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Make Orwell Fiction Again: Authoritarian Regimes' Use of Surveillance Technology in China and Russia

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Make Orwell Fiction Again: Authoritarian Regimes' Use of Surveillance Technology in China and Russia

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Abstract

This thesis demonstrates how different models of authoritarianism rely on surveillance technology as a part of the state's capacity. Specifically, I look at the technology based mechanisms employed by China and Russia in their efforts to regulate their population and ensure their durability based on their historical ideology of surveillance. In the comparison of the two states, I demonstrate how the differences in the scope of their efforts reflects China's long term authoritarian stability in contrast with Russia's political turbulence. The two regimes have similar historical origins, nontax revenue structures, and political institutions, whereas they differ in their state's capacity shown by the extent of their surveillance. State capacity is the state's ability to effectively govern its citizens and territory. The CCP's development and state-led production of new technology to monitor its citizens in the digital era has allowed it greater control over the population. Russia is closely following China's lead and combines Soviet era surveillance techniques with the digital tools of the twenty-first century, and is beginning to see similar results of a compliant citizenry. Ultimately, this thesis argues that an authoritarian regime will utilize surveillance technology to enhance its control over a nation and the extent of the regime's surveillance is reflective of the regime's durability.

I.   Introduction

The twentieth century brought about the rise of two influential international regimes, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Russian Federation, and questions about their durability have occupied scholars for years. While the CCP has remained a single party authoritarian regime since 1949, the Russian Federation is a hybrid authoritarian regime established in 1991 from the collapse of the authoritarian Soviet Union (USSR). What has allowed these regimes to persist in the face of the changing international environment and to combat the waves of democratization? Furthermore, how have the regimes managed the increasing technological advancements that pose serious threats to regime legitimacy? An authoritarian regime is defined by its strong state capacity, strong centralized power, and limited political input from its citizens. State capacity is how well the state can deliver on the outputs it provides to its citizens and how well the state can exert its control on its territory. While some scholars attribute authoritarian endurance to insurgent aspects of the regimes' histories, other account for external revenue sources to fund the regime. The scholarly debate continues with a focus on the domestic institutions the regime utilizes, and how the state capacity influences the nation. A component of a state's capacity is its surveillance technologies, which are the tools and networks a regime uses to monitor its population, since it aids the state's coercive mechanisms. Stronger coercive mechanisms, the methods a regime uses to pressure the citizens to follow a regime's policies, produces greater state capacity.

I will argue that different models of authoritarianism rely on surveillance technology as a part of the state's capacity. Specifically, I look at the technology based mechanisms employed by China and Russia in their efforts to regulate their population and ensure their durability based on their historical ideology of surveillance. In the comparison of the two states I demonstrate how

the differences in the scope of their efforts reflects China's long term stability in contrast with Russia's political turbulence.

II. Methodology

i. *Importance of case studies chosen – Significance*

The comparison between China and Russia will provide an insight as to what supports authoritarian regime durability. China and the Russian Federation are both important nations in the current international stage. They are middle to upper income nations, with growing political power through either economic development or military might. Furthermore, their regimes have a shared history of violent struggle with revolutionary origins and are leading autocracies who lend support to other non-democratic regimes. China's CCP and the Russian Federation's predecessor, the USSR, laid the foundations of single-party regimes with socialist economies. Both the CCP and the Russian Federation are variations of authoritarian rule and try to enhance their state capacity to perpetuate their rule. A shared doctrine emphasizing the use of surveillance for enhancing state capacity has been central to both regimes. However, China has maintained a sustained and durable authoritarian regime with a greater scope of surveillance, whereas Russia has had a turbulent history resulting in a competitive authoritarian regime under Vladimir Putin and a more modest scope. As seen, these two nations are similar in many factors, yet the final outcome, scope of surveillance due to authoritarian durability and stability, is very different between the two with China having a more intrusive and comprehensive surveillance system on its population than Russia. By selecting these two countries with few discrepancies between them, I can evaluate the ability of state capacity to influence the outcome of regime durability.

ii. *Method/organization of the paper*

This paper will first outline the previous scholarly work on possible explanations for authoritarian durability. The literature highlights four main factors of a regime that dictate its durability: its revolutionary origins, its support for other autocracies, its use of political institutions, and its state capacity. In the final section on state capacity, I will proposition that advancements in surveillance technology have contributed to a regime's state capacity, which is what this thesis will center on. Following this section, a brief theoretical framework will be provided which explains the mechanisms of a coercive state capacity and how technology links to authoritarian durability. Afterwards, the case studies of China and Russia will be discussed. For each country, historical overviews, current regime situation, current regime coercive mechanisms, and the regime's use of technology will be outlined. Next, the analysis section will be broken down into four sections: how the regimes are similar in all major factors except state capacity, the shared implementation of technology due to the history of surveillance, the differences in scope due to regime stability, and the people's response to highlight the efficacy of the regimes' technologies. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the arguments discussed and outline future questions to be researched with implications in the field of comparative politics and regime studies.

iii.   Limitations

The limitations of this thesis pertain to the ability of collecting information about tightly controlled regimes. Both China and Russia exercise great caution with the information that is permitted to leave its national borders, especially with regards to criticisms of the regime. The regimes cultivate their international image so that any self-reported success can be exaggerated, such as the efficacy of the regime's surveillance technology, while failures can be hidden or suppressed, like the avenues citizens use to evade government surveillance. Furthermore, since

this thesis is based on the operation of the states' surveillance programs and networks, no state, including Russia and China, would want to release this information to the public for fear of it being manipulated by external actors. Finally, there is a language barrier in that I do not speak Russian nor Mandarin, so some resources in other languages are not accessible. Thus, there are limits to the creation of a complete portrait of the situations at hand in the two nations concerning the ways in which the regimes operate.

III.   Literature Review

Authoritarian regimes' role in political systems has resulted in an extensive breadth of scholarly work and analysis on the existence, mechanisms, and durability of autocracies. However, as with any regime type, there are many different factors that contribute to the structure of a regime, thus academic disagrees as to what is the sole cause of a durable authoritarian regime. One camp argues that the importance of a nation's revolutionary origin, [1] while another camp focuses on the regime's support of other autocracies to strengthen its own rule. [2,3] A third camp points to how the regimes can manipulate and utilize its domestic institutions, including the ruling elite and the creation of a democratic façade, to endure as authoritarians. [4,5,6] A final camp contends that the state's capacity is essential to sustaining an

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[1] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 3 (July 2013): 5-17.
[2] Christian von Soest, "Democracy Prevention: The International Collaboration of Authoritarian Regimes," *European Journal of Political Research*, 54 (2015): 623-638.
[3] Julia Bader, "Propping up Dictators? Economic Cooperation from China and its Impact on Authoritarian Persistence in Party and Non-Party Regimes," *European Journal of Political Research,* 54, (2015): 655-672.
[4] Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies,* 40 no. 11 (November 2007): 1279-1301
[5] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, 13 no. 2 (April 2002): 51-65.
[6] Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Frantz, "Mimicking Democracy to Prolong Autocracies," *The Washington Quarterly,* 37 no. 4 (Winter 2015): 71-84.

authoritarian regime.[7,8] By inserting technological advancements into the coercive forces of the state, the authoritarian regime is able to suppress any possible threats to its control without the citizens feeling the extensive reach of the state, thus preserving its rule.[9]

i.   Revolutionary Origins

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way's theory on authoritarian durability based on revolutionary origins is widely accepted and used. By examining the histories of authoritarian regimes, both failures and successes, the theory proposes that when a nation has endured a revolutionary struggle in his history to rise to power, the regime creates four legacies which hinders the main three sources of regime breakdown, thus creating authoritarian durability. The legacies are as follows: the elimination of sources of power independent to the regime, a ruling elite unified in a singular party, total control over security forces, and dominant coercive mechanisms.[10] These are the four ways that new authoritarian regimes protect themselves in the future from elite defection, military coups, and mass protest, which contribute to authoritarian breakdown.

A revolutionary war permits the reigning party to exile any political rivals since they lost the war, while also dismantling any other institutions that are possible future sources of opposition mobilization.[11] The eradication of current rivals and these power centers removes the foundation for any future opposition threats to the regime. Elite cohesion is essential to authoritarian durability, and revolutionary regimes tie the survival of the regime with the ruling

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[7] Dan Slater and Sofia Fenner, "State Power and Staying Power: Infrastructural Mechanisms and Authoritarian Durability" *Journal of International Affairs,* 65 no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2011): 15-29.
[8] Eva Bellin, "Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders," in *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, ed. Marsha Posusney and Michele Angrist (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2005), 21-41.
[9] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas, "The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution," *Information Revolution and World Politics Project,* no. 21 (July 2001): 1-21.
[10] Levitsky and Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes" 6-7.
[11] Ibid., 7.

elites by incorporating them in the spoils of public office along with other incentives to keep the elites loyal.[12] Furthermore, the violence during the war for independence constructs strong partisan identities and boundaries led by leaders with "extraordinary legitimacy and unquestioned authority."[13] The result is that all citizens, including the elite, are drawn into the support for the regime based on its success in the war.

