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CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP - HETEROGENEOUS PARTY BASE

Changes in the membership structure of the Chinese Communist Party

by Lea Shih, in collaboration with Kerstin Lohse-Friedrich

Key findings and conclusions:

- The number of members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has doubled in the past 30 years to nearly 90 million. Membership rose by 26 percent from 2005 to 2016 alone.
- At the same time, the membership structure has changed significantly. The growing heterogeneity and social spread of party membership reflects the increasing individualization of the Chinese society in terms of lifestyle, education and wealth.
- Since 2013, party leadership under Xi Jinping has significantly curbed the influx of new members in an effort to reinforce the CCP's function as an elite, disciplined leadership organization in politics, society and the economy.
- The CCP also built up 1.8 million grassroots organizations in the private sector and in foreign companies in less than a decade. The penetration of the "new social strata" – private entrepreneurs, self-employed in the service sector, employed professionals – is progressing slowly, however.
- While party leaders vehemently claim organizational unity and political solidarity, the party base is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of its social structure, political interests and ideological preferences. As of yet, party leadership has covered up this gap through the consistent enforcement of their decision-making authority and preventing the participation of the party members in the intra-party decision-making process.

Centralized leadership - heterogeneous party base

Changes in membership of the Chinese Communist Party

Figure 1: Number of CCP members increases rapidly
Declining growth rates from 2013

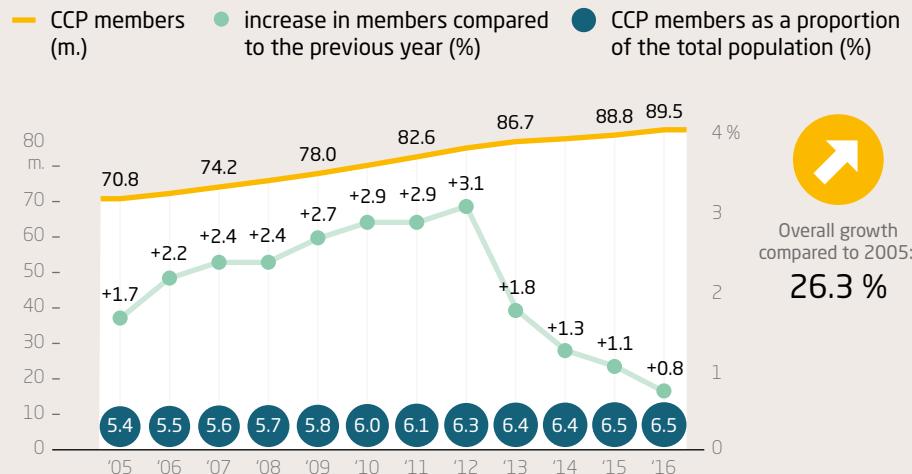


Figure 2: Recruitment of new members slowed down after 2013
Applications for membership and admittance of new members (2005-2016)



Source: Figure 1: Central Organization Department of the CCP and National Bureau of Statistics of China; Figure 2,3,4: Central Organization Department of the CCP

Figure 3: The party is aging
Share of different age groups in the CCP (2005, 2010, 2016)

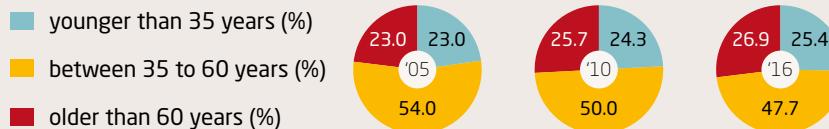
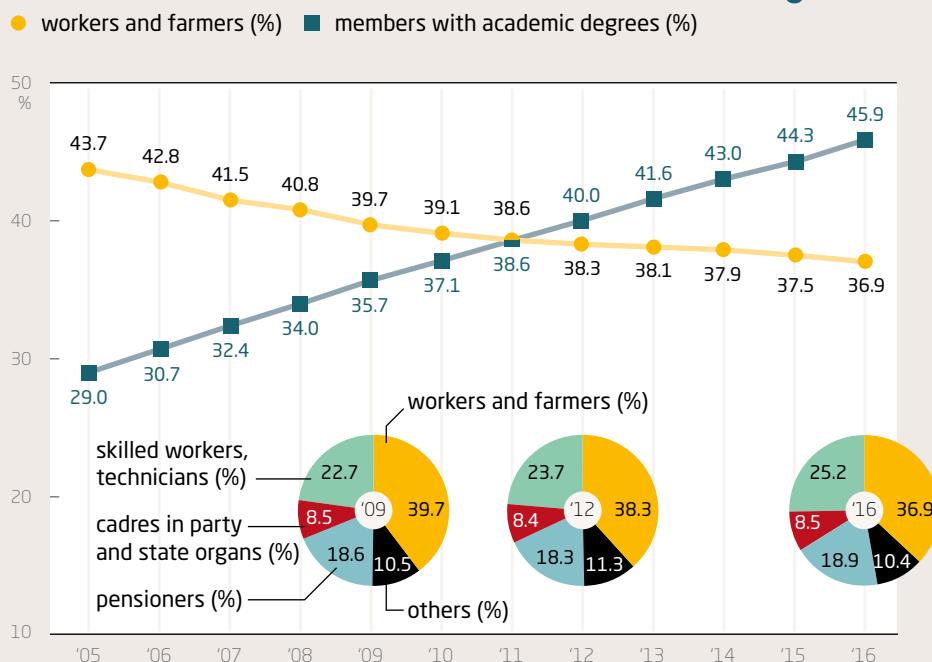


