

Towards Authoritarianism?

A case study on the influence of Russia on Kyrgyzstan



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Image on front page: The image has been chosen because it signifies Central Asia between Russia (depicted as a bear) and the West (depicted as a lion). In truth, the picture is about the Afghan emir and Russia on the left and Great Britain on the right during the Great Game in Central Asia. Source: Punch magazine 30 November 1878

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Map of Kyrgyzstan.



Map of Kyrgyzstan (www.nationsonline.org)

1. Introduction

“The ‘contagion’ of the Chinese authoritarian success story might be supported directly and even protected by the alternative economic and financial bids and influence provided by China as an alternative to the democracy conditionality of Western donors.” – (Erdmann 2011)

It seems that next to the promotion of democracy by the West, the promotion of authoritarianism is becoming more prominent in international relations (Erdmann 2011). The promotion of authoritarianism might not be a new phenomenon. The topic has only since recently received any attention in the research field of international relations. For apparent reasons, many researchers have since long focussed on the promotion of democracy, not authoritarianism.

In 2010, Levitsky & Way published a book about competitive authoritarianism. Regimes of this type are neither fully authoritarian, nor are they fully democratic. This type of regime has been the focus of many research, which labelled these regimes for example as illiberal regimes (Vanderhill 2013), electoral authoritarian (Diamond 2002; Schedler 2002) or semi-authoritarian regimes (Ottaway 2003). These competitive authoritarian regimes are interesting because, being on the brink of authoritarianism and democracy, they seem to be more susceptible to democratization efforts, and possibly to the promotion of authoritarianism as well. Levitsky & Way found that in some cases competitive authoritarian regimes did not democratize and remained competitive authoritarian. Other researches on similar cases indicated that these regimes may progress towards authoritarianism (Erdmann 2011). Levitsky & Way explained that one of the reasons why these competitive authoritarian regimes do not democratize, is that they are influenced by other non-democratic regimes, which they label ‘black knights’. Instead of promoting democracy, these black knights, direct or indirectly, promote authoritarianism (Vanderhill 2013: 23).

Yet, how do external actors promote either democracy or authoritarianism abroad? Is there a difference between the promotion of authoritarianism and that of democracy? Levitsky & Way have developed a theory in which they explain the democratic susceptibility of competitive authoritarian regimes. They have come up with three different mechanisms which explain how a competitive authoritarian regime is susceptible to Western democracy promotion efforts. These are the organizational power of the incumbents and the linkage to, and leverage from the West. As said earlier, black knights can countervail the influence of the West on the regime in question. Levitsky & Way however, did not elaborate much on this influence of black knights. Although their theory on the mechanisms behind the influence of Western democracies on competitive authoritarian regimes is pioneering work, they did not hold the same standards for their propositions about black knights.

This thesis will elaborate on the theory of Levitsky & Way concerning the influence of black knights on competitive authoritarian regimes. Instead of using their theory of linkage, leverage and organizational power to investigate the influence from Western democracies on the competitive authoritarian regimes, this theory will be used to investigate the influence from black knights. When combined with the findings of other research on the promotion of authoritarianism, this research can be an addition to the theory of Levitsky & Way on black knights. Furthermore, Levitsky & Way’s enhanced theory on black knights raises new interesting questions which might be a recommendation for future research.

Relevance & Research question

Research on the influence of black knights can help predict the effects of democratization efforts and the possibility that a regime will develop into a full democracy. Moreover, it might suggest that there is such a thing as the promotion of authoritarianism as well. Several researches have indicated that democratization is in fact declining. Some relatively young democracies have even collapsed into authoritarian regimes (Erdmann 2011). Research on the counter-promotion of democracy is scarce and does not offer much tools to perform a good research on these so called black knights.

The first objective of this research is to come up with a more extensive concept of black knights by adding the findings of other recent research. The second objective is to operationalize this concept and test it in a case study by using and enhancing the already existing theory of Levitsky & Way. One major difference is that the theory will be used to look at the relationship between competitive authoritarian regimes and black knights, and not democracies. In order to test that these theoretical adjustments are an improvement and work, a case study has been performed regarding the influence of the Russian Federation¹ on Kyrgyzstan. Russia is considered to be a black knight, whereas Kyrgyzstan fits the competitive authoritarian classification. This leads to the following research question: *Which influence does Russia have on the competitive authoritarian regime in Kyrgyzstan?*

2. The theoretical basis

2.1 The theory of Levitsky & Way explained

Competitive Authoritarianism

After the Cold War, the research field of hybrid regimes was biased by the notion that every state was moving towards democracy. Hybrid regimes were categorised for example as 'incomplete' or 'transitional' democracies, because they had only several characteristics of a democracy. Research on these hybrid regimes was mainly focused on their democratization. However, empirical research has shown that these hybrid regimes are not always moving towards democratization. As a matter of fact, many regimes did not democratize and remained stable after the Cold War. Levitsky & Way set out to examine why some democratized and why some did not. They first argue that these hybrid regimes should be labelled as competitive authoritarian regimes (CAR) henceforth. The argument is that they are still authoritarian, although the regimes themselves state that they are democratic. These CAR's want to create the illusion that there is room for competition and that they themselves are legitimately elected. The difference with a full authoritarian regime is that in a CAR, channels exist that make it possible for the opposition to legally contest for executive power. The opposition does not need to operate underground and there is a possibility to change the regime via elections. However, the elections are often not free and almost always unfair (Levitsky & Way 2010: 8). The major differences between democracies, CAR's and full authoritarian regimes are best described by looking at the differences in the status of core democratic institutions, status of the opposition and the level of uncertainty (see table 1).

¹ Henceforth referred to as Russia

	Democracy	Competitive Authoritarianism	Full Authoritarianism
Status of Core Democratic Institutions (Elections, Civil Liberties)	Systematically respected. Widely viewed as only route to power.	Exist and are meaningful, but systematically violated in favor of incumbent. Widely viewed as primary route to power.	Nonexistent or reduced to façade status. Not viewed as a viable route to power.
Status of Opposition	Competes on more or less equal footing with incumbent.	Major opposition is legal and can compete openly, but is significantly disadvantaged by incumbent abuse.	Major opposition banned, or largely underground or in exile.
Level of Uncertainty	High	Lower than democracy but higher than full authoritarianism.	Low

Table 1: Comparing democracies, CAR's and full authoritarian regimes (Levitsky & Way 2010: 13).

Levitsky & Way argue that a regime is competitive authoritarian when several criteria are met. First of all, there need to be partially free elections. In non free elections, major candidates are systematically excluded, opposition parties are repressed or legally controlled in order to prevent them from running public campaigns, and next to that, the electoral results are fraud. In a CAR, these criteria are partially met. For example, fraud may change the outcome of elections, but is not severe enough to make the voting itself meaningless. The second criteria are civil liberties. CAR's do not openly and violently oppress the opposition. They use more subtle forms of repression such as taxing or excluding the finance of certain groups or parties. The law itself is used to punish or repress their opponents. The third criteria involves an uneven playing field. This means there is asymmetry between the access to resources, media and the law.²

Competitive authoritarian regime trajectories

Levitsky & Way have identified three different trajectories for these regimes. First, a CAR can fully democratize. Second, the incumbent regime can remain in power after several elections, or is capable of choosing their own successor when needed. These are called stable authoritarian regimes. Third, the incumbents lose their power through electoral change, however the new regime turns out to be autocratic as well. These regimes are labelled unstable authoritarian (Levitsky & Way 2010: 369). These unstable CAR's however are also most vulnerable to democratization.

Levitsky & Way argue that incumbents are capable of holding on to power because of three mechanisms: linkage to the West, leverage from the West and the organizational power of the incumbents. The next paragraph will elaborate on these three mechanisms. The syntheses of the argument of Levitsky & Way is that these three mechanisms influence the regime trajectory. Depending on the level of linkage, leverage or organizational power, the CAR will become a democracy or (un)stable authoritarian (see figure 1). Therefore, not solely the incumbents grip on power determines the regime trajectory, but external players can also influence the regime trajectory (Levitsky & Way 2010: 24). Yet how do these mechanisms work?

² By uneven access to the law, it is meant that the incumbents have shaped or manipulated the judiciary system and electoral commissions in their favour.

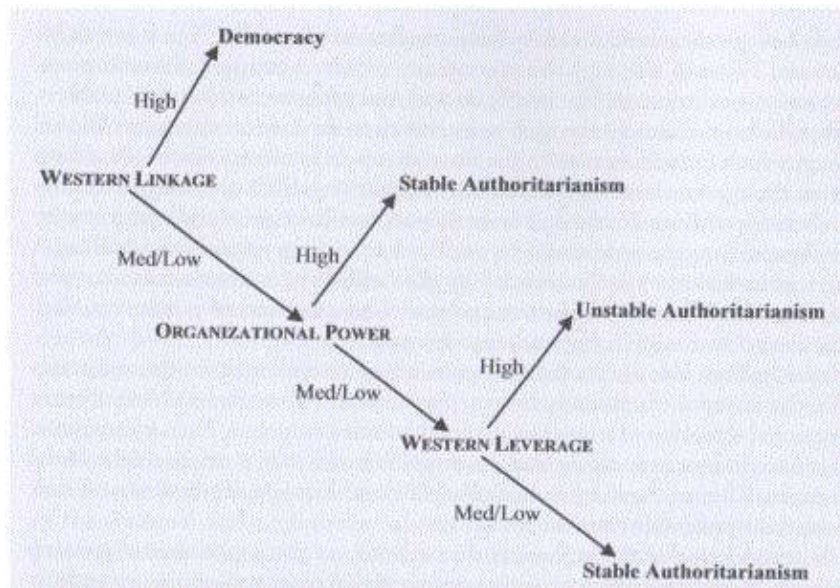


Figure 1: Explaining CAR trajectories by using Western linkage, organizational power and Western leverage (Levitsky & Way 2010)

Organizational Power

Organizational power of the incumbents resembles the robustness of the regime in power at that moment. High organizational power means it is difficult to overthrow the regime, democratically or by revolution. Levitsky & Way measure organizational power by looking at state coercive capacity, party strength and the state economic control. For both the state and the (leading) party, they measure whether the scope or cohesion are low, medium or high. Low is rated 0, medium 1 and high with number 2. For example, the scope of state coercive capacity is defined by the extent to which the security apparatus is trained, equipped and present across the country (For full details see, Levitsky & Way 2010: 376-379). Organizational power can be divided into the following dimensions:

- Party scope
- Party cohesion
- State scope
- State cohesion
- State economic control

Each of these dimensions can score a 0, 1 or 2. The sum of these scores decides the ultimate category for organizational power, ranging from low to high (Levitsky & Way 2010: 376-379). Levitsky & Way presuppose that the leading party has a dominant role within the regime. It can be argued that this is no necessity, for the real power does not necessarily always reside within the party, but for example solely with individuals within that party. By taking the regime party as a unit of measurement, it does become easier to compare different regimes.

Linkage & Leverage

In the research field, several theories exist to explain the influence of the international system on regime change. One of the theories for example, which is comparable with the theory on linkage and leverage, is that of democratic diffusion (Gleditsch & Ward 2006). These 'diffusion' or 'contagion' effects (Whitehead 1996) refer to a formal and informal spread of democratic values and attitudes by different means (Rogers 2003; Lauth & Pickel 2009). Levitsky & Way found that these theories did not explain why in some areas the influence was much thicker and more present than in other regions. Therefore, they constructed the following two dimensions: leverage and linkage from the West. Leverage in this context means: The power or ability to act or influence people, events,

decisions etc.³ Leverage is described by Levitsky & Way as the bargaining power of the regime in order to resist Western leverage. Next to that, the potential impact of punitive Western action is decisive. Crucial is the vulnerability of the regime towards Western leverage, less the Western leverage itself. Leverage is rooted in several factors. What matters first are the size and strength of the nation's state and economy. Second, competing Western foreign objectives may also limit the effectiveness of leverage. Third, black knights might reduce the effects of Western leverage. Finally, being a major oil producer or having nuclear weapons will give the CAR a low leverage (Levitsky & Way 2010: 372). The measurement on leverage is done by qualifying the competitive authoritarian regime as either having a low, medium or high leverage.⁴

Levitsky & Way define linkage as the density of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social and organizational) and cross-border flows (capital, goods and services, people and information) among particular countries and Western democracies and multilateral Western dominated institutions. Linkage is described as a multidimensional concept that connects politics, economies and societies to the Western democratic society (Levitsky & Way 2010: 43). There are six dimensions of linkage:

- Economic linkage: flows of trade, investment and credit.
- Intergovernmental linkage: bilateral diplomacy and military ties. Participation in international organizations.
- Technocratic linkage: number of countries elite that is educated in the West and has professional ties to Western institutions.
- Social Linkage: flows of people across borders, immigration, refugees and diaspora networks.
- Information linkage: Western media penetration and media information flows.
- Civil-society linkage: local ties to Western-based NGO's, international religious and party organisations and other international networks.

