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When States Crack Down on Dissent: Logic of Persecution in Authoritarian Regimes

In late July 2010, drought conditions and one of the hottest summers on record in Eurasia led to an outbreak of severe wildfires across Russia. The fires tore through forests and peat fields, destroying homes and crops, enveloping Moscow in a thick blanket of polluted smoke, and resulting in the deaths of over 50 people as of mid-August (Kramer, 2010, p. 1; "Russia," 2010). Officials' struggles to combat the flames were met by criticism that both local and federal governments have consistently neglected fire-prevention in favor of cost-saving measures and industry-favoring deregulation (Kramer, 2010, p. 1). Seeking to stay the public's wrath, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and other authorities hastened to promote a compensation plan that would provide at least 100,000 rubles (approximately 3,300 U.S. dollars) of federal money to each wildfire victim (p. 2).

As a post-Soviet but still transitioning government, the Russian government's reaction to the 2010 wildfires illuminates the complexities of regime transition and post-totalitarian governments' attitudes toward public dissent. In authoritarian regimes like Russia, the burden of proof falls on governments to continuously prove a regime's legitimacy and competency as justification for extensive restrictions placed on citizens' rights. Thus, large-scale disasters like the wildfires understandably provoke public outrage when citizens perceive government response as corrupt or inadequate, often leaving officials scrambling to calm the people before serious harm is done to the regime's image. In other words, when a majority of the populace is concerned, fearful or enraged about an issue, authoritarian regimes quickly take notice. On the other hand, public dissent perceived by a regime as "containable" or "manageable" is generally subject to persecution. The regimes in Russia and China both have established track records of targeting dissent, but persecution occurs in different ways and to different extremes, calling into question the relationship between regime type and the lengths to which states will go to maintain

control. In electoral authoritarian regimes like Russia, democratic-style institutions allow for limited creation of opposition parties and multi-party elections; in some ways, restricted avenues of dissent have been institutionalized, even if the consequences of dissenting are very real. In contrast, dissent in one-party regimes like China is by its very nature outside the country's institutions because the regime structure eliminates most opportunities for speaking out in public. This research seeks to examine dissent in Russia and China to test if persecution of dissent is less pervasive and violent in EA regimes than one-party ones, with the aim of proving that electoral authoritarian regimes are, overall, less repressive than one-party regimes.

BACKGROUND

After the de-legitimization of command and control economies, which had been grounded in fascist and communist ideology and gained momentum as the Soviet Union emerged as a superpower,[1] totalitarian states underwent radical change. Few have survived until today; North Korea and Cuba linger on as vestigial examples (Schedler, ed., 2006, p. 228), but one would be hard-pressed to find states looking to emulate either country's model of governance. Rather, the majority of these states have evolved—or, in some cases, disintegrated—from the totalitarian model to adopt less omnipresent methods of control.

Transitioning post-totalitarian states essentially fall into two main camps: those adopting some form of democratic institutions and processes, and those liberalizing within the confines of a one-party system. The former type of regime, known as electoral authoritarianism, incorporates the trappings of democracy. A state could, for example, establish nationwide elections with universal suffrage, but opposition parties may face insurmountable obstacles that

[1] Friedrich and Brzezinski (1966), among others, discussed the relationship between totalitarianism, fascism and communism in their argument for viewing totalitarianism as a new innovation in terms of typology (p. 15).

prevent the holding of free and fair elections. Ultimately, democratic institutions in EA regimes are undermined by those in power to preserve their control (Schedler, 2002, p. 41-47). One-party regimes, however, have prioritized maintaining political control of their countries via existing political norms and institutional structures (Dickson, 2007). Ideological differences may exist among party members, but disputes are handled within the party and only within the party; for political actors, there is no other viable mechanism for debate. One-party regimes may introduce economic and social reforms, but they resist political reforms that threaten their control of the government.

Because both EA and one-party regimes often have the means and inclination to respond to challenges to their authority, these authoritarian regimes "with adjectives," as they have come to be known (Schedler, ed., 2006, p. 4), often attempt to undermine or even eliminate political dissent. In recent years, Russia, an electoral authoritarian state, and China, a classic example of a one-party state regime, have both consistently made headlines in their persecution of dissenters.

Russia made significant strides in democratization after the fall of the Soviet Union, but the presidency of Vladimir Putin led to consolidation of federal executive powers at the expense of regional and legislative bodies. Hoffman (2003), a former Moscow bureau chief for *The Washington Post*, detailed the rise to power of Russia's wealthiest, examining the ideological shifts of elites—political and business alike—regarding how the country should be run and the role of democratic and capitalist institutions in Russia's government. Hoffman portrayed the solidification of the Russian government and the side effects of this process (restrictions of media freedoms and consolidation of presidential powers) as a paradox. On one hand, the oligarchs' domination of politics swindled the state out of billions and crippled its ability to

govern via independent institutions. On the other hand, although Putin's rise has lessened the corrupting influence of the oligarchs, it has also crushed many of the freedoms associated with the previous era, leading to resurging state control over industry and harassment of the media and political dissidents. These trends have not seen significant reversal since the 2008 election, when Dmitry Medvedev was elected president and Putin stepped down to become prime minister.