Revolutionary regimes are invulnerable to military coups since the former military forces were disassembled and are reassembled with soldiers who participated in "the liberation struggle and are imbued with a revolutionary ideology" so that they already support partisan ideals and are filled with "revolutionary and nationalistic fervor."[14] Thus, the new military has no need to revolt against the party since the two bodies are fused into one. Finally, the coercive capacity of the regime is amplified by creating the idea of external threats to the nation, thus requiring a greater coercive capacity. The security forces are comprised of experienced militants from the independence war and practice less visible acts of repression to avoid the risks from that such as international and domestic outrage. The informal militias allow the regime to control discontent at all levels, from individual to federal, which often can stop a large protest before it occurs.[15]

Ultimately, the regime will shift to a post-revolutionary regime once the revolutionary generation turns over to the next generation that was not involved in the conflict, and, as a result, has weakened partisan identities and ideological commitment.[16] To sustain legitimacy in a post-revolutionary regime, ambition and patronage will be the new binding aspects of society supported by the stability of economic growth.[17] This allows for a continued commitment to the

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[12] Levitsky and Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," 8.
[13] Ibid., 10.
[14] Ibid., 10-11.
[15] Ibid., 11-12.
[16] Ibid., 13
[17] Ibid., 14-15

regime, however under different terms as this is rooted in contemporary success and less on the historical background of the nation. Ultimately, this theory does not fully disagree with my idea of the importance of the coerciveness of the regime, however it factors that aspect in as a smaller part of the problem.

ii.   *External Factors – Supporting Other Autocracies*

The next body of literature to explain authoritarian durability is the claim that the support of other autocracies helps sustain authoritarian regimes. China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia's support to other non-democracies is a self-serving project in which they are seeking to enhance their own durability.[18] Autocrats main goal is to protect their own rule and they are aware that democracy tends to follow in geographic waves, therefore they must protect their neighbors who are susceptible to succumb to democracy. For example, Russia is a 'black knight' in that it maintains economic and geopolitical control on post-Soviet states since they are so close physically to Russia and have a shared history and culture. Russia ensures that the elections run smoothly with their favored candidates that way the incumbent regime is aligned with Russia's policies and demands; however, this can often led to public disruption and disagreement and undermine Russia's plan.[19] China also prioritizes preserving regional political stability, but has a policy of mutual non-interference in politics so its interactions are based on material interests with its neighbors.[20] CCP only engages in relations with regimes that are similar to their rule. This is because it is more convenient to work with political parties through its International Department (IDCCP) system and the assistance given by China is most useful to regimes who

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[18] von Soest, "Democracy Prevention: The International collaboration of authoritarian regimes," 623-638.
[19] Ibid., 630.
[20] Bader, J, "Propping up Dictators? Economic cooperation from China and its impact on authoritarian persistence in party and non-party regimes," 655-672.

focus on "performance- and development-oriented experiences" like the CCP regime.[21] China's assistance to single party regimes stabilizes them, whereas its cooperation with non-party authoritarian regimes tend to lead to their collapse.[22] Ultimately, authoritarian collaboration is due to the regimes' desire to maintain rule within their own borders.

    iii.   *Political Institutions*

          a. Ruling Parties

      The next camp is the argument that autocracies can manipulate their domestic political institutions avoid usual paths of regime breakdown such as the creation of a ruling party and a democratic façade. Gandhi and Przeworski emphasize the importance of ruling elites to durable authoritarianism, since the formation of a single party institution allows for elite participation in ruling party offices and provides a front to suffice any opposition protest. [23] The spoils of public office are distributed to the ruling elites by their integration into the autocratic rule. This institution intertwines the survival of the regime with the existence of the elites, thus creating elite cohesion and extends the ruler's tenure.[24] Authoritarians obtain the cooperation of the general public through the creation of policy concessions in legislatures, since it will appease the opposition without the regime resorting to overt instances of repression and can be easily monitored by the ruling regime. The impact of institutions on the survival of rulers is quite distinct as Gandhi and Przeworski show statistically that "rulers who under-institutionalize survive in power for a significantly shorter time than those who institutionalize sufficiently."[25] Essentially, autocrats who are able to create and make use of their political party institutions will

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[21] Ibid., 659.
[22] Ibid., 665-667.
[23] Gandhi and Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," 1279-1301.
[24] Ibid., 1281.
[25] Ibid., 1291.

be able to maintain power for an average of 9.13 years longer. The inclusion of citizens in the regime's political institutions and the regime's use of institutions will allow them to defend against threats to power.

b. *Competitive Authoritarian Regimes*

Another aspect of the exploitation of political institutions is through hybrid authoritarian regimes such as competitive authoritarianism, which pose as an illusion to democracy and allow authoritarianism to persist. Levitsky and Way championed this theory as well and argue that in competitive authoritarian regimes "formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy".[26] Essentially, there is real competition, but the playing field is extremely uneven toward helping the ruling party with less fraud and coercion than in full authoritarian regimes, but it is not democratic either.

The four areas of democratic contestation, where the opposition can challenge the ruling party, are: the electoral, legislative, and judicial arena, and the media. The ruling party will engage in subtle ways to skew the competition with large-scale abuses of power, shutting down of media sources, bribing judges, jailing opposition figures, and threaten or attack independent journalists.[27] These hybrid regimes are the result of a façade to participate in international economic trade as well as the rise of civilian authoritarian leaders who, unlike military regimes, rely on institutions to sustain rule.[28] Although there is a great risk in allowing the opposition a seat at the table, it can further show the authoritarian rule while satisfying cries for democracy:

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[26] Levitsky and Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," 51-65.
[27] Ibid., 58.
[28] Kendall-Taylor and Frantz, "Mimicking Democracy to Prolong Autocracies," 71-84.

elections enable leaders to manage their elite and demonstrate their dominance within the political system…deter rivals with their dominance…reward members who helped the vote…enable regimes to fragment the opposition by buying the support of some while disqualifying others, complicating the opposition's ability to mount a cohesive challenge.[29]

The authoritarian regime is strengthened every time it wins an election as it demonstrates how it is superior to any opposition, thus continuing the rule while still maintaining legitimacy for those who demand democracy.

iv. *State Capacity and Coercion*

The final theory of authoritarian durability pertains to state capacity, and focusing on a facet of its capacity: coercion. Slater and Fenner outline how a state's capacity, the regime's ability to effectively implement various policy goals, is essential to a stable and durable rule. [30] The stability of a state is determined by the regime's ability to avoid crises and resolve them efficiently, while the durability of the regime is how long the regime can maintain its stability. [31] The authors contribute to the importance of state institutions and infrastructure to highlight that when state infrastructure power is high, autocrats can utilize four mechanisms to prolong their time in power: coercing rivals, extracting revenues, registering citizens, and cultivating dependence. When a regime can dissuade the opposition from rallying, collect taxes from its citizens to fund its political plans, gather information and identify its citizens, and create citizen loyalty through state-provided services, the regime eliminates any potential threats to its rule.[32] Furthermore, these all contribute to the state's coercion mechanisms since "coercion works best when citizens know, or assume, that they are legible to the regime through their various

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[29] Ibid., 78.
[30] Dan Slater and Sofia Fenner, "State Power and Staying Power: Infrastructural Mechanisms and Authoritarian Durability" *Journal of International Affairs,* 65 no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2011): 16.
[31] Ibid., 19
[32] Ibid., 20-23

interactions with the state."[33] By utilizing these mechanisms through the state, autocrats appear

to be fully entrenched in their citizens' lives, thus increases the state's ability to coerce the

citizens into compliance. The coercive state apparatuses are funded by the revenue extracted,

informed by the citizen registrations, and strengthened by the subjects' dependence. Ultimately,

the authors summarize their coercion argument with "true [coercive] capacity might lie in not

needing to demonstrate it."[34] The strongest and most durable authoritarian regimes do not have

frequently large scale repression of protests and government crackdowns; they maintain rule

without these outbreaks since they are stopped before erupting.

  Theda Skocpol, a sociologist, focuses on how authoritarian regimes combat oppositions.

Skocpol argues that the difference between a successful revolution and rebellion is "the state's

capacity to maintain a monopoly on the means of coercion. If the state's coercive apparatus

remains coherent and effective, it can face down popular disaffection and survive significant

illegitimacy."[35] Essentially, the strength, consistency, and effectiveness of the state's coercive

apparatus determines whether the regime will be able to suppress opposition and survive.

Building off this concept, Eva Bellin argues that the autocracies in the Middle East and North

Africa (MENA) owe their durability to their states' coercive mechanisms. Furthermore, these

apparatuses are upheld, in a similar manner to Slater and Fenner's theory, by strong financial

health, international support, patrimonialism, and low popular mobilization.[36] The state must

continue to pay its security services to follow orders on behalf of the state and regulate its

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[33] Ibid., 22

[34] Ibid., 20

[35] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revoltuions: A comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 32.

[36] Eva Bellin, "Coercive Institutions and Coercive Leaders," in *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, ed. Marsha Posusney and Michele Angrist (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2005), 27.

citizens.[37] The patrimonial structure of the state, in which all power is based directly on the

leader or ruling autocrat, allows the other ruling elite to fear the loss of power since their own

survival is based upon the survival of the regime due to low institutionalism. Finally, the lack of

mass public opposition and networks to cultivate such rebellions means regimes are not

challenged with protests and do not need to utilize techniques of public repression which can

detract from the regime's legitimacy.[38]

      Along these lines, Sheena Chestnut Greitens promotes an important issue for autocrats:

"the coercive dilemma: a fundamental tradeoff between optimizing their internal security

apparatus to deal with a popular threat, or coup-proofing it to defend against elite rivals"[39]

Autocrats are faced with major threats to their rule from both outside the state in terms of the

public and within the state from other elites taking over. The balance must be found for autocrats

for where they place their financial resources. Ultimately, the regime can rely on its coercive

apparatuses to diffuse any possible crises and endure any rebellions.

      Moreover, the use of the Internet as a coercive mechanism to perpetuate authoritarianism

is presented by Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas. They argue that authoritarian regimes are able

to manipulate the Internet so that it expands their reach in the nation and advances national

development.[40] The Internet poses a threat to autocracies in four main ways: the mass public

access exposes the citizens to other thoughts and ideas dangerous to the regimes; civil society

organizations are strengthen with the networking abilities of the Internet and can undermine the

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[37] International support in the MENA region from Western countries is bred from security concerns over steady access to oil and Islamic militant threats, thus nations such as the United States will not retract their support for the regimes out of fear of their own national security concerns, Bellin, 35.

[38] Ibid., 27-35.

[39] Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 292-293.

[40] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas, "The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution," *Information Revolution and World Politics Project,* no. 21 (July 2001): 2.

regime; the creation of a "new domestic business elite" in which they revolt against the regime for economic benefits; and the communication efforts from the international democratic community to undermine authoritarian regimes.[41]

The authors focus on China and Cuba's reactive strategies, how they respond to existing or potential challenges, and their proactive strategies, which is how they prevent the creation of any such challenges, which will be discussed in the case study in greater detail. However, the two regimes enhance their coercive abilities by controlling access to the Internet based on individual groups or persons, filtering material, promoting self-censorship by involving the citizenry, creating their own propaganda sites, using the Internet to streamline government bureaucracy, and utilizing "harsh regulations, monitoring, and select arrests as scare tactics".[42] Altogether, by electronically monitoring its citizens with the Internet and other technologies, the regimes are able to further immerse themselves in their citizens' lives, thus creating a greater sense of compliance within the population, which creates a durable and stable regime.

