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RESEARCH ARTICLE



## Riding on the power of the masses? How different modes of mass mobilization shape local elite bargaining in China

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### ABSTRACT

When local bureaucrats in China disagree with their superiors, official channels for achieving a policy revision are limited and generally ineffective. However, if the stakes involved are high, they may turn to the power of the masses and draw on public pressure to enhance their negotiating position. In such informal inter-bureaucratic bargaining, local officials might intentionally facilitate popular protest and lead to a situation we call ‘mobilized instability.’ More commonly, they borrow power from ‘consent instability,’ that is, they discreetly leak insider information and instruct their police forces to be exceptionally tolerant. In this article, we use the redistricting case in Changxing county, Zhejiang province as well as other incidents to show how local officials can strategically exploit public pressure, in the mode of ‘consent instability,’ to extract policy concessions. We introduce the concept of ‘mobilized instability’ through an examination of jurisdictional restructuring conflict in Daye county, Hubei province. This analysis suggests that reckless intermediaries might over-mobilize and radicalize the masses, thereby undermining intentions and leading to serious consequences for the public officials. The article concludes that the power of the masses may serve as a credible bargaining chip during informal elite bargaining, but it can also be risky for those who handle it poorly.



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On August 6, 2005, over twenty thousand people from Daye county joined a demonstration in Huangshi city, Hubei province. The headquarters of the municipal government was stormed and furniture was smashed. This contentious episode was triggered by a jurisdictional restructuring plan seeking to convert Daye, a county with over one thousand years of history, into a district of Huangshi. The municipality was competing to become one of Hubei’s two proposed ‘sub-central cities’ and strove to empower itself by integrating resource-rich Daye.<sup>1</sup> The so-called Daye Incident attracted much attention, especially since quite a number of incumbent and retired officials were among the protesters. Even more unusual was that seven major Daye leaders, five

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incumbents and two retirees, were punished for plotting the protest and agitating the masses. Three incumbents were expelled from the party and two were stripped of positions; the retirees received serious within-party warnings (see Table A1 in the Appendix).<sup>2</sup>

Daye is not the only county that has experienced such contention. On May 8, 2013, over a thousand residents of Changxing, Zhejiang province, gathered in front of the county government compound and protested against the decision to turn the county into a district of Huzhou municipality. As in Daye, the protest appeared to be well prepared and highly organized, and there were signs that county government officials had granted implicit permission, if not outright support, to the protesters. Yet the episode in Changxing ended very differently: the municipal government made a swift decision to halt the jurisdictional restructuring, county leaders announced this change, and the crowd soon dissipated as peacefully as it had arrived. No county officials were publicly sanctioned afterwards.

Why did the officials, major agents of protest control in both Daye and Changxing, tolerate or even mobilize citizens taking to the streets, considering that they had been trained to employ both hard and soft modes of repression to put down protesters and secure 'social stability'?<sup>3</sup> What led to the different consequences of the two episodes of mass mobilization, with the leaders involved in the Daye Incident severely punished and relevant officials generally staying intact in Changxing? Through examining these questions, this article aims to study informal elite bargaining in the context of China's hierarchical bureaucracy. A comparison of what happened in Daye and Changxing shows how the power of the masses can be brought into the elite bargaining process to strategically empower local officials who have stances different from those of their superiors. We also demonstrate in great detail that the power of the masses can be hard to control and trying to ride on it can be risky for bureaucratic actors.

## Informal elite bargaining in China

The existing literature on collective action in China pays much attention to popular protest, such as those against the birth planning policy,<sup>4</sup> environmental pollution,<sup>5</sup> corruption of government officials,<sup>6</sup> improper expropriation of rural lands,<sup>7</sup> arbitrary charge of agricultural fees,<sup>8</sup> and inadequate settlements for laid-off workers.<sup>9</sup> We know little, however, about what influences the ability of Chinese bureaucrats to drive popular protest as they fight against decisions made by higher-level governments.

What can local Chinese bureaucrats do when they disagree with their superiors? The party-state has established various mechanisms to facilitate an upward flow of local information, through which local government actors can report local situations or particular requests to their superiors.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, such mechanisms are less effective when local information or demands by grassroots officials directly contradict the interests of their superiors.<sup>11</sup> When such a situation emerges, local officials typically first tap personal connections to superiors and articulate their opinions by listing potential negative consequences that might be caused by the decisions in dispute. This approach can work out or may, to some extent, persuade higher-ups to adjust

their decisions a bit. If superiors refuse to listen, local officials tend to act passively when the decisions do not hurt their interests much. They use tactics of symbolic implementation or workaround improvisation (*biantong*) to cheat their supervising officials, or they might simply ignore decisions that they believe are inappropriate. If the decisions made by superior governments will severely harm the interests of local bureaucrats and they fail to get them revoked or adjusted through informal channels, some of them might go as far as taking such institutional measures of disagreement voicing as petitioning even higher levels of government or voicing objections through venues such as meetings of the local People's Congress (PC) and the People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC).<sup>12</sup> Within China's top-down political system, however, using institutional channels to resist superiors is often futile. Worse still, local bureaucrats who publicly engage in those activities might be considered 'problematic' and risk getting sidelined, or even worse.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the tactics mentioned above, there is another important and sometimes more effective way for local bureaucrats to influence the decision-making of higher-level government agencies and officials: introducing the power of the masses into the bargaining process. In China, 'the masses' (*qunzhong*), as a concept, is at the center of Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rhetoric. Evidence from a survey experiment shows that higher-ups are more likely to concede to the demands of their subordinates when public pressure is brought in.<sup>14</sup> The power of the masses, as an extra-bureaucratic resource, can strengthen the positions of otherwise relatively weak local officials. For grassroots officials who value local interests above personal career development, there are relatively few downsides to using local mass mobilization as a tool to extract policy concessions from their superiors. These two institutional features of the Chinese party-state, as argued by Ma,<sup>15</sup> make tapping the public pressure a viable strategy during the process of hierarchical elite bargaining.

Local bureaucrats dare to activate the power of the masses because they believe, perhaps wishfully, that public pressure is manageable. In most cases, they stay behind the scenes and let the masses act in the front. Oftentimes, bureaucrats who value local interests over promotion are local deputies or staff who, compared with their immediate superiors, are less responsible for containing mass incidents. Some such officials will further distract attention from their role in an incident by communicating frequently with their superiors about how to address the situation or by demonstrating their good work ethic in other ways.<sup>16</sup> All this emboldens local bureaucrats to use the power of the masses to strengthen their bargaining positions. Once a mass incident takes place, they typically attribute it to local residents' spontaneous reaction to the unfavorable policies initiated by their superiors.

The above logic of safety in drawing on the power of the masses may hold in the mode of 'consent instability,' wherein 'local officials strategically tolerate bottom-up mobilization to strengthen their bargaining power.'<sup>17</sup> In this paper, we also study another situation that we call 'mobilized instability,' during which mass protest is intentionally triggered and facilitated by local bureaucrats.