Figure 4: The CCP is becoming more elitist
Share of different professional groups



1. Introduction

In the upcoming fall, the 19th Party Congress will face critical decisions about who will move up into the top leadership circle of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) alongside General Secretary Xi Jinping. Analyses of leading personnel and power constellations in the party are undoubtedly important. However, to properly assess the prospective political development of China, we should also look at the CCP membership structure, which has changed considerably in the past decade. The number of CCP members increased strongly, the social composition of the party base changed, and the party continues to strengthen its presence in private businesses and the civil society.

Under these conditions, how effective are calls from the party leadership for organizational unity and solidarity among the party members? Can Xi Jinping reliably mobilize the party base for his political agenda? In an effort to answer these questions, this MERICS China Monitor looks at how the membership structure of the CCP has evolved over the years.

Membership structure began to change even before Xi Jinping became the General Secretary of the CCP in 2012. The party leadership desired this change: in times of profound societal shifts it wanted to include a wider range of interests in the party base. The recruitment of new members from different social strata was also aimed at increasing the acceptance of the party within society. However, not all changes to party membership met the expectations of the party's leaders. From their point of view, the rapid quantitative growth has brought about a deterioration of quality and discipline of the party members. Many new members joined mainly for career reasons, attended party meetings irregularly, and were indifferent to political and ideological guidelines of the leadership. Some even exploited administrative and economic networks to their own advantage.

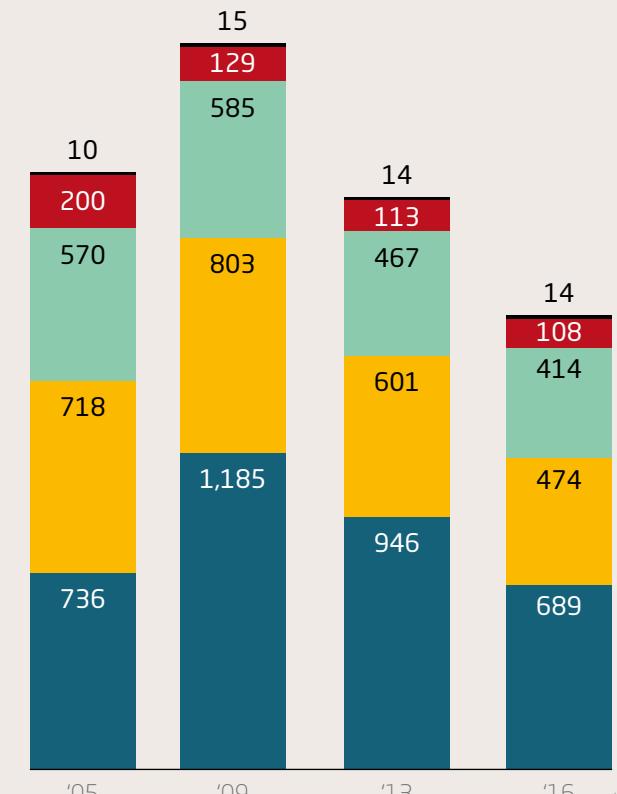
When Xi Jinping took office in 2012, the party was shaken by a series of scandals and intrigues. Therefore, the strengthening of the discipline among party members and the

rejuvenation of the party organization have become Xi's main concerns. He initiated various measures to reinforce the party's role as an elitist and disciplined organization with a leading position in politics, society and the economy. He also wanted to regain the trust of the broad population. Directly after Xi took office, the party drastically limited the influx of new members. Xi attempted to correct undesirable development by tightening control mechanisms party members had to register again and undergo training in Marxist doctrine. Political and ideological controls in higher education were intensified. Leading cadres of the party were subjected to harsh disciplinary measures.

Figure 5: Recruitment from different backgrounds speeds up change in membership structure

New members according to profession (in thousands)

- "new social strata"
- cadres in party and state organs
- employees, skilled workers and technicians
- workers and farmers
- students



Source: Central Organization Department of the CCP

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2. Structural transformation of the CCP membership

How has the membership of the CCP developed in the past decades? The statistics published annually by the Central Organization Department of the CCP reveals some significant shifts.

