5   Social Unrest in China

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Introduction

Social unrest is on the rise in China. Few incidents of public demonstrations, disruptive action or riots occurred in the 1980s, but the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square marked a turning point. In 1993, there were already 8,700 'mass incidents' recorded. By 2005, the number had grown tenfold to 87,000. Unofficial data estimated by a researcher at Tsinghua University suggests that there were 180,000 incidents in 2010.[1] These figures could easily be interpreted as signs that the days of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rule are numbered. However, the number of media outlets has proliferated since the 1990s; and with that, the incentive to report on eye-catching stories has increased. In comparing these incidents with the protests that toppled several authoritarian regimes during the Arab Spring of 2011, a number of significant differences emerge. The scale of most protests in China is much smaller. Protestors are usually a homogenous group, such as peasants, taxi drivers, migrant workers or homeowners. Mobilisation across social groups, an important precondition for system-threatening collective action, is therefore largely absent. Further, despite rising unrest, the death toll in such activities remains low.

Most important, few of these protests are aimed at toppling the regime, even though popular uprisings can do so, as evidenced in the Arab Spring. Interestingly, rising incidents of social unrest do not correlate with a decrease in the legitimacy of the CCP's one-party rule.[2] Although local officials are heavily criticised for their incompetence and corruption, few people are in favour of regime change.

If it is not a sign of an impending regime change or even of a major legitimacy crisis, what does social unrest in China signify? In this chapter, we argue that social unrest should be seen as a form of participation – as a means to communicate specific grievances in the hope that local government or the central authorities will address them. Two issues are at stake here: grievances and participation. Although scholars and politicians tend to focus on the former, the latter deserves equal attention. In fact, rising incidents of unrest might not be the result of mounting grievances but of changing forms of participation. The growth of information and communication technology (ICT) in China has brought about improved availability of information on issues at the heart of people's well-being, such as food quality and environmental pollution. It has also improved the ability of protestors to learn from the success or failure of previous initiatives, and to communicate their grievances and strategies.

In simple terms, the increase in occurrences of social unrest is likely the result of exploitation of material interests of disadvantaged groups, the inadequacy of formal channels of communication combined with greater opportunities for and falling costs of instigating or participating in social unrest.

As we will also show, this does not make social unrest innocuous. If the number of protests continues to rise, the perception that grievances are not being adequately addressed may translate into opposition to the regime. Even more likely is a scenario in which security forces overreact, protests spiral out of control, isolated protests link up with each other and large-scale riots are answered with massive repression. Realising these dangers, the Chinese government has begun to address the grievances underlying social unrest. It is also investing considerable resources in improving its ability to control, repress and prevent unrest, while some formal channels for communicating grievances are being improved.

This report sheds light on the forms, manifestations and root causes of social unrest and its role in the political system. It also analyses various strategies of the Chinese government for mitigating and countering protests. The section 'The Changing Nature of Social Unrest' examines definition, forms, distribution and development of social unrest in China. The next section 'Issues Leading to Grievances' analyses the root causes of rising unrest.

The study is based on English- and Chinese-language sources comprising official documents, newspaper reports, statistical yearbooks and scholarly publications as well as data and observations gathered in several weeks of fieldwork in Guangzhou (in February 2010), Shenzhen, Shenyang, Chongqing (in 2003 and 2004), Hefei (in December 2011) and Beijing.

The Changing Nature of Social Unrest

Escalating incidents of social unrest do not indicate an impending collapse of one-party rule in China. They signify instead the desire of an increasingly complex society to take part in the allocation of political and material values. As formal channels of participation fail to meet this need, informal channels such as demonstrations, protests and riots are chosen.

Evidence of social unrest

Social unrest is a sensitive subject in Chinese politics, which makes gathering evidence for it an arduous if not impossible task. This sensitivity is rooted at least partly in traditional philosophies of statecraft. Confucianism is still very influential even today, and some observers argue that the Chinese leadership is increasingly basing its claim to legitimacy on a Confucian world view. A central concept in Confucianism is the Mandate of Heaven or the divine approval to rule over others. It commits the ruler to justice and morality and is withdrawn from despots and tyrants. In this worldview, natural disasters and social unrest are seen as indicators that rulers are losing their divine mandate.[3] Mencius, one of the most important philosophers of the Confucian school, extended this idea to justify the overthrow and even killing of tyrants. Thus Confucianism allows people to protest against despotism. Not incidentally, the Chinese characters for 'revolution' (*geming*) translate as 'change of mandate'. Arguably, the passive component (social unrest as a sign of loss of mandate) and its active counterpart (overthrowing a tyrant) can reinforce each other, as large-scale social unrest might affirm people's belief that their protests are justified and even sanctioned by higher powers.

As a consequence, the Chinese government puts great effort into controlling and framing information on popular unrest.

A lack of reliable and consistent data makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the size and regional distribution of social unrest. Until 2005, the Ministry of Public Security issued official annual figures on the number of incidents of social unrest. Even though these figures were probably biased downwards, they illustrate a clear rise in protest activities. Incidents of social unrest rose at an alarming rate, from 8,700 in 1993 to 87,000 in 2005. No data were released for the first few years of the 2000s, and the Ministry of Public Security stopped issuing such data altogether after 2005. Informal estimates based on newspaper reports, hearsay and other unconfirmed sources suggest a further increase in occurrences of social unrest. A more commonly cited figure is 180,000 incidents in 2010 put forward by the researcher Sun Liping at Tsinghua University. However, an estimate by another Chinese scholar even suggests that there were 230,000 incidents in 2009.[4]

These figures hide more than they reveal. Varying definitions underlie this official data, which makes a comparison of trends over time a complicated task. During the 1990s, social unrest was officially classified under 'mass incidents' (*qunti shijian*). This was changed to 'public order disturbances' (*raoluan gonggong zhixu*) in the 2000s. The Chinese authorities have never properly defined what these terms mean. However, it appears that 'mass incidents' are defined with reference to the number of participants. According to the Jiangsu provincial government, 'important mass incidents' involve between 1,000 and 5,000 people and 'extraordinary mass incidents' include more than 5,000 participants. Following the same logic, incidents involving fewer than 1,000 people are also considered 'mass incidents'; but they are just not 'important' or 'extraordinary'. As for 'public order disturbances', the definition is characterised by the nature of the event rather than by the number of participants. It includes provocation or troublemaking, gambling, running underworld criminal organisations, obstruction of official business, mob fighting, delaying the delivery of mail, holding mass orgies, computer hacking, making and selling fake police uniforms, forging identity cards, burning national flags and corpse desecration.[5]

Nor is there information about the regional distribution of these protests. Because a lack of available official data has led

to reliance on media reports for information, the steep increase in the number of incidents since 2005 could be the result of more media reporting of social unrest than before. This could reflect the prevalence of commercially minded media vying for readership and the consequent efforts to investigate and report stories that were previously neglected. Also, the growth of ICT makes it easier for journalists to find out about such incidents and more difficult for the Ministry of Propaganda to keep them secret from the public.

