

Populism in Russia Worksheet by the Numbers

This project was designed for a survey history course on Russia (from 1000 to the present). Students are assigned three articles (available online) and two videos (available online) to watch.

1. Assign project and due date. Two videos and three short articles should require only a few days (three or four days should be sufficient). Students watch videos, read articles, and answer the worksheet questions outside of class.

2. Explaining grading criteria.

a. Students earn points via responding to questions on the worksheet. Answering all the questions represents full-credit. Scores below full-credit are possible based on student not answering provided questions. Points are deducted based on the value of missed questions, e.g., out of forty-eight questions, ten are missed. Each question is valued at 0.75 points. $0.75 \times 10 = 7.5$ points are lost from the worksheet, or 40.5 points out of a possible 48 points.

b. Students have the potential to earn above full-credit by answering extensively (something of a judgment call) and/or indicating where they found their answers (evidence). Since questions are drawn from provided information, a passage, quote, or page number suffices for evidence.

c. On the assigned day of the worksheet's completion, students will be organized into a seminar format and discuss the information they have examined. They are graded using the attached seminar-grading sheet. Students sign their names to the sheets, and the sheets are collected before the discussion begins. A workable system involves having the students arranged in a circle with the instructor on the outside of the circle. On a table in front of the instructor, arrange the seminar grading sheets (the sheets the students have just signed and the instructor has collected once they are seated in the seminar circle) into a circle mirroring the students' placement. As students discuss the topic, score their comments based on categories on the seminar-grading sheet. Total score is thirty-five points.

d. Although seminars can be structured in different ways, one successful way is to make the students responsible for the discussion. Keep notes while students discuss the topic. Ensure a few minutes are left between the expiration of the allotted seminar time (twenty-five to thirty minutes) and class dismissal. Once the seminar has ended, use the few minutes before dismissal to hit on any topics that students struggled with, missed, were in error, did an especially good job explaining, had an interesting insight, or any other action of note.

e. Scoring for the seminar is a blend of quantity and quality. Certain responses, such as answering questions and providing evidence are worth more than summarizing other's comments. But, full-credit will require participation throughout the seminar (quantity). A single, brilliant insight still only gets one check mark on the seminar grade sheet. In order to achieve full-credit, a student needs to raise multiple comments or questions. A full-credit seminar grade will have multiple check marks indicating different comments/questions the student raised during the seminar.

f. The seminar grade sheet has a prominent dividing line (*****) as well as a small #1 in the upper-right corner and a small #2 close to the right center of the page, below the prominent dividing line. The seminar grade sheet the students receive is only half a page, cut at the ***** mark. If the class is too large for one seminar group, divide the class in half. First, cut the seminar-grading sheet in half. Organize seminar grading half-sheets in a stack alternating #1 (small 1 in the upper-right corner), #2 (close to the right center of

the page, but now with page cut in half, also in the top right corner), 1, 2, 1, 2, etc. Distribute to students and select a number (1 or 2) to go in the first seminar group, followed by the second group. Two seminar groups in one class period can make for a rushed class and students will be under pressure to gain points in a short time period, but this is a system workable in a fifty-minute class with an enrollment of thirty-five students.

3. All the information above is based on past experience and projects with similar structures but with different themes. Of course there are alternative methods, and none of this is written in stone, but I have found this system functional. Teaching survey courses puts a premium on time, therefore, I shy away from large, student presentations, primarily because the time they gobble-up is time lost that was needed for other course topics. This system permits me to expose the students to a topic; they complete the work outside of class (again, class time is needed for other activities), and once completed the students' focus on this theme collectively. In this fashion, one day of the course is devoted to a theme, but the students have been spending a number of days mulling over this topic.

Populism in Russia Worksheet. Read the following articles on populism in post-Soviet Russia:

Boghani, Priyanka. "Putin's Legal Crackdown on Civil Society"

Deiwiks, Christa. "Populism."

Sestanovich, Stephen. "What a failed Soviet coup can teach us about 21st-century populism."

In addition, watch the *Frontline* video "Putin's Way." <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/putins-way/>> or <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bst3LDAbhmU>>.

Answer the following questions associated with the listed readings and video. Bring your answers to class on November 30th for a seminar discussion.

