Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The oligarchy in China: a case study of China's electricity industry, 1978-2013

Song, C.

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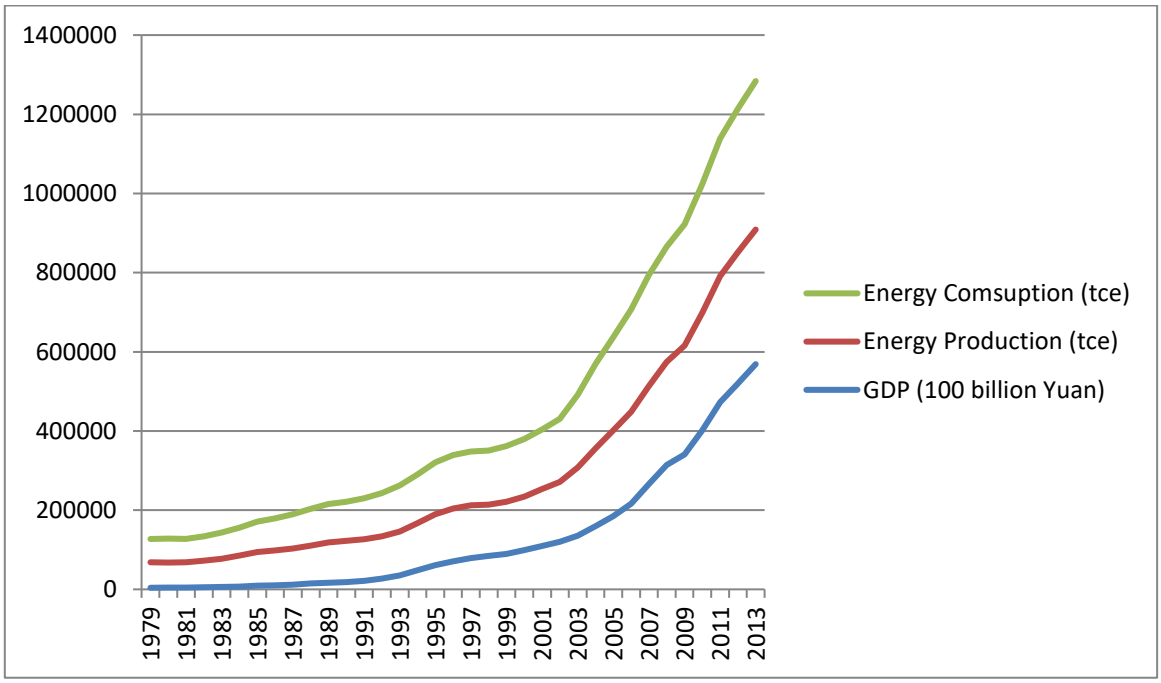
Appendix A: Energy and Development

Table 1 Energy Consumption, Energy Production and GDP (1979-2013)



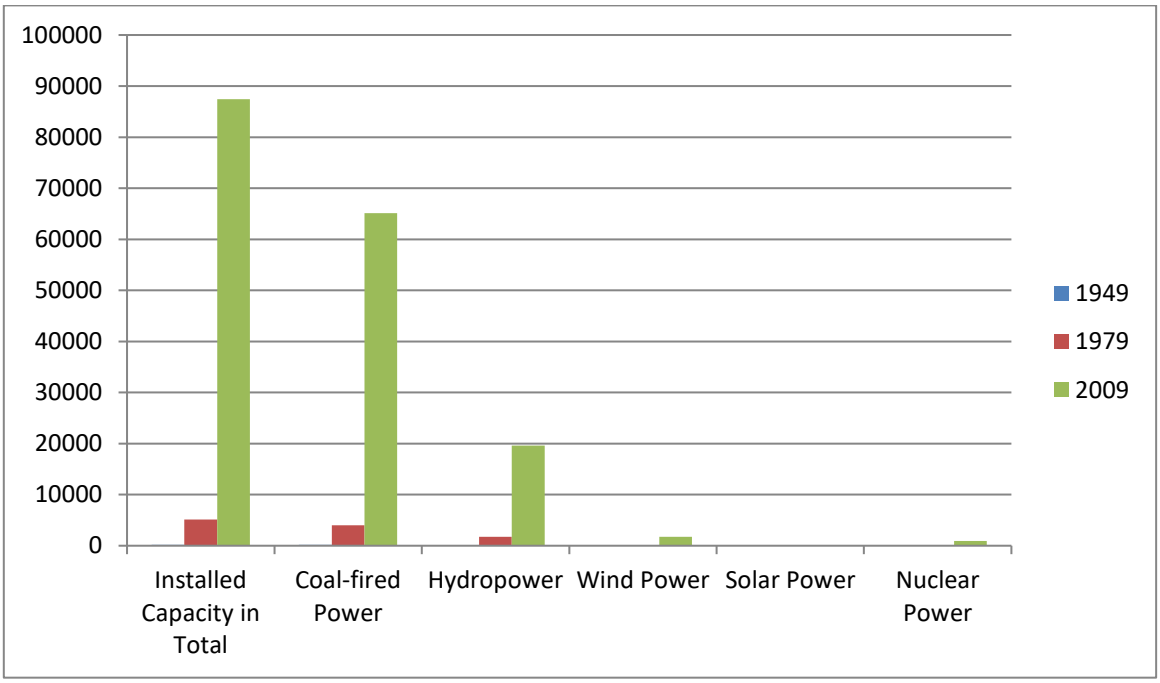
Source: China Statistical Yearbook and related statistics books from 1979-2013. Edited by the author.

