

Transition from Socialism to Capitalism of Post-Cold War Countries

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Abstract

This study investigated what factors influenced some former USSR nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1991. The purpose of this study was to explore what factors influenced some former USSR nations to adopt a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR. Through qualitative methodology, a generic approach design was used and addressed what influenced countries and satellite nations that consisted of the USSR to transition from socialism to capitalist focused governments. Policy feedback theory was used to capture knowledge through interviews from participants. Networking with historical societies worldwide was used to recruit potential participants. Participants gave their permission through a signed consent form. After which, interviews were scheduled, where questions that focused on the problem and purpose statements of this study were asked and transcribed. NVivo was used to analyze the data collected through coding academic articles, archived government documents, and results from interviews linking and shaping these into four themes that influenced these nations' transition away from decades of socialist governing to a new territory of a capitalist run government. Results from this study highlighted four themes that include economy, conflict, citizens' rights, and globalization as main contributors and turning point of citizens in these affected countries drive for changes and the persuasion it had on the USSR's administration to embrace a new age of transformation. Two recommendations for practice came from this study; first, would require large governing bodies to have a secondary economic plan on hand. Second, would be to require all nations to be certified on the latest technologies. Future research recommended, creating a similar study among African or Asian countries and what influenced those nations to adopt a capitalist government and expanding to 20 or 30-year period.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For centuries, the world had seen the evolution of kingdoms and rulers of territories blossom into present day countries. This had occurred by either breaking away from a monarchy rule, a larger dominant country, an authoritarian, or communist regime. In addition to these newer nations, there are also countries that have been in existence for decades, if not centuries. One thing all these countries needed was a foundation. A foundation on how it was governed and operated its resources, citizens, and international relations (Brøgger, 2023).

Whether it was an established country or one that had been newly developed from freedom or repression, the choice between governing styles is often an important decision. Each country had its own goals or objectives in place for establishing the right style of government to achieve their short- or long-term ambitions. Time, opportunities, and leadership seem to be the main factors that gauge the success of a country's governing style (Ince, 2022). Finding a governing style is not a set track, a country's success or failure could be affected by wars or conflicts, unexpected economic events, social pressures for change, leadership, and ideological changes (Cheibub, 2022).

The 20th century saw many examples of nations that shifted their politics and established new forms of government through various means. An example comes from what may have once been considered a world dominating superpower, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's (USSR) demise started in its Eastern Bloc (Pashazade 2024), when more than 70 years before the fall of the USSR (Baimenov & Liebert, 2019) it was under the rule of a monarchy. As the USSR continued to grow and dominate, its reach did as well. During the WWII era many countries were modernizing, especially those that were led under a monarchy rule (Hilger, 2021). These

soon to be independent countries saw an opportunity for growth through joining the USSR (Baimenov & Liebert, 2019).

An example of this comes from Vietnam during the 1940's, when it obtained independence from France. North Vietnam was receiving financial support from the Soviet Union. This financial relationship exposed the leadership in Vietnam to strong influences and ideologies of socialism and communism. Since the independence of Vietnam from France, the government chose a socialist style (Hong & Kim, 2021). Even after the Vietnam War, socialism grew even stronger throughout the country (Nguyen & Rahman, 2019). Even though Vietnam experienced financial instability, their leadership remained steadfast that there was no need for a change of their governing style (Nguyen & Rahman, 2019). Though Vietnam was an example of a nation that remained dedicated to its government, not all countries may have been grounded in this style of governing.

Breaking down the information about changing government style is centered around the post-Cold War era (1989–2000) with the fall of the USSR and what economic triggers may have led a country to replace its current government style with a capitalist form of rule. Understanding how these triggers may have influenced a country's transition to capitalism could help trading partners, businesses, world leaders, and citizens to become aware of potential changes and expectations (Segaro & Haag, 2022). Countries had also found that economic, social, and even institutional triggers may have led to the transition into a capitalist style of government (Pashazade 2024). In the 20th century, many countries throughout the world discovered freedom from outdated forms of authoritarian, communist, monarchy, or socialist governance (Hong & Kim, 2021).

After the fall of the USSR, most of the established and newly created countries used this as an opportunity to either choose a form of capitalist government or continue running its country in a socialist format. For nine countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, holding firm to a socialist style of government was their choice of governing (Recepoğlu, 2022). After the dissolution of the USSR, many of these socialist nations were now threatened with poverty, because state assets such as property and businesses become privatized and were seized by reformers for their own gain (Gafurov, 2019).

In addition, corruption was a growing issue in these countries, leading to high levels of poverty and low standards of living (Gafurov, 2019). Though these countries chose to govern in a socialist style right after the dissolution of the USSR, they formed a union referred to as the Commonwealth of Independent Wealth. This union consisted of these nine countries and a few other post-soviet nations (Recepoğlu, 2022). This union was formed to help these countries grow economically, but until the early 2000s, most of these socialist countries were struggling to obtain foreign investment and relied mostly on trade with one another to keep their economies afloat (Ashurov et al., 2020).

Since the advancement of technology and the expansion of global trade partners, many countries have experienced economic prosperity from a capitalist government structure, leading many nations to select this style of governing (Segaro & Haag, 2022). Countries may have turned to a capitalist style of government for better opportunities of joining trade organizations for expansion of exporting and importing globally (Segaro & Haag, 2022). There are unknowns, foremost what factors may cause a government to change back from capitalism to their former style (Boer, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed was what factors influenced some former Soviet nations to adopt and maintain a capitalistic form of government after the fall in 1991 of the USSR, while other former communist bloc countries regressed to a socialist government (Kuntadi & Damayantie, 2022). Those countries that adopted a capitalist government had positive financial outcomes while those other countries did not (Tismaneanu, 2009). Having awareness of these signs could help outside nations, corporations, and international organizations prepare for potential financial impacts on a country, region, and supported industries (Kalai et al., 2023). A study that looked at the countries in the post-USSR could help to provide insights as to what factors may have influenced a change from a socialist state to a capitalist government. Some factors may have included economic woes, disarray from conflict, or the uprising of downtrodden citizens (Lewczuk, 2019; Parrot, 2022). Several countries in Europe that did break away from the USSR found various degrees of economic independence after the Cold War through emerging, sustainable industries, and international investments (Fuchs-Schündeln & Schündeln, 2020; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2023). If this problem was not addressed, there could be a loss of awareness of how these potential triggers fester and expand (Boer, 2023).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this generic qualitative research method was to investigate factors that may have influenced some former USSR nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. There is a need to develop an in-depth understanding of the 27 countries that separated from the former USSR European communist bloc and understand what factors may have influenced 18 of these countries to convert and sustain a capitalist form of government (Geller & Guedes, 2017). These 18 countries include

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

The investigation included archived documents, scholarly articles, and the interview of 17 historians and government officials who stood as specialists or had real world experience on the subjects of this study. Focusing on historical research helped to understand various dynamics that were slowly eating away at the USSR and the encompassed nations. Historical research helped to find events and subjects that may have been defining over the nearly seven decades of the USSR. After identifying these items, further research was performed through National University's online library, other educational journal websites, non-profit Cold War and post-Cold War databases. From this research, questions were created for the interviews that were performed as another source of research.

Introduction to Theoretical Framework

A country's government and how it functions and operates could have critical consequences to its economic health that directly and indirectly influences its citizens (Nirel, 2017). With several factors that may have connections to the economic health of a country, policy feedback theory allows an individual to examine the historical institutional processes of the various countries. Policy feedback theory combines the study of democratic participation and policy design on government created laws (Kopec, 2024). This allowed the assessment as to whether policies are having the intended effects or if they need to be changed to achieve the goal (Soss & Moynihan, 2014).

Drawing on policy feedback theory, the motivation was focusing on nations that shifted from communist form of government to capitalism and what might have been the underlining

motives. Policy feedback theory concepts, such as incentive effects, looked at what the USSR government laws and resources may or may not have provided citizens with; leading to a more cognitive effects, or how they were influencing the populations through positive or negative responses (Campbell, 2020). These two concepts led to the proposition that negative or repressive policies, events, lifestyles enforced upon the population could influence future actions and demands for changes in government. Interviewing scholars and historians who specialize in Cold War and European history during the last decade of the 20th century helped give important insights into policy feedback regarding economic and government functions in these countries prior to transitioning to a capitalist style (Béland & Schlager, 2019). The theoretical framework helped guide the research by focusing on a country and its region's economic health while under its communist governing policies and the factors that helped cause a nation to change to a capitalist style of government enabling it to grow (Pierson, 1993).

To gain a better understanding of this information, the study assessed the evidence and obtained more insight into events that led post-Soviet countries to change to a capitalist style by analyzing the factors in this dissertation. This study covered the time period between the years 1989-2000 and what factors influenced countries in the former Soviet Union to convert to a capitalist style of government. Through relevant scholarly research, interviews, and empirical evidence was used to assess whether factors such as economy, conflict, or even mistreatment of citizens played a decisive role (Şatalan, 2022). When it comes to a capitalist government, the focus was on laws and regulations that allow for a balanced national budget through taxing and building opportunities for privately owned businesses, manufacturing that led to regional and global trade for distribution of goods. Some factors were used to assess if post-Soviet countries

may have found this style of government more profitable, progressive, or even a more stable form of national growth over their previous form of governing (Hilger, 2021).

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

A generic qualitative research method was conducted along with a small purposeful sample design for this study. A small purposeful sample design for this research was particularly suited for this study as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of knowledge and perceptions from a real-world setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A generic qualitative inquiry was most appropriate because information gained from participants' additional research was used to link various parts of this study to a more complete representation (Percy et al., 2015). This included researching archived documents, scholarly articles, and performing interviews (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). In the case of this study, it was accomplished by interviewing historians with structured questions.

Like all qualitative research, generic qualitative inquiry facilitates comprehension as to how people construe, construct, or make sense of their world and experiences (Kahlke, 2014). The generic qualitative study "does not always adhere to the characteristics of a single established methodological tradition," (Ellis & Hart, 2023, p. 1764) nor does an explicit or conventional set of philosophic assumptions that distinguish it from the more conventional qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography (Ellis & Hart, 2023). While the main data collection source was interviews with historians, data also consisted of official government memorandums and academic articles that supplemented interviews.

Sixteen historians from universities and historical societies from across the world were interviewed using a semi-structured set of questions. These interviews were performed through

video messaging services via Zoom or other similar platforms, along with communication through email. In order to achieve the necessary data collection, interviews continued until the saturation needed was achieved. Interviewing historians who specialized in post-Soviet Europe in the last two decades of the 20th century helped facilitate insights and information on events that may have led to changes or creations of capitalist governments. The historians who were targeted for recruitment included those who are general or board members of numerous historical associations, societies, lecturers, and professors around the world. Most board members of these associations or societies tend to be speakers at worldwide historical conferences and university educators that are immersed in the knowledge of this topic.

Interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and were audio recorded. An interview transcript was also emailed to each participant after the interview to provide the participant an optional opportunity to review and correct if desired. Transcript data were auto transcribed during the Zoom video interviews and were manually reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. Transcripts were then uploaded into the NVivo software for thematic development. NVivo was effective to help manage the data from different sources and to reduce human error (Shin & Kwon, 2022).

Research Question

The research question (RQ) below had been created as a roadmap to help find information and answers (Matić, 2022) about this dissertation.

RQ1:

As reported through interviews with historians who specialize in this region, what factors influenced some post-communist European nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991 where others did not?

Significance of Study

An aspect of having a study that looked at past potential economic factors that may have influenced a government's transition to a capitalist government, was being able to learn from other countries and their influencing dynamics. As the famous quote from Winston Churchill's speech to the House of Commons in 1948 goes, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it" (Norris-Tull, 2020, para. 4). As humanity and technology continue to change and advance, economic issues never go away (Markaj & Haxhimustafa, 2024). Conducting a study that focuses on countries in a more modern-day society that experienced a failing economy helped to foretell potential red flags. Whether a country gained independence from a colonial rule or found its established form of governing was becoming obsolete (Ince, 2022), this may help academics and even those in government piece together or foretell potential steps for a transition to a new form of governing.

This study could also help a struggling country understand from prior examples of how a change to a capitalist government could be attractive to foreign investors, (Yuan & Jing, 2024) increase infrastructure, and provide employment opportunities that may not otherwise occur (Brøgger, 2023). The negative impact of not performing this study might have led to not piecing together potential economic factors that may trigger a country to change its governing style. In the past 20 years, Iraq had endured a painful experience for rebuilding its government to a capitalist form (Ali, 2021). Finding leadership and mapping out the steps to achieve this goal had wasted years and financial investments from numerous countries (Altaie et al., 2023). The study may also allow those in the academic and government fields the ability to draw on similarities or understanding what potential failures may have been experienced from countries growing after conflict and help avoid costly failures.

Definition of Key Terms

Capitalism

Government leadership focused on creating and managing laws, policies, regulations that generate revenue, and growth through taxation of business and capital assets (buildings, land, ports, railroads, airfields, etc.) that are owned by individuals and private entities (Goode, 2021).

Citizen's Rights

This could be measured by the treatment of citizens by those in public office (Kyrgyzbayev & Khusanovna, 2022), such as exploiting individuals of a lower class to extract personal wealth, or power and dominance over the population to instill fear or cause uniformity (Egya et al., 2022).

Communism

A form of government where property and economic means were owned by the government focusing on distribution of daily resources (food, housing, goods, and services) among citizens, as a way to eliminate class distinctions (Datsyshen, 2022; Gatea, 2021).

Conflict

Considered an internal or external threat leading to armed forces being deployed to battle with results leading to a country's independence, acquiring land, or other financial growth capabilities (Parrott, 2022).

Economy

A nation's ability to grow monetary capital or gross domestic product. This could happen through various means such as employment, commodities (such as natural and man-made products or services), infrastructure (Durmanov, 2022), trade (exports/imports), growing or

stable currency exchange rates that are used to measure the market value of a country and its economic health (Cervellati et al., 2023).

Foreign Investment

A financial investment from a source outside of the receiving country for terms of obtaining a return more than the initial amount invested (Kalai et al., 2024). These foreign investments are meant to stimulate economic growth in numerous ways to build a country's gross domestic product value.

Government Style

A structured model of administration that looks to expand a country's growth through economic, industrial, legislative, and military means (Landers & Nilsson, 2023).

Policy

The creation of rules, legislation, or regulations proposed by the government with a proactive or reactive purpose to achieve goals or objectives for growth at a local or national level (Moses, 2000).

Post-Soviet

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulting in the separation and creation of 27 countries along with their formation of economies and governments in Eastern Europe (Silagadze & Zubiashvili, 2016).

USSR

(USSR) Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the Soviet Union. It consisted of more than two dozen countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that functioned as a transcontinental communist country (Parrott, 2022).

