

The Leadership of China's Four Major Cities: A Study of Municipal Party Standing Committees

Cheng Li

The leadership of China's four provincial-level cities, Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing, is arguably the most important sub-national decision-making body in the country. The top leadership positions in these four major cities are high-powered steppingstones for further promotions. For this reason—and also for these cities' pacesetter role in China's economic and sociopolitical development—factional politics has been particularly dynamic. Recently, senior leaders of all these cities went through a major reshuffling. This study focuses on the newly reappointed municipal Party standing committees, including their organizational compositions, members' generational attributes, and the factional distribution of power. This analysis can serve as a preview of the leadership changes in the upcoming 17th Party Congress.

In an increasingly urbanized world, major cities have often served as the pacesetters for economic and sociopolitical development.¹ China is certainly not an exception. Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing, the four provincial-level municipalities directly under the central government (*zhixiashi*), have all served as vanguards and engines of China's economic growth. In recent years, these four super-large cities have all witnessed dynamic transformations, and their changes not only have a strong impact on the politics and economy of the country, but also have profound implications beyond China's borders.

Beijing, China's capital, is in the midst of preparations for the 2008 Olympic Games—the country's “coming-out party” on the international stage. Shanghai, with its distinct cosmopolitan legacy, has reemerged in the span of about 15 years as one of the world's most forward-looking cities. The Shanghai municipal leadership has recently set the ambitious goal of becoming an international economic, financial, trade, and shipping center in the next 15 years. Tianjin's projected development over the next decade or so is also impressive. The central government recently designated Tianjin's Binhai District as China's third state-level special economic zone (Shenzhen and Shanghai's Pudong District are the other two). Because of Tianjin's geographic location, this new phase of the city's development will likely stimulate the economies of its neighboring cities and regions, including vast areas of China's northern and northeastern provinces. Similarly, the sprawling western city of Chongqing, with its 31 million inhabitants (the largest metropolis on the planet), has been the designated hub of the Chinese government's “Go West” development plan in the past few years. Chongqing's “take-off” and its potential radiant effect on the trade

and economic integration of its labor-intensive inland region may profoundly transform China's economic landscape.

The fact that these four major cities have been on the fast track to economic growth is linked to the political power and resources that the leaders of these particular cities possess. The top officials in these four cities usually have powerful patrons on the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For example, until recently, many senior leaders in Beijing were protégés of Jia Qinglin, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and former Party secretary of Beijing. Similarly, a number of senior leaders in Tianjin, including Zhang Lichang, who served as Party secretary of the city from 1997 to 2007, were protégés of Li Ruihuan, a former member of the Politburo Standing Committee who also served as former Party secretary of Tianjin. The political network of the so-called Shanghai Gang under Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong has been well known. Despite the recent fall of Shanghai Party chief Chen Liangyu, Jiang and Zeng's protégés have continued to dominate the municipal leadership in the city. Although in 1997, Chongqing obtained the status of China's fourth municipality directly under the central government, it did not play a pivotal role in China's economic and sociopolitical development until 2005 when Wang Yang was appointed Party secretary of the city.² It is widely believed that the central government's strong support of the city in the past two years was largely due to the close patron-client ties between Hu Jintao and Wang Yang.

The top leadership positions in these four major cities are important steppingstones for further promotions. As part of the political norms of the CCP, Party secretaries of these four cities usually hold membership seats in the Politburo, and the mayors are also leading contenders for national offices. Not surprisingly, these four cities have become principal political battlegrounds among various factions on the eve of the 17th Party Congress. The ongoing factional jockeying within the CCP leadership has various forms, and deal making, negotiations, and lobbying behind closed doors are common phenomena. The recent corruption scandals in Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin all involved senior municipal leaders, and thus reflect the intensity of factional contention. To a great extent, an analysis of the top leadership of these four cities provides some much-needed clues to understanding the status of factional politics and the distribution of power in the Chinese leadership at the upcoming 17th Party Congress and beyond.

This study focuses on the newly formed municipal Party standing committees of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing. The paper begins with an analysis of the bureaucratic and political composition of the municipal Party standing committees, followed by a biographical overview of all 52 of the standing committee members, and concludes with a discussion of factional politics and the distribution of power in the Chinese leadership as reflected by the top municipal leadership of China's four leading cities. This study pool includes some rising stars in Chinese politics such as Chongqing Party secretary Wang Yang, Tianjin Party secretary Zhang Gaoli, Beijing mayor Wang Qishan, Shanghai Party secretary Xi Jinping and Shanghai mayor Han Zheng. They will most likely play important roles in the national leadership in the near future. The leaders in this study are largely representative of the upcoming generation of leaders, those who were born in the 1950s and early 1960s. The collective characteristics of these leaders in terms of their political backgrounds, career

experiences, promotion patterns, and areas of educational expertise are valuable in understanding China's political future. All the biographical data are based on the Chinese official media.³

The Recent Reshuffling of Municipal Party Standing Committees

All municipal standing committees in the four cities went through a reshuffling in May and June 2007. This was part of the reshuffling of all of the 31 provincial-level Party organizations in the country, which took place in the second half of 2006 and the first half of 2007.⁴ In China, with its Leninist party-state political system, a standing committee of the CCP is not only the most powerful decision-making body at the national level, but is also where the seat of power lies at the provincial, municipal, and county levels as well. The highest-ranking government leaders usually serve on the standing committee of the Party at the same level. Table 1 (next page) shows the bureaucratic composition of the members of the newly formed municipal standing committees of the CCP in these four cities. After the most recent reshuffling, each and every standing committee is composed of 13 members. Each committee is headed by the Party secretary (No.1 leader, *diyibashou*), a deputy Party secretary who concurrently serves as mayor, and a second deputy Party secretary, who specializes in Party affairs.

