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Policing China: Struggles of Capacity, Order, and Organization

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Policing China: Struggles of Capacity, Order, and Organization

By

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Professor Kevin J. O'Brien, Chair
Professor Peter Lorentzen
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Professor Laura Stoker

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Abstract

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Why would police officers look the other way when criminals run? Why would an officer fix a busted lock in exchange for the victim calling to say she reported a break-in by mistake? This dissertation investigates issues of front-line policing and security capacity in the People's Republic of China. It probes the challenges faced by ground-level officers and their superiors as they attempt to do their jobs in the face of funding limitations, reform challenges, and structural issues that complicate police response. Drawing from 22 months of fieldwork in eight cities, the project uses interviews, station data, news reports, internal documents, and social media postings to understand how local policing in today's China works.

The data show that, despite China's reputation as a highly securitized state that spends more on internal security than national defense, ground-level policing is plagued by problems of capacity that even a well-organized central ministry is, for the most part, unable to resolve. As a result, the local state has difficulty responding to nearly every type of crime except public protest. Only in the domain of stability maintenance are police able to overcome the problem of low capacity by redirecting limited resources, implementing reforms that overcome institutionalized biases, and centralizing ministerial control by wresting power away from local actors. Security capacity remains low, however, for other areas of policing such as response to theft, violent crimes, and drug control, all of which continue to face problems of limited resources, poorly devised or executed reforms, and insufficient assistance from higher ups.

The result is that the internal security state in China suffers from weak capacity but can work well when Central officials redirect resources, bring local forces in line, and overcome institutional and cultural barriers to effective policing. This pattern explains why scholars and journalists who focus exclusively on protest control mistakenly bill the Chinese internal security state as strong and robust. It also gives us cause to rethink how we assess security capacity in authoritarian states, since scholars tend to look at protest control capacity and ignore everything else. In the Chinese case, a comprehensive review of ground-level police operations raises questions about capacity that challenge claims of authoritarian resilience. Capacity failures also demonstrate the limits of decentralized control over the Chinese local state, which for the police bureaucracy only exacerbates strains on frontline response.

Table of Contents

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I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Ed, and our baby girl, Octavia. Without Ed this dissertation would not exist. His love and patience is rivaled only by that of my parents, Jim and Anne, who are my original champions and perhaps the only two people in the world who were dying to read the final draft cover to cover.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This was supposed to be a story about effective policing practices in China. Effective policing is a good topic. It matters for people's lives and well-being. Researchers care about effective policing and have developed standards and measurements for it (Skogan and Frydl 2004). Effective policing is also less politically sensitive than other topics related to the police, which is an unavoidable consideration for researchers trying to sneak a peek at the inner workings of the Chinese state. But perhaps most importantly, effective policing is a good topic because policing in China appears, at least from the outside, to be quite effective. Crime is low. The streets feel safe, and there seems to be a decent police presence in the major cities. The Chinese police even excel at handling protest. While other authoritarian regimes have fallen apart, China has remained strong by clamping down of any and all regime challenging social movements. This success has been achieved despite reports in the literature that the Chinese police have long been underfunded (Fu and Choy 2003, Fu 2005).[1] All signs point to good policies and/or innovative practices at the ground-level (Heilmann and Perry 2011, Teets and Hurst 2014). But this is not a story about effective policing practices in China. If anything, it is the opposite.

"What? (什么, s*henme*)," responded one frontline officer when I asked him about effective practices in an interview in 2011. "What do you mean? (什么意思， *shenmen yisi*)." I tried yet another approach, this time asking about new techniques, then innovation, then improved response, only to get nowhere. Other interviewees were similarly disinterested. No one had anything to say about better practices or effective response. Instead, officers told story after story about resource constraints, counterproductive reporting requirements, reforms that made their work harder, and gave examples showcasing the sheer exhaustion of life on the frontlines. Perhaps these officers were just disgruntled employees, like other unhappy workers anywhere else. But their reports were too detailed, too focused, and in some cases too shocking to dismiss. The more officers talked, the more the police bureaucracy began to look less and less like the well-oiled machine I had expected to find.

Instead of telling a story about police effectiveness in the Chinese authoritarian state,[2] this dissertation looks at the challenges to local security capacity that are unearthed by plumbing the struggles of frontline officers and their superiors at the Ministry of Public Security

[1] Chapter 2 addresses the funding issue in detail.

[2] Here I rely on Juan Linz's definition of authoritarian regimes as system that restrict pluralism and political mobilization (Linz 1975, 2000).

(*gonganbu,* 公安部), the organizational body overseeing police and paramilitary operations in the country. Partly due to issues of access, we know little about the frontlines of China's domestic security apparatus. Despite China's reputation as a highly securitized state that spends more on internal security than national defense, a deeper investigation reveals that ground-level policing is plagued by problems of capacity that even a well-organized central Ministry is, for the most part, unable to resolve. Frontline police report that the local state has difficulty responding to most types of crime. From dealing with thefts to handling drug crimes, officers say they struggle under heavy workloads and lack the proper guidance and training to solve cases. Yet the same local police who say they have trouble with everyday crime report achieving relative success in the area of protest control. Such differences raise many questions. Why, if the security state is strong and well-funded, are local police having so much trouble on the ground? Why have they not replicated the model of protest response to address other types of crime management? In what areas do they struggle the most? The answers to these questions will tell us much about how policing in China works.

One goal of this dissertation is thus to establish a basic understanding of local officer interaction with higher ups as well as station response to crime on the ground in Chinese cities. But the issues that officers report are not just stories about low morale or inefficiency; they also reveal cracks in the bureaucracy that hold larger political significance. There is much to be learned from and about a state that does well with the political elements of policing like protest control but struggles with everyday crime management. Success in one area has necessarily brought challenges in the other. Problems with frontline policing can tell us much about security capacity and the resiliency of the world's largest authoritarian state. It also has implications for studies of the Chinese bureaucracy. The Public Security Bureau is a relatively centralized and well-organized branch of the Chinese state, and if it is having trouble with ground-level enforcement, then similar patterns are likely present in other bureaucracies.

Focusing on the Police

This dissertation takes frontline policing seriously. Much of the existing literature on reform-era policing in China focuses on higher-level concerns such as protest response (Tanner 2004, Xie 2012), strike-hard campaigns (Trevaskes 2010, Tanner 2000), leadership selection (YH Wang 2014), or structural reform (Wong 2011, Fu 2005, Dutton 1995). Far less attention has been paid to the frontlines of Chinese policing, though a handful of scholars are probing the depths of local police involvement with crime campaigns,[3] business ties (JH Xu 2013), and social service provision (XH Wang 2015, XH Wang and SW Wong 2012). More often, ground-level police are presented as abstract opponents of protestors in the broader Chinese politics literature. Though local police play a key role in shaping narratives of resistance, officers are typically relegated to background empirical sections or characterized as loyal agents of local governments. This sidelining of police and their lived experience is not unique to the China

[3] Xu Jianhua has written extensively on the motorcycle bans in southern China from the standpoint of local police and governments (2012, 2014) and media involvement (2015).

literature; scholars of comparative politics also tend to overlook the importance of policing in our understanding of the political world (Powell 2014). Though the state of the field has improved marginally[4] since David Bayley wrote in 1971 that, "police are rarely viewed from perspectives natural to political science,"[5] some of the best scholarship remains in criminology, sociology, and legal studies.

The absence of frontline police in both the Chinese and comparative politics literatures is more than just an unfortunate omission. Police help comprise an important class of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1979) who stand at the intersection of state and society, carrying out government policies and interacting with citizens on a daily basis. Police officers in particular are charged with enforcing laws and other security-related policies on the ground; thus, they are a key source for scholars who want to understand the processes that undergird state presence and power.[6] With respect to state coercion, policing is most obviously important to the contentious politics literature and our understanding of state response to conflict, but the scope of local policing is so much broader than protest control. Police spend most of their time responding to crimes and acting as mediators and general arbiters in the community. Given this reality, perhaps one of the biggest functions of local police in society is to provide an essential public good: security. How and whether or not they are able to do that job matters, and when we lack the perspectives of local police on these issues, we lose much about the daily functions of the local state.

Putting the focus on frontline policing in China brings to the surface many surprising facts. We typically think of the Chinese security state as strong and robust because the Communist Party has proven itself able to quash rising protests at nearly every turn. It is true that the Chinese police have made major advances in the post-Tiananmen environment, and reports from frontline police expressing satisfaction in their stations' ability to handle unrest further indicate that such efforts have been successful. But talking to frontline officers reveals a big gap between protest control capacity and other types of crime management. Notable failures in everyday policing and success in the area of protest control is not just an interesting idiosyncrasy of policing in China; it has also led to a mischaracterization of the Chinese security state.

Policing and Authoritarian Durability

What frontline police in China think and believe, and what we can learn from it, is important for a number of scholarly debates, first and foremost the growing authoritarian durability

[4] See for example the works of scholars such as Brian Taylor (2011, 2006) or William Muir (1979, 1980). For more work on local police see Lauren McCarthy (2015, 2014).
[5] Bayley 1971, p. 91.
[6] For studies that explore these themes in relation to the police in detail, see Lipsky 1970 and Muir 1979.

literature.[7] Recently, scholars have turned to institutional mechanisms to rectify this literature's lack of attention to the lower rungs of state control. (Slater and Fenner 2011, Lee and Zhang 2013). They are not wrong in doing so. Shifting our focus to the people and processes that actually undergird state power is needed to expand a literature that has long favored a top-down approach to understanding regime resilience by using structural (Geddes 1999), historical (Levitsky and Way 2012), or elite-centered (Magaloni 2008, Dimitrov 2009) explanations. The critical next step is to turn our attention to the workhorse of state control: the coercive apparatus. Here, scholars have already begun the important job of analyzing protest response capacity (Lee and Zhang 2013, Bellin 2004, 2012, Way and Levitsky 2006). But police – that core institution of state coercion – do so much more than keep protesters at bay.

To be clear, the management of public uprisings is an essential part of regime control.[8] Put another way, cracking heads is important, as is building in prevention mechanisms that obviate the need to crack heads. But everyday functions like responding to a call when someone's house has been broken into or stepping in to stop a crime in progress are also measures of whether or not state agents are able to promote ground-level security, even if such tasks are not nearly as glamorous as stamping out protest. If police are struggling with those everyday functions, then those failures have consequences, both for the people involved and for larger assessments of security capabilities. This dissertation thus adopts a broader conceptualization of security capacity; one that takes into account everyday capabilities as well as protest management. To do so, it looks at security capacity across a range of issues to show how response to regular crime, not just protest, matters. Such a focus necessitates a close look at local policing, which in the case of China includes the local police, the People's Armed Police (PAP), and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

This broader definition of security capacity opens up a new way of thinking about the authoritarian durability literature. As the Chinese case will demonstrate, the police actually spend most of their time trying to manage and prevent other types of crime, and they largely lack confidence in their ability to do that job well. If scholars want to understand how regime resilience works in an everyday setting, we must think more broadly about the ways in which institutions of the coercive apparatus wield the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The day-to-day activities of coercive institutions like the police – especially their regular interactions with the public - are a critical and overlooked part of regime resilience. And though management of everyday problems like traffic accidents or break-ins may seem pedestrian, the institutional capacity to address such issues matters for ensuring stability on the ground.

[7] Persistent authoritarian regimes have been labeled "durable" (Brownlee 2007), "resilient" (Nathan 2003) or "adaptive" (Shambaugh 2008). In China studies, "authoritarian resilience" is used most frequently.

[8] Theda Skocpol's seminal study on social revolutions established clear links between regime change, state coercion, and suppression of political dissent (Skocpol 1979).

Policing and the Chinese State

Looking more broadly at policing and security capacity also enriches our current understanding of the Chinese state. In the past decade, the concept of authoritarian resilience has achieved prominence in studies of Chinese politics, as scholars seek to make sense of how the Communist party survives and even thrives in the face of domestic challenges.[9] But that literature largely ignores security capacity,[10] perhaps because scholars implicitly assume that the state is strong in this area. A comprehensive review of ground-level police operations allows for a better understanding of how and where the state security apparatus is weak. In turn, problems with everyday crime management raise questions about overall capacity and may ultimately points to a less resilient regime than most current studies on the issue have led us to believe.

Focusing on policing also provides new insights into the Chinese bureaucracy. The Public Security Bureau (PSB) is relatively centralized, especially in comparison to other bureaucracies. This is by design. Like security institutions in other authoritarian states (Bayley 1985), the Chinese leadership has clear motivations for pursuing policies that promote centralization in the police bureaucracy. A streamlined system is more likely to ensure uniformity of policy implementation during times of crisis and be more adept at communicating ground-level issues to central leaders. Yet interviews with frontline officers reveal that the degree of centralization is not uniform across issue areas, nor does it always serve the provision of security, and those differences have consequences for crime management. Chapter Five demonstrates the ways in which control over the bureaucracy is highly centralized in the area of social unrest but relatively decentralized when it comes to handling other types of crime. Because the police handle social unrest so much more effectively than other crimes, this pattern has implications for understanding decentralization and ground-level service provision in other Chinese bureaucracies. It also has implications in the comparative context, since similar variation also occurs in, for example, Russia.[11]

Political Policing

For criminologists, this study fleshes out the political functions of policing in a stable authoritarian regime. No one has been more influential in honing our understanding of the political side of modern policing than Jean-Paul Brodeur (1983, 2010). By rejecting, in the words of Peter Manning, the two logical assertions that "no policing is political or all policing is political,"[12] Brodeur helped demystify the politics of policing by differentiating between high policing, which includes practices that serve a more political purpose such as protest control or surveillance, and low policing, which involves everyday crime fighting and public order

[9] See Nathan 2003, Gilley 2003, Dimitrov 2008, Cai 2008, Li 2012, Lee and Zhang 2013, among others.
[10] With the exception of Lee and Zhang 2013, which largely focuses on protest.
[11] Brian Taylor has found that this "hybrid" system creates opportunities for greater exercise of power by local police leaders (Taylor 2007, 2011)
[12] Manning 2012.

maintenance. Police agencies across the spectrum of regime types engage in some form of high policing, but the political role of the police in authoritarian states is necessarily more overt, even though the functions of high and low policing have become increasingly blended in Western democracies during the post 9-11 environment (Brodeur 2007, 2010).

A stable authoritarian regime such as China is an excellent case for exploring how frontline police engage in high policing activities. While scholars have recognized that high policing activities are a core feature of authoritarian regimes (O'Reilly and Ellison 2006, p. 644), they have never been analyzed in great detail.[13] In China, frontline officers have long been overtly charged with protecting the political regime - the raison d'être of high policing (Brodeur 2010, p. 227) - by collecting data on citizens, using informants (FL Wang 2004), exercising extralegal powers (Biddulph 1993), and even exploiting family and social ties to demobilize protestors (Deng and O'Brien 2013, O'Brien and Deng 2015). Authoritarian countries are unique because such activities are neither exclusively reserved for higher-level intelligence organizations nor particularly demonized in the same ways they are in democratic societies, which paradoxically may make the analysis of high policing activities in the authoritarian context more accessible.[14] But the real benefit of differentiating between high and low policing in an authoritarian regime is that it showcases how the two can mutually inform one another. Scholars have analyzed the blurring of boundaries between high and low policing (Brodeur 2010) and the role of private actors (O'Reilly and Ellison 2006), but little has been written about how one affects the other. Given the strengths that frontline police in China report in high policing (protest) and weakness with low policing (everyday crime), the Chinese case offers an ideal window into understanding how success in one area can bring costs to the other.

Beyond the Police Perspective

For all the benefits of looking closely at frontline police, there are also disadvantages. Absent from this account is the perspective of local government officials. Absent, too, is an in-depth discussion of how the public experiences crime management and protest control.[15] Police officers do not operate in a vacuum, and the perspectives of local leaders and the public are crucial dimensions of public security that provide insight into police legitimacy and the handling of crime. Interviews with frontline officers reveal much about their perception of interactions with local government officials.[16] They also show that officers believe that the public's respect for and perhaps fear of the police has steadily declined since the start of the reform period.[17]

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[13] Some studies such as Cao and Dai 2006 have, however, analyzed the transition from high to low policing as a country has democratized.

[14] Because high policing is so often seen as deviant or secretive, it is difficult to study in the democratic context (Brodeur 2010).

[15] Chapter Six reviews the literature on public perceptions of the police, which is somewhat contradictory in nature.

[16] See Chapter Five for a discussion of local officials' control over the police.

[17] One oft-repeated bit of police lore sums this up nicely: "In the 1980s, one officer could catch ten bad guys simply by walking into a restaurant and yelling 'halt!' These days, it takes ten of us to catch a single criminal." Interview with a city station detective, Hebei, 2011.

But the other side of these equations is largely beyond the research scope of this project, which is in no small part due to the research challenges I discuss below.

Sources

We know little about the working environment of frontline police officers because, like many individuals in China's security apparatus,[18] they are hard to reach. Although the country opened its doors to social science research over thirty years ago, concerns about secrecy continue to limit access to people in certain lines of work. In Chinese, the phrase *mingan* (敏感, sensitive) or even worse, very (很, *hen*) *mingan* can strike fear into the hearts of researchers hoping to finish what they started, and studies on the police are fairly sensitive across the board. Yet as scholars working around political sensitivities in China have noted,[19] what gets branded sensitive often varies across time, locale, and issue area. This opens up room to probe along the margins and pursue topics that might otherwise seem inaccessible.

About the Interviews

To get to the heart of frontline policing in China, I conducted 112 interviews with 56 officers. Over a period of 22 months between 2009 and 2015, I interviewed officers up and down the hierarchy of the PSB. The majority of informants worked on the frontlines as local station officers, detectives, patrol cops, emergency call workers, household registration officers, traffic police, and People's Armed Police (PAP) officers. A small number of those interviewees were mid-level supervisors, and I also interviewed one station chief, one assistant station chief, and one PAP squad leader. The age and experience level of the respondents ranged from new hires in their mid/early 20s to soon-to-be retirees in their late 50s. All but six of the frontline officers were men. Further up the chain of command, I interviewed provincial bureau officers in two provinces as well as a number of central Ministry officials. In order in ensure confidentiality of all sources, references to interviews throughout the chapters are intentionally vague and in some cases have been slightly altered.

Gaining access to these individuals required time, persistence, and a bit of luck. As a former English teacher to police officers in Beijing, I drew upon contacts I made in the years before beginning my PhD – appealing to friends as well as former students and colleagues in my bid to gain entry into the world of local policing. Even with a relatively large network of contacts, I ran into difficulties. Many were unable or unwilling to help me. On several occasions, an officer backed out of an interview at the last minute, presumably because he or she was afraid there might be consequences for speaking to a foreign researcher. Or more than one occasion, contacts gently (and not so gently) suggested I focus on another topic or bureaucracy. But not everyone found the prospect of a foreigner researching the police in China ill-advised. Other respondents were eager to talk about their work. One long-term contact even banged his hand on the table in excitement when I told him about my plans to focus on the police, "That's great!

[18] On similar difficulties reaching veterans, see O'Brien and Diamant 2015.
[19] See Hsing 2010, p 16-17, or Spires 2011, p. 18.

(太好了, *tai hao le*)," he enthused. "We Chinese police are very important, but too many people do not pay attention to us."[20]

Informants such as the one above notwithstanding, the interview part of this research proceeded in fits and starts as I worked with and around my own identity as a white, female foreigner with no firsthand policing experience.[21] Police officers can be a fairly inscrutable lot, and it typically required multiple meetings in order to establish trust and legitimacy with respondents before they were willing to share details of their working lives. To ease the way with new interviewees, I often relied upon mutual contacts and conducted interviews in social settings such as restaurants, teahouses, and the occasional karaoke club or bar. I found that the length of time I had known someone as well as our ability to find commonalties improved the probability of more frank conversation. Sometimes female or younger officers opened up more quickly, but sometimes other frontline officers, many of whom had previously had limited or no direct contact with a foreigner, were eager to learn more about policing in America and contrast it with their own experiences. For most, the process of trust building unfolded gradually, so I often made multiple trips to research sites and spent time getting to know the officers.

These interviews give voice to a group of individuals who are often ignored for a reason beyond access limitations: police have a bad reputation. Reports of police brutality and misuse of power are just as common in China as they are everywhere else. But to characterize all police as little more than lazy and corrupt or even as marionettes of state repression reduces the individuals behind the uniforms to simple caricatures that belie the complexity of the job they do. People who have spent time with police officers know this all too well and have written about the dilemmas confronting police, the vulnerability that they feel, and the coping strategies they adopt to manage the many difficult tasks they face.[22] One interviewee who later left his post described his decision as one made out of consideration for his family. Although he loved being a police officer, he said he knew all too well the type of mindset that police officers must adopt after being in such close contact with the worst elements of society. "I don't want my children to grow up in that environment," he explained.[23] This research aims to understand political society from the standpoint of the police, but it simultaneously seeks to acknowledge the complexity of their work and to humanize them as individuals. By taking the experiences and accounts of police seriously, we are able to gain a deeper understanding of the roles they play in society, both good and bad.

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[20] 2009.

[21] For more on this experience, see Scoggins 2014.

[22] See for example, the Muir 1979, or, in the popular press, David Brooks. "The Cop Mind," *The New York Times,* 8 December 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/09/opinion/the-cop-mind.html?_r=0.

[23] Interview, 2014.

About the Research Sites

Given the political sensitivities of the topic and the need to rely on social contacts for access to interviewees, the selection of research sites was somewhat constrained. I was nevertheless able to achieve variation along economic lines. I conducted research in a total of eight cities. The bulk of the observations come from five of those cities, which were located in three different provinces. One city was well off in terms of economic development, three were middle of the road, and one was poor. Of the remaining three cities, one was poor and the other two were well off. In addition to characterizing the economic development of research sites according to each city's GDP, I also classify the sites according to police-specific signs of development such as publically available budget reports, officer reports about equipment, stations' physical appearances, and the ability of stations to pay overtime or offer a salary that is higher than the national standard. These considerations largely confirm the original assessments of development.

Table 1: Research Sites

	Size[24]	Level of Development	Location
City 1	Small	Low	Northern China
City 2	Small	Medium	Northern China
City 3	Large	Medium	Northern China
City 4	Large	High	Northern China
City 5	Large	High	Central China
City 6	Medium	Medium	Southern China
City 7	Large	High	Southern China
City 8	Medium	Low	Southern China

Scholars traditionally characterize the Chinese bureaucratic system as a centralized entity comprised of five distinct layers: central, provincial, city, county, and village. The Ministry controls agents at the provincial, city, and county levels, but typically does not maintain a

[24] Large indicates cities with over 4 million, medium indicates cities between 1 and 3 million, and small indicates cities with less than a million.

dedicated presence at the village level.[25] All research sites were in areas classified as cities, though I also interviewed county officers near those cities. Moreover, many of the interviewees had experience working at the county level (in China the county is one level below the city). All cities reported some degree of social unrest, with one of the most developed cities experiencing the most protests.

It is interesting to note that the ultimate findings do not vary across research sites, despite differences in economic development. But such uniformity raises another important point about the scope of the research: this dissertation represents one particular slice of policing in China. It is not, so to speak, "policing at its best," as that would have required interviewing officers in the heavily developed "top-tier" cities. It is also not "policing at its worst," which is what we would expect to find in the poorest counties or perhaps along the borders. While I conducted a few interviews on either end of this spectrum, I was unable to gain the type of access that would allow me to make conclusive statements about policing in these areas. This is, instead, a dissertation about policing "in between" and the "central tendency," not variation around it. In some ways, that makes the findings more widely applicable than they would have been had I focused on the polar ends of the spectrum or on special case areas like Xinjiang and Tibet, but it is nevertheless a limitation of the research.

Triangulating Data

To round out the data collection, I use information obtained from policing journals, public or semi-public handbooks and other publications, online documents, news reports, and social media postings. Policing journal articles are an excellent source of information about frontline issues such as overtime frequency, protest response, and equipment usage. They often contain references to studies and other figures that are not readily available anywhere else. Many of these articles are available online through China Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), though I spent two months going through older issues of certain publications and additional materials held by the Universities Services Centre at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. There is also a surprising amount of information about Chinese policing that is available through other online sources. In addition to documents published by the Ministry of Public Security, city police bureaus and local governments often maintain their own websites and social media accounts with information about police station infrastructure, budget reports, and recent incidents. Individual officers also post work-related information online through social media accounts. And of course, news reports, when available, provide insight into local crime issues or particular high-profile cases. I use these sources throughout the dissertation to crosscheck interviews and strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

[25] Villages are overseen by village heads and county police may be called in as needed. Traditionally, villages in China are unaccustomed to police presence, although this too is changing as urban sprawl creeps into the Chinese countryside.

Looking Forward

The chapters that follow take a close look at policing on the frontlines. After presenting an overview of ground-level issues such as demographics, structure, mission, and funding (Chapter Two), the subsequent three chapters present the case that police in China face struggles with everyday crime management that are not present with protest control. By analyzing differences in how limited resources are allocated (Chapter Three), how reforms are crafted and received (Chapter Four), and how influence from different types of higher authorities affect outcomes (Chapter Five), these chapters present a damning portrait of everyday crime management even as they provide detailed insight into why the Chinese police bureaucracy is so very good at stability maintenance. Scholars of contentious politics will be interested in the tactics the bureaucracy uses to redirect limited resources, implement reforms that overcome institutionalized biases, and enforce coordination between different police forces to keep protestors in line.

But lest we get too carried away with the implications of police strength in stability maintenance, the problems of ground-level management for everyday crime response remind us that the other side of Chinese policing operates on a completely different plane. When it comes to non-protest crime management, officers on the ground argue persuasively that they face problems of limited resources, poorly devised or executed reforms, and insufficient assistance from higher ups. Frontline stories about worthless training programs, police officers looking the other way when they see criminal wrong-doing, or cops making deals with victims in exchange for a callback saying they reported the crime by mistake all provide critical insight into the day-to-day issues of the Chinese security state and round out our understanding of security capacity. The implications of these failures are both social and political. Chapter Five discusses why issues with everyday crime management are exacerbated by de facto decentralization and raise questions for other Chinese bureaucracies that provide ground-level services, and Chapter Six details the broader implications of those failures for assessments of authoritarian durability.

Overall, this is a story about weakness in one of the strongest branches of the Chinese bureaucracy; a weakness that hits everyday crime management the hardest but to which stability maintenance work is also not immune. This makes the issue of regime resilience particularly salient. Attacks against the police appear to be on the rise,[26] and in the final chapter I discuss the ways in which poor everyday crime management may actually be feeding back into the protest loop and undermining police strength in all areas.

The forces that create differences in response outcomes are powerful. Many of the problems facing the frontlines are deeply rooted in the institutional culture or structure of the police bureaucracy; issues that more money or even a change in the priorities of the bureaucracy's leaders would be hard pressed to solve. Evidence of this permeates the dissertation. Training programs get undermined by the Ministry's arguably outdated need to instill political ideology in officers who would rather be learning how to collect forensic evidence. Local government

[26] Zhan Lisheng. "Angry tea farmers attack police station," *China Daily,* 26 May 2009. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-05/26/content_7941775.htm.

leaders circumvent the Ministry and exert their power over the local police by forcing them to ignore Ministry regulations so that they can protect their private interests. The institutional culture of *guanxi* (social connections) leaves station offices stocked with well-connected and senior police officers, even though patrol leaders do not have enough men to send out on the beat. These cultural and institutional impediments make reform difficult and quick fixes impossible, especially in a conservative bureaucracy that is by nature adverse to change.[27] Filled with inefficiency, frustration, mismanagement, and competing interests, this is the world of frontline police.

[27] Power in military and police bureaucracies is consolidated in the top leadership, making those organizations less vulnerable to the influence of bottom-up or outside forces. Wilson 1989.

Chapter Two

Policing in China

Who are the Chinese police? How does policing in China work? Any discussion of local state security capacity in China must first establish a baseline understanding with answers to these questions. Unfortunately, accurate information about policing in China is scattered and sometimes contradictory. The academic literature remains underdeveloped, leaving gaps in our knowledge about how frontline policing actually functions, and media or scholarly accounts of single events in specific locations can make the local security forces appear stronger[28] or more feckless[29] than they actually are. This chapter lays out the background information that matters most for understanding how policing works in China's contemporary urban setting by answering the who, what, and how questions of local state police operations.

The literature on frontline policing in China is a small but growing subfield. Scholars have told us much about local crime prevention campaigns (Xu 2015, 2014, 2012, 2009), station relationships with businesses (Xu 2013), frontline dissatisfaction (Scoggins and O'Brien 2016), and police tactics for managing groups like petitioners (Deng and O'Brien 2013) or prostitutes (Boittin 2013). There is also a growing body of literature on frontline officer perceptions, such as how frontline officers view police culture and their role in society (Chen 2016a, Chen 2016b, Chen 2016c), how officers perceive and manage expectations about social service provision (XH Wang 2015, 2014), and how police supervisors view their work and report job satisfaction (Sun,

[28] For example, foreign news outlets reported in April 2016 that Chinese police would begin monitoring nearly 7,000 foreign organizations working on civil society issues. The broad-sweeping order gives the impression of a strong and coherent public security force that is capable of implementing such an endeavor, though whether or not local forces beyond Beijing will have the manpower and organizational wherewithal to meet the requirements of the new law remains to be seen. See Edward Wong. "Clampdown in China Restricts 7,000 Foreign Organizations." *The New York Times,* 28 April 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/29/world/asia/china-foreign-ngo-law.html?_r=0.

[29] In one tragic example that made international news, a Shanghai traffic officer was dragged to his death after trying to stop a driver from making an illegal turn. Though the driver was heavily criticized, netizens also questioned why the police officer acted so rigidly over such a small offense, refusing to let go off the moving vehicle until it was too late. See Fauna. "Shanghai Traffic Police Officer Dragged to Death." *Chinasmack.com,* 18 March 2015. http://www.chinasmack.com/2015/videos/shanghai-traffic-police-officer-dragged-to-death.html.

Liu, and Farmer 2016). Moreover, several studies have analyzed the occupational attitudes of police cadets (Sun, Cretacci, Wu and Jin 2009; Sun, Sobol, Cretacci and Phillips 2010; Wu, Sun, and Cretacci 2009; Cuvelier, Jia, Cheng 2015). In the more distant past, Fredrick Wakeman's *Policing Shanghai* also provided a detail-rich description of police activity in the city over a ten-year period between 1927 and 1937 (Wakeman 1995). These works have opened up the world frontline policing in China and given insight into officer motivations, frustrations, and expectations, but there is still much to be said about how their work is influences and is shaped by broader political phenomenon.

