

Father and Followers: Putin's Rhetoric as an Evolutionary-Psychological Leadership Tool

Philipp Ershov

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Abstract

Vladimir Putin has been at the helm of the Russian state since 2000, with much of the post-2008 period in Russia being characterised by poor economic performance. At the same time, many issues concerning regional development and public service provision have gone unaddressed. Yet, despite all these problems—which polls suggest do not go unnoticed by the Russian people—the popularity of the most powerful man in government has not slipped far from all-time highs. This paper suggests an evolutionary psychological explanation for Putin's resilient popularity and examines it through the question of whether the thematic content of Putin's rhetoric matches theoretical expectations stemming from evolutionary psychology. Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse a corpus of annual addresses by Vladimir Putin, it suggests that the thematic content of Putin's rhetoric is consistent with what a cultural reinterpretation of Hamilton's rule from evolutionary psychology predicts is particularly potent with followers. Specifically, his rhetoric creates bonds of relatedness within a defined group and focuses on benefits affecting members of that group—exactly what a cultural Hamilton's rule view of human social behaviour would suggest. The paper then links this explanation to Putin's approval ratings by looking at how this thematic content varies over time. In doing so, the paper represents a step towards an evolutionary psychological view of leadership appeal in modern political communities.

'No doubt there will be more recognition of the dependence of many political phenomena on the relatively sudden emergence of 'civilization' from the largely anonymous sea of tribal or folk societies... man had operated in small bands or tribes for at least half a million years and that he has had a relatively short time in which to master the civilization that is his own invention.'

Harold Laswell, *The Future of the Comparative Method*, 1968

I. Introduction

2018 marks the start of Vladimir Putin's fourth presidential term. Ever since the global recession and the advent of Western sanctions over Russia's activities in Ukraine, Russia has been experiencing economic difficulty (Movchan, 2017). The price of oil, Russia's major export, crashed in 2014, dragging with it the nation's currency and, subsequently, raising inflation. When one combines this with the last decade's economic contraction and the persistence of numerous social-policy problems, one starts appreciating that the situation in

the country is far from socio-economically ideal (Hille, 2018). According to public opinion surveys (Levada Centre, 2018), this fact is not strange to the Russian public: economic and political optimism fell each year from 2012-2015, and perceptions of material wellbeing fell annually between 2014-2017. Citizens also reported decreasing quality of healthcare provision each year since 2005.

Yet, amongst this negativity, Putin's personal ratings remain stable at 80%. Having been at Russia's helm since 2000, Putin is widely acknowledged as a powerful leader who retains primary influence over all major areas of Russian policy (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). When it comes to giving credit for Russia's successes, an overwhelming majority assigns it to none other than Putin. Meanwhile, the broader government seems to suffer the blame for persistent problems, with the number of citizens supporting the current ministerial Government's resignation having risen every year since 2012. The question that needs to be answered, therefore, is why citizens report increasing dissatisfaction with their lives and the broader government, yet appraisals of the country's leader remain high.

This paper aims to partially solve this puzzle by exploring the psychological basis of the support for Putin. It takes the support for him as given and suggests an evolutionary psychological (EP) explanation for it. Specifically, this paper posits that Putin's rhetoric may trigger psychological mechanisms in subjects that have evolved over millions of years. To define what makes political leaders popular, this paper develops a model based on a re-interpretation of Hamilton's rule (1964) to include cultural relatedness and Haslam, Reicher, and Platow's 'New Psychology of Leadership' (NPL) (2011).

To test this model, the paper asks whether the thematic content of Putin's rhetoric is consistent with the model's theoretical predictions. It does so by analysing annual addresses by Putin since 2012, focusing on identifying change around junctures when Putin's ratings spiked. This question represents the first of many that need to be asked to discern whether EP can really shed light on modern political leadership.

The importance of this task is manifold. Firstly, it enables us to comprehend assertions that Putin's popularity derives from the Kremlin's control over the media (Enkilopov et al, 2010). After all, the media is just the means of transmission, and it remains necessary to explain why what is being transmitted is effective.

Secondly, locating the root of Putin's support in general psychological theories is important if one wants to avoid the argument that it stems from a fixation with authoritarianism somehow endemic to East-Slavic culture; it is this argument that makes drawing parallels between Putin's case and the support for past Communist and Tsarist leaders so very common. Interpreting Putin's popularity through an EP lens will aid understanding of what Putin and his followers share with others throughout history, thereby illuminating other cases of leader popularity.

As such, the paper's ultimate hope is that the results of such psychological discussions will prove generalisable and offer interpretations for other instances of deviations from economic voting, such as recent anti-globalisation votes in the UK and the US. If psychological evolution has indeed led to people thinking in a certain way, then voter choice across historical contexts may be influenced by similar thought processes originating from humanity's earliest days.

The paper first reviews the literature on Putin's popularity, political leadership, and evolutionary political psychology, before developing a Hamiltonian-NPL model and relating it to Putin. This model steers the two-pronged textual analysis that follows. Quantitative text analysis thematically and dynamically decomposes Putin's rhetoric in the years 2012-2018, with these themes subsequently being contextualised and linked to our theoretical framework using discourse analysis. Together these approaches reveal whether Putin's rhetoric matches the Hamiltonian-NPL model's predictions of an appealing political leader, thereby shedding light on the relevance of EP to political popularity.

I.I Literature Review

This paper rests on several literatures, including the political science literature on Putin and the psychological and EP literature relating to politics and leadership.

Due to the track record of authoritarian states, it is crucial to evaluate the trustworthiness of public opinion data. Frye et al (2017) use list experiments to demonstrate that Putin's high approval ratings are almost certainly genuine, whilst Volkov (2015) discusses how viewing trends in approval and other Levada measures over Putin's entire tenure suggests these ratings are not fabricated or the result of intimidation. Ratings of other senior government officials also tend to experience sharp falls, showing that the public does not hesitate to judge harshly (Bershidsky, 2017). Colton and Hale (2017) corroborate this, demonstrating that Putin's support is broad-based and cannot be explained by fraud, oil prices, or coercion. All this indicates that there exists a real issue for this paper to grapple with.

As has been alluded, the growth of the Russian economy meaning presidential popularity up until this decade may well have been an instance of 'the economy, stupid' (Triesman, 2011). During 2011, however, Putin's approval ratings dipped from 80% and stabilised at 60%, even though public economic perceptions remained constant. This was possibly because sections of the public ceased giving Putin the benefit of the doubt over persistent problems (Triesman, 2014). However, following 2014, the ratings shot up from around 60% and stabilised at 80%¹, despite the economy deteriorating and most these problems not having been solved. Hence, the question of what buttresses Putin's support as he enters his third decade as leader arises.

¹ *Figure 3 p.21.*

Robertson and Greene (2017) argue that Putin's support results from popular appeal, in an argument that resembles Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism (1951), which viewed totalitarianism as created by the masses themselves. Rather than attributing Putin's popularity solely to top-down authoritarian influences, Robertson and Greene identify the Russian citizen as a participant of regime renewal in Russia, telling a story of 'co-construction' in which state and society willingly interact to enshrine the regime.

An illustration of Putin's popularity would be incomplete without discussing his media images. Gessen (2012) describes the process through which the Russian regime monopolised the media, with other studies emphasizing that positive press in state media has contributed to Putin's 'personality cult' and 'celebrity status' (Goscillo, 2013). Mikhailova (2013), for instance, notes Putin's frequent media appearances with children as an attempt to portray Putin as a 'fatherly figure'.

The classical literature on authority offers a starting point to understanding the above acceptance. Weber (2004/1919) presents a typology of authority suggesting that followers accept rulers if the latter convey charismatic, traditional, or legal authority. The charismatic view suggests leaders are followed because they are 'believed in': leaders' strength of personality in public appearances develops a 'personal devotion' and 'trust in the heroism, or other leadership qualities of an individual'. Traditional authority, on the other hand, originates from custom, whilst legal authority stems from constitutional rules. Without discounting traditional and legal authority, this paper seeks to elucidate the mechanisms behind charismatic authority.

To this end, Michels (1999/1911) argues that the masses are 'delighted' to succumb to leaders considered able to look past competing interests and 'look after (peoples') affairs', pointing out that the masses' gratitude often results in 'adoration' and 'perpetual' leadership, this being potentially applicable to Putin given his tenure's length. Burns (1979) separates these two approaches into two leadership types: 'transformational' leaders who charismatically create new leader-follower relationships, and 'transactional' leaders who are followed because they perform a service. This paper does not view Burns' two typologies as mutually exclusive: in fact, it suggests that charisma may emerge through the communication of 'transactional' benefit.

The case of Putin's popularity has attracted diverse explanations. Some of the psychological literature cites an intrinsic 'Slavic authoritarianism' that has made autocratic figures venerated and desired in Russia across historical periods (Korneeva, 2011). However, such approaches are problematic due to a lack of generalisability and because of their vulnerability at junctures when historically authoritarian societies democratise.