Linkage can contribute to democratization from three different perspectives. First, international reverberation and the cost of governmental abuse can stimulate democratization. Where linkage is high, Western media, intergovernmental organizations and NGO's are able to exert influence on the competitive authoritarian regime. High linkage will increase the probability that Western governments will take action towards reported abuse and violence. Not only as a result of media coverage and the following civil support, but also because they believe that their direct interests are more likely at stake. With a low linkage as in parts of Africa, regimes which "rely overwhelmingly on violence and exclusionary tactics [...] manage to slip almost completely beneath the radar of the international media" (Joseph 2003).

The second perspective from which linkage contributes to democratization is that of creating domestic constituencies for democratic behaviour. When Western linkage is high, domestic key players with personal, financial or professional ties with the West, will encourage democratic behaviour of the regime. In the early 1990's in the Dominican Republic, business leaders opposed a coup because it would "hurt the country's economic prospects, affect tourism, and impact relations with the United States" (Hartlyn 1993). Third, linkage can shape the domestic power balance that favours democratization. Western governments can support and protect the opposition and their leaders.

Levitsky & Way make some important notes about the concept of linkage. For shaping political outcomes, it is crucial that there is a diversity of linkage dimensions. When there are only two dimensions of linkage with the West present, the described linkage effects will not be observable. Another point is that linkage and leverage may overlap, especially when both are high. When linkage increases the costs of non-democratic behaviour, linkage can even be considered as leverage. Levitsky & Way argue that it is important to make a distinction between linkage and leverage, because in some cases, the outcomes of high leverage are different than the outcomes of

³ Dictionary.com

⁴ See appendix 3 for details

high linkage. Most interesting is that Levitsky & Way state that not all linkage is Western. Non-Western governments can shape how regimes respond to Western pressure or they can blunt the effects of Western linkage.

Linkage and leverage are hardly effective when used separately. Linkage can enhance the impact of leverage by making it more likely that Western governments will actually use pressure. Furthermore, when linkage is high, incumbent corruption and abuse of elections will face scrutiny from Western media and NGO's. High linkage will also increase the likelihood of becoming a democratic regime after the authoritarian regime collapses. The reason for this is that via linkage, domestic actors are influenced by Western democracies. Levitsky & Way call this the 'boomerang' effect (see Figure 2). As can be seen in figure 2, a high linkage means that both international as well as domestic actors try to influence the autocrat. The theory suggests that international actors use domestic actors (e.g. the opposition) in order to support their strive for democratization. To put it more simple, there is support for international leverage when there is a high linkage. On the contrary, when linkage is low, a possible electoral turnover will most likely lead to another authoritarian regime. To conclude, both linkage and leverage are needed. Furthermore, the effects of Western linkage and leverage can be blunted by these so called non-democratic black knights.

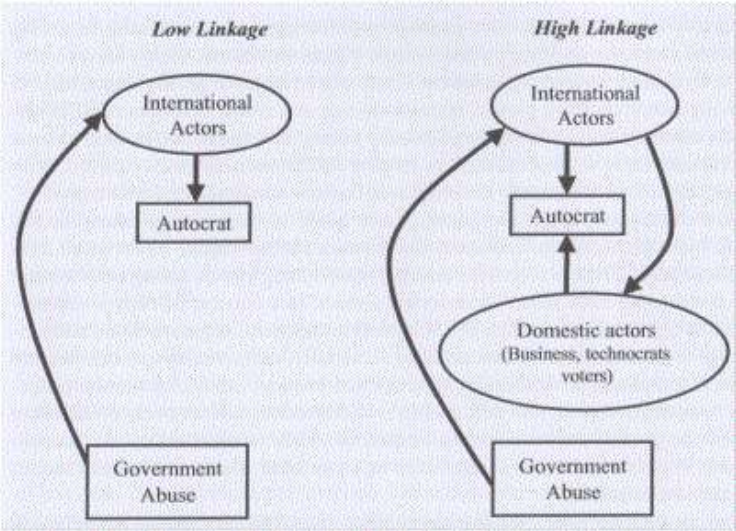


Figure 2: Linkage, leverage and the 'boomerang effect'. A high linkage also motivates domestic actors to take action (Keck & Sikkink 1998 in: Levitsky & Way 2010: 52).

2.2 The concept of black knights

Levitksy & Way use the concept of black knights as follows. 'A black knight is a counter-hegemonic power whose economic, military, and diplomatic support helps to blunt the impact of US or EU democratizing pressure' (Levitksy & Way 2010: 41). In the view of Levitksy & Way, Russia, China, Japan and France have played the role of black knights at various times after the Cold War. France mainly supported former post-colonial regimes, whereas Russia for example supported autocrats in Belarus.⁵ The reason why there was no countervailing power in the Americas or Eastern-Europe was that the US and the EU were 'the only game in town'. When we consider the interpretation and usage of the concept of black knights by Levitksy & Way, the following three features arise:

- Black knights oppose democratization efforts.
- Black knights must be a hegemonic power with economic, military and diplomatic power.
- Black knights can change their role as black knight in international relations depending on their objective.⁶

The first two statements are easy to defend. The whole notion about being a black knight is that it is counter-democratic and in order to be this, one needs power and influence.⁷ The third statement however, does not fit in the theoretical framework of the rest of Levitksy & Way's research. It is built on the premises that structural factors (i.e. institutions or states, and in the language of Levitksy & Way: linkage, leverage and organizational power of the incumbents) determine the outcome of international relations, and not necessarily actors (or agents) within the state. In their theoretical framework for example, the West promotes democratization, no matter what foreign policy each of them pursues. Consequently, the basic idea of black knights is that they counter these Western democratization efforts. The statement that black knights can sometimes be Western democracies as well, and can change their role whenever necessary, is thus inconsistent. In order for their overall theory to work, it is not possible to view the international world from both the perspective of structuralism as well as that of realism (Burchill et al. 2005). Of course one can argue that there are democracies which support authoritarian regimes instead of promoting democracy, but there is no room for such deviations in this theory. To conclude, Levitksy & Way brought up a very interesting theory about black knights, yet they were inconsistent in their description of this theory. Because Levitksy & Way did not pay much attention to this topic (which is nonetheless quite important for their theory), they left much room for discussion.⁸ A short illustration: in their book of over 500 pages, the topic is mentioned and described in about ten lines in total. This thesis tries to fill the gaps Levitksy & Way left us.

⁵ There is much to comment on these statements about black knights. These will be criticized in chapter 2.3.

⁶ For example the role of France as a black knight. France does not oppose democratization, unless it is not in their interest.

⁷ Power and influence of black knights is measured by the annual income and military expenditures of the country (Levitksy & Way 2010: 372)

⁸ These descriptions are to be found at p. 4 & 372 of Levitksy & Way (2010)

2.3 Black knights and the promotion of authoritarianism

There is hardly any literature on the counter-democratic behaviour of states, let alone on black knights. Therefore, the few literature there is will be reviewed and the still remaining questions will be answered by following the logic of Levitsky & Way, in order to construct a theory on black knights and the promotion of authoritarianism.

Literature on black knights and the promotion of authoritarianism

The terminology of black knights first appeared in research on economic sanctions by Hufbauer et al. and was thereafter used in similar research on economic sanctions (Hufbauer et al. 2007). The term black knight is being used to describe the countries that exploit the market of the sanctioned state. Whereas this market was first dominated by companies of the sanctioning state for example, it can now be exploited by third countries. Too many black knights interfere and significantly lower the target's costs of economic sanctions (McLean & Whang 2010: 431). This research however is not very helpful in this thesis because it does not focus on the spread of democracy, but mainly on economic sanctions. Their 'black knight theory' is also founded on the notion that agencies and not structures dominate international relations.⁹

What can be used in the concept of black knights is the few literature on the promotion of authoritarianism, because it can sometimes be regarded as a direct response to democratization efforts. This is called 'counter-promotion' (Burnell 2006). This presumes that a regime, in this case a black knight, purposefully promotes authoritarianism in order to counter the democratization effort of another regime. Although this not necessarily needs to be the primary intention of the black knight, for it can also be a side effect of a larger foreign policy.

One recent research in particular that does come close to describing counter-democratic behaviour, is the research of Vanderhill (2013). Vanderhill argues that external actors can encourage authoritarianism by changing the elite strategies and their capabilities (Vanderhill 2013: 13). This can be done by simply providing aid to certain groups. An example is the 'humanitarian aid' of Iran to Hezbollah in Libanon. These 'elites' can be compared with the incumbents described by Levitsky & Way. Vanderhill also looks at the linkages between the recipient state and the external actor. She describes this as a form of authoritarian diffusion, resembling the existing theory on democratic diffusion (Vanderhill 2013: 5). This consists of three dimensions: ideological agreement between the elite and the external actor, common cultural and historical background and the economic relationship. Linkage by the definition of Levitsky & Way is much more detailed, but misses the ideological agreement (Vanderhill 2013: 30). This should not be confused with the democratic missionary objective to spread the idea of democracy itself. It seems as if authoritarian regimes only promote authoritarianism in order to gain influence and not for ideological agreement. A possible explanation is that a stable authoritarian regime is a far more reliable ally than an unstable authoritarian regime (or democracy) which might change its view every few years or so.

What Vanderhill tries to bring across is that it is important to take the local conditions into account as well. She thereby focuses on the local conditions which can be influenced by external actors. These are the balance of power of the elites within the state and the linkages between the recipient state and the external actor (Vanderhill 2013: 23-30). These two mechanisms very much resemble the linkage and organizational power described by Levitsky & Way. Although there are probably more ways to describe the mechanisms behind the promotion of authoritarianism, it is more important to determine how to measure such a promotion.

When trying to measure the results (or effects) of the promotion of authoritarianism, one needs to measure the regime type and its trajectory. There is much criticism on how to define these regime types and next, how to measure them. This thesis will not join this discussion but will stick to the premises that due to the promotion of authoritarianism, a regime will remain or become more

⁹ What matters is the fact that states have different interests and will therefore choose different sides whenever this is deemed to be advantageous. (Hufbauer et al. 2007: 12)

authoritarian. 'More' in this context means that the authoritarian regime has become more stable and is therefore less susceptible to a regime change. Therefore, Levitsky & Way's usage of an either stable or unstable authoritarian regime can be applied here. Thus, a black knight's primary objective would be to stabilize the targeted regime because it will make it less susceptible to democratization efforts.

When looking at the findings of Erdmann, a substantial number of countries transitioned from democracies to hybrid regimes (i.e. competitive authoritarian) in the period from 1974 up to 2008. From the 52 cases, only five transitioned to a full authoritarian regime, the rest became hybrid regimes (Erdmann 2011: 10). If something like the promotion of authoritarianism is occurring (and successfully), we would see an increase in authoritarian regimes. When looking at the results of Erdmann, it is more likely that the promotion of authoritarianism leads to a competitive authoritarian regime, or when this is already the case, the consolidation of this regime. This might confirm the idea that a black knight's primary concern is stability, not necessarily authoritarianism itself.

How to construct a theory on black knights?

There are two different approaches on how to construct a theory on black knights and the promotion of authoritarianism. First, one can perform an elaborate study on the differences between authoritarian (i.e. black knights) and democratic states, with a focus on their external relations. By doing this, one can determine how a black knight tries to influence a competitive authoritarian regime differently. This approach will construct the theory from scratch.

