

Comparative Politics Master Thesis Seminar

The Illusion of power

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1.1 Introduction

By the end of the 1980's the communist regimes in Central and East Europe were collapsing. In Romania protests started after the government officials wanted to evict a dissident pastor. It started as small scale protests and the security forces cracked down hard on the protesters only to lead to mass protests. The head of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) was forced to flee from the central committee building and violence would continue in the streets until he and his wife were executed (Siani-Davies, 2005, p.1). Protests were not only taking place in Central and East Europe but in China as well. These protests were started by students, but after some time involved a great deal of the general population. The government cracked down hard on the protesters after several weeks and where in other countries the protests led to regime change this was not the case in China (Saich, 2011, pp. 81-83). This leads to the following research question:

Why did mass protests lead to regime change in Romania but not in China?

In order to look for explanations I will compare the protests in Romania to those in China to examine what might be attributed to the different outcomes. While these two cases probably will not be enough to generalize my findings they might present possible explanations that can be tested in further research. These two cases can help develop theory on regime change further as they appear different from one another in one specific aspect.

The results have implications for both society and the scholarly community. It could have implications on society as a whole as it might influence protest movements. The study can provide insights in when governments decide to use violence so that protests movements know when they can anticipate government repression and act accordingly. Furthermore, it can provide insights on what causes the government to decide to use violence and how the protest movements can use this

to their advantage so that the regime might collapse. The research can prove valuable on an academic level as there currently is few literature on nontransitions. Most studies try to explain the transition of countries and ignore the cases where transition does not take place (Hawkins, 2001, p. 442-443). This study will expand the literature in the field of nontransitions through the case study of China. Apart from that there is a body of literature on authoritarian regimes that this research could contribute to, see for example Levitsky and Way 2002, by analyzing other aspects then those that are commonly studied.

I will start by first discussing the general literature on democratization, revolutions and protests before moving on to my own research. During the literature discussion I will put forth the guiding questions that were used to guide my research to explain why protests led to regime change in Romania but not in China. This will be followed by a section on the research methods and data I used, the concepts and how these were measured.

1.2 Literature Review

There has been a great deal written on democratization and revolutions, but less on protests. Seeing that there is a great deal of literature available on democratization and revolutions I will focus on the most important and influential works. I will therefore start by discussing theories on these subjects.

Then I will move on to discuss the literature on protests as the main aim of this research is explaining the transition (in the case of Romania) or nontransition (in the case of China) and what role protests play in them. In the last part of this section I will discuss an alternative theory on how I believe the protests can be used to explain the regime change or nontransition.

Democratization theory

There has been a lot of work regarding democratization and revolutions over the past decades. One

author has been particularly influential within democratization theory, namely Huntington (1991-1992). Therefore I will start by shortly discussing the theory he developed on democratization. According to Huntington several groups play a crucial role in the democratization process. The outcome of the process is determined by standpatters, liberal reformers and democratic reformers in the government and by democratic moderates and revolutionary extremists in the opposition. Each of these groups holds different views on democracy and interests among them often conflict. To add to the complexity of the model groups can change their views regarding democracy based on how the democratization process is going once it is put in motion. The power of the different groups is usually not equal and affects the democratization process as well. Of course the power of different groups is subject to change during the process like the views are. The initial power of the different groups is also responsible for how the democratization process starts.

Huntington does not give a clear definition of power. How he uses it though it seems that he uses the term power as Robert Dahl defined it: "*A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do*". Because when he mentions power he talks about either who is currently in charge and able to determine the policies in a country or which group has more power and can bend the other group to its will. Crucial interactions in the democratization process are those between the government and opposition, between reformers and standpatters in the governing coalition and between moderates and extremists in opposition (Huntington, 1991-1992, pp. 588-590). Based on his work I come to the first guiding question for my research. Does the group with the most power over the other groups determines if protests lead to regime change or not? The rationale behind this is that if the most powerful group is in favor of regime change then it will be able to impose this on the others.

While Huntington uses labels the two groups within the regime standpatters and reformers other authors often used terms are hardliners and softliners. Concerning these two groups O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) worked out elaborate but clear definitions for both groups. They define

hardliners as individuals who believe that authoritarian rule is possible and desirable and no concessions should be made whatsoever towards democracy. Their definition of softliners is a group of individuals that believe that authoritarian rule is desirable but their staying in power is paramount for the country's well-being and are willing to grant the population more freedom to make sure they can continue to rule (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p.16).

Protests

While theories regarding democratization looked at various explanations the role protests play in the democratization process has hardly been researched. Noticeable exceptions are DeNardo (1985), Przeworski (1986), Bratton and van der Walle (1997), Karklins and Peterson (1993) and more recently Lynch (2011) and Howard and Hussain (2011). On this exact aspect this study makes a contribution as it looks at the role of protests in regime change. There currently are a number of theories on protests movements ranging from how they form to how successful they are. For this the interaction between the protests and the regime is important.

The theory on protests that is best applicable to this research is from James DeNardo (1985). In his book "Power in Numbers" he thoroughly develops a theory on protests and their interaction with the government. While other theories might do the same DeNardo's model sets it apart from others as he takes into account the repression of a regime in his model. Considering how in Romania and China the regime responded with violence it is important that an approach is used that incorporates that as well. DeNardo's model is based on the preferences of the population and the government. The interaction between the population and its government takes place through protests by the population against policies and the response of the government regarding the protests. The Government can respond by adjusting its policies or with repression. If the policies are adjusted enough then the demonstrations will stop. The same goes for repression, though repression can backfire on the government. DeNardo notes that there is a certain point where repression is

useless and regime change will take place no matter what (DeNardo, 1985). A slightly different view is held by Przeworski. According to him the threat of force produces consent and only in moments of true desperation this threat is not sufficient. Furthermore, a regime will not collapse unless individuals can identify a real alternative to the current regime (Przeworski, 1986, pp. 52-53).

There have also been some studies on how protests start both in the past and very recently with the Arab Spring. Research on how protests start have been done by Bratton and van de Walle who studied the transitions towards democracy in Africa. In their book they also look into the role of political protests. Their focus lies on explaining what causes political protests and what explains the differences in eruption between protests in various African countries. They found that protests are most likely to erupt in one-party systems that outlawed political organizations of their opponents. Economic factors appear to play no role in the eruption of protests (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, pp. 128-158). The Arab Spring caught the attention of a number of researchers because of how the protests started in those countries. Mark Lynch (2011) argues that the protests are a result of the change in ideology of the people in the Middle East. Howard and Hussain (2011) analyze the role of the digital media as a cause for the protests. They argue that the digital media make it hard for the authoritarian governments to silence opposition effectively and find that there is no central leadership under which the people united but rather a distributed leadership.

Authors who already looked at the role of protests in Eastern European countries and China in 1989 are Karklins and Petersen (1993). In their article they build a theory based on protests as an assurance game. They look at the society in countries as a whole but realize that societies consist of various heterogeneous groups. In their theory each societal group has a different tipping point before its members will participate in protests. They see the different groups participating as a cascading process. Workers will only participate for example if enough students are participating in the protests (Karklins and Petersen, 1993, pp. 593-596). To explain how the first group initially

starts protesting they refer to “collective rationality” that was developed by Muller and Opp. This refers to a collective consciousness among people that they realize that if no-one participates the collective action will fail. Another explanation they offer in the form of what they term the informal assembling process. People assembled during informal meetings and discussed there where and when to protest. Due to the informal nature of the assemblies the regime was unable to identify and deal with dissident groups (Karklins and Petersen, 1993, pp. 599-601). The reason they ultimately offer for the successes of the protests in Eastern Europe is that the regimes miscalculated the responses to their actions because instead of using an updated response pattern and relied on past experiences. China on the other hand used repression and making concessions effectively at the various stages of the protests and by repressing the workers stopped the bandwagon effect (Karklins and Petersen, 1993, pp. 611-612). Based on the research regarding protests I come to my second guiding question. Is whether regime change takes place dependent on if the government uses repression and concessions at the right stages of protest? The rationale behind this is that if the government uses the mixture of repression and concession at the right moment it should be able to prevent regime change from taking place according to Karklins and Petersen.

Repression effectiveness

Repression effectiveness could play a big role as well. Of course it matters if a lot of people who took part in the protests are arrested for instance, but of even greater importance is probably if those arrested were only taking part in the protests or if they were leaders of the movement. If the leaders are arrested then it will probably decrease the chances of the protests continuing. The rationale behind this is that because the leaders are arrested no one is left to use the repression to rally the people to their cause. New leaders would have to emerge to take their place that will have to take into account that they might suffer the same fate as previous leaders. Regarding repression effectiveness focusing on dissidents within the regime could be effective as well. If the all the

opposing individuals within the regime and military are removed at the same time as the movement leaders are arrested the regime will appear strong and united. This will lead the protesters to believe that it will be very hard if not impossible to overthrow the regime and lower, if not abandon, their hopes of the protests being successful. Therefore I believe it is of crucial importance that the effectiveness of government repression is taken into account as well. This leads me to my third guiding question. Is a government that is trying to repress the protesters effectively better able to stay in power?

Now that I have discussed the relevant literature for my research and laid out my guiding questions I will move on in the next section by discussing the research method, case and data selection I used for this research.

1.3 Research Design

In this section I will discuss the research design that I used in order to answer my research question based on the literature that was discussed in the previous section. As mentioned in the literature review there has already been a lot of research on authoritarian regimes, democratization and protests but hardly any research on the causal links between protests regime change. The goal of this study was therefore be to find the causal mechanisms between protests and regime change if there are any. I will start with discussing the research method, case and data selection I used for this study followed by the concepts and measurements.

Research method, case and data selection

In order to get an answer to the guiding questions I had to use a great deal of data. The cases for this study are as mentioned before the protests in Romania and China in 1989. In Romania there were protests to which the regime responded by trying to suppress them, but regime change eventually still took place. And in China there were protests to which the regime responded with repression

and no regime change took place. Both countries were communist states that were affected by the policy change of the USSR, glasnost and noninterference in the affairs of other countries. Both countries were fairly autonomous from the USSR, China more so than Romania but Romania still remained largely independent of the USSR even as a satellite state. Both countries had repressed protests in the past and the protests that are examined took place in the same year. While more Eastern European states crumbled in 1989 in all states other than Romania this was a largely peaceful process (Cipkowski, 1991). Hence my choice for Romania over any of the other Eastern European countries as it resembles the events in China more. Thus I did my research on the basis of the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) to examine the different outcome of the protests in both cases (Keman, 2011, pp. 57-59, Lijphart, 1971).

