Elite Capture of the Local Party in Village Elections

By

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Abstract

The Elite Capture theory suggests that the village elites in China are tempted to capture the local institution and resources for their own benefits. This paper studies the villager leaders' information distortion (as one of the major forms of elite capture) on election process. Based on the 2005 MCA survey, this paper finds that in around one fourth of the Chinese villages, the village party elites have provided distorted information when asked about the election process. The local Communist Party members within the village committee, as well as geographic regions and distance to administrative centers, determine the level of information distortion.

Acknowledgments

The earliest idea of this thesis stemmed from my research paper for Professor Erik Herron's Comparative Political Institutions. Villager leaders' information distortion was discovered in that paper, but not being the main topic, it did not receive my due attention. Professor Herron pointed out that it was indeed an important finding and it deserved more in-depth investigation. I owe my thanks to Professor Herron. For his inspiration, the idea of information distortion has been developed into this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for my advisor and mentor Professor John Kennedy. As one of the people who have had most profound influence on me, Professor Kennedy walked me through every step of my thesis with his patience and kindness, as he had always done. The writing of my thesis coincided with Professor Kennedy's one-year research project in China. I greatly appreciate his timely and detailed responses whenever I have questions, even though he had a lot of work to do in China.

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I finally thank God for his amazing grace, to which all I have received is traced back.

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Introduction

In the late 1980s, village elections were introduced to rural China in order to promote grassroots self-governance. Since then, Chinese farmers were granted the right to directly elect their local leaders. However, twenty years after the Organic Law was enacted, the Organic Law is unevenly implemented throughout China and the quality of elections varies (Epstein 1996; Kennedy 2002; O'Brien 1994; Shi 1999; O'Brien and Li 1999). According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) of China in 2005, only 39 percent of all the villager respondents report that the candidates of the village committees (VCs) are directly nominated by villagers.[1] The MCA survey is the central government's attempt to get an accurate understanding of the village election process. Indeed, the central party-government has an interest in seeing the village election law implemented because it provides a level of political legitimacy to the majority of the population who live in the countryside. However, this interest may not be shared by the township governments, because the village election may weaken the township governments' control over the villages (O'Brien and Li 2000).[2] The result is patchy implementation of the Organic Law at the local level. Apart from the township government's reluctance to fully implement the Organic Law, the local elites—wealthy villagers and village leaders, etc.—may also be responsible for this uneven implementation. The Elite Capture theory suggests that local elites attempt to control local institutions and resources for their own benefits (Persson and Zhuravskaya 2010; Platteau et al. 2010). Many

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[1] "Do not know" is included.

[2] In China, there are four administrative levels: national, provincial/municipality, county, township, and village. But village is not an official administrative level. The lowest official level is township, and the township officials are the immediate superiors of villages.

scholars show that in China, it is not uncommon that the village elections are rigged in the forms of closed nomination and the absence of campaign activities, etc (O'Brien and Li 2000, 2006).

Elite capture takes on various forms. One of the major forms is information distortion (Persson and Zhuravskaya 2010; Platteau 2008). According to Platteau (2008), facing external resources, local elites are inclined to promote their own interests by exploiting the information gap between the communities and the external agencies. In light of this theory, it is expected that the Chinese villages may fall prey to elite capture. In fact, a gap between the villagers' and village leaders' reports on election process has often been observed in rural China (Kennedy 2002; Kennedy et al. 2004). More often than not, villagers and village leaders provide different answers when asked about the election process. This gap creates challenges for researchers in determining the actual election process. Holding the belief that the data from the township government may not be reliable or accessible, researchers usually turn directly to the village-level data (Shi 1999a). Some previous studies have directly surveyed a single village leader respondent to get information about the village election process. But in cases where the leader's perception of the election process is not aligned with the villagers' perceptions, especially the majority of the villagers', it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the actual election process. This paper argues that this inconsistency between the villager and leader reports on election process may be attributed to some leaders' intentional distortion of the information of election process. If elite capture does exist in the Chinese villages, the village leaders are expected to distort information by untruthfully reporting the election process. Admittedly, it might be unfair to assume that it is always the leaders, rather than the

villagers, that distort the information whenever a discrepancy is observed. But in the current circumstance, it is extremely difficult to know the actual election process from an objective third source. And if a leader's answer contradicts the most of the villagers' answer, it is more likely that the leader is distorting information and providing false survey information (answers). Therefore, this paper assumes that it is the leaders that are responsible for the discrepancy between the villager and leader reports on election process. Of course, villagers may not know about the election process, but this study will only focus on whether or not leaders' perceptions (reports) are aligned with the majority of villagers who claimed to know about the election process. In addition, the results are suggestive (rather than proving) the existence of information distortion.

This paper aims to address two key research questions. (1) To what extent does elected leaders' information distortion exist in China? (2) Do village leader characteristics and village-level factors influence the degree of information distortion (the gap between village leader and villager perceptions of the election process)?

This paper contributes to the comparative politics and China studies literature by systematically studying the gap between the villager and leader reports on election process in rural China. Although many studies have discussed information distortion in rural China, few have investigated if this is a partial or a universal problem in villages across provinces (Kennedy et al. 2004; Shi 1999a). Moreover, few have addressed the source or possible cause of information distortion. To fill this gap, I draw on the data collected from the 2005 MCA Survey, a unique nationally representative survey conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China in 2005. The survey includes two questionnaires, one for individual villagers and the

other for village leaders, making possible to compare the differences between leader and villager reports on a national scope.

This paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I review the relevant literature on Chinese village elections and elite capture. The second section examines the five hypotheses and key independent and control variables. The third section provides the variable measures and data analysis. The final section discusses the statistical results, hypothesis and contribution to the literature.

Literature Review

Village Election

Democratic elections in China first took place in the less developed rural areas rather than the more affluent urban areas. Although the urban citizens in China have the right to elect their deputies in local people's congress, compared with village committees, people's congress have less power and resources (O'Brien 2001). The earliest VCs emerged in two Guangxi counties (Yishan and Luocheng) in late 1980 and early 1981 (O'Brien and Li 2000). The initial purpose of creating VCs was to keep social order after brigades and production teams stopped functioning after the Mao era. The members of the earliest VCs were elected through informal elections, and their main responsibilities were to manage village affairs (O'Brien and Li 2000).

