**Sourcing Sultanism: An Analysis of the Foundations of Sultanism in post-Soviet States**

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ABSTRACT

This paper was conducted under the guidance of American Univeristy Professors Dr. Field (SIS) and Dr. Boesenecker (SIS), with assistance from Dr. Morosini (SIS), Dr. Craig (SIS) and Dr. Erol (SIS). All assistance proved invaluable and most appreciated by the author.

*Sultanism, the subset of authoritarianism first identified by Juan J. Linz, has received more attention since the 1980s with the rise of powerful state executives across the globe. However, while research aimed at identifying the defining elements of sultanistic regimes has expanded, little scholarship exists describing the factors that give rise to a sultanistic executive. I look to contribute to this research by analyzing sultanistic regimes and their rise in Eastern Europe following the fall of the Soviet Union. I test three variables to assess their impact on the rise of sultanistic executives: an executive’s prior military/intelligence service, their level of support from societal elites, and public perception of economic conditions compared as the executive’s regime progresses. I put forth a small-n case study of four former Soviet states, and through qualitative analysis conclude the level of sultanism exhibited by each regime. This study’s findings point to moderate or higher levels of support from societal elites for the executive as being a necessary condition for the rise of a sultanistic regime. Furthermore, the evidence asserts that when economic conditions are perceived to be improving under the executive, and the executive has moderate or higher levels of elite support, these variables will prove sufficient to allow sultanism to develop. These findings will provide a strong basis for more expansive studies on cases outside the post-Soviet Bloc, and could prove to be a valuable resource to those attempting to develop stable and non-authoritarian regimes in the future.*

INTRODUCTION

“Unchecked executive control,” “complete control of the media,” “personal influence over the military and economy:” these are characterizations of government official that are rarely applied in the modern-day West. However, upon examining the power dynamics of many post-Soviet states, these descriptions appear to be all too applicable, a clear demonstration of the “sultanistic” power and influence that some Eastern European leaders exert on their countries today.[[1]](#footnote-1) Within the short period since the collapse of the USSR, the expression of such characteristics by state leaders has been far from constant, with some countries successfully transitioning to liberal democracies, while others descend into “sultanistic” authoritarian regimes. What conditions must be then present within post-Soviet states to allow a sultanistic executive and their associated regime to develop? With this question in mind I conducted a small-n neopositivist analysis of potential foundations of sultanistic regimes in order to address this puzzle.

I begin this paper with an analysis of the relevant scholarly literature. My literature review first unpacks the concept of sultanism and the key tenets that make it a specific sub-section of authoritarianism.[[2]](#footnote-2) Subsequently I explore the two prominent schools of thought that have emerged in the search to explain the causes of sultanism. The first group is one made up of scholars I classify as “structuralists.” This school of thought prescribes that the characteristics of the governing institution and structure is most clearly connected with giving rise to a sultanistic executive. The other scholarly camp is one consisting of those I describe as “individualists.” This school of thought is one in which the individual holding the position of executive is credited with producing a government characterized by sultanistic tendencies, with attention being paid to the individual traits possessed by that specific sultan.

Following my literature review I proceed with a neo-positivist small-n case study in an attempt to address my research question, with a particular focus on the “individualist” literature, as allowed by controlling for structural variables during case selection. My dependent variable in the case study is the presence of a sultanistic executive. I also put forth three independent variables, which I identified from the literature as being the most likely and/or prominent causes of sultanism. These independent variables include whether the executive: has any past military or intelligence experience, has the support of societal elites, and how the leader’s constituents perceive their economic conditions as the executive’s tenure progresses. To test these variables I have chosen four cases representing executives from states that developed from the former Soviet Union following its dissolution. The four leaders and their terms in office that make up my case selection include: Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004-2013), Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga (1999-2007), Russian President Vladimir Putin (2000-2008), and Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov (1990-2006). I analyze my findings, with a particular emphasis on the differences in traits present between the non-sultanistic regimes, Saakashvili and Vike-Freiberga, and the regimes of the executives who did display sultanistic powers, Putin and Niyazov.[[3]](#footnote-3) I use this data to analyze my three hypothesis that offer insights into the interconnected relationships of the independent variables and their affect on the dependent variable.

With the expansion of the global influence of Eastern European countries, I argue that understanding the source of sultanistic power is essential to maintaining regional stability, as history and area scholars assert that nondemocratic states have an increased tendency for aggression and the initiation of interstate conflict.[[4]](#footnote-4) Furthermore, knowledge of the variables that lead to sultanism can provide an important tool in preventing such occurrences in future regimes, an important concern for any state that has aims to either spread democracy, or protect their interests from authoritarian leaders who have conventionally been in opposition to Western policies. Armed with this knowledge, the United States and the world will be in a better position to approach state-building efforts, by implementing safeguards, and negotiations with foreign leaders by offering insights into the power any individual leader may wield.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A range of scholarship has addressed a multitude of underlying elements that allow for the creation of national leaders who hold unrestricted power and authoritarian positions within their governments. With few deviances, the majority of scholars can be grouped into one of two camps. One group asserts that the rise of sultanistic leaders is connected to the structure of the system, while the other group of scholars proposes that the rise of ultra-powerful leaders is primarily connected to the personal characteristics of the leader.

Authoritarianism is a blanket term that encompasses a multitude of government systems, which, as Juan Linz describes, “share at least one characteristic: they are nondemocratic.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Sultanism is one specific variant of authoritarianism, a governing system in which the state leader possess complete and personal discretion of action over the government, including the military and administration.[[6]](#footnote-6) By using this terminology I am able to ensure the research validity of my project by exploring scholarship dedicated directly to sultanism, rather than the umbrella term of authoritarianism.[[7]](#footnote-7) This term, which is most accurately seen as occurring on a spectrum of intensity, emphasizes the personal discretion and power, not of a government, but specifically the leader of that government.[[8]](#footnote-8) In most cases the regime’s political system is not characterized by a strong political ideology and sultanistic leaders do not find the need to defend their actions or decisions by using a political ideology.[[9]](#footnote-9) However there is some debate amongst sultanism scholars as to what degree a leader’s personality or individual characteristics contribute to the rise and establishment of a sultanistic regime.[[10]](#footnote-10) This departure is the starting point to which I began my exploration into sultanism and its two camps of scholars, “structuralists” and “individualists.”

“Structuralists” assert that the structure, or absence of such structure, of a country’s government is the predominant factor leading to the production of sultanistic leaders.[[11]](#footnote-11) One identified phenomenon is the construction of government structures to be purposefully designed to allow for the consolidation and centralization of power under their national leaders.[[12]](#footnote-12) Some scholars argue that the inherent design of systems that are characterized by sultanism and the culture of their country were found to prioritize values such as stability and security, and place comparatively less focus on pluralist democratic elements. [[13]](#footnote-13) These systems then facilitate the rise of leaders with unchecked power. When stability is emphasized it has been found that authoritarian leaders are not only less likely to be opposed based on a lack of legitimacy, but that in many cases government structure represents a society’s tolerance for extremely strong leaders in the first place.[[14]](#footnote-14) Therefore when the government structure was first created, it could be inferred that it was done so to purposefully allow for the possible rise of an authoritarian leader.[[15]](#footnote-15) For example, both Saudi Arabia and Angola have an extremely high cultural tendency towards strong leaders and both have the lowest freedom status of “not free” from Freedom House, as well as leaders who are emboldened with authoritarian powers by their country’s laws.[[16]](#footnote-16) Here lies a very distinct separation between the scholars of the two prevailing schools of thought, in which “structural” scholars identify the rise of sultanistic leaders as allowed for, and in some ways explicitly intended for by the legal and political design of the government.[[17]](#footnote-17) The belief that government structure can have an effect on the rise of sultanism can and has been included in a multitude of the relevant literature, however studies have failed to yield any type of consensus.[[18]](#footnote-18) Furthermore, the nature of sultanism in itself would imply that structural variables would not represent an obstacle to power, as any leader limited by institutional elements would not be categorized as a sultan to begin with.[[19]](#footnote-19) Therefore my study focuses on the individualist argument, which asserts that the rise of sultanistic regimes are tied to the characteristics and experiences of the individual state executive, rather than any institutional government structure.