Summary

In this chapter the problem addressed was that it was unclear what factors influenced some post-Soviet nations who adopted a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. The purpose of this study was to explore what factors influenced some post-Soviet nations to adopt and sustain capitalist governments while others did not. Policy feedback theory was the theoretical framework. Though policy feedback was the framework used, a generic qualitative inquiry was utilized, and semi-structured interviews with historians was the data collection approach. The study was significant in that it may present insights as to what factors influenced the successful and sustained adoption of capitalism and how this had benefited its citizenry. The next chapter consists of the literature search strategy, more detailed information on the theoretical framework, and an extensive literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem addressed was what factors may have influenced a country to change its government structure to a capitalist style (Kuntadi & Damayantie, 2022). The purpose of this study was to report on what factors may have influenced countries to transition from a socialist authority to capitalist style of government. This study included systematic and historical review literature and scholarly articles between the published years of 1919-2024 that focused on the background of the USSR that led to a 10-year period where there were dozens of countries that obtained independence or became established could help to understand what factors were more likely to precede the change of a nation from a communist government to capitalist style of administration.

Some factors that were discussed in the literature review included first, economy, in particular the finances and what resources nations or regions had at their disposal for growth and to branch out and look at what may have economically pressured a country to abandon their previous government and adopt a capitalist style. A second factor examined the connection between conflict and the adoption of capitalism. Third subtopic looked at the potential of what positives or negatives could come from a capitalist government. A fourth explored how abuse of citizens and their basic human rights may have created a push for a new form of government. These subtopics allowed for a better understanding of some of the factors that may have played into a nation's choice in adopting a new form of government such as capitalism.

Keeping this in mind could help to understand how some post-Soviet countries chose to become a capitalist centered government and why others did not. To better understand the perspective and the theoretical framework being used a literature review investigated past governing styles and transitions that had occurred leading up to the fall of the USSR.

Literature Search Strategy

To obtain better research and to effectively explain this information, databases such as the National University's library EBSCO database were the cornerstone of access to scholarly journal articles and other peer reviewed books. The search parameters included topics that focus on the 1990s, capitalism or democracy, and other forms of governments functioning during this researched time. Other research topics included independence, conflicts, economy, foreign investments, policy, and citizen's rights.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that was used to guide this study was based on Paul Pierson's policy feedback theory (PFT) that looks at the mechanisms of government policy and public response (Pierson, 1993). When it came to governments creating policies, programs, or administrations looking to achieve goals and objectives, PFT was used to gauge how well the public is receiving them (Campbell, 2020). As Pierson (1993) brought to light, "as E. E. Schattschneider argued over a half century ago, 'new policies create a new politics'" (p.595). Not only did this help lawmakers understand how their policies were being received but also allowed them to know whether they were able to create more legislation that may have continued to supplement the planned agenda of these laws (Schober, 2023).

In the United States, PFT had been used to help established public assistance programs during the great depression era (Busemeyer, 2022). This helped lawmakers gauge how well the public was receiving these new welfare policies and a method to slowly push the government's continuing itinerary (Busemeyer, 2022). With the positive reception from these assistance programs, around the same time the Social Security Act was created, which provided social security income to assist older Americans (Schober, 2023). Though this was considered a

positive expansion of government assistance, this program continued to see changes decades later. To the extent that as the government continued to change, amendments were made to this law to keep pace with new and growing agendas (Béland, 2010). PFT had also been used in more recent studies in the US that highlight social security and senior citizens (Campbell, 2002), establishing GI bill benefits for soldiers (Mettler, 2005), feedback on the Affordable Care Act policies (Campbell, 2020), legislation and political inequality that exists (Grumbach & Michener, 2022), along with policies focused on homelessness and their effectiveness (Kopac, 2024).

Starting from the creation of a policy, lawmakers and other policy creators enforced the new rule. After the policy had been put in place, the effects were received through various forms of reception, such as positive or negative economic results along with even constituents and media feedback (Schober, 2023). These forms of effects allowed lawmakers to understand the capacity and preference of those that the policies were directed towards. These could be seen in the form of citizens and business consumption behavior. Whether citizens by either spending or saving their money; businesses hiring or laying off employees (Schober, 2023).

In turn these effects could be seen through voting trends as well, if lawmakers were creating and improving policies that were supported by citizens, they would continue to receive votes. If they were not, voters looked for a candidate that best met their desires (Schober, 2023). This policy cycle continued to grow through the PFT and could be seen all around the world. Whether it was an established country and government or a newly created one, this theory was used to mold policies to fit in with the goals and objectives of a governing power (Busemeyer, 2022).

PFT has been used in a past studies that included social security and political participation by Campell When using PFT for this study, a specific aspect of this theory that was

of benefit when researching these post-Soviet countries that adopted a capitalist form of government is looking at the policy innovation and diffusion. Concepts that were used in this framework included economy such as the financial core of a country and how this may affect a nation's decision. Conflict was a second concept that looked at whether a country was forced into years or decades long battles, clashes, fights, or wars that required resources even alterations to lifestyles for the duration of the experience and effects it had for centuries that led to changes in governments. Following conflict, a third concept included independence, sometimes related to the purpose of battles and wars to become free from an oppression of another government. The fourth concept is citizens' rights, having a lack of rights or freedoms for people of a country may be another factor that led to overthrowing or rebellion against nation leaders. This research focus may have helped to look at new governments and their innovation in policy creation and how it could have had an effect on their level of economic growth (Petridou, 2014). Looking through this lens helped to distinguish if policy plays a smaller role in any of the listed countries' economic success in their change from a communist government to a capitalist one (Gill, 2013).

Looking at capitalism, having policies that are focused on economic growth through private bodies as opposed to state run entities was a shift in economic development or decline from what many countries experienced as part of the USSR (Kennard, 2004). Instead of having an economic plan that was included under a government that controlled dozens of countries, these post-Soviet governments were now looking at how to work with each other to grow their own markets and help to bolster trade (Billing & Lugg, 2019). Many post-Soviet countries were reliant on one another for trade to grow their gross domestic product (GDP) regardless of whether their business and manufacturers were private, or state owned (Benešová & Hušek, 2019).

A large aspect that helped a country's economy grow was also the amount of foreign investment that could be garnered (Kalai et al., 2024). As seen in post-Soviet countries, this was an after effect that came from conflicts that gave way to the creation or independence of countries (Khudoley & Khudoley, 2018). For example, Yugoslavia was dissolved into four new countries, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Slovenia, whereas Czechoslovakia was split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. With the 18 countries listed earlier, they needed investors when it came to transitioning from government owned and controlled corporations to an opened and privatized business sphere (Ciešlik & Gurshev, 2022). What better than having a rhetorical open slate that allowed foreign investors such as international corporations, financiers, and investment capitalists to inject money and provide new innovative markets and jobs (Murshudli, 2022).

With the dissolution of the USSR and the growth in foreign investments this also made way for expansion in these post-Soviet countries for human necessities. Not only were countries independent or created to integrate into a government style that would best fit their needs but also allowed for improved treatment of citizens. For these 18 specific countries this included bringing in capitalist style of governments and the improvements of living conditions (Kyrgyzbayer & Khysanovna, 2022), more potential jobs (cervellati et al., 2022), educational opportunities, and updating infrastructure (Durmanov, 2022). A big reform that was seen since the early 1990s was medical reforms that improved health services and ease of access for citizens (Antoun et al., 2011). Witnessing these transformations and changes in the post-Soviet era just opens the door as to what modifications had been made. This researcher hoped that this study would find what factors influenced countries to adopt a capitalist style of government and contribute to future bodies of research.

Literature Review

Over the course of millenniums, governments have been created and as societies have evolved, so have the forms of governing. Leading up to the 20th century many civilizations that were under monarchy rule started to gain their independence as a country or territory (Hong & Kim, 2021). Throughout the 1900s more and more countries started to become free from colonialism and chose a different style of government. Some countries found success; others were not as successful. This often led to changes in leadership and even governing styles. Many changes might often be linked to economic problems (Segaro & Haag, 2022).

When looking at countries that have made the difficult and often exhausting decision to transition from one form of government structure to another it was often a big undertaking. It was more than just changing the function and direction of the government, but also influenced the nation's economy, citizens' well-being, and even other countries and trade partners (Brøgger, 2023). With this said, there is often a leading reason behind this change, such as: war or another form of conflict, liberation of people or land from colonialism, or a change in a county's power dynamic (de Wat, 2019). Regardless of the reason, this new direction of government style is being changed in hopes of obtaining new goals and objectives by the country's leadership.

For centuries, people and countries were ruled under a monarchy, which also included the colonial style of government that started to dissolve during the 20th century, leading to the formation of new countries and styles of administration (de Wat, 2019). As colonial administrations began to fade away in new developing nations, two popular styles of government were in the spotlight. The choice between capitalism and socialism, each having their own attractive and unappealing characteristics, may have often been left up to those who were in authority to make pivotal decisions for the country's future (Kyrgyzbayev & Khusanovna, 2022).

Decision makers often included a group of individuals with similar goals for the country or a single person claiming to know what the nation and its citizens needed. Regardless of the formation, each form of government style could improve or decline a country's evolution and power. Included in this evolution is economic growth, living standards of citizens, and sustainability in the form of both education and employment opportunities (Kaiser et al., 2021). The public perceives the standard of living and how supportive the government or its leaders may be of their well-being. In a socialist style, the government is perceived as the caretaker of citizens and resources and therefore has a controlling interest in decisions. Capitalism is more geared towards individual success, but in theory also had laws in place to protect its citizens from unjust or biased actions against freedoms.

Economy

A country's economy could be a trigger that may affect the change in government style. When it comes to economic issues that could cause a government to change to a capitalist style of governing there may be features that could be appealing. When looking at a capitalist, Holmes et al. (2022) brought to light three core features, "(1) resource allocation and exchange through market mechanisms, (2) private ownership of the factors of production, and (3) limited state interference in the economy" (p.987). This helped create an opportunity for businesses to become privately owned with the prospect of financial growth. Allowing products and services to balance between the scales of supply and demand, instead of having government intervention controlling this spectrum of business. This also allowed the government a chance to generate revenue through taxes and fees with minimal involvement outside of legislation.

Colonialism is one style of government that has been pushed into the realms of history for a more modern form of socialism or capitalism that could bring more economic promise.

Breaking away from colonialism gave a region or a newly independent country the opportunity for self-governing while keeping all the revenues generated within the region and not paying a type of tax to a monarchy. As mentioned earlier, this example comes from Vietnam and its alignment with a new future in socialism (Hong & Kim, 2021), but years later changed to a capitalist system (Nguyen & Rahman, 2019). This example showed that it may only be a matter of time before another change in style may be a necessity to ensure a government could economically sustain itself (de Wet, 2019).

Li and Cheng (2020) brought to light the fact that the fall of the Soviet Union did not mean that all nation states found this an opportunity to separate from the communist mindset of government. Other states that became newly created nations, instead felt that the socialist style of governing was a needed structure to be economically successful (Li & Cheng, 2020). While others may have found a change to capitalism an opportunity to test the waters and experiment with a chance to grow.

An example comes from the country of Belarus, which experienced a “decline immediately following the breakup of the USSR” (Li & Cheng, 2020, p.428). Uncertain of how economically successful capitalism may be for Belarus, the government kept the socialist style to strengthen their country’s power and economy (Li & Cheng, 2020). With ties to Russia, who at the time was a large economic force, it made sense to shift from privatizing businesses to a state-owned structure. Having a socialist ruled government was helpful to extending the relationship in the region and did strengthen the Belarus economy (Li & Cheng, 2020). Unlike Belarus, other nation states that became independent countries felt that capitalism was a better style of governing. Unfortunately, this created economic weakness leading to many citizens migrating to

Russia for jobs that could provide better living conditions for families and individuals (Bakunin et al., 2020).

Though the Cold War did provide more present-day examples of success and failure that could occur if choosing capitalism, some countries, like Mexico had learned that a style of government for an economy is not an easy ride. As Bleynat et al. (2021) brought attention to the fact that Mexico's economy experienced many highs and lows. "After relative stability in the nineteenth century, they find substantial rise up to 1950, followed by a decline until 1980 and another rise in the 1980s" (Bleynat et al., 2021, p.588). Though an economy is more than jobs and monetary success, it also includes the standards of infrastructure, and educational opportunities available to the citizens through legislative means and governing styles.

Infrastructure is needed to help stabilize business, governments, residents, educational and medical institutes (Durmanov, 2022). If infrastructure for business, operations, and living have not been updated to provide more safety features, aesthetics, and newer amenities, many individuals and corporations may see this as a failing economy or a government's inability to manage growth with new ideas and opportunities (Durmanov, 2022). A government that may be stuck in the past and slow to forge new opportunities for economic growth (Kaiser et al., 2021) may experience a decline or collapse in their development into a capitalistic style of government.

Governments of various nations often have different economic, power, and social goals or objectives from one to another. Sometimes these goals and objectives could intersect with other governments that have positive economic outcomes for either party. Other times these styles of governing may lead to a collapse (Cheibub, 2022). There are different styles of governing that countries may choose to use as a structured framework for leading their nation to

achieve economic goals and objectives. Some countries may wish to replicate the style that other governments were successful in implementing to achieve their goals.

Leaders of countries may share similar economic principles or philosophies that have been successfully accomplished by established governments and see those as a foundation to follow (Goode, 2021). While others may feel that a democracy (popular with capitalist governments) is a better choice since it is more of an incentive-based form of government that often leads to competition that could lead to success through innovation (Goode, 2021). A country's goals, objectives, and political motivations could influence the style of government for leading a country.

In the late 1970s through the beginning 1990s, Great Britain found itself transitioning to a capitalist style, under the direction of the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Under what is commonly referred to as the Thatcher government (Ledger, 2019). The government needed to reduce public spending, both foreign and domestic. To do this, the government-controlled industries such as coal, iron, and even steel were privatized. This allowed the costs of operations such as communications and transportation to be covered at the expense of private owners allowing the government to acquire tax revenue instead (Ledger, 2019).

When the Soviet Union dissolved, it opened the door for many former Soviet satellite nation states to branch out and form their own government, whether this was in the form of capitalism or another system. Other established countries on the European continent also felt it was an opportunity for economic growth after the Berlin Wall fell, which led to the establishment of the European Union in 1992 (Brøgger, 2023). Of course, this was not a guarantee that these newly established countries from the former USSR would be economically successful (Rice, 1992). As with most circumstances where a new course of direction is forged, it

may not always show quick results. This may often take years, if not decades, to see substantial growth (Rice, 1992).

The fall of the Soviet Union brought a new problem as the states were now developing countries looking for the best style of governing to meet their goals. Many of these countries that were once nation states felt that socialism was no longer a viable form of government (Parrot, 2022), especially if they were looking to build relations with other European countries (Gatea, 2021). Other nations were more reliant upon Russia, and the needed economic support and trade influenced the need to continue a socialist government. Whereas if these countries were to become a capitalist government, their business and aide relations with Russia could suffer.

Mongolia is a country that felt that changing from a socialist style that was held for 70 years to capitalism was worth the risk (Sabloff, 2020). This was a high risk move for their economy given its location and trade between China and Russia; two large socialist countries could have a negative impact on their economy (Sabloff, 2020). In 1990, Mongolia changed its functioning government to a capitalist system, allowing for the various markets the potential financial growth beyond the state-controlled system. Unfortunately, the capitalist system in place was creating a negative impact upon the country's economy and job markets. Even with a negative impact and backwards tracking, the citizens still supported this new style of government. Though the job market and economy are not at the level they may have been prior to the change, citizens felt that they had a positive outcome that was only a matter of time before they become successful (Sabloff, 2020).