In Chinese language materials, there is a wealth of information about the issues frontline forces face in national journals like Policing Studies (公安研究, *gongan yanjiu*), or in regional police college journals. Chinese policing scholars cover a wide range of topics related to frontline work, including stability maintenance,[30] psychological health and distress of frontline officers (Zhang et. al. 2012, Wei 2011, Hu 2009, Hu and Ren 2006), corruption (Yin 2013, Lu and Qiao 2006, Guo 2003, GL Wang 2002) crisis management (Meng 2013), self-defense (Meng 2006, Ding 2002), and frontline police training (Zhou 2010). Articles in the policing journals tend to be more practice-oriented than theoretical and often focus on policy recommendations or editorial assessments.

Moving beyond studies that focus on the frontlines, scholars have written broad historical accounts of Chinese policing (Dutton 2005, Wong 2002, Wong 2009, Sun and Wu 2010) and developed discussions of community policing in the Chinese context (Jiao 1995, Wong 2001a, 2001b, Zhong 2009, Sun and Wu 2010, Wang and Wong 2012). Much has been written about police reform (Ma 1997, Wong 2011) and its relationship to the Communist Party (Fu 1994, 2005, YH Wang 2014) and police legitimacy (Wong 2004, 2005). Scholars have also analyzed crime rates and their causes during the reform era (Bakken 2005, Liu 2005), and Michael Dutton (2000), Susan Trevaskes (2010, 2003) and Murray Scott Tanner (2000, 1999) have written about hard strike campaigns and police efforts to fight major crime. Moreover, Tanner has conducted research on policing and protest, looking at internal policing policy debates (Tanner 2004) and the potential effects of the decentralized public security apparatus in China (Tanner 2005). Finally, Sara Biddulph's study on the legislative control over powers of detention provides an account of the use and abuse of police powers (Biddulph 2007).

By piecing together the existing literature with accounts from police officers at three levels of governance and other publicly available data about policing in China, a more complete picture of the frontlines emerges, giving insight into broader questions of local state security and regime control. This chapter starts the analysis at the beginning, presenting basic information about who the Chinese police are, to whom they answer, and what they do on a daily basis. It also addresses misconceptions about police funding and looks at evidence of police misconduct and corruption. These essential facts are important for evaluating frontline policing efforts in China, and they set the stage for larger discussions about how resource constraints, ministerial reforms, and variation in control over the local police weaken security response on the ground in nearly every area of policing except response to public protest.

[30] See Chapter four for an overview of the vast Chinese literature on stability maintenance.

Who are the Chinese Local Police?

Descriptions of the Chinese police can vary dramatically. Sometimes frontline police are depicted as automatons of the Chinese state and local governments.[31] Sometimes they are seen as protest crushers and fearsome enforcers of state control.[32] And sometimes they are described as corrupt, brutish thugs who demand bribes and mete out justice with little regard to national laws or basic human rights.[33] Yet at other times, Chinese police are portrayed as incompetent dolts, whose ignorance can be both humorous[34] and alarming.[35] Often these reports raise more questions than they answer about China's frontline agents of state control. Who are the Chinese police?

Starting with basic demographic data, the Ministry of Public Security employs approximately 2 million officers nationwide. By global comparison, this is a relatively small per capita force, and Chapter Three explores the impact of these numbers on Chinese police response in more detail. All police officers within the Ministry are part of the Chinese civil service (公务员, *gongwuyuan*),

[31] In his book on collective resistance in China, Cai Yongshun downplays the role of police in protest control. He writes that the final decision on collective action incidents are typically made "by the government or their top leaders and not the police," citing a survey of 1,000 police officers in Fujian province as evidence. Cai 2010, p. 4.

[32] See for example Simon Denyer. 2015. "Chinese riot police crush grasslands protest over chemical pollution," *Washington Post* https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/chinese-riot-police-crush-grasslands-protest-over-chemical-pollution/2015/04/06/0c4a0cf2-dc6a-11e4-b6d7-b9bc8acf16f7_story.html

[33] Examples of police abuse abound. In one report from Shanxi in 2014, news spread of a female migrant worker who was beaten to death after making a demand for unpaid wages. In a widely circulated photo online, a police officer stood on the worker's hair while she lay unconscious on the street. For details of the story and translated excerpts of Chinese netizens reactions see, Fauna, "Shanxi Chinese Police Beat Woman to Death, Stand on Her Hair," *chinaSMACK,* 29 December 2014. http://www.chinasmack.com/2014/stories/shanxi-chinese-police-beat-woman-to-death-stand-on-her-hair.html.

[34] In early 2016, Guangdong police were ridiculed for being unable to tell the difference between a practical joke and rumor spreading (a legitimate charge in the PRC) when they detained a man who created a fake news page and sent it to his friends over Wechat, a social media messaging platform. See Samuel Wade. "Police Criticized Over 'Two Wife Policy' Detention." *China Digital Times,* 25 January, 2016. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2016/01/police-criticized-over-two-wife-policy-detention/.

[35] In 2015, news sources reported that an auxiliary police officer in central China accidentally fired an air gun after a night out drinking, killing his companion. Sidney Leng. "Police officer detained in Central China after he fires airgun by accident and kills civilian." *The South China Morning Post,* 14 December 2015. http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/1891120/police-officer-detained-central-china-after-he-fires-airgun.

affording them a higher social status with more desirable benefits than other frontline forces such as the auxiliary police (协警, *xiejing*). Furthermore, all official Chinese officers carry a badge and can be identified by their police number (警号, *jinghao*). Officers enter the force as early as age 18 and retire at 60, and much like other civil servants in China, older officers begin reducing their workloads around age 55. There is also a distinct divide between older officers, many of whom cut their teeth as PLA soldiers in the 1970s and 1980s, and younger officers, who tend to have little or no military experience.

This generation gap is the result of professionalization reforms that began in the 1990s as a move to improve recruitment standards and attract more qualified individuals. At that time, the force was mostly stocked with men who had military backgrounds but little formal police training or education. Higher-ups were concerned that a lack of standardization allowed unqualified individuals to don the uniform, leading to problems of corruption, misconduct, and abuse of power.[36] Article 26 of the 1995 Police Law was the first major step to improve recruitment and set basic qualification standards for incoming officers.[37] These new standards have changed the face of frontline police and resulted in a more educated force with less military experience. Police leaders have mostly welcomed the changes, but professionalization of the force has come with certain costs. One official from the provincial Ministry who is currently serving as an assistant county station chief noted that many of the younger officers lack the real world experience of the older generation, much to the chagrin of station leaders.[38] "The officers born after 1980 are only children who are used to being served by their parents and grandparents," he explained. "These workers are more difficult to deal with and often look down on certain types of work...Their lack of experience makes it hard for them to do their jobs."

Aside from these differences among officers, official police are sometimes confused with other frontline workers who wear similar uniforms or perform overlapping functions. This dissertation focuses solely on official frontline police and their superiors, but it is nevertheless important to outline the differences between police and other frontlines agents, since even seasoned China hands get confused over who is a police officer and who is not. An article in *The Atlantic,* for example, referred to *chengguan* officers from the Urban Management Department as "police"

[36] Ma 1997, p. 119.

[37] In addition to an age requirement of 18, the new law required that officers have at least a high school diploma, support the constitution (拥护宪法， *yonghu xianfa*), be healthy (身体健康， *shenti jiankang*), have a good political and professional character（有良好的政治、业务素质和良好的品行, *you lianghao de zhengzhi, yewu sushi he lianghao de pinxing*), and voluntarily work on the force (自愿从事人民警察工作， *ziyuan congshi renmin jingcha gongzuo*). It also stipulated that officers may not have been punished for a crime (曾因犯罪受过刑事处罚的， *ceng yin fanzui shouguo xingshi chufa de*) or been expelled from office 曾被开除公职的， *zeng bei kaichu gongzhi de*). Finally, Article 27 of the law required prospective recruits to take a public examination that would encourage selection based on merit.

[38] Interview, 2012.

and “cops,” despite the fact that the much-hated *chengguan* are neither.[39] While some functions of the *chengguan*, such as dealing with unlicensed street vendors, may be similar to jobs police elsewhere perform, the *chengguan* are a distinctly different security force and are not even generally considered part of the civil service.[40]

Xiejing also cause confusion. *Xiejing* are a class of auxiliary police sometimes referred to as *fujing* (辅警), which can be translated as assistant or supplemental police.[41] *Xiejing* are not official police, even though they work alongside official police or perform the same functions. One duty of *xiejing* is watching dissidents. These are sometimes the hired “thugs” who receive media attention for beating, harassing, and detaining activists and their families. But *xiejing* are also involved in more mundane matters. The older men who sit or stand on the side of the road at busy intersections with the words “POLICE” or “警察” (*jingcha*) emblazoned across poorly constructed uniforms urging pedestrians not to cross before their turn are usually *xiejing*, as are many of the men stationed at the small, temporary police sheds erected on the streets of some Chinese cities. *Xiejing* wear the characteristic light blue shirts and dark slacks that are the uniform of China’s police, but most do not have badges.

The images below provide a visual representation of the similarities between frontline forces. Such ambiguities make it difficult to distinguish between official police and other frontline security agents. Images 1-2 show official police uniforms. Anyone working at the local *paichusuo* is most certainly a police officer, but what of the plainclothes men guarding the gate in Image 3? Or the security forces dressed in black handling protest control in Image 5? And what of the uniformed older man in Image 6, or the official looking officers in Image 4? Of these groups only the security forces dressed in black are official Chinese police, although real officers are sometimes dispatched to handle dissident control instead of the contract *xiejing*. Sometimes it is almost impossible to know if someone is an official police officer without asking him or her directly. *Chengguan* uniforms often look similar to police, but they are clearly marked as *chengguan* on the sleeve. *Xiejing* can be tougher to identify,[42] but one officer offered the following advice, “Look at their feet. Real officers wear police shoes.”[43] Looking at the

[39] Matt Schiavenza. 2013. “Meet the ‘Chengguan’: China’s Violent, Hated Local Cops.” *The Atlantic,* 22 July. http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/07/meet-the-chengguan-chinas-violent-hated-local-cops/277975/.

[40] For an interesting perspective on how real police officers and *chengguan* officers interact see JH Xu. 2013.

[41] Other names for *xiejing* include 协勒员 (*xie le yuan*)，联防队员 (*lianfang dui yuan*), and 治安员 (*zhi an yuan*), though *xiejing* is the most commonplace and is now the official term for auxiliary police in Beijing. Interview with district station leader, Beijing, 2012. See also Liao Jianchun 廖建春 . 2010.“协警执法问题研究” (English Title listed as: On the Enforcement of Auxiliary Police), *Journal of Guangxi Administrative Cadre Institute of Politics and Law*, 25:2, pp. 54-9.

[42] In Beijing, *xiejing* uniforms are clearly marked. Interview with district station leader, Beijing, 2013.

[43] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

images 3-6 above, the *chengguan* officers are clearly wearing soft shoes that indicate their status, but this does not hold true for every city. The security personnel guarding the dissident's residence are wearing a more formal type of shoe, leading to ambiguity about whether or not they are real officers or just wearing common black shoes like many other Chinese men of that age.

Images 1-2: Local Police Uniforms

1.	2.
	

1. Summer police uniforms
2. Long sleeve uniform with coat.

Image credits: Sponsored Police Uniform Specialty Store
http://www.cscxbg.com/product/20150310164652.html

Images 3-6: Other Security Personnel

3.

4.

5.

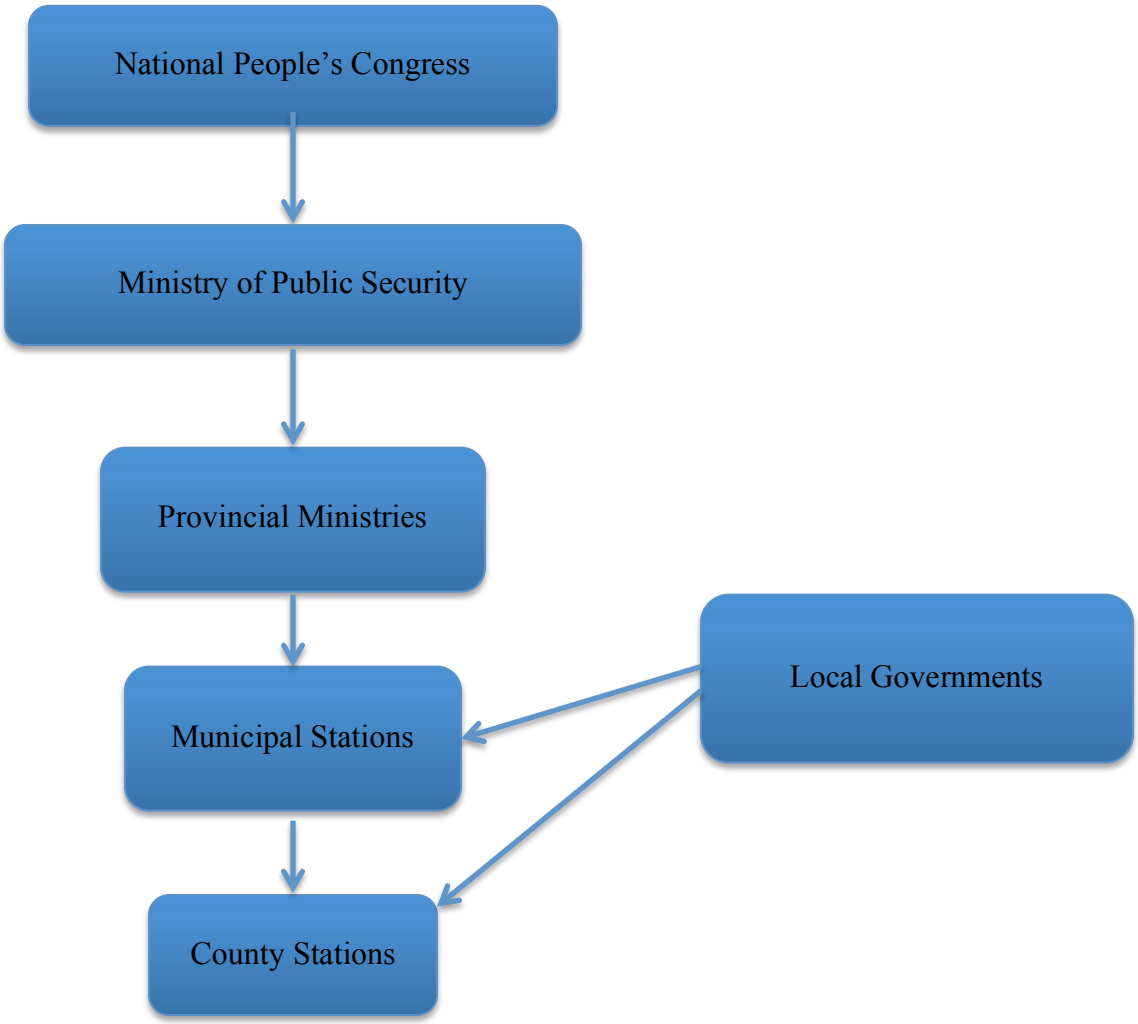
6.

3. A reporter is stopped by security personal outside the compound where dissident Zeng Jinyan is under house arrest. Because of the relatively high profile of Zeng, these men may be official police. Photo Credit: Frederic J. Brown, Getty Images.
4. Two *chengguan* officers observe street vendors in Suzhou. Photo Credit: Chinanews.com
5. Riot police in Shifang guard a street against protestors. Photo Credit: Weibo user 3483416086
6. An older man, most likely a xiejing, stands on the side of the road supervising traffic. Author's photo.

Who Oversees the Local Police?

Policing in China is ostensibly centralized and governed from the top down. Even far-flung county stations are required to follow national directives and ultimately held accountable to the Ministry of Public Security in Beijing. The National People's Congress officially sets general laws, and the Ministry uses these directives to devise more specific laws and regulations that local stations must follow. The Central Ministry oversees training programs for local police, affording them further influence over policing practices such as how to use new technology are respond to certain crimes. To further ensure compliance, local police bureaus are required to file reports with higher ups in the bureaucracy, and representatives of the Ministry may periodically make trips to the local level to observe operations first hand. A chart mapping the chain of command is outlined below in Figure A.

Figure A:



As the box to the far right implies, however, control over the local police is shared with local governments that hold considerable sway. Ties between the central and local state in China

have always been fraught, and the proverb "heaven is high and the emperor is far away" (天高皇帝远, *tian gao huangdi yuan*) is often used to describe the weak connection between the two, implying distance as well as local autonomy in the tendency of municipal and county officials to ignore the Center. Both are issues for the police bureaucracy. The sheer variety of local and street-level actors – frontline police, station leaders, and city and county-level government officials – complicate the Ministry's enforcement of rules, as does the physical remove of counties and cities from the Center.

Moreover, the Ministry of Public Security is a vast organization that does much more than oversee local police. In total, MPS has 36 departments that manage a host of public security concerns such as criminal investigations, economic crimes, internet security, customs, border control, prison administration, transportation, and narcotics. The list goes on: departments are devoted to domestic security protection, counter-terrorism, forestry services, and civil aviation. It even has departments charged with overseeing dangerous cults and mobile technology. This is in addition to a small group of departments that manage internal matters such as public relations, internal auditing, and political matters.[44]

Many of these departments do not involve the local police. Internet activism, for example, is a growing concern for the Ministry, and it maintains a large team of officers in Beijing and elsewhere who work around the clock to monitor email, social media, and other web-based communications.[45] Because blanket censorship is no longer feasible given the number of internet users and the possibilities that creative use of homonyms provide,[46] programmers within the Ministry are working to find better solutions that allow a certain amount of dissent.[47] "We have the Water Army (网络水军， *wangluo shuijun* – an online group of commentators) to spread information," explained one provincial bureau official, "but we are most concerned with the rise of misinformation. Four or five years ago, unfounded rumors were a big problem in our province, but now we have better methods to shut them down."[48] Such efforts to police the internet require technical expertise and have little to no involvement with frontline police or local stations.

Other political concerns also occupy the attention of the Ministry, most of which involve the Domestic Security Department (DSD, 国内安全保护支队, *guonei anquan baohu zhidui*) and have slightly more local police involvement. In such cases, the local police are subordinate to those departments. The DSD is a special branch of the Chinese police force that maintains departments all the way down to the municipal level and is charged with protecting and strengthening the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. It is one of the most secretive branches within the Ministry since it specializes in intelligence collection, political dissident control, and

[44] A full list of MPS departments is available on their website. www.mps.gov.cn.
[45] Personal communication with internet monitors, Beijing 2007.
[46] For an in-depth analysis of how the censorship game plays out in China, see Han 2015a. A broader overview of censorship is also presented in King, Pan, and Roberts 2013, 2014.
[47] For information on how pro-government online commentary is encouraged, see Han 2015b.
[48] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan 2012.

response to a wide range of activities deemed subversive to the regime. Limited information about DSD activity is publicly available, but occasionally internal documents surface. One such document confirmed that the DSD's number one priority is to protect social and political stability and provided some insight into the Party committee leaderships' control over DSD activities. [49] Because of its proximity to the party and focus on national security issues, the DSD remains separate from other police forces and enjoys a high priority in the MPS.[50] Local police are expected to assist the DSD when necessary, but none of my respondents reported such an experience.

The local police are thus controlled or influenced by several different types of higher-ranking authorities, the two most important of which are the Ministry of Public Security and their local government. Chapter 5 will explore these relationships in greater detail and show how and under what conditions the two exert control over the local station crime response. For now, it is sufficient to say that control over local police is divided and variations in how control is wielded can influence response outcomes on the ground, especially when Central Ministry officials decide to get directly involved in local police affairs.

What is the Mission of Local Police?

What does police work in China look like? Frontline officers are formally charged with serving the Communist Party and the public (为了人民服务, *weile renmin fuwu*). In practice, this means they must deal with crime, handle stability maintenance, and otherwise conduct work that advances the interests of the government. The job is not glamorous or particularly appreciated by the public. As Kevin O'Brien and I have documented elsewhere, police work can be exhausting for frontline agents, as local police labor under heavy caseloads, low pay, and administrative drudgery (Scoggins and O'Brien 2016). The work itself can vary, even for officers in the same position. Sometimes the job is excruciatingly boring, as evidenced by the many sleeping patrol officers I observed in squad cars parked on the side of the road at busy intersections in various field sites. In the summer, they typically sit two or four per car with the windows down, feet up, and heads back, catching rest any way they can get it in the smoggy heat. In the winter, they hunch down, trying to trap as much body heat as possible in their heavy coats and gloves as they wait for time to pass or a call to come in. When called for duty, however, these same officers must shift on a dime, since patrol work can be quite demanding and dangerous at other times. Office work is typically more consistent, but almost all officers report working long hours with frequent overtime.[51]

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[49] Chinadigitaltimes.net. "Internal Document of the Domestic Security Department of the Public Security Bureau." http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2010/01/internal-document-of-the-domestic-security-department-of-the-public-security-bureau-part-i/ Accessed March 1, 2015.

[50] Interview with ministry official, Beijing, 2012.

[51] Hu 2009 discusses the prevalence of overtime for frontline police.

The bulk of police work in China involves managing everyday crimes such as traffic accidents, burglaries, petty thefts, white-collar crime, rapes, murders, and other violent offenses. The size of local stations can vary dramatically, and in a small county station (派出所, *paichusuo*) with as few as 5 employees, officers on duty may share responsibility for handling all the crimes that occur in their jurisdiction, though who does what depends on seniority and social connections.[52] In larger cities, however, caseloads are divided among specialized departments. Criminal investigation divisions, for example, handle murder, violent crime, and rape cases, while traffic divisions deal with any and all street activity. Patrol divisions primarily manage petty theft and other public order violations, though patrol officers are also the first responders for a wide variety of cases. Officers are expected to manage their caseload in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Ministry in the criminal procedure code. Local police are also expected to file case reports that document each and every crime, police action taken, and any admission of guilt by the offending parties. The Ministry uses that information to track criminal activity and by the court system to prosecute offenders.

The mission of local police is not just to respond to crimes; frontline forces are also called upon to reduce the frequency with which crimes occur. We know that the reform era has brought an increase in crimes across the board for Chinese cities (Liu and Messner 2001), but it is very difficult to quantify police success in reducing crime because accurate data is hard to come by. The Chinese government is very selective in the information it releases about crime rates,[53] and more importantly, no frontline officer to whom I spoke expressed any confidence in the reliability of official figures. "You cannot trust any of the crime statistics," explained one officer.[54] "Crime in China is not nearly as low as they say it is." The example of China's murder rate illustrates how expectations for crime rates are driving local police to underreport and flat-out fabricate crime data. In 2004, the Ministry launched an anti-murder campaign in which all local public security authorities were required to reduce murders and raise clearance rates. The results were astounding, especially since few additional resources were allotted to help local stations meet new targets, and the number of murder cases gradually returned to levels not seen since the early 1980s. Unfortunately, no one has any confidence in the accuracy of these statistics, which by some reports has obscured the true murder rate beyond recognition.[55]

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[52] For more information about how age and social connections affect workloads, see chapter 3's discussion of officer officers.

[53] The government releases, for example, information about homicides and drug seizures to the UNODC, but not much else. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes UN-CTS Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics. https://data.unodc.org/#state:60. More data is available in The China Law Yearbook and in official state news articles.

[54] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[55] The Economist has an excellent article outlining the changes in the murder rate. See 2013. "Murder Mysteries: Official Figures Showing a Sharp Drop in China's Murder Rate are Misleading," *The Economist,* 6 April 2013. http://www.economist.com/news/china/21575767-official-figures-showing-sharp-drop-chinas-murder-rate-are-misleading-murder-mysteries?zid=317&ah=8a47fc455a44945580198768fad0fa41.

In addition to handling and (at least in theory) reducing everyday crimes, local police are also charged with political work.[56] For all the Ministry's talk about rule of law and strict adherence to procedure, the Chinese police continue to operate in a politicized, authoritarian environment. Though the police have become increasingly independent from the Communist Party in the reform era (Fu 1994), their relationship with the Party remains strong at all levels,[57] and local stations are still held accountable to local CCP Committees"[58] One officer explained, "the Party is still the most important (authority for local police)."[59] On the administrative side, police stations maintain the household registration documents (户口, *hukou*) that record and track movement for local residents. In larger cities, stations have designated officers who carry out this work, the majority of whom are female.[60] But political work has a much darker side. Since the police are the frontline agents of the Party's control, they have historically been charged with doing the Party's dirty work. Fu Hualing reports that some officers feel betrayed by new campaigns that hold them accountable for technically illegal activities performed in the service of the party,[61] but more some evidence of give and take on the issue has also emerged. In 2012, for example, local police were officially granted detention powers that had long been used but were formally outlawed.[62]

Such political work bleeds into crime control, especially in the case of stability maintenance. *Weiwen* is an important task for police officers in China, and local police are expected to respond to protest events, detain dissidents, and retrieve petitioners who attempt to lodge complaints at higher levels of government. Such work is politically important, and prioritization of *weiwen* harkens back to the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, when the police and military began developing a more unified approach to dealing with social unrest. Efforts further intensified in 2005 when President Hu Jintao called on provincial and ministerial level cadres to build a "socialist harmonious society."[63] With new attention from government leaders, protests went from being handled haphazardly and with little guidance from above[64] to the standardized, coordinated, and sometimes militarized responses we read about in the news today.

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[56] Even policing in democratic countries is political (Brodeur 1983, 2010). In China, the political functions of the police are quite overt and articulated by officers at all levels.

[57] YH Wang 2014 looks at the political empowerment of public security chiefs on the provincial level.

[58] See also Fu 2005, p 243.

[59] Interview with station officer, Hubei, 2015

[60] Interview with Provincial Ministry official on rotation at a local station's *hukou* division, 2012.

[61] Fu calls this the "irreconcilable conflict between politics and law. Fu 2005, p. 248.

[62] For an overview of current detention powers, see Stanly Lubman. "Arrested, detained: a guide to navigating China's police powers." *The Wall Street Journal China Real Time Report Blog,* 12 August 2014. http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/08/12/arrested-detained-a-guide-to-navigating-chinas-police-powers/.

[63] Hu Jintao. 2005. "On Building a Socialist Harmonious Society" (构建和谐主义社会), 19 February. http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/news/899546.htm.

[64] Interviews with retired county and city level officers, Hebei, 2010.

The annual number of mass incidents is generally thought to be rising around the country.[65] Local police do not handle the large-scale riots that involve 500 people or more, but they deal with nearly everything else, right down to small displays of dissent (上方， *shangfang*) that sometimes involve only single individuals. Given the frequency of reports about rising protests in the international news[66] and the highly developed protest literature within China studies, it is easy to get the impression that much of what Chinese police officers do is related to protest. It is not. Outside of politically sensitive areas like Xinjiang or Tibet, most city and county stations are filled with officers who rarely deal with protests. Among the cities where I conducted research, even police in the city that experiences the most social unrest said their station spends 30% of its time on the issue.[67] In other areas with fewer minority groups and less economic development, many officers reported they have never had to deal with such issues.

How are Chinese Police Funded?

Local police need money to carry out their mission of handling crime, conducting stability maintenance work, and serving the political directives of the Party. Much has been made of national budget figures showing that China spends more on internal security than it does on national defense,[68] but a breakdown demonstrates that the figures are not quite what they seem. By numbers alone, the budget for China's internal security is impressive. In 2013, the 12th National People's Congress allocated 769.1 billion yuan (approximately US$ 117 billion USD) to public security. Yet in 2014 the budget fell to just 205 billion yuan (US$ 31 billion) and 212 billion yuan (US$32 billion) in 2015. These new figures reflect central government spending on internal security but omit local and provincial government contributions, which accounts for 70-80 percent of total allocations.[69] Officially, the Ministry of Finance changed the reporting practice because data collection at the lower levels was still in progress. But the decision is more likely related to concerns over international press coverage and the political sensitivity of stability maintenance (*weiwen* 维稳),[70] which many believe is driving the increase in domestic

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[65] The annual number of mass incidents in China has been on the rise since the Tiananmen Square protests, with some estimates as high as 200,000 per year. For a more precise breakdown of the available numbers and what they encompass, see Peter Lorentzen, *Controlled Burn.* (Book Manuscript), Chapter Three.

[66] There are many such examples in the news. Well-publicized ones include Wukan Village riots in 2011 and the anti-Japanese protests that swept the major cities in 2012.

[67] Interview, district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[68] Ben Blanchard and John Ruwitch. "China hikes defense budget, to spend more on internal security," *Reuters,* 5 March 2013. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-defence-idUSBRE92403620130305.

[69] Xie 2013, p. 87.

[70] Edward Wong. "Beijing goes quiet on rise of local security budgets," 6 March 2014. http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/03/06/beijing-goes-quiet-on-rise-of-local-security-budgets.

security funds.[71] Though the new budget is incomplete, we can assume the total remains somewhere in the neighborhood of 2013's RMB 769 billion, if not much higher. Domestic security spending has risen sharply every year since the Ministry of Finance began releasing the data in 2009.[72]

What does the internal security budget mean in comparative perspective? At RMB 769 billion, the amount China is said to allocate would be roughly on par with next big spender on policing: the United States.[73] This is more than heavily policed[74] Russia (US$ 22 billion)[75] or Turkey (US$ 3.4 billion),[76] and it outstrips the budgets of similarly-sized India (US$ 19.7 billion)[77] and neighboring Japan (US$ 3.1 billion). [78] Per capita, however, China would rank in the middle of

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[71] Chinese officials have repeated denied that public security funds are for weiwen. There is no separate budget category for weiwen. Haiyan Wang. 2012. "Weiwen fei chao 7000 yi? Caizhengbu: tou huan gainian," ("Stability maintenance fees over 700 billion? Ministry of Finance: one conceptualization." *Southern Metropolis Daily.* 7 March 2012. http://gcontent.oeeee.com/1/41/1415db70fe9ddb11/Blog/6da/8d38ae.html?bsh_bid=83321550. Accessed on 23 July 2014.

[72] Beijing Youth Daily. "Ministry of Finance announced the central budget yesterday, five-year public security spending to grow 7 times" (财政部昨日公布中央预算 5 年公共安全支出增长七成, *caizhengbu zuori gongbu zhongyang yusuan 5 nian gonggong quanzhi chu zeng zhang qi cheng*), 26 March 2014. http://finance.people.com.cn/n/2014/0326/c1004-24737430.html.

[73] The United States Bureau of Justice Statistic estimates total "police protection," to be approximate 124 billion USD based on 2010 Census data. http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5049.

[74] Based on reported police per capita. "Most Heavily Policed: Countries," *Bloomberg.* http://www.bloomberg.com/visual-data/best-and-worst/most-heavily-policed-countries Accessed on 21 July 2013.

[75] Eugene Written, Maxim Tovkaylo, and Alexei Nikolsky. "Здравоохранению и образованию хотят добавить 700 млрд руб. Ежегодно. Читайте" (Health and education want to add 700 billion rubles annually). V*edomosti.* 14 February 2012. http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/1502548/proschaj_oruzhie?full#cut Accessed on 21 July 2014. It is possible that the budget is higher than reported here. Lidia Kelly (2014). "Russia's secret spending on rise, budget risks not properly assessed: IMF." *Reuters.* 26 May 2014. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/26/us-russia-policy-imf-idUSBREA4P0A020140526 Accessed on 21 July 2014.

[76] 2006 data from the Tenth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (Tenth CTS, 2005-2005). https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Tenth-CTS-access.html . This number may not include the prefectural police budget

[77] "Crime in India: 2012 statistics" http://ncrb.nic.in/CD-CII2012/Statistics2012.pdf. Accessed 21 July 2014.

[78] "Pingcheng 26 niandunei gefu suoguan, yiban huiji suichu yusuan ge mu mingxi shu." "FY2014 Cabinet Office General Account Expenditure Budget with Specifications" http://www.cao.go.jp/yosan/soshiki/h26/h26naikakufu_tousyo.pdf. Accessed on 17 August 2014. This number does not include all prefectural police spending.

those countries, spending half of what Russia does per capita and less than a quarter of what is spent on US policing. China's budget would be four times what Japan spends, six times India's spending, and nearly twice as much as Turkey. Within-country budget comparisons are also telling.[79] Instead of outspending national security, for example, the UK police budget is slightly lower than that of foreign aid.[80] There is only one catch.

Not everything in the public security budget goes to the police or even to the Ministry of Public Security, making the above comparisons imperfect. Even less makes its way to the local police. Though the specifics of how the entire RMB 769 billion is distributed remain unclear, a breakdown of the $205 billion dollar 2014 central government budget is outlined in Table 2. A large chunk of the budget goes to various police entities, with the People's Armed Police (PAP, or 武警, *wujing*) getting the lion's share. Despite its name, PAP officers are not local police but a paramilitary force comprised of somewhere between 660,000[81] and 1.5 million men and women.[82] The PAP is most famous for riot control, but it also protects the borders, national forests, and state-owned gold mines and has a fire-fighting brigade. Another RMB 16 billion funds public security operations at the central level, and smaller fractions of the budget go to the courts, procuratorate, judiciary, and anti-smuggling police, leaving about RMB 66 billion in "transfer payments" (转移支付 *zhuanyi zhifu*) for distribution at the local level.

[79] In 2011 the state press agency Xinhua defended China's public security spending by citing a 2009 report from the IMF showing that Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, and Russia all spend more on public security than military expenditures; however, the veracity of this statement depends on a very broad definition of "public security." None of the countries listed have police budgets exceeding national defense. "Niezao 'zhongguo weiwenyusuan' quefa jiben changshi" ("Trumping up "China's stability maintenance budget' lacks basic common sense") *Xinhua.* 6 April 2011. http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-04/06/c_121272130.htm. Accessed 24 July 2014.

[80] Figures are for 2014. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2217634/Foreign-aid-spending-12-6billion-overtake-police-budget.html.

[81] 2006 China Defense White Paper http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/book/194480.htm.

[82] Fisher 2010, p. 5, 33.

Table 2

2014 Public Security Budget (Central Government Spending only)		
Category, Program	**Budgeted** (in billions of yuan)	**Budgeted** (in millions of USD)
People's Armed Police	107.417	16,370
Public Security	16.488	2,510
Procuratorate	0.373	56
Courts	0.528	80
Judiciary	0.194	29
Anti-Smuggling Police	1.823	280
Transfer payments to local level	66.150	10,080
Total Budget	**205.065**[83]	**31,250**

Source: Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China[84]

But those are just the figures for what the Central government provides. The local and provincial governments provide the remaining RMB 564 billion of the 2014 budget. Combined with central government transfer payments, a portion of this money supports the local police, but funds are also earmarked for stability preservation offices at all levels of government,

[83] The 2014 budget is used because it is more detailed than the one for 2015, which omits transfer payment information. Interestingly, the published budget numbers for 2014 do not add up. The first six categories should total 138.9 billion, but they only amount to 126.8 billion. Prior budget reports have included a seventh category of "other public security expenses" (其他公共安全指出) that may have been omitted from the online report. Yss.mof.gov.cn. 2014. "Guanyu 2014 nian zhongyang benji zhichu yusuan de shuoming" (Description of the 2014 central level expenditure budget).

[84] Yss.mof.gov.cn. 2014. "2014 nian zhongyang gonggong caizheng zhichu yusuan biao" (2014 Central Government Public Expenditures Budget Report).

offices that are separate and distinct from the police,[85] as well as local courts, jails, prisons, and other public works.[86] Detailed budgets reports at these levels are not generally available to the public, but in 2012, Gangcha county (刚察县) in Qinghai province released an uncharacteristically specific account. [87] In addition to spending on the categories listed above in the central budget, the county uses internal security funds for national security, prisons, and re-education through labor.

Given these budget breakdowns, how much of the approximately RMB 630 billion (transfer payments + locally provided funds) in public security funds actually makes it to local police stations? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. In Gangcha County, half of the reported 15.17 million RMB (US$ 2.5 million) total funds for public security went to the local police. For other cities, the percentage ranged from 30% - 60%.[88] In Harbin, the local police received 40% of public security funds in 2013.[89] Based on these figures, local police funding is likely somewhere between one third to one half of the RMB 630 billion, but even this approximation may not reflect actual spending. In 2003 government leaders designed budget reforms to increase cash flow to ground-level stations by making counties contribute a higher percentage of their

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[85] Feng 2013, p 3.

[86] In a statement to the press, a Ministry of Finance official said part of the money goes to public works unrelated to stability maintenance, including public health, public transportation, construction safety, and increased supervision of food safety. The official provided neither a detailed account of these activities nor an explanation for why they were not included under the separate budget categories of healthcare, transportation, and general public service. Haiyan Wang. 2012. "Weiwen fei chao 7000 yi? Caizhengbu: tou huan gainian," ("Stability maintenance fees over 700 billion? Ministry of Finance: one conceptualization." *Southern Metropolis Daily.* 7 March 2012. http://gcontent.oeeee.com/1/41/1415db70fe9ddb11/Blog/6da/8d38ae.html?bsh_bid=83321550. Accessed on 23 July 2014.

[87] Zhang Youyi. 2013. "Jinnian zhongyang gonggonganquan yusuan 1289yi gaoyu jiao ke wen sheng." ("This year the central budget for public security is 128.9 billion yuan, higher than spending on: education; science and technology; culture, sport and media; and health and family planning") *Sina*. 28 March 2013. http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2013-03-28/030526662346.shtml. Accessed on 11 August 2014.

[88] Taken from author's random sample of ten prefectural level cities across China. Many of the cities selected provided no or partial information about the police to public security budget ratio. This is a preliminary estimate and more research is needed.

[89] Hrbczj.gov.cn. 2013. "2013 nian haerbin shi benji defang gonggong caizheng yusuan shouzhi anpai qingkuang biao." "2013 Harbin local public budget balance sheet arrangments." http://www.hrbczj.gov.cn/czxxgk/czyszxxx/zfysxx/5260.htm. Accessed on August 12, 2014. And Zwgk.harbin.gov.cn. 2013. "Guanyu haerbinshi gonganju 2013nian bumen yusuan youguan qingkuang de shuoming," ("Description of the Harbin municipal public security bureau 2013 departmental budget"). http://zwgk.harbin.gov.cn/auto336/auto343/201310/P020131031336493160240.doc. Accessed on August 12, 2014.

budgets to public security, but without the necessary funds, many cash-strapped local governments get saddled with funding expectations they cannot meet.[90] Even when funds are available, reports of station expenditures in four provinces (Guangdong, Jiangsu, Qinghai and Ningxia) show that much of the money is used to pay down old debts, not support operations.[91] The central government is trying to increase transfer payments to ensure funding at the local level,[92] but progress is slow.

This breakdown presents a far slimmer budget for policing than casual consumers of the RMB 769 figure might suspect. Some bureaus in large cities nevertheless appear well funded. In Beijing, the municipal police budget for 2013 was a reported 3.87 billion yuan (US$ 630 million), most of which came from public security funds and went to operations and training.[93] In the boomtown of Shenzhen, the public security bureau spent 1.55 billion yuan (US$251 million) in 2013 on police officer salaries, operations, special projects, and social insurance fund contributions.[94] Such figures, if accurate, paint an impressive picture of local police funding, but Beijing and Shenzhen are atypical. As the capital city and site of protests like the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest, Beijing is a politically important location that the leadership wishes to safeguard against social unrest and crime. Shenzhen, while lacking the history and political significance of Beijing, is an economic powerhouse bordering Hong Kong with a manufacturing sector that employs more than 7 million migrant workers. Both cities frequently see labor, land, and property rights protests, and have access to deep public coffers.

But the majority of local police stations in China are not located in major cities or politically contentious regions. These cities and counties cannot turn to rich local governments or national public security funds, and their budget shortages are well documented.[95] Many bureaus do not have enough funds to purchase proper equipment, making everyday tasks more challenging and time consuming. Most local stations are left to cope with budget shortfall by resorting to catch-as-catch-can strategies in order to keep their bureaus running. Money-making activities include tried and true methods like levying fines,[96] but they also pursue more innovative means

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[90] Xie 2013, p. 87.
[91] Xie 2013, p. 86.
[92] Chen Tongkui. 2012. “Yusuan nei gonggonganqu zhichu yin guanzhu.” (“Public security expenses in the budget attract attention.” *South Reviews*. 16 March 2012. http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2012-03-16/145724126565.shtml. Accessed on August 12, 2014.
[93] “Beijing jinnian gonggonganquan yusuan jin 33yi yin shemi weigongbu mingxi.” (This year’s public security budget in Beijing nears 3.3 billion, details are classified.”) *Beijing News.* 21 March 2013. http://news.qq.com/a/20130321/000043.htm. Accessed on 7 August, 2014.
[94] Szga.gov.cn. “Shenzhenshi gonganju 2014nian bumen yusuan he “sangong” jingfei yusuan qingkuang.” (“Shenzhen City Police Bureau’s 2014 Departmental Budget and “Three Publics” Expenditure Budget”). http://www.szga.gov.cn/ZWGK/ZJXX/CZYS/201404/t20140414_64054.htm. Accessed on 12 August 2014.
[95] Fu and Choy 2003.
[96] For a discussion of fine levying over time, see Fu 2005, p. 247.

such as teaming up with businesses, both local and foreign, to generate profits, a widespread practice that is not without controversy in policing circles because it publicly exposes the symbiotic relationship between the police and corporations (Xu 2013). Chapter three will explore the budget and resource shortage in greater depth.

Local Police Corruption and Misconduct

A final question people often have about the Chinese police relates to the prevalence of corruption and misconduct. Here the data is mostly vague and anecdotal. We know the Ministry has enacted an increasingly developed system of laws and procedures to curb individualized police power and mold the local force in its image. In the 1980s, central government officials became concerned that the unchecked authority of local police was eroding state legitimacy. To curb individualized power, the Ministry enacted reforms such as the previously discussed professionalization standards to address the issue. These reforms were also joined by efforts to increase supervision over the police and require greater adherence to the rule of law as well as by more targeted campaigns like the 2003 Five Prohibitions campaign enacted by then-Minister of Public Security, Zhou Yongkang. A senior official in a Beijing municipal bureau explained the shift: "In [the 1980s], the police had a lot of power because there were no real laws. . . Police could do whatever they wanted, but this was bad for the country. Now, the law is more important than individuals."[97] By promoting rule following and professionalization of the force, police reforms have made some headway, but as continued reports of corruption and misconduct demonstrate, the process is far from over.

Ministry officials say that centralization efforts are necessary to bring ground-level officers in line. Chinese police, much like police elsewhere, are known to engage in a wide range of misconduct, including beating suspects,[98] taking bribes,[99] and engaging in illegal activities.[100]

[97] Interview, Beijing, 2013.

[98] It is not uncommon for the press to publish stories on police brutality, particularly when the beatings result in death. For a well-known 2008 case of a young suspect's fatal beating in Harbin, see "Haerbin 6 Jingcha Shexian Dasi Nan Qingnian An" (6 Harbin police allegedly kill young man) *Netease*, 11 October 2008, http://news.163.com/special/0001135D/jingchadaren.html.

[99] Although most bribes go unreported, accounts sometimes surface in the press. See "Jingcha Shou 9 Wan Huilu Fangzou Xingan Yifan: Cheng Yin Falü Yishi Bugou" (Police accept 90,000 yuan in bribes to release suspects, said the suspects' knowledge of law is lacking), *Southern Metropolis Daily*, 7 September 2013 http://news.sohu.com/20130907/n386087346.shtml.

[100] Reports of police acting above the law are sometimes covered by the media and range from hit and run incidents to helping offspring gain university admission through improper means. See "Liaoning Fumeng Xian Jingche Shuang Ren Taoyi An Siji Bei Yifa Juliu" (Police car driver in Liaoning Fumeng County hit and run case detained according to the law) *Xinhua*, 17 April 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2013-04/17/c_115428978.htm and "Hunan Longhui Gonganju Zhengwei Nüer Maomingdingti Shang Daxue" (Hunan Longhui police commissioner's

Some of the most egregious and well-publicized violence is actually carried out by the *chengguan*,[101] but there is no shortage of evidence that police officers also engage in violent and unlawful activity. Moreover, government leaders are not averse to letting state media sources report on police corruption and misconduct. China's system of Internet censorship and state media control is complex,[102] but stories of bad behavior on the part of the police regularly appear in media outlets looking to boost readership or internet traffic.[103] The most famous story in recent memory is the corruption case of former police chief and vice mayor of Chongqing, Wang Lijun, who in 2012 fled to the American Consulate to seek protection from then-Politburo member Bo Xilai.[104] But other examples abound. In 2015, police shot and killed an unarmed petitioner,[105] and in 2010 a police chief was found guilty of rape and taking bribes in excess of USD$2.6 million.[106] In the age of digital media and citizen journalism, damning visual evidence against local police is also mounting. Disturbing footage has emerged of local police engaging in brazen hit and runs[107] and beating residents at a demolition site.[108]

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daughter uses an imposter to attend university) *China Youth Daily*, 5 May 2009, http://news.163.com/09/0505/08/58HMPUF500011229.html.

[101] The *chengguan* recently grabbed headlines around the world when chengguan officials killed a watermelon seller in Hunan. See Matt Schiavenza. 2013. "Meet the 'chengguan': China's violent, hated local cops." *The Atlantic.* 22 July. http://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/07/meet-the-chengguan-chinas-violent-hated-local-cops/277975/.

[102] For recent in-depth analyses of how the state influences the media, see Stern and Hassid 2012 and Stockmann and Gallagher 2011.

[103] By allowing stories of local police misconduct to surface, the Chinese state is also engaging in information collection. For more on how watchdog journalism can serve the goals of the state, see Lorentzen 2014.

[104] Ian Johnson and Jonathan Ansfield. "Key figure in scandal that felled Bo Xilai is charged." *The New York Times.* 5 September 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/06/world/asia/key-figure-in-bo-xilai-scandal-is-charged.html.

[105] Kiki Zhao. "China clears police officer in death of unarmed man, but controversy isn't over," *The New York Times*, 15 May 2015. http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/china-police-shooting-xu-chunhe/?_r=0.

[106] Sophie Beach, "Former Chinese police chief sentenced to death in gangland case." *China Digital Times.* 14 April 2010. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2010/04/former-chinese-police-chief-sentenced-to-death-in-gangland-case/.

[107] Fauna. "Chinese police car hits crossing pedestrian then drives away." *ChinaSMACK.* 18 April 2013. http://www.chinasmack.com/2013/videos/chinese-police-car-hits-crossing-pedestrian-then-drives-away.html.

[108] *Xinhua.* "*Haikou yansu chuli ouda qunzhong shijian youyingqu quzhang yinjiucizhi*" 海口严肃处理殴打群众事件 秀英区区长引咎辞职 (Haikou deals severely with beatings during mass incident; Youying district chief admits responsibility and resigns), 2 May 2016. http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2016-05/02/c_1118783295.htm.

Standout stories such as those above are only a taste of the bad behavior that occurs in public security bureaus around the country. Even more common is the acceptance of gifts from individuals hoping to curry favor with police officers and leaders. In interviews, officers may discuss the misconduct of their peers and sometimes speak of their own acceptance of small gifts, but the subject is largely taboo. Companies and individuals alike may provide gifts to the police, both as an annual tradition during holidays and on an as-needed basis. This topic is very sensitive, and only respondents in Hebei were willing to discuss it in any meaningful way. According to these sources, gifts are presented to both leaders and lower level officers alike, though higher-ranking officers get more. One older officer in Hebei reported that he was offered a vast array of gifts over the course of his thirty-year career. He explained that he mostly turned down cash gifts but often accepted valuable gifts such as tea sets, food products, alcohol, and cigarettes. As an investigator, many of the gifts were proffered by the families who were victims of the crime he was investigating, and sometimes they were given to show appreciation for his help after the case was resolved. Often, persons charged with the crime offered up cash gifts. He said he was less willing to take such gifts because he often could do nothing to help those individuals. This particular officer was quite open in discussing the process of gift giving. As a self-identified villager (农村人) he explained that his needs were simple, making him far more interested in solving cases than profiting financially. His wife, now a successful business woman, corroborates this story by complaining about how much money they could have made off of the gifts her husband turned down. She even compared him to some of his colleagues who profited financially in this manner from their posts.

Most recently, with the anti-corruption efforts begun by the Xi Jinping administration, public security reforms have begun to target internal corruption head-on, unseating officials at all levels of the bureaucracy who have been deemed to engage in inappropriate behavior and strengthening supervisory capabilities of the procuratorate over public security.[109] Data from interviews with Ministry officials also reveals concern over local police malfeasance as a motivating factor for efforts to increase centralized control. “Corruption is a very big problem,” explained one official.[110] “It is perhaps the biggest challenge the Ministry faces.” “We must curb local police power,” said another police leader.[111] Whether or not such efforts will be successful is unclear. There is some evidence to suggest that headway has been made in larger cities. “The standards for Beijing police are much higher,” explained one official, “ [Officers in Beijing] have a greater understanding of the law. If you compare them with other areas, you can clearly see the difference. The character of local officers [elsewhere] is lower quality . . . this causes problems for the Ministry.”[112]

[109] “公安改革 公安系统的大老虎腐败不堪习大大坚决改革,” (In police reforms, corrupt public security tigers cannot fend off Papa Xi’s resolute reforms) 31 December 2014. http://finance.gucheng.com/201412/2915084.shtml

[110] Interview with Ministry official, 2012, Southern China.

[111] Interview with municipal police leader, 2012, Beijing.

[112] Interview, Beijing, 2013.

The issues of police corruption and misconduct are important. We know that the Chinese public is concerned about police corruption,[113] and that a growing body of literature in Chinese policing journals has developed in response to the administration's concern for prevention and management of police corruption.[114] Yet because the subject of misconduct is inherently taboo and politically sensitive under the current administration, it is difficult to research in a meaningful way. Beyond the discussion of gift giving outlined above, respondents were largely unwilling to discuss the issue, citing "sensitivity" (敏感, *mingan*) as the reason. Even the discussions of corruption published in policing journals are high on prescriptive suggestions and low on concrete information about the extent or even specific nature of the problem. Because of such difficulties, this study addresses corruption and misconduct where applicable and when further information is available, but the issues are not the focus of analysis. More systematic research is needed on the topic.

Looking Forward

The Chinese police inhabit a rich and colorful world filled with danger, boredom, frustration, and occasional bursts of joy when a difficult case is solved or a promotion is granted. Understanding who they are and what they do as street-level bureaucrats is essential for understanding how the Chinese security state operates. Their accounts about neglected overtime pay, station leadership appointments, ridiculous service calls, and resentment of well-connected officers do more than just give body to a poorly understood and often maligned profession; they also reveal the complexities of law enforcement on the ground in Chinese cities. The chapters that follow lend voice to frontline stories and interpret them with the intent of establishing a more complete picture of what policing in China is, as well as what it is not.

Starting at the ground from the worm's eye view, flaws and strengths of the local policing system emerge that we might have missed had we only focused on high level reforms or conducted more narrow investigations of police activity in certain locales or on specific issues like protest control. Moving beyond stereotypes of police as corrupt, brutish thugs helps us ask more meaningful questions about what police actually do on a daily basis or how they rate their own work performance as well as that of their peers. From that vantage point, this study aims to correct misperceptions and demonstrates that police work in China is about so much more than protest. One of the major misperceptions that this chapter has challenged is the belief that an eye-popping internal security budget translates into well-funded local stations. The next chapter looks more deeply at the effects of budget and other resource limitations to argue that many areas of policing languish, even as protest control gets the longer end of the stick.

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[113] Wu and Sun's 2009 study on citizen trust in police found that trust in police declined for individuals who also reported worries about corruption. They cite a study that is no longer available online (Yu and Ren 2005) which found that nearly one quarter of complaints to a national hotline were about police corruption.

[114] See for example, Yin 2013; Liu and Li 2013; Lu and Qiao 2006.

Chapter Three

Resource Limitations

Resource limitations make life on the ground difficult for officers in ways that compromise police response. Interviews reveal that pay is low, proper equipment is lacking, and stations do not have enough qualified officers on the frontlines to manage current workloads. With insufficient financial support, street-level police say they struggle to do their jobs well, and many further complain that the way stations allocate scarce resources can make life on the ground even harder. These reports come at a time when things should be getting better for local police. Yet improvements in funding, training, and technology have failed to keep pace with increases in crime and citizen demands. While some might dismiss dissatisfaction over resources as the kind of grumbling so often seen among people at the bottom of a hierarchy, complaints also highlight important institutional problems that we might miss if we did not talk to people on the frontlines. This chapter shows how police reports of dissatisfaction over resource limitations reveal key failings in China's ground-level security apparatus.

The sections below look at how street-level police experience and respond to two types of resource constraints: those resulting from insufficient funds and those created by allocation decisions. For Chinese police, resources are limited first and foremost by a lack of money, which can affect frontline police by preventing them from getting many of the basic tools and support they need to do their jobs. Insufficient funding makes it difficult for stations to cover basic operating costs like patrol-related equipment or overtime pay. Funding limitations also translate into lower salaries for officers, which can leave them feeling demoralized and affect productivity. Finally, funding deficiencies make it hard for stations to hire and train enough qualified officers. As a result, many stations are relying on untrained *xiejing* to make up for the labor shortfall, which can reduce the quality of service stations are able to provide to the public.

Allocation decisions at the station level also affect ground level police, and interviews reveal discontent over how stations manage manpower and financial resources. The tendency of senior and well-connected officers to stay in the office rather than go out on patrol, for example, puts stress on a police force that is already stretched thin in absolute numbers. Moreover, when resources are disproportionately funneled into handling certain types of criminal activity, such as mass protests, police response to other types of crime can get short shrift. These observations highlight issues that arise from allocation decisions but they also give insight into why police leaders have a hard time addressing frontline concerns. As the following sections demonstrate, sometimes the bureaucracy's long-standing institutional culture blocks redirection of resources, while at other times, local leaders are constrained by the priorities of central government leaders.

The argument that China's ground-level police face resource limitations may come as a surprise to China watchers familiar with the attention-grabbing headline that China spends more on internal security than national defense. But I argue that the funding issues of the 1990s and early 2000s[115] have not vanished with the recent influx of so-called *weiwen* (stability maintenance) money.[116] In Chapter Two I outlined the distribution of China's 2014 internal security budget for central government spending and showed that less than 1% goes directly to local stations. I also reviewed evidence from policing scholars that calls into question the ability of local governments to meet the remaining budgetary expectations for local police. This chapter goes beyond the numbers to show how local police experience financial shortfalls and assesses the impact of resource limitations on frontline work.

Resource Limitations and Basic Operations

If you spend enough time with local police, you will soon hear talk about the inability of stations to cover basic operating costs. These complaints, whether they are about equipment, salaries, or overtime pay, highlight the resource limitations that affect local police the most. In the sections below, I detail the problems for different types of basic operation costs and evaluate the impact of those resource constraints on police morale and response capabilities.

Equipment

Modern policing depends on technology to maintain proper records, protect officers, and collect forensic evidence, but Chinese officers say they lack funding for many of the basic tools they need to do their jobs well. Financial constraints at the local level limit equipment purchases such as police cars, computers, and monitoring systems, which can make everyday tasks like responding to calls or recording data more challenging and time consuming. Many police are frustrated by this and compare their situations to that of police elsewhere who are presumably better off. "I wish we had equipment like they do in Hong Kong," explained one mid-level officer.[117] "Even their foot patrol officers have better technology than we do."

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[115] Fu 2005 discusses the underfunding of stations.

[116] Chinese officials have repeatedly denied that public security funds are allocated specifically for *weiwen*. See Wang, Haiyan. "Weiwen fei chao 7000 yi? Caizhengbu: tou huan gainian," ("Stability maintenance fees over 700 billion? Ministry of Finance: one conceptualization.") *Southern Metropolis Daily,* 7 March 2012. http://gcontent.oeeee.com/1/41/1415db70fe9ddb11/Blog/6da/8d38ae.html?bsh_bid=83321550. There is no separate category for *weiwen* in official budgets, though police in multiple interviews spoke of money that was available for certain *weiwen* related activities, such as returning dissidents to their home jurisdictions. Interviews with provincial police in Hunan, 2012, station officer in Hunan, 2012.

[117] Interview with junior district officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

Technology resources can vary widely by and within location. While police stations in Beijing proper have stellar resources,[118] many stations in the rest of the country lack the trappings of modern police stations. In my field sites alone, police equipment in two locations was outdated. Police cars were old, the stations had changed little since the 1990s, and what was available in terms of computer equipment was slow and cumbersome to use. In three of the other cities, however, the offerings were more mixed. While the main police stations were modern complexes with new riot vans and other police vehicles, the district stations were in poor condition, and availability of computing technology for patrol was spotty.

The issue of computing technology is an important one, especially for patrol. In this area, station resources often fall short because of a lack of funding for updated machines and software programs. One officer in Hebei explained his station's situation: "Most of the records in the station are computerized, but I don't care about that. Our patrol cars have computers now, but they are too slow. We don't like using them."[119] Officers in Shaanxi also expressed similar complaints about the speed of their police car computers, noting that sometimes they are unusable. A former official compared the situation in China to that of the United States: "They [officers in the US] have a mobile application that gives detailed information about a neighborhood before patrol goes in. You can see all recent criminal activity and pictures of the perpetrators."[120] He went on to compare that with the situation in China, "Our officers have nothing like this, and I'm not sure when we will be able to develop a similar system."

Even when funding is sufficient for computer and other equipment purchases, there may not be enough funds (or will) to train every officer on how to use them. This is particularly an issue for older officers. One officer nearing retirement complained: "A lot of the training in the last three to five years is geared toward learning new technologies. It's only for the young men. If you're over 50, they don't want to train you. We old guys get left behind."[121] Of course some older officers are perfectly content to leave the newer technologies to younger officers,[122] but the broader trend of limitations on equipment availability and number of officers trained to use them remain unchanged.

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[118] This observation is based on my time spent living in Beijing and observing police on the street as well as an interview with a Beijing district police station chief in 2012. There is also evidence on the internet and in police journals that confirm the modernity of police station offerings in the capital. See for example records of recent forensic equipment purchases: www.bgpc.gov.cn. 2014. "Beijing Police Academy in 2014 Laboratory Equipment Purchase Project." (北京金叉学院 2014 年实验设备购置项目) http://www.bgpc.gov.cn/news/news/news_id/4479; or this account of equipment demonstrations in Beijing's Changping district: XD Zhang 2006.

[119] Interview with junior district officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[120] Interview in Berkeley, 2014.

[121] Interview with two district station officers, Shaanxi, 2012.

[122] Interview with a senior district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

Salaries

Low pay is another basic resource complaint that affects the frontlines. Police salaries are set between RMB 1500 - 2500 (US$245 – 408) per month by a national standard that applies system-wide, meaning that all officers, from patrol cops in the most remote county in Anhui to those in the high-toned districts of Shanghai, should expect to receive the same pay every month. Any variation in income depends strictly on local governments, which may pay a higher (or lower) salary and/or supplement officer income with subsidies like housing allowances or gift cards for everyday items such as mobile phone services.[123] Far too often, however, officers say their local governments fall short when it comes to compensation.

Consider the financial situation of a policeman I'll call Officer Wang. One hot summer day, Officer Wang and I were caught in traffic when a small, bright-blue Ford cut in front of us. "That's the car I want," he said, "but I'll never be able to afford it."[124] This was somewhat surprising. The car was imported, but it certainly did not resemble one of the luxury items coveted by many young Chinese. Wang explained that the car he was driving was not his; he had borrowed it from a colleague. "I'm not from [this city]; I'm from the village and my family is poor. This is a good job for me; the test to become a police officer is even more difficult than the college entrance examination (高考, *gaokao*), but the pay is so low. I don't even make 2000 [RMB] a month. That car is over 100,000 [US$16,000)]. How could I ever [afford to] buy it?" Officer Wang is not alone. While some officers live in poor areas where take home pay is enough to cover basic needs, others like Officer Wang say they are unable to afford the items contemporary Chinese society expects them to possess. For young unmarried males, this means a house and a car, but the financial pinch also extends to smaller items like nice meals out with friends or colleagues. With restaurants in third tier cities charging a few hundred RMB for relatively modest group meals and KTV clubs commanding about the same for a night out with drinks, a monthly salary of 1,500 or even 2,500 means that certain cornerstones of Chinese social life and upward mobility are difficult to reach for those who lack family money or other sources of income.

