A COMPARISON OF TRUMP AND BIDEN'S POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN XINJIANG FROM AN IDEOSYNCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT. Studies on the United States' response to human rights violations in Xinjiang have tended to emphasize structural factors, such as great power rivalry, international norms, and foreign policy instruments, while the role of presidential leadership as an analytical variable has been relatively neglected. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the United States' foreign policy toward human rights violations in Xinjiang during the Donald Trump and Joe Biden administrations using an idiosyncratic approach. This approach places the leader's personality, ideological orientation, and policy context as key factors in the foreign policy decision-making process. Research data was collected through a literature review of scientific journals, books, official reports, presidential speeches, and US foreign policy documents from 2017 to 2024. The results show that policies during the Trump era were unilateral and confrontational, marked by the imposition of economic sanctions and harsh rhetoric against China. In contrast, the Biden administration adopted a multilateral and diplomatic approach, emphasizing international cooperation and coordination with allies. These findings confirm that differences in leadership character significantly influence the direction and instruments of U.S. foreign policy, even within the same strategic competition context.

Keywords: *Biden; Human Rights; Ideosyncratic; Foreign Policy; Trump; Xinjiang*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the United States and China is marked by increasingly intense strategic competition, especially as China's economic, technological, and military capabilities grow, which Washington perceives as a challenge to the US-led international order (Jisi, 2024; Zhao et al., 2021).Nevertheless, in light of China's remarkable advancements in economic, technological, military, and defense sectors, the United States perceives China as a significant threat to global security. It has been posited that these aforementioned developments may result in the replacement of the nation's hegemonic status. (Al Syahrin, 2018; Montratama & Yani, 2017; Shafitri et al., 2024). In this context, the issue of human rights violations in Xinjiang is not only positioned as a domestic issue for China, but also an integral part of the United States' foreign policy agenda in responding to China's global rise. The repressive policies against the Uyghur ethnic group and other Muslim groups in Xinjiang have attracted widespread attention from the international community and have been mobilized by the United States as a basis for political and moral legitimacy in increasingly competitive bilateral relations (Kriebitz, 2022; Polaschek, 2021; Szadziewski, 2020)there is serious and credible evidence that Uyghur and other minority communities in China are being forced into internment or 're-education' camps,1 with strong links to subsequent forced labour in factories, particularly centred in Xinjiang province.2 The use of forced labour (intimately connected to many international supply chains. A number of reports

and official statements, including from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United States government, categorize these practices as serious crimes against humanity, even claiming them to be genocide in a political and normative sense, although their legal status remains a matter of debate in international law (Andrena, 2024; Widjaja, 2020). Thus, the Xinjiang issue has become an important arena for understanding how human rights values are used and interpreted in the United States' foreign policy toward China.

Xinjiang is the largest autonomous region in China, with an area of approximately 1.66 million km² and its capital in Urumqi. The country's geographical location is in the northwest, with borders that share common boundaries with several Central Asian countries. The region is home to a diverse ethnic population, with the majority being Uyghurs, a Muslim group who speak a Turkic language and have a distinct culture and physical appearance that differs from the majority Han ethnic group in China. (Anna & Michael, 2015; Williams, 2013). Since ancient times, the region has been known as East Turkestan and was once an independent state prior to its official incorporation into China in 1949 and its subsequent designation as an autonomous region in 1955. The cultural and religious diversity of this region has rendered it a strategic center of multi-ethnic civilization, but also susceptible to social and political conflict (Starr, 2019; Warikoo, 2010; Yazar, 2024). (Figure 1)

The figure above shows the number of victims of human rights violations in Xinjiang, China, based on data from the official website of the Xinjiang Victims Database (https://shahit.biz/eng). Furthermore, based on data from the Uyghur Human Rights Project, it is

explained that since 2014 until 2024, it is estimated that a total of around 1.8 million people have been or are currently detained in internment camps in Xinjiang (Indri & Baihaqi, 2024; uhpr, 2024). The Chinese government has escalated its "re-education" policy targeting Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, citing the need to combat extremism and separatism (Edward et al., 2023). owever, this policy has been met with international condemnation, as it is regarded as a systematic oppression of their cultural and religious identity.
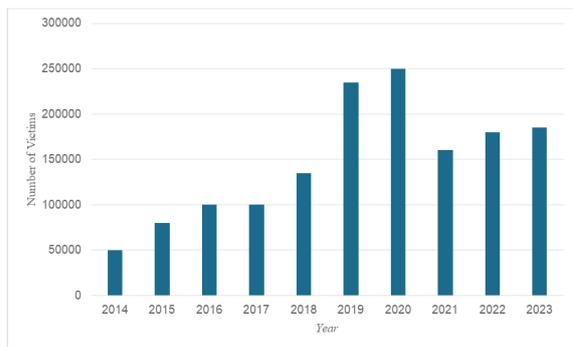
Source: (Database, 2024)

Figure 1. Number of Human Rights Violation in Xinjiang (2014-2023)

The intensification of this phenomenon reached its zenith in April 2017, when Chinese authorities initiated large-scale detentions in facilities that the government designated as vocational training centers, but which human rights organizations have characterized as internment camps (Szadziewski, 2020). According to various reports, including those from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations, the number of people detained in these camps is estimated to be between 800,000 and over 1 million. Some human rights groups have even estimated the number to be as high as 3.5 million people, making it one of the largest ethnic detentions in the world in recent decades (Freedom from Torture Report, 2022; Towadi et al., 2021).

