
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Focal Points, Dissident Calendars, and Preemptive Repression

[This version: March 20, 2018]

Rory Truex

The online Supporting Information contains the following items:

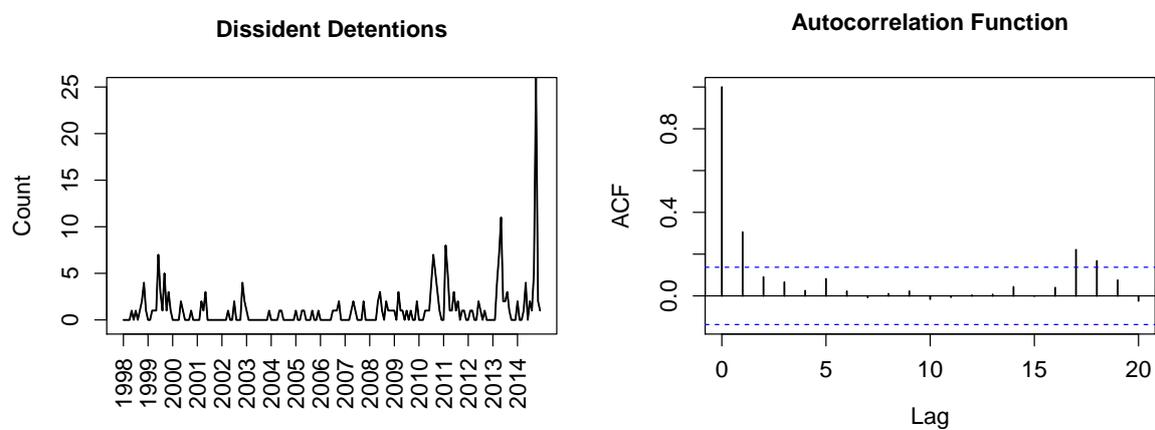
1. [Table A1](#): Overview of the CECC-PPD
2. [Figure A1](#): Time Series for *dem.det* and ACF
3. [Discussion of Data Validation](#)
4. [Figure A2](#): Time Series from CHR D vs. CECC-PPD
5. [Table A2](#): Determinants of Inclusion in CECC-PDD
6. [Discussion of Event Coding](#)
7. [Tables A4a-A4c](#): 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%	
<i>prior to 1998</i>	2622	33.5%	Major amendment to Criminal Law in 1997; Data quality poor in early years
<i>missing month/date</i>	586	7.5%	Month required to generate time series
<i>issue category outside scope</i>	1420	18.1%	Primarily Uyghur, Falun Gong, labor, and environment detentions
Total Included Entries	3182	40.7%	
<i>democracy detentions (base)</i>	222	2.8%	Entries tagged as “dem” or “6489” in PPD (<i>dem.det</i>)
<i>democracy detentions (extended)</i>	880	11.2%	Entries tagged as “spch”, “civil”, “info” and “assoc” in PPD, added to <i>dem.det</i> (1102 entries in total for <i>dem.det.ext</i>)
<i>Tibetan detentions</i>	2090	26.7%	Entries tagged as Tibetan in PPD (<i>ethtib.det</i>)

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 $det.det_t$ in China from 1998-2014 and autocorrelation function for the time series. All data drawn from CECC-PPD.

Discussion of Data Validation

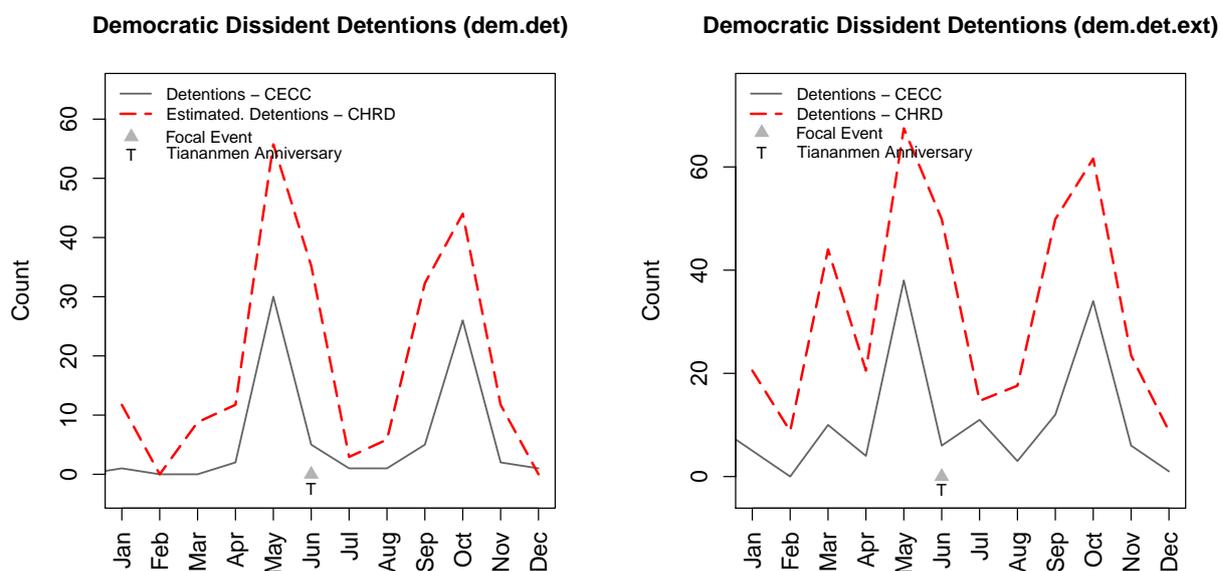
To get a better sense of possible biases in the CECC-PPD, we can compare detentions it includes to those identified by a grassroots organization of Chinese human rights activists, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD). Beginning in 2013, CHRD began collecting its own lists of activists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



