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### Climbing the Dispute Pagoda: Grievances and Appeals to the Official Justice System in Rural China

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**Table S1.** Definitions of Variables Used to Measure Grievances

Grievance Category	Operational Definition
Business-Related	debt collection; property damage or loss; or a problem produced in dealings with a government office (if the dealings concern commercial or tax issues)
Farming-Related	problem with water use; problem with responsibility land ( <i>zeren tian</i> , farmland contracted from the village) or contracting with a township or village enterprise; grievance over agricultural taxes ( <i>nongye fudan</i> ); or a problem produced in dealings with a government office (if the dealings concern farmland, agriculture, rural taxation, or the supply and marketing cooperative system)
Housing Land	problem with the acquisition of housing land or over housing construction rights
Neighbor	a dispute with a neighbor
Personal Injury	a personal injury or an accusation of personal injury or theft
Other	a family planning conflict with village cadres or someone else; a consumer dispute; a divorce; a problem collecting work pay; a family dispute (e.g., elderly care or property division); another kind of problem produced in dealings with a government office (not listed above); a school-related problem with a child's teacher or school; or another kind of problem not listed above ("other")

**Table S2.** County Characteristics from Official Sources, 2002

	Per Capita GDP (yuan)	Percent Rural Labor Force in Nonfarm Work
Ru'nan (Henan)	3,666	16
Yuanjiang (Hunan)	4,978	24
Taicang (Jiangsu)	40,105	62
Jimo (Shandong)	14,835	60
Zhong (Chongqing)	2,863	38
Hengshan (Shaanxi)	1,922	12

Source: "All China Data" (<http://chinadataonline.org/>)

**Table S3.** County Characteristics from Survey Samples, Rural China, 2002

	Mean Household Income (yuan)	Percent Labor Force in Nonfarm Work	Mean Tax Rate (taxes/fees as percent of gross household income)	Mean # Grievances per Household	Proportion Households with at Least 1 Grievance	Proportion Households with at Least 5 Grievances	Proportion Dissatisfied with Villagers' Committee	Proportion Disrespectful of Village Leaders
Ru'nan (Henan)	5,027	10	14	3.313	90%	26%	48%	50%
Yuanjiang (Hunan)	4,889	24	23	3.070	86%	26%	19%	29%
Taicang (Jiangsu)	21,442	56	6	.417	26%	.2%	3%	4%
Jimo (Shandong)	8,908	11	13	.408	22%	2%	13%	20%
Zhong (Chongqing)	6,853	25	7	1.544	60%	8%	6%	17%
Hengshan (Shaanxi)	8,673	21	8	1.216	49%	6%	19%	12%

**Table S4.** Grievances and Legal Mobilization by Family Ties to Village Leaders, Rural China, 2002

	Total	Connection to Village Leader		Statistical Significance of Differences
		No	Yes	
<b>Household Connection</b>				
Reported Any Grievances (yes = 1)	57.0%	57.4%	45.4%	$\chi^2=5.518$ (d.f.=1), $p=.019$
Mean Number Grievances (N) (households)	1.71 (2,898)	1.72 (2,801)	1.41 (97)	$t=1.411$ (d.f.=2,896), $p=.155$
Reported Responses to Grievances (households)				
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	2.7%	2.6%	5.2%	$\chi^2=2.421$ (d.f.=1), $p=.120$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	5.2%	5.1%	8.3%	$\chi^2=1.874$ (d.f.=1), $p=.171$
Either of the Above (yes = 1) (N) (households)	7.5% (2,898)	7.3% (2,801)	11.3% (97)	$\chi^2=2.198$ (d.f.=1), $p=.138$
Reported Responses to Grievances (grievances)				
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	1.8%	1.8%	5.0%	$\chi^2=6.774$ (d.f.=1), $p=.009$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	3.6%	3.5%	6.6%	$\chi^2=3.198$ (d.f.=1), $p=.074$
Either of the Above (yes = 1) (N) (grievances)	5.4% (4,757)	5.3% (4,636)	11.6% (121)	$\chi^2=9.050$ (d.f.=1), $p=.003$
<b>Family Connection</b>				
Reported Any Grievances (yes = 1)	57.0%	57.1%	54.7%	$\chi^2=.284$ (d.f.=1), $p=.594$
Mean Number Grievances (N) (households)	1.71 (2,901)	1.70 (2,764)	1.80 (137)	$t=-.494$ (d.f.=2,899), $p=.621$
Reported Responses to Grievances (households)				
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	2.7%	2.5%	6.6%	$\chi^2=8.530$ (d.f.=1), $p=.003$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	5.2%	5.0%	9.5%	$\chi^2=5.348$ (d.f.=1), $p=.021$
Either of the Above (yes = 1) (N) (households)	7.5% (2,901)	7.1% (2,764)	13.9% (137)	$\chi^2=8.608$ (d.f.=1), $p=.003$
Reported Responses to Grievances (grievances)				
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	1.8%	1.7%	5.1%	$\chi^2=14.791$ (d.f.=1), $p<.001$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	3.6%	3.5%	6.8%	$\chi^2=7.231$ (d.f.=1), $p=.007$
Either of the Above (yes = 1) (N) (grievances)	5.4% (4,757)	5.1% (4,522)	11.9% (235)	$\chi^2=20.103$ (d.f.=1), $p<.001$