Social unrest as a form of participation

What are the existing channels for Chinese citizens to participate in politics? We distinguish six forms of participation in China, which can be classified as legal, grey zone and illegal.[6] See Table 5.1.

Most of the legal forms of participation mentioned here are aimed at influencing political programmes and are therefore not suitable for addressing specific grievances. This is especially the case for elections and most other forms of institutionalised participation. They are of limited appeal to protestors because they are spatially restricted and non-responsive (such as village elections and neighbourhood self-governance), very exclusive (such as most institutionalised forms of participation) or tightly regulated (such as the activities of registered social organisations). However, the mechanisms described here are not a one-way street: increased social unrest has prompted central and local authorities to improve some of these channels, but not enough so far to dissuade people from taking to the streets.

Social networking, i.e. participating in politics through personal networks, is different, however. Although it is far more suitable for addressing specific grievances, it is problematic when political or material benefits accrue only to those who have invested in such a network. In other words, social networking is also very exclusive, but in a different way from participation in political parties or mass organisations. In order to be successful in politics or business in China, personal contacts with influential individuals need to be established. Friends and existing contacts have to be rewarded as go-betweens in facilitating such contacts, and the new contacts are showered with expensive gifts

Table 5.1 Forms of political participation in China

Legal	Grey zone	Illegal
Citizen participation Elections at the village and neighbourhood level	**Social networking** (Establish and employ close personal and social relationships) Clan networks Nepotism Patronage Other kinds of informal relations	**Popular resistance** Illegal demonstrations Strikes Refusal to pay taxes Foot-dragging Forming clandestine organisations
Institution-orientated participation Membership of CCP or other parties Delegate in national or local legislatures or consultative conferences Membership of mass organisations Engaging in registered social organisations	n.a.	**Political violence** Violence against property or persons
Problem-specific participation Letters to the editor Visits and complaints Contacting functionaries Legal demonstrations	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Thomas Heberer, *Einführung in die politischen Systeme Ostasiens: VR China, Hong Kong, Japan, Nordkorea, Südkorea, Taiwan* [Introduction to the Political Systems of East Asia: PR China, Hong Kong, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan], 2008. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag), p. 85.

or even cash. In addition, such networking involves hosting lavish banquets, which can add up to a large sum.[7]

The tools for problem-specific participation have received much attention in the literature, but their usefulness in overcoming grievances remains the subject of intense debate. This is especially true for 'letters to the editor' (*xinfang*) and legal demonstrations. Letters of complaint sent to newspapers are evaluated, bundled and presented to the authorities in unpublished compendiums, and they are often not printed for public

consumption. Thus although they feed into political agenda-setting, they almost never lead to concrete action by the authorities. The usefulness of legal demonstrations is equally limited, simply because it is almost impossible to gain a permit to demonstrate about the sensitive issues that most grievances represent. Contacting individual functionaries is just as futile, for similar reasons.

Analysts have devoted much attention to the system of 'letters and complaints'. This enables citizens to file complaints, either in writing (*xinfang*) or as part of a visit (*shangfang*) to specialised complaint offices in central and local ministries.[8] As Carl F. Minzner points out, 'in the absence of open political and legal channels, petitioning is one of the main methods by which Chinese citizens challenge and participate in the official decisions that affect their lives'.[9] Thus scholars perceive the xinfang system as a means to empower disadvantaged groups, a 'safety valve' for political tension[10] and an 'alarm system' for the central authorities.[11] But as the authorities act upon only a small proportion of complaint letters filed, most petitioners favour personal visits to complaint offices to written complaints. However, the increased influx of complaints to Beijing has led the central government to put a lid on this form of participation.[12]

The role of ICT

The Internet has also become a virtual space where contentious politics takes place. Incidents with sensational images can go viral and capture international media attention in a short time. ICT has become a medium for netizens to air their grievances and to rally the public to stage physical protests. To a certain extent, it has become a form of check-and-balance against official misconduct. Also, topics discussed in the virtual forum may be picked up by print media and television, which acts as a further check on official behaviour.

China's gradual development towards a knowledge-based economy has direct and immediate consequences for the nature and frequency of social unrest. It confronts the government with a dilemma. On the one hand, as it draws much of its legitimacy from economic growth, becoming a knowledge-based economy is crucial to maintaining the country's competitiveness in world

markets. This transformation requires the political elites and the population at large to have improved access to all kinds of information. On the other hand, enhanced access to information can also undermine the legitimacy of an autocratic government such as China because it enables people to obtain and disperse sensitive information and to organise resistance against dictatorship.

ICT has grown rapidly in China. While it accounted for only 38 per cent of China's research and development (R&D) expenditure in high-technology industries in 1997, the figure went to more than 60 per cent in 2011. In absolute terms, R&D expenditure on ICT has increased from Rmb 1.2 billion (EUR 150 million) to Rmb 48.7 billion (EUR 6 billion) in that period.[13] At the same time, the central government is actively promoting popular access to ICT.[14] China has the largest number of Internet users and the largest mobile phone market in the world today.

As of June 2013, there were nearly 591 million Internet users in China. Fewer than 5 per cent of China's population in 2002 went online but more than one-third did in the early 2010s, of which 65.5 per cent accessed the Internet through their mobile phone. Additionally, Internet use is no longer confined to young, male and educated residents of China's rich coastal provinces as it used to be. It has now reached all segments of the population.[15] These include migrant workers, whose potential to ignite social unrest is a matter of grave concern to the central government. As part of this development, Twitter-equivalent platforms such as Sina Weibo and QQ Weibo, which enable real-time sharing of texts, images and videos, have redefined the media landscape in China.

Microblogs (*weibo*) enjoy great popularity among ordinary citizens and also journalists, lawyers and advocacy activists. For instance, the number of people using microblogs reached 274 million at the end of 2012.[16] Microblogs are an important channel for discussing controversial social issues, anger-venting about injustice, linking like-minded people and obtaining first-hand information on current events, protests and disasters that are not reported in the traditional media. This has limited the government's ability to control the flow of information about sensitive events. As it is very difficult for the propaganda authorities to prevent accounts of government malfeasance from leaking to the general public through microblogs, they are forced to also allow the conventional media to report on those events.