This is not to say that there are no differences. The culture of both countries differs greatly of course and the communist parties ascended to power in different ways which might make generalization harder. Considering the limitations of this project I did not have time to gather my own data but had to rely on existing data. The data I plan to use are reports on the protests in both countries, how they started, developed, responded to government action, how the governments responded to the protests and the role of the military.

The research method that I used to perform the study is that of process-tracing. The choice for this method flows from what I wanted to discover with my research. I already knew the outcome in both cases, namely regime change in Romania and nontransition in China following protests, but I wanted to know if there is and if so what the causal link between the protests and regime change is. While protests might appear to play a role in regime change or nontransition I could not be completely sure of this until I examined the causal process and its alternatives. Process-tracing allowed me to examine if the same causal effects can be found in both cases (George and Bennett, 2005, pp. 205-207). The specific process-tracing method that will be used is that of an analytic explanation (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 211) as I tried to find causal explanations for how

protests might lead to regime change. However a downside to this method is that I only have data on two specific cases. This means that while my findings might hold true for the cases I studied I can by no means assume that they will hold true for other cases. However, the findings can still be used to further theory development (George and Bennett, 2005, pp. 220-222).

This approach unfortunately has two further limitations. In order for the outcome of process-tracing to be reliable the causal path must be uninterrupted and multiple hypotheses might fit into the causal mechanism (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 222). The limitation regarding an uninterrupted causal path is reduced by the fact that I examined two cases. So that if the causal path in one of the cases is not as good as we ideally want it to be in then that might still be good for the other case allowing me to still expose the mechanisms present in that case. This allows me to say with a great deal of certainty what the causal mechanism is regarding protests and regime change. The second limitation is of no concern for this research as I will try to identify causal mechanisms which in the future might be translated into hypotheses.

The main danger for my research lied in one of the dangers Njølstad mentions regarding case studies. Njølstad demonstrates how factual errors can influence the theory building when conducting a case study. In order to reduce the amount of factual errors I wanted to use mainly primary sources so that I will not be copying factual errors that slipped into the work of other authors (Njølstad, 1990, pp. 241-243). Most of the information about the cases was only available in languages I have not mastered leading me to rely on secondary sources. As a result there is a small chance that I might have copied some factual errors. I tried to negate this as much as possible by reading multiple sources of the same accounts to make sure that the information I gathered is indeed correct.

For the case of Romania I relied mostly on “The Romanian Revolution of December 1989” by Peter Siani-Davies. While not all scholars agree with his analysis they praise the book for its informational content: “In short, Siani-Davies has done more than provide an exceedingly fine-

grained account of the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime; he has given students of revolution an example with all the inner mechanics exposed (Legvold, 2005)”. “Peter Siani-Davies, with this highly detailed book, represents one of the few notable exceptions to the rule regarding academic publications on Romania. He sets himself the enormously ambitious task of charting the events of the Romanian revolution between December 1989 and January 1990 (Berry, 2005)”. “It is a valuable piece of scholarship, which provides a balanced analysis of the downfall of the communist regime in Romania and the early period of transition to post-communism. Informative and well-written, Siani-Davies’ investigation would certainly benefit both students and experts wishing to gain an insight into the events of December 1989 and into the early shaping of post-communist Romanian politics, and it would also provide a useful tool for understanding mass political movements in general (Cinpoes, 2005)”. “This is a book full of information that gives the reader the impression that Peter Siani-Davies has read every source in English, Romanian, and French pertaining to the Romanian revolution and has gone through the most obscure press-communicés issued during those momentous events (Mandache, 2006)”.

As a main source of information for the Chinese case I used “The Tiananmen Papers” based on the recommendation of my supervisor Daniela Stockmann who is an assistant professor at the Leiden University and has done a lot of research in the field of Chinese politics. The information in The Tiananmen Papers also matches the information provided through the private journals of Zhao Ziyang (Zhao, 2010) making it highly likely that the information is indeed correct.

Concepts and measurements

The following two concepts were used in the study: dynamics between political actors and regime change. Regarding dynamics between political, military and elite actors I based my work on how Taeku Lee (2002) conceptualizes the interaction. I looked if protesters became elite actors by

institutionalizing and professionalizing their efforts. If they became elite actors I analyzed the interaction they had with the political and military elite and how they and the political and military elite tried to affect mass opinion. The basis for the analysis were statements from the groups and transcripts of the meetings the elites had with each other. Studies that deal with transitions, see for example, Huntington 1991-1992 and Hawkins 2001, usually define the political elite and leaders of the protest groups as the elite and opposition groups. The military elite is usually grouped with the political elite. Therefore, I used the same definitions in my study. The political and military elite that rule the country will be considered the elite and those who rise in opposition to it will be considered to be the opposition groups. However within the elite a difference between hardliners and softliners is made. Hardliners are considered those who believe that an autocratic rule is necessary and desirable and no concessions towards democracy should be made under any circumstance. Softliners on the other hand believe that autocratic rule is desirable but most of all that they should stay in power and that concessions towards democracy can be made if this is the only way to stay in power (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Therefore, I also looked at the role of hardliners and softliners within the elite and how they influenced the responses of the regime towards the protests. There has been some criticism on such an elite-based explanation, but this is limited to the post-transition dynamics (Kopecký and Mudde, 2000, p. 527). Since this research was limited to trying to understand how the transition or non-transition can be explained in the case of Romania and China this was not an issue.

The concept of regime change was based on how DeNardo conceptualizes it:

“We use the term government here in a general way to denote the institutional arrangement of power in a ruling organization. The incumbent administration occupying those institutions will be called a regime (DeNardo, 1985, p. 33)”.

This led me to measure regime change by if the administration occupying the institutions that make up the government changes be it through a revolt or a peaceful transition. If it does I label it as a case of regime change and if the administration does not change I consider it a case of nontransition.

I measured repression effectiveness by analyzing if the regime was able to arrest the protest leaders and deal with dissidents within the regime itself by removing them. For instance the Chinese government's removal of those in the military that were unwilling to carry out the martial law order (Liang, 2001, p. 239).

Power was measured by determining if the protesters got the regime to take another action then it would preferably have taken and vice versa. An example of this would be the Chinese government that was at a loss on how to proceed in dealing with the students after over 10.000 students were protesting after the April 26 editorial (Zhao, 2009, p. 13). In the case of the regime I talk about coercive power when discussing the power of the regime and in the case of the protesters I talk about legitimizing power. The reason for this distinction is that the regime can physically harm the protesters to get them to alter their behavior. The protesters cannot physically harm the regime but they can use public pressure to bring the legitimacy of the regime in question and get the regime to alter their behavior that way. If the leaders of a country lose popular legitimacy then the country will most likely become unstable or will even be overthrown, this is not only the case in democracies but holds true for authoritarian regimes as well. In authoritarian states it is harder to continually receive popular support because there are no elections. In the case of China the

government largely relies on nationalism as a source of legitimacy which is a risky choice as it identifies the people themselves as the bearers of sovereignty, not the government (Reilly, 2012, pp. 37-38). The basis for the analysis of coercive and legitimizing power were be transcripts of meetings and official statements of the various groups. In the following chapter I will provide a short overview of the more general history and then that of Romania followed by the Chinese history up until 1989.

1.4 Historical background

In order to understand the significance of the events that took place in 1989 we have to know what they mean in the historical context. In this chapter I will start by giving a general overview of the history up to 1989 followed by two short overviews of the history of Romania and China. In the overview of the history of Romania and China I will focus on how the communist regime that was in place in 1989 developed and what the situation was prior to the protests.

The bigger picture

With Germany on the brink of defeat in 1945 the allied leaders gathered in Yalta to discuss how to deal with Germany after its defeat and what would happen to the countries liberated by the Soviets. While during the conference at Yalta Stalin promised to let the countries that the Soviets liberated hold free elections and be completely independent he soon came back on this. So after World War II was over the Eastern European countries fell under Soviet control (Cipkowski, 1991, pp. 3-5).

Communists were put in control of the Eastern European countries, the industry nationalized and any opposition was crushed. After Stalin was renounced in 1956 by Nikita Khrushchev he opened a Pandora's box. Because Stalin's infallibility was destroyed for many Eastern Europeans this destroyed Soviet infallibility as well. As a result in 1956 and later in 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980

Eastern Europeans marched the streets demanding more freedom and an end to the Soviet occupation of their countries. While the Soviets crushed the protests things changed in 1988 when Mikhail Gorbachev announced that the people of Stalin's empire were free to go their own way and in early 1989 he proclaimed a policy of nonintervention to the Eastern European leaders. One by one Eastern European countries were rebelling and saw the protests brought to a successful conclusion this time (Cipkowski, 1991, pp. 6-11).

Romania's history up to 1989

In Romania there was a pro-German regime during World War II which lasted until the Soviet forces were rapidly advancing through the country in 1944. In order not to lose all sovereignty to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) local opposition parties staged a and successfully executed a coup. When the USSR liberated Romania from the Germans they infiltrated the Romanian military and secret service in order to get in a position of power. After Germany was defeated they saw to it that broad coalition governments were formed. The first three lasted only shortly and in every consecutive government the communist party (PCR) garnered more influence and power. There was originally some struggle between two factions of Romanian communists out of which the so called home communists came on top. Gheorghiu-Dej the leader of the home communists was after this struggle the de facto leader of Romania. He then saw to it that all those who could possibly oppose him were purged. When many Stalinist regimes were purged in Eastern Europe during the de-Stalinization in 1956 Gheorghiu-Dej managed to avoid this fate partly thanks to the purges which left no rival faction in his party and accusing those that were purged of being Stalinists. He also used the occasion to purge the last people in the party that might oppose him in the future. Gheorghiu-Dej was also continually fighting for more Romanian autonomy and making the country less dependent on the USSR. He did so with much success in the 1950s by increasing the trade with the West and exploiting the Sino-Soviet dispute. In the early 1960s he was finally

successful when Khrushchev gave in to his refusal for participating in a division of labor between the USSR and the Eastern European countries. This eventually culminated in 1964 as a party statement that later became known as the “Romanian declaration of independence” (Roper, 2000, pp. 13-43).

