

ALEKSANDAR MATOVSKI

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA

Associate Professor	2026-
Assistant Professor	2020-2026

Williams College, Department of Political Science, Williamstown, MA

Visiting Assistant Professor	2019-2020
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow	2017-2019

Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Center Associate	2017-
Postdoctoral Fellow	2016-2017

Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA

W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellow and the Bittson National Fellow	2015-2016
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EDUCATION

Cornell University, Department of Government, Ithaca, New York PhD in Government	2015
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M.A. in Government <i>Fields: Comparative Politics and Political Methodology</i>	2012
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King's College London, London, United Kingdom M.A. in War Studies	2004
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Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, North Macedonia B.A. in Law, International Law Major <i>Summa cum Laude</i> , with University Honors	2002
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Additional Training:

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research Summer Program University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan Maximum Likelihood Estimation, Panel Data, Event History, and Time Series Analysis	2009
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NON-ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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

BOOK

Popular Dictatorships: Crises, Mass Opinion and the Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism (Cambridge University Press, 2021)

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

- Reviewed in *Perspectives on Politics* (by Gulnaz Sharafutdinova), *Eurasian Geography and Economics* (by Vladimir Gel’man), *Political Science Quarterly* (by Hannah Chapman) and the *Slavic Review* (by Irina Soboleva).
- Featured as a recommended book in the Ezra Klein Show in the *New York Times* (Nov. 1, 2022 episode interviewing Pippa Norris).

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Articles

“What Drives the Sino-Russian Partnership? Regime Insecurity, Aggressive Overreach, and Authoritarian Great Power Alignment,” *The Pacific Review*. 39(1): 62–93.

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2020. “Strategic Intelligence and International Crisis Behavior” *Security Studies* 29(5): 964-990.

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2018. “It’s the Stability, Stupid! How the Quest to Restore Order After the Soviet Collapse Shaped Russian Popular Opinion.” *Comparative Politics* 50 (2): 347-368.

Non-Peer Reviewed Articles

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2023. “How Putin’s Regime Survivalism Drives Russian Aggression,” *The Washington Quarterly* 46(2): 7-25.

- Lead article

Naimark, Norman M. and Aleksandar Matovski. 2017. “All Quiet on the Balkan Front.” *Hoover Digest*. Winter.

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2013. “The Attitudinal Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism.” *Perspectives on Europe* 43, No.1: 136-140.

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2008. “Introduction: Special Issue on Kosovo and the Perspectives of the Balkan Region,” *Forum Analytica*, Issue 10/11: 4-11.

Ordanoski, Sašo and Aleksandar Matovski. 2008. “Macedonia: A Crisis Nobody Wants to Notice.” *Forum Analytica*, Issue 10/11: 97-109.

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

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2002. “The European Energy Security Policy.” *Euro Dialogue* No. 2: 193-225. (in Macedonian).

Micković, Dejan and Aleksandar Matovski. 2002. “The European Common Foreign and Defense Policy: The Second Pillar of the EU or the Second Pillar of NATO?” *Euro Dialogue* No. 1: 89-141. (in Macedonian).

Peer Reviewed Book Chapters

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2020. “The Logic of Vladimir Putin’s Popular Appeal.” In *Citizens & the State in Authoritarian Regimes: Comparing Russia & China*, edited by Valerie Bunce, Karrie Koesel and Jessica Chen Weiss, 217-249. New York: Oxford University Press.

Non-Peer Reviewed Book Chapters

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2007. “Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans: The View from Macedonia.” In *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and*

Challenges in the Western Balkans, edited by István Gyarmati and Darko Stančić, 99-114. Geneva: Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).

Ordanoski, Sašo and Aleksandar Matovski. 2007. "A Tale of the Two Balkan Models of Conflict Resolution." In *The Balkan Prism: A Retrospective by Policy Makers and Analysts*, edited by Joanna Deimel and Wim van Meurs, 155-168. Munich: Otto Sagner Publishing House.

Working Papers

"When Regime Security is Threatened: Electoral Autocracies, Protest, and International Conflict?"

This article examines the link between the spread of electoral authoritarianism and international conflict. The paper's cross-national analysis finds that electoral autocracies are the regime type most prone to initiate militarized international disputes when challenged by mass protests at home – a phenomenon that has become a major, but still largely underappreciated source of global conflict.

"What Drives the Sino-Russian Partnership? Regime Insecurity, Aggressive Overreach, and Authoritarian Great Power Alignment"

This paper proposes a new framework for analyzing the growing strategic alignment between Russia and China, which emphasizes concerns about regime survival of the Russian and Chinese autocracies as the main drivers of their rapprochement – trumping external threats, geopolitical considerations, and shared ideologies.

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

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

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

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

Book Reviews

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2024. "Dictatorship and Information: Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Communist Europe and China. By Dimitrov, Martin K. Oxford [U.K.] and New York: Oxford University Press, 2023." *Slavic Review*. Vol. 83, Issue 2.

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "How Does the Weak Strongman Stay in Power? Exposing the Roots of Vladimir Putin's Rule in Russia." *Asia Policy* 29, no. 3: 181-185.

Policy Reports and Commentary

"Why Would Putin Invade Ukraine?" *The Washington Post*. Jan. 16, 2022.

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

"Macedonia After Bucharest: Avoiding Another European Failure in the Balkans." *European Union Institute for Security Studies Opinion*. June 13, 2008.

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

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

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

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

RESEARCH GRANTS

Co-Principal Investigator. “Kremlin Influence Operations in Online Spaces.” DoD Minerva Research initiative (with Karrie Koesel, Tim Weninger, Kristina Hook, and Jekatyryna Dunajeva), 2024. (\$400,000).

Principal Investigator. “Trilateral Strategic Competition in a Deteriorating Global Security Environment: Implications for US Integrated Deterrence” (with Covell Meyskens). Naval Research Program, 2024. (\$150,000).

Principal Investigator. “Is the Sino-Russian Military Alliance Solidifying? Implications for U.S. and NATO Integrated Deterrence” (with Covell Meyskens and Alexandra Sukalo). Naval Research Program, 2023. (\$164,350).

Principal Investigator. “Russia’s Strategic Recalibration After the Ukraine Conflict: Implications for the Two Near-Peer Competitors Strategic Environment” (with James Clay Moltz and Alexandra Sukalo). Naval Research Program, 2022. (\$124,990).

Principal Investigator. “Stabilizing Trilateral Deterrence and Great Power Competition in the Wake of the Ukraine Conflict” (with Jeffrey Larsen, James Clay Moltz, and Christopher Twomey). Naval Research Program, 2022. (\$124,610).

Principal Investigator. “Implications of Two Peer Nuclear-Armed Adversaries on U.S. Deterrence Strategy and the Future of Arms Control Agreements” (with Jeffrey Larsen, Mikhail Tsympkin, and Christopher Twomey). Naval Research Program, 2021. (\$205,924).

Principal Investigator. “Regime Survival and Conflict in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes: Russia in Comparative Perspective,” Naval Postgraduate School Research Initiation Program (\$133,872). 2021-2022.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Lieutenant Commander David L. Williams Outstanding Professor Award , Naval Postgraduate School	2024
Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship , American Council of Learned Societies	2014-2015
Sage Fellowship , Department of Government, Cornell University	2008-2009 2013-2014
Mario Einaudi Graduate Fellowship for dissertation field research in Russia, Einaudi Foundation and the Cornell University Institute for European Studies	2012

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

INVITED TALKS AND PODCASTS (last 8 years)

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2024. "What Drives the Sino-Russian Partnership Regime Insecurity, Aggressive Overreach, and the Alignment between Moscow and Beijing," Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University (Oct. 31).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2023. "Popular Dictatorships: How Putin's Strongman Legitimation Fuels Russia's War in Ukraine" Stockholm Institute for Transition Economics (Apr. 17).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "Does Mass Protest Make Electoral Autocracies More Belligerent?" The Postcommunist Politics Workshop, the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, (October 20).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "Popular Dictatorships - Electoral Authoritarianism, Putin's Popularity, the Utility of Crisis, & Domestic Legitimation as a Driver of Russia's invasion of Ukraine." *War in Ukraine: Update from Kyiv*, Flinders University, Australia (podcast, August 7).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "The Drivers of Russian Conduct," presented at the "Rising Autocracy Means Declining Democracy? Impacts to Stability and the International Order" panel at the 2022 U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium, (July 28).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "Putin's Russia and the Challenge of Authoritarianism," presented at the Summer Institute in American Foreign Policy, Williams College (June 28).

Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "The Peril of Elected Strongmen", TEDx Talk, York School, Monterey (May 5).

- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "Putinism, Russian Nationalism and the War in Ukraine," *Religion in Praxis*, Lund University, Sweden, (podcast, April 21).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "The Russian Invasion of Ukraine," the International Center for Advanced & Comparative EU-Russia/NIS Research-Vienna (podcast, March 29).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "The Domestic Sources of Russia's Aggression in Ukraine," presented at the "Ukrainathon: 24-hour Marathon of Expert Lectures on Topics Related to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," PONARS Eurasia, George Washington University (March 16).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2022. "The Potential Market Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War," Center on National Security, Fordham University School of Law (March 4).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2020. "Tracing Russia's (Post-Pandemic) Future: Public Opinion and the Crisis of Late Putinism," presented at the PONARS Eurasia Webinar series, George Washington University, (May 27).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2017. "Can Authoritarianism be 'Popular?' The Case of Russia's Regime Under Vladimir Putin," presented at the Department of Political Science, Colgate University (Nov. 14).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2017. "Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism? Comparative Evidence from Post-Communist Russia," presented at the School of Global and International Studies, Indiana University, (March 27).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2017. "The Logic of Vladimir Putin's Popular Appeal," presented at the *Citizens and the State in Authoritarian Regimes: Comparing Mass Politics and Policy in China and Russia* workshop, University of Notre Dame (March 10-11).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2017. "What Makes Authoritarian Leaders 'Popular?' The Case of Russia's Vladimir Putin," Department of Political Science, Williams College (March 8).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2017. "It's the Stability, Stupid! How the Quest to Restore Order After the Soviet Collapse Shaped Russian Popular Opinion," presented at the *Russia: 25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union* conference, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Stanford University (January 27).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2016. "Does Fear of Instability Sustain Popular Support for Electoral Authoritarianism? Comparative Evidence from Post-Communist Russia," Fellows Seminar, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University (October 5).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2016. "The Lure of Strong-armed Rule: Deconstructing the Popular Appeal of Electoral Authoritarian Regimes," presented at the *Mass Politics, the State and Foreign and Domestic Policy in Russia and China* workshop, Cornell University (Sept. 16).
- Matovski, Aleksandar. 2016. "Popular Dictators: The Attitudinal Roots of Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia and Beyond," presented at the 2015-2016 Glenn-Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellows Paper Presentation Series, Hoover Institution, Stanford University (June 9).

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (p=paper, d=discussant, c=chair)

American Political Science Association (2023/p,c, 2019/p, 2017/p, 2016/p, 2015/p, 2014/p, 2011/p), Midwest Political Science Association (2023/p,d, 2022/p,d, 2015/p, 2013/p,d), Association for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies (2017/p,c), Association for the Study of Nationalities (2019/c), International Studies Association (2013/p), International Conference of Europeanists (2014/p).

TEACHING

Graduate

Instructor: *NS 3401: Contemporary Politics of Russia*. Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School.

Instructor: *NS 3720: European Security Institutions*. Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School.

Instructor *NS 3710: Government and Security in Western Europe*. Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School.

Undergraduate

Instructor (Spring 2020): *PSCI 204: Introduction to Comparative Politics*. Department of Political Science, Williams College.

Instructor (Fall 2019): *PSCI 363: Protest Movements in Global Politics*. Department of Political Science, Williams College.

Instructor (Spring 2018, Spring 2019, Spring 2020): *PSCI 303: Authoritarian Politics*. Department of Political Science, Williams College.

Instructor (Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Fall 2019): *PSCI/RUSSA 286: Russian Politics under Vladimir Putin*. Department of Political Science, Williams College.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE

Academic Associate for the Europe and Eurasia curriculum and certificate programs, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School (2023-present).

Member of the Business Management Committee, National Security Affairs Department, Naval Postgraduate School, (2022-present).

Faculty Search Committee, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School (2021, 2024).

Referee for the *Cambridge University Press*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Nationalities Papers*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Post-Soviet Affairs* and *Slavic Review*.

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

Member of the Editorial Board, *Eurodialogue*, Skopje, North Macedonia (2002).

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The New York Times, Newsweek, The Atlantic, Deutsche Welle (DW), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Al Jazeera, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Christian Science Monitor.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH SKILLS

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

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

AFFILIATIONS

American Political Science Association (APSA)

Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)

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

International Studies Association (ISA)

Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN)