



## **Guarding against land-expropriation-related mass incidents (LERMIs): Practical evidence from China's local governments**

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China is faced with serious challenges brought by large-scale social protests in the period of rapid urbanization and profound social transition. In rural areas, the vast majority of mass incidents were related with land expropriation. In this paper, we intend to show how China's local governments guard against land-expropriation-related mass incidents (LERMIs) at the practical level. We first construct a comprehensive three-dimensional theoretic framework to define the boundary, to uncover the incentives, and to recognize the features of involved practices, then, on the basis of description evidenced by detailed data and/or cases, break various local practices down into two categories, the common local practices which refer to the nationwide top-down responses to the unified deployment by the central authority that aims to mitigate discontentment of land-deprived peasants and reduce the probabilities of conflicts through regulating land expropriation behavior and safeguarding economic interests and participation rights of affected peasants, and the specific local practices which point to the innovative local government behaviors with heterogeneity, in general, the tactical approaches to reduce the probabilities of disputes or conflicts evolving into group actions. We further argue that both of them follow a central tenet of instrumental orientation. As to the former, it is corroborated by local governments' paying more attention to promote the stylization and quantification in the aspects of regulating procedure, formulating and renewing compensation standards, resolving disputes, and evaluating risks, while the latter is mainly reflected from the outcome-orientation organization strategies to maintain overall stability in a relatively short term.