Moreover, for the lowest paid, take-home pay may drop below a living wage. If, like Officer Wang, they do not have family money or other resources to fall back on, they may have no choice but to look elsewhere for assistance. For example, when stations do not offer housing benefits, some officers must take on second jobs just to keep a roof over their heads and food

[123] According to one Ministry official, other non-monetary benefits include equipment, housing, clothing, weapons, electronics, lunchtime meals, and other gifts, particularly around Chinese New Year (Interview with Central Ministry official, 2012). These help supplement low salaries, since many have real monetary value such as gift cards. Such benefits come directly from the station, never from above. They are also not unique to the police bureaucracy, as extravagant gift giving during special occasions and holiday times is woven into the fabric of Chinese workplaces. Gift giving more generally is deeply ingrained and permeates Chinese society at all levels. See for example Yan 1996.

[124] Interview with SWAT officer, 2012.

on the table. While none of my interviewees reported themselves to be in such a situation, some freely told stories of colleagues who were compelled to seek out private security gigs or embark on small business ventures to pay for basic living expenses.[125] When asked why stations do not increase salaries to help such officers make ends meet, one respondent summed it up simply: "no money!" （没钱, *meiqian*).[126]

Overtime

Compounding the issue of low salaries is the inability (and occasional unwillingness) of stations to pay officers for overtime work, though how often this happens can vary across locale. In some areas, such as in one field site that was middle of the road in terms of economic development, officers are usually paid on time for additional work.[127] But in other cities, overtime is only paid when funds are available, and officers say they can go for long stretches without compensation for the extra hours they work.[128] In less densely populated counties in another province where I conducted research, overtime is rarely paid,[129] but this does not mean an area's size or degree of economic development always indicates whether or not officers will be compensated for extra work. In one large metropolitan city where I would have expected to observe frequent if not full compensation, a junior officer put it bluntly, "We never get paid (overtime)."[130]

By all accounts, overtime work is exhausting and commonplace for police in China. With human resources stretched thin at stations across the country, overtime is especially common for patrol cops (*xunjing* 巡警) and workers in small county and district stations. These officers are instructed to answer and respond to calls from residents at all times, even in the middle of the night. Sometimes officers are told about the extra hours in advance, but often the work is not scheduled. This means street-level police officers are on call, seemingly at all times, and on more than one occasion during fieldwork, officers were suddenly summoned back to the station or to a site of interest in the middle of an interview, regardless of the time or day of the week. One policing scholar calls such overtime "routine" (家常便饭， *jiachangbianfan*), citing a study that found Chinese police are, on average, working 11-15 hour days with 1 day off every three weeks.[131]

Officers say there is little they can do about the lack of overtime pay. Because of the relative hardship such a schedule imposes, I often asked officers if they complained to their boss about not getting paid. Most said no, and some gave me looks that seemed to ask if I was joking. One

[125] Interview with district station officers, Shaanxi, 2012.
[126] Interview with patrol captain, Hebei, 2012.
[127] Interview with patrol captain, Hebei, 2012.
[128] Interview with mid-level station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[129] Interview with officers, Hunan 2012; Hebei, 2012.
[130] Interview in Shaanxi, 2012.
[131] Hu 2009.

officer explained, “What would I say to my boss? He works alongside me and he also doesn’t get paid. It’s a big problem since our salaries are so low, but there is nothing we can do.”[132]

Basic Operations, and Police Effectiveness

Officer complaints about equipment, salaries, and unpaid overtime confirm the existence of inadequate funding for basic operations, but how do these limitations affect police effectiveness on the ground? For equipment issues, the impact is relatively clear-cut. Outdated patrol car technology can make filing reports and inputting information on the go a hair-pulling experience for police, slowing response times and increasing frustration. Older cars can also cause problems for patrol officers, depending on how well they are maintained, and the number of police cars a station can afford most certainly makes a difference in how quickly stations are able to respond to calls and how much time they are able to spend before moving on to the next case.

The effects of salary and overtime issues on officer satisfaction and performance are more nuanced. In interviews, officers report that low and inadequate salary compensation is demoralizing, especially when they compare it to what other government workers who have less challenging jobs make. While one would be hard pressed to find a worker anywhere who does not believe he/she should be paid more, police officers in China can make a pretty good case for themselves, given the low starting salaries, relative dangers of the job, and the frequency of uncompensated work. The average annual salary in urban Chinese areas is nearly twice what most officers bring home,[133] but police seldom compare themselves to workers in other industries. They are instead far more interested in how much police elsewhere are paid, particularly police officers in China,[134] and it is this comparison that officers find most disheartening.

Despite the national standard, it is well known among frontline police that salaries vary widely across the country. Sources confirm than the typical officer in Beijing makes about three thousand yuan per month,[135] which is above the national standard but well short of the reported six thousand yuan earned by Shanghai officers.[136] In Hebei, Hunan, and Shaanxi Provinces, officers labor for less than or around 2,000 RMB, even though they do the same

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[132] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[133] According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics in China, the annual average salary of an urban worker was 51,483 yuan, or ¥4,290 per month. It is not clear whether or not this figure includes an annual bonus.

[134] Officers often asked about how much officers in the United States made and most were astounded to learn that starting salaries in Oakland, which are currently advertised at $67,000 a year, are far more than most American university graduates can hope to make and roughly on par with starting salaries for college professors.

[135] Interview with district police leader, Beijing, 2013.

[136] I did not interview any police officers in Shanghai. Officers in Hunan and Guangdong provided this figure.

basic work as officers in big cites. Pay differences also exist between leaders and regular officers, but data to support this is unreliable since higher-level officers are typically less comfortable talking about income. Officers in Guangzhou are paid the most, and many of my interviewees wistfully spoke of those high-earning officers. In fact, the Guangzhou figure was so high and repeated with such frequency that I began to wonder if it might be an urban legend. It is not; Guangzhou officers earn about 10,000 RMB a month, nearly five times the salary of most officers elsewhere.[137]

Such differences leave police deeply dissatisfied, and in a country that still espouses socialist ideals, the topic is taboo. Some leaders even refuse to admit that differences in pay exist, [138] and one official in the Ministry winced slightly when I asked him about the pay inequality. "It's very sensitive right now," he explained. "Officials don't like to discuss it, but of course it isn't the same everywhere."[139] "Chinese expect that the same jobs should be compensated in the same way," explained one officer before going on to say that local cops see differences in pay as a violation of national policy (国家规定 *guojia guiding*).[140] Patrol officers in Hebei also say that the differences are unfair (*bu gongping* 不公平) before adding there is nothing to be done. Such frustration is understandable. Police work across China is tiring and sometimes dangerous, and poorly paid officers say they work just as hard as officers who are better compensated. To make matters worse, moving to an area where police are better compensated is rarely an option for most street-level police.[141]

The low morale that emerges from such comparisons can affect the quality of the work police do. Few officers to whom I spoke said that the issue of low salary or lack of overtime had affected their personal willingness or ability to do their job, but nearly all were quick to point out the impact it has on their colleagues. "My coworkers are lazy," explained an officer who went on to say there is little incentive to work hard when they are paid so little.[142] "Most only do what they have to [i.e. the bare minimum to keep their jobs]." Reports of shirking among

[137] Interview with local station officer, Shenzhen, 2013.
[138] Interview with district police leader, Beijing, 2013.
[139] Interview, 2012.
[140] Interview with internal supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[141] College graduates working higher up in the Ministry may enjoy considerable upward mobility, but the majority of local officers have little hope of going much beyond their initial posting. Entry to municipal level jobs is extremely competitive and requires a high examination score and the ability to pass an interview that often depends on the strength of one's social connections (Interview with municipal station officers, Hebei, 2011). Space is limited, and even capable officers who are well connected find themselves first laboring in far-flung stations out in the county (Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012). The most these officers can do is bide their time and hope for an opening in one of the district stations in the closest cities. Such a move typically means a salary increase, better benefits such as housing, and sometimes a lighter workload, but improvements are incremental at best. Thus, the demoralizing effects of low salaries are an inescapable reality for most.
[142] Interview with local station officers, Shaanxi, 2013.

officers[143] were common at all field sites, except in Beijing, and one patrol captain called dissatisfaction over a pay "a big problem" with the men he oversees.[144] This observation of a decrease in police effectiveness when morale is low is backed up by research on police elsewhere.[145]

Beyond effects on morale, salary issues resulting from low funding can also increase incentives for bribery and other types of corruption that lower the overall quality of policing on the ground. Reliable data is spotty, but it is commonly known that officers sometimes accept gifts from individuals and companies seeking to curry favor.[146] One recently retired officer listed some of the gifts he received over the course of his 30+ year career, which included everyday household items like rice, oil, milk, cigarettes, alcohol, and the occasional tea set. Such gifts can certainly make life easier for poorly paid police by offsetting low incomes, but it also harms the reputation of police in the eyes of society and provokes government leaders who are currently on an anticorruption kick under President Xi Jinping's leadership. For local residents on the ground, such greasing of the wheels may improve service or satisfaction for individuals with the ability to pay bribes, but it most certainly lowers it for those whose who are unable or unwilling to engage in such behavior.

Resource Limitations and Manpower

Manpower resources are also limited in China.[147] One Ministry officials said this is because current funding levels prevent stations from hiring more official police, even though they need more officers on the ground, [148] and this claim is further supported by information in Chinese policing journals.[149] Without cash to hire more police officers, some stations have begun using lower-paid *xiejing* to pick up the slack. Such manpower issues and decisions are not without costs. Just as having too few police officers can cause problems for stations, so too can the

[143] See also Scoggins and O'Brien 2016.
[144] Interview, Hebei, 2012.
[145] Greene 1989.
[146] The giving and receiving of gifts is a gray area for policing in China. Companies and individuals alike may provide gifts to the police, both as an annual tradition during holidays as a form of insurance and on an as-needed basis.
[147] China's low per capita force problem can puzzle those who have visited major Chinese cities and witnessed what appears to be a strong police presence on the ground. But adequate manpower and police presence are not necessarily the same. Police leaders in China, whether intentionally or not, have done a good job of manufacturing a police presence that belies manpower limitations in many cities. This topic merits more research, but in short, police presence in China can be enhanced by police signage (Xu 2013), strategically parked police cars, and ambiguous uniforms worn by non-police security personnel.
[148] Interview with Ministry Official, Beijing, 2012.
[149] HB Huang 2006.

reliance on poorly-trained part-time workers. The following sections evaluate the prevalence of these issues before discussing how they affect policing on the ground.

A Comparatively Small Police Force

Precise data about the number of police officers in China is not available, but there is evidence to suggest that the force is small. Perhaps because of political sensitivity issues, China has not released manpower figures to international groups since 1997,[150] and the last time Central officials directly reported the number was in 1999.[151] The best current source of data comes from vague estimates that occasionally crop up in state-run media sources and currently hover around 2 million.[152] One official in the Ministry put the total number of security personnel at four million, but this number likely includes Ministry officials, the PAP, and perhaps fulltime *xiejing*.[153] In a country with a population that is rapidly approaching 1.4 billion, a personnel figure of 2 million would put China's per capita police force in the bottom half globally. As a few points of comparison, China's rate of 147 cops per 100,000 people, if accurate, is much lower than Russia's 522, Hong Kong's 446, and somewhat lower than the per capita rates in the United States (195) and Japan (202).[154] Other countries that report a similar per capita rate to China are Burundi (140), Honduras (142), India (138), and Finland (141), though the policing needs in these countries varies wildly.[155] Table 3 presents the latest data on police per capita as a further point of comparison.

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[150] China participates in the UNODCs Surveys on Crime Trends (UN-CTS) but has left many of the questions blank, including those about personnel data, since the Sixth Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (1995-1997).

[151] A report from the Ministry of Public Security of Public Security put the total number of police personnel at 1.57 million (129 officers per 100,000 people) in 1999. Impregnable shield of the republic: 50 years of policing in the People's Republic of China. Eight years later, a figure released by Xinhua was still just 1.6 million. http://china.org.cn/english/news/194799.htm.

[152] It is unclear if these estimates include part-time workers. See for example Hille "China's police ill-equipped to combat unrest," *Financial Times,* 5 February 2012. http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/526b2508-4d49-11e1-8741-00144feabdc0.html; Li Jing and Teddy Ng. "China approves police reform plan aimed at improving force's efficiency and public image," *South China Morning Post* 16 February 2015, http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1714252/china-approves-police-reform-plan-aimed-improving-forces-efficiency-and.

[153] Interview with Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.

[154] 2014 data from https://data.unodc.org/.

[155] Per capita policing needs in a place like Honduras, which boast the highest reported homicide rate in the world (84 per 100,000) and recently created an entirely new military police force to manage corruption and violence, are vastly different from those in Finland, which in 2013 recorded just 93 homicides (1.7 per 100,000) and six total incidents in which police discharged their firearms. Data from https://data.unodc.org/; Sibylla Brodzinsky "The new 'police recruits' in Latin America: soldiers," Christian Science Monitor 8 February 2014 http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2014/0208/The-new-police-recruits-in-Latin-

Table 3: Police Per Capita in International Comparison

Country	**2014**	**Country**	**2014**
Kenya	87.4	Peru	323.0
Hungary	87.4	Lithuania	325.2
Uganda	119.3	Austria	327.6
Finland	139.9	Albania	333.1
Burundi	149.5	Belgium	338.0
Singapore	164.7	Dominican Republic	338.0
Norway	167.1	Slovenia	339.5
Denmark	187.6	Czech Republic	373.6
Guatemala	192.6	El Salvador	376.5
Canada	193.6	Bulgaria	391.2
United States of America	196.6	U.K. (N. Ireland)	397.9
Japan	202.7	Kosovo under UNSCR 1244	410.6
Sweden	206.6	Slovakia	414.1
Switzerland	217.0	Bosnia and Herzegovina	415.4
U.K. (England and Wales)	220.9	Algeria	420.7
Liechtenstein	222.6	Jamaica	423.8
Georgia	238.5	Cyprus	430.5
Faeroe Islands	240.6	Latvia	443.0
Paraguay	253.0	Portugal	444.2
Poland	255.9	Greece	471.5
Australia	266.6	Trinidad and Tobago	477.1
Romania	269.2	Croatia	483.1
Republic of Moldova	271.9	Serbia	501.9
Ireland	273.8	Barbados	503.9
Ecuador	274.1	Malta	515.9
Chile	278.4	The Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	519.9
France	288.6	Russia Federation	522.3
Netherlands	305.0	Spain	526.2
Thailand	308.8	Montenegro	680.5
Estonia	310.7	Uruguay	708.9
Colombia	311.8	Argentina	794.9
Andorra	313.2	Grenada	889.5
Luxembourg	320.4	Macau	1,115.9
U.K. (Scotland)	322.6	Holy See	18,147.7

Data Source: UNODC.org

America-soldiers; *Uutiset* “Finnish police fired guns only six times in 2013,” 12 December 2014, http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish_police_fired_guns_only_six_times_in_2013/7701005.

International per capita comparisons are not the only evidence to suggest that China's police force is small. In interviews, Chinese police consistently indicate that they need more officers to cover current policing demands. "I don't have enough people to send out on patrol," explained one captain of a district patrol squad when I asked about police staffing in his jurisdiction.[156] He is not alone. Officers at all levels of the bureaucracy spoke openly about staffing shortages, whether in their own districts or beyond. Moreover Chinese policing scholars are known to write about staffing shortages and their negative effects on local police officers.[157]

Compounding the problem of a small per capita force on the national level is the fact that many areas fall well below the country's average of 147 officers/100,000 people. Along the more developed coast and in certain districts of large cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Shenzhen, police force sizes may indeed approach that of the United States or elsewhere, though there are still limits to how many officers these areas can hire.[158] In less developed areas, however, force numbers are lower. One research site in Hebei had only 88/100,000,[159] and policing scholar Hu Wannian reported in 2009 that many districts in the countryside have per capita rates around 80/100,000 and sometimes much lower.[160]

Without funding increases, such differences are difficult to correct. The Ministry has stressed the importance of developing police manpower to combat rising crime and deal with stability maintenance,[161] but it has yet to develop national standards that address the issue. One step forward is the requirement that all sub-stations (派出所 *paichusuo*) have at least five officers, but five people is usually a mere drop in the bucket, given the population size of most areas.[162] While some urban stations have the monetary means to set force size according to population figures, many others are bound by the financial realities of their geographic location.[163] As a result, station leaders are turning to other sources to make up for shortfalls in staffing.

Xiejing

More and more cash-strapped stations are hiring unofficial *xiejing* workers because they are plentiful and cheap. These auxiliary or assistant police are the adjunct professors of the policing world: a low paid, overworked, and often unappreciated underclass of security workers. A *xiejing* officer receives no employment benefits and might earn as little as RMB 800 (US$130) a

[156] Interview in Hebei, 2011.
[157] Hu 2009.
[158] Beijing, for example, places certain restrictions on the number of official police hired because city government must limit the total number of civil servants (公务员, *gongwuyuan*) in their jurisdictions. Interview with district station leader, Beijing, 2012.
[159] Interview with city officer in Hebei, 2011.
[160] Hu gives the example of Lanzhou's Yantan district, which has just 18 officers to serve 120,000 residents.
[161] He 2012.
[162] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[163] Huang 2006.

month,[164] which is slightly more than half of what stations are required to pay entry-level officers.[165] Unlike adjuncts, however, *xiejing,* are rarely as educated as official police and receive virtually no training. They are primarily hired to do work that might otherwise be handled by official police, and their range of duties can vary widely: *xiejing* have been tasked with everything from watching dissidents to staffing the small, make-shift police kiosks (公安亭, *gonganting*) that are now commonplace in many Chinese cities.

Because of the temporary nature of the work, *xiejing* are attractively expendable. One police leader said the ability to hire *xiejing* makes it easy for his station to bring in more officers when necessary and concentrate them in the areas where they are needed most.[166] This type of at-will employment is also useful when things go awry. One senior officer explained, "If there is a problem, the station leader can report to local government officials that the person responsible was a temporary worker and has been fired. If they press for further information, the station leader says they can no longer find the individual (那个人不见了， *nage ren bujian le*)."[167] This system works well for stations leaders in a pinch, adding to the broader appeal of hiring *xiejing*.

Despite these advantages, the prevalence of *xiejing* varies by locale. In Hunan, the practice has only become popular in the last 3-5 years,[168] and in many rural counties, *xiejing* are not used at all. At research sites in Hebei and Shaanxi, *xiejing* are commonplace. Big cities like Beijing and Shanghai also use *xiejing,* though their standards are slightly hirer. *Xiejing* in Beijing, while still untrained, are monitored closely, wear clearly marked uniforms, and serve in more limited capacities.[169] The reluctance of station leaders in Beijing to use *xiejing* more widely is possibly due to the problems that have arisen from the practice.

Manpower Issues and Police Effectiveness

Manpower issues can impact police effectiveness even more than limitations on basic operations. Officers say understaffing leaves stations struggling to meet increasing demands from the public and ultimately lowers the quality of service they are able to provide. Moreover, added stress on officers and increased reliance on *xiejing* can lead to misunderstandings with the public and abuses of power that sometimes turn violent. These problems are well known throughout the policing world but are difficult to resolve given current funding levels.

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[164] Interview with patrol leader, Hebei, 2011. One policing journal confirmed the 800RMB figure, noting that high school graduate *xiejing* in Chengdu earn 800-1000RMB and college graduates might earn as much as 1500RMB, which is nearly three times less than what an official officer with the same educational background earns in Chengdu. See Liao 2010.
[165] Interview with detective, Hebei, 2010.
[166] Interview with detective, Hebei, 2010.
[167] Interview with detective, Hebei, 2011.
[168] Interview with provincial public security official, Hunan, 2012.
[169] Interview with district station leader, Beijing, 2012. Interestingly, Beijing *xiejing* command the same salaries as official police at a similar level, though they do not receive any benefits.

Officers across field sites say a shortage of officers makes their job more difficult. In Shaanxi, police complain that a low per capita force means more overtime work and less time to spend responding to calls.[170] In the Hebei city that has 88 officers per 100,000 people, the situation is even worse. Officers report heavy strains on patrol officers, such as routine overtime and a lack of men to manage call volumes.[171] Moreover, in rural areas facing social unrest, low force numbers can tax local officers to the breaking point. One PAP officer recounted the schedule of his friend, a local officer in an understaffed Xinjiang *paichusuo*, who sometimes works up to 40 days straight without going home, even though he lives just 20 kilometers away.[172] "They have the hardest job (*tamen zui xinku* 他们最辛苦)," he explained. Such schedules can have real consequences for the men and women on the frontlines. A report on the psychological health of officers in China found that the heavy work loads facilitated by "a serious shortage of police" leaves officers "physically and mentally exhausted, [with] nervous system disorders, circadian damage, and psychological stress."[173]

Unsurprisingly, an overworked, stressed-out police force without enough officers to send out on patrol or manage call volumes does not lead to better policing on the ground. One scholar called the shortage of manpower a "clear and prominent problem" plaguing public security in China.[174] A young officer in Shaanxi shook his head when I asked about the effects. "We don't serve the people," he said before going on to explain that officers in his station answer calls as quickly as possible and are often unable to help the callers, leaving all parties dissatisfied. In Hunan another officer explained, "It is very difficult [to manage under a limited force]. Our leaders do they best they can." To assist in the "muddling through" necessitated by low force numbers, stations in Hebei often rely on *xiejing* or partially trained police working under annual contracts to make up for shortfalls in manpower. "It is not the best option because they lack training," explained a patrol captain, "but it is all we can do."[175]

Indeed, problems with using *xiejing* abound. Though Western news sources tend to focus on abuses perpetrated by the *chengguan,*[176] Chinese media outlets routinely report incidents perpetrated by *xiejing.* At the end of 2015 alone, three *xiejing* groped and attacked a woman outside a Henan KTV club in September,[177] two *xiejing* in Ningxia were fired after a video of

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[170] Interview with station officers, Shaanxi, 2012.
[171] Interview with *xunjing* officers, Hebei, 2011; Interview with patrol captain, Hebei, 2012.
[172] Interview with SWAT leader, Shaanxi, 2012.
[173] Hu 2009, p. 61.
[174] He 2012,p. 78.
[174] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[175] Interview, Hebei, 2011.
[176] See for example Kiki Zhao. 2014. "China's Most-Hated Official is No Surprise." *The New York Times.* 29 May. http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/05/29/chinas-most-hated-official-is-no-surprise/?_r=0 .
[177] Da Chui 大锤. 2015. "河南协警 KTV 打人被拘" (Henan *xiejing* who beat person at KTV capture). 腾讯网 *Tengxun*, 15 September http://news.rugao35.com/newsshow-149656.html.

them beating a man went viral in November, [178] and in December, *xiejing* in a Shandong SWAT unit were caught on video brutally interrogating a naked couple caught having sex in their car (车震 *chezhen*, is usually punished with a fine).[179] These are not isolated incidents; the Internet is littered with examples and videos such as this one in Hebei Province[180] of *xiejing* beating suspects and/or exercising enforcement powers (执法权, *zhifaquan*) not granted to them by the law. Such problems caused by *xiejing* can be a mess for station leaders to clean up,[181] especially in an age of viral videos.

The issues with *xiejing* are well-known in the policing world but difficult to resolve. Regular officers are not surprised by the bad press surrounding *xiejing* and are quick to point out that *xiejing* are not "real police" but instead poor substitutes who often create more troubles than they fix because *xiejing* lack training and character (素质, *suzhi*). "Most of the problems you hear about on the news come from the *xiejing*," explained one senior officer.[182] "These men don't have proper training. Real police rarely act this way."[183] Policing scholars are also well aware of the problems and have called for institutionalized reform and standardization of the *xiejing*.[184] But with barely enough funds to pay assistant police, much less train them, local stations have few resources and no systems in place to carry out such reforms. It remains to be seen, however, if what appears to be a recent uptick in reports of *xiejing* misbehavior will cause police leaders to realign their priorities.

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[178] *Beijing Times*. 2015. "宁夏两协警打人被辞退" (Two xiejing in Ningxia fired for beating man"). 18 November http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2015-11-18/doc-ifxkwaxv2405328.shtml.

[179] Officials have denied the allegation that the woman hung herself after the video went viral. *China Daily.* 2015. "山东: '车震' 男女被 4 名洗净碰上遭粗暴讯问" (Shandong: Couple engaged in "car sex" suffer cruel interrogation by four *xiejing*). 22 December http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/micro-reading/dzh/2015-12-22/content_14420497_2.html.

[180] Youku.com. "网曝河北沧州协警暴力执法" (Internet airs Hebei Cangzhou auxiliary police violence, law) http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNzk2NzA4OTAw.html.

[181] When news spread that workers in a Beijing suburb were severely beaten by *xiejing* in the local police station, station leaders had to go to the hospital to visit the victims and call a special meeting with higher ups to handle the matter and meet with other workers at the construction site. *Hebei News Network.* 2010. "泊头民工京都派出所遭暴殴续打人协警被刑拘" (Baotao workers in Beijing suburb police station violently beaten, *Xiejing* responsible detained with criminal charges. http://hebei.hebnews.cn/2010-08/30/content_619192.htm.

[182] Interview, Hebei, 2010.

[183] Of course, official police are also known to abuse power and treat suspects violently, but the officer's point that such occurrences are less common with official police is plausible.

[184] JP Wang 2015.

Allocation of Limited Resources

On the topic of priorities, resource problems are further compounded by the decisions police leaders make about how to allocate limited resources. Two practices in particular impose further restrictions on current local policing resources, though for different reasons and in different ways: the phenomenon of office officers, and the prioritization of social unrest.

Office Officers

A strong institutional culture of rewarding senior cops and younger officers with social connections has created an oversupply of what I call "office officers." This firmly entrenched class of men and women is solely dedicated to working in the office and paid about the same or more as officers who go out on patrol or respond to calls. Much of what they do is legitimate work. All stations need workers, for example, to handle household registrations (户口, *hukou*), answer phone calls and visits by local residents, or perform other internal (内部, *neibu*) work such as station supervision. Overall, these jobs are desirable because they lack the danger and fatigue brought on by other police work performed outside the office, but problems arise when the number of office officers swells.

Who gets to be an office officer? Those who have family or other exceptional social connections (关系, *guanxi*) may go right into office positions without ever working patrol, or, more commonly, well-connected individuals will assume a cushy office position after working for just a few years. Officers without *guanxi* who prove themselves in the field may also be rewarded with office positions in as few as 10 years.[185] Many stations also hire women with educational training at police high schools or middle schools (警校, *jingxiao*) to work in the office.[186] Finally, police who have achieved seniority, especially those nearing retirement age, are frequently rewarded with office positions. Starting at age 55, these officers enjoy even better treatment as they reduce their workloads and come into the office less frequently.[187] By age 57 or 58, this

[185] Interviews with a patrol captain in Hebei, 2011 and a district station supervisor in Hunan, 2012.

[186] Patrol work is generally not considered suitable for female officers in the areas where I conducted research. Often women working in police stations in third tier and below cities are quite young and quit their positions once they become married or have children. Women in larger cities with a higher cost of living are more likely to continue working and gain seniority but they rarely work outside of the office. Interviews with two former female police office workers in Hebei, 2011 and 2012. In Southern cities, however, women are sometimes sent out for patrol. In one large city not far from Hong Kong, I observed women patrolling public spaces on horseback and was told by a Ministry official that the stations like to send female officers out on patrol because they are "better at resolving disputes" than their male counterparts. Interview in Southern China, 2012.

[187] Interview with former district station police officer, Shaanxi, 2012. This officer went on to say that most people nearing retirement go into the office primarily to collect their paychecks and say hello, though officers who are 55 or 56 may still do some actual work. He attributed

special class of office officers (out-of-office officers?) may stop coming in altogether, even though they continue to collect a full paycheck until age 60.

If that sounds like a lot of people in the office when stations are complaining about manpower shortages, it is. Precise numbers are hard to come by, but one Provincial Ministry official gave the example of five person county *paichusuos* in her area that have only three people doing actual work.[188] This is because, of the two remaining officers, one might be over 55 and just collecting a paycheck and the other might have social connections and a desk job. In the worst-case scenario, a five-person *paichusuo* might have as many as three office officers doing very little work.

How can stations support so many officer officers? The simple answer is they cannot. But leaders often lack the power to correct the issue because of entrenched expectations that office positions are a necessary reward for service, seniority, or *guanxi.* One patrol captain explained, "It's not fair, but men in the office have connections (*guanxi*)...and the leaders cannot force them out of the office."[189] When combined with the high demand for office positions and the unwillingness of police to leave posts once they secure them, it becomes even harder for police leaders to change the system. "Everyone wants to be in the office," explained a mid-level supervisor who himself had secured such a position.[190] And even though this particular officer waxed on about missing his days with the people, he confirmed he had no intention of returning to patrol duty because of hardships like the time he was called out in the middle of the night to retrieve a lost cow.

Office Officers and Police Effectiveness

Office officers hamstring an already limited force, hitting patrol and call response the hardest. "The problem is very serious," noted a provincial Ministry official, "because so many stay in the office and do nothing."[191] A police captain went on to explain the situation at his station, "There are too many men in the station, but not enough where we need them in the field."[192] Officers in other field sites confirmed this assessment, noting that their stations did not have enough officers to send out on patrol, even though the stations are filled with able bodies.[193] With too many people in the office, the practice of office officers thus reduces police effectiveness by limiting the number of available officers to conduct patrols and answer calls.

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this behavior to the reluctance of higher ranking younger officers to give orders to older officers, saying that older officers take advantage of their superiors' respect for their elders because they are getting older and feel they no longer need to work so hard.

[188] Interview, Hunan, 2012.

[189] Interview with a district station patrol squad leader, Hebei, 2012.

[190] Interview with a mid-level supervisor in district station, Hunan, 2012.

[191] Interview with a Provincial Ministry officer, Hunan, 2012.

[192] Interview, Hebei, 2011.

[193] Interview with senior and former officers in Shaanxi, 2012; interview with junior district station officer in Shaanxi, 2012; interview with senior detective, 2012, among others.