Newer psychological interpretations have been based on personality. Greene and Robertson (2017) explain political sentiment in Russia today by using the 'Big Five' personality traits from Goldberg (1983), namely, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. One of their findings is that citizens' 'agreeableness' plays a large role in

predicting regime support: the fear of disrupting societal consensus that is associated with this trait results in the resilience of traditional values and leaders.

It is this ‘agreeableness’ trait that brings us to EP as a promising explanatory model. This is because ‘agreeableness’ could be an evolutionary result of the success of cohesive groups (Boyd and Richerson, 1985). A corollary of the success of cohesive groups is a recognition by members that cohesive communities are beneficial, implying that leaders communicating notions of unity would fall on favourable ears. Furthermore, ‘agreeable’ people who fear detachment from the community will rally behind a leader perceived as beneficial for the group’s interests (Spisak et al, 2015). Thus, exploitation of intrinsic traits may help leaders gain followers—a view that can be traced to Machiavelli (2003/1532).

Graham Wallas (1929) was among the first to attack political science as only studying ‘the thing done’ and not those ‘doing it’, pointing to evolutionary biology as a way forward. EP has been establishing itself in politics since de Waal’s observations of political behaviour in chimpanzees (1982). Schubert (1989) and Blanc et al (2014) discuss how insights from evolution relate to politics, arguing that some of the work in this direction represents a naturalistic paradigm shift. Petersen (2016) summarises the current state of the art, noting its fundamental insight that people make socio-political decisions using primeval rules revolving around the overarching aim of gene propagation (Dawkins, 1989). This principle of kin-selection can lead to ethnocentrism and other forms of in-group/out-group tension (van de Berghe, 1987) that politicians exploit. Another EP insight are evolved cognitive biases such as loss-aversion, which makes fear-evoking political rhetoric particularly effective (Arceneaux, 2012).

Yet another result is that people may have evolved to prefer strong leaders at the expense of personal freedoms (Sidanius and Gurzban, 2003). This is particularly the case in groups that experience frequent inter-group conflict (van Vugt, 2007)—a criterion most certainly applicable to Russia considering the many wars it has waged throughout history. Strength is something leaders convey through appearance—which may explain Putin’s shirtless videos (RT, 2017)—as well as actions and words (van Vugt, 2006). Shestopal (2012) notes strength as a key component of Putin’s public appraisals.

EP leadership models can point us to what rhetorical content would be appealing. Boehm (1999), for instance, writes that in hunter-gatherer societies leaders emerge temporarily as figures perceived to possess decisiveness and competence: a focus on issue resolution would thus help gain popularity.

Van Vugt and Rooby (2014; 2008) note that leadership selection tends to be bottom-up, with hunter-gatherers disliking despots. This would predict that popular leaders possess humility and aim to convey to people that it is the latter who have the power of choice.

Finally, kin selection, a concept going back to Darwin whereby natural selection rewarded species where relatives helped each other survive, predicts that leaders will emphasize the

interests of a defined in-group. The concept is simply expressed in Hamilton's rule of social behaviour (1964), which argues that the promotion of in-group interests underpins many social species' behaviours. Scholars have recently started emphasising its relevance to the evolution of political institutions and cultures, with group-relatedness being extended beyond genetic relatedness to include cultural relatedness (Birch, 2017). Section I.II offers an application that can be tested through looking at verbal communication.

I.II. Theoretical Model

This paper theorises that since people have evolved to follow Hamilton's rule of social behaviour, leaders gain popularity if their selection as leaders is seen by followers to maximize this rule. The simplest version of Hamilton's rule is the following:

$$rB > C$$

in which r is the coefficient of relatedness to the agent following this rule of another individual (or group), B is the evolutionary (survival/reproduction/comfort) benefit of an agent's action to that related individual (or group), and C is the cost of the action to the agent. If this inequality holds, the agent's decision will be seen by the agent to benefit those within the agent's kinship group, with this benefit increasing in proportion to perceived relatedness. Importantly in the context of modern political societies, this paper sees r as encompassing both genetic and perceived cultural relatedness.

When it comes to selecting leaders, agents will select leaders they judge to be most beneficial to their groups' interests. To attract support, leaders may therefore define a kinship group to raise the relatedness co-efficient r and behave/speak in ways seen to promote group interests B . Voting for someone like Putin may well incur costs on voters, but they will still do so if the perceived benefits to their community are large enough.

The relevance of this Hamiltonian logic to leadership appeal can be seen in Haslam, Reicher and Platow's (2011) 'New Psychology of Leadership' (NPL). The main principle of NPL is that effective leadership derives from the leader's ability to 'embody and promote a psychology that they *share* with others.' NPL therefore helps us look at which aspects of Putin's rhetoric are consistent with this paper's assumptions regarding what citizens find appealing.

Elements of NPL help us describe what sort of leader the cultural Hamilton rule would encourage individuals to follow:

- a) *Successful leaders champion in-group interests.* Leaders become appealing when they are working for the collective interest of the group they are appealing to. In Hamiltonian terms, this benefits the survival of the group, raising rB .

b) *Appealing leaders construct identity*. This suggests that popular leaders actively create narratives placing their audience into groups. Such strategies attempt to artificially increase r —something that social structures and modes of communication absent from the ancestral environment made possible through an evolutionary ‘mismatch’ (cultural evolution overtaking biological evolution) (van Vugt et al, 2008).

Hamilton’s rule thus describes voter logic; NPL, meanwhile, describes appealing leaders. This paper refers to these theories’ sum as the ‘Hamiltonian-NPL’ model, which describes how leaders act upon follower logic to increase their popularity. The insights of the combined Hamiltonian-NPL model inform our theoretical expectations regarding Putin’s rhetoric. To raise r , one would expect Putin to talk about nationhood, patriotism, and historical instances when people united to overcome a difficulty (e.g. successful wars). Identity-building through talking about culture could serve the same purpose: such themes reinforce notions of a culturally and historically related ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983). Raising r could also be attempted from the other direction: for example, Putin may focus on defining the ‘other’, i.e. an external community like the ‘West’, or an antagonist on the global scene. This would be consistent with the view that ‘otherisation’ tightens and encloses in-group bonds (Taylor, 2009).

To raise perceived B , one would expect Putin to acknowledge the problems Russians face. This could be done through themes centred around the economy, social development, security, and grand strategy, as these issues either directly contribute to citizen welfare or raise the perceived status of one’s community through feelings like pride.

These expectations can be falsified in many ways. On a quantitative level, this paper’s hypothesis that rB -raising rhetoric is linked to popularity would predict that such rhetoric rises when popularity rises (i.e. would have risen after 2014). Whilst both rising simultaneously would not prove causation, one falling when the other rises would falsify our predictions. Additionally, themes that directly attempt to raise r and B forming only a quantitatively small part of the thematic content of Putin’s speeches would weaken our model’s importance. On a qualitative level, this paper’s claims regarding the Hamiltonian implications of certain quotes can be questioned.

II. Methodology

This paper evaluates the merits of the Hamiltonian-NPL model through considering whether Putin’s communication with Russia’s citizens is consistent with the model’s predictions regarding rhetorical content.

II.I. Corpus Selection

To do this, the paper analyses a set of addresses from Putin’s last presidential term (2012-2018). The selected addresses are of different types but share common features: all are annual, all shown by state television, all addressed to citizens, and all widely viewed.² This set includes Putin’s annual addresses to the Federal Assembly, in which Putin discusses the state of the nation; Putin’s 9th May addresses opening the annual military parade commemorating Russia’s victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), a focal point of Russian national identity (Torbakov, 2011); Putin’s annual New Year’s Eve addresses, uttered in the last minutes of each year; and transcripts of the annual Direct Line teleconference, in which Putin responds to selected citizens’ questions on topics ranging from the economy to Putin’s personal habits.³ The questions that end up being aired to Putin are pre-selected from millions of submissions by the Kremlin’s press-service.

Table 1: Characteristics of Each Address Type

Category of Address	Tag	Average length (minutes/words)
<i>Federal Assembly addresses</i>	FA	79 minutes/8,105 words
<i>Victory Day parade opening</i>	VD	7 minutes/501 words
<i>New Year’s Eve addresses</i>	NY	3 minutes/ 330 words
<i>Direct Line teleconference</i>	DL	245 minutes/16,979 words

This makes for a total of 23 analysed speeches, in which Putin uttered circa 140,000 words. Both the original Russian and English-translated versions (official translations from the Kremlin website) were analysed as separate corpuses. The English-language results are the ones discussed in the main text because of issues to do with how the respective languages are processed by the software, which are discussed below.⁴

The reasons for this sampling are numerous. Firstly, the speeches are particularly well-viewed, suggesting they are a primary means of Putin’s communication with his subjects. Secondly, the fact that they are annual makes it possible to conduct dynamic analysis, which is important for understanding the post-Crimea popularity spike. Thirdly, their varied nature means that using them collectively will enhance the sample’s representativeness.