'Mobilized instability' and 'consent instability' differ in several important dimensions. While officials in the mode of 'consent instability' indirectly facilitate mass mobilization by leaking information and tacitly loosening repression, officials in the mode of

'mobilized instability' meet directly with protest leaders and give them orders. Another crucial distinction between the two modes is the intermediaries through which local officials mobilize the masses. In 'consent instability,' local officials rely on the help of social organizations with greater dependence on the state (such as local business associations), whereas in 'mobilized instability,' local officials rely on organizations with less dependence on the state (in Daye, a football fan club). Mobilizing these relatively independent social organizations is a double-edged sword: this choice appears to be less risky because outsiders are less likely to associate these organizations with local government, but it also makes it difficult for local officials to control the degree of mobilization once the protest is in motion.<sup>18</sup>

The degree of mobilization has a bearing on the bargaining outcomes. In our case study of 'mobilized instability' in Daye, moving the masses to protest backfired on local bureaucrats due to its large scale and the appearance of violence by protesters. These elements triggered an investigation by the higher-level authorities,<sup>19</sup> during which evidence of local officials' role in agitating the masses was not difficult to find. In the mode of 'consent instability,' as exemplified in the case of Changxing, where mobilizations remained modest and local officials did not leave concrete proof of incitement, policy concessions might be wrung from higher-level governments without punishments incurred.

Daye and Changxing are not isolated cases. Similar episodes have taken place in Tengzhou county of Shandong province,<sup>20</sup> Guixi county of Jiangxi province,<sup>21</sup> and Huangyan county of Zhejiang province,<sup>22</sup> suggesting the strategies of bringing the power of the masses into bureaucratic bargaining might be more commonly employed by local officials than we thought. In this article, we mainly explore the Daye Incident and the Changxing episode to examine the modes of informal elite bargaining in China. We use both primary and secondary sources for this study. Interviews were conducted from 2013 to 2018 on the ground, by telephone, or through instant messaging apps. We visited around 20 interviewees relevant to the Daye Incident, including residents and officials from Huangshi and Daye. To explore the Changxing case and some other episodes, we interviewed another 20-odd informants who were familiar with this mode of contention. We also triangulated information from our interviews with news reports, official documents, and conversations on online forums, in order to capture a more comprehensive picture of the episodes we explore, as well as to ensure that the account we present here is accurate. Without exception, every non-attributed statement of fact regarding the two cases was gleaned from one or another interlocutor. All of them, for obvious reasons, prefer to remain anonymous.

### **Vertical conflicts among local bureaucrats**

The Chinese bureaucracy, seen both hierarchically and horizontally, is broadly described as a government with fragmented authority.<sup>23</sup> Different levels of government have their own administrative priorities, with the central government paying more attention to maintaining regime legitimacy and local authorities mainly pursuing concrete, measurable performance goals.<sup>24</sup> Even on the same level of a government,

different bureaucratic organs can hardly achieve cohesion; officials often have their own interests and center their actions in different logics. Negotiation and bargaining over various kinds of interests constantly take place along hierarchical and horizontal lines, between superiors, subordinates or equals.<sup>25</sup> In this section, after surveying existing literature on horizontal tension among bureaucrats, we explain why vertical tensions are of an important source of intergovernmental conflicts.

One source of horizontal tension arises from a historically formed, sharp separation of *guan* (officials) and *li* (local staff) in government personnel flows, as noted by Zhou.<sup>26</sup> These two bureaucratic groups have very distinct paths, incentives and bases of interest articulation, mainly because *guan* are directly appointed across administrative jurisdictions nationwide by the central government, while *li* are recruited from the locality and stay within the same administrative jurisdiction for life. This implies that *guan* tend to be less responsive to local interests and concerns than *li* are.

We find value in this general idea, especially after refinements made after Zhou and Li and Liu.<sup>27</sup> Zhou argues that a similar mode of personnel management in contemporary China is stratified mobility (*cengji fenliu*), in which officials also tend to stay within their administrative jurisdictions for their entire careers and only a small group of top officials from selected offices and bureaus enjoy a broader scope of mobility. Similarly, Li and Liu emphasize inherent conflicts between *guan* from *li*, but define *guan* even more narrowly than Zhou: *guan* encompasses only the top leaders in a jurisdiction, i.e. the party secretary and the mayor, who are non-indigenous officials appointed by the higher-level government.<sup>28</sup> Correspondingly, their definition of *li* is broader, covering all indigenous bureaucrats. Sometimes, the interests between *guan* and *li* are so incompatible that *li*, often having a broad social base of support, align with local influentials (*shen*) as they struggle against *guan*. In order to strengthen their relatively weak positions in the bureaucratic system as well as avoiding being identified as masterminds of disruption, they often collude with each other and bring the popular protest of the masses (*min*) into their game against *guan*.

As can be seen from Table A1 in the Appendix, among the seven officials who were punished due to their involvement in the Daye Incident, five were incumbent and two were retired. All were natives of Daye. Four incumbent officials held deputy leadership positions in the county government and had hit their career ceiling. The fifth, then the 57-year-old chairman of the county's PPCC, was close to the age limit for promotion. Hence, all the five officials were typical *li*.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the county party secretary and the county executive, who were not natives of Daye and still aimed for promotion,<sup>30</sup> their interests were more embedded in the locality and they had strong incentives to prevent the Huangshi municipal government from encroaching on local interests.

Li and Liu include the elite conflict incurred by jurisdiction restructuring into their framework of 'collusion between grassroots bureaucrats and local influentials.'<sup>31</sup> We argue that when it comes to understanding elite-initiated mass protest in China, these scholars over-stress the relevance and depth of conflict between *guan* and *li*. *Guan* do represent the state and act on behalf of the higher-level government, but, at least in the two cases we mainly examine, they were not the ones who initiated the undesirable policies that triggered mass mobilization. In these two cases, the municipalities and their leaders, which could benefit substantially from turning the counties into

districts, were the ones at odds with the counties. In other words, during this process, hierarchical conflict was much more important than horizontal conflict.

The tensions of hierarchical conflict are evidenced in the potential negative consequences that can be incurred following jurisdictional restructuring. If Daye county had become a district within the municipal-level city of Huangshi, it would have lost most of its authority to manage natural resources.<sup>32</sup> This power would belong to the Huangshi municipal government, which determines how land should be used and, notably, who was permitted to mine Daye's mineral resources. It was a public secret that some county officials owned shares of stock in some mining enterprises,<sup>33</sup> and they would have lost much of their power to safeguard these vested interests. Furthermore, Daye officials would have little say in planning the city's broader development, as the municipal government has overriding authority in this matter. Even worse, Daye would have lost its authority to levy taxes on mining operations, which was a large share of its revenue.

Local bureaucrats in Changxing county had similar worries when facing the top-down decision to turn the county into a district of Huzhou, Zhejiang province, where counties sometimes are stronger than their putative municipal overlords. Under an arrangement known as *Shěng guǎn xiàn*, those municipal governments only serve as titular 'masters' for their powerful counties. As one such county, Changxing enjoys a high degree of policy autonomy, with the privilege to retain most of its revenue as well as the entitlement to make almost all decisions on local issues. If it became a district of Huzhou, Changxing would not only have to transfer a large share of its revenue to the municipality, but also surrender much of its authority to make decisions. Meanwhile, like many other cities in Zhejiang province, the urban center of Huzhou was not as developed as the counties under its jurisdiction, and thus the county had little to gain from becoming a district of the city. On the contrary, many officials and residents in Changxing worried that the resources and wealth of the county would be diverted to support the development of the municipality's urban center.

