ICT FOR DICTATORS: HOW GLOBAL POPULISTS LEVERAGE INTERNET FOR
POLITICAL GAIN

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ABSTRACT

This study outlines the ICT impact on the international success of populism, a style of antagonistic and charismatic politics that exploits grassroots concerns.   Data driven findings indicate little direct connection between Internet penetration growth and populist government. However, both Internet penetration and populism are individually tied to higher levels of corruption.

Venezuela, China, and Russia are three sociotechnical case studies exemplifying the interaction between Internet and populism. In Venezuela, the Chavismo movement deftly incorporates a Latin American populist tradition into the social media-fueled political communication of the present. China, balancing economic growth and a return to Maoist populism, faces the challenge of promoting ICT development while curtailing the foundational freedoms inherent to traditional Internet use. In Russia, Vladimir Putin has introduced a nationalistic, mafia-style form of governance that intimidates citizens while encouraging a digital isolation that separates Russian Internet users from the rest of the world.

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Note on Translation and Transliteration

Foreign language terminology is translated directly from the author. Chinese language words and phrases are expressed using the two major language standards of Mainland China (People's Republic of China): simplified characters and Hanyu Pinyin transliteration into phonetic Mandarin.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Background and Research Questions

While often oversimplified and/or misunderstood, populism – a political style

emphasizing the power of the masses over an unfairly ruling elite – has emerged as a major

influence in twenty-first century international affairs. Successfully campaigning under a banner

of working class concerns and gripping charisma, populist leaderships have spread to multiple

continents, with notable strongholds in Russia, China, and South America. In so doing, these

leaders have also engaged in high-level deception, using the will of the people as a pretext for

strongman policies that counter the interests of the citizenry at large.

In the modern age, this rise has come largely, and non-coincidentally, in parallel with the

momentous growth of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) – especially the

Internet. Leaders from Venezuela's former President Hugo Chavez to Russia's current President

Vladimir Putin have experimented with various techniques of technological affordance

exploitation, from disciplined yet bombastic media strategy to investments in sophisticated (and

often malicious) software implementation to monitor and limit critical speech. Though

populaces in individual countries may fluctuate in support for specific populist leaderships, the

broader ideas and policy practices of contemporary populism nonetheless appear poised to

persist and even grow in the near future. This alone ensures that populism as a political strategy,

a campaign theme, and a basis for legitimate rule will be a global phenomenon in situations of

political contention for years to come. In addition, the persistence of populism as a significant

ideology within national and international politics even when populists themselves are not in

power further suggests that populism can easily dominate the format and direction of political discourse in the networked age.

Given that many influential states in the world have strong populist elements in their respective societies, an important question is thus raised in modern international politics: What are the drivers of contemporary populism? This thesis examines a hypothesis derived from this question, testing the strength of relationship between Internet penetration and populism in order to introduce the greater implications of ICT in a populist world. Here, populist states - those which have either a populist leader in power, a large presence of populist party/ideological influence, or both - can (and have) used the Internet to their advantage through mechanisms of institutionalized corruption to control networks, control political discourse, and control the seemingly free and fully enfranchised public. Consequently, this thesis tests an additional argument that the Internet is not only useful to populist regimes in their quest to gain, build, maintain, and manage power – it is essential to their very survival, posing a key question: through what sociotechnical and technological mechanisms are populist governments using the Internet to expand their political control?

Based on these arguments/hypotheses, the thesis will employ a multidisciplinary methodological approach to analysis that includes clear and consistent definitions of the social and political phenomena examined here (namely "populism"), a theory-driven research question with testable propositions, qualitative analytical overviews of case study countries, and quantitative statistical analysis. As such, a specific method of measurement for the likelihood of populism to thrive (as well as an outline of socioeconomic characteristics endemic to populist states) will be outlined via qualitative and quantitative approaches. The forthcoming quantitative

statistical analyses will include both an index for measuring state-level populism as well as a regression analysis testing the relationship between Internet penetration and the presence of populist states in the world today. Qualitatively, case study research analyzes the nature of populism and its treatment of ICT as a sociopolitical tool within three of the most globally influential populist societies today: Venezuela, China, and Russia.

Introducing Case Study Countries

Because of their foundational examples in the modern definition of populism, left-wing populist states are a focal point in the forthcoming analysis. In this large group of countries, Information Communication Technology (ICT) has strongly benefitted those in power against those fighting for greater rights and representation. From China to Russia to Venezuela, populist regimes achieve similar political outcomes even though the cultural and historical differences between these disparate countries are vast.

This study will employ a case study approach and use statistical, historical, sociocultural, and policy analyses to answer this question. As three influential populist states around the world, Russia, China, and Venezuela underscore populist Internet policy trends around the world. The diversity, size, and different sociopolitical influences these countries have in the international system also highlights those populist characteristics that are truly global as opposed to culturally specific in nature. In Russia, there is a clear example of a well-defined strongman ruler in Vladimir Putin, who invokes strong nationalist sentiment through a rigorous media strategy that mixes propaganda with censorship. In China, this formula is more oriented towards censorship and less towards cultivating a cult of personality around one leader after disastrous experience with Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. In Venezuela, the Chavez era produced

more overt and colorful propaganda strategy in building a historically-based "Bolivarian" cult of personality with an underlying bespoke approach to corrupt political bargaining; both of these characteristics exemplify a uniquely Latin American form of populism that has existed for two centuries.

As such, the study implicitly argues that at least three major leftist/populist states (China, Venezuela, and Russia) have outsized influence on global populism today, especially as it relates to using sovereign control of the Internet to enhance regime legitimacy and strength. In each of these countries, several core attributes are consistent, including:

- An authoritarian-leaning government unafraid to use intimidation to suppress dissent
- Internet usage that is restricted in some way, as expressed by censorship policy and/or lower Internet penetration
- Active one-way communication between populist rulers and their subjects, with anti-Western/anti-American sentiment a key theme
- Commitments to improving the economy, if only to support key benefactors of the regime
- Leadership that is built on charisma and/or a well-defined narrative of historical national trauma
- Severe corruption

China

In China, a renewed position of international might has brought with it important political issues that are directly related to the state's view that the Internet is a political tool. It views cyberspace as the next space of international conflict and has invested heavily to remain in an

advantageous attacking position in the battle for control over online speech. As a result, the

Chinese government's ability to reach and regulate the thoughts and activities of its people has

made censorship an effective method of maintaining regime legitimacy while promoting the

indigenous development of its people's highly sought-after ICT skills due to the demand for state

sponsored coders and hackers in the Chinese national security apparatus.

Given its recent high rates of growth, China faces an Internet political dilemma as ordinary

Chinese increasingly desire Western-style transparency and political openness. Importantly,

such a rising internal political tension comes as China must continue to stably manage the

competing ideological pressures of Communism and market economy within its current hybrid

society. Here, China's capitalist focus must be balanced with more traditional Maoism, a strain

of populism in Chinese politics (as seen in contemporary figures such as Bo Xilai) emerging

from the policies and rule of Communist China's (populist) founder: Mao Zedong. The

reemergence of Maoist populism in Chinese politics has new significance given the rise of the

Internet and social media use in China, on which more impassioned conversations over the

country's future direction – Western liberal vs. Maoist populist – take place on a platform that

has literally introduced China to the very practice of debate itself.

Venezuela

Venezuela is the flagship nation in the current model of Latin American populism, a political

tradition that dates back to the region's early days of independence. As such, it is unsurprising

that Latin American populism is a political phenomenon that has spread across the entire multi-

continental region throughout the post-colonial centuries. Today, prominent populist states (plus

the left-wing influence of Communist Cuba) include Ecuador and Bolivia (where indigenous

rights are incorporated into populist rhetoric), Nicaragua, Argentina, and, most important, Venezuela.

Channeling his predecessor, Simon Bolivar, the late President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela was very successful in stifling dissent utilizing his trademark charismatic rhetoric. His charisma served as an inspiration for many of Latin America's poor in a region with high income inequality and his passion allowed him to not only gain a meaningful alliance with Fidel Castro of Cuba but also supplant him as the standard bearer for the left in Latin America. As part of his political achievements, Chavez and his regime (Chavismo) conducted activities over ICT – notably through Chavez's use of Twitter – that effectively utilized the affordances of social media for political gain. This remains one of his most substantial legacies, for in the wake of his death other prominent (and similarly democratically elected) populists throughout the Americas, including Chavez's successor Nicolas Maduro, have incorporated his model of bullying and digital de facto censorship in their respective societies society. That said, the development of this trend remains heavily uncertain in Latin America due to recent electoral defeats against Chavismo in Venezuela as well as a wave backlash against once stronger populist heads of state across the region (Grillo 2015).

Russia

The Russian model emphasizes ICT policy towards areas that are in significant political transition, especially those which happen to border the country. This is best seen in the current conflict raging in Eastern Ukraine, where Russian military activities are sparking a new brand of social media usage to support the regime and regulate discourse that might hamper the war effort. Like China, the Putin regime supports censorship controls through authoritarian means,

while like Venezuela, it is headed by a charismatic leader who uses (online) media to promote

his popular image of tough-minded patriotism and win democratic elections. Because of this,

Russia is an intriguing case study for use in comparing the more disparate Chinese and

Venezuelan populist models given that its populist regime incorporates attributes from both

countries.

<u>Disciplinary Context, Operational Analyses, and Research Implications</u>

In compiling the quantitative and qualitative data for such rigorous analyses, this thesis

builds from the work of several fields and fits within a niche at the intersection of online

networking, policymaking, and (political) culture. It contributes to the nascent body of

scholarship focused on questions of digital political culture. An understanding of Information

Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) is useful because challenges related to

technology and international development often involve an analysis of similar factors (such as

political culture, corruption, and the "digital divide"). Importantly, many of the have-nots in the

"digital divide" have become active supporters of populist leaders and governments in

developing markets.   In this way, ICT4D as an emerging field of scholarship benefits from an

examination of the relationship between technology and development as first and foremost a

political issue (as opposed to a problem of neoliberal economics or purely due to cultural

anomalies within a given society).

From this, the statistical analysis of internationally-recognized and national-level data

measuring economic, social, and technological indicators (as compiled by the World Bank's

World Development Indicators) creates a series of meaningful takeaways that quantitatively

measure the influences and potential causes of modern-day populism. The study seeks to show

that modern populism – and the serious sociopolitical problems associated with it – is complex because of significant correlations between a wide range of indicators (including Internet penetration and corruption perceptions, among other variables) and the presence of populism in a given state. This analysis will also further elaborate a causal relationship between the variables in question and the existence of populism in the places where it has recently thrived. At the same time, causal relationships will be tested quantitatively via a regression analysis. Here, qualitative findings seek to support statistical conclusions – especially as expressed at a granular level in the country case study analyses – provide further resources for identifying and addressing the spread of populism globally through information technology.

Such findings provide an exciting array of potential future research avenues in the fast growing area of digital political science. These include pushing further into addressing the myriad of questions raised by the largely failed social media-fueled uprisings during the Arab Spring as well as contributing to a greater understanding of national censorship systems (from both a political and a technical perspective). At the same time, the study focus on the influence of ICT in governance issues provides a new, deep viewpoint into studying more effective approaches to anti-corruption measures around the world, particularly in light of the observed trend that populist states tend to have the most entrenched cultures of corruption.

CHAPTER 2 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

 This thesis incorporates a wide range of disciplinary perspectives to test the relationship

between Internet and global populism. As such, scholarship pertaining to the research topic

relates to a wide variety of sociotechnical and sociopolitical factors. Importantly, historical

development plays a role in establishing the intellectual backbone undergirding this niche of

multidisciplinary research, a reality that is further reflected throughout the individual case study

analyses in Chapters 4-6. At the same time, a theoretical framework is necessary to provide

explanations for the study's findings in order to appropriately place this study within

contemporary scholarship.

Theoretical Framework

Defining Populism

 Simply put, the term "populism" in this thesis refers to an antagonistic style of politics

led by a charismatic leader who plays to the feelings of a political base, particularly through an

aggressive media policy designed to disarm opposition leaders and discredit their ideas. As a

result, populist leaderships seek to create political cultures wherein a stark dichotomy emerges in

political discourse. Thus, the goal of populist leaders is to center political discourse around

themselves and their images so that the people are either for that leader or against that leader.

 This definition differs slightly from common usages of the word "populism" in a political

analysis context. Most important, in this study, the analytical focus on populism centers

exclusively on phenomena related to governing and achieving power. In addition, "populism" is

such a specific term in Latin American studies that it is necessary to address differences between

the use of the term in that discipline and in this thesis. In this case, the Latin American focus on populism is defined by a range of characteristics with an emphasis on the cultural development of hyperbolic, charismatic, and verbose leaders/dictators as exemplified by Hugo Chavez. This will be outlined further below when discussing literature related to Latin American populism, and will be a key component in the Venezuela case study analysis in Chapter 4. Although that view fits within the scope of this study, "populism" as defined here is intentionally broader so to incorporate larger trends across cultures and international regions.

Regime Related Characteristics

Another important term used by scholars and students of international political issues is "regime." Within this thesis, the term incorporates an array of comparable factors across countries. As such, "regime" in this study refers to a ruling government wherein the incumbent's ideology, coalition organization, and the establishment of a distinct governing brand determine policymaking methods and, in turn, the direction of policy and political trends. Given the focus on populism and its major components, this definition allows for a more holistic view of the commonalities of populist societies in the modern information age.

Measuring Key Factors: Corruption

The analyses presented here focus on corruption as a primary motivator of populism. Like the term "populism," "corruption" itself is a complex and mostly qualitative and interpretive concept. At the same time, corruption as witnessed by individual societies is inherently shadowy to define but generally entails the abuse of public positions for individual private benefit. Such a reality insures complexity and difficulty in providing adequate measurements for analysis.

Operationally, analyzing the relationship between populism and corruption can take several different directions. One possible approach is to focus on those trends easily observed, such as tangible economic impacts stemming from more transparent transactions, like international trade. Similarly, structural components of political culture such as bureaucratic processes can be useful in theorizing which areas of society are most affected by and susceptible to corruption. I view corruption as a composite measurement of several items, from political justice processes to the de facto function of the national economy. As such, corruption statistics here incorporate internationally comparable scores along an easy to identify scale (see Chapter 3).

Internet Connectivity

The wide and exponential impact of ICT in contemporary societies reflects the Internet's vast speed and complexity. These qualities also blur definitions for measuring connectivity growth. I employ a broad-based set of factors in measuring Internet connectivity and growth in a socioeconomic context, as best seen in the operational variables used in the statistical analysis in Chapter 3.

These variables reflect the view that ICT mediated connectivity – as exemplified by Internet usership – exists in an integrated sociotechnical ecosystem. Here, infrastructure is an important component of the system, from central nodes (e.g. servers) to physical extensions of cable expanding the network to more remote households. At the same time, economic reflections on a society's engagement in developing cyber capabilities is meaningful because it is a potentially unambiguous sign that the society/state is politically engaged to promote Internet growth and is actively anticipating positive ICT externalities to accrue to end users. From this,

measures of international commerce are especially useful in diagnosing the sociotechnical state

of a given country. As I will show, such status and orientation towards ICT has regime level

implications that affect rulers and citizens alike.

Political Philosophy in Cyberspace

This discussion pertains to an avenue of scholarship combining political affairs with the

impact of information technology. There is a current debate between those favoring the ability

of ICT to make democratizing political change (known as cyber-utopians) and those finding that

ICT affordances overwhelmingly benefit (incumbent) dictators (known as cyber-skeptics)

(Morozov, 2011). The literature review below outlines many of the specific and influential

perspectives from cyber-utopians and cyber-skeptics alike in shaping the focus of this thesis and

the interdisciplinary niche of digital political studies in general.

Importantly, my research generally aligns with cyber-skepticism. Research findings, as

well as a methodology that prioritizes individual country and case study examinations strongly

suggest that populist authoritarians have witnessed great benefits from information technology

externalities and continue to seek new ways to reap those benefits in greater quantities in order to

maintain power. Within this context, I also acknowledge a potential fallacy of analysis in

sociotechnical studies: technological determinism. This term describes the belief that the new

technologies dictate social development with little to no regard for the influence of human actors

and decisions, implying that ICT introductions into modern states leads to near entire path

dependent sociopolitical and socioeconomic realities (Smith and Marx 1994). In this case, I

adopt an anti-technologically deterministic approach to qualitative and quantitative analysis in

order to accomplish broader goals of determining aspects of political culture – especially the

direct actions of leadership and other influential social actors – that are conducive to populism today.

<u>Literature Review</u>

Based on the study's focus of populism as an all-encompassing force in a given society, it is first and foremost important to note that there is a prominent connection between populism and dictatorship. Here, the work of political scientists like Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2011) are essential to building a framework of understanding how individuals can gain total control of society via modern media networks. These scholars outline the three basic building blocks for populist dictatorship: nominal deciders (those legally defined to choose the next leader), the real electorate (those who actually choose the next leader), and the "winning coalition" (the individuals and groups whose support is essential for a leader's legitimacy and survival). As such, winning coalitions should be kept small so they can more effectively experiment and implement policy. At the same time, this structure ensures that new leaders can best adhere to the ancient advice of theorists like Sun Tzu who extol the importance of seizing the advantage before a time window closes (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2011, 4-5, 17, 93, 226-227). This is especially the case in matters involving the death of a leader, a situation recently experienced in contemporary Venezuela after the death of Chavez wherein his successor, Nicolas Maduro, failed to secure in a timely manner the stability-inducing legitimacy of a firebrand populist leader, with dramatic socioeconomic consequences (Grillo 2015). In such a situation, political opportunity abounds, and the kingmaking coalition must respond suitably and in short order to maintain status quo legitimacy (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2011, 25-29).

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The size and composition of this governing coalition is therefore essential to determining regime type and policy action. In a democracy, for example, coalitions are challenged to win a "battle for good ideas." That said, for all regime types, coalitions must make nuanced and important choices as to how to govern in a way that best meets their interests. This takes on numerous forms, including supporting higher education for the citizenry and the manipulation of foreign aid in doling out funds and promoting foreign policy investments to key allies. For populists, these ideas extend into the information technology and media policy spaces through a modern-day application of dictatorial tenets. With ICT, authoritarian populist states do well to balance connectivity and its supporting infrastructure to gain citizen support without inadvertently cultivating a powerful new opposition. Furthermore, this incentive to firmly clamp down on opposition extends itself well to media policy writ large, as more intensive efforts to control the political message and control media access yield dividends in the form of more stable regime power (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2011, 44, 108, 116, 162-163, 198).

Populism

> Populist practices emerge out of the failure of existing social and political institutions to confine and regulate political subjects into a relatively stable social order. It is the language of politics when there can be no politics as usual: a mode of identification characteristic of times of unsettlement and de-alignment, involving the radical redrawing of social borders along lines other than those that had previously structured society. It is a political appeal that seeks to change the terms of political discourse, articulate new social relations, redefine political frontiers and constitute new identities (Panizza 2005, 9).

<div align="right">- Francisco Panizza</div>

Generally speaking, the term "populism" in social science incorporates a number of important characteristics. First, there is a manufactured dichotomous breakdown of core political issues/decisions, often in an insider/outsider construction. Second, a charismatic leader emerges

to dominate political culture in the society in question, as seen in the presences of Chavez, Mao, and Putin, among others. Third, ideology becomes less important in a populist state, as the force of personality and discourse come about in ways that undermine preexisting structures of opposing philosophical positions.

Panizza highlights the us-versus-them nature of populism in its repeated calls for greater sovereignty and national pride. There is also a "demonization" of "the other" to the extent that populist leaders almost always employ culturally specific memes to specify opponent weaknesses and their unsuitability to govern. In this study, the cases of Chavez in Venezuela and Putin in Russia both highlight how conspiratorial, anti-American rhetoric serves such a goal (see Chapters 4 and 6). With charismatic delivery, this technique consequently breaks down the "dividing line between personal and political," a key ingredient for attracting a large, loyal following. Such a phenomenon is caused by a range of factors, including a lack of confidence in the political system, a breakdown in political parties, political culture, or other cultural traditions, and the important role played by the most advanced media technologies of the age connecting populists to their constituencies and amplifying their message (Panizza 2005, 3-5, 11-13, 26).

Another perspective of populism is that it implies that "these politicians use a rhetoric that aggressively defends the interests of the common man against the privileged elite." As such, populists, at their core, promote "the idea of a popular will and a struggle between 'the people' and 'the elite.'" Here, the work of Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin notes how this brand builds from a base of polarization within society and takes advantage of situations in which inequality is high and the effectiveness of political institutions is low. As a region with such prerequisite characteristics, Latin America has thus unsurprisingly cultivated a rich culture of populism

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throughout the region, with the emergence of Hugo Chavez as a one man political institution in

Venezuela a powerful recent iteration. From this, it is evident that such a situation naturally

leads to massive increases in public spending and "redistribution," conditions which intensifies

as populist reelection pressures emerge (Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2012, 771-774).

In Latin America

> In everyday parlance, populism is a term of abuse, denoting a dangerous malaise of the body politic. Populist leaders are said to be authoritarian demagogues who appeal to the emotions of the electorate in order to gain their support, pandering to prejudices and resentments to turn voters against the established political order. They have little regard for democratic institutions and procedures; they tell the people what they want to hear without consideration of the long-term political and economic consequences (Panizza and Miorelli 2009, 39-40).

In the above quote, Panizza and Miorelli (2009) outline how populism has become so

firmly established in the Latin America. Indeed, populism has returned in so many iterations in

Latin America that it has become a sub-discipline of regional affairs, an effect supported by the

reality that populist rulers in the region have a notable "political gap" between themselves and

the institutions they take over, in part insulating themselves from potentially destabilizing

criticism (Panizza and Miorelli 2009, 42). As such, the Venezuelan case study in this thesis falls

within a longer tradition of populism in Latin American political culture. Among other voices,

De La Torre provides an in-depth perspective on the causes and characteristics of populism in

Latin America. Within his larger definition of populism, he outlines two important aspects that

pertain especially to Latin American politics. First, his emphasis on "political clientelism and

patronage" implies an intricate connection between the rhetorical and political traditions of Latin

American populism and high levels of corruption. This is further encouraged from a cursory

observation that populism's popularity is encouraged in part due to the weak implementation of

enshrined citizen rights even though they are clearly written in national constitutions. Second, "charismatic leaders invoke myths" and "through metaphors they are assimilated into the icons of their cultures," a reality most clearly seen in Chavez's frequent attention towards the legend of Simon Bolivar, the founding father of much of post-colonial Latin America and a man that Chavez believed held "the original vision of a multipolar world" (De La Torre 2010, 10-11, 124). However, "the use of individuals indicates, not some antiquated attachment to a Great Man theory of history, but rather the convenience of denoting complex political conjunctures and relationships by means of brief biographical references" (Knight 1998, 233).

