

Determining the Truth: The War on Terror and Repression in China

Research Motivation

In the wake of September 11th, some in the international community began to worry that states with rebellious minority groups, such as India, Israel, Russia, and China, cynically support the War on Terror in order to justify their harsh tactics against separatists. The United States cannot afford to appear insensitive to such human rights abuses at a time when its own record is under attack. Given that states characterized by high levels of public dissatisfaction, low levels of electoral participation, limited freedom of the press, and inefficient political institutions may be more likely to harbor terrorists (Li 2005), and that many such states possess dissatisfied minority groups, it would seem counterproductive for the United States to allow its own rhetoric to be used to in ways that could potentially generate the terrorism it seeks to prevent (Miller and Stefanova 2007).

In the case of China, academics (Chung 2002, Starr 2004), the media (*The Guardian*, April 5, 2008, *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 12, 2005, *Agence-France Presse*, July 31, 2004, *The Associated Press*, February 3, 2004, *The New York Times*, December 16, 2003), foreign governments (*The Associated Press*, March 18, 2003), and non-governmental organizations (Human Rights Watch 2001, Amnesty International 2005) contend that the War on Terror has affected the Chinese government's treatment of the Uyghurs,¹ a Muslim minority group, although they disagree as to the degree of that influence. Just nine days after the September 11th attacks of 2001, President George W. Bush announced to Congress that the War

¹ The spelling of "Uyghur" varies widely. Though Uyghur diaspora groups claim that the "Uyghur" spelling is the correct one, other spellings include Uighur, Uigur, and Uygur. In my experience, "Uighur" is the most popular spelling. In deference to the Uyghurs, I use their preferred spelling.

on Terror had begun. Less than a month after Bush's speech, Human Rights Watch published an article quoting China as affirming that it "opposes terrorism of any form and supports actions to combat terrorism." However, Human Rights Watch was "concerned that China's support for the War against Terrorism will be a pretext for gaining international support—or at least silencing opponents—for its own crackdown on ethnic Uyghurs in the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Region" (2001).

Though many human rights organizations state that oppression increased in China after the declaration of the War on Terror, the effect of previously announced crackdowns on China's repression of the Uyghurs is unclear. According to Frederick Starr, chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, the campaign against the Uyghurs began long before September 11th, but repression by the Chinese government may have worsened since the attacks (U.S. Congress 2005). This study will test whether the Chinese government's repressive actions and rhetoric toward the Uyghurs has been affected by the War on Terror.

Literature Review

Repression

When discussing state repression, it is beneficial to know which government actions constitute repression. According to Christian Davenport, most scholars believe that repression involves "the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions" (Davenport 2007, p. 2). Violation of rights constitute

repression if the rights are freedom of speech, assembly, travel, or of the press up to the point of a clear and present danger; freedom of association and belief; or the freedom to boycott, picket, or strike without facing penalty. Violations of due process, such as deviations from standard procedure because of the individual's political beliefs, and violations of personal integrity, such as torture, imprisonment, and mass killing, are also considered repression (Davenport 2007). Scholars have discovered that non-democratic governments are more likely to violate these rights. In general, when dissidents challenge a state, the authorities employ some form of repressive action to counter or eliminate the threat; this constitutes what Davenport calls the "Law of Coercive Responsiveness." Democracies, due to their electoral processes and political toleration, are not as likely to employ repressive methods (Davenport 2007).

While the reactions of democracies and non-democracies to dissent are significantly different, the overall relationship between government coercion and dissident action is unclear. The repression-dissent relationship has been found to change significantly when variables such as regime type and economic activity are included, but most argue that no consensus has appeared on whether government coercion in itself results in less or more dissident activity. There is probably no simple correlation between government repression and rebellious behavior, but a partial correlation can be discovered after important factors are taken into account. Due to the repression-dissent relationship's tendency to vary widely across the literature, it is vital for it to be controlled in almost any study of state repression or dissent.

When Repression Occurs

Although the literature suggests that repression may occur for many reasons, domestic problems are a principal cause. Repression may be directly related to signs of public

dissatisfaction such as protests, riots, and rebellions. Governments respond with repressive action in order to raise the cost of individual and group participation, as well as to deter future dissent (Enterline and Gleditsch 2000, Levy 1989, Richards 1993). States faced with non-violent domestic conflict can try to divert public attention away from the problem and toward internal enemies, such as minority groups, or external enemies, such as other states (Enterline and Gleditsch 2000, Oneal and Tir 2006).

Why States Use Security Threats as Diversion

Political leaders generally want to stay in office, and in order to do so must handle problems of domestic and foreign policy competently (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson, and Smith 2002). As sociologists have argued since the 1950s, in-groups faced with internal dissent focus their anger on out-groups (Coser 1956). Combining these two ideas, Mueller (1973) discovers that some government leaders, when faced with internal dissent, blame out-groups for the country's troubles in order to maintain political power. Political leaders understand that the public is more likely to support them when the state is faced with an external threat, so the leaders have an incentive to draw attention to their enemies, perhaps by using military force (Ward and Widmaier 1982).

Political leaders sometimes use the "rally 'round the flag effect" to divert attention away from domestic discontent. While cross-national studies suggest that economic and political turbulence have little effect on the decision to use force, Mitchell and Prins (2004) hypothesize that most countries do not have the political opportunity to use force domestically. However, non-democracies are probably more likely to use force domestically, as in the form of repression,

than democracies because non-democratic governments are less transparent than democracies and also usually lack outspoken political adversaries (Mitchell and Prins 2004).

