

MASTER'S THESIS

The power structure in rural China after the reform: a case study of a villiage in Guangdong

Chan, Chi Wai

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**The Power Structure in Rural China after the Reform —
A Case Study of a Village in Guangdong**

CHAN Chi Wai

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for the degree of
Master of Philosophy**

Principal Supervisor: Dr. RUAN, Danching

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Abstract

Since the Chinese Economic Reform started in the late 1970's, the Chinese countryside has gone through tremendous changes, especially villages in coastal areas where a lot of farmlands have been changed to industrial use and are managed collectively. Collective management of the land property is not only a way to manage the village economy, but it has also affected the power distribution within the village. The aim of this study is to understand the impact of political and economic reform on the power of the village government, the cadres, and the ordinary villagers. The study was conducted in a village in Guangdong Province from 2002 to 2004. It is found that under the collective management, the village government plays the most important role in the economic development of the village. In executing their responsibilities, cadres have a great power over the decision making process both in terms of the administration and the economic development in the village. At the same time, ordinary villagers watch the cadres closely to ensure that they manage the collective property efficiently and successfully. Furthermore, like many villages in Guangdong Province, the village being studied has many "outsiders". In fact, there are only 153 native villagers but 30,000 non-native workers living in the village. This group of non-natives is a powerless group in the village. They are not allowed to participate in the village decision making process at all. This distribution of power in the village today can be accounted for, to a great extent, by the entitlement to ownership of land in the village, which is one of the most important areas that has changed significantly in rural China under the political and economic reforms.

提要

自 1978 年經濟改革以後，中國農村經歷了大規模的社會變遷。特別是沿海農村，在經濟變革之下，很多村庄把農地改變為工業用地，並以集體的形式管理。集體管理除了是統籌村內經濟資源的方法外，它亦影響著村內的權力分配。筆者希望通過是次論文分析經濟改革及村落自治對地方政府、村幹部及當地村民的權力帶來什麼樣的影響。是次研究於二零零二年至二零零四年期間在廣東省一個村莊進行。筆者發現，在土地以集體形式管理下，村政府成為管理並發展村內集體經濟的重要部門，而村幹部代表著村政府管理村內的行政及經濟，掌有很大的權力。同時，村民為了確保他們的集體資產得到最高的回報，他們往往扮演著監察村內集體經濟發展及行政的重要角色。另外，如廣東省其他村落一樣，是次研究的村莊居住著很多外來人口，現時村內本地人口只有 150 多人，但外來人口卻有 30,000。儘管外來人口是村中的絕大多數，他們中的很多人長期工作並居住在村中，但他們並沒有任何決定村內的行政及資源的執行及分配權，他們在村內是沒有權力實體的一群。當今這種村落的權力分配很大程度上是取決于土地所有權的分配。

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