

# Inner-Party Democracy: Development and Limitations

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The Fourth Plenary Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee, which met in September, passed a decision on promoting “inner-party democracy,” a political direction with which CCP general secretary Hu Jintao is closely identified. Although there can be beneficial aspects of inner-party democracy, including expanding the pool from which cadres are drawn and increasing the number of people participating in the political process, the development of inner-party democracy over the past decade suggests that movement will be slow and that renewed emphasis on electoral practices within the Party is unlikely to stem corruption or reduce social conflict.

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee, which met in Beijing September 15–18, passed the “Decision of the CCP Central Committee on a Number of Major Issues in Strengthening and Improving Party Building in the New Situation.”<sup>1</sup> Calling “inner-party democracy” the “lifeblood of the Party,” a term the CCP first used at the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2002, the Decision looks to expanding grassroots democracy as a way to stem corruption, promote social harmony, and prevent the monopolization of power at the local level by one or a few people.

This is hardly the first time the CCP has called for expanding inner-party democracy. In October 1938 Mao Zedong at the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenary session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Central Committee pointed out, “Expanding inner-party democracy should be seen as a necessary step in consolidating and developing the Party.”<sup>2</sup> In 1942, at the start of the rectification campaign, inner-party democracy played an important role. At the Seventh Party Congress, Liu Shaoqi made a full and complete exposition of inner-party democracy in his “Report on the Revision of the Party Charter” (关于修改党的章程的报告). The Party charter passed at the Seventh Party Congress included for the first time regulations on Party members’ rights and obligations, giving legal guarantee to the exercise of democratic rights.<sup>3</sup> Whatever efforts the Party made historically to develop inner-party democracy were obviously overwhelmed by the dynamic of struggle that developed in the Mao years.

With the passing of Mao and the rise of the Dengist coalition, the Party moved quickly to reestablish norms for inner-party behavior. In 1980, the Party adopted a decision on “Several Principles on Democratic Life in the Party” (关于党内政治生活的若干准则), which called for developing inner-party democracy by not squelching different opinions within the Party. As long as people were not opposed to the fundamental line of the Party, did not engage in plots, and did not engage in splittism or factionalism, then different opinions should be permitted.<sup>4</sup> By the late 1980s, political reform, including

inner-party democracy, became a major topic within the Party, and the 13th Party Congress, for the first time in Party history, had more candidates than seats for election to the Central Committee, resulting in Deng Liqun's failure to be elected. Inner-party democracy, however, failed to stem growing tensions within the Party, and perhaps even exacerbated them. These tensions exploded in the political meltdown that accompanied the crackdown on student demonstrations in June 1989.

The Tiananmen crackdown, however, did not end calls for inner-party democracy; indeed, tensions within the Party and impending leadership transition issues increased the need for inner-party democracy—as did the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Indeed, as early as 1990, the Party was again emphasizing the need for inner-party democracy in the Provisional Regulations Governing Grassroots CCP Organizing Elections (中国共产党基层组织选举工作暂行条例), which were formalized in January 1994 as the Regulations Governing CCP Organization of Local Elections (中国共产党地方组织选举工作条例).<sup>5</sup>

Despite this long and rather unsuccessful history of inner-party democracy, there is reason to believe that the combination of leadership transition and the collapse of the CPSU brought about a new and perhaps more sustained effort to implement inner-party democracy as the need to regularize relations within the Party increased. As the tensions associated with the Tiananmen crisis passed—along with many senior leaders—and as Jiang Zemin slowly accumulated power, the stage was set for the transition of power. To the extent that any power transition can be pinpointed, Jiang can be said to have consolidated power at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Central Committee in September 1994, which formally announced that power in the Party had been transferred from the “second generation” (the Deng Xiaoping generation) to the “third generation” (that of Jiang Zemin).