Appendix B: Comparison of China's Electricity Industry in History

This comparison accounts for two periods of 30 years. The first 30 years are from 1949-1979, and the second is from 1979-2009.

Table 2 Comparison of Installed Generation Capacity in the Years 1949, 1979 and 2009

(Unit: 10 MW)



Source: Statistical Yearbook of China's Electricity Industry. Edited by the author.

Appendix C: Electric Power Achievement of the 11th National Five-Year Plan in the Year 2010

Table 3 Generation Production of Different Provinces of Regions in 2010

(Unit: 100 million kWh)

Region	Total	Coal-fired Power	Hydropower	Windpower	Nuclear Power	Others
Nation	42278	34166	6867	494	747	2,6
Beijing	270	263	4	3,1	0	0
Tianjin	556	556	0,1	0,1	0	0
Hebei	2063	1998	8	57,1	0	0
Shanxi	2151	2108	37	505	0	0
Inner Mongolia	2600	2407	20	173,6	0	0
Liaoning	1340	1236	57	47	0	0
Jilin	658	522	103	33,2	0	0
Heilongjiang	791	736	22	33,1	0	0
Shanghai	944	942	0	2,2	0	0,1
Jiangsu	3499	3305	14	23	142	0,26
Zhejiang	2568	2082	224	4,7	240	0,1
Anhui	1463	1426	37	0	0	0
Fujian	1356	891	545	12	0	0
Jiangxi	639	537	101	1,4	0	0,004
Shandong	3091	3046	1	26,7	0	0,04
Henan	2284	2189	85	1,1	0	0
Hubei	2017	771	1246	0,7	0	0,01
Hunan	1100	725	375	0,4	0	0
Guangdong	3146	2535	268	10,2	334	0
Guangxi	1032	557	475	0	0	0
Hainan	162	139	20	2,4	0	0
Chongqing	475	331	143	0,5	0	0
Sichuan	1704	565	1139	0	0	0
Guizhou	1340	956	384	0	0	0
Yunnan	1365	546	814	3,9	0	0,1
Xizang	20	3,82	15	0	0	1,4
Shaanxi	1032	958	75	0	0	0
Gansu	875	591	263	20,8	0	0,01
Qinghai	472	109	363	0	0	0
Ningxia	599	572	18	8,3	0	0,59

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China's Electricity Industry 2010; Statistics of the SERC. Edited by the author.

