Vladimir Putin

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Vladimir Putin is the incumbent President of the former Soviet Union. He is been the President from 2000 and onwards. During this period of time he served as the Prime Minister of Russia for four months. Putin holds a degree in international law and has been a member of communist party from his university days. On December 31, 1999 he won the election against Boris Yeltsin and has been serving as the fourth President of Russia (Black 2018). He won the re-election in 2018, which made him able to run the Presidency until the year 2024. The following essay is aimed at analyzing the life of Vladimir Putin and will include the analysis of his rise to power and leadership styles.

# Introduction

Born in 1952, Putin is the youngest sibling among three children of Vladimir Spiridonovich Putin and Maria Ivanovna Putina. Putin’s father had served for many long as a cook for Vladimir Lenin (Black 2018). Before taking charge of this job, he served as conscript in Soviet Navy. Since Putin was youngest among his siblings, he started his regular school in 1960 at Baskov. During earlier years he was interested in Judo and obtained Judo Black belt in a competition held at the national level. After completing formal early level academics he obtained admission at Leningrad State University and obtained a degree of Law later in 1970. He graduated with a degree in international law in 1975 with majors in trading practices. One of his teachers had been a co-author of Russian constitution (Black 2018). In 1983, Putin married [Lyudmila Shkrebneva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyudmila_Putina) from which he had two daughters. His marriage, however, could not retain and in 2014, Kremlin confirmed that divorcee had been confirmed. It is widely believed that Putin’s close cousin has served as a director at Moscow based Bank who was later accused with money laundering charges.

Professionally, Putin’s first assignment was as a KGB agent in East German. After this assignment, during 1990s he performed his duties as the vice mayor of St. Petersburg. During his service as vice mayor he remained successful in defecting the invasion of Dagestan. Soon after this failed invasion, the popularity of Putin increased and he was able to win the Presidential election of 2000. He got the majority of 52 percent Russians (Black 2018). Scholars who have been writing about the life of Putin argue that his personality has been largely influenced the way federal security services of Russia works. Similarly many people believe that under Putin, many KGB workers have been ruling the Ruling federation. His personality traits suggest that Putin still gets influenced by the conduct he acquired as a KGB agent. *A thorough observation of his life suggests that military stimuli remain dominant irrespective of political ovation one enjoys.*

# Putin’s rise to power

Putin officially resigned from the KGB active reserves in 1991. He arrived Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and started working for Anatoly Sobchak. Sobchak was Putin’s law professor which was later elected as the city’s mayor (Lukin 2018). It was this assignment who aroused political interest in Putin. At this job he kept a low profile and worked behind the scene. He worked according to the notion that ‘if things required to be done’. Lukin writes that Sobchak inspired Putin and working at his Professor’s assignment, he started getting influenced by politics (Lukin 2018). His Professor and the first elected city mayor was known for the authoritarian notions. Putin remained loyal to Sobchak despite his failure in the re-election. It was this time when Putin declined the offer of the victor. A game-changer came in his political career when he relocated with his family to Moscow. He quickly rose to fame among the prominent faces of federal security services, who succeeded KGB.

Finally in the year 1998, Boris Yeltsin the then President of Russia named Vladimir Putin for the Presidency of Russia. With the coming of his name in international media, it was widely referred that only the trusted one could have been successful in getting this position, which Putin won. Formally in 1999, Yeltsin named Putin as the Prime Minister of Russia. Putin was the fifth Prime Minister in not more than five years. Premiership in Russia is the second-highest official rank which reports directly to the President (De Stefano 2018). Yeltsin finally stepped down on the last day 1999 and Putin was named as the new President of Russia. Analyst believed that since Putin had been so faithful to Yeltsin and there could be no other better option for Yeltsin other than Putin to get protection for himself. Interestingly, Putin also pardoned Yeltsin from criminal and administrative impeachments. Yeltsin resultantly got immunity from seizure and search of residence and different possessions.

For Putin as the President of Russia, things have not been so good at the start. Various domestic and foreign policy challenges had remained a stumbling block for his success at the national level. As he took power in 2000s, the Russian constitution not allowed the Presidential chair authority over some matters. The institutional clash for authority remained dominant in early decades of his presidency (De Stefano 2018). Throughout the times form thereon, Putin seeks power to maximize his control on the Presidentship. He consolidated domestic powers to assure his Presidency. Finally, he was able to win the Presidential elections consecutively. The consolidation of the domestic powers was for what he had been seeking power, which ultimately guaranteed his success between 2000 and 2018.

# Sources and extent of Putin’s power

Putin’s rise to power had been largely credited to the former President Yeltsin. Along with this many religious factions helped him to expand his political influence (Krindatch 2006). During the mid- 2000s Russian Orthodox Church supported the government-backed propaganda, in terms of turning Russians against the West and asserting Russia’s supremacy. The evidence in this regard is that many Orthodox priests collaborated with Russian State Security. Orthodox Church (along with state media) was used by Russian state as a defense against foreign intelligence (Krindatch 2006). Interesting to note is the fact that Ukraine being the largest country in the region is home to many Eastern Orthodox followers, and many of the reports to the Moscow Patriarchate (Krindatch 2006). Russia under Putin’s regime has also sponsored Orthodox Churches in Western Europe. A Russian Military Intelligence officer who served in Ukraine toured the country just before the Crimean annexation as the chief security officer of an Orthodox exhibition. However, Russia's constitution prescribes the separation of the Church and the State. Russia's richest people are not particularly religious including some politician (Krindatch 2006).

