

The Usual Suspect

Snoke is a humanoid warlord that usurped power from the nascent Empire in the years after the destruction of the second Death Star.

Snoke is not a reincarnated Emperor Palpatine. While cloning technology certainly existed and the concept of Palpatine entering clones or surrogates was well presented in novels of the Expanded Universe, if Palpatine was Snoke his name would reflect this. Similarly, we know Snoke is not Vader as his spirit was visible to Luke at the end of *Return of the Jedi*. Furthermore, Kylo Ren has possession of Vader's helmet and has made comments indicating his demise, which we clearly saw on camera.

Snoke would most probably not have been a Moff, or a member of the Imperial Viziers. The Empire's xenophobia was a defining doctrine. Some exceptions existed, but these were on a personal, relationship based foundation with the Emperor directly. Due to new canon, Thrawn does not exist. This throws out the most conspicuous example of an alien being embraced by the higher hierarchy of the Empire.

Snoke, as of the present, has not been shown to have any Force powers or supernatural aspects. As such, it is highly logical that he has a military background and perhaps a separate base of power before taking over or forming The First Order. This plays into the previous statement, since we do not know definitively that Snoke is not human, as his appearance may be caused by a deformity or injury from battle.