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Rights Consciousness, Economic Interests, and the 2003 District-Level People's Congress Elections in China: Middle Class Motivations and Democratic Implications

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RIGHTS CONSCIOUSNESS, ECONOMIC INTERESTS, AND THE 2003 DISTRICT-LEVEL
PEOPLE'S CONGRESS ELECTIONS IN CHINA: MIDDLE CLASS MOTIVATIONS AND
DEMOCRATIC IMPLICATIONS

by

XINSONG WANG

Under the Direction of Kim Reimann, Michael Herb and William Downs

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the motivations of the Chinese middle class members to run for District-level people's congress (DPC) elections in Shenzhen and Beijing in 2003. It is interested in exploring why the middle class members wanted to run for the DPC positions that do not have real political power in China, and how their behavior can influence political change in China. By systematically analyzing the candidates' campaign speeches and activities, this study reveals that the major motivating factors behind the middle class candidates' decision to run for the elections were to protect their property interests and their increasing desire to defend political rights. This thesis argues that the campaigners' actions in Shenzhen and Beijing will affect the democratization process in China.

INDEX WORDS: China, People's congress, Elections, Middle class, Democratization, Rights-consciousness

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master's of Arts
Georgia State University

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCP:	Chinese Communist Party
DPC:	District-level People's Congress
LPC:	Local People's Congress
NPC:	National People's Congress
BMG:	Beijing Municipal Government
BUGL:	Beijing University of Governance and Law
BUPT:	Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication
MCA:	Ministry of Civil Affairs

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between economic development and democratization has been a hotly debated topic in political science for many years. Students of Chinese politics have long been concerned about the potential democratic transformation caused by the economic liberalization of this Socialist country dominated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for over five decades. Despite dramatic domestic economic reforms and a much more engaged and open posture vis-à-vis the outside world, the CCP has not dramatically changed its authoritarian way of governance. Some observers have argued that the authoritarian government will be able to adjust and consolidate, thereby allowing it to stay in power. However, the constant social changes in China brought about by recent economic development have started to put increasing pressure on the state for political changes. The emergence of a new middle class and its members' numerous social and political demands are among the most pressing challenges facing the Chinese state in this period of rapid economic change.

However, as scholars of China have started to explore the political leanings of the new middle class in China and what role it will play in transforming the political structure of China, the results have not been very clear. On the one hand, the middle class members are expected to demand political opening because they are wealthier and better educated. On the other hand, they may withdraw such demands if they are afraid that their wealth and social status could be taken from them by the Communist authority and destroyed by political changes. The latter has

made some scholars argue that it is unlikely that the middle class members in China will participate in politics to demand political changes.

The emergence of some middle class campaigners running for District-level People's Congress (DPC) elections in 2003 has given us an opportunity to study the Chinese middle class's attitudes toward political participation and whether their desire for participation will contribute to democratization in China. During these elections in Shenzhen and Beijing, dozens of middle class Chinese conducted election campaigns to be nominated as candidates and elected as people's deputies (*renda daibiao*) to the DPCs, a relatively powerless organization in Chinese political structure.

This thesis examines the motivations of the middle class members for participating in politics. It is especially interested in exploring why the middle class members wanted to run for people's deputies in the DPCs that do not have real political power, and how their behavior might influence political change in China. Moreover, by studying the Chinese middle class' political attitudes, the thesis tries to shed light on the middle class's roles in democratization in general.

By systematically analyzing the candidates' campaign speeches and activities and their speeches during the media interviews, this study reveals that the major motivating factors behind the middle class DPC candidates' decision to run for the elections were to protect their property interests and their increasing desire to defend political rights. This thesis argues that the campaigners' actions in Shenzhen and Beijing will affect the democratization process in China in two ways. First, it will help to legitimize the democratic and competitive election procedures in future grassroots elections in China. Second, the fact that the campaigners applied legalistic means to defend their political rights granted by the state law also indicated a change in the way

middle class members confront the authoritarian state. This thesis suggests that the legalistic means used by the DPC election campaigners will pose a threat to the monopoly of power by the CCP and incur potential institutional changes in China in the future.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study of the new middle class's motivations to run for local elections is important as it could help us understand the tendency of their political participation and how the participation would affect the existing political structure. The Chinese middle class candidates' decision to run for the DPC elections is exclusively worth investigating considering the fact that the people's congress system is not given real political power in the status quo of the Chinese politics. The study on the subject may help us see the changes of people's views on local people's congresses and politics in general. This section will explore why running for people's congress elections is unusual in China and lay out the research questions that this thesis will seek to answer.

The people's Congress in China is granted superior power by the Chinese Constitution. "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at different levels."¹ People's deputies at various levels of congresses are elected by the Chinese people to represent their interests and will do so by participating "in the exercise of State power in accordance with the functions and powers vested in the people's congresses at the corresponding levels by the Constitution and relevant laws."²

The law endows many functions to People's Congress and deputies such as monitoring the government, legislation, appointment of bureaucrats, decision-making on substantial policies,

etc. However, in reality, the primary role of the people's congress system is "more nominal than real" (Nathan 1985, 194). People's deputies basically serve as a "link" (*niudai*) between the government and the people. They represent the "state authority" and are responsible to provide "a rationale for policy" made by the state and diffuse "societal pressures" (O'Brien 1994, 359).³ In other words, rather than representing the interests of voters, people's deputies appear to be unpaid government staff whose job is to mobilize "the masses to implement decisions made by the central government rather than actually making decisions" (Shi 1999b, 1118). Because the Chinese People's Congress has "a less powerful political status than governments, not to mention the Party," it has been largely regarded as a rubber stamp (Young 2002, 726). Overtime, this has become an informal but widely recognized rule in the Chinese political system.

The direct election of Local People's Congress (LPC) and indirect election of people's congresses of higher levels have also been strictly controlled by the CCP.⁴ Although the CCP amended the election law⁵ in the late 1970s to let voters directly elect the deputies to local people's congresses, nominate candidates, choose among multiple candidates, and vote secretly, it has continued to control the entire process of LPC elections such as voter registration, nomination, mobilizing voters, duration of election campaigns, etc. The amended election law also prohibits formation of political parties and precludes electoral competition⁶.

Given the constraints of LPC elections from the CCP and considering the weakness of the People's Congress, Chinese voters usually vote without enthusiasm, and very few would bother to run for LPC elections. As suggested by McCormick's research on Chinese local people's congress elections, even after their candidacy was confirmed, candidates had not intended to become a deputy and had not taken any effort to secure their elections. McCormick concluded that, "candidates rarely campaign in the usual sense of that word" (McCormick 1996, 40-41).

Election campaigning is almost unimaginable to the Chinese people especially after the election law was amended in 1982. The amended election law in 1979 once stated, “The political parties, mass organizations and voters may introduce deputy candidates by all kinds of means” (Yuan 2003, 223). Then in the 1980 LPC elections, some college students and workers in Beijing, Changsha and Shanghai ran election campaigns by organizing rallies and passing literatures to test the amended law (Nathan 1985, 205-07). Worried that the heated campaigning activities were producing potential “social disorder”, the National People’s Congress (NPC) amended the law in 1982 and specified the ways candidates could interact with voters and call for their support (Nathan 1985, 223). It states, “The electoral committee or the presidium of the people's congress shall brief the voters or deputies on the personal circumstances of candidates for deputy. The political parties, mass organizations, voters or deputies who recommend candidates may brief group meetings of voters or deputies about the candidates they are recommending.”⁷ However, the effects of such “group meetings” are limited. Normally voters are only briefed with very basic information of the candidates such as education level, party affiliation, employment, awards, etc. Therefore, voters lack the knowledge of candidates’ skills and capacities that are necessary for them to make wise decisions in casting votes. Since then, voters have become further alienated from participating in the elections (Yuan 2003, 224) and there have been very few election campaigns.⁸ For a long time, the word *jingxuan* (election campaign), which is believed to be a feature of the “Western capitalism”, has been a taboo among electoral officials and staff.⁹

In 2003, however, election campaigns were revived during the urban DPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing. In April and May, 8 citizens in Shenzhen sought candidacies to be elected as people’s deputies in the DPC elections. Most of them reached out to publicize

themselves by putting up posters, handing out flyers and name cards, and mailing letters of self-introduction to local residents. One of the write-in candidates won the election by a big lead over two final candidates.

Seven months later, during the DPC elections in Beijing, 27 citizens conducted election campaigns to be nominated and elected. In addition to passing out flyers and putting up posters, campaigners in Beijing also distributed brochures of election law to voters and posted campaign speeches at online discussion boards. One of the campaigners even set up a 3-member campaign office to help him win the election.

It is interesting to note that many campaigners in Shenzhen and Beijing came from the middle class that is newly emerging from the decades of economic reforms of China. For example, at least three campaigners in Shenzhen were homeowners and at least three worked for private enterprises as opposed to the Socialist *danwei*.¹⁰ In Beijing, the 26 campaigners were college students, university professors, lawyers and businessmen. At least nine were homeowners who wished to represent the interests of homeowners.