Faced with domestic troubles, it may be easier for leaders to target dissident groups as a display of their determination to address the problem than to actually confront the problem itself. Enterline and Gleditsch (2000) cite the popular support Peruvian President Fujimori acquired when he suspended the parliament and declared martial law, ostensibly in order to destroy the Sendero Luminoso rebel movement, but probably also to distract the public from Peru's economic woes. Minorities seem a particularly salient target for this type of diversion. According to the psychology literature, when people cannot voice their dissatisfaction they may take out that discontent on groups who are visible, relatively weak, and already disliked (Douglas 1995). These groups are usually commonly scapegoated, or held responsible for crimes of which they are not guilty. Norms are established by public figures and the media, and are responsible for the public's assumption that certain behaviors toward the scapegoat group are acceptable (Douglas 1995).

Effects of International Human Rights Criticism

The norms that are established by politicians and the media can influence behavior significantly. The literature on repressive governments suggests that the influence of international norms on state behavior may be less significant. Many states respond to human rights abuse allegations with white papers and gestures of compliance (Kent 1999), but without making serious reforms (Risse and Sikkink 1999). The international norms literature supports two ideas: first, states react to allegations from the international community with speech; second, most states' actions do not change in response to outside pressure.

Repressive states often respond to criticisms of their policies by making verbal reassurances that their behavior will change. These assurances are used to provide proof of a commitment to human rights in the hopes that the international community will give the state the benefits and prestige that it desires (Kent 1999). Despite a government's defensive reaction to outside criticism, it usually does not truly alter its policies. Occasionally a repressive state will make a small gesture to reduce international criticism (Kent 1999), but the state is only acting strategically to gain materially or to decrease international isolation (Risse and Sikkink 1999). Instead of altering its actions, a repressive state may attempt to deflect criticism by cloaking its policies in phrases accepted by the international community. A repressive government could thus combine its desire to ward off international censure with its wish to maintain its sovereignty over its internal affairs (Kent 1999, Risse and Sikkink 1999).

It is not impossible to reduce a state's use of repression through international criticism. As already stated, when a repressive state's interests are threatened, it is more likely to reduce its use of repression on dissidents. Franklin argues that human rights criticism can persuade repressive governments to reduce repression, but only in states with strong economic ties to other countries (Franklin 2008). In his article, Franklin admits that threatening to punish a repressive government economically may be too bold and harmful to the punishing government to be a realistic strategy, but even the possibility of economic sanctions may influence a government to reduce its oppressive actions (Franklin 2008). Other international reactions to repressive states, such as attacks on the state's prestige and international standing, may also bring about change, if the state wishes to be integrated into the global community (Kent 1999). Additionally, states are more likely to respond to criticism from foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, and religious organizations than from intergovernmental organizations (Franklin 2008), so it is

possible that a repressive state attacked by these groups would alter its policy in dealing with dissidents.

Application to Chinese Repression

The literature in the field seems to suggest multiple possibilities for whether China, a repressive government, would use the War on Terror as justification for its oppression of the Uyghurs or as an excuse for further repression. Repressive states act in different ways to international criticism of their actions, so an event like the September 11th attacks could have a positive or negative effect on repression, or no effect at all. It is therefore vital to consider the qualities of the state, its existing repressive policies, and the level of dissent within the state in determining how a particular state will react.

Theory and Hypotheses

The influence of human rights norms and criticism on Chinese policy remains unclear. Some believe that China has adopted the United States' War on Terror rhetoric in order to shield itself from international criticism of its previously existing repressive policies towards the Uyghurs and the subsequent human rights violations (U.S. Congress 2005). Others believe that it is more likely that China does not really care about international norms, and so continues to pursue the same Uyghur policy after September 11th that it did before (Ahrari 2000, U.S. Congress 2005). In order to determine what influence, if any, international norms regarding human rights have on Chinese policy, I test four hypotheses in two groups. The first group focuses on rhetoric, and the second group focuses on repressive activity.

Rhetoric Hypotheses

The terms terrorist, separatist, extremist, “splittist,” and Uyghur nationalist are all used by the Chinese media to denote Uyghur dissidents. It seems likely that China, if it chooses to use the War on Terror as an excuse to continue or expand its crackdown on the Uyghurs, will employ the language associated with the War on Terror. According to journalist Tom Leonard, in English, the word terrorist has more severe connotations than the words separatist or nationalist, as shown by the BBC's reluctance to use the word in its reporting because of the word's perceived value judgments, (The Telegraph, December 7, 2005). In Chinese, it is more difficult to ascertain the exact connotations, although the terms have clear and distinct definitions. In this study, it is assumed that an increase in the government's use of the terrorist descriptor in its rhetoric will reflect their desire for domestic and international approval. However, it seems more likely that China seeks international approval through its rhetoric than domestic approval because China already controls the state's media so its version of events has little, if any, competition. If China's sole interest is to persuade its own citizens, it would not have to change its rhetoric to do so.

China may want to use the War on Terror as justification to the international community because, like the repressive governments discussed by Kent (1999) and Risse and Sikink (1999), China desires to respond to human rights abuse allegations with gestures of compliance to international norms. The norms literature supports the idea that China reacts to shaming from the international community with assurances that it will end its repressive policies, so that other states will give China the benefits and status it desires (Kent 1999). Instead of changing its behavior, however, China may attempt to deflect criticism by cloaking its policies in phrases accepted by the international community. China could thus combine its desire to ward off international censure with its wish to maintain its sovereignty over its internal affairs, which

leads to:

Hypothesis 1a: If China uses the War on Terror as a justification of its repressive policies, the Chinese government will describe the Uyghur dissidents as terrorists more often after September 11th.

When political leaders are criticized by outside groups regarding their human rights violations, they sometimes respond with angry defiance. Some governments simply ignore condemnation and focus on eliminating their domestic threats (Franklin 2008). If a repressive state truly does not care about international opinion, the language used by the government and the state media does not change. The rhetoric of the repressive state only changes when it suits its purposes, so the government does not need justifications such as the War on Terror to excuse its policy. It is possible that a drop in terrorist rhetoric could reflect a less repressive policy toward the Uyghurs, but if there is a dramatic decrease in repression, then the question of whether China needs international justification is moot because it has no unpopular action to justify. This line of reasoning leads to:

Hypothesis 1b: The Chinese government will not see the need to justify its policies to the international community and so its use of non-terrorist descriptors of the Uyghur dissidents, such as separatist, extremist, splittist, and Uyghur nationalist, will stay the same or increase after September 11th.

Repressive Acts Hypotheses

Several governments—Israel, Russia, Pakistan and Egypt among them—are accused by the international community of using the War on Terror as a pretext for increasing the repression of dissident movements and individuals (Falk 2004). East Asian literature asserts that the United States has put pressure on democracies after September 11th to conform to American standards in fighting terrorism, and this pressure sometimes yields human rights violations (Thompson 2004, Smith 2004). Though many of these states have clearly changed their policies after September

11th by passing more restrictive legislation, China has cracked down on the Uyghurs before in its Strike Hard Campaigns of 1996 and 2001 (*South China Morning Post*, August 15, 1996, *Xinjiang Ribao*, September 2, 1996, *Agence-France Presse*, April 27, 2001, *Associated Press*, May 23, 2001, *Malaysia General News*, July 7, 2001).

That China's repression would also increase after September 11th seems almost given. Because China already used repressive policies toward the Uyghurs before September 11th, it is necessary to determine the level of repression before and after the attacks in order to assess whether September 11th had an effect on Chinese policy. Repression literature does support the possibility that increased human rights criticism could lead to increased repression, although that may be simply because states that are criticized for repression in the present are more likely to use repression in the future (Franklin 2008). If human rights criticism does lead to increased human rights violations, though, it could be difficult to determine whether China's intensified repression is caused by the useful excuse of the War on Terror or by the backfiring of the international community's criticism. In either case, it is possible that Chinese repression of the Uyghurs could increase after September 11th.

That journalists, academics, human rights organizations, and foreign governments believe that China has intensified its crackdown is understandable even if they based their assumption on the actions of other governments. In East Asia Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have all expanded their police powers after the September 11th attacks. After several suspected al-Qaeda terrorists were arrested in 2001, Singaporean officials announced that bombers had planned to attack American interests in the country and that Muslim extremists hoped to establish an Islamic regime in Malaysia. The government used these terrorist threats to justify continuing the Internal Security Act, which gave the government broader powers of arrest and detention (Thompson

2004). In Malaysia before September 11th, Prime Minister Mahathir courted conservative Muslims. After the attacks, Mahathir acquired a reputation as a moderate Muslim leader aligned with the United States against terrorists—a reputation aided by his attacks on terrorists and their supporters. However, the crackdowns were so thorough that Mahathir was suspected of using them against pro-democracy political opponents (Thompson 2004). In Indonesia's province of Aceh, separatists have struggled against the government for more than 25 years. After the United States declared its War on Terror, the Indonesian government responded to violence in Aceh with a crackdown supported by popular opinion. The Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Ache Freedom Movement, GAM) received little support from the international community because Indonesia labeled it a terrorist group responsible for bombings, despite GAM's claim that the government was stealing their mineral wealth without providing compensation. In the crackdown in Aceh, several soldiers were tried for beating civilians, and the number of people that were prosecuted for insulting the president, in either the press or demonstration, increased. An attempt to pass legislation requiring government workers to pass a loyalty test was soon extended to include re-registration of all government workers. Some estimate that 23 political protesters were imprisoned in 2003; others say 46 (Kipp 2004). Due to other states' repressive actions following September 11th, I test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a: Since China can utilize the War on Terror to defend its repressive actions, the government's repression of the Uyghurs will intensify after September 11th.

The repression literature suggests that although repressive governments may change what they say about their human rights policies in the face of international criticism, they are more reluctant to actually change those policies (Wachman 2001). The international norms literature supports the idea that China's actions do not change even under foreign pressure. In case studies about China, research illustrates that despite China's defensive reaction to international criticism,

the government usually does not change its policies, but only makes gestures, such as releasing political prisoners, in order to appease its critics (Kent 1999). China, like other repressive governments, only reacts to criticism in order to improve its international standing or economic situation (Risse and Sikking 1999).

As with rhetoric, if a repressive state does not care about international opinion, its actions do not change. In this view, China only changes its policy when the old policy is inappropriate for the government's objective, so the government does not need justifications such as the War on Terror to excuse its repressive acts.

Hypothesis 2b: The Chinese government will not be concerned with its image enough to base its Uyghur policies on international norms, so the repression of the Uyghurs will remain essentially unchanged after September 11th.

