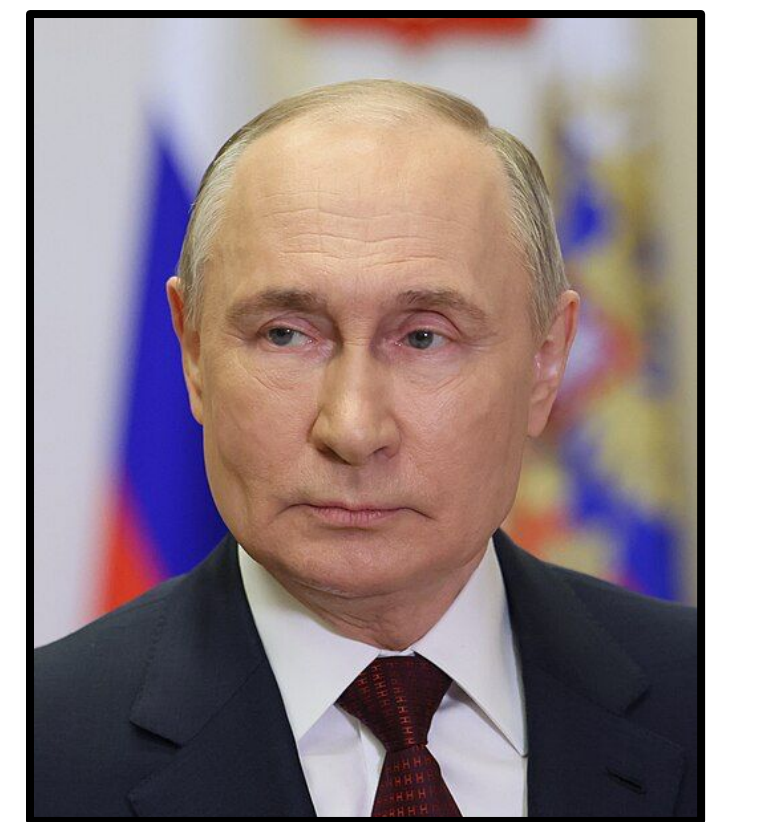


Legitimacy of Authoritarianism

Legitimacy and Institutions in Personalized Authoritarian Regimes

“Nobody and nothing will stop Russia on the road to strengthening democracy” - Vladimir Putin



Abstract

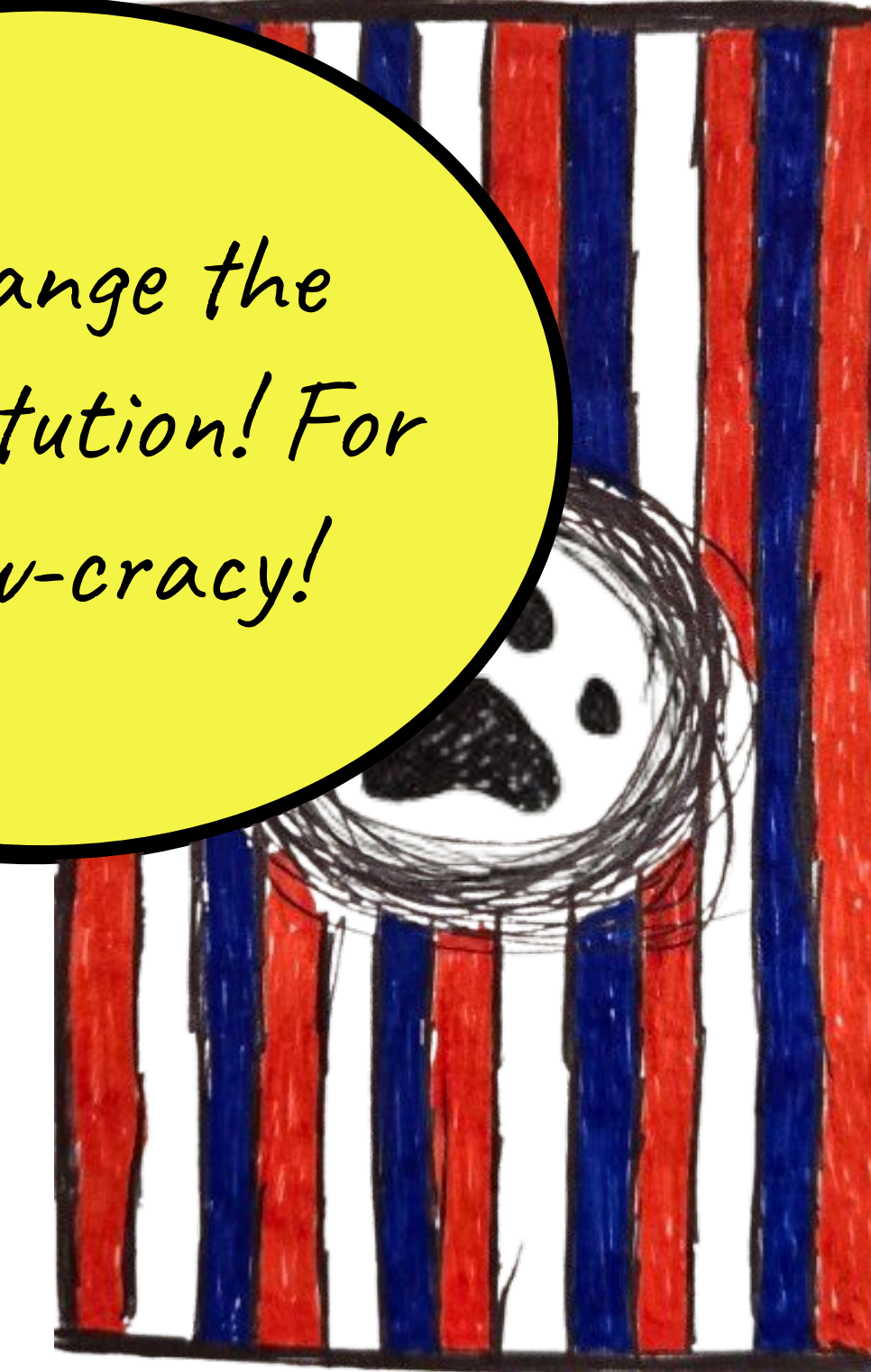
This research focuses on the area of how modern autocratic regimes legitimize themselves using existing social and governing institutions. Using inductive reasoning, this work will perform an examination of the Russian post-Soviet transition towards authoritarianism with Putin's rise to power as a consideration of modern personalist autocracies and their relationship to independent societal institutions. Contemporary regime analysis indicates a trend towards increased personalized regime support at the expense of civil structures and general welfare, indicative of the realization of legitimacy through the ascendancy of personal governing networks, thereby gutting legitimate institutions of power. This contributes to the larger discussion regarding the public support and stability enjoyed by dictatorial regimes and how the transition toward such governments is paved with civil erosion.