The resolution adopted at that Party meeting focused on organization and Party building, stressing the need for “democratic centralism.” If there was any doubt about the implication of democratic centralism for the CCP at that time of transition, the resolution spelled it out: Of the “four submissions”—individuals submit to the Party organization, minorities to the majority, lower-level organizations to higher, and all Party organizations and members to the Party Center—the principle that the whole Party submit to the Center was the most important.<sup>6</sup> Centralization of power was crucial in those uncertain times, but it was perhaps even more important to build a more regularized Party organization in which individual power would not count for so much. Thus, the resolution emphasized that it was necessary to avoid selecting cadres from within only a small scope or to advance individual interest; and it was essential to expand democracy when promoting and appointing cadres.<sup>7</sup>

The following year the CCP followed up on this plenum by issuing the “Interim Regulations on the Selection and Appointment of Leading Cadres of the Party and State” (党政领导干部选拔任用工作暂行条例).<sup>8</sup> These regulations tried to open up the decision-making process for selecting cadres by requiring that it include the elements of democratic recommendation, inspection, preparation, and discussion and decision. The

whole process was supposed to be guided by a promotion committee and was to include extensive consultation with a wide range of officials and colleagues at different levels. The intent was to constrain the ability of the “number-one leader” (一把手) to single-handedly select cadres for promotion, thereby limiting the ability of local leaders to build factions, engage in corruption, and abuse authority—all of which exacerbate principal-agent control and social-order problems.

These regulations, which were rather modest in their provisions for enforcement, went against the informal but deeply rooted practices of personnel management that had grown up over the years. In practice, the number-one leader, usually in consultation with one or two of his close colleagues, monopolized the decision-making process. There was an organizational logic to this practice. A local leader, say, at the county level, is evaluated by how well he fulfills tasks given to him by leaders at the municipal/prefectural level, and he needs followers who are personally loyal and reliable to fulfill those tasks. To open up the selection process at the local level diminishes the power of a county Party secretary and risks leaving tasks unfulfilled—and the county leader vulnerable.

Secrecy protects the organizational integrity of the Party. If names of candidates for promotion are known in advance, it will inevitably stimulate the formation of local factions that will then promote one candidate or another, making local governance more difficult. A county leader can use secrecy either to break up or to promote local interests of various sorts, thus maintaining control in his own hands.<sup>9</sup>

This practice of highly concentrated authority exercised with a minimum of consultation has long been legitimized by the principle of the “Party controlling the cadres” (党管干部), which might be said to be the central principle guiding the organization and practice of the CCP. It is a principle that places control firmly in the hands of leaders at higher levels. For a lower-level cadre to be paid his bonus and have a chance at promotion, the most important thing to do is to please the Party secretary at the next level up.<sup>10</sup>

The centrality of county Party secretaries is documented in Zhou Qingzhi’s recent study of a county in northwest China.<sup>11</sup> The core of the local power structure is the personnel system, and the local Party secretary has nearly total control over the selection of both county-level cadres and township Party secretaries and deputy secretaries. When there is a need to promote a cadre, the county Party secretary “sets the tone” for characteristics they should be looking for, and then the local organization bureau will nominate someone in accordance with this tone. The deputy Party secretary with responsibility for that sector will approve the decision (or not), and the Party secretary’s secretary’s conference makes a decision. In this county, the conference consists of the Party secretary and the three deputy Party secretaries. Once they have decided, the nomination is put to the Standing Committee of the local people’s congress for formal appointment. It is, however, the decision of the Party secretary’s conference that has substantive meaning.<sup>12</sup>

This system of nearly total control over appointments of lower-level cadres has served the CCP well. It has been central to the Party's efforts to mobilize the political system on behalf of economic development; organizational incentives (bonuses, promotion) line up well with personal incentives (including possibilities for corruption) to promote growth. But because power is so concentrated and opaque and because it revolves almost entirely around GDP growth, it is a system that is easily abused. Not only are there externalities such as environmental degradation, poor education, and poor health care, but also corruption of various sorts. For instance, when one former county Party secretary was convicted, he confessed:<sup>13</sup>

Every time prior to the verification of cadres, I would hold a secretary's meeting to set a "tone." I would use the age, work experience, educational background, and rank of those who had given me gifts to set a standard and demarcate a scope. I absolutely would not name anyone's name, but would let the Organization Bureau go "find people" within the "scope" I had demarcated. After they had found them, we could proceed according to procedures. On the surface, the rationale was clear and the procedures lawful, but in reality, this was using individuals to draw lines and using individuals to define the scope. I used this method to reward all those who had given me gifts.

