

The China Quarterly

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CQY>

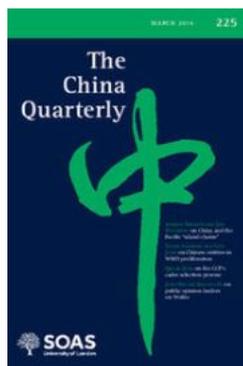
Additional services for ***The China Quarterly***:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



Varieties of Governance in China: Migration and Institutional Change in Chinese Villages. Jie Lu. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xi + 298 pp. £51.00. ISBN 978-0-19-937874-6

John James Kennedy

The China Quarterly / Volume 225 / March 2016, pp 256 - 257

DOI: 10.1017/S0305741016000047, Published online: 07 March 2016

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0305741016000047

How to cite this article:

John James Kennedy (2016). The China Quarterly, 225, pp 256-257 doi:10.1017/S0305741016000047

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

rather problematic given the fact that there are maximum 4,000 positions on the Central Committee's nomenklatura list.

On page 76, bottom, Lee argues that a "low or unranked official with a university degree might not expect higher chances of promotion, but a degree appears to have a strong effect on those in consideration for a leading cadre position" (p. 76). First of all, officials in China are all ranked and there is no such thing as an unranked official. Secondly, there is no doubt that a section member (*keyuan*) will stand a better chance of advancing to a section head position if s/he holds a university degree. Section head is not considered a leading cadre position. I would actually also disagree with Lee in defining leading cadres as cadres with the rank of vice-division leader (*fuchu ji*) and up. I am not sure *chuji yishang* (division level and up), which is the official definition of leading cadres, also includes the *fuchu ji* level. These are all minor details, although I would argue that they are not considered trivial by Chinese Party officials. At a more general level, I would disagree with the assertion that "that the CCP's resilience is a consequence of deliberate organizational proliferation, in certain realms, rather than center-led consolidation" (p. 199). In my view the CCP's resilience is not coincidental or the consequence of pluralization, it is rather the result of deliberate policies focusing on creating a younger and better educated cadre corps. These policies were all discussed, formulated and implemented by the Party centre in Beijing.

For anyone interested in how the CCP has evolved into a resilient organization constituting the core of the system's durability, this study is highly recommendable. It is also a useful supplement to other studies on the Party school system.

KJELD ERIK BRØDSGAARD

keb.int@cbs.dk

Varieties of Governance in China: Migration and Institutional Change in Chinese Villages

JIE LU

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015

xi + 298 pp. £51.00

ISBN 978-0-19-937874-6 doi:10.1017/S0305741016000047

While political scientists have written much about village governance and the significance of election reforms in rural China, economists and sociologists have evaluated how rural to urban migration influences those "left behind" in villages such the elderly and children. However, few scholars closely examine how village out-migration directly influences local governance. Jie Lu provides a well-written and comprehensive study on the various types of rural governance and how social conditions, such as migration, shape village institutions and the provision of public services. Drawing on two national surveys, several village case studies and many individual interviews, Lu demonstrates that both indigenous relations-based institutions and formal rule-based institutions can provide good governance, but the effectiveness of these institutions depends on the changing social conditions of villages (i.e. level of out-migration).

The main argument is that good governance is not solely based on the type of governing institutions (formal or informal), but rather on the social conditions in which these institutions operate. Lu starts with the decentralization of rural administration and greater economic opportunities in the cities that have increased rural out-

migration since the early 1990s, but the opportunity to migrate is unevenly distributed across rural China. It is the proportion of villagers who migrate out of the community that alters the fabric of social interactions and relations within the village. Traditional or indigenous community obligations and social sanctions begin to erode as a greater proportion of community members rely more heavily on income sources outside the village.

Lu generates three general hypotheses based on the interaction of out-migration and local governance. First, close-knit communities with limited out-migration (less than 10 per cent) have strong social sanctions and good governance. These traditional or indigenous institutions, such as clans, lineage and social organizations, influence the behaviour of villagers and cadres through reputation and reciprocal relations that develop in close communities. Second, communities that experience moderate levels of out-migration (about 15 to 25 per cent) tend to rely on more rule-based institutions. As a greater proportion of villagers migrate to the cities, indigenous relations-based institutions (i.e., social sanctions) start to erode and become less effective in providing equitable services. In this case, communities members tend to rely on village elections and legal sanctions to influence the behaviour of cadres and ensure the provision of public services. Third, communities that experience significantly high levels of out-migration (about 30 to over 50 per cent) tend to be more atomized, and neither indigenous nor rule-based institutions function well. In this case, the interests for the majority of villagers, both migrants and those left behind, are outside the village. Social sanctions are completely eroded and even rule-based village intuitions have little influence on the self-interested behaviour of villagers and cadres. Using two national surveys from 2008 and several well documented in-depth village case studies, Lu provides convincing evidence to support all three general hypotheses. His empirical analysis and findings makes a solid contribution to the comparative politics literature on institutional change as well as the literature on China's rural social and political development.

The book is laid out in eight chapters. The introduction and chapter two place Lu's argument and analysis within the general literature on institutional change as well as the literature on political development in China. These chapters also show how this study fits into the fields of comparative politics, economics, sociology and anthropology. Chapter three provides an historical overview on the development and evolution of rural governance, including the history of relations-based and rule-based institutions. Chapters four, five and six present the empirical analysis and incorporate statistical tests (survey data), village case studies and individual interviews. The mixed-methods approach provides solid qualitative and quantitative evidence that convincingly supports the three key hypotheses. Chapter seven is the conclusion. Lu shows how his results fit into the broader literature on institutional change and political development. Finally chapter eight reflects on the post-2008 economic and social conditions in rural China.

In short, I believe this book makes a significant contribution to the study of institutional change and rural governance in China. Lu delivers his unique and original analysis in a straightforward manner that is easy to comprehend for graduates and undergraduate students in the fields of China studies, political science, economics, sociology and anthropology.

JOHN JAMES KENNEDY

kennedy1@ku.edu