Note: T-tests are two-tailed.

**Table S5.** Distribution of Grievances by Contextual Characteristics, Rural China, 2002

	County Context				Statistical Significance of Differences
	Total	High-Tax Inland	Other Inland	Coastal	
Mean Tax Rate (taxes/fees as % of gross household income)	11.8%	18.5%	7.4%	9.1%	all t-tests, $p < .001$
(N) (households)	(2,875)	(996)	(997)	(882)	
Mean Total Annual Household Income, Yuan	9,252	4,958	7,753	16,127	all t-tests, $p < .001$
(N) (households)	(2,809)	(980)	(999)	(830)	
Dissatisfied with Villagers' Committee	16.1%	33.0%	6.4%	7.6%	$\chi^2=266.51$ (d.f.=2), $p < .001$
(N) (households)	(2,782)	(978)	(959)	(845)	
Disrespectful of Villagers' Committee Cadres	22.2%	39.6%	14.6%	11.0%	$\chi^2=320.20$ (d.f.=2), $p < .001$
(N) (households)	(2,806)	(979)	(972)	(855)	
County-Level Per Capita GDP, 2002, Yuan (weighted)	10,150	4,302	2,627	22,280	
County-Level % Rural Labor force in Nonfarm Work (weighted)	36.5%	19.1%	31.7%	60.4%	
(N) counties	(6)	(2)	(2)	(2)	
<b>GRIEVANCES</b>					
Agricultural (tax) Burdens	9.6%	11.4%	6.4%	6.3%	
Dealings with Government Office	3.0%	3.5%	2.1%	1.9%	
Property Damage or Loss	5.2%	6.1%	3.6%	4.1%	
Collecting Wages	5.2%	5.9%	4.1%	3.5%	
Contracting with Local Government (land or enterprise)	5.2%	5.7%	4.4%	3.3%	
"Other" Problem	1.6%	1.7%	1.3%	1.1%	
Children's Education	3.0%	3.0%	3.4%	.8%	
Accused of Personal Injury or Theft	.9%	1.1%	.4%	1.4%	
Household (such as elderly care or property division)	9.1%	9.4%	9.1%	6.3%	
Family Planning	5.8%	5.5%	7.2%	3.3%	
Water Use	10.2%	9.8%	11.6%	7.9%	
Neighbor	17.6%	17.0%	18.4%	19.9%	
Debt Collection	4.7%	4.3%	5.8%	4.1%	
Personal Injury	2.7%	2.5%	2.9%	3.5%	
Divorce	.9%	.8%	.8%	1.6%	
Major Consumer Purchase	8.7%	7.3%	10.9%	12.3%	
Housing Land Property Rights	6.9%	5.1%	7.8%	18.8%	
TOTAL	100.3%	100.1%	100.2%	100.1%	
(N) (grievances)	(4,958)	(3,188)	(1,403)	(367)	$\chi^2=223.95$ (d.f.=32), $p < .001$
Households Reporting Any Grievance (yes = 1)	56.9%	88.0%	54.9%	24.3%	$\chi^2=779.752$ (d.f.=1), $p < .001$
Mean Number Grievances	1.71	3.19	1.38	.41	
(N) (households)	(2,902)	(999)	(1,015)	(888)	all t-tests, $p < .001$
<b>Reported Responses to Grievances (households)</b>					
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	2.7%	4.5%	1.8%	1.6%	$\chi^2=20.283$ (d.f.=1), $p < .001$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	5.2%	9.9%	3.9%	1.4%	
Either of the Above (yes = 1)	7.4%	13.4%	5.6%	2.8%	$\chi^2=84.214$ (d.f.=1), $p < .001$
(N) (households)	(2,902)	(999)	(1,015)	(888)	
<b>Reported Responses to Grievances (grievances)</b>					
Mobilized Legal System (yes = 1)	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	5.0%	$\chi^2=18.967$ (d.f.=1), $p < .001$
Approached Government Office (yes = 1)	3.6%	3.5%	3.7%	4.0%	
Either of the Above (yes = 1)	5.4%	5.1%	5.3%	9.0%	$\chi^2=8.578$ (d.f.=1), $p = .014$
(N) (grievances)	(4,757)	(3,120)	(1,315)	(322)	

