



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The construction of China's national interest: between top-down rule and societal ideas

Mokry, S.

Citation

Mokry, S. (2023, November 14). *The construction of China's national interest: between top-down rule and societal ideas*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3656754>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3656754>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Propositions for the dissertation

“The construction of China’s national interest: Between top-down rule and societal ideas”

Sabine Mokry-Frey

Propositions relating to the subject of the dissertation

#1 Experts working at think tanks and university-based scholars can stand in for societal actors.

#2 Drawing on “preference attainment theory” (Dür 2008) and the “text-reuse approach” (Christensen 2023) and combining the frequentist understanding of causality underpinning these approaches with careful consideration of the context in which societal actors influence the official construction of China’s national interest, allows capturing instances of societal actors’ influence on the official construction of China’s national interest, rather than mere correlations between societal ideas and the official discourse.

#3 The state’s influence on societal ideas might be larger than societal actors’ influence on the state. However, examining societal actors’ ideas and their influence is still important for explaining changes in the construction of China’s national interest.

#4 We must re-examine Chinese societal actors’ influence on China’s foreign policy and China’s involvement in international politics.

Scientific propositions relating to the field of the subject’s dissertation

#1 The Chinese party-state’s openness to societal input changes faster than previously assumed.

#2 When engaging with (foreign policy) experts who work in authoritarian contexts or with the work they produce, these actors’ proximity to the state needs to be considered.

#3 Close analyses of public statements reveal more about a state’s foreign policy than investigations into concrete foreign policy decisions.

#4 Findings on Chinese societal actors’ influence on foreign policy are most generalizable to foreign policy-making in similar authoritarian settings. Some elements of the research process and findings might be transferable to other policy fields in the Chinese context or democratic contexts, but such a transfer will be more demanding.

Propositions on societal subjects

#1 European governments’ China policies should make more room for engagement with Chinese societal actors.

References

Christensen, Johan. 2023. “Studying Expert Influence: A Methodological Agenda.” *West European Politics* 46(3): 600–613.

Dür, Andreas. 2008. "Measuring Interest Group Influence in the EU: A Note on Methodology." *European Union Politics* 4: 559–76.