Focal Points, Dissident Calendars, and Preemptive Repression

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Abstract

This paper explains temporal variation in repression as a function of the "dissident calendar," the set of events that serve as natural focal points for coordination. The core argument is that regimes can anticipate the events that create these focal points and engage in preemptive repression to survive their passing. This dynamic produces predictable, often cyclical patterns in repression. An analysis of dissident detentions in China from 1998 to 2014 shows that "focal events" alone appear to be responsible for more than 20% of dissident detentions over the analysis period. Such detentions tend to be shorter and rely less on formal criminal procedures, suggesting a "catch-and-release" dynamic. Additional analysis of detentions in Tibet shows how the calendar may vary by issue or group.

Keywords: Repression, preemptive, detention, focal point, dissidents, authoritarian, mobilization, collective action, human rights, China, Tibet

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Why and when do we observe crackdowns on political dissidents? More broadly, what drives governments to commit repressive acts when they do?

The standard answer is that repression comes in response to increases in visible dissent (Carey 2006, 2010; Davenport 2007; Earl et al. 2003; Moore 2000). When confronted with protests, strikes, and other forms of overt collective action, government actors engage in repression to preserve the state and their own grasp on power. Indeed, our most powerful mental images of repression are of protestors facing down bullets or tanks or tear gas, whether at Kent State or Tahrir Square. Until recently, the consensus around the dissent-repression nexus was so strong that Davenport (2007) identified it as one of the core findings in the repression literature, dubbing it the "Law of Coercive Responsiveness."

New empirical scholarship has begun to amend this law. Ritter and Conrad show that the relationship between dissent and repression is conditional on regime type, and it appears to hold primarily for democratic governments, which engage in more reactive forms of repression. Authoritarian regimes, in contrast, are more adept at using preemptive repression– they address threats when opposition is still trying to mobilize, before overt collective action ever actually takes place (Ritter and Conrad 2016). Preemptive repression comes in many forms: curfews, prohibitions on assembly, and the monitoring and imprisonment of dissidents, to name a few (Ritter and Conrad 2016; Snyder 1976; Sullivan 2015, 2016). Such strategies allow authoritarian regimes to prevent most dissent from ever becoming visible, while also keeping repression itself largely out of public sight.

The purpose of this paper is to further strengthen our understanding of preemptive repression by focusing explicitly on temporal variation, and the explanatory power of dates and events. I introduce the concept of the "dissident calendar"– the set of events known in advance that serve as natural focal points for coordination and collective action (Mehta et al. 1994a; Schelling 1980). Historical anniversaries, high-level regime meetings, and even international sporting events present dissident groups with a unique opportunity to mobilize the broader population into overt collective action. My argument is that regimes anticipate the events that create

these focal points and engage in preemptive repression to survive their passing. This dynamic produces predictable, often cyclical patterns in repression. Importantly, the dissident calendar may vary across oppositional communities, producing varied patterns for different groups, issues, and regions.

A dataset of political prisoners in China is used to test these ideas. The Congressional-Executive Commission on China maintains a Political Prisoner Database (CECC-PPD) that contains a list of known individuals that have been detained in China for political reasons. This data was used to create an index of monthly "democracy related" detentions. An interrupted time series analysis shows that repression is indeed a predictable function of focal events. Detentions show cyclical patterns, coinciding with the five-year anniversaries of the Tiananmen Square Massacre and founding of the PRC, as well as high-level CCP meetings. On average, a focal event falling in or shortly after a given month increases the expected number of detentions by some 108% to 221%. The estimates suggest these events alone are responsible for more than 20% of political dissident detentions in China over the analysis period. A replication of the analysis for detentions in Tibet yields coefficients of similar magnitude, illustrating how focal events can vary across groups within a given polity.

The data also allow for an analysis of punishment outcomes. We observe that dissidents arrested shortly before focal events are about 12-13% less likely to receive a formal charge in the criminal justice system, and 12-13% more likely to have a short imprisonment period (defined as spending less than 30 days in custody). Overall, this suggests a "catch-and-release" dynamic that allows the regime to get through the sensitive dates that might produce broader, overt collective action. Dissidents are taken off the streets, intimidated and mined for information, and released once the danger has passed. Attention-grabbing trials are often avoided entirely, minimizing the risk for popular backlash (Francisco 1996; Rasler 1996; Sullivan 2016).

This paper presents one of the first attempts to quantify and explain temporal variation in dissident detentions, joining other studies that take a micro-level approach to the study of repression (Davenport 2014; Earl et al. 2003; Fielding and Shortland 2010; Francisco 1996;

Moore 1998, 2000, Rasler 1996; Ritter and Conrad 2016; Sullivan et al. 2012; Sullivan 2015, 2016). This type of data allows us to move beyond country-level explanations of repression and respect for human rights (Hill and Jones 2014), and to explore focal events as predictors of personal integrity violations. Despite its theoretical importance, we still know relatively little about how exactly preemptive repression works in practice– who suffers personal integrity violations, when, for how long, and of what sort.

Focal Points, Dissident Calendars, and Preemptive Repression

State repression is broadly defined as threats, intimidation, violence, and other forms of physical sanctions used to deter individuals or organizations from activities threatening to those in power (Davenport 2007; Earl 2003). Infringements on rights involving security of person, including freedom from being tortured, killed, "disappeared," or unlawfully imprisoned, are known as personal integrity violations (Davenport 2007). The dependent variable used in this study– politically motivated detentions– can be considered a measure of the broader concept of physical integrity violations, which is itself a subcategory of the broader concept of state repression.

We know that in authoritarian systems, much of the repression that occurs is preemptive in nature (Greitens 2016; King et al. 2013, 2014; Sullivan 2015, 2016; Wang and Minzer 2015). Bloated domestic security budgets fund "secret police" and other surveillance outfits that keep a close watch on potential troublemakers. Sullivan's archival research on Guatemala (1975-1985) shows how the National Police sought to repress the mobilization activities of dissident groups (Sullivan 2015, 2016). In the Chinese case, King, Pan and Roberts describe how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) skillfully censors social media posts aimed at stirring up protests or demonstrations, again targeting the mobilization stage of contentious behavior (King et al. 2013, 2014). When dissident mobilization does occur, regimes can intervene and deplete oppositional groups of their personnel, resources, and optimism. As Sullivan shows, such a strategy is effective in reducing overt, collective dissent (Sullivan 2016).

Thus, to understand patterns in detentions in authoritarian systems, we must identify factors

that increase the possibility of public dissent, not necessarily dissent itself (which is actively being prevented). Schelling's "focal point" concept offers a helpful starting point (Schelling 1980). In games of pure coordination, players will often employ strategies that have some unique salience or prominence. Schelling famously asked a group of students where they would go and when if they had to meet a stranger in New York City the following day, not being able to communicate in advance. The most common answer was the information booth at Grand Central Terminal at noon. Note that there is no added payoff from going to Grand Central– and in fact any place and time in the city could be an equilibrium– but that its salience is what led students to choose this strategy (Janssen 2001). As Schelling describes:

> People can often concert their intentions or expectations with others if each knows that the other is trying to do the same. Most situations... provide some clue for coordinating behavior, some focal point for each person's expectation of what the other expects him to expect to be expected to do (Schelling 1980, p. 57.).

Experimental evidence shows that players are able to use the labels or symbols associated with different strategies to coordinate on mutually beneficial outcomes, confirming Schelling's initial empirical findings (Mehta et al. 1994a,b).

In authoritarian systems, the choice to engage in collective action constitutes a coordination game of the class Schelling describes (Pierskalla 2009; Shadmehr 2014; Tucker 2007). Instead of places to meet in New York City, discontented citizens are picking moments or dates in which to voice their discontent. The benefits to dissent are increasing in the number of people joining in, as there is a greater chance of engendering change and a lower risk of personal punishment (Kuran 1991). Yet because of the constrained information environment, discontented citizens frequently have difficulty reliably communicating their strategies to each other in advance. The task is further complicated by the fact that there is effectively an infinite set of date-place combinations from which to choose.

Focal points are key to solving the coordination problem and engendering collective action. I define "focal events" as dates known in advance that have high salience and reduce problems of coordination for citizens seeking to act collectively. Such dates may include anniversaries

of key historical events, national commemorations or celebrations, elections or appointments of high-level officials, or high-level regime meetings (Davenport 1997; Opp and Gern 1993; Tucker 2007). These events need not increase anger or antipathy in the population itself (though some may); the key feature is simply that they are salient and known in advance. I refer to the "dissident calendar" as the set of these dates.

Of course, we know that the agents of repression do not simply stand by and allow dissidents to mobilize (Greitens 2016; Sullivan 2015; Wang and Minzer 2015). Sophisticated authoritarian regimes are well-aware of the dissident calendar and the list of focal events. The core hypothesis tested in this paper is that such governments engage in preemptive repression in advance of such dates.

> H_1[detentions]: Dissident detentions will increase in periods shortly preceding and during focal events.

This brand of targeted, preemptive repression can prevent any latent revolutionary bandwagons from taking off (Kuran 1991). Note that we may never observe visible dissent (protests, strikes, demonstrations, petitions, etc.) during these periods, as dissidents themselves are removed from the system and prevented from voicing opposition and mobilizing others.

Importantly, the set of focal events can vary from issue to issue, group to group. This yields variation in the timing of repressive crackdowns, as different dissident calendars may operate within the same polity.

If dissidents in authoritarian systems face this sort of preemptive repression strategy, shouldn't they learn, and try to coordinate around other dates? Certainly dissidents do mobilize in other ways, and at other times, which is why we see detentions occurring at non focal times and places. The argument here is simply that dissidents are bound to the political calendar, in some sense. In the same way that Grand Central Terminal is focal in New York City and 30th and Lexington is not, June 4th will always be salient for the Chinese population, and June 22nd will not. Because coordination is unreliable, the discontent naturally rely on focal events to reach each other and the broader population. They cannot create these events on their own.

Once the focal event passes, the danger for the regime passes as well. For this reason, we might also expect detentions preceding such events to take on a different nature, as regimes are simply trying to get through these dates with minimal trouble:

> H_2[process]: Reliance on extralegal detention procedures will increase in periods shortly preceding and during focal events.

Regimes may formally arrest, charge, try, and convict political dissidents, or they may rely on other means to get these individuals off the streets. Disappearances, forced travel, informal detention centers, and other extralegal forms of intimidation are standard moves in the repertoire of repression (Davenport 2007; Earl et al. 2003). In anticipating focal events, we should expect regimes to rely more on informal repression, as such tactics can be used more flexibly through the passage of the sensitive date. Compared to the formal arrest and trial process, informal repression is also lower profile and reduces the risk of engendering a popular backlash (Francisco 1996; Rasler 1996; Sullivan 2016). Individuals need not actually commit a crime to be detained informally.

This strategy also has the effect of reducing the average duration of detentions during focal events:

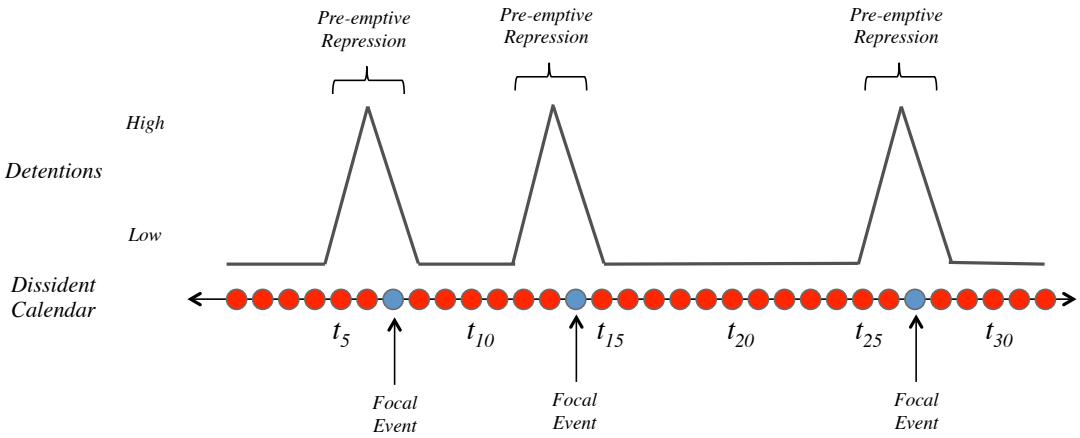
> H_3[duration]: The duration of detentions will decrease in periods shortly preceding and during focal events.

Even in authoritarian systems, individuals cannot be held in jail indefinitely without charge.[1] When informal measures are used, detention duration decreases. Of course, charges can be fabricated if necessary, but this entails a lengthy, highly visible trial process that could engender further collective action. Repression also comes with reputation costs, especially at the international level. It is easier for the regime to engage in a "catch and release" strategy with informal detentions to get through focal events. This minimizes the appearance of overt repression, while still achieving the goal of reducing prospects for collective action.

[1]In the Chinese legal system, for example, individuals cannot be detained for more than 30 days without a formal arrest and criminal charge (Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China, Art. 89).

Figure 1 provides a visual summary of the core theoretical intuition, illustrating focal events and cyclical waves of preemptive repression. The remainder of the paper tests these ideas in the Chinese case.

Figure 1: Theory Summary



Data

Detentions Data

The term "dissident" can be used to describe anyone who actively challenges an established institution. We can further subdivide this by issue category. "Environmental dissidents" challenge status quo environmental policies, "religious dissidents" challenge the state on religious issues, "labor dissidents" seek change on labor conditions, and so forth. My empirical focus is on China's "democratic dissidents." These are individuals that have the end goal of promoting democratization or at the very least, meaningful liberalizing political reforms. Such individuals complain about human rights abuses, demand freedom of speech and association, and call for more democratic political processes.

The analysis utilizes a time series dataset built from information contained in the Congressional-Executive Commission on China's Political Prisoner Database (CECC-PPD). The CECC draws on a range of publicly available Chinese and English sources to identify individuals that have been detained or imprisoned in China for non-criminal reasons. The CECC-PPD draws heavily

from other data collected by prominent China human rights organizations. These include the Dui Hua Foundation, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Human Rights in China (HRC).

The core hypotheses concern when democratic dissidents are detained and how they are treated once detained. The CECC-PPD contains a number of fields for each detainee that allow for the evaluation of these ideas, including: the date of detention, formal arrest, and trial (if applicable); activist issue category; the length of sentence; current detention status; location of residence and detention; and basic demographic information. The dataset also contains a short background description for each prisoner.

As of January 27, 2015– the date the full database was pulled– there were 7820 entries in the CECC-PPD, with the first detention recorded on May 29, 1981. Most of the entries are not relevant for the democratic dissident analysis. The vast majority of records (4030 detentions) are related to ethnic issues in some way, with Tibetan and Uyghur minorities the most common targets. Members of the Falun Gong represent another 1367 detainees, and 44% of all detentions are related to religious issues. Detentions related to property (232 detentions) and environmental (119 detentions) concerns are also commonplace. Such detentions are outside the theoretical scope of the argument, as they are not expected to follow the logic of focal events and dissident calendars. For example, labor, environmental, and property right activists in China are often involved in protests about personal or localized grievances, and there is not a set of salient dates that really unites them.

Relatedly, I exclude all entries prior to 1998 (2622 entries, 33.5% of the sample) in the interest of keeping comparability across the sample. China passed a major amendment to its Criminal Law in 1997, which included a revamping of sentences and political crimes. The data quality also appears worse for earlier years. I also exclude entries missing the specific month/date of detention (586 entries, 7.5% of the dataset).

The CECC-PPD includes a coding for democracy-related ("dem") or Tiananmen-related detentions ("6489"). This yields a total of 222 known detentions of political dissidents occurring

from 1998 through the end of 2014. The individual detention entries were aggregated to the monthly level, giving a count of political dissident detentions over time, referred to as $dem.det_t$. This time series is shown in Figure 3a. We see a large number of relatively "quiet" months, followed by spikes in detentions clustered in a few brief periods. This is the core variation the paper seeks to explain.

One major concern is that these exclusion filters produce a relatively narrow set of detentions (only 2.8% of entries in the dataset are included in *dem.det*). To expand the scope of the inquiry, I analyze a second variable, $dem.det.ext_t$, with a broader conception of "democratic dissident." In addition to the CECC-PPD codes for democracy-related ("dem") or Tiananmen-related detentions ("6489"), the *dem.det.ext* variable captures detentions related to freedom of speech ("spch"), civil society ("civil"), freedom of information ("info"), and freedom of association ("assoc").[2] These filters yield an additional several hundred detentions, bringing the total to 1102 in the analysis period (see Figure A4b in Supporting Information). I also replicate the core analysis with an event calendar and detentions for Tibetan separatists, $ethtib.det_t$, which captures 2090 detentions from 1998-2014 (see Figure 4). In the end, the overall analysis encompasses 3182 entries in the PPD, roughly 40.7% of the original dataset. See Table A1 in the Supporting Information for more information on the filters employed for the analysis.

It is important to be forthright about the limitations of the data. The database is drawn from publicly available news sources and on-the-ground reports (from Dui Hua, China Human Rights Defenders, Human Rights in China, etc.), and it thus fails to capture any detention that is successfully kept out of the public view. The true number of political dissident detentions in China certainly exceeds what I am analyzing here, even when the broader variable $dem.det.ext_t$ is used.

To get a better sense of possible biases in the CECC-PPD, we can compare detentions it includes to those identified by a grassroots organization of Chinese human rights activists, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD). Beginning in 2013, CHRD began

[2]I exclude detentions related to the Falun Gong and Tibetan and Uyghur minorities from the democratic dissident analysis, as these groups may operate by a different calendar of focal events.

collecting its own lists of activists in China that had been detained for at least five days or were tortured/inhumanely treated in some way. The CECC-PPD draws on data from CHRD but does not include entries that are not able to be verified. Indeed, only about 20% of the CHRD cases from 2014 are also included in the CECC-PPD.