Moreover, in the pursuit of high growth rates, local authorities frequently ride roughshod over the rights and interests of local citizens. Thus, local authorities, often in collaboration with developers, acquire land at prices peasants are unwilling to accept, causing petitions and mass incidents. In extreme cases, such as the famous riot in Weng'an in 2008, these incidents can involve thousands of citizens and explode in violence.<sup>14</sup> It is the distortion of higher-level directives and the abuses of authority that create public disturbances that concern higher-level authorities and bring about calls for inner-party democracy.

## What Is Inner-Party Democracy?

To date, the CCP has experimented with several forms of inner-party democracy, including two types of electoral democracy: "public recommendation, public election" (公推公选) and "public recommendation, direct election" (公推直选). In the former model, the "electoral group" (选举人团)—those eligible to vote in the election of cadres—is expanded from just the party secretary's conference (or party committee for the record) to include five to ten county Party and government cadres, all representatives to the township people's congress, all members of the township Party and government, the primary village cadres (the Party secretary, the village head, and the village accountant), and some representatives of the villagers. Altogether this electoral group usually numbers 200–300, though sometimes it reaches as many as 3,000 people.<sup>15</sup> Although this model expands the scope of those participating in the election, it is not a popular election; only those in the Party and government departments, or those very close to them, can become members of the electoral group. Expanding the electoral group to 200–300 people does

not mean that everyone's vote is equal. In most instances, the votes of county-level cadres are weighted more heavily (加权计票法).<sup>16</sup>

The “public recommendation, direct election system” is considerably more democratic in that all Party members of a given locale vote in an assembly. Though this system has been touted recently (see below), it is more controversial and has been criticized for violating the principle of the “party controlling the cadres.”

Despite real limitations, inner-party elections can be competitive. Candidates can be self-nominated, and the primary election, which determines the candidates for the final election, has more candidates than seats. But candidates generally do not give talks to public gatherings (although legally they are allowed to) and they are not permitted to put up campaign posters. Because of such restrictions, candidates have to use family and other connections to try to mobilize support among those on the electoral group. Such intermediaries can invite people to dinner and promote the candidacy of nominees.<sup>17</sup>

The first semi-competitive election appears to have been in 10 townships under Bazhong City's (巴中市) administration in 1995–1996 in northern Sichuan Province. In 1998–1999 there were some 300 township elections, primarily in Sichuan but with some taking place in Henan and Guangdong provinces. One of those was the well-known direct election of the township head in Buyun township (步云镇) at the end of 1998, which was repudiated by *Legal Daily* in January 1999 as illegal and in violation of the constitution. But *Legal Daily* criticized the role of direct elections in bypassing the local people's congress rather than the idea of inner-party (or even wider) elections per se.<sup>18</sup> Suggesting deep ambivalence in Beijing, the authorities allowed the election result to stand.<sup>19</sup>

In the 2001–2002 period the number of semi-competitive elections in Sichuan shot up, with some 40 percent of townships—over 2,000—holding them. These elections included voting for township deputy heads, township heads, township deputy Party secretaries, and township Party secretaries. There are a total of 16,000 leading positions at the township level in Sichuan, and some 5,000 were chosen through semi-competitive elections.<sup>20</sup> *CCP Document No. 12* in 2002 demanded that elections follow a common model and be held according to law, but it did not forbid elections.<sup>21</sup>

Outside of Sichuan, there have been several experiments with inner-party democracy, including the well-known 2002 Yangji township (杨集镇) election in Hubei, in which the Party secretary was elected by Party members through a process including “sea recommendations” (海推) in which over 7,000 voters recommended 18 candidates (unfortunately, this experiment was not repeated).<sup>22</sup> There have also been inner-party elections in Guangxi, Guizhou, Jilin, Zhejiang, Chongqing, Yunnan, and Jiangsu.<sup>23</sup>