In China, the Communist Party has steered the country to impressive economic gains since the reforms of 1978, but not everyone has benefited from the transition to a market-focused economy. China's Gini coefficient, a measure of the gap between rich and poor, increased fourteen percentage points in thirty years (Chen, 2010; Sisci, 2005),[2] and as Shirk (2010) pointed out, currently surpasses that of even the United States. Similarly, expansion of political liberties has not occurred as swiftly as economic reform. Friedman (2006) commented that "leaving no safety valve, the repression that ensues in today's politically unreformed China could be a pressure cooker for an eventual explosion of intensifying tensions" (p. 94), an idea echoed by Gilley (2003), Wang (2003), Pei (2002) and others.[3] Thornton (2002) detailed forms of "contentious action" by Chinese citizens as cultural practices that express dissent, a result of the restrictions inherent in a "pressure cooker" society that lacks space for free expression.

The CCP's fear over losing its monopolistic control of the state leads the regime to pursue a two-pronged strategy. On one hand, Dickson (2007) observed that the Party co-opts successful entrepreneurs both to attract new talent to the CCP's ranks and to tie them into the success or failure of the party (p. 827). On the other hand, those outside the fold, those it believes are political threats, are targets of persecution. The Chinese government remains a one-party regime with a rule by law—rather than rule of law—approach to governing the country.

[2] From 1980 to 2010, China's Gini coefficient rose from .33 to .47 (Chen, 2010; Sisci, 2005).
[3] Gilley (2003] and Pei (2002) as cited in Thornton (2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

As totalitarian states came to power, political scientists sought to understand the nature and characteristics of such regimes through analyzing their defining qualities. Friedrich and Brzezinski (1966) characterized the nature of totalitarian states as "autocrac[ies] based upon modern technology and mass legitimation" (p. 4), differing from totalist regimes in that the "organization and methods [are] developed and employed with the aid of modern technological devices in an effort to… [realize] the total destruction and reconstruction of a mass society" (p. 17). Because Friedrich and Brzezinski believed that totalitarian states required devices like modern media and transportation methods to organize and control the masses, they considered totalitarianism to be a new breed of autocracy distinct from earlier monarchical, sultanist and other regimes. They also developed six main characteristics of totalitarian states: states must have an ideology, one political party ("typically led by one man"), a "terroristic police," monopolies in communications and weapons, and a centrally directed economy (p. 21). Both Soviet Russia and Maoist China were considered totalitarian states for most of their existence, exhibiting all six characteristics developed by Friedrich and Brzezinksi. In particular, these states' overwhelming police powers and monopolies on communication allowed them to freely persecute dissent and unwanted expression.

With the arrival of the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington, 1991), many regimes transitioned to less repressive forms of rule, although not necessarily to democratic rule. Totalitarian regimes were no exception. In Totalitarianism and Authoritarian Regimes, Linz (2000) examined the development of authoritarian systems out of totalitarianism, concluding that three major defining qualities emerged as differences between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. He categorized these qualities as halves of three diametrically opposed pairs:

mobilization versus politicization, ideologies versus mentalities, and monism versus limited pluralism. Compared to their totalitarian predecessors, authoritarian regimes such as post-Soviet Russia and post-1978 China are less politically mobilized (p. 165), less ideological (p. 167), and may exhibit at least somewhat limited pluralism (p. 168).

Since the fall of their respective totalitarian regimes, Russia and China have developed into two different types of authoritarian states, electoral authoritarian and one-party regimes. Linz's (2000) three diametrically opposed pairs may also serve well here to further illuminate the differences between EA and one-party regimes. In the pairs, authoritarian states tilt toward the latter qualities (listed in the above paragraph), while totalitarian states exhibit the former (p. 263). A similar pattern occurs in a comparison of EA regime Russia and one-party China in that, in comparison with each other, Russia features more of the "authoritarian" characteristics, while China tilts toward the "totalitarian" side. For one, Russia's populace is less mobilized than China's—for a cursory but telling example, consider each government's mobilization efforts for their respective Olympic games, Sochi 2014 and Beijing 2008.[4] White (2005) noted that compared to China, the Russian state does not value ideology as a cornerstone of government (p. 85), whereas any Chinese citizen can rattle off state philosophies like the principle of "Harmonious Society" and the "Three Rural Issues."[5] Likewise, the structure of the Russian government does enable more opportunities for limited pluralism, such as its multiparty system, in which opposition parties can win votes in elections. Linz's model provides a framework for

[4] For the 2008 games, China mobilized 1.7 million volunteers, planned elaborate countdown ceremonies to galvanize the support of Beijing residents, and conducted a seven year long advertisement and media campaign to keep the Olympics at the forefront of public consciousness. Although Russia's population is too small to mobilize citizens on even a fraction of China's scale, preparation for Sochi has tended not to incorporate citizen participation. For more information on Sochi, see Weir (2010) and Nemtsov (2009); for Beijing, Huang (2008) and Liu (2008).