The Supporting Information details the results of this data validation exercise. There are three core findings. (see Figure A2 and Table A2). First, the CECC-PPD tends to do well in picking up detentions that formally enter the criminal justice system, as opposed to those where the dissident was punished through China's administrative justice system. Second, there appears to be some issue heterogeneity. The CECC-PPD tends to include dissidents active on the democracy issue, but misses out on individuals detained related to concerns over labor, property rights, or other commercial issues. Third, and most importantly, the presence of focal events does not appear to systematically increase the likelihood of a detention being identified by the CECC. The simple monthly time series of democratic detentions generated by the two organizations are also quite similar (see Figure A2 in Supporting Information).

Event Data

In terms of independent variables, the core hypothesis concerns the effect of *focal events*, which are known in advance and help dissidents coordinate their behavior.

> 1. focal event ($focal_t$) - an event known in advance that has high political salience for a particular dissident community

These might include anniversaries of key historical events, national commemorations/celebrations, or high-level regime meetings. I expect the CCP regime to engage in preemptive repression in advance of these dates, yielding spikes in repression. Detentions around these dates should also be shorter and more likely to rely on informal practices rather than the criminal justice system.

There are other types of events that may also beget mobilization and repression. To the extent these are correlated with focal events, this could confound the estimates. Existing research on repression and social movements has identified four relevant classes of events:

> 2. leadership transition ($trans_t$) - an event signaling the formal transition of power within the regime

3. leadership division (div_t) - an event signaling heightened division within the regime over issues of political reform; includes death/purge of key political reformers

4. governance shock ($shock_t$) - an event signaling gross policy mismanagement or scandal

5. foreign revolution ($revol_t$) - an event involving mass mobilization for democracy/political reform occurring abroad

Transitions or open division among the leadership might give dissident communities the impression that they have elite allies, in turn begetting mobilization and responsive repression (Meyer 2004). Shocks that signal poor governance– scandals, highly-publicized accidents, consumer safety issues– heighten grievances and give the population something to mobilize around (Meyer 2004; Opp 2000). Foreign revolutions can spur mobilization and repression through a demonstration and diffusion effect, as citizens in one country may be inspired by mobilization in the next (Beissinger 2002; Danneman and Ritter 2014).

One methodological issue is that in any given polity, an infinite number of events occur over a given span of time. To proceed, some finite "universe of prominent events" is necessary, along with an objective coding scheme. To this end, a list of prominent events in China from 1998-2014 were compiled using timelines published online from BBC News, China Profile, and Wikipedia (zh). Revolutions/political movements occurring abroad, as measured by the Beissinger dataset, were also added. In total, 172 events were identified in this way.

Using this list, the five event types (focal events, leadership transitions, leadership division, governance shocks and foreign revolutions) were coded by research assistants. There were a total of 14 focal events from 1998 to 2014. Commemorations of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the major anniversaries of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, the selection of key leaders at the five-year Party Congress, and even the Beijing Olympic Games fit the focal events criterion. Note that events that were not known in advance, like the death of purged reformer Zhao Ziyang or foreign revolutions like the Arab Spring, are not included in $focal_t$, as they do not operate by the same preemptive, catch-and-release logic. These events are captured in the other relevant mobilization events ($trans_t$, div_t, $shock_t$, $revol_t$) and associated variables, which encompass about 30 events in total. The full set of coded events is shown in Tables A3a

and A3c in the Supporting Information, along with more information on the coding scheme and replicability.

The dataset uses simple dummy indicators for whether the events occurred in a given month. For the focal events, the "event window" for $focal_t$ includes the month of the event and the preceding two months. This captures the preemptive logic of repression for these dates. For governance shocks ($shock_t$), leadership division events (div_t), and foreign revolutions ($revol_t$), the default window is also three months– the month of the event and the following two months. The twelve months following the two formal leadership transitions ($trans_t$) are included in the window for these events.

Given that the windows used are somewhat arbitrary, the analysis below closely examines the sensitivity of the findings across these assumptions (Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Leamer 1985). The core findings prove robust across a range of covariate specifications and coding rules.

Analysis

Democratic Detentions Analysis

To assess the core hypothesis (H_1) on detention patterns, I estimate different versions of the following interrupted time series model:

$$Y_t = \alpha + \beta_1 focal_t + \gamma X_t + f(T) + \epsilon_t \qquad \text{(ITS)}$$

Here, Y_t represents our dependent variable, the total number of democratic dissident detentions in a given month t, operationalized with either $det.dem_t$ or $det.dem.ext_t$. The primary independent variable is the indicator for a month including or shortly preceding a focal event $focal_t$, and the coefficient of interest is β_1. X_t indicates a vector of additional covariates that will be included in some specifications, the various "control events" that could beget more reactive repression ($trans_t$, div_t, $shock_t$, and $revol_t$). All estimates will employ a negative binomial model due to the count nature of the data. Some specifications also include a cubic function of time $f(T)$ to account for any temporal trends.

Table 1: Interrupted Time Series Estimates

Y_t		$\underline{dem.det_t}$			$\underline{dem.det.ext_t}$	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$focal_t$	0.736	1.169	0.913	0.420	0.577	0.476
	(0.299)	(0.294)	(0.261)	(0.159)	(0.161)	(0.143)
div_t		-1.014	-0.998		-0.284	-0.522
		(0.601)	(0.564)		(0.275)	(0.249)
$shock_t$		-0.091	0.205		0.129	0.102
		(0.491)	(0.438)		(0.254)	(0.229)
$revol_t$		0.750	0.369		0.405	0.280
		(0.265)	(0.237)		(0.145)	(0.129)
$trans_t$		0.814	0.218		0.287	0.149
		(0.385)	(0.362)		(0.218)	(0.204)
Window	3/12	3/12	3/12	3/12	3/12	3/12
$t + t^2 + t^3$	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
N	204	204	204	204	204	204
LL	-540.2	-521.8	-485.4	-1123.7	-1111.8	-1057.2
AIC	546.2	535.8	505.4	1129.8	1125.9	1077.3

Note: Table shows results of regressions of $det.dem_t$ and $det.dem.ext_t$ on event window indicators. All models use a negative binomial specification.

The coefficient estimates for six different models are shown in Table 1. The table explores robustness across different covariate sets and conceptions of the dependent variable. Model 1 is the simple bivariate regression of $dem.det_t$ on $focal_t$, using a three month window for $focal_t$. Model 2 includes the four different types of "control events" that yield reactive repression (leadership transitions, leadership divisions, governance shocks, and foreign revolutions), with the event window set to twelve months for $trans_t$ and three months for $focal_t$, div_t, $shock_t$, and $revol_t$. Model 3 includes temporal polynomials ($t + t^2 + t^3$). Models 4, 5 and 6 are the equivalent but using the broader conception of democratic dissident detention, $dem.det.ext_t$, as the dependent variable.

The estimated effect of focal events on dissident detentions is both substantively and statistically significant, providing evidence in favor of hypothesis H_1. If a month precedes or includes a focal event, the expected log count of the number of detentions increases by 0.74 to 1.17 for *dem.det*, and a more modest 0.42 to 0.58 for *dem.det.ext*. In incidence rate ratio terms, this translates to about about a 108% to 221% increase in the expected number of detentions (IRR ranging from 2.08 to 3.21) in a focal event month. Given that there are fourteen such events in the dataset, the cumulative effect on repression is quite large.

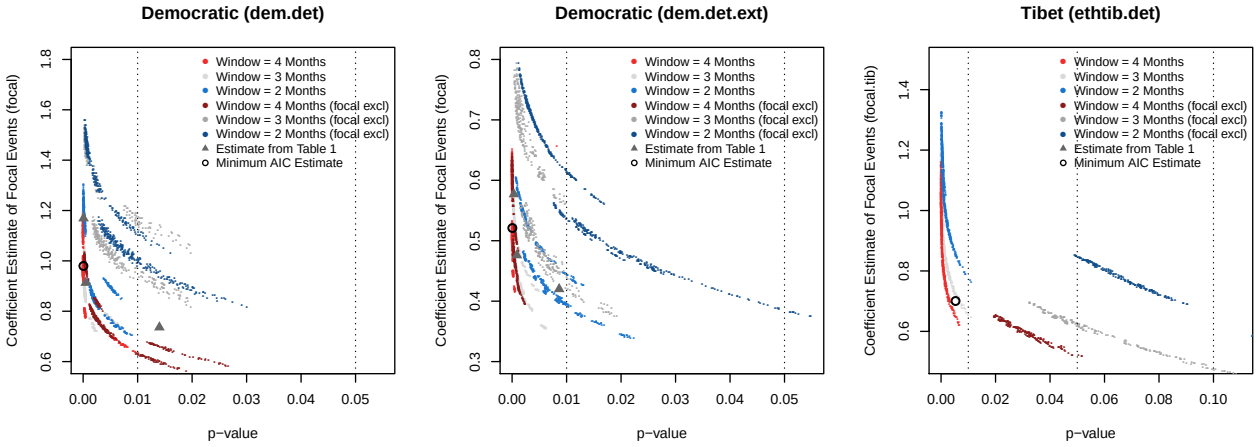
To test the robustness of the core finding on focal events, I conduct a sensitivity analysis that probes the distribution of the coefficient estimates across different covariate sets and the two different conceptions of the dependent variable, *dem.det* and *dem.det.ext*. The sensitivity analysis includes all possible combinations of the following covariates:

$focal_t$: (event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months) (focal event month include/exclude) (6 options)
div_t: (exclude, event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months) (4 options)
$shock_t$: (exclude, event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months) (4 options)
$revol_t$: (exclude, event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months) (4 options)
$trans_t$: (exclude, event window = 9 months, 12 months, 15 months) (4 options)
t: (exclude, $t + t^2 + t^3$) (2 options)

Such "global sensitivity analyses" are recommended by Leamer and have been used in other political science papers (Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Leamer 1985). In total, 3072 models (6 x 4 x 4 x 4 x 4 x 2) were estimated for each outcome variable, *dem.det* and *dem.det.ext*.