The second approach would be to accept the premises that the promotion of authoritarianism is at large similar to the promotion of democratization. It is to be expected that the manner in which linkage and leverage are shaped by black knights are somewhat different, because we know that authoritarian states operate differently than democracies do. Take for example civil-society linkage. Civil-society in an authoritarian regime is not to be compared with that in a democracy. It is to be expected that there will hardly be any non-governmental groups or agencies (NGO) in an authoritarian regime. The goal of an NGO is that, being non-governmental, they can exert influence on the current policy of the government in order to empower civil-society, especially minorities. Therefore, NGO's and authoritarianism do not go together well. Let alone that these NGO's promote a policy of authoritarianism abroad that eventually would undermine their own existence. When looking at Russia, the period of 2006 to 2012 shows a decline in civil-society freedom due to new state regulations for NGO's. For example, in July 2012, the NGO law on 'foreign agents' was passed, which prohibited any political activity from NGO's. The definition of political activity had been defined in such a way that any NGO could be accused of being a foreign agent (Machalek 2013: 11). Next to NGO's, companies in an authoritarian regime will also be more inclined to follow the state policy, if they themselves are not already owned by the state. However, these possible differences can be found, and subsequently tested, by reversing and altering already existing theories on the promotion of democracy, in this case that of Levitsky & Way.

This second approach will be applied in this thesis, by altering the theory of Levitsky & Way in such a way that it will be applicable to the promotion of authoritarianism. We have already concluded that the main goal of black knights probably is the stability of the targeted regime. Next, we assume that democracies as well as black knights are actors that influence their target, being primarily CAR's, by using the mechanisms of linkage and leverage. Democracies will promote democratization, whereas black knights will try to consolidate the current regime or try to make it more authoritarian (see figure 3).

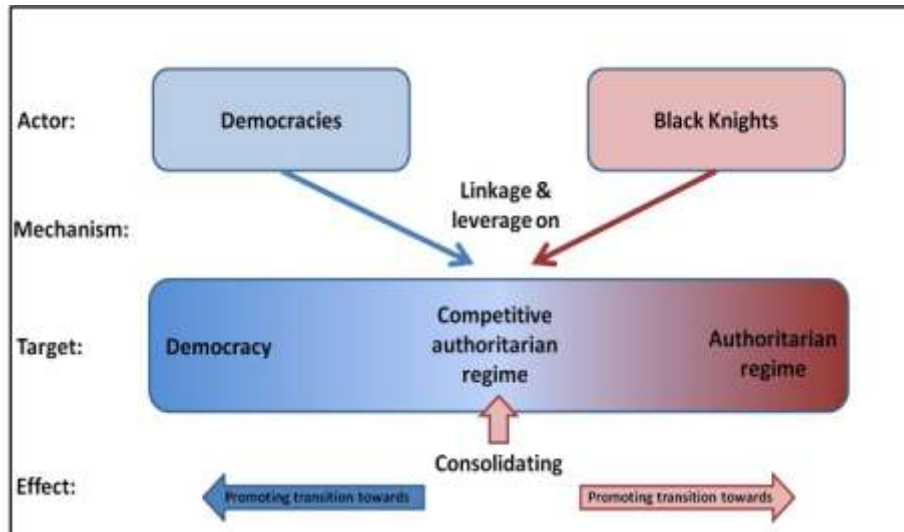


Figure 3: Theoretical foundation for a theory on black knights.

Figure 3 tries to capture the overall thought on how black knights as well as democracies influence a CAR. The only difference is that a black knight not only promotes transition towards authoritarianism, but also tries to consolidate the current CAR. Figure 3 will be the starting point for a further construction of a theory on black knights and the promotion of authoritarianism.

One of the question that arises, is whether all non-democracies are to be considered black knights. When following Levitsky & Way we have, next to democracies, CAR's and full authoritarian regimes. As we already discovered, the competitive authoritarian regime does not want to create a state in which there is a chance that the opposition removes the current incumbents. Although these regimes might call themselves democracies, it is unlikely that they will promote (and actively pursue) free democratic standards in other countries, while at the same time restricting them at home. Full authoritarian regimes on the other hand have no incentive to promote democracy at all. This leaves us two options. Full authoritarian states or CAR's will promote authoritarianism instead or do not wish to intervene at all, which can be regarded as non-interventionism or non-interference (Dunn, Nyers and Stubbs 2010: 297-299).¹⁰ But the concept of black knights dictates that the behaviour of the state is counter-democratic, not neutral. Therefore, there needs to be some kind of promotion of authoritarianism. The goal of this promotion, as we already discovered, is primarily to consolidate or create a stable authoritarian regime. We now have come to a point where:

- Black knights can be either competitive authoritarian or full authoritarian states;
- Black knights oppose democratization and promote authoritarianism;
- The primary concern of the black knight is not the spread of the idea of authoritarianism itself, but only the stability of the competitive authoritarian regime in question

Comments on Levitsky & Way

Some comments on Levitsky & Way's theory need to be made before trying to adjust their theory. First, the theory on leverage argues that it is determined by the vulnerability of the CAR to foreign pressure or leverage, as well as the foreign pressure or leverage itself. Both are true, yet difficult to implement together when trying to measure leverage and subsequently qualifying it as either low, medium or high. For example, a low leverage means that the regime in question is not vulnerable to foreign pressure because it has a large economy or is a mayor oil producer and so forth. A low leverage can at the same time mean that the Western sanctions are not substantial. In the end, Levitsky & Way only measure the vulnerability towards leverage, and completely neglect the externally imposed effects of leverage (Levitsky & Way 2010: 372).

¹⁰ Although one can argue that non-interventionism is also a form of support of the current regime.

Second, the quantitative analysis of linkage is not consistent with the theory that Levitsky & Way propose. Instead of the theoretical six dimensions of linkage, they measure only four dimensions. These are: economic ties, social ties, communication ties and intergovernmental ties. Why this is done is not explained. Next to that, the operationalization of these four dimensions are most dubious. For instance, the communication ties are measured by the per capita annual international voice trafficking and internet access. But do communication ties solely consist of voice trafficking and internet access? Or were these variables chosen because they were the only data available? Furthermore, the data of each of the four dimensions are given a score of 1 to 5, of which 1 is the lowest quintile and 5 the highest. The scores of the four dimensions are taken together and recalculated to a number between 0 and 1. It can be doubted whether this number is still representative for the measured data. These critiques demonstrate how difficult it is to operationalize this theory.

A third difficulty arises when we compare the methodology on linkage, leverage and organizational power. Whereas the scores on leverage are being measured as either low, medium or high, scores on organizational power on the other hand differentiate between low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high. Linkage is being defined as a score between 0 and 1. This is also inconsistent with the theoretical explanation of regime trajectories visualised in figure 1. In this figure, linkage, leverage and organizational power can be either low, medium or high.

Altering the theory of Levitsky & Way

If the promotion of authoritarianism is to be compared with that of the promotion of democracy, the same mechanisms (i.e. linkage en leverage) for the distribution of influence can be applicable. As we just discovered, the methodological system Levitsky & Way use is inconsistent. This thesis will therefore make some adjustments on how to measure linkage. Linkage will be defined as either low, low to medium, medium, medium to high, or high. The theory on leverage and organizational power will not be altered. The specific details will be discussed in the methodological section of this thesis.

If we stick to the logic and mechanisms described by Levitsky & Way concerning regime trajectories, and alter them to work from a black knight perspective, we would be inclined to use the schematics of figure 4.¹¹ However, we cannot simply replace the Western linkage and leverage with black knight linkage and leverage, as well as the consequent end states. Levitsky & Way identified three end states, being: democracy, stable and unstable authoritarian. Democracy is in this case the most desired end state. If we look at this from a black knight perspective, we would have the same end states, only then stable authoritarianism would be the most desired end state for a black knight. From a black knight perspective, the end state of democracy is very unlikely, and therefore, it would be more likely that a low black knight influence will result only in more susceptibility to democratization, and not democracy itself. Therefore, we can conclude that under the influence of a black knight, the regime trajectory of a CAR can lead to a:

- stable authoritarian regime
- unstable authoritarian regime
- unstable authoritarian regime which is susceptible to democratization

¹¹ This is the same picture as on page 9.

Figure 4 also seems to imply that linkage is dominant over organizational power and leverage. It also makes no differentiation between having a low or medium linkage, leverage or organizational power. The theory however does not require any dimension to be subordinate or dominate over the other. It would be better to treat linkage, organizational power and leverage as equally important.

Therefore, this thesis has come up with a new figure to explain the possible regime trajectories. In figure 5, the three mechanisms can be either low(1), low to medium(2), medium(3), medium to high(4), or high(5). Only leverage will be measured in either low(1), medium(2) or high(3), because there is no room in this thesis for a complete reconstruction of the theory on leverage. The sum of the results on black knight linkage, organizational power, and black knight leverage, will lead to a score that predicts the regime outcome. The predicted regime outcome is defined by its stability and susceptibility to democratization. The stability of an authoritarian regime itself is a normative construct which cannot easily be measured by numbers, and will therefore always remain an estimate. For example, one stable authoritarian regime can be more stable than another stable authoritarian regime, despite having been labelled 'stable' as well. In figure 5, the example (displayed in red) shows that a score of 11 will predict the regime outcome as being stable authoritarian.

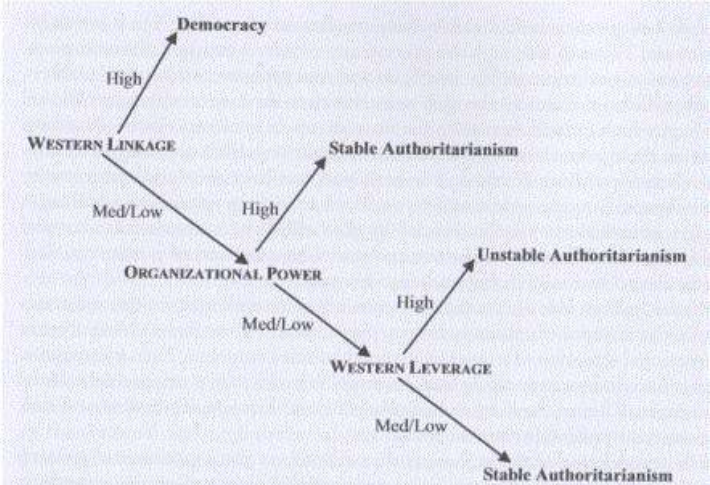


Figure 4: Explaining CAR trajectories by using Western linkage, organizational power and Western leverage.

Black knight linkage	Organizational power	Black knight leverage	Score	Predicted regime outcome
High (5)	High (5)	High (3)	13	Stable authoritarian
		3	12	
Medium to High (4)	Medium to High (4)		11	Stable authoritarian
		Medium (2)	10	
Medium (3)	Medium (3)		9	Unstable authoritarian
		Low (1)	8	
Medium to Low (2)	Medium to Low (2)		7	
			6	
Low (1)	Low (1)		5	Unstable authoritarian and susceptible to democratization
			4	
			3	

Figure 5: The promotion of authoritarianism by black knights. Adding the scores of black knight linkage, organizational power and black knight leverage lead to (un)stable authoritarian regimes, or regimes that are even susceptible to democratization. The red indications are meant as an example of how to use this figure.

The predicted regime outcome is crucial for this thesis, because it determines the effects of the influence of a black knight on a competitive authoritarian regime.

The so called 'Boomerang effect' depicted in figure 2 (page 10), does not need alteration when applied from a black knight perspective. A high linkage still means that not only leverage from international actors, but support for this leverage via domestic actors will increase the influence of these international actors on the regime in question. The goal in such a case however, is not to turn the regime and democratize it, but more likely to consolidate the current authoritarian regime.

We have now constructed a more elaborate theory of black knights. Although research needs to confirm the following statements, we can argue that black knights:

- can be either competitive authoritarian or full authoritarian states;
- oppose democratization and promote authoritarianism, by roughly using the same mechanisms as the promotion of democracy;
- the primary concern of the black knight is not the spread of the idea of authoritarianism itself, but only the stability of the competitive authoritarian regime in question;
- a large influence from a black knight on a competitive authoritarian regime (being high scores on linkage, leverage and organizational power) may lead to a stable authoritarian regime. A small influence (being low scores on linkage, leverage and organizational power) will likely lead to an unstable authoritarian regime or even susceptibility to democratization.