After the death of Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965 several other prominent party figures were in line to fill the empty seat left behind. Of these Ceausescu most cleverly manipulated party members and the course the party was on to increase his support, power and prestige. By using nationalism to its fullest extent Ceausescu was also able to create a lot of popular support. By denouncing the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 he was able to increase his influence and stature in Romania as well as with leaders in the West. By 1969 Ceausescu was the countries new leader and began constructing his cult of personality. During the 1970's Ceausescu focused on further industrialization of the country at the expense of the agriculture and in order to do so increased the trade with West. He also focused on promoting nationalism even more which didn't bode well for the ethnic minorities who were now for instance forced to learn Romanian in order to get into certain schools. Intellectuals that spoke up against human rights violations those years, and any other groups protesting against the regime for that matter, were swiftly dealt with by the securitate. Because of Ceausescu's failing economic policies he implemented austerity measures in the 1980's to pay of the growing debt of the country. This led to lower and lower living standards and combined with his continued policy of ethnic assimilation to the growing frustration within society (Roper, 2000, pp. 45-58).

China's history up to 1989

China took a different path to communism than the Eastern European countries. After the Marxist writings found their way to China the Chinese Communist party (CCP) was eventually formed and held their first congress in 1921. The CCP hardly at any power in its first years and after it realized

that it was quite powerless formed an alliance with the Guomindang (GMD), a very nationalist party, in 1924. The CCP benefited from the GMD network and the GMD benefited in turn from the alliance by receiving Soviet aid. In the years that followed the cooperation was not always a pleasant one. In 1927 GMD repression killed many CCP members which learned them that they should not rely on the military might of others. Because only less than 1% of the Chinese population consisted of workers the CCP also learned to focus their attention more on the peasants in the rural areas which they saw as more promising followers for a revolution. The CCP moved their base of operations from the south of China to the north where they were further away from GMD influence and were able to grow greatly. During 1942 to 1944 Mao Zedong consolidated his rule within the CCP and in 1945 the Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought became the guiding ideology of the CCP. From 1942 to 1944 Mao tried to eliminate any remnant influence from Soviet-oriented communists. In 1947 the GMD attacked the communists in the north but after a massive recruitment drive and successful guerrilla warfare the tables turned quickly in the civil war that started due to GMD aggression. After a successful campaign the CCP finally defeated the GMD in 1949 and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was born (Lieberthal, 2004, pp. 39-53).

On the eve of victory in 1949 the CCP pulled their military forces together and created the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The army was organized to fall directly under the control of the CCP so it would rather serve the party than the government. The remnants of the GMD retreated to Taiwan and the American navy blocked the crossing to Taiwan in response to the outbreak of the Korean War so the PLA could not advance any further and deal with the nationalists there. Because of Chinese aid to North Korea the United States (US) only recognized the Nationalist government in Taiwan as true government of China and thereby blocked the entry of the PRC to international organizations such as the United Nations and World Bank. Mao Zedong had become the de facto dictator of the PRC in 1949 and dictated the policy. During so called campaigns he cracked down on certain groups within society. At first mostly those that were seen as a threat to the new state and

later on the intellectuals. Especially the crackdown on intellectuals greatly hurt the Chinese development. Because of Mao's constant shifting policies throughout his governance it was hard for those in charge of implementing long term policies. While the PRC at first mostly followed the advice given to them by the USSR and profited from Soviet aid worsening relations between the PRC and the USSR led to a stop of Soviet aid in 1960 which had dire economic consequences. The worsening foreign relations led Mao to focus on self-reliance in the extreme which brought with it huge logistical problems and costs. The one thing the CCP did achieve was that the organization of a central leadership in Beijing that is capable of determining the national domestic agenda (Lieberthal, 2004, pp. 59-83).

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 Deng Xiaoping was able to gain power after a short power struggle. He saw the need to reform the policies and was cleverly using the support of the people to do so by creating space for them to voice their opinion. This lasted until he silenced them in 1979 when people started calling for further reforms to make China a democracy in addition to the other reforms. Until 1989 the CCP under Deng Xiaoping was continually trying to reform the country at the pace they saw fit. This led to constant cycles of reforms and then retrenchment as soon as the leadership believed that the reforms were having negative effects (Lieberthal, 2004, pp. 123-143).

2.1 The Romanian case

Now that I presented a short overview of the main historical events leading up to the protests in 1989 in the previous chapter I will continue by providing a summary of the events that took place in Romania in 1989. After the overview I will analyze Romanian case and then move on to the analysis of the Chinese case in the next chapter.

The starting incident

László Tőkés, a pastor in Timișoara, had been acting against the regime and placed under house arrest by the local authorities. When they decided though that he was to be evicted from Timisoara he called on his parishioners to gather outside his church when authorities would carry out the eviction order on December 15. While only 30 to 40 parishioners showed up on the day of his eviction a lot of normal citizens who just happened to be there mingled with them so the crowd grew larger. As the day progressed and the crowd grew larger it started to use anti-government slogan. The situation remained peaceful though and in the evening the crowd dispersed with only a few people remaining till morning (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 56-59). The next day the mayor, who unsuccessfully tried to get the crowd to disperse the day before, returned and said he was willing to make concessions. Quickly a negotiating committee was formed, but when the mayor said he could not give a written guarantee that Tőkés would not be removed the crowd that had gathered there grew suspicious and negotiations came to a halt. After the negotiations broke down the crowd started rioting and when security forces appeared on the scene it incited the crowd further. After more security forces arrived the security forces managed to disperse the protesters after a long struggle and arresting a number of people. Tőkés and some of his friends were taken into custody early on December 17. That day the riots continued, with a crowd that was numbering in the thousands by now. Later on a few tanks and soldiers arrived, after Ceaușescu had ordered a dispersion of the protesters and show of strength the day before, in order to cow the crowd into

submission. The crowds blocked the passage of some soldiers on the outskirts of the town and eventually got them to leave their vehicles and retreat (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 60-65).

After Ceaușescu was informed what had happened he called a meeting of the Political Executive Committee (PEC). Members of the PEC were Ceaușescu, his wife, Emil Bobu, Constantin Dăscălescu, Ion Dincă, Manea Mănescu, Gheorge Opera and Gheorghe Rădulescu. In this meeting Ceaușescu voiced his view that Tőkés was merely the front and the events in Timișoara were really the work of all the other nations trying to overthrow the regime. He went even as far as to say that the country was thus in a state of war. Both the security forces and military leadership were blamed by him how events had turned out because they did not follow his precise orders. While Ceaușescu kept mentioning that everyone should have been armed with live ammunition and move firmly to crush the demonstrations he did not give specific orders at the end of the meeting (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 63-67). As the day progressed in Timișoara the security forces eventually ordered to shoot on the protesters. After the massacre and mass arrests order was finally restored again (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 67-68). In the morning of December 18 Ceaușescu was informed that the situation was under control and left a few hours later for a planned state visit to Iran.

Protests continue and workers join in

Contrary to the report that the situation was under control the unrest continued. This time by a small number of people protesting at the Cathedral in the city and there was some unrest among the workers from a large nearby factory. Protesters at the Cathedral were violently suppressed leading to the death of a young man. Meanwhile, party officials tried to calm the workers in the factory. The next day the workers went on strike and party officials continued to be unable to get the workers to listen to them and back to work. The security forces continued with the suppression that day even though it appeared ineffective and workers started taking to the streets marching to the city center and protesting against the regime. On Wednesday 20 December even more factories went on strike

and took to the street as party officials were unable to change their minds. They marched for the center of Timișoara and eventually got the military to withdraw after Major-General Ștefan Gușă ordered them to. By this time the crowd of protesters consisted of about 40.000 people. (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 70-75). A group of delegates was formed to represent the crowds demands to the high party officials and senior members of the military that were now present in the city. The negotiations did not go to well and broke down after Ceaușescu, who had returned from Iran earlier that afternoon, made a speech in the evening that no compromises would be made. Also that day, Lorin Fortuna formed the Romanian Democratic Front (RDF) with himself at the head. Their demands were the resignation of Ceaușescu and the democratization of Romania (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 75-77, 82-83). While the situation was slowly calming down in Timișoara unrest spread to the neighboring cities where people also took to the streets and started forming RDF's (Siani-Davies, 2005, 77-82).

Mass protests start in the capitol

Meanwhile Ceaușescu decided to host a mass meeting and deliver a speech that would be broadcast to demonstrate that the regime still had widespread support and would legitimize the repression of the protesters. Party officials held speeches in factories before the meeting and then ordered people to attend the meeting with banners and portraits of Ceaușescu to show their support for the regime. During the meeting there was some commotion in the crowd that interrupted Ceaușescu's speech early on. This was followed by anti-government slogans and people shouting that they demanded Ceaușescu's resignation. After his startled expression was seen on the live broadcast it was interrupted until order on the square was restored. In his speech Ceaușescu promised to improve living standards and called for the Romanians to unite against those who would divide them. After he started getting interrupted by chanting again he ended his speech and the square where he held it quickly emptied. To keep the order the dormitories of students were placed under watch and know

dissidents were rounded up by the securitate and moved out of Bucharest. But these measures could not prevent that people started rioting throughout the city. The riots did not quiet down till early in the morning after they were ruthlessly crushed by the authorities under the supervision of Vasile Milea, the Minister of Defense. In the morning 49 demonstrators were dead, 463 wounded and 698 arrested (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 83-87).

