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Electoral Institutions, Political Participation,
and Grassroots Democracy in Rural China

Presenter

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My current academic interests focus on three issues. First, I focus on studying the nature of the current political regime in China. In a book I coauthored with several other Taiwanese scholars published recently, we used “degenerative totalitarianism” to describe the main feature of the current CCP regime. My second focus is to study the role of local government in economic development in coastal China. By combining the concepts of “developmental state” and “entrepreneurial state,” I raise “market state capitalism” as an analytical concept for this issue. The third focus is on the electoral institutions generated from the grassroots democracy in rural China. By tracing the evolution of the electoral institutions, I try to explain the logic of this evolution, and probe its democratic implication.

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I. Introduction

Village committee election in rural China has been held for more than twenty years. It has laid a solid foundation for China's future democratization. The practice of village committee election has created a lot of new methods in nominating candidates and other electoral procedures. In general these new methods of electoral procedures have pushed the village electoral institutions to evolve toward a more democratic direction. However, there still exist many uncertainties, problems, and limitations of the village committee election. It is controversial that, first, whether the practice of China's village committee election has been competitive and democratic, and second, whether China's village committee election contributes to China's democratization in general. These are the important contexts of discussing China's village committee election in recent years.

These questions are not only theoretically but also politically important. This paper intends to address these questions in both manners. By using the data from a nationwide survey,¹ this paper focuses on the following questions in China's village committee election. First, do democratic electoral institutions affect villagers' behavior of voting and pre-voting political participation? Do democratic electoral institutions prompt villagers to vote the candidates nominated by the villagers? Do democratic electoral institutions increase villagers' perception of the fairness of the election? Second, how do the village electoral institution affect the relationship between village committee and village party branch, or the "two-committee relationship" (*liangwei guanxi*, 兩委關係) as Chinese scholars call it. Third, how do the village electoral institutions and the "two-committee relationship" affect the governance of the village? Lastly, what are the implications of the practice of village

[✓] I would like to thank Dr. Lin, Tse-min and Dr. Wu, Chin-en for their advices. I would also like to thank Mr. Shih Yi-ren for his assistance on statistic analysis.

¹ Please refer to Appendix I for the data source of the survey. There are two sets of data. One is the individual data and another village data. Individual data is based on questionnaire interviewing individuals to acquire individual opinions and attitudes. Village data is based on questionnaire interviewing village cadres to acquire various aggregate features of the village.

election for China's democratization in general?

II. Achievements and problems of village committee election

Achievements

Since the revision of Article 111 of the "Constitution of People's Republic of China" in 1982, it has been more than twenty years when the foundation for the village committee election and self-governance was laid. It has been seventeen years since 1987 when the "Organic Law of Village Committee of PRC (Trial Version)" was passed. In 1996, all the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities under central government started to hold village committee elections together, some for the first time, and seventeen of them had already achieved three rounds by then. In year 2000, the "Organic Law of Village Committee of PRC" was formally put into practice. The past 22 years of practice of village committee election has at least accomplished the following achievements:

1. A firm legal foundation for village committee self-governance and election has been laid.
2. Legal concepts for village committee election among the villagers have basically been laid among the villagers. Villagers' consciousness of voting as a political right has strengthened as village committee elections were held constantly every four years. The concept that village cadres gain their legitimate authority from villagers' votes has taken roots in ordinary villagers' mind. Many villagers are more and more familiar with their rights under the law and are willing to defend those rights by protesting, submitting petitions and going to court.²
3. Democratic electoral institutions such as "open nominations," "secret ballots," "more candidates than posts," and "open vote tallying" have been basically assured in the procedure of village committee election, at least as legal principles.³
4. A team of local cadres and officials that are familiar with the practices of election has already been trained within villages. The most important is the fact that officials from the "Civic Affairs Office" of the provincial government have been

² See Elizabeth Dugan, "Report of International Republican Institute to the US Congressional Executive Committee on China, Roundtable Discussion on Village Election on China," July 8, 2002. <<http://www.iri.org/7-8-02-asia-ld.asp>>. This report states that "...Chinese villagers are more and more familiar with their rights under the law and are willing to defend those rights by protesting, submitting petitions and going to court."

³ Ibid.

well trained and experienced in terms of knowledge and skills in managing the electoral administration. These provincial-level officials have been a stable and strong back-bone for promoting village committee election all over the country.

5. Competitive elections have taken places in villages in many provinces. Self-nomination or villagers' nomination have become more and more common to replace the old method of "negotiation" in creating the candidates.
6. The village committee election has prompted some villages to accommodate the participation of villagers in the process of election of the village party branch cadres. According to the "Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party," the leading cadres of the village party branch are supposed to be elected by the party members in the village and ratified by the township level party committee. Accordingly, ordinary villagers are not allowed to participate in the process of party branch cadre election. However, due to the fact that village committee cadres are already elected by all the villagers, some of the village party branch cadres have felt pressures to accommodate the villagers' participation. For example, in Suizhou (Precinct-level) City, village party branches have adopted the "Two-vote System" to elect the party branch secretary. The first vote is actually a "confidence vote" from the ordinary villagers to the party members in the village. The preliminary candidates for party branch secretary are decided according to the votes all the village party members get. In short, the two party members who get the highest votes shall become the candidates. Then the village party members shall cast their vote to elect the party branch secretary among the candidates.⁴
7. The village committee election has also the effect of speeding up the experiment of direct election for not only township head but also more democratic election for township party secretary. Since the most famous case of direct election for township head in Buyun Township, Sichuan Province, there have been more than ten cases of this kind of experiment of direct election for township head.⁵ In recent years, there have also been some cases in which more democratic electoral institutions are introduced to the election of township party secretary. In most of these cases the nominations were opened to ordinary party members, and open

⁴ Wang, Xuejiang, "Two-vote system and the direct election of village party branch secretary," *China Elections and Governance*, June 25, 2004, <<http://www.chinaelections.org/readnews.asp?newsid={C07AC805-CD82-4CA9-AD72-7D2810D25836}>> .

⁵ Shi, Weimin (2000), *Public Election and Direct Election: Studies of Township Head Direct Electoral Institutions* (公選與直選：鄉鎮長人大選舉制度研究), Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe; Li, Fan (2003), *Ride with the Wind: My Experiences with the Direct Election* (乘風而來—我所經歷的步雲鄉直選), Xian: Xibei Daxue Chubanshe; Huang, Weiping, & Zou, Shubin (2003), *Reform of Township Direct Election: Case Studies* (鄉鎮長選舉方式改革：案例研究), Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe.

electoral process within the party was introduced for voting the party secretary. Cases in Chengdu City of Sichua Province in 2003⁶ and Rushan City of Shangdong Prvovince in 2004 are two examples among many.⁷

Problems

However, there still exist many uncertainties and problems of the village committee election. First, the “Organic Law of Village Committee of PRC” has not made strict regulation on many electoral procedures. It allows certain flexibility on many concrete procedures. Article 14 of the Law makes the following general regulations on electoral institutions:

The electoral committee for village committee election governs the administration of the village committee election. The members of the electoral committee for village committee election shall be created by villagers’ meeting or the villagers’ representatives’ meeting. (Organic Law of Village Committee of PRC, Article 13)

In the election of the village committee, the villagers shall directly nominate the candidates for village committee member. The number of the candidates should be more than the number of the elected seats. The election is not valid unless more than half of the eligible villager electorates cast their votes. A candidate is not elected unless he or she gets more than half of the cast votes. The votes should be cast with anonymous ballot and counted openly. The result of the election should be publicized immediately. The votes should be cast in a secret booth. Concrete measures of village committee election should be created by the People’s Congress of the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities under central government. (Organic Law of Village Committee of PRC, Article 14)

Second, it is still not fully implemented throughout the country. According to a report by the US government, the PRC government estimated that one-third of all elections had serious procedural flaws.⁸

⁶ “Direct election for township party secretary in Chengdu City sets fresh example for the country,” *China Elections and Governance*, December 9, 2003, <<http://www.chinaelections.org/readnews.asp?newsid={C6046CF3-CA57-43E4-81AB-0CA2501CFE29}j>>.

⁷ “The first directly-elected township party secretary was created in Rushan City in Shandong Province,” *China Elections and Governance*, May 14, 2004, <<http://www.chinaelections.org/readnews.asp?newsid={6FAFD54F-FC57-46C4-A36A-D52E3B68EC37}>>.

⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA State Department, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2003: China”, February 25, 2004, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/>

Third, in some villages where democratic village committee elections are put into practice, frustrations have taken place from the tension between village committee and village party branch, and from the intervention of the townships. Foreigners have also reached similar observations.⁹

Fourth, after the practice of village committee election for more than twenty years, serious social tensions are still growing in rural areas in recent years. There are thus opinions casting doubts and posing challenges to the democratic implication of village committee election toward China's democratization and rural governance.

III. Literature review and research questions

Village committee election and Voting in PRC: Empirical Studies

Many works have examined villagers' voting as political participation in China's village committee election. Manion pointed out that village leaders are responsive to villagers as a result of the village committee election. As a result of the village electoral process, village leaders' attitude toward the role of the state in economy has become more congruent with the villagers. In other words, the village committee election has produced a democratic effect of making the village leaders to become responsive to the villagers, vis-à-vis their old attitude to be only responsive to the officials at their higher administrative hierarchy.¹⁰

The study of Jennings sheds light on how village committee election as a contextual variable affects villagers' political participation in general. His study with a survey sample drawn from four countryside counties shows villagers were strategic in utilizing particular mode for particular problem areas. What is more relevant to this study is his finding that more vibrant village and township elections as aggregate variable do have an effect on individual villagers' political participation.¹¹

Shi's study is probably the only work that used nationwide data to study village committee election in China. Shi focuses on what causes voters to vote and not to vote in various types of elections in China's limited-choice election. His study finds that rather than waiting for elections to become fully democratic to vote, voters in China vote in these imperfect elections to punish corrupt leaders and to facilitate political

27768.htm>.

⁹ Edward Cody, "Elections Make Inroads in China: Many Head to the Polls, but Vote's Impact Is Limited in Yunnan Province", *Washington Post*, May 2, 2004.

¹⁰ Manion, Melanie (1996), "The Electoral Connection in the Chinese Countryside", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4, pp. 736-748.

¹¹ Jennings, M. Kent (1997), "Political Participation in the Chinese Countryside", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 2, pp. 361-372.

development. Even a little change in electoral rules would change people's cost-benefit calculations, which in turn would alter their voting behavior. In general, in agreeing with Manion, Shi suggests that introduction of competitive elections in Chinese villages has had a significant impact on the political processes in Chinese society.¹²

Based on a sample drawn from 12 counties in southern Jiangsu in year 2000, the study of Zhong & Chen also focused on what subjective factors caused villagers to vote and not to vote in the village committee election. The result of their study was quite counter-intuitive. Their finding defied Shi's observation in that they found dissatisfaction with corruption did not play a role in prompting the villagers to vote in the village committee election. Furthermore, in contrary to what theories would drive us to expect, they found villagers with lower levels of internal efficacy tend to vote. The only finding they did not surprise the readers was that voting was related to democratic values and high levels of life satisfaction and interests in state and local public affairs. They concluded that the reason why villagers with higher levels of internal efficacy and democratic values stayed away from village committee elections was due to the institutional constraints on the village committee elections. Accordingly, they question the competitiveness and democratic nature of Chinese village committee elections.¹³

Kennedy's study is probably the one most relevant to the topic of this paper. He focuses on how electoral institution, namely, nomination methods in the village committee election in 34 villages in Shaanxi Province in year 2000, affects villagers' attitudes toward satisfaction with the electoral process and local economy, and the result of the election, namely, the party membership of the elected. His conclusion was that electoral institution does affect the party membership of the elected village leaders. Villager-nominated leaders tend to be non-party members. Party-branch nominated leaders are not always party members, but a significant number are wealthy compared to their village constituents. And the large majority of township-nominated leaders are party members. Furthermore, in villages with more open nomination of candidates, villagers tend to be more satisfied with the electoral process even though they may be dissatisfied with their economic conditions.¹⁴

Literatures by Chinese Scholars

¹² Shi, Tianjian (1999), "Voting and Nonvoting in China: Voting Behavior in Plebiscitary and Limited-Choice Elections," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 4, pp. 1115-39.

¹³ Zhong, Yang and Chen Jie (2002), "To Vote or Not-An Analysis of Peasant's Participation in Chinese Village Elections", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 6, pp. 686-712.

¹⁴ Kennedy, John James (2002), "The Face of Grassroots Democracy in Rural China", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 456-482.

1. On the conflict between village committee and village party branch

Chinese scholars and media have paid a lot of attention to the problem of the conflict between village committee and village party branch. The origin of the problem lies on Article 3 of the Organic Law of Village Committee. It stipulates that the party branch be the “leading core” of the village. When the village committee has clear definition of its power according to the law, this article gives unspecified but highly symbolic position to the village party branch. It does not settle the already existing conflict between the village committee and party branch before the law was enacted in 1998, it on the contrary has fueled the controversy.¹⁵

In mid 90s, Organization Department of Hubei Province surveyed on 111 villages, and found that in 11.8% of them there was tension between the village committee and village party branch.¹⁶ He Xuefeng once visited more than 50 villages in Hubei and Jiangxi in 2000, and found that the percentage was actually higher. He found less than 60% of the villages he visited had a cooperative relationship between the village committee and village party branch.¹⁷ Mao Junji and Chen Yuanzhang’s research on 500 villages in Hunan and Chen Shiqian’s research in Fujian also expressed similar observations.¹⁸

2. On the importance of “nomination” and “selecting formal candidates”

Chinese scholars have written a lot on village committee self-governance and election. Many focus on electoral institutions. Bai and Zhao (2001) argued that in China’s direct democracy such as village election, there are two core issues to decide the democratic quality of the election: first, how the preliminary candidates are nominated, and second, how formal candidates are selected.¹⁹ They raised five types of nomination: (1) nominated by five or ten villagers (or households) collectively; (2) nominated by the party branch; (3) nominated by village small groups or villagers’ representatives; (4) nominated by the candidates themselves seconded by ten villagers;

¹⁵ Guo, Zhenglin (2002), “Village committee and party branch after village direct election: current conditions and adjustments” (「村民直選後的村委會與黨支部：現狀與調適」), from Li, Fan ed. (2002), *A Report on the Development of China’s Grassroots Democracy* (中國基層民主發展報告 2000–2001), Beijing: Dongfang Publisher.

¹⁶ Ren, Xudong, and Shu, Jun (2003), “A study of the conflict between village committee and party branch under the village self-governance,” *People’s Daily Online*, Aug. 19, 2003, <<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14576/28320/29243/29246/2025233.html>>.

¹⁷ He, Xuefeng (2000), “Face, Interests and the Nature of Village” (「面子、利益與村莊的性質」), <<http://www.snzg.net/shownews.asp?newsid=2167>>.