Conflict

In the history of the world, for thousands of years, wars and conflicts have occurred among kingdoms, rulers, and countries for various reasons. Some of these wars had occurred for

freedom from the rule of an individual or groups, for one reason or another or in the defense of themselves or people who are being persecuted. Other wars and conflicts had come from the need to conquer lands and civilizations, obtain power and control over a country or group of people. Whatever the reason may be, wars and conflicts had come to shape civilizations and the history of the current countries and governments that are in power.

So far, a main style of governing that was a predecessor to capitalism and socialism saw a push for many countries to seek independence from colonialism. The fight for a country's independence had been an ongoing battle. But a big question that comes to mind is what effects did war or conflicts have on a new or established country's choice of government? One theory to answer this question could be the influence that supporting countries may have had on the nation that is fighting for independence.

During the 1950s, India was gaining independence, China, Soviet Union, and the United States were all lending assistance in building this new Indian government, but only one left a lasting impression (Hilger, 2021). As Hilger (2021) highlighted, "other Indian leaders now declared that their country could learn a lot from Soviet economic and development" (p.440). Having support from a country that is considered a world power is a benefit, especially for financial aid. After conflicts and wars, economic recovery is often difficult (Kormarek & Wagner, 2021), especially as a developing country that needs as much financial assistance as possible to start a stable economy.

Some countries had chosen to form their government in the socialist system, where the growth of the country's authority and international power is more important. Other countries, like the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, and several others had found the importance in financial growth and innovation that capitalism had helped to create

after a war (Akulich & Kaźmierczyk, 2018). As technology had seen advancements, many countries found the importance of capitalism (Şatalan, 2022) even if this development in a country is created through war or other forms of conflict.

Some conflicts could be more of a political spectrum and how they need to change with the progressing standards of the world. For instance, the United Nations Resolution 1514 was created in 1960, that granted the end of colonialism and independence to the people of these countries or regions (Hastings, 2022). This declaration was seen as the ability for these countries, especially in Africa that were ruled under colonialism, to grow as independent nations (Hastings, 2022). Many of the colonial ruling countries were in favor and saw this as a step towards global economic growth for both the ruling and newly independent countries (Hastings, 2022).

Numerous countries were already economically stable like Ghana as a prime example that choose to become a capitalist government. Hastings (2022) brought to light, “Under British tutelage, Ghanaians were now productively growing cocoa, mining gold, diamonds, manganese, and bauxite, felling lumber, and processing timber” (p.210). With the help of the British government, Ghana and other African countries had thriving resources to turn into economic growth once they became independent countries.

Independence

As mentioned earlier, in the early to mid-20th century, there were several countries that found new independence from monarch rule and control (Ince, 2022). Though this may seem to be a welcome step, the work to establish a new government structure had already begun prior to this event occurring. A foundation to this included establishing the style of government a new nation would be functioning under (Hall, 2022). Would it be a capitalist, communist, or socialist

style that some of these new sovereign nations felt that communism was a better fit for their economic growth (Hilger, 2021), where others were established under a capitalist government.

Though these countries may have established their government under one style of administration, this may not always be a final solution to future economic issues. For example, Vietnam and India became a sovereign country with a socialist government thanks to the economic support from Soviet Union (Hilger, 2021; Hong & Kim, 2021). Yet decades later and after many years of Vietnam's internal/external conflict, this style of government started to show its weakness through failure to have a stable and growing economy, failing and outdated private and public infrastructure (Hong & Kim, 2021). Around the late-1990s, Vietnam decided it was time for transition to a capitalist style of governing. This new form of government helped Vietnam to mirror the regulations and laws (Hall, 2022) that South Korea, Japan, and United States were operating under to help bolster its waning economy (Hong & Kim, 2021). As for India, decades later in the 1980s/90s, broke away from the Soviet Union's inability to provide large profitable economic contracts (Hilger, 2021; Ironside, 2024), India began to adopt capitalism as well and had a mixed socialist/capitalist form of government.

Though these two examples above showed the transition that many several other countries had found their government and economies to face continued issues. African countries that had adopted capitalist style of government since their independence from monarch or colonial rule had faced long-term economic struggles that stem from corruption (Sebola & Tsheola, 2022). Countries such as Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and South Africa are just a few examples of capitalist countries that have faced corruption, coup d'états, citizen abuses, crime, violence, and poor economies that are controlled by illegal activities by warlords, corrupt politicians, and outside influences (Sebola

& Tsheola, 2022). These countries may be used to displaying the downside of a capitalist style of government, yet from the beginning of their sovereignty these countries have been heavily influenced by businesses and industries. Any business in different industries saw Africa as an open market to push their agendas and financial gain and not citizen's well-being or a government's success (Sebola & Tsheola, 2022). These countries could learn from the turbulent transition that another African country, Egypt, went through decades prior (Versieren & De Smet, 2022).

Egypt experienced a revolution that led to a new government leadership and a shift in their revenue from natural resources [not just cotton, but cotton and oil] (Versieren & De Smet, 2022). Africa is known for natural resources throughout the continent such as oil, gas, coal, various metals, and gems. Africa could see results like Egypt and follow the model that Iraq had experienced in its rebuilding as a nation and its economy. In the past couple of years, the country of Iraq had started to grow and build itself into an attractive country for international investments and structural growth (Altaie et al., 2023). With the assistance of outside nations such as the United States, other European nations, and some Middle Eastern countries, they had worked together to clean up corruption and establish a sustainable government and economic framework for Iraq (Altaie et al., 2023). This may be years or even decades in the making to reinvent African nations' capitalist governments and economies (Segaro & Haag, 2022). But with little to no change in the current governing pattern of African countries for more than 50 years (Versieren & De Smet, 2022), Cleaning up corruption could have been an alternative for the various capitalist governments.

Additionally, the Cold War had influenced other governments of Asia and Africa leading them to become communist or socialist in their style of governing (Ironsides, 2024). The Soviet

Union had a large influence among smaller and often seen weaker countries in the European and Asian regions (Hilger, 2021). So much so, that the USSR was centered around the Soviet Union, with many countries that were tied economically to its economic plans (Jonek-Kowalska, 2023). The Soviet Union used economy and society as crutches to ensure uniformity with countries like Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, East Germany, Romania, and Czechoslovakia and also used as an advantage to keep strength in the region during the Cold War (Jonek-Kowalska, 2023). Yet, citizens of these countries felt this form of government was more of enslavement with poor living conditions and no opportunities for financial stability and class growth (Kyrgyzbayev & Khusanovna, 2022).

As the Cold War was coming to an end, USSR countries were all experiencing some sort of economic setback and citizens were pushing back from the years of abuse, the need for a new style of government was seen as a priority (Brøgger, 2023). The Soviet Union perceived this as a failure for these countries to contemplate a move from a communist state to a capitalist style of government (Ironsides, 2024). As India experienced the slowdown in the economy, they saw an opportunity to shift from socialist to a mix of capitalist economy, like Poland (Hilger, 2023). Though most of these post-Soviet countries had a bumpy transition due to a weak economy, with the European Union (EU) being formed this allowed for future trade collaborations with countries in the EU (Brøgger, 2023). Collaboration to the expansion of technology in various fields such as alternative energy, computers, electronics, environmental renewals, government, healthcare, manufacturing, and security (Brøgger, 2023).

Citizens' Rights

The rights of people living in a country may be a critical measure of how a style of government could last. In the past decades an international push for people to be treated fairly,

respected, not placed into slavery, captivity, or forced servitude or any other form of repression had been spreading. Countries that feel the need for citizens to provide labor or services for the greater good with little to no entitled rights were slowly seeing this type of tyranny met with protests and uprisings against the government (Kyrgyzbayev & Khusanovna, 2022). Leading to the question, does the violation of people's rights influence a government's style?

The Soviet Union saw many residents that were discriminated against or repressed due to their heritage or native land. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, Belarus was home to a large population of Macedonians, at the time under the socialist rule were discriminated and persecuted. Most of the persecution was due to the mindset that Macedonians weren't Soviet citizens and not seen as equals or contributing to the communist goals (Stojkov, 2021). After the Soviet Union fell, Belarus became an independent nation choosing to be a capitalist style government. Pushing away from a socialist Soviet system allowed Belarus to be a little more open minded to the economic opportunities and civil rights of its citizens (Stojkov, 2021). As a result, the persecution against Macedonians stopped in Belarus, but the country of Belarus did still refuse to acknowledge Macedonians as a minority (Stojkov, 2021).

This was an ethnic example, but on a religious level, during the colonization of India by the British peace was kept between two religious groups. Hindu and Muslims were often clashing due to religious views and beliefs. Once India became an independent country, the conflict and deaths between the two religions escalated to the point where a new country was created. In 1947 Pakistan was formed so Muslims living in India could have a safe country to live and worship without fear (Kadir & Jaward, 2020) of religious retribution.

Yet, in the previous problem, focus of war and conflict, the Soviet Union influenced India in their choice to select a socialist style of governing (Hilger, 2021). Whether this had an

influence on other countries in the region of Asia, socialism was a popular style among these nations (Nguyen & Viola, 2022). An example of this comes from China, as a growing dominating world power and home to the largest population in the world (Chen et al., 2021), the need to balance citizen's rights with needs of the state are important. Chen et al. (2021) pointed out, "People protest to redress injustices when they believe that such protests have a chance of producing a favorable resolution of their grievances" (p.499).

It may seem that making the world more aware of human rights violations over the decades could have led to world leaders being more cognizant about their populations and how they treat them. Or as countries are looking for more financial backing from foreign investors and global corporations for jobs, many are hesitant to back countries that commit these types of violations (Lewczuk, 2019). Having investors pushes countries to be more aware of human rights may have an impact on nations changing to a freer market and capitalist form of government (Lewczuk, 2019). As seen with Vietnam changing their style of government from socialist to a capitalist form for economic growth and pressure from foreign investors (Nguyen & Rahman, 2019).

Forming the USSR

Before the USSR was formed, like many other nations previously mentioned, it was under a monarchy rule, known as the Russian Empire. Near the turn of the 20th century, the Russian Empire had experienced several setbacks on both a national and international stage (Repnikov, 2004). By the beginning of the 1900s, Russia was the largest and most populated country in the world with 130 million people, and its industrial base was beginning to grow (Davis, 2010). After centuries of expanding the empire of Russia, some think the beginning of

the end for the monarchy started with the failure of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 (Steinwedel, 2000).

Going into the Russo-Japanese War, Russia felt this could be an easy victory to gain a warm climate port in the Korean peninsula, but this was not the case (Steinwedel, 2000). Instead of gaining a warm weathered port in Asia fighting against a smaller, weaker, and famine-stricken Japan, the Russians, after many defeats under the leadership of Tsar Nicholas II, conceded to the Japanese (Steinwedel, 2000). This was just the beginning of what would be years of disappointment, perception of the Tsar's weakness, and suffering by the people of Russia. Though the Russo-Japanese War started in 1904 and only lasted for about 18 months, during this time the Revolution of 1905, which started in January of that year, increased the public's doubt in the Tsar's ability to rule the country (Davis, 2010). The Revolution which lasted for more than two years, resulted in reforms which would create a constitution for the people of the Russian Empire (Steinwedel, 2000).

One specific reform created by the Russian Constitution of 1906 was the pivotal opportunity for serfs who had been seen more as the property of landowners. They were now given more rights and freedoms under this constitution. In addition, this constitution started to chip away at the monarchy's authority of complete rule in the empire but created a new political party and gave people of all classes more rights (The Russian Constitution of April 23, 1906, 1979). These rights included allowing lower class to become landowners, the right to vote, freedom of expression, and the right to serve in the military as enlisted or officer (Gettell, 1919; Lindert & Nafziger, 2014).

Since the creation of the Russian Constitution, a new political party was established and referred to as the Bolsheviks (Marshev, 2019). From the time of its establishment, Vladimir

Lenin lead the Bolshevik political party which continued to gain followers among the discontented working- and lower-class citizens of Russia. The country continued to spiral into chaos and economic turmoil brought on by food shortages, scarcity of fuel, resources, and human death toll because of Russia's involvement in World War I (Reznik, 2022). By 1917, the citizens and Bolshevik party pushed back with a coup d'état, which spurred the October Revolution and forced Tsar Nicholas II to abdicate his throne (Mentzel, 2017).

From this revolution nearly 10 months later in 1918, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated his throne, and this triggered the Russian Civil War. Near the same time, Vladimir Lenin was appointed as head of Russia's new provisional government along with several other leaders (Reznik, 2022). About a year after his abdication, Nicholas II and his family were executed by the Bolsheviks. From 1917 -1922, the Russian Civil War pitted the White and the Red armies against each other. The White Army fought in defense of the monarchy government and its supporters (Reznik, 2022). The Red Army was formed by Lenin and his supporters that pushed for change through the need to establish a new government (Wright, 2016).

Through several years of struggle and turmoil, the Red Army and the Bolsheviks party became victorious, and this ushered in the new age of socialism in what was the USSR. The newly reformed USSR was established with a Marxist style or socialist government with a New Economic Policy in 1921 (Marshev, 2019). This newly established USSR created state owned institutions that included transportation, military, production based, and other needed establishments in order to grow and strengthen the country (Marshev, 2019). These institutions helped to expand the socialist influence across the region while also building new hubs or cities for growth and increased state run production (Steinberg, 2021).

This new socialist government was being sold by Lenin and its supporters as a utopian freedom and break from the slavery of a ruling monarchy (Steinberg, 2021). But, years later it was beginning to be evident that the USSR was more of a dystopia instead, a culture that Joseph Stalin would intensify during his reign after the death of Lenin (Steinberg, 2021). Though Stalin may have built upon the socialist structure that Lenin created for the USSR, it soon turned into an authoritarian rule. Stalin used many tools at his disposal to ensure that citizens within the vast USSR feared and adhered to the authoritarian's rule (Gafurov, 2019).

Stalin created a five-year plan focused on economic goals for the USSR. With push back coming from citizens, particularly nomads and peasants, Stalin found a method that could weaken this resistance (Werth, 2016). During the late 1920s and early 1930s, some regions within present day Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine experienced a man-made food famine and shortage (Werth, 2016). Stalin used this method as a way to introduce collective farming that took land from peasants and turned it into a state-run operation. While also dissolving the peasant class through either adherence to changes or starvation (Werth, 2016).

A few years later, the great purge was another tool that Stalin used to entice fear among those in the USSR political officials and military officers considered as potential threats to his regime (Whitewood, 2015). This continued for a period of 18-months, leaving many in fear of retaliation for any perception or action to overthrow Stalin (Whitewood, 2015). A secondary tool the government used to persuade adherence among citizens throughout the USSR was forced labor camps or the "gulag" (Barney, 2013). Forced labor camps were used throughout the USSR to build infrastructure and construct cities. Until the 1950s, this also served as a threat to political enemies, traitors, and criminals that they would be placed into a slavery induced system (Barney, 2013).

Leading up to WWII, the USSR was building into a world power, so much that there was little to no concern from attack after reaching an agreement with the Nazi Germany. But once the German's decided to encroach into the USSR through Operation Barbarossa, the Soviets were not shy in defending their country and fighting back to reclaim their land (Harward, 2021). At the end of WWII, the USSR continued to focus on expanding the nation's influence and reaching as a world superpower. This was done with rebounding industrial growth in various sectors of business and government to the extent this caught the attention of the United States of America (Eichengreen & Uzan, 1992).

Cold War Era

While the USSR was becoming a dominant power with many regional countries, an internal push came to maintain the culture and languages of these nations and people. In the 1920s, as the USSR was created and formed, there were also non-Russian countries that formed this union of nations. At this time, the government created a policy called Korenizatsiia, which was used to help culturally integrate people from non-Russian countries into the USSR (Edgar, 2022). To show respect for their cultures, traditions, and languages, Stalin integrated these aspects and their national leaders to administrative positions within the Soviet Union to give the perception of acceptance (Goff, 2015). During Stalin's reign in the 1930's, this policy though active was slowly overshadowed by Russification (Savchyn, 2023).

Russification was a strong push by Stalin to prioritize Russian as the primary language throughout all countries of the USSR, and all other languages as secondary forms of communications (Savchyn, 2023). By the late 1940s, Russification was slowly beginning to spread within the union's other countries (Goff, 2015). Not only was there a push for the Russian language to become standard and alienate the cultures of other nations, but some of the local

national leaders were being replaced by trusted associates of Stalin's regime for uniformity and growth (Palko, 2019). By this time, most if not all communications from the USSR leadership were done in Russian, leaving many other nations to forcefully adhere to the objective of Russification (Olivier, 1990). During the late 1940s -1950s, not only was Stalin creating uniformity in the USSR, but he was also meeting with many countries in the Asian region to expand the Soviet Union's reach (Shin, 2023).

While Russification was occurring, the USSR was expanding its transcontinental growth into Asia. With already having expanded into countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan the USSR was reaching out to China, India, and other newly independent countries such as Vietnam (Ashurov et al., 2020; Gafurov, 2019). The USSR was looking for more allies, trade partners, and expand socialism to these countries in the Asian region (Gafurov, 2019). This growth of Russification culture and allies in Asia continued during and after WWII, to the point that it was starting to create a divide among many nations in Europe and around the world.

With WWII coming to an end and Nazi Germany was no longer in power, the world's superpowers, Great Britain, United States, and USSR discussed dividing Germany into occupied zones and disarmament of Germany (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024). Soon hidden resentments were starting to surface between the United States and the USSR (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024). As the USSR was expanding its growth to war trodden countries, the United States was increasing its scientific technology through the atomic bomb (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024). Adding to the tension on the international stage was the ideologies of capitalism and growing technology of the United States and its allies, against socialism and large scaled manufacturing of the USSR (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024).

A few years later in 1947, as the tension and disdain for one another's ideologies continued to grow, a literal divide was occurring in Europe and the rest of the world. This divide was centered in Germany and divided the country by Eastern and Western Blocs (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024). The Western Bloc of Germany was occupied by Canadian, French, English, and American troops that were there as part of the peace treaty following the surrender of Germany after the war. This Western Bloc also divided the world to include Western European, North American, and some Asian countries (Henrikson, 1980). The Eastern Bloc included USSR, its Eastern Europe satellite states, allies, and some Asian countries as well (Easter, 2016). Within a couple of years, the tension continued to increase in what was labeled as the Cold War. Each side of this war was increasing their security and alliance measures.

To further cement the United States and its ally's fight against the spread of the USSR's socialist agenda, the Western Bloc strengthened their alliance with one another. In 1949, the United States and about 11 other North American, European, and Asian countries signed a peacetime military alliance called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Henrikson, 1980). NATO created a large combined deployable military arsenal that could be used by each member country to defend against outside threats. With the establishment of NATO, some of this large deployable military was sent to West Germany in order to protect and control the area against attacks and encroachment by the Eastern Bloc members (Henrikson, 1980).

After the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, new leadership steered the Soviet Union's foreign policy in a different direction (Crump, 2015). Within a few years the USSR created an alliance similar to NATO, which was called the Warsaw Pact. By 1955, similar to the United States, the USSR formed an alliance with several other nations in Eastern Europe that included Poland,

Albania, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia (Office of the Historian, n.d.). This pact was established as a means for protection against the growth of more nations joining NATO.

In addition, the Warsaw Pact would help the USSR draw tighter connections with other Eastern European countries within this agreement, while also making them more reliant on Moscow (Crump, 2015). This was done through the Soviet Union having the ability to control decisions of the Warsaw Pact (Office of the Historian, n.d.). A secondary method that the Soviet Union used to help limit revolution among nation states was through an economic agreement among Eastern bloc countries referred to as the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) (Bençe, 2020). COMECON was established in 1949 to create a stronger economic relationship among satellite states, and a stronger financial dependency on the Soviet Union (Bençe, 2020; Crump, 2015).

Within years, countries in the USSR were trading manufactured goods with the Soviet Union for oil. During this period Albania in 1961 withdrew from this alliance, and other satellite countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania, rebelled against the Soviet Union, but was quickly put down (Bençe, 2020; Crump, 2015). Other countries outside of the USSR, such as Cuba, Mongolia, and Vietnam joined the COMECON knowing the economic growth they could experience (Crump, 2015).

Though the USSR spent decades being diplomatic towards the United States and United Kingdom, the push to expand socialism throughout the world remained a goal of the USSR leadership (Easter, 2016). This goal was being implemented through various means inside the nations of the USSR and outside countries. This was being done through means such as arms dealing with outside nations, incorporating espionage against rival countries, providing financial aid to perspective countries, expanding the Soviet Union's nuclear program, along with

competing in the space race against the United States. These were all methods that USSR leadership used in the race to be world dominating (Easter, 2016; Porter, 1984).

After the fall of Nazi Germany in WWII, the USSR obtained majority of their armaments, including nuclear weapons which aided in international growth (Porter, 1984). This helped to push the USSR in the weapons and nuclear race and expand its growth into a dominating world power, rivaling that of the United States (Maddrell, 2021; Porter, 1984). At this point the USSR continued to grow as an arms dealer for countries in the region during wars. Some of these conflicts included the Afghanistan civil war of the late 1970s, Arab-Israeli war, Indo-Pakistan war, Angolan war, and even the Vietnam war (Porter, 1984). In addition to supplying arms, this also allowed the USSR to expand its presence in developing countries (Grinev & Lebedinskas, 1975).

One way that the Soviet Union was able to keep its authority was through having a strong state security agency that was referred to as the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (KGB) (Maddrell, 2021). Not only was stationing the KGB throughout the USSR used as a tool to control the population but also placed outside of the Soviet Union to gather intelligence on potential third world uprisings and conflicts (Porter, 1984). Throughout the USSR, KGB teams were stationed as a way to not only monitor, but regulate any suspicious activity, potential rebellion, uprising, or any form of espionage against the Soviet Union (Maddrell, 2021). With the Cold War beginning, the United States, USSR, and their allies all increased their security to defend against the threat of surveillance and intelligence gathering against each other (Maddrell, 2021).

The battle of espionage was well under way that included covert operations, wiretapping, persuading each other's intelligence agents and citizens to gather information for the other side

(Easter, 2016). As years passed during the Cold War, tactics to obtain information continued to change and progress to outdo one another (Maddrell, 2021). Information that was deemed to be valuable from each country involved focusing mostly on nuclear weapons, military logistics, government operations, and their respected space programs (Easter, 2016; Kohonen, 2009).

When it came to gaining intelligence on the nuclear weapons programs of each country, some of what may be considered information of importance would be how much of an arsenal and advancements in atomic sciences were being made (Easter, 2016; Marcy, 1982). Prior to the end of WWII, the United States had a functioning atomic arsenal used for protection and enemy deterrence (Akçapa, 2018). After WWII and the dissolution of the Nazi military, the Soviet Union had obtained possession of all Germany's nuclear equipment (Farzam & Soroosh, 2024). At this point, the USSR had the ability to compete with the United States (Akçapa, 2018). In order to protect itself and interests, the United Kingdom entered this race, with development of their first nuclear weapon in 1952 (Akçapa, 2018). From this point on, tensions around the world had escalated with the real threat of nuclear war occurring at any moment (Akçapa, 2018).

While the nuclear arms race was real and progressing, there was another one, the battle for space supremacy. This race really started to pick up in the late 1950s and 1960s with both the United States and the USSR fighting for space dominance for similar reasons (Kohonen, 2009). Both looked at the opportunity for information gathering through launching satellites and maintaining national security with the ability for long range missile and nuclear striking capabilities (Kohonen, 2009). But also, the exploration of space, learning more about the universe and its unknowns (Kohonen, 2009).

As these aspects of the Cold War continued to grow, so did the reach in the USSR to keep an iron fist on the citizens of satellite states. Since the early 1960s, the Berlin Wall was

constructed to divide Western and Eastern Germany (Bradley, 2006). After decades of competition and Cold War dynamics with the west, citizens of the states in the USSR were starting to see through the propaganda (Bradley, 2006). With political changes happening in the USSR, the push for reformation and more freedom was at hand with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991 (Kolsto, 1996). This symbol of breaking down a barrier allowed for a new beginning for dozens of countries and their citizens.

Summary

Through this chapter, the literature review had looked at four factors that include the economy, conflict, capitalism, and citizens' rights. To find accurate material, the use of appropriate databases with scholarly articles and peer reviewed books were needed. Gathering this information was used to help shed light on how developing and independent countries from the 20th century were influenced. This also looked at influences and potential factors that may have been a part in developing their governments. After looking at the Soviet bloc countries, examining their creation and history over decades up to the fall of the Berlin Wall may help understand how this could have been a new beginning for many of these countries. In the next chapter of this dissertation, the research method is discussed. This chapter goes into more detail of the methodology and design, the population and sample, operational variables, data analysis, and any of the study's limitations and assumptions.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem addressed was what factors influenced some former Soviet nations to adopt and maintain a capitalistic form of government after the fall in 1991 of the USSR, while other former communist bloc countries regressed to a socialist government (Kuntadi & Damayantie, 2022). The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that may have influenced some former USSR nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. Some of these factors that may have influenced them to transition including citizen's rights, external or internal conflicts, and even economic issues. To help gain a better understanding, the study focused on a 10-year period where there were more than two dozen post-Soviet countries obtaining independence could help to highlight what factors were more likely to precede the change of these nations from a communist government to capitalist style of administration.

This chapter focused on the nature of the study for this dissertation. This included looking at the population and sampling along with the materials or instruments that may be used. To help the reader understand better, operational definitions were given in addition to the study procedures and the data analysis strategy and software used for this paper. Of course, the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances of this study are also discussed in this chapter. The research methodology and design are used as a guide to gather and analyze the data and answer the research question for this dissertation.

Research Methodology and Design

A generic qualitative research method along with a small purposeful sample design was used for this study. A small purposeful sample design for this research was particularly suited for this study as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of knowledge and perceptions from a real-

world setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Since this study was focused on past world events, a small purposeful sample focused on PFT allowed for an in-depth exploration of the information and perceptions in this setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Using the generic approach allowed for flexibility with this methodology when examining a world history event that impacted millions of people for decades after the occurrence (Kahlke, 2014). A generic qualitative inquiry helped to guide the direction of an investigation when it comes to obtaining documented opinions or information from interviews, historical documents, or reflections of professionals, government officials, and historians (Percy et al., 2015). This was important when it comes to investigating the fall of the USSR which led to 27 countries becoming independent nations (Percy et al., 2015). Being half a world away and more than three decades ago, many of these forms of information may help to gain a better understanding of why some countries had chosen to establish a capitalist-based government instead of continuing with a legacy in socialism.

The generic qualitative study “does not always adhere to the characteristics of a single established methodological tradition,” (Ellis & Hart, 2023, p. 1764). Neither does it have an explicit or conventional set of philosophic assumptions that distinguish it from alternative qualitative methodologies such as case studies, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography (Ellis & Hart, 2023). Like all qualitative research, generic qualitative inquiry facilitates comprehension as to how people construe, construct, or make sense of their world and experiences (Kahlke, 2014).

Though generic approach is not the only qualitative design available, it was more appropriate for this research that aimed to understand experiences that Soviet Union populations may have experienced having flexibility of using techniques from other methodologies (Percy et al., 2015). Case study is often a popular design that is used for in-depth investigation but is

focused on a single case (Percy et al., 2015). However, for this study, there were numerous countries and several cases that were to be investigated where generic approach was more appropriate for dissertation research. The fall of the USSR was experienced by millions of people more than 30 years ago as a historical event. With this in mind, a second qualitative design that could have been considered was phenomenology. However, contacting a sufficient population to obtain a sample would have been difficult and could have required a lot of time. In addition, phenomenology would not have been an appropriate qualitative inquiry, since it was focused on an individual's psychological experience and this study had aspects that may have influenced a country's decision (Percy et al., 2015).

A third design available was the grounded theory, which focuses on data that is used to interpret an individual's actions and decisions (Percy et al., 2015). Again, since this study was focused on 18 countries and its legislative decisions, grounded theory would not have been most appropriate, because it would have required focusing on a much larger population and the interpretations of the information could be inaccurate. The last design could have been considered but it was less appropriate was ethnography. In a study, ethnography uses data to focus on a variety of social aspects such as beliefs, cultural practices, and behaviors (Percy et al., 2015). For this study, these social aspects had little to no use for the parameters of the topic being researched. The focus of this study was about the number of newly created and emancipated countries and their government's selection of a capitalist form of governing, not socially popular positions of its citizens.

Population and Sample

To get a better insight, the study focused on a small population of 17 individuals who were current or retired government officials, historians from universities, and historical societies

from across the world. The background of the sampled size was important to the study, with individuals that were well educated and experienced in real life events from this time period helped to authenticate the information received. This population included both males and females, professionals who were US citizens, individuals who were between the ages from late-30s to mid-80s with a variation of ethnicities that included Asian, European, and Middle Eastern backgrounds. The population included those who are general or board members of numerous historical associations, societies, lecturers, and professors around the world. This population focused on highly educated individuals with years of experience in teaching and researching European history during the Cold War era. Interviewing historians who specialize in post-Soviet Europe in the last two decades of the 20th century could facilitate insights and information on events that have led to changes or creations of capitalist governments.

Since this was a focused group of government officials and historians on a particular period, the availability pool of professionals was an extremely limited population. For instance, there are dedicated projects, museums, associations, societies, and institutions with resolute historians and professors on staff that specialize in the Cold War, in particularly the USSR. These groups with dedicated staff and resources focused directly on topics of the Cold War and are staffed with anywhere from single digit historians to a few dozen, leaving approximately 200 historians to choose from (Association, n.d.; People, n.d.; Project Staff, 2024; The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, 2023). The focus on a pool of 17 individuals may help to give an appropriate depiction and understanding of information for this study.