As the rioting started again in the morning of December 22 the military proved unable to stop the demonstrators who consisted of mostly young people and workers. Soldiers were also seen to fraternize with the demonstrators. At 10:58 a state of national emergency was declared that put the military and patriotic guard on full alert and banned gatherings of more than five people. Shortly after this it was announced that Milea had committed suicide and Stănculescu was appointed the new Minister of Defense. The troops that were stationed in front of the central committee building were ordered to retreat early in the morning on order of either Stănculescu or Dumitru Pavelescu, a colonel in the securitate. Due to this withdrawal demonstrators were able to surge into the building once they arrived. They did so after a failed attempt by Ceaușescu to change their minds when he addressed them from the balcony as they started filling the square. Ceaușescu immediately headed for the helicopter that was waiting for him on the roof and left Bucharest together with his wife, two high party officials and two bodyguards. After a few hectic hours Ceaușescu and his wife ended up on a military base near the city of Târgoviște (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 87-96). After Ceaușescu fled Bucharest and the central committee building was stormed by protesters who, once inside, moved to the balcony and started addressing the crowd. While others who remained inside were busy forming new governments (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 102-103).

Elites start to defect

After the broadcasting station was captured by protesters high placed individuals from the military, securitate, RCP and some intellectuals and unknown civilians started addressing the public. After

this various groups started using the broadcasting station to present their political programs to the public. Most notably of all groups is the National Salvation Front (NSF) led by Ion Iliescu. In the speech he gave he mostly attacked Ceaușescu labeling him as the principal culprit. When he held a speech on the balcony of the central committee building a few hours later he declared that the securitate no longer existed and was now part of the military, that the old governmental structures no longer existed and urged people to create institutions like the National Salvation Front Council he was forming in Bucharest throughout the country and closed with the news that Ceaușescu and his wife had been arrested near Târgoviște. After him Dumitru Mazilu, former head of the foreign ministry's legal department who Ceaușescu fired previously, started a speech from the balcony similar to the one of Iliescu (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 104-111). Mazilu later joined the NSF and after a few hours of discussion Iliescu issued a declaration that was largely in line with Mazilu's speech earlier that day. They announced that for a proper transition the government apparatus would be maintained and that the aims of the Front were democracy, freedom and the Romanian people's dignity (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 112-116).

After the army withdrew from the city centers the country fell in a state of anarchy. In response the army was quickly redeployed often unwilling to act when necessary so it would not endanger its new position as guardian of the people, but more often causing deaths because they did not receive proper orders and were mostly poorly trained (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 116-133). Because the support for the NFS was not yet secured they replaced some of the defected generals they did not fully trust some where they could rely on. After a long meeting taking place on December 24 about how to deal with Ceaușescu and his wife Iliescu was convinced by Voiculescu and Stănculescu that they should quickly be tried before a military tribunal in stead of a civil trial several weeks later. The next day personnel in order to hold the trial and an execution squad were flown to the Târgoviște military base. After the trial that can only be seen as a farce Ceaușescu and his wife were found guilty, sentenced to death and immediately executed (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp.

134-140). While the situation was already calming down since December 24 it continued to do so until the army declared on December 29 that it had full control over the country (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 142-143).

2.2 Analysis

In this part of the chapter I will analyze the events for each of the guiding questions. However, before beginning with the analysis to see which hypotheses hold true and which do not I will first identify the most important actors and opposition groups. Within the regime there appear to be few actors who played an important role during the events in Romania. The most important one obviously being Ceaușescu. During the events that took place it was clear that he believed in the cult surrounding him he himself had created and could not believe that the people were truly unhappy with his rule. Until the end he believed other forces were at work to destroy Romania and that his rule was crucial for the survival of the country. This is shown by his remarks in various meetings. After Ceaușescu was informed what had happened on December 17 he called a meeting of the Political Executive Committee (PEC). In this meeting Ceaușescu voiced his view that Tőkés was merely the front and the events in Timișoara were really the work of all the other nations trying to overthrow the regime. He went even as far as to say that the country was thus in a state of war. Both the security forces and military leadership were blamed by him how events had turned out because they did not follow his precise orders. While Ceaușescu kept mentioning that everyone should have been armed with live ammunition and move firmly to crush the demonstrations he did not give specific orders at the end of the meeting (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 63-67). This shows that he had no intention of compromising in any way and believed that the regime should be kept in place at all costs. His belief in the cult surrounding him is shown by how he intended to conclude the events after the protests in Timișoara were struck down with violence. Believing that he still had widespread support he was under the impression that hosting a rally to showcase to the country that

he still had a lot of support would put an end to things. In part he believed in his cult due to others confirming his delusions like his brother reporting to the Ministry of Defense that the protests were indeed a terrorist plot while he had information to the contrary (Siani-Davies, 2005, p. 65). During the rally his shocked face when the mob present at the rally starts shouting anti-regime slogans clearly shows how out of touch with reality he had become. His futile attempt the next day by trying to speak to the masses that were about to storm the government building are another example of this (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 83-96).

While Ceaușescu through his actions during meetings can clearly be identified as a hardliner it is much harder to categorize the others within the regime. While Ceaușescu kept repeating during the meetings how protesters should be crushed with force most other high party members kept quiet (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 63-67). No-one mentioned that some concessions would probably have to be made towards an electoral system so they could stay in power. An explanation for this could be that there was no clear opposition group with leaders that were demanding concessions and those within the regime were too afraid to suggest concessions themselves. While they were carrying out Ceaușescu's orders it does not become clear if they do so out of fear of what Ceaușescu would do to them otherwise or whether they shared his views. The high pace in which the events followed one another could also play a role. It was not clear until the last days of the regime on December 21 and 22 that the regime might be in real danger. Softliners within the regime perhaps did not want to voice their opinions until the situation was grave enough so they could do so without fear for harsh repercussions. Especially after Ceaușescu said in a public speech on December 20 that no concessions would be made it probably kept others within the regime from suggesting concessions as a viable option (Siani-Davies, 2005, p. 77).

While the pace of the events caught the elite off guard the same is true for the opposition groups. It can be argued that as early on as December 16 when László Tőkés felt that he was no longer in control over the crowd protesting in Timișoara (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 60-65) events

moved quicker than the opposition groups could keep up with. The quickly formed delegation to speak with high party officials and generals in Timișoara on December 20 was unable to organize properly as they had no time to form a clear idea of what it was they were hoping to achieve. As a result they could not convey the demands of the protesters properly (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 75-77). Likewise Lorin Fortuna who founded the RDF was also unable to exert control over the crowd and get things organized. After he had formed an RDF in his own town he was only able to get people in other cities to form similar RDF's. Other than that there was no further organization in order to achieve their goals of getting Ceaușescu to step down and start with the democratization of Romania (Siani-Davies, 2005, 77-82).

After Ceaușescu fled various opposition groups sprung into life in order to replace the government, but most did not last long. Even the NSF had great trouble organizing itself and adjusting to the new situation. Ion Iliescu only repeated some general demands of the protesters in his speech and the group spent most of its time gathering influential people and getting their support. A great example of the lack of direction in the beginning of the NSF is shown by Iliescu first declaring that the old government structures no longer existed only to come back to it later when they realized that they needed to maintain the institutions for a proper transition of power (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 104-116) As such there was not really anyone from among the opposition groups to organize and lead the protesters in the beginning. Now that I gave a short overview of the most important actors, their views and goals I will continue by looking at the interaction between the regime and protesters.

Repression effectiveness

Did repression effectiveness play a role then in the case of Romania? I will do so by giving looking how the government used repression and then analyzing its use to determine if it can be argued that they tried to repress the protesters effectively by focusing their repression or if they simply resorted

to widespread repression.

During the period of the protests, that would later turn into a revolution, both the elite and opposition groups did not understand how serious the situation was and neither had any real control over the situation. László Tőkés was the first to notice how things were getting out of hand when he was unable to get the crowd to abide by his requests. For the elite it was not until December 21 that they started to realize how serious the situation was. Up to that point they believed that by repressing the protesters with violence as they had done in the past they could restore order and carried on with business as usual. The main problem the regime had regarding repressing the protesters was created by Ceaușescu not giving clear orders during the meeting on December 16 and that his subordinates did not want to resort to the harsh measures he ordered them to use (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 63-68). Other than that, those mobilized to suppress the protesters did not receive clear instructions on how to act or any form of leadership at all in the case of the workers that were sent to repress the protesters. So when workers sent to repress the protesters arrived on scene they just stood there and the only thing they achieved was showcasing how weak the government was (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 76-77). By the time the protests in Timișoara were put down with violence and mass arrests it was too late and the protests had already spread to neighboring towns. The only individuals the regime specifically focused on arresting before resorting to mass arrests and violence were Tőkés and some of his friends (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp.60-65, 70-75). The same thing can be said for the events that took place in the capitol on December 21 and 22. The harsh response of the regime against the protesters and riots that broke out after the speech of Ceaușescu on December 21 did not seem to effect the situation in any way. The regime did try to focus their repression on December 21 and 22 by focusing on the students whom they saw as the most troublesome group and getting known dissidents out of the city so they could not join the protesters. However, they did not deal with dissidents in the military and security forces. This caused them to ignore orders at crucial moments (Siani-Davies, 2005, 83-87).

Did the regime repress the protesters effectively then? The elite tried to but because the protests sparked up as they did the elite could not effectively repress them. Since there were no clear leaders instigating the protests other than László Tőkés early on they could not focus their efforts on arresting any other specific individuals. The few known dissidents within the elite were arrested and moved out of the capitol, but to many others who were unwilling to support the regime were not. So the regime did try to effectively repress the protesters by focusing on specific persons and groups like the students on December 21. But the protests had simply grown too big too quickly and seemed to act with a collective mind. Their focus was replacing the regime and specifically Ceaușescu and in order to achieve that goal that it did not need to rely on any form of leadership. While some dissidents within the party were moved outside the capitol to neutralize them it seems that in the end the only ones who still wanted to keep the regime in place were Ceaușescu and a handful of people close to him. Therefore, there were too many unwilling people in the elite to keep in line and removing a few dissidents out of the picture had little to no effect.

So I conclude that while the regime did try to repress the protesters effectively it made no difference and did not affect the outcome in any way for the regime in Romania. Other than that it did not insure the obedience of the military causing high ranking military leaders to defect at crucial moments. So the Romanian regime failed to repress the protesters and dissidents effectively.

