under the category of sciences and engineering. Based on the analysis of the era when they pursued undergraduate study, it is found that due

to the shortage of technical talents in China at that time, most people chose majors under the category of sciences and engineering. In the stage of postgraduate and doctoral study, many chose majors under the category of economics, law, and management, which are more arts than sciences. The reason for their choice is that the study of sciences, engineering, literature and history already opened up their mind for their path of promotion, so many of them chose to develop themselves in a more versatile way and cultivate management skills necessary for being an official.

Moreover, the selection of a different major can also explain why the larger the number of positions matching an official's major, the slower the speed of promotion. Although a larger number of matched positions indicates specialization in a specific field, today's government needs inter-disciplinary talents to tackle different events. Therefore, province- and ministry-level officials need to choose a different major to improve their comprehensive management capabilities.

4.4. Social Capital and an Official's Competence: Transfers Boost Progress

Through hierarchical regression analysis, the times of interdepartmental transfers and the tenure in the functional department an official is working for are both positively correlated with an official's promotion, which is consistent with Hypothesis H5. The experiences of working in the leadership team have no significant influence on an official's promotion, and the number of positions in different sequences is factored out.

Social capital mainly emphasizes the “relationship network”, and from interdepartmental transfers and experiences in the functional department an official is working for, we can clearly see how an official builds his relationships network, which plays a positive role in promotion. Experiences in the functional department he is working for can help him build up a relationship network involving his superior leaders and subordinates in line with vertical bureaucratic relationships, which can promote vertical communication and increase his chance of promotion. Interdepartmental transfers refer to position transfers across departments. Before ascending to the ministry level, an official has served as chief or deputy leaders of governments at all levels and took charge of multiple departments. The relationship network built on these experiences is also in line with the social capital network, and department-based transfers can lay a solid foundation for future promotion.

Transfers in the same sequence and experiences in the leadership team do not have significant influences on an official's promotion. In the first case, it can be seen an official's mobility hasn't been well transformed into the boost for his promotion. The reasons, which need to be further explored, might be the requirement for avoidance between relatives in closely related positions and mandatory provisions such as policies on cross-regional transfers. In the latter case, the number of positions and

tenure in the leadership team don't play a significant role. This is because, according to the path dependence theory, although the chance of being promoted to the leadership team is once in a million, once an official enters is inducted into the leadership team, he will keep staying there. The accumulation of social capital will also affect an official's behaviors. Experiences in the functional department he is working for and experiences of working outside the government have a large influence on ousted officials. Diversified experiences of working both in the public and private sectors can increase the coverage of power, and long-term experiences in the functional department he is working for can extend the depth of power and help build interpersonal relationships, but these factors are more likely to bring moral risks and give rise to corruption. Therefore, these factors need to be attached with great importance in the appointment of officials to prevent those holding key positions from taking a "path of no return." Moreover, based on the exploration into the factors that degraded these ousted officials, it is found that it is important for officials to improve their sense of morality and enhance competence in governance.

4.5. Political Capital and an Official's Promotion: The Importance of Political Quality

In the study on years of membership in the Party, the results of the Independence Test show there is significance between years of membership in the Party and the dependent variable, and the results of the multiple linear regression analysis show years of membership in the Party are positively correlated with the speed of promotion. This indicates the larger the number of years in the Party, the easier it is to get promoted, which proves Hypothesis H1. This also highlights the characteristics of the Communist Party of China and Chinese government, the historical influence of the proposal made by Deng Xiaoping for the reform of the leadership system—the induction of more learned, professional and revolutionary young officials, and its profound influence on the requirements for Chinese officials today. Through descriptive statistics, it is found that a high proportion of leaders and officials are Party members (generally senior Party members). It can also be proven years of membership in the Party as an apparent and measurable indicator can manifest the uniqueness of Chinese political culture. Therefore, political quality, which is a part of political capital, plays a decisive role in an official's promotion.

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