One may wonder if there is a link between the social class of the campaigners and their motivations in running for the DPC elections. If so, considering the fact that the DPC elections have been practically ignored by most voters for two decades, what inspired these middle class campaigners to run for the elections in 2003? More importantly, why did they want to run for a political position that is largely symbolic in the Chinese political system? Will the campaign activities in 2003 exert any effects on democratic elections in China in the future? What does the Chinese middle class's campaigning behavior say about the influences of middle class on democratization in general? The rest of this thesis will try to address these issues.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

In order to study the motivations of the middle class members in China to participate in local elections, one needs to understand the logic behind the effects of socio-economic changes on political development and what role the middle class plays in this process. In the Chinese case in particular, one needs to understand what concerns the Chinese new middle class members most and how these concerns affect their decision to participate in politics. This section will review the existing literature on middle class and political development, and the literature on the development of the Chinese middle class.

The relationship between the emergence of middle class and political transformation has long been debated in the field of comparative politics. Lipset once suggested that the larger the size of the new middle class, the higher the chance for democracy to flourish (Lipset 1981). In his seminal paper, Lipset hypothesized a causal relationship between high levels of economic development and the prevalence of democracy, and explained that rising incomes would mitigate class conflicts so that the lower strata could be tolerated (Lipset 1959, 69-105). Similarly, in explaining how various factors brought about by economic development could sustain democracy, Huntington stated that since democracy means majority rule, it is “only possible if the majority is a relatively satisfied middle class, and not an impoverished majority confronting an inordinately wealthy oligarchy” (Huntington 1984, 199).

The social mobilization theory posits that economic development increases the interaction between individuals and states, which, in turn, encourages people to participate in political decision-making processes (Shi 1999a, 425-44). Mobilization theory also posits that economic development alters social class structure by expanding the middle class. As greater

portions of the population become educated and wealthy, they will become more interested in political decision-making, more sensitive to the political opportunities available, and more active in political participation (Nie, Powell and Prewitt 1969, 374). As Lipset et al. argued, “People with more income, in complex and widely interdependent work situations, with more education, and more access to health and other services are more likely to ask for increased political freedom” (Lipset, Seong, and Torres 1993, 166). These arguments are supported by many cases of democratization in the real world. China’s neighbors, Taiwan and South Korea for example, were democratized in the late 1980s partly due to the increasing political demands from the fledging middle class in their domestic societies.

There are alternative views on the relationship between middle class and democratic development during the economic development. For example, Huntington himself once warned that the middle class could be anti-democratic when they are threatened by working class movements (Huntington 1991, 66). In her literature review of democratization theories, Eva Bellin identified the capitalist class and working class as the two social forces in fostering democratic change. She mentioned that some scholars hold the view that “while capitalists supported the introduction of representative government and the protection of civil liberties, they opposed the extension of political rights to the lower classes” (Bellin 2000, 176). Bellin viewed both the capitalist class and the working class as “contingent democrats” (Bellin 2000, 179).

While there are contending views with regard to the middle class’ impact on political transformation, in the Chinese case the research on the relationship between new middle class and potential Chinese democratization has yet to find any clear correlation. There is mixed evidence whether accumulation of wealth among China’s entrepreneurs has fostered pro-democratic attitudes. While some affluent people rely on the state for future prosperity and

appear content with maintaining an authoritarian political system, others have preferred competitive politics. Read, for example, has argued:

“...business people can be highly dependent on the state in numerous ways for their economic success; for instance, for access to capital and relief from extractive predation. Democratization could well harm, rather than promote, their business interests. Moreover, to achieve their aims they often rely on individual clientelistic strategies. ... other scholars...pointing to a heightened sense of the common beliefs and interests of private business people and in some quarters hypothetical support for political competition and an end to the Party’s monopoly on power, but with little concrete political action” (Read 2003, 37).

Assuming that establishment of civil society may advance democratization, some research has focused on the Chinese middle class’ participation in associational activities and examined whether associational life could help develop civil society in China as economic interests have multiplied and personal freedom has grown (Gold 1990, 18-31; He 1997; Read 2003). Gold argued that with increasing personal control over assets, wealthy people have more economic interests and may defend them through collective action, given that there is more openness in the realm of social organization and larger personal freedom (Gold 1990, 31). Others argued that the newly wealthy “tend to participate in state-mediated associational forms, which are sometimes described as corporatist, as opposed to generating the type of autonomous groups that could wield real clout” (Read 2003, 36). Basically, it is doubtful whether the new middle class members in China are able to establish a mature civil society that will boost a democratic movement.

In summary, the literature suggest that until now it is questionable whether middle class will be a driving factor in democratization and whether the Chinese middle class can wield power to promote democracy in China. Moreover, very little research has systematically examined the real political participation by the Chinese new middle class members and particularly their participation in local elections, partly due to the lack of such cases. My research seeks to fill this research gap by doing individual-level analysis using motivation data

from the actual middle class candidates who ran for the 2003 DPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing.

As China is undergoing major economic transitions, it is worthwhile to explore whether and how the middle class members participate in politics as their way of life has been altered by rapid economic changes. For example, purchasing a private home became possible as the housing reform unfolded in the late 1990s and as the middle class members' income started to increase. Ownership of property, one could argue, potentially provides middle class citizens material incentives to get involved in politics.

Since the CCP took power in 1949, urban housing was owned by governments or by work units (*danwei*), and was allocated to urban residents for free. Starting from the 1980s, China implemented housing reforms to sell existing homes to residents and to build new commercial apartment complexes for sale. It was estimated that nearly five million square meters of new homes were constructed each year from 1995 to 1997 (Read 2003, 40).

Once people purchase private homes in newly built apartment complexes or neighborhood (*xiaoqu*), they are inclined to protect the properties they own and to maintain the quality of neighborhood they live in. To do so, they have to deal with two actors that are involved in the apartment complexes. One is the development companies (*kaifa shang*) which construct commercial homes and are either privately owned or owned by branches of governments. Many development companies make promises to prospective customers such as maintaining certain size of grasslands in the apartment complex, installing natural gas, building fitness center, etc. But very often they end up using the proposed budget to construct more buildings in the complex or simply break their promises after customers purchase homes. This has been a major reason for the conflicts between homeowners and development companies.

The other actor is the property-management companies (*wuye guanli gongsi*) which handle all community affairs such as sanitation, security, parking, grassland maintenance, etc. Property-management companies are often owned by development companies or by the housing management office of the government. Very few are privately owned.¹¹ Many management companies try to maximize their profits by exacting unreasonable fees from homeowners. When homeowners have problems with their apartments within the warranty period, the management companies often ignore them or send them to the development companies.

As individual homeowners found their property interests unprotected, they formed homeowner associations in apartment complexes to defend their economic interests (*weiquan*¹²) and resist exaction from the management company. However, since management companies and development companies usually have connections with the government, homeowners have often been defeated in their battles with them. There have been many cases where activists of homeowner associations were beaten by gangsters employed by development companies and management companies.

Being unable to secure their property interests, the homeowners may consider joining the government to protect their economic interests by using public power. Thus it is a sensible decision for them to choose to work for local people's congress and represent other homeowners as people's deputies so that they can submit bills for local government to consider and suggest to formulating or amending laws and regulations to better protect their economic interests. A number of campaigners in the 2003 DPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing were leaders of homeowner associations and they believed that their economic interests could be better protected if they are represented in the LPCs.¹³ This suggests a hypothesis worth investigating. Hence,

Hypothesis 1: As a new middle class with property emerges, they will be more likely to turn to politics if they feel their economic interests are at stake. A primary motivating factor for running for DPC elections is to protect one's economic interest.

In addition to economic interests, candidates may run for elections for political reasons. For example, according to Nathan's research, for the campaigners in 1980 to run for the DPC elections was an opportunity both to test the potential of the election law amended in 1979 and to change the state power through the congress (Nathan 1985, 206). While it is hardly realistic to expect that election to the DPC can seriously challenge state power, it is worth noting that the campaigners in 1980 had a keen perception on how the law could be used to challenge state authority and help them reach the goal of democratization. For them, running election campaigns based on the law was a "first step toward the realization of socialism democracy" (Nathan 1985, 206).

From the 1980 election we see a strong desire among campaigners to defend their political rights after the election law was amended. Such a desire has reappeared in the past decade as people have become more aware of their rights. In a recent study, for example, Minxin Pei found that the Chinese people's awareness of their rights granted by state laws and policies has increased in the 1990s (Pei 2000).

Pei attributed such rights-consciousness to the legal reforms, socio-economic development and a changing international context. As the level of education increases, citizens are more aware of the economic policies, legal reforms, and political system under which they are governed. Moreover, the opening of the state to the international community has enabled the citizens to observe and experience the political and legal systems in other countries. These developments have made the Chinese citizens clearer about the rights they hold, and the ones

that are not allowed by the Chinese authority. As a result, they become more willing to defend their rights once infringed and more eager to practice rights that were ignored in the past.

People's desire to defend their rights implies their rights-consciousness.

Under the authoritarian government, many rights that are granted to Chinese citizens by the Constitution and laws are kept in tight control by the CCP or not allowed to be put into practice (Nathan 1986, 161). For example, although the election law specifies that 10 or more voters may collectively nominate preliminary candidates to the LPC deputies elections, the CCP often replaces the candidates nominated by voters with those it trusts.¹⁴ Similarly, although the law allows candidates to meet voters at "voters' group meetings" organized by the election committee, it does not specify whether to allow for election campaigns beyond "group meetings" as a way for candidates to interact with voters. As a result, voters lose their trust in the election procedures and they rarely try to nominate candidates conjointly, and candidates barely reach out to publicize themselves. In the 2003 DPC elections, however, some voters regained their enthusiasm and assembled to nominate their candidates. Meanwhile, the candidates, including the independent ones, bravely tested the election law by running campaigns to seek ballots from the voters. It implies that the new middle class members have a clearer view of the political rights they hold and are ready to defend such rights. This suggests a plausibility of another primary motivating factor for the candidates to run for elections. Hence,

Hypothesis 2: The middle class members will participate in politics if they want to defend their political rights. A primary motivating factor for running for DPC elections is one's rights-consciousness.

