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MAKING SENSE OF VILLAGE POLITICS IN CHINA: INSTITUTIONS, PARTICIPATION, AND GOVERNANCE

by

XINSONG WANG

Under the Direction of Kim D. Reimann

ABSTRACT

How do democratic institutions function in authoritarian states? This study answers this question by examining the political institutions in rural China – democratic elections of villagers committees and village oversight agencies. Using a nationwide survey on China's villager self-governance conducted in 2005 and in depth case data collected in 2007 and 2008, this study finds that rural political institutions have significantly changed the political processes in China's countryside. The quality of village elections and the functioning of oversight agencies such as villager representative assemblies and financial supervision teams all have been crucial to affect the level of electoral participation and the quality of rural governance. The study shows that Chinese peasants are more active to vote as the village election methods feature more

competitiveness and transparency. Moreover, higher quality of village elections and well-maintained village oversight structures have improved the quality of rural governance by holding village cadres more accountable to peasants' demands, as demonstrated in the higher level of peasant satisfaction with the performance of villagers committees in public services provision. The study also reveals that the effect of rural political institutions is a function of village economic conditions. The effect of village elections and oversight agencies in holding cadres accountable is significantly higher in villages that own substantial collective resources than in the ones that do not.

This study challenges the traditional view in comparative politics that democratic institutions are established in authoritarian states for cosmetic purposes. It shows that, under economic pressure, political institutions matter in making democracy work in authoritarian regimes by encouraging political participation and generating better governance. It also suggests the necessity for the Chinese government to reinforce its efforts of standardizing village election rules and regulations and enforcing the establishment and maintenance of village oversight institutions.

INDEX WORDS: Village elections, Village oversight agencies, Villager self-governance, Grassroots democracy, Political institutions, Political participation, Better governance, China

MAKING SENSE OF VILLAGE POLITICS IN CHINA: INSTITUTIONS, PARTICIPATION, AND GOVERNANCE

by

XINSONG WANG

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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2008

MAKING SENSE OF VILLAGE POLITICS IN CHINA: INSTITUTIONS, PARTICIPATION, AND GOVERNANCE

by

XINSONG WANG

Major Professor: Kim D. Reimann

Committee: Jennifer L. McCoy
Charles R. Hankla
Tianjian Shi

Electronic Version Approved

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
August 2008

Dedicated to my father, Wang Li, and to my mother, Wang Beihui,

for their unreserved support and endless love

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Xinsong Wang,
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DFMT	Democratic Financial Management Team
MCA	Ministry of Civil Affairs
NPC	National People's Congress
PRC	People's Republic of China
VA	Villagers Assembly
VATST	Village Affairs Transparency Supervision Team
VC	Villagers Committee
VPB	Village Party Branch
VRA	Villager Representatives Assembly
VSG	Villagers Small Group

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Studies of Western democracies have identified institutions as significant factors in maintaining the quality of democracy. Among such factors are, for example, an effective constitution that respects fundamental liberties and limits the power of government, a functional civil society that protects civilian rights of freedom and monitors state behavior, a set of horizontal and vertical institutions that ensures governing accountability, and an electoral system that allows for free participation by citizens and fair competitions among different political parties.[1] While traditional studies have focused on the various types of political institutions in democratic states, a growing literature has examined the function of democratic institutions in non democratic societies. Some have argued that autocratic governments establish democratic institutions such as elections, legislature, and judiciary, for cosmetic purposes. By having national elections, for instance, autocratic governance seems more legitimate to both domestic and international audiences[2]. Some have found that political institutions indeed can enhance governing durability under dictatorships because an overwhelming victory in national elections by the ruling parties may deter the opposition forces from challenging the incumbent rules[3]. Some have shown that, although limited elections in authoritarian states have not changed the states' authoritarian nature, they have changed the political dynamics in these states and even led to actual democratic transition in some cases[4]. Others argue that contextual factors such as political culture need to be considered because democracy, primarily a Western product, may never be compatible with local cultures in other societies[5]. So far, however, very few studies

have paid attention to whether democratic institutions in non-democratic societies can perform the same functions as they do in democratic societies. For example, can democratic elections increase the level of political participation in authoritarian states? Can elections and oversight mechanisms hold political officials in authoritarian states more accountable and responsive to public demand and urge them to deliver better public service?

While China continues to reject political liberalization at the national level, it has instituted limited elections in rural villages where the majority of the Chinese population reside[6]. Since the 1980s, elections of villagers committees have become a major means of political participation for Chinese peasants. Although alternative political parties are prohibited by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and village elections in some regions bear the same deficiencies as limited elections in other authoritarian states, they have appeared to change rural politics in China by encouraging political participation and creating more responsible rural leaders. Along with these elections, the Chinese government also established other institutions in villages to check the power of villagers committees and monitor their activities. Gradually, a democratic model of governing – an elected executive branch with a check-and-balance mechanism – has emerged in rural China. A legitimate question to ask is whether these Western style institutional frameworks can function in the Chinese local setting where hierarchical order has been respected for thousands of years and whether these political institutions can generate certain political dynamics and create substantial changes in China's political future.

While not directly addressing the larger question of whether village elections will lead to democratization in China, this dissertation will examine the meanings of the rural electoral and oversight institutions in the changing political dynamics in China's countryside. The dissertation will answer two sets of important questions. First, what is the relationship between the quality of

village elections and the level of participation by Chinese peasants? Are peasants more active in participation if village elections are freer and fairer? Second, what are the impacts of village elections and oversight institutions on the quality of village governance? Can better elections make village cadres more responsive to villagers' demand? Can village oversight agencies such as villager representative assemblies hold village cadres more accountable? Can these democratic institutions enhance the public service provided byvillagers committees ? Answering these questions will help us better understand the functioning of political institutions in authoritarian states and the institutional perspective of good governance in rural China, and may also shed light on the prospects of political reforms in China.

This chapter will lay out some fundamental issues of this research project. First, it will introduce the background of village politics in China by answering the following questions. Under what circumstance were village elections introduced to rural China in the 1980s? What challenges have village elections gone through and how did village elections take root in China's countryside? What kind of oversight institutions were established in Chinese villages and why? What is the political dynamic in today's rural China? Second, I will identify and discuss the important questions that have been left unanswered in previous research of Chinese rural politics, and further introduce my research questions in this study. Finally, I will discuss the plan of the study and provide a brief outline of the other chapters.

Background: Village Democracy in China

Village elections were introduced by the central government to control rampant social chaos in rural China in the 1980s. In the late 1970s, the people's commune system collapsed and

was replaced by town/township governments. At the same time, the long-term pattern of collective agricultural production was substituted by the "household contract responsibility system". As each household was allocated a patch of farming land, villagers had higher motivation than before to work the fields in order to maximize their profits. At the same time, the state found itself losing monopoly of power since it controlled less collective property. Villagers no long relied on upper-level governments for resources and as a result became sensitive to unpopular policies from the above such as birth control and increased taxes and fees. As a result, relations between villagers and rural cadres became very tense in mid-1980s. The disintegration of political institutions in rural China and the deepening confrontation between villagers and township cadres caused constant social riots and worried the central government.[7]

The Politburo, the National People's Congress (NPC), and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) had intense discussion over the issue and, in 1987, came up with the solution of establishing villagers committees and allowing villagers to elect their villagers committee cadres. The idea behind such a decision was the expectation that villagers would be less likely to engage in protest and other contentious acts if they had more control in selecting village leaders and were able to punish corrupt leaders by voting them out of office. Moreover, it was expected that elected village cadres would have more legitimacy and would thus be more capable of implementing state policies among peasants, which constitute the majority of Chinese population.[8] In 1987, the Organic Law of Villagers committees of the People's Republic of China (hereafter the Organic Law) was passed by the National People's Congress (NPC) on a provisional basis. The 1987 Organic Law established the legal framework of the functions of villagers committees and general steps of their elections.

Composed of three to seven members, villagers committees are granted self-governing autonomy by the central government. They are not a level of state administration, but in reality they help the lowest level of state administration – township governments – to implement state and local policies such as birth control, taxation, and military recruitment, and carry out state and local political campaigns such as "Three Representatives", "Harmonious Society", and "Socialist New Countryside"[9]. They also handle all types of village affairs such as allocation of farming land, provision of public goods such as paved roads and bridges, and even resolution of family conflicts.[10] Since villagers committees deal with matters pertinent to everyday life of peasants, the selection of villagers committee members is very important for peasants to protect their interests. Granted by the Organic Law, about 600 million peasants can cast ballots every three years to elect cadres in China's approximately 614,000 villages[11].

Village elections started at different time in different provinces. According to the statistics of the MCA of China[12], which supervises the village-level self-government, the first province that held province-wide village elections was Fujian in 1982. By 2006, nine rounds of elections had been held in the province. The latest province was Yunnan, which started in 2001, and only three rounds of elections had been held by 2007. According to survey data used for this study – a survey conducted by the China Academy of Social Sciences in 2005[13], about 98% of villages in China had conducted at least one election by the year 2005.

The development of village elections has experienced a number of obstacles and problems due to local government resistance especially in the first ten years after it was instituted by the Organic Law in 1987. First, township governments tried to foil village elections since they were not willing to relinquish their power of selecting village cadres and more importantly, since they were afraid that cadres elected by peasants may not follow the instructions of

township officials, who relied on village leaders to carry out and enforce state policies.[14] Second, Village Party Branches (VPB) resisted village elections since they were reluctant to share power with democratically elected villagers committees while they themselves were usually appointed by township party committees.[15]

Due to these major obstacles, village elections have taken a sinuous road since the very beginning. In some circumstances, village elections were simply not held by local (township or county) governments, who still preferred the traditional method of handpicking village cadres. In others, since there is no national law on village elections, the village electoral rules are at local governments' discretion and are often manipulated by township governments and VPBs. For example, sometimes election commissions were occupied by incumbent village leaders, candidates were designated by township governments or VPBs, voters were forced to fill in ballots in public, and election results were not announced on the spot.[16] Even worse, the elected villagers committees were often denied real power by party branch committees who maintained control of official seals and ledger books[17] or were dismissed by local governments[18].

However, ineffectiveness of village elections in their earlier development stage did not thwart the increasing interest of villagers in the elections, and peasants have gradually realized the potential power of their ballots and sometimes resorted to class action to higher authorities – counties, provinces, and even the central government – so as to punish election fraud or to remove corrupt village leaders and elect their favorite ones. There were cases in which villagers held booklets of the Organic Law and provincial electoral regulations to argue with township and village cadres and to demand elections to be held in free and fair methods according to the election regulations.[19] Irregular elections may result in non-voting by peasants.

After about ten years following the passage of 1987 Organic Law, village elections gradually took root in rural China and came to be highly regarded by the central government as an effective way to maintain rural stability and ensure implementation of state policies. In view of the success of village elections and the many problems that plagued elections, the Organic Law was revised to include more detailed regulations on elections, village affairs management, and town-village relations. The revised law was passed by the NPC and became formal state law in 1998.

But in the same period, another important issue emerged as a challenge to the meaning of village elections. In some villages, elected cadres were behaving in corrupt ways and were not being held accountable. In fact, it was found that many elected village leaders were engaged in illicit activities such as embezzlement of public funds for luxurious personal consumption, gambling, and election bribery, as well as abuse of public power such as bullying villagers, contracting public projects to relatives, and making arbitrary decisions on village affairs, etc. The Chinese government soon recognized the loss of accountability in rural China and attributed it to the lack of an ex post check and balance mechanism. In order to make elected village cadres more accountable and responsive, the central government established several check and balance institutions[20]. In 1998 and 2004, the CCP and the MCA issued two official Circulars in which "Four Democracies" (*sige minzhu*) – democratic election, democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision – were branded as a political campaign to be put forth in rural China[21]. The focus of these two party circulars was on the latter three democracies and they required villages to establish oversight institutions to check and monitor villager leadership power.

Circular 9 was issued in 1998 by the Central Committee of CCP and the central government to all levels of local governments calling for democratic governance in rural villages and in particular, transparent management of village affairs and supervision of village governance by mass groups. Villager Assembly (VA) and Villager Representative Assembly (VRA) are two important mass groups in villages. According to the 1998 Organic Law, all villagers over 18 years old are members to a village VA. But if there is a considerably large number of villagers in a village or if village households are located too far away from each other, which makes it inconvenient to hold villager meetings (in mountainous areas, for example), villagers should elect some representatives to form a VRA and delegate VRAs the authority to monitor villagers committees[22]. A villagers committee is required to report every major issue it deals with to VA or VRA and seeks approval from the latter on budget and public projects.

To further entrench village democracy and enhance the accountability of villagers committees, Circular 17 was issued in 2004 in which the CCP and central government required two other agencies established in villages in order to supervise village governance: Villager Affairs Transparency Supervision Team (VATST) and Democratic Financial Management Team (DFMT). Both VATST and DFMT report to VA and VRA. Their members are selected by villagers from villager representatives. They are volunteers and cannot be villagers committee members or their immediate relatives.

VATST is responsible for making sure that the villagers committee report its work to villagers through public boards, newsletters, radio, cable TV, and public hearings. Generally, villagers committees are required by VATST to report on general village affairs such as use of land-for-housing, distribution of disaster relief funds, and salary of village cadres every three months. For substantial matters like leasing farmland to industrial developers, villagers

committee should report immediately to VAs or VRAs. In the case of villagers committee's failure to report, VAs, VRAs, or VATSTs can complain to township or county governments for resolution.

DFMT has the power of the purse. It has five members and works with a villagers committee to draft the village budget. Every line item of expenditure has to be approved by DFMT and signed by its head. It can audit villagers committee's financial transactions on behalf of VA or VRA and can demand that the villagers committee issue an explanation on any unclear or suspicious expenditure items. It also collaborates with VATST to ensure that village accounts and transactions are publicized regularly.

Research Questions

By now village elections have been held in most provinces for several rounds and have attracted numerous scholars interested in the causes and meanings of these new local political processes on both political actors and Chinese voters. So far scholarly studies on Chinese village elections have centered on four subsets of issues. First, scholarsare interested in the economic determinants of village elections. They have examined the causal relations between village economic development and the competitiveness of elections, and their findings have been mixed. While some have found elections are more competitive in wealthy villages[23], others argue that villages of mid-level wealth have the most competitive elections.[24] Still others contend that elections in low-income villages are more competitive.[25]

Second, many scholars focus on the origins of village elections in the one-party Communist state and speculate whether village elections could be a starting point for higher-

level elections and democratization in general.[26] Scholars have agreed that village election was introduced by the Communist Party as an instrument to ameliorate the relations between cadres and peasants, to enable township government to carry out their work more effectively, and to stabilize the rural society undergoing economic transitions. As for the meaning of village election, some argue that villagers empowered by their ballots will demand popular elections of township leaders.[27] Some argue that village elections can be the inception of "creeping democratization"[28] and "Trojan horse of democracy"[29]. But others argue that village elections are not meaningful in changing China's political structure.[30]

Third, some scholars have treated competitive election as an explanatory variable and studied its effects on change of village power structure and decision-making process. Some argue that elections have empowered villagers in demanding elected leaders follow their policy interests or face loss of office.[31] Manion's survey research has found that competitive elections have made village leaders more congruent with the constituents on some policy issues than with the township governments[32] and increased the level of trust of villagers in their village leaders.[33] Some argue that competitive elections have enabled villagers and villagers committees to supervise leaders of village Communist Party branches.[34] But others argue that it is the Communist Party branches[35] and township governments[36] that still maintain the final say on village affairs.

While these studies have been very useful, they have ignored two important questions that this dissertation will address. First, this dissertation is interested in studying the impacts of the quality of village elections on the level of electoral participation by Chinese peasants. Level of participation is a crucial indicator of whether village elections are to matter at all in changing rural politics. But not many scholars have closely examined the level of electoral participation

and both whether and why rural Chinese decide to vote. Even fewer scholars have paid attention to the influence of election methods. Considering the variation of electoral rules across China, peasants might react differently under various electoral settings. On the one hand, if electoral rules are manipulated by local officials and prevent peasants from free participation, the turnout rate may be lower and the elections are less meaningful to the peasants. On the other hand, peasants may be more interested in going to the ballot box if the election rules allow for contestation and encourage participation. To what extent do electoral institutions, i.e. electoral methods, affect peasants' electoral participation? To study this question has significant policy implications. Since the point of instituting village election for the Chinese government is to maintain rural social stability, voter participation is essential in ensuring that peasants' interests be articulated and aggregated through elections and that the elected may best represent most voters' interests. If election procedures are shown to be crucial in promoting voter participation, then the central government should take more measures in improving the electoral methods and laws and in enforcing their effective implementation. If, however, electoral participation level turns out to be low regardless of electoral procedures, then the elections do not mean much in changing rural politics and are not all that interesting to study.

Second, this dissertation is interested in how the quality of village governance might be influenced by village elections and oversight institutions. Theoretically, the quality of political institutions can be a determinant of the governing capacity of public officials. If public officials are elected through more competitive and transparent elections, they are more interested in making efforts to reward their supporters. In order to keep their positions through reelections, they also are motivated to be responsive to voters' demands. In addition, the performance of public officials is influenced by the institutional setting of checks and balances. Through

constraining the power of public position holders, institutions can prevent abusive and corrupt public officials.

Both elections and check-and-balance mechanisms are features of Western democracies. But how well do these similar institutions work in non-democracies? Are village leaders elected through more democratic methods held more accountable and responsive to peasants? In the post-election village politics, how effective are village oversight institutions such as VRA and DFMT in preventing village cadres from engaging in mismanagement or corruption? Not much research has been done on these issues and this dissertation will fill in the research gap.

In addition to these two central questions, a third concern this dissertation hopes to address is a methodological one relating to data. Most research on Chinese rural politics have had methodological flaws due to a common problem of doing research in China – poor access to data. Chinese government has long been seen as an unreliable source on statistics. For example, since voter turnout is viewed as a symbol of the Communist Party's political legitimacy, local governments have made turnout rate in village elections a criteria in evaluating local officials' work performance, which motivate local officials to submit exaggerated statistics to upper-level authorities. While scholarly surveys have revealed that voter turnout rate in local elections is about 70%, the Chinese government reports a turnout rate of above 90%.[37] In addition, it takes a long time for grassroots-level data on villager self-government to go up to the central government through multiple levels of local governments. Considering this fact and the large number of villages in China, data available from the MCA have also been outdated.

For the above reasons and for the reason that it is extremely costly for researchers themselves to collect national data on rural politics, most of the research in the past has been limited to regional studies. While some scholars were able to conduct surveys in small number

of counties or villages, many others relied solely on field research in limited number of villages for case studies.[38] Although these studies all have revealed interesting findings, they have not been generalizable ones. In addition to addressing new questions, this dissertation will also methodologically improve on these past studies by using a new and unique data set. This author worked with the Carter Center and the China Academy of Social Sciences to conduct a nationwide survey in the second half of 2005 and the first half of 2006 on village elections and villager self-government. This survey allows me to look at the general and most recent picture of grassroots democracy in rural China, and to systematically examine the research questions left unanswered in previous studies with presumably more generalizable conclusions.

Plan of Study

The study is organized in the following order. Chapter 2 reviews the previous theoretical works on issues of institutions, political participation, accountability, and governance. For the theme of electoral participation, I reveal the shortcomings in the existing literature and how variables of electoral institutions, i.e. methods of village elections, have long been overlooked in studying the level of participation. Previous focuses on sociological elements and subjective attitudes towards politics have not been able to explain the variation of levels of electoral participation in rural China. I propose to take electoral institutions into consideration and explain the logic and expected findings in detail. Following that, I discuss the literature on institution building and good governance and point out the lack of studies on democratic institutions in non-democratic contexts. Set in the authoritarian context in China, village elections and oversight institutions are good subjects to study in terms of revealing how well

democratic institutions can function in non-democratic societies. I propose that better elections and functional oversight agencies in rural China can improve the quality of governance by holding village cadres more accountable and motivating to provide better public service.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology by which my hypotheses are tested and the data sources with which the hypotheses are tested. Idiscuss the advantages and disadvantages of both statistical study and comparative case study followed by description of a mixed methodology to be used in my study and such a methodology can make hypothesis-testing more reliable. I introduce the processes of how the national survey on villager self-government, which is one of the primary sources of my study, was conducted in China, i.e. sample design, questionnaire design, interviewer trainings, data collection, and data processing. I also discuss my field visits to rural China and justify the selection of cases for in-depth comparison to confirm and enrich the findings from the statistical study.

Chapter 4, 5, and 6 present the empirical findings. In Chapter 4, I use the national survey data to test the relationship between election quality and the level of electoral participation in rural China. I show that, while other relevant factors are controlled for, better elections generate higher level of electoral participation. Chapter 5 is another quantitative chapter in which I test whether democratic electoral methods can hold elected cadres more accountable, provide more service to peasants, and make villagers more pleased with governance conditions. Additional examinations are done to the impacts of oversight agencies such as VRA and DFMT on village governance. Chapter 6 supplements the statistical findings in Chapter 4 and 5 and provides detailed case studies of selected villages. Essentially, I choose two pairs of villages with most of their socioeconomic conditions controlled for and, by comparing the cases, I show the mechanisms through which elections and oversight agencies lead to better village governance.

More importantly, I argue that, due to the changing economic and political life in rural China, a village's collective income level is a defining factor on the functioning of village institutions. Village institutions are more functional in villages that have large amount of collective revenues, primarily because peasants are much more interested and active in participating in the institutions. Consequently, these institutions can hold village cadres much more accountable and force them to improve the quality of village governance.

In Chapter 7, I summarize the findings of the study, discuss the contributions of this study to the discipline, and project the next step of research. I also discuss the policy implications of my study to policymakers in China and international aid programs on good governance, and emphasize the significance of perfecting legal and policy designs on grassroots-level institutions and strengthening their implementation in order to reach the goal of maintaining social stability and achieving good governance.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Institutions are major actors in politics and have been extensively studied by political scientists. Especially in the last two decades, with the rise of new institutionalism and the widespread recognition and attention paid by international financial institutions such as the World Bank, institutions have become a hot topic in multiple disciplines. Considering that scholars had overlooked institutions for several decades and paid much more attention to society and market, the revival of study of institutions since the 1980s has signaled the unique power of institutions in explaining the behavior of political actors and policy outcomes in today's world. My study will join the ongoing theoretical debates and argue that "institutions matter". The major interest of my dissertation is to examine how political institutions in rural China have changed peasants' voting behavior and cadres' activities in daily management of village affairs. It aims to show that, while socioeconomic and cultural factors are important, better institutional design can make a significant difference in the political life of Chinese peasants.

In order to explain the logic of my hypotheses, it is helpful to first explain what an institution is and look at how the existing literature has studied institutions on issues of electoral participation and governance. This chapter will start by reviewing the evolution of institutional studies in comparative politics, the recent comeback of institutions as a significant explanatory factor in the field, and the definition of institutions both in general and in the context of rural China. Next, by reviewing the literature on voter participation and identifying the overlook of institutional influence on peasants' participation in village elections, I will argue that better

election quality is a determinant of higher level of voter participation. In the last section of this chapter, I will review the literatures on governance and good governance and discuss how the existing theories may offer some support to my hypotheses that institutions of vertical and horizontal accountability – village elections and oversight agencies such as VRAs and DFMTs – are essential to good rural governance in China.

Institutions in Political Science

After political science separated from its sister-fields - philosophy, political economy, and sociology – as an autonomous discipline, the only subject matter that political science could exclusively claim to be its own was political institutions[39]. In the first half of the twentieth century, political science research primarily focused on formal-legal political structures such as the state and governmental organizations (hence "formal), and the legislature and public law (hence "legal")[40]. Shortly after the WWII, as democratic political models failed to function in many newly independent third world countries in the 1950s and 1960s, scholars shifted their research focus to society and tried to explain the failure of Western political models and the path of development from the perspective of local political values and individual behavior[41]. Political institutions were seen by them as an arena where societal actors strive for their political interests. Major theoretical approaches such as the system theory and the structural-functionalism tended to treat state and political institutions as a black box and argued that political institutions mainly functioned to process political inputs and generate policy outcomes[42]. At the same time, in the field of economics, neoliberalists also started to lose faith in the state and emphasize the market's role of getting the prices right, allocating resources and sustaining economic growth[43]. While

implementing aid programs in the third world countries, powerful international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and IMF strictly followed neo-classical economics theory which attributes exclusive power of maintaining economic order to the market. Because market is omnipotent, these agencies argued, the state should withdraw from the marketplace and rational players in the market would follow the market rules and automatically make adjustments to achieve their best interests[44].

However, after seeing the economic failures and consequent political collapse in Latin America and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, scholars brought their focus back to the state and criticized that previous research was "societally reductionalist" because it had long overlooked the autonomous role of state in explaining issues such as economic development and democratization[45]. Through comparative studies, some research showed that some degree of state intervention in the market was necessary to maintain smooth running of economy, a point that was best illustrated by the East Asian developmental states in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan[46]. In the meanwhile, the IFIs also started to acknowledge the necessity of building political institutions of accountability to fight corruption in loan-receiving countries and increased the proportion of institutional building in their aid programs[47]. Later they called for "good governance" in their target countries and emphasized the issues of holding public officials more accountable and making public offices more transparent.[48]

Together with the "Bringing the State Back In" movement in the discipline came the rise of new institutionalism. New institutionalists focused on the same subject matter as the old institutionalists did before the 1950s, but advanced the research by utilizing behavioral research approaches and methodologies of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the methodological individualism and the assumption of rational choice[49]. New institutionalists not only compared the differences

among formal and legal political structures, but also paid more attention to the different patterns of individual behavior caused by political institutions. For new institutionalists, an institution is a set of norms, rules, or standard operating procedures that are accepted and recognized by other political actors and that structure and constrain actions of those actors[50]. Normative institutionalists argued that political actors behave in a manner that follows the norms and values embedded in the institutions, known as the logic of appropriateness[51]. Rational choice institutions, however, argued that institutional rules generate incentives and disincentives that shape and reshape behavior of individuals who always seek to maximize their interests[52]. Although based on a different logic, they both agreed that institutions should not be considered simply as an arena where societal actors compete for interests. Rather, institutions should be given a new focus in the study of political behavior and policy. Moreover, although new institutionalists claimed the autonomy of institutions in political processes, they also acknowledged the interaction between institutions and the individuals they influence was not a one-way street, that is, individual behavior may assert influences on institutions as well and change institutional rules and norms[53].

So far most of the studies of institutional effects on political processes have centered on democratic systems. For example, numerous studies have compared presidential and parliamentary institutions on their influence of the capacity of governments to incorporate diversified constituents' interests[54]. Many scholars are interested in analyzing the impacts of different electoral institutional designs – majoritarian system and proportional representation – on voting behavior[55]. Not much research has been done to examine the political institutions in non democratic states. The conventional wisdom is that authoritarian states establish democratic institutions for the cosmetic purpose of maintaining legitimacy. Some political institutions like

partisan legislatures can even lengthen the authoritarian tenures by incorporating opposing forces and giving them a stake in the ruler's survival[56]. It seems unlikely that these institutions could ever function in the same way as they do in democratic societies, for example, by holding public offices accountable to citizens. This study is interested in examining the Chinese experimentation with local elections and accountability mechanisms to see if these institutions could exert any influence as they are supposed to in democratic societies on two fronts – increasing the level of public participation and holding local officials accountable. The next sections will survey the past literatures on the issues of electoral participation and governance and propose hypotheses to be tested in the following chapters of this dissertation.

Electoral Participation

Motivations of Voter Participation

Studies of elections in Western democracies assume voters are rational actors who calculate the costs and benefits of participating in elections before voting. If the costs of going to the ballot box such as consumption of time and energy are minor compared with the benefits, then voters will choose to cast ballots[57]. There are two major types of benefits that voters can obtain through voting. First, voters may participate in elections for instrumental and materialistic purposes. For example, the elected candidates are expected to support or issue policies to the benefit of voters, which can motivate voters to participate in elections. In political machines, people may vote for their patrons in exchange for patronage. Second, expressive benefits can be a motivation for voters. It is assumed that every citizen may have the incentive of expressing themselves on certain policy issues. Voting and nonvoting can satisfy the voters'

needs of expressing their values and opinions. Moreover, for those who view elections as a civic duty, they can feel satisfied by fulfilling such a duty through voting.

The rational-choice model of electoral behavior has also been applied to explain why people in Communist states choose to vote or not to vote in noncompetitive and limited-choice elections. In order to buttress their governing legitimacy, authoritarian governments such as the former Soviet Union and China instituted symbolic local parliamentary elections; the election processes were strictly controlled by the authority in order to ensure their trustworthy candidates to win the elections and to preclude dissidents from running for the positions.[58] Since these often noncompetitive elections only had nominal meanings, political dissidents in former Soviet Union chose to abstain from voting as a way to show their contempt to the political and electoral system.[59] Other studies have used a mobilization model to explain why voters chose to vote in the Communist context. According to this theory, voters participated in the elections because they were faced with forceful coercion by the Communist governments and had to avoid potential retaliation from the authority.[60] In the 1970s, former Soviet Union and China both reformed election regulations to allow for limited-choice elections in which there were multiple candidates for voters to choose from. However, the authority still controlled the nomination process by handpicking their favored candidates and including a few "additional candidates" for cosmetic purposes. These electoral reforms changed voters' electoral behavior. Though it was still impossible for voters to nominate their favored candidates, they would vote for the "additional candidates" instead of the ones favored by the authority to embarrass the authority. Oftentimes, if the candidates favored by the authority were known for corruption, voters could vote against them by selecting the "additional candidates". In any case, voters in Communist

states were able to materialize their instrumental and expressive interests through either voting or nonvoting.[61]

To understand voters' instrumental and expressive motivations of their voting behavior, a researcher can ask them directly in survey interviews. However, voters' self-reporting of their voting motivations is not always reliable. If a voter voted to punish the government-favored candidates or if a voter abstained from the election to express his complaint to the government, he may not report it to a researcher due to fear of retaliation from the government. Moreover, at the time of interviewing with a researcher, a voter may likely forget his voting motivations on the election day or he may have never thought about his motivations. For these reasons, election researchers have turned to more objective questions to identify the factors that may influence voters' motivations and that may be taken into consideration in a rational voter's cost-benefit analysis. Assuming that data drawn from these objective questions are reliable, researchers can then infer voters' real motivations from the behavioral variables.[62] One main thread of variables that may change the incentives of voting is electoral institutions.

Electoral Institutions

Following Downs's rational-choice model, new institutionalists posit that institutions, once established, may reshape political actors' preferences, goals and strategies. In making their decisions, rational people incorporate institutional rules into their cost-benefit analysis and utilize the rules to maximize their interests[63]. Electoral studies have shown that formal electoral rules may generate important incentives that can shape and constrain people's voting behavior.[64] Norris (2004)'s cross-nation study of electoral rules and voting behavior, for instance, reveals that different electoral systems, majoritarian, proportional, and combined system, influence the

behavior of political parties differently, whose electoral strategies then influence the behavior of general electorate, displayed from voter turnout. In Communist China, although these electoral systems are unavailable, the reform of electoral procedures can also change voters' electoral behavior. The change of electoral law on local people's congress elections in 1979 to allow candidates to introduce themselves led numerous candidates in colleges and factories in Beijing, Shanghai, and Changha to carry out electoral campaigns and rallies during the 1980 local people's congress elections.[65] Shi (1999b) also argued that the difference between noncompetitive single-candidate elections and semi-competitive limited-choice elections in China could change voters' behavior. Voters with higher level of democratic orientation, for example, chose to abstain from non-competitive local work unit leader elections but would go to the ballot box for semi-competitive local elections in order to punish those corrupt political candidates nominated by the authority.

Although such studies explain the Chinese voters' electoral behavior in local congress elections, very little research has examined voter participation in village elections from the institutional perspective, i.e. the quality of village elections. Both Shi (1999b) and Chen and Zhong (2002) set out to study the change of Chinese voters' electoral behavior under electoral institutional changes[66], but they assume that these institutional changes "fall on the whole population" in China (in Chen and Zhong's study, the whole population in Beijing) by the same degree. Thus institutional factors were not treated separately in examining the correlates of voting behavior. Instead, they focused on the effects of subjective motivations – voters' political efficacy, democratic orientations, incentive of punishing corrupt leaders – on voter turnout, and argued that under the same institutional changes, voters of stronger subjective attitudes towards politics were more likely to vote.

However, village elections are carried out very differently all over China, partly due to "the imprecision of the 1987 VC election law and different local methods for implementing the VC election law.[67] The 1987 Organic Law (provisional) only has one article on villagers committee elections[68]. It sets a tone for the direct elections of villagers committees but does not include any specific regulations on electoral procedures. Based on the principle of the Organic Law, every province produced its own electoral rules to guide lower-level governments. Due to the lack of a formal electoral law or a standardized election procedure to follow, local governments had the leeway of manipulating village elections by modifying the electoral rules. The revised and formal Organic Law passed in 1998 increased the number of articles relating to village elections (including the recall of villagers committee chair/members) to six. There are requirements for open nomination, multiple candidates, anonymous voting, use of secret ballot booths, public tallying, public announcement of results, and prohibition of election bribery and forceful voting. However, in reality, local governments do not always follow the rules in the Organic Law. In order to ensure that election results serve their own interests, the township governments and village party branches (VPBs) in some regions rigged elections by failing to institute certain core election procedures. For example, according to my nationwide survey data, only 35% of the respondents reported that the candidates were nominated by villagers whereas the rest reported nomination by electoral commissions, VPBs, or upper authority. Only 40% of the respondents reported that secret ballot booths were available for use in their village elections and 70% of the villagers said ballots were publicly tallied.

Given the significant variation of electoral practices across China, the quality of village elections may influence peasants' choice of voting and nonvoting. If the elections feature more fairness and transparency by permitting open nomination, multi-candidates, and secret ballot

booths, for example, then voters may feel that they have a hand in the elections and are able to put their favored persons in office. Therefore, they would be more willing to go to the ballot box on election day. If, however, election rules are vague, or they forbid voters to select electoral commission members, limit the choice of candidates, and deny public tallying of ballots, etc., then the election is less interesting and less credible, and voters may refrain from voting. In order to test whether and how much the variation of electoral rules in different parts of China affects voters' choice of voting and nonvoting, I will specifically examine the influence of seven core steps and practices in village elections on voter participation.

The first step of every village election is to form an *Election Commission* (EC). EC's job is to execute electoral rules, administer election processes, and arbitrate election disputes. An independent and just EC will make the entire electoral processes as fair as possible. Therefore, the method of EC formation becomes a crucial factor. The Organic Law requires ECs to be selected by voters. This method can to a great extent guarantee that ECs members are held accountable to voters and ECs are independent of influence from other forces. As elections are administered by more trustworthy ECs, voters will be more confident of achieving their benefits through voting, i.e. having their favored candidates elected, and thus they more likely to participate in voting. But it is not unusual that township governments and VPBs want to control village elections by hijacking the voters' rights of selection of ECs and appointing their supporters to preside ECs. In this scenario, ECs may have to defer their authority to the appointing bodies, which makes ECs less credible to voters and can discourage voters from participation in elections. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: If villager commission members are nominated and selected by voters, then it is more likely that a villager participates at village elections.

Candidate nomination is the second major step during village elections and free nomination is a significant symbol of the fairness of elections. Although the Organic Law requires that candidates are nominated by voters, scholars have found six nomination methods widely applied in different regions, and that nomination was one of the procedures often rigged by VPBs and township governments[69]. If voters are not allowed to nominate candidates, the benefits for them to participate in the elections are lowered because they cannot make their favored candidates win the elections by voting. Moreover, they will believe that the elections are controlled by local authorities and their rights of elections are infringed. Left with limited choice, they may decline to participate in the elections. Only free nomination can guarantee the rights of voters to nominate candidates and motivate villagers to participate. Thus:

Hypothesis 2: If candidates are directly nominated by villagers, then it is more likely that a villager participates at village elections.

Campaign Rules. In demo cratic states, candidates are given the freedom to conduct election campaigns through rallies and meeting with voters, distributing campaign literatures, broadcasting TV and radio advertisements, etc. No matter what political parties they are from, all candidates are granted equal public resources, for instance, access to media, for their campaign activities[70]. Campaigns provide a channel through which candidates and voters can interact, and voters get to know candidates' platforms, capacity and personalities. However, China's Organic Law does not make any reference to election campaign. Some provincial laws stipulate that election commissions may organize meetings between final candidates and voters, but such meetings normally are formalistic. Without knowing the candidates, it is impossible for voters to choose the right person and therefore voters may not be interested to participate in voting. But in some villages, it is known that the final candidates carried out door-to-door

campaigns on their ownby passing around flyers and having individual conversations with voters. These more active campaign activities could have increased voters' interest in the elections and motivate them to vote on the election day. Thus I propose:

Hypothesis 3: If a candidate carries out campaign activities such as door-to-door canvassing, then a villager is more likely to vote in village elections.

The existence of *multiple candidates* is an important sign of election competitiveness. Previous research has showed that the closeness of elections makes voters more interested in participation because, in close elections, individual votes become unusually significant[71]. In rural China, according to my data, 31% of the villages still held single-candidate elections. It is reasonable to expect that multi-candidate elections can attract more voters to cast ballots.

Hypothesis 4: If there are multiple candidates to VC chairs or members, then it is more likely that a villager vote in village elections.

Primary elections. The Organic Law and provincial electoral guidelines require that the winning candidate must gather at least half of the ballots, which means that three candidates to VC chair makes it less possible to reach the requirement. If more than two candidates are nominated for the position of VC chair, there needs to be a way to narrow the candidate list. VPBs and township governments could take this opportunity to remove the candidates they dislike. A more transparent and fair way of narrowing down the candidate list is to have a primary election open to all voters, which technically precludes manipulation of final candidate list by upper authorities. By submitting the selection power to voters, primary elections make final candidates more legitimate and make voters more confident in the justice of elections, generating higher motivation for participation. Thus I propose:

Hypothesis 5: If the final candidates are determined through open primary elections as opposed to appointment by township governments or village party branches, then it is more likely that a villager vote in village elections.

The use of *secret ballot booth* protects voters from influences by candidates or political forces on their voting choices. If local officials want to handpick villagers committee members, they could force ECs to skip the use of secret ballot booth to make it easier for the officials to monitor peasant filling out ballots. Fearing political retaliation, villagers may defer to the authority's will or they may give up voting. With the availability of secret ballot booths, however, voters will feel better protected, are freer to vote whoever they prefer, and will therefore be more willing to cast ballots. I propose:

Hypothesis 6: If a secret ballot booth is used in a village election, then it is more likely that a villager vote in the election.

Finally, proper counting procedures are required in fair elections. These procedures include *tallying ballots publicly* and proper treatment of void ballots. The process of publicly tallying ballots precludes manipulation of elections results and stuffing ballot boxes by candidates and other political forces. This process should be open to all voters and in the case of improperly filled ballots, the EC could arbitrate on invalid ballots in accordance with electoral rules under the supervision of voters. If voters know in advance that ballots are not counted publicly, they may suspect that ballots will be manipulated and they may choose not to vote.