Not surprisingly, top-down decisions of jurisdictional restructuring were not popular among local officials in both Daye and Changxing, and in particular some local officials with vested interests harbored strong opposition. Their worries and grievances sounded even more reasonable when they cited the unsatisfactory outcomes of previous cases of jurisdictional restructuring. In Daye, bureaucrats explained their opposition to restructuring by charging Huangshi municipality with bungling its development of two counties that had been integrated as districts several decades early. An open letter, which is believed to have been penned by a local official, said:

Huangshi has managed the districts of Tieshan and Xialu for several decades. They would have become as prosperous as a paradise if the municipal government had truly been promoting urbanization there. However, economic development in these two districts has been slow, and the districts have no sufficient revenues to support public services and urban construction. They have developed much more slowly than Daye over the past five decades. This was not because officials in Tieshan and Xialu have no incentives to develop the local economies, but because the city-district system has hindered their development. If Daye becomes a district, the consequences would be the same.<sup>34</sup>

In Changxing, local officials cited the relatively slow development of Nanxun as evidence for limitations of being relegated to district-status. When Nanxun district, mainly

based on Nanxun township, was established in 2003, it had an annual revenue of 711 million yuan then. During the next decade it developed at a rate of 15.5 percent, posting an annual revenue of 2.6 billion yuan in 2012. This progress would be impressive anywhere other than in China: Changxing grew at an annual rate of 22 percent. Changxing's annual revenue had been 1.03 billion yuan in 2003, only a bit larger than that of Nanxun, by 2012 had skyrocketed to 6.22 billion yuan, nearly three times of that of Nanxun. An official attributed Nanxun's lagging-behind to the constraints of its status as a district, 'having incomplete power of finance and with resources inappropriately distributed'.<sup>35</sup> Compared to Nanxun, Changxing enjoys greater autonomy. It is allowed to hold 80 percent of the tax revenue it collects, with only 20 percent contributed to the provincial government. If it was turned into a district, Huzhou would take away half of its revenue. According to common sense as well as an official of the county's Bureau of Finance, this would 'drag down' the development of Changxing.<sup>36</sup>

### Ineffective channels of official bargaining

When local bureaucrats disagree with their superiors on important initiatives like jurisdictional restructuring, they may air their opinions during the 'research phase' (*yanjiu jieduan*) or the deliberation process. When the decision nonetheless is believed to be inappropriate, they might use institutional channels such as the PC and the PPCC to petition higher-level governments. Few local bureaucrats would go as far as threatening to resign en masse or collectively boycott PC or PPCC annual meetings.

In general, channels of official bargaining tend not to be effective, particularly when the higher-level government agency is determined to implement its decision. The benefit of jurisdictional restructuring is clear and substantial on the part of municipality. In both cases, the targeted county was better-endowed than the city that sought to envelop it. Municipal officials were eager to direct new tax revenues toward what they believed were more pressing goals and, crucially, each city's provincial government shared these developmental priorities and thus supported the restructuring initiatives. For example, the then-party secretary of Hubei province admitted that he had known about and agreed with Huangshi's plan to merge Daye.<sup>37</sup> Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that county bureaucrats against redistricting did not expect a positive outcome if they limited their bargaining tactics to official channels. As they used these channels, they also considered other ways that hierarchically superior officials might be persuaded to change their minds.

At the very beginning, local bureaucrats in Daye and Changxing uttered their opposition during closed-door meetings. On those occasions, the municipal governments invariably emphasized the importance of jurisdictional restructuring for overall development and pretended to be open to different opinions. The Huzhou municipal government also promised some interim measures to make the transformation smooth, assuring Changxing that its fiscal autonomy would not be affected by the merger.<sup>38</sup> Most officials, however, considered such promises empty and easily breakable by new municipal leadership. They therefore unequivocally opposed the restructuring initiative during the meetings, but the municipal government held fast in its decision to convert Changxing county into its district. As to the Daye case, opposition



against restructuring was also strong during meetings of internal deliberation, but local officials failed to convince their superiors and the redistricting decision was not revised.

In theory, local bureaucrats on the PCs of Daye and Changxing could overrule the restructuring initiatives. According to relevant regulations,<sup>39</sup> the proposal to restructure a county must be thoroughly deliberated and approved by the deputies of the jurisdiction's PC. Next, the county government submits an application for restructuring to the municipal government and the file is then passed over level by level until it arrives at the State Council. However, China's PC is often considered a 'rubber stamp' and its deliberation sessions are no more than a gesture. Most important decisions are made at party committees at different levels and PCs serve the function of translating party decisions into government policies. In addition to PC, PPCC is another institutional channel for local bureaucrats to air different opinions. But if PC, the state's organ of power, is ineffective in terms of assembling different opinions, few would expect more from PPCC, which is limited as an organization for united front work and political deliberation.

Still, local officials resorted to these two channels of official bargaining, even though they had little faith in them. As to the Daye case, Shi Zhongwen, the vice director of the standing committee of the county's PC directed his subordinates to prepare a document titled, 'The Report on the Issue of Intended Abolition of Daye County by the Huangshi Municipal Party Committee and Government.' This document of petition was then sent to the central and provincial governments. Meanwhile, the county's PPCC, led by Guo Yanbing, sent to the State Council as well as the provincial government a report that was similar to the PC's but couched in harsher terms, titled 'Report on the Strong Objection to Transferring Daye County into a District by Some County Political Consultative Committee Members.' In Changxing, about 300 retired officials signed a letter opposing turning Changxing into a district of Huzhou and sent it to major organs of the county government, including the county's PC and PPCC. Another letter with signatures by around 30 township leaders and PC deputies went public, in which the officials denounced the restructuring initiative and even threatened to resign collectively if Huzhou continued pushing forward the redistricting arbitrarily, which was an audacious move in China's party-state.<sup>40</sup>

Generally speaking, channels of official bargaining are relatively risk-free for local bureaucrats. However, it is also relatively risk-free for higher-level government officials to ignore these discussions. Local officials in Daye and Changxing knew this well, and that is why they eventually sought extra-bureaucratic leverage from the masses.

### **Mobilized instability: the risky power of the masses**

To ride on the power of the masses, some local bureaucrats can be bold in action, particularly those who are anxious because their vested interests are endangered. Yet local officials who were involved in the Daye Incident had few precedents to learn about how to 'appropriately' mobilize the masses to protest. Using their best guesses, these local bureaucrats were quite overt in their actions to inspire the masses to protest against the Huangshi municipality's decision. Their proactive engagement led to a

large-scale mass gathering, but such 'mobilized instability' went out of control and serious consequences were incurred. The risky power of the masses ultimately backfired on the local bureaucrats and seven of them were harshly punished afterwards.