The widespread adoption of microblogs has helped to spread awareness of mass incidents caused by official misdemeanours that would otherwise have remained unknown and isolated. In some instances, public outrage against official misbehaviour has caused the government to take remedial action. The Internet is becoming a means of ensuring official accountability and enforcing the rule of law in that respect, even though it has not inspired political revolution in China or toppled the authoritarian regime as it has done in the Arab countries.

In September 2010, three people in Jiangxi province set themselves on fire after forced evictions by the local government in order to make way for a public transport project. When family members of the victims attempted to travel to Beijing to lodge a petition, they were obstructed at the airport in the provincial capital, Nanchang. Using their mobile phones, they petitioned journalists for help. The event then sparked a huge public outcry. Two local Party officials came under investigation and were subsequently removed from their position. The victims were also given financial compensation.[17] In another case, public criticism of the safety record of the much-publicised high-speed railway, particularly through the sharing of photos in social media, has prompted the authorities to re-evaluate the ambitious project and scale it down.[18]

The Internet, particularly social media, has also become a means of rallying people for physical protest. In the Dalian and Xiamen cases against the construction of toxic PX chemical plants, calls for protest, mounted on Internet forums and communicated via microblog platforms, helped to mobilise a large number of demonstrators.[19] In early 2011, the Arab Spring-inspired 'Jasmine Revolution' in China was initiated by postings on microblogs such as Twitter and Boxun. It was severely clamped down on by the authorities before it caught fire.

Classifying social unrest

Modernisation of Chinese society has led to diversification of protest activities. The official classification of social unrest activities is far from satisfactory because it conflates different forms of collective action as well as being ideologically biased. This highlights the need to classify popular protests along more dimensions

than its current definition does. We suggest six dimensions: geo-graphical location; motivations for protests; strategies of protest; degree of organisation; the degree of homogeneity of protest crowds; and ethnic protest.

Protests in China have shifted from events happening mostly in rural areas to both rural and urban areas. The issues at stake have diversified, and formal channels of communication have not kept up with diversifying expression of grievances. In the 1990s, peasant resistance against excessive and illegal taxation by rural governments used to dominate the social unrest scene. After the rural tax reform in the early 2000s, which abolished illegal rural taxes, an increasing number of protests are recorded in peri-urban and urban areas. Increasingly, residents in these areas are engaging in popular resistance in order to express their griev-ances about a range of issues affecting their livelihood, such as expropriation of land and residential property for development, job losses from factory closures and also rising fuel prices, which have incited unrest among taxi drivers. Social resistance, which used to be staged by the underprivileged, such as retrenched workers and peasants, is now an increasingly common means of expression for the middle class too. The other causes of unrest, which will be discussed below, include environment-related dis-putes, labour disputes over owed wages and appalling working conditions, urban housing issues and conflicts related to ethnic groups. As a general rule, urban protests are more dangerous to the regime than rural protests because news spreads faster in urban areas and hence they are more difficult to contain.

On motivations driving public protests, there are protests seeking redress for grievances, anger-venting incidents and anti-system protests.[20] Examples of redress-seeking incidents include occupational groups such as farmers fighting to keep their land, untrained workers protesting against loss of jobs, taxi drivers resisting rising fuel prices, homeowners or students complaining of unfair treatment and migrant workers strik-ing or even taking their own lives for higher wages and better working conditions.

Of increasing significance are 'anger-venting incidents', a term coined by the Chinese scholar and social critic Yu Jianrong. The term denotes incidents reflecting deep-seated anger that has been brewing for some time and is vented when seemingly

minor incidents occur. Their participants, usually in excess of 10,000, have no relationship with the victims of the incidents. Modern communication tools such as short text messaging and the Internet often aid the mobilisation of protestors. They sometimes engage in extremely violent behaviour, usually directed at local officials.[21]

In June 2008, as many as 30,000 people participated in a riot in Weng'an County in Guizhou province in which police cars were overturned and burnt and the Public Security Bureau building was set on fire. The incident was triggered by an incident of no direct significance to the protestors. Weng'an is a mineral town. In exploiting mineral resources and building hydropower stations, thousands of residents had been adversely affected in the previous few years. The local authority had forced many to relocate, often without much consultation and with only minimum financial compensation. Underground criminal gangs, often in collaboration with local officials, were also prevalent and active in Weng'an. Local Party leaders colluded with mine owners and gang leaders in running of mining businesses and in coercing local residents to comply with the government's instructions. Corruption was therefore rife. Local residents had clashed with the police and the local government prior to this incident. Public order was poor and the crime rate was high. Gangs had even penetrated the local schools and instigated gang-related violence.[22] Given this background, when a 16-year-old girl was sexually abused and killed by perpetrators allegedly connected with local officials and her uncle was subsequently beaten up for launching an investigation, as many as 30,000 Weng'an residents took to the streets, vandalising local government properties in their demand for justice.

The Weng'an incident was not an isolated case. In July 2008, more than 100 migrant workers stormed government buildings and destroyed police cars in a county in Guangdong province. The incident was triggered by the alleged abuse and murder of a migrant worker who was a taxi driver when he refused to pay Rmb 200 (€25) 'protection money' to village officials.[23] And in December 2010, mourning for a boy in Zhangjiagang in Jiangsu province also turned violent. More than 1,000 people clashed with riot police when a five-year-old died after an injection at a local hospital. The incident highlighted the tension and distrust

between citizens and local hospitals and the local government apparatus at large and showed the public's sympathy for the victim.[24] A peculiar social phenomenon is the ability of these seemingly minor incidents to act as a force for mobilising thousands of people not directly involved in them to mount collective action. It reflects a deeply rooted feeling of injustice widely shared by many strata of Chinese society.

Although protests that are aimed 'against the system' happen infrequently, they are the most dangerous to the regime. For instance, the 1989 student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, which started as protests against political corruption and favouritism, turned into calls to topple the Communist Party. Another example is the 'Jasmine Revolution' in 2011, which called for a democratic revolution in the wake of the Arab Spring. Most important in this category is ethnic unrest, which we will turn to later.

