

The Chinese Path to Rural Common Prosperity: Based on an Analysis of Jiangsu and Zhejiang Rural Demonstration Projects*

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Abstract

Common prosperity in rural areas is integral to achieving common prosperity. This paper makes an in-depth analysis of Jiangsu and Zhejiang rural demonstration projects from a state-society interaction perspective. Pathway analysis is based on the framework of “high-level promotion-endogenous development” linked by the advancement of the building of the Communist Party of China and the Party’s leading role: high-level promotion, through multi-level responsabilization, ensures policy implementation, while endogenous development, driven by endogenous breakthroughs and economies of scale brought about by industrial integration, generates explosive dynamics through common interest bonding. By linking high-level promotion with endogenous development, the advancement of Party building and the Party’s leading role ensure benign interaction between state and society. The combined efforts of state and society creates a “common prosperity effect,” effectively solving the thorny problem of “weak society” in the welfare system of developing countries and that of the “welfare trap” in the welfare system of welfare states. This, in a sense, enables China to embark on the road to rural common prosperity.

Keywords: Chinese path to modernization, rural common prosperity, high-level promotion, endogenous development

Originating as it does from the Marxist concepts of equality and wealth, common prosperity is an innovative development of the sinicization of Marxism. As the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out, “Chinese modernization is the modernization of common prosperity for all. Achieving common prosperity is a defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and involves a long historical process. The immutable goal of our modernization drive is to meet the people’s aspirations for a better life.” Rural common prosperity is an integral part of the goal of achieving common

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prosperity. That is why President Xi Jinping stressed that “the most arduous and onerous task of promoting common prosperity is the development of rural areas.” In practice, Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province have spearheaded this initiative. Starting from the theoretical perspective of state-society interaction and using as an exemplar the “Demonstration Projects of Common Prosperity” of typical villages in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, this paper conducts case and policy analyses in an attempt to paint a picture of common prosperity in China’s rural areas.

I. Introduction

Research literature in the field of common prosperity provides a useful reference for this study, but some research gaps still exist. First, there is no clear explanation for the role of high-level promotion and endogenous development in achieving common prosperity in rural areas. Second, as far as the internal mechanism of achieving rural common prosperity is concerned, previous research focused on specific case studies, without looking at the bigger picture of state-society interaction and thus resulting in a lack of higher-level generalization. Third, there is a lack of studies examining the role of primary-level organizations of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in creating state-society synergy to achieve rural common prosperity. In fact, the rural “Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects” were developed by higher authorities and implemented by local governments. In this process, primary-level Party organizations, through Party-building initiatives, played the “crucial role” of building partnerships and pooling resources. In this regard, a rural common prosperity analytical framework featuring “high-level promotion-endogenous development” cemented by primary-level Party organizations can be formulated based on the theoretical perspective of state-society interaction and the case analysis of the practice of villages in Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

First, high-level promotion is the engine of the rural Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects. From the perspective of national governance modernization, high-level promotion is characterized by state dominance, which includes, *inter alia*, the integration of national systems and the state exercise of infrastructural power. First of all, the integration of national systems serves to concentrate fragmented power. The exercise of centralized power is the hallmark of modern national governance.¹ Starting with the Qin dynasty, China established a unitary and centralized government—a modern bureaucratic system in the Weberian sense. In this respect, China is a model whose integration of national institutions was far earlier than that of the industrialized capitalist world. Moreover, the implementation of state infrastructural power constitutes the basis for the improvement of national governance capacity. Michael Mann distinguishes the state’s infrastructural power from its despotic power. Infrastructural power refers to a state’s capacity to have full presence in the territories it rules over in order to

1 Chen Junya and Wang Puqu, “Constructing a New Modern State by Dual Revolution.”

implement its policies as desired.²

In ancient China, however, “imperial power had no presence at the county level,” indicating weak state infrastructural power. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, infrastructural power has been continuously strengthened. After the 18th CPC National Congress, the state governance system and national capacity building have achieved a breakthrough. The central government guides local governance by setting up Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects in line with the national governance goals, demonstrating the typical features of “high-level promotion” in terms of both policy formulation and policy implementation.