However, it should be noted that the use of activism-based databases, such as the Xinjiang Victims Database, has several methodological limitations that need to be taken into account. The data in this database is collected mainly through individual reports, family testimonies, and open-source verification, which may contain reporting bias, limited access to information, and representativeness issues. Given the Chinese government's strict restrictions on independent access to the Xinjiang region, comprehensive field verification is limited, so the possibility of under-reporting or over-representation of certain groups cannot be ruled out entirely. Nevertheless, this database remains academically relevant as it provides one of the most systematic and transparent publicly available documents on alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang. In this study, the data are not treated as absolute quantitative measures but rather as empirical indicators to describe the patterns, trends, and intensity of violence that form the context of US foreign policy on the Xinjiang issue.

The camps in Xinjiang function not only as detention centers but also as political indoctrination centers. There, detainees are compelled to renounce their religious beliefs, learn Mandarin, and adhere to Chinese Communist Party propaganda. A substantial number of former detainees have reported experiencing physical and psychological torture, forced labor, sexual abuse, and medical neglect that has led to death (Leibold, 2022; Raza, 2019; Zenz, 2023). In 2018, satellite imagery revealed at least 39 large encampments across Xinjiang, covering an area equivalent to approximately 140 football fields. A 2022 report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights corroborated these allegations of human rights violations. A review of numerous interviews with former detainees reveals a pervasive pattern of systematic abuse, including brutal interrogations, sexual violence, and prolonged detention without clear legal process (Maizland, 2022; Polaschek, 2021).

The year 2020 saw the greatest number of violations, as illustrated in Figure 1. During this period, the number of detainees and victims of violations reached its zenith, with estimations suggesting that more than one million individuals remained detained and hundreds of thousands subjected to forced labor and restrictions on cultural and religious freedoms. Furthermore, the identification of over 380 detention facilities in Xinjiang points to a substantial augmentation of the camp network (BBC, 2020b). This surge can be attributed to the Chinese government's implementation of enhanced security measures and the deployment of sophisticated surveillance technology to regulate minority populations (Clarke, 2021).

Furthermore, the government has implemented a series of repressive policies, including the imposition of forced labor in various industries under stringent oversight, the orchestrated migration of Han ethnic groups to Xinjiang, resulting in the displacement of local cultural and economic hegemony, the prohibition of local languages in educational institutions, the imposition of strict restrictions on religious activities, including the destruction of mosques, and the compulsory collection of biometric

data for surveillance purposes (Li et al., 2020; Maya et al., 2019; Zenz, 2023).

This policy has been the subject of significant international condemnation. These egregious violations have been met with condemnation from human rights organizations, the United Nations, and Western countries. The United States has been among the most vocal opponents, with the Trump administration's confrontational foreign policy involving sanctions and bellicose rhetoric. Concurrently, the Biden administration has adopted a more multilateral and diplomatic approach, emphasizing international cooperation and respect for human rights as the foundation of diplomacy.

The Chinese government has provided justifications for this policy, citing national security and regional stability as its objectives. The government asserts that these detentions and "re-education" initiatives are a counterterrorism and counter-extremism strategy intended to forestall the disruption of national integration and public order by separatist movements. Nevertheless, this policy is regarded by many as a mechanism of political and social repression intended to obliterate the cultural identity of Uyghurs and other Muslim groups in Xinjiang.

The discriminatory actions and human rights violations experienced by the population of Xinjiang have garnered international attention, including from the United States. Therefore, the objective of this study is to elucidate the shifts in U.S. foreign policy during the administration of Donald Trump, which prioritized a unilateral, confrontational, and national interest-oriented approach (often referred to as "America First"). This approach was evident in the administration's response to human rights violations in Xinjiang, which included the imposition of economic sanctions and the use of bellicose rhetoric directed at China. Concurrently, Joseph Biden has initiated a more multilateral and diplomatic foreign policy, underscoring the significance of international collaboration and the reinstatement of democratic principles and human rights as the cornerstone of U.S. global diplomacy.

