Jiang Zemin's Successors: The Rise of the Fourth Generation of Leaders in the PRC*

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Shortly after Jiang Zemin and his so-called "third generation of leaders" took over power from Deng Xiaoping and other revolutionary veterans, China began to face a new round of political succession. This is no surprise because Jiang is already 72 years old, and two other top leaders, Premier Zhu Rongji and Head of People's Congress Li Peng, are also in their early 70s. The average ages of members of the Standing Committee, Politburo and Secretariat of the 15th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) elected in 1997 are 65, 63 and 63 respectively.[1] These three pivotal, hierarchical leadership organizations all consist of similar age groups. When the next Party congress convenes, these political bodies will be occupied by people with an average age of 68 to 70. This narrow age distribution among the top leadership may cause problems for political succession in the future.

Jiang Zemin and his generation of leaders are, of course, aware of the importance of selecting their own successors. Jiang recently announced that he will hand over, one at a time, three important posts that he currently holds (President, Secretary General of the Party and Chairman of the Military Commission) to the new generation of leaders.[2] The elevation of 55-year-old Hu Jintao to vice-president of the state during the recently held Ninth People's Congress was the first major sign of the rise of the "fourth generation of leaders" – those political elites in their late 40s and 50s. In the People's Republic of China (PRC), the position of the vice-president of the state used to be a ceremonial one held by a non-Communist Party figurehead or a semi-retired communist veteran. Madame Song Qingling (widow of Sun Yat-sen), for example, held the post for decades. Rong Yiren, Hu's immediate predecessor, was a former leading industrialist in the pre-communist era. But the selection of Hu, the youngest standing member of the Politburo, as President Jiang's deputy suggests that Hu will play an even more active role in national affairs at the turn of the century. This also places him in the "core of

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1. For a detailed discussion of the age distribution of leadership bodies of the 15th Party Congress and its comparison with previous Party congresses, see 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*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (March 1998), pp. 231–264.

2. *Shijie ribao* (*World Journal*), 3 March 1998, p. A1.

fourth generation of leaders in the PRC," the term often used by both the Chinese and some China-watchers abroad.[3]

Along with Hu, two other Politburo members in their 50s, Wu Bangguo and Wen Jiabao, are now in charge of China's industrial, agricultural and financial affairs in the State Council where they serve as vice-premiers. Zeng Qinghong, an alternate member of the Politburo who is in his late 50s and is a long-time confidant of Jiang, has been placed in charge of personnel affairs in the Party. Li Changchun, 54, the youngest in the Politburo and a native of Liaoning, was recently appointed as Party boss of Guangdong province (now China's richest province). It is, of course, too early to suggest that the political future of these individual leaders is assured, because in PRC history many appointed heirs (such as Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Wang Hongwen under Mao; Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang under Deng) have fallen suddenly from favour. However, it is likely that, if not Hu Jintao, someone from among the current front runners in the fourth generation of leaders will succeed Jiang in the not-too-distant future.

The rise of the fourth generation of leaders is most evident at the ministry and provincial levels. Early in 1999, all ministries and provinces in the country went through a reshuffling of their top leadership. After the rearrangement, 14 of the total of 29 ministers in the State Council were born in the 1940s. So were 12 Party bosses and 21 governors and mayors in 31 provinces and directly administered cities.[4] It is reported that the central authorities instituted a new rule stating that all provincial Party standing committees must have at least three members in their 50s or younger, and there must also be at least two people in their 50s or younger who are governors or vice-governors in each province.[5] In fact, the number of governors and vice-governors who are under 50 increased from 27 to 61 after the reshuffling, and their average age is now 52.3.[6] While the top Chinese leadership is still predominantly ruled by the third generation of cadres, political elites in their 50s, which is young by Chinese standards, are aggressively beginning to take the helm in both central and regional administrations. These are the people who will be most likely to govern China at the beginning of the 21st century.

What are the main characteristics of the fourth generation of leaders? In what ways do they resemble or differ from their predecessors, the third generation? What are their social backgrounds and career paths? What are the principal criteria for advancement to high office in this generation? The future of the Chinese Communist Party will largely depend on whether, as Hu Jintao recently said, the new Chinese leadership can win

3. Xiao Yu, "New generation aims for the top: 'fourth generation' leaders are taking the helm in both central and regional administrations," *South China Morning Post*, 6 August 1998, p. 1; and "Hu Jintao: Communist Party 'golden boy'," Agence France Presse, 15 March 1998, *South China Morning Post*, 25 August 1998, p. 1; and *Shijie ribao*, 25 August 1998, p. A9.

4. *China News Analysis*, No. 1607 (1 April 1998), pp. 4–5; and No. 1613–14 (1–15 July 1998), pp. 18–20.

5. Xiao Yu, "Fourth generation of leadership takes shape. Hu groomed to be next helmsman," *South China Morning Post*, 7 July 1998.

6. *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*), 3 August 1998, p. 1.

over public support, especially the country's younger generations.[7] To what extent does the fourth generation of leaders share similar convictions about the nature of the communist political system, and thereby maintain their loyalty and commitment to it? In addition to intergenerational differences, are there any important intra-generational differences among the fourth generation?

This study argues that this generation of leaders is more diversified than previous generations in terms of formative experiences, political solidarity, ideological conviction, career paths and occupational background. Although members of this generation share similar memories of experiences during the Cultural Revolution, they often have a diverse spectrum of political affiliations. Unlike the previous generations of leaders who usually shared strong bonding experiences such as the Long March and the Anti-Japanese War, this generation lacks political solidarity. Members grew up during the early years of the Cultural Revolution, a time of both idealism and extremism, but later became disillusioned about Mao and communist ideology. Compared to the Mao era, there are now more diversified channels through which new leaders can advance their political careers. Although both the third and fourth generations of leaders are known for the predominance of technocrats, there are more lawyers and financial experts in the fourth generation. These changes will have strong implications for the transformation of the Chinese political system.

The article begins by discussing the concept of political elite generations in the PRC and defining its fourth generation of leaders. The focus will be on the biographical data of 298 Chinese political elites. These data are based exclusively on the 1994 revised edition of *Zhongguo renming da cidian xiandai dangzhengjun lingdaorenwujuan* (*Who's Who in China*, the volume on current Party, government and military leaders), which consists of a total of 2,121 leaders at all levels above major city government.[8] The 298 leaders under study are members of the youngest group in the volume, born between 1941 and 1956. Many of them occupy some of the most important positions in the Party, government and army. For example, 95 are members of, or alternates to, the 15th Central Committee of the CCP, 40 are ministers and deputy ministers of the central government, 101 are provincial governors and vice-governors.[9] Yet, as some China-watchers have observed, relatively little is known about the sociological profiles and other characteristics of this generation of leaders, even including some prominent figures such as Hu Jintao, Wu

7. *China Daily*, 20 June 1998, p. 1.

8. Liao Gailong and Fan Yuan (comp.), *Zhongguo renming da cidian xiandai dangzhengjun lingdaorenwujuan* (*Who's Who in China, the Volume on Current Party, Government, and Military Leaders*), 1994 ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994). For the complete list of the categories of leaders included in the volume, see pp. xi-xv. An overwhelming majority of the fourth generation of leaders are not included in the previous 1989 edition.

9. Members or alternates of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP often serve in other capacities. For example, they simultaneously serve as ministers of the central government or provincial Party secretaries.

Bangguo and Wen Jiabao.[10] Although a few recent scholarly studies of the Chinese leadership are primarily based on the same source, no one has yet undertaken a focused analysis of this generation of leaders.[11] Indeed, almost no broad, quantitative comparison of political elites by age groups has been published, and no generational perspective has been applied to empirical studies in recent literature.[12]

In addition to analysing data from the above source, this study explores some important informal networks and personal connections among these leaders by using other sources from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and elsewhere, seeking verification from multiple PRC publications and the increasing availability of internet information from the PRC.[13] Brief case studies are also used to analyse the role of school ties and political nepotism in the recruitment and promotion of these political elites, especially prominent figures of this generation. Data about the background characteristics of leaders, of course, cannot give complete information about their political behaviour. But political leaders' behaviour and attitudes may be developed or constrained by their formative memories, socio-economic environments, occupational backgrounds and personal networks, all of which may influence their policy preferences. This article attempts to compare various aspects of this generation of leaders with their predecessors. It concludes by exploring both shared characteristics and major differences among the fourth generation of leaders and their implications for China's politics in the future.

Defining Political Elite Generations in China

The term "political generations" is frequently used but not carefully defined. Like many other biological and sociological categories – ethnicity, class, ideology – "generation can be imprecise at the boundaries."[14] In the literature, generation boundaries are often based on the combination of both birth year and characteristics of peer groups. The latter includes shared major life experiences and collective socio-political attitudes. A political generation is often defined as a group of birth cohorts whose combined length approximates 22 years.[15] The literature on generational studies in contemporary China tends to depict general

10. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 October 1997, p. 24.

11. For example, Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP"; and Xiaowei Zang, "Ethnic representation in the current Chinese leadership," *The China Quarterly*, No. 153 (March 1998), pp. 107–127.

12. One exception is Ruth Cherrington, "Generational issues in China: a case study of the 1980s generation of young intellectuals," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (June 1997), pp. 302–320.

13. Additional biographical data come mainly from *Renmin ribao*, *Zhonghua yingcai* (*China's Talents*, Beijing), *China News Analysis* (Hong Kong), *Mingbao* (Hong Kong), *China Directory* (Tokyo), *Zhonggong yanjiu* (*Studies of Chinese Communism*, Taibei), and *Shijie ribao*.

14. William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future 1582–2069* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1992), p. 59.

15. *Ibid.* pp. 60–61.

breaks at shorter intervals of 15 years.[16] These same age cohorts have experienced the same major historical events during their formative years (described as between approximately 17 and 25).[17] Karl Mannheim, a prominent social scientist who has contributed some seminal theoretical works in the study of generations, draws a primary distinction between a generation as a single age-group, based entirely on year of birth, and a generation based on collective social and political experiences, rather than age. These experiences lead to a shared consciousness and a unique world-view.[18] According to Mannheim, a purely age-based definition of a generation "does not fully account for the formation of a specific identity and self-consciousness of a particular generation."[19] A political generation becomes "sociologically significant only when it also involves participation in the same historical and social circumstances."[20] This relates to another important concept of Mannheim's theory of generation: "generational units," which posits that sub-groups within a generation may experience the world differently as a result of differences in race, class origin, gender, education and location. The concept of generational units highlights intra-generational differences in addition to inter-generational contrasts.

Mannheim's conceptual assumptions have profound implications for the study of Chinese political generations. The concept of political generations in China has often been based on the distinctive political experience of elites, such as the "Long March generation." The term "political generations" that many sinologists have used in their studies may be more accurately identified as "political *elite* generations." It would be an oversimplification to portray all the people in the same country who are the same age as a monolithic group that shares the same experience and therefore the same world-view. Political and socio-economic events will *not* affect all generational units or social groups in the same way: technocrats who are engineers-turned-politicians in the fourth generation of leadership in China may have more in common with technocrats in the previous generation than with non-elites in the same age group. It is also important, as Mannheim suggests, to pay attention to the tensions and differentiations within a political elite generation, and

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

17. Many scholars define the formative years of personal growth as between 17 and 25. See Michael Yahuda, "Political generations in China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 80 (December 1979), p, 795; Marvin Rintala, "Generations: political generations," in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968); and Rodolfo Garza and David Vaughan, "The political socialization of Chicano elites: a generational approach," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 65 (June 1984), pp. 290–307.

18. Karl Mannheim uses the term "location" to refer to the concept of generation in terms of a single age group, and the term "actuality" to refer to the importance of the collective social and political experience of various age groups. See Karl Mannheim, "Consciousness of class and consciousness of generation," in Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology of Knowledge* (London: RKP, 1952); and Pat McNeill, "The changing generation gap," *New Statesman & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 16, (23 September 1988), p. 30.

19. Cherrington, "Generational issues in China," p. 304.

20. Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 298.

therefore search for contrasts and sources of conflict among various elite groups, even within the same age range. An elite generation may not be homogeneous in some crucial aspect of their backgrounds, views and values, even though they have experienced similar major historical events at a similar point in their personal development.[21]

Keeping all these concepts and modifications in mind, one can identify five political elite generations in contemporary Chinese history: the "Long March veterans," the "Anti-Japanese War officers," the "Socialist Transformation cadres," the "Cultural Revolution grown-ups" and the "Economic Reform elites" (see Table 1).[22] Some Western sinologists used similar terms for major historical events to identify some of these political generations in communist China.[23] The Chinese Communist Party itself, as Michael Yahuda noted, "has classified its members in terms of the historical periods during which they joined the Party, and their participation in key events during the Party's history such as the Long March, the War of Resistance to Japan, and so forth."[24]

This categorization is also identical to the generational classification of China's leadership used by the current Chinese authorities. This categorization is highly political because Jiang Zemin has identified himself as the "core of the third generation of leaders," and used this identity to consolidate his political legitimacy as an heir to Deng. As both a communist student activist in France in the early 1920s and a member of the Long March, Deng should not be seen in the same generation as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. But by identifying Deng as the core of the second generation and himself as the core of the third, Jiang skipped the real core members of the second generation such as Zhao Ziyang, Wan Li, Hu Yaobang and Qiao Shi.[25] More importantly, by appointing the core members of the next generation, Jiang has attempted to diminish the pressure of power contenders in his own generation such as Li Peng, Zhu Rongji and Li Ruihuan. Similarly, Hu Jintao, Zeng Qinghong and their same-age cohorts, who used to be identified as the "third echelon"

21. This certainly differs from Seweryn Bialer's definition of elite generation. He argues that "elite generation is an age group whose membership is homogeneous with respect to a particular life experience at a similar point in its development." See *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability, and Change in the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 100.

22. At present, the reform generation, or the fifth generation of leaders, has not emerged as a significant elite group on both the central and provincial levels, although the formative years of a handful of leaders in this study occurred during the reform era.

23. Yahuda, "Political generations in China." Also, Carol Lee Hamrin categorizes four political generations: "Revolutionary Elders" (70s and 80s) whose coming of age was most influenced by anti-imperialism and civil war in the 1920s and 1930s; "Patriotic Leaders (50s and 60s) most influenced by the anti-Japanese and anti-American wars and the adoption of the Soviet model; "Rebel Adults" (30s and 40s) shaped by the Cultural Revolution and rural exile, and seeking new ideals and values; and "Open Youth" (teens and 20s) raised with weak transitional values during the reform era. See Hamrin, "Perspectives on generational change in China," p. 2.

24. Yahuda, "Political generations in China," p. 795.

25. For studies of some members of this generation leadership, see David M. Lampton, *Paths to Power: Elite Mobility in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1986); and John Israel and Donald Klein, *Rebels and Bureaucrats: China's December 9ers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

Table 1: **Political Elite Generations in Communist China**

Generation of leaders	*Major historical event*	*Period of event*	*Paramount leader*	*Representative figures*	*Primary age group by 1999*
1st generation	The Long March	1934–35	Mao Zedong	Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping	Late 80s or older
2nd generation	The Anti-Japanese War	1937–45	Deng Xiaoping	Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Yao Yilin, Qiao Shi	Late 70s and early 80s
3rd generation	The socialist transformation	1949–58	Jiang Zemin	Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Li Lanqing, Li Ruihuan	Late 60s and early 70s
4th generation	The Cultural Revolution	1966–76	Hu Jintao?	Wen Jiabao, Zeng Qinghong Wu Bangguo, Li Changchun	Late 50s and early 60s
5th generation	The economic reform	1978–	Unknown	Unknown	Late 40s and early 50s

(*disan tidui*), are now more inclined to be seen as the core of the fourth generation that is in line to succeed Jiang.

There are, of course, more ambiguities in terms of boundaries between generations. It is rather arbitrary to define "where one generation begins and another ends."[26] Political leadership does not always consist exclusively of elites in the same generation, although members of that generation may dominate the most important power positions. In empirical studies of Chinese political elites, generational classification based on age should also allow for some exceptions. For instance, Hu Yaobang is usually seen as a member of the second generation of Chinese leaders, although he took part in the Long March (Hu was one of the youngest people in the March). Most political leaders in the PRC, however, fit in the generational classification listed in Table 1. For example, the formative years of a majority of the third generation of leaders occurred *after* the Japanese occupation. Among the 24 members of the Politburo in 1998, only one joined the Party before 1945.[27] Most of them began their political careers during the socialist transformation in the 1950s, and many went to the Soviet Union and other East European countries for higher education (including four standing members of the Politburo: Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Wei Jianxing and Li Lanqing).

The fourth generation is composed of those who grew up, or had their formative years, during the Cultural Revolution, and usually acquired their first political experiences during this time. They are the youngest group listed in *Who's Who in China*, all born between 1941 and 1956. The definition of this generation is somewhat arbitrary because of the data available, but it does fit both the "15 year span of a generation" and "formative years between 17 and 25." The oldest among this group was 25 years old when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966 and some may have finished college and started working by the mid-1960s. The youngest member was ten years old. However, all would have memories of the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Most of them were either in high school or in college when it began, and therefore a majority of them served as Mao's "Red Guards." Some were among the 12 million young men and women who were sent to the countryside in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many were members of the so-called "lost generation."[28] Some later returned to school to complete their education, especially after 1977 when reformers reinstituted entrance examinations for higher education.

The Cultural Revolution certainly affected this generation of leaders in

26. Cherrington, "Generational issues in China," p. 304.

27. For the average age distribution of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP and its Politburo, see Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 252 and 254.

28. A discussion of the "lost generation" is found in Marthe Engelborghs-Bertels, "The new man or a lost generation? Education in the Four Modernizations program of the PRC," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 9 (September 1985), pp. 87–118; Yahuda, "Political generations in China," pp. 802–804; and C. Montgomery Broaded, "The lost and found generation: cohort succession in Chinese higher education," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 23, (January 1990), pp. 77–95.

ways that were remarkably different from other generations. Despite some important differences between subgroups, virtually all of them believed in Mao and Maoism (at least in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution). Later, however, they were disillusioned and felt manipulated, or even betrayed. Their idealism was shattered, their energy wasted, their education lost and their careers interrupted. Some scholars argue that, as a result of the Cultural Revolution, this generation also "acquired a variety of political skills and ... the habit of independent thinking."[29]

One important conceptual distinction should be made here: the fourth generation of leaders is the Cultural Revolution generation, but not vice versa. This is the distinction between political elite generation and political generation. Only the tip of the iceberg of the Cultural Revolution generation had a college education and/or became political leaders. An overwhelming majority lost the opportunity to be educated during the Cultural Revolution and now often face unemployment and other problems such as the increasing cost of educating their children and caring for their parents. Some leading Chinese dissidents are also members of the Cultural Revolution generation. There are profound differences among this generation.

Even within the fourth generation of leaders, there are some important contrasting subgroups, shaped by variables such as when they graduated from college, when they joined the Party (that is, prior to, during or after the Cultural Revolution), and what their class or family backgrounds were. Probably similar to the leadership in post-communist Russia, China's fourth generation of leaders may lack a common ideology and a willingness to commit to the existing political system. They also lack a fundamental consensus on major socio-economic policies.[30] This study will elaborate on the commonalities and differences among the fourth generation of leaders, as well as other demographic and sociological characteristics.

Quantitative Findings and Discussion

This study codes three types of data about the members of the fourth generation of leaders: their demographic distribution, including age, sex, nationality, birthplace and, for provincial and municipal leaders, the province or city in which they were born and the province and city in which they now serve as leaders; their educational backgrounds, including schools, degree levels, major fields, graduation years, and the differentiation of the time they joined the Party and the time they graduated from college; and their career and recruitment paths, including work experiences in different organizations (such as Party, government administration, military, youth league), work experiences in different fields

29. Yahuda, "Political generations in China," p. 802.

30. For a discussion of the contrasting subgroups of post-communist leadership in Russia, see David Lane, "Transition under Eltsin: the nomenklatura and political elite circulation," *Political Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5 (December 1997), p. 874.

(industry, agricultural, propaganda), and work experiences at different levels (grassroots, bureau/county/district, municipal/provincial, central).

Table 2 shows the distribution of current posts of the total of 298 leaders under study. If a member holds more than one leadership post, only the most important one is listed. For example, Bai Lichen, governor of Ningxia, is also deputy secretary of Ningxia, but the table lists only his position as governor. Most of the fourth generation of leaders are in very important Party and government positions at both the central and provincial levels, including 20 heads and deputy heads of the Central Department of the Chinese Communist Party, 40 ministers and vice-ministers in the State Council, and 38 provincial Party secretaries and deputy secretaries. They are already an important part of the leadership of China. They occupy 24.4 per cent of full membership seats and 31.8 per cent of alternate seats in the 15th Central Committee of the CCP (see Table 3). Four have been in the Politburo, the power centre of China. Table 3 also shows that the fourth generation of leaders did not emerge as a significant part of the CCP until the 14th Central Committee, elected in 1992 (50 members out of the total of 319, or 15.7 per cent). Table 4 shows the distribution of the years in which these leaders were appointed to current posts. An overwhelming majority (83.2 per cent) in this study pool, which was compiled in 1994, have been appointed to their current posts since 1991. This reflects the continuing turnover of Chinese political elites during the Deng era and the great mobility at high leadership levels.

Holders of some posts, for example the standing members of the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultation Conference, are largely ceremonial figureheads. These positions are usually held by non-communist figures such as representatives from the sports, the arts, philanthropy and "democratic parties." The number of representatives from other mass organizations, such as workers' unions and the National Federation of Women, is marginal. The number of fourth generation of leaders in the military is also remarkably low (3 per cent). This seems to be consistent with Jiang's political tactic of preventing the formation of any potentially powerful military faction. As a practical matter, Jiang has increased the turnover of senior military officers during the past few years, but meanwhile has not promoted young military figures to the top leadership. An alternative explanation is that Jiang may not be able to enforce the early retirement of senior officers. Top military posts on both the central and greater military district levels have always been held by those in their late 60s and early 70s, although individual officers in this same age group may change quickly.[31]

31. For a detailed discussion, see Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The army in the succession to Deng Xiaoping: familiar fealties and technocratic trends," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 8 (August 1993), pp. 757–786; and Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 255–56.

Table 2: **Distribution of Leadership Posts of the Fourth Generation of Leaders**

Leadership categories	*Number*	*Percentage*
Central		
Head of CCP Central Department	3	1.0
Deputy head of CCP Central Department	17	5.7
Government minister	3	1.0
Government vice-minister	37	12.4
Standing members of NPC	7	2.4
Standing members of CPPCC	16	5.4
Secretariat of CYLC	7	2.4
Editors-in-chief of major newspapers	6	2.0
President/vice-president of major banks	4	1.3
Head of mass organization (e.g. women, union)	6	2.0
Provincial and municipal		
Provincial Party secretary	4	1.3
Provincial deputy Party secretary	34	11.4
Provincial governor	6	2.0
Vice-governors	95	31.9
Provincial chief procurator	8	2.7
President of provincial court	7	2.4
Party secretary of major cities	12	4.0
Mayor of major cities	17	5.7
Military officers	9	3.0
Total	298	100.0

Notes:
CCP = Chinese Communist Party, NPC = National People's Congress, CPPCC = Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, CYLC = Communist Youth League of China.
Source:
Liao Gailong and Fan Yuan (comp.), *Zhongguo renming da cidian xiandai dangzhengjun lingdaorenwujuan* (*Who's Who in China, the Volume on Current Party, Government, and Military Leaders*), 1994 ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994). For the complete list of the categories of leaders included in the volume, see pp. xi–xv.

Demographic distribution by age, gender, nationality and birthplace. Table 5 shows the distribution by year of birth, gender and ethnic group. An overwhelming majority of leaders (92.6 per cent) in the study pool were born between 1941 and 1949. They were between 17 and 25 years old in 1966, when the Cultural Revolution took place. The youngest, Duan Qiang, vice-mayor of Beijing, was ten years old at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Virtually all members of the pool lived through the Cultural Revolution during their formative years, although a few of the youngest ones were in their formative years during the reform era.

A striking point, though not really surprising, is the dominance of males within the fourth generation of leaders. Although the percentage of females (9.4 per cent) is a bit higher than in the 15th Central Committee of the CCP (7.3 per cent), female leaders in this pool have more often

Table 3: **Number of Fourth Generation of Leaders who are 15th Central Committee Members of the CCP and their Tenure on the Committee**

Membership	*Number*	*% of total number in respective leadership bodies*	*Total number in leadership bodies*	*% of the total no. of the fourth generation of leaders (N = 298)*
Current				
Full politburo members	4	18.2	22	1.3
Full members	47*	24.4	193	15.8
Alternate members	48	31.8	151	16.1
Tenure since**				
11th CC (1977)	1 (1)	(0.3)	333	0.3 (0.3)
12th CC (1982)	13 (14)	(4.0)	348	4.4 (4.7)
13th CC (1987)	6 (20)	(7.0)	285	2.0 (6.7)
14th CC (1992)	30 (50)	(15.7)	319	10.1 (16.8)
Newly elected (1997)***	45 (95)	(27.6)	344	15.1 (31.9)

Notes:

*This includes four Politburo members.

**This includes both full and alternate members. The tenures of CC members are generally not interrupted. Four members of the 14th CC in the study pool, however, were not re-elected to the 15th CC.

***The real number of the members of the 15th Central Committee who were born after 1941 (the defining year for the fourth generation of leaders for the study pool) should be higher because some of these members have not yet been included in the source.

The numbers and percentages in parentheses include the previous number(s).

Sources:

Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China*; and *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*), overseas edition, 19 September 1997, p. 1.

Table 4: **Year First Appointed to Current Position**

Year	*No.*	*%*
1980	1	0.3
1983	1	0.3
1984	2	0.7
1985	6	2.0
1986	2	0.7
1987	4	1.3
1988	9	3.0
1989	5	1.7
1990	14	4.7
1991	21	7.0
1992	52	17.4
1993	170	57.1
1994	5	1.7
Unknown	6	2.0
Total	298	99.9

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

than not been appointed to deputy leadership positions, such as vice-governors and vice-ministers, or they serve in ceremonial posts. Only one woman in the study pool, Chen Zhili, minister of China's Ministry of Education (and a very close friend of Jiang Zemin), is a full member of the Central Committee of the CCP.[32] She is expected to be one of the leading candidates for the Politburo in the next congress. Interestingly, in the whole history of the CCP, only six women (including Mao's wife, Lin Biao's wife and Zhou Enlai's wife) have ever entered the Politburo. Sex discrimination against women in the Chinese leadership seems likely to continue as the country enters the 21st century.

It is also not surprising that most of the fourth generation of leaders are of Han nationality, as are all but 7 per cent of China's population. Less expected is the high number of 13 Tibetans in the study pool. Some of them have held important provincial positions: Danzim, deputy Party secretary of Tibet; Legqog, mayor of Lhasa (promoted to governor of Tibet in 1998); Sang Gye Gye, deputy Party secretary of Qinghai; Ou Zegao, vice-governor of Sichuan. All four of these are also alternate members of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP. This may reflect the government policy to select pro-Han Tibetans to be a significant part of local leadership in the areas where Tibetans live, though Hans usually

32. For the close relationship between Jiang and Chen, see Gao Xin, *Jiang Zemin de muliao* (*Jiang Zemin's Counsellors*), 4th ed. (Hong Kong: Mingjing chubanshe, 1997), pp. 204–205; it is also widely known in Shanghai where Jiang served as Party secretary and Chen served as his deputy in the late 1980s.

Table 5: **Distribution of the Fourth Generation of Leaders by Year of Birth, Gender and Nationality (N = 298)**

	No.	*%*
Year Born		
1941	50	16.8
1942	65	21.8
1943	32	10.7
1944	44	14.8
1945	30	10.1
1946	34	11.4
1947	8	2.7
1948	6	2.0
1949	7	2.3
1950	6	2.0
1951	4	1.3
1952	4	1.3
1953	3	1.0
1954	0	0
1955	4	1.3
1956	1	0.3
Gender		
Male	270	90.6
Female	28	9.4
Nationality		
Han	260	87.2
Tibetan	13	4.4
Hui	8	2.7
Miao	3	1.0
Uygur	2	0.7
Tujia	2	0.7
Korean	2	0.7
Manchu	2	0.7
Yi	1	0.3
Bai	1	0.3
Zhuang	1	0.3
Kazak	1	0.3
Gaoshan	1	0.3
Mongolian	1	0.3

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

hold the top posts in these areas. The representation of Uygur, Kazak and other ethnic groups in Xinjiang, in contrast, is very low.

Several recent studies of post-Mao leadership show an over-representation of elites who were born in eastern China, especially in Jiangsu and Shandong provinces, and an under-representation of those from the southern and south-western provinces such as Guangdong (which

produced a significant number of political and military elites during the Nationalist era) and Sichuan (which, until recently, was the most populous province of the country). This is in sharp contrast to the Mao era when the majority of CCP leaders came from central China, especially from Hunan and Hubei provinces.[33] Now Shandong, for example, accounts for well over one-quarter of China's senior military officers.[34] According to a recent report, of 42 highest ranking military officers whose birthplaces are identified, 13 were born in Shandong and six were born in Jiangsu. A total of 22 officers (52.4 per cent) are from eastern China.[35] On the 1998 State Council, 16 out of 29 ministers (55.2 per cent) are natives of eastern China, including eight who were born in Jiangsu.[36] In contrast, southern China has been badly under-represented on both the 14th and 15th Central Committees of the CCP, having only 2.6 per cent of the seats, though they make up 11 per cent of China's population and 13 per cent of the GDP.[37] The trend of unbalanced representation of leaders by birthplace is also evident in this study of the fourth generation of leaders, although the southern and south-western regions have higher representation than shown in previous studies (see Table 6). Again, the largest proportion of the new generation of leaders, about 40 per cent, are from eastern China, especially from Jiangsu and Shandong provinces.

Another important trend in the formation of provincial and municipal leadership in post-Mao China is the selection of local officials for leadership positions in their native areas. This trend challenges the "law of avoidance" (by which mandarins were prohibited from serving in their native provinces and counties) that was characteristic of traditional China for centuries and continued during the Mao era. In his study of the city of Wuhan during the early decades of the PRC, Ying-mao Kau observed that 91 per cent of municipal elites were non-native "outsiders."[38] But this "law of avoidance" was changed during the early stage of the reform era, as demonstrated by some recent studies of local elites, such as one on Chinese mayors by Li and Bachman.[39] Among 298 elites of this study

33. For earlier discussion of the origins of the CCP leaders, see Franklin W. Houn, "The Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: a study of elite," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 51 (June 1957); Jurgen Domes, "The Ninth CCP Central Committee in statistical perspective," *Current Scene* (Hong Kong), Vol. 9, No. 2 (1969); Robert Scalapino (ed.), *Elites in the People's Republic of China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972); and Paul Wong, *China's Higher Leadership in the Socialist Transition* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), pp. 190–203.

34. See Li and White, "The army in the succession to Deng Xiaoping," pp. 766–67; Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 246–47.

35. *China News Analysis*, Nos. 1615–16 (1–15 August 1998), pp. 15–19.

36. *China News Analysis*, No. 1607 (1 April 1998), pp. 4–6.

37. See Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 246–47; and Zang Xiaowei, "The Fourteenth Central Committee of the CCP: technocracy or political technocracy," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 8 (August 1993), p. 795.

38. Ying-mao Kau, "The urban bureaucratic elites in Communist China: a case study of Wuhan, 1949–1965," in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), *Communist Chinese Politics in Action* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), p. 227.

39. Cheng Li and David Bachman, "Localism, elitism and immobilism: elite formation and social change in post-Mao China," *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (October 1989), pp. 64–94.

Table 6: **Distribution of Birthplaces, by Province, of the Fourth Generation of Leaders and the Members of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP**

	4th generation leaders		*Members of 15th CC*			
Native province	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*Population %*	*GDP %*
North						
Beijing	3	1.0	5	2.6	1.0	2.4
Tianjin	3	1.0	3	1.6	0.7	1.6
Hebei	22	7.4	10	5.2	5.3	5.0
Shanxi	9	3.0	6	3.1	2.6	1.9
Inner Mongolia	2	0.7	2	1.0	1.9	1.5
Subtotal	39	13.1	26	13.5	11.5	12.4
North-east						
Liaoning	16	5.4	10	5.2	3.4	4.9
Jilin	11	3.7	10	5.2	2.2	2.0
Heilongjiang	6	2.0	2	1.0	3.1	2.8
Subtotal	33	11.1	22	11.4	8.7	9.7
East						
Shanghai	5	1.7	2	1.0	1.2	4.3
Jiangsu	39	13.1	29	15.0	5.9	9.0
Shandong	31	10.4	24	12.4	7.2	8.7
Zhejiang	18	6.0	11	5.7	3.6	6.2
Anhui	12	4.0	10	5.2	5.0	3.5
Fujian	11	3.7	4	2.1	2.7	3.8
Taiwan	2	0.7	1	0.5	–	–
Subtotal	118	39.6	81	41.9	25.6	35.5
Central						
Henan	9	3.0	5	2.6	7.5	5.2
Hubei	9	3.0	4	2.1	4.8	4.2
Hunan	13	4.4	11	5.7	5.3	3.8
Jiangxi	3	1.0	5	2.6	3.4	2.1
Subtotal	34	11.4	25	13.0	21.0	15.3
South						
Guangdong	12	4.0	5	2.6	5.7	9.4
Guangxi	3	1.0	0	0	3.8	2.8
Hainan	1	0.4	0	0	0.6	0.6
Subtotal	16	5.4	5	2.6	10.1	13.8
South-west						
Sichuan*	15	5.0	7	3.6	9.4	6.2
Guizhou	1	0.4	1	0.5	2.9	1.1
Yunnan	6	2.0	0	0	3.3	2.1
Tibet	7	2.3	1	0.5	0.2	0.1
Subtotal	29	9.7	9	4.6	15.8	9.5
North-west						
Shaanxi	13	4.4	4	2.1	2.9	1.7
Gansu	3	1.0	1	0.5	2.0	0.9
Qinghai	5	1.7	0	0	0.4	0.2

Ningxia	5	1.7	0	0	0.4	0.2
Xinjiang	3	1.0	2	1.0	1.4	1.5
Subtotal	29	9.7	7	3.6	7.1	4.5
Unknown	0	0	18	9.3		
Total	298	100.0	193	100.0	99.8	99.7

Notes:
*Including Chongquing. Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Sources:
China News Analysis, 1–15 July 1997, 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*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (March 1998), p. 246. Population and GDP data are calculated from *Zhongguo tongji nianjian, 1996* (*China Statistical Yearbook, 1996*) (Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, 1996), pp. 42–43 and 73.

pool, 187 are primarily provincial and municipal leaders, including four military officers who are in charge of regional military districts. Table 7 shows the correlation between their birth provinces and the provinces in which they now serve as leaders, as compared to Li and Bachman's study conducted about a decade ago. The trend to select local elites from the same region seems to continue in this new generation of leaders, as shown by the fact that 47 per cent of leaders work in their native provinces. Some non-native provincial leaders also have some sort of local connection; for example, they graduated from, or had many years of work experience in, the region in which they now serve as leaders.

Table 7, however, suggests that an effort has been made by the central

Table 7: **Distribution of Birthplace of Provincial and Municipal Leaders of the Fourth Generation and a Comparison with the Study of Chinese Mayors**

	Fourth generation		*Mayors (1986)*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Native province	88	47.1	144	58.2
Neighbouring province	25	13.4	31	12.5
Distant province	74	39.6	59	23.8
Unknown			13	5.2
Total	187	100.1	247	99.7

Note:
Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Source:
Cheng Li and David Bachman, "Localism, elitism and immobilism: elite formation and social change in post-Mao China," *World Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (October 1989), pp. 64–94.

authorities to limit the number of elites who work in their native areas. The percentage of those transferred from distant provinces has increased from 23.8 per cent in the study of mayors to 39.6 per cent in this study. In 1998, only seven provincial Party secretaries served in the province in which they were born (nine in 1997). There are only three provinces (Liaoning, Jiangsu and Jiangxi) in which both the Party secretaries and governors are natives.[40] Central authorities were faced with much local resistance in appointing non-native leaders to their provinces. Cantonese local officials, for example, were particularly resentful when central authorities appointed Li Changchun, a native of Liaoning and a new Politburo member, to be Party secretary of Guangdong, replacing Xie Fei, a native Cantonese who is still a member in the Politburo.[41] The tension between the demand for regional representation and the restraint on the rise of localism has become a crucial issue in Chinese politics in general, and elite recruitment in particular.

Educational background. The most important change in the leadership in post-Mao China is the dramatic rise in the political elites with higher education, especially those majoring in engineering and the natural sciences.[42] Table 8 shows the distribution of the educational levels of the fourth generation of leaders. Approximately 90 per cent of them received tertiary education or above, 75 per cent attended a university and 9 per cent have postgraduate degrees. Six leaders received their degrees from foreign universities (in France, Germany, England, Canada, the United States and North Korea). Lu Yongxiang, new President of the Chinese Academy of Science, received a Ph.D. in engineering science at Aachen Industrial University, Germany in 1981; and Hong Huasheng, vice-chair of Fujian Provincial People's Congress, received her Ph.D. from the University of Rhode Island in 1984. A few leaders had academic experience in the United States as visiting scholars. For example, Chen Zhili worked as a visiting scholar at Pennsylvania State University from 1980 to 1982. No one in the study pool received their education in the Soviet Union or East European countries, which is a sharp contrast to the third generation of leaders. It remains to be seen whether a large number of the coming fifth generation of leaders, the "reform generation," will be those who have been trained in the United States, as China has sent thousands of students to the United States during the reform era, especially since the mid-1980s.[43] They have already emerged as leaders of divisions or bureaus in the central government. In the recently reshuffled Ministry of

40. *China News Analysis*, Nos. 1613–14 (1–15 July 1998), p. 15.

41. For a discussion of the conflict between the central authorities and Cantonese officials regarding the selection of Guangdong's top leaders, see *Shijie ribao*, 17 September 1997, p. 2; and Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," p. 247.

42. For an overview of the rise of technocrats in post-Mao China, see Cheng Li, *Chinese Technocrats: Their Social Origins, Ideological Attributes, and Political Behavior* (forthcoming).

43. For a discussion of the Chinese students in the West, see Jia Hao, "Dui dangqian woguo liuxue renyuan zhuangkuang de fenxi he jidian jianyi" ("Analysis of Chinese study abroad and some recommendations"), *Shehui kexue* (*Social Science*), No. 6 (1997), pp. 58–62.

Table 8: **Educational Levels of the Fourth Generation of Leaders**

Level	*No.*	*%*
Post-graduate (inc. Ph.D. and MS/MA)	27	9.1
University	222	74.5
2-year college or polytechnic	9	3.0
Party school	12	4.0
High school or below	25	8.4
Unknown	3	1.0
Total	298	100.0

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

Finance, for example, the average age of division and bureau heads is 44.4. Over a quarter of them (16 out of 61) have Master's or Ph.D. degrees, many from universities in the United States.[44]

Table 9 shows the distribution of academic majors in three elite groups: 166 mayors, 158 full members of the 14th Central Committee of the CCP and 273 members of the fourth generation of leaders. This includes only the members who have a college education in the respective study pools. Data of these three elite groups were compiled in 1986, 1989 and 1994 respectively. This reveals both changes and continuities in the educational backgrounds of Chinese leaders during the reform era, although the three groups are not at the same level of leadership. The majority of Chinese mayors in the 1986 survey were in their 40s and early 50s.[45] Some of them have advanced their political careers and become provincial and ministerial leaders – the same people in the study pool of the fourth generation of leaders. It is not a coincidence that these two groups share some characteristics such as educational backgrounds. The members of the 14th Central Committee, however, consisted mainly of the third generation of leaders, although the second and fourth generations had some representation. This provides an interesting perspective for comparison. The following three points can be made to identify some important trends.

First, the predominance of those trained in engineering and natural sciences is evident in all three groups (the relatively low percentage on the 14th Central Committee may be partly because the academic majors of 36.7 per cent of the study pool were unknown). These engineers or scientists turned politicians can be defined as technocrats – people who have three traits: technical educations, professional experience and high posts. In a more inclusive degree, the category of technocrats also

44. *Mingbao*, 11 September 1998, p. 1; and *Shijie ribao*, 11 February 1998, p. A12.
45. Li and Bachman, "Localism, elitism and immobilism," p. 69.

Table 9: **Comparison of the Distribution of Academic Majors of Three Elite Groups: Mayors, Members of the 14th Central Committee of the CCP, and the Fourth Generation of Leaders**

	Mayors (N = 166) (1986 data)		*14th CC (N = 158) (1989 data)*		*Fourth generation elite (273) (1994 data)*	
Mayors	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Engineering and Natural Science						
Engineering	107	64.4	46	29.1	109	39.9
Geology	0	0	3	1.9	2	0.7
Agronomy	7	4.2	2	1.3	6	2.2
Biology	0	0	1	0.6	2	0.7
Physics	4	2.4	3	1.9	15	5.5
Chemistry	3	1.8	2	1.3	10	3.7
Medical Science	0	0	2	1.3	3	1.1
Mathematics	2	1.2	0	0	5	1.8
Architecture	1	0.6	0	0	1	0.4
Subtotal	124	74.7	59	37.3	153	56.0
Economics and Management						
Economics and Finance	10	6.0	3	1.9	20	7.3
Business Administration	4	2.4	1	0.6	2	0.7
Statistics and Accounting	1	0.6	1	0.6	5	1.8
Subtotal	15	9.0	5	3.1	27	9.9
Military Science and Engineering	0	0	17	10.8	4	1.5
Subtotal	0	0	17	10.8	4	1.5
Social Sciences and Law						
Politics and Party History	5	3.0	9	5.7	22	8.0
Political Economy	0	0	1	0.6	0	0
Journalism	0	0	0	0	4	1.5
Law	1	0.6	1	0.6	15	5.5
Subtotal	6	3.6	11	6.9	41	15.0
Humanities						
Philosophy	1	0.6	0	0	7	2.6
History	3	1.8	2	1.3	4	1.5
Education	10	6.0	1	0.6	6	2.2
Chinese Language/Literature	7	4.2	3	1.9	21	7.6
Foreign Language	0	0	2	1.3	6	2.2
Subtotal	21	12.6	8	5.1	44	16.1
Unknown	0	0	58	36.7	4	1.5
Total	166	99.8	158	99.9	273	100.0

Note:
Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Source:
Data on the 15th Central Committee are from Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," p. 250.

includes experts in economics and finance.[46] Using this definition, 180 out of the total of 273 college-educated fourth generation of leaders (65.9 per cent) are technocrats (see Table 9). The real number of technocrats in this generation of leaders should be even higher, because some who attended the military academy are also engineers by training.

Some scholars deny the existence of technocratic leadership in China because, in their view, technocrats should be genuine technical experts, whereas some current top leaders, such as Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Hu Jintao and Zeng Qinghong, are so in name only. Their "technical expertise" seems to be related more to maintaining their political status than to their ability to solve China's problems. While there is some validity to this argument, it overlooks the significance of the fact that the Chinese leadership is disproportionately dominated by engineers turned politicians. These college graduates represent a very small percentage of Chinese society: in the 1980s they represented only 0.8 per cent of the Chinese labour force. The fact that leaders share similar occupational training may affect their political coherence and policy preferences.

As recently as 15 years ago, technocrats were virtually non-existent in the posts of provincial Party secretary or governor (see Table 10).[47] Only one technocrat served as a minister in the State Council (2 per cent) and only four held full membership seats on the Central Committee of the CCP (2 per cent). In contrast, between one-half and three-quarters of the top leadership posts in the country are currently filled with technocrats. The educational backgrounds of the fourth generation of leaders indicate that the trend towards technocratic leadership will continue in the future.

Secondly, the training of the new technocratic generation of leaders shows some important variations compared to the educational backgrounds of the third generation of leaders, although the latter has been known as being predominantly technocratic.[48] Table 9 shows that the percentage of fourth generation leaders trained in economics and management, including finance, accounting and statistics, is about three times higher than was true of the 14th Central Committee. Young leaders who are in charge of China's financial system are usually economists by

46. Most studies of technocrats in Latin America and Asia have identified those trained economists as technocrats. See, for example, Patricio Silva, "Technocrats and politics in Chile: from the Chicago Boys to the CIEPLAN Monks," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (May 1991), pp. 385–410; Marshall Edward Dimock, *The Japanese Technocracy: Management and Government in Japan* (New York: Walker/Weatherhill, 1968); Laurence D. Stifel, "Technocrats and modernization in Thailand," *Asian Survey*, December 1976, pp. 1184–96; and Peter Smith, "Leadership and change, intellectuals and technocrats in Mexico," in Roderic Camp (ed.), *Mexico's Political Stability: The Next Ten Years* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 101–117.

47. Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), p. 236; and Hong Yung Lee, *From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats: The Changing Cadre System in Socialist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 268.

48. Hong Yung Lee, "China's 12th Central Committee: rehabilitated cadres and technocrats," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 23, No. 6 (June 1983), pp. 673–691; and Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 365.

Table 10: **Technocrats' Representation in High-Level Leadership (1982–97)**

	1982		*1987*		*1998*	
Leadership body	*No.*	*% of total*	*No.*	*% of total*	*No.*	*% of total*
Politburo members	0	0	9	50	18	75
Full members of the CCP Central Committee	4	2	34	26	98	51
Ministers of the State Council	1	2	17	45	19	66
Provincial Party secretaries	0	0	7	25	19	61
Provincial governors	0	0	8	33	23	74
The fourth generation of elites	–	–	–	–	180	60

Source:
Hong Yung Lee, *From Revolutionary Cadres to Party Technocrats: The Changing Cadre System in Socialist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1991), p. 268; Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (New York: W.W.Norton, 1995), p. 236; Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 231–264; He Pin, *Zhongguo xin zhuhou* (*The New Lords of China*) (Mississauga, Ont.: Canada Mirror Books, 1996); and *China News Analysis*, No. 1607 (1 April 1998), pp. 4–6; No. 1613–14 (1–15 July 1998), pp. 14–20.

training. Dai Xianglong, governor of the People's Bank, Li Jinhua, auditor-general of the State Council, Jin Renqing, vice-minister of finance and director of state administration of taxation, are all economists who graduated from China's Central Institute of Finance and Banking before the Cultural Revolution. Zhu Xiaohua, vice-governor of the People's Bank and director of state administration of exchange control, graduated from the Shanghai Institute of Finance and Economy in the early 1980s. Just a few years ago, the most important posts in China's financial system were usually occupied by third generation leaders trained as engineers. Li Guixian, for example, a Soviet-trained engineer and a graduate of Mentzeliev Chemical Engineering Institute in Moscow, was governor of the People's Bank from 1988 to 1993. During these five years, most bank loans and fixed asset investments went to the least productive part of the economy, causing many serious problems.[49] China's banking problems are not necessarily a result of Li's poor handling of macro-economic policy; nevertheless, his expertise in chemical engineering and his lack of experience in economic affairs did not prepare him for dealing with financial issues.

Another important change between the third and fourth generation is that the number of lawyers increased among the recently elected leaders. While the percentage of those trained in law among both the mayors and

49. Edward S. Steinfeld, "The Asian financial crisis: Beijing's year of reckoning," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer 1998), p. 44.

Table 11: **Periods During Which the Fourth Generation of Leaders Graduated (N = 268)**

*Periods of graduation**	*No.*	*%*
1959–66	90	33.6
1967–70	125	46.6
1971–80	17	6.3
1981–92	36**	13.4
Total	268	99.9

Notes:

*It usually refers to the graduation year of undergraduate programme, or the graduation year from Party school or graduate programme for those without regular undergraduate education.

**This number includes graduates from the Party schools (12 people) and from military academies (3 people).

Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source:

Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

the 14th Central Committee was extremely low (0.6 per cent), 15 leaders in the fourth generation pool (5.5 per cent) are graduates of law schools such as the Beijing Institute of Political Science and Law and the East China College of Political Science and Law. Many of them serve as vice-ministers in the Ministry of Justice, heads of provincial courts and provincial chief procurators. The youngest among them, Li Keqiang, 43, a 1982 graduate of the Law Department at Beijing University, was recently appointed as acting governor of Henan province – now China's most populous province. (Chongqing is no longer under the jurisdiction of Sichuan, which used to be the most populous province in the country.) These lawyer turned politicians will certainly follow the Party line in dealing with tough issues. However, their emergence in China's provincial and ministerial leadership reflects the central authorities' efforts to establish and consolidate the Chinese legal system during the post-Deng era. It remains to be seen whether the presence of this new group of lawyers will challenge the technocratic dominance in Chinese leadership, and, in the long run, contribute to the growing demand for democracy.

The third important trend reflected in the study of the fourth generation of leaders is related to the unique circumstances of China's educational system during the Cultural Revolution. Although the percentage of college-educated leaders in this generation is high, there are some profoundly different subgroups based on the period during which they attended college. Table 11 categorizes them into four groups.

The first group (33.6 per cent) graduated from college between 1959 and 1966, prior to the Cultural Revolution. Although the political background of students was relevant for college admission, academic qualifications, especially entrance examination scores, were usually the

most important criteria.[50] Also, despite the fact that their education was more or less interrupted by political and ideological campaigns during the late 1950s and early 1960s, they did complete their regular academic education.

The second group (46.6 per cent) graduated from college between 1967 and 1970. Their education was completely ruined by the Cultural Revolution, especially the class of 1970, who spent all their time on political campaigns. Some of them were enthusiastic about Maoism at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, but they were soon subjected to "self-criticism" and "political re-education." Most were assigned to work in remote rural areas after graduation.

The third group, the smallest in the pool (6.3 per cent), graduated between 1971 and 1980. They consisted primarily of "worker-peasant-soldier" students (*gong-nong-bing xueyuan*). The admission criteria for this group were based on class origin and political background, but almost no consideration was given to academic qualifications. Colleges closed down in the early years of the Cultural Revolution and did not reopen in substantial numbers until 1970. The length of higher education was reduced from four or five years to about two years. During these two years, students were mainly engaged in political campaigns and ideological studies.

The fourth group (13.4 per cent) graduated between 1981 and 1992. They entered college after 1977 when Deng Xiaoping resumed the national examination for admission. Since then, academic criteria have replaced political ones in admission decisions. In the classes of 1977, 1978 and 1979, a large number of entering students were already in their late 20s, or even 30s, since they did not have the opportunity to enter college during the decade of the Cultural Revolution. For example, Li Yuanchao, deputy director of the Information Office of the State Council, was born in 1950 and did not enter college until 1978, when he majored in mathematics at Fudan University. After graduating from Fudan in 1982, he pursued his Master's degree in economic management at Beijing University. Another example is Jiang Daming, a member of the Secretariat of the Communist Youth League of China who was born in 1953. A native of Shandong, he spent all his formative years on a collective farm in Heilongjiang province. He was largely self-taught for his middle school education and entered Heilongjiang University in 1978. The leaders in this group, such as Li and Jiang, were lucky; they were the tip of the iceberg – a tiny number of people out of the millions of the so-called "lost generation." The representation of post-Cultural Revolution college graduates in the fourth generation of leaders is actually

50. As C. Montgomery Broaded pointed out, three primary factors were taken into account in college admission: class background, the individual's own political performance and measures of academic achievement. Because only about 1–2% of college-age young people could attend higher education institutions during the first few decades of the PRC, applicants with political influence, especially children of high-ranking officials, might "actively intervene in the process to ensure a favorable outcome." See Broaded, "The lost and found generation," p. 80.

lower because many got their degrees from Party schools (12 people) or from military academies (three people) during the reform era.

The contrasts among these groups in terms of their educational experiences and occupational identities are important variables, which may cause internal conflict within the fourth generation of leaders in the future. Engineers, economists and lawyers are all professional experts, but variations in their expertise will lead to differences in their political perspectives and policy choices. For instance, a bridge engineer may favour building bridges, whether or not the place, time and cost is justifiable. While engineers and economists tend to rely more on their own expertise in policy-making, lawyers may be more concerned about the procedures of decision-making and the socio-political consequences of policies. This intra-generational tension is further intensified by heterogeneous political experiences during their formative years and their diversified career paths.

Career patterns. Table 12 shows the periods in which the fourth generation of leaders joined the CCP (for comparison, it also includes the same information about full members of the 15th Central Committee). It is understandable that, in general, the members of the 15th Central Committee joined the Party earlier than those of the fourth generation, because the former consists mainly of members of the third generation. But surprisingly, the majority of the fourth generation of leaders (50.9 per cent) joined the Party during the Cultural Revolution, especially in the early 1970s. This is surprising because one of the major criteria of the elite recruitment policy during the Deng era, particularly in the early 1980s, was to eliminate those "beneficiaries" of the Cultural Revolution – people who advanced their political careers during that decade. Deng's cohorts consisted mainly of elites who suffered during the Cultural Revolution, not those cadres who survived intact or advanced their positions.[51]

Apparently, there is now no sanction against young political activists from the Cultural Revolution taking leadership positions, for more than half of the fourth generation of leaders originally advanced their political careers during that decade. They differ significantly from those who joined the Party either before or after the Cultural Revolution. Those who joined the Party before 1966 were often labelled "revisionists" or "capitalist roaders." Some were persecuted, as were their mentors and patrons such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang. Those who joined the Party soon after the Cultural Revolution were usually the people who had long been denied the opportunity for a political career because of their class and occupational backgrounds. Liu Mingkang, vice-governor of Fujian and a senior economist with an MBA from London University, did not join the Party until 1988. A number of top provincial leaders, including Ou Zegao, vice-governor of Sichuan, Gao Guozhu, vice-governor of Liaoning, Yao Zhongming, vice-governor of Henan, Chen Liangyu, executive vice-mayor of Shanghai, all joined the CCP in the 1980s. Xu

51. *Ibid.* p. 77.

Table 12: **Periods During Which the Full Members of the 15th Central Committee and the Fourth Generation of Leaders Joined the CCP**

	Full members of 15th CC (= 193)		*Fourth generation of leaders (= 279)*	
Periods	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1938–45	5	2.6	0	0
1946–49	14	7.2	0	0
1950–55	20	10.4	0	0
1956–59	40	20.7	2	0.7
1960–65	53	27.5	95	34.1
1966–69	18	9.3	39	14.0
1970–75	17	8.8	103	36.9
1976–79	5	2.6	26	9.3
1980–85	7	3.6	13	4.7
1986–89	0	0	1	0.4
Unknown	14	7.2	0	0
Total	193	99.9	279	100.1

Note:
Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.
Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

Kuangdi, mayor of Shanghai, who has been seen by many as a candidate to succeed Zhu Rongji in the future, joined the Party as recently as 1983. These people were politically inconspicuous before the 1980s when many of them worked as engineers or college professors. In about a decade they have risen to China's top leadership positions.

Variations in joining the Party among the fourth generation of leaders has had a strong effect on Party seniority, which has hitherto depended on date of entry. Seniority of Party membership, which was crucial in the promotion of political elites for most of the PRC history, has now become less essential. Some other factors, such as educational credentials and administrative experience, seem now to be more valued. In addition, 19 leaders in the pool are not CCP members. Some of them hold important leadership positions: Pan Guiyu, vice-governor of Hunan, Li Lanfang, vice-governor of Guangdong, Zhang Rongming, vice-governor of Liaoning and Liu Hezhang, deputy auditor-general on the State Council. It is unlikely that these non-Communists will challenge Party authorities in any fundamental way, but their political experience often differs from that of communist elites.[52] In recent years, the authorities seem to have made a genuine effort to promote non-CCP officials to high positions. Twenty-two non-CCP leaders currently serve as vice-governors of pro-

52. In 1998, five vice-governors were actually nominated by delegates of the provincial People's Congress and they defeated candidates appointed by the Party. *Renmin ribao*, 3 August 1998, p. 1.

vincial government, five more than five years ago.[53] This is a significant step towards more genuine elections and power-sharing than presently exists.[54]

Table 13 illustrates both the career paths and major work experience of the fourth generation of leaders. Their careers follow one of three paths. The first path involves promotion step-by-step, moving from the grass-roots (such as factory director) to a middle level (bureau/county/district head) and on to a top post (city head, provincial and ministerial head). Vice-premier Wu Bangguo is a good example. After college graduation, he worked as a technician, engineer, factory director, head of an industrial company, head of an industrial bureau and deputy Party secretary in the municipal Party committee, all in Shanghai, before becoming Party chief of the city. The second path involves promotion from a clerical position, such as those who worked as personal secretaries or directors of office before obtaining high-ranking leadership posts. For example, Li Jianguo, the new Party secretary of Shaanxi province, started to work as deputy director in the office of the CCP Municipal Committee of Tianjin after graduating from college. Through office work, he eventually advanced to become deputy Party secretary of Tianjin and then was appointed Party boss of Shaanxi. The final path involves irregular promotion, and mainly includes those who were promoted directly from factory directors or college presidents to mayors or even provincial vice-governors. Probably the most significant example is Wang Zhaoguo, who started his administrative career as a deputy director of a branch plant of China's No. 2 Motor Vehicle Factory. Wang impressed Deng during Deng's visit to the factory in the early 1980s and was promoted to first secretary of the Secretariat of the Communist Youth League Central Committee, then director of the Central Office of the CCP Central Committee, then governor of Fujian, and currently is the head of the Department of United Front Work of the Central Committee of the CCP.

The three types of career paths above suggest that, compared to the Mao era, there are now more diversified channels through which cadres can advance their political careers. This trend echoes similar findings of some previous studies of the career patterns of the post-Mao leadership, such as mayors and military officers.[55] Table 13 also shows previous work experience, which includes several points worth noting. First, about 68.5 per cent of the fourth generation of leaders have had public administrative experience. They have usually been in charge of urban industrial work (62.1 per cent), and many of them (51.7 per cent) have had technical work experience, especially in engineering. Secondly, although a majority of them have had posts in Party leadership, only a small number have had experience in the organizational and ideological work of the Party (10.1 and 8.7 per cent). Few have had any military

53. *Ibid.*

54. Erik Echholm, "Chinese book on political reform stirs hopes for more debate," *The New York Times*, 25 August 1998, p. 3.

55. For example, Li and Bachman, "Localism, elitism and immobilism," pp. 77–79; and Li and White, "The army in the succession to Deng Xiaoping," pp. 774–75.

Table 13: **Career Patterns and Work Experience (N = 298)**

	No.	*% of total*
Career Patterns		
Promoted step-by-step	102	34.2
Promoted from only office work	61	20.5
Promoted irregularly	135	45.3
Total	298	100.0
Work Experience		
Public administration	204	68.5
Urban industry	185	62.1
Party leadership	180	60.4
Technical work (engineering)	154	51.7
Personal assistant or office secretary	66	22.1
Rural agriculture	62	20.8
Communist Youth League	56	18.8
Party personnel and organization	30	10.1
Education (teaching)	27	9.1
Propaganda work	26	8.7
Mass organization work (women, union, etc)	18	6.0
Law and legal work	16	5.4
Military service	16	5.4
Academic/scientific research	15	5.0
Economic planning	12	4.0
Finance and banking	11	3.7
Editor and journalist	6	2.0

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

experience (5.4 per cent) or work with mass organizations (6 per cent). This is in sharp contrast to the Mao era when most leaders claimed to specialize in these areas. Thirdly, a significant number of these leaders have worked as personal assistants to senior leaders (*mishu*) or as office secretaries; patronage and personal connection (*guanxi*) continue to play an important role in elite formation among the new generation of leaders.[56] And fourthly, while the above three phenomena could also be found in Li and Bachman's study of Chinese mayors about ten years ago, one can see the decline in the number of people who have had experience in economic planning and the greater number who have worked in finance, banking and legal work.[57]

Some recent studies on the elite mobility in urban China argue that

56. For a discussion of the role of *mishu*, see Wei Li and Lucian W. Pye, "The ubiquitous role of the *mishu* in Chinese politics," *The China Quarterly*, No. 132 (December 1992), pp. 913–936.

57. Compared to the study of Chinese mayors, the percentage of those who have had experience in economic planning declined 14.1% to 4.0%. Li and Bachman, "Localism, elitism and immobilism," p. 78.

there are two distinct career paths to the top. According to Andrew Walder, one path requires both educational and political credentials and leads to administrative posts with considerable authority; the other path requires education but not political credentials and leads to professional positions with little authority.[58] While this may be characteristic of low-level administrative posts, such a distinction is not evident in high-level leadership positions. Walder observes, quite accurately, that the candidates for elite positions in the reform era are usually screened for educational credentials.[59] But he seems to overlook the fact that the criteria for political credentials have become increasingly dubious. For instance, many prominent natural scientists and scholars, who did not have many "political credentials," have been quickly promoted to top leadership positions during the past decade. The mayor of Shanghai, Xu Kuangdi, is such a case. Informal networks, rather than formal political credentials such as ideological loyalty, political identity and leadership experience, are essential to the promotion of political elites.

One of the most important trends regarding the elite transformation in the reform era is the crucial role of school ties in the recruitment of both civilian and military elites.[60] It is now widely known that a significant portion of top leadership posts in both the Party and the state, in both central and provincial government, are occupied by graduates of Qinghua University, China's leading engineering school.[61] Among the total of 22 full members of the Politburo of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP, five (22.7 per cent) are Qinghua graduates, including two of its Standing Committee members, Premier Zhu Rongji and Vice-President Hu Jintao, as are also about 18 per cent of the 15th Central Committee members.[62] The over-representation of Qinghua graduates is evident in the fourth generation of leaders as well. Table 14 shows the positions of some Qinghua graduates in the study pool. Tian Chengping, 53, Party secretary of Qinghai province, and Li Jiating, 51, governor of Yunnan, are among China's youngest provincial bosses. Xi Jinping, 43, deputy Party secretary of Fujian, is one of the youngest members of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP.

Table 15 lists the top ten universities from which the fourth generation of leaders graduated. Qinghua tops the list and is far ahead of the second institution, the Central Party School. Interestingly enough, during the two decades of the reform era, the Central Party School has always been

58. Andrew G. Walder, "Career mobility and the communist political order," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (June 1995), pp. 309–328.

59. *Ibid.* p. 312.

60. For a discussion of school ties of military elites, especially the role of the National Defence University, see Shu Zhan *et al.*, "Guofang daxue, jiangjun de yaolan" ("The National Defence University: the cradle of generals"), *Zhonghua yingcai*, No. 171 (August 1997), pp. 40–42. Since its founding in 1985, the NDU has graduated a total of 5,000 military officers. They have occupied some of the most important leadership positions in the PLA; also see Li and White, "The army in the succession to Deng Xiaoping," pp. 782–84.

61. For a discussion on the Qinghua network, see Cheng Li, "University networks and the rise of Qinghua graduates in China's leadership," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 32 (July 1994), pp. 1–32.

62. *Shijie ribao*, 19 March 1998, p. A8.

Table 14: **Some Qinghua University Graduates in the Fourth Generation Leaders**

Name	*Birth*	*Grad.*	*CCP*	*Current position*	*Experience at Qinghua*
Hu Jintao	1942	1965	1965	Stand-Mem, Politburo, vice-president	Political Counsellor, CYLC Sec.
Wu Bangguo	1941	1967	1964	Mem. Politburo, vice-premier	Political Counsellor
Tian Chengping	1945	1968	1964	Party secretary of Qinghai province	Political Counsellor
Li Jiating	1947	1968	1964	Governor, Yunnan province	Political Counsellor
Liu Yandong	1945	1970	1964	Vice-head, Dept. of United-Front, CCP	Political Counsellor
Xi Jinping	1955	1979	1974	Party sec. of Fuzhou city	During CR
Chen Yuan	1945	1970	1975	Vice-governor, People's Bank of China	During CR
Du Yuzhou	1942	1966	1965	Vice-chair, Nat. Assoc. Textile Ind.	Political Counsellor
He Pengfei	1944	1970	1965	Deputy commander, Navy	During CR
Jiang Yiren	1942	1966	1970	Vice-mayor, Shanghai	
Li Tielin	1943	1968	1980	Vice-head, Org. Dept. CCP	During CR
Liu Zepeng	1946	1970	1974	Deputy dir. Overseas Chinese Affairs	During CR
Liu Zhizhong	1942	1967	1965	Deputy Party secretary, Chongqing	Political Counsellor
Sun Changji	1942	1966	1964	Vice-minister, Machinery Industry	Political Counsellor
Wang Hanmin	1943	1968	1961	Vice-governor, Qinghai province	Political Counsellor
Wang Shucheng	1941	1968	1965	Vice-minister, Electric Power Ind.	Political Counsellor
Xie Zhenhua	1949	1977	1969	Dir. State Environmental Adm.	During CR

Xu Bingsong	1942	1968	1965	Vice-governor, Guangxi province	Political Counsellor
Xu Rongkai	1942	1966	1960	Vice-min., Light Industry Association	Political Counsellor
Zhao Baojiang	1941	1966	1966	Mayor of Wuhan	Political Counsellor
Zhao Xicheng	1942	1966	1965	Vice-minister, Electric Power Ind.	Political Counsellor
Bai Dahua	1942	1967	No	Mem. China's Pol. Consultancy Com.	

Notes:

Com. = Commission or Committee; Educ. = Education; Inc. = Incomplete; Ind. = Industry; Org. = Organization; Prof. = Professor; Mem. = Member; Sec. = Secretary; SPM = Standing Politburo Member; UPM = Underground Party Member; Birth = Year of Birth; Grad. = Year of Graduation at Qinghua; CCP = Year of joining the Party; CYLC = Communist Youth League of China; CR = Cultural Revolution; Nat. = National; Assoc. = Association; Adm. = Administration.

Sources:

Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China*; Gao Xin and He Pin, *Zhu Rongji zhuan: cong fendan youpai dao Deng Xiaoping jichengren* (*Biography of Zhu Rongji: From Anti-Party Rightist to Deng's Successor*) (Taibei: Xinxinwen wenhua chubanshe, 1992); and *China News Analysis*, No. 1613–14, pp. 14–20.

Table 15: **Distribution of University Graduates in the Fourth Generation of Elites (Top 10 Schools)**

University	*Number*	*% of total (N = 270)*
Qinghua University	22	8.2
Central Party School	13	4.8
Beijing University	11	4.1
Beijing Institute of Political Science and Law	7	2.6
Harbin Military Institute of Engineering	6	2.2
China Central Institute of Finance and Banking	6	2.2
Beijing Institute of Industry	6	2.2
People's University	5	1.9
Fudan University	5	1.9
Shandong University	5	1.9

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

headed by graduates of Qinghua (such as Jiang Nanxiang, Song Ping and Hu Jintao).[63] The number of Qinghua-trained leaders in the pool is twice that of graduates of Beijing University. The reasons for the over-representation of Qinghua graduates may be numerous, but the most important is based on a vigorous political network initially established by Jiang Nanxiang, the late president of Qinghua who served from 1952 to 1966. (Jiang was also in charge of the Ministry of Education for many years both before and after the Cultural Revolution.) During his 14-year presidency, Jiang led a wholehearted effort to make Qinghua "the cradle of red engineers" – a key source of national leaders of the PRC when the communist veterans pass away.[64]

To reach this objective, Jiang created at Qinghua a "system of political counsellors" (*zhengzhi zhidaoyuan zhidu*), which was later copied in all colleges in China. Jiang personally selected junior and senior students who "excelled both politically and academically" to become political counsellors and extended their schooling for one more year so that they

63. When Jiang Nanxiang was first appointed executive vice-president of the Central Party School (CPS) under Wang Zhen, Jiang brought a few Qinghua cadres with him. These Qinghua graduates occupied many top administrative posts at the CPS such as provost and deputy Party secretaries of the school. In the early 1980s, the CPS admitted about 800 young and middle-aged cadres to its post-graduate programme. After two years of study, almost all of them were assigned by central authorities to provincial-ministerial leadership positions. See: Qinghua daxue Jiang Nanxiang jinian wenji bianji xiaozu (Editorial group for the commemorative collection of Jiang Nanxiang at Qinghua University), *Jiang Nanxiang jinian wenji* (*A Commemorative Collection of Jiang Nanxiang*) (Beijing: Qinghua University Press, 1990), pp. 398–421. Many leaders in this study pool, such as Li Haifeng, vice-governor of Hebei province, were graduates of this programme.

64. For a detailed discussion of Jiang's idea of the "red engineers," see *Xin qinghua* (*New Qinghua*), 30 April 1989, p. 4; Zhongguo gaodeng jiaoyu xuehui and qinghua daxue (comp.), *Jiang Nanxiang wenji* (*Collected Work of Jiang Nanxiang*) (Beijing: Qinghua University Press, 1998); and *Renmin ribao*, 7 May 1998, p. 11.

could develop their political skills.[65] The selection of the political counsellors reflected Jiang's intention to build a power circle, based on both patron-client relationships and the idea that legitimate modern government needs technical knowledge.[66] From a total of 682 political counsellors at Qinghua from 1953 to 1966, two-thirds later became governors, ministers, managers of large industrial enterprises and presidents of other universities.[67] Table 14 shows that all except one in the pool who graduated before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution served as "political counsellors" during their college years. They joined the Party prior to their graduation and became members of Jiang's power network at Qinghua.

Although not all Qinghua technocrats are associated with the network that Jiang established, the Qinghua connection helps to explain some rapid career advances. Probably the best example is the meteoric rise of Hu Jintao. He not only served as a political counsellor, but was also head of the Qinghua Communist Youth League – an important post in Jiang's power circle. After graduation in 1965, Hu went to Gansu and worked under Song Ping, a Qinghua graduate and a friend of Jiang. Hu worked for the provincial Economic Construction Commission and then as secretary of the province's Communist Youth League, while Song was Party secretary of the province. In 1981, Song returned to Beijing, and he recommended his protégé to Hu Yaobang, then Secretary General of the Party, who later appointed Hu Jintao as secretary of the National Communist Youth League. Hu Jintao then worked in Guizhou and Tibet as provincial Party secretary, a difficult post that, according to some China watchers, served to toughen him up for higher leadership responsibilities in the future.[68] In 1992, Song recalled Hu to work in the CCP's Organization Department, an organization Song once headed. When Song was about to retire as a standing member of the Politburo in 1992, he nominated Hu to succeed him.[69]

During the reform era, Qinghua has worked to form an active network of alumni associations. For example, alumni association members exceeded 2,000 in Shanghai and 1,000 in Guangzhou during the mid-1980s, a period in which Qinghua graduates occupied many top leadership posts in these two cities.[70] Every province has a Qinghua alumni association in its capital and they have now been established in 111 cities in the country. Information about these associations is available at Qinghua University's

65. According to Teng Teng, then a mid-level cadre at Qinghua and vice-chair of China's State Education Commission in the late 1980s, Jiang himself examined the profile of each candidate and made the final decisions. The first meeting of political counsellors was even held at Jiang's home. *A Commemorative Collection of Jiang Nanxiang*, pp. 148–49.

66. For a full discussion of the Qinghua network under Jiang, see Cheng Li, "University networks and the rise of Qinghua graduates in China's leadership."

67. *A Commemorative Collection of Jiang Nanxiang*, pp. 148–151.

68. "Hu Jintao: Communist Party 'golden boy'," Agence France Presse, 15 March 1998.

69. Cheng Li, "University networks and the rise of Qinghua graduates in China's leadership," pp. 1–30.

70. See *Qinghua Shanghai xiaoyou tongxun lu* (*Address Book of Qinghua Alumni in Shanghai*) (1986), and *Qinghua daxue Guangzhou diqu xiaoyou tongxun lu* (*Address Book of Qinghua Alumni in the Guangzhou Area* (April 1988).

Table 16: **Sequence Between the Year in Which They Graduated from College and the Year in Which They Joined the CCP**

	No.	*%*
College graduation prior to Party membership	115	44.6
Party membership prior to college graduation*	143	55.4
Party membership obtained in college	(91)	(35.2)
Total	258	100.0

Note:
*This includes those who joined the Party in college.
Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

website.[71] Jiang Yiren, vice-mayor of Shanghai, who serves as president of Qinghua's Shanghai Alumni Association, is one example. In 1990, Qinghua graduates occupied the four top positions in the Party and municipal government in Shanghai.[72]

The important role of the "system of political counsellors" in both the formation of school networks and the selection of future political elites is certainly not unique to Qinghua. Table 16 shows that a majority of the fourth generation of leaders (55.4 per cent) obtained Party membership prior to college graduation. About 35 per cent of them actually joined the Party in college. That is a significantly high percentage, considering the fact that only a very small number of college students were Party members because of an anti-intellectual policy during the Mao era. Yet, the "system of political counsellors" continues to exist in all colleges in the country today. The Shanghai municipal government, for example, ruled in 1998 that political counsellors should receive priority in terms of salary raises, academic promotion and study abroad.[73]

In addition to school ties, having "blood ties," such as being the child of a high-ranking official, is important for the career advancement of the fourth generation of leaders. Table 17 shows some leaders in the fourth generation known to have high-ranking cadre family backgrounds (called princelings, or *taizi* in Chinese). Previous studies of the third generation of leaders in the post-Mao era had similar findings.[74] These princelings usually went to elite universities (schools in the Soviet Union and East European countries for the third generation, while the fourth generation were most likely to have attended Qinghua, Beida and the Harbin Military Institute of Engineering). They all advanced quickly with the

71. On the Internet at the following address: http://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/.
72. They were Zhu Rongji (mayor and Party secretary), Huang Ju (executive vice-mayor and deputy Party secretary), Wu Bangguo (deputy Party secretary), and Yi Tianzeng (vice-mayor).
73. *Wenhui bao* (*Wenhui Daily*), 8 September 1998, p. 1.
74. For example, Jae-Ho Chung, "The politics of prerogatives in socialism: the case of Taizidang in China," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 1991), pp. 58–76.

help of their parents or their parents' comrades-in-arms. These princelings usually grew up in an environment that taught much about political survival in an authoritarian political system. From an early age, they had already learned power politics.

There are, however, some important differences between the third and fourth generations of leaders with high-ranking cadre family backgrounds. Many of the princelings in the third generation suffered tough times in their childhood. Jiang Zemin, Li Peng and Zou Jiahua, for example, all came from the families of communist martyrs. They participated in the communist revolution during the early years of their political careers. But the princelings of the fourth generation have usually had a privileged life (though in some cases it was interrupted briefly during the first few years of the Cultural Revolution). Because of this they are less secure than leaders of the third generation, who could stand on their own. This was reflected in the election of the 15th Central Committee of the CCP in 1997. The 15th Congress formed its Central Committee by an "election with a different number" (*cha'e xuanju*): more candidates than seats. Many candidates with princeling backgrounds did not get elected because of strong opposition to nepotism by the congress deputies. Some of those listed in Table 16 – such as Bo Xilai, son of Bo Yibo and mayor of Dalian – were among the 5 per cent of candidates who were defeated. Four princelings on the list, Deng Pufang, Xi Jinping, Liu Yandong and Wang Qishan, were among the seven alternate members receiving the lowest votes.[75]

Strong opposition to nepotism and favouritism was also evident in the election of members of the State Council and other state positions in the Ninth People's Congress held in March 1998. The members of Jiang Zemin's "Shanghai Gang" were often embarrassed that they received only a small proportion of the votes. For example, Chen Zhili, minister of education, received the fewest votes among 29 ministers. About 35 per cent of the deputies opposed the appointment of Han Zhubin, Jiang's long-time associate in Shanghai, to be procurator-general of the state.[76] All these episodes suggest that political nepotism in its various forms has received growing opposition and criticism, not only from Chinese society but also from deputies of both the Party Congress and the National People's Congress, who blocked the election of some princelings and the nominees favoured by Jiang.