Methodology

Chinese Rhetoric Methodology

In this study I use a simple word count system to compare the Chinese government's descriptions of the Uyghurs before and after September 11th in order to test **Hypothesis 1a**, which states that the use of "terrorist" rhetoric will increase post-September 11th, and **Hypothesis 1b**, which suggests that "terrorist" rhetoric will remain unchanged or decrease. First I search all Xinhua News Agency and BBC International Monitoring Reports news articles from 1994 to 2007 in Lexis-Nexis Academic for the terms relevant to the government's opinion of Uyghur separatists. The descriptor terms are "separatism," "separatist," "separatists," "terrorism," "terrorist," "terrorists," "extremism," "extremist," "extremists," "dissident," "dissidents," "fundamentalism," "fundamentalist," "fundamentalists," "splittism," "splittist," "splittists," "rebellion," "rebel," and "rebels." To determine that the articles regard the repression

of the Uyghurs, and not another ethnic group, the terms “Xinjiang,” “Sinkiang,” “East Turkestan,” “East Turkistan,” and “Uyghur” are also included. The list of descriptors I use in the search includes every common term I have seen government officials use in connection with the Uyghurs. By requiring “Xinjiang,” “Uyghur,” etc. in the search terms, I ensure that the articles include the word, but some articles merely mention the Uyghurs or the region in passing and primarily discuss other groups. Fortunately, the “separatist,” “terrorist,” “extremist,” “splittist,” and “Uyghur nationalist”-based words are almost always used in reference to the Uyghurs. Xinhua is a Chinese state-run news agency, and BBC Monitoring Reports articles that include the term Xinjiang are usually from Xinhua or another government-influenced newspaper, and therefore the BBC Monitoring Reports articles would not underreport the term “terrorist,” despite the BBC’s reluctance to use that term.

After separating the articles into pre- and post-September 11th groups, I use Microsoft Word’s find and replace application to count how many times each word was used before and after September 11th. I control for the increase in reports after the attack not by comparing the number of times a descriptor is used before and after the attacks, but by measuring the percentage of the time that descriptor is used instead of another one. Specifically, I am interested in whether the use of the words “terrorist” and “terrorism” increase significantly post-September 11th, because that would reflect a change in China’s justification to the international community.

Chinese Repressive Acts Methodology

In order to test **Hypothesis 2a**, **Hypothesis 2b**, and **Hypothesis 2c**, I use the automated events data coder TABARI (Textual Analysis by Augmented Replacement Instructions) to

determine whether the War on Terror is correlated with increased government repression.²

TABARI searched 18 different English-language media sources for the number of repressive acts committed by the Chinese government against Uyghurs or dissidents each month; this count makes up the dependent variable, government repression. TABARI searched from December 1996 through January of 2007 for the acts within China as a whole, and from January 1994 through December 2007 for the acts occurring only within Xinjiang. The directed dyad month is the unit of analysis and the number of recorded observations is 122. After TABARI produces results on the aggregated monthly acts, I test whether the variable of September 11th significantly affected the number of Chinese acts of repression, while controlling the dissidents' violent and non-violent protests against the Chinese government in each month. I also control for changes in the number of violent and non-violent protests against the government as reported in the newspaper articles over time. Lastly, I control for the effects of the 1996 and 2001 Strike Hard Campaigns, which were Chinese crackdowns against the Uyghurs and other groups.

I try three models in the acts test: Model 1, in which all the data are directed dyads of government-dissident behavior and dissident-government behavior in all of China; Model 2, in which all the data are government-dissident and dissident-government directed dyads of behavior within Xinjiang province; and Model 3, in which the data is made up of government relations with specified subjects in the Xinjiang province, which are mostly non-dissident Uyghurs. Whether an actor is a dissident or a non-dissident is determined by his acts towards the government; in this study, those who commit violent or non-violent acts of protests are

² "TABARI [...] is a system for the machine coding of international event data based on pattern recognition. It is designed to work with short news summaries such as those found in the lead sentences of wire service reports. It is a successor to the "Kansas Event Data System" (Keds) program that was developed by the eponymous project during the 1990s. Tabari has primarily been used to code events using the WEIS (McClelland 1976) and CAMEO event coding schemes (Gerner et al 2004) from the Reuters and Agence France Presse news services but in principle it can be used for other event coding schemes and text sources" (Schrodt 2006, p. 1).

considered dissidents.

Previous Use of TABARI and CAMEO

TABARI has been used in time-series analyses of the effects of mediation on the Israel-Lebanon and Israel-Palestinian conflicts in the Levant and the Serbia-Bosnia and Serbia-Croatia conflicts in the Balkans, as has CAMEO. As in this study, reports found in open sources provided the event data needed for the study, including the results of the mediation, the political circumstances, and the mediation strategies (Schrodt 2003, 2004).

TABARI

Before TABARI can locate important terms, first the aggregated news reports between 1994 and 2007 must be gleaned from a large collection of articles; in this case, I use Lexis-Nexis Academic.³ Then these reports are run through a formatter⁴ so that the news reports are separated into individual sentences to make the reports easier for TABARI to read. These results are then run through a story extractor which separates stories about Xinjiang from the other stories.⁵ In total, TABARI reviewed 3.3 gigabytes of news reports regarding Xinjiang.

TABARI searches the Xinjiang news reports for search terms belonging to three main categories: actors, verbs, and targets. I created many of the actor and target terms because the names of government and dissident actors, such as the name “Hu Jintao,” are often unique to the

³ The newspapers searched were: Agence-France Presse, Associated Press, Bangkok Post, British Broadcasting Corporation World Monitoring Reports, Central News Authority—Taiwan, Deutsche Press-Agentur, Inter Press Service, Jakarta Post, Japan Economic Newswire, New York Times, The Edge--Malaysia, The Edge—Singapore, The Nation—Pakistan, The Nation—Thailand, Pakistan Newswire, The Statesman—India, United Press International, and Xinhua.

⁴ The formatter, created by Jiayun Han of the Artificial Intelligence Center of the University of Georgia, is called the Lexis Formatter.