Table 4 Transmission Lines above 35KV (including 35kV) in 2010

(Unit: km)

Region	Total	1000kV	± 800kV	750kV	±600kV	500kV	330kV	220kV	110kV (including 66kV)	35kV
Nation	1336772	0	0	6685	1095	135180	20338	277988	458477	432668
Beijing	9745	0	0	0	0	1419	0	2566	3489	2271
Tianjin	8948	0	0	0	0	769	0	2130	2799	3250
Hebei	75201	0	0	0	202	9199	0	15026	24149	26625
Shanxi	50265	471	0	0	0	7881	0	10451	13929	17533
Inner Mongolia	56867	0	0	0	0	6453	0	16772	23580	10062
Liaoning	46873	0	0	0	0	6099	0	13365	27359	50
Jilin	28054	0	0	0	0	2455	0	8797	16758	44
Heilongjiang	43862	0	0	0	0	4067	0	10947	17852	10996
Shanghai	8550	0	106	0	0	993	0	2956	703	3792
Jiangsu	74242	0	22	0	0	8639	0	20156	22892	22533
Zhejiang	51262	0	156	0	0	6362	0	13054	16609	15081
Anhui	49106	0	385	0	0	5115	0	10511	12538	20467
Fujian	37358	0	0	0	0	2840	0	8816	12774	12928
Jiangxi	35673	0	0	0	0	2726	0	7964	10028	14955
Shandong	75571	0	0	0	415	5463	0	16559	21504	31630
Henan	61518	355	0	0	0	6512	140	13654	19207	21650
Hubei	57519	180	482	0	0	9592	0	10680	17983	18602
Hunan	64778	0	255	0	0	4897	0	11958	21718	25950
Guangdong	65662	0	0	0	0	7084	0	18709	29899	9970
Guangxi	52872	0	0	0	0	1222	0	10942	15205	25503
Hainan	7472	0	0	0	0	0	0	1968	3009	2495
Chongqing	22945	0	287	0	0	2670	0	4873	6835	8280
Sichuang	65947	0	265	0	0	8016	0	13449	20410	23807
Guizhou	37712	0	0	0	0	4641	0	7944	11573	13554
Yunnan	67728	0	0	0	0	6529	0	11612	20934	28653
Xizang	6507	0	0	0	0	0	0	338	2424	3745
Shaanxi	38029	0	0	803	308	565	7816	0	17756	10781
Gansu	45243	0	0	3518	0	0	6884	1101	15376	18364
Qinghai	16660	0	0	854	0	0	3814	0	7341	4651

Source: Statistical Yearbook of China's Electricity Industry 2010; Statistics of the SERC. Edited by the author.

Appendix D: The Reform of 2002 in China's Electricity Industry

China's electricity industry underwent a significant change around 2002. Document No. 5, the plan for reforming the electricity industry promulgated by the State Council, has long been regarded as a milestone in China's energy sector. According to this plan, a series of reforms would be carried out. Primary reform measures included:

Separating electricity plants from electricity grids.

Constructing regional electricity markets.

Setting up professional electricity regulatory institutions.[1014]

Based on these measures, the core objective of this round of reform was to promote the role of the market in industrial development and to apply adequate supervision of the electricity industry. However, this plan resulted in an oligopoly instead of a competitive market.

Electricity Crisis and Price Setting in the Grid

Reform is not motivated but always occurs because of crisis. The electricity crisis around 2002 called for a new round of reform.

China's electricity deficiency in the early 2000s was the most severe electricity crisis since 1949. In it, many enterprises experienced a shortage of electricity. Some small plants or factories were obliged to stop production or even became bankrupt. Residents in several provinces had to live without the usual sources of modern entertainment and convenience (e.g., television, lighting, and refrigeration) for two or three days every week. The retail price was then raised to encourage electricity production. Much work was needed to balance supply and demand.

The reason why this crisis happened has long been debated among Chinese scholars. Nevertheless, hardly anyone denies that the different price systems between coal and electricity were a factor. The dominant coal, electricity, and transportation coalition structurally

[1014] State Council (2002).

determined the electricity crisis. Since the coal price was set by the market but the electricity price by the government, the fixed electricity price had to adjust to the fluctuating price of coal, which was the primary fuel for electricity production. The differences between the two prices produced rent. The rent created was allocated. When the electricity price was much lower than coal, rent would transfer from electricity to coal. In an extreme case, when this loss of rent could not be recovered by raising the electricity price, electricity producers could reduce production. Therefore, an electricity shortage would unavoidably happen. An electricity excess followed the same logic. It was the mechanism of a two-price system that caused the electricity crisis.[1015]

The dominant coalition of coal, electricity, and transportation kept working to coordinate this two-price system. It tried to fix the two prices so electricity and coal could share profit in the long run. To achieve this, the dominant coalition required the producers of electricity and coal to sign a contract. The contract price was not regulated by the state but negotiated by the two contracting parties. However, because the coal price increased radically, it took time and effort to arrive at a price that satisfied the wishes of both parties. To help this dominant coalition to work, the NDRC sometimes introduced subsidies created as rent for the producers of electricity and coal to facilitate a compromise.[1016] But the scale of this subsidy was small, so they still needed help to cover the loss. As a result, when the price of transportation was controlled, the two segments of coal and electricity in the dominant coalition of coal, electricity, and transportation came into conflict with each other, making the current electricity crisis even worse.