The three major types of protest strategy are peaceful demonstrations, disruptive action and violence. Each of these strategies serves different objectives. Peaceful demonstrations are less risky for protestors than the other two strategies but are probably less likely to succeed. One of the authors of this paper examined such demonstrations in the central business district of Guangzhou. Protest leaders repeatedly urged the participants to maintain public order, to refrain from destroying public property and not to disrupt traffic.[25]

Risk aversion is not the only reason why protestors often choose peaceful demonstrations. Protestors frequently seek the support of higher-level administrations and the media, but cannot enlist help if they are labelled a threat to public security. The participants in such protests tend to present their activities as lawful. They also see themselves as partners of the central government in reining in local abuses of power, fighting corruption and strengthening the rule of law. Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li have termed this class of protest 'rightful resistance'.[26]

Disruptive action involves activities that disrupt daily life, such as blocking roads and thoroughfares. It often follows from unsuccessful petitioning or repression of peaceful demonstrations. However, it can also be a strategy employed by occupational groups, such as bus or taxi drivers, who are well positioned to cause disorder. Examples include the large-scale strikes by taxi drivers in Chongqing and Sanya in November 2008.[27]

Riots frequently happen in, but are not restricted to, minority provinces such as Tibet and Xinjiang or in poor provinces such as Guizhou and Anhui. Often they are responses to events that spark moral outrage, for example the previously mentioned attempted cover-up of the rape of a teenage girl by a local government-related perpetrator.

Another dimension of protest concerns how they are organised. In China, it is illegal to form an organisation without prior approval from the relevant authorities. If someone is being convicted as the organiser of a major demonstration, he will likely have a long prison sentence. In order to protect the organisers operating in the background, participants in protests often claim that their protest is spontaneous.

Given popularisation of ICT, protest organisers can now learn from the success and failure of their own activities as well as those of others. As a general rule, well-organised protests are more sustainable than unorganised ones, and the tactical employment of ICT can serve to surreptitiously coordinate protestors and to outsmart government censorship. Organisers of such activities are therefore more difficult to detect, which increases the cost to the government of maintaining stability.

The demonstrations in Guangzhou described earlier provide a good example of organisational learning in collective action. In a protest against irregularities in a redevelopment programme, protestors reacted to the arrest of some of their organisers by imposing a division of labour among themselves. The protest leaders took great care not to be seen at the protest site and delegated activities from behind the scenes. A division of labour was also imposed between men and women, old and young, employed and unemployed. We observed that it was predominantly elderly people, many of them women, who carried out the protests following an initial wave of arrests.[28] Young men are the principal wage earners, whom no family can afford to do without, whereas older people have less to lose, command some respect and are therefore less likely to be imprisoned. During this protest, an informal rule was imposed by which each family in the village had to send at least one representative to the demonstrations. Usually the burden fell on the women of the family, especially if they were unemployed and their children had left home.

External allies are another factor that influences the sustainability and, by extension, the impact of a protest on social stability. As mentioned above, lawful protests often seek the attention of the media, as the protestors know that the authorities are more likely to intervene in their favour if their grievances are reported in the press. Lawyers who boldly take up cases that motivate people to engage in further acts of social unrest are another popular ally. It is important to note here that protestors often do not welcome foreign support, because the government tends to interpret it as an attempt to undermine domestic order. The involvement of foreign actors can lead to unusually harsh jail sentences for protestors and thus needs to be undertaken with great care. Deep contextual knowledge, respect for Chinese counterparts and sensitivity to their particular situation are preconditions for this risky kind of intervention.

A further dimension of social unrest is the degree of homogeneity of protest crowds. Homogeneous protest crowds, such as occupational or status groups, indicate that issue-specific grievances are at stake. These are frequently easier to address than broader or more far-reaching demands such as for democratisation or social justice. Also, crackdowns on such groups are less likely to lead to larger protests if the population at large does not identify with the protestors or their demands. By contrast, social unrest may become widespread if organisers are able to reach beyond their core group and mobilise other social groups for solidarity.

A good example is the riots in Wukan, a village in southern China where more than 3,000 villagers demonstrated against illegal land grabs in late 2011. The local police responded with a massive show of force, which triggered further demonstrations in the following months. Subsequently, four suspected organisers were incarcerated by the police.[29] The death in custody of one of the suspects outraged villagers, which helped to mobilise more supporters. The unrest gained in intensity and became a movement against corrupt relations between business and politics in the locality.[30] Had this been a taxi drivers' strike, monetary concessions could have been made to address, for example, declining profits because of increasing petrol prices. In contrast, the protestors in Wukan criticised the general lack of quality in China's (local) governance. Instead of making monetary concessions

only, the provincial leadership saw itself compelled to make political changes. It is easy to see how this could lead to popular demands for more far-reaching reforms, eventually questioning one-party rule itself.

The demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in 1989 provide another illustration of the potency of heterogeneous protest crowds. These demonstrations were initiated by students, and later were joined by workers and then members of all social groups. Such events are more likely to pose a threat to the regime's legitimacy than issue-specific unrest. The heterogenisation of protest crowds can lead to broader demands, which in turn can mobilise more followers. A tipping point is reached when protestors' demands go beyond specific issues and pose a threat to the regime's legitimacy.

The ethnic dimension of social unrest deserves additional attention, even though the danger of ethnic protest to regime stability stems from two factors discussed earlier. Despite being united by their ethnicity, protest crowds encompass a wide array of social groups (heterogeneity) and their protests are frequently 'against the system'. Uighur and Tibetan protestors routinely deplore the political supremacy of the Han Chinese and often demand independence from China. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that separatism is always the root of such protests. Many Tibetans and Uighurs resent being disadvantaged vis-à-vis people of Han ethnicity, who enjoy a privileged status in minority regions. Han Chinese often regard minorities and their culture as inferior to their own culture.[31] They tend to enjoy better employment opportunities, not least because high wages are often an incentive for them to move to a place that they are not accustomed to.[32] Thus ethnic grievances have an economic as well as an ethnic component. Often, social unrest in minority regions starts with an 'anger-venting incident', a relatively small incident that can ignite a large-scale protest that reflects the Han versus ethnic minority tension.

Another type of ethnic protest, such as the widely publicised incidents in Lhasa in March 2008[33] and in Urumqi in July 2009,[34] is more comprehensive and organised. They also involve separatist political agendas. Nevertheless, in both cases, there was an underlying negative sentiment against the other ethnic group that had been brewing for some time. 'Anger-venting'

and 'anti-system' incidents can be difficult to discern, especially because the former often evolves into the latter: well-organised separatist groups can use 'anger-venting protests' as a vehicle to organise pro-independence activities, often aided by activists operating from abroad. In contrast to unrest in non-minority regions, protests in Tibetan, Uighur and Mongolian areas are seen by the regime as a serious challenge to its right to rule. Accordingly, unrest in minority areas is quelled swiftly and with a large show of force; activists are punished severely and police presence is prominently visible.

Issues Leading to Grievances

In this section, we examine the grievances that lie at the heart of social unrest. Contrary to popular belief, the rising incidence of unrest is not directly correlated with economic growth rates. It arises instead from land disputes, environmental degradation, labour conflicts and ethnic strife and is rooted in the institutional structure of central–local relations and the authoritarian nature of Chinese politics.