A bibliometric analysis of 123 scientific articles processed using VOSviewer shows that the themes of foreign policy, human rights, the United States, and China dominate global studies related to the Xinjiang issue. Keyword network visualization shows a strong connection between human rights issues and the dynamics of inter-state relations, particularly in the context of US-China strategic competition. However, the results of this mapping also reveal that most of the literature still focuses on macro and structural

approaches, such as great power rivalry, international regimes, and state policy instruments, with limited attention to leadership factors and the individual character of the president as analytical variables. These bibliometric findings reinforce the research argument that there is a gap in the literature regarding the role of executive leadership in shaping foreign policy responses to the Xinjiang issue. The idiosyncratic approach-based analysis in this study is positioned as an effort to complement and deepen the understanding that has been dominated by structural perspectives.
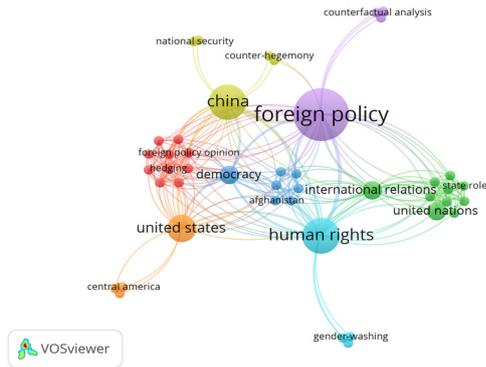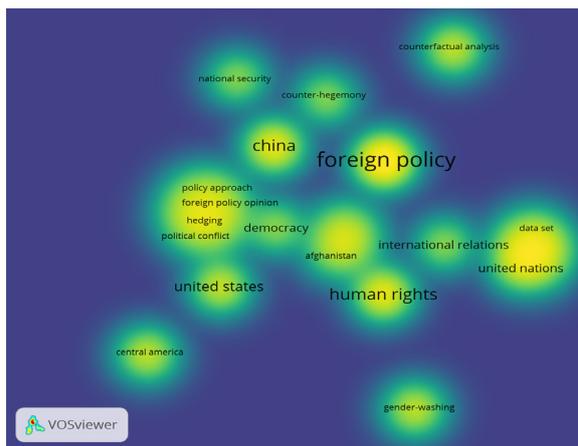

Source: Processed by VOSviewer

Figure 2. Map of the *visualization of the "foreign policy" network*

As demonstrated by this network visualization, there appears to be a close relationship between the subjects of foreign policy and human rights, international relations, and state actors such as China and the United States. The utilization of distinct colors to denote interrelated themes serves to facilitate the analysis of interconnected concepts. For instance, the red cluster is indicative of democracy and foreign policy opinion, while the green cluster signifies the United Nations and state role. This visualization underscores the inextricable linkage between foreign policy issues and global political dynamics, emphasizing the significance of human rights values in this context. It thereby paves the way for more specific and contextual studies, which in turn can lead to novel advancements in research.
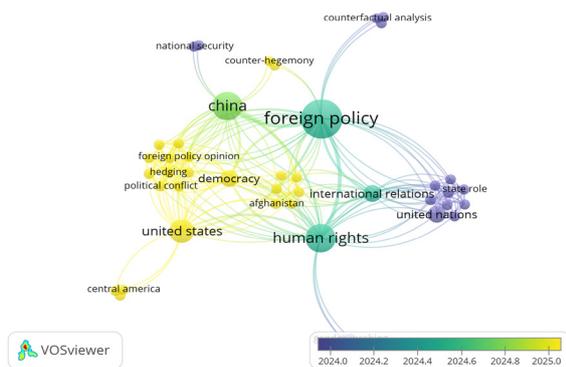
Source: Processed by VOSviewer

Figure 3. Overlay Map Visualization of "Foreign Policy"

Figure 3 demonstrates that research on foreign policy, human rights, and their relationship with China and the United States was extensively published between 2024 and 2025, as indicated by the color scale ranging from green to yellow. The density visualization map, which illustrates the mapping of updates to the themes of previous researchers, is presented on figure 4 that explained A number of recent studies show that discussions on the United States' response to the Xinjiang issue are generally examined through the perspectives of realism and institutional liberalism, with a focus on the dynamics of strategic competition, economic sanctions regimes, multilateral diplomacy, and the use of legislative instruments such as the Magnitsky Act and trade restriction policies. Several studies also highlight the normative dimension of framing human rights violations as genocide or crimes against humanity in foreign policy discourse, as well as its implications for the global reputation and international legitimacy of both countries. On the other hand, there are studies that place this issue in the context of the Indo-Pacific strategy, technological rivalry, and the restructuring of global supply chains. However, the developing literature still tends to place the state as a single actor without elaborating in depth on the differences in ideological orientation, policy preferences, and presidential leadership styles as variables that determine policy direction. This gap shows the need for a more systematic comparative analysis of the dynamics of executive leadership in shaping the United States' foreign policy response to the Xinjiang issue.

Source: Processed by VOSviewer
Figure 4. Visualization Map of Traffic Density "*Traffic Congestion*"

The visualization of the thematic relationship between foreign policy and human rights in the context of alleged violations in Xinjiang shows that the existing literature is still dominated by macro and structural approaches. The macro approach refers to analysis that places the issue within the framework of international system dynamics, such as great power rivalry, shifts in the global order, the distribution of material capabilities, and the role of multilateral institutions. Meanwhile, the structural approach emphasizes the influence of international norms, human rights regimes, state strategic interests, and power configurations on the formation of foreign policy. As a result, the focus of the study is more directed at patterns of interaction between states and systemic pressures, rather than on agency factors or leadership characteristics. This condition shows that analyses that specifically compare the leadership styles of Donald Trump and Joe Biden in responding to the Xinjiang issue are still relatively limited (Afriandi & Hati, 2022; Eichensehr et al., 2022; Larasati, 20224).

