

Chapter IX Party Membership in Post-reform China: Age, Educational Attainment, and Professional Competency

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*The Communist Party of China had only some 50 members at its birth 80 years ago and what the party faced was a calamity-ridden old China. But today, 80 years later, our party has become a big party that has been in power for more than 50 years and has more than 64 million members. What the Chinese people see now is a prosperous socialist motherland. This tremendous change is a historic miracle in the development of the Chinese nation.*¹

1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the Agenda

This chapter, using nationally representative household survey data, examines changes in the membership competence of the Communist party of China (hereafter referred to as the party) in the reform era. The total number of party members has been growing rapidly from 51 million in 1992 to 68 million in 2003 (see appendix B). What are, then, the socio-political attributes of newly joining party members?

The focus of analysis is on the determinants of educational and professional competences of party members. This chapter discusses how the party has been restructuring its membership to effectively cope with marketization. This chapter is organized as follows. In section 1, we present the background of the issue, previous literature, data sources, and a stylized framework of membership competence for empirical research. Section 2 describes changes in the individual attributes of party members between 1988 and 2002. In section 3, in order to examine the impact of marketization on the party's membership competence, we conduct city- and county-based estimations of the determinants of the membership structure. Section 4 concludes.

As the ruling party of the world's largest transition economy, the party has been restructuring its primary mission from pursuing the "socialist modernization (*shehui zhuyi xiandaihua*)" in the early 1980s to building the "socialist market economy (*shehui zhuyi shichang jingji*)" in the mid-1990s.² The membership principle, however, basically remained in tact during this period because it is the *raison d'être* of the party to be a revolutionary avant-garde organization of the working class.³

It was not until 2001–2 that the party explicitly began to widen its organizational basis. On July 1, 2001, General Secretary Jiang Zemin declared the following at the meeting celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the party.⁴

Since China adopted the “reform and opening up (*gaige kaifang*)” policy, the composition of China’s social strata has changed to some extent. There emerge new social groups such as entrepreneurs and technical staff (*chuangye ren yuan he jishu ren yuan*) of non-public hi-tech enterprises (*minying keji qiye*), managerial and technical staff (*guanli jishu ren yuan*) of foreign-invested enterprises, the self-employed (*getihu*), private entrepreneurs (*siying qiye zhu*), employees in intermediaries (*zhongjie zuzhi de congye ren yuan*), and free-lance professionals (*ziyou zhiye ren yuan*). Moreover, many people have begun to move around ownership sectors (*suoyouzhi*), industrial sectors (*hangye*) or places. There are frequent changes in people’s occupations and social status. These trends will continue. Under the guidance of the party’s line, principles and policies, most of these people in the new social strata contribute to the development of productive forces (*shengchanli*) and other missions in the socialist society through honest works and lawful business operations. They band together with workers, peasants, intellectuals, cadres, and officers and men of the People’s Liberation Army. They, too, are builders of the socialism with Chinese characteristics.

According to this new view of social stratification under the “socialist market economy,” the constitution of the communist party of China was amended at the 16th national congress of the party, held in November 2002. The new party constitution prescribes that, in addition to “worker, peasant, member of the armed forces, intellectual,... any advanced element of other social strata (*qita shehui jieceng de xianjin fenzi*)” can apply for party membership. The correspondent part in the past constitutions was “revolutionary elements (*gemin fenzi*)” (see appendix A). The term “advanced (*xianjin*)” is based on Jiang Zemin’s “Three Represents (*sange daibiao*)” doctrine, which advocates that the party should represent “advanced productive forces,” “advanced culture,” and the “fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of Chinese people.” Private entrepreneurs and managerial elites in non-public enterprises become eligible for party membership because they represent “advanced productive forces”. As literature on Chinese politics emphasizes, this is a critical turning point for the party because it implies a change to the party’s identity as a working-class party.⁵

Existing literature on social stratification and mobility in China emphasizes the significance of party membership as a determinant of social status and social mobility.⁶ These studies identify a technocratic view of the politico-economic development in the systemic transition from the planned economy. For example, Parish and Tang, using the below-mentioned 1988 CASS survey, argues that the major qualification for bureaucrats has begun to change from virtuocracy to meritocracy after

the reform and, along with this change, the educational level of party members has been increasing.⁷

Further, several empirical studies directly analyze the attainment of party membership. For example, Dickson and Rublee, using the 1988 CASS survey, compares the relative importance of party membership and educational attainment in urban society.⁸ Referring to the new class theory, they argue that there is evidence of a separate path in regard to career mobility: first, on the one hand, for the most socially prestigious jobs, not a party membership but a college degree has become increasingly important; second, on the other hand, intellectuals now have privileged access to the party, and the researchers believe that the importance of education relative to political reliability will increase over time. Bian, Shu, and Logan examine how the criteria for political screening and educational credentials evolved in the attainment of party membership during the period between 1949 and 1993, using sample surveys conducted in Tianjin and Shanghai in 1993.⁹ As is discussed below, Bian, Shu, and Logan presents a useful conceptual model of the attainment of party membership. However, their analysis is based on data collected from a small numbers of cities and does not cover rural areas. Their conclusions need to be confirmed by a larger sample that includes rural areas.¹⁰

1.2. Stylized Understanding of Membership Competence

The party's membership policy duaring the reform era emphasized "four transformations (*sihua*)", that is, "revolutionization (*geminhua*)", "juvenescence (*nianqinhua*)", "intellectual and educational competency (*zhishihua*)", and "professional competency (*zhuaneyehua*)" of the newly joining members.¹¹ Since the "revolutionization" of party members symbolizes the aim of the party, the main emphasis has been falling on the latter three qualifications.¹² After the 16th party congress, emphasis on party members' educational and professional competencies has been modified to emphasize the "governing ability (*zhizheng nengli*)" of the party, that is, the ability to manage the socialist market economy, the ability to develop a socialist democracy (*shehui zhuyi minzhu zhengzhi*), the ability to promote an advanced socialistic culture (*shehui zhuyi xianjin wenhua*), and the ability to build a socialistic, harmonious society (*shehui zhuyi hexie shehui*).¹³