⁵ The story extractor was created by Michael Covington of the Artificial Intelligence Center of the University of Georgia.

state in question, but a standard dictionary of between 3,000 and 4,000 generic actors, such as the actor “student,” is also added. The actor dictionary includes government actors, dissident actors, and social actors. These actor terms are also used as targets terms, because many of the actions between groups can be reciprocal. The actions are determined by the CAMEO verb dictionary.⁶

After the raw data is produced, the duplicate articles are removed, meaning that every time the actor, verb, target, and date matches a previously coded article, the extra article or articles are deleted⁷. Lastly, the T-Form TABARI formatter is used to make the data easier to read.⁸ Variables for violent dissent, non-violent dissent, and repression are made using the appropriate grouping of CAMEO codes. Actions are aggregated to the monthly level by summing the total number of actions per month. To control for a perceived increase in events due to increased media coverage over time the proportion of events of interest to the total number of events is used rather than a raw event count.

Hand Coding and Machine Coding

Event data is usually coded by hand. I code by machine because it codes large data sets, such as thousands of newspaper articles, much faster than an individual hand coder. Additionally, machines are unbiased and internally consistent, and less likely to become fatigued than a human coder (Schrodt 2006). Human coders have the advantage of being able to understand complex sentence structure while some computer programs falter over such grammatical characteristics as subordinate clauses. However, TABARI contains a “complexity

⁶ CAMEO, or Conflict and Mediation Event Observations, codes events related to the mediation of violent conflict. CAMEO was created by Phil Schrodt.

⁷ This filter is also called the one-a-day filter.

⁸ The T-Form TABARI formatter was created by Luke Davis at the College of William & Mary.

detector” that diverts difficult sentences to a separate file either to remove them from the data set or for a human to code later (Schrodt 2006).

Controls

To understand the influence the War on Terror has on Chinese government repression of both dissidents and non-dissident Uyghurs in Xinjiang, I control for the effects of the Strike Hard Campaigns of 1996 and 2001, the dissidents’ violent and non-violent protests against the Chinese government in each month, and the change in the number of events reported.

The term “Strike Hard Campaign” was originally used to refer to a 1983 crackdown on criminal activity, but in 1996, the Chinese government declared another Strike Hard Campaign, this time focused on the Uyghur and Tibetan separatists as well as murderers, rapists, and drug dealers (*South China Morning Post*, July 18, 1996). Separatist crimes included religious crimes, and the Xinjiang government encouraged cities and counties to “conduct a screening and consolidation of key religious venues to ensure that their leadership is truly in the hands of reliable patriotic religious personages,” as well as “crack down on illegal religious activities,” and “strictly control the construction of new religious venues, which will not be permitted without approval” (*Xinjiang Ribao*, September 2, 1996). According to writer Xiao Yu, the 1996 Strike Hard Campaign only lasted three months, but during that time 12,000 suspects were arrested, and at least 16,000 surrendered (*South China Morning Post*, August 15, 1996). The Chinese government renewed the campaign in April 2001 after a string of high-profile violent crimes (*Associated Press*, May 23, 2001). In the first month alone, one diplomat counted 801 Chinese citizens paraded in public rallies before they were taken away and shot (*Associated Press*, May 23, 2001), although the official number was 400 (*Agence-France Presse*, April 27,

2001). According to one news article, by July the number had increased to 1,781 people executed and 2,960 people sentenced to death (*Malaysia General News*, July 7, 2001). In addition to violent criminals, the government also executed those who committed lesser crimes, such as Wu Wei, an insurance salesman who was killed for embezzling the equivalent of \$47,000. Chinese media claimed that the main targets were not only criminals, but also “separatists, terrorists, and forces of religious extremism.” The media reported mass arrests in both regions, and Xinjiang television displayed the public sentencing of separatists. In early May 2001, state media announced that the Strike Hard Campaign would continue for two years (*Associated Press*, May 23, 2001). It is important to control for the Strike Hard Campaigns because September 11th occurred in the middle of the 2001 Strike Hard Campaign. Without a control, the repressive acts test may determine that the declaration of the War on Terror affected government repression when the Strike Hard Campaign was actually responsible for the increase in repression.

The repression literature suggests that there is a strong relationship between acts of dissent and acts of repression. If the number of acts of dissent increases and those acts are not controlled in the study, the government response may appear harsher than the response’s context would suggest. While scholars disagree on the particulars of the relationship, controlling for acts of violent and non-violent dissent is vital to a study of repression.

The number of total events is controlled because news coverage can increase over time, and because an increase in stories may yield an increase in evident events. If the number of events increases significantly after September 11th, it will be difficult to determine whether government repression has actually increased, or if there has merely been an increase in the reports of government repression.

Time Frame

I choose to measure the events in terms of months because years do not accurately reflect changes in the repression-dissent relationship. For instance, if Uyghur dissidents bomb a Chinese government building in December, the Chinese government response will not be recorded until the next year, which may imply they are behaving unjustifiably harshly towards the Uyghurs. Months capture events and the response to those events better than years, and provide a more accurate measure of trends across time.

Results and Analysis

Results of the Rhetoric Test

The test of **Hypothesis 1a**, which states that the Chinese government will describe the Uyghurs as terrorists more often after September 11th, and **Hypothesis 1b**, which states that the Chinese government's use of non-terrorist descriptors of the Uyghurs will stay the same or increase after September 11th, produced clear results. Before September 11th, when the Chinese government described the Uyghurs, 55.67% of the time they used the word separatist or a related term describing the motivations of the Uyghurs, such as separatism. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, China uses words related to separatism much more often before the attacks than afterward, when the percentage of words related to terrorism increased dramatically, from 20.99% to 74.20%. The reasoning behind Hypothesis 1a, that China is using the word terrorist more often in order to justify its actions to the international community, is supported by these results.