² DL2017 was watched live by over 6 million viewers across 3 state TV channels and received over 2 million questions for Putin (Focht, 2017).

³ See Appendices A and B.

⁴ See Appendix D.

II.II. Research Design

Understanding rhetoric is complicated. When it comes to its overall psychological potency, its content is just one important component: for a fuller view, one must look at the content's meaning within the context of the audience's socio-political experiences. This paper therefore utilises a mixed-method approach: quantitative to discern content, and qualitative to interpret this content's potency thematically and contextually. Thus, the paper espouses Grimmer's and Stewart's (2013) second principle of quantitative text analysis, stating that computerised methods 'only augment humans, and do not replace them.' An illustrative rationale in our corpus stems from the disproportional influence the shorter speeches may have on collective perception—something a purely quantitative method would obscure.

First, the paper utilised the *Thematic Analysis of Elementary Contexts* function of T-Lab 2017, a quantitative text analysis package, to identify thematic clusters within Putin's rhetoric. Before inputting the corpus into T-Lab, all text not uttered by Putin was manually removed from the transcripts, which is particularly important with the Direct Line addresses due to their 'Q&A' format. The individual transcripts were then tagged by year and type.

To pre-process texts, T-Lab automatically lemmatizes them (retains the base form of words, as their endings may vary) and removes stop words ('empty' words that do not convey specific and/or significant content on their own). The researcher then selects a unit of analysis (the elementary context unit (ECU)). Here, the choice was made to use 'chunks': word sequences less than 400 characters interrupted by full stop and carriage return. This was deemed the best unit of analysis among the smaller sentence and the larger paragraph units, due to this paper's corpus including both short and long texts. T-Lab then creates a matrix of these ECUs and commonly occurring words, populated by the presence/absence values of these words. This is subsequently normalised to be workable, with rows scaled to unit length (Euclidean norm).

For the Russian analysis, the list of stop-words and multi-words in the T-Lab dictionary had to be extensively manually updated following the initial run. This suggests that T-Lab's dictionary for pre-processing Russian is less well maintained, meaning the automatic results contain frequent words that bear little thematic meaning, affecting the output's informativeness. Once T-Lab's dictionary was supplemented, however, the results of the analysis revealed the two language versions to be thematically alike. Seeing as unassisted reading of both versions reveals the English to be a direct translation, these thematically similar results demonstrate the software's reliability when it comes to clustering. Nevertheless, the relatively incomplete stop-word list and inefficient lemmatization⁵ (seen when related words appear several times) in Russian suggests that, for the time-being, T-Lab is better equipped to deal with English texts.

T-Lab then conducted the clustering process unsupervised by applying the bisecting K-means algorithm. Intuitively, this algorithm places the ECUs into different groups (clusters) by their mathematical (cosine-coefficient) similarity. The maximum number of possible clusters was

⁵ See *Table 3* p.14.

initially selected to be 10, to be adjusted upwards only if 10 clusters were produced after the first analysis. If fewer than 10 were produced, the researcher would need to decide which partition of the ones produced makes most analytical sense.

Once the software produces these clusters, it is up to the researcher to assign thematic values. To enable this, T-Lab produces a list of commonly-occurring words in each cluster ranked by chi-squared value, which the researcher then interprets by evaluating meanings and possible connections between them. However, this process is subjective and inevitably influenced by researcher expectations. To reduce interpretive bias, this paper independently uses two people for this: its author and a person from an unrelated field to Russian politics (pharmacology). The proportional weighting of these thematic clusters was then computed for each year to enable analysis over time in relation to approval ratings.

Making sense of these thematic clusters requires viewing them within their historical context, and so the quantitative methods were supplemented with qualitative analysis based on the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). As an approach seeing ‘discourse as a form of social practice creating a situation, social identities, and relationships between people’ (Klymenko, 2015), DHA is uniquely suitable to understanding how Putin’s rhetoric raises *r* and *B*. The original transcripts were used for this, thereby reducing the paper’s reliance on the T-Lab algorithm.

To consider these contextual mechanisms, the paper explores how each identified theme falls into historically-embedded discourses. It then looks at how these discourses relate to issues of group identity and collective interest, thereby linking them to Hamiltonian calculus.

III. Results and Discussion

III.I. Theme Identification

To shed light on the corpus, *Tables 2 and 3* below show the overall statistics of the English and Russian-language corpuses respectively after initial T-Lab processing. The much higher unique word/lemma ratio and the larger proportion of unique words remaining out of total wordcount in the Russian corpus demonstrate T-Lab’s potentially reduced ability to process Russian.

Table 2: Overall Corpus Statistics After Analysis (English)

Total word count	163,935
Unique words	9,500
Lemmas	7,253
Lemmatization ratio	1.31
Number of documents	23
Total contexts (ECUs) after segmentation	3,441
ECUs classified into clusters	3,297

Percentage of text classified	95.84%
--------------------------------------	--------

Table 3: Overall Corpus Statistics After Analysis (Russian)

Total word count	138,507
Unique words	19,980
Lemmas	19,886
Lemmatisation ratio	1.00
Number of documents	23
Total contexts (ECUs) after segmentation	3,324
ECUs classified into clusters	3,243
Percentage of text classified	97.59%

The results of the clustering analysis itself and the qualitative assessment of the clusters' thematic content are shown in *Table 4* below. As mentioned, the maximum number of clusters T-Lab could find was set at 10. The actual analysis yielded nine possible partitions. Upon trying every possible one, seven partitions were selected as subsequent partitions failed to yield sufficiently thematically distinct clusters. It is worth mentioning that T-Lab looks for general categorisation that can cover the entire corpus, and as such will not necessarily output every partition existing at document level. Excess reliance on T-Lab therefore risks omission.

Table 4: T-Lab Thematic Clusters

Cluster (weight in overall corpus. n = 3,441)	Thematic Labels	Top 16 Characteristic Words (Lemmas) by Chi-Squared Values
1 (15.44%)	Law and government (<i>Second interpreter:</i> government/internal affairs)	government; agency; federal; law; ask; regional; enforcement; authority; money; ministry; fund; budget; office; prosecutor; region; tax
2 (9.77%)	Foreign policy (<i>Second interpreter:</i> international relations/politics)	Ukraine; political; relation; election; partner; agreement; country; union; respect; integration; Ukrainian; dialogue; neighbour; United_States; party; sign
3 (12.91%)	Economy (<i>Second interpreter:</i> finance/economy)	percent; rate; increase; sector; growth; industry; inflation; economy; agricultural; GDP; agriculture; export; grow; average; figure

4 (19.39%)	War and patriotism (<i>Second interpreter:</i> patriotism/nationalism)	war; victory; happy; fight; patriotic; army; love; veteran; great; wish; soldier; arm; enemy; hero; officer; nazism
5 (12.38%)	Science and education (<i>Second interpreter:</i> education)	education; research; child; university; student; professional; train; school; centre; programme; project; work; young; need; science; medical
6 (14.80%)	Economic policies (<i>Second interpreter:</i> internal financial policy)	problem; price; raise; exchange_rate; bank; billion; situation; central; loan; pension; resolve; issue; oil; rubles; cost; try
7 (11.16%)	Defence and nationhood (<i>Second interpreter:</i> war)	missile; Russia; weapon; world; nuclear; strategic; global; defence; challenge; international; century; treaty; unity; country; common; nation
Sum: 95.84%		

T-Lab automatically calculates the percentage of classified ECUs falling into each cluster. However, since this paper is interested in the weight of each theme in the entire corpus, the weightings were manually recalculated as a percentage of all ECUs, classified or unclassified. They can be seen in the first column. Since the thematic labels were assigned by the researcher, readers can judge them by observing the list of characteristic words in the third column. At this point, it is worth noting that ‘war and patriotism’, a theme directly linked to this paper’s theoretical expectations, emerges as particularly prevalent in the corpus, covering 19.39% of ECUs.

Having identified the themes, an analysis of how the various speech types in the corpus differed was performed, with *Figure 1* and *Table 5* showing the results.