Some middle class members may turn to politics both to protect their economic interests and to defend their political rights. In order to protect their property interests by joining the

LPCs, the middle class members have to understand the advantages and flaws of the political system so that they may assess the possibility of their success in elections. Once they realize that certain political rights are not ensured, they will seek to consolidate them so that they are able to win the elections and have their economic interests ensured. Thus the political rights-consciousness emerged partly for economic reasons. For some election campaigners, to be elected as a people's deputy is a means not only for protecting their property rights, but also for defending the political rights of being elected in local elections. It suggests a hypothesis to be tested.

Hypothesis 3: The middle class members will run for DPC elections if they want to protect their economic interests and defend their political rights.

For some middle class members, to become a people's deputy may be an honor and it may be helpful to advance their personal career. In urban China, the ratio between the number of people's deputies and that of voters is very small. Normally a people's deputy represents approximately 40,000 voters. Although a people's deputy does not possess real political power, it still symbolizes an honor to represent a large number of people in the government. The honor may even be aggrandized considering that being a local people's deputies is an unpaid job and people may appreciate his volunteering spirit. Presumably, some middle class members, particularly the business people, will take advantage of the honor of being people's deputies as a way for publicity. For example, displaying his title of being a people's deputy on name cards and business publicity materials will increase his credibility and strengthen his credentials. It may also indicate his connection with the government and affect others' view on his capacity to achieve business success. Hence,

Hypothesis 4: The middle class members will run for DPC elections if they want to pursue personal honor.

And,

Hypothesis 5: The middle class members will run for DPC elections if they want to advance their personal careers.

4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

In order to test the validity of these hypotheses, I will first clarify the meanings of the variables described in the hypotheses. Then I will find sufficient empirical evidence to measure the variables and present the evidence by using certain methodology so as to justify the causal relations to be examined.

The term of middle class has various definitions. I apply and agree with the reference in the following description: “People with more income, in complex and widely interdependent work situations, with more education, and more access to health and other services are more likely to ask for increased political freedom” (Lipset, Seong, and Torres 1993, 166). In this thesis I mainly refer to white-collar workers, professionals, technicians, and intellectuals as members of the middle class.

Political rights-consciousness here refers to people’s awareness of political rights ensured by the Constitution and law, and more importantly, their willingness to defend such rights. In this thesis, the middle class members’ economic interests are embedded in protection of their private properties and other property-related interests. The change of levels of rights-consciousness and economic interests will be explained by the discussion of changing social

backgrounds in China and will be shown through statements in the interviews of the election campaigners.

This thesis will draw its data from the newspaper and magazine reports on the election campaigners. According to the Carter Center's *China Elections and Governance* website¹⁵, about 125 Chinese articles, including both news report and scholarly studies, were written on the 2003 Shenzhen DPC elections and campaigns. About 60 news articles and editorials have been dedicated to the campaign activities in Beijing DPC elections, and another 300 news reports covering the entire election processes. The news reports are from the newspapers and magazines publishers all over China. Many of them are not managed by the central government of China or are known as reporting more independently and honestly. In addition, there are dozens of Western news reports on both elections in 2003. Meanwhile, data comes from the campaigners' speeches posted on the Internet discussion boards or quoted by media reports, and their interviews with the Chinese media. Some of the empirical evidence is collected from the articles published by the *China Elections and Governance* website whose managing team sent an independent observer to monitor part of the election processes in Beijing. As most of the data is in Chinese, translating the speeches and interviews will facilitate Western understanding of the candidates' motivations in 2003 DPC elections. The thesis also refers to and discusses some of the regulations in the election law of China, which comes from the website of the National People's Congress of China.

To test the hypotheses, the data is analyzed in this thesis in two steps. First, I read all articles, identify the campaigners (N=34), and code the various motivations of the candidates for running for the offices. Based on this aggregate data, I analyze the results to provide a first-cut answer as to which hypotheses are most accurate. After presenting and evaluating this aggregate

data, I conduct a close study of individual election candidates in order to examine in greater detail precisely how the motivating factors affected the campaigners and prompted them to run for the elections. As the predictions in the proposed hypotheses are not made by other known theories, case studies are the best format to capture evidence that may confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses. Moreover, a successful confirmation of the predictions proposed in the hypotheses through case studies may provide necessary backdrops for other people to further trace the causal process and to see how a more general theory works (Evera 1997, 54).

One may argue that the small number of campaigners (N=34) in contrast to the large number of voters may affect the validity of hypothesized causal relations. Moreover, considering that there are local people's congress elections in every city and township of China every three or five years, the fact that only two cities were found with campaigning activities may further diminish the significance of the candidates' campaigning behavior. However, it is worth noting that because of the rise of campaigning activities carried out by these 34 candidates, the 2003 LPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing were extensively reported by the Chinese and foreign media, and consequently drew extraordinary attention from the public. Therefore, although the number of cases is small, they are more visible than expected in the public eye, thus may have greater significance than suggested by their small number.

5. FINDINGS: AGGREGATE DATA

From all relevant articles, I identify the motivations of each of 34 candidates who ran for the DPC elections and list them in Table 1. Then I categorize the various motivating factors and identify the candidates who were motivated by each categorized factor (see Table 3). It turns out

that the data support the first three hypotheses while little evidence supports the fourth and the fifth hypothesis. I will do an in-depth analysis on the data to illustrate the correlations.

Table 1: Candidates and Their Motivations

No	Name	Location	Occupation	Motivation
1	Maowen Du	Beijing	Retired	Protect the interests of home owners
2	Fengchen Yang	Beijing	N/A	N/A
3	Hailiang Nie	Beijing	Businessman	Protect the interests of home owners
4	Xiazhen Shao	Beijing	Researcher, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Protect the interests of home owners
5	Junchao Chen	Beijing	N/A	N/A
6	Wenbin Zhou	Beijing	N/A	N/A
7	Ruiqi Wang	Beijing	N/A	Protect the interests of home owners
8	Liang Ming	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights
9	Yao Yao	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights Protect the interests of students
10	Menglin Li	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights Protect the interests of students Improve his social abilities
11	Min Li	Beijing	College Student	Protect the interests of migrant workers, college students and women
12	Wenjie Ouyang	Beijing	College Student	Protect the interests of students Advance the Chinese democracy via elections
13	Jun Yin	Beijing	College Student	Advance democratic DPC elections Advance the role of people's deputies Advance Chinese democracy and rule of law Protect the interests of students and other <i>ruoshi qunti</i> (socially weak groups)
14	Lei Shi	Beijing	College Student	Protect the interests of students Defend the election rights Advance democracy in school
15	Yuelai Xie	Beijing	College Student	Advance Chinese democracy via elections Defend the election rights
16	Jia Zhao	Beijing	College Student	Protect the interests of students
17	Junhao Chen	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights Advance democracy in China via elections
18	Riqiang Chen	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights Protect the interests of students
19	Meng Chen	Beijing	College Student	Defend the election rights Protect the interests of students and socially weak groups Develop Haidian District's economy, infrastructure and environment

20	Zhaoyong Du	Beijing	Lawyer	Monitor the government
21	Xingshui Zhang	Beijing	Lawyer	Advance political reform Defend the election rights
22	Lihua Tong	Beijing	Lawyer	Defend the interest of voters
23	Zhiyong Xu	Beijing	Law Professor	Defend the political right of election Advance rule of law Advance democratization in China Contribute to public affairs
24	Jinbiao Ge	Beijing	Law Professor	Protect the interests of students Defend the election rights
25	Kexin Shu	Beijing	Researcher, Businessman	Defend political rights by participating in elections Contribute to public affairs Advance democratic self-determination in urban communities Protect the interests of home owners Publicize the election rights and the functions of DPCs and people's deputies Advance democracy in China
26	Hai Wang	Beijing	Businessman	Contribute to law-making Advance democratic self-determination in urban communities Advance the functions of people's deputies Set an example for others to participate in elections Advance both self-interest and others' interests (socially weak groups and home owners) Publicize the election rights
27	Youmei Xiao	Shenzhen	Accountant	Protect the interests of voters Monitor the government
28	Haining Wu	Shenzhen	Businessman	Protect the interests of voters Protect the interests of home owners Defend the election rights
29	Jiajian Zou	Shenzhen	Employee of a Telecommunication Company	Protect the interests of home owners and socially weak groups by participating in law-making processes Publicize the DPC elections and increase the voters' rights-consciousness
30	Liang Wang	Shenzhen	President of a Technical Institute	Represent the interests of students Honor of the school Defend the election rights
31	Bo Xu	Shenzhen	Engineer, Shenzhen Urban Infrastructure Planning Institute	Defend the election rights
32	Yuanbai Ye	Shenzhen	Insurance Salesman	Protect the interests of home owners
33	Xiaoying Xie	Shenzhen	N/A	Protect the interest of socially weak groups
34	Shiping Luo	Shenzhen	Deputy Director of Road Bureau, Baoan District	N/A

Notes:

1. It was mentioned at many occasions that Fengchen Yang (No. 2), Junchao Chen (No. 5) and Wenbin Zhou (No. 6) announced their candidacies as independent candidates. Although their speeches are not available, all reports that mentioned their names indicated that they appeared as homeowners and they were listed together with No. 1, 3, 4 and 7. Therefore, it is reasonable for us to assume that the above three candidates were motivated by the demand of protecting private properties.
2. Shiping Luo (No. 34) was mentioned only once by the media as himself trying to seek the candidacy and winning the election.¹⁶ But whether he was nominated by the Party or by voters and whether he was an independent candidate were not known by us. His motivations also were not available.
3. Due to the data constraints, some campaigners' occupations could not be found.