Indeed, the character and personality of leaders play an instrumental role in determining the direction of diplomacy and human rights strategies at the global level. Consequently, this study introduces a scientific innovation by adopting an idiosyncratic approach to analyze how the different leadership characteristics of the two presidents influence the US foreign policy response to human rights violations in Xinjiang.This approach addresses a significant gap in the extant literature on foreign policy and human rights, which has historically overlooked the role of individual leadership in these contexts.

The objective of this study is to examine the disparities in leadership styles and policy orientations exhibited by the presidencies of Donald Trump and Joe Biden in their respective responses to human rights violations in Xinjiang, China. The central research question guiding this study is as follows: How do the foreign policies of these two presidents differ in their response to human rights violations in Xinjiang, China, given the distinct personalities of the leaders?

METHOD

This study used data collected through a literature review of secondary sources from scientific journals in the Scopus database (www.scopus.com). The keywords used were "*foreign*" AND "*policy*," "*united*" AND "*state*," AND "*human rights*," limited to journal articles published between 2017 and 2024. This search yielded 123 documents. The author then narrowed the study's scope by focusing on documents related to VOSviever aid to explore how the president's personality, communication style, and leadership type reflect a unique approach to responding to this case. The results of the analysis were

then systematically compared to identify differences and similarities in the policy approaches of the two presidents. Furthermore, this study analyzes the presidents' foreign policy decisions through the lens of idiosyncratism, an approach combining ideology, leader personality, and policy context.

The operationalization of the leader's personality and leadership style was carried out through qualitative analysis of textual data, particularly speeches, public statements, and policy documents that reflect the president's official stance on the Xinjiang issue. The analysis was conducted by categorizing narratives and language choices into idiosyncratic indicators adapted from Mintz and DeRouen's individual analysis framework and Hermann's concept of political personality, such as orientation towards nationalism, level of confidence in controlling events, propensity for international cooperation, and decision-making patterns (Hermann, 2003, 2005; Mintz & DeRouen, 2010a; Renshon, 2012). These patterns were then systematically compared between the two presidencies to identify differences in leadership style and foreign policy orientation. The inferences about leadership character were not based on speculative psychological assumptions, but rather on the consistency of discursive and policy patterns reflected in official sources.

Conceptual Framework
Ideosyncretism

This study uses an idiosyncratic approach to analyze US foreign policy toward human rights violations in Xinjiang during the Donald Trump and Joe Biden administrations. This approach is based on the assumption that national leaders are key actors in the foreign policy decision-making process, so that policy variations are determined not only by the structure of the international system, but also by the character, preferences, and leadership style of individual presidents(Mintz & DeRouen, 2010b).

In Idiosyncratic theory, this analytical model is influenced by individual actors in foreign policy decision-making, known as elite perceptions and defined as something inherent at the most basic level, yet fundamental because the international system, states, and societies are shaped by the individuals who compose them. According to Mintz dan DeRouen (2010), idiosyncratic elements, such as values, talents, and previous experiences, influence the decision-making or policy-making process undertaken by decision-makers. The indicators employed by the author in the analysis of this study are derived from Alex Mintz and Roke's work "Level of Analysis and Foreign Policy," specifically Chapter 3, which addresses Individual-Level Analysis. The model incorporates three significant indicators, which are outlined as follows:

Leader's Personality

According to Greenstein (1967), under certain conditions, personality exerts a particularly dominant influence, especially in situations involving uncertainty regarding the available information. This perspective aligns with the notion that an individual's character is shaped by the interplay between self-awareness, past experiences, and the development of emotions and beliefs, both consciously and unconsciously (Wayne, 2012).

Renshon (2012) posits that character constitutes the foundational element of an individual's personality structure, influencing their capacity to act and evolve. This character not only embodies the fundamental principles that shape an individual's worldview but also reflects their capacity to make decisions, execute their responsibilities, and establish supportive relationships in political and social contexts. In this context, character becomes an integral element of how an individual, especially a leader, performs a role in facing challenges and taking actions in accordance with their principles and beliefs. As the foundational element of personality, character empowers leaders to adapt to diverse circumstances and provide coherent direction in the policies they adopt, while also fostering integrity and public trust.

Personality is also shaped by an individual's emotional responses, which are influenced by four key elements of personality. According to Hampson (2012) these elements can be categorized as follows: temperament, defined as the observable behavioral component influenced by factors such as energy level and neurosis; social context, encompassing various factors including gender, class, race, culture, ethnicity, and generation; cognition, comprising all elements related to beliefs, values, and behaviors, as well as motives, which refer to the goals an individual seeks to achieve and defense mechanisms (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010b).

