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ELECTIONS AND POPULAR RESISTANCE IN RURAL CHINA (REVISED VERSION)

LIANJIANG LI*

Western scholars have suggested that free and fair elections in the Chinese countryside could improve relationship between cadres and villagers, particularly when it comes to dealing with the township government. As early as in 1994, Kevin O'Brien suggested that free votes could lead to the emergence of "run-away villages," where populist cadres would lead villagers to defy outside control and reject state tasks.¹ Based on a four-county survey, Melanie Manion found that competitive elections could improve congruence between elected cadres and electorates on the state's role in the economy.² Extending her results, cadre-village congruence may also emerge as regards how to handle impositions of local governments. Lianjiang Li and Kevin O'Brien have observed that villagers in Hebei sought protection from an elected cadre regarding unfair pricing at the township granary, and that the cadre vigorously defended the interests of his constituents.³ More recently, Tyrene White has suggested that appointed county and township leaders might find themselves increasingly at cross-purposes with elected village cadres.⁴

Mainland-based scholars have also noted that democratically elected cadres tend to be more willing to defend villagers against harmful local policies. Gao Xinjun has observed that over one-third of the elected cadres from fourteen villages in a Henan township said they would side with villagers when directives from higher levels conflicted with the interests of villagers: "They maintained that since they were popularly elected, they should be responsible to their voters and must not unconditionally satisfy unreasonable demands of higher level gov-

* (Editor's note: this article was previously published in *China Information* vol. 15, no. 2, but due to an error on our part, the tables were omitted. This is a reprint of the same article, now with the original tables. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.) Lianjiang Li is assistant professor at the Department of Government and International Studies of Hong Kong Baptist University. He would like to thank the following institutions for their financial support: Asia Foundation, the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, and Henry Luce Foundation. He would also like to acknowledge a grant for Research and Writing from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Grant No. 00-66954-000). For helpful comments on earlier drafts, he thanks Anita Chan, Thomas Bernstein, Zhenglin Guo, Baogang He, You-tien Hsing, M. Kent Jennings, Linda Chelan Li, Melanie Manion, Emerson Niou, Kevin O'Brien, Jean Oi, Jonathan Unger, Yongnian Zheng, and an anonymous referee.

¹ Kevin J. O'Brien, "Implementing Political Reform in China's Villages," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 32 (July 1994): 57.

² Melanie F. Manion, "The Electoral Connection in the Chinese Countryside," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 4 (1996): 736-48.

³ Lianjiang Li and Kevin J. O'Brien, "The Struggle Over Village Elections," in *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*, ed. Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 142.

⁴ Tyrene White, "Village Elections: Democracy from the Bottom up," *Current History* 97, issue 620 (September 1998): 267.

ernments.”⁵ Sha Guowu and Qi Wenjin have reported that many elected cadres in Hebei were no longer “responsible only to the superiors and not to the masses.”⁶ More recently He Baogang and Lang Youxing have found that 43% of the 111 elected VC directors surveyed in 1998 in Zhejiang said that they must be responsible to voters, while only 10% said they must be responsible to higher levels.⁷

Students of village elections, however, have yet to examine whether free and fair elections encourage villagers to urge elected cadres to resist unlawful extraction by local governments. After all, the fact that elected cadres tend to be more responsive is only one precondition for the formation of an elite-mass alliance against the township. As Xu Wang has suggested, elections only make it possible for peasants to use VCs as a weapon to defend themselves against intrusions by township and county governments.⁸ Another necessary and arguably more important condition is that villagers demand such protection from elected cadres. Current studies suggest that free elections may heighten villagers’ expectations that elected cadres should defend their interests. Allen Choate, for instance, has argued that free and fair votes can assure villagers that elected cadres will articulate their views to higher levels of authority.⁹ Xu Wang and Anne Thurston have suggested that villagers may feel empowered by elections.¹⁰ And Lin Changsheng has found that 86% of the 218 villagers he surveyed in Liaoning and Jilin provinces thought that elected cadres would be more effective in defending villagers’ interests than those appointed by the township.¹¹

But have free and fair elections made it more likely for villagers to urge elected cadres to defend them against unlawful extractions of local governments? How will this particular kind of appealing change the ways in which village cadres and villagers interact with each other? How will popular contention organized by legally constituted village leaders affect rural governance and the prospects for further political reforms?

⁵ Gao Xinjun, “Woguo xian xiang liangji zhengzhi tizhi gaige de shuguang—Henan sheng Xinmi shi cunji minzhu zhengzhi zhidu jianshe diaocha” (The twilight of the reform of political institutions at county and township levels—An investigation report on the construction of village democracy in Xinmi county, Henan Province), *Jingji shehui tizhi bijiao* (Comparative economic and social systems), no. 6 (December 1998): 5.

⁶ Sha Guowu and Qi Wenjin, “Zhongshuo fenyun hua zhixuan,” 30.

⁷ He Baogang and Lang Youxing, “The Impact of Village Elections on Village Power Structure and Its Operation,” *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences*, no. 16 (Spring 2000), 115–17.

⁸ Xu Wang, “Mutual Empowerment of State and Peasantry,” *World Development* 25, no. 9 (September 1997): 1440.

⁹ Allen C. Choate, “Local Governance in China: An Assessment of Villagers Committees,” Working Paper No. 1 (San Francisco: The Asia Foundation, 1997), 16.

¹⁰ Xu Wang, “Mutual Empowerment”; Anne F. Thurston, *Muddling Toward Democracy: Political Change in Grassroots China* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1999), v.

¹¹ Lin Changsheng, *Dalu nongcun cunmin zizhi zhidu yanjiu* (A study of the villagers’ self-government system on the mainland) (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan dalu weiyuanhui, 1995), 164

Using interviews, 1999 survey data and archival sources, this article examines how elections may bring village cadres and their constituents together in resisting unlawful local policies. It shows that free and fair elections enhance villagers' desire to appeal to village cadres when they find that the township has made decisions that contravene central policies. This appealing, coupled with regular elections, may make elected cadres increasingly more responsive to their voters. The article concludes with a discussion of how the alliance of elected village leaders and villagers may enhance the pressure to introduce township elections by increasing tension between villages and township governments.

