Hu's Policy Shift and the Tuanpai's Coming-of-Age

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The promotion of numerous leaders with Chinese Communist Youth League backgrounds (known as *tuanpai*) to ministerial and provincial top posts has been widely reported. Less noted, but perhaps even more important, is how the *tuanpai*'s rapid rise to power and their collective characteristics echo Hu Jintao's new mandate, which emphasizes social fairness and social justice over GDP growth. An analysis of all 22 *tuanpai* officials who currently serve as full ministers or provincial chiefs reveals both strengths and weaknesses of this elite group. An examination of two parallel developments—Hu's appeal for a "harmonious society" and the *tuanpai*'s coming-of-age—leads to revelations about Hu's leadership style, political power, and policy orientation.

"An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; and a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity," Winston Churchill once said. It is perhaps too early to assess Hu Jintao's leadership and its implications for China's future, but Hu has already demonstrated his optimism—and remarkable political wisdom—by seizing upon opportunities in every calamity.[1] Soon after he became the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in November 2002, China experienced the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic, a devastating health crisis that paralyzed the urban life and economy of the country for several months. The government survived this so-called Chinese Chernobyl largely because President Hu, along with his principal political ally Premier Wen Jiabao, effectively took charge and confronted the challenge. By exhibiting his effective leadership in a crisis, Hu Jintao quickly moved out of his predecessor Jiang Zemin's shadow and emerged as a populist leader in the world's most populous country.

Hu and other party leaders recognize serious problems in China such as rampant official corruption, economic disparities, ideological incoherence, and bureaucratic inertia.[2] In the Fourth Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP held in the fall of 2004, Hu proposed that the CCP enhance its "governing capacity" (*zhizheng nengli*) in order to deal with all these problems. According to Hu, the CCP's main task now is to provide a range of public services such as workplace safety, public health, social welfare, employment, education, and environmental reforms. Hu claims that economic efficiency is important, but China's new priority is to achieve distributive justice throughout Chinese society.

Hu has recently appointed many like-minded officials to top ministerial and provincial posts to carry out his new economic and social initiatives. His most noticeable appointees are longtime associates who advanced their careers through the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL); they are known as *tuanpai*. Minister of Justice Wu Aiying, Shanxi Party Secretary Zhang Baoshun, and Fujian Governor Huang Xiaojing, for example, were all appointed to their current posts in 2005. They are all *tuanpai* officials with close ties to Hu. An examination of these two parallel developments—Hu's shift in development strategy and the *tuanpai*'s coming-of-age—leads to revelations about Hu's leadership style, political power, and policy orientation.

China's Challenges and Hu's Opportunity

One of the most important changes under Hu's new leadership has been the trend toward acknowledging economic and sociopolitical challenges within Chinese society. Systemic problems in Chinese political institutions, possible economic and financial crises (including the threat of a real-estate bubble), and overwhelming demographic pressures are now more openly discussed in the official media than ever before. These problems are real. Several alarming trends have resulted in increasing tension stemming from urban protests, rural grievances, and the persistently high unemployment rate:

- According to a recently released report by China's Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), in 2004, China had a total of 114 million migrant workers, accounting for 23 percent of total rural laborers and 50 percent of urban workers.[3] Although many of them have already been living and working in urban areas for years, they are still often treated like second-class citizens, lacking permanent residency permits, insurance, and social welfare benefits. It is expected that 300 million people will move from rural areas to cities in the next 20 years. This is probably the largest and most drastic urbanization in human history.

- The number of public protests demanding social justice and fairness has increased significantly. According to a Chinese official source, there were about 58,000 protests in China in 2003—an average of about 160 protests per day, and an increase of about 15 percent compared with the 2002 data.[4] The number of public protests increased further in 2004.[5] Some of the 2004 protests involved a large number of participants. For example, it was reported that 50,000 to 100,000 peasants in Sichuan Province's Hanyuan County participated in a protest in October 2004 demanding fair compensation for land use.[6] According to Chinese official media, in 2004 Shenzhen had three major worker strikes, each including more than 2000 strikers.[7]

- The number of labor dispute cases increased from 1,909 in 1994 to 22,600 in 2003; the number of workers involved in these cases increased from 77,704 in 1994 to approximately 800,000 in 2003. Both represented tenfold increases within a decade.[8] In particular, the

frequency of coal-mine incidents and the high death rate of China's mine workers have been widely publicized. In recent years, gas explosions and other incidents at China's coal mines have taken about 6000 lives annually. China produces 35 percent of the world's coal but contributes an alarming 80 percent of the world's coal-mine-related casualties.[9] As calculated by some Chinese scholars, the death rate of mineworkers in China is 100 times higher than that in the United States.[10]

- The increasing environmental deregulation and the dearth of natural resources constitute long-term challenges for China. Approximately 300 million people have no access to clean drinking water, and 400 million people live with high degrees of air pollution (nine of the 10 most polluted cities in the world are in China).[11] One-third of China's land has been polluted by acid rain. The loss caused by environmental pollution accounted for 8 percent of China's GDP in 1995; this percentage increased to 15 percent in 2003. According to a Chinese official source, among the 45 kinds of principal mineral reserves that China possesses, only six will be sufficient to meet the country's needs in 2020.[12] Pan Yue, the outspoken deputy director of the State Bureau of Environmental Protection in the State Council, recently claimed that China's development strategy in the past two decades, which emphasized GDP growth without paying attention to the environment, was wrong.[13]

It should be noted that all these incidents, statistics and statements have recently made headlines in the Chinese media.[14] Issues of governmental accountability, economic equality and social justice have dominated recent political and policy discourse among Chinese intellectuals.[15] Such discourse was inconceivable only a few years ago under the rule of Jiang Zemin, when such statistics would have been classified as state secrets.