For this study, the researcher used purposive and snowball sampling to identify potential candidates and increase the participation for interviews. Purposive sampling was used given the focus was on candidates who were either academic experts in European history during or post-

Cold War era and US Ambassadors that served in countries of the region. With such a small pool of historians and professionals, a secondary method used was snowball sampling. This method was helpful in finding individuals who were not accessible through traditional means (Ting et al., 2025). The historians from these groups were contacted through email to invite them to participate in a virtual interview (please see Appendix A). These individuals were interviewed using a semi-structured set of questions through a video conferencing format (Appendix C). To achieve the necessary data collection, interviews were continued until the required saturation had been achieved.

Instrumentation

Virtual interviews were scheduled by email as soon as each participant had contacted the researcher. The informed consents were attached to the interview confirmation email sent within 24 hours (Appendix B), and participants were asked to review, sign and return the file via email prior to the interview. Before beginning the interview, the researcher briefly went over the informed consent, explaining the research and purpose of the interview being performed as well as the rights and freedoms to withdraw at any time upon written request during the study if they feel uncomfortable in participating. Their signature of this consent acknowledges they were willingly participating in these interviews.

The interviews consisted of 16 questions that focused on what countries were economically strong or weak both during and after the Cold War along with countries that may have been susceptible to financial corruption or success in a capitalist focused government. Other questions looked at the Cold War conflict and any impact on a country's change in government. Another factor of questions looked at how day-to-day rights of citizens and exploitation in any of these countries of the region may have influenced the push away from socialism and the drive for

capitalism. At the same time, it seemed that growth of the world's technology and communication was bringing nations closer together with influence and reach on a larger scale. Questions looked at globalization and if any of these elements may have influenced these countries to transition from the USSR and drive for independence as a capitalist government.

The interviews were audio recorded and lasted approximately 19-88 minutes; some participants were direct, and others elaborated more on their respected responses. Transcript data were auto transcribed using Zoom software and was manually reviewed for accuracy of the interview. An interview transcript was also emailed to each participant within two days after their interview. Participants were given an option to review and correct if desired within seven days of receipt. Transcripts were then uploaded into the NVivo software for thematic development. NVivo is effective to help manage the data from the interviews to reduce human error during this study (Shin & Kwon, 2022). Since interview questions were the instrument used for this study, no field or pilot testing was performed.

Study Procedures

As mentioned earlier in the population and sample segment, data collection for this study occurred through interviewing qualified historians familiar with the period of the USSR's fall and the rebuilding of the countries within this group of republics. Additionally multiple sources of data were used that included scholarly articles and archived government documents related to this subject (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Scholarly articles were accessed through the National University database, while archived government documents were found and downloaded through research of non-profit Cold War era study and institutional websites.

In order to utilize the data of information properly from these sources, procedures were established and followed to ensure proper implementation for this study. These documents, such

as scholarly articles, were utilized based on the 11 different topics being researched that related to this study and its time period. The topics included policies, globalization, economy, human rights, war and conflict, trade, foreign investment, government, Cold War growth, and citizen's rights. This same procedure was used when researching government documents on non-profit Cold War and post-Cold War websites. These articles and documents were then uploaded to the NVivo program which will be discussed in data analysis.

The first step of this phase involved networking with numerous historical societies worldwide that focus on 20th century history to identify and recruit potential participants. The participants that were being recruited are considered experts and well educated in the Cold War, the fall of the USSR, and the post-Soviet nation building. During this initial step, confirmation of the potential participant's background and knowledge was performed. Upon confirmation, the second step included obtaining the participant's permission by explaining the research and assessment so the individual being interviewed understands the study along with receiving a consent form to sign. In addition to the explanation and consent form, the participants were notified of their rights and freedoms to withdraw at any time during the study if they felt uncomfortable.

For the third step of this study, the focus was on communicating with the participants and scheduling an interview date and time. For this step, email was the most effective form of communication to accommodate each participant's location and time zone. It is important to note, for those who were interviewed, no incentives were provided to complete this study.

The fourth step included the researcher executing the interview with questions that are in line with the research that focused on the problem and purpose statements of this study. These interviews were performed through the Zoom video conferencing platform. This allowed for

face-to-face conversation in real time and permitted for clarity to answer and follow-up questions during the interview.

For the fifth step, transcribing the recorded interviews to a transcript was performed by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to email the transcripts to the interviewees to verify accuracy of the information. It also allowed for the researcher to store this data on a password protected computer to make data extraction from the interviews much easier. The sixth step included analyzing the data that was collected through interviews from current historians through the NVivo software, which is discussed in further detail in the next section.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study included the recorded interviews to be transcribed using a voice to text converting tool. For interviews performed through the Zoom platform, these were transcribed in real time using the programs transcription tool. To further assist the researcher with the qualitative data analysis, the NVivo software was used to improve the accuracy of the information assessed (Goyal & Deshwal, 2023). NVivo provided a systematic framework that reduced errors that occur through manual coding, such as focusing on phrases, keywords, or topics from interviews, journal articles, and archived documents that were uploaded. This system also allowed for accurate retrieval of information that was also traceable through automated audit trails.

This software allows for the information that is being managed for this study to be separated by data sets or coding (Goyal & Deshwal, 2023). With the data collected, the codes that were created allowed for specific information from these different sources to be gathered and labeled. This allowed the NVivo software to obtain these data points from the codes that were relevant to the research questions and be accessed for further review. These data sets or

codes consisted of information being analyzed such as countries that transitioned to capitalism and showed patterns and themes related to the research questions for this study.

Data triangulation was used to validate the accuracy of the information. This was experienced when the researcher uploaded scholarly articles and archived documents from their respected sources to NVivo into this study's project. After interviewing all the participants for this study each transcript was verified for accuracy, then all 17 transcripts were uploaded into NVivo. Once they were uploaded, the articles, documents, and transcripts were organized into data folders and read by the researcher while links and codes were labeled based on the topics they represented allowing for classifications. The researcher observed that numerous articles, documents, and transcripts included multiple codes and linked references.

After the researcher performed this with more than 100 articles, documents, and transcripts attributes of these items were assigned, and integration of these topics occurred. At this point parenting of the data occurred, which resulted in the creation of four themes that all of this data formed. This was performed by verifying the information gathered from documents and scholarly articles researched, and interviews with historians performed by the researcher.

Assumptions

This qualitative generic approach study had a few assumptions, with the initial being enough participants who would agree to and complete the interview process in order to reach saturation. A second assumption is that historians who participated in this study were delivering accurate and honest responses to the questions. The third assumption was the questions were directed at gathering accurate information from the participant's responses for the researcher to obtain data that was useful for the study. The justification for these three assumptions were connected to the underlying rationale that academic research was being performed where expert

participants would not be difficult to attain where accurate information would be given by interviewed individuals.

Limitations

For this study there were a few limitations. The first limitation of this study involved the amount of time that may be available to accurately obtain the information for the study. Many of these historians reside or work in different regions of the world, so timing could have been a limitation with the difference in time zones and even professional responsibilities taking precedence. With these two specific concerns of time, this could have created an issue with obtaining the necessary number of interviews in the allocated time period leading to an issue with validating the information gathered in the interviews if the number of interviewees falls short of the minimum number needed. For a study this size approximately 15 participants is often times a sufficient amount before saturation is reached (Sargeant, 2012). Having a road map prepared helped to alleviate the waste of time needed to obtain the data for this study that followed a set timeline. This included preparing interview questions that focused on addressing the problem and purpose statements before scheduling interviews. This included setting aside a few weeks to schedule and complete interviews, along with days or even a couple of weeks to follow up after the interview to verify the data collected.

A second potential limitation included the years that are encompassed in this study. Though this study focused on a 10-year period that included the end of the Cold War and start of the post-Cold War in Europe, expanding upon the amount of years may gain a better picture of a long-term effect on this study. This limitation could have caused the study to be short of a bigger picture of the long-term results that capitalist governments could have on these countries. To decrease the risk of distraction from the RQ, a 10-year period was more likely to focus on the

potential themes that influenced these nations to transition. Instead, a focus of 20 years or more would focus on an outcome that resulted from a change and distracts from this studies RQ.

Delimitations

For this qualitative study the delimitation of this research focused on historians from numerous historical societies, universities, and non-profits that are concentrated on Cold War and post-Cold War Europe. This emphasis could give better insight into events leading up to and after the Cold War that may have influenced nations transitioning to a capitalist government. As noted in Chapter one research method and design, using the small purposeful sample approach for this study allowed for a pool of 17 participants to be interviewed in order to gain a better understanding through the PFT framework on answers to the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As mentioned in earlier chapters, a larger concentration of participants would not necessarily be needed to obtain the results from these interviews.

Ethical Assurances

When it came to the consideration of this study, the subjects (historians') participation followed the guidelines established in the Belmont Report (Nagai et al., 2022). This allowed the participants that were interviewed the freedom to participate through signing a voluntary consent form. This gave the subjects confidentiality and freedom of information that is shared during the interview. These interviews were reliant on the interviewee's knowledge of the subject and charity for their time and honesty of the information that they shared during the research (Nagai et al., 2022). The subjects were interviewed on historical events that occurred during the late 20th century. The risk to these participants was minimal due to the information being extracted from real world occurrences. Since this study had what could be considered a sufficient standard of a minimum number of participants to be interviewed and established requirements, this study

received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection (Appendix D).

After the introduction and recruitment process, communication was established through email and interviews were performed and recorded via a video application. During this process of communication and information gathering, everyone's information was kept separately from other participants with alias and stored separately in a password protected program and device which only the researcher had access. The recorded data were collected from each participant and transcribed, and a data review of triangulation was performed through the NVivo to minimize the researcher's biases. Another mechanism used to avoid researcher bias, was to have all 16 interview questions written in an open-ended format to reduce leading participants to give specific answers. To ensure anonymity, each participant was assigned an alphanumeric designation of P01-P17 in chronological order of the date and time interviews were completed. This data was stored in a private and secure location to which only the researcher had access for a minimum of three years after the study officially closed. In order to avoid bias from the researcher, two mechanisms were put in place and used through this study.

Summary

In this chapter the focus was on the methodology and design of the research that occurred to gain information on this topic. This included looking at the nature of the qualitative research using a generic approach and how it was executed, along with the population size of those being interviewed. In addition, this chapter looked at any materials that may be used and clarify with definitions of any variables in the study. The study procedures and data analysis were explained to give a step-by-step description of how the research was performed and how the information

gathered was evaluated. Part of this evaluation included discussing assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical standards that were involved with this study.

In the following chapter of this dissertation the results from the research are discussed. Chapter four evaluated the trustworthiness and results of the data gathered. The research question was assessed with the new data obtained and gave an evaluation of these findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

This general qualitative study examined the last decade of the 20th century after the fall of the USSR and focused on which post-Soviet countries adopted a capitalist (democratic) government. The problem addressed was what factors influenced some former Soviet nations to adopt and maintain a capitalistic form of government after the fall in 1991 of the USSR, while other former communist bloc countries regressed to a socialist government (Kuntadi & Damayantie, 2022). The purpose of this generic qualitative research method that used a small purposeful sample design study was to investigate factors that may have influenced some former USSR nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. Those countries that adopted a capitalist government had positive financial outcomes while those other countries did not. Having awareness of these signs could help outside nations, corporations, and international organizations prepare for potential financial impacts on a country, region, and supported industries (Kalai et al., 2023).

A study that examined the countries in the post-USSR may help to provide insights as to what factors could influence a change from an authoritarian state to a capitalist government. Some factors may include economic woes, disarray from conflict, or the uprising of downtrodden citizens (Lewczuk, 2019; Parrott, 2022). Several countries in Europe that did break away from the USSR found various degrees of economic independence after the Cold War through emerging, sustainable industries, and international investments (Fuchs-Schündeln & Schündeln, 2020; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2023). If this problem was not addressed, there could be a loss of awareness of how these potential triggers fester and expand (Boer, 2023). The purpose of this study was to explore what factors influenced some former USSR nations to adopt a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. There is a need to develop an in-depth

understanding of the 27 countries that separated from the former USSR European communist bloc and understand what factors may have influenced 18 of these countries to convert and sustain a capitalist form of government (Geller & Guedes, 2017).

This chapter identified the data that was gathered in this study. Trustworthiness of the data collected was then examined. This includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data. After this was established, the results from the study are discussed and how it aligns with the research question for this study. From here the findings of this study are indicated and how they relate to the research question for this study.

Trustworthiness of the Data

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the sources that were used to obtain the data for this study included historical documents, peer reviewed journal articles, and interviews with historians well knowledgeable, along with government employees whose assignments and experience relate to the topic being researched. Having trust that these sources being utilized are important, but ensuring the validity of the data collected for this study is most important (Donaldson & Conway, 2015). Investing resources to obtain this information could be at a loss if the data gathered is not dependable or accurate. Reporting of a study with invalid data puts into question the ethical standards of those reporting and the reliability of the study. To validate that the data collected are dependable, it is critical to evaluate the trustworthiness of the information (Berghella et al., 2023). Trustworthiness is evaluated through the process of verifying the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study's data collected.

As technology grows and the availability of verifiable data is more easily available for studies, so is misinformation and incorrect materials (Hanson-DeFusco, 2023). In order to ensure

the data that had been collected for a study is accurate, the trustworthiness of the information must be confirmed. As the first aspect of trustworthiness, credibility focuses on the truth of the data, such as any biases by the participants of the study, audit trails, and observation notes that may help to confirm the information gathered, and any interferences the researcher may have experienced during the data collection process (Cope, 2014). Interview questions were emailed ahead of time to the participants, and this helped them gather their thoughts prior to the appointment time.

A method used to enhance the data's credibility was through the use of triangulation (Ahmed, 2024). Similar to a civil or criminal investigation, triangulation uses different sources to obtain more information on the subject or matter being investigated. Instead of just interviewing participants and being content with the information gathered, investigators also looked to obtain visual and even audio proof to collaborate and validate the verbal evidence gathered from participants. For this study, data triangulation was used to validate the credibility of the researched information gathered. Instead of having only interviews of 17 individuals considered to be experts, additional data from archives and journal articles were used to help validate the answers to the interview questions. The secondary data (scholarly articles) were processed through NVivo in a separate analysis from that of the primary data (interview transcripts).

Historically archived documents were publicly available from non-profit organizations through downloading on their webpage. In addition, peer-reviewed journal articles must meet various standards of credibility in order to be published. Many resources were used to help explore historical occurrences that may often be overlooked. Using these additional points of data helped to confirm the information received during the interviews. Utilizing this method of

triangulation enhanced the credibility of the interview data received and helped to highlight any potential biased participants (Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Patton, 1999).

As for transferability, two techniques were used, both of which were explained in Chapter three's population and sample section. There were several techniques used for qualitative studies. Purposive and snowball samplings were used to identify potential candidates and increase the participation for interviews in this study. Dependability of the data was an important aspect within the qualitative study. Dependability focuses on the stability and reliability of the data that is collected throughout the period of the study (Drisko, 2025). For this study as the research progressed, documentation of decisions made were kept in order increase the dependability of data gathered. Through using technology for interviews, recorded calls were possible with the use of Zoom, leading to videos and transcripts from each participant's call. To ensure dependability and the generated transcripts were accurate, the researcher read the transcript while watching and listening to each recorded interview. Additionally, dependability was maximized through data triangulation method previously described.

When looking at confirmability, the process focused on how the researcher was able to stay objective to the findings throughout the research and reporting on it without bias (Ahmed, 2024). A pivotal and important phase in this study was ensuring interview data obtained was authentic and not subjectively interpreted. This was accomplished by recording the interview through audio and video forms and verifying the system generated transcripts were accurate keeping the participants response and viewpoint authentic (Cope, 2014). In addition, the researcher had kept an audit trail with a record of decisions and thoughts as the study continued to develop, documenting how the study had developed to show the path to completion.

Results

The findings from the data collected were from 17 participants that are presented in this chapter for the study. In addition to the participants interviewed, document research comprised of more than 90 articles from academic journals that focused on topics of policies, globalization, economy, human rights, war and conflict, trade, foreign investment, government, Cold War growth, and citizen's rights. Along with these articles, 20 archived historical documents were included that focused on activities within numerous countries that were under the control of the Soviet Union, leading to the fall of the USSR from non-profit Cold War and post-Cold War societies. Recruitment for this study was performed over a five-month period through emails to individuals and various institutes such as universities and non-profit organizations throughout the world. Participants were selected based upon their professional experience and academic knowledge of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras of post-communist Europe. Throughout the five-month period an introductory email or statement on a website was given stating the purpose of the study and whom the researcher was trying to contact. Those individuals who volunteered to participate would give their consent through both an email message and an informed consent document that was provided.

The process to obtain participants for this study was completed over a five-month period. This started through finding non-profits that focused on Cold War and post-Cold War eras, many of which located in Europe and the US connected to educational institutions and government funding. Another source of recruitment was contacting history professors that specialized in the Cold War era at ivy league and other major universities in Europe and the US. Through this recruitment, it was noted that a small percentage of professors and lecturers at Ivy League

universities such as Brown, Columbia, Harvard, and Princeton were retired ambassadors. From this point a third avenue of recruitment was used that focused on reaching out to prior diplomats and ambassadors that served in countries that were focused on this study.

A recruitment email was created and sent out to interested parties at non-profits, universities, and prior diplomats for interviews for this study. Over the five-month period emails were sent out to 200 potential candidates to be interviewed for this study. Of these 200 emails that were sent, 70 individuals responded to the emails, representing a 35% response rate. Out of these 70 responses, 53 declined to be interviewed due to either time constraints, project or work demands, some did not feel comfortable being interviewed, or felt they did not specialize or have adequate knowledge of this topic. The remaining 17 respondents (8.5%) were received and interviewed within the last two months of recruitment.

Willing participants of the study included four professors (three actively teach in the US, and one in the United Kingdom), two lecturers (one of these lecturers was an ambassador, and the other an international civil rights attorney), 11 retired ambassadors (who all served in post-communist countries covered in this study). As noted in Table 1 each of the participants were given a simple coding from P01–P17 making it easier to reference their information and maximize privacy. All 17 participants of this study enthusiastically contributed through Zoom video interview (16) or phone interview (1). All of the interviewed ambassadors (P01, P07-17) had boots on the ground working in countries that were part of the USSR or satellite nations and experienced both the various degrees and effects of socialism and the nations' change to capitalism had on local and international dealings. These included transitions of an old guard (USSR) to a new uncharted terrain (capitalism) and the slow and often learning and failing as

the governments were being structurally established and maintained on both a regional and international platform.

As for P02, the experience as a human rights attorney had insight on treatments of people in some of the countries covered in this study on an international level with the UN. As for the four professors from various universities, three of them had personal and academic experiences in countries that were part of the USSR. Not only being an expert on subjects that surround the USSR, but these educators also spent time in these European countries and experienced firsthand daily life in a post-Cold War era. As for the interviews, each were scheduled for a specific time and date that was convenient for the participant, at least one hour was reserved, some were longer while others were shorter. Each participant was notified prior to and gave their consent to record the interview. Participants were asked questions which allowed them to respond from their personal and professional experiences and knowledge of the subject.

During the interviews participants provided responses to the questions based on their knowledge that was obtained through education studies building on their academic specialty, experience working in any of those countries in a US government position, or a mixture of both academic and professional experience. These interviews were all recorded to verify the responses clearly and transcribe the conversations accurately. Though the original interview times were expected to be 30-60 minutes, some participants were direct with their responses, while others elaborated more on their respected answers, with actual interview times being between 19- 88 minutes in length for this study. To obtain a better perspective on the demographics of all 17 participants interviewed, information is provided in Table 1.

Table 1*Participants Demographics (n=17)*

Participant	Sex	Position	Background
P01	M	Ambassador/Lecturer	U.S. Ambassador Economic & Social Council of UN, Deputy UN High Commissioner Refugees, founding Director USAID Office of transition Initiatives
P02	M	Attorney/Lecturer	Human Rights Missions Romania, Counsel of Foreign relations, Legal counsel 6th UN General Assembly
P03	M	Professor	Russian & Soviet history
P04	M	Professor	Armenian & Slavic history
P05	F	Professor	Stalinism, Soviet border lands, & Soviet Jewry
P06	M	Professor	Soviet Union Penal System (Gulag)
P07	M	Ambassador	NATO
P08	F	Ambassador	Czech Republic
P09	M	Ambassador	Armenia & Kazakhstan
P10	F	Ambassador	Bulgaria
P11	F	Ambassador	Slovenia
P12	M	Ambassador	Azerbaijan, Soviet Union, & Czech
P13	F	Ambassador	Albania & Bulgaria
P14	M	Ambassador	Belarus & Georgia
P15	M	Ambassador	Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, & Turkmenistan
P16	M	Ambassador	Kazakhstan & Georgia
P17	M	Ambassador	Georgia

Research Question #1

As reported through interviews with historians who specialize in this region, what factors influenced some post-communist European nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991 where others did not?

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, interviews with participants consisted of 16 questions that focused on influences these countries may have experienced such as economic strength or weakness during and after the Cold War. Whether or not the Cold War conflict was a weighting factor within the USSR and satellite countries that created a need for transitioning away from a socialist to a capitalist government. Questions in these interviews asked about day-to-day rights of citizens and any exploitation may have influenced rebellions and even political candidates that organized against the established socialist government and pushed a new and fair government for their citizens. As technology and communications continue to bring the world together, questions looked at globalism and its effects on a multinational transition away from socialism.

As mentioned for data analysis in the earlier chapter, the researcher uploaded scholarly articles and archived documents from their respected sources to NVivo. After uploading the articles, documents, and transcripts were read and the raw data within these documents were coded, leading them being organized under several categories that included policies, globalization, economy, human rights, war and conflict, trade, foreign investment, government, Cold War growth, and citizen's rights. After these categories were created, these related codes were clustered together to identify any patterns leading to the finding of themes. The researcher observed that numerous articles, documents, and transcripts included multiple codes and linked references.

Concerning the research questions, from the data that were gathered through scholarly articles, archived documents, and responses from the interviews, four themes emerged. Assessing this information was performed through by coding information relevant to this study and placed into labeled folders based on the topics data represented. When assessing the responses from the participants on these questions, the data was visualized through a table that

confirmed the frequency of the themes the data represented. Table 2 showed the highest, lowest, and average percentages of responses from the participants to the questions that related to these themes. These percentages in Table 2 showed that of the 16 questions that were asked in each of the interviews with participants, four questions related to each of the four generated themes.

The first of these four themes were economics and how these countries were affected by the Cold War and post-war actions. Most of the participants agreed that economics was a factor for many of these post-socialist countries transitioning to a capitalist format. This supported other information such as scholarly articles and archived government documents that had been gathered and coded in NVivo. When it came to the second theme, conflict, the Cold War engulfed many of these countries that were involved due to relationship with the USSR. But many of these participants noted that these countries in this study may have found benefits from this conflict and the conclusion of it after decades of engagement.

Looking at the third theme that developed from these interviews, citizen's rights grew into a subject. Most of the participants acknowledged that rights of the citizens in these post-socialist countries began to become an area of concern as leadership styles changed and communication advancements developed. The fourth theme, globalization grew into a subject as many of the participants shared experiences and knowledge of how the world was growing in the ease and quickness of communications. Many noted that this could have opened the door to once closed off cultures of nations to different perspectives.

From the responses to the questions that each participant was asked, these were organized into the four themes discussed earlier. These themes came to creation based on the responses from the participants. As noted in Table 2, the occurrences of these themes were a higher percentage and more frequent in most participants responses, where a few occurrences were a

lower percentage and had a slightly different perspective. In general, the occurrence of these themes was about average (about 25%) for each of the themes for responses from the participants. Economy had a strong occurrence with 27.5 percent, globalization was 25.2 percent, citizen's rights at 24.2 percent, and conflict at 23.1 percent throughout the participant interviews.

Table 2

Themes and the Percentage of Frequency in Occurrence During Interviews

Theme	High	Low	Average
Citizen's Rights	38%	18%	24.2%
Conflict	29%	9%	23.1%
Economy	46%	21%	27.5%
Globalization	35%	15%	25.2%

As noted in Figure 1 on the following pages, the responses that were received by the participants were themed into four categories that included economy, conflict, citizen's rights, and globalization. This illustrated the responses received and broken them down into the themed categories. As noted in Figure 1, aside from a few, most of the participants' responses varied almost consistently throughout the themed categories. Overall, majority of the participants agreed that these themes had impacts on countries that were post-communist and -soviet who transitioned to a capitalist style of government.

Economy. Economy was the first of the four themes that was generated from the interview responses of the 17 participants. Though strong responses were received, 82% of the participants shared this as very influential on the move away from socialism in Europe. For instance, P05 indicated that “Countries integrated into EU or NATO were generally more stable. Due to external structures required economic and democratic reforms, preventing excessive corruption or authoritarian regression”. P11 relayed “Slovenia remained economically stable after independence. Successfully adapted to global trade, especially in pharmaceuticals had a stable bureaucracy and legal governance.”

Conflict. The second theme that came about from the interviews was conflict. All the participants had discussed that conflict influenced these countries’ transition from socialism to capitalism in one way or another. Though some noted that it was not important, 76% of the participants responses noted this was a strong factor. P06 reported “Cold War, nations like Poland and East Germany rediscovered their national identities. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia reawakened suppressed ethnic and nationalistic ambitions, triggering renewed pushes for independence, especially in the Balkans”. Whereas P03 relayed that “The Cold War’s legacy drove Romania to reorient to the West”.

Citizens’ Rights. When it came to the third theme of citizens’ rights in the interviews, all the participants’ responses did reflect that this had some influence on future changes. But 82% of the participants shared strong responses that a lack of citizen’s rights had a powerful impression on the move away from socialism in Europe. For instance, P04 reported that “Soviet citizens were more like subjects than true citizens, they lacked the right to have rights.” P14 indicated that “Soviet crackdown in 1989 on peaceful protesters marked a turning point.”

Globalization. The fourth theme that was generated from all the interviews conducted was globalization. 64% of the participants felt that globalization held a serious influence on the countries in this study and their transition to capitalism. As P02 noted “Integration into global trade was essential for post-Soviet countries. However, it caused pain due to loss of subsidies and exposure to global prices.” P08 reported “Foreign direct investment, market expansion, training from Western firms, and integration into international economic institutions (OECD) were key. Also, cultural exposure through media and travel helped promote democracy”.

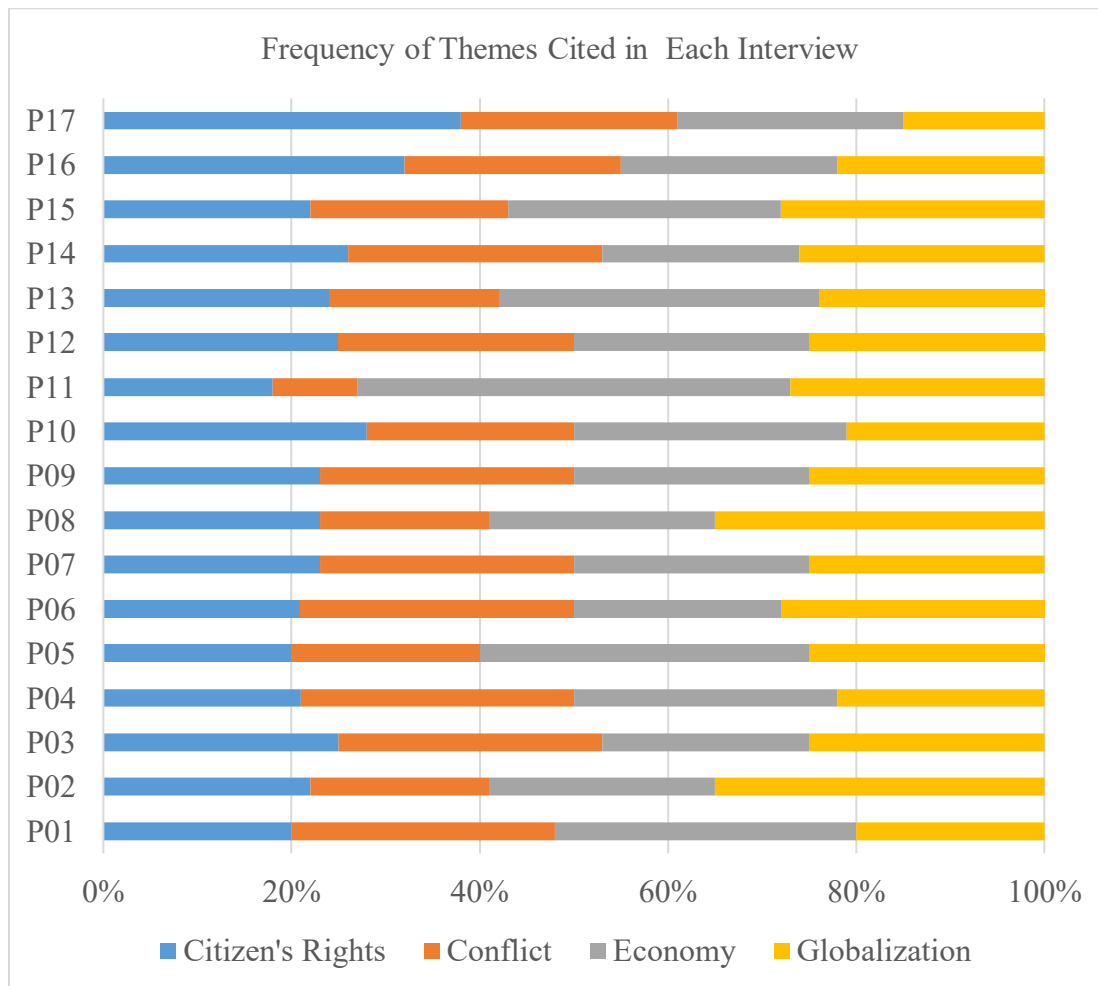
Figure 1 breaks down the degrees of which each of these themes may have had an impact on this transition near the end of and after the Cold War. When it came to the themes and responses received from the participants, economy and citizens’ rights seemed to have consistent responses from almost all of the participants, except for a few outliers. In both the conflict and globalization themes many of the responses varied and were not consistent with almost all of the participants except for a few outliers as well.

