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A Study of the Civic Attributes of the Newly Emerged Middle-Income Stratum in China
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A new middle class is emerging in China. Scholars consider this newly emerged class represents China's economic and academic elite and will emerge as a "catalyst for major political change." On the other hand, as the beneficiaries of the market economy, they are considered to be moderately conservative in making political changes since they have stable income and enjoy high-quality urban living. However, both assumptions are not supported by empirical data. Therefore, this proposed research will focus on what civic attributes the emerging middle class has and analyze democratic tendencies of the middle class – whether the middle class is interested in personal goods, or concerned about the public good and commonwealth. This research grant will be used to conduct interviews and surveys in three major cities of China in summer 2005. Data will be analyzed and used for research articles and book chapters. The study will also provide implications of policy-making regarding U.S. – China relations since building civil society in China has been at the core of the U.S.-China policies in three White House administrations.