Worksheet Rubric (do not mark, project begins at the bottom of this page)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. Answered all questions: (35 points possible)	_____	_____
(If yes, move to item #3)		
1a. Number of questions skipped (0.75 points each)		_____
1b. Number of skipped pages. (3.5 points each)		_____
1c. Value of skipped question:	_____	
1d. Value of each skipped page:	_____	
2. Worksheet Score		_____ /35
_____ (Value of skipped questions and pages subtracted from total value)		

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
3. All questions answered with <u>evidence</u> or an <u>extensive</u> response (Up to 10 points extra).	_____	_____ Stop. No extra credit
3a. <u>Additional Worksheet Score</u> Questions answered with evidence (up to 5 extra points)		_____
3a. <u>Additional Worksheet Score</u> Questions answered with extensive responses (up to 5 extra points)		_____
4. Total Worksheet Score		_____ /35

QUESTIONS BEGIN ON NEXT PAGE

8. What are the complementary objectives with populist referring to the people? (Deiwiks)

9. Why is the 'other' critical for the construction of a populist ideology? (Deiwiks)

10. What are the different targets of right-wing populism and left-wing populism? (Deiwiks)

right-wing populism

left-wing populism

11. What are the conditions that promote populism?

12. Considering the framework presented in the Deiwiks article, as well as knowledge gained about Russia in class, what were the conditions (the specific people or events, not just a restatement of the general conditions asked for in question 11) that promoted a populist movement with Boris Yeltsin? (Sestanovich)

- 13.** If the people and the other is the core dichotomy of populism, who are they in Yeltsin's Russia? (Sestanovich)
- 14.** What is a Demagogue?
- 15.** Why did Yeltsin fail as a populist leader? (Sestanovich)
- 16.** How does Yeltsin's failure set the stage for Vladimir Putin? (Sestanovich)
- 17.** How might Ukraine be following Yeltsin's populism model? (Sestanovich)
- 18.** Why do the new populist (called illiberal by Sestanovich) turn on the newly empowered populist and how do the old populist (liberal, using Sestanovich words) lose the support of the people?
- 19.** What does Professor Dawisha mean by saying Russia needs to be seen as an authoritarian system in the process of succeeding? ("Putin's Way")

- 20.** Considering Putin's self-produced documentary, how does this fit within the concept of Demagoguery? Also consider the internet definition of the term sockpuppet (do an internet search for: *Sockpuppet (Internet)*)
- 21.** How does the *Frontline* video Putin's Way undermine Sestanovich's premise of Putin's rise to power as a reaction to Yeltsin's fall from power?
- 22.** How does the attack on Chechnya aid Putin's (*Frontline*, Putin's Way) rise to power and how does this Russia versus Chechnya dichotomy aid a populist construction (Deiwiks)?
- 23.** Consider the conditions thought to be needed for populist movements, specifically opaqueness of political insitutions (Deiwiks), what are the characteristics of Vladimir Putin's government? (Putin's Way)
- 24.** Who is Gerhard Schröder and how does he fit into this story about Vladimir Putin? (Putin's Way)
- 25.** As a former KGB agent, how was Putin trained to relate to other people? (Putin's Way)

26. Why did the Arab Spring worry Vladimir Putin? (Putin's Way)

27. When Vladimir Putin was nearing legal limits on his term in office and he announced (in 2011) that he would run for another term as president, what was the popular reaction? (Putin's Way and Boghani)

28. As a lawyer and leader of the state, how did Putin discourage protests? (Boghani)

29. Considering the wealth of an average Russian (mentioned in Putin's Way), how does Putin shut-down spontaneous protests? (Boghani)

30. Putin also targeted NGOs. How does this fit into the rubric of populism? (Boghani and Deiwiks)

31. Why is calling NGOs "foreign agents" an effective way to slander an NGO in Russian? (Boghani)

- 32.** In terms of controlling people and motivating populist movements to support the state, how does the media in Russia feed into this support? (Boghani)
- 33.** What is the meaning behind the line that Putin is the master and prisoner of the Kremlin and what could this imply for future governance and transfer of powers in Russia (Putin's Way)
- 34.** Consider the contrast between Sestanovich's description and the Frontline video's description of the transition of power from Yeltsin to Putin. With, Russia described as "basically a corrupt, backward country," what is a potential fear of populism that Putin might have?
- 35.** What are the potential economic problems mentioned that Russia faces? (Putin's Way)
- 36.** How does Putin redirect any potential dissatisfaction the Russian people may have with his governance? (Putin's Way)
- 37.** What became of the anti-Putin populism in 2011 after Putin's confrontation with Ukraine? (Putin's Way)

38. What does the flight MH17 do to Russia's international position? (Putin's Way)

39. Why is Putin's story of a cornered rat instructive? Although not mentioned in the video, with continued economic troubles in Russia, who else could be seen as the cornered rat? (Putin's Way)

Go to "the Gaurdian" web site and search for and watch, "The Night Wolves: Putin's Motorbiking Militia of Luansk" (<<https://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2016/jan/29/the-night-wolves-putins-motorbiking-militia-of-luhansk-video>>).