[5] I have yet to come upon a satisfactory translation of this term in English; it refers to the concept of 农业农村农民, which directly translates as "agricultural industry, the countryside, and the farmer."

conceptualizing differences between EA and one-party regimes that can be applied to analyzing the pervasion and violence associated with persecution.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent liberalization of former Soviet regimes also sparked more research into developing a cohesive typology of new, so-called "hybrid regimes," Schedler's authoritarian regimes "with adjectives" (Schedler, ed., 2006, p. 4). Examining regimes with formal democratic institutions, Levitsky and Way (2002) sought to explicate "competitive authoritarianism" within the context of elections, state legislature and judicial systems, and the media (p. 52). Schedler's model fit halfway between the most detailed typology schemes and the simpler, conventional wisdom of pre-liberalization typology, where regimes are democratic, authoritarian, or simply somewhere in between. His method produced four broad regime types: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, EA, and closed authoritarianism (Schedler, 2002, p. 37). Analyzing Dahl's concept of "polyarchy," Schumpeter's minimalist standard of democracy, and Huntington's emphasis on "fair, honest, and free" elections for determining typology, Diamond (2002) introduced one of the broadest approaches. His model organized regimes into six categories: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, ambiguous regime, competitive authoritarian regime, hegemonic EA regime, and politically closed authoritarian regime (p. 25).[6]

Although all of these typologies provide a means to label and sort authoritarian regimes, the categories are nuanced to the extent that boundaries among the different regime types become unclear. Determining whether some regimes are electoral democracies or competitive authoritarian regimes, for example, is no easy task. Expansive models like Diamond's feature a category for uncertain states at the nexus of two regime types, but categories like "ambiguous

[6] Schedler (2002) noted that the Diamond (2002) model shared similarities with his own but divided up the EA category into three different types (p. 46).

regime" serve only to lump together tricky, unique cases, reducing the ability of the model to provide helpful information. Diamond himself acknowledged the problems surrounding development of hybrid regime typology: "When fitting messy and elusive realities against ideal types . . . [i]nteresting issues revolve around . . . boundaries . . . recognize[d as] blurry and controversial" (p. 27). Apart from the perhaps unresolvable debate of which typologies or terms best describe hybrid regimes, amid the broader continuum of their models' characterization of democratic or authoritarian qualities, scholars categorized China as more closed than Russia in all three schemes discussed on the previous page.[7] The implication is that regardless of the terminology chosen by researchers, their analysis of regime structure consistently found China to be a more repressive regime type than Russia.

Relevance of This Study

Research on the post-totalitarian transition has tended to target post-Soviet states; a wealth of comparative studies have been conducted that included post-Communist European states, the Commonwealth of Independent States and/or Russia (for example, McFaul & Stoner-Weiss, ed., 2004; Grzymata-Busse 2002; Miller, Grødeland, & Koschechkina, 2001). There have also been a fair number of studies on sultanist and neo-patrimonial regimes, but most studies are purely regional in geographic terms. Some researchers have searched further afield. In Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization, Brownlee (2007) compared Egypt, Iran, Malaysia and the Philippines. The conclusions drawn from these studies can be valuable.[8] Unfortunately, however, the main drawback of these comparative studies is that few target

[7] Diamond (2002) determined Russia to be competitive authoritarian and China as politically closed authoritarian (p. 30-31). Schedler (2002) described the Russian regime as electoral authoritarianism and China's as closed authoritarianism (p. 47). The four criteria of Levitsky and Way (2002) also indicated that Russia is less authoritarian than China (p. 54-58).

[8] Brownlee (2007) noted that the strength and cohesion of opposition groups vis-à-vis regime manipulation hinges on institutional differences among governments (p. 2-3); the methods by which United Russia permits opposition, even restricted as it is, are far more extensive than those allowed by the CCP.

differences between EA and one-party states, and hardly any comparative studies have been conducted on Russia and China. The few that exist, such as Cheng (2007) and Lupher (1996), tend to analyze both countries pre-liberalization, i.e., as totalitarian states or totalitarian states in transition rather than as authoritarian ones.[9] The relative lack of comparative research in this area indicates the potential usefulness of this research project, especially given Russia's and China's influence in international affairs and the importance of maintaining strong relationships with both countries for the United States.

Examining the price of public dissent in these countries is also valuable on its own terms. Both Russia and China are models for other transitioning states, and the two regimes' relative success in quashing dissent may inspire others to follow their example. More importantly, stifling dissent has serious implications for effective governance. States require analysis of past wrongs and current problems to determine a future course of action, so without channels for dissent, governments lack opportunities to improve response to crises or other challenges. Sunstein (2003) noted that "institutions are far more likely to succeed if they subject leaders to critical scrutiny and if they ensure [their actions] will face continuing monitoring and review from outsiders—if, in short, they use diversity and dissent to reduce the risks of error that come from social influences" (p. 148).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This paper intends to examine dissent in authoritarian regimes primarily by means of case studies. The dependent variable is state persecution of dissenters and the independent variable is type or regime/system (electoral authoritarian versus one-party).