Social unrest and economic transformation

There is a popular belief that social unrest intensifies when growth slows down, that grievances accumulate and translate into social unrest. If this belief is correct, China will be able to keep the lid on unrest as long as it maintains its growth. However, we find no evidence of a direct relationship between growth and unrest. As we will argue, unrest is a function of increased incentives and opportunities for protest and of growing impatience from people who have not benefited from economic growth.[35] This implies that the government has to take measures in addition to maintaining economic growth in order to tackle social unrest.

Figure 5.1 suggests that the relationship between growth and unrest is not straightforward. During the 1990s, the economic growth rate and the number of incidents of unrest seemingly trended in opposite directions: while economic growth rates declined, the number of 'mass incidents' rose. But when the economy grew in the 2000s, the number of incidents also increased.

Number of incidents (000)   Economic growth rate (%)
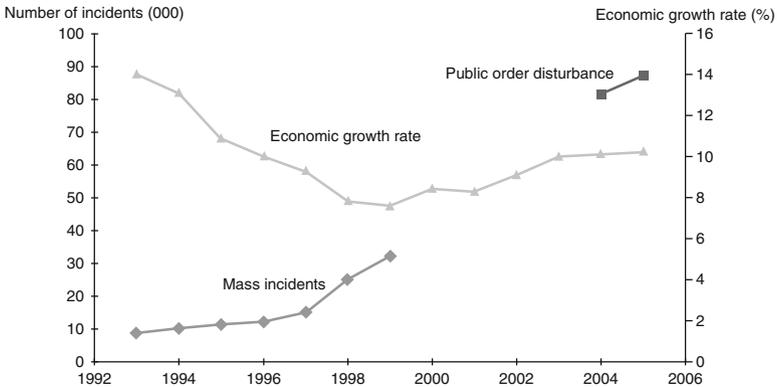

Figure 5.1   **The number of social unrest incidents vs economic growth rates, 1993–2005**

Source: Ministry of Public Security for data on 'mass incidents' and 'public order disturbances' and China's Statistical Yearbook.

Immediate grievances or causes of unrest

Land disputes are a primary cause of social unrest, and account for 65 per cent of all cases as Yu Jianrong has found.[36] In some instances, local governments expropriate land illegally, sometimes in collusion with real estate developers in order to avoid sharing land sale proceeds with higher-level governments. In other cases, they fail to consult the citizens affected or force them to vacate their properties against their will. In most instances, the compensation offered by local governments to affected residents is minimal and is considered grossly inadequate. Worse still, there is an increasing trend that local governments are hiring local mafia to force villagers to comply with their demands and to carry out forced land expropriations and seizures.[37]

Land-related social unrest is happening in peri-urban and urban areas. In peri-urban areas, local officials expropriate farmland in order to transfer land-user rights from farmers to real estate developers or private individuals. These transfers happen mostly in urban fringes where there is a demand for urban and/or industrial expansion, for which land is a requisite resource. In urban neighbourhoods, land disputes occur when local governments seek to tear down older residential areas in

order to make way for profitable office space or expensive apartment complexes.

The environment is another leading cause of social unrest. Often for the reason of increasing their tax revenue, local governments acquiesce to hosting polluting factories or plants that violate environmental regulations. This results in the loss of crops, endangered livestock and serious public health concerns. There are estimated to be more than 450 'cancer villages' in China. This term describes villages with an extraordinarily high number of cancer patients where water contamination from local factories is often the leading cause of the disease.[38] Affected villagers often gather to cause disturbance at polluting factories and gain attention from local governments and the media.

Some villagers have successfully engaged the non-governmental organisation (NGO) community to help them advance their cause, though this is still rather uncommon. Green Anhui, a student-founded environmental NGO, played an instrumental role in the success story of 'Qiugang', an Oscar-nominated documentary that depicted how a village of 2,000 people in the Huai River basin in Anhui province triumphantly forced the chemical factories that had been polluting their water sources and had caused many cancer-related deaths to shut down their operations. The green NGO advised villagers on evidence gathering and capturing media coverage in order to fight and eventually win their case.

Another type of environmental protest has less to do with a direct adverse environmental impact and more to do with the growing aspirations of the middle class. This type of protest happens in large cities, where the population has a high-income level. In August 2011, some 12,000 people in Dalian, a coastal city in Liaoning province, took to the streets in protest against the city government's decision to host a chemical plant. They were worried that a leak in a storage tank could cause a disaster akin to the Fukushima disaster in Japan.[39] This threat is not immediate, unlike the 'cancer village' incidents. In 2007, a similar protest took place in Xiamen, another affluent coastal city, in Fujian province. It involved close to 20,000 participants demonstrating against a petrochemical plant.[40] In this case, the residents' concerns had as much to do with falling property prices as with the harmful environmental consequences of the plant's

construction. These protests reflect certain post-modern values of protestors, which emerge only when society has reached a certain post-subsistence level of economic development. They should be differentiated from subsistence- or survival-based resistance and from environment-related resistance in the countryside.[41]

Labour-related protests are also on the rise in China. Most of them involve migrant workers employed in factories in coastal cities who demand higher wages and better working conditions. Some of them also complain of wage arrears by employers. In the face of labour shortages, some employers, for example Foxconn and Honda, have responded by raising wage rates and improving working conditions.[42]

Labour protests organised by laid-off state-owned enterprise (SOE) workers were frequent in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when those enterprises underwent restructuring and privatisation. As a result of this restructuring, many workers lost their jobs, once considered 'iron rice bowls' under the planned economy. In a knock-on effect, retrenched workers also lost their entitlements to medical care and pension benefits. These despairing workers were typically middle-aged or close to retirement and had difficulty finding a new job. They had few options but to take to the streets. These protests were typically large-scale, involving hundreds or thousands of enterprise workers.

Institutional causes

Most if not all of these social protests are directed at local governments rather than the central government. The motive for local officials' behaviour is their revenue imperative, created by economic and political institutions. Institutional incentives make it necessary for local officials to maximise revenue collection that comes at the expense of citizens. In order to finance targeted development projects, local officials do not stop short of illicit taxation.

In the 1980s, China went through fiscal decentralisation, which empowered provincial and lower-level governments to collect and retain tax revenue. Sub-national governments were also made responsible for financing the provision of public goods and services to local residents. Faced with declining revenue levels, the central government introduced a fiscal recentralisation policy

in 1994 called the 'tax-sharing system'. The policy recentralised major sources of tax revenue, for example value-added tax, to the central government while local governments' expenditure responsibilities were left largely unchanged. As a consequence of this reform, only 46 per cent of tax revenue now accrues to sub-national governments, even though they are responsible for 77 per cent of public expenditure. The World Bank has called China the most decentralised country of all in terms of expenditure responsibility,[43] and sub-national governments there are under systemic pressure to increase revenue collection in order to meet their expenditure obligations.