*Note:* "High-tax inland" includes the Henan and Hunan sites. "Other inland" includes the Shaanxi and Chongqing sites. "Coastal" includes the Shandong and Jiangsu sites. Grievance types are listed in reverse chronological order according to their salience in high-tax contexts relative to their salience in other contexts. More specifically, they are arranged according to the value of ("high-tax inland")/(["other inland"+"coastal"]/2). Totals do not equal 100.0 percent owing to rounding error. T-tests are two-tailed. County-level data supplied by "All China Data" (<http://chinadataonline.org/>); weighted by population. In 2002, the currency exchange rate was about ¥8.3 for each US\$1 (or about US\$.120 for each ¥1).

**Table S6.** Descriptive Characteristics of Variables Used in Models Presented in Table 1

	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	N
<b>DEPENDENT VARIABLE</b>					
Lump It	.331	.471	0	1	4,757
Bilateral Negotiation	.468	.499	0	1	4,757
Informal Relation	.073	.260	0	1	4,757
Village Leader	.063	.243	0	1	4,757
Administrative/Government Office Above Village	.036	.187	0	1	4,757
Police	.011	.102	0	1	4,757
Mobilize Lawyer, Court, or Judicial Office	.018	.134	0	1	4,757
<b>FAMILY CONNECTIONS</b>					
Number Village Leaders in Family	.052	.232	0	2	4,757
Number Other Nonfarm Laborers in Family	.678	.948	0	6	4,757
Number Farmers in Family	4.341	1.699	0	9	4,757
No Nonfarm Laborers in Family (farmers only)	.551	.497	0	1	4,757
Number Laborers in Family	5.070	1.594	1	10	4,757
<b>OUTSIDE POLITICAL CONNECTIONS</b>					
Any Outside Relatives Township Cadre	.055	.227	0	1	4,757
Any Outside Relatives Higher-Level Cadre	.068	.252	0	1	4,757
No Outside Political Connections	.882	.322	0	1	4,757
<b>DISPUTE TYPE</b>					
Business-Related Problem	.182	.386	0	1	4,757
Farming-Related Problem	.202	.402	0	1	4,757
Personal Injury	.037	.188	0	1	4,757
Housing Land Property Rights	.070	.256	0	1	4,757
Problem with Neighbor	.179	.383	0	1	4,757
Other Problem	.330	.470	0	1	4,757
<b>CONTROL VARIABLES</b>					
Mean Years of Education of Household Members (age > 14)	6.614	1.949	1	14	4,757
Mean Age of Household Members	32.126	10.841	10.8	75.0	4,757
Urban Household Registration (yes = 1)	.049	.215	0	1	4,756
Entrepreneurship (yes = 1)	.181	.385	0	1	4,757
Total Household Income, Yuan	6,421.6	6,860.4	300	130,000	4,640
Total Household Income, Log of Yuan	8.403	.899	5.704	11.775	4,640
<b>COUNTY SAMPLE</b>					
Ru'nan (Henan)	.342	.474	0	1	4,757
Yuanjiang (Hunan)	.314	.464	0	1	4,757
Taicang (Jiangsu)	.039	.193	0	1	4,757
Jimo (Shandong)	.029	.167	0	1	4,757
Zhong (Chongqing)	.157	.364	0	1	4,757
Hengshan (Shaanxi)	.119	.324	0	1	4,757

