

*Institutional Genes: The Origins of China's Institutions and Totalitarianism*

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This book explores the origins and evolution of China's institutions and communist totalitarianism in general. The book argues that the contemporary China's fundamental institution is communist totalitarianism. Introducing the concept of 'institutional genes' (IGs), the book examines how the IGs of Soviet Russia merged with those of the Chinese imperial system, creating a durable totalitarian regime with Chinese characteristics. Institutional Genes are fundamental institutional elements that self-replicate and guide institutional changes and are empirically identifiable. The book first analyzes the rise of communist totalitarian ideology in Europe and how it led to the creation of a totalitarian system based on the Tsarist Russian IGs. It then examines the origins and evolution of the IGs of the Chinese imperial system, focusing on how these IGs combined with the communist totalitarian IGs introduced to China by the Comintern, enabling the CCP to establish a totalitarian regime in China. The book further discusses the institutional changes during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, analyzing how the hybrid of Soviet totalitarian IGs and traditional Chinese IGs gave rise to a Regionally Administered Totalitarian (RADT) system. It also explores how the RADT system facilitated China's rapid economic development during the reform and opening-up period, not only saving the CCP but also turning China into a totalitarian superpower. The ascent of communist totalitarian China echoes Mises' warning that efforts to halt totalitarianism have failed. Reversing this trend necessitates a thorough understanding of totalitarianism.

Chenggang Xu's research areas include political economics, institutional economics, law-and-economics, development economics, transition economics, Chinese economy. He is a Senior Research Scholar at SCCEI, Stanford University and a Board Member of the Ronald Coase Institute. Before retiring from the University of Hong Kong, he was the Chung Hon-Dak Professor of Economics there, a Special-Term Professor at Tsinghua University, a World-Class University Professor at Seoul National University, a Reader (tenured Associate Professor) at LSE. He served as the president of Asian Law and Economics, and as a consultant for the World Bank and the IMF. He has frequently appeared in the media to analyze or comment on China's political economy. He obtained his PhD in economics from Harvard in 1991. His publications appeared at *REStu*, *JPE*, *AER*, *JEL*, *RFS*, *EER*, *ALER*, *JEG*, etc. He was a recipient of the 2013 Sun Yefang Prize and the first recipient of the Chinese Economics Prize (2016).