Hypothesis 7: If ballots are counted in public, then it is more likely that a villager vote in village elections.

While the quality of elections can influence peasants' confidence and trust over elections, peasants' socioeconomic standings can affect their stakes in elections and thus implicate their

voting behavior. Extant previous research has showed that sociological factors such as gender, age, education, and economic levels have influence on voter turnout. Moreover, scholars of political participation have also found those who are more psychologically involved in politics are more likely to participate in politics. Voters with higher levels of political efficacy or "the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact on the political process"[72] are more likely to participate in elections. Both the socioeconomic and subjective variables need to be controlled for during empirical testing in order to isolate the causal effect of electoral institutional factors. Detailed discussion of these control variables will be presented in Chapter 4.

Village Governance

The second theme of this study is concerned with the meanings of institutions in rural China to the quality of village governance. Can better elections and oversight institutions make elected offices more responsive and accountable to villagers? Can these institutions improve village leadership's performance in terms of providing more public service? The topic of governance has attracted many scholarly studies in the last two decades and the relationship between institutions and governance is at the center of the debates. The following section will introduce the theoretical arguments on the issue of governance, discuss the role of institutions in improving governance, and introduce my hypotheses based on previous literatures.

State, Society, and Governance

The meaning of governance used to completely overlap with the functions of government. Governance referred to the activity or process of governing by the government, which functions within the structure of both hierarchical and horizontal public bureaucracies[73]. State and public institutions are the sole executive actors in the process of governance. There is a distinctive separation between state and society. The state governs society – maintaining public order and facilitating collective action - by imposing laws and regulations and providing public service to the society[74].

Starting in the 1980s, the concept of governance has been given new meanings as the pattern of governance in the developed world showed dramatic changes. The first change was the trend of minimizing the role of state. This was partly a result of increasing financial burden created by the expansion of the bureaucracy. The privatization of many public services added to the pressure of cutting budgets for government spending and reducing the size of government. Leading Western states in the 1980s such as the Reagan Administration in the U.S. and the Thatcher Administration in the U.K. supported the idea of minimal government and let the societal actors and most importantly, the market, take more responsibilities of governance. Following the new classical economic theory, the neo-liberalists believe that the "invisible hand" of market can allocate social resources most efficiently, regulating individual behavior most effectively, and pushing forward economic progress to the greatest extent. The state is viewed by them not as a solution to problems but a cause of problems. Therefore, the state should withdraw from the market and refrain from intervention in the society.

The second change was that the distinctions between public and private sectors were blurred[75]. In particular, the rise of the third sector – voluntary groups, nongovernmental

organizations, transnational networks, etc. – has shifted many of the responsibilities that used to be undertaken by the state to the society. The third sector groups represent plural social interests and maintain some features of the traditional interest groups that compete with each other for rent-seeking from the state. But the groups to some extent also replace the state by offering public services on a wide range of issues and generating economic growth. The civil society literature has also suggested that democratic governance is more effective where civic values are strong and civil society is developed to support public projects[76].

As a result of these changes, the relationship between state and society has departed from the traditional pattern in which state is above society and governs society. Rather, state has become a part of the governing process along with other actors. The role of state has shifted from a governor with exclusive authority to a coordinator who plays a steering role of incorporating various actors into the governing system, devolving authority to those actors, providing assistance whenever necessary[77]. The concept of governance now means more than it did before. It reflects the changing governing pattern and refers to the new relations between state, market, and civil society, all of which together advance the development of the economy and society[78].

Good Governance

While this most recent concept of governance clarifies the new political relations among the state, society and the market in the developed world, it is yet to be fully compatible with the situation in many developing states that are still governed by autocratic rulers. Although many of these countries have adopted market economy systems, their state governments maintain strong control over society and impose certain level of intervention in the market whenever they

see necessary. Because the state retains a dominant role, space is very limited for societal actors such as nongovernmental organizations to get involved in governance issues or even to exist. The direct result is that the state faces minimal or no competition and supervision from the societal actors and thus is more likely to engage in abusive acts such as corruption and inaction in public goods provision. For these countries, the issue at stake is not so much to shift the functions of state due to the rising role of various political and social actors. Rather, the challenging job is to restructure the state itself to be more responsible and responsive to its citizens. The concept of "Good Governance" implies this demand for reforming the state and its institutions.

The concept of "Good Governance" was first raised by the World Bank in 1992. From the 1980s, IFIs such as the World Bank began imposing neoliberal Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) in client-countries. One of the principal requirements for receiving loans from the IFIs was to minimize the role of state by reducing government expenditure and government size. But the negative effects brought about by conditional lending in development states, such as inflation, high unemployment rate, cuts in public programs expenditure, and pileup of debts, proved that it was a mistake to ignore the state, which maintained exclusive authority to political, economic and social resources, and dominated all areas. In fact, many of the problems that kept the countries in poverty could be traced to dysfunctional states. For example, "Vital reforms of public expenditure may flounder if accounting systems are so weak that budgetary policies cannot be implemented or monitored, or if poor procurement systems encourage corruption and distort public investment priorities."[79] Therefore, reforming the state and political institutions became an impending task in order to facilitate economic development. As the World Bank noted:

"The consequences of an overzealous rejection of government have shifted attention from the sterile debate of state versus market to a more fundamental crisis in state effectiveness. In some countries the crisis has led to out-right collapse of the state…In their embrace of markets and rejection of state activism, many have wondered whether the market and civil society could ultimately supplant the state. But the lesson of half-century's thinking and rethinking of the state's role in development is more nuanced. State-dominated development has failed, but so will stateless development. Development without an effective state is impossible."[80]

Good governance is a relative term to poor governance. Some of the symptoms identified by the World Bank as poor governance include "a tendency to divert public resources for private gain", arbitrary application of rules and laws, excessive rules and regulations, which encourage rent-seeking, misallocation of resources, and nontransparent decision-making. These problems tend to erode the confidence of citizens in the authority of governments and it is financially costly for the governments to reconstruct domestic legitimacy and compliance. At the same time, poor economic performance may further erode the citizens' confidence in the authority[81].

Although these problems were identified by the World Bank in state governments, they could be found in subnational governments as well. As decentralization was introduced to more developing states, local governments have gained more autonomy in allocation of resources, making and enforcing laws and regulations, retaining tax revenues, and so forth. Monopoly of power and lack of supervision may encourage local governments to misuse public resources, exercise laws arbitrarily, make policies without participation of citizens, etc., all of which contribute to poor development and erosion of legitimacy. As a matter of fact, many of China's village administrations, despite being elected by peasants, were often involved in cases of corruption and mismanagement that have spurred rural protests throughout China.

As suggested by the World Bank, curtailing these problems will require institutional reforms to increase the capacity and efficiency in public sector management, making public

institutions accountable to service receivers, developing the rule of law and the ability to implement laws, and make information flow unobstructed and decision-making transparent[82]. For example, accountability of political and official elements of government can be achieved with the presence of media freedom, transparent decision-making, and accountability mechanisms. Allowing the growth of civic organizations and private enterprises could introduce competition to the government for delivering service and formulating policies. Engaging more public participation will make political processes more transparent and can make the public more trustful of the authority.

As good governance was promoted by the IFIs in their aid programs around the developing world, it has received some criticisms from the academic world. The central issue with good governance lies in its underlying assumption that institutional reforms will lead to economic growth. Because many of the institutional reforms required by the good governance strategy, such as building accountability institutions, follow the democratic principles, some argued that good governance is another strategy that the Western powers use to promote democracy in the world[83]. Others have doubted the idea that democratic reform is a necessary prior condition of development and have argued that it is inappropriate to assume that the model of democratic governance can be instituted anywhere at any stage of development process and can enhance further development[84]. Others had empirical findings to show that, "Counter to optimistic claims about how much 'institutions matter,' … greater transparency, accountability, and participation are often a result, rather than a direct cause of faster development."[85]

While scholars differed on the causal relations between institutional reforms and development, they seemed to agree with the assumption behind the concept of good governance that, if institutions do not lead to development, at least they can, if put into place, achieve the

goal of accountability and transparency, which are seen as preconditions to development. This assumption seems very self-explanatory. For example, accountability mechanisms are supposed to bring accountability and sound legal systems are supposed to bring rule of law. However, considering the failure of democratic systems in many developing states, the assumption needs to be challenged and further examined. Just as democratic institutions may not bring development everywhere, they may not even function well to achieve accountability and responsiveness because their incompatibility with the many authoritarian governments found in the developing world.

This study is interested in precisely whether those democratic institutions are able to exert the influences as they are supposed to on accountability in rural China. In particular, I will focus on two types of institutions of accountability, i.e. village elections for vertical accountability and village oversight agencies for horizontal accountability. In next section I will review the literatures and past studies on these institutions both in general and in the Chinese context, and propose my own arguments on the causal relations between these institutions and governing performance of village cadres.

Electoral institutions and village governance

A democratic political system features free and fair elections through which constituents select representatives to make political decisions on their behalf. In democratic elections, candidates are given chances to present their platforms and constituents are supposed to choose the candidate whose platform best fits their needs, assuming that the candidate, once elected, will behave as he promises. Constituents' capacity to pick their most favored candidates is primarily dependent on the quality of elections. Only if elections allow for free participation and fair

contestation can candidates freely and fully present their platforms and can voters make sensible judgment. The extent to which elections are free and fair is displayed in electoral rules. If electoral rules support, for example, inclusive registration, open nomination, democratic primary elections, campaigns, and properly counting ballots, etc., then elections are more transparent and it is easier for voters to identify the candidates they prefer.

While elected candidates do not always support or produce the public policies they have promised, they do face punishment for breaking their promises – loss of reelection. In measuring the quality of democracy, scholars have defined eight elements that are necessary to maintain a functioning democracy. Among them, vertical accountability and horizontal accountability are two elements for ensuring that in the post-election stage elected politicians are held accountable to voters' demands and needs. Vertical accountability is "the obligation of elected political leaders to answer for their political decisions when asked by voters or constitutional bodies."[86] It requires that politicians distribute information with respect to public policies to constituents and justify their stands on these policies. Based on the information and politicians' justification, constituents decide either to continue to support politicians or to punish them.[87] If voters realize that the political leaders they have picked either fail to perform by certain minimum standards or fail to deliver preferable policies, they will vote out those leaders in next election and choose other candidates whose platforms best match their requirements. Assuming that incumbents have the interest of staying in office, they are driven by the fear of losing reelection to deliver good governance and be responsive to voters.

Elections in Communist states are not used to select candidates who offer best public policy proposals but are instituted to shore up Communist party's governing legitimacy. Generally speaking, processes of elections in Communist states are strictly controlled by law and,

in practice, elected offices often do not have real power. However, village elections in Communist China theoretically grant political rights to peasants to freely choose village leaders who handle all village affairs concerning villagers. Although no opposition political parties are allowed in China, villagers do have multiple choices of candidates who hold different platforms in managing village affairs and serving villagers' interests.

Despite the lack of free and independent press and independent watchdog civic group that could check and monitor village leadership's behavior, village election has become a weapon for villagers to control their elected village cadres. Previous studies have demonstrated that villagers have displayed higher confidence in voting out the village cadres whose policies are incongruent to voters' demands[88]. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the mechanism of repeated and regular elections and voters' legal ability of recalling village cadres would rectify villagers committee's behavior and improve its performance in village governance.

Given the variation of electoral rules practiced by different villages, if electoral rules are freer and fairer, then it is more likely that villagers are able to choose among all candidates the one offering the most favored platforms. Since village elections are held regularly, elected village leaders, fearing the loss of reelection, will try to be responsive to voters and deliver sound governing performance. Scholars of rural politics in China have studied the relation between the quality of village elections and the quality of village governance and found mixed results. For example, Manion (1996)'s regional survey study has discovered that, due to direct village elections, village cadres have displayed significant congruence in views with villagers on policy issues. Her later survey study (Manion 2006) is straightforward in showing that electoral institutions matter. In villages where electoral designs encourage competition and voter participation, villagers have higher level of trust towards villager leaders. Kennedy (2002)

argues that where village elections are more competitive, villagers have a higher evaluation of village leaders' land management policies. However, some have argued that village elections have not improved village governance very much since power is still controlled by upper-level authorities. Alpermann (2001)'s study of village governance in Hebei province uses the Principal-Agent model to argue that villagers committees and village party branch committees are only agents of the party-state, who "delegates to ordinary villagers some of its monitoring and control powers over its local agents [through elections]."[89] According to his study, on policy issues in general, villagers committees fulfill their commitments to upper-level authorities rather than local constituencies. A common shortcoming of previous studies is that they all are based on regional research and thus their research findings are hard to be generalized. The advantage of my nationwide survey data is that it allows me to study similar questions to these studies but presumably with more generalizable findings due to its much larger geographical sampling. I propose:

Hypothesis 8: If village elections are competitive, then the quality of governance by the villagers committee will be higher.

Village oversight institutions and village governance

Studies of Western democracies debate on whether elections are sufficient for bringing about better governance. Some argue that free and fair elections do not necessarily implicate that the most capable persons are selected. While it is assumed that voters' preferences are articulated and aggregated during open electoral processes, the "conceptual difficulty" of "a citizenry possessing 'enlightened understanding'" should not be easily dismissed considering the well-known ignorance of public policy and political processes by even well-educated people.[90]

Moreover, social choice theory has shown that there is no way to coherently aggregate three or more alternative preferences among many individuals into a single choice. [91] Even if voters' preferences can be aggregated, studies have found different conclusions on which kind of electoral design and political system can aggregate the preferences of the most people and deliver the policies that favor the most people.[92]

Other scholars are concerned whether elections alone are sufficient to guarantee better governance and if other institutions need to be established to serve that goal. In arguing that free and fair elections can generate responsive governments, one assumes that winners of elections should embark on materializing their campaign promises, based on which voters make their voting decisions. However, "popular control of leaders [through elections] is not necessarily popular control of policies."[93] Elected politicians may deviate from their pre-election platforms and support or produce policies that are preferable for personal interests or interests of rent-seeking groups but are harmful to voters' general interests. Moreover, elections are held only periodically and their effectiveness in replacing outgoing leaders with more responsive ones is subject to the setup of party, electoral, and political systems. Newly elected politicians may simply repeat the same political action for which their predecessors are voted out. Many electoral democracies and illiberal democracies in the world are known for rampant corruption in government and disregard of fundamental human rights.[94] In contrast, in addition to free and fair elections, liberal democracies feature a functioning check-and-balance mechanism that puts pressure on public office holders to deliver good public service. A functioning democratic society has been able to persist in the U.S. thanks to the mechanism of separation of power designed by the farseeing founding fathers of the U.S. With Executive Branch's power checked by the Congress, for example, both institutions are then monitored and influenced by the media,

civic groups, and ultimately, voters. A check and-balance mechanism also includes oversight institutions that can ensure horizontal accountability.

Horizontal accountability "depends on the existence of state agencies that are legally empowered – and factually willing and able – to take actions ranging from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to possibly unlawful actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state."[95] Similar to but not limited to the mechanism of separation of power, horizontal accountability framework requires autonomous agencies, which can be legislative and judicial branches, but also can be "various oversight agencies, ombudsmen, accounting offices, *fiscalías*, and the like", to supervise political behavior and policymaking by elected executives.[96] Whenever improper or unlawful activities are identified, these agencies are entitled to command redress or impose sanctions on the executives. In order for these agencies to function effectively, they need to be protected by law from retaliation and intimidation from the executive power. In studying new democracies in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia, scholars have found that the weak framework of horizontal accountability has caused uncontrollable improper actions of the elected politicians.[97]

In rural villages of China, villagers committees are elected by villagers and undertake executive power in handling village affairs. While the methods of villagers to directly control and monitor the behavior of village cadres are limited, oversight institutions such as VRA and DFMT can help achieve horizontal accountability of elected village leadership. With each of these agencies supervising the executive's power from a different perspective, it is expected that villagers committee be more restrained and more pressured to be accountable and responsive to villagers' demands. Thus I propose that,

Hypothesis 9: If there is a functioning Villager Representative Assembly in a village, then the quality of governance by the villagers committee is higher.

Hypothesis 10: If there is a functioning Democratic Finance Management Team in a village, then the quality of governance by the villagers committee is higher.

Conclusion

That "Institutions Matter" is not a new argument. It has been put to the test for a wide range of dependent variables such as democracy, political participation, economic growth, etc. What is new about this study from the theoretical angle is that it puts to test whether democratic institutions can function to build accountability and good governance in an authoritarian state. This argument is also different from the propositions in the "Good Governance" literature that assumes that democratic institutional reforms can bring economic development in developing countries. Agreeing with its many critics, I doubt that democratic public institutions are either a sufficient or a necessary causal factor for economic growth. In fact, it is still in question whether instituting democratic structures in non-democratic societies is a plausible idea. Before one further explores the causal effects of democratic institutions on democracy and economic growth, it is helpful to first examine whether the institutions can even perform their functions as they are designed to in non-democratic societies. Can democratic elections hold elected offices accountable? Can balance-of-power mechanism make office holders responsible and responsive in an authoritarian state? Answering these questions will be a contribution to scholarly studies on institutions and democratization and to practitioners promoting good governance and democratization in the developing states.

The next Chapter will introduce how the hypotheses of "institutions matter" in rural China will be tested. I will discuss the methodologies used in this study and their advantages and disadvantages. I will explain the processes of data collection and verification, and case selection. Finally, I will discuss the measurement and operationalization of the variables to be tested in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY, SOURCES, AND VARIABLES

Methodology

This study adopts an institutional approach to examine such political phenomena as electoral participation and local governance. Since the beginning of the behavioral revolution in the 1940s and 1950s, political scientists have introduced new methods to complement the traditional methods and made research inquiries more scientific and findings more reliable. One of these new methods is the large-N statistical method. Statistical method tests relations between independent and dependent variables by using a large size of sample. The techniques of multiple variable regression in statistical study can provide the estimates of covariation between independent and dependent variables by holding the effects of other variables constant. By doing so, one can eliminate possible disturbance from confounding variables and make sure that the effects displayed are not spurious. To the extent that statistical analysis controls for potentially confounding effects, it can enjoy a larger degree of internal validity, although one can never be sure that all relevant control variables are exhausted. At the same time, statistical analysis has a great level of external validity, meaning the research findings from statistical analyses are more generalizable than single case studies or small-N studies[98].

However, statistical methods have long been criticized by scholars for their oversimplification of reality. Since it mainly looks at numerical results, a statistical study may sacrifice contextual richness. Also, statistical method overlooks or sometimes eliminates deviant

cases, but outlier cases may implicate classification and measurement problems in statistical models. Correcting these problems may show different conclusions[99]. For example, in examining the determinants of village leadership responsiveness, one may find factors other than elections and supervision agencies that are significant. Since these additional factors are not included in the survey, one may easily exclude them without further exploration.

A more contextual-rich method of research inquiry is comparative case method, which is a systematic analysis of small number of cases ("small-N analysis). The method req uires a careful selection of cases to control extraneous variance caused by potentially confounding factors and to highlight the robustness and validity of the causal relationships of concern. The most outstanding advantage of comparative case method is that it allows a researcher to conduct in-depth study of individual cases so as to discover and examine the causal mechanisms by which the tested relationships come into being. For example, running a statistical model could show that the variable of village election methods are positively associated with the variable of village cadres being accountable to villagers, but it could not reveal how this relationship is developed in practice. Intensive studies of a few villages may explain in more detail how elected village cadres are under pressure from the village constituents in their daily work, which motivates them to provide better service. Case studies may also help researchers to identify other variables that may lead to the existence of phenomenon under examination but are overlooked in statistical models[100]. However, since conclusions are produced from analyses based on limited number of cases, the method allows no more than partial generalizations.

In view of the advantages and disadvantages of both statistical method and comparative case method, this study will adopt a mixed method by combining both. Lijphart (1971) suggests incorporating the use of comparative case method with statistical method. He argues that

researchers should use comparative method as the first stage of research formulate hypotheses, then, at the second stage use statistical method to test the hypotheses in a large sample. Lijphart's advice draws on the distinct feature of case method to help researchers identify variables relevant to the research topics and, as Eckstein remarked, "construct increasingly plausible and less fortuitous regularity statements"[101]. However, in addition to building theories, case studies can test the validity of pre-established hypotheses as well. By comparing the findings from cases with the hypotheses, one may confirm the hypotheses or find the need to revise the hypotheses if the case findings differ from the hypotheses.

This study adopts Lijphart's suggestion to combine statistical method and comparative case method, but in a different way. As the hypotheses are drawn from previous literatures and my practical observations, I will first test the hypotheses using statistic method, followed by a study of a few cases to validate the statistical findings. As argued previously, case studies will also provide more details to explain the causal mechanisms of the variables of concern. In this way, I will be able to achieve more generalizable findings without sacrificing contextual richness.

Since this study adopts an institutional approach and argues that institutions matter, one needs to be careful of the potential problem of endogeneity. The problem lies in the fact that institutions not only influence norms, values, and political behaviors, their functions are influenced by contextual conditions under which they are formed and endured. In Adam Przeworski's words:

> "Imagine that only those institutions that generate some specific outcomes, say those that perpetuate the power of the otherwise powerful, are viable under the given conditions. Then institutions have no autonomous role to play. Conditions shape institutions and institutions only transmit the causal effects of these conditions. The question, thus, is how to distinguish effects of institution from those of the conditions that give rise to them."[102]

For example, if I do find that village cadres are held more accountable to peasants in China, it may be a result of socioeconomic conditions of the villages. In rich villages, villagers can be more interested in protecting the village public resources (collective revenues, land, and natural resources, etc.), therefore, they will be more concerned about transparency and accountabilities issues and place greater pressure on village cadres to be accountable by demanding freer and fairer elections and establishment of oversight institutions. In other words, electoral and oversight institutions matter partly as a result of the economic conditions under which the institutions are built. So far, there has not been a fully effective strategy to treat the endogenous problem, as acknowledged by Przeworski. What I will do is to control for the contextual factors that could possibly have influenced the establishment of the village institutions. Although this will not help to separate the autonomous effects of institutions and the contextual effects institutions transmit, it will at least isolate the institutional effects from the direct effects of contextual factors on the dependent variables.

The major technique to be used in the statistical part of the study is multivariate regressions. For the relationship between quality of village elections (I.V.s) and voter participation (D.V.), I will include in the model as independent variables the seven election methods described in Chapter 2. Also included in the model are three groups of control variables, i.e. villages' demographic and economic conditions, voters' socioeconomic conditions, and voters' subjective attitudes to politics. Because multivariate regressions can hold the control variables constant, the findings on the relationship between electoral institutions and voter participation will be more reliable. For the relationship between village institutions, i.e. village elections and oversight agencies (I.V.), and the quality of village governance (D.V.), I will use two statistic models. In the first one, I will include the seven electoral method variable as

independent variables and villages' demographic and economic conditions and voters' socioeconomic standings as control variables. In the second one, village oversight institutional variables are included to substitute the electoral variables in order to test whether oversight agencies function to hold village cadres accountable.

Data Sources

The statistical analyses of this study are based on a nationwide survey conducted in 2005 in China. The survey is a multi-party project among the Carter Center, Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) of China, China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the Beijing Policy Research Center (BCPR)[103]. The sample design was made by Dr. Tianjian Shi, Associate Professor of Political Science at Duke University. The sample was designed to be representative of the adult population over 18 years old residing in family households at the time of the survey, excluding those living in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The sample design uses a stratified multistage area sampling procedure with probabilities proportional to size measures (PPS). The sample covered 3,564 Chinese adult peasants from 520 villages and urban residential communities[104], 260 towns and townships, 130 counties. There were two questionnaires, one for villagers and one for village cadres. The questions regarding village institutions appeared in both questionnaires, which helps me to verify the answers of both and make adjustments accordingly. The questionnaires were designed based on the previous surveys on rural political participation conducted by Dr. Tianjian Shi, and were revised according to the comments of the MCA (see Appendix C and D). The project hired 276 surveyors, most of whom were middle school teachers from all over China, to conduct the surveys in the second half of 2005 and the first half

of 2006. This author participated in revising the survey questionnaire, training surveyors, and coordinating the cooperation among multiple parties. In total, 3,552 finished questionnaires were collected. After checking the questionnaires twice, there were 3,498 valid questionnaires.

One of the criticisms survey research is subject to is the reliability of respondents' answers. Especially for social science surveys that involve politically sensitive questions conducted in authoritarian states like China, there is a concern that respondents may not report honestly in order to avoid potential political retaliations. For this reason, we undertook some precautions while designing the questionnaire. One such precaution was that we tried to reduce the number of attitudinal questions and include more behavioral questions, assuming that behavioral questions may not raise respondents' security concerns and thus will be more acceptable to respondents. In order to check whether there was political contamination on the survey results, we can look at some politically sensitive questions. If significant number of respondents reported answers to such questions opposite to what we thought they might have reported for political safety, one can be more confident that survey results were not contaminated for political reasons and that the respondents were honest in answering questions. For example, for the question, "In electing the current villagers committee, were secret ballot booths used?" 60% of the respondents answered "No". For the question, "Do you think that village elections can generate village leaders trusted by the masses?" 44% of the respondents answered "No" or "Not Sure". Given that the use of secret ballot booth is required by the Organic Law, the fact that over half of the respondents reported the illegal practice in their villages implicated that they did not think that reporting honestly would set them in danger. Also, although a negative evaluation of state policies in authoritarian states might have caused potential political retaliation, we found that more than 40% of the respondents thought and reported negatively on village

elections, which is a state policy, in terms of its function in generating trustworthy leaders. By checking on these more sensitive questions, we are more confident that the survey respondents were generally honest in answering questions.[105]

Overall, doing survey research in China presented more challenges than those found in Western democratic states. As noted by Melanie Manion, an experienced survey researcher,

> "There is the whole set of problems of questionnaire design and response bias to consider. 'Correct' responses exist in many more and different categories, respondents may not believe their anonymity can be protected, the content and consequences of 'incorrect' thinking change frequently, and the experience of respondents with surveys is with official Party of government in investigations. There are only some of the problems associated with the political context in the PRC. There are also problems associated with the cultural context and with the fairly low level of economic development."[106]

One of the obstacles for our survey project came from the government censorship. Because the survey project involved foreign partners, the MCA was concerned of national security and was very careful in approving the survey questionnaires[107]. Since MCA is in charge of supervising villager self-government and grassroots-level democracy, it allowed in the questionnaire only the questions relevant to its work on building village institutions such as elections and oversight agencies. Although these questions provide essential data to my research, a lot of other questions needed for control purposes were deleted by the MCA who viewed these questions as irrelevant to its work. For example, questions regarding aggregate-level village economic structure and collective revenues would be helpful for me to examine the economic influence on institutions, i.e. whether democratic institutions would work better to provide public services and village cadres are held more accountable in wealthier villages. At least I would be able to control for the variable of village wealth to highlight the influence of institutional variables. Also, it would be necessary to have variables evaluating public goods provision, an essential measure of village governance, such as public investment and availability of paved

roads. Without these variables, I am forced to only use villagers' subjective evaluation of cadre performance to measure the quality of governance, which is missing some degree of objectivity. Therefore, although I am using a rare nationwide survey on villager self-government, one should keep in mind that the unique problems of doing survey research in China may prevent me from fully examining the issues of village politics using the data.

The case study analyses presented in Chapter 6 are based on the case data I collected during my three field trips to rural China[108]. In total, I spent three months visiting 11 villages in 7 provinces and conducted in-depth interviews and discussion with about 20 peasants in each village. Although I had to completely rely on my contacts in China to search for villages for my field research, they did try to find villages according to my selection strategy. I avoided selecting villages based on the dependent variable[109]. Rather I tried to find villages that varied in their institutional settings. For example, I proposed to visit both the villages in which elections were more standardized and oversight agencies were more functional and the ones that had election disputes and poorly functioning oversight institutions. The idea was to explore whether the different institutional settings would generate different qualities in village governance. However, while finding villages of the former type was easier (local officials were more willing to show the "model villages" to researchers), finding villages of the latter type was very difficult[110]. Local officials are not only more likely to veto visits in villages that have internal disputes, but visits to such villages would probably also create more chaos as the rural peasants, fed up with local officials, may be eager to make contact with outsiders and ask them to bring messages to upper-level governments[111]. Also, the success of this research strategy depends on controlling for the confounding factors such as village economic conditions, which makes selection of villages even harder. For example, the non-formal institutions such as community councils,

family clans, and temple associations, which were not included in the survey study, are likely to affect village politics. Thanks to the support and great assistance of my contacts in China, I was able to visit 11 villages of different types and finally was able to select four of them for comparative analyses, which are, relatively speaking, up to the standard for case research.

An ideal research design for doing a case study on the first theme of this dissertation – quality of elections and voter participation, would be observing elections in two or more villages where socioeconomic conditions are similar and finding whether the differences in electoral procedures may cause different levels of voter participation. However, it is difficult to locate and access villages where elections are going on. Doing a post-election study would not be very much different from the research on survey questionnaires. Therefore, for the comparative case analyses in this study I focus on the second theme – village institutions and village governance.

The design of the case study is based on the most similar system, which means that when all but one independent variable are held constant in two or more cases, the very independent variable that differentiates these cases should explain the difference in the dependent variable. The goal is to show that, when other variables are controlled for, the different qualities of village institutions lead to different qualities of village governance. In addition, because I was not able to include the variables of aggregate-level village economic conditions in the survey research, I will try to capture their influence in the case study.

Out of the 11 villages I visited, I selected two pairs of villages, for a total of four villages. The two villages in each pair had similar socioeconomic conditions, including village size, economic level, family clan structure, and distance to town centers, but had different qualities of village governance and different institutional settings. One village had relatively better elections and was equipped with better functioning village oversight agencies, while the other one fell

short of these institutions. The goal with this selection was to examine how the differences in village institutions caused the variation of village governance quality. In addition, between the two pairs, economic conditions of two villages varied from each other. The goal in this case selection was to examine whether, in villages that had better collective economic resources such as land and village factories, institutions would work better to hold cadres more accountable.

Variables

In this section, I will discuss the measurement and coding of the variables to be examined in the statistical analyses (For the complete questions and response choices in the survey questionnaire, refer to Appendix C and D). The first theme of this study is the relationship between the quality of village elections and voter participation. The direct measurement of voter participation is *voter turnout*, which comes from the self -reporting by voters who answered the following question, "Sometimes people may not be able to vote because they are out of town, sick, or busy. In the last villagers committee election, did you vote?" Respondents who answered "Yes" are coded 1 and who answered "No" are coded 0.

I propose that the seven variables that describe institutional features of village elections are positively associated with turnout. The independence of *election commission* is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, how was the villagers election committee formed that organized the election?" Respondents who answered "Elected at the villager assembly meetings" are coded 1 and I assume that election commission elected by voters is more independent and neutral. All other answers, including "Don't know", are coded 0, which

signifies that election commission is appointed by upper-level authority and is not independent or neutral.

Nomination method is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, how were primary candidates nominated?" Respondents who answered "Directly nominated by villagers" are coded 1, meaning there was an open nomination which I have proposed to increase turnout. All other answers are coded 0.

Primary election is another institutional feature that is expected to increase voter turnout. It is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, how were final candidates determined?" Respondents who answered "Primary election by villagers" are coded 1, meaning the candidate list was narrowed down by voters themselves as opposed to an upper authority or VPB. All other answers are coded 0.

Campaign rules are measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, how were candidates introduced to voters? (Multiple choices if needed)" Respondents who answered "Candidates introduced themselves by door-to-door canvassing" are coded 1, meaning that there are more interactions between candidates and voters. I would expect voters to be more interested in participation since campaigns make elections more competitive. All other answers are coded 0.

Multi-candidacy implicates the competitiveness of the elections and is expected to increase voter turnout. It is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, the method of electing the villagers committee chair was?" Respondents who answered "Multi-candidate election" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0.

Publicly counting ballots is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, were ballots tallied publicly?" Those who answered "Yes" are coded 1, meaning the

counting process was more transparent. I expect this to increase voter turnout. Those who answered "No" are coded 0.

The last institutional feature is the use of *secret ballot booth*. It is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, were there secret ballot booths to write ballots in?" Those who answered "Yes" are coded 1 and who answered "No" are coded 0.

The second theme of this dissertation is the relationship between village institutions and quality of village governance. Due to lack of survey data on objective evaluation of villagers committees' performance such as public goods provision, I will use villagers' perception of village cadre performance as a proxy to measure the quality of village governance. A problem that might derive from this measurement is that respondents' personal evaluation of village governance might be influenced by other random factors. For example, a respondent might give a negative evaluation to the villagers committee because he had personal conflicts with villagers committee members or because his personal interests were affected by public policies or projects initiated by the villagers committee that benefit most villagers. But in general, I assume that villagers' perception of the quality of village governance should capture the real level of performance by villagers committees. Villagers' evaluation of villagers committees' performance comes from two questions: 1) How do you evaluate the performance of the incumbent village cadres in handling village affairs? I coded those who answered "Very Fair" as 4. Those who answered "Fair" were coded 3. Those who answered "Not Very Fair" were coded 2. And those who answered "Very unfair" were coded 1. 2) How do you evaluate the effect of villager self-government in your village? I coded those who answered "Very Good" as 5. Those who answered "Good" were coded 4. Those who answered "Fair" were coded 3. Those who answered "Not bad" were coded 2. And those who answered "Very Bad" were coded 1.

In addition, I will use a question regarding the daily assistance peasants received from cadres to serve as a more objective measurement of the quality of village governance. The question asks, "In the last three years, have your family received direct help from the villagers committee on any of the following issues?" The interviewees were given 10 options including nine different types of assistance and an option of not receiving any help. Respondents who chose any option of receiving help were coded as 1, and respondents who did not choose any of the options of receiving help were coded as 0.

I propose that village governance quality is affected by two groups of factors. The first group of factors is the *quality of village election*. I use the same variables on electoral institutional features in the first part of this thesis, includingindependence of electoral commission, method of nomination, primary election, multi-candidacy, campaign rules, tallying ballots in public, and use of secret of ballot booth. I expect that the existence of these institutional features in village elections will lead to better quality of village governance.

The second group of factors is oversight institutions. I use three questions to measure the functions of VRA. The first one asked respondents if there was a VRA in their village. The second questions asked, "How many villager representatives assembly meetings, if any, were held in 2004?" I expect that the more meetings are held by VRA, the better the quality of village governance is.

The existence of the VRA does not necessarily mean that they are influential in village affairs. They could be established as figureheads without real power. In order to evaluate how influential VRAs are in monitoring villagers committee's management, I include a variable to measure the veto power of VRAs using the question, "Over past three years, was there any issue raised by the village cadres ever vetoed by villager representative assembly?" Respondents who

answered "Yes" are coded 1. All other answers are coded "0". The fact that the VRA has ever vetoed decisions of the villagers committee displays their capacity of controlling village affairs management and such capacity could help improve the quality of village governance.

The second oversight institution is the *DFMT*. The existence of DFMT is expected to hold village cadres more accountable in management of village accounts. We asked the peasants whether a DFMT was formed in their villages. Those who answered "Yes" are coded 1 and who answered "No" are coded 0. In addition, I include a variable to measure the transparency of village affairs management using the question, "Over past three years, has the villagers committee reported work to the villager assembly or villager representatives assembly every year?" Respondents who answered "Reported every year" are coded 1. All other answers including "Reports in some year(s) but not others", "Never reports" and "Don't know" are coded 0. If the villagers committee has to report its work regularly to villagers, village cadres will feel greater pressure from the public opinions and will be more responsive to villagers' demand.

Because all of the data on village institutional features are based on villagers' self-reporting, one may challenge the reliability of the data. For example, villagers might forget if the electoral commission members were selected by villagers or appointed by local government officials. One might not know how many VRA meetings were held last year because he is not a VRA member or does not care about village politics. Or, one might be hesitant to report that secret ballot booths were not available at the election because he was afraid of retaliation by village officials. As a result, the respondents from the same village might report different results to the same institutional question.

In response to this challenge, I compared the responses to the same institutional questions in the questionnaire to villagers and in the questionnaire to village cadres. While doing so, I

adjusted the villagers' responses according to the following rules. For all of the institutional variables except for *election campaign*, if the majority of the respondents from the same village reported the same answer as the village cadres'[112], then I replaced the minority answer with the majority answer.

If the majority of the respondents from the same village reported "Yes" and the village cadre's answer to the same question was "No", I changed all villagers' answers to "No". I assume that village cadres would be more likely to tell the surveyors that the institutions in their villages are democratic. For example, telling the surveyors that they did not count ballots in the public would be embarrassing for themselves[113]. Therefore, if cadres did report negative results to these institutional questions, it is more reasonable to believe what they said. If most of the respondents of the same village reported opposite answers to the cadre's, I assume that these villagers either did not know or forgot the answers but reported positively anyway[114].

However, if the majority of the respondents from the same village reported "No" and the village cadre's answer to the same question was "Yes", then the adjustment depends. For the variables of *election commission, nomination, primary elections, multi-candidacy, secret ballot booth, tallying ballots, and VC reporting its work to villagers*, I changed all villagers' answers from the same village to "No". Following the logic discussed above, I assume that village cadres might try to hide the true answers if the institutions in their villages were problematic. More importantly, the practice of these institutions such as nominating candidates and using secret ballot booths were likely to be known by all villagers. Therefore, under this circumstance, I would be more trustful of the majority of the villagers' answers and replace the answers of all the villagers of the same village to "No".

But for the variables of *VRA, VRA meetings, and DFMT*, I changed the answers of all respondents of the same village to "Yes". Because these institutions are known better to VRA members and DFMT members, the villagers' answers might not be very trustworthy. For example, if they did not know that their village had a VRA, they might report that there was no VRA. Under this circumstance, I tend to trust the cadre's answers.

Finally, for the variable of *election campaign*, I adopted a more stringent rule. If the majority respondents of the same village and the village cadre all reported "Yes", then I replaced the minority answer to "Yes". Some villagers might not be at home and thus they did not know about the campaign, whereas the majority of their fellow villagers and the village cadre knew about the campaign. For the same reason, if the majority of respondents answered "No" and the village cadre answered "Yes", I replaced all villagers' answers with "Yes". If the majority of respondents answered "Yes" but the village cadre reported "No", I replaced all villagers' answers to "Yes" because I assume that the very cadre who was interviewed did not know about the campaign. But if the majority of respondents and the village cadre all reported "No", then the adjustment depends on the situation. If the number of respondents who reported "No" minus the number of respondents who answered "Yes" is equal or less than 3, then I replaced all respondents' answers to "Yes". If, among the eight respondents from the same village, seven of them reported "No" while only one reported "Yes", it is not reasonable to replace all answers to "Yes" because this single person might have made up an answer of "Yes".

In any case, if the number of "Yes"s was equal to the number of "No"s, I decided to replace all answers with "Yes"[115]. In conclusion, by adopting the above strategies, I was able to standardize the answers of the respondents from the same villages. At the same time, by comparison the villagers' answers with the cadre's, I was able to verify the trustworthiness of the

data and, once the adjustments were made to the villagers' responses, the self-reported data on institutional variables are more reliable.

CHAPTER 4

QUALITY OF VILLAGE ELECTIONS AND LEVEL OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION: STATISTICAL RESULTS

Although it is debatable whether village elections will lead to democratization in China, many scholars and practitioners have argued that village elections at least would be a training ground for democracy - Chinese peasants will learn the mechanism and functions of democracy by attending regular elections of village leaders who manage village affairs on behalf of peasants[116]. But what have motivated Chinese peasants to go to the ballot box in the first place? Rational choice theorists like Mancur Olson have challenged the rationality of voting and argued that individual votes in collective action may hardly change the election result[117]. Scholars of Western democracies have attempted to give various explanations to this question within and beyond the paradigm of rational choice. Some have argued from an institutionalist perspective that formal election rules generate incentives that are capable of shaping political behavior[118]. For example, the proportional representation rule may be more incorporative than the rule of "winner takes all" and thus is capable of attracting more voters to attend elections. Others have paid attention to political culture and argued that voting is simply to fulfill one's civic duty. For example, in postindustrial societies, citizens are less concerned with basic material issues but are more interested in quality-of-life issues such as environmental protection and social justice, which makes modern citizens more motivated to directly participate in politics[119]. But how do we explain the voting behavior of citizens in authoritarian states like China? What is it that

motivates Chinese peasants to vote in village elections? These are the central themes of this chapter.

In this chapter, I argue that the quality of village elections determines the level of peasants' electoral participation. Due to lack of a national election law, village elections are conduced in different methods from one village to another. In some villages, the election procedures are more open and transparent. In these village, for example, voters are allowed to freely nominate candidates without interference from the authority and voters are given multiple choices of candidates at the polling station. But in other villages, voters are denied the rights to appoint election commission members, nominate and determine final candidates, and cast votes freely and privately. Whereas open electoral rules can encourage peasants to participate and the competitiveness of elections can attract more voters to participate, manipulated village elections are less meaningful to peasants and thus are attended by fewer peasants. Only if election methods are free and fair, are peasants interested in participation and will they gradually learn the true meaning of democracy. Untrustworthy election institutions will alienate voters and eventually make voters less confident in and indifferent to elections and democracy, which has been shown in the studies of African democratization. In other words, election institutions matter in making democracy work in rural China.

Using data from the national survey, this chapter will test these arguments on the relationship between quality of village elections and level of electoral participation. First I will discuss the dependent variable of participation in elections and its measure to be used in the statistical analysis. Next I will explore several electoral "institutions", i.e. rules and practices that have been institutionalized in varying degree in Chinese village elections to insure that they are free and fair. In addition to describing these electoral procedures and how they are measured,

I also provide a first-cut bivariate analysis of how they relate to election participation and show that there is evidence that these institutions do matter in encouraging peasants' participation. Then I will introduce four major factors that may also influence voter participation and therefore need to be controlled for – voters' socioeconomic conditions, subjective efficacy, village aggregate socioeconomic standings, and mobilization for voting. By describing their first-cut correlations with election participation, I will present the profile of rural Chinese who tend to be more active participants in village elections. The final part of this chapter will be statistical analyses of institutional effects of village elections on voter participation based on multivariate regressions. I will show that the election methods that feature transparency and competitiveness increase the level of participation of rural Chinese voters. I will conclude by stressing the importance of standardizing the practices of village elections in order to increase the level of electoral participation and consolidate the grassroots-level democracy in rural China.

Dependent Variable

Voter turnout is the most direct measure of level of electoral participation and has been widely used in studies of voting behavior. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) of China, which relies on local governments to report data on village elections, the national average turnout rate for the election term of 2005-2007 was 90.7%[120]. However, because turnout rate is seen as an important indicator of popular support of the regime and is used by upper-level government to evaluate political achievements of lower-level officials, local officials might have overestimated the turnout rate to exaggerate their accomplishments. One way to boost turnout rate, for example, is to assign proxy votes for those who do not show

up at election meetings. In some villages, election rule requires that only close family members of the voter may be assigned as the proxy for the voter. By in others, the rule is rather loose and a voter can assign any other voter to cast the vote for him. By this way, the turnout rate is kept high whereas in reality not as many voters participate in elections. For this reason, the turnout rate reported by the MCA usually is higher than that from social science surveys[121].

In our survey, we asked respondents the following question, "Sometimes people may not be able to vote because they are out of town, sick, or busy. In the last villagers committee election, did you vote?" The result shows that 63.2% of the respondents reported that they voted in the recent village election. This turnout rate is much lower than that reported by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA). It is also lower than what Shi (1999b) reported on semi-competitive elections of local work unit leaders in urban area and villagers committees in rural area. According to his 1990 to 1991 nationwide survey, about 76% of the respondents voted in these elections. One of the reasons for this difference is that there have been much more peasants migrating to urban cities who are thus not able to attend the elections in home villages. Among the 787 migrant workers in my survey sample, 81.1% said they did not attend the recent village elections in their hometowns.

Zhong and Chen (2002)'s survey in 12 counties of Jiangsu showed that 48% of the eligible voters reported to have gone to the central polling station to cast ballots in the last village elections. Their study excluded the proxy votes because casting ballots at central polling station, the authors argued, reflected voter's serious attitude to the elections. The data in my study do not allow me to adopt such a strategy and thus I will include all voters who reported to have voted in the recent village elections. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the reported participation level is inflated. On the one hand, for those who could not vote due to scheduling

conflicts, assigning proxy votes may be as formal as voting by themselves. On the other hand, those who abstain from voting may assign others to cast proxy votes in order to avoid possible retaliation by village cadres, but when asked whether they voted by the interviewers, they might still report nonvoting.

Independent Variables: Village Election Rules

Studies explaining the variation of voter turnout in different democratic states have found that political institutions and electoral law are key determinants. In democratic elections, participation level is higher when barriers to participation are removed and thus the costs of participation are lowered. In the United States, states that make provisions to facilitate voter registration (e.g. by allowing mobile mail registration on designated days or registration by mail) have seen higher turnout rates in general elections than states with the least facilitative election systems[122]. Robert Jackson's study of voter -turnout levels in the 1970s and 1960s in 19 democracies have found that political institutions and electoral law explain 97% of the variance in turnout levels. For example, in states that have nationally competitive electoral districts, political parties and candidates are motivated to mobilize voters everywhere, which increases turnout. Turnout rates are lower in multiparty political systems because elections are given a less decisive role in government formation. Also, mandatory voting laws can make it more costly for voters to register and vote and thus reduce turnout rates[123].

In China, there is no national electoral law on village elections and every province has its own electoral guidelines. Therefore, I assume that electoral participation levels in different parts of China are affected by their settings of electoral rules. The logic behind such causal

relationship shares commonalities with that in Western democracies, but it also has a unique logic itself. On the one hand, voters in both democratic societies and in rural China are rational actors who integrate cost-benefit analyses and preference of interest maximization into their voting decisions, intentionally or not. As new institutionalists argue, institutions and their rules shape the preference and behavior of rational actors living under such institutions[124]. Different electoral rules in various regions of China may alter voters' calculation of costs and benefits by participating in village elections and thus generate different levels of voter turnout.

On the other hand, the level of transparency and fairness in Chinese village elections is far less advanced than that in Western democracies. Democratic states may differ on their political institutional designs and election laws – multiparty system versus bipartisanship, or mandatory voter registration versus voluntary voter registration rules – but not so much on the quality of elections, thanks to a long history of progressive development of democratic politics and well-rounded monitoring mechanisms in these societies. In China, the setup of political institutions and the general principles of electoral rules are the same in every region. For example, there is only one political party, and VC positions are not party-based. There is no division of electoral districts in a single village. Election registration in every village is automatically done based on household registration, etc. However, what distinguishes the elections in different places of China is the quality of elections, exemplified by the practical methods adopted by local governments in village elections. For example, who have the rights to nominate candidates? Are peasants allowed to nominate candidates or do VPBes (VPB) and town governments designate candidates? Do election authorities provide secret ballot booths for voters to write ballots in? Or do villagers have to write ballots while being monitored by political cadres? These practical details in the electoral processes define the quality of elections

and consequently lead to different levels of electoral participation. More transparent and fair electoral methods make the electoral institutions more trustworthy. Thus peasants are more confident in getting their favored village leaders elected and are more interested in participation in the elections. If the election rules deny free participation and discourage competition, voters do not trust the electoral institutions and are less interested in participating in the elections. Essentially, the variation of quality of elections is reflected in seven major steps of village elections.

Formation of *Election Commission* (EC) is the first step in village election. EC administers the entire election processes and arbitrates any disputes that may arise during the election. Therefore, a just EC lays the foundation for a free and fair election, and the method of forming EC is especially crucial. According to Article 13 of the Organic Law, "Members of election commissions are nominated and elected by villager assemblies or villager small groups."[125] In practice, there are three ways that an EC is chosen. First, an EC may be elected at Villager Assembly (VA) meetings, which every villager over 18 years old is required to attend[126]. This is the most democratic way of electing an EC because it incorporates all eligible voters in the selection process. Second, in some villages, EC members are nominated within every Villager Small Group (VSG) and the nominated candidates are sent to villagers committees for final determination[127]. But because there is no legal requirement for VSG leaders to obtain majority approval before they make a decision, VSG leaders can nominate EC members without the need to call for a VSG-wide meeting. Sometimes, VSG leaders' choices can be influenced by local officials who force or cajole VSG leaders to approve their predetermined EC nomination. In this way, local officials can avoid possible charges of election manipulation and at the same time are able to install their allies to preside elections. Therefore, an EC elected by VSGs may

not be independent of external influence and it is not a trustworthy method to let VSGs choose an EC. Third, in some villages, local officials directly appoint EC members and deprive villagers the rights of nomination. If the EC is appointed by local officials, it will have to follow guidance from those who appoint the EC members rather than observe electoral rules and defend villagers' interests. As a result, EC's credibility is impaired and other election processes become less credible, which depresses voter turnout. But if an EC is elected by villagers at VA meetings, it is held accountable to all villagers and is more independent of upper authorities, which encourages voter participation.

I measure the independence of EC using the following survey question, "In electing the current villagers committee, how was the villager election commission selected that organized the election?" Respondents who answered "Elected at the villager assembly meeting" are coded 1. All other answers, including "Don't know", are coded 0. About 18% villagers reported that the EC was selected by voters.

Candidate nomination is another institutional indicator of the competitiveness of village elections[128]. The Organic Law states that, "In elections of villagers committees, candidates are directly nominated by eligible voters." However, Pastor and Tan (2000)'s study finds that there were six nomination methods widely applied in different regions,[129] and candidate nomination is one of the procedures often rigged by VPB or local government. My data show that 35% of the respondents reported that candidates were nominated directly and openly by villagers. If candidates are nominated by local officials rather than villagers, voters are left with limited choice, may lose trust over the election's fairness, and may abstain from attending them.

Nomination method is measured by the question: "In electing the current villagers committee, how were primary candidates nominated?" Respondents who answered "Directly nominated by villagers" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0.

Campaign Rules. Election campaigns help voters make sensible choices after they gain better knowledge of candidates and hear their work platforms. In a free and fair election, political candidates from different political parties should have the freedom to campaign and solicit votes, and all candidates should be granted equal campaign resources (e.g. access to media) for their campaigning activities.[130] Without campaigns, there would be limited interaction between candidates and voters, and elections would become less competitive. The Organic Law for China's village elections gives no information with respect to campaign rules. In practice, there are primarily three methods of introducing candidates. First, candidate's information is put up on the village public bulletin board before elections, and candidates are allowed to give a short speech on the election day right before villagers fill out ballots[131]. Second, in some villages, ECs organize VA meetings before the election day in which candidates get to meet with voters, give campaign speeches, and answer voters' questions. Third, in some rare cases, candidates were said to carry out door-to-door canvassing and pass campaign literature to voters before the election day.[132] Among these methods, the first one involves little or no real interaction between candidates and voters. Because voters get little information about candidates, they would feel difficult in deciding whom to choose, which may consequently lead them to give up voting. The other two methods both give more opportunities for the candidates to promote themselves. Particularly, door-to-door canvassing involves more in-depth communication between candidates and voters, makes elections more competitive and more interesting to voters, and attracts villagers to participate in the election processes and cast votes on the election day.

In the survey we asked the respondents the following question, "In electing the current villagers committee, how were candidates introduced to voters? (multiple choices if necessary)" The three methods were all provided as options for the respondents to choose from. But the option of "Through VA meetings" did not distinguish the VA meetings on the election day (or election meetings) from the pre-election VA meetings called on specifically for introducing candidates. Therefore, I will only regard the third measure, door-to-door canvassing, as a measure of real election campaigns which dynamically interact candidates with voters. Respondents who answered "Candidates introduced themselves by door-to-door canvassing" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0. About 7% of respondents reported such activities during the elections.

Multi-candidacy is an important signal of election competitiveness. The Organic Law requires that, "the number of candidates shall be more than that of positions." Election rules in many provinces require the number of candidates to be 1.5 to 2 times the number of positions. For example, there must be two candidates fielded for the position of VC chair. Because multi-candidacy provides more options for voters and increases the level of competitiveness, multi-candidate elections are more attractive for voters to participate. For the position of VC members, the rule is not strictly observed and often there is only one more candidate than the number of positions[133]. Since elections of VC members are not as competitive, I will not use multi-candidacy for VC members to measure the level of electoral competitiveness.

Data for electoral multi-candidacy came from the following survey question, "In electing the current villagers committee, the method of electing the villagers committee chair was," Respondents who answered "Multi-candidate election" are coded 1. All other answers are coded

0. My data show that 69% of the respondents reported that there was more than one candidate for VC chair in their elections.

Primary elections. China's VC election adopts an absolute majority rule, meaning that the winner needs to gather more than half of all votes. Such an electoral design together with the multi-candidacy rule predefines that it is better to only have two candidates for VC chair because having three candidates makes it very difficult to satisfy the majority requirement and may increase election costs if multiple elections are needed. Therefore, if more than two candidates are nominated for VC chair, there needs to be a way to narrow down the candidate list. However, this process of determining the final candidates may be controlled by party branch or township government who would like to remove unwanted candidates and keep their favored ones. A more transparent and fair way of narrowing down the candidate list is to conduct a primary election open to all voters. Although it is not mentioned in the Organic Law, a primary election was held in 24% of the sampled villages in the survey. A primary election technically precludes manipulation of final candidate list by upper authorities and submits the selection power to voters, which makes final candidates more legitimate. Presumably, peasants are more interested in participating in the election if a primary election is held.

The variable of primary election is measured by the question, "In electing the current villagers committee, how were final candidates determined?" Respondents who answered "Primary election by all villagers" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0.

The use of *secret ballot booth* is an essential procedure in free and fair elections. Secret ballot booth not only protects voters' privacy, but also keeps voters from interference or even intimidation by candidates or political forces over their voting choice. In order to reduce election costs or to make it easier to monitor voters' electoral choice, town government and VPB may

force the EC to ignore the use of secret ballot booth and ask voters to fill out ballots in public. My data show that only about 40% of the respondents reported the availability of secret ballot booths in their elections. Fearing retaliation from officials, voters might have to defer to the authority's will by voting for the authority's favored candidates, or they might simply refrain from voting. Moreover, the Organic Law has clearly required that secret ballot booths be available at polling stations. If local officials decline to arrange for use of secret ballot booths, voters who insist on protecting their privacy may abstain from voting because nonexistence of secret ballot booths is against national law. The respondents who answered "Yes" to the question, "In electing the current villagers committee, was there a secret ballot booth?" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0.

Finally, a proper ballot counting procedure is required for a free and fair election. To be exact, ballots need to be tallied in public, and void ballots need to be handled properly and openly. If the counting process is open to all voters and to neutral election monitors, election organizers can avoid potential illegal actions by candidates or other political forces such as stuffing ballot boxes and rewriting ballots. Also, the EC should arbitrate invalid ballots in accordance with electoral rules under the supervision of voters and election monitors. If ballots are not counted in public, the election results are not trustworthy to voters. If the measure of publicly counting ballots is not explicitly informed to voters before the election, villagers may decline to cast their votes. Openness of ballot counting is measured by the question, "In electing the current villagers committee, were ballots tallied publicly?" Those who answered "Yes" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0. About 70% of the respondents said that, in their village elections, ballots were counted in public.

Using the survey data, I conducted preliminary bivariate analyses of election rules and the measure of electoral participation. Both analyses provide an interesting first-cut on the relationship between institutions and participation and show that the existence of many of the electoral procedures described above have strong positive correlations to higher participation level in village elections. Figure 4.1 shows that, if implemented in an open and fair manner, any of the seven steps in village elections is associated with higher voter turnout. For example, the turnout rate was only 22% in villages where ballots were not tallied publicly but it was above 80% where ballots were counted in public. In villages that did not use secret ballot booths, the turnout rate was less than 50% but otherwise it was close to 90%. Also, turnout was less than 30% if there was only one candidate for VC chair. But multi-candidacy would boost voter turnout to about 80%. While these institutional effects on voter participation are consistent with my predictions, they are preliminary results and will be examined more carefully later as I should control for some other variables that may be associated with voter participation as well.

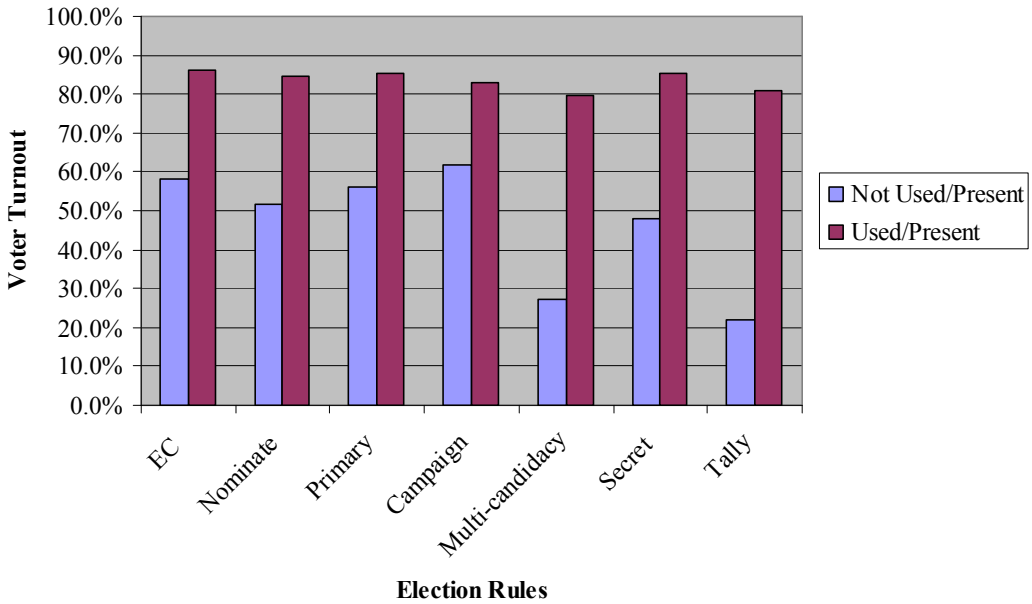

Figure 4.1 Village Election Methods and Voter Turnout

Descriptive Statistics and Control Variables

Previous studies have found that level of voter participation is a function of a number of factors including voter's socioeconomic standings, voter's subjective attitudes to politics, political institutional settings, etc. The research in this chapter is particularly interested in examining the institutional effects, i.e. quality of village elections, on the level of electoral participation by Chinese peasants. But in order for the testing to be valid, those other influential factors shall be controlled for. While I will account for the specific effects of these control variables in a larger regression, I will first present some descriptive statistics that provide first-cut relationships between these factors and voter participation. The preliminary analyses will help us know more about the voting population in rural China and reveal the "profile" of rural Chinese who tend to be more active participants in village elections.

Individual-level Socioeconomic Variables

Previous studies have shown that voter participation can be influenced voter's socioeconomic conditions such as gender, age, education level and so forth. Many studies have found that people from higher strata of socioeconomic standings are more likely to participate in politics than those from lower strata[134] and better educated and wealthier voters are more likely to vote than less educated and poor ones. Here I will discuss five main socioeconomic characteristics of rural Chinese voters and present their correlations with electoral participation.

Gender. In traditional societies, males had more opportunities to be exposed to political activities and, in contrast, most women were confined to domestic duties. The impact of such division of labor partly extended to the political life in most Western societies, in which male turnout rate was higher than female turnout rate[135]. In recent years, the difference of electoral participation between men and women has diminished and in some cases even reversed. For example, Pattie and Johnston found that, since 1979, women had been more likely to vote than men in Britain[136]. But according to my survey data, rural Chinese men are more likely to vote in village elections than women. While 67% of male respondents reported voting, only 60% of females reported so. This gender gap in voting is similar to what was found in industrial societies in the past. In rural China where traditional values are still prevalent, men take more responsibilities in the household while women primarily deal with domestic housework. When it comes to external matters like political activities, women are less likely to participate than men. Shi's study of political participation in Beijing showed higher turnout rate among women (74.8%) than that among men (70.8%). Apparently, urban women were more active than rural women in voting[137].

Age. People's age is often found to have a curvilinear relationship with turnout. "[P]articipation increases steadily with age until it reaches a peak in the middle years, and then gradually declines with old age."[138] A voter's age has three implications that may influence his or her turnout[139]. First, people at different stages of the life cycle may vote or not vote as a result of physical conditions. Due to occupation and immobility, youngsters and elders may not be able to vote. For example, in today's China, millions of young peasants move to urban cities to work and cannot make it back home to vote. Second, people at different stages of life cycle have different socioeconomic conditions, which may determine whether they will vote. People in their middle ages are more likely to vote because their socioeconomic status in the society has determined that the stake of elections is higher for them than that for youngsters and elders. Third, different ages signify different historical experience, which is also known as generational difference. Peasants from high age strata may have experienced the pre-1978 period when election of production team leader was a political task that everybody needed to fulfill. Such socialization process may have an impact on their later election experience. Young peasants do not have this historical experience and thus do not have the psychological motivation of voting. Since women and men have very different turnout levels, I will present the bivariate relationship between age and turnout rate separately by gender.

Figure 4.2 shows some different relationship between age and voter turnout than the one found in previous studies of political participation. While women's average turnout rate was consistently lower than that of men, their trend along the age line was different from each other after the age of 55. Peasants from the age group of 18-25 had the lowest turnout rates, 42.8% for men and 40.6% for women. From the age of 25 to 55, the turnout rate for both men and women steadily increased. At the age of between 46 and 55, male voters' average turnout rate was

78.6%, and female voters' average turnout rate was 73%. From then on, the average turnout rate for female voters consistently decreased to 67.2% among those older than 66. This trend for women is consistent with that among the voters in other societies. But the participation of men of different age groups had a different trend. Instead of showing a curvilinear shape, the relationship is represented in an ascending line. From 55 to older, the turnout level kept increasing to 78.8% for those between 56 and 65 years old, and 80.4% for those between 66 and 89 years old.

One explanation of the different trends of voter turnout between men and women is that young and middle-aged men were more likely to work outside villages and could not attend election meetings. Since most old men were left in the countryside, the likelihood of their participating in the village election and its related activities was higher than younger men. Although most old women also stayed in villages, they might be less interested in politics than younger women and less likely to participate in the election and its related activities.

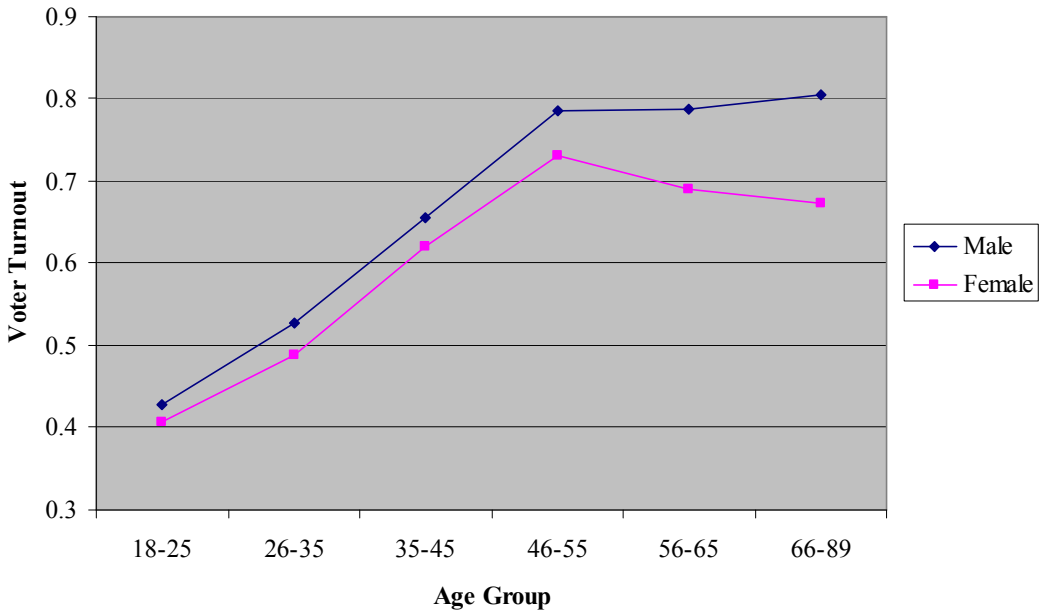

Figure 4.2 Age and Voter Turnout

Education. Voter's education level has been proved to significantly influence his or her voting behavior in many studies of political participation. However, the results are sharply different from each other in democracies and in authoritarian states. For example, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) found that the higher a voter's education level was, the higher the likelihood of voting was. This was true even when other socioeconomic variables were controlled for.[140] However, studies of political participation in the former Soviet Union have found that turnout rate was negatively associated with his or her education level. Voters who received longer period of education tend to abstain from voting as a way to show their contempt political attitude toward the authoritarian regime[141]. Shi's study of political participation in Beijing found that turnout rate had a curvilinear relationship with education level. Voters with 16-17 years of schooling had the highest turnout rate, and the turnout rate of voters with graduate-level education plummeted[142].

My data confirms Shi's findings and shows that it hold true in rural areas as well. In Figure 4.3, we see a curvilinear relationship between turnout rate and education levels. Voters with elementary school education had a slightly higher turnout rate (67.8%) than that of voters who received no education (65.8%). But the average turnout rate decreased for those who had additional years of education beyond elementary school. People who received education in two-year colleges or four-year universities or other high education institutes had the lowest turnout rate of 36.8%. One explanation for the trend is that peasants of higher education levels are less dependent on resources within villages for living. With better education, these peasants are more capable of finding non-agricultural jobs in nearby towns and their main income sources are from outside villages. As a result, these people are less interested in village politics and thus are less likely to attend village elections.

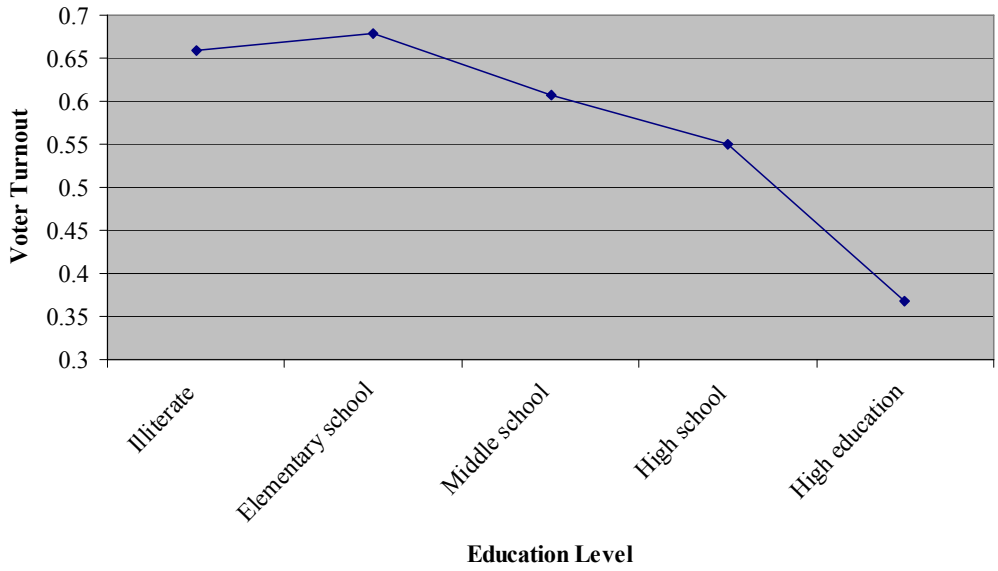

Figure 4.3 Education and Voter Turnout

CPC Membership. Previous studies have found that voters with strong partisanship are more likely to get engaged in electoral activities than those that are not affiliated with political

parties[143]. For party loyalists, voting does not have to a strictly rational choice action with the purpose of utility maximization, but can be a matter of habit that is developed in early-life socialization experiences and strengthened in repetitive participation in electoral activities[144]. Others argue from a rationalistic perspective that party identification is a choice of a voter's based on his retrospective evaluations of political parties and thus represents his future expectations as to which party to vote for[145]. Because the decision-making costs and information costs are lower for voters with strong party identification, party loyalists are more likely to participate in electoral activities.

China is not a multi-party political system and candidates in village elections are not divided by party lines. However, fearing not enough voters participate in elections, which may void the validity of elections and damage the legitimacy of elected cadres, local party committees or VPBs may mobilize party members to participate in elections. Therefore, CPC members were seen to be more active in voting than non-party voters[146]. My survey data show that turnout rate for party members was 77.1% while that for non-party voters was 62.5%.

Individual Wealth Level. A voter's economic standing may influence his electoral behavior. Wealthy peasants may have a larger stake in village politics or they have higher demand for self-expression and participation in politics. Therefore, wealthy peasants may be more likely to vote than poor ones. I will use voter's subjective evaluation of his or her relative economic standing compared with other fellow villagers instead of absolute value of income to measure voter's economic status. Absolute value is less meaningful to predict voter turnout in China considering the huge income disparity across regions. The poorest peasant from a village in an eastern coast province may still be richer than the wealthiest peasant from a village in

Western China. But the latter may be more likely to participate in village elections than the former because, being the wealthiest person, he has a larger stake in the politics of his village.

Shi (1997) found that voters who thought themselves as being better off economically were more likely to vote and those who considered themselves below average wealth level were less likely to vote[147]. But my data do not show a clear relationship between a voter's subjective evaluation of his economic status and turnout. In fact, peasants who considered themselves at average or above average economic status had relatively lower turnout rates of about 61.9% and 60.2%. But those who considered themselves as well off (although only 35 cases) had a relatively high turnout rate of about 75%. Also, peasants who thought their economic standing below average and poor had higher average turnout than those of middle wealth level (Figure 4.4). A more reliable relationship between wealth and turnout will be shown later in the regression results where other variables are added.

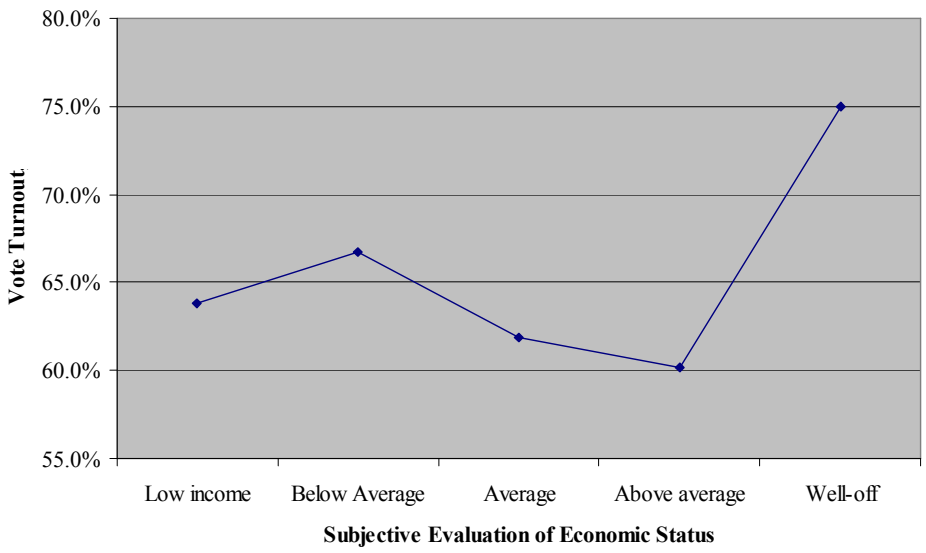

Figure 4.4 Subjective Evaluation of Economic Status and Voter Turnout

Individual-level Subjective Motivations

In addition to socioeconomic factors, electoral behavior may also be influenced by voter's subjective attitudes to politics. Those who are more psychologically involved in politics are more likely to participate in politics. For example, voters with stronger political efficacy, the feeling that individual political action such as attending elections will impact political process, are more likely to vote. Abramson and Aldrich (1982) found that the declining beliefs among the American public about government responsiveness, or external efficacy, (combined with the weakening of party identification) primarily explained the decline of turnout rate in U.S. Shi (1999b) found that voters with higher level of internal efficacy, or those who hold a stronger belief that they can participate in politics effectively, would vote in limited-choice elections (local people's congress elections, semi-competitive unit leader elections, and village elections) as a way to punish unpopular and corrupt leaders.[148]

Since political efficacy is found to be able to predict voter turnout, I will control for the variable in order to examine the relationship between electoral methods and voter participation. I use seven survey questions to measure a voter's internal efficacy: 1) I consider myself very capable of participating in politics. 2) If I were a government official, I believe I am completely capable of assuming the job. 3) If I were a village cadre, I could do a fairly good job. 4) I think that I know very well every village affairs, big or small. 5) In the village, I always can solve any large or small problems I encounter. 6) Sometimes politics and government can be so complicated that it's very hard for a person like me to understand them. And 7) I think I understand very well the major political issues facing our country. The answers to all these questions except for No. 6 are coded as 2 for "Strongly agree", 1 for "Agree", and 0 for all other

answers including "Don't know". The answers to the sixth question are coded as 2 for "Strongly disagree", 1 for "Disagree", and 0 for all other answers.

External efficacy is measured by six questions: 1) In our village, people have many ways to effectively influence the cadres' decisions. 2) In our village, people like me do not have a say. 3) In our country, people have many ways to effectively influence the government's decisions. 4) People like me do not have any influence on government policy-making. 5) Government officials do not care very much what people like me think. 6) The government cares very much and satisfies citizens' demand. For questions 1, 3, and 6, those who answered "Strong agree" are coded 2. Those who answered "Agree" are coded 1. All other answers including "Don't know" are coded 0. For questions 2, 4, and 5, those who answered "Strongly disagree" are coded 2. Those who answered "Disagree" are coded 1. All other answers are coded 0. Then I create two composite indexes of internal and external efficacy by adding the answers to each set of questions together.

Village-level Socioeconomic Variables

Voter's electoral behavior is influenced by both individual stimuli and external contextual factors. Contextual or environment variables include "the non-human biological and physical aspects of the surrounding world; the cultural milieu; the social-structural character of the community, and the political setting"[149]. While the major interest of this chapter is one element of the political setting – rules of the game, I need to control for some other contextual factors. For example, voters who live in mountainous or hilly areas need to overcome greater energy and time costs than those who live in plain area to participate in elections[150]. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that people in mountainous areas are less likely to attend election meetings

and less likely to involve in election-related meetings. Moreover, in rich villages, the stake of participating in village elections might be higher than that in poor villages. I will control for the wealth level of villages measured by their average net per capita income. The distance between a village and the nearest town center could matter as well because a village closer to the town center may have more economic resources, which increases the stake of its village election. At the same time, a village closer to town center may be more likely to be interfered by town government in its internal politics. Finally, I will control for the size of villages in case it also distracts my exploration of electoral institution's impacts on voter participation.

External Mobilization Variable

Political setting includes both short-term and long-term systemic factors. While rules of game or electoral rules being the long-term factor, short-term factors are "those which are unique to the particular election in which turnout is examined"[151]. For example, close races may increase the incentives for candidates to mobilize voters and make the voting power held by voters seem to be greater, both of which shall motivate voters to participate in the election[152]. In close-race elections, campaigning activities will certainly change voter's perception of the costs and benefits of electoral participation. In addition, family members, relatives, and friends all could be a mobilizing force during the election processes. In Communist states, in order to boost voter turnout, which is shown as an indicator of popular support of regimes, political cadres may use political resources to mobilize voters to vote. Fearful of political retaliation of nonvoting, it becomes a rational choice for voters to participate in elections in Communist regimes[153]. In any case, external mobilizations can be a driving force to voter participation.

To control for the effect of mobilization factors, I included a question in the survey, "In electing the current villagers committee, did anybody persuade you to vote for someone?" Those who answered "No" are coded 0. All other answers, including "Yes", "Don't remember", and missing values, are coded 1. The missing values are coded 1 because I assume that those who were mobilized by others in elections might decline to answer the question because they did not want to been viewed as voting under influence. About 69.6% of respondents said they had the experience of being persuaded by others to vote for somebody. Among the 371 respondents who explicitly said they were mobilized, 66.6% said the lobbyists were the candidates themselves or the candidates' friends and relatives. 32.1% said they were villagers of the same kinship. 25.1% said they were family members. 19.1% said they were village and town cadres. From these numbers, it seems that mobilization by candidates and their supporters was the strongest force to get out voters. Family clans and kinships seem to have been an influential factor in voting behavior as well. Village and town cadres had the least influence to mobilize voters, seen from these numbers. Because there is a large amount of missing values for each of the mobilizing force, I will not include these separate driving forces into the regression analyses to capture their individual influence on voter participation. Instead, only the variable of whether a voter was mobilized will be included.

Results and Discussion

I use a logistic model to test the relationship between electoral methods and voter turnout, which is a dichotomous variable. All independent variables are dichotomous as well. For each of the categorical variables of age, education level, individual wealth level, and village

geographic location, the differences between all categories are not equal to each other. Therefore, it is inappropriate to run these variables directly as doing so assumes that the differences between scores are the same. Instead, I break each of those variables into a series of dummy variables. Peasants under 25 years old with no education who considered themselves as very poor are set as reference categories to which peasants of other categories are compared. For the variable of village geographic location, villages in plain areas are in the omitted category. The multivariate regression results are presented in Table 4.1. Because I have incorporated a large number of variables in the statistical model and some variables have many missing values, the number of cases run in the model dropped to 2,067.

Overall, my hypothesis is confirmed that electoral institutions matter in raising the level of electoral participation. Open procedures of choosing an EC, determining final candidates, multi-candidacy, use of secret ballot, and counting ballots in public, all seemed to have made peasants more interested in village elections and get them out to vote. Although open nomination and free campaign do not seem to affect voter participation, their coefficients are positive, meaning they are positively related to voter turnout but the relationships are not strong enough to generate statistical significance in the regression. Because interpretation of the log coefficients in the logistic regression can not show a direct picture of the causal relations, in Table 4.1 I also present the change of probability in the dependent variable for every independent variable that is statistically significant.

How election commissions were selected appears to have a real effect on whether or not villagers decide to vote. When other variables were held constant, if the election commission was selected by voters as opposed to being appointed by village cadres or town officials, the voter turnout rate would increase by 4.36%. Using primary elections to determine the final

candidates has made the elections more transparent and attracted more peasants to vote. If the final candidates were elected in primary elections without the interference from local officials, voter turnout rate would increase by 3.99%, all other variables being held constant. Moreover, with multiple final candidates available for voters to choose from, the elections have become more competitive and voters are more willing to participate. Given multiple choices of final candidates to VC chair, peasants were 7.34% more likely to vote in the elections.

Among all electoral institutions, using secret ballot booths and counting ballots in public have appeared to be the most influential factors to increase voter turnout. When other variables are held constant, if secret ballot booths were to be available, voters would be 10.88% more likely to attend the elections. If ballot counting was to be open to all voters, 16% more voters would cast their ballots on the election day. It seems that voters view these two steps as more substantial than other democratic methods to protect their election rights. In other words, even if other procedures are not strictly observed, peasants still believed they would be able to protect their electoral interests in the last two steps. For example, even if voters are deprived of the opportunity to choose the election commission and to choose the final candidates, or, even if there is only one final candidate available, voters could still protect their interests or protest to the authority by nonvoting or by voting out the incompetent or abusive cadres on the election day. In order for the punishing action to be effective, secret ballot booths and opening counting procedure need to be put in place. When secret ballot booths are available for voters to fill out their ballots, villagers do not have to worry about retaliation from village cadres if they vote against cadres' will and do not have to be concerned of being glimpsed by peer villagers who might disclose their voting decisions. If the punishing effort is intended in the secret ballot

booths, then it is very important to have the ballots tallied in public to keep ballots from being tampered with by village cadres.

One factor that has not showed significant impact on voter participation is the open campaign method. Campaign activities like door-to-door canvassing does not seem to make peasants more willing to vote. However, this result might be due to the fact that so few peasants (only 7.12%) experienced the door-to-door campaigns in their villages. The variation of the variable was too little to show any significant influence on the dependent variable. The other factor that did not show statistical significance is open nomination. Compared with other procedures in village elections such as determination of final candidates, use of secret ballot booths, and open counting procedure, nomination is not a motivating factor in getting more peasants to the voting booth.

Table 4.1 Logistic Regressions of Voter Participation

Independent Variables	Voter Turnout	
	Coefficient	Change in probability
Individual socioeconomic controls		
Gender (0-1)	.206*	.0332
	(.118)	
Age: 26-35 (0-1)	.922***	.1224
	(.217)	
Age: 35-45 (0-1)	1.254***	.1705
	(.206)	
Age: 46-55 (0-1)	1.698***	.2087
	(.228)	
Age: 56-65 (0-1)	1.569***	.1799
	(.250)	
Age: 66-89 (0-1)	1.746***	.1808
	(.286)	
Education: elementary school (0-1)	.462***	.0714
	(.158)	
Education: middle school (0-1)	.664***	.1000
	(.182)	
Education: high school (0-1)	.569**	.0790
	(.267	
Education: high education (0-1)	.958	
	(.787)	
CPC membership (0-1)	.330	
	(.321)	
Wealth: below average (0-1)	.018	
	(.161)	
Wealth: average (0-1)	.271*	.0431
	(.154)	
Wealth: above average (0-1)	-.036	
	(.238)	
Wealth: rich (0-1)	1.375	
	(1.057)	
Subjective motivations		
Internal efficacy (0-14)	.064*	.0225
	(.031)	
External efficacy (0-14)	.007	
	(.037)	
Village socioeconomic controls		
Geographic location: mountainous (0-1)	.261*	.0423
	(.123)	
Geographic location: other location (0-1)	.770*	.0992
	(.302)	
Distance to town center	.008	

	(.009)	
Number of households	.000	
	(.000)	
Net per capita income	.000*	.0219
	(.000)	
Mobilization (0-1)	-.101	
	(.174)	
Electoral rules		
Selection of election commission (0-1)	.284*	.0436
	(.169)	
Openness of candidate nomination (0-1)	.114	
	(.141)	
Openness of final candidate selection (0-1)	.257*	.0399
	(.151)	
Door-to-door campaigns (0-1)	.127	
	(.213)	
Multi-candidacy for VC chairs (0-1)	.421***	.0734
	(.147)	
Use of secret ballot booths (0-1)	.765***	.1088
	(.133)	
Tallying ballots in public (0-1)	.825***	.1555
	(.158)	
Intercept	-2.793***	
	(.331)	
Model chi-square	287.39***	
N	2,067	

Note: Numbers in parentheses under the coefficients are standard errors. Changes in probabilities are calculated when other variables are held at their means. For dichotomous variables, the changes in probabilities are calculated when the independent variables move from 0 to 1. For continuous variables, including internal efficacy, external efficacy, distance to town center, and net per capita income, the changes of probabilities are calculated when the independent variables move for one standard deviation.
*$p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Among the individual-level socioeconomic factors, voter's gender, age, and education level all displayed significant relationship with both turnout rate, which confirms the findings in previous studies of sociological determinants of voter turnout and my first-cut analyses. A male peasant was 3.32% more likely to vote than a woman. Voters of all age groups included in the model were seen to be more likely to vote than voters under 25 years old, which is the reference

category, and peasants of 46-55 years old are most likely to vote. By comparing the changes of probabilities among all age groups, I found that the shape of changing turnout rates at different age levels is similar to the one in my first-cut analysis (Figure 4.2). Whereas other studies have proved that turnout for old people is substantially lower than that for young people, my study has found that the peasants older than 56 were even more active in voting for villager leaders than peasants of any other age groups except for those between 46 and 55 years old.

Voters on any education level except for high education were more likely to vote than those who receive no education. For example, voters who finished elementary school, middle school, and high school, were 7.14%, 10%, and 7.9% respectively, more likely to vote than illiterate voters. From the changes of probabilities I see that voters with middle school education had the highest probability of voting. Moreover, peasants with high education did not seem to be more active in voting than peasants with no education. But since only 35 respondents in the survey had high education degrees, the number of cases is too small to generate any meaningful regression result.

CCP members appeared not be more active in voting than non-party members. Being a CCP member does not make one more interested in village politics. But one also can argue that local party leaders have failed to mobilize party members to participate in village elections. The rejection of the mobilization model is further consolidated by the fact that the mobilization variable itself did not show statistical significance to turnout. Basically, in Chinese village elections, peasants are not significantly subject to external influences on their voting decisions.

Seen from the regression results, a voter's psychological motivations were behind his electoral behavior. One standard deviation increase in a voter's belief that he could understand and effectively participate in politics, known as internal efficacy, would increase the possibility

of his attending village elections by 2.25%. However, voters' external efficacy did not affect their voting decisions. Finally, the other socioeconomic variable that is worthy noting is the village net per capita income. Moving up for one standard deviation, the village per capita income was seen to increase turnout by 2.19%. However, the log coefficient is nearly equal to zero, which means that the odds ratio for the explanatory variable was approximately equal to "1" and that village net per capita income hardly affected the level of voter participation. This finding rejects the conventional wisdom that voters in rich villages are necessarily more active in electoral participation than voters in poor villages.

Conclusion

Students of political participation in China have focused on sociological and psychological determinants but have largely overlooked institutional factors. This chapter has examined the influence of the design of electoral rules on voter's participation in village elections. It has found that, in villages where election rules encourage competitiveness and feature transparency and fairness, voter participation level measured turnout rate is higher than that in villages where electoral rules limit the ability of voters to choose village leaders in a free and fair way. The finding holds true when socioeconomic and subjective variables are all controlled for.

The fact that election rules affect voter participation in village elections further consolidates the argument that village elections have led to increased rights-consciousness among Chinese peasants. Statistical results have showed that mobilization either by cadres or by fellow villagers does not influence peasants' voting behavior any more. In fact, peasants have

large discretion to decide whether or not to get involved in election politics, depending on the quality of elections. If election methods serve their material interest of punishing abusive or incapable cadres and their expressive interest of fulfilling civic duty and voicing their interests in village affairs, it is more likely that peasants will choose to join in the process. Earlier studies of Chinese rural politics have introduced such concepts as rightful resistance to argue that peasants have learned to resist governance by local officials if they do not observe national laws or central government policies. My study clearly shows the trend with statistical proof. If local cadres do not strictly enforce the Organic Law and do not fully allow for democratic village elections as demanded by the central government, nonvoting is the choice for the resistant peasants.

CHAPTER 5

DO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS PROMOTE BETTER GOVERNANCE IN RURAL CHINA: STATISTICAL RESULTS

While free and fair elections and functional oversight institutions are core elements in Western democratic framework to ensure the government's vertical and horizontal accountability, I am interested to know if similar institutions in rural grassroots China could exert similar effects in producing more accountable village government and better village governance. If so, under what conditions can these institutions generate such effects? In this chapter, I will examine the effects of democratic institutions – village elections and oversight agencies – on the quality of village governance. My expected finding is that institutions matter in producing better governing performance by village cadres. In order to test the proposed theory, I choose relevant questions in the nationwide survey to measure the variables at stake and test the relations within these variables.

In the rest of this chapter, I will first introduce the dependent variable, village governance, and its measurements. Then I will describe the socioeconomic control variables, introduce independent variables, village elections and oversight agencies, and analyze their correlations with village governance. Finally, I will conduct multivariate regressions to test the relations between institutional variables and the governance variables. Discussion of regression results are presented in the end.

Dependent Variable: Village Governance

The quality of village governance is measured by three questions: one about villager's evaluation of village cadre's governing performance, one about villager's evaluation of villager self-government, and the other about the public service provided by the villagers committees. I will turn these questions into three variables and test the relations between institutional variables with these variables separately. The first question asked villagers, "How do you evaluate the performance of the incumbent village cadres in handling village affairs?" Fairness of public officials in handling public affairs is one of the most important indicators of the quality of governance in rural China, where peasants are more concerned with unfairness and unequal treatment by village leadership than with economic underdevelopment, as reflected in an old saying "No fear for scarcity, but fear for inequity". Many village chairs I interviewed told me that the most important strategy to govern a village is to "hold a water bowl even". Only if village management is fair can stable conditions be kept in a village and can development on other aspects be possible.

Table 5.1 reports the villagers' answers. Seen from the results, 66% of the respondents were satisfied with their cadres while 16% of them expressed non-satisfaction. 16% of the respondents said they did not know about the performance of cadres. In some cases, the respondents chose "Don't Know" possibly because they had not lived in the village for a while. 36% of those who chose "Don't Know" worked in towns or cities and were interviewed in their urban residences. In other cases, although the respondents lived in the villages, they might not know the cadres well or might not have ever dealt with the cadres. Finally, some had no opinions on their village cadres, which might have led them to choose not to answer the question. For the purpose of conducting regressions, I coded those who answered "Very Fair" as 4. Those

who answered "Fair" were coded 3. Those who answered "Not Very Fair" were coded 2. And those who answered "Very unfair" were coded 1.

Table 5.1 Villager's Evaluation of Cadre's Performance

	N	Percentage (%)
Very Fair	404	11.6
Fair	1,913	54.7
Not Very Fair	432	12.4
Very Unfair	138	4.0
Don't Know	547	15.6
No Answer	64	1.8
Total	3,498	100

The second question asked villagers: How do you feel about the result of "villager self-government" in your village? Villager Self-government (VSG) in the Chinese context primarily refers to village elections and also includes the establishment of oversight agencies. The result of VSG implies such issues as whether the elected villagers committee members are qualified, how well they have managed village affairs, and whether the governance conditions have become better since the application of VSG. In other words, asking for a peasant's evaluation of the result of VSG is tantamount to asking for his or her overall evaluation of village governance. Higher evaluation of VSG's result means that the peasant is more satisfied with the governance conditions in his or her village.

In Table 5.2, I report the respondents' answers to this question. 45% of the respondents expressed positive opinions about the village governance conditions. 9% of the peasants were not satisfied with the governance conditions. Another 44% said the governance conditions were fair. To conduct regressions, I coded those who answered "Very Good" as 5. Those who

answered "Good" were coded 4. Those who answered "Fair" were coded 3. Those who answered "Not bad" were coded 2. And those who answered "Very Bad" were coded 1.

Table 5.2 Villager's Evaluation of VSG's Result

	N	Percentage (%)
Very Good	492	14.1
Good	1,085	31.0
Fair	1,521	43.5
Not Very Good	254	7.3
Very Bad	64	1.8
Don't Know	54	1.5
No Answer	28	.8
Total	3,498	100

So far both measurements of village governance quality have depended upon peasants' subjective evaluation. However, subjective evaluations might be biased for a number of reasons. First, fearing potential retaliation, a peasant might not want to tell the interviewer if he or she held a negative opinion on the cadres and village governance quality. Second, a peasant might give a negative assessment of village cadres simply because he or she had personal issues with the cadres. In order to overcome the shortcoming of relying on subjective evaluations, I include another variable that assesses the quality of public service provided by the villagers committees. The variable is turned from a survey question, "In the last three years, have your family received direct help from the villagers committee on any of the following issues?" The interviewees were given 10 options including nine different types of assistance and an option of not receiving any help.

In Table 5.3, the options are presented in a descending order by the number of respondents and the percentage. The table also illustrates the share of daily management tasks

for rural cadres in China. The kind of assistance that has been offered the most by village cadres is allocation of housing land and approval of construction of houses for peasants, which ranks even higher than agriculture-related assistance on production, sales, and bank loan. As more peasants work on urban jobs, the money they send back to their rural families has led to new waves of home construction in villages. Because rural land is collectively owned by villages, villagers committees are responsible to approve and allocate land for both agriculture and housing use. Moreover, home building and land allocation have created many disputes between contiguous families, which has made resolution of neighboring conflicts a major task for village cadres.

Table 5.3 Assistance from Villagers committees to Peasants

	N	Percentage (%)
Approval of land for-housing or construction of buildings	878	25.1
Resolution of neighboring conflicts	753	21.5
Agricultural production and sales	581	16.6
Acquiring bank loans	556	15.9
Poverty alleviation or disaster relief	497	14.2
Resolution of intra family or intra-family clan conflicts	480	13.7
Weddings or funerals	329	9.4
Medical care	253	7.2
Others	81	2.3
No Help	1,312	37.5

Note: Because respondents were allowed to choose multiple options, the total of N is more than the sample size and the percentage is over 100. Therefore, they are not presented.

Although I still have to rely on the self-report of peasants, the answers are more based on objective facts – receiving or not receiving help – and less on subjective opinions. A variable

turned from this question will be a more objective measurement of the quality of village governance than the first two variables which come from subjective evaluations. Assuming that better village elections and functional oversight organizations generate more accountable and responsive village cadres, peasants are more likely to receive the daily assistances from the cadres. For the purpose of conducting regressions, I recode the variable to be dichotomous. Respondents who chose any option of receiving help were coded as 1, and respondents who did not choose any of the options of receiving help were coded as 0.

Descriptive Statistics and Control Variables

Who are those villagers who approve theirvillagers committee 's performance and who are those that do not? Are peasants' evaluations of quality of village governance influenced by their personal conditions? Before examining the effects of institutional variables on quality of village governance, I will first look at a number of variables depicting the sampled peasants' demographic conditions including their gender, age, education level, Communist Party membership, and family wealth level, so as to provide first-cut findings on the correlation between these demographic variables and the dependent variables. Once the first-cut relationships are revealed, it will help me determine the necessity of controlling for the demographic variables in order to eliminate their confounding effects to the main effect of the institutional variables I am interested in testing.

First of all, women seemed to be less satisfied on average than men with the quality of village governance. As shown in Figure 5.1, women's evaluation of both cadre performance and VSG were slightly lower than men's evaluation. The difference is in accordance with the fact

that men were more likely than women to report that their families had received help from villagers committees. According to the data, the probability that men reported having received help (discussed in the previous section) was 61.9%, while the probably was 56.8% for women. After all, men might be more often than women to handle family affairs that needed the assistance of villagers committees. Since women did not deal with villagers committees as often as men, they did not know cadres or village affairs as well as men and thus might give lower evaluation of village governance quality.

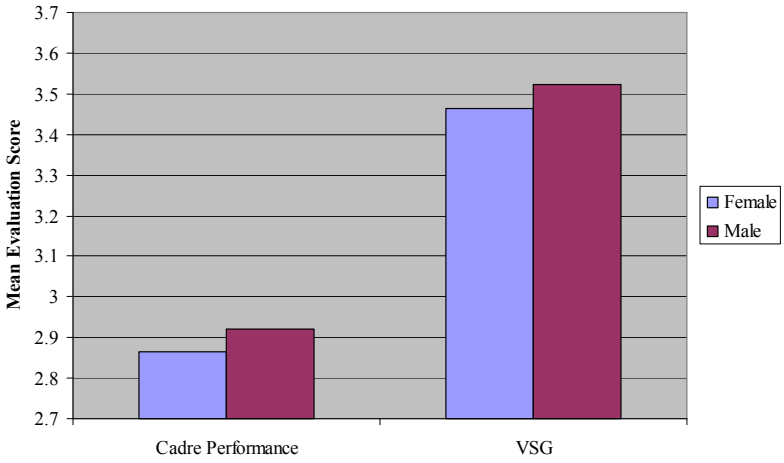

Figure 5.1 Gender and Evaluation of Cadre Performance[154]

Seen from Figure 5.2, peasants of 26-35 years old were the least satisfied ones in rural China. Compared with the peasants of other age groups, they gave the lowest evaluation of village cadre performance and VSG effect. Peasants from older age groups than 26-35 had higher evaluation of VSG effect and the peasants of 66-89 years old had the highest evaluation. The peasants that had the highest evaluation of cadre performance were between 46 and 55 years old. Older peasants seemed to be less pleased with cadre performance than those of 46-55. A

bivariate test between peasants' ages and the probability of their receiving help from village cadres did not show a significant correlation.

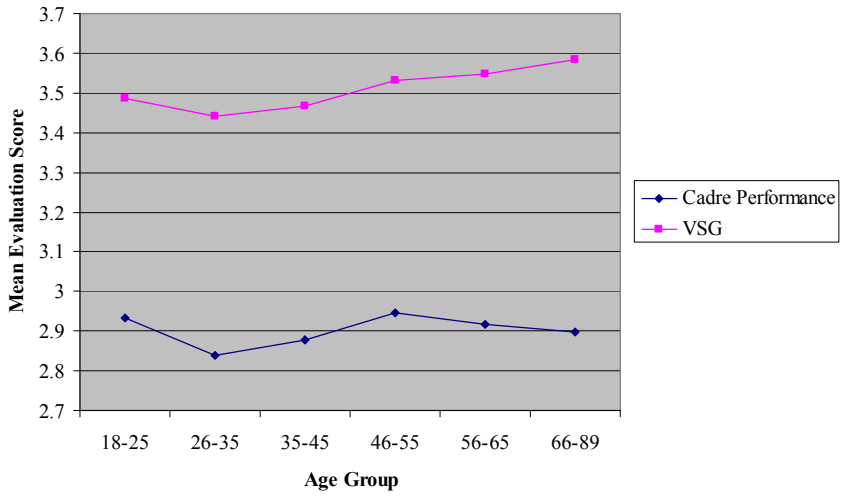

Figure 5.2 Age and Evaluation of Cadre Performance

It was not clear how a peasant's education level covariates wit his evaluation of VSG effect. In general, peasants with middle school education and high education were shown to give lower evaluation of VSG effect than peasants of other education levels (Figure 5.3). However, it is clearly shown that better educated peasants were less pleased with cadre performance. On average, the peasants who gave the highest evaluation of cadre performance were among those who received no education, and the peasants with high education gave the lowest score. Also, better educated peasants were less likely to report that their families had received help from village cadres (Figure 5.4). It is possible that peasants of better education are more capable of overcoming difficulties or solving problems for their families and were less dependent on villagers committees.

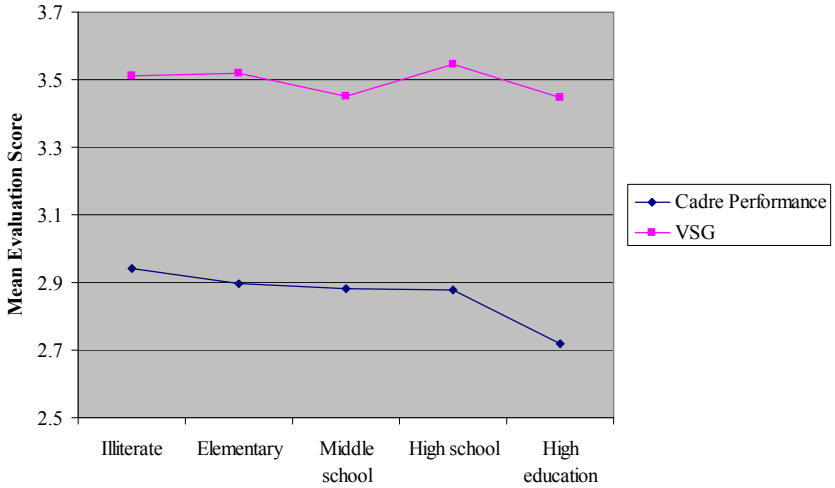

Figure 5.3 Education and Evaluation of Cadre Performance

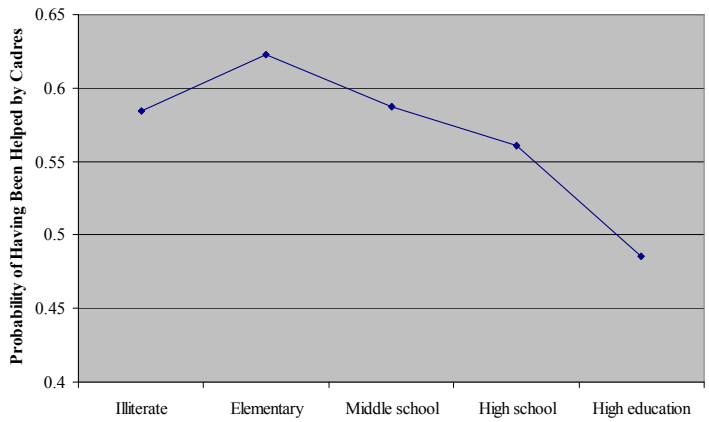

Figure 5.4 Education and Probability of Having Been Helped by Cadres

I find that wealthier peasants were more satisfied with village governance quality measured by both cadre performance and VSG effect than less wealthy ones (Figure 5.5). This is not hard to understand because, in general, wealthier peasants also were more likely to report that their families had received help from villagers committees in the past (Figure 5.6). Another correlation test between a peasant's education level and his family wealth level has showed that better educated peasants were wealthier than less educated peasants. It is interesting to note that,

while wealthier peasants were happier with village governance, better educated ones were not. In fact, as seen in Figure 5.3 and 5.4, peasants with the highest education level are the least happy ones with village governance. It is possible that the better educated peasants who were less satisfied with village governance were also less wealthy. They gave poor evaluation scores to villagers committees because they did not fare well economically.

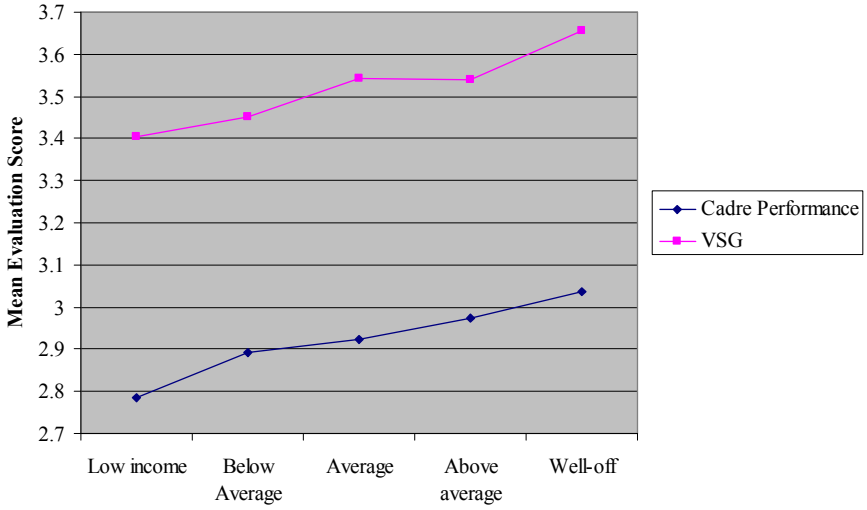

Figure 5.5 Family Wealth and Evaluation of Cadre Performance

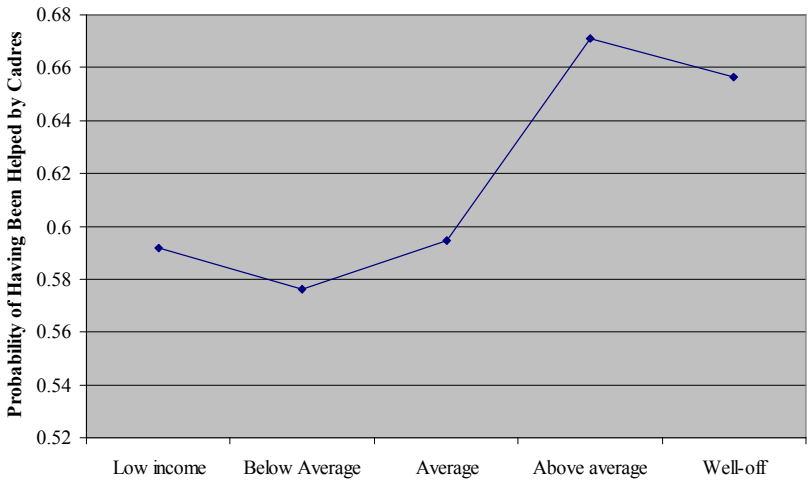

Figure 5.6 Family Wealth and Probability of Having Been Helped by Cadres

Finally, it is not surprising that Communist party members on average were happier than non party members with village governance (Figure 5.7) because some party members were themselves cadres[155] and also because party members received more help from villagers committees than non-party members. The probability for a party member to report that his family had received help from the villagers committee was 65.5% while the probability for a non party member was 59.1%.

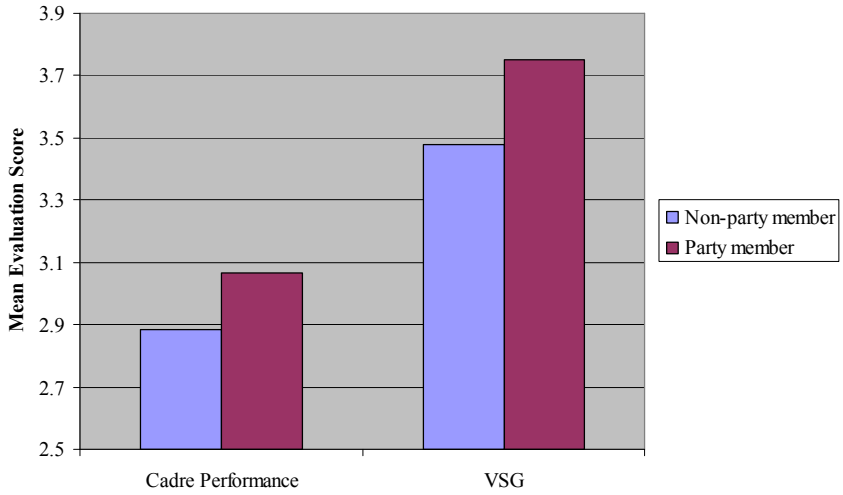

Figure 5.7 Party Membership and Evaluation of Cadre Performance

Seen from the above statistics, the demographic conditions of peasants such as gender, age, education level, family wealth level, and party membership, were associated in different ways with the peasants' evaluation of the quality of village governance. Also, peasants' socioeconomic standings may implicate varying degrees of likelihood that the peasants have been patronized by village cadres. All these variables may disturb the effects of institutional variables to be discussed in the following sections. Thus, they should be controlled for in the

statistical models used to test the relationship between the quality of village governance and the quality of elections and the availability of oversight organizations.

For statistical purpose, I code males as 1 and females as 0. Because the differences among age groups are not equal to each other, it is inappropriate to put the variable of age into multivariate regressions because doing so assumes equal distance between different categories and may generate biased results. Instead, I break the variable into a series of dummy variables with each age group as a single dichotomous variable and the youngest age group (18-25) as the omitted category. For the same reason, I create a series of dummy variables out of the variable of education and family wealth with the illiterate peasants and the lowest income group as the omitted categories.

Independent Variables: Village Election Procedure

One major thesis in this chapter is that better village elections will lead to better village governance. But what are better elections? In this chapter I use the same indicators used in Chapter 3 to measure the quality of elections – the methods adopted in seven major aspects of village elections, including formation of election commission, nomination of candidates, selection of final candidates, number of final candidates allowed, campaigns, use of secret ballot box, and ballot counting. I argue that, if fair and transparent methods are adopted in these aspects, the elected cadres will be held accountable by peasants and will provide satisfactory village governance to peasants. Less transparent methods will cause poor village governance, which will be shown in lower approval of the quality of governance by peasants and in lower probability that villagers committees provide daily assistance to peasants.

In general, our survey shows that village elections are carried out very differently across China. Although village elections have been established for 20 years and the Organic Law has made explicit requirements on certain electoral procedures, our data show that, in many places, village elections are not conducted in democratic ways and many local governments still control village elections by manipulating election rules and denying core democratic rights granted by law to peasants.

As Table 5.4 shows, 18% of the villagers reported that in their elections the electoral commissions were selected by voters themselves as opposed to being appointed by incumbent village cadres or upper authorities. 35% of the villagers reported that candidates were nominated by voters instead of being appointed by incumbent village cadres or upper-level authorities. 24% of the villagers said that primary election was used to select the final candidates, which is in contrast to 76% of other villagers who reported that final candidates were picked by village cadres or upper-level authorities. Only 7% of the respondents said that candidates exercised door-to-door canvassing in their elections whereas, in others, there was no such campaign activity and candidates were introduced by electoral commissions using public notice boards or at village representative meetings. Although the 1998 Organic Law on Villagers committees has regulated that the election organizers need to field multiple candidates for the to-be-elected positions, 31% of the respondents reported in 2005 that there was not a second candidate when electing the village chair. Even worse, the secret ballot booth, another requirement in the Organic Law, was only used in 40% of villages. Finally, 70% of the respondents reported that ballots were counted publicly as opposed to being closed-door to voters.

Table 5.4 Election Procedures Implemented in Chinese Villages (N=3,498)

	1	0
Electoral Commission	630 (18.01)	2,868 (81.99)
Nomination	1,230 (35.16)	2,268 (64.84)
Primary Election	847 (24.21)	2,651 (75.79)
Campaign	249 (7.12)	3,249 (92.88)
Multi-Candidacy for Village Chair	2,400 (68.61)	1,098 (31.39)
Use of Secret Ballot Box	1,413 (40.39)	2,085 (59.61)
Ballots Tallied in Public	2,442 (69.81)	1,056 (30.19)

Note: 1. Presented in the first row of each cell are numbers of cases. Numbers in parentheses are percentages.
2. Coding scheme is in Chapter 3.

How are these electoral variables correlated with the variables of village governance? The first-cut bivariate tests have shown that free and transparent electoral procedures do seem to correlate with better village governance (Figure 5.8). In particular, the variables of election commission selection, nomination, multi-candidacy, use of secret ballot box, tallying ballots in public, clearly improve peasants' evaluation of cadre performance and VSG, and increase the probability for villagers committees to provide daily help to peasants. But holding a primary election and conducting election campaigns only very slightly increase the evaluation score for VSG and the probability of help provision. Holding a primary election even slightly reduce the evaluation score for cadre performance, which is incompatible with my proposed finding. In order to further consolidate these first-cut findings and find out more about the relations between elections and governance, I will put the electoral variables along with the controls in multivariate regressions for testing.

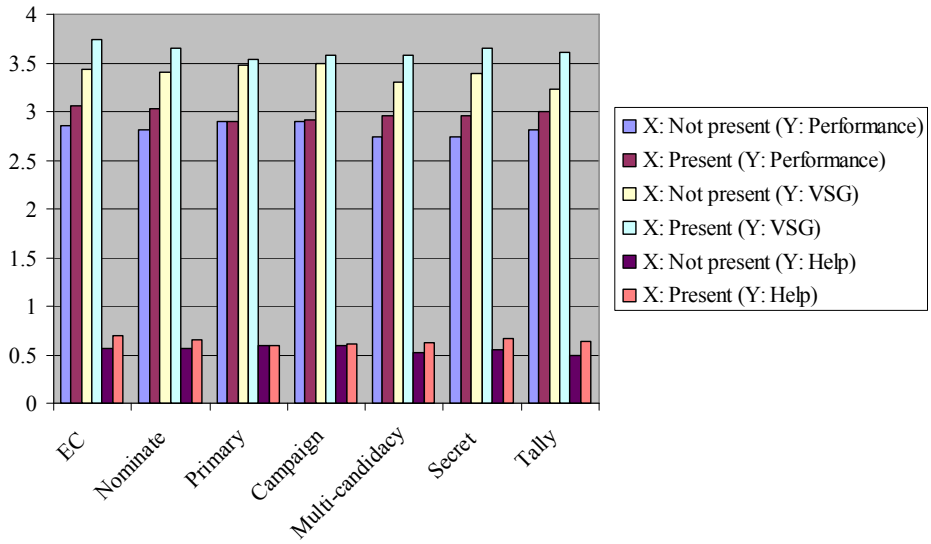

Figure 5.8 Village Election Methods and Village Governance

Regression Results and Discussion of Election's Effects

What does the variation of electoral methods in different villages mean for peasants? Are cadres more accountable if elected in better elections? Can they bring better rural governance to peasants than the ones that took the position through manipulated elections? In this section, I examine the questions with respect to the relationship between quality of elections and quality of governance by conducting multivariate regressions. Because both "Evaluation of cadre performance" and "Evaluation of VSG" are ordinal variables, I use ordered logistic regressions to test their relationship with the electoral variables. A logistic regression is conducted to test the relationship between the quality of elections and whether peasants have provided with daily assistance by villagers committees, which is a dichotomous variable.

In general, the regression results (presented in Appendix A) have confirmed my hypotheses. More than half of the electoral variables are shown to have improved the evaluation

score for cadre performance. About half of electoral variables have improved the evaluation score for VSG effect and increased the probability that villagers committees provide daily assistance to villagers. The variable of primary election is, oddly, negatively associated with all three dependent variables. While most other electoral variables have led to better governance quality, it is difficult to explain why determination of final candidates through primary elections would generate the opposite results. Also, election campaign is the only variable that does not have any impact on any of the dependent variables. I suspect it was due to the fact that only 7% of the respondents reported election campaigns and the variation of the variable is too small to show any meaningful impact on the dependent variables. Sometimes door-to-door campaigns can even be accompanied by bribery acts. When candidates visit residential households, they might bring over cigarettes, invite villagers to dinner, or simply give or promise to give money to voters. Consequently, some candidates with poor governing capability could win elections through briberies, but after elections, they may do poorly in village management and not be accepted by villagers. For these and other reasons, holding door-to-door campaigns does not necessarily exert influence on peasant's evaluation of the quality of village governance.

Since logistic and ordered logistic regressions only produce log coefficients which do not directly reveal the relations between independent and dependent variables, I have converted the log coefficients into predicted probabilities that present us a clearer vision of the examined associations. In Table 5.5, I present the predicted probabilities that the methods of village elections could affect the quality of village governance measured by three indicators. Only variables that are statistically significant are presented.

First of all, the formation of election commission has a positive effect on the quality of governance. If election commission members are selected by voters as opposed to being

appointed by local officials, peasants are more likely to give good evaluation of village governance and villagers committees are more likely to provide daily assistance to peasants. When all other variables are held constant, if election commission is selected by voters, the probability that peasants evaluate cadre performance in handling village affairs as "Fair" is 69.5%. The predicted probability is slightly lower (68.7%) if election commission members are appointed by village party branches or local governments. But this difference is larger when it comes to the option of "Very fair". If election commission is selected by voters, the predicted probability that peasants think cadres are "Very fair" while handling village affairs is 16%, four percent larger than if election commission members are appointed. When all other variables are held constant, if election commission is appointed, the probability that villagers evaluate the result of VSG as "Good" and "Very good" is 32% and 13%, each four percent lower than if election commission is selected by voters. If election commission is appointed, the probability that peasants report that their families have been provided with assistance by villagers committees is 59%, 8% lower than if election commission is selected by voters.

Table 5.5 The Quality of Village Election and the Quality of Village Governance

Election procedure		Predicted Probability of Outcome				
		Evaluation of Cadres		Evaluation of VSG		Provision of Assistance by Cadres
		Fair	Very fair	Good	Very good	
Election commission selected by voters (0-1)	0	.687	.12	.32	.13	.59
	1	.695	.16	.36	.17	.67
Open nomination of candidates (0-1)	0	.686	.12			
	1	.695	.14			
Multi-candidacy for VC chair (0-1)	0	.68	.11			
	1	.69	.13			
Using secret ballot booths (0-1)	0	.687	.12	.31	.12	.58
	1	.694	.14	.34	.15	.64
Tallying ballots in public (0-1)	0	.65	.08	.27	.09	.52
	1	.69	.15	.35	.16	.63

Note: "0" means the method was not adopted and "1" means the method was adopted.

Open nomination as a measurement of good elections has a positive association with peasants' evaluation of cadre performance. If candidates are openly nominated by voters, the predicted probability that a voter reports cadre performance as "Fair" and "Very fair" is 69.5% and 14%. But if candidates are appointed, the probabilities are lowered down to 68.6% and 12%. However, open nomination does not seem to affect peasants' evaluation of VSG result or the provision of daily assistance by cadres.

Similarly, multi-candidacy can lead to better governance in terms of cadre performance evaluated by peasants, but does not affect peasants' evaluation of VSG effect and is not associated with the provision of daily help by villagers committees. When all other variables are held constant, multi-candidacy as opposed to single-candidacy increases the probability that peasants evaluate cadre performance as "Fair" and "Very fair" by 1% and 2%, respectively.

Use of secret ballot box at polling stations is important to protect voters' privacy and freedom of choice. It has been proved to improve the quality of village governance measured by all three indicators. When all other variables are controlled for, use of secret ballot box increases the predicted probability that villagers evaluate cadre performance as "Fair" and "Very fair" by .7% and 2%, increases the probability that villagers evaluate VSG result as "Good" and "Very good" by 3%. In addition, villagers committees are 8% more likely to provide daily assistance to villagers as a result of secret ballot box being available to voters during village elections, all other variables held constant.

Finally, tallying ballots in public is another strong variable that, working with other electoral methods, can improve the quality of village governance and hold cadres more accountable after elections, as shown in peasants' evaluation of cadre performance and VSG

result and in how likely villagers committees provide daily help to peasants. As a result of ballots being counted in public during village elections, the probability that peasants think cadre performance as "Fair" and "Very fair" are 4% and 7% higher than if the counting process is closed-door to voters. The probability that peasants think VSG result as "Good" and "Very good" are 8% and 7% higher if ballots are counted in public. Moreover, cadres are 11% more likely to provide daily assistance to peasants if ballots are counted in public during village elections.

Seen from the regression results, the socioeconomic conditions of peasants do affect their evaluation of cadre performance as I have expected. Men are more likely to give better evaluations than women. Older peasants and better educated peasants give lower evaluation than the youngest peasants and the least educated ones. The wealthier the peasants are, the more likely they are to give better evaluation than the poorest peasants. And CPC members give better evaluation than non-party members. For evaluation of VSG effect, the variables of age and education do not show statistical significance, but wealthier male party members have better evaluation of VSG effect than poor female non-party members.

Independent Variables: Oversight Institutions

Villager Representative Assembly (VRA) and Number of VRA Meetings

In addition to village elections, the other institutional establishment in rural China to support villager self-government is the supervising structure (*jiandu jizhi*) that includes primarily two self-governing agencies, Village Representation Assembly (VRA) and Democratic Financial Management Team (DFMT). A VRA is elected by peasants in each village to exercise

supervising power on behalf of all villagers. My data show that 80% of sampled villages have a VRA. The number of Villager Representatives (VR) depends on the size of a village. Usually, every 5 to 15 households should elect one VR. VRA meetings are called by villagers committee and/or party branch. Both the Organic Law and the CCP's national circular require villagers committee and village party branch to consult with VRA and obtain approval from the latter before any decisions on substantial village issues are made. The number of VRA meetings is a symbol of to what extent villagers committee and party branch respect the authority of VRA hence the demands of villagers. More VRA meetings held in each village means that villagers committee and village party branch are held more accountable to VRA and to peasants. Thus they are expected to perform better in village governance and deliver better public goods.

We asked both villagers and village cadre the same question, "How many villager representative assembly meetings, if any, were held in 2004?" Table 5.6 shows the frequency of reports based on the mixture of villagers' and village cadres' reports on the number of VRA meetings held in 2004[156]. Because the intervals between different categories may not equal each other, I will not use this variable in its singular form for the multivariate regression analysis. Instead, I create a series of dummy variables to be inserted in the regression and omit "None/Don't know" as the baseline category.

Table 5.6 Number of VRA Meetings Held in Sampled Villages

	N	Percentage (%)
Four and above	937	26.79%
Three	618	17.67%
Two	666	19.04%
One	257	7.35%
None/Don't know	1020	29.15%
Total	3,498	100

Veto Power of VRA

The real power of VRA also is displayed in whether it is able to veto proposals or decisions made by villagers committees or party branches. My interviews with village leaders show that VRA meetings are often called upon as a formality instead of being an arena for consultation and deliberation. If the issues on agenda are not a matter of concern among VRs, VRs would show up simply to sign their names on the proposed bills. Sometimes, VRs may decline to attend meetings because they have to handle their personal businesses. In order to encourage VRs to attend VRA meetings, villagers committees often have to pay each VR, who otherwise is a volunteer, 5-20 *yuan* ($0.70-2.78) for each meeting they attend. But if the meeting agenda is a great concern to all villagers, on farmland acquisition and compensation for instance, VRs may be anxious in going to the meeting. However, it is possible that village leaders may still co-opt VRs to approve proposals that are against the interests of majority villagers. Therefore, a sign of whether a VRA has real authority and is independent is whether it has ever vetoed proposals made by villagers committee and/or party branch. If a VRA has vetoed villagers committee and/or party branch's proposals, it implies that the VRA is powerful enough to hold villagers committee and party branch accountable. If a VRA has never vetoed villagers committee and/or party branch, it does not necessarily mean that the VRA is powerless. Other factors such as the number of VRA meetings being held may still be meaningful to show whether villagers committee and party branch respect the authority of VRA. My survey data show that 15.32% of peasants reported that their VRAs have vetoed proposals made by village cadres.

Democratic Financial Management Team (DFMT)

DFMT is selected by the VRA and all DFMT members are VRs. The major task of this agency is to monitor financial transactions dealt with by villagers committee and party branch. In most villages, for public expenditures less than 5,000 *yuan* ($69.44), village cadres can spend the money without first informing the VRA or all villagers. For expenditures more than 5,000 *yuan*, cadres have to get permission from the VRA or, in some cases, from the majority of villagers before they could pay the bills. Many cases of corruption and misappropriation take place when cadres do not have to be granted permission by the VRA or villagers, or, when expenditures are under 5,000 *yuan*. It is the DFMT's job to make sure that cadres do not abuse their power by embezzling or misusing public money. Consisting of five members, DFMT members meet once a month to go through the expenses incurred in the previous month and the receipts to see if the two match. Members of DFMT also pinpoint whether a line item is reasonable and permissible. For instance, if a paid dinner bill shows up without an accompanying note, DFMT members may demand an explanation from cadres on who they had dinner with, why the dinner was necessary, and how the dinner was associated with public interests. If cadres could not give a reasonable explanation, DFMT member may decline to sign their names. Since township governments may check village accounts regularly and villagers can check public accounts at any time, an unsigned monthly ledger book may look awful for cadres and may even costthem their jobs. With DFMT checking and monitoring public expenditures regularly, cadres are less likely to engage in abusive spending or appropriating public money. DFMT is another way to hold village cadres accountable to voters and makes sure that public budget is spent on public interests. Therefore, the existence of DFMT may improve

village governance and make more provision of public goods possible. My survey data show that 70% of villagers reported that their villages had DFMTs.

VC Work Reports to VA or VRA

In addition to VRA meetings and establishment of DFMT, both the Organic Law and the party circulars also require that villagers committees report their work to VRAs or villagers at the end of each year. The requirement further increases transparency of village affairs and decreases the possibility that village cadres may betray public interests secretly. My survey data show extraordinarily different results between the reports from villagers and that from village cadres. We asked villagers and cadres the same question, "Over past three years, has the villagers committee reported work to the villagers assembly or villager representatives assembly every year?" Respondents who answered "Reported every year" are coded 1. All other answers including "Reports in some year(s) but not others", "Never reports" and "Don't know" are coded 0. Out of 379 villages, 83% of them are reported by cadres to have held work report meetings every year. But only 26% of the sampled villagers reported such work report meetings being held every year. After merging survey results from both villagers and village cadres, I have concluded that, among all villagers, about 25% of them have had work report meetings held by villagers committees every year in the past three year.

First-cut bivariate tests have showed similar directions as in my predictions. In villages with a VRA, DFMT, and villagers committee reporting to VRA regularly, villagers' evaluation scores for cadre performance and VSG effects are higher, and it is more likely that peasants are provided with daily assistance byvillagers c ommittees (Figure 5.9). Similarly, when there are more VRA meetings, the quality of village governance seems to improve (Figure 5.10).

One bivariate test result that stands out is that, in villages where VRA has ever vetoed villagers committee's proposals, the evaluation scores are lower than in villages where there has not been any veto (Figure 5.9). The bivariate test result is different from my prediction, which argues that VRA veto of villagers committee proposals signifies the power of VRA in holding village cadres accountable and thus may increase villagers' evaluation scores for village governance. But if the VRA has vetoed the villagers committee's decisions, it could also imply that the villagers committee may have proposed some ideas that violate the interests of peasants, which has made village cadres less credible, hence the lower evaluations scores given by villagers. In fact, seen from Figure 5.9, if a VRA has ever vetoed villagers committee's proposals, it is more likely that peasants are provided with daily assistance by village cadres. In other words, the veto power of VRA does make village cadres more accountable and more active in serving their constituents.

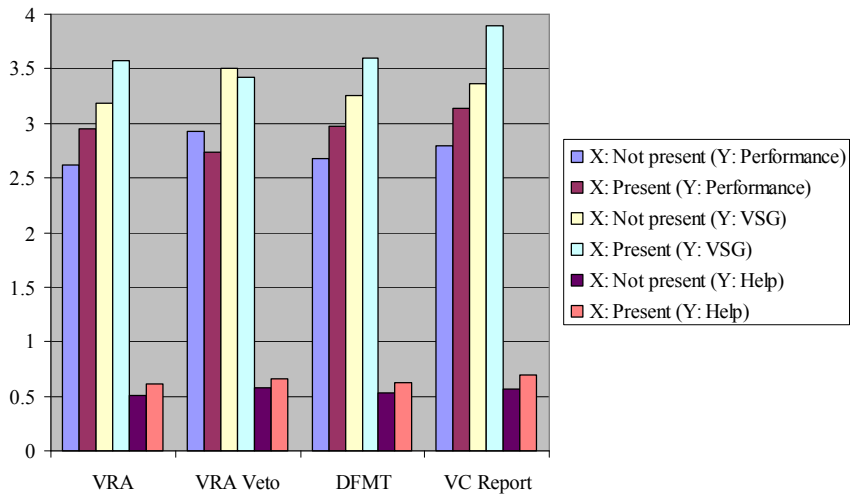

Figure 5.9 Oversight Institutions and Village Governance

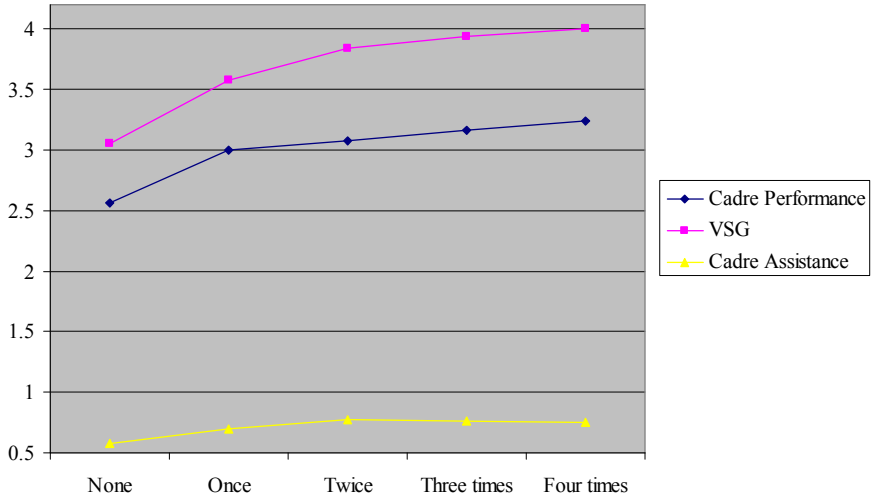

Figure 5.10 Number of VRA Meetings per Year and Village Governance

Results and Discussion of Oversight Agencies' Effects

In this section I use multivariate regressions to examine the relationship between each oversight institutional variable and the variables of village governance and to isolate the confounding effects of peasants' socioeconomic conditions. Two ordered logistic regressions and one logistic regression are conducted on peasant's evaluation of cadre performance and villager self-government effect and on whether villagers committees provide daily assistance to villagers (Appendix B).

The regression results have confirmed my hypotheses. All oversight institutional variables have effectively improve the quality of village governance by either increasing peasants' evaluation of cadre performance, or their evaluation of VSG result, or the probability that villagers committees provide daily service to peasants. The variable that depicts villagers committee's regular report to VRA has affected all three measurements of village governance positively. The detailed discussion below will reveal to what extent each oversight agency is

able to make village cadres provide more satisfactory service to peasants. To make interpretation of regression results easier, I have converted the log coefficient for each statistically significant variable into predicted probability, holding all other variables at their means.

By checking and balancing villagers committees, VRAs have brought about better quality of village governance seen from peasants' favored evaluation of villager self-governance effect and the higher likelihood of service provision by cadres. While all other variables are held constant, if there is a VRA, the probability that a peasant thinks the overall self-governance effect is "Good" and "Very good" is 4% and 2% higher respectively than if there is no VRA, and it is 6% more likely that peasants can receive daily assistance from village cadres.

Holding VRA meetings at least twice a year would increase the quality of village governance. For example, if VRA members meet twice a year, it is 1% and 4% more likely that peasants evaluate cadre performance as "Fair" and "Very fair", and 4% and 3% more likely that peasants evaluate the effect of self-governance as "Good" and "Very good" than if VRA members do not meet at all. However, more meetings than twice a year do not seem to increase the likelihood that peasants give good evaluation of village governance. In fact, holding three and four VRA meetings a year increase the probability by the same rates as holding two meetings a year, except that four VRA meetings would make it 5% (as opposed to 4%) more likely that peasants evaluate the cadre performance as "Very fair" than if there is no meeting. Moreover, any number of VRA meetings does not affect the likelihood of service provision by villagers committees. Although the existence of a VRA can increase the likelihood of service provision by villagers committees, peasants are not necessarily more likely to receive daily assistance from village cadres simply because there are more VRA meetings.

While VRA's power is not embodied in the number of its meetings, it is shown in the impact of it vetoing the villagers committee's proposals. If a VRA has ever vetoed, it is 7% more likely that village cadres have provided daily assistance to villagers than if there is no veto. By vetoing the proposals by villagers committees, VRA may protect the interests of their fellow villagers, show its authority to village cadres, and obligate cadres to better serve villagers. However, knowing that the VRA has vetoed the villagers committee, the villagers may get the impression that the villagers committee is not doing a good job and thus may give poor evaluation to cadre performance and to the overall quality of self-governance. That is the reason why peasants are 4% and 5% less likely to choose "Fair" and "Very fair" while evaluating the cadre performance and 2% less likely to choose "Good" and "Very good" while evaluating the result of VSG.

Table 5.7 Village Oversight Institutions and the Quality of Village Governance

Oversight Agencies		**Predicted Probability of Outcome**				
		Evaluation of Cadres		**Evaluation of VSG**		**Provision of Assistance by Cadres**
		Fair	Very fair	Good	Very good	
Existence of VRA (0-1)	0			.30	.11	.55
	1			.34	.13	.61
Two VRA meetings per year (0-1)	0	.70	.11	.32	.12	
	1	.71	.15	.36	.15	
Three VRA meetings per year (0-1)	0	.70	.11	.32	.12	
	1	.71	.15	.36	.15	
Four VRA meetings per year (0-1)	0	.70	.11			
	1	.71	.16			
VRA ever vetoed VC proposals (0-1)	0	.71	.13	.33	.13	.59
	1	.67	.08	.31	.11	.66
Existence of DFMT (0-1)	0	.69	.09	.30	.11	
	1	.71	.13	.34	.14	
VC reports work every year (0-1)	0	.690	.09	.29	.10	.58
	1	.693	.21	.40	.23	.68

The existence of DFMT has made peasants feel more satisfied with village governance as DFMT monitors the public accounts and constrains the financial power of villagers committees. Peasants are 2% and 4% more likely to evaluate the cadre performance as “Fair” and “Very fair” and 4% and 3% more likely to think the VSG effect as “Good” and “Very good” if there is a financial management team. But DFMT is not directly linked to whether cadres would provide daily assistance to peasants. Other variables such as the VRA hearing regular work report by the villagers committee would be useful.

Regular work report to the VRA puts pressure on village cadres to work harder because poor performance and possible disapproval by the VRA may cost them credibility and the legitimacy to govern. In fact, if a villagers committee reports its work to VRA every year, the probability that peasants receive daily assistance from cadres increases by 10%. At the same time, the regular work report also increases peasants’ evaluation of cadre performance and VSG effect by 2% and 13%.

Conclusion

Through statistical tests, this chapter has confirmed my hypotheses and showed that institutions matter by improving the quality of village governance. With elections carried out in an open and transparent way and with oversight agencies available, village cadres are held more accountable to villagers, are better evaluated by villagers, and provide more service to villagers.

CHAPTER 6

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND BETTER GOVERNANCE IN RURAL CHINA: STUDY OF CASES

Ever since the term "Good Governance" was coined by the World Bank and promoted by the IFIs through their various governance programs in almost every corner of the developing world, the concept and its accompanying requirements have been challenged by the academia. One of the most common criticisms is pointed at the institutional approach called upon by the IFIs. Good governance emphasizes the capacity of state governments and public officials to effectively implement public policies, cater to the needs of citizens, provide public service, and abstain from abusive behavior. In order for these governing goals to be achieved, the IFIs regard the institutions that promote public participation and constrain the power of public offices as a crucial element. It seems that, as far as the governments in the developing states adopt the institutional reforms suggested by the IFIs such as building accountability mechanisms and overhauling their legal systems, the populations in these states will be dragged out of poverty and the goal of development will be scored. However, many do not see institutional reform as a panacea to the problems in developing states. Some criticized that it is inappropriate if not naïve to assume that the same institutional structure will work everywhere and that the problems in the developing countries are a matter of lack of institutions[157]. For example, some have criticized the hypothesis of good governance and growth as lacking empirical scrutiny and faulting in measuring the concept of governance, and argued that growth and development led to improvements in governance rather than vice versa[158]. Others have shown that countries of the

Third World are on average no worse governed than other comparable countries. Rather, the geographic and economic constraints are the main causes of low income and poor living conditions in Sub-Saharan African countries[159].

While I am not particularly interested in testing the hypothesis of good governance and growth, I agree with the critics that it is improper to assume that institutions work the same way in every circumstance. In Chapter 4 and 5, I have shown that institutions of village elections and oversight agencies matter in making village cadres more accountable to the needs of peasants. However, these rural institutions are not as effective in every village, and the degree of their impacts is a function of other factors such as the level of collective wealth of the villages. In villages that lack sources of collective income, institutions work to the minimal degree because village cadres are left with few resources to provide public service. Moreover, since peasants are increasingly relying on non-agricultural income from working in nearby towns or from relatives who work in urban areas, they become less interested in the politics of their villages, are less active to participate in elections, and pay less attention to oversight agencies. But in villages that are abundant of collective revenues from leasing farmland and contracting village-owned coal mines, villagers are much more interested in village politics, particularly, in making sure that the collective wealth is not dispensed cursorily and cadres are not engaged in corruption. In these villages, institutions are much more effective because peasants have a much higher stake in village politics and are much more enthusiastic in attending village elections and watching the oversight agencies function. In other words, in rich villages, institutions work much better than in poor villages in terms of holding cadres accountable and providing better public service.

While the quantitative chapters have proved that institutions matter, they are not able to explain the mechanism through which institutions work and, as a result, miss out some key

variables that make institutions work better in some areas than in others. This chapter will get into the details of village politics and institutional functions by examining four villages, and aims at portraying a clearer picture of how exactly village institutions can lead to better governance in rural China. It will first introduce the background of the changing economic and political conditions in rural China and argue that the level of collective wealth of a village can make village institutions work more or less effectively. Next it will explain the method of testing this argument, i.e. how the cases are selected and how to compare the cases so that the findings are more reliable. Then it will delve into each of the four cases and discuss their social and economic conditions, conduct of village elections, working of oversight institutions, and the conditions of governance such as public goods provision, village cadre accountability, and village stability and orderliness. Through such an examination of the cases, the chapter will show that the impact of village institutions on village governance is a function of village economic conditions. Village elections and oversight agencies are much more effective in wealthy villages than in poor villages.

Economic and Political Changes in Rural China

Rural economy in China has experienced several stages since the founding of the PRC, with each stage also defining a different model of political relations in rural China. In this section, I will briefly review each of these stages of economic and political relations in rural China. The purpose is to explain how the economic changes have affected the relations between village cadres and peasants, and shape and reshape the functions and impacts of political institutions in villages.

The Collectivization Period

Prior to 1978, agricultural production in rural China was conducted in collectivities, which maintained tight control of peasant labor, production materials, and product sales. After the founding of the PRC in 1949, China followed the Soviet economic model and pursued an urban heavy industry-oriented development strategy. In order to maintain the low production costs in the heavy industry sector, the CCP subsidized the living costs of urban workers by suppressing the price of agricultural products through a forced state grain procurement system. The government also enforced a *hukou* system (household registration system) to prevent rural population from moving to urban areas and to ensure that sufficient labor was available for agricultural production.

In 1950, the CCP conducted the land reform to confiscate all farming lands from the landlords and redistributed them to peasant farmers. Following the land reform, the CCP forced peasants to work in collectives with the goal of increasing production capacity. The collectives held the land ownership and each collective included about 200 rural households. The collectivization campaign was further pushed forward by the CCP in 1957, when the "People's Communes" (*renmin gongshe*) were established. By 1959, all rural households had been included in the large commune system and each commune covered 5,000 families on average[160]. The communes made production decisions and owned all production materials such as land and production tools. Peasants were not allowed to work on private plots and their incomes were not linked to their collective work efforts. In fact, peasants' incomes were very small because the communes rationed food and other living needs to the households. As a result, peasants had very low incentives to work hard on farming and both the agricultural production and productivity

were low. Aggravated by another policy failure that called for peasants to engage in steel making in support of urban heavy industry, also known as the Great Leap Forward, agricultural production plummeted in 1959, which was the main cause for the 1959-61 famine that led to an estimated 30 million deaths[161]. After the Great Leap Forward calamity, agricultural production was decentralized to the production brigades (*shengchan dadui*) and their subordinate production teams (*shengchan dui*). Despite the administrative adjustment, the production materials were collectively owned by production brigades and teams, and grain prices were strictly controlled by the government. Peasants still lacked the incentives to work on farming, and brigade and team officials had to mobilize peasants to farming work in order to achieve production goals assigned by the communes[162].

Under the pre-1978 economic models of agricultural development, the political relations between peasants and local cadres were characterized by overwhelming domination of the former by the latter. Each and every bit of peasants' lives was under the supervision and control of commune and production brigade leaders. While personal freedom was highly limited, political participation was extremely rare. Although state constitutions and laws required that authorities organized elections of deputies to commune people's congresses, production team cadres, and delegates to brigade congresses (*sheyuan daibiaohui*), local authorities either failed to fulfill these requirements or at best did so formalistically[163]. Although the CCP claimed to recognize the "popular sovereignty" or the principle of letting people master the country and acknowledged the need to consult with peasants on public affairs, it maintained domination of policy-making. The formal institutions such as elections of production team leaders and holding of commune and brigade congress meetings only served the functions of "legitimizing official policy, communicating policy goals, and mobilizing peasants to implement policies.[164]"

Participation was primarily mobilized by local leaders in order to facilitate policy implementation. However, even under severe economic hardship, peasants seemed to be submissive to the ironclad rule of the state, which was successful in reassuring the public by promoting patriotic campaigns of "remember past bitterness and think of present sweetness" (*yiku sitian*) and by instituting mass organizations such as the Women's Association and Poor and Lower-Middle Peasant Associations to preach the CCP policies and political campaigns[165].

The Decollectivization Period

The domination-submission model of local cadres-peasants relations gradually changed after 1978. With the end of the ten-year Cultural Revolution, the central government set ambitious goals to revive the state economy and advance modernization. Again, the development strategy emphasized urban industry and, as a result, the reliance on agriculture to provide cheap grain for urban workforce became a necessity. At the same time, the urban light industry such as textiles, clothing, and cigarettes would need material supplies from the rural areas, and the countryside would also be a main market for urban industrial products. However, by the end of the Cultural Revolution, China's rural economy was in extremely bad shape. The annual per capita income increased by less than US 60 cents from 1966 to 1977, and annual growth of grain production was only 2.5% in the same period[166]. Along with the weak rural economy was the suppressed but strong rural discontent due to years of social instability, economic stagnation and destitute living conditions. Fearing that such discontent would eventually heat up and turn into anti-government revolutions, the central government refrained from resorting to the old coercion policy of squeezing profits from the rural economy and decided to undertake some measures to benefit the material interests of peasants[167]. One of such

policy reforms was the Household Production Responsibility System (*jiating lianchan chengbao zerenzhi*)[168]. Under this system, the farmland and production tools collectively owned by the production teams were fairly allocated among the households, and each household, contracted with several pieces of both good and bad land, was still required to sell a quota of the grain production to the state procurement agencies at a suppressed price, but could keep the rest of the grain for family consumption or to sell on the state or street market.

The decollectivization of agricultural production and the responsibility system changed the cadre-peasant relations dramatically. First of all, all of a sudden cadres were left with little administrative work to do, few resources to allocate, and little authority to use. The production team leaders used to manage the collective agricultural production, assign work to team members, and determine the rewards given to peasants. But now they were faced with autonomous households and peasants who did not need to observe the authority of cadres any more. Second, because of the reduction of administrative work and loss of authority for production team cadres, peasants increasingly saw cadres as unnecessary, especially considering that a portion of peasants' grain production was sold to finance cadres' remunerations[169]. Moreover, after decades of impoverishment, Chinese peasants were finally given a chance to fare well by profiting from working their own farmland and they did not need to worry about the frequent and tedious political tasks from the collectivization period such as attending meetings to study the central government's political campaigns. Being more autonomous, peasants' hatred towards governmental political tasks and policies grew and, as a result, they increasingly disliked the agents who implemented those tasks and policies – i.e., the local cadres. For this reason, the relations between cadres and peasants were tense during the 1980s.

In order to fill the administrative vacuum in the countryside, the central government revamped the local administrative structure in the early 1980s. The former people's communes turned into town and township governments. Production brigades became today's administrative villages (*xingzheng cun*) and production teams became today's Villager Small Groups (*cunmin xiaozu* or VSGs). An administrative village, usually called a village, has an administrative committee that serves as a transmission belt between the town governments and the peasants. Each village also has a Villager Party Branch (VPB) to oversee the work of villagers committee on behalf of the CCP and to implement party policies on the village level. In 1987, the central government exercised a democratic reform to allow peasants to freely elect villagers committee members and later instituted the villager representative assembly for peasants to participate in public affairs and monitor villagers committees[170]. The central government assumed that these institutions would alleviate the tension between cadres and peasants because peasants would be more likely to respect the cadres that they elect and it would be easier to rely on the elected cadres to implement central policies. However, the central government did not expect that the institutions would later empower peasants and lead to more contentious politics in the countryside.

For their part, local governments and cadres were at best lukewarm toward village elections. They viewed elections as further eroding their authority and made every effort to avoid village elections or conducted elections as a mere formality. However, the middle-level government, mainly the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) whose job was to supervise village elections, was enthusiastic about village elections. MCA viewed the elections as an important step in developing democracy at the grassroots level, and was very attentive to promote and enforce standard election practice in the provinces[171].

In the beginning, peasants were not trustful of the institution of village elections and thought it was the same symbolic political structure practiced during the pre-1978 period. But after a few rounds of elections, peasants were more confident of the power of ballots and elections became more efficacious for peasants to express their opinions on village politics. When local cadres tried to obstruct elections, peasants reacted vehemently and demanded free and fair elections. Some peasants learned to argue with local cadres by pointing to the Organic Law and provincial legal regulations, while others appealed to the higher-level governments[172].

The Period of Heavy Tax Burden

The 1990s saw changing economic policies that exacerbated the contention between peasants and cadres. First of all, the fiscal relations between the central and local government changed. Since the mid-1980s, the central government adopted the *fenzao chifan* (Eating in Separate Kitchens) fiscal reform, which essentially stipulated that the central government no longer guaranteed allocations of budgets for local expenditures. Instead, the local governments (province, county, and town) were allowed to keep a portion of their tax revenues after turning over the rest to the next higher level of government. Under such reformed fiscal relations, each level of local governments had a greater incentive to increase their profits by developing more enterprises and collecting more taxes[173]. However, not every region has the comparative advantage of developing local enterprises. Apparently, thanks to the surge of export-led manufacturing businesses and their favorable geographical location, the east coast provinces did much better than the vast inland provinces.

The 1994 fiscal reform further increased the portion of taxes that local governments needed to turn up to the central state. This exacerbated the fiscal pressure on many local

governments which were not able to expand their tax revenues from local enterprises. At the same time, town governments in many places also saw an increase of administrative and political tasks assigned to them by higher governments and an expansion of their bureaucratic sizes. As a result, these town governments plunged into fiscal crises and sought every possible way to fill up their coffers. One effective option was to impose heavy taxes and extract a long list of fees from peasants. This, however, had the effect of plunging the peasants into crisis. Already suffering from the low grain prices both in the state and free market, peasants could no longer bear the additional burden of heavy taxes and fees.

Because village cadres were on the frontline of collecting the taxes and fees for town governments, they were frequently involved in clashes with the peasants[174]. Data showed that the number of rural protests increased from 9,709 in 1993 to 32,000 in 1999 by almost four-fold[175]. The contentious relations between cadres and peasants led to more active public participation in village elections. In some cases, peasants felt a higher level of political efficacy because they could remove unresponsive cadres through elections, and the higher efficacy further motivated peasants to participate in village elections[176].

The Post-Tax Reform Period

The tax reforms in the early 2000s greatly eased the cadre-peasant relations. In 2002, the central government adopted the tax-for-fee reform (*feigaishui*), which abolished the existing agricultural taxes, surcharges, administrative fees to villagers committees and town governments and other ad hoc fees, and replaced them with a single agricultural tax and its associated surcharge. In 2005, even the new agricultural tax and its surcharge were abolished and peasants are now completely free of taxes and fees[177]. The removal of taxes has reduced the number of

financial disputes between cadres and peasants and has given back the peaceful order to many villages[178]. In fact, many villages have become "too" peaceful, and peasants and cadres are disconnected, not only as a result of the end of tax collection, but also because of the large-scale migration.

Due to a growing need in urban private enterprises for low-wage workers and the arduous rural living conditions, a great number of peasants have moved to urban areas since the 1990s. By 2006, there were 120 million rural migrants in cities[179], and my survey data show that migrant labors account for 24% of the total rural labors. While most of the rural migrants are young or middle-aged, the majority of the population left in the countryside are the elders, children and middle-aged women who find it hard to find jobs in urban cities. In other words, the traditional rural political elites now have left the villages and those staying on lack interest in village politics.

Peasants who stay in the countryside lack interest in village politics mainly for three reasons. First, their reliance on villagers committees has become minimalized since peasants basically work on private plots and do not need to submit fees to cadres. In some villages, peasants still need village cadres to coordinate the use of heavy agricultural machines such as combines and water pumps that are usually not owned by private farmers. Peasants also need to deal with villagers committees for approval of building additional residential houses and for issuing various documents for proof of residence, approval of birth (which is part of China's family planning requirement), approval of migration, etc. But overall, the interaction between villagers and cadres has been less.

Second, after all, farming has become a much less attractive job for peasants because of its low revenue, according to my interviews with the peasants in six rural provinces. On average,

the annual net profit of agricultural production per *mu* (about 0.16 acre) is 400 *yuan* ($29)[180]. But if a peasant works on an urban construction site, he could make 60 *yuan* ($9) per day as a mason. Comparatively, farming is far less profitable than working on non-agricultural jobs. In fact, many peasants choose to work in nearby towns when the farm work is out of season and come back to farming when it is time for sowing seeds, watering, and harvest. For those who cannot go out to work due to their old age, they rely more on the remittance from their children who work in urban areas than on agricultural revenues. The 2002 data show that the increase of non agricultural income contributed to 55% of the overall increase of peasants' income[181].

Third and most importantly, most villages now have very little collective revenues to allocate to peasants and few resources to finance public goods provision. After the fiscal reforms in the 1980s, local governments became financially self reliant and thus had higher incentives to generate tax revenues. As a result, publicly-owned township and village enterprises (TVEs) sprang up like mushrooms all over the rural areas. Because the village enterprises were collectively owned by all villagers, part of their profits needed to be allocated among fellow villagers, and villagers committees also had more money to spend on village public services. However, the severe competition among TVEs across regions brought down their profits. Moreover, entering the 1990s, the market-oriented reform encouraged the development of private sector and generated many private enterprises that ran more efficiently than the publicly-owned TVEs. By the late 1990s, most of the TVEs either went bankrupt or became privatized[182]. In addition, before the 2005 tax reform, villagers committees and town governments were able to use the collected fees to finance public projects[183]. With these fees abolished along with the agricultural taxes, village cadres have become less capable of investing in public goods such as paving roads, renovating village temples, building water ditches, etc., and have had to rely on

county budgets to finance those projects. Since the budgets of many counties are tight, the peasants in these countries often have to bear poor living conditions while village cadres have no means to help improve these conditions.

Due to the fact that peasants are less reliant on village cadres for agricultural assistance and public goods provisions, and the portion of agricultural revenue in peasants' total income is shrinking, peasants have become less interested in village politics and less motivated to participate in village elections or to be concerned of overseeing village cadres' work. From my interviews with the peasants, many have appeared to be nonchalant when I asked about their attitudes to villagers committees and cadres. One villager said, "It doesn't matter who is elected, because no matter who is (VC) chair, the village will be the same." When asked about whether the cadres were accountable and responsible, one villager said, "Yes, they are. But we don't ask for many things from them anyways." However, the indifference to village elections and oversight institutions does not mean that the institutions are unnecessary. For example, several peasants were immediately shaking their heads when I asked, "How about we just cancel the elections since you are not interested anyway?" Peasants thought that, as long as the elections and VRAs exist, cadres will behave more properly than if the institutions were nonexistent. In short, in these villages, institutions were not regarded by peasants as very crucial but, without the institutions, peasants would worry about cadres abusing power and corruption.

However, not all villages are in this situation and some villages do have a large volume of collective revenues. For example, villages that own coal mines make money by leasing the coal mines to private contractors. Also, China's aggressive urbanization has led to large-scale acquisition of farmland from nearby rural areas and those villages whose land is acquired may receive a large sum of compensation. In these villages, peasants spare no efforts to monitor the

villagers committees and make sure that the collective revenues are spent appropriately. Under these circumstances, oversight institutions such as the VRA and DFMT become very crucial because peasants can depend on these institutions to monitor and oversee village public affairs such as deal-making with local governments and real estate developers on land acquisition and compensations, allocation of revenues and compensations to villagers, dispensing collective money on public services, etc. Moreover, in order to make sure that village cadres are accountable, villagers are more active during village elections to nominate candidates and participate in voting. If village elections are manipulated by incumbent officials, villagers will get so upset as to boycott the elections or to appeal the cases to local governments and, if not successful, the central government. If villagers and cadres are in constant struggle over management of public assets due to lack of those institutions, the villages will be in disorder and village management will be paralyzed.

In short, if village elections and oversight agencies are in place and in good quality, village cadres are generally held accountable and villages are in stable condition. However, the institutions are much more effective in holding village cadres accountable in the villages that own a large amount of collective revenues than in the villages that do not. Table 6.1 denotes the different scenarios. In either a poor[184] or a wealthy village, if the quality of village election is good and oversight agencies (VRA and DFMT) function well, the governance quality is better than if the village election is manipulated and oversight institutions are inactive. Here, governance quality is measured by two factors. First is whether a village is stable. An unstable village sees more disputes between peasants and cadres, and thus village management work is paralyzed. Second, good governance refers to better accountability of cadres who are not corrupt and who are more active to facilitate agricultural production, resolve family conflicts in the

village, seek funds from county government to develop village public projects, etc. If the village election is poorly operated and the VRA and DFMT do not function, then one can expect the village to be in chaos with abusive cadres and restless peasants and public services are in a bad shape.

Table 6.1 Village Institutions, Collective Wealth, and Governance Quality

		Village Wealth Level	
		Poor	**Rich**
Institutional Settings	**Bad**	*Bad Governance*	*Bad Governance*
	Good	*Fair Governance*	*Very Good Governance*

What is more important is that, in villages that have abundant collective wealth, the difference of governance conditions between a village that has good institutional settings and one that does not is larger than that among poor villages. The collective wealth makes the village institutions much more effective in improving the quality of governance, because peasants are more active participants in the institutions and make sure that the institutions function in the right way. In poor villages, however, peasants are less interested in participating and monitoring the institutions because the benefit of doing so is significantly lowered. But this does not mean that cadres would engage in more abusive acts. In fact, cadres themselves are much less interested in serving their positions in the poor villages because the cost-benefit ratio is high. While they still have to implement the various state policies and political tasks assigned from the above and handle the daily management of village affairs, they are poorly paid by town governments and, since there is little collective revenue, they can not obtain any personal gain by abusing public power even if they want to. For this reason, in poor villages where elections are conducted and

oversight agencies are put in place, cadres are not high-spirited and have less incentive to work for the peasants. However, at least these villages are "peaceful". There is little unrest and little cadre-peasant tension, which is better than the situation in many other poor villages where elections are not held and oversight agencies do not exist. While institutions cannot improve the governance conditions very much in poor villages, without them, villages can plunge into much worse conditions.

Methods of Comparison

I use the comparative case method to prove my argument about the institutional effects on village governance quality and the economic effects on institutions. Essentially, I select two pairs of villages from the 11 villages I visited in 2007 and 2008. Each pair is a "most similar system", meaning the conditions for each village such as village wealth level, village size, distance to town center, etc. are the same. What is different is the institutional settings. One village has better elections and more active VRA and DFMT, while the other has not. The goal is to examine and compare the governance quality in these two villages. If the one that has better institutional settings has better governance conditions than the one whose institutional setting is poor, than we can argue that better institutions lead to better governance quality. Between the two pairs of villages, the main difference is the level of village wealth. One pair of villages has much more collective revenues than the other pair. By comparing the differences between the two villages in each pair, we could find out whether, in the pair of rich villages, the effects of institutions on village governance quality are higher than that in the pair of poor villages.

Institutional Effects on Governance Quality in Poor Villages

The two relatively poor villages are the Dragon village from Hebei province and the High Village from Sichuan province, and their general conditions are similar to each other[185]. Table 6.2 compares the two villages. Both are located in plain areas, are very close to the town centers, and have a little over 2,100 villagers. High village has a higher per capita income than Dragon village, but the purchasing power in the area where High village is located is lower than where Dragon village is located, and the per capital incomes of both are just a little above the national average[186]. Both villages receive about 6,000 *yuan* each year from their respective town government, which is essentially for the daily running of the villagers committee such as paying office utility bills and maintaining road lamps, ditches, water pumps, etc. Finally, the annual collective revenue for both Dragon village and High Village is about 13,000 *yuan*. The institutional settings and the governance conditions in these two villages, however, are very different from each other. Next I will discuss these two cases separately.

Table 6.2 Comparison of Dragon Village and High Village by Key Variables

	Dragon Village	High Village
Geographic Location	Plain area	Plain area
Distance to Town Center	About one mile	About one mile
Population	2,182	2,158
Per capita Income	3,700 *yuan* (USD 529)	4,300 *yuan* (USD 614)
Funds from Town Government per Year	6,000 *yuan* (USD 857)	5,000 ~ 6,000 *yuan* (USD 714 ~ 857)
Village Collective Revenues per Year	13,000*yuan* (USD 1,857)	20,000 ~ 30,000*yuan* (USD 2,857 ~ 4,286)
Village Election Quality	Low*	Good
Oversight Agencies	VRA but inactive; No DFMT*	Active VRA
Governance Quality	Disorder, unaccountable village leadership and paralyzed village management*	Orderly village and responsible village cadres

* I use the 2000-2006 data on the institutional settings and governance conditions for Dragon village because institutions were poorly set up and governance was in low quality during that period. The information of socioeconomic conditions of the village listed above was obtained when I visited the village in May 2007. In general, it did not change much from the period of 2000-2006.

Dragon Village

Dragon village is only 60 miles from Beijing but, because the Yan Mountains stand in between, it takes four hours to travel to the village. Partly because the area is separated by the big mountains from Beijing and other metro cities, it is among the poorest areas in Hebei province. Dragon village is a typical agricultural village, meaning that most of the villagers make a living out of farming, which is in contrast with many peasants in coastal provinces who live on family commercial businesses. The village has 6,000 *mu* (appx. 1,000 acres) of agrarian land and the major crops are grape, apricot, corn and apple. A small number of peasants also

raise and sell pigs. About 200 villagers have left to work in urban cities, primarily in Beijing, and another 500-600 villagers did labor jobs in nearby mining factories.

Dragon village had very few sources of collective revenues. In the late 1980s, the village was found to have underground ore of phosphorous. The township acquired about 1,000 *mu* (appx. 165 acres) agrarian land from the village to build a mining and processing plant, and compensated four million *yuan* ($571,428) to the village. According to the current VC chair, the money was invested in the village collective enterprises in the 1980s and 1990s. Just like other villages in China in the same period, Dragon village was motivated to develop its village collective economy and consecutively tried out an auto repair shop, electric welding factory, brick factory, sweater factory, carpet factory, stone factory, canned food plant, etc., but none lasted long. In the end, the compensation from the mining plant ran out and there was no collective enterprise when I visited the village. Right now, the villagers committee leased several roadside houses (owned publicly by the village) to the villagers who ran small shops, and collected a yearly rent of about 4,000 *yuan* ($571). In addition, another ore processing factory leased some farmland and paid 9,000 *yuan* ($1,285) every year. These were the Dragon village's only sources of collective revenues.

In the meanwhile, the village had about one million *yuan* ($142,857) of external and internal debts. It owed agricultural taxes and fees of 400,000 *yuan* ($57,143) to the town government, which were piled up before the 2002 tax reform. It had a bank loan of 380,000 *yuan* ($54,286) and a loan of 150,000 *yuan* ($21,429) from a local foundation to pay back. Plus, it owed 60,000 *yuan* ($8,571) of salaries to some villagers who helped build the village road in 2005.

In general, Dragon's village's conditions were not too different from many other villages in China. However, due to the lack of village institutions, Dragon village was literally in chaos from the late 1990s till 2006, and the financial burden and poor public goods provision in the village could have been lessened if those institutions were established. While Hebei Province started to promote village elections in 1988, Dragon village did not hold any formal election until the year 2000. A VRA did exist, but only on a nominal basis. Its members were handpicked by the village cadres and had no real say on village affairs. There was no DFMT in the village. Without a popularly-electedvillagers committee , the village was ruled by authoritarian VPB secretaries who faced no institutional check.

A fifty-year-old man, Li Wen, who became VPB secretary in 1997, was alleged by all of the villagers I interviewed to be an autocratic ruler. Because there was no VRA or DFMT to monitor him and check the village account, Li never disclosed the village account to villagers and never consulted with anybody on decision-making. In the late 1990s, some villagers once complained to the county government that Li failed to disclose the expenditure of village collective revenues. After knowing this, Li ranted through the village-wid loudspeakers [187], "I am the one who determines how to spend the money, and I see no need to tell you!" My interviewees recalled that Li often went to the microphone in the VC office and broadcast his magisterial and arrogant speeches. Many villagers also believed that Li and his predecessors should be responsible for the bankruptcy of the village enterprises and suspected that these village cadres misappropriate funds from the enterprises.

Apparently, the unelected village cadres had little motivation to provide public goods to peasants. When the phosphorus ore mining and processing plant settled in the village, according to the state policy, for every two *mu* of acquired agrarian land, the plant was required to offer a

tenure job to one peasant from the village. However, the VPB secretary made a deal with the labor department of the county government and "sold" these tenure jobs back to the mining plant through the county government. The revenue from "selling" the jobs was unaccounted for. Villagers complained that all peasants who work for the mining plant now except for one were non tenure employees whose benefits are worse than tenure workers. And the exceptional peasant was said to be a relative of then-VC chair.

Water is the most important agricultural production element in northern China, which is short of rain and water systems. But Li and his predecessors missed several opportunities to improve the irrigation system in the village. The town government once offered to drill a water well for the village but Li "gave" this opportunity to a neighboring village. Peasants were not sure if there was any material exchange in the deal but they thought it was a serious mistake by Li. Also, the industrial wastewater from the mining plant could be used to water crops, but, due to the delinquency of the village cadres, the water pipe was built to pass the neighboring village first before flowing to the Dragon village's land. Villagers were angry that the wastewater did not flow to Dragon village first since the mining plant was using the Dragon village's farmland.

Li's power was finally weakened in the year 2000, when he was pressured by the county government to hold a village election, but the election processes were full of twists and turns. The peasants in Dragon village were fed up by Li's rule and took the election as an opportunity to change their lives. Zhen Bao was the one who stood up to directly challenge Li. Zhen, in his thirties, used to be a local court clerk and thus had some general legal knowledge. After carefully studying the Organic Law and the provincial regulations on village elections, he pointed out to the county government that the formation of election commission in Dragon village was problematic. The election commission members were nominated by the town

government and VPB, and were roughly approved by some VRA members. The county party secretary agreed to restart the election but it was not held until 2001. This time, Zhen won the majority nomination votes to become a candidate. However, his rival was the VPB secretary, Li. Noting the strong popular support for Zhen, Li co-opted the town government to call off the election. It took two more times of elections and relentless appeals to the county government for Zhen to finally win the election and become the VC chair.

Although Zhen won the position through a democratic election, the VRA members were still appointed by Li and thus the VRA was not able to challenge Li's rule. Because Li controlled both the majority of members in the VC and the members of the VRA, Zhen's political base was weak. So Zhen appointed two of his hardcore supporters to be "Assistant to VC Chair" and since then, Dragon village had two power centers struggling with each other, which paralyzed the village management work. For example, because both Li and Zhen tried to collect taxes and fees from the peasants, eventually villagers declined to submit fees to either one, which led to the Dragon village's 400,000 *yuan* of debt owed to the town government. Eventually, due to a violent dispute with the phosphorus plant, Zhen was put into jail in 2003 and lost the fight with Li[188]. But before long, Li also receded from the political stage in Dragon village and retired in 2006[189].

In sum, the nonexistence of village elections in Dragon village for many years led to the stronghold of autocratic rule by the VPB secretary. Although democratic election was finally held, the village oversight institutions, especially the VRA, were not selected by the peasants and were under the control of Li. Without check and balance mechanisms, Li was not held accountable to the peasants and did not have the motivation to provide public goods to the village. The power struggle between Li and Zhen further paralyzed the village management and

plunged the village in chaos[190]. Dragon village revived to a stable order after the March 2006 election. The current VC chair, Li Dian (not a relative to the former VPB secretary), commented that, if village elections were held earlier, Dragon village should be much better than how it looks today.

High Village

High village is located in the southwest China's Sichuan province and is about 70 miles from Chengdu, the provincial capital city. It is right off a provincial express way and is the nearest village to the town center. Due to its convenient location, about one third of the villagers worked in nearby towns and cities and some of them migrated to the east coastal provinces. Peasants in the village lived on farming and remittances from their migrant relatives. The main crop in the village was rice. A few peasants rented others' land and built poultry farms and mushroom farms.

The main source of collective revenue in High village was from the peasants. The villagers committee collected 13.1 *yuan* ($1.87) of "Public Project Fee" (*gongyi shiye fei*) from each villager per year. The money, about 25,000 *yuan* ($3,571) each year, was mainly used to maintain the public facilities in the village, pay for the salaries of accountants and cashiers, sponsor the Village Association of the Elders, etc. In addition, there were some 20 private enterprises in the village, and the villagers committee could seek sponsorship from the enterprises for miscellaneous projects such as helping out impoverished peasants[191], holding village-wide sports games, celebrating all kinds of festivals, etc[192].

High village is divided into seven villager small groups, which are dispersed from each other[193]. Each VSG had its own sources of revenues and had the authority to dispense the money.

For example, the No. 5 VSG collected 150 *yuan*/*mu* of land contract fee from the peasants in 2007, totaling 38,000 *yuan* ($5,429), which were used to maintain the water ditches and wells within the VSG, pave the road shoulders, pay for the salaries of water well watchers and water pumping workers, and pay for the electricity bills for pumping water. The No. 5 VSG also had 5,000 *yuan* ($714) of income by renting some houses to a private plastic fiber bag factory. Overall, the income and expenditure were balanced unless there were some ad hoc projects. For example, in order to finance a new water ditch, the VSG loaned more than 50,000 *yuan* ($7,143) from the town Trust & Cooperative Bank. In addition to that, the VSG collected 25 *yuan*/*mu* from the peasants, which had to be approved by the villagers committee.

The VC in High village had a chair and three members. The committee members were in charge of the village account, women issues and people's militia, respectively. Their salaries and the salary of the VSG leaders were all paid by the town government[194]. The town government also allocated about 5,000 *yuan* ($714) each year to the village as administrative budget (*bangong jingfei*) to be used for paying bills of the VC offices.

Because there was no village economy and not much collective income in the village, most peasants had very little demand from the village leadership. As long as their private agricultural production was ensured, they did not seem to care much about village politics. Most peasants were not very interested in village elections although they were mobilized by the village leadership to participate.

The village elections in High village have not been very competitive. The current VC chair, Zhang Ming, was first elected in 1996 and won four elections since then. According to his and some villagers' accounts, the village election methods were fairly standardized. The candidates were nominated freely by villagers in each VSG. Each time there were some 30

preliminary candidates. The final candidates were determined in two rounds by all CCP members and the VSG leaders[195]. After the first meeting, five candidates who received the highest votes were brought to the second meeting, in which the same group of people voted for two final candidates to VC chair. During these processes, there was no campaign. Zhang said he never felt the need to win elections with the help of campaign activities. In each election, Zhang's rival was also a village cadre, who tended not to confront Zhang directly by holding campaign activities. The final election was held among all villagers in the village elementary school campus. The VC chair candidates each gave a short speech to the voters, who then cast ballots in secret ballot booths. The elections were only for the VC chair, and the other three VC members were appointed by the winning chair from the three people who did not make it to be final candidates. The losing final candidate could also be picked by the winning chair to be a VC member.

Compared with the elections of VC chair, the elections of VSG leader were more relaxed. For example, in No. 6 VSG in 2006, the VC nominated three candidates, and the candidate list was brought to the villager representatives in the VSG for approval. The representatives selected one of them as the VSG leader and the other two as the leader's assistants[196]. When asked why the elections were not competitive, the leader, Mr. Rao, answered by describing the job as "earning not much, doing not less". In the words of the No. 3 VSG leader, "I earn two *yuan* per day, but the job is so tough, … I'm 100% sure that I don't want to be this leader anymore!"

Among the toughest jobs for the VSG leaders were coordinating harvesting and planting (*shuangqiang* or "double rushes"), and collecting money. Because the harvesting season is very short, the VSG leaders needed to coordinate with the VC members and the peasants to arrange the efficient usage of combines. They (and the VC members) also had to harvest crops for the

old people in the village who did not have children, in additional to harvesting their own crops. Immediately following the harvest, VSG leaders engaged in another round of coordination work for planting.

The other tough job was collecting contract fees and "public project fee". According to Rao, although these fees were the only major source of village collective income and essential to public goods provision, peasants had all kinds of excuses to decline submitting the fees. Some complained about the poor conditions of their farmland and unfair allocation. Some were unhappy about the fact that the VC still collected money from peasants while the central government has abolished all taxes and fees on peasants. Once somebody succeeded in not submitting the fees, others, with or without excuses, followed suit and asked Rao to come back later once he collected the fees from 80% of the households. Rao complained that all the excuses were ungrounded because every household had both good and bad land, and the fees were needed to provide public service to the peasants.

More importantly, the fees were not misappropriated. High village had some good oversight institutions to make sure the collected fees were not misappropriated and mishandled by the village cadres and cadres did not extract fees arbitrarily. First of all, the income of the VSGs was deposited at the village account. The village hired five "special accountants" (*zhuanye kuaiji*) to handle the VSG accounts[197]. If the VSG needed to dispense some money, it had to get approval from the VC. After consulting with the special accountant, the VC would ask the village cashier to withdraw and give the money to the VSG. Both VC cadres and special accountants were responsible to monitor the VSGs' accounts. Second, whenever the VC needed to spend more than 500 *yuan*, it had to inform the town government, which guaranteed that the VC cadres should not be wasteful of public funds. Third, in the case that the VC or a VSG

needed additional money to finance a large public project, it needed to go through a process called "one deliberation for one project" (*yishi yiyi*)[198]. The VC or VSG was required to bring a proposal first to the villager representatives and CCP members for their opinions. Once they agreed, the representatives and party members each presented the case to some villagers, solicited their opinions and asked for their approval. Finally, the VC or the VSG would call for a meeting of all villagers to pass the case formally. The *yishi yiyi* process both enabled the village cadres to obtain sufficient funding for public projects and ensured that cadres should not solicit money from peasants in an ad hoc manner. However, getting villagers' approval through *yishi yiyi* was one thing, collecting the money was another. Many still declined to submit the fees for all sorts of reasons.

In sum, the institutions in High village reduced the chance for cadres to engage in corruption. Although the village did not have a DFMT, which is quite common in many other villages, the expenditures in High village were accountable through other institutional means. But because there was little collective income, the cadres in High village found it hard to provide better public service to the peasants. When asked about the challenges to his work, the VC chair said that the No. 1 challenge was the lack of collective revenues, which not only influenced public goods provision, but also "cannot attract the capable people to join the VC and VSG leadership." All of the VSG leaders I interviewed expressed their intention to quit the job once the term ends. They took the position because they were nominated by the VC cadres and did not want to deny the cadres' "face". These people all had other main jobs[199] so they did not mind too much the low salary. But the trouble of collecting money made them less capable of taking care of other public affairs and much less motivated to undertake the job any more. In short, lack

of collective wealth reduced the motivation of both peasants and cadres to participate in the village institutions and thus reduced the effectiveness of these institutions.

Institutional Effects on Governance Quality in Rich Villages

When villages have a great deal of collective assets, the peasants are more dependent on the democratic institutions of village elections and oversight agencies to hold village cadres accountable and responsible to make full use of the assets. Thus they are more active in participating in village politics. Without those institutions, the governance quality in the villages could be even worse than that in the villages that do not have much collective revenue. In this section, I will compare two rich villages from the same town in Wenzhou city of the east coastal Zhejiang province.

Zhejiang province is among the wealthiest areas in China. The province's economy has developed rapidly since the opening-up of the Chinese economy in 1978 and its GDP rose from the 12th in 1978 to the 4th in 2006 among all provinces[200]. The province had very early and fast development of township and village enterprises in the 1980s and, today, private sector accounts for 70% of the province's economy. In the coastal region like the Wenzhou city, almost every rural household runs a family business and they produce a full range of products from clothing and toys to electric elements and auto parts[201]. Non-agricultural income accounts for 72% of the total income for peasants in Zhejiang[202]. In some villages, all farmlands have been acquired by local governments for commercial development.

In recent years, due to large-scale acquisition of farmland in the Wenzhou region and the aggrandizement of village collective revenues, management of the collective assets and the

redevelopment of old villages have become the top concern of the peasants in many villages and brought about many disputes and chaos. As I visited West village and Peace village in September 2007, they were in the middle of the land acquisition and redevelopment process. However, due to the difference on village institutional settings, the two villages showed completely different conditions of governance. While West village was peaceful, prosperous, and on a right track of allocating compensation and redeveloping residential houses, Peace village had not recovered from the scars left before 2006 when the village was not in peace and there were constant and sometimes violent disputes between the villagers and the village leadership.

The basic conditions in the two villages were similar (Table 6.3). Both are on the edge of the town in plain areas and had some farmland acquired by the city government for commercial business development. West village was smaller and had 460 registered villagers, but it also had some 2,000 residents who migrated from the Western poorer region of Zhejiang province and from other provinces, while Peace village had 1,800 registered residents. The per capital income in the two villages was 12,000 *yuan* each, much higher than the national average. The fixed collective revenue was 700,000 *yuan* in West village and 500,000 *yuan* in Peace village, and the revenues mainly came from renting village buildings to local factories. The town government did not give any funds (not even the administrative funds) to its villages, so the villages were on their own in running the villagers committees and providing public services to peasants.

Table 6.3 Comparison of West Village and Peace Village by Key Variables

	West Village	Peace Village
Geographic Location	Plain area	Plain area
Distance to Town Center	About one mile	About one mile
Population	460 (registered) + 2,000 (unregistered migrants)	1,800
Per capita Income	12,000*yuan* (USD 1,714)	12,000*yuan* (USD 1,714)
Funds from Town Government per Year	None	None
Village Collective Revenues per Year	700,000 *yuan* (USD 100,000)	500,000 *yuan* (USD 71,429)
Village Election Quality	Good	Poor*
Oversight Agencies	Active VRA and DFMT	Inactive VRA and DFMT*
Governance Quality	Prosperous village and responsible village cadres	Disorder, unaccountable village leadership and paralyzed village management*

* I use the pre-2006 data on the institutional settings and governance conditions for Peace village because institutions were poorly set up and governance was in low quality during that period. The information of socioeconomic conditions of the village listed above was obtained when I visited the village in September 2007. In general, it did not change much from the pre-2006 period.

West Village

West village no longer had any farmland. The village was located in the center of the newly-planned business district of the city. In 2003, the city government acquired 153 *mu* farmland at the price of 57,000 *yuan*/*mu*. In addition to the monetary compensation, the city returned 20% of the acquired land to the village. The returned land would be part of the business district and the peasants might choose to start their businesses on the land or lease out their part of the land to other businesses. By the time I visited the village, part of the compensation had been allocated to the villagers and the returned land was yet to be divided[203]. The villagers

committee was busy planning the renovation of the residential buildings in the village, which included building an apartment complex for the elders.

The main source of collective revenue of the village was property rental. The village built some factory buildings for rental purpose and, by leasing them to local businesses, earned 700,000~800,000 *yuan* per year. Since there was no fund from the town government, the village depended on the collective revenue to provide public services and pay salaries to VC staff. For example, the village spent about 500,000 *yuan* in 1998 to pave all the roads in the village. The VC hired 14 villagers as part-time patrollers to safeguard the village and three full-time cleaners. Whereas peasants in other areas paid for their medical insurance on a voluntary basis, all peasants in West village had their medical insurance paid by the VC[204]. In order to encourage the peasants to pursue better education, the VC gave monetary award to the students who entered the best high school, best colleges, and graduate schools each year. The village also had an Association for the Elders. The Association was allowed to manage some of the village's factory buildings, and the earned income was used for the association's activities.

Since the village had a large amount of collective money at its disposal, the village had installed a well-rounded institutional system to hold village cadres accountable. The villagers committee had five members, and two of the members also sat on the VPB committee. In practice, the village affairs were mainly governed by the VPB secretary, Mr. Miao Jian. The village cadres explained to me that, because the VC chair, who was in his fifties with a low level of education, was not as good as Miao in handling the issues of real estate development and negotiation with the various external actors (the government, developers, construction teams, etc.), he was willing to play a more inferior and assistant role to Miao in village government. Miao, a 36-year-old man, had a college associate degree and was very energetic. He ran a family

business that manufactured leather products for brand names. He was the village security team leader from 1998 to 2001, and was elected VC chair in 2002. After serving one term, he quit in 2005 and joined the VPB secretary election.

The VPB secretary election in West village was among the most democratic ones according to my knowledge. The election was presided by the town government and held in two rounds. In the first round, the household representatives voted for four final candidates out of all 25 party members in the village. In the second round, the 25 party members voted for three members of VPB out of the four final candidates. Whoever obtained the most votes became the VPB secretary.

The methods of village elections were standardized as well. The last village election was held in April 2005. The preliminary candidates were nominated by peasants and then the final candidates were determined through a primary election. The final candidates to VC chair each gave a speech in front of all villagers one day before the election was held. On the election day, voters cast ballots in secret ballot booths and each voter could cast no more than three proxy votes for his or her relatives. There was no vote buying, according to both the VC staff and some villagers.

The VRA in West village was more functional and active than the ones I found in other villages. Among the 22 VRs, 16 of them were elected out of the household representatives through a democratic process. First, all household representatives passed the election rules designed by the villagers committee. Then, within each of the four VSGs, each of the household representatives voted for four people out of a list of all household representatives. The four household representatives who gathered the most ballots became the VRs of their VSGs. The

other six VRs were the three VPB members, the VC chair, the village cashier, and the town people's congress delegate from the village.

The VRA in West village played an active role in making decisions with regard to the village collective interests. Especially when it came to the issue of allocating land compensation and the returned land and of renovating the old residential buildings, the village leadership wanted to make sure that every step of the decision-making processes was transparent and open, and thus frequently called for VRA meetings. For example, there was a VRA meeting the day before I arrived, in which the VRs held a vote on the selection of a real estate developer. At an earlier time, the village leadership contacted six developers for renovating the old village. After careful research and inspection of these developers, the village leadership narrowed down the list to four developers. Each of the four developers then came to the village to promote their proposals to the VRs, who finally voted for the one to use.

On the issues of financial transactions, West village's account was managed by the town government and monitored by both the VRA and the five-person DFMT in the village. For expenses of less than 1,000 *yuan*, the reimbursement needed the signatures of the VPB secretary and VC chair. For expenses of between 1,000 and 5,000 *yuan*, they had to be approved at the VPB and VC meeting. And for expenses of over 5,000 *yuan*, a VRA meeting needed to be called for approval.

At the end of each month, the five members of the DFMT went to the VC office to audit the incomes and expenses from the previous month. After each of the members approved the account transactions, the DFMT leader stamped the official DFMT seal, and the VC sent the village account to the town government for another auditing and for filing.

According to my conversations with both the VC/VPB staff and the DFMT members, the DFMT was very picky on whether a line item was reasonable and permissible. For instance, once a new policeman was assigned to cover the area in which West village was a part of. To build up a friendly *guanxi* (relationship) with the policeman, the VC invited him to dinner. But at the end of the month, some DFMT members declined to approve the 500 *yuan* of dinner receipt because they did not think the dinner was necessary and thought the cadres took the chance to eat outside. Eventually, the DFMT leader persuaded other members to approve the item because the case was special. According to the cadres, sometimes it was inevitable to invite those who might benefit the village interests to dinner, but the villagers did not see the direct link between the dinners and the village interests. Miao said, "When I invite my friends to dinner, I spend at least 1,000 *yuan*. Why would I care to eat that 500-*yuan* meal!" Miao complained that the DFMT was too strict that sometimes he had to pay for public meals out of his own pocket. But overall, all of these institutions have made the cadres in West village very careful not to abuse their authority by any means.

And finally, the village accounts were published on the village public board each month for all villagers to inspect. At the time when I visited, the village also published its first issue of "West Village Newspaper", on which the village account transactions from the last quarter were published. The quarterly newsletter also published the village leadership's past activities and future work plans, and had a column on legal education.

Peace Village

Although Peace village had similar socioeconomic conditions with West village, its governance quality was much worse than West village. When I visited the village, it was still in

the process of recovering from the chaos before 2006, which was caused by the former VPB secretary who did not disclose the information on farmland compensation and the returned land to the villagers and who was alleged to have sold a village factory and profited from the price difference.

Peace village had 440 households, among which about 100 household lived on farming while the rest ran family businesses. Peace village had a similar amount of collective income as West village, but the public investment was much less. While in West village I saw paved roads and multi-level residential buildings, in Peace village, most of the buildings looked worn down and some roads were not paved. Other than the sponsorship for the Association of the Elders and building a village road, no other public services was provided by the village leadership between 2000 and 2006, according to the villagers[205].

Similar to Dragon village in Hebei province, Peace village was under autocratic rule by the VPB secretary for 16 years. Although the village had all the institutions that West village had, such as the VRA and DFMT, the oversight institutions along with the VC and VPB were all under control by the secretary, Mr. Ye Di. There were elections of VC members and VRAs, but the candidates were all nominated by Ye. Without checks and balances properly in place, Ye behaved like a despotic king in the village.

According to the villagers and some current VC members, Ye had taken public money for personal use without being checked. For example, in 2004, Ye leased some village land to a factory for 1.26 million *yuan*. Ye took 360,000 *yuan* for personal use and did not return it to the village until 10 months later. One of the most disturbing issues was that Ye cheated the villagers on farmland acquisition. According to the villagers, Ye told them that the city government acquired 7.5 *mu* of farmland while, after confirming with the city government, the villagers

found that 85 *mu* was acquired. In fact, Ye once called for a VRA meeting to approve the acquisition proposal. Due to the opposition by the majority of VRs, the proposal was not passed. But the farmland was acquired by the government and later villagers went to the town government to appeal the case, only to find that the VRs' signatures were on the proposal and Ye must have counterfeited the signatures. The compensation to the land was paid by the city government but was taken by Ye and some other cadres. Villagers also complained that, after a local shoe factory went bankrupt and was listed by the local court for auction, Ye used 1.6 million *yuan* of public funds to purchase it and then sold it to another company for 2.85 million *yuan*. The money has been missing since then.

The villagers in Peace village complained to the town, city (county-level), and metro-city government, but Ye was never investigated or sued. Apparently, Ye had bought off some officials in the local governments, and some villagers suspected that Ye was connected with a local gang ring. In August 2005, when the current VC chair, Ms. Xia Chun, organized villagers to donate money for hiring a measuring team to measure the exact amount of farmland being acquired, Ye sent dozens of thugs in the middle of the night to break in Xia's and other villagers' homes and beat them.

Xia won the village election in December 2005 and has tried her best to bring the village to its prosperity. However, Xia's efforts have stumbled due to institutional paralysis. Although Ye was retired in 2004, he still wanted to install the people on his side to govern the village and tried to block Xia's governance. For example, some of the VRs were part of Ye's group, and they intentionally declined to attend any VRA meetings, which technically invalidated any VC proposals. Also, the VPB has not been running because the new VPB secretary was harassed by Ye to quit the job.

In sum, in Peace village, Ye inundated all of the oversight institutions so that he could abuse his absolute power and profit from selling public properties without being constrained. Without the opportunity to participate in village politics and to challenge Ye through the institutions, the villagers in Peace village frequently appealed to the local governments for justice but did not succeed. Fortunately, they did succeed in electing a righteous new VC chair, Ms. Xia. But Xia has faced some challenges in reviving the energy of the village, partly due to the fact that Ye has continued to infiltrate the running of the important institutions in the village.

Conclusion

By examining the four cases in details, I have showed that institutions matter in improving village governance quality. Both High village and West village did better in public participation, accountability of village cadres and provision of public goods than Dragon village and Peace village. While other conditions were similar between Dragon village and High village and between West village and Peace village, the difference in their village institutions led to the difference in governance quality. Because village elections were hijacked and oversight agencies were inactive in Dragon village and Peace village, the VPB secretaries in these two villages imposed autocratic rules and embezzled public properties for personal gains. As a result, there was little public service in these two villages and villagers were found to have a tense relationship with the village leaders, which led to instability and affected the normal lives of the peasants. But in High village and West village, because the elections were held justly and the VRs, DFMTs and other oversight measures allowed for public participation, the village

leaderships in these two villages were held more accountable to the peasants and the public services were better than that in Dragon village and Peace village.

Moreover, in rich villages like West village, the village institutions became even more important and effective. Because the village held a large amount of public assets, i.e. farmland acquisition compensation and the returned land, the peasants paid much more attention to the management of these public assets. The elections of VC chair and VPB secretary gave the peasants the chance to select more trustable village leaders to manage the assets and other public affairs. And the election of VRs allowed the peasants to participate in the management process, albeit indirectly. The DFMT members represented the villagers to monitor the financial transactions of the village. Because of the public assets, the peasants were more active in participating in the village politics, which made the institutions more effective and held the village cadres more accountable to provide better public services to the peasants. In contrast, although High village also had a good mechanism of village institutions, villagers were not as active as the ones in West village to participate in these institutions. The reason was that the collective revenues were not large enough and the peasants could not receive more benefits from the village institutions. However, they would still need these institutions to maintain the basic level of accountability by village cadres. Without these institutions, the village would have sunk to the same messy situation as in Dragon village and Peace village, where accountability and public services were nonexistent.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The most significant contribution of this study is that it shows how democratic institutional building can be effective to change the political processes in authoritarian states. While the conventional wisdom holds that democratic institutions in authoritarian states such as legislature and elections are for the purpose of "window dressing", my study has showed that some of these institutions could indeed change the pattern of authoritarian governance and increase the level of political participation in these states. Twenty years after some democratic structures were brought to rural China, local autonomy has become an integral and important part of China's political structure and democratic governance has gradually taken root on the grassroots level, with peasants being engaged in meaningful voting participation and Communist cadres being accountable to local citizens. In other words, democratic institutional building matters in making democracy work even under an authoritarian regime.

The finding also has a distinct implication on the study of political institutionalization as a result of economic modernization. Confronted by the pressure from the public for more opportunities of political participation, many authoritarian states undertook institutional reforms such as allowing for multiple political parties and holding national elections. But because these states were not able to ensure other political and civil rights, they turned into hybrid regimes such as electoral democracies and often national election fraud could set the countries in serious crises. In contrast, China managed to avoid overhauling its political system but chose to experiment political autonomy on the grassroots level. My study shows that this political

arrangement has helped China absorb the pressure from the public by accommodating more political participation yet without encountering the many political repercussions experienced by the states who adopted institutionalization in the political center.

This chapter will review the findings of this study and relate them to the more general research on political institutions and democratic building. After reviewing the causal mechanism through which village institutions have changed the rural political processes, I will discuss its implications to thepolitical development in China and how China's econo mic reforms have shaped and will continue to shape the political institutions in the country. Finally, the chapter projects some future steps of research and suggests the necessity of doing more case studies to supplement the statistical findings.

Making Local Democracy Work: Political Institutions, Participation and Good Governance in China

Getting Out the Vote in Non-Democratic States: the Role of Institutions

Although the subject of village elections have been widely studied, not much research has paid attention to the relationship between the quality of village elections and the level of electoral participation by Chinese peasants. Scholars were more interested in the influence of voter's subjective factors such as political efficacy and democratic orientation on voter participation. My research found that the quality of village elections is positively associated with voter participation, that is, in elections that feature more competitive and fair methods, peasants are more willing to cast ballots. Seen from the survey results, *Hypothesis 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7* have been confirmed. For example, if voters are granted the rights to select the election commission, they view the election as more transparent and credible, and thus are more interested in

participating in voting. Similarly, holding a primary election to determine final candidates is a fairer method than appointment by local officials, and makes peasants more confident in their election power. With two candidates to VC chair, instead of single candidacy, a village election is more competitive and can attract more peasants to vote. Finally, allowing voters to cast ballots in secret ballot booths protects the privacy of voters, and tallying ballots in front of voters signifies the transparency of voting process. Both these methods have led to higher voter turnout.

However, not all the election procedures under examination have showed positive effects with statistical significance. Free nomination (*Hypothesis 2*) was not a statistically significant factor to influence turnout, although in theory it too is supposed to make village elections more transparent. But it also tells us that free nomination is not regarded by the peasants as important as other factors such as popular selection of the election commission, primary election, multi-candidacy, the use of secret ballot booths and public ballot counting, to influence their voting decision. Also, the existence of door-to-door canvassing (*Hypothesis 4*) does not seem to attract voters to the ballot boxes primarily because there were so few such campaign activities and the variation on this variable is too little to display significant causal effect on voter turnout.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that better village elections lead to higher level of participation among Chinese peasants as most measurements of election quality are proved to exert such effects. While testing this relationship, I have included the variables of voters' subjective orientations, i.e. political efficacy, into the statistical model for control purposes. The results show that voters' internal efficacy, i.e. the belief that they can participate in politics effectively, has positively influenced their voting behavior. Peasants with stronger such belief are more likely to participate in village elections. This finding is consistent with the results in

previous studies about voters' subjective orientation and voter turnout although those studies failed to include the variables of election quality into consideration.

Real Votes or Rubber Stamps: How Institutions Promote Better Governance

Although some research works have treated election quality as the independent variable and studied its influence on village politics, they have limited their scope to a few election procedures only, most commonly, free nomination and multi-candidacy[206]. While these two procedures certainly signify the competitiveness of village elections, they are insufficient to describe the level of transparency and fairness. An election could be unfair if final candidates are appointed by local officials or if voters are kept from watching ballots being tallied, although there are multiple candidates and preliminary candidates are nominated by voters. By including more election procedures to measure the quality of elections, I have a more accurate evaluation of whether elections are competitive, fair, and transparent.

In terms of the consequence of village elections, my measurement is similar to previous studies[207]. My survey study uses villagers' evaluation of the overall cadre performance to measure the accountability of village cadres. It uses villagers' evaluation of the quality of self-governance to measure the overall governance conditions in their villages. And finally, it uses villagers' self-report of the daily assistance they receive from village cadres to measure both the accountability of cadres and the quality of public service provided by cadres. However, I am unable to adopt any more objective measure of public goods provision due to the deficiency of my survey dataset. But my survey data also has an advantage, that is, the survey sample is drawn on a national basis, while the data used in previous studies drew from regional sample.

Such an advantage makes my conclusions more generalizable than the similar findings in previous research.

In fact, the findings from my survey research have confirmed my hypothesis (*Hypothesis 8*) that better village elections lead to better village governance. For example, five out of seven indicators of election quality (selection of election commission, nomination of preliminary candidates, multi-candidacy for VC chair, use of secret ballot box, and public ballot counting) have showed positive association with villagers' evaluation of cadre performance under statistical significance. In other words, if village election methods are more open and fair, the elected cadres are held more accountable by voters and thus receive better evaluation by voters. Moreover, three of the above five indicators (selection of election commission, use of secret ballot booth, and public ballot counting) are positively associated with villagers' evaluation of village self-governance and the daily assistance received by villagers, while other indicators do not show statistical significance. It is reasonable for me to argue that these three indicators are the most important ones to guarantee the fairness and transparency of village elections, and thus are the most effective ones to make elected cadres accountable to peasants' interests.

Separation of Power in Rural China: Does It Bring Better Governance?

So far there has not been any research that deals with the effects of the new village oversight agencies on village governance. My research has filled in this gap and confirmed the Hypothesis 9 and 10 that a functioning VRA and DFMT would make the quality of village governance better. For example, if VRAs meet more often, then cadre performance is better and the effect of self-governance is better, according to the surveyed peasants. Moreover, if a VRA is strong enough to veto the VC's proposals, then cadres are less able to violate peasants' interests,

are more responsive to the VRs, and are more likely to provide daily assistance to peasants. Even the very existence of VRAs has made governance conditions better, seen from higher likelihood that cadres offer daily assistance to peasants and peasants' better evaluation of VSG. In addition, the DFMT has proved to be useful to make village financial transactions more transparent and less susceptible to any attempt of embezzlement or misappropriation by village cadres. The increased credibility of village financial management has made villagers more pleased with cadre performance and the effect of self-governance, although it does not seem to influence cadres' efforts of offering daily assistance to peasants.

Functioning of Institutions: What's the Role of Economic Conditions?

The more in-depth study of four villages in China has further consolidated my findings in the quantitative research. In both the pair of villages that have few public assets and the pair that are rich in public resources, village elections, VRAs, and DFMTs have been proved to be key factors to ensure the good quality of village governance. Without the constraints imposed by these institutions, village cadres could abuse their power unscrupulously. For example, in Peace village in Zhejiang province, the weak VRA and inactive DFMT were part of the reason why the VPB secretary dared to cheat the villagers about compensation on farmland acquisition and to embezzle village money for personal investments, which sowed the seed of anger and grievance among the peasants. The repetitive appeal to higher governments and the requisition for investigation, justice and election by the peasants invoked more cruel governance and violent revenge by the VPB secretary. As a result, village order was chaotic and village governance was paralyzed.

Where village democratic institutions are put in place, the abusive behavior by cadres is curtailed and rarely seen. Even more importantly, these institutions seem to function extraordinarily well in villages that own large amount of collective incomes. For example, in West village, there were both fixed annual income from leasing village houses (for industrial purpose) and the compensation from local government for acquisition of the village farmland. Because of the large sum of money managed by the VC, the peasants in West village were much more active participants in village politics, and the institutions of village elections, VRA, and DFMT were the most effective channels for political participation. With monthly auditing by the DFMT, for instance, village cadres were unable to misappropriate public money. In fact, VC officials were very careful in their daily work because any trivial mistake could be picked up and challenged by the peasants. In order to avoid the chaotic situation that the neighboring villages were faced with (for example, West village), cadres in West village held VRA meetings much more frequently and held elections of VC chair and VPB secretary in a much more standardized way. With more active participation by the peasants in policy-making and in management of public money, the VC provided better public service, i.e. maintenance of public safety and sanitation, paying medical insurance for the peasants, renovating the old village using the land compensation, etc. These better governance conditions were not available in West village, which lacked the democratic institutions to hold cadres accountable despite of it also having a comparatively large sum of public revenues. The better governance conditions were not available in High village either, although the village had a complete and functional system of village institutions. Because there was little collective income in High village, the peasants were less interested in village politics and were less active in participation in village elections. With these institutions available, the village cadres were still relatively accountable to the peasants.

But since the peasants' expectation from the village leadership was lower, the cadres fulfilled their basic responsibility without making extra efforts to offer extra public goods (for example, by soliciting more financial support from the county government or local enterprises). In short, under the current economic development in rural China, village governance quality (cadre accountability and public goods provision) is kept at an acceptable level by the village democratic institutions. But particularly in rich villages, the ones that have much collective income, the institutions are more active and functional, meaning that peasants are more active in participation in the institutions and, consequently, cadres are more responsive to peasants' demands and provide more public services.

Implications

Implications to Comparative Politics

By demonstrating that village elections and oversight institutions have increased the level of peasants' participation and improve the quality of rural governance, this study adds to the study of institutions and governance in comparative politics. While traditional studies of political institutions in authoritarian states argue that institutions are meant to serve the need of authoritarian rulers to maintain governing legitimacy and to facilitate policy implementation, this study shows that the democratic institutions established in rural China are effective platforms through which Chinese peasants participate in village politics. Previous studies of political participation in China showed that Chinese people had adopted different patterns of political participation, but the participation of any pattern was only helpful to influence the "output" stage of political processes, i.e. the implementation of policies, instead of the "input" stage[208]. But

with the empowering of such village institutions as VRA and DFMT, Chinese peasants were more capable of influencing the policymaking process on the village level by participating in VRA meetings, voting for village development proposals, approving village expenditures, etc. These participatory activities not only have better incorporated the peasants' opinions into policymaking processes, but also have placed pressure on village cadres to refrain from abusing their power.

This study consolidates the part of literature on good governance about institutional building. The major thesis in the good governance literature makes a direct link between institutional building and economic development, but this causal mechanism misses the intermediate variable of accountability. It assumes that, by building public institutions of accountability, developing states will have accountability and, with more accountable political leaders, these states are more likely to achieve economic growth. While it remains doubtful whether more accountable leadership is a sufficient condition for economic growth, it is also doubtful whether institutional building, a successful experience in developed states, may bring about accountability in authoritarian states. This study proves that institutional building can be successful of bringing about accountability and better public service in authoritarian states, at least at the grassroots level. More importantly, the more in-depth study reveals more delicate contextual influences on the running of institutions. Institutions are not equally effective and influential in every village but are conditioned by the amount of village economic resources. Whereas the institutions of village elections and oversight agencies were effective on a minimal basis in poor villages, they were much more effective in villages that are rich in collective revenues because peasants are much more concerned about village politics. This finding serves as a caveat to the governance programs of the IFIs that, although institutional building is useful

for the purpose of making political leaders accountable, contextual factors such as economic conditions are equally importantly to determine how effective institutional building can be.

Implications to the Chinese Government

It is still arguable what the real motivations were for the Chinese government to initiate village elections in the first place. Many scholars seem to have agreed that it was an instrumental effort by the Chinese government to stabilize the rural society, which saw great tension between cadres and peasants in the aftermath of the 1978 economic reform and privatization of farming. Democracy did not seem to be on the mind of Chinese leaders and, in fact, some leaders were afraid that village democracy would cause more chaos in rural China. However, twenty years after village election was put forth as a national policy, we have seen a more democratic rural society where cadres generated in village elections are held accountable to the interests of peasants who are able to participate in village affairs management through VRA and DFMT. But it remains to be seen whether the political development on the grassroots level may be replicated in the higher-levels governments.

Even if democracy was not the initial goal, institutional building has been helpful to stabilize the rural society, which was definitely needed by the authoritarian Chinese government. Seen from the case studies, the villages without proper arrangement of village elections and active running of oversight agencies sank into management crisis and floundered in conflicts and disintegration. But the villages that were equipped with functional institutions managed to maintain coherent social relations and steady development of agriculture. In villages that owned large collective revenues, institutions were especially significant to smooth out the relations between cadres and peasants. The rich villages could achieve peace and prosperity with the

institutions (such as West village) but might plump into chaos and destitution without the institutions (such as Peace village). In sum, it is to the interests of the Chinese government to consolidate the development village democracy and further step up its efforts to enforcing standard village elections and monitoring the running of oversight institutions in every region.

Challenges and Future Research

This study has several major challenges that need to be addressed in my future research. First, due to the lack of aggregate data on village economic conditions, I was not able to offer a more objective measure of public goods provision. The measures of village governance quality used in this study are based on the interviewees' subjective evaluation of cadre performance, effect of self-governance, and the daily assistance they received from village cadres. These measures are useful and legitimate because they offer the peasants' opinions on whether village cadres are held accountable. But these measures are inadequate because subjective evaluations could be biased and inaccurate. Instead, more objective measures such as VC's public investment and the actual public goods provided by VC would make readers more confident in the data on village governance quality.

Second, if the aggregate data on village economic conditions were available, I could have controlled for the effects of contextual variables such as township and county government funding to villages, village collective revenues, funding from village lineage and temples, number of family clans, etc. These variables all may have influenced the provision of public goods and thus their confounding effects need to be controlled for. After the tax reform between 2002 and 2006, the provision of public goods in villages has to a greater extent relied on funding

from upper-level governments. Moreover, with the external funding, village institutions become a key factor to ensure transparent and efficient management of public project funding. Therefore, external funding from township and county governments can influence the provision of village public goods and also reveal the cadres' ability to manage public projects. If such a variable were available, I would be able to further explore the running of village institutions during the implementation of public projects.

In addition, some studies have shown that social forces in rural China such as family clans and lineages are significant factors in village management. Village ancestral temples and family clan committees sometimes donate funding for public projects. Village cadres who belong to major family lineages in a village may also feel the pressure from the lineages to devote more efforts for the public good[209]. Because the variables on village social forces were not available in my survey, I was not able to control for their effects on village governance quality.

More importantly, the survey research could have been further advanced if there were data on village collective revenues. In the case studies, I have demonstrated that the amount of village collective assets is a very important factor to influence the institutional effects on village governance quality. It would be very helpful if I could examine the interactive effects of village public assets and village democratic institutions on village governance, that is, whether more collective revenues would make village institutions more effective to hold cadres accountable to the demands of peasants. Although my case studies have proved such influence, similar results from survey research would make the proposition more reliable and generalizable.

But one should note that doing survey research in China still has some technical and political challenges to overcome. For example, the survey questionnaire used in this study was a

result of negotiation and compromise among the cooperating partners, governmental and nongovernmental. Correcting these problems in the questionnaire would be both costly and unrealistic. Before another survey becomes possible, what is more promising is to do more in-depth case research and, by studying more villages, to obtain more generalizable results. My current case studies have dealt with the variable of village collective incomes and controlled for the effect of funding from township governments, both of which were missing in the survey research. More case research of such would further enrich and consolidate my current findings on the effects of political institutions in rural China.

NOTES

[1] Among others, see Dahl (1971); Stepan and Linz (1996); Stepan (2001)
[2] Linz (2000); Brownlee (2002); Schedler (2006)
[3] Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, 2007
[4] Schedler (2006), p. 15.
[5] Eckstein 1988; Pye 1988
[6] Oi (1989); O'Brien (1990)
[7] White (1992); O'Brien (1994); O'Brien and Li (2000)
[8] For the debates among top leaders in China over implementing village elections and legislation on villagers' comittees, see, among others, O'Brien (1994); Shi (1999c); O'Brien and Li (2000)
[9] "Three Representatives" (*sange daibiao*) was first proposed by the CCP leader Jiang Zemin in 2000. It requires that "the CPC must always represent the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people." It became part of the CCP Charter in 2002. "Three Representatives" to Become Party's Mission Statement", http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/48642.htm, February 26, 2007. "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehui*) was raised by the Hu Jintao Administration in 2005 to call for democracy, the rule of law, equity, justice, and a closer relation between people and government, under the circumstance that lasting economic growth in China had led to certain social problems such as wealth disparity and social injustice. Building a "Socialist New Countryside" (*shehui zhuyi xin nongcun*) was a national campaign started by the Hu Jintao Administration in 2006 to increase funding for rural development in view of the unbalanced development between urban industrialization and rural agriculture over two decades of Chinese economic reform.
[10] The general functions of the villagers' committees are defined in the Organic Law of Villagers' Committee of People's Republic of China, *Website of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China*, http://www.mca.gov.cn/artical/content/PJCN/2003122290810.htm, February 26, 2007.
[11] Since 2000, the Chinese government has tried to reduce the number of towns (*xiang*) and townships (*zhen*) for the purpose of lowering down administrative costs and relieve the financial burden on local governments. At the end of 2007, there were 613,941 villages in China, 23.4% fewer than the number in 1999, reported in *2005-2007 nian quanguo cunmin weiyuanhui xuanju gongzuo jinzhan baogao* (National Village Elections Work Progress Report, 2005-2007), Department of Grassroots-Level Government and Urban Community Development, Ministry of Civil Affairs.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] A national survey on villager self-government was sponsored by the Carter Center and the MCA and conducted by the China Academy of Social Sciences in 2005. Details of the survey will be described in Chapter 3.
[14] Shi (1999c); O'Brien and Li (2000)
[15] The issue of conflicts between villagers' committee and party committee was discussed in Li (1999); Guo and Bernstein (2004).
[16] See Wang (1998); Pastor and Tan (2000); International Republican Institute (1997); Carter Center (1997) and (1998).
[17] For example, in 2001, 57 villagers' committee chairs in four townships of Qixia, Shandong Province, resigned en mass to protest the party branch's monopoly of power in their villages. Cui Shixin, " 'cunguan' weihe yao cizhi – dui Shandong 57 ming cunweihui chengyuan jiti yaoqiu cizhi shijian de diaocha yu sikao" (Why did Village Chairs Resign? Research Notes on the Incident of 57 Villagers' Committee Chairs Resigning En Mass in Shandong), *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), March 21, 2001.
[18] From 1999 to 2002, 57% of the elected village chairs in Qianjiang, Hubei Province were dismissed by township governments. Huang Guangming and He Hongwei, "sannian chele 187 ming minxuan cunguan" (187 Popularly Elected Village Chairs Dismissed in Three Years), *Nanfang Zhoumo* (Southern Weekend), September 12, 2002.
[19] See Li and O'Brien (1996) and Li (2002).

[20] Zhang (2000)
[21] Circular 9, "General Affairs Office of Central Committee of CCP and General Office of State Council: Circular regarding Widely Implementing the Institutions of Village Affairs Transparency and Democratic Management in Rural Area", April 18, 1998, *China Elections and Governance* (http://www.xuanju.org/NewsInfo.asp?NewsID=16556), accessed on March 8, 2007; Circular 17, "General Affairs Office of Central Committee of CCP and General Office of State Council: Circular regarding Improving and Perfecting the Institutions of Village Affairs Transparency and Democratic Management", June 22, 2004, *China Elections and Governance* (http://www.xuanju.org/NewsInfo.asp?NewsID=68996), accessed on March 8, 2007.
[22] There is no detailed regulation in the Organic Law as to how many villagers should be considered a large population that makes it necessary to form a VRA. But practically, every village is instructed by central and local governments to establish a VRA. In recent years, a central policy called for merging smaller villages in order to reduce administrative costs. It is more so that every village has a VRA.
[23] O'Brien (1994)
[24] Epstein (1997); Shi (1999a)
[25] Oi (1996)
[26] White (1992); O'Brien (1994); O'Brien and Li (2000)
[27] Wang (1998)
[28] Pei (1995)
[29] Schubert (2002)
[30] Bai (2000)
[31] Choate (1997); Li and O'Brien (1999); Li (2003)
[32] Manion (1996)
[33] Manion (2006)
[34] Guo and Bernstein (2004)
[35] Oi and Rozelle (2000)
[36] Alpermann (2001)
[37] See "Overview of Chinese Grassroots Democracy" (*zhongguo nongcun jiceng minzhu gaikuang*), website of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), http://www.mca.gov.cn/artical/content/WCM_YWJS/2003122995120.htm, accessed April 28, 2007.
[38] An exception to this is the national surveys conducted by Tianjian Shi in 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1993 and his studies of village elections based on these surveys. But rural politics has changed greatly since then. Village elections were more widely applied in mid- and late 1990s and in the past years of 21st Century. Some provinces such as Guangdong and Yunnan did not start village elections until 1998 and 1999. Also the Organic Law was revised in 1998 and many provinces updated their electoral rules after a few round of elections. Therefore, a recent survey in rural China would produce different research findings.
[39] Eckstein (1963), p. 10.
[40] March and Olson (1984), p. 734; Rhodes (1997), p. 65.
[41] Almond and Verba (1963); Almond and Powell (1966).
[42] Easton (1953); Almond and Powell (1978).
[43] Haggard and Kaufman (1995).
[44] World Bank (1978); World Development Report (1987), http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166322&entityID=000178830_98101903334595, accessed May 19, 2008.
[45] Nettl (1968); Stepan (1978); Nordlinger (1981); Krasner (1984); Skocpol (1985)
[46] Chalmers (1982); Haggard (1990); Wade (1990); Evans (1995); Woo-Cummings (1999). Also see Bates (1981).
[47] World Development Report (1987), http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64165259&theSitePK=469372&piPK=64165421&menuPK=64166322&entityID=000178830_98101903334595, accessed May 19, 2008; World Bank (1997)
[48] World Bank (1992)
[49] Peters (2005)
[50] March and Olsen (1984); North (1990); Knight (1992)
[51] March and Olsen (1984), (1989), and (1994).
[52] Shepsle (1989); North (1990); Weingast (2002)
[53] Peters (2005)

[54] Weaver and Rockman (1993); Linz and Valenzuela (1994)
[55] Powell (2000); Norris (1997) and (2004); Lijphart (1999)
[56] Gandhi and Przeworski (2007)
[57] Downs (1957); Tullock (1968)
[58] For description of these symbolic elections in former Soviet Union, see Gilison (1968); for description of local people's congress elections, see McCormick (1986); Nathan (1985); O'Brien (1990)
[59] Gilison (1968); Karklins (1986)
[60] The mobilization model of explaining electoral behavior is identified in studies of elections in both the former Soviet Union and China in the 1950s and 1960s. See Gilison (1968); Karklins (1986); Townsend (1969); Chen (2000).
[61] See Karklins (1986); Shi (1997); Shi (1999b)
[62] For an analysis of why it could be biased to rely on voters' self-report of electoral motivations, see Shi (1997), p. 144.
[63] North (1990); Thelen and Steinmo (1992)
[64] Norris (2004)
[65] See Nathan (1985), p. 205-07. The National People's Congress amended the electoral law in 1982 to call off election campaigns and limited the introduction of candidates to briefing meetings organized by electoral commissions.
[66] Chen and Zhong's study was concerned of only local people's congress elections. Shi's study included village elections as part of the semi-competitive elections and compared voting behavior in these elections with that in noncompetitive elections.
[67] Tan 2004, p.3. Also see Pastor and Tan 2000.
[68] The Organic Law, for its most part, regulates villagers' committees' functions and work. With regard to election, Article 9 of the 1987 Organic Law dictates that, "The villager committee chair, vice chair(s) and members shall be elected directly by the villagers. The villager committee shall have a term of three years and its members may be re-elected for consecutive terms. All villagers who have reached 18 years of age, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, family background, religious belief, educational level, financial situation or length of residence, have the right to vote and the right to be elected. But those who are deprived of political rights in accordance with the law are excluded." Translation excerpted from http://www.chinaelections.org/en/readnews.asp?newsid={AF98A72D-CD08-4BBD-8DEE-2D1BE310809B}&classid=19&classname=Laws, November 27, 2006
[69] Pastor and Tan (2000). These methods include village party branch, villagers (five or more freely associated), villager small group, villager representative assembly, direct nomination (*haixuan*), and self-nomination. Pastor and Tan 2000.
[70] See Elklit and Svensson (1997), Table 1 and p. 41.
[71] Ricker and Ordeshook (1968); Cox and Munger (1989)
[72] Campbell, Gurin, and Miller (1954)
[73] Pierre and Peters (2000), p. 15; Rhodes (1997), p. 46.
[74] Stoker (1998), p. 17.
[75] Stoker (1997), p. 21.
[76] Putnam (1993)
[77] Pierre and Peters (2000), p. 37-47
[78] Rhodes (1997), p. 53.
[79] World Bank (1992), p. 1.
[80] World Bank (1997), p. 25.
[81] World Bank (1992), p. 9-10.
[82] World Bank (1992), p. 12.
[83] Ayeni (2000)
[84] Leftwich (1993)
[85] Goldsmith (2007), p. 165.
[86] Diamond and Morlino (2004), p. 25.
[87] Andreas Schedler, "Conceptualizing Accountability." in Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner (eds.) (1999).
[88] Li (2002) and (2003); Shi (1999b); Chen and Zhong (2002); O'Brien (1994) and (1996)
[89] Alpermann (2001), p.47
[90] Powell (2004), p.93.

[91] Arrow (1951)
[92] For the debate on presidentialism and parliamentarism, see Shugart and Carey (1992); Linz and Valenzuela (1994). For the debate on majoritarian electoral system and proportional representation, see Lijphart (1999).
[93] Sullivan and O'Connor (1972), p. 1256. The parenthesis is added by this author.
[94] Diamond (1999); Zakaria (1997)
[95] O'Donnell (1998), p. 117.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[97] See Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner (1999); Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin (1999); O'Donnell (1998).
[98] Ragin (1987); King, Keohane, and Verba (1994).
[99] Macridis (1968); Jackman (1985); Collier (1993)
[100] Lijphart (1971).
[101] Eckstein (1975), p. 104.
[102] Przeworski (2004), p. 527.
[103] This author was one of the coordinators of the survey project. BCPR is a local NGO in Beijing that works on promoting electoral and political reforms in China.
[104] Because many rural residents have migrated to urban areas in recent years, we have included urban residential committees in the sample design in order to capture the rural population living in cities. Of the total sample, 789 peasants lived in urban cities at the time of the interviews.
[105] For more measures to check the reliability of survey results, see Shi (1997), pp. 26-30.
[106] Manion (1994), p. 741.
[107] Note that year 2005 saw a surging caution of both foreign and grassroots NGOs by the Chinese government. The concern was raised after the democratic movements in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, known as the "Color Revolutions", which was seen to be connected with and supported by NGOs in the West, especially in the U.S. As a result, the Chinese government was extremely wary of cooperating with Western NGOs. Our survey project was to a great extent affected by this political context. See "Foreign-funded Nonprofits under Investigation in China," by Jehangir S. Pocha, The Boston Globe, June 15, 2006.
[108] The first trip was in May and June 2007, the second trip was in September and October 2007, and the third one was in March 2008.
[109] Selection of cases on dependent variables, known as selection bias, has been cautioned against by many political scientists. See Geddes (1990) and (2003).
[110] While I was in one province, one morning I was about to set out to visit a village when I got a phone call from the village cadre asking me not to come because his villagers committee office was crowded by villagers who had issues with the cadres. It was unknown whether the villagers went to the office because they knew a researcher from the outside was visiting or whether it was a coincidence. But the incident showed the difficulty of visiting those villages that had internal disputes, which might be due to the weakness of institutions.
[111] In one of the villages I visited that had internal disputes, many villagers kept believing that I had relations or contacts with the central government and pleaded me to bring their appealing documents to Beijing.
[112] In each village, only one cadre answered the questionnaire.
[113] Similar to peasants, village cadres would not believe that the survey responses are anonymous. They would suspect that what they tell surveyors might be revealed to upper-level governments.
[114] Some villagers might want to gave positive answers to the institutional questions because they either were afraid of political retaliation or wanted to make their villages look democratic even though they might not know the answers.
[115] Only six village were found to have equal number of "Yes"s and "No"s.
[116] Chan (1998); Horsley (2001); Liu (2000); Pastor and Tan (2000).
[117] Olson (1965). Also see Barzel and Silberberg (1973).
[118] Norris (2004)
[119] Inglehart (1990); Dalton (1988)
[120] Wu Jing, "*Zhongguo cunguan xuanju 'changtai hua'* (Normalization of Village Cadre Elections in China)", *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), January 9, 2008.
[121] This is also described by Shi (1997), p. 96. Also see Zhong and Chen (2002), p. XX
[122] Milbrath and Goel (1977), p. 130.
[123] Jackson (1987), p. 405.
[124] North (1990); Thelen and Steinmo (1992).

[125] "*Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo cunmin weiyuan hui zuzhi fa* (Organic Law of Villager Committee Election of People's Republic of China)",*Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), November 5, 1998 (translated by this author).
[126] According to the Organic Law, any VA meeting needs to be attended by at least half of villagers over 18 years old. For any resolution to be passed by VA, it needs to gather votes from at least half of attendants.
[127] For administrative purposes, each village is divided into a number of VSGs. Each VSG has an appointed leader, who is delegated some responsibilities of administration by villager committee cadres.
[128] Nomination procedure has been treated as an important indicator of election's competitiveness in Kennedy (2002) and Brandt and Turner (2007).
[129] These methods include selection by VPB, by five or more villagers collectively, by villager small group, by villager representative assembly, through direct nomination (*haixuan*), and through self-nomination. Pastor and Tan (2000).
[130] See Elklit and Svensson (1997), Table 1 and p. 41.
[131] From my experience of observing village elections with the Carter Center delegation in China, such a speech was only a few minutes long, and candidates would read off a prepared script made up of very general work platforms. Very rarely was there a Q&A session following the speech.
[132] An interesting case that has attracted public attention is the election campaign by Liao Huaixin, a then-candidate to vice VC chair in Longtan village of Jiangxi Province in 2003. A shoe factory owner, Liao decorated his minivan with a huge board on each side that carried slogans such as "Practice the VC Organic Law", "Open and Fair Competition", "Please cast your holy ballot", etc. While driven around the village, the minivan carried an amplified speaker that repeatedly broadcast a pre-recorded campaign speech by Liao. Liao's campaign has stirred debates among government officials and scholars over whether self-sponsored campaigning activities should be allowed. See Gu Shuilin. "Campaigning for VC Chair; Campaigning Bus Running" (*jingxuan cunzhuren, chudong xuanchuanche*). *China Youth Daily (zhongguo qingnianbao)*, January 15, 2003.
[133] VC members are elected collectively and not for each single position. Thus, if there are five VC members, six candidates would make it multi-candidacy. Apparently, election of VC members is much less competitive than election of VC chair.
[134] Verba and Nie (1972), p. 125.
[135] Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), p. 37-44.
[136] Pattie and Johnston (2001), p. 300. Similar findings are seen in Norris (1999), p. 153; Denny and Doyle (2008), p. 303.
[137] See Shi (1997), p. 169.
[138] Milbrath and Goel (1977), p. 114. Similar findings are seen in Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), p. 37-60.
[139] Nie, Verba, and Kim (1974), p. 321.
[140] Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), p. 17-30. Similar finding was in Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978).
[141] See Karklins (1986), p. 456; Bahry and Silver (1990), p. 838.
[142] Shi (1997), p. 146.
[143] Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978).
[144] Campbell et al. (1966)
[145] Downs (1957); Fiorina (1981)
[146] Shi (1997)'s study of local elections in both rural and urban China found that being a CPC member slightly increased the probability of voting, other socioeconomic factors held constant, p. 166-67.
[147] Shi (1997), p. 150.
[148] Note in the elections studied by Shi, candidates were often nominated by authorities instead of voters. Not being able to reward popular political figures, Shi argued, voters with higher internal efficacy used elections to vote against candidates whom they think were corrupt or unpopular.
[149] Milbrath and Goel (1977), p. 123.
[150] Milbrath and Goel (1977), p. 124.
[151] Leighley and Nagler (1992), p. 720.
[152] Leighley and Nagler (1992) showed empirical evidence to support this finding, p. 730-33.
[153] Karklins (1986); Townsend (1966), p. 119; Shi (1997), p. 143.
[154] Note that the Y values for "Cadre Performance" and "VSG" are not comparable. The value range for evaluation of cadre performance is from 1 to 4, while the value range for evaluation of VSG is from 1 to 5.
[155] 18% of the party members in the sample undertook a position in villagers committees, village party branches, or village small groups.

[156] The detailed method by which I mix the survey results from villagers and from cadres is in Chapter 1.
[157] Leftwich (1993)
[158] Kurtz and Schrank (2007)
[159] Erich and Hartmann (2007)
[160] Fan, Zhang and Zhang (2002), p. 6.
[161] Lin (1990), p. 1229.
[162] See Unger (2002), p. 10-17.
[163] Burns (1988), p. 87.
[164] *Ibid*. p. 9.
[165] Unger (2002), p. 26.
[166] Kelliher (1992), p. 52, 50.
[167] For an analysis of the central government's rural policymaking processes after 1978, see Kelliher (1992), p. 41-55, and Du (2005), p. 96-100.
[168] The family contracting system was first invented and trialed secretly by the peasants in Anhui province in 1977 before it was acknowledged and promoted by the central government.
[169] Shen (1998), p. 11.
[170] See O'Brien (1994); Kelliher (1997). Also see Bai Yihua, "*Qinli cunmin weiyuanhui zuzhifa zhiding*" (My Participation in the Making of the Organic Law on Villagers committees), *Zhongguo renda* (China People's Congress), July 15, 2004, http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14576/28320/35193/35204/2641757.html, accessed June 10, 2008.
[171] See Shi (1999c).
[172] See O'Brien (1996).
[173] See Oi (1999), p. 27-34.
[174] See Bernstein and Lü (2003).
[175] Zweig and Chung (2007), p. 26, citing Lianjiang Li in his seminar, "Do Villagers Trust the Central Government", Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 30 October 2002. Lianjiang Li used data from the Fourth Research Institute of the Public Security Ministry.
[176] See Li (2003).
[177] Oi and Zhao (2007), p. 77.
[178] Although disputes over other issues such as environment pollution, unfair compensation for land acquisition, vote buying in village elections, etc., have increased. See Li (2006).
[179] "*2006 nian quanguo nongmingong gongzuo zongshu*" (2006 Comprehensive Work Report on the Nation's Rural Migrant Labors), Website of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, http://www.molss.gov.cn/gb/zt/2007-01/23/content_161427.htm, accessed June 10, 2008.
[180] My interview. The per capita agrarian land is about one *mu* among peasants in China.
[181] "*Feinong shouru shi nongmin zengshou de zhuyao laiyuan*" (Non-agricultural Income is the Main Source of the Increase of Peasants' Income), Xinhua Net, March 12, 2002, http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2002-03/12/content_313271.htm, accessed June 11, 2008.
[182] Kung and Lin (2007).
[183] *Cun tiliu and Xiang tongchou*. The salaries of village cadres also came from these fees but, after the tax reform, cadres were paid by town governments.
[184] Here "poor" refers to the lack of collective wealth in a village. It does not signify low per capita income. There are many villages in which individual incomes are relatively high but the villagers committees run short of collective funds.
[185] In order to protect the anonymity of the villages and peasants, all names used in this dissertation are aliases.
[186] The national per capital income for peasants was 3,587 *yuan* in 2006. Website of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2007/html/J1002C.xls, accessed June 16, 2008.
[187] Many villages in China attach loudspeakers to lampposts or telephone posts so that, when village cadres speak from a microphone in the VC office, their voice can reach every corner of the village. Usually, the speakers are used to make announcements, call for village meetings and activities, broadcast central policies, etc.
[188] The phosphorus mining and processing plant polluted some farmland of the village but did not issue sufficient compensation. Zhen led some villagers to negotiate with the plant but to no avail. So Zhen and the peasants besieged the plant for a day and a night. He was later arrested and sentenced to two years with five years of suspension. He was still in the suspension period when I interviewed him.

[189] The exact reason why Li was retired was not clear. Some interviewees were scornful to say that Li knew he did enough bad things and it was time for him to stop. But since the town government changed its leadership in 2005, I suspected that Li lost its patron and, due to the holding of village elections, Li felt it was much more difficult to maintain his absolute authority in the village. Also, the years of conflicts and tumults made Dragon village a notorious reputation in the county. Before the county government took any action against Li, Li might decide to retire. The current village chair suggested that I should not contact Li because I "wouldn't get anything from him", and I complied.
[190] Although Zhen represented the democratic force and aimed to end Li's autocratic rule, quite a few villagers were not pleased with Zhen's behavior. They thought Zhen was a little crude and rash and not mature enough to challenge Li. Some even thought that, without Zhen's challenge to Li and the subsequent power struggle, the village could not have been in such a mess.
[191] Usually, these peasants included old widows and widowers, old bachelors, handicapped persons, etc.
[192] These enterprises registered in the county commercial business bureau and used the village land with the county approval. The county government paid some compensation to the village in the 1990s. Thus, the enterprises did not pay any land leasing fees to the village. But they were willing to donate some money for the village activities.
[193] The villager small groups were developed from the production teams in the collectivization period. Even today, all villagers in High village used the name of "production teams" (*shengchan dui*) and call their leaders "team leaders" (*duizhang*).
[194] The VC chair's annual salary is 4,560 *yuan*. The village account (one of the VC members) is paid 4,320 *yuan* per year. The other two members are each paid 2,000 *yuan* per year. The VSG leader is paid poorly of 1,300 *yuan* per year.
[195] Here final candidates were not determined through primary elections. The cadres complained that primary elections would significantly increase the election costs especially considering the fact that the seven VSGs in High village are far from each other. Party members are considered by many High villagers as trustworthy and they also participate in some other decision-making processes.
[196] The assistants to VSG leaders are not paid and most work is done by VSG leaders.
[197] Each special accountant was paid 1,000 *yuan* per year by the VC.
[198] *Yishi yishi* was promoted by the MCA after the tax reform. Because the taxes and fees were abolished, many villages found difficulty to finance public projects. *Yishi yiyi* allows the villages to collective fees from peasants under the condition that the VCs deliberate with the peasants and obtain their approval through village-wide voting. *Yishi yiyi* means one voting for one project. Another deliberation and voting process needs to be passed through before money for that project can be collected.
[199] They all run private businesses. For example, the leader of No. 3 VSG ran a construction materials shop. The leader of No. 6 VSG ran a poultry farm. The VC cadres believed only these businessmen would not care about the low work payment and thus nominated them.
[200] *Zhongguo tongji nianjian* (China Statistics Yearly Book), the Website of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2007/indexch.htm, accessed June 16, 2008. Because Zhejiang is close to the Taiwan Strait, the central government did not invest much on industrial development in the area fearing potential across-strait wars. But with the economic reform in 1978, township and village enterprises developed rapidly and became the central pillar of the provincial economy.
[201] In order to avoid vicious competition, in the 1980s, the province promoted the economic model of "one village, one product; one region, one industry". See "Dynamic Development", by Zou Xiang, *Beijing Review*, Vol. 49, No. 17, 2006, pp. 34-36. This model has gradually changed and, for example, the two villages I visited manufactured not only one product, but many different products.
[202] "*2007 nian zhejiang nongcun jumin renjun chunshouru zengfu chuangxingao*" (The New High Growth Rate of Per Capita Income among Zhejiang peasants in 2007), the Website of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjfx/dfxx/t20080214_402462687.htm, accessed June 16, 2008.
[203] The village cadres told me that the land value in the area increased every day. A neighboring village divided the returned land and the peasants sold their land immediately only to find that the land value increased sharply and they lost a great deal of profits. So West village learned that lesson and delayed the division of returned land.
[204] Peasants in China did not have any insurance until 2002, when the central government promoted the new cooperative medial insurance in rural areas. The insurance is not mandatory. Each peasant pays between 10-45 *yuan* per year while the government pays a portion of the total insurance for the peasant.

[205] Some public services, such as building the river bank banisters, were funded by the village temple, which received donation from the villagers. For the research on public goods provision by social organizations in rural China, see Tsai (2002) and (2007).
[206] Manion (1996) and (2006); Kennedy, Rozelle and Shi (2004).
[207] Previous studies have focused on the change of power structure in villages (Oi and Rozelle 2000), the congruence of opinions on public policy between villagers and cadres (Manion 1996), villagers' evaluation of cadre performance on farmland reallocation (Kennedy, Rozelle and Shi 2004), villagers' belief on whether cadres are corrupt (Manion 2006), and village public investment (Wang and Yao 2007; Luo, Zhang, Huang and Rozelle 2007).
[208] For example, Shi (1997) discussed such patterns of political participation by the people in Beijing as contacting leaders, voting, appealing to higher governments, etc.
[209] See Tsai (2002), (2007a), and (2007b).

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Appendix A: Ordered Logistic and Logistic Regressions of Village Governance: Quality of Village Elections

ORDERED LOGISTIC AND LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF VILLAGE GOVERNANCE			
	Dependent Variables		
Independent Variables	**Evaluation of Cadre Performance**	**Evaluation of VSG**	**Provision of Assistance by VC**
Election procedure			
Election commission selected by voters (0-1)	.355*** (.110)	.383*** (.091)	.363*** (.108)
Open nomination of candidates (0-1)	.258** (.101)	.112 (.083)	.053 (.094)
Primary election used to select final candidates (0-1)	-.479*** (.100)	-.288*** (.083)	-.362*** (.094)
Door-to-door campaigns (0-1)	-.028 (.154)	.079 (.129)	-.104 (.141)
Multi-candidacy for VC chair (0-1)	.212* (.112)	.131 (.092)	.141 (.100)
Using secret ballot booths (θ 1)	.176* (.096)	.215*** (.078)	.248*** (.089)
Tallying ballots in public (0-1)	.669*** (.125)	.582*** (.102)	.459*** (.108)
Socioeconomic controls			
Gender (0-1)	.188** (.082)	.115* (.067)	.234*** (.075)
Age: 26-35 (0-1)	-.286* (.146)	-.080 (.120)	.018 (.137)
Age: 35-45 (0-1)	-.288** (.144)	-.115 (.116)	-.232* (.134)
Age: 46-55 (0-1)	-.276* (.158)	-.100 (.129)	-.448*** (.148)
Age: 56-65 (0-1)	-.406** (.179)	-.087 (.147)	-.368** (.168)
Age: 66-89 (0-1)	-.519** (.211)	-.045 (.173)	-.618** (.193)

Education: elementary school (0-1)	-.233* (.123)	-.010 (.100)	-.029 (.111)
Education: middle school (0-1)	-.387*** (.134)	-.150 (.110)	-.284** (.121)
Education: high school (0-1)	-.458*** (.171)	.085 (.140)	-.384** (.157)
Education: high education (0-1)	-.820** (.400)	-.051 (.333)	-.755* (.372)
Wealth: below average (0-1)	.245** (.123)	.077 (.099)	-.101 (.109)
Wealth: average (0-1)	.457*** (.112)	.317*** (.090)	.018 (.099)
Wealth: above average (0-1)	.646*** (.163)	.301** (.132)	.394*** (.151)
Wealth: rich (0-1)	.820** (.398)	.506 (.338)	.287 (.391)
CCP membership (0-1)	.427** (.178)	.394** (.154)	.301* (.179)
Intercept			
Model chi-square	208.78***	222.40***	149.12***
N	2,871	3,391	3,411

Note: For the variable of "Provision of Assistance by VC", I conducted a logistic regression instead of an ordered logistic regression as it is a dichotomous variable. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. The omitted category for Age is 18-25. The omitted category for Education is Illiterate. The omitted category for Wealth is Low Income.

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

Appendix B: Ordered Logistic and Logistic Regressions of Village Governance: Village Oversight Agencies

ORDERED LOGISTIC AND LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF VILLAGE GOVERNANCE			
	Dependent Variables		
Independent Variables	**Evaluation of Cadre Performance**	**Evaluation of VSG**	**Provision of Assistance by VC**
Oversight Agencies			
Existence of VRA (0-1)	.250	.262**	.237*
	(.159)	(.132)	(.142)
One VRA meeting per year (0-1)	.189	.188	-.114
	(.200)	(.166)	(.181)
Two VRA meetings per year (0-1)	.338*	.256*	.100
	(.177)	(.147)	(.161)
Three VRA meetings per year (0-1)	.315*	.264*	.202
	(.183)	(.150)	(.167)
Four VRA meetings per year (0-1)	.479***	.167	.058
	(.178)	(.145)	(.160)
VRA ever vetoed VC proposals (0-1)	-.556***	-.185**	.323***
	(.102)	(.090)	(.101)
Existence of DFMT (0-1)	.358***	.278***	.176
	(.127)	(.105)	(.115)
VC reports work every year (0-1)	.938***	.988***	.434***
	(.095)	(.077)	(.089)
Socioeconomic controls			
Gender (0-1)	.171**	.095	.225***
	(.082)	(.067)	(.074)
Age: 26-35 (0-1)	-.376**	-.172	-.021
	(.147)	(.120)	(.136)
Age: 35-45 (0-1)	-.342**	-.139	-.203
	(.144)	(.117)	(.133)
Age: 46-55 (0-1)	-.367**	-.167	-.414***
	(.158)	(.130)	(.146)
Age: 56-65 (0-1)	-.545***	-.155	-.337**
	(.180)	(.148)	(.167)

Age: 66-89 (0-1)	-.546**	-.051	-.526***
	(.213)	(.173)	(.191)
Education: elementary school (0-1)	-.235*	-.026	.009
	(.124)	(.102)	(.111)
Education: middle school (0-1)	-.382***	-.139	-.251**
	(.136)	(.111)	(.121)
Education: high school (0-1)	-.500***	.000	-.428***
	(.173)	(.142)	(.157)
Education: high education (0-1)	-1.024**	-.174	-.829**
	(.403)	(.333)	(.371)
Wealth: below average (0-1)	.301**	.124	-.060
	(.123)	(.100)	(.108)
Wealth: average (0-1)	.528***	.357***	.029
	(.112)	(.091)	(.100)
Wealth: above average (0-1)	.756***	.336**	.402***
	(.163)	(.133)	(.151)
Wealth: rich (0-1)	.815***	.455	.303
	(.398)	(.336)	(.391)
CCP membership (0-1)	.403**	.308**	.250
	(.179)	(.154)	(.179)
Intercept			
Model chi-square	330.57***	358.28***	124.18***
N	2,871	3,391	3,411

Note: For the variable of "Provision of Assistance by VC", I conducted a logistic regression instead of an ordered logistic regression as it is a dichotomous variable. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. The omitted category for Age is 18-25. The omitted category for Education is Illiterate. The omitted category for Wealth is Low Income.

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire for Villagers (Translated from Chinese)

National Survey on Rural Villagers Self-Government in China
(Questionnaire for Villagers)

Ministry of Civil Affairs of China
The Carter Center
November 2005

Hello, Sir/Madame/Comrade! My name is _____. I am an interviewer from the Ministry of Civil Affairs. In order to understand the conditions of our country and society, we organized this survey and selected your family as an interviewee. Now I will need to get some basic information of your family members. Thank you for your support.

First off, please tell me how many members are in your family. What are their relationships to you? What are their gender and age? Do they hold rural household registration? Are they out for work for a long term (longer than one month)?

No. of Family Members	Relationship to Respondent	Sex	Age	Rural Household Registration?	Out for Work for a Long Term? Location?
1	Respondent				
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

[To interviewer: Please write below in the KISH sampling table the title, gender and age of the family members over 18 years old, in the order of the oldest male, next oldest male…, the oldest female, next oldest female…. At last, please determine the interviewee based on sampling rules.

KISH Table													
No. of Family Members	Relationship to Respondent	Sex	Age	Order	Interview	A	B1	B2	C	D	E1	E2	F
1	Respondent					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2						1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
3						1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
4						1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
5						1	2	2	3	4	5	5	5
6						1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6
7						1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6
8						1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6

Just now you told me that there are ____ people in your family. The one I need to interview is your ____ [relationship to the respondent]. Can I interview him/her right now? [If he/she is not home,] Can you tell me when he/she will be home? [Please record the time below at the *.] All

right, I will com back again at ____(hour and minutes) on ____(month) _____(date). Please inform him/her to wait for me.

First Meeting: _____ _____ Month _____ Date	Second Meeting: _____ _____ Month _____ Date	Third Meeting: _____ _____ Month _____ Date
1. Interview completed 2. Interviewee not at home* 3. Made an interview appointment* 4. Interview refused ** 5. Nobody at home	6. No one lives at this address 7. Sick/Cannot understand one another's dialect 8. None qualified to be interviewed 9. Other**	

If the interviewee is not home, please record the rescheduled appointment date and time below.		
*_____(mm) _____(dd) ___:___(hr:mi)	*_____(mm) _____(dd) ___:___(hr:mi)	*_____(mm) _____(dd) ___:___(hr:mi)

Now let's start the interview.

Hello, Sir/Madame/Comrade! My name is _____. I am an interviewer from the Ministry of Civil Affairs. In order to understand the conditions of our country and society, we organized this survey. There are no right and wrong answers to the questions in this questionnaire. All you need to do is to go by your usual opinions and behaviors. The interview will last for an hour. We will keep the confidentiality strictly of your answers which are only for statistical purposes. Therefore please do not worry. If there is any question you do not want to answer, just let me know and we will go on to the next question. We hope that you will assist us in completing this interview. Thank you for your cooperation.