The imperative to augment revenue drives local governments to seek income growth by increasing extra-budgetary income and off-budget funds. This income is independent of the formal tax system and is not subject to sharing with higher-level governments. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a rise in arbitrary taxes, administrative fees and fines collected by townships, such as agriculture-related retained funds (*tiliu*) and fees (*tongchou*), township and village levies and various surcharges, fees and funds for education and other local infrastructure projects. While supplementing grassroots governments with much-needed revenue, these fees and fines aggravated 'peasant burdens' and became a leading source of rural discontent.[44]

Revenue constraints in general impose institutional pressure on sub-national governments to attract real estate and construction developments, from which they can derive land-related income. Since the 1990s, land-related revenue has risen to become the single most important revenue source for sub-national authorities. This has given rise to the term 'fiscalisation of land' (*tudi caizheng*) in China, referring to the management of land resources by government authorities for the purpose of generating fiscal income.[45] This income includes budgetary revenues, such as taxes collected from manufacturing and services industries, as well as extra-budgetary revenues, namely land conveyance fees.

Local governments' imperative to augment tax revenue also explains why they are likely to condone factories and enterprises that violate environmental standards and labour laws. This is particularly the case in a county or township where the company contributes the predominant share of the local government's tax revenue. Closing down the factory that pollutes the drinking

water source for local residents may be equivalent to cutting off the lifeline of local government.

The Communist Party cadre evaluation system, which rewards local government officials for local economic and industrial development and for tax revenue collection, is another major institutional reason for the surge in local government-initiated land transactions. Land development, with its concomitant real estate and construction activities, brings various taxes and other benefits greatly valued by the evaluation system to local government officials.

The cadre responsibility system was instituted by the CCP in the late 1980s as an instrument for the central leadership to exercise control over lower-level cadres. But not all cadres' performance targets are created equal. They are divided into three categories, reflecting their significance in the eyes of the central government. One is 'priority targets with veto power' (*yipiao foujue*), such as maintaining social order. However, achieving 'priority targets' does not guarantee career advancement: it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a successful career in the CCP. The other two categories are 'hard targets' (*ying zhibiao*) and 'soft' or 'ordinary' targets (*yiban zhibiao*). 'Hard targets' are quantifiable binding targets, such as tax renminbi collected or the local economic growth rate. 'Soft targets' are non-binding targets more difficult to measure and quantify, for example education and healthcare provision and cultural and social development. The 'hard targets' are the determining factors in leading cadres' careers: those who score high on these binding targets are politically and financially rewarded; those with a dismal performance have stagnating careers and will receive no bonus. The 'hard targets' thus command far more attention and effort from cadres than 'soft targets'.

Besides fuelling local economic growth and bringing in fiscal income, land development is usually accompanied by mega-scale construction projects such as public squares, highways, railways, airports and economic development zones, which are highly visible 'political accomplishments' (*zhengji gongcheng*). From the perspective of cadre evaluation, these ostentatious physical achievements are much more likely to score points with political superiors than 'softer' accomplishments such as increased provision of basic education and healthcare, even though the latter may be more vital for a locale's long-term development.

In effect, the fiscal and cadre evaluation systems reinforce each other in creating and sustaining the revenue imperative. Promoting local economic growth and augmenting fiscal revenue become *political* as well as *economic* necessities for local leaders. They need to meet these necessities not only to advance their political career but also to ensure the sheer economic survival and functioning of the local government.

Institutional failure to address grievances

The above analyses explain why local officials' behaviour contributes to social unrest but they do not account for what happens when citizens have grievances. In line with our argument, Murray Scot Tanner, a long-time observer of social unrest in China, argues that social protests arise when economic, social and political development produces new demands, but socialist democratic and legal institutions fail to keep up with this change. Frustration spills over into the streets when citizens either have not yet learnt how to voice their demands (e.g. they do not yet fully understand their legal rights) or the institutional avenues for voicing demands are 'underdeveloped' or 'clogged'.[46] This view echoes our earlier contention that social unrest erupts when citizens lack legitimate institutional channels through which to air their grievances and thus that they are forced to make themselves known through other means, for example illegal assemblies, marches and demonstrations.

Growing awareness of rights, legal knowledge and assertiveness notwithstanding, Chinese citizens still face an uphill battle in filing lawsuits against government officials. Despite the promulgation of the Administrative Litigation Law in 1989, the analogy of throwing an egg against a stone (*yiluan jishi*) is often used to describe an act of suing the politically powerful. Ordinary citizens face a range of hurdles in seeking justice through administrative litigation. There are legal restrictions on whom citizens can sue and Party secretaries and committees have legal immunity. Separating the Party and the government is tricky; and local authorities can sometimes use this lack of separation between the Party and the state to deflect lawsuits.[47] Local authorities can also prevent the local court from accepting

cases by other means, for instance by forbidding them to accept lawsuits on politically sensitive issues, namely land confiscation, forced evictions and excessive financial burdens. The fact that the Party secretary of a locality has power over the appointment and promotion of local judges suggests that their rulings are far from independent of the Party.

Once a case is successfully filed, the local Party secretary can often influence or intervene in court decisions. The fact that local judges are ranked lower than local Party leaders in the Party hierarchy does not help in warding off administrative interference. Local leaders can press the court to delay hearings until the plaintiffs voluntarily give up, as protracted cases can drain plaintiffs' financial resources, energy and time. Even when a plaintiff has successfully won a lawsuit, court rulings can go unexecuted, as local officials can simply ignore them. Filing a lawsuit against local governments deters some citizens for fear of retaliation.[48] Given the low odds of filing and winning a lawsuit, many citizens decide to take their grievances to the streets instead.

The State's Responses to Social Unrest

State actors and social unrest

To understand the state's responses to social unrest, it is necessary to discuss three relevant actors: the central government, local government and the security apparatus. The central and local governments have different goals and objectives, and thus they may respond differently to the same incident. Even though the police are accountable to the local Party committee and government, their respective objectives are not necessarily identical at all times.