2.1 DOUBLING OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP WITHIN THREE DECADES

From 1985 to 2016, CCP membership has doubled to nearly 90 million, which corresponds to 6.5 percent of the population (see Fig. 1). The number of members rose by 26 percent from 2005 to 2016 alone. In terms of membership, the CCP is by far the largest communist party of all time. Currently, it is the second-largest party in the world, after the Bharatiya Janata Party in India (which claims to have more than 100 million members). An average of 20 million people per year apply for membership to the CCP. Only about one candidate in eleven is accepted.

INFOBOX: THE PATH TO CCP MEMBERSHIP¹

There are many reasons and incentives to become a member of the Chinese Communist Party. Political and ideological belief in objectives, statutes and the leadership of the CCP are essential for many. For others, the potential for access and advancement makes a membership attractive – particularly in government-related areas (public administration, state-owned enterprises, banks, etc.).

Anyone who wants to be a party member, however, needs a great deal of patience. Admission takes two to three years on average and follows a five-step process. Each candidate (minimum age: 18 years) must present an impeccable CV and provide evidence that he or she is part of the "vanguard" (先进分子) of Chinese society. In addition, positive references from one's social environment are essential. The organization departments of the party in charge of member recruitment inquire about the character and conduct of the candidates among their circle of friends and acquaintances. The party expects its members to live a model life in terms of the party rules.

The five-step procedure in detail:

1) Written application: First, the candidates place a request with the local party cell. In their application, they have to explain their interest and motivation in joining the CCP. Within one month, the responsible party cell sends a contact person to the candidate to outline the rest of the process.

2) Acceptance as a candidate: As soon as the party cell accepts the application, the candidate must provide a detailed curriculum vitae as well as information on their family, their social connections and the political background of their parents. At the same time, the party cell appoints two party members to act as mentors.

3) One-year preparation period: The two mentors supervise the candidate during the preparation period. At the same time, the candidate must, at a minimum, complete a three-day course (e.g. at the party school). Furthermore, they must present a reflective report (思想汇报) on Marxism-Leninism, the guidelines of the CCP, as well as current political developments every three months.

2.2 THE CCP IS BECOMING MORE ELITIST

Traditionally, the CCP was a union of workers and farmers, much like any communist party. The massive growth in members has changed the structure of the party.

The share of the traditional core clientele has dropped steadily – from 43.2 to 37 percent between 2005 and 2016 alone. At the same time, the proportion of party members with a university degree rose from 16.9 to 45.9 percent. Compared to the year 2000 (21.1 percent), the proportion of university graduates doubled by 2016. In 2012, it exceeded that of blue-collar workers and farmers (40 vs. 38.3 percent) for the first time. It should be noted however, that in the population

Meanwhile, the responsible party cell verifies the candidate's information in the curriculum vitae as well as their political commitment and beliefs. To do this, the party interviews at least eight colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances of the candidate.

4) Official acceptance process: It is only after the candidate has passed this review that they can officially apply for party membership (入党志愿书). To do so, they must fill out a form and name two guarantors (入党介绍人) (usually the two mentors). A superior party organization reviews the application in three to six months and conducts an interview with the candidate. If the organization accepts the admission, the candidate is registered, sworn in, and begins a trial membership. Members have to pay between 0.5 and 2 percent of their net income annually as a membership fee.

5) One-year trial membership: If there is no breach of party discipline or law, official membership is granted after one year.

as a whole the proportion of farmers has also dropped steadily as a result of urbanization and industrialization.

2.3 THE PARTY IS AGING

The age structure of CCP members has also changed. While the proportion of members under 35 years of age increased slightly, from 23 to 25.4 percent between 2005 and 2016, the proportion of members over 60 years of age went up from 23 to 26.9 percent (see Fig. 3). The changes in the middle age group between 35 and 60 are even more significant: this cohort was long considered the core group of the party. It is still the largest, however, its share sank from 54 to 47.7 percent between 2005 and 2016 (i.e. from 38.2 million to 42.6 million members).

The rise in numbers of younger members can be explained by the recruitment strategy of the CCP, which is aimed at rejuvenation; the increase in members over 60 has its roots in the demographic development. In comparison to the general demographic change in China, the proportion of party members over 60 is expected to continue to increase faster than that of young members below 35.²

2.4 INFLUX OF "NEW SOCIAL STRATA" STAGNATES

The CCP's penetration of the new social strata – private entrepreneurs, self-employed in the (knowledge-based) service sector, employed professionals – has progressed slowly since 2005. The influx of this heterogeneous group is vanishingly small and is increasing only slightly.³ In 2005, it amounted to 11,000 (of 2.4 million new party members). In 2016, that value was 14,000 (of 1.91 million new members) (see Fig. 5 and detailed section 4.2).