In regard to the party's membership competence, Bian, Shu, and Logan presents a useful conceptual framework. Table 1 illustrates their argument on the changes regarding attainment of party membership, that is, the shift from ideological loyalty (political screening) to educational credentials and occupational competency (period 1 to 3 in the table).¹⁴ They empirically examine the evolution of membership attainment during the period from 1949 to 1993, using sample surveys of urban households conducted in Tianjin and Shanghai in 1993. Based on event history analysis, they argue that measures of political screening are persistently

Table 1 Stylized framework of the attainment of party membership

Historical periods	Mode of political screening	Role of educational credentials and occupational competency	Social bases of the party	Youth to recruit
(1)1949–1965	class origin political participation	positive	workers and peasants intellectuals	inspired youth
(2)1966–1978	class origin political participation and clientelism	becoming negative	workers and peasants	rebellion youth
(3)1979–2000	political participation and clientelism	becoming positive and important	workers and peasants intellectuals	educated youth
(4)2001–	political participation and clientelism	positive and increasingly important	workers and peasants intellectuals entrepreneurs managerial elite professionals, and other advanced social elements	educated youth qualified professional

Source: Bian, Shu, and Logan (2001), modified by the authors.

Note: Periods (1)-(3) are summarized from table 1 of Bian, Shu, and Logan (2001). Period (4) is added by the authors.

important in all post-1949 periods and that educational attainment emerges to be a significant determinant of party membership in the post-1978 period. From these findings, they argued that the party has shifted its emphasis in order to recruit a technocratic elite that is professionally competent as well as politically screened. Their discussion is consistent with earlier arguments by political scientists about the shift of the primary credentials for cadres from revolutionary ideology to technocratic ability.¹⁵ As we added in table 1 (see period 4), the new membership principle at the beginning of the twenty-first century can be understood as the development of an existing trend in the post-reform era.

1.3. Data Sources

The main data sources for this chapter are nationally representative household surveys conducted by the Chinese Household Income Project Team in 1989, 1994, and 2003. Reference years of the surveys are 1988, 1995, and 2002, respectively (hereafter referred to as the 1988, 1995, and 2002 CASS surveys).¹⁶ Sample households of the CASS surveys are subsamples of the official annual household surveys conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). By utilizing the sampling frame of the NBS, the CASS surveys ensure representativeness for both urban and rural areas. The basic structure of the CASS surveys is reported in appendix C.

2. Membership Structure of the Party, 1988–2002

2.1. Individual Attributes

Table 2 compares the basic individual attributes of party members in 1988 and in 2002. The following points can be made from this table.

Regarding gender structure, Table 2 clearly shows that female members increased between 1988 and 2002, although the party was still dominated by male members in 2002. Concerning the comparison between urban and rural areas, it is found that male dominance is much stronger in rural areas.¹⁷

The age structure has become older between 1988 and 2002 in both urban and rural areas. As discussed in previous literature,¹⁸ It is not an easy task for the party to recruit young members. As is shown in figure 1, the age structure of the party is older than that of the entire population. In 2002, approximately 11 percent of urban party members were between the ages of 18 and 34, whereas in the entire urban population those between the ages of 18 to 34 is about 38 percent. Similarly, approximately 13 percent of rural party members were between the ages of 18 to 34 in 2002, where as the entire rural population between the relevant ages was about 37 percent. Moreover, Table 2 and Figure 1 illustrate that average age of party members has increased through the 1990s in both and rural areas.

In order to figure out the time when the ageing of the party began, Table 3 reports the distribution of age at joining the party. It is interesting that overall the average age at joining the party increased after the reform. During the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–78), 61 percent of urban members and 38 percent of rural members entered the party at ages 18–24. In 1979–88, however, the proportion of members who joined the party at ages 18–24 decreased to 23 percent in urban areas and 13 percent in rural areas respectively. In urban areas, this trend has accelerated sharply in the 1990s.

As a reflection of urban-rural disparity in China, a large gap exists in educa-

Table 2 Basic structure of party members, 1988 and 2002

(%)

	1988		2002	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Gender				
Male	75.1	91.2	65.0	85.5
Age				
18–19	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.1
20–24	0.9	1.1	1.1	2.2
25–29	2.2	3.0	2.4	3.5
30–34	10.4	10.2	6.5	6.8
35–39	16.4	18.3	11.9	11.7
40–44	14.8	18.7	12.4	13.8
45–49	17.2	17.1	18.6	16.8
50–54	17.6	15.2	16.4	17.6
55–59	11.7	8.8	10.6	12.1
60–64	6.2	4.5	7.9	7.2
65–	2.7	2.6	11.7	8.2
Educational attainment				
College or higher	39.7	3.4	42.9	3.6
Senior high school	18.6	15.5	33.8	29.6
Junior high school	29.6	36.2	18.7	44.7
Primary school or lower	12.1	36.5	4.6	19.8
Illiterate	--	8.5	--	2.4
Political credentials				
Parents' party membership	--	--	33.9	19.3
Father's party membership	--	--	31.9	18.3
Number of observations	(4,738)	(1,709)	(4,348)	(2,116)

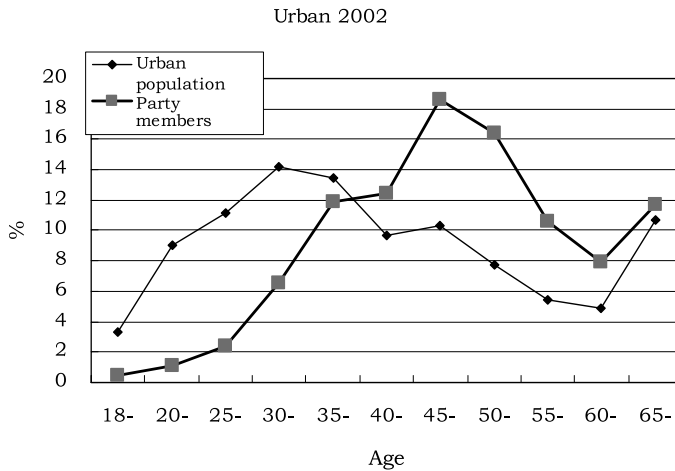
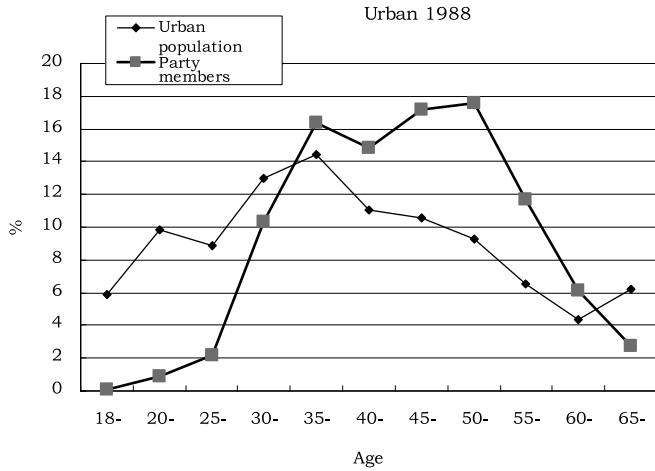
Sources: The 1988 and 2002 CASS surveys.

