ASIA POLICY, NUMBER 6 (JULY 2008), 53–93
HTTP://ASIAPOLICY.NBR.ORG

China's Fifth Generation: Is Diversity a Source of Strength or Weakness?

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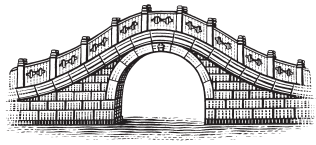

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NOTE *This is an abridged version of a longer research paper that will be included in a forthcoming publication based on NBR's "Emerging Leaders in East Asia" project. The author is indebted to Yinsheng Li for his research assistance. The author also thanks Sally Carman, Christina Culver, Scott W. Harold, Kenneth B. Pyle, and two anonymous reviewers for suggesting ways in which to clarify the article.*

KEYWORDS: CHINA; ELITE POLITICS; LEADERSHIP; INTRAGENERATIONAL DIVERSITY; FACTIONS; FIFTH GENERATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article studies the emerging "fifth generation" of leaders with a focus both on intergenerational shared characteristics and on intragenerational diversities.

MAIN ARGUMENT

China's decisionmakers are by no means a monolithic group of elites who share the same views, values, and visions; nor are they always engaged in a ferocious zero-sum struggle for power in which the winner takes all. The growing diversity within China's leadership and the dynamic interdependence among competing factions are particularly evident in the fifth generation. The fact that the two most powerful camps in the fifth generation—*tuanpai* and princelings—have been allotted an equal number of seats in China's supreme decisionmaking organs indicates the intensity of factional competition. Yet these competing factions are willing to cooperate, partly because they are in the same boat and partly because their expertise and leadership skills are complementary. Consequently negotiation, compromise, consensus-building, and behind-the-scenes lobbying will likely occur more often in the future. The emerging bipartisan balance of power will further contribute to the diversity of outlooks and stances on major issues, such as economic globalization, social justice, political democratization, and environmental protection.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Washington should understand that the political survival of the Chinese Communist Party is the most important consideration for this new generation of leaders.
- Although fifth generation leaders will probably respond to challenges and crises with more confidence than their predecessors, this new generation cannot afford to be arrogant. Increasing factional checks and balances will constrain these leaders in making new foreign policy initiatives.
- Though interested in promoting bilateral cooperation with the U.S. on various issue areas, the new generation of leaders will likely reject any lectures from the U.S. regarding how China should behave in the modern world.

The greatest challenge to the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) probably comes not from outside forces but from forces within the party. China's top leaders through the years—including Mao Zedong in the first generation, Deng Xiaoping in the second, Jiang Zemin in the third, and Hu Jintao in the fourth—all have publicly acknowledged the pivotal importance to the Chinese regime of unity and cohesion within the party leadership. From time to time, however, each of these top leaders preserved leadership unity and elite cohesion by moving decisively, sometimes even violently, to eliminate political rivals.

The emerging generation of Chinese leaders, known as the "fifth generation," is likely to find the challenge of producing elite harmony and unity within the CCP more difficult than leaders of previous generations. Three factors contribute to this daunting political challenge. First, over the past three decades China has been transforming away from rule by a single charismatic and all-powerful leader toward a more collective form of leadership. This shift has ended the era of strongman politics and, to a certain extent, China's long history of arbitrary decisionmaking by one lone individual. Factional politics, which have been particularly noticeable among the leaders of the fifth generation, may grow out of control as this generation comes to the fore and result in a collective leadership model that makes the decisionmaking process lengthier and more complicated, perhaps even leading to deadlock.

Second, for most of the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC) the ruling elite was largely homogeneous in terms of sociological and professional backgrounds. Communist revolutionary veterans with backgrounds as peasants and soldiers comprised the first and second generations, while engineers-turned-technocrats made up the third and fourth generations. The emerging fifth generation is arguably the most diverse elite generation in the PRC's history in terms of class background, political association, educational credentials, and career paths. Differences in the career experiences and administrative backgrounds of China's top leaders are often a source of tension and conflict.[1]

Finally, the fifth generation is also coming of age at a time when China faces a multitude of daunting problems, such as growing economic disparities,

[1] Lucian W. Pye, *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988); and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Leadership, Legitimacy and Conflict in China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984).

frequent social unrest, and repeated industrial and environmental disasters.[2] Foreign policy challenges have also become acute as the PRC confronts an unstable and increasingly complicated external environment. Debate over many issues—including the domestic redistribution of resources, the establishment of a public health care system, financial reforms, foreign trade, energy security, and domestic ethnic tensions—are so contentious that the fifth generation of leadership may find it increasingly difficult to build the kind of consensus necessary to govern effectively.

This pessimistic view should be balanced, however, by a competing assessment of the fifth generation. A vicious power struggle is of course hardly inevitable. Likewise political competition in China is by no means a zero-sum game. Fifth generation leaders understand that they are all "in the same boat" and that it is in their best interest to demonstrate political solidarity when facing enormous economic and socio-political challenges. The diverse demographic and political backgrounds of this generation of leadership can also be seen as a positive development to the extent that this diversity contributes to political pluralism in the country. It might even be argued that collective leadership not only is a mechanism of power-sharing through checks and balances among competing political camps but also entails a more dynamic and institutionalized decisionmaking process through which political leaders come to represent various social and geographic constituencies and thus develop better policies to meet new and complicated socio-economic environments.

Is the growing diversity of the political elite a source of strength or weakness for the Chinese political system? In what aspects does the foreign policy of the fifth generation differ from the policies of previous generations? How will the new dynamics associated with the rise of the fifth generation change the rules of the game in Chinese leadership politics? What factors have shaped the world-views of this generation of leaders? How does the fifth generation view the current East Asian security environment, and what are this generation's opinions on China's current and future role in these affairs, especially vis-à-vis the United States? Answering these important questions requires a solid and comprehensive analysis of the fifth generation of leaders—their formative experiences, collective memories, intragenerational differences, political socializations, career paths, factional divisions, educational backgrounds, foreign experiences, and world-views. The characteristics of this generation

2 For more discussion of these problems, see Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007); and Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

of leaders will not only affect China's choices for the future but will also have significant ramifications far beyond China's borders.

This article addresses four main issues:

- pp. 57–62 discuss definitional issues regarding the fifth generation and outline the methodology of this largely quantitative empirical study
- pp. 62–76 examine the collective characteristics and defining experiences of this generation based largely on biographical data on 538 of the most prominent fifth generation leaders
- pp. 76–87 will further analyze the intragenerational diversity of the fifth generation, with a focus on the factional distribution of power
- pp. 87–93 will then assess how the combination of characteristics of the fifth generation and new factors in Chinese elite politics will together determine China's future political trajectory

DEFINITION, METHODOLOGY, AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The categorization of elite generations can be quite imprecise and highly political. As some scholars in generational studies have observed, the distinction between "where one generation begins and another ends"[3] is at times rather arbitrary. Generational boundaries are often defined by a combination of birth year, shared major life experiences and memories, and collective socio-political attitudes of peer groups. A political generation is often defined as a group of cohorts born over a span of 15 to 22 years.[4] These same-age cohorts have experienced the same key historical events during their adolescent and formative years (approximately between the ages of 17 and 25).[5]

The concept of political generations in the PRC has often been based on the distinctive political experience of elites—for example, the Long March generation (the first generation), the "anti-Japanese War" generation (the second generation), the "socialist transformation" generation (the third generation),

3 Ruth Cherrington, "Generational Issues in China: A Case Study of the 1980s Generation of Young Intellectuals," *British Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (June 1997): 304.

4 William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1582–2069* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1992), 60–61.

5 Many scholars define the formative years of personal growth as occurring between the ages of 17 and 25. See Michael Yahuda, "Political Generations in China," *China Quarterly*, no. 80 (December 1979): 795. For a discussion of the importance of generational studies in a historical context and in other national settings such as Japan, see Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885–1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

and the Cultural Revolution generation (the fourth generation).[6] Political considerations among the major actors—for example Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin—have largely driven these categorizations of generational identity. It was Deng who in fact initiated these categorizations during a meeting with other top leaders soon after the Tiananmen crackdown. As a member of the Long March, Deng probably should not be seen along with Zhao Ziyang and Wan Li as part of the anti-Japanese War generation. Yet by identifying himself as the "core" of the second generation and Jiang as the "core" of the third generation, Deng was determined to ensure a smooth political succession in the wake of the failures of his two previously appointed successors (Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang). Jiang, on the other hand, used generational identity to consolidate his political legitimacy as an heir to Deng. When Deng's health deteriorated in the mid-1990s Jiang frequently referred to this categorization in order to secure his position as the "core" of the third generation.[7]

From one perspective, both the fourth and fifth generations of Chinese leaders belong to the Cultural Revolution generation, given that the most important formative experiences of fourth generation leaders, such as Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, and the rising stars of the fifth generation, such as Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, occurred during this time.[8] To a great extent the subdivision of the Cultural Revolution generation serves to extend the rule of leaders who grew up at different periods of this turbulent decade by indicating that the boundary between political elite generations may be subject to change under certain political circumstances.

There were, however, important differences in the experiences of the fourth and fifth generations during the Cultural Revolution. Fourth generation leaders had either completed or were still attending college when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. By contrast the beginning of the Cultural Revolution prevented fifth generation leaders from completing elementary or middle school. Having thus lost the opportunity for formal schooling as a result of the political turmoil of the period, this generation is often referred to as the

6 For further discussion of the definition of political elite generations in the PRC, see Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001): 6–14.

7 Paul Cavey, "Building a Power Base: Jiang Zemin and the Post-Deng Succession," *Issues and Studies* 33, no. 11 (November 1997): 1–34.

