

The Changing Political and Governance Architecture in China

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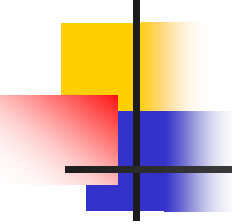
Overview: 30 years of moving away from “totalitarianism”

- Changed and Changing
 - Smaller State and Bigger Society
 - Power distribution within the shrinking state power: decentralization or devolution
 - Emerging Check and Balance
 - Institutionalization of peaceful power transfer
 - Reconfiguration of the Ideology: goals, perceptions, strategies, instruments
 - Changed citizens
- Unchanged:
 - Supremacy of the party over the state and the society



Political System: simplified

- Five levels: Center, Provinces (34-3), Prefectures (330), Counties (2,600), and Townships (38,000)
- Loosely connected to the party-state: villages (700,000)
- Each level: Party committees over people's congress, administration, courts
- Unitary system directed from top down



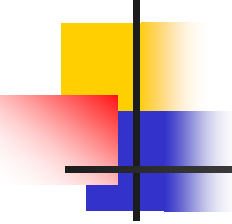
Smaller State and Bigger Society (1): economy

- Absolute withdrawal of the state in intervening the economy:
 - Freeing pricing: mid-1980s (dual track pricing), mid-1990s (converging to the market)
 - Privatizing SOEs: 1992 on, Upward spreading (small to large scale, county to provincial levels, and partial privatization centrally subordinated: listed)
- Relative withdrawal: Mushrooming of Privately Owned Enterprises, Foreign Direct Investments, Joint Ventures
- Reference: Maria Csanadi, 2007



Changing Ownership Structure of the Economy

	State sector	Private sector
1978	99.1%	0.1% <i>Economics Daily, 05/11/2002</i>
1997	75.8%	24.2% <i>Economics Daily, 05/11/2002</i>
2006	35%	65% <i>Outlook News Weekly, 01/10/2007</i>



Smaller State and Bigger Society (2): social life

- Withdrawal of the state in controlling individual citizen's movement (migration), education, employment, housing, health care, and consumptions...
- Separation of State and Society: Emerging and expansion of private sphere for individuals (diversified values, life style, moral codes)
- Civil society organizations: 3 millions (registered and unregistered) (Yu Keping, 2007)



The Chronologically Changing Battle Fields for the Interaction between the State and the Society

Years	Fields
Early 1980s	Clothing and hair-style
Until early 1990s	Pop music, pop arts, night life
1990s and 2000s	Religion



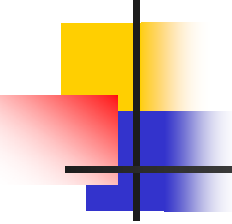
Decentralization within the Shrunken State Power

- Approving economic activities: registration, investment projects
- Administering social life: social security, health care, education, passport granting
- Decision making: city planning, public utilities, infrastructure



Increasing Role of Localities in Promoting Reform

- Initiatives taken by localities without central plans:
 - 1) privatization (1992)
 - 2) semi-competitive election (mid-1990s)
 - 3) opening up the people's congress (late 1990s)
 - 4) opening up court debating (2007)
- Special economic zones (early 1980s): centrally planned
- Pattern of reform in 1980s: centrally driven
- Pattern of reform since 1990s: dynamic interaction between the center and localities (local initiatives... controversy in Beijing... widely spread at localities... accepted and legalized in Beijing... across the land)



Emerging Check and Balance: increasing autonomy of people's congress (legislature)

- Increasing negative and abstention (NPC):
 - 1) 3-gorge Dam (1/3)
 - 2) Supreme Court Report and Supreme Prosecution Report (50%-)
- Cases of vetoing candidates nominated by the party committees for state positions (local)



Emerging Check and Balance: Judiciary

- Judges and prosecutors: from demobilized military officers (1980s) to highly educated students;
- Lawyers: from state employees (before 1990s) to private sector (after 1992);
- Problems: 1) local courts are parts of local governments (budget and personnel), 2) party supremacy



Legal Foundations for the People to Check the Governments

	Law	Event	Note
1989	Administrative Procedure	10,000(90) 100,000+ (00)	30%, citizen win
1994	State Compensation or Indemnity	1999, first Indemnity; 2005, 10 years imprisonment	
1997	Criminal Procedure	Denunciates “presumption of guilty”	Being revised, “presumption of innocence”