Table 2 shows that, in general, most of the campaigners in Beijing and Shenzhen were members of new middle class in China. It is shown in the data that 68% of the 34 campaigners were private business leaders, lawyers, and college students and professors. 9% were white-collar employees who worked for either state-owned or privately-owned enterprises. Another 6% were senior employees in government or government-owned institution. Their participation has given a special meaning to the 2003 DPC elections.

Table 2: Occupations of the Campaigners in 2003 DPC Elections

Occupation	Number	Percentage (N = 34)
Private Business Leader	4	12%
Lawyer	3	9%
College Student	12	35%
Professor	2	6%
Academic Researcher	1	3%
Assistant to Manager; Senior Accountant	1	3%
Employee of a Telecommunication Company	1	3%
President of Shenzhen Advanced Technical Institute	1	3%
Senior Engineer of Shenzhen Urban Infrastructure Planning Institute	1	3%
Insurance Salesman	1	3%
Deputy Director of Road Bureau, Baoan District of Shenzhen	1	3%
Retired	1	3%
N/A	5	15%

The data in Table 3 indicates that the following factors have motivated the middle class Chinese to seek candidacies or conduct campaigns in the DPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing (see Table 3).

Table 3: Candidates' Motivations

Motivation	Specification	Name	Number	Percentage (N = 34)
Protect voters interests	Protect the interests of home owners	Maowen Du Hailiang Nie Xiazhen Shao Ruiqi Wang Hai Wang Kexin Shu Haining Wu Jiajian Zou Yuanbai Ye (Fengchen Yang Junchao Chen Wenbin Zhou) ¹⁷	12	35%
	Protect the interest of students	Yao Yao Menglin Li Min Li Wenjie Ouyang Jun Yin Lei Shi Jia Zhao Riqiang Chen Meng Chen Jinbiao Ge Liang Wang	11	32%
	Protect the interests of socially weak groups	Min Li Jun Yin Meng Chen Hai Wang Jiajian Zou Xiaoying Xie	6	18%
	Defend the interests of voters (in general)	Lihua Tong Youmei Xiao Haining Wu Hai Wang	4	12%
	Contribute to public affairs	Zhiyong Xu Kexin Shu	2	6%

Defend election rights	Defend election rights	Liang Ming Yao Yao Menglin Li Lei Shi Yuelai Xie Junhao Chen Riqiang Chen Meng Chen Zhaoyong Du Xingshui Zhang Zhiyong Xu Jinbiao Ge Kexin Shu Haining Wu Liang Wang Bo Xu Jun Yin	17	50%
	Publicize the election rights and the functions of DPCs and people's deputies	Kexin Shu Hai Wang Jiajian Zou Jun Yin	4	12%
Advance Chinese democracy	Advance Chinese democracy via elections	Wenjie Ouyang Jun Yin Yuelai Xie Junhao Chen Zhaoyong Du Xingshui Zhang Zhiyong Xu Kexin Shu	8	24%
	Advance rule of law	Jun Yin Zhiyong Xu	2	6%
	Advance democracy in School	Lei Shi	1	3%
	Advance democratic self-determination in urban communities	Kexin Shu Hai Wang	2	6%
Empower the DPCs	Advance the role of people's deputies	Jun Yin Hai Wang	2	6%
	Monitor the government	Zhaoyong Du Xingshui Zhang Youmei Xiao	3	9%
Advance self-interests		Liang Wang	1	3%
Collective honor		Meng Chen	1	3%
Develop regional economy and welfare		Menglin Li	1	3%
Improve personal social abilities		Menglin Li	1	3%

Notes: For a list of candidates and their pledges, please see Table 1.

1) *Protect the interests of voters.* The empirical data shows that 35% of the 34 campaigners in the DPC elections of Shenzhen and Beijing were motivated by their interests of protecting private property, which supports the first hypothesis. In urban cities of China, conflicts between the homeowners and the developers and property management companies have become increasingly severe. The homeowners often find themselves in a disadvantaged situation in striving to protect their property interests against the developers and management companies. At the same time, they see the local people's congresses as a potential political institution through which they can secure their economic interests through legislation and through government power.

We also noticed that 32% of the campaigners, all of whom were college students and faculties, vowed to represent the interests of college students. 18% pledged to protect the interests of socially weak groups (*ruoshi qunti*), and half of these candidates were university students. Finally, 9% and 6% of the candidacy-seekers expressed that they were willing to represent the voters' interests in general and participate in public affairs.

2) *Defend election rights.* Among the 34 campaigners, 50% of them publicly stated that they hoped to defend the rights of voting and the rights of being elected through their participation. Meanwhile, 9% of them hoped to spread the knowledge of election rights among voters via their campaign activities. Some 19 (56%) campaigners were known to carry out campaigning activities to help promote election rights granted by the election law. All these data are supportive of the second hypothesis. In addition,

15% of campaigners promised to empower the DPCs if they were elected. As most of incumbent deputies do not function as they are supposed to, sometimes because they are suppressed by the CCP, the campaigners vowed to serve as responsible deputies by participating in the law-making process, advancing the functions of people's deputies, and monitoring local governments.

Members of the urban middle class usually know more about the political system and legal system of the country as they are better-educated, sometimes wealthier, and more open to the outside world. Accordingly, they are more conscious of political rights and are more likely to struggle for rights that are not ensured in reality. The campaigners in the 2003 DPC elections aimed at testing the legal regulations in the election law in order to ensure that their election rights are not fake ones.¹⁸

- 3) *Economic interests and political rights.* Seen from the empirical data, 12% (or 4) campaigners, mainly homeowner association leaders, were not only motivated by economic interests to run for elections, but also wanted to defend their election rights and to empower the DPCs. In other words, both economic interests and political rights-consciousness have collectively made the middle class members in China run for the DPC elections, which gives some support to the third hypothesis.
- 4) *Advance democracy in China.* 29% of campaigners hoped to advance democracy, rule of law and grassroots self-determination in China and democracy in their universities if elected. This was especially common among the rights-defenders who saw the election campaigns as a step to democratization. The data shows that 42% of those who vowed to defend the election law also called for democratization in China.

The motivation of democratization was not hypothesized in the thesis but it is not a surprising result because presumably the defenders of political rights may want to pursue democracy as a broad goal.

- 5) Finally, the empirical data does not seem to have strong evidence to support other hypothesized causal relations. There is no indication that any of the campaigners ran for DPC elections to gain personal honor. Neither did anyone express to advance his/her career interests by becoming a people's deputy.

6. INTERVIEW DATA AND NARRATIVES: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSES

While the statistical data suggests the overall validity of the hypotheses, analyses of individual cases of the campaigners will help us examine their motivations more closely. By discussing the campaign speeches and media interviews with the campaigners, the following section will show that the campaigners were motivated by their economic interests or political rights consciousness or both.

Economic Interests

The cases of Mr. Zou Jiajian from Shenzhen and Mr. Nie Hailian from Beijing may best illustrate how economic interests motivated them to run the DPC elections. As homeowners, both of them have had problems with the developers and property management companies of their neighborhood communities. Frustrated by their futile efforts in defending their properties

interests, both of them saw people's deputies as helpful in solving their problems thus decided to participate in the DPC elections and become people's deputies themselves.

Zou had struggled for a long time with the developer and the management company over issues related to his and his neighbors' apartments before he decided to run for the 2003 DPC elections in Shenzhen. When he purchased an apartment in a high-rise building in 1998, Zou was promised by the development company that a brand name elevator, probably made by Mitsubishi, would be installed in the building. Only after he moved in did he find that the elevator was made by an unknown manufacturer and, even worse, it sometimes went freefall, which frightened Zou and his neighbors. There were other infrastructure items in the complex that failed to meet the promises made by the developer before the residents made the purchase. In 2001, Zou led the residents to file a lawsuit against the developer. They won the case and were compensated by the developer. Later Zou was elected as chairman of the apartment complex's homeowner association.

Being unsatisfied with the services provided by the property management company and fed up by the unacceptable fees, Zou and his association members unprecedentedly fired the property management company that was affiliated with the developer, and selected another company through an open bid. In the same year, Zou was defeated in another lawsuit and was sentenced to pay 80,000 *yuan* (\$9,756) to the developer who accused Zou for being responsible for an online post on the homeowner association's website written by an unknown member containing scandalous words about the developer.