¹⁸ Ren & Shu (2003).

¹⁹ Bai, Gang, and Zhao, Shouxing (2001), *Election and Governance: Studies on Chinese Village Self-Governance* (選舉與治理：中國村民自治研究), Beijing: Chinese Social Science Publisher, p.120.

(5) nominated directly by villagers, such as the “Hai Xuan” in Jinlin. As for the “selection of formal candidates,” they raise two types: (1) through discussion with village small groups hosted by village electoral leading group; (2) through preliminary voting cast by villagers. They criticized that the first type is easy to generate controversies and to allow intervention from local cadres and officials.²⁰ Similar observation on the importance of these two electoral procedures has been made by other scholars studying elections for representatives of People’s Congress (PC). In a nationwide survey research with 1950 samples on peoples’ representative election conducted in 2000, it was found that when the interviewees were asked which electoral institutions need to reformed most, 50% said “nomination” and almost 19% said “method of selecting formal candidates,” which were the first and second most important issues.²¹ On nomination, it was found that although voters’ collective nomination is allowed, it was actually not the dominant one, and the party-nomination is found to be lacking transparency. On the “selection of formal candidates,” 32% of the interviewees were not satisfied, and the main reason was that it lacks transparency and allows intervention. There were 34.41% of the interviewees thought there existed “leadership’s will” in the process of “selection of formal candidates,” and almost 15% thought the process is a “black box.”²²

Some Reflections

The English literatures of Chinese village committee election studies share some common characteristics in comparison with the studies of Chinese scholars. First, the English literatures based on survey data tend to focus on the individual behaviors and draw implications of village committee election accordingly. Second, except for Kennedy, most scholars focus also on individual level variables as explanatory factors. Third, none of the English literature studies the conflict between the popular elected village committee and the powerful village party branch. The English literatures may run the risk of drawing democratic implication of the village committee election without taking into consideration the actual institutional context in the Chinese villages. The fact that the village committee election has democratic impact on individual villagers’ behavior is one thing, but whether the village committee election as an institution may have democratic implication on Chinese political system as a whole is quite another. It may be sometimes too natural for scholars studying Chinese

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 122.

²¹ Chen, Sixi, “Reality and Ideal: A Survey Report on Reforming the Electoral Procedures,” in Tsai, Dingjian, ed. (2002), *Reports on China’s Electoral Conditions* (中國選狀況的報告), Beijing: Legal Publisher, p. 322.

²² Ibid., pp. 333-334.

politics to reach an implication on the systematic level with data from the individualistic level. Institution as an intervening variable or independent variable has constantly been neglected.

In light of this, this paper intends to focus on the effects of institutional variables: the electoral institutions of village committee election and village party branch election as independent variables, and the relationship between village committee and village party branch as the intervening variable.

IV. Frameworks, variables²³, and hypotheses

Framework I

There are two groups of research questions in this paper. The first research question focuses on how the electoral institutions affect the practice and outcome of villagers' voting. It is addressed as "Do electoral institutions affect voting, pre-voting political participation, whom villagers vote for, and villagers' perception of the fairness of the election?" It is actually composed of three hypotheses as follows. (Figure 1 depicts the framework I):

Hypothesis 1.1: The more democratic the electoral institutions of the village committee election, the more active the villagers' pre-voting political participation.

Hypothesis 1.2: The more democratic the electoral institutions of the village committee election, the more likely villagers would vote..

Hypothesis 1.3: The more democratic the electoral institutions of the village committee election, the more likely the villagers would vote for the villager-nominated candidates instead the official-nominated candidates.

Hypothesis 1.4: The more democratic the electoral institutions, the more likely the villagers tend to feel the village committee election to be fair.

[Figure 1 here]

²³ The recoding processes from the original questions of the variables are illustrated in Appendix 2.

In the first group of research question, there are one independent variable “the electoral institutions of the village committee election” and four dependent variables: “voting”, “pre-voting political participation,” “whom to vote,” and “fairness of the election.” The major independent variable is the “electoral institutions of the village committee election.” There are also some control variables, namely, “party membership,” “gender,” “age,” “income,” and “education.”

The independent variable “the electoral institutions of the village committee election” is actually composed of a sequence of electoral institutions: (1) how was the administrative committee for village committee election created, (2) how the preliminary candidates are nominated, and (3) how the formal candidate is selected. The distribution of the frequency and percentage of the values of these variables are as follows.

The first institution “how was the administrative committee (leading group) for village committee election created” was measured in the following way. The responses to whether “leading group of village committee elections are generated by villager’s meetings” (M1) and whether “leading group of village committee elections are generated by villagers’ representatives meeting” (M2) are merged as a new variable “electoral administration”. When the responses to both these two questions are no, then the value of the “electoral administration” is coded “0,” and others are recoded as “1.” According to Article 13 of the Organic Law, it should be created by either of these two meetings. Therefore “0” implies it was not created according to the law, whereas “1” represented it was. Table 1 shows the result. It is worth noticing that in the individual data, there were 23.25% of the villagers reported that their villages did not create the village “electoral administration” according to the law.

[Table 1 here]

The second institution “how the preliminary candidates are nominated” was measured in the following way. The response to whether “to take direction election as the method for nominating the preliminary candidates for village committee” (N11), whether “to take villagers’ joint nomination as the method for nominating the preliminary candidates for village committee” (N12), and whether “to take villagers’ group or villager’s representative meeting as the method for nominating the formal candidates for village committee” (N15) are merged as a new variable “nomination.” The coding of the new variable “nomination” from the three old variable N11, N12, and N15 is shown in the following table 2. When the responses to the three questions are all “no,” then the “nomination” is coded as “0,” representing that the preliminary

candidates were nominated in a non-democratic method (about 16.7%). When the response to N11 is “no,” that is, not through direct election, but either of the other two questions is “yes,” then it is coded as “1,” representing the preliminary candidates were nominated in a median democratic method (42.8%). As long as the response to N11 is yes, then “nomination” is coded as “2,” representing the preliminary candidates were nominated in a most democratic method (40.5%).

[Table 2 here]

The third institution “how the formal candidate is selected” was measured in the following way. The response to whether “to take preliminary election as the method for determining the formal candidates for village committee” (N22) and to whether “to take votes by villager representatives' meeting as the method for determining the formal candidates for village committee” (N23) are merged as a new variable “selection of formal candidates.” If the response to N22 is “no” and the response to N23 is also “no,” the value of “selection of formal candidates” is recoded as “0,” representing the non-democratic method to select the formal candidates (20.14%). If the response to N22 is “no” and the response to N23 is “yes,” the value of “selection of formal candidates” is recoded as “1,” representing the less democratic method to select the formal candidates (42.61%). If the response to N22 is “yes,” the value of “selection of formal candidates” is recoded as “2,” representing the more democratic method to select the candidates (37.25%).

[Table 3 here]

The dependent variable “voting” is tested by the following question: “Did you vote in the (latest) village committee election?” There are basically two categories of response: “Yes” (84.32%) and “No” (15.68%). The frequency and percentage distribution of them is shown in table 4.

[Table 4 here]

The dependent variable “pre-voting political participation” is a reconstructed variable composed of three sets of question: “whether the villager has participated in the village committee election meetings,” “whether the villager has mobilized others to attend the village committee election meetings,” and “whether the villager has nominated any candidate.” Those villagers who have participated none of these three pre-voting activities, we coded them as “0” (51.56%), and if they have participated in

any one of these activities, we coded them as “1” (48.44%). The frequency and percentage distribution of these two values of this variable is as in table 5.

[Table 5 here]

The dependent variable “whom did you vote for” is composed of the following question: “(If you have voted in the previous village committee election) whom did you vote for? The original response categories are: 1. the incumbent village head; 2. candidates supported by the village party branch; 3. candidates supported by the township; 4. candidates supported by most of the villagers. We coded the response into two categories, by coding response “1 through 3” as “0” referring to “officials-nominated candidate” (66.67%), and “4” as “1,” referring to “villagers-nominated candidate” (33.33%). The distribution of frequency and percentage of these two values are shown in table 6.

[Table 6 here]

The control variables are “gender,” “age,” “education,” “income,” “party membership,” and “big or small surname / village.” The frequency and percentage distribution of these control variables are shown in table 7 to 12.

Framework II

There are three layers of variables in the framework of the second group of research question. The first layer is the independent variable, that is, the electoral institution of the village committee election and the village party branch election. The second layer is the intervening variable, that is, whether village committee or the village party branch is more dominant in deciding the village affairs after the election. The third layer is the dependent variables. The first dependent variable is whether there is solidarity than conflict in the villages after the election, or the other way around. The second variable is whether villagers feel the village committee election is more helpful or harmful for economic development after the election. This group of research question is composed of five separate hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2.1: The more democratic the electoral institutions of the village committee, the more democratic the electoral institutions of the village party branch election.

Hypothesis 2.2: The more democratic the electoral institution of the village committee election, the more likely that the village committee would become more dominant in deciding village affairs vis-à-vis the village party committee.

Hypothesis 2.3: The more democratic the electoral institution of the village party branch election, the more likely that the village party branch would become more dominant in deciding village affairs vis-à-vis the village committee.

Hypothesis 2.4: The more likely that the village committee is more dominant than the village party branch, the more likely the fact that there would be more solidarity than conflict within the village after the village committee election.

Hypothesis 2.5: The more likely that the village committee is more dominant than the village party branch, the more likely the fact that the villagers tend to feel the election is more helpful than harmful for economic development of the village after the village committee election.

Hypothesis 2.6: The more likely that the village committee is more dominant than the village party branch, the more likely the fact that villagers tend to have greater trust in the local government.

[Figure 2 here]

Except for the independent variable “the electoral institution of village committee election” as defined previously, another independent variable “the electoral institution of village party branch” is measured in the following way. The responses to “how did the secretary of the village party branch come to the office” (Z3) and to whether “the villagers (including non-Party members) were involved in the village-level secretary election” (Z4) are merged as new variable a new variable “party branch election.” If the response to Z3 is “appointed by township leading cadres” or “recommended by village party members and decided by the township leading cadres” and the response to Z4 is “no,” then “party branch election” is recoded as “0,” representing the electoral institution is “non-democratic.” If the

question to Z3 is “appointed by township leading cadres” or “recommended by village party members and decided by the township leading cadres” and the response to Z4 is “yes,” then “party branch election” is recoded as “1,” representing the electoral institution is “less democratic.” If the response to Z3 was “elected by the village party members” and the response to Z4 is “No,” then “party branch election” is recoded as “2,” representing the electoral institution is “more democratic.” If the response to Z3 was “elected by the village party members” and the response to Z4 is “Yes,” then “party branch election” is recoded as “3,” representing the electoral institution is most democratic. The frequency and percentage distribution of the value is shown in table 13.

[Table 13 here]

The intervening variable “two-committee relationship” is composed of two dummy variables: “the village committee being dominant” and “the village party branch being dominant.” In the village, when the village committee has been elected by all the villagers, it is natural to assume that its legitimacy would also be strengthened, and so would its authority. Consequently, the legitimacy and authority of the village party branch tends to become lower. If that is the case, there would be a conflict between these two entities. This conflict between these two entities has been widely recognized and observed by Chinese scholars as raised in the literature review previously. This variable is measured by the following question: “After the village committee election, which departments will make decisions?” There are the following possible responses: “1. Decided by village party branch alone,” “2. Decided by the chairman of the village committee alone,” “3. Decided through negotiation within the village committee,” and “4. Decided by voting.” We create two dummy variables: “village party branch being dominant” when the response is “1. decided by the village party branch alone;” and “village committee being dominant” when the response is either “2” or “3.” The frequency and percentage distribution is shown in table 14 and 15.

[Table 14 here]

[Table 15 here]

The dependent variable “solidarity vs. conflict within the village” is actually measured by the following question: “Has there been more solidarity or more conflict among villagers after the village committee election?” There are the following

responses to this question: “1. more solidarity,” “2. more conflict,” and “3. no influence.” We recoded them into two dummy variables: “Solidarity,” and “Conflict.” The frequency and percentage distribution of these two variables are shown in table 16 and table 17.

[Table 16 here]

[Table 17 here]

The dependent variable “Economic development” is also composed of two dummy variables. The variable is measured by the following question: “Do you think that elections will be helpful for economic development or not?” The responses to this question are: “1. more helpful,” “2. more harmful,” and “3. no influence.” We recoded them into two dummy variables: “More helpful” when the response is 1, and “More harmful” when the response is 2. The frequency and percentage distribution of these two variables are shown in table 18 and table 19.

[Table 18 here]

[Table 19 here]

V. Electoral institutions and political participation in village committee election

Table 20 reports the result of the logit analysis of “pre-voting political participation.” Two of the three electoral institutions of the village committee election, that is, the method of “electoral administration” and “nomination,” seem to have effect on villagers’ pre-voting political participation. In villages with more democratic method of selecting the “electoral administration” for the village committee election, the odds ratio of villagers “participate in the pre-voting political activities” over “not to participate” is 1.324 times of that in villages with less democratic method. In villages with less democratic method of “nominating the preliminary candidates” for the village committee election, the odds ratio of villagers being “involved” in the pre-voting political participation over “not involved” is 1.709 times of that in villages with non-democratic method. In villages with more democratic method of “nomination,” the same odds ratio is 2.184 of that in villages with non-democratic method.

As for the controlled variables, for male the odds ratio of being “involved” over “not involved” in pre-voting political participation is 1.31 times of female. For villagers aging 40-5 the odds ratio of being “involved” over “not involved” in pre-voting political participation is around 2 times of villagers aging less than 30. For villagers with junior high school of education, the odds ratio of being “involved” over “not involved” in pre-voting political participation is 1.65 times of villagers with less than elementary school of education. For villagers with household income between 12,001 to 16,000 RMB, the odds ratio of being “involved” over “not involved” in pre-voting political participation is 1.735 times of villagers with household income less than 4000 RMB. For party members, the odds ratio of being “involved” than “not involved” in pre-voting political participation is 2.5 times of those non-party-members. In short, the more democratic the electoral institution, the more likely villagers tend to be involved in the “pre-voting political participation.”

To sum up, basically hypothesis 1.1 can be verified with the result. However, among the electoral institutions of village committee election, only the methods of “selecting electoral administration” and “nomination” for village committee election have effects on “pre-voting political participation.” The method of “selecting formal candidate” was not found to have effect. This can be interpreted that a fair judge (the electoral administration) and an open opportunity for villagers to nominate encourage villagers to participate in the pre-voting mobilization politics. As for the method of “selecting the formal candidates,” since it is something taking place after the nomination and something less conspicuous for villagers, it does not affect villagers’ political participation in the activities relevant to electoral mobilization. Figure 3 shows the test result of hypothesis 1.1.