One particular quality of populist regimes, especially in Latin America, is the centralization of power and attention of a central figure. In Venezuela, this role was once played by Hugo Chavez. Such a figure, often referred to as a *caudillo* when their image is military and macho in nature (Cooney 2004), contributes to an overall culture of political patronage within a given Latin American state (Elliot 2012, 11). This combines powerfully with the moralistic tendencies pitting good versus evil characteristic of populism to produce a style of politics "innately cultural" to Latin America. It also reflects an "anything goes" attitude described by scholars like Hawkins as a commitment of populist regimes to do whatever it takes to maintain its winning narrative (Hawkins 2009, 3-5). In Venezuela, economic incentives from the profitability of national oil reserves interact with these underlying political realities to create a unique form of political structural ossification:

> More often than not, the political economy of oil engenders a patrimonial system of domination – a polity in which extensive clientelistic networks seek control of the resource in order to distribute its proceeds among insiders. This tends to produce a 'sparse' state that is unable to define and enforce rights, centralize the means of administration, or collect revenue efficiently (Schamis 2006, 29-30).

Schamis (2006) notes that a commitment to establishing an economic structure beneficial to the Chavez regime (Chavismo) is also an important factor in fueling the symbolism of Chavez as a major influencer in pan-Latin American politics. In this case, Chavez's foreign policy preferences were well financed and thus easier to implement. This allowed Venezuela to "meddle in the domestic politics of Peru and Mexico…while challenging Brazil (for supremacy as leader of the modern Latin American left)" (Schamis 2006, 31). Although Chavismo is a solidly left-wing movement, studies like that of Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012) have also shown that Latin American populism can effectively interact with neoliberalism as well as state-centric economic structures. This is due to the reality that populism an ideologically fluid style of politics that can accompany different types of ideologies (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, 9). This phenomenon is built from components that reflect Weyland's (2001) view that "populism is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, un-institutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers." As such, "Populism first and foremost shapes patterns of political rule, not the allocation of socioeconomic benefits or losses" (Weyland 2001, 11, 14). Consequently, the idea of unmediated effects between populist ruler and the populace refers directly to political structure rather than involving media and/or technology considerations.

Latin American populism, therefore, uses democratic bases of loosely organized mass support to overwhelm political institutions and the opposition parties they represent. Here, some ironies stand out. For one, non-populists in Latin America frequently employ populist tactics to convince the public to help them and implement decidedly non-populist neoliberal policies (Weyland 2001, Weyland 1999). Such a reality is further emphasized when "populist leaders, in

turn, use neoliberal programs to attack influential interest groups, politicians, and bureaucrats"

because "populist leaders and neoliberal experts also share an adversarial relation to many

established interest associations" (Weyland 1999, 384, 388). In addition, ICT mediation occurs

at a high level in populist states in Latin America, for "the tremendous spread of television has

also diminished the need for organization" and that only "through television (can) populist

leaders reach their followers directly and establish quasi-personal contact with millions of people

simultaneously" (Weyland 2001, 16).

Influences of Economics and Corruption

Populism exists in the Latin American region in large part due to specific economic

indicators. In particular, Dornbusch, Rudiger, and Edwards (1991) note that populism occurs

when people are impoverished and frustrated with the economy, a situation in which

redistribution becomes more attractive to wide swaths of voters. In a fusion of politics and

economics, populism thus becomes predictably attractive when there are "sharp class and

sectoral divisions." Much of Latin America – especially Venezuela – has experienced this kind

of social realignment, for the region consistently registers high income inequality compared to

other areas. Economically speaking, this impact becomes magnified once populists come into

power. Here, populism is a self-destroying political phenomenon due in large part to the

precipitous declines in household income in generates (Dornbusch, Rudiger, and Edwards 1991

7, 19). This is the impetus for high levels of corruption in populist states, for as wages,

educational levels, and independent media decrease, graft rises considerably. Economically

speaking, corruption is most highly correlated with economic development as expressed through

the gross domestic product (GDP) statistic (Husted 1999, 342, 354). In response, populists still

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shore up power because "ISI (Import Substitution Industrialization) industries, together with the public sector, provided the main source of employment for the groups in the best position to mobilize distributive pressures against the government in power: the urban middle classes and blue-collar unions" (Dornbusch, Rudiger, and Edwards 1991, 21). This reliance on import substitution in economic policy is a trademark of Latin American populism, especially in earlier iterations (Roberts 2006, 129).

Internet and Politics

ICT4D Issues

Leveraging the power of ICT for the purposes of state socioeconomic development is a subject that is still in its infancy. This is because there are seen and unforeseen social consequences of technological implementation. As a result, greater ICT penetration in society must face certain destabilizing externalities, particularly the "digital divide," defined as the wide gap in socioeconomic outcomes between those connected to digital networks and those isolated from them (Heeks 2014, Guillen and Suarez 2005). This translates into a compounding of income inequality, as wealthier households hold greater power through increased connectivity. Countries outside neoliberal Western democracies have played a role in making this phenomenon a reality, especially in populist states, through online media controls. Here, dictators have a preference for mass communication media tools (Chinn and Fairlie 2010), a potential motivator for the current reality wherein "the authoritarian or totalitarian government directly controls all of the physical access to the Internet" (Guillen and Suarez 2005, 688). The result in some of these states is that the Internet is often so tightly controlled that the spread of

ICT diffusion is slowed down to the point of scaring off foreign investors and further stunting innovation via ICT trade (Guillen and Suarez 2005).

According to scholars like Hoffmann (2004), developing countries face the digital divide as a unique economic development challenge, rather than as a purely technological problem. In particular, the regime structures of many developing countries are ill suited to the economic policy mechanisms necessary for information technology-fueled development; in this case, the innovation policymaking role of militaries and/or central governments is especially ineffective in promoting meaningful growth in the information society. Among these states, Communist Cuba provides a useful example for other policy mechanisms in action in this space. Here, a statewide literacy program makes mass media accessible to nearly all citizens, a positive result for the regime in spreading its message broadly to the public. At the same time, the Cuban regime balanced such skills development with de facto censorship in the form of high Internet Service Provider (ISP) fees sustained through a state telecommunications monopoly (Hoffmann 2004, 25-27, 46, 185, 219). This has persisted through "email wars" between mainland Cuba and a well-funded diaspora, an outcome further supported by the effective use of "political paranoia" as a method of control over the island (Karatzogianni and Kuntsman 2012, 197-198).

That said, one-way ICT greatly benefits and changes society is through increasing transparency and, consequently, reducing corruption. Such a focus is poised to grow in importance and effectiveness as ICTs develop and improve, making the potential for technology to assist in anti-corruption efforts far from saturated (Lio, Liu, and Ou 2011). This potential is starkly measured by economists as a chance to reduce the consumption tax caused by corruption wherein "one dollar of corruption is estimated to impose a burden of $1.67, which becomes very

large when compounded over time" (Vinod 1999). From a legal perspective, ICTs provide more

admissible information to corruption cases, a subset of prosecutions that are notoriously difficult

to convict due to frequent lack of hard evidence. At the same time, this greater access to

corruption-related data assists authorities, researchers, and publics alike in performing useful

analysis while keeping citizens informed of an important yet frequently opaque element in their

society (Shrivastava and Bhattacherjee 2015). The public can also utilize this increased

empowerment to make a meaningful contribution through greater participation and information

sharing on social media networks (Garcia-Murillo 2010) and even online search engines, as

"Internet hits about corruption per capita correlate negatively with corruption perceptions and

corruption incidence" (Goel, Nelson, and Naretta 2012). This is especially the case in situations

where the state has implemented egovernment initiatives (Lio, Liu, and Ou 2011) that will only

get stronger with the addition of more Internet users as followers and participants (Elbahnasawy

2014). This is in large part because as younger citizens grow in age and numbers, they will

demand greater open connectivity because of their socialization towards the blurring of

international borders afforded by ICT (Awan 2005, 114-116). As such, Garcia-Murillo (2010)

identifies present day cyber-utopian views of Internet and corruption in the following terms:

> The Internet can provide a more readily accessible, up-to-date, detailed, and a potentially
> more permanent record for anyone to check. This assumes, of course, that politicians do
> not force web page operators to delete potentially damaging pages. The Internet also has
> the ability to allow the public to easily and relatively inexpensively publish information
> through anonymous forms or simply by keeping a record of instances of corruption
> reported by the press (Garcia-Murillo 2010, 12).

However, the rise and diffusion of Internet powered networks supports political

fragmentation as led by interest groups that results in less institutional and more issue-based

politics. Among the case studies, China stands out in how its current politics are so directly tied

to one specific issue: economic growth. At the same time, Vladimir Putin in Russia has grown

and sustained his power by appealing not to formal political parties/institutions but to the critical

single issue of national pride. These examples show that Internet may be an effective tool for

populists in that it weakens concentrated elites while tilting political campaign foci towards the

masses, thus connecting populist leaders closer to the people (Bimber 1998). Rhetorically,

populism – particularly the Latin American variant – fits well into this situation because

"personalized politics has long existed, of course, in the form of populist uprisings or emotional

bonds with charismatic leaders." Therefore, populists benefit greatly by using "personal action

frames (e.g. 'We are the 99%,' a slogan that reflects a Western concern about growing income

inequality)" on account of the new reality that "the pervasive use of social technology enables

individuals to become important catalysts of collective action processes as they activate their

own social networks" (Bennett 2012).

ICT and Political Change

The combination of technology and political control is nuanced and has neither entirely

positive nor entirely negative qualities (Fung, Gilman, and Shkabatur 2013), as the nature of

cyberspace is constantly emergent (Deibert et al 2010). Indeed, "there are strong

interdependences between technological, economic and political/institutional change over time"

(Eckardt 2012, 5). In addition, the transference of state conflict and competition into the digital

space encourages dangerously offensive behavior in domestic and foreign policy (Deibert et al

2010), as is the case with the growing movement towards promoting Internet sovereignty among

several influential non-Western actors, namely China and Russia. This foreign policy adheres to

the belief that Internet can be controlled and policed in national territorial segments and that

nation-states should thus treat online space as they treat offline borders and jurisdictions (Deibert 2009).

For the populist states in question which are largely undemocratic and authoritarian in nature, this holds important implications. Fung, Gilman, and Shakabatur (2013) note that ICT makes political discourse within an undemocratic state dramatically more democratic if the regime is authoritarian offline but is unable or unwilling to police online activity and discussion at a similarly restrictive level. This is clearly seen in the division between the China case study and countries affected by the Arab Spring (Tunisia, Egypt, etc.) in managing social media-leveraged dissent, with the former politically and economically able to invest in censorship infrastructure and the latter struggling to control messages from mobile platforms. Conversely, the role of opposition movements is made difficult by the realities of Internet politics even though ICT gives such causes an inexpensive way to enter major media conversations and become "new actors entering the political arena" (Eckardt 2012, 12). That said, Eckardt (2012) posits that these movements struggle with two identified problems in order to sustain themselves: "inputs" ("money, authority, capacity") and "free rider problems" (Fung, Gilman, and Shkabatur 2013, 36). Manuel Castells (2012) has particularly outlined such problems for opposition movements in the ICT age, noting that they do not benefit from a characteristic "absence of formal leadership" that results from affordances of the Internet which foster a "culture of autonomy" and do-it-yourself experiences in social and political affairs conducted on digital networks (Castells 179, 230-231). From this, Fung, Gilman, and Shkabatur (2013) underscore how ICT is not a technologically deterministic element in democratizing contemporary politics:

> The average citizen may create the information, but the way this information gets related to the government follows the traditional mechanisms of institutional power. Therefore,

these ICT platforms are not transforming the relationship of the citizens with their government (Fung, Gilman, and Shkabatur 2013, 44).

Among other cyber political scholars, Morozov stands out in support of cyber-skepticism, or the view that the Internet empowers dictators more than the average citizen. This is evident merely in policy discussions of democracy-related sociotechnical terminology, particularly the intractable problem of agreeing on a meaning for the term "Internet freedom" in global diplomacy. In short, such a perspective notes that "governments can also take advantage of decentralized information flows and misinform their population," an ability uniquely suited to populists. In particular, intellectuals in countries like China and Russia have more access to global networks but this means they are dis-attached from politics and know little about news from their home countries in a direct sociotechnical application of an offline political priority emphasizing opaqueness from the government (Morozov 2011, 54, 229). This has had chilling effects on the social development of youth in particular, effectively neutralizing much of their technology savvy-driven ability to seriously challenge state regimes:

> Since modern authoritarian regimes don't really project a set of coherent values or ideologies – China and Russia haven't been able to successfully communicate what they are really about post-Lenin and post-Mao – many talented young people are not as disturbed working for their governments as they might have been had their leaders actually believed what they were saying in public (Morozov 2011, 124).

Calingaert (2010), on the other hand, notes that the Internet is still a useful tool for forming disparate groups for political activism purposes. The content-generating capacities of online users make the Internet a medium in which the flow of information is extremely difficult to control. However, this also compounds the impact of censorship online compared to any other form of media, for the impact of content controls is felt much quicker and much more widely. Because of this, the use of online censorship is an attractive policy option for authoritarian states

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on account of an alignment of technological affordances ranging from cyber blockades to calculated bandwidth control with a nation-state interest in eliminating other politically viable rulers within society (Calingaert 2010, 67-68). Here, states are exposed to a wide array of tools, including distributed denial of service (DDoS), content filtering, surveillance, state-of-the-art malware, Trojan viruses, content forgery, and theft. These tools can be scaled to greater of lesser effect to promote greater obedience and/or fear. Perhaps most striking is that these tools can be powerfully combined with offline harassment and cultural norms promoting self-censorship (Deibert et al 2010, 108, 135).

Venezuela

Trends in Modern Latin America

The culture of corruption characteristic to Latin America has become so engrained in recent years that it has blossomed into a variety of manifestations. These include kickbacks, extortion, embezzlement, fraud, nepotism, conflicts of interest, and an intensification of the general graft of previous eras (Elliot 2012). These realities represent the negative externalities of the "resource curse," a situation that plagues many populist states – particularly Venezuela and its Latin American neighbors – that have economies centered around the country's bounty in specific and valuable natural resources such as oil, an economically "volatile" resource (Elliot 2012, McCoy and Myers 2006). Consequently, it comes as no surprise that in such states the business and political structures put in place to extract these natural resources are conduits for corruption that have intensified their efforts as populist leaders seek to grow the economy for ostensibly redistributive purposes. These factors have thus contributed to the downward

trajectory in the economic and political stability of many Latin American states, among which

Venezuela is highlighted as a prime example (Elliot 2012, 6-7, 167, 173).

Venezuela's unique politics allowed Hugo Chavez to exploit an unrepresented

constituency to advance his political agenda and bring a new regime into power. This is due to

the reality that sociopolitical and institutional weaknesses under a more American-friendly and

neoliberal government allowed Chavez to recreate Venezuelan politics in his own image,

reversing the roles of higher and lower socioeconomic classes in democratic political decision-

making (De La Torre 2013, 28-29). This came about as a result of a collapse in the political

party system in Venezuela and the corresponding decline in the strength of political institutions

in the country (McCoy and Myers 2006). In embracing this "informal sector" in a tolerance for

corruption, Chavez wholeheartedly supported the development of "participatory democracy," a

large role of political participation/legislation for the citizenry, in the early years of his

presidency (De La Torre 2013, 31; Krastev 2006). Notably, these trends were codified in the

Constitution of 1999, which "established mechanisms of popular decision-making as an

antidote" to corruption (Ellner 2005, 162). This political development contributed significantly

to the elimination of state structures in order to increase connection between Chavez and the

people and reap the electoral benefits of "centralizing participation" towards supporting

Chavismo in large numbers (Leon and Smilde 2009, 1-8).

Chavismo

> Hugo Chavez and his supporters crafted a theory to explain moral decomposition in
> Venezuela which predated their contacts with leftist intellectuals after the failed coups of
> 1992. Their initial concept of 'social revolution' derived from Chavez's desire to
> reinvigorate democracy by returning the government to the people. Bolivarian
> thought…advanced the model of 'participatory democracy' as an alternative to post-1958
> democracy's representative paradigm (McCoy and Myers 2006, 123).

An important aspect of the Chavez regime in Venezuela (Chavismo) is the reality that "Chavez's movement shows a corresponding lack of institutionalization" (Hawkins 2003, 1149). Following populist trends in other societies, Chavez was largely elected by "an unorganized, largely informal, poor vote" – particularly in urban areas – as reflected in a negatively correlated relationship between income level and support for Chavismo (McCoy and Myers 2006, 33-35, 47; (Lupu 2010, 7-8). This statistic, however, does not fully explain the sustaining popularity of Chavez, for as many as twenty-five to fifty percent of Venezuelan voters stayed home during elections, with large numbers of that segment belonging to lower socioeconomic classes. At the same time, electoral results have also reflected notable levels of Chavista support among middle class voters (Lupu 2010 11, 22). In addition to reflecting general observations about Chavez's campaigning ability, these findings are meaningful within a broader societal context in Venezuela, as seen in the rapid doubling of the country's population from 1975 to 2000 (Wilpert 2005).

On the campaign trail, Chavez employs a tailored message that includes large doses of hyperbolic and crude language to demonize the opposition (Hawkins 2003). This reflects a characteristic of populist rhetoric which inherently seeks to place matters of political debate into a moralistic dichotomy between good and evil (Hawkins 2009). Therefore, populist logic dictates that "if the leader embodies the popular will, the opposition must be corrupt and illegitimate, and any means (including violence) can be legitimately employed against them." As a result, potential popular ideas like "freedom of the press is a subordinate right to the other goals of the revolution" (Hawkins 2003, 1140, 1156).

Chavista approaches towards campaign rhetoric and campaigning are also consistent with the purposeful rejection of political correctness in public discourse (Brading 2013). This is clearly observed through two strategic communication tactics. First, frequent insults of straw man enemies is a useful technique for Chavistas to use to counter potent opposition critiques (Brading 2013, Krastev 2006). This is especially relevant given the perceived power of (urban) lower socioeconomic classes in elections, as exemplified in the failure of the opposition to overthrow Chavez in a 2002 coup due to a strategy that falsely assumed that middle class citizens were critical swing voters in the political center in the country (McCoy and Myers 2006). Second, the use of Simon Bolivar as a regime-supporting image reflects the political calculation that "Bolivar captures social emotions" in Venezuela and across Latin America (Brading 2013, 50). Such imagery is particularly useful for a revolutionary movement like Chavismo that strives to implement "anti-elite" and "interventionist economic policies" (Conniff 1999, 151-152) to establish a comprehensible modern day parallel supporting "Bolivar's struggle for independence (as) a symbol of emancipation and national identity in Venezuela" (Brading 2013, 44).

From a policy perspective, public services under Chavez have proven powerfully effective in solidifying the Chavista base of support; conversely, these former areas of regime strength are falling apart under Nicolas Maduro in a testament to his lesser legitimacy and power (Grillo 2015). In the Chavez era, "Chavistas in power viewed established structures such as public schools at all levels, the health system, and municipal government as unresponsive to the needs to the popular classes" (Conniff 1999, 153). The government sought to address this problem through a system of missions (*misiones*) that provided many poor residents basic services. Politically, the importance of these missions is evident in their organizational

structures, for they functioned outside of ministries and under the direct purview of the central government. In their work, the *misiones* importantly provided free healthcare for those who could not afford such costly care. This had the powerful effect of broadening the Chavista coalition to include indigenous groups who were previously at the margins of politics and society in Venezuela, engendering political support by improving quality of life (Brading 2013).

The Global Impact of Hugo Chavez

Hugo Chavez is an important figure in contemporary populism in no small part due to his direct influence on spreading his style of governance across international borders. To accomplish his foreign policy goals and transmit an influential message of "anti-imperialism and pan-Americanism," Chavez engaged in aggressive diplomacy in two particular areas. First, Venezuela under Chavez was highly involved in OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) in order to keep oil prices high enough to maintain the strong economic growth necessary to not only maintain the domestic power of Chavismo but also to make the regime an attractive populist model globally, as evidenced by the fact that at one point between 2000 and 2010 Venezuela was at the highest growth rate in the Americas. Second, Chavez took a leading role in organizing and allying populist states in Latin America to consolidate their international political strength. This is especially evident in his creation of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (known by its Spanish acronym ALBA), a bloc that challenged neoliberal Western hegemony in the developing world by solidifying populist political and cultural ties (Dodson and Dorraj 2008, 74-76).

Venezuela also benefitted greatly from an ideological, symbolic, and trade relationship with Cuba, the pre-Chavismo vanguard of the anti-colonial left wing in Latin America (Ellner

2005, 174). For Chavez, this relationship yielded substantial dividends in important domestic

social policies, particularly the *misiones*. Here, the program's healthcare mandate was ably

fulfilled thanks to internationally regarded Cuban doctors, whose expertise directly impacted the

lives of ordinary Venezuelans. This was instrumental to the success of the misiones as a policy

despite concerns that Venezuela under Chavismo relies too heavily on foreign medical

professionals (Brading 2013, 97-105).

Economic and Corruption Realities

> A key concept for understanding the particular condition of the Venezuelan state is that
> of the oil rent, that is, of the price paid to the state by oil companies for the right to
> explore and develop national oil resources…this is the relationship between the nation
> and oil imperialism…A rentier state emerged by exacting copious resources from the oil
> companies and becoming dependant upon international oil capital for its revenue. Thus,
> nationally owned oil property and anti-imperialism occupied important positions in
> modern Venezuelan political discourse. But the most important feature regarding the
> final destination of oil rent is the political ability of the state to distribute the rent among
> different internal social and political groups (Davila 2000, 226).

- Luis Ricardo Davila

This quote highlights a key characteristic in explaining the socioeconomics of modern

Venezuela. In an adaptation of populist, "resource cursed" politics, Venezuela suffers from a

"double relationship" expected of the state to perform as both a political institution and as a

conduit for social redistribution. As such, economic realities are a major motivator driving

Chavista populism in Venezuela, for oil wealth is a legitimizing agent for a government that

retains power through redistribution schemes (Davila 2000). As a result, observers like Tsafos

(2007, 150-151) definitively note that "this is the strategy of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, who

has used control of oil revenues to maximize his political appeal among the poor and to

guarantee his triumph in the national elections." Unsurprisingly, this trend is closely tied to the

reality that populism in developing countries frequently experience severe economic crises due to a later start to economic development due to colonialism and the predictable nationalistic response shunning needed financial assistance from economically strong former colonial powers (Dodson and Dorraj 2008). In the economic policy sphere, it is fitting that foreign and private sector oil companies receive the largest share of rhetorical abuse from Chavista authorities while the government simultaneously encourages opportunities for potential corrupt deals with these very same companies. In short, this is a reality that reflects an intention to appear to harass foreign conglomerates while delaying many policies that might disadvantage business sales benefitting regime elites. In terms of financial impact, the global oil industry during Chavismo has thus faced serious challenges. For example, "in 2005, Venezuela revised its tax rate upwards from 36 percent to 50 percent and then, in 2006, charged 22 oil companies with owing $891 million in back taxes" (Tsafos 2007, 149).

