

## MASTER'S THESIS

### **Nip conflicts in the bud: grassroots institutional reform in China: the case of the center of comprehensive management, letters & visits and stability maintenance**

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**Nip Conflicts in the Bud: Grassroots Institutional Reform in China**  
**—— The Case of the Center of Comprehensive Management, Letters & Visits**  
**and Stability Maintenance**

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## ABSTRACT

In past few years, a new local institution - the Center of Comprehensive Management, Letters & Visits and Stability Maintenance (*zongzhi xinfang weiwen zhongxin*; 綜治信訪維穩中心; CCM for short), has emerged in China, first in the Pearl River Delta region and then spreading across the country, as a response to mounting social tensions and conflicts amid socioeconomic transformation. The institution is designed as an ad hoc agency that integrates the resources and manpower from different local bureaucratic divisions to provide the local people with a platform of one-stop dispute resolution service. What explains the emergence of such comprehensive management through administrative reform carried out by the Chinese state? What are the mechanisms of the CCM? To what extent can it enhance and improve the capacity of local states to control and solve social conflicts? This study attempts to address these questions. Based on cases collected in Shenzhen, the research is intended to reveal the sociopolitical logic behind the institutional innovation of comprehensive management. Theoretically, it aspires to combine the analytical strategy of disaggregating the state and the approach of historical institutionalism in explaining institution-building at the grassroots level, and explore the implications of comprehensive management for administrative reforms and state-society relations in China in the years to come.

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