Leadership Style

Mintz and DeRouen (2010) seminal study identified several dimensions of leadership style that facilitate comprehension of a leader's decision-making patterns, particularly within the context of foreign policy. First, the goal-driven and context-driven dimensions describe a leader's orientation toward goals and situations. Goal-driven leaders tend to prioritize the achievement of predetermined objectives and exhibit a reduced openness to

novel information that could potentially impact policy. Conversely, context-driven leaders exhibit heightened responsiveness to evolving circumstances and demonstrate a propensity to proactively seek and deliberate novel information as a foundation for decision-making.

Secondly, the task-oriented and task-motivated dimensions delineate the level of flexibility and dependence on coalition support in the decision-making process. In contrast, task-oriented leaders demonstrate a propensity to adhere rigidly to their positions and ideologies, exhibiting a reluctance to deviate easily from established beliefs and practices. Task-motivated leaders, on the other hand, exhibit a greater degree of flexibility, often displaying a lower reliance on domestic or international coalition support in the formulation and execution of policies.

Thirdly, the task-oriented versus context-oriented dimension sheds light on leaders' approaches to task execution and adaptation to the environment. Conversely, task-oriented leaders prioritize task completion with consistency and efficiency, often disregarding external changes. Conversely, context-oriented leaders exhibit a greater capacity for adaptability in response to environmental dynamics and are receptive to novel information, thereby facilitating the adjustment of policies to the evolving contextual conditions. A comprehensive understanding of these three dimensions is imperative for elucidating the rationale behind a leader's decision-making process, particularly in regard to the prioritization of certain alternatives over others. Furthermore, it is essential to explore the influence of leadership styles on the policy-making process and the subsequent outcomes.

Types of Leaders: Crusader, Strategic, Pragmatic, Incremental, and Charismatic

Mintz and DeRouen (2010) categorize leaders according to their characteristics and approaches to political challenges and decision-making processes. The Crusader type is a leader who dares to challenge political boundaries but is closed to new information. This type is divided into two subcategories: Expansionists, who have a strong drive to control, display high nationalism, and have few alternatives in decision-making; and Evangelists, who focus more on influencing relationships to achieve their goals and resemble the style of a gospel preacher. The Strategic type is a leader who clearly knows their goals and actively seeks information to achieve them. They have political courage and act with caution when realizing ambitious aspirations. Pragmatic leaders appreciate existing political

constraints but tend to be closed to new information. The Directive subtype focuses on the political issues at hand, while the Consultative subtype pays more attention to relationships and carefully monitors the positions of other elites. Within the pragmatic category are the reactive type, who are motivated to solve problems with mature political considerations, and the accommodative type, known as "bridge-builders," who prioritize building good relations and consensus between countries. The Incremental type describes leaders who face challenging problems or constraints yet remain open to new information. Finally, the charismatic type is a leader who desires political relationships and challenges and is open to information. Their primary motivation is to encourage others to act through charisma and personal influence. Understanding these types helps explain the variety of leadership styles in political decision-making and governance strategies.
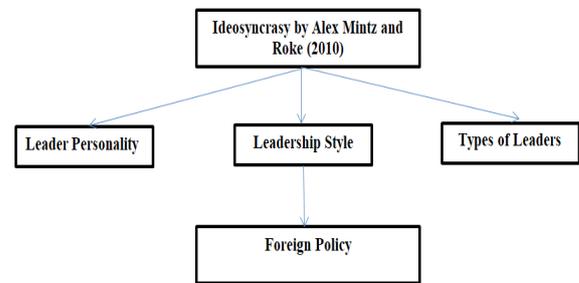
Source: Compiled by Researchers

Figure 5. Theoretical Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Donald Trump's Policy on Human Rights Issues in Xinjiang

Under the leadership of President Donald Trump, the United States' foreign policy has exhibited a tendency towards unilateralism and confrontation, with a pronounced emphasis on national interests as articulated through the "America First" principle (Caro et al., 2022). This policy is indicative of Trump's perspective on the United States' global role, which he perceives as one of preeminence in the international community. This perception is founded on the belief that maintaining a dominant global presence is essential for safeguarding national economic and security interests. In the context of human rights violations in Xinjiang, Trump's response was marked by the implementation of stringent and confrontational policies. He initiated a series of actions aimed at applying pressure on the Chinese government, including the implementation of economic sanctions targeting individuals and entities implicated in the enforcement of repressive policies directed towards Uyghurs and other Muslim

groups. The use of bellicose rhetoric by Trump, frequently accusing China of genocide and human rights violations, further exacerbated the already tense relationship between the two countries. While prioritizing human rights values, this policy was also grounded in a political orientation that prioritized national security and US interests over multilateral or diplomatic principles.

