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Resilience of authoritarianism and its projection onto international politics
The case of Russia

Ph.D. Dissertation
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Introduction

The research puzzle

Coming originally from the former Soviet bloc and having subsequently moved to experience life in the West, I've become quite fascinated by the idea that people around the world experience living under divergent modes of political governance. Having been greatly inspired by Fukuyama's (1992) "end of history" thesis, I've pondered continuously the notion of Western liberal democracy being the highest and final political form to which humanity can aspire. Perhaps it is true to say that more than at any time in history, people around the world acknowledge that their societies ought to be democratic. Liberal democracy, championing individual freedom and self-government, having delivered high levels of prosperity and stable governance to advanced societies, continues to enjoy the global prestige and wide legitimacy, with no powerful ideological alternatives in sight.

The Soviet system of centralized control and order has collapsed, yet what remains is centralized rule itself. Authority narrowly and more often illegitimately exercised remains a steady feature of the political landscape against the background of unprecedented levels of globalization, economic and financial interdependence the world has ever witnessed. Indeed it is puzzling why, given the present era of democratization and globalization, authoritarian rule is proving its resilience and persistence. To a large extent, political science field has not been able to fully explain, let alone anticipate, why it is so.

Central research questions and hypotheses

The overarching research questions of the present analysis are:

- Why authoritarianism in Russia remains resilient in the age of democratization?
- How is being an authoritarian regime impacts on its international behavior and international system as a whole?

My hypotheses are outlined as follows:

- Russia is by and large a stable authoritarian regime.
- Authoritarian regime stability in Russia is brought about by the prevalence of both domestic and external factors.
- Domestic political setting under the Putin regime strongly influences foreign policy aims and capabilities of Russia.

In this study I thoroughly explore and demonstrate relevant theoretical and empirical findings in the existing literature in order to support my hypotheses.

This analysis begins with definitions, namely of what constitutes an '*authoritarian regime*'. Among the foundational works, one of the most widely used definitions of authoritarianism is the one put forward by Juan Linz (1975:255): "authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism, without intensive nor extensive political mobilization, and in which a leader or a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones." By this terminology, Linz has sought to draw a distinguishing line between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes with the degree of social pluralism and levels of political mobilization as the distinctive elements, with the former seeking to demobilize and depoliticize society politically while allowing for some degree of pluralism.

The very relevance of Linz's account of authoritarian politics is reinforced by the fact that his 1975 work was republished in 2000 almost completely unchanged. Closely following Linz, Huntington (1991) defines an authoritarian regime as one where there is a single leader or group of leaders with no party or a weak party, little mass mobilization, and limited political pluralism.

This analysis utilizes Schedler's (2002) definition of what he terms 'hegemonic' regimes as those in which "formal democratic institutions exist on paper but are reduced to façade status in practice". It is argued that this definition can be equally applied to denote 'authoritarian' regimes proper. By using such a definition, the aim is to emphasize extra-electoral features of authoritarian politics, while a significant number of studies in this area have tended to stress primarily the role of contested elections in order to delineate autocratic and democratic regimes (see for example Brooker 2000; Przeworski et.al. 2000). The study further utilized a definition of a *regime* as "the set of government institutions and of norms that are either formalized or are informally recognized as existing in a given territory and with respect to a given population" (Easton 1965, referred to by Morlino 2012).

Methodology

The research conducted has largely relied on *qualitative* research method. The main method is an overarching analytical approach, combined with an in-depth overview of multilevel empirical inquiry. The study is based on theories and findings in the relevant literature and involves a case-study. For the case-study, the research has relied upon

documentary analysis, both background literature as well as analysis of events. The idea was to explore a quite recent area of research within political science literature, related to the field of regime-studies and comparative democratization.

In the primary data collection, the research conducted has benefited considerably from a line of *interviews* of predominately Russian and Western scholars and policymakers in Moscow, Brussels, Madrid and Rome. Four-month study abroad period was conducted in Brussels, Belgium at the Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS), where the author has worked under the supervision of Michael Emerson, CEPS associate senior research fellow and one of the leading scholars on Russia. For the data on *Russian opinion polls surveys*, most of reference was made to the results obtained by the Russian Levada Center, as one of the most influential Russia-based and widely utilized database.

Thorough understanding of both democracy and authoritarianism requires a selection of a good case for study and that is Russia, a country that has experienced a tremendous socio-political change in the course of the last several decades since the collapse of the Soviet Empire. The beginning of the 1990s saw an aura of optimistic expectations of Russia's inevitable turn toward the democratic path of development. Russia's case was among the top of the list of countries in the focus of democratization scholars; those highly convinced that democracy would rapidly advance there. Yet, a decade later, in the minds of many there was little doubt that the democratic gains of the past years were reversing in Russia, stimulating further discussion about the prospects of democracy globally. Russia's post-communist experience stands to reveal a great deal about the many sides of the authoritarian newly found resurgence.

Russia is by and large an authoritarian regime. Freedom House's annual '*Nations in Transit*' report on Russia has throughout the years become a rather strong critic of the political regime there, describing Russia in its 15th(2011) edition as being 'based on lawlessness and a lack of transparency' and characterized by a growing political stagnation. According to the report, Vladimir Putin has managed to turn his country into a 'consolidated authoritarian regime'. Tracing the Democracy score since the year 2000 up to 2011, there was a significant worsening from 4.58 to 6.18, respectively. Overall, the Russian political system is described in the Report as being personalistic, lacking democratically functioning standards and institutions and meaningful citizen participation. Executive branch dominates all other branches of government. There is a tight control over media and civil society groups; corruption is pervasive.

Russian political regime has been often described as resembling other authoritarian

regimes where leaders seek to wrap themselves in some form of democratic legitimacy. The ruling authority in Russia bases its legitimacy on regime's economic performance and leadership popularity. As Linz would have it "a more institutionalized authoritarian regime in which the rulers feel they are acting for a collectivity"(p.54) Russia represents a regime of strong and centralized state power. The ruling class has been tremendously successful in keeping consensus. Overall, there is a top-down approach of governance in achieving some liberalization and reform. The goal is to bring about economic modernization without political modernization.

Russia is however a country of a great potential. From a macroeconomic point of view, Russia is a relatively successful country. Its GDP has grown by 30% in the course of last five years and the federal budget has expanded substantially, inflation is down; external debt has been lowered by half. These are significant indicators, yet the reality is that the growth of Russian economy is still hanging on the price of oil. However, the Russian authorities remain firmly convinced in their ability to provide Russia's economic ascendancy while maintaining a tight grip on national politics.

Russia has increasingly been considered a rising non-democratic power that seeks to secure its economic and geopolitical interests, gain global recognition as a state with its own political course of development. (McFaul 2007; McFaul and Spector 2010; Carothers 2008; Lipman 2008; Kagan 2008) This assumption primarily rests on the fact that since the early 2000 with the regime growing more authoritarian in nature, its foreign policy agenda has started to become more pronounced and ambitious. The Putin regime's strategy to achieve a great power status for Russia involved primarily building a strong state at home; a robust market economy; capability to respond to external threats; strengthened ties with Russia's peripheries and develop partnership with the West.

At the same time the Russian leadership has a strong interest in ensuring that its political system is insulated as much as possible from the global democratic trends. There is a firm resistance to having other countries dictate Russia how it should govern itself or what standards it should adhere to as exemplified in former Russian President Medvedev's most recent speech on democracy in Russia at the 2010 Yaroslav Global Policy Forum. Medvedev has stressed that "Russia is a democracy – young and immature, imperfect and inexperienced, but it is a democracy", calling criticism of Russia's system 'unfair and tendentious' (Medvedev, 2010).

Organizational structure of the thesis

Russia is one of the countries that have so intensely resisted Western democracy promotion. This has in time resulted in the so-called 'Russian model' (coined by Freedom House) of resistance to external democratization efforts and many other governments have begun emulating this model. In the light of this, *Chapter 1* will examine the latest global democratization trends. The democratic regression is propelled to a large extent by a number of critical developments across the world, such as the difficulties of democracy building in Iraq, the regression to authoritarianism in Russia and the global rise of anti-Americanism (Plattner 2008:18).

The study of authoritarian regimes addressed in *Chapter 2* seeks to examine contemporary literature that deals with the question of why and how authoritarian regimes last. In the field of comparative democracy, authoritarian resilience has not been extensively covered. What we see now is that the notion of authoritarian government is often used as virtually a synonym for non-democratic government. A relevant question remains: why do some regimes not fall to democracy?

Chapter 3 takes the discussion on authoritarianism to the external dimension in order to examine whether authoritarian regimes behave differently in the international realm in comparison to their democratic counterparts. The reference will significantly be made to the Democratic Peace Paradigm and scholarly literature dealing with the question on the role of regime type as a variable in the study of international relations.

Chapter 4 looks in-depth at the domestic political setting in Russia and at the same time it seeks to examine how, if at all, external environment influences its domestic political setting. It is argued that examining Russian domestic setting and its foreign policy, since the early post-Soviet period, may shed some light on the relevant theoretical findings on authoritarian resilience. It suffices to examine whether or not there are specific factors that contribute to prolonging an authoritarian rule in Russia?

Chapter 5 seeks to link the authoritarian regime of Russia and its current foreign policy course. The main aim is to properly account for the dynamics and patterns of Russia's foreign policy behavior through the prism of its domestic political setting. It will be argued that like its domestic policy, Russia's foreign policy became increasingly centralized, highly dominated by Putin and his closest advisors. Putin's foreign policy during his tenure as the president was defined as being hardheaded and assertive. The analysis addresses the question: is there an increase in the influence of such a regional power like Russia on governance structures in its

neighbouring countries of foreign Soviet Union? At the same time, the idea is to contribute to the growing literature on authoritarian regimes that seeks to address the question of why and how such form of rule continues to persist in an age of democratization.

Egorov and Sonin (2011) claim that “the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011 has (re)turned public interest to authoritarian regimes”. The recent dramatic events in the Arab world undoubtedly mean a lot for the study on authoritarian resilience. In the minds of many there is no doubt that 2011 is 1989 of Middle East. Back then nobody could have foreseen those dramatic events in the history of the European continent. By the same analogy, the recent events in the Arab world came as a predominately welcomed surprise to the world at large. The domino effect, mass protests and uprisings, demands for reform, democracy and transparency are the critical factors present in both cases. The questions linger: what will come next? Will all these events lead to a successful transition to democracy? Will the necessary economic and social reforms be introduced? The first requirement in building stable democracies is to create favorable conditions under which diverse parties will be able to negotiate, election rules will be established and agreements on constitutional changed reached. Once an authoritarian regime has been dismantled, this is precisely the task, albeit immensely difficult one, to be carried out.

The international promotion of democracy has come across a rather serious resistance on the part of the leading authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China. Authoritarian regimes worldwide will remain a visible trend, thereupon stimulating further in-depth research in why and how such regimes remain a steady feature of the political landscape. Undoubtedly, authoritarian regimes of today are facing opportunities as well as constraints presented by the globalized international system.

The more entrenched become authoritarian regimes, the broader must be the research field to encompass domestic and international factors, combining both structural explanations and more contingent and agency-related (actors, decisions, events) explanations. Which domestic factors stand as determinative of an authoritarian regime trajectory? What is the precise relevance of external influence on entrenched authoritarianism? The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate through the case study on Russia that the interplay between domestic and international factors serve to protract an authoritarian rule.

Chapter 1. The contemporary discourse on democratization

The aim of this chapter is to sketch the contemporary discourse on global democratization, prevailing trends and arguments among the leading scholars in the field. Doing so is pertinent for the overall analysis in order to show how the discourse on the processes of democratization has gradually moved to incorporate the analysis of authoritarian resilience evident from the mid-1990s, an issue previously examined only scantily in democracy research field.

It suffices to examine the effects, if any, the current democratization setbacks may have on prevailing academic debate on the notion of modern democracy itself, its universal applicability, and whether it faces serious ideological challengers. The chapter will first of all focus on the current democratization trends and examine factors that have contributed, arguably, to a plausible decline in democracy's global outreach.

On democracy's current international prospects

Following the end of the Cold War, scholars have enthusiastically defined the subsequent era – the world with democracy as the only dominant principle of political legitimacy and the US, the sole superpower. The current state of affairs can still be characterized along the same lines; there are an unprecedented number of democracies all around the world, emerging as a result of the explosive wave of democratization after 1989. At that time due to certain historical changes a more favorable environment for global democratization was in place, letting Huntington (1991) speak with confidence of a 'third wave' of global democratization, having begun in 1974 with the pro-democracy military coup that overthrew Portugal's longstanding dictatorship and stretching into the 1990s.

According to a number of influential scholars in the field, however, global democratization has seen a declining trend in the last few years. Even Huntington himself was cautious about the extent and long-term prospects of this third wave and already by late 1990s was already observing a possibility of a reversal of the third wave. Unlike in previous reverse waves of democratization, a characteristic feature of the current democratic regression is that fewer countries than which initially made a transition to democracy have been affected. Of the 141 democracies, which existed between 1974 and 2007 (including 95 newly emerging democracies), only a few suffered a full democratic breakdown (Diamond 2008: 61 (Table 3.1)). What have emerged however as a result of stalled transitions were hybrid regimes (discussed in Chapter 2).

In its 2006 survey of political rights and civil liberties worldwide, *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House indicated as its principle findings that “the year 2006 saw the emergence of a series of worrisome trends that together present potentially serious threats to the stability of new democracies, as well as obstacles to political reform in societies under authoritarian rule.” (Puddington, 2007: 125)

It has been noted that 2002-2006 period has shown notable improvements for freedom, whereas the succeeding four years (2006-2010) have demonstrated a reversal of this trajectory based on all applied indicators of the survey. The indicators that have been least affected were elections and the core components of political pluralism, such as party competition and minority groups participation. The indicators that have shown the most critical setbacks pertain to the realm of governance, i.e. a measure of how governments function, including the corruption indicators, freedom of expression, the rule-of-law category (Puddington, 2011: 24).

These findings concur with Diamond’s (2008) compelling argument that democracies were ‘on the retreat’ and that parallel to what he sees as the phenomenon of the ‘democratic rollback’, there is the process of a ‘resurgence of the predatory state’ on an international level. Diamond speaks of a worldwide fall in the confidence in democracy, primarily in developing countries and the spread of corrupted semi-democracies that are inefficient in delivering good governance to their populace, which in turn gives rise to predatory states as authoritarian alternatives to failed democratic inefficient governance.

Contrary to both Diamond’s ‘democratic rollback’ argument and Puddington’s ‘freedom in retreat’ claim, Merkel’s (2010:26) analysis assesses the statistical calculations of Freedom House data to argue that ‘roughly the same amount of hybrid regimes have moved into the zone of ‘free’ countries as have moved toward the category of countries rated ‘not free’ and that “even partly free regimes as the least durable and most fragile of the three types of regimes [free, partly free and not free] have in fact enjoyed relative stability after the third wave of democratization had come to a halt in the mid-1990s”.

Overall however, by early 2007 democracy and democracy promotion efforts have come to face the kind of challenges not yet seen since the end of the Cold War. (Plattner, 2008) In 2008, the Economist stressed that “following a decades-long global trend in democratization, the spread of democracy has come to a halt.”¹ A number of significant factors have been highlighted to account for this phenomenon. These include developments at

¹ Democracy Index: Off the March, *the Economist*, October 29, 2008, http://www.economist.com/markets/rankings/displayStory.cfm?source=hptextfeature&story_id=1249935

domestic level in a number of countries as well as political and economic trends at the level of the international system.

At the international level of analysis, sharp increase in the price of energy resources, primarily oil and increasing Western dependence on imported supplies, have had a major consequence for recent setbacks to democracy. Between 2001 and 2008, oil prices increased from around \$20 to \$150 a barrel (Youngs, 2010). One must recall that none of developing countries that derive more than 60 percent of their export earnings from oil and gas exports is a consolidated democracy. For instance, Venezuela and Nigeria are countries whose economies are extremely dependent on oil, and as oil revenues increased, democratic gains decreased. The producer countries have used the state oil funds to distribute patronage-based largesse, thereupon generating democracy-weakening rentier dynamics. An influential rentier state hypothesis in fact claims that resource wealth contributes to the survival of autocracy and major proponents of this view (e.g. Ross 2001; Smith 2004; Ulfelder 2007) have gone to great length to demonstrate the direct causal link between these variables.

A parallel worrying trend has been pointed out by various democratization advocates, namely that Western states have increasingly resorted to a *realpolitik* approach to energy security and the war on terror in their foreign policies, which has starkly undermined the promotion of democratic governance in the non-democratic producer states, with the latter enjoying sharply increased energy revenues and greater international leverage.

A critical indicator of democracy's hard times nowadays have been developments in the Middle East and the failure of the former US President George W. Bush's Freedom Agenda – the campaign to promote democracy around the world – and above all in that critical region. It must be recalled that since the early 1990s there was a general acceptance of democracy promotion as an international norm, as a 'world value' of promoting human rights, development, and peace (McFaul 2004). The idea has in turn given rise to a proliferation of democracy-assistance programs with the aim of assisting technically and materially governments and nongovernment organizations to consolidate democracy.

The Bush administration however has tarnished its reputation by violating democratic and human rights norms both domestically and abroad, thus weakening the legitimacy of democracy-promotion efforts. As a consequence, the Western democracy promotion enterprise has been faced with a strong 'backlash' on the part of nondemocratic regimes around the world, being closely associated with the US regime change agenda. Carothers (2006) points out that governments across the globe have condemned democracy-building programs in their countries, denouncing them as "illegitimate political meddling", as

American interventionism, not US foreign policy goal of democracy promotion. Carothers claims that such allegation is not wholly unjustified because while ‘most external democracy activists may indeed be primarily interested in achieving free and fair elections, they also frequently hope that their efforts will increase the likelihood that autocrats will lose office’.

Gershman and Allen (2006) argue that the backlash against democracy promotion stems largely from the fact that the so-called hybrid regimes have become a widespread phenomenon across the globe. Hybrid regimes allowed enough political freedom, installed regular elections, several opposition parties, allowed civil groups and NGOs to receive foreign aid (*discussed in Chapter 2*). In 2004 the opposition groups in Ukraine mounted a significant challenge to the ruling regime that has become to known as the Orange Revolution. Thereafter, organizations and movements that monitor human rights and advocate the expansion of democratic freedom have become a particular target of authoritarian governments that have pursued systematic efforts to weaken or eliminate prodemocracy activism, marginalize the press, curtail freedom of assembly and suppress civil society.

At a country level of analysis, Russia stands out as a clear case of the ruling regime under former President Putin pursuing undemocratic actions in order to consolidate its power and constrict freedom, largely as a responds to the recent wave of ‘color revolutions’ in the neighboring Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Putin’s administration has denounced external democracy aid and criticized local NGOs for accepting outside assistance (*Chapter 4*). Governments of other former Soviet states like Uzbekistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, as well as China, states in Africa, and in South America have resorted to similar policies.

Thus, what we have seen from above, as noted by a number of contemporary democratization studies scholars, worldwide democratization processes are in tenuous conditions. *The prevailing discourse on contemporary democratization trends and Western democracy promotion around the world motivates one to pay renewed attention to the concept of democracy itself.*

The analysis ponders the nature of modern democracy as a regime model, what it takes for a regime to be considered democratic today. In the history of democracy, transformations taking place since the 1970s have been quite extraordinary, through which democracy around the world thrived and has proven its remarkable resilience and a widespread appeal. Liberal democracy in particular has proven quite resilient due primarily to its ‘dual nature’(*to be discussed below*).

This section further revisits the discourse on democracy’s global outreach and a

related issue on whether or not there are strong ideological alternatives to democracy. On the one hand there are those who argue that democracy's universal appeal is unequivocal, as it carries with it political, social, economic wellbeing for citizens around the world. On the other hand, there are those scholars who are more susceptible to the latest democratic setbacks and are more reserved about democracy's global outreach. *The present analysis stands in support of the former view and asserts that despite the prevailing setbacks to global democratization in recent times, democracy will continue to sustain its ideational² appeal around the world well into the future.*

In turn, Western political and academic circles have been pondering whether or not emerging alternative political models that display signs of illiberal and authoritarian values are challenging Western liberal democracy? Are authoritarian values staging a comeback? China's development model has been doubted by commentators as an 'authoritarian capitalist' (Gat 2007) alternative to democracy and has apparently become quite appealing to a good number of developing countries for its ability to generate development without undertaking democratic reforms. What is more worrisome is the degree of impressive steadfastness that the authoritarian regimes such as one in China have demonstrated, a phenomenon that has been dubbed 'authoritarian resilience'. (Nathan, 2003) It is argued that in the post-Tiananmen period, the Chinese leadership has been able to construct what appears to be a stable archetypal authoritarian regime under conditions that elsewhere have led to a democratic transition. The Chinese case might signify that "authoritarianism is a viable regime form even under conditions of advanced modernization and integration with the global economy" (Nathan 2003: 16).

However, some scholars are assured that in focusing overly on the sources of the staying power of authoritarian regimes, there is a substantial neglect or undervalue of the resilience of democracy itself. The idea is to look afresh at durability of democracy despite the obstacles it has faced in the recent time. It is contended that: "no well-established or consolidated democracies have been lost. In particular, in countries that have achieved high levels of per capita GDP, there still has not been a single case of democratic breakdown" (Plattner 2010: 82)

Merkel's (2010:25) analysis on democratization trends on an aggregated global scale reveals importantly that "most democracies within the category of 'free' states are relatively

² the term is adopted from Burnell and Youngs 2010, in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics the term 'ideational' refers to 'involving the representation of ideas', available from: www.highbeam.com/doc/1036-ideational.html

stable. A trend toward autocratic regimes can barely be expected." The reason stems to a large degree from the fact that democratic regimes continue to enjoy a high level of legitimacy at a national level as well as internationally. Both international and regional organizations endorse democracy; the United Nations in its official documents constantly articulates the value of democracy for human rights and for peace.

Moreover, a large array of public opinion surveys demonstrates a high degree of support for democracy worldwide. In particular, the World Values Survey is conducted about every decade with the most recent being 1999-2001 in 80 diverse countries around the world, accounting for about 80% of world population and represents one of the most comprehensive data on attitudes concerning issues ranging from politics, national goals to gender roles. The questions on democracy that the survey includes have an advantage of being worded the same in every country. The Survey is used to supplement Freedom House and Polity IV data.

The survey includes the following three main questions:

Do you agree with the following statement, "Democracy may have its problems, but it's better than any other form of government?"

Do you endorse the idea of a "Strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections?"

Do you agree that "Greater respect for authority would be a good thing?"

The responses to these questions allow researchers to analyze the extent to which democratic culture has developed or may develop in the future. With regards to the first question, the survey results revealed that at least in principle, the belief that democracy is the best system is overwhelming and omnipresent across the regions. "While there is a slightly higher preference among the Western industrialized countries, in every region- even the former Soviet Union – no less than 80 percent of people on average say democracy is the best system" (Diamond 2008: 32). Thus, the saturation level of democratic values is obtained by the means of measuring people's beliefs.

It appears further that the last two questions on a strong leader and authority, were helpful in examining the claim that some cultures or regions are naturally more conducive to the growth and consolidation of democracy. It has been found that there is a stronger authoritarian temptation outside the West, with the idea of a 'strong leader' appealing to almost half of respondents from the former Soviet Union and those in Latin American countries. While the 'greater respect for authority' was found to be favored by majority in the West, Asia, Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union and especially in Latin America and the Middle East (Diamond 2008:33).

Apart from the World Values Survey, public opinion on the performance of regimes and the economy is also obtained through periodic surveys, called 'barometers'. There are four different regional democracy barometers: the Afrobarometer (www.afrobarometer.org), the East Asia Barometer (www.asianbarometer.org), the New Europe Barometer (www.abdn.ac.uk/cspp) and the Latinbarometer (www.latinobarometro.org). These surveys include several types of questions that assess the support for the idea of democracy. The latest empirical findings, based on the regional 'barometers' in the recently democratized countries revealed that on average, more than 64 per cent of respondents support the general idea of democracy. "In Benin, Thailand, Kenya and Senegal this percentage increases to around 80 per cent of the people. The highest is Senegal, where more than 87 per cent of respondents find democracy to be the best form of government." (Doorenspleet 2010)

Thus, high levels of support for democracy are rightly considered to be an essential ingredient of democratic consolidation; political legitimacy is founded on citizens' approval of a democratic regime. Increasingly there is a growing scholarly interest in the levels of support vs. dissatisfaction with democracy in established democracies of the West and even more so in the new democracies.

Revisiting the definition of democracy

In order to take democracy seriously and to understand its remarkable durability, it suffices to revisit the concept itself. It is a case that more often than not the concept of democracy tends to be rather narrowly interpreted, most frequently seen as just semi-regular votes, thereby the true meaning of the world is being distorted. Democracy represents a much-contested and very elusive concept and there is no agreement on how to define it precisely and concretely. The definition most commonly used is that of Joseph Schumpeter (1943): "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote". Schumpeter's widely influential theory of democracy has been described as being 'minimalist' for its emphasis of the importance of the institutional element in democracy, i.e. the primarily role of competitive elections by which rulers are selected.

Democracy's meaning becomes even more ambiguous if one refers to its etymological origin in ancient Greek - "the power or rule of the people". In recent decades, the conceptualization of democracy takes on various forms in political science literature and no other issues have been subjected to such an extensive scrutiny as has the issue of "what

democracy is...and is not” in Schmitter and Karl 1991’s analysis, who emphasize the accountability of rulers to citizens and the relevance of mechanisms of competition other than elections.

According to Tilly (2007), there are four main types of definitions that are implicitly or explicitly referred to by scholars of democracy and democratization studies: constitutional, substantive, procedural and process-oriented.

A constitutional approach defines political systems from looking at their legal systems, making this approach vulnerable to error because of the common gaps between the content of laws and actual practice. *Substantive* approaches look at what actually comes out of the political system. If the system manages to produce popular control of the political agenda and political equality it is deemed democratic no matter what the content of its laws or how it is done. *Procedural* approaches on the contrary focus on governmental practices, first and foremost if free and fair elections are conducted. Then, a *process-oriented* approach is identified, as quite different from the other definitional strategies, which indicates sets of processes that must take place for a situation to qualify as democratic. (Tilly 2007: 7-9) Thus a process-oriented approach examines how a democratic political system works and is largely built on Dahl’s classic criteria for democracy (or as he puts it, “polyarchy”).

Dahl had developed a procedural approach to the conceptualization of democracy, establishing five criteria that an association would have to meet in order to satisfy the basic principles of popular control and political equality. These are:

Effective participation: all the members must have equal and effective opportunities for making their views known to the other members as to what the policy should be.

Voting equality: every member must have an equal and effective opportunity to vote, and all votes must be counted as equal.

Enlightened understanding: each member must have equal and effective opportunities for learning about the relevant alternative policies and their likely consequences.

Control of the agenda: the members must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how and, if they choose, what matters are to be placed on the agenda.

Inclusion of most adults: most adult permanent residents should have the full rights of citizens implied by the above criteria. (Dahl 1998: 37-38)

The rights and freedoms articulated by Dahl point to a critical idea that for a regime to be considered democratic today, apart from popular rule, it must account largely and

importantly for civil liberties and freedoms for individuals and minority groups. In order to be accepted as a democratic regime, apart from providing for the rule of the majority as articulated through free and fair elections, the protection of individual rights must be guaranteed by a written constitution that effectively constrains government. Such type of democracy is termed *liberal* or *constitutional democracy*. It is often claimed that the nature of constitutional democracy is paradoxical, for there is a complex relationship between its main components – the liberal (individual rights) and democratic pillar (majority rule).

Acknowledging the dual character of democracy with its often-conflicting goals of majority rule and individual liberty, it is claimed that “it is a kind of hybrid regime, one that tempers popular rule with anti-majoritarian features. For while it seeks to ensure the ultimate sovereignty of the people, at the same time it limits the day-to-day rule of the majority so that it does not infringe upon the rights of individuals or minorities”. (Plattner 2010: 84) As a result given such an inherent compromise between its main pillars, it may appear highly questionable how the liberal-democratic system endures and sustains itself, without creating a unsettling discontent between majorities and minorities?

The “dual nature” inherent in liberal democracy is reflected in a constant tension and requires continuous negotiations. Its success depends on a delicate balance that can be broken by an extreme manifestation of either of its two components: the democratic disorder called *populism* or the liberal disorder labeled “*radical pluralism*.” Both, however, can reciprocally correct each other; their mutual cancellation may explain democratic resilience. (ibid.: 91)

In fact it has been found that in the course of the last decade contemporary populism has been emerging as a successful and sustained phenomenon across established democracies of Western Europe. A wide circle of structural conditions have in combination provided a breeding ground for a new populist *Zeitgeist* across Western Europe with populist movements achieving impressive results in states like France, Switzerland and Denmark and for the first time have become part of national government in countries such as Italy, Austria and the Netherlands.

Across Western Europe, citizens have lost faith in traditional politics and its representatives that in their eyes have failed to address critical issues such as economic and cultural globalization. As a result disillusioned voters either become apathetic or turn to new, radical alternatives. “Populist vowing to reclaim the scepter for its rightful owner- the sovereign ‘people’- have been able to present themselves not as threat to Western European democracy, but as its saviors.” (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008: 2) One can infer that despite

the fact that there exists a considerable support for democracy *per se*, faith in its agencies and institutions is declining; people value democracy as an ideal but are quite dissatisfied with how their political systems perform. Ergo, the growing tendency among researchers is to focus on the negative aspects of how Western European democracies function (see for e.g. Stoker 2006; Crouch 2004; Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Diamond and Gunther 2001).

On the other hand of the spectrum, there is radical pluralism that is at work to different degree in different democratic societies. Within a political context, pluralism stands for a diversity of groups within the polity and its extreme form would threaten to undermine the foundations of popular self-government for if a political consensus cannot be established among various individuals and groups on the kinds of fundamental principles that should govern the society, then majority rule will not be respected. Yet radical pluralism “helps to hold in check the populist temptation, especially in the more advanced democracies.” (Plattner 2010: 90)

Thus, it appears that the durability, functionality and appeal of liberal democracy in the West could hardly be questioned and the central concern has been predominately about the proper balance between liberal and democratic features of liberal democracy and the best strategy for bringing both into being. This in turn spurs further debate on the best way to encourage the growth of liberal democracy outside the West.