The results of the sensitivity analysis are shown in the left and center panels of Figure 2. The figure depicts the coefficient estimates and one-sided p-values for $focal_t$, with each point representing the output of a different model. The red points signify models with a four month window for the focal event, grey signifies three months, and blue signifies two months. The chart also shows specifications where the month of the focal event itself was not included in the event window ("focal excl").[3] The triangles indicate the models shown in Table 1, and the circle indicates the model with the lowest ("best") value for the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), a measure of statistical fit. The figure suggests that the estimates are robust to different covariate sets, time windows, and conceptions of the dependent variable. All specifications reach conventional levels of significance.

Figure 2: Results of Sensitivity Analysis



Note: Figure shows results of sensitivity analysis for the coefficient estimate on $focal_t$ (for *dem.det* and *dem.det.ext*) and $focal.tib_t$ for $ethtib.det_t$. Each point represents the estimate of a single model; 1536 models were estimated in total for each conception of the dependent variable.

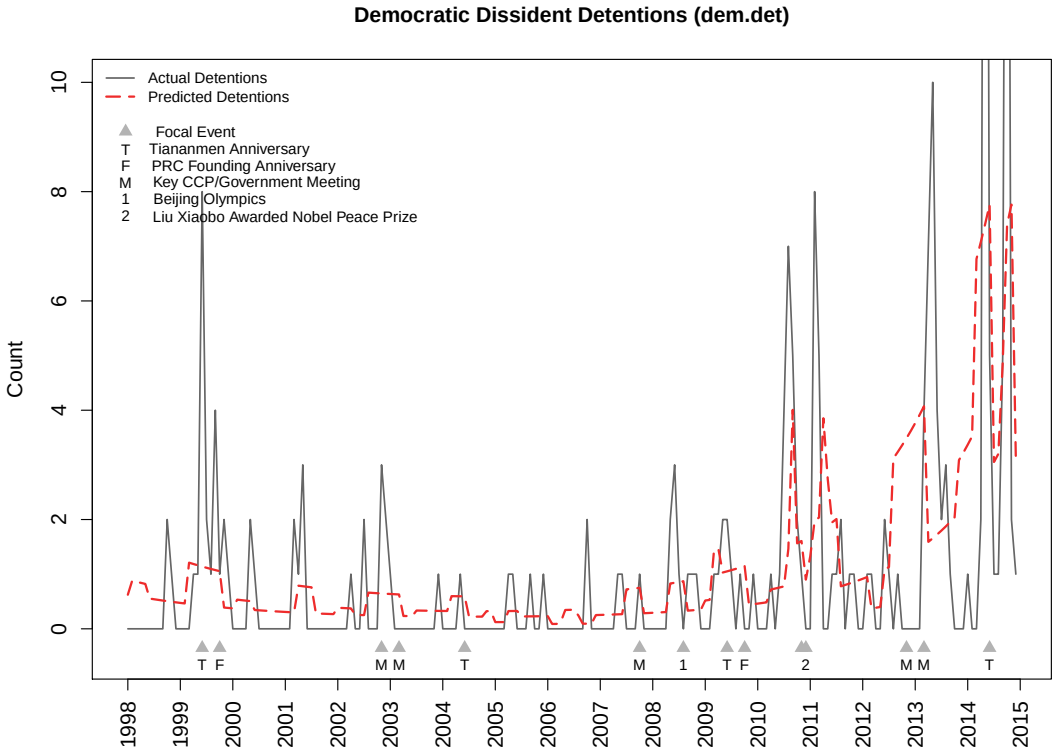
We can visually examine the predictive utility of the model to contextualize the importance of these events. Figure 3a shows the time series of dissident detentions for *dem.det*.[4] The grey triangles indicate the fourteen focal events, which prove associated with large spikes in

[3]This set of specifications accounts for the possibility that including the focal event month might also capture some detentions that occur after the focal event itself, which would no longer be considered preemptive in nature. Ideally, the analysis could be conducted at a lower level of aggregation (week or day), but a substantial number of entries in the CECC-PPD are missing this information.

[4]Figure A4b in the Supporting Information shows the equivalent analysis for *dem.det.ext*.

detentions. The 10th and 25th anniversaries of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, as well as the Beijing Olympics and key CCP meetings, produce visible increases in the preceding months.

Figure 3a: Predicting Democratic Dissident Detentions in China



Note: Figure shows total political detentions per month in China from 1998-2014 as they relate to key events. The dashed red line shows predicted values from the model with lowest AIC. All data drawn from the augmented CECC-PPD.

The dashed red line depicts predicted values from the model, which does appear to have some explanatory power.[5] It picks up many of the noticeable spikes in the data, though it tends to underestimate the magnitude of those spikes. In particular, the Occupy Central movement in Hong Kong brought a huge surge in detentions in mainland China.[6] This event is captured as a "foreign revolution" but clearly entails a greater threat to the regime than some of the other protests/revolutions in this category. Future extensions of this sort of analysis might find it fruitful to disaggregate external events into different subcategories (Danneman and Ritter

[5]Throughout this exercise, I utilize the model from the sensitivity analysis that had the minimum AIC. The covariates for this model include $focal_t$ (window = 4 months), $revol_t$ (window = 3 months), div_t (window =3 months), and $t + t^2 + t^3$.

[6]All detentions in Hong Kong are excluded from the dataset.

2014).

Overall, there were 222 publicly observable detentions of democratic dissidents in China from 1998 to 2014 using the narrow definition *dem.det*. The model predicts about 223 detentions using the true covariate values, as depicted by the dashed red line. If we had observed no foreign revolutions ($revol_t = 0$ throughout), we would expect to have observed about 194 detentions over this period. If there had been no focal events ($focal_t = 0$ throughout), we would expect to have observed about 150 detentions over this period, a decrease of about 32%. If there were neither foreign revolutions nor focal events ($revol_t = 0$ and $focal_t = 0$ throughout), the expected number of detentions is about 125. These two types of events alone seem to be associated with about 40-45% of democratic dissident detentions in China during this period.

Replicating the analysis using the broader definition of democratic dissident *dem.det.ext* produces percentages of smaller magnitude (see Figure A4b in the Supporting Information). The model predicts about 1112 detentions using true covariate values. This number goes down to about 906 simulating the outcome had there been no focal events, ($focal_t = 0$ throughout), and 836 had there been no focal events nor foreign revolutions ($revolt_t = 0$ and $focal_t = 0$ throughout). These represent decreases of 19% and 25%, respectively.

