

*Weaving the Social Fabric: Party-Led Community Social Capital Building in Rural Guangdong**

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Abstract

By examining the case of rural Guangdong, this research elaborates on the practice of party-led social capital building (PSCB), which provides a Janus-faced mechanism for creating synergies between the local party-state and society: the Primary Party Organizations cultivate bonding, bridging, and linking social capital to enhance community engagement while deliberately limiting the democratizing potential of this process by selecting vetted nonstate actors, including social workers, private entrepreneurs, and official delegates from higher administrative levels, to serve as key nodes in the community networks. These delegates are tasked with gathering information, building trust and reciprocity, and influencing public opinion to ensure that mass participation in community affairs produces the results desired by the local party-state. The state-vetted key players are mobilized and controlled by the grassroots cadres through well-targeted actions, including party discipline and various carrot-and-stick incentives in the private and tertiary sectors. Reinvigorating the mass line by integrating party-building with the control of the nonstate sector, grid management, and cultural governance, PSCB calls for our reimagination of the governance nexus in grassroots China.

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