Evaluation of the Findings

Having participants that experienced or are subject matter educators on historical events that were years and even decades of occurrence and aftereffects, the qualitative generic approach allowed for the open-ended information to be effectively gathered, resulting in rich data and thematic development. This enabled a deep understanding as to how the events of the Cold War may have influenced future changes. Whether it was economic, conflict, citizen’s rights, or even globalization, factors enabled many of these once communist countries to transition to capitalist styles of governing to improve the future, potential self-reliance, and success of these nations (Kahlke, 2014).

Figure 1

Interview Results and Percentages of Themes Influencing Nations



Concerning the research question, as mentioned earlier in the literature review, many countries began to expand and become free and not repressed. When looking at the literature that may have pointed to some of the factors or themes that had a potential impression on these nations it may be an easy understanding. But when the research created findings, it brought to

light results that gave some context to the themes that were found and discussed. Such as citizen's rights, as Lewczuk (2019) indicated that citizen's rights were an important factor for a country due to its connection to foreign funding. But in order to have this potential investment, a nation needed to show that its citizens have freedoms that are considered to be humane and just (Dimitrijevic, 1994). This also allows a government to be supported by its citizens to grow in many different faucets, instead of slowly becoming an authoritarian regime that may become limited with its non-natural resources.

Through the interviews and further research, the information gathered shared the similar support of Lewczuk (2019), that not only were citizens tired of the repression of rights and ill-treatment, but starting a new government that needed financial opportunities, and foreign funding helps with this issue (Kassab, 2024). As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, de Wat (2019) brought to light as nations were looking for a new form of governing and central point for maintaining a capitalist government would be a sustainable economy. As the trend of many socialist countries on the boarder of the iron curtain and the West started to realize countries outside of the USSR had better economies. These included independence from a centralized government in another country, newer goods, and updated technology (Ther, 2016). This was found to be consistent with the findings from this study that confirmed the existing research that had been found.

A third factor discussed included conflict, as Kormarek and Wagner (2021) focused on the detriment that war could have on a country's finances and morale. Leading many citizens within the Eastern European and Eurasian countries to push back on the original objective of the Cold War due to the negative impact the war was having on living conditions and finances throughout the socialist countries in the region. Majority of the subjects interviewed confirmed

Kormarek and Wagner (2021) and other existing research on this theme. Below each theme that was created from this study is discussed along with the result from the research performed.

Economy. From the consistency of the occurrences from all the interviews, the first theme, economy was the most recognized as an influence on the countries in this study. From the research gathered through multiple sources, economy was vital for future growth in the Soviet Union, which was becoming weaker as each year passed. This was putting strain on many countries that were within the USSR and other nations attached to the European socialist community. The once prosperous USSR was starting to dissolve, instead of improving the lives of citizens and being the caretaker of its society, the socialist government became like a disease taking resources and opportunities away from the masses and giving back to a small elite group of people (Kaiser et al., 2021). Updated infrastructure, basic needs for housing, medical, and protection were scarce and in return was used as a bargaining chip in exchange for compliance to the government (Durmanov, 2022).

Conflict. As for conflict, many of the participants agreed that this was a factor that affected many of these nations to turn away from socialism and embrace capitalism instead. Conflict helped to highlight the weakness and outdated ruling of a once powerful alliance of nations under a socialist government (Akulicj & Kaźmierczyk, 2018). In addition, many of these countries and its citizens were experiencing increasing inflation and limited communication and resources due to the relationship with nations outside of the Soviet Union, satellite states, and partnering socialist republics. As these pressures continued to grow through war, the push for a new style of government grew as well (Şatalan, 2022). Participants in this study confirmed that conflict was another influence that helped to end the Cold War and socialism in Europe.

Citizens' Rights. When it came to the third theme of citizen's rights, the consensus from the participants responses showed that freedoms and respect from the government was an important factor. As noted in Table 2, citizen's rights were an important aspect for many countries to transition from socialism to a capitalist government. From the decades of citizen's being subjective to a form of authoritarian rule and the misrepresentation of sacrifice for the better good for all had run its course with the overall population within the USSR and other socialist countries in Europe (Kyrgyzbayev & Khusanovna, 2022). It had become evident through the responses that this type of expectation from the socialist governments of the citizens was outdated and the positive returns were not seen by citizens, especially the younger generation (Stojkov, 2021).

Another characteristic that played in the push for better rights was the ability to celebrate each country and its ethnicities' cultures without fear of swift repercussions by the government. As P04 noted, these individuals were treated "more like subjects than true citizens" and the celebration of diverse cultures were seen as a contempt to the Soviet Union and those countries linked to the USSR. Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, different ethnicities and cultures were limited in being able to celebrate their heritages (Ther, 2016). As part of the citizen's rights theme, so was being able to celebrate one's culture instead of having one being forced on individuals and communities (Ther, 2016).

Globalization. A fourth theme that came to light from this study was globalization. As discussed earlier, the three previous themes all had influences on these countries transitioning from a socialist government to a capitalist structure. Globalization as it was growing, brought ease of communication among nations throughout the world, so the ability to shelter populations from outside influences was becoming more and more difficult. The growth of media,

telecommunications, and other forms of communications brought long distances within distance (Hellman, 1998). Instead of just Eastern European countries that bordered the West, other heavily influenced socialist nations were experiencing this new westernization impact. This included the potential freedoms that could come to populations through capitalist governments and economies (Dall’Agnola, 2021). From the results of these interviews, overall, all the participants agreed that globalization was another influence that advanced the downfall of socialism in these countries and the acceptance of capitalism.

Summary

In this chapter the focus had been placed on the trustworthiness and results of the data gathered from the research. For the data, this chapter discussed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability reflecting the transferability of the data from this research. In addition, this chapter objectively looked at the results from the analysis along with the demographic information of the study. The guiding framework used in this qualitative study was the generic approach. Addressing the research question helped to analyze the information obtained through interviews and created themes from the information gathered through interviews. Within this chapter the participants in this study included historians and professionals that had a background and even firsthand experience in this subject matter.

In the final chapter of this dissertation the implications, recommendations, and conclusions from the research of this study would be discussed. Chapter five would discuss the consequences of the research and any significance it might have in the topic of study. The research question would be assessed with recommendations from the data obtained and given recommendations for future research on this subject.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This general qualitative study examined the last decade of the 20th century after the fall of the USSR and focused on why some post-Soviet countries adopted a capitalist (democratic) government. As the Soviet Union fell, so did a multinational socialist system, the problem looks at what factors influenced some post-communist European nations to adopt and maintain a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991, where others did not. This study addressed this through some of the factors that were considered included the stress from negative or unstable economies, disarray from conflict, citizens who were tired of being repressed by an oppressing and controlling regime (Lewczuk, 2019; Parrott, 2022). Though there were 27 countries in total that were influenced by this change, 18 of these countries continued to sustain one form or another of a capitalist government (Geller & Guedes, 2017). Where other former communist bloc countries adopted capitalism, but they soon reverted to more of an authoritarian or controlling government.

During the data gathering phase it was noted in hindsight a better awareness of these signs could have been embraced better, instead of nations awaiting a bail out or an emergency last minute plan to be created. Other nations that were eager to embrace this new method of governing were able to achieve various degrees of economics through new markets, sustainable industries, and international investments (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2023). Although this may have occurred decades ago, the findings could be used to help future nations that may experience similar factors that these countries encountered. These findings could also be incorporated into businesses and international organizations to prepare for potential financial impacts in a country, region, and supported industries (Kalai et al., 2023).

This study aimed to explore the triggers that propelled these countries to abandon the socialist administration ruling a region and transition to an independent capitalist style of government. The criteria that were required for the participants to meet included specialized professional, educational, or a mixture of both for this time-period (Cold War and post-Cold War) and region (Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia). This study's research method and design was the qualitative generic approach. Standard methods used in this generic approach included one-on-one Zoom and phone-structured interviews of 19-88 minutes, which were scheduled at the participant's convenience. These interviews were all recorded to verify the responses clearly and transcribe the conversations accurately. During the interviews participants provided responses to the questions based on their experience and knowledge obtained through educational studies, academic specialties, experience working in any of those countries or regions whether through a US government, international, non-profit position, or a mixture of both academic and professional experiences.

Limitations that were experienced for this study included the availability of the number of historians and professionals that have a background, education, and knowledge of specific topics of the Cold War and post-Cold War in Europe. One of the two specific limitations that affected this study was its limited generalizing of the study to USSR and satellite socialist countries. The USSR was a fairly closed-door system of countries at the height of the Cold War; their intelligence was often sought after by many organizations outside of their society. As a noted in chapter one, the Soviet Union was in the space race with the United States, this along with trying to gain an upper hand with military weapons and growth this type of rivalry and war against a competitor would lead another government or society to be very secretive of information and materials. From this, the difficulty of finding information and experts on an

events that occurred more than 30 years ago was a limitation. The second limitation included time sensitivity of the data analysis through transcripts and coding from the interviews.

The risk related to participant availability was reduced through additional recruitment methods. The additional recruitment methods included networking with historians and diplomatic officials from different historical societies and universities. Candidates were found through historical society and non-profit websites, professional social media sites such as historian-based Facebook groups and even LinkedIn. These sources were also used to find other potential candidates that were interviewed for this study.

Moving through this chapter, information addressed the results in comparison with similar research. Recommendations for practice and future research from this study were also discussed. This chapter concluded with summarizing the study, the problem discussed, along with the importance of this study and its potential use.

Implications

The results obtained from this study revealed the impact that the Cold War had on the countries and their populations throughout the iron curtain and other European post-socialist nations. As the dissolution of the USSR was occurring many of these socialist nations were now at threat of poverty and a new form of governing was needed to be established for these nations. The problem addressed considered what factors may have influenced a country to change its government structure to a capitalist style (Kuntadi & Damayantie, 2022).

This study identified some impacts that affected these countries in their decision in adopting a capitalist form of government. To better understand the perspective of these nations' new leaders, the theoretical framework of PFT was used. PFT helps to gauge how well

government actions, laws, and policies are received and supported by the public they are meant to influence and support (Campbell, 2020). This theory was used to help mold policies to fit in with the goals and objectives of a government (Busemeyer, 2022). This helped to share whether those within the government were meeting the expectations or desires of the population they were supposed to be serving. This could be shown through voting trends, positive or negative economic results and media feedback (Schober, 2023).

Keeping the four different themes in mind helped understand how some post-Soviet countries chose to become a capitalist centered government and why others may not have been as dedicated. Whether it was to continue as a socialist, become an authoritarian regime, or capitalist government; nations were needing to consider their future. Going from a large network of socialist government body, what was once state assets under the USSR, property and businesses become privatized and were seized by reformers (Gafurov, 2019). When using PFT for this study, looking at the policy innovation and diffusion of this theory helped to perceive why many of these post-Soviet countries chose to adopt a capitalist government.

The effects of the research lead to assessing the results of the research question for this study. As a result, this study identified four specific themes that included: 1) Economy, 2) Citizen's Rights, 3) Conflict, and 4) Globalization. These themes revealed through the study are listed in their relation to the research question below.

Research Question #1

As reported by interviews with historians, what factors influenced some former USSR nations to adopt a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991?

Theme 1. The influence that a country's economy had in transitioning to a capitalist style of government. After reviewing the responses from the interviews, economics was recognized as

a significant theme among all the participants in this study. In this study, 14 of the 17 participants communicated that most, if not all, of these nations within the USSR and associating countries' economic growth was stagnated. Once the economic stagnation began to be experienced by many countries within the Iron Curtain in the 1970s, inflation began to grow, making it a financial burden to purchase daily necessities. In addition, countries that border the more prosperous Western European countries saw the positive economic growth from capitalism of these democratic nations (Kaiser et al., 2021). For more than a decade many of these socialist European countries were experiencing the downfall from being once prosperous and growing to impoverishing and deteriorating.

In the interviews performed, participants spoke about the lack of open trade with nations outside of their socialists' network along with the inflation to the economy that was experienced through the 1973 and 1979 oil crisis (Domonkos, 2023). The oil crisis created increased costs on oil and gas products that in turn hit the USSR and the connected socialist nations, leading to stagnant economic growth due to inability to expand technology that could have helped these countries stay up to date and diversify in new and growing markets that may have allowed for trade with "Western" nations to increase economic growth. These oil crisis, lack of technology, trade, along with the long-term effects of the Cold War left these socialist countries unable to focus on the future with modernizing to meet the new economic challenges facing nations (Domonkos, 2023).

After years of experiencing the negative effects of inflation, the economic coordination within the system of these connected socialist countries began to dissolve. With this dissolution some nations looked to the US and other western countries for loans and economic support. This led many socialist nations to look for a new method of economics and government. These

countries seeing the success and stability from these Western countries, many figured that capitalism was the future or only way to become economically stable (Prečan, 1990). The economic implications in this dissertation found anthropomorphism was a strong positive consequence of a capitalist government in a country that had switched from socialism, which had been reflected in previous studies (Mercinger, 2013; Domonkos, 2023). Though it may not be immediately seen, these nations were met with financial opportunities such as expanded trade agreements, foreign investments, and member state union agreements such as the EU, NATO, and UN that allowed for these countries to become more financially stable and grow economically (Vashakmadze et al., 2025).

Understanding how limitations of economic driven goods and services could have short- and long-term financial implications for years after the events. For instance, Covid-19 affected supply chains, goods, and services for months and even years after the pandemic. Economically, the Cold War had a drastic effect on numerous economies in the region. Being sensitive to this information may have helped leaders become aware of the potential negative and positive outcomes. For the countries in this study, the realization came that a new government style was a better opportunity to grow, even with potential short falls than remaining with the current system.

Theme 2. Conflicts, such as the Cold War, influenced the countries discussed and their decision to convert from a socialist form of government to a capitalist method of governing. The preliminary suggestions looked at the Cold War conflict as a region connected in battle against the West. After interviewing the participants and assessing their responses, it was made known that conflicts including WWI, WWII, and the Cold War affected these socialist countries in many ways. This study included 14 of 17 participants noted that national identities of individual

countries were affected to the point that much of their individual nation's history was being wiped away and replaced by Soviet culture instead. The desire to regain nationalism for many of these countries was growing near the end of the Cold War, pushing for more independence and self-government from the Soviet Union (Aydemir & Güner, 2024).

As history has shown, conflicts may occur for various reasons, as seen through this research, years of repression had effects on the government and population. Most countries are aware that conflict could be costly and there may be different effects of negative and positive outcomes. Though the implications showed that many countries became independent and free from a failing government, it may be out of necessity and not a primary choice. As resources were limited to the mass populations and the focus was on increasing the Soviet's capabilities in the war against the West and the race for world dominance, infrastructure that was not significant to this achievement was often overlooked, leading to outdated and diminished living conditions of the public (Kohonen, 2009). As new capitalist governments were established in prior USSR and satellite countries, this study does reflect just as other similar research studies on this topic had observed, that conflict did create an influential and positive consequence to these societies in this region leading to positive affects around the world (Munson, 2011; Tatlić & Zagora, 2025). Conflict created more pressure on the Soviet government to eventually dissolve socialism and capitalism to emerge, these nations did struggle for years to become better through this option, something that may have never happened under Soviet rule (Tismaneau, 2009).