This does not necessarily mean that political nepotism is no longer crucial in Chinese elite recruitment. The total number of members of the "Shanghai Gang" in the central leadership, for instance, may not be high, but numbers alone are not indicative of where the true power lies. Some of the most important leadership posts are often occupied by Jiang's confidants. The most recent example is the appointment of Zeng

75. For a discussion of the opposition to nepotism in the selection of the 15th CC members, see Li and White, "The 15th Central Committee of the CCP," pp. 258–262.

76. Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "All the president's men," *South China Morning Post*, 18 March 1998, p. 1; Vivien Pik-Kwan Chan, "Strong opposition as Jiang man gets top law job," *South China Morning Post*, 18 March 1998, p. 1; and *Shijie ribao*, 20 March 1998, p. A9.

Table 17: **Some Members of the Fourth Generation of Leaders Having High-Ranking Cadre Family Backgrounds**

Name	*Position*	*Family background*
Liao Hui	Director, State Overseas Chinese Affairs Office	Father: Liao Chengzhi, former member of Politburo
Yu Zhengsheng	Vice-minister, Construction	Father: Yu Qiwei (Huang Jing), former mayor of Tianjin
Wang Qishan	President, China Construction Bank	Father-in-law: Yao Yilin, former member of Politburo
Deng Pufang	President, Chinese Federation for the Disabled	Father: Deng Xiaoping, former Secretary General of CCP
Deng Nan	Vice-minister, State S & T Commission	Father: Deng Xiaoping, former Secretary General of CCP
Xi Jinping	Party secretary of Fuzhou	Father: Xi Zhongxun, former member of Politburo
Liu Yandong	Vice-head, United Front Dept. of CCP	Father: Liu Ruilong, former vice-minister of agriculture
Li Tielin	Deputy head of CCP Organization Dept.	Father: Li Weihan, former director of Dept. of United Front
Bo Xilai	Mayor of Dalian	Father: Bo Yibo, former member of Politburo
Chen Haosu	Vice-president, China Friendship Assoc.	Father: Chen Yi, former member of Politburo
He Pengfei	Deputy Commander, Navy	Father: He Long, former member of Politburo

Source:
Liao and Fan, *Who's Who in China.*

Qinghong as head of the Department of Organization of the Central Committee of the CCP, the one who chooses leaders for both the central and provincial levels. But what is most evident in Chinese politics at present is the broad trend of movement from an all-powerful single leader such as Mao and Deng, to greater collective leadership, as is now characteristic of the Jiang era. It remains to be seen whether post-Jiang leaders, because of their restraints and limitations, will rely more on power-sharing, negotiation, consultation and consensus-building than their predecessors.

Conclusion

Leadership and political succession have long been at the crux of Chinese political studies. The history of the People's Republic of China indicates that changes in the composition of the political elite often reflect – and sometimes herald – broad social, economic and political changes in the country at large.[77] For over four decades, especially during the Mao era, the PRC was ruled by communist revolutionary veterans – the so-called Long March generation of leaders who were closely bound by this powerful, shared experience.[78] Almost all 8,000 communist soldiers who survived the Long March later became the country's political elites. Their bonding experience became the foundation of the PRC, just as their hardship and ideology turned into a legitimate basis for their rule. An overwhelmingly large number of these elites were peasants and soldiers by origin, and many were illiterate. Thus the composition of the Chinese communist elites helps to explain the regime's recurring political campaigns against the educated people, and its excessive stress on ideological issues during the Mao era.

Deng Xiaoping changed the course of the country when he came to power in the late 1970s. His grand economic reform was accompanied by a political scheme gradually to replace revolutionary veterans with technocrats – engineers turned politicians. In contrast to the Long March and the Anti-Japanese War veterans, the third generation of technocratic leaders has neither heroic revolutionary experience nor solid political loyalties based on such shared experience (the same field army association). They have to seek and consolidate their legitimacy through economic success. Some important developments in China during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, such as the rapid growth of the market economy, gradual political liberalization, the "construction fever" on the south and east coasts, and gigantic technological projects such as the

77. Li Cheng and Lynn White, "The Thirteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: from mobilizers to managers," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (April 1988), pp. 371–399.

78. For a discussion of the Long March and its legacy, see Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove, 1961); Harrison E. Salisbury, *The Long March: The Untold Story* (London: Macmillan, 1985); and Daniel Wright, "A walk into the past: hiking the Long March," *The ICWA Letters*, July 1998.

Three Gorges Dam, are at least partially attributable to the change in political leadership.

The replacement of an older generation of leaders by a younger one in any society can be viewed as a "regenerative force" for a stagnant country, or as a stimulus for greater change.[79] This is particularly relevant to China today. The country is undergoing rapid transformation and faces many perplexing economic and socio-political choices regarding such problems as unemployment, income disparity, corruption and environmental degradation. The Chinese economy, after over a decade of double-digit growth, has slowed during the past two years. This is related partly to the East Asian financial crisis, but mainly to the decline in domestic consumer spending. The Chinese people are not willing to spend money, despite the fact that private savings are remarkably high.[80] Although the annual interest rate is now 2.5 per cent, the lowest in 20 years, people still want to save money, and they feel insecure and uncertain about the future. Under these circumstances, the rise of younger and more capable leaders at the national level will psychologically influence the behaviour of consumers. Consumer confidence will contribute to the economic growth of the country. Nothing is more essential to China now than a younger and more dynamic Chinese leader, a figure like Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s or Bill Clinton in the early 1990s. Some prominent figures of the next generation of leaders, such as Hu Jintao, Zeng Qinghong, Wu Bangguo and Wen Jiabao, are already seen as front runners in the line of succession following Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji and other third generation leaders.

In comparison, these two generations share similar characteristics. For the fourth generation of leaders, it still is an advantage to be male and born in one of the east coast provinces such as Jiangsu and Shandong, to have graduated from one of the nation's top engineering schools, and to have worked in one of the industrial sectors in major cities. Political nepotism has remained crucial to the career advancement of new leaders. Blood ties (children of high-ranking cadres), school ties (the Qinghua network), and patron-client ties (work experience as *mishu*) continue to be the factors leading to the quick rise of some members of the fourth generation. This is not surprising because the older generation of elites tends to use social and political resources to shape the biographical and behavioural profile of their successors.[81]

The most important findings of this article, however, are not the similarities between the fourth generation of leaders and their predecessors, but the differences – both the inter- and intra-generational differences found in the study pool. The fourth generation is more diversified than any previous generation of CCP leaders in various aspects such as

79. Cherrington, "Generational issues in China," p. 303.

80. Private savings of Shanghai residents, for example, increased from 3 billion *yuan* in 1980 to 237 billion in 1998, a 79-fold increase in 18 years. Nation-wide, the figure totalled 5.1 trillion *renminbi* (about US $615 billion). Shanghai tongji gongbao (Shanghai statistics report), February 1999.

81. Bialer, *Stalin's Successors*, p. 101.

their formative experiences, political solidarity and occupational background. Also, now there are more diversified channels through which new elites can advance their political careers. Although the fourth generation all grew up during the Cultural Revolution, which undoubtedly had a strong impact on all of them, their careers were affected in profoundly different ways by the same event. This generation of leaders can be divided into three distinct groups based on the period in which they joined the Party. The first group (34.8 per cent) joined prior to the Cultural Revolution. They were often labelled as "revisionists" and "capitalist roaders" and therefore subjected to political persecution during the Cultural Revolution, especially during the late 1960s. The second group (50.9 per cent) joined the Party during the Cultural Revolution. Some may have suffered as they were sent to the countryside, but most were young political activists who advanced their careers during the decade of the Cultural Revolution. Surprisingly, the discrimination against "beneficiaries" of the Cultural Revolution adopted by Deng and his associates seems not to apply to the fourth generation of leaders. One explanation is that Deng and his veteran associates were only after "bigger fish," and they did not care much about the cohort of young people who had just obtained Party membership. The third group (14.4 per cent) joined the Party after the Cultural Revolution. They were usually those who had long been denied the opportunity of pursuing a political career because of their class and occupational backgrounds. Unlike previous generations of leaders who had strong bonding experiences and therefore developed political solidarity, members of the fourth generation were often on conflicting political sides during their formative years.

The diversified political experiences of the fourth generation of leaders certainly influenced the way in which they viewed the world in general, and how they evaluated China's political system in particular. Even those young political activists who had believed in Mao and his ideology during the earlier period of the Cultural Revolution later felt manipulated or betrayed. This generation of leaders is likely to be even more cynical about communist ideology than their predecessors. More importantly, because of different experiences during their formative years, the fourth generation may lack a shared conviction and therefore a commitment to the existing political system. Probably similar to the leadership in post-communist Russia, the fourth generation lacks a fundamental consensus on major socio-economic policies, although for the time being they may continue to call their party communist and their system socialist. Compared to their predecessors, they will be far more flexible, and less dogmatic, in responding to socio-economic pressure and political demands within the country.

Another important aspect of the fourth generation of leaders is the diversity of occupational backgrounds. In contrast to the third generation who are predominantly Soviet-trained engineers, the fourth generation has a growing number of lawyers, economists and financial experts. This is a result of the central authorities' efforts to establish and consolidate

the legal and financial systems within the country. According to some theorists in studies of elites, the occupational selection of elites is generally "determined by the types of problems confronting a society" and by the skills needed to solve those problems.[82] For example, in an era when religion is highly valued, priests are the elite group; in an era when political orthodoxy is valued, ideologues are given high status; in an era when military prowess is essential, career officers rank highest.[83] The composition of elite groups changes over time as society demands new credentials for governing elites. A regime headed by technocrats, for example, can be expected to differ fundamentally from a state governed by lawyers. It remains to be seen whether the presence of the new group of lawyers will affect the way Chinese politics operates, and in the long run, contribute to the rule of law – an essential element of political democracy.

Aggregate analysis of biographical data, however, can only contribute so much towards an understanding of elite motivation and probable behavioural characteristics. This type of analytical research has its limits. What is not knowable about this generation of leaders is their political outlook towards the relationship between central and local governments, freedom of the press, patriotism, and links with the outside world. The full ramification of the rise of the fourth generation of leaders awaits further study. Interviews, questionnaire surveys, case studies and other research methods will be invaluable, although the current Chinese system still discourages the articulation of controversial views, at least by the politically ambitious, especially those in top leadership posts.

What is fascinating about the fourth generation of leaders is their diversity, and the seemingly contradicting trends engendered: their shared memories but contrasting experiences during the Cultural Revolution; the continuing dominance of technocrats and the rapid emergence of lawyers and economists; the prevalence of political nepotism and the increasingly strong opposition from within the political establishment; the demand for regional representation and the restraint on the rise of localism. All these seemingly contrasting trends exist in this rapidly changing country. Greater changes seem inevitable as this more diversified, more energetic, less dogmatic generation of leaders aggressively takes the helm of power in China at the dawn of a new century.

82. Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), p. 65.

83. For a full discussion of functional need of elites in a society, see Fred Chwan Hong Lee's dissertation, "The recruitment of elites in the Republic of China: a case study in the social utility of education," University of Oregon, 1983, pp. 1–2.