The list of descriptors I use in the search includes every common term I have seen

government officials use in connection with the Uyghurs. By requiring that the terms Xinjiang and Uyghur are in the search, I remove most of the articles that do not describe government acts toward Uyghurs, but some merely mention the Uyghurs in passing, and primarily discuss other groups. While the terms separatist, terrorist, extremist, splittist, and Uyghur nationalist are almost always used in reference to the Uyghurs in these news articles, these words may occasionally describe other groups, such as the Tibetans, which could affect the results. However, Tibetans are rarely called terrorists by the Chinese government because they do not engage in violent separatist activity, so the increased incidence of the word “terrorist” is probably not the result of mistakes in the search. In fact, because the accidental inclusion of articles related to the Tibetans probably dilutes the results, the evidence supports the conclusion of Hypothesis 1a even more strongly.

Table 1: Comparison of Chinese Use of Uyghur Descriptors Before and After 9/11

Uyghur Descriptor	Pre-September 11th	Post-September 11th	Overall Usage
Separatist	55.67%	16.09%	29.86%
Terrorist	20.99%	74.20%	55.69%
Extremist	6.08%	8.11%	7.40%
Splittist	17.06%	1.57%	6.96%
Uyghur nationalist	0.19%	0.03%	0.09%

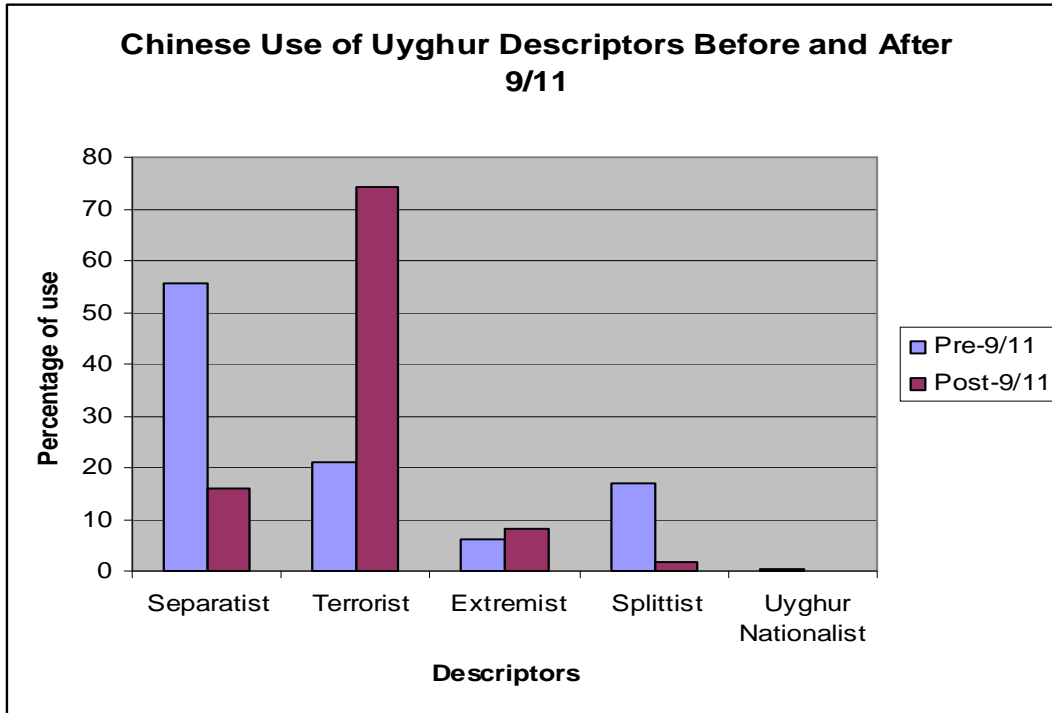


Figure 1: Bar Graph Comparing Uyghur Descriptors Used Before, After September 11th

Results of the Repressive Acts Test

In the repressive acts test, I test **Hypothesis 2a**, which states that the government’s repression of the Uyghurs will intensify after September 11th; **Hypothesis 2b**, which states that the Chinese government will not be concerned with its image enough to base its Uyghur policies on international norms, so the repression of the Uyghurs will remain unchanged or decrease; and **Hypothesis 2c**, which states that the Chinese government will be affected by human rights criticism and decrease its repression of the Uyghurs. The results of this test are not as clear as the results from the tests of Hypothesis 1a and 1b. I utilize three models, using three different dependent variables. The models use different estimators due to differences in the distribution of the dependent variable. Model 1 describes acts of repression in all of China, not just Xinjiang, and utilizes an OLS regression due to the normal distribution of the dependent variable (Figure 2); Model 2 describes acts of government repression against dissidents in Xinjiang and utilizes a

Negative Binomial Regression due to the negative binomial distribution of the dependent variable (Figure 3); and Model 3 also uses negative binomial regression and describes acts of repression against Uyghurs in general in Xinjiang (Figure 4). The figures use histograms to provide visual representations of the distributions of the dependent variables. Density measures the number of months with that variable's value. So if the density of months with five acts of government repression is 0.5, half of the months in the data set have five acts of repression.

My key explanatory variable, September 11th, has a positive and statistically significant effect on government repression in all three models. Non-violent dissent also has a positive and statistically significant effect on government repression of Uyghurs. In Models 2 and 3, which examine acts in the Xinjiang region, the Strike Hard Campaign also has a positive and statistically significant effect on government repression.