The other 27 provincial-level Party organizations also adopt this leadership structure. With the exception of some minority regions such as Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia, each of which has three or four deputy Party secretaries, all other provincial Party standing committees have two deputy Party secretaries. In contrast, prior to the 2006–2007 reshuffling, each provincial-level Party organization had five or six deputy Party secretaries. In 2004, for example, the total number of deputy Party secretaries was 169, with an average of about 5.5 for each province.⁵ After the recent reshuffling, the total number of deputy Party secretaries has been significantly reduced to 67. According to the Chinese authorities, the decrease in the number of the seats of deputy Party secretaries will enhance the role of the collective leadership in the decision-making process at the provincial level.⁶ Previously, the meetings of the secretary and deputy secretaries (*shuji bangonghui*) were often substitutes for the formal meetings of the standing committee. As a result, usually the Party secretary and deputy Party secretaries made major decisions, without sufficient consultation and discussion with the full provincial standing committee as required by the CCP Constitution.

Table 1 shows that the secretary of the Municipal Discipline Inspection Commission, the heads of the Municipal CCP Organization Department and the Propaganda Department, the chief of staff of the municipal Party committee, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) representative in the city garrison in all these four cities also serve on the standing committee. Only one or two vice mayors (usually executive vice mayors) in each city serve on the standing committee. In 2007, there are eight vice mayors in Beijing and Chongqing, and six vice mayors in Shanghai and Tianjin. The current distribution of membership seats indicates that the municipal standing committee

in these cities is far more powerful in the decision-making process than the municipal government. One or two Party secretaries at the district level in each city also serve on the municipal Party standing committees. They include the rising stars in these cities who run the districts that are declared major special economic zones. For example, Du Jiahao is Party secretary of Shanghai's Pudong District and Gou Lijun is newly appointed Party secretary of Tianjin's Binhai District.

Table 1

Bureaucratic Composition of the Members of the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities (2007)

<i>Current position</i>	<i>Beijing</i>	<i>Shanghai</i>	<i>Tianjin</i>	<i>Chongqing</i>
Party Secretary	1	1	1	1
Deputy Party Secretary & Mayor	1	1	1	1
Deputy Party Secretary	1	1	1	1
Secretary of Discipline Inspection Comm.	1	1	1	1
Head of Municipal CCP Organization Dept.	1	1	1	1
Head of Municipal CCP Propaganda Dept.	1	1	1	1
Head of Municipal CCP United Front Work Dept	1	1		
Chief of Staff of Municipal Party Committee	1	1	1	1
Secretary of various CCP Commissions	1	1	2	
Vice Mayor	1	1	2	2
Head of Public Security Bureau	1	1		1
Commander or Commissar, PLA City Garrison	1	1	1	1
Secretary of District Party Committee	1	1	1	2
Total	13	13	13	13

Notes: CCP = Chinese Communist Party; Comm. = Commission; Dept. = Department; PLA = People's Liberation Army.

Table 2 shows the number of members appointed to the municipal standing committees in each year from 1997 to 2007. The 15 newest members—those who were appointed in 2007, either a few months before, or during, the municipal Party Congress meetings held this spring—constitute 29 percent of the total members of the standing committees of the four cities. None of the 52 members was appointed before 1997; and thus they all meet the CCP Central Committee's requirement of term limits (each term is five years, and no one can serve more than two terms). More than half of the members, 27 (52 percent), were appointed since 2005; and 46 (84 percent) obtained their seats within the past five years.

Table 2

Number of Members Appointed to the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities, by Year

Year Appointed	Beijing		Shanghai		Tianjin		Chongqing		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2007	3	23%	5	38%	3	23%	4	31%	15	29%
2005-2006	3	23%	2	15%	3	23%	4	31%	12	23%
2002-2004	6	46%	3	23%	4	31%	4	31%	17	33%
2000-2001			2	15%	2	15%			4	8%
1997-1999	1	8%	1	8%	1	8%	1	8%	4	8%
Total	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	52	100%

Note: Some percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding.

The four leaders who have the longest tenure on the standing committees are Beijing Party secretary Liu Qi (1998), Shanghai deputy Party secretary and Mayor Han Zheng (1997), Tianjin deputy Party secretary Xing Yuanmin (1998), and Chongqing deputy Party secretary and Mayor Wang Hongju (1997). Three of them (Han, Xing, and Wang) were promoted to be deputy secretaries during their tenure as members of the standing committees. All these observations indicate the rapid turnover of the leadership in China's most important cities. This is partially due to the transfer and rotation requirements institutionalized by the central authorities, and partially because the membership seats of the standing committees of these four cities are major steppingstones for further career promotions.

Collective Characteristics of Leaders in China's Mega-cities

Table 3 shows the age distribution of all 52 of the municipal Party standing committee members. A majority of them are in their 50s (69 percent) and quite a few younger leaders are in their 40s (21 percent), indicating that the transition from the fourth-generation to the fifth-generation leaders in China's four provincial-level cities has largely been completed. Only one leader, 65-year-old Beijing Party secretary Liu Qi, is in the category of "65 or above." Liu is also the only official in the leadership of these four cities who currently has a seat in the 24-member Politburo. The reason he has retained his

post of Party chief of Beijing is mainly due to the fact that he is the president of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. It is unclear whether or not he will also keep his Politburo seat after the 17th Party Congress. Due to his age, he will most likely step down from his leadership post in Beijing after the Olympic Games.

