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Governmental Repression:

The Cases of China

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Departmental Honors Thesis
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Abstract:

This thesis explores what factors can explain why the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) response to two pro-democracy movements – 1989 Tiananmen Square and the 2014 Umbrella Movement – had varied repression levels. Specifically, this thesis will explore the impact of social media, break downs in government cohesion, and the type of protest on governmental responses. This research finds that a break down in government cohesion during the 1989 protest caused the declaration of martial law and the use of tanks followed by infantrymen. Although the 2014 protest was regime-threatening, social media constrained the government's ability to use alternative media and harsh repression. Especially due to the large number of users live posting uncensored information. Furthermore, there was not a break down in government cohesion during the 2014 protest which is why the CCP's response utilized soft repression.

Introduction:

Governments respond to protest movements in very different ways; some governments respond with extreme violence, and some have a more measured response. This thesis will look at the rising superpower – China – to investigate why governments have varying responses. Since the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) control began in 1949, there have been numerous pro-democracy movements in China, such as Tiananmen Square, the Charter 08 Movement, the Democracy Wall Movement, and the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. These movements organized mass protests with the number of protestors growing as time went on. While the goals of these protesters seem to be similar, such as increased representation and less repression, the Chinese government has responded in varied ways.

However, the question remains: Why has the Chinese government carried out responses to the pro-democracy movement, during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident and the 2014

Umbrella Movement, with varying repression levels? What factors can explain the differences in these responses? Specifically, why was there such a violent response to the protestors at Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, China, versus the confrontational but measured response, carried out during the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong?

As scholars have found, it often depends on outside influences (Folch, 2012). Still, scholars point out that gaps arise within this research field due to only providing one explanatory factor instead of using multiple (Davenport 2007). This thesis aims to help close the gaps by using multiple explanatory factors.

From a protestor's standpoint, extensive research on the factors the Chinese Communist Party uses to repress is extremely beneficial. It provides protestors information on how the Chinese government operates and responds during pro-democracy movements. Protest organizers can learn from the failures of previous protests and the factors governments used in the past to design their protests accordingly. More developed strategies will not only aid in creating a more inclusive government system but can also reduce the fatality rates. Not only is this applicable to future responses by the Chinese government, but it can also be applied to other authoritarian regimes such as Russia and Iran.

The importance of understanding the CCP's response to pro-democracy protests also becomes increasingly important for the international community. Specifically, there could be potential involvement from global democracy leaders such as the United States. If they decide to become involved with the fight for democracy, knowledge about the government's rationale would be a great benefit.

As the United States continues to develop its international aid to budding democracies, knowing weaknesses in governments during protests will be a benefit. An example of weakness

would be their economy, so as a response, the United States could implement sanctions to condemn the government's response. If the United States wants to aid protestors in their influence on changing authoritarian regimes, they both must understand what the government's rationale for different responses is. Similarly, in the event of human rights violations, the United Nations will be called on to intervene. However, this has become increasingly complicated as China is one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Studies on authoritarian regimes and their response to pro-democracy movements have a massive impact on all bodies involved.

This thesis will also help close the gaps in the literature of authoritarian regimes because of the comparative case study approach. While the literature on authoritarian regimes has focused on previous repressive responses such as the "Arab Spring" and the "Color Revolutions", this thesis will aim to discover if any of the factors that can explain why governmental repression has changed. For this research, factors will serve as variables, such as protest type, social media, and a break down in government cohesion. An in-depth study of the CCP's response to pro-democracy movements will also provide an insight into how other single-party authoritarian regimes repress. Furthermore, this thesis adds to a growing body of literature that considers the changes of one regime over time whereas research that looks at cross-country cases has not.

The results from this comparative case study analysis are that three factors can explain the varied responses to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement and the 2014 Umbrella Movement. The first explanatory factor is the categorization of protests using the terms regime-engaging vs. regime-threatening. The second factor is social media and the effects it has on creating a limitation bubble on a regime's ability to respond with harsh repression. The last

factor is a break down in government cohesion such as the division created during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, which resulted in harsh repression as a response.

Literature Review:

The majority of research on Chinese repression often lacks comparative case study analysis approaches especially when trying to answer why the Chinese government had a harsher response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement than the 2014 Umbrella Movement. What factors can explain this variation? This has led to researchers describing it as a concurring limitation.

In the current literature, some factors explain an authoritarian regimes' response through co-optation (Gerschewski, 2013), attrition (Yuen & Cheng, 2017), thought work (Deng & O'Brien, 2013), and diffusion proofing (Koesel & Bunce, 2013). To give a brief explanation, co-optation is the capacity to tie strategically relevant actors to the regime elite. Attrition is a method in which governments are constantly shifting their response tactics to keep up with the ever-changing protests. Thought work uses protestors' relatives and forcing them through blackmail to manipulate the protestor's activity in mass mobilizations. Lastly, diffusion proofing is controlling the context of the movement such as framing uprisings and the outcomes negatively.

While all of these have been used to define and explain a repressive government, will these factors be able to answer why there are varying levels of repression in the Chinese government's response? Are there any new factors that can be applied to the same explanation?