2.5 SLOWLY INCREASING PROPORTION OF WOMEN

Since 2005, the proportion of women in the CCP has risen slightly, from 19.2 to 25.7 percent in 2016. However, the appeal of the party for women appears to remain low in the face of poor potential for promotion – or the party is not making enough effort to recruit them (see Section 5 for details).

3. Risks of structural change for the CCP

In internal discussions, the party increasingly rejects the growing diversity of the base. The development is no longer considered as a positive pluralization. Rather, it is viewed as threatening the monopoly position of Marxist ideology and increasing the social rift within the party.⁴

3.1 INFLUX OF YOUNG UNIVERSITY GRADUATES CHALLENGES THE MONOPOLY OF MARXISM

Since 1981, the party has pursued the recruitment of young, educated elites – students and academics – in an effort to rejuvenate and professionalize the party membership. The intention was to gradually replace older and less educated party members (often revolutionary veterans) with younger members who can cope with the complex economic reforms. Doubts on this policy, however, are being raised in party discussions after a decades-long, massive influx of young academics. The reason for this is that it has proved to be difficult to educate young party members ideologically. To some of them, Marxist ideology has lost its monopoly character. Highly educated academics feel attracted to the ideas of free market economy, democracy, and rule of law. They tend to question the "official ideology."⁵ Hence, some of China's party veterans perceive the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union (CPSU) as a warning sign of what can happen to a party when more and more young students and academics are included as members.⁶

3.2 THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF CORE MEMBERS WEAKENS THE IDENTITY OF THE PARTY

The continuous decline in the number of workers and farmers in the party has several causes. In the course of the privatization of state-owned enterprises, millions of people lost not only their jobs, but often their connection to a party organization as well. The newly formed private sector employs mainly farmers and migrant workers, who are mobile, but no longer have a proper sense of home.

For a long time, Chinese party theorists have feared a weakening of the party's identity. The CCP always considered itself as the "vanguard of the working class" (party constitution). China's constitution defines the People's Republic as "a socialist state, led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and farmers." Hence, the progressive disappearance of the traditional working class is not compatible with the propagandized self-understanding of the CCP.

For some years now, a split in the party base between so-called CCP nostalgics (毛粉) and CCP pluralists (自由派) can be observed. These two camps are mainly distinguished by their attitude towards and judgement of Mao Zedong. The nostalgics, usually those who lost out in the economic reforms,⁷ wish for a comeback of the Mao era. The pluralists, on the other hand, favor a party that does not insist on its power monopoly. The leadership tries to push back both camps because it fears that both may weaken the party by the extreme views they stand for. Websites of these groups were often censored and public events restricted. The nostalgic camp split into two factions in 2012: the moderate supporters of the pro-Mao camp distanced themselves from the party leadership. They hope to set up a "new political force,"⁸ whereas the other sub-group wants to continue to "clean up

the party," "fight American imperialism," and stay on the "path of socialism."⁹

The party leadership is now faced with the dilemma that it cannot support either group – neither the CCP nostalgics (because that would be interpreted as a dissociation from the reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping), nor the CCP pluralists. As long as the two camps do not conspire against the party leadership with its 650,000 leading cadres as the backbone of the political system, the split poses no danger. It only weakens the loyalty of the base against the party leadership. In the long term, however, it threatens the stability of the party and the system.

In terms of ideology, the CCP has tried to counteract by replacing the classical Marxist class theory with the concept of the "Three Represents" and by opening up to "progressive forces" of society between 2002 and 2012 – even to its former class enemy, private enterprise.¹⁰ However, the fact that the majority of these sought-after groups remains distant from the party has caused the leadership to reconsider (see Section 4). In his speech on the 95th anniversary of the party in 2016, Xi stressed he wanted to lead the CCP back to its origins as a Marxist-Leninist party and build on the founding spirit of the CCP ("不忘初心, 继续前进").¹¹ At the same time, the CCP broadcast a commercial titled "Who Am I"¹² on the party-state station CCTV. The ad presented simple party members – like an ambitious student, a hard-working maid, a selfless doctor and a dutiful village chief – but not the political and economic elites of the party.

3.3 INCREASING SOCIAL SPREAD ESCALATES THE SENSE OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

One concern that comes up repeatedly in internal party debates is the growing gap between old and new party members, which goes back to differences in the level of education (well qualified/university degree vs. low qualified/middle school level), employment (knowledge-based vs. labor-based) and

the place of employment (city vs. countryside). Large income differences compared to the academically and professionally trained party members have created a feeling of inequality among the long-time, often less educated members.¹³

The unequal distribution of wealth has also exacerbated the gap between party members. During the reform era, some communist party members like Wang Jianlin (founder of the Wanda Group), Ren Zhenfei (founder of Huawei) and Ren Zhiqiang (real estate tycoon) have accumulated wealth in the hundreds of millions, even billions of Chinese Yuan, while more than nine million workers in state enterprises lost their jobs as a result of privatization.¹⁴ This extreme inequality and the associated redistribution of political resources within the poses at least two hazards from the point of view of Chinese party researchers: First, the race for power and resources among leading members becomes harder. Second, the long-serving members from the traditional core groups feel marginalized.