Note: Senior high school includes graduation from *gaozhong* and technical/vocational schools (*zhongzhuan*) equivalent to *gaozhong*. Junior high school means graduation from *chuzhong* or equivalent educational level. Primary school or lower includes graduation from primary school and semi-illiteracy. Parents' party membership indicates membership of either father or mother.

tional attainment between urban and rural party members. In 2002, approximately 43 percent of urban party members had educational credentials of college or higher, whereas the corresponding figure for rural party members was only 3.6 percent. Obviously, the educational attainment of party members increased between 1988 and 2002. In urban areas, the percentage of party members with senior high school or higher educational credentials increased from 58 percent in 1988 to 77 percent

Figure 1 Age structure of party members

1. A. Urban



in 2002. The corresponding figures for rural areas were 19 percent in 1988 and 33 percent in 2002. The increase in the proportion of senior high school graduates is remarkable in both urban and rural areas, while increase in the proportion of college graduates are moderate.

Figure 1 Age structure of party members

1.B. Rural

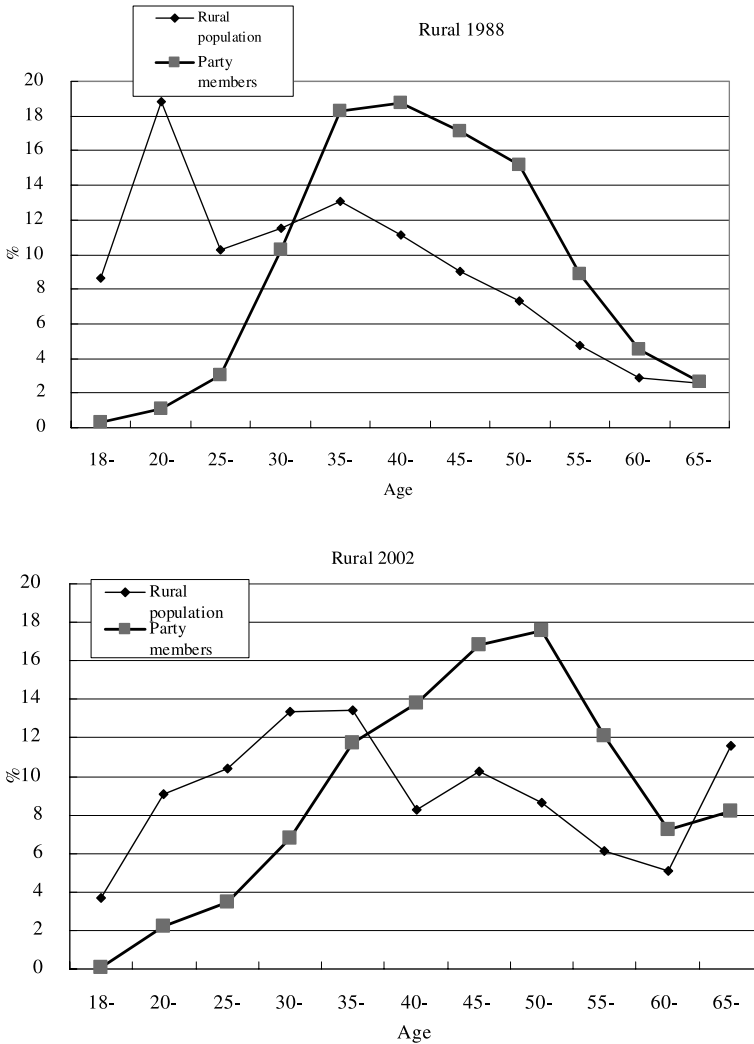


Table 4 compares the educational attainment of party members and non-party members. It is clear that the party members achieved educational levels than non-party members in both urban and rural areas. There has been approximately a 23 percentage-point difference in the proportion of college graduates among party

Table 3 Distribution of age at joining the party

3.A. Urban party members, 1949–2002

(%)

Years at joining the party	1949–1965	1966–1978	1979–1988	1989–1995	1996–2002	1949–2002
Age at joining the party						
18~19	13.5	8.8	2.4	0.9	1.2	4.4
20~24	59.2	52.8	20.7	11.4	8.3	27.0
25~29	21.2	20.2	21.4	18.7	16.3	19.5
30~34	4.8	9.6	19.1	20.4	23.3	16.7
35~39	1.3	5.0	15.9	22.5	20.4	14.4
40~44	0.0	2.9	10.0	16.6	15.4	9.9
45~49	0.0	0.6	6.4	6.9	10.7	5.5
50~	0.0	0.1	4.2	2.6	4.6	2.7
Number of observations	(453)	(872)	(1,165)	(850)	(872)	(4,212)

3.B. Rural party members, 1949–1995

(%)

Year of joining the party	1949–1965	1966–1978	1979–1988	1989–1995	1949–1995
Age at joining the party					
18~19	9.0	3.9	0.3	1.2	2.9
20~24	43.7	34.1	13.0	10.1	24.3
25~29	27.6	32.0	20.1	18.6	25.2
30~34	14.4	16.2	29.4	18.6	20.4
35~39	3.6	9.7	20.9	24.2	15.1
40~44	1.8	2.8	11.1	15.7	7.7
45~49	0.0	1.3	4.2	8.9	3.5
50~	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.8	0.9
Number of observations	(167)	(463)	(378)	(248)	(1,256)

Sources: The 1995 and 2002 CASS surveys.