The world is dominated by the prevalence of what has been termed electoral (Diamond 1996) or illiberal (Zakaria 1997) democracies, i.e. those that choose their leaders in competitive elections, yet fail to safeguard the basic rights of individual and minorities. However, as recent statistical analyses reveal, most of the emerging democracies have gradually become less illiberal, i.e. those regimes that are liberal are also competitive and inclusive, whereas regimes that are not liberal, the levels of competition and participation are very limited (Karatnycky 1999; Moller 2006).

Democracy - a universal value?

Scholars tend to be skeptical of the ideational appeal of democracy and its global outreach. In 1996, writing with pessimism about the global prospects of liberal democracy, Huntington asserted, “The West differs from other civilizations...in the distinctive character of its values and institutions. These include most notably its Christianity, pluralism, individualism, and rule of law...In their ensemble these characteristics are peculiar to the West” and therefore he argued against exporting democratic ideals for now and for foreseeable future (Huntington 1996: 311). Huntington’s thesis on uniqueness of the West

and cultural arguments about the limits to democracy has been gaining momentum in recent years once again.

Whether or not democracy is becoming a truly universal value, as was attributed by Sen, remains an open-ended debate. It suffices to recall Sen's main arguments in this regard. In pondering the claim of democracy's recognition as a universally relevant system, Sen emphasized that the issue stands as a major revolution in thinking and one of the major contributions of the twentieth century: "A country does not have to be deemed fit *for* democracy; rather, it has to become fit *through* democracy." (Sen 1999:4)

Sen argued that democracy has functioned well enough in the non-Western world, as exemplified in case of vast and ethnically and religiously diverse India. Furthermore, Sen scrutinizes a widespread argument that authoritarian regimes are better at economic development than democratic systems, disqualifying the hypothesis for the lack of systematic empirical studies and general evidence to support a claim that there is a general conflict between political rights and economic performance.

This may involve asking how authoritarian states have performed as governments. Brooker (2009) claims that the best way to go about this is to evaluate regimes in terms of their own priorities and goals. Some argue that there is no authoritarian economic model *per se*; that a spurious correlation exists between autocracy and growth (McFaul and Weiss, 2008). Indeed, the *relationship between regime type and economy* has been a subject of extensive scholarly research for decades. Is democracy more conducive to economic prosperity than authoritarianism? Does wealth inevitably lead to greater democratization or is it democracy that causes countries to become richer? Scholars have compared the economic trends and levels of development between democracies and autocracies.

A comprehensive study undertaken by Przeworski et al (2000) on the relationship between economic development and regime type reveals that while economic development does not directly cause democracy, democratic regimes nonetheless are more likely to survive in rich societies. Ezrow and Frantz (2011:129) claim that the same argument applies to dictatorships as they are too less likely to survive in poor countries, with "poverty having a destabilizing effect on all regimes, regardless of whether they are democratic or dictatorial."

It must be stressed that those authoritarian countries that have in fact achieved extraordinary economic success, such as Taiwan, Korea, Chile, have seen significant political transformations caused by raised popular demands for democratic government. So that even economic success appears to have been the cause of weakening of these authoritarian governments. Indeed, *democracy should be seen as providing a desirable complement, even a*

prerequisite for an enduring and sustainable economic growth.

What exactly does democracy offer to claim its universality? Sen identified a number of distinct virtues of democracy, arguing that these enrich the lives of the citizens. Democracy's merits include the idea that political and social rights have an *intrinsic* value for human wellbeing and in denying participation in the political life of the community; a good life of individuals as social beings is being seriously undermined. By the same token, democracy hold a crucial *instrumental* value in providing people with an opportunity to voice their claims, including claims of economic needs, and has *constructive* importance in formation of values and priorities of society, in the understanding of needs, rights and duties, including exchange of information and views, open public discussion in forging informed and considered choices.

Sen further takes on the argument on cultural differences, including 'Asian values' discourse and how these might gauge the debate on democracy's global applicability. In Sen's view, no cultural limits to freedom exist and democracy is not an intrinsic attribute to a Western tradition. (ibid.: 15) As it is well known the prime supporter of the view that there are cultural limits to democracy has been Lee Kuan Yew, the longtime prime minister of Singapore. Lee's cultural skepticism has been backed up by a considerable number of scholarly works promoting the idea that the distinctive Asian values are not compatible with Western liberal notions of democracy.

In particular, some state that: "there are morally legitimate alternatives to Western-style liberal democracy in the East Asian region. What is right for East Asians does not simply involve implementing Western-style political practices when the opportunity presents itself; it involves drawing upon East Asian political realities and cultural traditions that are defensible to contemporary East Asians. They may also be defensible to contemporary Western-style liberal democrats, in which case they may be worth learning from." (Bell 2006: 8) Thus, the principles and practices of non-Western political traditions can to a considerable degree enrich liberal democracy.

Ideological alternatives to democracy, are they strong?

While the discourse on universality of democracy may trigger contra views, it appears that posing a somewhat different but relevant question may shed more light on the nature of modern democracy and its unshakeable appeal as a regime model. Namely, *do ideological challenges to democracy exist?* This ultimately brings the discussion back to Fukuyama's famous thesis on Western liberal democracy being the highest and final political form to

which humanity can aspire?

Three weeks after the September 11 attacks, Fukuyama stated in an article in the Wall Street Journal that his “end of history” thesis remained valid twelve years after he first presented it, shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Fukuyama’s core argument was that after the defeat of communism and National Socialism, no serious ideological competitor to Western-style liberal democracy was likely to emerge in the future. Thus, in terms of political philosophy, liberal democracy is the end of the evolutionary process. To be sure, there will be wars and terrorism, but no alternative ideology with a universal appeal will seriously challenge the ideas and values of Western liberal democracy as the “dominant organizing principles” around the world. In particular, Fukuyama points out that non-democratic rival ideologies such as radical Islam and “Asian values” have little appeal outside their own cultural areas, and these areas are themselves vulnerable to penetration by Western democratic ideas. (Fukuyama 2001).

Being one of the leading critics of Fukuyama’s hypothesis, Kagan (2008) has been recently claiming that Western liberal democracy is being challenged by sustainable alternatives – authoritarian states, seeking to play a greater role on the world stage while tightening their grip on power domestically. In his latest book “The return of history and the end of dreams”, Kagan stressed the continuing importance of ideology in shaping the foreign policies of nations, determining their ambitions. The book is a referral to Fukuyama’s famous 1992 volume “The End of History and the Last Man”. Kagan points out that a peaceful international order envisioned by the end of the Cold War was an illusion; it did not lead to ‘the end of history’ – a universal acceptance of liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

According to Kagan, the existing state of global politics is characterized by the great power rivalries, while ideological clashes remain significant, with western liberal democracy (the US and Europe) facing stronger competitive ideologies in the face of autocratic regimes.

Indeed, Kagan gives much emphasis to the rise of China and Russia, as two ambitious great powers. Russia has undergone a transformation, which has produced a tremendous political and economic turnaround, while China is undertaking massive economic reforms and a large-scale program to modernize its military. Kagan states that it is important to remember that these great powers are autocracies that seek to modernize economically without opening up their political spaces. This has great implications for the international system. ‘True realism about international affairs means understanding that a nation’s foreign policy is heavily shaped by the nature of its government’, Kagan writes (p.98).

Kagan's analysis of both Russia and China seems to suggest that these are very similar countries with similar traditional power ambitions and similar ideologies guiding their domestic and foreign policies, both seeking more relative power for themselves. He states, '[i]n the great schism between democracy and autocracy, the autocrats share common interests and a common view of international order' (p.70). But this is debatable. For in many salient respects Russia and China are quite dissimilar from each other. Indeed, even geopolitical realists such as Zbigniew Brzezinski have regularly warned that there are bound to be tensions in the relationship between these two enormous and culturally distinct states that share a common border.

Kagan's treatment of China is also questionable. Kagan describes China as 'a rising geopolitical and economic giant...[that] has behaved like rising powers before it' (p. 25), claiming that it is a growing power with enormous geopolitical ambitions and that as its external interests and commitments expand, they will begin to collide with those of other great powers. But the source of China's power is primarily economic, and whether it will experience a 'peaceful rise' is a matter of great debate. While it is true that throughout history the emergence of new power centers in world politics has triggered instability, at the same time it must be noted that as long as American hegemony remains 'non-threatening', China will not seek to "balance" against the US.

What must be further acknowledged is the nature of the global economy today: economic productivity depends on institutions, property rights, and political stability, on a complex and interconnected global economy. Large countries such as China benefit from the current state of economic play, and remain firmly embedded in the 'globalized' international economy. While possessing a substantial share of global trade (at 10.4% in 2010) China is primarily concerned to preserve the sources of its economic growth. Kagan's downplaying of these realities is the central weakness of his analysis. That is, he considerably underestimates the forces of globalization and economic interdependence that draw together those democracies and autocracies which Kagan considers to form two antithetical camps. True that both Russia and China are regimes that are intensely resisting Western democracy promotion, and aiming to exert influence around the world, thereby creating significant obstacles to further democratization (*Chapter 3*). Yet, even such regimes describe themselves as democracies or claim that they are on the slow road to becoming a democracy.

Among the autocratic revival scholars, Kagan is certain the most extreme with his attempt to tie a regime type to geopolitical ambitions of major powers. Juxtaposed to the autocratic revival theorists, there are those who argue that at the present moment democracy

faces rather weak challenges at the ideological level. Deudney and Ikenberry (2009) argue that autocratic revival is generally a myth; autocracy is not a viable alternative within the global capitalist system. “Although today’s autocracies may be more competent and more adept at accommodating capitalism than their predecessors were, they are nonetheless fundamentally constrained by deep-seated incapacities that promise to limit their viability over the long run...due to deep contradictions between authoritarian political systems and capitalist economic systems”.

Ottaway (2009) in particular points out that the main obstacle to democracy is to be found in the political realm with the endurance of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, weak, incompetent and divided opposition parties and movements, insubstantial external pressure on the part of democratic states, and misguided efforts by international community to promote democracy. She argues that such political challenges are strong and may even be getting stronger, whereas the ideological challenges to democracy are weak and are not the cause for the failure of democratic transformations worldwide.

Ottaway argues further that democracy itself is not a full-fledged ideology in a classic sense with a proclaimed value system and socio-economic model. Instead what we witness today overall is that there are no coherent ideologies with a comprehensive political, social and economic agendas, what they provide are rather fragmented ideas and dispersed appeals. These include Islamism, nationalism in many parts of the world, socialism and the so-called boutique ideologies, which offer specialized ideological responses to specialized problems.

Thus, “a weak democratic ideology meets the challenge of other weak or fragmented ideologies. The fight for democracy is political rather than ideological.” (p.44) Indeed, such a political contest for democracy largely explains the present-day democratization setbacks around the world and ultimately means that democracy will be able to preserve its ideational appeal in the world for a time to come.

Sustaining democracy and making it work for people’s socio-political and economic wellbeing is a formidable undertaking of the twenty first century. The discourse on the essential nature of modern liberal democracy and democratization endures. The process of democratization is a complex and dynamic one, with a perennial risk of reversal; democratic arrangements are fragile and vulnerable. Furthermore, as Geddes (1999) emphasizes, ‘the process of democratization varies enormously from case to case and region to region. Generalizations proposed have failed either to accommodate all the real-world variations or to explain it’ (p.117).

Geddes contribution is highly significant for its emphasis on the need to differentiate

between authoritarian regimes in an effort to explain regime transitions. She argues that authoritarian regimes break down in systematically different ways depending on their essential characteristics and types, those of personalist, military, single-party or amalgams of the pure types. Geddes' analysis is one of the most influential contributions to the literature on nondemocratic regimes.

All in all, as we can observe from the above analysis, *the idea that the worldwide democratization process has come to a halt has become a truism. Another truism could be that global democracy promotion is in a strenuous condition. Yet another potential truism could be that authoritarianism is here to stay, having the ability to adopt itself to a changing environment.*

The democratization literature has accumulated an extensive knowledge about the domestic and international factors that contribute to political change in authoritarian regimes. Some of the most influential theories of democratization accumulated in the last 20 years during the so-called 'third wave of academic interest in democratization' (Geddes 1999) have established as a matter of fact that democracy is more likely in more developed countries, i.e. that a positive yet unexplained relationship between development and democracy exists (Jackman 1973; Bollen 1979; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Przeworski and Limongi 1997).

Another widely acknowledged finding is that poor economic performance increases the likelihood of authoritarian breakdown, as it increases democratic breakdown and defeat of incumbents in stable democracies, i.e. that there is a relationship between economic crisis and regime change (Diamond and Linz 1989; Bermeo 1990; Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Przeworski and Limongi 1997). What has been largely neglected in the above presented literature, however, is how and why a good number of authoritarian regimes remain and endure in international system. According to Geddes (2009) there is a lack of theoretical and empirical research on the interaction between international factors and the behavior of domestic political actors and should these be elaborated, it "could potentially transform the study of democratization".

In the light of this, chapters 2 and 3 that follow will focus specifically on the study of authoritarian regimes, examining an existing, even if quite recent, literature that deals specifically with factors that contribute to their survival and the existing and potential role they play on international stage. In particular, this study seeks to highlight a much-neglected international dimension of authoritarian endurance and it will be argued that external factors play a significant role in prolonging and strengthening authoritarian rule as well. While

scholars have shown an increasing interest in the external or international dimension of authoritarianism, including the so-called 'autocracy promotion' to be discussed in Chapter 3, the interest and research have so far remained quite limited and call the need for further examination.

“More theoretical analysis needs to be directed at understanding the persistence of authoritarianism, rather than focusing primarily on what causes democracy”

Thomas Ambrosio (2009)

Chapter 2: Sketching a framework of authoritarianism: sources of resilience

The present analysis focuses on the theoretical and empirical findings in comparative politics and regime study literature pertaining to the study on contemporary non-democratic regimes. *The analysis presented here examines current literature that deals with the question of why and how authoritarian regimes remain resilient in the evolving international system.* This involves an examination of both domestic and external sources of their survival.

The literature presented in fact reveals that given a prevalence of certain conditions authoritarian regimes can last: authoritarianism is not merely a transitional phase before democracy. This in turns calls for the need to continue thoroughly studying non-democratic regimes. The chapter begins with an overview of how the study on authoritarian regimes, of a new non-traditional type, has gained prominence within the field of comparative politics and regimes studies literature in the late 1990s. Part II outlines specific factors that contribute to authoritarianism’s staying power, on domestic as well as international level.

Part 1. The contours of the field of study

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, an extensive literature has emerged on the causes and consequences of democratization and issues of democratic consolidation, whereas research on emergence and persistence of nondemocratic regimes has been quite scant in regime studies and transition literature. As a result, there has been a disproportionate focus on those processes that contribute to greater democratization rather than the resilience of non-democratic forms of rule. This has been largely explained, as outlined in *Chapter 1*, by the *Zeitgeist* of democratic optimism and universalism following the explosive wave of democratization after 1989.

The studies on regime change in comparative political science have largely focused on the developments in Latin America, Southern Europe, and in aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union, on the post-Soviet Eurasia, and initially considered these as a case of ‘*transition to democracy*’, or ‘*transition from authoritarian rule*’. Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter in their 1986 seminal work on transitions away from authoritarianism contend that autocrats “can justify themselves in political terms only as transitional powers” (p.15). Most

of authoritarian regimes were allowing some form of ‘political liberalization’, which involved allowing individual expression and opposition organization. They have argued that such liberalization would lead to democratization; notoriously, in the words of Samuel Huntington “liberalized authoritarianism is not a stable equilibrium; the halfway house does not stand” (1991:174)³.

At that time the Western democracy promotion community had embraced an analytical model of global democratic transition, based on the idea that the third wave countries are on their way along a democratization sequence towards becoming full-blown democracies. However, in time the spread of democratization slowed down, and theorists of regime change have begun to put more emphasis on the concept of democratic *consolidation* and sorting the cases into categories reflecting degrees of democratization (the leading scholars in this field include Huntington 1991; Diamond and Plattner 1993; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Bunce 2003).

Parallel to the proliferation of both transition and consolidation paradigms, a distinct direction in scholarship of comparative politics has emerged, which began to examine those political regimes that couple formal democratic institutions with authoritarian practices. In countries across the former Soviet Union, in North Africa and the Middle East, in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South and East Asia, there was an initial democratic opening, with free and fair elections in place, yet what have emerged over time were new forms of authoritarianism.

Contemporary authoritarian regimes as distinct

Properly characterizing such regime types spawned a number of distinct conceptual strategies. One way scholars have chosen to make sense of regimes that combine democratic and authoritarian features is to position them at the very center between the two endpoints—democracy and authoritarianism – and began examining the properties of so-called ‘hybrid regimes’. The term ‘hybrid regimes’, introduced by Diamond (2002)⁴, denoting regimes that are neither clearly democratic nor conventionally authoritarian that emerged out of a widespread observation of an increasing number of countries around the world taken on democratic features, at least superficially.

These regimes are exhibiting some degree of political pluralism coupled with multiparty elections and are dubbed “pseudodemocracies”, because as Diamond argues, the

³ See also DiPalma 1990; Przeworski 1991

⁴ See also Karl 1995 and Rüb 2002, who argued that hybrid regimes are a separate type of a regime distinct from democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes all together.

term 'resonates distinctively with the contemporary era, in which democracy is the only broadly legitimate regime form, and regimes have felt unprecedented pressure (international and domestic) to adopt-or at least to mimic-the democratic form' (p.24). Hybrid regimes have seen a worldwide expansionary trend, surpassing far more the trend toward democracy.

In seeking to explore in-depth the notion of hybrid regimes, Morlino (2012:49, 67) ponders whether "when considering those phases of uncertainty and ambiguity, are we dealing with an institutional arrangement with some, perhaps minimal, degree of stabilization, namely a regime in a proper sense; or are we actually analyzing transitional phases from some kind of authoritarianism (or traditional regime) to democracy or vice versa?" He argues that hybrid regimes, while appearing as ambiguous forms of political organization are nonetheless "a substantial reality that can be considered an autonomous model of regime vis-à-vis democracy, authoritarianism, and the traditional regime."

This phenomenon has made apparent the fact that a great number of regimes are no longer 'in transition' to democracy as has been argued within the field of 'transitology' and constitute a new authoritarian kind that evidently is here to stay. Carothers (2002) rejects the transition paradigm as simplistic, conceptually incorrect approach that has outlived its applicability of the early days of the third wave of democratization. He usefully points to the diversity of political patterns among the so-called 'transitional countries', most of which have displayed few signs of democratizing and their political trajectories should be understood as "alternative directions, not way stations to liberal democracy"(p: 14).

Similarly, Linz (2000) called for a conceptual clarity in properly classifying hybrid regimes, avoiding labeling these as democracies, even using minimum standards. He proposed "the addition of adjectives to 'authoritarianism' rather than to 'democracy' (p. 34). Thus, the *transition paradigm has been undermined primarily for its teleological assumptions, for its overreliance on elections as a proxy for democracy, and its disregard for important sociopolitical and economic preconditions that may influence political trajectories.*

Carothers (2000) identifies distinct 'semi-authoritarian' regimes as those that 'follow some of the forms of democracy yet maintain sufficient limits on political openness to ensure they are in no real danger of losing their grip on power...and are certain to constitute a major feature of the international political landscape of the next several decades' (p.210). There is a complex political dualism at play in the workings of a semi-authoritarian regime, so that while adopting the basic institutional forms of democracy (i.e., elections, independent national legislature, independent judiciary, a democratic constitution, opposition political groups, independent civil society groups, some independent media), such regimes apply a successful

strategy of controlling the levers of political power. Interestingly, Carothers argues that the core meaning of the term 'semi-authoritarianism' implies not a failure to reach full democracy but a regime's deliberate and active strategy to sustain itself.

Ottaway (2003) in a similar way points to the deliberate character of semi-authoritarian regimes as not failed democracies or democracies in transition but rather as 'carefully constructed and maintained alternative systems' (p.7). She places semi-authoritarian regimes as a distinct regime type, and argues that it is wrong to regard these as transitional regimes and study them solely within the discussions on democratization.

Brooker (2000, 2009) introduces the concept of 'disguised dictatorship' as an instance of nondemocratic governance with the presence of semi-competitive elections forming its distinctive, defining feature. A dictatorship that claims to be 'democratic' is a new kind of a non-democratic instance, which differs from traditional types by "avoiding open rivalry with democracy and adopting an 'if you can't beat them, (appear) to join them' approach" (2009: 6).

Following Diamond's, Carothers' and Linz's analyses, Levitsky and Way (2002, 2010) have usefully warned analysts that hybrid regimes might be thought of not just as insufficiently democratic democracies but as 'insufficiently authoritarian autocracies'. They have developed a concept of 'competitive authoritarianism' to account for those regimes that have emerged out of broken down full-blown authoritarian regimes. The relevant cases of interest include Russia under Putin, Croatia under Tudjman, Serbia under Milosevic, Ukraine under Kuchma, Peru under Fujimori, Haiti, Albania, Armenia, Mexico and Zambia during the 1990s.

What distinguishes 'competitive authoritarianism' from other types of nondemocratic outcomes is that political authority is primarily obtained and exercised through formal democratic institutions. Such regimes fail to meet conventional minimum standards of democracy, for the ruling elites constantly and extensively violate democratic rules, by abusing state resources, denying the opposition adequate media coverage, harassing opposition candidates and their supporters and often manipulating electoral results. A political system becomes electoral authoritarian when violations of the 'minimum criteria for democracy' are so severe that they create 'an uneven playing field between government and opposition' (2010: 10). Such type of hybrid regime stands in the very middle between democracy and full-scale authoritarianism.

Moreover, opposition forces may have at their disposal arenas of contestation as the means to challenge the ruling incumbents, namely the electoral arena, the legislature, the

judiciary and the media (Levistky and Way, 2002: 54). As the authors suggest such type of authoritarian regime may prove to be long-drawn-out with inherent contradiction in coexistence of democratic rules and autocratic methods remaining intact and manageable by the authority.

Through an extensive empirical research, involving a comparative study of 35 cases in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and post-communist Eurasia, they have quite successfully identified specific factors – domestic and international (*described below in more detail*) – that explain competitive authoritarian regime trajectories. While the analysis presented by Levistky and Way focuses specifically on one type of an authoritarian outcome and on one specific historical period, namely the post-Cold War era, their overall framework of study can be constructively applied in order to discern the sources of authoritarian stability in general.

Levistky and Way's concept of competitive authoritarianism closely resembles the concept of 'electoral authoritarianism', developed primarily by Schedler (2002, 2006), as yet another attempt to break away from the transition paradigm and avoid conceptualizing non-democratic regimes through the prism of democracy. *The 'third wave' of global democratization has led to the creation of some types of democracy, yet at the same time gave birth to new forms of authoritarianism that cannot be categorized the same way as classic types of one-party, military, or personal dictatorship.* With the goal of delineating and categorizing regimes, Schedler, following Diamond (2002), outlines a regional distribution of political regimes in the developing world, stressing that more than half of all countries lay in an authoritarian realm with electoral authoritarians (EA) becoming the most common regime type, making more than two-thirds (69.9 percent) of all autocracies. The EA regimes are presented in the Arab countries, sub-Saharan Africa, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. (2002:p.48)

The new electoral authoritarian regimes of the post-Cold War era represent a form of nondemocratic governance that conduct regular multiparty elections at all levels of government at the same time acutely and systematically violating basic democratic standards. Unlike closed authoritarian regimes (such as Cuba, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan), these regimes have embraced a complete list of liberal-democratic institutions: apart from holding multiparty elections on regular basis, the regimes have put in place constitutions, the courts, legislatures, and agencies of accountability, judicial systems, federal arrangements, independent media and civic associations. Thus, institutionally speaking, such regimes are nearly identical to liberal democracies.

As Schedler (2002) emphasizes, it is not a straightforward undertaking to draw a clear boundary between electoral democracies on the one hand and electoral authoritarianism on the other. For, in principle, any democratic regime must adhere to a consistent set of minimal democratic norms, and once one of the constitutive norms is bridged, a regime cannot be regarded as a democratic one. However, empirically there is no division of regimes into clear-cut types, because 'democratic norms are not *perfectly* realized anywhere, even in advanced democracies' (p.38). Yet, it is clear that what distinguishes electoral authoritarians from their liberal democratic counterparts are the tools of substantive control and manipulation of the representative institutions (*What kind of tools precisely will be examined in Part II of this chapter*). Historically, autocrats have resorted to using elections to sustain themselves⁵, yet what is new in the practices of the contemporary authoritarians is the way electoral manipulations are undertaken.

Schedler (2010) contends that these nondemocratic regimes represent 'the last line of authoritarian defense in a long history of struggle that has been unfolding since the invention of modern representative institutions' (p.69). Schedler further argues that in the long run the very same representative institutions can play a significant role in weakening the authoritarian regimes, in that they are inevitably granted at least a minimal range of power and autonomy and thus there also appears an arena of contention and 'the *possibility* of eroding authoritarian stability and governance' (p.77). Overall, *there is a continuing propensity among democratization scholars to argue for an inevitable liberalization of those institutions that authoritarian regimes borrow from democratic countries and that processes of globalization and interconnectedness it fosters take on a homogenizing tendencies*.

The notions of competitive authoritarian regimes and electoral authoritarians both resemble Magaloni's (2006) concept of 'hegemonic-party autocracy', defined as 'a system in which one political party remains in office uninterruptedly under semi-authoritarian conditions while holding regular multiparty elections', in which opposition parties are allowed to regularly participate (p.32). The findings are based on the extensive analysis of the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), proven to be one of the most resilient authoritarian regimes, having retained control of government for 71 years from 1929 until its demise in 2000 when it lost the office of the presidency to the National Action Party (PAN). Magaloni develops a theory of hegemonic party survival that addresses the question of how a

⁵ This has been argued earlier by for example Linz 1975; Hermet 1978; Chehabi and Linz 1998; Remmer 1999

hegemonic party manages to solve elite disputes and keep the party united and why would voters support an autocratic regime?

Throughout its rule, PRI had managed to stay in power through regular multiparty elections by securing for itself a monopoly of mass electoral support in order to deter elite division and had manipulated institutions by controlling constitutional change. In particular, material goods and services were a central component of securing mass electoral support and dissuading elite divisions. As Magaloni notes, such multiparty elections autocracies are the most common form of authoritarian regime in the world, displacing single-party, military dictatorships, and monarchies and prevailing after the end of the Cold War.

We have seen above how Levisky and Way, Shedler and Magaloni among others ponder the dynamics of electoral politics in authoritarian regimes. Indeed it is clear from their analyses that authoritarianism with elections may not lead to democratization, at the same time, elections, manipulated as they are by the authorities, do not guarantee that autocrats are protected in their grip on power. *With the scholarly interest in authoritarian regimes dynamics proliferating, an enduring predisposition to view such regimes as diminished forms of democracy was no longer the order of the day.*

The study of nondemocratic regimes, of traditional and more contemporary forms, remains of utmost relevance and a growing number of recent studies have taken seriously the fact that non-democratic rule is here to stay. These have addressed the question of why and how such form of rule continues to persist in an age of democratization. The field encompasses a wide array of theoretical approaches seeking to explain and categorize such form of rule.

Traditionally, there are theories of totalitarianism and authoritarianism, approaches that deal with types of non-democratic rule such as military rule, the personal-rule of a monarch or a dictator, there is also the 'one party state' institutional approach. These have been extensively explored in the works of Arendt (1951), Friedrich and Brzezinski (1956), Huntington and Moore (1970), Linz (1975), Purcell (1973), Anderson (1970), Schneider (1971), Schmitter (1971), among others who have examined the identity of rulers and their modes of governance and legitimation. These works on political authoritarianism have sprung as a result of an increasing number of countries having come under authoritarian rule in the late 60s'-early 1970s and a growing awareness that authoritarian regimes were a category of their own. In his analysis, Linz (1975) examined the structure of power relations (monism vs. pluralism), strategies of legitimation (ideologies vs. mentalities), and the treatment of subjects

(mobilization vs. depoliticization) in drawing a distinction between totalitarianism and authoritarian rule.

Of the more contemporary typologies of authoritarian regimes, one of the most widely used and quoted typology of authoritarian regimes is that of Geddes (2003), who classifies regimes as personalist, military, single-party, or amalgams of these three. The main emphasis here is on institution structures that define elite politics in authoritarian regimes in order to discern which actors and institutions have access to political office and influence over policy, be it a single leader, a hegemonic party or the military.

Brooker's (2009) is yet another instance of a more recent typology of nondemocratic rule. He frames the study of non-democratic regimes by the means of a three-dimensional approach that involves examining – 'who rules?', 'how do they rule?', and 'why do they rule?' He cogently argues that any study of non-democratic regimes of past and present has to adapt such a 'mixed' theoretical approach 'in order to deal with the diversity of these regimes' (p.44). However Brooker further stresses that in studying the *present* and *potential* non-democratic regimes, the classical 'who rules?' approach becomes the most relevant. The 'how' and 'why' approaches have become less relevant because "so many regimes have policy orientations and performances that are similar to their democratic counterparts and...are using democratic ideology and institutions as the basis for their claim to legitimacy" (p.276). At the same time he cautions against generalizing about a large array of non-democratic regimes and calls for the need to provide qualifications that differentiate between types of such regimes.

Does classifying authoritarian regimes into different types help explain their survival and/or breakdown? Brownlee (2007) cautions that "a flurry of new typologies outpaces the development and confirmation of explanations, these new authoritarian subtypes risk becoming an intellectual cul-de-sac...the fresh branding of old regimes does not necessarily illuminate the going-on of the world's autocracies or explain why so many still stand"(p.25-27).

On the other hand, Hadenius and Teorell (2006) argue that indeed propensities to survive and to develop towards democracy depend on the nature of an authoritarian regime. Largely building on Geddes (2003) typology, they present a new typology of authoritarian regime types of 191 countries in 1972-2003 periods; there are five general regimes types: monarchical, military, no-party, one party, and multiparty. Each of these types has its own average life span. A strong correlation has been found to exist between years of executive tenure and the life span of authoritarian regimes. In particular, what they term as a 'limited

multiparty regime, one that holds parliamentary or presidential elections in which (at least some) candidates are able to participate who are independent of the ruling regime', becoming the most common type of authoritarianism since the early 1990s, is also the one most fragile (p.7). Monarchical regime type, on the other hand, is the most stable form of authoritarianism.

At the same time, Hadenius and Teorell contend that the breakdown of an authoritarian regime, in case of all the types presented, does not automatically lead to democratization and that *in fact more often than not collapsed authoritarian regimes are replaced by yet another authoritarian regime* (77 percent of cases in the time span under investigation, with 23 percent resulting in democracy). This applies predominantly to the governing monarchies and traditional one-party states, whereas the multiparty system is the one likely to democratize in a gradual way.

Similarly to both Brooker's and Hadenius and Teorell's emphases on the need to account for an authoritarian regime type, Snyder (2006) argues that the growing literature on non-democratic regimes overly concentrates on the electoral politics and competition and as a result other significant dimensions are not taken into consideration. These are the so-called 'extra-electoral' factors, according to Snyder, that constitute: the types of rulers (e.g. military, personal leader, or a political party), the means of non-democratic rule, mainly through patronage networks, ethnic ties, or mass parties, and the motives that drive rules in their quest for power (e.g., greed, religion, ideology), and the degree of rule.

Thus there is a need for a broader conceptual framework that incorporates not only electoral processes but, quite importantly, *how these electoral processes interact with 'extra-electoral' dimensions of non-democratic rule. Indeed, elections alone are not enough as a factor in understanding the regime dynamics.*

Being influenced by Geddes' (2003) classification of regime, Ezrow and Frantz (2011) comprehensively address the workings of authoritarian politics and emphasize that there are clear distinctions to be made between numerous types of dictatorships; in turn different types of them produce differing kinds of policies and outcomes. At the same time it is argued that a clear distinction equally has to be made between dictators and dictatorships in order to discern and distinguish the difference in strategies that motivate leaders and elite, with authoritarian regimes commonly surviving long after the tenure of any one leader. "Whereas regime longevity involves a complex and system-wide effort to ensure the satisfaction of elites and the regimes' mass constituents, leadership longevity centers on the ability of leaders to please their elite constitutes and deter elite defections." (p.81)

Bratton and van de Walle (1997) argue that personalist type of authoritarian regime is largely dependent on the transfer of material rewards in exchange for political support. Wright's (2008) argument is similar in pointing out that patron-client networks are established in personalist autocracies, which are strengthened by the means of formal political institutions.

By definition, a single individual dominates the political apparatus in a personalist authoritarian regime and "when the dictator dies, personal dictatorships are unlikely to survive, as there are few institutionalized methods for dealing with crises over succession" (Ezrow and Frantz 2011:61). In similar vein, Geddes (1999) argues that personalist dictatorships are unlikely to be succeeded by a democratic regime, with violent transitions often typical, by way of assassination, coup, revolution, or foreign intervention.

Moreover, Ezrow and Frantz (2011:50) argue that there is a correlation between the type of authoritarian regime and how it is represented regionally in the world with military regimes largely found in Latin America; personalist regimes more common in sub-Saharan Africa; Eastern Europe and East and Southeast Asia are more dominated by single-party regimes, and the Middle East is largely represented by monarchies.

As Merkel (2010:28) emphasizes "whatever typology of autocratic rule may be constructed, indicators of modernization and conditions related to culture, society and the state suggest that a relatively stable autocratic camp has emerged. There may be oscillations between different forms of autocratic rule, but there are no theoretical or empirical hints that signal notable changes towards sustainable democratization." Thus as we have seen, *comparative politics scholars have been developing new concepts and data to address one of the central issues in the field, namely what shape and form authoritarian rule takes on.* Understanding the essence of authoritarian rule is crucial in order to comprehend regime dynamics, causes, consequences and possibilities of change, if any, towards democracy.

Part 2. Why and how authoritarian regimes last?

A. The internal factors

Increasingly scholars of comparative politics and regime studies have begun to undertake in-depth research of precisely why and how contemporary authoritarian regimes last, beyond considering solely the electoral process. There are studies carried out on the sustainability of authoritarian regimes that focus on the mechanisms of control and the domestic pressures facing those regimes, revealing a number of institutional and contingent

sources of regime durability. While the literature on democratization has predominantly focused on the role of the opposition, i.e. civil society, insurgency, mass protests, in examining which domestic factors undermine authoritarianism and/or foster democracy⁶, *the main studies on authoritarianism put much more emphasis on the ruling elites' capacity to withstand opposition challenges and foster regime endurance*. According to Svobik (2009), in nearly 80 percent of cases autocrats are ousted from power by the very same elite that had provided support in the first place.

Bueno de Mesquita et. al. (2003) argue that in authoritarian regimes a principle challenge originates from within the political elite. Thus, the ruling authorities must be on a constant watch in order to prevent ambitious associates from power take over. What kinds of instruments are at the disposal of autocrats in order to survive in office? In examining the channels through which authoritarian regimes stay in power, Gandhi and Przeworski (2006, 2007) argue that autocrats have at their disposal two instruments to mobilize cooperation and prevent rebellion: policy concessions and distribution of rents-monetary rewards, perks, and privileges. And it is through political institutions, such as legislature, parties and elections, that autocrats purposefully establish and maintain, that cooperation is mobilized.

Partisan legislatures, as nominally-democratic institutions, serve to foster rulers' survival by means of broadening the basis of support for them by incorporating potential opposition forces. Legislatures are found to be well-suited institutional mechanism through which non-democratic rulers make policy concessions to elicit cooperation and avert rebellion. Those opposition groups that are allowed to participate in the legislature do so within institutional framework of rules established by the ruler.

These so-called 'institutionalized dictatorships', resembling 'electoral authoritarians' discussed above, as regimes that exhibit seemingly democratic institutions but remain non-democracies precisely because elections they hold are not fair, held with the purpose to 'intimidate any potential opposition'; because legislative initiatives of the executive are almost always approved and passed, because 'the outcomes of the legislative process, legally constituted by the dictator, can be reversed by the same dictator' (2006:p.22). Lust-Okar (2004) takes up the issues of 'co-optation' of opposition by ruling elites and argues that paradoxically the opposition is weakened significantly when it is co-opted into the regime apparatus, for it is given an opportunity to take part in the system, largely by being assigned a political post.

⁶ See for example Fish(1995), Bratton and van de Walle (1997), Diamond(1999), Collier (1999), Wood(2000), Thompson(2001), Beissinger(2002),

Following Gandhi and Przeworski, Magaloni (2008) takes the issue of how precisely does an autocrat manages to remain in office much further. She develops an in-depth theory of power-sharing under authoritarianism, and ways in which it influences regime longevity. The fundamental argument is that an autocrat, wanting to remain in power, is compelled to establish power-sharing arrangements with the elite, arrangements that must be outright credible. For the power-sharing deal to be credible, the autocrat must 'give up his absolute powers to select members of the ruling clique into government positions...to those who invest in the existing institutions rather than in subversive coalitions' (p. 716).

Magaloni argues that the institution of regular multiparty elections can play a significant role in strengthening the bargaining power of the ruling party in its power-sharing relation with the autocrat. In addition, based on 'a survival analysis of autocracies', party autocracies are more stable than military regimes and that single-party regimes have a higher longevity than hegemonic-party autocracies. Magaloni builds on Geddes (1999), who emphasizes the role of political parties in prolonging authoritarian rule. Geddes argues that a strong party fosters elite cohesion by means of distributing patronage. Managing intra-elite conflict is critical, because elite defection very often leads to authoritarian breakdown.

By the same token, Brownlee's (2002, 2004, and 2007) historical-institutional approach to contemporary authoritarianism lays emphasis on the role of parties and coalition management in authoritarian stability, once again refuting a widespread expectation that elections destabilize authoritarian regimes. It is claimed that "the ruling organization and the coalition it houses is the nerve center of authoritarianism"(2007:10). In regimes with limited multiparty politics, there is a strong causal relationship between ruling parties and regime persistence. Ruling parties are found to manage elite conflict, electoral control, and political durability.

Generally, this conclusion has been reached based on the statistical analysis carried out on 135 regimes in the period between 1975 and 2000, revealing that multiparty elections posed no substantial impact on the survival of authoritarian regime. The case studies on Iran and the Philippines revealed that once regime leaders had done away with party institutions, conflict emerged triggering a viable opposition and a possibility of regime change (2004: 26).

Smith (2005) develops a theory of authoritarian origins and long-term durability based on the cross-national tests of four single-party regimes in Africa and Asia. The idea is to show the connection between initial conditions surrounding party consolidation and regime longevity. Smith finds that the regimes of Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Tanzania reveal that it is not the existence of single party rule that explains the long-term

viability of some regimes and vulnerability of others, but rather their origins. More specifically, the types of fiscal and political constraints parties face at their inception influence the strength and shape of the institutions they create to maintain themselves. Smith argues that the study of regime persistence and change can benefit much from an analytical focus on the initial stages of formation of single-party regimes.

Apart from a strong ruling party, a stable authoritarian rule in no small measure rests upon a strong state. As mentioned above, Levitsky and Way (2010) highlighted one specific domestic dimension of competitive authoritarianism, namely the strength of state organizations and governing-party. It has been found that if a ruling government has a firm control and authority over its constituent parts, the country is much more likely to transition to a stable authoritarian system. The ability of authoritarians to control civil society, prevent elite defection, co-opt or repress opponents, defuse or crack down on protest, and win elections rests to a large degree on the effectiveness of state coercive capacity. As Max Weber recognized, state power ultimately rests on the ability to coerce.

In case of competitive authoritarians, according to Levitsky and Way, *low-intensity coercion* is extensively employed, which comes in the form of surveillance to monitor opposition activity, low profile physical harassment of opposition activists, these include also 'nonphysical forms such as denial of employment, scholarships, or university entrance to opposition activists, use of tax, regulatory, or other state agencies to investigate and prosecute opposition politicians, entrepreneurs, and media owners'(p.58) Such type of coercion, unlike the so-called *high-intensity coercion*(e.g. violent repressions of mass demonstrations, imprisonment, attempted assassination of major opposition leaders), are of preventive nature, and in most cases make the use of the latter redundant. Case studies of Belarus, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Russia, Taiwan, and Zimbabwe show examples of governments establishing effective coercive apparatus, capable of managing and coordinating state organizations responsible for internal security and domestic order.

MacKinnon's (2011) analysis of 'networked authoritarianism' refers to an authoritarian regime's ability to adjust and take advantage of digital communications. In her view, China represents a classic case of the networked authoritarian state where the everyday life is under a firm control of the single ruling party, following, monitoring and manipulating online activities of its citizens, who are ceaselessly seeking refuge in the online chatter to speak out on the injustices and mistreatments of the government.

Following the recent uprisings in the Arab world, the Chinese authorities are already taking great measures to further enhance its control over 'virtual society' that resulted from

the Internet, and to guide public opinion in the 'healthy directions', an edict from February 19 speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao. The plan is to increase spending on domestic security – police, surveillance and the courts by 13.8 percent, which is to exceed the defense budget for the first time.⁷ Increasingly following the example of China, countries such as Russia and several other former Soviet states have reverted to the technique of Internet filtering in highly sophisticated and innovative ways. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Vietnam have brought in Chinese Internet specialists to show them how to block websites from the West (Kurlantzick 2010).

In fact, as Deibert and Rohozinski(2010) have argued, authoritarian governments, such as China and Russia, utilize three 'generations' of Internet censorship techniques. The first of these involves the use of Internet filtering and surveillance. The 'second generation' techniques are the creation of a legal environment in order to legitimize information control, authorities' informal requests to companies for removal of information, technical shutdowns of websites, and computer-network attacks. The 'third generation' techniques include warrantless surveillance, the setting up of 'national cyber-zones', state-sponsored information campaigns, and direct physical measures to silence individuals or groups. The latter two forms of technique, widely used around the world are in fact are more subtle and difficult to detect. Thus, *it is clear that new information technologies are tools not only in the hands of human-right campaigners but are equally taken advantage of by authoritarian governments as well.*

Barma, Ratner and Spector's (2008, 2009) research reveals that authoritarian regimes, such as China, Russia and Venezuela, have embraced engagement in the international system 'in specific ways that dually enable their success and shield them from pressures for domestic political reform'. A set of modern authoritarian states, defined as 'open authoritarian regimes', have established at the domestic level versions of state-controlled capitalism and retain a sturdy grip on power. Barma, et al. argues that authoritarian regimes apply a strategy of the so-called *sociopolitical leapfrogging* in order to keep the control over society. Such an approach entails cherry-picking the most successful social, economic and domestic political policies of democratic countries that are then applied at home in a step-by-step, closely controlled fashion (2009: 8-9).

⁷ Buckley, C. 'China internal security spending jumps past army budge', *Reuters*, March 5, 2011: <http://www.globalnews.ca/world/China+internal+security+spending+jumps+past+army+budget/4387864/story.html>

Slater (2010) ponders why have some of Southeast Asia's authoritarian regimes, such as Malaysia, proven so much more durable than others? He finds that one of the most significant factors of authoritarian durability is the prevalence of what he terms a 'protection pact': an elite coalition united in the view that authoritarian politics represents a necessary bulwark against social chaos. If elites strongly associate authoritarianism with stability and democracy with disorder, democratic transition becomes difficult if not entirely impossible' (p.280). Apart from these attitudinal sources of durable authoritarianism, and even more significantly, Slater, much like Brownlee, Geddes, Magaloni, Levitsky, and Way, points to institutional sources – strong state and party institutions – as even more crucial in causing authoritarian regime longevity, especially in case of Singapore.

Ezrow and Frantz (2011) point to the prevalence of a complex amalgamation of structural, geo-political, and historical factors giving birth to and sustaining various types of authoritarian regimes. They argue that military dictatorships largely present in Latin America are sustained by the prevalence of internal factors such as good financial bases, large levels of economic inequality, close alignment with upper and middle classes, dominance of weak political parties, which ensured that military is not subservient to any one party.

By inversion, single-party regimes, largely found in region of Asia and Eastern Europe, are sustained by domestic factors, which ensure that the military are subservient to the party, there are lower levels of economic inequality and there was the need to have a strong party to carry through economic program. Personalist regimes in Africa are said to have emerged and prolonged because of factors such as ethnic diversity, weak militaries, weak political parties and weak middle class (p. 49).

Some scholars emphasize factors such as political economy of oil in seeking to explain authoritarian regime endurance. It suffices to recall Huntington's (1991) argument that broad-based economic development with industrialization contributes to democratization, yet wealth from sale of natural resources, primarily oil, while benefiting state, does not necessarily contribute to democratization. Smith (2004, 2006), among others⁸, develops a two-path theory of oil-based authoritarian persistence, which reveals that there are two major trajectories in the oil-exporting world, one leading to durable authoritarianism and the other one producing vulnerable authoritarianism, oil-catalyzed authoritarian breakdown has a tendency to generate new authoritarian regimes.

⁸ see also Diamond 2008; Youngs 2010; Ulfelder 2007

The theory is tested against data for 21 oil-exporting developing countries. In the first outcome, authoritarian breakdown is prevented in already robust regimes, which took shape in the earlier years as a response to fiscal and political challenges, by adding patronage rents. The second outcome reveals the cases of regimes that are heavily shaped early on by oil revenues. Both of these differing trajectories of oil politics, it is argued, tend to protract authoritarianism in spite of economic crises. Thus *the politics of oil serves as an important factor of regime endurance*. It must be recalled that none of developing countries that derive more than 60 percent of their export earnings from oil and gas exports is a consolidated democracy.

Overall, above we saw the examples of authoritarian manipulation of democratic institutions, the role of the state. At the same time it suffices to question what role, if any, do the 'bottom up', societal factors, such as the opposition and civil society play in seeking to understand how authoritarian regimes last? Undoubtedly the strength of opposition forces is an important determinant of authoritarian regime durability. Levisky and Way (2010) argue that opposition strength is strongly related incumbent capacity; so that systematic coercion by incumbents, those that have strong coercive and governing party structures, weakens opposition movements, or even prevent their emergence in the first place, whereas in cases when incumbents were unable to prevent large scale elite defection or use coercion, 'protesters knocked down a rotten door' (p.69).

Moreover, scholars such as Magaloni (2007), Ezrow and Frantz (2011), Rose, et.al. (2011) note that some support of mass populace is still required in order for an authoritarian regime to maintain power, regardless of whether the society genuinely support the ruling regime, the most important goal is citizen mobilization in favor of the incumbent. Ezrow and Frantz (2011:56) stress that presence of certain *incentives* stimulate the masses to support the regime, these range from "financial like the distribution of government spoils, to security, like the belief that life is more secure with the dictatorship in power given that violence would likely erupt if the regime fell".

Howard (2002) notes particular weakness of civil and opposition forces in post-communist countries that are made apparent in the low levels of organizational membership in comparison with other regions. He delineates a number of significant factors that help explain the weakness of civil society in the region, namely the legacy of mistrust of communist organizations, the widespread disappointment with political and economic developments since the collapse of the state-socialist system. As a consequence, 'the new democratic institutions are neither rooted in, nor actively supported by, the larger population' (p.165).

On the impact of popular uprisings in a regime change, it suffices to recall Huntington's (1991) argument that these are 'seldom' successful in bringing about democratization. For Huntington, the elites reach agreement that 'democracy is the least bad form of government for their societies and for themselves' (p.316).

Thus, as seen from above, by the early 2000s the scholarly focus has somewhat shifted away from examining purely democratic transition to paying attention to the contemporary non-democratic regimes, forming a separate field of study on authoritarian longevity distinct from the research agenda of transitology. Moreover, the burgeoning literature on such types of regimes has already started to accumulate a plethora of empirical explanations for the internal dynamics of authoritarian regimes. Whereas most scholars embrace the domestic perspective on authoritarian regime dynamics, some ponder whether the reasons and mechanisms of a number of authoritarian regimes' staying power may be *external* in nature as well?

B. The external factors

Individual countries' democratic practices have increasingly come under a heightened global attention and scrutiny, especially following the rise of international election observation by late 1980s that sets certain standards for electoral democracy. At the same time, as Huntington (1991) notes, the changes in the foreign policies of the United States and the European Union have brought to the fore external democracy promotion as a global agenda. Authoritarian regimes were seeking to gain at least some international credibility as democrats. Carothers (2000) stresses that early 1990s were characterized by a growing international expectation of democratic behaviour, and that there was 'the need for democratic self-profiling on the international stage'.

Levistky and Way (2010) highlight in their research that the post-Cold War era, as the time period chosen for their study, was when the international environment of the 1990s was highly favorable to democracy, creating significant external constraints on autocrats, who were faced with a militarily, economically, and ideologically strong Western powers. Thus, it has been found that the level of linkage a country had with the West was one of the most important factors in seeking to explain why some regimes after the end of the Cold War became democratic and others reverted to competitive authoritarianism.

Based on the empirical evaluation of a large array of countries across the world, they found that the higher the level of linkage (economic, diplomatic, political and civil) a country

had with the West in turn increases the likelihood of a country becoming a functioning democracy. More precisely, a high level of linkage to the West means that fraud, corruption and abuse will come to the attention of the international media and that domestic constituency with personal and business ties to the West and opposition groups is being strengthened.

Of the countries under study not a single government with a high level of linkage failed to democratize. On the other hand, in cases when the linkage with the West was weak, domestic factors weighed much heavier on the outcomes. And that is where the second factor-domestic- comes into play, (*described above in section A.*), namely the organizational strength of the incumbent government.

Thus what has been found is that the post-Cold War international environment created a niche for competitive authoritarian regimes to emerge. In looking beyond the post-Cold War era, by the late 2000s, as Levistky and Way predict, “the global balance of power had shifted considerably...in this new context, external pressure for democracy may weaken in many parts of the world. Greater availability of assistance from China and other states may expand autocratic governments’ room for maneuver vis-à-vis Western powers...creating new possibilities for authoritarian rule- competitive or not” (p-364). Clearly the optimism of the post-Cold War years is not present in the non-democratic world of today.

Complementary to Levistky and Way’s analysis, Barma, et al. (2009) argue that the international ‘openness’ of the modern authoritarian countries and the current global context itself lead to the very sustainability of such regimes. Contrary to a conventional belief that internal pressures and contradictions within such regimes would lead to their demise, Barma, et al. argue that authoritarian regimes possess the ability to respond to those domestic forces by the means of their international engagement. “The very innovations we commonly assume as best-suited to promoting democracy are adeptly used by open authoritarian elites to perpetuate their resilience” (2008: 8). Such a form of involvement on the international arena is described to come in a form of ‘*selective interconnectivity* with the liberal international order’, when these regimes possess leverages of material and ideological nature to prefer their terms of such engagement. Authoritarian regimes of today are facing constraints as well as opportunities by being a part of the globalized international system.

Material leverages encompass, among others, integration into the global financial and capitalist system via dramatic sovereign wealth fund investments and more discreet corporate mergers, successful trade and industrial policies, use of the Internet and complex financial instruments. The ideological basis of modern authoritarian regimes takes on an

expansive definition of human rights, emphasizing political stability, human security, and economic development as vital and necessary conditions for political freedoms. At the same time, these regimes promote alternative ideology of absolute sovereignty and noninterference.

A report by Freedom House, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia, "*Undermining democracy: 21st century authoritarians*"(2009), notes that "today's authoritarian regimes are undermining democracy in updated, sophisticated, and lavishly funded ways. This new class of autocrats poses the most serious challenge to the emergence of an international system based on the rule of law, human rights, and open expression." Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and Venezuela are the focus of the report as geopolitically significant countries, which stand for a new brand of authoritarian regimes.

These regimes are said to apply new strategies and methods of control in and outside their states in order to hinder democracy and rule of law. In particular, the report unravels that the new authoritarians are using tight direct or indirect control over the most important news media to reshape the public understanding of democracy, promoting their own redefined version of the concept on the home front as well as expanding their media broadcasting overseas. These regimes not only physically, economically and technologically control the Internet, but also enlist pro-government commentators to subdue unwanted discussions, guide and manage political discourse.

The report further stresses that the new authoritarian regimes differ from traditional authoritarian regimes in that "today's authoritarians recognize that absolute control over information and economic activity is neither possible nor necessary...The priority is political control, and any societal actor that is prepared to acknowledge the supremacy of the ruling group—and comply with its directives when called upon—is free to operate with a certain amount of autonomy" (Freedom House, et. al., 2009)

Ambrosio (2009) posits that contemporary authoritarian regimes possess political interest in undermining the spread of democracy and this in turn is reflected in the kind of domestic and foreign policies they pursue. He puts forward five *strategies of authoritarian resistance* that are meant to be policies aimed at countering the external democracy promotion in order to guarantee regime endurance.

The strategies are to *insulate, redefine, bolster, subvert, and coordinate*. Authoritarians aim to ensure that external forces that strengthen and sustain regime opposition must be barred. Thus the strategy of insulation is applied that entails shielding a country from external democratic pressures, cross-border influences and processes; this involves taking measures

such as blocking access to the international media, pursuing an autarkic economic policy, or restricting foreign travel of nationals.

At the same time, the incumbents seek to create legitimacy for the regime by rhetorically claiming that any political system follows its own path based on its history and political culture. The strategy of redefining entails discrediting external and domestic criticism, for example by misrepresenting the nature of a political system by defining it as being democracy with its own adjective, such as ‘Islamic democracy’, ‘developmentalist democracy’, ‘managed democracy’. Another way in which authoritarians seek to silence its critics is to present culturalist arguments of inapplicability of ‘Western values’ to one’s cultural and historical background and to portray external criticism as “an attempt to ‘impose’ a form of government on a sovereign state and therefore akin to ‘imperialism”(p.22). Also in the light of the criticism, authoritarian regimes have been on the offensive in turn criticizing and questioning other countries’ commitments to liberal democracy.

Bolstering involves providing support for fellow like-minded authoritarian rulers, whereas subverting entails sabotaging democratic states by the means of economic, diplomatic, political, and military pressures. Coordinating means working with other countries to resist democratization (*The last three of the strategies are to be considered in Chapter 3*).

Thus as we have seen, Levistky and Way’s, Barma, et al., Freedom House and Ambrosio’s analyses radically critique and undermine the conventional transition-theory based assumptions, particularly the notion that international dynamics play little role whereas domestic structures and actors are paramount. The table below presents a simplified way to see internal and external factors of authoritarian regimes endurance based on the findings of the above presented literature. The very interplay of these factors brings about authoritarian regime stability.

CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES: SOURCES OF DURABILITY

General findings:

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Coexistence of democratic rules and autocratic methods (Levistky and Way 2002)	The prevailing global context

Tools of substantive control and manipulation of the representative institutions (Schedler 2006)	Level of linkage a country has with the West (Levisky and Way 2010)
Policy concessions and distribution of rents; cooperation mobilized through political institutions, i.e. legislature, parties and elections (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007)	A considerable shift in the global balance of power, which may weaken external pressure for democracy (Levisky and Way 2010)
Establishment of <i>credible</i> power-sharing arrangements with the elite (Magaloni 2008)	International 'openness' of authoritarian regimes; 'selective interconnectivity with the liberal international order' (Barma, et.al. 2009)
Ruling parties manage elite conflict, electoral control and political durability (Brownlee 2007)	Undermined international democracy promotion campaign
Effectiveness of state coercive capacity (Levistky and Way 2010)	Creating legitimacy for the regime; discrediting external and domestic criticism (Freedom House, et.al. 2009)
Taking advantage of digital communications (MacKinnon 2011)	Barring external forces that strengthen and sustain regime opposition (Ambrosio 2009)
Applying the strategy of 'sociopolitical leapfrogging' (Barma, et. al.2009)	
Prevalence of a 'protection pack' (Slater 2010)	
Political economy of oil (Smith 2004)	
Opposition strength is strongly related incumbent capacity (Levisky and Way 2010)	

The scholarship presented in this chapter is an emerging empirical research on the new forms of authoritarianism, quite distinct from the workings of conventional typologies of authoritarian rule, those found in the seminal works of Huntington (1970) and Linz (1975). The authoritarian forms presented by recent scholarship are conceptualized more or less as an intermediate category of regimes in between two general notions of electoral democracies on the one hand and closed authoritarian regimes on the other. The analyses offer an array of explanations for why autocratic regimes manage to hold onto power. Scholars question why some autocrats retain their grip on power in the wake of the third wave of democratization.

The analysis has sought to contribute to the existing body of in-depth comparative studies on authoritarian rule, not of a classic type, but of the somewhat altered kind that habituates fairly successfully in the democratization era of today. As we have seen from above, the domestic-level analysis of authoritarian stability largely focuses on the degree of strength of incumbent governments to thwart opposition challenges by utilizing specific instruments of control and manipulation of democratic institutions. Whereas, the international-level analysis of authoritarian endurance highlights the essential changing nature of the global context and the role that the West plays in either strengthening or weakening authoritarian rule.

While the basic level of analysis of authoritarian endurance remains largely domestic, external factors are increasingly gaining prominence. It is argued that much more scholarly attention should be directed to examination of international factors that are increasingly playing a far greater role in prolonging authoritarian rule. The notions such as “diffusion”, “contagion”, “gravity”, “demonstration effect”, “complex interdependence”, “convergence”, “emulation”, “socialization”, “learning”, “external anchoring” have been applied extensively in democratization literature to account specifically for possible mechanisms and patterns by which international factors may influence political outcomes in direction of greater democratization (see for example Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996; Whitehead 2001; Kubicek 2003; Brinks and Coppedge 2006; Simmons et al. 2006; Morlino 2012, Chapter 6). Could the same notions perhaps be applied to account for political outcomes of a different trajectory, namely authoritarianization of a regime? The idea is to entertain the proposition that the very forces that are meant to foster globalization, capitalism and increasing international and transnational interdependence and pressures are equally contributing to endurance of authoritarian rule.

According to Jackson (2010:103) “there is little written that explores the role of external factors and whether and how they influence regimes to maintain status quo, or ‘upgrade’, or strengthen authoritarian elements of their political systems”. In the words of

Ambrosio, the Middle East uprisings have shown that “not only do we have democratic-based demonstration effects and learning (i.e., one pro-democracy or anti-regime group being inspired by and learning from those that came before it), but we also have *authoritarian-based demonstration effects and learning*. The first thing that Egyptian authorities did, as a result of seeing what occurred in Iran and Tunisia, was shut down the internet.”⁹

Indeed, unlike the domestic-level analysis, the international dimension is still an underdeveloped field of study, not only in the realm of how international processes impact on the domestic setting but also how being an authoritarian impacts on a regime’s foreign policy behavior and international system in general. Based on the findings outlined in this Chapter, the next Chapter will continue to ponder the phenomenon of authoritarianism and take the discussion to the international level in order to examine how authoritarian regimes in turn impact, if at all, on the international politics.

⁹ Author’s email exchange with Thomas Ambrosio (*one of the leading contemporary scholars on authoritarianism; his analysis is covered extensively in Chapter 2 and 3*) following the Arab revolts, February 28, 2011

Chapter 3: Regime type and international behavior: focus on authoritarian states

In the previous chapter, we have outlined a framework of the study on non-democratic form of rule, examining closely the internal and external sources of authoritarian regime survival. By inverting the questions posed earlier about the internal and external mechanisms of survival of authoritarianism, in this chapter it suffices to question *how being an authoritarian impacts, if at all, on a regime's foreign policy behavior and international system in general?* Answering this question ultimately involves a reference in Part I to Democratic Peace Paradigm and ways in which it might help to shed some light on authoritarian regimes' international behavior examined in Part II of this chapter.

Traditionally, few international relations (IR) scholars have given much credence to the role of regime type as a variable in the study of international relations. Realism and especially neorealism, as leading IR paradigms, have paid somewhat scant attention to state characteristics, attributing much of causal importance in explaining states' behavior to the distribution of power in the international system. It is only with the emergence of the *Democratic peace paradigm* within the liberal IR theory that a number of significant findings, which suggest that a regime type has an impact on international behavior, have been thrown into the light. As a result scholars began paying increasing attention to the relationship among state structure, leaders' incentives, foreign policy behavior, and international outcomes.

Does the nature of a domestic political system help to determine the direction of a regime's foreign policy? In general, there is no doubt that domestic factors have an influence on the nature of foreign policy; in the words of Wendt (1999:2) "foreign policy behavior is often determined primarily by domestic politics". The difficulty lies perhaps in determining precisely the kind of linkages that bind these two theaters of policy making.

This part of the chapter begins with a review of the democratic peace debate's theoretical and largely empirical findings, which suggest that regime type indeed influences international behavior. Thereafter, the analysis moves on to generally focus on authoritarian states' international behavior through the prism of the democratic peace paradigm.

PART I. Democratic Peace Paradigm

Is there a relationship between domestic regime type and a state's propensity to go to war? The democratic peace theory, as a liberal approach to international security in the post-Cold War world, has contributed enormously to the international relations field, foremost in

bringing to the front the idea that domestic politics, beliefs and norms can serve as crucial determinants of state international behavior.

