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"Good Types" in Authoritarian Elections: The Selectoral Connection in Chinese Local Congresses

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Abstract

A new electoral design for subnational congress elections in China allows me to investigate the informational utility of authoritarian elections. Authoritarian regimes are notoriously bad at solving the moral hazard problem in the voter's agency relationship with politicians. Borrowing from the literature on political selection, I theorize that authoritarian elections can nonetheless solve the adverse selection problem: Chinese voters can use their electoral power to select "good types," with personal qualities that signal they will reliably represent local interests. I analyze original data from a survey of 4,071 Chinese local congressmen and women, including voter nominees and communist party nominees. I find that voters do in fact overcome coordination difficulties to nominate and elect "good types." In contacting politicians about local problems after the elections, however, voters hedge their bets by contacting regime insiders too. At these very local levels, congressional representation by means of political selection co-exists with communist party nominating and veto power in the electoral process.

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Long after the third wave of democratization that began in the mid-1970s, authoritarian regimes abound: By a recent count (Svolik, 2012), nearly 40% of countries are authoritarian. Even in comparatively repressive military, monarchical, and single-party authoritarian regimes, however, dictators have opened the political playing field to more players through nominally democratic institutions. Authoritarian elections are now a commonplace; rarely are these elections staged as coercive plebiscites. Empirically, the wager has paid off for dictators: Authoritarian elections are associated not with democratic transition (Brownlee, 2007) but with regime longevity (Geddes, 1999). Exactly *how* is the subject of a sizable literature[1]—but one prominent view points to the informational utility of authoritarian elections (Brownlee, 2007; Gandhi, 2008; Geddes, 2006; Magaloni, 2006; Malesky & Schuler, 2008; Simpser, 2013). As the dictator must delegate authority, elections help solve her monitoring problem by enlisting ordinary citizens to convey information, with votes, about the performance of politicians at lower levels.

To help solve the dictator's monitoring problem, elections need not provide perfect information about popular preferences, but they must at least gauge them approximately; that is, elections cannot be managed so as to deprive votes of any informational worth. This seems to suggest that authoritarian elections must also go at least some way toward solving the *voter's* monitoring problem. How else to enlist voters to gauge the performance of politicians? Even in liberal democracies, however, monitoring politicians is difficult, sanctioning their bad performance in office often ineffective (see Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 1999). Authoritarian regimes are notoriously much worse at solving the moral hazard problem in the voter's agency relationship with politicians. The vote in authoritarian elections cannot credibly threaten to "throw the bums out." Indeed, the failure is inherent: Helping to solve the voter's monitoring problem is highly costly for the dictator, as it begins to unravel the basic infrastructure of authoritarianism. In the most common variant of authoritarianism, even if all opposition parties compete (which is not always the case), dictators manage elections so as to prevent alternation in power.[2] Where the ruling party shares some congressional power, it nonetheless wields the most power and controls the most resources. In most authoritarian regimes, elected congresses do not make policy, so governance outcomes cannot be reliably associated with parties other than the ruling party. Nor can voters look to a critical free press to help them monitor incumbents. In single-party authoritarian regimes, all these features pose

even more serious challenges for voters. Not only is organized opposition prohibited but also monitoring regime incumbents is more difficult: For one thing, voters cannot use party labels as a shortcut to bundle information about politicians.

This article shifts the empirical focus away from the dictator's monitoring problem to take up a suggestion by Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) to theorize and empirically investigate how "basic, yet specific features" of authoritarian elections are related to outcomes. A new electoral design for subnational congress elections in the single-party setting of China offers an unusual opportunity to investigate the informational utility of authoritarian elections. As in the past, at the municipal level and higher, ordinary Chinese are neither electorate nor selectorate: County congresses elect municipal congresses, municipal congresses elect provincial congresses, and provincial congresses elect the National People's Congress. Since the 1980s, however, Chinese voters not only elect their township and county congresses but also share selectorate power with the communist party,[3] with voters and local communist party committees separately choosing nominees for congressional seats. The new design also facilitates electoral manipulation, however: Party-led election committees are veto players, deciding which nominees appear on the ballot. In liberal democracies, different selectorates normally produce different candidates (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Hazan & Rahat, 2010). In China, notwithstanding the formal inclusiveness of the design, the party can ignore information conveyed in voter nominations and operate effectively as the sole selectorate. More to the point, as basic features of the authoritarian setting remain intact, the design does not seem to solve the voter's monitoring problem.

I theorize that, for voters, as authoritarian elections fail to solve the moral hazard problem, elections are about solving the adverse selection problem.[4] Specifically, borrowing a concept from the literature on political selection, I theorize that voters use their electoral power not to punish bad performance of politicians but to select "good types": individuals with personal qualities that suggest they can be relied on to represent them. In Chinese local congress elections, this selection happens first at the nomination stage. I analyze a unique set of original data from a recent survey of 4,071 congressmen and women, taking advantage of large numbers of voter nominees and party nominees among those surveyed.[5] I find voter nominees and party nominees are different types. In particular, voters nominate individuals with qualities that suggest they will reliably represent the community. In contacting elected congressmen and women about local problems, however, voters hedge their bets: They contact more powerful politicians, who are closer to the regime, as well as "good types." That the new electoral design has these consequences is

remarkable in two ways. It implies not only that voters can convey information with their nominations but also that powerful local party committees do not ignore it. That is, the "selectoral connection" in Chinese local congresses connects candidates to the preferences of two selectorates: local party committees and, more puzzlingly, voters.

The article is organized as follows. Section I "'Good Types' in Authoritarian Elections" elaborates the theory and the hypotheses it generates. Section II "Chinese Local Congresses and the Candidate Selection Process" briefly describes relevant features of the new design, drawing on Chinese-language materials and interviews with Chinese congressmen and women and congress scholars. Section III "Statistical Tests" presents alternative hypotheses and the statistical analysis of the survey data. A conclusion places findings in context and offers an argument addressing the puzzle of why voters seem able to make their preferences count in this authoritarian context.

"Good Types" in Authoritarian Elections

Modern political economy, as Besley (2005, 2006) points out, has attentively taken up James Madison's famous concern to get the institutions right so as to keep politicians virtuous in office (Buchanan, 1989; Ferejohn, 1986; Fiorina, 1981; Key, 1966; Manin, 1997; Mayhew, 1974). The classic agency perspective reflected in this concern focuses on the moral hazard problem, analyzing elections as accountability mechanisms. Elections make politicians accountable because they are sanctioning (and thereby constraining) mechanisms: Because they fear losing elections tomorrow, elected officials do not shirk their obligations to voters today. As argued above, this "liberal ideal" (Riker, 1982) is a poor fit for authoritarianism.

Yet, as Besley (2005) reminds us, there is another, less well studied part to Madison's theorizing about how to prevent the political class from using their power for self-dealing. Madison writes, in the *Federalist Papers* (1788/1961, no. 57), about the importance of rules to select leaders "who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of society." In a world of inadequate accountability design, selecting "good types" for political leadership is crucial. In this framework, "finding a trustworthy politician is a matter of selection, not a matter of incentives" (Besley, 2005, p. 49). Political representation depends on selecting types who can be counted on to act a certain way in office because of particular qualities. Fearon (1999) takes up the framework and models elections as repeated opportunities for voters to sort among types rather than to control problems of moral hazard. This sorting is possible even where differences between types are small and signals are noisy. If voters can distinguish "good types," with information

about personal character, for example, then classic accountability through electoral sanctions is not needed to produce governance outcomes that voters want. Scholars have also taken up the political selection framework in empirical work: Notably, Pande (2003) and Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004), analyzing India's elections, find voters use castes and tribes as signifiers of types who will reliably deliver public goods to the community once elected.[6] Lust-Okar (2006) and Shehata (2008) find voters in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East use clan, tribe, neighborhood, and village labels to identify candidates to support. Surprisingly, however, the political selection framework has not been explicitly applied to study authoritarian elections.

If authoritarian elections are unreliable mechanisms to sanction self-dealing by politicians, the accountability of local congressmen and women to ordinary Chinese comes down to political selection. Voters prefer to select nominees and elect candidates with qualities that suggest they will reliably represent local interests. Something as easily observable as longtime residence in the locality, for example, suggests knowledge about local concerns and (perhaps) susceptibility to informal local influences. Evaluating potential candidates in this way to judge their reliability to represent the locality is not a trivial problem, but it seems tractable for ordinary Chinese at the grassroots. It is more difficult to elect "good types" than to nominate them, however. As noted above, voters share selectorate power with local party committees, which can veto voter nominees to pursue their own interests and indulge their own biases toward party nominees.

I theorize that ordinary Chinese at the grassroots nominate "good types." The most obvious testable hypothesis implied by this is the following:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Two selectorates, namely, voters and the communist party. Voter nominees and party nominees possess distinct qualities that reflect preferences for different types. Specifically, voter nominees on the ballot possess qualities that identify them as "good types," who will reliably represent the locality.

The data I analyze to test this hypothesis is from surveys of already elected congressmen and women. That is, everyone in my sample is an electoral winner, not only a nominee; everyone has survived the entire candidate selection process, including party vetting. This presents an extra burden for evidence to support the hypothesis implied by political selection: Even if voters do in fact prefer to nominate "good types," these types will appear in my sample only if they also appear on the ballot and win.[7] This means that my test of the hypothesis above is at the same time a test of how each selectorate manages to realize its preferences through the entire nomination and election process,

in the context of the electoral rules. As I discuss in the section "Chinese Local Congresses and the Candidate Selection Process," although the rules give voters electoral power, it is nonetheless relatively difficult for them to act as veto players, denying wins to unpopular party nominees. By contrast, the rules make it relatively easy for local party committees to ignore the information conveyed in voter nominations so as to exercise their power as veto players and block "good types" from appearing on the ballot. This and other mechanisms that would produce voter and party nominees who are the *same* type are presented in alternative hypotheses in the section "Statistical Tests."

Political selection also has a less direct implication for the elections studied here. As qualities of "good types" convey an implicit promise of reliable representation, I theorize that voters turn to these types after the election to seek solutions to local problems. This generates the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Post-election contacting of "good types." Voters disproportionately contact elected "good types" to report local problems, as "good types" are reliable representatives of local interests.

An alternative is presented in "Statistical Tests" section.

Chinese Local Congresses and the Candidate Selection Process

In recent years, Chinese local congresses have evolved beyond the "rubber stamps" of the Maoist era. They veto government reports, quiz and dismiss officials, and reject candidates selected by the party for government leadership (Cho, 2008; Manion, 2008; Xia, 2008); they also coordinate to represent the local interests of their constituents, sometimes in conflict with local party committees (Kamo & Takeuchi, 2013). This all takes place at the subnational level, nested in the framework of a single-party authoritarian regime, that has, since the late 1970s, been engaged in various sorts of institution building to bolster its legitimacy and stability. The new electoral design for local congresses is one example of this.

The 1979 Electoral Law broke with the Maoist past by mandating secret ballots, electoral contestation, and voter nomination of candidates for township and county congresses. This introduced a new inclusiveness in candidate selection and a new uncertainty in electoral outcomes.[8] Figure 1 presents, in simplified form, the candidate selection process.[9]

As shown, candidate selection occurs in two stages, at two levels: nominations at the voting district level, followed by vetting and winnowing of nominees to select candidates at the township or county level, depending on which

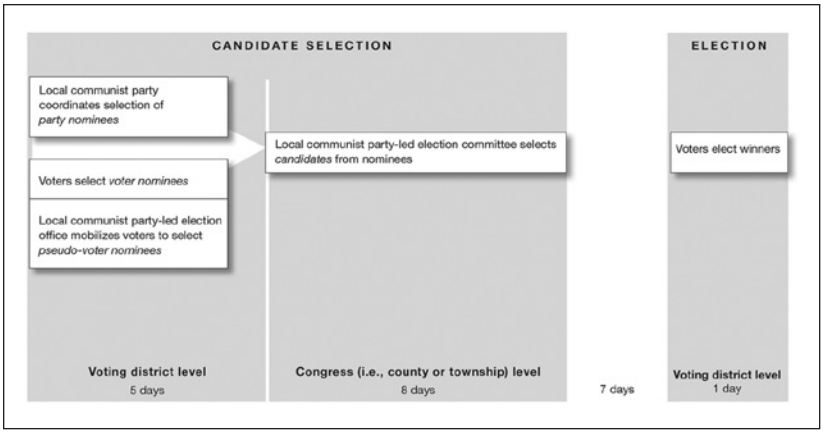

Figure 1. Candidate selection (and election) in township and county congresses.

level of congress is being elected. The law allocates only 5 days for nominations, only 8 days for selection of candidates. Election day is only a week after candidates are announced. Local communist party committees directly or indirectly manage the process at both levels.[10] In particular, party-led election committees wield effective veto power at the second stage of candidate selection. They ultimately decide which nominees are placed on the ballot as candidates.

Yet, elections determine winners. I include elections in Figure 1 because contested elections and secret ballots can check party committee power, so that ballots are not saturated with party nominees and party nominees are not egregiously unacceptable to ordinary Chinese. That is, elections can constrain party-led election committees to make strategic choices that take voter preferences into account. The rules make this possible—but not easy. I turn to this below.

Voters Elect Winners

Contested elections and secret ballots mandated by law produce the possibility of two undesirable (from the perspective of local authorities) outcomes: so-called failed elections and election of write-in candidates. First, a congress election can fail, requiring a new round of elections. For an election to be legally valid, votes must be cast by a majority of the electorate. Mobilized voting may not be enough to avoid electoral failure, however, because winning requires winning a majority (not plurality) of votes cast. This creates an

incentive for local authorities to keep the number of candidates on the ballot small. Congressmen and women are elected in multimember districts, with district magnitudes of 1 to 3, depending on population. By law, the ballot must list 1.33 to 2 candidates per congress seat. To promote decisive wins, election committees invariably set contestation at the legal minimum: In voting districts with one seat, the ballot lists two candidates; in districts with two seats, it lists three candidates; in districts with three seats, it lists four candidates (Shi, Guo, & Liu, 2009, p. 61). Second, candidates on the ballot may lose to write-in candidates. Voters can also spoil their ballots, denying wins to candidates on the ballot and producing failed elections.