[9] J. L. Wilson's article on the impact of the colored revolutions on Moscow and Beijing is the only post-transition, direct comparison study I been able to find (2009).

The case studies include twelve cases from each country, whittled down from a list compiled in the summer of 2010 and selected for events and incidents that evinced a clear potential conflict of interest between the government and the protestor(s) or dissident(s). Additionally, cases were selected to meet the following criteria. First, all events took place between 2003 and 2010. 2003 is essentially the earliest date when both Putin and President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiaobao were fully in power. By then, Putin had been president of Russia for three years; Hu and Wen had finished their multi-year transition to China's heads of state, a complex process in Chinese politics that involves accession to multiple posts. Essentially, by 2003 both administrations had had some experience and were key players in responding to events, crises and protests.

Second, although some events occurred on a national scale (changes to national laws, for example), others were primarily region-based or city-based. All cases, however, attained national significance and provided the central government an opportunity to intervene, although in some instances it decided against that course of action.

Finally, because this research focuses less on the details surrounding the event than the actions taken by dissenters and the government's reaction to their activities, information on these aspects of the cases had to be readily available and verifiable by multiple sources. What methods did dissenters use to express their views? What were their backgrounds—doctors, reporters, officials, or laypeople? Was their motivation economic (for example, to receive monetary compensation), political, or something else? Did political elites feel their rule was directly targeted by the dissent? How did the government respond: overtly, covertly and/or violently? Did it try to obstruct protesters before the event even occurred by introducing

institutional obstacles? Were dissenters allowed to speak freely? Did dissenters receive jail sentences or "disappear" for some length of time? What was the end result?

In terms of sources, information about the case studies came primarily from news sources—print and online media—based in Europe, the United States and Asia. In the final section of the paper, I will examine the data from the aforementioned analysis to draw some conclusions about the nature of public dissent in Russia and China.

CASE STUDIES

The primary aim of this research is not to educate the reader on recent events sparking public dissent in Russian and Chinese politics, but a brief summary of each case may provide a basic background of the situation that is helpful in the later analysis. As such, this section will provide an outline of all twenty-four cases, organized by country and arranged chronologically. For convenience, sources for the case studies will also be grouped by case in the references section of this paper; only sources directly quoted in this section are cited here.

Russian Case Studies:

- 2003: Russians celebrate a Chechen referendum vote that passes a new constitution stating Chechnya is part of Russia. Voter turnout is much higher than expected; some speculate that the government threatened to revoke pensions or humanitarian aid to pressure people to vote. Russia receives criticism for pushing the referendum before peace is completely established.
- 2003: Authorities remove the last independent television station, known as TVS, from Russian airwaves a day before it is scheduled to go off the air due to bankruptcy. By pulling the station early, the final episode of a show highly critical to the ruling party is not aired to the public.

- 2003: The owner of Russia's most valuable oil company, Yukos, is seized by the government and its CEO, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, is jailed for fraud and tax evasion, charges considered falsified by Western sources. Khodorkovsky is a wealthy oligarch who prior to his arrest spoke out against the encroaching power of the federal government and had talked of running for a position in the Duma. He remains in jail and has been on trial (his second trial) since 2009.
- 2004: In the Beslan school hostage crisis, a Chechen warlord sends terrorists to the school in North Ossetia to hold hostages in exchange for the end to the Second Chechen War. An explosion leads Russian forces to fire on the school, causing a fire in the gymnasium and resulting in the deaths of hundreds of hostages. After the tragedy, the Kremlin embarks on a campaign to centralize government control by, among other things, passing a law that permits the president to appoint regional governors (instead of governors running in elections to win their positions). The change is criticized as using the tragedy in Beslan to centralize power. This and other changes are featured in both Western and Russian media.
- 2005: Both houses of the Russian Parliament pass legislation that converts social benefits for approximately 40 million citizens from free services and subsidies on utilities into cash payments. For many citizens, the new cash payments cover expenses for far fewer services than those provided by the original benefits. In response to protests and opposition from some political parties, President Putin and his party respond that the measure is necessary to dismantle an outdated Soviet program and attempt to deflect blame onto regional governments.
- 2006: President Putin signs an executive order that strengthens regulatory powers regarding NGOs. The measure is widely seen as an effort to limit NGOs' potentially crucial roles in

events like the "color revolutions" of other post-Soviet countries. Putin's party emphasizes restrictions on foreign funding of Russian NGOs.

- 2006: Anna Politkovskaya, a fearless journalist who specializes in reporting on both sides of the conflict in Chechnya—and a fierce critic of Putin—is shot dead in her apartment. As the Western world and Russians mourn her loss, President Putin comments that "the degree of her influence over political life in Russia was extremely insignificant" ("Chechnya," 2006). Multiple suspects are arrested for her murder but are eventually acquitted.
- 2006: Another critic of President Putin and a former officer in the FSB and KGB, Alexander Litvinenko, dies a prolonged death from poisoning in London. After the autopsy, doctors discover the poison is polonium-210, a highly radioactive substance. Polonium-210 is only available in small amounts commercially, but almost all the world's polonium-210 is produced in Russia. Adding to the controversy, before his death, Litvinenko publicly accuses Putin of complicity in the poisoning. London authorities charge a former Russian government agent with murder, but Russia refuses to extradite the man, Andrei Lugovoi. Russia cites Article 61 of the Russian Constitution (which forbids extradition of citizens to foreign countries), although it has previously extradited some alleged criminals for trial outside the country.
- 2009: In Perm, Russia, fireworks in the Lame Horse nightclub light the club's ceiling on fire, engulfing the club in smoke and reducing visibility for patrons trying to escape the burning building. Over 150 people are killed as a result of the blaze. After the fire, intense media scrutiny surrounds the case and fire health codes. A government-led investigation reveals that many of the club's operating and licensing documents were obtained either

fraudulently or without the standard safety procedures performed by officials. Club owners and the fire inspector are indicted, and many local government officials resign.

- 2009: An accidental explosion at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric dam in southern Siberia kills at least 74 people. While investigating the story, a journalist named Mikhail Afanasyev questions the reaction of the dam's management to the tragedy, as some victims appeared to have survived the initial explosion but were not rescued in time to be saved. He also criticizes the-then official death toll of only ten people. After publishing articles about the explosion, Afanasyev is assaulted by two unknown men near his home and beaten unconscious. Prosecutors later charge him with slander for his remarks regarding the company managing the dam, although the charges are dropped after at least one NGO, the International Press Institute, speaks out against the case.
- 2010: In March, two female suicide bombers detonate attacks in two Moscow subway stations, killing at least 39 people and injuring approximately double that. A Chechen militant, Doku Umarov, takes responsibility for organizing the attacks and other bombings. As the Kremlin vows to renew focus on stamping out such militants, Russian citizens criticize the government for failing to install screening equipment at subway stations, as had been promised after a previous Moscow subway bombing. Some members of the national parliament and reporters also fault the FSB's lack of initiative in developing credible intelligence sources in the North Caucasus and its focus instead on a "shoot-to-kill policy" in the region (Pan, 2010a).
- 2010: Motorists around the country protest driving-related corruption, particularly government officials' use of *migalki*, or flashing blue lights, on their cars to flout traffic laws and drive at high speeds through traffic jams in Moscow. Although use of *migalki* is

supposed to be restricted to less than a thousand officials, corruption and bribery have enabled businessmen and other officials to acquire them, leading to multiple cases of *migalki*-equipped cars slamming into innocent pedestrians and drivers. Some protestors tape blue buckets to their cars and drive around Moscow; other protestors targeting vehicle-related injustices by organizing "horns of wrath." The intensity of motorists' outrage sometimes wins them concessions from the government, such as overturned convictions for drivers in *migalki*-related crashes, but protestors also face restrictions, such as arrests and charges for various "offenses."

Chinese Case Studies:

- 2003: The SARS outbreak, which originated in Guangdong Province but was covered up by provincial authorities, spreads across the country and eventually overseas. The government continues to deny the existence of the epidemic until a doctor in Beijing named Jiang Yanyong writes an email to Party officials and Western media, publicizing the disease and criticizing the government's approach, which had actually contributed to the spread of SARS. The CCP finally acknowledges the existence of SARS in public and allocates considerable resources to battling it. Jiang Yanyong becomes a national and international hero.
- 2003: Beijing pressures the Hong Kong government to pass Article 23 of its Basic Law (essentially Hong Kong's mini-constitution). Article 23 details expansive governmental measures to combat state subversion. The law meets with heavy opposition from citizens, with over 500,000 people (out of Hong Kong's population of less than seven million) protesting on the streets against the bill. Article 23 is eventually shelved without a conditional timetable. Key supporters among the Hong Kong government resign.

- 2004: Jiang Yanyong, the doctor who publicized the SARS cover up, writes a letter to China's political elites detailing his experiences as a doctor during the Tian'anmen Square Massacre, including damning admissions from high-ranking officials acknowledging the mistakes of firing on the peaceful protesters in 1989. Jiang's letter never spreads beyond those he sent it to. He and his wife are detained and Jiang is only released after seven weeks of "re-education." Because of the pressure placed on his wife and family, Jiang is effectively silenced from speaking out further.
- 2005: A company owned by the state-owned China Petrochemicals Company suffers a factory explosion, which poisons the Songhua River with an 80-kilometer long benzene chemical slick. Officials initially cover up the explosion, cutting off public water to affected areas and downplaying the health risk once news of the slick reaches the public. Chinese media criticize officials for blatantly lying about the incident.
- 2007: The sluice gates on the Three Gorges River Dam closes and the dam begins to fill with water, altering the river's course and habitat for fish and other wildlife, burying over a thousand archaeological sites, and forcing the relocation of over one million people to new homes farther from the river. Wang Xiaofeng, one of the senior members of a commission responsible for the dam's construction, warns that "we cannot win by achieving economic prosperity at the cost of the environment ("China," 2007)." The government and Wang Xiaofeng both later backpedal on these kinds of assertions, although Wang's career does not appear to suffer as a result of his statement ("Wang," 2007).
- 2008: The anniversary of a failed 1959 uprising against the CCP spurs peaceful protest by ethnic Tibetans and monks in March 2008. The protests lead to violence when members of the People's Armed Police, paramilitary troops responsible for domestic security, fire into the

crowds and assault protestors with batons. Some monks and nuns are forced back into their monasteries. On March 14th, some Tibetans retaliate by attacking security forces and property owned by ethnic Han Chinese. The resulting crackdown leads to further waves of police brutality and arrests and trials of protestors.