**Table S7.** Descriptive Characteristics of Variables Used in Models Presented in Tables 2 and 3

	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	N
<b>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</b>					
Reported Any Grievance	.569	.495	0	1	2,902
Ever Mobilized Legal System	.053	.225	0	1	2,887
Number Times Appealed to Government Office $\geq 1$	.052	.222	0	1	2,902
Number Times Appealed to Legal System $\geq 1$	.027	.161	0	1	2,902
Number Times Appealed Either to Government Office or to Legal System $\geq 1$	.074	.263	0	1	2,902
<b>FAMILY CONNECTIONS</b>					
Number Village Leaders in Family $\geq 1$	.047	.212	0	1	2,901
Number Village Leaders in Family	.050	.228	0	2	2,901
Number Family Members Other Nonfarm Laborers	.904	1.181	0	7	2,901
Number Farmers in Family	4.049	1.819	0	9	2,901
No Nonfarm Laborers in Family (farmers only)	.492	.500	0	1	2,901
Number Laborers in Family	5.002	1.687	1	10	2,901
<b>HOUSEHOLD CONNECTIONS</b>					
Number Village Leaders in Household $\geq 1$	.033	.180	0	1	2,898
Number Village Leaders in Household	.034	.185	0	2	2,898
Number Household Members Other Nonfarm Laborers	.717	.992	0	5	2,898
Number Farmers in Household	2.041	1.089	0	7	2,898
No Nonfarm Laborers in Household (farmers only)	.556	.497	0	1	2,898
Number Laborers in Household	2.792	1.094	1	7	2,898
<b>OUTSIDE POLITICAL CONNECTIONS</b>					
Any Outside Relatives Township Cadre	.037	.188	0	1	2,902
Any Outside Relatives Higher-Level Cadre	.049	.216	0	1	2,902
No Outside Political Connections	.917	.275	0	1	2,902
<b>CONTROL VARIABLES</b>					
Mean Years of Education of Household Members (age > 14)	6.774	2.040	1	14	2,899
Mean Age of Household Members	34.398	11.041	10.8	75.6	2,899
Urban Household Registration (yes = 1)	.081	.273	0	1	2,897
Entrepreneurship (yes = 1)	.142	.349	0	1	2,902
Total Household Income, Yuan	9,255.6	10,688.7	300	130,000	2,808
Total Household Income, Log of Yuan	8.705	.960	5.704	11.775	2,808
Dissatisfaction with Villagers' Committee	.154	.361	0	1	2,902
Dissatisfaction with Villagers' Committee Missing	.041	.199	0	1	2,902
Popular Disrespect of Village Leaders	.215	.411	0	1	2,902
Popular Disrespect of Village Leaders Missing	.033	.179	0	1	2,902
<b>COUNTY CONTEXT</b>					
Mean Tax Rate (taxes/fees as percent of gross household income)	11.726	5.907	5.912	22.792	2,902
Per Capita GDP	11,229.2	13,771.7	1,921.7	40,104.5	2,902
Per Capita GDP (logged)	8.704	1.049	7.561	10.599	2,902
Percent Rural Labor Force in Nonfarm Work	34.347	19.740	11.908	62.166	2,902
Ru'nan (Henan)	.172	.377	0	1	2,902
Yuanjiang (Hunan)	.172	.378	0	1	2,902
Taicang (Jiangsu)	.173	.378	0	1	2,902
Jimo (Shandong)	.133	.340	0	1	2,902
Zhong (Chongqing)	.177	.382	0	1	2,902
Hengshan (Shaanxi)	.172	.378	0	1	2,902