In making these statistics available to the Chinese public, Hu has attempted to recognize and reverse calamities in a way that clearly distinguishes him from his predecessor. In contrast to Jiang, who was more interested in demonstrating achievements rather than acknowledging problems, Hu is willing to discuss challenges—even though encouraging news regarding China is abundant. In 2004, for example, China experienced its highest recorded foreign trade value ($1.1 trillion), highest recorded foreign reserves ($540 billion), highest recorded tax revenues (2.550 trillion yuan—an increase of 500 billion yuan compared to 2003), and 9 percent GDP growth.[16] But the official media have not highlighted these accomplishments.[17] Further, under Hu's initiatives, the main agendas of Politburo meetings and State Council meetings have been opened to the public. These meetings usually focus on ways to respond to problems or prevent crises.

All these changes reveal a strategic shift in the policy priorities of the new Chinese leadership. Hu Jintao has already changed the course of China's development to a great extent. He has turned away from single-minded focus on coastal development at

the expense of the vast inland region and from obsession with GDP growth without regard for employment, the environment, or social issues, both of which characterized his predecessor's elitist approach. Hu has already stressed the need to achieve more balanced regional economic development, social harmony, and political institutionalization.

These policy changes are highly politicized. It has been widely noticed that Hu does not have many allies on the nine-member standing committee of the Politburo, in which Jiang's cronies occupy two-thirds of the seats. As a new top leader with no revolutionary experience, no economic expertise, no foreign-policy credentials, no strong military ties, and no solid power base in the highest decision-making body, Hu has had to reach out to the general public for support. His populism, rather than the speculated endorsement from the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, has become his real mandate. With a firm commitment to the development of the western, northeastern and central provinces, Hu has gained broad support from the political establishment, especially officials from these inland provinces.

Hu's Recognition of "Society" and Measures to Reduce Social Tensions

One of the most frequently used terms of the Chinese official media in the past two years has been "a harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*).[18] Top leaders, especially President Hu and Premier Wen, have often used the term to refer to the need to reconcile the growing tensions between social groups in China, particularly the need to be more compassionate to so-called vulnerable groups such as farmers, migrant workers, and the urban unemployed. On February 19, 2005, Hu gave a speech at a meeting of ministerial and provincial leaders in which he added a new objective—social development (*shehui jianshe*)—to Deng Xiaoping's three objectives (economic, political, and cultural developments) for China's future.[19] According to Hu, at a time when China faces serious challenges such as environmental degradation, energy scarcity, employment pressure, and economic disparity, the government should pay much greater attention to the issue of social fairness.[20] Hu argued that community building in both urban and rural areas is essential for reducing social tensions in this rapidly changing country.

While many critics both in China and abroad are suspicious of how much the Hu administration can really achieve, no one seems to doubt the necessity of this new initiative. A quarter-century-long economic reformation has created a wealthy Chinese entrepreneurial class, but has also economically marginalized larger groups of people. The number of Chinese failing to prosper during the market reforms has increased in recent years, and economic disparity has become one of the most important issues in Chinese society. It has been widely noticed that Chinese society lacks any social safety net: in rural areas, only 10 percent of the population possess a pension, and taking the country as a whole, only about 25 percent of the labor force possess any kind of pension or retirement plan. Furthermore, most of these pension or retirement plans are inadequate. Consequences stemming from the absence of a social safety net will likely become even more acute as some far-reaching demographic changes take effect. China currently has 130 million "elders" (citizens who are 60 years old or above), accounting for 10.2 percent

of the population; the number will increase to 200 million (14 percent) in 2015. Thirty five years ago, the ratio of children to elders in the PRC was 6:1; in 35 years, the ratio will be 1:2, largely due to the one-child family policy.[21]

Meanwhile, the traditionally strong Chinese family support system is undergoing other profound changes. In 2003, the PRC's divorce rate was 3.2 times that of 1978. The divorce rate is much higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In Shanghai, for example, the divorce rate increased twentyfold from 1983 to 2003, within roughly a generation. From January to October 2004, the divorce rate in Shanghai increased 30 percent compared with the same period in the previous year.[22] These social and demographic changes have caused increased tensions and conflicts in society.