[Table 20 here]

[Figure 3 here]

Table 21 reports the result of logit analysis of “voting.” In villages with the more democratic method of “nomination” for the village committee election, the odds ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is 2 times of that in villages with the non-democratic method of “nomination.” In villages with less democratic method of “selecting formal candidates,” the odds ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is almost 2 (1.9) times of that in villages with the non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” This shows that Chinese villagers have been subtle enough to be sensitive to whether village and township cadres have manipulated in the procedure of “selecting formal candidates” for village committee election. Non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates” in village committee election tends to discourage the voting. In

sum, the more democratic methods of “nomination” and “selecting formal candidates,” the more likely that villagers would vote. But whether the “electoral administration” is democratically selected does not affect the likelihood that villagers would vote.

For villagers who are involved in “pre-voting political participation,” the odds-ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is 8 times of those who are not. As for other controlled variables, for male the odds ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is 1.54 times of female. For villagers aging above 40, the odds ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is either around or more than 2 times of villagers aging under 30. For villagers with elementary education, the odds ratio of “to vote” over “not to vote” is 1.6 times of those with less than elementary education.

To sum up, basically hypothesis 1.2 is also verified, but only the electoral institutions of “nomination” and “selecting formal candidates” have direct effects on voting. Through the effect of villagers’ involvement in “pre-voting political participation,” “selecting village administration” and “nomination” also indirectly contribute to the likelihood of villagers’ voting. Figure 4 shows the test result of hypothesis 1.2.

[Table 21 here]

[Figure 4 here]

Table 3 reports the result of logit analysis of “whom did you vote for.” Only in villages with more democratic method of “selecting electoral administration”, villagers tend to vote for those candidates that nominated by the villagers than those by the officials. In these villages, the odds ratio of “voting for villagers’ nominated candidates” over “voting for official nominated candidates” is almost 2 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting electoral administration.” However, the other two more critical electoral institutions of village committee election, that is, “nomination” and “selection of formal candidates” are not significant in affecting villagers’ choice in “whom to vote for.” It is usually these two electoral institutions that the officials actually affect the election. Why these two critical electoral institutions would not affect whom the villagers would vote for? One interpretation could be that according to the already verified hypothesis 1.2, once these two critical electoral institutions are not democratic, politically sensitive villagers would have shied away from going to vote from the very beginning, and for the politically non-sensitive voters, it could be that whether these two electoral institutions are democratic won’t make much difference. It can also be interpreted that more democratic “nomination” and “selection of formal candidates” provide both the

official-nominated and villager-nominated candidates equal opportunity to compete. It thus would not necessarily affect whom the villagers would vote for.

As for the controlled variables, only education is found to have effect on “whom villagers would vote for,” that is, to affect villagers to vote more likely for the candidates they nominate. For villagers with elementary and junior high school of education, the odds ratio of “voting for villagers’ nominated candidates” over “voting for official nominated candidates” is around 1.6 to 1.7 times of villagers with less than elementary school of education. Figure 5 reports the test result of hypothesis 1.3.

This finding suggests a different implication from what Kennedy’s (2002) finding suggested. According to Kennedy’s finding, CCP or local officials should worry that more democratic electoral institutions would make the candidates with party membership less likely to be elected. In contrast, this paper finds otherwise. Township governments or the village party branches do not have to worry that democratic electoral institutions in the village committee election would make the candidates they nominate less likely to be elected. Open election provides equal opportunity. Democratic election does not have to be a zero-sum game for villagers and the local cadres, as long as the candidates are qualified.

[Table 22 here]

[Figure 5 here]

Table 23 reports the result of logit analysis of “fairness of the village committee election.” Only the method of “selecting formal candidates” seems to have effect on whether villagers feel the last village committee election was fair. In villages with less democratic method of “selecting formal candidates,” the odds ratio of “villagers feeling the election was fair” over “not fair” is around 1.5 times of that in villages with non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” “Pre-voting participation” again appears to be significant. For those villagers who are involved in “pre-voting political participation,” the odds ratio is 1.5 times of those who are not. The more villagers are involved in pre-voting participation, the more likely they tend to perceive the village committee election to be fair.

Hypothesis 1.4 is at best partially verified. Villagers’ perception of whether the village committee election was fair is affected only by whether the method of “selection of formal candidates” was democratic. This electoral institution, however, is a critical one for local cadres to manipulate, as stated above. The result presented here again proves that Chinese villagers are politically subtle in being very sensitive to the critical electoral institution. Besides, “involvement in pre-voting political participation” seems to be a positive factor to help villagers feel the election to be fair.

This variable also implies some indirect effects of more democratic methods of “nomination” and “selecting electoral administration.” All three electoral institutions for village committee election thus directly or indirectly contribute to villagers’ perception of “fairness of village committee election.” Hypothesis 1.4 is indirectly verified. Figure 6 reports the test result of hypothesis 1.4.

[Table 23 here]

[Figure 6 here]

To sum up, the analysis in this section suggests a pretty rosy picture that democratic electoral institutions of the village committee election can generate positive effects on the practice of village election. More democratic method of “selecting electoral administration” and “nomination” help villagers to be involved in pre-voting political participation. More democratic method of “nomination” and “selecting formal candidate” contribute to higher likelihood of villagers’ voting. All three electoral institutions, directly or indirectly through villagers’ involvement in “pre-voting political participation,” help villagers to have more fair perception of the election. Among all three electoral institutions, only more democratic method of “selecting electoral administration” has effect on “whom to vote for.” The test result of Part I of this paper testifies to the theoretical argument that democratic institutions encourage citizens’ political participation. It also verifies findings by previous researches that Chinese villagers are politically subtle in being sensitive to whether electoral institutions are democratic and this sensitivity affects their behavior of voting and other electoral participation.

VI. The conflict between the village committee and the village party branch

The rosy picture presented in Part I of this paper should not blind us to other daunting challenges that China’s grassroots democracy is facing. Democratic election for village committee itself is proved to be positive on villagers’ political participation, but its implication for rural China’s further democratization is actually quite limited. Students of Chinese politics should always be cautious not to draw macro-level implications too easily from micro-level evidence. The reality of grassroots democracy in rural China should not simply be presented with the practice of village committee election. Without recognizing the importance of the village party branch and competing importance with village committee, our picture of China’s village

politics would at best be flawed. It has been observed by Chinese scholars that popular election of the village committee has jeopardized the legitimacy of the village party branch, and has forced the latter to also adopt more democratic method of election, as addressed in literature review.

Table 24 reports the result of multinomial logistic regression to test such an observation. In table 24, among the three categories of the “selection of electoral administration,” two appear to have significant effect on “electoral institutions of village party branch election.” For villages adopting more democratic method of “selecting the electoral administration” for village committee election, the odds ratio of having a “less democratic electoral institutions of village party branch election” over “non-democratic ones” is almost 2 (1.91) times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting electoral administration.” Similarly, for villages adopting more democratic method of “selecting the electoral administration” for village committee election, the odds ratio of having a “most democratic electoral institutions of village party branch election” over “non-democratic ones” is 1.632 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting electoral administration.” In short, in two categories among three of the dependent variable, the more democratic the method of “selection of the electoral administration,” the more democratic the electoral institutions of the village party branch election would be.

Similarly situation happens to “nomination.” For villages adopting less democratic method of “nominating” the preliminary candidates for village committee election, the odds ratio of having a “more democratic electoral institutions of village party branch election” over “non-democratic ones” is about 2 (1.951) times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “nomination.” For villages adopting more democratic method of “nomination,” the odds ratio of adopting medium or most democratic method of “electoral institution for village party branch election” over “non-democratic ones” is both around 2 times (1.964 and 2.168) of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “nomination.” In general, in three categories of the six of the dependent variable, the more democratic the “nomination” of preliminary candidates in village committee election, the more democratic the “electoral institutions of village party election” would be.

The most interesting result happens as the “selection of formal candidates” for village committee election is the independent variable. For villages adopting a non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates” for village committee election, there are contradictory results in different categories of the “electoral institutions of village party branch election.” For example, for villages adopting more democratic method of “selecting formal candidates,” the odds ratio of adopting less and more democratic “electoral institution for village party branch election” over

“non-democratic ones” is around 1/6 and 1/2 respectively of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” Similarly, for villages adopting less democratic method of “selecting formal candidates” for village committee election, the odds ratio of less democratic “electoral institution for village party branch” over “non-democratic ones” is around 1/4 of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” The only exception happens in villages adopting less democratic method of “selecting the formal candidates” for village committee election, the odds ratio of having “most democratic electoral institution for village party branch election” over “non-democratic ones” in these villages is 2.656 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.”

In short, when the village committee election adopts a very democratic method of “selecting the formal candidates,” that is, when the party branch’s and township officials’ veto power over the candidates for village committee election is very much limited by democratic electoral institution, it is less likely, not more likely, for these local political elites to adopt a more democratic electoral institution for village party branch election. It can be interpreted that when their veto power over the candidates for village committee election is taken away, the party branch and township cadres may feel threatened, and thus become less willing to adopt more democratic electoral institution for village party branch election, lest the power of party branch be further undermined. This finding provides evidence again to what the Chinese scholars have observed that the procedure of “selecting the formal candidates” actually is politically critical in affecting the quality of the democratic practice of grassroots democracy in rural China.

According to the results reported above, the democratic degree of electoral institutions of “selecting electoral administration” and “nomination” in the village committee election seem to have positive effects on the democratic degree of the “electoral institutions of village party branch election.” However, the method of “selecting the formal candidates” seems to have either no effect or negative effect. In short, hypothesis 2.1 thus is partially verified, but partially proved the opposite. Figure 7 reports the test result of hypothesis 2.1.

[Table 24 here]

[Figure 7 here]

Hypotheses 2.2 and 2.3 were designed to address the relationship between the village committee and the village party branch. They hypothesized that democratic electoral institution helps strengthen the authority of the political entity in the village.

Table 25 reports the result of the tests of these two hypotheses with logit analyses. According to Table 25, for villages adopting more democratic method of nomination, the odds ratio of “village committee being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is 2.073 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “nomination.” For villagers who are involved in “pre-voting political participation,” the odds ratio of their “village committee being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is 1.577 times of that for those villagers who are not. For villages adopting all three levels of more democratic electoral institutions for “village party branch election,” the odds ratio of “village committee being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is between 1.5 and 3.7 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic electoral institutions. In short, when the “nomination” for preliminary candidates in village committee election is more democratic, when the involvement of villagers’ “pre-voting political participation” is greater, and when the “electoral institutions of village party branch elections” is more democratic, it is the more likely that “the village committee would be dominant” in deciding the village public affairs after the election. What is worth noticing here is the fact that democratic electoral institutions of “village party branch election” also contribute to the dominance of “village committee.” It is even more interesting if we notice that they have negative effects on the dominance of the “village party branch,” as will be presented in the following.

According to the Model 2 in table 25, it will be amazing for us to find that all the significant effects on the dependent variable, the “village party branch being dominant” in deciding the village affairs after the village committee election, are negative. For villages adopting more democratic method of “nomination” in the village committee election, the odds ratio of “village party branch being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is 0.644 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “nomination.” That is, the more democratic the “nomination” in village committee election, the less likely the village party branch will dominate. Similarly, for villages adopting more democratic method of “selecting formal candidates” in the village committee election, the odds ratio of “village party branch being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is 0.625 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” In other words, the more democratic the method of “selecting formal candidates” in village committee election, the less likely the village party branch will dominate. For villagers who are involved in “pre-voting political participation,” the odds ratio of their “village party branch is dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is 0.573 times of that for those who are not. The more the villagers are involved in the “pre-voting political participation,” the less likely their

village party branch would dominate. Most striking result for us is the following result: for villages adopting less and more democratic electoral institutions for the “village party branch election,” the odds ratio of “village party branch being dominant in deciding village public affairs” over “not dominant” is around 0.3 and 0.4 times respectively of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of the “electoral institutions of village party branch election.” That is to say, the more democratic the village party branch election, the less likely it tends to dominate.

The news is really good for the village committee but bad for village party branch. Democratic election for village committee strengthens the dominance of the village committee and undermines the dominance of the village party branch, whereas democratic election for village party branch election not only undermines the dominance of the village party branch itself but also strengthens the dominance of the village committee. If we add the fact that more democratic method of “selecting electoral administration” and “nomination” for village committee election contributes to more democratic electoral institutions for “village party branch election,” and the fact that the village committee election is bound to be more democratic according to the law, it seems that the authority of the village party has no choice but to diminish. Under the impact of more democratic village committee election, village committee and the village party branch are bound to conflict. Figure 8 reports the test result of hypothesis 2.2 and 2.3.

[Table 25 here]

[Figure 8 here]

VII. Democratic election and village governance

How would this tension between the village committee and village party branch affect the village governance? This paper chooses three dependent variables to test: villagers’ perception of the effects of the village committee election on whether there has been greater solidarity or conflict within the village, on economic development, and on the trust of local government.

Table 26 reports the logit estimates of the effect on “more solidarity or conflict.” The model recodes the dependent variable into two dummy variables: “solidarity vs. others” and “conflict vs. others.” For “solidarity,” only “less democratic method of selecting formal candidates for village committee election” and “most democratic electoral institution for village party branch election” have significant effects. For villages adopting “less democratic method of selecting formal candidates for village

committee election,” the odds ratio of “having more solidarity in the villages” over “not having” is 1.662 than that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” For villages adopting “most democratic electoral institutions for village party branch election,” the odds ratio of “having more solidarity in the villages” over “not having” is 1.718 than that in villages adopting non-democratic “electoral institutions for village party branch election.” In short, less democratic methods of “selecting formal candidates” and most democratic “electoral institutions of party branch election” contribute to greater solidarity in the village. However, neither the “village committee being dominant” nor the “village party branch being dominant” shows significant effect on “solidarity.”

As for “conflict,” table 26 reports some good news: both the “village committee being dominant” and the “village party branch being dominant” have negative effects on “conflict,” that is to say, help alleviate the conflict. For villages in which the village committee is more dominant, the odds ratio of “having more conflict” over “not having” is around half (0.478) of that in villages in which the village committee is not more dominant. Similarly, in villages in which the village party branch is more dominant, the odds ratio of “having more conflict” over “not having” is also around half (0.471) of that in villages in which the village party branch is not more dominant. However, we should not forget the fact that more democratic election tends to strengthen the dominance of the village committee. It is also worth noticing that among the 1012 cases in the survey, 40.81% of the villagers said their village tend to have more solidarity after the election, around 43% said the election had no influence, and only 16.21% said they had more conflict within the villages. Figure 9 reports the test result of hypothesis 2.4.

[Table 26 here]

[Figure 9 here]

Table 27 reports the multinomial logistic regression of “electoral institutions” on “economic development.” Villagers are asked whether they think the village committee election is “more helpful to,” “more harmful to,” or “has no influence on” economic development in the village. For villages adopting less and more democratic electoral institutions for “village party branch election,” the odds ratio of “village committee election being harmful to economic development” over “not” is around 2.2 or 2.3 times of that in villages adopting “non-democratic electoral institutions.” In other words, the more democratic the “village party branch election,” the more likely that “village committee election” is harmful to the “economic development.” For villages in which the village committee is more dominant, the odds ratio of “the

village committee election being helpful to economic development” over “not” is 1.687 times of that in villages in which the village committee is not dominant. That is to say, when village committee is dominant, the village committee election is more likely to be helpful for the economic development in the village. Basically, this result verifies what was assumed in hypothesis 2.5. Figure 10 reports the test result of hypothesis 2.5.