Other than the religious card, President Putin can employ various ways including constitutional or domestic to source his power. But for the fact that he had been on the Presidency for more than a decade there had no more sources which he could employ to maximize his control or for seeking power. The test case in this regard would be the 2024 elections (De Stefano 2018). As Putin had already expended his sources of power, therefore there exists no viable option within the domain of constitution which could allow him to hold on to the power. Although the constitutional limits in Russia are much narrow compared to the Western world, along with a general belief that Kremlin controls the Russian parliament. Therefore, there exist wide chances that Putin may abrogate the Constitution at any time during his present tenure for extending legitimacy to his stay in power post-2024 (De Stefano 2018). However, up till recently, Putin has denied any such options.

# Leadership styles

Putin has worked for a considerable time as a secret operative. The close aides of President Putin suggest that he is a fast learner and the qualities, and training skills he obtained during his career in the intelligence still dominate his conduct. His actions suggest that he is perceptive in nature and holds a tactical mind. President Putin has lived a life without a personal ideology of his own (McFaul 2018). He had remained close to the Russian power circles since the start of his career, therefore, he quickly absorbs what his friends and close aides suggest to him. His Presidential career suggests that he easily gets comfortable with new people and extends his confidence over him, this is how he had been able to turn over any things in his own favor. The psychoanalysts and international relations experts call this efficient confusion, which is part and parcel of Putin’s leadership style (McFaul 2018). Some also call this leadership style as management with walking around.

Another aspect of his leadership style is related to team building. He distributes charges in a very fuzzy manner. For example, no one under his command remains assures of his task. Many times many similar and parallel roles have been observed being performed by his associates (Black 2018). At the same time, he allows people under his command to decide about the extent of their roles. Among his close partners and aides he keeps on switching tasks from people to people. One important thing of his leadership style is second-guessing to which he refers as the factor of creativity and innovation (Black 2018). He is an astute observer and manages people based on their motivations. There are extremely few who worked for him, and none from his inner circle, have ever turned against him. At the same time, many people who were his bitter critics, now work for him. To find something comparable, we need to go back to Stalin. And even this comparison is favorable to Putin. Stalin heavily relied on killing people to prevent defections and betrayals, while Putin obviously dislikes blood and violence.

For many long Putin had remained focused on how things have been working on their own. He had never been so intriguing into things or the state apparatus (Chebankova 2010). He excelled by using the system’s own modus operandi and hidden inertia, instead of enforcing his own way of doing things. His ability to ride on other people’s motivations and energies allowed him to start his working days late, work just a few hours, and yet have full control of what is going on in his administration. Analysts understand his leadership role as an arbitrator who can choose the best options available among many (Chebankova 2010). This reflects in the manner he tries to comprehend the tasks; this is the reason why he never opted to put forward any strategic speech, or offered any grand plans for the future. There was once an attempt to run his electoral campaign under the motto “Support Putin’s plan”, but it was quickly abandoned. This benefits him in avoiding responsibility for failures and broken promises he and his people gave to the Russian public.

# Major Decisions

Putin has been ruling the Russian people for around fifteen years, there are many decisions at his credits which have changed the way people had been thinking about Russia. There are many decisions at his credit which remain dominant when it comes to analyzing Russian history from the days he became the President. On New Year’s Eve, with the resignation of Yeltsin, Putin as an acting President told BBC, that he could not imagine his country to live in isolation with Europe (Nichols 2018). Therefore he opined to work for bringing his country close to the European way of living. The later year's history suggests that Putin despite enjoying enormous popularity among people had remained largely fail to bring his people close to the European civilization. He still held major differences with the European counterparts. A decade and more after the end of Yeltsin era, Russia has drastically changed. People have become open and Russia at present is largely recognized as free and opened for all (Bukkvoll 2016). Despite the disagreement from him, one has to accept the fact that Putin has hugely impacted his own country.

Another important decision of his Presidency was related to Ukraine and the Georgian issue. Although it is the latest issue that has sparked differences among the West and Russia, it depicts how Putin had been assertive in exercising his rights. The annexation of Crimes suggests that he had been planning such acts six years prior to what had been happening in Georgia (Treisman 2016). The impact of his decisions although plunged the Russian economy, but for now President Putin remained successful in achieving his strategic aims. This episode benefitted the regime in mainly two ways. One is the Russian assertion of the fact that it still holds considerable strategic capabilities and on other hand it brought the consolidation of public views for President Putin.

After his election for the fourth term as Russia’s President in March 2018, Putin has shown quite a consistent pattern. President Putin is growing more and more conservative. He believes the global order needs a major overhaul for making the world more like what he had been projecting in Russia since Russia for him is perfectly fine as it is. At present he sees some major turmoil around the corner. It may or may not involve conflict, but he has diligently been building up his military capabilities (Vidmar 2015). He has insulated Russian banking against international sanctions, ratcheted up the self-reliance on food and re-oriented much of the military production toward high-tech parts from China. He also seems to have ensured the friendly neutrality of Israel, Turkey, Iran, and China in case something big happens between him and the West. The Big Russian Internet Wall is projected to prevent possible internal rebels from using the Internet and social media for self-organization and communication.

# Conclusion

The life of Putin as President and as a secret agent reflects a consistent pattern. He had not made himself part of any controversy which has largely benefitted him. In his personal life, professional life or as being a political leader his stimulus for success remains consistency. Throughout his first term, his policies toward Russia have been focused on the consolidation of domestic power and towards bridging the gap between scientific innovations and military capabilities. Such a pattern has been visible in different episodes later being the Russian annexation of Crimea. He has developed Russian strategic capabilities and overhauled the Russian strategic conundrum. Russia of Putin is much different from the Russia of the previous century. As this has analyzed a large aspect of Putin’s life, therefore it is right to argue that he remained stacked to the norms he learned being a secretive agent. He never left the space which had allowed the domestic ovation he enjoyed to tilt him from what he aims for Russia.

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