

# The Critical Obstacles of the Chinese Communist Party's Internal Elections

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## **Abstract**

At present, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is experiencing numerous problems in conducting its intraparty elections. Based on empirical studies, the article discusses nine major obstacles regarding the CCP's election system, including arbitrary nomination system, prohibition from public campaign, restrictions on multicandidate elections, less secret voting and public counting, limited elections on chief officers, fewer direct elections of party representatives, confined election, incomplete terms for elected officers, and no mechanisms of challenging, removing, or impeaching the elected officers. The article argues that effective reform of the election system and a checks and balances system should contain the power within the cage of the legal system, and build separation of power among the decision making, executive, and supervisory power.

**Keywords:** *Chinese Communist Party, Intraparty Elections, Political Reform*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

There is an inherent causal relationship and logical connection between the internal elections of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the CCP's checks and balances. To restrict and balance the power of the CCP, it is essential to guarantee each party member's rights and power. In doing so, the competitive democratic elections can effectively assure that each party member acts as an independent voter, and the CCP officials will obey the public opinion and follow the popular majority instead of a few superiors.

Therefore, competitive elections are a fundamental institutional effort that will affect the voters' incentive, motivations, and actions. "The protection and the full exercise of party members' rights will maintain the substantial restriction of the

CCP's power" (Gao, 2008). Moreover, the most critical theme of CCP's democracy is the party members' authorization which is more important than the power of decision making, executive, and supervisory (Wang, 2012).

Although the democratic electoral system is a typically Western idea, pioneered by ancient Greece, it has become the common custom and prosperity of political civilization for all human beings in the world. Providing an institutional order, this electoral system is more stable than administrative policies and regulations. Once the old system is insufficient in providing what society needs, it is urgent to initiate institutional innovation. The democratic elections are capable of ensuring the legitimacy of the elected persons and supporting them to exercise power, and in turn, to supervise and

restrict the power of the elected persons. More importantly, the election can encourage political and public participations in promoting a civil society (Wang, 2011).

However, based on the current different understanding of democracy within the CCP, it is urgent to seek the common denominator among the conservatives, liberals, and centrists in an effort to maximize their consensus. Evidently, democratization can be divided into three levels; including democratic ideals (such as universal values), democratic structures (such as bicameralism, separation of triple powers, and multiparty systems), and democratic procedures (such as elections). At present, the understanding of democratic ideals and democratic structures between China and the West is difficult to reconcile, but there are many similarities between democratic procedures and techniques, especially the process of democratic elections, that is universal without subject to specific culture, class, and nation. As Wang Huning said, the democratic procedure is similar to “the economic management and technology under different economic systems which can be introduced externally. The political management and techniques under different political systems can also be introduced or modified” (Wang, 1986).

At present, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is experiencing numerous problems in conducting its intraparty elections. Based on empirical studies, the article has explored at least nine major issues regarding the CCP’s election system, including candidate selection, election campaigning, multicandidate election, secret ballot and transparency of vote counting, competitive elections of the key leadership positions, direct elections of the local party representatives, free election of the party representatives, stability of elected party officials, and impeachment of the elected representatives. Obviously, an effective reform of the election system and a checks and balances system should restrain power within the legal and institutional cage, and construct a

separation of power among the CCP’s decision making, executive and supervisory branches.

## II. THE CRITICAL OBSTACLES OF THE CCP’S INTERNAL ELECTIONS

To understand China’s political reform and democracy, it is vital to discover the main obstacles and problems of the CCP’s internal elections, and thus seek common agreements of democratic elections before exploring the feasible directions of the CCP’s internal election reform. According to the author’s empirical research, to some extent, Chinese scholars and officials have reached some consensus on the universal principle of competitive elections, and hope to abide by those within the CCP. It is meaningless or even nonsensical to use the uniqueness of the CCP and China as an excuse to revise the popular electoral procedures, but it is necessary to follow the “principle of public choice” and the “principle of people’s participation” (Wang, 2011).

