

# Violence without Rebellion: Social Reclassification, Grassroots Policing, and the Great Leap Forward in China

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## Introduction and Research Questions

- The **Great Leap Forward** in China (1958-1960): characterized by unrealistic goals of industrialization and unprecedented human suffering. Violent acts including murder were common.
- However, discontent and violence in rural China were **not accompanied by rebellion or collective protests**.
- Explained by two factors: **weakened mobilizing structure** (traditional networks along kinship ties) and **hijacked mobilizing framing** (based on their class categories, protestors were named either as anti-revolutionary enemies or the "people" who had backward awareness).
- Being part of a larger project conducted by my supervisor Prof. Wang, this ARIA project tries to answer the following questions in order to support the two mechanisms above:

- Was state response to local resistance a function of types of resistance and political identifications of protestors? Which factor was more important?
- Did state response vary across different geographic regions?

## Hypotheses

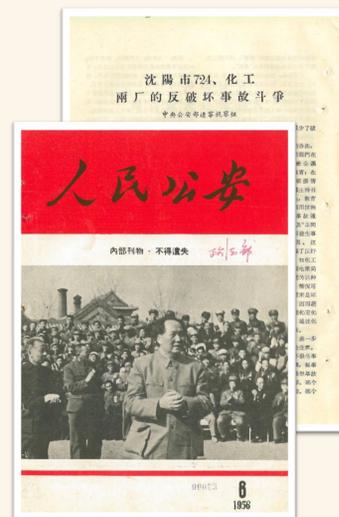
- Hypothesis 1:** The types of local resistance and protestors' political identifications had an impact on state response to the resistance.
- Hypothesis 2:** Political identifications mattered more than types of resistance in shaping state response.
- Hypothesis 3:** Being in rural or in urban areas had an impact on state response to local resistance.
- Hypothesis 4:** Being in old or new revolutionary bases had an impact on state response to local resistance.
- Hypothesis 5:** Province had an impact on state response to local resistance.

## Acknowledgements

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## Data Collection and Compilation

- This study is primarily based on systematic examination of local policing practices collected from **People's Police (1956-1965)**, a periodical published by the Ministry of Public Security.
- We scanned the available periodicals and used **OCR** technology to digitize the content.
- We used **keyword search** to pick out all contents relating to **local resistance**, including the following five categories:
  - Petitioning** (students strikes, workers strikes);
  - Everyday forms of resistance** (intentionally damaging crops and livestock, spreading anti-revolutionary rumors, stealing food from the commune);
  - Anti-revolutionary coordination** (anti-revolutionary religious groups);
  - Individual violence** (individual actions involved killing, hurting, or poisoning of local cadres or peers);
  - Collective violence** (mass violent uprisings, collective violence against local cadres).
- We also collected information about **state responses** to these incidents of local resistance and categorized them into four types:
  - Education, Monitor, Public struggle session, and Criminal arrest.**
- Information about **political identity of protestors** to these incidents of local resistance was also collected and categorized:
  - Mass** (the "People"), **Five Black Categories** (Landlords, Rich farmers, Anti-revolutionaries, Bad-influencers and Rightists), and **Relatives of Five Black Categories.**
- We compiled all relevant information (also including incident year, location, size of collective action) into a single **database**.



Number of Observations 1202

Number of Variables 10

Unit of Analysis Incidents of Resistance

## Regression Methodology

- We used **Ordered Logistic Regression** to model the relationship between state response, political identity, and resistance types in a local resistance.
- We used this regression model primarily because our dependent variable state response is an ordinal variable, ranging from the mildest state response (education) to the harshest one (criminal arrest).

$$\text{logit}(P(Y \leq j)) = \beta_{j0} - \eta_1 \text{Political Identification} - \eta_2 \text{Resistance Type} - \eta_3 \text{Size} - \eta_4 \text{Year}$$

