

# Shifang students prevent copper plant construction, China, 2012

- [\(mainly or initiated by\) people of color](#) [1]
- [\(mainly or initiated by\) student participants](#) [2]
- [an example of paradox of repression](#) [3]
- [included participation by more than one social class](#) [4]

## Timing

1 July

2012

to:

3 July

2012

## Location and Goals

Country:

China

Location City/State/Province:

Shifang, Sichuan Province

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

To stop the construction of a molybdenum-copper alloy factory in Shifang

## Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions ›students petitioned government to stop construction
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›outside government buildings

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications ›protesters signed their names on a banner
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›outside government buildings

Methods in 4th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support outside government buildings

Methods in 5th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support outside government buildings

Methods in 6th segment:

- 162. Sit-in outside gate of government compound

Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 056. Selective social boycott A restaurant owner refused to serve a policeman in protest against police violence.

Notes on Methods:

Many protesters and witnesses posted personal accounts, pictures, and videos on Weibo, a Chinese social networking site.

Segment Length:

Approximately 12 hours

## **Classifications**

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Environment

Group characterization:

- Shifang residents
- students

## **Leaders, partners, allies, elites**

Leaders:

High school students in Shifang

Partners:

Residents of Shifang

External allies:

Not known

Involvement of social elites:

Not known

## **Joining/exiting order of social groups**

Groups in 1st Segment:

- high school students in Shifang

- residents of Shifang

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length:

Approximately 12 hours

## **Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence**

Opponents:

Shifang government, Li Chengjin, Shifang police

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

Police used tear gas, stun grenades, and batons on protesters. Some pictures of injured protesters also show gunshot wounds.

## **Success Outcome**

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Total points:

9 out of 10 points

On 29 June 2012, the Shifang government in China's Sichuan province announced the construction of a molybdenum-copper alloy factory. High school students in the area who were concerned about the factory's environmental impacts sent the government a petition calling for it to cancel the construction. Reports estimated that the factory would pollute a radius of 60 km, encompassing Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province. The students also distributed pamphlets and posters over the entire city to raise awareness and rally the residents to take action against the refinery's construction. High schools threatened to expel the student activists if they continued their protests. Later that day, thousands gathered in the Shifang public square and in front of government buildings in protest.

On July 2, hundreds of protesters began a sit-in at the gate of the Shifang Municipal Government Compound and signed their names on a banner. The government sent in riot police who used tear gas, stun grenades, and batons on the demonstrators. They also shot at the protestors. At least 13 were injured, although the government denied any casualties.

Many protestors and witnesses posted personal accounts, videos, and pictures on Weibo, a Chinese social networking site. One user said that the government had bribed people living near the plant with 20,000 yuan (equivalent to US \$3,148) in hush money. Another Weibo user posted about a restaurant owner who had refused to serve a police officer in protest against the police violence.

On July 3, police attacked protestors again with tear gas and grenades. They also arrested 28 people, a number of them students. That evening, tens of thousands of people gathered in front of the gate to the government compound, demanding the release of students that police were holding against the students' will. The demonstrators, many of them parents of the detained students, chanted "Release the people!" Students from nearby Guanghan also joined the protests.

By the end of the night, the government had given in to the protestors' demands and announced that they would terminate the project. The police released 21 detainees later that night. However, they formally arrested three people on criminal charges and another three on administrative charges.

In response to these widespread protests, the Shifang government demoted the former party chief of the Shifang City Committee, Li Chengjin, to assistant of the new first secretary Zuo Zheng.

## Research Notes

Sources:

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Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Iris Fang, 14/10/2012

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