From this, it is clear that Venezuela is a populist state supported by an exploitative economy that fuels redistribution and inflation rather than organic wealth creation (McCoy and Myers 2006; Coronel 2006). This setup makes it possible for Chavismo to persist even though the government operates at historically corrupt levels, a finding all the more striking given the early Chavista platform tackling corruption in society (Coronel 2006). As a result, crime has soared in Venezuela with the same speed as private sector companies have fled the country, with those companies remaining engaged with the state in corrupt bargaining. This leaves Venezuelan society vulnerable to the political domination of Chavistas in spite of the meaningful socioeconomic deficiencies of the regime (McCoy and Myers 2006, 72-73, 90).

China

In twentieth-century China we have not only a profound social and political crisis but also the seeming collapse of a culture and a whole system of values (Schwartz 1960, 616).

-Benjamin Schwartz

Much of the basis for China's unique approach to ICT is rooted in historical background (see Chapter 5). Townsend (1977) and Spence (1990) in particular provide useful perspectives in building a meaningful narrative towards the rise of Maoist populism. Here, a centuries-long process of upending traditional cultural and power structures in China paved the way for the emergence of a radically new Communist ideology that has been branded as uniquely Chinese (Townsend 1977). As such, Chinese history since the rise of Mao has been consistently politicized. At the same time, the tumult of the twentieth century had a profound effect on Chinese culture, for "despite their sufferings, the Chinese were resilient and showed an irrepressible awareness of the zany paradoxes of life" (Spence 1990, 635-636, 720).

New Leftism, Neo-populism, and Modern-day Maoism

In China, the roots for the current state political culture lie in Confucianism, which created a "state-service" social class dedicated to an efficient bureaucracy that acted upon a national interest in promoting basic welfare (Schwartz 1960, 611). The concurrent collapse of the dynastic system and the introduction of ideas from across the globe in the early twentieth century profoundly affected the mindsets of emerging political elites like Mao Zedong. This ecosystem therefore changed the policy direction in China irrevocably, as perhaps best seen during the Hundred Flowers Campaign that targeted and rooted out intellectuals deemed threatening to regime stability, a priority in an era of constant strife (Schwartz 1960). In recent times, this change has been embraced by the Xi administration to address the concerns and

influence of the "New Left," a bloc led most prominently by the Chongqing party secretary Bo

Xilai, whose campaigns and policies closely follow the espoused tenets of Mao himself

(Freeman and Yuan 2011). For example, Bo's campaigns uses vivid, color-based imagery that

directly reflect the strategies of Chairman Mao as he sought to reaffirm political legitimacy and

further secure his power in the 1950s and 1960s (see Chapter 5). Politically, this return to

Maoist philosophy comes in response to greater dissatisfaction with income inequality and other

negative effects of a more open, capitalist economy; such negative sentiment is particularly

palpable in traditionally Maoist rural areas, where populist-fueled protests have been numerous

in recent years (Nadiri 2007). Therefore, neo-Maoism in modern China reflects serious

ideological tensions not seen since the early years of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the

1920s (Hu 2007).

In this context, New Leftism directly interacts with the post-Mao era principles of

stability through macroeconomic growth. As a result, ideas supporting greater rule of law in

China have been encouraged to represent "both an intellectual and political emancipation" of

Chinese life and economy since the 1970s (Zang 2010, 79). One outcome of this shift is the

protection of lawyers to defend and protect social fairness and stability, a trend further supported

by the growing influence of international pressure on Chinese policy decisions. Such an effect is

an important manifestation of a broader state policy towards promoting a "harmonious society,"

a frame to explain and sell the benefits of a new and more neoliberal sociopolitical and

socioeconomic situation in post-Mao China (Zang 2010). That said, the Chinese justice system

is also heavily influenced by populism, which "prioritizes public accountability and political

legitimacy over professional autonomy" and ethical prosecution (Liu, Liang, and Halliday 2014, 79-81).

Technology and Innovation Policy

> China's domestic ICT efforts are more decentralized, agile, and proactive than commonly portrayed, and they actively seek to involve the population in favorably shaping online content…The Chinese government has an interest in relatively unfettered internet use to promote economic development, as well as in allowing online dissent as a "safety valve" to vent grievances. A relatively open internet also assists the party and state officials in understanding public opinion, monitoring local officials, and improving governance (Greitens 2013, 264-265).

<div align="right">- Sheena Chestnut Greitens</div>

Research literature outlines China's position towards information technology as paradoxical. For one, Internet use can promote economic growth (in an arrangement where technology policy is equivalent to economic policy) (Salami and Soltanzadeh 2012). On the other hand, the control of Internet access and expression can counterbalance regime threats (Calingaert 2010). This setup is consistent with a political calculation that China and the regime at large benefit the most through a society with an "Information Economy Without Freedom of Information." In addressing economic issues via information technology, the current regime thus represents a post-Mao shift away from prioritizing ideology towards devoting greater energies to exploiting the economic and military growth potential of ICT (Austin 2014, 23-31). This is consistent with the Xi administration desire to increase "informatization" for the purposes of "modernization" (Austin 2014, 170). Such a policy view additionally builds off the observation that "China took off by restructuring and expanding the telecommunications sector as a politically strategic enterprise" (Sun 2010, 129).

However, the government holds the equally important goal of stopping undesirable "collective action" in order to protect the regime (Austin 2014, 70). From Beijing's point of view, the prospect of large numbers of Chinese citizens protesting via online networks is a growing reality given rapid improvements in ICT. These protest mechanisms have become more sophisticated as censorship tools and digital networks become more complex, enabling human users to have the ability to avoid censorship blockades (Calingaert 2010). That said, Internet oppositions face a greater sociotechnical challenge in that Chinese culture neither holds traditional views nor emphasis towards Western ideals of association-driven civil society, making organization very difficult in political activism (Tai 2006).

These realities make the Chinese Internet a platform of conflict wherein the state is influenced and forced to adjust to online activism in order to maintain an advantageous political position (Yang 2011). As such, "deep packet (email) inspection" and hefty prison sentences are pitted against potent satirical puns like "Grass Mud Horse" and "River Crab" (see Chapter 5). Such a battle has already yielded positive results for the opposition, especially the delayed implementation of advanced Green Dam censorship software (Calingaert 2010). Because this highly effective use of ICT affordances reverses the pressure of cyber-mediated threat away from the opposition (Tai 2015), the government has employed a human capital intensive strategy in which "an additional 250,000-300,000 paid "50-cent party members" (*wumao dang* 五毛党) mix control and activism online: they assist in monitoring content, making favorable comments, and generally push discussion toward pro-Party lines" (Greitens 2013, 265).

Economics and Corruption

> Chinese analysts of all ideological persuasions see the rise of several 'internal' driving forces that have disarmed many officials ideologically and morally. These include

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women, off-spring, gambling, and a psychology of an end-of-career scramble (Sun 2004, 177).

- Yan Sun

Although cultural differences make defining and comparing corruption difficult, the extent to which corruption is prevalent in China is clearly seen in many areas of Chinese society. This widespread nature of corruption as expressed in the above is similarly reflected through the complex imagery of contemporary Chinese language. Here, "the popular Chinese word for corruption is *tanwu* (贪污); the two characters literally mean greed and dirt, which conjure up the image of depravity." At the same time, the word *nuoyong* (挪用) has become a cultural norm for conducting business as a public official and refers to the use of public funds for private purposes, a corrupt act ameliorated in the eyes of society if and only if that money is returned in due time (Kwong 1997, ix-4). At the same time, ancient cultural norms of *guanxi* (关系, which roughly translates to "connections" or "relationships") created networks of corruption supported by well-established connections, a factor that is amplified given the tight fusion of government and society in China (Li 2010, translations provided by author).

In the post-dynastic era since WWI, corruption has been a major component in the success and vicissitudes of twentieth century Chinese regimes. Indeed, epidemic levels of corruption undermined the support for the Guomindang Nationalists and contributed to the victory of the Communists in the Chinese Civil War (Kwong 1997, 79). In the 1960s and 1970s, the Cultural Revolution, through the legitimacy eroding effects of a power struggle between Mao and Liu Shaoqi over economic policy, spurred the post-Mao change towards a private sector economy that enlarged the scale of corruption in China. In the modern era, corruption has been

able to spread for two reasons: "the lack of commitment to safeguard state property made state officials easy targets for bribery" and the continued role of the Chinese Communist Party as the monolith of power in China (Kwong 1997, 31, 53, 63, 116). Such an outcome runs counter to the stated regime interest in economic growth because the widespread practice of "rent seeking" significantly slows the pace of economic development (Sun 2004).

Russia

The rise and continued power of Vladimir Putin is closely tied to global observations of populist dictators. Putin has achieved prominence and survival as a populist leader due to a solid base of democratic support consistent with the aforementioned literature findings of populism in general (Dimitrov 2008). In Russia, Putin has specifically cultivated populism through the use of directed democracy and a fostering of confusion among the electorate in order to win a base of legitimate followers (Krastev 2006). This support was easier to gain for Putin thanks to his predecessors, who gave Russia an economically precarious position in the world; as a result, any minor socioeconomic improvements implemented by Putin has registered very positively in the minds of Russian voters (Dimitrov 2008, 79). From this, a powerful and centralized brand has emerged equating Putin with the Russian ideal for an undisputed national leader (Casula 2013). In promoting his agenda, Putin has made the media an actor with an outsized role in post-Cold War politics in Russia, for "the Kremlin controls either directly or indirectly all national television channels" (Dimitrov 2008, 80).

The Dynamics of Russian Internet

Research into the nature of Russian activities online has shown that the Internet in Russia is an "introverted medium" to communication within national and ethnic groups (Rose 2006).

This is likely an externality of Kremlin media policy wherein a devotion to censorship and intimidation greatly influenced by Soviet-era controls - particularly an aggressive prosecutorial attitude towards slander and libel (Deibert et al 2010) - contributes to a goal-oriented approach to manipulating Russians through television (Aslund 2008). From this, it is inherently unsurprising that Russia is a leading figure in the international push towards establishing a more state-driven, closed Internet because it makes the task of controlling media consumed within Russian borders much easier for the regime (Deibert 2015).

Studies examining the sociotechnical niche of online anti-military activism illuminate further the extent to which Russians are also pressured to limit their expression on the Internet. Here, the Kremlin is actively involved in squashing dissent online. At the same time, however, the Internet has still opened a new space for civic commentary, even on sensitive issues like criticism of military policy. This, combined with government threats and crackdowns, have further encouraged the introspective behavior of Russian citizens online, as seen through the affordance-dictated popularity of more private social media networks like LiveJournal (Lonkila 2008). This represents just one instance where Internet affordances have helped coordinate opposition efforts. Such organization, however loose, has been a vital mechanism for holding the Putin regime accountable that, while ultimately unsuccessful, provided especially valuable feedback and pushback to the Kremlin following allegedly fraudulent election results in 2011 (White and McAllister 2013). From this, it is especially interesting to note that the Russian state has entered into this space with a perspective of employing technological solutions that leverage democratic methods to attain greater regime support online, namely through the dispersion of "pro-Putin bloggers" (Deibert 2015, 69).

The sociopolitical situation of the Internet in Russia is, therefore, a direct consequence of a consistent dictatorial policy taken across all media. An important early and guiding example of regime priorities in this space was in the first Chechen conflict in the Putin era. Here, the government strong-armed and powerfully threatened media outlets and reporters alike into producing content that clearly favored the Kremlin (Sakwa 2007). Those who did not follow the code were greatly disadvantaged and shut down, as seen in the fate of the non-state network NTV, which gave Russian viewers the negative side of military and counterterrorism campaigns like those conducted in Chechnya (Baker and Glasser 2005).

Corruption, Governance and Economic Growth

A key nutrient feeding the Russian state today is corruption within a culture of duplicitousness. These characteristics are consistent with the regime's overall makeup of mostly intelligence operatives who by trade are accustomed to distrust, betrayal, and deception (Aslund 2008). This development has had monumental impact on the direction and nature of policy and politics in Russia, while the former of these attitudes is also a defining characteristic of the electorate's view towards government in general, though not towards Putin himself (Taylor 2011, 61, 205). In this case, Putin has developed a trademark of saying one thing and doing the opposite (Aslund 2008). This is clearly seen in one of the greatest roots of modern state corruption in Russia: the nationalization of oligarch-owned corporations. This move was hailed by the regime as a way of cleaning up society yet is now exploited for officials' gain (Aslund 2008). As such, Lucas sums up the nature of post-Soviet Russia powerfully:

> Putin and his ex-KGB colleagues captured a country exhausted by economic upheaval, disgusted by corruption, and yearning for strong and competent leadership. What it got was a cynical putsch, which used what looked like mass murder to create the public panic necessary to seize power (Lucas 2008, 17).

In short, therefore, Russia is paradoxically a free and unfree country as is convenient to

the Putin regime (Wegren 2013). Importantly, one freedom that has been substantially expanded

for the purposes of greater legitimacy is economic opportunity, a popular and tangible benefit for

the people even though they live under a state that enforces its rules through mafia-style tactics

(Lucas 2008). However, Russia suffers in appropriately implementing most other policy that

would benefit the general public. This stems from a conflict of interest crisis wherein no one

individual in the regime has the power or the motivation to operate entirely by the letter of the

law, especially throughout law enforcement ministries (Taylor 2011).

<u>Summary</u>

In this study, I will be testing whether there is a relationship between populism and

Internet connectivity such that populist states can be determined based on determinant

sociotechnical and technological characteristics. As such, the study relies of a set of key terms to

conduct a thorough analysis. Here, therefore, populism is defined as an antagonistic style of

politics led by a charismatic leader who plays to the feelings of a political base, particularly

through an aggressive media policy designed to disarm opposition leaders and discredit their

ideas. When populism reaches a level in which is the undisputed legitimate political power in a

country, such a movement has become a regime, as seen in the case study countries of Russia,

China, and Venezuela.

When viewing populism from this perspective, the literature highlights aspects in the

political processes necessary to keep a regime afloat and successful. First and foremost,

corruption, the activity of public officials acting out of self-interest rather than constituent

interest and thus abusing public office for private gain, is a key source for populist movements

and governments. In each of the case study countries – countries whose models are highly influential to the spread of modern populism – corruption is a constant and includes situations in which profiting elites are a small group tied to a lone leader (Venezuela, Russia) or in which graft is tightly institutionalized (China). Economic norms such as the "resource curse" have been frequently noted to play a role in the formation and growth of such corruption, a relevant factor when observing populist states with natural resources like Russia and Venezuela. The development of such structures, much like the development of national economies, is importantly influenced by historical events and the evolution of cultural norms, as is best exemplified by the wealth of literature dedicated to the iconic Latin American variant of populism.

When technology enters this dynamic political space, the literature presents, consistent with the youth and emerging nature of sociotechnical studies, a mixed picture. This is especially evident with the ever-growing complexity of the digital divide, a concept whose amorphous nature is in line with the rapidly changing nature of online usage and standards for digital empowerment in the modern world. That said, scholarship still posits little doubt that the expansion of ICT can have substantial political outcomes, in large part due to the tangible economic externalities it can provide. On the other hand, earlier thoughts extoling the liberalizing, democratic power of Internet-mediated communication tools have come under considerable challenge. Based on the offline and case study research regarding populism, my perspective is inclined to skew towards a cyber-skeptic view of ICT and politics. This view is directly supported by the regimes in each of the case study countries I will present in chapters 4-6.

In this overall context, the following chapters will test the relationship between online connectivity and the development/growth of populism with a theoretical background that incorporates a wide range of fields, from ICT4D to macroeconomics. The supporting literature consequently provides a meaningful qualitative background of offline realities stemming from populist states that may have little in common besides a similar style of governance. At the same time, research on political, economic, and sociological impacts from ICT provide an important gauge to measure sociopolitical impacts from technology in a reasonable fashion. From such background, therefore, the cyber-skeptic perspective taken as a result of the research literature examined here thus guide the forthcoming analysis to include powerful elements such as corruption in order to theorize and analyze potential global impacts related to populist emergence in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3 – STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction and Hypothesis

The complex nature of populism in the modern world is such that identifying and defining trends benefits from multiple methods of analysis. In this thesis, a statistical breakdown of country-level data is useful to analyze broad social factors that can allow populism to spread and thrive across varied political cultural environments. With the rise and domination of ICT as an essential socioeconomic component throughout the world today, it is thus important to include social interaction alongside information technology when examining the causes and sustaining influences behind populism in the twenty-first century.

As a result, I test a straightforward principle – that Internet penetration is a major driver and predictor of populism based on the study definition outlining an antagonistic style of politics led by a charismatic leader who plays to the fears/desires of a political base. In this study, measuring significant differences between populist and non-populist states presents a convincing overview of what populism brings to societies in the information age. Due to the nature of populist regime classification – especially the identification of a charismatic, populist leadership and mass-based politics in general – testing this hypothesis merges qualitative research-supported assessments of categorically coded populism with data analysis techniques enabled by interval level measurements of key indicators measuring ICT development, democratic governance, and societal demographics. As such, the hypothesis analyzes the following relationship:

H_1: Sociotechnical factors will be different in populist versus nonpopulist states.

H_0: Sociotechnical factors are not significantly different in populist versus nonpopulist states.

H_2: Corruption factors will be different in populist versus nonpopulist states.

H_0: Corruption factors are not significantly different in populist versus nonpopulist states.

H_3: Greater rates of ICT development cause lower levels of corruption.

H_0: Greater rates of ICT development cause the same or higher levels of corruption.

Data

Sources and Context

The data used in the following analyses comes from several different and internationally recognized ratings for countries in the year 2013. This year (2013) and the number of cases in the data set (168 countries) was selected based on the most recent completeness of data across several categories:

1. A series of variables are derived from the World Development Indicators, a World Bank-compiled set of databases measuring national levels of major socioeconomic measures in countries around the world.

2. World Bank data is also used in a separate series of datasets – the World Governance Indicators – for more complex variables measuring social and political developments in countries around the world. According to World Bank economists like Aart Kraay, these variables measure a mix of legal and de facto realities in addition to citizen perceptions of societal phenomena related to national governance (Kaufmann 2004; Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2011).

3. Corruption is further measured within this statistical analysis through the CPI variable, which represents country values in the Corruption Perceptions Index, an annual rating of corruption performed by Transparency International.

4. The CIA's December 2013 edition of *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments* (Central Intelligence Agency 2013) provides the names of the world leaders on whose (populist) policies the variable measures. This information is used as part of the process to manually code the Populism variable.

Operational Variables

Populism-Specific Variables (See Appendix):

- **Populism**: a nominal variable measuring the presence or absence of a populist political culture in a given country. Here, populism is thus measured based on the presence of any of the following factors: a known populist leader in power, evidence of mass-based politics coalescing around a leader, and/or evidence of dichotomous political dialogue centering around a single leader.

- **TotalPopScore**: an ordinal measurement indicating whether one category, no category, or both categories of the **Populism** variable are found in a given country.

- **PopLdr**: Indicates the presence of a leader in power displaying the qualities necessary to meet the study's definition of populism, namely adhering to an charismatic and antagonistic personality who plays to the fears/desires of a political base, particularly through an aggressive media/rhetorical policy designed to disarm opposition leaders and ideas.

- **PopCulture**: Indicates populist political sentiment that is strong enough to coalesce around a leader/organization and/or directly affect political activity in a given state (i.e. win an upcoming election, drive/implement policy, dominate political discussion).

Technology Variables:

- **Ipy**: Internet penetration as a measure of Internet users per 100 people (Internet users 2013).

- **FixedBroadband**: Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people (Fixed Broadband 2013).

- **Servers**: Secure Internet servers per 1 million people. According to the World Bank, "secure servers are servers using encryption technology in Internet transactions" (Secure Internet 2013).

- **MobileSub**: Number of mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people (Mobile cellular 2013).

- **ICTServiceExports**: According to the World Bank, "information and communication technology service exports include computer and communications services (telecommunications and postal and courier services) and information services (computer data and news-related service transactions)." This figure is expressed as a percentage of service exports (balance of payments) (ICT Service 2013).

- **Telephone**: Fixed telephone subscriptions (gross) (Fixed Telephone 2013).

- **HightechExports**: According to the World Bank, "high-technology exports are products with high R&D intensity, such as in aerospace, computers, pharmaceuticals, scientific instruments, and electrical machinery." This figure is expressed as a percentage of manufactured exports (High-technology Exports 2013).

- **ICTimports**: According to the World Bank, "information and communication technology goods imports include telecommunications, audio and video, computer and related equipment; electronic components; and other information and communication technology goods. Software is excluded." This figure is expressed the ICT percentage of total goods imported (ICT Goods 2013).

Societal Indicators:

- **UrbanPercent**: Urban population as a percentage of the total national population (Urban Population (% of total) 2013).

- **LaborForce:** According to the World Bank, "total labor force comprises people ages 15 and older who meet the International Labour Organization definition of the economically active population, (namely) all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. (This indictor) includes both the employed and the unemployed. In general the labor force includes the armed forces, the unemployed, and first-time job-seekers, but excludes homemakers and other unpaid caregivers and workers in the informal sector" (Labor 2013).

- **Unemployment**: Unemployment expressed as a percentage of the labor force (Unemployment).

- **UrbanPopulation**: According to the World Bank, "urban population refers to people living in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices. It is calculated using World Bank population estimates and urban ratios from the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects" (Urban population 2013).

Sociopolitical Conditions:

- **CPI**: Corruption Perception Index. According to Transparency International, "the CPI scores and ranks countries/territories based on how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be. It is a composite index, a combination of surveys and assessments of corruption, collected by a variety of reputable institutions. A country/territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0-100, where 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt and a 100 means that a country is perceived as very clean." For the 2013 data,

CPI was constructed for the countries in the data using the following 13 sources (Corruption

Perceptions 2013):

1. African Development Bank Governance Ratings 2012
2. Bertelsmann Foundation Sustainable Governance Indicators 2014
3. Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index 2014
4. Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Ratings
5. Freedom House Nations in Transit 2013
6. Global Insight Country Risk Ratings
7. IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2013
8. Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Asian Intelligence 2013
9. Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide
10. Transparency International Bribe Payers Survey 2011
11. World Bank - Country Policy and Institutional Assessment 2012
12. World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2013
13. World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2013.

