

Testing the Security Dilemma in US-China Relations, 1949-2011

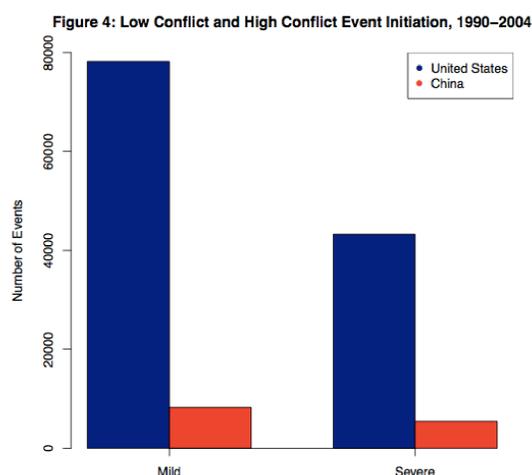
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Dissertation Prospectus

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Summary

- This dissertation project will bring four new datasets to bear on the analysis of reciprocity, rising power dynamics, uncertainty, and strategic misrepresentation in US-China relations over 1949-2011. The current literature on these topics tends to fall into the qualitative case study approach or the Correlates of War-type large-N approach. This dissertation will create new day-level event and perception datasets to examine how these processes unfold over time.
- Two day-level events datasets have been created. The Western events dataset was scraped from the *New York Times* over 1949-2011, and is composed of events from all articles with “China” in the title over the period. The Chinese events dataset was scraped from the main Chinese newspaper, the *People’s Daily*, and consists of events from all articles with “United States” in the title. These articles were machine translated into English. Validation of events extracted from 100 machine translated versus hand translated articles suggests this is a noisier but acceptable method.
- Two day-level perceptions datasets will be created pending archival research. The US perception dataset will consist of digitization of China passages of the Foreign Relations of the US series and other internal memoranda. The Chinese perception dataset will consist of digitization of internal documents from the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive.

Bias in Existing Events Data



Data

	Actions	Perceptions
US	Event data: <i>NYT</i> , 1949-2011	Archival research: FRUS, State Dept bulletins
China	Event data: <i>People's Daily</i> , 1949-2011	Archival research: MFA documents

Event Extraction Methods

US event data

Sample: 1.3 million document corpus

Method: TABARI CAMEO → 150,000 interstate events, 1851-2011

China subsample: Tens of thousands of US-China events, 1949-2011

Chinese event data

Sample: 50,000 document corpus

Method: Machine translation → TABARI CAMEO → 10s K US-China events

Validation: Comparative extraction from 100 MT vs hand translated articles

Research Questions

1. **Is there reciprocity in US-China relations?** It is standard in the events literature to test for bilateral reciprocity with vector autoregression.
2. **Is great power dissatisfaction associated with aggression?** Great power dissatisfaction can be operationalized with dictionaries framed around Gilpin’s 1981 “hierarchy of prestige” and “reputation for power.”
3. **Is uncertainty associated with aggression?** Uncertainty can be operationalized as the variance of power and intention assessments in internal discussions.
4. **When does strategic misrepresentation occur, and what are its effects?** More specifically, when do internal and external statements diverge, and what effect does this have on cooperation and conflict?
5. **When do policymakers persist in holding incorrect schema, what are the effects of doing so, and when do schema change?** Psychological explanations of international conflict stress that cognitive consistency, egocentric bias, and the fundamental attribution error result in leaders infrequently changing their perceptions (schema) of others (Stein 2008). The perception data will make it possible to identify when schema shift. Shifts can then be used as an explanatory variable for subsequent cooperation, and as a dependent variable for a variety of determinants.
6. **What are the determinants of spiral and deterrence failures in US-China relations?** This project will identify spiral failures (when actions are not offensive but perceptions are getting negative) and deterrence failures (when actions are offensive but perceptions are getting positive), and explore the determinants of such failures.