Moreover, the quality of service officers on patrol are able to provide may be lower than it would be if more office officers were sent out to the field. Since most of the more experienced officers have been rewarded with positions in the office, patrol cops tend to be younger and greener. These young patrol officers, by virtue of their age and experience level, know the territory less well and have fewer long-standing relationships with residents. "Their lack of experience makes it hard for them to do a good job," lamented one assistant station chief.[194]

The institutional culture that binds officers to the office is difficult to break, despite a generally recognized need for restructuring. It is not, however, impossible. In the middle of my fieldwork, national news of serial killer Zeng Kaigui hit the airways,[195] and police stations across south central China were called upon to muster all available resources to capture the former PLA soldier. In this time, the public security stations in one of the Hunan cities where I was conducting research increased patrol assignments by what was described to me as a "not small" percentage.[196] This necessitated bringing senior and well-connected officers out of the office and onto the streets. To much surprise, the practice continued for many months even after Zeng was apprehended, proving that the ties binding office officers to their posts have limits under the right circumstances. Whether or not such a change could be carried out on a broader scale and for a longer period of time, however, remains to be seen.

Stability Maintenance

On the opposite end of the spectrum is stability preservation. Shoring up funds for *weiwen* is another type of allocation decision, but unlike the issues discussed above, stability maintenance gets the long end of the stick. Government leaders at all levels have made a strong commitment to *weiwen,* mostly because their jobs depend on it,[197] and this means resources such as funding and manpower flow into stability maintenance at a higher rate. The reason behind this prioritization harkens back to the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, when the police and military began developing a more unified approach to dealing with social unrest. Efforts further intensified in 2005 when President Hu Jintao called on provincial and ministerial level cadres to build a "socialist harmonious society."[198] With new attention from

[194] Interview with an assistant station chief, Hunan, 2012.
[195] For a media description of Zeng Kaigui and his crimes, see Chinadaily.com. 2012. "Former Soldier Linked to Earlier Robberies, Murders," 12 January. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2012-01/12/content_14426375.htm.
[196] Interview with a provincial bureau official, Hunan, 2012.
[197] For a good discuss on how *weiwen* is assessed under the cadre evaluation system, see Xie Yue 2012, p 20-21. Performance in *Weiwen* and economic development are two key determinants of local cadre promotion, punishment, and dismissal. Xie reports that cadres may be fired if they fail to "maintain public order," regardless of whether or not they perform well in other areas.
[198] Hu Jintao. 2005. "On Building a Socialist Harmonious Society" (构建和谐主义社会), 19 February. http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/news/899546.htm.

government leaders, protests went from being handled haphazardly and with little guidance from above[199] to the standardized, coordinated, and sometimes militarized responses we read about in the news today.

Despite the attention *weiwen* efforts have received from the academics and international reporters, details about how stability maintenance is funded are scarce. It is important to note that funding and attention is most concentrated in areas where ethnic and religious tensions drive social unrest, such as Xinjiang and Tibet. PAP officers engaged in protest management say the bulk of the Central government's *weiwen* resources are devoted to these areas, with support ranging from direct funding for local police stations to the deployment of PAP officers and military units. [200] In Xinjiang, reports show that public security funding has increased dramatically in recent years, doubling in 2010[201] and again in 2014.[202] Such increases far outpace the rate of growth elsewhere. Moreover, financial support extends beyond the borders of Xinjiang and Tibet. Gangcha County, for example, is located outside of Tibet proper but in a Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. It spent $US 1.3 million on local police in 2012, even though its population was just 42,000.[203] Much of this money must come from the central government directly, as many of these areas are less economically developed.

But Xinjiang and Tibet are the exception, not the norm. As discussed in Chapter Two, journalists and scholars far too often assume that all or much of China's domestic security budget goes to handling protests,[204] and even more circumspect reports[205] give the impression that buckets of money are pouring into the management of dissidents and protest control. Most local officers will tell you this is inaccurate. Police in Hunan say their bureaus rarely see central government funds (维稳经费， *weiwen jingfei*). "That money is for big cities and other places [like Tibet]. We only get [Central government] *weiwen* money for bringing back petitioners who have gone

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[199] Interviews with retired county and city level officers, Hebei, 2010.

[200] Interview with SWAT leader, Shaanxi, 2012.

[201] Cui Jia. 2010. "Xinjiang security funding increased by 90 percent." *China Daily.* 13 January 2010. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-01/13/content_9311035.htm. Accessed on 5 August 2014.

[202] Andrew Jacobs. 2014. "3 Dead in Clash at Police Station in Western China, Report Says." *The New York Times*. 23 January 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/24/world/asia/3-dead-in-clash-at-police-station-in-western-china-report-says.html. Accessed on 12 August 2014.

[203] As a point of reference Keshan County in western Heilongjiang, has over twice the population of Gangcha, but spent considerably less (5.865 million RMB or $US 950,000) on local police in 2014. Keshan.gov "Keshanxian gonganju yusuan gongkai" ("Keshan County Police Department's Public Budget"), www.keshan.gov.cn/jone/keshan/fujian/克山县公安局预算公开.doc. Accessed 27 August 2014.

[204] On where that money really goes see Greitens "Rethinking China's Domestic Security Spending."

[205] Charles Hutzler, 2003. "Watching dissidents is a booming business in China," *Associated Press*, 27 May, http://bigstory.ap.org/content/watching-dissidents-booming-business-china. Accessed 8 August 2013.

to Changsha [the provincial capital] or Beijing," explained one officer.[206] "We get a phone call saying that one of our residents is there and we need to [come get them and] bring them back home. In these cases, the central government 'picks up the check' (来买单，*lai maidan*)." A Provincial Ministry official further explained, "The Central government makes sure the funds are used properly...The money cannot be spent on anything else. [The process ensures] a clear record of how the money is spent."[207]

Because protest and dissident management involves a lot more than just capturing petitioners who have skipped levels, however, most police stations depend on local governments to fund stability maintenance.[208] For example, to prevent petitioners from leaving their cities, local governments devote cash and human resources to contain aggrieved individuals and deal with protests before they draw attention from higher-ups. Sometimes this work is carried out by *xiejing,* but regular officers are also dispatched to handle these jobs.[209] The work might involve rounding up dissidents during sensitive times like the National People's Congress meeting or even longer-term containments. One officer described the case of a 70-year-old retired teacher who is observed virtually around the clock because he is seeking reparations for abuse he suffered during the Cultural Revolution.[210] Local government officials, fearful of reprisal for too many incidents of unrest in their area, are often eager to fund such *weiwen* activities, though resources are not unlimited. One officer said there is not enough money in the world to subdue the protestors in his city,[211] though most of his peers were more satisfied with their stations ability to manage *weiwen.*

Stability Maintenance and Police Effectiveness

The funding and prioritization of stability maintenance appears to be working from the standpoint of local police effectiveness on the ground. Across field sites, many of the same officers who bemoaned their low salaries or outdated equipment reported satisfaction with station resources for handling protests. Officers in Hunan said that they generally knew how to manage protests or dissidents, and one officer there echoed the sentiments of others, calling it, "not a big problem."[212] Another officer in Hebei said he enjoys stability maintenance work as a welcome break from the regular routine. He gleefully described chasing after would-be petitioners on their way to make trouble in Beijing, explaining that he and his colleagues can usually catch them at highway toll plazas or even on the train. He also described how he and other officers go and get potential dissidents during sensitive times, treating them "nicely" (很好, *henhao*) by buying them food, letting the watch movies, and sometimes even sharing a beer with them during their detention at a motel or other holding area. Even officers in an area of

[206] Interview with local station supervisor, Hunan, 2013.
[207] Interview with Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[208] Interview with Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[209] Interview with district station detective, Hebei, 2011.
[210] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[211] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[212] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.

Shaanxi that tends to see more social unrest were largely satisfied with their ability to handle *weiwen*. "We have to treat minority groups very carefully," explained one officer, "but we can hire *xiejing* to help [make up for manpower shortages]."[213]

The key to effectiveness of stability maintenance in the areas where I conducted research is multifold, but from the standpoint of frontline police resources, funding from local governments makes a big difference. Central government money for returning dissidents is not insignificant, but money from the local level for detention and *xiejing* helps to streamline frontline response by giving officers the resources they need to respond efficiently and effectively. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that local stations can boost effectiveness even more when more financial resources are available. A *Southern Daily* report on Guangdong's Lianjiang city found the local government spent US$ 4.5 million in 2010 and significantly reduced the number of mass petitions in the city as well as the number of protestors headed to higher levels.[214] While most cities lack the resources to muster such a response, the case of Lianjiang shows that real gains can be made when enough money is thrown at the problem.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of how resource limitations and allocation decisions affect police operations on the ground. As observations about equipment, salaries, and overtime pay demonstrate, resource limitations can impose real burdens on local police effectiveness when they affect equipment purchases, officer morale, and constrain the amount of time and/or number of officers available to respond to public demands. Moreover, allocation decisions, whether they are driven by institutionalized expectations or central government priorities, can impose further limitations on resources that are already stretched thin. Sometimes, as is the case with office officers, they can make a taxing situation even more difficult. But at other times they can produce the opposite effect, creating response efficiencies such as those we see in the area of stability maintenance. As Chapter Five will discuss, however, the benefits or prioritizing protest control comes with costs to other types of policing.

This chapter has also sought to correct misperceptions about police funding in China. Recent increases in central government funds for internal security have not created a windfall of cash for most local police stations, nor have they created substantial resources for local stations even in the area of stability maintenance. Most of that money comes from local governments, and while it does appear to be enough to handle social unrest issues in the areas where I conducted research, that may not be true in areas that experience more protest. Moreover,

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[213] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[214] News.sohu.com. "Guangdong's Lianjiang City spends over 31 Million in on year on Comprehensive Stability Maintenance, Says Money is to Buy Stability" （广东廉江一年用 3100 多万综治维稳 称花钱买稳定). *Southern Daily* 25 August 2010. http://news.sohu.com/20100825/n274452880.shtml.

funding from local governments for stability maintenance has limits. The police leaders in my field sites have not been able to parlay those funds into things that would improve response capabilities in other areas, such as hiring more official police officers or improving station and salary conditions. Instead, we see a compartmentalization of resources for *weiwen* that leaves other areas of policing stretched to the breaking point. As the following chapter demonstrates, the financial burden on front-line officers is not eased by central government reforms.

Chapter Four

Police Reform

Officers report that life on the frontlines is further complicated by police reforms. While it is fair to say that most officers in China are not inherently opposed to the general direction of the Ministry's reform agenda, it is also true that many take issue with the specifics.[215] Professionalization of the force, for example, is regarded as progress by most officers, but particular regulations, such as those for reporting requirements, are widely denounced as ineffective and worse. Often, it is not the content of reform that causes trouble for street-level police, but the slow and uneven application of change. Many officers wish, for example, that the Ministry would do a better job of creating response procedures or improve recruitment practices. Of course, not all reforms are negatively received by people on the frontlines. On the other end of the spectrum, officers report that some policies work well, particularly in the area of stability maintenance. By talking to street-level police about these issues, we learn more about how police reform in China actually works and how various policies affect day-to-day operations.

While others have written comprehensive reviews of police reform in China,[216] this chapter focuses on the policies that directly affect street-level police response. The sections below group public security reform into three categories: reforms that directly undermine the capabilities of local police, reforms that potentially improve police response but do not succeed at the current level of implementation, and reforms that are successful. By looking at these policies more closely, we can better understand specific effects like how limitations on gun use achieve broader state goals of limiting frontline police power but increase risks for unarmed officers, or why training programs are filled with information on political ideology but largely neglect to provide officers with practical advice that could help them solve cases or do their jobs more efficiently.

To fully assess police reform in China and understand why the Ministry might enact policies that impose challenges for ground-level response, it is important to recall the rationale behind the

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[215] This type of conflict is not unknown to Chinese scholars, though it is seldom discussed outside of policing circles. Kam Wong's *Police Reform in China* does an excellent job of presenting what he terms the "concerns and reservations about the goals, processes, and sustainability of police reform" that are held by both reformers and officers in China. Wong 2011, p. 5.

[216] See for example Wong 2011; Wong 2002; and Wong 2009. For additional information on public security reform, see also Fu 2005.

PSB's reform agenda. As laid out in Chapter Two, police leaders have molded the police bureaucracy to better serve the Central state and address security problems that arose during China's transition to a market economy. With this in mind, reformers have spent the last 25 years enacting policies that increase central government control, promote rule by law, and enforce stability. More recently, reformers have also begun pursuing changes that attempt to improve service to the public and, hopefully, stave off rising dissent. When we consider these goals, it is easier to see how some reform policies might be at odds with police objectives on the ground.[217]

The sections that follow assess the ways in which the Ministry's reform agenda shapes policing practices in China by showing how various policies diminish or enhance police response from the standpoint of frontline police. This analysis also reveals broader patterns that are critical for understanding the strength of the ground-level security apparatus in Chinese cities. As we observed in the previous chapter on resource allocation, police assessments of ministerial reform policies reveal an overall trend in which frontline officers say they are struggling when it comes to everyday tasks like responding to calls or managing "everyday" cases but achieving a certain degree of success in the area of stability maintenance.

Reforms that Undermine

In recent years, reforms that increase centralization and reduce the degree of individualized power held by local officers and station leaders have provoked resistance from frontline police. Local officers often complain about reforms related to the use of force, reporting requirements, and supervision, and these grievances reveal more than just feelings of powerlessness or irritation at being told what to do by higher ups. Such objections also expose a disconnect between central Ministry objectives and policing needs on the frontlines, especially when reform is applied unilaterally and with little heed to local context or officer input. In cases like reporting requirements, reforms can make the act of doing a job more difficult, while other policies such as those aimed to reduce the use of force arguably make the work more dangerous. For all reforms in this category, frontline police say new policies shift the rules of the game and leave them struggling, often indefinitely, since policy changes are seldom accompanied by additional resources that could help them adapt.

[217] China is not unique in this regard. Police bureaucracies around the world pursue reform for a variety of reasons that often have little or no relation to what ground-level agents would call frontline effectiveness. For example, reformers have pursued policies designed to achieve broader goals like increasing democratic development (Bayley 1995, Manning 2010, Sklansky 2008, and Stone and Ward 2000), demilitarizing the bureaucratic structure (Herzog 2001), and moving toward centralization (Hale, et al 2004) or decentralization (Taylor 2011, p 150-4, Eaton 2008). Police leaders and higher-ups may also use reforms to pursue political agendas like repressing political or economic rivals (Taylor 2011, p 34).

Limitations on the Use of Force

How and when police use force is complicated and controversial. A major goal of police reform in China is to curb the power of officers by limiting the frequency with which they are likely to use violent means. Whether this is achieved by restricting the use of firearms or limiting self-defense, the idea is to decrease the number of conflicts between police and society in which officers might be perceived as abusing their power or causing undue harm. But restrictions of this nature are inherently fraught because the very act of policing is a violent pursuit. Police are positioned at the frontlines of a state's Weberian monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and violence is often a necessary part of their job. This reality is why some scholars call the notion of democratic policing an oxymoron (Brogden and Nijhar 2013) as there is little democracy in a vocation whose goal is to force some people to do things they do not otherwise wish to do.[218] In China, debates about use of force and the role of police in society are also playing out in real time, as the Ministry tweaks restrictions and officers cope with the aftermath.

At the center of this discussion are limits on firearms. All regular officers in China carried guns as a matter of course until 1995 when the central government reversed the policy with Article 10 of the Police Law.[219] Firearms were rounded up and placed in county and city armories that required two keys held by two different people to open the door. A senior officer explained that the actual disarming of officers took several years, partly because it was a major undertaking and partly because some officers had their "own ideas" (自己的想法, *ziji de xiangfa*) about the restrictions.[220] By around 1996 or 1997, all local police stopped carrying handguns. After the change, office officers never touched a gun again, but patrol officers and criminal investigation police (刑警, *xingjing*) still had access to firearms when leaders deemed it necessary for particular missions. One more senior detective said he would often receive permission to carry a handgun when working on murder cases, especially in the early years following reform, but many of the younger officers I spoke with had not used a gun since their initial training period, though a 2014 policy has eased firearm restrictions for select patrol squads in large cities.[221]

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[218] This is also perhaps one reason why local policing in America is arguably just as violent today as it was in 1953 when policing scholar William Westley wrote that the municipal police "conceive of violence as a personal property to be used at discretion." Westley 1953, p. 34.

[219] Mps.gov.cn. 1995. The Police Law (人民警察法, *renmin jingcha fa*) http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n1282/n3493/n3763/n4138/427625.html

[220] Interview with detective, Hebei, 2011.

[221] In 2014, a pilot program was launched in Shanghai that allowed 1000 beat-cops to carry revolvers. Participating officers underwent a two-month training period and psychological assessment. Later, the size of the force was increased and similar programs were rolled out in other major cities like Qingdao, Changsha, Xian, and Kunming. While the change is significant, it affects only a small percentage of patrol officers and is concentrated in larger cities. Most patrol officers remain unarmed, and it is unclear when and whether the reforms will be broadened to arm patrol officers in smaller cities or the county stations. For more information, see CCTV News Video. 2014. "Ministry of Public Security officials discuss the arming of people's

The effects of the gun rule on frontline police can vary. Many new officers enter the force excited about the prospect of firing a gun in the line of duty only to have their hopes dashed, and that disappointment quickly turns to dismay if and when they find themselves in a dangerous situation unarmed. When I asked one interviewee about the dangers of patrol work, he pointed to a large scar running across the bridge of his nose.[222] When responding to a call one night, the officer had knocked on the caller's door only to be struck in the face with a thick, cleaver-style chef's knife by a woman who was later determined to be mentally ill. His wife, also a police officer, was eight months pregnant at the time, and their families, all police, worked for days keep the news from her while he was in the hospital receiving treatment. Other interviewees also expressed concern about their ability to defend themselves without firearms,[223] but not all police are bothered by the fact that they are not able to carry guns. One officer nearing retirement said it made no difference to him.[224] Another officer in the same age group said he cared little about the restriction and thought it was a probably good idea to keep close control of the guns in circulation. Of course, both of these officers were already firmly entrenched office officers who no longer went out on patrol or answered calls.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements are another category of reform that street-level police say can undermine their work. Police reports are a time-honored part of public security work around the world, and China is no exception. Local *paichusuo* have long maintained comprehensive records of murders, thefts, and other crimes, in addition to keeping archives of residential information under the household registration system (户口制度, *hukou zhidu*). In the early days of the reform era, officers hand-wrote detailed crime reports that logged events and statements of involved parties, but changes in technology and concerns over idiosyncratic reporting styles helped drive a push toward computerization and standardization.[225] Since the 1990s, stations have begun increasing the level of detail provided in reports, and digitization has made it much easier to transfer that information to the higher levels. But in order to understand the content and nature of reporting requirements, we must look beyond the major police reforms such as the Police Law, which typically include only vague language about the necessity of reporting.[226]

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police in Shanghai" (公安部官员谈上海民警配枪, *gonganbu guanyuan tan shanghai minjing peiqiang*). http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2014-04-22/093029985238.shtml.

[222] Interview, Hebei, 2011.

[223] Interview with patrol officer, Hebei, 2011; interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[224] Interview with detective, Hebei, 2012.

[225] For an account, see Y Xu 1996.

[226] See for example the general language in Article 33 of the Police Law. Mps.gov.cn 1995, or the City Police Patrol Regulations, which stipulate that patrol officers must file reports on important cases immediately. Mps.gov. 1995. 城市人民警察巡逻规定 (*chengshi renmin jingcha xunluo guiding*). http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n1282/n3493/n3793/n4348/436063.html.

More details about the specific nature of reporting requirements can be gleaned from talking to officers on the ground and reading police handbooks. These sources reveal that the Ministry has devised an extensive reporting system designed to keep the upper levels apprised of how crimes are handled by the local level. Under current practices, officers say all visits and calls to the station must record detailed information about the nature of the call/request, the attending officers, and the eventual resolution.[227] The Ministry also requires annual and semi-annual summary reports that log station activities.[228] For politically sensitive issues, such as terrorism or dissident tracking, reporting requirements are stricter.[229] All of these requirements are in addition to the routine collection of crime data, and all information is typically digitized and search enabled.

In practice, the system is far from perfect, not least because of the resistance it provokes from local officers who find their station requirements cumbersome at best. Officers are not opposed to report filing per se, but they resent the current level of time commitment as well as the stipulation that they must file a report for every single call. The higher up an officer moves, the more time he or she is likely to spend filing such reports,[230] but officers at all levels complain that reporting requirements waste valuable time better spent trying to solve cases or talking with residents while out on a call.[231] One local officer explained his concerns, "We are not helping people....We are just filling out reports."[232] Frontline officers also bemoan the fact that reports have to be filed for all calls to the station, even if the call is outside the scope of traditional police duties. One officer complained that he was often summoned out at all hours to resolve disputes between neighbors when he worked at the county *paichusuo,*[233] and another confirmed that he wasted time responding to calls that had nothing to do with police work, simply because the reporting requirements dictated it thus.[234] He explained, "people call

[227] Interviews with district station officers, Shaanxi, 2012; district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[228] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[229] An internal police document from Zhejiang describes a color-coded system in which red warnings are to be issued when local police encounter cases of terrorism or persons fleeing government capture. The deadline for raising a warning level about such cases to the higher level is 15 minutes during sensitive times, and the deadline for first providing feedback on how the situation was handled is 24 hours. Report available at Chinadigitaltimes.net. 2011. " Zhejiang Police's Internal Document: Controlling the Movements of Critical Persons," January 19. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2011/01/zhejiang-psb-internal-document-controlling-the-movements-of-critical-persons/.
[230] Interviews with patrol captain, Hebei, 2011; Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[231] Examples of this type of resistance are found elsewhere as well. Kam Wong discusses resistance to the "three items of education" campaign among police manager and officers to whom "it was more important to engage in police work (e.g., arresting criminals) than to participate in...off-site education and filling out reports for the campaign." Wong 2011, p. 252.
[232] Interview with station level officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[233] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[234] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

about lost dogs, and we have to go out...One time someone called about a lost QQ number (a social media website) and we had to file a report."

Accuracy of these reports is also an issue. One officer admitted, "most of what we write is fake,"[235] and though other interviewees were not quite so forthcoming in their assessments, several acknowledged that they or their colleagues cut corners and input information that was not accurate. One reason for this type of reporting is that stations and officers face real consequences if they do not meet certain expectations about case resolution. For example, during one interview with a district station officer, a mutual contact was present and told a story about calling 110 (China's emergency hotline) to report a break-in at her home.[236] When the local police arrived, she said they offered to replace her front door lock for free if she would call back and say the original call was made in error (打错了, *dacuo le*). The interviewee confirmed that some of his colleagues make deals like this because they do not want to file reports, especially for crimes they are unable to resolve. Such stories are humorous because they evoke images of officers riding around town with a sack of locks in their trunk, but they also demonstrate the lengths some cops will go to in order to get out of filing reports and keep crime statistics low.

Supervision

The story of fixing the lock brings up another reform issue that officers say plagues their work life: supervision. As with reporting requirements, supervision is a routine part of policing that plays a major role in China, not least because of the types of stories recounted thus far. But unlike reporting requirements, supervision methods are painstakingly codified at the highest levels and involve more actors than other reforms. Chapter 6 of the 1995 Police Law outlines supervision over law enforcement, noting that public security officials must establish a supervisory system that ensures implementation of laws at the local level and checks compliance.[237] Subsequent reform regulations presented in documents such as the Public Security Organ Inspection Regulations (公安机关督察条例, *gongan jiguan ducha tiaoli*)[238] and the Public Security, Police and Law Enforcement Responsibility and Accountability Provisions (公安机关人民警察执法过错责任追究规定, *gongan jiguan renmin jingcha zhifa guocuo zeren*

[235] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[236] Interview in Shaanxi, 2012.
[237] This chapter of the law includes a fair amount of detail. Under Articles 42-47, local police formally subjected to oversight by higher police authorities (人民警察的上机关, *renmin jingcha de shang jiquan*), the people's procuratorates (人民检察院, *renmin jiancha yuan*), administrative prosecution authorities (行政检察机关, *xingzheng jiancha jiguan*), and the public. Higher police authorities are granted the right to annul or alter decisions or other actions taken by local police, and the law further lays out mechanisms for handling conflicts of interest and managing accusations against local police. Mps.gov 1995.
[238] The 1997 original and 2011 updates are available at www.gov.cn. http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2011-09/08/content_1943257.htm.

zhuijiu guiding)[239] provide even greater levels of detail. In *Police Reform in China,* Kam Wong writes that this heavy emphasis on supervision is guided by an overarching expectation that "police should be professional and subject to both internal discipline and external supervision."[240] One local police supervisor echoed this sentiment, explaining that his job is only one part of the oversight mechanisms in place at his station.[241] In addition to internal supervision, he said local police are also monitored by representatives from the Ministry, journalists, and *laobaixing* (老百姓, ordinary people).

Within the bureaucracy, checkpoints have been created at all levels. Locally, designated internal supervisors at city stations and many city district stations monitor police behavior and compliance. The supervisor referenced above works at a city district station and went on to explain that his job focuses on supervision implementation (执行监督, *zhixing jiandu*) by looking at internal practice coherence with laws on the books.[242] Supervision of the local levels is also carried out by higher ups in the Ministry at both the provincial and central levels. The Ministry has internal officers conducting this work fulltime as well as officers dealing in external affairs who may be sent out on missions to check compliance for particular cases or issues.[243] Provincial level officials most commonly conduct such missions, but when higher profile issues are at stake, central government officials are also dispatched to check compliance.[244]

When possible, the Ministry will bypass station leaders altogether because they (perhaps rightly) do not fully trust reports originating at the local level.[245] Sometimes this entails conducting unannounced inspections,[246] and sometimes it means circumventing local actors altogether by establishing direct lines to the people. Returning once again to the story of fixing the lock, the officer on duty was particularly irritated because the caller had dialed 110, a national hotline that is easy for higher ups to monitor. Had she called the local station number, the officer would have had more discretion and might not have needed to file a report (or fix the lock). Beyond using 110 as a way to monitor and control what happens on the local level, the Ministry has also established hotlines for city and rural residents with complaints about local problems. These hotlines are managed by the MPS and provide an avenue for Ministry officials and aggrieved individuals to get around local government agents who might be unwilling to address their grievances. One Ministry official praised the hotlines, saying, "supervision of the lower levels remains a problem, but the hotlines are very helpful...In the past, our main way of getting information from the local level was to send a team down or read the news."[247] Others agree,

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[239] Mps.gov. 2016. http://www.mps.gov.cn/n16/n1282/n3493/n4390881/5036606.html.
[240] Wong 2011, p. 12.
[241] Interview, Hunan, 2012.
[242] Interview, Hunan, 2012.
[243] Interview with internal Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[244] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[245] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[246] Interview with central Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.
[247] Interview with Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.

explaining that hotlines are a step in the right direction for exposing police misconduct that might otherwise go unreported.[248]

Local police objections to supervision are many. Invariably, some officers do not like current practices because they make shirking or graft more difficult. Others dislike the uneven nature of supervision. Certain practices may be commonplace in a station but technically out of bounds, for example, and officers are subject to getting burned if inspectors show up unannounced.[249] Another officer explained that checks from the Ministry can "sometimes make problems worse" because officials enforce strict rule compliance but do not provide additional resources to help local stations cope.[250] Giving the example of raids, the officer explained that, prior to provincial Ministry intervention, the police in his city had leaked information about the approximate timing of drug inspections to local establishment owners (usually KTV clubs). This practice kept them from bagging high-level drug suppliers but allowed them to prosecute lower-level users and maintain a working relationship with the KTV proprietors. The provincial Ministry, frustrated that local stations were not following the letter of the law, finally began conducting their own inspections, which local police said only served to push the drug users underground where they could no longer be monitored.

Consequences for Police Effectiveness

Looking at the practices that have emerged from these three categories of reform, we see how ministerial efforts to centralize and promote rule by law can achieve state objectives and simultaneously make ground-level operations more challenging. In limiting the use of force, Ministry officials have likely reduced fatal conflicts between police and society, and, in the words of one senior station leader, taught officers how to speak using the law instead of their guns ("you cannot use a gun to speak" 不能用抢说话, *buneng yong qiang shuohua*).[251] The practice also helped minimize the risk of firearms falling into the wrong hands, a legitimate concern given the penchant of some officers to drink while armed.[252] Prior to the easing of

[248] Interview with a small group of Ministry officials, Beijing, 2012.

[249] One officer recounted the story of a colleague who was fired after a surprise inspection from the Ministry. The Ministry was onsite for an unrelated matter, but the officer was caught in the office, sleeping off an alcohol-infused lunch that is commonplace and even expected for police around the country but prohibited under the "Five Prohibitions" campaign that Minster of Public Security Zhou Yongkang launched in 2003. Interview with internal district supervisor, Hunan, 2012. For background on the Five Prohibitions campaign see Chinadaily.com. 2003. "259 Chinese Policemen Fired for Poor Conduct." 20 November. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-11/20/content_283267.htm.

[250] Interview with supervisor, Hunan, 2012.

[251] Interview, Beijing, 2012.

[252] The wife of one interviewee recalled her relief when the rules on gun use changed while her husband chuckled in acknowledgement. "He's always getting drunk," she said. "He can barely walk home. I was afraid he would lose his gun or (accidently) hurt himself." Interview in Hebei, 2011. A similar scenario was captured in Lu Chuan's 2002 film 寻枪 (*xun qiang*, The Missing

restrictions in 2014, China was one of only a handful of countries[253] that put unarmed patrol officers on the streets, and recent controversies surrounding police use of newly-acquired guns indicate that the Ministry may be right to approach the rollback of gun restrictions cautiously,[254] not least because they still have a long way to go in terms of training.[255] But restrictions on the use of force remain in place for the majority of cops in China, and grassroots officers say this makes it more difficult for them to stop crime.[256] It also means that patrol officers and anyone who goes out to answer calls or conduct investigations are exposed to greater personal risk, as the Hebei patrol officer's scarred face can attest.

Reporting requirements and supervisory practices similarly achieve Ministry goals of centralization by providing access to accounts of local police activities, should higher ups have both the will and manpower to look at them. But because current reporting rules dictate that essentially everything be reported, even those calls that frontline police say should be ignored, officers are required to file reports that they feel are of little consequence.[257] This burden is further exacerbated by the fact that frontline resources are stretched thin by limited police numbers, forcing police to work quickly as they try to move on to the next case. If the officer who said that much of what he and his colleagues write is false is to be believed – and under the circumstances his account is certainly plausible – then the absurdity of current reporting practices is thrown into relief: stringent reporting requirements have been instituted to keep the center apprised of ground-level activities, but the information they transmit may not even be accurate. Moreover, the burden such requirements impose on street-level police only serves to further limit their resources, in this case their time, to respond.