- **CorruptControl**: According to the World Bank, "Control of Corruption captures perceptions

  of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and

  grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.

  Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal

  distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5

  (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013).

- **GovtEffective**: According to the World Bank, "Government Effectiveness captures

  perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of

  its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and

  implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

  Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal

  distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5

  (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013).

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- **RegulatoryQ:** According to the World Bank, "Regulatory Quality captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5 (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013).

- **RuleOLaw**: According to the World Bank, "Rule of Law captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5 (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013).

- **VoiceAccountable**: According to the World Bank, "Voice and Accountability captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5 (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013). As such, Kraay et al outline this variable as one that emphasizes democratic political participation with special recognition of media as an influential factor (Kaufmann 2004; Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2011).

- **PolStabViolence**: According to the World Bank, "Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence, including terrorism. Estimate gives the country's score on the aggregate indicator, in units of a standard normal distribution, i.e. ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak governance performance) to 2.5 (strong governance performance" (Worldwide Governance 2013).

Variables for Case Study Analyses:

- **VZnotVZ**: nominal level variable separating Venezuela from the remaining 167 countries in the data set (Rest of World).

- **CNnotCN**: nominal level variable separating China from the remaining 167 countries in the data set (Rest of World).

- **RusNotRus**: nominal level variable separating Russia from the remaining 167 countries in the data set (Rest of World).

Procedures

Independent and Dependent Variable Selection

The variables tested in the statistical analyses reflect a specific methodological process, as variables were selected from the previously outlined basket of theorized social indicators. Here, therefore, the emphasis on including multiple corruption variables (CPI, CorruptControl) intentionally prioritizes corruption to be tested as a driver of populism as to confirm or deny assumptions encountered in research literature. In this way, it is also important to highlight the inclusion of Ipy as an initial test variable, for Internet penetration is the central element of the hypothesis H_1.

In the populism-specific variables (Populism, TotalPopScore, PopLdr, and PopCulture),

manual designations of populist and non-populist states were made keeping the two principle

characteristics of Populism in mind: the presence of a leader who meets the study definition of

"populist" and readily accessible evidence (news articles/analyses) suggesting the predominance

of actionable populist sentiment in the broader political culture of a given state. Here, it is

important to note that the variable measures evidence of populist politics that show the ability to

change elections and/or policy; therefore, assessments of populism growing does not feature

prominently in this analysis. More information pertaining to the data creation of these variables

in the statistical analysis of this thesis can be found in the Appendix.

Factor Analysis

Determining which independent variables are most relevant in predicting the existence of

a populist-led state is a major goal of the statistical analysis in this study. As such, factor

analysis reduces the number of potential variables to be considered as independent variables into

relevant dimensions. As a result, factor analysis finds which variables constitute larger

concentrations of driving influences contributing to modern populism. In addition, this is a

supporting element to the correlation and difference of means testing that further elaborates as to

the nature of populism in the sociotechnical sphere because it clearly delineates core concepts

expressed in the data.

Correlation and Regression

The hypothesis of this study tests whether there is a real difference in ICT profiles

between populist and non-populist states. In determining the basis for such a condition, a

correlation analysis clearly denotes which variables are the most related to populism-specific

variables. This method is useful in statistically verifying the relationship of the measured variables to the underlying concepts of the analysis. Strong, statistically significant correlations can thus also be further explored via regression to find evidence as to the causality of Internet use and the presence or absence of populist states.

Difference of Means Testing

Statistical findings from these variables yield important information about ways in which populism may influence the characteristics of sociotechnical factors such as Internet penetration. Here, the analysis includes a series of difference of means tests to note whether populist country means are statistically different compared to non-populist states as well as to the global mean of 168 countries. This technique is further applied to each of the case study countries (Venezuela, China, and Russia) to observe and analyze the extent to which these leading populist states represent international populist country norms.

Results

Overall Findings

The statistical test results below generally do not support H_1 and thus does not disprove the null hypothesis H_0. In short, few of the variables tested are significantly influenced by the presence of populism and its corresponding characteristics. Concurrently, the statistically significant findings supporting H_3 provide meaningful context, as they suggest that ICT support populism via increasing citizen perceptions of government transparency. This conclusion persists even when standards for statistical significance are viewed more liberally in this analysis to include results approaching the traditional five-percent probability of obtaining a result by chance. As such, corruption variables (CPI and CorruptControl) are consistently and

significantly influenced by the populism variables more or less under the 95% certainty of significance ($p<0.05$), as best seen through difference of means testing supporting hypothesis H_2.

Corruption variables play a central role in providing a quantitative explanation for the emergence and health of modern populist regimes. In this case, the focus on information technology is highly correlated with corruption indicators. The regression analysis below even shows that there is also a causal relationship between ICT and corruption, a secondary finding that implies a partial influence of Internet usage and infrastructure in creating the conditions necessary for contemporary populism to flourish. Upon further review of the data, this is supported by the makeup of many of the development indicators themselves. In particular, the VoiceAccountable variable includes elements that relate to a country's media environment, including the effects of new media/online in a political environment (Kaufmann 2004; Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2011). Such scope is key to understanding the performance of a variable though related to corruption and political stability metrics is rarely statistically significant throughout the broader analysis presented here.

Factor Analysis

Given the wide diversity of variables used in this statistical analysis, factor analysis provides a useful method for organizing these variables by similarity and potential explanatory power. Figure 3.1 shows that these data are grouped along six categories. By and large, the variables – with the exceptions of ICTServiceExports and ICTimports – have strong factor loadings across one component and thus have simple structure.

Because of this, principal takeaways relate to the strongest simple structure loadings for each variable. As such, it is important to note that the populism variables constitute an

independent factor unto themselves. Additionally, the variables are generally split in their factor loadings by whether or not they are sociotechnical or sociopolitical in nature, as seen in component 1. In addition, Internet is an element dividing ICT variables, as perhaps best evidenced in component 5 wherein three variables – Telephone, UrbanPopulation, and Hightechexports – are essential to ICT development but do not necessarily relate directly to the Internet and present factor loadings supporting this observed difference between Internet and non-Internet ICT variables.

Correlation Analysis

Figure 3.2 shows the only statistically significant findings from a larger matrix measuring relationships for all variables in the data set. Each of these relationships is moderate in strength and the corruption variables have stronger correlations to the populism variables. It is striking that no ICT variables yielded statistically significant results. It is additionally notable that VoiceAccountable is significantly correlated to the presence of populist leadership and is thus related to both nominal (Populism) and ordinal (TotalPopScore) measurements of populism.

As suggested by the makeup and behavior of the VoiceAccountable variable, there is reason to test the correlation between technology variables and the sociopolitical conditions variables. The results from such an analysis from Figure 3.3 supports such an instinct. With the exception of trade-related ICT variables, each of the variables is strongly correlated with one another. That said, it is equally interesting that relationships between VoiceAccountable and ICT variables is not as strong as those involving corruption or rule of law variables. It can be theorized that this discrepancy may be due to restrictive media policies as elaborated in the case study chapters in this thesis.

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Regression

        The results of the correlation analyses coupled with the multidisciplinary emphasis on corruption within populist states throughout this thesis give meaningful reason to test for causal relationships between ICT and the corruption variables CPI and CorruptControl via the linear regression results presented in Figures 3.4 and 3.5. These tables highlight the three most significant independent variables in the analysis: Ipy, FixedBroadband, and Servers. Of particular interest is the large explanatory power of both models, as each account for about 70% of the variance in the dependent variables. These variables thus show that ICT levels positively contribute to both corruption perception and corruption control reflecting common Information Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) wisdom that increased Internet access inherently leads to socially beneficial transparency (Lio, Liu, and Ou 2011). At the same time, it supports the theory that populists leverage media to move public opinion towards favorable (in this case, less corrupt) views of their incumbent governments (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2011, Panizza 2005, Weyland 2001, Chinn and Fairlie 2010, Garcia-Murillo 2010, Greitens 2013, Deibert et al 2010, Deibert 2015).

Difference of Means Testing

        In testing the overall hypothesis of this thesis, a series of difference of means tests is useful to establish whether populism or populism-related characteristics significantly determine the level of core sociotechnical measurements. These results thus constitute an important bulk of evidence in support of the null hypothesis. Such an approach is also duplicated in each of the case study chapters of this thesis so to observe whether and how the case study country is aligned with the global trends outlined here.

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ANOVA

The broad lack of significance in the difference of means for the ordinal measurement of populism (TotalPopScore) is clearly evident in Figure 3.6. Unsurprisingly, corruption variables are the most significant variables in this analysis, though their difference of means is only approaching significance at ten-percent probability level (see Figure 3.7). Also of interest are the approaching F-test significances of Hightechexports and PolStabViolence (Figure 3.6), though the latter of these two variables is less unexpected from a qualitative perspective because increased instability can easily create the power vacuum conditions necessary for populism to flourish.

Independent Samples T-tests

The following tests – to be repeated and tailored to each case study country in chapters 4-6 provide no evidence supporting the study hypothesis. Among the many pieces of non-evidence here, the fact that the difference of means between populist and non-populist states for each technology variable in the analysis is noteworthy. In Figure 3.8, this non-finding also takes into account more liberal standards for statistical significance, with the acceptable probability of chance ratio extended to ten percent.

In Figure 3.8, it is also clear that governance indicators are primary drivers of populism globally, particularly variables related to corruption, stability, and efficacy. In particular, CPI and CorruptControl are significantly higher in non-populist states than in populist states, a key finding to understanding the structure and workings of modern populist societies. In addition, economic indicators like Unemployment – a measurement arguably related to social stability – similarly approach statistical significance in this model. As such, the findings here that

unemployment in populist states is significantly higher than that in non-populist states speaks to both the structure of populist states as well as the socioeconomic and cultural factors at work in placing populism in the most powerful political positions within a given state. That said, media and ICT is decidedly not such a factor, as even the VoiceAccountable variable is insignificant in this t-test. This changes slightly in Figure 3.9, as lower measures of governance and media freedom emerge as primary influencers in whether populists are in leadership positions.

The dispersion of populism as measured via the variable PopCulture is quantitatively shown in Figure 3.10 to have somewhat surprising characteristics. Media and media infrastructure measurements as expressed through variables like Ipy and VoiceAccountable are not statistically distinct characteristics of populist political culture. At the same time, Servers – another form of information infrastructure and arguably a building block for national ICT penetration in a given state – has means that are approaching statistical significance. Because populist state means are lower than that of non-populist states, this finding supports hypothesis H_1.

General Conclusions and Key Takeaways

These results support a nuanced rejection of the study hypothesis postulating Internet penetration's direct role in determining populist states. While these quantitative findings do not show any significant evidence that Internet penetration nor other ICT-related international development indicators are unique characteristics of populist states, they do clearly indicate areas in which ICT is making an impact in populist politics and policy. This is well manifested in the strong relationships presented between ICT and corruption variables as illustrated through correlation and regression analyses.

As a result, it is logical to conclude that the correlation and regression analyses, though not directly disproving the stated hull hypothesis, provide highly meaningful findings as to the impact of ICT in an environment that is less connected to digital networks. In this way, the overall finding that corruption is directly influenced by the use and presence of high-speed ICT connectivity is mixed and thus does not refute the conclusion that modern iterations of corrupt populist regimes operated under a new kind of possibly mediated corruption whose characteristics may be distinct due to technological influence. As such, the role of corruption and the accompanying difference of means between country and world is appropriate not only to adequately place each state as a leader within the global populism context but also to further explore the nature of contemporary corruption in populist states like Venezuela, China, and Russia.

CHAPTER 4 – VENEZUELA

Introduction

> The intellectual basis of the Chavez regime appears to be grounded in a nationalism that
> its creators ascribe to Simon Bolivar…A more convoluted version encompasses elements
> from chaos theory, national security doctrine, the right to rebellion, repudiation of
> 'savage' neoliberalism, anti-globalization, and promotion of a multipolar international
> balance of power (McCoy and Myers 2006, 123-124).

- Jennifer McCoy and David Myers

The above quote clearly shows the depth of complexity inherent in the Latin American

variation of populism, a tradition that has been cultivated in the region for centuries. This

tradition builds upon the sociopolitical foundation set by Iberian colonial structures as well as the

iconic strongmen who led newly formed independent states through the decolonization process.

Among these men, Simon Bolivar, the early nineteenth century military and political founding

father of northern South America, stands out not only for his accomplishments but also in the

gripping influence his image projects onto much of Latin America in the present.

No place is perhaps more shaped in Bolivar's supposed likeness as Venezuela.

Venezuela is the vanguard of the Latin American populist tradition in the modern world.

Populism's hold on politics over the past two decades, combined with fierce nationalistic

elements attributed to a renewed hero worship of Simon Bolivar, make it a prime example of

how it is an effective and viable force dictating the political culture of contemporary post-

colonial states. Through an exploitation of weak political institutions (De La Torre 2010, 124)

and valuable concentrations of natural resource deposits in this case, petroleum (McCoy and

Myers 2006, Dodson and Dorraj 2008, Davila 2000) via welfare programs and "wealth

redistribution" (Coronel 2006, 8), a skilled and ambitious salesman named Hugo Chavez was

able to fill a potential power vacuum and assume control of an economically chaotic state.

The Venezuelan adaptation of populist as a regime-driving force fits well with the definition of populism presented throughout this thesis. Importantly, Chavez's Venezuela, heretofore known as Chavismo, has taken a staunchly anti-neoliberal stance ideologically. At the same time, the movement's continued success in retaining power speaks to a strong political fit within the country's broader culture. In this way, the Chavista populist regime in Venezuela incorporates elements present in both populist and lesser developed countries, especially crippling corruption resulting from a "resource curse" based on oil (Elliot 2012, 180) that exacerbates economic inequality and reduces political stability to create a political current more conducive to populism.

Defining Characteristics of Latin American Populism

> (P)opulist movements become successful when there is a widespread failure of government to implement rights of citizenship, particularly the rule of law, that allows citizens to characterize their governments as *corrupt* (Hawkins 2010, 6).

- Kirk Hawkins

> Populism in the developing world is closely associated with economic crises that arise from late development and a strong nationalist impulse to break away from all forms of colonial dependence (Dodson and Dorraj 2008, 74).

- Michael Dodson and Manochehr Dorraj

Venezuela's – and Latin America's – frequent embrace of populist leadership is generally thought to be a direct consequence of economic, political, and institutional breakdown. Given the many periods of social volatility throughout the history of the Americas, this is neither a new nor surprising finding and has made the entire region synonymous with many of the sociopolitical ills associated with populist waves of power, especially corruption. This is

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especially evident in Latin America due to the large number of resource-rich countries, including Venezuela, highly reliant on its large oil reserves (Davila 2000, Coronel 2006, Panizza 2005, Leon and Smilde 2009).

Often held hostage to the whims of global commodity markets, such resource-gifted states – if unable or unwilling to plan for periods of lower price levels – will experience wild swings of economic boom and bust as national revenue fluctuates. In addition, the concentration of national wealth in few, geographically isolated sectors like oil reserves breeds the drastic realities of income inequality that defines the fabric of Latin American societies today, with sociocultural and political consequences that directly affect the chances populist leadership will emerge and endure in countries like Venezuela (Dornbusch, Rudiger, and Edwards 1991). Thus, the dire socioeconomic consequences emergent during trough periods of natural resource profitability raises the stakes of citizen participation (especially in elections) and paints the corresponding rise of populist discourse and rule through a lens of "revolutionary change" (Hawkins 2010, 9) reflective of the violent oscillations that are plainly evident in the region's states, particularly Venezuela. As a result, the public often demands a greater stake in the economy as expressed through direct wealth redistribution (Dornbusch, Rudiger, and Edwards 1991, Coronel 2006).

Facing these pressures directly, populists in power create and expand upon a central problem plaguing Latin American development for generations: corruption (Husted 1999, Elliot 2012, Coronel 2006). In particular, Latin American systems of corruption are generally built upon networks of patronage (De La Torre 2010). Today such clientelism has been accompanied by *caudillismo,* an arrangement of dictatorial rule characterized by a romantic, charismatic hero

(Elliot 2012, 11; Weyland 2001, 12). Chavez is just one example of these influential types of leaders (*caudillos*) and has used the image of one of the first *caudillos* – Simon Bolivar – as a legitimizing agent to his rule (Conniff 1999, Brading 2013, McCoy and Myers 2006).

Such a method to emphasize nationalism helps make convincing pitches to citizens to adopt a more antagonistic, binary view of political and economic decision-making. In Latin America, such a distinction is made substantially easier due to the noticeably high gap in standard of living between the well-connected wealthy and the majority poor and lower middle class citizens. Here, populists seize the upper hand in filling a vacuum in the hearts and minds of some of the largest and most influential voting blocs in the country by addressing their concerns directly. As a result, straw men like so-called "imperialist" US presidents and their supposed allies make for an attractive alternative narrative for many citizens. This approach also serves populists well by pitting social classes against each other in political discourse, thereby ensuring the erosion of viable political parties and other institutions to challenge the *caudillo* on account of the inability of such parties to gain a broad enough following to gain legitimacy through strong coalition rule (Panizza and Miorelli 2009, McCoy and Myers 2006, Tsafos 2007, De La Torre 2010, De La Torre 2013, Dodson and Dorraj 2008, Ellner 2005, Brading 2013).

<u>Notable Elements of Chavismo</u>

> Bolivar's struggle for independence (is) a symbol of emancipation and national identity in Venezuela (Brading 2013, 44).
>
> - Ryan Brading

> Chavistas in power viewed established structures such as public schools at all levels, the health system, and municipal government as unresponsive to the needs to the popular classes (Conniff 1999, 153).
>
> - Michael Conniff

This is the strategy of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, who has used control of oil revenues to maximize his political appeal among the poor and to guarantee his triumph in the national elections (Tsafos 2007).

<div align="right">- Nikos Tsafos</div>

Hugo Chavez's unique stamp on the Latin American populist model defines much of the nature of populist movements in the modern, interconnected, and digital age. Within the region itself, his influence has promoted the reemergence of populist rule in countries throughout the Americas, including Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil, and Nicaragua (Seligson 2007). In Venezuela itself, Chavismo remains the only governing regime type in the short history of the twenty-first century and has outlasted the founder's death by several years. As such, the mere transition of power to current President Nicolas Maduro speaks to the longevity and cultural appropriateness of the Chavismo model in a Latin American society (Kornblith.2013).

The success of Chavismo is built on a repertoire that merges old-school populist tradition. It also shrewdly highlights unique characteristics of Venezuelan society to create the dichotomous form of discourse through which populism survives and thrives. Injecting a pompous and hyperbolic milleu to politics, policy, and campaigning in Venezuela, Chavez and his movement have formed a nation that reflects many of Latin America's core sociopolitical trends in the extreme, creating an easily implementable blueprint that has been followed by populists internationally in the process (Lynch 2007).

Among the exacerbations of purely Latin American social conditions perpetuated by Chavismo is the intertwined relationship between natural resource extraction and corruption. In Venezuela, the opportunity for "grand corruption" (Husted 1999, 344) as presented by the riches of the oil industry only increased under Chavez, who ironically campaigned for greater

transparency and equality in national wealth distribution. As a result, a culture of corruption and

"redistribution" (Coronel 2006, 8) now defines Venezuelan political culture under Chavismo.

Using his charisma to his advantage, Chavez also leveraged his demagogic legitimacy as a

political weapon in domestic and international contexts. At home, Chavez bought and often

forced) (Torres 2016) the loyalty of middle class and poor Venezuelans whose quality of life

depended on oil-funded social programs. This is particularly the case when observing the

misiones, social programs that included subsidized housing and Cuban medical expertise for the

urban poor. Here, it is important to note that the benefits provided by such redistributive policies

– namely housing – was at such a high level that residents, cognizant that such policies could be

eliminated by an opposing administration, have felt forced to cast votes in favor Chavismo. For

Chavistas, this political calculation has fared well electorally given the essential votes the urban

poor provide Chavismo as a message to continue these social programs (Hawkins 2010, Brading

2013, McCoy and Myers 2006, Lupu 2010).

Abroad, high petroleum prices during large portions of past 15 years formed a bulwark

against meddling Western influence and gave Chavez the freedom to become a power broker

among Latin American and petroleum producing states (e.g. OPEC). This helped to feed his

good versus evil populist narrative as well as insert useful support in ideologically aligned

populist campaigns across the South American continent, such as the victorious Ollanta Humala

in the 2006 Peruvian presidential election. Like his manufactured connection to Simon Bolivar,

Chavez also used international alliances to strengthen his brand and promote populism as a non-

Western alternative to freedom and prosperity, as seen particularly in the formation of the ALBA

alliance (ALBA, the "Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America," has included notable

member states as Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Ecuador). Additionally, his strong ties to Fidel Castro and Cuba helped to solidify his position as the leading ascendant figure of the Latin American left, publicly building upon the populist tradition in the entire region. This gave him the ideological legitimacy to more convincingly spread his brand of populism outside Venezuelan borders (Dodson and Dorraj 2008, Hawkins 2009, Hawkins 2010, Schamis 2006, Brading 2013).

Another area of expertise championed by Chavez is aggressive rhetoric. Chavez was a deeply polarizing figure (Roberts 2006) who became known globally for his bombastic and insulting speeches and commentary; this, consequently became one of the characteristics of his regime that stands out in international comparisons. The use of exaggeration helped to create meaningful linguistic frames intended to polarize political discourse and unite the public around a common straw man enemy. Such a strategy is consistent with scholarly assessments that Chavismo emerged and remained in power as a successful "regime of controlled chaos" (Krastev 2006, 53) that uses the unceasing nature of sociopolitical and economic crises to its advantage (Brading 2013, Hawkins 2010, De La Torre 2010).

Here, a rich array of colorful symbols emerged as key themes underpinning the strong brand of Chavismo. The aforementioned commitment to lionizing Simon Bolivar as a representation of fervent patriotism gave Chavista leadership historical legitimacy and showed the public that their populist regime fit well within mainstream Venezuelan culture. Also, the use of religious imagery in a highly Christian/Catholic region of the world further solidified the cultural fit of Chavismo in Venezuela, as seen in the depiction of Chavez as a savior of the Venezuelan people against the dark forces of the West, especially the US, who are "devils"

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(Hawkins 2003, 1154; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). Given the anti-Western rhetoric, it is

therefore not surprising that Chavez in addition used a misleading and disdainful interpretation

of democracy-related vocabulary to encourage participation supporting his regime through so-

called mechanisms of civil society (McCoy and Myers 2006, De La Torre 2010).