Consistent with the current nine major issues of the CCP’s internal elections, the nine common agreements of the CCP’s democratic elections are gradually being formed. The first issue is seen within the fewer open and free nominations, and more designated nominations by the arbitrary leaders. So, CCP must make open nominations possible for all candidates without any manipulation by a few leaders.

Different from the democratic procedure of nominating the candidates, the nomination by the CCP’s leaders is the fundamental flaw and misuse of competitive elections. Obviously, the fair nomination system will determine the starting point of the entire democratic election. All elections would be fraudulent if candidates could not be selected through the procedure of openness, fairness, and impartiality.

At present, the most essential drawback of the CCP’s internal party election is the arbitrary nomination system. For example, according to the

2012 party representative election in an east coastal city, it was popular to have a pre-selection before the formal elections, aiming to timely manipulate the candidates and effectively dominate the black-box operation before the official election. At the same time, that city's elections only allowed the multiple candidates about 11% more than the needed positions in the pre-election, but the final election didn't provide one candidate more than the needed position for voters' choice. In addition, the list of pre-selected candidates was actually proposed by the current standing committee of the municipal party council; so that this standing committee can grant the position of the next leader according to their own private interests and control the structure of the next leadership team. Furthermore, after the city standing committee has proposed a list of candidates, it needs to be reported to the provincial party committee for approval before the party representatives can be allowed to have a preliminary informal discussion. Finally, the bureau of the general assembly determines the candidates based on the majority opinion. The question here is, what is "preliminary informal discussion" and what is the majority opinion? This is not a normative language that regulates elections, aside from a "democratic centralism" with the characteristics of the CCP without any clear definitions on purpose (Secretariat of the XYZ CCP Congress in XYZ City, 2012A & 2012B).

Actually, pre-selection is not the invention of the CCP because American Democratic and Republican Parties also select their pre-elect candidates before the official election of the US president and some state senators. Thus, whether or not there is a pre-election or preliminary election is not the main criterion for democracy. As long as the pre-selected nominations are open to all, any form of election is acceptable. Nonetheless, the pre-selection system with the CCP's characteristics has become one of the biggest obstacles to open and free nominations.

As early as 1945, the CCP's Seventh National Congress began to initiate a "pre-selection" system, that is, two candidates must be posted, the first is of the non-official list while the second one is the official one (Mao, 1995:177). The essence of the CCP's pre-selection system is to influence the independence of voters' willingness. Furthermore, the system of accompany election is even worse. In order to perform the multiple-candidate election, the CCP carefully selected a companion as a "puppy" to ensure that the CCP's favorable candidates for the leadership will be successfully elected. Currently, there are three types of accompany election. One is "soft companionship," that is, ordinary people who are not known to be used as companions; the second is "reversed companionship-". According to the regulations, for instance, the official line-up must be a female representative, so they deliberately choose a man as a figure head who will definitely fail. The third is "nominal companionship" who declined to participate in the nominal election, and as a result, this "candidate" would not be nominated and elected during the election (Zhao, 2007:50). All soft, revised, and nominal accompanies should be considered a fraudulent election. Moreover, these "three-accompany" candidates have their motivations to serve as fake candidates because as long as these "candidates" can "lose the election," they will get awards which should be interpreted as disguised corruption (Qu, 2007:4).

In addition, according to the third Item of Article 3 of the CCP's Regulations on the Election of Local Organizations, the party representatives should be "nominated in a bottom-up manner. After full consultation and discussion, the candidates of preliminary representatives are proposed, following the opinions of the majority party organization or majority party members" (Personnel Department of the CCP Central Committee, 1994). This shows that both organization and party members can nominate the party representative candidates, but in reality, the organizational nomination often replaces the individual nomination (Qian, 2008:153).

Therefore, it is necessary to implement an open and fair nomination, allowing all party members to elect and to be elected, and to guarantee the initial nomination by ordinary party members. The invaluable nomination by general CCP members is a crucial procedure for the entire democratic election and a touchstone for identifying true or false elections.

The second problematic issue is fewer free elections, but more restrictions on public campaign. Obviously, an election without public campaign is either a silent game or a pre-directed drama. In the CCP's electoral culture, it is politically frowned upon if the election involves lobbying or connection building. As a result, this culture has greatly dominated over the normal campaign.