Then Zou realized that it might be easier to defend the homeowners' interests by joining the DPC and being a people's deputy. However, as an employee of a state-owned enterprise, at first Zou was afraid that running election campaigns would bring him more trouble. It was not

until a week before the election day in Futian District that Zou decided to run as a “write-in” candidate (*lingxuan taren*¹⁹). He grieved to the journalist that “to fight for the residents’ rights single-handedly has been too difficult!”²⁰ He described his life in the past years as being intertwined with lawsuits struggling against the developer and the management company at the expense of his physical and financial well-being. Zou believed that to work within the government to change rules would be better than directly confronting the developer and the management company.²¹

Moreover, as homeowner associations appear in China as newly-born organizations, they have not been completely incorporated into the Chinese legal system. For example, Zou’s homeowner association once was declined by the court as not being a qualified legal subject to initiate a lawsuit when they tried to sue the developer for failing to save enough money for maintenance of the apartment complex. Zou expressly stated that it was the lawsuits in the past years in which he was involved to protect the homeowners’ rights that motivated him to run campaigns in the District people’s deputy elections.²²

Zou said, “If I were elected as a people’s deputy, I would be able to submit bills (to the DPC) and to participate in the rule-making process. I would call for modification of those rules and regulations that are unfavored by the homeowners. I could use the power of public service (*gongquan*) to protect the private rights (*siquan*²³) of the homeowners.” Since he missed the deadline of candidacy nomination, he put up posters on public notice boards in his community or beside convenient stores, appealing to voters to vote for him as a “write-in” candidate. On his campaign poster, Zou wrote, “Please cast your critical vote for a candidate who is courageous to represent the homeowners to protect their rights.”²⁴

In the second case, Mr. Nie Hailiang, 1,200 miles away from where Zou lived, was motivated by similar reasons to carry out election campaigns in Beijing District-level people's congress elections in December 2003.

Three years previous to the election, the prospective homebuyers of *Huilongguan* neighborhood were told by the development company that they would have a playground and grassland on a 10,000-square-meter land in the neighborhood. Since then, however, nothing was constructed and in September 2003, the residents received a notice from the local government that the deserted land would be used to build new apartments for the Department of Public Transportation of the Beijing Municipal Government (BMG). The homeowners in *Huilongguan* neighborhood were infuriated as their interests were sacrificed by the development company.

On September 14, they went to the BMG and submitted their petition. The government set up an investigation team but did not come up with any solution. On October 18, some homeowners were beaten by the construction workers on the land after some oral disputes. Believing it was an intended action by the development company, some 400 homeowners drove over 100 cars to the BMG to petition officials there in the evening. Nie was one of the five homeowner representatives who were able to meet with the officials of Changping District Government and the developer after the petition. By the time the elections in Beijing were held, the land had been deserted. Since Nie became well-known among the residents for doing tremendous work in defending the homeowners' rights in the past three months, he was nominated by the residents as a people's deputy candidate.²⁵

With respect to his participation in the election, Nie confessed that since 1998 when purchasing private homes became possible, people's interests are more embedded in their assets.

Once people are satisfied with their “basic living conditions on clothes and food”, they will have “time and money” to “pursue their rights.”²⁶

In an interview with a magazine, Nie said, “I represent the interests of those who have private assets and of the elites of middle- and small-sized businesses...I would like to improve the humanity and social conditions within the neighborhood, to resolve the conflicts between development companies and homeowners through legislation, and to protect the interests of business leaders.”²⁷

Two other candidacy-seekers, Mr. Du Maowen and Mr. Yang Fengchen were from the same neighborhood as Nie and were also activists in negotiating with the developer and the local government. Du strongly believed that having a people’s deputy representing home owners’ interests would have made it easier for them to deal with the conflicts with the developer. This belief motivated him to run for the elections in Changping District. Reviewing the difficulties in defending their economic interests, Du regretted that the homeowners had no idea who their representatives in the government were or where they were.²⁸ A retired person in his 60s, Du sighed, “What if we had a people’s deputy to have our voice heard in the government!”²⁹ He said, “The repeated failure in defending the homeowners’ rights (*weiquan*) was the most important motivation for me to work within the (political) system to defend our rights.” Du wanted to represent the homeowners and protect their interests if he were elected. “I run for a people’s deputy because I am a homeowner and I love this community that makes me both happy and sorrowful. I deeply understand the difficulties of homeowners and I want to try my best to protect the rights and interests (*quanyi*) of every homeowner.”³⁰ Du pledged to establish an office to receive voters and their suggestions if elected.

In order to make sure that at least one representative of homeowners was elected, later Du and Yang withdrew from the election and supported Nie's campaigns. The strategy worked, and Nie won the election.

Rights-Consciousness

While homeowners desired to protect their economic interests by joining the DPCs, others (i.e., college students, professors and lawyers) (56% in total) intended to claim their rights to run for office and to spread the knowledge of election rights among other voters by carrying out campaigning activities.

Wang Hai, for example, explicitly expressed that his election campaigns were meant to tell the Chinese citizens that they should be aware of their (election) rights and know how to defend them. "Many Chinese people are not aware of their rights to vote or to be elected. Even though they know, they do not use their rights. By participating in the elections, I will prove that China is a democratic country with rule of law."³¹ Wang is well known in China for his persistent efforts to defend consumers' rights by intentionally purchasing fake and problematic products, getting them returned and asking for compensations (*Da Jia*).³² His efforts were believed to have helped Chinese consumers acknowledge that they are protected by the "Law of Consumers Rights Protection (*Xiaofeizhe Quanyi Baohu Fa*)."³³ Similarly, Wang believed that it would help spread the knowledge of election law among voters if a celebrity ran for office and generated publicity about the DPC elections. He told the journalists several times, "Through media I would like to tell people that they should know and use their rights!"³⁴ Wang viewed the

result of the election as not important as the fact of his participation. “If I were elected, I could set an example for other campaigners. If I failed, I could learn a lesson to do better next time.”³⁵

Another campaigner, Shu Kexin, chairman of the homeowner association in his neighborhood, claimed that his campaign efforts were meant to tell people that “the rights to vote and to be elected are granted by the election law, and voters have the legitimacy to participate in elections.”³⁶ Shu had a campaign team with two college students as his assistants. The team designed a poster for Shu and purchased 500 brochures of the election law to deliver to the voters.³⁷ In order to make the voters familiar with Shu and with the functions of people’s deputy, the team set up the Shu Kexin’s Election Office (*Shu Kexin xuanju shiwu bangongshi*) and called for people to bring their questions before the nomination process started.³⁸ Shu also visited the residents’ houses to introduce himself by saying, “Weigh your decision carefully. Then vote.”³⁹

Like Wang Hai, Shu candidly confessed, “I do not have high expectations for being elected. Even if I were elected, how much influence would I be able to yield as one of the 400 deputies? I only hope to tell people through my efforts that we have rights to participate in elections.”⁴⁰ Shu believed that the emergence of election campaigns by other candidates in Beijing’s DPC elections was partly attributed to himself.⁴¹

Shu thought that China has democracy and a good legal system but people need to defend their rights granted by the law. “China has a rather sound legal system but the law is somehow covered up.” Challenged by a British journalist that elections are predetermined in China, Shu responded, “It is not pre-determined. I myself am a self-motivated candidate. It is not that we do not have democracy. It is that nobody strives for democracy.”⁴² His assistant, Zhu Sihao, a college student of Communication University of China, agreed, “The Election Law and People’s

Deputy Law are implementable. Through election campaigns we want to tell people that the laws are not abstract legal regulations, and we are exploring a realistic way to exercise the right of being elected.”⁴³

In fact, Shu and Wang were not only motivated by their rights-consciousness to run for the DPC elections, they also aimed at protecting the economic interests of the homeowners in their neighborhoods. Both Shu Kexin and Wang Hai have been activists of defending the homeowners’ interests in their neighborhoods.⁴⁴ They met each other at a conference of homeowners associations in 2000 and decided to form a “Team of Defending Rights” (*weiquan xiaozu*) with a lawyer named Qin Bing, who has been well known among the homeowners in Beijing for filing law suits against development companies and property management companies in defending the interests of homeowners.⁴⁵ When the three learned the DPC elections to be held in Beijing, they decided to seek candidacies and run campaigns.⁴⁶ Shu vowed to establish his “Office of People’s Deputy” if elected so that he could “strengthen the communication with homeowners and better serve their interests.”⁴⁷ Wang Hai told the journalist that if he were elected, he would “try to push for democratic management of urban neighborhoods” and “improve legal regulations to better protect the homeowners’ interests.”⁴⁸

As shown in Wang and Shu’s cases, the motivations of economic interests and rights-consciousness co-vary with each other in election campaigns. Since many of those who can afford private homes are well-educated and have a better understanding of the political rights, they ran for elections to defend both the election rights and the economic interests.

The student campaigners were also very explicit in defending the political rights by running for the DPC elections. I will discuss the cases of Yin Jun from Beijing University (Beida) and Yao Yao from Beijing University of Governance and Law (BUGL).

Yin, a second-year graduate student, was nominated by student voters of Beida but did not enter the second phase as a final candidate. Yin decided to run for the election as an independent candidate. On the university's BBS⁴⁹, Yin explicitly stated, "The No. 1 purpose of my election campaign was to make the DPC elections more democratic (and more scientific) and to encourage more voters to cast their votes."⁵⁰ Yin pointed out that many voters did not even know there were elections, some electoral staff were not familiar with the election procedures, and voters were not enthusiastic toward the elections because they did not know of the candidates and they were not aware of the functions of the DPC. Yin asserted that the reason why the voters lacked enthusiasm was that there were no election campaigns.

As an independent candidate, he denounced the formal candidates for not doing anything to publicize themselves and interact with the voters. He said, "An important purpose of my election campaigns was to give a hard time to those formal candidates who had not expected themselves to be nominated and who did not expect to conduct campaigns to interact with voters."⁵¹ Once asked to stop his campaigns by a school senior leader, he responded that he would stop under the conditions that either he won the election through campaigns or more than half formal candidates ran election campaigns. "I am not afraid of pressure. I am afraid of indifference (*lengmo*)."⁵²

In another case, Yao Yao, a college student of Beijing University of Governance and Law ranked the defense of election rights as his first motivation to run election campaigns.⁵³ Yao Yao said in his speech, "As a student majoring in law, it is almost a habit to be conscious of rights. Thus when I heard of the elections to be held in Changping District, I decided to participate in the election. I will not only implement my rights to elect other people, but also implement my rights to be elected."⁵⁴

In their speeches, both Yao and Yin also made commitments to protect the interests of college students if they were elected as a people's deputy. However, they did not offer solid solutions to reach their goals. Nor did they give satisfactory answers to the questions raised by voters on how they would fulfill their promises. For example, Yin was asked, "How do you think you could serve as a five-year people's deputy for Beida while you are graduating in a year?" In response, Yin warded off the question by saying, "I do not think that is my problem. Nobody could ensure that he would stay in the same precinct all the time. In addition, I hope to stay at Beida for my PhD study if I were elected."⁵⁵ Neither did Yin offer any specific suggestion as to how he would fulfill his commitments on adding civil education to middle school and primary school students and strengthening civil rights among Chinese citizens.⁵⁶

Indeed, Yin and Yao were similar to other campaigners in seeing their actions more as a means to defend election rights. Although they all made commitments to solve everyday problems that concern the voters in their precincts, they did not seem to have a clear idea as to how they would achieve their goals as a people's deputy. For example, Professor Xu Zhiyong from the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication (BUPT) said in his speech, "I do not campaign for my personal interests. I just wanted to tell people: please trust our law...please believe that we have real election rights, and we need to cherish our democratic rights and treat our law sincerely."⁵⁷ However, when asked what he would do if he were elected, he seemed to be vague. "I am not very familiar with the detailed working procedures of the people's congresses...Five years is a long time, and I do not have any plan at this point...but I will certainly submit bills...and I will try to push for the rule of law and democracy by participating in the congress meetings."⁵⁸ The candidates' repeated references to election rights and democratization have made the voters doubt their capability of solving realistic problems.

Some campaigners promised to empower local people's congresses in monitoring the behavior of local governments and be accountable and obligated if elected as people's deputies. This indicates that people become aware of the responsibilities that were supposed to be undertaken by people's deputies according to the People's Deputies Law but had been neglected in the past. These campaigners hoped to defend the rights granted to people's deputies by law and serve as responsible deputies to counterbalance the monolithic power of state authority.

Zhang Xingshui and Du Zhaoyong said in their campaign speech, "We have noticed that, when making public policies and market economic rules, the power of the government is not effectively inquired and monitored, thus the decision-making to a great extent overlooks the feedback from the public opinion. This motivates us to stand out and conduct campaigns in the Beijing DPCs elections, for the people's deputies are spokesmen of the public, which is stipulated by the Constitution."⁵⁹ Du and Zhang pointed out that many deputies were entitled to represent the people but were not doing their job (*zai qi wei, bu mou qi zheng*). Thus they wished to become full-time deputies because otherwise "we could not devote enough efforts to be a qualified deputy".⁶⁰

Similarly, Wang Hai argued, "People's deputies play an important role! The Constitution delegates honorable power to people's deputies, but many deputies do not fulfill their responsibilities...For some deputies, the title is just a rubber stamp and wields no real power." Wang believes that people's deputies could be more useful.⁶¹

Lastly, none of the cases explicitly shows that the campaigners would run for the elections for reasons such as fame, honor and career interests. Even though such interests may have motivated the campaigners, perhaps they would not say so in the public. Based on the data used in this study, however, there is very little evidence supporting Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Advancing Democratization

Among those who advocated the election rights granted by the law, many also sought to advance Chinese democratization by joining the people's congresses. Some campaigners believed that the campaigning action itself symbolized and promoted a democratic way of political participation. Moreover, once elected, they hoped to serve as responsible people's deputies and apply the rights of people's deputies granted by the Constitution and law so that the LPCs could represent the interests of Chinese people to wield political power. The campaigners believed that these plans, if realized, would pave the way for democratization in China.

Campaigner Xu Zhiyong, a professor of Beijing University of Postal and Telecommunication, believed that democratization is not an "empty word" (*konghua*) or a "penthouse" (*kongzhong lounge*). It needs detailed contents and needs people to participate. He said, "To exercise our election rights within the limits of law is a means to construct our democracy."⁶² Xu argued that although elections by themselves might not advance democratization, the processes of participation and campaigns would help people see the "hope" for eventual democracy.⁶³

Yin Jun believed that his campaign behavior was meant to "pave the way for democratization of his school and his country", and to "kindle the light for the future of his school and his country."⁶⁴ Du Zhaoyong and Zhang Xingshui were even more idealistic in the view of the elections. They believed that "nobody could prevent the elites among the contemporary Chinese citizens from becoming glorious people like Hamilton and Madison. Let the Haidian District be our Virginia!"⁶⁵

In comparison, Shu Kexin and Wang Hai predicted that if they were able to win the elections and become people's deputies, they would at least try to advance the grassroots-level democracy in urban communities. Shu said, "(If I were elected) I would push forward the self-governance of the homeowners in urban communities." "With the institutions for management established, the homeowners need to learn to protect their property rights and learn democracy."⁶⁶ After knowing that he was not elected, he said, "I hoped to give a try for our democratic development. And I wish that more people who are more capable than me will participate in the elections next time."⁶⁷ Wang Hai said, "If I were elected, I would first forge ahead the democratic management in urban communities. I believe that the self-governance of homeowners will bring ahead the Chinese democratization."⁶⁸

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to explain what factors have motivated the urban middle class members in Shenzhen and Beijing to run for the DPC elections in 2003. By dissecting the campaign activities, speeches, and interviews of the campaigners, I found mixed motivating factors which generally support the hypothesized arguments. Some middle class members in Shenzhen and Beijing ran for the DPC elections to advance their economic interests of protecting private property. Some wanted to defend their election rights granted by law and test whether these rights are real ones by running for the DPC elections. Some others were motivated by both economic interests and political-rights consciousness to run for the DPC elections. Although the LPCs only play a nominal role at this moment in Chinese politics, the campaigners were seriously motivated to strive for a chance to protect their private property through the LPC. In

addition, the study shows that many campaigners wished to change the current status quo in Chinese politics by empowering the LPCs if they were elected, and such political goals also justified their efforts to run for people's deputies.

The results and data presented in this study also have implications for the larger question of democratization in China and the middle class's roles in the democratization process. There are two reasons why the 2003 elections may open a way for the democratic development in China.

First, the initiation of competitive elections by the campaigners in 2003 may help to legitimize democratic election procedures, such as popular nomination, transparent determination of final candidates, and free and fair campaigns in future DPC elections and other grassroots-level elections. Since the voters watched campaign behaviors by the candidates in 2003 and became more familiar with the election law, over time they may deem campaigning behaviors as legitimate and expect similar activities in future elections. If such behaviors are suppressed, voters may demand institutional changes to render more democratic and competitive DPC elections. The demand will become more imperative if the democratic elections of people's deputies eventually empower local people's congress and chip away the monopoly of power by the CCP.

The development of village committee elections in China may help us understand how democratic election procedures can be legitimated and consolidated through practices and the potential relevance of recent LPC elections. Since its initiation in 1987, village elections were incrementally implemented in China by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) officials who are in charge (Shi 1999c). At the early stage, the MCA reformers did not push hard to implement absolutely democratic election procedures in villages as the local officials were strongly opposed

to village election reforms and often manipulated such elections. Once peasants started to benefit from the competitive elections, they complained about election fraud in the mid-1990s and would not allow any election manipulation. As observed by Wang Zhenyao, the MCA official who was in charge of the village elections at that time, “The peasants cared less about the bad deeds of corrupt officials and more about the way they were elected” (Liu 2001, 4). By such means, “the MCA could rely on the rural populace to monitor the behavior of local bureaucrats” (Shi 1999c, 404). Eventually it was easier for the MCA officials to consolidate the democratic election procedures in rural villages.

Although the function of the urban DPCs differs from that of the village committees, the democratic and competitive elections of the DPCs may be consolidated in a similar way. Once voters are more aware of the election law and willing to defend political rights, they will not accept the CCP continuing to deny the granted electoral rights and to manipulate the elections. Gradually, institutional change of DPC elections will be demanded by voters to better serve their goals, either economic or political. However, whether the democratic changes of local election would by any chance lead to democracy in China remains to be seen.⁶⁹

Second, the study reveals that the campaigners in the 2003 DPC elections learned to apply the rights granted by the state law in confronting the monopoly control of the CCP. Thus a threat may have appeared to the Chinese authoritative government as it might face more legalistic collective resistance from the people in the future and may have to reform the election system sooner or later to bridge the gap between what is promised by the law and what takes place in reality.

As discussed before, the power of people’s congress and the rights of voters are granted and ensured by the Constitution and the election law. However, such power and rights have long

been suppressed by the CCP. It is worth noting that for some middle class members, the election campaigns served as a way to resist the monopoly control of the DPCs by the CCP. For example, Wang Hai argued that the people's congress needs to be where the citizens exert their power, "Our country does not have a institutional system of 'submitting suggestions' (*najian*). Only if a system of 'submitting suggestions' is established could the civil society play its role and citizens could be the owner of the country."⁷⁰ The CCP may feel threatened when it faces the confrontation from citizens who want to take grip over the power of people's congresses. The potential threat to CCP control is even more critical considering that the campaigners are now equipped with the law. If the CCP continues to manipulate elections and deny certain granted electoral rights, it may face legal suits by voters. One of the lawyers who planned to participate in the 2003 DPC elections in Beijing said that he would sue the CCP-controlled election committee if it eliminated him as a preliminary nominee without giving a reasonable excuse.⁷¹

Although at this moment the capacity of the middle class members in making political changes in China remains to be seen⁷², people's willingness to defend their rights by legalistic means and their heightened sense of rights-consciousness may have effective power in challenging and resisting the state. Kevin O'Brien acknowledged that the Chinese villagers have learned to use "laws, policies, and other officially promoted values" to "apply pressure on those in power who have failed to live up to some professed ideal or who have not implemented some beneficial measure" (O'Brien 1996, 41). He illustrated that the discontented villagers in rural China have learned to cite laws and policies like the regulations limiting "farmer's burdens" to ward off unapproved fees or demands for grain that exceed the agreed amount (O'Brien 1996, 33). While some research has examined the Chinese farmers' collective and legalistic action

against the bullying rules and policies of local cadres, there is still very little research on the changing ways of how urban middle class members collectively counteract the state authority by using laws. This thesis has provided empirical evidence to display such trend.

In conclusion, this thesis reveals the important roles played by the Chinese middle class in initiating the campaigning activities and making the elections more competitive. It supports the argument that the middle class is willing to participate in politics when its members are wealthier and more educated. Such willingness is even stronger when the middle class members' property interests are not securely protected and when the granted political rights are not warranted, as displayed by the middle class campaigners in China. Furthermore, the thesis suggests that the middle class's political participation and its demand for democracy may have a positive effect in spreading the democratic norms among the public and may eventually break down the authoritarian control of the CCP. As a result, democratization is possible with the middle class's participation as a leading force. Such finding may shed light on the theoretical argument that the emergence of middle class under economic development will contribute to a state's democratization process.

NOTES

¹ Article 2, "Constitution of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on December 4, 1982)", *Xinhua News Agency*, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-08/27/content_1047764.htm.

² Article 2, "Law of the People's Republic of China on deputies to the National People's Congress and to the Local People's Congresses at various levels", *China Elections & Governance* (<http://www.chinaelections.org>).

³ O'Brien explained that the Chinese people's deputies implement the tasks assigned by the state and "deny conflicts of interest both within society and between state and society," rather than making real policy changes that are requested by voters.

⁴ There are four levels of people's congresses in China, each corresponding to a level of government bureaucracy. The lowest level is the town/township people's congress in rural areas whose deputies are directly elected by voters. Voters are also allowed to directly elect deputies of county-level congresses in rural areas and those of district-level congresses and county-level city congresses in urban areas. These deputies, on behalf of the voters of the same level and below, elect the deputies to provincial-level and municipal-level people's congresses. Finally, the National People's Congress deputies are elected by deputies to the provincial-level and municipal-level people's congresses. County (District) -level people's congresses and below are considered as local people's congresses.

⁵ The election law here refers to "The Electoral Law of National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses of the People's Republic of China (3rd amendment in 1995)", translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *China Elections and Governance* (<http://www.chinaelections.org>).

⁶ See John Burns, "The People's Republic of China at 50: National People Reform", *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 159, No. 3 (1999), pp. 580-94; Jian Chen and Yang Zhong, "Why Do People Vote in Semicompetitive Elections in China?" *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 64, No. 1 (2002), pp. 178-97; Barrett L. McCormick, "China's Leninist Parliament and Public Sphere: A Comparative Analysis", in Barrett L. McCormick and Jonathan Unger (eds), *China after Socialism: In the Footsteps of Eastern Europe or East Asia?* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. 29-53; Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985); Kevin O'Brien, *Reform without Liberalization: China's National People's Congress and the Politics of Institutional Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Kevin O'Brien, "Agents and Remonstrators: Role Accumulation by Chinese People's Congress Deputies", *The China Quarterly* Vol. 138 (June 1994), pp. 359-80; Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Tianjian Shi, "Voting and Nonvoting in China: Voting Behavior in Plebiscitary and Limited-Choice Elections", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (1999), pp. 1115-39.

⁷ "The Electoral Law" (fn. 5), Article 33.

⁸ In September 1998, three political dissidents of the China Democracy Party (CDP) announced candidacy for the elections of Chaoyang District People's Congress in Beijing. The CDP was founded in June 1998 by long-standing political dissidents who kept close ties with political exiles overseas and human rights groups in Hong Kong. The Party recruited about 200 members across the country within four months, but was cracked down by the CCP in December 1998. See James Conachy, "China Democracy Party Members Face Political Trials." *World Socialist Web Site* (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/aug1999/cdp-a14.shtml>) (August 14, 1999); Minxin Pei, "Rights and Resistance: The Changing Contexts of the Dissident Movement", in Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (eds), *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 28.

⁹ Interview with Yuan Dayi, Professor of Politics at Beijing Governance Administration College, Aug. 2003.

¹⁰ *Danwei*, or work unit, refers to where people were employed under the Socialist China. It covers every job available to the Chinese people. Before the setout of market economy, most Chinese people were included in the Communist-controlled *danwei* system which not only provides jobs for employees, but also social welfares such as housing, health care, pension, etc. The system gradually collapsed after the market economy started in the early 1990s when the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) were reformed and private enterprises emerged. With more and more people employed by private enterprises, the CCP's direct control has been diminished. For the evolution of the *danwei* system in China, see Xiaobo Lü and Elizabeth J. Perry (eds), *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997).

¹¹ Hao Xiaoyao, Lü Fuming and Wang Yuanyuan, “*Wuye ni bei shei paoqi?*” (Property-management Companies: Who Abandoned You?) *Xinhua News Agency*, April 25, 2004.

¹² *Weiquan* means to defend one's rights. Activists of homeowners would like to call themselves *weiquanzhe* (rights-defenders). They believe that to protect property interests and to make development companies realize their promises are part of the rights they hold once they purchase the assets, and they believe that by protecting their property interests, they are indeed defending their rights. Therefore, rights-consciousness has already been embedded in the homeowners' mind.

¹³ For a detailed discussion of urban community development, housing reforms, and homeowner associations' *weiquan* activities in China, see Read 2003; Benjamin Read, “Revitalizing the State's Urban ‘Nerve Tips’ ”, *The China Quarterly*, Issue 163 (Sept. 2000), pp. 806-20.

¹⁴ Article 29 of the election law states, “Political parties and people's organizations may either jointly or separately recommend candidates for deputies. A joint group of at least ten voters or deputies may also recommend candidates.” However, Article 31 stipulates the determination of final candidates as follows, “The election committee shall collect and publish, 15 days prior to the date of election, the list of nominees for deputies for repeated deliberation, discussion and consultation by voter groups in the respective electoral districts and shall decide, in accordance with the opinion of the majority of voters, upon a formal list of candidates to be made public five days prior to the date of election.” See “The Electoral Law” (fn. 5). The “deliberation” and “discussion and consultation” processes are briefly called “*yunniang*” (fermentation) in Chinese, and in reality are manipulated by the CCP so that certain nominees are removed while “qualified” candidates are selected. For a story on how a preliminary candidate was removed in an electoral precinct in Beijing in 2003, see Yuan Dayi, “*Wo shi ruhe bei ‘xieshang’ xialai de* (How was I Removed by ‘Fermentation’)”, *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* (China Newsweek), December 8, 2003.

¹⁵ *China Elections and Governance* (www.chinaelections.org) is a website produced by The Carter Center, focusing on political and social issues in China. It has a fairly complete collection of the media reports on the 2003 DPC elections in Shenzhen and Beijing. I am one of the founders of the website and have been volunteering as assistant Chief Editor of the site.

¹⁶ Shen Lutao, Wu Huanqing and Li Nanling, “*Piaoxiang li tiaochulai de renda daibiao – Wang Liang dangxuan renda daibiao huifang* (People’s deputies jumping out of ballots – review of Liang Wang’s winning the election)”, *Xinhua News Agency*, June 6, 2003.

¹⁷ See Note 1 of Table 1.

¹⁸ Article 3 of the election law stipulates that any Chinese citizen over 18 years old, regardless of his nationality, race, gender, occupation, family background, religion, education, financial condition and duration of residence, has the right to vote and to be elected. “The Electoral Law” (fn. 5).

¹⁹ *Lingxuan taren* literally means “voting for another person.”

²⁰ Fan Qing. “*Zou Jiajian: yezhu wenzheng* (Zou Jiajian: Homeowner Participating in Politics)”, *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Southern Metropolitan Daily), Jan 5, 2004.

²¹ Li Guiru. “*Shenzhen renda daibiao jingxuan muhou* (Background of DPC Elections in Shenzhen)”, *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (China Youth Daily), May 28, 2003.

²² “*Shenzhen shouci chuxian renda ‘duli jingxuanren’* (Independent Candidate First Appeared in Shenzhen District Congress Elections)”, *Wen Wei Po*, May 18, 2003.

²³ *Gongquan* literally means public power while *siquan* means private rights.