Such features contribute to a political structure that is democratic in that Chavez was duly

elected but is not necessarily a functioning democracy by international standards because of a

lack of institutions and institutional controls like checks and balances. For one, it is important to

note that neo-populist, Chavismo-inspired governments are very loosely organized. This ensures

a lack of party dominance and/or opposition coalitions that could easily topple the populist

caudillo who holds the most widespread name/brand recognition and support in the society. This

leads to two major outcomes that define the structure of the Venezuelan/Latin American populist

regime: direct command from senior populist leadership and a dismantling of the mechanisms of

representative democracy. The first condition allows for the control of political discourse and

opposition-free policymaking. The second does away with the Western neoliberal model of

representative democracy to give the people a chance to make policy directly, a move that

engenders more support to the populist leader but further decentralizes political organization

within the country. Such tactics were useful to Chavez when facing crises during his rule,

especially in overcoming an attempted coup in 2002 because he had the strongest political

coalition even when he was briefly out of power. Chavez also codified in the 1999 Constitution

"Bolivarian Circles" which replaced many parties as a mechanism for pushing for change.

Contributing in part to his popularity, this, in conjunction with other redistributive policies which

attracted more voters to him, allowed Chavez the ability to use elections as threats, knowing that

the people would support his positions over any opposition (McCoy and Myers 2006, De La Torre 2010, De La Torre 2009, Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012, Ellner 2005, Hawkins 2010, Brading 2013, Wilpert 2005).

ICT and Chavismo: Testing the Hypothesis

(F)reedom of the press is a subordinate right to the other goals of the revolution (Hawkins 2003, 1156).

- Kirk Hawkins

The tremendous spread of television has also diminished the need for organization. Through television populist leaders reach their followers directly and establish quasi-personal contact with millions of people simultaneously (Weyland 2001, 16).

- Kurt Weyland

Examples of pro-government e-warriors include Venezuela's Chavista "communicational guerrillas" (Deibert 2015, 69).

- Ronald Deibert

The affordances of the Chavista populist model have created noticeable phenomena in the use of information technology in politics. Under Chavismo, the Venezuelan leadership has implemented a two-pronged approach to using the power of rapid, diffuse electronic communication for the sole purpose of advancing the Bolivarian revolutionary spirit which legitimizes their rule. Due to the cultural norms established by *caudillismo* and the charismatic presence of Hugo Chavez, contemporary Venezuelan media policy has been oriented towards convincing the public of the merits of populist rule and has thus "relied on activism more than control" (Greitens 2013, 8). Above all, this model shows that, in general, the political structures of Chavismo and Latin American populism writ large are supported through a strategy that maximizes the impact offered by ICT in advancing the populist cause. This result in Venezuela

is a consequence of careful media strategy planning and reflects the flexibility of ICT in advancing political goals from across ideological and regime type spectra, from authoritarianism to liberal democracy to populism.

Here, the emergence of microblogging globally during the Chavez administration fortuitously dovetailed with the style and goals of the Venezuelan populist regime. Known for its pithy wit, blunt insults, and rapid barrages of messaging content, Twitter, the most widespread of international microblogging platforms, was a boon to Chavez and has attracted millions of followers to his populist cause. Although it is evident that the format – especially the strict 140 character limit for tweets – and international reach of Twitter is ideal for a rhetorically gifted yet plain-speaking leader like Hugo Chavez, he initially struggled with the notion of engaging on social media. However, these new communication platforms, he realized, were essential to his rule as a dominant neo-populist, as his regime was built on a foundation of "participatory democracy" (McCoy and Myers 2006, 123; De La Torre 2009, 31; Wilpert 2005) and rhetoric designed to polarize the citizenry by making Chavismo the central element in Venezuelan political discourse (Hawkins 2010). Online, Chavez, one of the world's "most prolific trolls," or users who intentionally posts controversial content to attract argument and/or confrontation (Beckhusen 2013), used Twitter to reinforce and expand the reach of his populist policy priority through calculated yet over-the-top stunts which include providing free housing to his three-millionth follower (Associated Press 2012) and issuing policies and public statements while confined to intensive medical treatment (Associated Press 2011). With growing digital connectivity, even in developing nations like Venezuela, Chavista policies towards active participation in social media thus reflects the reality that populists must join social, cultural, and

political discussions online in order to place themselves in a viable position to dominate those conversations and truly morph the specter of political discourse in their (populist) image (Morozov 2011, 113-116).

Although Chavistas employ hyperactive participation in social media to guide political discourse and drown out opposition, the neo-populismo model as exemplified by Chavismo has employed tactics of media censorship that aid in creating the dichotomous, polarized nature of politics seen in a successfully implemented populist regime. As a corollary to the aforementioned social media strategy of leaders like Hugo Chavez, populist regimes like Chavismo tend to engage in measures of de facto censorship wherein a diminished media perspective is lost as an externality of a political action; this most vividly occurs with the closing of opposition media outlets due to registration or other concocted legal issues (Hoffmann 2004, Brading 2013).

From a technical perspective, internationally relevant trends such as hactivism ("hacker activism") (Morozov 2011) are also used to intimidate, scare, and frustrated online opposition authors from spreading their content. For Chavez, a centralization of this practice gave him another opportunity to reinforce his "revolutionary," anti-Western images for the country by designating such politically useful hackers as "communicational guerrillas" (Deibert 2015, 69; Krastev 2006, 52; Hawkins 2010, 9). At the same time, Latin American populist states have more recently seen such technological expertise to attack anti-regime actors – particularly journalists – in a more powerful and targeted fashion with the rise of malware packages that damage the information capabilities of those who can best raise credible objections to corrupt incumbent rule (Deibert et al 2010, 135; Scott-Railton et al 2015).

Figure 4.1 clearly shows that there is no significant difference between Venezuela and the rest of the world in each of the variables measured. This non-finding is consistent with the data-driven conclusions expressed in Chapter 3. Of particular note here is the lack of statistical significance in difference of means for the VoiceAccountable variable, which incorporates media environment in a social science metric. Given that Venezuela does not stray from global means in this statistic (a results-based conclusion), it can thus be assumed that there are similar sociopolitical media environments in populist and non-populist states. With a very low mean of -0.95, Venezuela is also a good country to delve further into examining cultures of political expression as its society is one that has limited opportunities for true free speech to the extent that it is so starkly measured in a variable like VoiceAccountable.

Extending this line of reasoning further, these results strongly suggest that Venezuela is a highly appropriate case study for qualitative analysis of populism because it exhibits qualities consistent with countries across the sociopolitical spectrum. In this case, a number of factors stand out when observing the non-statistically significant results from Figure 4.1. The lack of significant difference between corruption variable means (CPI and CorruptControl) indicates that the strongest drivers of populism are theoretically evident in many countries. At the same time, the very low means for both of these variables highlights Venezuela's position as a solidly corrupt country, a condition that the above qualitative case study analysis shows as a principal influence in the formation, establishment, and persistence of populism there. Another critically important area highlighted by the data involves the ICT economy in Venezuela. Here, the data indicate a paradoxical trend that would support the Twitter-fueled rhetorical strategy of the

Chavez regime. Here, Internet penetration reaches over half of the populace in a country where people live in close proximity to each other, as evidenced by the means for UrbanPercent and UrbanPopulation and can thus spread connectivity rapidly. Mobile subscriptions (MobileSub), an important element of the microblog universe, are similarly elevated. That said, there is a corresponding lack of Servers, FixedBroadband, and ICT related trade reported in Venezuela, likely a sign of economic centralization and isolation taken by the Chavez regime.

CHAPTER 5 – CHINA

Introduction

The Chinese case has been unique throughout human history. Following a separate path

of cultural development compared to the rest of the world, China presents an important

perspective on the sociopolitical outcomes available to populist heads of state. As such, a study

of Chinese political culture and policymaking is useful for proper insight into identifying and

prioritizing the characteristics of a global social, cultural, political, technical, and economic

phenomenon. The emergence of China as an economic and political superpower further

emphasizes that understanding of the Chinese worldview a prerequisite in contemporary

international relations today. Here, this thesis addresses two related issues: the nature of modern

populist regimes and the extent to which the Internet is an essential component of such regimes.

With its position as a large, influential, and developing non-Western country, China is an

excellent case study for analysis, as it represents a model for soliciting public support and

controlling political discourse consistent with populists elsewhere. As such, China is a non-

traditional example of effective cyber-oriented populism in two ways. First, the figurehead

essential to regime stability – Mao Zedong – is a long gone and controversial leader whose

ideological presence within the Chinese regime remains contested decades after his death. That

said, Mao and his ideology of rural, anti-intellectual populism still succeeds in creating a de facto

discourse centered on itself, a feat that persists despite the continued fortification of one party

rule in China which discourages individual-level politics. Second, China has been– both in its

attempt to ossify one party rule and in the spirit of Mao-era censorship policy – at the forefront

of identifying the Internet as a new political space and a battlefield domestically and

internationally. Consequently, the Chinese regime views cyberspace as a national security priority. This stance towards the Internet structures much of the regime's current ideology and explains many of the political conflicts that arise within Chinese cyberspaces as a result.

In the midst of a warlike attention to policing national cyberspace, China – in no small part due to the impact of Maoist populism in shaping the ideological spectrum– faces the political reality that policy must be a balancing act between openness and tight security in order to maintain stability and legitimacy for the regime in power. Beijing – unlike classic populist governments in other parts of the world – must thus cater to public desires and directly link their legitimacy to specific issue indicators (e.g. economic growth) rather than hero worship or bombastic insults of the opposition. This reality, combined with cultural norms of collectivism and saving face (Kim and Nam 1998), manifests itself in the contentious politics of online discourse, the only place where there is true multipolar discussion in China. Such a situation also informs the motives behind the implementation of two important aspects of populism globally: censorship and corruption.

Historical and Political Background

> (In the early twentieth century) many educated Chinese were convinced that their country was about to be destroyed, and they began to study every kind of political and organizational theory, examine the nature of their own social fabric, debate the values of new forms of education and language, and explore the possibilities for progress that seemed to lie at the heart of Western science (Spence 1990, 271-272).

> - Jonathan Spence

China today is an amalgam of ancient tradition and recent historical upheaval. A clash of domestic culture and new international ideas has played a major role in the economic development and current political ideology (especially towards new spaces like the Internet).

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Therefore, it is not surprising that the sociopolitical and cultural histories of China in the twentieth century represent periods of extreme competition to fortify new governing ideologies. Here, three eras hold the greatest influence in the formation of the modern Chinese state and its ideological imprint in ICT-related international politics: the May 4th Movement, the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, and the "Reform and Opening Period" (Tisdell 2009) post-Tiananmen Square.

The May 4th Movement

The World Wars – particularly World War I – moved Chinese politics towards a direction of rural populist communism and consequently fed the rise of Mao as the undisputed leader of China. In this way, the Treaty of Versailles sparked an intellectual awakening, the May 4th Movement, that strove to resolve the economic and social disadvantages, including colonialism, clearly depicted in the treaty's final terms. The adoption and experimentation of Western thought blossomed in the interwar period, with lasting consequences for modern Chinese political culture (Townsend 1977). Among the most important ideas introduced during this time were communism, from Russia and its recent Bolshevik Revolution and Westphalian sovereignty, the Western-forged commitment to national jurisdictions firmly settled by agreed upon borders (Duara 1997).

These ideas have been frequently cited justification for current Chinese domestic and foreign policy by Party leadership (Duara 1997). When expressed as isolationism, the mix of Communist policy perspectives and a Western-inspired commitment to promoting strong sovereign borders breed a potent nationalism from China's large and largely uneducated rural residents, the same constituency which fed the rise of Mao and, in turn, the birth of the Chinese

Communist regime (Saich 2000, Zheng 1999, Johnson 1962). This group of rural citizens still retains political importance in the information age, as they represent the segment of China's digital divide that is not active online (Knight and Shi 2009, Xia and Lu 2008, Fong 2009). At the same time, the economic focus away from free trade and international markets substantially limited technological development, an economic impact that is still being felt today due to the lack of a globally competitive innovation culture (Savitskaya, Salmi, and Torkkeli 2010).

The Rise of Mao

Within these hundred years of profound social change, one complex figure looms large: Chairman Mao Zedong. Chairman Mao, a man who "did not believe anything unless he could benefit from it personally" was ironically uncommitted to his own proclaimed ideology (Chang and Halliday 2005, 13-21, was highly self-interested and used his skills and his strong appeal to impoverished, rural, and otherwise left-out elements of dynastic Chinese elite society to achieve personal goals above other political priorities. This phenomenon is similarly seen in states like Russia, where strongman leaders like Putin assert influence and control through a centralized apparatus supporting the wishes and policies of just one person. In China, such singular commitment to advancing his political interests led to a byproduct of populism as a legitimizing agent, as Mao found that style of politics effective for his continued power over China. He adeptly filled a niche created in the wake of the end of the dynastic period, using the rejection of traditional Chinese culture – a tenet from the May 4th Movement – to subvert political hierarchy, at least on the surface, by extoling the value of the commoner and his/her concerns in society. In this way, Mao did not found the idea of populism in China outright but rather shaped it into a workable political norm for modern China (Townsend 1977, Chang and Halliday 2005).

Having built a military reputation as a leader aligned with the concerns of the majority rural population in China, Mao imparted his populist brand in his newly founded government and used it to unify the country under his rule following World War II and the Chinese Civil War. To accomplish this, Mao initiated several aggressive political campaigns designed to undercut any opposition, while cultivating Maoist thought as the centerpiece of any political discussion. These campaigns importantly introduced Mao's primary populist innovation – the "mass line" – to China, calling for "policies that benefit the masses (and supposedly) serve their interests and improve their conditions. It also prescribes a method or process for enlisting mass support in carrying out Party policies" (Townsend 1977, 1006).

Here, two examples – the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Cultural Revolution – illustrate this strategy in action. First, in the Hundred Flowers Campaign, Mao cleverly applied a trap for post-dynastic literati (Mao's populist movement was decidedly anti-intellectual) to criticize a government publicly where free speech was severely restricted (Chang and Halliday 2005, Schwartz 1960). As a result, political obedience to the Maoist state was firmly established as the most important personal quality in a given Chinese citizen. This sociocultural priority notably overshadowed other political issues and economic development fields like science and technology investment. Second, a lack of emphasis on economic development investment forced China into a "scientific stagnation" that it "had imposed on itself," a reality that progressed even further during the Cultural Revolution (Austin 2014, 20-23). Mao sought to dismantle social and political institutions in order to disperse any potential opposition and solidify his sole grip on the country, a move consistent with populist tenets emphasizing the unquestioned centrality of the leader in society. Because of this, "(w)hen the GPCR (Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution)

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turned chaotic, the state bureaucracy was torn apart, leaving only the Maoists in authority" (Sun 2010, 99). Unsurprisingly, however, the disorganized nature of the Chinese state left by Mao upon his death was such that the political system nearly ceased to function without his presence, prompting new leaders to establish new and more stable methods for asserting regime legitimacy (Austin 2014). Interestingly, the historical example of Mao is relevant in present-day Venezuela, as the socioeconomic and political condition of that country has eroded support for Chavismo following the death of Hugo Chavez (Grillo 2015).

The "Reform and Opening Period" (改革开放)

Part of the shift away from Maoist strongman rule in Communist China was adopted following a brief period of internationally broadcasted embarrassment stemming from the Tiananmen Square protests. Communist Party conclusions from that traumatic events entailed an explicit policy directive towards engaging and controlling information in a budding age of ICT. In this way, the idea of "Information Economy Without Freedom of Information" (Austin 2014, 29-31) serves as both a populist and an anti-populist measure. It is anti-populist in that it does not ultimately serve the lives of its base directly. In such a case, restrictions on Internet access does not serve the people's interests but is not necessarily discouraged because people without Internet access do not realize how they are being disadvantaged because they cannot see the benefits of connectivity. That said, it adheres to Mao's general populist model through manipulative purposes. By restricting the amount of politically sensitive information to citizens, the government leaves key social questions unanswered (such as the income inequality that has risen alongside economic development in China) (Tai 2015). This creates opportunities for fallacious arguments addressing the concerns of the populist base without jeopardizing the

legitimacy of the government.

A disingenuous approach to attracting citizen support is reflective of the current regime structure promoting official economic growth above all else. Here, ancient cultural norms have returned to some prominence in establishing this line of legitimacy. For one, an intricate subculture of interpersonal relationship protocol (*guanxi* 关系) creates the foundation necessary for high levels of corruption – the use of official political positions for private/individual gain – because it encourages behavior that is opaque in nature at upper echelons of business and government, which are merged entities in China given the country's state-centric economy (Li 2010). Aspects of Confucianism reinforcing the interests of the family unit (in a sense, this role is held by the state in Chinese political matters) over individuals also promote corruption by hampering the cultural acceptability of grassroots and individual-level accountability efforts (Tai 2006). Consequently, corruption is less acknowledged and less decried because culturally, government is a major component of all social constructions in Chinese society, and thus can, like in other populist states, drive economic and political decisions (Li 2010).

Mao's Regime Today: Populism in the Chinese Communist Party System

China today represents a contradiction of political directions. A Communist government actively presiding over an increasingly capitalist economy, a nation with multiple national identities (Maoist, Confucian, etc.) (Hu 2007), and a one-party state with multiple political factions – China is constantly balancing policy priorities, from the pressures of economic growth to honoring the legacy of Mao Zedong. China is also politically conflicted because it struggles with the divisive problem of corruption, which is a significant element of the new Chinese economy but simultaneously decreases growth (Sun 2010). In addition, China today pushes for

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economic growth at the expense of other byproducts of capitalism, namely free speech, through well-funded systems of censorship and criminal enforcement. These elements align closely to modern manifestations of populism around the world, particularly the other case studies of Venezuela and Russia, in large part due to the tight connection between challenges to regime legitimacy and the aiding role played by ICT in amplifying the range, reach, and strength of those challenges. Such a reality, therefore, forces policymakers – especially in China – to take both online and offline threats much more seriously than before.

Government Priorities

While corruption remains a major subtopic for Chinese policymakers due to its negative impact on economic growth, the economy as a whole is a regime-legitimizing priority and thus merits the most attention. Reaching out to external, developed marketplaces, policymakers in the reform period interpreted Western technical and economic ideas as a signal that advanced technological capability is essential to a prosperous economy. Here, the equating of technology policy with economic policy spurred greater investment in technological innovation in China, including the "sophisticated acquisition of technological spillovers (transfers) from the United States" (Tai 2006, 89), a policy that President Xi Jinping refers to in a general sense as the "modernization" that results from "informatization" (Austin 2014, 27, 170). At the same time, technical advancements in the media space encounter censorship norms which are based on the Communist regime belief that the media is intended to "function precisely to control space and time" (Sun 2010, 139) to best embrace the aforementioned goal of establishing an "Information Economy Without Freedom of Information" (Austin 2014, 29-31).

These realities are best encompassed in the Party's broader state policy of promoting a

"harmonious society" that keeps the Party under control of the country with stable economic

development. Here, corruption also plays a role in modern Chinese politics, for the Party has had

"a lot of continuity" (Zang 2010, 83-90) in organizing efforts to further police corruption. With

the level of corruption in China set to become even higher due to its greater "institutionalization"

(Li 2010, 14) within the regime and society, the Party state is concerned about the "weak rule of

law," which motivates corruption by decreasing enforcement mechanisms. This form of

corruption with impunity is sociotechnically significant precisely because it makes networks less

secure and investments in ICT less effective on account of a lack of accountability that leads to a

crippling series of conflicts of interest (Austin 2014, 85).

Contemporary Populism: The Bo Xilai Model

> Bo (Xilai) has reinterpreted the Communist culture as 'serving the people (Wei Renmin
> Fuwu 为人民服务) and tried to restore the traditional Communist Red (red symbolizes
> Communist) culture as a solution to not only Chongqing's social problems, but also to
> national problems, ranging from serious corruption, deteriorating social safety net
> systems, and an increased feeling of social alienation (Freeman and Yuan 2011, 14-15).

<div align="right">- Charles Freeman and Wen Jin Yuan</div>

Bo Xilai, as leader of Chongqing province before his fall from grace in 2012 (Ho and

Huang 2013), played to the sentiments of his Chinese constituency with an ideological bent in

line with the aforementioned positions and methods of Chairman Mao (Freeman and Yuan 2011,

Zhao 2012). Aided further by the influence of growing income inequality, populism (Nadiri 2007)

became a divisive force in Chinese politics with a well-supported base of policymakers in

contemporary Communist Party ranks. This was especially true during Bo's pre-2012 path to the

highest ranks of the Chinese Communist Party, as allied "New Leftists" boasted of "ties with

senior-level officials in the Chinese government, particularly those who appreciate their

theoretical framework and are adopting policies aimed at enhancing social equality." This receptiveness towards populism extended as far as now President Xi Jinping, who admired the Bo approach to neo-Maoist populism before Bo's personal and disruptive fall from grace (Freeman and Yuan 2011, Zhao 2012, Ho and Huang 2013).

The Bo approach to modern populism is built on a platform of two elements: people-centrism and anti-elitism (Tai 2015). These components are directly related to the Xi government's stated goals of addressing poverty and other negative issues of market reform in modern China. Politically, Xi's original interest in Bo is a likely response to the growing New Leftist movement that has become more insistent on promoting Maoist policies and campaign ideology as personified by the political image of Bo himself. As a result, the Xi government is attracted to the Bo model minus, of course, the toxic brand of Bo the man after his scandal because it accomplishes the objective to consider "some of the New Leftists' concerns seriously" (Freeman and Yuan 2011, 1-10) while appearing to tackle serious issues like corruption through well-publicized campaigns that target high level Party officials (Broadhurst and Wang 2014, Chen 2014).

In an example of such a technique, Bo's "anti-black" campaign (Liu, Liang, and Halliday 2014) against organized crime used a Maoist foundation to score political points on a social issue important to rank-and-file Chinese citizens: crime, particularly as it relates to corrupt activities. Along these lines, the "anti-black" campaign stands out in a number of ways. First, the scope of the campaign itself is sufficiently broad to accomplish other political purposes (i.e. crack down on general opposition) while portraying a message of a government responsible for the people's true welfare. Second, the use of color is an exquisite divider of discourse that is quintessentially

populist in nature due to its ability to paint political discourse in starkly dichotomous (black and

white) terms. In fact, Mao used color symbolism prominently throughout his tenure as leader of

China, with particular emphasis during the Cultural Revolution, as seen in the emphasis of red in

the name of key actors during that time such as the Red Guards (Spence 1990). In Bo's case, the

color black (黑) refers to 黑社会 ("black society"), a term used to describe gangster-like

criminality in Chinese language (translation by author). In the modern era, this symbolism has

extended towards seemingly accountable individuals throughout society; in the case of the Bo-

era "anti-black" campaign, the prominent lawyer Li Zhuang was thus targeted as an unpatriotic

actor/citizen due to his engagement in alleged corruption (Liu, Liang, and Halliday 2014).

