

Political Institutional Reforms in China from Vietnam's Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to enhance our comprehension of significant shifts in China's political-institutional transformation process, thereby enabling a more accurate assessment of the country's internal political landscape. The primary objective of this research paper is to elucidate three fundamental aspects of the reform of political institutions in China, spanning from 1978 to the present. This inquiry seeks to address three key aspects pertaining to China's political and institutional reform. Firstly, it aims to explore the motivations behind China's pursuit of such reforms. Secondly, it seeks to identify and examine the significant political and institutional reforms implemented by China since 1978. Lastly, it aims to assess the accomplishments and constraints associated with China's ongoing political and institutional reform endeavors. Drawing upon sources from Chinese and Vietnamese researchers, the authors employ synthetic, logical, historical, and comparative analysis methodologies to comprehensively examine the landscape of China's political and institutional reform from 1978 to the present. Scholarly evidence indicates that the reform of political institutions in China is primarily aimed at solidifying and enhancing the socialist character of the regime, with the success of such reform being heavily contingent upon the actions and decisions of the leader in power.

Keywords: *Political Regime, Innovation, Reform and Opening Up, Democratic Consultation, Anti-Corruption.*

Introduction

China is demonstrating significant growth as the most rapidly expanding developed economy globally. China has undertaken a comprehensive reform process and opening up to attain the growth above. In addition to significant economic, cultural, and social transformations, China has consistently undertaken political and institutional reforms to establish a socialist democratic system that reflects unique Chinese characteristics. The objective is establishing a state governed by socialist principles and the rule of law. Consequently, the emergence of China as a significant global force has garnered considerable attention from scholars worldwide, particularly those interested in investigating political and institutional reform within the country. The distinctiveness of socialism with Chinese characteristics is evident in several aspects that set it apart from other socialist nations. These distinguishing features are as follows: China does not adhere to the "separation of powers" model, commonly observed in numerous contemporary nations. The regime in question is characterized by implementing the "unified decree" approach, which entails consolidating State power within the National Assembly (Congress, 2021). Unlike numerous contemporary nations that adopt a multi-party system or a select few that employ a one-party system, this regime operates through multi-party cooperation under the guidance of the Communist Party (Shukui, 1988). An additional characteristic of the Chinese political system involves the amalgamation of the designations of the General Secretary, President, and National Military Commission, to foster a heightened consensus in guiding and executing the political institutions of the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese political system has made significant strides in leadership, contributing to the ongoing prosperity of the nation, particularly in its pursuit of transforming China into a developed society. Furthermore, upon reaching its centennial milestone, China is poised to emerge as a nation that has successfully implemented modernized socialism, cultivated a robust democratic civilization, and achieved the long-standing aspiration of attaining great power status (team, 2017, p. 22).

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In the context of Vietnam's ongoing efforts to reform its organizational methods and enhance the leadership capacity of its political party, it is imperative to seek guidance from the experiences of countries that have previously undergone similar reforms. Additionally, Vietnam and China are contiguous nations with enduring political, economic, cultural, and historical ties, resulting in reciprocal influence. The two nations exhibit several commonalities, including adherence to a socialist political system, which is sustained through the governance of the Communist Party. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Vietnam underwent a renovation process known as Doi Moi approximately eight years after China initiated its renovation efforts in 1978. However, the level of comprehension among the Vietnamese populace regarding China's political system reform is limited.

Since the research results provide a holistic picture of China's political and institutional reform, they not only aid in identifying the current state of China's internal politics but also allow readers to evaluate the successes and setbacks of China's reform of its political institutions, from which the Communist Party of Vietnam can draw ideas for its political system reform. This article is divided into four parts:

The article begins with a brief history of China's political institutions before assessing the depth of coverage given to the topic in literature from Vietnam, China, and the West. That allows us to identify a research and clarification gap in the article. The article's research strategies are presented here for the first time.

Second, the article explains why China reformed its political institutions, helping readers understand that these changes were necessitated by reform and opening up, as well as the construction of socialist modernization and the unification of the country's territories.

Third, from 1978 to the present, the article outlines the four stages of China's most important political and institutional reforms: The first stage covers the years 1978–1989; the second, 1989–2002; the third, 2002–2012; and the fourth, 2012–present. The Chinese political system reform is the socialist political regime in China improving and developing itself.

The fourth section of the article evaluates political and institutional reform in China. The number of corrupt officials is still rising, and democratic consultation is still a formality, just two of the many issues that plague China's political and institutional reform despite the successes it has seen.

Literature Review

The limited number of studies and scholars in Vietnam contributes to the existence of this phenomenon. In Vietnam, it is noteworthy that only two works provide a relatively comprehensive analysis of the reform of China's political institutions. Two notable publications discuss the reform of political institutions in China during different periods. The first is the book titled "Reform of Political Institutions in China (1978-2003)," authored by Do Tien Sam (Sâm, 2003). The second publication is an edited volume titled "Reform of Political Institutions in China in the First Two Decades of the 21st Century," edited by Nguyen Xuan Cuong (Cuông, 2018). The works above primarily elucidate the subject matter of political and institutional reform spanning from 1978 to the initial two decades of the 21st century while also offering valuable insights that can be applied to the context of Vietnam.