To address this issue of limitations, this thesis analyzes the case of the Chinese Communist Party as the repressive government and Tiananmen Square and the 2014 Umbrella Movement as the protest cases.

Defining the problem: What is Repression

What is repression and has it evolved to be included in more governmental responses? Repression is defined as a “wide variety of coercive efforts employed by political authorities to influence those within their territorial jurisdiction: overt and covert; violent and nonviolent; state, state-sponsored; state-affiliated; successful and unsuccessful” (Davenport, 2007). While Davenport has defined repression, the cause for repression still needs to be examined in which outside factors must be considered. Repression rests on a multitude of factors, and one party is not solely responsible every time (Davenport, 2007). Instead, the presented viewpoint within the current literature paints the protestors in a negative light. Therefore, when studying repression, the notion has always been centered around the protestor’s actions which prompted a brutal governmental response. The notion has never been centered on repressive governmental responses during pro-democracy movements.

Repression in Mainland China:

Chinese repression has modernized, and there is not one specific form used for each case of mass mobilization. Repressive acts within the Chinese government have been carried out for decades with the most known example being Tiananmen Square in Beijing (1989).

The Tiananmen Square movement originally started to mourn the death of Hu Yaobang, CCP General Secretary from 1981-1987, but turned into a call for democracy. The protest began gaining traction as members of the worker class and students became more involved. The protest eventually grew to 1.2 million protestors across different provinces and cities. This is when the government – The Chinese Communist Party – declared martial law. The Chinese government sent in the People’s Liberation Army, which consisted of 250,000 troops and a large number of tanks, to break up the pro-democracy movement. The People’s Liberation Army did not hold

back when it came to suppressing the movement. While many students died as a result of the massacre, there has not been a full death toll released by the Chinese government.

It is not always the government doing the grunt work though. Relational repression is the act of using their social ties to encourage protestors that are participating in mass mobilization to stop, otherwise their social ties and often family ties will be negatively affected (Deng and O'Brien, 2013).

The government relationally represses by depending on pressure, emotional blackmail, and feelings of guilt more than affection. The effectiveness relies on: "how much sway the government has over work team members and the strength of ties between team members and protestors" (Deng and O'Brien, 2013). Oftentimes, the government will go to extreme measures to ensure the members on the thought work teams are working to dismantle the protestors.

Carrying on a similar fashion of studying outsourced repression in China, Ong (2018) focuses on outsourcing to the Chinese municipal officers instead of the relational repression. While Deng and O'Brien note that relational repression can occur at any given point, Ong notes that it is mostly utilized during the early stages of repression whereas outsourcing to thugs can occur at any point. Outsourcing is tied to monetary benefit. For example, no money is required with relational repression because, as stated before, it relies on emotional and family blackmail.

On the other hand, outsourcing to thugs serves as another extremely cheap alternative because the cost is exceptionally smaller than deploying a full military. With that being said, the government faces increasing issues when it comes to the outsourced thugs using excessive levels of violence and force. However, this has negative impacts, which have led to growing distrust of the government and their response to pro-democracy movements.

As different leaders have taken the presidency in China, it has grown to be more and more strategic with the propaganda campaign. Specifically, when Xi Jinping took the seat in 2012 and heavily funded the propaganda campaign. One of the ways that the Chinese government has been able to control its media is by limiting access to global platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Instead, they developed their platform for social media, WeChat and WhatsApp.

When the campaign first began the topic of soft power, one of the main goals was to “drown out anti-China forces in the West” (Brazys & Dukalskis, 2020). Another one was to wrest global ideological leadership from the hands of the West. Xi Jinping acted as the executor for this campaign as previously stated because after the 2007 adoption of soft power, in 2013, Xi called on the CCP’s media apparatus to tell a good Chinese story and promote China’s views internationally. One of the main ways that the Chinese government can penetrate democracies is because of the free speech protections offered by democracies. More specifically, censorship – even of foreign media – is tricky for open political systems. Therefore, when repression occurs, it has become increasingly easier for the CCP to create propaganda on other countries’ problems to deter from their human rights violations.

Previous literature has suggested that less repressive authoritarian regimes have emerged and that protestors in these countries often limit their challenges (Li, 2019). There are two outcomes, the Chinese state permits some space for protests and most protestors confine themselves to this space.

Can the notion of the zero-sum game truly capture the nuances and complexities of contentious politics in authoritarian regimes? Authorities tolerate the majority of protests and

most did not reach a transgressive form (Li, 2019). This means that they stayed away from violence, radical political claims, and organizing with other protests.

Coercive capacity is essential to authoritarian stability. Even after a state is dealt a blow to its legitimacy, if its coercive capacity tactic is intact, the state will still have legitimacy. When popular resistance is introduced, it then becomes seen as a zero-sum game in non-democratic settings due to only one of two possible outcomes. The studies on this have then complicated the understanding of possible outcomes and how authoritarian regimes are not a zero-sum game type government. The studies typically focus on measures taken by incumbents rather than when protests have taken place and the regime's responses from there. The notion of the zero-sum game fails to represent the whole landscape of contentious politics, but more specifically in undemocratic states (Li, 2019).

