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# EMERGING LEADERS IN EAST ASIA

## *The Next Generation of Political Leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan*

**By J. Patrick Boyd, L. Gordon Flake, Cheng Li, Kenneth B. Pyle, Shelley Rigger, and Richard J. Samuels**

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROJECT, CONTACT TRAVIS TANNER AT <TTANNER@NBR.ORG>

The National Bureau of Asian Research
1215 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1600
Seattle, Washington 98161

206-632-7370 Phone
206-632-7487 Fax
nbr@nbr.org E-mail
http://www.nbr.org

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# FOREWORD

A new generation of leaders is on the rise in East Asia. Shaped by distinctive political experiences, the emerging leadership in China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan will bring new perspectives and fresh priorities to the region's political climate. How this up and coming elite responds to regional trends and potential crises will shape the future course of East Asian politics for years to come.

Formative influences such as professional background, education, social ties, and political allegiances provide important indicators of these future leaders' respective world-views and likely policy priorities. As Asia emerges as a critical center of gravity in world politics, a nuanced understanding of these factors provides U.S. policymakers with an essential foundation upon which to build effective policy toward the region.

This report represents the culmination of a year-long initiative launched by NBR to provide U.S. government and corporate leaders with a better understanding of East Asia's future leadership. By examining the qualities and characteristics that define these rising leaders and distinguish them from their predecessors, the initiative explores the possible implications of their emerging influence for U.S. foreign, economic, and security policy interests. To this end, in the spring NBR conducted a series of briefings on the report's findings to policymakers in Washington, D.C., and in July two sections of the report were published in NBR's journal, *Asia Policy*. We look forward to continued interaction with the policymaking community on this subject as well as to a wide distribution of the report's research findings.

Given its considerable policy relevance, exploring the emergence of new leadership in East Asia will remain a priority research area for NBR's Politics and Security Affairs Group. As such, we are already in the process of developing a future round of research in this important topic area.

I would like to recognize and express appreciation to the members of the research team whose work appears in these pages. It has been a true pleasure to work with each of them, and the project has benefited immensely from their expertise and professionalism. In particular, I would like to thank Ken Pyle for his vision and leadership, which guided the project from its inception. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the NBR project team, fellows, and editors, whose efforts contributed to the success of this initiative. Finally, I would like to thank the Smith Richardson Foundation for its generous support of this project.

Travis Tanner
*Director, Pyle Center for Northeast Asian Studies*
The National Bureau of Asian Research

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# Political Generations in East Asia: The Policy Significance

*Kenneth B. Pyle*

**KENNETH B. PYLE** is the Henry M. Jackson Professor of History and Asian Studies at the University of Washington, and Founding President of The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR). Dr. Pyle's most recent book is *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose.* He can be reached at <kbp@u.washington.edu>.

The contemporary societies of East Asia have experienced more decisive generational change in the last several decades than any other region of the world. Because intergenerational value change is one of history's locomotives, American policymakers need to accumulate intellectual capital about this process. It is not a subject that has drawn the attention it deserves. With the four states that are the subject of this National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) study—China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan—the United States has its most important bilateral relations. In East Asia, the United States has more sustained military deployments, conducts more trade, and owes more of its national debt than in any other region of the world.

Policymakers, seeking to discern the trajectory of change in this region, must consider generational change as a critically important insight into the dynamics that will influence the future politics in these societies. Discerning the consciousness of new generations as they come of age and move toward their time on the stage of history gives indications of the concerns and mindset of the emerging leaders in the region. Generations are one of the producers of historic change. Generations are the creatures of history, but they are also the makers of history.

A long-term U.S. strategic approach to East Asia must take account of the massive changes that are shaping the world-view of emerging generations in this region. Understanding the significance of this generational change will provide no simple conclusions that can be readily absorbed and worked into a clear pattern of the future. The reality of contemporary Asia is too complex—it possesses too many historical processes and involves too many causative forces—to permit one view of the future such primacy. But understanding the nature and extent of intergenerational change will sensitize the policymaker to one of the underlying driving forces shaping the future course of politics in this region.

Generational change is preeminently a modern phenomenon. Sharp distinctions between generations occur owing to the acceleration of the historical process that is characteristic of the modern world. Ordinarily, we think of a generation as changing every 25 years, but a political generation has dynamics that are not biological. A political generation, as opposed to a biological generation, is determined by major events that shape a distinctive outlook or a characteristic approach to issues among young people living through these events at a formative age. It needs to be emphasized that political generations may not be of common mind. Formative experiences need not lead to a consensus of views. There may be a diversity of viewpoint. There may be debates within a generation. But there is a common concern, a shared sense of problem consciousness, that is shaped by the formative experience that creates a generation.

The ever increasing tempo of change since the industrial revolution has produced marked differences in outlook between generations. Americans, with their history of a mobile and open society, have long grown accustomed to this phenomenon. Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the 1830s that generational change mattered less in Europe than it did in the United States, where, he wrote, "each generation is a new people." Americans saw themselves as freed from the traditional institutions and the deference to age and status that pervaded the old world. "The woof of time is ever being broken and the track of past generations lost," Tocqueville added. "Those who have gone before are easily forgotten, and no one gives a thought to those who will follow."[1] More recently, Americans have also been accustomed to contrasting their liberal tradition with the conservative traditions of Asian societies. But this contrast is not what it once was. In contemporary East Asia,

[1] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1969), 507.

the rapid tempo of change is disrupting the once smooth transfer of life patterns from generation to generation.

Each of the East Asian societies in this NBR project possesses a powerful conservative tradition that historically was underwritten by a moral code that admonished reverence for family and ancestors, respect for age and hierarchy, and deference to class and status distinction. The typical and safest course for a son was to follow the occupation of the family, whose training, capital, and help in time of need were crucial for survival. In addition to these economic bonds, the ritual, ideological and emotional ties of kinship secured a solidarity that left no room for the development of an explicit youth consciousness or ideology. The institutions of Asian societies, especially the immutable authority of the family and community, assured continuity between biological generations.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century when the Western impact of scientific and technological change began to make itself felt, this conservative tradition has been under mounting pressure. Processes by which society transmitted its heritage across generations, and so assured its own continuity, have been increasingly disrupted. Japan, which made its transition to industrial society in the Meiji period (1868–1912), was the first Asian nation to experience a youth consciousness and a conflict with filial traditions.[2] Students played a prominent role in the nationalist uprisings of 1919 in China and Korea and foreshadowed the role that new generations would later play in promoting historic change.

In the past several decades the tempo of change in the East Asian region has accelerated in breathtaking fashion. Some of this change is endemic to all modern societies around the world. Globalization and the beginning of a new long cycle of technological change, especially the information revolution, are having an impact on young people in their formative years, giving rise to their new consciousness. The authority of age is undermined by the new technology. Young people, exposed to the new knowledge in their schooling and thereby acquiring new technical skills, feel themselves better suited than their elders to the new era. The new technological paradigm has unmistakably created cultural discontinuities that are universal among youth in the developed world.

In Asia these "universal" sources of change are especially pronounced when joined to the sweeping change in their own societies. Young people in these Asian societies sometimes feel themselves starting the world anew. The magnitude of change often kindles a sense of liberation and confidence that the knowledge, traditions, and responses of previous generations are unreliable guides to the future, and that a sharp break with the past is necessary. Young people can feel liberated from history, convinced that their own experience is so different from their parents that they are no longer subject to the concerns that shaped their nation's past.

In my recent book, I cite an example of a young Japanese Internet entrepreneur and venture capitalist dismissing his elders' historical experience—their wartime memories of suffering; their experience of Hiroshima, surrender, and occupation; and their consequent pacifism—as irrelevant to his generation. Ito Joichi, born in 1966, reflected in 2005 on the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombings, choosing his words in a way that vividly reflects the independent outlook of a new generation growing up in a new technological paradigm:

> The bombings don't really matter to me, or, for that matter, to most Japanese of my generation. My peers and I have little hatred or blame in our hearts for the

[2] See my book *The New Generation in Meiji Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

> Americans….My grandparents' generation remembers the suffering, but tries to forget it. My parents' generation still does not trust the military. The pacifist stance of that generation comes in great part from the mistrust of the Japanese military…. For my generation, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and the war in general now represent the equivalent of a cultural "game over" or "reset" button. Through a combination of conscious policy and unconscious culture, the painful memories and images of the war have lost their context, surfacing only as twisted echoes in our subculture. The result, for better and worse, is that 60 years after Hiroshima, we dwell more on the future than the past.[3]

Such assertiveness of a new generation is hardly new and we know that it often masks a fragile self-assurance. Cultural values may be challenged by the young, but they cannot be outlived. History matters. Cultural traditions persist. For this reason, we often find that the world-views of a generation may change as it matures. They may moderate with age or they may, for example, alter from a characteristically youthful liberal orientation to a strident nationalist view as they encounter changed political environments affecting their society. In none of the cases studied here is the older generation to be dismissed. Patron-client relations remain important in the success of a new generation. Family ties and inherited electoral bases are still prominent in the emergence of new leaders in all these societies.

Because of its location early in the life cycle, education is critical in its formative influence. New and different educational opportunities are a significant factor in creating generational change. Conservative traditions and old values are challenged in the new schools. In each of the societies studied here there is an increased breadth of educational experience, and liberal trends have been conspicuous in the schooling of the emerging leadership generation. Young people in all of these countries have had more opportunities than their elders to study abroad, most notably in the United States. Education opens new career opportunities, giving the emerging leaders that are studied here new career paths to power with consequent influence on their world-view. Western liberal societies, particularly in the United States, have a strong appeal to the young in their educational experience.

But along with this attraction to the West, soon comes ambivalence, for the age of full-blown nationalism has arrived in Asia. The United States and the West are viewed with mixed feelings. The younger generations in all four countries are being shaped at a formative stage by the unprecedented economic strength and the emerging power and self-awareness of Asia. These generations are living through the historic rise of Asia. They are coming of age amidst a massive shift in wealth and power from the North Atlantic to their region. The end of the Cold War revealed a new economic strength in Asia that is bringing about a deep, long-term shift in the global distribution of power. This transformation has brought dramatic improvements in per capita income, living standards, health, and literacy. A region that for two centuries had been the object and victim of history's major forces began to emerge as a dynamic and competitive actor. Although remnants of the Cold War system remain, Asia is a vastly different region than it was under the Cold War order. The Western age in Asia is at an end.

In both economics and politics the conservative traditions of these societies have given ground to liberalizing trends. Market-oriented policies in all these states have diminished the role of government in planning, financing, and controlling economic development. New legal mechanisms

[3] Joichi Ito, "An Anniversary to Forget," *New York Times,* August 7, 2005, 12, cited in Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: PublicAffairs Press, 2007), 358.

to protect contract and property rights are an important part of this trend. Political change has accompanied this liberalizing trend in economic policies. The new prosperity has empowered a growing middle class in South Korea and Taiwan to demand political rights in a confrontation with authoritarian practices. In Japan, party politicians have begun to take back power from long-standing bureaucratic domination. In China, the Communist Party faces a challenge as to how to bring the masses into the political community.

There is a considerable body of social science research pointing to the many ways in which economic growth promotes vast changes in values among younger generations with implications for political development. Improved societal well-being tends to promote the increased appearance of self-expression values, the expansion of autonomy and choice among the young.[4] The rapidity of economic change has provoked not only new political awareness but also new sources of identification. Industrialization—especially rapid catch-up industrialization—brings with it social dislocations caused by the movement of people from the country to the city, by the psychological strain caused by the undermining of old values and the disturbance of vested interests by economic change, and by widening differences between generations. As the example of student activism in South Korea dramatically demonstrates, generations themselves become a source of identity.

But the most pervasive source of identity among the young is the growing strength of nationalism. Pride in the achievement of economic growth and a new sense of empowerment associated with the new status of these states in the international system give rise to nationalism. Leaders may construct nationalism to provide a motivating identity for a people arriving in the international state system and pursuing rapid economic development. In all Asian states, government has sought to harness economic growth to nationalist pride. As it gathers strength as a source of identification and motivation, however, nationalism easily slips beyond the control of state leadership. Certainly that is true in South Korea, and it is an ever present danger in China.

While the rapid demarcation of generations is brought on partly by such common factors as the experience of technological change, the end of the Cold War, and the activization of Asia, the country-specific change is yet more influential. In this NBR project, the authors find as many as five contemporaneous generations—so turbulent is the recent history of these societies. The complexity of generational change in the region is illustrated by the striking diversity of the four cases studied. Each has a separate, distinctive character that owes to the historical position of its politics. Each has internal—intragenerational—diversity. Moreover, the boundaries of generations are rarely precise and the delineation of each generation in these cases is individually complex and inevitably imprecise. Though we call on all our best social scientific research to aid in this task, a description of a particular generation may be as much a work of art as it is of social science. It may require as much imaginative insight and intuition as it does statistics and surveys.

Given the immensity and the rapidity of change that China has experienced in recent times, it is not surprising that Cheng Li discerns five different generations. The early generations were associated with the Long March, the struggle against Japan, the leadership of Mao, and Deng Xiaoping's transformation of socialism. But it was finally the throes of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) that produced the two contemporary generational cohorts—those who had finished their schooling when it began and then what is now the emerging new generation of Chinese leadership, born in the 1950s, which Cheng Li numbers the fifth generation, whose elementary and

[4] For a strong assertion of this trend see Ronald Inglehart and Christian Wetzel, *Modernization, Culture Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

middle schooling were disrupted and delayed by the Cultural Revolution. Deng's policy initiatives dramatically changed the course of the fifth generation. Most of this generation's leaders entered colleges when the higher education system reopened after 1977. Under the changed conditions, college admissions were no longer tied exclusively to political criteria or class background. Freed from the social and ideological turbulence of the Cultural Revolution, fifth generation leaders gained a new lease on individual career paths and made the most of it.

This fifth generation is already beginning to take its place in provincial and national leadership. In contrast to earlier generations that were more unified in their direction and their origins, it is remarkable for its diversity of social origins, postgraduate careers, and paths to power. While academic credentials became more significant, patron-client relations remained important. Some in this cohort were related to earlier party leaders and moved up quickly, in part helped by their family ties. They are known as the "princelings" or the "elite coalition" and are generally linked to former president Jiang Zemin. They tend to be educated in fields of economics, trade and international finance, law, and other social sciences and have had foreign experience, inclining them to focus on policies that will promote growth and play into trends of globalization. Others in the fifth generation have risen from relatively humble origins through the Communist Youth League and are known as *tuanpai* or the "populist coalition." They are generally linked to President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. Their education and their origins have given them a populist cast and made them more sensitive to the social needs of the broad society. Rather than giving priority to high finance or growth per se, tuanpai leaders tend to be sensitive to the effects of the market economy on ordinary people and deeply attuned to the disparities developing among regions and social classes.

In contrast to earlier generations…[the fifth generation] is remarkable for its diversity of social origins, postgraduate careers, and paths to power.

The two groups are about evenly divided in their relative representation and influence within the ruling political leadership and point to a more complex governing group. This balancing of two competing groups within the leadership is a new development for China and implies a need for negotiation and compromise on many issues. The "populist" tuanpai coalition of younger fifth generation leaders will have to find common ground in decisionmaking with the "elitist" coalition of princelings.

Despite their divergent origins, the two groups are united in their determination to protect the party's interests and its political hegemony. "The political survival of the Chinese Communist Party," Cheng Li emphasizes, "is the most important consideration for this new generation." While in firm agreement on their ultimate goal, these groups have, we might say, a generational debate over the necessary means to maintain the party's survival. In an international climate that gives high priority to democratic governance as the basis for political legitimacy, the party is well aware of the tenuousness of its legitimacy in the eyes of international liberalism. The party's claim to rule must rest heavily on its success in economic development and continued improvement of the nation's standard of living.

The fifth generation, owing to its own bitter experience with the Cultural Revolution, is inclined to be wary of ideological zeal and its combustible potential and hence to favor pragmatic approaches to policy issues. But this wariness of ideological zeal is expressed in different ways by the two groups. The princelings give priority to policies that will spur economic growth and provide continuing evidence of the party's success and thereby ensure its legitimacy, while the tuanpai worry more about the effects that uneven growth may have on the masses who may at any moment be resentful of the uneven distribution of growth and give rise to demands that will undermine party legitimacy. Cheng Li's observation here seems right on the mark: "Given the absence of well-established institutions for facilitating public participation in the political system, fifth generation leaders may find it challenging to resolve instances of policy deadlock without appealing to mass opinion."

China has yet to deal with the classic challenge of industrialization—that is, how to incorporate the masses into the political community—and we must conclude that this is a challenge that the fifth generation can ignore only at its own peril. Growing literacy and improved communications awaken the masses to national political issues and create pressure for political participation. Leadership is challenged to find ways to incorporate the masses into national political life and accommodate the tensions and antagonisms of a burgeoning industrial society. Industrialization brings with it social dislocations caused by the movement of people from country to the city—and China is experiencing a more rapid movement from the country to the city than ever before in human history—by shifts in values and disruption of vested interests, by the dispossession of assumed property rights for example, by the rise of newer and harsher class antagonisms, and, we must add, by the widening difference between generations. Hu Jintao and the tuanpai of the fifth generation pay obeisance to democracy, but these references are limited to contests in both inner-party and low-level elections.

An unchallenged legitimacy to rule will belong to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) only so long as economic development continues. Economic success is counted on to take the wind out of any middle class yearning for increased political rights and of lower class protests over the effects of the market on their lives. But if economic growth stalls, this legitimacy may be called into question. Thus far Chinese leadership has treated mass nationalism with kid gloves, knowing that some measure of national loyalty will be required to maintain the cohesion necessary for orderly growth. At the same time leaders are wary of a rampant popular nationalism over which they would have little control. It is a two-edged sword.

Recognizing the ideological void and the vulnerability that the demise of Communist ideology created, the leadership launched a state-led nationalism in the early 1990s. The CCP launched a campaign of patriotic education to provide the political indoctrination once offered by Marxism-Leninism and Maoist thought. Nationalist ideology promoted ideas that would support the continuation of a Communist leadership. As the *People's Daily* explained, patriotic education was launched with the intention of "boosting the nation's spirit, enhancing its cohesion, fostering its self-esteem and sense of pride, consolidating and developing a patriotic united front to the broadest extent possible. And directing and rallying the masses' patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics [and] helping the motherland become unified, prosperous, and strong."[5] It is a carefully contained, bridled nationalism designed to remain under the control of the state and to underwrite its legitimacy. Such muted nationalism eschews soaring

[5] Quoted in Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 219.

rhetoric of China's glories as a civilization in order to preempt a populist form of anti-foreign nationalism that might separate the state and motherland.

Chinese nationalism is a wild card. Devoted to the survival of the party as its number one priority, the emerging leadership will struggle to maintain its version of state-led nationalism, but the effort both to promote and to contain nationalism is fraught with peril. I find Cheng Li's conclusion compelling: "China's new leaders have not yet demonstrated the requisite skills and tactics for effectively handling the so-called double-edged sword of popular nationalism." When economic growth slows, the defining day for the party may arrive and, as social problems become unmanageable and its legitimacy comes into question, a future leadership will be tempted to turn to a more strident form of nationalist ideology in order to save itself and the party. Then perceived policy failures of the regime might be blamed on foreign treachery or domestic rivals. Ideology may, in such event, become the tool to preserve the party's legitimacy. In the meantime, as Cheng Li concludes, "Fifth generation leaders [are] more pragmatic and less dogmatic than their predecessors. None of the rising stars of the fifth generation appears to prioritize pursuing an ideological platform on either the domestic or foreign policy fronts."

The struggles of Chinese leadership to secure the survival of the Communist Party will inevitably have profound implications for China's neighbors—none more than Taiwan, which is itself on the cusp of a significant change of leadership.

The struggles of Chinese leadership to secure the survival of the Communist Party will inevitably have profound implications for China's neighbors—none more than Taiwan, which is itself on the cusp of a significant change of leadership. Shelley Rigger describes an emerging generation of political leadership with a world-view shaped by transition to democratic government, by impressive economic growth, and by a new international environment. She discerns three distinct political generations. The current leadership, exemplified by former president Chen Shui-bian and the new president Ma Ying-jeou, constitutes the "authoritarian generation" because it came of age under the authoritarian government that held sway until the late 1970s. The repressive regime of the Kuomintang (KMT), driven by its ideological zeal to return to power on the mainland and underwritten by the Cold War international system, resorted to propaganda and political mobilization, and severely limited fundamental political freedoms, giving little space for dissent. Native Taiwanese suffered discrimination that created a polarized politics in which they felt deep antagonism toward the KMT and its goal of taking back the mainland. The Taiwanese formed an opposition movement and took advantage of the KMT's declining international legitimacy and weakening will to form the Democratic Political Party in 1987. Martial law and one-party rule came to an end when the student movement demanding democratic reforms swept the island in 1990.

The generation shaped by the authoritarian period still retains its hold on government, but its power is passing to a new generation that was shaped by the transition to democracy that began in 1979 and was achieved by 1996. There were several formative experiences of this "transition generation". Most important was the student movement that led the popular demand for democratic reforms. In addition, during the same years, Taiwan's impressive economic growth brought dramatic increases in living standards that translated into a growing confidence and optimism. Finally, a third important influence was China's commitment to economic reform under Deng Xiaoping, which offered increased possibility of maintaining the status quo in Taiwan's relations with the mainland.

Members of the transition generation that will assume leadership in the coming years have a distinct world-view. As Shelley Rigger concludes, "Because they have no memory of Taiwan's darkest days, these young politicians are less likely than the current leadership to view their political opponents as enemies. Compared to many of today's leaders, they are rational and pragmatic in their outlook." The old polarization and emotional antagonisms have eased. The fact that Taiwan has been their only homeland gives them a strong identity with the interests of the island. At the same time, the growing economic interdependence with the mainland, most vividly demonstrated by hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese working on the mainland, creates conflicting interests no longer susceptible to easy answers. Among the transition leaders, the ideological fervor for return to the mainland is wholly absent, replaced by a pragmatic, problem-solving approach to their dilemma of maintaining the status quo of de facto independence while finding a *modus vivendi* with China. For the time being the status quo seems viable and is the preferred consensus of this new generation. But Taiwanese are not masters of their own fate. Their position requires skillful maneuvering between their relations with China and with the United States. More than any other state Taiwan will be influenced by the future national purpose of China as a rising power.

A third generation, the "democratic generation," shaped by the new political climate since 1996, is still very young, but its destiny may well be to oversee a solution to the problematic existence that has been the island's historic destiny.

In the case of South Korea, we have the most vocal, active, and self-conscious generation in contemporary Asia. This generation, on which Gordon Flake concentrates his analysis, brought generational influence to national prominence through its leadership in achieving democratic reform in the 1980s. The student movement was in the streets in large numbers struggling for its beliefs. Many of its leaders suffered personal injury. Many served prison sentences. Many more were the victims of other forms of brutal suppression. This generation, which was the "ideological core" of the democratic revolution, is known as the "386 generation" because of its several identifying characteristics. At the time that it gained prominence in the politics of the 1990s its members were in their thirties, went to college in the 1980s, and were born in the 1960s.

Student opposition had been common in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s when the Park government issued its Yushin Constitution, which imposed authoritarian government and repression of all civil liberties. The new generation of South Korean students in the 1980s, radicalized by an ideological zeal born of neo-Marxist philosophical views, built on this past activism and succeeded in winning the support for democratic reforms from a growing middle class that was gaining self-confidence amidst the rapid economic growth of the time. The 386 generation was suffused with a populist nationalism and revulsion from the Cold War mind-set that had legitimated authoritarian rule. The nationalism of the students took an increasingly

anti-American overtone owing to latent historic resentment of outside interference by the great powers in Korea. They saw the U.S. alliance as a Cold War pact that supported the military regime, served U.S. national interests, and impeded unification of the Korean nation. All of these factors came together in the Kwangju insurrection in 1987, led by students, which galvanized a rising middle class opposition to military rule and which was so threatening to the regime that it made concessions that soon eased the government's authoritarian grip and permitted open elections.

Generational change was the instrument of the transformation of South Korea's domestic politics. The student movement of the 1980s with its demands for an open democratic politics and its nationalist reaction to the U.S. alliance gave this generation a high-profile identity that has been reflected in the elections of Kim Dae Jung in 1995 and Roh Moo-hyun in 2002 as president. This generation is still young and has not fully taken its place in the leadership of institutions. Already having achieved most of its goals, as Gordon Flake observes, it has lost some of its fervor and cohesiveness. As this generation moves into positions of responsibility, it will have to grapple with the realities of its high ideals.

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For democracy to take root in a society, to be in its life blood, it must be struggled for. The 386 generation provided the struggle and shock that leaves an historic mark. But democratization is not an irreversible process that once achieved is certain to last. The liberal ideals of the 386 generation are not yet rooted in strong traditions and the democratic revolution is still young. The recent work of the late Charles Tilly brilliantly explores the fragility of democracy and the necessity to struggle to keep it alive. The challenge for this and succeeding generations in South Korea will be to preserve their new heritage.[6] Much will depend on a favorable international environment and the course that unification takes.

In addition to reform, the political upheaval of the recent past has left a legacy of a peculiarly intense form of popular nationalism that will present a challenge for the U.S. alliance. The 386 generation, empowered by the success of the democratic movement, regards the alliance as unequal and not befitting the dignity of a nation that has achieved industrial power and a participatory democracy. Populist nationalism is intent on freeing the peninsula from foreign domination and is inclined toward a romanticized view of unification with the North. The intensity and exclusivist nature of this nationalism will continue to pose a challenge for both the older generation of Korean leadership and for management of the alliance. As a consequence, Gordon Flake sums up his analysis: "Korea will remain skeptical of U.S. intentions, more demanding of respect and latitude from the United States, and more solicitous of North Korea."

Generational change in Japan has been less marked than in the other three societies, but nonetheless is significant in what it portends. The wartime and postwar generations, which were so pronounced in their distinct outlooks, have now largely passed from leadership, and Patrick Boyd and Richard Samuels focus their analysis on three generational cohorts: the present ruling political generation, which came to maturity in the period of high economic growth (1949–73);

[6] Writing of the ups and downs of the democratic idea in French history—its democratization and dedemocratization—Tilly observes: "[French political history] emphatically refutes any notion of democratization as a gradual, deliberated, irreversible process or as a handy set of political inventions a people simply locks into place when it is ready. On the contrary, it displays the crucial importance of struggle and shock for both democracy and its reversals." Charles Tilly, *Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33.

the emerging generation of leadership, which will take charge in the coming years and who came of age when Japan caught up with the West (1974–88); and a younger generation having come to maturity since 1989 when the Cold War ended and the economy encountered hard times.

Boyd and Samuels found their most distinct instance of generational difference in the younger generation's rejection of postwar economic institutions. Given the dramatic decline in the performance of the Japanese economy in the past fifteen years this is to be expected. It is this youngest cohort that has suffered the most from the reversal of Japan's economic fortunes and which has little recall of the glory days of Japan's vaunted economic model. Japanese have been debating this issue since the bubble burst in the early 1990s. Three distinct views seem to me apparent in this debate, somewhat correlated to generations: the conservative view, the convergence view, and the view that sought a third way. A conservative view, which obviously drew its strength from the older generation whose roots were in the high-growth period, argues that Japan had evolved the institutions and policies that best fit its historical preference for cooperation and harmonious social relations. In this view, the distinctive nature of Japanese capitalism would revive eventually because it reflected the values, norms, and ideology of Japanese society.

…the most noteworthy finding of Boyd and Samuels is the hawkish views of the younger generation on issues of national security…

In contrast, as the competitive disadvantage of Japan's nonliberal form of capitalism became evident, many Japanese—especially in the youngest generation as Boyd and Samuels found—regard the distinctive socially and culturally embedded institutions of their economic system as no longer assets and are demanding sweeping change, an unfettering of the economy to free it from many of the state-centered controls that had accumulated over Japan's long catch-up struggle. They believe that Japan is now a mature economy and needs to restructure its nationally managed capitalism to keep pace with economic internationalism and interdependence. In between the conservative and the all-out reform views of the older and younger generations, there is a view that argues for a hybrid. It recognized that Japan would inexorably be shaped by the new forces of globalization, that it would have to bend to the power of market forces, global competition, and interdependence as well as to the strength of ordinary consumers' demands for change. But at the same time this view is inclined, as Steven Vogel has suggested in his recent work, to be selective.[7] Some corporations concluded that past practices still had value and were loath to make a sharp break with the past. Vogel cites the example of Toyota, which has made some concession to the new principle of merit-based wages (as opposed to wages based on seniority). Boyd and Samuels' finding then would support a view that a continuation of economic reforms for the future is likely, although at a pace inhibited by the older generations' preference for the traditional institutions with which they are most familiar and comfortable and probably also by resistance from bureaucrats, who constitute a formidable leadership group not included in the Boyd-Samuels study.

While the findings regarding generational views of economic issues are significant but not surprising, the most noteworthy finding of Boyd and Samuels is the hawkish views of the younger

[7] Steven Vogel, *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry Are Reforming Japanese Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

generation on issues of national security and considerable like-minded views of the midcareer and older generations. In fact, they found support for greater security measures across the board, testifying to a steady turning away from the postwar grand strategy of leaving defense issues to the United States and concentrating on economic growth. In this sense, it could be said that change is affecting all generations and overriding any differences one might have expected to find between them. Nevertheless, it is especially significant that "the youngest generation is consistently more hawkish than the two older generations on the issues of [strengthening] the U.S. Japan alliance, collective self-defense, preemption and the expansion of Japanese defense capabilities." Among likely future leaders of the LDP, predilections for constitutional reform to sanction collective defense and for strengthening defense capabilities are clear.

What, we might ask, is driving this emerging new emphasis on a politically more assertive Japanese foreign policy? Boyd and Samuels conclude that it is not a right-wing nationalism. They find that right-wing nationalism has not won strong support from any of the generations: "However much the Japanese media associates the rise of right-wing nationalism and cultural conservatism in Japan with an angry and alienated youthful generation, this connection is not reflected in the distribution of preferences among Diet members." While largely eliminating a residual, old-style nationalism as a motivator of a more assertive foreign policy, their study did not elicit the sources of this new disposition to turn away from the Cold War strategy known as the Yoshida Doctrine. A different set of cultural issues, however, more focused on the present and future, might elicit significant generational differences that would explain the disposition to greater security assertiveness in general and especially in the youngest cohort. To elicit the motivation for a more high-profile political stance, one would have to ask questions that deal with the post–Cold War environment in Asia, especially the rise of China and the nuclearization of North Korea. These issues have huge, new implications for Japan and for the regional future in which younger Japanese must compete.

During the time that this more hawkish youngest generation came of age—that is, since 1989 and the end of the Cold War—Japan has confronted a radically transformed regional environment characterized by an unprecedented economic strength and nationalist vitality. This new Asia requires Japan to accommodate to forces of historical change wholly at odds with the way that it has related to its neighbors in the past. Accustomed to dominating a weak and backward Asia, Japan was psychologically unprepared to engage a dynamic new and competitive Asia. Expectations for continuation of Japan's leadership in the region were jarred by the dynamism of its neighbors, especially as Japan's own economy stalled. Younger Japanese especially are less likely to feel guilt, remorse, or defensiveness about residual issues of the Pacific War. History is much less a burden for them than for their parents. My sense is that the rise of China, in particular, would bulk large in the distinctive views of the younger generation. Instead of feeling guilt toward China, they see China as an economic, political, and potential military rival. They see South Korea less as a former colony and more as a tough, nationalist economic competitor. I would think that it is such concerns about the emerging new situation in the region that are driving the hawkish views of the younger generation.

A prescient observer of generational differences, Takemi Keizo, until 2007 an LDP member of the Upper House and former state secretary for foreign affairs, confirms many of the observations I am making here. He pointed out that young people under 30 years of age who were born when Japan was already an advanced country rich in material terms are much less affected by the older

psychological complex toward the West. At the same time they do not feel the same sense of superiority toward Asia that was common in earlier generations of Japanese. In fact, during their lives Asia has come to command more respect for its economic growth and assertiveness. Takemi further observed that many younger Japanese do not have quite the same guilt-consciousness toward Asia that their elders feel. Thus while older Japanese were often inclined to give aid to China out of a sense of remorse for suffering caused during the war years, many younger Diet members are more inclined to put relations with China on a new basis.[8]

Rather clear policy implications emerge from the Boyd-Samuels study. The clearest is that U.S. policymakers can expect continued reform of Japanese economic institutions owing to the strong support of the youngest generation. This reform will move away from traditional institutions of Japanese capitalism, but will not go so far as the Washington consensus in favor of market-driven practices. The other significant policy implication is the certainty that Japan will steadily strengthen its security institutions. This strengthening receives its support across-the board of all generations but especially among the youngest generation. Clearly, Japan is steadily moving away from the Yoshida Doctrine of concentration on economic growth and sole reliance on U.S. security guarantees that underwrote grand strategy during the Cold War. Despite the present deadlock in Japanese politics caused by the recent control of the Upper House by the opposition DPJ, strengthening of the alliance with the United States will have broad support, though not necessarily to the degree or at the readiness that the United States would prefer. The post–Cold War era has for many reasons given rise to a more vibrant and combative democratic politics; and security issues, such as revision of the constitution and approval of collective self-defense, will be subject to prolonged debate. Nonetheless, the trajectory of change toward a more politically assertive Japan seems to be clear.

The complex dynamics of generational change in East Asia that this NBR project explores demonstrate the challenge for U.S. policy. In a region characterized by flux and rapid change, where the shape of a new order is not yet apparent, the role of the United States in maintaining a balance of power will require a strategy based on deep understanding of the forces of change. Across the region, an unprecedented economic strength and nationalist vitality are creating both integrative and divisive forces. Trade and investment are knitting the region together and creating interdependence, but at the same time collision of national interests and strategic rivalries threatens the status quo. The U.S. role as an engaged balancer will require a firm grasp of the domestic politics of each regional state and of its emerging leadership. Generational change will be a key component of this politics and its trajectory.

8 Takemi Keizo, "Shinrai kankei o do kochiku suru ka" [How to Build Trusting Relationships], *Sekai*, March 2001, 88–93.

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

*Cheng Li*

**CHENG LI** is Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution's John L. Thornton China Center. He is also William R. Kenan Professor of Government at Hamilton College. Dr. Li's most recent publication is *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy* (2008). He can be reached at <cli@brookings.edu>.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crucial to any analysis of China's political trajectory is a solid understanding of what kind of leadership will govern the country in the next decade and beyond. This essay studies the emerging "fifth generation" of leaders with a focus both on intergenerational shared characteristics and on intragenerational diversities.

## MAIN FINDINGS

China's decisionmakers are by no means a monolithic group of elites who share the same views, values, and visions. Yet it is also too simplistic to assume that Chinese leaders are always engaged in a ferocious zero-sum struggle for power in which the winner takes all. The growing diversity within China's leadership and the dynamic interdependence among competing factions or coalitions are particularly evident in the fifth generation. The fact that the two most powerful camps in the fifth generation—tuanpai and princelings—have been allotted an equal number of seats in China's supreme decisionmaking organs indicates the intensity of factional competition. Yet these competing factions are willing to cooperate, partly because they are in the same boat and partly because their expertise and leadership skills are complementary. Consequently negotiation, compromise, consensus-building, and behind-the-scenes lobbying will likely occur more often in the future. The emerging bipartisan balance of power will further contribute to the diversity of outlooks and stances on some major issues, such as economic globalization, social justice, political democratization, and environmental protection. The next decade will test whether China can take a major step toward a more institutionalized transition to power-sharing.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

Finally, the fifth generation is also coming of age at a time when China faces a multitude of daunting problems, such as growing economic disparities, frequent social unrest, and repeated industrial and environmental disasters.[2] Foreign policy challenges have also become acute as the PRC confronts an unstable and increasingly complicated external environment. Debates over many issues—including the domestic redistribution of resources, the establishment of a public health care system, financial reforms, foreign trade, energy security, and domestic ethnic tensions—are so contentious that the fifth generation of leadership may find it increasingly difficult to build the kind of consensus necessary to govern effectively.

This pessimistic view should be balanced, however, by a competing assessment of the fifth generation. A vicious power struggle is of course hardly inevitable. Likewise, political competition in China is by no means a zero-sum game. Fifth generation leaders understand that they are all "in the same boat" and that it is in their best interest to demonstrate political solidarity when facing enormous economic and socio-political challenges. The diverse demographic and political backgrounds of this generation of leadership can also be seen as a positive development to the extent that this diversity contributes to political pluralism in the country. It might even be

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

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

argued that collective leadership not only is a mechanism of power-sharing through checks and balances among competing political camps but also entails a more dynamic and institutionalized decisionmaking process through which political leaders come to represent various social and geographic constituencies and thus develop better policies to meet new and complicated socio-economic environments.

Is the growing diversity of the Chinese political elite a source of strength or weakness for the Chinese political system? In what aspects does the foreign policy of the fifth generation differ from the policies of previous generations? How will the new dynamics associated with the rise of the fifth generation change the rules of the game in Chinese leadership politics? What factors have shaped the world-views of this generation of leaders? How does the fifth generation view the current East Asian security environment, and what are this generation's opinions on China's current and future role in these affairs, especially vis-à-vis the United States?

Answering these important questions requires a solid and comprehensive analysis of the fifth generation of leaders—their formative experiences, collective memories, intragenerational differences, political socializations, career paths, factional divisions, educational backgrounds, foreign experiences, and world-views. The characteristics of this generation of leaders will not only affect China's choices for the future but will also have significant ramifications far beyond China's borders.

To state the obvious, China is rapidly becoming a global economic powerhouse, and PRC government policies formulated by the fifth generation—including monetary, trade, industrial, environmental, and energy policies—will likely have a large impact on the global economy in the future. China's economic rise has been accompanied by growing influence on political and security affairs in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world. Whether China will play a more constructive international role in the future depends on many factors, perhaps the most essential of which is the ongoing transformation of China's political landscape in general and the generational transition of the political elite in particular.

To explore how the rising fifth generation will contribute to changes in China's political system and foreign policy during the next fifteen years, this essay will address four main issues. First, it discusses definitional issues regarding the fifth generation and outlines the methodology of this largely quantitative empirical study. The essay then examines the collective characteristics and defining experiences of this generation based largely on biographical data on 538 of the most prominent fifth generation leaders. These individuals are either members or alternates on the 17th Central Committee or have attained at least the rank of vice minister or vice governor (*fu shengbuji*). This essay further analyzes the intragenerational diversity of the fifth generation, with a focus on the factional distribution of power. The final section includes an assessment of how the combination of characteristics of the fifth generation and the new factors in Chinese elite politics will together determine China's future political trajectory.

## Definition, Methodology, and Scope of the Study

The categorization of elite generations can be quite imprecise and highly political. As some scholars in generational studies have observed, the distinction between "where one generation

begins and another ends"[3] is at times rather arbitrary. Generational boundaries are often defined by a combination of birth year, shared major life experiences and memories, and collective socio-political attitudes of peer groups. A political generation is often defined as a group of cohorts born over a span of 15 to 22 years.[4] These same-age cohorts have experienced the same key historical events during their adolescent and formative years (approximately between the ages of 17 and 25).[5]

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

The concept of political generations in the PRC has often been based on the distinctive political experience of elites…

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were, however, important differences between the experience of the fourth and fifth generations during the Cultural Revolution. Fourth generation leaders had either completed or were still attending college when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. By contrast, the beginning of the Cultural Revolution prevented fifth generation leaders from completing elementary or middle school. Having thus lost the opportunity for formal schooling as a result of the political turmoil of the period, this generation is often referred to as the "lost generation." Many future leaders of this generation became "sent-down youths," who were moved from cities to rural areas and worked for many years as farmers. Nonetheless, in contrast to many less fortunate members of the same generation, the majority of fifth generation leaders made remarkable comebacks by entering colleges when the higher education system reopened after 1977. This education resuscitated the professional and political careers of these future leaders.

Many future leaders of [the fifth] generation became "sent-down youths," who were moved from cities to rural areas and worked for many years as farmers.

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

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

The qualitative section is based on various sources, such as Chinese official reports and publications from Hong Kong and overseas containing biographical information on Chinese leaders. In addition, between August 2007 and February 2008 the author conducted interviews with two dozen Chinese public intellectuals and members of prominent think-tanks both in China and in the United States. This qualitative research aims to further identify political networks and factional affiliations among fifth generation leaders, illustrate overall political trends, and explore differences in policy preferences and world-views.

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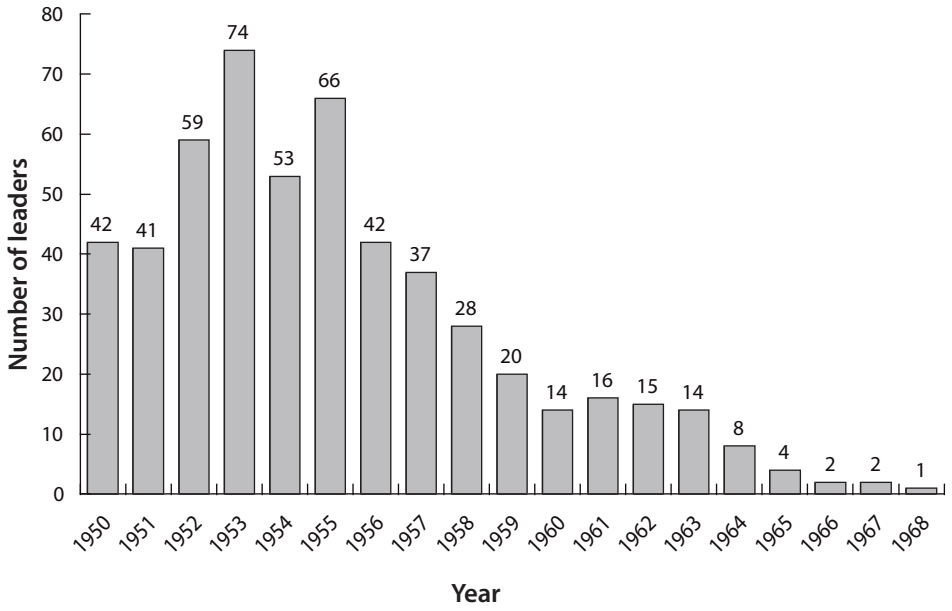
[9] Cheng Ying, "Jujiao Zhonggong shiliujie wuzhong quanhui: Zhongguo de zhuanzhe" [Focusing on the Fifth Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party: China's Transition], *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan,* October 9, 2005.

