



Information for Autocrats: Representation in Chinese Local Congresses (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

By Melanie Manion

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This book investigates the new representation unfolding in Chinese local congresses. Drawing qualitative fieldwork and data analysis from original surveys of 5,130 township, county, and municipal congressmen and women and constituents, Melanie Manion shows the priorities and problems of ordinary Chinese significantly influence both who gets elected to local congresses and what the congresses do once elected. Candidates nominated by ordinary voters are 'good types', with qualities that signal they will reliably represent the community. By contrast, candidates nominated by the communist party are 'governing types', with qualities that reflect officially valued competence and loyalty. However, congressmen and women of both types now largely reject the Maoist-era role of state agent. Instead, they view themselves as 'delegates', responsible for advocating with local government to supply local public goods. Manion argues that representation in Chinese local congresses taps local knowledge for local governance, thereby bolstering the rule of autocrats in Beijing.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Melanie Manion is Professor of Political Science at Duke University, North Carolina. Prior to this, she was Vilas-Jordan Distinguished Achievement Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She studied philosophy and political economy at Peking University in the late 1970s, was trained in Far Eastern Studies at McGill University and the University of London, and earned her doctorate in political science at the University of Michigan. She is the recipient of numerous research awards, including awards from the National Science Foundation and Fulbright Foundation. She frequently presents her research in China, Japan, and across the United States. Her publications include work on the Chinese bureaucracy, grassroots elections, and the political economy of corruption and good governance.

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