In fact, as essential means of democratic elections, advertising and public relations are able to provide an effective communication between candidates and voters. Given that CCP forbids this normal practice of election, it may indicate that CCP's leaders worry about the close connections and provocative debates between the candidates and voters. The refusal to provide legal, open, and regular channels for election campaigns can only lead to endless intrigues (Wang, 2011). At the same time, the relevant departments of the CCP are afraid of open campaigns, which may lead to more cliques and factions within the Party. In fact, some CCP's leaders often engage in sectarianism in the name of anti-sectarianism. The factions within the parties have never stopped in the past almost 100 years of CCP's history. Therefore, the slogan of anti-factions actually has become the effective excuse and weapon of suppressing inner-party democracy, eliminating party dissidents, and maintaining political dictatorship.

Needless to say, it is indispensable not only to allow election campaigns and advertising, but also to establish legitimate procedure, including setting specific campaign time, inviting media platforms, organizing candidates' debates, implementing

fundraising regulations, and allocating campaign funds. In particular, CCP should regulate and restrict illegal campaigns, such as forbidding personal attacks, prohibiting political bribery, and establishing an institution for election arbitration to deal with complaints and disputes arising in the election (Wang, 2011).

The third problem is fewer multi-candidate elections, thus more elections without competition. The soul of competitive elections is to have more candidates than the positions because an election with only one candidate for each position basically means a fake election. There is no essential difference between the fake elections and superior appointments. The fake election without enough candidates is designed to cover up the essence of the arbitrariness. Moreover, the differential voting system can effectively improve the consciousness and capability of CCP members' participation and preserve their democratic rights. In particular, multi-candidate elections provide a game of rules for democratic competition (Yu, 2011).

As early as in 1953, the *Election Law* did not clearly stipulate whether to implement single-candidate election or multi-candidate election. In the same year, the Central Committee of the CCP issued the "Instructions on Grassroots Elections." It blatantly violated the common idea of democracy and clearly proposed the implementation of single-candidate election: "The number of candidates proposed by the local election committee at the election meeting should generally be equal to the number of elected representatives" (The Election Commission of the Chinese Communist Party Committee, 1953).

After 26 years, the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress passed the new *Election Law* in 1979. Among them, the single-candidate election was changed to a multiple-candidate election, which stipulated that: "The number of candidates for direct election by the voters should be 50% to 100% more than the

number of elected candidates; the number of candidates at the local people's congresses should be 20% to 50% more than the number of elected representatives" (People's Congress, 1979). Finally, the principle of a multiple-candidate election system has been expanded from the election of local representatives to the election of local government administrators, including local government leaders, the standing committee members of the National People's Congress, and the chief justice of the court and the chief procurator (Li, 2011). However, there are no clear regulations for the multiple-candidate election of CCP's officials.

The election of the members of the CCP's Central Committee began at the 13th Party Congress in 1987 and was included in the Constitution of the CCP. However, over the past decade, it has been unsatisfactory for the multiple-candidate election of the three terms of the Central Committee members and alternate members. For example, in 2002, the Central Committee of the 16th Party Congress pre-selected 208 candidates, 198 were selected, with the difference of only 5.1%. The candidates for the Central Alternate Committee amounted to 167, 158 were selected, and the difference was 9 people with a difference of 5.7%. At the 17th Party Congress, 221 nominees were appointed, 204 were selected, and the difference was 8.3%. Among the nominated Alternative Committee candidates, 183 were nominated, and 167 were selected, with a margin of 9.6% (Zhang, 2012). At the 18th Party Congress, the number of nominees for the Central Committee was 224, the actual elected members were 205, the difference was 9.3%, and the nomination candidate for the Alternative Committee was 190, the actual selection was 171, and the difference was 11.1% (Zhang, Qin, Huo, & Li, 2012).