However, the literature has only focused on why the protests succeed or fail. It has not used multiple explanatory factors, which resulted in the zero-sum game being the only possible outcome. The most common form of repression found within the literature is policing (Li, 2019). It then breaks down into two factors – the character of the protest and the power of social groups.

The debate among researchers has turned into defining what 'radical' because different societies will have varied perceptions (Li, 2019). In China, claims for democracy and any effort to contest the Chinese Communist Party have the potential to be identified as radical. This is something that persists in the region of Xinjiang where the Chinese government assimilated the Uyghurs and Tibetans. It then becomes imperative for people to understand China's policies regarding minorities and how radicalism is often attached to those that do not belong to the Han Chinese majority.

Affirmative action-type policies do not improve the conditions of minorities. Minorities in China are still treated as peripheral people marginal to power and politics (Li, 2019). The notions of assimilation continue to be the same, China is a repressive regime that focuses on integrating people into the Han Chinese majority, but they must drop their minority identity. However, researchers have analyzed this in different ways. Due to limited data sets, researchers are forced to create self-made datasets, which will inevitably lead to limitations, but this is something that has become quite common when studying the zero-sum game notion in Chinese politics specifically.

Police were said to have responded to 33 of the events, and in 20 of those, they were sent by the government (Li, 2019). It is also important to note that the police are often not official members of the Chinese police force. They are instead thugs or gang members hired by the Chinese Communist Party. The influence of social groups is then weakened after incorporating character measures and the effect of minority protests becomes insignificant.

With the idea of police presence and factors that cause governments to repress, one must consider regime-engaging protests versus regime-threatening protests. When it comes to regime-engaging protests, the regime and the protestors see the legitimacy of each side. Regime-threatening protests tend to exhibit the most repression and transgression in which both sides fuel the fire.

When it comes to protestors in general, most protestors ‘restricted their claims, actions, and organization within the state-set bounds’ (Li, 2015). As protestors define their claims and organization within the state-set bounds for mobilization, informal norms are introduced. The state then creates limitations on mobilization, but also the claims the protestors are allowed to

make. If the protestors refuse these limitations, the protest shifts from regime-engaging protest to regime-threatening protests which are met with harsh repression.

However, the Chinese government has created extremely restrictive limitations about protests. Due to concerns about regime legitimacy, Chinese leaders have tolerated certain events. The central government has issued a series of regulations to restrain the use of coercion to deal with protests considered to fall within this category. Therefore, protestors in China have always pushed their limits because they believe that this is the only way the government will respond. In regime-threatening protests, such as pro-democracy movements, they are met with harsh repression (i.e., the Charter 08 movement).

The nature of the protestors' claims is the most critical element that determines state reactions to protest (Li, 2015). Transgressive protests have led to the notion of zero-sum games: the regime is toppled, power is divided, or the protest is squashed. It is important to note though that repression can backfire, create more radicalized movements, and result in a stronger push towards regime-threatening demands.

Repression in Hong Kong:

Repression in mainland China has thrived on more in-person activities such as thugs breaking up mass mobilization and thought work with family members. Hong Kong's repression started behind the scenes in the form of laws but has evolved into multiple different methods. Since the Handover in 1996, from Great Britain to China, Hong Kong citizens and residents have been placed on the back burner, and China's priorities have taken the forefront. The 1996 Handover brought about what people in Hong Kong considered necessary and good change. However, the people of Hong Kong quickly realized that legislation such as the Basic Law and

the White Papers were not in favor of letting them maintain their democratic freedoms as originally promised.

The Umbrella Movement started in 2014 due to the rules the Chinese Communist Party had released regarding the 2017 Chief Executive elections in Hong Kong. After being told they would have the freedoms to elect someone, the Chinese Communist Party notified the citizens of Hong Kong this was no longer true. Instead, they would have democratic voting abilities but only from a list of pre-selected CCP loyalists (Chan, 2014). Seeing this as unfair, the movement started with students across Hong Kong walking out of classes. It eventually turned into a mobilization composed of different groups such as the working class, professors, students, young, rich, old, and poor (Chan, 2014). As thousands of protestors took to the streets, police in Hong Kong dispersed the crowds using tear gas and water cannons.

The CCP and Hong Kong government, controlled by the CCP, consistently respond to the 2014 Umbrella Movement through attrition. The Chinese government was constantly changing its tactics when responding to the mass mobilization, which is different than other authoritarian regimes that normally rely on one singular method (Yuen and Chen, 2017). When attrition is utilized, it is in one of two ways: defensively or offensively.

One of the main ways the Chinese Communist Party has been able to repress the citizens of Hong Kong is through the use of passing legislation. Democratic freedoms have been desired by the citizens of Hong Kong since the 1950s but did not last past the 1980-90s when the Sino-British Declaration was introduced (Chan, 2014). The Sino-British Joint Declaration of the 1980s was essentially an agreement between the People's Republic of China and the United Kingdom that detailed the transfer of Hong Kong in 1997.

After the signing of the Joint Declaration, Hong Kong's semi-autonomic government drafted legislation referred to as the Basic Law would act as a new constitution. The first desires were representation in the Legislative Council (Comparable to the United States Congress). These desires occurred between 1985 and 1987.

However, this demand was extinguished by the British government, some believe with strong influence from the Chinese government. The representation was given to the Hong Kong citizens, in 1991, due to the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. There was a long-standing tradition that the governor of Hong Kong was selected by officials in London, but once the Handover occurred, they were selected by the CCP's Election Committee.

As the world modernizes, methods of repression will follow. With the introduction of social media, mass mobilization has become easier than ever before. Specifically, social media allows information to be spread on global platforms within a matter of minutes such as using live streams. This information can be mobilization details or uncensored information about governmental responses. Facebook was determined to be the most influential social media platform during the mobilization efforts because of the number of users (Lee et al., 2015). Not only did it increase the support for the Occupy Central Movement, but it also significantly reduced the citizens' satisfaction with the Hong Kong government.

Since younger generations are spending more time utilizing social media, they also tend to be more active when it comes to starting mass mobilizations. Political information obtained from social media cultivates both pro-protest opinion climate perception and pro-protest attitude (Shen et al., 2020). Alternative media, on the other hand, for political information, plays an influential role in shaping pro-protest attitude only. Therefore, Facebook being the main

information source had an indirect effect on online participation through influencing perceived movement support and pro-protest attitude.

Alternative media is defined as media platforms devoted to providing perspectives and viewpoints different from those of mainstream media and advocating social reform of alternative types. It is then used to disseminate insurgent discourses and alternative ideology by covering problems within Hong Kong's society, such as the genuine lack of democracy and the exacerbating social inequality. Alternative media is linked to reshaping people's political views; it helps convert people to being democracy supporters and develop pro-protest attitudes. The development of new media technology creates a more inclusive environment for people to share their pluralistic views. Alternative media serves as an attitude intensifier to invigorate an individual's intention of social movement participation. On the other hand, social media acts as an echo chamber saturated with pro-protest messages during social movements.

Media effects on political participation are largely influenced through socio-psychological factors (Cho et al., 2009 and Jung et al., 2011). Online participation is easier than in-person participation because the cost and benefits issues do not exist. Joining street protests requires more cost with time and money and also entails greater risk. The risk could be police brutality, water cannons, or tear gas in the case of the Umbrella Movement.

Not only has social media served as a platform for students to mobilize and express their opinions, but interest groups emerging in the Special Administrative Regions have also served as an outlet. Interest groups are more common now rather than thirty-two years ago during the Tiananmen Square protest.

Lo (2013) looks at the political interest group – the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements (HKASPD) – which advocates for democratization in both

China and Hong Kong. Not only do they advocate for democratization, but they also push for the Chinese Communist Party to reverse the official verdict of the 1989 Tiananmen Square. They were responsible for helping rescue some of the protest mobilizers shortly after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident which was known as Operation Yellowbird. The alliance has also branched into Macau to expand their advocacy to limit the control of power that the PRC has over the two semi-autonomous territories. The HKASPDM wants to let the SARs convert to democracy. The existence of such a political advocacy group is an indication of a certain degree of political tolerance by both the HK and Chinese governments. Furthermore, the HKASPDM plays a crucial role in fully utilizing Hong Kong's political space and keeping the idea of democratization alive.

Although the Occupy Movement (OCM) is said to have impacts on the economy and society, it is found to be short-term. The real impact was “long term with deep repercussions for the politics in Hong Kong” (Lam, 2015). The political demonstrations before been drastically different because the OCM “was the first attempt in the city to organize the general public by individuals to focus on a single issue” (Lam, 2015). The purpose of the OCM was to become a social awakening process in which the general public was educated to understand the meanings and significance of universal suffrage.

Some of the challenges Lam (2015) brought attention to are: 1) the prospect of consolidation a democratic model that all parties agree on, 2) the crisis legitimacy will be further deepened, 3) the executive-legislative relation will remain adversarial, 4) the society will remain divisive, and 5) that the Chinese government finds it is more important to exert more control over HK which result in less autonomy. Due to all of these arising challenges, Hong Kong's governing ability will be greatly reduced and therefore decay the political field (Lam, 2015). A solution proposed

to fix increasing political decay in Hong Kong would be to elect or produce a Chief Executive who is freely elected by the people. However, this remains challenging since the elections have a history of being unfair and not free.

Why the Current Literature is Not Sufficient:

Current literature in the field, which has utilized comparative case studies, has only focused on movements within China, such as Li (2015) who analyzed the Charter 08 Movement, Falun Gong, and the Uighur Movement. It does not compare the movements and responses that occur within China's Special Administrative Regions (SAR) which include Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong to the movements in China. To assist in growing the current literature, I have chosen to apply the comparative case analysis method to a case from mainland China, and one from its Special Administrative Regions, Hong Kong. Specifically, the cases are the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, in Beijing, China, and the 2014 Umbrella Protest, in Hong Kong.