2.5 Case selection: Russia and Kyrgyzstan

The black knight in this thesis will be Russia. Russia has been chosen because it is a regional power which has significant interest to further expand its influence in the region.¹² Russia itself is considered to be competitive authoritarian at least, and in 2010, Russia was considered Not Free by Freedom House.¹³ Furthermore, Russia sees the spread of democratization as a means of the US to spread its influence, and they believe that democratic countries are more likely to support the interests of the US. This is one of the reasons why Russia challenges the global dominance of the US (Vanderhill 2013: 6). Besides the fact that Levitsky & Way define Russia as a black knight, other recent research also selected Russia as an example of negative external influence towards democratization (Tolstrup 2009; Vanderhill 2013). To conclude, Russia is (competitive) authoritarian and it promotes and displays counter-democratic behaviour.

Kyrgyzstan has been chosen because it lies in the sphere of influence of Russia while simultaneously there have been attempts to democratize this regime (Diamond 2008: 36). When looking at the Freedom House score, Kyrgyzstan is considered to be partly free at the moment. The title of an important book on Kyrgyz democracy is also telling, being *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's island of democracy?* (Anderson 1999). The Freedom House scores fluctuated around Not Free and Partly Free from 2000 to 2010. Kyrgyzstan is perceived to be a competitive authoritarian regime which experiences influence from both Russia and the West. What means that Kyrgyzstan is susceptible to foreign influence, and therefore a correlation between foreign influence and the Kyrgyz regime is more likely.

¹³ Freedom House reports on Russia.

2.6 Hypotheses

There are several hypotheses which might answer the research question of this thesis: *Which influence does Russia have on the competitive authoritarian regime in Kyrgyzstan?* These hypotheses each have different effects on the stability of the regime. The more stable an authoritarian state is, the less effective democratization efforts will be. Figure 3 describes several pathways which are possible, depending on the linkage, leverage and organizational power of the incumbents.

H1: Kyrgyzstan will be a **stable authoritarian state** when there is a high linkage with, and high leverage from Russia, as well as a high organizational power within the Kyrgyz regime. The state is not susceptible to democratization efforts.

H2: Kyrgyzstan will be an **unstable authoritarian** state when the results on the linkage with, and leverage from Russia, as well as the organizational power within the Kyrgyz regime are not all low to medium, nor are they all considered to be high. The state is not considered to be utterly unstable, nor is it fully stable. The state is not susceptible to democratization efforts yet.

H3: Kyrgyzstan will be an **unstable authoritarian state and susceptible to democratization** efforts when the linkage to and leverage from Russia, as well as the organizational power of the Kyrgyz regime, are all low to medium.

3. Research methods

The research methods will mainly be qualitative and based on a thorough literature study. This master thesis wants to stay as close as possible to the methodology and theory of Levitsky & Way. The major difference is that the research is performed from another perspective, linkage and leverage from a black knight, in this case Russia. The research will mainly focus on data between the years 2000 and 2010. However, sometimes crucial historical elements dating from before 2000 or just after 2010 will be included.

Levitsky & Way's operationalization of leverage and organizational power are defined as either low, medium or high.¹⁴ This might seem less accurate, but it is more useful when one needs to make a judgement of the relationship between two states, for it could never be an exact number. The theory on leverage and organizational power can be applied to this thesis almost unaltered. In the measurement of leverage, Levitsky & Way look at the black knight beneficiary assistance of the targeted state. This needs to be regarded as Western beneficiary assistance instead. The methodology for measuring either leverage or organizational power will not be fully repeated here and can be found in the second and third appendix of Levitsky & Way (2010: 372 & 376)

Linkage will also be defined in terms of low to high. By doing this, the afore mentioned critiques on Levitsky & Way's measurement of linkage are overcome. Furthermore, the same unity of measurement will be applicable to linkage, leverage and organizational power. Another point of critique on linkage can be overcome by measuring all six dimensions of linkage, instead of just four.¹⁵ Table 2 shows what will be measured for each dimension and how this can be translated into a low, medium or high linkage.

¹⁴ Organizational power is even defined as low, low to medium, medium, medium to high, and high.

¹⁵ See page 16, Comments on Levitsky & Way

Linkage dimension between Russia and Kyrgyzstan	Defined and measured as	Scores
1. Economic	- percentage of trade on overall import/export - influence of type of trade - investment by Russian companies/ state	Low(0): no substantial economic ties Medium(1): considerate economic ties, but no dependency High(2): substantial economic ties and dependency
2. Intergovernmental	- bilateral/ military ties - membership of Russian organisations	Low(0): no substantial bilateral/military ties Medium(1): considerate bilateral/military ties with Russia, but alternative is present High(2): substantial bilateral/military ties and dependency on these Russian organisations
3. Technocratic	- part of elite that worked or is educated in Russia	Low(0): none or negligible ties with Russia Medium(1): considerate number of elite has ties to Russia, yet influence is moderate High(2): substantial number of elite has ties with Russia and is able to exert Russian influence
4. Social	- percentage immigration from and to Russia - percentage of diaspora from Russia	Low(0): no substantial immigration or diaspora Medium(1): considerate immigration or diaspora, yet no consequence to Kyrgyz domestic policies High(2): substantial immigration and diaspora, with consequences to Kyrgyz domestic policies
5. Information	- percentage of Russian media - perceived influence of Russian media	Low(0): none or negligible Russian media Medium(1): considerate Russian media penetration, yet no direct influence High(2): substantial Russian media penetration with direct influence
6. Civil society	- links with Russian NGO's - influence of Russian culture and language	Low(0): no substantial Russian civil society ties Medium(1): considerate Russian civil society ties present, yet no influence on state policy High(2): substantial Russian civil society ties present and able to exert influence on state policy
Total score:		Total score can range from 0-12. The following coding will define the overall linkage : 0-2 Low 3-5 Low medium 6 Medium 7-9 Medium high 10-12 High

Table 2: Methodology for measuring linkage between Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

The results on the Russian linkage and leverage, as well as the Kyrgyz organizational power will be added in order to predict the regime outcome of Kyrgyzstan by using figure 5 (page 17). The results of either linkage, leverage and organizational power will be discussed in detail in the appendix of this thesis. In order to better understand the relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Russia, this thesis will first provide a short description of Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2010, with a focus on the perceived freedom in this period. The Freedom House scores of Kyrgyzstan show us how authoritarian the regime was from 2000 to 2010. A closer look at the mayor political events will tell us how stable Kyrgyzstan has been. The Russian foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan will also be reviewed briefly, because this indicates what Russia's interests are in Kyrgyzstan.

4. Findings: case study on the influence of Russia on Kyrgyzstan

4.1 Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous area, which still has a strong nomadic and agricultural background. The inaccessibility of the country created a 'regionalist tradition' in which local leaders have much influence and where there is a potential for ethnic violence. A mountainous area separates the north from the south. The north is most urbanised, less agricultural and most Russians are located there. The southern part is more agricultural and is influenced by Islamic religion and culture (Laruelle & Peyrouse 2006: 91). The country also has a strong authoritarian tradition, which was only reinforced by seventy years of communist rule. The 'so called' innate democratic tendencies of nomadic culture did not alleviate this.

Politics in Kyrgyzstan has known a strong super presidential system since its independence from the Soviet Union, and the political parties themselves are underdeveloped (Collins 2011: 157). For example, independent candidates are more successful than any candidates affiliated to the continuous parties (Ishiyama & Kennedy 2001: 1184-1186). The people support only their (local) candidates instead of the party. The political party only functions as a platform to create temporary wider support, as happened for example in the 'tulip revolution' in 2005 via the NDK (People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan). The members of parliament comprise mainly businessmen and the local elites whom are mainly trying to protect their own interests. This suggests that political parties are not a good instrument for measuring organizational power, which focuses primarily at parties.

Like the other Central Asian states, Kyrgyzstan was well aware of its economic dependency on the former Soviet-Union and the political difficulties it would face following its independence in 1991. Kyrgyzstan did not have any natural resources, which could reinforce the build up of its economy, and is therefore often compared with Switzerland. Although Kyrgyzstan's road to democracy initially fared better than its neighbours, it was far from being free and democratic (Anderson 1999).

When looking at the Freedom House scores, the level of democracy decreased in 1999 due to flawed elections, and was rated 'Not Free'. The same president that once led Central Asia's hope for democracy, Akayev, was becoming more authoritarian. In 2001, Kyrgyzstan joined the US-led war on terror and opened up its airspace and an airfield for the US. The government faced much criticism, and protests were staged in major cities. These protests were violently oppressed by the government. In 2003, tensions rose at the Uzbekistan border and Kyrgyzstan continued balancing its relationship with both the US and Russia. In the same year, Russia expanded their military base in Kant. The Russian airbase, under auspices of the CIS, was largely seen as an attempt to counter the US, which had a military base in Manas.

In 2005, the authoritarian Akayev was ousted after a popular uprising, and the opposition leader Bakiyev was elected as president. Although this so called 'tulip revolution' was a step towards more democratic standards, Kyrgyzstan maintained its balancing policy between Russia and the US. Meanwhile the relation with Uzbekistan worsened because of conflicts about Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. In 2006, for the first time since 1999, Kyrgyzstan was rated 'Partly Free' by Freedom House. In 2007 and 2008 however, media and civil society freedom started to decline again. After a referendum in 2007, the presidential power was further increased. Its foreign policy shifted towards a Russian led 'authoritarian bloc' instead of Europe and the US. Pro-Russian law makers even tried to shut down the US military presence at Manas. After flawed parliamentary elections in 2009, the incumbents consolidated its power even further, while curtailing certain freedoms. These developments continued in 2010 and Freedom House labelled Kyrgyzstan again as 'Not Free'. As a result of anti-government demonstrations, president Bakiyev was eventually forced from office in 2010. A crucial aspect in this period is the rising Kyrgyz nationalism and the consequent

discrimination of minorities.¹⁶ In the same year, this culminated into ethnic clashes in the south of Kyrgyzstan, which is mainly inhabited by Uzbek. The government violently tried to end this conflict. Both the Chinese and Russian president vowed to support the government (Schwartz 2010). Remarkable is that Kyrgyzstan asked Russia to intervene militarily and end the violence in the south of Kyrgyzstan. They had asked this once before during a terrorist attack in 1999. In neither case did Russia intervene militarily. Russia could have easily increased its influence by legitimately deploying troops in Kyrgyzstan, yet they chose not to intervene. A possible explanation is that Russia fears international repercussions, although eventually the UN also looked to Moscow for help. In Russia itself, there was also opposition to any military intervention in Kyrgyzstan. Research on Russia's behaviour specifically in this case, concluded that although Russia is pursuing an active foreign policy towards Central Asia, this region is regarded by Moscow more as a threat that needs to be contained than an opportunity for expansion (Mateeva 2013: 9-12, 18). It shows that in practice, Russia only occasionally or partly wants to increase its influence in Kyrgyzstan.

With a new government in 2011, Kyrgyzstan started to stabilize and was labelled 'Partly Free' again. But nonetheless, Kyrgyzstan can still not be called an electoral democracy. Competitive authoritarian would be a better description. An overall trend that can be discerned from Kyrgyzstan's recent history is its embracement of nationalism. Kyrgyz nation building has seen many upheavals which are ascribed to a lack of national identity. The result however is that Kyrgyzstan now pursues a pro-Kyrgyz policy which threatens many minorities in the country, culminating in the 2010 ethnic clashes with Uzbek inhabitants. These developments are not considered to be beneficial to the forming of a parliamentary democracy (Laruelle 2012: 47).