Moreover, according to common sense, the main target of the multi-candidate election should be the top leaders, but the relevant regulations deliberately blur this critical issue. For example, the *Local Organization Law* stipulates that "the candidates for the chief leaders should generally

have one more person for the election. If there is only one candidate, the election may also be operated" (People's Congress, 2004). This "may also" is providing a perfect excuse and legal base for all leaders at all levels to operate the single-candidate election. At present, most of the elections of the chief leaders at the local level or above the county level have become single-candidate elections. In order to show off more subtly, many places secretly arranged "accompanying candidates." Once the "fake" candidates are announced, the voters all know who the "real candidate" is and who is the "accompanying candidate." To ensure that the favorable candidate is elected, they allow the accompanying candidate to publicize his/her background information briefly. For other cases, the name of the "intentional candidate" will be placed in the prominent position of the ballot, and the rest will be in alphabetical order. Some places even divide the ballots for the favorite and non-favorite candidates to ensure that all voters can figure out who the real candidate is in the leader's mind. According to the opinion of many interviewed experts, the so-called multi-candidate election is actually a show dominated by the administrators and cooperated by voters (Yu, 2011).

In addition, according to the 2012 party representative election in a coastal city, there was a multi-candidate election for the Standing Committee of the Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection. There were nine positions with 10 candidates. However, the first and second positions of this Committee were elected without competition. Furthermore, the list of 10 pre-selected candidates was also proposed and determined by the Standing Committee of the Municipal CCP Committee. Ironically, the primary responsibility of the elected Disciplinary Committee is to supervise and restrict the leadership of the Municipal CCP Committee. It seems to ask employees to supervise the employer. In addition, when they elected members of the party committee, the party committee at the upper level recommended a list of 13 people for 12 positions.

Interestingly, to protect the loser after the election, its document stipulated: "On the second day, the Party Alternate Committee members of the election will ensure that the unsuccessful members will not be defeated again. The members who have lost the previous day will automatically become the Alternate Committee members" (Secretariat of the XYZ CCP Congress in XYZ City, 2012A & 2012B).

The fourth issue related to the CCP's election is not secret voting and public counting, but more public voting and secret counting. Therefore, it is vital for CCP to vote secretly and count votes openly instead of openly voting and count secretly.

The purpose of secret voting is the same as the purpose of public counting, in order to guarantee the fairness and transparency of democratic elections. If the vote is not kept secret, the voter loses the right to vote freely and autonomously; likewise, if the vote counting is not made public, it creates opportunities for malpractice and black-box operations. Therefore, secret voting and public counting are two wings: the basic guarantee for the free and fair election to take off and land successfully.

However, most of the various elections held by the CCP are contrary to the basic common ideas of democratic elections. For example, according to the election case of a party representative in a coastal city in 2012, the election results of the members of the municipal party committee, the members of the municipal disciplinary committee, and the representatives of the provincial party congress did not announce the number of votes, and only publicized the list of elected persons according to the alphabetical order in an effort to avoid the embarrassment of the low voters (Secretariat of the XYZ CCP Congress in XYZ City, 2012A & 2012B). Similarly, the voting of the representatives of the 18th Party Congress in 2012 and the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2017 did not set up a secret ballot box. The electors voted in their own seats, which could not guarantee the secret of the ballot. Moreover, the

Party Congress has never announced the number of votes of the Central Committee members and the members of the Central Alternative Committee. At best, they are only sorted according to the number of votes of the members of the CCP Central Alternative Committee. Ordinary party members cannot even know the losers' names of the Central Committee and Alternate Committee election. In violation of the basic rules of democratic elections, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress, which were held in 2012 and 2017, are still boundless with no sign of improvement.

At the same time, some units have adopted the "interval" method in order to "supervise" the voters' election intentions; some deliberately arranged for the staff to intentionally or unintentionally watch the electors to fill out the ballot; some manipulated the technical procedures through designing counterfeit ballots and miscalculating the ballot boxes, violating the secret voting principle of the election (Qu, 2007:5).

The fifth problem is to elect fewer chief and important positions, but elect more deputy and non-critical positions. Thus, it is critical to focus on electing a chief or important position instead of a deputy or a non-critical position.