Figure 1: Individual Theme by Speech Type

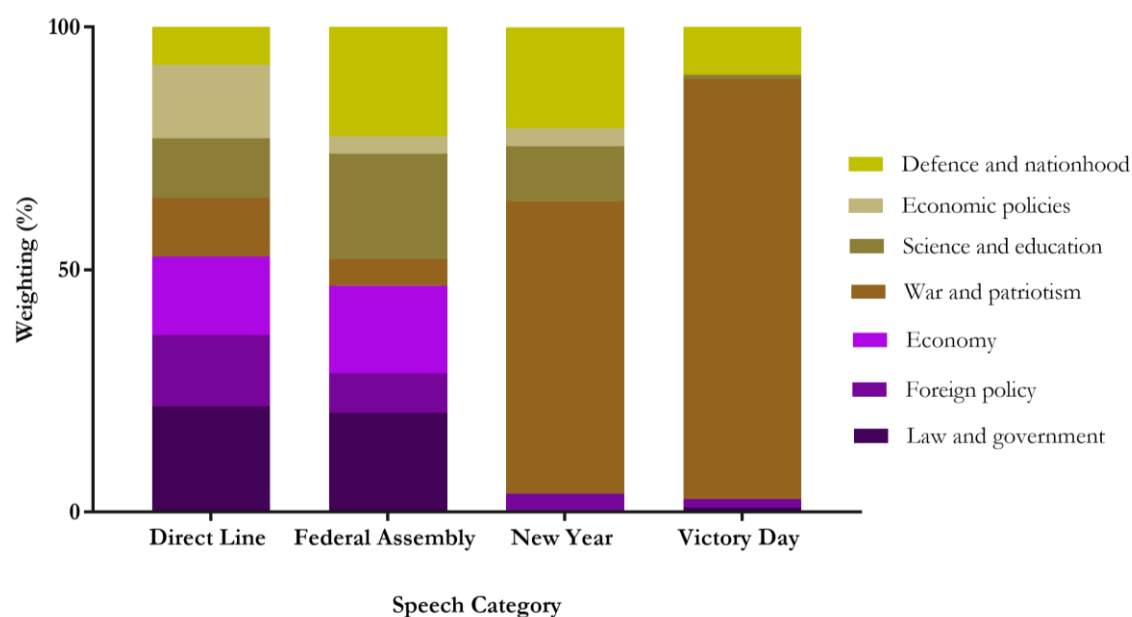


Table 5: Individual Theme by Speech Type

	DL	FA	NY	VD
<i>Law and government</i>	21.78%	20.46%	0%	0.89%
<i>Foreign policy</i>	14.7%	8.15%	3.77%	1.79%
<i>Economy</i>	16.22%	18.09%	0%	0%
<i>War and patriotism</i>	12.07%	5.46%	60.38%	86.61%
<i>Science and education</i>	12.34%	21.76%	11.32%	0.89%
<i>Economic policies</i>	15.17%	3.67%	3.77%	0%
<i>Defence and nationhood</i>	7.72%	22.41%	20.75%	9.82%

As expected from the category descriptions in Section II.I, VD proved to be almost exclusively dominated by ‘war and patriotism.’ FA and DL, meanwhile, were the most balanced categories, which was expected due to their objectives of holistically covering the issues facing Russia. In this sense, *Figure 1/ Table 5* serve as a ‘sanity check’ of the T-Lab analysis. However, these results offer interesting insights of their own: NY is, similarly to VD, also dominated by ‘war and patriotism.’ Whilst this link between a military parade speech and a non-militaristic New Year’s greeting is jarring at first and possibly exposes a pitfall of computer-generated partitions, it may suggest that these addresses, through sharing a thematic dimension, serve a similar identity-building (*r*-raising) purpose.

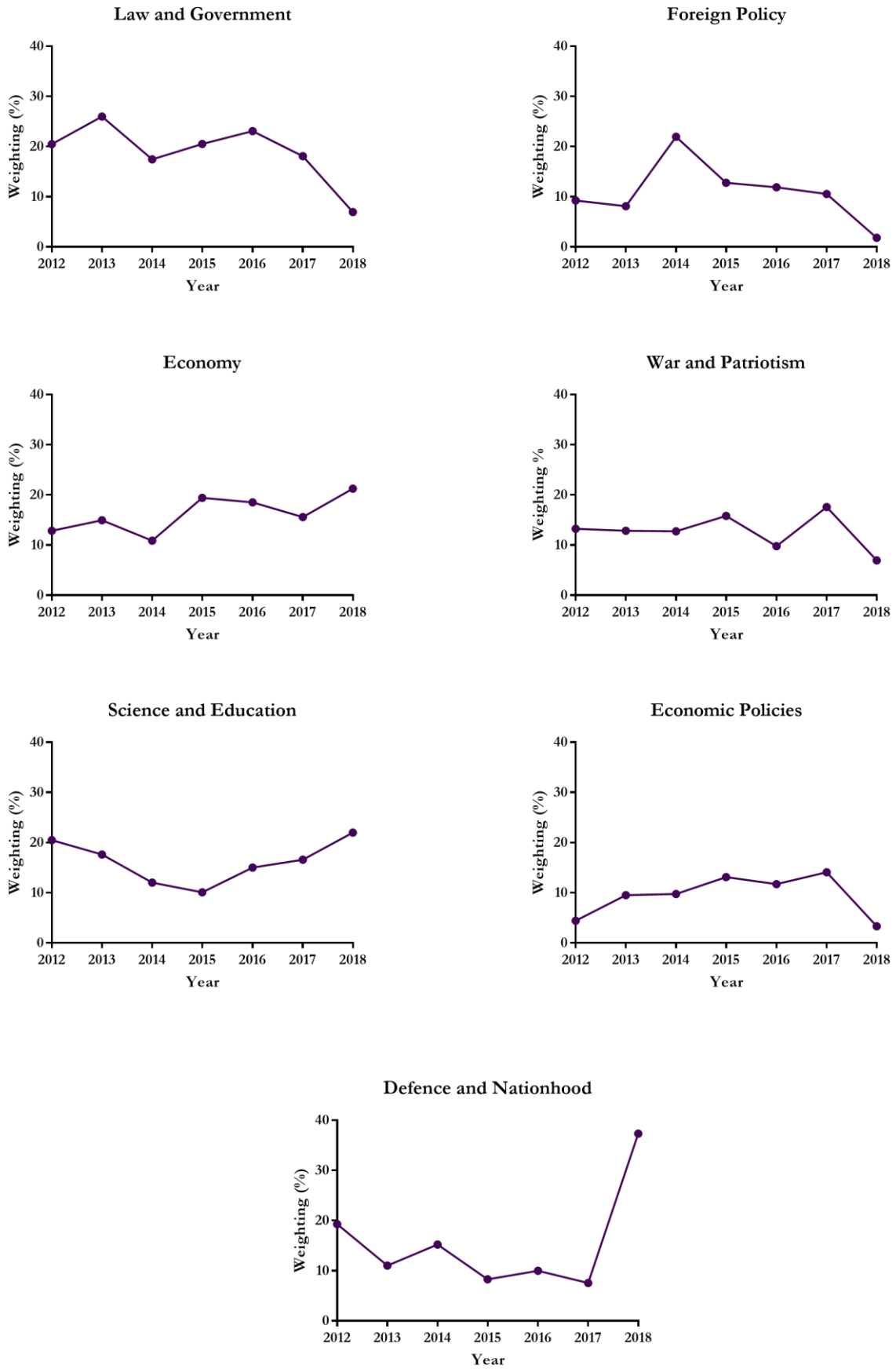
III.II. Dynamic Analysis

The next step of the quantitative analysis was to see how these themes varied over time, shown in Figure 2 and Table 6. When considering these results, it should be noted that FA was the only speech category present in 2018, as Putin and his press team opted to move it forward from its regular December 2017 date to March 2018— just weeks before the Presidential election. Hence, the sharp shifts occurring between 2017 and 2018 represent the thematic focus of just one speech, albeit a particularly important one given its pre-electoral role.

Table 6: Individual Theme Weighting by Year

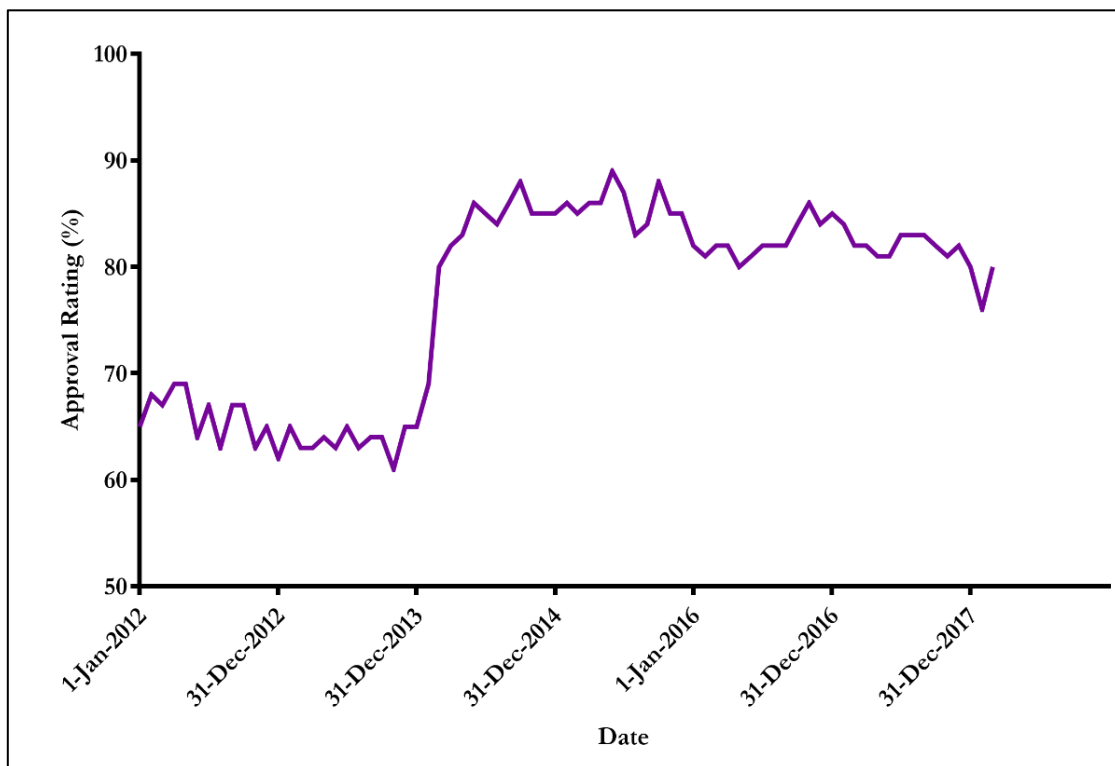
Category	<i>Law and government</i>	<i>Foreign policy</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>War and patriotism</i>	<i>Science and education</i>	<i>Economic policies</i>	<i>Defence and nationhood</i>
2012	20.48%	9.24%	12.85%	13.25%	20.48%	4.42%	19.28%
2013	25.98%	8.1%	14.94%	12.85%	17.6%	9.5%	11.03%
2014	17.45%	21.95%	10.88%	12.76%	12.01%	9.76%	15.2%
2015	20.5%	12.77%	19.42%	15.83%	10.07%	13.13%	8.27%
2016	23.08%	11.89%	18.53%	9.79%	15.03%	11.71%	9.97%
2017	18.09%	10.55%	15.58%	17.59%	16.58%	14.07%	7.54%
2018	6.96%	1.83%	21.25%	6.96%	21.98%	3.3%	37.3%

Figure 2: Individual Theme Weighting by Year



The first thing to look for is evidence of sharp changes between 2013 and 2014—the year Putin’s popularity spiked as seen in *Figure 3* below. *Table 6* provides evidence that ‘foreign policy’, rose from 8.1% in 2013 to 21.95% in 2014, albeit gradually falling back to 10.55% by 2017. The other noteworthy rise from 2013 to 2014 is in ‘defence and nationhood’, which went from 11.03% to 15.2%, subsequently falling below its initial levels. The fact that both these factors rose sharply in the exact year that experienced a popularity spike before diminishing, suggests that they may play a role in affecting change in popularity—as these themes rose so did popularity, and as they reverted popularity stabilised at the new higher level. Putin could be seen to have used them to ‘prove’ his credentials as a champion of Russian interests, without needing to do so again until 2018. It is noteworthy that in 2018, the electoral year in which Putin recorded his largest-ever victory with 77% of the vote, he chose to sharply increase his focus on one of these two themes. ‘Defence and nationhood’ demonstrated a 30% rise, with Putin spending 40 minutes of the 2-hour FA2018 address showcasing Russia’s defence programme.

Figure 3: Vladimir Putin’s Approval Ratings



DataSource: Levada Centre, <https://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/> accessed 24/04/2018

As with any other statistical inference, association does not imply causation: the 2014 spike in popularity may have been caused by any number of factors other than confrontational/nationalist rhetoric, including more successful policies and an improving economy. However, it has already been noted that 2014 was a year when the economy suffered particularly heavy blows, and there were no major policy shifts apart from the Kremlin’s response to the Maidan Revolution in Ukraine and the Central Bank’s decision to let the rouble float with painful inflationary repercussions (which Putin implicitly supported

in FA2014). Putin's response to Ukraine through annexing Crimea is likely to have played a major role in raising ratings; for this move to be linked to Putin, however, communication becomes important. Finally, Levada's sampling methodology, which ensures that each adult citizen in Russia has equal chances of being polled, makes the possibility that the spike was caused by a systematic change in the survey respondents unlikely, especially since the ratings stabilised rather than reverting (as they would have had in the event of a one-off sampling issue). Thus, the link between rhetorical content and popularity gains credence.

III.III. Themes as 'rB'-raising Discourses

Building on the above analysis, this section briefly contextualises each theme as discourses that build identity and/or appeal to people's individual and collective interests.

Law and Government

Levada Centre (2018) reports around 80% citizens feeling that corruption has either fully or significantly penetrated the Russian authorities. Addressing this is a large part of Putin's discourse on law. In DL2013, Putin suggests that 'if we get information that there is reason to suspect a state official, even of the highest rank, in breaking the law, it is instantly forwarded to law enforcement agencies for investigation.' Later, Putin voices a citizen's suggestion of executing 'at least 350 major crooks' to let 'officials at various levels of government know what the public mood is like.' In DL2017, Putin directly asks the governor of Stavropol to answer about the whereabouts of federal funding for families affected by flooding. Through both remarks, Putin disassociates himself from the corruption that has become too widespread to ignore—in FA2012 he cites 'poor government efficiency and corruption are major problems that everyone can see'—thereby positioning himself as an ally of the people against a corrupt gubernatorial class.

The fact that Putin acts on such stances in practice lends them credibility: in 2017 alone, Putin fired 15 governors, in what some analysts portray as a pre-electoral move (Zubarevich, 2017). Whatever the true motivations, through rhetorically portraying regional officials as the people's enemy and subsequently confronting them, Putin is acting in accordance to NPL's prescription of championing in-group interests.

Not all the rhetoric on law can be directly linked to popularity, however. Much of it is clarifying the legislative processes behind other issues, and as such does not have its own Hamiltonian potency.

Foreign Policy

Putin's recent popularity upsurge has often been linked to the taking of Crimea and the re-establishment of Russia as a great geopolitical power in the eyes of its citizens (Lloyd, 2018). His rhetoric contains much evidence along these lines and seeks to champion Russia as a major player in the international arena. In DL 2014, he speaks of Russia 'having the right to express our opinion' over Ukraine. In FA2018, Putin addresses the issue of Russia's

international voice directly when, presenting the *Kinzhal* nuclear warhead as a response to the ‘the threats posed by the US global missile defence system’, he says about NATO members to a standing ovation: ‘nobody really wanted to talk to us...and nobody wanted to listen to us (in 2004). So listen now.’

Whilst standing firm against Western powers, Putin nevertheless seeks to position Russia as a global power. In FA2016, Putin speaks of the importance of ‘equal and mutually beneficial’ relations with the US because of the two nations’ ‘shared responsibility to ensure international security and stability.’ In FA2018, Putin says Russia ‘protects our interests and respects the interests of other countries...we observe international law and believe in the inviolable central role of the UN.’ In doing so, Putin counter-acts claims that Russia is an aggressor-state, portraying his leadership as fair and firm in the international stage, and communicates to his audience that they remain part of a community that is as important in the world as the USSR was in its heyday, and deserving to be a global power on its own terms. It is this ‘global-shaper role’ Putin takes on when spearheading the ‘globally competitive integration group’ (FA2018) that is the Eurasian Economic Union—a Central Asia-centred common market alternative to the EU based on ‘equality and mutual respect’ (FA2014).

In talking about Ukraine and Crimea, Putin emphasises Russia’s role in supporting ‘brotherly republics of the former Soviet Union’ (FA2014), citing the \$25 billion investment in Ukraine. He talks about how ‘closely related’ Russia has always been to Ukraine (DL2014) and the biological ‘ethnic’ bonds between Russia and Crimea as justifications for Russia’s involvement. Putin thereby legitimises foreign policy endeavours by the quasi-biological relatedness Russia shares with its neighbours, in a rhetorical move that has direct *rB* implications.

That said, this discourse gains most of its Hamiltonian potency when linked to ‘defence and nationhood’, discussed below.

Economy

Much of Putin’s support since 2000 stemmed from him being seen as a prudent economic manager (Colton and Hale, 2009). The economy still features strongly in Putin’s rhetoric and becomes more prevalent in times of economic hardship—it rose from 10.88% in 2014 to 19.42% in 2015, when post-Crimea sanctions, the oil crash, and rate tightening combined to cripple growth (*Figure 2*).

Putin tends to take a realistic view of hardship, pointing out problems when these occur, as in his discussion of drastic home energy prices in DL2016, where he cited specific price-rises across gas, heating, and electricity.

Putin fills his discussions on any economic issue with specific figures. His tendency to identify and enumerate problems portrays him as a leader aware of the issues his followers face, and competent enough to deal with them—an effect strengthened by him rarely consulting his notes even when, as in the DL conferences, the issues he discusses are both

technical and range across many policy areas. As such, his economic discourse directly paints him as someone able to raise *B*.

War and Patriotism

This discourse is perhaps most directly linked to identity creation. Putin centres much of it around the Great Patriotic War and creates bonds among his listeners by saying that ‘across our huge country...no family was spared by the war.’ He calls the USSR’s victory over Nazi Germany ‘great’, singling out the Russian/Soviet nation as ‘the nation that routed Nazism’ (VD2013). He ties Russia’s current mission to this victory when he speaks of Russia’s responsibility to give future generations ‘stability and peace on the planet’ and ‘pass onto them the grave heroic truth and memory of the Great Patriotic War’ (VD2017).

In doing so, he links this discourse to that on foreign policy and defence and infuses Russian identity with pride through painting it as the force that saved ‘humanity from Nazism’ (VD2014). This link becomes clear when Putin calls the victory ‘a symbol of the sacred relationship between Russia and its people...it is in this unity and loyalty to the Fatherland that our strength, confidence and dignity lie.’

Such *r*-raising patriotism permeates even the seemingly apolitical NY addresses, which attests to their central role:

‘our personal plans are inseparable from Russia, from our heartfelt, noble feelings toward our Fatherland. Its development and further advancement of its thousand-year-long history is fully dependent on our joint efforts and energy, our unity and responsibility, our aspiration to do as much good as possible’ (NY2012).

In NY addresses, Putin speaks to almost every family in Russia as they gather at home to celebrate the New Year—the thematic prevalence of patriotism in such an intimate setting attests to its centrality in Putin’s communicative strategy.

Science and Education

Putin’s science and education discourse focuses on state effort to develop the nation’s scientific prowess, aiming to increase productivity, improve healthcare provision, enhance military capabilities, and give citizens modern, attractive opportunities.

FA2013 refers to the creation of ‘a network of centres capable of providing medical assistance at the most advance level’, whilst FA2015 talks about ‘the need for our own technology for the production, storage and processing of agricultural produce.’ The 2013 appeal to medicine harbours back to citizens’ concern over public healthcare, whilst the 2015 emphasis on agriculture comes at a time when the Kremlin embarked on a policy of import-substitution, as imported goods became increasingly expensive in rouble terms due to the currency’s depreciation. By tying science in to pertinent problems faced by citizens, this discourse raises perceived *B*.

Putin's scientific discourse has an added identity-building dimension. The rhetoric is often framed in competitive terms, in a possible effort to create a sense of national pride and aspiration. FA2018 refers to the 'need to take our research to a new level' for Russia to 'become one of the world's leading countries in terms of the capability and performance of its research infrastructure.' In a sense, such rhetoric harbours back to Soviet-era ideological discourses of science being a beacon of socialist success (Josephson, 1992). Indeed, the view of the USSR as a scientific nation became enshrined in the minds of older generations, and Putin's rhetoric may strive to create a sense of continuity with past achievements, thereby appealing to *r*. DL2016 directly corroborates this interpretation, as Putin talks about how Soviet-era research centres are used by 'young and promising creative research teams working in breakthrough areas of modern science.'

Finally, the emphasis on the young, whilst creating a sense of dynamism associated with Putin's agenda, also appeals to concerns over citizens' perceived prospects in Russia. In FA2018, Putin promises to 'support talented teachers' by 'building an open and modern system' and proposes 'creating the most convenient and attractive conditions for talented young people from other countries.' Thus, Russia would not just be a good place to live and work—to attract foreign talent, it would need to be among the best globally. The overarching aim is to 'turn our young people's education drive into a powerful force for our country's development' (FA2013). Thus, the push towards science and education appeals both to interest (*B*) and creates common goals (*rB*).

Economic Policies

This is a broad theme encompassing Putin's strategy for improving people's lives. One important dimension are demographics, Russia being afflicted by sluggish population growth and low life expectancy. In FA2012, Putin cites the risk of Russia's working population reducing by half, arguing for the need for 'more of us' for 'Russia to be a strong and sovereign nation.' In FA2014, Putin talks about Russia's defiance of United Nations forecasts by registering a population that was 8 million more than expected and registering 'natural population growth' when the UN was forecasting shrinking. By emphasising the natural, Putin is creating imagery of virility in the Russian nation that refuses to be constrained by international forecasts. This appeal to life as a constituent of nationhood resonates with direct evolutionary benefit.

The other distinguishing aspect of Putin's economic policy discourse covers infrastructure and jobs. The issue of regional road construction propped up almost every year in this paper's sample: even in FA2018, Putin spoke of the need to 'almost double the spending on road construction' and demands regional heads to 'constantly focus attention on roads.' Whilst saying that the situation is 'completely unacceptable with local roads', Putin notes that federal roads, over which the Kremlin has competencies, have been 'overhauled.' This is another instance of Putin allying himself with the people against governors over a visible problem.

Such rhetoric also achieves the ‘Eye of Sauron’ effect (Schwartzbaum, 2017), whereby problems are only solved when Putin directs his gaze at them. Through his 4-hour DL ‘town halls’, Putin conveys his concern with knowing about and resolving people’s problems. Characteristically, discussing the regional government not having implemented a legal consumer utility price-limit, Putin says he would like ‘to draw the attention of the relevant government agency to this fact,’ ‘and hopes this will be done shortly’ (DL2014). This grants him the quasi-paternal role of carer for citizens’ needs.

The discourse on jobs is aspirational: in DL2013, Putin speaks about creating 25 million high-tech jobs to set the economy onto an ‘innovative development track’; in FA2015, Putin calls changing the structure of the economy and creating ‘modern jobs’ the only way to improve living standards, further specifying in DL2017 that a digital economy is ‘the number-one goal.’ The development discourse is thus linked to that on science, and positions Putin as a forward-looking leader, dispelling impressions that his rule is stagnating after 20 years.

Defence and Nationhood

We have already seen that Putin motivates much of his foreign policy through interest championing amidst external wrongdoers. As the US withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2000, Putin paints the US as a violator of ‘the cornerstone of the international security system’ (FA2018). Through portraying Russia’s defence programme as the result of a ‘heroic’ effort of ‘thousands of our experts’ and ‘young professionals’ to protect the country by developing ‘cutting-edge’ technology that ‘no other country has developed’, Putin portrays the effort he champions as a nation-wide achievement.

Thus, military capabilities do more than *B*-raising protection—they also help mould identity through empowering Russia to have a global stewardship role. In FA2014, Putin promises to ‘protect the diversity of the world’ and ‘actively promote business and humanitarian relations’ even as some countries ‘attempt to create a new iron curtain.’ Far from merely being a protector of global stability, ‘the wealth of Russian culture’ makes Russia ‘among the nations that not only create their own cultural agenda, but also influence the entire global civilisation.’ (FA2012).

It is unsurprising Putin focused his latest electoral efforts around this discourse. Military security becomes a pre-requisite for the achievement of all other policy goals, suggesting that achievement in this domain may lead citizens to forgive lags in the economic/developmental domain; being ahead in the arms race, meanwhile, establishes Russia as a true global power, thereby creating a resilient identity based on pride that outshines the socio-economic costs of living in Putin’s Russia.

IV. Conclusions

On 7 May 2000, his inaugural day as Russian President, Vladimir Putin informed citizens of his ‘sacred duty to unify the people of Russia, to rally citizens around clear aims and tasks, and to remember every day and every minute that we have one Motherland, one People, and one future.’ This paper’s analysis reveals that such identity-building and focus on practical issues permeates Putin’s discourse across thematic domains all the way to 2018. Diverse themes like science, economic development, and foreign policy are all connected by being framed in a discourse unifying Russians as working towards ambitious, globally significant goals that both improve people’s lives and make them proud. As the *Internationale* anthem inspiring the 1917 Russian Revolution suggested, ‘We have been nought, we shall be all!’ At the helm of this effort is Putin; in rallying behind him, citizens acknowledge that Putin can solve Russia’s current problems but has opted for a ‘long-term agenda that must be independent of election cycles and the prevailing situation’ (FA2015).

This paper has argued that such discursive approaches make Putin’s rhetoric particularly attractive because they target the three elements of the Hamiltonian-NPL model ($rB > C$), which some scholars suggest underpin social behaviour. Identity-building creates bonds between citizens, making them care about more than just their personal economic wellbeing. Emphases on Russia’s interests champion the collective benefit of this strongly-bonded group. Mentions of Russia’s long-term ambitions nationally and globally persuade followers that the long-run benefits of Putin’s agenda outweigh the socio-economic problems people have been experiencing during his tenure.

The discursive trends that this paper has observed demonstrate that such interpretations have explanatory power: particularly evolutionarily potent discourses spike alongside popularity and are relied upon in electoral years. Additionally, the fact that most discourses identified here possess Hamiltonian potency may explain why Putin’s approval ratings have remained stably high, even as people’s lives become harder and broader government approval falls. Observing whether similar patterns occur in different historical contexts and testing this paper’s model using other types of data—including experimental findings and survey appraisals of r and B —can pave the way for viewing modern political societies as behaviourally connected to humanity’s evolutionary past.