Arguably the two most important sources for social disturbance in China today are the growing number of landless migrants and the frequency of industrial accidents resulting from poor work-safety regulations. During the past decade, China has been engaged in probably the largest "enclosure" movement (*quandi yundong*) that the world has ever seen. A vast area of agricultural land has been "enclosed" for commercial and industrial uses.[23] The lease of land for the use of foreign companies, for infrastructure and transportation projects, and for use in real-estate development has forced a large number of people in both urban and rural areas to relocate. In addition, leading universities in major cities have recently been engaged in establishing new campuses in the suburbs. This wave of building "university cities" (*daxuecheng*) has also driven many farmers out of their homelands. According to a Chinese official source, from 1996 to 2004 China's arable land decreased by 150 million *mu* (nearly 100,000 km^2), about 5 percent of the country's total arable land.[24] Meanwhile, about 40 million people have become "landless migrants" during the past two years.[25] Approximately one-third of these landless migrants have found new ways to make a living, but the rest live in poverty.[26] The percentage of poor peasants and migrant workers in the total population increased further in 2004.[27]

Compensation for previous residents forced out of their homes by enclosure has often been astonishingly inadequate. Zhang Xiaoshan, director of the Rural Development Research Institute of CASS, observes that in the modern era, when capitalists exploit laborers, local governments do not play the role of mediator or coordinator. They fail to protect vulnerable groups, instead often siding with stronger groups such as foreign companies and real-estate developers.[28] Zhang's observation is also supported by the fact that the representation of workers and farmers in the National People's Congress decreased from 27 percent and 21 percent in the early 1980s to 11 percent and 8 percent in the late 1990s.[29]

Furthermore, the migrant-labor group, which includes 114 million people, does not have any representatives in the decision-making bodies of the country. Wang Chunguang, a research fellow at CASS, argues that migrant laborers are unique in the Chinese context—they are considered "workers in occupation" and "farmers in identity." Like all citizens, they want a decent salary, a safe work environment, basic social welfare rights, education for their children, and respect from society. But in reality, they can get hardly any of these.[30] They are the second-, or even third-, class citizens of the PRC, as some Chinese scholars have noted.[31] But as Liu Kaiming, director of the Shenzhen Social

Research Institute, observed, China's migrant laborers are also experiencing a generational change. The new generation of migrant laborers is better educated and more conscientious about protecting their interests.[32] They often use cell phones to disseminate information and are potentially more interested in political participation. They were, in fact, the main participants in worker strikes in Shenzhen and other coastal cities in recent years.

Explosions in coal mines and severe casualties caused by industrial incidents have also received much public attention in the past two years. Chinese coal miners are perhaps the most vulnerable social group in the country. Six severe gas explosions occurred in 2004 (see table 1), including the one in the Chenjiashan coal mine that killed 166 miners. The Chenjiashan mine explosion caused the largest number of mine casualties in the country during the past 44 years. Severe coal-mine incidents have occurred every month this year, including the most recent one in Guangdong. In the wake of these incidents, many public intellectuals called for the Chinese government to adopt tougher laws on work safety. In addition, Sun Liping, a well-known professor of sociology at Qinghua University, argues that China should strengthen the role of worker unions, enhance their independence, and make them real organizations representing the interests of workers.[33]

Table 1 Severe Coal-Mine Accidents in China in 2004

Date	**Province**	**Coal Mine Location**	**Cause of Incident**	**No. of Deaths**
Feb. 23	Heilongjiang	Baixing, Jixi	Gas explosion	37
April 30	Shanxi	Liangjiahe, Linfen	Gas explosion	36
May 18	Shanxi	Caijiagou, Luliang	Explosion	33
Oct. 20	Henan	Daping, Zhengzhou	Gas explosion	148
Nov. 20	Hebei	Baita, Shahe	Fire	70
Nov. 28	Shaanxi	Chenjiashan, Tongchuan	Gas explosion	166
Source: *Xinshiji* (New Times Weekly), Dec. 21, 2004, p. 22.				

Not surprisingly, the number of public protests has gone up in the past decade. According to the Chinese official sources released in 2004, public protests increased 17 percent between 1994 and 2003.[34] The number of public protests rose from about 10,000 in 1994 to about 60,000 in 2003; and the number of total participants increased from about 740,000 in 1994 to 3,070,000 in 2003. The number of protests that attacked the party and governmental organizations increased from about 2700 in 2000 to 3700 in 2003. There were 3100 public protests that blocked highways and railroads in the year 2003 alone. These official sources also state that most of these protests were the result of unfair treatment of vulnerable groups.[35]

It has become clear to the new Chinese leaders that, unless policies are changed, the country will be on the verge of social revolution led by vulnerable groups such as farmers, migrant workers and the urban employed. That is the main reason the Hu

administration has called for the establishment of a more "harmonious society," paying more attention to issues of social justice and the interests of vulnerable groups. Hu and Wen have recently made some important policy changes in light of these concerns.

- In the beginning of 2004, the central committee of the CCP issued an order for local governments to make a concerted effort to reduce taxes and other burdens on farmers. In addition, Premier Wen stated that China would reduce or waive the agriculture tax for five years.[36] Although the policy was only recently implemented, it already has had some positive effects. In 2004, the average income of Chinese farmers increased 11.4 percent, which was the highest rate of increase since 1997.[37]

- The State Council ordered business firms and local governments to pay debts to migrant workers. Over the next 10 years the central government also plans to establish special funds to provide occupational training for unemployed migrants so that they will have a better chance of finding jobs in urban areas.

- In the wake of the tragic death of Sun Zhigang, a 27-year-old migrant worker who was beaten to death in Guangzhou, several Chinese legal scholars requested that "The Regulation for Internment and Deportation of Urban Vagrants," adopted by the Chinese government in 1982 to legally send migrant workers back to the countryside, be deemed unconstitutional. Within a month, Premier Wen Jiabao announced the abolishment of the regulation, bringing two decades of legal discrimination against migrants to an end.

