

**A GRAND PLAN OF PARTY-DOMINATION:
INSTITUTION-BUILDING UNDER
XI JINPING**

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Executive Summary

1. The Xi administration's conscientious effort to build up a comprehensive system of institutions governing every aspect of China sets it apart from that of its predecessors in the reform and opening era. The institutions are built to firmly entrench the dominance of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a defining characteristic of Xi's "China model".
2. In contrast to Deng Xiaoping's vision of a decentralised system separating the Party from the government to enhance the professionalism and efficiency of the latter, Xi's vision is a highly centralised system with Party domination in nearly every aspect of public, social and corporative administration, as well as in culture and ideology.
3. The dissolution of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1991 together with the dramatically deteriorated international environment and the security threat it has brought weighed heavily on Xi, who wants the CPC to be in control of the political power and at the centre of action in all areas. The Party is incorporated in the competency of governance.
4. Xi declared that "[T]he party's leadership must be comprehensive, systematic and holistic, and must be reflected in economic construction, political construction, cultural construction, social construction, ecological civilization construction and national defense forces, the reunification of the motherland, diplomatic work, party building and other aspects".
5. The Xi'ist model of institution building classified institutions into three categories: those belonging to "the fundamental system" (*genben zhidu*), those constituting "the basic system" (*jiben zhidu*) and those composing "the important systems" (*zhongyao zhidu*).

6. Institution building at these three levels inter-nestled with each other to spawn a wide range of requirements for institution building in specific niches covering all important spheres of political, economic and social life.
7. Xi'ist institution building is far from completion. In many areas only principles or guidelines are promulgated without translating into concrete institutions. That may in part accounts for Xi Jinping's need for a third term or even beyond.
8. Xi's centralisation has gone far beyond that of imperial China because of the CPC's Leninist legacy. Tight organisations under centralised power may lend the CPC system of governance a competitive edge in terms of maintaining stability and orchestrated response to change, but it comes at the cost of societal vitality and creativity.
9. Cadre passivity, bureaucratism and formalism are commonly criticised conditions of the Chinese officialdom under Xi. It poses a sharp contrast to the creativity of the local governments and cadres at the height of the Dengist reform era that spawned numerous innovations and local or regional development models.