The underlying framework is that the new technology used by a regime is contributing to the state's surveillance capabilities which contribute to the state's coercive mechanisms and its coercive state capacity which perpetuates authoritarianism. Surveillance in this thesis is defined as "the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction." [43] The intelligence collected by a regime helps the regime to actively monitor its citizenry with aims to coerce the population to comply with the regime's will. It is repeatedly reestablished within surveillance studies that the recurrent purpose of surveillance is to control behavior, although it may be found in a multitude of subtler forms of

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[41] Ibid., 2-4.
[42] Ibid., 5-9, 16.
[43] David Lyon, *Surveillance Studies: An Overview*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007), 14.

control rather than totalitarian domination.[44] The ability to control is derived from the power dynamic between the watched and the watcher since the information collected by the watcher from surveillance allows them to coerce and control those being watched.[45] This is the rational for many governments' use of enhanced CCTV camera networks to combat terrorism or to reduce crime, which can be beneficial for the entirety of a nation. However, the issue arises when the state overreaches by utilizing surveillance and its technology to "increase the federal government's grip over the mundane objects of everyday life, and they are intended to consolidate governmental authority."[46] When the government extends itself into the daily life of citizens through surveillance technologies, this provides the regime with greater control since they gather more information about the population that will be used to coerce them.

Surveillance itself is not a novel idea since it has been used for decades most notably in two cases: Mao Zedong and the CCP's aim to develop communal surveillance contributing to growing government surveillance[47] and the USSR's creation of a police state based on surveillance, which Putin is attempting to reinstate in the Russian Federation.[48] Both nations share the ideology that surveillance is essential to regime control which in turn is crucial for regime durability. The continuation of this theory is apparent in the two nations' use of modern surveillance technology, that is far more advanced than 20th century technology, to collect more information on its population to consolidate state strength and capacity to perpetuate the regimes' positions of power.

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[44] Neil Richards, "The Dangers of Surveillance," *Harvard Law Review* 126, no.7, pp. 1949-1953.
[45] Ibid., 1956
[46] Keith Guzik, *Making Things Stick: Surveillance Technologies and Mexico's War on Crime*, (University of California Press, 2016), 15.
[47] Michael Dutton, *Policing and Punishment in China: From Patriarchy to 'the People'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[48] Brian Taylor, *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

v.   *Missing Literature*

I aim to follow Kalathil and Boas' discussion of the Internet and its coercive abilities. By investigating how modern authoritarian regimes utilize all possible tools at hand, the use of the Internet to aid the regime along with the development of surveillance technologies are important tools that sustain an autocracy. As previously demonstrated, a state's durability is dependent on its coercive mechanisms. Levitsky and Way's argument of revolutionary origins sidelines the importance of coercive apparatuses on their own, which I advocate is central to authoritarian durability. Both regimes China and the Russian Federation have revolutionary origins, but differing levels of state surveillance due to coercive apparatuses. Next, both China and Russia provide support to other regimes, thus the argument of external factors is not sufficient by itself to explain regime durability. The importance of institutions for sustaining autocracies is twofold, but the regimes control their domestic institutions with dissimilar outcomes. Therefore, this leaves the debate open to the role of state capacity and coercion which is where I will develop the argument that coercion is essential to authoritarian regime durability.

IV.   Case Study

China

i.   *Historical Overview*

China has maintained a relatively durable and consistent authoritarian regime, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since its revolution in 1949 despite serious challenges to the regime. After the collapse of the Chinese imperial system in 1912, two different political parties emerged to lead the country in very different directions.[49] The Kuomintang (KMT) government

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[49] Cucchisi, Jennifer Lynn, "The Causes and Effects of the Chinese Civil War, 1927-1949" (2002). *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs)*. 19

was the original government that was democratic, nationalistic party founded and led by Sun

Yat-sen in 1912 and General Chiang Kai-shek in 1927. The CCP was the communist party

founded in Shanghai in 1921 by inspired by Li Zahao and other Marxist inspired intellectuals.[50]

Although there were initial tensions between the two parties, the Japanese invasion of China

from 1937 until 1945 forced cooperation to defeat the common enemy and take back their

country.[51] The Resistance War brought devastation to China with 3 million soldier and 18

million civilian deaths and undermined the KMT's ability as a state to defend its people. After

the Japan's defeat in World War II, a civil war erupted across the country lasting from April

1946 to October 1949, and the KMT were the anticipated winners.

During the war, the KMT's power continued to dwindle due to mounting criticism of

Kai-shek's leadership fueled by military losses in Manchuria, ultimately resulting in party

infighting and party rupture. In contrast, the CCP's promise for land reforms and propaganda

were effective recruitment tools leading to lead to a greater and stronger army, the People's

Liberation Army (PLA).[52] Mao Zedong became the leader of the CCP during the Resistance

War, and his influence only grew with the Civil War with his use of essays and literature to share

his message with the nation. The CCP claimed victory on October 1st, 1949, when Mao

established the People's Republic of China and the Nationalists fled to Taiwan.[53] The CCP was

founded as a revolutionary party with aims to change the country from an imperial system to a

democracy.

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[50] Suisheng Zhao, "Introduction: China's Democratization Reconsidered", in China and Democracy: The Prospect for a Democratic China eds. Suisheng Zhao (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3
[51] Diana Lary, *China's Republic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 112
[52] Alfed Ho, *China's Reforms and Reformers*, (London: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 34-36.
[53] Lary, *China's Republic,* 175.

The CCP regime has since maintained authoritarian rule that has been thoroughly oppressive and eliminated any dissent or opposition from the newly created nation. Mao faced political turbulence in his regime with policies and events such as the Great Leap Forward of 1958 leaving millions to starve to death, a 1959 large-scale revolt in Tibet, and the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976 which "produced massive social, economic, and political upheaval."[54] The autocracy attempted to exert its control across the nation through economic policies to advance its international prowess, and although these reforms are seen as massive failures and could have easily toppled the regime, the CCP persisted.

Another close downfall was Mao's death in 1976 which led to the "Gang of Four" during which four of the top CCP ruling elites jockeyed for power, highlighting the problem with authoritarian succession following such an influential leader. However, in 1977, Deng Xiaoping took leadership and enacted further economic reforms to propel the country into prosperity such as opening its borders through the Open-Door policy and immersing the country in the international economy.[55] These reforms were much more successful and the impressive economic performance displayed by China in the last 30 years has served to validate the regime.[56] The 1989 Tiananmen Square protest killing 200 demonstrators, most of whom were young students, was a serious roadblock in China's development since the death toll of 200 students lead to international sanctions and questioned the regime's capabilities.[57] Nonetheless, the authoritarian CCP regained control of the population and has implemented non-threatening trade policies with neighboring states to allow continued international cooperation. The

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[54] "China Profile – Timeline," *BBC,* April 4, 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882
[55] Ibid.
[56] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 3 (July 2013): 14.
[57] "China Profile – Timeline," *BBC,* April 4, 2018, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13017882

authoritarian regime has maintained total control of the nation throughout the decades of coercion that has recently been amplified through the Internet and surveillance technologies such as facial recognition and closed circuit cameras.

ii.   *Current Regime Situation*

a. *External Factors*

The CCP does not rely on financial support from other autocracies and rather through bolstering other autocracies the CCP can extend its own authoritarian regime as a "self-serving project."[58] The CCP aims to strengthen its rule by focusing on aiding autocracies that are geographically close to China or have a similar regime type, a communist single-party rule.[59] Through focusing on the regional political climate, the CCP eliminates the "snowballing effect" from potential threatening democracy waves. [60] Additionally, the CCP has been expanding its scope in fiscal assistance to distant governments who have similar party-based regimes since the stabilizing effect of economic performance adds to both regimes' legitimacy.[61] Ultimately, the CCP is very selective with its international engagement, maintaining its policy of mutual non-interference; however, when interacting with the rest of the world it will focus on regimes with similar interests, structures, and are located within the regime's geopolitical control.

b. *Institutional Structure*

The CCP is a strong ruling party with a cohesive ruling elite and is an exclusively authoritarian regime, not a competitive authoritarian regime. China has become a "party-state"

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[58] von Soest, "Democracy Prevention: The International collaboration of authoritarian regimes," 624.
[59] Bader, "Propping up Dictators? Economic cooperation from China and its impact on authoritarian persistence in party and non-party regimes," 657.
[60] Samuel Huntington's "snowballing" or demonstration effect claims that democratic revolutions can spillover from one nation into neighboring nations because the others utilize the model of the first nation to try for regime change themselves. Samuel Huntington (1991). Democracy's Third wave. *Journal of Democracy, 2*(2), 12-34.
[61] Bader, "Propping up Dictators? Economic cooperation from China and its impact on authoritarian persistence in party and non-party regimes," 665.

despite the multi-party cooperation system, as the regime itself admits that all political parties "are under the leadership of the Communist Party, and devote themselves to the socialist construction." [62] Every election has Party approved candidates who follow CCP rules, therefore making the elections window dressings to appease the international community.[63] Unlike in a competitive authoritarian regime in which there is legitimate opposition, there is no way for opposition to gain any political positions in the Chinese government because any public political opposition has been eliminated with many tactics such as threats or arrests.[64] The CCP simply dominates China's political system.

Furthermore, the regime maintains a cohesive ruling elite of the nation's wealthiest, such as leading businessmen and politicians, and recently including the military and police chiefs as will be discussed shortly. The best demonstration of the elite cohesion is the 1989 Tiananmen Square event. The party elders, Deng Xiaoping, and the military supported the army's violence and used a scapegoat, Zhao Ziyang the General Secretary of the CCP at the time, to divert individual blame.[65] The regime maintained economic growth and development despite international outrage and, more importantly, there was no resulting elite rupture breaking down the authoritarian regime. [66] This continued elite solidarity in the face of a drastic internal and external outcry demonstrates the strength of the single ruling party.

iii. Current regime coercive mechanisms and state capacity

    a. *Fortifying the Police Force*

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[62] "China's Political Party System," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, accessed November 11, 2018, http://bs.china-embassy.org/eng/sgxw/t992474.htm

[63] John Starr, *Understanding China: A Guide to China's Economy, History, and Political Culture* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 61

[64] Alexandra Ma, "Barging into your home, threatening your family, or making you disappear: Here's what China does to people who speak out against them," *Business Insider*, August 19, 2018, https://www.businessinsider.com/how-china-deals-with-dissent-threats-family-arrests-2018-8

[65] J. A. G. Roberts, *A Concise History of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 298.

[66] Levitsky and Way, "The Durability of Revolutionary Regimes" 8.

A longstanding instrument of the state's coercive mechanism has been China's police force, which has recently seen an increase in state funding and the promotion of police chiefs to the ruling elite. The CCP wants to squash local opposition before it rises to a national level, thus it delegates the maintenance of social stability to the police where they engage in everyday forms of state repression: "monitoring the population and Internet users, managing the family registration system (hujou), reporting early signs of social unrests, spying on political dissidents, controlling small-scale protests, and suppressing large-scale protests." [67, 68] However, this is a tall order for a relatively small police force: "the median police-to-population in the world stood at 303.3 police officers per 100,000 population… by comparison, the ratio in China was 110 in 2004."[69] To combat the inevitable frustrations due to a lack of resources and a large scope of enforcement, leading to an erosion of coercive capacity, the CCP has implemented two courses of action.