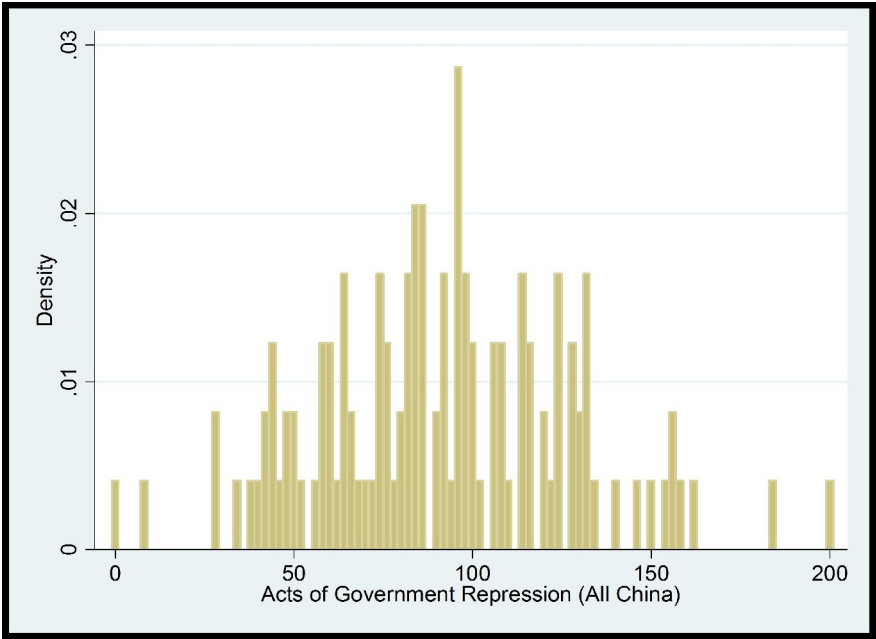


Figure 2: Model 1: Histogram Measuring Density of Acts of Government Repression Against Dissidents in China

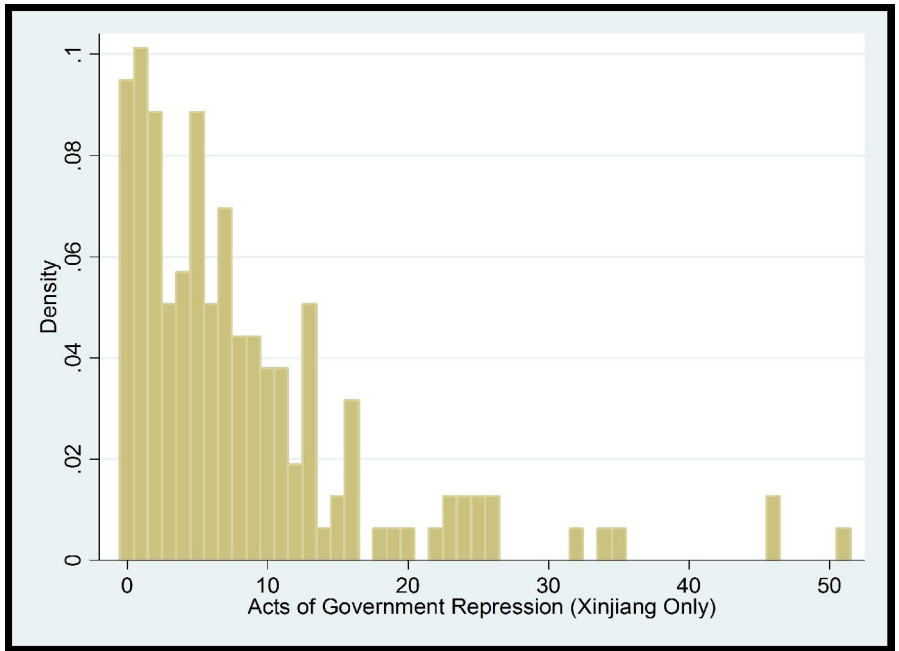


Figure 3: Model 2: Histogram Measuring Density of Acts of Government Repression Against Dissidents in Xinjiang

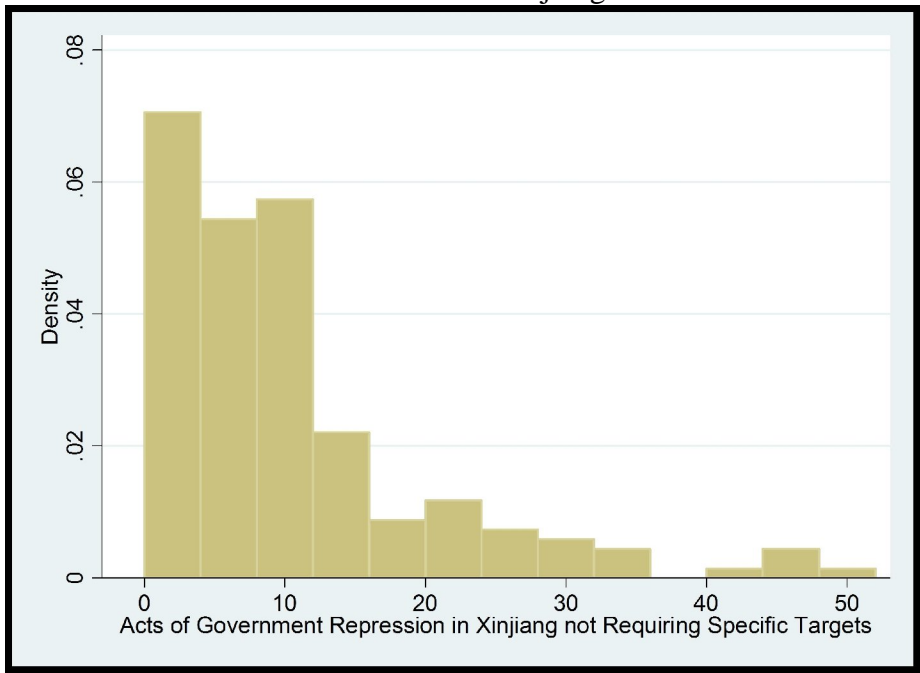


Figure 4: Model 3: Histogram Measuring Density of Acts of Government Repression Against Uyghurs in Xinjiang