Table 4 Comparison of educational attainment of party members and non-party members, 1988 and 2002

4.A. Urban area

(%)

	Party members		Non-party members		Total	
	1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002
College or higher	39.7	42.9	16.6	20.3	21.8	26.1
Senior high school	18.6	33.8	24.0	38.6	22.8	37.4
Junior high school	29.6	18.7	38.1	29.6	36.2	26.8
Primary school or lower	12.1	4.6	21.3	11.5	19.2	9.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of observations	(4,738)	(4,348)	(16,323)	(12,531)	(21,061)	(16,879)

4. B. Rural area

(%)

	Party members		Non-party members		Total	
	1988	2002	1988	2002	1988	2002
College or higher	3.4	3.6	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.9
Senior high school	15.5	29.6	7.5	13.4	8.0	14.6
Junior high school	36.2	44.7	29.3	43.6	29.7	43.7
Primary school or lower	45.0	22.1	62.0	41.3	61.0	39.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of observations	(1,709)	(2,116)	(27,146)	(25,632)	(28,855)	(27,748)

Sources: The 1988 and 2002 CASS surveys.

members and non-party members. In rural areas, also, large differences in educational levels according to party membership can be found, and the difference increased between 1988 and 2002. As for those who graduated from senior high school or higher, the percentage-point difference by party membership was 6 points in 1988' and the figure had increased to 14 points by 2002. There also is a large difference in the proportion of illiterate according to party membership, which reflects an advantage in educational attainment given to party members of the older generation.

The proportion of party members whose parents/fathers were also members of the Communist party is much higher in urban areas than in rural area, which natu-

rally reflects disparity in the density of party according to where they live. If, following Bian, Shu, and Logan's discussion, one's parents'/father's party membership can be regarded as a proxy for political credentials, then an examination whether or not this factor affects membership attainments is needed.

2.2. Determinants of Membership Attainment

To examine the changes in individual attributes that relate to party membership attainment, we have conducted probit estimation of the determinants of party membership for selected historical periods. The dependent variable is a dummy variable for the party membership (1 = party member) of cohorts ages 18–34 in each historical period. Explanatory variables are as follows: gender (dummy for male gender); dummies for educational credentials (college or higher, senior high school, junior high school or lower); dummy for father's party membership (1 = party member).¹⁹ The selected historical periods are 1949–56 (the first Five-Year Plan), 1966–73 (the Cultural Revolution/9th–10th party congresses), 1987–92 (early reform era, 13th–14th party congresses), and 1997–2002 (15th–16th party congresses).

The estimation results are summarized in Table 5 and the following points can be made from the table. First, the positive effect of male gender on membership attainment has been decreasing in both urban and rural areas. In urban areas this factor finally became statistically insignificant in the years 1997–2002. Second, the positive effect of educational credentials on membership attainment has increased. In urban areas, both college and senior high school level educational credentials became positive and significant in the period 1966–73, and the effects have been increasing.²⁰ In rural areas, senior high school or higher educational credentials became positive and statistically significant after the reform era. Third, although a father's party membership has been less than the significant level of 10 percent in all the selected periods, it is interesting that both the coefficient and the significance level have become larger in the current period. As is discussed below, this factor proved to have significant effect on the membership structure in 2002.

2.3. Professional Competency

As for professional competency, we focus on urban areas in this chapter. This is partly because “*zhuan'yehua*” in membership policy mainly refers to urban areas and partly because it is rather difficult to define professional competency in a rural context.²¹

Table 6. A. reports the occupational status of urban party members in comparison with non-party members in 2002. The share of cadres/executives among party members is much higher than among non-party members, as was expected. It is notable that the difference in the proportion of professionals/engineers is not very

Table 5 Probit estimation of the determinants of party membership in selected historical periods

5. A. Urban area

Period of joining the party	1949-1956	1966-1973 (9th-10th party congresses)	1987-1992 (13th-14th party congresses)	1997-2002 (15th-16th party congresses)
Male	0.676 (6.56)***	0.496 (9.31)***	0.289 (5.97)***	0.069 (1.11)
College or higher	-0.106 (0.79)	0.454 (7.30)***	0.854 (11.69)***	1.018 (9.70)***
Senior high school	0.146 (1.36)	0.133 (2.29)**	0.427 (5.78)***	0.462 (4.17)***
Father's party membership	0.279 (1.63)	0.006 (0.09)	0.051 (1.04)	0.094 (1.50)
Constant	-1.564 (17.03)***	-1.908 (37.35)***	-2.279 (32.46)***	-2.055 (20.46)***
Number of observations	1,230	6, 237	8, 083	3, 455

5. B. Rural area

Period of joining the party	1949-1956	1966-1973 (9th-10th party congresses)	1987-1992 (13th-14th party congresses)
Male	1.199 (4.03)***	0.821 (10.02)***	0.713 (7.83)***
Senior high school or higher	--	0.025 (0.24)	0.649 (9.47)***
Constant	-3.194 (11.07)***	-2.609 (35.00)***	-2.931 (34.18)***
Number of observations	2,855	9,666	12,442

Sources: The 1995 and 2002 CASS surveys.

Notes: The dependent variable is a dummy variable for the party membership (1 = party member) of age cohort 18-34 years in each historical period. Omitted independent variable is junior high school or lower. Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses.