8 My previous study defines the Cultural Revolution generation as consisting of those who were born between 1941 and 1956 and who were 10 to 25 years old when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. See Li, *China's Leaders*, 10–12. The prominent Chinese scholar Hu Angang, however, defines those who were born between 1949 and 1959 as the members of the Cultural Revolution generation. See Yu Zeyuan, "Guoqing wenti zhuanjia Hu Angang: Zhongguo juqi you sanda wenti" [Interview with China Expert Hu Angang: China's Rise Confronts Three Major Problems], *Lianhe Zaobao*, January 15, 2007.

"lost generation." Many future leaders of this generation became "sent-down youths," who were moved from cities to rural areas and worked for many years as farmers. Nonetheless, in contrast to many less fortunate members of the same generation, the majority of fifth generation leaders made remarkable comebacks by entering colleges when the higher education system reopened after 1977. This education resuscitated the professional and political careers of these future leaders.

It should be noted that the official Chinese media seldom uses the term "fifth generation" but instead calls the cohort of leaders who were all born after the founding of the PRC in 1949 the "generation of the Republic" (*gongheguo yidai*).[9] Based on general consensus both in China and in overseas communities that study contemporary China, the fifth generation is mainly composed of the age cohort born in the 1950s.[10] This study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the collective characteristics and intragenerational diversities of the fifth generation leaders through both quantitative and qualitative analyses of this generation.

The quantitative section of the article will analyze the biographical backgrounds of 538 current high-ranking leaders who were born in or after 1950. **Figure 1** shows the distribution of fifth generation leaders by year of birth.[11] Of leaders from this generation, 462 (86%) were born in the 1950s, 71 (13%) were born in the early 1960s, and only 5 (1%) were born in the late 1960s. The latter five are the youngest leaders at the level of vice governor and vice minister in present-day China. Though nominally considered members of the fifth generation at present, these individuals will probably be reclassified as members of the sixth generation in future studies. Various types of biographical data, including career paths and political socialization, have been coded for analysis.

The qualitative section is based on various sources, such as Chinese official reports and publications from Hong Kong and overseas containing biographical information on Chinese leaders. In addition, between August 2007 and February 2008 the author conducted interviews with two dozen Chinese public intellectuals and members of prominent think-tanks both

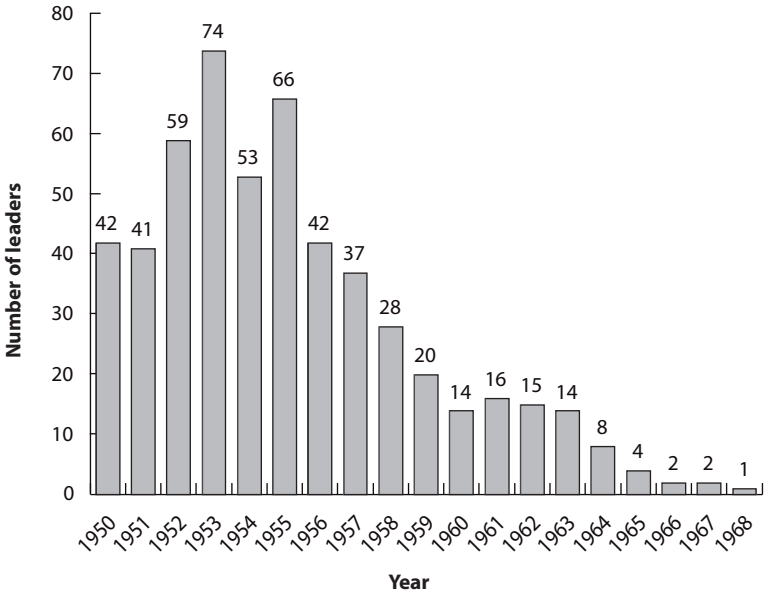
9 Cheng Ying, "Jujiao Zhonggong shiliujie wuzhong quanhui: Zhongguo de zhuanzhe" [Focusing on the Fifth Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: China's Transition], *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, October 9, 2005.

10 Qiu Ping, *Zhonggong diwudai* [The Fifth Generation of CCP Leaders] (Hong Kong: Xiafeier Publishing Company Limited, 2005).

11 Unless cited otherwise, the biographical data on the 538 leaders studied and the data in the tables and figures was primarily compiled by the author using Xinhua News Agency and Chinese-language search engines provided by Google and Baidu.

FIGURE 1

Distribution of Fifth Generation Leaders by Year of Birth



in China and in the United States. This qualitative research aims to further identify political networks and factional affiliations among fifth generation leaders, illustrate overall political trends, and explore differences in policy preferences and world-views.

The 538 leaders studied include all full and alternate members of the 17th Central Committee who were born in or after 1950, as well as all directors and deputy directors of five central CCP organs (e.g., the Department of Organization and the Department of Propaganda), all 29 ministers in the State Council, all provincial CCP secretaries and deputy secretaries, and all provincial governors and vice governors who were born in the same timeframe. **Table 1** shows the distribution of leadership positions held by the fifth generation leaders considered in this study. Vice governors and vice ministers constitute the two largest groups, accounting for 43.5% and 18.2% of leaders respectively. The business leaders, college administrators, municipal officials, military elites, and mass organization leaders in the table concurrently serve as full or alternate members on the 17th Central Committee.

The individuals in this study pool are the most important political leaders in the fifth generation. They include: Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, who are the

TABLE 1

Distribution of Leadership Positions Held by Fifth Generation Leaders

Position	Number	Percentage (%)
Central CCP organs	24	4.5
State Council organs	6	1.1
Ministers	11	2.0
Vice ministers	98	18.2
Provincial party secretaries	10	1.9
Governors	20	3.7
Vice governors	234	43.5
Other provincial leaders	44	8.2
CEOs and business leaders	19	3.5
College presidents	8	1.5
Municipal leaders	27	5.0
Military leaders	23	4.3
Mass organization leaders	14	2.6
Total	**538**	**100**

two youngest of the nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CCP (the supreme decisionmaking body in the PRC); Li Yuanchao and Wang Yang, who are Politburo members (Li currently serves as director of the CCP's powerful Department of Organization, and Wang serves as party secretary of Guangdong, China's richest province); and Ling Jihua and Wang Huning, who are both members of the six-member secretariat of the CCP Central Committee and who also concurrently serve as director of the CCP General Office and director of the CCP Central Policy Research Center respectively. The party's norm of promoting leaders in batches based on age brackets suggests that Hu's designated successor will most likely be selected from the fifth generation. These rising stars—especially Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, and Wang Yang—will be in line for succession to the top posts in the CCP and the state hierarchy in 2012 and 2013.

A few leaders who were born in the late 1940s, including former mayor of Beijing Wang Qishan (born in 1948) and Chongqing party secretary Bo Xilai (born in 1949), are also possible candidates to succeed the top fourth

generation leaders. Wang and Bo are not included in the quantitative analysis of this study because both were born before 1950. Nonetheless, because of their proximity in age to the fifth generation age cohort both leaders' life experiences are quite similar to the experiences of the leaders in this study. Qualitative analysis of the factional competition and the political spectrum of the fifth generation leadership, therefore, should consider these exceptions.

Fifth generation leaders already constitute a significant portion of China's leadership at both the national and provincial levels. Though a majority of the members in the Politburo (including its Standing Committee) and in the Central Military Commission are leaders in the fourth generation and the presence of fifth generation leaders in these two supreme decisionmaking bodies is marginal, members of the fifth generation already constitute a majority at the next highest level of leadership. For example 210 of the 371 full and alternate members of the 17th Central Committee (57%) are fifth generation leaders. Furthermore in January 2008 the leadership of all 31 provincial-level governments in China was reshuffled, and as a result it is now the case that 20 of 31 governors (65%) and all 239 vice governors were born after 1950. Altogether, these 538 prominent fifth generation leaders constitute a sizable study pool from which to derive abundant information on the generational traits and sociological backgrounds of the next generation of Chinese leaders.

DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender, Party Membership, and Ethnicity

The distribution of fifth generation leaders by gender, CCP membership, and nationality is depicted in **Table 2**. As was the case with preceding generations, men occupy the bulk of the fifth generation political leadership. For example the percentage of female leaders is 11%—compared with 9% and 12% in the two study pools of the fourth generation.[12] The fourth and fifth generations are also similar in terms of the fact that most female leaders in the fifth generation serve as vice ministers, deputy provincial party secretaries, or vice governors. Only 2 of 29 ministers in 2007 were women—Minister of Justice Wu Aiying and Minister of Supervision Ma Wen. Another female leader, Li Bin, is expected to be appointed as the minister of the State

[12] For the gender ratio of the two study pools of the fourth generation, see Li, *China's Leaders,* 58.

TABLE 2

Distribution of Fifth Generation Leaders by Gender, Party Membership, and Nationality (538 Leaders in Total)

	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	478	88.8
Female	60	11.2
Party Membership		
CCP Members	503	93.5
Non-CCP Members	35	6.5
Nationality		
Han	477	88.7
Tibetan	14	2.6
Mongolian	9	1.7
Hui	5	0.9
Manchu	5	0.9
Miao	5	0.9
Yi	5	0.9
Uygur	4	0.7
Zhuang	3	0.6
Bai	2	0.4
Korean	2	0.4
Tujia	2	0.4
Buyi	1	0.2
Dai	1	0.2
Kazakh	1	0.2
Naxi	1	0.2
Yao	1	0.2

Population and Family Planning Commission at the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) meeting in March 2008. By contrast in 2003 when the 10th NPC selected cabinet members of the State Council, all 29 full ministers were men. No female leaders currently serve as provincial party secretaries, and

only one woman currently serves as a governor—Song Xiuyan, governor of Qinghai.

In recent years the Chinese authorities have increasingly promoted non-CCP members to high-ranking posts, including some in the central government. According to the CCP's Department of Organization approximately 32,000 non-CCP members currently serve as county or division level (*xianchuji*) leaders.[13] This article shows that 35 non-CCP members currently serve at the vice minister and vice governor level or above, accounting for 6.5% of fifth generation leaders. This number includes two full ministers: Wan Gang (born in 1952), minister of science and technology, and Chen Zhu (born in 1953), minister of health. At present all of the full governors are CCP members. With the exception of Xinjiang, in which all vice governors are CCP members, each and every one of China's 31 provincial-level governments has a vice governor who is a non-CCP member.