Definition of Legitimacy

The “right to rule, where that is understood as correlated with an obligation to obey on the part of those subject to the authority” (Raz 1985, 3)



*Let's change the
claw-stitution! For
De-meow-cracy!*



Popular Values

The values held by a population are influenced by:

- Economic Circumstance
- Education
- Local Urbanization
- Age Demographics
- “Social Capital”

Regime support is more likely under certain conditions, and authoritarians take steps to ensure those conditions are met or otherwise controlled.
Support = Legitimacy

Bureaucratic Friction

Established government has legitimacy through presence. Using existing avenues of democratic friction to suppress opposition keeps the system valid, but the authoritarian in charge.

Abusing Democracy

Many authoritarians are in power by democratic means and stay there by those same means, just warped and abused by informal power, as used to inflict change constitutionally to democratic institutions.

Systemic Control

- Putin's Television - NTV in 2000 - informational media monopoly
- Election Fraud & Power Plays
- Russian Oligarchs & Personal Loyalty
- Constitutional Changes (President until 2036)

Legitimate to Whom?

The goal of propaganda may not be as straight-forward as commonly assumed. Even outlandish claims and unbelievable factoids can go a ways towards making a voter base apathetic to politics as a whole.

Calling the Ukrainian government “Pro-Nazi” may not be convincing, but it does help obscure clarity and obfuscate justification.

Loyalty Over Longevity

Modern authoritarians use the visage of democracy to assert themselves as legitimate rulers of regimes. The key institution here is the electoral system itself, and the means whereby power is initially grasped. Modern autocracies have commonly democratically elected the leader that later became autocrats, as the further steps in the progression is where authoritarianism becomes clear.

Findings & Conclusion

Personalist authoritarian regimes benefit from privatization in the same way that party based regimes benefit from nationalization. The use of institutions to benefit individuals is universally an authoritarian move, but the longevity of the systemic manipulation depends on whether that authority is invested in an individual or a party / ideology.

“Diffuse” VS “Specific” Legitimacy

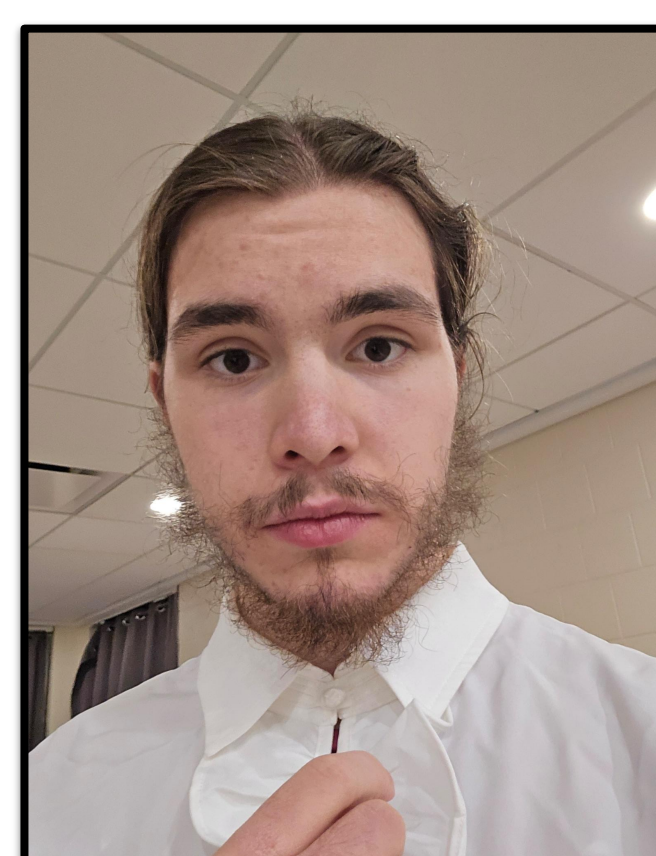
Diffuse:

- How well the system does its job

Specific:

- The right of an individual to be the leader

Nicholas McKeon



Sources
& More Info