Table 3

Age Distribution and Average Age of the Members of the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities (2007)

Age	Beijing		Shanghai		Tianjin		Chongqing		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
65 or Above	1	8%							1	2%
60–64	1	8%			2	15%	1	8%	4	8%
55–59	6	46%	3	23%	2	15%	5	38%	16	31%
50–54	3	23%	8	62%	7	54%	2	15%	20	38%
45–49	2	15%	1	8%	2	15%	3	23%	8	15%
44 or Below			1	8%			2	15%	3	6%
Total	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	52	100%
Average Age	55.2		52.5		54.5		52		53.5	

Note: Some percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding.

The four other leaders in their 60s are: secretary of the Discipline Inspection Committee of Beijing, Ma Zhipeng (60); Tianjin Party secretary Zhang Gaoli (61); Tianjin mayor Dai Xianglong (63); and Chongqing mayor Wang Hongju (62). Three leaders are in their early 40s: chairman of the Agricultural Commission of Shanghai Xu Lin (44), Party secretary of Chongqing's Shaping District Weng Jieming (44), and Party secretary of Chongqing's Wanzhou District Wu Zhenglong (43). All three of these young leaders previously had leadership experience outside of the city in which they currently serve. Xu served as deputy Party secretary in a Tibetan city; Weng served as deputy Party secretary in a county of Shaanxi; and Wu was director of the general office of the China National Machinery & Equipment Import and Export Corporation. Their relatively young age and broad work experiences suggest that they have been selected by the CCP Organization Department to be on the fast track for future promotion.

All of the members of the Municipal Standing Committee of Shanghai are in their 50s or younger. The leaders in Shanghai and Chongqing have lower average ages (52.5 and 52; respectively), in comparison to those in Beijing (55.2) and Tianjin (54.5). One may expect that Beijing and Tianjin will likely add younger leaders to their municipal

Party committees in the next year or two as some senior leaders in these two cities will either be promoted to the national leadership, or retire.

Table 4 shows the promotion patterns of the 52 most important municipal leaders. A large number of them (63 percent) were promoted from the same city. In the case of Shanghai, 10 out of 13 (77 percent) leaders have had no leadership experience other than in Shanghai. Two leaders who were transferred from other provinces are Party Secretary Xi Jinping from Zhejiang and PLA commander of the Shanghai Garrison Jiang Qinhong, who was transferred in 2005 from Fujian where he served as vice commander of the provincial military region.

Table 4

Promotion Patterns of the Members of the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities (2007)

Promotion Pattern	Beijing		Shanghai		Tianjin		Chongqing		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
From the central government or the CCP central organs	2	15%	1	8%	2	15%	2	15%	7	13%
From other provinces	2	15%	2	15%	4	31%	4	31%	12	23%
From the same city	9	69%	10	77%	7	54%	7	54%	33	63%
Total	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	13	100%	52	100%

Note: Some percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding.

A total of seven leaders in the four cities were transferred from the central government; they include all four secretaries of the discipline inspection commissions in these cities (Beijing's Ma Zhipeng, Shanghai's Shen Deyong, Tianjin's Zang Xiaopu, and Chongqing's Xu Jingye). The other three are: Beijing Party secretary Liu Qi, Tianjin mayor Dai Xianglong, and Chongqing Party secretary Wang Yang. The political norm is that the Party secretary and the head of the discipline inspection commission in a given city or province are outsiders, while a majority of the other senior leaders are selected from the same city or province.

An interesting, though by no means surprising, finding of this study is that a great number of these prominent municipal leaders have previously worked as *mishu* (personal secretaries) to a senior leader, director of a general office, or chief of staff on a municipal

Party committee or in the government. For example, Gou Lijun, newly appointed Party secretary of Tianjin's Binhai District, worked as a *mishu* to former Tianjin Party secretary Zhang Lichang for 15 years (1986–2001). A total of 28 leaders (53.8 percent) in this study have experience as *mishu*, office directors and/or chiefs of staff; and among them 18 (34.6 percent) previously served as chiefs of staff or deputy chiefs of staff. This phenomenon not only indicates that the position of chief of staff is an important steppingstone for further promotion, but also suggests that patron-client ties have remained prevalent in elite selection in China's leading cities. This is particularly evident in the municipal Party standing committee of Shanghai in which seven members (more than half of the committee) previously served as chiefs of staff or deputy chiefs of staff in the Shanghai administration. They include Mayor Han Zheng, Deputy Party Secretary Yin Yicui, Vice Mayor Yang Xiong, Head of the Organization Department Shen Hongguang, and Head of the Propaganda Department Wang Zhongwei.

All 52 of the leaders have college educations, and two-thirds of them hold post-graduate degrees (see Table 5). Many received their advanced academic training in mid-career degree programs offered by the Central Party School. Five leaders (almost 10 percent) hold Ph.D. degrees. They are: Xi Jinping (Shanghai Party secretary), Xing Yuanmin (Tianjin deputy Party secretary), Duan Chunhua (chief of staff of the Tianjin Municipal Party Committee), Chen Cungen (head of the Organization Department of Chongqing) and Weng Jiemin (Party secretary of Chongqing's Shaping District). A

Table 5
Educational Levels of Members of the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities (2007)

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Members of the standing committees</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Ph.D.	5	9.6
MA/MS/MBA	30	57.7
Four-year college	14	26.9
Two-year college	3	5.8
Total	52	100.0

Note: Some percentages do not add to 100 because of rounding.

small number of the leaders studied abroad as visiting scholars. For example, Yin Yicui (deputy Party secretary of Shanghai) was a visiting scholar in the United States between July 1995 and March 1996. Two leaders in this study obtained their academic degrees overseas. They are Chen Cungen (head of the Organization Department of Chongqing), who received a Ph.D. in forestry from the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Science in Vienna in 1987, and Chen Chaoying (secretary of the Education and Health Commission of Tianjin) who obtained an M.S. degree in computer science from Free University of Brussels in Belgium in 1988.