[Table 27 here]

[Figure 10 here]

Lastly, table 28 reports the result of logit estimates of the effects on “trust in local (township) government.” Accordingly, for villages adopting both less and more democratic method of “nomination” in village committee election, the odds ratios of having “more trust in the local government” over “less trust” are respectively 2 and 1.5 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “nomination.” Similarly, for villages adopting less democratic method of “selecting formal candidates,” the odds ratio of having “more trust in the local government” over “less trust” is 1.57 times of that in villages adopting non-democratic method of “selecting formal candidates.” In short, the more democratic the methods of “nomination” and “selection of formal candidates” in village committee election, the stronger the villagers’ trust in the local government would be. However, more democratic electoral institutions for “electoral institutions of village party branch election” are not found to have the same effect. And interestingly, similar to the situation in “alleviating conflicts within the village,” it is also shown that both “the village committee being dominant” and “the village party branch being dominant” help to strengthen villagers’ trust in local government. For villages in which the village committee is more dominant, the odds ratio of having “more trust in the local government” over “less trust” is 1.641 times of that in villages in which the village committee is not. And for villages in which the village party branch is more dominant, the odds ratio of having “more trust in the local government” over “less trust” is 1.72 times of that in villages in which the village party branch is not. The only thing that deviates from what the hypothesis assumed is the fact that the dominance of both the village committee and the village party branch help strengthen villagers’ trust in local government. Figure 11 reports the test result of hypothesis 2.6.

[Table 28 here]

[Figure 11 here]

VIII. Conclusion

This paper contains two parts. The first part verifies the theoretical hypothesis that democratic elections encourage citizens' political participation. This paper finds that electoral institutions for village committee election tend to affect villagers' pre-voting political participation and voting. Among the three electoral institutions of the village committee election, only the "selection of electoral administration" would affect whether the villagers would vote for villager-nominated or official-nominated candidates. Democratic electoral institutions of the village committee election, directly or indirectly through "pre-voting participation," help villagers to perceive the village committee election to be more fair. Figure 12 illustrates the result of framework I.

The second part of this paper discusses the impact of the village committee election. First, this paper finds that the more democratic the "selection of electoral administration" and "nomination" in the village committee election, the more democratic the electoral institutions of the village party branch election tend to be too. It is likely that once villagers have elected a village committee through democracy, it would be difficult for the village party branch to neglect such a pressure from villagers and to justify its power merely by the authorization from above. However, this paper points out that the village party branch is facing an inescapable dilemma. The evidence shows that when the procedure of the "selection of formal candidates" in the village committee election has also become more democratic, it implies that the veto power of the local cadres over the candidates is limited. In such villages, the electoral institutions of the village party branch election tend to be less democratic. Clearly they are resisting. But if the village party branch adopts more democratic electoral institution for its own election, its dominance would be further undermined, according to what we find in this paper. In contrast, democratic elections for both the village committee and village party branch would strengthen village committee's dominance in deciding village public affairs after the election. It seems that as long as democratic election in the village is an irreversible trend, the demise of the village party branch seems to be also inevitable. Figure 13 and 14 illustrates the result of framework II with village committee and village party branch as the intervening variable respectively.

The finding in Part II presents a dilemma for the CCP regime to interpret. This paper finds that in villages of which the village committee is dominant, after the village committee election the villagers tend to feel that there would be less conflict

within the village, the election is helpful to economic development, and villagers tend to have higher trust in the local government. Democratic procedure of “nomination” and “selection of formal candidates” in the village committee election also help lift villagers’ trust in the local government, and strengthen the solidarity in the village.

In short, if the CCP regime chooses to support democratic village committee election, and also the strengthened village committee authority, then what it gets would be a lot of positive results for local governance in rural China. In contrast, if the CCP regime chooses to support the village party branch as the dominant force in the village, it will have to face the risk that the party branch may resist full-fledged democratic election both for the village committee and the village party branch itself. Although a dominant village party branch can also help lift the villagers’ trust in local government and suppress conflict within the village, it nevertheless would have irreconcilable conflict of interests with a democratic village committee, according to this paper. The conflict between them would then deepen instead of lessen, and could eventually undermine the governing capability and stability in rural China.

Actually, in solving this conflict, many localities have started to follow a policy recommendation promulgated together by the Central Committee of the Party and the National Council in 2002. This document encourages those candidates for village party branch secretary to participate in the contestation of village committee election. If they are elected as the village head, then it proves that they are qualified as a party branch cadre (approved by the mass). But if they are not elected as the village head, then they should no longer be qualified as candidates for the village party branch secretary. Those party members who are also the members of village committee are encouraged to become members of village party branch through the village party branch election.²⁴ Although this “circulation” (通知) is not absolutely binding, some provinces and localities have started to follow this instruction. For example, the CCP Committee of Anhui Province has recently promulgated an “circulated opinion” (意見) suggesting the villages to do so in the upcoming village committee elections.²⁵ If this institution is really put into practice nationwide, then the problem of contesting authority and the problem of the conflict between the village committee and village party branch can be solved. But the party will have to follow the mass opinion and can no longer force candidates upon the villagers.

The relationship between village committee and village party branch is actually a

²⁴ “Circulation on Further Realizing the Task of Village Committee Election” promulgated by the Central Committee and the General Office of National Council (中共中央辦公廳國務院辦公廳發出通知進一步做好村民委員會換屆選舉工作), Aug. 18, 2002. *People’s Daily*, Aug. 19, 2002, p.1.

²⁵ “Anhui advocates the same team of cadres taking both the positions of village committee and village party branch for the upcoming village committee election,” *People’s Daily Online*, Nov. 9, 2004, <<http://www.chinaelections.org/readnews.asp?newsid={EDF7ED98-DB4D-4E97-9218-B5664E5178BD}%20target=>>>.

reflection of the tension between the government and the party committee at various levels of administration. As the whole political system suffers from diminishing legitimacy, if the regime intends to strengthen the legitimacy of the government first by adopting democratic election, the legitimacy of the party committee would then be undermined and threatened, as already has happened in the village. However, the experiences of village committee election has also proved that democratic election raises citizens' political participation and also brings about positive feedback to rural governance. The only cost is that party organization will have no choice but to follow people's will expressed in the election. Probably due to this reason, the CCP regime has obviously not adopted the same model in the village in solving the tension between government and the party committee within the state. Instead, the CCP regime currently chooses to go along with "intra-party democracy" first. That is, the CCP will introduce limited contestation and participation within the circle of political elites in deciding the governmental leading positions. The direct election for government leaders at township or even higher level has been postponed. However, once the legitimacy of the party is strengthened by introducing more democratic contestation in selecting the cadres, it would be inevitable for the citizens to question why the same democratic mechanism can not be applied to choosing the government leader at the same level. To summon democratic election for beefing up legitimacy is a one way ticket. Once it is started, the only direction would be to go democratic even further.

Figure 1. Electoral institutions of village committee election and voting related participation

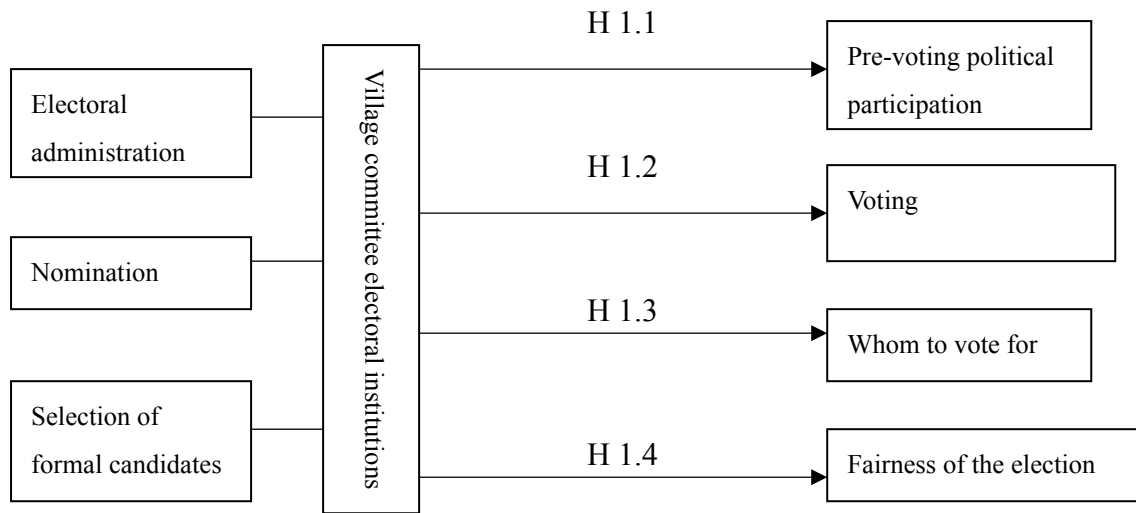


Figure 2. Elections, “two-committee” conflict, and grass-roots democracy

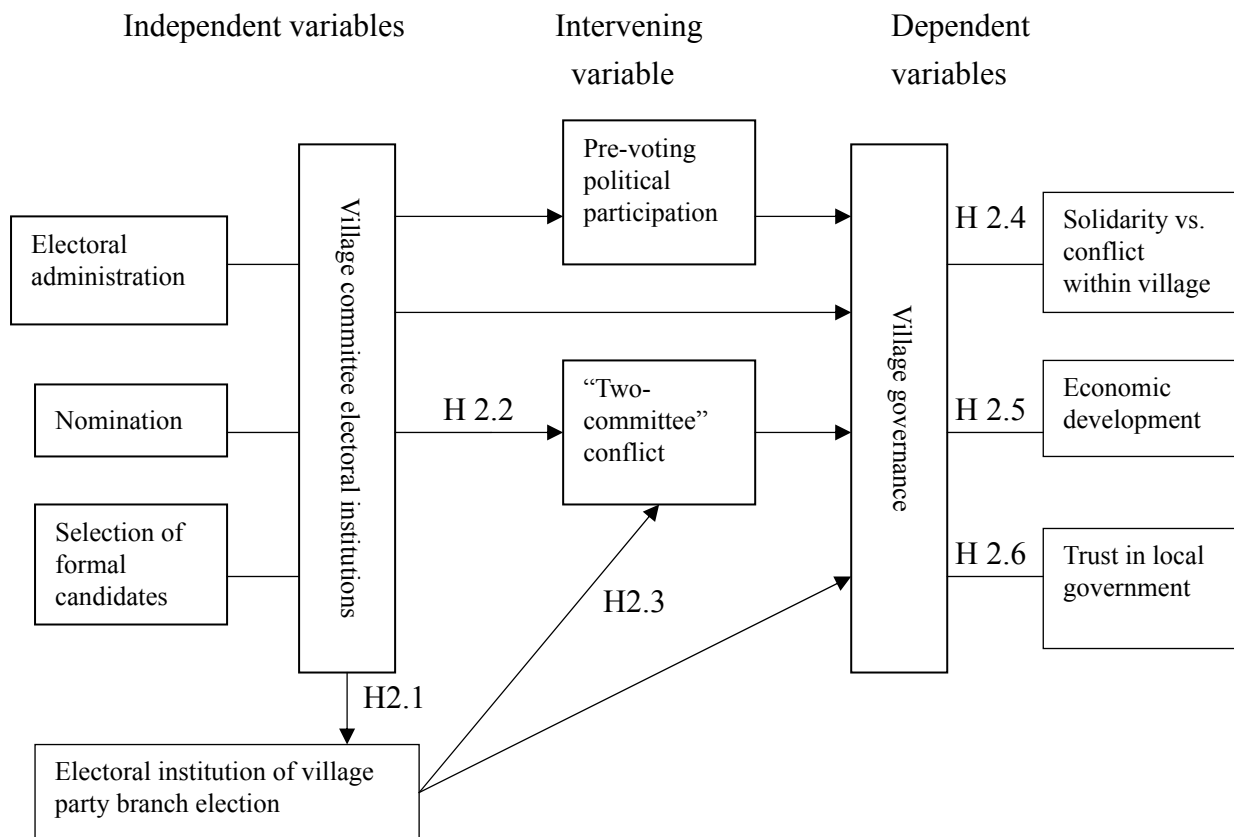


Figure 3. Electoral institutions of village committee election and voting related participation

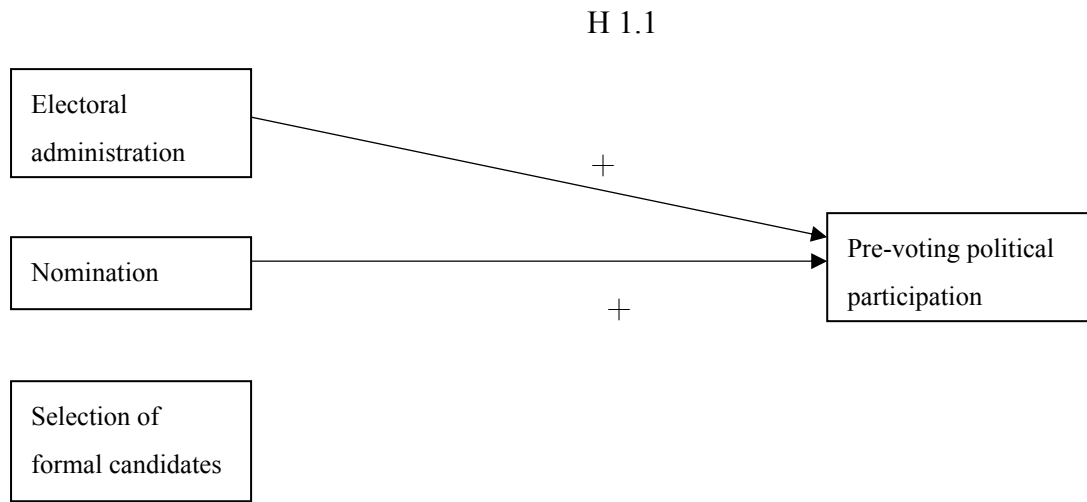


Figure 4. Electoral institutions of village committee election and voting

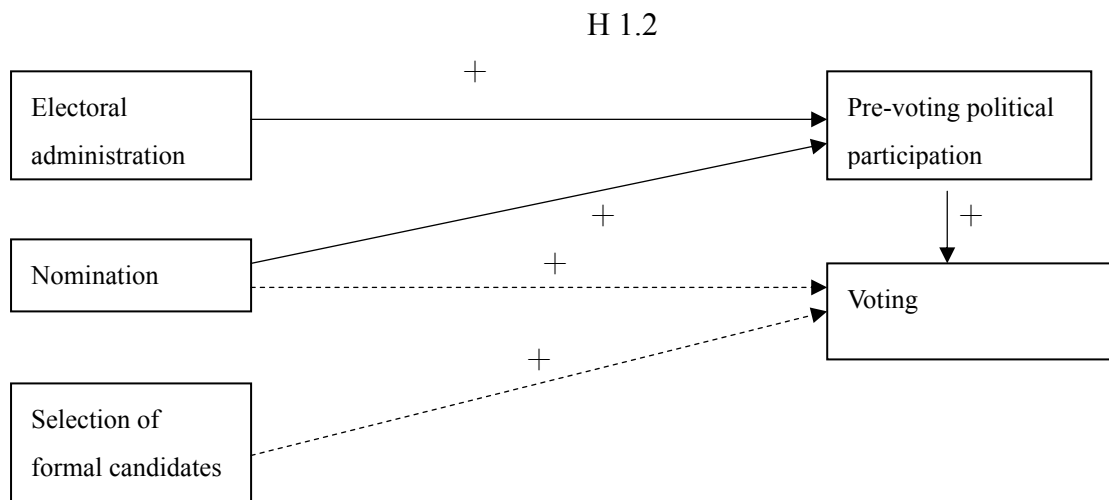


Figure 5. Electoral institutions of village committee election and “whom to vote for”