From an ideosyncratic perspective, the personality of Donald Trump is a significant factor in the shaping of U.S. foreign policy toward China and the Xinjiang issue. Trump's reputation is characterized by his egocentric, pragmatic nature and his strong desire to exercise control over global events (Fitzsimmons, 2022; Wangdi & Boossabong, 2024). These characteristics are evident in his response to issues that threaten US interests, such as the Xinjiang issue. In this instance, Trump demonstrated a propensity to adopt a confrontational stance toward China, despite the potential for exacerbating bilateral relations between the two nations. It is evident that Trump's pronounced nationalism and self-assurance in his decision-making abilities serve to reinforce a foreign policy that places significant emphasis on the consolidation of the United States' position and dominance within the global arena (Snyder, 2024). Trump's inclination is to prioritize policies that bolster U.S. security and sovereignty. This tendency, however, is not always aligned with diplomatic initiatives or international cooperation in addressing global issues.

Furthermore, Trump's foreign policies exhibited an isolationist tendency, as evidenced by his actions concerning the Xinjiang region (Gill, 2020). He demonstrated a marked preference for the implementation of economic sanctions as a means of exerting pressure on China, opting for this approach over multilateral dialogue or the involvement of international institutions such as the United Nations (BBC, 2020a). his attitude is indicative of a pervasive distrust of outsiders that has been a hallmark of Trump's leadership style. He demonstrates a preference for unilateral actions, believing that such decisions are optimal for safeguarding US national interests, without the need for excessive reliance on international alliances. In this case, Trump regards the international security threat posed by repressive policies in Xinjiang as an issue that needs to be resolved in a direct and decisive manner.

Trump's approach to the situation is not, as one might expect, to treat it as a human rights issue requiring diplomatic resolution. Rather, he regards it as a direct threat to global security, particularly in the context of terrorism and extremism that are often associated with China's policies toward the Uyghurs and other Muslim groups. This approach illuminates how a leader's personality, in this case characterized by nationalism, pragmatism, and a penchant for control, can influence a nation's response to international issues, particularly in the context of Trump's foreign policy toward Xinjiang. President Donald Trump's foreign policy toward China, including in response to human rights violations in Xinjiang, places strong emphasis on national security and US domestic interests. This orientation is reflected in the National Security Strategy of the United States (2017), which explicitly positions China as a strategic competitor and a threat to US interests. This approach is then implemented through unilateral policy instruments, such as the imposition of economic sanctions based on the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and the signing of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 (Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, 2016; Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, 2020).

In addition, President Trump's rhetoric in various official statements and public speeches consistently emphasized issues of sovereignty, security, and economic pressure on China, with relatively limited multilateral involvement. This pattern shows that Trump's policy response to the Xinjiang issue was driven more by strategic and domestic considerations than by collective diplomatic efforts through international mechanisms.

Analysis of Joe Biden's Policy on Human Rights Issues in Xinjiang

The Biden administration has adopted a multilateral and diplomatic approach to foreign policy, a significant departure from Donald Trump's approach (Lisbet, 2021; Patrick, 2021). Biden emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and respect for human rights and focuses on restoring democratic values as the basis of U.S. foreign policy. Unlike Trump's more confrontational and unilateral policy, Biden prefers to engage international allies and utilize multilateral diplomacy to address human rights violations in Xinjiang (Caro et al., 2022). In response to China's repressive policies targeting Uyghurs and other Muslim groups, Biden has adopted a strategy of inviting Western countries and international institutions to join forces in collectively denouncing these actions and applying pressure on China, rather than pursuing a unilateral approach (Lisbet, 2021). Biden's personality, characterized by its empathetic and open nature in negotiations, exerts a significant influence on the United States' foreign policy approach. This

approach places a premium on compromise-based communication and international cooperation. Biden's approach to foreign policy is predicated on the notion that the resolution of international issues is more effectively achieved through collaborative endeavors with international allies than through the unilateral policies that have been a hallmark of his predecessors' foreign policy approach. In the context of foreign policy related to Xinjiang, Biden strongly condemned human rights violations and emphasized the importance of cooperating with U.S. allies and international organizations to urge China to take responsibility for its repressive policies against the Uyghurs. (Zaki & Sahide, 2024) For example, Biden called on the G7 countries and the European Union to join in condemning China's policies and increasing diplomatic pressure on China. This approach is very different from Trump's style, which tended to confront China directly through economic sanctions and harsh rhetoric. Biden believes that foreign policy based on multilateralism is more effective in maintaining international stability and promoting fairer solutions to human rights violations. In addition, Biden also focuses on the importance of upholding international standards on human rights, which serve as the foundation of US foreign relations (Ertem, 2021). In this context, Biden has demonstrated his commitment to ensuring that China remains accountable for its repressive policies, but in a more coordinated manner that prioritizes global diplomacy.

Biden's approach reflects not only a desire to pressure China, but also to ensure that the US plays an active role in building more constructive international cooperation, with a focus on upholding democratic values and human rights around the world. Biden sees the Xinjiang issue as broader than just a bilateral issue with China, but rather part of a global responsibility to ensure that the basic rights of every individual are respected. Thus, Biden's foreign policy on Xinjiang differs from Trump's, which prioritized national interests and dominance in international policy. Biden has chosen to strengthen diplomatic ties and work with allies to push for policy changes in China, with the aim of reducing human rights violations and maintaining global stability.