In contrast, the existing literature needs a detailed exposition of the specific components of the reform implemented during distinct periods. Furthermore, it needs to elucidate the distinctive features of China's present political and institutional reform and provide a comprehensive evaluation of the accomplishments and constraints encountered in the realm of political and institutional reform within China. In addition, Chinese scholars have researched the reform of Chinese political institutions. For instance, Wang Bang Zuo's work (Bangzuo, 2016) titled "Achievements and Development Paths of China's Political System Reform," Shi Zhong Quan's work (Zhongquan, 2019a) titled "China's Political System Reform has taken a new path," and Gao Zheng Li's work (Zhengli, 2019) titled "Political System Reform and Political Civilization Construction in New China" all discuss the assessment of achievements and limitations. However, these works focus more on evaluating achievements rather than identifying limitations. These works are primarily assessed based on the public's viewpoint of their respective national political systems, resulting in an inherent absence of objectivity. In the realm of political institution reform in China, Western countries have conducted extensive research. Notably, William A. Joseph's book "Politics in China: An Introduction" (Joseph, 2014) and June Teufel Dreyer's publication "China's Political System" (Dreyer, 2014) both emphasize the significance of China's political system reform alongside its notable accomplishments in economic development and global influence. The global influence of China is experiencing a notable augmentation. However, the Communist Party of China and the Chinese populace are currently confronted with significant obstacles across various domains. These challenges encompass the potential for economic instability, environmental pollution, pervasive corruption, pronounced inequality, and escalating instances of social protest (Dreyer, 2014, p. 2).

This article provides additional clarity and elucidation on the necessity for China to reform its political institutions and undertake reforms in each distinct period based on the ambiguous and unconvincing nature of the existing body of published research. The article additionally evaluates the accomplishments and constraints of China's political and institutional reform.

Numerous brief articles by Chinese academics cover various aspects of political and institutional reform in China. Nonetheless, studies comparing the reform of China's political institutions from 1978 to the present day with that of Vietnam could be more varied and coordinated. So, this article is a product of the most up-to-date thinking by Vietnamese academics who have studied the transformation of China's political institutions since 1978.

Methodology

The author employed research methods to investigate the content mentioned above. The analytical and synthetic research method seeks to elucidate the underlying factors necessitating political reform in China. These factors include the erosion of democracy within the Party due to economic and institutional reform imperatives, the need to foster public well-being and enhance governance capabilities, the imperative of unifying Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, and the requirements for facilitating international economic integration. The author employs the logical-historical research approach to elucidate the progression of China's political institutional reform, which unfolds across four distinct stages. The primary focus of these reforms lies in the implementation of essential measures, including the enhancement of the Communist Party's leadership, the refinement of the People's Congress system (such as the National Assembly), the restructuring of the administrative apparatus, the transformation of judicial institutions, and the augmentation of the political consultation framework and multi-party cooperation under the guidance of the Communist Party. Furthermore, the author employs the comparative and contrasting research methodology to examine and elucidate the accomplishments and persisting constraints in reforming China's political institutions.

Despite the author's extensive residency in China, their perception of societal dynamics is limited to observable phenomena and quantifiable data. In contrast to Vietnam, the author's experiences in China facilitated a more discerning document analysis and research approach.

The article analyzes China's political institution reform from 1978 to the present, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of this process. Additionally, the evaluation section of the article critically assesses China's political institution reform.

Results and Discussion

The reason why China conducts political and institutional reform

There exist numerous justifications for China to undertake political and institutional reforms. However, it is essential to concentrate on the following vital rationales primarily:

The lack of legal guarantees for the democratic rights of the Chinese people has been a significant consequence of the limitations inherent in China's political system since its establishment and before the reform and opening-up period (Dreyer, 2014, p. 2). This situation has had a detrimental impact on how individuals can actively exercise their democratic rights. The concentration of power necessitates the emergence of bureaucracy, while the prevalence of patriarchal systems hinders the promotion of agency and government effectiveness across all levels. This political institution has adopted a system of governance characterized by prioritizing human discretion over the principles and norms of legal frameworks. According to (Xiaoping, 1994), regulatory and promulgated policies frequently require a greater emphasis on scientific foundations, stability, and continuity, as they are susceptible to errors.

This phenomenon can be traced back to the necessity for economic and institutional restructuring. The political regime in China was formerly constructed upon a profoundly centralized economic institution. Hence, the constraints observed within the aforementioned political institution can be attributed to a causal relationship with the limitations inherent in the present economic institution. As the evolution of economic institutions progresses, a need for corresponding reforms in political institutions arises. It necessitates the Government to modify its functions, restructure its apparatus, and adapt the political system's personnel in alignment with the demands of the market economy.⁵

This initiative is derived from the imperative to enhance citizen engagement and elevate the nation's administrative proficiency. Upon implementing reforms and opening up China, the nation's leaders collectively recognized the imperative nature of liberating production and fostering the advancement of productive capabilities. In order to enhance productive capacity, it is imperative to fully harness the collective population's positive attributes and creative potential. Hence, there is a need to undertake reforms in the various stages and dimensions that impede and restrict the advancement of positivity and creativity among the general population within the political framework. Furthermore, the reform of political institutions is driven by the imperative to enhance the overall management capacity of the nation, encompassing the management proficiency of Party organizations and governmental bodies at various tiers, ranging from the central to the local levels. To enhance the overall management capacity of the nation, they imperative to establish a contemporary leadership institution encompassing a decision-making framework, an executive framework, a monitoring framework, and an advisory framework. The reform of the political system is necessary (Xiaofeng, 2019).

This phenomenon can be traced back to the implementation requirements of the reunification process involving Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The People's Republic of China has successfully integrated the regions of Hong Kong and Macau, while Taiwan remains independent and has yet to reunite with mainland China. The matter of Taiwan reunification has emerged as one of the prominent challenges confronting China in the 21st century. China's strategy for addressing Taiwan is based on the "one country, two systems" principle. China's commitment to respecting the current regime in Taiwan is contingent upon Taiwan's reunification with China. It implies that, on the condition that Taiwan embraces the ideology above, China will permit Taiwan to maintain its existing capitalist system (Weiqing, 2001, p. 235). The concept of "one country, two systems" has been proposed to address Taiwan. China has subsequently

⁵ Using Economic Thinking for Political System Reform - Interview with Zhou Tianyong, Deputy Director of the Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Social Science Daily (Shanghai), April 10, 2008.

implemented this framework to resolve the challenges faced by Hong Kong and Macau. The "one country, two systems" ideology posits that the unification of the three territories mentioned is necessary for reforming economic and political institutions in China.

The initiation of international economic integration is traced back to the requirement (Hongshu & Bin, 2009). On November 10, 2001, China completed 15 rigorous negotiations and officially joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). With this accession, China has embraced the principles and practices of a market economy. It implies that China will be compelled to engage in innovation, encompassing cognitive frameworks and practical measures, thereby leading to a substantial overhaul of its governmental operations across all tiers, from the central to the local level. The previous system was characterized by the government's tendency to justify all actions and exert control over all societal resources. However, in the market-oriented system, the government's role shifts towards indirect management and macroeconomic regulation. When there are alterations in the functions of the government apparatus, it becomes imperative for the civil servants employed within said apparatus to adapt accordingly. Therefore, China must undertake comprehensive reforms in its political institutions, administrative apparatus, and personnel system, with the ultimate goal of gradually implementing political democratization.

Based on the analysis above, it is evident that initiating the reform and opening up in China has necessitated political and institutional reform to facilitate socialist modernization construction and territorial unification. Adjusting the superstructure to align with the economic base will enhance the engagement of individuals and facilitate the advancement of production capabilities. Hence, the reformation of political institutions is often compared to the metaphorical concept of a "second revolution" in China.

Changes in Chinese political institutions since 1978 (Fulin, 2002)

China's socialist political system constantly strives for improvement and growth, and institutional reform is vital to this process. Beginning at the close of 1978, China began a process of political and institutional reform. The Chinese academic community has roughly divided the stages of political institution reform in China into four categories. China's current situation guides the specifics of each phase of reform.

Strengthen existing political institutions

Between 1978 and 1989, new political institutions were proposed and put into place in China. During this time, Deng Xiaoping formed and developed his theory, including his political theory, focusing on rebuilding political institutions.

Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech entitled "Party Reform and State Leadership" at the Expanded Conference of the Politburo Central Committee on August 18, 1980 (Yufang, 2018a). In his discourse, Deng Xiaoping conducted a comprehensive analysis of the primary detriments prevalent within China's political framework: bureaucracy, excessive centralization of authority, patriarchal tendencies, the perpetuation of lifelong leadership positions, and the manifestation of privilege (Xiaoping, 1994, p. 337). Hence, it is imperative to develop a comprehensive strategy to address these negative consequences systematically and determinedly. This approach will instill confidence among the populace in our governance and foster trust in the Party and the principles of Socialism, thereby revitalizing our collective aspirations (Xiaoping, 1994, p. 337).

China has undertaken political and institutional reforms in response to the limitations of its existing political institutions. This reform period has primarily emphasized several critical areas of reform, which are outlined as follows:

First and foremost, it is proposed to eliminate the life-long leadership cadre system and instead adopt the "Four Modernizations" policy for the cadre team, as formulated by the Organization Department of the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China in 2021. This policy aims to transform and rejuvenate the cadre team by emphasizing four key aspects: revolutionizing, youthizing, intellectualizing, and professionalizing the cadres (Department, 2021). In December 1982, the Constitution of the People's

Republic of China was ratified during the fifth session of the National People's Congress. This constitutional amendment introduced a provision stipulating that the heads of state, the National People's Congress, and the State Council are limited to serving a maximum of two consecutive terms. This development marked an initial stride towards implementing a retirement system for party cadres and eliminating the previously prevalent lifelong tenure system for cadres and leadership positions. The abovementioned approach has effectively addressed the significant issue of staff aging (Tank, 2018).

Second, to address the requirements of economic and institutional reform, it is imperative to establish a clear demarcation between the roles of the political party and the government while also optimizing the organizational framework of the government (Xianglin, 2015). In September 1986, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China initiated the formation of a Study Group on the Reform of the Central Political Institutions, following a recommendation by Deng Xiaoping. This group's primary objective was to prepare and design a comprehensive plan for the reform of political institutions. Following an extensive research endeavor, the team of researchers developed a document titled "Political System Reform Master Plan (Draft)" (Chuntao, 2014). The report of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 1987 emphasized the importance of implementing the "separation of party and government functions" and the separation of party leadership positions from government roles. It also stressed the need to coordinate and unify the relationship between the central and local governments by loosening the constraints between them. The report further advocated for the adoption of "vertical decentralization" and "classification by horizontal" approaches to reform the personnel regime and decentralize government management (China, 1987).

Third, the restoration and advancement of the legal system have been emphasized (Wenxian & Chuntang, 1988). The initiation of the restoration and advancement of the legal system serves as the foundational step towards a fresh examination of democratic politics within the political framework of this era. The establishment of the Legal Department under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in February 1979 aimed to enhance legislative efforts. The recently ratified "Law on Organization of the People's Courts of the People's Republic of China" establishes that the judicial authority of the People's Courts is to be exercised autonomously by the law, free from any influence or intervention by administrative agencies, social organizations, or individuals (Agency, 2018). The 1982 Constitution introduced a provision stating that "organizations and individuals do not possess the right to receive preferential treatment beyond what is outlined in the Constitution and legal statutes" (China, 1982). These measures established the fundamental framework for the development of democracy and the establishment of legal principles during the initial phases of political and institutional restructuring.

Furthermore, it is proposed to eliminate the existence of people's communes and instead establish a system of grassroots democracy wherein self-governing villages would be implemented (Forum, 2018). The establishment of village committees, congresses of workers' representatives, and residents' committees took place in 1980, with their legal status being officially recognized in the constitution of 1982. The "Notice on the Implementation of Separation of Government from Society and the Establishment of Communal Government" was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council in October 1983 (Network, 1983). Individuals should strive to reinstate communal authority and recognize the distinction between government and society. The term "government withdrawal" refers to the process by which the government relinquishes control over social organizations, including transferring authority over human resources, financial matters, and decision-making power. This process also involves empowering social organizations to assume a more proactive role in their development (Network, 2018). In 1988 the "Law on Organization of Village Committees of the People's Republic of China" was enacted. The "Law on the Organization of Urban Residential Committees of the People's Republic of China" was enacted by the National People's Congress in 1989. This legislation played a significant role in the gradual consolidation of the grassroots democratic self-governance system in China. It demonstrated notable advancements in the standardization, institutionalization, and legal framework of grassroots democratic self-governance.

Adapting and speeding up the process of political institution reform

The period spanning from 1989 to the 16th National People's Congress in 2002 marked a notable phase in establishing and advancing the "three representatives"⁶ ideology. During the Party Building Theory Seminar in December 1989, Jiang Zemin emphasized the imperative of steadfastly pursuing political system reform. Nevertheless, it is imperative to clarify that the objective of this reform is not to undermine or eliminate the Party's leadership but to fortify and augment it (Jingwen, 2021).

During this particular period, the reform of Chinese political institutions was implemented across various domains, namely as outlined below:

One potential approach is to establish a civil servant regime (Yanxin, 2009). The establishment of the Ministry of National Personnel in March 1988 signified the commencement of the implementation phase of the state civil servant regime, as determined by the decision made during the 1st Conference of the 7th National Congress of Deputies and the year 1989 witnessed the pilot project implementation for the civil servant regime in six State Council agencies and two cities nationwide. This initiative focused on three key aspects: the recruitment examination system, the practice of nepotism avoidance, and the personnel evaluation system. The efficacy of the nationwide personnel training regime has been extensively evaluated, yielding noteworthy outcomes (Yufang, 2018b). The "Plan for Implementing the State Civil Service Regime" was issued in November 1993. The implementation of the state civil servant regime was finalized by 1997. The "Charter on Selection and Appointment of Party and Government Leaders" was issued by the Party Central Committee in July 2002. This charter establishes significant principles and a fundamental framework for selecting and appointing leaders within the party and government (Committee, 2019).

Second, it is imperative to establish a regime of multi-party cooperation and political consultation (Network, 2021). The 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1992 incorporated the establishment of a multi-party cooperation regime under the leadership of the Communist Party of China as a component of the theory of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics. The inclusion of the multi-party cooperation led by the Communist Party of China and the political consultation regime into the Chinese Constitution occurred during the inaugural session of the Eighth National People's Congress in 1993 (Zhiping, 2021).

Third, an essential aspect of governing the country was the enhancement of the People's Congress system, focusing on bolstering the legislative and supervisory capacities of the People's Congress and its standing committee. This approach ensured that the nation's governance adhered to legal principles (Xiaoping, 1997, pp. 31-32). Emerging from this particular political ideology, the report of the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1997 accorded significant importance to the reform of political institutions and presented a comprehensive blueprint for the gradual transformation of these institutions over the century. The inclusion of the rule of law in the constitution was formally established in 1999. In January 2001, during the National Propaganda Ministerial Conference, Jiang Zemin put forth a strategic proposal of "integrating the principles of legal governance and ethical governance," which holds great historical significance in the political evolution of China (Party, 2019).

Furthermore, it is imperative to expedite the legislation process and formulate various laws and regulations. According to Peng (Peng, 2002), by the conclusion of August 2002, the National People's Congress and the Standing Committee had undertaken a comprehensive evaluation and endorsement of a total of 301 laws, along with seven legal interpretations and 122 decisions about legal matters. The action above has brought about a significant transformation from a state lacking a legal foundation to one that establishes a legal assurance for advancing socialist politics, economy, and culture, specifically tailored to the unique characteristics of China.

Gradual growth with an emphasis on steadiness

⁶ The ideology of "three representatives" specifically: The Communist Party of China must represent China's requirements for the development of advanced productive power; representing the development direction of China's advanced culture; represent the fundamental interests of the Chinese people.

The period between 2002 and the 18th National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012 (Socialism, 2020), as discussed in the report of the 16th National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2002, emphasized the importance of integrating three critical elements for the establishment of socialist governance in modern China. These elements include upholding the party's leadership role, ensuring public ownership of the nation, and governing the country based on legal principles (Zhiping, 2021). The 17th National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in 2007, emphasized the concept of democracy within the party. Specifically, the Congress proposed the adoption of the term system for party deputies as a means to enhance intra-party democracy. The primary political regime of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been established as grassroots self-government within people's democracy (Zhiping, 2021).

The discourse surrounding the reform of China's political institutions during this period centered on several key aspects:

First, in order to enhance the Party's governance capabilities, it is imperative to initiate reforms in the Party's leadership and administrative approaches (Chao, 2019). The "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Strengthening Management Capacity Building" was adopted during the Fourth Plenary Meeting of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in September 2004 (China, 2016). This decision, which aims to establish a socialist harmonious society, has emerged as a crucial and significant representation of the shift in political cognitive values. It advocates for implementing scientific, rule-based, and democratic governance, reflecting the Party's evolving understanding of leadership and governance approaches. Since January 2005, the Party has implemented educational initiatives to preserve its members' advanced qualities and reinforce its governing basis. These efforts involve utilizing policies, laws, economic strategies, administrative measures, educational programs, consultations, and conciliatory actions. The objective is to promptly address public concerns that align with legal provisions and government practices that prioritize the well-being of the people while also fostering strong connections between the Party and the general population (Committee, 2008a).

Second, it is imperative to establish a public service system that serves as the central pillar while simultaneously enhancing the reform of the socialist administrative system with distinct Chinese attributes through enhancing government functions (Baocheng & Sendong, 2018). The proposal to achieve the policy objective of establishing a service-oriented government across the nation was put forth by the Third Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2003 (Committee, 2004). According to Guanghui (Guanghui, 2018), the national will was declared as "striving to build a serving government" during the Third Session of the Tenth National People's Congress in March 2005. The "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on several major issues related to the construction of a socialist harmonious society" was adopted during the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2006. This decision put forth the idea of establishing a "public service system" (Committee, 2008b). According to the report of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2007, the reform of the administrative management system was identified as a significant component of the broader political system governance reform. The primary objective of this reform initiative is to establish a government that prioritizes service-oriented practices (Government, 2007).

Thirdly, it is imperative to advance the concept of people's democracy by fostering intra-party democracy and facilitating the systematic expansion of individuals' involvement in democratic political processes. In September 2004, the "Statute on Protection of Party Members' Rights" was issued by the Communist Party of China (China, 2004). The initial step in constructing a party's democracy involves the identification and safeguarding of the democratic interests of its members. Since the convening of the 17th National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China, significant advancements have been made in establishing and refining electoral democracy, public consultation, and other mechanisms for conducting hearings. According to Ouyang Yuehua (Yuehua, 2021), members of the general public express their viewpoints on the social situation through various channels such as government websites and hotlines.

Develop in-depth and comprehensively

The temporal span commences from the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012 and extends to the present moment. During this particular era, China's political institutions had a notable and comprehensive development (Yaotong, 2018). China's political system reform has made notable progress under the guidance of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, led by Xi Jinping. This reform has achieved significant advancements in various crucial domains, effectively leveraging its substantial political influence and facilitating the enhancement of the socialist political framework with distinct Chinese attributes (Zhongquan, 2019b). The reform centers its attention on various aspects explicitly:

First and foremost, it is essential to foster the advancement of a comprehensive and multifaceted democratic consultation framework. The "consolidation of the socialist democratic consultation system" was emphasized in the report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which took place in November 2012. In order to enhance the operational mechanism and democratic consultation system, as well as facilitate the comprehensive and multifaceted advancement and institutionalization of democratic consultation (Jintao, 2012). The party political report acknowledges the significance of democratic consultation in the context of national political construction, marking a notable departure from previous reports (Qinglin, 2013). The comprehensive plan and implementation to promote the extensive and multi-layered development of the democratic consultative regime were released by the Third Plenary Meeting of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam in November 2013 (Jiayi, 2013). In February 2015, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China released a document titled "Opinions on Enhancing the Establishment of socialist democratic consultation" (Committee, 2015). This document provided suggestions for the comprehensive development of various forms of consultation within the political party system, including consultation with the People's Congress, government consultation, consultation at the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, consultation with people's unions, grassroots consultation, and consultation with social organizations in the context of the new circumstances.

Second, the report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012 highlighted the importance of "We must be steadfast in our convictions" when perfecting the leadership system and anti-corruption working mechanism. "The anti-corruption road with Chinese characteristics follows the principle of treating symptoms and causes, comprehensive treatment, and punishment and prevention simultaneously; it emphasizes prevention plans and vigorously promotes the construction of a punishment system; it combats corruption; it guarantees clean cadres, clean government, and clean politics. (China, 2013) At its Fourth Plenary Session in October 2014, the 18th Central Committee legitimized the establishment of anti-corruption institutions. To be more specific, we will take steps to ensure that the government fulfills its statutory mandates, that the law makes decisions, that administrative law enforcement institutions are reformed to the fullest extent possible, and that everyone abides by the law. Enforcement of laws that are strict, normative, fair, and civilized. Increased regulation and supervision of administrative power; widespread encouragement of government transparency (China, 2014). As part of the Beijing delegation's discussion at the Fifth Session of the 12th National People's Congress in March 2017, Wang Qishan⁷ emphasized the importance of establishing a national supervisory board for the Commission and integrating anti-corruption resources and forces in order to create a centralized, unified, authoritative, and influential anti-corruption system and a state supervision system. All public officials who use public power should be subject to strict oversight (Qishan, 2017).

Furthermore, it is imperative to advocate for implementing judicial institutional reform (Justice, 2022). The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China underscored the imperative of expediting the reform of the judicial system, enhancing and refining the socialist justice system that embodies distinct Chinese characteristics, and guaranteeing the effective exercise of judicial and supervisory powers by the judicial and procuratorate authorities (China, 2013). In the third plenary session of the 18th Communist Party of China Executive Committee, reform measures were proposed to address unresolved judicial issues

⁷ At that time, Wang Qishan was the Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China.

and facilitate the establishment of structured judicial and operational systems (Jinping, 2014). During the fourth plenary session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, a comprehensive discussion was held regarding measures to ensure judicial fairness. These measures included the enforcement of independent and fair trials, adherence to legal controls, the establishment of a log book to track the involvement of leading officials in judicial activities, intervention in case handling, the implementation of an information reporting and prosecution system, the consolidation of administrative agencies for handling lawsuits, assistance to courts in managing administrative cases, and the respect and adherence to court judgments. Additionally, the session emphasized the need to establish and strengthen mechanisms that protect judicial officers in performing their statutory duties (Xiangping, 2015).

The clarification of the leadership of the Communist Party of China regarding the primary goals and directions of China's political institution reform in the foreseeable future has resulted in the formulation of strategic measures and specific steps. Per the outlined strategy, it is imperative to enhance political and institutional reform, optimize administrative processes, devolve authority, and adhere to legal principles. These endeavors aim to eliminate hindrances that impede the cultivation of distinct Chinese characteristics, thereby generating the necessary political momentum to materialize the vision of a great Chinese Renaissance.

Evaluation of the Reform of China's Political Institutions

The political system in China has undergone significant reforms, resulting in several tangible outcomes. These include the elimination of the lifetime tenure system for leading cadres, the removal of overlapping party and government bodies, the establishment of the people's congresses and political consultation systems, the revitalization of village self-governance and grassroots democracy, and the renovation of the cadre system, among others. The statements above present a collection of objective facts. However, specific perspectives suggest that while marked by notable accomplishments, China's ongoing political institution reform is also confronted with a range of precarious economic challenges and environmental concerns (Joseph, 2014, p. 3). According to Xueqiang (Xueqiang, 2011), it is contended that China's political reform is experiencing a delay. Furthermore, the argument posits that various challenges and impediments need to be improved to progress reform efforts. The persistence of unresolved issues about China's economic institutions can be attributed to the delayed progress in political reform.

The invocation of Deng Xiaoping's perspective on the interplay between economic and political institutional reform is evident in their discourse. Specifically, they assert that the successful implementation of economic, institutional reform hinges upon the prior execution of political institutional reform, as encapsulated by Deng Xiaoping's statement: "Without undertaking political institutional reform, the implementation of governance and economic institutional reform becomes challenging." Each progressive stride in reforming economic institutions is acutely cognizant of the imperative to reform political institutions. The achievement of successful economic reform is contingent upon the reformation of the political institution, as emphasized by Xiaoping (Xiaoping, 2001, pp. 164, 174-175, 240-241, 220, 372). Corresponding changes in the political sphere must accompany the advancement of economic reform. Subsequently, proponents have contended that the transformation of China's economic institutions is contingent upon the reformation of its political institutions, with the current pace of economic and institutional reform being characterized as expeditious.