Repression combined with Concessions

As I discussed in the previous section regarding repression effectiveness the regime did use widespread repression at various points during the protests. They did not use repression right at the start when it would have been more effective. When it was used, it was too little at the beginning and too much at the later stages so instead of restoring order to backfired and the protests grew by spreading to other cities. So when the regime had finally repressed the protests in Timișoara there were multiple others spread throughout the region that showed the regime's inability to contain the

situation (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 70-75). The regime did try to couple the repression with some concessions when it held another rally to showcase the support the party still had among the people. During the rally the government made it look as if they were making concessions by announcing reforms while in actuality no new plans were announced. Other than that the concessions they announced were small ones and hardly noteworthy and did not have any effect on the sentiments present in the crowd. So when there was some confusion and unrest in the crowd during Ceaușescu's speech it was the spark that led to protests and riots throughout the capital (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 83-87). The government was not willing to make concessions at any other point. While it seemed that some concessions could be made on December 20 between a delegation of the protesters in Timișoara and government officials, but the speech of Ceaușescu later that day prevented this by breaking down the negotiations (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 75-77).

The elite did not use enough repression against the protesters early on, when it should be used according to Karklins and Petersen (1993), to restore order. Ceaușescu was also unwilling and unable to make concessions. In part because by the time he realized how serious the situation was concessions were pointless and on the other hand there was no clear group he could talk to and make concessions with.

Legitimacy undermining and Coercive Power

The regime failed to use repression effectively and did not couple repression with concessions. Can a look at the power of the different groups also aid in explaining why regime change took place? As far as coercive power of the elite and legitimacy undermining power of the opposition groups goes it is much harder to determine who had the most power over the other groups and how it developed. The main problem being that the opposition groups never had any control over the protesters. The elite was also unable to identify any clear opposition groups even as it was being replaced on

December 22. During the events that took place from December 16 to December 22 both the actions of the opposition groups and the elite were focused on the masses that were protesting. The opposition groups tried to get them to follow their lead and the elite tried to strike them down and replace order. In the early stages this is seen by Tókés efforts to control the crowd and a bit later on by Lorin Fortuna with his RDF. Meanwhile Ceaușescu was constantly busy directing all his resources towards striking down the protests hard and fast by mobilizing the military, securitate, patriotic guard and even workers from outside the region. It was not until Ceaușescu was forced to flee and got overthrown on December 22 that a clear leadership and opposition group formed that started to organize the mob. And even then the opposition group, the NSF, was struggling to gain legitimacy and tried to get the crowd to listen to it by rounding up all the individuals who played a role in one way or another the days leading up to the regime change (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 104-116).

In the Romanian case it can be said that both the elite and opposition groups did not have either coercive or legitimacy undermining power as both were at the mercy of the masses. The elite was unable to get the protesters to disperse with either the threat or use of force. The opposition groups, on the other hand, were unable to get the masses to unite behind them so they could use them to undermine the legitimacy of the government and use that to get the government to make concessions or step down.

A different mechanism?

What was exactly at work then that explains the regime change in Romania? The regime was unable to repress the protesters effectively and did not make or try to make any concessions. It did use force to repress the protesters at various moments. Repression failed and while there was a lack of organization regarding the opposition groups the regime was still overthrown. What can explain then how the regime was toppled without any leadership from opposition groups to guide the

masses?

The Informational Cascade Model of Lohmann (1994) can provide an explanation in this case. She argues that the masses are influenced by a lot of different “senders” who provide them with information about the regime and on the basis of this information people decide if they join the protests. Then people participating in protest take informational cues from the changes in size of the protest movement which further influences their participation. This creates a form of collective decision making without any real leadership. This can explain why people do not need to base their actions on what a single opposition group tells them to do, but rather base their actions on the information they receive. No real guidance is needed if the actions of individuals are driven mainly by information received from their peers or other news sources. In the case of Romania, this could explain why the regime was overthrown without opposition groups organizing and leading the protests. Instead, the protests were organized through the information that people received and decided to join or not based on that information and the changes in size of the protest movement. An example of this would be the people starting to protest in the cities around Timișoara after they received the information about what was taking place there (Siani-Davies, 2005, pp. 70-82).

3.1 The Chinese case

Now that I looked at the Romanian case in detail I will move on to portray and analyze the events that took place in China. After which I will compare both cases with each other and check how these cases can help explain regime change. As in the Romanian case, I will start by giving an overview of the events that took place in China during the protests before moving on to the analysis. The focus of the overview will be on the size of the protests and on which societal groups are participating in them.

The starting incident

Shortly after Hu Yaobang died on April 15 Zhao Ziyang was concerned how his death might impact society. At the time other high party members did not expect his death to lead to major disturbances, but they decided to keep a close eye on the response of the people (Liang, 2001, pp. 21-22). While most of the students were only mourning the death of Hu Yaobang a few used the mourning to protest against the regime which caused the leaders to be on their toes. This caused Zhao Ziyang to order the city government of Beijing to keep a close eye on the students but not to take other actions. Li Peng, premier and member of the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), however, found that the protests were getting out of hand and ordered the local government to take action which it did (Liang, 2001, pp. 23-36). On April 20 the first non-official student organization, the Autonomous Federation of Students (AFS) including Ding Xiaoping, Wang Dan, Yang Tao and Feng Congde, was formed with seven students to lead the student movements. Unrest continued to grow and reports came in that workers and officials were joining the students. Zhao knew the situation was tense in Beijing as well as in a few other cities, but even after being asked to postpone his visit to Korea he still decided to go in order to signal that the situation was under control (Liang, 2001, pp. 36-49). Before his departure to Korea Zhao ordered Li Peng to take charge and told him Deng Xiaoping had agreed with three principles to resolve the issue. Students should be prevented

from demonstrating, bloodshed be avoided but rioters arrested en persuading the students through dialog.

However the day after the memorial ceremony students started boycotting classes on and established a provisional student planning committee (Liang, 2001, pp. 49-55). In response to this Li Peng called a Politburo meeting on April 24 in order to discuss how to deal with the situation. During the meeting they once again concluded that the students were being manipulated into this behavior by others but should not underestimate the power the few who were responsible had. Those in attendance formed a Small Group with Li Peng as its head and decided that those causing the boycotts and riots should be exposed and dealt with. They send this notice to all local party bureaus and agreed to present a report to Deng Xiaoping the next day (Liang, 2001, pp. 56-62). Meanwhile, in several other cities than Beijing people started protesting and rioting. Interesting is that not only students participated in these but also workers and farmers (Liang, 2001, pp. 67-70).

The April 26 editorial

On April 25 Deng Xiaoping was briefed on the situation and agreed that there must be others working behind the scenes that are organizing the students. They decided that Deng would write an editorial in the People's Daily to comment on the situation. When Zhao was updated on the situation he agreed with the decision. The editorial stated that the movement was a planned plot to throw the country into turmoil (Liang, 2001, pp. 71-76). Military officers agreed that stability should be preserved, declared themselves behind the party and those not obeying the law be punished. However they did mention that some of the reforms the students were protesting for would be good if they were implemented. When in a response to the April 26 editorial huge student protests followed Yang Shangkun, the president of the People's Republic China, got the consent of Deng Xiaoping to move soldiers into Beijing as a reserve force. The soldiers were not allowed to use weapons in case of a clash between students and civilians (Liang, 2001, pp. 76-81). In response to

the large demonstrations the April 26 editorial created Li Peng ordered another editorial to be written with the focus on preserving social stability (Liang, 2001, p. 83). After Li Peng called another PSC meeting they decided that the favorable course of action was to pursue dialogs with the students (Liang, 2001, pp. 83-90). The dialogs did not have the desired effect though and students started protesting again after the discussion aired on China Central Television (CCTV). This was because the students did not see the students present in the discussion as their representatives and in their opinion substantive issues were being ignored (Liang, 2001, pp. 95-96).

On May 1 Wang Dan, the leader of the AFS, chaired a meeting in which students criticized the government and were asking for others to support them. The same day Zhao Ziyang, who had just returned from his visit to Korea the previous day, held a meeting with the PSC. During this meeting Zhao mentioned that they should pursue discussions with the students and focus on guiding the students instead of confrontations. He also noted that there was a global trend towards democracy and that the party should follow the trend before other groups used it to overthrow the party. Others agreed with his sentiments though they all believed that China should keep a one party system, not a multi party system and before reforms could be implemented stability should first be restored (Liang, 2001, pp. 101-108). On May 2 it was decided in a meeting of the AFS that Wang Dan and Feng Congde would be making the preparations for demonstrations they had planned on May 4 (Liang, 2001, p. 109). The following day Zhao Ziyang held a speech in which he affirmed the students patriotism and the legitimacy of their desire for democracy and opposition to corruption. He ignored the desire of others including Li Peng to add the phrase “oppose bourgeois liberalization” because he felt that in the current situation that was better left out (Liang, 2001, p. 110). On May 4 the AFS made a number of demands during the protests in Beijing and students protesting were mentioning to be upset that the government was suggesting that they were being manipulated. In this speech he mentioned that the government should meet the students demands through democracy and law. He had a discussion with Li Peng afterwards about the situation. Zhao

wanted to publish a reaction on the April 26 editorial in which the few using the students would be clearly pointed out and set apart from the masses of students that were simply being used. Li Peng disagreed with this few and as neither could convince the other they parted ways (Liang, 2001, pp. 115-118).

