

The Emergence of the Fifth Generation in the Provincial Leadership

CHENG LI

The 16th Party Congress marked a shift of power to a younger generation of Chinese leaders, the so-called fourth generation. These fourth generation leaders, led by new General Secretary Hu Jintao, not only have now held almost all top ministerial and provincial leadership posts, but also have occupied about 80 percent of the seats on the 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). But ironically, these “younger generation” leaders are not really that young. Most generational studies on Chinese political elites define the fourth generation as the generation whose members were born between 1941 and 1956 and had their formative years during the Cultural Revolution.¹ Now these leaders are between 47 and 62 years old.

THREE TOP LEADERS of the fourth generation—Hu Jintao, expected to be named president of the state at the upcoming 10th National People’s Congress (NPC); Wu Bangguo, expected to become head of the NPC; and Wen Jiabao, expected to be named premier of the State Council—are all over 60 years old. The average age of members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the highest decision-making body in the country, is 62, and the average age of all members of the 16th Politburo is 60.4. There is no young, rising star who serves on the Politburo or the Secretariat. The youngest member of the Politburo is 55-year-old Liu Yunshan (director of the CCP Publicity Department). The age span between the oldest member of the Politburo and the youngest is 12 years. The age span between General Secretary Hu Jintao and his youngest colleague on the Politburo is only five years. On the 16th Central Committee, out of 313 members whose ages are identified, only 14 (4.5 percent) are leaders of the “fifth generation” (those who were born after 1957). Apparently, the current top leaders

soon need to be concerned about selecting their own successors—the prominent figures for the next-generation leadership.

THE SCANT REPRESENTATION OF THE FIFTH GENERATION ON THE 16TH CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The absence of a rising star on the Politburo and the scant representation of leaders under the age of 46 on the Central Committee are the result of several factors. First, the term “fifth generation of leaders” has never been used in the official media in China. In fact, since summer 2002 the term “fourth generation of leaders” is no longer used in government publications. It seems that at least for now, Hu Jintao and his fourth generation leaders are concerned more about fulfilling their own mandate than about selecting their successors.

Second, the CCP’s previous norms regarding the designation of a key successor from the upcoming generation (e.g., Jiang and Hu) may have helped the country avoid major political crises at times of power transition, but this practice also clearly reflects traditional patron-client ties and the noninstitutional way of selecting a top leader. The trend toward political institutionalization seems now to place more weight on collective leadership and the procedure of elite selection than on the designation of a single successor.

Third, political leadership in a given country does not always consist exclusively of political elites from the same generation. To a certain extent, the prominence of generational identities in Chinese elite politics was a result of Deng’s effort to use term limits and age requirements for retirement in order to develop a more orderly transition of power. In the future, when China has established more institutional mechanisms for political succession as well as checks and balances within the political system, it is more likely that the national leadership will consist of elites across two or three generations.

Fourth, the categorization of a political generation is arbitrary, and often itself political. Joseph Fewsmith argues that the so-called Cultural Revolution generation may in fact include two quite different subgroups²—those who graduated from college when the Cultural Revolution began (e.g., Hu Jintao and Politburo Standing Committee member Li Changchun), and those who lost the opportunity to obtain an education and were sent down to rural areas to work as farmers during the Cultural Revolution (e.g., Party Secretary of Jiangsu Li Keqiang and Governor of Fujian Lu Zhangong). On the 16th Central Com-

mittee, 24 members had experienced the so-called May 7 School, the labor camp for intellectuals and cadres during the Cultural Revolution, and the other 26 younger members were “sent-down youths,” who lost the chance to complete their middle-school educations and worked as farmers for many years in the 1970s. These members of the younger group typically attended college when Deng’s reform began in 1978, and they tended to major in economic management rather than engineering. It is certainly debatable whether these two groups should be considered part of the same generation. Yet, one can argue that the collective memory of the decade-long political turmoil and of similarly tough life experiences during their formative years is strong enough to characterize both groups as members of the Cultural Revolution generation.

Because of the collective characteristics of the fourth generation leaders—such as adaptability, endurance, grassroots consciousness, and political sophistication—they will likely run the country for 10 years or beyond. The fifth generation of leaders may take a long time to move to center stage in Chinese politics. Yet, if the fourth generation leaders do not promote more leaders from the younger generations to high offices in the years to come, a generation-based political conflict may take place. An orderly power transition to younger leaders is crucial for a country in which political institutionalization is not well developed.

To a certain extent, a main reason why the CCP has been able to stay in power for over a half century, especially during the past two decades, is arguably the fluidity of elite transformation in the country. In programs initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s, the CCP made great efforts to recruit “new blood,” especially cadres from different social and occupational backgrounds, into the party leadership. As a matter of fact, the CCP leadership has changed from one consisting of peasants and soldiers during the revolutionary era to one that consists mainly of engineers today. These Chinese technocrats did not emerge as a distinct elite group until the mid-1980s. For example, in 1982 tech-

Generational and occupational differences may lead to widely differing worldviews and policy orientations among China’s future leaders.

nocrats occupied only 2 percent of the full membership seats on the Central Committee and 2 percent of the top ministerial posts on the State Council, and did not hold any posts as provincial party secretary or governor.³ But in 1997, 15 years later, the representation of technocrats accounted for 52 percent of the full members of the Central Committee, 70 percent of the ministers, 74 percent of the provincial party secretaries, and 77 percent of the provincial governors.⁴ At the 16th Party Congress, the nine members of the newly formed Politburo Standing Committee were all engineers by training.

The above discussion of the “technocratic turnover” in the past two decades is relevant to this study of the next generation of Chinese leaders, who likely have life experiences and occupational backgrounds that differ profoundly from those of the fourth generation of leaders. These generational and occupational differences may lead to widely differing worldviews and policy orientations among the future leaders. It is critically important for China watchers to grasp the main characteristics of the leaders of the fifth generation—most of them have just begun to emerge in provincial and municipal levels of leadership. The 14 members of the fifth generation who currently serve on the 16th Central Committee are particularly worth noting. Holding a seat on the Central Committee at a relatively young age is an important sign for a leader’s career advancement potential. Several Standing Committee members of the Politburo—for example, Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, Wu Guanzheng, Li Changchun, and Luo Gan—were among a small number of “front-runners of the younger generation” who held alternate seats at the 12th Party Congress in 1982. Twenty years later, they are the top leaders of the country. Furthermore, if provincial leadership posts remain as the main stepping-stones to national leadership in the future, as has been the case during the past decade, the fifth generation leaders who currently serve as provincial leaders will be the front-runners in the competition for power in the years to come.

FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES OF THE FIFTH GENERATION

Like many other biological and sociological categories—ethnicity, class, ideology, and income—“generation can be imprecise at the boundaries.”⁵ It is rather arbitrary to define “where one generation begins and another ends,” as some scholars have stated.⁶ Practically, there is not much difference between those who were born in 1956 and those who were born in 1957. Nevertheless, for analytical reasons, we need to

base generational demarcation on specific (and somewhat arbitrary) years. A political generation is often defined as a group of cohorts born during a period of approximately 22 years.⁷ The literature on generational studies in contemporary China, however, tends to depict general breaks at shorter intervals of 15 years.⁸ These same-age cohorts have experienced the same major historical events during their formative years (described as the ages approximately between 17 and 25).⁹

In the People's Republic of China (PRC), the concept of political generations has also been based on the distinctive historical experiences of the elites.¹⁰ The first four elite generations in the PRC are commonly identified as the "Long March generation," the "Anti-Japanese War generation," the "Socialist Transformation generation," and the "Cultural Revolution generation," represented by Mao, Deng, Jiang, and Hu, respectively. Because of the multifaceted, strong impact of the Reform Era on the formative years of the fifth generation, we will name this generation the "Reform Era generation." The Reform Era generation—or the fifth generation—consists of people who were born between 1957 and 1972, an interval of 15 years. They were between 6 and 21 years old in 1978 when Deng's economic reform began, were between 17 and 32 years old during the 1989 Tiananmen incident, and are between 31 and 46 years old at present.

This definition is consistent with the way in which Chinese official sources divide the elite generations. During the past two years, several generational studies conducted by Chinese researchers have also used 45 as the age dividing members of the generation of leaders who will obtain powerful positions in the national leadership about 15–20 years down the road from the members of the fourth generation who currently rule the country.¹¹ The CCP Organization Department recently required that all leadership bodies above the county level have a number of top officials in their early 40s or younger.¹²

Most members of this generation were too young to experience the violent and radical times of the Cultural Revolution. Also, unlike members of the previous generation, who suffered famine and hunger as a result of Mao's Great Leap Forward and radical Socialist Transformation, members of this generation usually have not had firsthand experience of poverty and starvation. Their formative experiences occurred largely after 1978, when Deng began his economic reform. Three major transformations or events—in the economic, social, and political arenas—have been particularly prominent in shaping their collective characteristics and worldviews.

The first is an unprecedented economic boom. Between 1979 and 1997, the growth rate of China's gross domestic product (GDP) was 9.8 percent annually, about three times greater than the world average. During the same period, 170 million people in China were lifted out of poverty. Chinese citizens' bank savings increased 220-fold, from 21 billion yuan (roughly \$2.5 billion) to 4,628 billion yuan (about \$560 billion). Never in human history have so many people made so much economic progress in a single generation. Yet also within two decades,

Many members of the Reform Era generation have begun searching for a new path that Chinese democracy might pursue.

China has changed from one of the most equitable countries in the world in terms of income distribution to one of the least equitable.¹³ In addition, unemployment has risen to its highest level since 1949, and official corruption has been rampant.

Understandably, these drastic economic changes and their contradictory consequences will certainly not lead to a unified viewpoint among the future leaders who grew up during this perplexing time. Some believe in a market economy and tend to attribute the

successes of their own careers to their talents. For them, just as the market economy justifies inequality, their intelligence and credentials justify their elite status. The other members of this generation, however, have become the so-called New Left (*xin zuopai*) and have launched a new, systematic critique of capitalism. Still others are not interested in ideological labeling, but enthusiastically call for "retaining socialist passion" to help the "weaker social groups" (*ruoshi qunti*) and to adopt sound policies to achieve a better balance in regional economic development.¹⁴

The second major determinant of the fifth generation's diversified worldviews is the more pluralistic social and cultural environment in which these leaders grew up. Unlike their predecessors, members of the Reform Era generation largely grew up in a pluralistic—rather than a static, conservative, and state-centered—cultural environment. In the 1980s, for example, there were a number of nationwide debates among Chinese youth on issues such as individualism, the lessons of the Cultural Revolution, the problems of conformity and uniformity, the meaning of life, and the new spirit of the special economic zones. Most

of these debates occurred in the widely circulated official journal *China Youth*.¹⁵

Another important development in the Reform Era is China's unprecedented exchange with the outside world, especially cultural and educational exchanges with the United States. Since most of the fifth generation leaders were in high schools and universities during the 1980s, they were heavily influenced by Western views and values. Some studied abroad as visiting scholars or degree candidates and then returned to their native country in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Yet, the growing Western cultural influence and increasing presence of U.S.-trained returnees do not necessarily mean that these people will form a pro-American force in China's policymaking circles, at least in the near future. For instance, almost all members of the so-called Say No Club, the authors of the famous book series *China Can Say No*, were born in the late 1950s and the 1960s. They may have a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, but they often have strong nationalist views rather than globalist visions. Nevertheless, their life experiences will likely contribute to further external opening and increased internal diversity in the country.

The third major incident, Tiananmen, was undoubtedly the most important political event in the collective memory of the Reform Era generation. For many of the Reform Era generation, the Tiananmen movement was their first political experience, and it affected their lives, careers, and worldviews in a profound way. No matter what side they were on during this tragic drama, they all reached political maturity afterward. The fifth generation leaders have likely drawn lessons and gained wisdom from this enormous human tragedy.

Like the preceding generation of leaders, who often fear a recurrence of Cultural Revolution-like chaos, the Reform Era generation may fear a Tiananmen-like violent clash. Many members of the Reform Era generation—whether they participated in the Tiananmen movement or not—have begun searching for a different path, a new path that Chinese democracy might pursue. Institutional development, the rule of law, grassroots elections, civil liberties, independent media, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and people's congresses—rather than street protests—have intrigued those who intend to promote political democratization in the country. Unsurprisingly, most demonstrations and urban protests since the 1990s have been held by workers, laid-off workers, religious groups, and elders, not by college students and intellectuals. This fact does not necessarily mean that

intellectual elites of the Reform Era generation have lost their critical view of the Chinese political system and China's social problems, but rather that some people are interested in working within the system and trying to improve it, whereas others are interested in promoting changes in social and civic domains that may lead to the establishment of both a civil society and a democratic state.

GROWING DIVERSITY IN EDUCATIONAL/OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE FIFTH GENERATION

Economic and sociopolitical changes during the past two decades have also helped determine the educational and occupational backgrounds of the fifth generation of leaders. Table 1 shows 36 prominent members of the fifth generation. They all currently serve as ministerial or provincial leaders (as a vice minister, standing member of a provincial party committee, vice governor, and/or above); 14 of them are members of the 16th Central Committee. Three of them hold full membership seats. These 36 leaders are the only high-level civilian leaders from the fifth generation whose biographical information is available at present. Based on the information, one can highlight several important educational and occupational characteristics of the fifth generation.

First, among the 33 leaders whose educational backgrounds are identified, all had college educations, and 27 (81.8 percent) had postgraduate educations, including six who hold doctoral degrees. Educational credentials, especially advanced educational attainment, have remained an important criterion, perhaps even a prerequisite, for elite promotion. My preliminary research on the municipal and prefecture levels of leaders indicates that, similarly to their age cohorts in the provincial-ministerial level mentioned above, many Reform Era generation leaders hold advanced degrees. For example, the mayor of Jiangsu's Gaoyou city, Xu Xianghua (b. 1963), obtained a doctorate in agriculture; vice mayor of Guangdong's Yangjiang city, Zhong Yi (b. 1965), received his doctorate in management at Central China Science and Technology University; and vice mayor of Shandong's Qufu city, Sun Youxun (b. 1971), earned a doctorate in environmental engineering at Tongji University. Jiang Jun (b. 1960) and Ding Hui (b. 1960), both vice mayors of Liaoning's Liaoyang city, hold doctoral degrees as well, the former from Liaoning Institute of Engineering and the latter from a university in Great Britain.

Second, in contrast to both the third and fourth generations of

TABLE 1. *Fifth Generation Leaders Who Serve on the 16th Central Committee and/or as Provincial/Ministerial Officials*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>16th CC</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Educational background</i>	<i>Major</i>
Zhao Leji	1957	Member	Governor, Qinghai	College, Beijing University, 1980	Philosophy
Zhou Qiang	1960	Member	First secretary, Chinese Communist Youth League	M.A.	Unknown
Zhang Qingwei	1960	Member	Vice president, China Aerospace Corporation	M.A., China's Northwest University, 1988	Physics
Zhu Yanfeng	1961	Alternate	President, China's First Auto Group	M.A., Zhejiang University, 1983	Engineering
Lin Zuoming	1961	Alternate	President, China Shenyang Liming Company	Unknown	Unknown
Liu Shiquan	1963	Alternate	Vice director, Sanjiang Space Group	M.A., Harbin Institute of Technology	Engineering
Qiu Xueqiang	1957	Alternate	Deputy prosecutor, Supreme People's Prosecutor	M.A.	Law
Tie Ying (f)	1957	Alternate	Vice chair, Chinese Writers Association	Unknown	Chinese
Ling Jihua	1957	Alternate	Deputy director, General Office, CCP	College, Youth League School	Party affairs
Li Jiheng	1957	Alternate	Party secretary, Nanning (Guangxi)	College, Guangxi University, 1979; M.A., Central Party School, 1998	Chinese economics
Shen Yueyue (f)	1957	Alternate	Deputy party secretary, Anhui Province	Junior College, Ningbo Normal College, 1980	Mathematics
Wang Zhengwei	1957	Alternate	Party secretary, Yinchuang	Ph.D.	Unknown

(continued)

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>16th CC</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Educational background</i>	<i>Major</i>
Zhang Xuan (f)	1958	Alternate	Acting president, Higher People's Court, Chongqing	M.A., Southwest Institute of Law & Political Science	Law
Su Shulin	1963	Alternate	Vice president, China National Petroleum Corporation	Unknown	Unknown
Ma Xiaowei	1959		Vice minister of Health	China's Medical University, 1982	Medicine
Xiao Jie	1958		Vice minister of Finance	Visiting scholar in Germany	Economics
Ye Dongsong	1958		Vice minister of Land and Natural Resources	M.A., Nankai University, 1982	Economics
Chen Zhangliang	1961		President, China Agricultural University	Ph.D., Washington University in St. Louis, USA, 1986	Agriculture
Zhu Mingguo	1957		Vice governor, Hainan	M.A., Central Party School, 1996	Party affairs
Pan Yeyang	1961		Standing member, Jiangxi	Ph.D., Zhongshan University	Marxism
Sun Yu	1957		Vice governor, Guangxi	M.A., Central China Normal University	Law
Hu Chunhua	1963		Standing member & chief of staff, Tibet CCP Committee	B.A., Beijing University; M.A., Central Party School, 1999	Chinese economics
Chen Miner	1960		Director, Publicity Department, Zhejiang CCP Committee	M.A., Central Party School	Party affairs
Liu Wei	1958		Director, Organization Department, Shandong CCP Committee	College, Anhui Normal College, 1985; M.A., Central Party School, 1992	Chinese economics
Ji Lin	1962		Standing member, Beijing	M.A., China's People's University	Law

Sun Zhencai	1963	Standing member, Beijing CCP Committee	Ph.D., Beijing Institute of Agriculture	Agriculture
Wang Huiming	1959	Assistant governor, Xinjiang	M.A., Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Finance
Wang Yongming	1958	Assistant governor, Xinjiang	M.A., Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Management
Wang Anshun	1957	Standing member & head, CCP Organization Department, Shanghai	M.A.	Economics
Sun Laiyan	1957	Chief of staff, China's Science & Technology Industrial Commission	M.A., French National Science Laboratory	Physics
Li Jinzhao	1958	Standing member, Guangxi CCP Committee	Ph.D., Chinese Academy of Sciences	Economics
Lu Hao	1968	Vice mayor, Beijing	M.A., Beijing University	Economics
Kurexi Maihesuti	1960	Vice governor, Xinjiang	B.A., Central Party School, 1998	Politics
Nuerke Abudumanjin	1962	Vice governor, Xinjiang	M.A., Beijing Normal University, 2000	Politics
Cui Yuying (f)	1958	Vice governor, Tibet	B.A., Tibet Institute of Agriculture, 1982	Agriculture
Xie Xuezhong	1957	Vice governor, Tibet	B.A., Liaoning Institute of Finance, 1982; Ph.D., People's University, 1991	Economics

leaders, who are predominantly engineers by training (as described earlier in this study), many of the fifth generation leaders have studied economics, politics, or the humanities. Table 1 shows that among those 32 leaders whose academic fields are identified, 11 majored in economics, finance, and management, nine studied natural sciences and engineering, six studied politics and party affairs, four received law degrees, and two majored in the humanities. The percentage of technocrats amounts to only about 28 percent.

Receiving a law degree has become a valuable credential for a leadership post. On the 16th Central Committee, several new full members hold law degrees. They are Xi Jinping (party secretary of Zhejiang), Li

Returnees from abroad not only have distinct educational backgrounds, but also take different career paths than do those leaders who were educated in China.

Keqiang (party secretary of Henan), Cao Jianming (vice president of the Supreme Court), Zhang Xuan (president of the Higher People's Court), Yin Yicui (deputy party secretary of Shanghai), and Yuan Chunqing (deputy party secretary of Shaanxi). These leaders were all born in the 1950s and are seen as rising stars in the Chinese leadership. Jiang's work report at the 16th Party Congress specified that China should establish a Chinese-style legal system by 2010. More recently, Hu Jintao also made a widely publicized speech in which he emphasized the rule of law. Accord-

ingly, the enrollment at China's law schools has increased significantly. In the early 1980s, there were only 3,000 lawyers in a country of over one billion people. China now has over 150,000 lawyers. The number of applicants for master's degrees in law increased from about 18,000 in 2001 to about 27,000 in 2002.¹⁶ All these developments suggest that lawyers will likely become an important elite group in the near future.

Third, several front-runners in the fifth generation work as CEOs of major state enterprises. For example, Zhang Qingwei (b. 1960), vice president of China Aerospace Corporation; Zhu Yanfeng (b. 1961), president of China's First Auto Group; Lin Zuoming (b. 1961), president of the China Shenyang Liming Company; Liu Shiquan (b. 1963), vice director of Sanjiang Space Group; and Su Shulin (b. 1963), vice president of the China National Petroleum Corporation, all currently serve on the 16th

Central Committee. These people represent the rise of entrepreneurs (representing various firms such as state enterprises, joint ventures, stock-sharing companies, and collective and private businesses).

Several factors have contributed to the reemergence of entrepreneurs in the PRC. These include the rapid development of rural industries, rural-urban migration, urban/private enterprises and joint ventures, the adoption of a stock market and land lease, and the development of information technology, especially the birth of the Internet. At present, very few private entrepreneurs serve in leadership positions. But, Jiang's theory of the "three represents," which was added as an amendment to the CCP constitution at the 16th Party Congress, has paved the way for the political advancement of this elite group in the years to come. In fact, in 2002, for the first time in the history of the PRC, private entrepreneurs attended the party congress as a distinct group, and some served as members of the presidium of the congress.¹⁷ The posts of entrepreneurs of the large firms will likely become stepping-stones for the national leadership. Some leaders with entrepreneurial and business backgrounds may also serve in provincial and municipal leadership posts during a certain stage of their political careers. For example, new Vice Mayor of Beijing Lu Hao (b. 1968) is only 35 years old. He was in charge of the economic administration of Zhongguanchun (dubbed Beijing's Silicon Valley) before becoming vice mayor of the capital.

Fourth, out of the total of 36 leaders, 22 (61 percent) currently serve as provincial leaders. Among them, 16 (73 percent) work in inland provinces, especially in poor regions such as Qinghai, Guangxi, and Jiangxi. Four work in Xinjiang, and three in Tibet. Apparently, the central authorities have placed these young leaders in poor interior provinces to develop their ability to work in a difficult environment. After several years, these leaders will likely be promoted to higher positions in a way similar to the experience of Hu Jintao, who served as party chief in Guizhou and Tibet before obtaining a Standing Committee membership on the Politburo.

Fifth, several of the leaders listed on the table studied abroad as degree candidates or visiting scholars. For example, Chen Zhangliang, president of China Agricultural University and a vice minister-level official, received his doctorate at Washington University in St. Louis in 1986. Sun Laiyan, chief of staff of China's Science & Technology Industrial Commission, received his master's degree in physics at the French National Science Laboratory in Paris. The current top Chinese leaders plan to recruit a large number of these returnees into the political lead-

ership because they are usually in their 30s and early 40s—the right ages for cohorts of a fifth generation of PRC leaders. Zeng Qinghong recently stated that students returning from study abroad should be seen as a major source for political recruitment.¹⁸ Zeng also specified that some outstanding returnees be immediately appointed to leading bureau-level posts (*juchang*). They may be promoted to even higher posts after serving as bureau heads for a few years. In the recently reshuffled Ministry of Finance, for example, the average age of division and bureau heads is 44. Over one-fourth of them (16 out of 61) have master's or doctoral degrees, many from universities in the United States.¹⁹ Vice Minister Xiao Jie, who is listed on the table, was a visiting scholar in Germany.

Most of these returnees serve in leadership posts in the fields of education, academic research, finance, and foreign affairs. It seems that returnees not only have distinct educational backgrounds, but also differ in some other important ways from those leaders who were educated in China. Returnees tend to advance their careers through certain sectors such as university administration, academia, foreign affairs, banking, and finance. This path is in contrast to those of many current top leaders, who have advanced their careers step-by-step from county, city, and provincial levels of administration. It remains to be seen whether the number of returnees will significantly increase in the Chinese leadership, how China-educated elites (especially those who advance their careers in poor inland regions) and foreign-trained elites will interact with each other, and what their diverging career paths mean for China's future political development.

CONCLUSIONS

What generalizations can we make, based on the information available, about the main characteristics of the fifth generation? In what ways do these leaders differ from their predecessors, the fourth generation of leaders? The remarkable economic boom and subsequent political, social, and cultural transformations, as well as unexpected negative side effects, have had an everlasting impact on the collective characteristics of this generation. As a result of the continuing importance of educational credentials in the selection of this generation of leaders, members of the fifth generation are the best-educated elite generation in PRC history.

Yet unlike the previous generation of leaders who experienced many

hardships during the Cultural Revolution, nurturing within them valuable traits such as adaptability and endurance, the fifth generation leaders do not possess these traits and thus will probably be less capable of dealing with tough challenges and crises. Their capacity will likely be further undermined by the fact that they do not have the same broad work experience as the members of the fourth generation had.

Because of the rise of new groups during Deng's era, such as entrepreneurs and lawyers, the fifth generation will likely be the most diversified elite generation in PRC history, not only in terms of views and values as a result of the increasingly pluralistic nature of the Chinese society in which they grew up, but also in terms of occupational backgrounds and political associations. This generation has had more exposure to foreign countries, especially Western countries, than its predecessors. Since some fifth generation leaders are returnees from study abroad, they will likely have a better understanding of the West than did the leaders of the third and fourth generations. This distinction does not necessarily mean that they are pro-West or pro-United States, because ultimately they are pragmatic Chinese nationalists who live in a realists' world. They will likely be outward-looking, but not necessarily with a global view.

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NOTES

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8. Carol Lee Hamrin, "Perspectives on Generational Change in China," unpublished scope paper for workshop organized by The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, June 1993, 1.

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11. See, for example, Peng Bo and Wang Lin, eds., *Keneng yingxiang ershiyi shiji Zhongguo de yibai ge qingnian renwu* (The 100 young people who may shape China in the 21st century) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin chubanshe, 2001).

12. *Shijie ribao* (World journal), August 4, 2000, sec. A, p. 7.

13. Fang Ning, Wang Bingquan, and Ma Lijun, *Chengzhang de Zhongguo—Dangdai Zhongguo qingnian de guojia minzu yishi yanjiu* (Growing China: Study of nation-state consciousness of contemporary Chinese youths) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2002), 299.

14. For the ongoing intellectual debate on this issue, see Li Shitao, ed., *Zhishifengzi lichang: Ziyoushuoyi zhizheng yu Zhongguo sixiangjie de fenhua* (The standpoint of intellectuals: The debate over liberalism and the split of Chinese intellectuals) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2000), and Joseph Fewsmith, *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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17. *Shijie ribao*, November 12, 2002, sec. A, p. 3.

18. See <http://www.chinesenewsnet.com>, September 25, 2000.

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