Another common rule in the elections of modern democratic countries is to focus on the election of chief and important positions, and to exempt all kinds of deputy and non-essential positions. In general, officials in modern democratic countries come from three main ways: public election, appointment, or recruitment, which are worth learning for the CCP. The public election as the first approach indicates that the critical positions, such as the President, Governor, and Congressmen, must go through competitive elections. The CCP needs to gradually implement direct elections for party members, including the chief party leaders at the Central and local levels who must be responsible for the ordinary party members and must be limited by the specific term.

The second way of gaining the official positions is by appointment. Similarly to the Western administrative officers, as a chief Party leader, the party committee secretary through the competitive elections has the right to appoint the heads of the party committees at all levels. Such officers must report and be responsible for the chief Party leader, and also apply for a term system, but there is no need to go through the election.

The third type of officers rely on recruitment. Like the affairs officer at all levels in the West, this type of officers will handle daily affairs for party committees at all levels. The affairs are appointed by the administrative officers, the above-mentioned second type of officials. Their main responsibilities are implementing the decisions of administrative officers, and are responsible for the specific execution of decision-making without term limit.

Obviously, the object of the CCP's internal elections should be selective and focused. It will enhance the cost of elections and affect the efficiency of hiring if the lower level officials and insignificant positions are elected. Moreover, in reality, these elected non-essential party personnel are not responsible to the voters. Instead, they have to serve at their real bosses' pleasure although their bosses are not elected. By contrast, if these chief party positions which are supposed to be elected are appointed, they have neither the basis of people's support nor responsibility to the people. As a result, the elected deputy or non-chief government officials must naturally bear the mistakes of governance. Consequently, there has been a ridiculous so-called "party leadership but government responsibility," that is, the leaders without responsibility and responsible persons without leadership. In other words, all credit should belong to the leaders and all responsible persons must be blamed for mistakes. Based on this power-responsibility mechanism, how can the CCP's chief leaders avoid arbitrary leadership and dictatorship? More than 50% of the scholars and officials involved in the interview believe that the biggest obstacle to the CCP's

democratic centralism is that the top leaders are too powerful.

Therefore, the current situation of the CCP's internal elections is to elect what is not necessary and not elect what is necessary. According to Wang Changjiang, "there is a serious issue in some places to elect some deputy or minor positions at the local level head. The local or departmental party leaders are supposed to be strictly responsible for their bosses through appointment instead of election which leads to not only the lack of efficiency, but the chaos of governance" (Wang, 2011).

Obviously, the CCP's various types of elections have three negative consequences. First, the chief leader who is not elected by the people is only responsible for the overhead and is arbitrary to his subjects, resulting that the power is not subject to horizontal supervision and local checking. The second is the party committee members, who are not elected by the people, claim to implement the collective responsibility system, but in fact are not responsible because it is impossible to pursue the collective committee for its unethical and illegal actions (Gao, 2008). Third, after being elected by individual party members, these deputy or minor leaders are faced with a dilemma: they should be responsible for the voters in theory, but in practice they can only be responsible for their bosses, which leads to the election of minor position like a show with half-truth and half-false. It really wastes taxpayers' revenue and, more importantly, demolishes democracy and people's will.

The sixth problematic issue is less direct elections of party representatives at the local level and more indirect elections. Therefore, it is critical to increase more direct elections instead of arbitral indirect election of local part representatives.

In modern Western countries, the main reason for adopting indirect elections rather than direct elections is related to technical issues because if the constituency is too large and there are too

many voters in one specific district, it will make the election operation more difficult. However, in the electoral process of the CCP's local party representatives, due to the limited and controllable voters, there is no technical obstacle for direct elections. Instead, it is necessary for the CCP to control the elections politically. Article 14 of the "Provisional Regulations for the Election of Local Organizations of the CCP" issued in 1990 clearly states that direct elections are not allowed at the local level of the CCP's committees and the disciplinary inspection committees. For example, according to this Regulation: "If a party member's assembly is convened, the last party's committee will present candidates according to the opinions of the majority party organizations. After the examination and approval by the higher-level party organizations, the list of candidates will be submitted to the council of the conference for discussion and approval. As the next step, all groups of the party congress representatives will be consulted before submitting the list to the party members' congress for election" (The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, 1990).