In sum, given electoral contestation and secret ballots, voters can check party committee selectorate power to make their preferences count at the ballot box. Yet, from what we know, electoral failure and election of write-in candidates are rare events. In 2001, 2.2% of township congress elections and 1.7% of county congress elections failed; in 2006, 1.7% of township congress elections and 1.3% of county congress elections failed (Shi et al., 2009, p. 520).[11] In 2001, 0.4% of individuals elected to township congresses in 2001 were write-in candidates (Shi et al., 2009).[12] This is not surprising. By the rules defining electoral failure, party nominees can win with the support of just over 25% of the electorate. This is hardly a high bar. Moreover, electing write-in candidates requires voters to coordinate on a candidate in a very short time, in a climate of authoritarian one-party rule that sets up major obstacles to political organization.[13]

The Party and Voters Select Nominees

The official Chinese lexicon recognizes only two categories of nominees: *voter nominees* and *party nominees*. Ten or more voters jointly nominate voter nominees; local party committees mobilize satellite parties and party-led organizations to coordinate nominations of party nominees.[14] Communist party members numerically dominate both categories.

Turning first to party nominees, in the Chinese political system, all party and government leaders are appointed, evaluated, and managed by communist party committees one level up in a hierarchy that stretches down from Beijing.[15] About a half-year before the congress elections, county party committees appoint township party and government leaders, and municipal party committees appoint county party and government leaders.[16] To promote party standards set in Beijing as well as effective coordination in governance, local party committees direct election committees to allocate congress candidacies to some of these leaders. For the same reasons, the allocations commonly also include whoever the party committees most prefer to hold leadership

positions in congress, for example, congress chairs and standing committee members. In effect, these allocations are assignments to engineer the election of specific appointees (Interview 24-0707). Election committees distribute the allocations (perhaps a dozen for a county congress, fewer for a township congress) across voting districts, where they make up some proportion of the party nominees pictured in Figure 1 (He, 2010; Shi, 2000; Zhang, 2005). Failure to elect designated winners constitutes serious election agency failure. Some provinces set ceilings on the number of party nominees. Lower-level party committees can circumvent these ceilings by instructing election agencies to "transform the will of the party into the wishes of voters" (Shi & Liu, 2008, p. 55), that is, mobilizing communist party members in the voting district to nominate party committee favorites. In Figure 1, these are *pseudo-voter nominees*, to be distinguished from the voter nominees discussed below.

Voter nominees normally emerge in small voter group meetings, convened for this purpose by party-led election offices. Nomination is unstructured (Cai, 2002), requiring little voter effort.[17] The data suggest that voter nominees may outnumber party nominees: In 2001, for example, voter nominees comprised 70% of township congress nominees and 77% of county congress nominees (Shi et al., 2009).[18] Undoubtedly, some are pseudo-voter nominees.

Election Committees Select Candidates

In voting districts with more nominees than seats and more of them voter nominees than party nominees, both apparently common situations (Cai, 2003; Zhang, 2005), the selection of candidates from nominees necessarily eliminates many voter nominees. This is the result of an inclusive (and easy) first stage in candidate selection combined with incentives in electoral rules for local authorities to list few candidates on the ballot. Despite this, in 2001, voters generated most candidates on the ballot and most winners: 60% of candidates and 53% of winners in township congresses and 71% of candidates and 56% of winners in county congresses (Shi et al., 2009).[19] If these voter nominees are in fact no different from party nominees, this is less puzzling, of course.

Prominent Chinese scholars (Cai, 2003; Shi & Liu, 2008; D. Yuan, 2003) argue that the vetting and winnowing stage of candidate selection is a black box that offers easy possibilities for manipulation by local party committees. By law, if nominees are numerous and voter support is fragmented, the process features primary elections or consultation with representatives from voter groups. In practice, primaries are uncommon. Moreover, at consultation meetings, party-led election committees control the agenda and manage

information to steer decisions to reflect party preferences (see, for example, D. Li, 2003; D. Yuan, 2003; Zhang, 2005). Although election committees cannot guarantee nomination of specific candidates, they can effectively "ensure that nominees they do *not* want to become candidates will not be on the ballot" (Interview 58-0826). This includes, for example, office-seeking "independent candidates" (He & Liu, 2012; Nathan, 1985, pp. 193-223; Sun, 2013; Z. Yuan, 2011); they rarely survive to make it onto the ballot.

Statistical Tests

The brief description of candidate selection in the previous section is consistent with a theoretical story of political selection, where voters under authoritarianism use their nominating power to identify and contact "good types," who possess qualities that suggest they will reliably represent them. Yet, party committees can easily use their veto power to ignore the information conveyed in voter nominations. By contrast, voters face big obstacles to exercising their electoral power to oppose party committees.

In this section, I put implications of the theory to statistical tests, analyzing data from my surveys of Chinese congressmen and women. Nomination data are missing for 6% of township congressmen and women, and 3% of county congressmen and women, so effective sample sizes are 2,919 across 19 county congresses and 1,152 across 26 township congresses. Voter nominees constitute 68% of the township sample and 50% of the county sample.

Hypotheses

The most straightforward hypothesis the theoretical story generates is that voter and party nominees are different types: Voter nominees (but not party nominees) are "good types." The description in the previous section is more specific than this, however: It suggests that party nominees are also types. Local party committees use their nominating power to identify "governing types": Individuals with qualities of officially valued competence, who will boost credentials of officials in accordance with standards set in Beijing and will promote coordination across party, government, and congress institutions. These types may or may not promote voting district interests, but their qualities do not signal their reliability in this regard. Party and government officials are, by their daily work routine, more closely connected to the township or county than to the voting district. I can restate the original hypothesis to make this implication explicit, as I do in Hypothesis 1 in Table 1.

Both the original hypothesis and its more specific restatement yield a prediction of observed differences between voter and party nominees. The test is

Table 1. Testable Hypotheses.

Hypotheses generated by theory
Hypothesis 1: Two selectorates, namely, voters and the communist party. Voter nominees and party nominees possess distinct qualities that reflect preferences for different types. Specifically, voter nominees on the ballot possess qualities that identify them as "good types," who will reliably represent the community; party nominees possess qualities that identify them as "governing types," who measure up to official standards of competence and foster coordination in local governance.
Hypothesis 2: Post-election contacting of "good types." Voters disproportionately contact elected "good types" (over "governing types") to report local problems, as "good types" are more reliable representatives of local interests.
Alternatives
Hypothesis 1a: One selectorate, namely, the communist party. As local party committees exercise veto power over which candidates appear on the ballot, they can ignore distinct voter preferences and select voter nominees who are the same type they would choose without voter input. Voter nominees and party nominees on the ballot are indistinguishable and reflect party preferences for qualities that identify them as "governing types."
Hypothesis 1b: One selectorate, namely, the communist party. As the regime has overwhelming influence over the allocation of resources, voters suppress their sincere preferences and nominate individuals who are close to the regime. Voter nominees and party nominees on the ballot are indistinguishable and reflect party preferences for qualities that identify them as "governing types."
Hypothesis 1c: One selectorate, namely, voters. Cognizant of voter power as electoral veto players, local party committees select candidates who best insure against failed elections and election of write-in candidates. Voter nominees and party nominees on the ballot are indistinguishable and reflect voter preferences for qualities that identify them as "good types."
Hypothesis 2a: Post-election contacting of "governing types." Voters disproportionately contact elected "governing types" (over "good types") about local problems, as "governing types" have better access to regime resources.

a hard test, because nominees in the survey data used here are also electoral winners, who have survived party vetting. Empirical support does not mean that candidate selection is free of censorship of voter choices; the rules make such censorship fairly easy and anecdotal accounts indicate that at least some local party committees use their veto power to manipulate nomination and election outcomes. Empirical support only points to more nuanced behavioral and institutional conclusions. At a minimum, it suggests that voter preferences diverge from preferences of local party committees and that voter

nomination offers ordinary Chinese a channel for electoral voice, however muffled or distorted in candidate selection.