'Mobilized instability' in Daye began with a coordinating meeting of five key officials. Li Pengguo, the deputy party secretary of Daye, convened Chen Fangyin, Shi Zhongwen, Guo Yanbin and Shi Jiaopeng, the key resisting county leaders, for a discussion at the Bureau of Civil Affairs, which was in charge of the affairs relating to jurisdictional restructuring as well as social organization management.<sup>41</sup> At this meeting, they agreed to adopt a variety of tactics to mobilize the masses, such as collecting protest signatures, posting notices and open letters, and stirring up citizens on the Internet.<sup>42</sup> Shi Jiaopeng, the director of the Bureau of Civil Affairs, was asked to seek out agents to organize protest activities, since he was well-versed in the relevant laws and rules of organizing and he could also leverage his connections to the social organizations in Daye.<sup>43</sup>

Shi Jiaopeng quickly located mobilization agents. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Daye Athletic Society for Senior Citizens and the chairman of the Daye Association for Football Fans, Shi Daitian, Zhang Zhixiang and Yuan Zhengshe, respectively, were instructed to mobilize citizens to petition, since they were chiefs of social organizations and thus could easily mobilize their members. The two social organizations were ideal for petition and protest mobilization. Most members of the Daye Athletic Society for Senior Citizens were retired officials and thus 'biographically available'<sup>44</sup> and strategically experienced at petition. The Daye Association for Football Fans had deep roots among the general public. Many of the county's large iron and steel production enterprises had established their own football teams and competed with each other. Such interactions cultivated an uncharacteristically large number of football fans whose reputation for enthusiasm spread beyond Daye to Hubei province and even nationwide. The Chinese Central Television even covered the association's development.<sup>45</sup> The diverse occupational background of members in these clubs created rich horizontal linkages across different segments of the local society and made them ideal vehicles to disseminate information and mobilize residents.

Entrusted with the mission of mobilization, the three association leaders actively engaged in organizing such protesting activities as preparing banners, putting up posters, collecting signatures and staging petition-drives and demonstrations.<sup>46</sup> They named their action group Civil Petition Mission (*minjian qingyuantuan*), with Yuan Zhengshe, the chairman of the Daye Association for Football Fans, serving as the person of liaison.<sup>47</sup> With the support of county leaders, the Civil Petition Mission, composed mainly of retired officials, filed petitions with various levels of government. From August 1 to 3, 2005, Shi Daitian and Zhang Zhixiang organized several retired officials to send their petition to Beijing and Wuhan, trying to persuade the central and provincial governments to press Huangshi to withdraw the jurisdictional restructuring plan. In Huangshi, Yuan Zhengshe organized retired officials and civilians to petition the municipal government to impose more direct pressure on August 4.

The general public was then targeted for more active forms of mobilization. Two open letters, written by local official(s), were disseminated widely,<sup>48</sup> one titled 'A Letter to Provincial Governor Luo Qingquan on Converting Daye, Hubei into a District'

and the other 'An Open Letter to the Nine Hundred Thousand People in Daye.' The first letter was written in a rational tone, invoking Daye's glorious history and its great economic success to justify the county's unique status, and railing against the injustice embedded in the decision to transfer it into a district. The second letter was much more provocative. It enumerated 'three harms,' 'three nonconformities,' and 'three confusions' to denounce the Huangshi municipal government's decision to restructure jurisdictions. It described Huangshi's move with inflammatory language like 'encroach,' 'dismember,' and 'eliminate.' The second anonymous letter, supposedly written by another official, spoke in the name of the county party secretary and the county executive,<sup>49</sup> apologizing to the public for not having fought hard enough on behalf of Daye so that the county, despite its long history, was to be transformed into a district.<sup>50</sup> All these letters aimed to mobilize participation from ordinary citizens, but did not go so far as to contain an action statement.

The three letters were posted both online and in print. They appeared in local and national online forums, such as Daye Fengyun Net, kdnet, tianya BBS and ifeng Net. At that time, Daye Fengyun Net was the major local web portal for citizens seeking to exchange information on the county. Yuan Zhengshe, the chairman of the Daye Association for Football Fans started a special discussion section on this portal for issues of jurisdictional restructuring. Lu Wei, who had just lost his job and was then idle at home, actively spread information on the protest against the jurisdictional restructuring.<sup>51</sup> Open letters and notices flooded the website, and were widely read and hotly debated.<sup>52</sup> After Li Pengguo and Chen Fangyi raised adequate funding for printing, these letters were posted in streets and parks,<sup>53</sup> and even appeared in towns and villages.<sup>54</sup> Qinglongshan Park served as the most important offline venue for mobilization. Located in the center of the county, near many companies and public institutions, the park was used extensively for walking, playing with family and socializing with friends. It was thus an ideal focal point for mobilization, and in only three days in the park (beginning August 1, 2005), Yuan Zhengshe had managed to collect over 10,000 signatures on banners with slogans against redistricting. This was remarkable, given that the urban population in Daye was only about 130,000 then.<sup>55</sup>

Local historical and cultural sentiments also fueled the mobilization. At the time of incident, Huangshi was a city with only five decades of history, but the county name, Daye, had existed for more than one thousand years. Daye residents distinguish themselves from those in Huangshi by speaking a different dialect. Most residents in Huangshi speak the Wuhan dialect, since from the 1950s to '70s many factories in Wuhan and other cities moved to Huangshi, and their workers gradually became the major population of the city.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, Daye residents speak *Ganyu*, which is a significantly different dialect from that of Huangshi. For Huangshi residents, *Ganyu* is difficult to understand; even after several decades of sharing a municipal jurisdiction with the people from Daye, most of them cannot understand the dialect.<sup>57</sup> Residents of Daye speak *Ganyu* in their own county, but Mandarin in Huangshi. The long history of the county and the difference in dialect speaking had cultivated a strong sense of place-based identity among Daye residents.

However, it is important to notice that place attachment can only serve as a 'base' for mobilization, and some catalyst is needed to make it work. In our narrative, the

catalyst came from mine owners who provided economic incentives for protest participation by their employees. The interests of these mine owners were under direct threat from the planned jurisdictional restructuring. They made protest participation convenient by offering free bus or truck transportation from Daye to Huangshi. More importantly, they promised cash subsidies for participants. A security guard working for a bank near the municipal government described the situation then:

I saw a large number of people flooding to the city government [building]. Their accent told they were Daye residents. From what they wore, I guess they must be peasants. ... Later on, I heard some mine owners openly promise that they would provide 30 yuan for everyone participating in the sit-in in front of the Huangshi municipal government on August 5, and would offer 100 yuan and a free lunch for protesters demonstrating on August 6. Furthermore, mine owners promised to cover all the costs if protesters were injured, and could compensate the family of those who died, if any, half a million yuan.<sup>58</sup>

With economic incentives and transportation convenience provided by mine owners, thousands of Daye residents joined in the protest in the name of protecting their hometown.