However, county-level party representatives across China have continuously "violated" regulations and proactively implemented direct elections. For example, the county-level party representative election in YaAn City, Sichuan Province, piloted two counties and districts (Yucheng District and Yingjing County) as the experiment, contributing four innovative directions. First, all individual CCP's members are allowed to register and participate in the election of the CCP's representatives. Second, the CCP branch can elect its preliminary candidates by secret ballot. Third, the CCP Congress should elect its official candidates based on the preliminary candidates. Finally, the CCP Congress should conduct its direct election selecting its official representatives (Qiang&Cai, 2004:8-9).

In addition, Suyu County in Anhui Province supported the competitive public campaign for

electing heads of party and government agencies at the township and village level through self-nomination, public selection, organizational recommendation, and administrative endorsement. At the same time, the public campaign encourages candidates to address voters' interests and concerns through public dialogues and promising. As a result, the top three candidates for each position will be elected by the party members' congress or the people's representatives in reference to the preliminary candidate's survey, the campaign speeches, and the public opinion polls. This model has promoted the voters' sense of responsibility and enhanced the officials' sense of insecurity (Qiang&Cai, 2004:8-9).

Obviously, only through direct elections can the original nominating rights be protected, so that multiple candidates can directly communicate with the voters through public speeches. It will ensure effective voting, efficient casting, and equal opportunity to all candidates, promoting a sense that everybody has a chance, but nobody is certain about the result of election (Shi, 2011:24-26).

The seventh problem about CCP's internal election is a less free election, therefore more administrative obstacles to the election of party representatives. The number of people's representatives in democratic countries, such as the US House of Representatives, is mainly determined by the number of the entire population in the perspective areas, with the standardized ratio subject to demographic changes. However, the CCP's distribution of the number of party representatives is full of randomness, case by case, and arbitrary determination. For example, edited by the CCP's Organizational Bureau in 2001, its CCP's Election Manual stipulates that when assigning a representative quota, different requirements may be imposed on the proportion of representatives. As for some units with more outstanding people, they may "appropriately increase the proportion of candidates for nominations." In particular, "there should be a proper increase in the number of delegates for CCP

and governmental agencies” (Personnel Department of the CCP Central Committee, 1994).

Consequently, the number of representatives for CCP and government agencies has been extremely inflated, seriously violating the basic principles of free and competitive elections. For example, in 2004, the deputy-level party cadre in a county of Zhejiang Province were only about 3% of the total party members, but they occupied 73% of the party’s representative seats, that is, every four cadres taking one representative while 330 ordinary CCP members taking one seat only. In addition, the proportion of leading cadres is only 8% of the total party members in the 17 local units in Zhejiang, but these leaders controlled more than 80% of the total representative slots. Thus, the Congress for Party Members has been alienated from Congress for CCP’s leaders (Qian, 2007:108).

In another example, among the 66 candidates in a provincial capital city, it is clearly stated that there should be 48 slots reserved for major cadres, about 68% of the total representatives. In particular, these 48 representatives must be recommended without any competition. The additional 18 candidates can be outstanding party members in all areas based on 50% of the competition (Qian, 2008:153). A survey showed that only 21.92% of the respondents believed that the party representatives can represent the party members’ interests, and 32.21% of the respondents clearly indicated that the party representatives could not. 62.9% of them strongly believed that the party representative never contacted the ordinary party members while only 7.85% have positive views (Qian, 2007:108).

It is worth noting that “election meetings” are very popular before the election, designed to deliver “leadership intentions” and ensure that candidates favored by the leaders must be elected by the majority. Subsequently, the “election meetings” must be divided into various group meetings at which the team leaders of each group must address their leadership intentions and special favors. After

such heavy supervision and filtering, it would be almost impossible not to implement the “superior intention” (Qian, 2008:153).