Gun). In the film, a police officer in rural Guizhou loses his gun after a night of heavy drinking at a wedding, resulting in an increasingly panicked search for the weapon. The officer ultimately sacrifices his life to get the gun back and dies happily when he succeeds.

[253] Patrol officers in Britain, Ireland, Norway, New Zealand, and Iceland do not carry firearms.

[254] In the summer of 2015, newly armed police in a Heilongjiang train station shot a petitioner. The case attracted attention from law firms in Beijing and figured somewhat prominently in discussions about the national crackdown on rights lawyers in 2015, as attorneys from the firm involved in the case disappeared. For information on the shooting, see: Luo Yuming. 2015. "Man shot in Heilongjiang was a serial petitioner, family awarded assistance after death" (黑龙江被击毙男子曾多次上访 死后家属获救助，*heilongjiang bei jibi nanzi ceng duoci shangfang sihou jiashu huo jiuzhu*), *Southern Weekend,* 6 May. http://news.qq.com/a/20150506/014644.htm?ADUIN=519013714&ADSESSION=1430896173&ADTAG=CLIENT.QQ.5389_.0&ADPUBNO=26466.

[255] One report from police officers in China notes that most of the patrol cops now being armed have not fired a shot since the five bullets they were required to shoot during their initial training. William Wan and Xu Jing, 2014 "Newly armed police in China say they fear their guns as much as public," *Washington Post,* 26 September, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/09/26/newly-armed-police-in-china-say-they-fear-their-guns-as-much-as-public/.

[256] See Cai 2015.

[257] Interview with district officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

This raises issues of unintended consequences and limitations of reform, themes that run deep in the subcategory of reforms that undermine. The effects are particularly apparent with regard to supervision, and one Ministry official acknowledged this, explaining that supervision at the top levels was well-developed but messy at the lower levels (有点儿乱, *youdiar luan*).[258] In the case of 110, local police have come up with methods to circumvent reporting requirements that are far less complicated than fixing locks. Visitors to China may have noticed signs on the street like the one in the image below. These are not just friendly reminders about public safety; they also carry important information about the local station's phone number. When residents call this number instead of 110, calls are answered more quickly[259] and the station is not held to the same reporting standards. This can be very useful to officers who are looking to lighten their workload and/or station leaders who are hoping to keep clearance rates high.[260] Even the direct hotlines for complaints have their limitations. The same officials who touted the benefits of the hotlines were also quick to point out the flaws. Aggrieved individuals may not know about the hotlines or avoid them for other reasons, such as the belief that a phone call will do little to resolve their problem.[261]

Image 1: Public security notice featuring local station phone numbers. Author's photo.

[258] Interview with Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.

[259] Dialing 110 does not immediately connect the caller to the local *paichusuo.* The calls usually go through three tiers of bureaucracy before it finally gets down to the appropriate *paichusuo*. (Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi 2012).

[260] Interviews with district station officers, Shaanxi, 2012; Hunan, 2012.

[261] Such beliefs have merit. The Ministry's resources for managing calls are limited and many issues that surface in the calls cannot be addressed. One official explained, "There is very little we can do if someone calls about a stolen wallet, but if they have a complaint about a fundamental problem with a rule, we can take the issue under review." (Interview with Ministry official, Beijing, 2012). Whether and how often they do so, however, is not immediately clear, and none of the officials interviewed could provide additional information about the process.

Reforms that Fall Short

Local officers also raise grievances about reforms they say do not go far enough in helping police manage ground-level problems. Unlike reforms that undermine, street-level cops mostly see policies in this category as a step in the right direction, but many are dissatisfied with current levels of implementation. At the forefront of these issues are complaints about training. Nearly all the officers I spoke with said current training programs are woefully disconnected from the reality of their lives on the ground, even though the Ministry has been quite active in increasing training requirements. Relatedly, changes in recruiting - a cornerstone of Chinese police reform - remain an issue that local police and leaders say needs development in order to improve frontline police effectiveness. Finally, some officers say a lack of detail in procedural rules can leave the frontlines struggling and encourage shirking, though where an officer stands on this issue depends on personal preference. All three reform categories stem from broader Ministry objectives to promote rule by law and professionalize the force, and the following subsections look carefully at the development of each before turning to assess their broader effects on frontline effectiveness.

Training

Training has always been a key part of policing in the reform era, but the Ministry's move toward rule by law in the latter half of the reform period has placed even greater emphasis on police training. Article 28 of the Police Law states that police must be trained in police schools or academies and pass related examinations.[262] The law also dictates education and training in political ideology, the legal system, and police work (政治思想 *zhengzhi sixiang*，法制 *fazhi*，警察业务 *jingcha yewu*), and highlights the importance of building facilities for training. With regard to training infrastructure, some programs are carried out centrally in Beijing, but most training occurs at the local police schools (警校, *jingxiao*) scattered throughout the provinces. These institutions operate at the university, high school, and even middle school levels and vary in quality.

Most officers are dissatisfied with current training programs, and it is easy to see why when one considers the order in which the Police Law presents the three emphases (political ideology, the legal system, and police work). From the standpoint of the Communist Party and the Ministry of Public Security, an organ of the Party, it makes sense to prioritize ideology and adherence to law,[263] but for officers on the ground, this ordering has little practical value. One particularly "well-trained" interviewee attended the police academy in his provincial capital, participates in annual training programs, and spent two years in Beijing at the People's Public Security University (公安大学, *gongan daxue*), a rare opportunity for most frontline officers.[264] But he said that none of this training was useful, "You don't learn anything," he explained. "95 percent

[262] Mps.gov.cn 1995.
[263] Political control of the police is common in communist states (Bayley 1985), and the Chinese police are no exception (Fu 1994).
[264] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.

is just political thinking...not really any practical examples you can use." Another officer described the (mostly political) training that he has to go through every year as a chance to rest (休息, *xiuxi*) and catch up on sleep.[265]

So much emphasis on ideology leaves little room for practical instruction, and even when it is offered, the training that officers receive may not be consistent or available to everyone in the station. One younger district station officer explained, "We are supposed to have training twice a year, but I haven't been in two or three years. Sometimes [during training] we just leave to go eat lunch and they tell us to study on our own...it's a complete waste of time."[266] Training can also be restricted to certain types of officers, as it was for the older policeman quoted in Chapter Three who complained that most of his station's training programs are reserved for younger officers and focus on how to use new technologies.[267] Given these trends, it is easy to see why officers say training does little to improve their ability to do their jobs.

Recruitment Standards

Another category of reform related to professionalization that police officers say does not go far enough or in quite the right direction is recruitment standards. The Ministry began the professionalization process by implementing new rules for recruitment in the 1990s. Once again, the 1995 Police Law was the first major codification of this agenda,[268] and subsequent reforms honed these measures, with even the most recent 2015 reform agenda calling for improvements to recruitment and training mechanisms (招录培养机制, *zhaolu peiyang jizhi*).[269] Changes in recruitment have gradually overhauled police force demographics by replacing the old guard of officers who have military experience but little or no formal education with young, more educated officers. Using entrance exams, educational requirements, and a formal interview process, these efforts follow the logic that policing problems on the ground such as corruption and poor law enforcement can be improved by bringing in smarter and better-educated officers, though this line of thinking has long been questioned by criminologists.[270]

Despite higher standards and the hardships of life on the frontlines, recruiting officers is not a major problem in China. As with many other professions, officers join the police force for a variety of reasons, many of which have little to do with quality of life. Potential recruits may seek a spot of the force because their father, uncle, brother, or another influential figure was

[265] Interview with patrol captain, Hebei, 2011.
[266] Interview, Shaanxi, 2012.
[267] Interview with district station officers, Shaanxi, 2012.
[268] Mps.gov.
[269] *Xinhua.* 2015. "Opinion on the Framework for Comprehensive Deepening of Police Reform and Large Problems," (关于全面深化公安改革若干重大问题的框架意见, *guanyu quanmian shenhua gongan gaige ruogan zhongda wenti de kuangjia yijian),* 15 February. http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2015-02/15/c_1114379121.htm.
[270] See for example Smith 1978, Carlan 1999.

an officer. Others say they joined because they admired police officers when they were children,[271] wanted to wear a uniform, or hoped to shoot a gun.[272] Many see it as an entry point into the Chinese civil service and a chance to secure an "iron rice bowl."[273] Competition to join the force is perhaps fiercer than ever before, and even a degree from a local police school no longer guarantees a spot on the force. Many officers labor for years in far-flung county stations, often under contracts that must be renewed annually, while they wait to secure coveted city station positions.[274]

Yet no one seems happy about the quality of existing officers or the new recruits. A common complaint about police officers *among* police officers is that too many have poor "quality" (素质, *suzhi*). Frontline officers voice this concern about their colleagues[275] almost as vocally as their superiors.[276] One assistant station chief said that the new standards have simply replaced old employment problems with new ones, noting that the officers born in the 1980s (80 后, 80 *hou*) may be educated but are difficult to manage because they have been coddled, "lack experience...[and] are not willing to do many types of work," that they see as beneath them.[277]

There are different ideas regarding what should be done to improve recruitment. One strategy employed by station leaders is to attract more applicants, and some well-heeled stations have gone so far as to create movie-style posters[278] in order to drum up interest. But interviews with frontline officers indicate changes also need to target institutionally entrenched hiring practices. In one area of Hebei, for example, potential recruits are still expected to pay money in order to secure a coveted slot at one of the district city stations. "Passing the exam is not enough," explained one officer who was hoping to land just such a position.[279] "You have to pay money." Further complicating matters, the officer went on to explain, was that amounts are not fixed; positions are awarded to whoever pays the most, and even having a family member on the force does not exempt one from making the payment, though it might mean they can get away with paying less. Other officers voiced concerns about the continued importance of social connections (关系, *guanxi*). G*uanxi* is particularly useful during the interview process, and well-

[271] Interview with local district supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[272] Interview with local station officer, Hebei, 2011.
[273] Interviews with local district station officer, Shaanxi 2012, district officer, Hunan, 2012.
[274] Interviews with patrol officer in Hebei, 2011, local district supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[275] See for example interview with patrol officer, Hebei, 2011 and district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[276] Interview with Ministry official, Beijing, 2012; Interview with Beijing municipal police leader, Beijing, 2013; Interview with assistant station chief, Hunan, 2012.
[277] Interview with assistant station chief, Hunan, 2012.
[278] Lei Zi, 2014. "Chengdu Police Recruit Officers with Cool Hong Kong-Style Blockbuster Poster" (成都警方发酷炫招警海报具港式大片风格, *Chengdu jingfang fa ku xuan zhao jing haibao ju gangshi dapian fengge*), *Chengdu News Network,* 3 July 2014. http://cd.qq.com/a/20140703/011313.htm#p=9.
[279] Interview with patrol officer, 2011.

connected persons are more likely to be hired. Such preferential hiring practices are problematic because the most qualified individuals may not be getting hired. Moreover, it is highly likely that *guanxi* hires are further increasing the number of office officers in stations, which as Chapter Three demonstrated, is not good for frontline response.

Procedural Rules

Finally, some officers argue that ground-level procedural rules need more attention from reformers.[280] In China, specific rules and regulations develop out of laws set by the National People's Congress or from policy statements made by top government officials. Because these laws and policy statements are usually quite general, Ministry officials use them as the basis for creating more specific procedural rules that frontline police then follow.[281] For example, legal articles in the Criminal Procedure Law[282] dictate general ground-level policing practices that the Ministry then uses to develop detailed handbooks that hammer out procedures for practical implementation. One such handbook based on the new Criminal Procedure Law is 693 pages long.[283]

But some say these procedures do not provide enough detail about how to actually manage the real life criminal activities street-level police encounter on a daily basis. "Officer Xiao" described the extent of the problem over hot pot one night.[284] "There are not enough rules for how to respond in most situations," he explained. "It isn't well-developed like it is in America." When I asked him to explain, he told a story about going to bust up a local hair salon/brothel: "The boss started running out of the door as soon as I pulled up, so I went running after him," he said. "I ran for a long time until I finally caught up with him. And when I got back to the station my coworkers laughed at me because I was so sweaty and could barely breathe. It was also summer and I'm a little fat. They would have just let the boss go...There isn't any rule about what to do when suspects run." Xiao told the story to make everyone at the table laugh, but he went on to explain that the lack of specific procedures causes real problems for public order. There are, for example, no rules about how to handle underground blood traders in his city, and so officers just ignore them, even though this type of exchange is a problem for public health and order.

This type of police inaction in the absence of procedural rules has also been picked up by the national news. One case in Bengbu City, Anhui made headlines after a 17-year-old clerk was

[280] Complaints about procedural development were not common. This possibly reflects unwillingness on the part of the officers interviewed to suggest anything that might create more work for them.
[281] Interview with Ministry Official, Beijing, 2012.
[282] Gov.cn. 2012. People's Republic of China Criminal Procedure Law (中国人民共和国刑事诉讼法, *zhongguo renmin gongheguo xingshi susongfa*), 17 March. http://www.gov.cn/flfg/2012-03/17/content_2094354.htm.
[283] Sun and Li 2012.
[284] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

stabbed to death while the two police officers she had called to her aid stood by and did nothing. In security footage that is still available online,[285] the officers are seen standing back from the attacker as he pulls the girl to the ground and stabs her repeatedly, stepping in with pepper spray only after the attacker has finished with the girl and turned the knife on himself. Even after the incident blew up on social media, the officers returned to work and never faced disciplinary action. A follow up investigation found that the two police were "not involved in the incident" and had broken no rules, which is, given the state of procedural development, technically true.[286] This type of case, while extreme, is exactly the kind of incident that officers who call for better procedural rules (and more training) say could be prevented by more carefully devised reforms.

Consequences for Police Effectiveness

As accounts of police inaction in the face of real crime indicate, police effectiveness is compromised when policies fall short and officers do not know how to respond. With reforms in this category, officers would like to see more action on the part of the Ministry to develop existing policies, but because of conflicting ministerial priorities or simply a lack of capacity, ground-level needs are not being met. Training is one area in which the Ministry ought to be able to make a difference. Yet in interview after interview, officers say current training programs mostly waste their time. One Ministry official noted that there is not a lot of funding for training,[287] but that fails to explain the prioritization of political ideology in the training programs that do exist. Based on reports from officers, it appears that the Ministry's continued emphasis on ideology has rendered training an insignificant part of police life, squandering what could be a potentially invaluable tool to improve the quality of policing on the ground.

The implications for frontline operations stretch far. Without proper training and without the right protocols to guide them, many frontline police are underprepared to do the job they are called upon to do, and some take the easy way out. One officer explained, "Officers ignore (difficult) cases.... (if they didn't) they would have to go out and collect evidence. We have no idea how to do that...No deep knowledge of forensics...how can we solve crimes?"[288]
Issues related to recruitment are similarly vexing. It is difficult to say how prevalent the reliance on *guanxi* and use of cash payments to buy positions are across local stations, but these problems are deeply rooted in the institutional culture of the Chinese bureaucracy and are by

[285] Youku.com. "Video: Anhui Bengbu City: Two police officers stand by and witness a young girl be stabbed to death" (视频：安徽蚌埠： 两警察目睹少女被刀杀近在咫尺, *shipin: anhui bengbu: liang jingcha mudu shaonv bei daosha jin zai zhichi*). 18 August 2013. http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTk5MzcwNDY4_rss.html.
[286] Xiao, Hui and Fu Zongheng. 2013. "Investigation finds two police officers who witnessed a young girl's murder will not lose their jobs." (调查租认定目睹少女被害两民警不失职 , *diaochazu rending mudu shaonv beihai liang minjing bu shizhi*), *The Beijing Daily,* 23 August. http://www.bjnews.com.cn/news/2013/08/23/279965.html.
[287] Interview with Central Ministry Officer, Beijing, 2012.
[288] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

no means exclusive to the local police. From an outsider's perspective, the Ministry appears to have made considerable progress in improving the educational attainment levels of new recruits, and as older officers continue to retire, it should be easier for the Ministry to mold the current force more carefully in its desired image. Properly executed reforms and better supervision could rectify the issues street-level police raise about recruitment, but ultimately, their complaints about the character problems of officers may be less related to the quality of new recruits and more about the way the institution shapes them after they arrive.

Successful Reforms

Amid a sea of dissatisfaction about everything from gun usage to poor training are once again the largely positive assessments of stability maintenance policies. Ground-level police, for the most part, do not complain about *weiwen* reform, and instead indicate that the Ministry is doing several things right. The previous chapter showed how funding and extra manpower resources have improved ground-level operations in this area, and the next chapter will provide more detail about how a centralized pattern of government control over *weiwen* works to improve frontline response. This section focuses exclusively on the reforms enacted by the Ministry and their immediate effects for ground level operations. Once again, it is important to note that the findings in this section are restricted to locales that do not see extraordinary levels of social unrest. Local police in areas marred by contention, particularly those in Xinjiang and Tibet, may very well view Ministry reforms differently, and more research is needed to understand those effects.

Frontline security agents are a major part of stability maintenance work in China, and police reform and procedures reflect that. Though the 1995 Police Law technically covered mass incidents as a matter of course, the issue did not receive considerable attention until after the Resolution on Building a Harmonious Society was released during the Sixth Plenum of the National Party Congress in October 2006. Since that time, national laws, such as the 2009 People's Armed Police Law, which formally charged the PAP with managing rebellions, riots, and terrorist acts, have been updated to codify the management of social unrest,[289] and handbooks for police and other law enforcement agents have been issued,[290] in addition to updates to criminal code handbooks.[291] Further reflecting the importance of the issue, scholars and practitioners in China are engaged in a robust, high-level discussion of stability maintenance in all the major policing and legal journals. Between 2005 and 2016, these outlets

[289] Gov.cn. 2009. People's Armed Police Law (中华人民共和国人民武警察法, *zhonghua renmin gongheguo renmin wujingcha fa*). 27 August. http://www.gov.cn/flfg/2009-08/27/content_1403324.htm.

[290] See for example People's Daily Press. 2009. Prevention and Disposal of Mass Disturbances. Beijing, People's Daily Press.

[291] See 2012. *Interpretation of the New Criminal Procedure Law and Police Practice Guide.*

published nearly 2000 articles on the issue of mass incidents, covering topics such as prevention,[292] disposal,[293] public relations response,[294] and even tips for utilizing police dogs.[295]

Such attention has benefits. In contrast to the problems detailed in the previous section on procedural rules, protocols for handling social unrest are clearly developed, and police say they know what to do in most cases. Often the first responders for street demonstrations are traffic police, who have been trained to clear the street quickly. "We don't let them block traffic," said one traffic police supervisor.[296] Another officer explained that while keeping streets clear is the top priority, officers from his station may be called out for any public demonstration, large or small.[297] "People often go to public squares because they are unhappy [about land expropriation or medical malpractice]," explained the detective. "They will sit down with a banner and try to get people's attention. Sometimes they have a weapon and threaten to kill themselves...We police have to deal with them because they are dangerous [threats] to public security." By chance, I observed one such event on a side street in Beijing in 2012. A man with what appeared to be a head wound unfurled a white banner and stood outside an apartment complex with his wife for perhaps 10-15 minutes. During that time, an individual came out to argue with the man and a few minutes later a patrol car from the local *paichusuo* pulled up to take the protestor away, demonstrating how quickly the police can respond to such issues.

Once at the station, the process is well-defined. Officers, station leaders, and local officials may be called in to negotiate with the protestors, depending on the case.[298] One officer explained that there are two types of protestors -reasonable ones (合理, *heli*) with the legitimate complaints and unreasonable ones (不合理, *bu heli*) who just want to cause trouble (闹事, *naoshi*) - but they have to deal with them both.[299] When it gets to this point, petitioners are often well known to people in the system, making it easier for police to know which office to call. One policeman explained that public protest is often a last resort: "The people go to courts or other government departments, but they can't get justice, so they turn to *shangfang*, which has a long history in China."[300] Sometimes petitioners go directly to the police station. This happens when protesters have already failed to make contact with the appropriate department because they, "do not know where to go...the staff of the department did not know how to help them...or the guards at the gate wouldn't let them in."[301] In these cases, the standard procedure for police is to help the petitioners make contact with the relevant people at the necessary departments. After that, the case is usually out of their hands.

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[292] PZ Li 2008.
[293] XH Liu 2005.
[294] See for example, Ye, Xiao, and Liu 2006.
[295] Qin and Luo 2015.
[296] Interview, Hunan, 2009.
[297] Interview, Hebei, 2009.
[298] Interview, Hebei, 2011.
[299] Interview with city station officer, Hebei, 2009.
[300] Interview, Shaanxi, 2012.
[301] Interview with city station officer, Hebei, 2009

In outlining the procedures of protest management, we can see that how stability maintenance work is divided. In addition to involvement from local government officials, labor is also split among ground-level police agents. There are big differences between the *shangfang* (上访) cases that local police handle and the mass incidents that develop into riots (大型活动) or demonstrations that are designated as terrorist events. The latter two are typically managed by the People's Armed Police because local police are not equipped to handle such incidents. Depending on the city, a PAP officer explained that they may also be brought in for small demonstrations if the protestors "have a conflict with another group...have become violent...[or if] local police do not have enough people to manage the problem"[302]

Again, the procedures are clear. Prior to 2009, local government leaders were permitted to call in the PAP directly, but the People's Armed Police Law checked that right, possibly because leaders were concerned that local governments were too quick to call in the PAP and unnecessarily escalated conflicts with protesters.[303] Now Ministry officials must first authorize the deployments, and when they do, the response is typically swift and effective. PAP squads are strategically placed throughout the country and stand on call to manage incidents of unrest. Teams can travel in squads of up to 500 men, though they usually go out in 100-200 person groups.[304] Officers spend most of their time preparing for big events, which includes working out, running laps, and participating in training exercises or competing in competitions with teams from other cities.[305] With this level of coordination and training it is unsurprising that local officers report satisfaction with stability maintenance reforms. By dividing the labor, the regime has proven able to manage *weiwen* more effectively than other areas of policing.

Conclusion

Officer assessments of legal and ministerial reforms reveal dissatisfaction in many areas that affect daily police work. Restrictions on the use of force have increased the vulnerability of officers on the streets, while reporting requirements and related supervisory procedures and have decreased the amount of time they have to spend on cases while simultaneously failing to provide the Ministry with accurate information about ground-level operations. These complaints further reveal the one-sided nature of central-local relations in the police bureaucracy. Their reports suggest that local police and station leaders are treated more as problems to be tamed than partners in law enforcement on the ground. Supervision, for example, gets carried out in ways that aim to control the local police, passing expectations down and transmitting information about performance back up, but it is not a two way street

[302] Interview with PAP officer, 2012.
[303] Wang Yukai, professor at China's National School of Administration, quoted in: Michael Wines. 2009. "China Approves Law Governing Armed Police Force," *The New York Times*, 27 August, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/28/world/asia/28china.html?_r=2.
[304] Interview with PAP officer, 2012.
[305] Interview with PAP leader, 2012.

for frontline police. No local officer with whom I spoke ever dared to pass information or suggestions back up the chain of command, with one explaining that his leaders "wouldn't want to listen" (不要听, *bu yao ting*).[306] Moreover, strict enforcement of procedures like the requirement of unannounced drug raids rightly or wrongly prevents local officers from collaborating with the Ministry to find work around solutions that could preserve some of the benefits of existing practices. One officer explained that this is just not the way the top-down system works.[307]

Complaints about insufficient reforms also reveal important deficiencies in the system. The lack of practical training for frontline officers is truly surprising, given the tangible benefits that such programs could provide to enforcement practices on the ground. Here, it appears that a myopic focus on political ideology permeates all types of training programs, even and perhaps especially at the university level.[308] When one considers this lack of training in combination with procedural deficiencies, it is easy to see why some officers say reforms do not go far enough. Moreover, the examples officers give of police choosing to not run after criminals or of looking the other way when they see activities that they do not know how to build cases around are disturbing because they raise questions about the willingness and ability of police to ensure public order. They also stand in stark contrast to frontline police accounts of reforms related to protest.

The positive assessments that local officers give of protest control are equally telling. In this area of crime management, the Ministry appears to have overcome problems of training and procedural ambiguity to create a system that officers say works fairly well from where they stand. In some ways this is unsurprising, given the attention that stability maintenance gets from all levels of government. Yet it interesting because it indicates that effective reform policies can and are being devised and implemented. This begs the question of why the Ministry is not developing similar reform policies in other areas of crime management, which are arguably just as important for maintaining public order as protest control.

[306] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[307] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[308] This, incidentally, is not the case with the People's Armed Police. One squad leader reported that he often participates in high-level, technical training programs in Beijing or with foreign police forces that has helped him gain knowledge to take back to his team (Interview, 2012).

Chapter 5

Controlling the Local Police

As the issues with oversight and reform suggest, the Ministry faces challenges to controlling frontline police. In China, the police bureaucracy is centralized by design.[309] The Ministry of Public Security in Beijing is charged with setting all police policies and overseeing ground-level implementation. Ostensibly, this means the Ministry has a firm command over local policing practices, but in reality, control over the frontlines is far more complicated. To understand how and when the Ministry and other government entities influence local policing, frontline accounts are critical. One officer assessed the Ministry's power in this way: "The center wants to manage the local police, but this is very difficult...The truth is that we police must also follow the local government."[310] The influence of those government forces can be powerful. So powerful, in fact, that street-level police say it feels like they have "two bosses" (两个老板 *liangge laoban*). But this does not mean local police always get caught between power sharing struggles of their two bosses. In some cases, the Ministry overcomes local forces and exerts strong control over local police, as with social unrest. And in many other cases, both the local government and the Ministry ignore the day-to-day activities of local police. How and when upper level officials exert control affects ground level response and can tell us much how security capacity in China works.

Approaching policing from the ground up allows us to peel back the layers of the bureaucracy and see differences in how the Ministry and local governments exercise control over various types of crime. There are three main patterns of control over frontline operations: superficial, shared, and unified. Differences in how upper level officials exercise control largely depend on the type of case. For most crimes, local police are left to their own devices, struggling to respond as best they can, given the resource and reform-related limitations outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. Under this pattern of superficial control, both the Ministry and local governments are indirectly involved with ground-level response, and the results for crime management are typically not good. For other types of cases, however, the Ministry and local governments are more active and end up sharing control over frontline operations. When the two lock horns, local police get caught in the middle and crime response suffers, though according to reports from frontline officers the results of shared control are not always

[309] This is in contrast to decentralized police systems like the United States where station practices and capabilities can vary vastly from city to city. Japan and the United Kingdom also have centralized systems.

[310] Interview with city police officer, Hunan, 2012.

negative. When the interests of the two bosses align, however, local police can focus their energy on meeting goals set forth by the Ministry. This is because local government leaders reiterate Ministry targets rather than compete with them. In this final category of unified control, conflict between local governments and the Ministry eases, enabling more effective police response on the ground.

These patterns reveal deep-seated structural issues within the Chinese bureaucracy. Interviews with frontline police about their interaction with higher ups delineate the limits to central Ministry power, telling us much about how the security bureaucracy functions. Reports that PSB officials share power with local forces in China will come as no surprise to scholars of the Chinese state. The reality of shared power formed the foundation of the fragmented authoritarian literature in the 1990s and much that has followed since.[311] The persistence, however, of shared control in the PSB is interesting because police bureaucracies in authoritarian regimes are typically more tightly managed.[312] The results presented in this chapter thus extend the findings of other studies on fragmentation in the Chinese bureaucracy, which traditionally focus on non-security-related entities.[313] Most interesting, however, is the degree to which control over ground-level policing in China has been ceded to the local level. As the next section discusses, the Ministry exercises only a superficial degree of control over policing in most areas of crime management, and the results for frontline response are not positive.

Superficial Control

Most of the day-to-day work of local officers attracts little attention from higher-ups. Handling a theft case, catching a drunk driver, responding to a traffic accident, breaking up a fight, etc.: these activities comprise the bulk of daily work for frontline police. Such crimes, which also include violent crimes and even murder (in larger cities), are what I refer to collectively as "everyday crimes," and they seldom attract attention from the Ministry or local government officials. Instead, response to everyday crime is largely left up to local stations. While street-level police must file reports about cases and abide by the Ministry's laws and procedures, oversight is limited and the specifics, like how to deal with threats to public order not covered

[311] The literature on fragmented authoritarianism as a framework for understanding the Chinese bureaucracy is vast. See Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988; Lieberthal and Lampton 1992, and the more recent iterations: Mertha 2008; Mertha 2009.
[312] Bayley 1985, pp. 64-66.
[313] In their 1992 edited volume on fragmented authoritarianism, Kenneth Lieberthal and David Lampton acknowledged that the framework had primarily focused on the economic bureaucracies. In the book, they were able to broaden the scope somewhat but nevertheless lacked detail on what they termed the "civilian security cluster," which includes the public security system as well as the judicial system, prison and forced labor administration, and intelligence units. p 3.

in the handbook or the nitty-gritty of when to pursue certain types of investigations, are all decisions left to local police and station leaders. Upper-level control over frontline police with regard to these issues is thus superficial because Ministry and government officials are, for the most part, focused on other matters. This pattern of control is essentially a form of de facto decentralization, and it brings surprisingly few benefits to police on the ground. But unlike full decentralization, the Ministry continues to exercise control in a superficial manner, and officers say that this method of control only adds to existing pressures, further complicating their ability to do their work.