Recent Village Protests

In July 1998, a large peasant protest broke out in Yizhang county, Hunan Province. The first spark flared in Dongcun village.¹² Upon learning that the township had demanded an enormous fee and threatened to throw their children out of school if they missed the deadline, dozens of indignant peasants rushed to see the villagers' committee (VC) director. At the urging of the agitated villagers, the director called an emergency meeting of the VC, at which members unanimously agreed to lodge a collective complaint. The next day, hundreds of peasants appeared in front of the office building of Taiping township. Speaking on behalf of the complainants, the village director pointed out that this fee alone would amount to more than 15% of villagers' income, way above the 5% limit set by the State Council's *Regulation Concerning Peasants' Fees and Labor* (1991).¹³ When the township leaders refused to explain and instead ordered the police to arrest the VC director, the assembled villagers turned violent. They drove the township police and officials away with a shower of bricks, and then set the township office building on fire.¹⁴

Shortly after the Taiping protest, similar demonstrations took place in seven other townships of Yizhang county.¹⁵ Most of these protests were also led by village cadres. Having learned about the violent clashes in Taiping, officials in these seven townships did not risk a crackdown; instead, they told angry peasants that the fee was levied by the county government. Their hint was understood. Protesters immediately started to organize an appeal to the county leadership, and the director of the Dongcun VC volunteered to coordinate their action. A few days after the violent clash in Taiping township took place, thousands of villagers from eight townships besieged the Yizhang county government compound, where they staged a several-hour-long confrontation with the county

¹² Village and township names have been altered.

¹³ The Regulation stipulates that the amount of village fees (*cun tiliu*) and township levies (*xiang tongchou*) should not exceed 5% of villagers' net income for the previous year (Art. 6). For discussions of peasant burdens, Xiaobo Lu, "The Politics of Peasant Burden in Reform China," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 25, no. 1 (October 1997): 113–38; and Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, "Taxation without Representation: Peasants, the Central and the Local States in Reform China," *The China Quarterly*, no. 163 (September 2000): 742–63.

¹⁴ Interviews, Hunan, April 2000.

¹⁵ There are altogether 27 townships in Yizhang county.

police. The standoff ended peacefully only after the Party secretary of Chenzhou prefecture ordered Yizhang county leaders to revoke the fee, apologize to protesters, and pledge no retaliation against the organizers.¹⁶

Proud of their victory, local people called this protest the “Second Xiangnan Rebellion,” comparing it to the peasant revolt led by Zhu De and Chen Yi—two of the ten marshals of the People’s Republic—in the same area seventy years ago. Local leaders, on the other hand, were stunned. They were particularly dismayed that village cadres organized the protest. In an internal document, the Chenzhou prefectural Party committee urged county and township leaders to bear in mind that democratic elections had changed village cadres. Instead of helping the government extract revenues, the circular said, elected village cadres “have in this incident turned their guns against the township and eventually the county.”¹⁷

Though it is still rare for elected village cadres to organize such large-scale protests, it is no longer news that they often join villagers in resisting unlawful decisions made by township governments. In Shandong, the liberalization of nomination procedures in early 1999 led to the election of many “leaders of collective complaints” (*shangfang touzi*).¹⁸ By October 1999, elected cadres had organized so many protests against township governments that the provincial organization department warned in an internal circular that elections had caused widespread chaos.¹⁹ In Hebei, free elections have also been blamed for leading to “anarchy.” Some local leaders openly said that “direct elections may be a step forward toward democracy, but politically it is a step backward.”²⁰ Such apprehension is shared by officials in other provinces. In Henan, some county leaders argued that implementing free elections would destabilize half of the villages under their jurisdiction.²¹ In Shanxi, two policy researchers of the provincial Party committee warned that over 22% of elected village directors they interviewed wished to be “independent” (*duli*) from the township.²² Nationwide, according to a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and an official at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, quite a number of local leaders found

¹⁶ Interviews, Hunan, April 2000.

¹⁷ Interviews, Hunan, April 2000.

¹⁸ Interview with a county official from Shandong, October 1999. For a Western report on leaders who put forward collective complaints winning elections, see Michael Laris, “Chinese Village Officials Arrest 4 Elected Leaders,” *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 12 November 1999, A28.

¹⁹ Interview, Beijing, October 1999.

²⁰ Sha Guowu and Qi Wenjin, “Zhongshuo fenyun hua zhixuan” (Various opinions on direct elections), *Neibu wengao* (Internal essays), no. 17, 10 September 1998, 31.

²¹ Meng Bai, “Guanyu dangqian Henan nongcun shehui wending wenti de diaocha yu jianyi” (Investigation of social stability in rural Henan and policy advice), *Zhongguo nongcun jingji* (Chinese rural economy), no. 12 (December 1998): 70.

²² Li Chun and Guo Lingji, “Shixing cunmin zizhi xu chuli hao san chong guanxi” (Three relationships must be handled well when implementing villagers’ self-government), *Neibu canyue* (Internal references), no. 30, 4 August 1999, 2–3.

that “democratic election of village cadres is not a good method, because elected cadres do not obey orders.”²³

Appealing to Village Cadres

The critical moment in the Dongcun protest, according to villagers and local officials, was when dozens of villagers swarmed the house of the VC director, demanding that he stand up to the grasping township. In the words of a county official: “If it were not because so many villagers went to see him, the VC director might not have organized the collective complaint. After all, if he helped the township collect the fee, he could receive a handsome bonus in return. But when a large crowd of villagers pressed him to speak up for them, turning them down would offend too many of his voters.” A villager was more blunt: “If that guy refused to take any action, he would certainly be considered not only a coward, but also a traitor. He promised to serve the villagers when he ran for the position two years ago.”²⁴ Why did so many villagers go to see the VC director?