**Table S8.** Alternative Measure of Legal Mobilization by Contextual Characteristics, Rural China, 2002

	County Context				Statistical Significance of Differences
	Total	High-Tax Inland	Other Inland	Coastal	
Reported Ever Mobilizing Legal System (yes = 1) (N) (households)	5.3% (2,877)	6.9% (999)	4.3% (1,012)	4.8% (876)	$\chi^2=7.759$ (d.f.=1), $p=.021$

**Table S9.** Alternative Measure of Legal Mobilization by Family Ties to Village Leaders, Rural China, 2002

	Total	Connection to Village Leader		Statistical Significance of Differences
		No	Yes	
Household Connection				
Reported Ever Mobilizing Legal System (yes = 1) (N) (households)	5.3% (2,883)	5.0% (2,786)	14.4% (97)	$\chi^2=16.408$ (d.f.=1), $p<.001$
Family Connection				
Reported Ever Mobilizing Legal System (yes = 1) (N) (households)	5.3% (2,886)	5.0% (2,749)	13.1% (137)	$\chi^2=17.334$ (d.f.=1), $p<.001$

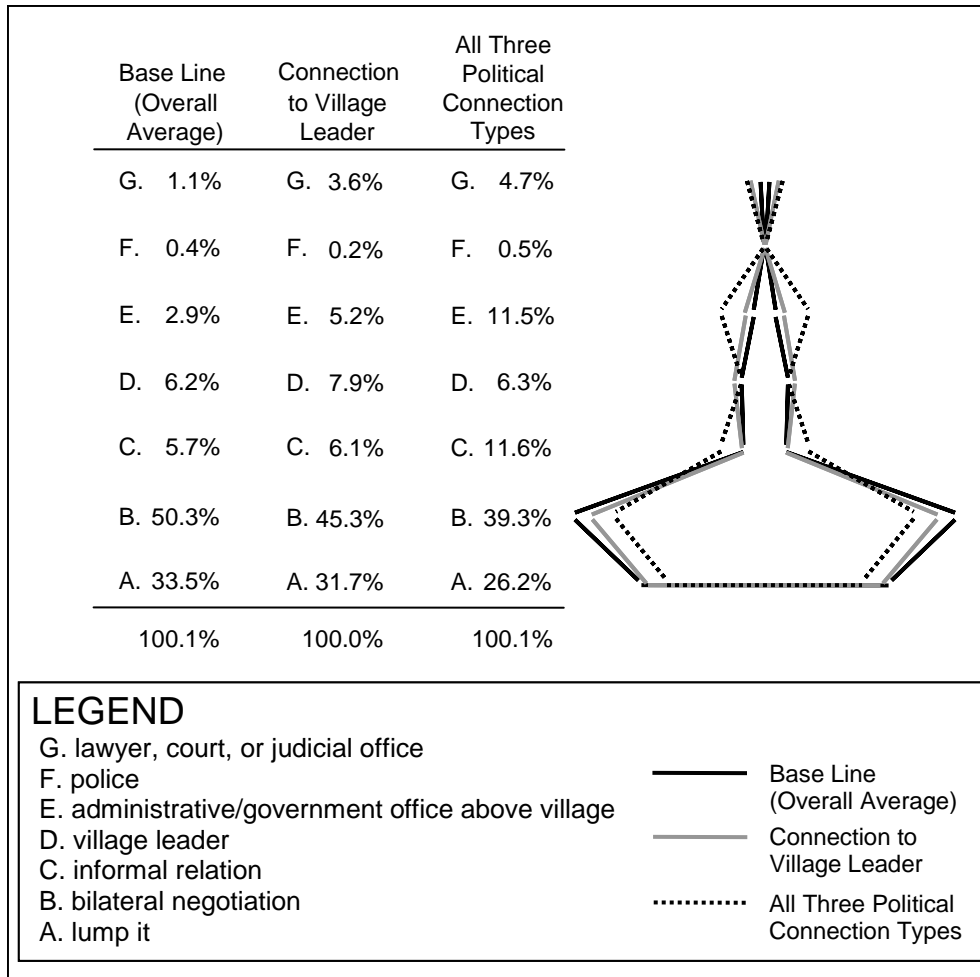
*Note for Tables A8 and A9:* An alternative measure of legal mobilization is defined as an answer of “yes” to any of the three following questions: (1) “Have you ever appeared in court as a plaintiff?”; (2) “Have you ever sought the advice of a lawyer over a matter of your own?”; and (3) “Have you ever consulted with a lawyer for some other reason, such as on behalf of a friend or a relative?” None of these three questions were asked in reference to specific grievances.