The first is to empower the police chiefs by including them in positions of leadership within the Party, giving them the "spoils of public office", which incentivizes regime loyalty and ties the leaders of the coercive forces to the fate of the regime.[70] The police chiefs are aware of the privileges afforded to them through the regime and now are more motivated to protect the regime, since once the CCP falls from power, they will also lose their privileges and power. The other way to enhance the coercive mechanisms is by increasing police funding in parts of the nation with a weakened state sector from the loss of state owned enterprises (SOEs) due to liberalization of China's economy. SOEs are businesses that the Chinese state has control over

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[67] Yongshun Cai, "Local Governments and the Suppression of Popular Resistance in China," *The China Quarterly*, 193, (March 2008), 26.

[68] Wang, "Coercive capacity and the durability of the Chinese communist state," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47, 16.

[69] Chen, Xi, "Origins of Informal Coercion in China," *Politics and Society,* 45, no. 1 (2017): 72

[70] Wang, "Coercive capacity and the durability of the Chinese communist state," 16

and function as coercive apparatuses.[71] As a result, the CCP is replacing one form of coercion

with another by increasing its police force funding: "SOE labor has decreased over time, while

per capita police funding has increased."[72] Essentially, the autocracy increases police ability

through funding in provinces where the state loses control over the population. The CCP is

amplifying its coercive abilities by ensuring the loyalty of the security force leaders and

increasing money for the police force in strategic locations.

b. *Informal and Third Party Coercion*

The fragmentation of the Chinese political system has resulted in the emergence of

informal coercion by lower level political agents to accomplish CCP goals. Informal coercion is

defined as "coercion not by formal state agents, but by non-state or semiofficial actors such as

vigilantes, thugs, or paramilitary forces."[73] State officials will hire gang members to intimate

opposition activists, dissuade workers from complaining, disrupt protests, and act as security

guards, essentially to fill the role of the police force.[74] Conflict arises when the central

government has severely constrained the use of police force and formal coercion against the

population by issuing statements asking officials to avoid using state force against petitions and

protests.[75] However, the party still sends down initiatives to the local officials which places them

in situations where "strong coercion may be needed such as land expropriation, house

demolition, petitioning control, and urban management."[76] The local state employees must then

supplement the state's formal coercive mechanisms for informal coercion through non-state

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[71] Xiao Geng, Xiuke Yang, and Anna Janus, "State-owned enterprises in China: Reform dynamics and impacts" in *China's New Place in a World in Crisis* ed. Ross Garnaut, Lingang Song, Wing Thy Woo (ANU Press, 2009)
[72] Wang, "Coercive capacity and the durability of the Chinese communist state," 20
[73] Chen, "Origins of Informal Coercion in China," 68
[74] Ibid., 81
[75] Murray Scot Tanner, "China Rethinks Unrest," *The Washington Quarterly*, 27, no. 3 (2004), 148
[76] Chen, "Origins of Informal Coercion in China," 72

actors.[77] This process is beneficial for the CCP because not only are the local governments able to achieve the goal of controlling the population and maintaining regime control, but it alleviates the pressure off the CCP and eludes scrutiny of the CCP's coercive mechanisms since the informal coercion is used at local levels in low intensity and low risk situations.

c. State-owned enterprises (SOEs)

As previously mentioned, SOEs play a vital role in the regime's coercive mechanisms as they further the state's control in citizens' lives. SOEs, created as a part of the socialist industrialization of China, allow the CCP to directly implement its development agenda since there is no conflict of interest. [78],[79] More recently, SOEs have spearheaded China's development objectives in technological development, which not only build the nation's surveillance technology industry, but also aid economic development.[80] Furthermore, SOEs allowed the state to provide employment and social benefits to its citizens, while also assisting local governments with local projects such as roadbuilding and unemployment.[81] During the height of SOE engagement, "everyone worked for the government, even in grocery stores and restaurants…Everyone was assigned a job out of school, lived in apartments allocated by the government and dependent on government ration coupons for food."[82] By having the government control an aspect of daily life, the regime has a greater coercive capability over its citizens since the citizens' means of survival are tied to the regime, akin to the police chiefs. Although there have been major market-oriented reforms aimed to decrease the importance of

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[77] Chen, "Origins of Informal Coercion in China," 82.

[78] Xiao Geng, Xiuke Yang, and Anna Janus, "State-owned enterprises in China: Reform dynamics and impacts," 156

[79] J. A. G. Roberts, *A Concise History of China,* 290

[80] Barry Naughton, "State enterprise reform today," in *China's 40 Years of Reform and Development: 1978-2018*, eds. Ross Garnaut, Ligang Song, Cai Fang (ANU Press, 2018), 376, 384.

[81] Lin, J. Y., Cai, F. and Li, Z. (1998), Competition, policy burdens, and state-owned enterprise reform, American Economic Review 88(2): 422–7.

[82] Peter Hadekel, "China's Challenges," in *China* ed. Dimitri Cavalli (The H.W. Wilson Company, 2002), 20

SOEs, the state sector has significantly expanded in terms of output and net value of capital

stock,[83] therefore "SOEs still play a prominent role in the Chinese economy."[84] Ultimately,

SOEs, the fortified police force, and informal coercion remain important aspects of the CCP's

coercive capabilities; however, they are being increasingly replaced with the use of surveillance

technology as a central component of coercive apparatuses.

iv. How Technology is Used by the Regime as a Coercive Mechanism

The CCP has developed a massive surveillance state through technological

advancements. The growing technology industry in China, rivaling Silicon Valley in scale and

investment, is funded by government contracts to help the government's surveillance

ambitions.[85] Sample innovations include computer applications that show "when crowds of

people are crashing" or virtual maps of building complexes or highly advanced voice and facial

recognition systems.[86] The CCP claims that the installment of 450 million closed circuit security

cameras by 2020 along with these other surveillance products nationwide are to reduce crime and

terrorism, however this network of services can be used by the government to track any citizen

anywhere.[87] Even the most insignificant crimes have the CCP utilizing their advanced systems to

track it, like in Beijing where facial-recognition cameras have been installed in public parks to

"fight toilet-paper theft in restrooms, using face-scanning dispensers that limit each person to one

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[83] Yiping Huang, "State-owned Enterprise Reform," in *Twenty Years of Economic Reform* ed. Ross Garnaut, Ligang Song, (ANU Press, 2012), 95-96.

[84] Xiao Geng, Xiuke Yang, and Anna Janus, "State-owned enterprises in China: Reform dynamics and impacts," 158.

[85] Paul Mozur, "Inside China's Dystopian Dreams: A.I., Shame and Lots of Cameras," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/08/business/china-surveillance-technology.html.

[86] Ibid

[87] Anna Mitchell and Larry Diamond, "China's Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone," *The Atlantic*, February 2, 2018.

2-foot length of paper every nine minutes"[88] The regulation of such a trivial crime demonstrates

that the very real all-knowing authoritarian state is being created at this moment.

At a major intersection in Jinan, a city 250 miles south of Beijing, a massive billboard

displays videos, photographs, ID numbers, and home addresses of various citizens. These are the

identities of jaywalkers, who are simply trying to get on their way just a bit faster, confirmed and

added to the local police database on the citizen's file, then used to humiliate them into thinking

twice before jaywalking again.[89] This extreme method of population control seems like an

overkill for a small crime, yet it is happening across the country and it is working. Jaywalking

decreased from 200 to 20 instances a day within a month of its use. [90] If such unreasonable

penalties for small crimes are in place, along with the publishing of their names in the local

media or informing the jaywalkers' bosses about their crimes, [91] the situation can only get worse

for political dissidents posing a real threat to the regime. This mass data collection on the

Chinese people, including a biometric voice database, is raising serious concerns within the

global community as this information and tracking capabilities can be abused by the regime to

track, monitor, and capture regime threats.[92] Essentially, the regime can use the information at its

own discretion for any purpose or prosecution.

The Internet has been thought of as the world's great democratizer, however the CCP

anticipated such results and "played a strong historical role in the development and control of

ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) …as a consequence of this control, the

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[88] Josh Chin and Liza Lin, "China's All-Seeing Surveillance State Is Reading Its Citizens' Faces," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 2017.
[89] "China shames jaywalkers through facial recognition," *Phys.org*, June 20, 2017, https://phys.org/news/2017-06-china-shames-jaywalkers-facial-recognition.html
[90] Ibid.
[91] Mitchell and Diamond, "China's Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone."
[92] Paul Mozur and Keith Bradsher, "China's A.I. Advances Help Its Tech Industry, and State Security," *New York Times*, December 3, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/business/china-artificial-intelligence.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer

development of the Internet in China has been largely a product of state initiative."[93] Since the

regime was able to be a part of the Internet's creation in China, they have been able to shape this

modern invention to its needs. The CCP has created a system of monitoring, filtering, and

censorship which determines who has access to the internet, the quality and quantity of websites

accessed, and the boundaries of Internet use in the nation. The government is also able to

"indirectly regulate the Internet by directly regulating intermediary actors like Internet service

providers (ISPs) and the Internet content providers (ICPs)."[94] The regime can reduce explicit

government intervention by managing the supports of the Internet.

Furthermore, the regime is utilizing the networks created to promote state propaganda

and to further add to the citizenry database regarding who visits certain sites at what times and

communicate with which people.[95] The regime acts upon this information, as noted in a 2004

Amnesty International report, when at least 54 people were arrested for their activities online, by

circulating information on the Internet, expressing their opinions, or simply sending emails from

November 2002 to January 2004.[96] However, it is important to remember that there will always

be ways for opposition to form and grow against the regime. Guobini Yang argues that despite

its history with the CCP, the Internet has provided China's citizens with the tools and networks

to cultivate robust citizen activism that has created an arena of political contention between the

public and the government pushing the boundaries of government rule.[97] Nonetheless, the regime

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[93] Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor Boas, "The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution," *Information Revolution and World Politics Project,* no. 21 (July 2001): 2, 5

[94] Yongnian Zheng, Technological Empowerment: The Internet, State, and Society in China, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, 8-9.

[95] Kalathil and Boas, "The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution," 6-9.

[96] Amesty International, "People's Republic of China: Controls tighten as Internet activism grows," *Amnesty International*, January 28, 2004, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/001/2004/en/

[97] Guobini Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

is allowing for less and less space for such contention as the autocracy's proactive strategies have lengthened the regime's reach into citizens' lives through the once thought of liberator.