An alternative prediction of no observed differences between voter and party nominees is consistent with three different causal mechanisms, presented in Table 1 as Hypothesis 1a to Hypothesis 1c. The first view considers ballot secrecy, electoral contestation, and the new inclusiveness of nominations as mere window dressing to legitimate the ruling party's monopoly of organized power.[20] In this perspective, local party committees use their veto power in the second stage of candidate selection not only to eliminate voter nominees they consider politically threatening (which we expect) but also to indulge their own biases fully at the expense of expressed voter preferences. The elections are rigged inasmuch as contestation is not genuine: voter nominees on the ballot reflect party (not voter) preferences. A different view is consistent with findings in other authoritarian settings. Scholars find that voters may support regime incumbents (Magaloni, 2006) and nonincumbents who are close to the authoritarian regime (Lust-Okar, 2008), despite their preferences, because the regime has overwhelming influence over resource allocation—and voters know this. Applying this perspective, Chinese voters may nominate party or government officials or other individuals who are regime insiders or favorites, because congressmen and women who are close to the regime have better access to official resources, which they can allocate to their constituents. The two causal mechanisms are not mutually inconsistent. Voters who nominate "governing types" are strategically complicit, taking the authoritarian context into account and simplifying the work of local party committees in deciding which nominees to place on the ballot. Both mechanisms yield the same prediction, that voter and party nominees both reflect party preferences that identify them as "governing types," presented in Table 1 as Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b.

A finding of no observed differences in voter and party nominees is also consistent with a more radical mechanism. Local party committees may be fully responsive to voter preferences revealed in voter nominations. In this scenario, voters are the veto players: Fearful of failed elections and election of write-in candidates, local party committees produce party nominees who are the same type that voters evidently prefer. This yields a prediction that voter and party nominees both reflect voter preferences that identify them as "good types," presented in Table 1 as Hypothesis 1c.

As noted in the first section "'Good Types' in Authoritarian Elections," the theory also has a less direct implication, about constituent contacting. As qualities of "good types" convey an implicit promise of reliable representation of local interests, voters turn to these types to seek solutions to local problems. I restate Hypothesis 2 in Table 1 to reflect the voter's choice to

contact "good types" over governing types. This prediction is by no means self-evident. "Governing types" are regime insiders or regime favorites, many in positions of leadership, with presumably good access to resources to alleviate local problems and supply local public goods. Given this, voters may do better to contact "governing types" after the elections, which yields the alternative presented in Table 1 as Hypothesis 2a.[21]

Measures

"Good types." I define qualities of "good types" along three dimensions: familiarity, responsiveness, and efficacy. Familiarity is a basis for selecting good types, because it allows voters to evaluate personal character. A good measure of this is years of residence in the locality. Longstanding residents can be "good types" because they are not only familiar to voters but also familiar with local problems. Even if they do not exactly share constituent views about local problems, they are at least spatially implicated in the manifestations of these problems. Moreover, their integration into the locality may make them more susceptible to informal local influence through implicit and explicit social pressures and, as such, more responsive to constituents. A second measure is reflected in occupational category. Congressmen and women have other fulltime jobs; responsiveness to local concerns may already be part of these job descriptions. In particular, popularly elected officials of village committees and urban neighborhood committees may be relatively more responsive. Their experience dealing with local problems may make them more efficacious too.

In addition to these objective indicators, the surveys measure responsiveness and efficacy as attitudinal items,[22] which voters infer. First, congressmen and women are supposed to represent both the parochial interests of the "small collective" (constituents) and the broader interests of the "big collective" (township or county), and congress officials recognize conflicts can occur (Interview 23-0706). Where conflicts of representation occur, "good types" prioritize the locality over the township or county. Second, to the extent that congressmen and women think their constituents pay attention to what they do, they act to better represent constituent interests. That is, "good types" see themselves as constrained by attentive constituents who monitor their actions. A third attitudinal item measures subjective efficacy in addressing local problems; importantly, the item refers to the voting district, not the township or county.

"Governing types." Local party committees nominate candidates to facilitate local governance. These "governing types" are party or government officials.

At the county (but not the township) level, congress also has its own leadership: standing committees, about 7% to 8% of congress members. Their composition matters for local governance, and their elections are intrinsically insider affairs with communist party control both "less difficult and more extreme" (Interview 55-0823) than popular elections. Strictly, the action described in the section "Chinese Local Congresses and the Candidate Selection Process" is prior to election of standing committees, but because their composition matters and because their elections are more easily manipulated, it makes sense to think of local party committee choices of standing committee members as happening prior to congress elections and to predict more party nominees than voter nominees on congress standing committees. Finally, "governing types" better reflect officially valued competence and career preparation for leadership: communist party membership, higher education, and training at higher-level communist party schools.[23]

Demographic characteristics. In addition to variables of theoretical interest, reflecting qualities of nominees, I include standard demographic variables (sex, age).

Constituent contacting. We asked congressmen and women about the number of constituent-initiated contacts to report on local problems in the current congress term.[24] From responses, I computed average yearly contacts for each congressman and woman.[25] As self-reports present an opportunity to exaggerate, I checked self-reported contacts against contacts reported by constituents in a subsample of surveyed townships; constituents roughly agree with their congressmen and women on frequency of contacts.

Differences Between Group Means

The most appropriate way to test Hypothesis 1 and alternatives Hypothesis 1a to Hypothesis 1c is also exceedingly simple: a *t* test of differences between group (i.e., voter nominees and party nominees) means. Township and county congresses differ in ways that prompt me to analyze the two samples separately. The most important difference is scale, with implications for familiarity in the community. The average population of a Chinese county is 467,000, an order of magnitude larger than the average township, with a population of about 39,000. On average, a township congressman or woman represents 679 people, a county congressman or woman 2,393 people.[26] Voting districts for township congresses are much smaller than for county congresses: For township congress, voting districts average is 1,100 people; for county congresses, the average is 3,800 (Shi et al., 2009).[27] Voting districts for township

congresses are small enough to effectively guarantee that voter nominees are personally familiar to the entire district population. Voter nominees for county congresses are undoubtedly not so widely known across the entire voting district. Scale has implications for responsiveness as well as familiarity, because small scale facilitates informal social influence and probably is associated with greater district homogeneity too, both of which facilitate representation of local interests and monitoring by voters.

Results are presented in Tables 2 and 3. They support Hypothesis 1, not alternatives Hypothesis 1a to Hypothesis 1c. Voter nominees in the sample differ significantly from party nominees: They look like "good types," whereas party nominees look like "governing types."

At both congress levels, voter nominees are more familiar than are party nominees: They have lived in their voting districts longer—31 years compared with 18 years in county congresses, for example. At both levels, higher percentages of voter nominees prioritize district interests over township or county interests (close to 40%, compared with just over 30% for party nominees), and voter nominees have a significantly higher sense of subjective efficacy than do party nominees. In county (but not township) congresses, voter nominees have a significantly greater sense of constituent monitoring, compared to party nominees.