²⁴ Liu Juntong and Li Tianjun. “*Shenzhen yi xuanmin zijian jingxuan renda daibiao, yinzhi wushi fen haibao la xuanpiao* (A Voter Campaigned in District Congress Elections in Shenzhen; 50 Posters Printed to Attract Voters)”, *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (China Youth Daily), May 17, 2003.

²⁵ Li Jianmin, “*Nie Hailiang: you hengchan zhe you hengxin* (Nie Hailiang: Those Who Have Private Assets Have Strong Will)”, *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* (China Newsweek), Issue 47, 2003.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Here the “rights” Nie refereed to implied political rights that could be used to protect their property rights.

²⁷ Wu Peishuang, “*‘Beijing Xianxiang’ de linglei jiedu – rang renda daibiao chengwei zhengzhi jia* (Alternative Explanation of ‘Beijing Phenomenon’ – Let the People’s Deputies be Politicians)”, *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* (China Newsweek), Issue 48, 2003.

²⁸ Wan Xingya, “*Beijing liu yezhu jingxuan renda daibiao de taiqian muhou* (The Fronts and Backgrounds of the Six Homeowners in Beijing Who Sought Candidacies to People’s Deputies)”, *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (China Youth Daily), November 20, 2003.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Wang Ru. “*Zijian houxuanren tan xuanju* (Self-nominated Candidates Discussing Elections)”, *China Elections and Governance* (www.chinaelections.org), December 5, 2003.

³² Article 48 of *Xiaofeizhe Quanyi Baohu Fa* (Law of Consumers Rights Protection) states that, when a purchased product is determined by relevant government offices to have quality problems, upon the request of consumer, the sellers or manufactures are responsible to refund the consumer. *Zhongguo Renda Wang* (Website of the National People’s Congress of China; <http://www.npc.gov.cn>).

³³ “*Shu Kexin xiansheng yu Beida tongxue duihua* (Mr. Shu Kexin Talking with Students of Peking University)”, *China Elections and Governance* (www.chinaelections.org), November 18, 2003.

³⁴ Wang (fn. 31).

³⁵ “*Sanrenxing, zijian canxuan renda daibiao* (Three People Running Together: Self-nomination in People’s Deputy Elections)”, *Zhongguo Shehui Bao* (China Society), Oct.25, 2003.

³⁶ Fn. 33.

³⁷ Miao Wei, “*Shu Kexin de jingxuan biaoyan* (The Campaigning Performance by Shu Kexin)”, *Sanlian Shenghuo Zhoukan* (Sanlian Life Weekly), Vol. 265, November 24, 2003.

³⁸ Wan Xingya, “*Wei canxuan renda daibiao, Beijing yi shimin chengli xuanju shiwu bangongshi* (A Beijing Citizen Set Up an Election Affairs Office to Campaign for People’s Deputy Elections)”, *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (China Youth Daily), September 26, 2003.

³⁹ Mark Magnier, “China Moves Toward an Open Vote”, *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 2003.

⁴⁰ Fn. 38.

⁴¹ Fn. 33.

⁴² Fn. 33. Ironically, Shu was eliminated during the “fermentation” process and failed to become a final candidate in his precinct.

⁴³ Fn. 38.

⁴⁴ Shu is a part-time researcher at the Center of Institutional Analysis and Public Policy of Renmin University (People’s University), and has been doing research on urban community democratic management. Wang is also on the research team at the Center. Wang has

contributed to the making and modification of Regulations on Property Management in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai. See Wang Xiaofei, “‘Renda daibiao’ Wang Hai? (Wang Hai, a People’s Deputy?)”, *Nanfang Zhoumo* (Nanfang Weekend), November 6, 2003; Hu Kui, Wu Peishuang and Zhang Lan, “*Shu Kexin de geren jingxuan zhi lu* (The Road of Shu Kexin’s Election Campaigns)”, *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* (China Newsweek), Issue 40, November 3, 2003.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Hu Kui et al.

⁴⁶ Qin quit before the nomination started. He was pressured by the law firm he worked for not to seek candidacy, otherwise he would be fired. He quit both the election and the job. Interview with Qin Bing, November 2003.

⁴⁷ Fn. 35.

⁴⁸ Shi Xiaoliang and Wu Wenkai, “‘Diaomin’ Wang Hai: woyao dang renda daibiao (Censorious Wang Hai: I Want to be a People’s Deputy)”, *Qi Lu Zhoukan* (Qi Lu Weekly), Nov. 14, 2003. Wang once authored a bestseller, “I am a Censorious Citizen.”

⁴⁹ BBS means Bulletin Board System, a type of online forum widely used in Chinese universities. Most campaign activities of student voters, such as posting campaign speeches and answering voters’ questions, were carried out on the school BBS.

⁵⁰ Yin Jun, “*Zhi gewei chubu houxuanren de gongkaixin* (A Public Letter to All Preliminary Candidates)”, *Beida Weiming BBS Zhan* (The BBS of “Unknown” of Beijing University; <http://bbs.pku.edu.cn>).

⁵¹ “*Zijian houxuanren yu xuezi ‘mian dui mian’* (Face to face between candidacy-seekers and students)”, *Beida Weimin BBS Zhan* (The BBS of “Unknown” of Peking University; <http://bbs.pku.edu.cn>). Other nominees were mostly staff and professors of Peking University who were nominated and determined by the election committee or the CCP branch in the school.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ It is worth mentioning that Yao Yao’s father, Yao Lifa is a famous rights-defender in China. He ran for county-level people’s deputy as an independent candidate for three times in Qianjiang city of Hubei province before finally winning in 1998. He painstakingly fulfilled his responsibility as a people’s deputy and made numerous achievements. The most famous one is that he exposed that 187 democratically elected village chairs were “fired” by town/township governments. See Elizabeth Rosenthal, “Far from Beijing, a Semblance of Democracy,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2002. In the October 2003 county-level people’s congress elections in Qianjiang, 33 voters followed Yao to run for the elections as independent candidates. Liu Zhiming, “*Qianjiang zhi xing* (Qianjiang Wakening)”, *Zhongguo Xinwen Zhoukan* (China Newsweek), Iss. 47, 2003. The cases in Qianjiang are not discussed in this thesis as the data available is very limited.

⁵⁴ “*Zhongguo zhengfa daxue xuesheng Yao Yao xuanbu xunqiu Changping qu renda daibiao xuanju houxuanren timing* (Yao Yao, College Student of Beijing University of Governance and Law, Declared to Seek Nomination in Changping District People’s Congress Elections)”, *China Elections and Governance* (www.chinaelections.org), Nov. 18, 2003.

⁵⁵ Fn. 50.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Qin Wen, “*Xu Zhiyong: Qing xiangxin women de xuanjuquan shi zhenshide* (Xu Zhiyong: Please Believe that We have Real Election Rights)”, *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Southern Metropolitan Daily), December 16, 2003.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Du Zhaoyong and Zhang Xingshui. “*Zhi Haidian qu xuanmin de yi feng gongkai xin* (A Letter to Voters of Haidian District)”, *Beijing Kingdom Law Firm*, November 20, 2003. Zhang Xingshui is Director and Partner of the law firm.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Jiang Yingshuang, “*Wang Hai: woxiang canyu guize de zhiding* (Wang Hai: I Want to Participate in Making the Rules)”, *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Southern Metropolitan Daily), Nov. 17, 2003.

⁶² Xu Zhiyong, “*Wo yao jingxuan renda daibiao* (I Want to Run for a People’s Deputy)”, *Beida Weiming BBS Zhan* (The BBS of “Unknown” of Peking Univeristy; <http://bbs.pku.edu.cn>).

⁶³ *Ibid.* Xu is a law professor at Beijing University of Postal and Telecommunication. In 2003, he and other two lawyers submitted a bill to the National People’s Congress of China to ban an unconstitutional national regulation, “*Chengshi liulang qitao renyuan shourong qiansong banfa* (Regulations on Custody and Repatriation of Urban Beggars)”, after a college graduate was mistakenly recognized as a migrant worker without necessary IDs and were beaten to death in the local police bureau in Guangzhou.

⁶⁴ Yin Jun, “*Beijing Daxue shuoshisheng Yin Jun ni zijian canjia benci haidianqun renda daibiao jingxuan* (The Master’s Student of Beijing University, Yin Jun, Plans to Campaign as an Independent Candidate in Haidian District People’s Congress Elections)”, *China Elections and Governance* (www.chinaelections.org), Nov. 9, 2003.

⁶⁵ Du and Zhang (fn. 59).

⁶⁶ Miao (fn. 37).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Jiang (fn. 61).

⁶⁹ Chinese officials and China scholars have divided views on village election's consequences on Chinese democratization. Some believed that village elections have helped establish grassroots democratic institutions and rule of law, and have made farmers aware of the democratic rights and electoral procedures. Others, on the contrary, argued that village democracy would not have substantial effects on democratization of China without the existence of other institutional and cultural factors needed for a democracy. Some held that grassroots reforms were never as effective as that initiated from the top. For a complete discussion of the debates on the meanings of village elections, see Yawei Liu, "Consequences of Villager Committee Elections in China", *China Perspectives*, No. 31 (September 2000), pp. 19-35.

⁷⁰ Wang Xiaofei (fn. 44).

⁷¹ Interview with the lawyer, August 2003.

⁷² Only 5 out of 34 campaigners in Shenzhen and Beijing (15%) won the elections. It suggests that the DPCs are still under control of the state.

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