Price setting was an essential factor in explaining the electricity crisis. Still, this crisis had its institutional roots in the state structure, where the interaction between the dominant coalition and the Tiaokuai structure defined the contents of industrial policy. To simplify the analysis, we approach the issue from the angle that the related industrial policymaking was a compromise reached by the central government, the local government, and the coal-electricity-transportation coalition.

Obstacles in Marketization

[1015] The two-price system here refers to price settings in which the price as determined by the supply and demand in the market coexisted with the price planned by the government. In this case, it can happen in a deal to one commodity, e.g., coal, or also to two different items, e.g., coal and electricity.
[1016] Ding Songyan and Li Chaolin (2008).

To initiate this reform, more concern was given to the blueprint of international experience than to the natural obstacles presented by the Tiaokuai structure. According to the State Electricity Regulatory Commission, the Ministry of Finance, and the World Bank, four models could be categorized for China's electricity sector structure.[1017] The first was the administrative monopoly before 1985. The government directly or indirectly controlled all the generation, transmission, and distribution agencies. The second was that only a single buyer could buy from electricity producers in competition in an area. China adopted this between 1984 and 2002, during which electricity generation was relatively independent while the transmission section still owned the distribution section. The third was that the distribution section and large end-users could purchase from competitive generators. The fourth was to develop a competitive structure with a clear division between generation, transmission, and distribution. In this structure, transmission and distribution would be independent of each other and privatized into a wholesale market and a retail market, respectively. The recommendation to marketize China's electricity industry focused on allowing model 2 to transform into model 3 to achieve model 4 in the future. This orientation of marketization was meant to replace a monopoly as the primary mechanism to allocate resources.[1018] If this approach had been adopted, a free market in China's electricity industry would have been achieved. However, as will be examined below, it underestimated the obstacles within the Tiaokuai structure, especially the interaction between this structure and the oligopoly.[1019]

The first obstacle was conflict among the agencies in the State Council. These agencies included the NDRC, the SASAC and the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC). Although it was suggested in the report that an independent SERC with effective authority to supervise the power sector and regulate the electricity market was critically important in a market-orientated reform, the feasibility of forming such an agency should have been mentioned. Provided that the NDRC was the "General Manager" of the SOEs and the SASAC the "Chairman of the Board," there was so little space left for the SERC that it became embarrassed. It would function like an executive officer rather than a commander or inspector

[1017] State Electricity Regulatory Commission, Ministry of Finance and World Bank (2007, pp. 51-2).
[1018] State Council (2002; 2003).
[1019] Zhang and Heller summarized the difficulties for developing countries as concentrated market power among generators, transmission and distribution bottlenecks, and weak incentives for capacity enhancement. China faced all these difficulties. See Chi Zhang and Thomas C. Heller (2004, p. 42).

holding a superior position to the two other ministries.[1020] As a result, the stamp (signature) of the SERC had to be approved by the NDRC and the SASAC.[1021]

The second obstacle was an internal contradiction of policymaking in the State Council itself. The State Council employed both a declared policy and an ad hoc policy. The internal rejection of these two policies lay in the political power arrangement between the State Council and the Politburo of the CCP. The State Council generally preferred economics to politics, while the Politburo preferred the opposite. In such a context, although the SERC attempted to carry out the policy of the market plan of 2002, this attempt would be interrupted or postponed by the ad hoc policy of the State Council. This was because the State Council had to pay more attention to the suggestion of the Politburo, the priority of which justified the implementation of the declared policy and the initiation of the ad hoc policy. The two approaches struggled to reach a compromise or fell into a deadlock, weakening the capacity of the SERC. In addition, the self-contradiction of the two policies further deprived the SERC of the authority to represent the State Council in supervising the market players, paralyzing the whole system.[1022]

