

# ALEKSANDAR MATOVSKI

Department of Political Science • Williams College  
Schapiro Hall rm.223 • 24 Hopkins Hall Drive • Williamstown, MA 01267 USA  
[am30@williams.edu](mailto:am30@williams.edu) • [aleksandarmatovski.com](http://aleksandarmatovski.com)

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

---

<b>Williams College, Department of Political Science, Williamstown, MA</b> Visiting Assistant Professor	2019-
<b>Williams College, Department of Political Science, Williamstown, MA</b> Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow	2017-2019
<b>Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA</b> Center Associate	2017-
Postdoctoral Fellow	2016-2017
<b>Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA</b> W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellow and the Bittson National Fellow	2015-2016

## NON-ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

<b>Director of Studies</b> , Forum Center for Strategic Research and Documentation, Skopje, Macedonia	2006-2008
<b>Consultant</b> , M6 Educational Center, Skopje, Macedonia	2007-2008
<b>National Security Advisor</b> , Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia	2004-2006
<b>Political and Military Advisor</b> , Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia	2003-2004
<b>Research Associate</b> , Eurodialogue Project, Skopje, Macedonia	2001-2002
<b>Policy Analyst</b> , Study and Analysis Group, Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, Macedonia	2001
<b>Research Assistant</b> , Forum Center for Strategic Research and Documentation, Skopje, Macedonia	2000-2001

## EDUCATION

---

<b>Cornell University, Department of Government</b> , Ithaca, New York PhD in Government <i>Committee:</i> Valerie Bunce (chair), Sidney Tarrow, Peter Enns	2015
M.A. in Government <i>Fields:</i> Comparative Politics and Political Methodology	2012
<b>King’s College London</b> , London, United Kingdom M.A. in War Studies	2004
<b>Saints Cyril and Methodius University</b> , Skopje, Macedonia B.A. in Law, International Law Major <i>Summa cum Laude</i> , with University Honors	2002
<i>Additional Training:</i> <b>Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research Summer Program</b> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan Maximum Likelihood Estimation, Panel Data, Event History, and Time Series Analysis	2009

## BOOK MANUSCRIPT

---

**Title: Popular Dictatorships: Crises, Mass Opinion and the Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism**

*Summary:* Does popular appeal play an important role in the rise and endurance of authoritarian regimes? Based on a cross-national analysis of regime transitions and a comparative study of the prototypical case of Russia, I show that electoral autocracies – the most widespread type of non-democracy today – are largely the product of distinct opinion currents that emerge in the wake of profound political, economic and security crises. I demonstrate that in such contexts, incumbents with a reputation for effective, strong-armed rule, gain decisive advantages in popular appeal over their competitors. This allows them to establish and sustain authoritarian rule through the ballot box and with minimal resort to coercion, thus conferring a veneer of electoral legitimacy. Fear of renewed instability, in turn, deter voters from challenging the regime through voting and public protest, enabling even poorly performing autocracies to survive. This legitimization strategy has a key limitation, however: electoral authoritarianism becomes unnecessary both when it succeeds and when it fails in its mission of stabilization. To maintain popular consent to their rule, I argue that electoral autocracies must therefore sustain, or even manufacture crises that justify their existence – a dynamic recently exemplified by Russia’s involvement in the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

## PUBLICATIONS

---

### *Peer Reviewed Articles*

“It’s the Stability, Stupid! How the Quest to Restore Order After the Soviet Collapse Shaped Russian Popular Opinion.” *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 50, No.2. April 2018.

### *Non-peer Reviewed Articles*

“All Quiet on the Balkan Front” (with Norman M. Naimark). *Hoover Digest*. Winter 2017.

“The Attitudinal Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism.” *Perspectives on Europe*, Vol. 43, Issue 1, Spring 2013. pp.136-140.

“Introduction: Special Issue on Kosovo and the Perspectives of the Balkan Region,” *Forum Analytica*, Issue 10/11 (November/December 2008). pp.4-11.

“Macedonia: A Crisis Nobody Wants to Notice” (with Sašo Ordanoski). *Forum Analytica*, Issue 10/11 (November/December 2008). pp.97-109.

“Macedonia After Bucharest: Avoiding Another European Failure in the Balkans.” *European Union Institute for Security Studies Opinion*. June 13, 2008. pp.1-6.

“Between Ohrid and Dayton: The Future of Macedonia’s Framework Agreement” (with Sašo Ordanoski). *Südost Europa Mitteilungen* (Journal of the Southeast Europe Association), Vol.47, Issue 4, August 2007. pp.46-59.

