

**WHAT IS NEW FOR CHINA'S
TECHNOCRACY IN
XI JINPING'S TIME?**

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Executive Summary

1. In the early stage of reform, Chinese technocrats with engineering background like Li Peng, Hu Qili and Jiang Zemin were promoted to top positions in the Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee (PSC).
2. During Jiang's and Hu's tenure, though more technocrats were promoted, they were still outnumbered by those with educational background in social sciences.
3. After Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, a large number of technocrats with working experiences in military and aerospace industries, and those with training in social sciences, especially economics ("econocrats"), were promoted to key positions.
4. The growing number of technocrats in the party-state also reflects China's transition from Mao's military society ruled by warriors to industrial society ruled by engineers, planners and producers in the reform era.
5. In the transition from industrial (mass production) to post-industrial (service-oriented) society, China's technocracy is shifting its centrality towards new science-based industries like artificial intelligence, aerospace technology and telecommunications.
6. In Deng's and Jiang's time, China's technocrats were predominantly engineers with physical science background, while in Hu's and Xi's tenure, an increasing number of technocrats were in fact "econocrats" with social science training.
7. The technocratic tendency manifests the bureaucratisation of China's politics and governance becomes less a matter of determining the appropriate direction for society than one of adjusting its institutions and policies to the flows of economic and technological development.
8. Between 1997 and 2007, all PSC members had an engineering educational background; since 2012, the proportion has dropped to 29%.

9. Despite the declining number of engineers at the top leadership level, China has been promoting technocrats from military, aerospace or other strategic new industries at the ministerial/provincial level in Xi's tenure.