

Abstract

The dissertation examines the dynamics and outcomes of small-scale protests in China by more meticulously scrutinizing the role of the state. In order to clarify the sensitive topic of how local officials and protesters try to outmaneuver each other, I have conducted an in-depth fieldwork that is less than Sedaka, but more than an interview. A thorough analysis of the highly mixed reality of protest and protest-handling in the dissertation improves scholarly understanding of state-society relation and contentious politics in China.

In particular, *Chapter One* is the brief introduction of the thesis in which I primarily explain how and why the study is conducted in four different fields, viz. China studies, political science, sociology and anthropology.

Chapter Two is theoretical core of the dissertation. Based on a comprehensive literature review, the chapter redirects our attention away from protesters and towards officials, and develops a framework to more meticulously scrutinize the role of the state, in order to better explain the fate of small-scale protests in China.

Chapter Three covers the methodological aspects of the dissertation. I describe how I structured my fieldwork and argue why I believe the data gathered to be applicable to the study.

The next three analytical chapters concentrate on three specific issues. *Chapter 4* illustrates how and why petitions are mishandled. *Chapter 5* explores how and why nail residents can succeed. *Chapter 6* provides an explanation of why nail petitioners are more likely to succeed in China today.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion, in which I summarize the various contributions to the dissertation.