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Vladimir Putin's Leadership Traits over 11 Years: A Longitudinal Study of Putin's Third Term in Office Using Leadership Trait Analysis

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The findings of this study challenge much of the existing literature. Contrary to the widely proposed notion that Putin's traits changed most between 2012 and 2014, particularly in the distrust and need for power indicators (Semenova and Winter 2020; Dyson and Parent 2018; Hill and Gaddy 2015), this analysis revealed a different narrative. The most significant shift in Putin's leadership traits occurred in 2014 when six of the seven studied traits moved at least one standard deviation from the average. This period saw decreases in task focus, belief in the ability to control events, self-confidence, and need for power but increases in the indicators of in-group bias and conceptual complexity. These findings not only challenge the existing literature but also provide a fresh perspective on how Putin has adapted his pursuit of power, shifting his task focus from problem-solving to relationships to maintain political power (Semenova and Winter 2020). This analysis aims to broaden the field of literature to encompass more comprehensive assessments of Putin's leadership traits over recent years while also deepening the understanding of the benefits and downsides of longitudinally studying a leader using LTA indicators.

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Vladimir Putin's Leadership Traits Over 11 Years:

A Longitudinal Study of Putin's Third Term in Office using Leadership Trait Analysis

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Introduction

Researchers in political psychology have spent decades trying to understand how the personality of a leader impacts her subsequent decisions while in office. While researchers still debate this question (*See* Jervis 2013; Fordam 1998; Kolko and Kolko 1972), an extensive section of the literature has determined that leadership style has substantial consequences on behavior in office (Hermann et al. 2001; Byman and Pollack 2001; Dyson 2009; John et al. 2008). In order to determine *how* leadership personality interacts with policymaking, two primary sections of research have emerged: psychobiographical analysis, which seeks to use biography, environment, and personal history to determine how a leader makes decisions (Hill and Gaddy 2015; John et al. 2008; Ihanus 2001); and content analyses, which use speech coding to interpret inner personality traits (Huddy et al. 2013; Hermann et al. 2001). These traits have been found to have some stability, though there is a likelihood they can change over time, leading many in the field to research how and when traits may change (Caspi et al. 2005; Hermann 1980b; Kaarbo 2021).

While this research is compelling, some gaps remain in the literature. Studies involving Vladimir Putin used only a select few research methods, and very few have been able to conduct a longitudinal analysis or independently study his leadership post-Ukrainian invasion. Therefore, this research hopes to explore if and how Vladimir Putin has changed his leadership traits over his third term in office. To empirically study this research question, a subset of content analysis called Leadership Trait Analysis was used. Unlike other popular content analysis methods in leadership psychology, Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) proposes stability in traits, except when there are significant shifts in inner psychology or external events (Hermann 2003; Hermann et al. 2001). Additionally, the various means with which LTA examines data allow for the

conceptualization of the results to be done in a multitude of ways, both individually and comprehensively (Fouquet and Brummer 2023; Hermann 2003; Cuhadar et al. 2017; Kaarbo 2021).

By utilizing LTA and longitudinal analysis to study Vladimir Putin, this research seeks to fill the void present in the broader literature while also exploring the possibilities this research could have in the future. Longitudinal studies in this field are a relatively new subsection of research, and contributing to that literature could provide insight into some of its benefits and downsides. By including longitudinal studies, cross-language analysis, and the study of a non-European figure, this research hopes to push the boundaries of an already extensively studied method and extend the use of this literature further.

Literature Review

When studying the question "How has Vladimir Putin's leadership style changed over time?" it is essential to note the assumptions made: the statement implies that Putin possesses a distinct set of measurable traits that *matter in foreign policy,* and that these traits can *change over time.* To understand how leadership affects policymaking, a subset of political psychology known as leadership analysis seeks to bridge the gap between psychology and the study of leaders (Huddy et al. 2013; Hermann et al. 2001).

While much of the literature has concluded that a distinct connection exists between leadership personality and policymaking, critics of this argument question the extent of a leader's ability to influence policy (Jervis 2013; Polsky 2012; Fordam 1998; Kolko and Kolko 1972). These critics cite that that situation may change the views of presidents rather than the other way around. Jervis, specifically, finds there to be a continuity in policymaking, stating that the

homogeneity of culture, socialization once in office, and the constraints placed on leadership may limit how much a leader's personality can influence their policies. This view is corroborated by others, who argue that leaders tend to have limited power to determine policy in circumstances of war (Polsky 2012) and that economic interests determine a leader's policies, not their personality (Fordam 1998). This section of research concludes that various outside factors contribute more to foreign policy than the traits of leaders (Kolko and Kolko 1972).

This "lack of influence," as contended by critics, is directly countered by personality theorists. Many attest to the importance of a leader's traits and psychology (Byman and Pollack 2001; Dyson 2009; John et al. 2008). This section of the literature asserts that the personalities of leaders will affect both their state's strategies and others' reactions. While some contend that these personalities can have more significant effects in some circumstances and less in others, researchers still maintain the importance of studying the individual in the context of international decision-making (Post 2003; Saunders 2009). Although these researchers may concede that the role of a leader is not the only factor that affects foreign policy outcomes, they still maintain that the personality and choices an individual leader makes matter (Saunders 2009).

Additionally, if researchers discount the importance of the individual when consequential behaviors of foreign policy are being made, research contests that any accountability that a leader may feel for her actions is lost (Hudson 2005). If the "blame" is not placed on the leader for her actions, then there is little chance that the leader would feel pressured to understand the consequences of her actions. This perceived lack of responsibility leads to what these researchers would call a dehumanization of foreign policy (Hudson 2005). The personality of a leader plays a role in the choices made in office, resulting in lasting consequences that this section of the

literature deems to be essential to understanding what influences foreign policy (Hermann and Hermann 1989).

While personality may be a factor to consider, the methodology used to study it is a point of contention. Some scholars question the validity of 'at-a-distance' analysis, which attempts to understand a leader's psychology without direct interaction, citing its limitations in defining individual personalities within the broader psychological context (Renshon 2001; Samuels 2003; Renshon 2014). These findings highlight some of the key challenges with this approach, including its inability to directly measure these traits and the reliability of using scripted speeches to infer thought processes (Schafer 2014). Moreover, researchers have criticized leadership studies for their contentious and inconsistent nature, with different theories employing varying definitions of 'leadership' to support their claims (Rhodes and t'Hart 2014; Renshon 2001). However, once these issues are addressed, leadership studies and content analysis can be as valid as other psychological techniques used to study behavior (Schafer 2014; Rhodes and t'Hart 2014; Byman and Pollack 2001).

Within leadership psychology, two broad categories have been characterized: content analytic techniques and psychobiographical approaches (Feldman and Valenty 2001). Content analytical techniques — also called content analysis — use different parts of speech (e.g., verbs, adverbs, or pronouns) to analyze the inner thought processes of a leader (Schafer 2014). This approach follows the idea that a leader will use words referencing her inner thinking or psychology, which can then be analyzed and identified with different personality traits (Schafer 2014; Post 2003). Leadership content analysis also has subsections, with the most relevant area of research being that of Leadership Trait Analysis (Hermann et al. 2001), motive analysis (Winter 1988), and operational code (Dyson 2001). Psychobiographical is by far the oldest, most

researched, and most well-known, but in recent literature, it is often paired with content analysis to contextualize findings (Simonton 2014; Fouquet and Brummer 2023; Hermann 2003; Cuhadar et al. 2017; Kaarbo 2021). The following literature review will summarize the relevant research within both psychobiographical techniques and various forms of content analysis, explaining their functions, potential benefits, and downsides.

Biographical and Historical Approaches

The historical or biographical approach examines the relationship between a leader's environment, personal experiences, and their subsequent approach to policymaking (Simonton 2014). This work focuses on how a leader's history and background shaped their political policymaking behavior, which provides an in-depth analysis of the leader and depicts *why* they act that way in the first place (Hill and Gaddy 2015; John et al. 2008; Ihanus 2001). Biographical analysis has been extensively used over the years to try to understand the inner thought processes of leaders (Samuels 2003). It is beneficial because it uses personal characteristics — which tend to be lacking in content analyses — to determine behavior (John et al. 2008). For example, in a study by Ihanus comparing the leadership profiles of different Soviet leaders, they contrast Yeltsin and Stalin, who both had tough, loveless childhoods. They identify Stalin as a charismatic, seductive leader who used "tough love" to gain followers, cited as being due to a lack of childhood compassion or love (Ihanus 2001). On the other hand, Yeltsin used his tough childhood to become an obstinate, moody figure who delegated authority, resulting in a chaotic, hierarchical government that relied heavily on his "clan" to make most decisions (Ihanus 2001). While there are no concrete reasons for *how* these leaders acted in power, conclusions can be drawn about *why* they acted the way they did, leading to a profile that characterizes their actions in office as related to their personal experiences.

However, these analyses tend to be, at best, educated guesswork. As mentioned in the previous study, this method lacks cohesion, introducing some problematic factors (Ihanus 2001; Renshon 2014). Because there is no specified framework of study, the results of these approaches tend to be entirely subjective, trying to answer *why* something happened without being able to specify exactly *how* that thing happened in the first place. However, researchers have found that combining content analysis with historical approaches can answer both *why* and *how* (Fouquet and Brummer 2023; Hermann 2003; Cuhadar et al. 2017; Kaarbo 2021). Content analysis provides a conclusive, repeatable result that can then be contextualized by history and background, creating a comprehensive analysis that analyzes both behavior and experiences (Simonton 2014).

Leadership Trait Analysis

To introduce the section describing content analysis, the first and most widely renowned subset of leadership content analysis is Leadership Trait Analysis. LTA differentiates itself from other areas of the literature because it uses speech to detect underlying traits that may affect policymaking (Hermann 1980b). Speech is used because it can show the focus or purpose of the leader. A speech, primarily when conducted in an informal or spontaneous setting, uses verbs, nouns, and other forms of speech that can indicate different motivations, which is then measured using a frequency test (Hermann 2003). For example, a leader who focuses on problem-solving is often going to use verbs such as "solve," "fix," or "institute." However, verbs such as "cooperate," "communicate," or "discuss" indicate a focus on relationships with others. These verbs can provide insight into the focus of that leader; in this instance, whether they focus on solving problems or building relationships in order to achieve a goal. This example portrays the motivation of a leader, which, when combined with the leader's responsiveness to constraints

and openness to information, characterizes the three main themes of LTA (Hermann 2003). Within these themes, seven different traits are analyzed, creating a coherent and comparable analysis of political leaders as compared to contemporary historical analysis (Hermann 2003).

By separating these themes into seven identifiable traits, there is both overlap and separation in concepts, allowing a comprehensive analysis to be conducted (Hermann 2003). A leader changes how they respond to events based on how much they believe they can control outcomes and their need for power and influence over those outcomes (Hermann 2003). How open a leader is to incoming information, especially if it contradicts the preconceived notions of the world, will change based on their conceptual complexity — how ambiguous they believe the world to be — and their self-confidence (Hermann 2003). Finally, a leader's motivations are based on their task focus — whether they focus on people or situations/problems —, how much they distrust others, and how likely they are to fall into in-group bias (Hermann 2003). These themes and their composite traits are what make LTA so applicable. Comparisons can be made between leaders using entire profiles or specific traits (Fouquet and Brummer 2023; Hermann 2003; Hermann 1980b) or even between different leadership roles (Cuhadar et al. 2017).