4.2 Russia's foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan

"If current trends continue, Central Asia will be back in the Russian sphere of influence by early next decade" – George Friedman (2009: 69)

The Russian foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan is often summarised in a broader policy towards Central Asia. Russia is said to advance its interest by keeping the present leaders and elites in power. By supporting the current regimes, Russia ensures some kind of predictability and stability. At the same time, these regimes slide towards autocracy (Allison 2004: 284). One Russia specialist summarized Russian national interests towards Central-Asia in five points (Dmitry Trofimov, In: Allison 2004: 283-284). These are:

- Stability in the region and close partnership with these states;
- Rights which guarantee transit across Central Asia in order to maintain relations with China, Iran and India;
- Expand common economic space;
- Military presence in the region for ensuring Russia's status as regional and world power. This is especially directed against Islamist terrorist threats and drug trafficking (Spechler 2010: 619);
- International recognition of Russia's leading role in the region;

Russia clearly uses structures as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to further strengthen its grip on Central Asia in pursuing the afore mentioned objectives. The bid for energy in Central Asia is less focused on Kyrgyzstan, for it does not have substantial energy sources. Kyrgyzstan has voiced more trust in Russia than in other major powers, concerning who should have the responsibility to deal with problems in Central Asia (Allison 2004: 292). The US presence in Central Asia, and its withdrawal after its preoccupations in the Middle East, will probably reinforce competition between the US and Russia in Central Asia (Allison 2004: 293).

¹⁶ Freedom House report on Freedom in the world: Kyrgyzstan 1999-2012

Because the Russian foreign policy is framed for the whole Central Asian region, there is no strict policy for only Kyrgyzstan. Russia does however seem to have a strong and consistent intention to increase its influence in Central Asia.

4.3 Linkage between Kyrgyzstan and Russia

The linkage with Russia has always been evident in Kyrgyzstan. After its independence in 1991, Russia's influence in Kyrgyzstan declined, mainly because of the disorder in both Kyrgyzstan and Russia at that time. Still, the overall linkage with Russia is quite extensive. Economically, Kyrgyzstan is more reliant on Russia than the other way around. Almost 30% of Kyrgyz imports originate from Russia. These imports have increased in the period ranging from 2000 to 2010. Following China, Russia is considered to be the second most important trading partner. The foreign direct investment from Russia has been low for some time, and only recently increased due to a large Russian investment in Kyrgyz hydro energy. Economically, Kyrgyzstan and Russia have substantial ties, but there is no dependency of Kyrgyzstan on Russia. The intergovernmental ties with Russia are considered to be high. Kyrgyzstan is a member of several Russian dominated regional organizations like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security and Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Trading Cooperation (SCO). Kyrgyzstan and Russia both seek extensive bilateral economic and military cooperation. In 1999 as well as in 2010, Kyrgyzstan even asked Russia to intervene militarily due to terrorist attacks and severe ethnic clashes in the south of Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan seems to distance itself from the US by ousting the US military base in Manas. The technocratic dimension is high as well. Many Kyrgyz elites still have close ties with Russia, although the younger generations are less inclined to go to Russia for education and work. The social ties to Russia are also considered to be high. The Russian diaspora in Kyrgyzstan is one of the larger minorities. A large and increasing number of Kyrgyz on the other hand, are working in Russia. The remittances that are sent back to Kyrgyzstan make up almost one third of the total GDP. Many Kyrgyz families are thus reliant on family working in Russia. The information dimension is considered to be medium. Although Russia invests heavily in Kyrgyz telecommunications and many former Russian media structures still linger, the restraints on Kyrgyz media were mainly exercised by the Kyrgyz government itself. The civil society dimension is perceived to be medium. The role of NGO's can easily be neglected because there are few. One can even question whether an authoritarian regime like Russia has liberal non-governmental agencies. The Russian culture and language though, still have a prominent place in Kyrgyzstan. The Russian language for example, is still the second official language in Kyrgyzstan. The role of Kyrgyz minorities in Russia though, is insignificant for it cannot exert any substantial influence.

This research does not include a comparison with the linkage to other nations, but the results so far all suggest that Kyrgyzstan has the most extensive linkage with Russia. On all dimensions of linkage, Russia stands at the fore. Especially the intergovernmental, technocratic and social linkages are heavily influenced by Russia. The result is that the linkage between Russia and Kyrgyzstan is perceived to be medium to high.¹⁷

4.4 Organizational power of Kyrgyzstan

The weakness of the organizational power of Kyrgyzstan becomes apparent when looking at the revolutions in both 2005 and 2010. In 2005, the Akayev government was overthrown and a new government under the leadership of Bakiyev was installed. This event not only shows us that the organizational power was low, it also illuminates the range of the incumbents state apparatus. Although a new government was set in place, this one became even more authoritarian than the

¹⁷ See appendix 1 for details

previous government, and was consequently overthrown in 2010. Conclusions can still be drawn from the entire period ranging from 2000 to 2010, despite (or perhaps even better due to) these two turnovers. The political party's scope and cohesion seem to be low, which is mainly the result of the informal and local dynamics of Kyrgyz elite. The scope of political parties for example, mainly relies on interpersonal ties and patronage with local leaders. One can even doubt whether it is relevant to focus on political parties in Kyrgyzstan. The people support independent leaders, mostly their own local leaders, and not political parties. Political parties are mainly used to form temporary alliances to unite for a single cause, as happened for example with the NDK during the revolution in 2005. The Kyrgyz political system is defined as a decentralized system characterized by balancing alliances among competing potentates (Engvall 2007: 42). The party scope and cohesion are therefore perceived to be low. The incumbents however, do seem to have some control over their security apparatus, which makes the state coercive capacity medium. Kyrgyzstan does not have a substantial economic control over its economy. When using the methodology and grading of Levitsky & Way, and combining this with our knowledge of Kyrgyz politics, the organizational power of Kyrgyzstan is perceived to be low.¹⁸

4.5 Leverage in Kyrgyzstan

“La Russie continue donc à jouer le rôle de première puissance régionale en Asie central: même sans faire preuve d’un grand intérêt, le soft power russe est dominant sur le plan économique, et depuis la vague des ‘révolutions florales’, les liens stratégiques et militaires se sont renforcés.”¹⁹

The leverage of Kyrgyzstan (i.e. its susceptibility to influence of external players as well as the external leverage from Russia in this case) is perceived to be medium. Kyrgyzstan meets only two of the four criteria for having a medium leverage. The first two criteria are not met, because Kyrgyzstan does not have a medium sized economy (GDP between \$50 and \$100 billion) and is no secondary oil producer. The two other criteria for having a medium leverage, are black knight assistance and competing security related foreign-policy issues. The black knight assistance has in this research been reversed to Western democratic assistance, and in this case there is substantial financial aid from the US. This criteria is met even without the support of the EU, which there undoubtedly is. Kyrgyzstan also has competing security related foreign-policy issues, exemplary in this case is the military presence of both the US and Russia. From this perspective, there is a clear competition in Kyrgyzstan between the West and Russia.²⁰

¹⁸ See appendix 2 for details.

¹⁹ Although Russia does not show enormous interest in Central Asia, it still perceived to be the major regional power, economically and increasingly so military as well. Quote from Laruelle & Peyrouse (2006: 9)

²⁰ See appendix 3 for details.

4.6 Conclusions

The results seem to indicate that there is a medium to high linkage, low Kyrgyz organizational power and a medium black knight leverage. Implemented in the theoretical model (see figure 5 on page 17), we can see that Kyrgyzstan is an unstable authoritarian regime (see figure 6).

Black knight linkage	Organizational power	Black knight leverage	Score	Predicted regime outcome
High (5)	High (5)	High (3)	13	Stable authoritarian
			12	
			11	
Medium to High (4)	Medium to High (4)	Medium (2)	10	Unstable authoritarian
			9	
Medium (3)	Medium (3)	Low (1)	8	Unstable authoritarian and susceptible to democratization
Medium to Low (2)	Medium to Low (2)	Low (1)	7	
Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)	6	
			5	
			4	
			3	

Figure 6: Case-study Kyrgyzstan: the result of the influence of the black knight Russia on the CAR Kyrgyzstan leads to an unstable authoritarian regime.

The results of the case-study show that Kyrgyzstan seems to correspond to the mayor political events from 2000 to 2010, being two revolutions, which suggests it is unstable. Despite these turnovers, the regime remained authoritarian. The medium to high linkage with Russia seem to be logical because of the close proximity to Russia, the few alternative regional powers and their long shared history. Although one would expect a strong organizational power in a competitive authoritarian regime, Kyrgyzstan shows otherwise. This mainly seems to be the result of the local conditions and culturally inherited localism in Kyrgyzstan. Looking at the external factors, i.e. leverage from Russia, the influence of a black knight like Russia clearly adds to the stability and susceptibility to authoritarianism. There are no indications however that Russia openly supports the construction of authoritarianism. It does so only in an indirect manner, for instance by countering the West and supporting the regime in power. What we can ultimately conclude is that Kyrgyzstan is unstable and authoritarian and that a medium to high linkage (and partially leverage) with Russia prevents it from being susceptible to democratization. The research question of this thesis was: *Which influence does Russia have on the competitive authoritarian regime in Kyrgyzstan?* Russia influenced Kyrgyzstan's regime trajectory in such a way that it supported and increased the stability of the authoritarian regime in power. This makes the democratization of Kyrgyzstan less likely and more difficult to pursue.

A theory on black knights?

The theory of Levitsky & Way can be used from a black knight perspective, although it needs some adjustments. By looking at this theory from an opposite perspective, some deficits of the theory of linkage, leverage and organizational power have come to the fore. First, Levitsky & Way have chosen structuralism as a way to describe international relations. In the definition of black knights however, they argue that black knights can change their role if necessary. This implies that agencies or actors are able to dominate international relations, instead of structures. Although a very interesting discussion, it is irreconcilable with structuralism. The second finding is that the theory of leverage can be confusing. Leverage is about the vulnerability of a country to external pressure. However, at the same moment, it is also about the external pressure applied itself. Not only the vulnerability matters, the amount of leverage (pressure) can also make a difference. The third finding is that there is hardly any literature on black knights, or the deduced promotion of authoritarianism. Relying on the few literature at hand, and by following the approach of structuralism used by Levitsky & Way, an enhanced concept of black knights is produced. This leads to the following definition, which states that black knights:

- can be either competitive authoritarian or full authoritarian states;
- oppose democratization and promote authoritarianism, by roughly using the same mechanisms as the promotion of democracy;
- the primary concern of the black knight is not the spread of the idea of authoritarianism itself, but only the stability of the competitive authoritarian regime in question;
- a large influence from a black knight on a competitive authoritarian regime (being high scores on linkage, leverage and organizational power) may lead to a stable authoritarian regime. A small influence (being low scores on linkage, leverage and organizational power) will likely lead to an unstable authoritarian regime or even susceptibility to democratization.

What the case study of Russia and Kyrgyzstan has shown, is that the mechanisms for the promotion of democracy can be applied to the relationship between a black knight and a CAR. However, the case-study also showed that there is an underlying difference in the application of some dimensions of linkage. As already anticipated in the theoretical section of this thesis, civil-society within an authoritarian regime works differently, which expresses itself for example in the relevance of NGO's. One can also argue that the international organization which are domination by mainly (competitive) authoritarian regimes work differently. Therefore, we can conclude that the mechanisms can be applied from a black knight perspective as well, but that the application of the different dimensions of each of the mechanisms might be different. The case study also seemed to support the third proposition which states that the primary concern of black knights is stability. The focus of Russia on the security of Kyrgyzstan and the absence of any attempts to directly influence the political progress seem to support this. The last and fourth proposition seems to be partially true. The low organizational power in Kyrgyzstan seems to make it difficult to stabilize the country via external influence, being either linkage or leverage. This suggests that the local conditions in the targeted country are definitely important.

5. Theoretical implications

There are several theoretical implications. First, this thesis shows that the promotion of authoritarianism can be measured by using a theory on the promotion of democracy. The same mechanisms for democratization can be used by black knights in order to gain influence in the targeted state. The black knight's influence consolidates and stabilizes authoritarianism, with the intention of making it harder for democratization to succeed, as can be seen in the case study. A second implication of this research is that it offers a methodology for doing research on the

promotion of authoritarianism. So far, there are hardly any methods to investigate the relationship, and the consequent effects on democratization, between authoritarian regimes. Third, this thesis has shown that the mechanisms of linkage, leverage and organizational power can be used from a black knight perspective. However, the separate mechanisms themselves seem to work somewhat differently. The results of this case study show for example that the civil-society of a black knight is different than that of a democracy. Russia does not have any non-governmental organizations which might strengthen linkage. Russian foreign investment on the other hand might not solely strengthen linkage but can also be applied as leverage, for many Russian investments are closely tied to the Russian government. To conclude, the mechanisms are useful to explain the relationship between a CAR and a black knight, however, some dimensions within the mechanism seem to be different. Last, this thesis reveals there are still many theoretical gaps and some findings need to be verified by more than one case study.