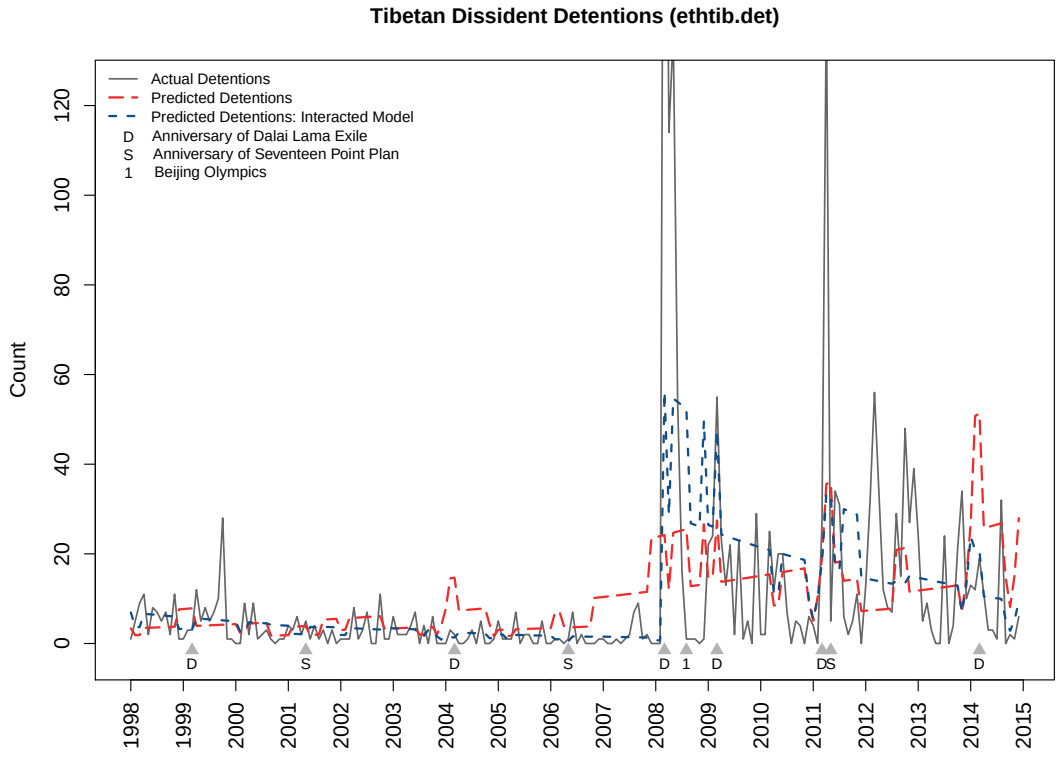
Tibet Detentions Extension

The paper focuses on China's democratic dissidents, but one key idea is that the set of focal events may vary from group to group. Focal events are socially constructed, dependent on local history and culture. Thus, within a given polity, different dissident calendars are likely operating at the same time, producing separate cycles of preemptive repression.

To test this idea, and further evaluate the detention hypothesis, we can look at patterns in the treatment of Tibetan dissidents (*ethtib.det*). The Tibetan independence movement, personified abroad by the Dalai Lama, poses a threat to the CCP distinct from the broader countrywide democracy movement. In recent years, the Chinese government has taken an increasingly repressive stance in the region, routinely detaining Tibetan activists and citizens less directly involved in the independence movement. Figure 4 illustrates this variation over time using detentions

documented in the CECC-PPD. There were 2090 detentions of Tibetans in the dataset from 1998 through 2014.[7]

Figure 4: Predicting Dissident Detentions in Tibet



Note: Figure shows total political detentions per month in China from 1998-2014 as they relate to key events. The dashed red line shows predicted values from the model with lowest AIC. All data drawn from the CECC-PPD.

As before, publicly available timelines were used to create a list of prominent events, and focal events were identified within this list. Table A3c in the Supporting Information shows the set of events used for the Tibet extension. Two historical events are clear focal points and create cyclical opportunities for coordination. The first is the beginning of the Dalai Lama's formal exile from Tibet on March 31, 1959, in response to growing pressure from the CCP. The second is the signing of the Seventeen Point Plan (the "Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet") on May 23, 1951, which established CCP control over the region.

[7]Note that these detentions were not included in the previous analysis because they were considered ethnic ("eth") or religious ("rel") detentions by the CECC, not democracy-related ("dem") or Tiananmen-related ("6849").

In Tibet, the dates May 23 and March 31 carry the same significance as June 4 (the Tiananmen anniversary) does for China's democratic dissidents. The five-year anniversaries of these dates are natural focal events.

The data suggests that such dates produce similar surges in preemptive repression in Tibet. The third panel of Figure 2 above shows a sensitivity analysis for the coefficient estimate on $focal.tib_t$, the set of focal events in the Tibetan dissident calendar.[8] Overall we see a fairly robust relationship. The substantive and predictive importance of these events is roughly on par with that found in the analysis of democratic detentions. The model predicts about 2050 detentions using the true covariate values, as depicted by the dashed red line in Figure 4. If there had been no focal events ($focal.tib_t = 0$ throughout), we would expect to have observed about 1701 detentions over this period, a decrease of about 17%.

Looking more closely at Figure 4, we can see that the original specification fails to capture an important dynamic in the data, that repression and detentions in Tibet increased systematically following the March 2008 riots. These protests were themselves triggered in part by two focal events– the upcoming Beijing Olympics and the 49th Anniversary of the Dalai Lama's exile. The dashed blue line in Figure 4 shows predictive values from an alternative specification which includes an indicator for the month being after this unrest ($unrest.tib$), as well an interaction between this variable and $focal.tib_t$. This model outperforms those without the interaction term, suggesting that the effect of focal events was stronger after the 2008 protests, and much more muted in the previous decade. This specification attributes about 15.5% of the detentions (317/2036) to focal events and does a better job fitting the data visually.

Duration and Process Extension

The theory also predicts that detentions will take on a different nature during and before focal events, as the regime is trying to simply pass through the sensitive date with minimal attention.

[8]Models representing all combinations of the following variables were used: $focal.tib_t$: (event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months); $focal_t$: (exclude, event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months); $revol_t$: (exclude, event window = 2 months, 3 months, 4 months); $trans_t$: (exclude, event window = 9 months, 12 months, 15 months); $trans.tib_t$: (exclude, event window = 9 months, 12 months, 15 months); t: (exclude, $t + t^2 + t^3$). The div_t and $shock_t$ events were excluded because they are not relevant to the Tibetan context.

Preemptive repression should take on a "catch-and-release" dynamic. Dissidents should be detained for shorter periods of time, and without a lengthy and visible criminal charge, trial, sentencing, and appeal process.

To test the process (H_2) and duration (H_3) hypotheses, we can consider the data on a detention level, which is how the dataset is originally organized. For most entries, the CECC-PPD contains information on the detainee's legal process and approximate time spent incarcerated. The first dependent variable of interest, $det.charge_i$, is an indicator for the detainee having formally received a criminal charge. About 45% of democratic detentions in the dataset have a formal criminal charge attached. The rest are held without charge (about 35%) or sentenced through the administrative detention system (about 20%), both of which can be done in China with little to no judicial oversight.

The second dependent variable of note, related closely to the first, is whether the detainee was held for a short period of time. The data quality is insufficient to reliably code the exact length of time served, but it is possible to use fields in the dataset to differentiate detainees that were released relatively quickly and those that spent considerable amounts of time in jail. The variable $det.short$ is an indicator for the length of detention being less than 30 days. Among the 1102 democratic detainees in the dataset (using $dem.det.ext$), 221 (about 20%) were held for less than 30 days, 725 (about 66%) were held for more than 30 days, and the remaining 156 (about 14%) were not able to be reliably coded either way.

Table 2 reports the results of regressions of these two binary outcome variables on $focal_i$ using the 1102 democratic detentions (extended definition $det.dem.ext = 1$) in the CECC-PPD dataset. For ease of interpretation, the table reports estimates from both a logit and linear probability specification. Each cell represents a single regression, showing the coefficient on $focal_i$, the indicator for whether the individual was detained prior to a focal event. The table shows twelve models in total. Model 1 refers to the bivariate specification, Model 2 includes fixed effects for the province of detention, and Model 3 includes indicators for the detainee's

Table 2: Effect of Focal Events on Process and Duration

#	Covariates	*det.charge*		*det.short*	
		LOGIT	LPM	LOGIT	LPM
M1.	None	-0.558	-0.132	0.693	0.135
		(0.118)	(0.027)	(0.133)	(0.025)
M2.	M1. + $det.prov_i$	-0.630	-0.122	0.751	0.121
		(0.136)	(0.026)	(0.158)	(0.024)
M3.	M2. + $occupation1:7_i$	-0.730	-0.121	0.805	0.125
	+ $religion1:4_i$	(0.148)	(0.025)	(0.169)	(0.023)

Note: Table shows results of regressions of $det.charge_i$ and $det.short_i$ on $focal_i$. The table explores robustness across three different covariate sets and two models, the logit and linear probability model. Data is at the detention level using the *dem.det.ext* criterion and the three month window for focal events. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses.

occupation and religion, if available.[9]

Overall, the data provides evidence in favor of the duration and process hypotheses, and the estimates are relatively stable across specifications. In expectation, Chinese citizens that were detained during or preceding focal events are about 12-13% less likely to receive a formal charge in the criminal justice system, and 12-13% more likely to spend less than 30 days in government custody. Repression appears to take on a different character in advance of focal events.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that patterns of preemptive repression are driven by the dissident calendar– the set of focal events dissidents naturally use to overcome their coordination problem. Authoritarian regimes, or at least China's CCP, anticipate these events and repress accordingly, detaining dissidents in greater numbers but for shorter periods of time and without formal crimi-

[9]Table A4 in the Supporting Information shows the same regressions using the $focal_i$ measure that excludes the month of the focal event from the event window.

nal charges. Overall, this "catch and release" dynamic allows the regime to get through sensitive dates with minimal popular agitation.