While there is sufficient literature on each explanatory factor regarding specific case studies, for example, social media's impact during the Umbrella Movement (Lee et al., 2015, Shen et al., 2020), it still does not show the truly revolutionary impact. More specifically, the available literature on social media does not answer what impact social media has had on the Chinese Communist Party's response to pro-democracy movements. Furthermore, the comparisons of social media's impact on movements within China and Hong Kong are slim to none. The purpose of this thesis is to show how important social media platforms are during pro-democracy movements.

While there has been some literature conducted on government cohesion (Levitsky and Way, 2012), during pro-democracy movements in authoritarian regimes, it has focused mainly on countries involved in the Arab Spring and Color Revolutions. The literature has produced

information regarding the split among the party leaders during Tiananmen Square and its effect on the CCP's response. There does not appear to be literature addressing government cohesion during the 2014 Umbrella Movement.

Lastly, the classification of protests has been attributed to explaining why government responses have varied so greatly in terms of repression. One of the samples of literature provided in the literature review discusses how the Chinese government works with regime-engaging protests and creates boundaries. The shift into a harsh repressive response is apparent when the protest then moves from regime-engaging to regime-threatening. While it applies to the protests in China, such as the ones Li (2015) mentions, the applicability is not the same when analyzing the Hong Kong case. This is because both of the protests, Tiananmen Square and the Umbrella Movement, called for a power shift, but only the UM protestors were met with soft repression.

My research and analysis are aimed at providing answers to these lingering questions and closing gaps within the comparative case study field, specifically focusing on China and Hong Kong pro-democracy movements as the cases.

Hypothesis:

There are three hypotheses for this analysis on the Chinese Communist Party's harsh response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident and the 2014 Umbrella movement.

The first hypothesis is *that a larger social media presence will result in a lower degree of violence*. Looking at the Umbrella Movement, for example, there were over one million social media users in Hong Kong sharing live updates to the world (Lee et al., 2015). This mass communication helped the protestors show to the world the Chinese government's response without censoring. Furthermore, the international community was watching firsthand to see how the Chinese government would respond.

The second hypothesis is that *regime-threatening protests will result in a higher degree of violence*. The type of protest matters significantly because when looking at the Tiananmen Square Incident the CCP responded harshly when the protest shifted from regime-engaging to regime-threatening. I hypothesize that this will be true when looking at these cases comparatively.

Lastly, the third hypothesis is that *a break down in government cohesion, as seen within the CCP during 1989, will result in a higher degree of violence*. This is a hypothesis because, as soon as the CCP leaders split, martial law was declared, and then harsh repression occurred.

Methods:

This research will utilize a comparative case study approach to examine qualitative research. The research aims to find what factors explain the varying repression levels carried out by the Chinese Communist Party during 1989 Tiananmen Square and the 2014 Umbrella Movement. Furthermore, this research aims to examine any similarities in the responses orchestrated by the CCP. Researchers have stated throughout their studies that limitations in the comparative case study field, especially Chinese politics, are due to only including one explanatory factor (Davenport, 2007). This current research is applicable regarding utilizing more than one explanatory factor to help close the gaps. Furthermore, expanding on the generalization ability will help improve the research on countries protesting authoritarianism while accounting for multiple factors.

Before diving into the data section, I will first explain my theory of this research. As researchers in the field of international comparative studies know – authoritarian governments – competitive (Russia) or non-competitive (China), often have a few tight-knit officials leading for large populations. To maintain this level of power, they rely heavily on repressive acts such as

limiting the use of the internet, diffusing protests, and even utilizing militaries against their citizens. We also know that previous authoritarian regimes have a history of sparing no lives when it comes to the utilization of the military, such as the Arab Spring, Color Revolutions, and the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident in Beijing, China. The theory for this paper is that while other researchers have said repression is the backbone of authoritarian regimes (Gerschewski, 2013), there are more explanatory factors when comparing these two cases. My research will utilize factors such as the revolutionized media platforms acting as a limiting factor on a government's ability to enact violent responses, cohesiveness among those serving in government roles, and the kinds of protests (i.e., regime-engaging or regime-threatening).

The variables used in this research and analysis are a break down in government cohesion, social media, and type of protest. First, it is important to define each variable and explain how they affect a government's response to a pro-democracy movement. When using the term government cohesion, this research is defining it as whether major leaders of a regime or government are stepping down or become divided. The second variable would be social media which will be defined as platforms that allow the general public to spread information to a global platform (i.e., Twitter and Facebook). Lastly, the third variable is the type of protest in which this research will mirror the definition that Li (2015) applied. Regime-engaging protests are protests that work with the government and do not call for a complete overthrow of the government or their power. Regime-threatening protests are those that act out of the confines the regime has set and call for a complete overthrow of the government and or removal of power.

Each variable has different levels of effect on a government's response to a pro-democracy movement. Social media acts as more of a confining factor for governments because it allows people all over the world to see unfiltered, unbiased information. Therefore, regime

governments are either restricted on what their response can be, or they have the option to create an internet shutdown. This has been seen in authoritarian regimes such as Iran. A break down in government's cohesion has a massive effect on whether the regime responds with harsh repression. As seen with the Tiananmen Square protest and the split of the party leaders in which two leaders declared martial law, but others did not agree. Lastly, the type of protest acts as an excuse for a government to declare a harsh repressive response. For example, if they can push the message of our country is at risk, then they can respond harshly.

1989 Tiananmen Square Background:

Uprisings and protests are not a new trend in Chinese politics that has emerged with the modernization of society. Protestors have been mobilizing since the dynasty eras, but pro-democratic uprisings started with Mao Zedong and his rise to power. After the Democracy Wall Movement's slow progression and results, students took to the streets in the late 1980s. They staged class walkouts and in-person demonstrations to voice their desires for government reform and to mourn the loss of Hu Yaobang, CCP General Secretary from 1981-1987. This would later be known as the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement.

The protest began gaining traction as members of the worker class, and the students became more involved and eventually grew to 1.2 million protestors mobilizing in different provinces and cities. This is when the government – The Chinese Communist Party – declared martial law due to the large numbers of protestors gathering each day and most importantly, because of China's tarnishing image on the international stage. The Chinese government sent in the People's Liberation Army, which consisted of 250,000 troops and a large number of tanks, to break up the pro-democracy protests in Beijing. While many students died as a result of the massacre, there was never a full death toll released by the Chinese government. The People's

Liberation Army did not hold back when it came to their attempts to suppress the movement, such as firing live rounds of ammunition into the crowds. This led to international sanctions and heavily suppressed information regarding the massacre, which still has not been fully undisclosed. Suppression has included limiting research on the Tiananmen Square incident within mainland China, altering social media, as well as never releasing full documentation about the events.

Between the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident and the 2014 Umbrella Movement, the citizens of China released a document filled with questions about China's future, commonly known as the Charter 08. Charter 08 is composed of three sections, a preamble, fundamental concepts, basic positions, and a conclusion. Within the Charter, the preamble focuses on highlighting the anniversaries such as the Democracy Wall Movement and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More so, it included critiques of the Chinese government and asked the question, "will China continue to 'modernization' under authoritarian rule, or will they adopt the basic universal human rights as other countries have" (Human Rights in China, 2017).

The authors and signers of this Charter outlined six fundamental concepts they wanted to be implemented: Freedom, Human Rights, Equality, Republicanism, Democracy, and Constitutionalism.

Next, they outlined their basic positions on a variety of issues that would convert the People's Republic of China from authoritarianism to democracy. Included in this portion is the call for a new constitution or amendments to the constitution that would provide citizens of China basic human rights. Their aim is for the new constitution to be the overarching supreme law in which no one would be able to infringe. Similar to the United States, the demands include

an independent judiciary, legislative democracy, democratic elections, and separation of powers which would include checks and balances.

While Charter 08 outlined the democratic wants and desires of the citizens of China, the government responded against the authors by jailing Liu Xiaobo and Wen Kenjian and raiding the home of Zhang Zuhua – a fellow human rights activist. Also, the government arrested and interrogated over 70 other Charter signatories. This leads up to the democracy movements later on in 2014, the Umbrella Movement, and in 2019, which protested the National Securitization and Extradition Bill.

2014 Umbrella Movement Background:

Although the Umbrella Movement did not begin until 2014, democratic tendencies were presented as early as the 1950s but dropped off after the Sino-British Declaration in the 1980s (Chan, 2014). One of the original desires was that the citizens of Hong Kong wanted representation in the Legislative Council during 1985 and 1987 but was suppressed. After the incident in Tiananmen Square in 1989, the Chinese Communist Party granted representation to the citizens of Hong Kong for the Legislative Council in 1991.

While there was representation in the Legislative Council, the Chief Executive (governor) was directly elected through the Chinese Communist Party rather than a democratic process. When met with backlash, the Chinese Communist Party announced that future elections of the Chief Executive would be through a democratic process. However, that was not the case, and the Umbrella Movement started in 2014 due to the rules the Chinese Communist Party had released regarding the 2017 Chief Executive elections.

After being promised the freedom to elect someone, the Chinese Communist Party notified the citizens of Hong Kong that they would have democratic voting abilities, but only

from a list of pre-selected CCP loyalists (Chan, 2014). The movement started with students across Hong Kong walking out on classes but eventually turned into a mobilization composed of different groups such as the working class, professors, students, young, rich, old, and poor (Chan, 2014). As thousands of protestors took to the streets, police in Hong Kong dispersed the crowds using tear gas and water cannons. To protect themselves, Hong Kong protestors marched with umbrellas, marking the name “The Umbrella Movement”. While the Umbrella Movement, a 79-day protest, fizzled out, a new movement began in 2019 protesting a proposed Extradition Bill. This bill would allow the Chinese government to take citizens from Hong Kong and try them for crimes in China. The fear is that pro-democracy movement leaders will be taken from Hong Kong and sentenced to jail in China.

Analysis:

Research on Chinese repression has expressed many explanatory factors, independently, when looking at different protests in mainland China. However, research on comparing Chinese repression within mainland China and its territories lacks comparative case study approaches. Some of the explanatory factors are co-optation (Gerschewski, 2013), attrition (Yuen & Cheng, 2017), thought work (Deng & O’Brien, 2013), diffusion proofing (Koesel & Bunce, 2013), and regime-engaging protests vs. regime-threatening protests (Li, 2015). Not enough attention has been brought to factors such as social media in a collaborative theme with international pressures. This paper will analyze the difference in repression that occurred during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Movement (Beijing, China) and the 2014 Umbrella Movement (Hong Kong). Specifically, what factors can explain that varied response

While Li (2015) discusses the explanatory factors as to what causes regimes to respond with harsh repression, this explanation has a varied application to the protests that occurred

during 1989 and 2014. In the 1989 protest, the protests started for mourning the death of Hu Yaobang. The protestors were saddened by the loss because Yaobang was one of the more democratic CCP members and believed in having talks with the protestors from previous movements.

After Yaobang had passed, the protestors felt as though the door to discussions on how to better the 'motherland' had been closed. The protestors, which were student-led, in turn, shifted their protest from mourning to a pro-democracy movement, which included hunger strikes and mass mobilizations. Here is where Li (2015)'s explanation can be applied due to the protest shifting from a regime-engaging protest to a regime-threatening. The mobilizers went from mourning the death of a glorified CCP member to calling for a shift in power and reform to the government.

This then led to the Chinese Communist Party resorting to an ideology of zero-sum game. Either the protest would have to end immediately and swiftly, or the Chinese Communist Party leaders would lose their grip on power. The shift then moved to more drastic decisions and breaks of cohesion amongst the leadership of the CCP. Li Peng, one of the most influential members of the CCP, began turning members against each other, where the membership became significantly divided. One of the groups was comprised of Deng Xiaoping, the Premier and Head of the Chinese Communist Party, alongside Li Peng and a few other members.

The decision to end the Tiananmen Square Movement came from the group including Xiaoping and Peng. They called for martial law during the end of May, but the movement had continued, which is what Li attributed to a shift towards regime-threatening protests. The regime had set the boundaries, which had been changed and constantly moving, but was required due to the protestors constantly pushing the boundaries.

Once the martial law decision was ignored by the protestors, the divided party leaders ordered on June 4th for an immediate clearing of Tiananmen Square. This resulted in the mobilization of the People's Liberation Army, consisting of soldiers on foot as well as tanks. While the full death toll has yet to be released, this is considered a prime example of extreme harsh repression. More so, the Chinese Communist Party has limited the available research on this topic and in turn, has negatively impacted future researchers from truly understanding and exploring the topic.

When applying this same explanatory factor to the 2014 Umbrella protests, it is uncertain whether this can serve as a factor. The 2014 Umbrella Movement started due to the Chinese Communist Party announcing that the Chief Executive elections would not be a democratic process. This is when students and citizens of Hong Kong among every social class began to protest in the streets. Now, applying Li's regime-threatening versus regime-engaging, it had been a regime-threatening protest from the beginning. The Hong Kong citizens demanded a change in the government system and a power shift. They hoped that this would allow the representation in the Legislative Council to be comprised of more Hong Kong democratically elected members.

The response to this protest compared to the 1989 Tiananmen Protest was drastically different. As mention previously, Tiananmen Square's response was comprised of tanks and troops firing live ammunition into crowds when the CCP deemed it a zero-sum game. When it came to the response of Hong Kong, it was geared more towards crowd control. The police in Hong Kong utilized tear gas, water cannons, and riot shields. While many people were injured through this response, it was still less drastic and repressive than the one carried out by Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping.

One of the more applicable factors would be the effect of social media and media in general. With the increasing influence of social media in politics and the economy, the state will try to control and manipulate the media. and When it comes to Tiananmen Square, reporters from all over the world gathered around Tiananmen waiting for the tanks and soldiers to march in. The media had a large impact on the world coverage and the sanctions imposed because it showed the world the human rights violations being committed. Although the media had large impacts on what was occurring, such as the famous picture of 'Tank Man', through methods such as journalism, social media was not at the global level it is at today. It took days before the news broke to other countries. Social media platforms did not start to emerge until the early 2000s and with some of them not being global platforms. The emergence of social media was more than a decade and a half after the atrocities committed during the Tiananmen Square Incident.

Both social media and traditional had overwhelming impacts on the response from the Chinese Communist Party during the 2014 Umbrella Movement because the world's eyes were on Hong Kong. When the citizens of HKG were starting their protests in 2014, the mobilization leaders used social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to share information. While it increased the number of mobilizers, it also served as a platform to quickly show the world what the protestors were facing. This not only showed world leaders what was happening, but it also served as an unrestricted means to share with a global audience.

When it comes to the Chinese government showing their version of what occurred, it is highly censored and will not share media that puts them in a negative light. Regimes must also remember that once global actors and communities are introduced to the topic, repression will

become more difficult to implement. Furthermore, curtailing freedoms, especially ones that violate human rights and international norms, will be scrutinized.