Finally, comparisons can be made about a specific leader over time (Kaarbo 2021). Within leadership personality studies, a small section of the literature examines personality change over time. Recent research has found that leaders tend to "break bad," becoming more authoritarian and less likely to be open to receiving information (Kaarbo 2021; Kellerman 2004). However, in order to operationalize the term "bad," research cites the importance of context and operational indicators as necessary aspects of longitudinal research, defining its indicators as aging, experience, learning, and the psychological effects of power (Kaarbo 2021). Aging has been found to increase the need for power and aggression, most likely due to their shortened

timeline for future actions as a leader (Horowitz et al. 2005). Experience is argued to determine how likely leaders are to change their policy over time. People with previous political experience are less likely to change what they know "works" rather than adapt to new foreign policy outcomes, while leaders with less experience are believed to have more prominent learning curves over time as they adapt to their role (Hafner-Burton et al. 2013; Saunders 2017). Learning, in contrast, is defined as a change in beliefs, which can be studied in many different ways: seeing the world as becoming more conflictual rather than cooperative (Crichlow 1998), the change in the belief of the ability to control events (Cuhadar et al. 2017), or a change in conceptual complexity (Stein 1994). Finally, power is argued to change a leader's traits over time due to factors such as distrust, changing motivations, and self-confidence (Kaarbo 2021).

This recent work not only contributes to the existing literature on leadership analyses but also expands the scope of LTA by broadening the seven indicators and their prospective uses in studying leaders. By incorporating comparisons in leadership types, studies over time, and studies between leaders of different governments, LTA has the potential to construct profiles of leaders from all corners of the world and various time periods. By connecting these profiles and building a comprehensive database, comparisons can be drawn between leaders with compatible or contradictory traits. With further research, this could potentially lead to the prediction of such leaders and their interactions, opening up new avenues for understanding and studying leadership.

Motive Analysis

Motivation analysis, a prominent form of content analysis in leadership studies, offers practical insights into the driving forces behind a leader's actions (Winter 2011; Winter 2019; Winter 2013). This method, which categorizes motivations into three indicators observed in a

leader's speeches (Winter 1988), provides a valuable tool for understanding a leader's actions. By scrutinizing word choice and how a leader contextualizes a problem or event, profound insights can be gained into their motivations. It is worth noting that each leader will exhibit some degree of each indicator, underscoring the importance of this analysis in understanding their actions (Winter 2013).

The three indicators of motive analysis are divided by the leader's desired outcome: the desire for achievement, affiliation, or power. The achievement indicator shows the prevalence of problem-solving within a leader's speech, highlighting phrases that discuss strategy and planning (Winter 1988). These phrases may refer to a solution to a problem, completion of a task, or some other policy initiative that had been upheld and resulted in its achievement. A relevant example of achievement would include Nixon's approach to communist China, where he focused specifically on policy objectives (Winter 1988). To contradict the achievement motive is the affiliation indicator, which focuses on the parts of speech where a leader highlights his relationship with others (Winter 1988). A leader high in this score indicates a focus on building or maintaining relationships, which would include examples such as a good relationship with the leader of another country or ties to cooperations or alliances with inter-diplomacy initiatives. Finally, the power indicator looks for phrases that show strength over something or someone else (Winter 1988). The action aims to show power or influence over another to improve internal affairs, with a pertinent example coming from the invasion of Georgia by Vladimir Putin in 2008 (Semenova and Winter 2020).

While a leader will demonstrate all three indicators, the proportions of each will vary depending on the situation and the type of leadership they exhibit, akin to the task focus indicator used in LTA (Winter 2019; Hermann 2003). These traits are highly individualized and

context-dependent, often undergoing significant changes in different situations (Winter 2019). Motive analysis, unlike LTA, focuses on the long-term goals of leaders, not their beliefs or traits, which are more subconscious forms of analysis (Winter 2011; Hermann 2003).

The variability in different situations allows motive analysis to benefit considerably from longitudinal studies (Semenova and Winter 2020). Because the motivations can be situation-dependent, it allows for a shorter motivational analysis before and after the event. However, in that same vein, the situational dependence of this analysis makes it difficult to show a long-term longitudinal trend in leaders, though this has yet to be done (Semenova and Winter 2020). Finally, this method is very limited in what it can accomplish. Because this research focuses on motivation and not the subconscious (as done in studies such as LTA), the only interpretations come from leaders' intentions, not necessarily their personality traits. However, these two can be combined by including psychobiographical analysis to contextualize results, which has led to an increased ability to understand the actions of leaders (Semenova and Winter 2020).

Operational Code

Finally, a third type of content analysis often cited is operational code, which differs slightly in its operationalization and interpretation compared to other forms of content analysis. Unlike LTA or motive analysis, operational code focuses more on breadth. Researchers in this section of the literature divide worldview into two broad categories: instrumental beliefs and philosophical beliefs (Dyson and Parent 2018). Within each worldview, five questions broadly categorize a leader's beliefs about the world as a whole (philosophical beliefs) in conjunction with how they go about achieving those beliefs (instrumental beliefs) (Dyson 2001). Through

this division, the goal is to separate how an actor views the world and how they intend to behave within that perceived world, as those two concepts may be different but interrelated (Dyson 2001). Interestingly, operational code almost combines the benefits of both LTA and motive analysis by incorporating both inner personality and outward intentions.

In addition to the combining features of operational code indicators, another considerable benefit of operational code is the depth and specificity of its indices. Substantial comparisons can be drawn between a leader's worldview and actions, showing if there are disparities between the two (Dyson and Parent 2018; Pankow and Patman 2018). Research on Vladimir Putin using this analysis finds few disparities but an intriguing conclusion on his worldview, citing that he is an opportunistic leader who changes his worldview depending on the context, with his primary focus centered on counter-terrorism and political control. His actions, then, reflect those focuses as well as his worldview. When pro-Russian President Yanukovich was ousted in 2014, Putin took extreme action to maintain political control and counter perceived threats in the near abroad (Pankow and Patman 2018). The research found that the destabilization from the EU and the presidential ousting were perceived as momentous territorial threats, which he counteracted by annexing Crimea, suppressing media, and harassing political parties to achieve his aims (Pankow and Patman 2018). However, very little research has been done regarding Putin in recent years, likely due to the issues involved with operationalizing the indicators of operational code.

Because this type of analysis has such depth when doing this research, it comes with a large workload and difficulty in studying the indicators empirically. Unlike LTA or motive analysis, operational code relies entirely on verb coding to define the indices, which makes the research much more subjective than some of its counterparts and depends entirely on verbs to constitute the entire purpose of a leader, which can lead to significant assumptions made based

on simple word choice. To help this, as was done with motive analysis, psychoanalytical arguments are used to bolster the research and put it into context (Dyson and Parent 2018).

In sum, there are a plethora of different ways leaders can and have been analyzed. Whether from studying their background, personality, motivations, or internal code, these types of content analyses hold much potential for future study. By conducting, comparing, and combining each of these different analyses, research is getting closer to understanding if and how a leader matters in foreign policy.

Analytical Framework

Because this study used leadership trait analysis, the research and findings studied in the literature review will remain critical throughout this research. Leadership Trait Analysis has extensively studied leaders worldwide (Hermann et al. 2001, Kaarbo 2021; Cuhadar et al. 2017; Fouquest and Klaus 2023; Hermann 1980a; Hermann 2003), though, in content analysis in general, the author's interests tend to focus on specific leaders or geographic areas. David G. Winter — one of the founders of motive analysis — had his area of the Middle East and the Soviet Bloc (Winter 2011; Winter 2019; Winter 2013), while others, such as Margaret Hermann, were much more interested in the traits of leaders of liberal democracies (Hermann 2003; Hermann 1995; Hermann and Preston 1998). This divide creates a hole in the literature when combining LTA with non-West actors. The closest LTA on Putin comes from Hermann in one of her earliest works with LTA, in which 20 men in the Soviet Politburo are compared using earlier methods of LTA (Hermann 1980a). Using speeches of similar length, content, and timing, LTA was used on each member to create a profile of Soviet Politburo members. While this study did not specifically investigate Putin, what made it so substantial was how it divided its results.

First, each member was given his own score and, based on his position, was analyzed in the greater context of the Russian government. Secondly, the scores were compared against each other, depicting what would be considered the outliers and what would constitute the "average" traits of a Soviet Politburo member. In doing this work, Hermann found that Soviet leaders tended to have a high need for power, low self-confidence, high belief in the ability to control events, and high status in leadership (Hermann 1980a). These results suggested the validity of the inverse relationship between power and self-confidence and the importance of in-group bias as an indicator, which would lead to the success of her later work (Hermann 1980a).

While this fascinating study showed Russian leaders' personality traits, this research was conducted prior to Putin's rise to power. However, several analyses have been conducted on Vladimir Putin during his time in office. Research has been largely inconclusive on his general leadership style, with some of the literature pointing to motivational shifts due to NATO security tensions (Semenova and Winter 2020), while others venture him to be more strategic in his actions, making him an opportunist (Dyson and Parent 2018; Hill and Gaddy 2015). When specifically studying his actions in Ukraine from 2014 to 2017, nationalism, in-group bias, "othering," and polarization of allies and enemies were all contributors found to have impacted his leadership (Roberts 2017; Pankow and Patman 2018). Interestingly, there seems to be little consensus about Putin's real personality or motivations in the literature. However, psychobiographical researchers tend to think he is more territorial than most, as his experiences in the KGB are believed to have resulted in a need to suppress potential threats to feel a sense of safety (Hill and Gaddy 2015). Conversely, some cite him as an authoritative, paranoid leader who feels that safety overrides freedom (Roberts 2017; Pankow and Patman 2018; Hill and Gaddy 2015), while others view him as a strategist, using international boundaries as loopholes

to gain power and success in the international system (Semenova and Winter 2020; Hill and Gaddy 2015; Dyson and Parent 2018).

While these analyses provide intriguing results, there is a lack of cohesion or real conclusions about how Vladimir Putin conducts foreign policy. Additionally, these conclusions have been made in varying subsections of leadership analysis, excluding LTA. While research into Putin's actions in other areas holds many insights into some of his actions, they do not have some of the benefits of LTA. Compared to many of the studies listed above, its ability to compare analyses of over 122 political leaders will prove vital for any future work that wishes to delve deeper into the topic (Hermann 2003).

In order to fill this gap and shed light on Putin's leadership traits, this study employed LTA computer coding to conduct a longitudinal analysis of his traits to see how his political personality changed and what surrounding events may have been associated with that change. Because the period studied ends in 2023, an updated analysis of Vladimir Putin can be presented. By answering the *when*, *how*, and *why*, further research could study his first two terms as president and draw comparisons, study the role of his advisors in decision-making, or create comparisons between his leadership type and that of previous actors who held the Russian presidency. This research can continue to grow the field of leadership analysis, the merit of using technological coding programs, and open up more research to see if and how leaders change over time and in what ways.

Methodology

This analysis explored Vladimir Putin's leadership style over time and its correlation with specific events. A quantitative content analysis research design was employed to operationalize

LTA traits, which were applied across five pivotal events. These results were averaged and then juxtaposed, with a final psychobiographical approach undertaken to contextualize the results and shed light on the potential reasons for variations across different periods. This comprehensive psychobiographical approach integrated models developed by Margaret Hermann that categorize world leaders. The findings of previous studies on Putin in various fields were amalgamated to present a holistic view of the results. In conclusion, both the quantitative and qualitative results were scrutinized for any gaps, errors, or areas requiring further testing, with a discussion section outlining the strengths and weaknesses of this analysis and proposing avenues for future research to enrich the literature in this area.

Given the substantial amount of data that needed to be processed, a reliable content analysis coding program called ProfilerPlus was used to manage the extensive coding process (Levine and Young 2014). ProfilerPlus, a computer program developed in 2014, was chosen for its proven track record in shortening the research timeline, making at-a-distance analyses more accessible to newer researchers, and increasing coding reliability (Levine and Young 2014; Hermann 2003). Within its programming are several different content analysis options to code for, including LTA, operational code, motive analysis, and verbal code analysis. For the purposes of this research design, the design of Profiler Plus will be explained using Leadership Trait Analysis and its seven indicators. For more information on the implementation and coding used within Profiler Plus, see Levine and Young (2014).

At its foundation, Profiler Plus performs the same task as a hand coder but with the added benefits of speed and concrete parameters to define each indicator. The program meticulously goes sentence by sentence, word by word, through the coding scheme for each individual indicator and tracks how many times an indicator returns as a positive (the indicator existed) or

no match (there was a response, but it did not match the necessary inputs to qualify as an indicator). These "If, Then" statements can be broken down into coding, which does the exact thing as seen above. This kind of computer analysis has both benefits and weaknesses. On the one hand, it is more empirical and creates a more systematic and unbiased analysis than could ever be done by a hand coder (Dyson and Parent 2018). However, because there are such limitations on the inputs that constitute an indicator, there will always be a chance that the information can be misconstrued due to a coding error (Grimmer and Steward 2013). However, the same applies to hand coding, as humans are much more susceptible to mistakes than machines.

Data Sources

The research question was analyzed through the content analysis of translated speeches focusing on five crucial times throughout the third term of Putin's presidency (2012 - today). To account for language barriers, these speeches were taken from the President of Russia's website (n.d.). The Russian government's translations were used because translations can be skewed due to cultural interpretations and a lack of direct word-to-word translations (Levine and Young 2014). While not foolproof, these translations are the most likely to be "correct" or assigned the best meaning because the message will be biased through the Russian government, which is more likely to translate as Putin wishes. These translations were entered in ProfilerPlus for content analysis. This technological tool automatically codes the translations and provides a dataset of the raw numbers of each variable in each trait and the calculated traits themselves so the math and data can be checked.

All five speeches were "Addresses to the Russian Federation," which are the annual presidential speeches that act similarly to the State of the Union speech. These speeches were addressed to Federal Council members (essentially the Russian Congress) and the broader Russian population twice yearly. All topics of the speeches were similar, focusing on the international relations of Russia towards in comparison to the West. These speeches were specifically used because they had the same formatting, approximately the same length, similar subjects, and were all focused on one audience: the Russian people. It could be argued that these speeches are biased because of the focus on the Russian people, making Putin want to show a more benevolent, democratic leader. However, Putin never gave spontaneous speeches, which researchers usually use to provide the most reliable results (Hermann 2003). Because of this, the next best option was to use speeches addressed to a single audience with similar topics, which was done when gathering the sampled speeches.

In addition to the content analysis performed by ProfilerPlus, two sample analyses were conducted by hand using one speech from the sample. A table of random numbers was consulted to remove bias when choosing the speech to code (University of Connecticut n.d.). For this sample, the chosen speech was hand-coded in English and then in the original Russian using knowledge of the Russian language. This sample explored if and how the translations impacted the coding techniques and provided an interesting analysis of the differences between Russian and English. Ultimately, this exploration provided a greater understanding of the LTA coding scheme and explored the translation discrepancies that affected the coding. To read more on the hand-coding sample, see *Exploring Hand-Coding: A Comparison of Russian vs. English Texts* on page 29.

Data Gathering

Of the five time periods selected for LTA analysis, four were chosen for coding based on their apparent historical significance. Vladimir Putin's reelection (2012) was his return to the presidency after being Prime Minister, and it was also the time when the most substantial NATO tensions took place (Semenova and Winter 2020). The annexation of Crimea (2014) has been a controversial topic studied by many, with some describing the incident as being Putin's reaction to NATO infringement, while others view it as an excuse to take back what Stalin "gave away" (Dyson and Parent 2018; Roberts 2017; Pankow and Patman 2018). The fifth time point, 2018, was added as a baseline when no significant international events were apparent and also to act as the midpoint between 2014 and 2022, which would have had an eight-year gap otherwise. The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was a critical escalation in aggressive policy decisions, which will likely correspond with a change in leadership style, which may be correlated with a shift similar to the one research argues happened in 2014 (Roberts 2017; Pankow and Patman 2018). Finally, the last data point was the most recent speech to the general assembly in 2023 at the time of research while the war in Ukraine was still ongoing. This data was used to get the most up-to-date analysis of Putin, providing the most relevant and recent research available.

Within each of these time points, the Federal Address of that year was selected for analysis. If more than one of these speeches were given within that year, the speech closest to the time of the event studied was chosen. Based on previous literature, each of these speeches needed to be at least 1,000 words, all made within two months of the specified event and relating to the event studied (Hermann 2003). While LTA usually tries to use the most "authentic" speeches — which would be the ones that are the most spontaneous and most likely to show the traits of a leader (Hermann 2003) — Putin, unfortunately, does not provide any opportunities for

spontaneous speech. The annual Federal Assembly speeches —which act similar to the State of the Union speeches of the U.S. — will be used because they are done yearly and can easily be compared to each other over time, providing a standardized measure of analysis to show the change (Semenova and Winter 2020).

Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, ProfilerPlus coded for each of the seven traits used in LTA. After each speech was coded, the scores for each trait at each time point were calculated and then averaged to give an overall finding of Putin's leadership style at each specified time. These were then compared to see if there were any changes and provide an overarching average of Putin's leadership style. Once the results were calculated, they were compared against relevant literature, resulting in a qualitative psychobiographical approach to add context and understanding to the analysis. By including previous literature and historical context, the qualitative analysis hopes to provide a sense of why the changes identified may or may not have occurred, which is a common practice in this area of research (Simonton 2014).

To operationalize the LTA indicators, each variable takes the count of the specified trait and divides it by the sum of the indicators of that trait and the opposite. For example, calculating the score for the need for power would involve taking the number of statements showing power and dividing it by the sum of statements showing power and those showing a lack of power, as shown in the example equation below.

$$\frac{verb\ phrases\ indicating\ power}{total\ number\ of\ verb\ phrases\ in\ the\ speech} = \%\ Need\ for\ Power$$

To define what statements show power or the lack of power, Margaret Hermann's research guide was used, specifying each trait's analysis in depth (Hermann 2003; Smith 1992).

While Hermann describes seven traits for LTA, she also groups these traits into three major themes: whether a leader respects or challenges constraints, is open or closed to information, and is motivated by problems or relationships (Hermann 2003). Within these themes, 2-3 traits are grouped, creating a categorization that can define the type of leader being studied. Table 1 depicts Hermann's categorization of leaders through these three themes.

Respect or Challenge Constraints? Whether or not a leader tends to respect or challenge constraints will depend on whether they have a high need for power and a high belief in the ability to control events (Hermann 2003). The more dominant trait between the two determines how successfully the leader will work around or within constraints (*See* Table 2 for a comparison of Power to BACE below). The traits of need for power and belief in the ability to control events are compared to operationalize this category.

To test for the belief in the ability to control events (BACE), a researcher must determine how confident a leader feels that they can shape or change any situation in which they find themselves. If they have a high level of confidence, they are more likely to take part in the preparation and planning for such an event (Hermann 2003). To code for this, verbs describing when a leader takes responsibility for an action or its preparation indicate a count for BACE. This number is then divided by the total number of statements made, both active and passive, resulting in a ratio. For example, the sentence "we submitted a proposal to France" suggests that the leader took part in this action, showing an instance where BACE is present. However, the sentence "A proposal was submitted to France" has no subject, suggesting that while the leader did have this task done, he either delegated it or is not too keen on being associated with the action itself, indicating a non-instance of BACE.

Table 1: **Hermann's Table of the Categorization of Leaders**

Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges constraints	Closed to information	*Expansionistic* (Focus of attention is on expanding leader's, government's, and state's span of control)	*Evangelistic* (Focus of attention is on persuading others to join in one's mission, in mobilizing others around one's message)
Challenges constraints	Open to information	*Actively Independent* (Focus of attention is on maintaining one's own and the government's maneuverability and independence in a world that is perceived to continually try to limit both)	*Directive* (Focus of attention is on maintaining one's own and the government's status and acceptance by others by engaging in actions on the world stage that enhance the state's reputation)
Respects constraints	Closed to information	*Incremental* (Focus of attention is on improving state's economy and/or security in incremental steps while avoiding the obstacles that will inevitably arise along the way)	*Influential* (Focus of attention is on building cooperative relationships with other governments and states in order to play a leadership role; by working with others, one can gain more than is possible on one's own)
Respects constraints	Open to information	*Opportunistic* (Focus of attention is on assessing what is possible in the current situation and context given what one wants to achieve and considering what important constituencies will allow)	*Collegial* (Focus of attention is on reconciling differences and building consensus—on gaining prestige and status through empowering others and sharing accountability)

Source: *(Hermann 2003; 185)*

Table 2: **Hermann's Table of Leader's Reaction to Constraints**

	Belief Can Control Events	
Need for Power	**Low**	**High**
Low	**Respect** constraints; work within such parameters toward goals; compromise and consensus building important.	**Challenge** constraints but less successful in doing so because too direct and open in use of power; less able to read how to manipulate people and setting behind the scenes to have desired influence.
High	**Challenge** constraints but more comfortable doing so in an indirect fashion—behind the scenes; good at being "power behind the throne" where they can pull strings but are less accountable for result.	**Challenge** constraints; are skillful in both direct and indirect influence; know what they want and take charge to see it happens.

Source: *(Hermann 2003; 188)*

The trait of need for power (PWR) indicates a desire to control the actions of someone or something else. It is the desire to influence a situation. To code for this trait, verb usage determines whether a leader wants to acquire or maintain power:

> Some of the conditions where the need for power would be scored are when the speaker (1) proposes or engages in a strong, forceful action, such as an assault or attack, a verbal threat, an accusation, or a reprimand; (2) gives advice or assistance when it is not solicited; (3) attempts to regulate the behavior of another person or group; (4) tries to persuade, bribe, or argue with someone else so long as the concern is not to reach agreement or avoid disagreement; (5) endeavors to impress or gain fame with an action; and (6) is concerned with his or her reputation or position. (Hermann 2003, 190)

The more frequently the PWR is indicated, the stronger the leader's desire to have power or influence over a situation. This trait is the primary factor determining how effectively a leader

can navigate constraints. Table 2 provides a detailed description of how leaders with different traits manage the constraints they face.

Open or Closed to Information? Hermann's second theme describes how willing leaders are to listen to new information, which is attributed to self-confidence and conceptual complexity. Conceptual complexity describes how ambiguous a leader believes the world to be. Do they see the world as a structured, unchangeable place? Or do they see it as a grey, complex world with many different and varying intentions? How a leader responds to new information entirely depends on whether they are more self-confident or more conceptually complex (Hermann 2003). As depicted in Table 3, comparing these traits determines the willingness to receive information. The basis for this comparison is that high self-confidence indicates a leader is more closed off to information, while high conceptual complexity indicates a higher openness to information. An inverse relationship defines the traits of self-confidence and conceptual complexity, with the latter having a greater effect on the overall analysis.

Table 3: **Hermann's Table on Openness to Information**

Scores on Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence	Openness to Contextual Information
Conceptual Complexity > Self-Confidence	Open
Self-Confidence > Conceptual Complexity	Closed
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both High	Open
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both Low	Closed

Source: *(Hermann 2003; 194)*

When scoring for self-confidence (SC), the analysis focuses on how leaders approach interaction in a given environment. When in uncomfortable situations, how will that individual

respond? Are they more likely to continue supporting their position or likely to change it when confronted with an undesired or uncomfortable situation? When operationalizing this variable, then, the context of pronouns such as *I, me,* or *mine* can show SC:

> When speakers interject these pronouns into their speech, how important do they see themselves compared to what is happening? Does the use of the pronoun reflect that the leader is instigating an activity (e.g., "I am going to . . ." or "That is my plan of action"), should be viewed as an authority figure on this issue (e.g., "If it were up to me . . ." or "Let me explain what we mean"), or is the recipient of a positive response from another person or group (e.g., "You flatter me with your praise" or "My position was accepted")? (Hermann 2003, 194).