Assessing ICT Support of the Populist and One-Party State

> The internal dynamics of Chinese civil society favors the development of the Internet.
> There are various manifestations of such dynamics, such as the expansion of individual
> rights and urban public spaces, the proliferation of popular protest, the decentralization of
> the media, and the expansion of associational life. These dynamics derive from the
> extraordinary combination and juxtaposition of ambiguities, tensions, contradictions, and
> hopes in contemporary Chinese life (Yang 2011, 108).

- Guobin Yang

The emergence of the Internet in China arrived in the midst of an unprecedented period

of socioeconomic reform and rapid growth that contributed to the extensive change seen in China

since the end of the Mao era. In recent years, the Internet has played a major role in new

ideological formations crafted by both government and opposition in response to the increasing

dependence on ICT in the global marketplace, an important driver of modern economic

development. In short, "user-generated content provides a viable alternative to the mainstream

media, and the prevalence of 'humour, outspokenness, pithy put-downs and catchy slogans'

across social media fits nicely the 'short acerbic nature of populist messages'" (Tai 2015, 122).

As a result, the Chinese Internet has become a new forum of contention in the divided politics of the Chinese one-party state. Here, the "most unorthodox, imaginative, and subversive ideas can be found in Chinese cyberspace," a place where "authority of all kinds is subject to doubt and ridicule" (Yang 2011, 1-2). This reality – interpreted by current Party leadership as a threat to legitimacy, sovereignty, and the "harmonious society" they seek (Zang 2010, 83) - has sparked a new online regime that implements the offline interests of the Communist Party by leveraging the affordances of Internet-mediated communication and social organization to the state's advantage.

China's Information Regime

China has attracted worldwide attention for its devotion to dominate the online space frequented by Chinese users, a commitment that includes a notorious investment in ICT tools and infrastructure supporting a strict censorship regime. However, this is only part of a multifaceted state strategy to sculpt discourse in Chinese cyberspace. According to this strategy, "monitoring and state-sponsored online activism are also important components." As such, the Chinese government's involvement in Internet activities is varied, including priorities "to promote economic development," to allow "online dissent as a 'safety valve' to vent grievances," to gauge public opinion, and to improve governance outcomes. A key outcome from implementing such a priority-driven approach is that "China's domestic ICT efforts are more decentralized, agile, and proactive than commonly portrayed, and they actively seek to involve the population in favorably shaping online content" in a modern-day adaptation of Mao's populist campaigns (Greitens 2013, 263-265).

China clearly favors a more closed Internet internationally to the point of promoting

restrictive, easy to censor/police intranets at the expense of the worldwide and interconnected Internet, a foreign policy that is likely due to the balancing act this approach towards Internet discourse control requires (Deibert 2015, 70. Here, China has adopted a position of cybernationalism which has culminated in a commitment to enforcing national "borders" online (Deibert et al 2010, 181-191). This policy, however, still exists under the Party's motive to live up to its legitimacy-granting promise of prosperity, thus supporting international Internet use for economic growth purposes (Calingaert 2010). As such, "popular nationalism" online, from the interest perspective of current Party leadership, benefits China but must be controlled by the state (Yang 2011).

Given these wide-ranging concerns, the Chinese online regime employs a wide range of techniques to achieve its goals. The most basic conceptual element in this repertoire is website blocking. Here, specific sensitive sites are not only blocked for Chinese Internet users, but search engine queries can be denied as well. This latter task frequently involves human censors complementing the work of advanced software tools and other technological infrastructures such as the Great Firewall of China (Greitens 2013, Yang 2011). The human element is also an important element in spreading pro-government messages online through palatable conduits. These actors – known colloquially as the "50 cent Party" because according to rumor they are paid the equivalent of 50 cents per post (Yang, Yang, and Wilson 2015) - combine the "mass line" with de facto public opinion polling and other political data mining (Deibert 2015, Yang 2011). The outcome of these campaigns is a structured "public opinion guidance" program that, true to populist form, sets the parameters of political discourse in public space (Morozov 2011).

Supporting this human capital, censorship tools have been developed at an high level.

These techniques are advanced to the extent that they now represent and intimidating development both inside and outside China. Today, such tools extend beyond simple denial of access and have progressed towards espionage and data manipulation/theft capabilities. For example, "deep packet inspection" retrieves emails, finds keywords, and rewrites messages instantly following state censorship standards (Calingaert 2010, 69). These abilities now extend beyond the physical borders of China. This is evident in technologies such as the domain name-blocking feature of the Great Firewall of China in which foreigners accessing certain sites from outside of China have faced the same censorship restrictions as a Chinese citizen (Deibert et al 2010, 187). The effects of these tools are therefore highly effective in accomplishing regime goals and influencing opposition Internet behavior, because "(a)s these techniques become more widely used and known, they create a chilling effect: Even without particular evidence, activists may avoid digital communication for fear that they are being monitored" (Deibert 2015, 69).

De Facto Realities of the Chinese Internet

Although the Chinese government has invested heavily in censorship technology, the Internet remains the most intellectually free space in the Chinese sociopolitical system. At the same time, the Internet has allowed Chinese to counter powerful interests and even delay the implementation of censorship technology developments (especially the highly sophisticated Green Dam software that allows websites to control user computers) (Calingaert 2010; Wolchok, Yao, and Halderman 2009). The relevance and empowerment of the Internet for opposition users persists due to the lack of offline options for ordinary Chinese to air grievances and discuss pressing political issues. Here, "(i)nstitutionalized channels for public participation (for example, the petition system) are still weak and ineffective" and as a result "citizens need

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alternative channels of communication," with "the Internet meet(ing) this need better than official (state-run) channels" (Yang 2011, 107).

However, increases in global information network access have not led to the same experimentation with foreign ideas in China as occurred during a similar period of international openness: the May 4th Movement (Duara 1997 and see section above). This is especially evident in the Chinese public's lack of knowledge about their home country's politics (Morozov 2011). That said, a new type of non-state sanctioned political dialogue is emerging in online networks thanks to larger public ignorance of politics in China. At the same time, Chinese have a particularly high level of online political efficacy in China, an ironic finding given a rising lack of knowledge in the political system. From the political ignorance of citizens to the growing political activity online to the disorganized nature of both Chinese political opposition and online group participation, the Chinese online political environment can thus be conducive to opposition-led populist sentiment if a leader/group created a strong brand centering themselves as the face of a movement (Tai 2015). This reality would further support the finding that China is a populist nation, for it has cultural components that would strongly support populist leaders with different ideological backgrounds. That said, however, opposition politics today in China remains limited in large part because political activities conducted by non-state actors online pertains almost exclusively to "issue-specific" situations like economic opportunity, crime, and endemic corruption (Yang 2011, 44).

In addressing critical issues, opposition online activists are providing a counterpunch to the censorship challenges presented by the state through a strain of grassroots politics that uses a variety of techniques proven to avoid censors by using the affordances of language and

information technology to their advantage. Linguistically, "the most common way of avoiding drawing attention from censors to erotic or otherwise politically sensitive work is by disguising sensitive keywords that might trigger alerts" (Hockx 2015, 126). This is best exemplified through the use of satirical puns like Grass Mud Horse (草泥马, a verbal pun for 肏你妈, meaning "fuck your mother") and River Crab (河蟹, a verbal pun for the Chinese "harmonious society" policy translated as 和谐) ("Decoding" 2015) that avoid censors while simultaneously communicating anti-regime feelings about policy (Calingaert 2010, 71). This creation of imaginary characters ("Decoding" 2015) to construct a socially relevant narrative also extends to real people who are made into symbols of regime excess and corruption. For example, "My father is Li Gang" became a viral and colloquial phrase in China as a political protest of an incident involving a wealthy Chinese man who corruptly avoided prosecution for vehicular manslaughter because of his powerful father (Tai 2015, 125-126; Wines 2010).

On a more technical level, opposition Internet users have used ICT to reverse the government's paradigm of constant surveillance on its people (Tai 2015), providing a check on their power and fueling an alternative explanation to the causes behind many Chinese citizens' socioeconomic woes. Such netizens have popularized new hacking techniques and have applied them to great effect, including the "human flesh search engine" wherein netizens uncover unsavory facts about officials (particularly their corrupt ways of doing business) (Morozov 2011). At the same time, hackers also involve the international community by using their expertise to spread dissent across borders, a political move that channels the influence of the Chinese diaspora in toppling the Qing dynasty in the early 20th century (Yang 2011, Spence 1990).

Figure 5.1 provides a meaningful snapshot of the social conditions facing China in the present day. This is most evident in the statistically significant differences of means between China and the rest of the world in several categories. First, the significantly higher urban population is an important yet unsurprising consequence of China's position as the world's most populated state. Second, trade in technology (ICTServiceExports, ICTimports, Hightechexports) is conducted at a level substantially higher than the average country and also reflects the large degree to which the Chinese economy is now dependent on ICT goods and services. Third, this focus on ICT comes from a pre-Internet infrastructural foundation, for the number of telephones in China dwarf country averages in the data set. Such a figure also raises a question of whether mean values are the most accurate measure of variables such as telephone penetration, for a high figure from China could influence mean calculations artificially upward. That said, statistically insignificant findings also tell much about the nature of the Chinese state today. Here, perhaps the most important indicator that registered a statistically insignificant difference of means is VoiceAccountable, an indicator that measures the extent to which citizens can participate in the political process and includes media freedom and freedom of expression ratings. In the case of China, this variable measured very low (-1.58, with -2.5 the indicator for the lowest level of sociopolitical expression in a society), strongly suggesting that the country's notorious system of multi-methodological censorship was successfully implemented in all-encompassing fashion.

These statistical findings, coupled with the previous qualitative policy analysis of Chinese Internet, suggest that three overarching themes permeate sociotechnical development in China. First, the government has explicitly stated that economic growth is a political imperative

to the point of tying it to regime legitimacy (Holbig and Gilley 2010). An emphasis on trade

implies that such activity is conducted on a scale so large that it is likely a sociopolitical priority

rather than a consequence of high natural resource concentration, specific international demand,

or other factors. Second, the statistical significance of ICT variables in Figure 5.1 suggests that

information technology is intricately tied to economic growth in China due to the significantly

higher levels of ICT trade compared to the rest of the world, a finding that provides data-driven

support consistent with the policy analysis conclusions presented earlier in this chapter. Third,

China's uniquely large population, combined with technological and economic development

goals, advantageously positions the country to take advantage of the affordances of a modern

global economy that emphasized knowledge production over manufacturing output (Powell and

Snellman 2004). Here, the high concentrations of urban residents in China make for meaningful

"knowledge clusters" wherein expertise can congregate and produce at a high rate (Wang, Lin,

and Li 2010). At the same time, however, such concentrations of people and economic influence

is a tempting opportunity to reignite corruption, thereby reinforcing rather than reforming

sociocultural and economic norms in an age of increasing international expansion in China.

CHAPTER 6 – RUSSIA

Introduction

> Authoritarian regimes often fail when they lose the will to use coercion to remain in power or lose the ability to adapt. Putin showed that he has not lost the will to use force (Wegren 2013, 4).

- Stephen Wegren

Russia is a state recently emerging from a momentous transition. After years of totalitarian rule culminating in the fall of the Soviet Union, the country has struggled with the growing pains associated with a new form of government: democracy (on paper). Such a struggle is especially prevalent in areas such as economic output and inequality, homicide, human trafficking, and the drug trade (Wegren 2013, 196). These worrisome trends have threatened stability and signaled for greater change in the minds of many Russians.

In response to the growing social breakdown, an unlikely leader named Vladimir Putin, a once obscure former KGB agent stationed in East Germany during the fall of the Berlin Wall (Ignatius 2007), has emerged to dominate politics and discourse as the second President (and surprisingly anointed successor) to Boris Yeltsin in post-Communist Russia. An odd choice for a country with a proud Soviet past, Putin, a man with a noted anti-Communist sense of humor who read banned books in his youth, "remains an enigma" (Wegren 2013, 23; Sakwa 2007) yet created a brand which has resonated across the world as that of a modern, united Russia. This brand, driven by a populist regime where policy is directed "from above" with Putin as a central, "nodal point" in the political network, thereby makes him the undisputed "national leader" in Russia. An important effect of this tight centralization of power is that the public has been presented a consistent and more inspiring definition of what it means to be a (proud) Russian

today, a definition which includes ethnocentrism and an anti-Western attitude (Casula 2013). As a consequence, there has been a long stretch of popularity for Putin. In fact, the man has become such an influential role in Russian culture that popular arts and media, as exemplified by works such as "One Like Putin" (a 2002 hit song), extoll the President's personal and moral virtues and in turn fortify his legitimacy to rule (Lucas 2008, 57).

With this strong social support, the Putin regime allows Russian policymakers to "get away with murder, metaphorically or even literally" (Lucas 2008, 84) due to a lack of opposition both domestically (via ruthless persecution of and propaganda against potential enemies) and internationally (via high natural resource revenues). Here, several elements from the previous two case studies of Venezuela and China resurface in a different cultural context. Like Venezuela, Russia has a populism that is heavily supported through natural resource sales (especially natural gas and petroleum). Given this, it is no surprise that Putin's "nationalization" of the oil industry in Russia was inspired by similar actions taken by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela (Lucas 2008). Russia has also based its economic policy on the approach of contemporary Argentina (Lucas 2008), a populist ally of Chavismo under the Presidents Kirchner (Nestor and Cristina) (Roberts and Escalante 2008). At the same time, Russia has become closer to China, in no small part through leveraging its other abundant economic resource – firearms – in international trade networks (Lucas 2008, Sakwa 2007). In addition, Russia and China share a legacy of Communist states run by cults of personality (Lenin/Stalin in Russia, Mao in China) and have crafted unique, non-Western, and anti-neoliberal paths towards a return to international political prominence.

Implications from the Fallout of the USSR: the Russian Perspective

Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin both thought of themselves as making history and sought to bend the existing circumstances to further their goal of rebuilding the Russian state (Taylor 2011, 26).

- Brian Taylor

Most Russians were ill placed to judge Yeltsin's policies. The market economy was a mystery…Nothing in their past lives had prepared the population for rapid economic change (Lucas 2008, 32).

- Edward Lucas

The Russian state experienced dramatic and traumatic change with the sudden fall of the Soviet Union (USSR) from 1989-1991 and the consequential breakdown of a Russian-led multinational empire. This led to a decade of painful transition and wounded national pride, as outside ideas – particularly in the neoliberal economic policy of "shock therapy" – were disastrously implemented with the support of Western powers (Hall and Elliot 1999). As such, "all Russian politicians" since the end of the Cold War have "wrestled with what mixture of pride and shame the Soviet past would arouse" (Lucas 2008, 103).

While democracy was established through Western-style socioeconomic liberalization, the evolution of Russia as a political entity over the past twenty-five years has resulted in a "dual state" where citizen participation is tempered by "a directed and managed process" led by Russian political executives, namely Vladimir Putin (Wegren 2013, 33). This process includes substantial doses of corruption, electioneering, and voter manipulation designed to keep the Putin government consistently afloat. As such, populism is an important element in establishing a politically stable "dual state" model because it encourages voter-fueled legitimacy while strongly supporting the incumbent leader (Putin). Here, Putin has appealed to the base instincts of the Russian public by contrasting himself to recent Russian leaders with great effect, for "Putin's

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taciturn competence looked all the better compared with his lame-duck predecessor" (Lucas 2008, 29).

Underpinning this populist-powered regime is one of the largest beneficiaries winners from the fall of the USSR: intelligence operatives from the former KGB, the Soviet intelligence agency. Here, "Putin and his ex-KGB colleagues captured a country exhausted by economic upheaval, disgusted by corruption, and yearning for strong and competent leadership (and) used what looked like mass murder (in the form of mafia-style hits) to create the public panic necessary to seize power" (Lucas 2008, 17, 39). These officials have thus leveraged their experience to create a mafia state dominated by "siloviki," political actors with ties to Russian intelligence and security services (Aslund 2008). This development is part of a rigid pyramidal sociopolitical structure in which Putin is the head of a series of influential siloviki who enforce regime directives (Taylor 2011).

Among the many regime priorities of the Putin era, a return to Soviet-style nationalism stands out. Here, Putin and his government have used history as a rhetorical platform to signal a new, strong, post-Communist Russia to the world. Two examples illustrate this phenomenon in action, with implications for both domestic populism and international security policy:

1. Putin has stated publicly that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (Lucas 2008, 106). This clearly plays to the fears and economic suffering of Russians in the early post-Soviet (pre-Putin) years.

2. Putin has tied the military into his nationalist statements and campaigns. This is due to the symbolism of military might as representative of state power and reflects the reality that "the Russian army has been one of the very few institutions that Russians have had a significant

amount of confidence in" since the end of the USSR. As a result, trust in the army assists the Putin regime in rebuilding Russian national pride, as broadcasted to the public in commemorations and other highlights of the incredible and victorious sacrifices made by Russians during World War II (Lonkila 2008, 1127-1128).

How Putin Represents Russian Interests

> (M)odern Russia is a country in which it is possible for a private citizen to dream about personal fulfillment through brains and hard work. The promise of a prosperous and civilized life began in the Gorbachev and Yeltsin eras, but for many Russians, it has only become a reality under Putin (Lucas 2008, 45).

> - Edward Lucas

> Putin is the master of good feelings. One of his outstanding political strengths is to reflect in himself everything that people want to see. His main political achievement is that he has made Russians feel good about their country again" (Aslund 2008, 21).

> - Anders Aslund

Russia today is governed under a striking paradox. While the Russian people remain deeply distrustful of government to serve their core interests, they have held the government's leader – Vladimir Putin – in high esteem for much of his rule (Taylor 2011). As such, "the popularity of the incumbent Vladimir Putin, which robbed the opposition movement of a widespread sense of grievance against an unpopular leader," (White and McAllister 2013, 83) keeps Putin in power while undermining the perceived efficacy of the very government he leads. As a result, during his terms Putin has become a "needed" man in Russian society (Wegren 2013, 3). This type of populist arrangement exacerbates the dichotomous discourse between the ruler and his challengers others in Russian politics.

This political reality creates meaningful, regime-sustaining policy. For many Russians, this has resulted in the reality that "(f)or all his attacks on other freedoms, he (Putin) has

preserved the ones that the 'New Russians' most care about…never in Russian history have so many Russians lived so well and so freely" (Lucas 2008, 42). Such a general belief in the efficacy of the Putin system emanates from a concerted regime effort to address three major political problems: reestablishing Kremlin sovereignty, creating a climate of political stability, and building a functional economy.

Putin has made large strides to delineate and enforce the new Russian state's territorial reach in a marked improvement over the previous Yeltsin government wherein a series of serious "sovereign power issues" arose and intensified (Taylor 2011, 79). For the Putin Kremlin, this policy priority is most clearly seen in the "renationalization" of territory in the Russian Federation. Here, a system of territorial governors supported by special Kremlin-appointed representatives – or "polpreds" – bring Putin's presence closer to remote and potential breakaway areas (Wegren 2013, 68-69.

From these kinds of policies, Putin is credited for ending "Russia's endless cycles of revolutions and counter-revolutions" (Sakwa 2007, 65). This is a meaningful policy achievement for many contemporary Russians, who have generally lived through chaotic periods of crisis supported by weak institutions. Consequently, modern "Russia has a cultural predisposition towards strong personalized leadership" (Sakwa 2007, 73) clearly seen in Putin's rise to power. Putin's new leadership also represents a response to previous and damaging encroachments of Western influence/ideology, a sociopolitical prerogative shared between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church (Lucas 2008). From these factors, foreign policy becomes a winning issue for Putin because his voting base understands the implications of diplomatic actions better than the minutiae of reforming domestic and bureaucratic structures.

Such a focus is particularly effective in niche policy areas like food security where nationalism is essential to effectively fight economic sanctions in a populist-appropriate manner that adequately vilifies the responsible Western powers (Sakwa 2007). It is, in turn, a major policy motivation in larger topics like the international natural resources trade, where Russia seeks to use its control over natural gas distribution in Europe to its advantage (Lucas 2008).

Here, Putin benefitted greatly from the low foundation left by his predecessors. One of the principal drivers of his lengthy period of popular rule is that the economy was so depressed when he assumed office that growth was quickly and easily possible (Dimitrov 2008). In so doing, Putin recognized early in his administration that a return to the recent (Soviet) past would prove palatable in economic policy and aligns with his oft-repeated belief that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (Lucas 2008, 38, 106). Based on such an ideological backbone, Putin was thus motivated by Communist-era policies, particularly those which stressed greater economic equality in counter to Western/capitalist/neo-liberal economic reforms. Surveying the political landscape, Putin also publicly argued that in order to successfully administer such a policy – as well as to avoid further corruption and the politicization of economic policy – the state had to take a central role in all aspects of reform (Wegren 2013). For much of his time in power, this approach pleased Russians in general and citizens reacted positively to the resulting rehabilitation of the Russian banking system. Such a reality resonated with Russian voters, who took note that "(f)or all his virtues, that [economic stability] is something that Yeltsin never managed" (Lucas 2008, 31).

Characteristics of the Putin Regime

> Putin has created a political system that is completely personalized and centralized,
> which means that its sustenance is entirely dependent on Putin's person. Several of his

supporters have stated that this system will collapse if he leaves. They might be right. Putin has created a system that not only makes it possible but demands that he stay in power. Commercial corporations in different industries in a world without law, only a godfather, cannot thrive without the godfather (Aslund 2008, 23).

The Putin regime in Russia is a populist system in which power is tightly centralized and highly associated with the charismatic leader, Putin. In constructing this setup, the Putin administration is organized in an authoritarian, shadowy, gang-like structure supported by one-party domination of the political environment in Russia. Such a format is ripe for corruption, and encourages a culture of mafia-imposed censorship in the media sphere in which regime opponents are denied access to spreading their political messages, frequently accused of criminal libel, and severely punished. In Russian society, this has created an abundance of fear amongst the public due to the high levels of government-sanctioned force against those who speak against the regime. As a result, self-censorship is a cultural norm of survival in modern Russia and informs much of the expression patterns within the country today (Deibert et al 2010).