The Guangxi experience was reported to Beijing, the capital of China. Thanks to the committed endorsement of Peng Zhen, who was then vice-chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), villagers' committees were written into the Chinese Constitution as elected, mass organizations of self-government in 1982. In 1984, the Ministry of Civil Affairs produced the first draft of the Organic Rules on the Villagers' Committees

(O'Brien and Li 2000). Although both the constitution and the draft considered the VCs to be elected organizations, there were no detailed election rules as to how the elections should be conducted. Moreover, no consensus had been made as to whether the VCs should be democratically elected. The proposal of democratic elections of VCs encountered strong opposition. Most of the criticisms centered on the claim that direct election would weaken the Chinese Communist Party's control over villages, and some argued that the Chinese people lacked the democratic consciousness (O'Brien and Li 2000). Despite the opposition, a trial Organic Law of Village Committee was passed in 1987. As for the relationship between VC and higher-level government, the Organic Law to a large degree recognized VC's autonomy. It mandates that "the township and county people's governments guide, support, and help the work of VCs and the VCs assist the township and country governments' work" (Article 3) (Organic Law 1987). In terms of election, the 1987 Organic Law only prescribes rudimentary rules and procedures for conducting village election (Tan 2004). It stipulates nothing more than "the committee chair, vice chair, and members are directly elected by villagers" (Article 9) (Organic Law 1987). The 1987 Organic Law was revised in 1998. The 1998 Organic Law improved the process by requiring that the elections should be competitive (the candidates outnumber the positions), and the candidates should be directly nominated (Article 14) (Organic Law 1998). However, by the standard of Western democracies, the 1998 Organic Law is still too vague and too simple, which results in the considerable variation in the actual rules and procedures in the Chinese villages (Tan 2004). In broad terms, two issues on village elections have drawn the most attention within the scholarly literature. The first issue is factors that account for the uneven implementation of the Organic Law (Epstein 1997; O'Brien 1994;

Oi 1996; Hu 2005; Shi 1999b). The second issue is the outcomes and implications of the

village elections (Kennedy 2002; Kennedy et al. 2004; Li 2003; Manion 1996; Shi 1999b;

Paster and Tan 2000; Wang and Yang 2006). Much of this literature has drawn on survey data

and interviews, but the survey data and interviews often face a problem—the inconsistency

between leaders' and villagers' reports on election process. To avoid leaders' intentional

distortion of information, Tianjian Shi (1999a) made use of the survey data from individual

villagers and aggregated these data into a village-level data. Kennedy et al. (2004) went a step

further by taking into consideration both the villagers' reports and several leaders' reports and

comparing the villagers' answers with the leaders'.[3] These studies' use of individual villager

data suggests the possible existence of information distortion. In light of the problem revealed

in these studies, one of the goals of this paper is to examine the extent and degree of leaders'

information distortion throughout rural China.

Elite Capture

Elite capture is a concept first used in economics. It typically refers to "a phenomenon

where resources transferred for the benefit of the masses are usurped by a few, usually political

and/or economically powerful groups, at the expense of the less economically and/or

politically influential groups" (Dutta 2009, 3). This problem is prevalent in community-based

projects (Iversen et al. 2006; Fritzen 2007; Burgess and Pande 2005; Prinsen and Titeca 2008).

For the last two decades, Community-based Development (CBD) projects have been

advocated by development scholars for its advantages of delivering direct aids for targeted

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[3] Kennedy (2002, 2004) looked at three village leaders. Thus he compared the different reports (perceptions of the local election process) among the leaders and between the villagers and leaders.

groups (Cernea 1985; Hirschman 1984; Chamber 1983; Ostrom 1990). While the success of CBD seems to be taken for granted, it has been observed that its efficiency and equity are compromised by the elite capture in local communities. Platteau (2003) argues that the main advantage of CBD lies in the better knowledge of local conditions and constraints, but there is a trade-off between information advantages and elite capture. On the one hand, "local people's motivation to apply effort and to contribute resources is expected to be stronger when they are let free to choose their objectives and their ways to achieve them rather than being told from above what to do and how to do it" (Platteau 2003, 7). On the other hand, the CBD "may be more vulnerable to capture by local elites, who will then receive a disproportionate share of spending on public goods" (Platteau 2003, 7). Elite capture is thought to be more serious in lower levels of government, because collusion is easier in local governments than higher governments (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2005).

As an intangible phenomenon, elite capture takes on many forms. According to Diya Dutta (2009), there are four ways of measuring elite capture, including bribes and influencing decision-making. Platteau et al. (2010) considers embezzlement and information distortion to be the two main ways of elite capture. Facing external resources, local elites are inclined to promote their own interests by exploiting the information gap between the communities and the external agencies (Platteau 2008). This paper primarily looks at the village elites' distortion of information. Although the issue of this paper is not perfectly embedded in the context of CBD, information distortion is still expected to take place in rural China, where the local officials are in the position to capture village elections as local institutions.

Theory and Hypotheses

In China, elite capture in the form of leaders' information distortion on election process exists. In short, village elites attempt to capture the Village Committee (VC) by manipulating the election process. Information distortion occurs when the local leaders provide false reports to higher level officials regarding the election process. In this case, reporting to the MCA. According to the Organic Law (1998), the VC is made up of three to seven people including chair, vice chair, and accountant. Although in many villages the VC members can be businessmen, party members or farmers, they do not have to be the richest group in a village. In fact, the elected leaders have a difficult job managing the collectively owned property (such as land) and implementing national policies such as family planning. The benefits of being an elected leader in rural China especially over the last ten years is managing collective land because the land use contracts for local development can be very lucrative. Some local elites may attempt to manipulate local elections to gain control over the land use contracts. In this study, information distortion refers to the deliberate misstatement of the actual election process, such as nomination process and the use of secret vote booths to the official MCA interviewers for the 2005 survey.

The elite capture theory suggests that in a local community, the better-off elites may make use of the information gap between the communities and the external agencies to capture the externally-provided resources (Platteau 2008). Some villager leaders have an incentive to over-report the quality of the village election. If the incumbent leader came into office through no election, he or she may not be willing to tell the truth, for this obviously violates the Organic Law. If the incumbent leader came into office through a manipulated election, he or she may

still be tempted to make a more democratic description of the election in order to enhance the legitimacy of his or her administration.

What are the factors that make some villages more susceptible to elite capture than others? One factor may be the influence of clan and kinship. As early as pre-1949, Esherick and Rankin (1990) find that in China many villages were run by leaders who were the heads of powerful family clans. Today, clan is still found to be an important force that impacts village election and village governance by many scholars (Kennedy 2002; Kennedy et al. 2004; Tan and Qiushui 2007; O'Brien and Han 2009; Tsai 2007). Thus, if clan and kinship have big influence on the village election in a village, it is expected to observe more serious elite capture in this village. *So, the clan and kinship influence on the VC election increases the level of information distortion in a village.*

A village's local social and political environment such as local economy and community level characteristics may also have influence on the level of information distortion (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2005; Dutta 2009). These factors can influence the leaders' political and economic incentives to manipulate the election process in order to gain a position of local power (i.e. elected office). In a local community, better educated villagers are more aware of their political rights and are more skilled at supervising and punishing the offending cadres (O'Brien and Li 2006; Shi 1999a). A better educated villager community increases the leaders' opportunity cost of capturing local institutions. *Thus, it is expected that the villagers' education level reduces the level of information distortion.*

The influence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can also be a factor. In rural China, the party branch is set up in every village. The party secretary is the head of the party branch

and is appointed by the higher-level party branch, rather than popularly elected by the villagers. In many villages, it is the party secretary, rather than the elected VC chair, that holds the most power. Although by the law, VC is a villager autonomous organ, there is not a fine line between the party branch's and the VC's domain, especially when VC members are also party members (O'Brien and Li 2000). However, the ambiguous relationship between the party branch and the VC is not what the central CCP really desires. In China, the CCP is not a monolithic single party that can control all party members down to the village. Local party secretaries have a large amount of power and relative autonomy. In fact, village elections were first introduced because high officials at the county and above could not monitor village cadres all the time, so the elections were designed to allow villagers to monitor and replace village cadres. VC members who are not party members are only held accountable to villagers, VC members who are at the same time party members have to be accountable to the non-elected party secretary in addition to villagers. Hence, the party influence on the VC may increase the elite capture in a village. *So in a VC that is highly influenced by the Party, it is expected that leaders are more likely to distort information.*

A village's dependence on agriculture may also be a factor. In heavily agricultural villages, the most valuable resource is arable land, but in many remote agricultural villages, the men have migrated out of the villages for work and many of the elderly and women were left behind to farm. As a result, there are few resources left to capture. The Elite Capture Theory suggests that information distortion should be low in these villages. *Therefore, it is expected that the more agricultural a village is, the less likely the leaders are to distort information of election process.*

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Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is a village's distance to its administrative centers (e.g. town seat and county seat). Distance to administrative centers serves to measure a village's openness to trade. Studies show that administrative centers in China usually have commercial functions and therefore the distance to urban centers may be associated with off-farm labor opportunities and access to large markets for a number of agricultural and non-agricultural products (Kennedy 2002; Skinner 1964). So villages close to their administrative centers are generally more open in trade than remote villages. Studies have also found that in China, openness in trade reduces income inequality (Wei and Wu 2001). Platteau contends that "in situations of high inequality, the poor and the minorities are more easily oppressed by local power groups that can easily collude beyond the control of higher-level institutions and the attention of the media" (Platteau 2003). *Therefore, it is expected that the nearer a village to its administrative centers (county seat or town seat), the less likely the leaders are to distort information of election process.*

Hence, five hypotheses are proposed.

H_1: Leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in villages where clan and kinship have big influence on the village elections.

H_2: Leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in villages with less educated village communities than villages with better educated village communities.

H_3: Leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in villages where the VCs are more influenced by the party branch.

H_4: Leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in less agricultural villages.

H_5: Leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in villages that are distant from their administrative centers (county seat or town seat).

Data and Operational Variables

The 2005 MCA Survey

This paper draws on the 2005 MCA Survey, which is an official nationwide project conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in May 2005 titled "Sample Survey of China's Villager Self-governance." The Carter Center's China Program worked with the MCA on this project and released the data and questionnaires (in Chinese) for public access in 2009. There are two separate questionnaires in the MCA survey. One has a random sample of 3,501 villagers. The data from this questionnaire is referred to as "individual-level data" in this paper. The other is a village-level questionnaire for village leaders. It is completed by the VC chair, vice chair, or the accountant in 380 villages throughout China. The MCA is an important ministry within the central government and it is responsible for the implementation of the Organic Law. Instead of relying on the local reports from township and county governments, the MCA worked with the Carter Center to conduct a nationally representative survey of

village elections. Before the 2005 MCA Survey, there were few national surveys that narrowly focus on the village election process and participation. What is more, the MCA Survey provides both individual-level data and village-level data on a national scope, making it possible to compare the villagers' answers with the leaders' answers in each village, on which the measurement of information distortion is hinged on.

Dependent Variables

The measure of leader information distortion is based on leader and villager perceptions (reports) of the election process, namely, the nomination of preliminary candidates and the use of secret ballot booths. Nomination is selected because it is an essential part of a free and fair election (Dahl 1971; Elklit and Svenssonn 1997). The 1998 Organic Law requires a direct nomination by villagers. In the context of China, it is even more important to study the variation of nomination process than the competitiveness of the elections. This is because since early 1990s, the competitiveness of village elections has markedly improved and today competitativeness does not show enough variation to differentiate the quality of elections. In a nationwide survey on political culture and political participation conducted in 1990s, Shi (1999a) finds that 51.6 percent of the respondents reported competitive election—candidates outnumber the positions to be filled. Around a decade later, the percentage of villagers that reported competitive elections has increased to 67.5 (see Table 1). The number is much higher according to the leaders; 95.8 percent of the village leaders reported to have competitive election when electing their current village committees (see Table 2).

Table 1 When electing your current village committee, the method is:

	Frequency	Percentage
Competitive	2351	67.5%
Non-competitive	115	3.3%
Other	115	3.3%
DNK	270	7.7%
Not applicable	634	18.2%
Total	3485	100%

Note: V17, individual-level data

Table 2 The method of electing your current village committee is:

	Frequency	Percentage
Competitive	347	95.80%
Non-competitive	25	2.40%
Other	6	1.90%
Total	378	100%

Note: V33, village-level data

However, competitiveness alone does not qualify a village election for a free and fair election (Kennedy et al. 2004; O'Brien and Li 2000; Tan 2004). The nomination process must also be taken into account, because it is possible that the candidates in a competitive election are chosen from a closed nomination, which makes the seemingly competitive election less meaningful. Also, an open nomination is required by the 1998 Organic Law. Compared with competitiveness, the 2005 MCA Survey shows more variation on nomination process. Only 39.2 percent of villagers reported that their candidates were directly nominated by villagers (Table 3).

Table 3 When electing the current village committee, how was the preliminary candidates nominated?

	Frequency	Percentage
Villagers	1364	39.20%
Election committee	330	9.50%
Party branch	149	4.30%
Superiors	100	2.90%
DNK	888	25.50%
Not applicable	652	18.70%
Total	3483	100.10%

Note: V13, individual-level data

Secret balloting, in addition to nomination process, is an important principle of a free and fair election, and it is required by the 1998 Organic Law (Goodwin-Gill 2006; Sawer 2001). Many scholars have used secret ballots as a measure of election quality (Bai 2001; Wang 2003). Only when voters are able to cast a ballot in a secret place can they vote freely. The 2005 MCA Survey shows that secret ballot booths are not as widespread as competitive election and only 40 percent of the villager respondents reported that they had secret ballot booths.

Table 4 When electing the current village committee, were secret ballot booths set up?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1394	40.0%
No	862	24.7%
Not applicable	638	18.3%
DNK	595	17.1%
Total	3489	100%

Note: V20, individual-level data

The dependent variables are the congruence between villager and leader answers to the questions asking about the nomination process and the use of secret ballot booths. A high

congruence suggests low level of information distortion and a low congruence suggests high

level of information distortion. However, it is important to note that in some sampled villages,

few voters have opinions about the election process. Table 1 shows that almost 30 percent of all

the sampled villagers did not provide specific answers for the nomination process ("DNK", or

"not applicable"). In villages where the majority of villager respondents fail to give specific

answers, the comparison between villager and leader reports is meaningless and the

congruence index (high, medium, low) does not apply, because in these villages, little

information about election process can be drawn from the villagers. Consequently, this paper is

only interested in comparing the villager reports with the leader reports in the villages where a

majority of villagers had opinions about nomination process and the use of secret booths. So

before the comparison, I have to first identify the villages in which most of the villagers had

opinions about the election process. This is done through looking into the villager congruence

on the perceptions of election process.

Regarding election process, there are survey questions respectively asking about the

nomination process and the use of secret ballot booths in the individual-level questionnaire.

V 13 When electing the current village committee, how were the preliminary candidates
nominated?
1. Directly nominated by villagers
2. Nominated by election committee
3. Nominated by party branch
4. Nominated by superiors
7. Not applicable
8. Do not know

V 20 When electing the current village committee, was secret ballot booths set up in your
village?

1. Yes
2. No
7. Not applicable
8. Do not know

When coding the congruence of voter perceptions, the majority rule is employed. The majority rule has been used by researchers to estimate the election process when the respondents in a village give inconsistent answers (Kennedy et al. 2004; Shi 1999a). Specifically, if more than 50 percent of the respondents in a village give the same answer other than "DNK" or "not applicable," the level of congruence of this village is coded as 2, which refers to "high with opinion," because this suggests that most of the villagers share the similar perceptions of the election process. If more than 50 percent of the respondents of one village report "DNK" or "not applicable," the level of congruence is coded as 0, referring to "high without opinion," because it suggests that most of the villagers have no opinion of the election process. If 50 percent or more of the respondents of one village give specific answers other than "DNK" or "not applicable," but meanwhile their answers are inconsistent, the congruence of voter perception of this village is low (coded as 1), because this suggests that although most of the villagers in that village hold an opinion (they are able to give specific answers), their opinions are different. This coding process is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5 Coding Process of Villager Congruence on Perceptions of Election Process

Criteria	Level of villager congruence
The majority of respondents give the same answer other than "DNK" or "not applicable"	High with opinion (2)
The majority of respondents of one village give inconsistent answers other than "DNK" or "not applicable"	Low (1)

The half or majority of the respondents of one village report "DNK" or "not applicable"	High without opinion (0)

What are the proportions of these three kinds of villages? In Figure 1, about 38 percent of the 501 villages in the 2005 MCA Survey have "high without opinion" congruence on nomination process, and about 30 percent of the villages have "high without opinion" congruence in the use of secret ballot booths.[4] I will not compare the leader-villager perceptions on election process in villages with "high without opinion" congruence.

Moreover, in comparison to nomination process, villages have a higher level of congruence on the use of secret booths. This is probably due to the fact that the presence of secret ballot booths is a more concrete fact than the nomination process, so it is easier to recall and less likely for the villagers to give contradictory answers.

Figure 1 Voter Congruence on Perceptions of Election Process

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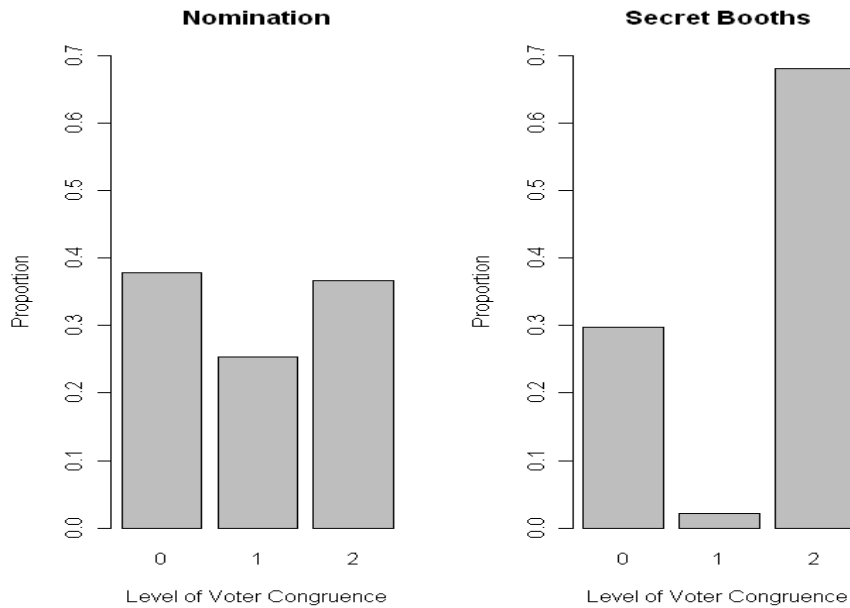
[4] The individual-level survey is completed by villagers from 501 villages.

The next measure is the congruence between villagers (aggregate perceptions) and the village leaders' perceptions. An index is used to compare the leaders' reports with the villagers' reports on nomination process and secret ballot booths. But one problem has to be solved before creating the congruence indexes. The question that asks about the nomination process in the village-level questionnaire does not have the identical options as the question in the individual-level questionnaire. Different from the four options in the individual-level questionnaire (V13), the question (V29) in the village-level questionnaire has seven options.

V29 When electing the current village committee, how were the preliminary candidates nominated?
1. By all villagers (hai xuan)
2. Jointly nominated by some voters (xuanmin lianhe timing)
3. By party branch or mass organizations (quntuan zuzhi)
4. By superiors
5. By villager small groups or villager representatives meeting (cunmin daibiao huiyi)
6. By election leading team (cun xuanju gongzuo lingdao xiaozuo)
7. Self-nomination
8. Other

To make the two questions comparable, all of the options in both questions are categorized into four types of nomination process (Table 6).

Table 6 Categories of nomination process

Nominated by villagers (1)	Villager (V13): (1) directly nominated by villagers Leader (V29): (1) sea election; (2) jointly nominated by voters;(7) voter self-nominated
Nominated by villager groups (2)	Villager (V13): (2) nominated by election committee Leader (V29): (5) nominated by villager groups or villager representative meetings (6) nominated by election affairs leading groups
Nominated by party branch (3)	Villager (V13): (3) nominated by the party branch Leader (V29): (3) nominated by party branch or mass organizations
Nominated by	Villager (V13): (4) nominated by superiors

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superiors (4)	Leader (V29): (4) nominated by superiors

As is shown in Table 7, for the villages with "high and opinion" congruence on the perceptions of election process, if the leader's perceptions match with the perceptions of more than 50 percent villagers', the congruence is coded as high. This happens in villages where the leader's perceptions and the majority of the villagers' perceptions to the survey are similar. If the leader's perception is different from the report given by the majority of the villagers, the level of congruence is coded as low. In these villages, leaders obviously reported differently from their fellow villagers.

For the villages with low voter congruence on the perceptions of election process, if the leaders' reports match with the reports given by a plurality[5] of the respondents, the level of congruence is coded as medium. Otherwise, it is coded as low. In the cases that there are equal numbers of villagers that report different processes, as long as the leader's report matches with any of them, the congruence level is coded as medium. Villages with medium leader-villager congruence are the villages where leaders' reports are the same as many of the villagers' but since there are also villagers reporting differently, it does not provide as strong evidence of the consistency between villager and leader reports as villages with high leader-villager congruence.

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[5] The number of respondents having one particular answer does not need to exceed 50 percent of the total number, but it has to outnumber the respondents having any other answer.

Table 7 Coding Process of Congruence Index

Criteria	Leader-villager Congruence
leader's report=the majority's report	High (3)
leader's report=the plurality's report	Medium (2)
leader's report≠the majority's report OR leader's report ≠the plurality's report	Low (1)

The comparisons between the villager and leader perceptions in a village will yield two congruence indices for each village, one for the nomination process ($congruence_n$), the other for the use of secret ballot booths $(congruence_b)$. Table 8 shows that in terms of both nomination and secret ballot booths, there are around 25 percent of the villages with low level of leader-villager congruence, which is an indication of potential information distortion.

Table 8 Leader-villager Congruence in Reports on Election Process

Congruence	Nomination	Secret ballot booths
High	49.1% (139)	72.4% (239)
Medium	23.0% (65)	2.4% (8)
Low	27.9% (79)	25.2% (83)
Total	100% (283)	100% (330)

Note: Villages where villagers have no opinions of election process are not included.

Independent Variables

Based upon the five hypotheses to be tested in this paper, the six key independent variables are the clan and kinship influence ($clan_i$) on the VC election, the villagers' overall education level ($education_i$), the party influence on the VCs ($party_i$), the village's dependence on agriculture ($agriculture_i$), the village's distance to county seat ($county_i$), and the villages' distance to town seat ($town_i$).

The clan and kinship influence on the VC is measured by the score of clan influence of one

village. Each villager in the individual-level data was asked about the clan and kinship influence of VCs.

Q34 Do you think clans and kinship have influence on your VC election?
1. Very big influence (4)
2. Big influence (3)
3. Some influence (2)
4. No influence (1)
5. Do not know
6. Do not answer

The variable $clan_i$ will be the average of the scores given by the respondents in each village. Table 16 in the appendix shows that overall, the clan and kinship influence on the VC is very small. On average, the influence score is only 1.83, which lies between no influence and some influence.

With respect to education level, the individual-level questionnaire asks about the villager respondents' education level.

V3 What is your education level?

1. Illiterate
2. Elementary school
3. Junior high school
4. High school
5. Technical secondary school
6. Junior college or above

The villager community's education level in a village ($education_i$) is the average of the villager respondents' education level in a village. Table 16 in the appendix shows that, the

villager communities' average education level is 2.44, between elementary school and junior

high school.

The party influence in a village will be measured by the proportion of party members in the

VC. The relevant survey question is V16 and V16J in the village-level questionnaire.

V16 There are_____ members in your current VC, including chair, vice chair, and
members.

V16J, Among all the VC members, there are_____party members.

$$party_i = V16J/V16 \qquad (1)$$

According to Table 16 in the appendix, the Chinese Communist Party is quite influential

on the village committees. The average party membership of the VCs is 75 percent.

The village's dependence on agriculture (*agriculture_i*) is measured by the per capital arable

land (V7A, the village-level data). The survey question is below. The average per capita arable

in the villages in the village-level survey is 1.6 mu (Table 16).

V7A The arable land per capita in your village is_____ mu.[6]

The next two key independent variables are the village's distance to its county seat and

_____

[6] 1 mu=666.66 m^2

town seat. In the village-level questionnaire, there are questions directly asking a village's distance to county seat and town seat.

V2A: Your village is____ kilometers from the county seat.

V2B: Your village is____ kilometers from the town seat.

Apart from the above key independent variables, six geographic dummy variables will be added as control variables. Each of the surveyed villages belongs to one of the seven regions including Northeast, the North China, the East China, the Central China, the South China, the Southwest, and the Northwest. Table 9 is the details of the regions within the 2005 MCA Survey. The geographic dummy variables control for the economic development of different regions. Figure 2 presents the average village per capital net income in the seven different regions. This figure is created based on the question (V6, the village-level questionnaire) that asks the village leaders the per capita net income in their villages. It can be seen that the villages in the East China is significantly wealthier than other parts of China and Northwest and Southwest China are significantly less developed.

Table 9 Chinese Regions

The Northeast (*NE*)	Heilongjiang, Jinlin, Liaoning
The North China (*N*)	Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Hebei, Tianjin
The East China (*E*)	Anhui, Fujian, Shandong, Zhejing, Jiangsu
The Central China (*C*)	Hunan, Henan, Hubei, Jiangxi
The South China (*S*)	Guangxi, Guangdong
The Southwest (*SW*)	Guizhou, Sichuan, Yunnan, Chongqing
The Northwest (*NW*)	Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Shaanxi

Figure 2 Average Village Per Capita Income in Seven Regions
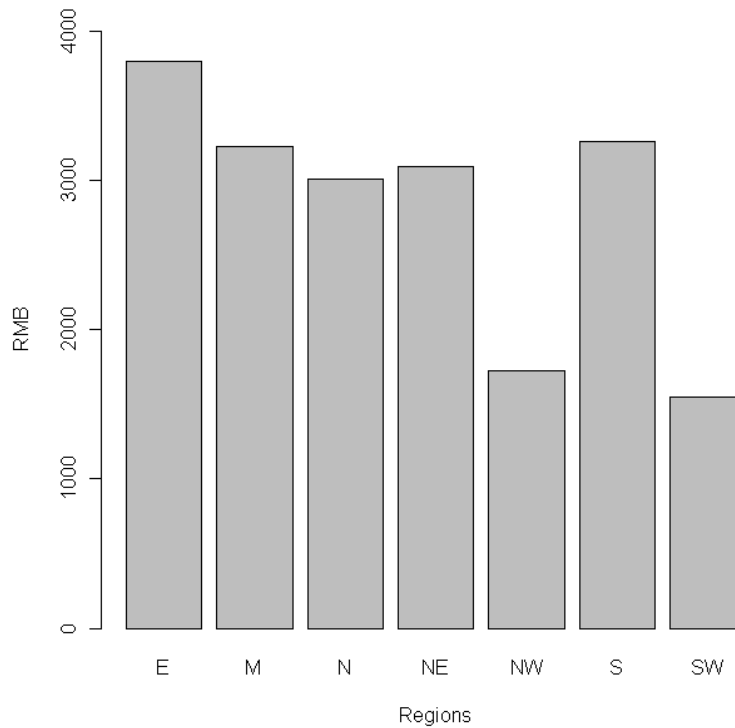
Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

One of the hypotheses suggests that clan and kinship should be negatively associated with the leader-villager congruence on the perceptions on nomination process. In other words, in villages where village elections are heavily influenced by clans, a bigger difference between villager and leader perceptions on election process should be observed. However, the descriptive statistics do not show clear evidence for this hypothesis. Table 10 and Table 18 (in the appendix) show that clan influence on the village election does not result in marked differences in the leader-villager congruence on election process.

Another hypothesis suggests that party has a negative influence on the congruence on election process. Table 10 shows the CCP party branch does have a negative influence on the leader-villager congruence on perceptions of nomination process. Among the villages where over 80 percent of the VC members are CCP members, only 41.1 percent of the villages have high leader-villager congruence on perceptions of the nomination process. But in villages where the membership in the VC is less than 80 percent, the percentage is 58.2 percent.

While the local party officials seem to manipulate the election process, they do not seem to be manipulating the use of secret ballot booths. As is shown in Table 18 in the appendix, party influence does not make a big difference in terms of the leader-villager congruence on the perceptions of the use of secret ballot booths.

Table 10 Predictors of Leader-villager Congruence on Perceptions of Nomination Process

Congruence on Nomination	Clan Influence		Party Influence	
	<1.667	≥1.667	<0.8	≥0.8
1	29.7% (44)	25.9% (35)	23.8% (29)	32.2% (47)
2	22.3% (33)	23.7% (32)	18.0% (22)	26.7% (39)
3	48.0% (71)	50.4% (68)	58.2% (71)	41.1% (60)
Total	100% (148)	100% (135)	100% (122)	100% (146)

Note: the cut-off points are the median of each variable.

Another hypothesis suggests that a village distance to its administrative centers should be negatively associated with the leader-villager congruence. But Table 11 shows the opposite: the closer a village to its town seat, the lower the leader-villager congruence on the perceptions of the use of secret ballot booths. The descriptive statistics reveal no significant relations between congruence and county distance.

Table 11 Predictors of Leader-villager Congruence on Perceptions of Use of Secret Ballot Booths

Congruence on Secret Ballot Booths	County Distance		Town Distance	
	<20	≥20	<4	≥4
1	27.0% (37)	23.8% (46)	32.1% (42)	20.6% (41)
2	2.2% (3)	2.6% (5)	4.6% (6)	1.0% (2)
3	70.8% (97)	73.6% (142)	63.4% (83)	78.4% (156)
Total	100% (137)	100% (193)	100% (131)	100% (199)

Note: the cut-off points are the median of each variable.

Ordered Logistic Regression Models and Findings

Two ordered logistic regression models are built in order to see the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Ordered logistic regression is employed because the two dependent variables—*congruence$_n$* and *congruence$_b$*—are both ordinal variables with 3 levels, 3 representing high level of leader-villager congruence, 2 medium level, and 1 low level.

$$congruence_n = \beta_0 - \beta_1 clan_i + \beta_2 education_i - \beta_3 party_i + \beta_4 agriculture_i - \beta_5 county_i - \beta_6 town_i$$

$$+ \beta_8 region_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad \text{(Model 1)}$$

$$congruence_b = \beta_0 - \beta_1 clan_i + \beta_2 education_i - \beta_3 party_i + \beta_4 agriculture_i - \beta_5 county_i - \beta_6 town_i$$

$$+ \beta_8 region_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad \text{(Model 2)}$$

Because *region$_i$* is a nominal variable with seven values, six dummy variables are created in each ordered regression model. As is shown in Figure 2, East China is wealthiest and most developed, so the East China is made the baseline with which the rest of the regions will be compared.

A correlation matrix for the independent variables can be found in the appendix (Table 19). It shows no high correlation between any of the independent variables.

The results of the ordered logistic regression models reflect the descriptive analysis; the proportion of party members on the VC is negatively correlated with the congruence on the perceptions of nomination process and this correlation is statistically significant (see Table 12). It is consistent with the descriptive analysis and supports the hypothesis that the *leader information distortion of election process is MORE serious in villages where the village committees are more influenced by the party branch.* This result means that the local party branches in the Chinese countryside may be subverting national party-government local election policy to capture the local election. The village election makes the elected village cadres accountable to their electorates, but if they are party members, they also need to be accountable to the party. The party's impact on elite capture is further exacerbated by the presence of party secretary in each village. The secretary is not a popularly village cadre. As a result, if a party secretary is not on the VC, his direct accountability to the villagers is very limited. In a considerable number of Chinese villages, it is the party secretary, rather than the VCs that keeps tight control of power (Oi and Rozelle 2000; Guo and Bernstein 2004). However, it should be made clear that the local party branch's capture of the election process does not necessarily reflect the central CCP's will. In fact, the central party government may lose political legitimacy if the local party branches manipulate the national law on village elections.[7]

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[7] One of the main reasons that the village elections were introduced was to help the central leadership control local corruption and monitor local cadres. In reality, the central party has difficult time monitoring and controlling the grassroots

Another significant factor that contributes to leaders' information distortion is one of the geographic dummy variables—northwest. The finding is that the leader-villager congruence on the perceptions of nomination process is lower in the Northwest China than in the East China. In addition, the dummy variable of the Northeast China is close to the conventional standard of being statistically significant (p-value=0.065), but in contrast to the Northwest China, the Northeast China tends to have higher congruence on the perceptions on the nomination process than the East China. This is consistent with the belief that the East China and the Northeast China, such as Fujian and Jilin Provinces, have set the examples of developing sound election processes (Kennedy et al. 2004).

Table 12 Determinants of Leader-villager Congruence on Nomination Process and Use of Secret Ballot Booths

Independent variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coefficient	Walt Z	Coefficient	Walt Z
Clan	-0.086	-0.460	-0.227	-1.070
Education level	0.144	0.530	-0.149	-0.500
Party influence	-1.003*	-2.280	-0.217	-0.460
Agriculture	-0.085	-1.690	0.090	0.780
County distance	-0.003	-0.980	-0.013*	-2.130
Town distance	0.004	0.220	0.081*	2.610
Region=Central	-0.009	-0.030	-0.535	-1.340
Region=North	-0.216	-0.490	-0.604	-1.370
Region=Northeast	0.967	1.840	-0.194	-0.310
Region=Northwest	-1.232*	-2.240	-0.335	-0.560
Region=South	-0.541	-1.130	-0.830	-1.560
Region=Southwest	-0.641	-1.680	-0.494	-1.180
R-square	0.104		0.086	

* P≤0.05

party members. It is costly to watch all the village cadres. By allowing villagers to openly elect and recall village cadres, the CCP shifts the monitoring costs to the villagers.

There are also other independent variables that are substantively important and suggestive, although they are not statistically significant by the conventional standards. As is shown in Table 12, a village's dependence on agriculture is negatively associated with the congruence on the perceptions on nomination process (p-value=0.091), which means the more agricultural a village is, the more vulnerable it is to the village elites' information distortion. This result is opposite to my hypothesis, which suggests that there should be less information distortion in agricultural villages. A possible explanation is that for many villages, land is still a valuable resource that the elites may want to capture. This is especially true in the villages whose land has been expropriated by the government for public use. The village leaders are generally thought to benefit themselves through land speculation. Over the years, land issue has become a major source of villager-cadre tension and public discontent in rural China (O'Brien and Li 2006). This idea is supported by Table 13, which shows that the leader-village congruence on nomination process is more likely to be low in villages where land was expropriated for public use during the period of 1995 to 2005.

Table 13 Land Expropriation and Congruence on Nomination Process

	Land expropriation	
Congruence on nomination process	Yes	No
High	43.1% (53)	53.7% (86)
Medium	22.8% (28)	23.1% (37)
Low	34.1% (42)	23.1% (37)
Total	100% (123)	100% (160)

Note: This table is created based on V12 in the village-level survey: In the past decade, has the land in your villages been expropriated?

With respect to the leader-villager congruence on the perceptions of the use of secret ballot booths, none of clan, party, education, or agriculture has significant relationships with the dependent variable. The only two independent variables that are statistically significant are the distances to county seat and town seat (see Table 12). The literature suggests that villages close to administrative centers have less information distortion. But interestingly, the influences of distances to county and town are in opposite directions. Although the descriptive statistics in Table 11 does not show a clear correlation between county distance and congruence, the regression does show that the closer a village to its county seat, the more congruent the leader and villager perceptions on the use of secret ballot booths. In contrast, the closer a village to its town seat, the less congruent. The higher-level governments are supposed to enforce the Organic Law, and as a result, the proximity to administrative centers should make this enforcement physically easier. Why is the information distortion more serious in villages close to their town seats? One explanation is that township government officials are the immediate superiors to the village cadres, and the immediate superiors serve more to encourage elite capture rather than curb it. This is because the town governments rely much on the village cadres to implement the central policies and thus have more stakes in controlling the village cadres through the village election. In comparison, the county governments, as higher-level of governments, are more committed to enforce the Organic Law and play more positive roles in checking the village leaders' elite capture. In fact, many studies find that the Chinese villagers have more faith in the higher authorities than their local governments (O'Brien and Li 1995; Michelson ; Li and O'Brien 1996). Consequently many Chinese peasants would rather lodge complaints to higher-level governments than their local cadres. As O'Brien

and Li (1995, 778) put it:

"the Centre is our benefactor (enren [恩人]), the province is our relative, the county is a good person, the township is an evil person, and the village is our enemy." If villagers are able to reach higher levels, either directly or through visiting journalists, relatives outside the village, passing inspection teams, or even through visits by provincial or national leaders, their chance of gaining a hearing and redress may indeed improve."

Now that the determinants of the leader-villager congruence have been discussed, one question still remains to be answered: among all the leaders who distorted the information, how many have over-reported the election quality and how many under-reported the election quality? One possible explanation is that this could be due to the information distortion from the villager side. It is possible that villagers are less likely to tell the truth because they are afraid to report what they believe are unfair elections. Some studies find that the in villages with low quality of election, more villagers report "do not know" for fear of political pressure (Kennedy and Shi 2011). If this is the case, it should be observed that in the villages where leaders under-reported the election quality, the percentage of DNKs is higher. This assumption is to some degree supported by Table 14, in which 27.2 percent of the villagers in the "under-report" villages versus 23.8 percent of the villagers in the "over-report" villages report "not applicable" or "do not know."

Figure 3 shows that for the use of secret ballot booths, an overwhelming majority of the information distortion comes from the village leaders' over-reports of the election quality, which is quite natural. However, for nomination process, quite a part (around 46 percent) of the

information distortion seems to result from the village leaders' under-reports of the election

quality. This finding is somehow counterintuitive. What benefits can village elites capture by

under-reporting the quality of the election, through which they themselves came into office?

One possible explanation is that this could be due to the information distortion from the

villager side. It is possible that villagers are less likely to tell the truth because they are afraid to

report what they believe are unfair elections. Some studies find that the in villages with low

quality of election, more villagers report "do not know" for fear of political pressure (Kennedy

and Shi 2011). If this is the case, it should be observed that in the villages where leaders

under-reported the election quality, the percentage of DNKs is higher. This assumption is to

some degree supported by Table 14, in which 27.2 percent of the villagers in the "under-report"

villages versus 23.8 percent of the villagers in the "over-report" villages report "not applicable"

or "do not know."

Figure 3 Two Types of Information Distortion

Nomination Process

Secret Ballot Booths
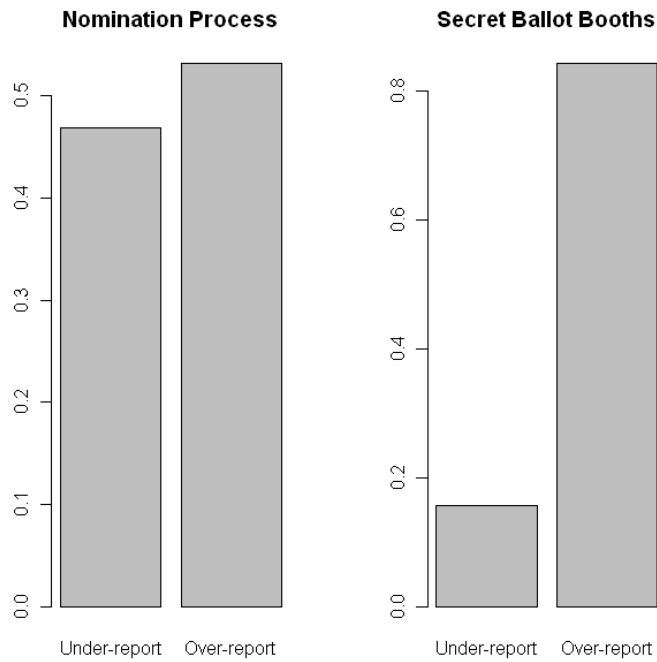
Table 14 DNKs and NAs in Two Types of Villages

	"Underreport" Villages	"Over-report" Villages
Specific answers	72.8% (198)	76.2% (221)
Not applicable or DNK	27.2 % (74)	23.8% (69)
Total	100% (272)	100% (290)

Another possible reason why village leaders "under-report" the election quality may be

that the villagers' education level is lower in these villages, so the villagers are unaware of the

election process and perceive a better election than what actually occurred in the village. The

data also provides evidence for this assumption. Table 15 shows that in the "under-report"

villages, a lower proportion of villagers have completed junior high school or above

education than in the "over-report" villages.

Table 15 Education Level and Two Types of Villages

Education Level	"Underreport" Villages	"Over-report" Villages
Junior High or above	38.3% (105)	46.9% (136)
Below junior high	61.7% (169)	53.1% (154)
Total	100% (290)	100% (274)

Conclusion

The primary goal of this paper is to discover if the Chinese village elites' information distortion, as a form of elite capture, is a universal or local problem in China. In addition, this paper has tried to find out what are the factors that influence the degree of information distortion in the Chinese villages. Five important conclusions have been reached.

First, there is fair number of villagers who have little information about the election process. Figure 1 shows that when asked about election process or the use of secret ballot booths, around 30 percent of the villages reported "do not know" or "not applicable." This has been a major obstacle for the research in village elections in China to know the actual election process from the villagers. This high percentage of "DNKs" may be because the villagers in those villages are fearful to report what they perceive is manipulated elections. It is also possible that the villagers simply do not care about the village elections.

Second, for the villages where a certain amount of information on the election process is observed among villagers, information distortion clearly exists, but it is far from a universal problem. Table 8 shows that in about one forth of the villages, the leaders' reports are obviously inconsistent with the majority of the villagers' reports (low congruence). What is interesting is that more than 40 percent of information distortion on the nomination process actually results from the leaders' under-report of the election quality (One possible explanation is that this could be due to the information distortion from the villager side. It is possible that villagers are

less likely to tell the truth because they are afraid to report what they believe are unfair

elections. Some studies find that the in villages with low quality of election, more villagers

report "do not know" for fear of political pressure (Kennedy and Shi 2011). If this is the case, it

should be observed that in the villages where leaders under-reported the election quality, the

percentage of DNKs is higher. This assumption is to some degree supported by Table 14, in

which 27.2 percent of the villagers in the "under-report" villages versus 23.8 percent of the

villagers in the "over-report" villages report "not applicable" or "do not know."

Figure 3). This is counterintuitive because it seems to make no sense that leaders who came

into office through elections would downgrade the election quality. One possible explanation is

that it is the villagers who over-reported the election quality, rather than the leaders who

under-reported the election quality. Villagers may have done so for fear of political persecution.

The respondents' fear of persecution has been an important problem facing survey studies in

Chinese politics and it has been discussed in different works (Shi 2001; Chen 2004). Aside

from the fear of political persecution, education level might be another factor that leads

villagers' over-reports of election quality. The villages where villagers over-reported the

generally have a less educated villager community, which is shown in Table 15. And a widely

held belief is that less educated people are less critical of the election process.

However, these two factors do not explain another question: why do the villagers

over-report nomination process but not the secret ballots? This may result from a

methodological issue. In the questionnaires, there are more options under the questions about

nomination process than under the questions about the use of secret ballot booths. This makes

the questions about nomination process less straightforward and facing with so many options,

villager respondents might be less certain about the answers they were to choose, which may have led to the villagers' over-reports on nomination process.

Third, although the literature suggests that clan should exert influence on information distortion, our study shows that it is not this case. Clan is not found to make the congruence different, either in terms of nomination process or the use of secret ballot booths. In fact, on a national scope, clan and kinship's influence on the village elections is not as big as is expected. Among the 502 villages, only 7.4 percent have big or very big clan influence on the village elections (Table 20).

Fourth, the CCP local party branch serves to distort the information of nomination process. The percentage of the CCP members on the village committee is found to be negatively associated with the leader-villager congruence, meaning that the local party branch exacerbates leaders' information distortion. However, it is important to make the distinction between the local CCP branches and the central CCP. It is the local party elites, rather than the central party officials, that capture the election process. This suggests that the central party-government lacks the capacity to implement some policies and control local party cadres.

Fifth, with respect to the use of secret ballot booths, only the proximity to administrative centers is found to exert influence on the leader-villager congruence. But interestingly, being close to the county seat lessens the information distortion, while being close to the town seat aggravates the information distortion. This is a manifestation of the fact that the town governments, as the immediate superiors of the village cadres, are more interested in manipulating the village elections than well implementing the Organic Law. This also suggests that county governments play a stronger role in enforcing the Organic Law and supervising the

self-governance of the villages in their vicinity.

The last point made in this paper is that without an objective source of information about the actual election process, this paper is only suggestive, rather than proving the existence of information distortion. The question of if it is the leaders' answers or the villagers' answers that are closer to the objective facts deserves rigorous investigation by future studies.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Supplementary Tables

Table 16 Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

	Min.	Median	Mean	Max.	Sd.	N. of cases
Clan	1.00	1.71	1.83	4.00	0.65	500
Education	1.00	2.38	2.44	5.17	0.59	501
Party	0.00	0.80	0.75	1.00	0.29	362
Agriculture	0.00	1.00	1.60	57.00	3.70	373
County	0.00	20.00	29.63	997.00	55.38	379
Town	0.00	4.00	6.20	45.00	6.31	379

Source: The 2005 MCA Survey

Table 17 Determinants of Leader-villager Congruence on the Perceptions of Nomination Process

	Education		Agriculture		County		Town	
Congruence	<2.29	≥2.29	<1	≥1	<20	≥20	<4	≥4
1	26.5%	29.8%	26%	31.4%	25.5%	31.4%	24.4%	33%
	(43)	(36)	(45)	(33)	(42)	(37)	(41)	(38)
2	20.4%	26.4%	26%	19%	24.2%	21.2%	23.8%	21.7%
	(33)	(32)	(45)	(20)	(40)	(25)	(40)	(25)
3	53.1%	43.8%	48%	49.5%	50.3%	47.5%	51.8%	45.2%
	(86)	(53)	(83)	(52)	(83)	(56)	(87)	(52)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(162)	(121)	(173)	(105)	(165)	(118)	(168)	(115)

Note: the cut-off points are the median of each variable

Table 18 Determinants of Leader-villager Congruence on the Use of Secret Ballot Booths

	Clan		Education		Party		Agriculture	
Congruence	<1.667	≥1.667	<2.29	≥2.29	<0.8	≥0.8	<1	≥1
1	26.3%	23.9%	28.7%	21.1%	25.4%	25.2%	22.3%	29.5%
	(45)	(38)	(18)	(32)	(43)	(37)	(45)	(36)
2	4.1%	0.6%	1.7%	3.3%	4.1%	0.7%	2.0%	3.3%
	(7)	(1)	(3)	(5)	(7)	(1)	(4)	(4)

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3	69.6%	75.5%	69.7%	75.7%	70.4%	74.1%	75.7%	67.2%
	(119)	(120)	(124)	(115)	(119)	(109)	(153)	(82)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(171)	(159)	(178)	(152)	(169)	(147)	(202)	(122)

Note: the cut-off points are the median of each variable

Table 19 Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables

	Clan	Education	Party	Agriculture	County	Town	Region
Clan	1.00						
Education	0.13	1.00					
Party	-0.12	-0.09	1.00				
Agriculture	0.05	0.03	-0.01	1.00			
County	-0.11	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	1.00		
Town	-0.04	-0.12	-0.03	0.05	0.14	1.00	
Region	-0.19	-0.04	-0.04	0.05	0.14	-0.04	1.00

Table 20 Clan and Kinship's Influence on Village Elections

Clan Influence	Frequency	Percentage
<3	465	92.6%
≥3	37	7.4%
Total	502	100%

Note: "3" denotes big influence. The larger the number, the bigger the influence.

Appendix II: Acronym List

CBD: Community Based Development

CCP: Chinese Communist Party

DNK: Do Not Know

MCA: Ministry of Civil Affairs of China

VC: Villagers' Committee

Appendix III: Description of the MCA 2005 Survey

Since the implementation of "Organic Law of the Villagers Committees" in 1987,

elections at village level as well as villager self-governance have been carried out in China

for more than 20 years. However, due to the lack of comprehensive data, our understanding

of villager self-governance has been relying on regional surveys done by scholars and data

reported by local governments. In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the

current situation of China's villager self-governance, and to make a scientific evaluation of its

performance, the Ministry of Civil Affairs conducted a nationwide project in May 2005 titled

"Sample Survey of China's Villager Self-governance". This project was sponsored by The

Carter Center's China Program and implemented by the Institute of Sociology at the Chinese

Academy of Social Sciences, with the assistance of the Beijing Center for Policy

Research   (BCPR). The entire program lasted for a year, involving nearly 400 investigators

and coordinators.

The sampling frame was designed based upon the data gathered during the fifth national

census in 2000. 520 village committees in 260 villages and towns over 130 cities and

counties were selected using PPS sampling method, covering a population of 1.6 million

people from all provinces and autonomous regions, with the exception of Tibet. The final

sample size was 3,564 people.

The investigators of the survey project were mainly composed of currently employed or

retired middle school teachers. The project team held 6 training courses, each lasting 5 days,

for the investigators in Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Hangzhou, Chengdu, and Guiyang from August to September in 2005. A total of 276 investigators participated in the training and 264 of them passed the final examination.

All sides of the project were consulted during the design of the questionnaire. From June to July 2005, a test survey comprised of 60 questionnaires was conducted in Beijing suburbs, and the final questionnaire was amended based on the results obtained from the test survey. The project team also designed specific questionnaires for migrant workers and village cadres in order to compare the results with those obtained from villager surveys.

Face to face interviews were conducted from October 2005 to March 2006. All the received questionnaires were verified twice before being entered into the computer program.

Among the questionnaires distributed, 3,552 questionnaires for villagers were collected out of 3,564 copies, with a response rate of 99.7%; 375 questionnaires for village cadres were collected out of 379 copies and the response rate was 98.2%. Valid questionnaires were recorded via EPi software by two persons and the final output was exported to SPSS.

Upon Chinese government's approval, The Carter Center is glad to release the data and questionnaires for public access with the hope that this research could help us further understand and promote China's village democracy.

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