Once again, it is essential to reiterate that these traits are not mutually exclusive. Many of the examples listed above also indicate situations when a leader takes ownership of an action, which would indicate BACE. In many ways, BACE and self-confidence go hand-in-hand because when one feels confident about a situation, she desires to plan for it. Therefore, and as discussed later, it is widely argued that some of these traits have their own relationships outside of the three themes described by Hermann, which may include a positive relationship between BACE and self-confidence.

Conceptual complexity (CC) is often characterized by how "black and white" a leader perceives the world: is it a binary view, or are they open to understanding others' perspectives? Do they consider the world rigid or adaptable, depending on the circumstances? Leaders with low CC might resort to sweeping generalizations, making them less adaptable to their environment (Hermann 2003). To measure CC, the use of adverbs or brief phrases that define the certainty of a situation are used. Terms like *absolutely, without a doubt,* or *impossible* would typify someone with low CC, while terms such as *there is a probability, maybe,* or *for example* would indicate high CC.

Motivation: Problems or Relationships? This theme is most closely related to Motive Analysis' Achievement and Affiliation indicators, which determine whether a leader wants to focus on completing tasks (Achievement) or create/maintain relationships (Affiliation) (Winter 1988). For instance, if a leader were forced into a situation where they had a problem, but solving it would result in losing a meaningful relationship, what would that leader choose? Within this category, Hermann defines two separate areas of analysis: motivation for seeking office and motivation toward the world (Hermann 2003). A leader's world outlook may differ vastly from their reason for entering office, and understanding the links between the two is essential to truly understand a leader's motivations in any situation. To operationalize these separate ideas, task focus is used to determine the reasoning for seeking office, and the indicators of distrust and in-group bias determine a leader's motivation toward the world.

Task Focus (TASK) is a concept defined by two extremes: the desire to maintain group relations and the desire to solve problems. The leader's choice between these two extremes determines their task focus. If a leader finds themselves in the middle, the situation at hand, rather than the leader's individual preference, determines which aspect takes precedence (Hermann 2003). This trait, unlike some of the other traits, focuses less on the absence of a trait and more on the extremes a trait may exhibit. Its operationalization, therefore, differs in its approach. There are two distinct sets of phrases that would indicate task focus, though they would represent different extremes:

> [The focus is on] words that indicate work on a task or instrumental activity, as well as words that center around concern for another's feelings, desires, and satisfaction. Examples of task-oriented words are *accomplishment, achieve(ment), plan, position, proposal, recommendation*, and *tactic*. Illustrative of the group-maintenance types of words are *appreciation, amnesty, collaboration, disappoint(ment), forgive(ness), harm, liberation*, and *suffering*. (Hermann 2003, 198)

These two sets are counted up, and then the task-oriented score is divided by the total sum of the indicators found, which would include both the group-maintenance and task-oriented counts.

In-group bias (IGB) is the indicator that describes how likely a leader will attribute blame outside of their group or success within it, regardless of the actual outcome. Does the leader feel a keen sense of loyalty to this group? Does the leader rely heavily or only on the opinions of this group to make decisions? IGB is an intriguing concept on its own, but when operationalizing for LTA, the focus is on how likely a leader is going to defend the decisions of the group:

> Of interest is ascertaining the following information when the leader makes a reference to his or her own group: are the modifers used favorable (e.g., great, peace-loving, progressive, successful, prosperous); do they suggest strength (e.g., powerful, capable, made great advances, has boundless resources); or do they indicate the need to maintain group honor and identity (e.g., "need to defend ‹rmly our borders," "must maintain our own interpretation," "decide our own policies")? (Hermann 2003, 201)

Any reference attributed to the group's continual success or a loss due to an outside party would be considered a count for IGB. When combining this with the indicator of distrust, a description of a leader's worldview can be formed. Table 4 describes this relationship, as well as the focus each suggests.

Distrust (DIS), as discussed before, measures how distrustful a leader is toward another group or person. Is a leader hesitant to engage in cooperation or agreements with others? Do they tend to personify other groups as deceitful or untrustworthy, even when that group has done nothing to show this? To operationalize this indicator, any statement showing a lack of trust, unwillingness to cooperate, or uncertainty toward another group would be counted as the presence of the distrust indicator:

> In coding for distrust of others, the focus is on noun and noun phrases referring to persons other than the leader and to groups other than those with whom the leader identifies. Does the leader distrust, doubt, have misgivings about, feel uneasy about, or feel wary about what these persons or groups are doing? Does the leader

Table 4: **Hermann's Table of Motivation Toward World**

In-group Bias	Distrust of Others: Low	Distrust of Others: High
Low	World is not a threatening place; conflicts are perceived as context-specific and are reacted to on a case-by-case basis; leaders recognize that their country, like many others, has to deal with certain constraints that limit what one can do and call for flexibility of response; moreover, there are certain international arenas where cooperation with others is both possible and feasible. *(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and relationships)*	World is perceived as conflict-prone, but because other countries are viewed as having constraints on what they can do, some flexibility in response is possible; leaders, however, must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena and prudently prepare to contain an adversary's actions while still pursuing their countries' interests. *(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant)*
High	While the international system is essentially a zero-sum game, leaders view that it is bounded by a specified set of international norms; even so, adversaries are perceived as inherently threatening and confrontation is viewed to be ongoing as leaders work to limit the threat and enhance their countries' capabilities and relative status. *(Focus is on dealing with threats and solving problems even though some situations may appear to offer opportunities)*	International politics is centered around a set of adversaries that are viewed as "evil" and intent on spreading their ideology or extending their power at the expense of others; leaders perceive that they have a moral imperative to confront these adversaries; as a result, they are likely to take risks and to engage in highly aggressive and assertive behavior. *(Focus is on eliminating potential threats and problems)*

Source: *(Hermann, 2003; 200)*

> show concern about what these persons or groups are doing and perceive such actions to be harmful, wrong, or detrimental to himself or herself, an ally, a friend, or a cause important to the leader? If either of these conditions is present, the noun or noun phrase is coded as indicating distrust. (Hermann 2003, 202-203)

An example of this type of coding can be visualized in the sentence, "The Britains are taking away our grain." DIS would indicate a single positive in this sentence because it refers to a different group (The Britains) doing something detrimental to their country (taking away our grain). An example of a negative would be something similar to this sentence: "Our allies watch our backs." The words allies and watch would indicate two separate instances of a negative DIS score because the term "allies" implies a trusted group, and they are doing something to prove this: "watching our backs," which indicates two different ideas showing trust. The frequency count of DIS is divided by the total number of occurrences to provide a percentage denoting the total amount of distrust a leader has toward others. If these two previous example sentences were combined, the total score would be ⅓, or 33%, which would connotate a low distrust score because it is under 50% or .5.

In conclusion, LTA is divided into three themes, which are composed of a total of seven different indicators. Whether a leader respects or challenges restraints will be based on the leader's belief in the ability to control events (BACE) and her need for power (PWR). A leader's openness to receiving information is based on how complexly they view the world (CC) and their self-confidence. Finally, a leader's inner motivations are divided into three traits: distrust of others (DIS), task focus (TASK), and in-group bias (IGB). While these categories can be used to create a comprehensive profile of a leader, they can also be broken down into indicators to analyze individual traits, making LTA very versatile. This versatility was examined in-depth in the hand-coding sample.

Exploring Hand-Coding: A Comparison of Russian vs. English Texts

When deciding on the method with which to conduct the original research question, there was a debate on whether to hand code or use ProfilerPlus. Ultimately, the computer program was chosen because it allowed more data to be processed with similar reliability (Levine and Young 2014). As discussed above, ProfilerPlus also had the added benefit of putting out the raw data and the calculated indicators, allowing for greater verifiability. However, the author felt it would also be of great interest to hand code a sample of one of the speeches chosen in both Russian and English for a few reasons. Firstly, an exploration could be done on the change in results between the two languages. Secondly, the author would have a greater sense of the data, be able to understand the coding itself better, and intuit where some of the potential flaws the data might have.

When operationalizing the data, an unbiased choice had to be made to determine which speech would be studied for the language comparison sample. After consulting a random list of numbers (University of Connecticut n.d.), the 2014 speech was chosen. Because this was an exploratory analysis with no hypotheses, the introduction and conclusion were selected as the sample to ease the amount of data that would have to be hand-coded. The results, which utilized Hermann's techniques for hand coding (2003), are shown in Table 5. The column labeled "Positive" indicates the number of times that specific indicator was identified and counted as a positive, while "Total" is the total number of words counted. For example, for BACE, the total number of verbs is counted, with positives being the number of times those verbs indicate involvement in taking action or preparing. Therefore, for this speech in particular, Putin showed a belief in the ability to control events 23.7% of the time when using any given verb in a sentence. However, when coded in Russian, this percentage jumps to 26.8%. The English

hand-coding results found that the President focused less on taking action and more on conceptualizing the history that united the peoples of Crimea, Sevastopol, and Russia. This characterization made him more of a storyteller than a convincer or go-getter, making him likely to have a lower BACE score. For Russian, the slight jump in this indicator was likely due to the subtle differences in translation. To begin, Russian does not have a word for "to be" in the present tense (it is implied and therefore omitted), which lowered the total score by 11, thus denoting the higher percentage.

This same difference occurs when coding for power (PWR), resulting in a smaller total for the Russian analysis. For both the English and Russian translations, Putin's was surprisingly low, only showing indications approximately 9.7% of the time. Similarly to scores for BACE, the focus of this speech was on the unification of the broader Russian cultures, not the proliferation of power over them, which may indicate why this score was also low. Self-confidence (SC) had a very small total sample to pull from because of the parts of speech used to calculate it. As discussed previously, the focus is on the pronouns "I, me, and mine" (Hermann 2003), indicating Putin referencing his abilities. However, this was only done a few times — he frequently uses the term

Table 5: **Results of Hand-Coding LTA Traits**

Hand Coding	Positive	Total	Score
Belief in the Ability to Control Events			
English	22	93	0.2366
Russian	22	82	0.2683
Need for Power			
English	9	93	0.0968
Russian	9	82	0.1098
Self-Confidence			
English	6	7	0.8571
Russian	7	8	0.8750
Conceptual Complexity			
English	1	21	0.0476
Russian	1	19	0.0526
Task Focus			
English	13	22	0.5909
Russian	13	22	0.5909
In-Group Bias			
English	28	28	1
Russian	28	28	1
Distrust			
English	0	1	0
Russian	0	1	0

"we" to unite his people as one — and when it was, it almost always referenced a high self-confidence in his abilities. One great example of this comes from the end of the introduction, where he describes the benefits of incorporating Crimea and Sevastopol into the Russian Federation. He says, "We have great respect for people of all the ethnic groups living in Crimea. This is their common home, their motherland, and it would be right – I know the local population supports this – for Crimea to have three equal national languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). "I know" indicates that he believes what he thinks and what the population thinks, which, in this instance, would contribute to the desire to show confidence in this referendum plan.

In sharp contrast to the results of self-confidence, Putin's conceptual complexity (CC) was very low. Of the 22 indicators cited, only one indicated the presence of an awareness of others' actions. Within his speech, he uses binary, absolute terms to define history, almost as if he is painting the story so everyone thinks the same way, making him a sort of storyteller. For example, when describing the future of Crimean independence, he says, "The particular historic, population, political and economic circumstances of Crimea would have made any other proposed option — however tempting it could be at the first glance — only temporary and fragile and would have inevitably led to further worsening of the situation there, which would have had disastrous effects on people's lives" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). The terms he uses here - *inevitable*, *only temporary*, *would have had disastrous effects* - all point to absolute thinking in his portrayal of history. Russia had no other option but to help Crimea, and Crimea understood that. He makes it seem that there is no other history or perspective on the issue, which may be why his CC is so low in this speech.

Unlike CC, the scoring for in-group bias was high at 100% or 28 out of 28. While this high score may be due to incorrect coding, it may also show a trend in the speech. Because he continually references history, he makes points seem indisputable, represented in the low CC score. To make that confidence seem believable, he puts history in a perspective that makes Russia look favorable. For example, when referring to the mistreatment of Tatars at the hands of Russia, he says, "True, there was a time when Crimean Tatars were treated unfairly, just as a number of other peoples in the USSR. There is only one thing I can say here: millions of people of various ethnicities suffered during those repressions, and primarily Russians" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). Instead of admitting to the deeds committed in the past, he points to the suffering that happened to Russians during this time, as well as Tatars, taking away the blame from his people. The use of phrases such as "*just as a number of other peoples*" and "*millions of people of various ethnicities suffered*" contributes to that perspective.

Distrust directly contrasts the results of IGB, showing a 0 out of 1. While this result appeared to be initially incorrect, the lack of reference to an outside group was likely the primary reason the total score was low. There is only one reference to an outside group in the text, excluding Sevastopol in Crimea, which was never directly named or discussed. Therefore, when looking at the "outside" groups that Putin would be referring to, it would make sense that he would try to put these groups in a favorable and trusting light. Therefore, the DIS indicator score had a small total to pull from and an even smaller pool from which distrust could be shown.

Finally, task focus, unlike many of the previous indicators, sits right around the middle. The percentage puts him at 55%, which Hermann would relate to him being able to change his focus depending on what the situation calls for: charismatic when needed, but able to put a task at the forefront when it was time-sensitive. However, when looking through the speech, he

intertwines the two. He frequently refers to a referendum that was held to discuss the issue of reuniting Crimea, Sevastopol, and Russia. To provide evidence of the people's desire to reunite, he cites facts from this referendum that support his actions, which denote a focus on the task at hand, "More than 82 percent of the electorate took part in the vote. Over 96 percent of them spoke out in favour of reuniting with Russia. These numbers speak for themselves" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). However, this referendum was also a point to build relations, a theme suggested throughout the sample results. By solidifying the history from his perspective (low CC), showing confidence in his storytelling (SC and BACE), less focus on the power Russia has over these peoples (low PWR), perceived belief in the rightness of this reunification (high IGB), and showing trust in the combined desires of the Crimean people to agree with him (DIS), he creates a narrative and argument that pulls the people in, using figures and numbers to create a focus on the proof that the people want this while exuding charisma in order to make that proof seem genuine.

This argument is merely an educated guess based on the results and interpretation of the sample text, which had far too few words by Hermann's standards to be able to show any definitive conclusions. However, the results are compelling and show a need for further study in this area. The most intriguing findings from this research were the changes in the Russian and English translations. Upon further investigation, the parts of speech used by Hermann to operationalize the indicators can be translated; however, how they are coded as indicators for LTA is variable. For example, adverbs such as *absolutely or likely* do not change meaning or structure, while the verb "to be," as discussed above, is wholly omitted in the Russian translation, which changed the total in the Russian translation.

Additionally, and most interestingly, the differences in context when using pronouns such as *I, we,* and *you* created some difficulties in scoring. When specifically understanding self-confidence, there were at least a few instances where Putin used *we* instead of *I*, which in translations does not necessarily come across the same. In Russian, the pronoun "I" is only ever used to describe a personal action involving oneself. It would not include one's achievements or even, in some cases, one's work. For example, if someone were presenting something to a classroom full of students, she would say something along the lines of "Today *we* will be presenting…" rather than *I*. This contradiction is due to the collectivist culture of the Russian language. The focus of using *we* more than *I* has the potential to skew the results for self-confidence since the presence of first-person singular pronouns would be lower. While this was not very visible in the sample results, this was most likely because there was little to no way to tell the meaning in the original translation. If Putin used *we* in Russian, it is very possible that it was translated the same way, therefore making it almost impossible to tell whether he is taking responsibility for actions (BACE), showing self-confidence (SC), or trying to bring a sense of community by using the inclusive pronoun.

To conclude, the results of this sample were quite engaging and prompted further discussion in this field. Understanding the differences in language and how translations can affect the overall message of a statement could have created implications for further study of translations in this field of research. This sample gave a peek into the possibilities of those differences in translations, provided a hands-on approach to LTA coding, and resulted in an interesting analysis that, while not necessarily enough on its own to make any grand conclusions, created a dialogue around the use of speech, its purpose, and language interpretation.

Considerations and Concerns

This work, being an at-a-distance analysis, necessitates careful ethical considerations. The results of this research, designed to be speculative and exploratory, aim to fill a crucial gap in the literature around Vladimir Putin, thereby stimulating further analysis in this area. The speeches used, likely scripted, may slightly skew the results (Hermann 2003), as they may not fully reflect Putin's inner thoughts but rather the Russian Federation's public motivations. However, given the scarcity of unscripted speeches, especially when spanning multiple years, this research was conducted using speeches with the same audience, subject, and length to mitigate this issue as much as possible.

Furthermore, due to the selection of only one speech from each year to represent the entire sample, there is a potential for misrepresentation due to the small sample size. However, this concern was addressed through a highly selective process of speech choice. While the outcome of this research, seeking to understand Putin's thinking for better policymaking, could, if not done correctly, misrepresent both the public's and the government's perception of Putin and Russia at the time of a major war, these concerns will be thoroughly considered in the results, discussion, and conclusion.

Results

As outlined previously, five of Putin's speeches to the Russian General Assembly were coded using the seven indicators of LTA at five significant time points to understand if and how Putin has changed his leadership traits over his third term as president. To examine this research question, the results of this coding will be discussed in four separate parts. The first will be the content analysis of the average of each trait across the five time points. The second part will

identify his leadership category (*See* Table 1) and compare these findings to Hermann's index of world leaders (Hermann 2003; *See* Table 6). Afterward, the traits will be examined individually to see how these traits may have changed over time. Finally, outside literature regarding Putin will be used to contextualize the data further, search for similarities or differences between the findings, and see if the findings make sense within the broader literature.

Individual LTA Trait Results

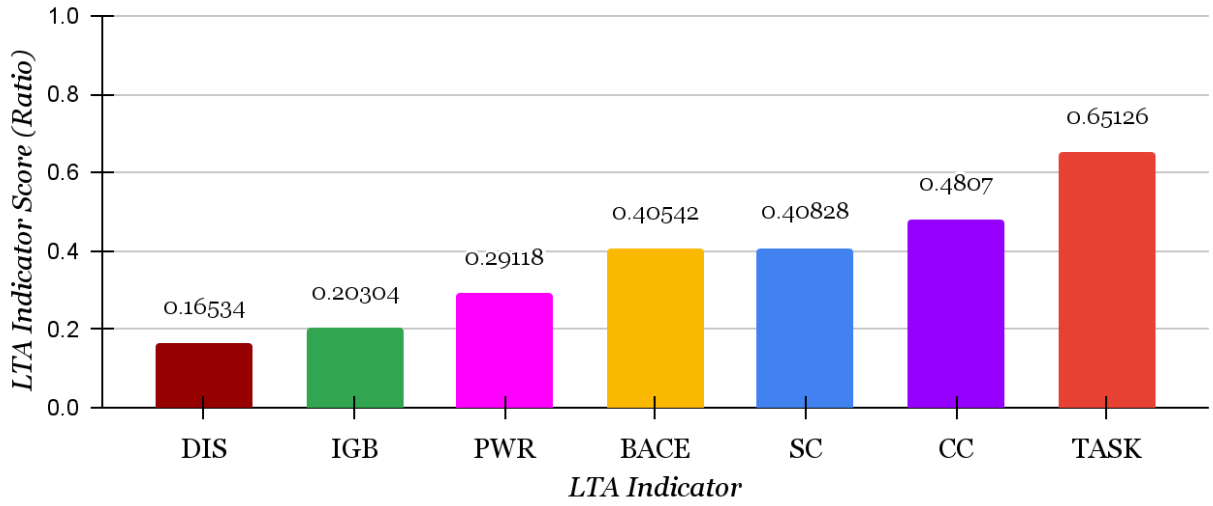


Figure 1: Average Scores of Putin's LTA Traits

Figure 1 depicts the average score of each trait over the entire period studied (2012-2023). To calculate this average, the results of each event were combined and divided by the number of events studied (five), resulting in the overall average of each indicator. As seen above, Putin's lowest traits were distrust and in-group bias, while his highest trait was task focus. In order to conceptualize these traits, a compiled profile of Putin's leadership traits was created and then compared to Hermann's research on average world leaders. As discussed previously, Hermann created a research database depicting the average LTA traits of over 122 world leaders (2003), resulting in a dataset that allows leaders to be compared to the average in order to see

what traits may be considered high or low, utilizing standard deviation to calculate. This dataset is depicted below in Table 6.

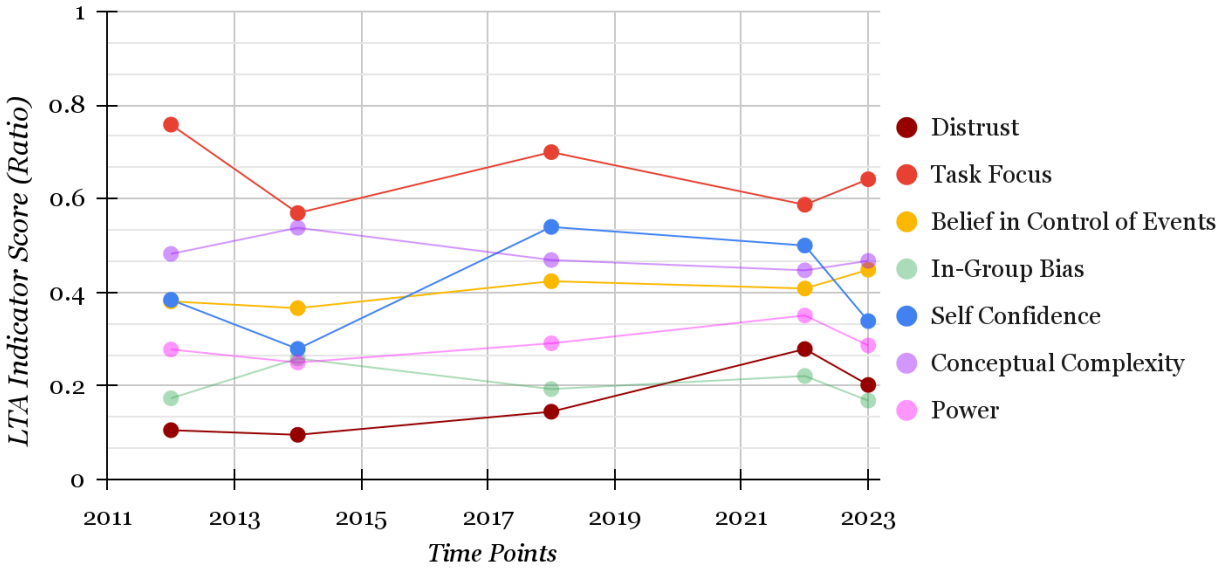


Figure 2: LTA Traits of Vladimir Putin Over 11 Years

Figure 2 above depicts the scores of each LTA indicator over the five specified time points. While there is a line connecting the points together, it is essential to note that this figure does not mean to show a continual change in traits. The connecting line is meant to provide visual clarity and see the journey of all the different traits over the time points on a single figure. When comparing the results in Figure 2 with the averages in Table 6, Putin remains within the mean of the indicators of BACE, SC, CC, and TASK, while he is low in PWR, IGB, and DIS. Using Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Refer back to the *Data Analysis Section*) created by Hermann (2003) as a basis for qualification of this data, the results found would consider Putin as someone who respects constraints, is open to information, shifts between task focus depending on the situation, and believes the world to be non-threatening. He would, then, be categorized as an opportunistic leader. Referring back to Table 1, which defines the eight main categories Hermann has defined world leaders to be, an opportunistic leader would be one whose attention is on "assessing what

is possible in the current situation and context given [based on] what one wants to achieve and considering what important constituencies will allow" (Hermann 2003, 185). Based on these results, Putin would be a forward thinker who takes advantage of the opportunities he finds while still considering how his actions may appear to other countries.