This part of the chapter reviews the literature concerning the major tenants of democratic peace proposition, its classical as well as current versions. There are three variants of the democratic peace proposition—the institutional, normative, and interdependence strands. The primary claim of democratic peace proponents is that democratic states do not wage war against each other, although a number of scholars have modified the claim to the proposition that “democracies are *less* likely to fight wars with each other.” Overall, the validity of the idea that democracies are more pacific continues to attract a great deal of scholarly interest and there is a continuous debate at large on this issue. There are a number of alternative explanations and claims of the thesis and it still remains to be seen which has proven to be the most convincing.

Development of the democratic peace thesis within the Liberal Internationalist thought

In the post-Cold War world, a particular strand of ‘Liberal’ approach to international security has come to the fore, receiving a wide support in the Western academic as well as political circles. The overarching argument of this approach constitutes a claim that democratic states tend not to fight other democratic states. The underlying basic rationale for this argument is the idea that democracy represents a fundamental source of peace.

The democratic peace thesis takes its origin in Immanuel Kant’s 1795 essay, *Perpetual Peace*. Kant was one of the leading Liberals of the Enlightenment, who had strongly believed that reason could bring freedom and justice in world politics and laid emphases on domestic sources of international peace. For Kant, achieving perpetual peace necessitated the transformation of individual consciousness, republican constitutionalism, and a federal contract between states to bring about the abolition of war, rather than its regulation.

In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant developed three Definitive Articles for a permanent peace, namely a) The civil constitution of every state shall be republican, b) The law of nations shall be founded a Federation of free states, c) The rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality. (Kant 1903:117) The second and third articles relate more broadly to a transnational order. On an important front, Kant had argued that the frequency of conflicts would be drastically reduced if the people, rather than the prince, were to decide whether or not the force must be used.

In the 1980s, Kant’s ideas on a ‘pacifist federation’ have been revived and reworked foremost by Michael Doyle. In a widely quoted article ‘Liberalism and World Politics’, Doyle

forcefully argues that liberal states have created a 'separate peace'. He thoroughly pondered a number of theoretical traditions of liberalism and contended that the Kantian legacy to the modern liberalism has been that liberal states exercise peaceful restraint in relation with each other, having "established a separate peace – but only among themselves." (Doyle 1986: 1156)

Doyle reformulated the three 'definitive articles' of Kant's theory of democratic peace into the contemporary forms of democratic representation, an ideological commitment to human rights, and transnational interdependence. He argues that these three elements help explain why democratic states are 'peace-prone'. Whereas non-democratic states tend to be 'war-prone' for the fact that such attributes are absent. (Doyle 1995: 180-4) Furthermore, Doyle noted that in their relations with authoritarian regimes and stateless peoples, liberal democracies are as aggressive as any other type of state.

Yale political scientist, Bruce Russett, has made an extensive contribution to the democratic peace thesis, further solidifying the theory's credibility. In 1993 "Grasping the Democratic Peace", Russett unravels and clarifies the theoretical debate backed up with a thorough empirical investigation that underpins the relative pacifism of democracies. In search of evidence to the idea of democratic peace, Russett goes back in time to the world of ancient Greece as well as non-Western nonindustrial societies. He points to the pervasiveness of *normative restraints* on conflict between democracies, as well as *structural/institutional constraints* on democracies' decisions to go to war as the two main explanatory variables for the phenomenon of democratic peace.

Noteworthy is Russett's emphasis on the fact that normative restraint as an explanatory model is the more powerful one; this conclusion is the result of measurements of norms by the absence of violence in domestic politics and the duration of democratic regimes, which Russett found to be somewhat more strongly associated with peace between democracies than was measure of structural/institutional constraints. According to Russett, "it is an empirical fact that democracies rarely fight each other. They do not need to fight each other because they can employ alternative methods of conflict resolution, and at less cost than through violent conflict." (Russett, 1993: 136)

Russett further argues that democratic values are not the only influence permitting states to avoid war; all states are concerned with power and strategic influences and democracies are no exception. Shared democratic values will contribute to a more peaceful world, but not by themselves eliminate all wars. Russett famously stressed 'vulgar realism's vision of war of all against all, in which the threat that other states pose is unaffected by their internal norms and institutions'. (Russett 1995: 175)

Thus, Doyle and Russett along with other scholars (Benoit 1996; Ray 1995; Rummel 1995; Rousseau et al. 1996, Bremer 1992; Gowa 1999; Maoz 1997) have elevated the democratic peace idea to an almost undisputable, law-like proposition, at the same time instigating a relentless debate about the validity of theory and its application in foreign policies of Western liberal-democratic states, particularly the United States, in the post-Cold War era.

The scholarly debates on validity of the paradigm

Generally, theorists tend to disagree about the theory's causal claims. The scholarly search for an explanation to why liberal democratic states are more peaceful continues. Moreover, there is at large a parallel scholarly debate about which definitions and interpretations of *democracy* and *peace*, as the theory's most basic concepts, to utilize in the light of the fact that there is generally a lack of universal standard for assessing these concepts. Thus the ongoing debate is largely conceptual and semantic in nature with little consensus yet established. Some critics have claimed that, "it is only intellectual suppleness – the continual tinkering with definitions and categories – that allows democratic peace theorists to deny that democratic states have fought each other". (Layne 1994: 40) Others contend that liberal proponents of the democratic peace "ignore their own arguments, and selectively adopt definitions of key variables so that data analysis yields the results they seek". (Spiro, 1994: 55)

Danilovic and Clare's (2007) recent theoretical and empirical re-investigation of the Kant's reasoning behind the liberal peace deserves a particular attention. Their basic claim is that the established democratic peace research has predominately focused on the representative nature of electoral democratic institutions and has left out to a significant degree even more crucial elements of Kantian republicanism, namely the respect for civil liberties and the rule of law, as a source of international peace. They draw a clear distinction between democracy and liberalism in theoretical terms and provide empirical analysis to validate such claim.

Undoubtedly, the debate over the concepts is highly significant and in itself constitutes a source of further thorough scholarly inquiry. Taking the phrase 'democratic peace' itself, one cannot help but note that it seems to indicate a direct link between peace and democracy, that to achieve peace, one has to look solely for something in democracies. Perhaps a clearer expectation would be to acknowledge that peace is linked to those norms and institutions that are widely associated with democracies.

Overall, however, *none of the criticisms of the paradigm voiced by opponents has been able to undermine the overarching argument of the democratic peace theory.* Instead what have emerged were distinct largely empirical studies seeking to further refine the theory's boundary conditions. The leading ones include the findings that reveal that democracies tend to win a disproportionate share of the wars they fight (Lake 1992; Reiter and Stam 1998); democracies are more likely to initiate wars against autocracies than are autocracies against democracies (Bennett and Stam 1998); and larger democracies seem more constrained to avoid war than are smaller democracies (Morgan and Campbell 1991)

At the same time various models in the general democratic peace scholarship have emerged, each laying emphasis on different factors to account for the plausible causal mechanisms at play. A number of scholars have considered the plausibility of reverse causality, i.e. suggestions that peace may induce or facilitate democracy, causing a spurious correlation between democracy and peace. (Thompson 1996; James, Solberg and Wolfson 1999; Rasler and Thompson 2004)

In a study undertaken by Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 2007) a clear distinction is emphasized between 'mature' and new or 'transitional' democracies, with former being in capacity to maintain a separate peace, while the latter likely to be even more belligerent. Other scholarly studies have been preoccupied with linking peace with factors other than regime type such as nuclear deterrence, the balance of power and especially trading ties.

Economic development is viewed to be a strong variable in seeking the causal relationship between democracy and peace. Gartzke (2007, 2010) calls on to view both democracy and peace not as independent variables, each causing the other, but rather as a product of common underlying forces, such as political transformation and especially economic development. He argues that overtime commerce rather than conquest has become a more preferential choice for developed countries. "Peace and democracy have come to an increasing portion of the globe not because humanity had been improved or institutions perfected but because economics has made most forms of state-based predation inefficient." (2010:75)

Clearly, one should not underestimate the forces of globalization and economic interdependence that draws together democracies and autocracies alike. What must be acknowledged is the nature of global economy today: the sources of economic productivity depend on institutions, property rights, and political stability, on a complex interconnected global economy. Other researchers point to societal factors such as civil-military structures and political communications as strong reinforcing elements of the link between democracy

and peace (Choi and James 2008).

Recent rationalist models in the democratic peace literature overrule the possibility that norms are a primary causal driving force behind the democratic peace, as has been argued forcefully by Russett, claiming that the norms argument is not fully supported empirically and that institutional and/or material factors are highly significant causal elements (Fearon, 1994; Bueno de Mesquita, et al, 1999, 2003; Schultz, 2001; Reiter and Stam, 2002). In particular, some findings reveal that domestic political institutions influence the choice between war and negotiation. By laying out a game theoretic model in which the perfect Bayesian equilibrium is found, scholars have demonstrated that democratic leaders in trying to avoid risking their political tenure in office are not so inclined to engage in a war unless they are confident of winning. Institutional explanatory model is claimed to be more comprehensive, accounting for all existing regularities that together taken to define the democratic peace.

Derived evidence shows that democracies devote more resources to their war efforts than do non-democracies. Hence, “since two democrats in a dispute both try hard, both can anticipate that, if they go to war, each will spend lots of resources in a risky situation where they are not disproportionately advantaged by their great effort. This is shown to incline democrats generally to negotiate with one another rather than fight”. Thus the incentives of leaders in war differ as a function of their institutional arrangements (Bueno de Mesquita, et al, 1999). Works by Gaubatz (1996), Smith (1996), Leeds (1999), Mansfield et al (2002) contend that democracies are more likely to comply with international agreements than authoritarian states. It has been argued that this has to do with the influence of democratic elections that make it costly for electorally minded leaders to breach international agreements.

Alternatively, a new wave of inquiry into the evolutionary expansion of the democratic peace has taken off – systemic analysis, looking at how changes in the proportion of democracy and the amounts of conflict in the global system are related. This has resulted in a number of empirical studies finding a positive relationship between global democracy and systemic peace (Crescenzi and Enterline 1999; Gleditsch and Hegre 1997; Maoz and Abdolali 1989).

Thus a tendency has developed to move beyond examining the dyadic democratic peace to systemic-level behavior. Particularly noteworthy is the dynamic model of the democratic community strength developed by Kadera, Crescenzi, and Shannon (2003). Such a model captures interplay of both normative and material/institutional factors that in tandem serve as strong causal forces behind the democratic peace. It is contended that the strength of the

democratic community is a function of how many democracies exist in the system relative to autocracies, the intensity of states' commitment to democracy, and states' material power. These variables are used and their aggregate measures established with the aim of examining the theoretical consequences of changes in the strength of the democratic community.

In theoretical and empirical terms, the authors of the model sought to demonstrate, among other phenomena, that when the democratic community is strong, new democracies are more likely to survive. The interesting element of the study is the authors' stress that their research brings to light a different view on democracy promotion as a policy goal of advanced western democracies that must be viewed as beneficial in the long term. Liberal governments are advised to combine the promotion of democracy with pragmatic goals of national economic and military strength. "The global democratic community plays a role in the survival of democracy, and in the long run it is this survival that is key to achieving a global democratic peace". (Kadera, Crescenzi, and Shannon 2003: 235)

The democratic peace paradigm's basic classical premises continue to entice further scholarly research, most of which tends to focus on the contradictions and paradoxes of the theory. Scholars increasingly cannot avoid viewing the theory directly or indirectly through the prism of contemporary wars and military interventions fought in the name of human rights and democratization. Ergo, the theory must inevitably account for *democratic war* as well, i.e. examining the 'resort to the use of force' on the part of democracies must become an intrinsic part of the field of study (for more on 'democratic war' theorizing see Geis, Brock and Muller, 2006).

However, the truth is that the various approaches accounting for the democratic peace theory are ill-equipped to face the task of explaining democratic war involvement. This promises to be a challenging endeavor for democracy theorists because the whole idea behind the democratic peace paradigm was to denigrate the core realism's assumptions about war as an essential part of an anarchic international system by seeking to elevate peace, cooperation, regime building as the essential features of the world order envisioned by liberal international thought.

Also challenging would be an attempt to construct a coherent overarching theory on democratic peace out of the established approaches and dispersed hypothesis-testing quantitative studies, accumulated over the course of the last 15 years. In the end, *there is yet much to be done to theory building on democratic peace, at the same time the paradigm itself has a high potential to greatly contribute to our understanding of the democracy-autocracy dichotomy.*

PART II. International behavior of authoritarian states as distinct?

What does the democratic peace paradigm reveal about the behavior of authoritarian regimes on the world stage? *How is being an authoritarian regime impact, if at all, on its international behavior and international system as a whole?* As seen from Part I the democratic peace hypothesis is focused almost entirely on the conflict proneness of democratic states. There are however a few corollaries that can be made for the study on authoritarian regimes' international behavior. Russett and Oneal (2001) put it simply by arguing that since authoritarian states are on the whole less constrained internally than democracies, they are more likely to engage in conflict.

Yet, some scholars remain unconvinced by conflict proneness of authoritarian states. Hill (2003:239) argues that "non-democracies do not necessarily engage in aggressive or uncooperative behavior internationally, however unpleasant they may be towards their own people...There is no convincing evidence which suggests that autocracies pursue their ends internationally through aggression, terrorism or general uncooperativeness".

A string of recent scholarship has focused on the so-called 'autocratic peace' that might resemble a 'democratic peace', in order to entertain a proposition that internal institutional checks on executive authority serve to moderate the actions of states and apply this to authoritarian regimes. They have used the insights about democracy and war generated by the democratic peace research in order to understand the conflict behavior of authoritarian regimes. Peceny et al. (2002) stress the need to differentiate between various types of authoritarian regimes in examining their conflict behavior, specifically between three – personalist, military and single-party dictatorships. It was found that specific types of authoritarian regimes are peaceful toward one another.

In particular, no two personalist dictators or two military regimes have gone to war with each other in the post-World War II era. On the other hand, single-party regimes have fought wars with one another during the same period under study three times. This finding was based on the analysis of four causal mechanisms that bring together regime type and war, namely institutional constraints, transparency, war fighting capabilities, and shared values. Therefore this line of research cogently argues for widening the scope of the research that deals with the impact of regime type on conflict behavior in order to bring the level of the impact of authoritarianism on foreign policy to the level of the study of the impact of democracy. Overall, the empirical analysis has found that there may be a separate peace among authoritarian regimes, yet not as robust as the one found among democracies.

Ishiyama, et.al. (2008) examine the conflict behavior of authoritarian states using

monadic analysis, i.e. whether states engage in conflict first, found in the democratic peace paradigm. The idea was to empirically test a proposition of whether a 'monadic authoritarian peace' exists? The methodology applied involved 101 states from 1980-2002 assessing the effect of authoritarian institutions on the likelihood of a state being the first to use violent force in a militarized dispute.

As a result of the tests, it was found that generally different types of authoritarian regimes do indeed impact on the conflict propensity of authoritarian states. These results contribute to the prevailing assumptions that authoritarian regimes with more institutional checks on executive authority are less likely to first use military force than are regimes that have fewer such institutional checks.

A more recent study by Weeks (2011) reviews the existing literature on the conflict initiation behavior of autocracies and ponders whether all authoritarian regimes are equally belligerent and in particular, 'what specific political institutions in dictatorships encourage leaders to initiate military disputes abroad, and why?' Weeks finds that there are in fact considerable differentiations in the predisposition of authoritarian regimes to initiate international conflicts depending on their differing types. This is accounted for by a number of factors, one of which concerns domestic audience and as Weeks argues against the grain of the conventional wisdom, 'many authoritarian leaders face powerful domestic audiences composed of regime elites', as in case for example of modern China, and Argentina and Brazil under their military juntas and must thus be aware of their preferences and interests in matters of war and peace. Weeks also differentiates between audiences' background experiences and socialization as in whether or not they are military or civilian-led regimes, with the former favoring the initiation of international conflict more frequently than their civilian counterparts.

A further critical factor to acknowledge is that in personalist regimes, such as North Korea or Iraq under Saddam Hussein, the leaders are unconstrained, i.e. do not face powerful domestic audiences, and therefore stand as the types of authoritarian regimes that are the most belligerent and a decision to go to war ultimately depends on the preferences and tendencies of these leaders themselves. Overall, Weeks' original theoretical framework greatly contributes to the study of comparative authoritarianism and conflict initiation in autocracies by highlighting significant differences prevalent between non-personalist authoritarian leaders and personalist dictatorships.

Beyond examination of conflict behavior of autocracies

Increasingly scholars have begun to embed the democratic peace research in a broader understanding of the influence of domestic political institutions on international interactions and at the same time, examine a corollary of the democratic peace paradigm in relation to authoritarian regimes. A strong and consistent relationship between a regime type and foreign policy behavior in both monadic and dyadic dimensions has been particularly noted by Leeds and Davis (1999). They go well beyond the democratic peace paradigm's main empirical finding that democracies do not fight each other and show that internal institutional structure of states impacts on the international decisions of their leaders well beyond military actions in a much broader and systematic way.

By means of an empirical testing of states' international behavior in the period between 1953 and 1978, their findings reveal that (a) states with more democratic characteristics tend to behave more cooperatively in the international system, (b) democracies tend to engage in high levels of cooperation and low levels of conflict with other democracies, (c) non-democracies exhibit less cooperative behavior in relation to democracies. Theirs is an attempt to widen the scope and breadth of the democratic peace theory and give much credence to the notion that the influence of regime type should be taken more seriously in the study of international relations.

It may appear as simple logic at first that democracies constrain their decision-makers and, conversely, that decision-makers in non-democratic states have fewer constraints on their actions. Increasingly scholars have begun paying more attention to authoritarian states' behavior internationally in relation to their internal dynamics.

Kinne's (2005) study applies poliheuristic theory of decision-making in autocracies. Based on the combination of rational choice and cognitive psychology literatures, he uses the poliheuristic theory in order to assess the nature of foreign policy decision-making in various types of authoritarian regimes. According to the poliheuristic theory largely developed by Mintz and Geva (1997) and Mintz (1993, 2004), in order for leaders to reach a difficult decision, they must filter through vast amounts of information available and they do so using shortcuts, or heuristics. The most effective such shortcut was found to be the 'non-compensatory' decision rule, by which leaders tend to select those options that are likely to lead to positive outcomes on a single dimension of concerns and in foreign policy field, the political dimension is always the non-compensatory one. Kinne's findings reveal that "leaders measure their success in political units, such as public approval ratings, and they are only able to turn their attention to other dimensions – e.g. economic or diplomatic concerns- after their

political concerns have been satisfied". He further argues that leaders in dictatorships will make foreign policy choices to deter those individuals who can oust them from doing so, minimizing the likelihood of a negative outcome. (2005:115).

The role of regime type in influencing foreign policy change has been noted by Corrales (2009) in his study of Venezuela's foreign policy under Chavez. He argues that regime type is a significant variable that has an impact on Venezuela's foreign policy aims and capabilities. Following the emergence of Chavez's authoritarian regime and particularly in the period 2004-2008, foreign policy has been directed, for one, towards strengthening ties with non-democracies, which represents a stark departure from past foreign policy aims of the Venezuelan state. In the past, the country has been known for a foreign policy tradition of promoting democracy and institution building. Furthermore, Corrales stresses that Chavez has 'monopolized' foreign policy decision making by excluding parties, certain business groups and technical experts from participation in policy formation and 'embedding' key institutions, such as the ministry of foreign affairs, the Central Bank, the military, with like-minded ideologues.

China, Russia, Iran, Syria and Cuba are Venezuela's strategic partners. Corrales argues that *ties with closed regimes is a foreign policy move expected of any autocracy because establishing political and business ties with similar regimes makes it easier to keep secrets than would be the case in relations with democracies, whose governments by definition are subject to domestic scrutiny.* For example, Venezuela's strategic partnership with Russia partly based on a common antipathy towards the US unipolarity and largely build on commercial interests (e.g. the Russian arms sale to Venezuela) (Katz 2006), had sprang up with a relative ease and in a short time span, following a number of personal meetings between Chavez and Putin.

A close examination of China's policies towards other authoritarian regimes is an even better instance, exemplifying the notion that dealing with authoritarian regimes may be relatively straightforward and unproblematic. China had established long-standing friendship with authoritarian states such as North Korea, Burma, Iran, Zimbabwe and Sudan based on vast investment and trading deals.

The respect for state sovereignty and noninterference has always been at the heart of China's foreign relations while it seeks to partner with countries that present the potential for profitability. Kurlatzick (2005), Barma and Ratner (2006), McGiffert (2009) and Breslin (2009) among others speak of China's rising soft power evident in its success in promoting an idea of the world where nations do not interfere in one another's affairs, while its authoritarian state-led economic development has become an appealing form of domestic

governance in the developing world. Scholars speak of a “China model” as a potential alternative to the democratic-capitalist model of development that couples rapid economic growth with social order and political control.

At the same time, China has been the leading source of unconditional foreign assistance to the regions of Latin America and Africa, where such arrangements were viewed as beneficiary and largely welcomed. At the same time, according to Freedom House (2009) such type of aid fosters unaccountable and corrupt models of governance across the developing world. Based as it is on the principles of noninterference, the type of foreign aid from China is being implicitly juxtaposed with the Western aid conditionality.

There is an emerging literature, which argues that authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes are ascending at the international stage and at the same time their growing international influence is a reality. Gat (2007) argues that today’s global liberal democratic order is faced with the challenge that stems from the rise of authoritarian capitalist great powers, exemplified by China and Russia that ‘may represent a viable alternative path to modernity’ for ‘there is nothing in the historical record to suggest that a transition to democracy by today’s authoritarian capitalist powers is inevitable’.

Kuchins (2006) in ‘Will the Authoritarians of the World Unite?’ points out that a deepening Chinese-Russian entente is an evident part of ‘a growing global ideological conflict between consolidating democracies and dictatorships’. Beijing and Moscow are said to be leading an authoritarian backlash that emerged as a result of the expanding US democracy promotion campaign and rhetoric, viewed by autocrats instead as an expansion of Washington’s geopolitical interests, and following the 2003-2005 ‘color revolutions’ in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

Among a recent string of research on the relationship between domestic regime and foreign policy behavior, Kagan’s (*see Chapter I*) is the most far-reaching, for he defines a regime type as a defining feature of international politics. In his view, the existing state of global politics has entered an era in which the global competition between democratic and autocratic governments will become a dominant feature of the 21st century world. For Kagan, the fact that countries like Russia and China are autocracies has great implications for the international system, and makes ideological struggles between great powers all the more probable in time to come. “True realism about international affairs means understanding that a nation’s foreign policy is heavily shaped by the nature of its government” (Kagan, 2008: 98)

Being significantly influenced by these three scholars, Ambrosio (2009) undertakes an in-depth study on authoritarianism’s resurgence and contends that the democratic world is

faced with a new world order in which autocratic regimes, such as Russia and China, are increasingly playing a bigger role and even serve as potential models and allies for countries under democratic pressures. Ambrosio takes further Diamond's argument on an apparent 'backlash' against democracy promotion on the part of authoritarian states (*presented in Chapter 1*), to contend that the recent 'authoritarian backlash' has a strong international dimension and consequences.

He argues that authoritarian regimes are actively resisting or countering the spread of democracy and this has become their domestic and foreign policy objective. Ambrosio argues that democratization literature, while increasingly paying significant attention to the international-level component to democratization process, tends to focus overly on "explaining democratic successes, rather than democratic failures, and democracy promotion, rather than autocratic opposition" (p.6). In other words, the democratization literature is inadequate in elucidating how authoritarians react to international democratic trends. His is an attempt to demonstrate that autocratic states are not passive actors of democratic trends. Quite on the contrary, he argues cogently that there is a need to move beyond this traditional perspective and examine how authoritarian regimes are *actively* (emphases added) confronting democratization at the international level.

In countering democratic norms, authoritarian regimes are said to be utilizing five strategies of authoritarian resistance – insulate, redefine, bolster, subvert, and coordinate. In the domestic sphere, the strategies of insulation and redefinition are used (*outlined more thoroughly in Chapter 2*). In the realm of foreign policy, authoritarian countries are said to employ the strategy of *bolstering*, i.e. supporting like-minded fellow authoritarians because an authoritarian regimes' survival in no small measures rests on the kind of political systems that dominate their neighboring countries. Thus, the support comes in a form of patronage, a mixture of economic, diplomatic, military and political aid. The examples of this according to Ambrosio are China's support for the military dictatorship in Myanmar, Venezuela's aiding of regimes in Bolivia and Ecuador and Russia's policy towards Belarus. In addition to bolstering fellow autocrats, an authoritarian state can also utilize the strategy of *subverting* democratically elected governments in case when a democratic reversal is likely. In this case, a mixture of economic, political and military pressures is applied, as was the case in Russia's policy toward Georgia and Ukraine following the color revolutions.

In outlining the strategy of *coordinating* Ambrosio refers to the work by Peceny et.al 2002 on 'autocratic peace', mentioned earlier in this chapter. A common interest in preserving their regimes, prompts autocrats to cooperate more closely among themselves. A primary

example of the way in which authoritarian states can unite is by creating international organizations in order to shield themselves from the possibility of a regime change. “Such organizations will seek to establish a regional order which makes it illegitimate to criticize these governments, interfere in the domestic politics of its member states, or promote regime change” (p.24). Organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) are clear examples of groupings of authoritarian countries seeking to undermine democratic trends in their regions. Clearly as a result of such efforts being undertaken by authoritarian regimes, the international environment can become increasingly favorable to the persistence of authoritarianism.

Ambrosio’s work is a valuable contribution to the general theory that seeks to examine the relationship between the international level, democratization, and authoritarianism, primarily for his emphasis on the need to expand the theorizing on external democracy promotion in order to acknowledge that ‘the politics of democratization are inherently interactive, as a contest between opposing forces and actors at the international level as well’ (p.202). Furthermore, Ambrosio’s claim throughout his analysis that authoritarian states are committed to challenge the norms of democracy promotion, led by Russia and China, as two ‘critical’ players is widely shared by a number of scholars. McFaul (2010) argues that authoritarian regimes of Russia, Iran and Venezuela are building up resources to allocate for exporting their forms of government; they “did not simply defend their own autocratic systems, but provided ideas and resources to other anti-democratic governments and social movements” (p.6).

Active autocratic resistance to the spread of democracy on international level that Ambrosio claims exists has been closely scrutinized by Burnell (2010), who observes what he denotes as ‘autocracy promotion’, as either fairly recent global phenomena or simply an acknowledgement that such political developments are indeed taking place. An inclusive definition of autocracy promotion according to Burnell encompasses “deliberate attempts to influence a regime in an anti-democratic direction, the diffusion of authoritarian values across borders and the borrowing or imitation of foreign models of authoritarian rule and their institutions, which may happen with or without the active encouragement of the authoritarian source. In international forums, assisting other regimes’ efforts to counter the pressures and inducements to democratize that come from international democracy promoters. Doing ‘business as usual’ with a regime in a way that gives it greater freedom to determine its political trajectory vis-à-vis all its international partners.” (2010(a): 6)

Important questions abound, however: What the international promotion of

authoritarian rule actually comprises? How extensive it is and how it is related to the idea of exporting autocracy? For Burnell the difficulty in answering these questions stems from the fact that governments and politics of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes such as China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Venezuela, significantly differ among themselves. In addition, under a considerable doubt is the idea that these regimes are sincerely seeking to tilt other states' regimes toward an authoritarian mode of governance; are they not rather seeking to promote their own national and commercial interests? Could it possibly be the case that 'the consequences for upholding or increasing authoritarian rule elsewhere are largely incidental'? Burnell acknowledges that autocracy promotion in more general terms does exist, and calls for the need on the part of democracy promotion community to take seriously the notion that political authoritarianism and semi-authoritarianism could spread across borders by varied ways or means described in his concept of autocracy promotion.

Ambrosio (2010) develops a notion of 'authoritarian diffusion', similar to Burnell's concept of 'autocracy promotion', by applying a broader literature on diffusion and on democratic diffusion in particular to authoritarian outcomes. The idea of diffusion in this context, its non-coercive variant, rests on the assumption that authoritarians are not undertaking attempts to forcibly impose their form of government on other states, but rather they take a defensive stance to protect regime sovereignty and ensure that West's regime change endeavor is delegitimized.

The two central elements of authoritarian diffusion constitute *appropriateness*, i.e. an increase in the legitimacy of authoritarianism would lead to the spread of autocratic norms and practices throughout the international system, and *effectiveness* of autocratic forms of government, i.e. authoritarian form of development serving as a model for other countries to emulate. In addition, there are contributing factors at play that enhance authoritarian diffusion: geographic proximity, linkage, international organizations, major power prestige, and reference group of countries which have adopted a behavior being diffused. Generally Ambrosio's theorizing about possible phenomena of authoritarian diffusion taking place and his general ideas about the shifts in international system and the possibility of the beginning of a new reverse wave of democratization, while highly contestable, nonetheless serves as an important venue for future research.

Ambrosio's insights are echoed in Chestnut's (2010) study of diffusion in an authoritarian setting. She refutes the 'diffusion' hypothesis of democratization that authoritarian regimes are less capable of 'learning' and adapting. Political agency, diffusion and international influence while favoring the pro-democracy movements, can also contribute

to the maintenance of authoritarian stability. China is an example of unexpected adaptability; since 1989 the leaders of PRC have sought to gather information and learn the causes of instability of other authoritarian regimes and adapt policies to counter similar problems at home. Thus, theoretical arguments about democratic diffusion must be re-conceptualized to include what Chestnut denotes as 'counter-diffusion' – the acquisition and employment of anti-democratic repressive strategies on the part of the state, i.e. how the authoritarian regimes respond to the transnational diffusion of democratization strategies.

Bader *et.al.* (2010) scrutinizes a prevailing proposition that non-democratic regional powers are to be blamed for the persistence of entrenched autocratic regimes in their neighborhood. Through an application of a rational choice analysis to the country cases in the regional environments of Russia and China, it is argued that indeed autocracies strongly prefer autocratic neighbors over democratic ones, yet at the same time support for autocratisation abroad is unlikely should there arise an expectation that it could lead to political instability at home or threaten national security in some way.

As seen from above, existing theoretical and empirical assessments of authoritarianism's international outreach is yet very scant, focused as it is predominantly on the roles of China and Russia, as "the two main suspects of being foreign sources of influence on authoritarian maintenance, revival or return" (Burnell 2010(a): 1). Scholars across fields of comparative democratization and international relations have grown increasingly engaged in a widespread discourse of an emerging speculation that non-democratic forms of rule are now widely resurgent and even contagious across borders, which in turn raises concerns about the implications for the spread of democracy and international democracy support.