Theme 3. After decades of violations on basic citizen's rights during the Cold War, this implication did have an influence on the push for a new style of government in these socialist nations. From the initial research carried out, it seemed that the unfavorable living conditions, controlled routines, regulated goods available to citizens, along with the fear and pressure placed

on the mass populations to follow the principles and laws put in place by those in power were a point of disdain (Ther, 2016). In this study, 14 of the 17 participants in this study confirmed, what was abuse of citizen's rights under Soviet rule was slowly growing as the economy was tanking (Domonkos, 2023). This was ignored for years until the descent started sweeping into many different countries within the USSR and satellite nations that became a threat to the Socialist governments (Suny, 1999). This dissent grew from economic weakness outweighing the sacrifices needed to support the ideology, including the abuse citizens had experienced (Collins & Waller, 1992). Participants that worked in this region during this period also noted the growth of political movements with the establishment of new parties that represented what the citizens wanted (Tuma, 2001; Wilson Center, 1989a).

Though this was a transition among many different countries this stood to be a pivotal shift in governing after the Cold War. It had decades of implications leading newly elected leaders to ensure this was done correctly the first time and encapsulated what a capitalist government held (Schwarz, 2019). This study confirmed what previous research shared of how significant of consequences that abusing citizens and their rights had on the push for changes in government and the last impacts it could carry (Prečan, 1990; Dimitrijevic, 1994; Tatlić & Zagora, 2025). As Suny (1999) brings to light, "the Soviet experience was a dangerous, wrong-headed, even evil, experiment on living human beings" (A Brief Excursion in Soviet Historiography, para. 1). This real-world instance is a practical example for countries that may be in a comparable circumstance of transitioning to a capitalist style of governing. Just like other countries throughout the USSR that transitioned, there is always the potential for economic failure, changes in the government, or alliances with other nations that could result in regress back to a prior governing system (Suny, 1999).

Theme 4. Another aspect that correlated with these other themes is globalization and the influence this might have on these countries and their government transition. As the Cold War accelerated competition between both the US and the USSR, technology was a core focus of growth. With this brought the ability to communicate rapidly in various forms and travel further distances in a shorter time, creating interconnection of the world setting for globalization (Gnesotto, 1992). Globalization was echoed as one of the several factors that started to create a kink in the armor of the USSR. As globalization continued to knock at the Iron Curtain's door, populations in bordering countries started to notice how Western society really was compared to the propaganda shared through state media (Collins & Waller, 1992).

Out of all the participants, 11 of the 17 noted the exposure to Western civilization opened the door to a brighter future for many of these economically failing countries through capitalism. As the expansion of globalization and the fall of the USSR crossed, multinational groups began to be established or become members, such as the EU and NATO (McInnes, 1994). Opening the pathway for many of the post-socialist countries functioning under a capitalist style of government. An implication this study noted is that a change in the style of government brought practical opportunities, such as globalization became available. As these countries embraced capitalism, globalism had opened trade relations with countries that otherwise may have been difficult to reach or become a trading partner, instead making it easier to expand trade in and out of the region (Mencinger, 2013).

Recommendations for Practice

This qualitative study provides insight into four aspects that affected many socialist countries associated and within the USSR to transition into a capitalist governing body. This

study addressed how economics, conflicts, lack of citizen's rights, and globalization combined together to create perfect chaos that created pressure from the mass population towards a weakened administration to a new system of capitalist based democratic governments throughout the post USSR and satellite states (Kennard, 2004). This transition was years in the making with many barriers and roadblocks in administrative and economic changes due to the inexperience of officials (Appel, 2004). A big hurdle experienced was taking public assets and trying to disperse these into a privatized format without a successful plan or proper regulation (Appel, 2004). The findings of this study provide reinforcement and support for educators and administrators and exemplify the many components of the study's framework relative to providing this support.

The theoretical framework used in this qualitative case study was the Policy Feedback Theory (PFT) that helps to assess government changes based on public feedback (Campbell, 2020). PFT is a theoretical framework that works well with studies that focus more on government policies, programs, and even shifts in administrative dynamics (Campbell, 2020). This helps to understand how well policies are received if they are achieving the goals they may have been created to achieve, or if it is failing (Schober, 2023). This feedback could be received in various forms of collection such as analysis, government reports, investigations, media feedback, and public criticism (Schober, 2023). For this study PFT could be seen through feedback that focusses on financial success and failures of these nations, and the quality of life that citizens experience, along with their growth on an international scale.

Correlating with the PFT, the first recommendation for practice from this study that should be incorporated would require large governing bodies, such as the UN, EU, NATO and other regional groups to have a secondary economic plan on hand. This secondary economic plan would be focused on nations that are under authoritarian, communist, complete monarchy, and

socialist governments to have a transitioning plan available for their country. As the research touched on, some of the countries in this study struggled to create a new capitalist government without a blueprint or a plan to follow (Gill, 2013). The expectation of a secondary plan has the ability for a government to follow a blueprint. This blueprint could include detailed plans for a government restructuring, such as the style of governing, elections, and candidate eligibility to run for office (Wilson Center, 1989b). Another attribute of a secondary plan in the event it is needed should include the redistribution of state assets and businesses to public and private organizations along with the necessary policies to avoid fraud and long-term sustainability of these moves (Kaiser et al., 2021). Another venue of this plan includes restructuring a failing government to be a more successful (semi-capitalist) through opening the doors for new revenue streams of regional and world-wide trading partners (Brøgger, 2023; Petridou, 2014).

A second recommendation from this study would be to institute a regional or internationally connected requirement for all nations to be up to date or certified on the latest technologies. As seen prior to the end of the Cold War, globalization was actively growing, but nations under the tutelage of the USSR were in a sense cut off from the rest of the world through communications and trading, unaware of these advancements, were left at a disadvantage (Kennard, 2004). As several participants from the study pointed out Albania and Georgia were examples of countries that were below the bell curve for benefiting from globalization due to their lack of technology advancement and reliance on Russia. In turn this created a loss in potential foreign investments by businesses and other nations, which in turn could have increased these nations' GDP and expanded trade opportunities (Murshudli, 2022). Institute a technology-based certification, such as artificial intelligence or similar growing tech. Having a certification-based system recognized by others at regional and even international levels, would verify that

this nation is up-to-date and has the ability to expand in a strong market while the country was transitioning to a new governing system (Mencinger, 2013).

Recommendations for Future Research

As for recommendations for future research in this field of study, two have been identified. The first recommendation would be to consider creating a similar study among African or Asian countries and what factors may have influenced those nations to adopt a capitalist government. Considering a similar study like this one could have the opportunity to obtain more insights from historians and government officials with firsthand or secondary experience in many of these countries within these regions. This may also have the opportunity to create trends of government changes and motives that might have triggered these countries to transition and be used in future circumstances.

To piggyback, a second recommendation would include expanding the years of this study from 10 to 20 or even a 30-year period. This may provide researchers with a long-term view of how a change in governing to a capitalist form instead of a snapshot picture. The four themes that were created through this study as reasons for this change could also have effects on some of these same countries becoming more successful, stagnating, or even creating a shift into a new governing style for a few of these nations.

Summary

This study addressed the factors that influenced former USSR nations to adopt a capitalist form of government after the fall of the USSR in 1991. Provided insight and experiences from participants that studied or experienced events that led up to and after the fall of the USSR. This

study highlighted how the factors of economics, conflict, citizen's rights, and globalism caused a push for change from a socialist government to a better future through capitalism on a global scale. While at the time this was a large-scale transition for many countries in a small timeline, this could help future generations learn and adapt these changes to future situations with needed adjustments.

This study confirms that many countries found that capitalist governments were a more positive form of governing than that of socialism. Most if not all of the outlining and satellite nations, while governed under the USSR, experienced decades of poverty and financial struggle due to the expectations from Moscow to support the Cold War and associated projects. Many of these countries found that Socialism, outside of the realm of power and authority, struggled to meet the needs of their populations. As the influence of socialist governments began to weaken, the impact of capitalist governments began to grow. Though the transition was difficult, many of these nations welcomed the new change from socialism to capitalism knowing the potential this could have for their future. This had allowed for better economic growth through trade and protection within regional and global national alliance groups such as the EU, NATO, and UN.

This study concludes that capitalism did have a positive effect on these nations that transitioned from socialism. Though they had varying degrees, majority did experience improved economies, limited if any conflicts, better treatment of citizens, and positively benefit from globalization. This information was highlighted and confirmed by insight from participants' experiences and knowledge of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. The study is significant in it helps to recognized what main factors such as economy, conflict, citizen's rights, and globalization that could influence nations leaders to evolve the government to capitalism. This

study is meaningful in it could be used for future countries that may need to change and transition from one form of government to a capitalist administration. This could provide insight as to how factors such as economy, citizen rights, and globalization had positive outcomes and stayed consistent for decades after these countries transitioned. Recommendations from this study for future research include expanding the number of interviews with historians and government officials, this may help to obtain more insights on this matter. Additionally, future research could include expanding the study to 20 or 30-year period and may provide researchers with a long-term view of changes and the potential effects that technology may have on this subject as well.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Dear Participant,

I am emailing to invite you to be part of my dissertation research project about the transition of post-USSR from socialist government to capitalism. The purpose of this research is to examine any potential connection between economic, conflicts, or human rights issues that may have influenced post-USSR countries to transition from a socialist government to a capitalist one after the fall of the Soviet Union. Your participation includes a scheduled 60-minute video interview. The interview include questions that focus on the last two decades of the 20th century in Eastern Europe. Specifically, countries that were part of the USSR and their post-soviet capitalism development. This research is connected to the College of Law and Public Service department of National University. Eligibility criteria for those who wish to participate include knowledge of the USSR during the Cold War and Eastern Europe's Post-Cold War development and growth. There is no risk in participating, and the benefit of your contribution includes adding to the academic knowledge of this subject. Participation is voluntary, I hope you will choose to be part of this research project. To participate, please provide your phone number and email address.

Respectfully,

John Hawkes

Appendix B: Informed Consent

My name is John Hawkes. I am a doctoral student at National University. I am conducting research on socialist Soviet Union (USSR) countries during the Cold War and their Post-Soviet transitions to capitalist governments. I am interested in understanding what influences caused these countries to leave socialism and embrace a new style of economics and governing through capitalism. This research study's name is "From socialism to capitalism of Post-Soviet countries: A qualitative generic approach ". I am seeking your consent to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and I am here to address your questions or concerns at any point during the study.

Eligibility

You can participate in this research if you:

1. Are over 18 years old.
2. Are educated, employed, or volunteer at an institution that focuses on the Cold War and Post-Soviet Union era of history.
3. Are willing to share your insight about post-Soviet countries' policies and economic factors.

I plan to include 15 or more people in this survey.

Activities

The interview will take around 60 minutes to complete.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks associated with the study.

You can decline to answer any question and quit the questionnaire anytime.

Benefits

This research may increase knowledge on the impact and perceptions of countries that were once a part of the USSR during the Cold War era and the motives that created a change from a socialist to a capitalist style of government. In addition, this could provide insight that may help countries and other multi-national unions foresee potential government changes of nations and help provide better administrative and economic support during a similar transition.

Privacy and Confidentiality

I will secure your information with these steps: All personal information will be removed. You will need help to link answers to you. The data will be coded with a pseudonym to ensure the confidentiality and protection of personal information. Data will be protected with passwords. After data analysis is completed, data will be stored offline.

No identifiers (name, address, etc.) are collected. The de-identified information could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative. I will securely store your data for three years. Then, I will delete the electronic data and destroy the paper data.

How the Results Will Be Used

The findings from the study will be published in journals and websites and presented at conferences. It will not be possible to identify you as a participant. Only aggregate data will be presented, and no individual responses will be published or presented.

Contact Information

If you have questions, you can contact me by email at J.Hawkes1922@o365.ncu.edu or by phone at 760-622-7955 (Pacific Time Zone). Your information will not be linked to your responses if you contact me.

My dissertation Chairperson is Dr. Lori Demeter. She is employed at National University and will supervise me throughout this research. She can be reached through email at ldemeter@nu.edu, or by U.S. Post: Northcentral University, 9388 Lightwave Avenue, San Diego, CA, 92123.

Your information will not be linked to your responses if you contact us.

If you have questions about your rights in the research or if a problem or injury has occurred during your participation, please contact the NCU Institutional Review Board at irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 extension 8014.

Voluntary Participation

If you decide not to participate or stop participating after you start, there will be no penalty. You will not lose any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

Please answer this question.

Electronic Consent

Please check one of the boxes below:

Yes, I agree

No, I disagree

Appendix C: Interview Questions

To help give a better idea for the study I am performing that focuses on Post-Soviet countries during the last two decades of the 20th century, let me define what a capitalist government is considered for these questions. A capitalist government, most frequently a democracy, is one that focuses legislation on laws and regulations that allow for taxing and focusing on building opportunities for privately owned businesses, manufacturing, interstate and global trading, distribution of goods, and citizens property rights (Cheibub, 2022).

Economics:

Question #1

During the Cold War, which USSR countries would you consider having the strongest economies in the region? And why?

Question #2

During the 20th century, which USSR countries would you consider having the weakest economies in the region? And why?

Question #3

After the Cold War, governments of Post-Soviet countries were more susceptible to financial corruption and foreign manipulation, how did these outside influences affect their style of government?

Question #4

How economically stable were Post-Soviet countries that established capitalist styles of government?

Conflict:

Question #5

How strong of an impact did World War I, World War II, or the Cold War have on the independence of some European countries from their ruling monarchies or republics (USSR)?

Question #6

What social and economic advancements did the Cold War bring to the Soviet Union and countries that were part of the USSR and what were the costs for these progressions?

Question #7

Can you describe what role conflict (Cold War) played in countries adopting a capitalist style of government and avoiding a socialist or repressive administration after the Cold War?

Question #8

How did the Cold War lead some Post-Soviet countries to adopt a capitalist government and what are some of the major factors?

Citizen Rights:

Question #9

Since the creation of the Soviet Union as a country and the formation of the USSR as a union of countries, has the abuse of citizens and their rights been an issue, for how long and why?

Question #10

What kind of role did the exploitation and abuse of citizen rights in the USSR during the Cold War play in a country's push for a drive to a more independent government?

Question #11

How is having a capitalist government increased the protection and improved treatment of its human/citizen rights in countries that were part of the USSR during the Cold War?

Question #12

If any, what Post-Soviet countries that adopted a capitalist form of government transition back to a different style of governing (authoritarian, communism, socialism, or even back to a complete monarch rule)? Why?

Globalization:**Question #13**

How did the process of globalization in the 1980s and 1990s positively affected countries around the world?

Question #14

In what ways did globalization have any influence on newly created, small, or struggling Post-Soviet countries to embrace a change of government to a capitalist style instead of a socialist administration?

Question #15

What factors of globalization were most beneficial to these types of Post-Soviet countries?

Question #16

Which Post-Soviet countries embraced globalization and found a capitalist style of government their way to embrace the future of change?

Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter

Date: 3-15-2026

IRB #: IRB-FY24-25-624

Title: Post-Cold War Capitalism in the USSR

Creation Date: 2-3-2025

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: John Hawkes

Review Board: NU IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt
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Key Study Contacts

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Member	John Hawkes	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	j.hawkes1922@student.nu.edu