6. Discussion and recommendations

A major deficit of this thesis is that it misses the comparison to any Western (democratic) influence. Because this research wants to investigate the effects of one of two ideologically opposite regime types on a CAR, one consequently needs to include both in the research. The influence of Russia in Kyrgyzstan for example is relative to the influence of the West. Russia can have substantial linkage to Kyrgyzstan, but this does not exclude the West from having substantial linkage as well, although this is unlikely. A recommendation for future research would be to look at the influence of both the West and black knights in general, in relation to the CAR in question. The cumulative amount of influence by several black knights might be larger than that of the cumulative amount of influence by Western democracies. In Kyrgyzstan for example, not only Russia, but China²¹ as well might influence the trajectory of the regime.

Another deficit of this thesis is it consists of only one thorough case study. In order to make general statements, it would be better to have multiple case studies, favourably from different continents and with different black knights. Another point of discussion is that this thesis also shows that the promotion of authoritarianism might be more subtle and often indirect when compared to democratization. It is even possible that the usage of the terminology of the 'promotion of authoritarianism' is too extreme. In this case study for example, especially when looking at the broader picture of the relationship between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, Russia did not seem to actively pursue authoritarianism itself, only stability and everything but a Western oriented democracy.

When using the theory of Levitsky & Way, I have encountered some inconsistencies which are described in the Comments on Levitsky & Way on page 14, 15 and 16. One particular issue is that the terminology of linkage and leverage do not accurately describe what they are meant for. Leverage for example, can be explained twofold. It can describe the vulnerability of a state towards foreign pressure of leverage, which tells you something about the state itself. A large oil producer for example is less vulnerable to foreign pressure or leverage. Leverage can also be explained as the efforts of an external actor to influence the targeted state, like sanctions. Because of this duality, it is theoretically impossible to state that leverage is high or low, for it depends on the point of view.

Another point for improvement would be to make the measurement of the different mechanisms homogeneous. Linkage and organizational power can be qualified in five categories, ranging from low to high, whereas leverage can only be defined as low, medium or high. Furthermore, organizational power seems to focus mainly on political parties. The case of Kyrgyzstan showed us that especially underdeveloped CAR's do not rely on a party system.

This thesis also seems to suggest that there is a difference between the interpretation of linkage and leverage from the point of view of a black knight. What might fall into the domain of

²¹ Levitsky & Way (2010) perceive China to be a black knight

linkage for a democracy, will not necessarily do so for a black knight. The influence of non-governmental agencies for example, should be considered as linkage. In a black knight state however, there are only governmental agencies and no true liberal non-governmental agencies. These black knight governmental agencies are therefore categorized as leverage and not linkage. A more thorough and elaborate research on these differences might support this claim. A possible solution for this problem would be to define linkage henceforth as non-governmental linkage, entailing everything that is not instigated by the state. Leverage, in the sense of external pressure, should then be defined as governmental linkage. The governmental linkage will need to focus on the relationship (linkage) between the actor and the target in a broader sense. Leverage can then be applied as the vulnerability of the state to external pressures (i.e. governmental linkage).

When looking at the two goals of this thesis, these deficits did not hinder the thesis from reaching its objectives. The first objective was to come up with a more extensive concept of black knights. The second objective was to operationalize and enhance the theory of Levitsky & Way on the relationship between these types of states. This thesis might thus provide a framework for future research on the promotion of authoritarianism as well as democratization. A recommendation for future research would be to adjust the above mentioned deficits of this research.

This thesis has also raised new questions about the functioning of CAR's. What is interesting for example is that Kyrgyzstan seems to pursue a balancing policy towards both the West and Russia. Kyrgyzstan is probably not alone in this. Competitive authoritarian regimes are not an anomaly anymore, but maybe a viable and advantageous alternative to both full authoritarianism and democracy. It is a formalised regime type which uses the 'old' balancing politics of realism. Such regimes typically attempt an artful political balancing act (Carothers 2006). The increasingly multipolar world might only further stimulate this development of competitive authoritarian regimes. Just like the quote from Erdmann at the beginning of this thesis, it is all about the most viable alternative. This means that if democracies want to promote democracy, they need to face the fact that the alternative might be more attractive. A prior and thorough study of the targeted state (using the proposed methodology of this research) might even reveal that the undertaking of democratization is not worth the effort in certain countries.

The title of this thesis questions: are we moving towards authoritarianism? We might say democratization has a real competitor nowadays and that competitive authoritarian regimes are becoming a viable alternative type of regime. Despite these regimes own proclamations of being democratic, they are not. Are we then, moving towards authoritarianism?

"It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it; consequently, the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning." – (George Orwell 1947)

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Appendix 1: Linkage from Russia with Kyrgyzstan

1. Kyrgyzstan

1.1 Economic

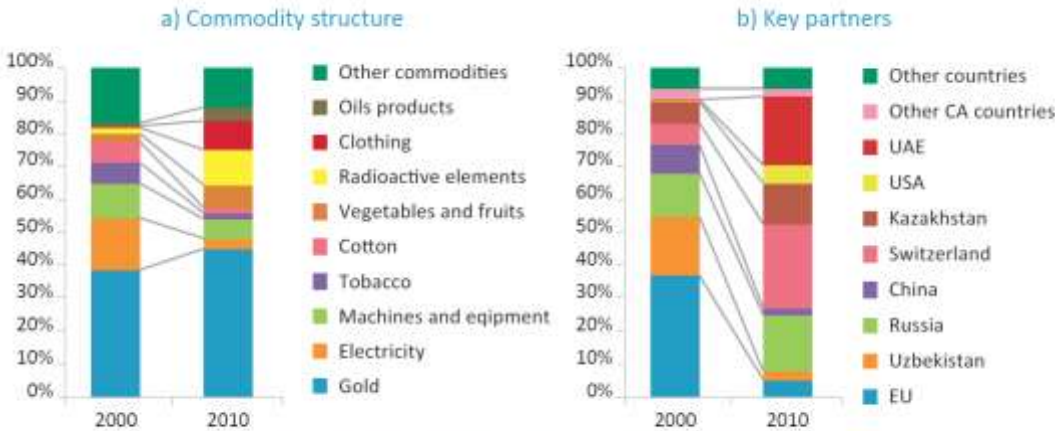
After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the turnover of goods between Central Asian regimes and Russia dropped enormously. This trade relationship only worsened because of the financial and economic crises in Russia in 1998. From 2003 onwards, the turnover of goods grew 5.2 times, mostly due to gas purchases. In 2008, the trade turnover dropped again by almost 20% due to the global economic and financial crisis. After this crisis, the trade turnover recovered again to the pre-2008 level (Sinitsina 2012: 7). Russian imports into Kyrgyzstan make up over 30%, which is considered to be high. The export of Kyrgyz goods to Russia however, has declined (see table 3) (Sinitsina 2012: 8).

Russia's share in Kyrgyzstan	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Exports (%)	22.8	16.5	22.2	17.3	17.8	16.7	11.1	14.7	14.8
Imports (%)	21.9	23.9	34.2	33.8	34.9	36.6	35.9	33.6	27.2

Table 3: Russia's share of im- and exports in Kyrgyzstan (Sinitsina 2012).

The relative importance of Russian trade with Kyrgyzstan compared to Russia's trade with other Central Asian countries is very low. The export to Kyrgyzstan made up 6.2% and the imports 1.4% in 2010 (Sinitsina 2012: 9).

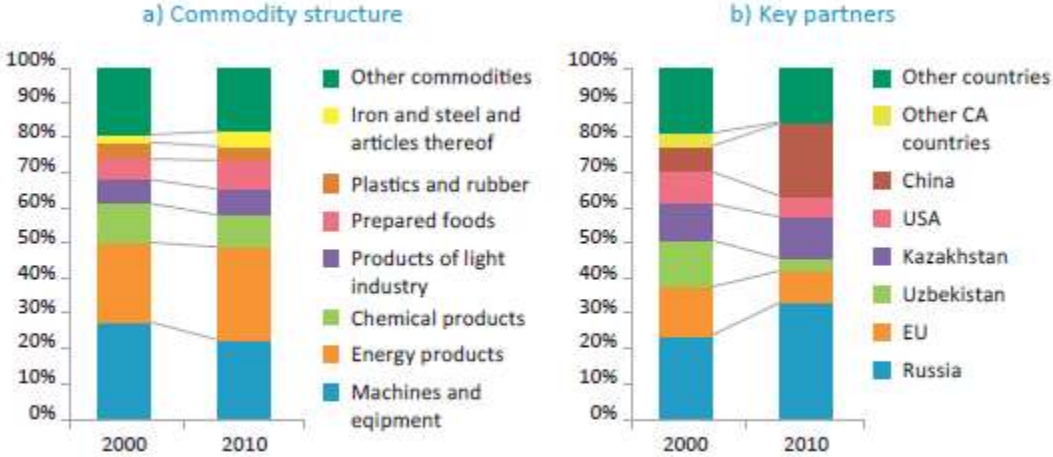
The type of goods that are exported from Kyrgyzstan are mainly gold, radioactive elements and agricultural products. The export of manufactured goods is a growing item in Kyrgyz export. In figure 7, the type of commodities and the key players for export are shown. Russia as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) became more important partners. The role of the EU became smaller, mainly due to the fact that gold is exported to Switzerland instead. There has been a substantial export of oil to the US and its coalition partners and Uzbekistan, but only because the conflict in Afghanistan consumed a lot of fuel. Kyrgyzstan does not produce its own oil and only re-exports these products. In 2010, the export to the US and Uzbekistan dropped almost to zero (Mogilevskii 2012: 20). Russia is considered to be the second most important trading partner at the moment, following China (Sinitsina 2012: 11).



Sources: COMTRADE, National Statistical Committee of the KR

Figure 7: Exports of Kyrgyzstan. Both the commodity products and the key partners are displayed (Mogilevskii 2012: 19).

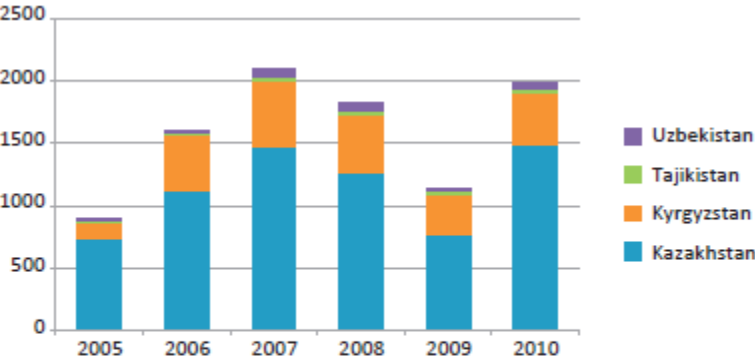
The import of goods consists mainly of machines, energy and consumer goods. Russia has recently significantly increased its share on Kyrgyz market. The key partners for Kyrgyzstan have shifted towards China and Russia, whereas the West became less important (see figure 8).



Sources: COMTRADE, National Statistical Committee of the KR, State Custom Service of the KR

Figure 8: Imports of Kyrgyzstan. Both the commodity products and the key partners are displayed (Mogilevskii 2012: 19).

The trade of services are substantial for Kyrgyzstan. Almost 60% of the total amount of export is based on services like tourism and travel. The number on the import of services varies around 20% and is related to the transportation within trade and travel migrations (Mogilevskii 2012: 32-34). Kazakhstan is the key destination for the export of services, which is logical, considering that tourism is mostly local. With 14% of the total trade of services, Russia is the second largest key destination, being twice as large as the US (Mogilevskii 2012: 37). Kyrgyz investment in Russia is quite constant and compared to other Central Asian states of a comparable size quite extensive (see figure 9).



