For more than twenty years, the “localist” turn has become the catchphrase for the transition from Northern (960-1127) to Southern Song (1127-1279). However, as to the precise social and political connotations of this term, opinions differ even among its most important proponents.

Robert M. Hartwell, in his path-breaking article on the transformation from the eighth to the sixteenth century, defined this transition as the demise and re-absorption of “a semi-hereditary professional bureaucratic elite” into “a multitude of local elite gentry families,” which it had hitherto coexisted with. Since Hartwell maintained that those local gentry elites had dominated the local scene since the Tang times or earlier and continued as such into Southern Song, change at the end of the eleventh century was not about the rise of local elites but rather about the demise of the professional political elite which had succeeded in monopolizing policymaking organs in the central government until the end of the eleventh century. As the data he collected are centered on high policy-making and financial officials, Hartwell’s argument tells more about the court side of the story and assumes continuity of elite groups in local society.

Robert P. Hymes takes issue with the local landscape in his case study of Fuzhou elites during Northern and Southern Song. Hymes emphasizes that what he sees is not two groups (as for Hartwell) coexisting in Northern Song, with the former absorbed into the latter in Southern Song, but rather two strategies – one “national” and the other “localist” – the former employed by elite families in Northern Song and the latter in Southern Song. Thus, the transition from Northern to Southern Song was not the demise of the professional bureaucratic elite as a group, but rather a reorientation of a same group of elite families from a commitment in bureaucratic service in the central government organs to an increasing involvement in local affairs including local defense, social welfare and religious life. The rise of Southern Song local elites, defined not only by migration and marriage patterns but also by civic engagement in local affairs, was in itself a phenomenon which deserves as much attention as the demise of the Northern Song professional political elite.

Despite these subtle, however significant, differences, both arguments point to more widely recognized historical changes in migration and marriage patterns of elites during Song dynasty. Both recognize that in Northern Song there was a tendency for elites (or the professional political group of them) to migrate out of their home areas, establish their residences in the capitals and intermarry with each other regardless of their regional origins, whereas Southern Song elites were more reluctant to emigrate and more willing to marry locally. It was based on these same facts that Ihara Hiroshi makes the distinction, in his case study of Southern Song Sichuanese elites, between “emigrant” literati (shikyo shijin, 徙居士人) in Northern Song and “settled” literati (teikyo shijin, 定居士人) in Southern Song.3

Maps 1 to 4 below visualize kinship and non-kin social networks of two Sichuanese officials in Northern and Southern Song respectively. Maps 1 and 2 compare the direct non-kin social contacts of Wang Gui (1019-1085) and Wei Liaoweng (1178-1237), whereas Maps 3 and 4 illustrate their kinship networks.4 In general, these maps confirm the received wisdom that in Southern Song one’s kinship and social networks became geographically more restricted to where he hailed from.

[Insert maps 1-4 here]

In their attempts to explain the origins of this shift at the turn of the twelfth century, both Hartwell and Hymes have emphasized the impact of factional struggles in the latter half of Northern Song. Progressively broader purges restricted the use of yin privilege by the professional elites who experienced prolonged periods of disqualification from bureaucratic employment, and also made specialization in bureaucracy “a shaky foundation on which to base the future of the family.”5 As a result, professional political elites gradually disappeared as a distinct social group and became more concerned with the consolidation of their local power bases. This trend, argues Hymes, was reinforced by “growing importance of locality in elite social life and self-conceptions” on the one hand and a weak state presence in local affairs in the aftermath of Jürchen invasion on the other, a combined effect of which led to a “separation – growing in Southern Sung, but

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4 Much effort has recently been devoted in CBDB project to the calculation of kinship distance. At the moment, CBDB uses four parameters to define kinship boundaries, namely, numbers of generations removed both upward and downward, degree of collateral distance, and degree of marriage distance. Four pairs of signs are used in CBDB to express kinship relations: F (father) and M (mother), S (son) and D (daughter), B (brother) and Z (sister), and H (husband) and W (wife). Thus, for instance, FMZDH expresses one’s paternal grandmother’s sister’s son-in-law. Each occurrence of F or M in the expression adds one to the upward generational distance, that of S or D to the downward generational distance, that of B or Z to the degree of collateral distance, and that of H or W to the degree of marriage distance. Following this approach, kinship networks in this paper are all defined to include kinsmen of three generations removed both upward and downward, with three degrees of collateral distance and two degrees of marriage distance.

5 Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformation of China, 750-1550", p.422.
some respects already clear in Northern Sung – of elite from state.” Thus, in this
argument, the transition of elite behavioral patterns was rooted in changing political
scenes and reflected a shifting configuration between governmental and non-
governmental power. Given the significance of state in this line of explanation of social
transformation in the late eleventh century, it is surprising how little we know of the
(changing) profiles of state itself through the Song dynasty. We have settled for an
obscure dichotomy of “strong” and “weak” state. Instead of assuming that the turn from
“national” to “local” parallels a shift from state activism to increasing civic engagement
of elites in society, this paper will use both dichotomies as analytically distinct axes in
defining the transition at the end of the eleventh century and draw upon existing data in
China Biographical Database (CBDB) to give a bird-view reexamination of kinship and
non-kin social networks in Sichuan.

Stratification among Sichuanese Elites and Native Incumbency of Local Governments
Local elite, broadly defined by Hymes in terms of possession of wealth, power and
prestige, can be stratified by a variety of criteria such as status or blood, socioeconomic
class or market position, as well as intellectual affiliations or value orientations. Given
our interest outlined in the previous section, we make our first distinction between an
office-holding elite and a non-office-holding one (Group C). This distinction, based on
entitlement to formal governmental power, parallels a conventional one among Japanese
scholars between a bureaucratic elite (kanryōsō, 官僚層) and a stratum of non-office-
holding local magnates (dogōsō, 土豪層), from which the bureaucratic elite is assumed to
have evolved. Then, among the office-holding Sichuanese elite, a further distinction is
made between those who served within Sichuan (Group A) and those who never did7
(Group D).