“The European Energy Security Policy.” *Euro Dialogue*. Issue 2. July 2002. pp.193-225. (in Macedonian).

“The European Common Foreign and Defense Policy: The Second Pillar of the EU or the Second Pillar of NATO?” (with Dejan Micković) *Euro Dialogue*. Issue 1. May 2002. pp.89-141. (in Macedonian).

### ***Book Chapters***

“The Logic of Vladimir Putin’s Popular Appeal.” In Bunce, Valerie; Karrie Koesel and Jessica Chen Weiss. *Citizens & the State in Authoritarian Regimes: Comparing Russia & China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. (forthcoming)

“A Tale of the Two Balkan Models of Conflict Resolution” (with Sašo Ordanoski) in Deimel, Joanna and van Meurs, Wim (eds.), *The Balkan Prism: A Retrospective by Policy Makers and Analysts*. Munich: Otto Sagner Publishing House, 2007. pp 155-168.

“Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans: The View from Macedonia.” in Gyarmati, István and Stančić, Darko. *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*. Geneva: Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2007. pp.99-114.

### ***Papers Submitted in Peer-reviewed Journals***

“Faking Turnout, Not Loyalty: How the Hidden Demobilization of the Citizenry Helped Russia’s Electoral Autocracy Maintain Dominance at the Polls.”

*Analyzing a unique set of list experiments, the article shows that the hidden demobilization of Russia’s electorate helped Vladimir Putin to secure a landslide victory in the 2012 presidential election despite the unprecedented protest wave that preceded it.*

“Strategic Intelligence and International Crisis Behavior”

*This paper challenges the widely-held view that high-quality strategic intelligence is a stabilizing factor in international relations, steadying decision-making, and preventing misunderstandings and surprise attacks. Based on a comparative study of the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, it argues that intelligence coups are among the most destabilizing forces in high-stakes international crises, providing beneficiaries with potentially decisive offensive capabilities, and compelling them to use it quickly, before the breach is discovered and the advantage is gone.*

“Our Brand is Crisis: Political, Economic and Security Upheavals and the Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism.”

*This article examines the impact of political, economic and security crises in the rise and resilience of electoral autocracies, based on an extensive cross-national analysis of regime survival and transition patterns for the 1973-2010 period.*

“Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism? Comparative Evidence from Post-Communist Russia.”

*This article argues that even poorly performing authoritarian regimes can maintain substantial electoral advantages and genuine popular support when there is widespread fear that their replacement will lead to greater turmoil. The article tests this theory on the paradigmatic Russian case, using evidence from the Russia Election Study panel surveys for 1996 and 2000.*

“The Lure of Strong-armed Rule: Deconstructing the Popular Appeal of Electoral Authoritarian Regimes.”

*Based on a cross-national analysis with data from the Comparative Manifestos Project Dataset, this article explores the campaign appeals of incumbents in electoral autocracies. It shows that these regimes have followed a remarkably consistent script in their appeals: claiming that their countries require a strong-armed but popularly endorsed leadership, which they are uniquely qualified to provide.*

### ***Policy Papers & Commentary***

“Trump Claims He Wants Closer Ties with Russia. Here Are 3 Reasons That Won’t Fly.” *The Washington Post*. May 17, 2017.

“Radicalism and the Bumpy Road Ahead: What is Kosovo’s Violence Potential?” Policy Paper. *Forum-Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation*. November 2004.

“Russia After 15 Years of Transition: The Great Power in a Small Package.” *Forum Magazine*. No.150. July 2004. pp.36-43 (in Macedonian).

“The Case of the Thessaloniki-Skopje Pipeline Extension: The Past, Present and the Future.” Policy Paper. *Forum-Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation*. July 2004.

“Russian Energy, Geopolitics and the Balkans: Opportunities and Limits for Expansion.” Policy Paper. *Forum-Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation*. May 2004.