Scholars representing the “individualist” group emphasize the role that the individual office holder plays when trying to explain the development of sultanistic leaders. Individualists will argue that, while certain governments may be more or less susceptible to the creation of an intensely powerful executive, the true source of a leader’s sultanistic power is the leaders’ own characteristics.[[20]](#footnote-20) In the individualist view, governments are less likely to have a sustained sultanistic government across multiple sequential leaders, as the intensity of power held by the executive will vary based on the office holder, rather than a sultanistic executive being enumerated into law.[[21]](#footnote-21) Regardless of the specific elements that allow for power consolidation by the leader, individualists will contend that these elements in themselves are all specific to the individual who resides in office rather than the office itself. One source of this ability is posited as connected to a leader’s past experiences, and this is the first area I explore under the “individualist” umbrella.

One element that individualists point to as a source of a leader’s sultanistic power is their background, specifically any armed or intelligence service, and the connections and lessons from said military/intelligence background that they can use to centralize power into a sultanistic regime.[[22]](#footnote-22) It is argued, using history as evidence, that those who have this style of background are more likely to do two things. First, sultanistic leaders tend to install military individuals into higher positions within the government, and do so more often than those without this background.[[23]](#footnote-23) The end result is a government whose policy is focused on security, order, and stability. These policies focused on stability and increasing the influence of the military establishment, can then be used as a tool of control and power by the sultanistic leader. Secondly, individualists point to the fact that leaders with a military background are also more likely to institute rigid “chain of command” governing structures with an increasingly top-down hierarchy. Therefore when individual leaders rely on their backgrounds to make decisions, those with military/intelligence experience will likely institute policies that centralize governing power and enhance their control of national affairs with themselves at the top of that hierarchy.[[24]](#footnote-24) Those with military backgrounds will also feel especially comfortable in this tiered structure, and will be increasingly likely to implement it as a way to ensure their discretionary power. It is from this area of study that I drew inspiration for using military/intelligence experience as an independent variable that had the potential to influence the presence or rise of a sultanistic executive.

Another defining characteristic individualists have pointed to as the key to a leader’s power is based on the individuals’ personal support from their citizens. Two camps have devolved from this assertion, with one group of scholars arguing that the support of the general public is more important to the exploration of authoritarian leaders, while the other has pointed towards emphasizing the role of societal elites. Scholars who emphasize the role of a leader’s public support argue that possessing the favor of the masses is the most significant factor to obtaining and keeping immense executive power.[[25]](#footnote-25) Within the individualist school of thought, the “cult of personality” element is given attention across the board; with differences lying simply in how much significance it is given. Scholars have presented well-documented cases in which, regardless of accuracy, leaders who are able to take on authoritarian powers will be portrayed as “parental” savior figures, individuals who “know [and can bring] stability.”[[26]](#footnote-26) The concept of power through individual popular support is connected to a phenomenon in which the leader’s personal popularity is relatively high while the popularity of the government or “institutional popularity” is at low levels[[27]](#footnote-27) This phenomenon is then used as further justification for the leader to further accumulate firm control over all aspects of the government. This occurrence further emboldens the leader to act in an authoritarian manner, for the leader can be seen, or see themselves, as the only part of the government who actually has the support of the people, and thus scholars within this camp place a heavy emphasis on popular perception and support as a variable leading to sultanism.

The condition of the economy is another variable that is directly tied to the popularity of many leaders, especially in authoritarian states. The scholarship points to the perception of economic conditions, rather than necessarily the objective truth, as being far more important to building domestic support for a sultanistic leader.[[28]](#footnote-28) Economic conditions are often a central issue that rising authoritarians focus on during their ascension, and the success of this approach also gives backing to the assertion that economic conditions are a key determinant of the general public’s level of support for a specific leader.[[29]](#footnote-29) However most authoritarian regimes are characterized by a state controlled media that spreads misinformation. Therefore citizens make their decisions based off of what they *believe* to be true, and thus perceptions of economic conditions is one of the key variables to be explored when addressing individual power.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Other individualist scholars give more emphasis to the idea that authoritarian leaders are allowed to rise and strive within a system based on the individual’s personal support from societal elites. These elites are often documented as trading their support, and in effect, the ability for a leader to become sultanistic, in return for expected personal gains from their personal relationship.[[31]](#footnote-31) Furthermore, it is suggested that governments and countries that are potentially susceptible to the rise of a sultanistic leader are also likely to simultaneously possess an entrenched and influential elite class, such as oligarchs, religious leaders, or political dynasties, who are willing to promote the growth of government power if they will benefit in some way.[[32]](#footnote-32) In these systems that are already prone to allowing the majority of the power to rest with the few, individualist argue that it is the support of the societal elites who already hold the majority of non-official power (e.g. influence) that allows for the rise of ultra-powerful state leaders.[[33]](#footnote-33) This research explores which individualist variables or combinations thereof can be found to yield a sultanistic regime.[[34]](#footnote-34) In the following section I will suggest a model and method to test and examine the potential influences of these identified variables on the specific phenomenon of sultanism via their application on select cases.[[35]](#footnote-35)

METHODOLOGY

My research will utilize a multicase, small-n neopositivist approach in an "attempt to improve generalizability compared to single-case studies… [while maintaining many of the] details lost and the oversimplification of multi-case [large-n] studies.”[[36]](#footnote-36) My four cases will consist of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004-2013), Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga (1999-2007), Russian President Vladimir Putin (2000-2008), and Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov (1990-2006).[[37]](#footnote-37) These cases will allow for the conduct of a most similar case comparison (MSCC) and thus will allow for a more in-depth analysis of the sources of sultanism. The cases fit the MSCC model as they share a multitude of commonalities (compared to other cases that could be chosen), including geographic location, ethnic composition of the populous, cultural preferences, etc. and a majority of the cases have a crossover of the government structures to which they operate within, in order to attempt to eliminate externalities.[[38]](#footnote-38) In the same way I am also controlling for the structuralists variables by choosing cases with similar histories and cultures, and especially by choosing countries that all posses populations raised in the Soviet system. Variables one might potentially test for on the structuralist’s side, such as Hofstede ratings as they relate to tolerance of authoritarianism within a society and culture, are therefore controlled, as the values across the USSR were relatively universal following the end of the cold war and the establishment of these regimes.[[39]](#footnote-39) Furthermore, the cases fit the most similar case comparison model as they share a variety of *potential* contributing variable values, allowing many of the potential causes of divergences in the dependent variable to be assessed and excluded.[[40]](#footnote-40) This leaves a few select variables that show case-unique values and will be the independent variables analyzed in this paper.

The dependent variable in this study will be “the presence of a sultanistic leader” to be measured through qualitative study, and yielding an indicator value of either “present, present but with limits, or not present.”[[41]](#footnote-41) By determining which combination of independent variables yields certain values for this dependent variable, I will then be able to analyze the requisite conditions needed for a sultanistic regime to rise to power. These indicators will be given values based off of analysis of a multitude of primary and secondary documents including government documents, NGO reports, scholarly works, and newspapers which will then be used to answer the evaluation questions shown in Appendix One as the method of assigning variable values.