However, this profile may not have stayed consistent across his presidency. Table 6 shows the stability of traits over periods compared to their standard deviation, using the average score for each trait as the comparative score. To calculate these outcomes, the standard deviation in each direction was found for the average of each indicator. For Table 6, "Low" constitutes a score of one deviation below the mean of that trait, while "High" denotes one deviation above its mean. Any square left blank indicates no significant change in score. As cited in Table 6, these traits remained relatively stable regarding standard deviation, except in 2014. In this period, six different traits moved one standard deviation (TASK, BACE, IGB, SC, CC, and PWR), showing a notable shift in leadership traits during this period. All other periods had little statistically relative change overall.

Table 6: **Comparison of Vladimir Putin's Average LTA Scores At Each Time Point Using Standard Deviation**

	2012	**2014**	2018	2022	2023
Distrust				High	
Task Focus	High	**Low**			
Belief in the Ability to Control Events		**Low**			High
Ingroup Bias		**High**			
Self Confidence		**Low**	High		
Conceptual Complexity		**High**			
Need for Power		**Low**		High	

LTA Indicator Scores Over Time

For the second part of the research, a comparison was made of each trait and its change over the five events studied. To visualize the results in Table 6, Figure 2 shows each LTA indicator's results over the five time points studied. The y-axis indicates the indicator's score out of one, or the ratio. For example, a score of 1 for power would indicate that out of all the possible verbs used in the speech, every single one would have shown a need for power. If a score showed 0 for power, no verbs showed a need for power. The x-axis depicts time, beginning in 2012 and ending in 2023. The color of each line represents a different indicator, which is described on the key to the right. As depicted above, the indicators of belief in the ability to control events and conceptual complexity remained relatively stable, while distrust and need for power increased slightly. Self-confidence, task focus, and in-group bias shifted to extremes, though these shifts were not in any one particular direction. The following section will examine these indicators individually at each time event.

Referring back to Figure 1, this study will now examine the results of each trait over the five time periods. The first trait to be individually examined was distrust, which remained low throughout the time studied. The lowest score occurred in 2014, and distrust was the only variable with no significant change at this point (*See* Figure 3). In 2022, Putin exhibited a high amount of distrust compared to his average, jumping to .1339 in 2018 and dropping back to .0767 in 2023. However, it is essential to note the setup of Figure 3 because there are four years between 2018 and 2022. Therefore, this "jump" may not be an anomaly at all but rather a more linear progression of distrust increasing over time. Despite that, this is contradicted by the sudden drop in this trait in 2023. If anything, the most intriguing thing to note would be this drop, which decreases almost one standard deviation from the year before. However, when

reading the texts themselves, there does not appear to be much variance in distrust. Instead, it seems that the theme of distrust is much harsher in the 2023 speech than in the 2022 speech. In the introductory paragraph, President Putin refers repeatedly to the "fundamental threats which irresponsible Western politicians created for Russia consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. I am referring to the eastward expansion of NATO, which is moving its military infrastructure ever closer to the Russian border" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). Here, the use of *fundamental threats*, *irresponsible*, and *rudely* all attribute to the high levels of distrust seen in this speech. However, in the 2023 speech, Putin is much harsher, saying, "The West is using Ukraine as a battering ram against Russia and as a testing range. I am not going to discuss in detail the West's attempts to turn the war around, or their plans to ramp up military supplies, since everyone is well aware of that" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). The terms *battering ram* and *ramp up military supplies* are used to show distrust, but they appear much harsher and more pointed. This discrepancy in the data and interpretation is something to keep in mind, and maybe further study is needed, as it may show an issue with the data.

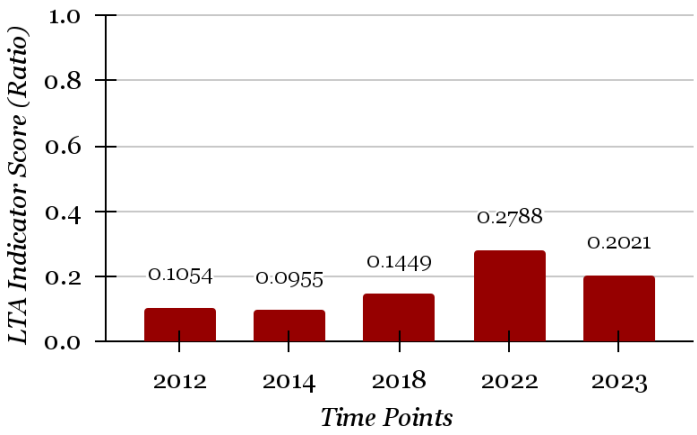


Figure 3: Indicator Scores of Distrust of Others

When combined with task focus, the in-group bias indicator would represent a leader's worldview (Hermann 2003). Putin's in-group bias remained extremely low compared to the average for world leaders studied in Hermann (2003)(*See* Figure 4). There was little change over time, and the only instance where a significant change occurred was in 2014 (*See* Table 5 and

Figure 4). To put this into context, Putin's low averages in both in-group bias and distrust would make him an opportunist (S*ee* Table 5, Figure 3, and Figure 4) — someone who wants to use relationships and other opportunities to succeed. He would generally see the world as non-threatening, with many countries limited in what they can do, but there is still a chance for cooperation (Hermann 2003). In 2014, these ideals would still be in place.

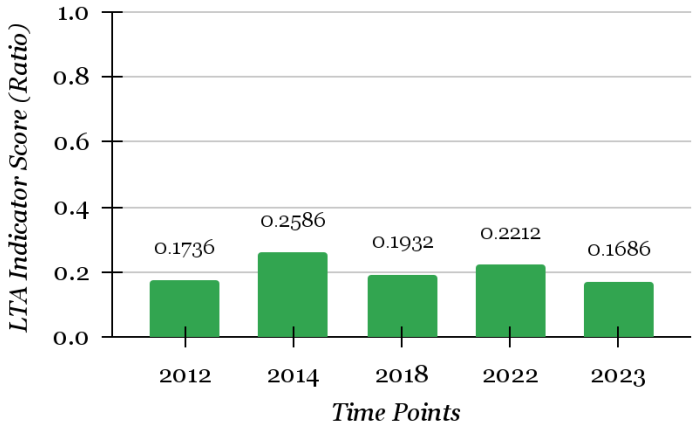


Figure 4: Indicator Scores of In-Group Bias

However, his increased score in in-group bias over the prior time point would indicate a shift in his views to see the world as more of a zero-sum game, where cooperation is still possible, but everyone is looking out for themselves.

Throughout Putin's third time of presidency, his task focus has remained above .5, indicating a greater emphasis on problem-solving as the reason he is in power (Hermann 2003). In the introduction of his speech in 2018, he leans into this problem-solving perspective, stating, "It is at such turning points that Russia has proven, time and again, its ability to develop and renew itself, discover new territories, build cities, conquer space and make major discoveries. This unwavering forward-looking drive, coupled with traditions and values, ensured the continuity in the thousand-year-long history of our nation" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). Using verbs such as *develop, renew, build, discover,* and *conquer* would be examples of sample speech indicating a task focus on problem-solving. However, as shown in Figure 5, there were two points where this trait almost equaled that .5 marker, indicating that, when necessary, Putin may shift his focus to relationships. One of these times was in 2014, when task-focused dropped

to its lowest score, indicating that the president's goals at this time were more likely to be focused on maintaining relationships. This may be for a myriad of different reasons, but one speculation for this low score may be the audience towards whom he was directing his speech. During this speech, representatives of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol were widely announced as being present. He was very likely, at least based on the direction of his speech, focused on presenting Russian-Crimean-Sevastopolian relations in a positive, futuristic light to build trust and relationships, which would be indicated by a low task focus score like the one seen in Figure 5. In 2012, however, it was significantly higher than the two years afterward and would continue to fluctuate through the extremes throughout the period studied, with a slightly negative trend as time continued.

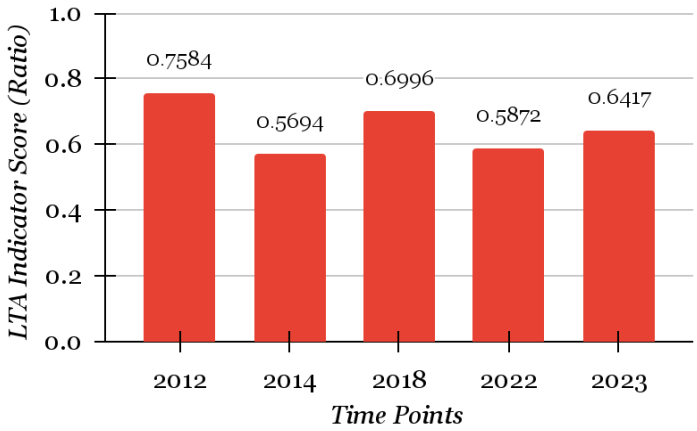


Figure 5: Indicator Scores of Task Focus

When determining Putin's openness to information, the conceptual complexity and self-confidence indicators are compared, as discussed above. Looking at Figure 6, conceptual complexity averaged at .48, denoting Putin as someone who views the world more structured than someone who views the world as entirely grey. In his 2018 speech, he described the expansion of trade in the North East: "We will definitely develop this route and reach new horizons. I have no doubt about it" (President of Russia's

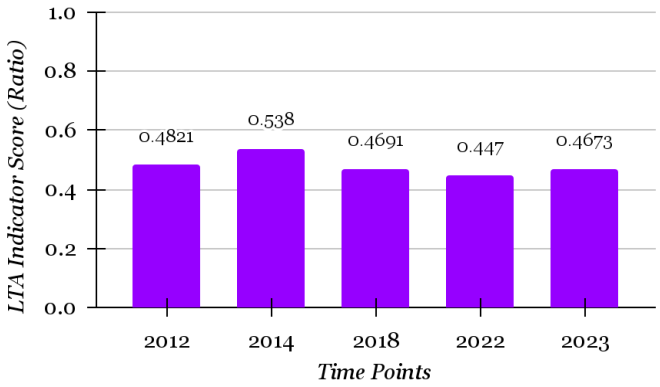


Figure 6: Indicator Scores of Conceptual Complexity

Website, n.d.). In this speech, his CC is low due to using words like *definitely* and *no doubt*. Because he sits around the .5 line, he likely has a changing view of the world depending on context, which is why he may tend more towards a binary worldview at some points but more complex at others. Referring back to Table 6, conceptual complexity shifted one standard deviation upward in 2014, then moved back down and stayed relatively even up to 2023. This shift likely indicates some change in 2014, which then slowly returned to the average for the rest of the scores.