(Record) interview starting time: _____ month _____ day _____ hour _____ minute [24 hour system] ……
[__|__][__|__][__|__][__|__]

I. Respondent's Basic Information

Q 1. The respondent's gender……..……...V1 [__]

1. Male 2. Female

Q 2. What is your age? (Please write the number below)…….....……V2 [__|__]

_____ years old

Q 3. What is your highest education level?..... .....V3 [__]

1. Illiterate or almost illiterate
2. Elementary school
3. Middle school
4. High school
5. Technical high school
6. Technical high education and above

Q 4. What is your political affiliation? ……. V4 [__]

1. Member of Communist Party
2. Member of Communist Youth League
3. Average citizen
4. Member of democratic parties

Q 5. Your employment status in last three years is …….....V5 [__]

1. Farming at home village in most or all time
2. Working or doing business at home village in most or all time
3. Teaching or practicing medicine at home village in most or all time
4. Working or doing business in other places in most or all time
5. Doing housework at home [Skip to Q 7]
6. Others (please specify) _____

Q 6. Could you please tell me your current occupation? In other words, what do you do specifically? ……..……..……V6 [__|__|__]

_____

997. [Do not read] Not applicable 999. [Do not read] No answer

Q 7. In 2004, your family income was (please write the numbers below):

1. _____ yuan from farming; V7.1 [__|__|__|__|__]

99997. [Do not read] Not applicable 99998. [Do not read] Don't know
99999. [Do not read] No answer

2. _____ yuan from working (including urban jobs) and doing business; V7.2 [__|__|__|__|__]

99997. [Do not read] Not applicable 99998. [Do not read] Don't know
99999. [Do not read] No answer

3. _____ yuan from stocks and estate income; V7.3 [__|__|__|__|__]

99997. [Do not read] Not applicable 99998. [Do not read] Don't know
99999. [Do not read] No answer

4. _____ yuan from other incomes; V7.4 [__|__|__|__|__]

99997. [Do not read] Not applicable 99998. [Do not read] Don't know
99999. [Do not read] No answer

5. _____ yuan in total of the above items; V7.5 [__|__|__|__|__]

99997. [Do not read] Not applicable 99998. [Do not read] Don't know
99999. [Do not read] No answer

Q 8. Currently do you undertake any positions listed below? (can be multiple choices)

1. Village Party Committee Secretary …… V8.1 [__]
2. Village Party Committee Vice Secretary …… V8.2 [__]
3. Village Party Committee Member …… V8.3 [__]
4. Villagers Committee Chair …… V8.4 [__]
5. Villagers Committee Vice Chair …… V8.5 [__]
6. Villagers Committee member …… V8.6 [__]
7. Villagers Small Group Leader or Villagers Representative …… V8.7 [__]
8. Average villager, undertaking none of these positions …… V8.8 [__]

Q 9. Among all households in the village, your household's wealth level is: …… V9 [__]

1. Well-off
2. Above average
3. Average
4. Below average
5. Low income
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 10. Is your family last name the majority or minority among all families in the village? ..... V10 [__]

1. Majority 2. Minority 3. [Do not read] Don't know

II. Democratic Elections

Q 11. In which year was the current villagers committee elected? …… V11 [__]

1. 2005
2. 2004
3. 2003
4. 2002
5. 2001
6. 2000
7. Before 2000
8. [Do not read] Don't remember

Q 12. In electing the current villagers committee, how was the villagers election committee formed that organized the election? ……..…….....……. V12 [__]

1. Elected at the villagers assembly meeting
2. Elected at the villagers small group meetings
3. Elected at the villager representatives assembly meetings
4. Appointed by the village party committee
5. Appointed by the officials from above
6. Others (please specify)
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 13. In electing the current villagers committee, how were primary candidates nominated? .....V13 [__]

1. Directly nominated by villagers
2. Nominated by the election committee
3. Nominated by the village party committee
4. Appointed by higher authorities
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 14. In electing the current villagers committee, how were candidates introduced to voters? (can be multiple choices)

1. Introduced at villagers assembly meeting …….…….. V14.1 [__]
2. Candidates introduced themselves by door-to-door canvassing …. V14.2 [__]
3. Board posters (by election committee) …….....……. V14.3 [__]
4. Other means (please specify) _____ …….…….. V14.4 [__]
5. No introduction …….…...…… V14.5 [__]
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't remember

Q 15. In electing the current villagers committee, how were final candidates determined? ……V15 [__]

1. Primary election by villagers
2. Primary election at villagers small group meetings
3. Discussion or primary election at villager representatives assembly meetings
4. Determined by village party committee
5. Determined by higher authorities
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 16. In electing the current villagers committee, have you participated in the following activities?

		Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	Not Applicable	No Answer	V16
A	Attended campaign meeting or briefing meeting for the candidate	1	2	3	4	7	9	A [__]
B	Self-nomination or nominated someone as candidate	1	2	3	4	7	9	B [__]
C	Mobilized others to participate in briefing meetings in order to get to know the candidates	1	2	3	4	7	9	C [__]
D	Mobilized others to nominate a candidate	1	2	3	4	7	9	D [__]
E	Mobilized others to vote for someone	1	2	3	4	7	9	E [__]
F	Mobilized others not to vote for someone	1	2	3	4	7	9	F [__]
G	Complained about the election or criticized it	1	2	3	4	7	9	G [__]
H	Others (please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	7	9	H [__]

Q 17. In electing the current villagers committee, the method of electing the villager committee chair was: …….……...…….. V17 [__]

1. Multi-candidate election
2. Limited-choice election
3. Others (please specify) _____

Q 18. In electing the current villagers committee, the method of electing the villager committee members was: …….…….. V18 [__]

1. Multi-candidate election
2. Limited-choice election
3. Others (please specify) _____

Q 19. In electing the current villagers committee, were ballots tallied publicly? ……... V19 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 7. [Do not read] Not applicable 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 20. In electing the current villagers committee, were there secret ballot booths? …..... V20 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 7. [Do not read] Not applicable 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 21. In electing the current villagers committee, did anybody persuade you to vote for someone? …….……...…….. V21 [__]

1. Yes 2. No [Skip to Q 24]
7. [Do not read] Not applicable 8. [Do not read] Don't remember

Q 22. If yes, who persuaded you to vote for someone?

		Never	Yes	Not Applicable	No Answer	V22
A	Candidates	0	1	7	9	A [__]
B	Candidates' friends or relatives	0	1	7	9	B [__]
C	Your family members	0	1	7	9	C [__]
D	Your friends	0	1	7	9	D [__]
E	Members of your family clans or lineages	0	1	7	9	E [__]
F	Members of your village	0	1	7	9	F [__]

G	Town/township or village cadres	0	1	7	9	G [__]
H	Villagers small group leaders	0	1	7	9	H [__]
I	Others (please specify) _____	0	1	7	9	I [__]

Q 23. When anybody persuaded you to vote for someone, was there any conduct as follows (can be multiple choices):

1. Bought you meals or drinks …….…...…… V23.1 [__]
2. Gave you money …….……...……. V23.2 [__]
3. Gave you gifts ……...……. V23.3 [__]
4. Promised to give you certain benefits ……...……. V23.4 [__]
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't remember

Q 24. Sometimes people may not be able to vote because they are out of town, sick, or busy. In the last villagers committee election, did you vote? …….……..... V24 [__]

1. No 2. Yes 7. [Do not read] Not applicable 8. [Do not read] Don't remember

Q 25. Did the candidates you supported win the election? …….……. V25 [__]

1. None elected
2. All elected
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 26. After the election of the current villagers committee, was there a smooth handover of power? …….…….. V26 [__]

1. A smooth handover
2. Not a smooth handover
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] No answer

Q 27. How fair do you think was the last election? ……..…… V27 [__]

1. Very fair
2. relatively fair
3. Not very fair

4. Very unfair
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] No answer

(<u>All respondents are required to answer the following questions.</u>)

Q 28. Do you think that village elections can generate village leaders trusted by the masses? ……V28 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 3. Its' hard to say 4. [Do not read] No answer

Q 29. Which way of selecting village cadres do you think is better, appointment by higher authorities or election by villagers? …….....…… V29 [__]

1. Appointment by higher authorities is better
2. Election by villagers is better
3. It's better to combine appointment by higher authorities and election by villagers
4. It's hard to say
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 30. Do you think that democratically elected village cadres can represent the masses' interests? ……..……. V30 [__]

1. Yes 2. Generally, yes
3. No 4. It's hard to say 9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 31. Do you think that democratic elections can force village cadres to listen to the masses' opinions and
demands? ……..……...……. V31 [__]

1. Mostly, yes 2. Sometimes, yes 3. Rarely
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 32. How were the incumbent villagers small group leaders selected in your village? ……..……...……. V32 [__]

1. Nominated and elected by villagers of the small groups or by household representatives
2. Appointed by village cadres
3. Others (please specify) _____
4. There are not villagers small group leaders at all [Skip to Q 34]
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 33. What do you think of the influence of villagers small group leaders? ……..……..……...……. V33 [__]

1. Very strong
2. Relatively strong
3. Some influence
4. No influence
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 34. Do you think that such factors as family clans (lineages) and relatives influence villagers committee elections? …….....…….……..……...……. V34 [__]

1. Very large influence
2. Fairly large influence
3. Some influence
4. Not much influence
5. It's hard to say
9. [Do not read] No answer

III. Democratic Decision-making

Q 35. How were villager representatives, if any, elected in your village? ……..... V35 [__]

1. Nominated and elected by villagers small groups
2. Nominated and elected by household groups
3. Appointed by village cadres
4. Others (please specify) _____
5. There aren't villager representatives [Skip to Q 39]
9. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 36. Is there a villager representatives assembly in your village? …….....…. V36 [__]

1. Yes
2. No [Skip to Q 39]
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 37. Usually who called out and presided villager representatives assembly meetings? V37 [__]

1. Villagers committee chair
2. Village party committee secretary
3. Villager representatives assembly chair
7. [Do not read] Not applicable

8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 38. How many villager representatives assembly meetings, if any, were held in 2004? ……V38 [__]

1. None
2. Once
3. Twice
4. Three times
5. Four times or more
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 39. During the latest year, has any villagers assembly meeting been held (including the ones attended by household representatives)? ……..……..……..… V39 [__]

1. None
2. Once
3. Twice
4. Three times or more
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 40. Over past three years, how were decisions regarding the following issues made in general in your village?

		By villagers assembly meetings or household representatives meetings	By villager representatives assembly meetings	By village cadres	Don't know	No answer	V40
A	Regulations on submitting fees to town/township and villagers committee	1	2	3	8	9	A [__]
B	Number of people who enjoy village subsidies for absent working days and amount of subsidy	1	2	3	8	9	B [__]

C	Expenditures of incomes from village enterprises	1	2	3	8	9	C [__]
D	Fundraising plans for public goods like village schools and roads	1	2	3	8	9	D [__]
E	Initiation of and contracting village economic projects; contracting village public goods projects	1	2	3	8	9	E [__]
F	Regulations on contracting and managing fields	1	2	3	8	9	F [__]
G	Regulations on usage of land-for-housing	1	2	3	8	9	G [__]
H	Others (please specify)_____	1	2	3	8	9	H [__]

Q 41. Over past three years, was there any issue raised by the village cadres ever vetoed by the villagers assembly or villager representatives assembly? ……..…..…… V41 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 42. How would you evaluate the performance of the incumbent village cadres in handling village affairs? ……...……...…… V42 [__]

1. Very just and fair
2. Fairly just and fair
3. Not very just or fair 8. [Do not read] Don't know
4. Very unjust and unfair 9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 43. Who you think are the most trustworthy people to the masses in your village? (maximum of three selections) …….……...… V43a [__]

1. Village party committee secretary ……...……..…….. V43b [__]
2. Villager committee chair ……...……..……..…… V43c [__]
3. Family clan leaders
4. Retired cadres
5. Wealthy householders or private entrepreneurs
6. Doctors

7. Teachers
8. Others (please specify _____)

IV. Democratic Management

Q 44. At present, who keeps the villagers committee's official stamp? ……..……...… V44 [__]

1. Village party committee secretary and villagers committee chair (same person)
2. Village party committee secretary (who is not villagers committee chair)
3. Villagers committee chair (who is not village party committee secretary)
4. Villagers committee accountant or secretary
5. Other village cadres
6. Town/township cadres
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 45. At present, who controls approval of expenses in your village? ……...… V45 [__]

1. Village party committee secretary and villagers committee chair (same person)
2. Village party committee secretary (who is not villagers committee chair)
3. Villagers committee chair (who is not village party committee secretary)
4. Village party committee secretary together with villagers committee chair
5. Other village cadres
6. Town/township cadres
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 46. At present, is there a "democratic financial committee" in your village? ……..… V46 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 47. Are you aware of the financial transactions of your village? ……..……..… V47 [__]

1. Very aware 2. Fairly aware 3. Somewhat aware 4. Not aware

Q 48. How do you like the financial management in your village? …..…...……...… V48 [__]

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Not very good 8. [Do not read] Don't know
5. Very bad 9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 49. At present, is there a village compact or a guideline on villager self-government in your village? ……..…… V49 [__]

1. Yes
2. No [Skip to Q 53]
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 50. When the village compact or the guideline on villager self-government, if any, was produced, were villagers consulted for their opinions and suggestions? ….…… V50 [__]

1. Discussed and approved at villagers assembly meetings (including household representatives meetings)
2. Discussed and approved at villager representatives assembly meetings
3. Village cadres inquired opinions and suggestions of some villagers
4. Villagers were not consulted; village cadres made the decisions
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 51. How do you like the implementation of the village compact or the guideline on villager self-government? ……..……...…… V51 [__]

1. Very good [Skip to Q 53]
2. Good [Skip to Q 53]
3. Fair [Skip to Q 53]
4. Not very good
5. Very bad
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 52. (Required if "4" or "5" was selected in Q 51) If the implementation of the village compact or the guideline on villager self-government is not good, what are the major reasons? (maximum of three selections) ……..……..…….……..…… V52 [__]

1. Unrealistic
2. Applied only to the masses, not to the village cadres
3. Lack of practicability
4. The masses were not consulted for opinions and suggestions
7. [Do not read] Not applicable
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 53. Do the subcommittees under the villagers committee such as the subcommittees of public security or conflict resolution, if any, play a role? …..…..... V53 [__]

1. A very strong role
2. A relatively strong role
3. An ordinary role
4. Not a big role
5. hardly any role
7. [Do not read] Not applicable (there is no subcommittee)
8. [Do not read] Don't know
9. [Do not read] No answer

V. Democratic Supervision

Q 54. Over past three years, did the villagers committee report its work to the villagers assembly or villager representatives assembly every year? …...…...……...…… V54 [__]

1. Reported every year
2. Reported in some year(s) but not others
3. Never reported
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 55. In recent three years, through what means did the villagers committee publicize the following issues to the villagers?

		No publicity	At villagers assembly meetings	On the "Public Board on Village Affairs Transparency"	Via public speakers	Other means	V55
A	Collections and expenditures of fees to town/township and villagers committee	1	2	3	4	5	A[__]
B	Number of people who enjoy village subsidies for absent working days and amount of subsidy	1	2	3	4	5	B[__]
C	Expenditures of incomes from village enterprises	1	2	3	4	5	C[__]

D	Initiation of and contracting village economic projects; contracting village public goods projects	1	2	3	4	5	D[__]
E	Regulations on contracting and managing fields	1	2	3	4	5	E[__]
F	Regulations on usage of land-for-housing	1	2	3	4	5	F[__]
G	Implementation of family planning policy	1	2	3	4	5	G[__]
H	Distribution of disaster relief aid	1	2	3	4	5	H[__]
I	Collection and payments of water and electricity charges	1	2	3	4	5	I[__]
J	Village debts	1	2	3	4	5	J[__]
K	Subsidies for farming and for "withdrawal from farming for forests and grasslands"	1	2	3	4	5	K[__]
L	Others (please specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	L[__]

Q 56. How often does the villagers committee announce village incomes and expenditures? ……V56 [__]

1. Once a year
2. Once every six months
3. Once every three months
4. Once every two months
5. Once a month
6. Any time updated
7. Never
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 57. Currently, is there a monitoring team for village affairs transparency? ……..…... V57 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 58. Through what means do you receive information regarding village affairs and village financial management? (maximum of three selections) …….....……. V58a [__]
V58b [__]
V58c [__]

1. Listen to reports by village cadres at meetings
2. View public boards on village affairs and village financial management"
3. Read "transparency letters" delivered to villagers
4. Listen to reports on public speakers
5. Listen to reports by the "village affairs monitoring team" or "democratic financial management team"
6. Briefed by villager representatives or villagers small group leaders
7. Audit the village account book
8. Others (please specify) _____

Q 59. Do you think that the "Public Board on Village Affairs Transparency" has a monitoring effect? ……..……. V59 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 3. It's hard to say

Q 60. Do you think that the information publicized by village cadres is real and reliable? ….……..……. V60 [__]

1. Real and reliable
2. Basically real and reliable
3. Partly real and reliable
4. Not real or reliable

Q 61. Has your village implemented the democratic evaluation system of village cadres? ……..V61 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 62. In recent three years, have you submitted any suggestion or complaints to village cadres? ……. V62 [__]

1. Yes, very often 2. Yes, occasionally 3. Never

Q 63. If you have complaints about village cadres, through what means do you make your voice heard? (maximum of three selections) ….……..…... V63a [__]
V63b [__]
V63c [__]

1. Speak at villagers assembly meetings
2. Talk to village cadres privately

3. Complain to higher authorities
4. Discuss with other villagers
5. Vote against him/them at elections
6. Associate with other villagers to recall him/them
7. Do not speak
8. Others (please specify) _____

Q 64. How do you evaluate the effect of villagers self-government in your village …..... V64 [__]

1. Very good
2. Relatively good
3. Fair
4. Not very good
5. Very bad

VI. Relations of Towns/townships vs. Villages and Cadres vs. the Masses

Q 65. As far as you are concerned, what kinds of work are delegated by town/township governments to village cadres? (can be multiple choices) ...…….. V65

A. Collecting taxes and fees …….……..… A [__]
B. Implementing family planning policy …….…….. B [__]
C. Maintaining village security and order ……. C [__]
D. Recruiting free/volunteering labor ……...……. …… D [__]
E. Collecting required amount of capital for collective projects ……..….. E [__]
F. Distributing special funds for retired servicemen, disaster relief, poverty alleviation and forced migration, etc. ……..... F [__]
G. Maintenance of public sanitation ……...…….. G [__]
H. Others (please specify) _____ ……. H [__]
8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 66. In recent years, has the town/township government organized any trainings on villagers committee elections or village affairs management? …….. V66 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 67. What do you think of the relations between your villagers committee and the town/township government? …….……...…….. V67 [__]

1. Very good
2. Relatively good
3. Fair
4. Not very good
5. Very bad 8. [Do not read] Don't know

Q 68. In recent three years, has your household received direct help from the villagers committee on any of the following issues? (can be multiple choices) …….…….. V68

A. Production and sales …….…… A [__]
B. Acquiring loans from banks …….…… B [__]
C. Receiving financial or material aid for poverty alleviation or disaster relief ……..... C [__]
D. Medical care ……..……...……. D [__]
E. Weddings or funerals ……...… E [__]
F. Resolution of neighboring conflicts ……. F [__]
G. Resolution of intra family or intra-family clan conflicts …….… G [__]
H. Approval of land-for-housing or construction of buildings ……...……. H [__]
I. Others (please specify) _____ …….….. I [__]
J. Never received help from the villagers committee ……...…… J [__]
8. [Do not read] Don't know 9. [Do not read] No answer

Q 69. If you encounter the following problems, who would you resort to in the first place for resolutions?

		Relatives	Neighbors	Family elders	Village cadres	Others	V69
A	Intra-family or intra-family clan conflicts	1	2	3	4	5	A [__]
B	Neighboring conflicts	1	2	3	4	5	B [__]
C	Borrowing money or stuff	1	2	3	4	5	C [__]
D	Weddings or funerals	1	2	3	4	5	D [__]
E	Medical care	1	2	3	4	5	E [__]
F	Others (please specify ____)	1	2	3	4	5	F [__]

Q 70. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No answer	V70
A	I consider myself very capable of participating in politics.	1	2	3	4	8	9	A [__]

B	If I were a government official, I believe I am completely capable of assuming the job.	1	2	3	4	8	9	B [__]
C	If I were a village cadre, I could do a fairly good job.	1	2	3	4	8	9	C [__]
D	I consider myself very clear of any large or small issues in the village.	1	2	3	4	8	9	D [__]
E	In the village, I always can solve any large or small problems I encounter.	1	2	3	4	8	9	E [__]
F	In our village, people have many ways to effectively influence the cadres' decisions.	1	2	3	4	8	9	F [__]
G	In our village, people like me do not have a say.	1	2	3	4	8	9	G [__]
H	Sometimes politics and government can be so complicated that it's very hard for a person like me to understand them.	1	2	3	4	8	9	H [__]
I	I think I understand very well the major political issues facing our country.	1	2	3	4	8	9	I [__]
J	In our country, people have many ways to effectively influence the government's decisions.	1	2	3	4	8	9	J [__]

K	People like me do not have any influence on government policy-making.	1	2	3	4	8	9	K [__]
L	Government officials do not care very much what people like me think.	1	2	3	4	8	9	L [__]
M	The government cares very much and satisfies citizens' demand.	1	2	3	4	8	9	M [__]

Q 71. Finally, please write in text your opinions and suggestion on villagers self-government.

_____

_____

_____ _____

_____

Here is the end of the interview. Thanks again for you cooperation!

[The following to be filled out by interviewer]

The respondent's family address: _____

The respondent's name: _____ Phone: _____

Q 72. The time is now _____ hour _____ minute [24-hour system] ..……..… V72 [__|__] [__|__]

Q 73. (For rural villagers) How far is the nearest county capital to the respondent's residence? ____ Km ……..… V73 [__|__|__]

Q 74. (For rural villagers) How far is the nearest provincial capital to the respondent's residence? ____ Km ……. V74 [__|__|__]

Q 75. The survey location is: ……...……. V75 [__]

1. Village
2. County capital / busy town
3. Middle or small-sized city (less than 1 Million people)
4. Middle or small-sized city's suburb
5. Big city (more than 1 Million people)
6. Big city's suburb

Q 76. The respondent's cooperation was ..……..…..… V76 [__]

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Bad
5. Very bad

Q 77. The respondent's overall understanding of politics and public affairs is ……...V77 [__]

1. Very high
2. Relatively high
3. Fair
4. Relatively low
5. Very low

Q 78. The respondent's ability to express him/herself is ……...……..… V78 [__]

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Bad
5. Very bad

Q 79. Was the respondent attentive in his/her answers? ……...…….....… V79 [__]

1. Very attentive all the time
2. Attentive for the most part
3. Not very attentive

Q 80. Were there any other people present during the interview? ……..… V80 [__]

0. No 1. Yes

Q 81. Did the presence of others affect the quality of the interview? …….. V81 [__]

1. Yes 2. No 7. Not applicable

Q 82. The intellectual level of the respondent is ……..... V82 [__]

1. Very high
2. Relatively high
3. Average
4. Relatively low
5. Very low

Q 83. Before the interview, did the respondent feel suspicious about the interview? ….. V83 [__]

1. No
2. Some
3. Very suspicious

Q 84. Overall, the respondent's interest to the survey was ……..……..... V84 [__]

1. Very high
2. Relatively high
3. Fair
4. Relatively low
5. Very low

Q 85. The reliability of the respondents' answers is ……....…… V85 [__]

1. Completely reliable
2. Generally reliable
3. Sometimes seemingly not reliable

Q 86. If the questionnaire was not completed, please explain why.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q 87. If the respondent withdrew from the interview before it was finished, what was the reason given?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Interviewer (signature): _____

Questionnaire verifier (signature): _____

Coding staff (signature): _____

Coding verifier (signature): _____

First Final Inspector (signature): _____

Second Final Inspector (signature): _____

Final Verifier (signature): _____

Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire for Village Cadres (Translated from Chinese)

National Survey on Rural Villagers Self-Government in China
(Questionnaire for Villager Committee Members)

Ministry of Civil Affairs of China
The Carter Center
November 2005

Respectful village cadres, In order to objectively understand the reality of villagers self-government and to push forward the work on rural grassroots level, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) is conducting a randomly sampling survey and your village is selected as part of the sample. Please, if you will, answer every question in the questionnaire honestly. We will strictly keep the confidentiality of your answer which will be used for statistical analysis purpose only. Please do not be concerned. Thanks for your cooperation! Ministry of Civil Affairs September 2005
Instructions on filling and answering the questionnaire: 1. The questionnaire should be answered and filled by one of the villagers committee member of whom the committee is under charge (Chair, Vice Chair, or Accountant). 2. Please circle the number of the answer under each question or write texts or numbers on "_____". 3. Please select one answer only unless noticed otherwise by "Can be multiple choices." 4. Please do not write in "[__]" which is for coding purpose by statistical staff. 5. If anything is unclear, please inquire the surveyor.

Now let's start the interview.

(Record) interview starting time: _____ month _____ day _____ hour _____ minute [24 hour system] …….…… [__|__][__|__][__|__][__|__]

I. Basic Information of the Village

Q 27. Your village is situated in a ……...…..…..…….….. V1 [__|__]

1. Plain 2. Mountainous region 3. Hilly region 4. Others

Q 2. The distance between your village and the capital of the county to which the village belongs is _____ Kilometers (Note: If the village is located within the county capital, you may fill with "0" Kilometer ……..…….. V2A [__|__|__]

The distance between your village and the capital of the town/township to which the village belongs is _____ Kilometers (Note: If the village is located in the same place as the town/township government, you may fill with "0" Kilometer ..……. V2B [__|__|__]

Q 3. Your village has a (can be multiple choices)

1. Railway station …….…….. V3.1 [__]
2. Bus stop …….. V3.2 [__]
3. Ferry port …… V3.3 [__]
4. None of the above ……..…….…… V3.4 [__]

Q 4. At present your village has _____ households; ……....……. V4A [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ people; ……..…….. V4B [__|__|__|__|__]
Among them, _____ people have rural household registration in the village; ……V4C [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ people have non-rural household registration; ... V4D [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ people do not have household registration; ……. V4E [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ people are temporary migrants from other places ..V4F [__|__|__|__|__]

Q 5. Your villagers committee administers _____ (number) villages …..……. V5A [__|__]
There are _____ (number) villagers small groups …… V5B [__|__]

Q 6. In 2004, the per capita net income in your village was _____ *yuan* ……. V6 [__|__|__|__|__|__]

Q 7. In your village the per capita area of agrarian land is _____ *mu* …….. V7A [__|__]
The per capita area of forests is _____ *mu* ……..… V7B [__|__]
The per capital area of grassland is _____ *mu* ……..…. V7C [__|__]
The per capita water area is _____ *mu* …… V7D [__|__]

Q 8. Does your village have electricity? ……..……..……... V8 [__]

1. Yes 2.No

Q 9. Does your village have tap water? ……..……..……...…. V9 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 10. Does your village have cable TV? ……..……..…….……. V10 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 11. In your village, _____ households have telephones installed; ……. V11A [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ households have TVs; …...……...……..……. V11B [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ households have computers; ……..……... V11C [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ households have cars; …….....…… V11D [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ households have tractors or other vehicles for agricultural use; ……. V11E [__|__|__|__|__]
_____ households have motorcycles; ……..... V11F [__|__|__|__|__]

_____ households have refrigerators; …….....…. V11G [__|__|__|__]

Q 12. In the past 10 years, has any land in your village been acquired by state government? …….……...… V12 [__|__|__]

0. No 1. Yes; Acquisition of _____ *mu*

Q 13. Currently is there a debt on the villagers committee? ……..…… V13 [__|__|__]

Q 14. Does your villagers committee use a high-volume public speaker? ……..…… V14 [__]

Q 15. Does your villagers committee have a designated office? …..…….…….. V15 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

II. Basic Information of the Incumbent Villagers Committee and Village Party Branch

Q 16. Including the Chair, Vice Chair and committee members, the incumbent villagers committee has _____ people; ……..... V16 [__|__]

Among them, there are _____ males; …..……..…..…….….. V16A [__|__]
There are _____ females; ……..……...……. V16B [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Elementary School and Below; ……...…….……. V16C [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Middle School; …..…. V16D [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is High School; ……....… V16E [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Two-year Technical Institute and Above; ……...…….……..… V16F [__|__]
There are _____ people who are 35 years old or younger; …….……..... V16G [__|__]
There are _____ people who are between 36 and 59 years old; …..... V16H [__|__]
There are _____ people who are over 60 years older; ……...……..… V16I [__|__]
There are _____ party members; ……..... V16J [__|__]
There are _____ youth league members; ……..……..… V16K [__|__]
There are _____ people who also undertake leading positions in the party branch (party major branch or party committee); ……..……..... V16L [__|__]

Q 17. Basic information of the incumbent villagers committee Chair:

Gender: ……..……V17A [__]

1. Male 2. Female

Age: _____ years old; ……...…… V17B [__|__]

Education level: …… V17C [__]

1. Illiterate or nearly illiterate
2. Elementary school
3. Middle school
4. High school
5. Technical high school
6. Two-year technical institute and above

Political affiliation: ……...……..……...……. V17D [__]

1. Party member
2. Youth League member
3. Average person
4. Member of democratic parties

The monthly subsidy for delayed farm work is _____ *yuan* ……..... V17E [__|__|__|__]

Q 18. Does the incumbent villagers committee Chair also undertake any leading position of the village party branch (party major branch or party committee)? ……... V18 [__]

1. He/she is the village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Secretary
2. He/she is the party branch (party major branch or party committee) Vice Secretary
3. He/she is the party branch (party major branch or party committee) member
4. He/she does not undertake any leading positions of the party branch (party major branch or party committee)

Q 19. The incumbent village party branch (party major branch or party committee) has _____ people including the party Secretary, Vice Secretary and members; ….. V19 [__|__]

Among them, there are _____ males; ……...…….……...…… V19A [__|__]
There are _____ females; ……..……..……. V19B [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Elementary School and Below; ……..V19C [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Middle School; …..…. V19D [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is High School; ……... V19E [__|__]
There are _____ people whose education level is Two-year Technical Institute and Above; …….……. V19F [__|__]
There are _____ people who are 35 years old or younger; …….....….. V19G [__|__]
There are _____ people who are between 36 and 59 years old; …....…... V19H [__|__]
There are _____ people who are over 60 years older; ……..…..…….. V19I [__|__]
There are _____ people who also undertake positions in the incurrent villagers committee; ……... V19J [__|__]

Q 20. Basic information of the incumbent village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Secretary:

Gender: ……..……..…….…… V20A [__]

1. Male 2. Female

Age: _____ years old; ….....……...…… V20B [__|__]

Education level: …….....……..…… V20C [__]

1. Illiterate or nearly illiterate
2. Elementary school
3. Middle school
4. High school
5. Technical high school
6. Two-year technical institute and above

The monthly subsidy for delayed farm work is _____ *yuan* …..…... V20D [__|__|__|__]

Q 21. Does the incumbent village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Secretary also undertake any leading position of the villagers committee? ……..... V21 [__]

1. He/she is the villagers committee Chair
2. He/she is the villagers committee Vice Chair
3. He/she is the villagers committee member
4. He/she does not undertake any leading position of the villagers committee

Q 22. Currently, _____ people among all village cadres receive regular subsidy or salary; ……V22 [__|__]

They are:

1. Village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Secretary; ……..……..…….. V22.1 [__]
2. Villagers committee Chair; ……..……..… V22.2 [__]
3. Villagers committee accountant; …….....… V22.3 [__]
4. Village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Vice Secretary; ……..……..…….. V22.4 [__]
5. Villagers committee Vice Chair or member; …….....…… V22.5 [__]
6. Villagers committee Cashier; …….....… V22.6 [__]
7. Family Planning Officer; ……...……...… V22.7 [__]
8. Others (please specify) _____ ……...……...… V22.8 [__]

Q 23. Currently, _____ people among all village cadres receive subsidy for delayed farm work (or non-regular subsidy or salary); ……..... V23.1 [__]

They are:

1. Village party branch (party major branch or party committee) Secretary; ……..……..……..... V23.1 [__]
2. Villagers committee Vice Chair or member; ……. V23.2 [__]
3. Villagers committee Cashier; …….…….....… V23.3 [__]
4. Family Planning Officer; ……...……..…..… V23.4 [__]
5. People's Militia Battalion Head; ……..……..…… V23.5 [__]
6. Villagers small group leader; …….……..…. V23.6 [__]
7. Others (please specify) _____ ……...…….…... V23.7 [__]

III. Basic Information of the Villagers Committee Election and Village Affairs Management

Q 24. When was the first villagers committee election held in your village? … V24 [__|__|__|__] _____ year

Q 25. How many villagers committee elections has your village held till now? ……..… V25 [__] _____

Q 26. When was the incumbent villagers committee elected? ……... V26 [__|__|__|__] _____ year

Q 27. When is the next villagers committee election? …….….. V27 [__|__|__|__] _____ year

Q 28. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, how was the Election Directing Team formed? ……. V28 [__]

1. Selected by all villagers
2. Selected by villager representatives assembly
3. Selected by villagers small groups
4. Nominated by the village party branch
5. Composed of previous villagers committee members
6. Nominated by town/township party committee and government
7. Others (please specify) _____

Q 29. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, how were primary candidates nominated? ……V29 [__]

1. Open nomination (sea election or *haixuan*)
2. Collectively nominated by voters
3. Nominated by the village party branch or the mass social groups
4. Nominated by upper authorities

5. Nominated by villagers small groups or villager representatives assembly
6. Nominated by the village Election Directing Team
7. Self-nominated
8. Others (please specify) _____

Q 30. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, how were final candidates determined? …….. V30 [__]

1. Discussion and deliberation
2. Primary election
3. Elected by villager representatives assembly
4. Determined by the village Election Directing Team
5. Nominated by the village party branch
6. Determined by upper authority
7. Others (please specify) _____

Q 31. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, how were candidates introduced to voters? (can be multiple choices)

1. Introduced at villagers assembly meeting …….. V31.1 [__]
2. Candidates introduced themselves by door-to-door canvassing …. V31.2 [__]
3. Board posters (by election committee) ……..…..…. V 31.3 [__]
4. Other means (please specify) _____ ……..….. V31.4 [__]
5. No introduction ……..… V31.5 [__]

Q 32. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, the method of electing the villager committee chair
was: …….……..… V32 [__]

1. Multi-candidate election
2. Limited-choice election
3. Others (please specify) _____

Q 33. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, the method of electing the villagers committee members was: ……. V33 [__]

1. Multi-candidate election
2. Limited-choice election
3. Others (please specify) _____

Q 34. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, were ballots tallied publicly? …... V34 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 35. In electing the incumbent villagers committee, were there secret ballot booths? .. V35 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 36. In your village, there are _____ villager representatives …… V36 [__|__]
Among them, there are _____ Chinese Communist Party members ...V36A [__|__]
There are _____ females ……..……...… V36B [__|__]

Q 37. How were villager representatives, if any, elected in your village? …….....…. V37 [__]

1. Nominated and elected by villagers small groups
2. Nominated and elected by household groups
3. Appointed by village cadres
4. Others (please specify) _____
5. There aren't villager representatives [Skip to Q 41]

Q 38. Is there a villager representatives assembly in your village? …….....…. V38 [__]

1. Yes 2. No [Skip to Q 41]

Q 39. Usually who called out and presided villager representatives assembly meetings? V39 [__]

1. Villagers committee chair
2. Village party committee secretary
3. Villager representatives assembly chair
4. Others (please specify) _____

Q 40. How many villager representatives assembly meetings, if any, were held in 2004? ……..V40 [__]

1. None
2. Once
3. Twice
4. Three times
5. Four times or more

Q 41. During the latest year, has any villagers assembly meeting been held (including the ones attended by household representatives)? ……...…….…...V41 [__]

1. None
2. Once
3. Twice
4. Three times or more

Q 42. At present, who keeps the villagers committee's official stamp? ……..……...… V42 [__]

1. Village party committee secretary and villagers committee chair (same person)
2. Village party committee secretary (who is not villagers committee chair)
3. Villagers committee chair (who is not village party committee secretary)
4. Villagers committee accountant or secretary
5. Other village cadres
6. Town/township cadres

Q 43. At present, who controls approval of expenses in your village? ……..……....… V43 [__]

1. Village party committee secretary and villagers committee chair (same person)
2. Village party committee secretary (who is not villagers committee chair)
3. Villagers committee chair (who is not village party committee secretary)
4. Village party committee secretary together with villagers committee chair
5. Other village cadres
6. Town/township cadres

Q 44. How often does the villagers committee announce village incomes and expenditures? ……... V44 [__]

1. Once a year
2. Once every six months
3. Once every three months
4. Once every two months
5. Once a month
6. Any time updated
7. Never

Q 45. At present, is there a "democratic financial committee" in your village? ……..… V45 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 46. Are you aware of the financial transactions of your village? ……..……..… V46 [__]

1. Very aware 2. Fairly aware 3. Somewhat aware 4. Not aware

Q 47. How do you like the financial management in your village? …..…….....… V47 [__]

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Not very good
5. Very bad

Q 48. Currently, is there a monitoring team for village affairs transparency? …..……... V48 [__]

1. Yes 2. No

Q 49. At present, is there a village compact or a guideline on villager self-government in your village? ……..…… V49 [__]

1. Yes 2. No [Skip to Q 51]

Q 50. When the village compact or the guideline on villager self-government, if any, was produced, were villagers consulted for their opinions and suggestions? ……..V50 [__]

1. Discussed and approved at villagers assembly meetings (including household representatives meetings)
2. Discussed and approved at villager representatives assembly meetings
3. Village cadres inquired opinions and suggestions of some villagers
4. Villagers were not consulted; village cadres made the decisions

Q 51. Do the subcommittees under the villagers committee such as the subcommittees of public security or conflict resolution, if any, play a role? …..….....V51 [__]

1. A very strong role
2. A relatively strong role
3. An ordinary role
4. Not a big role
5. hardly any role
6. No such subcommittees

Q 52. Over past three years, did the villagers committee report its work to the villagers assembly or villager representatives assembly every year? …...…...…… …… V52 [__]

1. Reported every year
2. Reported in some year(s) but not others
3. Never reported

Q 53. Finally, please write in text your opinions and suggestion on villagers self-government.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Here is the end of the interview. Thanks again for you cooperation!

[The following to be filled out by interviewer]

(Record) Interview end time: ____ month ____ day ____ minute (24-hour system) …….…… [__|__][__|__][__|__][__|__]

The respondent's mailing address:
_____

The respondent's Name: _____ Title: _____ Phone: _____

Interviewer (signature): _____

Questionnaire verifier (signature): _____

Coding staff (signature): _____

Coding verifier (signature): _____

First Final Inspector (signature): _____

Second Final Inspector (signature): _____

Final Verifier (signature): _____