$Y = \text{State Response, with } j \text{ categories, } j = 1, \dots, J - 1$

## Result

Table 1: Ordered Logit Regression Table

	(1) Base-Year	(2) Base-Periods	(3) Rural-Urban	(4) Regions	(5) Provinces
state response					
wulei relative	0.448 (0.90)	0.452 (0.90)	0.428 (0.85)	0.445 (0.89)	0.775 (1.52)
wulei	0.603** (3.18)	0.619** (3.24)	0.588** (3.06)	0.610** (3.19)	0.790** (3.76)
everyday resistance	1.464* (2.32)	1.523* (2.41)	1.460* (2.31)	1.463* (2.32)	1.473* (2.26)
individual violence	3.080*** (4.28)	3.169*** (4.40)	3.066*** (4.25)	3.088*** (4.29)	3.214*** (4.28)
coordination with intent	3.104*** (4.39)	3.174*** (4.49)	3.101*** (4.38)	3.098*** (4.38)	3.229*** (4.41)
collective violence	3.361*** (4.10)	3.478*** (4.24)	3.340*** (4.07)	3.371*** (4.11)	3.502*** (4.05)
size of collective action	-0.40349 (-1.20)	-0.00337 (-1.17)	-0.00369 (-1.25)	-0.00352 (-1.21)	-0.00313 (-1.03)
incident year	-0.0618 (-1.69)		-0.0628 (-1.71)	-0.0612 (-1.67)	-0.0733 (-1.78)
post GLF		0.176 (0.77)			
pre GLF		0.339 (1.64)			
protest population			0.000115 (0.22)	0.000123 (0.23)	-0.000140 (-0.25)
urban			-0.0796 (-0.42)		
old revolutionary bases				0.0722 (0.40)	
cut1	-119.2 (-1.66)	2.208*** (3.45)	-121.0 (-1.68)	-117.9 (-1.64)	-141.4 (-1.75)
cut2	-118.8 (-1.65)	2.563*** (3.99)	-120.7 (-1.67)	-117.6 (-1.63)	-141.0 (-1.75)
cut3	-118.3 (-1.65)	3.135*** (4.85)	-120.1 (-1.66)	-117.0 (-1.63)	-140.4 (-1.74)
log likelihood	-540.2	-540.3	-540.1	-540.1	-518.5
pseudo R2	0.0860	0.0858	0.0862	0.0862	0.123
N	511	511	511	511	511
chi2	101.6	101.5	101.9	101.9	145.0

t statistics in parentheses

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001

## Discussion

- According to our basic model (Model 1), there is a statistically significant relation between being a Five Black and harsher state response, and a statistically significant relation between all types of resistance and harsher state response. Therefore, **the null hypothesis of Hypothesis 1 can be rejected.**

- After computing for odds ratio of the estimated coefficients, the increased likelihoods of having a harsher state response are higher for resistance types than political identity, that is, having resisted in a more serious way mattered more than the protestors' political identity. Therefore, **the null hypothesis of Hypothesis 2 cannot be rejected.**
- Model 3, 4, and 5 show that after each controlling for rural-urban difference, regional difference, and provincial difference, the relationship between key variables remains the same; further, these control variables do not have statistical significance. Therefore, **the null hypothesis of Hypothesis 3, 4, and 5 cannot be rejected**, and there's no difference across geographical areas.
- Post-Estimation:** Compared to the baseline, a Five Black who resisted in the form of everyday resistance is 20% more likely to be criminally arrested, while the same protestor but resisted in the form of individual violence is 58% more likely to be criminally arrested. The **marginal effect** of criminal arrest as state response **increased by 38%** by one level change in resistance type.

## Conclusion

- Limitation: the periodical People's Police is subject to **selection bias**. Incidents were handpicked by policy makers to illustrate directions for policy implementations; thus, state responses tend to reflect more uniformity than diversity across regions.
- Limitation: The data is subject to **ambiguities** in the original reporting language.
- Further improvements: more statistical models, other than ordered logit regression model, can be used to check against current results.