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

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

**FIGURE 1** Distribution of fifth generation leaders by year of birth




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

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

A few leaders who were born in the late 1940s, including former mayor of Beijing Wang Qishan (born in 1948) and Chongqing party secretary Bo Xilai (born in 1949), are also possible candidates to succeed the top fourth generation leaders. Wang and Bo are not included in the quantitative

**TABLE 1** Distribution of leadership positions held by fifth generation leaders

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

analysis of this study because both were born before 1950. Nonetheless, because of their proximity in age to the fifth generation age cohort both leaders' life experiences are quite similar to the experiences of the leaders in this study. Qualitative analysis of the factional competition and the political spectrum of the fifth generation leadership, therefore, should consider these exceptions.

Fifth generation leaders already constitute a significant portion of China's leadership at both the national and provincial levels. **Table 2** shows the presence of the fifth generation leaders in China's most important organs. Though a majority of the members in the Politburo (including its Standing Committee) and in the Central Military Commission (CMC) are leaders in the fourth generation and the presence of fifth generation leaders in these two supreme decisionmaking bodies is marginal, members of the fifth generation already constitute a majority at the next highest level of leadership. For example 210 (or 57%) of the 371 full and alternate members of the 17th Central Committee are fifth generation leaders. Furthermore, in January 2008 the leadership of all 31 provincial-level governments in China was reshuffled, and as a result it is now the case that 20 (or 65%) of 31 governors and all 239 vice governors were born after 1950.

Among 29 ministers of the State Council, 11 (38%) were born after 1950. A majority of the vice premiers and state councilors in the State Council retired at the 11th National People's Congress, held in March 2008. The ministerial level of leadership will also undergo a major reshuffling in the near future with more leaders in their 50s taking over the top posts of various ministries. Altogether, these 538 prominent fifth generation leaders constitute a sizable study pool from which to derive abundant information on the generational traits and sociological backgrounds of the next generation of Chinese leaders.

**TABLE 2** Number and percentages of fifth generation leaders in China's most important leadership organs (as of February 2008)

| Leadership organ | Total number | Number of fifth generation | Percentage (%) of fifth generation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Politburo Standing Committee | 9 | 2 | 22% |
| Politburo | 25 | 4 | 16% |
| Secretariat | 6 | 4 | 67% |
| Central Military Commission | 11 | 1 | 9% |
| Central Committee | 371 | 210 | 57% |
| Military members in Central Committee | 65 | 23 | 35% |
| Ministers of the State Council | 29 | 11 | 38% |
| Heads of the CCP central organs | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| Provincial party secretaries | 31 | 10 | 32% |
| Provincial deputy party secretaries | 64 | 47 | 73% |
| Governors | 31 | 20 | 65% |
| Vice governors | 239 | 239 | 100% |

## Demographic, Sociological, and Educational Characteristics

### *Gender, Party Membership, and Ethnicity*

The distribution of fifth generation leaders by gender, CCP membership, and nationality is depicted in **Table 3**. As was the case with preceding generations, men occupy the bulk of the fifth generation political leadership. For example the percentage of female leaders is 11%—compared with 9% and 12% in the two study pools of the fourth generation.[12] The fourth and fifth generations are also similar in that most female leaders in the fifth generation serve as vice ministers, deputy provincial party secretaries, or vice governors. Only 2 of 29 ministers in 2007 were women—Minister of Justice Wu Aiying and Minister of Supervision Ma Wen. Another female leader, Li Bin, is expected to be appointed as the minister of the State Population and Family Planning Commission at the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) meeting in March 2008. By contrast, in 2003 when the 10th NPC selected cabinet members of the State Council, all 29 full ministers were men. No female leaders currently serve as provincial party secretaries, and only one woman currently serves as a governor—Song Xiuyan, governor of Qinghai.

In recent years the Chinese authorities have increasingly promoted non-CCP members to high-ranking posts, including some in the central government. According to the CCP's Department of Organization, approximately 32,000 non-CCP members currently serve as county or division level (*xianchuji*) leaders.[13] This essay shows that 35 non-CCP members currently serve at the vice

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

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

**TABLE 3** Distribution of fifth generation leaders by gender, party membership, and nationality (538 leaders in total)

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

minister and vice governor level or above, accounting for 6.5% of fifth generation leaders. This number includes two full ministers: Wan Gang (born in 1952), minister of science and technology, and Chen Zhu (born in 1953), minister of health. At present all of the full governors are CCP members. With the exception of Xinjiang, in which all vice governors are CCP members, each and every one of China's 31 provincial-level governments has a vice governor who is a non-CCP member.

Not surprisingly, members of the Han ethnic group occupy an overwhelming majority of the seats held by fifth generation leaders (approximately 89%)—compared with 87% of seats occupied by the fourth generation.[14] All governors of China's five provincial-level autonomous regions are ethnic minorities, reflecting the effort of the Chinese authorities to recruit more local leaders with

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

ethnic minority backgrounds in the minority regions. The Tibet Autonomous Region has fourteen vice governors—the largest number among provincial-level administrations in the PRC and nine of whom are Tibetans.

### *Birthplace and Regional Representation*

It has been widely noted that China's national leaders often come disproportionately from certain geographic regions.[15] For example, only five to seven natives of the southern region, which is home to approximately 11% of China's total population and which contributes approximately 12.4% of the country's GDP, have served as full members on any of the four Central Committees during the past 25 years—which is only approximately 2.5% of the full Central Committee membership during this period.[16] Meanwhile, natives of the eastern region, especially from the provinces of Shandong and Jiangsu, have always been overrepresented in the national leadership—constituting approximately 40% of the full Central Committee membership. This geographic pattern of birthplace distribution of the full membership has largely remained the same for the 17th Central Committee.[17]

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

**Table 4** shows the distribution of the fifth generation leaders by birth province. Among the 520 fifth generation leaders whose birthplaces could be identified, natives of Shandong, Hebei, Jiangsu, Liaoning, and Zhejiang provinces had the highest representation in this study, accounting for 12.1%, 8.7%, 6.5%, 6.5%, and 6.2% of members respectively. Though the eastern region is still overrepresented, the percentage of leaders from this region has decreased from 44.7% in the third generation and 38.8% in the fourth to 33.7% in the fifth. The percentage of natives of Jiangsu Province has dropped most significantly, from 14.2% in the third and 12.5% in the fourth to just 6.5% in the fifth generation. The decline of Jiangsu natives in the national leadership might be partially related to the fact that Jiang Zemin, the core leader of the third generation and a native of Jiangsu, has lost his influence over personnel appointments in the past few years.

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

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

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

**TABLE 4** Distribution of third, fourth, and fifth generations leaders by birth province

| Native province | Third generation | | Fourth generation | | Fifth generation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| **North** | 45 | 19.4 | 29 | 12.9 | 106 | 20.4 |
| Beijing | 6 | 2.6 | 1 | 0.5 | 21 | 4.0 |
| Tianjin | 6 | 2.6 | 7 | 3.1 | 9 | 1.7 |
| Hebei | 21 | 9.1 | 11 | 4.9 | 45 | 8.7 |
| Shanxi | 10 | 4.3 | 7 | 3.1 | 22 | 4.2 |
| Neimenggu | 2 | 0.8 | 3 | 1.3 | 9 | 1.7 |
| **Northeast** | 30 | 13.0 | 35 | 15.6 | 52 | 10.0 |
| Liaoning | 12 | 5.2 | 18 | 8.0 | 34 | 6.5 |
| Jilin | 12 | 5.2 | 12 | 5.4 | 10 | 1.9 |
| Heilongjiang | 6 | 2.6 | 5 | 2.2 | 8 | 1.5 |
| **East** | 104 | 44.7 | 87 | 38.8 | 175 | 33.7 |
| Shanghai | 7 | 3.0 | 2 | 0.9 | 15 | 2.9 |
| Jiangsu | 33 | 14.2 | 28 | 12.5 | 34 | 6.5 |
| Shandong | 36 | 15.5 | 25 | 11.1 | 63 | 12.1 |
| Zhejiang | 13 | 5.6 | 10 | 4.5 | 32 | 6.2 |
| Anhui | 11 | 4.7 | 14 | 6.2 | 18 | 3.5 |
| Fujian | 3 | 1.3 | 8 | 3.6 | 13 | 2.5 |
| Taiwan | 1 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Central** | 30 | 13.0 | 35 | 15.6 | 81 | 15.6 |
| Henan | 7 | 3.0 | 10 | 4.5 | 27 | 5.2 |
| Hubei | 5 | 2.2 | 6 | 2.7 | 20 | 3.8 |
| Hunan | 12 | 5.2 | 15 | 6.7 | 19 | 3.7 |
| Jiangxi | 6 | 2.6 | 4 | 1.8 | 15 | 2.9 |

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

*Table 4 (continued)*

| Native province | Third generation | | Fourth generation | | Fifth generation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| **South** | 7 | 3.0 | 6 | 2.7 | 18 | 3.4 |
| Guangdong | 6 | 2.6 | 4 | 1.8 | 8 | 1.5 |
| Guangxi | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.9 | 7 | 1.3 |
| Hainan | 1 | 0.4 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.6 |
| **Southwest** | 11 | 4.7 | 17 | 7.5 | 54 | 10.4 |
| Sichuan | 5 | 2.2 | 4 | 1.8 | 12 | 2.3 |
| Chongqing | 3 | 1.3 | 2 | 0.9 | 13 | 2.5 |
| Guizhou | 2 | 0.8 | 3 | 1.3 | 8 | 1.5 |
| Yunnan | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 2.2 | 12 | 2.3 |
| Tibet | 1 | 0.4 | 3 | 1.3 | 9 | 1.7 |
| **Northwest** | 5 | 2.0 | 15 | 6.7 | 34 | 6.5 |
| Shaanxi | 1 | 0.4 | 11 | 4.9 | 15 | 2.9 |
| Gansu | 2 | 0.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 0.9 |
| Qinghai | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.5 | 5 | 0.9 |
| Ningxia | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.5 | 4 | 0.8 |
| Xinjiang | 2 | 0.8 | 2 | 0.9 | 5 | 0.9 |
| **Total** | 232 | 100.0 | 224 | 100.0 | 520 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: The data on the third and fourth generations is based on Shen Xueming et al., comp., *Zhonggong di shiwujie zhongyang weiyuanhui zhongyang jilü jiancha weiyuanhui weiyuan minglu* [Who's Who of the Members of the Fifteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Fifteenth Central Commission for Discipline Inspection] (Beijing: Zhonggong wenxian chubanshe, 1999), calculated by the author. See also Cheng Li, *China's Leaders: The New Generation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 61–62.

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

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

**Table 5** shows the work experiences of fifth generation leaders during their adolescent years. Of the 389 leaders for whom information about their early work experiences is available, at least 281 (72.2%) were sent-down youths. This number includes rising stars of the fifth generation such as

Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, and Li Yuanchao. Xi Jinping, for example, worked as a farmer and branch party secretary in a village in Yanchuan County in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province between 1969 and 1975. Xi recently stated to the media that his experience in Yan'an as a sent-down youth was a "defining experience" and a "turning point" in his life.[18] The hardships in the countryside were so extreme as to shape the collective memory of the generation.

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

### *Growing Diversity in Political Backgrounds*

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

The diversity of the fifth generation in terms of political socialization is particularly evident when examined in light of the years when fifth generation leaders joined the CCP. **Figure 2** shows the year fifth generation leaders joined the CCP. The criteria for party membership were quite different between the Mao and Deng eras. Those who came from "bad family backgrounds," for example, had very little chance of joining the CCP during the Cultural Revolution.

The fifth generation leaders joined the CCP between 1967 and 1997—a span of 30 years. The final few years of the Cultural Revolution (1973–76) and the early 1980s were two timeframes during which a large number of fifth generation leaders joined the party. The political environments and

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

[19] *Dongfang liaowang zhoukan,* June 26, 2005.

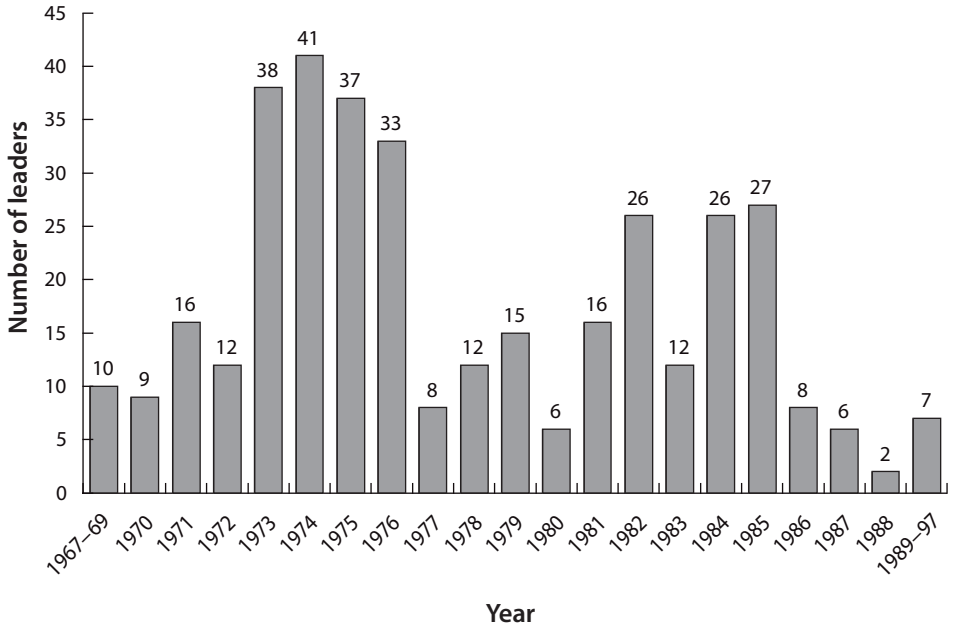
[20] In 1970 the Maoists decided to recruit a small number of students (approximately 40,000) for China's colleges, which had not accepted any students since 1966. All of these new students, however, were recruited from young workers, peasants, and soldiers rather than from high school graduates. Admission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

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

**TABLE 5** Work experiences of fifth generation leaders during their adolescent years

| Work | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| "Sent-down" youth | 281 | 72.2 |
| Born into farmer's family and worked as a farmer | 7 | 1.8 |
| Coal miner | 4 | 1.0 |
| Construction worker or stevedore | 4 | 1.0 |
| Railway worker | 4 | 1.0 |
| Factory worker | 40 | 10.3 |
| Oil field worker | 3 | 0.8 |
| Shop assistant or waiter | 4 | 1.0 |
| Soldier | 42 | 10.8 |
| **Total** | **389** | **100** |

**FIGURE 2** Distribution of fifth generation leaders by year of joining the CCP




ideological orthodoxies of these two periods were drastically different: the former period was dominated by the radicalism of the "Gang of Four," whereas the latter period comprised the least contentious years of Deng's economic reforms. One can reasonably infer that fifth generation leaders who joined the party during these two periods are quite different in political qualifications, class backgrounds, administrative skills, and ideological inclinations. In addition, as noted earlier, 35 high-ranking fifth generation leaders are not members of the CCP.

### *The Famous "Class of 1982"*

As a result of Deng Xiaoping's policy initiatives, in 1977 China resumed the use of college entrance exams. A total of 11.6 million people, ranging in age from late teens to early 30s, registered for the exams in the first and second year. The admission rate, however, was less than 3% for both classes, with only approximately 401,000 being admitted.[22] The ratio of those who took the exam and those who were admitted in 1977 was 29 to 1, compared with a ratio of 2 to 1 in 2007.[23] In March and October of 1978 two classes were enrolled in several hundred universities in China. This famous "Class of 1982" (both groups graduated in 1982) was extraordinary not only for having passed the most competitive college entrance exams in PRC history but also because, as Chinese dissident intellectual Wang Juntao has argued, "this unique group would most likely produce the country's most talented scientists, writers, philosophers, educators, and artists as well as statesmen in the future."[24]

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

Li Keqiang's classmates at the university have pursued drastically different professional careers, some having become leading public intellectuals, political dissidents, independent scholars, religious leaders, or human-rights activists. Notable examples include Wang Shaoguang, Hu Ping, Zhang Wei, Fang Zhiming, and Wang Juntao. Like Li Keqiang, most of these individuals were sent-down youths prior to entering college. Wang Shaoguang later became a distinguished scholar of political science. He taught at Yale University for many years and currently teaches at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Wang is known for his criticism of the side effects of China's market transition and he is a leading voice for social justice and fairness.

Hu Ping was the author of "On Freedom of Speech," one of the first and most comprehensive papers on the democratic movement in the PRC, which shaped intellectual discourse during the

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22 *Zhongguo shibao,* May 15, 2006.

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

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

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

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

Democracy Wall Movement in Beijing in 1979. He later attended a PhD program in political science at Harvard University and served as chairman of the Chinese Alliance for Democracy (1988–1991). Hu is currently chief editor of the overseas dissident journal *Beijing Spring*, which has the mission to promote human rights and democracy in China.

Zhang Wei was once a rising political star in the Chinese leadership of the 1980s. Zhang came from a humble family and during his student years, he became a protégé of Hu Qili, who later became a member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the CCP. Zhang served as the head of the Tianjin Special Economic Zone. In 1985, *Time* magazine identified the 33-year-old Zhang Wei as "one of the youngest of the heirs apparent," probably second in line behind only the then 42-year-old Hu Jintao.[27] Zhang quit his promising political career in the CCP after the 1989 Tiananmen movement and went abroad to obtain a master's degree in public administration at Harvard University and a PhD in economics at Oxford University. Zhang now teaches economics at the University of Cambridge.

Fang Zhiming was one of the writers of the controversial and influential 1988 television miniseries "River Elegy," which urged the Chinese to discard their inward-looking, ethnocentric, traditional agrarian culture and to embrace the "blue ocean"—the symbolic representation of Western civilization and cosmopolitan values. Feng later emigrated to the United States after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, was baptized as a Christian in 1991, and studied at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi from 1992-1995. He is now a priest and a founder of China Soul for Christ Foundation.

Wang Juntao came from the family of a high-ranking PLA general, but later became a leading political activist against the Communist regime. He was jailed twice in China for his political activities, and was labeled one of the "black hands" behind the student movement at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Released from prison in 1996, he enrolled in a PhD degree program at Columbia University in 1997 and recently completed his doctorate degree. Wang is currently the chairman of the California-based Chinese Constitutionalist Association.

In the early 1980s Li Keqiang and his classmates at Beijing University were all enthusiastically engaged in local and school elections. In 1980, for example, Hu Ping was elected to serve as a delegate to the People's Congress at a county level in what was later called the "first free local election" in the PRC. Zhang Wei was the first elected president of the Student Union (*xueshenghui*) of Beijing University after the Cultural Revolution. After being nominated by Wang Juntao, Li Keqiang was elected head of the Executive Committee of the Student Assembly (*changdaihui*), which supervised and oversaw the work of the Student Union.[28] The principle of fair and open elections was a central political issue at Beijing University in the early 1980s. Although some conservative CCP leaders at the time wanted to crack down on campus elections, according to Wang Juntao, Li Keqiang was supportive of open elections.[29] Li is, of course, the only one among the six discussed above who became a fifth generation political leader. His college experience, however, which is both similar to and different from the experience of his peers, is important for an analysis of Li's background, personality, and world-view.

In addition to Li Keqiang, other prominent fifth generation leaders who belong to this famous class of 1982 include Li Yuanchao (Fudan University), Fujian party secretary Lu Zhangong (Harbin

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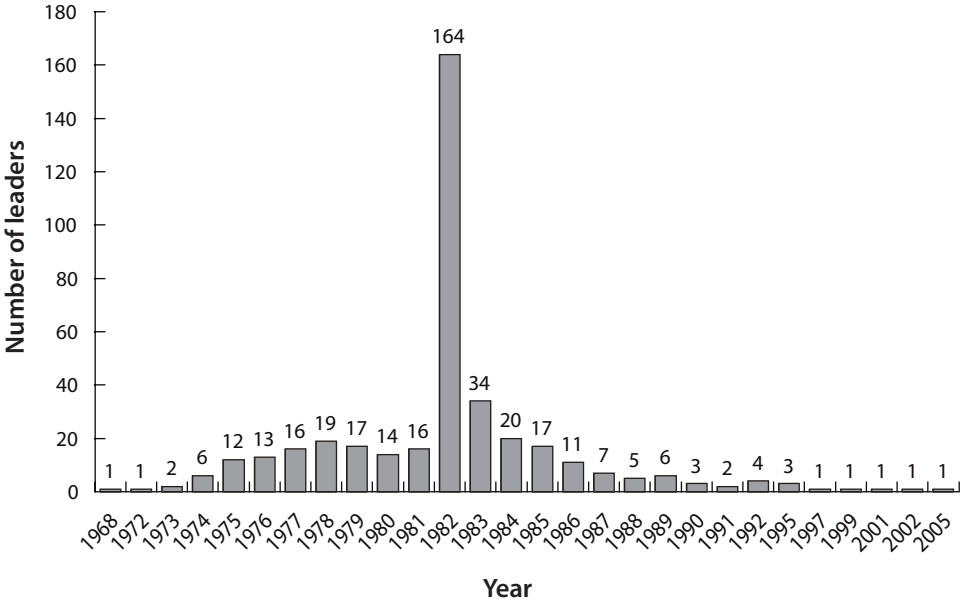
[27] "A Successor Generation," *Time*, September 23, 1985. See also http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,959912-1,00.html.

[28] This is based on Wang, "Beida fengyun jiuyou dianping."

[29] Ibid.

**FIGURE 3** Distribution of college-educated fifth generation leaders by year of graduation including the famous "class of 1982"




Institute of Architectural Engineering), Hubei governor Li Hongzhong (Jilin University), Hunan governor Zhou Qiang (Southwestern Institute of Politics and Law), Ningxia governor Wang Zhengwei (Ningxia University), Shandong governor Jiang Daming (Heilongjiang University), Chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission Shang Fulin (Beijing Institute of Trade), Director of State Taxation Bureau Xiao Jie (People's University), Chairman of China Investment Corporation Lou Jiwei (Tsinghua University), and Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi (Beijing No. 2 Foreign Language Institute). In addition, some fifth generation leaders enrolled in graduate programs by passing the newly re-established graduate school entrance examinations during this same period. Examples include Wang Huning (Fudan University), Director of the *People's Daily* Wang Chen (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), and Director of the State Sports Commission Liu Peng (Chongqing University).

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

### *Postgraduate Degrees and Part-Time Programs*

**Table 6** shows the educational levels of fifth generation leaders. Approximately 394 leaders (73%) received postgraduate degrees, and among them 113 (21%) received PhD degrees. PhD holders

include some of the most prominent figures in the fifth generation, such as Xi Jinping; Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao; Yuan Chunqing, Shaanxi governor; Wang Min, Jilin party secretary; Yu Youjun, vice minister of culture; and Liu Jiayi, auditor general. This is in sharp contrast to the educational levels of fourth generation leaders, who usually completed only an undergraduate degree due to the Cultural Revolution.

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

Most fifth generation leaders earned part-time postgraduate degrees at the Central Party School (CPS).[30] **Table 7** lists the top ten schools at which fifth generation leaders pursued their graduate level studies. A total of 127 leaders attended the CPS, six times more than attended the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)—the educational institution with the second highest number of fifth generation leaders as attendees of its graduate program. Between 1981 and 2006 the CPS produced 266 graduates with PhD degrees and 1,126 graduates with master's degrees.[31] A majority of leaders pursued these degrees on a part-time basis. Nankai University, Jilin University, People's University, and Beijing University—all with a strong reputation in the social sciences and humanities—are also ranked high on the list.

It seems that only a small number of fifth generation leaders attended the graduate schools that are famous for engineering and natural sciences. Tsinghua University, known as China's MIT, is very strong in engineering and was the cradle of China's technocrats in previous generations—producing top leaders such as Zhu Rongji, Yao Yilin, and Song Ping in the third generation and Hu Jintao, Wu Bangguo, and Liu Yandong in the fourth generation. Yet Tsinghua University is not even among the top ten schools attended by fifth generation leaders.[32]

**Table 8** compares the top schools at which the third, fourth, and fifth generation leaders pursued their undergraduate-level studies. Though heavily represented in the leadership of the third and fourth generations (with 93 graduates), Tsinghua University produced only eight fifth generation leaders. Tsinghua's rank in terms of the number of graduates in China's senior leadership fell from number one in the third and fourth generations to number seven in the fifth generation.

Table 8 suggests that the fifth generation graduates of any one particular school will no longer likely dominate the Chinese leadership as graduates of Tsinghua have dominated the third and fourth generations of leadership. Although graduates of Beijing University currently are the highest represented in the Chinese leadership—including prominent figures such as Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao; Zhao Leji, Shaanxi party secretary; Yuan Chunqing; Hu Chunhua, secretary of the

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

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

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

**TABLE 6** Educational levels of fifth generation leaders

| Educational level | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| PhD | 113 | 21.0 |
| Master's degree | 281 | 52.2 |
| Bachelor's degree | 113 | 21.0 |
| Military academy | 9 | 1.7 |
| Junior college | 9 | 1.7 |
| High school | 2 | 0.4 |
| Unknown | 11 | 2.0 |
| **Total** | **538** | **100** |

**TABLE 7** Distribution of schools in which fifth generation leaders pursued their graduate level studies (top 10 schools)

| School | Number of Graduates |
|---|---|
| Central Party School | 127 |
| Chinese Academy of Social Sciences | 20 |
| Nankai University | 13 |
| Jilin University | 12 |
| People's University | 12 |
| Beijing University | 9 |
| China University of Science and Technology | 7 |
| Harbin Institute of Technology | 7 |
| Fudan University | 6 |
| Tongji University | 6 |

Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL); Wang Weiguang, vice president of CASS; and Yi Gang, vice governor of People's Bank—the number of graduates of Beijing University in this generation is much smaller than the number of Tsinghua graduates in the previous two generations. Even more importantly, leaders who graduated from Beijing University constitute a more diverse group and do not have the strong factional ties that the Tsinghua clique did.[33]

### *More Diverse Academic Disciplines and the Decline of Technocrats*

The decrease in the number of Tsinghua graduates in the senior Chinese leadership is also associated with the decline in power and influence of technocrats in present-day China. **Table 9**

[33] Li, "University Networks," 1–32.

**TABLE 8** Comparison of distribution of schools at which third, fourth, and fifth generation leaders pursued undergraduate-level study

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

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

presents the academic specializations, in both undergraduate and graduate programs, of the fifth generation leaders. Although engineering is still ranked first in terms of the number of undergraduate majors among fifth generation leaders, more leaders pursued their graduate studies in the areas of economics (23%), political science (22.2%), and law (11.5%) than in engineering (10.4%).

Fifth generation leaders in this study pool pursued a wide range of academic disciplines. A comparison of academic fields between the fourth and fifth generations of leaders shows the rise of leaders trained in economics, social sciences, and law in the fifth generation.[34] This study defines technocrats as political elites who received their higher education in engineering or the natural sciences. **Figure 4** shows that the percentage of leaders who specialized in these fields decreased from 54% in the fourth generation to 22% in the fifth generation. Meanwhile, the percentage of leaders who majored in economics or management increased from 8% in the fourth generation to 33% in the fifth generation. Finally, the share of leaders who studied the social sciences or law increased from 11% in the fourth generation to 30% in the fifth generation. **Figure 5** further shows both the rapid rise and the rapid decline of technocrats in ministerial and provincial leadership over the past quarter century.

Meanwhile, the percentage of leaders who studied law increased from 3.5% in the fourth generation to 9.3% in the fifth generation. Many prominent leaders in the fifth generation majored in law as undergraduate or graduate students, including Xi Jinping; Li Keqiang; Li Yuanchao;

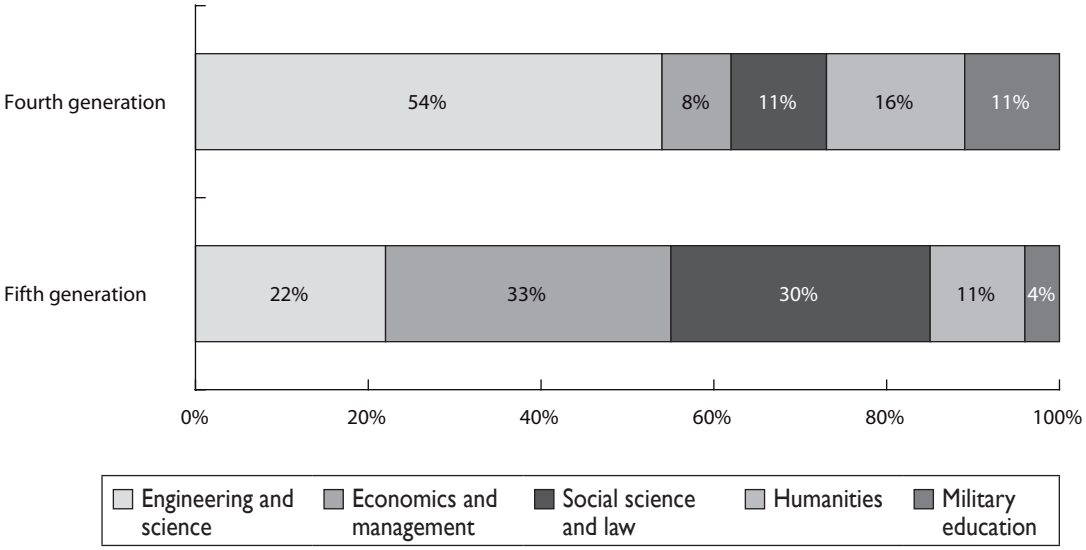
[34] A leader's academic specialization is defined here as the field in which he or she attained the highest level of specialization.

**TABLE 9** Academic fields of fifth generation leaders

| Field | Undergraduate education | | Graduate education | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| **Engineering and science** | 167 | 39.2 | 66 | 18.5 |
| Engineering | 105 | 24.6 | 37 | 10.4 |
| Agronomy/forestry | 19 | 4.5 | 7 | 2.0 |
| Geography | 4 | 0.9 | 3 | 0.8 |
| Biology/genetics | 3 | 0.7 | 4 | 1.1 |
| Chemistry | 4 | 0.9 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Computer science | 4 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 1.4 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Physics | 8 | 1.9 | 7 | 2.0 |
| Medicine | 13 | 3.1 | 4 | 1.1 |
| Architecture | 1 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Economics and management** | 67 | 15.7 | 139 | 39.0 |
| Economics | 46 | 10.8 | 82 | 23.0 |
| Management | 12 | 2.8 | 32 | 9.0 |
| Finance | 7 | 1.6 | 9 | 2.5 |
| Accounting/statistics | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Business administration | 2 | 0.5 | 14 | 3.9 |
| **Social science and law** | 76 | 17.8 | 123 | 34.6 |
| Political science/politics | 56 | 13.1 | 79 | 22.2 |
| Law | 18 | 4.2 | 41 | 11.5 |
| Sociology | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Journalism | 2 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.6 |
| **Humanities** | 98 | 23.0 | 23 | 6.5 |
| Philosophy | 18 | 4.2 | 12 | 3.4 |
| Chinese language and literature | 47 | 11.0 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Foreign language | 15 | 3.5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| History | 16 | 3.8 | 5 | 1.4 |
| Education | 2 | 0.5 | 4 | 1.1 |
| **Military education** | 18 | 4.2 | 5 | 1.4 |
| **Total** | **426** | **100** | **356** | **100** |

Wang Huning; Wu Aiying; Zhou Qiang; Yuan Chunqing; Peng Qinghua, deputy director of the Liaison Office of the PRC Central Government in Hong Kong; Cao Jianming, deputy justice of the Supreme Court; and Qiang Wei, Qinghai party secretary. Over the past decade a law degree has become a valuable credential for aspiring political leaders within the CCP. The future impact of

**FIGURE 4** Comparison of the distribution of academic specializations of fourth vs. fifth generation leaders




SOURCE: The data for the fourth generation is based on Shen, *Zhonggong di shiwujie zhongyang weiyanhui zhongyang julu jiancha weiyuanhui weiyuan minglu.*

the rapidly growing number of leaders trained in law and politics in the Chinese political system deserves great attention.

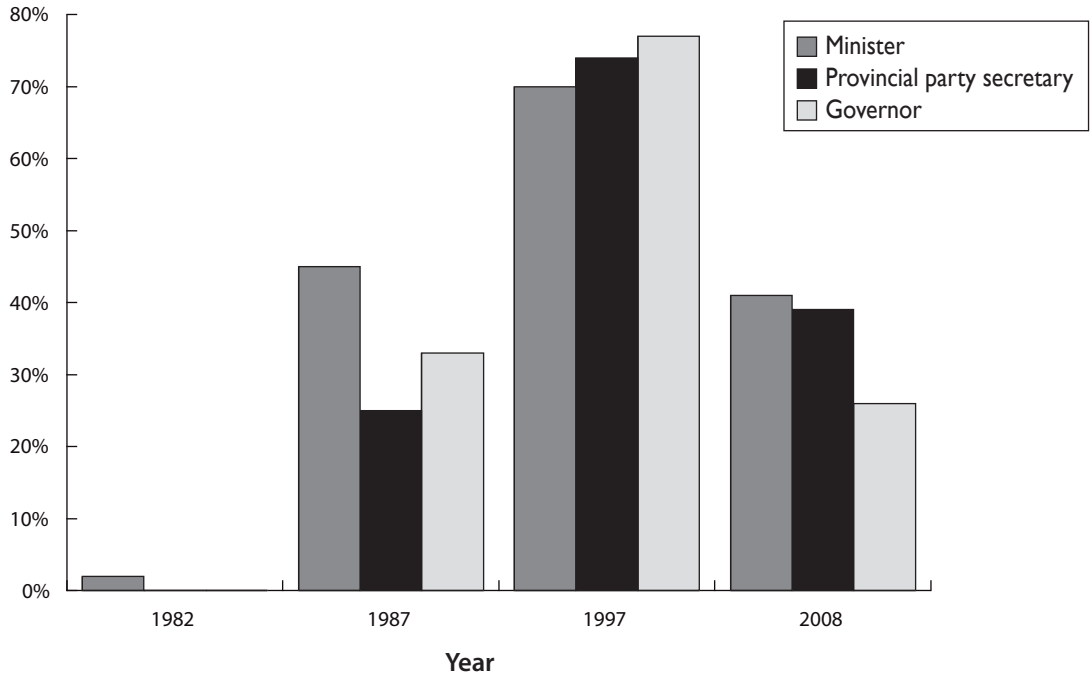
### *Growing Number of Foreign-Educated Returnees*

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

**Table 10** presents an overview of the foreign study experiences of the fifth generation leaders. A total of 82 leaders—accounting for 15% of this study pool—are reported to have studied abroad. Among them, 23 leaders (28%) obtained academic degrees from foreign universities, 52 leaders (63%) studied or worked overseas as visiting scholars for a year or longer, and 7 leaders (9%) participated in month-long study abroad programs. A majority of the 23 leaders who studied in degree programs were enrolled in postgraduate programs, and 16 of these leaders (70%) received PhD degrees.

In addition, a majority of fifth generation leaders with study abroad experience attended schools in Western democratic countries—43% studied in the United States, 15% in England, and 11% in Germany. Also in contrast to third and fourth generation leaders, who usually went to the West to

**FIGURE 5** Changes in technocrat representation in ministerial/provincial leadership posts, 1982–2008




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

study engineering and the natural sciences, fifth generation leaders typically studied economics, social science, and law. For the first time in PRC history leaders with experience studying in the United States have entered the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee. Li Yuanchao and Wang Huning, who are in charge of personnel and propaganda work for the CCP respectively, both studied in the United States as visiting scholars. Li attended a short-term program in public administration at Harvard's Kennedy School, and Wang was a visiting scholar in political science at the University of Iowa and the University of California–Berkeley.

**Table 11** shows the academic fields, schools, countries, and duration of overseas studies of fifth generation leaders who received PhD degrees from study abroad programs. Their academic specializations range widely, including physics, medicine, biology, agronomy, engineering, economics, education, and sociology. They usually received their doctoral degrees from well-known universities in the United States and Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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

Two full ministers in the State Council who are not CCP members—Wan Gang, minister of science and technology, and Chen Zhu, minister of health—both spent many years in the West.

**TABLE 10** Overview of the study abroad experiences of fifth generation leaders

| Study abroad | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Types** | | |
| Degree candidates | 23 | 28.0 |
| Visiting scholar (1 year or longer) | 52 | 63.4 |
| Short-term program (about 3 months) | 7 | 8.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100** |
| **Level (degree holders)** | | |
| PhD | 16 | 69.6 |
| MA | 6 | 26.1 |
| BA | 1 | 4.3 |
| **Total** | **23** | **100** |
| **Country*** | | |
| United States | 42 | 42.0 |
| England | 15 | 15.0 |
| Germany | 11 | 11.0 |
| Canada | 5 | 5.0 |
| France | 5 | 5.0 |
| Japan | 5 | 5.0 |
| Hong Kong | 3 | 3.0 |
| Australia | 2 | 2.0 |
| Singapore | 2 | 2.0 |
| Austria | 1 | 1.0 |
| Belgium | 1 | 1.0 |
| Denmark | 1 | 1.0 |
| Holland | 1 | 1.0 |
| Italy | 1 | 1.0 |
| Ireland | 1 | 1.0 |
| Norway | 1 | 1.0 |
| Russia | 1 | 1.0 |
| South Korea | 1 | 1.0 |
| New Zealand | 1 | 1.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

* Some leaders studied in more than one country. All the countries are counted.

Wan received his PhD in physics from Technische Universität Clausthal in Germany in 1991 and worked as a senior manager at the Audi Company in Germany for over a decade (1991–2002). Chen received his PhD degree in medicine from Université Paris 7 in France in 1989. He is one of the world's leading hematology experts and holds memberships in several prestigious academies,

**TABLE 11** Study abroad experience of highly ranked fifth generation leaders

| Name | Year born | Current position | Degree (year) | Field | School (country) | Duration abroad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wang Gang | 1952 | Minister of Science and Technology | PhD ('86) | Physics | Technische Universität Clausthal (Germany) | 1985–91 |
| Chen Chu | 1953 | Minister of Health | PhD ('87) | Medicine | Paris No. 7 University (France) | 1984–89 |
| Min Weifang | 1950 | Party Secretary of Beijing University, CC Alternate member | PhD ('87) | Education | Stanford University (U.S.) | 1982–88 |
| Zhai Huqu | 1950 | President of China Agricultural Academy, CC Alternate member | PhD ('87) | Biology | The University of Birmingham (UK) | 1984–87 |
| Yi Gang | 1958 | Vice Governor of People's Bank | PhD ('86) | Economics | Illinois University (U.S.) | 1980–94 |
| Sun Laiyan | 1957 | Vice Minister of Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense | PhD ('93) | Physics | Paris No. 6 University (France) | 1987–93 |
| Chen Zhangliang | 1961 | Vice Governor of Guangxi | PhD ('87) | Biology | Washington University St. Louis (U.S.) | 1983–87 |
| Jiao Yong | 1956 | Vice Minister of Water Resources | PhD ('95) | Engineering | Imperial College of London (UK) | 1991–95 |
| Gao Hucheng | 1951 | Vice Minister of Commerce | PhD ('85) | Sociology | Paris No. 7 University (France) | 1982–87 |
| Zhang Laiwu | 1955 | Vice Governor of Ningxia | PhD ('95) | Economics | State University of New York (U.S.) | 1990–95 |
| Zhao Baige | 1952 | Vice Minister of State Population and Family Planning Commission | PhD ('88) | Medicine | Cambridge University (UK) | 1985–89 |
| Zhang Taolin | 1961 | Vice Governor of Jiangsu | PhD ('89) | Agronomy | Bonn University (Germany) | 1986-89 |

including the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World, the United States National Academy of Sciences, and the French Academy of Sciences. The presence and growing power of Western-educated elites in the Chinese leadership should be an important indicator of the openness and the political transformation of the country. It remains to be seen whether those returnees who hold

public offices in both the government and the CCP will help propagate international norms and values as a result of their foreign experiences.

## Intragenerational Diversity: Factional Divisions and Policy Differences

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

One coalition can be identified as the "populist coalition," which is currently led by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao. The core faction of the coalition is the group of leaders who advanced their political careers primarily through the leadership in the CCYL; this group is referred to as *tuanpai*.[35] The other coalition is commonly referred to as the "elitist coalition" and is led by Jiang Zemin, former CCP chief, and Zeng Qinghong, former vice president. The Shanghai Gang at one time constituted the core of the elitist coalition. Because of the declining power and influence of the Shanghai Gang in the past two years, "princelings" have become the core group of the elitist coalition.[36]

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

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

### *Leadership Divided: Tuanpai versus Princelings*

In the newly formed Politburo and Secretariat of the 17th Central Committee, there are now eight members in their 50s. These eight leaders can be equally divided into two groups in terms

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

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

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

**Figure 6** identifies 123 fifth generation leaders, 23% of the study pool, who have had CCYL leadership experiences at the bureau/county level or above. Among them, 84 leaders (69%) served at the CCYL provincial or national level of leadership. Of course, not all leaders who advanced their careers in the CCYL are protégés of Hu Jintao, nor should they necessarily be considered as tuanpai members. For example, Shanghai mayor Han Zheng is often seen as a member of the Shanghai Gang rather than a tuanpai leader despite the fact that he served as secretary of the CCYL in Shanghai. Han's career advancement owes more to his patron-client ties based in Shanghai than to his leadership experience with the CCYL.

Based on this study's definition of tuanpai, 84 leaders (15.6%) in this study can be categorized as officials belonging to this coalition. **Table 12** lists the 22 most prominent tuanpai leaders from the fifth generation. All 22 currently have the rank of either full minister or full governor and are full members of the 17th Central Committee. A majority of these leaders held provincial or national CCYL offices around the same time that Hu Jintao was serving on the CCYL Secretariat (between 1982 and 1985). Although tracing each leader's association with Hu Jintao during that period is difficult, it can be reasonably inferred that most of these individuals have known Hu for over two decades through CCYL work. Many of these tuanpai leaders—including Li Keqiang, Li Yuanchao, Ling Jihua, Zhang Baoshun, Zhang Qingli, Liu Qibao, Yuan Chunqing, and Han Changfu—served as members of the CCYL Central Committee or Secretariat, the two leadership bodies that Hu once headed. Even though Wang Yang served only in the CCYL provincial leadership in Anhui, some believe that Hu played a direct role in Wang's rapid rise.

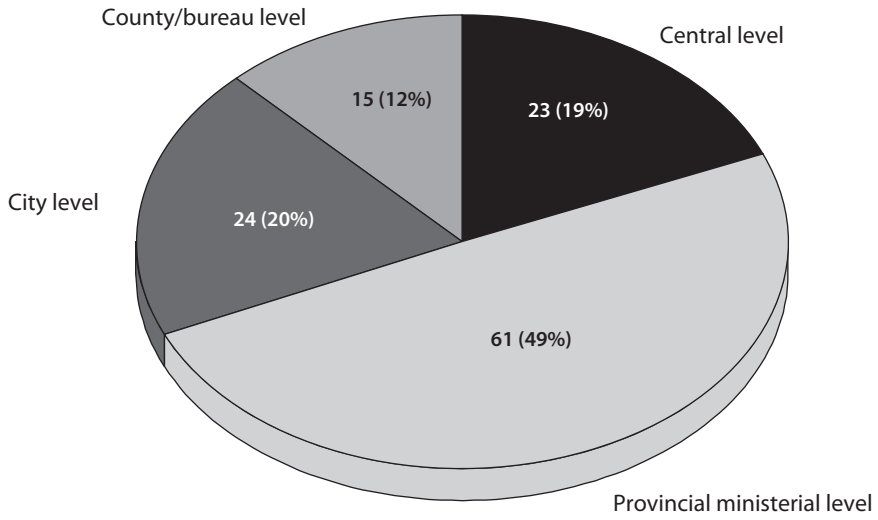
A majority of these tuanpai officials come from humble family backgrounds.[37] Many received a postgraduate education in the fields of politics and law, often at the Central Party School in the 1990s when Hu served as the president of the school. Most possess provincial-level leadership experience, mainly in the inland and northeastern provinces. Among these 22 high-level tuanpai leaders from the fifth generation, only one leader—Jilin governor Han Changfu—has experience in finance, banking, or foreign trade.[38] Most populist faction members instead possess leadership experience in rural work, party organization and discipline, propaganda, and legal affairs rather than in economic administration. Tuanpai leaders therefore must share power with princelings, who constitute a formidable, though probably less cohesive, political faction.

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

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

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

**FIGURE 6** Distribution of tuanpai officials in the fifth generation by the level of leadership in the CCYL




(Zeng Qinghong, Zhou Yongkang, and Yu Zhengsheng) by comparison served in the previous Politburo.[39]

**Table 13** lists the seventeen prominent fifth generation leaders with princeling backgrounds. Important to note is that princelings are not necessarily part of a monolithic organization or a formal network, and thus strong patron-client ties are not common within this coalition. In addition, the political interests of the princelings are not always identical, and infighting often occurs over power and wealth. As an elite group, princelings are far less cohesive than tuanpai. In fact, owing to political affiliations a few prominent leaders with princeling backgrounds—for example, Liu Yandong, Li Yuanchao, and Zhang Qingli—are commonly perceived by the public as tuanpai leaders rather than princelings.

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

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

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

**TABLE 12** Highest-ranked fifth generation leaders with tuanpai (CCYL) backgrounds

| Leader | Year born | Current position | Central Committee status | Factional ties and defining experience in CCYL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Li Keqiang | 1955 | Executive Vice Premier | Politburo Standing Committee member | CCYL Secretariat, 1982–98 |
| Li Yuanchao | 1950 | Director, CCP Organization Department | Politburo member | CCYL Secretariat, 1982–90 |
| Wang Yang | 1955 | Party Secretary, Guangdong | Politburo member | CCYL Anhui Department Secretary, 1982–84 |
| Ling Jihua | 1956 | Director, CCP Central Office | Secretariat member | CCYL Central Committee, 1979–95 (Hu's mishu, part of 1982–85) |
| Wu Aiying | 1951 | Minister of Justice | Full member | CCYL Shandong Secretary, 1982–89 |
| Shen Yueyue | 1957 | Vice Director, CCP Organization Department | Full member | CCYL Ningbo Secretary, Zhejiang Secretary, 1983–93 |
| Yang Chuntang | 1954 | Deputy Minister of Ethnic Affairs Commission | Full member | CCYL Shandong Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1987–92 |
| Liu Peng | 1951 | Director of State Sports Commission | Full member | CCYL Chongqing Secretary, 1985–86 |
| Ji Bingxuan | 1951 | Vice Director, CCP Propaganda Department | Full member | CCYL Henan Deputy Secretary and Secretary, 1987–90 |
| Zhang Qingli | 1951 | Party Secretary, Tibet | Full member | CCYL Central Committee, 1979–86 |
| Zhang Baoshun | 1950 | Party Secretary, Shanxi | Full member | CCYL Central Committee, 1978–93 (Secretariat, 1982–93) |

formidable rivals in the tuanpai faction, princelings have grown more unified as a distinct elite group in recent years.

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

*Table 12 (continued)*

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

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

Also, a large number of princelings listed in Table 13 are military elites. This reaffirms a recent study of China's top military officers.[40] Two princelings have made it into the CMC, including Li Jinai and Wu Shengli. Among the 65 military Central Committee members, at least 12 can be identified as princelings. Just as in the new Politburo, where the rise of civilian princelings caused a good deal of consternation among party officials not similarly blessed with comparably prominent

[40] See Cheng Li and Scott Harold, "China's New Military Elite," *China Security* 3, no. 4 (Autumn 2007): 62-89.

**TABLE 13** Highest-ranking fifth generation leaders with princeling family backgrounds

| Leader | Year born | Current position | Central Committee status | Family background |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Xi Jinping | 1953 | Executive Member of Secretariat | Politburo Standing Committee member | *Father:* Xi Zhongxun, former vice premier, former Politburo member |
| Li Yuanchao | 1950 | Director of the CCP Organization Department | Politburo member | *Father:* Li Gancheng, former vice mayor of Shanghai |
| Zhang Qingli | 1952 | Party Secretary of Tibet | Full member | *Uncle:* Zhang Wannian, former vice chairman of the Central Military Commission |
| Zhang Youxia | 1950 | Commander of Shenyang Military Region | Full member | *Father:* Zhang Zongxun, PLA general |
| Yang Yuanyuan | 1950 | Deputy Director, State Administration of Work Safety | Full member | *Father:* Yang Yingdong, former head of Taiwan Affairs Office |
| Liu Yuan | 1951 | Commissar of PLA Military Academy | Full member | *Father:* Liu Shaoqi, former PRC president |
| Wang Yi | 1953 | Director of Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council | Full member | *Father-in-law:* Qian Jiadong, Zhou Enlai's foreign affairs assistant |
| Wang Guangya | 1950 | Director of State Foreign Affairs Office | Alternate member | *Father-in-law:* Chen Yi, former minister of Foreign Affairs |
| Luo Zhijun | 1951 | Governor of Jiangsu | Alternate member | *Father:* Luo Wen, former PLA lt. general |
| Du Yuxin | 1953 | Party Secretary of Harbin | Alternate member | *Father:* Du Xianzhong, former vice governor of Heilongjiang |
| Liu Yuejun | 1954 | Chief-of-Staff, Lanzhou Military Region | Alternate member | *Father:* former PLA lt. general |
| Ding Yiping | 1951 | Chief-of-Staff, PLA Navy | Alternate member | *Father:* Ding Qiusheng, former commissar of North Sea Fleet |
| Ai Husheng | 1951 | Chief-of-Staff, Chengdu Military Region | Alternate member | *Father:* Ai Fulin, former PLA lt. general |
| Lou Jiwei | 1950 | Chairman, China Investment Corporation | Alternate member | *Father:* former vice minister-level leader |
| Zhang Mao | 1954 | Vice Minister of National Development and Reform Com. | None | *Father-in-law:* Gu Mu, former vice premier |
| Zhang Xiaoqiang | 1952 | Vice Minister of National Development and Reform Com. | None | *Father:* Zhang Yuan, former vice minister |
| Bu Xiaolin | 1958 | Vice Governor of Neimenggu | None | *Father:* Buhe, former vice chair of National People's Congress |

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

parental plumage, the rise of a cohort of princeling military elites poses the potential to fragment China's fighting forces along the fault line of nepotism and privilege.[41] If factional struggles break out into the open in the future, it is conceivable that China's military princelings might side with the CCP's civilian princelings, owing to their common identity and shared political interests. The prevalence of princelings in the military, therefore, may prove crucial to the outcome of any such future intra-elite contention.

Third, leaders with princeling backgrounds usually do not fare well in elections. Princelings' privileged life experiences and "helicopter-style" rapid upward career advancements have elicited vocal criticism and opposition—not only from the Chinese public but also from the delegates to the Party Congress. The strongest evidence of opposition to nepotism in the selection of Central Committee members is that many candidates on the ballot for the Central Committee were not elected despite (or more likely because of) their high-ranking family backgrounds. Xi Jinping, Bo Xilai, and Chen Yuan, for example, were on the ballot for membership on the 14th Central Committee in 1992, but none were elected.[42] Likewise, in the election for the alternate members of the 15th Central Committee in 1997 Xi Jinping received the lowest number of votes among the 151 alternate members elected. Wang Qishan and Liu Yandong were also among the bottom ten in terms of the number of votes received. Wang Qishan, however, has improved his previously poor public image by demonstrating remarkable leadership in handling the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003.

### *Broadening Policy Platforms: Elitist Xi versus Populist Li*

Paralleling the diversifying political career paths and increasingly dynamic factional contention among the fifth generation leaders is the broad transformation of Chinese society after three decades of market reforms. On the one hand, China has a fast-growing entrepreneurial class and a very dynamic private sector. According to one official Chinese source, there are approximately 50 million entrepreneurs in China who control a total of ten trillion yuan in assets and contribute one-third of the country's revenue. China's major state-owned enterprises also have a huge stake in the country's economic development, foreign trade, and global expansion. It should be noted that a large number of fifth generation leaders who were born in the 1960s come from business backgrounds as CEOs of China's flagship enterprises. Also interestingly, children of the third generation leaders such as Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, and Zhu Rongji and fourth generation leaders such as Hu Jintao, Wen Jiaobao, and Zeng Qinghong have pursued careers in the business sector, especially in foreign joint ventures.

On the other hand, many socio-economic groups who have lagged behind or been marginalized as a result of rapid market transition—such as farmers, migrant laborers, the urban poor, and retired workers—are becoming increasingly active in their demands for socio-economic justice. The rising frustration of these groups is evident in the growing number of mass protests in the country in recent years.

Arguably, more today than during any previous period in PRC history, both elite interest groups and vulnerable social groups are cognizant of how to advance and protect their individual economic interests. These divergent socio-economic groups are increasingly seeking representation

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41 Li and Harold, "China's New Military Elite," 77. Also see, Cheng Li, "China's Most Powerful "Princelings": How Many Will Enter the New Politburo?" *China Brief* 7, no. 19 (October 2007): 2-5.

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

from political elites in the national leadership who will give voice to their concerns and protect their interests. The competing agendas of these groups at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum, coupled with the divergent interests of the coastal and inland provinces, have fueled the emergence of a more collective Chinese leadership seeking to broaden policy choices to meet new socio-economic environments. The recent amendment to the PRC Constitution establishing property rights, as well as the economic goal of the 17th Party Congress to quadruple the GDP per capita by 2020, primarily serves the interests of urban entrepreneurs. In contrast, the populist policy of waiving taxes on farmers, the call for establishing a basic health care system in the countryside, and the platform of building a harmonious society reflect the concerns of vulnerable socio-economic groups.

The policy differences between the elitist coalition and the populist coalition, between the princeling and tuanpai factions, and between Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang are as significant as the contrasts in their socio-political backgrounds. Xi and Li, the two leading contenders for top leadership posts in 2012, have strikingly different policy priorities. Xi's enthusiasm for continued private sector development and market liberalization is well known to the Chinese public and the international business community. Not surprisingly, his primary policy concerns include promoting economic efficiency, attaining a high rate of GDP growth, and integrating China further into the world economy. Though recognizing the necessity for accelerating China's inland development, Xi favors "continued rapid growth of the coastal provinces as the means to resolving the remaining development challenges through a process of trickle down."[43]

…more today than during any previous period in PRC history, both elite interest groups and vulnerable social groups are cognizant of how to advance and protect their individual economic interests.

In contrast to Xi, Li is noted for his concern for the unemployed, his efforts to improve the availability of housing, and his desire to develop a rudimentary social safety net, beginning with the provision of basic health care. Li's emphasis on employment, for example, has been recognized since his tenure as party secretary in Liaoning in late 2004. In 2007 Li promised that "if all the members of a family were jobless, the government would offer them employment within twenty days."[44] For Li reducing economic disparities is thus a more urgent policy priority than enhancing economic efficiency.[45]

An enthusiastic supporter of his mentor Hu Jintao's populist policy initiatives to produce more balanced regional development, Li will most likely push for the greater development of China's northeast region in the years to come. Li also appears strongly inclined toward improving relations with Tokyo in order to attract foreign investment to the northeast region from Japan. Leaders

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[43] Anthony Saich, "China's New Economic Leadership Team," China Dialogues Network, Hong Kong, 2008.

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

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

of three northeastern provinces recently pushed for the establishment of an East Asia free trade zone, which would include northeast China, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN. Interest in this plan probably explains why Li has met frequently with Japanese leaders in recent years and why the Japanese media holds a generally favorable view of him.[46] Li's relatively close ties with Japan contrast with Xi's publicized good relationship with prominent U.S. leaders, such as Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson.[47] Whether this contrast will lead to different foreign policy preferences remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, these diverging policy priorities will likely grow in importance as Xi and Li consider the questions of how China should respond to growing foreign pressure for renminbi appreciation, how China should deal with issues such as global warming and environmental degradation, and what regions and cities should be considered as the engines of the country's next phase of development. At stake in the competition between Xi and Li therefore is much more than sheer political power. Important to note, however, is that neither Xi nor Li has any major achievements to date. Although belonging to strong factions in the fifth generation leadership, both Xi and Li are still quite weak as individual leaders. Compared with the highest-ranking fourth generation leaders such as Hu Jintao, Zeng Qinghong, and Wen Jiabao, who are all known for their brilliance in political compromise and consensus-building, Xi and Li are much less impressive—both have yet to prove their leadership skills. China's political and economic future thus may hinge on whether these two frontrunners of the fifth generation, and the two competing coalitions to which Xi and Li belong, succeed at working together.

## Diversity in Values and World-Views

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

In recent years, however, Chinese political leaders have become somewhat more accessible to the Chinese public, specifically in terms of the willingness of these leaders to discuss and explain their views and policies. For example, newly-appointed cabinet ministers, provincial governors, and provincial party secretaries have appeared singly on a prime time national news program on Chinese Central Television (CCTV). Many leaders have also participated in live radio call-in programs and conducted interviews with Chinese newspapers and magazines. The increasing

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

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

transparency of individual leaders' views is probably related most directly to the fact that in recent years China's demographic and socio-economic challenges, as well as the country's strategic interests in a rapidly changing world, have been thoughtfully discussed among public intellectuals and policymakers.[48]

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

Much evidence suggests that fifth generation leaders share some basic views owing to common formative experiences. The widespread ideological disillusionment that members of the lost generation experienced during the Cultural Revolution has tended to make fifth generation leaders more pragmatic and less dogmatic than their predecessors. None of the rising stars of the fifth generation appears to prioritize pursuing an ideological platform on either the domestic or foreign policy fronts. With regard to U.S.-China relations, most fifth generation leaders do not seem to exhibit any fundamental ideological differences. The ideological conflicts between the United States and China are to a great extent less important today than in the past. As Henry Kissinger has observed, China today does not have an ideology that is fundamentally hostile to American values.[49]

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

Though Chinese nationalism is rising—perhaps most noticeably among young leaders—this does not necessarily mean that China intends to take an aggressive stand toward the United States, Japan, or Taiwan. A radical foreign policy generally requires a radical leader, and no such leader is likely to stride onto the stage in Chinese elite politics now or in the foreseeable future. Like their predecessors, fifth generation leaders will be firm on issues such as the independence of Taiwan or Tibet. With a nationalism that is largely defensive in nature, however, the fifth generation leadership will also likely avoid adopting provocative measures on these sensitive issues. The political survival of the CCP is the most important consideration for this new generation of leaders. Although fifth generation leaders will probably be more confident than their predecessors in responding to international challenges and crises, members of this generation cannot afford to be arrogant. With China's neighbors—namely Japan, Russia, the Southeast Asian countries, and India—all concerned over Beijing's growing power, the fifth generation is likely to remain relatively cautious at a time when China's foreign security environment is increasingly turbulent.

Because of the strong Western influences on Chinese society in the 1980s when many fifth generation leaders were attending college, and because some of these future leaders later received educations in the West, the fifth generation has been exposed far more to Western ideas and values than earlier generations. Consequently, the fifth generation tends to have a better understanding of the West than did the third and fourth generations. This does not necessarily mean that the fifth generation's outlook is pro-West or pro-United States; ultimately fifth generation leaders

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

[49] Henry A. Kissinger, "No Room for Nostalgia," *Newsweek*, June 29, 1998, 51.

are pragmatic Chinese nationalists who have ascended within a system that requires paying close attention to the defense of national interests. As such their thinking will likely be outward-looking but not necessarily globally oriented. These leaders tend to be cynical regarding the moral superiority of the West, resentful of what they view as U.S. arrogance, and skeptical of U.S. welcoming attitudes toward a strong and stable China. Having interest in dialogue with the United States only if an "equal dialogue" (*pingdeng duihua*), the fifth generation leadership will likely reject lectures from the United States on how to behave in the modern world.

### *Contrasting Outlooks on Political Democracy and Economic Globalization*

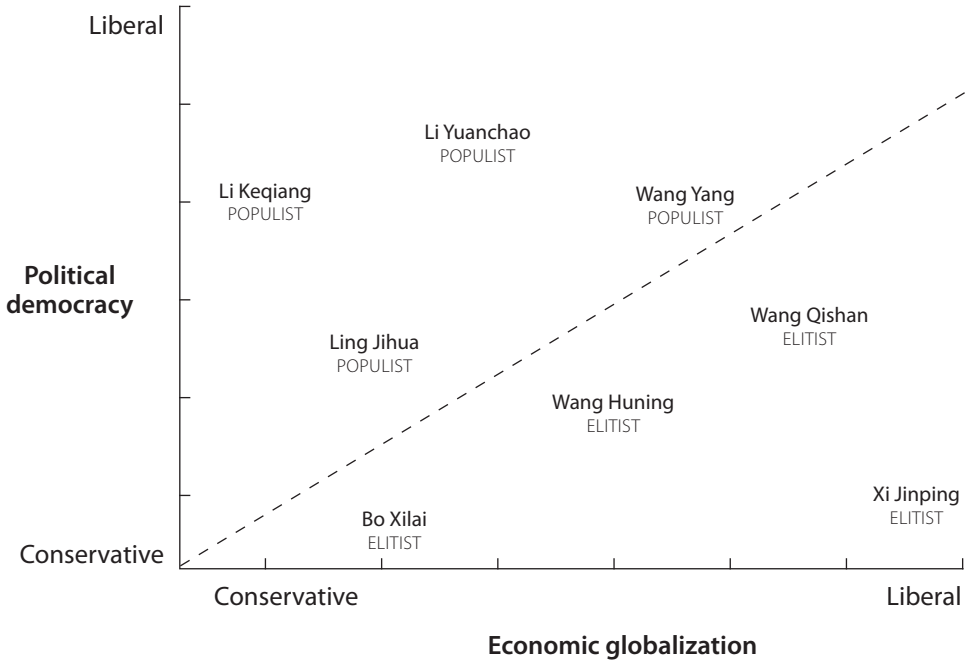
Perhaps paradoxically, the most prevalent value fifth generation leaders hold is tolerance for diversity. As discussed earlier in the article, intragenerational differences serve to reinforce diversity in the values and world-views of these leaders. Dynamic factional politics, which are particularly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

**Figure 7** presents a heuristic diagram exploring the value orientations of top fifth generation leaders on two crucial axes: political democracy and economic globalization. The positions of the leaders shown in this diagram are based on a selective sampling of these leaders' most important speeches and conduct relating to these two broad issues over the past six years. For example, with respect to political democracy, the diagram combines these leaders' views and public statements on inner-party elections, local elections, rule of law, freedom of the media, freedom of religion, and the role of both NGOs and civil society. On economic policy the leaders were compared on the basis of their views regarding employment, the construction of a social safety net, foreign trade and investment, the importance of pursuing economic equality, low-income housing, internal migration, property rights, and taxation. The diagram also draws on the assessments of two dozen Chinese scholars and members of prominent think-tanks whom the author recently interviewed.

The diagram illustrates that the fifth generation of leaders is quite diverse in its views on political democracy and economic globalization—all four quadrants have representatives among the most prominent leaders of the fifth generation. In general, however, leaders of the populist coalition are more interested than their elitist coalition counterparts in promoting political democratization—defined here mainly in terms of multiple-candidate contests in both inner-party or low-level elections. At the same time populists tend to be less enthusiastic about economic globalization than elite leaders. This difference is not surprising. Populist leaders are frequently more effective in addressing issues such as social fairness and distributive justice and are thus far less scared than princelings by the prospect of elections. On the issues of economic globalization and market liberalization, however, populists often lack both professional expertise and experience and are thus more sensitive than elitists to the side effects of market reforms and the possible negative impact of foreign trade in terms of increasing economic disparities and unemployment.

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

**FIGURE 7** Value orientation of key fifth generation leaders




Li Yuanchao seems to understand that China's political and administrative reforms to date have not adequately enabled the political system to adapt to a rapidly changing socio-economic environment. He recently criticized the mentality of some leaders who are "obsessed with stability" (*taiping guan*) and who refuse to try new political experiments.[50] Li believes that this propensity toward stasis, although seemingly more likely to produce stability, is actually more likely to cause instability, as a focus on "going slow" and preserving the status quo might lead cadres to miss opportunities to effectively prevent more serious crises. According to Li, the problem is not that Chinese leaders lack wisdom or ideas but rather that these leaders need more courage to pursue "bolder reforms."[51]

Since becoming party secretary of Guangdong at the end of 2007 Wang Yang has claimed that he wants to make the province the frontier of China's new wave of "thought emancipation" (*sixiang jiefang*).[52] A Hong Kong newspaper noted that Wang used the phrase "thought emancipation" four times in his inauguration speech and 22 times in the first provincial party committee meeting. In contrast, Zhang Dejiang, Wang's predecessor, hardly ever used this phrase during his tenure in Guangdong.[53] According to Wang, the principal development objective for Guangdong is no longer economic growth but rather political development.

Only time will tell what Li hopes to accomplish through his "bolder reforms," what Wang means by "thought emancipation," and whether either leader will have the opportunity to play a larger

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

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

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

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

role in the higher echelons of leadership in the next decade. The restraints placed on top leaders by the system of collective leadership may encourage Li and Wang to reach out to the general public for support. Given the absence of well-established institutions for facilitating public participation in the political system, fifth generation leaders may find it challenging to resolve instances of policy deadlock without appealing to mass public opinion.

### *Final Thoughts*

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

The competition between these coalitions, however, could just as easily turn ugly, especially at a time when China is confronting so many daunting demographic, socio-economic, and political challenges. Fifth generation leaders, including Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, seem less capable of engaging in deal-making and consensus-building than their fourth generation predecessors (such as Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and Zeng Qinghong). Furthermore, China's poor international image has increasingly become a major liability for the country's development and security, as is evident from the recent protests over Tibet and the Beijing Olympics. The fifth generation will also face a daunting challenge in dealing with rising ultranationalism in the PRC. Although it may be argued that the fifth generation grew sensitive to and even distrustful of ideological extremism and nationalist fervor during the Cultural Revolution, China's new leaders have not yet demonstrated the requisite skills and tactics for effectively handling the so-called double-edged sword of popular nationalism.

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

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# Prosperity's Children: Generational Change and Japan's Future Leadership

*J. Patrick Boyd & Richard J. Samuels*

**J. PATRICK BOYD** is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a research associate at Waseda University. He has published his work in *Policy Studies* and *Ronza* and can be reached at <jpboyd@mit.edu>.

**RICHARD J. SAMUELS** is Ford International Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His most recent book is *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (2007). Dr. Samuels can be reached at <samuels@mit.edu>.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study measures generational differences in the views of Japanese legislators across three key areas of Japan's political discourse—economic policy, security policy, and cultural issues related to right-wing nationalism. The study then explores the policy implications of these differences through three plausible midterm scenarios.

## MAIN FINDINGS

The study of generational differences provides only a limited explanation for the dynamics of Japanese politics. (1) Generational differences are most significant in domestic economic policy, where the eldest cohort favors maintaining the institutions of Japanese-style capitalism more than both younger cohorts. (2) Although the youngest cohort favors more muscular security policies than do the elder cohorts, only one instance of this generational difference proves statistically significant. (3) Even though there are no statistically significant differences between generations on cultural issues related to right-wing nationalism—an unexpected finding in itself—that the midcareer cohort, which is the primary object of this study, is more progressive than the other cohorts in this area is surprising.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Given that generational differences in two of the three most salient dimensions of Japanese politics are statistically significant in only a few instances, the findings of this study do not support expectations for impending policy transformation based on generational change.
- Japanese leaders are likely to continue trying to reform the domestic economy, especially in areas such as fiscal policy and public works.
- U.S. and Japanese alliance managers should expect continued support from Tokyo for enhanced Japanese roles and missions over the medium term despite an increasing number of questions over U.S. motives and intentions.
- Because the range of security and economic policy preferences is less extreme than is sometimes presumed, U.S. policymakers should not overreact when Japanese leaders question U.S. policies.
- Barring an unforeseen event, the study finds no evidence that right-wing nationalism in Japan will become a major problem for U.S.-Japan relations.

A new generation of politicians will rise to occupy the highest positions of political leadership in Japan over the next five to fifteen years. In the course of this transition these future leaders will face challenges both new and old. On the one hand, they will need to navigate a political landscape in which many traditional "paths to power"—the stepping stones in career trajectories leading to the highest party and government posts—appear to have been undermined by over a decade of electoral, campaign finance, and party reforms; by the development of a nascent two-party system; and by increased volatility in voting patterns among the electorate. On the other hand, these new leaders will be called on to deal with difficult issues long on the national agenda, such as constitutional revision, the pressing need to reform government spending practices, and demands from both home and abroad for Japan to assume a more activist security posture. How will members of this new generation respond to this changed—and still changing—political environment? Will they cohere as an identifiable group with shared values and preferences? Will they fragment into different policy camps due to fundamental differences in political orientations? Will the new distribution of values and preferences differ from that of the generation currently in power?

In this study we consider whether generational change spells political change for Japan. Drawing on Diet member survey data and elite interviews, we examine the preferences of over 450 of the 480 members of Japan's House of Representatives (HOR) in order to gauge the policy views of those who will come to lead Japan over the next fifteen years and compare them to the views held by their older and younger age cohorts. We find that however much change is afoot, much continuity remains in the distribution of policy preferences among Japanese elites—and that party affiliation is consistently more important than generational location in defining this distribution. Generational differences appear strongly significant in economic policy, where the younger generations are clearly less supportive of the institutions of Japanese-style capitalism than the older generation. In security policy, however, although the youngest cohort's enthusiasm for strengthening Japan's defense capabilities distinguishes this generation on many important issues—including whether to reinterpret the constitution to allow Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense—no significant divisions among the three generations are apparent. Finally, in what may be our most surprising finding, the sides in Japan's "culture war" over history and traditional values do not appear to be drawn along generational lines. In sum, generational differences matter more on economic policy issues, less on security, and almost not at all on cultural issues.

We begin the discussion with a review of the literature on political generations in order to clarify our theoretical assumptions and methodological approach. We then develop generational classifications for postwar Japan and map the contemporary political discourse to provide context for the policy dimensions examined. In the remainder of the paper, we focus on the midcareer cohort, first comparing the members of this cohort with their younger and elder colleagues and then considering what promising figures from this key group might bring to future leadership. We conclude by assessing what our findings might mean for policymaking in several midterm scenarios.

## Theory and Methodology

### *Theoretical Assumptions*

The concept of political generation is intuitive but at the same time deceptively complex. Though theorists have proposed several different models for explaining how generations shape political change, two are dominant: the experiential model and the maturation model.[1] First offered by Karl Mannheim in 1928, the experiential model is still used most widely.[2] Mannheim suggests that political values formed by particular historical experiences become an enduring part of a youth's intellectual orientation. Yet contemporaneity is not a sufficient condition for the formation of a political generation. A group of similarly aged individuals becomes politically relevant only when "endowed…with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process"—that is, when such individuals also experience the same historical events.[3] Mannheim refers to these events as "crystallizing agents."[4] When shared crystallizing agents are absent there will be greater diversity of "generational units" within the same cohort. In Mannheim's view distinctive politically relevant generations are more likely to form in times of rapid social change:

> Whether a new generational style emerges every year, every thirty, every hundred years, or whether it emerges rhythmically at all depends entirely on the trigger action of the social and cultural process.[5]

The maturation (or "life cycle") model is often associated with S.N. Eisenstadt's structural-functional model of individual development in a stable society.[6] In Eisenstadt's view values change as individuals age. The demands of adult life temper youthful rebelliousness, with adult roles shaping new social and political orientations. Eisenstadt sees the smoothly functioning society as one that allocates roles in part on the basis of age. Political orientations are thus temporal in such a society. Although initially formed as a response to an established order, political orientations change as youths adjust to adult society. Lipset and Ladd trace the intellectual history of this model, and find evidence of it in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and in the essays of Max Weber.[7]

There have been relatively few studies of political generations in Japan. Kenneth Pyle has analyzed the Meiji generation of young leaders and identified how this generation both instigated political change and inspired social and intellectual trends.[8] In a longitudinal study of the careers

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[1] For a review of the full range of approaches, see Richard J. Samuels, ed., *Political Generations and Political Development* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1977); and Richard G. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart, "Political Generations," *Research in Political Sociology*, volume 4, ed. Richard G. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1989): 281–319.

[2] Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *From Karl Mannheim*, 2nd edition, ed. Kurt H. Wolff, (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993), 351–95. For recent comparative applications, see Bruno Wanrooij, "Youth, Generation Conflict, and Political Struggle in Twentieth-Century Italy," *European Legacy* 4, no. 1 (1999): 72–88; and Olena Nikolayenko, "The Revolt of the Post Soviet Generation: Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine," *Comparative Politics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 169–88.

[3] Mannheim, "Problem of Generations," 79.

[4] Ibid., 365, 385.

[5] Ibid., 385.

[6] S.N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956). For application and elaboration of this model, see Richard A. Settersten, Jr., and Karl Ulrich Mayer, "The Measurement of Age, Age Structuring, and Life Course," *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 233–61; and Michael J. Shanahan, "Pathways to Adulthood in Changing Societies: Variability and Mechanisms in Life Course Perspective," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 667–92.

[7] W.M. Lipset and E.C. Ladd, Jr., "The Political Future of Activist Generations," in *The New Pilgrims: Youth Protest in Transition,* eds. Philip G. Altbach and Robert S. Laufer (New York: David McKay, 1972), 63–84. See also Richard G. Braungart, "The Sociology of Generations and Student Politics," *Journal of Social Issues* 30, no.2 (1974): 31–54; Catherine R. Cooper and Jill Denner, "Theories Linking Culture and Psychology: Universal and Community-Specific Processes," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49 (1998): 559–84; Richard A. Settersten, Jr. and Karl Ulrich Mayer, "The Measurement of Age, Age Structuring, and Life Course," *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 233–61; and Shanahan, "Pathways to Adulthood in Changing Societies."

[8] Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885–1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

and political orientations of radical students in postwar Japan, Ellis Krauss provides evidence for the usefulness of the experiential model, especially for analyzing the most highly politicized members of his sample.[9] Through an examination of Japanese survey data Nobutaka Ike suggests that more than one variety of generational change prevails.[10] More recently Tanaka Aiji and Clyde Wilcox have compared political generations at the mass level in the United States and Japan.[11]

There is anecdotal evidence in Japan to support both the experiential and the life cycle models. For example, the Japanese media commonly refers to the "Taisho," "Showa," and "Heisei" generations—or to "prewar" and "postwar" generations—each a notionally different experiential group.[12] Likewise a 2001 survey on Japanese attitudes toward the reliability of the national pension system yielded results consistent with the life cycle model by showing how confidence in the system decreased with age.[13]

In this study we follow convention and focus our analysis on Mannheim's experiential model. In part because we find only limited support for the life cycle model, but also because we do not have the data necessary to test each model fully, the article will highlight maturation effects only when suggested by the data.

## *Data and Methods*

This project combines elements of two distinct research programs: the study of political elites and the study of political generations.[14] In work on democratic societies, students of elite politics have tended to rely on semi-structured interviews and on analysis of legislative voting records, while students of generational politics have relied largely on analysis of polling data or focus groups designed to be representative of national populations. In applying the political generations framework to the study of Japanese political elites we have adopted a hybrid approach. On the one hand, the study taps into the rich vein of data captured in the *Asahi Shimbun*-Tokyo University Elite Survey (ATES) to map an issue space for nearly all members of the HOR. On the other hand, we also conducted interviews with both Japanese academics and politicians to gather background information on HOR members and place the study's survey findings in context.

Additionally, we developed a database on the 480 HOR members elected in September 2005 (the most recent election) in order to comprehensively explore the rising generation of leadership. The database collected not only basic demographic information—such as age and gender—but also information on each member's background, including family, education, and pre-Diet career.[15] We

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[9] Ellis S. Krauss, *Japanese Radicals Revisited: Student Protest in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[10] Nobutaka Ike, "Economic Growth and Intergenerational Change in Japan," *American Political Science Review* 67, no. 4 (December 1973): 1194–203.

[11] Tanaka Aiji and Clyde Wilcox, "Beikoku yoron chosa no doko to Nichi-Bei kankei" [Trends in U.S. Opinion Surveys and U.S.-Japan Relations], in *Amerika no tagenteki henka to Nippon* [America's Multidimensional Changes and Japan], ed. Miyamoto Seigen (Tokyo: Dobunkan, 1993).

[12] Examples include "Posuto Kaifu de Miyazawa, Watanabe-shi 'Taisho sedai no seiken wo'" [Miyazawa, Watanabe and a Post-Kaifu Government by the Taisho Generation], Nihon Keizai Shimbun, March 19, 1991, 2; and "92-nen zenhan no seikai wo tenbo—henshuiin zadankai" [Editorial Staff Roundtable Discussion: Surveying the Political World for the First Half of 1992], *Asahi Shimbun,* January 16, 1992, 5.

[13] Tanaka Aiji, *"Seijiteki Shinrai to Sedaikan Gyappu"* [Political Trust and the Generation Gap], *Keizai Kenkyu* 53, no.3 (July 2002): 213–25. Important to note is that Tanaka is skeptical that this intergenerational difference is actually the result of a life cycle effect. As the panel data required to rule out the life cycle hypothesis is not available in this case, however, we cite the survey here only as a potentially illustrative example.

[14] For examples of work on political elites, see Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976); and Sidney Verba and Steven Kelman, eds., *Elites and the Idea of Equality: A Comparison of Japan, Sweden, and the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); and Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[15] This information was taken from the following Diet guides: Seisakujiho, *Seikan Yoran* [Handbook of Politicians and Bureaucrats] (Tokyo: Seisakujihosha, 2005 and 2007); and Kokusei Joho Center, *Kokkai Giin Yoran* [Handbook of Diet Members] (Tokyo: Kokusei Joho Center, 2007).

then added data on each politician's electoral situation, including the type of seat held (single-member district (SMD) or proportional representation (PR)), the level of urbanization in the home district (if an SMD seat), and the number of times elected.[16] The database also recorded factional affiliations for the 296 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members.[17] Finally, to assess the policy views of individual members we added their responses to the ATES survey.[18] The survey was administered to all candidates prior to the 2005 election—with a response rate of more than 94% (452 of 480) among the eventual winners—and asked respondents to provide views in a variety of policy areas, ranging from short-term political issues to long-term institutional matters. In total the survey contained ten multi-part questions covering security and foreign policy and domestic economic policy as well as social and cultural issues.

…the study is primarily concerned with understanding the political generations or generational units that may exist among current political elites.

Assembling the data in this way enabled us to analyze the policy views of individual politicians in a variety of dimensions, including partisanship, factional affiliation, and (for the purposes of this study) generational cohort. This approach also facilitated the selection of candidates who met established standards for prospective leaders. We conducted in-depth interviews with four of the Diet representatives who responded to the survey. In virtually all cases the opinions these representatives expressed were consistent with their survey responses, giving us confidence in the validity of the survey overall. On the whole this hybrid method has provided insights into that ever-elusive quarry, "the next generation of leadership." As with any methodological approach, however, this method involves trade-offs.

First, although we considered previous work on political generations in the general public when developing the boundaries of our generational analysis, we did not examine generational effects among the broader population in the study. Instead, the study is primarily concerned with understanding the political generations or generational units that may exist among current political elites.

Second, we have limited our analysis to politicians. In so doing we do not mean to imply that members of the national bureaucracy or of important interest groups—such as Keidanren (business), Rengo (labor), or the Jinja Honcho (religion)—play no role in shaping national policy. As the long-standing debate over "who governs" in Japan has made clear, these and other actors in civil society influence political decisionmaking.[19] Recent work on Japanese policymaking, however,

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[16] Some basic electoral information was included in the ATES survey data, including district type and whether the member was a winner in a single-member district (SMD), was only on the proportional representation (PR) list, or was a dual-listed candidate who ended up with a PR seat. Sugawara Taku of Tokyo University calculated the level of urbanization for each of the 300 SMDs and his findings are available at http://freett.com/sugawara_taku/data/2003did.html. All other data is from *Seikan Yoran* or *Kokkai Giin Yoran.*

[17] Faction affiliations as they stood at the end of September 2005 and the end September 2007 were taken from *Seikan Yoran.*

[18] The results of the ATES for the winning candidates were published in "To no sonbo, toshu shidai" [The Life or Death of the Party Is Up to Its Leader], *Asahi Shimbun,* September 13, 2007, 7.

[19] Ellis S. Krauss, Thomas P. Rohlen, and Patricia Steinhoff, eds., *Conflict in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984); Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); and Richard J. Samuels, *The Business of the Japanese State: Energy Markets in a Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

suggests that the salience and policy expertise of the country's political leaders have increased in recent years.[20] If these changes continue, the next generation of leaders will assume power at a time when their input will matter more than ever.

Third, we have narrowed the scope of this study to members of the HOR, which is the more powerful of the two chambers of the Diet. This decision was driven mainly by the study's focus on leadership. During the postwar era the vast majority of cabinet members, party leaders, and faction chiefs have come from this chamber.[21] Although the results of the 2007 House of Councillors (HOC) election—in which the opposition parties, led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), seized control of the upper chamber—have increased the profile of the HOC in national politics, we expect members of the HOR to continue to dominate government and party leadership positions because the institutional roots of this dominance have not changed.[22] First, because Article 67 of the Constitution gives the HOR precedence over the HOC in the selection of the prime minister, Japan's postwar prime ministers have always come from the lower house.[23] The prime minister is thus primarily dependent on the HOR contingent that voted him into office—a dependence that is strengthened by the fact that only the HOR can pass a non-confidence resolution forcing either the cabinet to resign en masse or the prime minister to dissolve the HOR and call for a general election (Article 69). This combination of institutional factors places pressure on the prime minister to reward supporters in the HOR, one particularly important means of doing so is with appointments to high-level government and party posts. The large disparity in size between the two chambers also sustains HOR dominance—the HOR is nearly twice the size of the HOC. Thus, even a prime minister wishing to give special consideration to supporters in the HOC chamber is constrained by the fact that more than two-thirds of Diet members sit in the HOR.[24] For these reasons our interest in understanding future leadership dictates the study's focus on the HOR.

One final methodological issue involves the use of surveys in the assessment of individual policy views. Surveys are best suited for legislatures, such as Japan's Diet, where high levels of party discipline mask individual policy preferences and where rebellion against party leadership does not occur often enough to reveal legislators' policy views.[25] Although a low response rate is a common problem with surveys at the elite level, the ATES achieved an impressive response rate of more than 94%. When properly done, surveys are also a particularly efficient means of identifying the presence or absence of generational differences. A single survey can uncover the situation that Huntington argues is central in the study of generations in politics: "two different generations

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20 Muramatsu Michio and Kume Ikuo, eds., *Nihon Seiji Hendo no 30-Nen* [Japanese Politics: 30 Years of Change] (Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shinposha, 2006); and Shinoda Tomohito, *Reisengo no Nihon Gaiko* [Japanese Foreign Policy after the Cold War] (Tokyo: Minerva Shobo, 2006).

21 Hayao Kenji, *The Japanese Prime Minister and Public Policy* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1993), 99.

22 In the July 2007 upper house election the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) achieved a historic victory, supplanting the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as the largest party in the upper house for the first time since 1955. The resulting divided government—a lower house dominated by the LDP and its coalition partner, New Komeito, and an upper house controlled by the DPJ and its allies in the opposition—has raised the profile of the House of Councillors (HOC) in the policymaking process in so much as it now serves as the opposition's primary lever of institutional power.

23 The HOR also takes precedence over the HOC on budget (Article 60) and treaty (Article 61) votes.

24 Even the DPJ, currently so dependent on its upper-house contingent to influence Diet affairs, bowed to this arithmetic when appointing members to the Third Ozawa "Next Cabinet," the party's shadow cabinet, in September 2007. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the appointees are from the lower house. For a critique of the upper house by a famous former member, see Ishihara Shintaro, *Kokka no genei* [Illusion of a Nation] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1999), 215.

25 For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Taniguchi Masaki, "Shugiin no seisaku ichi" [The Policy Positions of Lower House Diet Members], *Nihon Seiji Kenkyu* 3, no. 1 (January 2006): 91–4.

doing two different things at the *same* point in time."[26] Important to concede at this juncture, however, is that no single survey can alone provide sufficient data to select between the experiential and maturation models of generational change in the event that generational differences are discovered. Untangling these models requires the use of comparable panel data gathered over long periods of time—a resource not yet available from the ATES.

## Generations, Political Discourse, and Issue Location

### *Three Generations Under One Roof*

Following Mannheim's experimental model we have identified three groups of lawmakers with the potential to form political generations or otherwise to divide into generational units.[27] In developing these groupings we first attempted to pinpoint potential "crystallizing agents"—either a set of political events or gradual shifts in the larger environment that might have been salient to the members of a particular age cohort during their "impressionable years" (ages 18–25). Most work on political generations credits major political and economic events—such as the Nationalist takeover of Taiwan, the New Deal in the United States, or the Italian "Hot Autumn"—with shaping the political views of age cohorts. Likewise, past work on generations in postwar Japan has generally identified World War II, the collapse of the empire, and the harsh aftermath of the war (e.g., the occupation and severe economic problems) as "crystallizing agents" determining generational boundaries.[28]

For the purposes of this study, however, an analysis of these major events will not be particularly useful. Only 3 current members of the lower house turned 18 before 1945, and none had reached the age of 25 before the Pacific War ended (see **Figure 1**). Only 17 members even have adult (considered age 18 or older) memories of the occupation. Furthermore, only 43 current HOR members (approximately 9%) are old enough to have received even a single year of education under the imperial system. In short, relevant experiences from the war years and their immediate aftermath no longer can serve as Mannheimian criteria for an analysis of Diet generations.[29]

It thus was necessary to draw the boundaries between potential political generations according to different criteria. The study posits that three categories of factors—international politics, domestic economic conditions, and domestic politics—divide Japan's postwar experience into three distinct periods, each with the potential to produce a politically relevant generation.

*The elders (1949–74).* Japan arguably faced a higher level of threat and uncertainty during the first half of the Cold War than during the latter half. From the 1950s to the early 1970s Japan was quite weak militarily, with the country's national security almost entirely dependent on the alliance with the United States. This was a time of "mutually assured destruction" and U.S. hegemony, not one of high confidence in autonomous national capabilities. Moreover, the United States was engaged in a series of "hot" wars in neighboring Korea and in nearby Vietnam that threatened to entangle Japan. The country also faced considerable insecurity on the economic front: the

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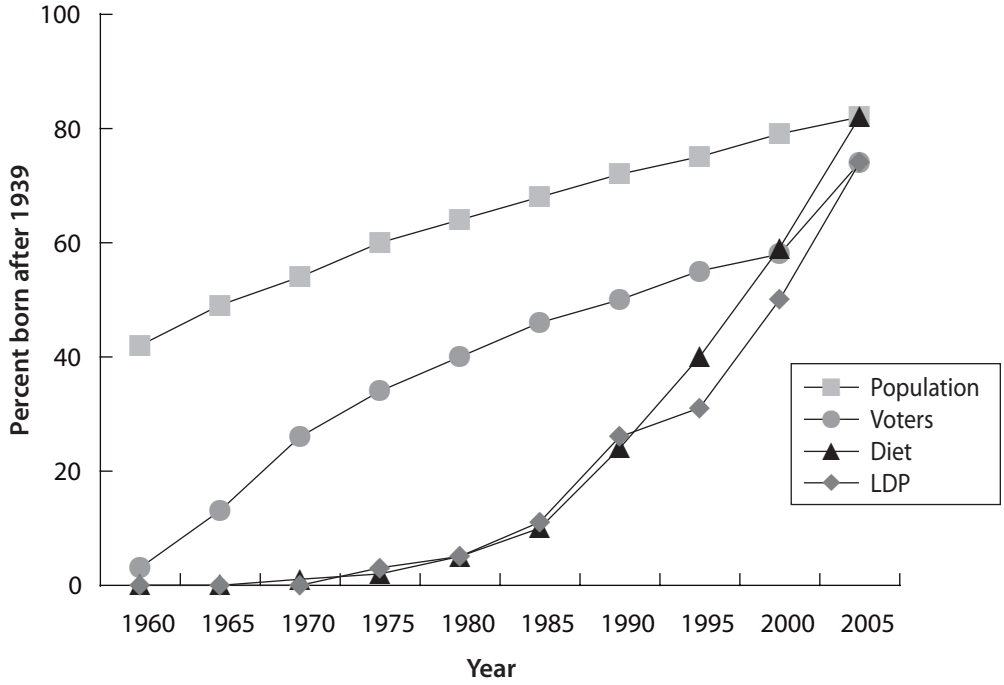
[26] Samuel P. Huntington, "Generations, Cycles, and Their Role in American Development," in *Political Generations and Political Development,* ed. Richard J. Samuels (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1977).

[27] Although we use the terms "generation" and "cohort" interchangeably to refer to these three groups, we do not assume these groups to be Mannheimian "political generations" because determining their nature is the object of this study.

[28] See, for example, Tanaka and Wilcox, "Beikoku yoron chosa no doko to Nichi-Bei kankei."

[29] See Mary Alice Haddad, *Making Democracy Real: Late Democratization in Japan* (unpublished manuscript, 2007).

FIGURE 1 Changing age distribution of Japan's political actors




SOURCE: Mary Alice Haddad, *Making Democracy Real: Late Democratization in Japan* (unpublished manuscript, 2007).

period began in the devastating aftermath of the Pacific War, which was marked by inflation and a lack of foreign exchange, and ended with Japan's storied economic miracle. On two occasions in the early 1970s the actions of the United States jeopardized this economic success—first, when Richard Nixon unilaterally ended the gold standard and, second, when Nixon recognized the People's Republic of China. Domestic politics during this period saw the highest levels of popular mobilization and political involvement in Japanese history, including multiple waves of student and environmental movements and intense ideological division. In particular, the conflict over the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, which pitted the Left against the Right on issues of security policy and spawned the largest mass demonstrations in the postwar period, was likely a formative experience for many in this generation. The common themes across all these areas are rapid change, instability, and uncertainty.

Hypotheses related to the political attitudes of those who came of age during this period include: the likelihood of polarization along right-left ideological lines (resulting in generational units), a relatively friendly attitude toward the United States, a tendency to view Japan as a "small" or "middle" power that should maintain a low profile in international politics, and a relatively favorable view of growth-oriented and redistributive economic policies at home. This is the cohort of Cold War builders and strivers that is currently in power. The shared experience of this cohort is one of "optimistic uncertainty."

*The midcareer cohort (1975–88).* Those leaders who came of age in this second period are the main target of this study. Their formative experiences occurred during a "sweet spot" in Japan's postwar history. Few international conflicts affected Japan during this period. Although the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war heightened Cold War tensions, this period began

with détente and ended with glasnost. By this stage the Cold War had stabilized through the formation of institutions that reduced threat. At the same time, Japan gradually but significantly improved the country's defense capabilities. In addition, by 1975 Japan's economy had recovered from the first oil shock and proceeded to grow steadily. By the end of this second period Japan was recognized throughout the world as an economic and technological superpower.[30] Trade friction with the United States was merely an annoyance—the cost of Japan's great technological and economic success. Although the Plaza Accord and resulting yen reevaluation briefly flattened Japan's economic trajectory, the economy quickly recovered and was accompanied by the inflation of an asset bubble. Many, if not most, in Japan had never had it so good.

Finally, in the realm of domestic politics the public began to demobilize. Social movements retreated as the LDP co-opted many of these movements' issues while also taming labor unions and left-wing parties.[31] In addition, many of the conventions associated with the LDP's long period of one-party rule were by now firmly in place: seniority advancement, factions, policy tribes (*zoku giin*), interparty collaboration and compromise (*kokutai seiji*), and bureaucratic dominance were all taken for granted, which was of particular importance to those seeking careers in politics.[32] Although the LDP's numbers neared parity with the combined opposition parties during this time, the party maintained control of both houses and then prime minister Nakasone's huge victory in 1986 seemed to portend a new era of LDP dominance. Overall the picture of Japan during this period is one of stability and certainty. The country was richer, more secure, and more confident than ever before in managing affairs both at home and abroad.

Hypotheses related to political generation formation among those who came of age during this period include: less polarization along right-left ideological lines (reducing the likelihood of generational units), a less favorable view of the United States than the view held by the elder cohort, a tendency to view Japan as an important player in world affairs and an increased willingness to improve Japan's profile in international politics, and a relatively favorable view of redistributive economic policies at home, at least more so than the midcareer cohort's younger colleagues. This is the cohort that will succeed the current generation of leaders. The shared experience of this cohort is one of "prosperity's children."

*The youngest cohort (1989–present).* This period of optimism ended in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, and the loss of the LDP's upper house majority. Although the end of the Cold War, the economic difficulties of the 1990s, and the persistence of coalition governments would not become fully apparent for a few years, the third period has been marked by high levels of instability in international affairs and uncertainty both in the domestic economy and in politics. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, the missile threat from North Korea, and U.S. interventions in the Middle East and Central Asia forced the Japanese to begin reconsidering national security policy.[33] The economic downturn also generated doubts over the future viability of traditional postwar economic policies, especially the government's role in redistributing revenue from growth. Finally, the LDP's inability to regain sole control of the upper house coupled with the party's temporary loss of the lower house led

30 Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

31 See Richard J. Samuels, "Leadership and Political Change in Japan: The Second Rincho," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 29, no.1 (Winter 2003): 1–31.

32 Bradley M. Richardson and Scott C. Flanagan, *Politics in Japan* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1984).

33 Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

to electoral reform ushering in an age of coalition governments. A strange political coalition of Liberal Democrats and Socialists shattered Cold War ideological lines and paved the way for a protean two-party system. At the same time many of the familiar institutions of the LDP's long one-party rule (e.g., seniority advancement and factions) either have morphed or have become dysfunctional altogether.

Hypotheses related to political generation formation among those who came of age during this period include: the possibility of generational units forming across new (non–right-left) axes due to increased instability and uncertainty, a more favorable view of the United States as an alliance partner in an uncertain environment, and an increased willingness to revise past practices and try new approaches in foreign and domestic policies (such as supporting the use of force, allowing collective self-defense, and reducing support for developmental economic and industrial polices). This is the post–Cold War cohort of "brave new worlders" that is in gestation and the last cohort currently in line for power. This cohort's shared experience is one of "true uncertainty."

Three potential Mannheimian generations therefore comprise individual Diet representatives who turned 25 years old during one of these periods.[34] This results in an age range of 44–57 (as of December 31, 2007) for the targeted generation of this study, the midcareer generation. Given that the average age of the current cabinet is 60 and that some top LDP and DPJ officials are even older, barring a complete breakdown of the link between seniority and advancement, the midcareer cohort will likely fill leadership positions for the next fifteen years.[35] In addition, this three-way division of periods provides a basis for comparison between potential political generations—the eldest cohort has 210 members in the HOR (44%), the middle cohort has 187 members (39%), and the youngest cohort has 83 members (17%). Though relatively small compared to the older cohorts, the youngest cohort is still sufficiently large for statistical analysis.

Japanese postwar history is a journey from instability and uncertainty (1949–74) to stability and certainty (1975–88), followed by a regression to instability and uncertainty. Our targeted "generation in waiting" is the product of the middle period, which was notable for prosperity and stability rather than for any specific crystallizing events. If this period did produce a coherent political generation, this generation was likely formed through environmental shifts occurring as a result of higher standards of living and the increasing number of economic opportunities enjoyed by young people during these years.

### *Mapping the Japanese Political Discourse*

There are three key dimensions of Japan's contemporary political discourse: security, the economy, and cultural issues. Though each issue area is vigorously contested, none follows simple ideological, party, or institutional logic.

Consider first the discourse on Japan's security policy.[36] The Left and the Right agree that the U.S.-Japan alliance diminishes Japanese sovereignty. Differences in security policy, however, do not strictly reflect party lines. For example, even though the ruling LDP supports the U.S. alliance

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[34] We note that most studies of political generations use the lower number of the "impressionable years" age range (in our case 18). We depart from this convention and use the higher number (25) because we are seeking to understand leadership over the medium to long term (5–15 years in the future). This requires analysis of the younger members of the midcareer generation. Calculating from the high number ensures that the younger members of the age cohort are most exposed to the target period and should thus exhibit the strongest generational effects.

[35] "Fukuda naikaku no heikin nenrei, wazuka ni wakagaeri, 60.2-sai" [Marginally Younger, the Average Age of the Fukuda Cabinet is 60.2], *Nihon Keizai Shimbun,* September 26, 2007, 4. We note, however, that leadership transition is not a one-way street. In 2006–07 the leadership of both the LDP and the DPJ was transferred from younger to older politicians.

[36] This argument is elaborated in Samuels, *Securing Japan.*

unconditionally, the party remains divided on the issue of how to deal with Asia. Conversely, the DPJ is unified on the issue of regional integration but divided over the U.S. alliance.[37] Moreover, the contemporary discourse on Japanese grand strategy is dominated by strange—and shifting—coalitions. Heirs to prewar nativism share antipathetic views of the U.S. alliance with heirs of the old Left. Though agreeing that the alliance is important, today's small Japanists (those who think of Japan as a mercantile power) and big Japanists (those who think of Japan as a great power) disagree fundamentally on how much Japan should pay for maintenance of the alliance—and whether part of that cost should include Japan's becoming "normal." The deck is reshuffled yet again on the issue of accommodation with China.

The security policy preferences of contemporary Japanese scholars, commentators, politicians, and bureaucrats can be sorted along two axes. The first axis measures the value placed on the U.S.-Japan alliance. At one extreme is the view that the United States is Japan's most important source of security and thus must be embraced. The scope of U.S. power and the limits of Japanese capabilities are central to this view, which emphasizes the strategic importance of the alliance for Japan's security. On this account U.S. bases in Japan are critical elements of any coherent national security strategy. At the other extreme is the view that in a unipolar world the United States is a dangerous bully that must be kept at a distance for fear that Japan might become entangled in U.S. "adventures" abroad. The presence of U.S. bases in Japan increases the likelihood of such entanglement. Finally, located in the middle of this axis are those who call upon Japan to rebalance relationships with Asia and the United States. Though attracted to the idea of regional institution-building, this group is not yet prepared to relinquish U.S. security guarantees. This first axis therefore is a surrogate measure of the relative value different groups place on the dangers of abandonment and entanglement. Those groups with a high tolerance for abandonment are willing to maintain a greater distance from the United States than are those with a high tolerance for entanglement.

Finally, located in the middle…are those who call upon Japan to rebalance relationships with Asia and the United States.

Those with a high tolerance for entanglement, however, are not all status quo–oriented. This camp is divided along a second axis measuring the willingness to use force in international affairs. Support for the revision of Article 9, for the adoption of a more proactive and global defense posture, for the integration of Japan's military forces with the U.S. military, and for the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) abroad are all indicators of where individuals stand on this second axis. Some who support the U.S. alliance are more willing to deploy the SDF to "share alliance burdens" than are others who prefer that Japan continue to limit itself to rear-area support. The former group wishes for Japan to become a great power again and adopts the position that Japan should become "normal." According to these "normal nation-alists," the statute of limitations for Japan's mid-twentieth-century aggression expired long ago; it is time for Japan to step onto the international stage as an equal of the United States. The latter group, "middle power internationalists," believe that Japan must remain a small power with self-imposed limits on the right to belligerency. The country's contributions to world affairs

[37] For an incisive analysis of these differences, see Shiraishi Takashi, *Teikoku to Sono Genkai* [Empire and Its Limits] (Tokyo: NTT, 2006).

should remain non-military. Among those who prefer that Japan maintain a greater distance from the United States are both "neoautonomists," who support the creation of an independent, full-spectrum Japanese military capable of using force, and "pacifists," who eschew the military institution altogether.

The economic dimension is equally contested. By the mid-1990s the wheels had fallen off Japan's largely idealized system of corporate paternalism, alliance capitalism, state guidance, and collaborative competition.[38] The benefits of the "developmental state" were widely questioned.[39] Lifetime employment in the private sector, *keiretsu* (business group) solidarity, the use of public works to sustain employment levels, government intervention in production and pricing decisions, and the use of Keynesian measures to stimulate the economy were all seen as core elements of Japan's postwar economic model. In response to Japan's long economic slide in the 1990s, commentators and practitioners actively debated the viability of Japanese-style capitalism. Suddenly, laissez faire economics was receiving a hearing and the developmental state was taking a beating. Active debate over the benefits and risks both of the "big bang" liberalization of Japanese capital markets and of deregulation and unfettered competition came to dominate the national discourse. Neo-liberalism—once the *bete noir* of Japanese business and government elites—had powerful advocates on the archipelago for the first time.[40] As in the debate over security, the advocates for change and the defenders of an idealized status quo defy conventional labels. Some agents of change (e.g., former prime minister Koizumi) are conservative politicians whose efforts to move Japan away from the postwar system were met with opposition from both the Left and the Right. Indeed, Koizumi battled his own party in order to reform the postal savings system. Even bureaucrats within the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) were divided between those who favored hoary techniques of state-led intervention in the economy and those who thought the time for the heavy hand of the state had past. Business elites meanwhile argued over the cost and benefits of free trade.[41]

"Culture war"—a common characterization of a major fault-line in U.S. politics—applies *mutatis mutandis* as well to Japan as to the United States. Before becoming prime minister, Abe Shinzo outlined the route Japan should take to reconnect with the country's traditions.[42] His jeremiad served as a comprehensive statement from the Right on the cultural issues gripping public discourse. Disputes over how to understand the Pacific War—whether the war was one of aggression or necessity, for example—are compounded by disputes over the appropriate role of the imperial household in the 21st century as well as over how to balance individual freedom with the collective good and deference to authority. Some currently see immigration as the solution to Japan's social ills, whereas others see immigration as a cause. Are citizens too fixed on individual rights and too complacent with respect to social duties? Should individual privacy be protected or protected against? These disputes collectively amount to nothing less than a battle over the right to define true Japanese virtue and national identity—a battle often, though not always, waged by

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38 Ronald Dore, *Taking Japan Seriously: A Confucian Perspective on Leading Economic Issues* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), chap. 9.

39 Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle,* 1982; and Meredith Woo-Cumings, ed., The Developmental State (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

40 Steven K. Vogel, *Japan Remodeled: How Government and Industry are Reforming Japanese Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

41 Takenaka Heizo, *Kozo Kaikaku no Shinjutsu: Takenaka Heizo Daijin Nisshi* [The Truth about Structural Reform: Minister Takenaka Heizo's Diary] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai, 1996).

42 Abe Shinzo, *Utsukushi Kuni E* [Toward a Beautiful Country] (Tokyo: Bungei Shuju, 2006).

supporters of right-wing nationalist ideas. As in the debates over security and economic policies, combatants in the culture war are often allies in other domains. Former prime minister Nakasone called Abe's vision an "unrealistic revival of tradition and culture."[43] Both current prime minister Fukuda Yasuo and former prime minister Koizumi Junichiro support female succession to the imperial throne in opposition to many fellow conservatives. Familiar left-right divisions thus do not hold on every front of the culture war. The reliably conservative newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* has found common cause with the liberal *Asahi Shimbun* in opposing conservative efforts to normalize prime ministerial visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine.[44]

These debates are occurring within a HOR that is controlled by the LDP in coalition with the New Komeito (NK). Since September 2005 the LDP and NK have together occupied more than two-thirds of the HOR seats. The largest opposition party is the DPJ, which holds 113 seats in the HOR and—importantly—has controlled the HOC since July 2007.

Even though none of these parties is organized along generational lines, newer members of the lower house—self-declared junior legislators (*wakate giin*)—have for years formed groups that share political goals. (For a list of some of these groups, see **Appendix A**.) In the 1970s the Seirankai—a conservative, anti-mainstream group that included future prime minister Mori Yoshiro and future Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintaro—formed in the LDP in opposition to then prime minister Tanaka Kakuei's overture to the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile, a group of younger and more moderate former bureaucrats in the LDP, led by future prime minister Miyazawa Kiichi, established the Hirakawakai in 1973. There have been a great many subsequent examples of such groups, many of which—for example the Jiyu Shakai Kenkyukai, founded in 1977 by future prime ministers Takeshita Noboru, Kaifu Toshiki, and Miyazawa Kiichi—were supra-partisan. The most widely discussed contemporary example is the Young Diet Member's League to Consider Japan's Future and History Education (Nippon no Zento to Rekishi Kyoiku wo Kangaeru Wakate Giin no Kai), founded by Nakagawa Shoichi and Abe Shinzo, among others.

Yet before examining the relevance of these parties and potential generational groups for the core issues of Japanese political discourse, we will first describe the key characteristics of the target midcareer generation.

### *Key Characteristics of the Midcareer Generation 125*

In some respects the background characteristics of the midcareer generation are little different from those of the general population of the HOR. For example, the distribution of the pre-Diet careers among members of this generation is approximately the same as the distribution of pre-Diet careers among lower house representatives as a whole. Of the members of the midcareer generation, 33% are former Diet secretaries, 29% have business experience, 26% were local politicians, and 14% were bureaucrats. This is approximately the same distribution in exactly the same rank order as the HOR overall. More than one-third of the members of this cohort in both the DPJ and the LDP have experience working as a secretary to a Diet member. Another similarity is the concentration of graduates from three elite schools—Tokyo, Waseda, and Keio universities—that accounts for slightly less than half of the midcareer cohort. Nearly one-fourth of this generation graduated

[43] Masaru Tamamoto, "Japan's Politics of Cultural Shame," *Global Asia* 2, no.1 (Spring 2007): 15.

[44] "Shusho no yasukuni sanpai wo 'okashii' to hihan" [Prime Minister's Yasukuni Visits Criticized as "Inappropriate"], *Asahi Shimbun,* January 4, 2006, 2.

from Tokyo University alone, and a similar proportion of members of this cohort within the NK and the DPJ attended graduate school.

What distinguishes the midcareer generation from other generations is that 60%—a higher percentage than in either of the other two generations—entered national politics after having worked in two or more different types of professions. Moreover, this generation produced five members with undergraduate degrees from foreign universities—which again is more than any other cohort has produced. The SMD winners from the midcareer cohort are evenly drawn from urban, rural, and mixed districts, whereas the elder generation is weighted more toward rural districts and the younger generation is more urban. The relatively high number of women belonging to this cohort—more than 12%, which is the highest percentage among the three cohorts—also distinguishes the midcareer generation from the others.

Nearly 90% of the members from this cohort were elected after 1993, with more than 57% first elected after 2000. As a result, more than half of the midcareer members possess fewer than eight years of experience in nationally elected offices. Of this cohort 23% (43 members) are affiliated with the DPJ and 62% (116 members) belong to the LDP. Additionally, the midcareer cohort constitutes more than half (16 of 31 members) of the NK contingent in the lower house.[45] The largest subset of the LDP group (40 members) has no factional affiliation.[46] Nearly half of the former Mori faction, however, and more than 60% of the small Komura and Tanigaki factions belong to this cohort. Indeed more than 20% (24 members) of the midcareer cohort in the LDP were members of the former Mori faction, the largest faction in the LDP. On a partisan basis DPJ members of the HOR are more evenly drawn from each generation than their LDP counterparts, with roughly a third of DPJ members belonging to each of the three generational groups. The LDP's membership is concentrated in the two older cohorts, with nearly 46% belonging to the eldest. Interesting to note, however, is that the midcareer cohort constitutes nearly the same percentage of the LDP (39%) and the DPJ (38%) contingents in the HOR.

### *Location in Individual Issue Dimensions*

The survey data on which this study is based illuminates each of the three policy dimensions outlined above. (For a translation of the survey questions along with the results by generation and party, please see **Appendix B**.) There are five questions relevant to the cultural discourse. The first question elicits attitudes toward official prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. These visits are highly controversial because the shrine is associated with a particular religion (Shinto), with an imperial war in Asia, and with the enshrinement of convicted war criminals.[47] A second question measures attitudes toward the construction of a secular national memorial as an alternative to Yasukuni. A third question asks whether individual politicians believe Japan's actions in the Pacific War were justified. A fourth question concerns the trade-off between civil liberties and public safety, a classic dilemma in social policy that in Japan speaks to politically volatile but

[45] Interesting to note is that neither of the two traditional left-wing parties—the Japan Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party of Japan—has even a single lower house member in the youngest cohort.

[46] Please note that we used factional affiliation data that was current as of September 2005 and that this data will have changed somewhat since then. Different rates of affiliation across generations are consistent with the life cycle model explored above. Nearly 70% of the youngest generation is unaffiliated, while 35% of the middle generation and only 16% of the eldest generation are unaffiliated with factions in the LDP.

[47] For an excellent discussion of the Yasukuni matter, see Takahashi Testuya, *Yasukuni Mondai* [The Yasukuni Issue] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2005).

informal norms concerning the relative importance of the individual versus the group.[48] The final question addresses attitudes toward whether non-citizens who are permanent residents should be allowed to vote in local elections. Responses to this question reveal attitudes both toward the integration of Japan's long-term–resident alien minorities into the Japanese mainstream and toward immigration.

Eight questions directly address the security discourse. The first question measures attitudes on the expansion of Japan's defense capabilities. The second gauges support for strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance. In addition, multiple questions measure attitudes toward the use of military force—specifically, support for Japan's right to take preemptive action in the face of imminent threat, support for reinterpretation of the constitution to allow for collective self-defense, support for constitutional revision, and attitudes toward deployment of the Japanese SDF to Iraq. Two final questions—one concerning whether Japan should become a permanent member of the UN Security Council and the other concerning whether Japan should favor pressure over dialogue in dealings with North Korea—generate little variation and are of limited analytical utility.

Six questions address the domestic economy. The first two questions ask Diet representatives for their views on funding social security. The third question measures attitudes toward the proper size of government. The fourth is a proxy for attitudes toward the traditional Japanese employment system. The last two questions gauge attitudes on fiscal policy.

With one minor exception, none of the differences across generations in response to the questions on cultural issues is statistically significant.[49] That said, the study finds that the targeted midcareer generation is the most cautious on the issue of Yasukuni visits. Only 15% of this cohort favored unconditional visits to the shrine by the prime minister—the lowest level of support among the three generations. Moreover, this group proved more willing than other cohorts to take international factors into account when judging the rectitude of these visits. These responses collectively reveal that midcareer leaders assume a more conciliatory attitude than their elders toward China and other Asian neighbors. Likewise, the midcareer generation's evaluation of the Pacific War separated this generation from the oldest and youngest generations. Only 9% of this group—a lower percentage than in the other generations—believes that Japan's actions in the Pacific War were justified, and 38% of this generation—a higher percentage than in other generations—believes the Pacific War was a misguided war of aggression. The midcareer generation was also the most willing of the three to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections. This generation, however, was not consistently the most progressive in our sample on cultural issues. Of the three generations midcareer politicians proved the most willing to restrict individual rights in order to preserve public safety; the youngest cohort registered the most liberal response to this question. The one statistically significant finding on cultural issues obtained within the DPJ, where the eldest cohort was more liberal than the successive generation on the issue of granting voting rights to non-citizens.

As in the case of the analysis of the cultural dimension, we have found only a limited number of statistically significant results with regard to security issues. The most striking result is that the

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[48] An additional question concerning perspectives on female succession to the imperial throne produced little variance and is thus not analytically useful. In our view this lack of variance owes to the timing of the survey. In September 2005 the only legitimate heir to the throne was female: thus opposing female succession possibly entailed opposition to maintaining the monarchy. This situation has since changed, however, with the birth of a male heir in September 2006.

[49] To assess the statistical significance of differences in the responses of our three generational cohorts, we performed chi-square tests for nominal scale data (questions 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6, and 7) and ANOVA tests (Bonferroni and Games-Howell) for interval scale data (questions 8 through 9.12). Our criterion for statistical significance is the 0.05 level.

youngest cohort is more supportive of strengthening Japan's defense capabilities than the midcareer generation. Interestingly the elder generation is also more hawkish on this question, as well as on the question of preemption, than the midcareer cohort is, though not at statistically significant levels. Overall the study found that the youngest generation is consistently more hawkish than the two older generations on the issues of the U.S.-Japan alliance, collective self-defense, preemption, and the expansion of Japanese defense capabilities.[50] As noted above, however, only the difference between the youngest and midcareer generations on the latter issue was statistically significant. Within the DPJ the younger two generations were more supportive of strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance than the eldest—differences that proved to be statistically significant in both cases.

Using the two security axes in our original model—attitudes toward the United States and toward the use of force in international affairs—**Figure 2** helps locate the members of the midcareer generation in Japan's contemporary security policy debate.

The figure is revealing. First, the normal nation-alists, who favor both strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and relaxing existing constraints on Japan's ability to use force overseas, form the single largest group (23%). Second, the normal nation-alists face significant levels of opposition from pacifists (12%) and middle power internationalists (10%). Third, the neoautonomists, who oppose a stronger alliance but favor a more muscular security policy, are so few as to be almost non-existent. Another finding, however, overshadows these: more than 50% of the midcareer generation sits on either one or both of the two axes. A cumulative majority therefore is ambivalent toward strengthening the alliance (29%), using force (11%), or both (13%). This pattern also obtains for each of the other two generations and for the HOR sample as a whole.

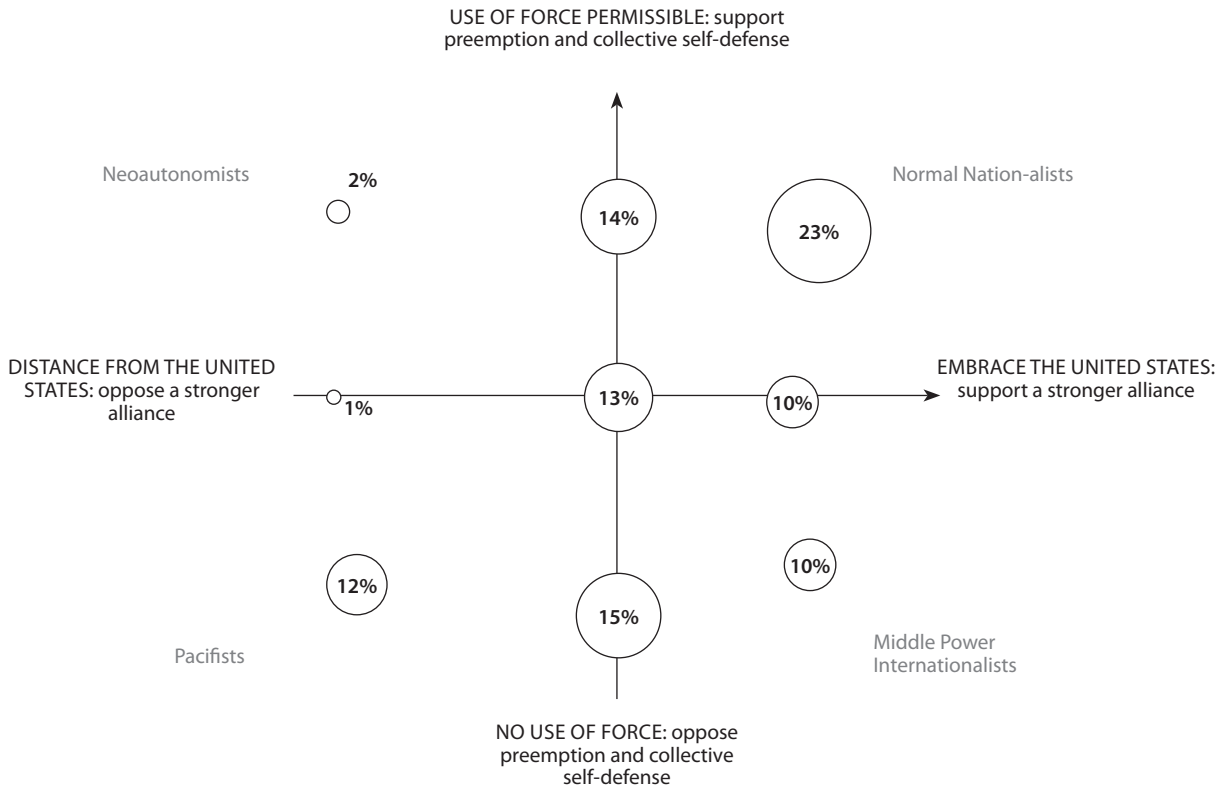
…security policy is likely to remain an important cleavage in Japanese politics for some time to come and considerable room remains for realignment on issues of security.

Viewing the data in this way leads to two conclusions. First, despite enjoying success in academia and publishing, the neoautonomists have failed to make significant inroads among national politicians. This finding provides strong evidence that fears of a return to the unilateralist and aggressive security polices of the prewar period are unfounded. Second, even as the largest single group in both the midcareer and youngest generations, the normal nation-alists still face considerable opposition; higher percentages of both generations are ambivalent over changes in alliance policy, the constraints on Japan's use of force, or both. Taken together these findings indicate that security policy is likely to remain an important cleavage in Japanese politics for some time to come and considerable room remains for realignment on issues of security.

The most significant generational differences are found on issues of economic policy. On the questions of lifetime employment in the private sector, the use of public works to stabilize aggregate employment levels, and the use of fiscal stimuli as an instrument of economic policy,

[50] Although the youngest generation was also more hawkish on the questions of the deployment of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in Iraq and the revision of the constitution, the differences between the midcareer and youngest generations on both questions were extremely small.

**FIGURE 2** The midcareer generation in the security policy discourse




the eldest generation was in every case more supportive of traditional forms of Japanese economic practice than the members of the younger two generations at statistically significant levels. Moreover, no significant difference existed between the two youngest generations on these issues; both expressed less support than the eldest cohort for traditional Japanese economic practices. In all three cases, however, the midcareer generation proved marginally more enthusiastic about these institutions than the youngest cohort. In a result that was not statistically significant, the midcareer generation was more supportive of small government than the eldest group but less supportive than the youngest. Even within parties we found similar distributions of responses, some at statistically significant levels. For example, within both the LDP and DPJ elders were more supportive of maintaining lifetime employment practices in the private sector than either of the younger generations. Within the DPJ this relationship also obtained with regard to using public works to support aggregate employment levels.

Having provided a general portrait of the midcareer cohort in the HOR, this study will now turn to identifying individuals within this cohort who are likely to become leaders of Japan.

## Identifying Future Leaders

Japanese politics has witnessed more change in the last fifteen years than in the previous thirty. Parties have split, coalition governments have obliterated conventional conceptions of the ideological spectrum, the largest opposition party of the Cold War era collapsed, and opposition

parties formed and dissolved at such an alarming rate that finding new party names has grown challenging for would-be founders. Although many of the formal and informal institutions of the classic 1955 system persist—such as *koenkai* (local support groups), factions, and the LDP itself—none of these institutions has remained unaffected by the changes to the system. Thus changes in previously stable patterns of advancement, or "paths to power," in the political world should be expected.[51]

For example during the golden years of the 1955 system a candidate for LDP party president (and thus for prime minister) was expected to meet a relatively rigid set of criteria: candidates were on average around 65 years old, though not older than 72; had served more than 25 years in the lower house; had won at least ten elections; and were either the formal or acting head of a faction.[52] Though not a prerequisite, experience as minister of finance was also strongly associated with success at becoming party president.[53] These patterns were so well established by the late 1980s that political journalists accurately predicted four of the seven LDP party presidents (Kono, Hashimoto, Obuchi, and Mori) between 1989 and 2001.[54]

With the beginning of the new millennium, however, this predictable pattern broke down. None of the three LDP party presidents and prime ministers since 2001 had served as formal or acting head of a faction or as minister of finance. Only one (Koizumi) had served for 25 years in the lower house and won ten elections. Abe Shinzo, who at 52 was the youngest prime minister in postwar history, became party president with only five electoral victories, which would not have guaranteed even a cabinet post in the years when seniority advancement was the rule.[55] Although Fukuda Yasuo was endorsed by eight of nine faction leaders in a successful bid for party leadership in 2007, nearly a third of faction members likely voted for Fukuda's opponent, Aso Taro, against the wishes of faction leaders.[56]

Given that formerly well-trod paths to power no longer guarantee success, we have sought to understand the new and evolving selection criteria for party leaders in order to develop a profile of future leadership. Based on interviews, the first step in this process focused on the electoral strength of individual politicians.[57] It seems that whether or not a Diet member can "own" an electoral district—that is, win repeatedly in a convincing fashion—is a measure of leadership

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51 Our focus here is only on the top positions in the executive branch and major parties. In the government these positions include the prime minister and other cabinet ministers, including the chief cabinet secretary. In the LDP these positions include the party president, party secretary-general, chairman of the General Council, chairman of the Policy Research Council, and chairman of the Diet Affairs Committee. The top positions in the DPJ include president, acting president, secretary-general, chair of the Policy Research Committee, and chair of the Diet Affairs Committee.

52 Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister,* 96–121.

53 Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister,* 110. From when Hatoyama Ichiro assumed office in 1954 to when Miyazawa Kiichi left office in 1993, nine of fifteen prime ministers had served at least one term as minister of finance, while eight had served multiple terms—both records for an individual ministry in this category.

54 Ito Masaya and Fukuoka Masayuki, *Korekara 10-nen Sengoku Jiminto* [The LDP: The Next Decade of Civil War] (Tokyo: Daiichi Kikaku Shuppan, 1988), cited in Hayao, *The Japanese Prime Minister,* 99. To be sure, Ito and Fukuoka did not make point predictions. Instead they generated a list of sixteen LDP politicians who met general criteria. This list included the four men who became LDP party president as well as Hata Tsutomu, who subsequently left the LDP but served briefly as prime minister in a non-LDP government in 1994.

55 Gerald L. Curtis, *The Logic of Japanese Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1999), 105–6.

56 LDP party presidents are currently selected by a vote of LDP Diet members and local chapters. Although Diet members vote by secret ballot, it is clear that many faction members ultimately ignored the endorsement of faction leaders and voted for Aso. If one assumes that Aso and Fukuda split the vote among non-aligned LDP members and that all members of Aso's own faction voted for Aso, then approximately 29% of faction members, or nearly one-third, voted against the wishes of faction leaders.

57 Author interview, Aburaki Kiyoaki, Keidanren Political Affairs Group, Tokyo, December 13, 2007.

potential.[58] Diet members with an iron grip on their home districts gain the respect of their peers and are more likely to be around in five to fifteen years to assume the top posts. In constructing our profile pool of future leaders we thus limited consideration to members of the midcareer generation who won in single-member districts in 2005 (116 members). We then determined the number of times each had been elected and eliminated those who had been elected fewer than three times as too untested. We also excluded Diet members who had won six or more elections, such as Nakagawa Shoichi (LDP) and Okada Katsuya (DPJ)—both of whom entered politics before their peers and already possess enough leadership experience to qualify as current leaders. This left 65 members who were elected three to five times.[59] We additionally eliminated members of smaller parties and one independent, resulting in a list of 48 LDP members and 13 DPJ members. We then sorted the remaining 61 members by margin of victory over the nearest opponent (in vote-share terms) in the 2005 election and removed from the list members who failed to beat the average SMD victory margin for the midcareer generational cohort in their party.[60] As an additional measure of electoral strength we limited consideration to members who were "straight-winners"—that is, who have not lost an election after their first victory. Finally, we excluded members, such as Abe Shinzo, who had already achieved the highest posts and are known quantities on the international stage.[61] Through this process we identified sixteen successful midcareer politicians (twelve from the LDP and four from the DPJ) who are well-positioned to assume the reins of power within the next fifteen years. The results appear in **Table 1**.

The above method effectively identified experienced leaders in the midcareer generation. For example, all of the LDP members identified already possess some form of cabinet experience, compared to only 59% of LDP members belonging to the midcareer generation overall. Likewise, all four DPJ members have been appointed to the party's shadow cabinet at least once, compared to only 51% of midcareer DPJ members overall. In addition, although they were excluded from the final list for the reasons noted above, our procedure initially identified seven members of the middle generation who have already served as prime minister, cabinet ministers, or chief cabinet secretary. We thus have confidence in the study's parameters. Although we do not claim to have identified every individual who will rise to power, we are confident that we have identified a representative sample of the next generation of Japanese leaders.

### *LDP Future Leaders: Background Factors*

The twelve midcareer Diet representatives we have identified as likely future LDP leaders all have served in senior sub-cabinet positions (parliamentary vice minister or vice minister) with a wide range of important portfolios—foreign affairs, defense, education, justice, transportation, and

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[58] Recent analysis of leadership appointments that finds a positive relationship between appointments to "high-policy posts" (in areas such as finance, foreign affairs, defense, and the cabinet) and margin of victory in a SMD partly supports this approach. See Robert Pekkanen, Benjamin Nyblade, and Ellis S. Krauss, "Electoral Incentives in Mixed-Member Systems: Party, Posts, and Zombie Politicians in Japan," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 2 (May 2006): 190–91.

[59] This distinction was supported in our interview with DPJ representative Watanabe Shu, who identified his seniority in terms of the number of elections won rather than in terms of his chronological age: "Those of us who have been elected five times are next." Author interview, Watanabe Shu, DPJ representative, Tokyo, January 24, 2008.

[60] The use of the vote-share differential between the first- and second-place finishers as a measure of electoral competitiveness is discussed in Matthew Carlson, *Money Politics in Japan: New Rules, Old Practices* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 31n15.

[61] In addition to Abe, those Diet members excluded in this last category included: former chief cabinet secretary Shiozaki Yasuhisa; former defense minister Koike Yuriko; Tanahashi Yasufumi, former minister of state for Science and Technology Policy, Food Safety, and Information Technology; Kishida Fumio, current minister of state for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs; Motegi Toshimitsu, former minister of state for Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs; and Watanabe Yoshimi, minister of state for Financial Services, Administrative and Regulatory Reforms in the Fukuda cabinet. Please note that it is likely some of these midcareer politicians will again serve in top posts in the future.

**TABLE 1** Likely future leaders of the LDP and DPJ

| LDP | DPJ |
|---|---|
| Hamada Yasukazu | Kikawada Toru |
| Ishida Masatoshi | Kondo Shoichi |
| Ito Shintaro | Nakagawa Masaharu |
| Kajiyama Hiroshi | Watanabe Shu |
| Kaneko Yasushi | |
| Kono Taro | |
| Matsushima Midori | |
| Miyakoshi Mitsuhiro | |
| Ono Shinya | |
| Shimomura Hakubun | |
| Takagi Tsuyoshi | |
| Tsuchiya Shinako | |

agriculture. This group includes a significantly higher percentage of women (17%) than the LDP as whole. The majority of members were educated in the social sciences at Japan's elite universities. One-third were local politicians before stepping onto the national stage. In addition, more than 40% served as Diet secretaries, and an equal number are hereditary politicians. We also note that one-third of this group entered national politics with corporate experience.

As a whole these twelve are more conservative on cultural issues and, perhaps not coincidentally, come from districts that are more rural than either the midcareer cohort or the LDP overall. For example, only 10% insist that the prime minister not visit Yasukuni Shrine—half the level of the entire midcareer cohort on this response. Likewise, only 8% of these twelve potential LDP leaders take the position that the Pacific War was a mistake—less than half the corresponding LDP level. In addition, this group is more willing to restrict privacy and individual rights for the sake of public security than the LDP or the midcareer generational cohort overall.

With regard to defense and security policy, although they favor strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance, the twelve exhibit somewhat more ambivalence toward the security alliance than did the LDP respondents overall. This pattern also obtained with regard to strengthening Japan's defense capabilities. On the thorny issue of constitutional revision these potential leaders unanimously support change—a level significantly higher than the level of support from the midcareer cohort as a whole (80%). Given the opportunity to identify the section of the constitution that they would first target for revision, seven of eleven representatives specified Article 9, which deals with national security (one representative did not respond). In addition these potential future leaders more strongly favor reinterpreting the constitution to allow for the exercise of the right of collective self-defense than the midcareer cohort overall, although less so than the LDP party average. The twelve, however, are significantly more supportive of Japan's right to preemptive attack in the face of imminent threat than the LDP overall or the larger midcareer generational cohort. These potential leaders are also slightly less willing than their LDP colleagues—but more

willing than both the midcareer cohort and the HOR as a whole—to assume a hard-line position in negotiations with North Korea.

On economic policy these twelve representatives are largely indistinguishable from most other members of the LDP or the midcareer cohort. These individuals support lifetime employment practices in the private sector at the same levels as the larger groups do and—similar to the LDP overall—are moderately supportive of measures to ensure aggregate employment through public works projects. Gauging this group's economic policy preferences is difficult, however; when asked directly if fiscal policy should be used to stimulate economic growth, the group was more cautious than the LDP or the midcareer generation as a whole.

### *DPJ Future Leaders: Background Factors*

Given that only four DPJ representatives survived the filters we applied to identify those with strong leadership potential, the study profiles only a small slice of future DPJ leadership. Moreover, the small number of potential DPJ leaders in the sample requires that we be modest in our claims. This number likely would have been significantly larger had the DPJ not suffered such a massive defeat in the September 2005 elections—an event that eliminated a number of promising DPJ leaders from our sample.

As in the LDP group profiled above, all four of the midcareer DPJ representatives we have identified as likely future leaders have enjoyed the full confidence of party leadership. Each has been a member of the DPJ shadow cabinet, with portfolios in such areas as general affairs, finance, the economy, trade and industry, and the environment. In addition one of these four representatives served in a leadership position in the Liberal Party, which merged with the DPJ in 2003. Three of the four have served as vice chairs of the DPJ Diet Affairs Committee. Although our small sample excludes women and public university graduates, this group is otherwise representative of the DPJ overall: three are from urban or mixed districts, all four studied in the social sciences, and none hold graduate degrees. In addition, half the representatives in the sample have studied abroad—more than twice the corresponding figure for the midcareer generation as a whole. Three entered national politics through local political careers, and two worked as news reporters. Only one is a hereditary politician (25%)—compared to 17% of DPJ representatives overall.

Unlike the LDP group discussed above, these four DPJ members have expressed views on cultural issues that are in line with the views of the party overall. On the issue of Yasukuni this group opposes prime ministerial visits at roughly the same rate as their DPJ colleagues. Moreover, the group is even more uniformly supportive of plans to construct a secular national war memorial. All four representatives in the sample also agree with the majority of DPJ and midcareer representatives that Japan's actions in the Pacific War were mistaken. None of the four embraced the view of the small number of LDP representatives who believe that Japan's actions in the Pacific War were justified. Half instead identified Japan as the aggressor in the Pacific War, which is the dominant view within the DPJ. Interestingly this group is significantly more conservative on the issue of the trade-off between individual rights and public security, with half agreeing with the statement that it is proper to suspend the former in the interest of public security.

As is consistent with the DPJ overall, these four leaders adopt a moderately cooler attitude toward strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance than does the midcareer cohort as a whole. That said, this group did not express any extreme views on the alliance and basically supports the status quo. Three of four support constitutional revision to some degree, though for different reasons.

Moreover, despite selecting the "cannot say either way" answer, the fourth representative indicated an interest in adding "environmental rights" to the constitution. Two representatives registered strong opposition to allowing the exercise of collective self-defense, while one was ambivalent and another did not respond.

This small group reflected the full range of opinion on whether Japan should strengthen the country's defense capabilities, with one representative supporting stronger defense capabilities, two opposed, and one in the middle. Similarly, there was no consensus on the issue of whether Japan should take preemptive action in the face of an imminent threat. One legislator strongly supports the right to preemptive action, while two strongly oppose this right. There is also division on policy toward North Korea, with one representative in the sample strongly supporting the use of pressure over dialogue, one strongly opposing it, and the remaining two representatives conflicted over this issue. This consistently broad distribution of security policy preferences suggests that the next generation of DPJ leaders holds as diverse a set of views as the current generation.

The four future DPJ leaders in the sample consistently expressed a preference for economic reform. This group is indifferent toward lifetime employment practices in the private sector, unenthusiastic regarding the use of public works as a means to ensure employment, and objects to the promotion of growth and reduction of government debt through fiscal measures. On each of these issues the four are significantly less supportive of Japanese-style capitalism than the DPJ or the midcareer cohort as a whole.

## Profiles

We have selected two representatives from each of these groups in order to provide a somewhat more intimate portrait of Japan's potential future leaders. We do not wish to suggest that these four individuals—two from each of the major parties—are any more likely than their colleagues to reach the highest levels of national leadership, however. To be consistent with the generational focus of this study, we selected them because they were the oldest and youngest members of each party's future leadership cohort.

### *Miyakoshi Mitsuhiro (LDP)*

Miyakoshi Mitsuhiro (57 years old) has been elected four times from Toyama's 2nd district, first in a 1988 bi-election. A member of the Koga faction, Miyakoshi has chaired the Agricultural and Fisheries Diet Committee and has been a senior director of the Diet's standing committee on METI. In addition, he has served as vice minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) and has been a parliamentary vice minister in the Cabinet Office. Representative Miyakoshi left Kyoto University before graduating and was elected to the Toyama Prefectural Assembly, where he eventually became vice speaker. In the LDP, where he has served as vice chairman of the Policy Research Council, he has been a leader of the subcommittees responsible for agriculture, fisheries, and the environment. He has taken a special interest in diplomatic issues related to the Northern Territories. He was also the chairman of the LDP's Okinawa Revitalization Committee.

Representative Miyakoshi is relatively conservative on cultural issues. In the questionnaire he takes the unqualified position that the prime minister should visit the Yasukuni Shrine and opposes construction of a secular national memorial as substitute for the religious-based

Yasukuni. In our interview, however, he was more nuanced. Representative Miyakoshi supported de-enshrinement (*bunshi*) of convicted war criminals so that the prime minister and the emperor can visit the shrine.[62] He expressed no opinion on how history should judge Japanese behavior during the Pacific War. He strongly supports revision of Article 9 of the Constitution but avoids taking a strong position on the issue of reinterpreting it to allow the exercise of collective self-defense and similarly avoided expressing strong views on the preemptive use of force in the face of an imminent threat. Representative Miyakoshi strongly supports strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance and agrees that Japanese defense capabilities should be enhanced. As he put it, maintaining the alliance is Japan's "obvious" first principle (*tozen da*), adding, "The United Nations will not protect Japan, only the United States will." He did point out, however, that the alliance is imbalanced and insisted that changes need to be made so that Japan can aid the United States should it come under attack.[63] His economic views are a study in contrast. On the one hand, he has aligned himself with the mainstream of the LDP on the politically-sensitive pension issue and accepts the party's position on public works as an instrument for sustaining employment. On the other hand, he is less enthusiastic about the importance of maintaining lifetime employment in the private sector. He is a strong consumer advocate. On his account, "Japan should not automatically put producers first. There should be a better policy balance between producer demands and consumer interests."[64]

### *Kono Taro (LDP)*

Koeno Taro (44 years old) has been elected four times from the Kanagawa 15th district. First elected in 1996, after his father's (and grandfather's) multi-member district was reconfigured, he is a graduate of Georgetown University. His pre-Diet experience included working on the staff of U.S. senator Richard Shelby (Alabama) and a stint as a corporate representative for Fuji-Xerox in Southeast Asia. Despite his youth, he has already occupied significant positions in the government, the Diet, and the LDP. In the government he has served as vice minister of Justice and parliamentary vice minister in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. In the Diet he is a member of the Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Land, Infrastructure, and Transport. He is also a member of the Diet Special Committee on International Terrorism Prevention. In the LDP, where he is a member of the Aso faction, he has been deputy chairman of the Policy Research Council, chairman of the Committee on Judicial Affairs and Local Autonomous Organizations, and acting director of the LDP's Foreign Affairs Division, a subcommittee within the Policy Research Council. More importantly, he has been deputy secretary-general of the LDP. In addition to the above, Representative Kono has built an extremely wide policy portfolio, working on such issues as immigration, health and welfare, foreign workers, consumers, and terrorism.

Kono is widely known as an independent thinker within the LDP.[65] In our interview, he acknowledged this, explaining that he feels more comfortable talking to DPJ representatives than to members of his own generational cohort within the LDP.[66] This view of him as a policy maverick is sustained by the results of the ATES. He rejects the legitimacy of prime ministerial

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62 Author interview, Miyakoshi Mitsuhiro, LDP representative, Tokyo, January 24, 2008.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Carlson, *Money Politics in Japan,* 45–49.

66 Author interview, Kono Taro.

visits to Yasukuni Shrine, a position shared by only 6% of his LDP colleagues. His support for the construction of a secular national war memorial is also a minority position in the party. Equally striking is his view that Japan's war policy was both aggressive and mistaken, a position shared by only a fifth of the LDP. On security issues, however, he is as least as conservative as the LDP, and on certain matters, more so. For instance, he supports revision of the constitution along with the majority of his colleagues, but he has staked out an even more conservative position than the average LDP member on allowing the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. His positions on economic policy are varied. Overall, he is a stronger advocate of economic reform than either the average member of his party or his midcareer cohort. However, with regard to the pensions issue, he supports the transformation of the program into one that is purely tax-based. Here again, his views place him among a small minority of both the LDP and the midcareer cohort. He acknowledges that he is not a modal LDP politician and explains that he joined the party "by accident, not by choice."[67] The maverick label thus appears well justified, particularly with regard to his views outside of security policy.

### *Nakagawa Masaharu (DPJ)*

Nakagawa Masaharu (57 year old) has been elected four times from the Mie 2nd district, first in 1996 as a New Frontier Party (Shinshinto) representative. He has specialized in economic affairs, serving as director of the Diet Budget Committee and as a member of the Diet Financial Affairs Committee. He has also served as a member of the Special Committee on International Terrorism Prevention and the Special Committee on Japan's Cooperation and Support for Humanitarian Assistance for Iraq Reconstruction. He is also a member of the Special Committee for Research on the Constitution. In 2004–2005, he was a member of the Special Committee on North Korean Abductees, and has at various times served on the Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs and Fundamental National Polices. Again reflecting his expertise on financial matters, he has served as the Party's Shadow Minister for Finance and as chair of the DPJ Tax Committee. In addition, he has been a deputy chair of the DPJ Policy Research Committee and senior vice chair of the party's Diet Affairs Committee. He has also chaired a research committee on the status of foreign workers in Japan. After graduating from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, he joined the Japan Foundation, which he left in 1983 to run for the Mie prefectural assembly, where he served three terms. He left the assembly in 1993 to join Hosokawa Morihiro's Nihon Shinto. He subsequently joined Ozawa Ichiro's New Frontier Party in 1995 and later the DPJ. He is one of the few DPJ incumbents to successfully defend his single-member district in September 2005, when Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro engineered an overwhelming victory for the LDP.

Representative Nakagawa is more progressive on cultural issues than Representative Miyakoshi and is closely aligned with the views of Representative Kono. Specifically, he insists that under no circumstances should the prime minister visit the Yasukuni Shrine and strongly supports the establishment of a secular war memorial. On both these issues, he is aligned with the overwhelming majority of his party. On security issues, Nakagawa is far more dovish than either of the LDP representatives above as well as the other members of his party and of his midcareer generational cohort. He favors constitutional revision, but does not limit his preferred changes to Article 9. He argues for a third paragraph in Article 9 explicitly allowing Japan to participate in collective

[67] Author interview, Kono Taro. On his account, running as an independent was a non-starter, and not being a communist, socialist or religionist, the Japan Communist Party (JCP), Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ), and NK were ruled out. In the mid-1990s, this left him with either the New Frontier Party (NFP) or the LDP, and as he did not believe the NFP would survive, the LDP was the only option.

security regimes, and opposes collective self-defense.[68] In his answers to the survey, he strongly opposed increasing defense capabilities and prefers a strengthened alliance with the United States. In the interview, however, Representative Nakagawa criticized Japan's current leadership generation as too eager "to follow the U.S. on all security matters. Our generation wants to be more independent and to make decisions on the basis of our own values."[69] Importantly, he categorically opposes the preemptive use of force in the face of imminent threat, a position aligning him with only one-fifth of his party and even fewer of his generational cohort. He strongly supports the creation of a new security architecture for Asia.

In economic policy, the area of his particular expertise, Nakagawa is a reformer. He strongly supports increasing the consumption tax to pay for pensions and, like Representative Kono, believes that only taxes should be used to support the social security system. He expresses greater skepticism than the other members of his party or generational cohort on the issues of the traditional Japanese employment system, the use of public works to stabilize employment, and the application of fiscal stimulus. In our interview, he advocated creation of an East Asian economic community that excludes the United States.[70]

### *Watanabe Shu (DPJ)*

Watanabe Shu (46 years old) has been elected four times from the Shizuoka 6th district. He is the senior director of the Diet's National Security Committee and Special Committee on the Abductees Issue and a director of the Special Committee on International Terrorism Prevention.[71] He is also a member of the Diet standing committees on the cabinet, ethics, and elections. He has twice been named a DPJ shadow minister, first for the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry and then in 2005 for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. He has also served as senior deputy secretary-general of the DPJ and as deputy chair of the party's Diet Affairs Committee. He is now deputy chair of the DPJ Tax Committee.

The son of a former Diet member from the small Democratic Socialist Party, Representative Watanabe graduated from the Waseda University School of Politics and Economics and also studied at Columbia University. After graduating from Waseda he joined the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, where he covered important issues such as the death of the Showa Emperor and the Imperial succession. In 1990 he left Yomiuri and successfully stood for election to the Shizuoka prefectural assembly, where he worked on social welfare and environmental issues.

Representative Watanabe consistently departs from the most popular positions on cultural, security, and economics both within the DPJ and his midcareer cohort. On cultural issues, he is more conservative than Representative Nakagawa. In our interview he advocated changing

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[68] Author interview, Nakagawa Masaharu, DPJ Representative, Tokyo, January 24, 2008. In the Japanese discourse, the distinction is made between "collective self-defense" (*shudanteki jiei*) and "collective security" (*shudanteki anzenhosho*). Collective self-defense is narrowly defined as the use of force to defend an ally that has come under attack. The focus here is on bilateral military cooperation, which is banned under the extant interpretation of Article 9. Collective security, by contrast, refers to cooperation with international organizations and other countries to enhance the security of countries without relevant alliance relationships. For fuller analysis, see J. Patrick Boyd and Richard J. Samuels, *Nine Lives?: The Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan,* Policy Studies 19, (Washington D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2005).

[69] Author interview, Nakagawa Masaharu.

[70] Ibid.

[71] In December 2007, DPJ Representative Watanabe became a founding director of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals, a private sector think-tank established to "build an independent and self-respecting nation and study the basic issues facing Japan." The group's first proposal focused on North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. See *Sankei Shimbun,* "Sakurai-shira shinku tanku shido" [Sakurai and Others Start Think Tank], January 22, 2008, 3.

the constitution to make the emperor the "head of state" (*genshu*).[72] On the Yasukuni issue, he supports prime ministerial visits provided that foreign relations are taken into consideration, a more conservative position than Nakagawa's and part of a small (17%) contingent with the party. Although he does support the construction of a secular war memorial, he is unwilling either to defend or criticize Japan's behavior during the Pacific War. Representative Watanabe, who openly considers China a threat, is rather more hawkish than most members of his party and slightly more so than his generational cohort. He strongly supports Japan's right to preemptive action in the face of imminent threat, a position shared by only 4 of the 105 DPJ members who responded to that question. Indeed, this position was shared by only slightly more than 8% of his midcareer cohort. He favors preserving the first paragraph of Article 9 and adding a clause stipulating Japan's responsibility to make "international contributions" (*kokusai koken*), but is ambivalent on the question of collective self-defense. In what we have found to be an unusual configuration, he strongly supports increased defense capabilities but is ambivalent about strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance. In his words, "This may be hard for you to hear, but Japan should be more distant from the United States in security affairs." He told us that the Japanese government was too credulous in accepting U.S. claims about WMD in Iraq, adding that "Japan was being used by the United States."[73] Like Representative Nakagawa, he expressed concern that the current generation of leaders has been too deferential to Washington.

On economic matters, his position is quite similar to that of Representative Nakagawa. Like Nakagawa, Watanabe leans in the direction of economic reform and is reluctant to support lifetime employment in the private sector, public works to ensure employment levels, and fiscal stimulus to spur economic growth. In his words, "lifetime employment should be protected, but I suspect it will disappear for everyone but the bureaucrats."[74] He lines up with the majority of his generation in supporting the current funding system of contributions and taxes for pensions, a conservative position shared by only a small minority of his party. Likewise, he joins a minority of DPJ members (34%), who oppose raising the consumption tax to sustain the social security system.

## Conclusion

This study has explored generational differences across three important dimensions of Japanese political discourse. Though the available data was not sufficient to adequately test the relative utility of the two dominant models of generational politics, the study does support some tentative conclusions regarding each model. First, in the absence of panel data we did not find strong evidence supporting the life cycle model in the form of statistically significant differences moving in one direction from the youngest to the oldest cohort or vice versa. Either the model is underspecified or political preferences among Japanese politicians are more fixed than the life cycle model would predict.

Second, the data only partially supported our hypotheses based on the experiential model—the bulk of this study. For example, contrary to our expectation we did not find any significantly different level of left-right polarization within the eldest generation. Although there are coherent

[72] Author interview, Watanabe Shu.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

policy differences between individual politicians of the same party (e.g., between Aso Taro and Kato Koichi, both from the LDP) as well as across parties (e.g., between Hiranuma Takeo, who is an independent, and Yokomichi Takahiro from the DPJ), the study does not find strong support for Mannheim's concept of "generational units" forming within any one generation in this study. In addition, although the model predicted that the midcareer generation would hold a less favorable view than the oldest generation of the United States, the data did not support this hypothesis: the middle group in fact favors strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance at a higher rate than the eldest cohort.

These limitations notwithstanding, the study did generate interesting and significant results, some of which are particularly striking. For example, there is now compelling evidence that Japan's culture war is not fought on a generational battleground. The study supports this conclusion for three reasons. First, there were no statistically significant differences on any of the five cultural questions between any pair of generations in our study. Second, the study finds that cultural conservatives (such as Abe Shinzo), who have received so much media attention, are actually a minority within the midcareer generation, which proved to be more progressive on cultural issues than any other. Cultural conservatives are in fact distributed across the three generations without dominating any single one. Although concentrated in the LDP, cultural conservatives are outnumbered by the combination of the cultural progressives in the opposition and the large minority in the LDP. Finally, the widely touted institutional basis for generational politics among Diet members on cultural issues is not what it seems. The study explored the generational composition and policy efficacy of young Diet member groups—such as the Young Diet Member's League—and found that membership in these groups is not always limited to young Diet members. For example, among the founding members of the Young Diet Member's League, two-thirds of both the leadership and the membership belong to the most senior cohort analyzed in this study—an anomaly that was corrected when the group eventually dropped the term "young" from its name.[75] Apparently youth is measured not only chronologically but also in electoral terms—most members of the Young Diet Member's League had been elected five or fewer times when the group was first founded. This same pattern obtains in other so-called youth groups in the Diet; for example, Representative Kono Taro stated that after being elected for the fourth time he stopped receiving invitations to these groups' meetings, even though he is younger than many who do.[76]

…there is now compelling evidence that Japan's culture war is not fought on a generational battleground.

The policy efficacy of these groups receives mixed reviews. According to Kono, who reported having joined nearly two dozen such groups: "They don't last and most have no policy relevance."[77] Another Diet representative, who is not currently a member of any such group, expressed a more

[75] The names of the 26 founding leaders and 46 members were taken from Young Diet Member's League to Consider Japan's Future and History Education [Nippon no Zento to Rekishi Kyoiku wo Kangaeru Wakate Giin no Kai], *Rekishi kyokasho he no gimon* [Questions about History Textbooks] (Tokyo: Tendensha, 1997), 516–17. Judging from references to the group's name in news reports, the name change occurred in late 2004 or early 2005. The first reference appearing in *Asahi Shimbun* without the term "young" was January 2005. See "NHK Bangumi Kaihen" [Changes to an NHK Program], *Asahi Shimbun,* January 18, 2005, 33.

[76] Author interview, Kono Taro.

[77] Ibid.

positive view of their efficacy: "Young guys are always on the front line. They sharpen the issues." This representative added, however, that "these groups come and go as needed."[78] It seems that young Diet member groups serve both policy and political functions. First, these groups raise the salience of selected issues and clarify the contours of national debate. Second, such groups allow Diet members with relatively little experience to position themselves in certain policy areas to impress constituents during re-election campaigns. Though it is clear that these groups do help establish cross-factional and cross-party ties, the study also found that the groups do not consistently function as primary conduits for generational political action.

Although the study found that the youngest generation appears more hawkish on security issues than the older generations, the results in the security dimension were less robust than we expected. The exception was the finding that support in the youngest cohort for increasing Japan's defense capabilities is stronger than in the midcareer generation—a statistically significant result. Otherwise no pair of generations varied from one another on security issues at a statistically significant level. In addition, given that the elder generation is more hawkish than the midcareer cohort on the issues of preemptive action and stronger defense capabilities, it cannot be concluded that younger cohorts always favor more muscular policies than older generations. More importantly the study finds support across all generational cohorts for strengthening both the U.S.-Japan alliance and Japan's own defense capabilities. The breadth of this support suggests that if the current distribution of preferences holds, generational factors will not drive major changes in Japanese security doctrine.

The economic dimension, however—where the electoral stakes are higher than in the security dimension—consistently generated statistically significant results. There is a robust difference between the two younger generations and the current ruling cohort on issues of economic policy. Being far less attached to the traditional institutions of the Japanese economy, the younger generations are significantly more likely to oppose state intervention to maintain employment levels and Keynesian solutions to economic problems. Nor do these generations support traditional, but inefficient, practices in the private sector, such as lifetime employment. Given this result, and assuming that the current distribution of preferences remains in place, continued political support for the transformation of Japanese economic institutions should be expected. That said, although the relatively negative view of Japanese-style capitalism held by the younger cohorts may indicate an openness to neo-liberal policies—in the sense of increased preferences for market-based solutions and less government involvement in the economy—this result is not evidence that these younger generations have adopted such views to the same degree and extent as have leaders in Washington or London.[79]

To place these generational results in context, we also analyzed the distribution of policy preferences against party affiliation and factional affiliation within the LDP. In seventeen of the twenty questions we examined, differences across the three largest parties (LDP, DPJ, and NK) were statistically significant. In only three cases did this result obtain when comparing LDP factions.[80] Because differences in responses to six of these questions were statistically significant

[78] Author interview, Nakagawa Masaharu.

[79] For a nuanced analysis of the current state of economic reform in Japan, see Vogel, *Japan Remodeled.*

[80] This result contradicts Prime Minister Fukuda's recent call for LDP factions to be viewed as "policy groups" (*seisaku gurupu*). See "Habatsu suitai tomarazu" [The Decline of Factions Has Not Stopped], *Asahi Shimbun,* October 5, 2007, 4.

among the generational cohorts, we conclude that generations are more closely associated with policy views than factions, but considerably less so than parties.

When identifying the three generational cohorts earlier in the study, we speculated on the policy positions each would embrace relative to the other generations. A number of these hypothesized relationships held—many at a statistically significant level. The eldest generation stood out vis-à-vis the other two on issues of economic policy in terms of support for the traditional institutions of the Japanese economy. Likewise, the youngest cohort differentiated itself from the other two on security policy by being the most hawkish. Finally, the middle cohort was marginally more progressive on cultural issues than either the eldest or the youngest generation. These relationships are summarized in **Table 2**.

The table illustrates that one generation generally differs from the other two in each policy dimension and that the outlier is different in both cases where statistically significant results obtained.

In sum, this study has found significant generational differences in economic policy preferences, less significant differences in security policy, and to our surprise no significant generational differences on cultural issues. Changed structural circumstances—either domestic or external—could of course result in a reshuffling of this deck. We therefore conclude this study by exploring the possibilities for generational impact on politics in three plausible medium-term scenarios, assuming that the current distribution of policy preferences across generations is maintained.

The first scenario is the current status quo in which the LDP and its coalition partner, the NK, continue to govern. The second presumes an unprecedented change of government in which the DPJ takes power, possibly with the NK. The third presumes a realignment of the current party structure in which all three major parties become irrelevant.

Assuming all else remains constant, if the LDP continues to govern in coalition with the NK, we should expect continued reform in economic policy (especially in the use of fiscal policy and public works), continued or enhanced support for the U.S.-Japan alliance, and little change in the culture war. We base these conclusions on two sources of information. The first is the distribution of preferences among the sixteen midcareer LDP and DPJ representatives who were identified as likely future leaders. The second source is a comparison of the midcareer cohort in each of the two major parties, which reveals that differences will remain across parties as the new generation assumes power. These differences therefore will likely continue to define partisan politics in familiar ways for the next fifteen to twenty years.

Although this first scenario presumes the status quo, even under status quo assumptions it has not been possible to imagine LDP governance without considering the DPJ position since the DPJ achieved a near single-party majority in the upper house in July 2007. Thus our predictions for this first scenario are tempered by the expectation that the DPJ will continue to influence policy outcomes even as the ruling generation is replaced.

In the event that the DPJ actually becomes the governing party (the second scenario) we should expect the next generation of Japanese leaders to embrace the United States as an ally with moderately less enthusiasm than the current leadership does. Comparing the midcareer generation of the DPJ to the current generation of LDP leadership (the most relevant comparison for this scenario), the study finds that the midcareer DPJ politicians are more ambivalent both with respect to the reinterpretation of Article 9 to allow for collective self-defense and with respect to the use of preemptive force. Although by no means dovish in the conventional sense of Japanese

TABLE 2 Summary of generational positions in Japan

| Generation \ Dimension | Culture | Economics | Security |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eldest** | Moderate | Anti-reform | Weak hawk |
| **Midcareer** | Progressive | Pro-reform | Weak hawk |
| **Youngest** | Weak progressive | Pro-reform | Hawk |

NOTE: Shaded cells indicate statistically significant differences.

politics—that is, supporting unarmed neutrality—the DPJ midcareer cohort is less enthusiastic about the use of military force than the current LDP generation of leaders. Likewise, the DPJ will likely support economic reform with even greater enthusiasm than at present. Finally, because there is little support within the party for conservative positions on cultural issues, a future DPJ government will find itself with allies from the midcareer cohort across party lines—a situation that could further isolate the most culturally conservative elements in Japanese politics.

The third scenario presumes party realignment in which there is no longer a LDP or a DPJ and in which the current leadership generation is no longer politically active. Any speculation concerning this scenario must derive from the distribution of views within the current midcareer cohort, leavened by the views of what is today the youngest generation. First, under this scenario political realignment is unlikely to occur in the cultural dimension because most cultural conservatives are already concentrated in a single party (the LDP). Looking to the other dimensions, two types of party systems can be imagined. The first is a competitive system that builds upon the relatively wide distribution of preferences in the security dimension. For example, although the midcareer generation and the youngest cohort are not deeply divided internally over the value of the U.S.-Japan alliance, each generation is evenly divided over the efficacy of the use of force in international affairs. The second is a hegemonic party system in which a reformist economic consensus attracts a near supermajority of politicians—the inverse of LDP governance during the Cold War. This possibility is conceivable both because economic issues have consistently driven electoral outcomes in recent years and because there is a strong consensus within the midcareer and youngest generations in favor of economic reform. Both outcomes are plausible given the distribution of preferences in our data.

Explanations of political change invoke a great many factors: parties, class, interest groups, factions, ideology, and—as in this analysis—generations. This study has explained some factors more than others. Parties remain the single most important organizing unit of policy ideas in Japan. However much the Japanese media associates the rise of right-wing nationalism and cultural conservatism in Japan with an angry and alienated youthful generation, this connection is not reflected in the distribution of preferences among Diet members. To the contrary this study finds that the distribution of preferences is far less extreme than many fear. Though democratic discourse remains active and vibrant in Japan, we find little evidence that either the midcareer generation or the youngest generation will stake out a radically new course for the nation.

## APPENDIX A Notional Generation-Based Groups in the Japanese Diet

1. Young Diet Member's Group Considering Gasoline Issues (*gasorin sutando wo kangaeru wakate giin no kai*)
2. Young Diet Member's Group Considering the Future of Japan's Forestry Industry (*ashita no nihon no ringyo wo kangaeru wakate giin no kai*)
3. Diet Member's League to Achieve a Breakthrough on the Issue of Nursing Care Insurance (*kaigo hoken mondai toppa giin renmei*)
4. Young Diet Member's Group to Promote the Environmental Tax (*kankyozei wo suishin suru wakate giin no ka*i)
5. Young Diet Member's Group Demanding Decisive Reform of Civil Servant Pay (*komuin kyuyo kaikaku danko wo motomeru wakate giin no kai*)
6. Diet Member's Group to Promote Real Reform of the Pension System (*shin no nenkin seido kaikaku wo susumeru giin no kai*)
7. Diet Member's League to Abolish Diet Member Pensions (*giin nenkin haishi giin renmei*)
8. Diet Member's Group to Promote Values-based Diplomacy (*kachikan gaiko wo suishin suru giiin no kai*)
9. Young Diet Member's Group to Establish a National Security System for the New Century (*shinseiki no anzen hosho taisei wo kakuritsu suru wakate giin no kai*)
10. Young Diet Member's Group to Consider Japan's Future and History Education (*nihon no zento to rekishi kyoiku wo kangaeru wakate giin no kai*)
11. Diet Member's Group to Verify the Truth of the Nanking Incident and the Comfort Women Issue (*ianfu mondai to nankin jiken no shinjitsu wo kensho suru kai*)
12. Diet Member's League to Accelerate Reform (*kaikaku kasoku giin renmei*)
13. Diet Member's League for Revolutionary Reform (*kakumeiteki kaikaku giin renmei*)
14. Diet Member's Group for Members First Elected after Their Fiftieth Birthday (*kurounin no kai – chimei risshi kai*)
15. Diet Member's League to Support Second Chance Legislation for Workers (*saicharenji shien giin renmei)*
16. Young Diet Member's Group to Support the Koizumi Government's "No Sacred Cows" Decisive Structural Reform (*koizumi seiken no seiiki naki kozo kaikaku no danko wo shien suru wakate giin no kai*)
17. Diet Member's League to Create a Bright Future and Realize Real Reform to Rescue Japan from Crisis *(nihon no kiki wo sukui shin no kaikaku wo jitsugen shi, akarui mirai wo sozo suru giin renmei*)

**APPENDIX B** Selected Questions and Responses from the 2005 Asahi-Tokyo University Elite Survey (ATES)

## I. Cultural Dimension

**Question 5.1**
What do you think about prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine?

1. The prime minister should visit Yasukuni Shrine
2. Although basically the prime minister should visit Yasukuni Shrine, it is necessary to handle the issue flexibly in consideration of implications for Japan's foreign relations, etc.
3. The prime minister should not visit Yasukuni Shrine

| Q5.1 Generation | 1 Should visit (%) | 2 Consider foreign relations (%) | 3 Should not visit (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 21.8 | 44.7 | 33.5 |
| Midcareer | 14.9 | 48.1 | 37.0 |
| Young | 27.8 | 44.4 | 27.8 |

| Q5.1 Party and HOR | 1 Should visit (%) | 2 Consider foreign relations (%) | 3 Should not visit (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| LDP | 28.8 | 65.0 | 6.2 |
| DPJ | 4.0 | 17.0 | 79.0 |
| HOR | 20.2 | 45.9 | 33.8 |

**Question 5.2**
Do you support or oppose the construction of a new secular national memorial?

1. Support
2. Oppose
3. Don't know

| Q5.2 Generation | 1 Support (%) | 2 Oppose (%) | 3 Don't know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 48.8 | 38.8 | 12.4 |
| Midcareer | 45.6 | 38.6 | 15.8 |
| Young | 52.6 | 31.6 | 15.8 |

| Q5.2 Party and HOR | 1 Support (%) | 2 Oppose (%) | 3 Don't know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| LDP | 29.1 | 52.5 | 18.4 |
| DPJ | 80.2 | 8.9 | 10.9 |
| HOR | 48.3 | 37.4 | 14.4 |

**Question 5.3**
Regarding views of the Pacific War, please mark the response that is closest to your viewpoint.

1. It was a war of self-defense that could not be avoided
2. It was a war of aggression based on mistaken state policies
3. Cannot say either way

| Q5.3 Generation | 1 War of self-defense (%) | 2 War of aggression (%) | 3 Can't say (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 14.6 | 37.6 | 47.8 |
| Midcareer | 8.8 | 38.4 | 52.8 |
| Young | 12.8 | 23.1 | 64.1 |

| Q5.3 Party and HOR | 1 War of self-defense (%) | 2 War of aggression (%) | 3 Can't say (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 0.0 | 84.6 | 15.4 |
| LDP | 16.7 | 20.2 | 63.1 |
| DPJ | 4.9 | 54.4 | 40.8 |
| HOR | 12.0 | 35.2 | 52.8 |

**Question 7**
Revision of the Imperial Household Law is being debated. What are your views on the possibility of a female emperor?

1. Imperial succession should be limited to male children as per current practice
2. A female emperor should also be allowed
3. Don't know

| Q7 Generation | 1 Oppose (%) | 2 Support (%) | 3 Don't know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 2.7 | 91.8 | 5.4 |
| Midcareer | 2.4 | 88.5 | 9.1 |
| Young | 5.1 | 82.3 | 12.7 |

| Q7<br>Party and HOR | 1<br>Oppose<br>(%) | 2<br>Support<br>(%) | 3<br>Don't know<br>(%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **NK** | 0.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| **LDP** | 1.6 | 88.0 | 10.5 |
| **DPJ** | 4.5 | 89.1 | 6.4 |
| **HOR** | 3.0 | 88.8 | 8.2 |

**Question 9.11**
It is natural for privacy and individual rights to be restricted in order to maintain public security.[81]

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.11 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| **Elder** | 2.90 |
| **Midcareer** | 2.88 |
| **Young** | 2.93 |

| Q9.11 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| **NK** | 3.46 |
| **LDP** | 2.50 |
| **DPJ** | 3.49 |
| **HOR** | 2.90 |

**Question 9.12**
Permanent foreign residents should be given the right to vote in local elections.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.12 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| **Elder** | 2.94 |
| **Midcareer** | 2.86 |
| **Young** | 3.00 |

[81] Please note that all questions with a question number beginning in 9 are prefaced by the following passage: "Do you agree or disagree with the opinions listed below? Please select only one answer choice."

| Q9.12 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 1.11 |
| LDP | 3.33 |
| DPJ | 2.52 |
| HOR | 2.92 |

## II. Security Dimension

**Question 6**
Regarding the Self-Defense Force (SDF) deployment to Iraq, which of the following is closest to your opinion?

1. The SDF should be withdrawn as soon as possible
2. The SDF should be withdrawn at the end of this year as per the current deployment schedule
3. If necessary, the deployment should be continued into next year and beyond

| Q6<br>Generation | 1<br>Withdraw ASAP<br>(%) | 2<br>Withdraw end of year<br>(%) | 3<br>Stay as necessary<br>(%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 28.2 | 26.4 | 45.4 |
| Midcareer | 22.4 | 30.1 | 47.4 |
| Young | 22.5 | 30.0 | 47.5 |

| Q6<br>Party and HOR | 1<br>Withdraw ASAP<br>(%) | 2<br>Withdraw end of year<br>(%) | 3<br>Stay as necessary<br>(%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 5.3 | 36.8 | 57.9 |
| LDP | 7.3 | 21.1 | 71.5 |
| DPJ | 58.2 | 40.9 | 0.9 |
| HOR | 24.9 | 28.5 | 46.6 |

**Question 8.1**
Do you think the constitution should be revised? Select only one of the following:

1. Should be revised
2. Probably should be revised
3. Cannot say either way
4. Probably should not be revised
5. Should not be revised

| Q8.1 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 1.61 |
| Midcareer | 1.50 |
| Young | 1.49 |

| Q8.1 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 1.89 |
| LDP | 1.18 |
| DPJ | 2.00 |
| HOR | 1.55 |

**Question 9.1**
Japan's defense capabilities should be made stronger.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.1 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.56 |
| Midcareer | 2.69 |
| Young | 2.30 |

| Q9.1 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 3.30 |
| LDP | 2.19 |
| DPJ | 3.01 |
| HOR | 2.57 |

**Question 9.2**
The U.S.-Japan security alliance should be made stronger than it is today.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.2 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.68 |
| Midcareer | 2.62 |
| Young | 2.56 |

| Q9.2 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 2.79 |
| LDP | 2.28 |
| DPJ | 3.18 |
| HOR | 2.63 |

**Question 9.3**
In the event that an attack by another country is expected, Japan should not hesitate to launch a preemptive attack.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.3 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 3.02 |
| Midcareer | 3.05 |
| Young | 2.96 |

| Q9.3 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 3.71 |
| LDP | 2.71 |
| DPJ | 3.35 |
| HOR | 3.02 |

**Question 9.4**
Japan should become a permanent member of the UN Security Council in order to fulfill its international role.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.4 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 1.72 |
| Midcareer | 1.50 |
| Young | 1.53 |

| Q9.4 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 1.18 |
| LDP | 1.40 |
| DPJ | 1.80 |
| HOR | 1.60 |

**Questions 9.5**
Pressure should be prioritized over dialogue in Japan's policy toward North Korea.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.5 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.56 |
| Midcareer | 2.56 |
| Young | 2.32 |

| Q9.5 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 2.93 |
| LDP | 2.36 |
| DPJ | 2.55 |
| HOR | 2.52 |

**Question 9.6**
The government should change its constitutional interpretation to allow for the exercise of the right of collective self-defense.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.6 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 3.21 |
| Midcareer | 3.19 |
| Young | 3.01 |

| Q9.6 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 4.61 |
| LDP | 2.63 |
| DPJ | 3.83 |
| HOR | 3.17 |

## III. Economic Dimension

**Question 4.2**
Do you think that the Basic Pension System should be funded by pension insurance contributions and taxes as it is today or should it be funded all from taxes?

1. Pension insurance contributions and taxes
2. All from taxes
3. Don't know

| Q4.2 Generation | 1 Contributions and taxes (%) | 2 Taxes (%) | 3 Don't know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 74.6 | 25.4 | 0.0 |
| Midcareer | 70.6 | 29.4 | 0.0 |
| Young | 64.5 | 32.9 | 2.6 |

| Q4.2 Party and HOR | 1 Contributions and taxes (%) | 2 Taxes (%) | 3 Don't know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 100.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| LDP | 88.1 | 11.1 | 0.7 |
| DPJ | 23.3 | 76.7 | 0.0 |
| HOR | 71.3 | 28.3 | 0.5 |

**Question 4.3**
Do you agree or disagree with the idea of increasing the national consumption tax in order to secure revenues for the social security system and to rebuild the nation's finances?

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Disagree

| Q4.3 Generation | 1 Agree (%) | 2 Somewhat agree (%) | 3 Somewhat disagree (%) | 4 Disagree (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elder | 24.6 | 50.9 | 17.1 | 7.4 |
| Midcareer | 11.1 | 50.0 | 28.4 | 10.5 |
| Young | 21.6 | 43.2 | 27.0 | 8.1 |

| Q4.3 Party and HOR | 1 Agree (%) | 2 Somewhat agree (%) | 3 Somewhat disagree (%) | 4 Disagree (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NK | 4.0 | 44.0 | 52.0 | 0.0 |
| LDP | 20.3 | 55.0 | 18.7 | 6.0 |
| DPJ | 23.5 | 43.1 | 26.5 | 6.9 |
| HOR | 18.7 | 49.1 | 23.4 | 8.8 |

**Question 9.7**
Small government is better even if it adversely affects government programs such as social welfare services.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.7 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.86 |
| Midcareer | 2.85 |
| Young | 2.82 |

| Q9.7 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 3.18 |
| LDP | 2.43 |
| DPJ | 3.44 |
| HOR | 2.85 |

**Question 9.8**
Japanese companies should maintain lifetime employment practices.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.8 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.71 |
| Midcareer | 3.08 |
| Young | 3.21 |

| Q9.8 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 3.00 |
| LDP | 3.00 |
| DPJ | 3.02 |
| HOR | 2.94 |

**Question 9.9**
It is necessary to ensure employment levels through public works projects.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.9 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 2.58 |
| Midcareer | 2.99 |
| Young | 3.20 |

| Q9.9 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 2.96 |
| LDP | 2.72 |
| DPJ | 3.26 |
| HOR | 2.85 |

**Question 9.10**
For the time being, in order to rebuild the nation's finances, rather than hold down expenditures, the government should utilize fiscal policy to stimulate the economy.

1. Agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Cannot say either way
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Disagree

| Q9.10 Generation | Mean |
|---|---|
| Elder | 3.26 |
| Midcareer | 3.60 |
| Young | 3.74 |

| Q9.10 Party and HOR | Mean |
|---|---|
| NK | 3.68 |
| LDP | 3.48 |
| DPJ | 3.68 |
| HOR | 3.48 |

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# The Rise, Fall, and Transformation of the "386": Generational Change in Korea

*L. Gordon Flake*

**L. GORDON FLAKE** is Executive Director of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation. He is co-editor with Roh-Byug Park of the book *Understanding New Political Realities in Seoul: Working toward a Common Approach to Strengthen U.S.-Korean Relations* (2008) and co-editor with Scott Snyder of *Paved with Good Intentions: The NGO Experience in North Korea* (2003). He can be reached at <lgflake@mansfieldfdn.org>.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pace of development and societal transformation in Korea over the past half century has been truly dramatic. The extent of this change has endowed several generations in the post–Korean War era with remarkably distinct characteristics, despite the relatively short time span. This article focuses primarily upon the cohort, at times celebrated and at times reviled, popularly known as the "386 generation" and the pivotal generation for understanding Korea's present and future trajectory into the next ten to fifteen years. While this generation's rise and fall in the past decade has been meteoric, it is its ongoing transformation that most bears observation.

## MAIN FINDINGS

Within the lifespan of a single generation, Korea has experienced tremendous social change. However, the various stages of this transformation have impacted subsequent generations during their most formative times in starkly different ways. The 386 generation's views and values were forged during the key period of Korea's transition to democracy in the 1980s. While the political activities of the core student activists from that time have garnered the most attention, perhaps the most transformative influence of the 386 generation has been in the cultural, civic, and business sectors. During the past five years this generation shared the Roh Mu Hyun administration's rise to prominence as well as its cataclysmic decline. Today, the 386 generation is among Korea's largest and remains, despite recent setbacks, extremely influential in Korea's political sphere. While individual interests, tactics, and direct involvement of this particular generation are changing, its core values remain distinctive and will continue to set expectations for both domestic and foreign policy.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Observers in the U.S. would be mistaken to conclude definitively that the recent election of the relatively conservative Lee Myung Bak and the subsequent success of the Grand National Party in the National Assembly elections mark a return to the harshly anti-Communist and unquestioningly pro-alliance positions of previous decades.
- Future Korean administrations, as well as Korea's international relations, will continue to be influenced by and in some respects held to the standards advanced by Korea's rising generations.

Over the past five decades the pace of change in the Republic of Korea[1] has been so dramatic that efforts to understand developments on the peninsula have tended to focus on how fundamentally Korea has been transformed in the space of what is loosely considered to be a single generation, rather than upon the changes in the generations themselves. Without even focusing on the upper ranks of the elderly, someone born in Korea during the 1930s or the 1940s has lived to experience Japanese occupation, national liberation, the U.S. military government, the foundation of the Republic of Korea, the division of the peninsula, the fratricidal Korean War and its resultant devastation, a period of economic development so rapid in pace that it is often termed a "miracle," three decades of military dictatorship, and a relatively peaceful transition to a vibrant democracy.

While such witnesses to history remain an active and important part of Korean society, Korea in 2008 is increasingly a highly democratic, technologically advanced, and economic powerhouse with a vibrant civil society and a cultural sector whose influence extends throughout the region. In order to understand where Korea is today, and more importantly where Korea is going, one must understand the subsequent postwar generations in Korea, as well as the impact they have had, and are likely to have, on Korea's future.

## Understanding Generational Change in Korea

### *Defining Events in Korea's Recent History*

For some generations, such as the World War II cohort in the United States that has been termed the "greatest," there is little dispute about the defining event of an era. Such is the case for Koreans over 55 who directly experienced the bloody three-year conflict that we call the "Korean War" and which Koreans in the South term the "625 War" for the North Korean invasion on June 25, 1950, that initiated conflict. For an already impoverished nation newly independent from Japanese occupation and annexation, the Korean War was a truly cataclysmic event. The conflict raged up and down the Korean Peninsula, resulting in millions of civilian casualties with destruction on such an epic scale that it could not help but be the primary touchstone even for those born in the decade following the truce that was declared in 1953.

It is in some way fitting then that the same Koreans who experienced the lowest of lows would also witness, within the lifespan of a single generation, the dramatic economic growth that has come to be known as the Korean economic "miracle," or more colloquially, the "Miracle on the Han."[2] In the space of just over 30 years Korea went from being a backwards, agrarian economy with a per capita GNP of $60 per year to a nation hosting the Olympics and joining the developed nations in the ranks of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[3]

For decades, political change in Korea did not keep pace with the economic transformation of the country. After the failed policies of import substitution led by the Republic of Korea's first president Rhee Syng Man, military strongman Park Chung Hee, who took over in a military coup in 1961, set the country on a pace of rapid industrialization and economic progress. Koreans'

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[1] This essay is focused on generational changes in the Republic of Korea or "South Korea," unless otherwise specified. All references to "Korea" refer to the Republic of Korea.

[2] The "Han" being the Han River that runs through Seoul.

[3] To put the era in context, Korea is now the thirteenth largest economy in the world, with an annual per capita GDP of over $20,000. While its feasibility is challenged, President Lee Myung Bak campaigned on a promise to bring the era of 747 to Korea—not the Boeing plane, but instead 7% annual growth, per-capita GDP of $40,000, and status as the seventh largest economy in the world.

**TABLE 1** Presidents of the Republic of Korea

| Name | Date in office |
|---|---|
| Rhee Syng Man | 1948–60 |
| Yun Po Sung | 1960–62 |
| Park Chung Hee | 1963–79 |
| Choi Kyu Ha | 1979–80 |
| Chun Doo Hwan | 1980–88 |
| Roh Tae Woo | 1988–93 |
| Kim Young Sam | 1993–98 |
| Kim Dae Jung | 1998–2003 |
| Roh Mu Hyun | 2003–08 |
| Lee Myung Bak | 2008– |

hopes for democracy were dashed shortly after the assassination of Park by one of his own aides in 1979 when yet another military leader, Chun Doo Hwan, assumed control in 1980. This transfer frustrated an increasingly educated and politically aware Korean populace that thought its rapidly developing country had moved beyond the stage of rule by military dictatorship and political transition through coup d'état. Among the responses to this coup were nationwide demonstrations that led to a stand-off in the southwestern city of Gwangju and a subsequent bloody crackdown that has become known as the Gwangju Incident of 1980, an incident that that would become the defining moment for the first fully post–Korean War generation.[4]

Although there had been active student and pro-democracy movements throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, it was in the 1980s that both the student movement and the democracy movement came to full maturity. Utilizing the international attention focused on Korea by its successful bid to host the 1988 Olympics, core groups of student activists and organizers were able to mobilize a growing number of students and ultimately broad swaths of society, perhaps most importantly, Korea's emerging middle class. These growing calls for and mass demonstrations in support of greater democracy reached their climax on June 10, 1987, when Roh Tae Woo, the designated successor of Chun Doo Hwan, accepted demands for direct elections of the president.

The presidential elections of December 1987 were the first to be considered free and fair in Korea, but they were not yet considered to represent full democracy. The failure of the political opposition represented by the "Three Kims"—Kim Dae Jung, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong Pil—to field a unified candidate led to the election of former general Roh Tae Woo with a plurality of the vote. Five years later in 1992, opposition leader Kim Young Sam was elected president, though only after merging with the ruling party. It was only the election of President Kim Dae Jung in 1997, leading an opposition party and representing the underprivileged Cholla region of southwestern Korea, that finally was seen as marking the full transition to democracy.

The year 1997 was a turning point for the Korean economy as well. Korea had just enacted a range of sweeping financial reforms and obtained membership in the OECD when the 1997 financial crisis that swept through much of Asia hit Korea hard and shook the public's faith in an economy that had grown at close to double-digit rates for nearly 30 years. It was in part the perceived economic failings of the Kim Young Sam administration that opened the door for the election of the progressive Kim Dae Jung. President Kim Dae Jung's election also brought about the

[4] One indication of the sensitivity surrounding this event is that the "Gwangju Incident," as it was originally known, is now officially referred to as the "Gwangju Democratization Movement" after years of progressive governments. Without intending any disrespect, however, the former terminology will be maintained in this essay, given that the event is still better known among readers in the United States as the Gwangju Incident.

most significant change in South Korea's approach to North Korea in the more than 40 years since the end of the Korean War. In his inauguration speech, President Kim Dae Jung openly called for peaceful coexistence with the North—something that would have been considered blasphemy just a few short years before.

Just as the 1997 election challenged the economic underpinnings of Korean society, the election of 2002 turned to challenge another long-standing tenant of Korean political society, the U.S.-ROK alliance. Partly due to a surge of national pride after the successful hosting of the World Cup, which mobilized Korea's younger generations, and partly due to the controversy surrounding the tragic death of two Korean schoolgirls in an accident during U.S. military training exercises, President Roh Mu Hyun was elected on a wave of anti-American sentiment.

The five years of the Roh administration were tumultuous, both in Korea's domestic affairs and in its foreign policy. After ten years of successive progressive governments, the elections of 2007 brought about another shift, and the electoral success of President Lee Myung Bak arguably represents the establishment of a regular political transition between Left and Right—a change from the past when Korea had only half a political spectrum.

While in a summary effort such as this it is impossible to identify all the defining events for a single generation, let alone for the entire post–Korean War period, one useful filter is the events that are so prominent that they are known by their dates alone. Just as December 7, 1941, was declared by President Franklin Roosevelt to be a day that will live in infamy, and September 11 has become the touchstone for a new generation of Americans, there are a select few events in recent Korean history that are significant enough to be known by their dates alone: 625, 419, 518, and 610. These events are the June 25 start of the Korean War, the April 19 Revolution, the May 18 Gwangju Incident, and the June 10 concession to democratization, respectively.

### *Understanding Generational Distinctions and Differences in Korea*

In countries or societies that have not undergone significant transformation or rapid change, one might presume that the chronological distinctions between one generation and another would provide little assistance in understanding that nation's policies and proclivities. As noted in the preceding sections, however, Korea has not lacked seminal events or generational touchstones. As such, chronological distinctions between generations in Korea do have real meaning. In the case of Korea, these distinctions are defined not only by the presence of common experiences but also by the lack or absence of particular common experiences. For example, the fact that the Korean War generation as well as several postwar generations experienced rapid economic growth and democratization, the fact that post–Korean War generations did not directly experience the trauma and hardship of the Korean War and its immediate aftermath, and the fact that all of these generations experienced Korea's economic progress and democratization at different stages in life resulted in remarkably different views of and approaches to the opportunities and challenges faced by Korea.

Without delving too deeply into the academic debate on what constitutes a "generation" or applying a single rigorous definition in the attempt to explain the dramatic changes in Korea, this essay benefits greatly from the writings of one of the co-authors in this report, Dr. Shelley Rigger. Dr. Rigger clearly summarizes the late Karl Mannheim's requirements for an age cohort to achieve generational distinction if it, "during its formative years, collectively pass[es] through events

and experiences that destabilize prevailing social and cultural norms."[5] Given the tumultuous changes that Korea has undergone over the past 50 years alone, this definition lends a relatively free hand to interpretations of generational divisions in Korea. Perhaps more importantly, Korean generations are largely self-defined in the public discourse. In the Korean context, the term *saedae,* or "generation," to a particular cohort closely tracks Mannheim's definition of generational distinctions as being environmentally determined on an experiential rather than a solely chronological basis.

For the purposes of this work, it is helpful to identify and understand at least four key generational cohorts in modern Korean society.

*The Korean War generation.* The generation that directly experienced the horrors of the Korean War, albeit at a relatively young age, dominated Korean politics and business for most of the past three decades. Following the leadership of an aging Rhee Syng Man, the relatively young Park Chung Hee and his successor Chun Doo Hwan both had direct military experience. The core of Korea's democratic opposition known as the Three Kims was similarly part of that generation. This generation's view of the United States, in particular, was deeply affected by the role of the United States in liberating Korea from Japan, as well as the role of the United States and the United Nations in pushing back the North Korean invasion of the South. Though somewhat broader in chronological scope than some subsequent generations, this cohort is bound together in that it most directly experienced the horrible devastation wrought by the Korean War, as well as the poverty and hunger that followed, and they were most directly responsible for the country's rapid industrialization and economic development.

*The yushin generation or the "squeezed" generation.* The generation that was born in the 1950s and came of age in the late 60s and early 70s is at times referred to as the *yushin* generation, since this cohort came of age politically when Park Chung Hee pronounced the harsh yushin constitution, partly in response to its agitation for greater democracy.[6] Like generations that followed, the yushin generation was actively involved in the student movement and actively, if unsuccessfully, sought the democratization of Korean society. Several members of this cohort refer to themselves as the *ggin,* or "squeezed," generation, given that the prominence and endurance of the preceding generation offered them little opportunity to emerge in their own right. With the election of the Roh government in 2002, this generation appeared to have been bypassed in favor of the rising generation. A quick survey of the cabinet representing the newly inaugurated Lee Myung Bak administration, however, reveals that the majority of cabinet members and key advisors are members of the yushin generation. Predictably, with their rise to prominence, they too have been given a numerical generational moniker: the 475 generation. Like the "comeback kids" of recent U.S. politics, the 475ers may justifiably claim the title of the "comeback generation." Yet in numbers, they remain "squeezed" between the broader grouping of the Korean War generation and the larger 386 generation that immediately followed.

Though not a sufficiently long period of time for a fair assessment, the first hundred days of the Lee Myung Bak administration and the unanticipated transformation of Korean domestic opposition to the importation of U.S. beef into a genuine political crisis of public support is an

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[5] Shelly Rigger, *Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics, and "Taiwanese Nationalism,"* Policy Studies 26 (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2006), 11.

[6] The term *yushin* means "restoration," and this constitution granted enormous powers to President Park Chung Hee including a six-year term, unlimited re-election, and the power to appoint a large portion of the National Assembly.

early indication that the 475 generation has yet to adjust to the changed political environment in which it is now operating.

*The 386 generation.* By far the most recognizable generation in Korea, and the one sufficiently different from preceding cohorts as to raise public consciousness of generational change, is the so-called 386 generation. Like the baby boomers and Generation X in the United States, a memorable nickname seems to be a requisite for generational recognition. The 386 generation is a moniker that gained prominence in Korea during the late 1990s and refers to those who were in their 30s at the time, went to college in the 1980s, and were born in the 1960s. There is also a side reference to the fact that this first digital generation in Korea cut its professional teeth on 386 computers. Now that all but the tail end of that particular cohort are in their 40s, there is something to be said for a logic progression to the designation 486 or, to keep up with the computer metaphor, "Pentium" status. For the purpose of this essay, however, this generation shall remain forever in its 30s—a claim the author's mother managed to maintain for decades—and the distinctive 386 will be used hereafter. As this generation is the focus of this study, its particular characteristics will be described in subsequent sections of this essay. In summary, however, the members of the 386 generation largely came of age politically in a rapidly industrializing and economically secure, if not wealthy, post–Korean War environment. The primary issue during their politically formative period of college education was Korea's struggle for democracy. As such, the defining characteristic for the 386 generation was its participation in, support for, or relationship to the student-led democratization movement of the 1980s.

*The "wired" generation.* The upcoming generation, individuals in their 20s and early 30s, much like Generation Y in the United States, has yet to develop a clearly defined identity or a unitary nickname. Some call it the "World Cup generation," while others have labeled it the "enjoyment generation," the "Internet generation," or the "IMF generation." In general the members of this generation came of age politically in a relatively wealthy, industrialized, democratic Korea that had already hosted the Olympics, joined the OECD, and achieved considerable international recognition. Equally important, they belong to the first post–Cold War generation and tend to be less political, more international, and certainly more Internet and technology savvy. The seminal event for this generation is most likely economic, such as the 1997 financial crisis, rather than political. Although there is some indication that the rising generation is more pragmatic, if not more conservative, than the 386 generation, there are also indications of its relative political apathy. In the 2002 presidential elections that were presumed to be the showcase of youthful exuberance, only 57% of the post–386 generation actually voted.[7] While high for the United States, that percentage is low for Korea, even in an era of declining political participation. One important caveat regarding the rising generation is that the full meaning and extent of its role in the recent anti–Lee Myung Bak demonstrations, sparked by the importation of U.S. beef into Korea, are not yet clearly understood. There are, however, early indications that the rising generation's participation in these demonstrations was at least in part fueled by a search for the meaning and purpose of the 386 generation that has been lionized in Korean popular culture.

[7] Sun-Young Park, "Shinsedae: Conservative Attitudes of a 'New Generation' in South Korea and the Impact on the Presidential Election," East West Center, Insights 2, no. 1, September 2007.

## The 386 Generation in Focus

The decision to focus a discussion of Korea's generational change primarily on the 386 generation will be inevitably controversial. It can certainly be argued that the 386 generation was not involved in the defining event of the last century for Korea—the Korean War—nor was it responsible for Korea's industrialization and dramatic economic growth. The 386 generation is not currently in power in that neither the president nor a single member of his cabinet or senior advisors come from that generation. Given a dynamic and very international rising generation in its 20s and early 30s, some may argue that the torch has already been passed. Moreover, given the striking unpopularity and electoral failings of the Roh government, as well as the political parties that were championed and staffed by core members of the 386 generation, one might reasonably conclude that the 386 generation had its shot, failed, and will now fade from the scene.

Basic demographics, however, would argue differently. Like the baby boom generation in the United States, birth rates, and more importantly the survival rates of children, increased dramatically throughout the 1960s in Korea. Equally as important in this case, the birth rate in Korea began to decline at an accelerating rate as Korea continued to progress economically. In fact, according to the "State of the World Population 2007" report filed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the end of 2006, South Korea's birth rate[8] stood at 1.19, marking the fourth lowest birth rate in the world.[9] The relevance of these trends can easily be seen in **Figure 1** below. Looking at the 2005 population data, the two largest groups of Koreans, those from the 35–39 and 40–44 age bracket, encompass the entirety of the 386 generation.

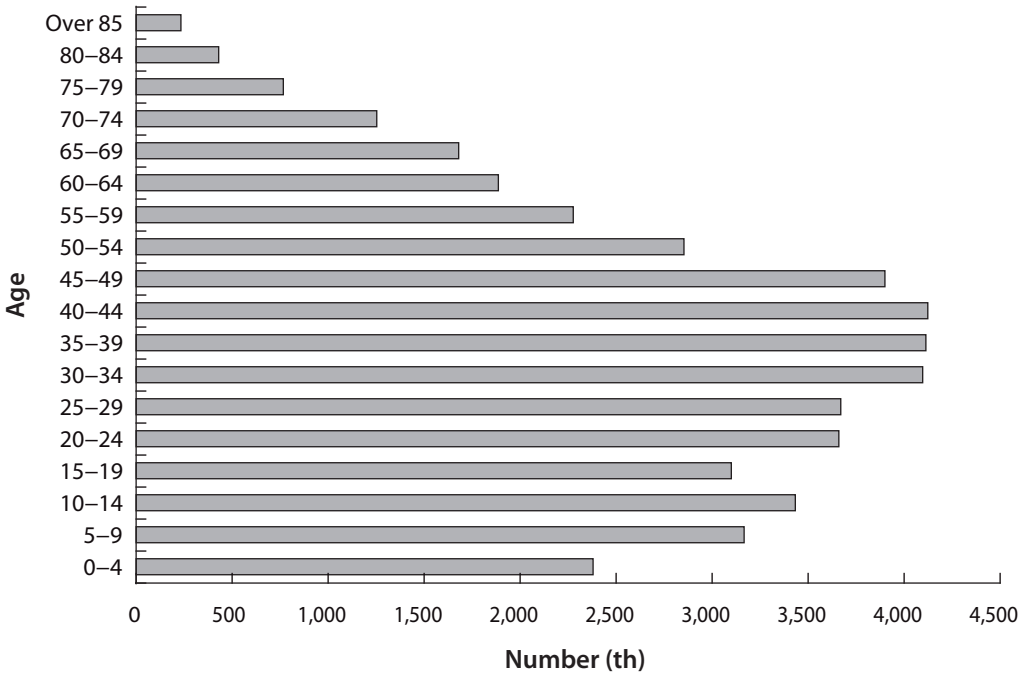
More importantly however, it was only with the political emergence of the 386 generation in the late 1990s that generational change emerged as part of the Korean political lexicon. Prior to that point politics was primarily understood through the prism of individuals, institutions, and ideology. The seminal elections of 1987 were not decided on the grounds of generational differences but by the pervasive regionalism that split the opposition vote between the Three Kims, each representing the hopes and fears of a specific region. In contrast, the 2002 election was clearly cast as a generational struggle pitting the relatively youthful Roh Mu Hyun and his even younger supporters against the elderly Lee Hoi Chang. Most recently regionalism played an even more diminished role in the election of Lee Myung Bak. The Korean War generation again voted for the more conservative Lee Hoi Chang, while the more progressive Chung Dong Young was only able to attract the support of the most ideological of the 386 generation. In fact, it is arguable that one key factor in Lee Myung Bak's election—a victory with the greatest margin in Korea's democratic history—was the transformation of the 386 generation and the support that he gained among the majority of this key cohort.

At any rate, without intending to diminish the role of preceding or subsequent generations, it is the author's supposition that in order to understand the dramatic social and political changes in Korea over the past twenty years, as well as the direction in which Korea is likely to go in the next ten years, it is essential to understand the 386 generation. This is not a value judgment like Tom Brokaw's terming the U.S. World War II generation the "Greatest Generation," or even an assessment of relative importance; rather, it is a recognition that the experience of the 386ers is the key to understanding generational change in Korea and that immediately preceding and

[8] The average number of babies born to a woman between the ages of 15 and 49.

[9] Chung-a Park, "South Korea has 4th Lowest Birthrate," *Korea Times,* June 27, 2007.

**FIGURE 1** Demography of Korea, 2005




SOURCE: Korean Statistical Information Service, online database, http://www.kosis.kr.

subsequent generations are likely to be better understood in the context of the experiences of the 386 generation.[10]

## *Defining Generational Characteristics: Relationship to the Student Movement/ Democratization*

A relatively simplistic definition of the 386 generation has already been given above. As with most truly distinct generations, however, it is the experiential commonalities rather than age cohort alone that give this generation its cohesiveness. The core of this generation is formed by the university classes of 1980 through 1987, and accordingly the experiential bookends of this cohort are the Gwangju Incident of 1980 and the key steps toward democratization in 1987.[11]

As such the most important touchstone for this generation is the student movement. Of course not all Koreans attended university, and even among university students, not all were politically aware and active.[12] However, the core period of democratization in the early and mid-1980s was such a seminal event in modern Korean history that all Koreans of that generation could not but be affected, and in some respects defined, by it. Song Ho-geun of Seoul National University

[10] Author's disclosure: Although I have difficulty naming a personal generational identification in the United States, in Korea I would be part of the 386 generation: born in 1967, part of the university class of 1985 as Koreans count it, and now in my 40s. To underscore the asymmetry in U.S.-Korea relations, however, in nearly 20 years of working on Korea, my average interlocutor has been 30 years my senior. This was not due to any intent or particular qualifications on my part, but driven primarily by the reality that the Koreans who traveled to Washington and were involved in U.S.-Korean relations on a political level were primarily from the Korean War generation until recently. As such this project has been a useful introduction to my own age cohort.

[11] Korean university classes, or *hakbon*, are determined by entrance year rather than by graduation year.

[12] In fact, of the approximately nine million members of the 386 generation, approximately one-third, or three million, attended college during this period. See B.J. Lee, "Korea's Generation 386: Student Protest Leaders of the '80s Call for Change," *Newsweek*, April 17, 2000.

emphasizes what he calls Korea's "density of experience" as a key factor.[13] With a homogeneous population of over 45 million people packed into a country approximately the size of the state of Indiana, and a quarter of that population concentrated around Seoul, nearly all experiences in that era might easily be described as "common."

Student activism has a long history in Korea, and the notion of the role that students serve as the "conscience" of the nation is deeply rooted in Korea's Confucian societal structure. Indeed, student protests and demonstrations were not unique to the 1980s. Student demonstrations were a key factor in the end of the Rhee Syng Man regime in the 1960s, and students suffered greatly in the protests leading up to and following the declaration of the yushin constitution under the military dictator Park Chung Hee in the 1970s. The student movement of the 1980s, however, is remarkable for its tenure, its tenacity, and ultimately its success.

Student activism has a long history in Korea, and the notion of the role that students serve as the "conscience" of the nation is deeply rooted in Korea's Confucian societal structure.

Without going into events in too much detail, mounting civic demonstrations against the military leader Chun Doo Hwan, who had recently taken power in a coup, were violently suppressed by military forces including elite units of Korea's Special Operations Command in May 1980. Although there is still some dispute over the actual number of casualties, the brutality of the suppression shocked average Koreans and became a rallying cry that would sustain student opposition to the Chun regime for the next seven years.

This opposition extended beyond college campuses to labor activists, human rights activists, lawyers, and of course politicians. However, the ideological core of the democratization movement and opposition to the military regime were largely found on college campuses. This opposition is perhaps best understood as concentric circles with a core group of student leaders and activists forming the center, the next ring being those students who supported the movement and joined the larger demonstrations but were not involved in the planning or leadership, and finally an outer ring consisting of observers who were sympathetic, whether directly involved or not.

The student activists of the core group obtained their moral legitimacy from their willingness to suffer and even to die for the cause. Suffer they did under harsh suppression from the military regime under which many, if not most, student leaders were arrested, imprisoned, and even tortured. Though almost inconceivable to today's college students in Korea, one participant recalls some of the particulars of the environment of the time: "Police agents were routinely posted on college campuses to watch activities by students and faculty members. All forms of assemblies and rallies were strictly banned by a decree, and violators were expelled or sent to prison."[14] The intensity of activists' experience contributed to the support they received from the broader student body, and there were feelings of guilt and obligation for not having participated more directly in the case of students who were not directly involved. This sentiment was eloquently expressed by Sunhyuk Kim in the foreword to his book, *Democratization in Korea,* where he wrote, "This book

[13] Author's interview with Song Ho-geun, Seoul, January 23, 2008.

[14] Kuk Cho, "386 Generation: Today and Tomorrow," Korea Focus 1 (Spring 2007): 25.

is a product of guilt. During the tempestuous years of democratization in Korea in the mid 1980s I was an undergraduate student at Seoul National University, Korea. For various reasons, I did not join many of my friends who were actively involved in the antigovernment student movement for democracy. I hope this book compensates for my silence at that time. I also hope my book provides condolences to all those who lost their lives during the long and tortuous journey toward democracy in Korea."[15]

The student movement continued to grow and gain strength through the early 1980s with issue-specific protests and demonstrations as well as larger demonstrations on key anniversaries, particularly those related to the Gwangju Incident. With the Olympics as leverage, the demonstrations reached their peak in 1987. In a key concession in June 1987, President Chun Doo Hwan's anointed successor, Roh Tae Woo, announced his support for the direct election of the president as well as for some democratic revisions to the constitution.

Though Roh Tae Woo ultimately won the 1987 presidential election with a plurality after the three opposition candidates split the vote, the 1987 election is still regarded as a fair and free election and marked the onset of democracy in Korea. It is this success, as much as the hardships that preceded it, that defines the 386 generation's self-perception.

### *Divisions within the 386 Generation*

The most common perception of the 386 generation is that this cohort, though pro-democracy, is anti-American with pro-North Korean sympathies. Even among the core group of student activists, however, there were key divergences and factions. The most prominent groups in the student movements were the "NL" and "PD" factions. The NL (National Liberation) faction tended to be more focused on and closer to North Korea.[16] It was dedicated to unification with the North and independence from the United States and other foreign powers—hence, the NL faction's support for the heady nationalistic North Korean national ideology of *juche*.[17] In contrast, the PD (People's Democracy) faction focused much more on domestic issues, such as labor rights and democratization. The PD faction was in many ways the starting point for both the left-of-center Democratic Labor party as well as the "New Right" movement in South Korea.[18]

Beyond divisions within the core student activists, there were also considerable divisions among the students who actually studied during their college years rather than mobilizing and demonstrating. These divisions extended to fields of study. The 386 generation of students in the social sciences, including many political scientists, tended to focus much more on domestic issues in Korea and sought their graduate education from domestic Korean universities. Those students focused on economics or more technical fields, however, tended to shy away from politics, and a greater percentage sought their graduate degrees overseas. One key result of the democratic reforms of the mid-1980s was the easing of restriction on overseas travel and overseas education.

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15 Sunhyuk Kim, *The Politics of Democratization in Korea: The Role of Civil Society* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2000), xi.

16 Korean political discourse has made the use of two-letter acronyms widespread. The Three Kims (Kim Dae Jung, Kim Young Sam, and Kim Jong Pil) were popularly known as DJ, YS, and JP, a trend continued today as President Lee Myung Bak is widely referred to as MB.

17 *Juche* is widely translated into English as "self-reliance," but this translation does not really capture the full meaning. The literal meaning of the Chinese characters are "govern the body," meaning self-control, subject rather than object, actor rather than what is acted upon, and the meaning is best understood as a repudiation of the historical Korean ideology of *sadaejuui* or "respect the great."

18 The "New Right" is a political movement of scholars and politicians united by the premise that prior generations of conservatives, or the "Old Right," were anti-democratic, corrupt, and thus unable to speak authoritatively on issues such as North Korea's human rights record. They argue that earlier generations' anti-Communism was an end in itself, not a means to the promotion of freedom and democracy. In contrast, the scholars and politicians in the New Right tend to be on the progressive side regarding domestic social issues while loudly criticizing North Korea.

More important still were the core versus periphery issues relating to divisions within the 386 generation. Whatever their identification with the democratization of the 1980s, as there is a typical correlation between rates of educational attainment and income in Korea, those members of the 386 generation that did not attend university were understandably much more concerned with bread and butter issues than the ongoing "movement."

### *The Role of Nationalism*

The question of nationalism in Korea is rich enough for an entire book and impossible to adequately address in a single essay of a regionally-focused report such as this.[19] Given the role that generational change has played in Korean politics and policy, however, it is important to at least gain a summary understanding of the way that nationalism has influenced and been reflected in different generations in Korea, particularly the 386 generation. Korean nationalism has traditionally been expressed in opposition to outside threat and occupying powers, such as Japan. There is also a strong undercurrent of ethnic nationalism in Korea that was evident during the 2002 World Cup and is often expressed in support of individual Koreans on the world stage, such as UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, or the current dominant generation of Korean women professional golfers. The manifestations of nationalism that have the most relevance to this work, however, are related to views of the United States. In general the older generations, and in particular the Korean War generation, continue to hold very favorable assessments of the United States and view the U.S. military presence in Korea as a positive factor, historically responsible for the creation of the Korean state itself. In contrast, the 386 generations' struggle was not against Japanese occupation or North Korean invasion but instead against a Korean military dictatorship supported by the United States. As such it is only natural that the nationalism among the 386 generation is often expressed as anti-American or as a desire for greater autonomy and respect from the United States. In fact, the roots of the NL and PD factions among the 386 generation outlined above are to some extent a reflection of differing expressions of nationalism.

Looking forward, there is also some indication that the generation following the 386 generation may be developing a very different form of nationalism. In September of last year, Kang Wong Taek, published an editorial in *Chosun Ilbo* based on work he had done as Chair of the East Asia Institute's Public Politics Panel on what he has termed "Republic of Korea Nationalism." This, he notes, accompanies sharp changes in the way the post–386 generation views North Korea and is markedly different from nationalism.[20]

### *The Role of Technology*

The side reference to Intel's 386 processors could not be a more appropriate moniker for this generation. Though not unique to Korea, the increased availability of personal computers had a tremendous impact on the productivity and relative competitiveness of the 386 generation. As of April 2000, nearly half of Korea's high-tech startup firms were run by 386ers.[21] One of the complaints of the preceding yushin generation was that it was the hardest hit by the 1997

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[19] For an excellent treatment of nationalism in Korea, see Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[20] Kang Won Taek, "Post 386ui deungjang: Bukhanui inshikbyunhwa deungulo hanminjok minjokjuuiso Daehanmingook minjokjuuilo junhwan" [The Rise of the Post-386: Changes in Views of North Korea and the Transition from Ethnic Korean Nationalism to Republic of Korea Nationalism], *Chosun Ilbo,* September 3, 2007.

[21] Lee, "Korea's Generation 386."

Asian financial crisis that shook Korea's economy. Not only were members of that generation in vulnerable middle-management positions, but they did not have the same computer skills as their younger competitors. The 386 generation was the first to widely use e-mail and the Internet. Given that the pace of change in technology outstrips even Korea's blistering rate of transformation, the torch in this era is clearly passing to the rising generation. The use of technology, however, was among the defining characteristics in the 2002 elections that brought Roh Mu Hyun and the 386 generation into power. More recently, the importance of technology, and in particular the Internet, to Korean politics was demonstrated in how the anti–Lee Myung Bak, anti–U.S. beef protests were mobilized.

### *Culture: The Korean Wave*

In the past few years, worldwide attention has been paid to what is referred to as the "Korean Wave," or *hallyu*, with Korean films winning international film festivals and numerous other awards, Korean television dramas sweeping in popularity through much of Asia, and musicians, artists and the arts increasingly prominent on the regional and international scene. A major factor behind this trend has been core members of the 386 generation who benefited from the newfound political and economic freedoms, as well as the intensity of their era. This change has not been universally welcomed. In a dialogue that would be familiar in Peoria, older generations express their concern over the sex, language, violence, and lack of morals in some of the artistic output from the 386 generation. Key members of the 386 generation in these fields frequently credit their own experiences during the struggle for democracy as inspiration for their work and take full advantage of the increasingly liberal environment in the production and dissemination of their work. Furthermore, the subject matter of much of the literature and film produced by the 386 generation served to lionize the generation actively involved in Korea's struggle for democracy and appears to in some respects have been a model, if not a catalyst for, the most recent wave of civic action in Korea.

### *Civil Society*

While it was expected that college graduates in Korea would set aside their youthful ideals and activism and secure jobs in the government or with one of Korea's large business conglomerations, or *chaebols*, many of the more ideological members of the 386 generation opted to continue their activism in the labor movement, law, media, and most notably in Korea's then-nascent civil society movement. This generation fueled a dramatic expansion of civic organizations in Korea, focusing on women's issues, democracy, corruption, peace, and more. Emerging in an environment with an increasingly free press and communication greatly democratized through information technology, Korea today has arguably the most vibrant and independent civil society sectors in Asia. Although most of the major research institutions remain funded by the Korean government or the corporate sector, there are numerous humanitarian NGOs, issue advocacy organizations, and a growing number of truly independent think-tanks that are increasingly active in Korea's political discourse. In advance of the 2000 National Assembly elections, approximately four hundred civil society organizations worked together to develop a blacklist of some 86 candidates who were deemed unworthy due to corruption or ties to past dictators. Not only did this have an impact on the National Assembly elections, but it also laid the groundwork for the active involvement of the civic sector in the presidential elections of 2002. Once again the role of civic groups in spreading the

word and organizing the most recent spate of anti-government demonstrations makes it clear that the role of civil society in Korea has not waned with the election of President Lee Myung Bak.

### *Media*

Under the authoritarian rule of Korea's military dictators, the media was tightly controlled and highly censored. Even as democratization brought with it an increasingly free press, however, there were ongoing concerns over self-censorship in the mainstream media, stemming from government ownership and control over some of the major television broadcasters, as well as the use of threatened tax investigations of the major newspaper companies. In this context, members of the 386 generation played a pioneering role in "investigative journalism" and increasingly carried the social issues concerning their cohort to a broader audience. In addition to a growing number of reporters in the mainstream media, perhaps the 386 generation's greatest influence was felt in the development of new media, such as the Internet news site *OhmyNews* profiled below. The role of the 386 generation was particularly important in shaping public perceptions of North Korea and the United States. The volatility of Korean media is underscored by the fact that in the early months of the Lee Myung Bak administration new sources established after 2000, such as "PRESSian.com" and "nocutnews.co.kr," have come to the fore.

### *Trajectory and Core Narrative of the 386 Generation*

Although the key common events that help form a particular generation during the impressionable years are interesting, the relevance and significance of any generation is arguably based on what it does rather than on what it thinks. The primary reason for focusing on the 386 generation in Korea is not just to understand the forces that shaped that generation but more importantly to understand the contributions and likely future influence of its membership.

As such it is useful to understand the generational narrative as articulated by members of the 386 generation. An excellent example of this narrative is provided by Kang Won Taek of Soongsil University who, using a famous 1995 *Economist* article on Korea entitled the "House that Park Built"[22] as a starting point, casts the 386 generation as the primary actor in an "Extreme Makeover: Country Edition," systematically challenging and changing the structure left in place by President Park Chung Hee.[23] Kang describes the Korean establishment left by Park as having four pillars: the military, the chaebols, the bureaucracy, and the primacy of the Gyeongsang region. He also emphasizes three major policy thrusts that characterized the Korean state as constructed under Park Chung Hee and successive governments: strong commitment to the U.S.-ROK alliance, anti-Communism domestically, and antagonism toward North Korea. Kang then goes on to describe how each element of the House that Park built has been systematically demolished, or at least remodeled, in the era since democratization. During the Kim Young Sam administration from 1993 to 1998, the military was depoliticized, elite factions were rooted out from the military, and two former military-based presidents were publicly tried for their past actions. During the Kim Dae Jung administration from 1998 to 2003, the response to the 1997 Asian financial crisis fundamentally altered the perception and role of the bureaucracy, led to reforms related to the chaebol, reduced the alienation felt by the citizens of the Jeolla region in response to decades of

[22] "The Survey: The House that Park Built," *Economist*, June 3, 1995.

[23] Author's interview with Kang Won Taek, Seoul, January 25, 2008, with reference to a PowerPoint presentation by Kang as provided to the author.

emphasis on the rival Gyeongsang region, and most famously, as well as fundamentally, altered South Korea's approach to North Korea and toward more progressive ideas in South Korea. While the wisdom and effect of such policies are still being debated, the remaining political sacred cows, including the preeminence of the U.S.-ROK alliance, were openly challenged, and the policies put into place by Kim Dae Jung were advanced and deepened during the administration of President Roh Mu Hyun.

Kang does not argue that the 386 generation was solely or even primarily responsible for this truly "extreme makeover" of Korean society. Given that the 386 generation was borne of opposition to the excesses during the last days of the Park Chung Hee administration and to his ultimate successor Chun Doo Hwan, who assumed power through a subsequent military coup, however, Dr. Kang's narrative provides a compelling narrative for the intent and direction of the 386 generation.

After the many failures of the Roh Mu Hyun administration, there is a general willingness among members of the 386 generation to admit their unpreparedness for office and criticize the excesses of the most ideological members of the core group of student activists that were responsible for some of the Roh administration's most divisive policies. Nonetheless, there remains an unrepentant view of the administration's role in Korean history and the correctness of its core convictions. In fact, the most common explanation for the failure of the 386 generation to hold together in support of the more progressive candidate, Chung Dong Young, in the 2007 presidential elections was that the movement was too successful. Having achieved all the major unifying goals of the movement as described by Kang above, there were few big issues around which to unify the generation.

### *The 2002 Presidential Elections and the Roh Administration: Rise and Fall*

The peak of influence from the 386 generation is widely seen to have been the 2002 presidential election during which the 386 generation members were among the most vocal and most influential supporters of President Roh Mu Hyun and his promised "participatory government." About twenty of President Roh's top advisors, particularly those in the Blue House, were from the 386 generation, and they entered office with an ambitious agenda to remake Korean society, continue to improve relations with North Korea, and place U.S.-Korean relations on a more equal footing.[24]

Before long however, the assessment of their performance in office was decidedly negative. The 386 standard-bearers were seen as overly ideological and blamed for the divisive climate in the country and a relative economic slowdown.[25] Instead of being celebrated for their suffering during the democratization period and their uncompromising standards, they were increasingly criticized as lacking core management skills. The willingness of the core leadership to sacrifice its studies to lead the student movement was a virtue for a revolutionary movement, but these actions did not serve well in government. As a result, 386 quickly became a derisive term for those who had assumed power too early and who emphasized ideology over more pragmatic day-to-day operations.

The public assessment of the 386 generation, and ultimately of President Roh himself, ultimately became a question of competence. One need only look at the headlines in the press

[24] Korea's presidential residence and office, so named for the blue tiles on its roof.