Note: Includes all types of investments: direct and portfolio investments, miscellaneous investments (trade and other loans, including foreign governments' loans obtained against security of the RF government), and excludes investments by monetary authorities, commercial and saving banks. Source: Rosstat data for corresponding years

Figure 9: Investments from Central Asian (CA) countries to Russian economy (Sinitsina 2012: 31).

The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is considered to be low in Kyrgyzstan compared to its foreign trade turnover share. The Russian FDI ranked 5th or 6th around 2005 and ranked 2nd in 2010, mainly due to its governmental aid after the Kyrgyz crises in April 2010.²² Investment mainly takes place in the establishment of hydropower and in telecommunications (Mogilevskii 2012: 36). Hydropower is the only form of energy resource that Kyrgyzstan possesses, and Russia invested 1.7

²² Mogilevskii (2012: 28)

billion USD in the hydropower plant Kambarata-1 HPS (Sinitsina 2012: 34 and 56). In return for the financial support, Russia was granted another permanent military base in Kyrgyzstan, yet Kyrgyzstan now has considerable debts to Russia concerning this matter (Rickleton 2013). This investment in particular ties Kyrgyzstan economically to Russia.

In the research of Mogilevskii (2012), the influence of Russia on the Central Asian states is reviewed. Some conclusions about Russia's influence are applicable on Kyrgyzstan individually. They concluded that the economic relationship with Russia is still much lower than during the Soviet Union. The EU and China have become important players in Central Asia as well, and it is difficult for Russia to compete effectively with these key players. However, Central Asia has the potential of become a large export market for Russian manufactured goods. The Central Asian states on the other hand, view Russia as a potential market for their agricultural goods. Especially during the late financial crisis, Russia appeared to be a stable partner for economic cooperation. Russia is therefore still considered to be the driving force for economic cooperation and integration in Central Asia. Yet lately, Russia is experiencing more competition from the West. In this light, Russia is not fully exploiting its potential for economic cooperation with Central Asia yet (Sinitsina 2012: 68-71). Looking at the economic ties to Russia, one can conclude that there are considerable economic ties, but there is no dependency. The score is therefore medium (1).

1.2 Intergovernmental

On intergovernmental economic cooperation, there is a trend towards more cooperation with Russia. In 1994, Kyrgyzstan signed the agreement on a Free Trade Zone (FTZ), which made trading more easy and cancelled tariff restrictions and numerous barriers. In 2011, Kyrgyzstan signed another addition to these protocols. Within these agreements, there are still many exemptions from both Russia and Kyrgyzstan. The agreement is therefore mainly focused at protecting the export of the members of the agreement (Sinitsina 2012: 19 – 21). Following the FTZ agreements, a Custom Union (CU) has been created in order to ease trading. There are still some minor problems concerning Kyrgyzstan because of the re-export of many Chinese goods to Russia. These Chinese goods can then easily, without customs, reach Russia (Mogilevskii 2012: 25).

Kyrgyzstan is a member of several international organizations, of which many are dominated by Russia. Most important is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This organization comprises twelve former Soviet states. The main goals of this organization are economic and security cooperation. The CIS is a means to more extensive military integration, with Russia taking the lead militarily and financially.²³ The CIS is currently on its way to developing into a Eurasian Union. Although the volume of trade within the CIS has increased between 2000 and 2010, the relative importance of this trade has decreased. Kyrgyzstan and many other Central Asian states may become a part of this Union, but not for the moment. It is yet unclear whether this Union will liberalize its members, or that it will become a new 'Soviet' Union (Hartwell 2013). One of the remarkable, and often criticized, institutions of the CIS is its election monitoring organization (CIS-EMO). This 'Russian' organization has approved election scores, which were condemned by independent observers.²⁴ It claims to be a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) but can better be explained as a Russian Policy tool (Kupchinsky 2005). Kyrgyzstan is also a member of many CIS associated organization, which are; the Free Trade Area (FTA)²⁵, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) which focuses on a common energy market and usage of water²⁶, and the organization of Central Asian Cooperation. In all these organizations, Russia has a predominant role.

Kyrgyzstan and Russia are also both members of the Collective Security and Treaty Organization (CSTO). The CSTO is primarily an organisation for military cooperation. Via this organization and its Rapid Reaction Forces, Russia has troops deployed at Russian military bases in

²³ Kyrgyzstan notifies US of Manas Transit Center Closure, RIA Novosti & Russia, Kyrgyzstan sign military base lease deal, RIA Novosti

²⁴ www.economist.com (2012)

²⁵ Referring to the Free Trade Agreement between CIS members

²⁶ Wikipedia on Commonwealth of Independent States

Kyrgyzstan.²⁷

Another major international organization of which Kyrgyzstan is a member is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Within this organisation, Russia and China are perceived to be the key players. Kyrgyzstan is one of the founders of the SCO and thus well integrated into this organisation.²⁸ The SCO should not be viewed as a mere 'talking shop', but as an embodiment of new norms and values, which are based on a non-democratic status quo. Research concluded that the SCO supports authoritarian regimes, especially in the case of Kyrgyzstan (Ambrosio 2008).

Kyrgyzstan also looks at Russia as a point of reference on for instance internal legislation. A study on Kyrgyz counter terrorism legislation has shown that even in the absence of much terrorist activity, the Russian law on this subject had been used as a template for Kyrgyz law. This results in a more repressive instrument towards democratic and autonomous political activity in Kyrgyzstan (Blank 2011: 210).

The strictly military relationship of Kyrgyzstan with Russia has been improved in recent years. It had allowed Russia to create another base and has terminated the contract with US for their base at Manas (Spechler & Spechler 2010; Blank 2011: 216). Russia also has several military units deployed in Kyrgyzstan under the flag of the CSTO. These are stationed there in order to fight international terrorism. There is even a special anti-Terrorism Centre located in Bishkek (Jonson 2004: 188). Kyrgyzstan welcomes these troops and next to the supply of cheap military equipment and training, Russia was asked for direct military support several times. First on the 31st of August 1999, Kyrgyzstan requested Russian military assistance in order to end a terrorist attack in which several hostages were taken. Russia did not send soldiers, but only some technical assistance (Jonson 2004: 66). In 2010, Kyrgyzstan asked Russia to intervene militarily during the ethnic clashes in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Crucial is that the Kyrgyz government again asked for Russian support, but Russia did not intervene. Russia is said to have recognised that it would not effectively increase its influence by intervening. It did make sure that no Western peace keepers got access instead (Sestanovich 2010). The primarily Russian military aid and Kyrgyzstan's preference for Russian military help in crises clearly shows that Kyrgyzstan and Russia are closely linked on this topic.

The intergovernmental ties with Russia are perceived to be high (2). Within the intergovernmental organizations, Russia uses its prominent role to exert influence abroad. Furthermore, Russia and Kyrgyzstan have a close bilateral relationship on security issues.

1.3 Technocratic

The influx of an educated workforce to Russia, like engineers, seems to be especially small, although it is easier for them to access Russia, compared to lower educated workers. Most of the educated Central Asian work force moved 'far abroad' because Russian regulations for acquiring citizenship were still too protective (Sinitsina 2012: 44). Despite the many restrictions and regulations for foreign students, Russia is still attractive for students from Central Asia (Sinitsina 2012: 58 & 70). However, Russian education is experiencing more competition from Western universities and programs. One of the reasons for the decline of Russian students in Central Asia is that Russia's share of the educational market is not expanding as fast as in the West. Although the number of Kyrgyz students who study in Russia has grown lately, it is still modest compared to other countries. Furthermore, most students choose Western universities over Russian ones mainly because of possible future job opportunities and the quality of the universities Sinitsina (2012: 49). Mogilevskii acknowledges that Russia is losing its potential capacity to influence the future elite in Central Asia. Having studied at Russian universities, these future Central Asian Managers would bring home a positive and realistic view of Russia as well as being capable of communicating in Russian (Sinitsina 2012: 51). Despite these setbacks, many of the elites still have close ties with Russia. They have Russian roots, or have spent a considerable number of years in Russia. The former Kyrgyz president Akayev for example had

²⁷ Eurasianet.org (2011)

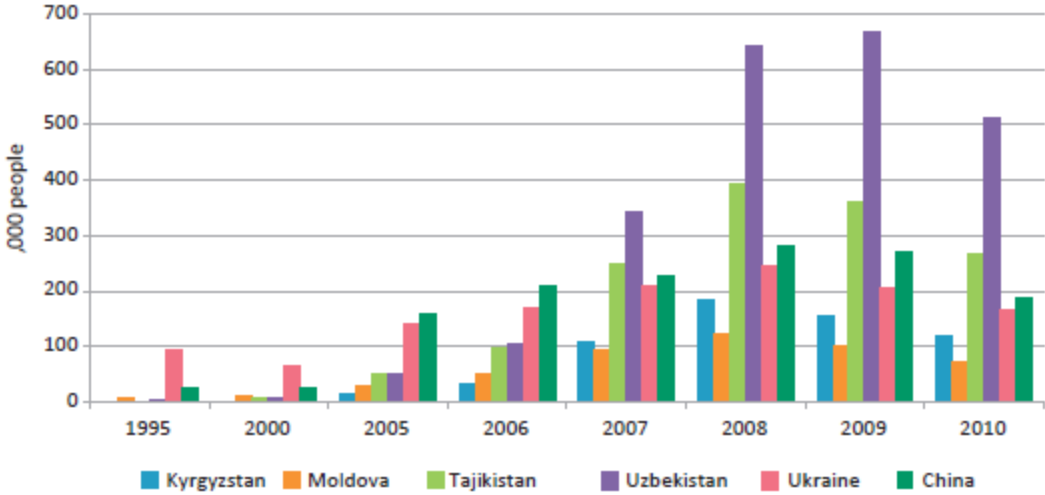
²⁸ Website SCO

been a research scientist in Leningrad for 14 years. In 2002, Akayev even appointed the ethnic Russian Nikolai Tanaev as prime minister (Huskey 2003: 120).

The technocratic ties are best described as high (2). However, Russia is experiencing competition from other parts of the world, and within Kyrgyzstan, most of the politicians are moving towards Kyrgyz nationalism. This would leave less room for a Russian technocratic elite in the future.

1.4 Social

Russia is the main destination for Kyrgyz migrant workers. The numbers of Kyrgyz workers in Russia are displayed in figure 10. The numbers are quite high and account for 17% of the Kyrgyz work force at home (Sinitsina 2012: 40). A large portion of these migrants, estimated about 60-80%, are illegal. Unofficial numbers by NGO's state the total figure of Kyrgyz emigrants might vary between 600.000 and one million, which are much higher than official numbers (Tynaliev & McLean 2011: 4). Most of the emigrants lack education or training and can only participate in unskilled jobs. About one third of these people seek permanent residence in Russia (Sinitsina 2012: 42). The remittances these workers send back to Kyrgyzstan make up almost half of the total of cross-border money transfers, and are still rising. In 2007 they accounted for 27% of the GDP (Sinitsina 2012: 46-47). The effects of emigrants returning home has been investigated by Tynaliev & McLean and they concluded that emigrants brought not only remittances but also new skills back to Kyrgyzstan (Tynaliev & McLean 2011: 4). The main reason for working abroad is to earn a living. The effects of the remittances send back to Kyrgyzstan are not fully known, but it is said that the amount of money sent home is enormous and has positive effects on the Kyrgyz economy (Lukashova & Makenbaeva 2009: 55). Central Asian workers in Russia are still experiencing many problems regarding regulations and restrictions, and migrant employees are still not considered to be full employees (Sinitsina 2012: 58). There is still unfriendly and sometimes even xenophobe behaviour towards Central Asian migrants in Russia itself (Sinitsina 2012: 69). Tynaliev & McLean however, state that Kyrgyz emigrants overall were quite positive about Russia.



Sources: Russian Federal Migration Service, Rosstat.

Figure 10: Inflow of workforce (from the mayor countries) into Russia 1995-2010 (Sinitsina 2012: 39).

Russians themselves are also leaving Kyrgyzstan. Especially after the independence of Kyrgyzstan, many Russians left the country. Between 1989 and 1999, the Russian population in Kyrgyzstan decreased by 34%. After 1999, still large numbers of Russians leave Kyrgyzstan because of negative economic prospects and discriminatory personnel practices (Commercio 2004: 26). The total percentage of Russians in Kyrgyzstan in 2013 was 12.5% in contrast to the 64.9% Kyrgyz.²⁹

The social ties with Russia are perceived to be high (2) because the Russian Diaspora is one of the main minorities in Kyrgyzstan, yet their influence on Kyrgyz policy is diminishing. More important

²⁹ CIA worldfactbook Kyrgyzstan

is the immigration of Kyrgyz workers to Russia. Especially the fact that an amount as large as almost a third of the Kyrgyz GDP is sent back to Kyrgyzstan by remittances should not be underestimated. Many Kyrgyz are thus reliant on family working in Russia.

1.5 Information

Russia invests much in telecommunications in Kyrgyzstan. Russia has a 51% interest in the largest mobile operator in Kyrgyzstan, Megacom. Another large Kyrgyz company, JSC Sky Mobile is part of the Russian influenced VypelCom Ltd (Sinitsina 2012: 36). The former Soviet media structures still dominate and influence the present Kyrgyz media. The media is still perceived to be a political instrument to create stability (Brown 1995). Despite Russian influence on the media, former restraints on news media were mainly exercised by the Kyrgyz government itself (Manzella & Yacher 2005). The ties to Russia are therefore medium (1).

1.6 Civil Society

The role of Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) is difficult to measure because Russia itself does not seem to use any of these organizations in Kyrgyzstan. The World Association of Non-Governmental Organization (WANGO) lists 8 different NGO's active in Kyrgyzstan. None of these are Russian influenced.³⁰ It could be there just aren't such organizations that operate in Kyrgyzstan. It is already extremely difficult for NGO's to operate within Russia itself, and this will only worsen (Maxwell 2006: 262). One explanation might be that Russian NGO's have too much trouble within Russia, let alone that they might operate from Russia abroad. The overall influence of NGO's also became apparent during the 'tulip revolution' in march 2005, where the protest movement was run by local elites that gathered protesters locally, and where no NGO's were involved at all (Radnitz 2006:133).

There are 28 Kyrgyz Diaspora communities and organizations in Russia. It will be too difficult to really look into these organizations themselves and discover how large and professional they are. The sheer number itself indicates the Kyrgyz Diaspora in Russia has ties with their homeland Kyrgyzstan and has some form of organisation (Lukashova & Makenbaeva 2009: 104).

The cultural and lingual influence of Russia in Kyrgyzstan is drastically declining. In a survey from 2007, it is said that 38% of the population felt at home with the Russian language. Although the opportunities for children to learn the Russian language have decreased, 70% of Kyrgyz students still learn Russian. One of the reasons for a decline of Russian education is that Western countries as well as China, Turkey and Iran are gradually replacing it (Sinitsina 2012: 47-48). Kyrgyzstan did actively pursue a better integration of the Russian language in 2001 by making it the second official language in Kyrgyzstan (Huskey 2003: 120). But the Russian language and minorities are sometimes still facing discrimination and there are many Russian-speaking minorities in Kyrgyzstan that want to expand the communicational ties with Russia (Sinitsina 2012: 70). In 2011, new attempts were made to assert the predominance of Kyrgyz language. For example, those who only speak Russian have problems finding employment. On governmental level, the Kyrgyz state reassigned many formerly Russian lingual broadcast channels to local Kyrgyz stations. The Kyrgyz shift towards nationalism is alienating the Russian population in Kyrgyzstan.³¹

The ties between Russian and Kyrgyz civil society are medium (1) because the Russian culture and language are still dominant in Kyrgyzstan, especially when compared to other minorities. There are however no NGO's that guide this Russian civil society in Kyrgyzstan. A Kyrgyz society in Russia exists but cannot exert influence on state policy.

³⁰ WANGO.org

³¹ Eurasianet.org (February 17th 2011)

2. Total linkage score

The total amount is graded by the score index described in table 2 (p.20).

Case: Kyrgyzstan	
Dimension	Score
1. Economic	1
2. Intergovernmental	2
3. Technocratic	2
4. Social	2
5. Information	1
6. Civil Society	1
Total:	9
Category:	Medium High

Table 4: Total linkage score between Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

Appendix 2: Organizational Power of Kyrgyzstan

1. State coercive capacity

1.1 Scope

The state coercive capacities scope of Kyrgyzstan can be considered medium (1). There is not much information on this topic and there were some critical changes after the tulip revolution in 2005. Before 2005, Akayev had full control over the police, but the army was never fully controlled by him. The Kyrgyz army was reluctant to intervene in the revolution and in the end quickly sided with the new provisional government (Marat 2010: a). After this revolution, his successor Bakiyev tried to increase his control over the security apparatus. He removed powerful ministers and replaced them with loyal supporters and family. Bakiyev placed his brother and a son in charge of the Presidential Guard and the National Security Service (Collins 2011: 153). He also created a new armed unit to protect governmental officials (Marat 2010: a). After the 2005 revolution, the police was still divided through local (Kyrgyz) ethnic lines, where consequently their primary loyalty lies. The army is still considered to be an institution of the poor. Few of the ethnic minorities are represented in the army and they are poorly equipped and trained. The 2010 revolutions showed that both army and police acted without directions of the government, and the security forces violently repressed the uprising in Osh in south Kyrgyzstan. It is said that these events even further alienated the army from the national government (Marat 2010: b).

1.2 Cohesion

The cohesion within the states security forces can be regarded as medium (1) because there is much evidence for non-material sources of cohesion. The security forces are deeply linked by patronage and ethnic ties, but there is no overall national cohesion. For example, even after the ousting of president Bakiyev in 2010, some local security forces remained loyal. In both the 2005 and 2010 revolutions, the security forces were primarily loyal to the regime and only later switched sides (Collins 2011: 157).

2. Party strength

2.1 Scope

The party strength is low, mainly because there is no strong urban population, strong civil society or national-level student movements which can form an opposition (Radnitz 2006: 133). Yet in 2005, the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (NDK) was able to attain influence in both the northern and southern parts of Kyrgyzstan. The protests however originated from local discontent. Because of the many informal interpersonal ties and patronage with local leaders, their discontent only roused when 'their' leaders were removed. A national organization of the government, or opposition is thus very hard. Nonetheless, the removal of Akayev in 2005 was achieved by a final trust of the NDK party. Yet, there is no solid foundation for these kinds of revolutions, and Kyrgyz politics are defined by localism (Radnitz 2006: 138-139). Because of this limited scope, low (0) would qualify best.

2.2 Cohesion

The cohesion of party strength has always been low because of the importance of clans and their individual leaders which leads to a form of localism (Radnitz 2006: 137). Results from before 2000 for example indicated that party nominated candidates were hardly ever chosen, in contrary to independent candidates (Ishiyama & Kennedy 2001: 1184) After 2005, the focus shifted towards patriotism and elites residing in the north of Kyrgyzstan. If we look at data on the effective number of political parties in Kyrgyzstan, this was 4.27 in the year 2000, not available in the 2005 revolution and 1.16 in 2007.³² This suggests a higher cohesion on party strength, but still very low. In another

³² Using Molinar's methodology on effective number of parties (Turovsky 2011: 205)

research, the results after the elections of 2010 state that the runner up parties had 8.5% and 7.8% of the parliamentary seats. A total of 29 parties took part in these elections in October 2010. Nonetheless, Kyrgyzstan is said to be moving towards a fragmented party system, which is not to be misunderstood as a multiparty system but a highly elite-based one (Turovsky 2011: 209). Furthermore, the trend towards nationalism is supporting the cohesion of the political parties itself, at least for Kyrgyz nationals. Despite the increasing cohesion via nationalism and the recent political changes, the cohesion is still fragmented and based on localism. The cohesion is therefore be qualified as low (0).

3. State economic control

In Levitsky & Way’s methodology, the discretionary state control of the economy is determined when either:

1. The state controlled mineral sector accounts for more than 50 percent of export revenue.
2. The centrally planned economy does not undergo large-scale privatization.³³

When looking at the Kyrgyz economy, there is neither a centrally planned economy nor a large mineral sector. The economy is for a large part privatized, although this can also be explained as the stealing of economic assets or political positions (Engvall 2007: 42). When looking at privatization, after Kyrgyzstan’s independence in 1991, many companies were able to privatize. However, this wave of privatization quickly slowed down to almost a halt. On not attractive, politically sensitive or too important domains, privatization was not possible. It is said that the privatizations that took place were sometimes illegal. Yet after 2005, some companies were even nationalised again (Kisenkov et al. 2006: 10-14). To conclude, the state does not have full control over its economic structures. The grading will thus be neither 1 or 2 and thus 0.

4. Overall organizational power

Levitsky & Way measure the total on organizational power as follows:

- 0-2: Low
- 3: Low Medium
- 4: Medium
- 5: Medium High
- 6-8: High

Case	Party Scope	Party Cohesion	State Scope	Sate Cohesion	State economic control	Total	Category
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1	0	2	Low

Table 5: Total on organizational power.

³³ Methodology explained as such in Levitsky & Way (2010: 378)

Appendix 3: Leverage of Kyrgyzstan

1. Kyrgyzstan

Leverage is being measured by looking at the susceptibility to foreign leverage or sanctions. That means that many indicators focus on the strength of the country in question, in this case Kyrgyzstan. Second comes the leverage from black knights like Russia. Levitsky & Way measure leverage by listing certain characteristics of a case, which either fit in low, medium or high leverage.³⁴ The same methodology will be applied here.

1.1 Low leverage

Kyrgyzstan does not have low a leverage because it is not a large economy with a total GDP of more than \$100 billion. In 2000, the Kyrgyz total GDP was approximately \$2.4 billion and had in 2010 risen to \$5.0 billion.³⁵ Kyrgyzstan does not produce any oil (or gas) itself, and cannot use this to obtain a low leverage. Kyrgyzstan neither possesses nuclear weapons. It meets none of these criteria and does not have low leverage.

1.2 Medium leverage

A country will have a medium leverage if the economy is medium sized and has a total GDP between \$50 and \$100 billion. Another criteria is being a secondary oil producer. As we have already seen, the Kyrgyz economy is very small and does not produce any substantial oil itself. The third criterion is that there should exist major security related foreign-policy issues for the US and the EU. In this case we need to look at the foreign-policy issues of Russia concerning Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan has a strategic position for Russia because it is positioned at the southern sphere of influence of Russia. Especially the threats of international terrorism in Central-Asia make Kyrgyzstan interesting for Russia. The main argument for Russian military presence in Kyrgyzstan is based upon this argument. Because of limited Russian resources to effectively strengthen its influence, Russia chose to collectively work together to fight international terrorism (Jonson 2004: 66). Furthermore, there are competing security issues between Russia and the West. The US had a large military base in Manas in order to support their operations in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan was thus also very important for the West. Kyrgyzstan is definitely the spill in the competing US and Russian foreign policies in Central Asia (Blank 2011: 209). In 2003, Russia's ambassador to India, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, stated that the US bases in Central Asia were redundant since Russia played the major stabilizing role there (Blank 2011: 210). Although some authors expect Central Asia to become a new battleground for major powers (Berman 2004), it is not likely that these competing interests will lead to a new 'great game'. Especially for the West, the region and Kyrgyzstan in particular are not as important as to Russia. The fear for a new power struggle in Central Asia should therefore not be exaggerated (Weitz 2004: 165).

Another criteria for medium leverage is black knight assistance. Instead of looking at black knights, one needs to look at Western support (or white knights). When looking at the financial aid from the US in the period 2001 to 2010, the numbers vary from \$43.44 million to \$117.52 million, being more than 1% of the Kyrgyz GDP in this period. The US can clearly be regarded as a major (military) power that offers substantial financial aid. Even without taking the EU into consideration, it can be concluded that there is external support from Western democracies (Nichol 2013: 30). When looking at these criteria, Kyrgyzstan fits the third and fourth criteria for having medium leverage.

³⁴ See Levitsky & Way (2010: 372) for details

³⁵ World bank World Development Indicators: Kyrgyz Republic

1.3 High leverage

Levitsky & Way determined that high leverage is present when the case meets none of the criteria for low or medium leverage. Kyrgyzstan therefore has a medium leverage.