On the contrary, reforming political institutions is characterized by a gradual pace, progressively becoming more constrained by the need for expeditious action. When examining the reform of China's political institutions, it becomes evident that China concurrently implemented political and institutional reforms alongside establishing a socialist market economic system. During that period, China's economy transitioned from a planned economy to a market economy. Numerous elements required standardization. During that period, it was observed that the market economy was nascent, thereby necessitating the need for political institutions to undergo adaptations to align with the ongoing reforms in economic institutions. This analysis examines the interconnections between China's political and institutional reform efforts and the corresponding economic and institutional reform prerequisites during a designated timeframe. Nevertheless, the political system's institutional reform will probably need to align with the pace of

economic, institutional reform. However, it is typically accompanied by economic and political institutional reforms in order to align with the developmental requirements of a socialist-oriented market economy.

Hence, when evaluating the reformation of Chinese political institutions, it is imperative to consider certain legal aspects, such as complexity, durability, gradual implementation, and systematic progression. However, prior to delving into these factors, it is crucial to focus on the following three key points:

First, the interdependence, coordination, and adaptation between China's political institution reform and its economic and institutional reform are evident. However, it is essential to note that both reforms exhibit an asymmetrical structure. China's approach is influenced by its strategic emphasis on economic development and the rationale behind reform initiatives. According to a report published in 2018 (Times, 2018), China initiated its reforms by focusing on the rural areas and the economic sector. The renovation of economic institutions represents a significant reform that transitions an economy from a planned system to a market-oriented one. On the contrary, the adaptation of political institutions is characterized by persistence and comprehensiveness. With the progression of the socialist market economy, the fundamental socialist system in China has gradually addressed the deficiencies within its political framework.

Second, it is imperative that China's political institution reform aligns with both economic and institutional reform, as well as the advancement of cultural and economic development.

Thirdly, the reform of China's political system has yielded numerous tangible outcomes. However, these outcomes hold greater significance as they exemplify and embody China's political development trajectory. This assertion can be substantiated by examining the following:

First and foremost, within the macro operation of political power, there has been an enhancement in the authority of the Constitution, accompanied by a notable increase in the institutionalization of political power. It is particularly evident in the power dynamics of the central government. The paramount aspect of China's political development is its utmost significance. The Constitution's authoritative development is evident in its explicit institutionalization, as it has established a framework for regulating the behavior of all social actors, including political parties, through the law. The macro system of political power has undergone a substantial transformation. Throughout its implementation, there has been a notable enhancement in the standardization and procedural aspects of the fundamental political system established by the Constitution, namely the People's Congress system.

Second, within the realm of political power micro-operations, it is evident that despite the persistence of various deviant occurrences in the exercise of power, there is a noticeable rise in the presence of normative elements within the political system. In the present context, it is evident that the National People's Congress is progressively reinforcing its monitoring role while the press is experiencing a strengthening of its function in terms of public accountability. Additionally, the significance of the administrative rule of law state has been augmented, accompanied by the establishment of a comprehensive system, exemplified by the advancement of administrative proceedings. Furthermore, enacting the Law not only delineates legislative authority but also establishes a legal differentiation between central and local legislative powers, among other developments.

Third, the most prominent aspect of political progress in China's recent years lies in advancing individual rights and freedoms. This development serves as a direct manifestation of the country's achievements in reforming its political system. When examining the state of individuals' rights and freedoms before and after the implementation of reform and opening-up policies, it becomes evident that the fundamental aspect of enhancing the human rights situation lies in guaranteeing social stability, fostering economic progress, and elevating the overall quality of life for individuals.

In addition to the accomplishments above, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of reforming China's political system. These limitations can be observed through the following aspects:

Firstly, there has been a notable rise in corruption cases. After implementing political and institutional reforms in China, several significant corruption cases involving prominent officials across various sectors, including sports, law, environment, and public security, have been consistently brought to light. Several notable cases have caused significant public outcry in China. One such case involves Wen Qiang, the former director of the Department of Justice in Chongqing. Wen Qiang was convicted and sentenced to death for accepting bribes totaling 1.77 million USD.

Additionally, he was found guilty of protecting five criminal organizations and being involved in multiple rape cases in 2009 (Commission, 2010). Another case involves Ye ShuYang, the former Chief of Police in Shao Quan City, Quang Dong Province. Ye ShuYang faced trial in January 2010 on charges of accepting bribes exceeding 34 million yuan. He was also accused of protecting illegal activities such as prostitution, gambling, drug trafficking, aiding criminals in evading the law and engaging in buying and selling positions within the police force. These offenses were committed during his 19-year tenure in office (Online, 2010). Furthermore, it has been reported by Chinese media that during the initial half of 2003, a minimum of 4,000 corrupt officials in China absconded with a sum totaling 5 billion dollars (Shikang, 2014).