** denotes statistically significant at the 5% level, *** at the 1% level.

Table 6 Occupational status of party members in comparison with non-party members in urban areas, 1988-2002

6. A. Occupational status of urban party members and non-party members, 2002 (%)

	Party members	Non-party members	Total
Production workers, salesclerks, and other service workers	7.5	27.9	22.0
Skilled workers	10.3	22.0	18.7
Clerical/office staffs	26.6	17.7	20.2
Middle-grade cadres/executives of government agents, enterprises, and other institutions	20.3	2.9	7.9
High-grade cadres/executives of government agents, enterprises, and other institutions	7.6	0.5	2.5
Professionals/engineers	24.1	19.9	21.1
Owners of family business/private entrepreneurs	1.4	6.0	4.7
Others	2.2	3.1	2.9
Number of observations	(2,930)	(7,267)	(10,197)

6.B. Changes in occupational status between 1988 and 2002 (%)

	Party members 1988	Party members 2002	Non-party members 1988	Non-party members 2002
Workers and clerical/office staffs	53.8	44.4	83.3	67.6
High/middle grades executives of enterprises	11.2	11.0	1.1	1.9
High/middle grades cadres of government agents and other non-business institutions	11.3	17.9	0.5	1.5
Professionals/engineers	22.8	24.1	13.7	19.9
Owners of family business/private entrepreneurs	0.9	1.4	1.4	6.0
Others	0.0	2.2	0.0	3.1
Number of observations	(4,195)	(4,738)	(13,556)	(16,328)

6.C. Professional competence by party membership, 2002
(%)

	Party members	Non-party members	Total
Cadres/professionals/engineers of government agents and other non-business institutions	58.4	50.8	54.4
High/middle grades executives of SOEs	16.1	5.5	10.4
High/middle grades executives of other enterprises	4.9	2.5	3.6
Professionals/engineers of SOEs	14.2	25.8	20.4
Professionals/engineers in other enterprises	5.8	13.4	9.8
Private entrepreneurs	0.7	2.0	1.4
Number of observations	(1,525)	(1,731)	(3,256)

Sources: The 1988 and 2002 CASS surveys.

Notes: Other enterprises include former SOEs reorganized into state-share holding enterprises (*guojia konggu qiye*).

large. Regarding to changes between 1988 and 2002, two points can be made from table 6. B. First, the percentage-point difference in the proportion of cadres/executives between party and non-party members increased in 2002 (from 21 points in 1988 to 26 points in 2002). Second, on the other hand, the difference in the proportion of professionals/engineers narrowed (from 9 points in 1988 to 4 points in 2002). This is due to the share of professionals/engineers among non-party members having increased between 1988 and 2002.

Table 6.C shows the composition of an urban population with professional competency, that is, those who are cadres, executives, professionals, engineers, or private entrepreneurs (owners of private enterprises). The majority of party members with professional competency are cadres/executives of government/non-business institutions and executives of SOEs. In comparison with party members, non-party members with professional competency are more likely to be professionals and engineers of enterprises (including SOEs). Also, the proportion of private entrepreneurs is higher in non-party members than in party members.

These facts suggest that “elitization” of the occupational structure of urban party members has been progressing through the conventional bureaucratic-elite

rather than through the highly skilled professional elite, suggesting dual elite paths under the development of marketization. This is consistent with the discussions by previous literature on social mobility in post-communist countries.²²

3. Determinants of Membership Structure, 2002

3.1. Framework of Analysis

Here, we conduct a city- and county-based OLS estimation of the determinants of membership structure. We utilize the 2002 CASS survey, and the reference year is 2002 for all variables used in the estimations. The framework of empirical analysis is as follows.

For the dependent variables, we employ the following measurements of membership structure aggregated at city/county level.

a. Juvenescence of party members

With regard to the age structure of party members by city/county, we introduce the logit transformed proportion of party members at ages 18-39 to the total population of same age cohort.²³

b. Educational competency of party members

Concerning the educational competency of party members by city/county, we employ the logit transformed proportion of well-educated party members to the total number of party members. Considering the substantial difference in the educational level between urban and rural areas, we define well-educated as an educational level of college or higher in urban areas and as an educational level of senior high school or higher in rural areas.

c. Professional competency of party members

With regard to professional competency of urban party members by city, we use the logit transformed proportion of party members who are qualified professionals/engineers to the total number of party members. Qualified professionals/engineers here mean those who hold the titles of advanced (*gaoji*) or intermediate (*zhongji*) levels of professionals/engineers.

As explanatory variables, we introduce the following measurements of the socioeconomic characteristics of the cities/counties surveyed.

1. Average educational level of the region

To control the average educational level of cities/counties, we employ a proportion of the population of age over 18 who have an educational level of senior high school or higher to the total population over age 18.

2. Level of marketization of the region

We measure the level of marketization of cities/counties from two angles: first, the level of regional income; and second, the level of diversification of ownership

structure. For the measurement of regional income, we use 2002 per capita annual net income in 2002 computed from the 2002 CASS survey. To measure the level of diversification of ownership structure, the share of public sector employment to total working population is introduced. As for urban areas, the public sector is defined as government departments, non-profit institutions, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and collectively-owned enterprises. We introduce the proportion of workers/staffs employed in the public sector to the total number of the working population. To measure of the level of diversification of ownership structure in rural areas, we employ a proportion of the working population who earn wage income from collectively-owned workplaces to the total number of the working population. As an additional variable relating to marketization in rural areas, we add the indicator of out-migration, that is, the proportion of the working population who earn income outside the county in which they were born.²⁴

3. Historical basis of the party in the region

In order to take the party's historical basis into consideration, we introduce a measurement of intergenerational party membership inheritance, that is, proportion of party members whose fathers also have party membership to the total number of party members.

3.2. Working Hypotheses

We hypothesize that the membership structure of each city/county is determined by (a) the above-mentioned membership policy of the party and (b) the incentive structure of people to join the party. People's reason for joining the party can be divided into economic and non-economic incentives. Since data on non-economic incentives (such as ideological commitment or the desire for recognition among colleagues/neighbors) are not available, we focus on the relationship between the economic-incentive structure and the membership structure.

Regarding economic advantages to party membership in urban China, Sato (2006), using the urban household survey of 1999, has found the following two basic facts.²⁵ First, when ownership sectors are compared, the progress of marketization lowers party members' wage premium. No statistically significant wage premium for party members was found in the non-public sector (private enterprises, mixed-ownership enterprises, foreign-invested enterprises, and other non-public work units) in 1999. Second, however, when the public sector is observed over time (between 1988 and 1999), the wage income premium for party members seems to have increased slightly, or at least to have been maintained at the same level. Based on these findings, we assume that the economic incentive for youth to join the party tends to decline along with the level of marketization. If this assumption is correct, then the following working hypothesis can be made: membership competence of the party (juvenescence, educational competency, and professional competency)

negatively correlates with the level of regional income and positively correlates with the share of public sector employment. Concerning rural areas, similarly, we hypothesize a negative correlation between the level of regional income and membership competence of the party, positive correlation of the share of collective sector employment with membership competence. The development of out-migration in rural areas is assumed to have a negative correlation with membership competence. This is because out-migration lowers the dependency of peasants on the local politico-economic structure and because the increasing mobility of young and educated peasants will increase the party's difficulty in recruiting new members.