Putin's self-confidence score shifted considerably longitudinally. While there were only two significant shifts, they were in opposite directions, and three separate sets of shifts were seen in Figure 7. His average is comparatively low, but numerous shifts do not indicate a definitive relationship. When studying the largest shift, it falls between the lowest and highest points in 2014 and 2018. These two data points are four years apart, which could indicate some change in between; however, there is another four-year gap between 2018 and 2022, where no significant shift occurred. These spikes may be due to missing data points, extreme outliers, or something more meaningful, though it would be difficult to discern without more data. The 2014 speech had the lowest score. In order to find openness to information, the traits of conceptual complexity and self-confidence are compared to see which is higher. While his average conceptual complexity score was higher than his average self-confidence score (0.4807 to 0.40828), they were very close, indicating a slight preference

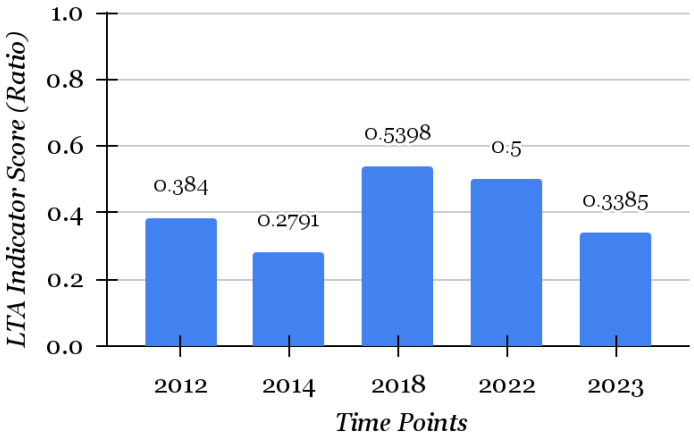


Figure 7: Indicator Scores of Self-Confidence

toward being more open to incoming information. However, his score was higher in self-confidence in both 2018 and 2022, indicating he was closed off to information. These conflicting results suggest that his openness to information may be situationally dependent rather than a static trait. A great example is the 2012 speech, where he says, "I have talked about this many times, but I want to emphasize it again" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). The phrase *I want to emphasize* is less powerful than a phrase such as *let me emphasize,* which would focus less on the actor and more on the action, indicating a lack of self-confidence (Hermann 2003). While one may argue that the impersonal construction often used in Russian would lower the score for self-confidence (see *Exploring Hand-Coding* section for more), the considerable shifts between periods would not corroborate such an issue. Therefore, it is most likely that this self-confidence is not a translation issue but rather the actual movement of the trait.

Finally, to understand how Putin reacts to constraints, the indicators of the need for power and the belief in the ability to control events are compared. Overall, Putin's need for power is relatively low over the time period studied, with a slightly positive increase and two significant shifts in data: low in 2014 and high in 2022 (*See* Figure 8). There was a 10% increase between 2014 and 2022. However, it is, again, essential to note that there is an eight-year gap between these two data points, making a 10% increase not all that indicative of a significant shift in personality. These interpretations also appear to line up when looking at the raw data. In his 2012 speech, he said, "We have a unique opportunity in the next

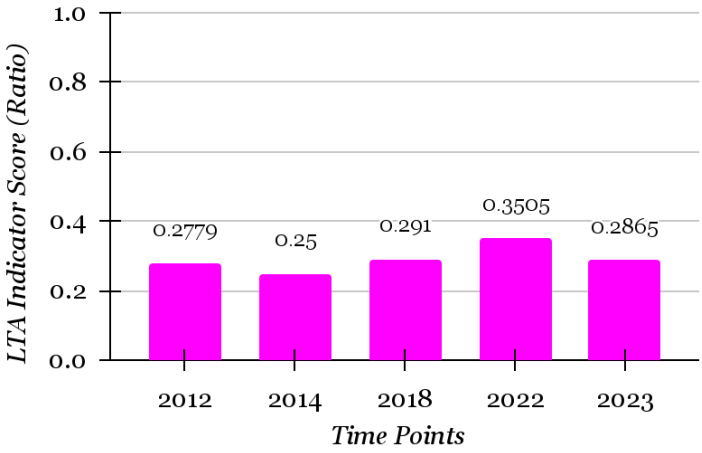


Figure 8: Indicators Scores of Need for Power

decade to fundamentally resolve another long-standing Russian problem: housing" (President of Russia's Website, n.d.). He often uses passive voice, such as *have, can,* and *is*, to describe actions, generally indicating a low need for power. However, as discussed in the hand-coding sample, Russian uses many more passive verbs and impersonal constructions than English, which would automatically lower this score. This deviation is quite interesting because it would entirely change the dynamic that a translation would read, and similar to the issue of personal pronouns with self-confidence, it would be almost impossible to know the difference in intention after a translation is done.

The belief in the ability to control events indicator remained stable, with a slight increase within the period studied. There were two points of significant change: a low score in 2014 and a high one in 2023 (*See* Table 6 and Figure 9). On average, Putin had what Hermann would consider an average belief in his ability to control events compared to world leaders. An example of this somewhat changing BACE is shown during the speech in 2022. He says, "The same is happening today. They did not leave us any other option for defending Russia and our people, other than the one we are forced to use today. In these circumstances, we have to take bold and immediate action" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). The phrases *did not leave us any other option* and *take bold and immediate action* contradict one another, as the data presented describes. There are a few interpretations of how these two phrases could coincide, with one arguing that he is justifying his actions by saying he had no control. However, if he was

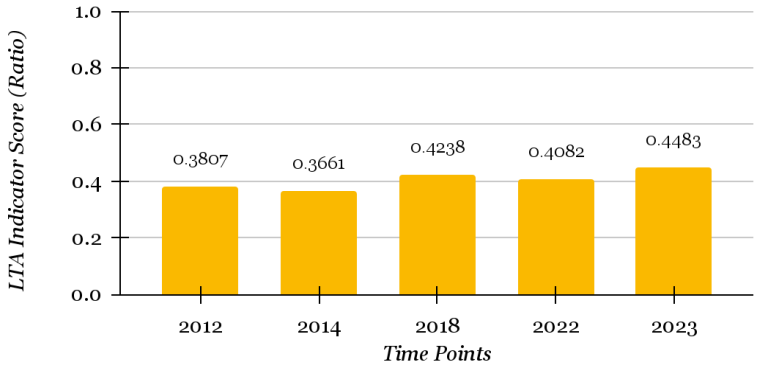


Figure 9: Indicator Scores Belief in the Ability to Control Events

trying to justify his actions, it is unlikely he would use words like *bold* to describe something in which he felt he had no part. Based on these results, then, in any given situation, he would likely believe there is almost equal importance placed on things he can control and things he cannot control. He would often take at least some part in planning and preparing events, but those will sometimes be delegated so he can focus on the things he can control, a trait common in leaders with these results (Hermann 2003). He is more likely to react to a situation than to decide to commit an act, but this is situationally dependent. Referring back to the example text, the statement is a bit unclear. While he says that he was forced to act, *bold* and *immediate* indicate the self-confidence of someone who believes they have control over the outcome of this struggle. Because BACE is so situationally dependent to him, he would appear to be an increasingly secretive authoritative leader who will struggle to maintain public support as he continues to break boundaries. These traits would make Putin someone who will respect constraints, build compromise, and try to work with others to meet goals. However, when he tries to challenge constraints, he will likely be less successful because he shows too much power and is not considered a manipulator of others, though this may be subject to change due to score shifts (Hermann 2003).

These results differ considerably from those published by other research in this area. Much of the previous literature presented on Putin focuses on the change between 2012 and 2014, citing a shift in motivation, a rise in the traits of distrust, and a rise in the need for power. This argument is based on the outcomes of other areas of literature, which cite NATO security tensions over Ukraine, Putin's opportunistic nature, and rising Russian nationalism as key features showing greater authoritarianism in his leadership (Semeonva and Winter 2020; Dyson and Parent 2018; Hill and Gaddy 2015). However, the results show the exact opposite, with 2014

showing low need for power and an average amount of distrust compared to his average score in that trait. To conclude the results, a comprehensive profile will made in the discussion section to explain why the results may differ from the previous consensus in the literature. Because of the significant change seen in 2014, an analysis of this time specifically was also studied.

Putin's Leadership Trait Profile: 2014 vs. the Average

Because of the significant shift in indicator scores in 2014, a more in-depth study of the event was done. To determine the magnitude of this shift, two leadership profiles were found using Hermann's "Categorizations of World Leaders" (*See* Figure 1), comparing the 2014 scores to Putin's average scores for each trait. Referring back to Table 1, which categorizes the focus of leaders based on the three major themes Hermann defines, the results of the 2014 speech of each trait would qualify him as a collegial leader, while his average scores define him as an opportunistic leader (*See* Figure 1).

The 2014 results depict Putin as a leader who respects constraints, is receptive to information, and concentrates on fostering relationships. Similar to figures like Bill Clinton (Hermann 2003), Putin could be described as someone who focuses on "reconciling differences and building consensus — on gaining prestige and status through the empowerment of others and sharing accountability" (Hermann 2003, 185). In 2014, Putin's scores indicated that he had the profile of an archetypal altruistic world leader who was reliant on his trusted advisors and focused on building global relationships that would benefit Russia. However, this profile starkly contradicts Putin's actions during this period. Putin delivered his 2014 speech just 20 days after the Crimean Annexation, a time that should have seen him eager to amass power and challenge the status quo; yet, his scores in need for power and desire to challenge constraints remains low.

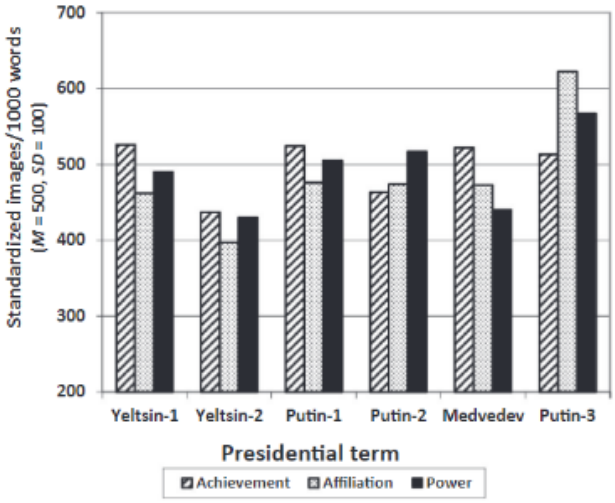
While this discrepancy could be attributed to a coding or subsequent analysis error, for the purpose of this research, an argument will be presented using results from the literature and an alternative investigation of the events leading up to the Annexation of Crimea. Based on the descriptions provided by Hermann, Putin's shift in profile from the average to the one in 2014 would likely have reflected his views that the international system as a zero-sum game bounded by international norms, where opportunities can be seized, but groups tend to prioritize their own interests to stay atop the international system (Hermann 2003).

Discussion

To better understand these profiles and results, outside literature was presented to contextualize the data. To begin with, Semenova and Winter's motive analysis of Putin (2020) was particularly insightful, as it was one of the few analyses that also arrived at challenging conclusions. They used motive analysis to identify an alteration in Putin's motivations between his first and second term (1999-2004, 2004-2008) and his third (2012), attributing this shift to his early focus on career preparation and success, "his hard work and persistence when the chances of success are at least moderate," and the desire to acquire greater power (Semenova and Winter 2020, 823-24). More specifically, they found that Putin had the greatest motivation towards power acquisition in 2014 but moved to affiliation in 2018. They argue that this shift was likely influenced by the NATO tensions from 2008-2014, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and other issues due to foreign policy (Dyson and Parent 2018; Hill and Gaddy 2015). This period, specifically, was likely to have changed Putin's view of the West, making him less likely to want to engage in cooperative politics (Dyson 2001; Forsberg and Pursiainen 2017).