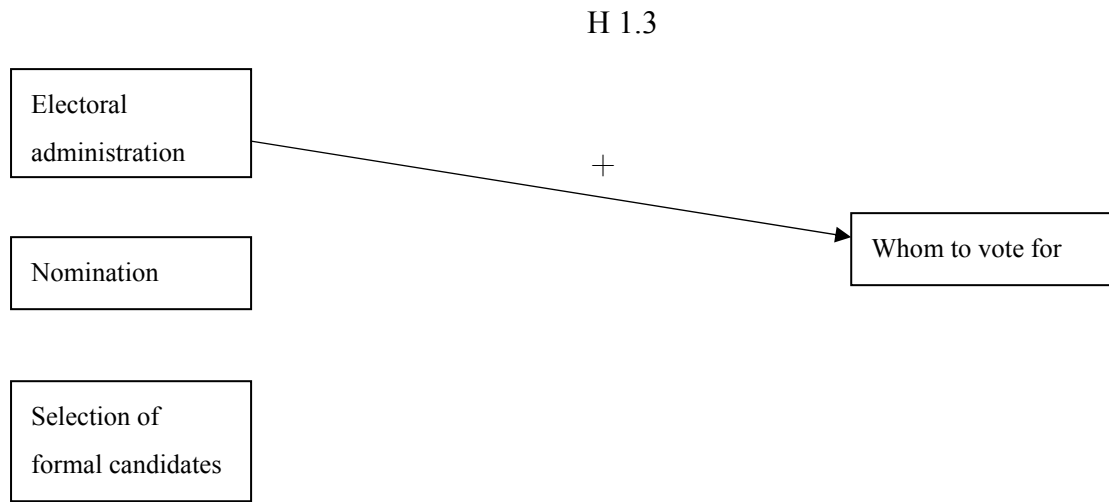


Figure 6. Electoral institutions of village committee election and “fairness of the election”

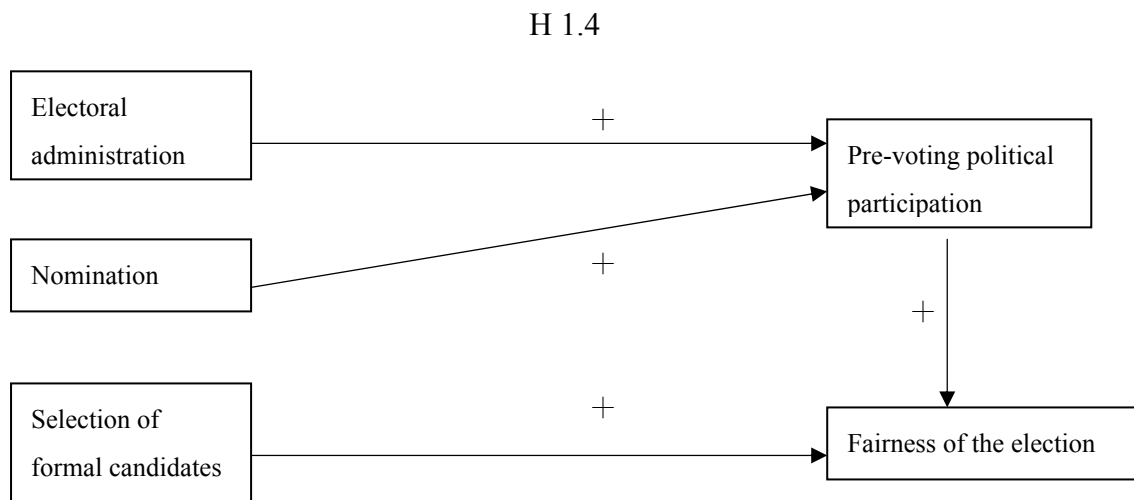


Figure 7. Electoral institutions of village committee and electoral institutions of village party branch

H 2.1

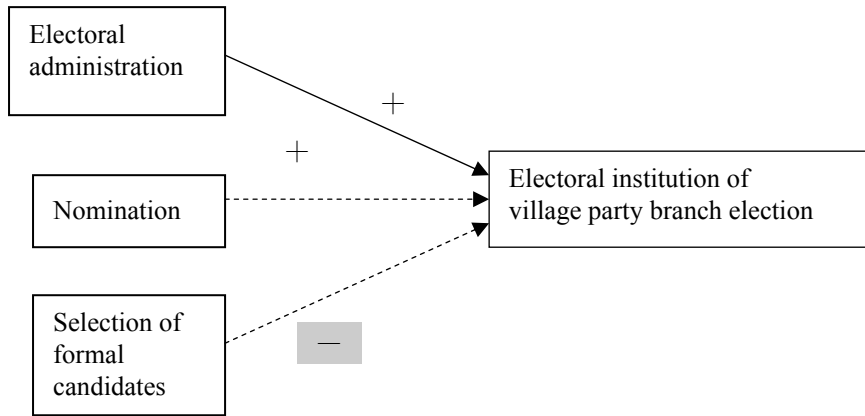


Figure 8. Electoral institutions, pre-voting political participation, and the “two-committee relationship”

H 2.2 and H 2.3

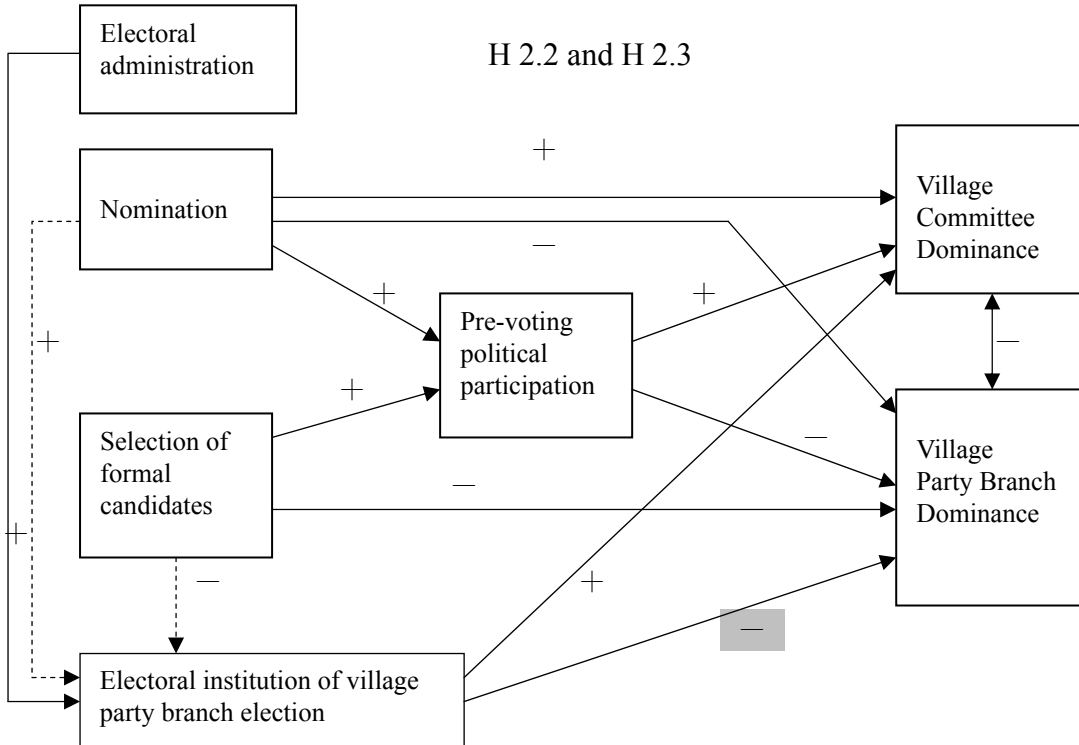


Figure 9. Electoral institutions, the “two-committee relationship,” and “solidarity/conflict within the village after the election”

H 2.4

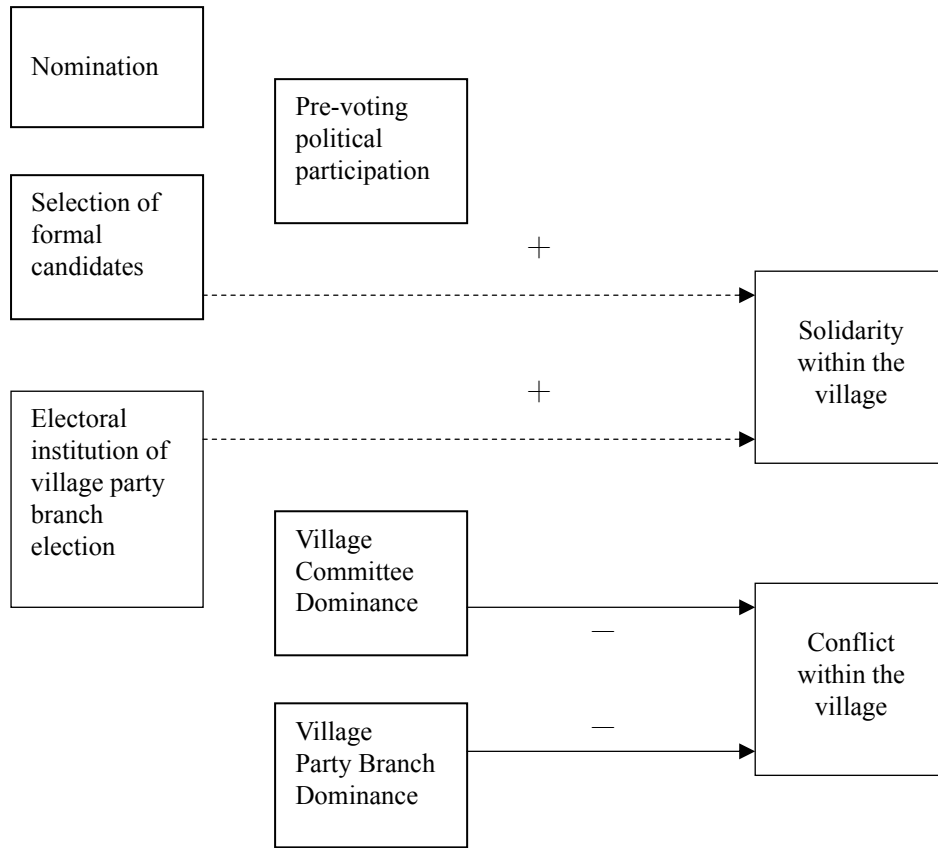


Figure 10. Electoral institutions, the “two-committee relationship,” and “economic development of the village after the election”

H 2.5

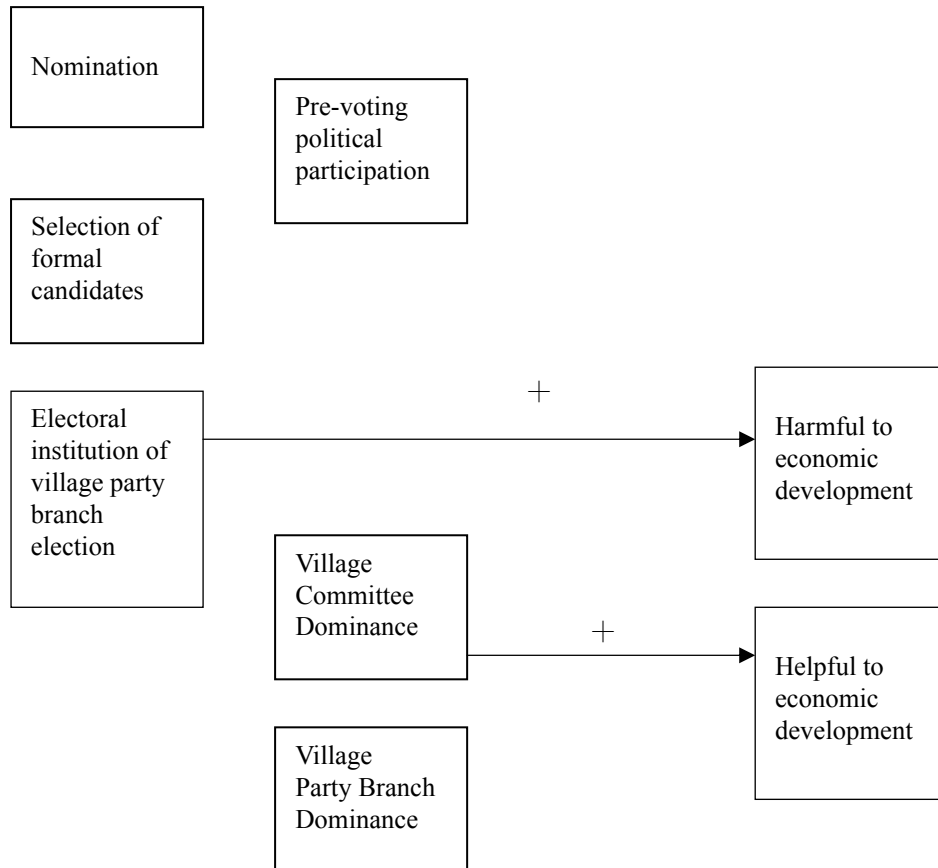


Figure 11. Electoral institutions, the “two-committee relationship,” and “villagers’ trust in local government”

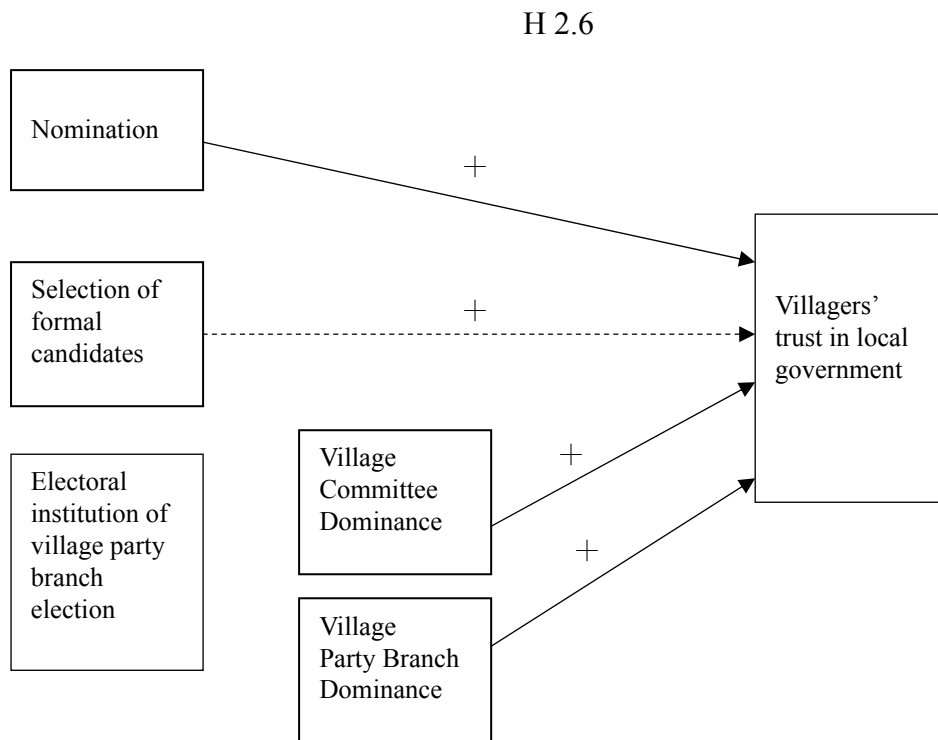


Figure 12 Framework I

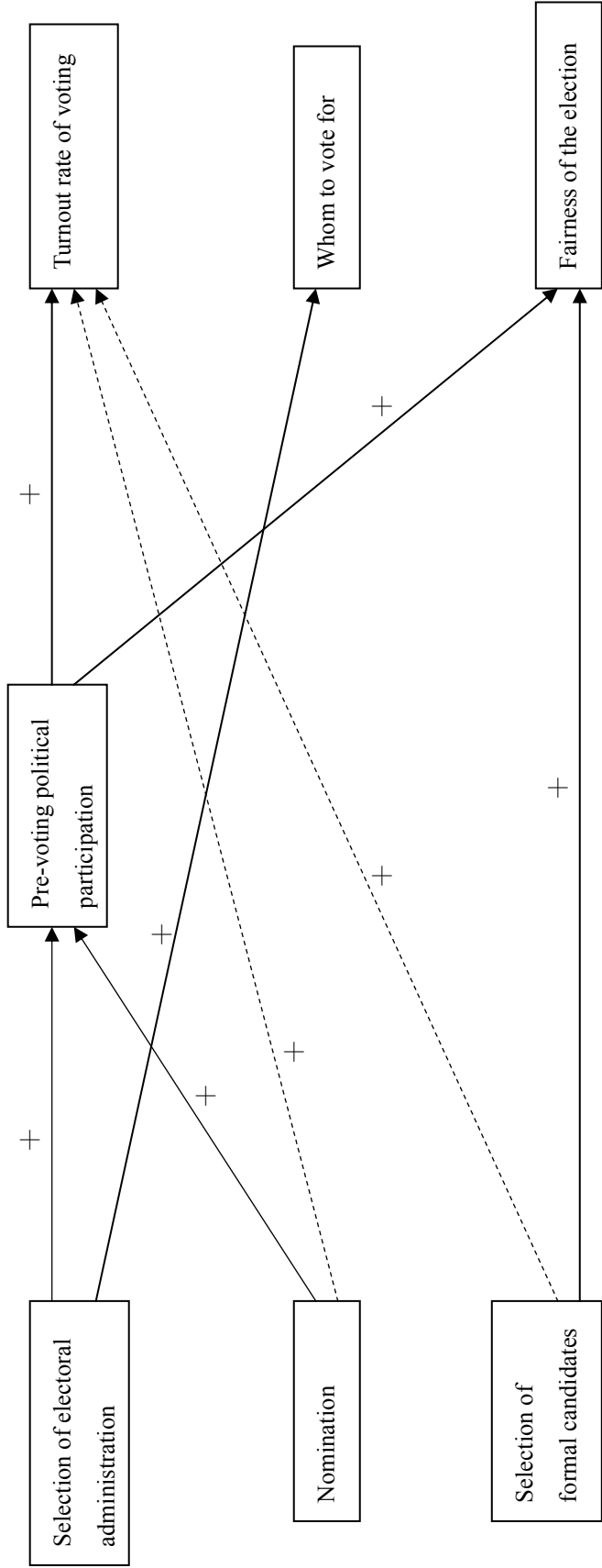


Figure 13 Framework II-1

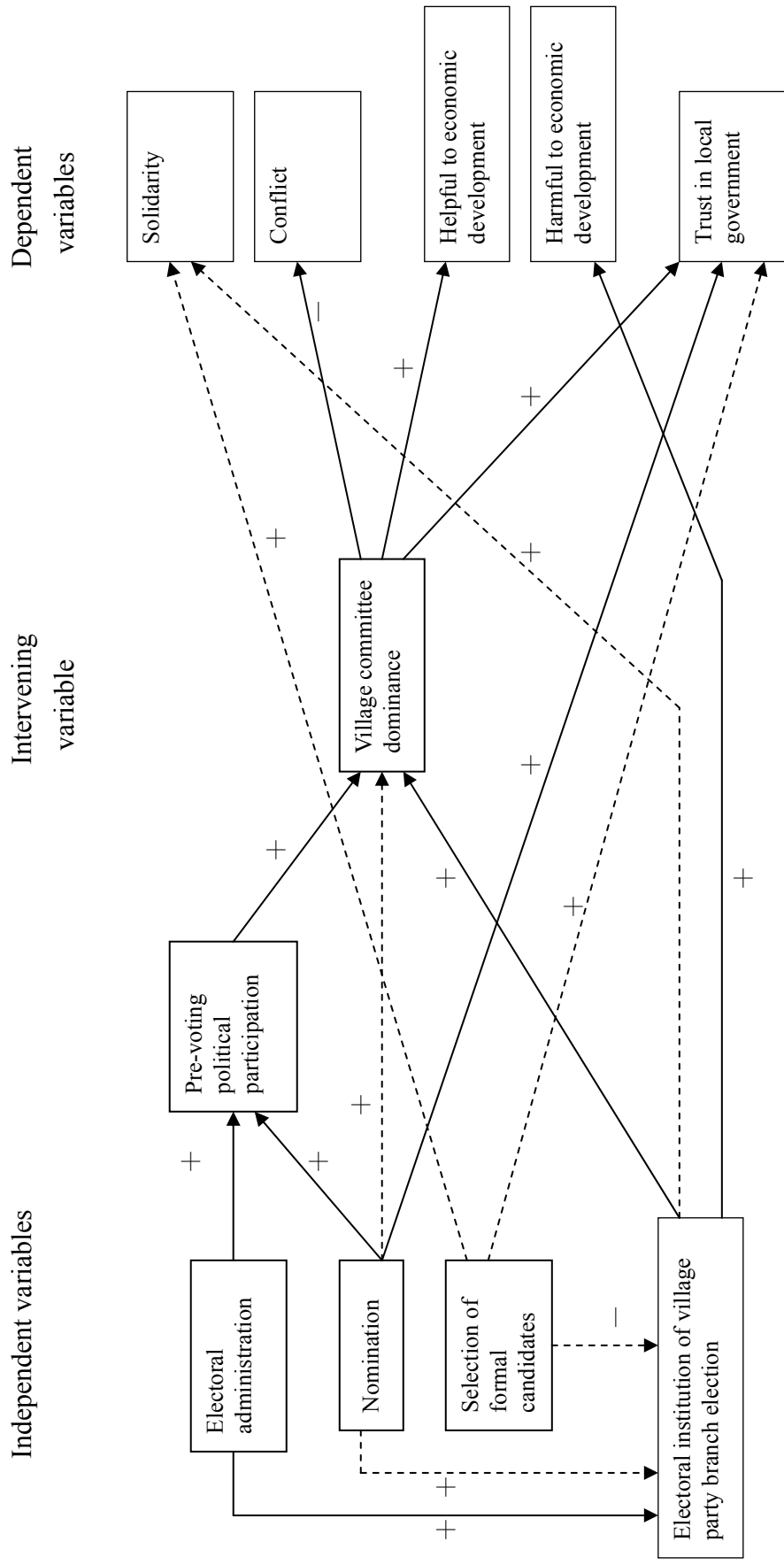


Figure 14 Framework II-2

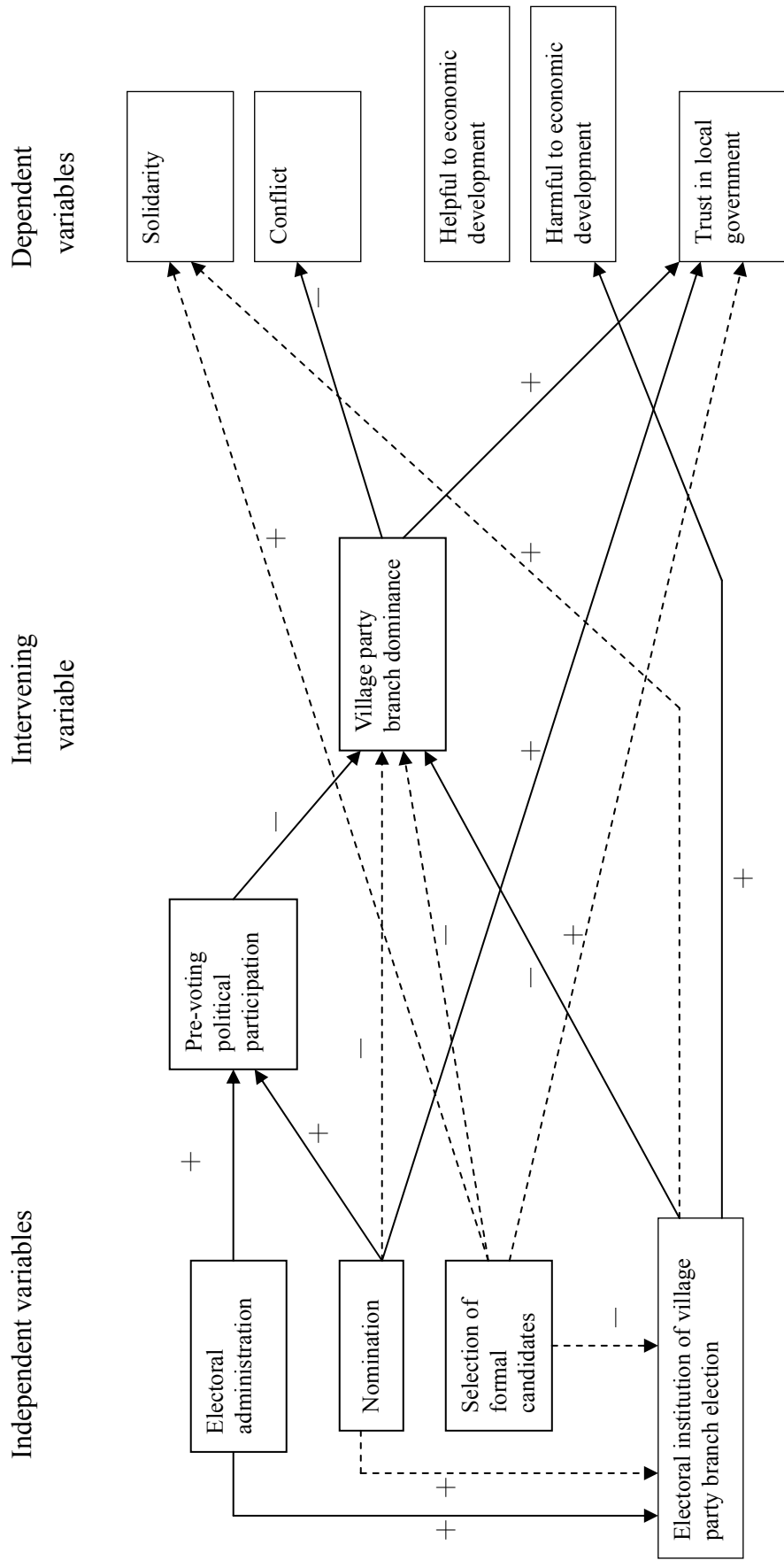


Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of “electoral administration”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (non-democratic)	275	23.25
1 (more democratic)	908	76.75
Total	1183	100.00

Table 2 Frequency and percentage of “Nomination”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (non-democratic)	197	16.69
1 (less democratic)	505	42.80
2 (more democratic)	478	40.51
Total	1180	100.00

Table 3 Frequency and percentage of “selection of formal candidates”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (non-democratic)	233	20.14
1 (less democratic)	493	42.61
2 (most democratic)	431	37.25
Total	1157	100.00

Table 4 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Voting”

Value	Frequency	Percent (%)
0 (not-voting)	167	15.68
1 (voting)	898	84.32
Total	1,065	100.00

Table 5. Frequency and percentage distribution of the “pre-voting political participation”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0 (lower pre-voting political participation)	529	51.56
1 (higher pre-voting political participation)	497	48.44
Total	1,026	100.00

Table 6. Frequency and percentage of the “whom did you vote for”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0 (vote for official-nominated candidates)	562	66.67
1 (vote for villager-nominated candidates)	281	33.33
Total	843	100.00

Table 7 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Gender”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(male)	625	52
1(female)	577	48
Total	1,202	

Table 8 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Age”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(under 29)	153	12.73
1(30-39)	355	29.53
2(40-49)	285	23.71
3(50-59)	220	18.30
4(over 60)	189	15.72
Total	1,202	

Table 9 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Education”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(none or elementary school incomplete)	516	42.96
1(elementary school)	289	24.06
2(high school)	301	25.06
3(over high school)	95	7.91
Total	1,201	

Table 10 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Income”²⁶

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(less than 4,000RMB)	411	34.19
1(4,001RMB to under 8,000 RMB)	331	27.54
2(8,001RMB to under 12,000 RMB)	149	12.40
3(12,001RMB to under 16,000 RMB)	71	5.91
4(16000 RMB or more)	240	19.97
Total	1,202	

Table 11 Frequency and percentage distribution of “Party Membership”²⁷

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(Party member)	152	12.66
1(None)	1,049	87.34
Total	1,201	

Table 12 Frequency and percentage distribution of “the position of surname and natural village”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
0(Small)	172	16.62
1(Medium)	428	41.35
2(Large)	435	42.03
Total	1,035	

²⁶ In questions v95a (How many farm income did your family get last year?), question v95b (How many part-time jobs income did your family get last year?), question v95c (How much side business income did your family have last year?) and question v95d (How much income did your family get from village or township industries have last year?), We recode 99997(inapplicable), 99998(don't know) and 99999(refused to answer) as missing value and merged them as the new variable *income*. The variable Income is categorical and divided by 4000.