The third obstacle came directly from the challenge of the State Grid. It was a conglomerate. It attempted to monopolize the national grid market. This monopolization could restrict the engagement of the SERC in supervision because the State Grid enjoyed the authority to set a buying price and quota for producers and a selling price for consumers. Although there were two other grid companies, namely the South China Grid and the Western Inner Mongolia Grid but their controls were limited to their domains. This made them cooperative rather than opponents in most aspects of challenging the supervision of the SERC. Even though these two independent grids conflicted with State Grid, they were deeply concerned about losing their monopoly rent, resulting in a typical inclination against any proposal for a free market. For example, the State Grid and the South China Grid were ambitious in carrying out the UHVTP. However, the former aimed to technically monopolize the national networks while the latter prepared to fight against this monopolization. When these two oligopolies faced the risk of fragmented competitiveness, they were drawn into an integrated and dominant interest group, trying to ignore their disputes.

The fourth obstacle was nothing but local protectionism. Local governments owned more

[1020] As for the embarrassment of the function of the SERC, see Tang Zu'ai (2008, pp. 111-9); As for how the SOEs were managed from 1998-2008, see Shao Ning (2014).
[1021] Interviewee No. 2.
[1022] Fang Xiaoju, Yu Huan, and Cheng Yujie (2013, the front page).

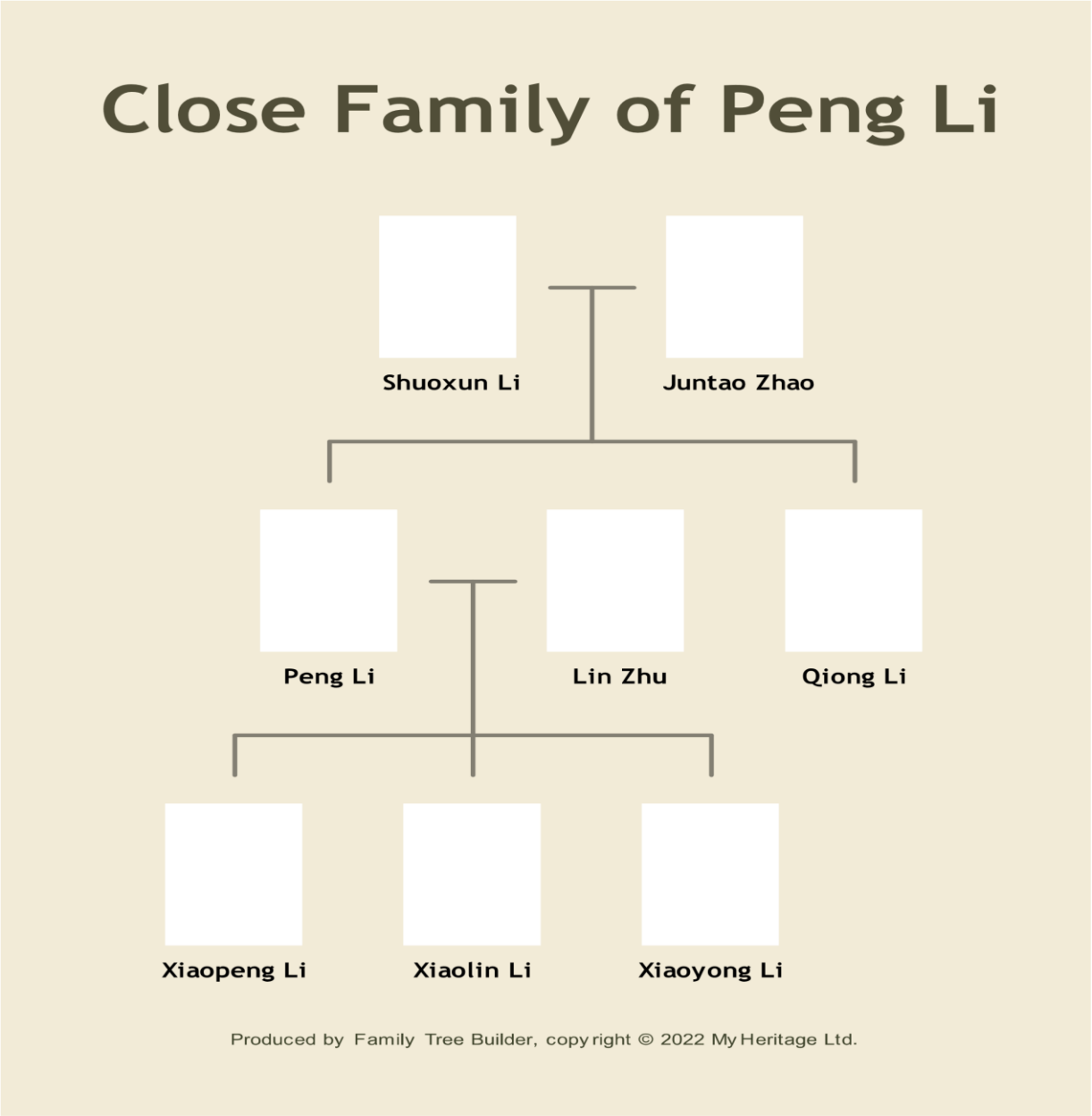
than 30% of the national generation market share and some suburban and rural distribution lines. With such assets, the local governments could afford any excuse to act following their own will and disobey the orders or rules of the SERC. Widespread local protectionism was hardly rooted out. Because of this local protectionism, the anticipated result was that the suggested branches of the SERC in the report written by the SERC, the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank would be no more than bystanders if they were set up. Even with the expected local branches, the central SERC could still be blinded because of the possible fraudulent information provided by the local governments. This was because the interests of the local governments were intertwined with those of the local branches of Ministries and central banks, and fraudulent information served to blind the supervision of the central government in favour of their interests at the local level. Such blindness to the data could deepen the SERC's misunderstanding of what happened at the local level.