The independent variables are traits that, per sultanism scholarship, are most likely to yield a sultanistic regime with a sultanistic executive at the helm. I have identified three independent variables likely to yield the phenomenon of sultanism, the first being whether or not the “*executive leading the sultanistic regime had past military or intelligence experience*.” This variable is measured through indicator values “no experience, informal experience, or formal experience” used to measure past experience.[[42]](#footnote-42) A second independent variable will focus on whether or not the regime in question “*possesses the support of societal elites*,” measured through indicator values “supportive, neutral, or antagonistic.”[[43]](#footnote-43) With the tendency for sultanistic regimes to have an ultra-wealthy or powerful elite class in their own right, the influence this group represents suggests a key area to be studied. The last independent variable is tied to popular support and specifically their “*perception on economic as time passes under the executive’s leadership*” to be measured with the indicator values “better, the same, or worse.”[[44]](#footnote-44) These three variables are what I have judged to be the most likely causes of sultanism based off of my analysis of existing scholarship, and show variances in the values they take for these variables, and thus represent the main components of my MSCC.[[45]](#footnote-45)

My hypotheses analyze the interaction of the identified independent variables with each other, as well as with the dependent variable. I put forth three hypotheses that suggest combinations of variables that will yield sultanistic regimes, as well as assert conditions in which sultanism would not occur. The following are three hypotheses that put forth the variable relationships to be tested in order to determine the factors that allow for the development of a sultanistic regime.[[46]](#footnote-46)

**Hypothesis One (military/intelligence experience as a necessary condition)**: Popular perception that economic conditions are improving and elite support is not sufficient to yield sultanism if the executive does not have military/intelligence experience.

**Hypothesis Two (military/intelligence experience and elite support as sufficient conditions):** By itself, military/intelligence executive experience will not yield sultanism, but when combined with elite support sultanism will be able to develop.

**Hypothesis Three (economic improvement as not being a necessary condition):** The perception that economic conditions are not improving will not stop a sultanistic regime from developing if military/intelligence experience and elite support is present.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The following section will now go forth with the exploration of each case’s variable values and their significance to, and impacts on, the development of sultanistic regimes.

ANALYSIS

My research was conducted through the lens of a most similar case comparison and thus will analyze the potential factors contributing to sultanism through a focus on four distinct cases. Four Eastern European presidents will be put forth as cases of study, and tested against three independent variables in order to evaluate their effects on the dependent variable of sultanism. My analysis will proceed by first addressing variable values and significant indicators that each case presents in order to focus on the significant contributing factors to each case’s final dependent variable value. For the complete structured focused comparison, or to explore the sources of information utilized to qualify these indicators, please see Appendix I, which has the sources and given response for each question of the structured focused comparisons.[[48]](#footnote-48) The variable values can be referenced below in “Figure I” and further explanations of the diagram and its values can be found in Appendix II. After having addressed the key variable values for each case, I will then apply my findings to my hypothesis and apply these findings onto the broader question of the contributing sources to the rise of sultanistic regimes. I will conclude with by addressing potential challenges to the findings as well as areas that continue to be unanswered or would benefit from further research.

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*Variable Diagram: Potential Foundations of Sultanism*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Figure I[[49]](#footnote-49)** | Independent Variables | | | Dependent Variables |
| Cases | Mil/Intel | Elites | Perception | Sultanism |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | No Experience | Overall: Low Levels of Support  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Supportive (Early Years)  Antagonistic  (End of Second Term*)* | Moderately Better | *Not Present* |
| Vaira Vike-Freiberga | No Experience | Low-moderate Support | Very Slightly Better | *Not Present* |
| Vladimir Putin | Formal  Experience | Supportive | Moderately-Much Better | **Present** |
| Saparmurat Niyazov | No  Experience | Moderately Supportive | Small-Moderately Better | **Present** |
| Key:   * Mil/Intel = Past military or intelligence experience of a regime’s leader   + Potential Values: No Experience, Informal Experience, Formal Experience * Elites = Support of societal elites for the regime   + Potential Values: Supportive, Neutral, Antagonistic * Perception = Perception of economic conditions as time passes under the President’s leadership?   + Potential Values: Better, the Same, Worse | | | | |

*Case Analysis*

My first case was Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004-2013) whose case informed my research by asserting that perceived economic improvement in the absence of military/intelligence experience and a supportive elite class is not sufficient to yield a sultanistic regime. Addressing the independent variables for Saakashvili, one challenge was determining if he had any ties to military/intelligence service. While I was able to find rumored and unsubstantiated claims that Saakashvili served for a short time in the Soviet Border Guard, no evidence could be found to support these assertions.[[50]](#footnote-50) While there is a gap in his history during the period he is supposed to have served, and military conscription was common, the fact that any experience would not at least be acknowledged in a society to which so many served in the armed services doubt on this issue.[[51]](#footnote-51) In terms of elite support, the President went through fluctuations in support beginning with his large support during the “Rose Resolution” in which Saakashvili lead a peaceful revolution to the presidency on a campaign promise of eliminating corruption.[[52]](#footnote-52) However by the end of his second Presidential term, the support for his political establishment had dropped as represented by his party’s loss in the elections, and his forced exile under threat of prosecution.[[53]](#footnote-53) When this fact is combined with the faced (yet survived) military mutiny towards the end of his second term, Saakashvili’s elite support can be seen as at overall low levels when incorporating the two “eras” of political sentiment.[[54]](#footnote-54) Public perception polls did show a general trend in which economic conditions were perceived as relatively better as Saakashvili’s Presidency continued and thus a “moderately better variable” value was assigned.[[55]](#footnote-55) While President Saakashvili did display repressive tendencies and authoritarian power at varying times in his career, he still abided by term limits, and, most significantly, is currently under self-imposed exile to avoid arrest for crimes many consider to be political persecution. The fact that Saakashvili was unable to act at his discretion, is subject to potential consequences for abuses, and at times faced intense protests and public outcry for his decisions, lends itself to a lack of a sultanistic regime.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga (President 1999-2006) is by far the most democratic leader analyzed in this study, and showed that low-moderate levels of support, even when combined with perceived economic conditions will not yield a sultanistic regime. Having fled the USSR during her childhood and eventually settling in Canada, President Vike-Freiberga never faced conscription requirements nor served in the military and therefore lacks military experience. Her record of possessing support from elites is mixed, especially with the high skepticism of elitism represented in the Latvian electorate and thus the need for her to keep her distance from many sources of elite support.[[57]](#footnote-57) With Vike-Freiberga’s election going to the sixth ballot and her appointed high-level executives lacking any military experience, some would argue for a lack of elite support; yet her ardent support for expanding the Latvian military, and joining NATO is a source of military elite trust and therefore gives her a moderate rating based on having applicable support from military elites. Economic perceptions were also mixed under Vike-Freiberga’s presidency, with perceptions on the standard of living, and whether or not one could afford to buy food remaining relatively constant with no discernable trends. However, overall perceived economic conditions did take a slight uptick through her tenure and the perceived economic conditions quality took a stark drop once she left office, indicating an overall view on economic conditions as having improved very slightly under Vike-Freiberga.[[58]](#footnote-58) With Latvia praised as a success story of post-Soviet states and their overall international rankings for judicial independence and respect for term limits at high levels, the data presents the case that Latvian President Vike-Freiberga would not qualify as a sultan. [[59]](#footnote-59)

Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin has a strongly documented history of leading as a sultanistic executive, identifying military experience and high levels of elite support as potential foundations for sultanism. Putin was an officer in the KGB during the Soviet Union and thus qualifies as having military/intelligence experience. Furthermore, Putin was a personally chosen successor to the Russian presidency by oligarchs and the upper echelon of the new Russian security services, with a number of members from the latter serving in enhanced position within his inner circle upon his ascension to the presidency.[[60]](#footnote-60) These elements, when addressed as a group, indicate strong support for Putin by societal elites. Putin’s portrayal as an economic savior is also prevalent, especially during the time period being analyzed (Putin’s first presidential tenure from 2000-2008), with the scores for perception of economic improvement being the highest for the Putin case.[[61]](#footnote-61) Lastly, Putin’s ability to act with seeming impunity, as represented by what has been portrayed as his unilateral decision-making during the “Belsan School Siege,” his manipulation and centralization of constitutional powers, and his ability to control Russian affairs via his surrogate Dmitry Medvedev, all without being constricted by a strong party/political system ideology makes Putin a textbook example of a sultan.[[62]](#footnote-62)

The final President analyzed is Turkmen Executive Saparmurat Niyazov who served as President of Turkmenistan from 1990 until his death in 2006 showed that military/intelligence experience did not appear to be a necessary variable, but similar to Putin, showed that moderate levels of elite support was a key factor his development as a sultanistic president.[[63]](#footnote-63) While Saparmurat Niyazov did live during the era of the Soviet military, he did not serve in the military and also lacks any intelligence experience, answering this variable value with a negative. President Niyazov did have elite support, especially that of the military and his secret police services, which acted as an extension of his power and will.[[64]](#footnote-64) However it must be noted that much of this support was drawn out of fear and force, with Niyazov having a tendency to insert his political power in most major economic interactions (thus requiring nepotism and the need to support the President if a business owner wanted to be successful), as well as his demonstrated tendency to purge his inner circle, as exhibited by his arrest of 16 “conspirators” (to which nothing but a coerced confession was provided as evidence) connected to an assassination attempt Niyazov survived unscathed.[[65]](#footnote-65) Thus some levels of support can be seen as tied to fear rather than allegiance or loyalty, though the evidence shows that the result is the same, with Saparmurat Niyazov maintaining support until his death of a heart attack.[[66]](#footnote-66) Furthermore, as Niyazov drew much of his initial support from the Soviet institutions under which he thrived and many Turkmen bodies came to resemble, he can be seen as possessing this same power to intimidate elites into supporting him at Turkmenistan’s foundations as during his regime, making the understanding of elite support applicable throughout his tenure.[[67]](#footnote-67) The data presented all pointed to Niyazov representing an example of a sultanistic leader, except for the fact that his regime had a basis in a strong and societally pervasive ideology that was used by Niyazov to assert his power, as a central facet of sultanism is the ability to yield discretionary power without utilizing an institutionalized political ideology.[[68]](#footnote-68) While Linz would argue that while authoritarian leaders might utilize strong central ideologies, sultans do not, I contend that in the case of President Niyazov he may still be considered a sultan as the ideology is based solely around his personal cult-of-personality and thus his power has the same grounding in personal ability as other sultans.[[69]](#footnote-69)

*Hypothesis Evaluations*

***Hypothesis One***

This hypothesis proves to be incorrect based on the evidence presented by the case of Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov and is therefore rejected. In this case the leader had the support of societal elites (both military and economic), as well as experiencing the phenomenon in which his citizens perceived economic conditions to be improving. However this executive did not have any military experience and therefore maintained a sultanistic regime without having military experience and while having the support of elites and improved economic perceptions. Thus this hypothesis would be rejected as its stated necessary condition of the executive possessing military/intelligence expirience proves to not be necessary.

***Hypothesis Two***

This hypothesis proves to be correct as demonstrated by the case of Vladimir Putin and not contradicted by any other cases, and is thus accepted. The data showed that Vladimir Putin had both a past military background and economic conditions were perceived as becoming more favorable under his presidency, with sultanism also being present. However this is one area where a more expansive approach may be needed to be conclusive, as of my four cases only one had a military background. Therefore an area for further research in the future would be to expand the case selecting to test this hypothesis, while including more leaders with military backgrounds.

***Hypothesis Three***

This hypothesis cannot be addressed by the current cases as, rather unexpectedly, all four leaders experienced some degree of perceived economic improvement in the eyes of their citizens. Thus while this paper may not be able to exhibit an analysis of this hypothesis, it does create an opening in the scholarly discourse for further work to be conducted, and for this study to be improved upon.

CONCLUSION

Through the lens of a most similar case comparison I believe my findings allow for a unique approach to discussing the sources of sultanism. Of my two cases that exhibited sultanistic regimes, one leader had a military background and one did not, thus I would contend that this is likely not the defining element that determines the development of sultanism, despite its clear relevance in the literature (this is not to say that it does not have a strong connection to the intensity or success of a sultanistic regime, but that a sultanistic regime is capable of developing without this variable being present). Another assertion to address is the importance of the strength of opinions on economic perceptions of the populace. Here again I argue that a certain level of perceived improvement is not a necessary or sufficient condition for the development of sultanism on its own. This is because of the two cases that had higher perceived economic improvement (Putin with “Moderately-Much Better” and Mikheil Saakashvili with “Moderately Better”) only Putin developed into a sultanistic executive; and of the two cases with lower perceived economic improvement (Vaira Vike-Freiberga with “very-slightly better” and Saparmurat Niyazov with “small-moderately better) only Saparmurat Niyazov developed a sultanistic regime. Therefore I contend that the key feature to the development of sultanism is having high levels of elite support (moderate or above). In fact, moderate or higher elite support was the one variable that the two “sultanism present” cases had similar values, while the two “sultanism not present” cases had different values. Thus my findings point to moderate levels (or higher) of support from societal elites for the executive as potentially being a key condition for sultanism to develop.[[70]](#footnote-70) While not expected to represent the critical variable, this finding is directly in line with the individualist scholarship that, especially in the geographic area of Eastern Europe, emphasized the importance of elites, specifically oligarchs and military leaders, in government affairs. With this finding in mind I argue that for a sultanistic regime to develop, it will be necessary for the potential sultan to have elite support, however this in and of itself will not be enough to allow a sultanistic executive to rise. My findings do support that this variable would be present in any combination of variables that are determined to be foundational to a sultan’s development. Then when combined with another individualist variable, perceived economic improvements under the executive, my results contend that a sultanistic regime would be capable of developing. Structuralist variables could also foreseeably combine with my asserted key variable of the executive possessing moderate or higher elite support, to yield to yield a sultanistic regime, though my findings contend that combinations of individualist variables in themselves are capable of yielding sultanistic regimes without the presence of structuralist variables.[[71]](#footnote-71) Therefore my overall results point to the concept that individualist variables are capable of proving sufficient to form the foundations of a sultanistic regime, if one of those variables is a moderate or higher level of support for the executive from societal elites.