## Incentives for Inner-Party Democracy

Given the basic alignment of organizational and personal incentives around the objective of high growth, the demand for hierarchical control, the need for strong political

organizations to control social order (even if those same mechanisms sometimes lead to public disturbances), and the incentives of local-level authorities to not rock the boat, why would there ever be institutional innovation in the system? Taken as a whole, China's public bureaucracy is very conservative; individual initiative is generally discouraged. Local-level cadres are rewarded for fulfilling their assigned tasks, mostly economic development and maintaining social order. A local cadre who fulfills these demands is likely to have a long and comfortable career. Bureaucratic entrepreneurship is generally not rewarded by the system, and the system makes it impossible for local citizens to reward innovation.

So the question is, what sorts of pressure would lead to the adoption of any form of inner-party democracy? Lai Hairong, in his recent study of semi-competitive elections, makes clear that these pressures do not stem from popular demands for democracy. Indeed, *not one* of the township elections held in Sichuan Province, where his research is focused, was the result of pressures from below: "All cases were initiated by the Party committee."<sup>24</sup> Although there is no general outcry for democracy in China's countryside, there is plenty of discontent, and local leaders must balance the two main tasks of economic growth and maintaining social order. This is not easy in an era in which local revenues are declining, as happened following the tax reforms of 1994. These tax reforms, which reversed the long-standing trend of declining central revenues relative to GDP, had the effect of starving local governments, particularly those in poorer regions of the country that had little local industry. As revenues declined, there was an inevitable tendency to maintain growth rates by extracting more resources from local society. Before the agricultural tax was reduced and then eliminated in 2003–2006, the local authorities raised taxes—against central policies on taxation but in conformity with central demands for high growth.

Collecting taxes and fees is always coercive and sometimes violent, particularly as peasants became more cognizant of the disparity between central policies and local actions.<sup>25</sup> Areas like Sichuan, poor and overpopulated, were ripe for social confrontation, and, indeed, a major riot had broken out in Renshou County (仁寿县) in 1993,<sup>26</sup> even before the tax reform exacerbated local finances. Tensions were notably high in places like Bazhong City, Nanbu County (南部县), and Suining City (遂宁市).

Because local revenue sources were declining, local cadres needed to increase extra-budgetary funds if they were going to develop their local economies. For instance, Nanbu County wanted to build a power plant to fuel its economic growth. The plant would cost some 650 million yuan, but the plant was not listed in the state economic development plan, so there was no hope of getting funds from higher levels. At the time, however, there was growing peasant resistance in the area, as peasants were petitioning that the cadres had created various problems. In some instances, peasants would gather in front of county party offices and demand that certain township cadres be removed from office. In 1996 the peoples congresses of some townships there refused to accept four cadres out of the 14 recommended by the county party committee. As Lai Hairong comments, "This was unprecedented."<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, disturbances in Xinqiao and Baoshi townships (新桥乡 and 包石镇), also in 1996, had a direct impact on the inauguration of inner-party democracy in Suining City. Zhang Jingming, who would become famous for promoting local elections, was Party secretary of Zhongxin District in Suining. She decided to carry out public recommendation, public election for township heads in Xinqiao and Baoshi in an effort to win back trust of the people.

Declining revenues, increasing social tensions, and the need to raise funds for local economic development were all conditions contributing to local institutional innovation, but other factors were also important. For instance, semi-competitive elections in Sichuan developed in places that were relatively isolated and in which social tensions were not too great. The development of any sort of democratic system could easily get out of control in the opinion of higher-level cadres, so caution was always a part of innovation. In addition, innovators tended to be younger cadres. Semi-competitive elections, after all, involve some erosion of power, so those most likely to be willing to sacrifice their immediate interest were those who hoped to be rewarded at a later point in time for their willingness to adopt innovative solutions to problems—and those people tended to be young.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, one other incentive for introducing semi-competitive elections was the desire of some local leaders to find younger and more energetic cadres than those who seemed slated for promotion. Semi-competitive elections expand the pool of potential cadres, in some cases by quite a lot, and elections provide a mechanism to ease out, or pass over, lesser talents.

## Impact

Although township semi-competitive elections are limited in many ways, they do have some positive impact. For instance, villages located in townships that have had semi-competitive elections are reported to have more open and competitive elections. Township leaders who have not faced electoral competition are more likely to make leadership decisions at the village level, whereas those who have participated in semi-competitive elections are more likely to allow villages to choose their own leaders through a more open electoral process. If the person elected as village head is a Party member, he is likely to be named Party secretary; if he is not a Party member, he may well be recruited to join the Party.<sup>29</sup>

The emergence of semi-competitive elections also influences the relations between the Party secretary and the township head, giving the latter greater confidence, which can, in turn, lead to greater conflict. Just as the conflict between Party secretaries and village heads led, in some instances, to the emergence of the “two ballot system” (两票制) at that level, there have been instances of semi-competitive electoral mechanisms being extended to the township level; the first instance in which a township Party secretary was chosen by direct election of Party members occurred in Lingshan township (灵山乡) in Pingchang County (平昌县, which is under Bazhong City) in 2001.<sup>30</sup>

If semi-competitive elections have a positive impact, at least at some times and in some places, there are still very real strictures on the operations of township governments. For instance, all cadres, whether elected or appointed, remain subject to the cadre evaluation system; county-level cadres will evaluate whether township cadres have fulfilled the tasks assigned to them. Bonuses and future promotions depend on positive evaluations. Cadres can also be transferred; if a need arises, county authorities will transfer cadres whether they have been elected or not. Moreover, counties retain the ultimate sanction: removal from office. Finally, there are the interests of the cadres who have been promoted through semi-competitive elections. Candidates for election are all party member cadres who have been serving in various posts and are putting forth their candidacies in order to be promoted, not to overturn the existing order. Perhaps such candidates are more intelligent or talented than those who might have been appointed through non-electoral means (there are no data to demonstrate this proposition one way or the other), but they are simply trying to open up better career prospects for themselves, not trying to introduce democracy to China's rural areas. It is in their interest to fulfill the tasks assigned by the county.

Finally, in a number of instances, semi-competitive elections have incurred difficulties and have simply been reversed. For instance, in Nanbu County, the election of township heads led to tensions between them and county authorities with the result that many assigned tasks remained unfilled. So county authorities changed the weight of ballots to exert greater control over township elections. In the 1995 and 1998 elections, ballots were weighted so that township and village cadres votes counted for 60 percent, while those of the county officials counted for 40 percent. In 2001, this weighting was reversed so that county officials' votes counted for 60 percent.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Baoshi township in Suining City, which had adopted semi-competitive elections to ease social tensions and facilitate tax collection in 1998, went back to the old way once the crisis had passed. In 2001, Suining City simply appointed the township head of Baoshi township, apparently without township authorities complaining.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the most startling case of reversal came in Pingchang County, in Bazhong. Facing social disorder and financial crises, Pingchang carried out the first experiment in "public recommendation, direct election" in 2001. This reform developed from the first township elections in 1995–1996, through the election of a local Party secretary in Lingshan township, and semi-competitive elections subsequently spread to one-third of the townships in the county. The reform won an award in "Innovations and Excellence in Local Chinese Government" from the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau in 2006 and was widely publicized.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, with the passing of the immediate crisis, there was conflict among leading cadres and discontent among cadres who had been forced to step down during the crisis. The experiment was also criticized by higher-level authorities for violating the principle of "the party controls the cadres," so further experimentation with public recommendation and direct election was stopped and much of the progress that had been made in merging villages and townships was reversed (creating more positions for local cadres).<sup>34</sup>



## Continuing Efforts

After the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress declared inner-party democracy the “lifeblood of the Party,” Hu Jintao’s report to the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2007 used the term “democracy” (民主) over 60 times and raised the slogan “expand inner-party democracy to bring along people’s democracy; increase inner-party harmony to facilitate social harmony.”<sup>35</sup> The Party Charter was also revised at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress to open the door, at least a little, to inner-party democracy. Previously the Party charter had stated in Article 30 that “after the Party secretary and deputy secretaries are selected [选出]” their names should be reported to the next higher level Party organization for approval; in 2007 that was changed to read, “after the Party secretary and deputy Party secretaries are *elected* (选举产生).”<sup>36</sup> It says nothing about election procedures, but opens a space for future experimentation.

The recent Fourth Plenum decision builds on these precedents and calls for expanding democracy in the selection and appointment of officials. In doing this, it lays emphasis on the “primary role” (主体地位) of Party members, including their rights to know (知情权), participate, elect, and supervise officials. Such statements will, of course, reinforce efforts to implement the sort of inner-party elections discussed above. At the same time, however, the Fourth Plenum decision is clear that cadres should be selected with regard to both “integrity and ability, with priority for integrity” (德才兼备, 以德为先), but “integrity” has too often been interpreted in the past as personal loyalty. Moreover, the decision makes clear that the principle of “the Party managing cadres” will continue to be upheld. These are, of course, tenets that in the past have led to the personalization of power, and there is no indication in the Fourth Plenum document that a new emphasis on inner-party democracy will be sufficient to counter deeply entrenched habits.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

Inner-party democracy is not an unreasonable way for an authoritarian party, concerned with corruption, social tension, and other such issues, to try to develop better mechanisms for monitoring its local agents, expanding the pool of potential officials, and giving Party members a greater stake in the management of the Party. Although it has a long history in the Party, Hu Jintao has very much made the issue his own, rejecting other approaches such as electoral democracy. Nevertheless, inner-party democracy was sharply limited in the last round of township leadership change in 2006. The Decision of the Fourth Plenum appears to be pointing the way toward the next end-of-term elections, which will start in 2011, prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress the following year.

Nevertheless, there are fundamental obstacles to implementation of inner-party democracy that need to be confronted if the practice is going to be developed and institutionalized in any meaningful way. The central issue remains the cadre management system, which rewards compliance with orders from above, particularly from one’s immediate superior, rather than responding to the demands of those being governed.

Because the Party has shown no inclination to accept monitoring from below, it seems likely to remain hostage to the problems laid out above, namely, using inner-party democracy to control crisis situations, rolling back relatively successful experiments either when the immediate crisis has passed or when cadre opposition builds up. Without a willingness to confront such systemic difficulties, inner-party democracy will develop only slowly and have only marginal impact on the management of the Party.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> On the Fourth Plenum, see Alice L. Miller, “The Case of Xi Jinping and the Mysterious Succession,” and Cheng Li, “Inner-Party Democracy in China: Should We Take It Seriously?” in *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 30 (Fall 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu dangjian yanjiusuo ketizu (ed.), *Xin shiqi dangjian gongzuo redian nandian wenti diaocha baogao* [Research report on contentious and difficult problems of Party building in the new period], (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyiju chubanshe, 2004), p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “Guanyu dangnei zhengzhi shenghuo de ruogan zhunze” [Several Principles on Democratic Life in the Party], in *Zhongguo gongchandang dangnei fagui xuanbian (1978–1996)* [Selected inner-party rules and regulations of the CCP, 1978–1996], (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, first edition, 1996, third edition, 2001), pp. 40–55; cited passim p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> The latter regulation is included in *Zhongguo gongchandang dangnei fagui xuanbian (1978–1996)*, pp. 247–254.

<sup>6</sup> “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang dang de jianshe jige zhongda wenti de jue ding” [CCP Decision on several major questions on strengthening party building], in *Zhongguo gongchandang dangnei*, p. 116.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 123–124.

<sup>8</sup> “Dangzheng lingdao ganbu xuanba renyong gongzuo zanxing tiaoli” [Provisional regulations on the work of selecting and appointing leading cadres of the party and state], in *Zhongguo gongchandang dangnei*, pp. 385–397.

<sup>9</sup> Xu Xianglin, “Dang guan ganbu tizhi xia de jiceng minzhushi gaige” [Democratic-type reforms at the grassroots level under the ‘Party controls the cadres’ system], in *Zhejiang xuekan*, 2004, no. 1, pp. 106–112.

<sup>10</sup> Maria Edin, “State Capacity and Local Agent Control in China: CCP Cadre Management from a Township Perspective,” in *China Quarterly*, no. 173 (2003): 35–52; Whiting, Susan H. (2004), “The Cadre Evaluation System at the Grass Roots: The Paradox of Party Rule,” in Barry Naughton and Dali Yang (eds.), *Holding China Together: Diversity and National Integration in the Post-Deng Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press), pp. 101–119; and Zhuang Guobo, *Lingdao ganbu zhengji pingjia de lilun yu shijian* [Theory and Practice of Evaluation of Political Performance by Leadership Cadres] (Beijing: Zhongguo jingji, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Zhou Qingzhi, *Zhongguo xianji xingzheng jigou jiqi yunxing—dui W xian de shehuixue kaocha* [The structure and operation of China’s county-level administration—a sociological investigation of county W], p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Wen Shengtang, “2003 nian de fanfubai douzheng” [The struggle against corruption in 2003], in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi, and Li Peilin (eds.), *2004 nian: Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2004), p. 158.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Fewsmith, “An ‘Anger-Venting’ Mass Incident Catches the Attention of China’s Leadership,” *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 26 (Fall 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Lai Hairong, *Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi tizhi gaige—xiangzhen ban jingzhengxing xuanju yanjiu* [China’s rural political reform—A study of township semi-competitive elections], (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyiju chubanshe, 2009), p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

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- <sup>18</sup> Zha Qingju, “Minzhu buneng chaoyuen falü” [Democracy must not transcend the law], *Fazhi ribao*, January 19, 1999.
- <sup>19</sup> Vivian Pik-Kwan Chan, “Beijing Indicates Recognition of Landmark Township Election,” *South China Morning Post*, March 1, 1999, p. 9.
- <sup>20</sup> Lai Hairong, *Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi tizhi gaige*, p. 71.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- <sup>22</sup> Long Gong, Zhang Shihong, and Zhou Zhibing, “Hubei sheng shouwei ‘haitui zhixuan’ xiangzhen dangwei shuji chansheng” [The first ‘sea recommendation and direct election’ of a township Party secretary in Hubei], *Renmin Wang*, January 17, 2003, available at <http://www.chinaelections.org/printnews.asp?newsid=20881>.
- <sup>23</sup> Lai Hairong, *Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi tizhi gaige*, p. 72.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- <sup>25</sup> See Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- <sup>26</sup> Joseph Fewsmith, “Notes on the First Session of the Eighth National People’s Congress,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 3 (Summer 1993): 81–86.
- <sup>27</sup> Lai Hairong, *Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi tizhi gaige*, p. 86.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113–114.
- <sup>30</sup> “Min xuan guan de minzhu shiyan” [Democratic experiment of people electing officials], available at <http://www.bzjc.gov.cn/7/4/200908/54009.html>.
- <sup>31</sup> Lai Hairong, *Zhongguo nongcun zhengzhi tizhi gaige*, pp. 117–118.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- <sup>33</sup> See Wang Changjiang, Zhou Hongyun, Wang Yongbing, *Dangnei minzhu zhidu chuanguangxin* [Inner-Party democracy and institutional innovation] (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyiju chubanshe, 2007).
- <sup>34</sup> Author interview with Chinese researchers.
- <sup>35</sup> Ren Huiwen, “Zhonggong jiakuai dangnei minzhu diwen” [The CCP accelerate the contents of inner-Party democracy], *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, November 4, 2009.
- <sup>36</sup> The Party charter can be found at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-11/18/content\\_633225\\_6.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2002-11/18/content_633225_6.htm). See also Ren Jin, “Dangnei minzhu de xin shijian” [The new practice of inner-Party democracy], in *Xuexi shibao*, November 23, 2009, available at [http://www.studytimes.com.cn/WebPage/NewsPaper/20091123\\_513/popup.htm](http://www.studytimes.com.cn/WebPage/NewsPaper/20091123_513/popup.htm).
- <sup>37</sup> “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin xin xingshi xia dang de jianshe ruogan zhongda wenti de jueding” [CCP Central Committee Decision on Major Issues in Strengthening Party Building in the New Situation], *Xinhua*, September 27, 2009.