An addition to the regime's citizen database is the development of a citizen score, based off the existing Sesame Credit system[98], which combines information from private companies and government bureaucracies on "each citizen's political persuasions, comments, associations, and even consumer habits."[99] The regime will collect and analyze data on a citizen's spending habits, online behavior, and real world actions to rank each citizen and permit certain privileges based on ranking.[100] A citizen's score will be lower if they purchase items such as video games or alcohol that are not supported by the regime or associate with other citizens who have low scores, thus isolating dissidents from society. Essentially this is a calculated implementation of population control by the CCP: "what China is doing here is selectively breeding its population to select against the trait of critical, independent thinking."[101] This program aims to incentivize good behavior, separate any bad members of society or opponents to the regime, and has a planned national introduction by 2020.

The culmination of this national social credit system and advanced technology as a prediction of the nation's future is demonstrated with the current situation of Xinjiang, China where the Uighur Muslim minority is being aggressively monitored and repressed. Following Uighur riots in 2009 against discrimination and unjust treatment by the CCP and "a surge in deadly terrorist attacks around the country in 2014 blamed on Xinjiang-based militants", the CCP cracked down on the western province to control the 11 million Uighurs living there,

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[98] Paul Mozur, "Internet Users in China Expect to Be Tracked. Now, They Want Privacy," *New York Times*, January 4, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/business/china-alibaba-privacy.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer
[99] Mitchell and Diamond
[100] Paul Mozur, "Internet Users in China Expect to Be Tracked. Now, They Want Privacy," *New York Times*, January 4, 2018.
[101] Mitchell and Diamond, "China's Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone."

turning it into a de facto prison.[102] The city has the highest number of security cameras in the country, while the population is subjected to daily invasions of privacy with police officers checking files on smartphones utilizing new technologies and computer applications that quickly screen devices for any content opposing the regime. Furthermore, the data collected on the Uighurs goes beyond name, age, and job, including "relatives' details, fingerprints, blood type, DNA information, detention record and "reliability status"."[103] The CCP is going to extreme lengths to monitor the Uighur Muslims by collecting an exhaustive database of all personal information on this small minority group.

The CCP believes that by monitoring and surveilling the population they can deter any crime. Moreover, the CCP will have all the intelligence it needs to persecute those who break any laws or speak out against the regime. Since the population knows that the CCP knows everything there is about them and has the funding and manpower to do so. Other nations are taking similar approaches to national and authoritarian security, which suggests the CCP's success in expanding state capacity through this new technology.

Russia

i. Historical Overview

The Russian Federation has its origins in the USSR's turbulent history. The Russian Revolution of 1917 resulted in the overthrow of the Russian imperial regime that ruled for the last 300 years, and led to a civil war between the Duma, also known as the Whites were members of the Provisional Government, and the Bolsheviks, who were members of the Russian Social

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[102] Josh Chin and Clément Bürge, "Twelve Days in Xinjiang: How China's Surveillance State Overwhelms Daily Life," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 19, 2017.

[103]"Does China's digital police state have echoes in the West?" *The Economist*, May 31, 2018, https://www.economist.com/leaders/2018/05/31/does-chinas-digital-police-state-have-echoes-in-the-west

Democratic Party based upon Marxism and were led by Vladimir Lenin.[104] The Whites were

positioned to win with many advantages such as the support of the church paired with Western

aid, a stronger army, and an occupation of more land. Nonetheless, the Bolsheviks "tailored their

social and economic policies to the needs of winning the war" to create the Red Army

throughout the war by utilizing their ideology of social equality for the recruitment of both

political elites and the working class.[105] The civil war, lasting from November 1917 until

October 1922, resulted in Bolshevik victory and the creation of the Soviet Union.

Joseph Stalin took control of the USSR following Vladimir Lenin's death in 1922 by

eliminating Leon Trotsky from the Communist Party. Stalin enacted a Five-Year Plan that

created a new Socialist economy in which there was the mass collectivization of agriculture, the

murder of many Kulaks who were relatively rich peasants, along with the elimination and

confiscation of property of millions of peasants.[106] The state cracked down on its citizens after

the discovery of Leon Trotsky's plot against the regime that resulted in "a large-scale purge in

which thousands of alleged dissident in the armed forced, the Communist Party, and the

government were sentence to death or long imprisonment."[107] The prior economic reforms only

strengthened the state's fiscal ability to introduce such measures of open repression and

temporarily eliminated future threats to the regime due to the fear created within the society. This

was made possible by the utilization of the regime's power ministries and secret police, the most

well-known being the Committee on State Security (KGB), which collected surveillance as a

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[104] Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to its Legacy*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 15-28.
[105] Ibid., 37-39.
[106] Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to its Legacy*, 25.
[107] "Soviet Union timeline," *BBC*, October 31, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17858981

means to enhance state capacity.[108] The employment of surveillance in tandem with the state's

enforcement capabilities allowed Stalin to enforce his policies on the nation.

Stalin's death provided a difficult time for the regime as with the death of Mao in China

as the problem of authoritarian succession created a power struggle between Georgi Malenkov,

the prime minister, Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Central Committee of the Communist

Party, and Nikolay Bulganin, a ruling elite of the regime. The result was Malenkov's oust from

position with Bulganin's replacement in 1955.[109] However, the competition for power continued

until 1958 when Khrushchev became prime minister, two years after delivering a secret speech at

the 20th Communist Party Congress that denounced Stalin's rule. This speech served as an

important focal point for Soviet citizens who wanted to change the path of a dictatorship into a

democracy; however, this only resulted in the party's enhanced control of the state through a

stronger police state as demonstrated with the suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956

and the creation of the Berlin Wall in 1961.[110]

Aleksey Kosygin, as the prime minister, created the Brezhnev doctrine in 1968: "[the

doctrine] gave communist countries the right to intervene in other communist states whose

policies threatened the international communist movement."[111] The implications of this policy

include additional power given to the autocracy in the international community and enhances the

state's ability to surveil its own citizens and its neighbors through an excuse of determining what

is a threat to the regime. This adds to the USSR's police state and thus increases the state's

coercive capacity and allows the regime to protect its durability by eliminating opposition to its

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[108] Brian Taylor, *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.
[109] Ibid, 4.
[110] Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to its Legacy*, 342-343.
[111] "Soviet Union timeline," *BBC*, October 31, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17858981

regime and threats to its collapse. The Soviet Union continued its autocracy despite a rapid turnover of power from 1980 until 1985 with the new prime ministers, in order, of Nikolay Tikhonov, Yuri Andropov, Konstantin Cherneko, and Andrewy Gromyko. Mikhail Gorbachev enters the global stage in 1985 as the general secretary of the Communist Party at the same time and creates the policies of openness (glasnotst) and reconstruction (perestroika).[112] These policies proposed by Gorbachev are the start of USSR's relaxation of the state enforcement and loosened its control on its citizens. By 1988 Gorbachev took the presidential seat and allowed a private sector in the USSR's economy, furthering the relaxation of the state. The Revolutions of 1989 were "the toppling of the Soviet-imposed communist regimes in central and eastern Europe."[113] The Soviet troops were unable to contain these rebellions and lead to democracy and separation from the USSR in many of these nations. The implications drawn from this is that the USSR has lost its coercive capabilities and ability to repress the public and maintain control.

The Communist Party's vote to end one-party rule in 1990 arose from the pressures of the citizens following the September 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union in the Congress of People's Deputies, and on the 25th of December Gorbachev resigns as Soviet president so on the 26th of December, the Russian Federation government takes over formerly USSR offices across the country with Boris Yeltsin as the democratically elected president, followed by Vladimir Putin's presidential election in 2000.[114] Although Putin aims to reinstate the strength of the power ministries and surveillance, throughout Russia's history the importance of surveillance and state control has been in fluctuation with the political turbulence. Russian history is comprised of many periods of state collapse due to weakness, as shown by the collapse of the

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[112] Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to its Legacy*, 356.
[113] "Soviet Union timeline," *BBC*, October 31, 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17858981
[114] Ibid.

imperial regime followed by the 1917 revolution only to bring in another authoritarian regime, the USSR, once more followed by a revolution for democracy in 1991 that has led to the current competitive authoritarian regime controlled by Putin.

ii. Current regime situation

   a. External Factors

The Russian Federation under Vladimir Putin is another strong hybrid authoritarian regime in the world, and rather than relying on other autocracies' support, it acts as a black knight for neighboring autocracies to strengthen its own regime. By sustaining autocratic rule elsewhere, it allows Putin to maintain autocratic status quo in the international political arena and stop any wave of democracy that might threaten his regime.[115] According to Jakob Tolstrup, a black knight is "an external actor that acts as [a] guardian of autocracy or challenger of democracy in specific contexts" and help other autocracies "by boosting various material and strategic resources available to the autocrat, or by undergirding and solidifying regime legitimacy."[116] In a sense, the black knight guides the autocrat from a position of uncertainty to one of definite and secured control. Russia is notorious for its interventions in former Soviet Union nations, who are geographically close, have a shared history, and similar societal structures, and intervenes through election bolstering.[117] The regime selectively involves itself in other nations' elections

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[115] Christian von Soest, "Democracy Prevention: The International Collaboration of Authoritarian Regimes," *European Journal of Political Research*, 54 (2015): 623-638.

[116] Jakob Tolstrup, "Black knights and elections in authoritarian regimes: Why and how Russia supports authoritarian incumbents in post-Soviet states," *European Journal of Political Research,* 54 no. 4 (2015): 676.

[117] The presidential election in Belarus in 2006 is an illustration of successful election bolstering by the Russian regime prolong Alyaksandr Lukashenka's dictatorship. By providing financial assistance, ruler legitimacy, opposition reproach, and protection from Western influence, Putin prevented any "undesired spill-over effects" of democratization threatening his regime. However, this assistance must be used sparingly since the Kremlin's intrusion in nations with strong anti-Russian sentiments has led to authoritarian regime collapse. The presidential elections in Ukraine 2004 and the resultant Orange Revolution demonstrates the severe consequences in which the democratic opposition, Viktor Yushchenko, ousted the Russian sponsored candidate, Viktor Yanukovych, leading to a national democratizing revolution initiated by claims of electoral fraud, corruption, and voter intimidation due to the help of the Kremlin. Von Soest and Tolstrup.

depending on the impact the incumbent regime will have on the Russian regime's political aspirations.

b. *Institutional Structure*

The current regime, the Russian Federation, is most accurately defined as being a competitive authoritarian regime. The USSR was an authoritarian single party regime; however, on July 10, 1991 Boris Yeltsin was democratically elected.[118] Nonetheless, the hopes for a proper democracy vanished when Yeltsin continued unfair Soviet era political tactics and primed Putin for election in 2000, continuing Yeltsin's legacy of developing a semi-democracy. The competitive authoritarianism model discussed earlier in the literature review applies to Russia as in each of the four arenas of democratic contestation, Russia's government fits all the descriptions of a competitive authoritarian regime.[119] Yeltsin's strong electoral challenges from former communist parties in the 1996 elections applies to the electoral arena, while the legislative arena contestation arose from a truculent parliament in the 1990s. [120] Yeltsin's response to the Constitutional Court preventing him from disbanding the parliament was to "cut off the Court's phone lines and [take] away its guards" outlines the judicial arena, and Vladimir Gusinsky's Independent TV criticized Yeltsin's regime demonstrating the media arena of contestation.[121] In these four arenas, the Russian government is challenged in ways not permitted by an authoritarian regime, and since the regime is unable to consolidate authoritarian rule to explicitly crush this opposition, they find other avenues through which to maintain power.

iii. *Current regime coercive mechanisms and state capacity*

a. *Fortifying the Police Force*

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[118] "Soviet Union timeline," *BBC*, 31 October 2013, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17858981
[119] Levitsky and Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," 53.
[120] Ibid., 55-56.
[121] Ibid., 56-58.

The Russian regime prioritizes and strengthens the security forces of the nation to reintroduce greater state capacity. Putin aims to reconstruct the Soviet 'politics of fear' style of rule by selectively and harshly repressing any opposition: "Vladimir Putin made rebuilding this strong state the central goal of his presidency, and he relied heavily on coercive organizations in this endeavor."[122,123] Putin sees the use of coercive forces vital to state control and power, so he reversed the fragmentation of the power ministries and allocated more funds to the state's coercive agencies. The USSR had three power ministries, the Committee on State Security (KGB), the Ministry of Defense (MO), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), that were shattered into thirteen different ministries by the new democratic regime to disperse power, resulting in a disruptive restricting of leadership and allocation of resources. But, in 2006, Putin fused them into eight ministries, including MO, MVD, and the revived KGB, the Federal Security Service (FSB). [124] The consolidation of the ministries allowed for a clear modus operandi for the ministries without conflicting agendas. Additionally, between 2000 and 2007, the military and security sectors of the federal budget nearly tripled due to Putin's drastic increase in defense spending with the law enforcement agencies, MVD, procuracy, and the FSB, gaining the greatest percentage increases.[125]

The fortification of the security forces allowed for the development of a new strategy of population suppression focusing on proactive intervention and harassment of opposition.[126,127]

[122] "Control: Instruments of Informal Governance," in *Global Encyclopaedia of Informality, Volume 2: Understanding Social and Cultural Complexity*, eds. Ledeneva Alena, Bailey Anna, Barron Sheelagh, Curro Costanza, and Teague Elizabeth, (London: UCL Press, 2018), 420.

[123] Brian Taylor, *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

[124] Ibid., 38.

[125] Ibid., 54.

[126] Graeme Roberston, "Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin's Russia," *Slavic Review*, 68 no. 3 (Fall 2009), 537.

[127] Brian Taylor, *State Building in Putin's Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism,* 95.

The security forces allowed the creation of the competitive authoritarianism regime in Russia which entails a greater coercive scope and cohesion within the regime. By reorganizing the power ministries, Putin rebuilt the Soviet-inspired regime of repression which allowed the regime to manipulate elections and control protests, thus shift into a competitive authoritarian regime with a greater state capacity.

b. Informal Coercion and Practices

The current regime practices informal coercion as another facet of its coercive capabilities to ensure the regime maintained control. A former advisor to Putin, Gleb Pavlovsky asserts that these coercive tactics such as "*kuratory* exists today because the Kremlin has always relied on informal practices."[128] The USSR had a powerful police state, however it could not rely on solely mass repression and needed alternative techniques to dismiss party dissidents or political infighting. Techniques such as *kompromat*, an extreme form of blackmail based on information collection, and *kuratory*, the hiring of non-state actors who are members of organized crime, served as ways for the regime to intimidate and coerce opposition and the population in ways other than the police and security forces.[129,130] By employing informal coercion, the regime is still able to complete policy initiatives, remove opposition, and covers the regime from the blame of their actions, ultimately allowing autocracies to survive.

c. State-owned enterprises (SOEs)

The employment of state owned enterprises (SOEs) in the Russian economy allow the further penetration of its citizens' lives by the government and support regime development goals, adding to the state's coercive mechanisms. The Kremlin utilizes SOEs primarily to help

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[128] "Control: Instruments of Informal Governance," 456.
[129] Ibid., 435.
[130] Ibid., 456.

industrial development and to aid the diversification of the economy, and generally are in the fuel and energy and military industries.[131] The privatization of the economy has further separated the state from its population since this is one less aspect of daily life that involves the regime and reducing the state's coercive capabilities. This is demonstrated when comparing this level of involvement with the USSR's as its citizens were "dependent on the state for housing and employment, they were forced to observe police regulation in order to assure their welfare, becoming participants in their own policing."[132] The autocracy forced compliance within the population through controlling the citizens' welfare through the economy. Although the transition from the USSR socialist economy to the Russian Federation's liberalized economy drastically altered the labor market by significantly decreasing the number of SOEs, it appears that these enterprises still hold great influence due to the importance of fuel industries and since SOEs comprise 10 of the top 25 largest Russian companies. [133,134] By maintaining SOEs in vital industries, the regime enhances its coercive capabilities.

   In conclusion, the reconstructed security forces, informal coercion, and SOEs, are important aspects of the Russian Federation's coercive capabilities; however, Putin's regime is beginning to substitute them with surveillance technology as is of greater importance to the state's coercive apparatuses.

iv. How Technology is Used by the Regime as a Coercive Mechanism

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[131] Sprenger, Carsten, "State-Owned Enterprises in Russia," Presentación en la OECD Roundtable on Corporate Governance of SOEs, ICEF Higher School of Economics, Moscú (2008).
[132] Louise Shelley, *Policing Soviet Society: The Evolution of State Control* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 129.
[133] Valeri Ledyaev, "Domination, Power and Authority in Russia: Basic Characteristics and Forms," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24, no.1, March 2008, 19.
[134] Pawel Augustynowicz, "State-owned enterprises in Russia: The origin, importance, and principles of operation," in *Crisis Management and the Changing Role of the State* eds. Eva Voszka and Gabor David Kiss (Szeged: University of Szeged Doctoral School in Economics, 2014), 143

The Russian competitive authoritarian regime is trying to combat the potentially democratizing effects of the Internet by applying extensive censorship laws. The regime is selectively filtering websites that it determines to have extremist or criminal content in the name of national security. The Single Register is the federal registry through which three government agencies update and post the illegal websites that are to be blocked by all national service providers within 24 hours.[135] There are 129,052 pages currently listed as prohibited websites, and most are prostitution, black markets, and torrents sites; however, there are also webpages of NGOs that report on the Russian military conflict with Ukraine or the blog of Alexey Navalny, an anti-Putin movement leader in 2011-2012.[136] The state uses its discretion to determine which websites are banned and which are permitted, with no public choice in the decision. Although there are measures to bypass the limited access, this system creates a "double digital divide" between the users with the technological capabilities to surpass the censorship and the majority of Russian Internet users without the resources or knowledge to access these blocked sites. Therefore, these sites become echo-chambers where individuals with the same skills access and circulate the same information, while those who cannot are denied new knowledge.[137] The regime combines this filtering system with surveillance tools to discover who has this access.

Russia has created a national system of lawful interception of all electronic messages to monitor its citizenry and prosecute criminals. The System of Operative Investigative Measures (SORM) allows the nation's power ministries, specifically FSB, unlimited access to any communications made through any electronic device.[138] While it started as a system that only

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[135] Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, "Russia's Surveillance State," *World Policy Journal*, 30 no. 3 (Fall 2013).
[136] Ksenia Ermoshina and Francesca Musiani, "Migrating Servers, Elusive Users: Reconfigurations of the Russian Internet in the Post-Snowden Era," *Media and Communication*, 5, no.1, 2017, 47.
[137] Ibid., 48.
[138] Andrie Soldatov and Irina Borogan, 2013

captured telephone conversations, it quickly moved to Internet traffic to the latest update

intercepting all information and stores the collected data of the users. There are legal steps for

the FSB to follow and obtain court issued permits; however, they are only required for telephone

recordings, 98.35 percent of requests are granted, and in the last decade 5.4 million permits for

phone tapping were issued.[139] Citizens and visitors are left vulnerable to a remotely controlled

system in FSB regional offices allowing access often without the provider's knowledge that data

is being collected. During a series of protests in Moscow in 2011-2012, members of the State

Duma and political opposition leaders were hacked by SORM and their private information and

conversations were released to defame and delegitimize them.[140]

SORM is used by the current regime to eliminate any opponents and strengthen the

regime's rule. Fifteen years after the system was brought to international attention, the European

Court of Human Rights argues that SORM violates the European Convention of Human Rights

"because its technical infrastructure enabled interception of communications without court

permission, thus bypassing legal procedures." [141] However, the regime does not stop at the

interception of data from personal devices and has implemented additional legislature to save

personal data available on websites

The Yarovaya Law involves international corporations in the regime's quest for power

expansion. The law introduced in 2016 states that "Russian telecom operators will have to store

all traffic (including calls, letters, documents, images and video) for six months, and related

metadata for three years"[142] These large-scale companies such as Google and Linkedin are

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[139] Damir Gainutdinov, "Russia's Surveillance State is Giving Us a False Sense of Security," *openDemocracy*, August 25, 2017.
[140] Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, "Russia's Surveillance State,"
[141] Ksenia Ermoshina and Francesca Musiani, "Migrating Servers, Elusive Users: Reconfigurations of the Russian Internet in the Post-Snowden Era,"44.
[142] Ibid., 45.

forced to station servers for Russian Internet traffic through their websites in Russia and comply

with the law on personal data or else, as Linkedin was in 2016, the web service will be blocked

in Russia.[143] The imposition of such restrictive legislature is further alienating Russian citizens

from the international community, because if the company decides it is not a worthwhile

investment then they will not provide their service there and Russians would be unable to use

social networking sites. Putin's Russia is giving its citizens the choice of accepting no access or

no privacy with constant monitoring.