To illustrate the problem, the Chinese political scientists Zhu Yuwei and Xiang Zeng divided the party members into five strata:¹⁵

- **Leadership:** leading cadres in the party and government organizations of all levels. They define the rules.
- **Business elite:** managers in state-owned enterprises and owners of private firms that have access to economic resources and good relations with the ruling elite. They have great influence.
- **Educational elites:** leading intellectuals, professors, opinion leaders, etc. They have influence on policy and the party – on the condition that the two above-mentioned strata accept their advice.
- **So-called "bystanders":** employees, skilled workers and teachers. Their influence is limited to voting/consenting to the party line.

- **Lower class:** impoverished farmers, former employees of state-owned enterprises, migrant workers and others who have no say.

If we compare member statistics from 2016 with this strata model, the fifth layer makes up 66.2 percent and the fourth layer 25.2 percent of the party.¹⁶ This means that more than 90 percent of the party members have no significant political influence.

According to Zhu Yuwei and Xiang Zeng, the increasing centralization of political power and economic resources has favored the formation of cliques in the first and second strata of the party. Their goal is to expand and secure personal privileges. This could escalate the struggle for power and resources. There is concrete evidence of patronage-networks and intra-party clique formation in the Xi era. For example, proceedings were initiated against the former member of the Politburo's Standing Committee, Zhou Yongkang, patron of the state-owned oil industry, as a part of Xi's anti-corruption campaign. Another example of the factional clique formation is the former head of the Central Committee, Ling Jihua. Evidently, he established a "regular association of executives from central and regional party and business circles, who met regularly to negotiate on the award of political offices and lucrative economic activities."¹⁷

From the perspective of the two researchers, the lowest two strata feel pushed to the margins. Their trust in the highest levels of party leadership is shaken and their loyalty to the party leadership has weakened. This also becomes evident in the increasing passivity of a lot of party members and in their refusal to engage in the party. After taking office, Xi Jinping resorted to methods from the Mao era to counteract this problem. This includes the so-called "mass line" (群众路线). Party members were asked not only to work as a silent model vis-à-vis the "masses," but to represent the positions of the party proactively and to collect, to combine and articulate the interests of the "masses."

4. A new strategy against the risks of structural change

4.1 THE NEW RECRUITMENT STRATEGY SINCE 2012

In 2016, some 20 million people applied for membership in the CCP. In the same year, 1.91 million new party member books were issued. It is interesting that the number of newly registered party members increased every year between 2005 and 2012, but has decreased since 2013 (see Fig. 2).

The reason clearly lies in the realignment of recruitment policy since Xi Jinping took office. Even before Xi came to power in 2012, the party leadership had recognized the steady increase in new members (which reached the proud mark of three million per year in 2011) as a potential risk. At that time, Xi was responsible for the expansion of the party in the Politburo and served as President of the Central Party School. It is likely that slowing down the recruitment of new party members was always a part of his agenda, which is focused on re-organizing and consolidating the party.

Party leadership curbed the influx of new members in an effort to reinforce the CCP's function as an elite, disciplined leadership organization in politics, society and the economy. In the party document "Position on Strengthening Recruitment and the Management of Party Members in the New Situation" (关于加强新形势下发展党员和党员管理工作的意见) published in early 2013,¹⁸ the Central Organization Department established for the first time an annual fixed growth rate of 1.5 percent until 2022. In 2016, the rate was even lower at 0.8 percent, which shows that membership growth is being restricted even more than required. There were 1.3 million fewer members accepted than in 2012 (3.23 million).

The above-mentioned party document is the revised version of a document from 2004, which addressed the control of growth of party membership but did not make any concrete recommendations. The documents also differ in their view of recruiting "representatives of new social strata." In 2004, the

party dedicated a section to that subject, but there was no mention of it in 2013. Evidently, the Organization Department gave up on its "proactive" recruitment course.

A second document attests to this change of direction. In June 2014, the party revised the "CCP Working Regulations for the Admission of Party Members" (中国共产党发展党员工作细则). Since then, the focus has included "purity" as a political criterion, in addition to the "vanguard" condition. Applicants must believe in Marxism and Socialism with Chinese characteristics and "voluntarily practice the Socialist value system."¹⁹

4.2 THE DILEMMA OF THE CCP IN DEALING WITH THE „NEW SOCIAL STRATA“

The CCP has made a claim to be represented in the new social strata: at the 16th Party Congress in 2002, the party opened up to private entrepreneurs²⁰ and began the rapid expansion of party organizations into the so-called "non-governmental

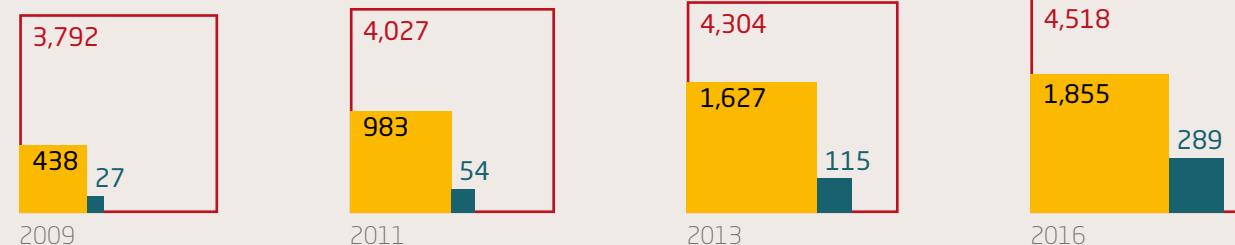
sector."²¹ On the basis of the available figures, it seems clear that the CCP has considerably expanded its influence in these areas. Between 2006 and 2016 alone, it increased the number of party organizations in the private sector and foreign companies nine-fold, to 1.8 million (see Fig. 6).

However, when you compare these numbers with the increase in members from the "new social strata," there is evidence of an extremely uneven development. The party started to build up organizational units in the non-governmental sector relatively early, but achieved only weak penetration in this area (see Fig. 5). The main reason for this lies in the fact that the newly founded party organizations consist mainly of old members, who were already in the party before their job transition to the private sector.

There are other reasons why the recruitment of party members from new social strata has been slow: according to internal party polls in Guangdong Province, representatives of the "new social strata" generally have an above-average income, and high levels of education. As a result, they have a

Figure 6: The CCP has massively expanded its presence in the non-governmental sector
Distribution of party organizations (2009-2016)

- party organizations in total (in thousands)
- private companies with party organizations (in thousands)
- social groups* with party organizations (in thousands)



Source: Central Organization Department of the CCP *Associations, non-profits, foundations and unions

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greater awareness of their individual rights and place greater emphasis on social justice. They are professionally mobile and less tied to a fixed location. They feel very connected to their homeland – but not necessarily to the CCP.²² They are very willing to cooperate politically, but they are drawn more to the People's Congress or the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (which is accessible to non-CCP members) than to the party.²³

Many long-time party members are also skeptical about the acceptance of new elites as they see large social differences as dangerous to the CCP. Evidently, the elites from the private sector do not trust the CCP, either. In a survey of grass-roots organizations of the party in Shanghai, more than two-thirds described their relationship with entrepreneurs as "tense." Their attempts to reach out to entrepreneurs often encountered refusal or rejection.²⁴

The party leadership is aware of the dilemma, as is made clear by the change in the recruitment rate. The document on recruitment work from 2013 does not mention "new social strata" anymore. Instead, the United Front Work Department of the CCP is to integrate these new strata more actively.²⁵ They set up an office for "new social strata" in July of 2016 that is responsible for the relationship between the CCP and private companies.²⁶ The party hopes to better manage the relatively inconsistent group and better integrate it into the existing structure. Even if the party has so far not officially announced that it has given up recruitment of the new strata, the shift in priorities is already visible. The party is not paying as much attention to the topic like it did up until 2012, during the reign of President and General Secretary Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao.

5. More women in the party – but no chance to advance

For women, the appeal of the party appears to remain low in the face of poor promotion prospects, or the party is not making enough effort to recruit them. Only a quarter of party members were women in 2016. This is despite the fact that the CCP has had its eye on increasing the number of women since 1995. Back then, the UN World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, and China established gender equality as state policy. A document from the Central Organization Department in 2001 made this step concrete.²⁷ It prescribed increasing the number of women among new party members by one to two percent per year. At the same

Figure 7: Chances for promotion are slim for women

Gender distribution in top positions in party and state bodies (July 2017)

女人 women 男人 men

Leading CCP bodies

Politburo Standing Committee 0 7

Politburo 2 23

Secretaries of provincial party committees 0 31

Standing members of provincial party committees 29 290

Source: Merics research * The inner cabinet is made up of the ten highest State Council officials (Premier, four Vice-Premiers, five State Councilors) **includes vice-ministers

Government authorities

State Council (inner cabinet)* 1 9

Ministry level officials (outer cabinet)** 16 161

Provincial-level governors 2 29

Deputy governors 14 187



time, the document specified a target of at least one woman in each governing body of party committees, people's congresses and the political consultative conferences, as well as one woman in the county, city and provincial levels of government. Only half of the governing bodies in the central government must meet this requirement.

