INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR, INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN, AND STATE-SOCIETY STRUCTURE IN UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL SUCCESSION IN CHINA: FROM HU TO XI AND THE NEXT?

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Abstract - Xi Jinping began his second term as the President of People Republic of China and the Secretary General of Chinese Communist Party in October 2017. In the one hand, since 2013, Xi has seized full control of the central leadership in Zhongnanhai and been regarded as the most powerful paramount leader since Deng Xiaoping. In the other hand, in the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the most powerful new seven members of the Central Politburo represented the main political factions inside CCP. Will China continue its legacy of collective leadership designed by Deng decades ago? Will Xi pave the way for his absolute rule in the future? To answer this question, this research traced back to the time when Hu Jintao stepped down and Xi came to power in the 2013. Adopting three approaches—individual behavior, institutional design, and state-society structure to understand political succession with Chinese characteristics, this research suggested that First, the societal pressure to the CCP empowered Xi to become a more assertive leader. Second, however, it's not the winner takes all game for Xi. The CCP continues its collective leadership. Third, understanding Chinese political succession needs all three approaches as tool.

Index Terms - Political Succession, Xi Jinping, Hu Jintao, Chinese Politics