Second, endogenous development is the foundation of sustainable common prosperity in rural areas. It is a new development model growing out of a critical reflection upon the traditional exogenous development model which relies on government support, external resources and technical assistance. It shifts the focus to mobilizing internal resources to promote rural economic and social development, particularly the dynamism in villages and enthusiasm of villagers. By integrating internal and external resources, this new model embraces social capital as an important factor promoting comprehensive rural development. Overall, the endogenous development aiming at rural common prosperity is a “new endogenous development” featuring “internal mobilization facilitated by external assistance” and “the integration of internal and external resources.”³

Third, the advancement of Party building and Party’s leading role is the political guarantee for common prosperity in rural areas. A better understanding of China’s local governance can be reached from the perspective of state-society interaction. In a large unitary country, villages are the nexus between state and society; therefore, the relationship between state and society holds sway over the characteristics and direction of rural common prosperity.⁴ In other words, the Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects can be better implemented with the guidance of primary-level Party organizations, which ensures the combination of high-level promotion with endogenous development.

Based on the above analytical framework, this paper takes typical cases of rural common prosperity in Jiangsu and Zhejiang as the object of study. The samples were selected from 81 basic units of common prosperity in Zhejiang and 100 typical cases of new rural collective economic development entitled “100 Common Prosperity Villages” in Jiangsu. In 2022, Jiangsu Province carried out investigations entitled “Rural Revitalization in a Hundred Villages in Jiangsu,” while Zhejiang’s investigations were titled “Typical Cases of the Modern Basic Unit of Common Prosperity.” Both provinces conducted in-depth analysis of the typical practice of rural common prosperity and made relevant news reports publicly available

2 Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism*, pp. 5-9.

3 Li Huairui and Deng Guosheng, “The Mobilization of Social Forces in Rural Revitalization: Pathways for the New Endogenous Development.”

4 Xu Yong, “The Orientation and Direction of Chinese-Style Primary-Level Governance Modernization.”

online.⁵ This paper selects twenty Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects from the 181 typical cases as objects of analysis based on their location, representativeness, relevancy and feasibility of investigation.

The rationale for the selection is as follows: First, Zhejiang Province is a demonstration area for high-quality implementation of common prosperity projects with the support of the state, while Jiangsu Province has made remarkable achievements in promoting rural common prosperity driven by the new rural collective economy, with both provinces being exemplary role models. Second, the types of economic ownership of the two provinces are particularly illustrative. The private economy of Zhejiang Province has become the “golden name card,” bringing into full play the advantages of its systems and mechanisms, while the new rural collective economy of Jiangsu Province has had a scale effect that provides a basis for the comprehensive analysis of the model practice of rural common prosperity. Third, the governments of the two provinces have arranged for personnel from multiple departments and a host of experts and scholars to carry out in-depth research on the practice of rural common prosperity, accumulating substantial empirical data. To facilitate the research and to ensure academic neutrality, we have encoded the samples, with the villages in Jiangsu starting with J and those in Zhejiang Province starting with Z, followed by the initials of sampled villages. In addition, the names of people and places were all represented by their initials.

After selecting the samples, we collected more data from multiple channels to bolster research data. First, we conducted on the spot investigation in some of the sampled villages, interviewing the relevant departments and personnel with a view to obtaining first-hand research data. Second, we built a research database by sorting out policy texts and implementation plans regarding rural common prosperity at the national as well as the local level. Third, we collected publicity materials which included, but were not limited to, media reports, online reports, WeChat public accounts dissemination, and news in pictures. The above data is used to analyze the implementation process of rural common prosperity in order to fully demonstrate the internal logic of rural Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects.

II. High-Level Promotion: The Initiation of Rural Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects

The high-level promotion of demonstration projects lies in policy implementation. Based on the empirical analysis of the practice of relevant departments of the State Council, researchers observed that the demonstration projects served as a tool to promote top-designed policy, as the projects started as pilot projects before scaling up so that quality was ensured and achievements were widely publicized. The internal mechanism of “high-level promotion” takes advantage of the “gravitational potential energy” inherent in the political potential

5 The case data of this paper, unless documented, are all from the research results of rural common prosperity projects of the two provinces.

energy, and on this basis, uses “regular movement” to enhance the “dynamic potential energy” of policy implementation so that policies can be effectively implemented.⁶ Some other studies, based on the highly dynamic and complex features of policy implementation at the national level in China, specifically revealed the operation process of high-level state promotion: under the leadership of the Party, public policies with Chinese characteristics feature both vertical and horizontal integration: vertically, policy implementation is guaranteed by the political Party system and horizontally, local Party committee leadership gets departments at the same level working together. High-level promotion with Chinese characteristics can be employed to prevent the implementation of public policies from being “fragmented.” This practice, by means of multi-level governance and multi-attribute governance, works to straighten out the relationship between the central government and local governments as well as between the various local departments at the same level in terms of policy implementation,⁷ thus ensuring policy implementation’ vertical and horizontal integration.

