

## *The Role of Political Networks in Anti-Corruption Investigations*

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### *Abstract*

Scholars have debated the degree to which China's anti-corruption campaign is an instrument to conduct a political purge against political rivals. With a newly constructed dataset based on public information, we conduct a multilevel analysis on the publicized time probed individuals spend between the announcement of investigation and being sentenced (length of investigation). We find that higher ranking individuals as well as those who will receive harsher punishments are likely to experience shorter investigations, controlling for the amount of money involved. We also find limited evidence that political network membership is associated with the length of investigation. Being associated with Zhou Yongkang, a known political rival of President Xi Jinping, does not make the investigation significantly different given similar amounts of money involved in the corruption case. Association with other prominent party members (e.g., Ling Jihua, Liu Zhijun, etc.), however, increases the length of investigation. We explore possible interpretations for the variation in investigation times among different networks.

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