How Superficial Control Works

When one considers the scale of policing efforts in China, the Ministry's superficial control makes sense. The task of managing policing in China is monumental. The MPS is large in comparison to many of the other ministries, and the bureaucracy's 36 departments are tasked with a wide range of operational and oversight functions, many of which have little to do with local police forces.[314] In interviews, bureaucracy insiders say they lack the manpower and financial resources to influence ground-level operations to the extent they might like. "We don't have the ability to get to the grassroots," explained one provincial Ministry official when asked how his office manages the lower levels.[315] "If we get to the city level, this is already not bad (已经不错，*yijing bucuo*)...There are too many stations."[316] This, in addition to the inability of the Ministry to fund local police operations beyond infrastructure projects, is why Fu Hualing wrote in 2005 that, "China does not have a national police force; there is no centralised political leadership over the police."[317]

Ministry officials nevertheless attempt to exercise a certain degree of control over the local levels. As Chapter 3 noted, the Ministry sets regulations and uses police reform to devise methods that will help overcome manpower and funding issues, including requiring reports and managing supervisory procedures. As the last chapter demonstrated, however, the effectiveness of these methods is limited and the quality of information that gets transferred

[314] For more information on these departments and their specific functions, see the organizational charts and accompanying text in Chapter Two.
[315] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2012.
[316] The provincial public security bureau in Hunan had a total staff of around 2000 in 2012 and is not exceptional (Hubei PSB also has around 2000 employees total). Of those 2000 employees, many work in internal affairs (内部, *neibu*) and have little to no contact with the local stations. The rest may go out to supervise local police operations. (Interview with provincial bureau officials in Central China 2012, 2015). To put those numbers into perspective, there are 14 prefecture-level cities and 122 county-level cities, districts, counties, and autonomous counties in Hunan. All of these have public security stations (公安局，*gonganju*) and district stations (分局, *fenju*). Beyond those jurisdictions, the province's 1098 towns, 1158 townships, 98 ethnic townships, and 225 sub districts all have local stations (派出所 *paichusuo*), making for a grand total of 2715 jurisdictions under the purview of the provincial bureau.
[317] Fu 2005, p. 246.

up is suspect. In interviews, some Ministry officials recognize these limitations, but say there is little to be done. One provincial Ministry official explained that the local police are very closed and will not tell Ministry officials the truth of what happens on the ground, no matter what.[318] Another central official explained the Ministry's limitations, "The most effective way [to bring local stations in line] is to send a team down from the Ministry," he explained, "When that happens, the result is very good. But we don't do this often because we don't have enough men or money."[319] Thus, the Ministry maintains only a semblance of centralization.

Local governments are equally unlikely to get involved in everyday police operations. Unsurprisingly, officials want to keep crime and, more importantly, crime statistics low,[320] but it is not their job to manage frontline police response. While local governments may involve themselves in certain cases,[321] the details of frontline operations for the majority of police work are left to officers and station leaders. When, however, a particular crime gets out of hand, such as a rash of purse snatchings or a spike in drug use, local governments and the Ministry may step in and temporarily break the pattern of superficial control. In such cases, the local police may be called upon to enact crime campaigns that address a certain type of crime and/or pursue other political goals.[322] Sometimes the campaign is a national one like the strike-hard campaigns (严打 *yanda*) that involve multiple government agencies,[323] but smaller campaigns are also used to address local issues, such as the motorcycle bans in Guangzhou aimed at reducing a rash of snatch and theft robberies.[324] Such moves are an exception to the superficial pattern of control, but they are usually short-lived and of little utility.

Effects of Superficial Control

The largely hands-off approach adopted by the Ministry and local governments in this pattern of superficial control could, theoretically, yield big benefits for policing on the frontlines in China. Autonomy of this nature is the breeding ground for the flexible sort of discretion that allows street-level bureaucrats to provide better service and assistance to citizens.[325] Unfortunately, officers report that this is not how frontline policing in China works. In interview after interview, police say they have neither the time nor the desire to make use of

[318] Interview in central China, 2015.
[319] Interview with central Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.
[320] See Chapter Two for a discussion of the difference between actual crime and reported crime rates.
[321] In all likelihood, local government officials intervene in cases that involve personal friends and contacts, though I do not have evidence for this type of behavior. I would suspect that any such intervention is case specific and not likely to produce changes in the way officials interact with police on similar cases to which they lack a connection.
[322] Crime campaigns are usually politically motivated at the national level. See Dutton 2000; Trevaskes 2007.
[323] See Trevaskes 2001 for an analysis of the 2001 Yanda.
[324] See Xu 2011. Criminologists call this type of targeted crime campaign "situational crime prevention." (Clarke 1983; Clarke and Cornish 1983).
[325] See, for example, the accounts in Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2006.

discretionary power and are not interested in thinking up new techniques or methods for dealing with cases. Out of over 100 interviews, only one officer - a provincial Ministry official, no less - could recall a single innovative method that local police had devised to help them do their jobs better.[326] In the day-to-day reality of life on the ground it appears there is little room for such matters. One local officer explained, "We don't have time for that [new methods]...We have a lot of work to do...no time to go and learn new things... the same is true for all (old and young officers)." [327]

Moreover, the techniques used by Ministry officials to exercise superficial control over the local levels can impose further burdens that ultimately hinder crime response. Prior chapters discussed frontline concerns about the time it takes to follow through on every single call to the station or file reports that local police believe have little practical value. These issues clearly demonstrate the problems that arise out of the Ministry's attempts to monitor the local level, but police say they also face difficulties in dealing with new laws that do not take into account local needs. "Police face many pressures," explained one local officer.[328] "We get a lot of pressure from new laws set by the Central Ministry.... there are big differences between the law and the local situation." This officer went on to explain that people will often twist the law or policy[329] to serve whatever purpose they want and then use that to pressure police.[330] With little meaningful communication between the Ministry and the local levels, officers have no way to address concerns about how to apply laws and are instead left to deal with public expectations and do their jobs as best they can.

With no room to innovate and with superficial control from the Ministry only adding to the burdens local police face, results for crime management are not good. One officer who complained about reporting requirements had this to say about his station's response to everyday crimes: "We aren't solving cases...this is why Chinese people don't like the police."[331]

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[326] Interview, Hunan, 2012. The innovative technique mentioned by the official was the use of personal social media accounts by some officers to solicit information from the public about open investigations. The benefit to this practice is that police needed more assistance, but stations were either unable or unwilling to post such requests on official websites or social media accounts.

[327] Interview with local station officer, Hubei, 2015.

[328] Interview with local station officer, Hubei, 2015.

[329] Officers often use the words law and policy interchangeably in interviews. Laws are set by the National People's Congress and the Ministry interprets laws into specific policies or regulations.

[330] Another assistant station chief complained about rising rights consciousness among residents in his jurisdiction. He explained, "In the 1990s no one knew they had rights. Now everyone knows, and they are quick to talk about rights if they think we are not doing something properly...the demands (要求, *yaoqiu*) from the public are very high...but they often don't know what they're talking about...now we have to manage them while we are trying to do our work at the same time." Interview, Hunan, 2012.

[331] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

"Our goal is to serve the people," explained another, "but there are many problems we can't solve. We have a lot of cases and problems to deal with."[332] Crunched for time, police instead focus on "easy cases" and try to ignore everything else. "In China, it is very important for the criminals to admit guilt. This is what makes an easy case," explained one officer before going on to say that officers would try to find ways to get around opening cases where it was difficult to get the person or persons involved to admit guilt.[333] Some officers say good leadership at the station level can reverse these effects,[334] but this requires a steady supply of dedicated leaders that is clearly not available at every station. In fact, many local police chiefs are political appointees with no prior policing experience. To make matters worse, officer workloads are only increasing, as everyday crimes continue to rise in frequency.[335]

Even crime campaigns do not usually result in effective crime management, since they are often more about reaching quotas than providing police with additional resources to manage these crimes. Xu Jianhua's research on the crime campaigns in the southern city of Guangzhou is particularly telling in this regard.[336] In the case of outlawing motorized rickshaws, the campaign has proven inept, even though police in China say it has been effective.[337] There remain hundreds of thousands of outlawed vehicles in the city, but officers are mostly focused on reaching a set monthly quota for confiscations. The officers, who are far outnumbered and afraid of violent confrontation, typically do the work at the beginning of the month and often confiscate vehicles in the morning, which is the best time for targeting the youngest and least experienced drivers. The sheer number of motorized vehicles that remain on the street are a testament to the ineffectiveness of the campaign. Perhaps more men and resources would enable better outcomes, but in the absence of better training and assistance, everyday crime suffers, even during crime campaigns.

Shared Control

But control over local level operations is not always superficial. Beyond enacting campaigns for everyday crimes, the Ministry and local governments may get more directly involved in day-to-day policing activities for higher priority issues that pose special challenges to public order or attract the attention of higher ups for other reasons. Crimes that fall under this category include drug-related offenses, human trafficking, and corruption, though depending on the time and place there may be others. For the sake of simplicity going forward, I will refer to this group as "priority crimes." Because both the Ministry and local governments are interested in these crimes, problems can arise if the two have different objectives, and when priorities

[332] Interview with city officer, Hubei, 2015.
[333] Interview with district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.
[334] Interview with internal supervisor, Hunan, 2012.
[335] For a discussion of crime patterns in China, see Chapter Two.
[336] JH Xu forthcoming.
[337] Interview with Ministry Official, Beijing, 2012.

collide, ground-level police can face competing instructions about how to manage crime, putting them (and ground-level response) in a difficult position.

How Shared Control Works

Even though priority crimes are not elevated to the same level of interest as social unrest,[338] the Ministry treats these issues with more care than everyday crimes. This is partly because Central government officials are vocally stressing attention to priority crimes like corruption, but it is also because these issues more generally deal with greater perceived threats to public or political order, though whether or not this assessment is justified will be addressed in the conclusion. One official described the rationale behind how the Ministry approaches one type of priority crime: "human trafficking is rare, but it makes people very afraid (很害怕, *hen haipa*)."[339] He went on to explain that the Ministry wants to reduce this fear by actively handling the issue. Corruption is also a widely perceived threat to public (and political) order, especially now that the Xi Jinping administration has made fighting both "tigers" and "flies" a priority. Moreover, drug use is seen as both a public health and a public order issue that needs monitoring.

Overall, the Ministry's concern for priority crimes is fairly pragmatic, and undergirding this attention is a concern for public perception. When a priority crime in a city or region gets out of hand and/or is made public, cases can make headlines and shame the parties involved as well as the supervising authorities; thus Ministry officials have an incentive to increase attention to local response regarding these issues. Moreover, the Ministry may give more attention to certain priority crimes because they feel they can maximize the return on their effort. The same Ministry official who talked about the public's fear of human trafficking went on to explain that trafficking is also a priority for the Ministry because they can expend fewer resources for greater benefit, since the phenomenon is relatively rare. He likened spending in this area to giving a poor person something small and inexpensive that could make them very happy and improve their life, which is preferable to giving a rich person something very beautiful and expensive that would only make them somewhat happy.

We may assume that local government officials get involved with priority issues for similar reasons. They too follow the political winds of the central government and are concerned with addressing corruption, or at the very least appearing to address corruption. It is also in every official's best interest to avoid getting caught up in higher level sweeps and to do everything in their power to ensure that their city or county stays out of the headlines. If problems with priority crimes arise during an official's watch, it could permanently damage their political career, even if they are not directly involved; therefore, local government officials have real incentives to be more involved with priority crimes. But fear of embarrassment and retribution is not the only reason local government leaders take an interest in priority cases. Priority cases

[338] Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, corruption could join social unrest as a higher priority issue.

[339] Interview, Beijing, 2012.

can and do touch upon local official misconduct, and this relationship sets up a very different incentive structure that can create a conflict of interest.

Issues for local police arise when they get caught between competing expectations and demands from local government officials and the Ministry. Sometimes this happens because local officials are looking to protect their own financial interests or those of friends or other social and political connections. Reliable data for corruption links to priority crimes is scarce, but a police officer in one Hunanese city said it was possible (有可能, *you keneng*) that certain dealers in his city have such connections.[340] The firing of one local drug squad leader in another Hunanese city after a publicly successful drug raid also suggests that corruption of this nature is a problem with deep roots.[341] But local government leaders may exert control for less nefarious reasons that nevertheless run counter to Ministry objectives. They might, for example, be seeking to conceal the full extent of a priority crime for fear that it will damage their political careers. In contrast, ministerial officials are primarily concerned with local level compliance with the law,[342] and it is this difference in priorities that sets the MPS up for conflict with local officials.

Once local officials decide to get involved in frontline police operations, their influence can be difficult for Ministry officials to curb. The MPS can send teams down to the city or county level, but the close proximity of local government leaders is, in most cases, something the Ministry is unable to replicate.[343] Local government officials have also amassed considerable power[344] because they ultimately hold control over funding for local police operating costs and wield considerable influence over station leadership appointments.[345] In fact, despite stepped-up efforts by the Ministry to the manage the station leadership hiring process, local officers report that many station leaders were installed by local leaders and were chosen for political loyalties, not because they have any experience in law enforcement.[346] By controlling the local police

[340] Interviews with city police officers, Hunan, 2012.

[341] In 2012, City leaders dismissed the drug squad leader Huang Bailin in Chenzhou City, Hunan shortly after he successfully oversaw a large drug bust. At least one suspect who was detained as a result was later released, and subsequent official statements indicated that this individual was incorrectly charged. Some speculate that the squad leader was improperly fired because the bust imprisoned individuals with connections to city leaders. See Chinadigitaltimes.net. 2012. "How one policeman got burned," 21 May. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/05/how-one-policeman-got-burned/.

[342] Interview with central Ministry official, Beijing, 2012.

[343] Sometimes, however, they will appoint provincial officials to local station leadership positions or temporarily send officers from the province to work alongside officers at the grassroots. Interviews with Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan, 2012, 2014.

[344] Fu 2005.

[345] This point is also made in Xie 2013, p 82.

[346] Interview with Provincial Ministry official, Hunan, 2013. The local governments have the power to appoint leaders and the Ministry must approve the appointment. One local station officer explained the conflict over choosing a station leader in his city: "The local government

through their leaders, officials can exert influence over investigations and protect themselves or their associates against claims of criminal wrongdoing, if and when they so desire.

Effects of Shared Control

What happens to priority cases when local governments and Ministry officials share control? Because human trafficking cases are relatively rare and corruption cases are politically sensitive, my data only speaks with authority to the impact of shared control on drug response. Nevertheless, the results for crime management in this area are telling as an example of how police response can be affected when there is conflict between the expectations of local government officials and the demands of the Ministry. As previously noted, shared control can leave local police in an awkward position as they attempt to manage competing demands and a lack of resources that might help them resolve conflict in ways that are beneficial to crime management. In the specific case of drug response, the Ministry has made inroads into breaking firmly entrenched local corruption ties, but the results for crime management are decidedly mixed. This is partly because the Ministry's strategy toward drug control works against rather than with local practices and partly because of capacity limitations at both the ministerial and local levels.

Shared control makes crime response difficult in several ways. First and foremost, it pushes police in two different directions. Returning to the example of drug raids raised in Chapter Three, police in Hunan got caught between a Ministry seeking to sever ties between the proprietors of establishments where illegal activities take place and local individuals (in government or on the police force) who may or may not have had a vested interest in supporting the continuation of pre-arranged drug raids.[347] In Hunan, local police leaders were well aware of the Ministry's requirement for unannounced raids and the risks they might face if they continued to defy orders. Nevertheless, police persisted in staging coordinated checks right up until the day provincial teams directly intervened by conducting the inspections themselves.[348] Even then, the practice did not entirely stop. One provincial Ministry explained, "one year after we started conducting checks, local police still (make coordinated inspections), but it is less than before."[349] On the surface, the Ministry's intervention looks like a success. Since the implementation of unannounced raids, drug use in cities is less visible and more users have been but in jail. But local police and even some Ministry officials say the change has only pushed users further underground to cheap hotels and residences where they are harder for police to find and monitor.[350] This reduces the quality of information police have about drug

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selected a new chief after the bureau appointed the old chief to another position, but the bureau won't approve the new chief...I don't know the reason...we don't have a station chief right now." The officer went on to explain that the provincial government would probably have to step in to adjudicate the issue. Interview, 2012.

[347] Interview with Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan, 2012.

[348] Interviews with city police officers, Hunan, 2012, Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan, 2012.

[349] Interview with Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan, 2012.

[350] Interviews with city police officers, Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan, 2012.

sale and use and also increases the risks associated with conducting inspections or raids in unfamiliar locales.

If the Ministry and local governments were just duking it out over who wins the shared control battle, the impact on crime response might not be so bad. Unfortunately, there are other characteristics of shared control that negatively impact crime response. Recall that shared control arises because the Ministry's power to manage the local levels is weak due to fiscal decentralization and manpower limitations (issues that also plague superficial control). This means the Ministry is only able to fight certain battles when it comes to managing priority crimes. With regard to drug control, local police say the Ministry has not provided them with additional resources such as drug dogs, new surveillance technology, or increases in manpower that would help them develop a new response system for managing drug crimes that does not run afoul of Ministry guidelines.[351] With a broken old system and drug users underground, the local police need such resources now more than ever, yet it not clear when or if such assistance will materialize.

Another characteristic of shared control that hinders police response is lackluster coordination between agencies and levels. Though the Ministry devotes certain resources to actively managing drug crime response, as evidenced by the interactions between provincial Ministry officials and local police, Central Ministry interactions in this area are rare. No local police interviewees could recall a single Central Ministry-led, drug-related mission in their area. Furthermore, there is little to no coordination between security agents at the border and police at either the local or provincial level.[352] This means drug trafficking is a big problem for local police who have few resources to stop the deluge of illegal substances into their cities, and no regularized means of communicating with border police to know when a new influx might be hitting their jurisdiction.[353] There is some hope for the expansion of local roadside, train station, and airport inspection stations, but police say funds remain limited. Even drug dogs are few or non-existent and used primarily during high-level raids. Ultimately, both local police and provincial Ministry officials in Hunan report that the Ministry has failed to create a coordinated response to drug control at the national level, though the situation appears to be better coordinated on the issue of human trafficking.

These problems notwithstanding, outcomes for priority crimes are not always negative. In the areas where police do not experience a high number of priority crimes, there were few complaints about problems arising from shared control. For example, drug crimes are present but not rampant in two Hebei cities and another in central China where I conducted research, and officers in these areas reported that response to drug crimes do not elicit the type of conflict arising out of shared control that officers in Hunan report. One officer explained that raids were mostly pre-arranged, just as they are in Hunan, yet the practice had not (yet?) attracted the attention of Provincial Ministry officials.

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[351] Interview with district station supervisor, Hunan, 2012.

[352] Interviews with Provincial Ministry officials, Hunan 2012; interviews with city police officers, Hunan, 2012.

[353] Interviews with city police officers, Hunan, 2012.

Unified Control[354]

Standing in stark contrast to patterns of superficial and shared control is the highly centralized power Ministry officials exert over police response to national priority issues. Unified control is difficult to achieve because it requires coordination between frontline police, local governments, and Provincial and Central Ministry officials. Because city and county governments hold command over financial resources and many local station leaders, it is not easy for the Ministry to overcome local forces, as the pattern of shared control demonstrates. Yet MPS officials have been able to unify control over *weiwen*, demonstrating the strength of what the Chinese state can accomplish when it sets out to do so.[355] The positive results for policing on the ground are palpable. Crime management works much better under unified control because frontline officers receive more attention from the Ministry and efforts between local forces are better coordinated.

How Unified Control Works

The PSB has good incentives to centralize control over local police response to *weiwen*. As the attention to reforms in this area covered by Chapter Four indicate, this national priority issue takes precedence over all other policing problems, especially since the number of protests in has not abated. The Central leadership has charged the Ministry with assisting the Communist Party in prioritizing stability maintenance because proper police management of protests is critical to preventing a regime-destabilizing social movement. Ministry officials know and follow this direction from the Central government, but given the decentralized nature of policing in China, unifying control is not easy.

In order for the Ministry to centralize power over police operations, it must, by definition, bring local forces in line. Such coordination works better when the priorities of local government leaders and the Ministry lack conflict, but overcoming local resistance in the absence of naturally aligned interests is not impossible. In the case of *weiwen* management, the Ministry receives a major boost from Central government policies though the cadre evaluation system. Proper management of protests is a key evaluation criterion under this system, and cadres can be punished and even dismissed if their area is deemed particularly unstable, as defined by the total number of social unrest incidents as well as the number of dissidents who bypass local channels to petition at higher levels.[356] As Chapter Three noted, direct accountability for cadres

[354] This pattern of control is also referred to as "unified power" in the federalism literature on policing. See Taylor 2007.

[355] The Chinese Communist Party has periodically proven adept at implementing cherished central policies with the help of street-level bureaucrats, even when those policies were almost universally disliked at the lower levels. Some examples include the agricultural quotas implemented during the Great Leap Forward and, more recently, the family planning requirements of the "One-Child Policy."

[356] For a good discuss on how *weiwen* is assessed under the cadre evaluation system, see Xie Yue 2012, p 20-21. Performance in *weiwen* and economic development are two key determinants of local cadre promotion, punishment, and dismissal, and cadres may be fired if

has led local government leaders to divert more resources to controlling social unrest, since Central government funds are insufficient to cover all needs in this area.

The Ministry must also coordinate efforts between security forces. As Chapter Four demonstrated, reforms have been instrumental in this regard by beefing up response protocols and dictating when and under what conditions the PAP are called in to handle stability maintenance work. As a result, police efforts to control protest are well-coordinated and exhibit little variation in areas outside of troubled minority regions.[357] Police officers in all research areas engaged in very similar practices with regard to handling *weiwen*, although officers in Hebei and Shaanxi report being more involved in managing potential protestors during times of political sensitivity such as national meetings or anniversaries of important political events. In contrast, officers in Hunan said their stations were more likely to hire non- or quasi-police officials to detain potential protestors.[358] Overall, however, descriptions of protest control were very similar across research sites.

All this coordination takes effort, and Central Ministry officials are often involved in overseeing local compliance. They are, for example, far more likely to conduct inspections and provide assistance to local police in the management of social unrest than they are to intervene in other types of crime response.[359] Moreover, areas that experience unusual amounts of protest receive even more attention from the Ministry. In politically sensitive areas such as Xinjiang, the Ministry will often dispatch teams to monitor the situation on the ground and respond to threats.[360] One SWAT team leader described his experience on such trips, which he noted were far more difficult and prone to violent confrontation than missions in Tibet.[361] "We go to help the local police," he said. "We work side by side with them and become like local police ourselves." Such close contact with higher-level police groups does not end once missions are over. The SWAT leader also described how frontline officers from Xinjiang sometimes take business trips to Beijing, in spite of their tight work schedules back home. Such opportunities to visit the capital for work were not available to most *paichusuo* officers with whom I spoke, demonstrating the heavy degree of coordination in critical areas.

It is interesting to note that unified control over social unrest in China is highly standardized but not entirely rigid. On the whole, the MPS engages in far fewer experimental pilot projects (试点,

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they fail to "maintain public order," regardless of whether or not they perform well in other areas.

[357] Protest control efforts take on a distinct character in the turbulent areas of Xinjiang and Tibet. In these provinces, there is far more police presence and coordination between different levels of police, particularly local police, SWAT police, and officials from the Ministry. Police also work closely with informants from ethnic minority groups to gather information about past and potential attacks. Interview with PAP squad leader, 2012.

[358] Interview with city station officer, Hunan, 2012; Interview with city station officer, Hebei, 2011; Interview with city station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

[359] Interviews with central Ministry official, Beijing, 2012, and PAP squad Leader, 2012.

[360] Personal communication with Central Ministry official, Beijing, 2008.

[361] Interview in Shaanxi, 2012.

shidian) than bureaucracies like the Ministry of Finance, but when they do conduct *shidian*, one Central official explained that they are primarily interested in projects that "promote stability."[362] As such, some officers and stations have been allowed space to experiment with lower-cost solutions to manage dissent. In Shaanxi, for example, officers are using social media to collect information about protesters. In 2012, I observed interviewees posting photos on Weibo of protesters engaged in unlawful destruction of property that were accompanied by requests for help in identifying the perpetrators, mimicking the vigilante-style justice techniques used by Chinese netizens in "human flesh searches" (人肉搜索, *renrou sousuo*).[363] Other cheap technology solutions include the utilization of live video petitioning, which is reportedly used by understaffed stations in Liaoning to reach aggrieved individuals more easily.[364] While the Central Ministry may or may not be actively promoting these new methods of crime response as official pilot projects, the pattern of unified control at the very least does not preclude their existence.

Effects of Unified Control

The response to social unrest has become highly centralized over time, with local leaders, ground-level officers, and Ministry officials teaming up to better manage uprisings and prevent dissidents from organizing and escalating their claims. Unified control brings local forces in line by creating an incentive structure that has all parties working toward the same goals: providing nationally standardized and enforced practices for managing social unrest and responding quickly to unrest events. Unified control also makes possible a high degree of coordination between agencies, dividing the labor and helping officers properly respond to protest and call for help when need be. One local officer explained, "Most of the time, we just have to deal with the small-time petitioners (上让, *shangfang*). We get help if there is a big incident."[365] When we view the characteristics of unified control with the redirection of resources to social unrest presented in Chapter Three and the extra attention to *weiwen* reforms outlined in Chapter Four, we can better understand why frontline officers provide such positive assessments of their areas' ability to manage stability maintenance work.

But while Central Ministry officials have done an extraordinary job of centralizing power over social unrest, especially when compared to virtually every other crime that local police must handle, the system of unified control is still imperfect. Due to the stipulations imposed by the cadre evaluation system, managing social unrest is not so much seen as an opportunity for the local level to work with the Ministry but more as something that must be contained at any cost and even hidden from the upper levels. One retired detective explained how they deal with trouble-making dissidents in his city. "We know who they are and go get them during sensitive times....We don't want them getting to Beijing. That's a lot of trouble when we have to chase

[362] Interview in Beijing, 2012.
[363] Observation of social media accounts, 2013.
[364] Original link no longer available. See *China Digital Times.* "Liaoning Police take Live Video Petition." 11 December 2008. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2009/12/liaoning-police-take-live-video-petition/
[365] Interview in Hebei, 2012.

them down."[366] He went on to explain that city officials and the station will face consequences if the dissidents make it to the capital to lodge their complaints, so they hold them in offices or hotel rooms until enough time has passed. Another district station officer described his station's concerns. "If too many people protest (*shangfang*), it's a problem for local officials, so the local government gives us money to deal with [the dissidents]," he said.[367] "We often hire people who are not police officers to help." Such actions are not officially condoned by the Ministry but are nevertheless steps local officers say their stations must take to deal with dissidents who try to call attention to their causes, especially during politically sensitive times.

Technically, the way frontline forces suppress and hide *weiwen* activities is the precise goal of Central officials: stop social unrest at the local level by any means necessary. But the current system creates an extra set of incentives for local governments to underreport protest events, when possible, and conceal the number of dissidents in their area by keeping them under house arrest with local government funds (the use of which may or may not be reported to higher levels). By using house arrest to prevent countable incidents of unrest - either through visible protest or a petition to a higher level - local governments thwart the flow of information to the center about the exact situation on the ground. While the end result (reducing the total number of incidents) is highly desirable for everyone, the path to get there produces the undesired side effect of limiting information. This may hide potential hot spots from officials in the Ministry, burying the true extent of discontent and perhaps making it more difficult to prevent or respond appropriately to threatening protests or riots. The pattern of unified control thus strikes a tenuous balance, despite all the gains it brings to *weiwen* management.

Discussion

While scholars have written extensively about how local interests shape central government economic and environmental policies, we know little about how this fragmentation affects the police. This chapter addresses that gap by demonstrating how patterns of superficial, shared, and unified control showcase three different approaches taken by the Ministry to oversee different types of crime. Each pattern delineates the limits of the Public Security Bureau's power over the local level, with capacity limitations, the persistent strength of local forces, and decision-making at the top levels of government creating the demarcation lines. Taken together, these patterns of control have important implications for the effectiveness of frontline policing and show how cracks in the police bureaucracy's centralized system pose challenges to law enforcement officers on the ground, especially with regard to everyday and priority crimes.

Outcomes for the majority of crimes that local police have to deal with on a daily basis are not good. Theoretically, the uneven, decentralized control that is the natural byproduct of a fragmented bureaucracy could enhance police efficacy by opening up space for locally tailored response to crime, but room for innovation ends up getting blocked by heavy case loads and

[366] Interview with senior detective, Hebei, 2011.
[367] Interview in Hunan, 2012.

further demands on police time that are imposed by the monitoring requirements the Ministry imposes to ensure a certain degree of superficial control. This pattern of control thus undermines basic police operations for a wide variety of crimes. These failures are important. Managing everyday crimes is essential for perceptions of public safety, yet the bureaucracy is failing its frontline forces and making a difficult job even harder.

Issues under shared control fare little better, though the results are more mixed and vary by region and issue. With local government officials influencing both the funding and leadership decisions of police stations, it is easy to see why some scholars argue that successful implementation of central policing policies necessarily depends on "the support of, or at least the compliance of, the CCP committees at the local level."[368] That those same officials can undermine Ministerial control when it serves their best interest is no secret, and when conflict arises, life gets difficult for local police. In the case of response to drug crimes, the effect of shared control means police are largely ineffective at stopping the trafficking of drugs into their jurisdictions. In the most affected areas, police are also struggling to manage drug use within their cities because of strict rule compliance enforced by provincial officials.

When Central officials overpower local government interests and take an active role in asserting power over the local police, results for crime response improve. Under this pattern of unified control we observe benefits such as the extensive coordination between security forces, local governments, and Central Ministry officials. Incentives under the cadre evaluation system bring local government officials closer in line, but there are also some undesirable side effects. The cadre evaluation system can also incentivize suppression of information that conceals the true extent of discontent in cities outside of traditionally troubled regions. While local officials may not be working actively against the Ministry, as they sometimes do under shared control, they may nevertheless end up behaving in a way that ultimately undermines the Central Ministry.

In addition, the manner in which local governments deal with dissidents may be counterproductive to the longer-term interests of the regime. The current ad-hoc response of suppressing malcontents is difficult to sustain because of the high costs of detention and the difficulty local police have in identifying new dissidents. One officer lamented the soaring costs associated with maintaining stability and called *weiwen* the product of a failing system: "What the government needs to do is reform the institutions," he said.[369] "The court system is not independent and when people can't get justice they turn to petitioning....the money spent on *weiwen* is a waste (白花, *baihua*)." Moreover, since many localities choose to employ non-police agents to watch dissidents at a lower cost, opportunities for abuse are high. Visual proof of unjust detentions occasionally makes its way onto the internet, and in the eyes of some individuals, police actions may end up tarnishing the image of the regime.

[368] Fu 2005, p. 244.
[369] Interview with city district station officer, Shaanxi, 2012.