Future research can explore why citizens within a given system experience variation in repression (Davenport 2014; Earl et al. 2003; Sullivan 2015). Why are some dissidents detained for years and others for days? Why are some individuals tortured and others left unharmed? This paper has investigated the explanatory power of focal events, and Sullivan (2015) probes the importance of opposition demands, but there are potentially dozens of other relevant theoretical variables that have yet to be explored. Outcomes might be driven by a dissident's ethnicity, her proclivity to divulge information, the career incentives of her local officials, or her position within the dissident network, among other factors. Tests of this nature will require richer information than available in the CECC-PPD, but such analyses are certainly within reach.

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Supporting Information

The online Supporting Information contains the following items:

1. Table A1: Overview of the CECC-PPD
2. Figure A1: Time Series for *dem.det* and ACF
3. Discussion of Data Validation
4. Figure A2: Time Series from CHRD vs. CECC-PPD
5. Table A2: Determinants of Inclusion in CECC-PDD
6. Discussion of Event Coding
7. Tables A4a-A4c: Key Events in Analysis Period
8. Figure A4b: Predicting Democratic Dissident Detentions in China
9. Table A5: Effect of Focal Events on Process and Duration

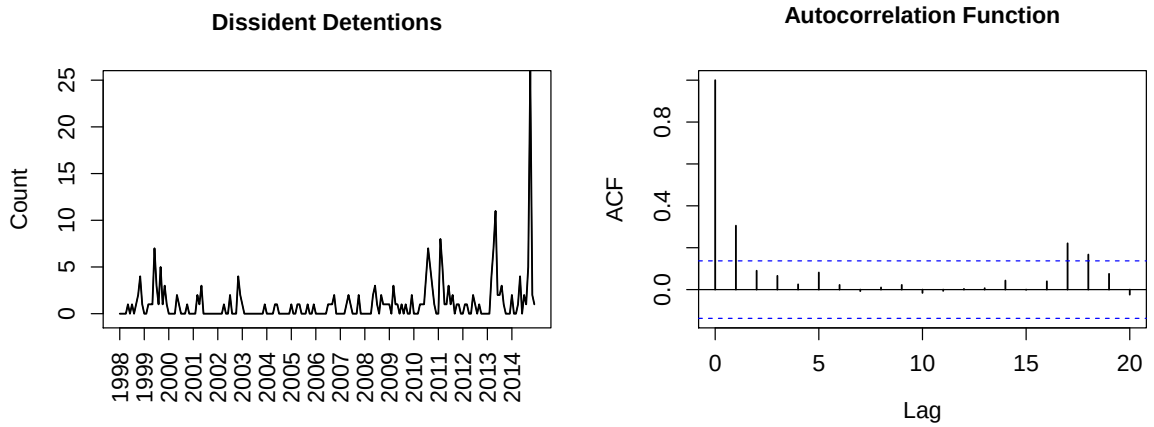
The full data and replication code for the project are available at `www.rorytruex.com/publications`.

Table A1: Overview of the CECC-PPD

	Count	%	Note
All Entries	7820	100.0%	
Total Excluded Entries	4628	59.1%	
prior to 1998	2622	33.5%	Major amendment to Criminal Law in 1997; Data quality poor in early years
missing month/date	586	7.5%	Month required to generate time series
issue category outside scope	1420	18.1%	Primarily Uyghur, Falun Gong, labor, and environment detentions
Total Included Entries	3182	40.7%	
democracy detentions (base)	222	2.8%	Entries tagged as "dem" or "6489" in PPD (*dem.det*)
democracy detentions (extended)	880	11.2%	Entries tagged as "spch", "civil", "info" and "assoc" in PPD, added to *dem.det* (1102 entries in total for *dem.det.ext*)
Tibetan detentions	2090	26.7%	Entries tagged as Tibetan in PPD (*ethtib.det*)

Note: Table shows why various entries into the CECC-PPD were included and excluded from the analysis. The full database was pulled on January 27, 2015.

Figure A1: Time Series for *dem.det* and ACF (1998-2014)



Note: Figure shows total democratic dissident detentions per month $det.dem_t$ in China from 1998-2014 and autocorrelation function for the time series. All data drawn from CECC-PPD.

Discussion of Data Validation

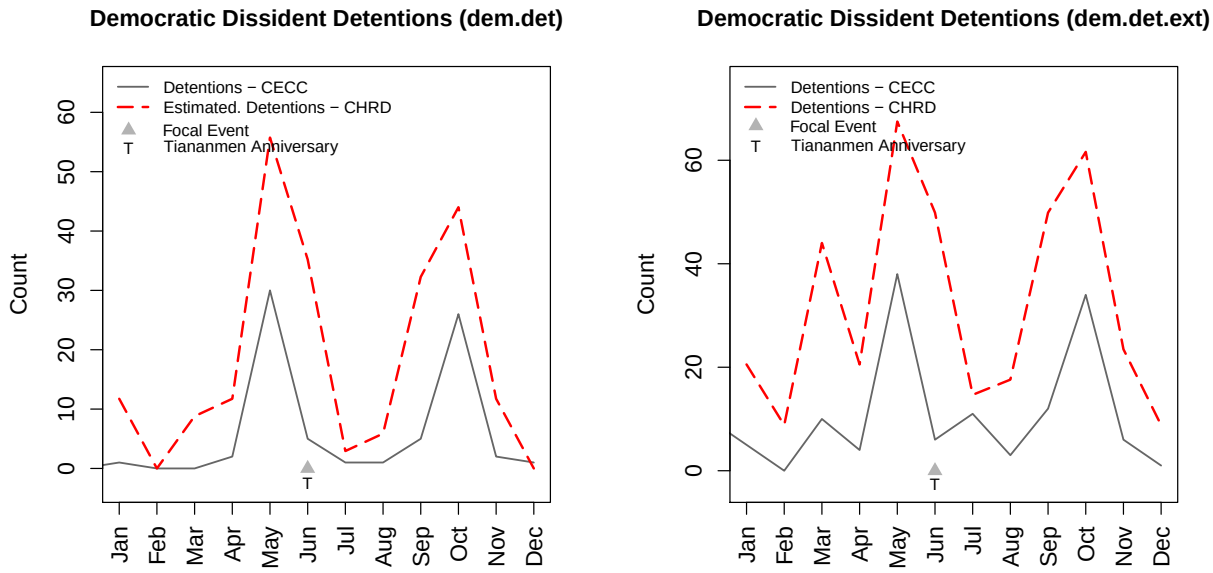
To get a better sense of possible biases in the CECC-PPD, we can compare detentions it includes to those identified by a grassroots organization of Chinese human rights activists, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD). Beginning in 2013, CHRD began collecting its own lists of activists in China that had been detained for at least five days or were tortured/inhumanely treated in some way. The CECC-PPD draws on data from CHRD but does not include those that are not able to be verified. Indeed, only about 20% of the CHRD cases from 2014 are also included in the CECC-PPD.

The list from the CHRD includes some basic fields, as well as links to news stories or blog posts that describe the relevant detention. This information was used to code the following indicator variables: whether the detainee was formally placed in the criminal justice system ($det.type.crim$); whether the detained was held in an informal setting like a house, hotel, drug rehabilitation center, psychiatric institution, or "black jail" ($det.place.informal$); whether the detainee was active on the democracy issue ($issue.dem$ or $issue.dem.ext$), ethnic/religious issues ($issue.ethrel$), or issues related to property, labor, or commercial interests ($issue.propcomlab$); whether the detainee was female ($female$), whether the detainee was involved in a petition ($act.petition$) or protest ($act.protest$); whether the detention occurred leading up in the two month window of a focal event ($focal.win2$); and whether the detention was also included in the CECC-PPD ($cecc$). Because of resource constraints, this coding process was only able to be completed for a random sample of about one third of the entries in the CHRD prisoner list.

Figure A2 compares the time series of $det.dem$ and $det.dem.ext$ generated from the CECC and CHRD. Because of the sampling and coding process for the CHRD, the total number of detentions was multiplied by 3 to create an estimated number of detentions for the CHRD time series. Overall we see that while the CECC contains fewer entries in total, there is consistency in the patterns of temporal variation across the two datasets. In both datasets, the time series shows spikes in May and October 2014. The spike is less dramatic in the CECC-PPD, but note that this would likely lead to more conservative estimates for the relationships of interest.

Table A1 shows the results of logit regressions of *cecc*– the indicator for whether the CHRD entry was included in the CECC-PPD– on the various detention-level variables coded from the CHRD. The CECC-PPD tends to do well in picking up detentions that formally enter the criminal justice system (*det.type.crim*) and those on the democracy issue (*issue.dem.ext*). Most importantly, the presence of focal events does not appear to systematically increase the likelihood of a detention being identified by the CECC.

Figure A2: Time Series from CECC-PPD vs. CHRD



Note: Figure shows time series of *dem.det* and *dem.det.ext* drawn from two separate databases, the CECC-PDD and CHRD. The CHRD series reflects estimates based on coding of 1/3 of the total entries in that dataset (see description of CHRD coding procedure). Overall we see underreporting of detentions in the CECC but consistency in the temporal variation across the two datasets.