Traditionally, Chinese policy analysts adopt the view that the role of security forces in a developing country whose priority is economic development is to contain protests and to prevent popular demands from overwhelming the state's ability to govern.[49] Policing is conducted by several kinds of police. The most important police force is the People's Armed Police (*wujing jingcha*, PAP), a paramilitary force subordinate jointly to the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Defence. The PAP is responsible

mainly for China's domestic security, which includes quelling riots, maintaining law and order and responding to emergencies. Subordinate only to the Ministry of Public Security is the Public Security Service (*gong'an jingcha*), which is in charge of local policing, criminal investigation, counterterrorism and the control of residence. In recent years, quasi-police forces hired by city governments (*chengguan*) have assisted these forces in their actions.

In the years immediately after the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, the regime engaged in a strategy of quick suppression and/or quelling demonstrators with force. But as the number of 'mass incidents' grew over time, the authorities recognised that moderate levels of protest are inevitable and they adopted instead a 'permissive strategy of containment and management'.[50] This more sophisticated and nuanced strategy means that the government has allowed non-violent and low-key protests to be staged while professional policing of protests is maintained in order to ensure that they do not get out of control or turn violent. Instead of pre-empting all protests like it used to do, the security apparatus now employs coercive forces selectively in cases of mob violence, looting or attacks on government property. Officers are encouraged not to make mass arrests when unrest occurs but to gather intelligence, intensify policing and quietly detain protest leaders when crowds have dispersed.

The provision of local security has been decentralised. The CCP Central Committee passed a resolution for the improvement of public security in 2003 that has resulted in an increase in the quantity and quality of grassroots security organs: police substations (*paichusuo*) at the village and neighbourhood level.[51] Their number grew from 37,978 in 1990 to 52,000 in 2004. A similar trend can be observed of PAP forces, which increased from 680,000 in 1978 to 1.43 million in 2004.[52]

The role of the local security forces in handling popular protests is complex. Like all local agencies, they are subject to demands and orders from local Party and government leaders, on the one hand, and from their functional superior, the Ministry of Public Security, on the other. Local Party committees, however, are in charge of police budgets and the appointment of personnel, making them the more powerful of the two bosses. In addition, the police may become sympathetic to the cause of the protestors.

The security forces must tread a fine line between being too harsh or too soft on protestors.[53] They are sometimes caught in a 'catch-22' situation: they may be defying orders from local Party bosses if they refuse to take swift action against protestors, but they may suffer official punishment or popular revenge if they apply the force needed to restore order.

Another factor that influences policing is the quality of the security forces. As local governments are required to finance the larger part of their security expenditure from their own budget, the police tend to be ill-trained, especially in poor localities. By contrast, policing capabilities tend to be much better in wealthier places. In rich and poor localities alike, the *raison d'être* of the police is to maintain regime stability rather than to solve crimes. For this reason, ordinary citizens often regard the police with suspicion. Given the renewed focus on maintaining stability (*weiwen*), officials tend to employ police units against protestors, petitioners and other groups that might prevent local administrations from meeting the rather strict stability targets prescribed from above. In addition, massive police forces are occasionally deployed in national and local 'strike hard' campaigns against drug trafficking, prostitution, gambling and organised crime.

Drawing on media coverage of large-scale incidents (those involving more than 500 participants) from 2003 to 2009, Tong and Lei analyse local government responses to 248 cases of social unrest. The responses are classified into four categories: 'tolerance', 'accommodation', 'discipline of local officials' and 'application of force'.[54] Sixty per cent (152 of 248) of the cases were 'tolerated' by local governments. These were cases that did not specifically target the state and in which local officials typically tried not to get involved. These incidents included labour disputes with foreign companies, anti-Japan student demonstrations and student protests against school administration. Another 29 per cent (72 of 248) of cases were 'accommodated' by local government: protestors were usually given monetary compensation. These cases were more common in prosperous than in poorer locales, where local authorities could ill afford to provide compensation. Examples include protests by war veterans, land disputes and labour disputes with SOEs.

Local officials were disciplined by higher-level governments in 8 per cent (20 of 248) of the cases considered. Each of those cases involved one of the following situations: (1) a large number

of people had taken part in the protests; (2) the protestors had assaulted government institutions; (3) deaths and injuries had occurred; (4) the incident occurred on the eve of an important public event, e.g. the Olympic Games and National Day; and (5) the protest had evolved into a mass riot.[55] In these cases, local officials were seen to have mishandled the incidents, and discipline was deemed necessary to appease the public. Central or local government used force in only 4 per cent (10 of 248) of the cases. The preconditions for the application of force were the occurrence of (1) politically motivated protests, (2) attacks on police officers and (3) violent acts, such as killing, burning and looting. Ethnic riots, such as those in Lhasa and Urumqi in the late 2000s, also fall into this category that sees the use of force in cracking down protestors.

'Social management' as a comprehensive strategy against unrest

As we have argued, local government's responses to social unrest are often subject to local variations and generally lack coordination by the central government. A recent strategy aims to rectify this shortcoming. At the annual session of the National People's Congress in March 2011, the improvement of 'social management' (*shehui guanli*) was high on the agenda. It was also featured in a speech by President Hu Jintao in February 2011.[56] Hu specified eight measures to address 'social management'. They fall into four categories: alleviating inequality and social hardship; heightened indoctrination; decentralisation of service provision; and improving public security. In combination, these measures are aimed at removing the various sources of public grievances, improving popular attitudes towards the regime, outsourcing social control and keeping social unrest in check.

Despite numerous speeches and official documents, the concept of 'social management' still remains rather vague. However, what is certain is that the priorities and importance the central leadership attaches to it reflect its concern with the rise in the number of 'mass incidents'. The central leadership also recognises the type of growth that China has pursued – in Wen Jiabao's words, 'unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable' – have inevitably resulted in social conflicts.

'Social management' may be a misnomer for what the central leadership has in mind and the policies that have thus far been implemented. Much of it is aimed at 'controlling' society, rather than 'managing'. Since 2008, the central government has increased its measures to influence public attitudes towards it by means of propaganda and indoctrination. The news media is under stricter control than before. The central government sees the media now as a means by which to guide public opinion. Concurrently it has stepped up its efforts to indoctrinate politicians and the general population through political education and propaganda campaigns. This applies not only to patriotic education in schools, for example, but also to larger government involvement in the field of culture. Thus the Twelfth Five-Year Programme envisions a larger role for the government in the production of popular entertainment such as films, literature and art.[57]

The other important element is improved public security. Government outlays for public security have increased dramatically, and official documents make clear that a powerful security apparatus will be the centrepiece of the government's social management efforts. According to official statistics, in 2011 the Chinese government spent more on internal security (USD 111 billion (€90 billion)) than on national defence (USD 106 billion (€86 billion)). The rationale of this effort is not to improve crime-fighting capabilities but to increase control over society in order to maintain political stability.