In contrast to the fourth generation of Chinese leaders, in which technocrats predominate, the upcoming generation of leaders, as evident in this study of municipal leaders of China's mega-cities, will likely consist of leaders who are trained in more diversified academic fields. Table 6 shows that the number of leaders who were trained in "economics and management" and "social sciences and law" has surpassed those who were trained in "engineering and natural sciences." The number of the leaders who specialized in engineering is the same as the number of those who majored in law. Among the 12 Party secretaries and deputy Party secretaries in this study, only one (Beijing Party secretary Liu Qi) studied engineering. Others majored in economics, law, or humanities. It remains to be seen how the changes in the professional and educational backgrounds of these leaders will affect their policy choices as this upcoming generation comes to the forefront of national leadership.

Table 6

Academic Majors of the Members of the Municipal Standing Committees of the CCP in the Four Major Cities (2007)

<i>Academic Major</i>	<i>Members of the Standing Committees</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Engineering and Natural Sciences</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>21.2</i>
Engineering	7	13.5
Agronomy	2	3.8
Mathematics	1	1.9
Medical science	1	1.9
<i>Economics and Management</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>34.6</i>
Economics and finance	13	25
Management	4	7.6
Accounting and statistics	1	1.9
<i>Social Sciences and Law</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>28.8</i>
Law	7	13.5
Politics	4	7.6
Party history and Party affairs	2	3.8
Sociology (public security)	1	1.9
Journalism	1	1.9
<i>Humanities</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>11.5</i>
History	2	3.8
Philosophy	2	3.8
Chinese language and literature	2	3.8
<i>Military education</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.9</i>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.9</i>
Total	52	100.0

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Factional Politics and the Distribution of Power

Because of the great importance of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing in China's economic and sociopolitical life, the top leaders in these cities usually have strong factional identities. With a few exceptions, many have advanced their political careers through a powerful faction; some have a heavyweight patron in the central government. Therefore, an analysis of the current top leaders of these four cities may help reveal the status of factional politics and the distribution of power in the CCP leadership in general.

Table 7 (next page) exhibits an overview of the 12 top leaders of the four cities, including the three most important leaders of each city, namely the Party secretary, the deputy Party secretary who concurrently serves as mayor, and another deputy Party secretary. Among these top leaders, there are more protégés of former Party chief Jiang and current vice president Zeng Qinghong than of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao.⁷ This is not surprising, because Hu Jintao's protégés, especially those leaders who advanced their political careers through the political networking of the Chinese Communist Youth Leagues (CCYL), known as *tuanpai*, usually hold the top leadership positions in economically backward inland provinces rather than economically advanced coastal provinces and major cities. For example, on the Provincial Party Standing Committee of Shanxi (a northern inland province), *tuanpai* leaders currently occupy 5 of the 13 seats, including the seats of Party secretary and one of the two deputy Party secretaries. Similarly, in the Provincial Party Standing Committee of Jilin (a northeastern inland province), *tuanpai* leaders currently constitute one half of the members, including the two deputy Party secretaries. A more detailed discussion of the distribution of power in terms of factional affiliation in the mega-cities is invaluable for a better understanding of the tension, competition, and interaction of Chinese elites at the sub-national level.

Beijing

Both Beijing Party secretary Liu Qi and Mayor Wang Qishan were long considered to be protégés of Jiang Zemin. According to Cao Xin, an expert on Chinese elite politics, because of Jiang's strong endorsement, Liu obtained the post of mayor in Beijing in 1999 and then the post of Party secretary in 2002.⁸ It was also widely believed that Jiang played an important role in recalling Wang Qishan from Hainan back to Beijing during the crisis of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in the spring of 2003 to serve as the mayor of China's capital city.

The third highest-ranking official in Beijing, the newly appointed deputy Party secretary Wang Anshun, is a rising star in the so-called fifth generation of leaders. His factional identity, however, is not entirely clear. Wang advanced his political career in the oil industry when he worked in China's northern and northeastern regions, mainly as an official in geological fieldwork. He also served as the director of the personnel department of the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources, and the director of the

(text continues on page 12)

Table 7
An Overview of the Top Leaders of the Four Major Cities (2007)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Since</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Previous position</i>	<i>16th CC</i>	<i>Academic major</i>	<i>Political network</i>
Liu Qi	Beijing Party secretary	2002	1942	M	Jiangsu	Beijing mayor	PM	Engineering	Jiang's protégé
Wang Qishan	Beijing deputy Party secretary & mayor	2003	1948	M	Shanxi	Hainan Party secretary	Full	History	Princeling, Jiang's protégé
Wang Anshun	Beijing deputy Party secretary	2007	1957	M	Henan	Shanghai deputy Party secretary	—	Economics	Hu's protégé?
Xi Jinping	Shanghai Party secretary	2007	1953	M	Shaanxi	Zhejiang Party secretary	Full	Economics	Princeling, Zeng's protégé
Han Zheng	Shanghai deputy Party secretary & mayor	2002	1954	M	Zhejiang	Shanghai vice mayor	Full	Economics	Shanghai Gang, Zeng's protégé
Yin Yicui	Shanghai deputy Party secretary	2002	1955	F	Zhejiang	Head, Shanghai CCP Propaganda Department	AM	Law	Shanghai Gang, Zeng's protégé
Zhang Gaoli	Tianjin Party secretary	2007	1946	M	Fujian	Shandong Party secretary	Full	Economics	Zeng's protégé
Dai Xianglong	Tianjin deputy Party secretary & mayor	2002	1944	M	Jiangsu	Governor, People's Bank	Full	Accounting	Wen's ally
Xing Yuanmin	Tianjin deputy Party secretary	2002	1949	M	Shandong	Secretary of Tianjin Education & Health Commission	—	Philosophy	CCYL, Hu's protégé
Wang Yang	Chongqing Party secretary	2005	1955	M	Anhui	Deputy secretary-general, State Council	AM	Economics	CCYL, Hu's protégé
Wang Hongju	Chongqing deputy Party secretary & mayor	1997	1945	M	Chongqing	Chongqing vice mayor	Full	Math	N/A
Zhang Xuan	Chongqing deputy Party secretary	2007	1958	F	Hebei	President, Chongqing Court	AM	Law	CCYL, Hu's protégé

Note: AM = Alternate Member; CC = Central Committee; CCP = Chinese Communist Party; CCYL = Chinese Communist Youth League; F = Female; M = Male; PM = Politburo Member.

(continued from p. 10)

personnel and education department of the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources in the 1990s. In 1999, at the age of 41, Wang was appointed as a member of the Provincial Party Standing Committee of Gansu and head of its organization department. In 2001, he was transferred to Shanghai, first serving as head of the Organization Department and a member of the municipal Party standing committee and later becoming Shanghai deputy Party secretary. It is important to note that from 1989 to 2006, Wang was the only senior official in the Shanghai leadership who was transferred from elsewhere. It was widely speculated that Wang had close ties with Zeng Qinghong (because of their similar backgrounds in the oil industry), Wen Jiabao (because of their shared career paths in the field of geology), and Hu Jintao (because of their common experiences in Gansu). Nevertheless, Wang Anshun has never been seen as a member of the Shanghai Gang; and this seems to suggest that he is closer to Hu than to Zeng.

As Hu Jintao has increasingly secured his power, he is likely to appoint his own people to the Beijing municipal leadership. Hu's priority at present seems to be to undermine the factional network formed by the former Beijing Party secretary Jia Qinglin. Examples are the arrest of the former Beijing vice mayor, Liu Zhijun, on the charges of both "decadent lifestyle" and the embezzlement of money slated for major construction projects in 2006, and the ongoing investigation of former head of Haidian District, Zhou Liangluo, charged with malfeasance in land-transfer deals (both leaders were often seen as the protégés of Jia). Meanwhile, several members of the current municipal Party standing committee in Beijing have advanced their careers through the CCYL leadership. For example, Ji Lin (45) previously served as secretary of the CCYL in both the People's University and the Beijing municipality; Ma Zhipeng (60) was secretary of the CCYL in the Ministry of the Chemical Industry; and Zhu Shanlu (54) served as secretary of the CCYL at Beijing University. Vice Mayor Ji Lin is a rising star in the Chinese leadership and will likely be a strong contender to succeed Wang Qishan as mayor of Beijing in the future. It should also be noted that Hu has made these political moves in a slow and extremely cautious manner. For example, although it was widely speculated that Haidian District Party secretary Tan Weike, Jia's confidant and long-time *mishu*, was under investigation on corruption charges, Tan was reappointed as a member of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee in May 2007.

Shanghai

The recent reshuffling in Shanghai has brought five newcomers (including Xi Jinping) to the municipal Party standing committee, compared with three new faces in both Beijing and Tianjin and four in Chongqing. With the exception of Xi, all other newcomers were promoted from Shanghai instead of being transferred from other regions. On the current Shanghai municipal Party standing committee, Shen Deyong (secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission of Shanghai) is the only other member besides Xi who is not originally from Shanghai. Shen was vice president of the Supreme People's Court and

was transferred to Shanghai in 2006. As discussed earlier, the position of secretary of the provincial/municipal discipline inspection commission is usually an outsider.

Despite the recent fall of the former Shanghai Party secretary Chen Liangyu and the subsequent weakening of the Shanghai Gang, the protégés of Jiang and Zeng still dominate the Shanghai leadership. Like Jiang and Zeng, the new Shanghai Party secretary, Xi Jinping, is a princeling whose father was a revolutionary veteran leader. Xi has long been considered one of the upcoming power contenders from the Jiang-Zeng camp. Since Xi became the Party secretary of Shanghai in March 2007, he has repeatedly announced that Shanghai should closely follow the policy agenda of the Hu-Wen leadership, as widely publicized by both the foreign and domestic media. But this should not blur his strong patron-client ties with Jiang and Zeng. It should also be noted that Xi promised the local leaders that he and the central authorities would take a “soft approach” (*rouxing de zuofa*) to reassigning the leaders who were previously promoted by Chen Liangyu.⁹

No one on the previous municipal Party standing committee, headed by Chen Liangyu, was purged after the eruption of Chen’s alleged Shanghai pension fund scandal. Probably the most significant change in the city’s senior leadership was the transfer of the former member of the municipal Party standing committee, Jiang Sixian, who previously served as Chen’s chief of staff and the head of the Organization Department of Shanghai, to Hainan Province where he currently serves as vice governor. That transfer occurred in November of 2006, prior to Xi’s arrival in Shanghai.

Age was the main factor in determining who would lose their seats on the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee in the recent reshuffling. For example, among the five former deputy Party secretaries, Luo Shiqian (64) has retired, and Liu Yungeng (60) has moved to the “second front,” serving as the first vice chairman of the Shanghai Municipal People’s Congress; but meanwhile, Wang Anshun (50) has become Beijing deputy Party secretary, and Han Zheng (53) and Yin Yicui (52) have remained as the only two deputy Party secretaries of the city. Although Han and Yin both worked as CCYL officials in the city early in their careers, their political advancements have largely been attributed to the network of the Shanghai Gang rather than Hu’s *tuanpai*. Zeng’s strong endorsement for Han and Yin has been the most crucial factor in their past survival and possible future success.

In addition, all six members of the previous municipal Party standing committee who are in their 50s—Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission Shen Deyong (53), Director of the Public Security Bureau Wu Zhiming (55), Head of the Propaganda Department Wang Zhongwei (52), Head of the Organization Department Shen Hongguang (57), Head of the United Front Work Department Yang Xiaodu (54), and Party secretary of Pudong District Du Jiahao (52)—have been reappointed to the current standing committee. The most noticeable one is certainly Police Chief Wu Zhiming, who is the nephew of Jiang’s wife. All these facts reaffirm that, although Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao have consolidated their power in the national leadership in the wake of the Shanghai pension fund scandal, Shanghai remains the turf of the Jiang-Zeng faction.¹⁰

Tianjin

The recent retirement of the 68-year-old former Party secretary of Tianjin, Zhang Lichang, was expected. It is surprising, however, that several of his protégés in the city lost their seats on the newly appointed municipal Party standing committee. Even more striking is the fact that Song Pingshun, the former deputy Party secretary and chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CCPCC) of Tianjin, committed suicide in June 2007. In addition, former secretary of the Political Science and Law Commission, Wang Wenhua (59), and former head of the Binhai District, Pi Qiansheng (56), not only failed to be reappointed to the Tianjin Municipal Party Standing Committee, but also lost their other leadership positions in the city. Speculation is that Tianjin police chief Wu Changshun and Zhang Baifeng, president of the Tianjin Municipal Higher People's Court, have also been under investigation. All these recent developments are likely related to the corruption case of Li Baojin, the former deputy director of the Public Security Bureau and chief procurator of the Municipal People's Procuratorate. Li was arrested on corruption charges in 2006. Almost all of these Tianjin leaders advanced their careers in the area of law and public security in the city. Zhang Lichang previously promoted Song, Wang, and Pi after Zhang became Tianjin Party secretary in 1997.

Zhang Lichang's replacement, the new Party secretary of Tianjin Zhang Gaoli (61), is a native of Fujian. Zhang Gaoli advanced his political career mainly in Guangdong where he served as director of the economic committee of the Guangdong provincial government, vice governor, and Party secretary of Shenzhen City from 1985 to 2001. Many analysts believe that Zhang Gaoli's rise to the top provincial position was due to Zeng's favoritism. It is unclear when and how Zhang Gaoli began to form close ties with Zeng. This might be because both worked in the oil industry early in their careers. Zhang Gaoli served as deputy Party secretary of Maoming City and general manager of the Maoming Petroleum Company in the early 1980s. When Zeng was in charge of the powerful Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee in 2001, he helped Zhang Gaoli obtain the post of acting governor of Shandong. One year later, Zhang became Party secretary of Shandong. With his new appointment as Party secretary of Tianjin, Zhang will most likely obtain a seat in the next Politburo. Meanwhile, Zhang's close ties with Vice President Zeng in the central government and his previous leadership experience in China's first special economic development zone may be essential for this born-again major city to profit from China's next phase of economic development.

Tianjin mayor Dai Xianglong was previously governor of the People's Bank. Former premier Zhu Rongji played an important role in Dai's rapid rise in China's banking and finance sector. When Dai Xianglong was transferred from Beijing to become president and Party secretary of the Shanghai-based Bank of Communication in 1990, Zhu was Party secretary and mayor of the city. Zhu was impressed by Dai's expertise in banking and his administrative skills. When Zhu took over the governorship of the People's Bank of China in 1993, he immediately appointed Dai as vice governor of the bank. Two years later, in 1995, Zhu Rongji passed the governorship of the bank to Dai.

Dai is also widely considered to be a political ally of Premier Wen Jiabao. It is believed that in 2002, with Wen's recommendation, the central government transferred Dai to Tianjin, Wen's native city, with the mission of revitalizing this important coastal city, especially its traditionally strong, but until recently stagnant, financial industry. Under Dai's leadership, in 2005 Tianjin established Bohai Bank, which was China's first national joint-stock commercial bank since 1996 and also the first national joint-stock bank headquartered in the city.¹¹ More recently, Tianjin has been aggressively engaged in preparation for a bid to establish the Northeast Asia Bank (*dongbeiya yinhang*). Dai and other Tianjin officials hope that this will be a Tianjin-based bank sponsored jointly by China, Japan, and South Korea.¹²

Hu Jintao's protégés have also occupied several seats on the Tianjin Municipal Party Standing Committee. They include Deputy Party Secretary Xing Yuanmin (62), the newly appointed secretary of the Political Science and Law Commission, San Xiangjun (53), head of the Organization Department, Shi Lianxi (55), and chief of staff of the Tianjin Party Committee Duan Chunhua (48). All of them advanced their careers through the CCYL. The first three worked as deputy secretaries of the Tianjin CCYL Committee in the early 1980s when Hu Jintao was in charge of the CCYL National Committee. San and Shi are alternate members of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP. In the wake of the recent removal of the senior leaders who were associated with former political heavyweights in the city, such as Li Ruihua and Zhang Lichang, Hu's protégés will likely play an even more important role in Tianjin in the years to come.

Chongqing

In contrast to the other three cities in which Hu's protégés have usually occupied membership seats on the Party standing committees, rather than being secretary or deputy secretary, Hu's *tuanpai* leaders have taken two of the three top posts in Chongqing. Hu Jintao and Chongqing Party secretary Wang Yang are both natives of Anhui. They first met each other when Hu was in charge of the CCYL Central Committee and Wang was deputy secretary of the Anhui Provincial CCYL Committee in the early 1980s. Ever since then, Wang's promotion largely paralleled Hu's career advancement. Soon after Hu became a standing member on the Politburo and a member of the Secretariat of the CCP Central Committee in 1992, Wang was appointed director of the Planning Committee, and assistant governor and vice governor of Anhui. Wang was the youngest vice governor in the country in 1993. When Hu served as vice president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1998, Wang was appointed vice minister of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), arguably the most important ministry in the State Council. Soon after Hu became president of the PRC in 2003, Wang entered the State Council, where he served as deputy secretary-general. In 2005, Hu appointed Wang, at the age of 50, as Chongqing Party secretary, making him the leader of the world's largest city.

During the past two years, with favorable policies by the central government, Chongqing has witnessed the most dramatic economic development in its history. The city claims that it has more construction cranes than Shanghai.¹³ In the late 1990s, Shanghai was widely believed to be the home of one-sixth of the cranes in the world. Meanwhile, urbanization and poverty alleviation have become the two most important tasks for Chongqing's "takeoff." According to a recent study, during the past decade Chongqing reduced the number of its rural population in absolute poverty by 3 million.¹⁴ As the top leader of the city, Wang Yang has received a great deal of credit for these accomplishments. With his broad experience at various levels of leadership, relatively young age, close ties with Hu Jintao, and the remarkable economic development of Chongqing under his watch in recent years, Wang Yang is a leading contender of his generation for national leadership in the near future.

Deputy Party Secretary Zhang Xuan (49), the youngest deputy Party secretary in all four of these cities, is also a *tuanpai* leader. Zhang is a native of Hebei, and was a sent-down youth in Yunnan in the mid-1970s. She studied at the Law Department of the Southwestern Institute of Political Science and Law in Chongqing from 1981 to 1985. After graduation, she worked for seven years on the Municipal Committee of the CCYL in Chongqing. When Hu Jintao was in charge of the CCYL National Committee in 1985, Zhang was appointed deputy secretary of the Municipal CCYL of Chongqing. She later served as deputy Party secretary of Chongqing's Dadukou District and chair of the Chongqing Women's Federation. In 2002, Zhang became president of the Chongqing Municipal Higher Court and was also elected as an alternate member of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP.

Deputy Party secretary and mayor Wang Hongju (62) is a native of Chongqing. He has served as deputy Party secretary ever since the city became the fourth municipality directly under the central government in 1997, and became mayor in 2003. A low-profile, down-to-earth leader, Wang Hongju has been instrumental in the rapid economic growth of the city. He does not have a clear factional affiliation. Due to his long tenure and age, Wang will likely retire as mayor in a year or two.

The current executive vice mayor, Huang Qifan (55), is a member of the Shanghai Gang. Huang Qifan spent the first three decades of his career in Shanghai (from 1968 to 1998); first as a worker during the Cultural Revolution, then as a factory director and researcher in the 1980s. When the central government designated Shanghai's Pudong as a special economic zone, Huang became deputy director of the Pudong Development Office in 1990. He worked very closely with the former Shanghai Party secretary Huang Ju and other top Shanghai leaders throughout the 1990s, serving as deputy chief of staff of both the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee and the municipal government. In the late 1990s, he also served as director of the Shanghai Economic Commission. In 2000, Huang was transferred to Chongqing, where he has served as vice mayor for the past seven years. It remains to be seen whether he will be promoted to mayor of the city after Wang's retirement.

Conclusion

In the PRC history, top national leaders have all been interested in establishing their own power base in the country's mega-cities. In the mid-1960s, Mao accused Liu Shaoqi, former president of the PRC, of building a "revisionist independent kingdom" in the municipal Party standing committee of Beijing. In fact, this was considered the immediate reason why Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. In the final years of the Cultural Revolution, the so-called Gang of Four led by Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, was based primarily in Shanghai.

Soon after Deng reemerged as a paramount leader in the country in the early 1980s, he promoted two officials from Tianjin, first Hu Qili and then Li Ruihuan, to the national leadership. Deng even designated a small town called Shenzhen in southern China and made it China's frontier city for economic globalization. After the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, Deng not only promoted Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji to some of the top positions in the Party and the central government, but also accelerated economic reforms and openness in Shanghai, making the reemergence of cosmopolitan Shanghai one of his most important legacies.

Shanghai has always been Jiang Zemin's power base. Throughout the 1990s, Jiang gradually consolidated his power in the national leadership largely through the penetration of the so-called Shanghai Gang at the center of power. Meanwhile, Jiang also used corruption charges to purge his main rival at the time, former Beijing Party secretary Chen Xitong, and replaced him with Jiang's long-time friend Jia Qinglin, thus consolidating Jiang's power in China's capital.

Hu Jintao seems to adopt a somewhat different strategy in forming ties with China's most important cities. Instead of naming his own protégés to serve as the Party secretary or mayor in these cities, he is more interested in first promoting his *tuanpai* associates to serve on the municipal Party standing committees in these four cities. For example, in Beijing and Tianjin, *tuanpai* leaders currently occupy 4 of a total of 13 membership seats in each city. In a few years, these relatively young *tuanpai* leaders will be very competitive for higher offices on both the municipal and national levels. Also, instead of competing with other factions for the traditionally most important leadership seats in coastal cities like Beijing, Shanghai, or Tianjin, Hu Jintao has paid great attention to Chongqing, an inland city. His *tuanpai* associates now occupy two of the three highest-ranking positions in the city. Party Secretary Wang Yang is the youngest top leader among all the secretaries and mayors in these four cities, thus making him a front-runner in the upcoming fifth generation of leaders.

To a great extent, Hu Jintao's new strategy is related to the changing nature of Chinese elite politics. Strongman politics, as evident in the eras of Mao and Deng, are now coming to an end in the country. Hu Jintao is only the "first among equals" in the fourth generation of leaders; and he is not able to make important personnel decisions without reaching an agreement with other members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. Factional power sharing, deal making, and compromise have become norms in

Chinese politics today. The regular transfer and rotation requirements institutionalized by the central authorities have reinforced the norm of collective leadership. This is the case not only in the national leadership, but also in the municipal top leadership of China's four mega-cities, as evident in this study.

This study also shows that the turnover of the municipal leadership has been remarkably dynamic. The transition from the fourth generation of leadership to the fifth generation has largely been completed in these most important cities in the country. An interesting phenomenon is that, in contrast to Chinese public expectations, none of the three mayors (Beijing mayor Wang Qishan, Shanghai mayor Han Zheng, and Tianjin mayor Dai Xianglong) were promoted to become Party secretaries of these cities during the recent reshuffling. Han Zheng, for example, even served as acting Shanghai Party secretary in the wake of the pension fund scandals in the city. One possible explanation is that Wang, Han, and Dai will likely move to the State Council before the next People's Congress in March 2008. All three of these leaders have substantial leadership experience in finance and foreign investment. Regardless of the future careers of individual leaders, the senior leadership in these four cities will surely remain as one of the most important sources for leadership at the national level.

Notes

¹ The author is indebted to Yinsheng Li for his research assistance. The author also thanks Sally Carman, Christina Culver, and Scott Harold for suggesting ways in which to clarify the article.

² The 11th Five-Year Plan (2006–2010) placed Chongqing on the fast track to economic growth. The central government plans to invest 350 billion *yuan* (US\$43.5 billion) in new industrial renovation projects in Chongqing during these five years. This will have a strong impact on the Chengdu-Chongqing economic zone, which includes 35 cities and 99.6 million people. In 2010, the total GDP in the economic zone is expected to reach 1.4 trillion *yuan* (US\$173.9 billion)—two times higher than the current GDP. *Diyi caijing ribao* [The First Economics and Finance Daily] 6 February 2006, p. 2.

³ See <http://xinhuanet.com>.

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the reshuffling, see Cheng Li, "Reshuffling Four Tiers of Local Leaders: Goals and Implications." *China Leadership Monitor* 3 (Spring 2006).

⁵ The number of the provincial deputy Party secretaries in 2004 is based on information in the *China Directory 2005* (Tokyo: Radiopress, Inc. 2004).

⁶ Li Linge, "Zhonggong sida zhixiashi shuji: Weihu zhongyang quanwei" [Secretaries of the four cities directly under the Central Committee of the CCP]. *Nanfang Zhoukan* (The Southern weekly), 9 June 2007.

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the factional division in the current Chinese leadership, especially the tension between the elitist coalition led by Jiang and Zeng versus the populist coalition led by Hu and Wen, see Cheng Li, "China's Inner-Party Democracy: Toward a System of 'One Party, Two Factions?'" *China Brief*, vol. 6, no. 24 (December 2006): pp. 8–11.

⁸ Cao Xin, *Lingdao Zhongguo de xinrenwu* [The New Leaders Who Run China], vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Mirror Press House, 2003), pp. 461–481.

⁹ He Nanwu, "Xinyijie Shanghai shiwei: Zhongyang didiao shenshazi" [The new Shanghai Party Standing Committee: The central authorities' low-profile political penetration]. *Yazhou shibao* (Asia times), 29 May 2005. Also see <http://chinesenewsnet.com>, 30 May 2007.

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the Shanghai pension fund scandal and its implications for Chinese factional politics, see Cheng Li, "Was the Shanghai Gang Shanghaied? The Fall of Chen Liangyu and the Survival of Jiang Zemin's Faction." *China Leadership Monitor* 20 (2007).

¹¹ The initial capital of the bank was 5 billion *yuan* (US\$616.5 million). The Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (TEDA) Investment Holding Company Ltd. was the largest promoter with a 25 percent stake. British Bank Standard Chartered also invested about US\$123 million (about a 20 percent stake). See <http://www.xinhuanet.com>, 17 June 2007.

¹² Sun Ming, “Bohai yinhang kaiye: Dai Xianglong zaimou xinpaizhao [The grand opening of Bohai Bank: Dai Xianglong is seeking a new license] *Ershiyi shiji jingji baodao* (The 21st century economic news), 17 February 2006.

¹³ For a detailed discussion of the economic and physical landscape changes in Chongqing, see Howard W. French, “Big, Gritty Chongqing, City of 12 Million, Is China’s Model for Future,” *New York Times*, 1 June 2007, p. A15.

¹⁴ See <http://www.xinhuanet.com>, 14 June 2007.