The situation calms down

While after the speech of Zhao most students returned to attend their classes on May 5 Wang Dan called for a continuation of the boycott on May 7 so that a petition a group of reporters wanted to deliver on May 9 would have more support (Liang, 2001, p. 125). Meanwhile Zhao continued to try and get more support for changing the characterization of the student movement. He would try and get the PSC to support his view while Yang Shangkun would talk to Xiaoping. However, in the next meeting with the PSC he did not really address the issue and did not try to get Li Peng and the others to support his view. He ended the meeting with stating that they should keep the evil minority and the good majority of students apart and start to show the people that the party was busy fighting the corruption (Liang, 2001, pp. 122-124, 126-129). On May 9 Wang Dan stepped down after a controversial decision to expel Zhou Yongjun because he made the unauthorized announcement that boycott of classes was ending. He mentioned though that he would join the AFS again should the need arise (Liang, 2001, p. 130). During a meeting of the PSC that took place the same day different views were voiced in how to handle the ongoing protests during which some called for more punitive measures. Zhao prevented such a course though and got them to focus on dealing with the students demands for reforms (Liang, 2001, pp. 131-138). May 10 saw another student protest under the leadership of the AFS (Liang, 2001, p. 139). On May 11 Yang talks with Deng and relays Zhao's views regarding the April 26 editorial. Deng does not make a decision right away but instead he mentions that he, Zhao and Yang should get together to discuss things. During the talk Yang also informs Deng that although there are some discussions within the military there are no

sings of disunity (Liang, 2001, pp. 140-144). Zhao Ziyang, Yang Shangkun and Deng Xiaoping then meet each other on May 13 to discuss the situation. They agree that Tiananmen square should be clear so that Gorbachev, who would arrive soon for a state visit, and other important delegations can be properly received and that they should also quickly act on the sentiments of the people against corruption, but no concrete decisions are made (Liang, 2001, pp. 147-152).

The hunger strike begins

On May 13 the AFS again demanded a dialog with party and government leaders while posting a “Declaration of Hunger Strike” and “Manifesto for a Hunger Strike” at several universities. In the manifesto they say that they started their hunger strike because of the indifference the government towards their boycott of classes and the negative labeling of the movement by the government. They demanded a dialog with the government and the government to acknowledge the legitimacy of the movement. In the evening, representing the AFS, Wang Dan, Wang Chaohua and Ma Shaofang held a press conference stating they would not leave until their goals were reached. In response Yan Mingfu, chief of the Party's United Work Department, met with representatives from the AFS, the dialog delegation and representatives from the hunger strikers in order to get them to abandon the strike before Gorbachev's visit. After the meetings she reported to Zhao that she did not believe the student representatives were in agreement with each other and wondered whether they represented or could exert any influence on the hunger strikers at all (Liang, 2001, p. 153-159). In the face of the students determination Zhao Ziyang, Yang Shangkun and Li Peng decided to send Li Tieying, Yan Mingfu and Wei Jianxing to speak with student representatives. Mingfu then met with some student leaders where he learned that the student leaders themselves were uncertain if they could end the strike if they decided to (Liang, 2001, p. 164-165). On May 15 the Tiananmen Square Hunger Strike Headquarters were established by students with Chai Ling at its head. While she was giving interviews to the press more than a 100.000 people, including workers, civilians and some

staff members from government ministries and the Bank of China were marching in support of the students. In many other cities demonstrations also took place in front of provincial government offices (Liang, 2001, pp. 171-172). The next day leaders of students, including Li Lu, Chai Ling and Wang Dan, gave another press conference stating that they would not give up and strike to the death (Liang, 2001, pp. 173-174). After the hunger strike got underway the tensions between the students from Beijing and those from outside Beijing started to rise. Those from Beijing had big problems organizing supplies for the Beijing students so they did not give the same amount of support to the students from outside the city. This led to the students from outside Beijing to form their own organization that would focus on helping those from outside of the city (Wright, 2001, pp. 75-76).

Elite policy starts to change

After the Chinese leadership felt ashamed at how Gorbachev's visit had started, the fact he could not be properly welcomed on Tiananmen square, they had another meeting on May 16. During this meeting Zhao Ziyang again voiced his opinion that they should reverse the view of the student movement voiced in the April 26 editorial. However, none of the other officials present at the meeting agreed. It was then concluded that they would talk with Deng Xiaoping on the matter and Zhao would deliver a written speech to the public (Liang, 2001, pp. 177-181). On May 17 the PSC came together with Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun and Bo Yibo to discuss the situation once again. In this meeting all attacked how Zhao Ziyang had been handling the situation and that he did not take the same stand in his May 4 speech as the April 26 editorial. Deng Xiaoping pushed the decision in the end to declare martial law in Beijing and move in the army to restore order. After the meeting Li Peng gathered other high party officials to let them know what was going to happen and tasked Yan Mingfu with contacting the students that controlled the hunger strikers (Liang, 2001, pp. 184-190). When the PSC convened that evening Zhao proclaimed that he was against imposing martial law. The other PSC members seemed to have mixed feelings about the issue and after a vote

Li Peng and Yao Yilin voted for imposing martial law, Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili against it and Qiao Shi abstained. Zhao Ziyang offered to resign when they could not reach an agreement, but they did not want him to as they felt the party should show unity at that moment. They decided to go to Deng Xiaoping again since they could not reach a consensus (Liang, 2001, pp. 191-193). On May 18 Zhao Ziyang was at a loss what to do as he felt he could no longer work with Li Peng and Yao Yilin in the PSC. He thought about resigning first but then decided on sending a letter to Deng Xiaoping urging him to reconsider changing the official view of the April 26 editorial and to refrain from imposing martial law in Beijing (Liang, 2001, pp.199-201). When the Elders and the PSC, with the absence of Zhao Ziyang, held a meeting everyone present saw martial law as the needed course of action. During the meeting Hu Qili who earlier voted against it and Qiao Shi who had abstained did not speak until towards the end. Hu Qili said he needed to think it over but would follow party discipline and Qiao Shi mentioned he was now also in favor of martial law. The meeting was concluded with the decision that martial law would be imposed starting May 21 which Yang Shangkun would oversee (Liang, 2001, pp. 204-211). When Yang was making preparations for the martial law he got a report that the commander of the Thirty-Eight Army, Xu Qinxian, was refusing to carry out the order to enter Beijing and declare martial law (Liang, 2001, p. 213).

The declaration of martial law

The meeting Li Peng and other officials held earlier that day with student leaders of the AFS and other student organizations turned out to be fruitless. Meanwhile more and more people started protesting on Tianamen Square. Workers came and brought food and blankets to support the students. Throughout the rest of China the student protests got an increasing support from journalists, officials and workers (Liang, 2001, pp. 202-203, 213-216). When Deng and Yang met on May 19 Deng mentioned his displeasure with the speech Zhao had given earlier that day at Tianamen and that they should act against Zhao. When informed about the unwillingness of Xu to

carry out the martial law order he told Yang that the military should always obey orders and Yang had to make sure they were carried out as planned (Liang, 2001, pp. 217-219). During a large meeting in the evening Li Peng announced to those present that martial law would be declared and why. Yang Shangkun, who spoke in place of Zhao Ziyang, added to this that the military would not be used directly at the students but just to maintain order (Liang, 2001, pp. 224-227).

After Li Peng signed the martial law order on May 20 the various student organizations and the Autonomous Federation of Workers in Beijing (AFW), which had been founded the day before, published a handbill. In the handbill they called officials tyrants, mentioned that the population of Beijing was against martial law and it should be withdrawn and that they would continue boycotting classes while workers should support them using all peaceful and effective means including strikes. Furthermore student leaders dispatched students to intercept and prevent the military from reaching the square and prevented army divisions from reaching the square. Not only students but ordinary citizens were also participating in the blockades (Liang, 2001, pp. 233-239). Yang was updated on the situation as events progressed on May 20. He heard that Xu had been successfully replaced and no-one else had disobeyed the order. He ordered that everything should be done to keep the unity of the army and force should be used with great restraint. Eight other generals sent Deng Xiaoping a letter stating that they did not want to move their troops in Beijing and enforce the martial law. After which Deng and Yang sent two top military leaders to talk to them and eventually managed to get them to obey the command (Liang, 2001, pp. 239-242, 265). The next day student leaders decided to leave the square but in the evening they reversed their decision during an emergency meeting after more people had entered the square. Meanwhile Wang Dan held a speech stating that the students would never retreat (Liang, 2001, pp. 253-254).

Removal of Zhao and Hu

When the Elders met on May 21 they decide that Zhao is no longer fit to lead and that Hu Qili

should also be replaced. They believed that who should replace them is a matter that was best settled later though and only decided to relieve Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili from their posts. They also decide to let Wan Li return to China, but not directly to Beijing and that he should be informed of what is going on before heading there (Liang, 2001, pp. 256-264). In the evening of May 22 Li Peng, Yang Shangkun and Qiao Shi report in a top of party officials that Zhao is responsible for the current situation and because he handled it wrong has been relieved. They also state that they need to keep a hard line towards the protesters and clear the square as soon as possible when they get the chance (Liang, 2001, pp. 268-272). On that day there was disagreement between the various student organizations about what to do though the trend seemed to be to persist with their protests. Meanwhile the State Security Ministry kept receiving reports that protests throughout the country continued and also included intellectuals, workers, party members and a few soldiers (Liang, 2001, pp. 272-275).

On May 23 Li Peng ordered the railways to not transport students to Beijing anymore (Liang, 2001, pp. 279-281). May 23 also saw the creation of the Association of Beijing Intellectuals with Bo Zuxin at its head. Their first declaration that day called for an end to martial law, the firing of Li Peng and respect for constitutional rights (Liang, 2001, p. 286). On May 24 Yang held a meeting with the Central Military Commission (CMC) explaining to the military commanders, political commissars and other high officials the need to be unified on the matter of Zhao Ziyang's removal. At the end of the meeting he ordered the senior military leaders to unify the thinking of those under their command as well and that no one should be allowed to disobey orders (Liang, 2001, pp. 287-289). The State Security Ministry labeled the leaders of the Federation of All Social Sectors in the Capital (FASSC), Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, as the ones being the main plotters behind the student movement. The FASSC published two documents that day with demand similar to the ones that had previously been made like the call for more freedom, democracy, rule of law and the removal of Li Peng (Liang, 2001, p. 294). On May 26 the Central Advisory Commission

Standing Committee voted unanimously for giving the martial law and the treatment of Zhao Ziyang their support (Liang, 2001, p. 298). The party's top leaders received the full support from the military for its decisions (Liang, 2001, pp. 302-303, 314). Meanwhile Wang Juntao, Bao Zunxin, Wang Dan and other student leaders kept demanding the dismissal of Li Peng and the withdrawal of the army while simultaneously calling for the workers to strike and urging the students to continue protesting (Liang, 2001, p. 303). On May 27 Wan Li, who was practically placed under house arrest in Shanghai, wrote to Party Central that he agreed with the actions of the PSC and the implementation of martial law (Liang, 2001, pp. 305-306). On May 28 Bao Tong, Zhao Ziyang's closest confidant, was arrested under the charges of leaking state secrets, Zhao Ziyang placed under house arrest and actions were also taken against other members of Zhao's staff (Liang, 2001, pp. 307-308).

Students at a loss and protests are in decline

While there was some discussion among the students whether to continue protesting or not they went on and on May 27 a new organization, the United Conference of Patriotic Beijing Organizations in Support of the Constitution, proclaimed that the demonstrations would last at least until the National People's Congress (NPC) that was scheduled for June 20 On May 28 the AFS decided to continue protesting at least until June 20 as well and during a secret meeting that day Bao Zunxin and Wang Juntao decided with student leaders that they would focus on mobilizing workers, farmers, soldiers and other groups. (Liang, 2001, pp. 314-315). During May 29 and May 30 the student protests were slowly growing smaller. Students started going back to classes and a lot of out of town students left Beijing to return home again. In the evening of May 29 students decided to form a nationwide AFS and the next day an announcement followed that Wang Dan and Chai Ling were replaced as student leaders by Feng Congde and Li Lu, the demands the new leaders remained much the same of previous demands however. Even though he was not a leader anymore

Wang Dan broadcast a message in the evening calling all members of society to form associations (Liang, 2001, pp. 319-320, 322). The high command of the navy reported on May 29 and 30 that they supported the party position regarding the student movement and Zhao, but also reported that some officers had their doubts (Liang, 2001, p. 321).

The PSC received a report from the Beijing Party Committee, drafted on the request of Li Peng, on June 1 where after an assessment of the situation they ask them to quickly repress the counterrevolutionary turmoil in Beijing. Another report was delivered to all PSC members that they in which the State Security Ministry, again under orders of Li Peng, mentioned international intervention in the events blaming mostly the U.S. and Kuomintang. The martial law headquarters send a message that they to the PSC and CMC stating that they were ready for a swift and thorough pacification of the turmoil in the capital (Liang, 2001, pp. 330-353). Meanwhile the protests on Tiananmen Square were in further decline and the situation started to get more chaotic (Liang, 2001, pp. 353-354). A good indication of how chaotic things got was the struggle over the broadcasting equipment. Over the past few days people constantly tried to control it and was seized by various groups for periods of time (Wright, 2001, pp. 86-87).

Clearing the square

On June 2 a meeting with a few Party Elders and the PSC took place in which they discussed the reports that were send to the PSC the day before. Everyone reacted angered about the international intervention and even though the protests were in decline they did not believe the students would leave voluntarily. They decided that they needed to act decisively and order the troops to clear the square if any protesters would remain after they announced their course of action (Liang, 2001, pp. 354-362). The same day a singer and three intellectuals announced they were going on hunger strike and besides criticizing the government also criticized the students for neglecting democratic procedures (Liang, 2001, pp. 362-363). As the word reached those on Tianamen square on June 3

that the military was entering the city in order to clear the square the AFS and AFW called for people to set up roadblocks. While the roadblocks seemed to be working the AFW began supplying students and citizens with weapons for self defense. While waiting for orders military and police personal began to retreat (Liang, 2001, pp. 366-368). Yang Shangkun, Li Peng, Qiao Shi and Yao Yilin called an emergency meeting that day to discuss the current situation. They decided that students should be advised to leave the streets before the army moved in. If students were refusing to leave the army should try and persuade them but if that fails they should use all means necessary to complete their objective. The army were given orders to have the square cleared by morning the next day (Liang, 2001, pp. 368-370).

After those one the square heard that the military was coming to clear the square most left until only a few thousand, mostly students, remained. Those that remained were driven out of the square by the military a few hours later. While that went rather peacefully there was a lot of bloodshed throughout other parts of the city by the military shooting on those who resisted. The protesters were rioting throughout the city from the evening of June 3 throughout the next day (Liang, 2001, pp. 371-382). On June 4 the AFS distributed a pamphlet in which is called students and citizens to resist the government by striking, withdrawing their money from banks and spreading the news of the killings that took place (Liang, pp. 385-386). In other cities throughout the country students were protesting against the events that took place in Beijing as soon as they got word of it. Protests continued until June 10 when after a campaign by the municipal public security offices the student leaders and activist citizens were arrested (Liang, 2001, pp. 392-416).

3.2 Analysis

As with the analysis of the Romanian case I will start by identifying the most important actors in the Chinese case. The actors that played a role within the elite in China are Zhao Ziyang, Hu Qili and Qiao Shi Li Peng, Yao Yilin and Deng Xiaoping. While Deng Xiaoping held no official position

within the regime at the time, other than CMC chairman, he still has a great influence within the CCP. During the protests Zhao Ziyang Hu Qili and Qiao Shi were in favor for a more peaceful approach. While Zhao was clearly most in favor of dealing with the student protesters by recognizing that the movement was patriotic and their claims were just Hu and Qiao seemed to be in favor for such an approach as well. Because of this willingness to make some concessions to the protesters they can be considered softliners. Li, Yao and Deng on the other hand prefer a stern approach without compromising and can therefore be considered hardliners.

During the protests there are various opposition groups active all leading a small portion of the people protesting. While the demands of all the groups vary the main demands of the groups are that the regime implements some reforms towards democracy and that the students are recognized as patriots. Other than these groups there were some people acting on their own accord like small groups of intellectuals and those on hunger strike. So while there was a great deal support for the movement in general there was not a single group in charge of all the people participating. Now that I gave a short overview of the most important actors in the Chinese case I will analyze the case again in more detail like the Romanian in the previous chapter by looking at the interaction between elite and opposition groups.

Repression effectiveness

Was the Chinese regime able to repress the protesters effectively then when they finally decided to use repression? Before executing their repression the regime carefully planned it. Possible dissidents such as Zhao within the political elite and Xu in the military were replaced. Before deploying troops they made sure their order would be obeyed by securing the loyalty of the military. This was achieved by replacing those that refused to obey the orders given to them. This made sure that when June 4 came the repression was carried out swiftly and effectively. Considering the size of the protests, can the preparation of the regime be the sole cause for the effectiveness of the

repression though?

Apart from repression at certain moments during the period of protests Wright (2001) seems to identify an even more effective way the regime used to repress the students. As she mentions and can be distilled from the events that took place during the protests the students did not try to include other groups actively in their protests. The reason for this is the differential treatment the regime had given the students in the years prior to the protests of 1989. Because it allowed students to protest but cracked down hard on workers and other citizens as soon as they joined protests it made students fearful to be protesting with other groups in society. They feared that if other groups joined them that would be used as an excuse by the regime to repress them. So they did not try to expand the movement to include workers out of fear that they would then be repressed and lose any hope of success (Wright, 2001, p. 94). So while other groups like workers supported the students they were kept from participating themselves. The few that did join the protests were also immediately dealt with to keep other workers from joining them. And while there was an AFW it was in actuality lead by a former student. The really effective method in dealing with protesters in China was one of rather cunningly dividing the groups, students out of fear for repression if they joined forces with the workers, within society so they would not unite in their protests. It allows students to vent the negative sentiments that live within society towards the elite without much consequence and increases the costs of other societal groups that want to protests as they know they will be dealt with harshly if they decide to do so. Thus giving the regime time to act on the sentiments within society before other groups are also inclined to take to the streets. So it can be argued that the Chinese regime was able to repress the protesters exceptionally well by being able to target and deal with each societal group separately.

No concessions?

While repressing the protesters seemed to have worked well for the Chinese regime some authors

(Karklins and Petersen, 1993) argue that repression combined with concessions is the most effective way in dealing with protesters. Did the Chinese elite try to make concessions then in order to better deal with the protesters? The elite did make some concessions towards the students in the form of agreeing to do something about the corruption and implement some of the reforms the students proposed. The only major concession the regime did not make was acknowledging that the student movement was nationalistic and patriotic. Had it done so then the protests might have ended sooner and in a more peaceful manner as after the April 26 editorial this was arguably the main issue to the students.

Power struggle between protesters, elite and within both groups

So the regime effectively repressed the protesters and even made a number of small concessions. Why then did the movement grow so big and last as long as it did though? While students were unhappy with the affairs in China at that time the movement did not really take off until the April 26 editorial. The negative way the students were portrayed caused a lot of outrage among the students so more felt inclined to join them. The rest of the population also did not really start supporting them until the editorial. If the government had portrayed the students differently the movement would have had at least a great deal of trouble to gather as much support as it did or even lose momentum on its own as I previously mentioned.

The main reason seems to be the split between softliners and hardliners within the regime. Because Zhao was in favor of not repressing the students by force. However, Li got Deng to label the protesters badly as he felt a harsh stance was still necessary the message did not come across very well and caused outrage among students. As the hardliners in the regime did not want to appear weak they refused to change their view of the protesters which could have defused the situation. Instead they kept a stern approach criticizing the students for what they were doing. While the tone of government officials was harsh Zhao kept them from resorting to repression. Because of this

inaction on the side of the government the students believed that they might be successful in their actions as the government did not intervene, notwithstanding them condemning the movement. Other than what this signaled to the protesters it created a lot of confusion within the party. It caused a lot of debates and people were unsure which group to follow. Realizing this, the hardliners later also took their time when they mobilized the army to clear out the protesters. Doing this they were able to deal with any dissidents within the army before it would come in contact with the protesters and were sure that their orders would be obeyed. As the biggest fear of the hardliners was that some parts of the army might chose the side of the students if deployed.

The size the movement had swollen was also a reason for the regime to act with caution. Because of the enormous number of people protesting even the hardliners thought it best if they could disperse the crowd without repression. This only lasted until they met with the student leaders and the realization dawned that there was not a single person or group in charge of all the students. So even if they would make concessions it was doubtful that all the students would disperse. Once the hardliners realized this all hope of ending the protests peacefully practically vanished and their mind was set on repression to restore order.