Popularly elected community leaders make up 33% (the largest category) of voter nominees and 15% of party nominees in county congresses. In township congresses, community leaders make up the largest occupational category for both party and voter nominees, but differences are nonetheless substantial and statistically significant: 54% of voter nominees, compared with 32% of party nominees, are community leaders. By contrast, higher percentages of party nominees are party or government officials or leaders: For example, in county congresses, party or government leaders make up 33% (the largest category) of party nominees and 10% of voter nominees; in township congresses, these leaders make up 16% of party nominees and 4% of voter nominees. In county congresses, which elect standing committees, 14% of party nominees and only 4% of voter nominees are standing committee members. At both levels, party nominees have attended party schools at higher levels than have voter nominees: For example, 50% of party nominees (but 29% of voter nominees) in county congresses have attended a party school above the county level. At both levels, party nominees are also more highly educated generally than are voter nominees. For example, much higher percentages have completed some form of college; many fewer party nominees have gone no further than junior or senior high school.

My survey data distinguish voter nominees from party nominees, but I cannot distinguish voter nominees from pseudo-voter nominees. This does

Table 2. Voter Nominees and Party Nominees, Township Congresses Differences Between Group Means (*t* Tests).

	Voter nominees		Party nominees		*p* values
Subjective efficacy	2.674	(0.028)	2.451	(0.033)	.000
Perceived constituent monitoring	3.448	(0.040)	3.367	(0.055)	.237
Voting district priority	0.377	(0.018)	0.308	(0.025)	.028
Years lived in voting district	34.346	(0.732)	26.809	(1.125)	.000
Communist party member	0.865	(0.013)	0.865	(0.013)	.981
Highest communist party school	1.587	(0.044)	1.910	(0.072)	.000
Male	0.783	(0.015)	0.792	(0.022)	.739
Age	56.036	(0.418)	56.970	(0.712)	.231
Junior high school or below	0.396	(0.018)	0.295	(0.024)	.001
Senior high school	0.391	(0.018)	0.278	(0.024)	.000
Vocational school	0.153	(0.013)	0.246	(0.023)	.000
College	0.061	(0.009)	0.181	(0.021)	.000
Agricultural worker	0.159	(0.014)	0.198	(0.022)	.105
Industrial worker	0.008	(0.003)	0.008	(0.005)	.970
Self-employed entrepreneur	0.041	(0.007)	0.017	(0.007)	.037
Private businessperson	0.046	(0.008)	0.034	(0.010)	.375
Enterprise manager	0.036	(0.007)	0.040	(0.010)	.757
Enterprise or agency staff	0.017	(0.005)	0.006	(0.004)	.139
Skilled worker or professional	0.022	(0.005)	0.020	(0.007)	.812
Teacher	0.017	(0.005)	0.034	(0.010)	.069
Military or police	0.004	(0.002)	0.008	(0.005)	.368
Community leader	0.535	(0.019)	0.317	(0.025)	.000
Party or government official	0.054	(0.008)	0.144	(0.019)	.000
Party or government leader	0.037	(0.007)	0.161	(0.020)	.000
Other occupation	0.025	(0.006)	0.011	(0.006)	.142
Observations: 1,063-1,195					

Source. Author's surveys.
Standard errors are in parentheses; variable description and summary statistics are in Appendix B.

not much affect interpretation, however. That voter nominees look like "good types" and party nominees look like "governing types" implies that most voter nominees are not pseudo-nominees, that party committees use information about voter preferences to select pseudo-nominees, or some combination of the two possibilities. However they emerge, if voter nominees on the ballot

Table 3. Voter Nominees and Party Nominees, County Congresses Differences Between Group Means (*t* Tests).

	Voter nominees		Party nominees		*p* values
Subjective efficacy	2.541	(0.017)	2.418	(0.017)	.000
Perceived constituent monitoring	3.215	(0.027)	3.100	(0.027)	.003
Voting district priority	0.386	(0.013)	0.307	(0.013)	.000
Years lived in voting district	31.132	(0.523)	18.266	(0.500)	.000
Communist party member	0.808	(0.011)	0.859	(0.009)	.000
Highest communist party school	1.952	(0.036)	2.477	(0.040)	.000
Standing committee member	0.042	(0.006)	0.138	(0.010)	.000
Male	0.738	(0.012)	0.818	(0.010)	.000
Age	52.238	(0.305)	53.948	(0.309)	.505
Junior high school or below	0.171	(0.010)	0.082	(0.007)	.000
Senior high school	0.327	(0.012)	0.199	(0.011)	.000
Vocational school	0.304	(0.012)	0.299	(0.012)	.764
College	0.198	(0.011)	0.420	(0.013)	.000
Agricultural worker	0.065	(0.007)	0.048	(0.006)	.053
Industrial worker	0.016	(0.003)	0.015	(0.003	.778
Self-employed entrepreneur	0.026	(0.004)	0.011	(0.003)	.003
Private businessperson	0.154	(0.010)	0.069	(0.007)	.000
Enterprise manager	0.085	(0.008)	0.069	(0.007)	.114
Enterprise or agency staff	0.011	(0.003)	0.007	(0.002)	.326
Skilled worker or professional	0.020	(0.004)	0.018	(0.004)	.695
Teacher	0.063	(0.007)	0.064	(0.007)	.890
Military or police	0.005	(0.002)	0.024	(0.004)	.000
Community leader	0.331	(0.013)	0.150	(0.010)	.000
Party or government official	0.093	(0.008)	0.174	(0.010)	.000
Party or government leader	0.103	(0.008)	0.331	(0.013)	.000
Other occupation	0.028	(0.004)	0.021	(0.004)	.226
Observations: 2,640-2,943					

Source. Author's surveys
Standard errors are in parentheses; variable description and summary statistics are in Appendix B.

reflect revealed voter preferences, the connection is with two selectorates; voter nominees and pseudo-voter nominees both reflect voter preferences for qualities that define "good types."

In sum, voters use their nominating power to select "good types," with qualities that suggest they will reliably represent local interests. Moreover,

local party committees who have the power to ignore information conveyed in voter nominations are responsive to voters when they decide which nominees to place on the ballot. They are not *fully* responsive: They also place on the ballot a substantial number of party nominees who are "governing types," who differ in predictable ways from the "good types" voters evidently prefer.

Mixed-Effects Linear Models

To test Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 2a on post-election constituent contacting, I specify mixed-effects (two-level hierarchical) linear models that cluster township congressmen and women in their respective townships and county congressmen and women in their respective counties. This allows me to capture unspecified (but possibly influential) random effects associated with the multitude of differences across localities. Likelihood ratio tests comparing estimates in my mixed-effects models to ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates (i.e., to single-level models) indicate statistical significance of these random effects.

One complication with using number of constituent contacts as a dependent variable in the analysis is concurrent seats, which adds to the number of constituents per congressman or woman. Concurrent seats are not uncommon, especially at and above the county congress level: 55% of congressmen and women we surveyed in county congresses sit concurrently in more than one congress. To make valid comparisons along a dimension on which constituents figure prominently, I take the necessary precaution here of restricting the samples to congressmen and women without concurrent seats—that is, those contacted about local problems in a single voting district in a single township or county. As expected, even in the restricted samples, scale matters: Yearly averages for constituent contacts are 13.6 per thousand constituents in township congresses, 3.5 per thousand constituents in county congresses.[28] Once again, it makes theoretical sense to analyze township and county samples separately.

The dependent variable for the analyses here is the mean annual number of constituent contacts reporting local problems to their congressman or woman. As above, observations are congressmen and women. Independent variables are the qualities identified above, for the differences between group means tests that distinguish between "good types" and "governing types."[29] Results are presented in Table 4.

Results are mixed. At the county level, the only easily interpretable coefficient that achieves statistical significance is that for perceived constituent

Table 4. Constituent Contacts About Local Public Goods Provision Mixed-Effects Linear Models, Random Effects Clustered at Congress Levels.

	Township congresses			County congresses		
Subjective efficacy in voting district	−0.353	(0.629)	0.574	0.081	(0.599)	0.892
Perceived constituent monitoring	1.278	(0.401)	0.001	1.869	(0.342)	0.000
Voting district priority	0.997	(0.914)	0.275	0.032	(0.728)	0.965
Years lived in voting district	0.096	(0.030)	0.001	0.037	(0.024)	0.125
Communist party member	−0.217	(1.291)	0.867	−0.114	(0.980)	0.908
Highest communist party school	0.821	(0.412)	0.046	0.435	(0.279)	0.120
Standing committee member				−0.698	(1.165)	0.549
Male	−0.969	(1.043)	0.353	1.209	(0.854)	0.157
Age	0.410	(0.319)	0.198	0.501	(0.268)	0.061
Age-squared	−0.003	(0.003)	0.284	−0.004	(0.002)	0.085
Senior high school	0.695	(1.040)	0.504	1.503	(1.318)	0.254
Vocational school	0.917	(1.544)	0.553	3.324	(1.368)	0.015
College	−0.026	(2.177)	0.990	0.617	(1.503)	0.681
Industrial worker	−2.318	(4.991)	0.642	−3.371	(2.636)	0.201
Self-employed entrepreneur	5.922	(2.256)	0.009	3.992	(2.959)	0.177
Private businessperson	−2.014	(2.555)	0.431	−0.307	(1.766)	0.862
Enterprise manager	4.996	(2.368)	0.035	−2.117	(1.875)	0.259
Enterprise or agency staff	5.252	(3.473)	0.130	−1.891	(3.863)	0.624
Skilled worker or professional	2.941	(3.061)	0.337	1.039	(2.525)	0.681
Teacher	4.702	(3.138)	0.134	3.394	(1.996)	0.089
Military or police	4.070	(5.130)	0.428	−0.712	(2.499)	0.776
Community leader	2.366	(1.252)	0.059	2.701	(1.681)	0.108
Party or government official	3.880	(2.219)	0.080	−1.263	(1.937)	0.514
Party or government leader	2.294	(2.381)	0.216	0.485	(1.927)	0.801
Other occupation	2.716	(2.742)	0.322	3.430	(2.511)	0.172
Constant	−13.033	(8.567)	0.128	−14.748	(7.424)	0.047
Wald chi-square statistic (*df*)	55.61 (26)		0.0003	114.46 (19)		0.0000
Likelihood Ratio tests: Comparison to one-level model			0.0002			0.0000
Observations: 566 congressmen and women in township congresses, 814 in county congresses						

Source. Author's surveys.
Standard errors are in parentheses, *p* values in columns 4 and 7, variable description and summary statistics in Appendix B. Analysis excludes congressmen and women with a concurrent seat in another congress. Township congresses do not establish standing committees. Reference educational category is junior high school completion or below; reference occupation is work in agriculture, animal husbandry, or fisheries.

monitoring. A sense that more constituents are attentive to what congresses do, which I identify as a quality of "good types," is associated with more contacting. This is true at the township level too. At the township level, where more coefficients are statistically significant, I can reject neither Hypothesis 2 nor Hypothesis 2a. Voters contact "good types" and "governing types": community leaders—but also party and government officials and leaders, for

example. All this suggests that voters hedge their bets after elections. When they encounter local problems, they contact types they know and think they can rely on to respond as well as types with greater resources to respond.

Conclusion

The findings in this article present representation in Chinese local congresses as a matter of selection, including voter selection, not incentives. In the context of contested elections and secret ballots, the new inclusiveness of candidate selection matters, connecting Chinese local congresses with two selectorates. Voter nominees and party nominees are different types, reflecting different selectorate preferences. The new electoral design offers ordinary Chinese an opportunity, which at least some take, to select, based on what they know, "good types" to nominate and elect. "Good types" possess qualities that suggest they will reliably represent the locality.

These findings raise questions of general interest to scholars of authoritarian politics. Considering the relative ease of wielding veto power to ignore the information conveyed in voter nominations, why do local party committees heed it at all? Looking further up, from an institutional design perspective, what do the new rules offer Beijing? Answers to these questions cannot be inferred from the survey data. Here, I offer some speculative arguments.

In other authoritarian regimes, where ruling party power is less overwhelming, electoral manipulation to maintain ruling party dominance is common (Simpser, 2013). The Chinese electoral design offers ordinary Chinese a channel for electoral voice, but it also integrates electoral manipulation (formally, without subterfuge or apology) into candidate selection as part of normal politics. If the design nudges local party committees to take voter preferences into account, it also hands them an institutional cudgel to exclude voter nominees. Surely, failed elections and election of write-in candidates are rare events in part because the rules that define winning require only minimal attention to voter nominees. In this sense, the electoral design is window dressing, to legitimate the regime.

At the same time, it serves Beijing's priority of social stability well to delegate to ordinary Chinese the opportunity to use their local knowledge to identify types who, once elected, can bridge the gap between the grassroots and local governments. Congressmen and women who understand local priorities and problems have valuable information for local authorities, giving them the opportunity to use responsive governance to pre-empt rowdier versions of interest articulation. Mass petitions, protests, strikes, and riots are now normal facts of political life in China, routine ways to express popular

discontent with local officials and local circumstances. The new electoral design does not constrain local party committees to heed voter nominations in shaping ballots (and congresses), but extravagant failures to do so produce readily observable outcomes. Ballots saturated with types who are egregiously unacceptable to voters are provocations. Failed elections and election of write-in candidates are "fire alarms" (McCubbins & Schwartz, 1984), signaling to Beijing that local party committees have seriously abused their nominating and veto powers in candidate selection. Even if local party committees prefer to ignore the knowledge conveyed in voter nominations, the communist party personnel system, with decisions on political career advancement ultimately centralized in Beijing, constrains them to pay at least minimal attention.

Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) note that, at most moments, the fundamental stability of an authoritarian regime is not at stake. Whether voter identification of "good types" in fact contributes to Chinese authoritarian persistence is a matter for pure speculation. Directly relevant to this, it seems to me, I find voter nominees are not only more familiar (in objective terms) to ordinary Chinese than are party nominees but also attitudinally more responsive. This is not surprising, but it is of more than passing interest as we consider China's authoritarian model. Maybe party nominees are "better types" than they would be without legally mandated electoral contestation and secret ballots, but, by standards presumably important to ordinary Chinese, voter nominees are even better types. This suggests something about the tradeoffs this powerful single-party authoritarian regime sees fit to make in the institution-building project that practically defines post-Mao China. Minimal electoral responsiveness to ordinary citizens co-exists, in design and in practice, with communist party management.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing the subnational focus of the findings presented here. Only township and county congresses are popularly elected in China. Whatever representation is gained through the new electoral rules is very local, focused on everyday problems of the community.[30] There is no timetable for popular elections to municipal or provincial congresses, much less the National People's Congress. Nor is it obvious that representation as a matter of selection easily scales up: Large voting districts seem bound to frustrate (or at least complicate) voter identification of "good types." On this larger scale, meaningful identifying labels such as political party (and not a single party), which bundle information together for voters, are an important part of the institutional mix in representative politics. This more radical institutional change is also absent from the official reform agenda in this single-party authoritarian system.

Appendix A

For the surveys, I partnered with the Research Center on Contemporary China at Peking University, the most professional and innovative social science survey research agency in the country. We conducted our surveys in Zhejiang, Anhui, and Hunan provinces, selected mainly for feasibility of implementation, within a group of provinces that varied along dimensions of interest. Counties and townships are probability samples, selected with probability proportionate to population size. The sample is nested: counties within selected municipalities, and townships within selected counties. Within each province, we probabilistically selected two large municipalities, with (county level) urban districts within them. We probabilistically selected one urban district and two counties or county-level cities under the governance of each of the selected municipalities. Within each of the selected counties or county-level cities (but not urban districts), we probabilistically selected two townships or towns. The result is a representative unbiased sample of congresses across the three provinces. For a variety of reasons, not all local authorities were willing to permit or facilitate surveys of congresses in all probabilistically selected localities. At the same time, we were unwilling to compromise on the fundamental issue of probability sampling. Ultimately, we successfully completed surveys in 49 congresses in our sample: four municipal congresses, 19 county congresses, and 26 township congresses. Response rate was 53%.

We conducted the surveys over a period of 26 months, from September 2007 through October 2009. There are two practical ways to survey congress delegates systematically: at congress meetings that bring them to a single site at the same time or with a self-administered questionnaire that delegates complete and mail back. We used both, adapting our method to local circumstances. As no regular congress meeting provides enough time for face-to-face interviews with a substantial number of delegates, we designed the survey instrument as a self-administered questionnaire. For elite respondents, who are generally more literate than the mass public, we judged this method acceptable. Our strong preference was to administer the survey at congress meetings, but this was possible for only 29 congresses, accounting for 52% of delegates surveyed.

Appendix B

Subjective efficacy: 4-level ordinal variable

Question. "As a congressman or woman, how much impact do you have in addressing problems in your voting district?" Response categories: a very big impact, relatively big impact, not too big an impact, no impact

Perceived constituent monitoring: 5-level ordinal variable
Question. "About how many constituents in your voting district do you think pay close attention to the activities of this congress?" Response categories: none, 30% or less, 30%-50%, 50%-80%, 80% or more
Voting district priority: dichotomous variable
Question. "If you had to choose between the interests of your voting district and the interests of your township [county], which interests would you tend to represent?" Response categories: voting district, township [county]

Highest communist party school: 6-level ordinal variable
No party school, township party school, county party school, municipal party school, provincial party school, Central Party School
Education: 4-category categorical variable
Question asked highest level of schooling and specified six categories—no schooling, primary school, junior high school, senior high or technical high school, vocational school, and college or higher. For the analysis here, I combined the three lowest categories because those with no schooling or primary school as their highest level of schooling comprise less than 6% in township congresses and less than 2% in county congresses.

Occupation: 13 dichotomous variables
12 specified occupations and an "other occupation" category

Constituent contacts about local public goods: yearly average categories transformed using midpoints, bounded by 0 and 30
Question. "Since you were elected this term to this township [county] congress, about how many constituents have contacted you in your capacity as congressman or woman to report local problems? This includes written contact, spoken contact, telephone calls, and any other methods of reporting local problems." Response categories: none, 1-2 people, 3-5 people, 6-10 people, 11-20 people, more than 20 people. To construct a constituent contacting variable, I transformed response categories into values with 0 and 30 as extreme values and midpoints for the middle four categories. I then computed yearly averages, taking into account the lapse of time between the beginning of the term and the survey.

Table B1. Summary Statistics for Table 2.

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Voter nominee	1,152	0.679	0.467	0	1
Subjective efficacy	1,127	2.610	0.715	1	4
Perceived constituent monitoring	1,158	3.411	1.081	1	5
Voting district priority	1,102	0.355	0.479	0	1
Years lived in voting district	1,128	32.171	20.433	0	80
Communist party member	1,124	0.863	0.344	0	1
Highest communist party school	1,063	1.684	1.197	0	5
Male	1,165	0.782	0.413	0	1
Age	1,195	56.237	12.165	25	85
Junior high school or below	1,186	0.379	0.485	0	1
Senior high school	1,186	0.348	0.477	0	1
Vocational school	1,186	0.177	0.382	0	1
College	1,186	0.096	0.295	0	1
Agricultural worker	1,144	0.175	0.378	0	1
Industrial worker	1,144	0.009	0.093	0	1
Self-employed entrepreneur	1,144	0.033	0.179	0	1
Private businessperson	1,144	0.042	0.201	0	1
Enterprise manager	1,144	0.036	0.186	0	1
Enterprise or agency staff	1,144	0.013	0.114	0	1
Skilled worker or professional	1,144	0.023	0.149	0	1
Teacher	1,144	0.022	0.146	0	1
Military or police	1,144	0.005	0.072	0	1
Community leader	1,144	0.464	0.499	0	1
Party or government official	1,144	0.083	0.276	0	1
Party or government leader	1,144	0.074	0.262	0	1
Other occupation	1,144	0.021	0.143	0	1

Table B2. Summary Statistics for Table 3.

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Voter nominee	2,919	0.504	0.500	0	1
Subjective efficacy	2,842	2.484	0.635	1	4
Perceived constituent monitoring	2,910	3.156	1.025	1	5
Voting district priority	2,726	0.347	0.476	0	1
Years lived in voting district	2,864	24.839	20.123	0	80

(continued)

Table B2. (continued)

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Communist party member	2,779	0.832	0.374	0	1
Highest communist party school	2,668	2.205	1.405	0	5
Standing committee member	2,640	0.089	0.285	0	1
Male	2,867	0.775	0.418	0	1
Age	2,943	54.036	11.698	22	88
Junior high school or below	2,943	0.129	0.336	0	1
Senior high school	2,943	0.263	0.440	0	1
Vocational school	2,943	0.302	0.459	0	1
College	2,943	0.306	0.461	0	1
Agricultural worker	2,798	0.056	0.231	0	1
Industrial worker	2,798	0.015	0.123	0	1
Self-employed entrepreneur	2,798	0.019	0.136	0	1
Private businessperson	2,798	0.112	0.315	0	1
Enterprise manager	2,798	0.079	0.270	0	1
Enterprise or agency staff	2,798	0.009	0.096	0	1
Skilled worker or professional	2,798	0.019	0.135	0	1
Teacher	2,798	0.064	0.245	0	1
Military or police	2,798	0.015	0.120	0	1
Community leader	2,798	0.242	0.428	0	1
Party or government official	2,798	0.133	0.339	0	1
Party or government leader	2,798	0.213	0.410	0	1
Other occupation	2,798	0.024	0.153	0	1

Table B3. Summary Statistics for Table 4, Township Congresses.

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Constituent contacts	778	9.809	10.152	0	51.429
Subjective efficacy	773	2.572	0.716	1	4
Perceived constituent monitoring	797	3.379	1.113	1	5
Voting district priority	769	0.368	0.483	0	1
Years lived in voting district	790	32.011	20.109	0	75
Communist party member	769	0.832	0.374	0	1
Highest communist party school	740	1.530	1.225	0	5
Male	790	0.768	0.422	0	1
Age	808	56.510	12.729	26	85
Junior high school or below	802	0.369	0.483	0	1

(continued)

Table B3. (continued)

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Senior high school	802	0.363	0.481	0	1
Vocational school	802	0.180	0.384	0	1
College	802	0.089	0.284	0	1
Agricultural worker	784	0.179	0.383	0	1
Industrial worker	784	0.008	0.087	0	1
Self-employed entrepreneur	784	0.038	0.192	0	1
Private businessperson	784	0.038	0.192	0	1
Enterprise manager	784	0.042	0.201	0	1
Enterprise or agency staff	784	0.017	0.128	0	1
Skilled worker or professional	784	0.026	0.158	0	1
Teacher	784	0.022	0.146	0	1
Military or police	784	0.005	0.071	0	1
Community leader	784	0.459	0.499	0	1
Party or government official	784	0.083	0.276	0	1
Party or government leader	784	0.059	0.235	0	1
Other occupation	784	0.026	0.158	0	1

Table B4. Summary Statistics for Table 4, County Congresses.

