

**CHINA'S YOUNG GENERATION:
A SHAPING FORCE IN SOCIETY**

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Executive Summary

1. In 2014, Chinese youths born in the years of reform enter their 20s and 30s. A new generation whose life experience is closely linked to the Chinese economic reform is in its prime.
2. The 230 million youth born in the 1980s and the 199 million born in the 1990s who are not the major groups in demographic terms will be in their prime and play a key role in the coming decades of China's development.
3. Based on educational attainment, the new generation is often categorised into young migrant workers and college graduates. Except for youths from rich families, these two groups are in fact quite similar in terms of economic status and social values.
4. The young generation in China today is characterised by its individual-based and individual-oriented values and outlook.
5. This individualisation is brought about first and foremost by marketisation. Thanks to structural changes in the economy, the young generation no longer depends on families, localities and work units for its livelihood.
6. The monetisation of society is another major factor behind a freer and more individualised way of life for the young.
7. The Internet also contributes to individualisation of society as it creates individualised virtual spaces for young netizens.
8. The decline of a collectivist society is evident in contemporary youth language, as old collectivist terms have been replaced by new ones with a distinctive individualistic orientation.

9. Though the new generation could be considered the most blessed in recent Chinese history, it is also limited by other unprecedented economic and social constraints.
10. As the young generation will become an important shaping force in China's future, related decisive reforms are needed. Much is thus dependent on the success of the current reforms undertaken by Xi Jinping.