As the eighth problematic issue on CCP’s election, fewer elected party officers completed their terms, with the majority having been terminated or changed by the administrative orders. A common practice in democratic countries is that elected officials have a tenure system and can’t terminate their services unless there are inescapable events, including elected officials’ deaths, illness, crime, family accidents, or their resignations. Moreover, it is quite normal in China for the administrators to ask an unelected official to replace an elected official; or an elected official can easily be transferred to a different place to serve as another elected officer without election. Under normal circumstances, elected officials must fulfill their election promises and complete their terms because their elections are subject to public opinion and votes, and their removal must also follow the democratic procedure. The higher-level administrators should not have any legitimacy to change or transfer elected officials’ jobs at will (Wang, 2011).

At present, however, elected officials’ jobs are often arbitrarily changed during their tenure. It seriously ignores and disrespects voters’ choices, essentially turning the election into appointment. The current popular practice is that prior to the re-election, the higher-level party committees always appoint the key leaders of the lower-level party committees, and then organize a fake election to endorse their appointments (Qu, 2007:4). Similarly, arbitrary change of party representatives is quite common, leading them to be incapable of representing people, exercising rights, and performing duties (Zen & Deng, 2010:81).

Finally, few elected CCP officers, if any, could be challenged, removed, or impeached at any time if the majority voters have no confidence on their performance. In light of the democratic elections, there must have the functions of recall and

impeachment designed to establish a monitoring mechanism with both checks and balances and accountabilities. The paradox of the CCP's system of powers and responsibilities is that individual has the power to make decisions, but the group must take responsibility for the results of decisions. Or, the group controls the power of decision-making, but individual bears responsibility. Given this unique system, it is almost impossible to keep a true collective leadership and responsibility system, because "the uncertainty and ambiguousness of personal power and responsibility will lead to collective irresponsibility" (Zheng, 2012). In particular, the top party leader's dictatorship is directing the CCP's governance to a hierarchical power structure (Hua, 2006:39).

Therefore, it is necessary to establish the appraisal and recall system, making CCP leaders' performance deliverable, measurable, and sustainable (Yang, 2009). But the impeachment must be legally enforced and the rule of game must be strictly established prior to playing the game (Zen & Deng, 2010:82-83). In this regard, the CCP's Constitution is delivering the confusing contradictions on the appointment and removal of CCP officials. On the one hand, Article 10, paragraph 2, of the Party Constitution, passed by the 18th CCP's National Congress, stipulates: "The party's leading units at all levels must be elected, except for the CCP's representative units and the party branches in non-party organizations." According to this regulation, the direct appointment of the CCP's top leaders is in violation of the Party Constitution, when Mr. Zhang Dejiang, for instance, was directly appointed as the secretary of the Chongqing Municipal Party Committee in March 2012. However, Article 13 of the CCP's Constitution stipulates: "When the party's local congresses are not in session, the higher-level party organizations may appoint a person to be in charge of the lower-level party organizations if it is necessary" (The Central Committee of the CCP, 2012:14-16). This arbitrary appointment of power

has been confirmed in writing as part of the Party Constitution since the CCP's Eighth National Congress in 1956. Apart from the CCP's Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh National Congress during the Cultural Revolution, the Party Constitutions from the 12th to the 18th National Congress have addressed this appointment regulation clearly. As a result, since the Twelfth Party Congress, superior party organizations have the power to remove or assign any heads of the party organization at any time when the party congress is not in session.

### III. CONCLUSION

Studying the problems of the CCP internal elections is essential to understanding CCP's current obstacles of promoting its competitive elections. Given the fact that CCP has its almost 100 years of dictatorship and its Lenin-style of party culture with more than 90 million party members, there are three options for Chinese democratization in the future. One is to follow the former Soviet model, initiating democracy outside of the CCP through peaceful revolution and forcing CCP to accept the Western style of democracy. A Second option is to conduct an aggressive revolution designed to change Communist Party regime. Thirdly, CCP itself initiates its internal elections, transferring its system from the centralized dictatorship to a checks and balances system and promoting freedom of speech, press, and party competition.

Considering the cost of transformation and social stability, the third option should be the best. However, if CCP keeps rejecting any substantial political reforms, the first and second options may become evident soon. Therefore, 90 million of CCP members should promote their consensus on the right directions of intra-party elections and enhanced their urgency to initiate comprehensive, competitive, and true democratic elections before the radical evolutions and violent revolutions are coming.

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