- 2008: The Sichuan earthquake reveals lax building codes for schools in the earthquake-prone region, as many schools collapse in areas where other buildings remained standing. Shoddy construction contributes to the deaths of thousands of school children, and because of China's one-child policy, many of the children come from single-child homes, further intensifying parents' grief. The parents of children killed during the earthquake demand further investigation into the collapses. Many parents, however, are pressured by officials to sign statements acknowledging they will cease protesting in return for compensation packages valued in thousands of U.S. dollars. Those who refuse to sign are threatened. An activist who begins investigating the buildings, Tan Zuoren, is arrested and brought to trial; Ai Weiwei, an artist and activist, is also beaten and detained to prevent him for testifying in Tan Zuoren's defense. Tan Zuoren receives a five-year sentence and is still in jail.
- 2008: Almost 300,000 infants are sickened and some die after consuming milk powder contaminated with melamine, a poisonous chemical added to watered down milk to fool quality control tests. The primary company responsible for selling the milk powder, Sanlu, admits that it had known of the problem for at least six months, but government officials aided in the cover-up to prevent the news story from casting a shadow over the Beijing Olympics. Angry parents are not permitted to attend the trials of the defendants in the case and some are also pushed to accept monetary compensation.

- 2008: Charter 08, a manifesto written by Chinese activists and signed by bloggers and elites from all walks of life, is modeled on Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 and demands the government institute greater democratic reforms, although it does not call for removing the CCP from power. Days before its online release, the main activist spearheading the effort, Liu Xiaobo, is arrested. Other prominent signers face consequences in their careers and/or harassment; even bloggers who signed the document are subject to interrogation. The document is scrubbed from websites accessible in China.
- 2009: Celebrity bloggers explode on China's internet scene. In particular, Han Han, a rally car driver and writer from Shanghai, gains prominence with his blog, considered to be the most popular personal blog in the world in terms of readership. Han Han writes critically on Chinese society and politics and does not shy away from direct criticism of Party elites or China's political system. He does not, however, suggest alternatives to CCP rule in his blogging. Due to his immense popularity, Han Han's posts are occasionally blocked or removed from his blog by the government, but he has yet to suffer harsher punishments.
- 2010: Google announces on its blog that it has detected a late 2009 cyber attack against company infrastructure and other large organizations. The blog states that the attack originated in China and was targeted at gaining access to the Gmail accounts of prominent Chinese human rights activists with lengthy histories of public dissent. Western cyber security experts suspect that because Beijing strictly monitors all hacking activity on the mainland, the government either hired the hackers or at least tacitly condoned the attack. By mid-March, Google essentially halts its direct search engine operations in China, beginning to redirect mainland users to its Hong Kong search engine.

- 2010: Workers at Honda plants in Guangdong Province strike for higher wages and improved benefits. Although the CCP has a known aversion to mass protest not sanctioned by the Party, the central government neither imposes restrictions upon the workers nor the company. The Honda workers negotiate a 34 percent pay raise. Beijing and other cities say they also plan to raise municipal minimum wages to help offset the standard of living divide between rich and poor.

RESULTS

Initial analysis of the data set would seem to discredit the original hypothesis that persecution of dissent is less pervasive and violent in EA regimes than one-party ones, thus casting doubt on the claim that EA regimes are, overall, less repressive than one-party regimes. In terms of pervasion, dissenters in nine out of twelve Russian cases suffered some sort of restrictions on their ability to speak out (three cases—the Lame Horse club fire, the Moscow subway bombings, and benefits protests—being the exceptions). Similarly, three Chinese cases (Article 23 protests, Songhua River poisoning, and the Honda plant strikes) also did not feature repercussions for dissidents.[10] Looking at the level of violence involved in confrontations with protestors, no major difference is readily apparent, either: three violent cases in Russia, four (one violent and three mixed) in China.