Table A2: Determinants of Inclusion in CECC-PDD

	(1)	(2)	(3)
det.type.crim	1.088	1.237	1.246
	(0.410)	(0.444)	(0.444)
det.place.informal	0.814	0.491	0.501
	(0.737)	(0.810)	(0.807)
issue.dem.ext	1.631	1.658	1.632
	(0.510)	(0.519)	(0.523)
issue.ethrel	0.355	0.408	0.376
	(0.716)	(0.737)	(0.742)
issue.propcomlab	-0.629	-0.685	-0.672
	(0.444)	(0.509)	(0.510)
female		0.043	0.045
		(0.388)	(0.388)
act.petition		0.411	0.445
		(0.485)	(0.494)
act.protest		-0.431	-0.408
		(0.441)	(0.445)
focal.win2			0.174
			(0.440)
N	199	191	191
LL	-97.269	-90.607	-90.529
AIC	206.538	199.215	201.058

Note: Table shows results of regressions of $cecc_i$ on various dissident attributes. All models use a logit specification.

Discussion of Event Coding

A list of prominent events in China from 1998-2014 were compiled using timelines published online from BBC News, China Profile, and Wikipedia (zh). Revolutions/political movements occurring abroad, as measured by the Beissinger dataset, were also added. In total, 172 events were identified in this way. Using this list, the five event types (focal events, leadership transitions, leadership division, governance shocks and foreign revolutions) were coded using the definitions outlined in the paper:

1. focal event ($focal_t$) - an event known in advance that has high political salience for a particular dissident community; include anniversaries of key historical events, national commemorations/celebrations, high-level regime meetings

2. leadership transition ($trans_t$) - an event signaling the formal transition of power within the regime; include both party and government transitions

3. leadership division (div_t) - an event signaling heightened division within the regime over issues of political reform; include death/purge of key political reformers

4. governance shock ($shock_t$) - an event signaling gross policy mismanagement or scandal

5. foreign revolution ($revol_t$) - an event involving mass mobilization for democracy/political reform occurring abroad

Below is a snapshot of what the raw event data looked like from 2009.

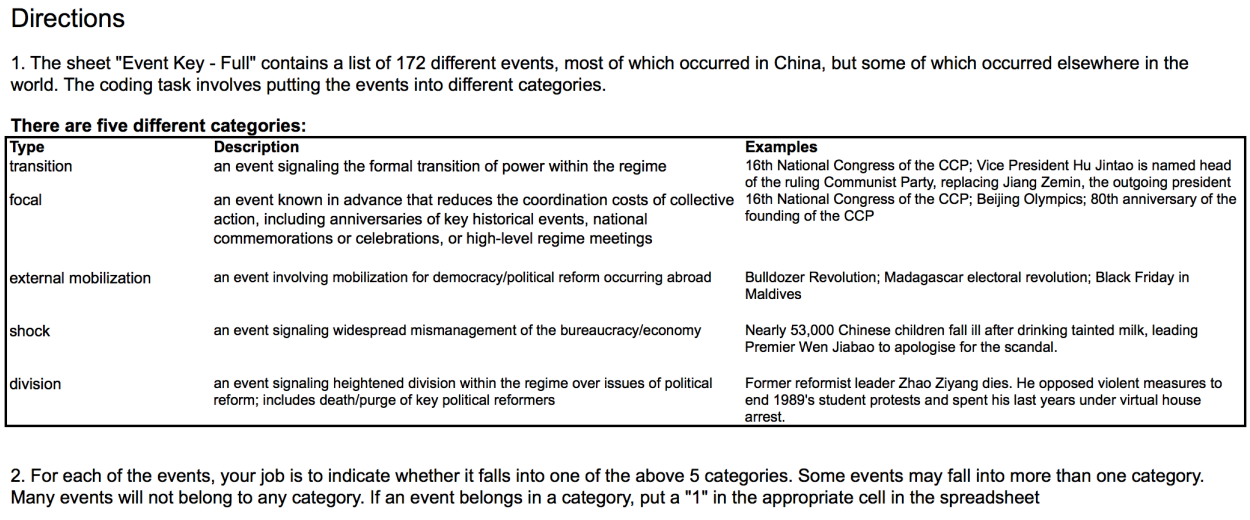
num	event.desc	month	year	inc	event.type
93	2009 Malagasy Political Crisis	Jan	2009	1	foreign revolution
94	Russia and China sign $25bn deal to supply China with oil for next 20 years	Feb	2009	0	
95	Hillary Clinton calls for deeper US-China partnership on first overseas tour as secretary of state	Feb	2009	0	
96	Moldovan Twitter Revolution	Apr	2009	1	foreign revolution
97	Niger Constitutional Crisis	May	2009	1	foreign revolution
98	20th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre	Jun	2009	1	focal
99	Iranian Election Protests	Jun	2009	1	foreign revolution
100	China demands that new personal computers come with filtering software	Jul	2009	0	
101	Hundreds injured in ethnic as a protest in the restive Xinjiang region turns violent	Jul	2009	0	
102	Shanghai urge parents to have a second child in effort to counter effects of aging population.	Jul	2009	0	
103	Leaders of China and Taiwan exchange direct messages for the first time in more than 60 years	Jul	2009	0	
104	China stages mass celebrations to mark 60 years since the Communist Party came to power	Oct	2009	1	focal
105	Six men are sentenced to death for involvement in ethnic violence in Xinjiang	Oct	2009	0	
106	China executes Briton Akmal Shaikh for drug dealing	Dec	2009	0	

The events without reference to the detentions data themselves, though a better approach would have been to try to pre-register the events in some way. Future replications of this sort of analysis can pre-register or perhaps even solicit the set of focal events using a direct survey of a small number of known dissidents or the academic community.

The initial coding was done with close discussion with the author, with the definitions of each event type clarified through iterative discussion. As part of the revisions process for *JCR*,

a replication of this coding was conducted, whereby a minimal set of directions was provided to a new research assistant, along with the list of 172 events. This research assistant was a Chinese citizen identified through Upwork with working knowledge of the Chinese political system. The directions provided for the coding replication are shown in Figure A3:

Figure A3: Directions Provided in Coding Replication



Directions

1. The sheet "Event Key - Full" contains a list of 172 different events, most of which occurred in China, but some of which occurred elsewhere in the world. The coding task involves putting the events into different categories.

There are five different categories:

Type	Description	Examples
transition	an event signaling the formal transition of power within the regime	16th National Congress of the CCP; Vice President Hu Jintao is named head of the ruling Communist Party, replacing Jiang Zemin, the outgoing president
focal	an event known in advance that reduces the coordination costs of collective action, including anniversaries of key historical events, national commemorations or celebrations, or high-level regime meetings	16th National Congress of the CCP; Beijing Olympics; 80th anniversary of the founding of the CCP
external mobilization	an event involving mobilization for democracy/political reform occurring abroad	Bulldozer Revolution; Madagascar electoral revolution; Black Friday in Maldives
shock	an event signaling widespread mismanagement of the bureaucracy/economy	Nearly 53,000 Chinese children fall ill after drinking tainted milk, leading Premier Wen Jiabao to apologise for the scandal.
division	an event signaling heightened division within the regime over issues of political reform; includes death/purge of key political reformers	Former reformist leader Zhao Ziyang dies. He opposed violent measures to end 1989's student protests and spent his last years under virtual house arrest.

2. For each of the events, your job is to indicate whether it falls into one of the above 5 categories. Some events may fall into more than one category. Many events will not belong to any category. If an event belongs in a category, put a "1" in the appropriate cell in the spreadsheet

Note: The screenshot shows the directions provided to an Upwork coder as part of the event coding replication process prepared during the revisions process for *JCR*. The coder was provided these directions and the list of 172 events.

The results of the coding replication are summarized in Table A3. With respect to the $focal$ event variable, inter-coder reliability is relatively high– there were 5 disagreements across the 172 events, and the Cohen's κ measure passes conventional thresholds for high reliability (see Landis & Koch 1977).

Table A3: Results of Coding Replication

Variable	% Agree	Cohen's κ	Disagree	Cases
transition	95.9%	0.351	7	172
division	93.6%	0.322	11	172
shock	97.7%	0.702	4	172
revol	96.5%	0.888	6	172
focal	97.1%	0.823	5	172

Note: The table shows the results of a "minimal information coding replication", whereby a new research assistant was recruited, and provided only the directions in Figure A3 and the list of 172 possible events. All statistics reflect the agreement between this coding and the original coding used in the paper.

The five disagreements are as follows. First, the research assistant in the coding replication identified two events as focal that were not included in the original focal event coding.

Beijing wins right to host the 2008 Olympic Games (July 2001)

Iranian Election Protests (June 2009)

Both events should not actually be considered focal events according to the definition in the codebook. The awarding of the Beijing Olympic Games in July 2001 was not known in advance, and the Iranian Election Protests represent an event outside the Chinese system. This latter point was perhaps not clear in the minimal codebook provided to the research assistant in the replication.