There were an additional 33,546 instances of corruption, bribery, irresponsibility, and serious crimes in 2009, involving 41,179 people, and 26,684 instances involving 33,953 people were investigated and prosecuted, for a total increase of 1% and 10.1% over 2008. Of these, 3,211 severe cases of dereliction of duty and infringement of rights were documented and investigated; 2,687 officials at the provincial level and above have been investigated and prosecuted for suspected crimes, including 181 at the departmental and departmental levels and four at the provincial and ministerial levels (Government, 2009).

In 2013, Beijing prosecutors filed and investigated 299 cases of corruption and bribery involving 357 individuals and 74 cases of negligence of duty and violation of rights involving 81 individuals. According to tv.sohu.com (tv.sohu.com, 2014), there are a total of 59 national staff working at the county and departmental levels, with another 15 working at the department and bureau levels. Of the 505 cases of corruption, bribery, dereliction of duty, and violation of rights investigated in 2014, 120 involved more than one million yuan (31.2%); (Network, 2015).

There was always corruption in the system. Because ministerial and official salaries are so low compared to the rest of the population, corruption in China has exploded since the country implemented institutional reforms. Nowadays, business is only done in China with a connection. To put it another way, cultivate relationships with people you deem necessary by giving them gifts that fall into one of several predetermined categories. Everyone seeks connections with those in positions of authority, and those in positions of authority seek relationships with those in positions of power. And if you, my boss, are ever too demanding, I can always befriend your boss instead. It is a method for settling arguments. The fight against corruption has been labeled a "vital matter" by the Communist Party of China (government, 2011).

Is the Chinese Communist Party capable of effectively managing and mitigating corruption? The significance of anti-corruption in the reform of Chinese political institutions cannot be overstated. China may strive to maintain integrity and moral rectitude at the forefront. According to a report published by the New York Times on November 11, 2012, it was revealed that Wen Jia Bao's family possessed assets amounting to \$2.7 billion (Yew, 2013). Hence, this observation indicates that the Chinese Communist Party has encountered challenges in effectively managing corruption at the local level. Corruption does not undermine the political system's integrity but hampers its ability to operate efficiently. The reliance on personal connections for the promotion or appointment of crucial positions can have implications for policy implementation, posing challenges to China's ability to leverage its developmental goals and achieve optimal growth rates fully.

Furthermore, democratic consultation remains a mere formality. On September 10, 2022, the website Chinaelections.org analyzed the constraints associated with the political reform process, particularly emphasizing "democratic negotiation." In China, there has been a shift towards adopting the concept of "democratic consultation" instead of "political consultation." However, it is essential to note that consultation primarily serves as a symbolic representation of political engagement rather than a substantive mechanism for democratic decision-making. The consultative commissioners need a direct mandate from the populace and possess a substantial public support base. This absence of popular representation does not follow the existing legal framework. Furthermore, the presence of numerous discretionary practices poses challenges to the attainment of comprehensive democracy and inclusive consultation. The implementation of consultations in China is currently characterized by subjectivity on the part of senior leaders within the Chinese Party and government.

The reform of China's political institutions continues to encounter various challenges, including power conflicts and divisions within the workforce. When a single link within a chain becomes broken, it has the potential to disrupt the entire chain.

Conclusions

The objective of political institution reform in China does not involve altering the fundamental character of the socialist system in China but instead aims to enhance its comprehensiveness and vitality (Chengwen, 2020). Hence, certain domains necessitate reform, including the Party leadership structure and the administrative apparatus. Nevertheless, certain aspects require further enhancement, including the refinement of the People's Congress system, the enhancement of the political consultation framework, and the promotion of multi-party collaboration within the framework of the Communist Party's leadership. The areas above focus entail the paramount significance of reforming the Party's leadership institution and restructuring the administrative apparatus. Since the initiation of reform and opening up, China has implemented four administrative reforms, with particular emphasis on the reforms undertaken in 1998, widely regarded as the most substantial in scale. These reforms have made notable progress in restructuring, downsizing, and functional transformation. These accomplishments are crucial in strengthening the gains made in economic and institutional reform while fostering a conducive atmosphere for further progress in economic and social institutional reform.

Nevertheless, the pace of reform in the Chinese political system, initiated after the implementation of economic and social reforms, needs to be more active. This domain of reform must align itself with the progress achieved in other areas and confront the challenges it presently encounters. The contemporary global landscape is characterized by several significant factors that have profoundly impacted the ongoing process of reforming China's political institutions. These factors include the swift transformation in the international balance of power, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the deceleration of China's economic growth, and the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. These elements have exerted substantial influence on the trajectory, actions, and strategies pursued in reforming China's political institutions. In contrast, China's political system exhibits a significant degree of concentration of power in the hands of the individual leader, thereby indicating that the future trajectory of political reform in China will predominantly hinge upon the dynamics of political authority. President Xi Jinping, the leader of the People's Republic of China, has expressed a keen interest in this particular domain. The ongoing political system reform in China is a complex and protracted endeavor that necessitates extensive examination within Vietnam and on a global scale.

In light of China's prevailing political and institutional reform landscape, it is pertinent to explore the potential lessons that can be derived for Vietnam, mainly about political system reform. This inquiry is crucial regarding the prerequisites for successfully implementing the proposed project. Hence, it is imperative to conduct additional research on this matter.

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