Effect of Variables on Government Repression

In every model, September 11th has a positive, statistically significant effect on government repression, meaning that Chinese repression of dissidents, Uyghur dissidents, and Uyghurs in general increases after the declaration of the War on Terror. Furthermore, September 11th is more significant across the models than any other variable besides violent dissent. Model 1, which is an OLS regression, indicates that the impact of the War on Terror is small, since there is an increase of only 10.49 repressive actions per month after the attacks. Nevertheless, a small increase could explain why journalists, academics, and human rights organizations would accuse China of increased repression (Table 2). Hypothesis 2a, which states that since China can utilize the War on Terror to defend its repressive actions, the government's repression of the Uyghurs will intensify after September 11th, appears to be closest to the truth as determined by this study.

There are other interesting results from the repressive acts test. In all of the models, non-violent dissident actions toward the government show a positive, statistically significant effect on Chinese repression of the Uyghurs and dissidents. The Strike Hard Campaigns appear to be significant in the Xinjiang models of government repression against Uyghur dissidents and citizens, but not in the China model. The difference in the Strike Hard Campaigns' influence may be because of increased repression in the Xinjiang regions specifically during the time of the campaigns, but more research is needed. Acts of violent dissent are only significant in Models 2 and 3, which reflect government repression on Uyghur dissidents. Though it seems reasonable that the Chinese government's repressive acts would increase in response to violent dissident activity, it is unclear to me why the government does not respond with repression to violent acts of dissent in China as a whole.

Variables in Original Models

In my original models, I control changes in the number of events across time by making it an independent variable. Unfortunately, the number of newspaper reports seems to increase steadily across time, meaning that in the post-September 11th period, variance is distorted. To restore the control for the change in the number of events counted without adding them as a variable, I use the proportions of violent events to total events and non-violent events to total events in the models.

Table 2: Independent Variables' Effects on Government Repression:
Benchmark Results of All Models

	Model 1: All of China	Model 2: Xinjiang Region	Model 3: Xinjiang Region, No Targets
Non-Violent Dissent (All China)	3.663* (2.12)	-	-
Violent Dissent (All China)	.204 (.634)	-	-
Non-Violent Dissent (Xinjiang Only)	-	52.177** (28.566)	-
Violent Dissent (Xinjiang Only)	-	25.686*** (3.320)	-
Non-Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, No Targets)	-	-	03.315 (10.48)
Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, No Targets)	-	-	10.141*** (1.501)
Strike Hard Campaigns	-3.131 (5.79)	.416*** (.175)	458*** (.181).
9/11	10.487** (4.65)	.547** (.131)	.545** (.135)
Observations	122	122	122
R²	.59	-	-
RMSE	2.13	-	-
Alpha	-	.192 (.044)	.189 (.039)

* Indicates significance at the .10 level

** Indicates significance at the .05 level

*** Indicates significance at the .01 level

As shown by the Expected Changes in Government Repression Tables (Table 3 and Table 4), the Strike Hard Campaign and the September 11th attacks have approximately the same influence on government repression. This finding further suggests that China is using the War on Terror as a justification for the continuation of its existing repressive policies, such as the Strike Hard Campaigns. In addition, violent dissent is only statistically significant in Models 2 and 3, but appears to be highly correlated with increased repression.

Table 3: Expected Changes in Government Repression for Model 2

	min->max	++sd/2
Non-Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, Targets)	6.114	4.021
Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, Targets)	152.771	0.775
Strike Hard Campaigns	3.596	1.733
9/11	3.072	0.936

Table 4: Expected Changes in Government Repression for Model 3

	min->max	++sd/2
Non-Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, No Targets)	-1.538	-0.225
Violent Dissent (Xinjiang, No Targets)	168.132	4.995
Strike Hard Campaigns	4.644	-
9/11	4.842	-

Conclusion

One week before the September 11th attacks, Chairman of Xinjiang Abulhat Abdurixit said, “The situation of Xinjiang is better than ever in history [...] so it can be said that there has been no room for national separatists and religious extremists. By no means is Xinjiang a place where violence and terrorist accidents take place very often” (Ta Kung Pao, September 4, 2001).

Nevertheless, this research suggests that both anti-terrorist rhetoric and government

repression of the Uyghurs increased after the announcement of the War on Terror, indicating that China used that rhetoric to justify its repressive policies to the international community.

Furthermore, this study suggests that China used the War on Terror as an excuse for repressive action against the Uyghurs beyond the activities it engaged in before September 11th. In addition, the test on repressive acts firmly supports the theory that increased violent acts of dissent intensify repression.

While using automated data event coding software to test repression and its justification in rhetoric may support the ideas of those who already criticize repressive governments, using automated events coding to test the effects of that criticism may be more useful in pursuing human rights policy. Testing criticism in this way could more clearly show the benefits and risks of using shaming as a policy tool. Since applying automated events data coding to states suspected of human rights violations can result in discovering that the states are actually reducing repression, foreign governments and other groups critical of a state's repressive policies could use the findings from such a study to determine when a state should be punished for intensifying its repression, and when it should be rewarded for decreasing it. Overall, this type of research can be expanded for use in testing many types of state behavior, but one of its most useful potential functions could be in the field of human rights.

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