When comparing 1989 and 2014, mass communication has revolutionized and evolved. In 2014, there were first-hand accounts of what occurred during the movement, but also, their descriptions matched what was being reported in the newspapers, globally, and in Hong Kong. Therefore, the repressive response became more streamlined because it would be in the eyes of the entire world, within a matter of hours. This has made it increasingly harder for countries around the world to carry out extreme repressive responses. On the other hand, governments may respond with the jailing of journalists or defectors such as those who share information about certain events in the Chinese Communist Party's history of repressive responses to other countries.

Government officials in authoritarian regimes have a complex relationship when it comes to cohesiveness. For some regimes, cohesiveness has remained as one of the largest factors on why authoritarian regimes resort to such hardline methods of repression and even the downfall of the regime. One of the most well-known examples of division amongst government officials and its result in hardline repression would be the 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident. The party leaders are the top Chinese Communist Party officials responsible for making all government decisions domestically and abroad. During this time, the party leaders were President Deng Xiaoping, Prime Minister Li Peng, CCP Chief Zhao Ziyang, CCP Chief of Shanghai Jiang Zemin, CCP Secretary Hu Jintao, and CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang.

As the Tiananmen Square protests began, the six leading members soon grew divided in response methods. More authoritarian members such as Li Peng advocated for a complete shutdown of the protest utilizing any resources. On the other hand, Zhao Ziyang favored talks

with the students during the protests and advocated for reform to the government's decision-making. With the split of the party leaders, Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping were on one side and the other, more democratic members, were on a separate side. The group led by Peng and Xiaoping declared martial law towards the end of May. However, due to increasing levels of participation in the Tiananmen Square protest, Peng and Xiaoping ordered the Peoples Liberation Army to exterminate the protests on June 4th, 1989.

Government cohesion in Hong Kong is also something that has become increasingly difficult to maintain. This is due to rising pressures from the people to shift control from CCP backed Leg Co members to democratically elected Leg Co members. However, the government itself did not have any break downs of cohesion among government members. The Chief Executive in Hong Kong is selected by the Chinese Communist Party. Therefore, these defections or a breakdown of cohesion would be slim to none until the 2019 movement regarding the Extradition Bill.

Conclusion:

This thesis is to help better understand why the Chinese government responded with varying levels of repression to two different pro-democracy movements. The currently available literature has not accounted for explanatory factors such as social media, a break down in government cohesion, and type of protest. The Chinese Communist Party's response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protest involved high levels of repression in which protestors were met with infantrymen and tanks. When comparing the response to the 2014 Umbrella Movement, the Chinese Communist Party did not utilize tanks or infantrymen to end the protest. Instead, they relied on fear of local police, tear gas, outsourced thugs, and water cannons.

The type of protest factor, which was broken down into regime-engaging and regime-threatening, was applicable regarding the protest in Tiananmen Square. This protest was met with harsh repression because it was calling for an overthrow of the government and a shift to a westernized democracy. When comparing this to the response during the 2014 Umbrella Movement, the level of applicability dwindles. While the desires of the protests were the same as those protesting in Tiananmen Square, the response was not the same by any means. This is because there was another binding factor from allowing the Chinese Communist Party to respond so harshly.

That binding factor was social media. When it comes to how much social media has revolutionized the world in being able to connect people, it has also changed the way protestors spread information. This is what helped the protestors of the Umbrella Movement gain international support from not only citizens, but major democratic countries such as the United States. Through this research, I find that social media is a new and constraining factor for governments when it comes to responding to pro-democracy movements. The accessibility to share information with the world within minutes has hindered the ability of the government to utilize tanks and infantrymen. Therefore, I conclude that the larger amount of social media presence, the less likely it is for a government to be able to utilize harsh repression.

The last factor this research utilized was a break down in government cohesion in terms of party officials for the regime but also amongst government leaders. Specifically, the relationship between a break down in government cohesion and the harshness of a repressive response. I conclude that a break down in government cohesion does cause the response carried out by the Chinese government to include more repression than with a unified government. A break down in cohesion amongst the party leaders caused the horrific response to the Tiananmen

Square protest. Then comparing it to the Umbrella Movement, there was no breakdown in cohesion among government leaders, which caused a more controlled and less repressive response.

With these results, this research can be continued to expand into more modern movements such as those during 2019 with the Extradition Bill and National Securitization Bill in Hong Kong. On a global platform, this thesis shows the benefits of having social media as a factor that causes regimes, in this case, the Chinese Communist Party, to execute a more streamlined response. Furthermore, this study will be important when the Handover period ends, and the SARs are fully transferred back to China. For future protests, a higher level of social media engagement will result in lower levels of repression from the CCP. The Handover period will also serve as another opportunity to continue the research of a regime's ever-changing methods of responding to pro-democracy movements. Will the internet crackdown on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat apply as well? Will Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan have to become dependent on Chinese-made media platforms such as WeChat and WhatsApp to communicate? Following the current trend of media suppression in China, it is only a matter of time before the Chinese government imposes the same media suppression on Hong Kong and Macau.

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