The wide mobilization in Daye was also due to the organizers' strategic framing of the ongoing incidents. On August 4, Yuan Zhengshe, the chairman of the Daye Association for Football Fans who was supported by Shi Jiaopeng (the director of local Civil Affairs Bureau), led a group of around 150 participants, including retired officials, peasants and workers, from Daye to Huangshi, where they planned to present the banners with signatures against the redistricting plan.<sup>59</sup> One deputy mayor showed up and tried to appease them. They were not satisfied, but they were not prepared to escalate at that time. On their way back to their vehicles, the petitioners ran into a team of police officers who were investigating a murder case, and unfortunately a police dog bit some protesters.<sup>60</sup> This incident was later framed as a deliberate attack by the Huangshi municipal government on the Daye people. In an interview, Yuan Zhengshe commented, 'This [letting out dogs to bite people] was used to treat class enemies (*jieji diren*) rather than the masses. We were treated as class enemies.'<sup>61</sup> Such a framing was provocative to the local population.<sup>62</sup> The rumor spread widely via Qinglongshan Park, as well as on the Internet. Unfortunately, the Huangshi authorities did not clarify the facts in a timely and persuasive manner, which added fuel to the fire.

However, what contributed most to the radicalization of the Daye Incident was perhaps the recklessness of the people hired by some mine owners to 'lead' the protest. Mine owners, though an ally of the dissident local officials, were more anxious and less rules-conscious. As one of our interviewees revealed:

On August 5, some mine owners called up about 200 idle people (*xianza renyuan*), accommodated them in the Daye Chengguan Hotel, and asked them to take a lead in the protest the following day. They were even encouraged to cause a bit of vandalism. But on the second day, these idlers acted impulsively and, with their leading role, the protest soon turned into a spree of beating, smashing and looting. Ultimately the situation went out of control.<sup>63</sup>

On August 6, over 20,000 people assembled in front of the municipal government headquarters. At first, they were more or less in order. They demanded to meet the

party secretary of Huangshi, who did not appear.<sup>64</sup> Though other municipal leaders attended (first a vice mayor and then the mayor), the absence of the party secretary further provoked the demonstrators. Those who had been hired by mine owners started to destroy the public property, and soon others followed. At this point, a man claiming to have been sent by the Daye county government begged the crowd to stop, but no one listened to him. Instead, they stormed the compound and facilities within were smashed or stolen. To the Chinese party-state, besieging the local government was a serious offense.

The mobilized instability produced mixed outcomes. The plan to incorporate Daye into Huangshi Municipality was aborted following the incident, but the local bureaucrats involved could not escape unscathed. As noted at the beginning, key county leaders were removed from their position and even expelled from the party following the investigation by the higher level authorities.

### **Consent instability: Strategic and peaceful use of the mass power**

While Daye officials' attempt to ride on the power of the local protesters eventually backfired, officials in Changxing successfully resisted the redistricting decision of their superiors with the help of the masses in 2013 and stayed intact afterwards. Almost identical to the case of Daye, the Huzhou municipal government decided to push through a conversion plan that would change Changxing into a district, even though many Changxing officials had voiced strong opposition during the relevant closed-door meetings. However, days before the municipal officials planned to formally announce the redistricting decision, a popular protest took place in Changxing. The sudden burst of mobilization raised suspicion that county officials had purposefully leaked information to the public, since all discussion of the redistricting had been confidential.

The protest proceeded in a peaceful and orderly fashion. At first, a township business association submitted a request for a public gathering on May 8 to oppose the conversion. Though it was not approved by the county's Public Security Bureau, a common outcome in China, but the police did nothing to stop them as they began to assemble. In the meantime, sentiments of objection to the proposal quickly flooded cyberspace, with hundreds and thousands of posts appearing in local online discussion bulletins and the county's Baidu Tieba page. On the appointed day (May 8), led by the local business association, over a thousand people showed up to demonstrate in front of the county government's headquarters. Wearing printed T-shirts and with banners provided by the organizers, the protesters chanted slogans opposing the conversion. To demonstrate that their opposition was supported by the general public, protesters also invited pedestrians to sign their names on a large banner. At one point, some protesters entered the building and hung the signature-filled banner on its gate, but they never damaged any property. The mobilization was not limited to the space near the government compound. Many car owners put stickers showing support for the county, and some business establishments filled their outdoor LED billboards with slogans against redistricting. These spontaneous actions demonstrated a genuine sentiment of anti-restructuring among the county residents.

The police on the site also showed tremendous restraint. They did not try to stop the protesters, nor did they arrest anyone. The protest lasted for half a day. In the afternoon, the county leadership announced to the people demonstrating in the square that the municipal government had decided to suspend the redistricting plan. The crowd cheered and quickly dissipated.

The contentious episode in Changxing ended peacefully with a desired outcome for the protesters. Unlike the case in Daye, no officials in Changxing were publicly punished for allowing the protest to take place. The obvious trigger of the protest was the Huzhou municipal government's attempt to turn the county into a district, yet county officials did not appear to be the masterminds. Under the CCP's cadre responsibility system, it is very hard to punish officials who are not responsible for triggering a mass protest yet who are able to resolve the issue peacefully. The restraint the county authorities demonstrated during the protest could also be interpreted as a strategy to pacify the situation. It is also reported that the county officials actively communicated with municipal leaders on the development of the situation, which resulted in the latter's concession.<sup>65</sup>

As in Daye, county officials in Changxing lacked bargaining power to defend their interests through the formal, institutionalized mechanisms within the bureaucracy. Local citizens were tolerated to voice and act on their dissatisfaction against such decisions, which empowered local officials at the bargaining table. Yet unlike officials in Daye, leaders in Changxing did not participate directly, at least given the available evidence, in organizing the protest. The largely peaceful and seemingly self-organized mobilization, together with its peaceful resolution and dispersal, protected the officials from being thoroughly investigated by their superiors. Our deep survey of public reports did not reveal any hint that the county government, in whole or in part, had purposefully instigated the protests, nor did our private interviews with local officials. The scarcity of evidence on official involvement, compared to the case of Daye, speaks volumes. The relatively low profile of the local officials during the mobilization might be an important reason why Changxing officials were able to avoid sanction in the wake of the protest.