Before the reader, yawning, throws in the towel, a more detailed analysis of the data does reveal some interesting trends that have implications for analyzing repression in the two countries. The most obvious one is the role of the media in leading or enabling dissent in Russia. All of the Russian cases were made public by media reports that directly criticized the

[10] A fourth case, the 2003 SARS cover up, did not result in direct persecution of Jiang Yanyong (the doctor), but the media was forced to quickly phase out coverage of his story, thus limiting his means for speaking out to the public. However, Jiang was primarily focused on informing other medical professionals about the disease and alerting government officials that their attempts to maintain secrecy were actually helping spread SARS, so it is debatable whether or not Jiang perceived the media ban as restricting.

government's actions, and some reporters risked their lives to continue speaking out against government encroachment upon citizens' freedoms. All three violent responses by the regime were targeted toward authors and reporters. Anna Politkovskaya and Alexander Litvinenko, in particular, had become personal enemies of Putin by the time of their deaths. Politkovskaya was Putin's critic on the war in Chechnya; Litvinenko and Felshtinsky (2007) detailed the gain in power of the FSB, the KGB's successor as Russia's domestic security service, and its role in propelling Putin into the presidency. As an EA regime, Russia relies on a partially free press to maintain the appearance of permitting critical perspectives, but the government also tries to tip the balance of power in its favor, which leads to frequent conflicts with the Russian media.

Authors' and reporters' confrontations with the Russian government resulted in the bulk of persecution in Russia, but in one-party China, most journalists cannot even imagine constantly battling with the government in public over the publication of content. China's two news agencies, Xinhua and the China News Service, are both state-owned and state-directed.[11] Online newspapers and other publications are also given direction by state censors and officials (Pan, 2006, p. 2-3). The fusion of media agencies and government in one-party China eliminates the possibility for serious challenges to government corruption, incompetence and encroachment upon citizens' rights because critical articles rarely make it past the editing room or the censors in the first place. With this crucial institutional difference in mind, a case can be made that Chinese media and media-based dissent actually faces more persecution than their Russian equivalents, even if less journalist-targeted violence occurs. Expressing critical opinions via Russian media is not without its risks, but Chinese journalists do not even have the luxury of debating whether or not to publish such pieces: with rare exceptions, one word from a coworker

[11] China News Service is mostly targeted to Chinese speakers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas, but Xinhua publishes for mainlanders and recently has invested more money into developing its foreign language news publishing. Most mainland Chinese have little interaction with China News Service publications.

or an official and the offending article is "edited" to agree with the CCP version of the event. In one-party regimes in which the government directs the media, lack of independent institutions restricts dissent more thoroughly than EA regimes' efforts to tame their media networks.

Another trend worth examining is the background of protestors who managed to express their views with a minimum of persecution, with the aim of determining a difference between successful protests in EA and one-party states. In China, successful dissidents had very specific backgrounds:

- celebrities, whose fame provides them some protection against persecution if they do not openly challenge the CCP (celebrity blogging);
- when the CCP faces a crisis situation, genuine "good Samaritans" with no political motives (SARS cover up);
- workers striking against foreign-owned companies, and thus exhibiting no direct grievance against the government (Honda plant strikers); and
- highly mobilized protestors *not* on the mainland (Article 23 controversy in Hong Kong).

Essentially, fame, pure altruism, seeking redress from a foreign "wrongdoer," and/or living outside the country were prerequisites for successful dissent. The experience of Jiang Yanyong, the indefatigable doctor, provides an example of effective and ineffective protest by the same person but under different conditions and producing different outcomes. In 2003, with death tolls mounting, his letter to authorities regarding the spread of SARS successfully convinced officials to change tactics by making public details of the disease, even though doing so revealed the cover up of the SARS outbreak in Guangzhou. In 2004, however, Jiang's second attempt to document another cover up, the far more sensitive Tian'anmen Square massacre, went nowhere: although Jiang wanted to help the families of the Tian'anmen victims, his letter referenced

statements by political leaders in addition to his account of treating victims. To authorities, this imbued his letter with a political challenge. Without imminent threat of jeopardizing the CCP's reputation through further inaction (the impetus for caving to Jiang's suggestions during the SARS outbreak in 2003), the easy choice for authorities was to simply bury the case. The data set confirms that in one-party China, successful dissent is generally limited to those outside the bounds of normal Chinese society because the one-party system is intolerant of politically motivated protest by the average mainlander.[12]

Successful protest in Russia diverges from the Chinese model: although political dissenters may face harsh punishments for protesting, in some instances the voice of the average citizen has become more powerful in recent years. Specifically, motorists, a growing segment of the population and a group united by issues rather than ideology, have emerged as a relatively effective protest group, drawing attention to unfair driving-related convictions and pressuring the Kremlin to overturn them (Barry, 2009). The increase in the cohesion and vociferous nature of motorists' protests reflects how citizens' outrage stems from a sense that a fundamental right, safe personal transportation, is being violated by corrupt officials and businessmen (Boudreaux, 2010). Russian motorists rely on legal loopholes and circumspect attention to protest laws in order to organize dissent; in a one-party state like China where the state alters its interpretation of the law to suit the political situation, this form of protest would be nearly impossible to achieve without protestors facing harsh punishments.

[12] This statement may appear to overlook the relative frequency of certain types of protest in China. For example, in 2005 there were approximately 87,000 strikes and protest demonstrations in China (Shevtsova, 2007, p. 272). I have chosen not to discuss this topic further in this paper for three reasons. First, many strikes in China are resolved quickly and/or do not receive much media attention for political reasons, making researching the details of such cases quite difficult. Second, few of these protests led to provincial-wide or nation-wide scrutiny of the event, one of the criteria for inclusion in this study. Finally, I was unable to determine a strictly rational approach to choosing one or two strikes out of tens of thousands of protests for this study *except* via the criteria discussed in the "Case Study" section, hence my selection of only one recent incident that met the established criteria (the Honda plant strikes).