1. Multi-level responsabilization: vertical integration of national systems

An important feature of national governance modernization is the integration of national systems, which lays the foundation for the autonomy of state power. The integration of national systems entails vertical policy integration and horizontal multi-level responsabilization. In the past several years, a series of policies concerning rural common prosperity has constituted hierarchical policy systems: the reports to the 18th and 19th CPC National Congress and Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Implementing the Rural Revitalization Strategy and the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022) belong to macro-control policies; supportive policies formulated by the central government and ministries and the commissions of the State Council play the role of high-level promotion; more detailed local-level policies worked out by the general office of the provincial government and the functional departments serve as the nexus between central government policies and primary-level policies; and the policies hammered out by county and township governments are aimed at implementation. Thus, the vertical integration of the national systems can be epitomized as “meta-policies-supportive policies of the central government and relevant ministries and commissions-provincial policies-county and township policies,” generating “gravitational potential energy” in promoting rural common prosperity.

2. Cross-departmental collaboration: horizontal integration of national systems

At the local government level, multiple departments are usually organized to jointly formulate policies, with each department shouldering distinct responsibilities while collaborating with the others. Cross-departmental collaboration, therefore, enables horizontal integration of the national systems. For example, in 2022, the *Special Action Plan to Promote*

6 Liu Zhipeng, Gao Zhouyi and Ma Liang, “Demonstration, A Tool for High-Level Policy Promotion: Based on the Empirical Research Conducted by Relevant Departments of the State Council (2008-2019).”

7 He Donghang and Kong Fanbin, “The Chinese Experience in Public Policy Implementation.”

the Integration of Rural Passenger, Cargo and Postal Transportation Aimed at Fueling High-Quality Development of Rural Logistics and Building Demonstration Zones for Common Prosperity was jointly promulgated by eleven departments of Zhejiang Province including the Provincial Postal Administration, the Department of Transportation, the Development and Reform Commission, and the Department of Finance. These policies facilitate the establishment of a collaborative mechanism through which resources are pooled and participating departments collaborate.

At the local government level, the tasks to be carried out under the horizontal integration of the national system are delegated to specific departments. AJ County, for example, had a “detailed working plan” in place when carrying out the overall reform plan for the common prosperity project of ZYC Village, tasking designated departments specifically with the project as well as having some supportive departments deal with various reform matters based on the overall plan. The role of county authorities is to provide comprehensive guidance for the reform work and strengthen collaboration between county departments and township and village units. The departments specifically responsible for the project (in the case of Common Prosperity Industrial Park Project as many as six) work together with multiple other departments to get the work done in time. Detailed to-do lists and clear responsabilization speak volumes for the horizontal cross-departmental collaboration system at the primary level of government.

3. Wide-ranging support: the exercise of state infrastructural power

Wide-ranging support refers to the multi-dimensional support provided by the government to promote common prosperity in rural areas. Government support not only provides a guarantee for the implementation of the national policy concerning rural common prosperity, but also demonstrates the exercise of state infrastructural power. The government renders support in three main ways. First, it provides financial support by establishing a special fund for the development of the rural collective economy, offering financial aid and discount loans for the collective economic development of each village. Second, it implements tax reduction and exemption policies by introducing preferential tax policies for rural collective economic organizations, with individual income tax, property tax and deed tax reduced or exempted to ease their burden. Third, it strengthens empowerment resources by building trading platforms for village collective asset equity and land management rights through which new forms of shareholding rights such as equity transfer, mortgages and cross equity participation can be explored, thus giving collectives and farmers more property rights.⁸ For example, Jiangsu Province initiated ten measures to support and safeguard the implementation of rural common prosperity projects, including improving infrastructure and public services, helping villagers to make money by encouraging them to start businesses or work in businesses, and supporting collectives in generating more revenue.

8 Zhang Xinwen and Du Yongkang, “Collective Economy-Led Rural Common Prosperity: Practical Patterns, Experiences and Innovative Paths.”

The support of local governments generates “dynamic potential energy,” accelerating rural common prosperity. In 2022, for example, Zhejiang Province took practical measures for income distribution, basic public services and support programs to support rural common prosperity projects, achieving marvelous results. First, it implemented an action plan to increase the share of the middle-income and low-income population, straightening out the rural collective economy and enriching villagers. Statistics show that the proportion of administrative villages in the province with a collective economic income of more than 300,000 yuan and an operating income of more than 150,000 yuan has reached more than 85 percent. Second, it promoted equal access to public services in both urban and rural areas. According to statistics, 74.2 percent of village children attend first and second class kindergartens and all village schools have been incorporated into urban and rural compulsory education communities. Third, it initiated a “Three Synchronous Actions” program geared to helping the low-income population. Continuous efforts have been made to build a new support mechanism to assist low-income farmers. Thanks to the initiative, the annual per capita disposable income of low-income farmers increased by 14.6 percent, eight percentage points higher than the growth rate of farmers’ income across the province.⁹

III. Endogenous Development: The Practice of Rural Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects

The powerful ruling party and the government are the prime mover of common prosperity. However, once the common prosperity program is carried out, the dissemination and realization of its values, goals and ideas rely on the coordination and synergy of the political system and social forces.¹⁰ The endogenous development of Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects in villages of Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province also feature “internal mobilization facilitated by high-level promotion” and “the integration of internal and external resources,” forming a continuum of “endogenous breakthrough-industrial integration-common interest bonding,” thus generating economic dynamism in the achievement of rural common prosperity.

1. *Endogenous breakthrough: driving industrial development*

“Endogenous elements” refers to the production factors that can drive rural economic development. They underlie the development of specialty industries and are thus essential if the rural economy is to make a breakthrough. The endogenous elements of rural common prosperity include, *inter alia*, natural resources, cultural resources, human resources, technology, organization, and capital. These fall into two categories: endogenous elements

9 Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics and Zhejiang Survey Team of National Bureau of Statistics, “Statistical Bulletin of Zhejiang Provincial Economic and Social Development in 2022.”

10 Yu Jianxing and Liu Tao, “A Governance System of Common Prosperity Going beyond the Developmental State and the Welfare State.”

and embedded elements.

First, tapping the endogenous elements. Endogenous resources are those with distinctive village characteristics, including the environment, natural resources, specialty cultures, village talents, etc. These resources, if brought into full play, contribute to wealth-generation and furthermore, if integrated with industry, create specialty industries. Jiangsu and Zhejiang's villages share the common practice of developing leisure tourism based on their environment and cultural factors. This is because these provinces are endowed with a unique natural environment and a humanist historical heritage as well as beautiful southern scenery. These natural conditions, coupled with a vibrant economy, make them attractive places that appeal to tourists both at home and abroad. A case in point is ZYC Village, which has spared no effort in restoring the environment and developing leisure tourism. In 2022, the annual revenue of the village reached 13.05 million yuan, with the average per capita net income amounting to 64,000 yuan. This village is a typical case of achieving rural common prosperity by developing ecological industry. Second, a further exploratory practice is the development of specialty industries in Jiangsu and Zhejiang based on their unique resource endowments. For example, ZXST Village has vigorously developed a specialty dendrology industry thanks to its location as the "Homeland of Dendrobium." A Dendrobium Growing Zone of 213 *mu* has been set up, creating more than 300 jobs for villagers. Third, specialty culture and village talents are also endogenous factors driving the realization of common prosperity in rural areas. Villages also develop specialty industries by taking advantage of their cultural brands. ZSF Village, for example, maximizes the use of "Zikai Culture," generating handsome income for villagers. The joint village-enterprise projects in ZXST Village are attributable to the efforts made by village talents to bring their businesses back to revive the village economy.