Differences in Leadership Characteristics and Foreign Policy

A comparative analysis of the leadership styles and foreign policy approaches of Donald Trump and Joe Biden reveals notable distinctions, particularly with regard to their respective positions on human rights violations in Xinjiang. The personality traits of these leaders significantly influence their responses to various situations, leading to a wide range of policies.

The image above illustrates the differences in leadership styles and foreign policy between President Donald Trump and Joe Biden. A comparative analysis of the leadership styles of these two presidents reveals significant disparities in five key indicators: leadership personality, decision-making style, interpersonal style, foreign policy actions, and the influence of personality on policy decisions. Trump's political persona is characterized by an acute sense of self-importance and a pragmatic approach to governance, with a pronounced emphasis on the primacy of U.S. interests. This disposition is manifest in his unilateral and confrontational approach to foreign policy, which has been a hallmark of his administration. He has a propensity to make decisions that are inflexible and driven by a strong

Figure 5. Comparison Table of Trump and Biden's Foreign Policies on Human Rights Issues in Xinjiang

Indicator	Donald Trump	Joe Biden	Personality Influence	Policy Action
Leader Personality	Egocentric and Pragmatic, focused on US supremacy and national interests	Empathetic and Diplomatic, focus on international cooperation and democratic values	Trump is more egocentric and pragmatic, prioritizing national interests, while Biden is more empathetic and diplomatic with a global orientation.	Trump is more authoritarian and nationalistic, while Biden focuses more on diplomacy and global cooperation.
Decision-Making Style	Goal-driven, Task-oriented, rigid in decision making	Context-driven, Task-motivated, more flexible and consider new information	Trump is more goal-driven and task-oriented, while Biden is more context-driven and task-motivated, responsive to changing situations.	Trump prioritizes short-term goals and national security, while Biden is more responsive to global dynamics.
Interpersonal Style	Authoritarian leadership, lack of trust in outsiders	Cooperative leadership, paying more attention to international cooperation	Trump tends to be more closed and authoritarian in international relations, while Biden is more open and cooperative.	Trump emphasizes isolation, while Biden emphasizes collaboration and diplomacy.
Foreign Policy Actions	Unilateral economic sanctions, isolationist policies	Multilateral approach, inviting allies to pressure China collectively	Trump is more aggressive and unilateral, while Biden focuses more on diplomacy and international cooperation.	Trump relies more on force and sanctions, while Biden focuses more on diplomacy and multilateral sanctions.

Source: Processed by researcher

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sense of purpose, often prioritizing the achievement of immediate objectives while neglecting to take into account the evolving global dynamics. Furthermore, his authoritarian interpersonal style engenders closed policies that exhibit a paucity of trust in external parties, as evidenced by his unilateral economic policies and sanctions.

In contrast, Biden's personality has been characterized as more empathetic and diplomatic, with a focus on international cooperation and democratic values (Thomas, 2022). Biden's approach to decision-making is characterized by its flexibility, contextual dependence, and responsiveness to new information, enabling him to adapt foreign policy to the dynamic global environment. Biden's cooperative interpersonal style is conducive to a more inclusive foreign policy that prioritizes diplomacy and international cooperation. Biden's foreign policy actions are characterized by a greater emphasis on multilateral engagement, whereby international allies are encouraged to apply collective sanctions and diplomatic pressure on China. This approach stands in contrast to the unilateral and isolationist policies that were a hallmark of Trump's foreign policy.

Comparison of US International Actions on the Xinjiang Issue

Donald Trump's leadership style emphasizes unilateral action and economic sanctions. He served as president from 2017 to 2021 and is known for his rigid, egocentric, and often unilateral leadership style (Yang & Qu, 2020). This style is reflected in U.S. foreign policy, which prioritizes national interests and U.S. supremacy in the international arena. This is evident in Trump's response to human rights violations in Xinjiang. Trump views this issue as not only a human rights issue but also a threat to global stability and international security requiring decisive action from the US.

One specific action undertaken by Trump was the implementation of economic sanctions targeting individuals and entities believed to be complicit in the implementation of repressive policies in Xinjiang. In July 2020, the Trump administration declared its intent to impose sanctions on senior Chinese officials accused of responsibility for mass surveillance, mass detention, and repression of the Uyghur ethnic group. These sanctions included asset freezes and travel bans for officials involved. One individual targeted by the sanctions was Chen Quanguo, who was then the head of the Communist Party in Xinjiang and was regarded as the chief architect of repressive policies in the region (Hendrix & Noland, 2021; Szadziewski, 2020).

Furthermore, Trump underscored that the human rights violations in Xinjiang can be categorized as "genocide," thereby signifying that the Chinese government's actions may be classified as crimes against humanity. This in-your-face rhetoric was intended to demonstrate to the international community that the United States would not tolerate such actions without consequences (Wong & Buckley, 2021). Nevertheless, Trump's approach prioritizes unilateral action and economic leverage over international diplomacy, resulting in the United States' marginalization in addressing the matter. Trump's inclination to act unilaterally serves to underscore the notion that the United States is a superpower that does not require the support of allies to ensure international justice.