Going forward this project establishes a widely applicable methodology and “most similar case comparison” style that can be applied to a large variety of other cases, geographic locations, and time periods (provided the data can be obtained). Touching on generalizability, it should be recognized that due to the limited number of cases selected, my conclusions are less generalizable outside of these contexts to which I have chosen my cases.[[72]](#footnote-72) However the data should still be capable of yielding results that allow for the identification of trends within the focus area of my study, which could prove valuable in understanding the elements that gave rise to *certain* sultanistic leaders. While my small-n approach cannot effectively prescribe a formula for the sources of sultanism, I do argue that my work contributes to studies on the intersections of these specific variables and the regimes these intersections yield, as well as sultanism as a whole. In general these findings show that my model can be used to produce conclusive results, and with the expansion of the number of cases tested, I could foreseeably establish what might yield to be a consistent “law” on the sources of sultanism in post-Soviet states.[[73]](#footnote-73)

This information could prove invaluable to a number of applicable policy concerns including state building, regime change considerations, and diplomatic relations. Addressing state building efforts with this knowledge would allow for strategic decisions to be made so that the foundations of sultanism are not present within the state being constructed. For example, state building efforts could be approached in a way that incorporates societal elites into the proccess so they are invested in the success of the new institutional structure of the government. Societal elites will therefore be less likely to throw their support behind a potential sultan, and the findings of my study point to the belief that without this support, a potential sultanistic executive would be unable to rise. The same logic can be approached to discussions of regime change by states and institutions when addressing foreign failed or strategically threatening states, whether those discussions be if regime change should be attempted or who should be supported in the effort. The logic of my findings could also be used to understand the probability that a sultanistic leader would rise (who would likely be more prone to initiating internationally destabilizing conflict), and base their decisions off of this understanding.[[74]](#footnote-74) More specifically this information could prove useful in foreign affairs when negotiating with foreign leaders. This is because understanding the discretionary powers represented by those you are negotiating with, and the degree of direct and unobstructed control they have over their state’s activities, is essential when leaders attempt to predict the future actions of foreign leaders and implement contingent policies to advance their own strategic agendas. While my findings come far from determining a method of eliminating sultans, the identification of a potentially key variable responsible for its rise, does bring authoritarianism scholarship one-step closer, and makes this area of scholarship more applicable to practical application.

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Appendix I[[75]](#footnote-75)

Questions for structured-focused caparisons (Variable Evaluation Matrix)

1. Questions for evaluating the presence of sultanism:
   * Does the President or the government they direct act repressively?[[76]](#footnote-76)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Yes | No | Yes | Yes |

* + In practice, is the judiciary independent?[[77]](#footnote-77)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Low-Moderate Independence | Moderate Independence | Low Independence | Not Ranked |

* + In noted cases of legal violations, has the President faced impeachment, arrest, or removal (if this is a legal possibility)?[[78]](#footnote-78)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Yes (arrest) | No | No | No |

* + Is the President featured in positive state-sponsored propaganda?[[79]](#footnote-79)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Yes | No[[80]](#footnote-80) | Yes | Yes |

* + Does the leader abide by term limits?[[81]](#footnote-81)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Yes | Yes | Only in Practice | No |

* + Is the regime/political system characterized by a strong central ideology?[[82]](#footnote-82)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No | No | No | Yes |

1. Questions for evaluating the past military or intelligence experience of the leader of the sultanistic regime.[[83]](#footnote-83)
   * Did the executive serve in intelligence or military positions prior to becoming executive?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No[[84]](#footnote-84) | No | Yes | No |

* + Did the executive hold an officer rank in any military or intelligence agency?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No (See bullet One) | No | Yes | No |

* + Did the executive serve in a revolutionary, guerilla, rebel, or militant/militia style armed group as a combatant?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No (See bullet One) | No | No | No |

* + Does the executive have a military record?[[85]](#footnote-85)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No (See bullet One) | No | Yes | No |

* + Was the executive alive and of age for a time in which conscription or mandatory enlistment was a policy?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Yes | No | Yes | Yes[[86]](#footnote-86) |

1. Questions for evaluating the support of elites for the regime:
   * Does the executive have public or private political support from economic elites?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Some | No | Yes | Yes |

* + Does the executive have the political support of Military Elites (None, Some, Strong)?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Some | Moderately Strong | Strong | Strong |

* + Does the executive place military members in prominent executive positions?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| No | No | Yes | Yes |

1. Questions for determining the *perception* of the populous with regards to their economic conditions as time progresses under the executive’s leadership: [[87]](#footnote-87)
   * Does the populous feel they are economically better off as time passes under the President’s leadership? (Better, Same, Worse)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Better | N/A | Very Slightly Better | Small-Moderately Better[[88]](#footnote-88) |

* + Does the general populous rate their standard of living as better off as time passes under the President’s leadership? (Better, Same, Worse)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Same | Slightly Better | Better | N/A |

* + Do more people perceive the condition of having enough money for food as better off as time passes under the President’s leadership? (Better, Same, Worse)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mikheil Saakashvili | Vaira Vike-Freiberga | Vladimir Putin | Saparmurat Niyazov |
| Same | Very Slightly Worse | Moderately Better | N/A |

Appendix II[[89]](#footnote-89)

Variable Diagram: Potential Causes of Sultanism[[90]](#footnote-90)

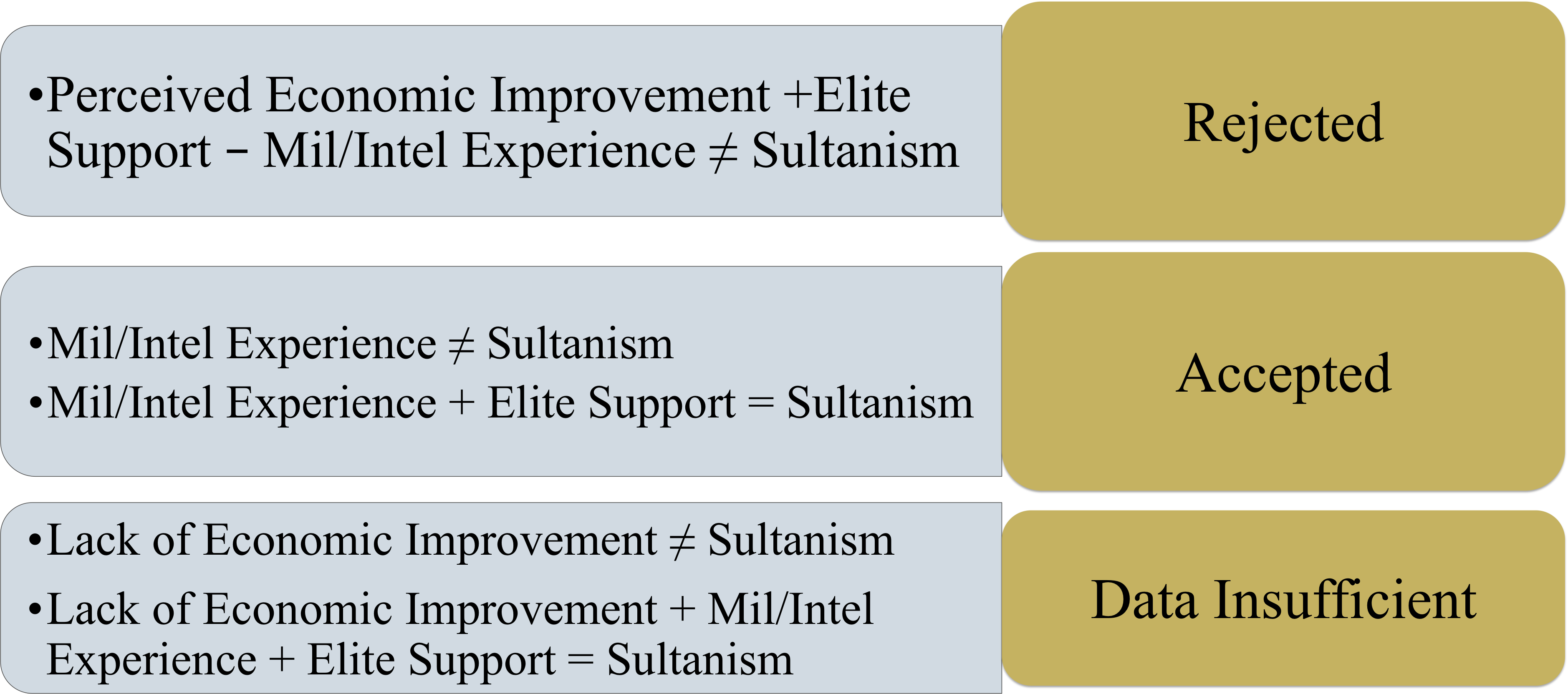
|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Independent Variables | | | Dependent Variables |
| Cases | Mil/Intel | Elites | Perception | Sultanism |
| Mikheil Saakashvili[[91]](#footnote-91) | No Experience[[92]](#footnote-92) | Overall: Low levels of Support  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  *Supportive (Early Years)*  *Antagonistic*  *(End of Second Term)* | Moderately Better | *Not Present*[[93]](#footnote-93) |
| Vaira Vike-Freiberga[[94]](#footnote-94) | No Experience | Low-moderate Support | Very Slightly Better | *Not Present*[[95]](#footnote-95) |
| Vladimir Putin[[96]](#footnote-96) | Formal  Experience | Supportive | Moderately-Much Better | **Present**[[97]](#footnote-97) |
| Saparmurat Niyazov[[98]](#footnote-98) | No  Experience | Moderately Supportive | Small-Moderately Better | **Present**[[99]](#footnote-99) |
| Key:   * Mil/Intel = Past military or intelligence experience of a regime’s leader   + Potential Values: No Experience, Informal Experience, Formal Experience * Elites = Support of the societal elites for the regime   + Potential Values: Supportive, Neutral, Antagonistic * Perception = Perception of economic conditions as time passes under the President’s leadership?   + Potential Values: Better, the Same, Worse | | | | |