Additionally, an examination of each government's response to public dissent reveals the different tactical approaches taken by the regimes. For Russia, the government responded overtly to seven cases, covertly to four, and used both tactics to respond to one case. For China, none of the cases were solely approached via overt means; the CCP responded covertly to seven cases and used both tactics to respond to the other five.[13] An explanation for this variation lies in the CCP's prioritization of removing scandalous or undesirable events from the public eye, a means of avoiding an explosion of the "pressure cooker" society discussed by Friedman (2006), Gilley (2003), Wang (2003), Pei (2002), and others. As an electoral authoritarian regime, Russia permits limited but vocal opposition via protests and the press, thus providing a means to let off the proverbial "steam" by allowing citizens to express their grievances. Also, unlike China, White (2005) has noted that Russia's ruling party, United Russia, lacks a specific ideology (p. 85), meaning that the party has isolated itself from crises of confidence in a way that the CCP, tied to its promises of delivering consistent economic growth, can never be.[14]

Finally, one commonality in the regimes' approach to persecution is their tendency to prefer shifting blame to regional governments when incompetence or corruption is discovered. After disasters like the Lame Horse club fire and the Songhua River poisoning, local and regional authorities received the majority of the blame for lax fire codes and cover ups, even if lax federal policy created and/or compounded the issue. When Russians protested the overhaul of the benefits system in 2005, Putin attempted to deflect blame onto other political parties and regional governments, and much of the blame for the poor building codes in Sichuan were laid at

[13] For this study, overt action was defined as a direct measure taken to prevent dissent (or, in some cases, to allow or promote dissent. This usually happened when the government publicized some form of the original dissent or openly gave in to protestors). Overt tactics could involve legal, legislative or physical persecution. On the other hand, covert action involved threats, pressure, avoidance of blame, or similar techniques in an effort to reduce case visibility or efficacy of protest.

[14] In 2009, United Russia began promoting a new slogan, "Russian Conservatism," but the new movement does not appear to vary significantly from the previous "Putin's Plan" (Levy, 2009, p. 1).

the door of provincial, not central, officials (Bradsher, 2009). This phenomenon stems from the need for authoritarian regimes—both EA and one-party—to minimize the public's loss in confidence in the legitimacy and efficacy of the federal government as a result of such cases.

CONCLUSION

A discussion of the implications of this study cannot begin without the frank acknowledgement of several challenges associated with the research design and sampling of this type of research project. Quality event analysis requires an extremely large sample size to best approximate the population, careful selection of representative cases, and precise coding of events.[15] Given the resources at hand, this study could not hope to achieve the former,[16] but I have attempted to accomplish the latter two. Nevertheless, without the use of Russian-language (or many Chinese-language) sources, the possibility of a biased sample is real. In terms of coding, unbiased evaluation of each case's components was also a challenge.

Nevertheless, the data provide evidence to substantiate the overall hypothesis that one-party regimes are more repressive than electoral authoritarian regimes. These results square with the theories advocated by Diamond (2002), Schedler (2002), and Linz (2000) regarding typology and the nature of authoritarian regimes. Although persecution in the EA regime in question did not noticeably appear more pervasive or violent than in the one-party regime, the one-party state's methods of control—strict restrictions on publishing, suppression of events from the public—have resulted in a populace with little access to accurate information and few methods of expressing public dissatisfaction or outrage. This situation contributes to the "pressure

[15] For an excellent example, see Tilly (1995), possibly the benchmark for protest event analysis; researchers in the study analyzed over 8,000 events to produce the data set. See also Almeida (2003), Ekiert and Kubik (1998), Eckstein, ed. (1989), and Wolfsfeld (1988).
[16] For example, the study lacked a case study that examined the consequences of high-level dissent from politicians of Russia's opposition parties, such as opposition leader Garry Kasparov, who had planned to run for president in 2008.

cooker" effect that could potentially explode in the face of the ruling party and requires constant management to avoid that conclusion. In contrast, citizens in EA regimes have channels for expressing their opinions and, if careful, can directly engage with the government on certain issues to win concessions. The analysis led to the conclusion that repression and persecution are embedded within regime institutions; hence, examining persecution of dissent requires analyzing how tactics of repression filter through the regime or regimes in question. These findings have applications for further comparative study between authoritarian regimes with limited electoral institutions and those who have made strides in democratization but continue to reject integrating electoral institutions into the structure of the central government.

In regards to Russia's situation, the Putin regime's centralization of power, strengthening of United Russia's control of politics, and consistent policy of expanding limitations on expression may be moving Russia from electoral authoritarianism toward a more one-party type of regime. Based on the data collected in this study, the more the Russian regime acquires the trappings of such a regime, the more it will persecute those who challenge its control. More research into this area could provide a framework for understanding how EA regimes slip into more repressive forms of authoritarianism.

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