As of January 2007, China Biographical Database (CBDB) contains 1,554 biographies of
Sichuanese for the Song period. Of these biographies, however, only 308 (roughly one-
fifth of the total) has information on non-kin and non-antagonistic social relations, and
our analysis will have to focus on this one-fifth. Since collection of office-holding data,
as part of Hartwell’s legacy, skews towards appointments in fiscal offices and policy-
making positions in central government and before the mid-twelfth century, some office-
holding information is supplemented based on my memory and what Index to Song
Biographical Materials (Songren zhuangji ziliao suoyin, 宋人傳記資料索引) summarizes.
Index years are also added where they are missing.

These biographies are then divided into seven cohorts based on their index years, with an
interval of fifty years. Figure 1 plots the composition of each index-year cohort.
Throughout the three centuries of Song, there was a fairly constant representation of non-

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6 Hymes, Statesmen and Gentlemen, pp. 201, 211, and 216-7.
7 Emigration and geographical features of bureaucratic appointments are analytically different concepts.
However, since Sichuanese officials who were posted to government positions within Sichuan seem to have
overlapped considerably with those who migrated out, hereafter I will refer to these officials as “emigrant
Sichuanese officials” just for the sake of convenience.
office-holding Sichuanese elites (Group C) of around 40% in the first two and a half centuries, with only a gentle decline in the thirteenth century to 25%. However, there was a much sharper contrast among those who embarked upon a bureaucratic career. With the exception of the latter half of the thirteenth century when Sichuanese elites began to emigrate eastward in escape of attacks from the Mongols, the plot gives a persistent downward trend in the proportion of Sichuanese officials who took up posts only outside Sichuan (Group D), and a upward one in the proportion of those who served as officials within the region (Group A). Historical complexities aside, this suggests clearly an increasing native incumbency of local governments in Sichuan since the latter half of the eleventh century.

This turn of the mid-eleventh century signals an end of the lingering discriminative personnel policies against Sichuanese elites in the first half of Northern Song. Geographical isolation of Sichuan, its recent history of political independence in the aftermath of the Tang collapse, and the repeated rebellions following the Song conquest of the region had all raised great suspicion among political leaders in the Song court. During the first hundred years of Song dynasty, Sichuanese elites were not allowed to serve in positions of vice-prefects and above within Sichuan, and those who came out of Sichuan to serve in the court were forbidden to return to Sichuan even after they became aged. Although compromises and short-lived rescissions were made in 1018 and 1030, the tide was not effectively turned until the mid-eleventh century, by virtue of the confluence of a variety of social, political, and intellectual currents.

To summarize what I have elaborated elsewhere, in the early 1040s Cheng Jun, a native of Meishan county (in Yizhou circuit), received his first significant appointment in Sichuan as the vice-prefect of Pengzhou, which would be followed by two others (one by imperial grace). Referring to the policy of the time, Lü Tao, in the epitaph he composed for Cheng, reported that Sichuanese were allowed a maximum of two appointments to government positions “near their home areas.” Timing of these appointments suggests a possible connection with Qingli reform, but the policy change seems to have survived the backlash against the reformers, and by the 1060s instances abounded of Sichuanese elites posted to significant local positions in Sichuan.

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8 The term “local government” is used here in a general sense versus the central government or the court, referring to county government, prefectoral government, circuit bureaucracy, as well as regional administrations of Southern Song.

9 Wang Ling, Wang Ling Ji 王令集 (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社), chapter 20, “Descriptions of conducts of Wang Yi 叔祖左領衛將軍致仕王公(乙)行狀.”

10 Chen Song, “Xining san nian dingchai fa zhi qianzou: Qingli yi lai de zhenglu yu zhengce” 熙寧三年定差法之前奏——慶曆以來的政論與政策, for presentation at the International Conference on Studies of Song History and the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of The Chinese Association for Studies of Song History (國際宋史研討會暨中國宋史研究會第十三屆年會) in Kunming, 29 July - 2 Aug 2008.

11 Lü Tao, Jing de ji 淨德集, chapter 21, “Epitaph for Cheng Jun” 太中大夫武昌程公墓誌銘, p.16a.
Meanwhile, by the 1060s, there had emerged a circle of Sichuanese elites, involving at least a court official in the capital, an administrator in local government, as well as a literatus back in Sichuan who had yet to receive any degree or office. In this circle, a discourse had been developed and circulated, which exculpated native scions of Sichuan from its recent history of political separatism. It was this discourse that would soon be evoked by another Sichuanese official, in his memorial to the newly enthroned Emperor Shenzong (r. 1067–85), in defense of the political allegiance of his landsmen and in support of postings of them to local government positions in Sichuan.

Legacies of policy change since the 1040s and of the sociopolitical movement among native Sichuanese elites in advocacy for their own political allegiance were consolidated in the method of “delegated appointments” (dingchai fa, 定差法), promulgated in 1070. To solve the problem of understaffed local governments in remote areas and to minimize the expenses of escorting officials in and out of these circuits, the method of “delegated appointments,” fiscal intendants in eight southern circuits – including the four of Sichuan – were empowered to make appointments to “all prefectural and county positions within their jurisdiction (excepting those prefectural administratorships customarily filled by the Secretariat-Chancellery),” which had hitherto been the responsibility of the Board of Personnel. Aside from the delegation of personnel power to fiscal intendants, the policy also stated that a prefectural official shall be allowed for another posting to the same prefecture, and a candidate officially registered as native Sichuanese for another posting to the same circuit, if they so wish. In effect, as an alternative name of this new personnel policy – “method of transferring officials in remote places to nearby positions for convenience” (yuanguan jiuyi zhi fa, 遠官就移之法) – suggests, the policy cleared the barriers for consecutive appointments of Sichuanese elites to local government positions, which had once been capped by a maximum of two in the 1040s. This was soon qualified by a succession of edicts, one of which prohibited positions of both fiscal and judiciary intendants of the same circuit in Sichuan and positions of both administrator and vice-administrator of the same prefecture in Sichuan to be filled by Sichuanese at the same time. Despite these restrictions and later twists and turns in its implementation, this relaxed policy towards Sichuanese had been firmly established by the last decade of the eleventh century and reconfirmed in the early years of Southern Song.

This turn of the mid-eleventh century in favor of native incumbency of government positions in Sichuan is reflected in the soaring number of Sichuanese who began to staff significant positions in prefectural, and in a number of cases circuit, governments in Sichuan, which had been hitherto monopolized by officials of non-Sichuanese origins. Despite the paucity of office-holding data in CBDB on Song field administration, existing data nevertheless substantiate this change quite successfully.

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12 Li Tao 李燾, Xu Zizhi tongjian chang bian 欣資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju 中華書局, 1979), chapter 214.
Using the geo-administrative level of local governments as the X coordinate and index years of officials staffing as the Y coordinate, Figure 2 illustrates the geographical origins of officials posted to positions in Sichuan over the course of Song dynasty. The illustration is divided into three vertical panels, showing county offices, prefectural offices, and circuit offices from left to right. Within each panel, four parallel vertical lines report data on the four circuits of Sichuan respectively (from left to right: Yizhou, Zizhou, Kuizhou, and Lizhou circuits). Since CBDB data skews towards circuit bureaucracies before mid-twelfth century and was poor on prefectural and especially county administration, the trend it unfolds may underestimate the proportion of officials with Sichuanese origins, who more often ended up with lower positions in Sichuan governments. This caveat aside, the watershed of 1070 for the index year stands out in the picture.

Index year represents the year when a person is supposed to have reached the peak of his career. CBDB has sophisticated rules for determining an index year, but “[t]he goal is to estimate this as close to age 60 [by Chinese counting] as possible unless documented Year of Death was available and age at death was less than or equal 60.” 14 Given that a man is unlikely to be appointed vice-prefectural positions and above before he was in his late thirties, a watershed in index year of 1070 suggests that by the mid-eleventh century, appointments to significant prefectural and circuit positions in Sichuan had been made almost exclusively to officials hailing from outside the area (Group B). It was only in mid-eleventh century that a long-term shift in favor of candidates with Sichuanese origins began to appear, although the proportion between these two groups in local governments of Sichuan was not reversed until about a century later (Figure 3).

Networks of Officials in Sichuan Governments and Sichuanese Elites before the Mid-Eleventh Century
Field administration, nevertheless, is not only about who staffed the bureaucracy, but also about connections among these officials and connections between them and other elites. These connections, once formed, may feed back into the political process by facilitating exchanges of information and resources, offering opportunities for conspiracy or mutual protection, or enforcing shared values and norms.

In the foregoing discussion, using two pairs of attributes – i) native place and ii) place of bureaucratic appointment, we have distinguished four groups of sociopolitical actors in Sichuan. Not included in the above four groups are those who were neither Sichuanese nor posted to offices in Sichuan field administration; they possess weakest ties to the locality and are labeled here as the fifth group (Group E). For the beauty of clarity, these five groups of actors are illustrated below:

The Y coordinate denotes the political hierarchy in Sichuan field administration: the upper half of the diagram contains officials in Sichuan field administration, hailing from Sichuan (upper-left) or elsewhere (upper-right); and the latter half are occupied by those who never acted in official capacity in Sichuan. The X coordinate denotes the socio-geographical affiliation of a particular person. Regardless of whether one had an official duty or not, those of Sichuanese origins are placed on the left, and the others on the right. Thus, Group A in this diagram has the closest connection to Sichuan, with their native place affinities strengthened by their official capacity in local administration. Group E stands opposite to Group A, with neither personal nor bureaucratic connections to the area. The other groups occupy intermediary positions betweens these two extremes. All groups are colored consistently here and in network visualization in later sections of this paper.

As argued in the previous section, for the first hundred years of Song, field administration in Sichuan involved a group of officials with non-Sichuanese origins (Group B), who were confronted by a multitude of Sichuanese with no official duties (Group C). Sichuanese elites who obtained more prominent official status usually served in the court or in other regions of the imperium (Group D) and may or may not have engaged themselves in local affairs back in their home area. But since the mid-eleventh century, relaxations in personnel policy began to spur a wave of native incumbency of local government positions in Sichuan, which thereby gave rise to a new group of sociopolitical actors (Group A) who were scions of influential local elite families and managed to add to whatever social power they enjoyed there with appointments to significant local government positions.

Defining social ties in very broad terms, we start off by searching for all non-kin ties involving members of groups A through D. It should be noted here that aside from historiographical issues with regard to how data are passed down to us and entered into CBDB, this search routine itself tends to generate a lower centrality value for members of Group E, since they will be reported only when they are involved in a relationship with members in other groups while all intragroup ties within Group E will be discarded.

Since this study is concerned only with positive social connections, antagonistic social ties will be removed from the search results. When more than one kind of social tie is involved between the same pair of actors, only one of them will be considered. Thus, CBDB reports 1,282 distinctive pairs of individuals with positive social connections, which involve a total of 900 Song figures. This will be supplemented by an attribute file, which includes basic biographical information on these 900 individuals, including names and index years as well as information on group affiliation based on their places of origin and bureaucratic careers. Then, when social networks among them are partitioned into different temporal subsets based on index years of those involved, distinctive structural features of these networks begin to emerge.
Figure 5 reports social networks among officials in Sichuan and elites of Sichuanese origins whose index years fall in the time range between 960 and 1070.15

(1) Here yellow dots, representing officials appointed to Sichuan but with non-Sichuanese origins (Group B), are our first foci. With few exceptions, these officials are socially connected only to red ones (Group E) in a direct way, and only rarely are they directly connected among themselves. Even more rarely are they in direct social contacts with green (Group C) and turquoise (Group D) dots. This pattern suggests (i) a lack of structural solidarity among officials staffing local governments in Sichuan, and (ii) a noticeable detachment between these officials on the one hand and the social networks of local Sichuanese magnates and emigrant Sichuanese officials on the other. Rather, those officials posted to Sichuan are part of more cosmopolitan circles relatively independent of territorial bonds.

In the few instances where members of Group B and of Group C are connected, they are often cases in which local elites in Sichuan received or sought recommendation into that circle. Fan Du 范度 was a clerk whose literary flair and conduct attracted the attention of Zhang Yong 張詠 (946-1015), then prefect of Yizhou (Chengdu) (see Table 1). This marked the beginning of the Fan family’s political upstart. In the next generation, his youngest son Fan Zhen 范鎮 (1008-1088) would become a prominent court official, occupying quite a central position in the main component of our diagram here.16 The rise to eminence of the Su family in Meizhou tells a similar story. As illustrated in the diagram, Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009-1066) approached Zhang Fangping 張方平 (1007-1091), also prefect of Yizhou, with his literary compositions and was further referred to Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072).17 It was through such ties with Zhang and Ouyang that Su Xun was connected indirectly to other officials in Sichuan such as Zhao Zhen 趙稹 (963-1038).

(2) The second observation from this diagram is that emigrant Sichuanese officials (Group D, turquoise dots) maintained closer ties with each other. Some of these were formed in their home areas and were taken with them when they moved out of Sichuan to embark on government service. Others were formed through contingencies which imperium-wide bureaucratic transfers offered and thus had a weak territorial dimension, if at all. In the former fashion, the relationship between Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009-1066) and Shi Yangxiu 石揚休 (995-1057) was cemented by both territorial (as neighbors) and

15 Since the quality of data for networks in Song dynasty Sichuan needs to be improved for mathematical analyses, this paper uses only NetDraw, a network visualization software, to help illustrate the historical changes.
16 Han Wei 韓維, Nan Yang Ji 南陽集, SKQS (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 臺灣商務印書館, 1983), chapter 30, “Spirit-path Stele of Lord Fan Zhen” 范公神道碑.
17 Ye Mengde 葉夢得, Bi Shu Lu Hua 避暑錄話, SKQS (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 臺灣商務印書館, 1983), chapter 2, p.6b.
affinal bonds back in Sichuan, which was further enriched by a memory of childhood
life.18 But Fan Zhen said nothing but that he got to know Shi Yangxiu because they
passed the jinshi examination in the same year and were colleagues in government.19

(3) Emigration also opened new opportunities for Sichuanese elites to engage in social
connections otherwise unimaginable. Yin Zhu 尹洙 (1001-1047) from Luoyang cited
Wang Ji 王汲 (982-1040), native of Guozhou in Sichuan, as an “old friend” (you zui jiu, 游最舊). This friendship was forged when Wang Ji moved his residence to Luoyang, sent
his two sons to the Directorate School (guozi xue, 國子學) and for private tutorship with
Yin Zhu, and began to establish there a burial ground for the family. It was through Yin
Zhu that he was possibly connected to Chen Guan 陳貫 (968-1039) and all other officials
in Sichuan.

Table 1. Contents of Selected Social Ties in Figure 5

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<th>Receiver</th>
<th>Group#</th>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>宋祁</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>何中</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>李畋</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>蜀之耆儒李畋、代淵，皆與之為友</td>
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</table>

Thus, by the middle of the eleventh century, territorially based local connections among
Sichuanese elites had hardly penetrated into local political structure in Sichuan, which
was staffed mainly by officials hailing from elsewhere in the empire. Neither were these
officials in Sichuan connected with each other in any pattern which might qualify them as
one cohesive group. Their sociopolitical connections were oriented towards more

18 Su Xun 蘇洵, Jiayou ji jianzhu 嘉祐集箋注, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1993), “Farewell Essay to Shi Changyan on His Diplomatic Trip to the North” 送石昌言使北引.
19 Du Dagui 杜大珪, Mingchen beizhuan wanyan zhi ji 名臣碑傳琬琰之集, Skqs (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 臺灣商務印書館, 1983), “Epitaph of Shi Yangxiu” by Fan Zhen 石工部墓誌.
cosmopolitan circles centered on prominent cultural and political elites like Ouyang Xiu, Yin Zhu and Ding Wei 丁謂 (966-1037), who came from diverse regional backgrounds and were court officials with intermittent assignments to official duties in different locations across the imperial territory. It was this circle that politically aspiring Sichuanese elites in early Northern Song strived to enter. As in the cases of Zhang Yong and Zhang Fangping, officials in Sichuan, especially those administering strategic prefectures like Chengdu, played an important role as “brokers” between those cosmopolitan circles and the aspiring Sichuanese elites. Once introduced into that circle, these Sichuanese elites had to migrate out to take up official positions. They may have maintained their ties with other Sichuanese elites (locally based or nationally transferred), but these ties were now threatened by their emigration and bureaucratic rotations. Su Xun in his farewell essay to Shi Yangxiu lamented with a touch of nostalgia,