[25] Actually, Korea's economy grew an average of 4% per year during Roh's administration, which was slow by Korea's standards, but certainly not bad for a developed economy.

to understand the situation: from *Business Korea,* "The Young in Power: the 386 Generation Has Yet to Display Economic Competence;"[26] from *Newsweek*, "South Korea: Too Much Activism? The Country's Idealistic '386 Generation' Helped Usher in Democracy, but Has Bungled Its Political Opportunity;"[27] from Korea's largest newspaper, the conservative *Chosun Ilbo*, "Why the '386 Generation' is Failing;"[28] and in the *Korea Times*, "The Fiasco of the 386 Generation."[29]

Lim Hyeon-jin, professor at Seoul National University, has claimed that the 386 generation failed "to create a vision for a post-democratization Korean society," concluding that "some former activists in power were not open to new ideas."[30] Kang Won Taek analogizes the response of the Korean public to a thirsty man who can think of nothing except water until he drinks, but who quickly turns his thoughts to food as soon as his needs are met. Likewise, the Korean public genuinely wanted and needed democracy and societal transformation, but once these goals were in large part achieved, the public turned its attention to economic growth and other priorities. The hardcore members of the 386 generation, however, did not make that transition and kept offering "water" or social revolution.[31]

### *The Transformation of the 386 Generation*

The failure of the ideological core of the 1980s student movement should not, however, be interpreted more broadly as the failure of the 386 generation, politically or otherwise. The number of politicians from the 386 generation in the ruling Grand National Party actually increased in the April 2008 general elections. The number of members in the Korean National Assembly in their forties decreased from 106 of 299 (or 35.5%) during the 17th Assembly to 88 of 299 (or 29.4%) of the current 18th Assembly. Part of that decline, however, was due to the aging of assembly members who were not technically of the 386 generation—hence, the number of members in their fifties increased from 121 to 142 out of 299 seats. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that only 95 of 537 members (or 17%) of the U.S. Congress are in their forties. As mentioned above, the 386 generation also formed a core constituency for President Lee Myung Bak's election. In other words, President Lee did not win in spite of the 386 generation but largely with its support. Hence, rather than close the book on this generation due to the actions of a relatively small number, it is essential to understand the transformation of the broader 386ers to fully understand Korea's future direction.

As mentioned above, student activism has a long tradition in Korean society, dating back perhaps to the Confucian-era expectation that students exercise a role as the conscience of society. At the same time, however, the expectation in modern Korean society has always been that university students could afford to be radical and demonstrate during their years of study but that they would conform to societal norms once they graduated, had to get jobs, or report for their mandatory military service. This pattern is of course not unique to Korea and seemed to hold true for most of the postwar generation as the idealism of youth was forced to submit to the realities of making a living and the responsibilities of home and family.

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[26] "The Young in Power: the 386 Generation Has Yet to Display Economic Competence," *Business Korea* 21, no. 247 (2004): 16-17.

[27] B.J. Lee, "South Korea: Too Much Activism?" *Newsweek*, October 15, 2007, http://www.newsweek.com/id/44498.

[28] "Why the '386 Generation' is Failing," *Chosun Ilbo,* January 21, 2008, http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200801/200801210023.html.

[29] Andrei Lankov, "Fiasco of 386 Generation," *Korea Times,* February 5, 2008, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/special/special_view.asp?newsIdx=18529&categoryCode=180.

[30] "386 Generation Activists in Power Profiled," *Dong-A Ilbo*, December 2, 2006, http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?bicode=050000&biid=2006120257838.

[31] Author's interview with Kang.

After the climactic events of the late 1980s, the experience of the 386 cohort appeared to follow the national norm. In the early 1990s, few from this generation, fresh out of college and at the bottom of the corporate or other organizational hierarchy, were in positions of sufficient influence to make their voices heard. By the late 1990s, however, it would become apparent that there was something different about this generation. With their particular advantages in these sectors, members of this generation began to make their mark in the IT sector, the cultural realm, and, perhaps most noticeably, civil society. The conclusion that Korea may have one of the most vibrant civil society movements in Asia is directly linked to developments during this period.

By the year 2000, the 386 generation emerged as a political force as well, and 150 of 299 candidates for the National Assembly were from this cohort. While somewhat simplistically described as a "rise and fall" during the Roh Mu Hyun era, the 386 generation was also undergoing a transformation from within. Never immune from the same societal pressures now facing other generations, most members of the 386 generation had entered their forties by the end of 2007. In addition to job and family, they now also had to address concerns over buying and maintaining a home, their children's college education, aging parents, and even planning for their own retirement.

In addition to such individual concerns, the lack of a central unifying theme and changes in the international environment also had an impact on their collective strength and unity. In some respects the generation was a victim of its own success. To follow the narrative referring to the 386 generation outlined earlier, there was nothing left to bind this particular cohort together, having accomplished all the major objectives of the societal "extreme makeover." Another important factor led to dramatic changes relating to North Korea. The North's increasingly undeniable failure as a state following the massive famine in the late 1990s, refugee flows, and its international isolation was punctuated by the October 2006 North Korean test of a nuclear weapon. These events all fundamentally challenged the 386 generation's presumptions concerning the North and even its proscribed policy for dealing with Pyongyang.

### *Understanding the Election of Lee Myung Bak*

At first glance, it is easy to view the election of Lee Myung Bak as a direct repudiation of the 386 generation. In the end, however, presidential politics are about individual personalities, and the 2007 election was as much an anti-Roh vote as it was a pro-Lee vote. As a candidate, Lee Myung Bak successfully crafted a personal narrative of competence and pragmatism that was the perfect antidote to the ideologically tumultuous Roh presidency. In fact, the argument that Lee was elected due to the failure of the 386 cohort to hold together ignores the fact that most 386ers who voted did in fact stick together, and they voted for Lee.

In substance, it is also difficult to argue that Lee Myung Bak represents a fundamental repudiation of the actual policies of the Roh administration. Instead, the 2007 election was much more about getting things done than any particular policy or ideological difference. Rhetoric aside, so similar were Lee and Roh on the basic approach of engaging North Korea that Lee Hoi Chang ultimately decided to run for the third time as a representative of the "true" conservative.

In the important area of U.S.-Korean alliance relations, the gap between initial expectations and reality may be the greatest of all. Roh Mu Hyun is widely considered to have done damage to U.S.-ROK relations, and it is certainly true that the past five years were extremely rocky from a political perspective. Counter-intuitive though it may be, however, it is arguable that in terms

of his actual policies, President Roh was actually one of the most pro-U.S. presidents in modern history. Not only did his administration initiate and negotiate a free trade agreement, but Korea dispatched troops to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon under his watch. On the alliance front, many of the difficult structural issues—such as a revised status of forces agreement, the relocation of the Eighth Army south of Seoul, and the transfer of wartime operation control—were all addressed with some degree of success. In appealing to the most extreme parts of his political base, and perhaps his own beliefs, however, President Roh's words tended to downplay and even undermine his own policies, further heightening the distrust with which he was viewed in Washington. This distinction between policy and personality is important in that President Lee was not elected on promises to fundamentally change Korea's approach to Washington. Instead, President Lee's approach to policy relating to the United States was one of continuity. The primary distinction with his predecessor was in his willingness and relative political freedom to openly articulate his support for a strengthened U.S.-ROK relationship predicated on the primacy of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

### *The International Environment*

While the intent of the above section was to focus on the particular characteristics of the 386 generation, it is important to note that this generation did not emerge in a political or historical vacuum. The end of the Cold War, the emergence of China, the 1997 Asian financial crisis, September 11, the U.S. war on terrorism, the Iraq War, and shifting global attitudes toward the United States were all part of the global and regional context in which events in Korea developed.

It is notable that many of these external factors had previously been driving factors in Korean presidential politics. The divided peninsula has long been referred to as the last outpost of the Cold War and anti-communism and anti-North Korean positions were long core tenets of the half spectrum of Korean politics. It is said that all politics is local, but for Korea local has meant a tough neighborhood between two larger powers, China and Japan, as well as the constant threat from North Korea, which has the world's fifth largest standing army, mostly forward deployed as close as 30 kilometers from Seoul. It has only been with the end of the Cold War, a reassessment of the North Korean threat, and growing confidence over Korea's role in the region and the world that such external factors could be so fully ignored. Nearly every poll taken around the December 2007 presidential election in Korea confirmed that this was an election driven almost exclusively by domestic concerns.

## Implications of the Decline of the 386 Generation: Prospects for Change

Andrei Lankov, professor at Kookmin University and one of the more insightful scholars of North and South Korea, observes:

> There is much talk about the "collapse of the 386 generation." Those statements are definitely premature. The 386ers are now actually in their prime, and in subsequent decades they will have a number of opportunities to make a comeback. After all, their opponents expect that the new administration will deliver a second edition of the 1960s "economic miracle." Due to manifold

> reasons, this is not going to happen, so disappointment might herald the political revival of the 386 generation.[32]

That is not to say that the revival of the 386 generation is predicated on the failure of the Lee Myung Bak administration. In fact, in a short summary of major issues facing Korea, it becomes quickly apparent that many of the core beliefs and position of the 386 generation will continue to hold sway in Korean society. In many respects, members of the 386 generation were the Roh administration's harshest critics, especially when he, his key officials, and their policies did not live up to their relatively idealistic standards. It is difficult to imagine that the standards will be any different for Lee Myung Bak. Even in the first weeks and months of the Lee administration there are already indications that his will be a short honeymoon, and any notion that a 1960s- or 1970s-era style of corporate governance might be acceptable to the Korean public has already been challenged. In fact, most early reports indicate that the recently large public demonstrations in Seoul that have caused a crisis for the Lee Myung Bak administration just one hundred days in had less to do with the importation of beef than with the governing style of President Lee. While President Lee campaigned as a pragmatist, he appeared to be far less open and transparent than the Korean public expected after five years of President Roh Mu Hyun's "participatory government." This lack of transparency was reinforced in the selection of President Lee's cabinet and the proclamations of policy directions from the presidential transition committee.

While it is true that none of Lee's initial top-level officials are from the 386 generation, Lee too can be expected to be looking for new faces, as the first group encounters challenges. Within bureaucracies, many of the 386 generation are at the director level or above and can fully be expected to reach the ministerial level within ten years. It is also true that the 386 generation has transformed with age and responsibility. If age is removed as a factor, however, the 386 cohort is still more progressive than others. Even if not directly in power, the 386 generation's influence in civil society, media, and academia can be expected to continue growing.

## Generational Profiles: Illustrative Individuals and Institutions

### *The Internationalists*

For over three decades, U.S.-Korean relations have greatly benefited from the public service of a core group of English speaking, internationally educated, extremely articulate, and accomplished scholars and officials who forged deep and long-standing relationships in Washington, D.C., and who largely shouldered the responsibility for maintaining the political-level relationship between the United States and Korea as a result. Their role was made all the more important by the asymmetry in the U.S.-Korean relationship. With the exception of a few public officials and scholars who maintained a concerted focus on Korea, most U.S. officials responsible for Korea cycled in and out of administrations and positions relating to Asia. Thus, the real constant in the relationship has been on the Korean side.

This group is sometimes referred to as the "Seoul Forum" after the membership of many participants in one of Korea's foremost foreign policy forums. Key members include, but are not limited to, current prime minister Han Seung Soo, former prime minister Lee Hong Koo, former foreign minister Han Sung Joo, former minister of finance and economy Sakong Il,

[32] Lankov, "Fiasco of the 386 Generation."

former ambassadors Kim Kyoung Won and Hyun Hong Choo, noted economist Kim Ki Hwan, and several others. Most were born in the 1930s or the 1940s and thus fit squarely in the Korean War generation, yet it was their postwar activities that really distinguished them. To fully list the accomplishments of this core group could easily occupy the remainder of this essay.

Given his ongoing role, the experience of current prime minister Han Seung Soo is illustrative of the prominence and considerable contributions of his remarkable group of peers. After a career as a professor of economics at Seoul National University, Han served as the first chairman of Korea's Fair Trade Commission and as minister of trade and industry under President Roh Tae Woo. He was also ambassador to the United States, served as chief of staff to President Kim Young Sam, was minister of foreign affairs under President Kim Dae Jung, was elected president of the UN General Assembly, and between these jobs served three terms in Korea's National Assembly.

Ironically, in a critical editorial on January 29, 2008, the progressive *Hankyoreh* newspaper criticized Han Seung Soo's nomination as prime minister based on the breadth and diversity of his experience, with Han having served in some function for nearly every government in Korea over nearly three decades.[33] While service to such diverse governments might be criticized as demonstrating a lack of core political convictions from a partisan domestic perspective, it would be difficult to find a more consistent and effective advocate for Korea's interests internationally than Han.

### *386 Generation*

*Im Jong Seok, member of the National Assembly, United New Democratic Party***.** Im Jong Seok was born in 1966, and in 1989 he was elected president of the student body at Hanyang University and became the third chairman of the National Student Representatives Council, or *jeondaehyeob*. In December of that year he was arrested for his role in sending a student, Im Soo Kyoung, to North Korea to attend the World Youth Festival in Pyongyang. He is considered a strong supporter of engagement with North Korea. Im was first elected as an assemblyman in 2000 and served as a member of the Committee of Reunification and Foreign Affairs and Trade during his second term. He was voted out of office, however, in the general elections of April 2008, along with many of the more progressive members of the 386 generation.

*Lee Kwang Jae, member of the National Assembly, United New Democratic Party***.** Lee Kwang Jae was born in 1965 and is a graduate of Yonsei University. In some respects he is one of the "poster boys" of the core group that assumed power with President Roh. He served as a secretary to Roh when the president was an assemblyman, and he served at the Blue House as a secretary for information and policy monitoring after Roh was elected president in 2002. He resigned from his Blue House position and became a member of the National Assembly in 2004. His is a cautionary tale, as he was reportedly linked to various scandals that tarnished the reputation of the 386 generation for anti-corruption. Yet after leaving the Blue House he was able to secure a seat in the 17th National Assembly and was re-elected for a second term in April 2008.

*Won Hee Ryong, member of the National Assembly, Grand National Party***.** Won Hee Ryong was born in 1964 on the Jeju Islands and is the prototypical overachiever. He ranked first in the nation the year he took his national university entrance exam, graduated from Seoul National University, and was again ranked first in the nation the year he took the bar exam. He became a prosecutor, holds nine full-course marathon records, and was first elected as an assemblyman in 2000. He was

[33] "The President's Butler," *Hankyoreh*, January 29, 2008, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_editorial/266271.html.

one of the more "establishment" 386 generation members recruited by the GNP to run in response to the large number of younger candidates on the progressive party's slate. In April 2008, Won was re-elected for a third term.

*Nam Kyoung Pil, member of the National Assembly, Grand National Party.* Nam Kyoung Pil was born in 1965 and is another of the establishment 386 generation lawmakers in the GNP. He graduated from Yonsei and Yale universities and was the president of the Korean Students Association at Yale. He was a reporter at *Gyeonginilbo*. His father was Nam Pyeong Woo, honorary chairman of *Gyeonginilbo* and assemblyman from 1988 to 1995. Nam Kyoung Pil was first elected as an assemblyman in 1996 in his late father's electoral district. In April 2008, Nam was re-elected for a fourth term.

*Choung Byoung Gug, member of the National Assembly, Grand National Party.* Choung Byoung Gug was born in 1958, and while not technically a member of the 386 generation, he is often grouped together with Nam Kyoung Pil and Won Hee Ryong, who are jointly called Nam Won Choung, as representatives of the next generation of Korean conservatives. Choung graduated from Sungkyunkwan University and was arrested in 1987 due to his activities in the democratization movement. From 1988 to 1992 he served as a secretary to Kim Young Sam, who was president of the Unified Democratic Party and Democratic Freedom Party. He also served at the Blue House for President Kim Young Sam from 1993 to 1997. In April 2008 Choung was re-elected for a third term.

*Kim Ki Shik, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD).* Born in 1966, Kim Ki Shik graduated from Seoul National University and is one of many in his generation to labor in Korea's dramatically expanding civil society sector. He has been an active participant in the PSPD since its inception in 1994. During the 2000 elections, Kim led a movement to "blacklist" candidates for the National Assembly with ties to Korea's authoritarian past and hence remained very vocal on a full range of societal issues. The founding statement of the PSPD makes explicit the link between the student movement, the democratization process, and its activities:

> Before the 80s, tear bombs played a part on the streets in achieving democracy but the situation has changed now. In order to build a true democracy in this new era, action must take place in the middle of society and the political stage, and in people's daily lives. "Democracy," literally would mean that the owners of the country are the people…
>
> After much travail, we decided to build a community of hope with two axes of "participation" and "human rights" as the direction of a new society. We want "People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy," where many citizens gather to become the foundation in forming a unified community. Let's make an era that is formed with everyone's support, an era that is built with participation and human rights.[34]

*Oh Yeon Ho, President, publisher, and CEO of OhmyNews.* Born in 1964, Oh Yeon Ho graduated from Yonsei University, the site of many of the most intense pro-democracy demonstrations in the 1980s. Oh entered into the field of journalism and worked as the Washington, D.C. reporter for *Mal*, a progressive monthly magazine, from 1995 to 1997. In 2000 he established OhmyNews.com, Korea's first Internet-based newspaper, which claims 600,000 citizen journalists and is based on the

[34] The founding statement of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy dated September 10, 1994, is available at http://blog.peoplepower21.org/English/20779.

principle of participatory journalism. *OhmyNews* quickly became a primary source of information for Korea's younger Internet generation and played a key role in the social environment that resulted in the election of the participatory government of Roh Mu Hyun in 2002.

An indication of how the student movement and democratization experience of the 1980s affected Oh can be found in his remarks while receiving the Missouri School of Journalism's Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism on October 9, 2007. One of his citizen journalists reported the following:

> Oh stated how this great experiment of *OhmyNews* has tried to bring participatory journalism, participatory democracy for his country. Then, Oh became visibly emotional as he spoke about the abuses of freedoms in past Korean dictatorships. Oh rallied as he promised the audience that he would continue to fight for the freedom of speech and pledged to pursue meaningful ways for citizens to engage with one another.[35]

*Lee Jae Woong, CEO of Lycos Korea and founder of Daum Communications.* Born in 1968, Lee Jae Woong also graduated from Yonsei University and built his career in the information technology sector. In 1997 he established Daum Communications, one of Asia's largest Internet platforms with over 40 million users. In 1997 Daum started the first free webmail service (hanmail.net) in Korea, and by 2000 Daum.net was recording over 100 million page views per day. In February 2007 Lee described the human brain as a metaphor for his work, where neurons work individually but also collectively, saying, "This was my vision for building systems that allow people to work together and create meaningful things."[36]

*Park Chan Wook, film director.* Born in 1963, Park Chan Wook graduated from Sogang University and was among those in his generation to apply the experiences of the 1980s to a film industry increasingly free from censorship and government control. His first successful film, *JSA,* was released in 2000—a political thriller set in the Joint Security Area along the de-militarized zone (DMZ). Park gained international recognition for his "vengeance trilogy," consisting of *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003), and *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005). *Oldboy* received the Jury Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004. Although the extreme violence of Park's films has made him a polarizing figure, three of his films rank among the top 30 all-time highest grossing films in Korean history, making him an undeniable influence.

## Beyond Domestic Politics: Generational Change in Korea and Korea's Relations with Its Allies and Neighbors

### *South Korea's Self-image in the U.S.-ROK Relationship*

Although the 386 generation is considered to be anti-American, most members view the United States primarily through the context of U.S. support for Korea's authoritarian regimes, with the exception of a very small number of genuinely pro-Communist activists with direct ties to North Korea. As such, Korea's democratization fundamentally altered this generation's views of the

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35 Cynthia Yoo, "This Medal Belongs to My OhmyNews Citizen Reporters and Staff," *OhmyNews,* October 9, 2007, http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?article_class=8&no=380650&rel_no=1.

36 Bruno Giussani, "Jaewoong Lee Looks 'Post-Google,'" Lunch over IP web log, February 9, 2007, http://www.lunchoverip.com/2007/02/lift07_jaewoong.html.

United States. Though not necessarily "anti" American, the 386 generation's view of the United States nonetheless remains somewhat ambivalent, due in part to its own formative period.

For much of the past 50 years, Korea's relations with the United States were defined on some level by South Korea's insecurity and fear of abandonment. Nearly all Koreans are as familiar with the 1905 Taft-Katsura Agreement that recognized Japan's claim to Korea as they are with the famed Acheson Line that excluded Korea from the United States' declared sphere of strategic interest and President Carter's proposed troop withdrawal from Korea in the 1970s. As recently as the 1994 negotiations over the Geneva Agreed Framework, Korean officials regularly expressed fear of abandonment, as if the United States would somehow trade its alliance with South Korea for improved relations with the impoverished North.

For the post–Korean War generations, however, and particularly for the 386 generation for which the formative seminal event was not the Korean War but the 1980 Gwangju Incident in which the United States was seen as complicit in suppressing the free expression of Korean national aspirations, the view of the United States was not so much that of an unreliable ally but that of a regional hegemon eager to maintain control. The combination of this world-view and Korea's understandably growing confidence following its hosting of the Olympics, joining of the OECD, and hosting of the World Cup naturally led to Korean demands for a more equal relationship with the United States.

While President Lee Myung Bak has pledged to improve U.S.-Korea relations and prioritize the U.S.-ROK alliance in Korea's foreign policy, including inter-Korean relations, that does not mean that Korea will be satisfied with the same attitudes and arrangements that characterized the U.S.-Korean alliance over a decade ago.

### *The Emergence of China*

Generational change in Korea is also likely to have an impact on the country's views of China. After almost 50 years of viewing China primarily through a Cold War prism and as an adversary in the Korean War, the post–Korean War generation's view of China has been so focused on markets that there has been some concern of Korea returning to its traditional place in China's orbit. Indeed for the past decade there has been tension between Korea's cultural affinity for China and its growing fear of China's influence in the region.

Korean views of China changed dramatically after the 2004 controversy surrounding China's claim that the ancient Korean Kingdom of Koguryo was actually a Chinese kingdom. In a remarkably short period of time, nearly all Koreans, including the 386 generation, went from viewing China through rose-colored glasses to a period of genuine, though not openly articulated, concern over Chinese intentions in which the bloom fell off the rose. In fact, Korean officials in private commonly cite growing Chinese influence in North Korea as a motivator for South Korea's engagement policy with North Korea.

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

Despite the fact that Lee Myung Bak's margin of victory in last year's presidential elections was the largest in Korea's democratic history, observers in the United States would be mistaken to definitively conclude that Lee's election marks a return to the harshly anti-Communist and unquestioningly pro-alliance policies of a previous era. Future Korean administrations, as well as

Korea's international relations, will continue to be influenced by, and in some respects hold to, the standards advanced by Korea's rising generations, including the 386 generation.

As with the classic Mark Twain quote, the rumors regarding the demise of the 386 generation have been "greatly exaggerated." Although this generation may never attain the same prominence or focus that it has experienced in the past five years, there is no question that it remains a key demographic in Korea that cannot be ignored. This means that going forward Korea will remain relatively skeptical of U.S. intentions, more demanding of respect and latitude from the United States, and more solicitous of North Korea. At the same time, however, Korea will likely be more democratic, more transparent, and more diverse in its own political discourse.

*Embrace a broader, more diverse, and more democratic foreign-policy elite.* The era in which U.S.-Korean political relations could largely be shouldered by a handful of individuals, no matter how accomplished, has clearly passed. The liberalization of information flows, personal travel, and civil society means that the number, breadth, and scope of individuals and institutions that are stakeholders in the U.S.-Korea relationship have expanded dramatically. A successful foundation for future U.S.-Korean relations can only be built upon a multifaceted approach that extends beyond traditional and official circles of the diplomatic, business, and security elite.

Given the apparent establishment of a pendulum swing in Korean politics, this also means that it will be important for U.S. diplomats and other key interlocutors with Korea to maintain and continue to cultivate personal and institutional relationships with the more progressive elements in Korean society. They will be back.

*Engage civil society.* Both the Korean and the U.S. governments need to more fully understand the role and influence of civil society in Korea. Policy coordination on the full range of bilateral issues from trade to national security requires at least some level of buy-in from civic organizations, or at a minimum, an understanding of and strategy for ways to simultaneously engage and mitigate some of the influences of civil society on issues of particular bilateral importance.

*Emphasize common values and shared interests.* The broad-based democratization of Korean society does present some challenges for government-to-government policy coordination. At the same time, however, it dramatically expands the range and scope of potential collaboration between the United States and Korea. On issues from transparency to the rule of law, human rights, and other international norms and standards, the values shared by the United States and Korea should be viewed as an open opportunity for collaboration and cooperation in the region and across the globe. It is such collaboration that will allow the U.S.-ROK alliance to stand for something rather than against something.

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# Rising Rationalists: The Next Generation of Leadership in Taiwan

*Shelley Rigger*

**SHELLEY RIGGER** is the Brown Professor of East Asian Politics at Davidson College in North Carolina. She is the author of two books on Taiwan's domestic politics—*Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (1999) and *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (2001). She can be reached at <shrigger@yahoo.com>.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This essay describes the rising generation of political leaders in Taiwan—those born between about 1958 and 1975—as well as the major forces shaping the generation and the distribution of political views within it.

## MAIN FINDINGS

Taiwan's rising generation of leaders is more moderate and pragmatic, and less ideological, than the current leadership. The young politicians will adopt a less challenging posture toward the PRC. These leaders do not support unification on Beijing's terms and will attempt to avoid such an outcome. They will emphasize stabilizing the cross-Strait political relationship and enhancing economic cooperation. Trends in public opinion will reinforce the efforts of elites to move Taiwan in this direction. The rising generation's political orientation is the product of its having reached political awareness during Taiwan's democratic transition and opening to China.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- The new generation of leaders will be less inclined to push the envelope on cross-Strait relations but is unlikely to surrender to Beijing's demands. Whether or not cross-Strait tensions ease will depend on the PRC government's willingness to postpone unification.
- The new leaders will not push for unification but probably will align Taiwan more closely with the PRC than ever before, especially in the economic realm.
- The new leaders will seek to maintain good relations with Washington while also trying to avoid dependence on the U.S.

The Taiwan Strait has been called the world's most dangerous flashpoint. The United States and China—both nuclear powers—find themselves on opposite sides of a dispute that could end in military conflict. Meanwhile, dialogue between Taipei and Beijing stalled more than a decade ago, so that today, resolving even the simplest disputes requires Herculean efforts. Adding to anxiety over the strait is the perception around the world that Taiwan's government is pressing forward its claim to independent status in the world community. Given Beijing's determination to block Taiwan independence at any cost, the belief that Taiwanese leaders are willing to challenge China's position is causing heartburn on at least four continents.

This essay argues that though these fears were justified during the era of presidents Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian, there is a good chance Taiwan's future leaders will be less forceful in defying Beijing. A transfer of power is at hand and is bringing to the forefront a generation of politicians who are less emotional and ideological than the current generation of leaders. This trend toward moderation is reinforced by trends in the electorate—in which the percentage of rationalists is growing—and by institutional changes, including a newly implemented legislative voting system that encourages majoritarian appeals. Although there is no evidence to suggest the new generation of leaders will welcome unification on Beijing's terms, it is clear this generation is more comfortable with the status quo—something between unification and independence—than the current leadership generation and thus will not challenge Beijing as assertively. Whether the Taiwan Strait continues to be a flashpoint will be up to Beijing.

This essay takes Karl Mannheim's theory of generational politics as its theoretical and methodological basis.[1] According to Mannheim, rapid and profound change (which Mannheim refers to as "destabilizing" change) in the environment in which individuals receive their political socialization can create political generations—groups of people who share an experience of the world during their formative years (which Mannheim defines as between the ages of 18 and 25) that differs significantly from that of older and younger people. Not everyone is led by these common experiences to the same attitudes and views, but they are all influenced by the same experiences, and their reactions bind members of a generation to one another even while dividing them from other generations.

The major theoretical challenge to the generational politics model is the concept of life cycle effects—the idea that differences among age groups should be attributed to changes in attitudes over the course of a lifetime rather than durable differences between age cohorts. To address this challenge, many studies of generational politics use long-term panel data. Such data is not available for Taiwan, where public opinion surveys on sensitive political topics have been conducted only since the late 1980s. In the absence of appropriate long-term studies, this paper uses qualitative evidence—including historical analysis, focus groups, and interviews—to identify and analyze generational effects in Taiwan's political elite.

Taking Mannheim's framework as its touchstone, the essay begins by explaining the common experiences shared by members of the rising generation of Taiwanese leaders. It draws a strong contrast between the current political leadership, which came of age during the height of Taiwan's single-party authoritarianism (the "authoritarian generation"), and the next generation of politicians, who came to political awareness after Taiwan had begun its transition to democracy (the "transitional generation"). Because they have no memory of Taiwan's darkest days, these young

[1] For a detailed synopsis of Mannheim's theory see Shelley Rigger, *Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics and "Taiwanese Nationalism"* (Washington: East West Center, 2006).

politicians are less likely than the current leadership to view their political opponents as enemies. Compared to many of today's leaders, they are rational and pragmatic in their political outlook.[2] The essay then analyzes the main strands of opinion—what Mannheim calls the generation units—within this group, and provides brief profiles of young leaders from Taiwan's two main political parties. The next section discusses the most common pathways to power for young leaders as well as the political environment in which these leaders find themselves, including a description of Taiwan's electorate. The essay concludes with several scenarios under which the rising generation might come to power and a discussion of the policy implications of its rise for the United States and the People's Republic of China.

## Events and Environment Shaping Politicians in the Transition-Era Generation

Taiwan's postwar history falls into three periods. From 1945 until the mid-1970s, the Kuomintang (KMT, or Nationalist Party) ruled the island as a single-party authoritarian regime, under the name Republic of China. The first stirrings of a democratic transition came in the early 1970s, but the process was most evident between 1977 and 1996. Since the mid-1990s, Taiwan has been a fully democratic state. Each of these periods—authoritarian, transitional, and democratic—had its own pattern of political activity and participation. Taiwanese who reached political maturity in the different eras developed markedly different outlooks toward politics. The result is three distinct generations of politically active Taiwanese. The current leadership is made up of men and women who came of age during the authoritarian era. People like Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou were born and raised under a repressive authoritarian state that actively discriminated against the "Taiwanese" majority. In contrast, the rising generation of political leaders in Taiwan came of age during the transitional period, when politics were in flux, repression was declining, and the "native Taiwanese" majority was learning to value its unique culture and history.

### *The Authoritarian Period*

Republic of China (ROC) administrators arrived in Taiwan in 1945 to take power from the Japanese colonial government that had ruled the island since 1895. Their practice of subordinating the island to the ROC's larger goals offended many Taiwanese, and on February 28, 1947, economic and political dissatisfaction exploded into rioting that engulfed the island. The regime used deadly force to put down the uprising, and the so-called February 28th Incident became the KMT's original sin in Taiwan. It created lasting resentment among the island's original inhabitants (the roughly 85% of Taiwan residents known as "native Taiwanese" or *benshengren*) and later became the foundation for Taiwan's political opposition.[3]

In 1949 the ROC state was forced from China and took refuge in Taiwan. The administrators, soldiers, and dependents who settled there came to be called "mainlanders" or *waishengren*. The Nationalists insisted that recovering the mainland from Communist control was their highest

[2] Taiwan's current president, Ma Ying-jeou (b. 1949) belongs to the same political generation as his predecessor, Chen Shui-bian, but his political outlook is similar to that of the transitional generation, leading some analysts to characterize his election as a generational turnover. Such a characterization is premature, however, as the generation born in the 1940s and early 1950s still occupies most of the top positions in Taiwan's political leadership. That said, Ma's success may well accelerate the process of generational turnover by breaking the grip of the more ideologically authoritarian generation.

[3] *Benshengren* means "a person of this province"—Taiwan—while *waishengren* means "a person from another/outside province," referring to the rest of China.

priority, and they went to work to make Taiwan a secure base for that effort. They stressed political stability and economic development. The economic path they chose—a combination of market-driven and state-led export-oriented development—was highly successful, achieving growth rates in the 1970s and 80s that made Taiwan a leader among newly-industrializing countries.

The ROC's brand of authoritarianism stressed popular mobilization as well as repression. Forceful measures to suppress political activism outside approved channels ran parallel with efforts to make Taiwanese active participants within those channels. The KMT used propaganda and education to win loyalty, and then incorporated Taiwanese into the party-state. In particular, the KMT encouraged Taiwanese to participate in local elections. By the 1970s so many Taiwanese were active in the KMT that managing the competition among them had become one of the party's biggest challenges.

During the authoritarian period, most Taiwanese avoided political entanglements. Voting rates were high, but political activism challenging the ruling party was rare. For those who grew up during this period—including most of today's top leaders—challenging the KMT carried a heavy price. Thousands of Taiwanese and mainlanders were arrested on suspicion of supporting communism or Taiwan independence. Many opposition politicians spent time in prison or exile. The KMT also demanded strict fidelity to its leaders and ideology from its supporters, so even those who chose to identify with the ruling party were not free. As a result, politicians from the authoritarian generation who became active in the opposition movement—now the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Taiwan's second-largest party—tend to be colorful, even reckless, extroverts, whereas the KMT's top figures are mostly dour, cautious men lacking in charisma and media appeal.

### *The Transitional Period*

The first stirrings of political change occurred in the early 1970s. By the end of the decade, it was clear that Taiwan had entered a new phase. In retrospect, we can identify three trends that contributed to the transition.[4] The KMT's faltering international and domestic legitimacy forced the party to lighten its grip on society and make greater efforts to live up to its "Free China" moniker. Also, a handful of popular local politicians became disenchanted with the KMT and started competing openly with KMT candidates. Third, opposition activists took advantage of the KMT's diminishing control to intensify efforts at inducing democratic reform. Late in the decade, opposition politicians and activists joined forces to create a quasi-party organization, the Dangwai.[5]

In late 1979, Dangwai activists organized a protest in the southern city of Kaohsiung. The regime blocked the demonstration and prosecuted organizers. If the KMT imagined the crackdown would put a stop to opposition activity, it had badly miscalculated. The Kaohsiung Incident became a source of sympathy and visibility for pro-democracy forces, resulting in a sharp uptick in the Dangwai's electoral support. By 1987, the Dangwai had constituted itself as a political party (the DPP), martial law was gone, and Taiwan's path toward democratic reform was clear. The ROC's

[4] There is an extensive literature on Taiwan's democratization. See, for example, Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1986); Tien Hung-mao, *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in the Republic of China* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1989); Alan Wachman, *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994); and Wu Jau-hsieh, *Taiwan's Democratization: Forces behind the New Momentum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[5] Dangwai means "outside the party."

highest court struck down restrictions on the direct election of national legislators in 1990, and in 1994 the political parties reached an agreement to allow direct presidential elections.

The members of the generation of Taiwanese leaders that is stepping into national prominence today (those born between approximately 1958 and 1985) were in their formative years during this transitional period. The oldest of them were barely twenty when political opposition broke the veneer of stable single-party rule with the Kaohsiung demonstration. Their political awareness thus was dawning just as the Dangwai was gaining momentum. They remember the authoritarian period: the fear of speaking about politics, the denigration of all things Taiwanese, and the insistence on unification; yet they also saw how quickly an authoritarian edifice could collapse. They were educated—and indoctrinated—into the regime's self-justifying ideology, but outside their classroom windows they could see the KMT's political domination crumbling.[6]

The U.S. decision in 1979 to sever relations with the ROC was a shock, even though the ROC's diplomatic position had been deteriorating for more than a decade. Many people—in Taiwan as well as in China and the United States—expected the island to fall quickly into Beijing's hands. When these dire predictions failed to materialize, Taiwan seemed to have gained a second chance—no thanks to the KMT. That same year, the Kaohsiung Incident opened the eyes of many Taiwanese to the KMT's paranoid, reactionary nature.

In the aftermath of the Kaohsiung Incident, Dangwai supporters redoubled their efforts. Although they formed the DPP in 1986 in violation of martial law, they were not arrested. Evidence suggests KMT leaders had come to believe the tide of reform propelled by domestic and international forces was irreversible. President Chiang Ching-kuo reinforced this impression in 1987 when he decided to lift martial law, thereby in a stroke liberalizing both the political system and the mass media. These events represented steady progress toward democratization and accustomed the young generation to rapid change and increasing opportunities for democratic participation.

The watershed event for the transitional generation was the student movement that swept Taiwan in 1990. In March student activists occupied the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial plaza to demand democratic reforms, the first in a series of student-led protests.[7] The regime's initial reaction was to crack down—a number of activists were arrested, beaten, or expelled from school—but soon it met the students' reform demands. Compared to demonstrations in the Dangwai era, the student movement attracted broader support. The values it represented were by 1990 mainstream youth attitudes. As the student movement leader Fan Yun explained, "The 'student movement generation of the 1990s' sounds relatively narrow, but democratization actually shaped our entire generation. Even those students who didn't join with us to make the student movement all felt the liberalizing wave of that time."[8]

The students' goal was democratization; independence was not part of their agenda. Nonetheless, the protests had a strong Taiwanese flavor, which is captured in their central symbol—a huge sculpture of a wild lily.[9] For Taiwanese in the transitional generation, Taiwan is the only homeland they have ever known. No matter where their parents were born, they themselves have no memory

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[6] For a detailed discussion of the psychology of generation formation, including among Taiwanese in this period, see Rigger, *Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics and "Taiwanese Nationalism"*.

[7] He Rongxing, *Xueyun Shidai* [The Student Movement Era] (Taipei: Shibao Wenhua, 2001).

[8] Ibid., 260.

[9] It is perhaps ironic that the Taiwan student movement should have drawn ideas from the 1989 student movement in Beijing, but the wild lily sculpture at least was clearly inspired by the "Goddess of Democracy" statue in Tiananmen Square.

of a mainland home or of Japanese colonialism. Theirs was not a movement aimed toward China; instead, it was completely Taiwan-focused. The charges the transitional generation raised against the KMT included the ruling party's tendency to see itself as representing "China" and its aspiration for unification, but what they were protesting was how the KMT was using those claims to justify denying democracy to Taiwan.

During the student movement, open advocacy of Taiwan independence was still illegal. It was a matter of only months, however, before the KMT stopped suppressing pro-independence activism. In 1991 a number of blacklisted politicians, including representatives of the World United Formosans for Independence, returned from exile. Their return broke the taboo on independence advocacy and sparked a debate within the DPP over whether to make independence a DPP platform plank. In 1991 the party adopted a resolution making independence its official position.[10]

The returned exiles sparked a wave of excitement over the possibility of independence, and there is no question that the student movement was affected. Many young activists were attracted to the independence cause. Still, the student movement activists were not leading the DPP in the early 1990s, and the authoritarian generation politicians who were in charge were considerably more ideological than their young supporters. For the student leaders, Taiwan was less the blasted victim of KMT dictatorship in need of independence than a beloved homeland in need of protection and care.

The watershed event for the transitional generation [born between 1958–85] was the student movement that swept Taiwan in 1990.

This orientation is evident in a 1996 document published by student movement activists led by Jou Yi-Cheng: "Manifesto for the Taiwan Independence Movement in a New Era." The manifesto advocates an inclusive definition of Taiwanese identity, one that embraces all those who call the island their home, regardless of ethnicity. It defined "Taiwan independence" as a spiritual reality, available to everyone, and rejected the Taiwan independence movement's emphasis on formal gestures and symbols. The student activist (and DPP legislator) Kuo Cheng-liang summarized the difference between the transitional and authoritarian generations this way: "The old generation advocated Taiwan independence because of the past, tragedy and nationalism, while the new generation advocates Taiwan independence because of the future, hope and democracy."[11]

Taiwanese born between 1958 and the mid-1970s also were influenced by the fast-changing political and economic environment in which they grew up—an environment quite different from the one the authoritarian generation confronted. While they were watching Taiwan's political transformation, these youths were enjoying the fruits of the island's economic "miracle." Although children growing up in these decades were expected to work hard, and competition for educational opportunities was intense, the promise of interesting work and financial success at the end of the cram school rainbow was real.

Another consequence of Taiwan's growing economic might was confidence. Where earlier generations saw themselves as supplicants to international aid donors, members of this generation

[10] For a detailed account of the process by which this decision was made, see Shelley Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 120–36.

[11] Kuo Cheng-liang, *Minjindang zhuanxing zhi tong* [The DPP's Painful Transformation] (Taipei: Tianhsia, 1998), 76.

were in a position to help others. Also, they did not share their elders' sense that a ruthless enemy lurked across the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan's confidence was bolstered even more in 1987 when the government lifted restrictions on travel to the mainland. Taiwanese who visited the People's Republic of China (PRC) immediately recognized that Taiwan was far ahead in economic and social development. Whereas the previous generation was raised to view the mainland as a deadly enemy, and the subsequent generation—which we might call the democratic generation—has grown up with the mainland as Taiwan's biggest trading partner (and potential competitor), the transitional generation straddles these two eras. At school the transitional generation was taught to hate and fear the "Communist bandits," but as adults they have watched trade and investment boom across the strait.

Finally, Taiwanese growing up in the transitional era were spared the worst psychological damage of the White Terror period, an era of intense political repression in the 1950s and 60s. Unlike politicians who grew up during the authoritarian era, many of whom still harbor a deep hatred for mainland-born people (whom they see as the agents of their oppression and the beneficiaries of their losses), transitional generation politicians tend to be pragmatic, optimistic, and forward-looking. DPP stalwarts in the transitional generation who believe Taiwanese identity is extremely important generally are still comfortable speaking Mandarin. They do not see it as a betrayal of the cause. As Duan Yi-kang, a rising leader in the DPP, put it: "Language is just a tool. As long as everyone can use it, can communicate, the rest is not very important."[12]

Perhaps most importantly, the transitional generation does not equate loving Taiwan with hating China. As Lin Chia-lung, another rising generation DPP politician stated:

> Taiwan identity has reached a watershed point. It is now the mainstream. But the meaning of Taiwan identity is changing. At first, Taiwan identity was an identity in opposition to the KMT. Then later it became an identity in opposition to the CCP. But people today don't want an identity that is in opposition to something.[13]

Duan Yi-kang puts this idea explicitly in generational terms:

> In the past, the KMT domination took the "Taiwan" out of Taiwan, it destroyed the local language, culture and history. That kind of domination produced an extremely strong backlash and dissatisfaction…So some of the older people in the DPP don't want to hear "China." To them, "China" represents suffering, it represents the KMT's high-pressure political authority…That kind of backlash, when the bonds are taken off, can look very extreme…We [the transitional generation] don't want to see this kind of situation, we don't want society to be so extreme. We want an identity that everyone can accept. We're in Taiwan now, Taiwan is our country, but this country, Taiwan, has extremely close ties to China. If we want to understand Taiwan we must also understand China; if we want to care for Taiwan, we must also care for China.[14]

Domestic changes in Taiwan—political, economic, and social—also need to be understood within the context of global events and changes. The authoritarian period of Taiwan's history coincided with the high tide of the Cold War, in which Taiwan was a front-line state. After the

[12] Interview with the author, 2005.

[13] Interview with the author, 2005.

[14] Interview with the author, 2005.

United States opened talks with China, however, being anti-Communist no longer guaranteed a privileged status in the world. A new international logic took its place: the key to international respect is democracy. Taiwan's old friends in the United States, the anti-Communist stalwarts, were joined by new friends—democracy advocates such as U.S. Representative Stephen Solarz. Taiwan's democratic movement attracted broad support overseas, especially in the United States where advocates of Taiwan independence had already assembled an impressive grassroots movement.

Taiwanese in the transitional generation have been affected by globalization and China's rise. Both of these are complex and vexing developments for Taiwan's political leadership. On the one hand, there is no question that Taiwan's export-oriented economy benefits enormously from global integration. Open markets have allowed Taiwanese companies to become leaders in manufacturing, moving up the value chain from textiles to IT. Similarly, China's open-door policy has been a huge boon to Taiwanese companies.

Globalization poses challenges, too. Though China's low-wage workforce allows Taiwanese manufacturers to remain competitive, it also draws jobs away from Taiwan. These trends have left many Taiwanese deeply ambivalent and intensely anxious about globalization and mainland China's rise.

## Generation Units

The account of the rising generation given above relies on broad generalizations. We can begin to narrow these generalizations by identifying subgroups within the generation. The most important division is the split between those who identify with the DPP and those who identify with the KMT.[15] At one time, it might have made sense to draw the dividing line between those who identify with Taiwan and those who identify with China, but among Taiwanese born in the 1960s and 70s, very few believe the mainland, and not Taiwan, is their homeland.

Compared to the authoritarian generation, the generation units within the transitional generation are less polarized and antagonistic (although DPP and KMT politicians are extremely competitive). The defining event for this generation is the student movement, and while most students did not participate (and some joined pro-KMT student groups), the values the student movement represented—democracy and reform—were less controversial among their peers than among their parents. Conservative students opposed the movement's disruptive tactics, and many accepted the regime's argument that too much change too quickly was unwise, but the divisions between generation units have never been as visceral for this group as they are for older politicians.

Another reason why the generation units within this cohort are less pronounced than one might expect is the strong pragmatic strain that runs through the whole generation. KMT-leaning members of the transitional generation are more enthusiastic about engaging mainland China and stress the benefits of economic interaction. DPP-leaning members are more skeptical because they see risks in unfettered engagement. In other words, they agree (more or less) over ends but differ over means. Moreover, politicians on both sides of the aisle are searching for realistic solutions to the problems Taiwan faces. As a result, there are few fundamentalists in this generation.

[15] The reconsolidation of Taiwan's two major parties in 2008 has made the labels "Pan-Green" (DPP/TSU) and "Pan-Blue" (KMT/PFP/NP) obsolete, at least for the time being.

The Taoyuan County executive Chu Li-lun (Eric Chu) exemplifies the pragmatic outlook of KMT politicians in his generation. Chu rejects the assertion that the KMT is a unificationist party. Instead, he characterizes the KMT as pragmatic and committed both to preserving Taiwan's economic and political status quo and to allowing future generations to determine Taiwan's relationship with China.[16] Likewise, there is plenty of evidence of pragmatism in the words and deeds of DPP politicians in this age group. One of the most hard line of the DPP's leading young politicians is Lin Chia-lung, but even he insists that his party is pragmatic:

> The DPP is already not so radical. It is actually a very pragmatic, rational party. Most people are influenced by the PRC's view of the DPP, but their view is actually very wrong…I don't think there's a big difference in the generations. We all have Taiwan subjectivity, but we also are all pragmatic, and willing to negotiate with China. But not if that negotiation requires sacrificing Taiwan's subjectivity. We are totally willing to engage with China.[17]

In the run-up to the December 2005 municipal elections, a group of transitional generation politicians—led by Duan Yi-kang and Luo Wen-chia, the DPP Taipei County executive candidate—called for a "New DPP Movement." They sought to revive the party's core values and ideals, which they identified as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice. The idea gained wide support—more than 70 DPP legislators endorsed it—but the transitional generation was the driving force. Senior DPP leaders reacted badly to the criticism and banned discussion of the idea. Soon after, the Chen administration made a number of hard-line cross-Strait policy decisions, a clear rebuke to the youthful moderates.

Unlike the senior generation of DPP politicians, which tends to be divided into hard-liners and moderates on the ideological question of how far to push for Taiwan independence, DPP politicians in the rising generation are divided on tactics. The idealists—people like Jou Yi-Cheng—believe the DPP has compromised too much in its pursuit of power, making itself little better than the KMT. This group tends to be the most moderate on the cross-Strait issue. Idealists oppose ethnic politicking and making unrealistic promises about independence to pander to hard-liners. Opposing the idealistic camp are realists, who argue the DPP must retain power at all costs, that refusing to do what is necessary to win—and so letting the KMT regain power—is the wrong approach. They tend, whether for tactical or ideological reasons, to be more willing to use identity politics to mobilize votes.[18] Lin Chia-lung is a leading spokesman for this view:

> Some people stress that because economic reliance [on China] can't be avoided, we shouldn't try to resist it; we shouldn't become the bad guys, but instead should open more aggressively. But we must resist, because if we give in too much, things will start moving too fast, and we will get unification, but not peaceful unification—conflictual unification. This is where the KMT is leading us—to a premature, non-peaceful unification. We will not allow this. The DPP will fight with all our resources to prevent the KMT from achieving their goals...I think we should try to persuade people of our values, to influence them to agree with us, not just follow behind the voters. You need to have values and ideals. At the same

[16] Interview with the author, November 2005.

[17] Interview with the author, 2005.

[18] The conflict between these groups can be sharp. In May 2007 Lin Chia-lung took fire from moderates in his generation when he called them "opportunists" who did not support the party's core values. Cheng Yun-peng responded that Lin's comments showed his lack of political experience. See Flora Wang, "DPP members slam secretary-general over poll comments," *Taipei Times*, May 22, 2007, 3.

time, if we are not able to persuade people, we need to respect their decisions. This is democracy.[19]

In the wake of the DPP's disastrous defeats in the 2008 national elections—in which DPP legislative presence was reduced to less than a quarter of the seats, and it lost the presidency to the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou by an eighteen point margin—this debate has emerged even more strongly. Early indications suggest that the pragmatists may gain the upper hand—their candidate for DPP chair was elected in May 2008—but that the hard-liners still enjoy considerable influence within the party, and few authoritarian generation politicians are ready to hand power to the transitional generation.

## Pathways to Power for Taiwan's Rising Leaders

Next generation politicians have followed various career paths. Most DPP figures began their careers in the student movement. Although their ages range across more than a decade—from Lee Wen-chung (1958) to Cheng Yun-peng (1973)—most were at university in the critical years of 1990 and 1991. The few rising DPP politicians who did not take part in the student movement got their start as staff assistants or as the scions of political families who inherited political machines. An example is Kaohsiung's Chen Chi-mai, whose father, Chen Che-nan, was a leading lieutenant to Chen Shui-bian before he was disgraced by scandal in 2005. Chen Chi-mai emphasizes his (relatively limited) participation in the student movement as a way of establishing his *bona fides* as a DPP transitional generation leader.

After the student movement ended, a handful of activists—including Lee Wen-chung and Lai Chin-lin—jumped directly into electoral politics, but most continued their education. Many pursued graduate degrees in Taiwan and overseas. From there, they either joined faculty at Taiwanese universities or entered politics as assistants to rising DPP politicians of the previous generation. Among the most famous political aides were Chen Shui-bian's "boy scouts" Ma Yung-cheng and Luo Wen-chia. They had important posts in the Taipei City government when Chen was mayor (1994–98). Others worked in DPP administrations in smaller cities. By the late 1990s transitional generation politicians were running for elected offices, including the legislature. Unlike most Taiwanese politicians, few student movement activists worked their way up through local elections. Under the old legislative voting system, attractive politicians with DPP support could win legislative seats even without deep local roots. Under the new system, young politicians face a steeper climb.

Electioneering is an important skill for rising politicians to master, but it is not the only one. The DPP also tries to give young leaders opportunities to develop administrative and policy expertise. In addition, the party headquarters provides employment and leadership opportunities for politicians who are out of office. For example, Hsiao Bi-khim, a former legislator, has had numerous jobs within the party headquarters, including heading the international department. After losing the Taichung City mayoral election in 2005, Lin Chia-lung was appointed secretary-general of the DPP.[20] After Chen Shui-bian was elected president in 2000, many rising DPP figures

[19] Interview with the author, 2005.

[20] In the past, DPP factions—which had offices and paid staff—were another source of employment for out-of-office and rising politicians. Duan I-kang, for example, ran the New Tide faction office for a time. The DPP recently "outlawed" factional organizations, so that outlet is not longer open.

were appointed to positions in the government, including the National Security Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Government Information Office. Chen Chi-mai and Liu Shyh-fang, a promising female politician of this generation, also followed this route.

The paths to power for KMT politicians are similar but more diverse. A number of young generation KMT politicians "inherited" their positions, whereas others worked their way up. As in the DPP, the latter group tends to enjoy higher status. They are nominated for better positions and have a better reputation overall. Even in the young generation, mainlanders are overrepresented (relative to their share of the population) among KMT politicians, but most transitional generation KMT politicians are Taiwanese. Flirtations with other conservative parties are not uncommon, but as the KMT reconsolidates, those who want to remain active in politics will have little choice but to rejoin the KMT. Those who have returned to the KMT so far have encountered little resistance from the party center.[21]

KMT politicians receive training and experience working at party headquarters and as staffers in legislative offices. Under the Chen administration, central government appointments were hard to come by, but the KMT compensated for the lack of national political posts by placing young politicians in local governments. The KMT has a much stronger presence in municipal offices than the DPP, and it uses both elective and appointive offices in municipalities as venues for cultivating young talent. With the KMT back in charge of the executive branch, the range of opportunities will be very wide indeed.

The career trajectory of Taoyuan County's young executive, Chu Li-lun, is instructive. Chu was born in 1961 and was active in student politics, though not the student movement. He affiliated himself with the KMT early on; he was elected president of the mainstream Student Association for Universities, Colleges, and Technical Institutes, and his biography mentions that he once received a commendation from Chiang Ching-kuo himself. He earned a PhD in accounting at New York University, and he taught at National Taiwan University. He served one term in the legislature (1998–2001), and two terms as Taoyuan County executive (2001–2005, reelected in 2005). Taipei County executive Chou Hsi-wei (born 1958) has a similar background. He was educated in business administration in the United States, elected to the now-defunct provincial assembly and legislature, and then ascended to the top post in Taipei County—Taiwan's most populous municipality—in 2005. Chou took one interesting detour when he left the KMT to become a People First Party legislator; however, today he holds one of the KMT's highest-profile elected positions.

In sum, rising generation politicians in Taiwan use positions in business and academics as launching pads (and crash pads) during their political careers, and can fall back on appointed positions in local and national government or in their respective party headquarters. Still, every ambitious politician must eventually test his or her mettle in the electoral arena because all the big prizes in the political system are won through popular vote.

For the previous generation, other pathways to power (mainly appointive office and party service) were more important, and many older politicians are hampered by their lack of electoral experience and charisma. During the transition to democracy, opposition figures could wield influence behind the scenes by writing or coordinating political strategy. Chiou Yi-jen and Wu Nai-jen were among the Dangwai movement's most influential figures, but they never entered electoral

[21] Politicians returning to the KMT have in some cases run into resistance from potential competitors. For example, under the old, multi-member electoral system, the KMT was happy to nominate former New Party activist Joanna Lei for a legislative seat. Under the single-member system, Lei lost the KMT nomination to a more resourceful local politician. She ended up back in the New Party, running on the party list.

politics. Many KMT loyalists gained high offices through appointment or minimally-competitive elections. In the 1990s KMT strategists fretted openly over the lack of electoral experience among top politicians.

Although transitional generation leaders have not yet assumed top national government or party positions, they have made inroads. Approximately 50% of the DPP legislators and 40% of the KMT legislators elected in 2008 were born after 1956.

## The Political Environment Facing Taiwan's Rising Leaders

U.S. policymakers pay close attention to Taiwanese attitudes toward mainland China. They monitor survey data and parse the statements of Taiwanese leaders, and see troubling trends: many in Taiwan are becoming less interested in satisfying Beijing's demand for unification and are identifying more closely with Taiwan as their homeland. Because these trends are occurring at a time when the PRC is gaining the capacity, and perhaps the will, to coerce Taiwan into acceding to its demands, they may lead to an increase in the likelihood of cross-Strait conflict.

Twenty years ago few Taiwanese dared to question their government's pro-unification stance openly, but support for immediate unification quickly dwindled. According to surveys conducted by the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University, one of Taiwan's most respected survey centers, support for unification in the near term has remained below 5% for more than a decade. Support for unification as a long-term solution is stronger, but also declining, from approximately 25% in 1995 to around 12% a few months ago.[22] These surveys make it clear that Beijing's strong preference—unification, sooner rather than later—enjoys little support among ordinary Taiwanese. The question that remains is whether this is a pragmatic response to Beijing's military threat or an indicator of genuine ambivalence on the issue.[23]

Opinion regarding national identity supports this analysis. In the mid-1990s approximately half of all Taiwanese said they considered themselves "both Taiwanese and Chinese," while a quarter identified as Taiwanese and a fifth as Chinese.[24] Since then, the percentage claiming a Taiwanese identity has increased, and the percentage of islanders who call themselves Chinese has declined sharply. Many analysts infer from this data that Taiwanese are likely to resist the incorporation of their island into a Chinese nation, given that they do not think of themselves as Chinese people. Even if Taiwanese are reluctant, for practical reasons, to support *de jure* independence, they have a strong preference for the *de facto* independence Taiwan currently enjoys, so unification will not be accomplished easily.

Perhaps the strongest support for this pessimistic logic is found in the evolving political discourse on the island. Former president Lee Teng-hui's personal transformation from top unificationist to

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[22] National Chengchi University Election Studies Center data reported in I-chou Liu, "The Development of the Opposition," in *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China*, ed. Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 80; and National Chengchi University Election Studies Center data reported by the Mainland Affairs Council, available at http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/index1-e.htm.

[23] Surveys that eliminate this ambiguity by asking whether Taiwanese would support independence if it could be achieved without provoking conflict with the PRC find a higher proportion in favor (around 30%). See Chu Yun-han, "Taiwan's Politics of Identity: Navigating Between China and the United States," in *Power and Security in Northeast Asia: Shifting Strategies*, ed. Byung-Kook Kim and Anthony Jones (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 245.

[24] "How People in Taiwan Identify Themselves, as Taiwanese, Chinese, or Both?" survey conducted by National Chengchi University Election Studies Center for Mainland Affairs Council, http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/english/pos/890623/8906e_3.gif.

leading independence advocate embodies this trend. In his 1996 inaugural address, President Lee stated:

> For over 40 years, the two sides of the Straits have been two separate jurisdictions due to various historical factors, but it is also true that both sides pursue eventual national unification. Only when both sides face up to the facts and engage in dialogue with profound sincerity and patience will they be able to find the solution to the unification question and work for the common welfare of the Chinese people.

In 2005, by contrast, Lee stated: "Taiwan has never been a part of China since ancient times and Taiwan is already an independent country…The Philippines fought against first Spanish, and later American rule, to achieve its independence. We should also fight to make Taiwan a normal nation."[25]

President Lee's about-face is an extreme example of a more general phenomenon. For five decades the KMT insisted on unification as the shared destiny of Taiwan and the mainland. Determination to carry out the "grand unification of China" was a core element of KMT ideology, whereas the DPP adopted a pro-independence position. Neither party's official stance, however, adequately reflected the public's preference for a middle road that rejected both unification and independence as near-term goals. Over time both parties adjusted, until, as Gunter Schubert points out, Taiwan's political parties arrived at an overarching consensus "that supports the idea that a Taiwanese nation already exists."[26] Given this cross-party consensus favoring the status quo, evident recently in the two parties' competing proposals to pursue a United Nations seat, many U.S. policymakers listen to the political rhetoric emerging from Taiwan's elites with alarm. The loudest voices are those opposing any concessions to the PRC, while unification supporters have gone completely silent.

Because these trends have developed and accelerated over the past twenty years, most analysts expect them to continue. In particular, analysts worry that "de-sinification"—the deliberate excision of Chinese elements from Taiwan's everyday life and culture—will undermine the basis for unification in the future, as young Taiwanese will see themselves as no more connected to China than to Japan or the United States. The fear is that young Taiwanese, who have grown up without a government insisting on a Chinese identity or unification will push their leaders even further along the road to formal independence—and conflict with the PRC.

Though these trends are important, a strong countertrend requires attention, too. Even as Taiwanese views of unification and national identity have consolidated around a Taiwan-centric consensus, economic forces are pulling Taiwan closer to the mainland. Since the Taiwanese began visiting the PRC twenty years ago, billions of dollars in trade and investment have flowed across the strait. Hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese entrepreneurs, professional workers, support staff, and dependents are living and working in the mainland, combining Taiwanese technology, capital, and management skill with China's abundant labor force to produce one of the world's most productive manufacturing partnerships. At the same time, China's political weight is growing, and Taiwan—including the rising political leadership—is well aware that its options are, and will continue to be, constrained both by its economic relationship with the mainland and by Beijing's global political

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[25] "Taiwan Awaits China's Anti-secession Law with Fear and Fury," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, March 4, 2005.

[26] Gunter Schubert, "Taiwan's Political Parties and National Identity: The Rise of an Overarching Consensus," *Asian Survey* 44, no.4 (July/August 2004): 535.

influence. For these reasons, the simple dichotomy in public opinion and in political discourse between unification and independence that drove debates during the 1990s is now irrelevant.

The collision of these contradictory trends creates a complex political environment for Taiwan's next generation of leaders. Politicians who hope to win support in the electorate must cope with the cross-Strait issue on two dimensions: the ideological and policy dimension and the party image dimension. Young Taiwanese—those born after the transition to democracy began—identify with Taiwan as their homeland, whether they are "mainlanders" or "Taiwanese" (categories that are rapidly losing coherence and salience). Virtually no one in the rising generation of politicians—regardless of their party affiliation—would identify publicly as anything but Taiwanese. Even the conservative legislator Joanna Lei (Lei Chien), a mainlander who has run under both the New Party and KMT banners, talks in terms of "saving Taiwan" and emphasizes her dedication to the island: "The best thing a government should do is to build this place as a homeland people really want to come back to." As for China, her goal is to "coexist and co-develop… until such time that the two sides decide on how we resolve our differences."[27]

Politicians who hope to win support in the electorate must cope with the cross-Strait issue on two dimensions: the ideological and policy dimension and the party image dimension.

The trick for politicians is to find a way to talk about policy that conveys both a sincere commitment to Taiwan and a credible vision for the future. This is not easy, given the unique predicament in which Taiwanese find themselves, caught between their desire for de facto independence and the need to find a *modus operandi* for living peacefully alongside the PRC. For KMT politicians, the challenge is to persuade voters that they can represent the Taiwanese people authentically and that they will not subjugate Taiwan's interests to an anachronistic ideology (unification). Most KMT politicians are native Taiwanese, so their dedication to Taiwan is hard to challenge, and even mainlander candidates—including Chu Li-lun and Chou Hsi-wei—have been able to overcome their ethnic background to win in predominantly Taiwanese constituencies.

Finding a workable balance between a strong Taiwanese identity and a pragmatic policy orientation poses a different problem for DPP politicians, especially members of the rising generation. For them, being "Taiwanese enough" to suit the average voter is not enough. They must also win the support of the pro-independence stalwarts in their own party. DPP politicians need to appeal to ideological voters in the DPP base to win party nominations, and they also need these voters' support in general elections, few of which DPP candidates can win without full-scale mobilization of the party faithful. It is proving very difficult to be both "Taiwanese enough" to please the hard-liners and centrist enough on the policy issues to please the average voter. Pro-independence ideologues torpedoed the candidacies of a number of rising DPP moderates in the 2008 legislative elections, including Hsiao Bi-khim (1971), Luo Wen-chia (1966), Lee Kun-tze (1964), Cheng Yun-peng (1973), and Shen Fa-hui (1966).

[27] Interview with the author, Fall 2005.

Pandering to the pro-independence wing of the party is not the solution either, especially under new election rules creating single member legislative districts. Under the old electoral rules, committed and cohesive minorities (such as DPP hard-liners) could win seats, but the new system sets a higher bar. The DPP's experience in the first such election came in January 2008. The results of the election—in which the DPP's share of legislative seats dropped from 40% to less than 25%—demonstrated starkly that mobilizing the party's base is not enough to win. It is clear that centrist voters, too, must be attracted. One could discern a certain grim satisfaction among the transitional generation moderates when the hard-liners nominated in their stead flopped in the general election.

Attracting centrist voters is difficult for the DPP for two reasons. The first is the problem of pro-independence hard-liners discussed above. The second reason is a credibility gap. In the 1970s and 1980s the central source of conflict between the KMT and Dangwai was the opposition's demand for democracy and the KMT's resistance to reform. Identity politics played a role, too, given that the demand for democracy also implied a demand for political equality between mainlanders and Taiwanese. As the KMT yielded to the opposition's political demands, the ethnic cleavage came to play a more prominent role in DPP rhetoric—a trend that was reinforced when the independence issue burst into the open in the 1990s.

Both parties adjusted their positions to attract mainstream voters. As a result, there is very little real difference between the parties' platforms today.[28] There is, however, a significant difference in the parties' images. For fifteen years, "seeks Taiwan Independence" has been one of the top two responses voters give to the question "What is your impression of the DPP?" while "loves Taiwan" (or something similar) is generally in the top five.[29] Being a party that loves Taiwan would seem to be a plus, given the rise in Taiwan identity. Being a party that seeks independence, however, is on balance a negative, because pressing for formal independence does not have broad popular support. The KMT, on the other hand, abandoned its strong unificationist position under Lee Teng-hui. Although it has flirted with a more pro-China orientation from time to time, most voters do not believe the KMT is seriously pursuing formal unification with the PRC. This makes the KMT more credible as the party of the *status quo*.[30]

Taiwan's political elite is sharply divided between a KMT that views closer engagement with the PRC as the solution to many of Taiwan's problems and a DPP that sees engagement as entailing serious risks and limited benefits. Although there is variation within each party, the parties are most easily differentiated on the core issue of how Taiwan should handle its relationship with the PRC. The generation of leaders in power today—those who grew up during the authoritarian period—cannot transcend this fundamental cleavage. DPP politicians claim the KMT will sell Taiwan out to the PRC, while KMT leaders insist the DPP's reckless pursuit of Taiwan independence is ruining the economy and dragging Taiwan toward war.

Young Taiwanese are much less polarized in their views, making the next generation of political leaders harder to pigeonhole. Among Taiwanese under fifty there is no market for the idea that Taiwan's interests should be subjugated to some higher historical mission or imperative; at the

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[28] Schubert, "Taiwan's Political Parties and National Identity," 534–54; and Shelley Rigger, "Party Politics and Taiwan's External Relations," *Orbis* (Summer 2005):413–28.

[29] Lin Chiung-chu, "The Evolution of Party Images and the Party System in Taiwan, 1992-2004," *East Asia: An International Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 34–35.

[30] In "The Evolution of Party Images" article referenced above, "supports unification" is commonly attributed to the PFP and New Party, but it is not in the ten characteristics attributed to the KMT.

same time, there is also little support for independence. Most of the KMT politicians who have the potential to be national leaders cannot be tarred with the "agent of China" brush. They are not excited about unification, but they believe Taiwan's best chance to remain a self-governing entity is to avoid provoking China's wrath and to take full advantage of the economic opportunities engagement with the mainland offers. Transitional generation politicians in the KMT tend to believe that negotiating with Beijing, perhaps even reaching a long-term compromise, is the best way to preserve Taiwan's political autonomy and economic prosperity. They also oppose, or at least do not support, efforts to strongly differentiate Taiwan from "China," an approach that they believe stigmatizes mainlanders and antagonizes Beijing.

DPP leaders in the rising generation are less ideological and emotional than those they will succeed. With some exceptions, these leaders view close economic ties with the PRC as a positive development, and they recognize that Taiwan independence cannot be achieved anytime soon. They may wish independence were possible, but they are realistic, and most are willing to postpone it. At the same time, these rising leaders worry that engagement and negotiation could make Taiwan more vulnerable to Beijing's irredentist impulses. They believe that the best way to strengthen the Taiwanese will to resist Beijing is to inculcate a feeling of Taiwanese identity that would make incorporation into "China" unappealing. Making Taiwan more indigestible helps deter Chinese military action and reduces the chances that Taiwan's leaders might be seduced into making a bad deal.

In short, transitional generation politicians are focused on figuring out how best to protect Taiwan and promote its interests. It is on this practical question that the two parties divide into nuanced and pragmatic positions. Even the authoritarian generation has found itself pushed in this direction. In 2008 both parties' presidential candidates were from the older generation, but their positions on issues were moderate. The KMT candidate campaigned on "three nos"—no unification, no independence and no war—and the DPP candidate advocated a peace agreement between Taipei and Beijing.

Placing the rising elites on the existing political map is useful, but new cleavages and issues are emerging, too. The debate over cross-Strait relations has shifted from a debate over whether Taiwan should engage the mainland at all to one over the degree of engagement (economic and political) that is desirable. Few transitional generation politicians, however, have articulated clear positions on what they think Taiwan should allow. Taiwanese politics long has been dominated by the cross-Strait issue and valence issues such as fighting corruption and democratization, so there has been relatively little room for new issues to emerge. As the rising elites come into their own, they will need to differentiate themselves from their peers by offering positions on new issues—such as whether to construct a welfare state and how to sustainably upgrade the economy. These issues conform much less readily to the existing party cleavage.

## Scenarios

Looking forward, it is difficult to foresee Taiwanese politics reversing the course it is on, especially with the new generation of leaders bringing their pragmatic orientation to the forefront of political discourse. Overall, the island's trajectory is toward moderation but not unification. If Beijing insists on formal political unification, the tension in the Taiwan Strait will continue to fester. If, however, the PRC is willing to allow the status quo to persist for another decade, Taiwan is

likely to agree. Although a stabilized status quo is the most likely prospect in the near-to-medium term, we can envision at least three scenarios in which this happy outcome could be thwarted:

### *PRC-Coerced Settlement*

The PRC might attempt to coerce Taiwan into accepting a settlement of the cross-Strait issue on the PRC's terms. Coercion could consist of limited or unlimited military force (anything from a naval blockade to a decapitation strike or from strategic bombing to an invasion attempt) or non-military action. If coercion were to succeed, Taiwan's domestic politics would be thrown off balance and probably polarized. Even if most Taiwanese were to decide to accept Beijing's terms, some would resist. If coercion were to fail, support for formal independence would increase sharply while support for engagement would diminish, although the effect probably would not be permanent.

### *Taiwan-Supported Unification*

Profound changes in China could make unification more attractive. In this case, support for unificationist parties would increase. Again, the effect would be to polarize politics, as many in Taiwan, even in the young generation, would resist unification on any terms. What might change in China? If China were to adopt a much more liberal political system (not necessarily moving all the way to Western-style democracy, but lifting restrictions on civil liberties and adopting participatory institutions), provide substantial autonomy for localities, and greatly increase its prosperity, some in Taiwan might see unification as beneficial.

### *PRC Annexation*

Taiwan could fall into a deep economic slump, perhaps the consequence of China's economic strangulation, with the result that its citizens might give up hope of maintaining their autonomy. There would likely be a military dimension to this scenario because the economic crisis might be so deep that Taiwan could not maintain an adequate defensive capability, and annexation would appear inevitable. This scenario is unlikely, in part because it is hard to imagine the PRC's economy improving while Taiwan's declines (at least in the next ten to twenty years), given the degree to which PRC industry depends on Taiwanese technology, capital, management expertise, and marketing savvy.[31]

Though these scenarios are not impossible, the more likely future is continued competition between moderate parties seeking to reinforce and stabilize the status quo. In particular, three scenarios are likely.

### *KMT Dominance*

The KMT's political position could continue to strengthen and consolidate, in which case debates within the KMT will become the primary political driver for political change in Taiwan. Debates will center on exactly how far to go in strengthening ties with the mainland, but other topics will emerge—for example, fiscal policy, social welfare, economic regulation, environmental problems, and public construction. In the near term (five to ten years) a stronger KMT position is likely to result in direct flights and other traffic between Taiwan and China, diminished restrictions on cross-Strait investment (both directions), easier access for PRC visitors, and increased efforts

[31] Another possibility is that China's economy could decline. In that case, Taiwan's economy would likely follow suit, although the specific causes of the downturn would determine how closely. The political implications of such an event would depend on Beijing.

at authoritative communication. Whether those efforts succeed will depend largely on whether Beijing relaxes its preconditions for dialogue.

Which of the KMT's young politicians take the lead also will help determine the party's orientation. If the national leadership is dominated by legislators, the party's policy direction is harder to predict. The political incentives facing legislators tend to draw their attention to ideological and pork barrel issues. If the new national leaders are drawn from the ranks of the municipal executives, the party will almost certainly emphasize economic issues. Because municipal executives spend their days in the economic trenches, they have little interest in ideological debates. These are the KMT leaders most likely to succeed Ma Ying-jeou and his circle. Moreover, after Ma Ying-jeou, any KMT presidential candidate will be Taiwan-born. It will be difficult to argue that KMT leaders who have lived in Taiwan since birth—even those who are technically mainlanders—lack a "Taiwanese identity."

### *DPP Dominance*

A second scenario would have the DPP moving toward the political center and regaining the momentum it lost under Chen Shui-bian. Evidence of a resurgent DPP would be an increased vote and seat share in the next two elections (municipal elections in 2009 and legislative elections in 2011/12) or a DPP victory in the 2012 presidential race. This scenario requires that the party's center of gravity shift to the transitional generation. The authoritarian generation seems incapable of setting aside ideological issues in favor of a pragmatic approach. The antipathy senior DPP leaders feel toward China (and the KMT) is simply too strong. Even after the party's disastrous showing in the 2008 legislative elections, Frank Hsieh, the DPP's presidential candidate, was unable to convincingly repudiate the ideologues' strategic orientation. His failure cost him dearly in the presidential vote.

When the next generation of DPP politicians comes to the fore, they will be eager to burnish their party's popular image. In particular, they will want to demonstrate competence and incorruptibility. To do this, they must shift their focus away from grand gestures, toward economic and administrative performance. Still, the DPP's younger leaders are not indifferent to the identity and status issues. They want to secure and preserve Taiwan's de facto independence, so while they may reach out to Beijing on practical issues, they will not surrender the principle that Taiwan must be treated as an equal. Also, there are hard-liners in this generation, notably the very influential politician Lin Chia-lung. Therefore, as in the first scenario, it will be up to Beijing to relax its preconditions enough to get dialogue moving. No matter how moderate these young leaders might be, resuming dialogue will be harder under a DPP government than under the KMT because PRC leaders deeply distrust the DPP. Where it might be willing to accept an ambiguous statement of principles from the KMT, Beijing is likely to demand clarity from the DPP.

One factor that makes this scenario less likely is the relative youth of the DPP leaders in the authoritarian generation. Chen Shui-bian will step down in May 2008, and despite his efforts to install himself as a leader of the DPP hard-liners, his influence will wane. There are a number of DPP politicians in their 50s and 60s, however, who have been waiting for their "turn" and are not eager to pass the torch. Losing the 2008 presidential election did not end the careers of people like Frank Hsieh, Su Tseng-chang, and Lee Ying-yuan. The rising leaders in the DPP may have to wait until the middle or end of the next decade to take their place at the head of the party.

### *Convergence of the DPP and KMT*

The least likely of these three status-quo scenarios would see the DPP taken over by the hard-liners, with the moderates marginalized. Under this scenario the rising generation politicians would be forced to choose between accepting the hard-liners' program, and the diminished political role for the DPP that this would entail, or leaving the DPP altogether. If they feel there is no room for them in the DPP, some young politicians will leave. For some, especially locally oriented politicians, this could even include joining the KMT. Others would weigh the benefits of remaining within the DPP against the risks of joining third parties. Though the new electoral system discourages third parties, a deeply unpopular and marginalized DPP could create space for one. A moderate alternative to both the KMT and DPP—especially one that attracted well-known and highly regarded DPP pragmatists such as Luo Wen-chia, Bi-khim Hsiao, Duan Yi-kang, Li Kun-tze, Jou Yi-Cheng, Kuo Cheng-liang, and others—might be able to gain political traction.[32] Whether they leave the DPP may depend on whether the party is able to regain the presidency. If it does, they will probably choose to continue to compete with the hard-liners and to wait out the older generation. If the DPP continues to lose elections, rising generation politicians could run out of patience. Another factor will be the network of DPP politicians known as the "New Tide." Many DPP moderates from the authoritarian and transitional generations are affiliated with the network, so the political logic laid down by senior New Tide figures will influence those in the younger generation. If they say sticking with the DPP is the best strategy, younger politicians who follow them will agree.

The first of these status quo-oriented scenarios—a return to KMT predominance for the next five to ten years—is most likely. In 2000 the KMT seemed close to demise. Its share of the vote and command of popular loyalty were free-falling. The party had lost the presidency, split in two, and seemed incapable of reform. Instead of consolidating its strength as the voice of moderation, after the 2000 presidential election senior party leaders took a sharp turn to the right by reviving the pro-unification agenda. In legislative elections held at the end of 2001, the KMT vote share was 31%—five percentage points below the DPP. The KMT lost not only its majority status but even its claim to be the largest party in the legislature. The People First Party, a breakaway faction of the KMT, used its leverage as a coalition partner to block policy initiatives the KMT supported.

Fortunately for the KMT, the DPP fumbled the opportunity to build on its successes early in the decade. Instead of moving to the center when the KMT vacated it, the senior DPP leadership shifted further to the left. When the KMT's top leadership reacted hysterically to Chen Shui-bian's re-election in 2004—after a bizarre shooting on the eve of the election—some DPP leaders responded equally irrationally, accusing the KMT of plotting a coup. As evidence of government corruption mounted, instead of purging wrongdoers, Chen insisted the accusations were politically motivated. In 2005, when young DPP loyalists under the banners "New DPP Movement" and "Green Academics" tried to shame the party into cleaning up its act, they were accused of abetting the enemy.

While the DPP was purging reformers in its ranks, the KMT was regaining its footing. In mid-2005 the KMT elected Ma Ying-jeou as chair by a wide margin. Ma was a full decade younger than his opponent, legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng, and many KMT members considered him a force for reform and rejuvenation. With the DPP mired in scandal and accusations of incompetence,

[32] Jou Yi-Cheng left the DPP already to organize the Third Society Party to compete in the 2008 legislative election. The party did not pass the 5% threshold for party list seats.

the KMT was able to pull off a huge victory in local elections that December, winning over 50% of the vote and increasing its share of executive posts from nine to fourteen.

The legislative elections in early 2008 were the DPP's worst showing since 2000. The party's legislative representation dropped from 40% of the seats to below 25%. Although the new electoral system—which is both disproportional and malapportioned—played an important role in the decline, it was not the only factor. In the single-member districts, the DPP lost approximately half the seats it should have won based on its performance in recent elections. In party list voting, the DPP captured just under 37% of the vote—almost exactly the share it had won in previous elections. The presidential election in March 2008 confirmed DPP supporters' worst fears when the KMT recaptured the presidential office with a 58% vote share, including majorities in 20 of the island's 25 municipalities.

Unless it can reverse this trend, the DPP is doomed to remain a minority party. The past four years' elections all show a trend toward growing KMT influence, reinforcing the assessment that the likeliest scenario is for the KMT to consolidate its hold on power while deepening its moderation on key issues. This KMT revival may continue through the transfer of power to the rising generation in both major parties. The recent elections eroded the DPP's influence over national and local political institutions. Even the presidential win in 2004 hurt the DPP more than it helped because Chen's disastrous second term shook voters' confidence in the party.

The DPP failed to expand its base of support in the first decade of the century in large part because hard-liners dictated its political strategy. Rather than offering positions aimed at winning over voters, the pro-independence faction within the Chen government tried to convert voters to its point of view (a strategy Lin Chia-lung describes in the above quotation). Seen in this light, their relentless—and ultimately counterproductive—harping on symbolic and ideological issues makes sense. To build a consensus against compromise with the PRC they had to change voters' minds. Playing ethnic politics, promoting constitutional reform and "defensive referendums," renaming state-owned companies, pushing for "transitional justice," rewriting textbooks, and "rectifying the name" of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall were all part of a grand strategy to make Taiwan's people more anti-China. There were those in the DPP who saw the risks of such a strategy, but the party leadership rejected their advice.

After its catastrophic losses in 2008 the DPP faced a leadership crisis. In May moderates and hard-liners faced-off in a vote for party chair. The hard-liners, represented by the octogenarian Koo Kwan-min, argued that the DPP's retreat from a strong pro-independence line was to blame for the party's woes. Arguing the moderates' case was Tsai Ying-wen, a former Lee Teng-hui administration mainland affairs official who had joined the DPP only four years earlier. Tsai won the chairmanship, but Koo received approximately 40% of the total vote. Furthermore, Tsai's relatively shallow roots in the party led some to doubt whether she would be able to influence the hard-line faction and move the DPP toward moderation.

## Implications for Beijing and Washington

This essay argues that the rising generation of Taiwanese politicians is less emotional and ideological and more rational and pragmatic than the island's current leaders. Their emergence as national leaders should make Taiwanese policy and cross-Strait relations more manageable. Still,

complex interactions among the three players—Taipei, Beijing, and Washington—will shape how the rise of a new generation affects the triangular relationship.

For Beijing, the pro-independence camp's declining visibility and influence will expose just how far the political center has shifted in Taiwan. PRC leaders have spent the last decade castigating Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian for "splittism." While they were squawking, the Taiwanese people quietly lost their appetite for unification. Only if the PRC government decides it can live with the status quo—a Taiwan that is neither formally independent nor formally part of the PRC—will it find the new generation of leaders acceptable. If Beijing decides to work with the new leaders (including Ma Ying-jeou as well as politicians from the transitional generation) to strengthen economic and social ties between the two sides (as opposed to pushing for formal unification in the near term), relations between Taipei and Washington will become less important. If China insists on a relationship beyond what the new leaders (and the Taiwanese public) can accept, Taiwan will look to the United States for protection, and the cycle of tension will resume.

For the United States, the new generation's approach—which is sketched not in black and white but in shades of gray—offers opportunities and challenges.

The rise of a new generation of leaders will also not solve the U.S. "Taiwan problem." The new leaders will continue Taiwan's ambivalent relationships with both Beijing and Washington. They will not push for unification, but they probably will align Taiwan more closely with the PRC than ever before, especially in the economic realm. Persuading Taiwanese politicians to choose a closer political and military relationship with the United States over improving cross-Strait ties will become more difficult. This is not to say the transitional generation politicians are anti-American, but they will avoid over-dependence on the United States. In their memory, Washington has never been a steadfast partner. Thus, this generation assumes the United States will put its own interests first. If they think Taiwan will benefit from closer ties with the PRC, they will pursue those ties. If they think the best way to protect Taiwan is to exploit tension between Washington and Beijing, they may well choose that option.

Like their predecessors, the new generation of leaders will try to enhance Taipei's relationships around the world. Though trying to avoid a zero-sum approach to international relations, these leaders will also resist marginalization and isolation orchestrated by Beijing. The most visionary among them imagine a world where diminished sovereignty everywhere eases the sovereignty problem for Taiwan. They will try to avoid military confrontation, but will not abandon Taiwan's defense (although they will not necessarily agree with U.S. defense planners on the details of defense strategy). In short, the new generation of leaders will try to avoid provoking China, but they will not surrender, either.

For the United States, the new generation's approach—which is sketched not in black and white but in shades of gray—offers opportunities and challenges. The reduction in cross-Strait tension will be welcome, but the introduction of new variables will increase uncertainty. A thaw in the Taiwan Strait will reanimate the debate within the United States over whether U.S. interests are served by a permanent rapprochement between Taipei and Beijing. Since the 1970s, the basis of

U.S. policy has been to encourage a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue by Taiwan and China themselves. Because the chances of a resolution were remote, this policy has never really been tested. On the contrary, U.S. policymakers have spent most of their time worrying about conflict in the strait.

Ironically, estrangement in the Taiwan Strait has allowed U.S. policymakers to avoid the question of what kind of relationship between Taipei and Beijing the United States should prefer. After the transitional generation—and their successors, the democratic generation—come to power, the chances of a deal between Taipei and Beijing will improve. The United States must be ready with a policy that protects its regional interests while supporting a successful settlement in the Taiwan Strait.

NBR THE NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ASIAN RESEARCH

*Seattle and Washington, D.C.*

1215 FOURTH AVENUE, SUITE 1600
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98161 USA
PHONE 206-632-7370, FAX 206-632-7487

1301 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, SUITE 305
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004 USA
PHONE 202-347-9767, FAX 202-347-9766

NBR@NBR.ORG, WWW.NBR.ORG