In addition to administrative restructuring, decisions on the allocation of large public projects and investments, such as the construction of high-speed railway stations, can also trigger local-government-backed mobilization. The 2015 protest in Linshui, Sichuan province, was a high-profile incident in this genre. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets to demand the inclusion of a local station on a newly proposed high-speed railway that, according to plans, would bypass the locality. The local government exercised an unusual degree of restraint as it contained the protesters. While there was no direct evidence that local governments instigated the protest, it was clear that they tolerated and showed sympathies with the protesters.<sup>66</sup> They even acknowledged and praised the motivation of the protesters in an announcement following the protest. This episode of popular resistance, like the Changxing protest, in which officials strategically tolerate the mass mobilization, can also be considered as a case of 'consent instability.'<sup>67</sup>

The struggle for local high-speed railway station is the most common cause of known cases of 'consent instability.' The Chinese media has documented numerous

mobilizations with similar appeals. The Linshui case stood out for its scale and occurrence of violence by protesters. In other cases, more moderate mobilizations occurred. For example, in 2009, citizens in Xinhua, Hunan province, gathered in a local public square and collected more than ten thousand signatures calling for a station built in the county along the proposed Shanghai-Kunming high-speed railway. A local PC delegate displayed a long list of signatures during a meeting session of the county's annual congress. Shortly after that, citizens in Shaoyang, a nearby city competing with Xinhua for the station, quickly acted to gather more than fifty thousand signatures.<sup>68</sup>

Similar to what happened in Changxing, local governments seemed to turn a blind eye, if not outright support, to the mobilizations in the cases of 'social movements struggling for high-speed railway stations' (*gaotie sheyun*). For example, *Shaoyang Daily*, the local official newspaper, covered the public gathering that was intended to collect signatures to support the fight for railway station, an unusual gesture that suggested local officials' tolerance for citizen's spontaneous mobilization. In the Xinhua case mentioned above, local citizens proactively formed an organization, 'Alliance to Protect Our Railway' (*hulu lianmeng*), to coordinate their action. Establishing a non-governmental organization and preparing for a collective gathering without state approval might well have invited repression by the local government, as they have in other contexts. Yet in these cases, they did not. The demands of these mobilizations were not directed at misconduct of local officials, but toward unpopular higher-level decisions that the local governments wished to change. The voice of the people served as leverage that officials in these places could exert when they tried to extract policy concessions from their superiors. Most of these mobilizations did not take place in central cities (such as provincial capitals) but in peripheral locations (e.g. Xinhua and Shaoyang in Hunan (2009), Dengzhou and Xinye in Henan (2014), Linshui and Dazhu in Sichuan (2015)).<sup>69</sup> Officials in these places generally lack bargaining power within the regime and often get sidelined during processes of internal decision-making.

### Comparing the two modes of mobilization

In this article, we distinguish 'mobilized instability' from 'consent instability,' with the former exemplified by the Daye Incident and the latter mainly by the Changxing case. The two cases share a public display of local citizen dissatisfaction, which in China constitutes a credible and often costly signal of a locality's resolve in inter-bureaucratic bargaining and could lend local bureaucrats extra leverage in negotiating with their superiors.<sup>70</sup> Yet unlike the Daye case where local leaders were punished and removed from their positions, local officials in most other cases stayed intact after similar incidents. We have explained why officials adopting apparently similar defiant strategies were treated differently by their superiors.

Two broad features emerge from the analysis of the Daye case. First, the most notable feature of the Daye case was the escalation of protest and the appearance of violence. The protesters besieged the municipal government and violently damaged property within the compound. These actions raised the profile of the incident and forced the Hubei provincial authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to pin

down the culprits. In the other cases, citizen mobilizations remained largely peaceful throughout the end, and thus they did not create the same level of pressure and urgency on the part of superiors to investigate the grassroots officials' involvement in these protests. In fact, direct superiors of the local bureaucrats concerned also had incentives to quietly turn the page, as they could be blamed (by their superiors) for making the incautious policy decisions that triggered the protests in the first place. In short, the escalation of protests into violent actions invited attention from the higher-ups and limited the degree to which local officials could deny or shirk their responsibilities.

Second, local leaders in Daye directly participated in organizing the protests. They met in person with protest leaders and directly issued orders. This made them easy to identify during the subsequent investigation. In the cases of 'consent instability,' although local leaders shared interests with the protesters, they were much more discreet and did not leave concrete evidence that they were responsible for organizing the protests. Although there was evidence that the local governments turned a blind eye to the preparation of the mobilization and showed a great deal of tolerance when the protests took place, these actions could at most be considered as negligence at work. Local leaders could get away their passive support by arguing that the policy decisions that ignited anger of local people were not in their control. Blame, they argued, should be assigned to the higher-level decision makers with whom local leaders had unsuccessfully bargained. In the case of Daye, local leaders' direct involvement proved they were the cause of protest and thus the ones to be held accountable. Resisting or plotting against the higher level's authority is a serious disciplinary violation within the communist party, and their consequences are much more severe than allowing protests to take place because of negligence.

Then why did the local bureaucrats in other cases remain invisible? The Daye protest received national attention at the time and so did the punishment of the officials involved in the protest. It is possible that local leaders in Changxing and Linshui learned from this earlier lesson and adapted their strategies to protect themselves. If the officials try to appear as not being associated with the protests, how did they coordinate with and monitor the protesters? More importantly, how did the officials make sure that the mobilization would not grow out of control (e.g. violent escalation in the case of Daye) and could be stopped whenever their bargaining demands were satisfied by their superiors?

Local officials need intermediaries to channel information with protesters while protecting themselves from prying eyes.<sup>71</sup> Local business associations play the roles of such intermediaries in many cases. In Changxing, for example, a township business association publicly proposed a demonstration (although the county authority never approved it) and prepared for it (such as making T-shirts and banners). Local business associations also took the lead in organizing many of the collective actions surrounding high-speed railway stations. It is no secret that private business in China is highly dependent on the state.<sup>72</sup> Entrepreneurs have to form close ties with local leaders to survive or succeed in their business. This kind of close relationship provides a relatively safe channel for local leaders to control the situation from behind the scenes. On the surface, the business associations appear as independent, organizing protests that



local officials do not take part in, while they in fact were carrying out what local officials wanted them to do. Local officials also have much leverage on private entrepreneurs, which ensures that private entrepreneurs do not use the mobilized masses for their own purposes and that the officials would have the ability to call off the protests when needed. In contrast, the football associations that played a significant role in mobilizing local population in Daye were less dependent on the state (compared with the business association in Changxing) and therefore were more difficult to control during the protest.

The mine owners also played the role of intermediary in Daye, but they were not merely the tool of the local officials: they themselves were important stakeholders in the county's independent status. As discussed earlier, turning Daye into a district of Huangshi could result in the reassignment of the management and ownership rights of local mines. This means that the mine owners had a lot to lose, perhaps even more than the local bureaucrats involved, if the county lost its independent status. This fact might have been helpful in mobilizing them against the restructuring plan, yet it also limited the degree to which the officials could control them. The mine owners were not just acting as an agent of the local officials, they were fighting for their own interests. That partly explains why they were not hesitant to adopt risky and extreme measures (such as employing paid protesters and encouraging the escalation of violence) that local officials would mostly avoid. In other cases, the policy decisions in question (e.g. whether to build a local high-speed railway station) did not affect the interests of the intermediaries to the same degree as the one in Daye. Therefore, their mobilization (e.g. peaceful protests or signatures collecting) also appeared to be more moderate in general and within the tolerance of the state.

To sum up, a number of factors led to the backfire of Daye officials' use of mass mobilization in inter-bureaucratic bargaining. The lack of an intermediary that the local officials could effectively control from behind the scene led to the violent ending of the protest, which forced the higher-level authorities to conduct thorough investigations of the incident. The local leaders' direct involvement in the planning of the protests made them easy targets for their superiors to identify and punish. Organizers of subsequent mobilizations seem to have learned from the Daye experience. Involvement by local leaders was invisible from the viewpoint of higher-ups, and officials in these incidents remained largely intact.

