

Polity IV Country Report 2007: China

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-7</td> <td>-7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>58</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	Polity:	-7	-7	0	Democ:	0	0	0	Autoc:	7	7	0	Durable:		58		Tentative:		No		<p style="text-align: center;">Authority Trends, 1946-2007: China</p>
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SCODE	CHN	CCODE	710	Date of Report	1 November 2008																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	1	4	3	4	1																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date		10 January 1949		Begin Date																					
				1 October 1949																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1982																								
Executive(s)	Secretary General and President Hu Jintao (CCP); elected by National People's Congress 15 March 2003																								
Legislature	Unicameral: National People's Congress (2,987 seats; no competitive elections, recruitment through designation within the CCP; 36 deputies are elected in Hong Kong)																								
Judiciary	Supreme People's Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Designation (3)

The citizens of China cannot change their chief executive through democratic mechanisms. Executive recruitment within China remains a designative act within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CCP has ruled this country since its military victory over the Chinese Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek in 1949. While Deng Xiaoping dominated Chinese politics during the two decades following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, with Deng's death in 1997 President Jiang Zemin ascended to the top of the Chinese power structure. Jiang was initially designated as secretary general of the CCP in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square uprising of 1989 and became president of the PRC in 1993. In 1998 he was re-elected President during the 9th National People's Congress. Executive power currently resides in the hands of President Hu Jintao, who is also general secretary of the CCP. Although for the first few years of Hu Jintao's tenure Jiang Zemin retained considerable influence and several party posts, in 2004-06 Hu Jintao emerged as China's paramount leader.

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Executive Constraints: Slight to Moderate Limitations (3)

China is a one-party communist dictatorship in which the CCP has traditionally dominated both the government and Chinese society. While in recent years the CCP has relaxed its control over social and economic relations, albeit tentatively and with mixed results, its domination of the political realm remains steadfast. While Mao Zedong and, at times, Deng Xiaoping, were able to stand above the party apparatus, more often than not the CCP as a collective body has retained its ability to limit the powers of its designated chief executive. While the powers of the general secretary of the CCP are vast, nonetheless, the autonomy of the chief executive is constrained by the institutionalized power of the party apparatus. Instead of standing above the party apparatus, China's most recent leaders, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, have tended to govern collectively with the "third generation" members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.

While the National People's Congress has long been seen as a rubber-stamp parliament, in recent years the role of its deputies is gradually becoming less ceremonial and more practical in nature. At its annual meeting in early 2004 China's parliament debated important constitutional changes that could, in the long-run, serve to rein in the overwhelming powers of the Communist Party. While the CCP continues to control virtually all aspects of Chinese society, in recent years the rule of law has begun to slowly encroach on their unlimited power.

Political Participation: Repressed Competition (1)

The 58 million-member CCP continues to restrict all challenges to its fifty-year rule. Political threats to CCP hegemony and Chinese (Han-dominated) territorial sovereignty are countered with repression. While eight minor parties are permitted to operate in China, they have no autonomy from the ruling CCP. All independent voices of political and social reform are muzzled by the CCP. In addition to attacks on ethnonational groups within its borders (in Tibet and Xinjiang "Autonomous Regions"), the CCP also remains vigilant against pro-democracy reformers and large social/cultural organizations that operate outside of the boundaries of direct party control (like the Falun Gong movement). On the other hand, rapid economic growth has begun to create a new class of economic entrepreneurs who are amassing the resources necessary to create functional autonomy from government control. It is also increasing pressures on traditional groups and urban workers who are witnessing a growing gap in consumption patterns and a growing pressure on political intermediaries and local officials who are challenged by the rising influence and autonomy of the entrepreneurial class and increasing opportunities for official corruption. Local and grassroots protests have been increasing as affected people react to corrupt officials and/or policies that threaten traditional livelihoods, allow deterioration of environment, or seize land for developers.