When comparing this analysis – which uses the same set of speeches from the Russian Government website — to the one using LTA, the differences at first appear astonishing. However, further investigation and a slight shift in perspective align these analyses. While they find power to be high in Putin's third term, they also show an astonishing jump in Putin's affiliation score, which they tie as being due to an extremist "us vs. them" grouping (Semenova and Winter 2020; Roberts 2017). For clarification, the affiliation score shows the desire to build relationships over problem-solving. This could be towards one's own group or outside groups. In this case, it was likely his desire to influence his own group to build a strong relationship that discounts outsiders was the reasoning for this change. This jump fits with the 2014 profile that characterizes him as being focused on gaining prestige through relationships, which is in and of itself a form of power. This relationship-based power — the manipulation and behind-the-scenes work he does to get others to support him on different scales, as described by his reaction to constraints (Hermann 2003) — may be why Kaarbo believes him to be "breaking bad." His beliefs about the world may have changed how he views power (Semenova and Winter 2020), which Kaarbo (2022) references as one of the substantial indicators of Putin's leadership style changes. These rises indicate what Kaarbo calls a change of beliefs, a coding term used in LTA to describe how an actor feels about the world and how that orients their personality toward foreign policy. It was not that he necessarily lost a need for power, but more so that he found a

Figure 10: **Putin's Motive Analysis Scores**



Source: *(Semenova and Winter 2020; 822)*

better and less noticeable way to obtain political power: through narratives and manipulating people's perceptions. He would have initially been unsuccessful with this endeavor (as seen in his BACE score). However, over time, he may have developed a sense of where and how to influence relationships, building the narrative he pushes to maintain Russian security. While this is all speculation, the shift in his BACE and PWR scores prompts further study.

Comparing this to his earlier leadership style (2001-2007) further proves this change in power focus. He actively engaged in Western politics, was not territorial in his "post-Soviet world order boundaries," and focused more on domestic policy (Kramer 2002). The Baltic-NATO membership agreements between 2004 and 2009 corroborate this lack of territorialism, as they are all direct neighbors of Russia (Kemp 2022; Kramer 2002). All of these countries were former Soviet satellite countries, yet their acquisition of NATO membership was treated with a reluctant acceptance. In a 2001 radio interview, he remarks, "'We cannot forbid people to make certain choices if they want to increase the security of their nations in a particular way'" (President of Russia's Website n.d.). Based on his previous policymaking, Putin would have had to have another reason to change his policy towards NATO. He has shown his belief that Ukrainians and Russians are one people, which adds context as to why he is reluctant to let it go (Roberts 2017; Pankow and Patman 2018).

It is likely, then, that the importance of the Ukrainian-Russian narrative stays at the forefront of Russian policies (Hill and Gaddy 2015), leaving Georgia to become the collateral that Putin used to demonstrate that NATO was crossing the boundaries of what he believed to be the international world order. Putin believes that the USSR is within his rightful domain, and while he gave up some of it to keep the peace, he deems NATO's infringement as breaking the rules of the international world order (Dyson and Parent 2018), which he will not stand for. He is

an opportunist but is also someone who despises rule-breakers. If rules are not followed, he will likely toss them in favor of his country's agenda (Dyson and Parent 2018). As he realized that NATO was "breaking the rules," he began to create more reactionary policies to see what NATO was doing before showing his own hand (Dyson 2001). In the meantime, he also began voicing a narrative to uphold his beliefs, adding that the polarizing relationships he experienced in international politics resulted in reactionary policies toward the West (Semenova and Winter 2020). The "us vs. them" narrative — in which "us" is the greater Russian community (including former Soviet nations) and "them" is the West and NATO—results in such reactionary policies, including rigging the Ukrainian presidential election because "we" believe that "they" did it, too; as well as the annexation of Crimea after Ukraine was promised a membership by "them." As a result, Putin's actions were "consistent with [his] operational code that placed the survival of the regime above other considerations in Russia and the 'near abroad,'" demonstrating that Putin believes the world to be more threatening towards his boundaries of power in light of breaking international norms (Pankow and Patman 2018, 552). Putin's belief that his territory was being encroached on, in addition to perceived rulebreaking, caused him to strengthen his internal narrative and become more reactionary in his actions to "play the field," resulting in more aggressive policies that he believed were warranted.

Conclusion

The study of the personality of political leaders is an area of research dedicated to understanding the impact of leadership personality on policymaking. While this research has been done for decades, the question is still debated (Jervis 2013; Fordam 1998; Kolko and Kolko 1972), with new avenues of research being presented continually (Kaarbo 2021; Cuhadar et al.

2017; Semenova and Winter 2020). However, there is a consensus in the literature that leadership personality has an impact on decision-making, leading to an intensive field of research that seeks to understand that relationship (Huddy et al. 2013; Hermann et al. 2001; Hill and Gaddy 2015; John et al. 2008; Ihanus 2001). More recently, the study of longitudinal personality has been the subject of research to understand how stable personality traits remain over time (Caspi et al. 2005; Hermann 1980b; Kaarbo 2021). More specifically, research into the use of Leadership Trait Analysis over time has introduced a new area of the literature: longitudinal content analyses (Semenova and Winter 2020; Kaarbo 2021).

This research explored how longitudinal content analyses could be used in the context of one specific leader: Vladimir Putin. This leader was chosen because of the need for a more in-depth study on him utilizing LTA and his leadership of Russia during prevalent recent events, with the hopes of better understanding if and how his leadership personality changed over his third term of presidency. In doing so, it was found that Putin is a far more average president than characterized in both the media and other pieces of literature. In the traits where much of the literature deemed him to be high scoring — the need for power, ingroup bias, and distrust — he was low, which seemed to contradict his actions during his third term of presidency. However, this may have been due to a shift in power acquisition by focusing on people rather than problems, which allowed him to build and manipulate relationships to achieve his foreign policy objectives.

Additionally, he had a substantial shift in leadership traits in 2014, with six of the seven LTA moving at least one standard deviation from the average of his traits. These trait shifts may be correlated with reactionary policymaking due to rulebreaking by the West, which may have further contributed to his opportunistic tendencies as a leader. However, it is vital to note some of

the flaws with the research design. Putin's low distrust score directly contrasts many of the arguments made by Semenova and Winter (2020). If he believed NATO to be backstabbing rule breakers, then he was likely to have a far greater distrust of their actions, which would have been shown in the aforementioned trait. However, because the speeches chosen were intended for Russian citizens, he was likely not to want to show that distrust very openly, leading to a lower distrust score. Further research will need to be done to test how distrust may interact in a different way that may have better matched Putin's actions, as well as to ensure the precision and accuracy of this analysis.

However, this research is just the beginning, an exploratory analysis that aims to fill a significant gap in the literature. The results have sparked a new line of inquiry, challenging much of the existing literature and underscoring the need for further study of Vladimir Putin using both LTA and longitudinal studies to develop a more comprehensive profile. It underscores the necessity for more research into Putin's leadership to better understand the intricate relationship between his personality and the pivotal events of the past 12 years, which have significantly shaped public perception of Putin's leadership capabilities. Further research into the issue of translation and content analysis may help to reconcile some of the discrepancies found. This analysis has successfully opened up a new avenue for research on Vladimir Putin. Expanding on this research could potentially provide critical insights into Putin's actions.

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Appendix

Table 1 in the appendix describes the abbreviations used in the raw data presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1: **Leadership Trait Analysis Indicator Terminology**	
HD	Count of high distrust observations.
LD	Count of low distrust observations.
DIS	Distrust score.
HT	Count of high task observations.
LT	Count of low task observations.
TASK	Task score.
IC	Count of internal control observations.
EC	Count of external control observations.
BACE	Belief in Ability to Control Events score.
HB	Count of high ingroup bias observations.
LB	Count of low ingroup bias observations.
IGB	Ingroup Bias score.
HS	Count of high self-confidence observations.
LS	Count of low self-confidence observations.
SC	Self-Confidence score.
HC	Count of high complexity observations.
LC	Count of low complexity observations.
CC	Conceptual Complexity score.
HP	Count of high need for power observations.
LP	Count of low need for power observations.
PWR	Need for Power score.

Table 2 below shows the frequency counts and total score for each indicator at each time point, as well as the overall average for each indicator. For spacing, the table has been divided in two. The bolded columns represent the total score of each indicator.

Table 2: **Raw Speech Scores Using ProfilerPlus (Outputs)**									
Speech Date	HS	LS	**SC**	HC	LC	**CC**	HP	LP	**PWR**
2/21/ 2023	44	86	**0.3385**	350	399	**0.4673**	100	249	**0.2865**
2/24/2022	18	18	**0.5**	97	120	**0.447**	34	63	**0.3505**
3/1/2018	61	52	**0.5398**	387	438	**0.4691**	110	268	**0.291**
3/18/2014	12	31	**0.2791**	184	158	**0.538**	28	84	**0.25**
12/12/2012	48	77	**0.384**	403	433	**0.4821**	92	239	**0.2779**
AVERAGE	36.6	52.8	**0.40828**	284.2	309.6	**0.4807**	72.8	180.6	**0.29118**

Speech Date	HD	LD	**DIS**	HT	LT	**TASK**	IC	EC	**BACE**	HB	LB	**IGB**
2/21/2023	58	229	**0.2021**	283	158	**0.6417**	156	192	**0.4483**	59	291	**0.1686**
2/24/2022	29	75	**0.2788**	64	45	**0.5872**	40	58	**0.4082**	23	81	**0.2212**
3/1/2018	31	183	**0.1449**	326	140	**0.6996**	164	223	**0.4238**	68	284	**0.1932**
3/18/2014	21	199	**0.0955**	82	62	**0.5694**	41	71	**0.3661**	30	86	**0.2586**
12/12/2012	31	263	**0.1054**	339	108	**0.7584**	126	205	**0.3807**	54	257	**0.1736**
AVERAGE	34	189.8	**0.16534**	218.8	102.6	**0.65126**	105.4	149.8	**0.40542**	46.8	199.8	**0.20304**

Table 3 below shows the score for each indicator at each time point, the overall average of each indicator, the standard deviations up and down from the average, and the percentage change between the first speech in 2012 and the last in 2023.

Table 3: **Scores of Each LTA Indicator Over the Time Periods Studied**							
Speech Date	**DIS**	**TASK**	**BACE**	**IGB**	**SC**	**CC**	**PWR**
2023	0.2021	0.6417	**0.4483**	0.1686	0.3385	0.4673	0.2865
2022	**0.2788**	0.5872	0.4082	0.2212	0.5	0.447	**0.3505**
2018	0.1449	0.6996	0.4238	0.1932	**0.5398**	0.4691	0.291
2014	0.0955	**0.5694**	**0.3661**	**0.2586**	**0.2791**	**0.538**	**0.25**
2012	0.1054	**0.7584**	0.3807	0.1736	0.384	0.4821	0.2779
AVERAGE	***0.16534***	***0.65126***	***0.40542***	***0.20304***	***0.40828***	***0.4807***	***0.29118***
Standard Deviations	0.076	0.078	0.032	0.037	0.109	0.034	0.037
1 Deviation Up	**0.24134**	**0.72926**	**0.43742**	**0.24004**	**0.51728**	**0.5147**	**0.32818**
1 Deviation Down	**0.08934**	**0.57326**	**0.37342**	**0.16604**	**0.29928**	**0.4467**	**0.25418**
% Change First to Last	9.67	-11.67	6.76	-0.5	-0.0455	-0.0148	0.0086
% Change 2014 - 2022	18.33	1.78	4.21	-3.74	22.09	-9.1	10.05