Negative side effects notwithstanding, the unified pattern of control nevertheless produces better outcomes for crime response on the ground than the patterns of superficial and shared control. Perhaps additional reform and centralization efforts will enable the Ministry to unify control over everyday and priority crimes in the long run, but the prognosis for the immediate future is not promising. Because of funding decentralization for police operations and the ability of local leaders to influence police leadership appointments, the power of local governments shows few signs of decline, even if the Ministry is able to step in from time to time to address the most egregious cases. It is possible that the Ministry could choose to exert more influence over everyday crimes, if it can garner both the resources and political will to do so, but this is also challenging. Despite the obvious benefits to ground-level crime management brought about by unified control, centralization is expensive in terms of both financial and human resources, and the Central Ministry has a limited supply of both. Susan Trevaskes has noted that a focus on campaigns facilitates the neglect of other police work, and a similar dynamic is at play here as well (Trevaskes 2010). But ultimately, the decisions about which crimes to prioritize are coming from the top, and the next chapter will discuss why these decisions may be ill advised and dangerous for long-term regime stability.

Chapter Six

Implications

On Saturday night, June 21, 2008, Li Shufen went out with a few classmates. Around 11 pm that evening, witnesses heard a girl's voice crying for help. Li's lifeless body was found early the next morning, floating in the Ximen River. Described as a "quiet and nice child" by the aunt who helped pull her body from the water, Li was only 16 years old – a student from the countryside who lived with relatives so she could attend Weng'an No. 3 High School.

Her death launched a firestorm. Local residents were furious with the way police handled the investigation and treated the 500 middle school students who showed up at the local station to question the official claim that Li's death was a suicide. What followed was one of the largest and best-documented riots against police in China.[370] Before it was all said and done, nearly 30,000[371] people would take to the street, burning out the police station, setting squad cars ablaze, and spurring the deployment of hundreds of armed PAP officers who used tear-gas and physical force to disperse the angry crowd of men, women, and children, some as young as 12.

It is hard to know exactly what happened to Li Shufen. Her family said the two young men she met up with that night had family connections to the local police. They believe the boys raped and murdered their daughter, threw her body into the river, and then turned to police and local officials to help them cover up the crime. The police have a different account. Officers initially detained three individuals found near her body, including the boy family members said she met that evening. But all suspects were released eight hours later, and the local station declared Li

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[370] This narrative draws from accounts of what is often called the Weng'an Incident. Certain details vary. For example, state news media reported Li's age as 17, while other accounts said she was 15. Most international news sources reported her age as 16. See Jill Drew. "Anger over rape-murder case sparks riot in China," *The Washington Post,* 30 June 2008. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/06/29/AR2008062900805_pf.html; Jim Yardley. "Chinese riot over handling of girl's killing," *The New York Times,* 30 June 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/30/world/asia/30riot.html?_r=0; China Daily, "Up to 30,000 took part in Guizhou mass action," 1 July 2008, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-07/01/content_6807540.htm; *News.boxun.com.* "Weng'an riots follow-up report" (瓮安暴乱后续报道， *Weng'an baoli houxu baodao*), 29 June 2008. http://news.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2008/06/200806291715.shtml.

[371] Early reports had the figure at 10,000 or even lower, but *China Daily* later put the number at 30,000. "Up to 30,000" took part in Guizhou Mass Action," *China Daily,* 1 July 2008. http://language.chinadaily.com.cn/cdaudio/2008-07/01/content_6810027.htm.

Shufen's death a suicide. A forensic investigation found no sign of sexual assault, and the local government submitted a statement saying Li was, "unhappy with life because her parents favored her elder brother."[372]

The family and community fought back. Her uncle, a middle school teacher, went to the police station where he was reportedly assaulted by six plain-clothes security guards. Her father said the men who beat his brother within an inch of his life, "weren't police, but they might have something to do with police."[373] Her aunt was also beaten. All of this took place as her parents stood vigil, guarding their daughter's body in a refrigerated coffin and demanding a proper autopsy. Meanwhile, students from as many as four middle schools went to a local government building carrying banners demanding justice. When they received no response, they marched to the police station and things got ugly. Witnesses say officers met the students with electric prods. The angry crowd retaliated by setting police cars on fire, eventually engulfing the entire station in flames. Videos capturing the scope and intensity of the scene are still available online.[374]

Weng'an is not the first place we might expect to see an outpouring of anger against the Chinese police, but it is also not the last. Weng'an County sits smack in the middle of Guizhou, one of China's poorest provinces, and is just a little south of Zunyi - the city famous for being the place where Mao Zedong first took control of the Communist Party during the Long March. Due to its high concentration of ethnic Miao, Weng'an is a minority autonomous prefectural county. Miao are recognized as one of China's 55 official minority groups, though they are not particularly known for lodging the kind of violent, political claims that certain members of other groups have made.

Politically, the timing of the riots in Weng'an could not have been worse. The incident came just weeks before the Beijing Olympic Games were set to open on August 8, 2008, an auspicious date in traditional Chinese culture. But 2008 had been anything but auspicious for Chinese leaders hoping to stage a grand and politically calm Olympics. Tibetan monks had already gathered in Lhasa that March to protest Beijing's rule, stirring sympathy protests in China's Sichuan Province and as far away as India and Nepal.[375] Smaller, unrelated incidents had also cropped up in Xinjiang, though that violence would not come to a crescendo until a few days before the Olympics when separatists would drive a truck into a police station and kill 16

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[372] Fu Jing. "Guizhou official: third finding on rape claim to be made known," *China Daily,* 3 July 2008. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-07/03/content_6814968.htm.
[373] Bill Schiller, "Girl's death inflames China," *The Toronto Star,* 2 July 2008. https://www.thestar.com/news/2008/07/02/girls_death_inflames_china.html.
[374] For links, see Liu Yong. "Girl's death sparks rioting in China (updated)," *China Digital Times,* 28 June 2008. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2008/06/girls-death-sparks-rioting-in-china/.
[375] Jim Yardley. "Violence in Tibet as monks clash with police," *The New York Times,* 15 March 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/world/asia/15tibet.html.

officers.[376] If anything, the politically oriented Uyghurs and Tibetans were expected to stir up trouble during a time when all eyes of the international community were set on Beijing. But they were not the only ones targeting the police that summer.

In mid July, just a few weeks after they pulled Li Shufen from the river, hundreds of angry migrant workers attacked a police station in Kanmen, Zhejiang, a small city south of Shanghai along China's populous coast.[377] Just like the residents of Weng'an, these workers had no larger political grievances in mind. According to reports, they mobilized because the police had detained one of their own after he went to the police station to complain that a security guard had beaten him for trying to obtain a temporary residence permit. The migrant workers rioted for three days, surrounding the police station, smashing cars and motorbikes, and stoning police officers and their vehicles.

That was just 2008. Since then, other violent protests have erupted against the Chinese police. In the span of one week in 2009, state media sources reported that 1000 protestors attacked traffic police in Gansu province after an altercation occurred between a cyclist and four officers,[378] and 300 farmers in Guangdong assaulted a police station with stones, bricks, and hoes, setting police cars and motorbikes on fire. The infamous Shishou riots also occurred in 2009. Those riots were set off after police claimed to find a suicide note for a 24-year-old chef in Hubei that family members believed was a fake.[379] In 2011, 1000 workers in Guangzhou blocked traffic and fought officers after city police pushed a pregnant street vender to the ground.[380] In 2014, Xinjiang residents drove a vehicle into another police station and set off bombs, resulting in the shooting deaths of at least 13 protestors.[381] And in 2015, hundreds of Hunan villagers attacked a police station after a woman's death was declared the result of an

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[376] Edward Wong and Keith Bradsher. "16 killed in attack on Western China police station," *The New York Times,* 4 August 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/04/sports/olympics/05china.html?_r=0.

[377] "Migrant workers riot in eastern China," *The New York Times,* 14 July 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/14/world/asia/14iht-china.1.14477228.html

[378] Wu Gang, "Anti-police sentiment spills," *Global Times,* 22 May 2009. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/431766.shtml.

[379] Sophie Beach. "Video: Riots in Shishou, Central China over death (updated)." *China Digital Times,* 20 June 2009. http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2009/06/video-riots-in-central-china-over-death/.

[380] Peter Foster. "Migrant workers in China attack police in third day of riots," *The Telegraph,* 13 June 2011. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8572680/Migrant-workers-in-China-attack-police-in-third-day-of-riots.html.

[381] Tom Phillips, "Chinese police kill 12 'terrorists' after 'bomb attack' on police station," *The Telegraph,* 21 June 2014. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/10916303/Chinese-police-kill-13-terrorists-after-bomb-attack-on-police-station.html.

accidental pesticide poisoning rather than a premeditated murder.[382] Even the well-publicized siege of Wukan in December 2011 targeted police as well as local officials. And these are just the highlights of the widely reported cases.

According the state media's own account,[383] attacks against the police are becoming more commonplace as Chinese residents lash out against police violence, deception, and incompetence. Many of the incidents involve protests that were waged because local police classified a death as a suicide when family members believed their loved ones were murdered. This makes that national call to reduce the number of murders look like a bad idea, since classifying a death as a suicide or accident is a great way to knock a murder case off the books. But incidents like the ones above do not make national and international news because of a few aggrieved family members; they do so because the people in the community chose to take up a cause and protest in the streets, even at personal risk to themselves and despite the fact that they may have never met the victim(s). That level of participation arises out of anger over a single event, but it also taps into longer standing dissatisfaction with local police and the governments they represent.[384]

When the police are underfunded, poorly trained, overworked, underprepared to do the job they are expected to do in society, and subject to the political whims of local leaders, bad things can happen. While extreme, incidents like the ones above demonstrate yet another way in which the mishandling of everyday crime affects Chinese society. If and when police mismanagement of cases or maltreatment of citizens feeds back into the protest loop, this creates even more problems for the Communist Party. While it is hard to say just how often such events occur, state-owned *Legal Daily* reported in 2012 that 22.2 percent of mass incidents were caused by conflict with the police (民警冲突, *minjing chongtu*).[385]

Authoritarian Durability

Students of authoritarian durability take note: what the police do matters. Modern authoritarian regimes are not totalitarian monoliths, as has been emphasized in research on Chinese politics, for example, since at least the 1980s. A state's institutional capacity to ensure ground-level security is essential for regime survival. People everywhere care about public

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[382] BBC News. "China arrests after hundreds attack police in Hunan Province," 20 June 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-33210165.

[383] Zhan Lisheng. "Angry tea farmers attack police station," *China Daily,* 26 May 2009. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-05/26/content_7941775.htm.

[384] For a discussion of the Weng'an case and shared expectation of the people who decided to join the family's cause, see Lorentzen and Scoggins 2015, p. 648-651.

[385] Legal Daily. 2012 Mass Incident Report (2012 年群体性事件研究报告, 2012 *nian qunti xing shijian yanjiu baodao*) 27 December 2012. http://www.legaldaily.com.cn/The_analysis_of_public_opinion/content/2012-12/27/content_4092138.htm.

safety, and regime leaders - even authoritarian ones - who wish to maintain power must deal with the social expectation that governments should protect us from the Hobbesian ills of the world.[386] When governments do not provide ground-level security, we know that it has real consequences for regimes. In Latin America, studies have shown that crime victimization increases political participation and influences individual preferences for regime type (Bateson 2012). Moreover, in fledgling democracies, security failings such as an inability to stem high crimes rates are known to be particularly salient for drops in public opinion (Bitencourt 2007 and Perez 2003). In China, we are just beginning to understand the larger political effects of poor policing, but we know that a diminished sense of safety is correlated with lower levels of trust in the police and other state entities (Sun, Hu and Wu 2012, Wu 2010, Wu and Sun 2009).

While scholars need to address a broader deficit in attention to policing within the comparative politics literature more generally, the lack of meaningful studies about the importance of other police work is especially troubling for studies of authoritarian durability. A state's security apparatus can be strong in some ways and weak in others, and such variation is visible only when we disaggregate the coercive functions to look carefully at ground-level crime response, as this study has done. Because the authoritarian resilience literature is narrowly focused on social control, however, many key elements of the public security apparatus have been overlooked. If we are going to study coercive capacity in a 360 degree fashion, we need to look more broadly at all the a state's control functions, and that means taking police as well as other frontline agents of state power more seriously than political scientists have usually treated them.

This study is a first step in that direction. The Chinese case shows a state that responds effectively to protests but struggles in managing nearly every other type of crime. This raises questions for studies of coercive capacity in other authoritarian regimes; questions that a broader definition of coercive apparatus operation could potentially answer. Ultimately, regime resiliency is not dependent on any one factor, but broadening our investigation of coercive capacity will help scholars develop a deeper understanding of the role the local state plays in regime resilience. Because of the influence that daily work has on regular citizens and even on the frequency of protests, it can bolster or undermine a regime in ways that may fly under the radar during normal times but matter a lot during times of crisis. By problematizing security response and paying attention to seemingly mundane aspects of policing, we gain new insight into the day-to-day functioning of the coercive apparatus.

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[386] Authoritarian regime leaders appear to recognize the risks of ignoring the public and act accordingly. In China, police reform documents are filled with language about serving the people and reminders that police leaders and officers be mindful of public opinion. While we might dismiss these statements as lip service, such efforts appear with considerable frequency and make good common sense. In the wake of the regime changes brought about by the Arab Spring, it is no wonder that modern authoritarian regimes are concerned about their image and the ability of security forces to avoid public relations crises. Whether or not and to what extent they can achieve theses goals, however, is another matter.

Considerations for the Study of Chinese Politics

For students of Chinese politics in the reform era, weaknesses in China's police bureaucracy expose an interesting truth: the security institution that most Chinese people encounter on a daily basis is not nearly as strong as studies of protest control have led us to believe. This misconception is significant, since security is one area in which the Chinese state is thought to be doing a better than average job. Furthermore, the findings here call into question the CCP's heavy focus on managing social unrest and raise larger questions about whether or not other frontline agencies are struggling with response deficiencies that may also be hurting local governance and regime legitimacy.

The weakness of police capacity in China could spell trouble for long-term regime stability in China in ways that have been overlooked by the Chinese politics literature. A dearth of studies on ground-level police has made it easy to take the hefty internal security budget figures, official reports of low crime, and impressive track record of putting down violent protests for granted without thinking more carefully about the potential weaknesses of frontline security. This oversight has enabled the pendulum of the authoritarian resilience literature to swing too far in the direction of state stability, since those studies are undergirded by an implicit belief that the security state is strong and capable in terms of both managing protests and maintaining order on the ground. Recently, some scholars have begun to chip away at the notion of authoritarian resilience (Cheng Li 2012), and this study adds fuel to such a line of thought. Taken in the aggregate, failures in ground level response can weaken regime control by failing to address the security needs of local residents.

For now, the Chinese state has done a good job of putting down protests, due to the redirection of resources, focus on *weiwen* related security reforms, and centralization of control in ways that mitigate conflict with local governments. And though they could continue to succeed for a long time, the balance is tenuous. When officers say things like there is not enough money in the world to subdue the number of protesters out there and that the money the Central government spends on *weiwen* would be better spent reforming the institutions that are causing discontent rather than suppressing it, we see signs of distress. Equally troubling is the manner in which local governments hide potential protesters and employ non-police agents to watch dissidents in order to save money. These practices may ultimately be counterproductive to the longer-term interests of the regime because they suppress the flow of information and increase the chance of violent conflict with residents.

Moreover, the money for *weiwen* is not without limits. In addition to officer reports that their cities lack sufficient funds to manage *weiwen* activities, there are signs that some petitioners are stretching limited resources even further by taking advantage of the system. One leader said police in his area call such people "pestering petitioners" (*chanfang,* 缠访)"[387] because they are trouble-makers out for personal gain without real grievances. Another source close to police in central China said that officers there compare these petitioners to menstruation (*yuejing shangfang*, 月经上访) because they show up every month to make noise and collect

[387] Interview, Beijing, 2012.

money. Such petitioners are one downside to a more routinized system, and it is possible they could cause trouble for local budgets if their numbers and demands increase.

More research is needed to understand these effects, and future studies would do well to approach the issue from the perspective of the public. Unsurprisingly, Mainland publications have reported relatively high levels of trust in the police, but some studies outside of China have also reached similar conclusions.[388] One comparative study even found that the public's confidence in the police ranked 8th out of 49 countries, putting China roughly on par with Switzerland (Jang et al. 2015). But the jury on public perceptions is still out. Another comparative study reached an opposite conclusion,[389] and finer grained analyses have provided a better understanding of the potential dynamics at play behind positive assessments of the police. For example, a study of college students found that, while students indicated an overall satisfaction with police, the majority of respondents had "substantially less positive views of police fairness, effectiveness, and integrity...did not consider their local police as honest, upright, or ethical...(and) had doubts regarding the police's ability to effectively respond to crime, solve crime, prevent crime, or handle crime victims." (Wu and Sun 2010, p. 106). Other studies have found potentially valuable variation, such as lower degrees of trust in police held by urban residents (Wu, Sun and Hu 2016).[390] Focus groups might be helpful in shedding light on contradictions in the survey-based literature and parsing out the nuances of public perceptions about state capacity to address specific security and public safety threats.[391]

More research is also needed on the police in other parts of China as well as on other street-level bureaucrats. China is a populous and diverse country, and there is still much to learn about police operations in places like crowded, crime-ridden Guangzhou, lower-crime rural counties, or areas heavily marred by social unrest such as Xinjiang. Additional variation along these lines would enable further testing of the depth and causes of security weakness. It is possible, for example, that places with more social unrest are in need of additional resources or reforms that were not captured here, or that extremely poor areas see weak police performance across all dimensions of activity. And while this dissertation has focused exclusively on the local police and other officers within the public security bureau, we need

[388] Wu and Sun 2009 found nearly 75% of respondents trusted police. A later study by Sun, Hu and Wu also found urban residents "exhibited a highly favorable opinion of the police," with the caveat that the respondents may be reluctant to acknowledge or simply be ignoring problems with police (Sun, Wu and Hu 2012, p. 100).

[389] Cao and Hou 2001 found that "confidence" in the police was lower in China that it was in the United States.

[390] This finding contradicts an earlier study using a smaller sample by the same group of scholars. See Sun, Hu and Wu 2013.

[391] We must be cautious with studies surrounding public perceptions, since potential indicators like fear of crime are deeply rooted in social, cultural, economic, psychological and geographic considerations, and not a mere reflection of how well the security state is functioning. For an overview of the literature on fear of crime, see Pain 2000. Individual vulnerability also matters. For analysis of fear of crime and vulnerability in China, see Zhang et al 2009.

more research on the *xiejing* and *chengguan* to round out our understanding of local state security strength.[392] Exactly how these groups are affected by a lack of resources, poorly designed reform, and decentralization is largely a black box. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that either of these groups are better run than the police, and this could be very unwelcome news for the health of the security state. *Chengguan* in particular are poorly compensated and known across China for their thuggish reputation, willingness to take bribes, and frequent confrontations with the public.[393] These officers are likely to have an even harder time than police in carrying out their duties, and their grievances may be exacerbating the contentious relationship between Chinese residents and local security forces, especially since their uniforms make it difficult to tell them apart from the police.

Questions about the *xiejing* and *chengguan* also invite inquiry into the job performance of other street-level bureaucrats. Chapter Five found that decentralized control over everyday crime leads not to innovation but to further strains on frontline response. This finding has implications for studies of the Chinese state by showcasing the ways in which a heavy degree of decentralization over everyday issues can create enforcement problems. The model of superficial control is useful for thinking about other government workers like grassroots tax collectors, family planning workers, or local prosecutors, all of whom are doing daily work that may not be attracting the attention and assistance of higher authorities unless something goes wrong. If these frontline workers are also struggling with problems like severe resource shortages, a lack of training, or reforms that tie their hands, then the model of superficial control gives us a better way of understanding both the effects of unfinished decentralization and the deficiencies in local state service provision. With regard to tax collection, we know that administrative decentralization has increased communication costs and undermined tax administration reform in China (Cui 2015). It is also possible that superficial control over that bureaucracy is further undermining frontline work. Research in these areas would give more insight into the dynamics of bureaucratic control and improve our understanding of the Chinese local state.

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[392] The *chengguan* are even more understudied than the police in China, though a few recent works touch on the jurisdiction of *chengguan* and their activities. See Sigley 2013 and Xu 2014.

[393] If anything, violent altercations between local residents and the *chengguan* may be worse than those with the police. An attack in Hunan by *chengguan* officials resulted in the death of a watermelon seller and sparked local protests that made headlines around the world. See Chris Luo, "Fury as Hunan Watermelon Seller is 'Beaten to Death by Chengguan,'" *South China Morning Post*, 28 July 2013. http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1285309/watermelon-vendors-death-triggers-overnight-protest-hunan. Later that same year, 18 *chengguan* officers in Xiamen were severely burned after being doused with sulfuric acid by angry residents. Jeremy Blum, "Eighteen *Chengguan* Officers Hospitalized after Acid Attack," *South China Morning Post*, 13 October 2013. http://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1334519/eighteen-chengguan-officers-hospitalised-after-acid-attack.

Political Policing

Returning to Brodeur's conceptualization of high and low policing, another way of characterizing the findings is to say that the Chinese security apparatus does a good job with high policing yet struggles with low policing. By detailing small-scale dissident management as well as coordination procedures between forces for addressing other types of political dissent, we have gained insight into how political policing works in one modern, stable authoritarian regime. In many ways, this is exactly what we would expect to find in an authoritarian regime where the political functions of the police have long loomed large.[394] But before we overplay the dichotomy between policing in authoritarian regimes and democratic regimes (where we are arguably far less likely to find a similar profile of high and low policing proficiency), it is important to recall that modern states like China are still beholden, albeit in somewhat different ways from their democratic counterparts, to providing public service. [395]

The interactions between high and low policing in China have implications that stretch beyond regime type. While the literature has focused on how high policing techniques get incorporated into the low policing realm, the Chinese case shows that high and low policing are interactive. Pointing out that failures in one area have consequences for the other, the issue in China is primarily one of problems with everyday crime management feeding back into the protest loop and creating more work for high policing. In other settings, we might find different patterns of interaction. Public distrust created by police use of high policing surveillance techniques, for example, might also be undermining low policing interactions between the police and the public. More research is needed to understand the relationship between high and low policing in other societies and across regime types, which may not be so different after all.

Further Considerations

Though the findings of this study highlight weaknesses in frontline response, they also unearth a few positive signs that scholars interested in the internal security state should pay attention to in the future. There is evidence to suggest, for example, that the Ministry is becoming more responsive and adept at gathering information in ways that might help officials address problems at the ground level. As with the lower rungs, the Ministry's old guard is gradually retiring, and this makes room for better-educated, younger officers to assume positions of

[394] Other high policing activities such as surveillance or higher level dissident management handled by China's Domestic Security Department are outside the scope of this discussion.
[395] In China, language about public opinion in police reform documents is quite common. See for example Communist Party of China News. 2014. "Guo Shengkun: Concentrate on problem-oriented public opinion to guide deeper public security reform" ("郭声琨：坚持问题导向民意引领全面深化公安改革"), 17 October. http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2014/1017/c87228-25857762.html, accessed on 10 June 2015. Police officers also talk about their mission of serving the public in interviews (为了人民服务，*wei le renmin fuwu*).

authority. At least two Ministry officials with whom I spoke believe the change in command will increase the Ministry's overall flexibility. One young Ministry official explained: "There has been a change in the attitude of supervisors in just the last five years...my supervisor will sometimes ask for the opinion of lower ranking officers and actually listen to their suggestions. This never happened before."[396] Another provincial Ministry official praised his supervisor's interest in new computing capabilities and willingness to work side-by-side with him to solve problems.[397] He also said that this type of behavior was a break with prior hierarchal interactions in which supervisors paid little attention to the ideas of lower ranked officials.

The system of cadre rotation was also recently expanded for Ministry officials in ways that may improve the exchange of information between levels. Cadre rotation has always been designed to increase ministerial knowledge and control by requiring young officials who wish to move up in the ranks to spend time at the lower levels.[398] Prior to changes implemented in 2014, it was a very selective process, since the men and women who engaged in rotation were being groomed for leadership roles. There is evidence to suggest that the benefits of the old system are limited,[399] and interviewees in the police bureaucracy who had completed or were in the process of completing rotation work were largely pessimistic in their assessments of what they gained from the experience (beyond the ability to meet one of the requirements for advancement). One recent college graduate working at the 110 call center explained, "I don't like this work. I've been here for six months and haven't learned anything. I'm exhausted and cannot wait until I move to another office. If my examination scores were higher, I could have been at another [provincial bureau besides Public Security]."[400] But the new changes have increased the number of Ministry employees who are now eligible to complete rotation, and this puts more officials in frontline positions than ever before. One provincial bureau employee expressed excitement about her upcoming post, saying she was pleased to have been assigned to one of the more difficult stations in the city. "I'm very interested in learning more about the life of the grassroots police officers," she said.[401] "I want to know more about the psychological pressures they face so that our department can better help them." While not every official may be so enthusiastic, more work is needed to understand the effects of the expanding cadre rotation system.

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[396] Interview, 2012, Southern China.

[397] Interview, 2012, Hunan. Others who were further removed from their work on the frontlines were similarly pessimistic. One provincial official explained, "I worked at the *paichusuo* for two years. Life was very difficult... I'm not sure what I learned... I just know I never want to go back." Interview, 2012, Hunan.

[398] For more on cadre rotation and management of lower level officials, see YS Huang 2002.

[399] See Eaton and Kostka 2014 for a discussion of how the short time frames and frequent turnover associated with cadre rotations led to quick, less-effective implementation of environmental policies in Shanxi, Hunan, and Shandong.

[400] Interview in Hunan, 2012.

[401] Interview, 2014.

The frontlines also display glimmers of hope for increased efficiency and better service provision in the area of everyday crime management. The retiring of the old guard could also make a difference at the lower levels if future research finds that old supervisors are being replaced by men and women who are more dedicated to improving law enforcement on the ground. We know from the policing literature in the United States and the United Kingdom that effective supervisors can make a big difference for job performance and officer satisfaction,[402] and the same is likely true in China. At least one lower ranked interviewee indicated that his district station was operating more efficiently than others in his city. He explained, "If the leader is strict, then the officers won't be lazy. The leader will tell them what to do in various situations so they know how to respond, and they'll do it. But if the leader isn't strict, the officers are going to find ways (to get out of doing work)."[403] While the hands of midlevel supervisors are often tied,[404] more research on station supervisors could show that an influx of younger, more responsive leaders can alter the landscape of policing in ways that trend toward better effectiveness. But it remains to be seen whether or not these developments will be enough to overcome the resource limitations, reform failures, and other structural limitations of the bureaucracy.

Final Thoughts

Such bright spots notwithstanding, accounts from the frontlines strongly suggest that our beliefs about state stability in China - created by impressions of a well-funded and highly-responsive Public Security Bureaucracy that is capable of putting down protests at every turn - are mostly misplaced. By looking at how police handle resource constraints, experience ministerial reform, and interact with the bureaucracy, we see fissures in what, from the outside, looks like a well-oiled and highly capable machine. Make no mistake: this is the world of "policing in between," in that it reflects the reality of officers in areas outside of tightly controlled cities like Beijing or contested areas such as Tibet. Yet these officers' accounts nevertheless present an image of frontline policing that exhibits a high degree of continuity across geographic distance and city size. The resulting portrait of a low-capacity internal security state is hard to ignore. Though it may be true that some members of the bureaucracy hype the challenges police face,[405] frontline officers have no such political agenda and are simply describing their reality, as they see it.

Changing that reality will be difficult. Increasing budget allocations at the lower levels could alleviate some of the resource limitations presented in Chapter Three. Where that money would come from remains to be seen, but budget improvements would undoubtedly allow

[402] See for example, Brewer, Wilson, and Beck 1994.
[403] Interview, Shaanxi, 2012.
[404] See Scoggins and O'Brien 2016.
[405] Fu 2005, p. 148 notes that the police leaders are quick to discuss the risks that instability poses to CCP rule and will highlight crime rates to justify their existence.

stations to hire more officers[406] and purchase more and better equipment. But that money would have to be accompanied by a dedicated commitment to changing the institutional culture of local stations and the bureaucracy itself. Though professionalization attempts have made headway in dislodging the influence of *guanxi* in hiring practices, reports across research sites demonstrate that *guanxi* still matters, albeit to a lesser extent. Even more challenging to displace, however, is the culture of office officers, especially since the people who hold these positions (officers with seniority or social connections) are some of the most powerful people in the station. Furthermore, shifts in the ideological focus at the highest levels would be necessary in order to retool police training programs that are presently dominated by impractical classes in political ideology.

Changes in priorities from the leadership, extending all the way up to the Politburo, could also make a difference. Such a revision would necessitate either a shift away from the focus on stability maintenance, or the elevation of everyday crime management to a level on par with *weiwen* and anti-corruption efforts. Both are tall orders, but even if such a shift were to occur, it is not clear that the Ministry would have the capacity to enact meaningful change. Ministry officials would need to tackle the contested space of shared control with local governments and develop a presence on the ground that is currently out of reach, given the staffing levels of the provincial security bureaus. It would also necessitate an overhaul of crime reporting practices, since the practice of underreporting crime appears to be widespread. Finally, the Ministry would have to overcome any resistance to changes that originate at the local station level.

The latter issue can be quite thorny, and an example given by Central Ministry officials demonstrates the length that some stations will go to in order to resist changes from above.[407] "Many reforms are implemented at the grassroots level first," he explained, "which can create a lot of problems. This has been true with recent personnel cuts (throughout the different branches of government), and we've had reports that some police stations are only pretending comply with the new rules...For example, a station might receive an order to cut their force from 50 to 30, so they cut 20. But those 20 just go to a different office and do the same work that they were doing before. The middle levels either don't know or don't care that this is happening and we can't stop it right now." When I asked him where the money came from to pay their salaries and electricity, his answer was simple: "corruption." While an increased focus on everyday crime management might not provoke the same level of resistance among local police, the official's example also demonstrates the ways in which issues can lay outside the scope of the Ministry's capacity, problems that do not bode well for the future of everyday crime management or the Chinese public.

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[406] A staffing increase would also need to be accompanied by a clause exempting the PSB from staffing restrictions that have been enacted across bureaucracies to trim the size (and expenses) of the government. Moreover, adding to the number of officers would help only if certified police are hired as new recruits and not the untrained, contract security agents that are currently being added to station rosters.

[407] Interview, 2012.

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