

# Engineering Stability

Rebuilding the State in Twenty-First  
Century Chinese Universities

Yan Xiaojun



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“Grounded in original and thought-provoking fieldwork, *Engineering Stability* sheds new light on party-state policies and practices related to the experiences of university students in contemporary China.”  
—Teresa Wright, California State University, Long Beach

## ENGINEERING STABILITY

REBUILDING THE STATE IN TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

By Xiaojun Yan

*Series: China Understandings Today*

While the processes of founding a new state or constructing a new political order after a transition have been well-studied, there has been much less attention to how regimes that survive major political crises purposefully reinvent a post-crisis state to respond to updated concepts, new circumstances, changed social demands, and a realigned elite consensus. In *Engineering Stability*, Yan Xiaojun examines the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to reassert control and restore order on university campuses in the post-Tiananmen era. Since prominent national universities serve the nation-state as training grounds for the country's future political, economic, and cultural elites, public life on university campuses has immediate political relevance.

Drawing on rich materials gathered from in-depth field research in China during the Xi Jinping era, *Engineering Stability* invites scholars of comparative politics, state theory, contentious politics, and political development to rethink and reimagine how what Yan calls “a compromised autocratic state” is rebuilt within and from itself after overcoming a traumatic moment of vulnerability. The book further details the four types of infrastructure — institutional, significative, regulatory, and incentivizing — that state rebuilders need to overhaul, and looks into the campaign of state rebuilding in post-Tiananmen Chinese universities and its implications for our understanding of politics in general.

Yan Xiaojun is Associate Professor of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong.

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