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Constituent contacts	1,162	9.842	9.953	0	1
Subjective efficacy	1,173	2.378	0.590	1	4
Perceived constituent monitoring	1,196	3.082	1.017	1	5
Voting district priority	1,151	0.334	0.472	0	1
Years lived in voting district	1,193	23.777	18.899	0	80
Communist party member	1,154	0.730	0.444	0	1
Highest communist party school	1,114	1.919	1.468	0	5
Standing committee member	1,155	0.100	0.301	0	1
Male	1,182	0.690	0.463	0	1
Age	1,207	54.650	12.625	22	88
Junior high school or below	1,211	0.107	0.309	0	1
Senior high school	1,211	0.253	0.435	0	1
Vocational school	1,211	0.309	0.462	0	1
College	1,211	0.332	0.471	0	1
Agricultural worker	1,163	0.060	0.238	0	1
Industrial worker	1,163	0.025	0.156	0	1
Self-employed entrepreneur	1,163	0.017	0.130	0	1
Private businessperson	1,163	0.145	0.353	0	1
Enterprise manager	1,163	0.103	0.304	0	1
Enterprise or agency staff	1,163	0.014	0.117	0	1
Skilled worker or professional	1,163	0.026	0.159	0	1

(continued)

Table B4. (continued)

Variable	Observations	*M*	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum
Teacher	1,163	0.098	0.297	0	1
Military or police	1,163	0.026	0.159	0	1
Community leader	1,163	0.193	0.395	0	1
Party or government official	1,163	0.106	0.308	0	1
Party or government leader	1,163	0.154	0.361	0	1
Other occupation	1,163	0.034	0.180	0	1

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Notes

1. For good reviews and discussions, see Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009); Magaloni and Kricheli (2010); and Svolik (2012).
2. Common labels for such regimes include electoral authoritarianism (Diamond, 2002; Schedler, 2002), competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way, 2002), and dominant-party authoritarianism (Magaloni, 2006).
3. I use the term *selectorate* here in the usual way, following the literature on candidate selection: That is, a selectorate comprises the individuals who select candidates to stand for electoral office. This is different from the usage in Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2003).
4. The more appropriate (but less familiar) term may be "propitious selection." See Hemenway (1990).
5. Appendix A describes the surveys. Data are available upon request to author. I also conducted extensive in-country qualitative fieldwork, including 65

interviews with Chinese congress officials, congress scholars, and congressmen and women. Interview numbers used in this article refer to these interviews.

6. Quite apart from representational concerns, Stone, Maisel, and Maestas (2004) argue in the American context that electoral prospects improve with "personal quality" because voters value it for its own sake.
7. Of course, they can win as write-in candidates. See discussion in the section "Chinese Local Congresses and the Candidate Selection Process" below. I have no write-in candidates in my sample.
8. Prior to 1979, the communist party monopolized candidate nomination, electoral contestation was exceedingly rare, and voting was usually public. See Townsend (1967, pp. 115-137). The 1953 Electoral Law gave voters the right to put forward nominations, but a clarification by Deng Xiaoping (1953, February 11, p. 40) identified the party as the appropriate main source of nominations. It was unusual for a voter nominee to appear on a ballot.
9. The Electoral Law passed in 1979 has been revised five times, most recently in 2010. The description in this section is common to local congress elections after 1980.
10. In township elections, the township party committee secretary usually heads the election committee. In county elections, the county congress standing committee appoints members to election committees, after the county communist party committee approves. In the voting districts, election offices do much of the work associated with candidate selection; at both levels, a communist party branch secretary usually heads them (Xiong, 2002).
11. Here and below, I use the most recent available figures that include all or most provinces. Where data are incomplete, I note this.
12. This is effectively the only path to an electoral win for those self-declared office seekers who campaign actively for local congress seats without party support. These "independent candidates" may seek or bypass voter sponsorship as voter nominees, but they rarely survive vetting to appear on the ballot.
13. Despite the legal status (and growing numbers) of local congress office seekers who mobilize voter support, Chinese authorities regularly engage in overt repression of such candidates. See Nathan (1985); Zhu (2006); F. Li (2008); Z. Yuan (2011); and Sun (2013).
14. Satellite parties are the eight historically democratic political parties permitted by the ruling communists to survive the civil war but not to exercise substantive political power after 1949. Party-led organizations are organizations through which the communist party manages broad interests in society (e.g., trade unions, women, youth). The party appoints and manages leaders of these organizations. The exact translation from the Chinese of what I call "party nominees" is "organizational nominees."
15. There is a large literature on this. See especially Manion (1985); Burns (1989, 1994); Whiting (2001, 2004); Edin (2003); Brødsgaard (2004); and Landry (2008).

16. Strictly, the system is quasi-parliamentary, with the usual fusion of executive and legislative branches. Party leaders are appointed, but government (and congress) leaders must be elected by congresses. Party committees nominate their preferred candidates for government and congress leadership, and their candidates usually win (see Manion, 2008).
17. Even so, voter attendance is probably not large. For example, Zuo (2007) surveys voters in a district in Beijing and finds 47% participated in *no* meetings associated with the 2006 elections.
18. At the county level, data are available for only 10 provinces.
19. It is impossible to construct district-level data from the available aggregate data, but some voter nominees on the ballot probably lose to party nominees in some districts. Whether this is due to party nominees chosen to reflect voter preferences, votes for regime insiders (see "Statistical Tests" section), or electoral fraud is impossible to know. In any case, it does not invalidate the analytical results below.
20. More generally, Schedler (2006) argues that simply holding elections may help dictators survive by enhancing regime legitimacy.
21. By the same logic, looking ahead, voters may do better to be strategic (not sincere) in their nominations too, as reflected in Hypothesis 1b.
22. See Appendix B for question item wording, variable construction, and variable descriptives.
23. Party schools are established from the township level up through the Central Party School in Beijing. Congressmen and women normally receive short-term training at a school operated by the local party committee; individuals being groomed for leadership receive more training, at higher levels.
24. We followed up with an open-ended question asking about the content of constituent contacts. Infrastructural issues (especially roads), housing, public spaces, and agricultural production dominate.
25. Of course, constituent contacts may increase or decrease over a term in office. Lacking evidence to support either of these propositions, both of which seem plausible, I use simple yearly averages, which implicitly assumes no lumpiness in activity.
26. These figures simply divide the population averages by congress delegates at the two levels. Obviously, there is huge variation in size across counties and townships. In my sample, averages are 726 and 2,742 in township and county congresses, respectively.
27. There are 959,100 voting districts for township congresses; 330,000 for county congresses. The figures above are estimates for the 2006-2007 congress elections.
28. At both levels, voters contact voter nominees more than party nominees, although the difference is statistically significant only for county congresses.
29. In addition to age, I include age-squared because (as with most relationships of interest in social science) any effect of age is likely to be curvilinear.
30. For example, these are mostly problems of infrastructure, especially roads. In Manion (2014), I characterize local congressional representation as "authoritarian parochialism."

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