As for the influence of the historical basis of the party, we postulate that a strong historical basis encourages educated and professionally qualified youth to enter the party. The expected results of the estimations are positive correlations of the party's historical basis with juvenescence, higher educational attainment, and higher professional competency of the party organization.

3.3. *Empirical Results*

The results of city- and county-based OLS estimations are summarized in Tables 7. The following points can be deduced from the results.²⁶

In regard to the juvenescence of party members, our working hypothesis is supported only in urban areas. In urban area, the proportion of party members at ages 18-39 to the total population of the same age cohort negatively correlates with the level of regional income and positively correlates with the share of public sector employment. These facts suggest the difficulty of recruiting member's of the younger generation in cities where the income level is high and the non-public sector is well developed.²⁷ The estimation results for rural areas, however, show no statistically significant correlations between the development of marketization and the age structure of party organization.

As for educational competency, the estimation results are rather mixed. In urban areas, neither regional income nor the share of public sector employment is statistically significant, suggesting that educational competency of the party organization does not correlates with the level of marketization. Estimation results for rural areas partly support the working hypothesis. First, the share of public sector employment positively correlates with educational competency, indicating that the development of the non-public sector will lower the educational level of the party organization. This is consistent with our hypothesis. Second, however, it is also shown that the development of out-migration positively correlates with educational competency. This is not consistent with our hypothesis. We do not have a concrete explanation for this result, and further investigation is needed.

With regard to professional competency in urban areas, the estimation result does not support our hypothesis on the impact of marketization. No statistically sig-

Table 7 Determinants of membership structure of the party: city- and county-based OLS estimations, 2002

7.A.Urban areas (by city)			
Dependent variables Explanatory variables	(a)Juvenescence (proportion of ages 18-39)	(b)Educational competency (college or higher)	(c)Professional competency
Educational level	-0.025 (0.03)	1.695 (2.65)***	0.103 (1.27)
Per capita income	-0.088 (3.14)***	-0.015 (0.70)	-0.002 (0.63)
Share of public sector employment	1.053 (1.82)*	0.638 (1.48)	0.065 (1.19)
Historical basis of the party	1.751 (2.60)**	1.383 (2.76)***	0.140 (2.19)**
Constant	-2.365 (5.03)***	-2.152 (6.16)***	-0.019 (0.42)
Number of observations	77	77	77
Adjusted R-squared	0.22	0.27	0.11

nificant correlation was found between the level of marketization and professional competency.

It is notable that the historical basis of the party has significant effects in urban areas. The estimation results suggest that party organizations in cities with stronger historical basis of the party are able to recruit younger, well-educated, and professionally competent members. In fact, it is the only statistically significant variable that positively correlates with the educational and professional competences in urban areas.

4. Concluding Remarks

Although the party is eager to restructure its organization to cope better with the “socialist market economy,” our empirical results suggest that, in fact, the development of marketization makes it more difficult to recruit young and well-educated people in urban China. “Elitization” of the occupational structure of urban party

7. B. Rural areas (by county)

Dependent variables	(a)Juvenescence	(b)Educational
Explanatory variables	(proportion of ages 18-39)	competency (senior high school or higher)
Educational level	-2.465 (1.19)	8.145 (4.42)***
Per capita income	0.066 (0.37)	-0.220 (1.40)
Share of public sector employment	1.360 (0.68)	3.503* (1.96)
Out-migration	-0.245 (0.16)	2.874 (2.14)**
Historical basis of the party	-0.003 (0.04)	-0.060 (1.00)
Constant	-1.208 (2.33)**	-2.437 (5.28)***
Number of observations	122	122
Adjusted R-squared	-0.02	0.16

Source: The 2002 CASS survey.

Notes: Dependent variables are as follows. (a) Juvenescence: party members at ages 18-39/total population at ages 18-39. (b) Educational competency: well-educated party members/ total number of party members). Well-educated is defined as college or higher for urban areas and senior high school or higher for rural areas. (c) Professional competency: party members who are qualified professionals or engineers/ total number of party members. All dependent variables are logit transformed.

Explanatory variables are defined as follows. Educational level: population over age 18 who have an educational level of senior high school or higher/total of population over age 18. Per capita income: total of annual income/total population. Employment structure: share of public sector employment to total number of working population over age 18. Public sector employment in urban areas is defined as workers/staffs over age 18 employed in government departments, non-profit institutions, and state-owned enterprises. Public sector employment in rural areas is defined as working population over age 18 who earn wage income from collectively-owned workplaces. Historical basis of the party: party members whose fathers have party membership/total of party members. Out-migration: proportion of working population who earn income outside the county to which they belong. Absolute value of t statistics in parentheses. *** denotes statistically significant at the 1% level, ** at the 5% level, * at the 10% level.

members has been progressing by way of the conventional bureaucratic-elite rather than by way of the highly skilled professional elite. In rural areas, also, it is suggested that development of the non-public sector will reduce the incentive of peasants to join the party. These findings seem to reflect the diminishing economic incentive for joining the party. The development of marketization has increased the rate of return for education and professional skills, and many lucrative and socially prestigious jobs must now be obtained through educational rather than political credentials.²⁸

In other words, we suggested that people have a rather utilitarian view on joining the ruling party in the post-reform era. It may be ironic that, though the party has not emphasized “men of good stock (*chushen xuetong*)” in its recruiting efforts after the 1980s, in fact, the historical basis of the party plays an important role in staving off the weakening of the party organization in urban China.

The party’s new membership principle launched at the turn of the century’ can be understood as a counter-measure against the possible diminishment of its organizational base. However, so far, our empirical study strongly suggests the difficulty of increasing of the party’s recruitment base. In fact, according to sample surveys of private entrepreneurs conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, of 961 private entrepreneurs who were party members in 2002, only 157 (16.3 percent) entrepreneurs joined the party after becoming private entrepreneurs. Others obtained party membership before becoming private entrepreneurs.²⁹ In some sense, the new membership policy is an ex post facto ratification of changes in party membership that took place during the 1990s.