When looking at the distribution of top posts, it becomes clear that career opportunities for women in the party and state are still poor. The ratio of men to women there is nine or ten to one at best. Take the party committees in the provinces, for example, where there are 29 women and 290 men (see Fig. 7). There are two women (Liu Yandong and Sun Chunlan) and 23 men in the Politburo. There has never been a woman in the Standing Committee of the Politburo. The same is true for the 31 party secretaries of the provinces. The government positions are no different. At the management level of the provincial governments, there are 14 women and 187 men. Two women have made it to the position of provincial governor: Xian Hui in Ningxia and Bu Xiaolin in Inner Mongolia (as of 2017). In the rank of minister, there are 16 women (among 161 men); one woman sits in the inner cabinet of the State Council. The proportion of women in the Central Committee of the Party Congress actually went down from 10 to 8.8 percent compared to the Party Congress.

Since 2012, the All-China Women's Federation has called for a gender quota instead of specifying a concrete number of women for the governing bodies of the party and state.²⁸ Because, in practice, the requirement of at least one woman was treated mostly as an upper limit. Also, there are no sanctions if even this minimum requirement is not met.

So far, however, the demands of the Women's Federation have fallen on deaf ears. Cheng Li, analyst at the US-based research institute Brookings predicts that little will change at the upcoming 19th Party Congress.²⁹ There were too few women available on the party's middle management level who could actually qualify to be elected into one of the governing bodies in the CCP.

6. What do the changes mean for the party leadership?

From the point of view of the current party leadership, the changes to the membership structure of the CCP documented in this study have led to diverse signs of organizational decay. For this reason, the party has tried to shape the membership based on its own specifications, curb the growth in members and ensure improved quality and stricter discipline within the party organization.

Measures to discipline the party organization under Xi Jinping – from the active fight against corruption, to ritual self-criticism, to public declarations of loyalty – have at least temporarily stabilized the party and restored an image of unity.

The disciplinary measures will not be sufficient to cover the pluralization of the grassroots as well as the widening gap between the party base and its leadership. When it comes to important intra-party decisions, Xi Jinping and his associates rely on unilateral strengthening of the party hierarchy, not on increasing participation of the party base. This tension could contribute to intra-party conflicts in the context of domestic political and economic crises.

1 | 中国共产党发展党员工作细则 (Work Provision on the Membership Recruitment of the CCP), published on June 11, 2014, available under <http://renshi.people.com.cn/n/2014/0611/c139617-25131619.html>. Accessed: 6/21/2017.

2 | The rejuvenation (年轻化) of party and government officials (along with academization and professionalization) became priorities as early as 1981 at the 6th Plenary Session Assembly at the 10th Party Congress. This was due to the initiative of Deng Xiaoping. See Wang Lei: Deng Xiaoping's Contribution to the Four Modernizations of the Cadre (王雷: 邓小平对干部“四化”方针的贡献与实践) published on 02/26/2016, accessible at http://www.cssn.cn/ddzg/ddzg_ldjs/rwyj/201602/t20160226_2884695.shtml. Accessed: 5/15/2017.

3 | The CCP defines four groups: leading employees in the private sector and foreign companies, leading employees in social organizations, self-employed in the service sector, and employed professionals (including employees of new media).

4 | Liu Xiaoqi and Cheng Jianjun: Observations and Thoughts on the Size of the Party (关于党员队伍规模的考察与反思), in: Wang Changjiang (ed.): Annual Report on the Work of Party Building 2015 (2015年执政党建设研究年度报告), Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2015, pp. 125-138; Hu Xiaojun: Problems of the Size of the CCP: Expansion and Insubstantiality (中国共产党员规模问题：“膨胀”与“虚化”), in: Wang Changjiang (ed.): pp. 131, -137.

5 | Peng Sheng: Problems of the Structural Change of the CCP and Countermeasures (党员结构变化带来的问题及对策), in: People Forum (人民论坛), Sep. 2012, No. 377, p. 11.

6 | Cui Guitian: Optimization of the Membership Structure and Working Plan for the Improvement of the Quality of Members (党员结构优化与质量建设的路径选择), in: People Forum (人民论坛), Sep. 2012, No. 377, p. 6.

7 | According to various sources, the followers of the pro-Mao camp are male party members over 50 years of age who have ended up impoverished in the course of economic reforms (including laid-off workers from State-owned enterprises, former red guards, as well as some retired party cadres and intellectual or faithful followers of Mao's thoughts).

8 | The new group is meant to combine and represent the interests of workers, farmers, migrant workers, students, employees, etc., according to a prominent representative of the pro-Mao camp, see <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/72932.html>. Accessed: June 20, 2017.

