



## Academia in France

Saoussane Rachel Sarah GHALI



### 1. What are the main topics of interest for social scientists in France?

Sociology in France concerns a broad spectrum of interests and focuses on many fields, such as migration, economic sociology, sociology of inequalities, urban sociology, education, gender and political sociology. However, because of the multicultural background of France and its long history of migration, many subjects revolve around ethnic minorities (e.g., migrants' integration, ethnic inequalities, second-generation migrants). Furthermore, matters of inequalities have also been largely discussed under various themes and have been at the heart of many studies (e.g., gender, social mobility, educational opportunities, social mobilization).

### 2. In terms of theoretical influence, which are the most discussed theories or renowned authors in France?

There are three main theoretical influences in France. First, economic sociology is quite predominant. Second, many researchers have a Bourdieusian influence. Third, interactionism is also prevalent and authors like Goffman or the Chicago School are of interest. Furthermore, there is quite an important division between researchers working on purely theoretical sociology and the ones focusing on empirical work.

### 3. How are the roles and interaction between teachers and students managed in France?

The relationship is quite distant mainly for two reasons. First, there is a tradition of formally addressing teachers, teaching assistants and professors by using formal/polite speech (using “Professor with the last name” or “vous” which is the polite pronoun used to address someone in France). This interaction setting directly creates a distance in the relationship. Furthermore, the relationship in general is quite hierarchical. Second, a lot of classes are taught by teaching assistants and only lectures, with a large number of students, are taught by professors, which makes it really hard for the professors to be able to interact directly with students. For the PhD students, this hierarchical relationship and the distance are still present, however because they work more closely with assistant professors, there is a possibility to have a closer relationship.

[See the full interview](#)

## CONFERENCES

**Olivos Francisco.** “Uncovering the feel for the game at schools: Evidence from two factorial survey experiments.” and “Pride and Protest: Emotional response in the aftermath of the 2019 Chilean social outburst.” Papers to be presented at American Sociological Association 2021 (Virtual) Annual Meeting, August 6-10, 2021.

Song Jing and **Li Lulu.** “Daughters’ Return Migration and Entrepreneurship in China’s Small Cities.” Paper to be presented at American Sociological Association 2021 (Virtual) Annual Meeting, August 6-10, 2021.

**Xu Xinzhi.** “Standardisation and Service Efficiency: A Video-Based Study of Two Robotic Hotels in China.” Paper to be presented at the 19th Annual STS Conference Graz 2021 - Critical Issues in Science, Technology and Society Studies, May 3-5, 2021.

**Asiama A. Amoako.** “Dealing with substance abuse in public space; from the perspectives of residents around Tung Chau Street Park, Hong Kong.” Paper to be presented at the 12th Annual Asian Criminological Society Conference, June 18-21, 2021.

## My Thesis in 300 Words

Huan HE



Recent literature on contentious politics and social movement has found that rather than challenging state power and protecting citizens' rights, laws and legal means can be used to exercise political and social control over a contentious society and then to sustain and legitimize the state's domination. These legal measures are supposed to not only make contentious activities channeled and contained in a more invisible way but also render state repression more legitimate by discrediting protesters and justifying coercive actions. Therefore, some scholars suggest that state authorities can shift to more consolidated repression under the guise of legal approaches,

and limited political space is left for contentious activities.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, interview data, and government documents and reports in China, my dissertation attempts to provide a more complicated picture of state repression dynamics and contentious struggles under the repressive laws. The Chinese state launched the legal governance campaign in 2013, and legal control has become an important principle for state agents to handle state-society contentions in Xi's era. Contrary to conventional assumptions, I found that state authorities do not fully govern contentions as written legal-bureaucratic texts regulate, and they tend to respond to illegal contentious activities deliberately, even though the prevailing rhetoric of law-based governance provides the convenient basis for them to legitimize their coercive actions. Since the legal punishment is more public and responsible, the governments require more careful considerations and are likely to avoid the potential risks of formally employing criminal penalties to achieve domination. Consequently, state officials sometimes tend to use soft strategies to respond to troublemaking actions, despite being irreconcilable with law and order. On this occasion, it is possible that aggrieved citizens can exploit the pressure faced by state agencies and succeed with their claims to some extent. In general, this study offers a different pattern of state-society relations under the legal governance campaign in China. Rather than highlighting the importance of tactical innovation for the survival of activism in the repressive environment, this study focuses more on the impact of the pressure faced by the state on the political space for contentious activities.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ✓ Call for papers

- Mini Conference & Special Issue by Work and Occupations "Precarious Employment and Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic." **Deadline for Papers: November 15, 2021.** [\[see the ad\]](#)
- Special issue on Theoretical Approaches for Alcohol and Drug Research". **Deadline for abstracts: May 3, 2021.** [\[see the ad\]](#)

#### ✓ Job ads:

- Post-doctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong. **Deadline: May 4, 2021** [\[see the ad\]](#)