Another critical problem for the party is how to deal with disadvantaged people’s already-shaky confidence in the party. Pursuing the technocratic reorganization of the party inevitably means that poorly educated and unskilled people will feel alienated. Even though there have been few coordinated protests by workers and peasants since the 1990s,³⁰ the party is frequently forced to show paternalistic concern for the disadvantaged working-class outside of the party. The party continues to walk a treacherous tightrope between populism and technocratic elitism.

Appendix A: Constitutions of the Communist party of China

1. Constitution amended at the 16th national congress of the party

(November 14, 2002)

General Program

The Communist party of China is *the vanguard both of the Chinese working class and of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation*. It is the leading core of the missions for the socialism with Chinese characteristics and represents the development of China’s advanced pro-

Appendix B. Development of the Communist Party of China

	Total number of party members at year-end(thousand)	Proportion of party members to total population (%)	Party congresses
1956	10,730	1.7	8th
1969	22,000	2.7	9th
1973	28,000	3.1	10th
1977	35,000	3.7	11th
1982	39,650	3.9	12th
1987	46,000	4.2	13th
1992	51,000	4.4	14th
1997	60,417	4.9	15th
1998	61,877	5.0	
1999	63,221	5.0	
2000	64,517	5.1	
2001	65,749	5.2	
2002	66,941	5.2	16th
2003	68,232	5.3	

Sources: *People's Daily Online* (<http://zg.people.com.cn>, <http://www.people.com.cn>), Guojia Tongjiju Guomin Jingji Zonghe Tongjisi (ed.), *Xin Zhongguo Wushinian Tongji Ziliao Huibian*, Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, 1999, 1, Guojia Tongjiju (ed.), *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian 2004*, Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe, 2004, 95.

ductive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. The realization of communism is the highest ideal and ultimate goal of the party.

The Communist party of China takes Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of the "Three Represents" as its guide to action.

Chapter I Membership

Article 1: Any Chinese worker, peasant, member of the armed forces, intellectual, and any *advanced element of other social strata* who has reached the age of eighteen and who accepts the party's principles and constitution and is willing to join and work actively in one of the party organizations, carry out the party's decisions and pay membership dues regularly may apply for membership in the Communist party of China.

Article 2: Members of the Communist party of China are vanguard fighters of the Chinese working class imbued with communist consciousness.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Appendix C: The 1988, 1995 and 2002 CASS surveys

	1988 survey	1995 survey	2002 survey
Rural household survey			
Number of households	10,258	7,998	9,200
Number of persons	51,352	34,739	37,947
Number of provinces (or equivalent administrative units) covered	28	19	22
	Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Neimenggu, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai.	Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu.	Beijing, Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Xinjiang.
Urban household survey			
Number of households	9,009	6,931	6,835
Number of persons	31,827	21,694	20,632
Number of provinces covered	10	10	12
	Beijing, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jinagsu, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Guangdong, Yunnan, Gansu.	Beijing, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jinagsu, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Guangdong, Yunnan, Gansu.	Beijing, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jinagsu, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Guangdong, Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu.

Sources: The 2002, 1995, and 1988 CASS surveys.

Note: Rural and urban are defined by household registration status.

2. Constitution amended at the 15th national congress of the party

(September 18, 1997)

Chapter I Membership

Article 1: Any Chinese worker, peasant, member of the armed forces, intellectual, and other *revolutionary elements* who has reached the age of eighteen and who accepts the party's principle and constitution and is willing to join and work actively in one of the party organizations, carry out the party's decisions and pay membership dues regularly may apply for membership in the Communist party of China.

3. Constitution amended at the 12th national congress of the party

(September 6, 1982)

General Program

The Communist party of China is *the vanguard of the Chinese working class* and a faithful representative of the interests of all nationalities in China. It is the leading core of the missions for Chinese socialism. The realization of communism is the highest ideal and ultimate goal of the party.

The Communist party of China takes Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as its guide to action.

Chapter I Membership

Article 1: Any Chinese worker, peasant, member of the armed forces, intellectual, and other *revolutionary elements* who has reached the age of eighteen and who accepts the party's principle and constitution and is willing to join and work actively in one of the party organizations, carry out the party's decisions and pay membership dues regularly may apply for membership in the Communist party of China.

Article 2: Members of the Communist party of China are vanguard fighters of the Chinese working class imbued with communist consciousness.

4. Constitution amended at the 11th national congress of the party

(August 18, 1977)

Chapter I Membership

Article 1: Any Chinese worker, poor and lower-middle peasants, member of the revolutionary armed forces, or other *revolutionary elements* who has reached the age of eighteen and who accepts the party's Constitution and is willing to join and work actively in one of the party organizations, carry out the party's decisions, observe the party's discipline and pay membership dues regularly may apply for membership in the Communist party of China.