The culmination of Russia's new coercive capabilities through technological

advancements is the intimidation and monitoring of individuals critical of the regime. *Al Jazeera*

journalist Roman Dobrokhotov described his experience as a journalist in Russia and the use of

old Soviet surveillance tactics that have been modernized:

> I was on a watch list for a while…I would be approached and taken to a local police
> station for a "preventative chat." It would be a completely meaningless action whose only
> purpose was to make me understand: "We are watching you closely".[144]

The power ministries track individuals with data from CCTV cameras and SORM networks, then

employ blatant trailing and threatening maneuvers on these individuals to simply remind them

that they are always under scrutiny by the regime. The state is accruing biometric data on its

citizens to further support this threat, such as the over 25 million fingerprints taken although that

process is only when an individual is arrested on administrative grounds.[145] Russia does not

camouflage, often flaunting, its exhaustive surveillance of its citizens, ensuring that the

population is aware that the state has "an ever growing amount of strictly personal (and often

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[143] Ilya Khrennikov and Anastasia Ustinova, "Google Warning on Russia Prescient as Putin Squeezes Web," *Bloomberg*, April 30, 2014, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-29/google-warning-on-russia-prescient-as-putin-squeezes-web
[144] Roman Dobrokhotov, "Under Surveillance in Russia," *Al Jazeera*, November 8, 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/11/surveillance-russia-161107133103258.html
[145] Damir Gainutdinov, "Russia's Surveillance State is Giving Us a False Sense of Security," 2017.

extremely intimate) information on citizens at their disposal"[146] The goal of this lack of concealment is to ensure that the population is conscious of the situation they are in, which is total dependence on the regime once more, since disobeying the state results in the exposure of private information or incarceration.

Analysis

i.   *Regime Comparison*

Both the CCP and the Putin's regime have the same historical origins, similar nontax revenue situations, and comparable institutional structures, thus these are unlikely to be causes for the discrepancy in regime durability between the two nations. Both regimes have revolutionary backgrounds with violent struggle in civil wars, thus according to Levitsky and Way, they should have been able to create the same institutions and both still stay durable. The two regimes do not receive support from other autocracies, but rather support neighboring authoritarian regimes in efforts to prevent a disturbance in the political status quo, which would sustain its own regime. The two regimes' institutions are different, as Russia is a competitive authoritarian regime and China is an authoritarian regime. However, both the USSR and China were single-party regimes, yet China endured as an autocracy while the USSR collapsed. In each of these situations, the two regimes are as closely matched as possible. They are both middle income level countries in similar regions of the world and are comparable in each of the first three different camps suggesting authoritarian durability and stability, therefore there must be an inconsistency in the regimes' coercive state capacities.

ii. Shared Implementation of Technology

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[146] Gainutdinov, Damir, "Russia's Surveillance State is Giving Us a False Sense of Security,"

A continuation of the regimes' similarities is their use of surveillance technology. Both regimes heavily rely on: Internet censorship, the use of CCTV cameras, a developed system and database of citizen information, and the use their gathered information to intimidate or separate individuals critical of the regime. This is a modern continuation of the regimes' shared surveillance ideology that prioritizes information gathering of its population as a mechanism to enhance state capacity.

The two regimes heavily restrict and contain the information that enter and leave the country with extensive censorship and relating legislation. The CCP's sustained position of power during the development of the Internet in the 1990s and early 2000s has resulted in the state's ability to mold the Internet's capacity and scope in China. The CCP introduced the Internet to its population with a monitoring system already embedded in its foundation along with an automatic filtering and censoring system. Although Putin's Russia was not in the same position of total control as the CCP during the Internet explosion, the current regime's use of legislative censorship laws and the Single Register has created a similar level of censorship as the Chinese Internet. Both nations aim to create a national Intranet, which is a private network administered by the state and would provide state permitted material, thus alienate their respective populations from the global population.[147,148] Russia has passed even more censorship legislation like the Yarovaya package, when compared to China, and this is possibly due to its inability to manipulate the nation's internet from the beginning like the CCP. The management of intermediate actors, like ICPs and ISPs along with international corporations, is utilized by Russia and China. In order to operate within the nations, these secondary actors must follow compulsory regulations that comply with regime objectives of citizen monitoring and censorship.

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[147] Soldatov and Borogan
[148] Kalathil and Boas, 9

The state has implanted itself in their citizens' use of the Internet through exhaustive censorship laws and systems in both regimes.

The CCP and Putin deploy continuous monitoring of its citizenry through advanced and multiplied camera activity, which contributes to their citizen database. Beijing, China's capital, is currently 100 percent covered by surveillance cameras, with claims that there will be 450 million closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras installed across the nation by 2020.[149] Similarly, Russia's capital, Moscow, has implemented 130,000 CCTV cameras constantly monitoring and reporting information back to the power ministries.[150] The two regimes have created an environment in which the state is incessantly observing and recording its citizenry, calling to mind the panopticon society in George Orwell's novel *1984.* The information collected from the real-time cameras serves a two-fold purpose: it contributes to the national citizenry database created by the state, while simultaneously creating a specific response within the populations that will be addressed later. The state's database allows the regime to deploy appropriate police enforcement to reduce criminal activity, such as Beijing's regulation of toilet paper in parks or Moscow's crackdown on illegal protest activity. The CCP takes this one step further by infusing public humiliation with regular police intervention as a preventative measure to stop people from committing crimes again.

The database also supplies the regime with information about possible regime dissidents. The Russian SORM provides the power ministries with information on any citizens' phone calls, internet traffic use, and any other communications that pass through electronic devices. SORM provides access to any communication of political opposition amongst any citizens or anyone within the SORM network range. The CCP is in the process of creating a citizen score that

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[149] Mitchell and Diamond, "China's Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone."
[150] Gainutdinov, "Russia's Surveillance State is Giving Us a False Sense of Security."

combines the information collected from both the private sector and the public sector on individuals to determine the citizen's loyalty to the regime. The regimes have access to an abundance of intelligence on their populations due to their state sponsored advanced surveillance technologies.

Equipped with their surveillance technologies and the resultant citizen data, both regimes ensure the public is aware of their surveillance, intimate possible political opposition, and separate them from the rest of the population. The two regimes parade their superfluous technologies by the number of CCTV cameras or national propaganda claiming the efficiency of its surveillance mechanisms. In Russia, journalists have recounted their experiences of Russian FSB operatives following and threatening them, utilizing information gathered from CCTV cameras and SORM networks to make their intimidation tactics appear more menacing. The Western city of Xinjiang has been the CCP's exemplar of the state's surveillance capability. The breadth of the citizen database of the Uighur Muslims is paired with excessive police intervention of citizens' lives daily at checkpoints throughout the city and summons to police stations. The two regimes are slowly testing the limits of their increased capacity from the surveillance technologies, which only serve as predictions for the future of the nations.

This builds on the shared ideology of the importance of surveillance in that they both add to their regimes' state capacity. The two regimes share the idea that the more information the regime accumulates on its citizens, the better the regime will be able to combat opposition and to maintain compliance, thus the stronger the regime will be and the longer the regimes will endure. Both China and Russia have valued intelligence collection and have maintained state objectives that will accomplish these goals. Thus, with the advancements of surveillance through better facial recognition systems and better quality cameras and more invasive security systems, the

regimes modernized this tradition so that they can continue to maintain such an intensive regime goal. However, despite this shared tradition and similar techniques, there has been a difference between the regimes in terms of the state's scope of intelligence collection.

iii. Differences in Scope due to Regime Durability and Stability

Despite all their similarities, the CCP has created a more extensive citizen database and data collection compared to Putin's regime in Russia, possibly due to the disparity in two regime's stability and durability. First and foremost, the state is explicitly fostering and financing the technology and surveillance industry in China, whereas this is not the priority for the Russian economy. The research and development of the surveillance industry is flourishing in China because government contracts are providing current businesses with the resources to expand and create innovations, while also incentivizing new startups to get involved in the industry. The technology sector in the Chinese economy far outpaces Russia's. The state created technology boom is not seen in Russia, thus this abundance of new technology is not provided to the regime. Putin is playing catch up to Chinese products and the Russian technology sector, although growing due to this recognition of the possibilities for the regime, is trying to follow in China's footsteps. The Russian economy is on a similar ranking as the Chinese, thus they have the same fiscal capacity to buy products, but China's advantage is that they have easier access to the products because they are Chinese products.

Secondly, due to the government sponsored technology boom, the products the CCP utilizes are the best on the international market. The CCP purchases these new surveillance technologies to use on its population so they are armed with better facial recognition systems or hi-definition cameras or network security systems to collect better intelligence. The new technology allows the CCP to be more intrusive, as demonstrated with the Sesame Credit system

tracking spending habits or the jaywalking billboards that broadcast the criminals' names, faces, and other personal information. The more accurate the data collection tools, the more accurate the citizen database can be, and the stronger the regime's state capacity. Russian technology is improving; however, it is not nearly as impressive/good as the Chinese, which impacts their ability to collect intelligence and monitor its citizens.

The pinnacle of China's surveillance superiority is the comparison between its social credit system with the Russian SORM. The program is based on a technological system/network that combines online purchases with social media platforms and postings with political participation with criminal activity with CCTV camera imagery with even peoples' personal relationships and communications. The strength of this system is that it can compile and organize the different sources of information into one profile for the citizen in question. From this convergence of citizen data, the state will "give and take away privileges…foreign travel, speedy internet, school access, and social benefits could all be granted or denied based on a person's score."[151] The ability of the system to not only accumulate but systematize/classify/categorize cannot be emphasized enough as that is what allows the regime to enforce its law the best way possible. In comparison, SORM collects and stores information from any communication media on an electronic device. Although this system is also intrusive and allows the regime to collect mass amounts of data on citizens such as recordings and locations, it is not done automatically and the system must be reactivated for every person it is monitoring to collect this information package. Furthermore, it does not include the criminal activity or state camera recordings or political activity/voting or much of private sector activity such as online shopping. SORM's main objective is to filter through the information for dissidence and alert the power ministries

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[151] Mozur, "Internet Users in China Expect to Be Tracked. Now, They Want Privacy."

on an individual, who then access their separate databases and catalogue this activity there for it to be processed in order to figure out political enforcement. The surveillance networks of the Russian state are not linked in the same way as China's are and the connecting of the dots (linkage) is so vital and important, as simply having the data from the different sources stored separated and not in relation/with the rest of the data makes the new tools inefficient.

An advantage the CCP has over Putin is as previously mentioned, the difference in control during the creation of the Internet. The CCP controlled the creation of the Internet because they maintained total power during its transition, but Putin, who was not in power during this timeframe, relies on current legislation for censorship. While it has created similar levels of censorship, it is harder for the Russians to have to constantly adjust and reconfigure their censorship legislation to adapt to changes in the Internet, while the CCP has been able to block anything of its type within the nation's borders. It is always better to be able to prevent someone from ever doing something than to retroactively stop them from doing something.