Not surprisingly, members of the Han ethnic group occupy an overwhelming majority of the seats held by fifth generation leaders (approximately 89%)—compared with 87% of seats occupied by the fourth generation.[14] All governors of China's five provincial-level autonomous regions are ethnic minorities, reflecting the effort of the Chinese authorities to recruit more local leaders with ethnic minority backgrounds in the minority regions. The Tibet Autonomous Region has fourteen vice governors—the largest number among provincial-level administrations in the PRC and nine of whom are Tibetans.

Birthplace and Regional Representation

It has been widely noted that China's national leaders often come disproportionately from certain geographic regions.[15] For example only five to seven natives of the southern region, which is home to approximately 11% of China's total population and which contributes approximately 12.4% of the country's GDP, have served as full members on any of the four Central

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13 Tong Guanglai, "Sanshiyi shengqushi zhengfu xinlingdao quanbu liangxiang" [The Completion of the Leadership Change of the 31 Provincial-level Governments], *Fazhi wanbao*, January 31, 2008, 1.

14 Li, *China's Leaders*, 58.

15 For example, see Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Army in the Succession to Deng Xiaoping: Familiar Fealties and Technocratic Trends," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 8 (August 1993): 757–86; Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: Full-Fledged Technocratic Leadership with Partial Control by Jiang Zemin," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 3 (March 1998): 231–64; and Zang Xiaowei, "The Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP: Technocracy or Political Technocracy?" *Asian Survey* 33, no. 8 (August 1993): 787–803.

Committees during the past 25 years—which is only approximately 2.5% of the full Central Committee membership during this period.[16] Meanwhile natives of the eastern region, especially from the provinces of Shandong and Jiangsu, have always been overrepresented in the national leadership—constituting approximately 40% of the full Central Committee membership. This geographic pattern of birthplace distribution of the full membership has largely remained the same for the 17th Central Committee.[17]

In the new Politburo elected by the 17th Central Committee the natives of the eastern region also remain overrepresented in relation to the population as a whole, occupying 11 out of 25 seats, or 44% of the Politburo membership. By contrast there are no natives of Guangdong or Sichuan—two of the most populous provinces in the country—serving on the Politburo. There is a marked absence of natives from China's south and southwestern regions on this important decisionmaking body. As with other sources of elite divisions, birthplace ties can be instrumental both in factional conflict and in political compromise. During the Jiang Zemin era, for example, leaders from Shanghai and neighboring areas dominated the Politburo Standing Committee—contributing to elite cohesion on the one hand while simultaneously causing tremendous factional tensions on the other.

Among the 520 fifth generation leaders whose birthplaces could be identified, natives of Shandong, Hebei, Jiangsu, Liaoning, and Zhejiang provinces had the highest representation in this study, accounting for 12.1%, 8.7%, 6.5%, 6.5%, and 6.2% of members respectively. Though the eastern region is still overrepresented, the percentage of leaders from this region has decreased from 44.7% in the third generation and 38.8% in the fourth to 33.7% in the fifth. The percentage of natives of Jiangsu Province has dropped most significantly, from 14.2% in the third and 12.5% in the fourth to just 6.5% in the fifth generation. The decline of Jiangsu natives in the national leadership might be partially related to the fact that Jiang Zemin, the core leader of the third generation and a native of Jiangsu, has lost his influence over personnel appointments in the past few years.

These changes suggest that the fifth generation leadership will possibly become more diverse in terms of birthplace than previous generations.

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16 This data is based on statistics compiled by the Chinese government in 1999–2000. For the population numbers, see the National Bureau of Statistics of China, *Diwuci quanguo renkou pucha gongbao* [The Fifth National Census of the Population of the People's Republic of China], no. 2, May 15, 2001. For GDP statistics, see "Gediqu guonei shengchan zongzhi he zhishu" [Provincial GDP and Other Statistics] ~ http://www.stats.gov.cn/ndsj/zgnj/2000/C08c.htm.

17 Cheng Li, "A Pivotal Stepping-Stone: Local Leaders' Representation on the 17th Central Committee," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 23 (Winter 2008): 8–9.

The new trend found in this study is that a large number of provincial and municipal leaders currently work in the same province or city in which they were born; as a result provincial leaders are more evenly distributed in terms of birth provinces now than before. Recent efforts by the Chinese central authorities to select local leaders through elections and public evaluations discourage the nomination or appointment of candidates from outside of the locality in which leaders will serve, and, all other things being equal among the candidates, the populace and local political establishments tend to prefer native candidates. In addition demands by the central authorities that local leaders be more accountable to constituents further discourage the practice of appointing outsiders to positions of local leadership.

Formative Experiences: The "Lost Generation" and "Sent-Down Youths"

The most defining collective experience of the fifth generation was undoubtedly the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). During this period China's educational system—including elementary schools, middle schools, and colleges—was largely paralyzed, with students engaged mainly in political campaigns and ideological indoctrination rather than in academic studies. Although catastrophic for the entire nation, the Cultural Revolution affected most those who were in elementary and middle school when the movement began. Deprived of the opportunity for formal schooling, fifth generation leaders characteristically belong to the so-called lost generation. This age cohort suffered extraordinary hardships during adolescence, as many were rusticated and forced to work in the countryside as farmers. Between 1966 and 1978 a total of 16.6 million youngsters from urban areas were sent "up to the mountains and down to the villages"; they were called "sent-down youths" (*zhishi qingnian*). As their education was lost, ideals betrayed, dreams broken, and energy wasted, this generation came to be commonly perceived as the "most miserable generation in the People's Republic" (*gongheguo zuibuxing de yidai*).

Of the 389 leaders for whom information on early work experiences is available, at least 281 (or 72.2%) were sent-down youths. This number includes rising stars of the fifth generation such as Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, and Li Yuanchao. Xi Jinping, for example, worked as a farmer and branch party secretary in a village in Yanchuan County in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province, between 1969 and 1975. Xi recently stated to the media that his experience in Yan'an as a sent-down youth was a "defining experience" and "turning point"

in his life.[18] The hardships in the countryside were so extreme as to shape the collective memory of the generation. There is some evidence that such arduous and humbling experiences forced these future leaders to cultivate valuable traits such as endurance, adaptability, and humility. For example Fujian party secretary Lu Zhangong (born in 1952), who spent his teenage years in Heilongjiang as a sent-down youth, recently said, "I was merely one of the thousands of 'sent-down youths.' There was not much difference between my fellow 'sent-down youths' and me. The only difference is that I was lucky enough to seize the opportunity given me."[19] It can be reasonably inferred that fifth generation leaders will differ profoundly from future sixth generation leaders in terms of adolescent experience, because the latter usually move from high school to college without having to face the extraordinary obstacles encountered by the former generation.

Growing Diversity in Political Backgrounds

Though usually sharing common experiences of hardship during the Cultural Revolution, fifth generation leaders often differed greatly from each other in terms of class background and political socialization. It is true that nearly all urban teenagers during the Cultural Revolution, regardless of class or family background, were strongly encouraged to participate in the sent-down youth movement. Those who came from cadre family backgrounds, however, usually returned for various reasons to the cities earlier than those who came from other backgrounds, especially to attend college as the so-called worker-peasant-soldier student class.[20] According to a recently released Chinese documentary film on the sent-down youths in Yunnan, approximately 99% of such youths from cadre family backgrounds returned to their native urban centers within the first few years, while a majority of those from non-cadre backgrounds remained in the countryside for approximately a decade.[21] Thus the fifth generation never formed as strong of political bonds or experienced

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18 "Xi Jinping huijian Yan'an dangzheng daibiaotuan" [Xi Jinping Meets with the Yan'an Party and Government Delegation], *Yan'an ribao*, August 20, 2007, 1.

19 "Gongheguo yidai" [The Generation of the People's Republic], *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan,* June 26, 2005.

20 In 1970 the Maoists decided to recruit a small number of students (approximately 40,000) for China's colleges, which had not accepted any students since 1966. All of these new students, however, were recruited from young workers, peasants, and soldiers rather than from high school graduates. Admission thus was based on class and political background instead of educational credentials. This group of students was called the "worker-student-soldier student class" (*gongnongbing xueyuan*).

21 *Gungun hongchen: Zhongguo zhiqing minjian jiyi jishi* [Red Waves: The Grassroots Memory of China's Sent-down Youths], documentary film (Shantou: Shantou Musical Publication, 2006).

as much solidarity as previous generations of leaders, which had bonded through combat experiences in the Long March, the anti-Japanese War, or the Communist Revolution.

The diversity of the fifth generation in terms of political socialization is particularly evident when examined in light of the years when fifth generation leaders joined the CCP. The criteria for party membership were quite different between the Mao and Deng eras. Those who came from "bad family backgrounds," for example, had very little chance of joining the CCP during the Cultural Revolution.

The fifth generation leaders joined the CCP between 1967 and 1997—a span of 30 years. The final few years of the Cultural Revolution (1973–76) and the early 1980s were two timeframes during which a large number of fifth generation leaders joined the party. The political environments and ideological orthodoxies of these two periods were drastically different: the former period was dominated by the radicalism of the "Gang of Four," while the latter period comprised the least contentious years of Deng's economic reforms. One can reasonably infer that fifth generation leaders who joined the party during these two periods are quite different in political qualifications, class backgrounds, administrative skills, and ideological inclinations. In addition, as noted earlier, 35 high-ranking fifth generation leaders are not members of the CCP.

The Famous "Class of 1982"

As a result of Deng Xiaoping's policy initiatives, in 1977 China resumed the use of college entrance exams. A total of 11.6 million people, ranging in age from late teens to early 30s, registered for the exams in the first and second year. The admission rate was less than 3% for both classes, however, with only approximately 401,000 being admitted.[22] The ratio of those who took the exam and those who were admitted in 1977 was 29 to 1, compared with a ratio of 2 to 1 in 2007.[23] In March and October of 1978 two classes were enrolled in several hundred universities in China. This famous "Class of 1982" (both groups graduated in 1982) was extraordinary not only for having passed the most competitive college entrance exams in PRC history but also because, as Chinese dissident intellectual Wang Juntao has argued, "this unique group

22 *Zhongguo shibao*, May 15, 2006.

23 *Shijie ribao*, January 7, 2008, A3.

would most likely produce the country's most talented scientists, writers, philosophers, educators, and artists as well as statesmen in the future."[24]

Because the college admission process was no longer based on political loyalty, ideological purity, or possession of a revolutionary or proletarian class background, the class of 1982 became known for having diverse family backgrounds. At the same time the post–Cultural Revolution years constituted an exciting period marked by an enthusiasm among Chinese youth for absorbing Western liberal ideas. Li Keqiang's experience and the diverging career paths of some of Li's classmates are particularly revealing. Li enrolled in the Department of Law at Beijing University, one of the most prestigious universities in the country. During his college years academic and interdisciplinary study groups were very popular on the campus, which had a long tradition of liberal arts education. Li actively participated in various public lectures and debates organized by these groups[25] and studied under Professor Gong Xiangrui, a well-known British-educated expert on Western political and administrative systems. Li was particularly interested in the subjects of foreign constitutional law and comparative government.[26] He also published articles on legal development, scientific management, rural economic reform, poverty alleviation, and other socio-economic issues of the day.

Li Keqiang's classmates at the university have pursued drastically different professional careers, some having become leading public intellectuals, political dissidents, independent scholars, religious leaders, and human rights activists. Notable examples include Wang Shaoguang (professor of political science at the Chinese University of Hong Kong), Hu Ping (chief editor of the overseas dissident journal *Beijing Spring*), Zhang Wei (economist at the University of Cambridge), Fang Zhiming (priest and founder of the China Soul for Christ Foundation), and Wang Juntao (chairman of the California-based Chinese Constitutionalist Association).

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24 John Pomfret of the *Washington Post* has described the entrance exams as "the most intense [they] ever had been and ever would be in Communist China's history." John Pomfret, *Chinese Lessons: Five Classmates and the Story of the New China* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 10. For Wang's remarks, see Wang Juntao, "Beida fengyun jiuyou dianping" [Comments about a Few Distinguished Alumni of Beijing University], December 25, 2005 ~ http://www.blogchina.com.

25 Leng Gun, "Li Keqiang tudao Liaoning de xunji" [The Meaning of Li Keqiang's Transfer to Liaoning] *Qianshao*, March 27, 2005 ~ http://news.boxun.com/news/gb/pubvp/2005/03/200503272355.shtml.

26 Zhao Lei, "Beida falüxi: 'Huangpu yiqi na banren'" [The "Graduates of the First Class of the Huangpu Academy": The Students of the First Post–Cultural Revolution Class at the Law Department of Beijing University], *Nanfang zhoumo,* June 7, 2007.

In the early 1980s Li Keqiang and his classmates at Beijing University were all enthusiastically engaged in local and school elections. In 1980, for example, Hu Ping was elected to serve as a delegate to the People's Congress at a county level in what was later called the "first free local election" in the PRC. Zhang Wei was the first elected president of the Student Union (*xueshenghui*) of Beijing University after the Cultural Revolution. After being nominated by Wang Juntao, Li Keqiang was elected head of the Executive Committee of the Student Assembly (*changdaihui*), which supervised and oversaw the work of the Student Union.[27] The principle of fair and open elections was a central political issue at Beijing University in the early 1980s. Although some conservative CCP leaders at the time wanted to crack down on campus elections, according to Wang Juntao, Li Keqiang was supportive of open elections.[28] Li is, of course, the only one among the six discussed above who became a fifth generation political leader. His college experience, however, which is both similar to and different from the experience of his peers, is important for an analysis of Li's background, personality, and world-view.

All these examples underscore both the liberal academic atmosphere during the time when the class of 1982 was attending college and the remarkable diversity of the students—not only in terms of pre-college experience but also in terms of postgraduate careers. The class of 1982 accounts for 164 (41.2%) of the 398 leaders whose graduation year can be identified. The number of leaders from the 1982 class is significantly higher than the number of leaders who graduated in all other years and approximately five times greater than the class of 1983, which produced 34 leaders (8.5%), the second largest number of graduates. Having been shaped by extraordinary life experiences and diverse socio-political backgrounds, the class of 1982 will be most prominently represented in the national leadership in the years to come.

Postgraduate Degrees and Part-Time Programs

Table 3 shows the educational levels of fifth generation leaders. Approximately 394 leaders (73%) received postgraduate degrees, and among them 113 (21%) received PhD degrees. PhD holders include some of the most prominent figures in the fifth generation, such as Xi Jinping; Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao; Yuan Chunqing, Shaanxi governor; Wang Min, Jilin party secretary; Yu Youjun, vice minister of culture; and Liu Jiayi, auditor general.

27 This is based on Wang, "Beida fengyun jiuyou dianping."

28 Wang, "Beida fengyun jiuyou dianping."

TABLE 3

Educational Levels of Fifth Generation Leaders

Educational level	Number	Percentage (%)
PhD	113	21.0
Master's degree	281	52.2
Bachelor's degree	113	21.0
Military Academy	9	1.7
Junior College	9	1.7
High School	2	0.4
Unknown	11	2.0
Total	**538**	**100**

This is in sharp contrast to the educational levels of fourth generation leaders, who usually completed only an undergraduate degree due to the Cultural Revolution.

A majority of leaders in the fifth generation who hold postgraduate degrees earned these degrees in the past ten years through part-time or correspondence programs. Among those with a PhD, 53% pursued advanced degrees on a part-time basis. Among the above-mentioned prominent leaders who hold PhD degrees, only one leader, Wang Min, attended a doctoral program full-time. After receiving a master's degree in engineering at the Beijing Institute of Aviation in 1981 and teaching in a small college for two years, Wang spent three years at Nanjing Institute of Aviation from 1983 to 1986. As many as 87% of the master's degree holders in the fifth generation obtained academic titles through part-time programs. Not surprisingly the Chinese public often criticizes these part-time and correspondence programs for helping political officials to "get gilded" (*dujin*) rather than providing substantial academic training.

Most fifth generation leaders earned part-time postgraduate degrees at the Central Party School (CPS).[29] A total of 127 leaders attended the CPS, six times more than attended the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)—the educational institution with the second highest number of fifth generation leaders as attendees of its graduate program. Between 1981 and

[29] If a leader attended two schools for postgraduate-level studies, only the most recently attended school has been counted.

2006 the CPS produced 266 graduates with PhD degrees and 1,126 graduates with master's degrees.[30] A majority of leaders pursued these degrees on a part-time basis. Nankai University, Jilin University, People's University, and Beijing University—all with a strong reputation in the social sciences and humanities—are also ranked high on the list.

It seems that only a small number of fifth generation leaders attended the graduate schools that are famous for engineering and natural sciences. Tsinghua University, known as China's MIT, is very strong in engineering and was the cradle of China's technocrats in previous generations—producing top leaders such as Zhu Rongji, Yao Yilin, and Song Ping in the third generation and Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, and Liu Yandong in the fourth generation. Yet Tsinghua University is not even among the top ten schools attended by fifth generation leaders.[31]

Table 4 compares the top schools at which the third, fourth, and fifth generation leaders pursued their undergraduate-level studies. Though heavily represented in the leadership of the third and fourth generations (with 93 graduates), Tsinghua University produced only eight fifth generation leaders. Tsinghua's rank in terms of the number of graduates in China's senior leadership fell from number one in the third and fourth generations to number seven in the fifth generation.

Table 4 suggests that the fifth generation graduates of any one particular school will no longer likely dominate the Chinese leadership as graduates of Tsinghua have dominated the third and fourth generations of leadership. Although graduates of Beijing University currently are the highest represented in the Chinese leadership—including prominent figures such as Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao; Zhao Leji, Shaanxi party secretary; Yuan Chunqing; Hu Chunhua, secretary of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL); Wang Weiguang, vice president of CASS; and Yi Gang, vice governor of People's Bank—the number of graduates of Beijing University in this generation is much smaller than the number of Tsinghua graduates in the previous two generations. Even more importantly leaders who graduated from Beijing University constitute a more diverse group and do not have the strong factional ties that the Tsinghua clique did.[32]

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30 See "Zhongyang dangxiao gaikuang" [Overview of the Central Party School], Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC, February 24, 2008 ~ http://www.ccps.gov.cn/dxgk.php?col=4.

31 For a detailed discussion of Tsinghua University as the cradle of Chinese technocrats, see Cheng Li, "University Networks and the Rise of Tsinghua Graduates in China's Leadership," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 32 (July 1994): 1–32.

32 Li, "University Networks," 1–32.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Distribution of Schools at which Third, Fourth, and Fifth Generation Leaders Pursued Undergraduate-Level Study

Third and fourth generation of leaders		Fifth generation of leaders	
School	**Number of graduates**	**School**	**Number of graduates**
Tsinghua University	93	Beijing University	21
Beijing University	45	Central Party School	16
Anti-Japanese University	45	People's University	11
People's University	40	Fudan University	9
Central University	32	Beijing Normal University	8
Shanghai Jiaotong University	30	Central University for Nationalities	8
Yanjing University	28	Tsinghua University	8
Fudan University	24	East China Normal University	7
Central Party School	20	Shandong University	6
Associated Southwestern University	15	Southwest University of Political Science and Law	6
St. John's University (Shanghai)	15	Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages	5

Source: Information on the schools that the third and fourth generation leaders attended is based on volume 3 of Liao Gailong and Fan Yuan, eds., *Zhongguo renming da cidian* [Who's Who in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House, 1989). The distribution of universities in providing graduates at high-level leadership was collected and tabulated by the author.

More Diverse Academic Disciplines and the Decline of Technocrats

The decrease in the number of Tsinghua graduates in the senior Chinese leadership is also associated with the decline in power and influence of technocrats in present-day China. Fifth generation leaders in this study pool pursued a wide range of academic disciplines. A comparison of academic fields between the fourth and fifth generations of leaders shows the rise of leaders trained in economics, social sciences, and law in the fifth generation.[33] This study defines technocrats as political elites who received their higher education in engineering or the natural sciences. The percentage of leaders

[33] A leader's academic specialization is defined here as the field in which he or she attained the highest level of specialization.

who specialized in these fields decreased from 54% in the fourth generation to 22% in the fifth generation. Meanwhile the percentage of leaders who majored in economics or management increased from 8% in the fourth generation to 33% in the fifth generation. Finally, the share of leaders who studied the social sciences or law increased from 11% in the fourth generation to 30% in the fifth generation. **Figure 2** further shows both the rapid rise and the rapid decline of technocrats in ministerial and provincial leadership over the past quarter century.

Meanwhile the percentage of leaders who studied law increased from 3.5% in the fourth generation to 9.3% in the fifth generation. Many prominent leaders in the fifth generation majored in law as undergraduate or graduate students, including Xi Jinping; Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao; Wang Huning; Wu Aiying; Zhou Qiang; Yuan Chunqing; Peng Qinghua; Cao Jianming, deputy justice of the Supreme Court; and Qiang Wei, Qinghai party secretary. Over the past decade a law degree has become a valuable credential for aspiring political leaders within the CCP. The future impact of the rapidly growing number of leaders trained in law and politics in the Chinese political system deserves great attention.

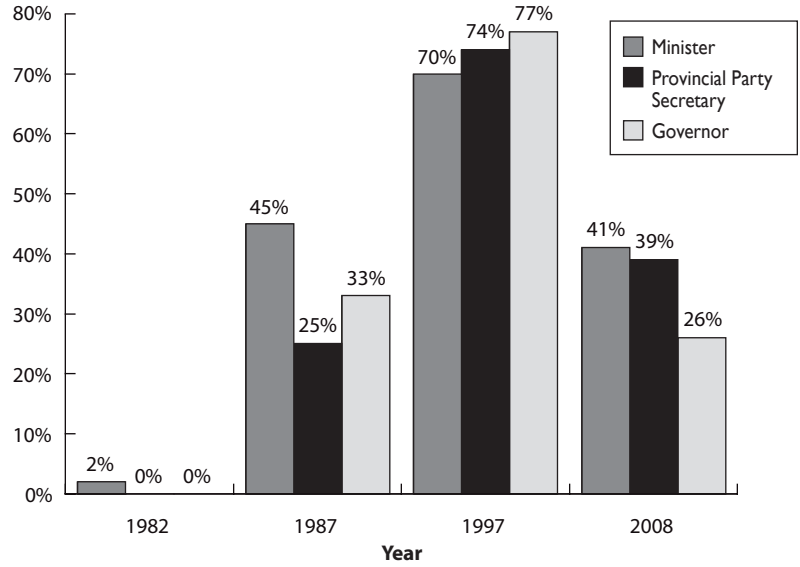
Growing Number of Foreign-Educated Returnees

Although the number of foreign-educated returnees has remained small in the fifth generation of leadership, as a distinct group returnees have increased their presence and contributed to the growing diversity of the Chinese political elite. The third generation leadership included many foreign-educated technocrats—for example, Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Luo Gan, and Cao Gangchuan. Nearly all foreign-educated leaders in the third generation, however, studied in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. With the exception of Zhang Dejiang, who studied in North Korea, fourth generation leaders generally attended China's own universities, which is not surprising given that throughout the 1960s and 1970s China hardly sent any students abroad. Only after 1978, when Deng Xiaoping began the educational open-door policy, did a large number of Chinese students and scholars travel abroad to pursue academic studies.

A total of 82 leaders—accounting for 15% of this study pool—are reported to have studied abroad. Among them, 23 leaders (28%) obtained academic degrees from foreign universities, 52 leaders (63%) studied or worked overseas as visiting scholars for a year or longer, and 7 leaders (9%) participated in month-long study abroad programs. A majority of the 23 leaders who studied

FIGURE 2

Changes in Technocrat Representation in Ministerial/Provincial Leadership Posts, 1982–2008



Source: The data for the years of 1982, 1987, and 1997 are based on Hong Yung Lee, *From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats: The Changing Cadre System in Socialist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 268; Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 236; and Li and White, "The Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party," 251.

in degree programs were enrolled in postgraduate programs, and 16 of these leaders (70%) received PhD degrees.

In addition a majority of fifth generation leaders with study abroad experience attended schools in Western democratic countries—43% studied in the United States, 15% in England, and 11% in Germany. Also in contrast to third and fourth generation leaders, who usually went to the West to study engineering and the natural sciences, fifth generation leaders typically studied economics, social science, and law. For the first time in PRC history leaders with experience studying in the United States have entered the Politburo and the secretariat of the Central Committee. Li Yuanchao and Wang Huning, who are in charge of personnel and propaganda work for the CCP respectively, both studied in the United States as visiting scholars. Li attended a short-term program in public administration at Harvard's Kennedy School, and Wang was a visiting scholar in political science at the University of Iowa and the University of California–Berkeley.

Some of these returnees-turned-leaders previously played an important role in advising high-level officials. For example, Wang Huning and Cao Jianming assisted Jiang Zemin on such crucial issues as ideological evolution, China's accession to the WTO, and tensions across the Taiwan Strait. Wang in particular is believed to have been a principal drafter of the "three represents" theory expounded by Jiang. Today the impact of these individuals on the political process within decisionmaking circles is even more direct.

Two full ministers in the State Council who are not CCP members—Wan Gang, minister of science and technology, and Chen Zhu, minister of health—both spent many years in the West. Wan received his PhD in physics from Technische Universität Clausthal in Germany in 1991 and worked as a senior manager at the Audi Company in Germany for over a decade (1991–2002). Chen received his PhD degree in medicine from Université Paris 7 in France in 1989. He is one of the world's leading hematology experts and holds memberships in several prestigious academies, including the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, the United States National Academy of Sciences, and the French Academy of Sciences. The presence and growing power of Western-educated elites in the Chinese leadership should be an important indicator of the openness and political transformation of the country. It remains to be seen whether those returnees who hold public offices in both the government and the CCP will help propagate international norms and values as a result of their foreign experiences.

INTRAGENERATIONAL DIVERSITY: FACTIONAL DIVISIONS AND POLICY DIFFERENCES

Despite the emphasis on educational credentials in elite recruitment, patron-client ties and factionalism have continued to play important roles in the career advancement of political leaders in the PRC. In the absence of a paramount figure similar to Mao or Deng, Chinese leadership politics have been increasingly characterized by checks and balances between two contending political camps or coalitions. This trend toward bipartisanship within the CCP, or what one might call a "one party, two coalitions" phenomenon, first emerged in the fourth generation and will most likely become more dynamic in the fifth generation.

One coalition can be identified as the "populist coalition," which is currently led by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. The core faction of the coalition is the group of leaders who advanced their political careers primarily through

the leadership in the CCYL; this group is referred to as *tuanpai*.[34] The other coalition is commonly referred to as the "elitist coalition" and is led by Jiang Zemin, former CCP chief, and Zeng Qinghong, vice president. The Shanghai Gang at one time constituted the core of the elitist coalition. Because of the declining power and influence of the Shanghai Gang in the past two years, however, "princelings" have become the core group of the elitist coalition.[35]

Although this emerging inner-party bipartisanship still lacks transparency and does not possess legal or institutional legitimacy, Chinese authorities have recently begun using the term "inner-party democracy" to describe the idea that the party should institutionalize checks and balances within party leadership. Chinese factional politics is no longer a zero-sum game in which the winner takes all. This change largely owes to the fact that the two competing coalitions are almost equally powerful. Neither side is capable of nor interested in completely defeating the other side; instead both sides are in many ways complementary in terms of administrative skills and political credentials.

As a result, the two coalitions may take turns in the "driver's seat" of Chinese politics. Occasionally one camp may inflict "casualties," so to speak, on the other by firing one or two political rivals on charges of corruption or incompetence. Each side, however, will need to make these political moves through compromise, negotiations, and deal-cutting to avoid causing a systemic crisis in the country. The motive behind this inner-party bipartisanship is that both coalitions want to maintain the CCP's rule at home while continuing to improve China's status abroad as a major international actor. An analysis of the factional composition, leadership line-up, personalities, and policy preferences of the top leaders of the fifth generation is therefore crucial to understanding the changing nature of Chinese elite politics.

Leadership Divided: Tuanpai versus Princelings

In the newly formed Politburo and Secretariat of the 17th Central Committee, there are now eight members in their 50s. These eight leaders can be equally divided into two groups in terms of factional affiliations. Four leaders—Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, Wang Yang, and Ling Jihua—are in the

[34] This study defines tuanpai leaders as those who have served as CCYL officials at the provincial level or higher and who largely owe their political career advancements to the CCYL network.

[35] This study defines princelings as those leaders who come from families of former high-ranking officials (vice minister or vice governor level or above).

populist camp. All advanced their careers primarily through membership in the CCYL and are known as long-time protégés of Hu Jintao. The other four leaders—Xi Jinping, Wang Qishan, Bo Xilai, and Wang Huning—belong to the elitist camp. The first three are princelings, and Wang Huning is a member of the Shanghai Gang. All four are protégés of Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong. The fact that the populist and elitist camps hold an equal number of seats in these two powerful leadership organs for the emerging generation indicates how intense the factional competition is, especially for the upcoming political succession.

Never before have leaders with CCYL origins occupied as many important posts at the national and provincial levels of leadership. In the 17th Central Committee, tuanpai leaders account for 86 out of 371 members—23% of the total. In the 25-member Politburo, tuanpai leaders of the fourth (Hu Jintao, Wang Zhaoguo, Liu Yunshan, Wang Lequan, and Liu Yandong) and fifth (Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, and Wang Yang) generations occupy eight seats (32%), four more than in the previous Politburo.

Based on this study's definition of tuanpai, 84 leaders (15.6%) in this study can be categorized as officials belonging to this coalition. **Table 5** lists the 22 most prominent tuanpai leaders from the fifth generation. All 22 currently have the rank of either full minister or full governor and are full members of the 17th Central Committee. A majority of these leaders held provincial or national CCYL offices around the same time that Hu Jintao was serving on the CCYL Secretariat (between 1982 and 1985). Although tracing each leader's association with Hu Jintao during that period is difficult, it can be reasonably inferred that most of these individuals have known Hu for over two decades through CCYL work. Many of these tuanpai leaders—including Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, Ling Jihua, Zhang Baoshun, Zhang Qingli, Liu Qibao, Yuan Chunqing, and Han Changfu—served as members of the CCYL Central Committee or Secretariat, the two leadership bodies that Hu once headed. Even though Wang Yang served only in the CCYL provincial leadership in Anhui, some believe that Hu played a direct role in Wang's rapid rise.

A majority of these tuanpai officials come from humble family backgrounds.[36] Many received a postgraduate education in the fields of politics and law, often at the Central Party School in the 1990s when Hu served as the president of the school. Most possess provincial-level leadership experience,

[36] Two noteworthy exceptions are Li Yuanchao and Zhang Qingli, who come from high-ranking official family backgrounds.

mainly in the inland and northeastern provinces. Among these 22 high-level tuanpai leaders from the fifth generation, only one leader—Jilin governor Han Changfu—has experience in finance, banking, or foreign trade.[37] Most populist faction members instead possess leadership experience in rural work, party organization and discipline, propaganda, and legal affairs rather than in economic administration. Tuanpai leaders therefore must share power with princelings, who constitute a formidable, though probably less cohesive, political faction.

Like tuanpai leaders, princelings are well represented in the top leadership. Altogether there is a record number of seven princelings in the current Politburo (Xi Jinping, Zhou Yongkang, Li Yuanchao, Wang Qishan, Liu Yandong, Yu Zhengsheng, and Bo Xilai). Only three princelings (Zeng Qinghong, Zhou Yongkang, and Yu Zhengsheng) by comparison served in the previous Politburo.[38]

Table 6 lists the seventeen prominent fifth generation leaders with princeling backgrounds. Important to note is that princelings are not necessarily part of a monolithic organization or a formal network and thus strong patron-client ties are not common within this coalition. In addition the political interests of the princelings are not always identical, and infighting often occurs over power and wealth. As an elite group princelings are far less cohesive than tuanpai. Owing to political affiliations a few prominent leaders with princeling backgrounds—for example, Liu Yandong, Li Yuanchao, and Zhang Qingli—are commonly perceived by the public as tuanpai leaders rather than princelings.

Princelings, however, do share a strong political identity. Without exception all prominent leaders with princeling backgrounds greatly benefited from family connections early in their careers. In Chinese terminology princelings were "born red"; that is, the majority of princelings were born during the late 1940s and 1950s at a time when their parents' generation was victorious in the civil war and assumed rulership of the Communist regime. Leaders with princeling backgrounds have often claimed that their blood ties to veteran Communist revolutionaries and the founding fathers of the PRC make members of this coalition the most suitable and loyal successors to the leaders of the earlier regime.

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37 Han once worked as an assistant to Wen Jiabao on financial and agricultural issues and subsequently served briefly as deputy director of the General Office of the CCP Central Finance Leading Group in the late 1990s.

38 Although Li Yuanchao and Liu Yandong are identified here as princelings, most analysts consider them members of the tuanpai faction because of their close patron-client ties with Hu Jintao, ideological leanings, and political loyalty to the tuanpai leadership.

TABLE 5

Highest-Ranked Fifth Generation Leaders with Tuanpai (CCYL) Backgrounds

Leader	Year born	Current position	Central Committee status	Factional ties and defining experience in CCYL
Li Keqiang	1955	Party Secretary of the State Council	Standing Committee Member	CCYL Secretariat, 1982–98
Li Yuanchao	1950	Director, CCP Organization Department	Politburo Member	CCYL Secretariat, 1982–90
Wang Yang	1955	Party Secretary, Guangdong	Politburo Member	CCYL Anhui Department Secretary, 1982–84
Ling Jihua	1956	Director, CCP Central Office	Secretariat Member	CCYL Central Committee, 1979–95 (Hu's mishu, part of 1982–85)
Wu Aiying	1951	Minister of Justice	Full Member	CCYL Shandong Secretary, 1982–89
Shen Yueyue	1957	Vice Director, CCP Organization Department	Full Member	CCYL Ningbo Secretary, Zhejiang Secretary, 1983–93
Yang Chuntang	1954	Deputy Minister of Ethnic Affairs Commission	Full Member	CCYL Shandong Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1987–92
Liu Peng	1951	Director of State Sports Commission	Full Member	CCYL Chongqing Secretary, 1985–86
Ji Bingxuan	1951	Vice Director, CCP Propaganda Department	Full Member	CCYL Henan Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1987–90

Table 5 (continued)

Leader	Year born	Current position	Central Committee status	Factional ties and defining experience in CCYL
Zhang Qingli	1951	Party Secretary, Tibet	Full Member	CCYL Central Committee, 1979–86
Zhang Baoshun	1950	Party Secretary, Shanxi	Full Member	CCYL Central Committee, 1978–93 (Secretariat, 1982–93)
Liu Qibao	1953	Party Secretary, Sichuan	Full Member	CCYL Anhui Secretary,1982–83; CCYL Secretariat, 1985–93
Qiang Wei	1955	Party Secretary, Qinghai	Full Member	CCYL Beijing Secretary, 1987–90
Song Xiuyan	1955	Governor, Qinghai	Full Member	CCYL Qinghai Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1983–88
Yuan Chunqing	1952	Governor, Shanxi	Full Member	CCYL Central Committee, 1980–97 (Secretariat, 1992–97)
Qin Guangrong	1950	Governor, Yunnan	Full Member	CCYL Hunan Deputy Secretary, 1984–87
Luo Baoming	1952	Governor, Hainan	Full Member	CCYL Tianjin Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1984–92
Han Changfu	1954	Governor, Jilin	Full Member	CCYL Central Committee, 1982–91
Jiang Daming	1953	Governor, Shandong	Full Member	CCYL Organization Division Head, 1984–86; Secretariat 1993–98
Zhou Qiang	1960	Governor, Hunan	Full Member	CCYL Secretariat, 1995–2006
Yang Jing	1953	Governor, Inner Mongolia	Full Member	CCYL Inner Mongolia Secretary, 1993–96
Hu Chunhua	1963	Secretary of CCYL	Full Member	CCYL Secretariat, 1997–2001, 2006–08

TABLE 6

Highest-Ranking Fifth Generation Leaders with Princeling Family Backgrounds

Name	Year born	Central Committee status	Current position	Family background
Xi Jinping	1953	Standing Committee Member	Executive Member of Secretariat	*Father:* Xi Zhongxun, former vice premier, former Politburo member
Li Yuanchao	1950	Politburo Member	Director of the CCP Organization Department	*Father:* Li Gancheng, former vice mayor of Shanghai
Zhang Qingli	1952	Full Member	Party Secretary of Tibet	*Uncle:* Zhang Wannian, former vice chairman of the Central Military Commission
Zhang Youxia	1950	Full Member	Commander of Shenyang Military Region	*Father:* Zhang Zongxun, PLA general
Yang Yuanyuan	1950	Full Member	Deputy Director, State Administration of Work Safety	*Father:* Yang Yingdong, former head of Taiwan Affairs Office
Liu Yuan	1951	Full Member	Commissar of PLA Military Academy	*Father:* Liu Shaoqi, former PRC president
Wang Yi	1953	Full Member	Party Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs	*Father-in-law:* Qian Jiadong, Zhou Enlai's foreign affairs assistant
Wang Guangya	1950	Alternate Member	Director of State Foreign Affairs Office	*Father-in-law:* Chen Yi, former minister of Foreign Affairs
Luo Zhijun	1951	Alternate Member	Governor of Jiangsu	*Father:* Luo Wen, former PLA lt. general
Du Yuxin	1953	Alternate Member	Party Secretary of Harbin	*Father:* Du Xianzhong, former vice governor of Heilongjiang

Table 6 (continued)

Name	Year born	Central Committee status	Current position	Family background
Liu Yuejun	1954	Alternate Member	Chief-of-Staff, Lanzhou Military Region	*Father:* former PLA lt. general
Ding Yiping	1951	Alternate Member	Chief-of-Staff, PLA Navy	*Father:* Ding Qiusheng, former commissar of North Sea Fleet
Ai Husheng	1951	Alternate Member	Chief-of-Staff, Chengdu Military Region	*Father:* Ai Fulin, former PLA lt. general
Lou Jiwei	1950	Alternate Member	Chairman, China Investment Corporation	*Father:* former vice minister-level leader
Zhang Mao	1954	None	Vice Minister of National Development & Reform Com.	*Father-in-law:* Gu Mu, former vice premier
Zhang Xiaoqiang	1952	None	Vice Minister of National Development & Reform Com.	*Father:* Zhang Yuan, former vice minister
Bu Xiaolin	1958	None	Vice Governor of Neimenggu	*Father:* Buhe, former vice chair of National People's Congress

Source: Li, *China's Leaders*, 127–47; and Ding Wang, "Shiqida quanli guafen: gaogan zidi zouhong" [The Power Distribution in the 17th Party Congress: the Advantages of the Princelings], BBC News ~ http://www.bbc.co.uk, July 31, 2007.

Ironically princelings (both in politics and in business) are also among the greatest beneficiaries of China's market transition and capitalist developments. Some have taken advantage of political position or family connections to convert state assets into private wealth. The presence of a large number of princelings in leadership positions has reinforced public perceptions of the convergence of power and wealth in China and has led to widespread public resentment of this privileged group. Partly because of socio-political pressure and partly because of intense competition with formidable rivals in the tuanpai faction, princelings have grown more unified as a distinct elite group in recent years.

A review of the most prominent princelings' career paths in the fifth generation reveals three shared traits. First, princelings often received shortcuts to career advancement—in many cases by serving as *mishu* (personal secretaries) to senior leaders who were their fathers' old comrades-in-arms. For example Xi Jinping served as mishu to Geng Biao (then minister of defense) and Lou Jiwei served as mishu to Zhu Rongji (then mayor of Shanghai). Experiences as mishu not only afforded princelings valuable opportunities to become familiar with the work and decisionmaking processes at the national and provincial levels of leadership but also accelerated their political careers. Similarly Xi Jinping and Bo Xilai all previously served as high-level municipal leaders in coastal cities. Given that these coastal cities hold the potential for fast economic growth, such appointments to municipal leadership positions were catalysts for future promotions.

Second, a majority of prominent princelings have substantial leadership experience in economic administration, finance, and foreign investment and trade. Wang Qishan, Ma Kai, Bo Xilai, Zhou Xiaochuan, Chen Yuan, and Lou Jiwei are among the most experienced economic leaders in China today. Xi Jinping has gained considerable leadership experience through managing China's most market-oriented provinces and cities. Economic expertise and administrative credentials are among the most valuable political assets these princelings possess in the competition for power with tuanpai leaders in the same age cohort, most of whom lack such experience.

Third, leaders with princeling backgrounds usually do not fare well in elections. Princelings' privileged life experiences and "helicopter-style" rapid upward career advancements have elicited vocal criticism and opposition—not only from the Chinese public but also from the delegates to the Party Congress. The strongest evidence of opposition to nepotism in the selection of Central Committee members is that many candidates on the ballot for the Central Committee were not elected despite (or more likely because of) their

high-ranking family backgrounds. Xi Jinping, Bo Xilai, and Chen Yuan, for example, were on the ballot for membership on the 14th Central Committee in 1992, but none were elected.[39] Likewise in the election for the alternate members of the 15th Central Committee in 1997 Xi Jinping received the lowest number of votes among the 151 alternate members elected. Wang Qishan and Liu Yandong were also among the bottom ten in terms of the number of votes received. Wang Qishan, however, has improved his previously poor public image by demonstrating remarkable leadership in handling the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003.

Broadening Policy Platforms: Elitist Xi versus Populist Li

The policy differences between the elitist coalition and the populist coalition, between the princeling and tuanpai factions, and between Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang are as significant as the contrasts in their socio-political backgrounds. Xi and Li, the two leading contenders for top leadership posts in 2012, have strikingly different policy priorities. Xi's enthusiasm for continued private sector development and market liberalization is well known to the Chinese public and the international business community. Not surprisingly his primary policy concerns include promoting economic efficiency, attaining a high rate of GDP growth, and integrating China further into the world economy. Though recognizing the necessity for accelerating China's inland development, Xi favors "continued rapid growth of the coastal provinces as the means to resolving the remaining development challenges through a process of trickle down."[40]

In contrast to Xi, Li is noted for his concern for the unemployed, his efforts to improve the availability of housing, and his desire to develop a rudimentary social safety net, beginning with the provision of basic health care. Li's emphasis on employment, for example, has been recognized since his tenure as party secretary in Liaoning in late 2004. In 2007 Li promised that "if all the members of a family were jobless, the government would offer them

[39] Xiao Chong, *Zhong gong disidai mengren* [The Fourth Generation of Leaders of the Chinese Communist Party] (Hong Kong: Xiafeier Guoji Chubangongsi, 1998), 337.

[40] Anthony Saich, "China's New Economic Leadership Team" (unpublished manuscript, 2008).

employment within twenty days."[41] For Li reducing economic disparities is thus a more urgent policy priority than enhancing economic efficiency.[42]

An enthusiastic supporter of his mentor Hu Jintao's populist policy initiatives to produce more balanced regional development, Li will most likely push for the greater development of China's northeast region in the years to come. Li also appears strongly inclined toward improving relations with Tokyo in order to attract foreign investment to the northeast region from Japan. Leaders of three northeastern provinces recently pushed for the establishment of an East Asia free trade zone, which would include northeast China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN. Interest in this plan probably explains why Li has met frequently with Japanese leaders in recent years and why the Japanese media holds a generally favorable view of him.[43] Li's relatively close ties with Japan contrast with Xi's publicized good relationship with prominent U.S. leaders, such as Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson.[44] Whether this contrast will lead to different foreign policy preferences remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, these diverging policy priorities will likely grow in importance as Xi and Li consider the questions of how China should respond to growing foreign pressure for renminbi appreciation, how China should deal with issues such as global warming and environmental degradation, and what regions and cities should be considered as the engines of the country's next phase of development. At stake in the competition between Xi and Li therefore is much more than sheer political power. Important to note, however, is that neither Xi nor Li has any major achievements to date. Although belonging to strong factions in the fifth generation leadership, both Xi and Li are still quite weak as individual leaders. Compared with the highest-ranking fourth generation leaders such as Hu Jintao, Zeng Qinghong, and Wen Jiabao, who are all known for their brilliance in

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41 See "Li Keqiang chengnuo, Liaoning lingjiuye jiating renyuan ershitiannei ke zaijiuye" [Li Keqiang Promises That if All the Members of a Family Were Jobless, the Government Would Offer Them Employment within Twenty Days] ~ http://www.lnzxw.gov.cn/document_show.asp?show_id=3188.

42 For more discussion on this, see Cheng Li, "China's Two Li's: Frontrunners in the Race to Succeed Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 22 (Fall 2007): 1–22.

43 The regional interests Li has expressed may become even more crucial as more provinces and cities in the country engage in foreign economic cooperation. For an example of the Japanese media's favorable coverage of Li Keqiang, see "Shui shi Hu Jintao de jiebanren? Riben meiti kanhao Li Keqiang" [Who is Hu Jintao's successor? The Japanese Media Focuses on Li Keqiang] ~ http://www.6park.com/news/messages/25319.html.

44 Photos showing Xi and Paulson engaged in a substantial conversation while walking along the West Lake in Hangzhou in 2006 have been widely publicized in China. See Steven R. Weisman, "Paulson Spends Much of Debut on World Stage Defending the U.S.," *New York Times*, September 20, 2006 ~ http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/20/business/worldbusiness/20paulson.html.

political compromise and consensus-building, Xi and Li are much less impressive—both have yet to prove their leadership skills. China's political and economic future thus may hinge on how well these two frontrunners of the fifth generation, and the two competing coalitions to which Xi and Li belong, succeed at working together.

DIVERSITY IN VALUES AND WORLD-VIEWS

Assessing the values and world-views of political elites is difficult even in democracies. Questions both over how social background affects an individual's outlook and over how that outlook further influences an individual's behavior and policy preferences are questions that are intellectually interesting but analytically challenging to answer. Conducting research on the views and values of political leaders in China is exceedingly difficult because many leaders tend to reiterate only the party line and give little public expression to their own views. For most of the PRC's history, differences and conflicts in the views and policy preferences of high-level leaders have usually become publicly known only after the winner of a factional struggle announces the defeat of his or her enemy.

In recent years, however, Chinese political leaders have become somewhat more accessible to the Chinese public, specifically in terms of the willingness of these leaders to discuss and explain their views and policies. For example newly-appointed cabinet ministers, provincial governors, and provincial party secretaries have appeared singly on a prime time national news program on Chinese Central Television (CCTV). Many leaders have also participated in live radio call-in programs and conducted interviews with Chinese newspapers and magazines. The increasing transparency of individual leaders' views is probably related most directly to the fact that in recent years China's demographic and socio-economic challenges, as well as the country's strategic interests in a rapidly changing world, have been thoughtfully discussed among public intellectuals and policymakers.[45]

[45] For the intellectual and policy debate, see Wang Hui, *China's New Order: Society, Politics, and Economy in Transition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); and Tyrene White, ed., *China Briefing 2000: The Continuing Transformation* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).

Less Ideological, More Sophisticated, and More Exposed to Western Ideas

Much evidence suggests that fifth generation leaders share some basic views owing to common formative experiences. The widespread ideological disillusionment that members of the lost generation experienced during the Cultural Revolution has tended to make fifth generation leaders more pragmatic and less dogmatic than their predecessors. None of the rising stars of the fifth generation appears to prioritize pursuing an ideological platform on either the domestic or foreign policy fronts. With regard to U.S.-China relations, most fifth generation leaders do not seem to exhibit any fundamental ideological differences. The ideological conflicts between the United States and China are to a great extent less important today than in the past and are likely to become irrelevant in the future. As Henry Kissinger has observed, China today does not have an ideology that is fundamentally hostile to American values.[46]

As a result of the humble work experiences that fifth generation leaders had early in their careers, and having witnessed the rapid economic growth as well as the associated negative side effects of that growth during the reform era, fifth generation leaders tend to possess more sophisticated views on various conceptual issues important for Chinese politics—including the dichotomies between market and state, man and nature, elites and masses, and China and the world. Consequently fifth generation leaders are far less interested than leaders of previous generations were in promoting radicalism in domestic politics or foreign policy.

Though Chinese nationalism is rising—perhaps most noticeably among young leaders—this does not necessarily mean that China intends to take an aggressive stand toward the United States, Japan, or Taiwan. A radical foreign policy generally requires a radical leader, and no such leader is likely to stride onto the stage in Chinese elite politics now or in the foreseeable future. Like their predecessors, fifth generation leaders will be firm on issues such as the independence of Taiwan or Tibet. With a nationalism that is largely defensive in nature, however, the fifth generation leadership will also likely avoid adopting provocative measures on these sensitive issues. The political survival of the CCP is the most important consideration for this new generation of leaders. Although fifth generation leaders will probably be more confident than their predecessors in responding to international challenges

46 Henry A. Kissinger, "No Room for Nostalgia," Newsweek, June 29, 1998, 51.

and crises, members of this generation cannot afford to be arrogant. With China's neighbors—namely Japan, Russia, the Southeast Asian countries, and India—all concerned over Beijing's growing power, the fifth generation is likely to remain relatively cautious at a time when China's foreign security environment is increasingly turbulent.

Because of the strong Western influences on Chinese society in the 1980s when many fifth generation leaders were attending college, and because some of these future leaders later received educations in the West, the fifth generation has been exposed far more to Western ideas and values than earlier generations. Consequently the fifth generation tends to have a better understanding of the West than did the third and fourth generations. This does not necessarily mean that the fifth generation's outlook is pro-West or pro–United States; ultimately fifth generation leaders are pragmatic Chinese nationalists who have ascended within a system that requires paying close attention to the defense of national interests. As such their thinking will likely be outward-looking but not necessarily globally oriented. These leaders tend to be cynical regarding the moral superiority of the West, resentful of what they view as U.S. arrogance, and skeptical of U.S. welcoming attitudes toward a strong and stable China. Having interest in dialogue with the United States only if an "equal dialogue" (*pingdeng duihua*), the fifth generation leadership will likely reject lectures from the United States on how to behave in the modern world.

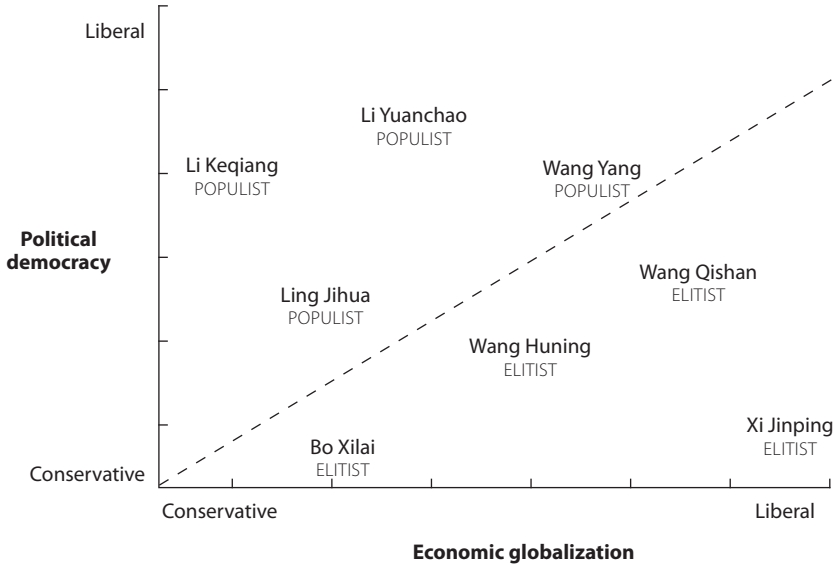
Contrasting Outlooks on Political Democracy and Economic Globalization

Perhaps paradoxically, the most prevalent value fifth generation leaders hold is tolerance for diversity. As discussed earlier in the article, intragenerational differences serve to reinforce diversity in the values and world-views of these leaders. Dynamic factional politics, which are particularly evident in the emerging bipartisan balance of power in the top leadership, also contribute to the growing transparency of diverse outlooks and stances that decisionmakers hold on some major issues.

Figure 3 presents a heuristic diagram exploring the value orientations of top fifth generation leaders on two crucial axes: political democracy and economic globalization. The positions of the leaders shown in this diagram are based on a selective sampling of these leaders' most important speeches and conduct relating to these two broad issues over the past six years. For example, with respect to political democracy, the diagram combines these

FIGURE 3

Value Orientation of Key Fifth Generation Leaders



leaders' views and public statements on inner-party elections, local elections, rule of law, freedom of the media, freedom of religion, and the role of both NGOs and civil society. On economic policy the leaders were compared on the basis of their views regarding employment, the construction of a social safety net, foreign trade and investment, the importance of pursuing economic equality, low-income housing, internal migration, property rights, and taxation. In addition the diagram also draws on the assessments of two dozen Chinese scholars and members of prominent think-tanks whom the author recently interviewed.

The diagram illustrates that the fifth generation of leaders is quite diverse in its views on political democracy and economic globalization—all four quadrants have representatives among the most prominent leaders of the fifth generation. In general, however, leaders of the populist coalition are more interested than their elitist coalition counterparts in promoting political democratization—defined here mainly in terms of multiple-candidate contests in both inner-party or low-level elections. At the same time populists tend to be less enthusiastic about economic globalization than elite leaders. This difference is not surprising. Populist leaders are frequently

more effective in addressing issues such as social fairness and distributive justice and are thus far less scared than princelings by the prospect of elections. On the issues of economic globalization and market liberalization, however, populists often lack professional expertise and experience and are thus more sensitive than elitists to the side effects of market reforms and the possible negative impact of foreign trade in terms of increasing economic disparities and unemployment.

Li Yuanchao and Wang Yang, two leaders of the populist coalition, for example, have called for bolder and faster democratic reforms in the past few years. Both leaders have gone on record to address issues such as political democracy, official corruption, government accountability, and the election of local officials more frequently than any other fifth generation leaders. As party secretary in Jiangsu in 2002–07, for example, Li Yuanchao routinely asked the public to evaluate local officials and he also pioneered the implementation of inner-party elections.

Li seems to understand that China's political and administrative reforms to date have not adequately enabled the political system to adapt to a rapidly changing socio-economic environment. He recently criticized the mentality of some leaders who are "obsessed with stability" (*taiping guan*) and who refuse to try new political experiments.[47] Li believes that this propensity toward stasis, although seemingly more likely to produce stability, is actually more likely to cause instability as a focus on "going slow" and preserving the status quo might lead cadres to miss opportunities to effectively prevent more serious crises. According to Li the problem is not that Chinese leaders lack wisdom or ideas but rather that these leaders need more courage to pursue "bolder reforms."[48]

Since becoming party secretary of Guangdong at the end of 2007 Wang Yang has claimed that he wants to make the province the frontier of China's new wave of "thought emancipation" (*sixiang jiefang*).[49] A Hong Kong newspaper noted that Wang used the phrase "thought emancipation" 4 times in his inauguration speech and 22 times in the first provincial party committee meeting. In contrast, Zhang Dejiang, Wang's predecessor, hardly

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47 See Xinhua News Agency, August 11, 2005 ~ http://www.xinhuanet.com.

48 For more discussion on the intellectual and political discourse on the Chinese democracy, see Cheng Li, ed., *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

49 Wang Jianming, "Zhonggong faqi disanci sixiang jiefang yundong" [China Launches the Third Movement of Ideological Emancipation], Chinese News Net, January 14, 2008 ~ http://www.chinesenewsnet.com.

ever used this phrase during his tenure in Guangdong.[50] According to Wang the principal development objective for Guangdong is no longer economic growth but rather political development.

Only time will tell what Li hopes to accomplish through his "bolder reforms," what Wang means by "thought emancipation," and whether either leader will have the opportunity to play a larger role in the higher echelons of leadership in the next decade. The restraints placed on top leaders by the system of collective leadership may encourage Li and Wang to reach out to the general public for support. Given the absence of well-established institutions for facilitating public participation in the political system, fifth generation leaders may find it challenging to resolve instances of policy deadlock without appealing to mass public opinion.

Final Thoughts

With the emergence of the fifth generation into the national leadership, China has entered a new era characterized both by growing pluralism in the socio-economic life of the country and by a diverse and collective leadership based on factional checks and balances in power. Is diversity a source of strength or weakness? Although certainly not specific to China, this question is critical for assessing the future trajectory of this rapidly changing country. If they can negotiate effectively, the elitist and populist coalitions could make perfect partners, whose coexistence paves the way for the establishment of a political system that provides genuine choices for the general public. A more accountable, responsive, transparent, and legitimate political system—a Chinese-style democracy—could one day potentially emerge through the current political experiments, especially given the emerging bipartisanship within the CCP.

The competition between these coalitions, however, could just as easily turn ugly, especially at a time when China is confronting so many daunting demographic, socio-economic, and political challenges. Fifth generation leaders, including Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, seem less capable of engaging in deal-making and consensus-building than their fourth generation predecessors (such as Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and Zeng Qinghong). Furthermore China's poor international image has increasingly become a major liability for the country's development and security, as is evident from the recent protests over Tibet and the Beijing Olympics. The fifth generation

[50] Pan Xiaotao, "Xianming nanxia" [With Hu's Order, Wang Comes to the South], *Yazhou shibao,* January 8, 2008.

will also face a daunting challenge in dealing with rising ultranationalism in the PRC. Although it may be argued that the fifth generation grew sensitive to and even distrustful of ideological extremism and nationalist fervor during the Cultural Revolution, China's new leaders have not yet demonstrated the requisite skills and tactics for effectively handling the so-called double-edged sword of popular nationalism.

The next five to ten years will therefore test the political instincts, strategic vision, wisdom, humility, and capabilities of the Chinese leadership. In a far more important respect, this period will also test whether China can take a major step toward a more institutionalized transition to power-sharing. Considering that this most populous country—and the entire world—will be profoundly affected if the fifth generation fails, one must hope that the new Chinese leadership is up to this task. ◈