**Table S10.** Correlates of Mobilizing Legal System, Odds Ratios Converted from Logistic Regression Coefficients, Rural China, 2002

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>FAMILY CONNECTIONS</b>				
Number Village Leaders in Family $\geq 1$ (yes = 1)	2.373***	2.401**	2.418***	2.423**
Number Family Members Other Nonfarm Laborers	.948	.905	.943	.926
<b>OUTSIDE POLITICAL CONNECTIONS</b>				
Any Outside Relatives Township Cadre (yes = 1)	1.495	1.630	1.487	1.367
Any Outside Relatives Higher-Level Cadre (yes = 1)	1.554	1.799 <sup>+</sup>	1.618	1.524
<b>HOUSEHOLD CONTROL VARIABLES</b>				
Mean Age of Household Members	1.010	1.008	1.011	1.019*
Household Mean Years of Education (if age > 14)	.993	1.014	1.005	1.010
Urban Household Registration (yes = 1)	1.250	1.141	1.202	1.323
Entrepreneurship (yes = 1)	1.772***	1.802***	1.725***	1.585*
Total Annual Household Income (log of Yuan)	1.257	1.198	1.266	1.192
Dissatisfied with Villagers' Committee	—	1.988***	1.669*	1.544
<b>COUNTY CONTEXT</b>				
Ru'nan County (Henan)	1.818**	—	1.455	.850
Yuanjiang County (Hunan)	1.249	—	1.146	.658
Taicang County (Jiangsu)	.774	—	.790	1.066
Jimo County (Shandong)	1.239	—	1.165	1.482
Zhong County (Chongqing)	.788	—	.795	.672 <sup>+</sup>
Hengshan County (Shaanxi) (reference group)				
<b>REPORTED GRIEVANCES</b>				
Business-Related Problem (yes = 1)	—	—	—	2.229***
Farming-Related Problem (yes = 1)	—	—	—	.935
Personal Injury (yes = 1)	—	—	—	4.870***
Housing Land Property Rights Problem (yes = 1)	—	—	—	1.140
Problem with Neighbor (yes = 1)	—	—	—	.717
Other Problem (yes = 1)	—	—	—	2.008**
Pseudo $R^2$	.036	.037	.041	.106