The research assistant in the replication failed to identify two events that were coded as focal events in the original coding.

NPC elects Hu Jintao President of PRC (March 2003)

NPC elects Xi Jinping President of PRC (March 2013)

The research assistant coded these events as leadership transitions, not focal events. This is a reasonable disrepancy, but in general those observing the Chinese political system consider the

Party Congresses to mark leadership transitions, not the transferral of government positions at the National People's Congresses. Both events fit the definition of focal events as described in the paper. I believe the research assistant in the replication also failed to internalize the fact that events could fall into multiple categories.

The final disagreement actually revealed an error in the original coding. The research assistant in the replication did not identify the following as a focal event:

> Jailed Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo is awarded Nobel Peace Prize, prompting official protests from Beijing (October 2010)

In this instance, the research assistant in the replication was correct– the event in the dataset does not actually constitute a focal event, as the date refers to the announcement of Liu Xiaobo's prize by the Nobel committee (October 2010). In the original coding, we had thought this referred to the awards ceremony itself (December 2010), which does fit the definition of a focal event. The analysis was redone to correct for this error, and the substantive results do not change in shifting the focal event indicator from October 2010 to December 2010.

The leadership transition variable has a relatively low reliability score (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.351$). This is primarily because the research assistant identified the transitions as occurring when government positions were transferred (at the National People's Congresses in March), not the party positions (at the National Party Congresses months prior). The research assistant also included the "half transition" occurring in 2007/2008 under Hu Jintao as a transition, which is a reasonable interpretation given the codebook.

Overall, the coding for the key theoretical variable of interest– $focal$– seems to be relatively well-defined and reliable, as does the *revol* and *shock* variables. The leadership transition and division variables are less reliable, but they represent control events and are not the empirical focus of the paper. The core results of the paper are robust to their exclusion from the analysis, as shown in Figure 2 and Table 1.

Table A4a: Key Events in Analysis Period

Event	Month
Focal Events ($focal_t$)	
- 10th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre	June 1999
- 50th Anniversary of founding of PRC	October 1999
- 16th Party Congress	November 2002
- NPC elects Hu Jintao President of PRC	March 2003
- 15th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre	June 2004
- 17th Party Congress	October 2007
- Beijing Olympic Games	August 2008
- 20th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre	June 2009
- 60th Anniversary of founding of PRC	October 2009
- Dissident Liu Xiaobo awarded Nobel Peace Prize	December 2010
- 16th Asian Games	November 2010
- 18th Party Congress	November 2012
- NPC elects Xi Jinping President of PRC	March 2013
- 25th Anniversary of Tiananmen Square Massacre	June 2014
Leadership Transition Events ($trans_t$)	
- Hu Jintao elected General Secretary of CCP	November 2002
- Xi Jinping elected General Secretary of CCP	November 2012
Leadership Division Events (div_t)	
- Death of Zhao Ziyang	January 2005
- Party elders criticize Propaganda Dept.	February 2006
- Chen Liangyu dismissed from CCP	September 2006
- Party elders criticize censorship	October 2010
- Bo Xilai removed from office in Chongqing	March 2012
- Zhou Yongkang dismissed from CCP	December 2014

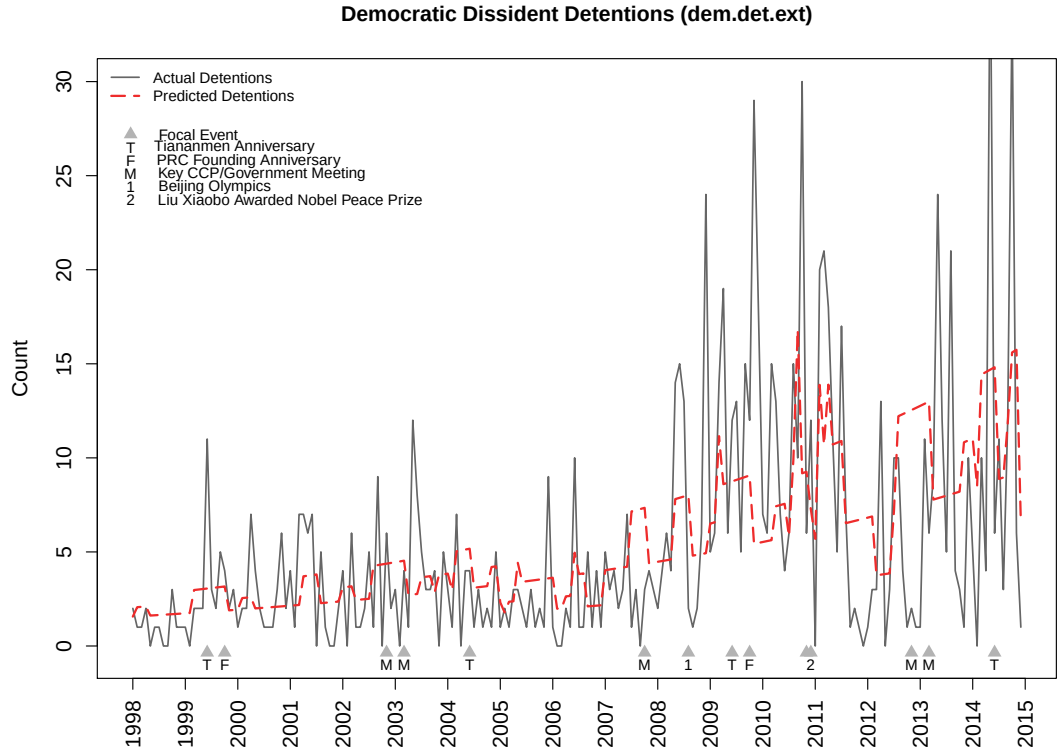
Table A4b: Key Events in Analysis Period

Event	Month
Governance Shock Event ($shock_t$)	
- Yangtze River flooding	June 1998
- SARS virus spreads to mainland	March 2003
- Chemical plant poisons Songhua river	November 2005
- Sichuan earthquake	May 2008
- Milk powder scandal	September 2008
- Wenzhou train accident	July 2011
Foreign Revolution Event ($revol_t$)	
- Indonesian Revolution	February 1998
- Bulldozer Revolution	February 2000
- Madagascar Electoral Revolution	January 2002
- Hong Kong Protests against Anti-subversion Bill	July 2003
- Rose Revolution	November 2003
- Orange Revolution	November 2004
- Tulip Revolution	March 2005
- April Revolution in Nepal	April 2006
- 2009 Malagasy Political Crisis	January 2009
- Kyrgyz 2010 Revolution	April 2010
- Tunisian Revolution	December 2010
- Egyptian Revolution 2011	January 2011
- Libyan Revolution 2011	February 2011
- Euromaidan Uprising	November 2013
- Occupy Central Movement in Hong Kong	September 2014
- Burkinabè Uprising	October 2014

Table A4c: Key Events in Analysis Period

Event	Month
Focal Event Tibet ($focal.tib_t$)	
- 40th Anniversary of Dalai Lama exile	March 1999
- 50th Anniversary of Seventeen-Point Plan	May 2001
- 45th Anniversary of Dalai Lama exile	March 2004
- 55th Anniversary of Seventeen-Point Plan	May 2006
- Beijing Olympic Games	August 2008
- 50th Anniversary of Dalai Lama exile	March 2009
- 60th Anniversary of Seventeen-Point Plan	May 2011
- 55th Anniversary of Dalai Lama exile	March 2014
Leadership Transition Events Tibet ($trans.tib_t$)	
- Guo Jinlong appointed Party Secretary for TAR	September 2000
- Yang Chuantang appointed Party Secretary for TAR	December 2004
- Zhang Qingli appointed Party Secretary for TAR	November 2005
- Chen Quanguo appointed Party Secretary for TAR	August 2011

Figure A4b: Predicting Democratic Dissident Detentions in China (dem.det.ext)



Note: Figure shows total democratic detentions per month in China from 1998-2014 as they relate to key events. The dashed red line shows predicted values from the model with lowest AIC. All data drawn from CECC-PPD.

Table A5: Effect of Focal Events on Process and Duration (focal event excluded)

#	Covariates	*det.charge*		*det.short*	
		LOGIT	LPM	LOGIT	LPM
M1.	None	-0.452	-0.108	0.735	0.149
		(0.130)	(0.030)	(0.143)	(0.027)
M2.	M1. + $det.prov_i$	-0.530	-0.103	0.686	0.115
		(0.148)	(0.029)	(0.169)	(0.026)
M3.	M2. + $occupation1:7_i$	-0.635	-0.106	0.788	0.126
	+ $religion1:4_i$	(0.161)	(0.028)	(0.181)	(0.026)

Note: Table shows results of regressions of $det.charge_i$ and $det.short_i$ on $focal_i$. The table explores robustness across three different covariate sets and two models, the logit and linear probability model. Data is at the detention level using the *dem.det.ext* criterion and the three month window for focal events. Robust standard errors are shown in parentheses.