When Changyan (capping name of Shi Yangxiu) took the jinshi examination, I was only several years old and had not begun with my studies. I recall that Changyan took dates and chestnuts to feed me when I was playing with other kids by my father’s side. We lived close to each other and were relatives, and for that reason we had intimate relations…. More than ten years later, Changyan passed the examination and was ranked the fourth place. He took up offices all over the country, and we had not heard from each other ever since…. It was several years later that I met Changyan in Chang’an on my way to the capital [after I had decided to resume my studies]…. Now more than another decade had passed, I came to the capital again. However, Changyan was serving as a drafting official and was sent on a diplomatic trip in service of the Son of Heaven to the unbridled border state a thousand miles away...²⁰

Some significant structural features of the pre-1070 network image persist in this picture. Direct social ties among officials posted to Sichuan but of non-Sichuanese origins (Group

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²⁰ Su Xun 蘇洵, Jiayou Ji 嘉祐集, “Farewell Essay to Shi Changyan on His Diplomatic Trip to the North” 送石昌言使北引.
B) remain rarely observed (Figure 6.1). Nor were they connected noticeably with non-office-holding Sichuanese magnates (Figure 6.2). Rather, their social connections were largely directed towards those culturo-political elites who had tangential relations with Sichuan either by birth or through bureaucratic postings (Figure 6.3) but instead dominated the cosmopolitan circles based in the court. In addition to Ouyang Xiu, Ding Wei and Yin Zhu, these culturo-political elites have now included central court figures such as Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) and Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086). Some officials posted to Sichuan, for instance, Wen Yanbo 文彦博 (1006-1097), Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027-1101) and Wang Anshi’s brother Anli 安禮 (1034-1095), were themselves key players in the cosmopolitan networks.

Similarly, in this circle emigrant Sichuanese officials also participated as they did in the previous diagram, and some of them formed a little community among themselves (Figure 6.4). Brought into the network among Fan Zhen, Shi Yangxiu and Su Xun discussed in the previous section are members of the next generation such as Su Shi brothers. Another new face Wang Gui 王珪 (1019-1085), however, was but a younger contemporary of Fan Zhen and Su Xun, who had been excluded from the previous analysis because of the more or less arbitrary use of 1070 as the cutting point for index years. Now that Wang Gui is included into this network, he brings in two other figures – Wang Han 王罕 and Xue Jiqing 薛季卿 (997-1060) – both of whom were uncles of Wang Gui.21

In Figure 6.5, there have also appeared instances of direct ties between emigrant Sichuanese officials and those appointed to administrative positions in Sichuan. These ties were formed or expressed in the court circle or en route in bureaucratic rotations. Kong Zonghan 孔宗翰 and Yu Chong 俞充 (1033-1081) were recommended for offices by Wang Gui.22 Li Zhichun 李之純 defended the Su brothers when the latter were impeached by political opponents in the court.23 Kong Zonghan took over Su Shi’s office in Mizhou (in modern Shandong) when the latter’s tenure was over.24 The only intellectual association here is between Fan Chunren and Fan Zhen, whom Chunren identified himself a disciple of.25

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23 Tuotuo 脫脱, Song Shi 宋史, chapter 344, “Biography of Li Zhichun” 李之純傳.
24 Su Shi 蘇軾, Dongpo Xu Ji 東坡續集, SJZB 宋集珍本叢刊 (Beijing: Xian zhuang shu ju 線裝書局, 2004), chapter 8, “Postface to Maps of Eight Domains” 八境圖後序.
25 The tie between Su Shi and Zhao Bian was more apparent than real. Unlike writing a tomb epitaph (muzhiming, 墓誌銘), composing the text for a “spirit-path stele” (shendaobei, 神道碑) was often an
But most prominent in this diagram is the emergence of highly localized networks among officials in Sichuan governments, which begin to rival the cosmopolitan ones.

As can be expected from our earlier discussion on delegated appointments and its precursors, change in personnel policy introduced into the picture a new group of actors – namely, local officials in Sichuan with native origins (Group A) (see Figure 6.6).

Historiographically, detailed accounts of the lives of these local officials are known to us mostly by virtue of two figures – Wen Tong 文同 (1018-1079) and Lü Tao 呂陶 (1031-1107), whom these officials had some social connections with and received epitaphs from upon their decease. Wen Tong, having died in 1079, bore limited witness to the full significance of the promulgation of delegated appointments, but his social contacts did offer a glimpse of the transitional period around the mid-eleventh century. Already emerging in his circle were Ren Ji 任伋 (1018-1081) and Guo Youzhi 郭友直 (1008-1071), both with some appointment in Sichuan. Ren was once appointed as Prefect of Luzhou, while Guo ended up only in a humble position as assistant instructor in a prefectural school.26

Implications of native incumbency of government positions in Sichuan were fully unveiled in the network centered on Lü Tao. Many of Lü Tao’s social contacts served, at one point or another, as prefects or vice-prefects in Sichuan. Except for a few who lived long enough to savor the fruits of delegated appointments in their aged years (for instance, Shi Xunzhi 石洵直), most of these people belonged to the same generation as Lü Tao (see Table 3).

Table 3. Highest Offices in Sichuan Held by Elites of Sichuanese Origins in Figure 6.6

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As noted above, by the mid-eleventh century, government positions in Sichuan had been almost exclusively staffed by officials of non-Sichuanese origins, who were seldom connected to each other and were oriented mainly towards a circle based in the court far away from their administrative jurisdictions in Sichuan. By contrast, in the latter half of the eleventh century, as a consequence of increasing native incumbency, officials of Sichuanese origins brought into local governments their elaborately woven webs of social connections, among themselves, with non-office-holding locals as well as with emigrant Sichuanese officials (Figure 6.7 and Table 4).

Many of these connections had been maintained for generations in Sichuan and were territorial bonds formed independently from political structure of the ruling dynasty. Lü Tao, Fei Qi 費琦 (1027-1080) and Li Shensi 李慎思 (1026-1063) were all natives of Chengdu, who passed the jinshi examination in the same year. With both Qiongzhou prefect Chang Gong 常珙 (1024-1084) and the non-office-holding Wu Gongzhi 吳拱之 (1002-1084), Lü claimed to have acquaintances over multiple generations (shijiu, 世舊). Similarly, Wen Tong was a relative of the emigrant Su brothers, an intimate friend with Luzhou prefect Ren Ji as well as a friend with the non-office-holding Gentleman Li in Mianzhou.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Index Year</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Death Year</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Connected to</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>1058</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>知彭州</td>
<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>常溥</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>通判彭州</td>
<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>程濬</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>知遂州、夔路運使</td>
<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>李慎思</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>通判青石縣尉</td>
<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>郭友直</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>1071</td>
<td>龍巖助教</td>
<td>文同</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>文同</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>知遂州</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>任伋</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>1081</td>
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<td>文同</td>
</tr>
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<td>常珙</td>
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<td>1024</td>
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</tr>
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<td>費琦</td>
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<td>1027</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>通判遂州</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1031</td>
<td>1094</td>
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<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呂陶</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>知梓州</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>楊宗惠</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>知遂州</td>
<td>呂陶</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Contents of Selected Social Ties in Figure 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sender</th>
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<th>Receiver</th>
<th>Group#</th>
<th>Contents of Social Ties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>文同</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>任伋</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>任伋與蘇氏同郡，與文同。蘇氏兄弟皆相善</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呂陶</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>常珙</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>呂陶與常珙「同郡而家世往還最舊」</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呂陶</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>常溥</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>呂陶為作墓誌銘</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呂陶</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>楊宗惠</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>「元豐初年始識宗惠」</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呂陶</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>程濬</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>眉之大族</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 The term “non-office-holding elites” used in this paper applies only to individuals. Therefore, although one did not hold any office, his family (as in the case of Wu Gongzhi) may have had a long history of office-holding in previous generations and had sons and grandsons in government service.
This is not to say, however, that officials in local Sichuan governments in Lü Tao’s generation were isolated from the more cosmopolitan elite networks. Rather, officials hailing from outside Sichuan continued to participate in that circle; so did those of native Sichuanese origins. Lü Tao himself remained an active court official while not serving in Sichuan. He was acquainted with Tang Jie (1010-1069), who recruited Lü as a staff member in Taiyuan and recommended him for decree examination, as well as with prominent statesmen of the time such as Sima Guang and Fan Zhen.

What native incumbency of government positions in Sichuan did add to the picture was a densely interwoven network among local officials, independent from the cosmopolitan ones centered on culturo-political elites in the court and rivaling it. Given that this network among local officials drew upon preexisting webs of social ties among native Sichuanese elite families, most of its participants were native scions of Sichuan whereas officials who hailed from elsewhere and were only briefly posted to Sichuan became peripheral, if not completely alien, to it.

The fact that social connections of local magnates, often formed independently from the political structure of the ruling dynasty and sustained over many generations, had by now crept into the local administrative apparatus raised concerns among some officials. That imperial governance in Sichuan would be trumped by intertwined local connections and parochial interests hovered around He Zhengchen’s 何正臣 opposition in 1081 to delegated appointments:

Now that [all government positions] below prefectural administratorship are allowed for delegated appointments, natives constitute more than half [of the officials] in a prefecture. Subordinates share their places of origin, while clerks and the people are whom they are well acquainted with. It is hard for them to be impartial and easy to form factions.  

28 Xu Song 徐松, Song huiyao jigao 宋會要輯稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju 中華書局, 1957), “Examinations 23” 選舉二三, p.3.
He Zhengchen’s argument embraced a rationale, which found its strongest expression in early Northern Song policy that forbade native scions of Sichuan to take up government positions there and forced them to migrate out had they chosen to embark on a career in government. The rationale insisted that an effective control of the dynasty over a region – especially one as remote and geographically isolated as Sichuan – depends much upon a bureaucratic machinery quarantined from the influence of local elite networks, whereas native incumbency would subject local governments to appropriation for private ends.

This view qualifies the validity of a premise, upon which the received wisdom on the “localist” turn rests, that a growing interest in establishing oneself in local society from the late eleventh century on implies an increasing irrelevance of state and a shift in elite strategy from a successful bureaucratic career. This nagging tension between consolidating one’s local power base and establishing a stronghold in the political arena is real only if service in government requires an official to spend much of his life away from kindred and social acquaintances in his home area. This had been the case for Sichuanese elites in the first half of Northern Song, but as noted by He Zhengchen, native incumbency since the mid-eleventh century, which empowered existing networks of local Sichuanese magnates with governmental resources, made it possible for pursuits of a bureaucratic career and of local power to cross-fertilize each other.

This cross-fertilization between office-holding and local power seem to have continued into the next two centuries of Song rule, although the question of whether there remained cosmopolitan networks in these two centuries or, rather, these cosmopolitan networks themselves had been substituted by more localized ones begs for further investigation. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate networks of the twelfth (here only the main component) and thirteenth century respectively. More work is needed for the twelfth, but localized circles around Sichuanese officials such as Li Shi (1108-?), Yu Yunwen (1110-1174) and Zhang Jun (1097-1164, in the picture via his son Zhang Shi) vaguely stand out in contrast to circles centered on non-Sichuanese officials like Wang Zhiwang (1103-1170).29

But in the thirteenth-century picture is much clearer. Surrounding Wei Liaoweng (1178-1237), there formed an extensive network among Sichuan officials with native origins, much like that around Lü Tao. Also, Wei was connected to men outside Sichuan.

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29 But the twelfth-century picture is complicated by some new historical phenomena – for example, in preparation of defense against Jürchens, officials of Sichuanese origins (such as Zhang Jun and Yu Yunwen) were charged with plenipotentiary authority in Sichuan and were intensely involved in court politics; as refugees fled into Sichuan, there were also waves of migration covering long geographical distances.
by virtue of his brief service in the court and in the southeast as well as through such sojourning Sichuanese as Yuwen Shaojie 宇文紹節 (?-1213).

Cohesion among Sichuan Officials by Blood and Marriage
Social connections among Sichuanese elites posted to local positions were further cemented by agnatic and affinal ties. Native incumbency and consecutive appointments to local offices in Sichuan gave rise to a new group of office-holding elites with Sichuanese origins, for whom the geographical scope of bureaucratic rotations were considerably limited and connections to the court weakened. Their marriage practice differed significantly from that of the emigrant Sichuanese officials, who often based themselves on the capital and arranged marriage alliances with officials from a variety of places outside Sichuan (for example, see Wang Gui’s kinship in Figure 1). Instead, this new group of locally based Sichuanese officials usually sought marriage partners among themselves.

Their marriage networks were much narrower in geographical scope, and could be considered “localized” in the sense that their participants hailed almost exclusively from prefectures in the western part of Sichuan basin. But marriage arrangements among these locally based Sichuanese officials diverged from received wisdom on localist marriage strategies in two crucial ways. Firstly, whereas Southern Song Fuzhou elites in Hymes’ study married mostly within the prefecture (and often within each county of the prefecture), in late Northern Song and Southern Song Sichuan, marriages across prefectural and circuit boundaries were not uncommon. Secondly, whereas localist strategy in Hymes’ definition implies an elite group less oriented to a bureaucratic career, in Sichuan, not only did many elites manage to make office-holding in local governments a family occupation, but affinal connections with other officials posted to substantive local positions were also actively sought.

Signs of networks among local officials woven through consanguinity and marriage were dimly discernible in Wen Tong’s generation in the late eleventh century. Drawing upon existing data in CBDB, Figure 9 reports Wen Tong’s kinship. Among the families directly related to Wen Tong through marriage, all except his son-in-law Zhang Yuanbi 張元弼 hailed from prefectures in the neighboring Chengdu circuit.

But few of Wen Tong’s agnatic and affinal kin held substantive local positions, and those who did were very weakly connected to each other. Among those immediately linked to Wen Tong through marriage, only two of Zhang Yuanbi’s uncles served briefly as intendents or prefects in Sichuan, and nobody from the Sichuanese families were posted to important local offices. The Su family moved out and pursued careers elsewhere in the empire, whereas Li Tong 李彤 (1019-1072) served only briefly in humble positions (See
Spectacular as was the success of the Cheng family, it was not unique among Sichuanese elites in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Brief genealogical accounts of prominent families, as well as epitaphs from this period, provide plenty of cases of brothers, fathers and sons, or in-laws from notable Sichuanese families appointed to important government positions in Sichuan. Most envied were the Zhou brothers who served as prefects of Zizhou and Hanzhou at the same time, perhaps still a rare phenomenon in the 1080s.\(^{30}\)

Marriage arrangements are much less well documented, but piecemeal evidence

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nevertheless gives some hint. For example, Shi Xunzhi 石洵直 (999-1091), a close friend of Cheng Jun who received three prefectural appointments in Sichuan, married his only daughter to Guo Zigao 郭子臯 (1033-1087), who was a scion of a distinguished lineage in a county of Chengdu and would-be administrator in three prefectures of Sichuan. Through the Guo family, Shi Xunzhi was further (and very remotely) related to other prominent Sichuanese families such as the Fans and Xianyus.31

The strongest documented case for localized webs of connections among Sichuanese elites, woven by consanguinity and marriage and empowered by repeated appointments to local government positions, comes from the thirteenth century.

Wei Liaoweng’s affines hailed exclusively from the two western circuits of Sichuan. But their illustrious records of office-holding in prefectural and circuit governments of Sichuan overshadowed Wen Tong’s relatives (Table 6). A large number of Wei’s affines received repeated appointments as prefectural administrators in Sichuan, and quite a few among them rose all the way up to circuit and viceroyalty positions. Also, in contrast to Wen Tong and the distinguished Cheng lineage, whose relationship was mediated by their shared affine Su Zhe, prominent local officials in thirteenth-century Sichuan were often related to Wei Liaoweng in a much closer way.

Many of Wei’s affines successfully placed their sons in administrative positions of counties and prefectures (e.g., Yu Yunwen’s grandsons as well as Wei Liaoweng and his natal brothers) and often maintained a family tradition of local office-holding for generations (e.g., Li Yanzhen’s patriline). Anecdotal accounts also suggest that in thirteenth-century Sichuan, marriages with these native office-holding elites were actively pursued. When one of Wei Liaoweng’s daughters, granddaughter-in-law of An Bing 安丙, was widowed, her connections to both families made her an ideal wife for many.32 In turn, these affinal connections could also be mobilized for advancement in local bureaucracies. When Li Zhi 李廌 (1161-1238), prefect of Tongchuan, was replaced by the newly appointed Wei Liaoweng, he proposed to Wei that they would each recommend the other’s affine for promotion in local offices, a deal which had become very common in Wei’s eyes.33

Table 6. Selected Relatives and Their Offices in Wei Liaoweng’s Kindred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ego</th>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>Kinship</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Basic Affiliation</th>
<th>Kinship Distance</th>
<th>Index Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

33 Wei Liaoweng 魏了翁, Heshan ji 鶴山集, chapter 82, “Epitaph for Du Guangxin” 永康軍通判杜公墓誌銘, pp.19ab.
Epilogue: Song Dynasty China in Regions

Robert M. Harwell argued that the administrative history from mid-Tang through early Ming was “one of a progressive shift in the balance of power from the central government to large regional administrations.” In the Southern Song, the central government...

34 Liu Zhensun 刘震孙 (?-1268), a sixth-generation descendant of the Northern Song statesman Liu Zhi 刘挚 (1030-1097), was often identified as a man from Dongping (in West Jingdong circuit). But apparently, Dongping was not where the family actually resided after the loss of North China. It is reported that since the time when Liu Zhensun’s great-grandfather was appointed to Longyou (in Sichuan’s Jiading prefecture), the family had established their residence in Sichuan. See Peng Donghuan 彭東煥, Wei Liaoweng nianpu 魏了翁年譜 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2000), p.26.

government was unable to exercise direct administrative control beyond the circuits contiguous with the capital, and considerable autonomy was granted to regional commands located far away from the court. During the century and one-half since the governmental reorganization in 1082, according to Hartwell, regional divisions also defined the geographical range of bureaucratic employments, as “interregional career patterns in specific branches of the bureaucracy were replaced by intraregional ones in diverse fields of administration.”  

However, in a teleological reasoning, Hartwell positioned the growing significance of regional commands in Southern Song as an intermediate stage “in the evolution of the province (sheng).” Along Weber’s line, he also saw the shift from interregional patterns of bureaucratic transfers to intraregional ones as antithetical to a process which could have led to a “modern” bureaucracy with “functionally distinct hierarchies of bureaus.”

Nevertheless, as this paper seeks to demonstrate, the growing importance of regional administrations and the intraregional patterns of bureaucratic rotations, whatever their relations to the province of late imperial China or to a modern bureaucracy, provided the political impetus for localized social networks and marriage alliances.

For Sichuan, there is no evidence to attribute, as Hartwell did, the intraregional pattern of bureaucratic rotations to government reorganization in 1082. Instead, intraregional career patterns owed more to changes in personnel policy around the mid-eleventh century, which relaxed previous restrictions on native incumbency of local government positions in Sichuan, and the method of “delegated appointments,” promulgated in 1070, which made consecutive appointments in Sichuan possible.

Consecutive appointments in Sichuan, or intraregional patterns of bureaucratic transfers, cannot be substantiated by existing data in CBDB, for it requires the documentation of full office-holding histories for a significant number of Sichuanese elites, which CBDB has not covered yet. But existing data in China Biographical Database (CBDB) reports a soaring number of native Sichuanese who, since the latter half of the eleventh century, held significant positions in prefectural and circuit governments of Sichuan, which had been hitherto almost exclusively staffed by officials of non-Sichuanese origins.

Native incumbency and consecutive appointments in Sichuan introduced into the historical scene a new group of sociopolitical actors, who were scions of influential local elite families and managed to penetrate into local governments. By the mid-eleventh century, those officials of non-Sichuanese origins, who had nearly monopolized

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37 Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformation of China, 750-1550", p.398. This argument runs counter to two apparent pieces of evidence. The first is that the post-Song administrative history unfolded a rather reversed process in which areas already consolidated into the four regional commands were split – with the only exception of Sichuan – into the smaller units of provinces; and, more importantly, intraregional patterns of bureaucratic rotations which characterized the Southern Song did not seem to have survived the fall of the dynasty.  
government positions in Sichuan, were seldom connected to each other and could hardly be identified as one cohesive group. Instead, each of them was oriented towards more cosmopolitan circles centered on prominent cultural and political elites based in the court far away from their administrative jurisdictions in Sichuan. Into these circles politically aspiring Sichuanese elites in early Northern Song wished to enter, and governors posted to strategic Sichuan prefectures played an important role as patrons and sponsors for these aspiring locals.

But since the latter half of the eleventh century, along with native incumbency, interwoven webs of social connections among Sichuanese elite families, often formed independently from the political structure of the ruling dynasty and sustained over many generations, crept into the administrative apparatuses in Sichuan as scions of these families were appointed to local government positions. These densely knit networks among Sichuan officials of native origins, which rivaled the cosmopolitan ones, were further cemented by agnatic and affinal ties. Prominent lineages managed to place many of their sons in administrative positions of counties and prefectures, and as such for generations. Intermarriages were actively pursued among these locally based office-holding elites, including prefectural administrators, circuit intendents, as well as regional commissioners in civil, fiscal and military affairs.

Social and political change in Sichuan since the mid-eleventh century unfolds a historical dynamic alternative to the received wisdom on the localist turn, a dynamic in which the consolidation of local power base and the pursuit of political success may not exclude each other. The shift in the balance of power from the central government to large regional administrations, native incumbency of local government positions, and the emergence of intraregional patterns of bureaucratic rotations, all made possible a cross-fertilization between office-holding in local governments and the consolidation of local power base. Thus, the localized elite networks in Sichuan revealed not the dissipation of political aspirations among native elites, but rather a reorientation of such aspirations from the court to regional and local governments.

The macroscopic analysis of this historical change which CBDB facilitates, in spite of the paucity and historiographical bias of its data at the moment, attests to the strength of such relational databases in revealing macro-historical patterns and in testing and refining propositions pertaining to a long temporal range and a large geographical area.

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