- The central government ordered a reduction in land lease for commercial and industrial uses and a reduction in the number of special economic zones, which often receive favorable tax breaks and other benefits. As a result, a total of 4,735 special economic zones were abolished, accounting for 70.2 percent of the total number of special economic zones in the country.[38]

These policy initiatives by the new leadership have been very well received by the Chinese populace, especially public intellectuals. According to a survey of experts in the fields of sociology, economics, law, and management conducted by CASS in December 2004, 56.8 percent of respondents believe that the Chinese leadership has made important progress in improving the lives of vulnerable social groups, sharply up from 9.2 percent (in the 2003 survey).[39] Some Chinese scholars argue that the increase in attention to the interests of vulnerable social groups can be seen as the real beginning of China's political reform, because it signifies a profound change in state-society relations.[40]

Whether or not the Hu administration will continue political reform in the years to come is still uncertain. The Chinese public discourse on democracy, the rule of law,

human rights, governmental accountability, and civil society has arguably been more dynamic during the past two years than at any previous time in PRC history.[41] But at the same time, the Hu administration has also been known for its severe control over the media. The recent arrests of outspoken journalists, the ban of some liberal media outlets, and the policing of internet chat rooms all seem to indicate that Hu has no interest in allowing freedom of the press—an important aspect of political reform. Instead, Hu has been inclined to fight an uphill battle against the trend toward media autonomy at a time of rapid commercialization of the Chinese media.

Hu's recognition of "society" and his populist approach apparently aim to enhance the so-called governing capacity of the CCP and consolidate his own power. Nevertheless, Hu's strategy for China's development has differed profoundly from his predecessors'. Concerns about social cohesion have overcome the old model's emphasis on economic efficiency, a more balanced regional development has replaced the previous coastal development strategy, and a people-centered rhetoric (*yiren weiben*) has downplayed the GDP-centered drive.

Under the Hu leadership, elite promotion has also significantly changed. Technocrats dominated the Chinese leadership in both the Deng and Jiang eras. Their experiences and expertise in science, technology, finance, and foreign trade have contributed to China's economic expansion in the past two decades, as exemplified by the cases of Shanghai and other coastal cities. In light of his perceived new mandate, Hu seems to be interested in promoting elites with different kind of leadership skills and expertise. This is particularly evident in the rapid rise of *tuanpai* officials in the past two years.

Characteristics of the *Tuanpai*

Officials of the CCYL have long been a major recruitment source for the party and government leadership in the PRC. The mission of the CCYL states explicitly that this political organization is the "reserve army" (*houbeijun*) for the CCP. Its purpose is to "add new blood" to the party and to produce successors for all levels of political leadership.[42] The CCYL is one of the largest political institutions in the PRC. In 2002, the CCYL had a total of over 68 million members, including 181,000 full-time CCYL cadres.[43] Several prominent leaders throughout Chinese history, including Hu Yaobang, Hu Qili, and Li Ruihuan, have been members of the CCYL.

But for most of the PRC's history, the number of officials with CCYL backgrounds in top leadership positions has been quite small. Liu Shaoqi intended to promote some CCYL leaders, but Mao persecuted them during the Cultural Revolution. Deng did promote Hu Yaobang, Hu Qili, and Wang Zhaoguo, but all of them lost favor in the late 1980s. Jiang Zemin did not value leaders with CCYL backgrounds, and very few of Jiang's close associates had previously worked in the CCYL. Among the 25 members of the current Politburo, only four, including Hu Jintao, have had CCYL leadership experience. Liu Yunshan, head of the CCP Propaganda Department, is believed to be closer to Jiang and Zeng Qinghong than to Hu Jintao. Xinjiang Party Chief Wang Lequan and Head of Workers' Union Wang Zhaoguo advanced their careers through the CCYL,

but they do not owe any debts to Hu because he did not promote them. Therefore, no one in the current Politburo is seen as Hu's protégé.

This will likely change with Hu in charge. While *tuanpai* officials do not hold many seats in the current Politburo, they do have the largest representation on the 16th Central Committee of the CCP. Altogether 47 *tuanpai* officials currently serve on the committee as full or alternate members.[44] Hu will most likely promote his own protégés to the Politburo, perhaps even to its standing committee, at the 17th Party Congress scheduled for the fall of 2007. Since Hu became the general secretary of the party in the fall of 2002, a large number of officials with CCYL backgrounds have been appointed to positions in the ministerial and provincial levels of leadership.[45] According to a recent study, about 150 *tuanpai* officials currently serve as ministers, vice ministers, provincial party secretaries, provincial deputy party secretaries, governors, and vice governors.[46]

Table 2 lists all 22 *tuanpai* officials who currently serve as provincial chiefs (13), ministers of the State Council (seven), and heads of the CCP central departments (two). They accounted for 21 percent, 25 percent, and 50 percent of total numbers in these three levels of leadership, respectively. This list includes most, but not all, prominent *tuanpai* officials. Some rising stars with *tuanpai* backgrounds currently serve as vice ministers, deputy heads, and deputy provincial chiefs. They include Wang Yang (deputy secretary general of the State Council), Liu Peng (director of the General Administration of Sport), Ye Xiaowen (director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs), Tian Congming (head of Xinhua News Agency), Ling Jihua (deputy head of the General Office of the CCP central committee), Cai Wu (deputy head of the CCP International Department), Shen Yueyue (deputy head of the CCP Organization Department), Huang Yaojin (deputy head of the CCP United Front Work Department), Ji Binxuan (deputy head of the CCP Propaganda Department), Yuan Chunqing (executive deputy party secretary of Shaanxi), Liu Qibao (executive deputy party secretary of Guangxi), and Jiang Daming (executive deputy Party secretary of Shandong). Most of them are in their early 50s and are members or alternates of the 16th Central Committee. Along with those listed in the table, these prominent *tuanpai* officials will likely play a more important role in Chinese governance in the years to come.