This paper’s analysis of Putin’s rhetoric nevertheless requires an additional explanatory link: talk is cheap, and what is said must nevertheless be believed. Putin has been at the helm of the Russian state for 18 years with many problems still being unresolved—the question of how he has retained a critical level of trust therefore becomes particularly important. His actions over Ukraine are a likely explanation, but evolutionary psychology may again offer insights: having led Russia over a long period spanning the early stages of Russia’s development as an independent state, Putin has become viewed by many as the nation’s father—something other leadership contenders cannot match. Trust in one’s parents may be particularly strong for evolutionary reasons, as it enhances the functioning of families. When such emotions percolate to politics, however, the accountability implications become profound.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Analysed Speeches (English)

Address	Word Count	Length (minutes)	Date of Address	Link
<i>FA2018</i>	13,322	117	01 March 2018	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/56957
<i>FA2016</i>	9,685	69	01 December 2016	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/53379
<i>FA2015</i>	7,571	65	03 December 2015	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/50864
<i>FA2014</i>	8,541	73	04 December 2014	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/47173
<i>FA2013</i>	9,749	70	12 December 2013	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/19825
<i>FA2012</i>	11,278	82	12 December 2012	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/17118
<i>VD2017</i>	801	8	09 May 2017	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/54467
<i>VD2016</i>	641	9	09 May 2016	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/51888
<i>VD2015</i>	985	11	09 May 2015	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/transcripts/49438
<i>VD2014</i>	472	5	09 May 2014	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/20989
<i>VD2013</i>	450	4	09 May 2013	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/transcripts/18092
<i>VD2012</i>	420	6	09 May 2012	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/15272
<i>DL2017</i>	18,435	238	15 July 2017	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/54790
<i>DL2016</i>	18,235	220	14 April 2016	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/51716
<i>DL2015</i>	18,452	237	16 April 2015	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/49261
<i>DL2014</i>	17,670	236	17 April 2014	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/20796
<i>DL2013</i>	24,758	293	25 April 2013	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/17976
<i>NY2017</i>	407	4	31 December 2017	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/56591
<i>NY2016</i>	349	3	31 December 2016	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/pressident/news/56591

<i>NY2015</i>	411	3	31 December 2015	sident/news/53683
<i>NY2014</i>	395	3	31 December 2014	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51128
<i>NY2013</i>	572	4	31 December 2013	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47446
<i>NY2012</i>	336	3	31 December 2012	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20022
				http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17260

Appendix B: List of Analysed Speeches (Russian)

Address	Word Count	Length (minutes)	Date of Address	Link
<i>FA2018</i>	11,428	117	01 March 2018	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957/work
<i>FA2016</i>	7,323	69	01 December 2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379/work
<i>FA2015</i>	6,107	65	03 December 2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50864/work
<i>FA2014</i>	7,028	73	04 December 2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173/work
<i>FA2013</i>	7,578	70	12 December 2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19825/work
<i>FA2012</i>	9,164	82	12 December 2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17118/work
<i>VD2017</i>	605	8	09 May 2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54467/
<i>VD2016</i>	500	9	09 May 2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51888/
<i>VD2015</i>	732	11	09 May 2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49438
<i>VD2014</i>	346	5	09 May 2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20989
<i>VD2013</i>	357	4	09 May 2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18089
<i>VD2012</i>	467	6	09 May 2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15271
<i>DL2017</i>	16,149	238	15 July 2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54790/work
<i>DL2016</i>	15,367	220	14 April 2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51716/work
<i>DL2015</i>	16,029	237	16 April 2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/

<i>DL2014</i>	16,383	236	17 April 2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/49261/work
<i>DL2013</i>	20,966	293	25 April 2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/20796/work
<i>NY2017</i>	313	4	31 December 2017	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/17976/work
<i>NY2016</i>	285	3	31 December 2016	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/56591
<i>NY2015</i>	320	3	31 December 2015	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/53683
<i>NY2014</i>	320	3	31 December 2014	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/51128
<i>NY2013</i>	463	4	31 December 2013	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/47446
<i>NY2012</i>	277	3	31 December 2012	http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/20022
				http://kremlin.ru/events/presid ent/news/17260

Appendix C: T-Lab Spatial Mapping of Clusters and Characteristic Lemmas (English)



3,324)		
1 (23.29%)	Economic development	Страны [country]; возможности [opportunities]; развития [development]; экономики [economy]; ведущие [leading]; производства [production]; передовые [cutting-edge]; комплекса [system]; нового [new]; ВУЗы [higher education]; промышленного [industrial]; число [number]; принципиально [principal]; таких [such]; промышленности [industry]; сармат [<i>sarmat</i> (missile)]; отраслей [fields]; высокотехнологичных [high-tech]
2 (15.19%)	Economy	Миллиардов [billions]; рублей [roubles]; процента [percent]; долларов [dollar]; по-моему [in my opinion]; поддержки [support]; чем [than]; бюджета [budget]; миллиарда [billion]; капитал [capital]; где-то [somewhere]; рост [growth]; федерального [federal]; цен [price]; плюс [plus]; й []; предусмотрено [provided for]; триллиона [trillion]; инфляция [inflation]; деньги [money]
3 (13.55%)	Labour and industry	Федерации [federation]; российской [Russian]; согласен [agree]; работы [work]; повторяю [repeat]; скажем [say]; решение [decision]; заработной [pay]; решения [decision]; деятельности [activity]; хозяйства [livelihood]; работа [work]; считаю [consider]; честно [fair]; достаточно [sufficient]; сельского [agriculture]; другую [other]; людям [people]; платы [pay]
4 (10.44%)	War and defence	Сил [power]; победы [victory]; великой [great]; стран [countries]; точки [point]; отечественной [patriotic]; зрения [opinion]; стратегического [strategic]; днем [day]; вооруженных [armed]; х [h]; главным [main]; работать [work]; рождаемости [birth rate]; самых [most]; поздравляю [congratulate]; наших [our]; поколение [generation]; оружия [weapon]
5 (9.00%)	Law and government	Внимание [attention]; проблемы [problems]; деньги [money]; правительство [government]; власти [authorities]; первое [first]; денег [money]; сразу [immediately]; органов [agencies]; все-таки [nevertheless]; правоохранительных [judicial]; особое [particular]; федеральных [federal]; стороны [sides]; обратили [turned]; проблему [problem]; проблема [problem]; решена [solved]; где-то [somewhere]
6 (13.94%)	Common goals and bonds	России [of Russia]; наших [our]; граждане [citizens]; граждан [citizens']; интересы [interests]; отношения [relations]; друг [friend]; добрые [good]; жизни [life]; слава [glory]; друга [friend]; безопасность [safety]; товарищи

		[comrades]; поздравить [congratulate]; новый [new]; понимание [understanding]; слова [words]; добьемся [achieve together]
7 (12.10%)	Nationhood	нашей [our]; Россия [Russia]; народа [of people]; народ [people]; истории [history]; нашего [our]; мир [world]; стране [country]; страны [country]; русский [Russian]; международной [international]; памятью [memory]; семье [family]; своим [our]; войны [war]; общество [society]; страной [country]; каждой [every]; общей [common]
Sum:		
97.59%		

Bibliography

Ahlquist JS and Levi M (2011) Leadership: What It Means, What It Does, and What We Want to Know About It. *Annual Review of Political Science* 14(1): 1–24. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-042409-152654.

Alford JR and Hibbing JR (2004) The Origin of Politics: An Evolutionary Theory of Political Behavior. *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4): 707–723.

Anderson B (1983) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso: NLB.

Arceneaux K (2012) Cognitive Biases and the Strength of Political Arguments. *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 271–285. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00573.x.

Arendt H (1973) *The origins of totalitarianism*. New ed. with added prefaces. A Harvest/HBJ book. New York; London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch.

Arutunyan A (2015) *The Putin mystique: inside Russia's power cult*. First American edition.

Bain J and Chaban N (2013) Euro-Visions: An Analysis of Visual Imagery in TV News. In: Bruter M and Lodge M (eds) *Political Science Research Methods in Action*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 139–164.

Berghe PLVD (1981) *The Ethnic Phenomenon*. Praeger. Available at: <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780313390203> (accessed 9 January 2018).

Bershidsky L (2017) Russian Polls Do Mean Something, After All. *Bloomberg.com*, 26 April. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-04-26/russian-polls-do-mean-something-after-all> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018) *BTI 2018 Country Report - Russia*. BTI Country Reports. Gutersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung. Available at: http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/files/BTI/Downloads/Reports/2018/pdf/BTI_2018_Russia.pdf.

- Bignell J (1997) *Media Semiotics: An Introduction*. Manchester University Press.
- Birch J (2017) *The Philosophy of Social Evolution*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blank RH, Hines SJ, Funke O, et al. (2014) *Politics and the Life Sciences: The State of the Discipline*. Research in Biopolitics. Bingley: Emerald.
- Burns JM (1979) *Leadership*. Harper torchbooks. New York ; London: Harper & Row.
- Buss DM (2015) *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology, Volume 2: Integrations*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Chaisty P and Whitefield S (2012) The Effects of the Global Financial Crisis on Russian Political Attitudes. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 28(2): 187–208. DOI: 10.2747/1060-586X.28.2.187.
- Colton TJ and Hale HE (2009) The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime. *Slavic Review* 68(3): 473–503.
- Dawkins R (1989) *The selfish gene*. New ed. Oxford University Press.
- De Waal F and Waal FB (1982) *Chimpanzee politics: Power and sex among apes*. JHU Press.
- Dunbar RIM and Barrett L (2007) *Oxford handbook of evolutionary psychology*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Enikolopov R, Petrova M and Zhuravskaya E (2010) *Media and Political Persuasion: Evidence from Russia*. ID 1367046, SSRN Scholarly Paper, 28 August. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1367046> (accessed 9 January 2018).
- Focht E (2017) Rossiane teriaut interes k ‘Priamoi linii’ c Putinin [Russians lose interest in Direct Line with Putin]. *BBC Russian Service*, 19 June. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-40327944> (accessed 30 April 2018).
- Frank SA (2011) Evolutionary foundations of cooperation and group cohesion. *arXiv:1112.3046 [q-bio]*. Available at: <http://arxiv.org/abs/1112.3046> (accessed 9 January 2018).
- Frye T, Gehlbach S, Marquardt KL, et al. (2017) Is Putin’s popularity real? *Post-Soviet Affairs* 33(1): 1–15. DOI: 10.1080/1060586X.2016.1144334.
- Greene, S and Robertson G (2017) Agreeable Authoritarians: Personality and Politics in Contemporary Russia. *Comparative Political Studies* 50(13): 1802–1834. DOI: 10.1177/0010414016688005.
- Grimmer J and Stewart BM (2013) Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts. *Political Analysis* 21(3): 267–297. DOI: 10.1093/pan/mps028.

Grolemund G and Wickham H (n.d.) *R for Data Science*. Available at: <http://r4ds.had.co.nz/> (accessed 10 January 2018).

Hille K (2014) Russian GDP falls for first time in five years. *Financial Times*, 29 December. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/920dbf76-8f5a-11e4-9ea4-00144feabdc0> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Hille K (2018) Russia's economy: challenges facing Vladimir Putin. *Financial Times*, 28 February. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/3aac3faa-1bb6-11e8-aaca-4574d7dabfb6> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Josephson PR (1992) Soviet Scientists and the State: Politics, Ideology, and Fundamental Research from Stalin to Gorbachev. *Social Research* 59(3): 589–614.

Klymenko L (2016) Nation-building and presidential rhetoric in Belarus. *Journal of Language and Politics* 15(6): 727–747.

Kutter A (2018) Corpus analysis. In: Wodak R and Forchtner B (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 169–187.

Lancia F (2012) The Logic of T-Lab Tools Explained. Available at: <http://mytllab.com/textscope.pdf> (accessed 9 January 2018).

Lasswell HD (1968) The Future of the Comparative Method. *Comparative Politics* 1(1): 3–18.

Levada Centre (2018) *Obshhestvennoe Mnenie-2017 [Public Opinion-2017]*. Moscow: Yuri Levada Analytical Centre. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/cp/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/OM-2017.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Lloyd J (2018) Commentary: Why Putin is still – genuinely – popular in Russia | Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lloyd-putin-commentary/commentary-why-putin-is-still-genuinely-popular-in-russia-idUSKBN1GV25D> (accessed 29 April 2018).

Machiavelli N (2003) *The prince*. Reissued with revisions. Penguin classics. London ; New York: Penguin Books.

Max W, David O and Strong TB (2004) *Vocation Lectures: "Science as a Vocation"*. Indianapolis, UNITED STATES: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=1107298> (accessed 26 February 2018).

Michels R (1999) *Political Parties*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers.

Mondak J (2010) *Personality and the foundations of political behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oates S (2006) Television, democracy and elections in Russia. *Television, Democracy and Elections in Russia*: 1–222. DOI: 10.4324/9780203966525.

- Papkova I and Gorenburg DP (2011) The Russian Orthodox Church and Russian Politics: Editors' Introduction. *Russian Politics & Law* 49(1): 3–7.
- Petersen MB (2015) Evolutionary political psychology. *Handbook of evolutionary psychology*.
- Reisigl M and Wodak R (2017) The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*.
- Roberts CW (2000) A Conceptual Framework for Quantitative Text Analysis. *Quality and Quantity* 34(3): 259–274. DOI: 10.1023/A:1004780007748.
- Robertson G and Greene S (2017) The Kremlin Emboldened: How Putin Wins Support. *Journal of Democracy* 28(4): 86–100.
- RT (2017) *Kak Putin v Tuve otidial (ponaia versia) [How Putin spent his Holidays in Tuva (full version)]*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBRwIhrhWFc> (accessed 27 April 2018).
- Schubert G (1983) Evolutionary Politics. *Western Political Quarterly* 36(2): 175–193. DOI: 10.1177/106591298303600203.
- Schubert G, Alker HR and Zinnes D (1983) The Evolution of Political Science: Paradigms of Physics, Biology, and Politics [with Commentaries]. *Politics and the Life Sciences* 1(2): 97–124.
- Schwartzbaum A (2017) Yandex Uber Alles. *FPRI Bear Market Brief*, 11 November. Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/cea752834d17/yandex-uber-alles?e=ef7d2e3c72> (accessed 29 April 2018).
- Shestopal E b., Pishcheva T n., Gikavyi E m., et al. (2004) The Image of V.V. Putin in the Consciousness of Russia's Citizens. *Sociological Research* 43(6): 29–56.
- Shestopal EB (1997) The Prospects of Democracy in Russians' Minds. *Russian Politics & Law* 35(2): 5–30. DOI: 10.2753/RUP1061-194035025.
- Shestopal EB (2012) *Psihologija politicheskogo vosprijatija v sovremennoj Rossii [The psychology of political perception in modern Russia]*. Moscow: Rosspen.
- Sidanius J and Kurzban R (2003) Evolutionary approaches to political psychology. *Oxford handbook of political psychology*: 146–181.
- Smith JE, Gavrillets S, Mulder MB, et al. (2016) Leadership in Mammalian Societies: Emergence, Distribution, Power, and Payoff. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 31(1): 54–66. DOI: 10.1016/j.tree.2015.09.013.
- Spisak BR, O'Brien MJ, Nicholson N, et al. (2015) Niche Construction and the Evolution of Leadership. *Academy of Management Review* 40(2): 291–306. DOI: 10.5465/amr.2013.0157.

Taylor KE (2009) *Cruelty: human evil and the human brain*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Torbakov I (2011) History, Memory and National Identity: Understanding Politics of History and Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Lands. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 19(3): 209–232.

Treisman D (2011) Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin. *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 590–609. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00500.x.

Treisman D (2014) Putin's popularity since 2010: why did support for the Kremlin plunge, then stabilize? *Post-Soviet Affairs*: 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/1060586X.2014.904541.

Van Vugt M (2009) *Despotism, Democracy, and the Evolutionary Dynamics of Leadership and Followership*. 1. American Psychological Association.

Van Vugt M and Grabo AE (2015) The Many Faces of Leadership: An Evolutionary-Psychology Approach. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 24(6): 484–489. DOI: 10.1177/0963721415601971.

Vedernikov A (2017) *Religioznye sud'by velikih ljudej russkoj nacional'noj kul'tury [Religious fates of great people in national culture]*. Litres.

Volkov D (2015) How Authentic is Putin's Approval Rating? *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 27 July. Available at: <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/60849> (accessed 25 April 2018).

Wallas G (1929) *Human Nature in Politics*. Third. Constable. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11634/11634-h/11634-h.htm> (accessed 11 February 2018).

Weber M (1922) *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weber M (2004) *The vocation lectures*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub.

Wodak R (2011) The Discourse-Historical Approach. In: Wodak R and Meyer M (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. SAGE Publications, Ltd, pp. 63–94. Available at: <http://methods.sagepub.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/book/methods-of-critical-discourse-analysis/d6.xml> (accessed 2 March 2018).

Wodak R (2015) Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-Historical Approach. In: *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. DOI: 10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi116.

Wodak R and Meyer M (2001) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. 6 Bonhill Street, London EC2A 4PU: SAGE Publications, Ltd. DOI: 10.4135/9780857028020.

Zubarevich N (2017) The Fall of Russia's Regional Governors. Available at: <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/73369> (accessed 28 April 2018).