All these obstacles were related to the institutions in China, which could hardly be changed by a newly established agency like the SERC. More importantly, these obstacles indicated that rent-seeking activities were conducted by the players mentioned above. Unfortunately, the SERC needed to be more potent to exercise political power either to stop this game or become involved in it as an eligible player. So, the timetable of the market-orientated agenda in Document No. 5 encountered difficulties in implementation after 2002. This resulted in an undesirable electricity market with fewer fragmented competition elements and more oligopoly characteristics. The SERC planned to legalize itself by promoting a new electricity law to keep going on. However, it only survived before submitting the proposal.[1023] It was dissolved on 18 March 2013.[1024]

[1023] For an outline planned by SERC to legalize the supervision over the marketization, see State Electricity Regulatory Commission Document No. 42, 2013.

[1024] It experienced four presidents in ten years: Chai Songyue, You Quan, Wang Xudong, and Wu Xinxiong. They did a lot but still needed help putting the marketization of the electricity industry forwards. See Li Tingzhen and Yang Yue (2013).

Appendix E: Close Family Tree of Li Peng



Source: Yang Zhongmei. 1991. *Li Peng Pingzhuan: Cong Zhou Enlai Yangzi Dao Zhonggong Cishengdai Zongli (Li Peng's Biography and Its Comments, from Zhou Enlai's Adopted Son to the Second-Generation Premier of the CCP)*. Fengshuang Chubanshe (Fengshuang Press), p. 37.

Appendix F: Li Xiaoyong in China

I did not display Li Xiaoyong's photos to protect his portrait privacy. I only listed their information and sources:

1. Li Xiaoyong (back left 2). August 2002, Zhongnanhai, Beijing

Source: 李鹏及其儿女罕见家庭老照片_网易军事 (163.com)

2. Li Xiaoyong (right 2). 19 July 2003. Beijing

Source: Li Peng (2005, pp. 1344-5).

3. Li Xiaoyong (back right 1). 10 October 2003, Beijing?

Source: 李鹏及其儿女罕见家庭老照片_网易军事 (163.com)

4. Li Xiaoyong (right 1). January 2007, Shenzhen

Source: 李鹏及其儿女罕见家庭老照片_网易军事 (163.com)

5. Li Xiaoyong (left 3). 4 September 2011, Haikou, Hainan Province (Photo: Qiu Ayu)

Source: 缅怀革命先驱 海口各界纪念李硕勋英勇就义 80 周年 _原创_原创_海口网 (hkwb.net)

6. Li Xiaoyong (right 2). 11 September 2016, Huiyang, Guangdong Provicne (Photo: Lin Jincheng)

Source: 叶挺家属向叶挺纪念馆捐赠珍贵文物 - 每日头条 (kknews.cc)