Table 2. Career Experiences of *Tuanpai* Officials Who Serve as Full Ministers and Provincial Chiefs (2005)

Name	Position	Born Year	Year Appointed	Education Level	Field	CCYL Years	Rural Experience	Industrial Experience	Foreign Trade	Finance/ Banking	Organization Work	Propa-ganda
Li Kiqiang	Liaoning Secretary	1955	2004	Ph.D.	Economics	82–98						
Zhang Baoshun	Shanxi Secretary	1950	2005	M.A.	Economics	78–91						

Li Yuanchao	Jiangsu Secretary	1950	2002	Ph.D.	Law	82–90						
Qian Yunlu	Guizhou Secretary	1944	2001	College	Economics	82–83						
Wang Lequan	Xinjiang Secretary	1944	1995	M.A.	Politics	82–86						
Yang Chuantang	Tibet Secretary	1947	2004	M.A.	Economics	84–92						
Ji Yunshi	Hebei Governor	1945	2003	College	Physics	82–84						
Huang Xiaojing	Fujian Governor	1946	2005	College	Unknown	81–84?						
Li Chengyu	Henan Governor	1946	2003	College	Politics	82–85?						
Huang Huahua	Guangdong Governor	1946	2003	M.A.	Politics	82–87						
Song Xiuyan (f)	Qinghai Governor	1955	2004	College	Economics	83–89						
Yang Jing	Neimenggu Governor	1953	2004	M.A.	Economics	83–5, 93–6						
Ma Qizhi	Ningxia Governor	1943	1998	College	History	81–83						
Li Dezhu	Minister, Ethnic Affairs	1943	1998	College	Politics	80–85						
Li Zhilun	Minister, Supervision	1942	2003	College	Law	82–92?						
Li Xueju	Minister, Civil Affairs	1945	2003	M.A.	Unknown	78–88						
Wu Aiying (f)	Minister, Justice	1951	2005	M.A.	Politics/Law	82–89						
Du Qinglin	Minister, Agriculture	1946	2001	M.A.	Law	78–84						
Sun Jiazheng	Minister, Culture	1944	1998	College	Chinese	78–83						
Zhang Weiqing	Minister, Family Planning	1944	1998	College	Philosophy	82–83						
Liu Yunshan	Head, CCP Organization	1947	2002	College	Politics	82–84						
Liu Yandong (f)	Head, CCP United Front	1945	2002	Ph.D.	Politics	82–91						

Those in the table who serve as provincial chiefs and ministers certainly have a greater opportunity to advance to the national leadership in the near future. Li Keqiang (party secretary of Liaoning), Zhang Baoshun (party secretary of Shanxi), Li Yuanchao (party secretary of Jiangsu), Wu Aiying (minister of Justice), and Liu Yandong (head of the CCP United Front Work Department) are among the candidates for Politburo seats in the next Party Congress. All of them hold postgraduate degrees, and, with the exception of Liu Yandong, all are in their early 50s. Li Keqiang, Zhang Baoshun, Li Yuanchao, and Liu Yandong all served on the 11-member secretariat of the CCYL Central Committee in the early 1980s, when Hu Jintao was in charge of the organization. Many other *tuanpai* leaders served as CCYL secretaries at the provincial level in the early 1980s, and were usually members of the CCYL Central Committee during this period. Li Xueju was the head of the Organization Department of the CCYL Central Committee. Li Zhilun was the director of the Research Office of the Youth Movement of the CCYL Central Committee. Both Li Xueju and Li Zhilun worked under Hu's leadership during the early 1980s. Therefore, all of them have had close contact with Hu Jintao for more than two decades.

Two *tuanpai* officials, Li Yuanchao and Liu Yandong, are "princelings"—the children of high-ranking officials. Their fathers served at the provincial or ministerial levels of leadership prior to the Cultural Revolution. After Deng Xiaoping returned to power in 1978, especially in the early 1980s, a large number of princelings were promoted to leadership posts at various levels as an incentive for veteran leaders to retire. Many princelings first became CCYL officials, as a stepping-stone for further promotion. In the 11th Secretariat of the CCYL Central Committee in the early 1980s, for example, four of the eleven members were princelings, including Li Yuanchao, Liu Yandong, Chen Haosu (son of former Foreign Minister Chen Yi) and He Guangwei (son of revolutionary veteran He Changgong).

Since the mid-1980s, however, princelings have been taking positions with business firms or local governments in coastal cities, which provide more opportunities for financial profits and political careers. Yu Zhengsheng (party secretary of Hubei), Xi Jinping (party secretary of Zhejiang), and Bo Xilai (minister of Commerce), for example, went to Qingdao, Fuzhou, and Dalian, where they served as municipal leaders. According to Ding Wang's study, since 1983 no princeling at the minister or vice-minister level of leadership ever served in the national leadership of the CCYL. Consequently, CCYL officials usually come from humble family backgrounds, and many from poor inland provinces.

Table 2 shows that all of them have been appointed to their current posts within the last ten years. Seventeen officials (77 percent) were appointed to their current posts within the past four years. Many of them have gained broad leadership experience by taking jobs in different levels of leadership (county, municipal, provincial, and national), different institutions (the party and the government), and different sectors (propaganda, organization, and legal affairs). Li Yuanchao, for example, served as deputy director of the Office of the International Public Affairs of the CCP Central Committee, deputy director of the Information Office of the State Council, vice minister of Culture, and party secretary of Nanjing City before taking the post of party secretary of Jiangsu.

Table 2 also lists academic fields based on the highest degree these leaders have received. Ten (45.5 percent) officials studied politics or law, six (27.3 percent) majored in economics, and three (13.6 percent) received degrees in humanities. Only one leader, Hebei Governor Ji Yunshi, studied natural science. None studied engineering.[47] This is in sharp contrast to the dominance of technocratic leaders in the late Deng and Jiang eras. Many of these leaders, for example Liu Yunshan, Wang Lequan, Li Yuanchao, Huang Huahua, Song Xiuyan, and Wu Aiying, attended a part-time degree program at the Central Party School (CPS). Almost all the younger leaders on the list also attended midcareer training programs at CPS in the 1990s, when Hu Jintao was the president of the CPS, thus strengthening their ties with him.

A majority of these *tuanpai* leaders (81.8 percent) have rural backgrounds. Li Keqiang and Li Yuanchao were "sent-down youths" who worked as farmers during the Cultural Revolution. Liu Yunshan, Qian Yunlu and Yang Chuantang worked as laborers in the collective farms. Many served as party secretaries of the People's Communes early in their careers. They include Wang Lequan, Qian Yunlu, Li Xueju, Wu Aiying, and Sun

Jiazheng. Thirteen (59.1 percent) had work experience as county party secretaries. Only three of these *tuanpai* leaders had leadership experience in the industrial sectors. Yang Chuantang, for example, served as party secretary of the Qilu Petroleum and Chemical Company for three years.

One of the most astonishing findings in this study of 22 prominent *tuanpai* leaders is that none of them has had work experience in foreign trade, finance, or banking. Of course, some have previously served as mayors and some are currently serving as governors, and their primary responsibility is to promote economic growth in their cities or provinces. Those who serve as party secretaries are also required to make important economic decisions. Therefore, these *tuanpai* leaders are not necessarily ignorant of, or incapable of, handling economic issues. Nevertheless, none of these most prominent *tuanpai* leaders has specialized in economic or financial administration, and their experience is especially lacking in the area of international trade and finance. Not surprisingly, all seven of the current ministers with CCYL backgrounds head ministries in noneconomic or nonindustrial fields, specializing in ethnic affairs, civil affairs, supervision, justice, culture, family planning, and agriculture, rather than finance, construction, railways, information technology, or commerce.

Table 2 also shows that *tuanpai* officials usually have had work experiences in party organization and propaganda. Ten leaders (45.5 percent) previously worked as propaganda chiefs or deputy chiefs in various institutions, and eight (36.4 percent) were in charge of organizational affairs in party affiliates. Several leaders have had experiences in domestic legal affairs. These credentials may not be valuable in a country that prioritizes foreign trade and economic globalization, but they are arguably essential as the Hu administration begins to pay more attention to social problems and political tensions among various interest groups.

All of this is certainly in line with Hu Jintao's perceived major challenges for China and his new development strategy. For Hu, the issues of social cohesion, legal reforms and the sociopolitical impact of economic globalization are at least as important as GDP growth. Members of think tanks who share Hu's perspective have recently been appointed to important leadership positions. For example, both Yu Keping, who is deputy director of the Central Bureau of Translation of the CCP, and Xia Yong, who was recently appointed as director of the State Bureau of Secrecy, have written numerous books on these subjects.[48] Yu Keping was born in Zhuji, Zhejiang Province, in 1959 and received his doctoral degree in political science at Beijing University. He has previously lectured at Duke University in the United States, Donghua University in Taiwan, and the Free University in Germany as a visiting professor. In addition to his position at the Central Bureau of Translation, he also serves as director of the Center for the Study of Chinese Governmental Innovation at Beijing University. His main research interests include civil society, the political impacts of globalization, and China's political and institutional reforms.

Xia Yong was born in Jingzhou, Hubei Province, in 1961. He studied law as an undergraduate at China's Southwest Institute of Law and Political Science from 1978 to 1982. Since graduation, he has been engaged in teaching and research. He obtained a

doctoral degree in law from Beijing University in 1992 and studied at Harvard University as a postdoctoral fellow. In 1992 he began work as a research fellow for the Institute of Law at CASS. He served as deputy director of the Institute in 1998 and director in 2002. Like Yu, Xia has been interested in the issues of civil society, NGOs, governance, the rule of law, and state-society relations. With a low-profile personality, Xia has seldom appeared in the Chinese media, although it is believed that he works very closely with Hu Jintao.[49] His recent appointment to director of the important State Bureau of Secrecy seems to confirm this speculation. Both Yu and Xia will likely play more important roles in the future, especially if and when Hu Jintao begins to pursue bolder political reforms.