Note: Figure shows time series of *dem.det* and *dem.det.ext* drawn from two separate databases, the CECC-PDD and CHR D. The CHR D series reflects estimates based on coding of 1/3 of the total entries in that dataset (see description of CHR D 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)
<i>det.type.crim</i>	1.088 (0.410)	1.237 (0.444)	1.246 (0.444)
<i>det.place.informal</i>	0.814 (0.737)	0.491 (0.810)	0.501 (0.807)
<i>issue.dem.ext</i>	1.631 (0.510)	1.658 (0.519)	1.632 (0.523)
<i>issue.ethrel</i>	0.355 (0.716)	0.408 (0.737)	0.376 (0.742)
<i>issue.propcomlab</i>	-0.629 (0.444)	-0.685 (0.509)	-0.672 (0.510)
<i>female</i>		0.043 (0.388)	0.045 (0.388)
<i>act.petition</i>		0.411 (0.485)	0.445 (0.494)
<i>act.protest</i>		-0.431 (0.441)	-0.408 (0.445)
<i>focal.win2</i>			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
<i>transition</i>	95.9%	0.351	7	172
<i>division</i>	93.6%	0.322	11	172
<i>shock</i>	97.7%	0.702	4	172
<i>revol</i>	96.5%	0.888	6	172
<i>focal</i>	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 discrepancy, 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
<i>Focal Events ($focal_t$)</i>	
- 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
<i>Leadership Transition Events ($trans_t$)</i>	
- Hu Jintao elected General Secretary of CCP	November 2002
- Xi Jinping elected General Secretary of CCP	November 2012
<i>Leadership Division Events (div_t)</i>	
- 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

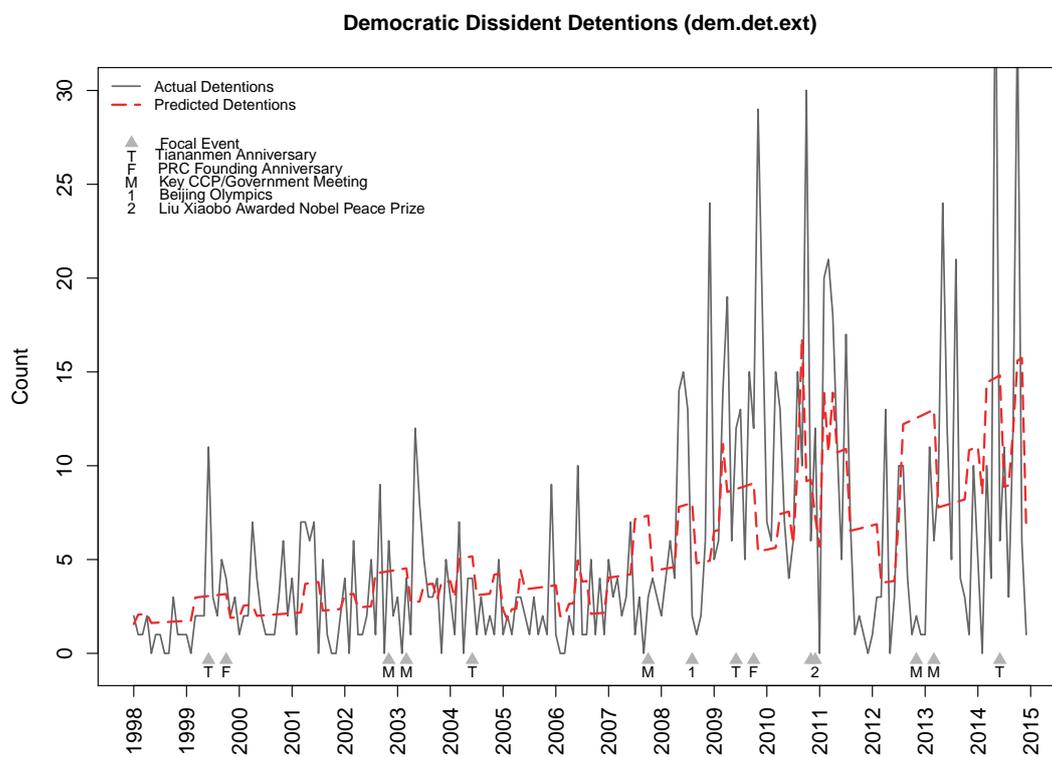
Table A4b: Key Events in Analysis Period

Event	Month
<i>Governance Shock Event ($shock_t$)</i>	
- 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
<i>Foreign Revolution Event ($revol_t$)</i>	
- 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
<i>Focal Event Tibet (focal.tib_t)</i>	
- 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
<i>Leadership Transition Events Tibet (trans.tib_t)</i>	
- 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	<i>det.charge</i>		<i>det.short</i>	
		LOGIT	LPM	LOGIT	LPM
M1.	None	-0.452 (0.130)	-0.108 (0.030)	0.735 (0.143)	0.149 (0.027)
M2.	M1. + <i>det.prov_i</i>	-0.530 (0.148)	-0.103 (0.029)	0.686 (0.169)	0.115 (0.026)
M3.	M2. + <i>occupation1 : 7_i</i> + <i>religion1 : 4_i</i>	-0.635 (0.161)	-0.106 (0.028)	0.788 (0.181)	0.126 (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.