Appendix III[[100]](#footnote-100)

Tested Hypotheses: Tested Format

* **Hypothesis One**: The popular perception that economic conditions are improved from the previous regime AND the support of societal elites is NOT sufficient to yield a sultanistic executive, IF, the executive lacks a military or intelligence background.
* **Hypothesis Two:** The presence of past military or intelligence experience by the regime’s leader is NOT a sufficient factor to give rise to a sultanistic regime; HOWEVER, the presence of an executive with military experience and a regime with support of elites simultaneously, will yield a sultanistic regime.
* **Hypothesis Three:** The popular perception that economic conditions are not better than the previous regime is NOT sufficient to prevent a leader from possessing sultanistic powers, IF, they have both formal or informal military and/or intelligence experience, AND has the support of societal elites.

Tested Hypotheses: Pictorial Depiction



1. The term “sultanism” refers to a government characterized by an emphasis on the personal discretion and power, not of a government, but specifically the leader of that government. For further information on the phenomenon please see the first portion of the Literature Review section. J.J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. J.J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the rationale behind my case selection see the Methodology and Case Analysis Section. Availability of country data was also a factor on the selection of cases [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ido Oren, "The Subjectivity of the "Democratic" Peace: Changing U.S. Perceptions of Imperial Germany," *International Security* 20, no. 2 (1995); John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," ibid.19 (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Note that Linz uses nondemocratic not to only describe the system, but also the behavior of a government. Thus the simple presence of elections does not mean that a country is democratic if the elections are considered illegitimate, such as if voter intimidation, corruption, or the jailing of opponents occurs. Linz, 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Linz and Stepan, 26-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The idea that “all sultanistic regimes are authoritarian, but not all authoritarian regimes are sultanistic” is important to keep in mind, and therefore while some authoritarianism literature can correctly apply to my work, narrowing my terminology was essential to producing a valid result. Linz, 53-63; Linz and Stepan, 26-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Linz and Stepan, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz, "A Theory of Sultanism," in *Sultanistic Regimes*, ed. H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz (Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The different scholarly opinions on this question will be discussed further in the subsequent sections, however one noteworthy observation is that Linz has co-published works in which he expresses varying beliefs on the debate. Whether this is due to the opinions of his co-authors changes in findings over the passage of his long career, or any other reason is frankly irrelevant. What is significant is that the range of opinions expressed by Linz alone exhibits the complexity of the question to be answered by scholars of sultanism. Ibid., 7; Linz and Stepan, 26-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. J. R. Dresden and M. M. Howard, "Authoritarian Backsliding and the Concentration of Political Power," *Democratization* 23, no. 7 (2016): 1122-24; H. Oversloot, "Reordering the State (without Changing the Constitution): Russia under Putin's Rule, 2000-2008," *Review of Central and East European Law* 32, no. 1 (2007); Linz; Matthew Hyde, "Putin's Federal Reforms and Their Implications for Presidential Power in Russia," *Europe-Asia studies* 53, no. 5 (2001); J. Gandhi and A. Przeworski, "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 11 (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hyde, 720-21; Elizabeth N. Saunders, "Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy," *International Security* 34, no. 2 (2009): 127.

    Further reading on the rise of authoritarian regimes rising after governmental changes can be observed in both Linz and Baker & Glasser, however this paper is addressing the rise of authoritarian leaders *within* a system, not the rise of an authoritarian government as a new governing body all together. Linz; P. Baker and S. Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution*, 1 ed. (New York, NY: Scribner, 2005), 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Linz, 53-54, 61-63; Baker and Glasser, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For further information on the societal opinion and tolerance of strong leaders, broken down by country see the “Hofstede Cultural Dimensions”, and specifically the sections on “power distance.” See the section on “uncertainty avoidance” for further information on the emphasis a society places on stability and security, which can be seen as being on the opposite end of the continuum of individual freedom. Thus a country with a high score for the dimension can realistically be seen as placing a lower emphasis on personal freedom, or at least an emphasis lower than they place on stability. G. Hofstede, G.J. Hofstede, and M. Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Third Edition* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2010); "Totalitarianism", (Boston, MA, 1953), 203; Michael Halberstam, *Totalitarianism and the Modern Conception of Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. M. V. Liñán, "History as a Propaganda Tool in Putin's Russia," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43, no. 2 (2010): 167-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov; "Freedom in the World 2016: Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies: Global Freedom under Pressure," in *Freedom House Reports*, ed. Freedom House, Freedom in the World (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Linz, 61, 159, 61, 64; Hyde, 719-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Linz, 61,159, 64; Hyde, 719-21; Liñán, 167-68; Saunders, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Linz and Stepan, 26-30. This is not to say that elements of the camps cannot both contribute to the rise of sultanism, but that I contend there are some elements within the individualist camp that are necessary for the rise of sultanism. Furthermore, there may be some individualist variables that if present together, would be sufficient to give rise to sultanism, even if no elements identified by structuralists are present. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Oversloot; Saunders; Jennifer O'Connor et al., "Charismatic Leaders and Destructiveness: An Historiometric Study," *The Leadership Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1995); D. S. Hutcheson and B. Petersson, "Shortcut to Legitimacy: Popularity in Putin’s Russia," *Europe - Asia Studies* (2016); Gandhi and Przeworski. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Linz, 151; O'Connor et al., 530. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Linz; Baker and Glasser; Saunders, 121-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Saunders, 121-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Linz, 72, 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Hutcheson and Petersson, 1108-09. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Accuracy in this context is meant to be read as ‘regardless of the accurateness of this paternalistic portrayal of the leader and their actual ability or record in bringing stability and security…’ Daniel Sankowsky, "The Charismatic Leader as Narcissist: Understanding the Abuse of Power," *Organizational Dynamics* 23, no. 4 (1995): 59; Baker and Glasser, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Hutcheson and Petersson, 1109. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Perception is more important than objective reality as strict control of national data and the press by many authoritarian leaders allows for these leaders to shape the portrayal of conditions that citizens perceive. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. George J. Stigler, "General Economic Conditions and National Elections," *The American Economic Review* 63, no. 2 (1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Gandhi and Przeworski; Liñán; Stigler. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Lisa Blaydes, "Authoritarian Elections and Elite Management: Theory and Evidence from Egypt" (2008), 1-5, 9-15, 25. In these cases leaders are willing to give up some rights typically ensured to all citizens (by working with and allowing an authoritarian regime to flourish) with the understanding that due to their stature in society they will actually gain more wealth and personal influence (the ability to whisper in the sultan’s ear) in the bargain. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Linz, 72; L. Gudkov, "The Nature of "Putinism"," *Russian Politics and Law* 49, no. 2 (2011): 8, 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. 8, 15-16, 18. Evidence representing the sentiment “systems that are already prone to allowing the majority of the power to rest with the few” can again be seen in the work by Hofstede under the dimension of “power distance.” Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. As will be addressed later the implications of these findings will be limited in their explanatory capabilities based off of the context of my chosen cases. See the section on validity and trade-offs for further information. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. My proposed case study will include many “cases” or what John Gerring would describe units, and will thus be a “cross unit analysis” or what is commonly referred to as a “small-n case study” by other scholars. John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?," *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 346-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Andrew Abbott, *Methods of Discovery*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The temporal restrictions of the dates provided, per Gerring’s article, are stated to represent the times in which the leaders were the officially recognized executives/leaders of their countries, and these are the time periods of leadership that will be studied. It should be noted that Vladimir Putin’s first and second terms are only being considered on account of the fact that his current time in office is ongoing. Therefore, it lacks both data and the potential to analyze his period of leadership in context of this study that analyzes the regimes of leaders as a whole with emphasis on the ending as well as the beginning of the period of power. Gerring, 341-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For explanations of the characteristics of different styles of case comparisons see: Aaron Boesenecker, *18 - Making Comparisons*, *Lecturelets* (American University: School of International Service, 2016). As noted above, these cases share a multitude of commonalities when compared to the potential shared characteristics that other cases may represent and are thus well suited for a MSCC. However this should not be construed as stating that they have all the same characteristics or that the elements identified above in which they share commonalities are necessarily identical. For information on the shared societal preferences see the Hofstede dimension data for both pre and post 1991. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Boesenecker. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The indicator “present but with limits” refers to the phenomenon in which a leader has sultanistic powers and would be described as an example of sultanism, yet they might not have complete or true sultanistic power on account of the leader lacking complete discretionary authority over certain institutions, groups, or sectors of the government. For further explanation see: Linz and Stepan, 26-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Informal military or intelligence experience would be any role conducting the same actions as a traditional military or intelligence apparatus, but not conducted as part of an official state body or service. Shahid Afsar, Chris Samples, and Thomas Wood, "The Taliban: An Organizational Analysis," *Military Review* (2008); Linz and Stepan, 26-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. In this case elites are not limited to any specific sector of society such as economic or military elites. In fact, the questions posed in Appendix I attempt to address a wide range of elites as identified by the following literature sources: Gandhi and Przeworski; Lilia Shevtsova, "Gorbachev and Yeltsin: Reformer and Terminator," *Carnegie Moscow Center* (2011), http://carnegie.ru/2011/02/01/gorbachev-and-yeltsin-reformer-and-terminator-pub-42455; I.U. Felʹshtinskiĭ and V. Pribylovskiĭ, *The Corporation: Russia and the Kgb in the Age of President Putin* (Encounter Books, 2008); Gudkov; Dresden and Howard; P. Reddaway, "Is Putin's Power More Formal Than Real?," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2002); Guy Faulconbridge, "Kremlin Ruler or Putin's Puppet: Who Is Medvedev?," *Reuters News* (2008), http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-election-medvedev-idUSL2436079220080224. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Economic conditions are used as the indicator for popular support rather than general popularity for two reasons. First is that the issue shown to be of primary concern for the average citizen in Eastern Europe was economic conditions. The second is the fact that due to the authoritarian nature of many of the cases, public opinion polls are not available and/or reliable. Thus the opinions of citizens on the issue they are most concerned with as it relates to government leadership is used to judge public opinion/approval. Stigler. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. For a visual depiction of the variables and their potentials for interaction, see Appendix II [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For the hypothesis in their technical tested format (as opposed to summaries), as well as a pictorial representation, see Appendix III. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The description of the economic variable in hypothesis three includes the possibility that economic conditions worsen under the executive, as well as that the conditions remain the same as under the previous executive and during the new executive’s (the potential sultan being evaluated) time in power. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. L. M. Howard, "Ch. 1 & Appendices 1, 2, & 3," in *Un Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 353-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For all sources included as part of the diagram, please see the expanded chart in Appendix II [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. One example of this *rumored* service can be found in Wikipedia, but again with no corroborating sources.

    "Mikheil Saakashvili," in *Wikipedia* (Wikimedia Project, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. E Jones, "The Military as an Agent for Political Socialization. Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military," (1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Giorgi Kandelaki, "Georgia’s Rose Revolution," (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Margarita Antidze, "Court in Georgia Orders Arrest of Ex-President Saakashvili," *Reuters* (2014), http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-saakashvili-charges-idUSKBN0G20FK20140802. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Matthew Chance and Nunu Japaridze, "Georgia Foils Mutiny at Military Base Ahead of Training Activities," *CNN* (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Appendix I for source data [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Lincoln Mitchell, "Saakashvili Doesn’t Need a Little Help from His Friends," *Foreing Policy* (2014), http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/04/the-one-place-where-washington-can-make-a-difference/. The rumors of Saakashvili’s military background can be found here but cannot be substantiated: "Mikheil Saakashvili." [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Daina S. Eglitis and Laura Ardava, "Challenges of a Post-Communist Presidency: Vaira Vike-Freiberga and the Leadership of Latvia," in *Women Presidents and Prime Ministers in Post-Transition Democracies*, ed. Verónica Montecinos (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), 268. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Gallup Analytics, "Approval of Country's Leadership," ed. Gallup (Washington, D.C.). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Shevtsova. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Gudkov; ITAR-TASS, "Russian Patriarch Praises Putin Address," 2000; O. Kryshtanovskaya and S. White, "Putin's Militocracy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19, no. 4 (2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Hutcheson and Petersson. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Baker and Glasser; Linz; Chrystia Freeland, "Russia’s “Sultan” Putin," *Reuters News* (2011), http://blogs.reuters.com/chrystia-freeland/2011/09/30/russias-sultan-putin/; Christian Neef and Matthias Schepp, "The Puppet President: Medvedev's Betrayal of Russian Democracy," *Spiegel Online* (2011), http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-puppet-president-medvedev-s-betrayal-of-russian-democracy-a-789767.html; Gudkov; Hyde; Ben Noble, "Putin Just Won a Supermajority in the Duma. That Matters.," *The Washngton Post* (2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/01/putin-just-won-a-super-majority-in-the-duma-that-matters/; Oversloot. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Gregory Gleason, "Turkmenistan under Niyazov and Berdymukhammedov," in *Worst of the Worst*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambriage, MA; Washington, DC: World Peace Foundation, Brookings Institution Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid., 125-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Slavomir Horak, "The Ideology of the Turkmenbashy Regime," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 6, no. 2 (2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid. This also coincides with the earlier work by both Linz and Stephan who do leave room for a completely leader-centric regime to still be considered sultanism. Linz and Stepan, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. This should not be construed as asserting that the simple presence of elite support is sufficient to give rise to a sultanistic executive, simply that any sultanistic regime would *need* to have this variable present. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. This is evidenced by the result of the combinations of the variables “moderate or higher elite support” and “improved perceived economic conditions under the executive” which were shown to result in sultanism with structuralist variables controlled for. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Boaz Atzili, "When Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors: Fixed Borders, State Weakness, and International Conflict," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (2006/07): 141; Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow, "Designing for Trustworthiness," in *Interpretive Research Design* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Gerring, 341-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Owen; Oren. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The following sources were used for the evaluation of the matrix questions for sections A-C:

    **Mikheil Saakashvili**: Giorgi Areshidze Miriam Lanskoy, "Georgia's Year of Turmoil," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 4 (2008); "Activists Warn of "Genocide" in S. Sudan’s Jonglei Conflict," *Sudan Tribune* (2011), https://www.sudantribune.com/Activists-warn-of-genocide-in-S,41011; Margarita Antidze, "Georgia, with Eye on 2016 Election, Switches Prime Minister," *Reuters* (2015), http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-primeminister-idUSKBN0UC1NL20151229; "Court in Georgia Orders Arrest of Ex-President Saakashvili," ibid. (2014), http://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-saakashvili-charges-idUSKBN0G20FK20140802; Hans-Georg Heinrich and Kirill. Tanaev, "Georgia & Russia: Contradictory Media Coverage of the August War," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2009); Damien McGuinness, "Georgia President Mikheil Saakashvili Admits Election Loss," *BBC News* (2012), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19798323; Stephen F. Jones, "The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2006); Kandelaki; Joel Lazarus, "Democracy or Good Governance? Globalization, Transnational Capital, and Georgia's Neo-Liberal Revolution," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 3 (2013); Chance and Japaridze; Embassy of Georgia to the United States of America, "On 1 February 2008 President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili Introduced Newly-Appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs Davit Bakradze to the Staff of the Ministry.," news release, 2008.

    **Vaira Vike-Freiberga**: Eglitis and Ardava; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Vaira Vike-Freiberga," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2013); Eglitis and Ardava, 268; Vaira Vike-Freiberga, interview by David A. Andelman, 2016; Vaira Vike‐Freiberga, "Latvia's Integration into the Euro‐Atlantic Structures: Why, When and How?," *The RUSI Journal* 146, no. 1 (2001); State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia, "Ex Prime Ministers of the Republic of Latvia," State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia, http://www.mk.gov.lv/en/content/ex-prime-ministers-republic-latvia.

    **Vladimir Putin**: Baker and Glasser; Natalie Duffy, "Internet Freedom in Vladimir Putin’s Russia: The Noose Tightens," (American Enterprise Association, 2015); Freeland; Hyde; Anne Leahy, "Putin's Russia," *International journal (Toronto)* 55, no. 4 (2000); Oversloot; Liñán; Faulconbridge; Horak; Neef and Schepp; NPR, "Vladimir Putin: A Biographical Timeline " National Public Radio, http://www.npr.org/news/specials/putin/biotimeline.html; Kryshtanovskaya and White; Jones; Gudkov; Felʹshtinskiĭ and Pribylovskiĭ.

    **Saparmurat Niyazov**: Gleason; Horak; Gleason, 115-16, 22-23; Michael Kaser, "Economic Transition in Six Central Asian Economies∗," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 1 (1997): 13; Bess Brown, "Saparmurad Niyazov," in *Encyclopedia Britanica* (Encyclopedia Britanica Inc., 2016).

    Design adapted from Howard, 353-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Repressive actions are defined as “the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions” Christian Davenport, "State Repression and Political Order," *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 10 (2007): 2; Linz, 61, 61, 64, 159-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. , 61, 61, 64, 159-61. All rankings are based on judicial independence as part of the Institutions Pillar of the Global Competitiveness Report for the year 2006, during which all four leaders were in power. Note Turkmenistan was not profiled and thus has a null response rather than a source substitution in order to ensure continuity. Klaus Schwab, Michael E. Porter, and Augusto Lopez-Claros, "The Global Competitiveness Report 2006–2007," (Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Linz and Stepan, 26-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Liñán. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. No evidence of state-sponsored propaganda aimed at the promotion of the status of the President was found [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Alexander Baturo and Michael Laver, *Democracy, Dictatorship, and Term Limits* (University of Michigan Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Linz. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The evaluation of military service does not incorporate any prescribed military role that is attached to the individual’s leadership position as the leader of their country. Only prior and non-mandated service is considered. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. No valid sources could confirm rumors that Mikheil Saakashvili served a shortened military career. While there are many explanations for this lack of information, as no texts can identify any evidence that Mikheil Saakashvili has a military background. The only reason this issue is considered is the fact that no records appear to be available to account for his time before entering university, and thus one can make the case that a background of some sort may exist covertly with Soviet conscription policies as evidence. However the fact that the unaccounted for years are few, with no information having been released even as he grew to prominence, the evidence supports that no meaningful military experience, if any exists.

    Jones. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Rank or level of success in a military/intelligence apparatus is of secondary presence when compared to the simple possession of a background in the field. This is on account of the study’s focus on the leadership and governing style based on military principles and rules (e.g. the chain of command) which a knowledge of and experience with can be assumed at any level of the military. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Records show that while conscription was an option, Saparmurat Niyazov was never conscripted into the Soviet Armed Services. Jones. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. All answers for this section use Gallup polls and the “same value” was used when no identifiable trend in either qualitative direction could be identified. Most values analyze the ending periods of most case time periods due to data avalibility.

    GALLUP Analytics, "Bussiness and Economics," Gallup, Inc., https://analyticscampus.gallup.com/Tables. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Kaser. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Design adapted from Howard, 9. The values for the independent variables were determined by the results of the structured case comparison in Appendix I [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Design adapted from ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Julie A. George, "Minority Political Inclusion in Mikheil Saakashvili's Georgia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 7 (2008); Jones. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. See notes in Variable Evaluation Matrix [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Freedom House, "Georgia," Freedom House, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/georgia; McGuinness. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Helen M. Morris, "President, Party and Nationality Policy in Latvia, 1991–1999," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 4 (2004); Vike‐Freiberga; George Tsebelis and Tatiana P. Rizova, "Presidential Conditional Agenda Setting in the Former Communist Countries," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 10 (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Shevtsova. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Baker and Glasser; Gudkov; Hutcheson and Petersson; ITAR-TASS; Leahy; Liñán. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Baker and Glasser; Freeland; Interfax, "Putin Recognized Symbol of Stability, Prospective Leader of Progress - Analysts," 2012; Leahy; Lydia Tomkiw, "Who Is the World's Most Powerful Person? Russia's Vladimir Putin Tops New Forbes List," *International Bussiness Times* (2015), http://www.ibtimes.com/who-worlds-most-powerful-person-russias-vladimir-putin-tops-new-forbes-list-2169615. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Gleason. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Horak; Nicholas Kunysz, "From Sultanism to Neopatrimonialism? Regionalism within Turkmenistan," *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. The hypothesis format utilized is inspired by previous literature: Megan Nissel, "To Intervene or Not to Intervene: The Role of Humanitarianism, U.N.Approval, and Economic Incentives in Determining Nato Military Intervention in Conflict," *Clocks & Clouds* 4, no. 2 (2014): 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)