Following Trump's departure, Joseph Biden assumed the role of leadership for the United States from 2021 to 2025. Biden's foreign policy approach, marked by his empathetic, cooperative, and multilateral leadership style, exhibited a marked shift in the United States' stance toward China, particularly with regard to human rights violations in Xinjiang (Caro et al., 2022). In contrast to Trump's inclination towards unilateral and confrontational approaches, Biden places a premium on international collaboration and diplomatic resolution of this issue. Biden's position on the matter is that a comprehensive, global solution is imperative to address egregious violations of human rights, particularly those occurring in Xinjiang.

A notable action undertaken by Biden was the initiation of multilateral cooperation with the European Union and G7 countries, resulting in the imposition of collective sanctions against China in 2021. In March 2021, the Biden administration announced joint sanctions with the European Union against Chinese officials involved in the persecution of Uyghurs. However, in contrast to the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States, these sanctions emerged as a collective international action, underscoring the global nature of human rights violations and the need for collective responsibility (Ertem, 2021).

Additionally, Biden has proposed a more coordinated policy toward China, underscoring the significance of international diplomacy. For instance, during the Biden administration, the United States resumed its membership in the World Health Organization (WHO) and reentered the Paris Agreement on climate change, signifying a renewed dedication to reinvigorating robust international collaboration. In the context of Xinjiang, Biden has also chosen to employ diplomatic pressure and multilateral cooperation to ensure that China remains under international pressure without exacerbating

bilateral tensions. For instance, in December 2021, the United States government imposed a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics in protest against the human rights violations in Xinjiang (Global Times, 2021). Despite the ongoing participation of US athletes, this decision conveyed a resounding message to the global community: the United States and its allies would no longer remain passive in the face of China's oppressive policies. This course of action was endorsed by allies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, which also participated in the diplomatic boycott. This is a clear example of Biden's multilateral approach, which is focused on coordination with international allies.

Furthermore, Biden underscores the significance of upholding human rights as an integral component of the foundational values that underpin U.S. foreign policy. This policy is regarded as an endeavor to reestablish the United States' credibility on the global stage as a nation that advocates for human rights and democratic principles. In this case, Biden seeks to ensure that China is held accountable for its policies in Xinjiang, but through more inclusive international cooperation and diplomacy.

A comparative analysis of the concrete actions undertaken by the two presidents reveals discernible discrepancies in their respective foreign policy approaches to human rights violations in Xinjiang. Trump's approach entailed the implementation of unilateral economic sanctions and the use of bellicose rhetoric, with the objective of demonstrating U.S. dominance. Conversely, Biden adopted a multilateral strategy that placed emphasis on international cooperation and diplomacy. Trump's inclination is to act unilaterally, with the objective of fortifying the United States' standing on the global stage. Conversely, Biden's approach entails the formation of an international coalition that is more responsive to human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

These actions are indicative of the significant disparities in the leadership styles of each president. Trump's approach is marked by unilateralism and confrontation, as evidenced by his use of economic sanctions and isolationism as tools of policy. In contrast, Biden's strategy emphasizes multilateral cooperation, aiming to address human rights violations through a more coordinated international effort.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that idiosyncratic leadership factors play a significant role in shaping the orientation and instruments of US foreign policy on human rights violations in Xinjiang. These findings show that variations in personality, ideological preferences, and presidential decision-making patterns have a real influence on external strategy choices, even when dealing with the same issues in the context of US-China structural rivalry. Thus, analysis at the individual level complements the macro-structural approach that has been more dominant in the literature.

Under Donald Trump's leadership, U.S. foreign policy tended to be unilateral and confrontational, with an emphasis on economic sanctions and harsh rhetoric toward China as a form of projecting dominance and protecting national interests. In contrast, the Joe Biden administration has prioritized a multilateral approach through coordination with allies, collective diplomatic pressure, and reaffirming its commitment to democratic norms and the international human rights regime. These differences show that although both administrations recognize human rights violations in Xinjiang, the instruments and strategies used are greatly influenced by the leadership style and policy orientation of each president.

Conversely, the Biden administration adopted a more multilateral and diplomatic approach, emphasizing international cooperation and respect for human rights. Biden's approach diverges from Trump's in that he opted to enlist allies in denouncing the human rights abuses in Xinjiang through the implementation of collective sanctions and diplomatic pressure, whereas Trump relied predominantly on unilateral policies. Biden's approach is characterized by a greater inclination toward negotiation and a prioritization of international cooperation, with the objective of preserving global stability, upholding democratic principles, and safeguarding human rights. Therefore, the discrepancies in leadership styles between Trump and Biden, with regard to personality and decision-making, have a substantial impact on the United States' foreign policy toward human rights violations in Xinjiang. Trump, who prioritizes national security and international dominance, has chosen unilateral measures, while Biden emphasizes multilateralism to achieve more inclusive and coordinated solutions.

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