The CCP has been able to build and cultivate its surveillance industry/sector because it has maintained consistent power as a durable authoritarian regime, whereas Russia has not. As aforementioned in the literature review, the two nations have utilized surveillance as a mechanism to fortify their state's capacity and maintain power. This creates a cycle for regime power in that this data collection will improve the state's capacity and a stronger state will have more resources to do more surveillance and data collection which will add to its state's capacity and so forth. Surveillance can be utilized as a tool to build up and maintain strong states.

The CCP has been in power since 1949 without interruption, which means that it has been able to develop its state capacity for sixty-nine years. It has continued its tradition of surveillance collection to fortify its state's capacity with emerging technologies to surveil and

control the population. At the same time, the stronger state being created due to its extensive surveillance abilities has allowed it to continue to eliminate threats to the regime, thus preserve authoritarian rule. Ultimately, the regime maintains greater surveillance tools because it has maintained control which has allowed the continued expansion of surveillance.

However, Russia lacks such regime durability, and, even though there is a similar effort to use surveillance technology in the same way, its surveillance tools are weaker. The current Russian regime can be traced back to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the creation of the Soviet Union until its ultimate collapse in 1991 from which a democratic Russian Federation was born. Throughout the different leadership and regime changes, Russia has been unable to maintain a consistent emphasis on surveillance technology, from the height of surveillance during Stalin's police state, to the lack of such right before the USSR collapse. The lack of stability and durability in Russia for the same time frame as China's development period resulted in weaker surveillance tools for the current Russian regime to utilize and build off and a lack of a sector to development, thus a necessity to start from the beginning with Putin's election in 2001.

The difference in quantity and quality of surveillance tools and the resultant scope of the two regimes' surveillance sectors, despite a shared ideology, could be due to the regimes' durability and stability as authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, this could provide a possible explanation of why the CCP is an authoritarian regime while Russia is a competitive regime. The lack of such a hearty surveillance industry/tools has resulted in the weakened Russian regime compared to the CCP who has maintained authoritarian durability because of their surveillance and state capacity.

iv. The People's Response

The way in which the respective populations of the regimes react to the state's use of technology can provide a valuable insight to the efficacy of technological interventions to amplify state capacity and to sustain authoritarianism. Although both regimes have utilized technology to create control, the CCP has seemingly had a more successful experience with this compared to Russia since there is a dearth of information regarding how Chinese navigate the censorship or are rebelling against the regime's technologies.

The implementation of surveillance technology has created a more obedient population for the regime to control. The regime created a 'panopticon' mentality in which "people will follow the rules precisely because they do not know whether they are being watched."[152] The constant presence of the state through remote surveillance creates an uncertainty and unease within the population, so they follow the regime's laws. The police forces exploit this apprehension with the use of facial recognition glasses when interrogating suspects. Mr. Shan, the Zhengzhou deputy police chief, retold his experience with a suspect: "he was afraid of being found out by the advanced technology, he confessed…We didn't even use any interrogation techniques. He simply gave it all up."[153] The security forces did not need to coerce the man into a confession, the facial recognition technology's presence coerced him. Another result of these enhanced coercive mechanisms is how they utilize public humiliation to assure future compliance: "Ms. Gan, 31 years old, had been caught on camera crossing illegally here once before, allowing the system to match her two images… "I won't ever run a red light again," she said."[154] By aligning police enforcement with the societal values, the state does not need to exert

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[152] Paul Mozur, "Inside China's Dystopian Dreams: A.I., Shame and Lots of Cameras."
[153] Ibid.
[154] Josh Chin and Liza Lin, "China's All-Seeing Surveillance State Is Reading Its Citizens' Faces."

any more coercion as the technology once again takes the blame off the regime and instead

diverts it to the citizen through public embarrassment as punishment.

The result of such a constantly controlled and monitored society will decreased social

welfare, but will also be imitated by other regimes hoping to acquire the same level of civilian

compliance:

> Increasingly, citizens will refrain from any kind of independent or critical expression for
> fear that their data will be read or their movements recorded—and penalized—by the
> government. And that is exactly the point of the program. Moreover, what emerges in
> China will not stay in China. Its repressive technologies have a pattern of diffusing to
> other authoritarian regimes around the world.[155]

The CCP is limiting the space for freedom of expression and thought against the regime,

enforced by punishment, and this schematic will entice other autocrats to improve their rule

through this technology as well.

Russians are divided in their responses to the enhanced scrutiny imposed by the

government with some believing that it is necessary and others erupting in outrage to this;

nonetheless, Putin has created a regime of repression in which the population still complies out

of fear of the consequences. In a 2014 study, Ohio State University associate professor Erik

Nisbet found that the government has "created a psychological firewall in which people censor

themselves…they don't go to certain websites because the government says it's bad for me." The

regime has coerced some of the population into believing that the regime is the singular source of

legitimacy, thus there is less desire to resist censorship laws. The study surveyed 1,601 Russian

citizens on their Internet and media use, support for the censorship, and support for the regime.

The research revealed that those reliant on state sponsored media were more supportive of the

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[155] Mitchell and Diamond, "China's Surveillance State Should Scare Everyone."

current regime and believed the Internet was a threat to Russians and supported the online

censorship, compared to participants who watched other non-state but legal media sources. [156]

Another poll, conducted by the Levada Center in 2016, cites that 44 percent of Russians

believe that political censorship did not infringe upon the rights and freedoms of activists, while

32 percent said it did, and 24 percent could not answer. Moreover, "56 percent of participants

said that they fully or mostly trusted the news they saw on Russian television channels, only 37

percent said the same about news they saw on the Internet."[157] The Russian population polled is

much more doubtful of the Internet than state sponsored television. However, the regime scares

the population into compliance with the enhanced coercive capacities. Some journalists, after

being trailed and harassed by FSB officers are intimidated into leaving the nation as "not

everyone is ready to continue to work under such pressure."[158] The immense presence of Putin's

repression regime has possible positive results for the regime if it can deter opposition and

activists form coming to Russia. Furthermore, the Russian population is also motivated by fear:

"According to sociological data, a small minority of citizens (6 percent in 2002) fulfil their

responsibilities towards other people because they 'respect the laws'; others are motivated by

fear – that is, by coercion."[159] Although this does not account for the entire population, the

regime has created to some extent a society in which people are simply abiding by the laws

because the state has a strong coercive mechanism, thus there is too great of risk to defy the

regime.

[156] "Why many Russians have gladly agreed to online censorship," *The Ohio State University*, September 6, 2017, https://news.osu.edu/why-many-russians-have-gladly-agreed-to-online-censorship/
[157] Adam Taylor, "60 percent of Russians think Internet censorship is necessary, poll finds," *The Washington Post*, November 18, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/11/18/60-percent-of-russians-think-internet-censorship-is-necessary-poll-finds/?utm_term=.ce63dd91d613
[158] Roman Dobrokhotov, "Under Surveillance in Russia," *Al Jazeera*, November 8, 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/11/surveillance-russia-161107133103258.html
[159] Valeri Ledyaev, "Domination, Power and Authority in Russia: Basic Characteristics and Forms," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24, no.1, March 2008, 25.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to keep in mind that power is never absolute and there are ways in which citizens are subverting the regimes. Ermoshina and Musiani point to an opening for subversion within the Russian censorship system: "in many cases clients can still access the denied resource by using technical countermeasures such as a VPN or the Tor network."[160] The regime does not have complete control over the Internet as citizens can access banned materials with some technical expertise. Furthermore, there are still reporters and journalists who continue to travel to Russia and report critiques of the regime despite the intimidation as mentioned by Dobrokhotov or the efforts of the regime to suppress such attitudes and publications. Some Uighur escapees claimed that while living in Xinjiang, they would own two cell phones, one that is used only at home and another that has no sensitive content which is used outside and regularly checked by police.[161] The Internet can provide new avenues for connection and communication for the people, and there are innovative minds engaged in both sides of the situation, either to create repression tactics/systems for the regime or subversion tactics/systems against the regime.

While there are ways to subvert both regimes, they are both fairly limited in specifics since once information is released on a loophole in the system, both regimes will rectify their systems to ensure more surveillance/control/restrictions. I must acknowledge that there is far less information on how the population can circumvent the CCP's surveillance and censorship systems, which can demonstrate the regime's ability to regulate what is released outside of national boundaries. This ability to restrict and control information entering and leaving a territory indicates the regime's state capacity as does the effect the technology use has on crime

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[160] Ksenia Ermoshina and Francesca Musiani, "Migrating Servers, Elusive Users: Reconfigurations of the Russian Internet in the Post-Snowden Era," *Media and Communication*, 5, no.1, 2017, 48.
[161] Chin and Burge, "Twelve Days in Xinjiang: How China's Surveillance State Overwhelms Daily Life".

and citizen compliance. There are limits to the claim that technology has created a completely submissive population, as there will always be undisclosed subversion and rebellion in any regime; however, there appears to be a decrease in the publishing of such actions as the state continues to expand its reach into the daily citizen life through technology.

V.   Conclusion

This thesis has argued that different authoritarian regimes are adapting to the modernizing world by implementing new surveillance technology founded upon a shared historical ideology of surveillance to sustain their regime. The Chinese CCP and the Russian Federation have a shared origin, external financial situation, and similar domestic institutions, but their difference in state capacity is what has allowed the regimes to persevere or collapse. The CCP's use of technological surveillance paired with SOEs, informal coercion, and fortified police force has allowed the regime to embed itself in the citizen's lives. The Russian Federation has tried to follow a similar path through censorship, SORM, and a fusion of Soviet tactics and current surveillance technology. Ultimately, the main difference between the two regimes is their state capacity in terms of the scope of state surveillance which can account for the differing regimes' durability and maintenance of authoritarianism.

The broader implications from this thesis regards how the changing technological environment, which is rapidly becoming a large aspect of daily life, will impact the political landscape and regime type. It will be important to investigate how other regimes, especially hybrid authoritarian regimes and authoritarian regimes, will observe China's success and follow their lead. Since these two regimes are so similar in a variety of aspects, how will other regimes interpret these results and implement them in their own situations depending on similarities.

Furthermore, will authoritarian regime continue to monopolize these technologies or will the people be able to shift the power balance through these technologies. Along these lines, how will Russia adapt with these policy and security implementations and will it continue to shift into authoritarianism, or will it democratize and to what extent can that be contributed to the technologies. Similarly, how much longer will the CCP be able to continue to outpace the surveillance industry and suppress its population with improved surveillance technologies, or will its opponents find more effective ways to undermine the regime?

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