Notes

- 1 Jiang Zemin's speech at the meeting celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Communist party of China held on July 1, 2001 (*People's Daily*, July 2, 2001)
- 2 See appendix B for the development of the party since the 1950s.
- 3 The definition of working class has changed between the 1970s and the 1990s. However, it basically has remained within the traditional Marx-Leninism.
- 4 *People's Daily*, July 2, 2001.
- 5 Kojima, Tomoyuki, 2003. *Fukyo Taikoku no Chugoku*. Tokyo: Ashi Shobo.
- 6 Bian, Yanjie, 1994. *Work and Inequality in Urban China*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Davis, Deborah, 1992. "Job mobility in post-Mao cities: increases on the margins." *The China Quarterly*, 132, pp. 1062–85; Parish, William L. and Wenfang Tang, 2000. *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Walder, Andrew, 1995. "Career mobility and the communist political order." *American Sociological Review*, 60: 3, pp. 309–28; Zhou, Xueguang, Nancy Brandon Tuma, and Phyllis Moen, 1996. "Stratification dynamics under state socialism: the case of urban China, 1949–1993" *Social Forces*, 74: 3, pp. 759–96.
- 7 Parish, William L. and Wenfang Tang, 2000. *Chinese Urban Life under Reform: The Changing Social Contract*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Regarding virtuocracy in Chinese context, see for example, Shirk, Susan, 1984. "The decline of virtuocracy in China," in William Watson (ed.) *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 8 Dickson, Bruce J and Maria Rost Rublee, 2000. "Membership has its privileges: the socioeconomic characteristic of communist party members in urban China." *Comparative Political Studies*, 33: 1, pp. 87–112.
- 9 Bian, Yanjie, Xiaoling Shu, and John Logan, 2001. "Communist party membership and regime dynamics in China." *Social Forces*, 79: 3, pp. 805–41.
- 10 Empirical analyses on the communist party membership in urban China refer to earlier studies on Eastern Europe such as Szele'nyi (1987), which is based on the new class theory and presents two paths to party membership: the path through the occupational structure and the path through educational institutions.
- 11 Zhonggong Zhongyang (the Communist party of China), 2004. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe de jue ding (September 19, 2004)." Xinhua News Agency, September 27.
- 12 *Zhejiang Zaixian* (Zhejiang Online News Service), October 9, 2004 (<http://www.zjol.com.cn>).
- 13 Zhonggong Zhongyang (the Communist party of China), 2004. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe de jue ding (September 19, 2004)."
- 14 Bian, Yanjie, Xiaoling Shu, and John Logan, 2001. "Communist party membership and regime dynamics in China." *Social Forces*, 79: 3, pp. 805–41.
- 15 See for example, Lee, Hong Yung, 1991. *From Revolutionary Cadres to party Technocrats in Socialist China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- 16 The Chinese Household Income Project Team is an international research team organized by the Institute of Economics, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Several foreign researchers including the author are involved in the team. The surveys are funded by the Ford Foundation, ADB, SIDA, and several other research grants. The 2002 survey is partly funded by the Masayoshi Ohira Memorial Foundation, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the Graduate School of Economics, Hitotsubashi University. The author is grateful for their generous supports.

- 17 The party's gender structure is another important issue to be investigated.
- 18 See for example, Kojima, Tomoyuki, 2001. "Chugoku no doukou" *Toa*, July, 2001 (Online version. http://www.kazankai.org/publishing/toa/2001_07/index.html), Kojima, 2003. *Fukyo Taikoku no Chugoku*.
- 19 Because of data availability, the father's party membership is not employed in the estimations on rural areas.
- 20 It should be noted that the effect of educational credentials, especially college or higher credentials, in the period of 1966–73, is overestimated because entering higher education was the outcome of political screening during the Cultural Revolution.
- 21 We will discuss professional competency in rural areas in our ongoing researches.
- 22 Dickson, Bruce J and Maria Rost Rublee, 2000. "Membership has its privileges: the socioeconomic characteristic of communist party members in urban China." *Comparative Political Studies*, Hanley, Eric and Donald J. Treiman, 2003 "Recruitment into the Eastern European communist elite: dual career paths." , California Center for Population Research On-Line Working Paper Series: CCPR-008-03., Walder, Andrew, Bohai Li, and Donald Treiman, 2000. "Politics and life chances in state socialist regime: dual career paths into the urban Chinese elite, 1949 to 1996." *American Sociological Review*, 65: 2, pp. 191–209.
- 23 Logit transformed indicator of juvenescence of the party (J) is:

$$J = \ln (j / (1 - j))$$

where j is the proportion of party members at ages 18-39 to the total population of same age cohorts.

- 24 Working population under age 18 is not included in the estimations in both urban and rural areas.
- 25 Sato, Hiroshi, 2006. "From work-unit socialism to hierarchical labour market in urban China." in Li, Shi and Sato, Hiroshi (eds.) *Unemployment, Inequality and Poverty in Urban China*, London: Routledge Curzon.
- 26 In addition to age structure, educational competency, and professional competency, we have investigated the degree of male dominance in the party, that is, the logit transformed proportion of male members to total number of party members by city. Although gender balance has not been emphasized in both recent party documents and previous literature, it will be an important component of membership competence. The estimation result for urban areas is as follows.

$$\ln(m/(1-m)) = 1.755 - 1.806edu - 0.044income + 0.666employment + 0.059history$$

(6.80)^{***} (3.82)^{***} (2.86)^{***} (2.09)^{**} (0.16)

where m is the proportion of male members to total number of party members; edu is the proportion of those over 18 who have an educational level of senior high school or higher compared to the total population over age 18; $income$ is per capita income; $employment$ is the share of public sector employment; $history$ is the father's party membership (see text for detailed explanation of the model specification).

The degree of male dominance positively correlates with the share of public sec-

tor employment and negatively correlates with regional income and educational level of each city. It is suggested that marketization narrows the gender gap in political participation. Previous literature on China's urban labor market has revealed that marketization has been widening the gender wage gap (see for example, Maurer-Fazio, Margaret, Thomas G. Rawski, and Wei Zhang, 1999. "Inequality in the rewards for holding up half the sky: gender wage gaps in China's urban labor markets, 1988–1994," *The China Journal*, 41, pp. 55–88., Gustafsson, Bjorn and Li Shi 2001. "Economic transformation and the gender earnings gap in urban China," in Carl Riskin, Zhao Renwei and Li Shi (eds.) *China's Retreat from Equality: Income Distribution and Economic Transition*. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, pp. 184–209.). It will be interesting to compare the impact of marketization on different arenas in urban society. This task will be done in our ongoing research.

- 27 As for urban areas, we have also found that the average age of party members aggregated at the city level positively correlates with regional income.
- 28 Sato, Hiroshi, 2006. "From work-unit socialism to hierarchical labour market in urban China." in Li, Shi and Sato, Hiroshi (eds.) *Unemployment, Inequality and Poverty in Urban China*, Walder, Andrew, 2002. "Income determination and market opportunity in rural China, 1978–1996," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 30: 2, pp. 354–75.
- 29 Chen, Guangjin, 2003. "Siying qiyezhu de shehui laiyuan, jieceng yishi yu zhengzhi shehui canyu fenxi," in Zhang, Houyi, Lizhi Ming, and Chuanyun Liao (eds.) 2003. *Zhongguo Siying Qiye Fazhan Baogao.*" Vol.4, Beijing: Shehuikexue Wenxian Chubanshe, pp. 27–56.
- 30 Blecher, Marc, 2002. "Hegemony and Workers' Politics in China." *The China Quarterly*, 170: pp. 283–303.

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