However, there is a great deal of variation among internal security budgets of local governments.[58] Figure 5.2 contrasts economic development and public security outlays for all provincial governments. It shows that the provinces fall into three rough clusters: poor minority provinces with large public security budgets; rich coastal provinces with large outlays; and some provinces where level of development and relative size of the public security budget correlate. The variation is striking: Gansu province spent only 4.6 per cent of its budget on public security in 2010 but the corresponding figure for Guangdong was nearly 9 per cent.

This subnational budget is used for decentralising and augmenting the local police force, as well as for technological upgrading. In particular, the Chinese government has invested heavily in creating large-scale databases hosting personal data of
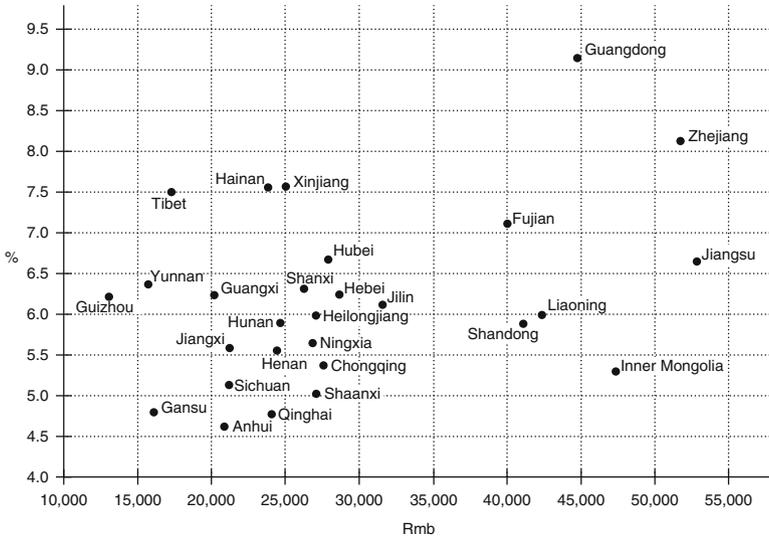
Figure 5.2 **Public security outlays as a percentage of budget (%) vs Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita (Rmb), 2010**

Source: Calculated from *China Statistical Yearbook 2011*. GRP/capita for Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin is so high that if they were included in the graph, the other provinces would be compressed into an illegible cluster. GRP/capita and public security expenditures for the three cities are Beijing: Rmb 75,943 (EUR 9,529)/6.66 per cent; Tianjin: Rmb 72,994 (EUR 9,159)/6.17 per cent; and Shanghai: Rmb 76,074 (EUR 9,545)/5.67 per cent.

the population[59] and in improving its rapid-response capacities at all levels.[60] Investments in high-technology surveillance systems largely explain the comparatively high public security expenditures of Guangdong province. China now possesses the largest network of closed-circuit television cameras in the world, with more than 10 million cameras being installed in 2010 alone.[61]

Conclusions

Our central argument is that social unrest will continue to grow but will not pose an immediate threat to the regime. Nevertheless, there is a danger that localised protests will escalate and that containing unrest will result in intensification of

repression. The probable future trend of social unrest in China is that it is likely to occur more frequently. Local officials, who are still subject to revenue imperatives, are unlikely to change their behaviour of maximising income for organisational and personal gains. There has been some debate among the central leadership about de-emphasising GDP growth in cadre evaluation, but it does not seem prepared as yet to compromise the pursuit of GDP growth for other social objectives.

In addition, social unrest will grow unabated because the political and judicial systems have failed to allow the aggrieved to redress their concerns. The central government has restricted access to existing institutional channels for anger-venting and expression of grievances. Furthermore, making local stability a key criterion in cadre evaluation provides an incentive for local officials to prevent people from using the letters and complaints system. This is an unintended outcome of the central government policy. As formal institutional channels fail to allow distressed citizens to seek justice for their grievances, public demonstrations and protests become a venue for venting anger and gaining sympathy for their causes.

Improved access to information and communications technology enables broad segments of the Chinese population to obtain and disperse information critical of the regime as well as to better organise and coordinate protests. As a result, there are now greater incentives to air grievances outside legal channels while the costs of doing so have fallen.

To what extent does growing social unrest pose a threat to the stability of the Chinese leadership? In the age of modern technology, popular resistance has the potential to catch fire and spread very quickly. This challenges the ability of the authorities to suppress public sentiment or to appease the aggrieved. The Chinese leadership is fully cognisant of this risk, which explains why it is spending more on maintaining domestic public security than on military defence.

Notwithstanding this, escalating popular resistance is not capable of toppling the regime, for three reasons. First, more protests may not signify the rise of 'rights consciousness', as Western observers have come to understand. Elizabeth Perry of Harvard University once argued that Chinese conceptions of 'rights' are more akin to 'economic rights' – those of attaining

subsistence (*shengcun*) and development (*fazhan*) – which are rooted in the thinking of the ancient philosopher Mencius.[62] As Perry notes, 'when Deng Xiaoping initiated his reforms, in sharp contrast to Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, he talked not of *glasnost* (political openness) or of *perestroika* (restructuring) but of *xiaokang* (economic comfort).'[63] These 'rights' are of a different order from the Western concept of individual civil rights or civil liberty, which are more antithetical to the power of the state. Under the conception of 'economic rights', political legitimacy stems from the state's ability to deliver prosperity and economic goods to society. In this respect, the political legitimacy of the Chinese state is more appropriately described as its 'performance legitimacy'.

Second, the central authority has a propensity to intervene before an incident gets out of hand. Our analysis suggests that the central or provincial governments will step in and punish local officials when incidents pose a threat to their political legitimacy. Based on this logic, concessions will be offered to protestors before the 'tipping point'.

Third, the ability of the central and local governments to handle social unrest is steadily improving. They have invested in modernising police stations, training public security forces and purchasing state-of-the-art surveillance technology. Riot police are becoming increasingly skilled at crowd control, and even minor threats to stability are quickly answered with massive police deployments. As a result, governments at all levels have become more technically sophisticated in recent years. Communication on the Internet and by mobile phone is strictly controlled in order to prevent the distribution of content considered detrimental to social stability. Also, critics of the regime and suspected ringleaders of anti-government activities are under permanent surveillance and are subject to arbitrary arrest.

Unfortunately, repression has proven to be more expedient than intervention or co-optation. Increased budgetary allocations have also created an inherent organisational interest in maintaining and possibly increasing the flow of monetary resources towards public security agencies. Similar to the military apparatus, a growing public security sector will seek to justify its existence by exaggerating threats and lobbying for increased repression.

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