Yu and Xia are not *tuanpai* officials. Many *tuanpai* leaders, however, share similar interests. For example, Li Keqiang, newly appointed Minister of Justice Wu Aiying, and Executive Deputy Party Secretary of Shaanxi Yuan Chunqing have all written substantially about state-society relations and governance. As Hu's confidants, they provide insights that have been influential in terms of governmental policies. Their views may also be indicative of the future trajectory of the country.

Conclusion: Social Challenges and Governance in the Hu Era

With a populist approach that differs profoundly from his predecessor Jiang's, Hu Jintao has changed China's course of development to be more in line with his perceived mandate. Turning away from Jiang's policies, which emphasized political authoritarianism, coastal development, and single-minded GDP growth, Hu has outlined his vision of development, which includes three main objectives: enhancing the governing capacity of the CCP, striving for balanced regional development, and establishing a more "harmonious society."

During the past two years, President Hu and his close ally, Premier Wen, has taken popular actions such as reducing the tax burden on farmers, ordering business firms and local governments to pay debts to migrant workers, shaking hands with AIDS patients, visiting family members of the victims of coal-mine explosions, and abolishing some discriminatory regulations against migrants. These gestures and policies reflect Hu's recognition that his administration should respond more seriously to the challenges and problems facing Chinese society before it is too late. As the Chinese official media often acknowledge nowadays, triggering factors such as sensational corruption scandals, a large-scale real-estate bubble, a global financial crisis, major industrial accidents, health crises, a war over the Taiwan Strait, and other unexpected events (especially a combination of any of these events) may jeopardize China's future development.

Hu is evidently concerned about all these potential crises, especially at a time when the unemployment rate in the country is exceptionally high, demographic changes are overwhelming, and public resentment of growing economic disparity is prevalent. Not surprisingly, the new leadership intends to maintain control over the media and does not allow expressions of discontent, which they fear could instigate mass social disturbance.

At the same time, Hu has used these perceived challenges to legitimize his shift of development priorities and to consolidate his personal power. Although this power is balanced and constrained by Jiang's protégés in the Politburo, Hu has recently begun to take important political action by appointing his long-term *tuanpai* associates as ministers and provincial chiefs. Some of them will be the front-runners for the next Politburo. In general, *tuanpai* leaders have had work experience in rural areas instead of urban industries; they have been familiar with propaganda and party organizational work; and none of them has had any substantial experience in foreign trade, finance, or banking. A majority have educational backgrounds in politics or law rather than engineering or the sciences.

All these traits differ significantly from the technocrats who dominated the Chinese leadership in the Jiang era, especially the members of the so-called Shanghai Gang. This observation has two important ramifications. First, the career experience and political backgrounds of *tuanpai* officials are arguably the right credentials with which new leaders can better handle new challenges that China faces. *Tuanpai* officials are ready to carry out Hu Jintao's concept of a "harmonious society," which pays more attention to social fairness and social justice than GDP growth. Second, *tuanpai* officials' lack of credentials in economics, especially in foreign trade and finance, is an inherent disadvantage for this powerful elite group, indicating that these officials have to cooperate—thus sharing power – with other elite groups. This may also help prevent Hu from wielding excessive power or achieving social fairness at the expense of economic efficiency.

No one knows whether Hu and his like-minded *tuanpai* officials will accomplish their objectives in this new phase of China's development. Nor is it known whether Hu's new vision is merely a tactic to consolidate his power, as has happened many times in China in the past century. However, the fact that Hu and other leaders are fully aware of these challenges, and are interested in dealing with them seriously, may help them avoid a collapse of the one-party regime in the near future. China is in the throes of far-reaching change. Greater changes are inevitable—partly because Hu's new policies will likely lead to further socioeconomic transformation, and partly because societal forces will increasingly shape the Chinese political process.

Notes:

[1] The author thanks Sally Carman and Suzanne Wilson for suggesting ways in which to clarify the article.
[2] For a detailed discussion of these problems, see Xiaobo Lu, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involution of the Chinese Communist Party*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.
[3] Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce* (Analysis and forecast on China's social development, 2005). Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004, pp. 184–85.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] Ru, Lu, and Li, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 5. Also, *Voice of America News*, November 4, 2004. See http://www.voa.gov.
[6] *Shijie ribao* (World journal), November 2, 2004, p. C1.
[7] *Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* (China Newsweek), December 28, 2004.
[8] *Zhongguo laodong tongji nianjian 1994–2003* (China labor yearbook, 1994–2003), Beijing: China Statistics Press, 2004; and "*2003 niandu laodong he shehui baozhang shiye fazhan gongbao*" (Report on labor and social welfare development in 2003).