Tensions and Paradoxes

Given this type of regime construction, paradoxes are an integral part of the political system. This is evident in the motives and directions taken by Putin as Russia's leader. Although he is "(i)mposing an authoritarian regime on the country, Putin" does not rule like many authoritarian heads of state because he "is still free from any ideological dogma" (Shlapentokh 2008, 207). For him, the most important political priority is to stabilize the country in his populist image in order to remain comfortably in power. As such, he has emphasized "patriotism" in his rule, "normalized" new sociopolitical norms based on Soviet-era ways, and protected the assets of his favored political elites (Sakwa 2007, 35, 163).

In this way, it is clear that corruption is an acute condition of the Putin regime from top officials to the lowest law enforcement ministries. This situation supports Putin's position due to the "low professionalism" (Taylor 2011, 161, 185) that results from the low economic benefits individual officials receive when conducting themselves ethically, a problem exacerbated by the legal reality that politicians in Russia hold immunity from prosecution (Wegren 2013). This supports the view that there is a large mafia-style presence in the Russian economy, a reality further evidenced by the frequent pressuring of wealthy capitalist tycoons to adhere to the Putin regime's corrupt standards (Lucas 2008, 46-52). In addition, the "renationalization of large privatized corporations" in Russia is such that "the most plausible explanation, for such state-sanctioned activity, is corruption" (Aslund 2008, 20).

Given the duplicitousness required of corrupt behavior, it is consequently paradoxical that in Russian society loyalty over the interests of Russia as a whole is a most important value to Putin (Baker and Glasser 2005). This is especially relevant in his emphasis of nationalist patriotism glorifying the USSR, including its great victories of World War II (Lucas 2008). This rhetorical strategy is positive reinforcement for public support of increasingly aggressive foreign policy maneuvers, particularly in the invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 both taken in the supposed defense ethnic Russian interests abroad (Yakovlev 2016). That said, anti-military activism remains an element of internal regime critique in Russia but the government's actions enforcing censorship send a clear message to many Russians who face "the risk of being conscripted" if they express their negative views publicly (Lonkila 2008, 1128-1134).

Discourse surrounding the military shows how Russia is both a free and suppressed country at the same time (Wegren 2013). Such a reality is consistent with Putin's famous style

of saying one thing and doing the exact opposite as part of constructing a political culture

centered entirely on Putin himself (Aslund 2008). Among various techniques, Russian "saber-

rattling" is noteworthy in that it "mainly involves military exercises and minor irritants" such as

"send(ing) unauthorized flights into another country's airspace to test its defenses" (Lucas 2008,

144). This practice is related to a broader regime tactic of employing KGB-style "psychological

tricks" (Lucas 2008, 19-20) on adversaries such as "seemingly offering concessions but

undermin(ing) their impact" (Wegren 2013, 5).

Mafia Censorship

> The space for civic activism is rapidly diminishing in present-day Russia, particularly in
> areas that directly challenge the state. Anti-military activism is a particularly sensitive
> topic since it deals both with the legitimization of state-organised violence and the role of
> the army as one of the main building blocks of Russian national identity (Lonkila 2008,
> 1125).

> - Markku Lonkila

Adopting the power of gang rule while lionizing the legacy of Soviet-era policy (Deibert

et al 2010), the Putin regime is aggressively using intimidation to enact de facto censorship

throughout Russia. Not surprisingly, therefore, "Russia is one of the most dangerous places for

journalists" in the world today. This threat looms large over all media in Russia, a threat that is

all the more credible given that "the Kremlin is not really facing any serious opposition" and is

thus engaging in the classic populist tactic of eliminating organized attempts to balance political

dialogue away from Putin's favor (Lucas 2008, 64-69). Similarly, even when there have been

protests against Putin, electoral irregularities have been carefully calculated to avoid rigging

results towards unreasonable percentage distributions (White and McAllister 2013).

To that end, Russia employs two important strategies to curb opposition development

through offline networks. First, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are targeted or created as "a new, subtler and more effective weapon" in political intelligence (Lucas 2008, 148). NGOs are more tightly regulated (Wegren 2013) as part of a policy requiring registration and banning general public protests (Lonkila 2008). At the same time, the Kremlin's control of television in the Putin era has been a high profile element of the regime's censorship policy. Encouragement for pro-regime coverage began during the Chechen War, when official state standards for journalistic content were first introduced in the Putin era on a large scale (Sakwa 2007). Those who failed to heed such messages – like independent networks such as NTV, for example – endured losing efforts to remain freely open after struggling with regime-led shadow campaigns of harassment and intimidation (Baker and Glasser 2005, Sakwa 2007).

Gang Rule on ICT: Inside Putin's Control of Media Networks

> The Internet, and particularly social networking, has been a crucial ingredient in many of these events through the rapid and effective mobilization of supporters. The nature of the Internet, with its ability to convey information instantly and to bypass official media and avoid censorship, makes it an ideal tool for co-ordinating social protest (White and McAllister 2013, 73).

<div align="right">- Stephen White and Ian McAllister</div>

With its amorphous and highly fluid flows of information, the Internet presents many authoritarian regimes a serious challenge to their carefully calculated control over political discourse. That said, the Russian state under Putin is well equipped to rise to such a challenge given its functioning format as a mafia-style organization. In this way, offline intimidation and populist rhetoric employed by the Putin regime apply themselves well in many areas of Russian cyberspace, from international hacking (Rid 2012) to building from policies of traditional media control (especially in television).

Television

The intentions of the Putin regime in the media sector are most evident in an analysis of television policy. In its success "the Kremlin controls either directly or indirectly all national television channels" (Dimitrov 2008, 80). Such a phenomenon – populist in nature due to its complete domination of mediated discourse in Russia – also aligns well with the Putin goal of more indigenous national cultural products. The result has been no less than the ability of the Putin regime to use television as a "tool of political control" that uses "managed television coverage" to achieve specific political outcomes and further grow his base of popular support. This was powerfully implemented following the hostage situation at a school in Beslan. There, government control of television stations dictated that no coverage was broadcast questioning or exploring the competencies of the rescue mission, a departure from earlier inquiries from a previously independent NTV with regards to similar tragedies (Wegren 2013, 130-134). From this, there is strong evidence that such manipulation of television networks and content made Putin the noteworthy populist leader he is today and his policies thus underscore a political discourse value shift towards promoting conflict beneficial to the popularity of the regime (Baker and Glasser 2005).

Runet: The Internet in Russia

In addition to the media policy environment established by Putin on domestic networks (such as television), Russia's Internet is highly influenced by the challenges facing large developing nations in the twenty-first century, namely the "digital divide" between those connected to global (Internet) networks and those disconnected and/or without viable access. Although measurement of such a divide is seriously questioned amongst technology and

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development scholars, growing countries like the BRIC nations of Russia, China, and India are well positioned to experience high Internet penetration growth rates for an extended period even though significant swaths of their national populations remain disconnected (Rose 2006). Even for those who are online users in Russia, the isolation of cross-border dis-connectivity experienced by fellow Russians informs much of the culture of Russians online, as is clearly seen in the emergence of popular, indigenous-constructed social media networks like VK and Odnoklassniki (White and McAllister 2013). These factors thus contribute to a reality in which modern Russia is a dual state in both online and offline sociopolitical spheres.

This Russian Internet – aptly known colloquially as "Runet" – speaks to the domestic-centric nature of the Internet (as well as its mostly urban usership), with a sense of isolation reinforced by the exclusive (and potentially nationalistic) use of Russian language throughout online networks in the country (Lonkila 2008, 1130-1131). Within this backdrop, the state has thus guided the Internet in Russia to function as "an extension of media space" (Deibert et atl 2010, 215). This is a direct result of the social externalities created by the Putin regime's strict offline media policies, as truly public discourse has no space in society outside of cyberspace (Lonkila 2008).

Cyber Protests, Backlash, and Control

World events in the early twenty-first century have shown that the Internet can facilitate users to change political agendas away from the priorities of ruling elites (White and McAllister 2013). In Russia, this, on the surface, appears to be the case, for the "Internet (is) an 'introverted' medium for Russians to communicate with each other" (Rose 2006, 2) in a manner that is culturally palatable (and does not involve unpopular Western influence). This is clearly

seen in the affordances of important social networks like LiveJournal, a very popular social

media platform in Russia because users like having the ability to grant specific users privileged

access to private/sensitive content (Lonkila 2008). With this sociotechnical infrastructure in

place, it is not surprising that political activism in Russia still occurs, as seen in the notable civic

response to contested 2011 election results, which included a series of major demonstrations

against alleged fraud for a period of over six months, a challenge to the Putin regime which

spurred harsher curbs on free speech (White and McAllister 2013, Kara-Murza 2012). In this

way, the state's answer to such a direct challenge to its rule speaks volumes as to the capabilities

and policy direction of the Putin regime in online-mediated sociopolitical spaces:

> Several social networking websites apparently experienced denial of service attacks at
> crucial points during the December protests, and mobile Internet was unavailable in
> Bolotnaya Square during the 10 December 2011 demonstration. The regime had also
> established numerous groups which characterized the protesters as Western-funded and
> anti-Russian. The administration had also encouraged a youth movement, Nashi, which
> had employed the Internet and social networking to oppose the protests against the
> government (White and McAllister 2013, 82).

Here, the state benefits from some of the larger consequences of information technology

development. Most important, ICT is generally inexpensive to acquire, mass produce, and

innovate to specific purposes. Although this is a principle advantage of activists and other non-

state actors, it gives authoritarians like Putin pointed policy guidance as to how to most

effectively address netizen threats to regime legitimacy. In this case, authoritarians like Putin are

best served to "invest huge resources in firewalls and in monitoring websites and web traffic"

(White and McAllister 2013, 73).

Interestingly, Russia – unlike China – does not take this approach as overtly, using

bureaucracy and legal vagaries befitting mafia-style rule to enforce de facto censorship through

fear. This general principle holds both domestically – where websites require registration, "harmful" sites are well documented, and slander laws are strongly enforced in areas of cyber-speech - and internationally as seen in the aggressive cyber activity of the 2008 Russia-Georgia war (Wegren 2013; Deibert et al 2010, 6, 24-25, 209). As a result, the Putin brand of populism is applicable online and persists as a variant that is well suited to the asymmetrical contests of Internet-mediated dialogue, providing an attractive authoritarian regime type in the contemporary sociotechnical environment facing anti-neoliberal leaders in international politics.

Statistical Findings

Results comparing the difference of means between Russia and the rest of the world (Figure 6.1) yielded a series of interesting non-findings. In sum, none of the Russian indicators for each of the nineteen variables analyzed were statistically distinct from global mean figures. As such, a number of variables yielded data that indirectly dovetails with the above qualitative analysis of the Putin state.

Perhaps the most important observation from the Russian data is that Internet penetration in 2013 Russia covers over two-thirds of the population. This paradoxically supports and challenges the aforementioned assertion that most Russians are "in proximity" to Internet connection (Rose 2006, 11). In this way, such a statement is true in that so many Russians are online and that there is a very large urban population of over 100 million. However, the idea of the masses being "in proximity" to Internet is also misleading because it implies that there is a serious disconnect between the data and qualitatively observed trends or usership and connectivity. That said, across the ICT variables, there are also high figures for Russia, a finding consistent with the overall trend in the country embracing cyberspace as an area for national

security and national identity. This is similarly expressed in the low VoiceAccountable rating

for Russia, a statistic in alignment with the dangerous media opposition environment created by

the Putin regime.

Related to these media and technology findings are the corruption statistics that would be

expected to describe much of modern Russia. Here, Russian data rank low on the indicator

scales of both CorruptControl and CPI. However, these data raise an important question to be

considered in context of the analyses of this chapter: to what extent are these variables – at least

for countries like Russia – influenced by citizen support for a corrupt leader (Putin)? Pure,

democratic approval of Putin is a substantial element of the current governing regime in Russia

and likely legitimizes otherwise corrupt practices to the fully enfranchised citizenry, especially if

branded directly in connection with populist leadership. Such a line of inquiry further highlights

the extent to which corruption can be both difficult to measure and difficult to root out in society,

as metrics can be closely influenced by socioeconomic perceptions, popular policy, and the high

rates of economic growth as experienced by the post-Soviet era Russians and Chinese as

analyzed in this thesis.

CHAPTER 7- DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overview of Research Findings

This thesis –through statistical analysis and policy-focused case study – presents a series of findings that deepen the understanding of populism in an age increasingly connected by digital media infrastructure. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these research takeaways is the rejection of the hypothesis arguing a meaningful difference in Internet connectivity rates between populist and non-populist states. That said, it is also important to emphasize that Internet connectivity may complement the development of corruption as seen in its influence on fomenting cultures of corruption in countries around the world (see Chapters 3-6). Given that populism is cultivated and sustained through substantial corruption, the relationship between Internet and populism – though insignificant in statistical testing – is noteworthy for its indirectly powerful influence on authoritarian governments around the world. From these takeaways, the unsupported hypothesis is consistent with research adhering to intellectual perspectives which clearly delineate the Internet's lack of influence in directly generating democratic and liberalizing sociopolitical change (see Chapter 2).

The emergence of corruption as a central tenet of modern populist rule as expressed by both statistical results (see Chapter 3) and case study findings (see Chapters 4-6) yields greater insight into the role of information technology in the contemporary populist landscape. Here, the affordances and externalities of ICT are directly related to corruption within many states. This technology-driven effect is such that populist leaders like Chavez and Putin have identified and implemented policies which take advantage of these ICT-generated benefits by rapidly recreating

media discourse around the central figure of their leadership. As a result, the use of ICT in a political context can polarize debate in a society so a truly populist leader comes into power.

Among the three case studies discussed in this thesis, there are interesting and culturally-related differences in how the corruption-driven, ICT-supported development of populism manifests itself in a given social context. Here, Venezuela and Russia, two countries whose statistics place them within the global mainstream in Internet penetration, have populist societies that are built along similar cultural foundations. Venezuela is the current vanguard of *caudillo*-led populism (see Chapters 2 and 4), while Russia under Putin is a contemporary take on Soviet political tradition (see Chapter 6. Additionally, China under Mao was also constructed in much the same way, as Mao held emperor-esque power over China while simultaneously decrying the excesses of the imperial, dynastic era. Today, however, the political framework in China is centered on the Communist Party once led by Mao (as opposed to a single individual like Mao), making its form of populism tied to an dual image of Mao's commitment of Chinese nationalism and the later promise of state-promoted economic prosperity.

As such, these countries' populist models stand out not only for their particular policy choices but also for the cultures in which populism smoothly entered into political practices. Here, Venezuela, upholding a long tradition of populist states in Latin America, and China, the ancient civilization transforming Western political concepts like populism and sovereignty with indigenous sociocultural norms, are vanguards (see Chapters 4-5), as they represent the range of unique governance styles among populist states, from symbolism-driven regimes in Venezuela (Simon Bolivar) and China (Mao Zedong) to legitimized gangs operating under a godfather (Vladimir Putin) in Russia. Russian iteration of populism is further highlighted by the extent to

which corruption is a major influencer in the rise, consolidation, and persistence of populist power in the Kremlin because its opacity legitimizes a democratically elected government while preserving political interests supporting a government organized in a mafia structure (see Chapter 6).   From this, the thesis concludes that the three case studies of Venezuela, China, and Russia show multiple sustainable applications of populism within distinctly different sociocultural contexts.

Areas of Comparison

Corruption

The principal conclusion from this thesis is that corruption, the use of public official power for private interests (Worldwide Governance 2013), is a potent underlying characteristic that allows populism to flourish to the extent that it dominates regimes across the globe. However, the manifestation of such endemic levels of corruption is not tied to a lack of economic development or the implementation of a particular state ideology in a linear fashion. Indeed, corruption may come hand in hand with economic and technological development – as seen through the lenses of Internet penetration and ICT trade data (see Chapters 3-6) – as a result of a conducive mix of sociocultural influences. Among these influences, history plays an important role in establishing the corruption bases of populist states. In each of the case study countries, as historical developments dating back to foundational eras of each contemporary society (as discussed in Chapters 4-6) form powerful images establishing a legitimate transition to and continued governance under populism.

Venezuela has experienced Chavismo in power for nearly two decades in large part due to its historically significant position within the Latin American experience. Here, the image of

Simon Bolivar – the most famous of the liberating generals who gave Spanish America its independence – is useful and influential because it immediately signals a high degree of national pride and personal connection associated with the populism brand attributed to Latin America. At the same time, corruption is similarly a defining characteristic of society as a whole. As such, Chavismo clearly displays the nexus between corruption and populism through its electioneering promises of redistributing lucrative oil wealth to lower and middle class communities (see Chapters 2 and 4). This political priority reflects the reality that socioeconomic class conflict is exacerbated to create a successfully bipolar political discourse that emphasizes and empowers populism.

China faces the opposite political pressures from Venezuela with regards to populism. Here, a revolutionary and innovative populist – Mao Zedong – created the centerpiece of modern Chinese political culture (namely himself and his wariness/disdain towards the West and towards pre-Communist China). Mao is also a critical actor in contemporary Chinese politics because he nearly upended the legitimacy of this regime structure due to the socioeconomic and cultural chaos of his later years in power. This history lies at the center of all political issues in modern China, and corruption is no exception. In following his rhetoric and style as an example, ruling elites thus hold an uneasy relationship with combatting corruption because of the diametrically opposed priorities of supporting shadowy and illicit, albeit culturally established, business networks while promoting transparent avenues of innovation for future growth. At the same time, Mao's commitment to reinforcing class consciousness presents current Chinese leaders with greater challenges as they struggle to earn public support for a nominally Communist regime in a country where the negative aspects of a more open, capitalist economy, such as

income inequality, have rapidly arrived to an environment conditioned to the benefits of socialist protections for lower and middle class citizens (Freeman and Yuan 2011, Tai 2015, Nadiri 2007). As a result, it is no surprise that populist politics among Chinese leaders centers on anti-corruption campaigns much like those championed so colorfully by Bo Xilai (see Chapter 5).

The Russian case in particular presents a close-up view of the sociopolitical role corruption plays in state function. Here, corruption is a main ingredient for the Putin regime to work at its most basic level, as it is the norm structure driving a unique political structure: the mafia state. This sociopolitical construction, with Putin firmly in position as the boss of Russia, is supported by the "dual state" model of open democratically elected government and de facto dictatorship, corruption, and violent intimidation in policymaking (Wegren 2013, 33) is vital to maintaining the attractiveness of the Putin populist regime in the eyes of the voting public. This pattern is followed especially in the media space, an area of considerable state commitment towards promoting corrupt practices that are essential for the political legitimacy of Putin and his government.

Other Important Political Activity

The scope of political structure and participation in populist states is such that populist leaders survive and thrive in power because they have a consistently strong electoral base of support (Dimitrov 2008). However, I have shown that this phenomenon can take place in a wide range of states with drastically different cultures and different leadership personalities. While the study outlines key characteristics necessary for populist leadership and political control, legitimate political activity in such states is generally one in which public opinion takes center stage, even in cases where the regime is overwhelmingly totalitarian and seemingly disinterested

in the thoughts of the citizenry. Such a phenomenon is not as obvious in more rigidly censored

societies like China; that said, the influence of public opinion there is no less strong as in other

states, particularly due to the high level of opposition-friendly activity that still persists thanks to

Internet-fueled technological affordances from savvy software patches to well established

linguistic code schemes on social media.

The reverence for and manipulation of public opinion is perhaps most clearly witnessed

in contemporary Venezuela. Here, the rise of Chavismo reflects the Latin American populist

tradition very closely, as an emphasis on direct citizen participation is supporting an heir to

Simon Bolivar, the founder of modern South America and the populist tradition that defines

much of the political culture of the region (see Chapter 2). Under Chavismo, this is implemented

through frequent plebiscites organized with the knowledge, and motivational rhetoric, that a firm

majority can ensure a populist victory; these elections are exponential in impact, with each vote

delivering the Chavez regime more legitimacy than the last. However, the death of Chavez

himself, the cornerstone of the Chavismo government, has brought the use of democratic

processes to support Chavista legitimacy – particularly that of President Nicolas Maduro – into

serious question. It remains to be seen (and should thus be researched further) whether this

trend, which is in its infancy at the time of this writing but nonetheless includes the weakening of

populist in other key Latin American states, will substantially impact the cultural propensity

towards populism in the region (Sabatini 2015).

Russia's governing structure supports a similar setup, as evidenced by repeated Putin

electoral wins. Success at the polls is further solidified through a regime-wide emphasis

outlining democratic processes and an appearance of commitment in the rule of law. That said,

the influence of corruption as a component of Russian political culture is such that results are consistently manipulated, as much through manipulating candidate/party percentage as through tactical techniques such as skewing votes in a manner that appears reasonable to the public (e.g. setting a Putin victory with 50-60% of the vote rather than an inflated total of over 90%) (White and McAllister 2013). Here, Putin's legitimacy relies significantly on the ability to maintain a façade of freedom and citizen empowerment in a way that shows how mafia-style actions deliver positive results for the regime by mixing corruption with a healthy respect for general voter sentiment (see Chapter 6).

China, on the other hand, displays substantially different characteristics. Consistent with the collectivist nature of Chinese society, the government in China presents itself through the legitimate power of a singular institution: the Communist Party. This informs the cautious attachment to history currently employed by the leadership, as the presence of figures like Mao in the sociocultural development of modern China is instrumental to understanding contemporary realities in the country. Such influences contribute to a tightly organized system of censorship and authoritarianism that has translated itself powerfully online (see Chapter 5). As a result, the Party is perhaps more keenly aware of public opinion than its more democratic populist counterparts in Venezuela and Russia.

Protecting Regime Interests Online

In this sociopolitical context, the Internet has emerged as a central battleground for winning hearts and minds, as well as expanding the scope of national political discourse in states around the world. This phenomenon is particularly acute in populist states, for populist leaders have adapted their charismatic styles into digitally effective techniques thanks to the great fit

between short posting requirements (e.g. the 140 character limit on Twitter) and the populist penchant for insults and other aggressive one-liners. In a new reality, populist and authoritarian states are now equipped with a wide variety of methods to control Internet speech, ranging from advanced software systems (e.g. Green Dam in China – see Chapter 5) and telecommunications infrastructure to intelligence-style agencies dedicated to swaying online public opinion in a pro-regime direction (e.g. Chavista cyber-warriors, pro-Putin bloggers, and the "50 Cent Party" in China – see Chapters 4-6).

The Venezuelan populist case presents an overview of what is likely the most popular manifestation of Internet speech influence in Western-style democracies: the social media-fueled campaign. Here, attacks supported by pithy sound bites are highly effective in bolstering the electoral power of a given politician. These norms, best suited for a bullying persona like that of Chavez, have developed in parallel to the massive diffusion of data access and digital expression opportunities afforded by the Internet. In particular, the affordances of online tools like Twitter benefit such an antagonistic political style, and it is thus fitting that Chavez was one of the world's most influential Twitter users during his tenure leading Venezuela (Greitens 2013).

China and Russia, on the other hand, have leaderships that devote more resources towards actively censoring content than crafting manipulative campaign strategies to win elections; it is important to note, however, that Putin has also engaged in rhetorical political strategy to create electorally potent imagery such as the aforementioned "One Like Putin" music video (see Chapter 6). This is especially the case in China, where the Communist Party has identified control of public speech as a major priority; interestingly, this current emphasis bears remarkable similarities to the aggressive censorship campaigns from the former Party leader Mao

Zedong himself (see Chapter 5). The potentially empowering nature of online media for Chinese citizenry has only further cemented the concern to keep the Party in power as it faces cyber threats to its legitimacy, from well-equipped private hackers to well-connected groups of anti-Party sympathizers, that are larger and faster than ever. Because of this threat, China has developed a broad scope of censorship capabilities, where massive investments in blocking and filtering content has ranged from human censors to advanced software to employing strategic content promoters like the "50 Cent Party" (Yang, Yang, and Wilson 2015). Conversely, Russian Internet is a sociotechnical arrangement that splits potential opposition blocs naturally because of the cultural influence that encourages joining only those digital networks frequented by likeminded users likely of similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. At the same time, mafia censorship scares many potential netizen activists from starting discussions for fear of dangerous consequences.

Implications and Future Research

The themes raised in this thesis invite a series of questions analyzing the impact of information technology on regimes in international politics. The inclusion of diverse case study countries similarly underscores distinct responses to policy challenges such as populism and technological implementation in society. From this, larger subjects – from the nature of populism today to sociopolitical institutions in the twenty-first century to the impacts of globalization and Internet policy on society at large – help contextualize the research findings in this thesis. It is clear that, based on the statistical analysis results alone, populism is a politically viable force around the world. The case studies of Russia, China, and Venezuela presented here show how such a revolutionary political style can adapt itself quickly into the cultural context of

very different states. This is further evident in a cursory analysis of other countries in the present

day.

For many around the world, populism – a political style emphasizing the power of the

masses over an unfairly ruling elite – is thus increasingly personified not in the aforementioned

politicians of the case study countries but in an American presidential candidate: Donald Trump.

Although his candidacy and campaign lie outside the scope of this particular thesis, news

analysis and political research have shown that Trump uses many of the techniques outlined in

the case studies of three international populists, with a caustic propensity to insult via Twitter

large that exemplifies Chavista media manipulation (Quealy 2016 and see Chapter 4). In

addition, he has even acknowledged familiarity, similarity, and a potential affinity towards other

influential populists like Vladimir Putin (Miller 2015). From a research perspective, this begs

for more intensive analysis of populism in the present day, a challenge that would require further

scrutiny of populism variable coding matrix (see Appendix) as well as access to data from 2015

and beyond.

The implications raised by this analysis also extend themselves to elements of society

beyond political campaigning. Here, the strength of corruption variables in helping to explain

populist occurrences is worthy of further study. This is especially the case when observing key

economic indicators. The analysis clearly shows that countries that have "resource curses" like

Venezuela and Russia can be susceptible to corrupt and connected states where the benefits of

technology-fueled growth accrue to increasingly authoritarian leaders due to the greater

empowerment of dictators when armed with more advanced information about their societies as

provided by ICTs. In this way, the impact of powerful, fast-acting, wide-reaching, and

economically beneficial sociotechnical tools lies not in a technologically deterministic approach

emphasizing how particular technologies change sociopolitical calculations, but rather in

research examining affordance-driven approaches to international political strategy when faced

with new innovations.

FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Factor Analysis by Components and Factor Loadings					
1: Sociotechnical	2: Populist	3: Ancillary Sociotechnical	4: Modern Urban	5: Offline Social	6: Economic
CorruptControl (0.95) **CPI** (0.94) **RuleOLaw** (0.94) **GovtEffective** (0.91) **RegulatoryQ** (0.89) **Voice-Accountable** (0.86) **Fixed-Broadband** (0.85) **Servers** (0.84) **Ipy** (0.78)	**Total-PopScore** (0.98) **Populism** (0.95) **Pop-Culture** (0.88) **PopLdr** (0.86)	**Telephone** (0.98) **Urban-Population** (0.97) **High-techexports** (0.94)	**Mobile-Sub** (0.86) **Urban-Percent** (0.67)	**Labor-Force** (-0.84) **PolStab-Violence** (0.70)	**Unemployment** (0.93)
Variables without simple structure: ICTServiceExports (0.36, Component 1), ICTimports (0.49, Component 3)					
Extraction: Principal Components Rotation: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, converged in 5 iterations					

Figure 3.2: Correlation Matrix *= $p \leq 0.10$ ** $p \leq 0.05$ *** $p \leq 0.01$				
VARIABLE	Populism	TotalPopScore	PopLdr	PopCulture
CPI	-0.18**	-0.18**	-0.16**	-0.16**
CorruptControl	-0.19**	-0.18**	-0.15**	-0.16**
GovtEffective	-0.13*	-0.13*	-0.14*	-0.09*
RuleOLaw	-0.16**	-0.15*	-0.14*	-0.12*
VoiceAccountable	-0.12*	-0.13*	-0.15**	Not Sig.
PolStabViolence	-0.17**	-0.16**	-0.15*	-0.13*

Figure 3.3: Correlation Matrix (Independent Variables) * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$					
VARIABLE	CPI	Corrupt-Control	RuleOLaw	Voice-Accountable	PolStab-Violence
Ipy	0.78**	0.79**	0.83**	0.66**	0.31**
FixedBroadband	0.79**	0.80**	0.82**	0.73**	0.30**
Servers	0.72**	0.74**	0.72**	0.63**	0.27**
MobileSub	0.42**	0.41**	0.48**	0.39**	0.22**
ICTServiceExports	0.26**	0.27**	0.32**	0.36**	Not Sig.
Hightechexports	0.20*	0.19*	0.19*	Not Sig.	Not Sig.
ICTimports	0.41**	0.40**	0.44**	0.38**	Not Sig.

Figure 3.4: Regression Model Results (Dependent Variable: CPI)			
Variable	B	beta	Significance
Ipy	0.28	0.42	$p \leq 0.01$
FixedBroadband	0.32	0.19	$p \leq 0.08$
Servers	0.01	0.30	$p \leq 0.01$
Overall Model	n=168	$R^2 = 0.68$	$p \leq 0.01$

Figure 3.5: Regression Model Results (Dependent Variable: CorruptControl)			
Variable	B	beta	Significance
Ipy	0.01	0.41	$p \leq 0.01$
FixedBroadband	0.02	0.19	$p \leq 0.08$
Servers	0.001	0.33	$p \leq 0.01$
Overall Model	n=168	$R^2 = 0.71$	$p \leq 0.01$

Figure 3.6: Difference of Means Test (Factor: TotalPopScore)					
Variable	Full Populist Mean	Populist Mean	Nonpopulist Mean	F	Sig.
HightechExports	5149900000	39280000000	15430000000	2.47	$p \leq 0.09$
CPI	37.92	38.97	45.65	2.91	$p \leq 0.058$
CorruptControl	-0.33	-0.29	0.07	2.98	$p \leq 0.054$
PolStabViolence	-0.37	-0.34	-0.03	2.39	$p \leq 0.096$

Figure 3.7: ANOVA (Factor: TotalPopScore)- Bonferroni Post Hoc Results		
Variable	Mean Difference (Full Populism/No Populism)	Sig.
CPI	7.73	$p \leq 0.094$
CorruptControl	0.40	$p \leq 0.09$

Figure 3.8: Independent Samples T-test (Grouping Variable: Populism)					
Variable	Non-Populist Mean	Populist Mean	t	df	Sig.
Unemployment	7.47	9.11	-1.80	166	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.074$)
CPI	45.65	38.36	2.41	166	$p \leq 0.02$
CorruptControl	0.07	-0.31	2.44	166	$p \leq 0.02$
GovtEffective	0.05	-0.20	1.66	166	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.99$)
RegulatoryQ	0.06	-0.22	1.82	166	Approaching Sig ($p \leq 0.71$)
RuleOLaw	-0.01	-0.32	2.04	166	$p \leq 0.05$
PolStabViolence	-0.33	-0.36	2.19	165	$p \leq 0.04$
Ipy	43.30	37.59	1.26	166	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	11.42	9.08	1.26	166	Not Sig.
Servers	278.20	192.45	1.07	166	Not Sig.
MobileSub	102.14	103.27	-0.18	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.11	19.30	-0.43	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	6030495.67	7251376.33	-0.32	166	Not Sig.
HightechExports	15430000000	18580000000	-0.28	116	Not Sig.
ICTimports	4.52	4.69	-0.22	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPercent	57.61	56.90	0.20	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	111426050	57903713.30	0.99	144	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	19166817.30	25760650.20	-0.61	165	Not Sig.
VoiceAccountable	-0.56	-0.30	1.61	166	Not Sig

Figure 3.9: Independent Samples T-test (Grouping Variable: PopLdr)					
Variable	Non-Populist Mean	Populist Mean	t	df	Sig.
CPI	44.40	38.03	2.02	166	$p \leq 0.05$
CorruptControl	-0.003	-0.33	2.00	166	$p \leq 0.05$
GovtEffective	0.31	-0.25	1.78	166	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.078$)
RegulatoryQ	0.36	-0.27	1.96	166	$p \leq 0.06$
RuleOLaw	-0.05	-0.35	1.84	166	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.067$)
VoiceAccountable	-0.06	-0.38	1.99	166	$p \leq 0.05$
PolStabViolence	-0.08	-0.39	1.94	165	$p \leq 0.055$
Ipy	42.62	36.82	1.23	166	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	11.10	8.84	1.18	166	Not Sig.
Servers	266.13	184.06	0.99	166	Not Sig.
MobileSub	103.07	102.07	0.15	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.73	18.65	0.03	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	828514.37	3810127.15	1.44	131.035	Not Sig.
HightechExports	20590000000	11330000000	0.82	116	Not Sig.
ICTimports	4.56	4.67	-0.13	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPercent	57.33	57.14	0.05	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	97926023.80	63111127.40	0.61	144	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	26136409.60	16084351.20	0.90	165	Not Sig.

Figure 3.10: Independent Samples T-test (Grouping Variable: PopCulture)					
Variable	Non-Populist Mean	Populist Mean	t	df	Sig.
Servers	288.21	160.70	1.674	165.993	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.096$)
CPI	44.63	38.35	2.03	166	$p \leq 0.05$
CorruptControl	0.01	-0.32	2.14	157.968	$p \leq 0.04$
PolStabViolence	-0.09	-0.35	1.76	158.75	Approaching Sig. ($p \leq 0.081$)
Ipy	41.18	39.48	0.38	159.545	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	11.03	9.17	1.016	159.38	Not Sig.
MobileSub	100.64	105.65	-0.79	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.10	19.57	-0.52	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	5658008.92	8033528.74	-0.62	166	Not Sig.

Figure 3.10: Independent Samples T-test (Grouping Variable: PopCulture)					
Variable	Non-Populist Mean	Populist Mean	t	df	Sig.
HightechExports	18450000000	15350000000	0.28	116	Not Sig.
ICTimports	4.41	4.88	-0.60	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPercent	57.24	57.30	-0.02	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	97563549.2	67341822.5	0.54	144	Not Sig.
Unemployment	7.67	9.16	-1.61	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	18184560.9	28548253.8	-0.94	165	Not Sig.
GovtEffective	-0.002	-0.18	1.11	166	Not Sig.
RegulatoryQ	0.01	-0.20	1.37	166	Not Sig.
RuleOLaw	-0.06	-0.31	1.61	159.39	Not Sig.
VoiceAccountable	-0.11	-0.27	1.03	166	Not Sig.

Figure 4.1: Difference of Means Testing (Venezuela, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	Venezuela	t	df	Sig.
Ipy	40.48	54.90	-0.49	166	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	10.26	7.35	0.24	166	Not Sig.
Servers	235.84	11.13	0.43	166	Not Sig.
MobileSub	102.70	101.61	0.03	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.70	13.36	0.30	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	6633669.00	7773777.00	-0.05	166	Not Sig.
HightechExports	17060000000.00	18092984.00	0.29	116	Not Sig.
ICTimports	4.60	4.19	0.08	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPercent	57.27	88.89	-1.40	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	85764655.90	1013786.00	0.26	144	Not Sig.
Unemployment	8.28	7.5	0.13	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	22404507.70	26913587.00	-0.07	165	Not Sig.
CPI	42.05	20	1.11	166	Not Sig.

Figure 4.1 (Continued): Difference of Means Testing (Venezuela, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	Venezuela	*t*	df	Sig.
CorruptControl	-0.12	-1.28	1.14	166	Not Sig.
GovtEffective	-0.07	-1.14	1.06	166	Not Sig.
RegulatoryQ	-0.08	-1.64	1.59	166	Not Sig.
RuleOLaw	-0.16	-1.79	1.64	166	Not Sig.
VoiceAccountable	-0.18	-0.95	0.77	166	Not Sig.
PolStabViolence	-0.19	0.22	-0.42	165	Not Sig.

Figure 5.1: Difference of Means Testing (China, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	China	*t*	df	Sig.
Ipy	40.48	45.80	-0.18	166	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	10.26	13.63	-0.28	166	Not Sig.
Servers	235.84	3.87	0.45	166	Not Sig.
MobileSub	102.70	88.71	0.35	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.70	34.56	-0.89	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	6633669.00	266985000.00	-18.72	166	*p*<0.01
HightechExports	17060000000.00	560058000000.00	-16.87	116	*p*<0.01
ICTimports	4.60	20.54718938	-3.31	166	*p*<0.02
UrbanPercent	57.27	53.168	0.18	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	85764655.90	256908.00	0.26	144	Not Sig.
Unemployment	8.28	4.6	0.62	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	22404507.70	721691798.00	-16.03	165	*p*<0.01
CPI	42.05	40.00	0.10	166	Not Sig.

Figure 5.1 (Continued): Difference of Means Testing (China, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	China	t	df	Sig.
CorruptControl	-0.12	-.357063204	0.23	166	Not Sig.
GovtEffective	-0.07	-.029019397	-0.05	166	Not Sig.
RegulatoryQ	-0.08	-0.3	0.22	166	Not Sig.
RuleOLaw	-0.16	-0.46	0.29	166	Not Sig.
VoiceAccountable	-0.18	-1.58	1.40	166	Not Sig.
PolStabViolence	-0.19	-.546183765	0.36	165	Not Sig.

Figure 6.1: Difference of Means Testing (Russia, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	*Russia*	t	df	Sig.
Ipy	40.48	67.97	-0.93	166	Not Sig.
FixedBroadband	10.26	16.62	-0.53	166	Not Sig.
Servers	235.84	51.13	0.36	166	Not Sig.
MobileSub	102.70	152.84	-1.25	166	Not Sig.
ICTServiceExports	18.70	32.25	-0.76	165	Not Sig.
Telephone	6633669.00	40473148.00	-1.39	166	Not Sig.
HightechExports	17060000000.00	8655776675.00	0.14	116	Not Sig.
ICTimports	4.60	6.84	-0.45	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPercent	57.27	73.85	-0.73	166	Not Sig.
LaborForce	85764655.90	3131976.00	0.25	144	Not Sig.
Unemployment	8.28	5.6	0.45	166	Not Sig.
UrbanPopulation	22404507.70	105981289.00	-1.20	165	Not Sig.
CPI	42.05	28	0.71	166	Not Sig.

Figure 6.1 (Continued): Difference of Means Testing (Russia, Rest of World)					
Variable	Global Mean	*Russia*	*t*	df	Sig.
CorruptControl	-0.12	-1.00	0.86	166	Not Sig.
GovtEffective	-0.07	-0.36	0.28	166	Not Sig.
RegulatoryQ	-0.08	-0.37	0.30	166	Not Sig.
RuleOLaw	-0.16	-0.78	0.62	166	Not Sig.
VoiceAccountable	-0.18	-1.01	0.83	166	Not Sig.
PolStabViolence	-0.19	0.12	-0.33	165	Not Sig.

APPENDIX

Populism Variables Coding Data

Populism Variable Coding Matrix				
Country	*PopLdr*	*PopCulture*	*Populism*	*TotalPopScore*
Afghanistan	1	1	1	2
Albania	0	0	0	0
Algeria	1	0	1	1
Angola	0	0	0	0
Argentina	1	1	1	2
Armenia	1	1	1	2
Australia	0	1	1	1
Austria	0	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0
Bahamas, The	0	0	0	0
Bahrain	0	0	0	0
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0
Barbados	0	0	0	0
Belarus	1	1	1	2
Belgium	0	0	0	0
Benin	0	0	0	0
Bhutan	0	0	0	0
Bolivia	1	1	1	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	1	2
Botswana	1	1	1	2
Brazil	1	1	1	2
Brunei Darussalam	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	0
Burundi	1	1	1	2
Cambodia	0	0	0	0
Cameroon	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0	0
Cabo Verde	0	0	0	0
Central African Republic	0	0	0	0
Chad	1	0	1	1
Chile	0	0	0	0
China	0	1	1	1
Colombia	0	0	0	0
Comoros	0	0	0	0

Populism Variable Coding Matrix (Continued)				
Country	*PopLdr*	*PopCulture*	*Populism*	*TotalPopScore*
Costa Rica	0	0	0	0
Cote d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0
Croatia	0	0	0	0
Cuba	1	1	1	2
Cyprus	0	1	1	1
Czech Republic	1	1	1	2
Congo, Dem. Rep.	1	0	1	1
Denmark	1	1	1	2
Djibouti	0	0	0	0
Dominica	0	0	0	0
Dominican Republic	0	0	0	0
Ecuador	1	1	1	2
Egypt, Arab Rep.	1	1	1	2
El Salvador	0	0	0	0
Equatorial Guinea	1	0	1	1
Eritrea	0	0	0	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0
Ethiopia	0	0	0	0
Finland	1	1	1	2
France	0	0	0	0
Gabon	0	0	0	0
Gambia, The	1	1	1	2
Georgia	0	0	0	0
Germany	0	0	0	0
Ghana	0	0	0	0
Greece	0	1	1	1
Guatemala	0	0	0	0
Guinea	0	0	0	0
Guinea-Bissau	0	0	0	0
Guyana	0	0	0	0
Haiti	1	1	1	2
Honduras	0	1	1	1
Hungary	1	1	1	2
Iceland	0	0	0	0
India	0	0	0	0
Indonesia	0	1	1	1
Iran, Islamic Rep.	0	0	0	0
Iraq	1	0	1	1
Ireland	0	0	0	0
Israel	1	1	1	2
Italy	0	1	1	1

Populism Variable Coding Matrix (Continued)				
Country	*PopLdr*	*PopCulture*	*Populism*	*TotalPopScore*
Jamaica	1	0	1	1
Japan	0	0	0	0
Jordan	0	0	0	0
Kazakhstan	1	1	1	2
Kenya	1	1	1	2
Korea, Dem. Rep.	1	1	1	2
Korea, Rep.	1	0	1	1
Kuwait	0	1	1	1
Kyrgyz Republic	0	1	1	1
Lao PDR	0	0	0	0
Latvia	0	0	0	0
Lebanon	0	0	0	0
Lesotho	0	1	1	1
Liberia	0	0	0	0
Libya	0	1	1	1
Lithuania	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0
Madagascar	1	0	1	1
Malawi	1	1	1	2
Malaysia	1	1	1	2
Mali	1	0	1	1
Mauritania	1	1	1	2
Mauritius	0	0	0	0
Mexico	0	0	0	0
Moldova	0	0	0	0
Mongolia	1	1	1	2
Montenegro	0	0	0	0
Morocco	0	1	1	1
Mozambique	0	0	0	0
Myanmar	0	1	1	1
Namibia	1	0	1	1
Nepal	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	0	0	0	0
New Zealand	0	0	0	0
Nicaragua	1	1	1	2
Niger	0	0	0	0
Nigeria	0	1	1	1
Norway	0	1	1	1
Oman	0	0	0	0
Pakistan	1	1	1	2
Panama	1	1	1	2

Populism Variable Coding Matrix (Continued)				
Country	*PopLdr*	*PopCulture*	*Populism*	*TotalPopScore*
Paraguay	0	0	0	0
Peru	1	1	1	2
Philippines	0	0	0	0
Poland	0	1	1	1
Portugal	0	0	0	0
Qatar	1	1	1	2
Romania	0	1	1	1
Russian Federation	1	1	1	2
Rwanda	0	0	0	0
Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0
Senegal	1	0	1	1
Serbia	1	1	1	2
Seychelles	0	0	0	0
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0
Singapore	1	0	1	1
Slovak Republic	1	1	1	2
Slovenia	1	1	1	2
Somalia	0	0	0	0
South Africa	1	1	1	2
South Sudan	0	0	0	0
Spain	0	0	0	0
Sri Lanka	1	1	1	2
Sudan	1	1	1	2
Suriname	0	0	0	0
Swaziland	0	0	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	1	0	1	1
Syrian Arab Republic	1	0	1	1
Tajikistan	0	0	0	0
Tanzania	1	1	1	2
Thailand	1	1	1	2
Timor-Leste	0	1	1	1
Togo	0	0	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	0	0
Tunisia	0	0	0	0
Turkey	1	1	1	2
Turkmenistan	1	1	1	2
Uganda	1	1	1	2
Ukraine	0	1	1	1
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0	0

Populism Variable Coding Matrix (Continued)				
Country	*PopLdr*	*PopCulture*	*Populism*	*TotalPopScore*
United Kingdom	0	0	0	0
United States	0	0	0	0
Uruguay	1	1	1	2
Uzbekistan	1	1	1	2
Venezuela, RB	1	1	1	2
Vietnam	0	0	0	0
Yemen, Rep.	0	1	1	1
Zambia	1	1	1	2
Zimbabwe	1	1	1	2

Sources Consulted for Populism Coding Matrix

Country encodings depicted in the Populism Variable Coding Matrix are derived from a cursory overview of February 2016 Google News page-one search results for the period 2013-2015. It is important to note that some of these sources may have been published slightly earlier/later than this search period but appear in search results because they include elements relevant to populist development during that two year time period. Search terms included "(country name) + populism," "(country name) + populist," "(name of country leader) + populist," and "(name of country leader) + populism." The additional sources below also provided specific pieces of evidence determining variable coding for particular countries in the data set:

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