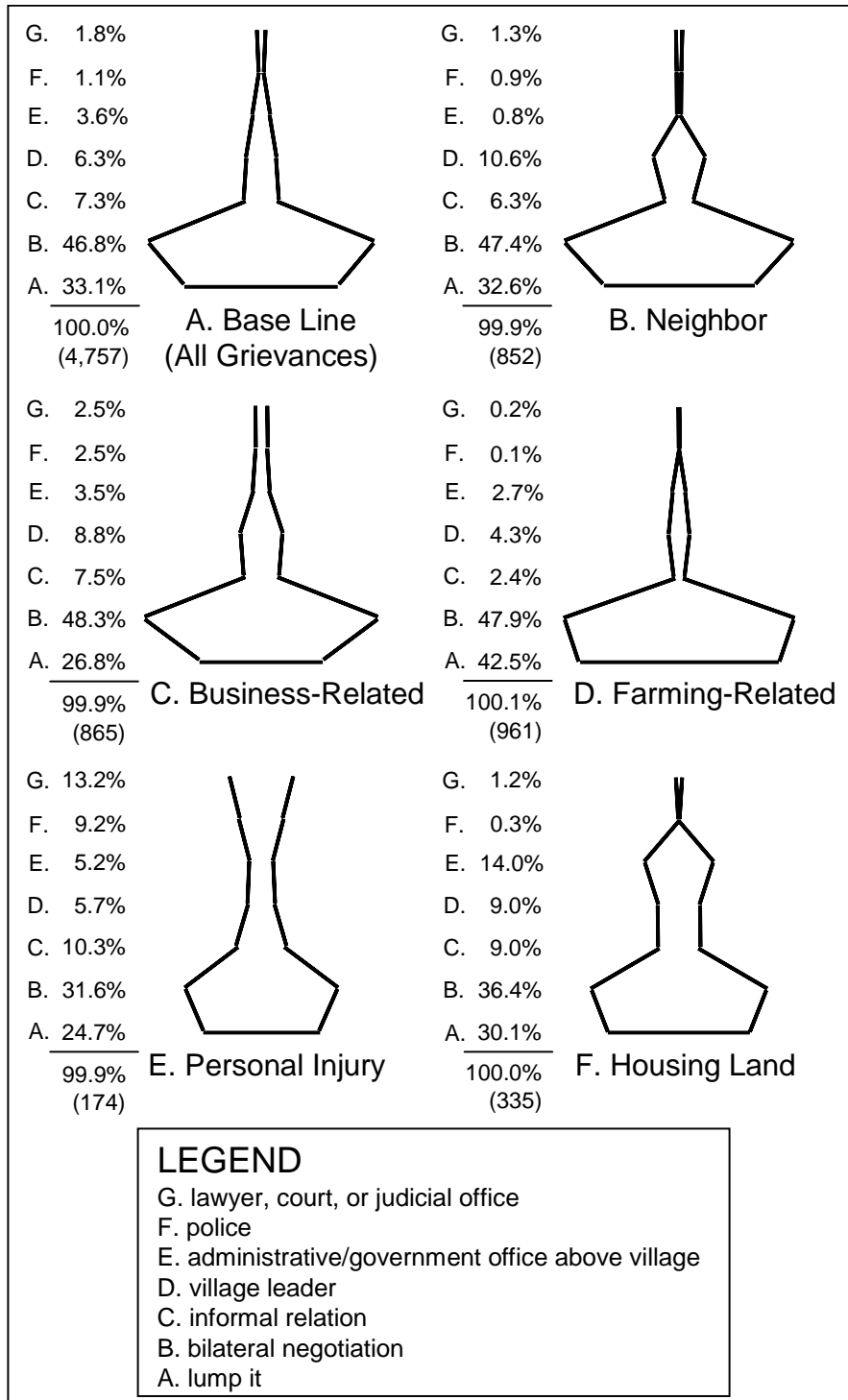
Note: N = 2,790. The dependent variable in these models is the measure of “legal mobilization reported with reference to concrete grievances.” Significance tests are calculated from robust standard errors that correct for clustering within 37 villages. Wald tests of whether the effect of an additional village leader is different from the effect of each additional “other” type of nonfarm worker (for example, a test of whether we can reject the null hypothesis that [“any family members village leader” = “number other family members nonfarm laborers”]) are all significant at  $p \leq .002$  in each model.

\*  $p \leq .05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test). <sup>+</sup>  $p \leq .05$  (one-tailed test).

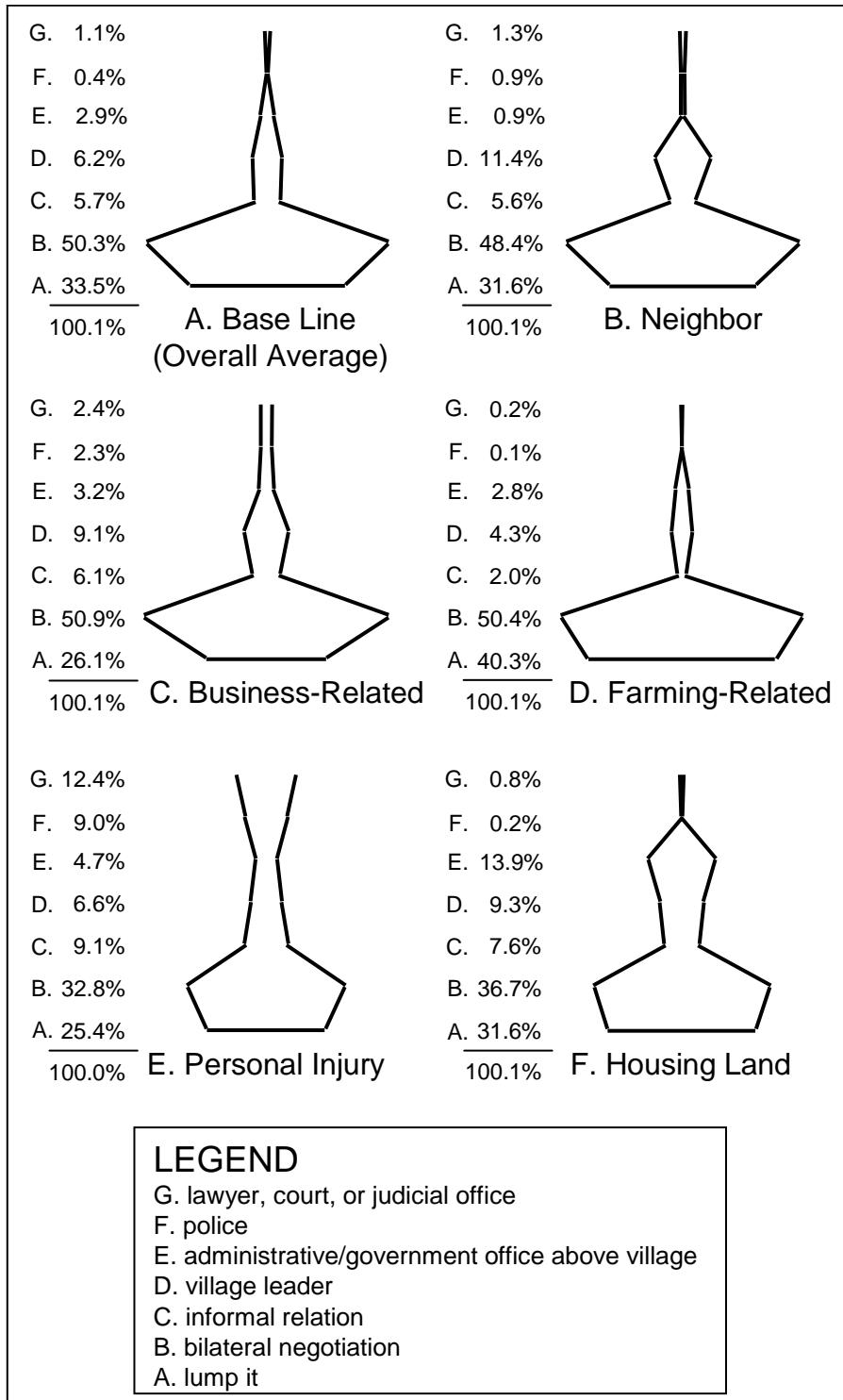


**Figure S1.** Dispute Pagodas by Political Connections, Predicted Probabilities from Multiple Regression Model, Rural China, 2002

*Note:* Not all dispute pagodas total 100.0 percent owing to rounding error. “All three political connections types” refers to the presence of a village leader, an outside relative working as a township cadre, and an outside relative working as a higher-level cadre. Each level of the dispute pagoda represents a predicted probability calculated from Table 1, Model 3 by holding all variables constant at their means except the dummies for political connections.



**Figure S2.** Dispute Pagodas by Grievance Type, Univariate Distributions, Rural China, 2002  
*Note:* Numbers of grievances are in parentheses. The pagoda for “other” grievance types (N = 1,570) (see Table S1) is not depicted because, as a potpourri of grievances varying in character, its interpretation lacks coherence. Not all dispute pagodas total 100 percent owing to rounding error.



**Figure S3.** Dispute Pagodas by Grievance Type, Predicted Probabilities from Multiple Regression Model, Rural China, 2002

*Note:* Not all dispute pagodas total 100.0 percent owing to rounding error. Each level of the dispute pagoda represents a predicted probability calculated from Table 1, Model 3 by holding all variables constant at their means except the dummies for dispute type.