Burnell and Schlumberger (2012) open up a venue for further research on "the influence of international politics on national political regimes", examining whether serious competition in the form of autocracy promotion is plausible given the current state of global democratization and the present conditions of international democracy promotion. They claim that "the global rule seems to be a remarkable resilience of non-democratic rule, and a new trend towards the (re-) authoritarianization of political regimes." (p.3) One expects in the future an expansion of analytical research that deals with international determinants of national political regime developments.

IR scholarship has been faced with a fundamental question of determining how much influence, and what kind of influence, the domestic political context exerts on a state's international behavior. How and in what ways the domestic environment impinges on foreign policy? Hardly any of the prevailing schools of thought completely disregard the domestic

sphere of foreign policy in international relations. Even neo-realists acknowledge that international dynamics cannot explain everything.

The overarching inquiry in this chapter revolved around the question of how being an authoritarian impacts, if at all, on a regime's foreign policy behavior and international system in general? The idea was to initially delve into the Democratic Peace Paradigm's essential premises and weave out the ways in which it can possibly shed some light on the international behavior of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes.

We have seen in *Part I* that the democratic peace debate is focused almost entirely on how democratic institutions affect the conflict proneness of states, the relationship between democracy and conflict behavior, allocating a somewhat residual sub-study to authoritarian regimes' conflict behavior. The study on the conflict proneness of authoritarian states has revealed that indeed there are variations in the conflict behavior of certain types of authoritarian regimes, pointing specifically to the difference between non-personalist authoritarian leaders and personalist dictatorships.

Presented in *Part II* is the literature that takes seriously the impact of internal dynamics on authoritarian states' international behavior. *General findings that link foreign policy behavior of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes to the logic of their domestic politics tells us that authoritarian regimes generally seek to:*

* establish closer ties with other authoritarian regimes, providing a mixture of economic, diplomatic, military and political aid to bolster their regimes
* promote an idea of the world where nations do not interfere in one another's affairs
* champion authoritarian state-led economic development as a model of domestic governance
* take a defensive stance to protect regime sovereignty and ensure that West's regime change endeavor is delegitimized
* actively resist or counter the spread of Western liberal democracy

Clearly foreign policy behavior of authoritarian regimes that remain in a substantial number across the world should be subjected to much more systematic examination and not only as far as their conflict behavior is concerned. The study that cuts across the disciplines of

international relation and comparative politics examines the question of how political regimes shape foreign policy. This is a new underdeveloped field of research that significantly points to the inevitable effect of domestic politics on foreign policies of states.

Overall, what we have seen in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 is how a string of recent research on authoritarian regimes cogently argues for a renewed attention to be paid to the sustainability, resilience and adaptability of such regimes in the context of a democratic recession and changes in the international system. The subsequent chapters will focus on Russia as a case study. As has been mentioned in the Introduction, Russia has specifically been chosen for this analysis. The nature of the prevailing regime in Moscow will be examined and defined within the parameters of the theoretical discussion relevant for this analysis.

“At present, there is no scenario for Russia without the great survivalist Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin”¹⁰

Chapter 4. Russia’s authoritarian political regime: sources of resilience

We have seen in Chapter 2 that a distinct direction in scholarship of comparative politics had emerged in late 1990’s in order to examine political regimes that coupled formal democratic institutions with authoritarian practices. Russia is one of the field’s major case studies. Overall, the case of Russia has been described, as one where there was an initial democratic opening, with relative pluralism and national elections in place, yet what has emerged over time was a new form of authoritarianism. *This analysis aims to contribute to the knowledge accumulated on Russia and in particular widen the understanding of how internal and external factors influence the political situation in the country. Chapter 5 that follows will examine further how Russia’s political system helps craft its foreign policy course.*

Chapter 2 introduced notions of ‘hybrid regime’, ‘semi-authoritarianism’, ‘disguised dictatorship’, and ‘competitive authoritarianism’, among others, created with the aim of scrutinizing a new face of authoritarian rule. All of these concepts have been and are used to portray Russia, which shows that characterizing a specific nature of the prevailing Russian political regime as ‘authoritarian with adjective’ has already become generally accepted. Indeed, in the Western policy and academic circles, a widespread belief prevails that Russia is not a democracy, even though a debate still continues on whether or not it ever had been a democracy during the time of Russia’s first president, Boris Yeltsin (1992-1999).

Russia’s post-Soviet transition was characterized by ever-shifting process with the early 1990’s having seen attempts to establish a new political system. During that period, developments in Russia were viewed by a majority of scholars through the lens of democratization, and categorized as a case of a “protracted” democratic transition (McFaul, 1999)¹¹. Yet what Yeltsin had put in place could hardly have been dubbed a liberal democracy, rather a modest political opening with multiparty elections.

A recent study by Petrov, Lipman and Hale (2010) treats Russia as an ‘overmanaged democracy’, a type of hybrid regime with a highly centralized state control with democratic institutions being systematically replaced with a whole network of *substitutions* to serve some of their functions, created by and dependent on the central authorities. It is argued that this type of political system differs from other types of hybrid regimes in that there is a higher

¹⁰ Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, “Putin and the Uses of History”, *The National Interest*, January 4, 2012 (accessed January 29, 2012)

¹¹ See also for example Colton and Hough (1998); Aron (2000); Nichols (2001)

degree of centralization, less space for political competition and the substitutions of democratic institutions are its central elements. By means of establishing a “non-participation pact” with society, the ruling Russian government seeks to reap maximum benefits for itself out of democracy, primarily with the aim of legitimizing state authority.

However, judging by the state of current political developments taking place in Russia, it is quite clear that it is no longer ‘in transition’ to democracy as many democratization scholars had initially hoped for and *thus a tendency to conceptualizing the nondemocratic regime of Russia through the prism of democracy should altogether be abandoned.*

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical analysis of contemporary non-democratic regimes, examining domestic and external sources of their resilience. In order to show how this is so, this part of the present analysis will examine at length *the internal and external causes of why and how an authoritarian regime in Russia lasts?* On the domestic level, it suffices to ponder the nature of a political regime in Russia and specific factors that since the early 1990s have contributed to solidification of authoritarian trends, with a particular focus on the presidency of Vladimir Putin as the most decisive figure in the Russian political arena to date, surrounded and supported by a elite group that defines and sets the rules of the political game.

This study chooses to speak of “*the Putin regime*” in order to emphasize the significance that actors and the system play in an amalgamation in the case of Russia. Russia’s political system is based on the leadership of a specific autocrat, surrounded by a circle of an elite group that defines and sets the rules of the political game. It is argued that *leadership personality plays a quite significant role in the context of any discourse on Russia’s current political system.* Making all the more relevant the question of who governs the country? At the same time, the very notion of a political ‘regime’ as a system of governance, utilized throughout this study, *highlights the importance of posing the question of how a country is governed, which crucially involves a discussion that would encompass a wider set of determinative factors apart from incumbent state leadership, to include the domestic institutional setting, policies and rules.*

Furthermore, it will be questioned: how, if at all, do international politics and external environment foster and enhance authoritarianism in Russia’s domestic political setting?

Part I. The domestic factors protracting an authoritarian rule in Russia

A consolidated state under the Putin regime

The main studies on authoritarianism covered in Chapter 2 put much more emphasis

on the ruling elites' capacity to withstand opposition challenges and foster regime endurance. What kinds of instruments are at the disposal of the ruling authorities in Russia in order to survive in office?

The 1990s period under Boris Eltsin's presidency in Russia were characterized as a time of instability, organizational weakness, sharp economic decline, and a dramatic transformation of political and economic institutions. The economy saw 24% decrease by 1993 and further 40% by 1996¹². Weak legal and political institutions were prevailing alongside a massive privatization of state assets in the 1990s, causing a rise in income inequality and a widespread dissatisfaction among the public. In a public opinion surveys of 1991-1995 period, when asked to characterize the political situation in the country, 51% of Russians thought that anarchy was in reigns, and when asked: '*What is more needed for our society now: order or democracy?*', more than three-quarters gave priority to order and only 10% to democracy (Levada, 1995).

Observers stress that state cohesion was very low and central control was ruptured following the collapse of the Soviet state, economy and Communist Party as the central pillars of control and order. According to Kahn (2002) and Stoner-Weiss (2006) this has in turn triggered regional leaders to act semi-independently of central government, setting up and administering their own policies and laws concerning for example tax collection and privatization, leading to sub-national noncompliance with Moscow on a quite extensive scale.

The beginning of the new millennium, with Vladimir Putin's arrival to executive office in Moscow, has witnessed a dramatic change in the political climate in Russia. Following what has been described as a successful counteroffensive military campaign in Chechnya, Putin's approval rating soared in the wake of the 2000 presidential campaign. At the same time, Russian voters were found of Putin's youth and energy and for them he represented an end to the volatile and unpredictable Kremlin politics. He was regarded as a strong and determined leader. Yet another important factor contributing to Putin's victory was the lack of an effective opposition. The Community Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) was in the lead among the opposition parties in electoral politics, yet it has failed to secure enough votes for its leader, Gennady Zyuganov (McFaul, 2001).

From the very beginning of his first term in office, Putin's domestic political and economic agenda was directed at strengthening centralized authority and maintaining control across the vast country. "Russia needs strong state power and must have it...strong state

¹² World Bank World Development Indicators, at www.worldbank.org/data

power in Russia is a democratic, law-based, capable, federal state,” Putin underlined¹³. In a way, Putin’s course of action was necessary to prevent further state capture by powerful elites, who had accumulated wealth and power under Yeltsin to set the rule of the game in the economy. Putin has brought the economy under state control, by nationalizing key economic sectors, primarily the energy industry, by gaining full control of Gazprom, the monopoly gas company that was previously semi-autonomous (M Goldman 2008: 136).

At the same time Putin sought to reconfigure the relationship between the state and businesses by fighting the most famous of oligarchs: Berezovsky, Khodorkovsky, Gusinsky and Lebedev. Putin sought to ‘liquidate the oligarchs as a class’, by using state power to take away their assets, and filing civil and criminal actions against them. As a result, Russian billionaires “had become subjects of a regime with the will to deprive them of their wealth if they stepped out of line politically” (Rose, et.al 2011: 47)

Since 1999 the Russian economy averaged 7 percent, characterized by budget surpluses, twentyfold increase in the stock market, the eradication of foreign debt and the accumulation of massive hard-currency reserves – at \$598 billion in 2008, the third largest in the world after China and Japan. The rise in world oil prices accounted for half of Russian growth during this period. It was a part of the BRIC group of the world’s fastest-growing emerging markets (the others are Brazil, India, and China). During this period of relative economic prosperity, growth spread to both the middle class and the poor. Unemployment went down by half from 12.9 percent in 1999 to 6.3 percent in 2008. Overall the society had expressed support for the state’s policies and Putin’s popularity among the public has been steadily growing.

At the same time McFaul and Stoner-Weiss (2008) emphasize that public safety, health, corruption and the security of property rights have not shown any real change relative to Eltsin’s era. Under Putin, the frequency of terrorist attacks in Russia has increased, overall murder rate also has increased, and there are relatively more casualties in the ongoing Chechen conflict than there was prior to 1996. In terms of public health, the data shows that government health spending has not increased substantially over the course of last decade; there is decreasing fertility and increasing mortality rate that has worsen since 1998, life expectancy has declined, with no-communicable diseases being the leading cause of death.

The fact that these negative trends did not lead to a widespread social unrest is largely attributed to the Putin regime’s success in creating in a relatively short period of time a strong

¹³ Vladimir Putin, “Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheletiy,” *Nezavisimay Gazeta*, December 30, 1999

state power that involved a heavy reliance on coercive organizations – such as the military, the police, and the secret police. The Russian state coercive agencies are known as ‘power ministries’, and ‘siloviki’ are officials who run those power ministries, being former members of the Soviet secret police, the Committee of State Security (KGB) and other security services of the state. Thus, the ruling authorities have at their disposal a sizeable security apparatus with an objective of aiding Putin in restoring the authority and effectiveness of the federal government. This in turn has brought into question the future of democracy in Russia under Putin; some were pointing out that Putin was indifferent to democratic principles and practices...“believing that Russia might have to sacrifice democracy in the short run to achieve ‘more important’ economic and state-building goals” (McFaul, 2001: 344).

Having won re-election with more than 70 percent vote in a popular ballot in 2004, Putin has continued his agenda of consolidating the Russian state, creating a ‘*strong political vertical*’, strengthening a sense of Russian national pride, monopolizing control over major economic assets and restricting autonomy of regional governors by creating seven supra-regional district administrators accountable to the president; five of the seven district governors were generals. As has been noted, by this time, “Russia’s experiment with open politics was over”. (Fish, 2005: 1)

By the end of his second term in office in 2008 Putin has managed to build a non-competitive political system with pro-presidential United Russia party in place as the leading political party.

The United Russia party originated in 2001 as the merger of three out of seven political parties represented in the Duma: Unity, Fatherland, and All Russia. We have seen in Chapter 2 from the literature on the role of dominant parties in authoritarian states that such parties serve as one of the essential tools of control by autocrats over their regimes. Since its inception and electoral triumph in both 2003 and 2007 (securing a constitutional majority in the chamber, gaining 315 seats out of 450 parliamentary seats) United Russia became the principal party in Russia. It became one of the major instruments of rule by the Kremlin – what Russians call ‘the party of power’ (*partiya vlasti*) and some Western scholars dubbed ‘a true dominant party’ that constitutes a mutual investment by Kremlin and regional elites as a way to overcome their commitment problem (Reuter and Remington 2009:521).

The United Russia presented a useful device for the Kremlin because it ensured ‘solid, consistent, reliable majorities in legislative voting, both in the Duma and in regional legislatures’, represent the Kremlin in time of elections as made up of followers of Putin to raise further the party’s popularity (Remington 2010). The party relies heavily on patronage,

managing the careers and ambitions of politicians. Other parties' existence and formation was made difficult by the number of legislative provisions on political parties initiated by Putin, those that ensured tough registration requirements and other administrative restrictions, as well as large-scale manipulation of elections in order to ensure that the dominant party wins by large margins. As a result, no opposition party today presents a real challenge to the regime. Thus the ascendancy and dominance of United Russia has signified an emergence of a new political system, in which there is a leading party that serves as one of the multiple instruments of vertical power created by Putin.

The centralized power vested in Putin and his close associates holds together a quite cohesive state apparatus, a firm grip on the economy, while at the same time paying much attention to disguising authoritarian personalized rule as democracy to the Russian public. In 2005, Putin emphasized in his State of the Nation address to parliament that Russia 'will decide for itself the pace, terms and conditions of moving towards democracy.'¹⁴ There has been much rhetoric on the part of the Russian leadership stressing that the country is set on the democratic course of its political development, a form of democracy that was termed 'managed' and then 'sovereign'.

The latter concept emerged in 2006, following a series of publications and speeches by Vladislav Surkov, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office. Most notable is Surkov's article entitled "Nationalization of the Future. Paragraphs *pro* sovereign democracy", where sovereign democracy is defined as "the way of political life in society when the authorities, their institutions and their acts are elected, formed and directed only by the Russian nation through its diversity and integrity in order to provide material prosperity, freedom and justice for citizens, social groups and for people the nation consists of" (Surkov, 2006). Ergo, the idea was that Russian citizens themselves determine the form and functioning of their country's political system.

Sovereignty as national independence is not merely seen as a right, in the view of the Kremlin, it is represented as a capacity that stands for economic independence, military strength and cultural identity. Moreover sovereignty incorporates another key element that should be emphasized, that of a 'nationally-minded' elite. Thus the sovereign is defined not as the people or the voters but the reason embodied in the consensus of the responsible national elites.

¹⁴ BBC News, "Putin deplors collapse of USSR", 25 April, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4480745.stm>

Medvedev's modernization objectives

When Dmitry Medvedev replaced Putin in 2008 as Russia's third president, 'sovereign' democracy rhetoric has somewhat subsided and has been replaced to a large measure with the rhetoric of strengthening the rule of law, addressing endemic corruption and modernizing the country. 'No European country can boast of such universal disregard for the law as can Russia', Medvedev has emphasized (quoted in Edwards 2009). In fact specific in case of Russia is a widespread prevalence of the use and abuse of administrative resources at the expenses of formal frameworks of governance.

Medvedev initiated and promoted a new anti-corruption legislation shortly after his inauguration as president. He declared corruption as a key threat to Russian modernization and social stability and announced anti-corruption policy as one of the top priorities of his presidential program.

Addressing endemic corruption is critical to improving the society's trust and confidence in the governance system and boosting foreign direct investment. Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Russia 147 out of 180 countries, noting an eight-year downward trend. An analysis undertaken by Frye (2010) reveals that given Russia's high levels of education and relative wealth, its corruption ratings are worse than expected. Reducing corruption and promoting the rule of law are two interrelated problems of technical and political nature. On a more optimistic note, Frye argues the country has made considerable progress in modernizing the technical aspects of its legal institutions over the past 20 years.

The idea of modernizing Russia has previously featured widely in Putin's public speeches and it was with the arrival of Medvedev that the idea has become a central policy agenda of development. In his 2009 liberal manifesto "*Go Russia!*"¹⁵ Medvedev stressed that Russia is lagging behind developed countries in science, technology and economics. He proclaimed five priorities to achieve the goal of modernization of Russia: improve energy production and transportation efficiency, raise nuclear technologies to world's standards, upgrade information technology by using "supercomputers" and other equipment, develop the country's ground and space infrastructure by putting new space satellites into orbit, become a leader in the production of medical equipment and medicines for the treatment of various diseases. 38 major modernization projects are planned to be undertaken in these five

¹⁵ Medvedev, Dmitry (2009) "Go, Russia!" Published 10 September, available at: http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/09/10/1534_type104017_221527.shtml

priority spheres as part of Medvedev's latest drive to liberate Russia from what he dubbed a 'humiliating' reliance on oil and gas exports, and to revive the greatness of a nation traditionally known for scientific and technological achievements.

Building a 'Russian Silicon Valley' as one of the primary objectives with the Skolkovo Innovation Center to be devoted to innovation in communications and biomedicine, as well as in space, nuclear, and information technologies. Apart from the Skolkovo project, the president has allocated more than \$10 billion for tech investment and in his 2008 blueprint for the Russian economic, "Strategy 2020", called for tech sector to make up 15 percent of exports or 10 percent of GDP by 2020, which at the moment accounts for nearly 1.1 percent of GDP. (Matthews and Nemtsova, 2010: 26) His modernization agenda represents a top-down state-led approach to development and is restricted to a technological progress. It appears that Medvedev has aimed to establish a centrally planned high-tech, 'knowledge' economy. This stands as an ambitious, yet an extremely arduous task and a considerable number of observers firmly doubt appropriateness of developing a competitive nanotechnology industry for a country at Russia's stage of economic development.¹⁶

State-sponsored modernization cannot be achieved overnight and it requires serious political will to implement reforms and provide incentives in order compensate for the negative investment climate. It is in no way an easy objective to move from an oil and gas economy to one that can successfully compete in nanotechnologies. The truth is that changing the Russian economic climate will take a long time and much effort on the part of the state in order to make significant strides forward in modernizing its economy.

Russia represents a capitalist economy that is more or less open to private entrepreneurship, as far as its 'nonstrategic' sectors are concerned. Russia's international scores for economic, competitiveness, business friendliness and transparency and corruption remain low, while the role of government in the economy and business sector is excessive. Russia has sought to integrate into the world economy on its own terms with the energy sector assuming the leading position in terms of development.

In its latest Global Competitiveness report, the World Economic Forum (2011) ranked Russia in 66th place among the world's most competitive nations, which is a drop of 15 places since Medvedev became the president in 2008. The report stresses that despite the overall macroeconomic stability achieved, the most substantial obstacles to Russia's competitiveness are its weak institutional framework and the low efficiency of its goods market. Russia is

¹⁶ see for example Richard Connolly, "State-led Modernization in Russia: The Nanotechnology Industry", *Russian Analytical Digest*, #105, 5 December 2011

advised to take advantage of its main strengths, namely its 'high innovation potential, its large and growing market size and its solid performance in higher education and training' (p. 6).

In 2009 Russia suddenly faced a sharp fall of 8 percent of its economic output, oil price decrease and a reversal of capital flows and is believed to be one of the worse affected by the global economic crisis (Guriev and Tsyvinski, 2010). Letting some to claim that Russia is now a 'post-BRIC', i.e. it has lost much of its pre-economic crisis self-confidence (Judah, et.al. 2011:57).

Nonetheless, according to Aslund, et al. (2010) Russia has dealt quite successfully with the economic crisis and is unlikely to face significant financial problems in the foreseeable future. Its current account surplus remains impressive and its international currency reserves, at \$436 billion in mid-March 2010, still remain the third largest in the world. It is in the possession of substantial assets – natural resources and human capital. Oil revenues allowed the government to pay off much of public wage arrears and its foreign debt. However, it is argued that the country is facing vast structural challenges in the long run (p.260). The Ministry of Economic Development of Russia forecasted that between 2010 and 2013 Russia will require about \$1 trillion in order to implement ambitions plans to restore crumbling Soviet infrastructure such as railways, schools and hospitals and the state budget can only cover a third of that sum (Matthews and Nemtsova(b), 2010:26).

Undoubtedly, should world oil prices remain high, the Russian government may choose to delay restructuring the economy. As a result, the country will continue suffering from a 'resource curse'¹⁷ that impinges to a large extent upon needed socio-economic reforms. Thus what remains of utmost importance is introduction of economic policies aimed at diversification of economy away from its heavy dependence on production and export of commodities. Although Russia is not as an extreme petrostate: even though energy presently accounts for two-thirds of Russia's exports, it is not more than one-fifth of its GDP. According to World Bank's forecast, the real GDP in Russia in 2011 stood at 4%, for 2012 the projection is that the GDP will reach 3.8%¹⁸ as the ruling elites continue to grapple with the consequences of the global financial crisis.

Medvedev's objectives of deregulating business and promoting innovation were very promising. However, as most scholars concur, modernization requires building effective

¹⁷ The term is used to describe a paradox that countries rich in natural resource tend to have less economic growth and worse development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources. Auty, Richard M. (1993) *Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse Thesis*. London: Routledge

¹⁸ The World Bank in Russia, *Russian Economic Report*, # 26, September 2011, available at <http://www.worldbank.org.russia>

political and economic institutions with substantive – not merely rhetorical claims – to improving the rule of law, ensuring protection of property rights, and lowering corruption. Medvedev himself has claimed that he is “a supporter of the values of democracy in the form that humanity has developed them over the last few centuries. My definition of democracy as the power of the people is in no way different from classical definitions that exist in all countries” and acknowledged that “without political freedom it would be impossible to reform successfully.”¹⁹ Medvedev has been praised for some notable achievements in the legal sphere, tax reform and attempts to introduce more political plurality in Russia. However, in the course of last six years since Medvedev’s grand modernization plan was announced, little progress has been achieved in implementing the priority objectives.

There were those who had regarded Medvedev as a true reformer, whose innovative ideas have come across a strong resistance on the part of those elites in the government loyal to Putin. However, *it is argued that there is no substantial difference in policy between Putin and Medvedev; both have aimed for a renewal of structural reforms to improve efficiency and governance.* It has now become quite clear that Medvedev was merely Putin’s substitute for a presidential term because of the constitutional limitations upon presidential term limit. Medvedev, being not only Putin’s successor but also his long-time colleague, himself has acknowledged throughout this term in office that “his presentation and demeanor may be different, but in terms of policy and goals he would not differ from his predecessor” (Wegren and Herspring, 2010:6). During Medvedev’s presidency, Putin, serving as prime minister, has remained quite influential, in what came as the two-headed system to be widely known as ‘tandemocracy’.

It must be stressed that the balance of power in the Kremlin has remained unaltered despite the much-praised transition of office from Putin to Medvedev without changes to the Constitutional rules. In other words, there was little departure from a regime in place much influenced by Putin during Medvedev’s presidency.

The 2011 parliamentary and 2012 presidential elections in Russia and their consequences

In 2011, Russia, being a *multiparty elections autocracy*, is in the throws of an intense political season with the December parliamentary elections resulting in a reconfiguration of power in the State *Duma* - the lower chamber of parliament. It was clear from the analysis of a number of scholars, presented in Chapter 2, that authoritarianism with elections may not lead

¹⁹ “Laying Down the Law: Medvedev Vows War on Russia’s ‘Legal Nihilism,’” *Johnson’s Russia List*, no.233, December 26, 2008

to democratization, at the same time, elections, manipulated as they are by the authorities, do not guarantee that autocrats are protected in their grip on power. This applies clearly in the case of Russia.

As a result of the elections, United Russia party has lost a significant number of Duma seats, thereby losing its 'constitutional majority', yet it has managed to secure a majority of seats, even if much-reduced, for another five years. United Russia attained 49.5%, compared to 64.3% in 2007; out of 450 seats, it won 238 seats, ceding 77 seats to their rivals –the Communist Party (19.2%, 92 seats), A Just Russia (13.2%, 13 seats), and the Liberal Democratic Party (11.7%, 56 seats).²⁰ These outcomes and en masse street demonstrations they have led to – with as many as 25,000 citizens, by official state statistics, coming out to protest on Bolotnaya Square in Moscow on December 10 and thousands more in a number of other cities across Russia – have already been hailed by observers as a sign of a major shift in Russia's political landscape (see for example Cameron 2011; Kramer 2011).

Clearly these outcomes allow one to speak with some confidence that Russia no longer is a '*hegemonic-party autocracy*' to use Magalony (2006) terminology introduced in Chapter 2. However, gaining an 'absolute' majority of seats still allows United Party to implement its major policies without the need for a 'constitutional' majority, which is used to amend the Constitution, something that happens quite rarely. The most important committees in the Duma will remain under the control of United Russia party. In addition, as Medvedev stated, United Russia would seek to forge a coalition with other political parties on certain issues.²¹

According to a number of scholars the outcomes of the latest Duma elections stand to reveal a great deal about the relationship between the state and society in Russia and shed light on country's electoral politics, an element of Russia's political setting that had been long ignored by observers (Hale, 2011). At the same time, overly focusing on elections alone may not reveal the whole picture. It must be stressed that fraud and abuse in the Russian elections is nothing new and were quite widespread already during the 1990's, under Eltsin's relative pluralism. Following both the 2003 parliamentary elections and 2004 presidential elections, OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has noted that both elections were characterized by abuse of state resources, electoral manipulation, media bias

²⁰ Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, <http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru>

²¹ Itar-Tass, "Ruling party to have to join coalitions, agree with opposition", 05/12/2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c39/289836.html>

and some fraud²². The same applies to the 2007 parliamentary elections during which opposition access to the media was very limited and a highly restrictive political parties law made it impossible for several liberal parties to compete (S Goldman 2008).

Throughout the 2011 Duma elections, the international observers have noted extensive violations of basic democratic standards. It was claimed that the state authorities have denied the opposition adequate media coverage, harassed opposition candidates and their supporters and manipulated electoral results: there were attempts to stuff ballot boxes and manipulate voter lists (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly 2011). McFaul and Petrov (1998:319) emphasize that “direct falsification and various forms of interference [were and remain] integral characteristics of Russian elections.”

At the same time, it is important to go beyond the electoral process and examine the ‘extra-electoral’ dimensions of non-democratic rule, emphasized by Snyder (2006) (*presented in Chapter 2*). And perhaps nowhere it is more applicable than in case of Russia. Under first two terms of Putin’s rule, there was clearly in place *a benign domestic political setting with strong public support from the society and the political elite alike*. Putin’s approval ratings in public opinion polls flared above 70% over the course of an extended period of time, which undoubtedly is a striking achievement.

However, upon the recent public announcement that Putin intends to return to Kremlin, Putin’s personal popularity has been waning. Putin’s popularity has dwindled to record low of 23% in October-November 2011 (compared with 60% approval in the same season in 2010). Medvedev’s ratings in the same time period are even lower, at 15%, (previously at 51%)²³. This must to a greater degree be a result of the so-called ‘*voter fatigue*’, which may arise due to the realization on the part of the society that Putin will be in the office for a long period of time.

March 4, 2012 elections of Russia’s president have indeed proven that, as the quotation that opens this chapter emphasizes, Vladimir Putin is the ‘*great survivalist*’, securing his return to power. Putin won the election by a wide margin over four other candidates, obtaining 63.6 percent of the vote (whereas in 2000 Putin won 53% of the vote and 71 % in 2004). The second-place finisher was Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov with 17.9 percent. In third came billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov with 7.8 percent, while Liberal

²² ODIHR (2004) *Russian Federation Elections to the State Duma*, 7 December 2003, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report. Warsaw: OSCE; ODIHR (2004) *Russian Federation Presidential Elections*, 14 March 2004, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report. Warsaw: OSCE

²³ Levada Center, “*Indexy. Odobrenie Vladimira Putina i Dmitria Medvedeva*”, www.levada.ru/indeksy. Accessed on December 12, 2011

Democratic leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy secured 6.2 percent. The last candidate, Just Russia leader Sergei Mironov got 3.85 percent.²⁴

The international observers, led by the OSCE, widely concur that the presidential elections were seriously flawed, with conditions clearly skewed in favor of one of the contestants – Prime Minister Putin, with notable procedural irregularities, including ballot-stuffing, cases of group, proxy and multiple voting, vote counting deficiencies.²⁵ *While the result of the presidential elections as no surprise to many, the future of political regime in Russia designed as it was according to a model of state governance defined by the Putin regime remains an open question. In other words, while it is now certain who will take up the incumbent leadership, how will this effect the political system, given the recent critical developments in terms of massive street demonstrations is yet to be seen.*

Societal support for the regime, 'voter fatigue' and opposition strength

The plausible 'voter fatigue' has emerged suddenly in autumn of 2011 upon Medvedev's infamous announcement that he was supporting Putin's return to the presidency, while he would himself become prime minister after the March 2012 presidential elections. Another event that exacerbated further the decline in mass support for the ruling tandem was Putin's subsequent statement that this 'trading in places' with Medvedev had been planned long ago.

As forecasted by a scholar prior to the mass protests denouncing the Duma election results:

"The problem with the tandem construct is that it probably cannot go backwards, and the attempt to do so by casting Medvedev to the prime ministerial post and Putin back to the presidency may fundamentally undermine their model of political legitimation. It renders Medvedev a spent political force, which makes it much more difficult to maintain expectations of gradual change and could encourage the liberal segment of society to reunite in opposition to the government."(emphasis added)²⁶

At the same time, according to the recent polls, more than half of the Russian public mistrusts non-parliamentary government opposition and would not vote for any of the opposition candidates at the presidential elections. 49% of respondents believe that the opposition does not have a constructive program of action and only criticizes the

²⁴ "Putin eases to third Presidential term", *Euronews*, 5 March, 2012, <http://www.euronews.com/2012/03/05/putin-wins-presidential-third-term-hands-down>

²⁵ ODIHR, International Election Observation, Russian Federation, Presidential Elections, 4 March, 2012, *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/88661>

²⁶ Indra Overland, "Modernization after Medvedev?", *Russian Analytical Digest*, #105, 5 December 2011

government.²⁷ This shows that the Putin regime has had a stable and prolonged public support for “it has become accepted as a lesser evil to alternatives” (Rose, et.al 2006).