If the information in the journal of Zhao is correct then the divisions within the regime were even greater than they were portrayed in *The Tiananmen Papers*. Zhao portrays the events being largely the works of Li. While Li got Deng to agree to his plans Deng did not like the central role Li gave him and would have preferred to remain in the background. Li was also constantly trying to undermine the efforts of Zhao by not pursuing a serious dialog with the students and constantly attacking Zhao's position in the PSC. When Li first took different actions then were agreed during the last meeting Zhao attended Zhao was on his state visit and did not see a way to effectively disagree with it. Later on Li got Zhao to agree with his course of action not because Zhao agreed with it, but because Li threatened to step down if he did not. This behavior lasted until Zhao was finally set aside and removed from all decision making (Zhao, 2010, pp. 3-49).

Within the student protesters there were also divisions. The first to emerge was between the hunger strikers and the groups that had thus far been trying to lead the movement. They were seen as the ones that should lead the movement and because their willingness to sacrifice their own health no one felt they had the right to tell them what to do (Wright, 2001, p. 58). This was especially troublesome during the discussions between government officials and student representatives, because whatever deal the student representatives would make they could not guarantee that the hunger strikers would abide by it. Then there was the division between the students from Beijing and those from outside the city. The students from Beijing did not want the students from outside the city to stay at the square and them actively participating at the protests. If they wanted to protest the students from Beijing felt that they should do it in their own cities. When martial law was declared the students from Beijing wanted to withdraw while those from outside of the city wanted to stay which further increased the tension between the groups (Wright, 2001, pp. 71-90).

4 Discussion

Now that I looked at both the Romanian and Chinese case individually I will move on to compare the cases with each other. In this chapter I will compare both cases and check my findings regarding the guiding questions. While on the surface the Romanian and Chinese case seem very similar an analysis of both cases shows a few big differences. These differences include the social groups participating in the protests, the organization of the opposition groups, the elite responses to the protests prior to using repression and the way repression was implemented in both cases.

Social groups

While the protests in China started with only students protesting the Romanian case shows that workers and ordinary citizens were participating right from the start. While in China the movement never really grew beyond the students, while they did receive support from other societal groups, the movement in Romania was already broad from the start. Students even lagged behind and did not start actively protesting until December 21 in the capitol. So the movement in China never encompassed enough of the population to really endanger the regime whereas in Romania it already started out as potentially dangerous for the regime. An explanation for this can be found in the preferential treatment of students in China and the general repression over the years and appalling living standards in Romania. As Chinese students could vent some of their unhappiness every form of critique of the regime was being repressed for years in Romania. This created a false image with Ceaușescu who did not understand how unhappy the people really had become over the years and how his support had eroded.

Organization of opposition groups

There is also a distinct difference in the way the protests were organized in both countries. In Romania the wave of protests suddenly just started at the hand of an incident and spread throughout

the country while in China they were more organized. The size and the encompassing of different social groups in Romania enabled the protesters to render those still in support of the regime practically powerless. As soon as the elite saw how serious the situation was on December 21 and 22 they realized that this was a force they could not stop and started abandoning ship so no organization was really necessary in the beginning. While the Chinese protests were organized by various groups there were too many of them and a lack of cooperation between them to function effectively. Because they were divided and lacked control over the students they held no real bargaining chips with the government. As it seems that the government would have been willing to make some concessions if the opposition groups could stop students from protesting the organizing of students could have had some results. However in the end the level of organization was too low in order to be effective.

Elite responses

In both cases the responses to the protests by the elite also differ. Where Ceaușescu wanted to crack down hard on the protesters as soon as possible the division between the hardliners and softliners within the elite in China caused a more moderate approach. Because Ceaușescu was unclear with his orders and subordinates were unwilling to crack down hard on protesters at first the actual response of the Romanian regime was also moderate. When they did resort to large-scale repression the protests were already too big and ended up inflaming the situation. Prior to the repression the Romanian regime had also shown weakness at various instances which gave the protesters hope that they had a fighting chance. They also did not take the time to make sure everyone would be loyal in carrying out the orders before giving the order to repress the protesters. In the Chinese case the regime stood united and showed no weakness as soon as they announced the decision to declare martial law and remove the protesters by force. They also took their time to make sure everyone involved in repressing the protesters would obey and carry out their orders. So when the regime

decided to use repression they made sure that the students would believe any further struggle to be pointless and order would be restored.

The better organization of the Chinese elite seems to be one of the main reasons why the protests did not lead to regime change in China but in Romania. The better analysis of the Chinese regime of the situation and better preparation prior to the repression seem to make a big difference. However, perhaps the best explanation for the different outcome lies in the differential treatment of the Chinese elite towards the students and the workers. By allowing students to protest without having to fear big repercussions they lower the tipping point for large student protests while keeping the costs of protests high for other groups within society. So even when large groups of students are protesting other societal groups are not inclined to join them short term. I argue that this gives the elite time to deal with the students and take measures to prevent other groups from joining the protests. This way the regime could be using students to measure dissatisfaction within society which gives the elite time to take measures against the dissatisfaction before it reaches high enough levels among other groups before they start protesting as well.

Guiding questions

Regarding the guiding questions my findings vary. Repression effectiveness seems to play a role though it is hard to determine how big that role is exactly. Ceaușescu wanted to crack down hard on the protesters right from the start. While the protests were small this might have worked. This response would have fit in well with the updated response pattern a regime had to use according Karklins and Petersen (1993) in which regimes have to use large-scale repression early on to stay in power. However, this did not happen in stead large-scale repression only sparked more protests by the time it was used. They did try to by focusing on arresting László Tőkés and removing known dissidents in the capitol later on. Instead of simple protests the Romanian case seems more like a widespread uprising with a collective goal to replace the current regime. So there was no simple

way to target individuals as there simply really were none leading it. While in the Chinese case the elite did not focus on the individual leaders it focused greatly on keeping the ranks of the regime closed to dampen the hope of success for the protesters combined with keeping the different social groups separated. Where the regime in Romania partly failed to and in part could not repress the protesters effectively it is hard to determine the role of repression effectiveness in that case. In the Chinese case it seemed to have been effective regarding the organization of the repression and keeping societal groups separated. So the Chinese case does lead me to believe repression effectiveness plays a role in dealing with protests.

There are also clear indications that power plays a large role during protests and can be used to explain outcomes. In the Romanian case it is mostly the lack of coercive power Ceaușescu has over the protesters that determines the outcome. In the end he has too few means to do anything about the protesters and is replaced by them because of it. In the Chinese case the protesting students are able to get the Chinese elite to act carefully at first and have the power to get some concessions from the government till it realizes that the various opposition groups do not control the students. The division between the students keeps them from having any real legitimacy undermining power and thereby leaving them with no ability to influence the government. When looking at the elite there is a clear power struggle between the hardliners and softliners. Due to being able to gather more support within the CCP the hardliners are able to exert more coercive power and eventually dictate the policy on how to deal with the student protests. So power does seem to be a major factor in determining if the outcome of protests is regime change.

Coming up with a straight answer to the repression and concession guiding question is the hardest. While the Romanian government failed with cracking down hard early on or making major concessions the case cannot be explained with theory of Karklins and Petersen regarding the right mixture of repression and concessions. The main reason being that the protests do not fit the different stages they describe. Even while the protests were still small the groups protesting do not

correspond with the groups that should protest according to them while the protests are still small. I believe that this is because of the large anti-government sentiment that was already present in society and that it was a matter of waiting for an incident to set things into motion. Even if the Romanian elite wanted to use an updated response pattern it would have been futile in this case as the basis for the protests within society was too broad from the beginning. Only major concessions right at the start might have saved the regime, but due to the false perception of the situation by Ceaușescu this was unthinkable. While Karklins and Petersen use the Chinese case to argue in favor of their theory I believe it shows quite a different picture. The regime was never planning on using a mixture of repression and concessions. The only reason there were some mild concessions towards the students was due to the strong softliner faction within the elite. If either the hardliner or softliner faction would have been stronger we would have seen a different response. The reason why it took the elite so long to use repression to deal with the student protests was that this time was needed for the hardliner faction to gain full control. Rather than the mixture of the repression and concessions it is the division of social groups that Karklins and Petersen themselves also describe. By treating the students and workers differently they lowered the tipping point of the students while that of the workers remained the same and discouraged the students from joining forces with the workers.

5 Conclusion

In this study I have looked why mass protests caused regime change in Romania but not in China. In both cases I have found evidence that repression effectiveness and the power of the different groups can be used to explain the outcomes. It is hard to say for sure how big of a factor repression effectiveness in Romania was though. Mainly due to the fact that in the Romanian case the elite hardly had any chance to try and repress the protesters effectively. A mixture of repression and concessions does not explain the different outcome of protests in Romania and China. The theory does not fit either of the cases and has little explanatory value in my study.

I found that the different outcomes in both cases can best be explained by the large anti-government sentiment that was present in Romania which caused a large popular uprising to big for the regime to deal with. Striking about the Romanian revolution though is that opposition groups hardly played a role in the organization of it. Further research of the Romanian case regarding the collective rationality of the masses could still shed a better light on how a leaderless mass of protesters is able to cause regime change. Comparison with the the protests in the Arab Spring could possibly provide additional insights about the workings of collective rationality. When looking at the protests in the Arab Spring I suggest to look at the information that was spread through social media at the time. If there is indeed a form of collective rationality in protests and people act based on the information they received about the regime and the changes in size of the protest movement it should be most obvious in these cases where social media is said to have played an important role. If there appears to be no form of collective rationality the Arab Spring cases it leaves the question then how the masses were able to organize themselves in the case of Romania.

In the case of China the government prevented the students and workers from joining forces by giving the students a preferential treatment by not resorting to repression against them in a way they did with the workers. This might allow the Chinese regime to deal with the situation before the worker tipping point is reached. For future research regarding protests it would therefore be

interesting to examine if differential treatment of students and workers or other societal groups really is an effective way of governments to prevent protests from getting out of hand and leading to regime change. Further research into how other authoritarian regimes managed to stay in power for long periods of time could clarify if authoritarian regimes are better able to stay in power if they treat social groups in a way that makes it more costly to protest for a social group if they protest together with another social group.

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