Emerging Check: semi-competitive elections at low levels

Levels	Year of first case	Latest amount of cases	Proportion	Locations
County	2004	4	0.1%	Jiangsu, Hubei
Township	1995	2000+	6%	Sichuan, Yunan, Hubei, Jiangsu
Village	Late 1980s	240,000	30%	Across the land



Institutionalization of Power Holding and Transfer

- Before 1990s: no terms, either died at office (life-long) or demoted through struggle
- After 1997: term of office—5 years; Limited terms—2
- Peaceful transfer of highest power:
 - 1) 1997 (unprecedented in socialist China),
 - 2) 2002 (unprecedented in 2000 years of China),
 - 3) 2007 (consolidation)



Conditions for the Institutionalization of Power Holding and Transfer

- Elite: lessons from Cultural Revolution and early disasters
- Critical Actor: Deng Xiaoping
- Measures: retirement of senior revolutionaries since early 1980s (20 years) and introduction of terms
- Societal Condition: 1) separation of politics and economy, 2) separation of state and society
- Power change and the society: limited influence to each other
- Elite: no need to invoke and mobilize the society.
- Society: little interest to engage the power transfer.

Reconfigured Ideology (1) : from Maoist Socialism to Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

	From	To
Goals, Tasks (Missions)	The rule of proletariat dictatorship	1)Economic growth; 2)Social peace
Perception of the outside	Enemy (a coming war)	Partner (peace and development)
Source of legitimacy	Ideology	1)Performance (economic welfare); 2)Procedure (weakly)
Elements of ideology	Marxist and Mao scripture	1)Marxist and Maoist 2)Traditional Chinese V. 3)Universal Value

Reconfigured Ideology (2): socialism with Chinese characteristics—redefining socialism

	from	to
Fundamental features	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1)Public ownership;2)Planning economy;3)To each according to his work	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1)Mixed ownership (2002 constitution, private);2)Market economy
Relations between socialism and capitalism	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1)Antagonism;2)Inevitable substitution	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1)Peaceful coexistence;2)Mutual learning and reciprocity (02: political civilization);3)02 party constitution revision: deleting substitution

Reconfigured ideology (3): socialism with Chinese characteristics—redefining the party

	From	To
Nature	Vanguard of proletariat	Vanguard of proletariat, Chinese people, and Chinese nation
Strategy	Class struggle	Harmonious society: compromise, coordination, negotiation, peace
Means	Rule of revolutionary principles and rule by revolutionaries	Rule by law (1978-1997); Rule of law (1997 on)



Changed citizens

- Economically independent and increasingly resourceful
- Better educated
- Rising awareness of rights (sue governments, sue SOEs, go on demonstrations)
- Continuously exposed to outside world (3rd wave democratization)
- Diversified interests and values
- More active, but not as active as they could be (legacy of atomization)



Supremacy of the party

- Softened “monopolization”:
 - 1)only on personnel and limited issues;
 - 2)with written rules and unwritten customs
- Remained Critical Function:
 - 1)to coordinate (the legislature, the administration, and the judiciary);
 - 2)to ensure the lower level’s compliance to the upper levels (inadequate legal basis and social consensus);
 - 3)to hold different region and social stratus together (inadequacy of other means)
- Flexibility and Responsiveness:
 - 1)many of the changes;
 - 2)2017 Hong Kong direct election;
 - 3)Free interviewing (Olympic)



Two Angles to Observe China

- Historical angle (achievements and negative legacies):
- Horizontal angle (inadequacies)—compared with developed countries:
 - 1) Primitive
 - 2) Yet to be implemented



Difficulties in Understanding China: mixture of conflicting elements

- Inconsistency among norms
- Inconsistency between norms and actual life
- Inconsistency among levels, regions, social stratus, different elite...
- Trap: each argument would find its confirming cases
- Thus need to have:
 - 1)the overall picture;
 - 2)both the historical and horizontal angles



Perspective

- Two driving forces for further changes:
 - 1) keeping fast economic growth: endangered by corruption and unpredictability of the behavior of the authority
 - 2) keeping social peace: marred by tension between the authority and the people
- Technology and integration into the world
 - Telecommunication and Internet: flow of information
 - Integration to the world community: 1) active in or forced to learn new values and institutions; 2) not just economic integration but also political integration
- Major challenges: inadequate participation of people in political process



Many Thanks!

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