The size of the fee undoubtedly contributed to public indignation. Escalating the tension further was the township’s ploy of issuing the threatening notice of fee payment not directly to villagers, but to school children, hence literally forcing the weeping kids to press their parents to pay up. But the amount of discontent alone could not explain why so many villagers went to see the VC director. A similarly large fee was levied a few years ago; at that time only a few villagers asked for help from village cadres, and no village cadre organized collective protests. Like today’s leaders of Chenzhou prefecture, a county official from Yizhang insisted that what had changed the behavior of both villagers and village cadres was the election in early 1996. In this third round of VC elections, the Hunan bureau of civil affairs introduced several new procedural reforms. Free nomination of candidates and primaries were strongly recommended for the first time, and competition was required for all VC positions.²⁵ In an attempt to seek “noteworthy achievements” (*zhengji*) by winning the title of “demonstration county of villagers’ self-government” (*cunmin zizhi shifan xian*), Yizhang county leaders went to some pains to enforce these reforms. As a result, nearly one-third of the incumbent VC directors lost to candidates nominated by villagers. “Naturally,” according to the county official, “villagers have more trust in cadres they themselves elected. That’s why so many of them in Dongcun went to see the director.”²⁶

²³ Bai Gang and Zhan Chengfu, “Guanyu qieshi jiaqiang jiceng minzhu zhengzhi jianshe de jidian jianyi” (A few suggestions regarding how to earnestly strengthen the construction of grassroots democracy), *Neibu wengao* (Internal essays), no. 5, 10 August 1998, 21.

²⁴ Interviews, Hunan, April 2000.

²⁵ See “Hunan sheng di san ci cunmin weiyuanhui huanjie xuanju gongzuo shishi fang’an” (Implementation scheme of the third round of elections of villagers’ committees of Hunan Province), in 1995–1996 *niandu quanguo cunweihui huanjie xuanju ziliao huibian* (Collection of materials on the 1995–1996 elections of villagers’ committees), comp. Minzhengbu jiceng zhengquan jianshesi nongcunchu (Beijing: Minzhengbu jiceng zhengquan jianshesi, 1996): 71–73.

²⁶ Interview, Hunan, April 2000.

Elections may not only improve public confidence in grassroots leadership, an even more significant consequence seems to be that free and fair elections may change the meaning of seeking protection from village cadres. Appealing to officials for assistance has long been an important form of political participation in China.²⁷ Typically, officials are asked to either use their discretionary power in policy implementation or discipline their subordinates.²⁸ But when villagers press village cadres to resist unlawful decisions made by a township government, the cadres are expected to challenge a higher level authority. The introduction of free and fair votes may have made this particular form of appealing more effective.

Before the introduction of free and fair elections, pursuing such appeals would be equivalent to asking an appointee to defy his boss or asking an office seeker to defy the only people in a position to nominate him. Understandably, not many villagers would do this. Those who did appeal would usually find it ineffective, because there was little they could do when village cadres refused to respond. Even when particularly community-minded cadres agreed to stand up on behalf of villagers, their objections were often dismissed by the township. Few village cadres would go as far as to organize a collective protest, because doing so would certainly cost them their political careers even if they won the battle with the township.

In places where free and fair elections have been introduced, however, appealing to village cadres for protection against the township's unlawful extraction no longer amounts to making such a demanding request, because the township can no longer appoint village cadres or control elections. Moreover, the revised *Organic Law of Villagers' Committees* (1998) has reaffirmed that it is a legal obligation of elected cadres to reflect mass opinions to the government (Art. 2). Even more important, when villagers can freely choose their leaders, appealing may place considerable pressure on cadres who wish to be reelected.

The introduction of free and fair elections, so it seems, has brought about a significant change to the political opportunity structure²⁹ of Chinese villagers. Although elections have not enabled villagers to challenge state policies such as birth control, demanding that village cadres resist unlawful local policies (*tu zhengce*) seems to have become a realistic and effective way to defend their rights and interests. If this is true, then we would expect that the freer and fairer a village election is, the more likely villagers will appeal to village cadres when they find that the township government has enacted a harmful local policy. My 1999 survey shows that this kind of electoral connection does exist in the Chinese countryside.

²⁷ For more discussions of making appeals to cadres in rural China, see John P. Burns, *Political Participation in Rural China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 151.

²⁸ For discussions of different types of appealing, see Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 45; and Kevin J. O'Brien, "Agents and Remonstrators: Role Accumulation by Chinese People's Congress Deputies," *China Quarterly*, no. 138 (June 1994): 359–80.

²⁹ For a discussion of this concept, see Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17–18 and chap. 5.

Measuring the Quality of Village Elections

The survey was administered in early 1999 by 87 university students in their home villages, which were located in 82 counties, 25 provinces.³⁰ In each village, the interviewer was instructed to draw a systematic random sample of 10% of adults who were between 18 and 70 years of age from the village small group (*cunmin xiaozu*) his or her family belonged to.³¹ Altogether 1,384 villagers were interviewed, 1,356 of whom were included in this study. The trimming of the dataset excluded 28 respondents who were incumbent village leaders at the time of the survey. Since this is only a local sample, we cannot infer anything about the rural population nationwide, but we can explore the correlation between variables.³²

Before we explore the impact of village elections, we need to know whether a village has held any election, and if it has, to what extent the election was free and fair. In addition to asking the respondents whether their villages had held any VC elections, five follow-up questions about key election procedures were raised to respondents who confirmed the existence of elections. Out of the five questions, three were derived from the revised *Organic Law*: (1) whether preliminary candidates to VCs were nominated by villagers;³³ (2) whether the election was contested (*cha'e*), i.e., whether the number of candidates on the ballot exceeded the number of posts; (3) whether the balloting was anonymous (Art. 15). In addition, I included (4) whether the official candidates were selected through primaries, and (5) whether candidates delivered any campaign speeches.³⁴

Unfortunately, as Duke political scientist Tianjian Shi noted, although respondents from the same village offered largely similar answers to the questions about elections, they did not always agree with each other. Indeed, respondents even disagreed about whether any elections had been held in their villages. As Shi pointed out, there are many possible reasons why such disagreements may emerge. Some respondents, for instance, might be working outside the village at the time of election.³⁵

³⁰ 100 students were recruited as interviewers, 87 of whom successfully completed their assignments. Interested readers may request the database (SPSS data files) from the author.

³¹ Village small groups are typically equivalent to the production teams of the commune era, while villagers' committees are in most cases equivalent to the brigades. Some small groups, particularly in south China, are natural villages.

³² On the use of local probability samples, see Melanie Manion, "Survey Research in the Study of Contemporary China: Learning from Local Samples," *The China Quarterly*, no. 139 (September 1994): 741–65.

³³ On nomination procedures and their importance, see Choate, "Local governance in China," 10; Jørgen Elklit, "The Chinese Village Committee Electoral System," *China Information* 11, no. 4 (1997): 7–9; and Thurston, *Muddling Toward Democracy*, 26.

³⁴ For a discussion of the importance of primaries, see Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Accommodating 'Democracy' in a One-Party State: Introducing Village Elections in China," *The China Quarterly*, no. 162 (June 2000): 465–66.

³⁵ See Tianjian Shi, "Economic Development and Village Elections in Rural China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 8, no. 22 (1999): 433–35.

Because individual-level data on elections are inconsistent, we are unable to construct an “objective” index of electoral quality. What we can do is to aggregate individual responses into village-level data by adopting a sensible index of homogeneity. By doing so we will not completely overcome the problem of lacking objective data on village elections, but we can at least partly overcome the problem of endogeneity.

Adapting the scheme developed by Shi, I applied two rules of aggregation. First, on whether VC elections had been conducted, I employed a two-thirds rule. That is to say, a village is considered to have held a VC election if two-thirds or more of the respondents from the village said so. Second, in consideration that perhaps not all villagers had participated in the election, and those who did might well have different memories of how it was conducted, I used a less stringent one-half rule to aggregate individual-level data on election process. That is to say, a village election is considered to have met a particular procedural criterion if one-half or more of the respondents from that village said so.

The aggregated village-level data showed that, based on the two-thirds rule, 59 (67.8%) of the 87 surveyed villages had held elections. This result largely conforms with that of a survey of 818 migrant workers from 779 villages in 436 townships, 434 counties, 22 provinces, which was conducted at the three railway stations in Beijing by the State Council Development Research Center in April 1999. When asked how village cadres were chosen, 78% of the respondents said cadres were elected.³⁶

Electoral quality varied considerably among the 59 villages where elections had been held. On two accounts, elections in many of these villages seemed free and fair. Anonymous balloting was conducted in 44 villages. In the other 15 villages, voting was either done by a show of hands or in other irregular ways.³⁷ Moreover, elections in 27 villages were contested (*cha'e*), in the sense that they met with the requirement that the number of candidates should exceed the number of posts. Elections in the 32 villages were not contested.³⁸

³⁶ See Zhao Shukai, “Cunji zuzhi de kunjing” (Difficult situations of village-level organizations), *Diaocha yanjiu baogao* (Investigation and research reports), no. 169, 10 December 1999, 4–5. An abridged version of this report appears in *Neibu wengao* (Internal essays), no. 5, 10 March 2000, 13–15.

³⁷ Respondents reported several kinds of irregular voting. In one Henan village ballots were distributed to villagers but balloting never took place. In a Jiangsu village, only women and children were called to the election meeting, while adult male voters were not informed. Villagers from Hainan and Shandong said they were required to write their names on the ballots. In a Henan village ballots were filled in by school children under the instruction of their teachers. Finally, in an Inner Mongolia village candidates themselves carried ballot boxes to villagers’ homes and told them how to vote.

³⁸ It is worth noting that the term “*cha'e*” can refer to any of the following three different arrangements: (1) there is only one extra candidate on the ballot. Voters just have to eliminate one candidate, oftentimes with everyone knowing in advance who is to be the loser; (2) there are two or more extra candidates on the ballot, but not every post has two candidates; and (3) there are two candidates for each position of the VC. Obviously, these arrangements represent different degrees of competitiveness. This research did not differentiate these three forms of *cha'e*, though it allowed respondents to judge whether

Measured by the other three criteria, however, elections in the majority of the 59 villages were not so free and fair. First, in only 10 villages preliminary candidates were nominated by villagers.³⁹ Candidates in the other 49 villages were nominated either by the Party branch, or the township government, or the incumbent VC. Second, the control of village elections by the village Party branch and the township government is just as obvious in the selection of official candidates (*zhengshi houxuanren*). Only 6 villages called primary elections to select official candidates. In the other 53 villages official candidates were chosen by the village Party branch, the township, or the incumbent VC.⁴⁰ Finally, public election campaigning remained very limited:⁴¹ in only one village VC candidates delivered campaign speeches, candidates in the other 58 villages did not. Table 1 summarizes how many villages selected in each of the 25 provinces had held elections, how many had not, and which criterion was met in villages where elections had been held.

To assess the impact of elections on appealing, I constructed a simple additive index of electoral quality out of these five procedural indicators. Measured by this index, a perfectly free and fair election meets with all of the five procedural criteria. On the other extreme, a completely rigged election satisfies none of these criteria.

Elections and Appealing

Do village elections have any influence on whether the respondents would appeal to village cadres? In this research, villagers' intention to appeal to village cadres was tapped by a hypothetical question: "What would you do if you found that the township government had made a decision that does not accord with central policies?"⁴² The respondents were asked to choose all courses of action they might consider taking from a list of nine alternative reactions, which included "raising objections through village cadres" (*tongguo cun ganbu ti yijian*).⁴³

the elections were truly contested. I thank Melanie Manion for bringing this important point to my attention.

³⁹ On selecting nominees and potential abuses, see Jude Howell, "Prospects for Village Self-Governance in China," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 25, no. 3 (April 1998): 97; O'Brien, "Implementing Political Reform," 55; Elklit, "The Chinese Village Committee Electoral System," 8–9; Daniel Kelliher, "The Chinese Debate over Village Self-Government," *The China Journal*, no. 37 (January 1997): 82; Choate, "Local Governance in China," 10; and Robert A. Pastor and Qingshan Tan, "The Meaning of China's Village Elections," *China Quarterly*, no. 152 (June 2000): 495–96.

⁴⁰ For a similar observation, see O'Brien and Li, "Accommodating 'Democracy'," 486.

⁴¹ On campaigning, see Pastor and Tan, "The Meaning of China's Village Elections," 496–97.

⁴² In theory, local leaders could make decisions that contravene central policies but are beneficial to villagers, but in reality they hardly ever do so. So it is understood in China that "local policies" which do not accord with central policies refer to those local decisions that are detrimental to the interests of ordinary citizens.

⁴³ The other eight options are: (1) complain in private; (2) go directly to the township government to raise objections; (3) reject these decisions; (4) write letters of complaints

Bivariate analysis showed that the mere existence/absence of village elections had no significant effect on whether villagers would appeal to village cadres if they found that the township government had made a decision that did not accord with a central policy. Among the 911 respondents whose villages had held elections, 25.2% said they would appeal. Similarly, among the 445 respondents whose villages had not held election, 23.6% said they would appeal. The difference between these two groups is statistically insignificant ($p > .5$).