40. What is Donbass?

41. Notice the old, black and white, framed photo at 2:41 and later at 11:36. Who is this person and why might the Night Wolves glorify him?

42. How does God, nostalgia, and patriotism fit into the Night Wolves worldview?

43. How is Putin viewed by the Night Wolves?

44. How is the West/America viewed by the Night Wolves?

45. Putting all the information together about Russia, populism, and Putin, why might Putin support the policies he does towards the West and Ukraine?

46. Why might Russian populist follow Putin instead of denounce him?

47. How might this information inform the West's policies toward Russia?

48. What might be the long-term results for Putin and Russia?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Topic: _____

Positive Seminar Behaviors:

Introduced substantive points:

- Addressed assigned questions (2)..... *Once* *Sometimes* *Frequently*
- Answered assigned questions (4).....
- Pointed to important passages or evidence in text (6).....

Deepened the discussion:

- Identified essential issues or questions the text was discussing (5).....
- Asked clarifying questions (4).....
- Connected ideas; summarized (2).....
- Challenged ideas or offered alternative explanation (3).....
- Linked seminar topic to other course readings/topics (4).....

Facilitated group exploration:

- Encouraged non-participants (4).....
- Supported others by responding to their ideas (1).....
- Focused group back to text (3).....
- Brought closure to one point and made transition to a new one (2).....

Negative Seminar Behaviors:

- Jumped to *interpretation* too soon (-1).....
- Distracted group by holding sidebar conversations (-5).....
- Dominated discussion by talking too much (-2).....
- Discussing topics unrelated to seminar subject (-2).....

0	poor (1)	6	7	fair (2)	13	14	good (3)	29	30	proficient (4)	35
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Boghani, Priyanka. "Putin's Legal Crackdown on Civil Society." *Frontline*. 13 January 2015.
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/putins-legal-crackdown-on-civil-society/>>

With his hand resting atop a copy of Russia's constitution as he was sworn in for a third term as president, Vladimir Putin promised to "respect and protect human and civil rights and freedoms." But in the two years since, the Russian president has overseen an accelerated crackdown on dissent and opposition. A series of recently enacted laws have made it harder for Russians to assemble, to publish criticism on the Internet, and to carry out political or human rights advocacy, according to analysts and human rights groups. "He's a lawyer," Leon Aron, a Russia scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, explained to *Frontline*. "So he generally tends to avoid these crude, typically authoritarian, thuggish methods where people come in, break equipment and beat people up. He tries to do it as a slow strangulation — but very fatal — through a series of laws."

A Costly Protest

December 2011 saw widespread mass protests in Moscow and other Russian cities, sparked by Putin's announcement earlier that fall that he intended to run for a third term as Russia's president, as well as by allegations of rigged parliamentary elections. Tens of thousands of Russians of all political persuasions gathered in the capital chanting "Putin is a thief" and "Russia without Putin." "The Kremlin, and Putin personally, were quite frightened by the public protests of late 2011 and early 2012," Tanya Lokshina, the Russia program director at Human Rights Watch, told *Frontline*. "As soon as Putin returned to the Kremlin he tried to do his utmost to make sure people were strongly discouraged from taking part in such protests." Less than a month after Putin's inauguration, Russia's parliament passed a bill raising the fines and penalties for taking part in unauthorized protests to 300,000 rubles (more than \$9,000 at the time). Organizers of unsanctioned rallies could be fined up to a million rubles.

Putin's own human rights adviser reportedly asked the president to veto the bill, but Putin signed it into law days before a planned protest, justifying it as a bulwark against radicalism. The number of public protests dropped by half in the following year, according to a report by Amnesty International, which noted that "Spontaneous protest has been virtually outlawed." In July 2014, Putin signed a new law that raised the fines for protesters caught participating in unauthorized demonstrations multiple times a year to between 600,000 and 1 million rubles (\$17,124-\$28,540 at the time) — a cost that rights groups said was prohibitively high for the average Russian citizen to pay. Protesters could also be held criminally accountable and face up to five years of forced labor or prison.

Cracking Down on NGOs

Putin began tightening conditions on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during his second term as president. In 2007, he described NGOs that received grants from foreign governments as "jackals." In 2011,

he compared election monitors who received foreign funding to Judas. In 2012, Putin signed what would become known as the “foreign agent law,” which requires NGOs that received funding from outside Russia to register as “foreign agents” and be subject to mandatory audits. Failure to register could result in a maximum fine of 300,000 rubles for individuals and 500,000 rubles for organizations.

The law also required NGOs to submit reports on their funds and resources on a quarterly basis, and reports on their activities and personnel every six months. Failure to submit such reports or providing “incomplete” information could result in fines of 30,000 rubles for individuals and 10 times that amount for legal entities. Individuals and organizations could also be fined 300,000 and 500,000 rubles respectively if they published or distributed materials without noting that they had been published by a “foreign agent.” The Kremlin cast the law as a way to prevent “foreign meddling” in Russia’s domestic politics and increase transparency. “Any direct or indirect interference in our internal affairs — any form of pressure on Russia, our allies and partners — is unacceptable,” Putin said in a February 2013 speech to the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor agency to the KGB.

But Russia observers say the law was intended to marginalize and demonize NGOs in the eyes of Russians. “In the Russian language, in the Russian context, foreign agent means foreign spy, there is no other interpretation,” Lokshina said. “The intent was to create a sense of fear and kind of warn off any kind of civil society,” said Aron, who described the law as one of the most damaging passed in recent years. As many as 2,000 NGOs were raided by government authorities in the spring of 2013. Putin said the inspections were to check “whether the groups’ activities conform with their declared goals.” Among the groups targeted was Golos, an election watchdog that tracked instances of fraud during the 2011 elections. In April 2013, it was fined for failing to declare itself a foreign agent. The offices of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were also raided, along with Memorial, one of Russia’s oldest human rights organizations. Within a year of the law being enacted, at least 10 NGOs had been taken to court for failure to register. In May 2014, the law was amended to give the Ministry of Justice the power to label NGOs “foreign agents” if they didn’t register themselves. Twenty-eight of the 30 NGOs currently listed as foreign agents were added by the ministry.

A Shrinking Independent Media

During his first two terms, Putin worked to increase state control over the media, bringing the television empires of two of Russia’s biggest media tycoons — Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky — under the Kremlin’s control. By early 2014, several Russian media outlets saw an editorial change of guard to more Kremlin-friendly leaders, and only one independent television station remained, Dozhd (Rain) TV. The channel’s editor-in-chief won a Committee to Protect Journalists award last November, but in Russia, the channel is a pariah, with its studio now located in a tiny apartment in Moscow.

Adding to Dozhd's troubles is a law that bans advertising on private cable and satellite channels. It was passed by the Russian parliament last July and takes effect this year. The heads of several channels wrote a letter to the government, explaining that "excluding the advertising model will place about 150 [out of 270 cable and satellite channels] on the brink of survival," according to *The Moscow Times*. During a news conference in December, Putin said the law's purpose was to even the playing field between the cable and satellite channels, and federal free-to-air stations.

In October, Putin signed another law that would limit foreign ownership in media companies to 20 percent by the end of 2016. It also prohibited international organizations, foreign citizens or Russians with dual citizenship from owning mass media outlets. The law will most likely impact the two biggest independent media outlets in *Russia*: *Forbes' Russian* edition and *Vedomosti*, a joint publication of the *Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. "We understand very well that those who own information own the world," Vadim Dengin, the lawmaker who wrote the bill, said during debate before the law's approval. "When foreigners come here to make money and then actively influence the media market and use it for their own benefit, at this moment, I want to say that I am ready to close down Russia and ensure its security." *Vedomosti's* editor in chief, Tatiana Lysova, said, "We do not report to the Russian authorities, so that is why we are a potential danger in their mind, a potential enemy."

Regulating an "Island of Freedom"

Before 2012, Russia saw almost no Internet censorship, according to Eva Galperin, global policy analyst at the Electronic Frontier Foundation. The Internet "was a place where people debated politics with great vigor, and there was a very well-developed civil society," she told *Frontline*. Lokshina described it as an "island of freedom" in Russia's media landscape. In the months leading up to Putin's re-election, opposition forces used websites and blogs to organize protests and expose alleged corruption. The Russian government went on the attack, with Sergei Smirnov, the deputy director of the FSB, blaming western security services for creating "new technologies" to "create and maintain constant tension." "Society must defend itself," Smirnov said in an April 2012 speech. "If the enemy uses 'dirty' technology, we need to purge the space from such activity in some way." Within months, Putin signed the "Law on the Protection of Children from Information Detrimental to Their Health and Development." It called for the creation of a registry — or blacklist — of sites containing information deemed harmful to children.

Reporters Without Borders criticized the legislation, saying the procedure that could lead to a website being blocked was "extremely vague." Russia's telecom minister, Nikolai Nikiforov, tried to reassure critics, saying the government didn't intend to "enforce censorship." Websites would "be blocked only if they refuse to follow Russian laws, which is unlikely, in my opinion," he said. The registry is maintained by a federal agency,

Roskomnadzor. “Roskomnadzor actually has no method of appeal, and no real oversight,” Galperin said. “So really, they can block what they want, for whatever reason they want.” In December 2013, Putin signed another law that would allow Roskomnadzor to block sites that carry “extremist” content or promote mass rioting within 24 hours and without a court order. It came into effect last February.

A month later, three opposition media sites and a blog maintained by opposition leader Alexei Navalny were blocked in accordance with the law for encouraging “illegal activities and participation in public events held in violation of the established order.” “They’ve taken down a number of Russian political sites, particularly sites belonging to members of the political opposition and independent news sites, especially when the news features points of view that aren’t in keeping with the Putin regime,” Galperin said. In May, Putin signed another law that would require bloggers with more than 3,000 daily visitors to register with Roskomnadzor. They would also have to reveal their identities, and verify the accuracy of the information they published.

The law has already compelled some tech companies in Russia to change their policies in order to comply. The most recent example was Intel, which shut down its Russian-language developer forums, redirecting users to third-party sites or Intel’s English-language forums. The company explicitly said the changes were a result of “new laws in Russia.” The cumulative effect of all these laws, according to experts, has been to create an environment hostile for activists, critics of the government and independent journalists. But some, such as Human Rights Watch’s Lokshina, say that the government’s moves may end up being counter-productive. “While the number of people who are ready to speak to criticize the Kremlin at this time has gone down ... it’s very much like a pot,” she told *Frontline*. “It might just bubble over, it might just explode at any given moment.”

of their own. James (1988) formulates the latter aspect in more positive terms. Peronism is, in his eyes, the redefinition of the notion of citizenship within a social context, which meant full political rights and political inclusion, but most importantly, these political aspects should not be separated from civil society, and especially not be implemented at the expense of the latter. Moreover, a more transcendental aspect of Peronism is the recognition of workers as a class and a distinct social force, not through parties and formal rights but through trade unions.

In terms of Mudde's minimal definition of populism, the 'people' were the disadvantaged working class, who revolted against the old establishment and the industrialists exploiting the work force. Moreover, Peronism was essentially anti-party, being only weakly institutionalized. Perón himself stressed that "Peronism is a national movement committed to real democracy, not a political party preoccupied with formal democracy" (McGuire 1997, 1). These findings correspond to the two core aspects of populism as defined above. Finally, underlying and facilitating conditions, in this case industrial development and modernization, are a major characteristic of Peronism even though it is questionable whether they should be part of a definition of populism.

A short conclusion

On the basis of the short descriptions of populism in Russia, the United States, Western Europe and Latin America, the difficulties connected with developing a definition become visible. It hardly surprises that scholars struggle to settle on one definition. Yet, the analysis of the theoretical literature shows that the degree to which this concept is contested has declined. While Ionescu and Gellner could not agree on the core of populism in 1969, Mény and Surel (2000; 2002), Taggart (2000; 2002) and Mudde (2004), define populism in very similar terms. Hence, Panizza (2005) is not so far off the mark when he claims that there is an academic consensus.

Finding commonalities in the above cases of populism is obviously easier if one knows what to look for. Starting with a minimal definition of populism and trying to apply this definition to empirical cases facilitates determining whether one deals with populism or not. A minimal definition has the advantage that one gets a tight grip on what populism is, the theoretical discussion becomes less confusing because populism as a concept becomes distinguishable from other phenomena in politics. Worsley (1969) emphasizes the applicability and hence analytical usefulness of ideal types (Weber 1949), which synthesizes and unifies a multitude of empirical observations into a coherent construct.

Given the many instances of populism from all over the world throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, what are populism's future prospects? At least two factors indicate that populist elements in politics will remain or even increase. First, representative democracy almost inevitably goes along with populism, due to the democratic paradox. Hence, opportunities for populists who want to restore the power of the 'people' are not likely to wane. Second, the mediatization of politics is not likely to abate either. This renders many opportunities for populists to gather support by conveying simplified messages and presenting themselves as charismatic leaders and true representatives of the 'people.' Hence, populism is likely to continue to be part of politics and of political analysis.

Funding

This research was supported by a grant of the European Science Foundation (#116795).

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