9 | <http://redchinacn.net/portal.php?mod=view&aid=17810&page=2>. Accessed: 6/20/2017.

10 | Sebastian Heilmann: China's Political System, Rowman&Littlefield, 2017, p. 52.

11 | See Xi Jinping's speech from July 1, 2016 at the 95th anniversary of the Party, available at http://news.ifeng.com/a/20160701/49277391_0.shtml. Accessed: 5/19/2017.

12 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8TMJ_wfTSU. Accessed: 5/19/2017.

- 13 | Zhu Yuwei and Xiang Zeng: Effects of the Internal Spread on Intra-party Democracy (党员阶层分化对党内民主产生的影响), in: Theoretical Research (理论研究), 2007, No. 5, p. 2021; Qiu Wei: Debates on social spread in the last decade within the CCP (近十年来执政党在社会阶层分化问题上面对的若干争论), in: Journal of Zhejiang Provincial Party School (浙江省党委党校学报), 2008, No. 2, pp. 43-49.
- 14 | The number of laid-off employees of former State-owned enterprises refers to the period from 1998 to 2008, see Lea Shih, Chinas Industriepolitik von 1978 bis 2013 [China's Industrial Policy from 1978 to 2013], Springer VS Verlag, 2015, p. 194.
- 15 | Zhu Yuwei and Xiang Zeng: Effects of the Internal Spread on Intra-party Democracy (党员阶层分化对党内民主产生的影响), in: Theoretical Research (理论研究), 2007, No. 5, p. 20.
- 16 | The number of the fifth stratum is composed of the number of "blue-collar workers and farmers," "retired" and "other professionals" in 2016; the number of fourth stratum stems from the number of "employees, skilled workers and technicians" in 2016.
- 17 | Sebastian Heilmann: China's Political System, Rowman&Littlefield, 2017, p. 185f.
- 18 | http://fjdf.fjsen.com/2017-01/03/content_18930055.htm. Accessed: 5/19/2017.
- 19 | See Xi Jinping on this: "Strong Implementation of All Measures to Preserve the Purity of the Party" (扎实做好保持党的纯洁性各项工作), appeared on 03/16/2012 in "Qiushi." Available at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64094/17405766.html>. Accessed: 5/19/2017.
- 20 | Sebastian Heilmann (ed.), China's Political System, Rowman&Littlefield, 2017, p. 74.
- 21 | This sector has come about since the introduction of the market economy outside of the traditional dominant State sector. These include two "new organization types" ("两新组织"): (1) new economic organizations: namely private companies, enterprises with foreign investments, enterprises with investment from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan; (2) new social organizations: public associations, non-profit organizations and foundations, etc. These new organizations differ from the traditional ones through their financial independence from the State and self-determined personnel recruitment. For the official definition of the CCP, see <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/134999/135000/8104940.html>. Accessed: 5/15/2017.
- 22 | Research Group of the Guangdong United Front Work Department of CCP, Study on Political and Ideological Work vis-à-vis the New Social Organizations (新社会组织思想政治工作初探), in: Journal of Guangdong Institute of Socialism (广东省社会主义学院学报), 2001, No. 7, p. 41.
- 23 | The Profile of the New Social Strata is Becoming Clearer (新社会阶层身影日渐清晰), appeared on June 11, 2007, accessible under <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64387/5845528.html>. Accessed: 5/15/2017.
- 24 | Liu Qiang: Study of Party Building in New Social Organizations (新社会组织党建研究), zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 2015, p. 61.
- 25 | The United Front Work Department of the CCP is responsible for contact with non-communist forces generally, including work with "democratic parties," ethnic minorities, religious groups and with foreign Chinese. However, this department does not approach the political weight of the other central departments of the CCP. See Sebastian Heilmann: China's Political System, Rowman&Littlefield, 2017, p. 71.
- 26 | The researching of groups and maintenance of contact with key people and networks is among the key tasks of the office. The creation of this office underlines the great deal of attention the CCP pays to opinion leaders in new media and on social networks. See <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/1985643/chinas-communist-party-reaches-out-new-social-class>. Accessed: 5/15/2017.
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- 28 | The Proportion of Female Leaders in Our Country is Very Low at the Top and at the Base (我国女官员格局现状: 在最高层和基层比例很低), appeared on 03/08/12 in Xin Jing Bao, available at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/sd/2012-0308/024424077171.shtml>. Accessed: 5/15/2017.
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YOUR CONTACT FOR THIS ISSUE OF CHINA MONITOR

Dr. Lea Shih
lea.shih@merics.de

EDITOR

Claudia Wessling
claudia.wessling@merics.de

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Klosterstraße 64
10179 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 3440 999 0
Mail: kommunikation@merics.de
www.merics.org

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Kathrin Hildebrandt
hildebranding.com

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