### **FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS**

---

<b>Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship</b> , American Council of Learned Societies	2014-2015
<b>Sage Fellowship</b> , Department of Government, Cornell University	2008-2009 2013-2014
<b>Mario Einaudi Graduate Fellowship</b> for dissertation field research in Russia, Einaudi Foundation and the Cornell University Institute for European Studies	2012
<b>Research Travel Grant</b> for field research in Russia, Cornell Graduate School	2012
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) Summer Fellowship</b> for Intensive Russian Language Study at the Moscow State University	2012

<b>Pre-dissertation Research Fellowship</b> for field research in Russia, Council of European Studies, Columbia University	2012
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS)</b> Academic Year Fellowship for Russian Language Study at Cornell University	2011-2012
<b>Open Society Institute Global Supplementary Grant</b>	2008
<b>Fulbright Foreign Student Program Award</b> for graduate study in the US (declined)	2007
<b>Fulbright Fellowship for the 2005 Study of the United States Institute</b> , University of Delaware	2005
<b>UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Chevening Scholarship</b> for graduate study in the United Kingdom	2002-2003
<b>Golden Coin and Certificate of Merit</b> for the highest achieving graduates for 2001-2002, Saints Cyril and Methodius University	2002
<b>26th of July–Frank Manning Award</b> for outstanding academic performance, Saints Cyril and Methodius University	2002
<b>Golden Justinian Award for top ranking law student 1997-2001</b> , Saints Cyril and Methodius University	2002

#### INVITED TALKS (last 5 years)

---

“Can Authoritarianism be ‘Popular?’ The Case of Russia’s Regime Under Vladimir Putin,” presented at the Department of Political Science, Colgate University, November 14, 2017.

“Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism? Comparative Evidence from Post-Communist Russia,” presented at the School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University, March 27, 2017.

“What Makes Authoritarian Leaders ‘Popular?’ The Case of Russia’s Vladimir Putin,” Department of Political Science, Williams College, March 8, 2017.

“The Logic of Vladimir Putin’s Popular Appeal,” presented at the *Citizens and the State in Authoritarian Regimes: Comparing Mass Politics and Policy in China and Russia* workshop, University of Notre Dame, March 10-11, 2017.

“It’s the Stability, Stupid! How the Quest to Restore Order After the Soviet Collapse Shaped Russian Popular Opinion,” presented at the *Russia: 25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union* conference, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Stanford University, January 27, 2017.

“Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism? Comparative Evidence from Post-Communist Russia,” Fellows Seminar, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, October 5, 2016.

“The Lure of Strong-armed Rule: Deconstructing the Popular Appeal of Electoral Authoritarian Regimes,” presented at the *Mass Politics, the State and Foreign and Domestic Policy in Russia and China* Workshop, Cornell University, Sept. 16, 2016.

“Popular Dictators: The Attitudinal Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia and Beyond,” presented at the 2015-2016 Glenn-Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellows Paper Presentation Series, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, June 9, 2016.

### **SELECT CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS (last 5 years)**

---

“Strategic Intelligence and International Crisis Behavior,” the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Aug.29-Sept.1, 2019, Washington, DC.

“The Kremlin Meets the Masses on the Eve of the 2018 Presidential Election: Identity, Conflict, and Center-Periphery Politics,” roundtable discussion at the 2017 Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies, November 9-12, 2017, Chicago, IL.

“Faking Turnout, Not Loyalty: How the Hidden Demobilization of the Citizenry Helped Russia’s Electoral Autocracy Maintain Dominance at the Polls,” the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Aug.31-Sept.3, 2016, San Francisco, CA.

“Legitimizing Electoral Autocracies,” the 2016 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Sept. 1-4, 2016, Philadelphia, PA.

“Popular Legitimation and Campaign Appeals in Electoral Autocracies: A Comparative Analysis,” the 2016 Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Apr. 7-10, 2016, Chicago, IL.

“Our Brand is Crisis: Systemic Crises and the Rise of Electoral Autocracies,” the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Sept. 3-6, 2015, San Francisco CA.

“Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Autocracies?” the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference, Apr. 16-19, 2015, Chicago IL.

“Legitimized by Fear: Systemic Crises, Risk-averse Electorates and Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism,” the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2014, Chicago IL.

“Popular Opinion and the Rise of Illiberal Political Actors and Regimes,” the 21st International Conference of Europeanists, March 14-16, 2014, Washington, D.C.

### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE**

---

Referee for the American Journal of Political Science, Nationalities Papers and Comparative Politics

Member of the Editorial Committee, Reviews & Critical Commentary, Council for European Studies, Columbia University, 2013-2014

Member of the Editorial Board, *Eurodialogue*, Skopje Macedonia, 2002

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS (International Media)**

---

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Al Jazeera, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Christian Science Monitor

## **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH SKILLS**

---

Languages: Macedonian (native), Serbo-Croatian, Russian and Bulgarian (fluent), French (basic)

Software: STATA (advanced), R/S+ (advanced), Python (basic), Mathematica (basic)

## **AFFILIATIONS**

---

American Political Science Association (APSA)

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)

International Studies Association (ISA)

Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN)