**Appendix:**

***Centre-Province Relations in Personalist Autocracies:***

***Explaining the Emergence and Survival of Powerful Provincial Leaders***

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This appendix contains additional empirical evidence and analyses of provincial leaders in personalist settings who chose to pursue a power-accruing strategy. In the main paper, we perform an in-depth case study of Ramzan Kadyrov’s rule over the Chechen Republic within the Russian Federation. Here, we list and briefly discuss six other examples of power-accruing provincial leaders both from within Russia as well as from other personalist regimes in the Post-Soviet region.

The intention is not to compile a comprehensive list of power-accruing provincial leaders in this region. Neither does the list necessarily represent the most extreme examples of power-accruing officials. Rather the goal is to illustrate the empirical breadth of the group of power-accruing provincial leaders, while at the same time presenting additional empirical evidence for the theoretical claims made in the main article.

In Table 1, we list the examples of power-accruing provincial leaders and score them on each of the three conditional factors highlighted in the theory section of the main paper. This table also gives additional backing to the case choice made in the main document. Only in the chosen case of Ramzan Kadyrov’s Chechnya are all the relevant contextual conditions that we highlight as important explanations for why provincial leaders attempt and succeed with a power-accruing strategy present.

Following this, we briefly discuss all cases (except the Kadyrov case). We focus on how the highlighted conditional factors prompt provincial leaders to follow a power-accruing strategy, how far the provincial leaders go, and, lastly, how the personalist dictators they serve respond to their actions.

Table 1: Examples of power-accruing provincial leaders in personalist dictatorships across the post-Soviet space 1991-2020

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Province characteristics** | **Province tasks** | **Periods in time** | **Outcome** |
|  | *Troublesome province* | *Resource-rich province* | *Oppression and purges* | *Insecure ruler* |  |
| **Russia** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Yury Luzhkov (Moscow, 1992-2010) |  | x |  | x | Challenged president Yeltsin in national politics in the late 1990s. Dismissed in 2010. |
| Vyacheslav Gaizer (Komi, 2010-2015) |  | x |  |  | Ruled his republic as his personal thiefdom. Arrested and jailed. |
| Ramzan Kadyrov (Chechnya, 2004-) | x | x | x | x | Extremely powerful – both in local and national politics. Still in power. |
| **Tajikistan** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rustam Akramzoda (Rudaki, 2018-2020) |  | x |  |  | Economic power accumulation despite explicit warning from President Rahmon. Dismissed in late 2020. |
| **Kyrgyzstan** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Melis Myrzakmatov (Osh, 2009-2013) | x |  | x |  | Very powerful local leader. Resisted pressure from the center for years but lost the battle and and fled the country in 2014. |
| **Uzbekistan** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shukhrat Ganiev (Ferghana, (2011-2020) | x | x |  |  | Strong and unruly provincial leader. Promoted to Deputy PM. |
| **Azerbaijan**  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vasif Talibov (Nakchivan 1997- ) | x |  |  | x | Extremely powerful – both in local and national politics. Still in power. |

Note: The case highlighted in grey (Ramzan Kadyrov) is analyzed in depth in the main paper.

**Yury Luzhkov (Moscow, Russia, 1992-2010)**

Yury Luzhkov was the mayor of Russia’s capital Moscow – which enjoys the status of a federal subject – from 1992 to 2010. He served under three presidents: Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin, and Dmitry Medvedev. Luzhkov emerged as a loyal ally of the first president Boris Yeltsin, with whom he had worked in Moscow’s city administration during the late 1980s. In 1992, Yeltsin appointed him mayor of the Russian capital. Luzhkov quickly proved an effective manager but also one focused on making use of his position to build an independent power base.

In the first part of the 1990s, Moscow became an economic powerhouse. By the late 1990s, the city accounted for 13 percent of Russia's gross national product and 80 percent of its financial resources. That is, Moscow was one of the most resource-rich provinces in the country. Luzhkov used these economic resources to build his own patrimonial regime within Russia. He monopolized political power, controlled information sources, bullied opposition voices and distorted economic activities to his own advantage. Gradually, he also extended his influence beyond the city and established solid political ties to both Russian regions and neighboring countries. That is, gradually, he became a very powerful provincial leader.

Yeltsin initially allowed him to expand his influence within Moscow in exchange for his political support through the tumultuous years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, from around the mid-1990s it became increasingly clear that Luzhkov had greater ambitions. Yeltsin tried to reign him in by slashing economic subsidies to the city, strengthening federal control of coercive forces in the capital, and running slandering campaigns in media controlled by the President. For some years, Yeltsin was able to discipline Luzhkov but he could not demote the influential and widely popular Moscow strongman, who in the 1996 elections was backed by almost 90 percent of voters.

From around 1997, Yeltsin’s health was ailing and it was evident that he was on his way out. Luzhkov seized the moment and openly entered the national stage with one clear goal – becoming the next president of Russia. He increasingly challenged Yeltsin in federal politics while simultaneously extending and solidifying the coalition of supporters around himself. It culminated in late 1998, when he established the Fatherland (*Otechestvo*) movement as a launching pad for a presidential campaign. Luzhkov was very close to actually pulling it off. However, unexpectedly emerged Vladimir Putin. With backing from Yeltsin’s team, he won the presidency in 2000. As Putin consolidated his power, Luzhkov was forced to return to a much more acquiescent strategy. In the first part of the 2000s, he was still a very powerful provincial leader, but the balance had tipped in favor of the center. Gradually he lost power to the center. Unable to defend himself against the whims of President Putin, he turned more and more acquiescent. In 2010, Dmitry Medvedev, Putin’s caretaker president, dismissed the once so powerful man from his post.

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**Vyacheslav Gaizer (Komi Republic, Russia, 2010-2015)**

Vyacheslav Gaizer was appointed head of the Komi republic in Russia in 2010 by then-president Dmitry Medvedev. Komi is a region rich on resources such as oil and gas. Gaizer who at the point of his appointment was a prominent member of the party of power in Russia, *United Russia*, and a member of the Presidium of the State Council. Gaizer – apparently, in cooperation with the former governor of the region, Vladimir Torlopov, who left for a seat in Russia’s upper House, the Federation Council – ruled his province as his personal thiefdom.

Gaizer made sure to deliver the necessary votes to President Putin in 2012 and to the United Russia in parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2015. However, simultaneously he accrued substantial power through his control over the vast resources of his region. According to several sources, the administration under his rule resembled a mafia gang. During his five years in power, he extracted considerable resources from the region and channeled them into his own and his local supporters’ pockets.

After the 2015 Duma elections, President Putin decided to strike at him. He was removed from his position, and he and 18 of his cronies were arrested and in a high-profile case charged with fraud, racketeering and corruption. In 2019, a Moscow court sentenced Gazier to 11 years in prison. Gazier thus represents an example of a provincial leader tempted by high resource availability to accrue economic and political power. Though he professed loyalty to Putin’s regime, he also proved too independent and too greedy. President Putin, seemingly, decided to use him to set an example to other Russian governors. As Gazier had not (yet) developed strong connections to other high-ranking regime members at the national stage, the president could easily replace him.

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**Rustam Akramzoda (Rudaki, Tajikistan, 2018-2020)**

In 2018, Tajikistan’s personalist dictator, Emomali Rahmon, appointed Rustam Akramzoda as head of the Rudaki district just south of the capital Dushanbe. The Rudaki district is the most populous district and most densely populated in the country. Due to massive urbanization, the district has grown in economic importance during the last five years. As a byproduct of migration to the capital, land prices in Rudaki have exploded, allowing for the district’s governor to control who gets access to valuable land and for what price. Thus, the Rudaki district has become a resource-rich province ripe for economic and political power accruement.

Ironically, Akramzoda was appointed after President Rahmon had sacked the former governor for corruption in connection with land sales. As Akramzoda appointed with the explicit mission to clean up the mess in the district, one should expect that he understood the risk associated with following the power-accruing strategy. Nonetheless, he followed the example of his predecessor; he not only gave preferential treatment to relatives, friends, and other people in his network but also generated huge personal profits from illicit land sales during just two years in power of the district. Though Akramzoda did not govern long enough to become truly powerful, and therefore was not difficult for the Tajik President to remove, he illustrates how provincial leaders can be tempted to exploit their position and engage in power accruement, even when they are aware of the high risks associated with doing so.

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**Melis Myrzakmatov (Osh, Kyrgyzstan, 2009-2013)**

The Osh region of Southern Kyrgyzstan has since the dissolution of the Soviet Union been unstable. Located in the borderland between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, tensions between different ethnic groups have been frequent. In the city of Osh, referred to as ‘the capital of the South’, ethnic hostilities between local Kyrgyz and residents from the Uzbek community dominate local politics and economics. As the second largest city in the country, Osh is thus both economically and politically important to control.

In 2009, President Kurmanbek Bakiev, who came to power following the Tulip Revolution in 2005, was tightening his grip on Kyrgyzstan. As part of this consolidation process, he appointed Melis Myrzakmatov as the new mayor of Osh. Bakiev promoted a system of kleptocratic governance based on mafia methods. Also in Osh did Bakiev want more control and more profit. Myrzakmetov was therefore tasked with taking full control of the city. Myrzakmetov disregarded the existing power balance between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz groups in the city, and promoted a Kyrgyz-first policy in both politics and economics. He facilitated takeovers of Uzbek companies, repressed critical voices in the minority community, and – in the process – he made sure that he himself also profited from the redistribution of economic assets. After only a few years, he informally controlled large parts of businesses in the city, the local security forces were subjugated to him personally, and he had become quite popular among the Kyrgyz residents. Thus, the troublesome character of the Osh region in combination with the tasks put before him, in large parts facilitated Myrzakmetov’s power-accrual in those years.

Following Bakiev’s ouster during the 2010 protests, Myrzakmetov managed to hang on, and the power vacuum in Bishkek allowed him to first further consolidate his position. As protests spread to other parts of the country, he used ethnic violence against Uzbeks to mobilize his supporters, and though the provisional, and weak, president, Roza Otunbayeva, opposed this, he speed up the process of economic monopolization. The Uzbeks in Osh had good reasons to resent Myrzakmetov, and they, and fellow Uzbek elites from other parts of the country, lobbied the center for disciplining the powerful provincial leader. Myrzakmetov continued his course unabated. It seems that he saw additional power accrual as the only way to reshuffle proof himself and secure him against retribution from the Uzbek community that he had mistreated.

When Almazbek Atambayev won the 2011 presidential elections, he had his eyes set on the unruly Osh mayor. In the following years, he repeatedly challenged him, but Myrzakmetov’s proved too powerful. Only after Atambayev gained full control of the country’s security forces and was able to also subjugate those forces located in Osh, could he force out Myrzakmetov in late 2013. His supporters protested the dismissal but Atambayev stood firm. Not long after, Myrzakmetov was charged with abuse of power and corruption and he fled the country. In 2015, the Osh City Court sentenced him to seven years in prison in absentia. The power-accruing provincial leader had been defeated.

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**Shukhrat Ganiev (Ferghana, Uzbekistan, 2011-2020)**

In 2011, Uzbekistan’s highly personalist dictator, Islam Karimov, appointed Shukhrat Ganiev governor of the Ferghana Region. Ferghana is the most populous region in Uzbekistan, home to more than a third of the country’s residents. It is also a region of great economic importance with activities centered on large industrial plants, refineries and the important textile industry. Ferghana is also a borderland region with a mixed ethnic composition and a history of both ethnic tensions and border skirmishes with neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Karimov took a tough stand on both terrorism and regional security and expected Governor Ganiev to do the same. The protests and ethnic violence in neighboring Kyrgyzstan during 2010 and 2011, clearly provided Karimov with impetus to tighten his control over the region.

Since his appointment, Ganiev has cracked down hard on alleged terrorist networks, and he has numerous times attracted attention due to harsh rhetoric in connection with ethnic issues. During his years in power, he has consolidated his control over the region. However, unlike some of the other provincial leaders discussed in this appendix, he has not managed to turn his province into a state within the state. He was allowed more leeway from the center and accumulated more power in comparison to other Uzbek governors, but he does not seem to be untouchable.

However, since around 2018, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the personalist ruler who took over after the death of Karimov in 2016, has stepped up attempts to discipline Ganiev. Many pundits expected him to be dismissed during the summer of 2019, but he managed to survive, and in September 2020, he was surprisingly promoted Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the agriculture and food sector. Whether this indicates that Ganiev is growing in influence on the national stage as well, or it is a sign that President Mirziyoyev want to uproot him from his stronghold in the Ferghana region and keep him where he can better monitor his actions remains to be seen.

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**Vasif Talibov (Nakchivan, Azerbaijan, 1997- )**

The Nakchivan Republic is an autonomous exclave of Azerbaijan located within Armenian territory. Nakchivan is the home town of Azerbaijan’s former ruler, Heydar Aliyev, and his son, the present incumbent, Ilham Aliyev. It is not uncommon for personalist dictators to give preferential treatment to their home locations. However, the Nakchivan republic is quite different in this regard, as it is de facto beyond the control of Azerbajian’s leader. Instead, Vasif Talibov, who has headed the region ever since his appointment as Chairman of the Nakchivan Supreme Assembly in 1997, enjoys a near complete monopoly on power.

Talibov was close to Heydar Aliyev and supported him in his rise to power in Azerbaijan. Aliyev in return gave Talibov substantial autonomy given that he secured stability within the troublesome region that saw significant fighting during the Armenian-Azerbaijani hostilities in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Even today, the territory remains contested. For Aliyev, the main goal was to keep the region as part of Azerbaijan whatever the costs.

When Heydar Aliyev faced severe health problems in the beginning of the 2000s and prepared for passing power to his son Ilham Aliyev, Talibov and other influential elites with Nakchivan roots came out in support of the hereditary succession. For Talibov, the succession presented an opportunity to consolidate power within Nakchivan while at the same time securing a stronger say on national politics. Within his region, Talibov emerged as a de facto local dictator. In full control of the security apparatus and the economy, he squashed all opposition and established a repressive and highly personalist regime that has survived ever since. On the national stage, the new incumbent, Ilham Aliyev, was highly dependent on the support of his father’s dominant elites including Talibov, after the successful passing of power in 2003. The powerful provincial leader therefore managed to appoint his own people to surround the new president and to influence appointments to senior posts in the government. Ever since, he has been an important player in the regime and an untouchable despot of his province.

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