[9] *Xinshiji* (New times weekly), Dec. 21, 2004, p. 22.
[10] See http://www.chinesenewsnet.com. November 14, 2004.
[11] Hu, "*Zhongguo renlei buanquan de zuida tiaozhan"*; and see also http://business.sohu.com. June 19, 2005.
[12] Ma Ling and Li Ming, *Wen Jiabao*, Taibei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2003, p. 44.
[13] For Pan's speech, see http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/fortune/en/doc/2005-04/07/content_432232_3.htm.
[14] For example, a large official Chinese news site announced that by July 14, 2005, floods in China had already caused 764 deaths and severely affected the lives of 90 million people since the beginning of the year. See http://www.chinanews.com and http://www4.chinesenewsnet.com/MainNews/EntDigest/Life/zxs_2005-07-15_599787.shtml.
[15] For example, Sun Liping, professor of sociology at Tsinghua University, argues that the Chinese government should improve its institutional mechanism for economic redistribution. His contention is that the state's enterprise tax, income tax, and investment in social welfare should all be improved ***Cheng: What do you mean by "improved" here? vw[Please change "improved" to "increased."]***. *Caijing* (Economy and Finance), special report on the world and China, January 2005, p. 71.
[16] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, December 30, 2004, p. 44; and also http://xinhuanet.com, December 28, 2004. In June 2005, China's foreign reserves further increased to $711 billion. *Baokan wenzhai* (Newspaper and magazine digest). July 20, 2005, p. 1.
[17] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan* (Oriental Outlook), December 30, 2004, p. 44; and also xinhuanet.com. December 28, 2004.
[18] *Xinmin wanbao* (Xinmin Evening News), December 29, 2004, p. 26.
[19] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, July 11, 2005.
[20] See http://www.sina.com.cn, July 11, 2005.
[21] Ru, Lu, and Li, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 13.
[22] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, December 30, 2004, p. 66.
[23] Land belongs to the state in China, and cannot be owned by individuals or corporations; rather, it is leased out to them—often by local governments—for periods of 40 to 70 years. Enclosure laws allow land use to change under a new lessor, and unscrupulous developers frequently manipulate the system by taking over agricultural land to build everything from golf courses and amusement parks to college campuses.
[24] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, December 30, 2004, p. 66.
[25] Ru, Lu, and Li, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 177.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[27] Lu Xueyi, *Dangdai Zhongguo shehui liudong* (Social Mobility in Contemporary China). Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004, p. 18.
[28] *Shangwu zhoukan*, December 20, 2004, p. 35.
[29] Ru, Lu, and Li, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 234.
[30] *Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* (China News Weekly), December 28, 2004, p. 1.
[31] http://www.chinesenewsnet.com, December 28, 2004.
[32] *Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* (China News Weekly), December 28, 2004, p. 1.
[33] *Caijing Magazine*, special report on the World and China, 2005, January 2005, p. 71. China had 136.9 million members of worker unions by September 2004, an increase of about 13.5 million compared to the previous year. China's worker unions had about 1 million grass-roots organizations. *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, December 30, 2004, p. 21.
[34] Ru, Lu, and Li, eds. *2005 Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce*, p. 235.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 235.
[36] *Lianhe zaobao* (United Morning News), December 28, 2004.
[37] *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, December 30, 2004, p. 39.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[39] Lu Jianhua, ed. *2005 nian Zhongguo shehui lanpishu* (Bluebook of the Chinese Society in 2005). Beijing: China's Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2004.
[40] *Shangwu zhoukan*, December 20, 2004, p. 37.
[41] For example, *Liaowang zhoukan* and *Liaowang dongfang zhoukan*, two official newsmagazines run by the Xinhua News Agency, frequently publish articles on these topics.
[42] For more discussion, see Cheng Li, "Hu's Followers: Provincial Leaders with Backgrounds in the Communist Youth League," *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 3 (Summer 2002); Cheng Li, "Hu's New

Deal and the New Provincial Chiefs," *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 10 (Spring 2004); and Cheng Li, "New Provincial Chiefs: Hu's Groundwork for the 17th Party Congress," *China Leadership Monitor*, Issue 13 (Winter 2005).

[43] *Shijie ribao*, May 3, 2002, sec. A, p. 7, and http://cyc7.cycnet.com/zuzhi/worksnew/80year/introduce/index.htm.

[44] See Cheng Li, "The 'New Deal': Politics and Policies of the Hu Administration," *Journal of Asian and African Studies,* Vol. 38, Nos. 4-5 (December 2003): 329–346.

[45] For a comprehensive study of *tuanpai* officials, see Ding Wang, *Hu Jintao yu gongqingtuan jieban qun* (Hu Jintao and the Successors of Chinese Communist Youth Leagues). Hong Kong Celebrities Press, 2005.

[46] *Zhongguo shibao* (China Times), July 13, 2005, p. 1.

[47] Liu Yandong, however, studied chemical engineering at Qinghua University as an undergraduate in the 1960s. In the 1990s, she continued her graduate-level education at the People's University and Jilin University, where she received her Master's degree in sociology and Doctoral degree in politics.

[48] Examples include the following: Yu Keping, *Shequn zhuyi* (Communitarianism). Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2005; Yu Keping, *Zhongguo gongminshehui de xingqi yu zhili de bianqian* (The Emerging of Civil Society and Its Significance for Governance in Reform China). Beijing: Shehui kexuewenxian chubanshe, 2002; Xia Yong*, Yifa zhiguo—guojia yu shehui* (Rule of Law in Governance: State and Society). Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003); and Xia Yong. *Zhongguo minquan zhexue* (The Philosophy of Civil Rights in the context of China). Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004. discussion

[49] *Shijie ribao*, June 8, 2005, p. C1.