What matters is the quality of elections. As we see in Table 2, in places where elections had been held, meeting any one of the five procedural criteria mentioned above is correlated with higher likelihood of appeal. For instance, respondents from villages where elections were contested were more likely to appeal than those from villages where elections were uncontested (odds ratio = 1.58).⁴⁴ Between-group comparison is more complicated, as respondents from villages where elections met with none or only one procedural criterion were in fact slightly less likely to appeal as those from villages where elections had not been held. So it seems that poorly conducted or rigged elections may be demoralizing and increase villagers' distrust in village cadres. But in so far as electoral quality has crossed a threshold, which in this research is meeting at least two procedural criteria, it is in general true that the overall procedural quality of elections and villagers' desire to appeal have a significant positive correlation ($p < .001$). Table 3 shows that, other things being equal, the higher the electoral quality, the more likely the respondents would appeal to elected cadres. At the two extremes, respondents from the village where elections met with all five procedural requirements were almost nine times as likely to appeal to village cadres as those from villages where elections met with none of the five procedural criteria (odds ratio = 8.9).

The procedural quality of VC elections, of course, is not the only factor that may affect whether a villager would ask village cadres to raise objections to unlawful township impositions. The demographic background of villagers may also have some effect. For instance, male, younger, better-educated villagers may be more likely to appeal to cadres than female, older, and less-educated vil-

to higher levels of government; (5) go directly to higher levels of government to lodge complaints; (6) join other villagers to lodge complaints at higher levels of government; (7) other reactions; and (8) do not know what to do. For discussions of peasant political attitudes and behaviors, see Lianjiang Li and Kevin J. O'Brien, "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China," *Modern China* 22, no. 1 (January 1996): 28-61; and Yali Peng, "Democracy and Political Discourses in China," *Modern China* 24, no. 4 (October 1998): 408-44.

⁴⁴ The odds of an event occurring are defined as the ratio of the probability that it will occur to the probability that it will not occur. In other words, when p is the probability of an outcome, the odds of the same outcome are $p/(1-p)$. The odds ratio is the ratio of the odds of an outcome when one particular predictor is, say, 1, compared with the odds of an outcome when that predictor is, say, 0. The odds ratio, always predicated on a particular independent variable, is the increase (or decrease) in the odds of an outcome when that independent variable increases by one. For a detailed discussion of odds and the odds ratio, see Tamas Rudas, *Odds Ratios in the Analysis of Contingency Tables*, Sage University Papers Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Series No. 07-119 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications Inc., 1998).

lagers. Party members might be more confident that they have political influence, and hence more willing to apply pressure on village cadres than non-Party members. In addition, economically better off villagers may have a stronger sense of political efficacy and may be more likely to appeal than the less well-to-do.

More relevant is villagers' evaluation of cadres' performance. If villagers think that cadres are managing village affairs well, then they may be more likely to appeal to cadres because they have more trust in them. On the contrary, if villagers are very dissatisfied with cadres' job performance, they may have less trust in cadres, hence they are less likely to appeal. In this research respondents' evaluation of the performance of village cadres is measured by an additive index (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$), which is constructed out of the respondents' ratings of cadre performance in (1) governing by law; (2) respecting villagers' opinions and consulting with villagers before making decisions; and (3) leading villagers to prosperity on a five-level scale, ranging from "very good" to "very poor."⁴⁵

Multivariate logistic regression shows that electoral quality remains a highly significant predictor when the effects of all the other six factors are held constant. As we see in Table 4, the estimated coefficient of electoral quality indicates that, controlling the effects of the other predictors included in the equation, for every one more procedural criterion the election satisfies, the likelihood of willing to appeal increases by 1.25 times.⁴⁶ In other words, regardless of their gender, age,⁴⁷ level of education, Party membership, income, and evaluation of job performance of village cadres,⁴⁸ it remains true that the higher the electoral quality, the more likely the respondents would appeal to elected cadres when they found the township government had issued an unlawful local policy.

⁴⁵ The index of villagers' evaluation of job performance of village cadres is constructed by using three questions: (1) "How well do you think village cadres are doing in governing by law (*yifa banshi*)?" (2) "How well do you think village cadres are doing in terms of respecting villagers' opinions and consulting with villagers before making decisions?" and (3) "How well do you think village cadres are doing in leading villagers to get rich?" Respondents were asked to rate cadre performance in these three aspects on a five-point scale: (1) "very good," (2) "good," (3) "so-so," (4) "poor," and (5) "very poor." Summing up valid rating scores produced a 13-point index, ranging from 3 to 15, where 3 indicates very positive evaluations on all three accounts, and 15 indicates very negative evaluations on all three accounts.

⁴⁶ Logistic regression coefficients reflect the change in the log odds of the dependent variable that a one-unit change in the independent variable would cause. A positive coefficient increases the probability of an event occurring, while a negative value decreases the predicated probability of an event occurring.

⁴⁷ Bivariate analysis shows that the correlation between respondents' age and their intent to appeal is not curvilinear.

⁴⁸ The correlation between respondents' evaluation of cadre performance and electoral quality is very weak (Pearson's $r = -.09$).

The Significance of Appealing

It may seem trivial to say that free and fair elections encourage villagers to ask elected cadres to raise objections to unlawful decisions made by the township. But as long as the stronger propensity to appeal is translated into more acts of appealing, then such appeals could trigger a meaningful change in the dynamics of village politics. First, such appealing may have considerable impact on villagers' voting behavior. The survey showed that many villagers expected elected cadres to defend them against unlawful extractions of local governments. In other words, they not only wished to elect a community leader, but also wished to elect a political representative. Among the 1,356 respondents, nearly two-thirds (62%) said they would base their voting on whether they thought the candidates would dare speak up on behalf of villagers. Although this preference appears less important than "being impartial when handling village affairs" (83%), "being able to lead villagers to get rich" (80.5%), and "having good character and not corrupt" (75.4%), it may have a larger impact on voting when there is appealing.⁴⁹ Villagers may disagree on whether cadres are impartial or honest, and they may be willing to give cadres more time to develop the economy. But once appealing occurs, it will become clear whether village cadres want to defend villagers against the township. In this sense, the act of appealing will subject elected cadres to an indisputable test, which will prove beyond a reasonable doubt whether they are "running dogs" of the township or protective community leaders. Since the results of such tests may have remarkable influence on the next election, village cadres who wish to seek reelection can ill afford to be unresponsive. As appealing exposes unresponsive cadres and generates support for responsive ones, before long free and fair balloting may help transform the political ecology of village cadres into one of survival of the more responsive.

Second, popular appealing may not only apply pressure on elected village cadres, it may also open a window of opportunity for them. Quite a few village cadres have long disliked being driven to carry out local policies that villagers abhor. In Hainan, for instance, a village cadre told the interviewer that he was very angry that the township government forced him to collect "arbitrary fees."⁵⁰ A desire to escape the "dictatorship" and "scapegoatism" of the township government was dramatically expressed by a VC director in Shanxi. Right after he won the first free election, the reelected director pointed his finger at the township leaders and said loudly: "Today I announce to you, from now on I'm independent. I will never accept your arbitrary rulings again!"⁵¹ Such assertive cadres may challenge the township on their own, but popular appealing will offer them encouragement and moral support. In this sense, by empowering villagers, free and fair elections have in the mean time made it less risky for elected cadres to reject unlawful demands of the township. As an elected VC director

⁴⁹ Other qualifications to which villagers attach some importance are "dare resist local polices from above" (39.5%), "be a party member" (13.5%), and "be from the same lineage" (6.7%).

⁵⁰ Respondent no. 974.

⁵¹ Li and Guo, "Shixing cunmin zizhi," 2.

in Henan said to his voters: "Since I'm elected by you, as long as I keep in line with you and with the central Party leadership, I have nothing to fear."⁵² In fact, the more defiant they are in the township's eyes, the better they may fare in the village. Successfully wringing concessions from the township may help consolidate their power, bring them prestige and respect, and boost their reelection prospects. Even if they fail to win every battle with the township, elected cadres occupy the moral high ground by standing up on behalf of their constituents.

Elected cadres do not have to be overly confrontational when they press townships to revoke unlawful local policies. They may simply link popular demands with cooperation in implementing state policies such as birth control, warning that unless the township revokes illegal decisions, then they will be unable to secure villagers' compliance. It has been noted that elections often improve policy implementation in villages. But as both village cadres and township officials appreciate, villagers accept elected leaders not simply because they voted these cadres into office.⁵³ Accompanying a willingness to accept the leadership of elected cadres is a set of new expectations, including, most notably, that elected cadres should represent and defend their constituents. If the township refuses to give in to a rightful demand from an elected cadre, then the latter may feel justified in refusing to assist the township.

When resisting unlawful local policies, elected cadres may also mobilize public support by calling meetings of the villagers' assembly or villagers' representative assembly and allowing villagers or their representatives to vote on how to respond to township directives. In Henan, for instance, one-fourth of the elected cadres from 14 villages said they would let the villagers' representative assemblies decide what should be done regarding unreasonable directives from the township.⁵⁴ In Guangdong, "villagers' representative assemblies have been used by elected VC directors as a democratic base to resist unreasonable and unlawful local policies."⁵⁵ Of course, as a last resort, elected village cadres may also, as we saw in Yizhang county, organize collective protests.

However it is manifested, the alliance of elected cadres and villagers in opposing unlawful local policies always poses a serious challenge to the township government. When resourceful villagers refer to central statutes and demand the revocation of unlawful local policies, township leaders may wish to give in. But more often than not, they are unable to do so, because the unlawful policies in question are either passed down directly from the county, or practically dictated by the county in the sense that without making such policies township leaders will not be able to meet their assigned targets.⁵⁶ In such cases,

⁵² Li Junde, "'Jianfu yingxiong' za cheng le fazui xianyiren" (How did heroes of reducing burdens become crime suspects), *Banyuetan* (neibuban) (Semi-monthly) (Internal edition), no. 2, February 2000, 14.

⁵³ Cf. Kelliher, "The Chinese Debate," 73.

⁵⁴ Gao, "Woguo xian xiang," 10.

⁵⁵ Guo Zhenglin, "Cunweihui xuanju hou de kunhuo, douzheng he quanli geju" (Confusion, struggle, and configuration of power after village elections), Unpublished paper, 10.

⁵⁶ For analyses of institutional constraints of local officials in China, see Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 2 (January 1999): 167-86; and Andrew Wedeman, "Agents and Fis-

township leaders will find themselves trapped in a no-win situation. On the one hand, yielding to popular pressure would mean either openly defying their superiors or directing popular anger toward the county, both of which will endanger their careers. On the other hand, rejecting the rightful demands raised by elected cadres will backfire. Demoralized village cadres in this situation may stop helping the township meet its targets. Or even if cadres are still willing to help, they may no longer be able to win the cooperation of disappointed villagers. Even worse, frustrated village cadres may organize collective protests. When protesters make their way to the county or higher level government, township leaders will be blamed for failing to maintain local stability.

To avoid such a dilemma, some township officials have begun to depend on appointed village Party secretaries to enforce local policies. A township leader in Fujian said he relied solely on Party secretaries "when it comes to difficult tasks, because VC directors often ignore the township's directives."⁵⁷ This strategy, however, has its own problems. Though the Organic Law stipulates that the Party branch is the leadership core in the village (Art. 3), Party secretaries do not necessarily have the authority needed to enforce a township's directives. In many places, they have met with strong challenges from elected VC members, who charge that appointed Party secretaries do not have the right to manage affairs concerning all villagers.⁵⁸ In a Guangdong village, the elected director had refused to pay restaurant bills submitted by the Party secretary, and he even ordered the Party branch to move out of the village office building. He argued that since the Party branch members listened only to the township and did not serve the villagers, they should ask the township to provide them with an office and pay for their banquets. Ordinary villagers firmly supported this move.⁵⁹

As the tension continues to grow between township governments and villagers led by elected cadres, some township leaders have found it too trying to hang on. In Hebei, a township Party secretary who was known for being tough resigned after losing a number of battles with peasant protesters. Talking to reporters from a journal run by the Central Propaganda Department, he said: "Now that villagers' self-government has been implemented, peasants no longer take orders. I couldn't rein in the troublemakers, neither could I stop peasants from bypassing levels to lodge complaints. I had to resign."⁶⁰

More constructive solutions to the election-induced tension between villages and townships have also been explored. Understanding that appointed

cal Dependence in Central-Provincial Relations in China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 8, no. 20 (1999): 119.

⁵⁷ Interview, Fujian, July 1997.

⁵⁸ See Li and O'Brien, "The Struggle over Village Elections," 142. Also see Shao Jingjun, "Liaocheng shi dangzhishu canxuan cunweihui zhuren diaocha" (Investigation report on the participation of Party secretaries in the election of directors of villagers' committees in Liaocheng city), *Neibu canyue* (Internal references), no. 6, 18 February 2000, 9.

⁵⁹ Interview with an official of the Guangdong provincial bureau of civil affairs, Guangzhou, October 1999.

⁶⁰ Liu Jian, Jiang Shan, Lu Guoqing, Chen Xianfa, and Duan Xianju, "Nongcun wending: yige ningzhong de huati" (Rural stability: A grave topic), *Banyuetan* (neibuban) (Semi-monthly) (Internal edition), no. 4, April 1999, 12.

township leaders are unlikely to resist unlawful local policies, villagers and elected cadres alike have begun to push for township elections.⁶¹ Most interestingly, because they are weary of being caught in the crossfire of assertive villagers and law-breaking superiors, some township leaders themselves have begun to call for democratic township elections. A township leader in Anhui, for instance, argued that only direct elections could free him from the predicament of having to either disobey his superiors or alienate the people. At a meeting on the impact of village elections, he said that "at present the township economy is in recession, and it is no longer practical to ask for money from the masses. But the higher levels continue to require us to report how many well-to-do villages (*xiao kang cun*) and well-to-do townships (*xiao kang xiang*) have been established. Township and county leaders dare not ignore such demands, otherwise they will lose their positions. My question is: can't township leaders be elected, too? If we are elected, then we will be able to keep in line with the masses, we will dare to reject impractical demands from above, and villagers will have a better life."⁶² This person may be exceptionally outspoken, but he is not alone. In anticipation of "the inevitable contradictions and conflicts" between free village elections and appointment of local government leaders, some township officials in Henan have also volunteered to take the lead in experimenting with township elections.⁶³

An unauthorized township election in December 1998 graphically showed that if democratic township elections are introduced then elected township leaders are likely to behave just like elected village cadres in regard to unlawful local policies from above. In the Buyun township election in Suining city of Sichuan, how to handle unlawful directives from the county was a prominent campaign issue. The former deputy Party secretary of the township who won the election made the following statement in his campaign speech: "I sincerely pledge to you that I will never build my political achievements on your burdens and complaints. If keeping the official's cap on my head conflicts with your interests, believe me, I'll choose you and give up my official cap without any hesitation."⁶⁴ A recent report confirms that on one occasion, this popularly

⁶¹ Xiang Jiquan, "Lun woguo nongcun cunmin xuanju de shijian jixiao ji qi yingxiang" (The practical achievements and influences of village elections in our country), in *Xiangtu Zhongguo de minzhu xuanju* (Democratic elections in rural China), ed. Xu Yong and Wu Yi (Wuhan: Huazhong Normal University Press, 2001), 555. Also see Jin Taijun, "Guanyu cunmin zizhi ruogan guanxi wenti de shenceng sikao" (Some in-depth reflections on several questions concerning villagers' self-government), *Kaifang shidai* (Open times), no. 1 (2000): 91.

⁶² Xin Qiushui, "57 ming xiangzhen ganbu zai zuotanhui shang tichu cunmin zizhi yihou cunzai zhe 14 ge zenmoban" (57 township officials raised 14 questions about what should be done after the establishment of villagers' self-government), Unpublished paper, 1999, 6.

⁶³ Gao, "Woguo xian xiang," 15.

⁶⁴ See Tang Jianguang, "Zhixuan xiangzhang" (The direct election of a town mayor), *Nanfang zhoubao* (Southern weekend), 15 January 1999, 2. For discussions of the Buyun election, see Li Fan et al., *Chuangxin yu fazhan* (Innovations and development) (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2000); Shi Weimin, *Gongxuan yu zhixuan* (Public elections and direct elections) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2000), 428–53; Yawei Liu,

elected town mayor did keep his promise in turning down the county's ill-advised instruction to grow more cotton, which did not sell well.⁶⁵

Conclusions

Whatever policy-makers in Beijing intended, free and fair elections seem to have made villagers more willing to urge elected cadres to resist township's decisions that contravene central policies and harm villagers' interests. This particular form of appealing will expose unresponsive cadres and elevates responsive ones. When this process is set in motion, regular free and fair elections may make it more likely for elected village cadres to join forces with fellow villagers in resisting unlawful township impositions. Beyond this, the fact that several multi-village protests in Hunan were led by elected village leaders may suggest that, by providing these leaders with a clear mandate to defend their respective constituencies, free and fair elections may also facilitate the formation of a "United Front" between neighboring villages in challenging the township. In this sense, if decollectivization has given Chinese villagers economic independence, and if the promulgation of specific statutes provides them with a legal basis to engage in what O'Brien calls "rightful resistance,"⁶⁶ then by enabling them to choose a community leader who they expect should represent and defend their rights and interests, free and fair elections may give them an organizational resource to deploy in their struggle with predatory local governments.

Township governments bear the brunt of popular resistance organized by village leaders. But since unlawful local policies usually originate at the county or even higher levels, township leaders are unable to ignore them, even if they want to. As more and more elected cadres join villagers in opposing unlawful local policies, elite-mass tension within the village may decline, but conflicts between villagers and local governments may grow. Free village elections, so to speak, may help transform much of the conflicts between village cadres and

"The Buyun Election and Its Meaning," in *The Carter Center Report on Chinese Elections: Observations on The Township People's Congress Elections January 5–15, 1999 and Cooperative Activities with the Ministry of Civil Affairs August 1, 1998–January 15, 1999* (Atlanta: The Carter Center, 1999), Appendix 4. For criticism of the Buyun election, see Zha Qingjiu, "Minzhu bu neng chao yue fa lu" (Democracy must not surpass laws), *Fazhi ribao* (Legal daily), 19 January 1999, 1. Editors of *Legal Daily* were divided on this issue. A week after the publication of Zha's article, the newspaper published a short commentary entitled "Shishi quandian" (Comments on current affairs), 23 January 1999, which compared Buyun town to Xiaogang village in Anhui, from where the Household Responsibility System originated. But this commentary was published without the endorsement of the chief editor, who later vowed to go after the responsible party. For the chief editor's angry reaction, see Chen Yingge, "Buneng xuanchuan weixian shijian" (Unconstitutional events must not be publicized), *Neibu tongxin* (Internal communications), no. 5 (1999): 11. For a response to Zha's criticism by a county official from Suining city, see Li Lu, "Buyun de gushi fabiao yihou" (After the publication of the Buyun story), *Huasheng yuebao* (China's voices monthly), no. 3, March 1999, 20.

⁶⁵ See Li Fan, "'turan xiji'—Buyun xiang" (A surprise visit to Buyun town), *Zhongguo shehui daokan* (Chinese society journal), no. 9 (September 2000): 40.

⁶⁶ See Kevin J. O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (October 1996): 31–55.

peasants into clashes between organized villages and township governments. Unless Beijing scraps village elections, it is unclear how the Center can reduce village-township tension without introducing democratic township elections, thus allowing the township to “pass the buck” up yet one more level.

By encouraging cadres and villagers to work together in resisting unlawful local policies, free and fair village elections have created both a chance and a challenge for Beijing. Policy-makers in Zhongnanhai may share villagers’ interest in placing some constraints on the arbitrary power of local governments. But village elections have also created problems that cannot be resolved without further reforms that the regime has so far been hesitant to introduce. Central Party leaders may wish to scale back the discretion of their local agents, but in the mean time they seem to fear the domino effect of introducing local elections. After all, though villagers have so far only asked elected village cadres to resist unlawful local policies, this does not imply that they are happy with all central policies. If local elections are introduced, then the scenario we see in villages may be played out on a larger scale. Elected township leaders, for instance, may be pressed to resist unlawful directives from the county, thereby creating pressure for county elections.

In theory, improved elite accountability and responsiveness at the grass-roots level does not necessarily impede the reach of the central state. But if local elections ascend, ultimately Beijing may have to justify its own policies to the people or face the opposition of popularly elected local leaders. Given the large number of central policies that discriminate against rural residents, the compatibility of interests between Party leaders at the top and peasants at the bottom remains limited. So is the elbow-room for political reform. Lacking a popular mandate itself, the current leadership may find election-induced elite-mass alliance vis-à-vis the township government more a threat than an opportunity. Township election may still be introduced, but only when the Center comes to the same conclusion that Peng Zhen drew about villagers’ self-government: only democratic reforms can help rein in unprincipled local officials and prevent massive rural unrest.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ For a discussion of Peng Zhen’s support for villagers’ self-government, see Li and O’Brien, “The Struggle over Village Elections,” 132.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of village elections: summary

Province	Election		Contested (<i>cha'e</i>)		Anony- mous bal- loting		Villagers nominate candidates		Primary election		Campaign speech	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	Ye s	no	yes	no	yes	no
Anhui	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	2
Chongqing	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Fujian	3	0	2	1	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	3
Gansu	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2
Guangdong	0	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Guangxi	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
Guizhou	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Hainan	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Hebei	9	4	2	7	7	2	1	8	0	9	0	9
Heilongjian g	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	2
Henan	4	0	3	1	2	2	0	4	2	2	0	4
Hubei	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
Hunan	3	1	2	1	3	0	0	3	0	3	0	3
Jiangsu	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Jilin	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Neimeng	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2
Ningxia	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Qinghai	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	1
Shaanxi	8	3	1	7	7	1	0	8	0	8	0	8
Shandong	5	3	3	2	3	2	1	4	0	5	0	5
Shanxi	3	1	1	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	0	3
Sichuan	0	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Xinjiang	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Yunnan	3	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	3
Zhejiang	0	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	59	28	27	32	44	15	10	49	6	53	1	58

Note: -- indicates that values cannot be computed because no election was held

Table 2. Effect of meeting individual procedural criterion on villagers' intent to appeal

	Villagers nominate candidates***		Primary election*		Candidates deliver campaign speech**		Contested (<i>cha'e</i>)**		Anonymous voting*	
	yes (122)	no (789)	yes (83)	no (828)	yes (10)	no (901)	yes (394)	no (517)	yes (698)	no (213)
appeal	39.3	23.1	34.9	24.3	70.0	24.8	30.2	21.5	26.8	20.2
not appeal	60.7	76.9	65.1	75.7	30.0	75.2	69.8	78.5	73.2	79.8

Table 3. Cross-tabulations of the intention to appeal with electoral quality

	Will appeal	Will not appeal
Number of procedural criteria met		
No election (28, n=445)	23.6	76.4
None (11, n=183)	20.8	79.2
One (18, n=282)	19.1	80.9
Two (21, n=347)	28.5	71.5
Three (7, n=75)	33.3	66.7
Four (1, n=14)	50.0	50.0
Five(1, n=10)	70.0	30.0

Note: Numbers in parentheses after each category are number of villages, followed by number of respondents from each villages. Numbers in cells are percentages of respondents, rows sum to 100.

Table 4. The intention to appeal (multivariate logit model)

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error	Odds ratio
Constant	-1.80	.41	
Age ^a	-.00	.01	.99
Gender ^b	.13	.07	1.13
Education ^c	.05	.02	1.05
Income ^d	.14**	.05	1.16
Party membership ^e	.60*	.29	1.82
Performance assessment ^f	-.00***	.00	.99
Electoral quality ^g	.23***	.05	1.25

Notes: N = 1,252; -2 log likelihood = 1,341.8; Nagelkerke R^2 = .09; percentage correctly predicted = 74.7.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

The dependent variable is a dummy variable. "Will appeal" is coded as "1," "will not appeal" as "0."

^a Ranging from "18" to "68."

^b Female is coded as "0," male as "1."

^c Measured by the number of years of schooling, ranging from "0" to "12."

^d Household per capita annual income, measured by a six-level index, where "1" stands for "below 200 yuan," "2" for "200–500 yuan," "3" for "501–1000 yuan," "4" for "1001–2000 yuan," "5" for "2001–4000 yuan," and "6" for "above 4001 yuan."

^e Coded "1" if a Party member, "0" if not a Party member.

^f Measured by a constructed index, ranging from "3" (very positive) to "15" (very negative).

^g Measured by the number of procedural criteria met, ranging from "0" to "5." "No election" is treated as meeting no criterion.