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Political and Ethnic Representation in Chinese Local Governance

Analysis of the Roles of the Deputies of Leishan County People's Congress,
Guizhou Province, China

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the political and ethnic environment of local Chinese political actors and their representational dilemmas in the Miao-dominant area of Leishan County, Guizhou Province, China. The investigation is conducted via two research questions: how do the deputies of a Miao County People's Congress in China play their roles in representing the interests of the state towards the community, and how do they represent the interests of the community towards the state? The achievements of the deputies and the challenges they face in their dual representational roles are a focus of the analysis. The thesis provides insight into the governance and politics of a local government body dominated by an ethnic minority and the interplay of these dynamics with central government authorities presided over by Han Chinese.

The representative structure of the Leishan County People's Congress (LCPC) and its deputy membership is explored to understand how the deputies enact their roles in promoting, intervening in and restructuring development projects as both agents of and remonstrators to the central state. Case studies of village governance and cultural tourism are used to illustrate how the LCPC deputies are both coordinators and negotiators in a polycentric local governance structure.

The fieldwork was carried out in the ethnic area of Leishan County. Relevant data was collected through four interrelated research methods: focus groups, semi-structured individual interviews, purposive observation and document analysis. The quantification of pairwise ranking by the focus groups highlighted the achievements and challenges in the key functions required of the deputies. The data also led to two further areas for in-depth analysis: central-local relations, and the political and ethnic representation of the deputies.

The research found that when conflicts exist, political representation that favours the state prevails over community interests. At the same time, the deputies' representation of their ethnic communities is enhanced and augmented when they undertake to localise the national development policies and projects handed down by central authorities. Finally, the concept of polycentric governance enables a more precise understanding of the changing local governance systems in China among the diverse stakeholders present in the ethnic communities.

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Annotated Glossary

Biangan

Village development model worker.

Daitouren

Pacesetter in area of village development.

Ganbu

Cadre; public employees who work in governmental organs, the army or people's organisations and who play a leading role or conduct administrative work.

Haozhaoli

Charisma; the collective ability of a group such as deputies who possess the influential ability of a policy who/which can inspire and guide the people to follow.

Livelihood Projects

A series of projects implemented by the government such as poverty-relief, promotion of employment, education and aid, social security, economy housing, infrastructure, environmental improvement, medical care etc..

Minimum Subsistence Security System (MSS)

A national policy practiced over China to guarantee those aging, or disabled, or patients, or widows, or anyone who has no job, and who has no any source of income in both urban and rural areas, have the lowest income to live.

Oversight

The legal power executed by deputies in People's Congress for the supervision of the work of government, court and procuratorate; to have oversight over (something).

Paiban

Clap the board; have the final say.

Pufa

Activities taken by deputies to educate people in awareness about legal issues; popularising the laws.

Renovation of unsafe housing

A national project practiced over Chinese rural areas to grant financial support to those farmers who haven't the economic ability to improve their living houses which are in disrepair.

Sangnong issues

The issues related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers. In Chinese, the first character of each of the three words is the same as nong.

Spiritual work

Political consciousness raising; such work conducted by deputies to the villagers for specific political objectives.

The Party

Chinese Communist Party.

Xiadao

Second or to be seconded. It is used to describe those officials or future deputies who are transferred to work at a lower or grassroots level.

Yifuliangyuan

Government, court and procuratorate. The deputies of People's Congresses at different levels often use this term to describe their oversight over the government, the court and the procuratorate.

Zhualuoshi

Carry through on a project.

Zuzhi

Organisation, such as governmental personnel department or unit within the Party; any Party or government institution.

Acronyms

CGB	County Government Bureau
CGG	Commission of Global Governance
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPC	County People's Congress
CPG	County People's Government
CPPCC	County People's Political Consultative Conference
CPRs	Common-pool resources
ERAS	Ethnic Regional Autonomy System
FG	Focus groups
GRP	Government of the Republic Period
LCPC	Leishan County People's Congress
LPC	Local People's Congress, including People's Congress at provincial, prefectural, county and township levels
LPG	Local People's Governments, including People's Governments at provincial, prefectural, county and township levels
NPC	National People's Congress
NPM	New public management
NRCMC	New Rural Cooperative Medical Care
PC	People's Congresses at national and local levels
PCC	Party Committee of the County
PCLC	Party Committee of Leishan County
PG	Prefectural Government
PPC	Provincial People's Congress
PPF	Preferential policies for farmers
RCA	Representing the community: averaged value

RCTA	Representing the community: total averaged value
RSA	Representing the state: averaged value
RSTA	Representing the state: total averaged value
TPG	Township People's Government
TPC	Township People's Congress
VC	Villagers' Committee
VPB	Village Party Branch

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