²⁷ Question111: What is your political affiliation? And recode 9(refused to answer) as missing value.

Table 13. Frequency and percentage of “party branch election”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (non-democratic)	255	21.89
1 (less democratic)	133	11.42
2 (more democratic)	496	42.58
3 (most democratic)	281	24.12
Total	1165	100.00

Table 14. Frequency and percentage distribution of “village party branch being dominant”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	598	58.64
1 (village party branch dominance)	422	41.37
Total	1020	100.00

Table 15. Frequency and percentage distribution of “village committee being dominant”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	541	53.04
1 (village committee dominance)	479	46.97
Total	1020	100.00

Table 16. Frequency and percentage distribution of “Solidarity”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	599	59.19
1 (more solidarity)	413	40.81
Total	1012	100.00

Table 17. Frequency and percentage distribution of “Conflict”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	848	83.79
1 (more conflict)	164	16.21
Total	1012	100.00

Table 18. Frequency and percentage distribution of “More helpful”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	320	30.74
1 (more helpful)	721	69.26
Total	1041	100.00

Table 19. Frequency and percentage distribution of “More harmful”

Coding	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 (other)	929	89.24
1 (more harmful)	112	10.76
Total	1041	100.00

Table 20 Logit Estimates of Pre-voting political participation

Independent Variables	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Selection of electoral administration (more democracy)	0.281# (0.167)	1.324
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	0.536* (0.208)	1.709
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.781** (0.211)	2.184
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	-0.270 (0.190)	0.764
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	-0.347# (0.192)	0.707
Gender (Male vs. female)	-0.269* (0.136)	0.764
Age1 (30-39)	0.386 (0.237)	1.471
Age2 (40-49)	0.658** (0.243)	1.930
Age3 (50-59)	0.729** (0.264)	2.074
Age4 (over60)	0.405 (0.277)	1.499
Education1 (elementary school)	0.232 (0.170)	1.261
Education2 (junior high school)	0.500** (0.185)	1.649
Education3 (over high school)	0.238 (0.277)	1.268
Income1 (4001~8000RMB)	-0.163 (0.172)	0.849
Income2 (8001~12000RMB)	-0.277 (0.223)	0.758
Income3 (12001~16000RMB)	0.551# (0.283)	1.735
Income4 (over 16001RMB)	0.251 (0.192)	1.286
Party membership (None)	-0.915* (0.221)	0.400
Constant	-0.071 (0.364)	0.932

Note: Entries are coefficients of Logit model with standard error in parentheses

N=998, log likelihood=-656.21814, $X^2=70.41$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 21 Logit Estimates of Voting

Independent Variables	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Selection of electoral administration (more democratic vs. less)	-0.360 (0.258)	0.697
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	-0.088 (0.274)	0.915
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.718** (0.301)	2.051
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	0.648* (0.276)	1.912
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	0.358 (0.276)	1.430
Pre-voting political participation (higher vs. lower participation)	2.092** (0.270)	8.103
Gender (male vs. female)	-0.432** (0.205)	0.649
Age1 (30-39)	0.435 (0.305)	1.545
Age2 (40-49)	1.050** (0.340)	2.859
Age3 (50-59)	0.642# (0.365)	1.901
Age4 (over60)	0.803** (0.386)	2.232
Education1 (elementary school)	0.490# (0.265)	1.632
Education2 (junior high school)	0.078 (0.282)	1.081
Education3 (over high school)	0.027 (0.418)	1.027
Income1 (4001~8000RMB)	-0.298 (0.252)	0.742
Income2 (8001~12000RMB)	-0.422 (0.309)	0.656
Income3 (12001~16000RMB)	0.208 (0.495)	1.231
Income4 (over 16001RMB)	0.203 (0.306)	1.225
Party membership (None)	0.118 (0.345)	1.125
Intercept	0.847 (0.554)	2.333

Note: Entries are coefficients of Logit model with standard error in parentheses

N=990, log likelihood=-339.49031; $X^2=142.21$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 22 Logit Estimates of “Whom did you vote for”

Independent Variables	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Intercept	-1.246** (0.427)	0.288
Selection of electoral administration (more democratic vs. less)	0.672** (0.207)	1.958
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	-0.029 (0.247)	1.030
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.240 (0.242)	1.310
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	0.004 (0.227)	0.996
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	0.065 (0.227)	1.064
Pre-voting political participation (higher vs. lower participation)	0.240 (0.160)	1.272
Gender (male vs. female)	-0.095 (0.159)	0.909
Age1 (30-39)	-0.242 (0.272)	0.785
Age2 (40-49)	-0.396 (0.278)	0.673
Age3 (50-59)	-0.378 (0.306)	0.685
Age4 (over60)	-0.531 (0.329)	0.588
Education1 (elementary school)	0.478* (0.197)	1.613
Education2 (junior high school)	0.538* (0.213)	1.712
Education3 (over high school)	0.246 (0.317)	1.279
Income1 (4001~8000RMB)	-0.097 (0.205)	0.908
Income2 (8001~12000RMB)	0.332 (0.257)	1.394
Income3 (12001~16000RMB)	-0.019 (0.320)	0.981
Income4 (over 16001RMB)	0.007 (0.221)	1.007
Party membership (none)	-0.204 (0.232)	0.816

Note: Entries are coefficients of Logit model with standard error in parentheses

N=800, log likelihood=-494.46126; $X^2=39.37$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 23 Logit Estimates of the Scale of Fairness

Independent Variables	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Intercept	1.125** (0.370)	3.079
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	0.200 (0.243)	1.221
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.300 (0.244)	1.349
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	0.380# (0.228)	1.463
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	-0.045 (0.222)	0.956
Pre-voting political participation (higher vs. lower participation)	0.440** (0.167)	1.552
Gender (male vs. female)	-0.200 (0.167)	0.819
Education1 (elementary school)	0.013 (0.212)	1.013
Education2 (junior high school)	-0.415* (0.205)	0.660
Education3 (over high school)	-0.127 (0.330)	0.881
Party membership (None)	-0.150 (0.263)	0.861

Note: Entries are coefficients of Multinomial logistic regression with standard error in parentheses

Model1: N=828, log likelihood= -427.91806; $X^2=26.34$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 24 Multinomial logistic regression of “electoral institution” on “electoral institutions of village party branch election”

Independent Variables	Village party branch election (1 vs. 0)		Village party branch election (2 vs. 0)		Village party branch election (3 vs. 0)	
	Coefficient β	Exp (β)	Coefficient β	Exp (β)	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Selection of electoral administration (more democratic vs. less)	0.647* (0.298)	1.910	-0.395* (0.200)	0.674	0.490# (0.252)	1.632
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	0.237 (0.291)	1.267	0.669** (0.229)	1.951	0.399 (0.260)	1.490
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	-0.127 (0.306)	0.881	0.675** (0.231)	1.964	0.774** (0.262)	2.168
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	-1.470** (0.203)	0.230	-0.329 (0.245)	0.720	0.977** (0.314)	2.656
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	-1.822** (0.302)	0.162	-0.635** (0.238)	0.530	0.122 (0.314)	1.130
Intercept	0.036 (0.334)	1.037	0.838** (0.266)	2.311	-1.250 (0.366)	0.287

Note: N= 1127 LR chi2(15) = 141.50 Log likelihood = -1382.1189

Table 25 Logit Estimates of the conflict between village committees and party branch

Independent Variables	Model 1 “Village committee being dominant”		Model 2 “Dominance of the village party branch”	
	Coefficient β	Exp (β)	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	0.213 (0.256)	1.237	-0.370 (0.248)	0.691
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.729** (0.253)	2.073	-0.409# (0.246)	0.664
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	-0.141 (0.232)	0.869	-0.029 (0.231)	0.971
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	0.267 (0.227)	1.306	-0.470* (0.230)	0.625
Pre-voting political participation (higher vs. lower participation)	0.456** (0.158)	1.577	-0.557** (0.159)	0.573
Party branch electoral institution (1 vs. 0)	1.318** (0.293)	3.734	-1.212** (0.295)	0.298
Party branch electoral institution (2 vs. 0)	0.945** (0.216)	2.572	-0.903** (0.210)	0.405
Party branch electoral institution (3 vs. 0)	0.435# (0.242)	1.545	-0.383 (0.233)	0.682
Income1	-0.017 (0.197)	0.983	0.150 (0.198)	1.161
Income2	-0.432# (0.251)	0.649	0.302 (0.250)	1.353
Income3	0.089 (0.307)	1.093	0.047 (0.314)	1.048
Income4	-0.614* (0.239)	0.541	0.592* (0.234)	1.808
Party membership	-0.023 (0.238)	0.977	-0.239 (0.237)	0.787
Survil1	-0.145 (0.227)	0.865	0.083 (0.228)	1.086
Survil2	-0.002 (0.227)	0.998	-0.032 (0.229)	0.969
Constant	-1.252* (0.446)	0.286	1.116# (0.440)	3.052

Note: Entries are coefficients of Logit model with standard error in parentheses

Model1: N=746, log likelihood=-481.70641; $X^2=54.48$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Model2: N=746, log likelihood=-480.89359; $X^2=69.30$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 26 Logit Estimates of Solidarity and Conflict

Independent Variables	Model 1 Solidarity		Model 2 Conflict	
	Coefficient β	Exp (β)	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	-0.063 (0.265)	0.939	-0.384 (0.352)	0.681
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.031 (0.265)	1.031	0.254 (0.333)	1.289
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	0.585* (0.0.243)	1.662	-0.397 (0.325)	0.673
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	0.097 (0.0.242)	1.102	0.309 (0.292)	1.362
Pre-voting political participation (higher vs. lower participation)	0.126 (0.164)	1.134	-0.252 (0.214)	0.777
Party branch electoral institution (1 vs. 0)	-0.299 (0.309)	0.742	0.261 (0.377)	1.298
Party branch electoral institution (2 vs. 0)	-0.148 (0.223)	0.863	0.125 (0.284)	1.133
Party branch electoral institution (3 vs. 0)	0.541* (0.244)	1.718	0.005 (0.333)	1.005
Village committee being dominant	0.390 (0.296)	1.477	-0.739* (0.339)	0.478
Dominance of the village party branch	0.393 (0.294)	1.482	-0.875* (0.346)	0.417
Income1	-0.089 (0.206)	0.915	0.280 (0.270)	1.324
Income2	-0.189 (0.264)	0.828	0.240 (0.337)	1.271
Income3	0.160 (0.314)	1.174	-0.159 (0.438)	0.853
Income4	-0.099 (0.245)	0.906	0.348 (0.315)	1.416
Party membership	-0.117 (0.242)	0.889	-0.157 (0.302)	0.855
Survil1	0.034 (0.234)	1.035	-0.287 (0.292)	0.751
Survil2	-0.038 (0.528)	0.383	-0.094 (0.291)	0.910
Intercept	-0.960 (0.528)	0.383	-0.667 (0.656)	0.656

Note: Entries are coefficients of Logit model with standard error in parentheses

Model1: N=687, log likelihood=-446.09233; $X^2=32.70$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Model2: N=687, log likelihood=-301.64103; $X^2=30.06$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 27 Multinomial Logistic Estimates of Economic Development

Independent Variables	Harmful/ no influence		Helpful/ no influence	
	Coefficient β	Exp (β)	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	-0.579 (0.440)	0.560	-0.244 (0.295)	0.783
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.217 (0.423)	1.243	-0.188 (0.300)	0.829
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	-0.149 (0.399)	0.862	0.103 (0.275)	1.108
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	-0.106 (0.372)	0.900	-0.087 (0.272)	0.917
Party branch electoral institution (1 vs. 0)	0.832# (0.476)	2.297	-0.330 (0.337)	0.719
Party branch electoral institution (2 vs. 0)	0.793* (0.400)	2.209	0.287 (0.260)	1.333
Party branch electoral institution (3 vs. 0)	0.107 (0.492)	1.113	0.394 (0.293)	1.482
Village committee being dominant	0.434 (0.499)	1.543	0.523# (0.312)	1.687
Dominance of the village party branch	0.428 (0.502)	1.534	0.439 (0.310)	1.551
Income1	-0.167 (0.355)	0.846	-0.504* (0.228)	0.604
Income2	0.472 (0.437)	1.603	0.005 (0.313)	1.005
Income3	0.106 (0.636)	1.112	0.444 (0.423)	1.560
Income4	1.188** (0.456)	3.281	0.774* (0.353)	2.168
Party membership	-0.253 (0.399)	0.776	-0.066 (0.306)	0.936
Survil1	-0.152 (0.388)	0.859	0.302 (0.280)	1.353
Survil2	-0.196 (0.386)	0.822	0.123 (0.277)	1.131
Intercept	-1.061 (0.880)	0.346	0.743 (0.580)	2.102

Note: Entries are coefficients of Multinomial logistic regression with standard error in parentheses

Model1: N=751, log likelihood= -593.18668; $X^2=63.82$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 28 Logit Estimates of People's Trust in the Local Government

Independent Variables	Coefficient β	Exp (β)
Nomination (1 vs. 0)	0.706** (0.245)	2.026
Nomination (2 vs. 0)	0.451# (0.240)	1.582
Selection of formal candidates (1 vs. 0)	0.451# (0.240)	1.570
Selection of formal candidates (2 vs. 0)	0.062 (0.228)	1.064
Party branch electoral institution (1 vs. 0)	0.134 (0.0.321)	1.143
Party branch electoral institution (2 vs. 0)	-0.247 (0.228)	0.781
Party branch electoral institution (3 vs. 0)	0.434 (0.280)	1.543
Dominance of the village committee	0.495# (0.280)	1.641
Dominance of the village party branch	0.543# (0.285)	1.720
Income1	-0.167 (0.219)	0.846
Income2	-0.225 (0.275)	0.798
Income3	0.069 (0.374)	1.072
Income4	0.081 (0.249)	1.084
Party membership	0.192 (0.239)	1.212
Intercept	0.132 (0.0.458)	1.141

Note: Entries are coefficients of Multinomial logistic regression with standard error in parentheses

Model1: N=890, log likelihood= -434.8048; $X^2=29.36$; # $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Appendix 1

A Note on Data Sources

The East Asia Barometer Survey

The two surveys in China, the survey on Chinese citizens and the one on villages, were collected under the auspices of the Comparative Study of Democratization and Value Changes in East Asia Project (also known as East Asia Barometer Survey). The Project was launched in summer 2000 and funded by the Ministry of Education under the MOE-NSC Program for Promoting Academic Excellence of University. The Project is headquartered at the Department of Political Science of NTU in Taipei and under the co-directorship of Profs. Fu Hu and Yun-han Chu of National Taiwan University. The project involves eight country teams and more than thirty leading scholars from across the region and the United States. Coordination for the surveys was also supported by supplementary funding from National Taiwan University, the Academia Sinica and various national funding agencies across East Asia.

Leaders of the eight local teams and the international consultants collaboratively drew up a 125-item core questionnaire designed for a 40- to 45-minute face-to-face interview. The survey was designed in English and translated into local languages by the national teams. Between July 2001 and February 2003, the collaborating national teams administered one or more waves of this survey in eight Asian countries or territories – namely, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Mongolia, Hong Kong and the PRC – countries that have experienced different trajectories of regime evolution and are currently at different stages of political transition..

The Barometer Survey in China

The China survey was conducted in March-June, 2002. Prof. Tianjian Shi of Duke University was responsible for overseeing the administration of the fieldwork with assistance and logistical support from Taiwan-based co-PIs and the Institute of Sociology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The survey yielded 3183 valid cases out of 3,752 sampled cases for a response rate of 84.1%. The sample represents the adult population over eighteen years of age residing in family households at the time of the survey, excluding those living in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. A stratified multistage area sampling procedure with probabilities proportional to size measures (PPS) was employed to select the sample.

The Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) employed in the sample design are counties (*xian*) in rural areas and cities (*shi*) in urban areas. In province-level municipalities, districts (*qu*) were used as PSU. Before selection, counties were stratified by region and geographical characteristic and cities or districts by region and size. A total of

sixty-seven cities or districts and sixty-two counties were selected as the primary sampling units. The secondary sampling units (SSUs) were townships (*xiang*) and districts (*qu*) or streets (*jiedao*). The third stage of selection was geared to administrative villages in rural areas and neighborhood committees (*juweihui*) or community committees (*shequweiyuanhui*) in urban areas. We selected 249 administrative villages and 247 neighborhood or community committees in the third stage of the sampling process. A total of 496 sampling units were selected. Households were used at the fourth stage of sampling.

In the selection of PSUs, the National Statistical Bureau's 1999 volume of population statistics²⁸ was used as the basic source for constructing the sampling frame. The number of family households for each county or city was taken as the measure of size (MOS) in the PPS selection process. For the successive stages of sampling, population data were obtained from the All China Women's Association (ACWA), using data collected by that organization for a 2000 survey on women's status in China. For areas not covered in the ACWA survey, we asked local ACWA chapters to collect sampling data for us. All village and neighborhood committee levels, household registration (*hukou*) lists were obtained. The lists were used as the sampling frame for the fourth stage of the sampling process.

The response rate for urban areas was lower than that for the rural areas. For urban area, the response rate was 82.5%, and rural areas it was 86.5%.

Weighting variables for the sample were calculated along the three dimensions of gender, age, and educational level using the method of raking.²⁹

The questionnaire used in Mainland China varied from the core questionnaire used in the other societies in two ways. First, for all the questions in the core questionnaire asking respondents to compare the current situation in their society to that of the authoritarian past, we asked respondents to compare the current situation to that in Mao's period. Second, the questionnaire repeated some questions used in an 1993 survey, which was part of the Comparative Study of Political Culture and Political Participation in Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong Project, to facilitate possible cross time comparison.

Retired middle school teachers were employed as interviewers for the survey. Before interviews started, our collaborators in China contacted the association of retired middle school teachers in Dongcheng and Haidian districts in Beijing to ask their help in identifying newly retired teachers. We invited retired teachers aged 55 to

²⁸ Guojia tongjiju renkou tongjisi (National Statistical Bureau, Department of Population Statistics), *Zhongguo renkou tongji nianjian* (Population Statistics of the People's Republic of China) (Beijing: National Statistics Press, 1999).

²⁹ Raking is a procedure to bring row and column totals of a table of survey estimates into close agreement with independent estimates of those totals by adjusting the entries in the table.

62 to apply for jobs as interviewers. About 150 retired teachers applied, and we chose 67 as interviewers. The interviewers went through an intensive training program, which introduced basic concepts of social science research, survey sampling, and interview techniques, and familiarized them with the questionnaire to be used in the survey. After a course of lectures, the interviewers practiced among themselves and then conducted practice interviews with residents of a rural village near Beijing. At the end of the training course, interviewers were subjected to a rigorous test.

The mainland China team adopted two measures of quality control. First, we sent letters to prospective respondents, stating that an interviewer would come to his or her home to conduct an interview within a month. The letter included a self-addressed envelop and an evaluation form asking the respondent to report 1) whether the interviewer arrived as promised, and 2) the respondent's evaluation of the interviewer's attitude toward his or her job. Second, field supervisors randomly checked 5% of respondents to evaluate the quality of the interview. We informed interviewers about the control mechanisms to deter them from cheating. Mandarin was used for most interviews. Interviewers were authorized to hire interpreters to deal with respondents unable to understand Mandarin.

The Village Survey

The village survey was conducted in conjunction with the larger country-wide survey among Chinese citizens. The funding for the village survey was provided by National Taiwan University, Duke University, the Carter Center and other sources. Our research design tried to capitalize on the huge differences in the basic demographic, social, economic conditions as well as institutional contexts of villages across rural China. It has been well documented that there exist wide diversity in the formal institutional arrangements for the electoral process and in the ways they are implemented in practice. Even within the same province, the specific local structural and institutional conditions might differ significantly from one village to another. To take the advantage of this diversity, we implemented a parallel survey on village-level characteristics.

In rural area, for each of the randomly selected villages, we normally interviewed five to eight villagers. At the same time, our fieldworkers approached the village committee for its assistance in filling out a village survey questionnaire. This village survey questionnaire was collectively designed by Tianjian Shi, Yun-han Chu, Chiy-yu Shih, Szu-chien Hsu and Chih-jou Chen, with input from Tom Bernstein, Xinxin Xu and Tangbiao Xiao. The questionnaire documented the macro-level traits as well as aggregate statistics of the village as a whole, such as geographical and

demographic profile, lineage structure and kinship networks, economic activities and conditions, revenues and expenditures, history of village elections, village-level electoral institutions, party recruitment procedures, backgrounds of village cadres, and other aggregate information about the village.

Altogether, we have successfully collected data from 242 villages, about 87% percent of the total sampled villages. At the next level, 1,202 villagers were interviewed across the 242 villages. For these 1,202 cases, we can undertake a cross-level analysis, employing both individual-level and village-level data. This unique sub-sample represents a miniature of China's rural population. This two-prone approach enable us not only to control for variation in village-level contextual variables but also to carry out cross-level analysis and ecological inference in the most rigorous way, something that has never been tried in the field of China studies.

Appendix 2 Coding of Variables

With Question M1 from the village questionnaire: “whether the leading group for village committee elections was generated by villager’s meetings” (0=no, 1=yes), and Question M2 from the village questionnaire: “whether the leading group for village committee elections was generated by villagers’ representative meeting” (0=no, 1=yes), we create a new variable “Electoral Administration” by merging the two variables. If M1= 0 (no) and M2=0 (no) “Electoral Administration” is recoded as “0” (less democratic); others are recoded as “1” (more democratic). Coding of “Electoral Administration” from M1 and M2 is as follows:

M1	M2	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Coding for electoral administration
0	0	275	23.25	23.25	0
	1	392	33.14		
1	0	467	39.48	76.75	1
	1	49	4.14		

With question N11 from the village questionnaire: “whether to adopt direction election as the method for nomination of formal candidates for village committee” (0=no, 1=yes), Question N12 from the village questionnaire: “whether to adopt villagers’ joint nomination as the method for nomination of formal candidates for village committee” (0=no, 1=yes), and Question N15 from the village questionnaire: “whether to adopt villagers’ small group or villager’s representative meeting as the method for nomination of formal candidates for village committee” (0=no, 1=yes), we create a variable “Nomination” by merging the three variables. If the responses to all three questions are all “no,” then “Nomination” is coded as “0” (non-democratic). If N11=0, and either N12=1 or N15=1, then “Nomination” is quoted as “1” (less democratic). If N11=1, then “Nomination” is coded as “2” (most democratic). Coding of “Nomination” is as follows:

N11	N12	N15	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Coding for Nomination	Value label
0	0	0	197	16.70	16.69	0	Non-democratic
		1	183	15.51			
	1	0	188	15.93	42.80	1	Less democratic
		1	134	11.36			
1	0	0	341	28.90	40.51	2	More democratic
		1	72	6.10			
	1	0	35	2.97			
		1	30	2.54			
			1180	100.00	100.00		

With question N22 from the village questionnaire: “whether to adopt preliminary voting as the method for selecting formal candidates for village committee” (0=no, 1=yes), and Question N23 from the village questionnaire: “whether to adopt voting in villager representatives' meeting as the method for determining formal candidates for village committee” (0=no, 1=yes), we create a new variable “formal candidates selection” by merging them. If N22=0 and N23=0, then “formal candidates selection” is recoded as “0” (non-democratic); if N22=0 and N23=1, then “formal candidates selection” is recoded as “1” (less democratic). If n22=1, then “formal candidates selection” is recoded as “3” (most democratic). Coding of “formal candidate selection” is as follows:

N22	N23	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Coding for Nomination	Value label
0	0	233	20.14	20.14	0	Non-democratic
	1	493	42.61	42.61	1	Less democratic
1	0	356	30.77	37.25	2	More democratic
	1	75	6.48			

With questions Z3 from the village questionnaire: “How was the secretary of the village party branch come to the office” (1 = appointed by township leaders; 2 = recommended by party members in the village, and then appointed by the township leaders; 3 = elected by the party members in the village), and question Z4 from the village questionnaire: “whether the villagers (including non-Party members) were involved in the village-level secretary election” (0 = no, 1= yes), we create a new variable “party branch election” by merging them. If Z3 equals to 1 or 2 and Z4 equals to 0, “party branch election” is recoded as “0” (non-democratic); If Z3 equals to 1 or 2 and z4 equals to 1, “party branch election” is recoded as “1” (less democratic); If Z3 equals to 3 and Z4 equals to 0, “party branch election” is recoded

as “2” (more democratic); If Z3 equals to 3 and Z4 equals to 1, “party branch election” is recoded as “3” (most democratic). Coding of “party branch election” from Z3 and Z4 is as follows:

Z3	Z4	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Coding for Nomination	Value label
1 or 2	0	255	21.89	0	Non-democratic
	1	133	11.42	1	Less democratic
3	0	496	42.58	2	More democratic
	1	281	24.12	3	Most democratic
Total		1,165	100.00		

The variable “two-committee relationship” is operationalized by the question from the village questionnaire: “After the village committee election, how were the decisions made in the village” (1 = decided by village party branch; 2 = decided by the village committee head; 3 = decided by the village committee collectively; 4 = decided by vote). It is recoded into two dummy variables: “village party branch being dominant,” and “village committee being dominant.” “Village party branch being dominant” is coded “1” when “two-committee relationship” is 1, and “0” when “two-committee relationship” is 2, 3, or 4. “Village committee being dominant” is coded “1” when “two-committee relationship” is 2, 3, or 4, and “0” when “two-committee relationship” is 1. Coding of these two dummy variables is as follows:

Coding of “village party branch being dominant” from “two-committee relationship”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percentage (%)	Coding fir Dominance of party branch	Value label
1 (Decided by party branch)	422	41.37	41.37	1	party branch being dominant
2 (Decided by the chairman of VC)	38	3.73	58.64	0	party branch not being dominant
3 (Negotiated through VC)	441	43.24			
4 (Decided by voting)	119	11.67			
Total	1,020	100	100		

Coding of “village committee being dominant” from “two-committee relationship”

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percentage (%)	Coding for Village committee being dominant	Value label
2 (Decided by the chairman of VC)	38	3.73	46.97	1	Village committee being dominant
3 (Negotiated through VC)	441	43.24			
1 (Decided by party branch)	422	41.37	53.04	0	Village committee not being dominant
4 (Decided by voting)	119	11.67			
Total	1,020	100		100	

From Question 42 from the individual questionnaire: “Has there been more solidarity or more conflict among villagers after the village committee election”, we created two dummy variables: “Solidarity” and “Conflict.” The original coding of Question 42 is as follows: 1 = more solidarity; 2 = no influence; 3 = more conflict; 7 = not applicable; 8 = don’t remember; 9 = refuse to answer. We recode 7(not applicable), 8(don’t remember) and 9 (refuse to answer) as missing value. Then we create the dummy variable “Solidarity” by recoding Q 42. “Solidarity” is coded “1” (more solidarity) when Q 42 is 1, and “0” (less solidarity) when Q 42 is 2 or 3. “Conflict” is coded “1” (more conflict) when Q 42 is 3, and “0” (less conflict) when Q 42 is 1 or 2. Coding of these two dummy variables is as follows:

Coding of Solidarity from “solidarity vs. conflict”

Coding of the original question	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percent (%)	Coding of Solidarity	Value label
1 (more solidarity)	413	40.81	40.81	1	Solidarity
2 (no influence)	435	42.98	59.19	0	Less solidarity
3 (more conflict)	164	16.21			
Total	1,012	100.00	100.00		

Coding of Conflict from “solidarity vs. conflict”

Coding of the original question	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percent (%)	Coding of Conflict	Value label
3 (more conflict)	164	16.21	16.21	1	More conflict
1 (more solidarity)	413	40.81	83.79	0	Less conflict
2 (no influence)	435	42.98			
Total	1,012	100.00	100.00		

From Question 43, “economic development,” from the individual questionnaire: “Do you think that elections will be helpful for economic development or not”, we created two dummy variables: “Helpful to economic development” and “Harmful to economic development.” The original coding of Question 43 is as follows: 1 = more helpful; 2 = no influence; 3 = more harmful; 7 = not applicable; 8 = don’t remember; 9 = refuse to answer. We recode 7(not applicable), 8(don’t remember) and 9 (refuse to answer) as missing value. Then we create the dummy variable “helpful to economic development” by recoding Q 43. “Helpful” is coded “1” (more helpful) when Q 43 is 1, and “0” (less helpful) when Q 43 is 2 or 3. “More harmful” is coded “1” (more harmful) when Q 42 is 3, and “0” (less harmful) when Q 42 is 1 or 2. Coding of these two dummy variables is as follows:

Coding of “Helpful to economic development” from “economic development”

Coding of the original question	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percent (%)	Coding of “helpful to economic development”	Value label
1 (more helpful)	721	69.26	69.26	1	More helpful
2 (no influence)	208	19.98	30.74	0	Less helpful
3 (more harmful)	112	10.76			
Total	1,041	100	100.00		

Coding of “Harmful to economic development” from “economic development”

Coding of the original question	Frequency	Percent (%)	Percent (%)	Coding of “harmful to economic development”	Value label
3 (more harmful)	112	10.76	10.76	1	More harmful
1 (more helpful)	721	69.26	89.24	0	Less harmful
2 (no influence)	208	19.98			
Total	1,041	100	100.00		