Second, maximizing the use of embedded elements, including organization, technology, capital, etc. These elements, once integrated into the rural system and culture, can generate empowering and enabling functions, thus fueling the creation of specialty industries. There are three main ways to drive rural common prosperity: first, organizational traction. This is done mainly through the establishment of a new organizational form of rural common prosperity and through the integration of management, information, land, manpower and other elements that enable rural industrial transformation to be implemented and villagers to be mobilized. For example, JZY Village, which uses land as an investment, has jointly started businesses with enterprises. JWX Village makes best use of its enclave, creating an Enclave Business Park. Second, technology empowerment. Digital technology has been embedded in organizations, resources and human resources to generate a digital industry that promotes rural development. For example, JJX Village is known for its floristry and floriculture industry. Empowered through digital technology, this specialty industry has enabled more than 300 households in the village to use Taobao for e-commerce, for which it has been rated "Village of National Rural Specialty Industry with an Output of 100 Million Yuan" for two consecutive years by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Third is capital boosting.

Joint-stock companies have been established by introducing external capital with a view to developing the rural economy. JZY Village, for example, started an ultra-fine powder deep processing project by joining hands with Huale Alloy, an enterprise located in Lianyungang Economic Development Zone. The total investment amounted to 50 million yuan, with JZY Village owning 35 percent of the shares, generating 2 million yuan per year, and thus creating a prosperous village.

2. Industrial integration: promoting economies of scale

Endogenous breakthroughs provides a growth channel for achieving rural common prosperity. Industrial integration is enlisted to achieve rural common prosperity and the comprehensive development of the rural economy. Besides the development of the specialty industries propelled by endogenous elements, leisure tourism and a modern service industry should be fully developed to integrate primary, secondary and tertiary industry, ensuring the development of economies of scale.

The integration of agriculture and tourism is the main mode of promoting industrial integration aimed at achieving rural common prosperity in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. For example, JZZ Village drives the integration of agriculture and tourism with selenium-rich ecological industry. In 2019, JZZ Village, under the leadership of the village Party branch, established a cooperative in which all villagers had membership. The goal of the joint efforts of the “Party branch + cooperative + households” is to develop a multifunctional selenium-rich ecological industry park integrating primary, secondary and tertiary industries on the basis of selenium-rich ecological and healthy agricultural products. Currently, more than 3000 *mu* of green selenium-rich rice, 500 *mu* of high-quality selenium-rich fruit, 200 *mu* of green selenium-rich tea and 30 *mu* of green selenium-rich vegetables are grown in JZZ Village’s CZ Selenium-rich Ecological Industry Park, demonstrating a substantial scale effect. On the basis of the development of selenium ecological industry, JZZ Village further promotes the integration of agriculture and tourism, building a comprehensive ecological industry park complete with wine cellar, porcelain kiln, oil mill, beancurd mill, specialty restaurants and bed and breakfast inns. The park integrates agritourism, leisure vacations, special catering, fruit and vegetable picking and red tourism, receiving more than 300,000 tourists annually.

Industrial integration helps achieve economies of scale by maximizing the accumulation of rural wealth to enrich villages as well as villagers; by creating jobs for villagers in rural construction so that they have strong villages with a wealthy population; and by increasing awareness of brand effects to improve market access and achieve economies of scale.

3. Common interest bonding: achievements for all

Rural revitalization entails sharing the fruits of common prosperity projects in rural areas. Mobilizing villagers to actively participate in the projects is a sure way to realize rural common prosperity; as Deng Xiaoping remarked, “Let some people get rich first. In time to come, they will pull up the rest and we will achieve common prosperity.” The mechanism of common interest bonding is for everyone, individual and collective alike, and motivates

everyone, including individual villagers, contractors of small farms and large specialized farms, to participate in the projects fully, to share their fruits and eventually to get rich. The vision of common prosperity is to fuel the development of the collective economy under the principle of the integration of “development” and “sharing” so that all the villagers enjoy the fruits of the projects.¹¹ Both Jiangsu Province, where the new collective economy is the dominant mode, and Zhejiang Province, where the private economy is the dominant mode, pursue economic growth through the mechanism of common interest bonding with a view to achieving rural common prosperity.

Jiangsu Province promotes rural common prosperity through the development of the new type of collective economy through the following specific practices.¹² First is strengthening unified management to ensure benefits for both individual households and village collective entities. The “unified” approach built upon the “collective +” operation and service model narrows the gap in service costs incurred between individual households and village collective entities, facilitating the integration of individual households into modern agricultural projects. Second is enabling individual villagers and collective entities to bond together through shareholding. They share the same vision, shoulder their respective responsibilities, remain motivated and enjoy corresponding benefits. Third is establishing the inter-village common interest bonding mechanism. “Strong villages” are encouraged to work in concert with “weak villages” so that the weak become strong and the strong stronger.

In the course of promoting rural common prosperity in Zhejiang, the village collective economy also plays an important role. Many practices are similar to those of Jiangsu Province, with the exception that in Zhejiang the private economy plays a dominant role. First is increasing rural residents’ income and narrowing the gap between rich and poor. A multitude of private entrepreneurs have created a huge quantity of jobs, enabling villagers to increase their income. Second is increasing tax revenue and enhancing the capacity for redistribution. For example, in 2021, the economic value-added of Zhejiang’s private economy accounted for about 67 percent of the province’s GDP. Third is promoting urban-rural integration and narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas. The highly developed private economy has been narrowing the per capita disposable income gap between urban and rural residents in Zhejiang Province, with a prominent feature being the emergence of a multitude of “bosses.”¹³ In ZHL Village, for example, on average one in eight people is a “boss.” A high proportion of villagers start their own businesses and get rich through hard work.

11 Zhang Xinwen and Du Yongkang, “Rural Common Prosperity Led by the Collective Economy: Practical Patterns, Best Practices and Innovative Paths.”

12 Yang Shiyun, “Promoting Rural Common Prosperity through High-Quality Development of the New Collective Economy,” pp. 34-36.

13 Cheng Jianhua, “Promoting Common Prosperity through High-Quality Development of Private Economy, Mechanism and Practice: Taking the Building of Zhejiang into a Demonstration Zone for Common Prosperity as an Example.”

IV. The Advancement of Party Building and the Party's Leading Role: The Linkage of High-Level Promotion and Endogenous Development

Samuel P. Huntington, a master of the theory of state modernization, posits that political parties are the guarantee of political modernization, that traditionally a state without political parties is fragile, and that a modernizing society needs political parties to unite social groups horizontally, assimilate social and economic strata vertically and build a political community.¹⁴ The Communist Party of China provides the political underpinning for the promotion of common prosperity in the course of rural modernization. The advancement of Party building and Party's leading role is essential for linking high-level promotion with endogenous development to promote the benign interaction of state and society, and for guiding policy implementation and resource integration. The ultimate purpose, of course, is to maintain economic dynamism and create a "common prosperity effect."

1. Ensuring policy implementation

Policy implementation is the process of taking specific courses of action to plan and achieve policy goals by using a variety of governance instruments and policy tools. Effective and impeded policy implementation are two manifestations of policy implementation. Effective policy implementation means that implementers thoroughly carry out all the policy measures, implementing policies to the letter in accordance with policy objectives so that the policy can ultimately benefit the people. Impeded policy implementation, however, means that implementers meet with bumps on the road due to the emergence of negative factors that slow down implementation or even bring it to a halt. In this case, policy objectives cannot be achieved effectively or cannot be achieved at all. Specifically, policies are implemented at the surface level, rather than in the spirit, and in some circumstances are selectively or distortedly implemented or expanded. The extreme situation is non-implementation.¹⁵ Therefore, how to ensure effective policy implementation and avoid impediments has become a matter of vital concern in public policy implementation.

Primary-level Party organizations, empowered by the advancement of Party building and the Party's leading role, have maintained consistency, effectiveness and an unimpeded flow in the implementation of central and local policies, thus ensuring that rural common prosperity projects are fast tracked in the correct direction. First, the advancement of Party building and Party's leading role ensures the correct direction and effective implementation of rural common prosperity projects. The "villagers-centered" approach signifies that the fruits of the development are shared by all villagers. The secretary of the Party branch in each village plays the role of the leading goose, with other members of the village Party Committee and Party members in the village sharing the leading. DXZ Village, for instance, has broadened

14 Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 332.

15 Ding Huang, "Institutional Analysis of Impeded Policy Implementation and Countermeasures at the Current Stage in China."

the “Common Prosperity Road” through “Party Branch Support Initiatives”: by showcasing Party members’ entrepreneurship demonstration bases, the village Party branch incentivizes villagers to follow the lead of Party member entrepreneurs so that they can increase their income and join hands in pursuing common prosperity.

2. Integrating internal and external resources for rural economic development

The utilization and development of resources is the foundation of rural development. Strong primary-level Party organizations, by integrating fragmented and decentralized resources inside and outside rural areas, gather ideas and efforts to promote rural common prosperity. In terms of internal resource integration, the Party branch committee is mainly devoted to land revitalization, attracting human resources, and developing specialty resources. For example, the JXJ Village, with an area of only 4 square kilometers, does not have enough land to develop industry and agriculture on a large scale, so the village Party organization has turned to asset leasing, focusing on the “operational utilization” of assets. It actively promotes the reform of the property rights system through “village collective economic organizations + cooperative economic organizations,” effectively turning “resources into funds, funds into shares, and villagers into shareholders.” In 2021, the annual collective income of JXJ Village reached 5.29 million yuan, with villagers getting 500,000 yuan in dividends, thus achieving the goal of invigorating the village and enriching the villagers.

In terms of external resource integration, the Party branch committee is mainly devoted to admitting, attracting and developing external resources. The launch of regionalized Party building initiatives is an important means for rural Party organizations to integrate external resources. Regionalized Party building is different from “intra-Party building” which exercises vertical control. As a horizontal network named “Regionalized Party-Community Service Center,” it endeavors to pool resources in its service area so as to join hands to achieve common prosperity. For example, Hangzhou’s ZCD Village worked together with the China Academy of Art and Zhejiang Conservatory of Music to launch a joint Party-building initiative under the guidance of a United Working Committee. Relying on such “external forces” as university resources and digital empowerment, the village has hosted more than 200 artists. Pulling together innovative elements including talent, science and technology, and art, the village has jointly created an “intelligence engine,” greatly increasing the income of the villagers.

3. Promoting the order and social vitality of rural governance

Order and vitality are the two sides of rural governance and the ideal model of good rural governance. All the villages taken as the subjects of study achieved order and vitality under Party leadership and guidance.

On the one hand, the advancement of Party building and the Party’s leading role is the organizational guarantee of good rural governance, a key indicator of common prosperity. ZHY Village, by drawing on the “best practices of Fengqiao,” shifted its governance model from “rule by elites” to “rule of law.” The village set out a complete set of village governance

rules and regulations and set up a Leading Group on Comprehensive Social Governance made up of such governance institutions as the Peace and Security Committee and the People's Mediation Committee. The Leading Group handles emergency incidents as well as disputes and conflicts, ensuring that "villagers' affairs, big or small, are handled in a timely way and all complaints and conflicts are resolved by the Leading Group. It never shuns responsibility by referring them to higher-level institutions or government agencies." Rural governance based on "Party building +" creates social harmony, economic development and common prosperity. ZMD Village has aligned good rural governance with achieving common prosperity, promoting "grid-based micro-level Party-building initiatives." Six Party branches with distinctive features have been set up, including a Policy Communication Branch and a Dedicated Support Branch. Other efforts include building "Good Governance Publicity Teams" and primary-level Party organization teams as well as enabling easy access to the system of petitions and complaints. Eventually, the villagers felt happier, with a satisfaction rate as high as 95 percent. Continuous effort has brought peace and harmony to the countryside.

On the other hand, the advancement of Party building and the Party's leading role stimulate social vitality. By pulling together villagers—both those "lone" villagers in the village and those who have moved out of the village—primary-level Party organizations are able to strengthen the social bases and ensure that there is enough workforce for rural construction. JZZ Village created a model of Party branch—managed cooperative. In 2021, JZZ Village opened a Shiyan Farm Produce store in Kexiang New Market—an "Internet Famous Farmers' Market" in downtown Nanjing—selling high-quality selenium-rich rice, local eggs, fruit juice, dried fruits and other specialty agricultural products. The prosperous business plays an exemplary role, attracting migrant villagers back home to seek jobs or start their own businesses. Mobilizing villagers to participate in village governance and democratic supervision are also manifestations of the advancement of Party building and the Party's leading role. The Party organization of ZCD Village prioritizes governance by enlisting villagers and non-villager talent to participate in village planning as well as in major village construction projects and by incentivizing villagers to contribute to the daily governance of the village.

V. Conclusions

Continuous provision of social welfare and enriching the people in the course of driving the modernization of national governance has always been an object of theoretical research and the goal of national practice. Sustainable welfare can be realized only if welfare demonstration projects are underpinned by policy on the one hand and motivation on the other hand, and more importantly, by the integration of policy and motivation. Developing countries in East Asia rely on the policy formulation of a "strong state," which weakens social autonomy and

the capacity for social organization, giving rise to a “weak society.” Western welfare states feature universal social security coverage, promoting affluence for the masses, but they fall into a “welfare trap” due to economic and fiscal challenges and shifting demographics. The fundamental reason for the stagnation of these two welfare systems lies in the separation of, and the lack of benign interaction between, state and society.

The Common Prosperity Demonstration Projects in Jiangsu and Zhejiang are successful practices showcasing the benign interaction of state and society, achieving a significant demonstration effect and promotion value. These demonstration projects are intended to create a rural common prosperity model with Chinese characteristics under which the leadership of the Party makes achieving the goal of meeting people’s aspiration for a better life its starting point and end point and realizes rural modernization aimed at promoting the people’s all-round development.

This model has the following basic characteristics. First is wealth accumulation: promoting the all-round revitalization of rural areas while focusing on continuously increasing the wealth of the village collective and the villagers. Second is fair distribution: protecting the legitimate income of rural residents in accordance with the law on the basis of socialist public ownership, while at the same time eliminating unfair distribution and preventing polarization. Third is all-round development: promoting the all-round development of villagers and ensuring that they share the fruits of rural common prosperity projects. The practical logic of the “Jiangsu and Zhejiang experience” is pretty clear: primary-level Party organizations, by linking “high-level promotion” with “endogenous development,” enable the marriage of policy implementation and explosive dynamics, thus creating the “common prosperity effect” in the course of realizing rural common prosperity.

First, effectiveness of policy implementation empowered by high-level promotion. Through vertical integration of national systems, i.e., hierarchical responsabilization of different levels of departments and horizontal integration of national systems, i.e., cross-departmental collaboration, high-level promotion enables efficient and effective policy implementation and close collaboration, allowing for the development of detailed, timely implementation plans. In addition, the exercise of national infrastructural power provides basic financial support and material guarantees for rural common prosperity, incentivizing rural development actors to be innovative in accomplishing all the required tasks. In this way, high-level promotion ensures the effectiveness of the implementation of common prosperity policies.

Second, explosive dynamism empowered by endogenous development. Developing specialty industries with a view to achieving rural common prosperity relies heavily on tapping endogenous elements including the natural environment, natural resources, specialty culture and village talent and maximizing the use of embedded elements including organization, technology, capital, etc. Industrial integration, as the basic means to achieve economies of scale, is critical for wealth accumulation and for the generation of economies of scale effects. Common interest bonding is the goal of implementing rural common prosperity

projects, scaling up pilot projects so that all villagers can enjoy the fruits of development. Endogenous development, propelled by high-level promotion, creates explosive dynamism, which is critical to sustainable development and the realization of rural common prosperity.

Third, the “common prosperity effect” empowered by the advancement of Party building and Party’s leading role. On the one hand, Party leadership links government agencies, ensuring effective implementation of rural common prosperity policies. Primary-level Party organizations, empowered by the advancement of Party building and the Party’s leading role, have maintained consistency, smoothness and effectiveness in the implementation of central and local policies, thus ensuring that rural common prosperity projects are going in the correct direction and on the fast track. On the other hand, Party leadership links rural society, integrating internal and external resources in the development of the rural economy and promoting the order and vitality of rural governance. In this way, Party leadership integrates high-level promotion with endogenous development, thus promoting benign interaction between state and society. It enables collective action, becoming a powerful source of energy devoted to achieving common prosperity.

In the final analysis, primary-level Party organizations, by linking high-level promotion with endogenous development in the course of promoting rural common prosperity, enable effective policy implementation and explosive dynamism to generate synergy, thus promoting the benign interaction of state and society and thereby achieving order and vitality in the rural areas and creating the “common prosperity effect” in village revitalization. It also ensures that welfare demonstration projects are underpinned by policy on the one hand and motivation on the other, and more importantly, that policy and motivation are integrated. In so doing, it promotes the sustainable development of rural common prosperity projects. The combined efforts of state and society effectively solve the thorny problem of a “weak society” in the welfare system of developing countries and that of the “welfare trap” in the welfare system of welfare states. In a sense, this has enabled China to embark on the road to rural common prosperity, demonstrating Chinese wisdom and the Chinese approach to realizing common prosperity.

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