As we have seen from above, in a short- and medium-term Putin’s initial state-building achievements have brought political order and stability, especially if compared to the early chaotic 1990’s of the Yeltsin era. However, endemic corruption and inflation remain quite high and the recent Duma votes were a reflection of societal dissatisfaction with socio-economic conditions in the country, which were relatively better in 2007 when United Russia had more votes. In response to a polling question: “Do you think that things in our country are developing in the right direction or is our country going in the wrong direction?” only 36% of Russian respondents answered positively in 2011, compared to 61% in 2008.²⁸

A recent survey reveals that the majority of Russians view inequality of opportunity to be very high in their country. There is low trust in the capitalist economy and low support for private property rights. Most believe that political connections and criminal activity matter more than talent in acquiring wealth. It was further found that most Russians do not favor economic and political liberalization: only 36 percent support democracy and 28 percent support market reform, which is the lowest among all transition countries. (Denisova, Eller and Zhuravskaya, 2010).

At the same time it appears that, having been a ruling party for a considerable period of election cycles, United Russia has encountered the ‘*voter fatigue*’ with the Russian public, parallel to the one possibly in place in relation to Putin, as mentioned above. Overall, by all measures the public support for the political regime has indeed markedly fallen, but it should be recalled that *previously it was quite high enabling a further support of the system of government by a substantial percentage of Russians at least in the medium term future.*

Rose, et.al. (2011) argue that ‘all forms of government require popular support, whether voluntary or involuntary’(p.1). In case of Russia, it is claimed that the Russian elite were able to mobilize *a substantial* amount of popular support for their increasingly undemocratic regime (emphases added). Exactly how has the state authority managed to mobilize support to build an existing political system? Based on the extensive analysis of the New Russian Barometer surveys²⁹, the Russian case reveals that an undemocratic regime just

²⁷ Levada Center, “Vybory v Gosdumu, chast’ 3. Ob oppozitsii i kritike vlasti”, 7 December, 2011, www.levada.ru/07-12-2011/vybory-v-gosdumu-chast-3-ob-oppozitsii-i-kritike-vlasti, Accessed on December 9, 2011

²⁸ Levada Center surveys 2000-2011, Russia Votes. National Issues-Trends, www.russiavotes.org/national_issues/national_issues_trends.php#066, Accessed on 10 December 2011

²⁹ The first survey was launched in 1992. Each survey has a nationwide sample of 1600 to 2000 respondents; fieldwork is carried out by the Levada Center, available at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cspp/catalog1_0.shtml

as a democratic one can mobilize voluntary support or at least the resigned acceptance of the mass of its population, constituting “a striking challenge to theories of the inevitability of democratization” (p.77).

The primary factors that have accounted for the support by the Russian public of their political establishment are that the overwhelming majority of Russians feel freer today than during the Soviet times; an extremely strong effect on support for the regime stems from how Russians evaluate the national economic system; there is also ‘the passage of time’ element, i.e. the fact that the regime has lasted for two decades. In addition, even though Russians tend to describe their regime as corrupt, untrustworthy and undemocratic, a majority of respondents do not endorse any alternative to the current regime; this suggests that “Russians have low expectations of government”(p.97).

The latest Duma elections street demonstrations were the biggest public rallies since the 1990s, even if still only a portion of 1 percent of voters came out on the streets; undoubtedly and by all measures, *the Russian public has suddenly become politically active*. What does this altered public mood mean for the country’s political future? Some experts were (see for example Aslund 2011) quick to claim that a liberal awakening in Russia could be brought by a growing civil society. It is indeed premature to claim that the latest events will lead to a regime change. For what is substantially lacking is a united cause on the part of opposition, which includes liberals, nationalists and leftists; there is no organizational structure in seeking popular support, so that “all they have is a bunch of informal leaders, with their marginal parties effectively barred by the Kremlin from the political field. None of these leaders has nationwide awareness, let alone support”.³⁰

Indeed, *societal dissatisfaction has notably grown since the late 2010, but opposition strength is quite weak and unable to foster a coherent and influential force to face the ruling regime*. A professor at the Moscow University of Finance stated, “opposition forces are clearly aware of the power of Putin and United Russia. Self-promotion is driving them to participate in the elections’³¹.

The Kremlin employs three major tools to deal with regime opponents, according to Silitski (2009). The primary tool is ‘political technology’ which constitutes information and propaganda campaigns designed to discredit and weaken regime opponents, including in the ‘virtual’ realm. The Russian authorities have increasingly become an active participant in the

³⁰ A comment by Maria Lipman, “Duma Elections: Expert Analysis”, compilation of commentaries, December 13, 2011, available at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/12/13/duma-elections-2011/8kkf>

³¹ Interviewed by the author in April 2011 in Moscow, Russia

Russian blogosphere, competing with other actors there for influence. Already by late 1990s, the authorities in Russia were concerned that the Internet freedom can potentially mobilize mass social unrest and as a pre-caution have put in place legislation to enable online surveillance, emphasizing that state protection and policing were essential.

In particular, at the time of elections, the Kremlin activates a network of supportive bloggers and online media experts in order to engage in online discussions and provide regime-friendly rhetoric to keep the level of political criticism from opposition as low as possible. As was noted in Chapter 2, the Russian authorities employ the third generation of content control to enhance state control over national cyberspace and building capabilities for an ability to compete with their rivals in the virtual world. (Deibert and Rohozinski, 2010).

The Russian public opinion is undoubtedly manipulated by government propaganda. However, Internet use among the public is on a sharp rise, providing unprecedented opportunities for the Russian public to gain access to diverse sources, both domestic and foreign, of news and information. It was noted that “between 2000 and 2008 the Russian portion of cyberspace, or RUNET, has grown at an average rate of 7,208 percent, or over five times the rate of the next faster region (Middle East) and 15 times faster than Asia...by latest official estimates, 38 million Russians, or a third of the population of Russia are connected, with over 60 percent of those surfing the Internet from home on broadband connections...by official predictions, Russia’s Internet population is set to double to over 80 million users by 2012” (Deibert and Rohozinski (2010). Following the December 4th Duma elections, instances of ballot irregularities were recorded by mobile devices and then posted on the Internet and as a result: “outrage-and calls to protest-flashed from computer to computer with political discourse thriving in blogs, tweets, posts to Facebook, uploads on YouTube-challenging the regime’s old-media monopoly on news and opinion”.³²

The second tool at the disposal of the ruling regime is more explicit prevention of any opposition to the authorities, with opponents being disqualified from running for office, jailed, exiled or even murdered. The third tool is the provision of material benefits for the society; the regime is believed to have allowed citizens a degree of social autonomy. At the same time, Silistki further argues that during his tenure as the president, Putin chose not to become an absolute ruler out of considerations of Russia’s international prestige, a cogent argument to be explored in the next section of the analysis.

³² Robert Conquest, “Halfway to where?”, *NEWSWEEK Special Edition, Issues 2012*, December 26, 2011/January 2, 2012

Part II. The external factors protracting an authoritarian rule in Russia

International environment in the immediate post-Cold War period

In this part of the Chapter it will be argued that the international environment that has emerged after the end of the Cold War has substantially contributed to autocratization of Russia and a number of the more recent global events stand to further solidify Kremlin's authoritarian rule.

As we recall Carothers' (2000) argument in Chapter 2, early 1990s were characterized by a growing international expectation of democratic behavior, and that there was 'the need for democratic self-profiling on the international stage'. The international environment of the 1990s was highly favorable to democracy, creating significant external constraints on autocrats, who were faced with a militarily, economically, and ideologically strong Western powers.

Levitsky and Way (2010) demonstrated that the level of linkage a country had with the West was one of the most important factors in seeking to explain why some regimes after the end of the Cold War became democratic and others reverted to competitive authoritarianism. Strong linkages to the West, i.e. high density of economic, political, diplomatic, social ties, meant that regimes democratized, while in case of low linkages, regime outcomes depend on incumbents' organizational power, i.e. the scope and cohesion of state and governing-party structures.

In relation to Russia, Levitsky and Way stress that low Western democratizing pressure, the so-called *Western leverage* and high organizational power have contributed to authoritarian stability in the country in the post-Cold War period. Prevalence of high organizational power is what we have discussed in Part 1 of this analysis, where emphasis was on Putin's objectives of creating a strong centralized authority, which he indeed had managed to put in place.

Historically, there has been very low level of ties between the West and the Soviet Russia as the Communist Party strictly controlled and restricted flows of people and information to and from the West. Thus the country remained quite isolated from global social, cultural and ideational trends. The collapse of the Soviet Union however has largely contributed to an expansion of linkages with the West, although as Levitsky and Way claim "the kind of linkage-based democratizing pressures seen in Eastern Europe and the Americas were largely absent in the post-Soviet cases"(2010:185).

Russia's strategic importance for the West

Former Russian President Yeltsin had embraced closer ties with the West. Eltsin was promoting the idea that Russia should emulate the West for it is part of Europe with which it shares common values and therefore should develop in the same manner as the West. Eltsin has turned to the US and the EU countries for guidance and as a result Western political influence within the country mounted. In the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western engagement was notable with 'Western advisors invited to 'occupy' virtually every branch of the Russian government' (Goldgeier and McFaul 2003:59).

Alongside financial, economic and social assistance programs, a stream of Western democracy promotion programs and agencies has started operating freely in the country under Yeltsin. However, Kopstein and Reilly (2000) note that Russia's engagement with the West remained below expectations and that is accounted for by the fact that Russia stands among countries that are "the remnant cores of formerly imperial powers that are especially impervious to outside influence" and is geographically far remote from the West, making the spatial diffusion of influence, institutions, norms and resources, necessary to the construction of political democracy, problematic (p. 2 and 21).

This is indeed surprising given that following post-Soviet economic collapse, Russia was highly vulnerable and there was plenty of opportunity for outside influence. A number of close observers stress that the *West's disengagement with Russia in the 1990s, in terms of exerting pressure for democratization, is the most decisive factor for the strengthened authoritarian rule* (McFaul 2001; Shevtsova (2010); Levisky and Way 2010).

Russia stood out as a particular case for its economic and strategic importance. From the very beginning of relations, the Western states have acted cautiously towards Russia because it was still "even at its weakest, a big state with vast military capacity" and massive oil and gas reserves (Levisky and Way 2010: 187). The West had chosen to emphasize economic ties and neglected political reforms while "relying on Eltsin and believing that he would guarantee Russia's transition"(Shevtsova 2010: 156). In the US, Russia was identified as a democracy and the former US President Bill Clinton upon taking his first term in office had pledged to support Eltsin in carrying out transformation reforms. However by the time of his second term in office, Clinton had come to regard Eltsin as the 'least bad' of Russian presidents (Marsden 2005: ch.2).

By the time of Putin's reign, the ruling regime was largely immune from outside pressure and was given an opportunity to fully consolidate. In Russia's relations with the West under Putin the accent was largely and increasingly economic, while in terms of political

development, the Western model was no longer one to emulate, as was the policy under Eltsin. The US policy towards Russia remained largely unchanged and given Russia's strategic importance, made Putin "impervious to the criticism"³³. Some analysts note further that there was some degree of disappointment on the part of the Russian public with the results of democracy and Western integration (McFaul and Spector, 2010:116).

The Russian authorities have regarded international criticisms expressed as an outside interference in Russia's internal affairs, as an attempt on the part of the West to use the opposition as its tool of influence, which stands to further exacerbate the authority's suspicions and press harder on curtailing and monitoring civil society activities at home. At the same time, Putin's anti-Western rhetoric is growing and it was one of the major themes of his candidacy campaign at the March 2012 presidential elections.

An outspoken critic of the conduct of the latest Duma elections was the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In undiplomatically blunt manner she highlighted that the elections were neither free nor fair. After the December elections in Duma Medvedev stated that it was up to Russia to decide how many parties it should have. 'When foreign partners observe the election process in Russia, its one thing, but when they discuss its political system, it's quite another; its none of their business'³⁴.

In the same way and in even harsher undertone, Prime Minister Putin, upon becoming formally a candidate for the March presidency, has accused the US of encouraging protests against his government. His accusations were primarily directed at US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, who, in his words 'set the tone for opposition activists and gave them a signal'³⁵.

While clearly irritating the Kremlin with its constant criticisms of how undemocratic is the ruling regime, the US's policy toward Russia has more or less come down to accepting Russia as it is. An ostensible improvement in relations between US and Russia following the 'reset' initiative in 2010 reflects Washington's need for Russia's cooperation on Iran, Afghanistan and nuclear arms reductions. As a result in dealing with Russia, Obama administration largely omitted discordant issues such as NATO expansion or democratization. The US has de-prioritized Russia as it chose to focus on the Pacific (Clinton 2011), which in turn is undoubtedly contributing to the strengthening of authoritarianism there.

³³ "Putin's Assertive Diplomacy is Seldom Challenged", *The New York Times*, 27 December 2006

³⁴ President Medvedev's Meeting with Central Election Commission Chairman Vladimir Churov, December 6, 2011 <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/3182>

³⁵ 'Putin lashes out at Clinton over protests', *Euronews*, December 8, 2011, www.euronews.net/2011/12/08/putin-lashes-out-at-clinton-over-protests/

Especially noteworthy are the events following the 2003-2005 wave of the so-called 'color revolutions' in three of the former Soviet Union states, by the end of which Western democracy aid programs were no longer welcomed in the country as the Russian ruling elites have undertaken swift measures to insulate as much as possible their regime from the outside influence.

The impact of the 'Color revolutions' and the "Arab Spring" on Russia's domestic political trajectory

The Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003), the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan (2005) have emerged after unfair and rigged presidential and parliamentary elections in each of these countries have led to massive street protests culminating in regime changes. These revolutions were claimed to have "raised the specter of regional democratic contagion, which might spread to affect Russia itself"(Ambrosio 2009:42).

In a stark contrast to the Western interpretation of the 'color revolutions' as a product of domestic forces (Ackerman and Duvall 2005; Hale 2005, 2006; McFaul 2005; Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Demes and Forbrig, 2006), Russian analysts traced their origin to the outside factors, interpreting them as a clear case of a regime change sponsored by the West and an attempt on the part of the latter to encroach on Russia's sphere of influence by pulling countries such as Georgia and Ukraine away from it. (FBIS Report, 2004; Markov, 2005; Volkova 2003) Although the Western scholarship still acknowledges that Western governments, NGOs and foundations played a role in these revolutions, "albeit one that facilitated and conditioned the events, not necessarily causing them"(McFaul and Spector, 2010:118).

As was emphasized in Chapter 1, by early 2007 democracy promotion efforts have come to face the kind of challenges not yet seen since the end of the Cold War. The Western democracy promotion enterprise has been faced with a strong 'backlash' on the part of nondemocratic regimes around the world, being closely associated with the US regime change agenda. Carothers (2006) points out that governments across the globe have condemned democracy-building programs in their countries, denouncing them as "illegitimate political meddling", as American interventionism, not US foreign policy goal of democracy promotion.

Precisely this kind of perception on the part of the Russian ruling elite, namely that the West was closely involved in the electoral changes in the neighboring countries, that has led to the state to take strong measures to further erode democratic institutions in the country. A

general state of fear and suspicion of these developments was growing inside Kremlin and has incentivized a significant change in how domestic and foreign policy were carried out. The authorities in Russia have extensively justified curtailing of civil liberties and regional autonomy due to the external threats. Kremlin's response was to develop policies aimed at diminishing Western influence within the country by the means of an extensive reform package that included amendments to the Civil Code, the changes to the electoral law to prevent foreign funding of parties and other aspects of electoral campaigns, the law on non-profit organizations, the law on public associations, the law on closed administrative territorial formations, amendments that broaden definition of extremism to include criticism of public officials.

The government took measures to tighten control over NGO activities by passing "2006 NGO law", which imposed rigid requirements for re-registration, disclosure of sources of funds and annual reports and gave Russian governmental agencies broad mandates to regulate foreign assistance for domestic NGOs (Klitsounova, 2009: 107). Government pressed strong allegations that foreign intelligence organizations are using Russian NGOs for their purposes and do not have the country's best interests in mind.

The government allocated resources to create state-sponsored and state-controlled organizations and in order to control civil society organizations developed its Public Chamber Project. Another pre-emptive measure carried out by the authorities in order to prevent a colored revolution in the country was to set up various youth movements, the leading of which became "Nashi" (meaning Ours), which has overtime gained over 100,000 in members, establishing branches in cities and regions across the country. The purpose of 'Nashi' is to mobilize youth to attend government rallies and events, and to serve as a forum to promote the 'sovereign' democracy ideas and 'encourage patriotism and loyalty to the Russian regime' (McFaul and Spector 2010:127).

At the same time, the Kremlin has begun to extensively champion a non-Western form of government inside Russia under the slogans of 'sovereign' democracy. The concept of 'sovereign' democracy, discussed in Part I of this analysis, has specifically been constructed in response to the color revolutions and a sense of concern the events have generated among the political elites. Interestingly enough, the sovereign democracy project did not entail the creation of 'Russian uniqueness' theories that would lay emphases on Russia's exceptionalism. The Kremlin's major policy thinkers, who in fact are not political philosophers but public-relations specialists, have pointed to what they saw as a threatening amalgamation of

international pressure from above and populist pressure from below as in case of Ukraine, where Kuchma's regime was destroyed following the Orange revolution (Krastev 2006).

Clearly, *the electoral revolutions in the neighboring states have substantially contributed to further solidifying the Kremlin's authoritarian rule.* In addition, the fact that the 'color revolutions' have turned out to be disappointing experiences clearly played into hands of the Kremlin. Indeed, the subsequent developments in all the three countries have illustrated how ephemeral a successful democratic protest can be, prompting an observer to note in reference to Georgia, that "it was only later that the revolutionary leader's lack of understanding of democratic ideals and principles, and their disinclination to follow them, became apparent" (Khutsishvili 2009:68). The same applies in case of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, where following the revolutions the leaders promised their people substantive reform and democratization, yet have quickly failed to meet the expectations and renewed cynicism among people of these countries has prevailed.

The Kremlin has sought to exploit the failures of the color revolutions to its advantage with extensive public speeches and pro-Kremlin publications stressing the failures and inadequacy of such ways of bringing about change. Putin continues to extensively claim that "color revolutions are a prepared scheme intended to destabilize a society."³⁶ And he warned against attempt to destabilize the political system by "any unlawful methods of struggle".³⁷ As with the failures of the 'color revolutions' before them, the prevailing negative connotations from the revolts in the Arab world clearly play into the hands of the ruling elites.

The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia and subsequent events in Egypt, Libya, and Syria have resonated in Russia as well, where the ruling elites responded with the assertions that the revolts in the Arab world were ignited by "outside forces" that were also aiming to topple the Russian regime. In the words of Medvedev: "Let's face the truth. They have been preparing such a scenario for us, and now they will try even harder to implement it. But in any case this scenario will not be possible".³⁸ Putin claims that as a result of the revolts in Libya and Egypt, the rise of the Islamists could destabilize the situation in the Caucasus. Thus, the authorities are aiming to convince the public that the consequences of the revolts in the Arab world could lead to chaos, instability and rise of extremism, not an opening for a democratic and progressive development.

³⁶ Putin's annual phone-in with the Russian public, December 15, 2011, available at: <http://premier.gov.ru/events/news/17409/>

³⁷ Putin, "Poslanie Federal'nomu Sobraniu Rossiskoi Federatsii", April 25, 2005 at www.kremlin.ru

³⁸ cited in Nabi Abdullaev, "Kremlin Sees Peril in Arab Unrest," *the Moscow Times*, February 24, 2011

International environment after 2008 global financial crisis and its impact on Russia

The ongoing global financial turmoil is the gravest economic crisis since the 1930s that is having an imprint on the global political, social and economic order. "The economic crisis has hit every country in the world. Even such nearly-autarkic economies as North Korea and Burma are not untouched."(Hanson 2009:23) There are substantial decreases in international trade, increases in unemployment and volatile price fluctuations. As a result, countries began to grapple with higher taxes and severe reductions in public goods and services leading to a widespread public disillusionment and mistrust of political leaderships of their countries.

Governments across the world and primarily in the West have shifted their attention to addressing immediate domestic socio-economic consequences while the deepening austerity is generating people's dissatisfaction with their governments, already causing widespread social unrest throughout the Europe continent. A close observer notes: "Back when George W. Bush was president, his "freedom agenda" was about democratic elections and ending one-party rule in the developing world. Now the no. 1 issue has become freedom from crippling debt and restoring fiscal balance in the developed world...in coming years the ability to manage debt may be the best indicator of where global power resides."³⁹ As the West stays focused on the domestic consequences of global economic turmoil, external pressure for democracy has weakened in many parts of the world, leading some to argue that its 'soft power' is becoming increasingly shattered (Judah, et.al. 2011: 57).

The coming of Putin to power had coincided with a dramatic increase in world energy prices, approaching \$100 a barrel. Economists generally agree that the effect of rising commodity prices on Russia's economic growth is extremely large. McFaul and Stoner-Weiss (2008) argue that increased energy revenues allowed for the return to autocracy, which in turn has negatively influenced economy, producing more corruption and less secure property rights.

The Kremlin used the state oil funds to distribute patronage-based largesse, thereupon generating democracy-weakening rentier dynamics. Thus resource wealth has contributed greatly to the survival of autocracy. To a large measure, the Russian economic future will continue to be determined by the world oil price, and the higher the oil price means there will be much less incentive for the Russian government to undertake reforms.

The disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in March 2011 and the

³⁹ Daniel Gross, "The New Freedom", *NEWSWEEK Special Edition*, Issues 2011, December 2010/February 2011

continuingly unsettling situation in parts of the Middle East and North Africa, have both brought into a light concerns related to the reliability of energy supply. The Fukushima accident has led to countries abandoning their plans for nuclear growth and phasing out nuclear plants altogether.

Meanwhile the global demand for energy will continue 'to grow strongly, increasing by one-third from 2010 to 2035, according to International Energy Agency (IEA). Moreover, as forecasted by the IEA, "the majority of Russia's oil and gas exports continue to go westwards to traditional markets in Europe, but a shift towards Asia markets gathers momentum. Russia gains greater diversity of export revenues as a result: the share of China in Russia's total fossil-fuel export earnings rises from 2% in 2010 to 20% in 2035, while the share of the EU falls from 61% to 48%".⁴⁰ These forecasts underpin a fact that *Russia stands to play a major role in the global energy market in the coming decades.*

In 2012 Iran nuclear issue will increasingly become a central international issue as the West has taken an even harsher stance towards Iran's alleged plans to expand enrichment activities at an underground facility near Qom. Should the US choose to be drawn into military action with Iran, while remaining a possibility, would cause global oil prices to skyrocket.

At the same time, Western analysts do not essentially concur on the forecasts about energy prices in 2012 and beyond. Goldman Sachs claims that energy prices may rise by 15% in 2012 and continue to rise in 2013, whereas Morgan Stanley claims that price rise is unlikely in energy sector in the coming years⁴¹. Most remain assured that the energy price will ultimately depend on whether or not the world economy manages to avoid recession in the coming years.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the energy sphere, Morgan Stanley claims that Russia's economy will grow by 5.0% in 2012 and will be the only country that will post faster growth in comparison to 2011 due largely to a rise in government spending and private investment ahead of the March 2012 elections.⁴² Russia's economic position may be further strengthened by the fact that it has recently been accepted as a member of World Trade Organization (WTO), after nearly two decades of prolonged negotiations. According to observers, joining the organization will lead to increase by one percent of GDP per year of

⁴⁰ IEA World Energy Outlook 2011, executive summary, available at: <http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/>

⁴¹ Goldman Sachs, Outlook 2012, <http://www2.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/global-economic-outlook/outlook-2012/index.html>; Morgan Stanley, Global Economic Forum, 2012 outlook, <http://www.morganstanley.com/views/gef/archive/2011/20111215-Thu.html#anchor99298874-2748-11e1-816a-772a53a242ce>

⁴² <http://www.morganstanley.com/views/gef/>

Russian economy⁴³. Although observers remain uncertain and ambivalent about the exact impact of the WTO accession on the Russian economy, *it is clear that becoming a member of WTO presents Kremlin with more confidence to continue focusing primarily on economic side of development and modernization agenda, paying less attention to political reforms.*

This is the way of an ‘open authoritarian’ regime, which according to Barma, et.al., as discussed in Chapter 2, is proving relatively successful in prolonging its rule in an era of globalization by selectively engaging with the outside world. It is the very ‘openness’ of the modern authoritarian countries internationally and the current global context itself that lead to the very sustainability of such regimes.

The table below presents a simplified way to see internal and external factors of authoritarian regimes endurance in Russia based on the findings of the above – presented literature.

Authoritarian regime in Russia: sources of durability

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Effectiveness of ‘power vertical’ reliant on coercive organizations	The post-Cold War period- Russia’s low level of linkage to the West
Putin’s high public approval ratings (2000-2010)	Russia’s strategic important – low Western democratizing pressure
Economic growth fueled largely by energy revenues; society enjoying relative economic prosperity Excessive role of the government in the economy and business	The impact of the ‘color revolutions and the ‘Arab Spring’ on Russian ruling regime’s campaign to insulate itself from outside influence
United Russia party used as the ‘party of power’	2008 global financial crisis has led to Western preoccupation with domestic socio-economic needs – weakened external pressure for democracy
Sovereign democracy” rhetoric; ‘political technology’ used to discredit and weaken regime opponents and manipulate public opinion, including in the ‘virtual’ realm	Global energy outlook: growing demand and Russia’s position as a major player in the global energy market; Reliability of energy supply questioned as a consequence of the 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and the unstable situation in the Middle

⁴³ Euronews, “WTO gains and losses for Russia”, December 16, 2011

	East and North Africa
Public allowed a degree of social autonomy	Russia's 2012 accession to WTO – as a result less attention is expected to be paid to political reforms by the ruling elite
Majority of Russians feel freer today than during the Soviet times	The Iran nuclear issue – a possibility of sharp rise in global oil prices
Public do not endorse any alternative to the current regime; lack of an effective and united opposition	

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the rapidly changing nature of Russia's domestic political, social and economic context. Since the fall of communism the country has undergone a tremendous transformation of its political, social and economic system. Under Eltsin's presidency, the country was politically disorganized and the economy was in shambles. Overall there was a widespread sense of insecurity and uncertainty prevalent in Russia at that time. In no small measure Putin's coming to power at the end 1990s has influenced the regime's change in an increasingly authoritarian direction. The need for stability to provide an order to the chaotic early 1990s has given birth to a centralized state apparatus, little accountable to the public and based on close control of Putin and a narrow circle of ruling elite.

A widespread analysis of the political system of Russia among close observers is ultimately focused on Vladimir Putin as he is identified closely with the current regime, as a testament to that in the last several years a number of books have emerged with "Putin's Russia" as a title (Shevtsova, 2005; Jack, 2005; Politkovskaya, 2007; Sakwa, 2008; Wegren and Herspring, 2010). *This study has argued that Putin remains one of the most important political figures, who makes decisions within a limited circle of a ruling group that includes former President Medvedev and other players from the security, law enforcement and business community.*

Understanding what constitutes the Putin regime is crucial for comprehending what kind of transformation the Russian political system has been faced with. The main characteristics of the Putin regime include a creation of an interventionist and regulatory central state apparatus, modernization of the Russian economy through trade and economic

cooperation, largely based on increasing oil prices. These stand to have a lasting impact on the future of the country's political system.

The 2011 Duma elections have shown to have little impact on Putin's bid for presidency that he has indeed won, under however fraudulent electoral conditions. It was widely forecasted that should Putin become once again Russia's president, it then would lead to 12 years of political stagnation, reminiscent of Brezhnev⁴⁴ era, with corruption remaining rampant and repression prolonged (see for example Aslund 2011). *Given the present conditions, this study argues that Russia will remain steadfast authoritarian at least in the medium term future.*

This is the domestic context in which we should view Russia's international behavior. Chapter 3 addressed the theoretical account of the relationship between regime type and foreign policy of states in order to discern whether or not authoritarian states act differently internationally in comparison with their democratic counterparts. The next chapter will attempt to take further the relevant theoretical findings and apply them to the case study on Russia.

The case of Russia's international behavior is quite pertinent because in the past several years it has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention: analysts began to note Russia's resurgence on the world stage and emphasis has particularly been placed on its domestic political setting as it has become increasingly centralized, while at the same time its global resurgence has become a significant feature of international relations. The chapter that follows will take seriously the notion that *domestic factors increasingly shape Russian behavior in the international arena* and will examine this proposition in-depth.

⁴⁴ Leonid Brezhnev – presided over the former Soviet Union from 1962 until his death in 1982; Brezhnev's eighteen year term in office were widely called 'Brezhnev stagnation, or era of stagnation' as it was marked by serious economic, political and social problems.

Chapter 5. Russia's 'domestic' foreign policy

The previous chapter outlined Russia's domestic socio-political and economic setting, within which we should view its international behavior. We have learned that the Russian regime has since the early 1990's increasingly become authoritarian due to a number of crucial domestic and international factors. Chapter 5 will follow the theoretical scheme of Chapter 3 by questioning *how being an authoritarian regime domestically impacts on Russia's foreign policy behavior and international system in general?* Posing such a question encompasses a wide sphere of engagement, well beyond military actions, to examine how institutional structure of the state impacts on the international decisions of its ruling elites. In Chapter 3, it was argued that regime type and domestic context in general do indeed have an influence on state's international behavior and therefore the study of international relations should incorporate a much more thorough analysis of the relationship between foreign policy and internal dynamics of states.

This study works essentially within the framework of modified realism that takes into account the domestic factors in consideration of international behavior of states as exemplified in particular in the work of Donaldson and Noguee (2009). Modified realism highlights the balance of power and the importance of national interest and examines in-depth factors that influence foreign policy of Russia, both internal and external.

Classical realism *per se* is insufficient in explaining Russia's foreign policy. Realism lays emphasis on the historical patterns in Russia's foreign policy and argues that preservation and enhancement of power is Russia's national interest that affects its international behavior. However, realism falls short of grasping fully changes in foreign policy and the scope and origins of those changes, having placed overwhelming emphasis on power and structure of international system. Yet, domestic factors serve as significant source of foreign policy behavior of states and therefore must be part of any account of Russia's foreign policy. The study outlines and explores the major domestic factors that directly impact on Russia's international behavior so as to demonstrate that Russia's foreign policy has strong roots in domestic forces.

The present chapter addresses the foreign policy course of Russia under the Putin regime. The overarching aim is to provide both a description and an explanation of the foreign policy of Russia through the prism of its domestic political setting, taking the last 20 years of an independent Russian Federation more broadly as the time frame of analysis. How does the foreign agenda mirror the domestic agenda? *Russia's foreign policy was and remains 'domestic'*

in a sense that it is substantially subordinated to the goals of domestic agenda of consolidating the state and undertaking predominately economic reforms.

As shown in Chapter 4, leadership personality plays a quite significant role in the context of any discourse on Russia's current political system. The study attributed much of change in Russia's political setting to Putin's coming to power in 2000 and his significant role in bringing about a system of governance based on 'vertical of power'. At the same time, it was stressed that *the Putin regime is a system of governance based on the cohesion and consent of an elite group formed around Putin that has established and maintains a centralized authority based on institutions through which the rule is administered.*

Throughout much of the Russian history, political leadership has played an important role in influencing the content of foreign policy of the country. Traditionally, the executive has overwhelmingly dominated foreign policy making in Russia with highly restricted roles for parliament and political parties (Checkel 1995). With the passage of the 1993 Constitution of Russian Federation, the president of Russia was endowed with a dominating role in the policy process, including in the external domain. But as will be argued in this study, the foreign policy making domain in Russia like in the domestic domain is a product of more than simply incumbent leader's preferences and decisions. Political leadership is one of the factors that influence Russia foreign policy course. Below is the list of major domestic drivers affecting Russia's international behavior.

Major domestic drivers of Russia's foreign policy:

a. The role of Putin's leadership

Putin has indeed set forth major directions of Russian foreign policy and has taken an active involvement in a wide range of foreign-policy activities – indeed the first Russian leader to do so. This has prompted one of the closest observers of Russia to assert that 'the foreign policy of the Putin era is indeed Putin's own foreign policy' (Rumer 2007: 10). Undoubtedly, *Putin's coming to power has had a lasting impact on the domestic and foreign affairs of Russia.*

Putin is pragmatic in his foreign policy behavior much as he is on the domestic front. He is a complex figure with a preference for measured, gradual, evolutionary change, steady, well-planned actions, being highly inspired by Pyotr Stolypin, the reformist prime minister under the last czar, Nicholas II. Echoing Stolypin's famous reprimand to Duma deputies in 1907: "You, gentlemen, are in need of great upheavals; we are in need of Great Russia", Putin

claims, “We do not need great upheavals. We need a great Russia” (Hill and Gaddy 2012). Putin’s political ideas stems from his re-interpretation of history and a fusion of czarist and Soviet ideas.

Balancing against the West, and the US in particular, was not a part of his distinctive vision of Russia’s national interest that represented Russia as a great power. In his view, Russia must join the community of Western states as an independent and autonomous ‘normal’ power (Motyl, Ruble and Shevtsova 2003), to some extent echoing Kosyrev’s ideas presented above. Putin has recognized that Russia has no future except a close economic relationship with the West, particularly with the European Union. In addition, following September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, Putin has actively cooperated in the US-led war on terror, which further strengthened a perception of his pro-Western position that lasted up to the late 2002.

Two days before Yeltsin resigned as Russia’s president and handed over power to Putin, an important document “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium” emerged on the official website of the Russian government. In this document Putin essentially outlined his agenda of consolidating the Russian state. He emphasized that the ‘Russian idea’ comprised unique Russian values such as patriotism, collectivism and solidarity, *derzhavnost’* (great power status) and *gosudarstvennichestvo* (the precedence of state above everything) ⁴⁵ Putin is said to be ‘obsessed with unity and avoiding the dangers of splintering and fracturing in politics’ (Hill and Gaddy 2012).

Lo (2003) and Trenin (2002) and Lo (2003) emphasize in particular that Putin has strong domestic coalition building skills, and stress his ability to appease many interests and balance competing factions within the government, while remaining neutral and not aligning too closely with any particular group. The elite of Russia is not a genuinely homogeneous group and there prevail various strands of opinion. The elite serve the primary constituents of an incumbent leader, and their preferences inevitably must be take into account, otherwise a leader risks being deposed. In case of Russia, there is a strong dynamic of elite-leader relationship that helps explain a course of foreign policy decision-making.

b. Consolidation of centralized state rule

The foremost object of the Putin regime was an improvement and consolidation of the Russian state and the kind of policy he pursued domestically had a strong impact on the

⁴⁵ Vladimir Putin, “Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheletiy,” *Nezavisimay Gazeta*, December 30, 1999

foreign policy course. Referring to Putin's authority, Chambers (2010:125) submits that "the strategy pursued internally fuels the strategy pursued internationally, and the strategy pursued internationally acts as legitimation for the strategy pursued internally". The domestic agenda defined by Putin has considerably correlated with his foreign policy one. According to Shevtsova (2010), a vicious cycle was created, in which the Russian centralized state sought to be recognized as a great power by the international community, which in turn fostered even further centralization of power at home.

Troitskiy (2006) argues that "to the greatest extent ever, Russian foreign policy now begins at home", that the sources of Russia's foreign policy have become increasingly domestic in the course of a decade while during the early 1990s and beginning of the decade it was more receptive to external factors, due primarily to Eltsin's attempts to model Russia to Western liberal democracy and dependence on foreign financial aid.

During the Yeltsin presidency, foreign policy was defined and implemented in a decentralized and fragmented way with a number of various groups having an impact. At that time Kremlin was largely unable to control and coordinate the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Defense Ministry, the Security Council, the regional governors, all of whom had their own foreign policy agendas.

This state of affairs contrasts starkly with the Putin era, when foreign policy became centrally coordinated, yet still reflecting the interests of a narrow base of power structures and state corporations, which were closely interlinked through the partial re-nationalization of the resource sector and introduction of a strong *power vertical* (discussed at length in Chapter 4).

As a part of his objective to strengthen of the power vertical, Putin has sought centralization of foreign policy making in the Kremlin, concentrating much of it in the presidential administration. The MFA, the Security Council, the Parliament, regional leaders are said to have played a peripheral role in foreign policy making, greatly circumscribed under Putin's presidency. At the same time, the biggest state-own firms, such as energy companies – Gasprom and oil pipeline operator Transneft – and the security services along with the military have remained quite influential.

Russia's engagement in the 2008 war with Georgia stands to reinforce the prevailing assumption that the foreign policy decision-making in Russia is highly centralized with Vladimir Putin, serving as a prime minister at the time of the war, being largely unconstrained, i.e. not facing a powerful domestic audience and 'monopolizing' foreign policy decision making, in deciding whether or not to engage in conflict. This reinforces Weeks

(2011) theoretical arguments on conflict initiation in autocracies presented in Chapter 3. “To a world that had grown used to seeing Russia as a dysfunctional shell, the invasion of Georgia was a stunning announcement that Russia had again become a force to be reckoned with” (Mankoff 2009: 1).

A strong state is deemed to be crucial in addressing state-defined security threats, such as Islamic extremism. A model of statism built at home, is reflected externally with championing of a strong sovereign state. On the other hand, theoretically speaking, a more democratized political system in Russia would have allowed general public’s natural preference for a foreign policy directed at addressing socio-economic oriented instead of a course directed at active external role elsewhere. Although in case of Russia, continuous and sustained domestic support for the Putin regime’s foreign policy course has been extensively emphasized by observers. Trenin (2006) claims that “the Russian political system rests on the acquiescence of the governed”. Rumer (2007, Ch3) stresses that “Putin’s foreign policy, his vision of Russian interests abroad and his choice of means to advance those interests have enjoyed the broad and consistent support of his constituents”.

c. Public support of foreign policy course of the state

Nationwide surveys reveal a steady trend of popular support for Kremlin’s foreign policy decision-making choices among the average Russian. The majority of Russian public have expressed support for the policy of balancing against the US even if the majority have a positive attitude towards the latter⁴⁶; viewing NATO as a constant threat to Russia and supporting the view that Russia should form counterbalancing alliances or stand as a single bloc against NATO⁴⁷; viewing Georgia’s hypothetical membership in NATO as a threat to Russia⁴⁸. In the latest opinion poll data regarding the foreign policy course of Russia, the respondents stand for a closer cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Western Europe, at the same time support a policy of keeping a distance in relation with the US, which 76% of those polled regard as an “aggressor that aims to take under its control all countries of the world”, as opposed to 7% viewing the US as a

⁴⁶ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, April 2008,
http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541

⁴⁷ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, February-March 2009,
http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541

⁴⁸ Levada Center, Nationwide Survey, September 2008; January-February 2010,
http://www.russiavotes.org/security/security_usa_nato.php#541

“guarantor of peace, democracy and order”.⁴⁹ Thus, it appears that the major pillars of Putin’s foreign policy remain in line with majority sentiment in Russia.

d. Economic growth fueled by high-energy revenues, coupled with increased state-control share of the economy.

Russia has faced a rather rapid economic recovery, roughly encompassing the 1998-2008 period, with an average annual growth rate of 7 percent, putting Russia to tenth place among the world’s largest economies, which has laid the foundation for a more confident and resurgent foreign policy course. Its domestic revival and strong economic growth allowed Russia to repay its external debt and built vast foreign currency reserves. So that energy-fueled economic growth allowed primarily for freedom from dependence on foreign creditors, stimulated higher budgetary expenditures on military among other measures. Notably, “Putin paid off Russia’s entire remaining debt to the IMF more than 3 years ahead of schedule in 2005 and to the Paris Club in 2006” (Gaddy 2007). As a result, West’s bargaining position vis-à-vis Russia decreased substantially as Russia’s political leadership has sought a better negotiating position for Russia in order to carry through with an independent foreign policy course. By 2007 Russia’s budget expenditures on foreign policy increased dramatically. Compared to 1996, spending on external relations had almost doubled (Safranchuk 2007).

Throughout his terms in office, Putin has stood for Russia’s global economic integration and actively sought to make Russia attractive to foreign investors. Putin has remained strongly committed to the principles of the market economy and private enterprise, seeking to reconcile private ownership with the need for central state order.

Under Medvedev’s presidency that has begun in 2008, the broad outlines of Putin’s approach to international affairs have endured. Former President Medvedev has put forward a new paradigm of an improved investment climate and a more open and dynamic Russia. Improving Russia’s economy involves opening to innovations and investments from the West, which has already involved resetting relations with Washington and expanding cooperation with the EU. Global integration via the recent entry into the WTO has been the prime objective for the Russian leadership.

⁴⁹ Levada Center, Press-vipusk, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii, otnoshenie k drugim stranam*, 21 February, 2012, <http://www.levada.ru/21-02-2012/vneshnyaya-politika-rossii-otnoshenie-k-drugim-stranam>

e. The great power ambitions of the ruling elite

In Putin's second term as president (2004-2008), Russia's foreign policy became much more assertive, as evident in Putin's infamous speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2007. Putin strongly criticized the US 'unilateralism in world politics. He accused the US of "disdain for the basic principles of international law" and having "overstepped its national borders in...the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations."⁵⁰ Putin's Munich speech was further refined in the Russian foreign ministry report "A Review of the Russian Federation's foreign policy" of 2007, which outlined justifications for Russia's more active role in shaping international relations, emphasizing the notions of multipolarity based on "a more equitable distribution of resources for influence and economic growth", as contrarily to the notion of unilateralism and disrespect of international law by any one global power.⁵¹

The great-power ambitions of Kremlin's elites portray Russia as an assertive autonomous international actor in world affairs, as one of the poles in the twenty-first century multipolar international system, based strongly on the notion of sovereignty and noninterference, in which there exist alternative political models of development that differ from Western liberal democracy model.

There is a strong sense of the uniqueness of Russian national identity among the rulers and ruled alike that fuels its special place in the world. The same holds true for the Russian scholarly community, among which even liberals stress Russia's special position as an independent center of power in the world (see for example Lukin 2002, Pushkov 2002). Thus, while seeking to secure its national and commercial interests abroad, in its relations with other countries, the Russian political leadership has sought to promote, at times intentionally, an idea of a strong centralized state, impervious to outside interference in its domestic affairs. In turn, prompting some Western scholars (see for example Sakwa 2008) to argue that Russia's approach to international relations was becoming increasingly neo-realist, based on the old-fashioned notion of power balancing.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced the times of internal decline, protracted turmoil and withdrawal from the international arena, leading some to claim that Russia was becoming 'less and less an actor in world affairs, while running the risk of becoming an object of competition among more advanced and dynamic powers' (Graham

⁵⁰ Vladimir Putin, "Speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy", February 10, 2007, www.kremlin.ru

⁵¹ "Obzor vneshnei politiki Rossiskoi federatsii", March 27, 2007, www.mid.ru

1999).

The basic principles of the Russian foreign policy throughout much of the 1990's were a combination of a number of contending ideas and visions of how Russia should respond to its newly formed independent nationhood. There were 'liberal Westernizing' ideas promoted by the first Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev (1990-1996), who argued shortly after the break-up of the USSR that Russia would not 'cease to be a great power', it would however be a 'normal' great power, which would pursue the kind of national interests that would be 'understandable to democratic countries' (Kozyrev 1992:10). At the same time Kozyrev has sought to promote a new broadly inclusive security arrangement in Europe, or by strengthening the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The Russian authorities were convinced that the NATO after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact would cease to exist and took a passive stance towards it.

Kozyrev's ideas were highly supported by President Yeltsin and Deputy Prime Minister Egor Gaidar. Like Gorbachev, Eltsin was from the Westernist tradition in foreign policy thinking in Russia, promoting the idea that Russia should emulate the West for it is part of Europe, with which it shares common values and therefore should develop in the same manner as the West. The idea was to turn Russia into a modern state with socio-political and economic system as one found in the advanced Western countries in a rather short time span.

On the foreign policy front, the objective was to "create a nonthreatening external environment that would be most conducive to domestic economic and political development...producing a foreign policy of accommodation, retrenchment, and risk avoidance" (Donaldson and Noguee 2009:109). It was a radical shift away from a commitment to ideological struggle and power balancing against the West. Yeltsin had tuned to pro-democracy and pro-Western rhetoric, seeking to join the G-7, the World Trade Organization, the European Union (EU) and even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

However such liberal ideas were quickly swept away by a quite strong degree of internal criticism and a wide political debate. Contrary to the 'liberal Westernizing' ideas, came the contending views, expressing the idea of Russia being distinct from the West, an Eurasian state with a significant role of serving as a bridge between East and West. At the same time, more attention were to be focused on the 'Near Abroad' (*blizhnee zarubejje*) and a special role that Russia plays in the region by becoming its integrator and a defender of some 25 million ethnic Russians residing in the states of the former Soviet space. This so-called 'pragmatic nationalist' or 'Eurasianist' viewpoint has become quite influential among a number of government and academic institutions, primarily promoted by presidential

advisors Sergei Stankevich and Andranik Migranian. Stankevich argued that Russia has a special mission “to initiate and maintain a multilateral dialogue of cultures, civilizations and states. Russia the conciliator, Russia the unifier, Russia the harmonizer”.⁵² Migranian has even more staunchly stressed that “Russia should declare to the world that the entire geopolitical space of the former USSR is a space of its vital interests”.⁵³

Prevalent at that time were also ‘fundamentalist nationalist’ ideas, expressing viewpoints of communists and extreme nationalists. The ‘fundamentalist’ were openly anti-Western, promoting the idea of restoring the strong, and imperialist Russia to bring back its lost territories in the other former Soviet states, by the use of force if necessary. Strong contenders of this view were Vladimir Zhirinovski, the leader of neofascist party and Genadii Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party.

Under Russia’s second foreign minister Evgenii Primakov (1996-1998), who had replaced Kozyrev, the vision of Russia as a great power came as central in Russia’s foreign policy aspirations. Primakov represented the liberal Statist school of Russian foreign policy thinking that promoted the notion of a strong state at home and abroad⁵⁴.

At the same time, the Russian authorities have begun to increasingly voice their opposition to much in the West’s foreign policy, most markedly NATO’s eastward expansion, and its military intervention in the Balkans. It was indeed the NATO 1999 war against Yugoslavia that marked the departure from pro-Western views in the Kremlin altogether and the alliance was from that point in time seen as a threat. At the same time, the 2000 versions of the National Security Concept, the Military Doctrine and Foreign Policy Concept of Russia displayed a “more ‘muscular’ approach to the use of force and a more pessimistic view of international relations” (Trenin 2007).

The foreign policy discourse in Russia is wrought with a fundamental tension between harnessing fully the power of market economy and making Russia a modern capitalist country and on the other hand, there is a deep-seated desire for global influence along the lines of traditional notions of power politics.

With regards to the latter, Russia’s war with Georgia in 2008 clearly demonstrated Russia’s determination and confidence to carry out a large-scale military assault on a neighboring country in spite of a worldwide condemnation and to the gross detriment to its relation with the West. At the end of the Putin’s second term in office, Russia’s relations with

⁵² Sergei Stankevich, “A power in Search of Itself”, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 28, 1992

⁵³ Andranik Migranian, “Real and Illusory Guidelines in Foreign Policy”, *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, August 4, 1992

⁵⁴ More on the distinction between Russia’s foreign policy schools of thought see Tsygankov (2006, Chapter 1)

the West have been marked by low level of trust and mutual understanding while the quest on the part of the Russian leadership to be taken seriously in the world affairs has become firmly an enduring feature of its international behavior. So that “Russia does not set itself up as an *alternative* to the West; but it does claim *autonomy*...While the West wants Russia to be a junior partner, Russia insists that it is a separate power in its own right” (Sakwa 2008:246)

The Kremlin’s most recent foreign-policy doctrine outlines the plans to establish a world in which Russia will be ‘mutually dependent’ on other big powers with the EU and US as the most desirable partners (McDermott, 2010). It has been noted in particular that Russia is on its course of foreign policy adjustment towards a greater engagement with the West, yet at the same time, self-assertiveness and self-confidence of Russia’s ruling elites remains intact (Secieru, 2009).

The foreign policy moves under the Putin regime that were propelled by a centralized and stronger authority in Russia have been extensively described as being aggressive: gas cut-offs and pressure on Ukraine, cyber-attacks on Estonia, constant anti-American rhetoric, use of military force in Georgia, a danger of a ‘new arms race’. So that many scholars in the West began to speak of the revival of the Cold War (see for example Brzezinski 2004; Satter 2007; Hoagland 2007; Lucas 2008). On the other hand, Russian officials and scholars have tended to be more assured that Russia’s newly active foreign policy behavior is beneficial for Russia and for the world (see for example Ivanov 2003; Primakov 2006; Degoev 2006; Baluyevsky 2003).

Scholars such as Tsygankov (2009) posit that Western scholars and policy analysts have often misinterpreted the intentions and policies of Russia. Russia’s relations with the West define much of Russia’s foreign policy and national interest. He argues that Russia’s power maximization ventures have come as a result of the inability or reluctance on the part of the West to engage Russia multilaterally.

According to Tsygankov, in a historical perspective, from Alexander I’s Holy Alliance, through the Bolsheviks’ strong support for a collective security system in Europe to prevent the rise of fascism, the Soviet global security initiatives, Gorbachev’s ‘common European home’ idea, Kozyrev’s calls to develop ‘natural partnership’ with Western countries, to Putin’s policy of assertiveness, there are indications that Russia, while searching to strengthen its material capabilities, at the same time has sought to combine these with ideas of global governance. The recent international assertiveness of Russia is one of many instances when “it has strived to bridge principles of multilateral decision-making with those of multipolar balance of power” (p.51).

Former Russian President Medvedev put forward some concrete proposals about

NATO and Russia sharing responsibility for security in Europe, particularly information sharing and jointly managing defense systems. In his speech in Berlin in 2008, Medvedev called for a new comprehensive security architecture that would encompass broader security alliances, including a new European security treaty in order to upgrade Cold War-era security arrangements⁵⁵. In the words of Dmitry Medvedev, the most important consequence of the war in Georgia is that on August 8, 2008 a previous security architecture ceased to exist. Russia is calling on a creation of a new architecture based on multipolarity that does not allow any one country to dominate. According to a number of scholars, these new proposals have epitomized Russia's latest efforts to reassert itself on the world stage, as a 'joiner' that seeks to normalize its relations with the world (Goldgeier and McFaul 2004, Sakwa 2008).

The idea that Russia's foreign policy became more assertive was strongly reinforced by August 2008 event that culminated in Russia's military invasion of Georgia. In general, peace is closely linked to those norms and institutions that are widely associated with democracies. From chapter 3 we have learned that authoritarian states are on the whole less constrained internally than are democracies and thus are more likely to engage in conflict.

Russia's basic principle of the world politics largely rests on traditional Westphalian notion of sovereignty, as juxtaposed to 'liberal interventionist' notion predominant in the West. So that "Russian foreign policy discussions tend to focus on the need to make the world more stable rather than on the development of a universal model of government." (Bordachev 2009:65)

The West's approach of using preventive force around the world is regarded by Kremlin as a strategic threat to Russia. NATO's active engagement with other former Soviet Union countries around Russia, the US unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and the planned deployment of American ballistic missile defence (BMD) components to the Czech Republic and Poland have remained the main points of contention between Russia and the West.

Stratfor (2012) describes current US-Russia relations as 'incredibly tense', with the central point of contention being the US BMD plans. The US BMD systems are scheduled to become operational in Romania in 2015 and in Poland in 2018. The US claims that the systems are intended to counter the rising threat from Iran. For Russia, "BMD means a physical US military presence in the region, showing Washington's security commitment to Central Europe against a strengthening Russia." As a response, Kremlin offered to join

⁵⁵ "Russia Unveils Proposal For European Security Treaty", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 8,2009, http://www.rfrl.org/content/Russia_Unveils_Proposal_For_European_Security_Treaty/1891161.html

together its BMD system with NATO's defense system, a proposal that was rejected by Washington, aggravating further Russia's suspicions of the US factual intentions and triggering a number of countermeasures on the part of Russia. Kremlin has threatened to cut off the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), the only one large supply network, through which shipments of fuel and supplies for the NATO-led war effort (more than 130,000 US and allied troops) in Afghanistan takes place.

f. The role of security and military elite

Particularly during Putin's second term in office (2004-2008), there was a growing number of *siloviki*, members of various internal security forces of the former KGB, working in the MFA, thus raising the influence of power structures on foreign policy decision-making (Mankoff 2009, Chapter 2). A substantial number of appointments of those with KGB background has led to a conviction by a number of scholars that the foreign policy making would be influenced by a certain kind of expertise and that precisely this administrative factor might explain the course of the foreign policy of greater assertiveness (see for example Petrov 2002, Kryshchanovska and White 2003). Indeed this factor stands as a contributing element of the course of foreign policy adjustments.

There is in place a substantial degree of influence of post-Soviet security and military elites, who proclaim Russia as a counterbalancing power against the US hegemony and inflate the prevalence of foreign threats. As a result there is constant emphasis on military might. In 2007, a seven-year \$200 billion rearmament plan was adopted, including the acquisition of a new generation of missiles, planes and aircraft-carriers (Sakwa 2008: 251). The government has monopolized the Military Industrial Complex sector through merger of Rosvooruzhenie and Promexport into Rosoboronexport to control export of military equipment to developing countries. The Russian ruling authorities are clearly taking preventing steps to face perceived internal and external threats to its order and stability. Putin has made large-scale military modernization one of his top priorities as part of this vision of national security policy, promising to add in the next 10 years 400 intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, including eight ballistic missile submarines, with plans to increase the percentage of contracted servicemen up to 70% in the next five years' time (Trenin 2012) There was a rising trend in the amount of resources that the military, security and state enforcement agencies have been receiving:

Militarization of the State Budget of Russian Federation

State budget expenditures, annually, in %	2009	2011	2014
National defense	12.3	13.9	18.8
National security and law enforcement	10.4	11.3	14.2
National economy	17.1	16.2	11.3
Housing and communal	1.6	2.1	0.5
Education	4.3	5.1	3.4
Cultural sphere	1.2	0.8	0.6
Healthcare	3.6	4.6	3.2
Interbudgetary transfers to regions and municipalities	37.2	5.2	3.4

Source: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 12 December 2011, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation, www.ng.ru/economics/2011-12-30/4_militarizaciya.html

The principle domestic drivers of Russia's foreign policy presented above come to project a significant enough influence on the course of Russia's international behavior. *By stressing the role of domestic factors in the making of foreign policy, this study does not imply that internal factors are the only variable influencing all of Russia's foreign policy aims and capabilities.* The international system's fundamental components shifted considerably in the

last few years and a number of critical international factors stand to play a significant role in foreign policymaking of Russia.

In the early 21-century, the US remains the world's sole military might. However, its ability to claim global leadership has been seriously shattered by the loss of moral authority following the disaster of Iraq, Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. The US military forces have withdrawn from Iraq, leading to a shift in the region with Iran potentially asserting more influence there. The ensuing war in Afghanistan remains complicated and NATO casualties are on the rise. Russian policymakers and scholars have pointed to what they perceive to be the US's long drawn out preoccupation with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11 global war on terror, which seemingly puts limits on the US geopolitical ambitions.⁵⁶ Indeed the situation in Afghanistan, Iran nuclear issue, the war on terrorism, and internal economic state of affairs will remain priority on Washington's domestic and foreign agenda for a foreseeable future.

Moreover, with the global recession in place, the European Union's position as a global player has been considerably shattered, as the eurozone crisis will continue well into 2012. The global financial crisis has demonstrated the weakness of the neo-liberal 'Washington consensus' and inability on the part of the Western led international financial architecture to regulate global finance and foster development.

As Russia seeks deeper economic integration with the rest of the world, its national economy too is becoming quite vulnerable in the age of globalization when trade, communication, and financial linkages create a deeper state of interdependence sufficiently limiting national policymakers' freedom of action. This in turn should stimulate the Russian authorities to seek stronger economic cooperation internationally.

Scholars such as Trenin (2001) argue that Russia has no choice but to seek greater integration with the EU and solid relations with the US in order to face regional challenges such as China's growing might and the instability of the Islamic south. Indeed, *the course of Russia's foreign policy has been characterized on the one hand by a steady engagement with the West on central issues of mutual concern, such as terrorism and economic cooperation, and on the other hand, marked equally by a degree of tension with the West as far as its geopolitical assertiveness is concerned*. So that "nearly two decades since the fall of communism...a satisfactory balance between integration and autonomy [in its relationship with the West] has not yet been found" (Sakwa 2008: 242). Nowhere has this tension in relation with the West

⁵⁶ Bogaturov, A. (2007) "Lovushki detsentralizatsii: V SShA vozvrashaetsya mysl' o privlekatel'nosti shirokikh koalitsii," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 5 February

been more pronounced than in case of Russia's claim to have an advantaged position in the region of former Soviet Union. Following the war in Georgia in 2008, President Medvedev explicitly asserted that "Russia, like other countries of the world, has regions in which it maintains privileged interests".⁵⁷

Russia in its 'Near Abroad': promoting autocracy while furthering national and commercial interests

The 'near abroad' states are the non-Baltic former Soviet republics, which throughout the 1990's were on the periphery of Russia's immediate foreign policy concerns. Thus, initially the policy towards the former Soviet republics remained largely neglected. At that time, Russia was concentrated on relations with the West instead. Gradually however the Kremlin began to shift its attention increasingly to the 'near abroad'.

Authoritarian rulers in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have all received unwavering support from Russia, while it sought to further undermine democratic practices in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. Russia has succeeded in limiting the degree of influence of external forces in much of the former Soviet Union and has firmly become the dominant player there, amidst a substantial shift in US foreign policy focus to the Islamic world away from Eurasia, leading a scholar to stress that "Russia's influence on the political systems of former Soviet republics must be considered a fact" (Kastner 2010).

At the contemporary stage, Russia has managed to install a rather consistent political-military strategy particularly towards Central Asian countries in the view of the EU's and NATO's enlargement, missile defense in Europe, and the presence of foreign military bases in the region. The deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan, and the August 2008 Georgia war have further contributed to the resurgence of Russia in the Eurasian region. At the same time, Gazprom's activities in the region and Moscow's aggressive energy cooperation strategy have begun to turn the region into a special target of Russia's energy, and economic expansion. In order to exert further influence over neighbouring countries, Putin proposed close economic integration with Belarus and Kazakhstan, elevating the Customs Union to the Eurasian Economic Union. Growing multilateralism in Russian foreign

⁵⁷ Dmitry Medvedev, "Interv'yu Dmitriya Medvedeva telekanalam 'Rossiya', Pervomu, NTV", 31 August, 2008, http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/08/31/1917_type63374type63379_205991.shtml

policy was evident in its effort to strengthen both the regional Collective Security Treaty Organization and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The Russian leadership has managed to strengthen its influence in its neighboring region through a combination of 'hard' and 'soft' power⁵⁸ and export its model of managed or 'sovereign' democracy there as well. It is conventionally believed that Russia has no soft power. There are however mechanisms of influence and attraction that Russia has crafted to establish informal networks, business links, state-corporate relations, civilizational affinities and linguistic ties. The Russian language persists as a regional lingua franca; it is the language of commerce, employment and education for many countries in the former Soviet region.

Furthermore, populations of regional countries are attracted to the Russian popular culture, which spreads through satellite TV; there is a growing film industry, rock music, popular literature and the rich artistic tradition. Also, Russian consumer goods have begun to dominate regional markets. In the course of the last several years, a vast number of immigrants from Eurasia came to Russia in search of work. Hill (2004) claims that Russia's greatest contribution to the security and stability of its vulnerable southern neighbors has been through absorbing the surplus labor of these states, providing markets for their goods, and transferring funds in the form of remittances (rather than foreign aid).

Russia-financed NGOs and think tanks have emerged in many CIS countries. What 'soft power' instruments are at the disposal of the Kremlin in order to spread its ideology? These include media outlets, youth movements, pro-Kremlin Internet websites, expert networks, regular conferences and publishing houses. Putin himself stands in active support of promoting Russian language and culture, foremost in other former Soviet countries, by forming in 2005 the "department of interregional and cultural relations with foreign countries and the CIS" (Mereu 2005). The 'soft power' machine created by the Russian state is described as "the new face of 'smart authoritarianism' that speaks the language of Western norms and is very flexible, but has very little to do with the values of democracy, Eastern- or Western-style" (Popescu 2006:2).

Similarly to Ambrosio's (2009) main theorizing presented throughout the previous chapters, Jackson (2010) advances the argument that external factors that constitute indirect diffusion and direct promotion, while having an influence on regimes to democratize, also

⁵⁸ 'Soft power' defined by Joseph S. Nye as the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion". Nye argues that 'soft power' originates from three resources: "a state's culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (where it lives up to them at home and abroad) and its foreign policies (where they are seen as legitimate and having more authority)".

have an impact on maintaining and/or entrenching authoritarian form of rule. Russia as a dominant regional power has had an impact on the strengthening of centralized rule especially in the countries of Central Asia. *The influence has taken shape in the form of deliberate as well as unintentional actions on the part of Russia to prompt up regimes in the neighboring states.*

For instance, Moscow extended unconditional support to Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov following the Andijon massacre, whereas the West strongly condemned the repressive actions of the Uzbek authorities and pressed Karimov for an independent investigation of the incident.⁵⁹ The difference in external reaction to the Andijon events on the part of Russia and the West has played well into the hands of the former. Karimov shifted his position and sought closer military ties with Russia, permitting the stationing of a Russian military base on in his country in exchange for substantial financial aid from Moscow, while at the same time ordering that the US vacate its military base in the city of Manas. Thus, Russia has gained an upper hand in the region, by its ability to cozy up to the authoritarian leaders of Central Asia as a significant advantage over the West.

Jackson (2010) argues further that there is no 'coherent or a deliberate agenda of 'autocratization' *per se* that would characterize Russia's support of the neighboring regimes. Close military and security ties of Russia with the countries of Central Asia have reinforced these states' coercive capabilities vis-à-vis its societies. Russia's political, diplomatic, economic support mainly contributes to legitimization of current regimes particularly in Central Asia and an encouragement of the status quo. There is also at play a strong factor that unites authoritarian regimes, particularly in the case of Russia and its Central Asian neighbors following the Colored revolutions of 2003-2005 period – an aggravation in a strong perception of a threat to the stability of a regime.

Shapovalova and Zarembo (2010) argue that "Russia is not interested in bolstering a particular type of regime within its 'sphere of privileged interests' as an end in itself" ...the main aim is to "*establish a Russia-dependent government*." Russia is adept at utilizing either promotion of autocracy tactic or supporting democracy in its neighboring countries, 'depending on what best suits its interest'. In case of its relations with Belarus, it was noted that Russia has sought to weaken President Lukashenko's regime during the stages of ruptured relations between the two countries. Kremlin is said to have engaged with the

⁵⁹ In May 2005 a bloody uprising in the city of Andijon in Uzbekistan took place and it was met with massive retaliation by government forces, which led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians and the displacement of thousands more. Andijon became a symbol of Uzbek repression under Karimov.

Belarusian opposition to pressure Lukashenko, financed Belarussian civil society campaigns, and launching a media campaign that depicted Lukashenko as an oppressive dictator. Similar 'democracy rhetoric' tactics, closely resembling West's democratization discourse and agenda, are said to have been used by Russia against Kyrgyz former president Kurmanbek Bakiyev. From these instances, it is logical to infer that in its relations with the neighboring states, Russia is much more concerned about control and access to resources, than about ideology as such.

Yet, it suffices to ponder whether Russia actively exports certain ideas and norms, particularly in its regional neighborhood? The political elites of Central Asian nations, while having rejected Western ideas of liberal democracy and human rights and remain skeptical of the aims of Western democratization efforts, have actively adopted Kremlin's ideas about "legitimacy, authority, respect, order, and sovereignty...because they already existed locally and enhanced the authority and legitimacy of the governing elite" (Jackson 2010:104)

Recently Russia's Foreign Ministry has released a thorough report, overviewing human rights situation in countries around the world. The report starts with the criticism of the US, stating that human rights abuses by the US government, including violations of the law of war and disproportionate use of force, are "far from the ideals declared by Washington...the main unresolved problem is the odious prison in Guantanamo Bay, secret US prisons in Europe, unauthorized surveillance of American citizens and racial and religious discrimination".

The report also targets in particular countries of the Baltic region, which are said to grossly violate the rights of ethnic Russian minorities, as well as Georgia for violating minority rights, and forced resettlements as well as putting down peaceful protests. The report concludes with the focus on the violation of international law in the course of NATO operation in Lybia with the blame being placed on NATO and the Lybian rebels⁶⁰. It's a first time that such a report is issued by the Russian authorities and clearly shows that Russia criticizes the democratic credentials of other countries for the most part so as to divert external criticism away from itself, as noted by Ambrosio (2009).

Bader *et.al.* (2010: 85) ponder specifically a theoretical argumentation of the problem of autocracy promotion by authoritarian regional powers and argue generally that governments overall are not indifferent with respect to the political regime type of other states, especially those in their immediate neighborhood and tend to "develop a preference towards systems convergence, in particular in their regional environment", in cases of

⁶⁰ Doklad MID Rossii "O situazii s pravami cheloveka v riade gosudarstv mira", 28 December, 2011, <http://www.mid.ru>

politically unstable countries. Yet at the same time it is argued that by the logic of a rational-choice model, according to which foreign policy preferences are the direct result of a government's interest in domestic political survival, "authoritarian and democratic powers alike tend to be driven by an overarching preference for 'stability' in foreign relations", i.e. regional powers favor the continuation of the status quo, with a stable domestic environment prevailing in the other states, without a consideration of the form of government existing in that state.

In relation to the case study on Russia, the scholars argue that Russia's authoritarian turn has caused it to prefer similar forms of regime in the other former Soviet states. In particular the cases of Georgia and Kyrgystan exemplify how pressure for system convergence was applied on the part of Russia, as both countries were relatively weak states, which made the costs of regime change strategy relatively low.

Russia and other authoritarian states

On several occasions former foreign minister Primakov entertained an idea of creating a counter-hegemonic alliance of countries such as Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba, China, those distrustful and hostile to the United States and upholding the notion of absolute sovereignty and noninterference in domestic affairs (Mankoff 2009: 30). As emphasized throughout the present study, *Russia is one of the major forces behind 'authoritarian backlash' against international democracy promotion on the domestic level and on the international scale as well.* Ambrosio's (2009) analysis presented in Chapter 3 reveals that Russia, being an authoritarian regime, is actively confronting democratization at the international level. Furthermore, Russia serves as a potential model and an ally for those authoritarian countries that are resisting democratic pressures from the West.

Silitski's (2006) analysis in similar vein emphasizes what he sees as the 'rise of the authoritarian internationale' specifically in the post-Soviet Eurasian region, a trend that follows the efforts on the part of authoritarian regimes to take preemptive actions in order to combat the democratic contagion resulting in the so-called *preemptive authoritarianism*, defined by Silitski as "a strategy to combat the democratic contagion that is pursued in anticipation of a political challenge, even when there is no immediate danger of a regime change". It is precisely this preemptive strategy that externally leads to cooperation between non-democratic regimes. At the international level, the leading authoritarian regimes are targeting regional and international organization, such as UN, OSCE, OAS, in order to hinder

their human rights and democracy promotion agendas (Freedom House 2009).

Scholars on the 'autocratic peace', presented in Chapter 3, argue that there may be a separate peace among authoritarian regimes, even if not as robust as the one found among democracies. For there prevails a common interest among such regimes to cooperate more closely among themselves in preserving their rule. Russia's foreign policy has been directed at times deliberately towards strengthening ties with non-democracies. Dealing with authoritarian regimes may be relatively straightforward and unproblematic. China's traditional preoccupation with "foreign devils" makes it a natural partner for Russia as both have strived for a multipolar world, argues Kalb (2012). The current situation in Syria stands as a contending issue and as an example of Russia's most recent retreat from cooperation with the West and as some observers claim (see for example Kaufmann 2012) a stark instance of autocratic regimes propping up another authoritarian regime, namely Russia and China supporting Syria.

Scholars like Burnell (2006) point to the inadvertent and involuntary role that China plays, while seeking to pursue solely economic interests, in fostering what he terms 'anti-democracy promotion'. Thus, Burnell's argument suggests that authoritarian regimes such as China, are not actively campaigning against democracy abroad. This argument is reinforced by Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small' (2008) observation of a significant change in the last few years in China's diplomacy towards pariah regimes. China continues to proclaim and uphold a general policy of nonintervention, which suggests that there is a limit to how far China may be involved globally, beyond financial and economic spheres⁶¹.

In the similar fashion, Carothers (2009) argues that China's foreign policy is "more mercantilist than pro-authoritarian." Furthermore, Mankoff (2009:301) claims that "in some ways, China's view of the international order has more in common with that of the Western powers than with that of Russia...Despite its authoritarian tendencies, China has more to gain from partnering with the West in a globalized world than from seeking to overturn a global order that has made it one of the fastest-growing, most dynamic countries in the world in just over a generation." Mankoff's argument is quite cogent and reveals *the state of current global economic and financial interdependence in which financial-market movements can overwhelm*

⁶¹ China's 2011 move to buy up euro zone debt by bolstering Europe's Financial Stability Facility may well be a sign of the West's growing need for China's international engagement. China's Central Bank is expected to make a 100 billion euro contribution but Beijing has also made it clear that its help will not come without conditions. Source: "China pledges to keep buying eurozone debt", *The Telegraph*, 15 February 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/9083297/China-pledges-to-keep-buying-eurozone-debt.html>

most countries, especially the largest economies such as the US and China. So that should China's Central Bank for some reason reject US Treasury bonds, this would in turn cause interest rates to rise leading to the recession in the US economy. In turn, the Chinese economy would be in serious economic trouble should the US choose not to import Chinese products.

In this context it suffices to reiterate that Russia, like many other countries, depends significantly on the world economy and has increasingly become more interconnected (as stressed in the previous chapter) particularly so following its much-awaited accession to the WTO in late 2011. This in turn imposes limits on its ability to carry out a foreign policy course that would be run counter to its proclaimed goal of becoming a strong global power with viable and self-sufficient economic and financial system.

Conclusion

Throughout the analysis presented on Russia in both Chapter 4 and 5 of this study, the idea was to examine the nature of the authoritarian rule in Russia and its linkage to Kremlin's foreign policy behavior. A change in a regime type in the Russian political setting has given birth to a particular foreign policy course, motivated largely as it was by domestic considerations. The study has sought to explore how domestic regime type influences foreign policy behavior of Russia.

The idea was to examine the way in which authoritarian political rule shapes Russia's foreign policy, its relation with the West and its policy in its 'near abroad'. Russia is authoritarian regime, bordering to its south by equally authoritarian regimes. Observers tend to point to a direct connection between the Putin regime's domestic agenda of building a supreme state and what appears as at times an expansionist and neo-imperialist external behavior of Kremlin.

As we have seen, Yeltsin's Russia was dependent on the Western aid and support and thus the foreign policy course was more contingent on Russia's domestic development priorities. The idea was to make Russia a member of the community of developed democratic states of the West, taking on an active role in addressing acute global economic, political, social, environmental and nuclear security issues. Under Putin, foreign policy became more independent and pronounced. In turn, many in the West have interpreted Russia's new assertiveness as a challenge to the West and a sign of its hegemonic ambitions. Russia stands in staunch defense of its 'privileged' position in its Near Abroad and seeks other powers recognize its primacy in the former Soviet Union region.

Foreign policy under Putin was coherent and independent. The rise of autocracy in Russia has led to 'monopoly' by central state over foreign policy decision-making, largely displacing various actors from decision-making process, such as parties, private sector and technical experts, thereby "embedding" key institutions with like-minded ideologues (to use Corrales (2009) terminology with regards to case study on Venezuela's foreign policy)

A number of scholars (see for example Mankoff 2009, Tsygankov 2010) note that ideas and preferences driving Russian foreign policy have broadly remained unaltered and there is a visible trend of continuity in Russian foreign policy behavior from at least the mid-1990s well into Medvedev's presidency. Indeed, the Russian ruling elites continue to proclaim Russia as a great power with national interests in a traditional sense of the word, as surviving in the international system of states, the relationship among which is in part defined according to traditional measures of power.

The world outside is portrayed as being hostile, and the country is always faced with new challenges and threats to its security, requiring a strong state with a strong military. In the recent years the Kremlin has taken steps to boost Russia's military strength, the budget allocations are enormous. Building up militarily is regarded as essential to keeping the status of a great power with influence in world affairs.

Such great power rhetoric and the identification of 'new enemies' has dominated Putin's pre-march 2012 presidential election campaign as a candidate. According to Putin: "the world is facing a growing 'cult of violence' in international affairs and warned the West against interference in Russia by stressing that Moscow must not let events like those in Libya and Syria be repeated in Russia.⁶² Thus, quite bluntly, Putin is planting anti-US sentiments across the population. Moreover, in his presidential campaign program 2012-2018 "Strong Russia in a complex world", Putin lays main emphases on Russia' integration projects in the post-Soviet Union region, especially the creation of the Eurasian Union, as analogous to the European Union.

The intellectual disposition to portray Russia as a great power is an ever-present ambition among the ruling elite. Although as we have learned the country is faced with a wealth of remaining domestic challenges and constraints that greatly impedes its ability to boost significantly its standing on the world stage. "Russia's internal health determines its destiny among the nations of the earth" (Chambers 2010:125).

⁶² Inga Umasheva, VestiFM, "Vladimir Putin obespokoen mirovim kultom nasilia", February 8, 2012, <http://www.radiovesti.ru/articles/2012-02-08/fm/32778>

This would ultimately require dismantling a highly entrenched system of corruption, patronage and cronyism that permeates throughout the ruling government and the whole socio-economic system of governance. Resolving this gross problem requires public oversight, which remains quite weak, and this can be done only with greater freedom afforded to mass media, a greater independent role for the Parliament and a more involved role for civil bodies. The inability of the ruling elite to address these fundamental flaws and shortcomings of the existing system, will further ignite public frustration and stand to potential incite further mass protests that have taken place in recent months (*discussed in the previous Chapter*). At the same time, endemic corruption is widely known to prevent foreign investment and Russia has already seen a net capital outflow of \$84 billion in 2011.⁶³

Russia is an enormous country and the Kremlin must maintain and sustain an extensive welfare system, a vast bureaucracy, a modernizing military, while addressing the alarming trends of impending epidemics of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, low life expectancy and high infant mortality. Indeed, *Russia's great power status will be primarily determined by its ability to address acute domestic challenges and the ability to maintain strong economic capacity*. However, one expects a *measurably bolder stance of the Russian leadership in various dimensions of its foreign policy course to persist well into the future with however limited resources at its disposal*.

⁶³ Jason Bush, "Putin's state sector crackdown: more show than substance", *Reuters*, 16 February 2012

Conclusion

The study has sought to weave out internal and external forces affecting political governance in autocracies. *One of the central points woven throughout the analysis was that authoritarian regime stability in Russia is brought about by the prevalence and interplay of domestic and external factors.*

The present analysis has sought to synthesize and examine the growing theoretical and empirical studies on autocratic rule, bringing together the fields of comparative politics and international relations. The analysis has sought to contribute to the existing body of in-depth comparative studies on authoritarian rule that habituates fairly successfully in the democratization era of today. *Understanding the essence of authoritarian rule is crucial in order to comprehend regime dynamics, causes, consequences and possibilities of change, if any, towards democracy.*

Authoritarian regimes are less studied in political science than democracies and the aim of the present study was to bring together a growing field of literature dealing with autocratic politics. This study has applied a descriptive and analytical approach in its research methodology in order to form theoretical claims and apply them to the case study on Russia. Assessing the more recent political regime dynamics in Russia in detail is necessitated in order to shed more light on the widespread scholarly speculation about the role and influence of leading authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes such as Russia on the international politics.

A number of branches of literature were taken into account in addressing the issue of authoritarian politics, namely scholarship on current democratization trends, appeal and legitimacy of democracy as a regime type in general, prevailing findings in democratization scholarship (*Chapter 1*) and scholarship on contemporary authoritarian regimes and role of regime type in international politics (*Chapter 2 and 3*). At the beginning, the analysis has assessed global democratization trends and laid out main theoretical and empirical arguments on democracy's global advancement. Within this context, it was shown that the democratization process is not a smooth and teleological one. The diagnose of a 'democratic retreat' and 'authoritarian backlash' by a number of prominent scholars in the field of democratization studies appear to be sound given the overall state of the global political landscape and some more recent trends regionally and at a country-level of analysis.

The study highlighted sources of resilience of authoritarian type of rule, stressing both domestic and international variables. We have seen how under certain conditions

authoritarian regimes can last – they are not merely diminished forms of democracy – mutating into a new form of authoritarian rule that combines formal democratic institutions with autocratic practices. The scholarship presented cogently underscores the failure of a ‘transition paradigm’ to account for divergence in political trajectories, for alternative political outcomes that may not lead inevitably to liberal democracy. The ‘third wave’ of global democratization has led to the creation of some types of democracy, yet at the same time gave birth to new forms of authoritarianism that cannot be categorized the same way as classic types of one-party, military, or personal dictatorship. Comparative politics scholars have been developing new concepts and data to address one of the central issues in the field, namely what shape and form authoritarian rule takes on.

The most distinctive features of contemporary authoritarians are that they adopt basic institutional forms of democracy, allow some degree of political pluralism, yet systematically violate basic democratic standards, primarily by manipulating electoral outcomes in order to sustain their rule. Highlighting specific traits of non-democratic form of rule involves categorizations and typologies. It also involves asking *why and how* such types of regimes persist in the age of globalization.

On the domestic level, authoritarianism is primarily protracted by the ruling elite’s capacity to maintaining elite cohesion by the means of policy concessions, distribution of patronage and privileges, manipulation of political institutions such as legislature and parties to maintain elite unity, and the effectiveness of state coercive capacity.

At the same time it was argued that *international factors* are quite significant in sustaining and prolonging authoritarian rule as well, amongst the most decisive are the undermined legitimacy of international democracy promotion campaign, level of linkage with the West, and the ruling elite’s active campaign of barring external forces that strengthen and sustain regime opposition.

While the basic level of analysis of authoritarian endurance remains largely domestic, external factors are increasingly gaining prominence. It is argued that much more scholarly attention should be directed to examination of international factors that are increasingly playing a far greater role in prolonging authoritarian rule. At the same time the discussion on the phenomenon of authoritarianism is taken to the international level of analysis and an equally important question has been posed relating to authoritarian states’ international behavior in relation to their internal dynamics. This has essentially been carried out through the prism of the democratic peace paradigm, and it was argued that the paradigm has a high potential to greatly contribute to our understanding of the democracy-autocracy dichotomy.

As far as conflict propensity is concerned, the relevant scholarship on 'autocratic peace' has generally revealed that authoritarian regimes behave different depending on their types.

Furthermore given that authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China are, arguably, ascending at the international stage and their influence has considerably expanded, the analysis has sought to highlight the prevailing discourse on what this means for the discussion on the relationship between regime type and foreign policy behavior. In particular, considerable attention has been paid to the notion of a plausible 'authoritarian backlash' against democracy promotion at the international level. The original works by Diamond(2008), Ambrosio (2009) and Burnell (2010) have especially been highlighted for their examination of the relationship between the international level, democratization and authoritarianism.

The major theoretical and empirical findings on authoritarianism's international outreach, as underdeveloped and recent as they are, highlight essentially two significant tendencies, namely that:

- * authoritarian states' international behavior is clearly influenced by the logic of their domestic politics. As a result the ruling elite form a distinct foreign policy vision that champions an idea of the world where nations do not interfere in one another's affairs, seeking to protect regime sovereignty and ensure that West' democracy promotion endeavor is delegitimized, at the same time promoting authoritarian state-led economic development.
- * while the claims of an active autocratic resistance to the spread of democracy globally remains contentious, support for autocratization abroad does take place, with non-democratic forms of rule being contagious across borders, which in turn raises some concerns about the implications for the spread of democracy and democracy promotion campaign.

The case of Russia (*Chapter 4 and 5*) has supported generally the major theoretical claims of the present analysis and has sought to unravel how and which internal and external factors influence the political situation in the country and at the same time examine further how Russia's political system influences its foreign policy course. Chapter 4 has portrayed the nature of a political regime in Russia and specific factors that since the early 1990s have contributed to solidification of authoritarian trends. *The centralized power vested in the Putin regime holds together a quite cohesive state apparatus, a firm grip on the economy, while at the*

same time paying much attention to disguising authoritarian personalized rule as democracy to the Russian public.

It was argued that leadership personality plays a quite significant role in the context of any discourse on Russia's current political system. Making all the more relevant the question of who governs the country? At the same time, the very notion of a political 'regime' as a system of governance, utilized throughout this study, highlights the importance of posing the question of how a country is governed, which crucially involves a discussion that would encompass a wider set of determinative factors apart from incumbent state leadership, to include the domestic institutional setting, policies and rules.

The 2011-2012 election cycle in Russia has been an intense political season that has attracted a great deal of media and scholarly attention; for the first time in the last twenty years the country has seen the biggest public rallies with the Russian public suddenly becoming politically active. The analysis has attributed this phenomenon to a 'voter fatigue' factor, i.e. realization on the part of the society that Putin will be in the office for a long period of time.

Overall, by all measures the public support for the political regime has indeed markedly fallen, but it should be recalled that *previously it was quite high enabling a further support of the system of government by a substantial percentage of Russians at least in the medium term future.* The societal dissatisfaction has notably grown since the late 2010, but opposition strength is quite weak and unable to foster a coherent and influential force to face the ruling regime.

There is no doubt that Russia today is an authoritarian country. *The prevailing Russian regime is proving resilient and will most likely endure well into the future precisely because the kind of authoritarianism that exists there has incongruous elements that are at odds with each other: on the one hand, the regime appears to be stable and in control, while on the other hand, keeping its borders open, allowing its people free travel and use freely the Internet.* The 2012 March presidential elections in Russia has led to Putin's securing six years in power, with Russian political regime on the way to cementing its authoritarian traits and one should expect further curtailing of foreign influence on domestic politics.

This study has argued that Putin remains one of the most important political figures, who makes decisions within a limited circle of a ruling group that includes former President Medvedev and other players from the security, law enforcement and business community. As Paul H. Lewis (1978) argues however: "Regardless of how powerful dictators are, the complexities of modern society and government make it impossible for them to rule alone.

They may dominate their respective systems, but some of their authority must be delegated, which means that a government elite stratum is formed just below them.” The theoretical findings, largely presented in Chapter 2, reveal that the survival of most authoritarian leaders depends predominately on an ability to maintain cohesion among the elites. In this regard, Putin must ensure the satisfaction of elites and deter elite defections.

Wegren and Herspring (2010: 293) speak of a distinctive mind-set of Russian ruling elite, one that defines an approach towards those who are governed. The four major defining traits of such a mind-set are said to be “mutually reinforcing explain the incomplete democratization in Russia” and include “a feeling of insecurity among the top political elite; a distrust of genuine democracy by that elite; a fear of a ‘color revolution’ in Russia; and the threat of domestic instability, whether from domestic terrorism or domestic political opposition.”

Is political change possible in Russia? Even though power shifts are less likely, political system is in a state of evolution. It is impossible as of yet to foresee whether a change towards a more liberal regime is possible for Russia in the foreseeable perspective. The ruling regime in Russia will continue the course of pursuing a calibrated economic opening without meaningful political reform. One of the main pillars of legitimacy of the ruling elite is economic wellbeing of the nation. Thus, economic conditions stand to influence the political choices available to its leaders and the types of decisions they will make. Vast oil and gas reserves will continue to prop up an authoritarian regime there.

The authoritarian politics bodes ill for the growth of Russian economy, compromising Russia’s global future economic standing. According to the Nobel economics laureate Paul Krugman, Russia does not belong among the so-called BRIC nations, ‘it’s a petro-economy in terms of world trade...its role in the world right now is not at all similar to China’.⁶⁴ Indeed, *meeting future foreign policy challenges will not prove effective should the Russian authorities choose not to reform the domestic political system.*

Particularly during period of economic crisis that characterize the global outlook today, it is immensely difficult to stimulate and sustain the support of a critical subset of the mass population of Russia by providing necessary financial incentives. By some estimates, prior to the March 4th presidential elections, Putin election campaign promises to the masses, amidst the mass street demonstrations, could cost up to \$161 billion of government spending

⁶⁴ Alena Chechel, “Russia Sees Stalling Economy, Ruble Plunge at \$60 Oil Price”, Bloomberg, 13 September 2011, <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-09-13/russia-sees-stalling-economy-ruble-plunge-at-60-oil-price.html>

through to 2018. Many observers doubt the sustainability of rising public expenditures in the state's finances and point to the risks involved for the macroeconomic stability in the future.⁶⁵ *Country's lingering problems such as population health, demographic dynamics, point to its internal weakness that stands to impede significantly on the ruling elite's aspiration to remain one of the major global powers.*

At the same time the study has sought to outline international factors that protract authoritarianism in Russia's domestic political setting. The prevailing international context stands as a significant factor in determining why Russia's political system has become sternly authoritarian. It was argued that the international environment that has emerged after the end of the Cold War has substantially contributed to autocratization of Russia and a number of the more recent global events stand to further solidify Kremlin's authoritarian rule. Especially noteworthy are the events following the 2003-2005 wave of the so-called 'color revolutions' in three of the former Soviet Union states, particularly that which has taken place in Ukraine, by the end of which Western democracy aid programs were no longer welcomed in the country as the Russian ruling elites have undertaken swift measures to insulate as much as possible their regime from the outside influence.

The 'Arab Spring' events have resonated in Russia quiet strongly as well. The events that have unraveled in the Middle East stand to be of historical significance and the profound transformations that are taking place in the Arab world will take years to show any significant dynamic. Plattner (2011) claims that the revolts that have been extensive throughout the Middle East during 2011 'have already had a dramatic impact on *global perceptions* of the fortunes of democracy'. However, as the situation has progressed in both Tunisia and Egypt, the transitions have proven to be quite difficult and already encountered serious setbacks for democracy. Western scholars were quick to stress that the events in the Middle East triggered a state of fear and loss of self-confidence among authoritarians around the world. Yet at the same time, the events have clearly prompted authoritarian regimes to stand on guard and seek ways to adapt.

While the result of the recent presidential elections as no surprise to many, the future of political regime in Russia designed as it was according to a model of state governance defined by the Putin regime remains an open question. Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 has clear repercussions for the way the political system in Russia will be maintained. Russian

⁶⁵ Howard Amos, "Putin's Election Promises Could Cost \$161Bln", 28 February 2012, *the Moscow Times*, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/putin-election-promises-could-cost-161bln/453759.html> [accessed 29 February 2012]

politics have never been so easily foreseeable and hardly follow conventional wisdom. While this analysis is being carried out, the political situation in Russia continues to evolve following the 2011-2012 election cycle.

The literature is plentiful on Russia's internal transformation, far less attention, however, has been paid to the impact of this transformation on the Russian foreign policy. We have seen in Chapter 5 that foreign policy preferences of Russia are strongly influenced by its domestic politics. It was essentially argued that *Russia's foreign policy was and remains 'domestic' in a sense that it is substantially subordinated to the goals of domestic agenda of consolidating the state and undertaking economic reforms.* At the same time, it is argued that while seeking to secure its national and commercial interests abroad, in its relations with other countries, Russia has sought to promote, at times intentionally, an idea of a strong centralized state, impervious to outside interference in its domestic affairs. The Russian ruling elite advocate a world order, in which there exist alternative political models of development that differ from Western liberal democracy model. Quite significantly, Russia stands in staunch defense of its 'privileged' position in its Near Abroad and seeks other powers recognize its primacy in the former Soviet Union region.

The intellectual disposition to portray Russia as a great power is an ever-present ambition among the ruling elite. Although as we have learned that the country is faced with a wealth of remaining domestic challenges and constraints that greatly impede its ability to boost significantly its standing on the world stage.

Venues for future research

While the basic level of analysis of authoritarian endurance remains largely domestic, external factors are increasingly gaining prominence. It is argued that much more scholarly attention should be directed to examination of international factors are increasingly playing a far greater role in prolonging authoritarian rule. The idea to ponder is that the very forces that are meant to foster globalization, capitalism and increasing international and transnational interdependence and pressures, are equally contributing to the sustaining of authoritarian rule.

There are multiple avenues available for future research on authoritarian regimes. In particular, scholarship in this area would benefit greatly from further in-depth analysis of relationship between types of authoritarian regimes and levels of development and growth. Any future research that links international causes to regime transition could benefit by

undertaking a systematic and comparative approach of cases studies to weave out concrete factors that elicit and strengthen authoritarianism.

The research that deals with the issue of relationship between authoritarianism and corruption is in its nascent stage and there is little in-depth empirical research done in this field. Golden and Chang (2006) analysis on this topic lays emphasis on the idea that corruption prevails more often in personalist type of authoritarian rule as opposed to one-party or military type. This is accounted for by the fact that in personalist dictatorships there is the lack of institutionalized provisions for succession, largely present in other types of authoritarian regimes, which means that the political future of personalist authoritarians is not established, prompting them to seek a short term gain in order to increase one's own personal wealth as well as distribute perks to supporters under few checks on their behavior. Overall however, corruption in personalist dictatorships is still an underdeveloped study that warrants further investigation.

There is a continuing propensity among democratization scholars to argue for an inevitable liberalization of those institutions that authoritarian regimes borrow from democratic countries and that processes of globalization and interconnectedness it fosters take on a homogenizing tendencies. However, such reasoning is contested by an emerging strand of research on external dimension of authoritarianization of political regimes. Namely, Burnell and Schlumberger (2012) analysis is a primary attempt to set future research agendas for an analytical approach to addressing the question of political regime development and the important international dimensions to this topic.

Interviews conducted by the author:

(name, title, organization, date of interview, place of interview)

Dr. Carmen Claudin, Program Director, Centro de Estudios y Documentacion Internacionales de Barcelona (Barcelona Spain), October 2009 in Barcelona, Spain

Michael Emerson, Associate senior research fellow, Center for European Policy Studies (Brussels, Belgium), September - December 2010 in Brussels, Belgium

Professor Daniele Archibugi, Italian National Research Council and University of London, Birkbeck College, October 2010 in Rome, Italy

Felix Krawatzek, visiting researcher at Center for European Policy Studies and MPhil candidate at Oxford University, September 2010, in Brussels, Belgium

Professor Thomas Ambrosio, associate professor of political science at North Dakota state University, email exchanges, February 2011

Professor Dmitri Vasil'ev, Institute of Business and Politics (Moscow Russia), April 2011 in Moscow, Russia

Professor Victor Zavialov, Moscow University of Finance, April 2011 in Moscow, Russia

Professor Leonardo Morlino, LUISS Professor of Political Science, January 2012 in Rome, Italy

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