While bargaining across bureaucratic hierarchies is common in China,<sup>73</sup> our findings highlight a hidden link between bureaucratic bargaining and local mass mobilization. Other scholars have also noticed the similar role of mass pressure in bureaucratic politics in China, particularly on how higher level government uses the power of the masses to monitor local officials.<sup>74</sup> The strategic use of mass mobilization by officials to extract policy benefits are not unique to Chinese local politics. This strategy arises as a consequence of ineffective official channels for credibly signaling officials' intentions. Similar official-backed protests appear across different countries and political contexts. Daniel Treisman, for example, found that regional governors in post-Soviet Russia allowed more protests in their jurisdictions to solicit more revenue transfers from Moscow.<sup>75</sup> In examining protests in Central Asia, Scott Radnitz found that local economic and political elites who are vulnerable to expropriation and harassment

from above cultivate support in local communities and use elite-led protest as a 'weapon' against regime predation.<sup>76</sup> In addition to local politics, scholars also find that government-initiated protests play an important role in international politics. Jessica Weiss argues that authoritarian leaders strategically tolerate anti-foreign protests during times of international negotiations to increase their bargaining power.<sup>77</sup> These studies have significantly remedied the stereotype that authoritarian officials are often at odds with protesters, suggesting instead that people in streets can play a meaningful role in shaping elite politics.

In addition to contributing to this line of inquiry with detailed case studies, this article also highlights the potential risks of the strategy to use the power of the masses. Allowing aggrieved citizens to take to the streets is inherently dangerous to most authoritarian leaders. Yet as Weiss suggests that unpredictable risks (i.e. that the officials cannot control the protest) are preconditions for some strategies to be useful.<sup>78</sup> An ostensibly staged protest is easily regarded as cheap talk and would not help officials advance their interests. Few studies, however, have systematically examined such risks and studied why some government-backed protests have gone wrong. In this study, we suggest the conditions under which these protests might grow out of control and backfire on officials who initially sought to capitalize on them. We hope our study will stimulate future research that looks into the complex dynamics between local officials and popular mobilization.

## Notes

1. Interview with a vice director of the Bureau of Finance in Huangshi, August 1, 2017.
2. Based on the official report on the Daye Incident by Hubei Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision Department. For details see Zhang, "Dazhi 8.6 qunti shijian zeren ren shou yan cheng [Daye Incident organizers were severely punished]".
3. For earlier work on the Chinese state's efforts in maintaining social stability, see, for example, Yan, "Patrolling harmony"; Liu and Ma, "Popular threats and nationalistic propaganda."
4. See Wasserstrom, "Resistance to the One-child Family"; White, "Domination, resistance, and accommodation."
5. See Deng and Yang, "Pollution and Protest"; Steinhardt and Wu, "In the Name of the Public."
6. See Chen, *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China*; Li and O'Brien, "Protest Leadership in Rural China"; So, "Peasant Conflict and the Local Predatory State".
7. See Guo, "Land Expropriation and Rural Conflicts in China"; Ho, "Contesting rural spaces".
8. See Bernstein and Xiaobo, *Taxation without Representation*; Li, "Driven to Protest".
9. See Cai, "The Resistance of Chinese Laid-Off Workers"; Chen, "Subsistence Crises, Managerial Corruption".
10. See, for example, Truex, *Making Autocracy Work*; Manion, *Information for Autocrats*.
11. See, for example, Li and Yang, "What Causes the Local Fiscal Crisis in China"; Pan and Chen, "Concealing Corruption".
12. See Zhang, "Huangyan jie jie [Resolution to the Huangyan Puzzle]."
13. Personal communication with an expert of China's bureaucracy, August 24, 2019.
14. See Ma, "Consent to Contend".
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 7.
17. Ibid., 2.

18. For studies on why football fans are easy to become radicalized in mobilization, see Zaimakis, "Football Fan Culture and Politics in Modern Greece".
19. Yongshun Cai emphasizes the importance of higher-level intervention in determining how the local authorities respond to popular protest. See Cai, "Local Governments and the Suppression"; Cai, *Collective Resistance in China*. He argues that "a combination of casualties with media exposure or with a large number of participants is very likely to invite intervention from the central government," and "facing intervention or a threat of intervention from the central government, local governments will have to use concessions or concessions with discipline to stop citizens' resistance quickly". See Cai, "Power Structure and Regime Resilience," 419. Illuminated by Cai's idea, we argue here that the strategy of borrowing power from the masses will backfire when mass mobilization gets out of hand and triggers investigation from higher-level officials.
20. See Zhang, "Yi ge xian ji shi zhuiqiu 'sheng zhi xia' de minjian suqiu [Citizens in a county appealing for the province-manages-county status]."
21. See Radio Free Asia, "Jiangxi chong hua xingzheng fanwei yinfa guixi minzhong saoluan [Jurisdictional restructuring in Jiangxi province caused popular unrest in Guixi]."
22. See Zhang, "Huangyan jie jie [Resolution to the Huangyan Puzzle]."
23. See Lieberthal and Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China*; Mertha, "'Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0'".
24. See Cai, "Power Structure and Regime Resilience".
25. See, for example, Zhou and Hong, "Bureaucratic Bargaining in the Chinese Government"; Zhou et al., "A Behavioral Model of 'Muddling Through'".
26. See Zhou, "Cong guan li fen tu dao cengji fenliu [Between 'Officials' and 'Local Staff']".
27. Ibid.; Li and Mingxing, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
28. See Li and Liu, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
29. See Zhou, "Cong guan li fen tu dao cengji fenliu [Between 'Officials' and 'Local Staff']"; Li and Liu, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
30. In fact, the then-party secretary of Daye county was in the process of getting promoted to a municipal city position.
31. See Li and Liu, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
32. In 2005, the mining industry accounted for up to 45 percent of gross industrial output value of enterprises above a designated size, while mining and the mine processing industry accounted for 80 percent of gross industrial output value of enterprises above a designated size. See "Daye shi chengshi zhuanxing wenti yanjiu [Research on the urban transformation of Daye county]" by daye she ke lian [Daye Federation of Social Sciences Association].
33. Also reflected in the interviews conducted in Huangshi and Daye, August 1 and August 2, 2017. See Li and Liu, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
34. "Zhi daye jiushi wan jumin de gongkai xin" [An open letter to 900,000 Daye residents], 2005.
35. See Liu, "Che xian she qu? Changxing bu gaoxing [Changxing residents unhappy for their county planning to be turned into a district]."
36. Ibid.
37. Interview with an official in Daye Bureau of Finance, August 2, 2017.
38. See Liu, "Che xian she qu? Changxing bu gaoxing [Changxing residents unhappy for their county planning to be turned into a district]."