7. Li Xiaoyong. 10 February 2018, Huiyang, Guangdong Province

Source: 叶大鹰出任叶挺将军纪念园理事会荣誉理事长 - 每日头条 (kknews.cc)

8. Li Xiaoyong (right 7). 12 April 2018, Huizhou, Guangdong Province

Source: 惠州市归国华侨联合会 (huizhou.gov.cn)

9. Li Xiaoyong (front left 1). 16 May 2018, Yeting Middle School, Guangdong Province

Source: 红色后代送红色故事进校园 (sohu.com)

10. Li Xiaoyong (left 2). 25 July 2019. Beijing

Source: 【李鹏逝世】李鹏追悼会举行 三子女齐露面[图]｜多维新闻｜中国 (dwnews.com)

Interviewees

number	identity	facilities	time	place
1	staff	China Electricity Council	03/10/2009	Beijing
2	staff	State Electricity Regulation Commission	17/10/2010	Beijing
3	government official	National Development and Reform Commission	05/10/2009	Beijing
4	government official	National Development and Reform Commission	17/06/2012	Beijing
5	government official	State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission	27/06/2009	Beijing
6	retiree	Beijing Electric Power Company (State Grid)	04/03/2010	Beijing
7	government official	Beijing State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission	05/03/2010	Beijing
8	retired cadre	the former Beijing Electric Power Administration	11/02/2010	Beijing
9	manager	State Grid	20/01/2013	Beijing
10	staff	State Grid	10/03/2010	Beijing
11	researcher	State Grid	08/06/2009	Beijing
12	party cadre	State Grid	29/06/2009	Beijing
13	manager	Huaneng Group	09/06/2010	Beijing
14	manager	Huaneng Group	29/07/2019	Shandong
15	technician	Yuanbaoshan Power Plant	02/10/2012	Chifeng, Inner Mongolia
16	teacher	North Electric Power University	16/11/2012	Beijing
17	teacher	North Electric Power University	16/11/2012	Beijing
18	technician	Xingtai Power Plant	03/09/2010	Xingtai, Hebei
19	manager	Xingtai Power Plant	03/09/2010	Xingtai, Hebei
20	engineer	Guodian Group (power plant in Jiangxi Province)	04/09/2010	visit by telephone
21	manager	Datang Group	06/08/2012	Beijing
22	boss	a private power plant (Biotechnology) in Inner Mongolia	07/06/2010	Beijing
23	researcher	China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute	04/11/2012	Beijing
24	retiree	an infrastructure Bureau of the former Ministry of Water and electricity	08/05/2008	run across by train
25	manager	Zhengzhou No. 1 Thermal Power Plant	21/09/2010	Zhengzhou, Henan
26	technician	Zhengzhou No. 1 Thermal Power Plant	21/09/2010	Zhengzhou, Henan
27	investor	a futures company in South China	17/02/2013	Shenzhen
28	government official	National Development and Reform Commission of Shaanxi Province	23/06/2008	Beijing
29	business partner	a private company of Jiangsu Province (business related to grid)	30/05/2008	Nanjing/Beijing
30	researcher	China National Petroleum Corporation	09/09/2010	Beijing
31	marketing	China National Offshore Oil Corporation	20/05/2012	Beijing
32	government official	Ministry of Railways	05/07/2009	Beijing
33	government official	Ministry of Railways	05/07/2009	Beijing
34	boss	a private coal mine in Shanxi Province	26/09/2010	Beijing
35	herdsman	a wind power plant in inner Mongolia	04/10/2012	Baorixile, Inner Mongolia
36	private businessman	private logistics involved with mining in Shanxi Province	03/05/2012	run across on a road
37	researcher	Beijing University	13/05/2009	Beijing
38	researcher	Tsinghua University	25/07/2017	Beijing
39	researcher	Tsinghua University	07/08/2019	Beijing

40	researcher	People's University	25/07/2017	Beijing
41	researcher	University of International Business and Economics	28/12/2013	Beijing
42	researcher	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	04/08/2019	Beijing
43	manager	China Road & Bridge Corporation	28/06/2009	Beijing
44	boss	a private company of Shanghai Municipality	31/12/2013	run across at the airport
45	researcher	Yellow River Conservancy Commission	20/09/2010	Zhengzhou, Henan

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