39. Guo wu yuan [The State Council], "Xingzheng quhua guanli de guiding [Regulations on Administrative Jurisdiction Management]," January 15, 1985. For the detailed formation on application and approval procedures, see Baidu Tieba, "Quhua tiaozheng shenqing de liucheng [Application process of jurisdiction restructuring]," June 28, 2018. [https://tieba.baidu.com/p/5771630531?red\\_tag=0155209489](https://tieba.baidu.com/p/5771630531?red_tag=0155209489), accessed on Oct. 14, 2019.
40. The boldest move ever taken by local bureaucrats to oppose jurisdictional restructuring occurred in Huangyan, Zhejiang province. For nine years, 1994–2003, some delegates of the county's PC and PPCC refused to attend the annual meetings in order to press the Taizhou municipal government to acknowledge Huangyan's semi-county political status. Their demand was met by the Huangyan municipal government in 2003.
41. See Zhang, "Dazhi 8.6 qunti shijian zeren ren shou yan cheng [Daye Incident Organizers were Severely Punished]"; also interview with a Daye resident, September 15, 2013.
42. Interview with officials in Huangshi and Daye, respectively, August 1 and August 2, 2017.
43. See Zhang, "Dazhi 8.6 qunti shijian zeren ren shou yan cheng [Daye Incident organizers were severely punished]."
44. See McAdam, "Recruitment to High-risk Activism".
45. See Zhou and Ta, "Yecheng qiumi: jiao de xiang de chengshi mingpian [Football fans in Daye]."
46. See Zhang, "Dazhi 8.6 qunti shijian zeren ren shou yan cheng [Daye Incident organizers were severely punished]."
47. Yuan Zhengshe was then a teacher at Dong yue zhongxue [Dongyue Middle School] and also the chairman of Daye Association of Football Fans. Before holding this position, he was a teacher at Cheng bei zhongxue [Chengbei Middle School]. In exchange for accepting a transfer – essentially a promotion – to the prestigious Dongyue Middle School, he agreed to stop acting as a key protester against privatizing the Chengbei Middle School. Interview with a Daye resident, September 13, 2013.
48. Interview with an official of the Bureau of Finance in Daye, January 13, 2018.
49. See Gao, "Liangwan dazhi ren kangyi dangju za shifu duan gonglu [Twenty thousand Daye Residents Protested by Storming the Municipal Government and Blocking the Expressway]."
50. Interview with a Daye resident, September 15, 2013.
51. He was arrested on August 18, 2005 and later sentenced to two years in prison because he was found to be responsible for inciting the August 6 mass incident by posting the demonstration notice on several websites. For details, see Zhongguo fayuan wang [China Court], "Juzhong chongji guojia jiguan da za caiwu qingjie yanzhong, shandong feifa youxing shiwei naoshi fa buneng rong [Those who mass people to storm the government building and vandalize public property and those who incite illegal demonstration should be punished by law]," September 26, 2005, <http://hubeigy.chinacourt.org/public/detail.php?id=3692>, accessed on Apr 11, 2013.
52. See Yang, "Hubei dazhi shi liang wan minzhong kangyi jingcha cubao [Twenty thousand Daye residents of Hubei province demonstrated against the police brutality]."
53. See Fang, "Hubei liangwan ren weigong shifu [Twenty thousand Hubei residents besieged their municipal government]."
54. Interview with an official of the Bureau of Urban Management in Daye, August 2, 2017.
55. The majority of Daye's population were rural residents.
56. Interview with a Huangshi resident, April 17, 2013.
57. Interview with a Huangshi resident, May 10, 2013.
58. Interview with a Huangshi resident, July 29, 2013.
59. See Zhang, "Dazhi 8.6 qunti shijian zeren ren shou yan cheng [Daye Incident organizers were severely punished]."
60. Interview with a Huangshi resident, July 29, 2013; also see Li and Liu, "Li shen gongmou [The Collusion Between Government Functionaries and Local Influentials]."
61. See Yang, "Hubei dazhi shi liang wan minzhong kangyi jingcha cubao [Twenty thousand Daye residents of Hubei province demonstrated against the police brutality]."

62. In Chinese culture, being bitten by a dog that someone lets out intentionally is extremely humiliating for the victim.
63. Interview with a Daye resident, September 15, 2013.
64. It is said that he then hid in the military base. Interview with a Huangshi resident, September 15, 2013.
65. See Liu, "Che xian she qu? Changxing bu gaoxing [Changxing residents unhappy for their county planning to be turned into a district]."
66. See Allen-Ebrahimian, "These Chinese people want high-speed rail."
67. See Ma, "Consent to Contend".
68. See Yan, "'Gaotie zhengduo zhan' chengxian she yun xin tedian [New characteristics of social movements struggling for high-speed railway stations]."
69. See Yan, "'Gaotie zhengduo zhan' chengxian she yun xin tedian [New characteristics of social movements struggling for high-speed railway stations]."
70. Also see Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*, on a theoretically thorough discussion on the similar role of permitting nationalistic protests during diplomatic negotiations.
71. See Ma, "Consent to Contend".
72. See Dickson, *The Communist Party's Embrace*; Hou, *The Private Sector in Public Office*.
73. See, for example, Zhou and Hong, "Bureaucratic Bargaining in the Chinese Government"; Zhou et al., "A Behavioral Model of 'Muddling Through' in the Chinese Bureaucracy"; Liu, "The New Politics of Conflict Processing in China"; Fan, Zhang, and Li, "The Credibility and Bargaining"; Shi and Frenkiel, "Policy Entrepreneurship Under Hierarchy".
74. See, for example, Gao and Jie, "From Web to Weber"; Gao and Teets, "Civil Society Organizations in China".
75. See Treisman, *After the Deluge*.
76. See Radnitz, *Weapons of the Wealthy*.
77. See Weiss, *Powerful Patriots*.
78. See Weiss, "Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences".

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## Appendix

**Table A1.** Local bureaucrats involved in the Daye incident.

Actor	Native place	Title	Actions	Punishment
Li Pengguo	Daye	Deputy party secretary of Daye county	Convened a meeting preparing for protests against Huangshi city government's redistricting plan	Expelled from the Party and stripped of his position
Chen Fangyin	Daye	Deputy party secretary and vice mayor of Daye county	Sought financial support from bureaus	Expelled from the Party and stripped of his position
Shi Zhongwen	Daye	Vice director of the Standing Committee of the Daye county's PC	Arranged his fellow to write the report signed by deputies and sent to the central and provincial governments	Dismissed from his Party position and ordered to resign his PC position
Guo Yanbing	Daye	Chairman of Daye county's PPCC	Implicitly arranged his fellow to write the report signed by members and sent to the central and provincial governments	Dismissed from his Party position and ordered to resign his PPCC position
Shi Jiaopeng	Daye	Director of the Bureau of Civil Affairs in Daye	Authorized and supported retired officials and the middle school teacher Yuan Zhengshe to organize protest actions	Expelled from the Party and stripped of his position
Shi Daitian	Daye	Retired county official; Chairman of the Daye Athletic Society for Senior Citizens	Organized a series of protest actions, including petition, demonstration, and collecting signatures	Received serious warning within the Party
Zhang Zhixiang	Daye	Retired vice president of Daye's PPCC; Vice chairman of the Daye Athletic Society for Senior Citizens	Organized a series of protest actions, including petition, demonstration, and collecting signatures.	Received warning within the Party

*Source:* Based on the official investigation report, news reports, and interviews.