

## Who supports Mr Putin?

### The personal characteristics of Putin's voters.

by Karem A Warton

**Abstract:** This report will describe the personal characteristics of the Russian citizens that voted for Mr Putin in 2016, and the association of these to their choice of political party. Looking for answers around the question of whether Russia is a good democracy? The chosen database for this purpose is The European Social Research, 'The Russian Federation 2016'.<sup>1</sup> Presenting a large sample N=2430, deemed to succeed most of the assumptions required such as data symmetry, normality of distribution and reliability test. The first part of this report will introduce, define, and explain the thesis to propose two hypotheses. The first hypothesis will consist of one Y dependent variable and two X independent variables, the aim is to analyse the strength of the relationship between them and their relation by using Spearman rho's. The second part of this report will attempt to create a formulation for the second hypothesis based on the strength of the results of hypothesis one and to find out whether there is significant statistical support of the presented literature premises as will be referenced.

### Thesis

Back to 1917, the Russian Revolution roused out of public discontent, driven by the eager for social, political, and economic change. Russians, unlike the rest of their geo-political neighbours, were amongst the less developed states mainly characterised as an anachronistic society, oppressed by the lack of recognition of citizens' rights, authoritarianism, and poverty. The so-called, third wave of global democratisation during the 1970s – 80s that affected countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy in the South of Europe and countries in Latin America.<sup>2</sup> A fact that was not going to pass without affecting the communist world. As sensed by the academic literature, the transition process to democratisation was a global phenomenon deemed successful in the South of Europe and Latin America that affected Russia but arguably not at the same level of transformation. Nevertheless, the fundamental differences between authoritarian or autocratic governing systems and communist systems started to be noticed and differentiated. Now, world analysts can confirm that the process of democratisation of doctrinal communists' nations is a different case that should be understood in its own context.

For instance, it can be noted the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages as in the state of Russia, though, might represent a positive aspect. It has always been a challenge for governments, as identity plays an important role in political representation and political behaviour that affects human deeds.<sup>3</sup> Though the field of democracy and democratisation processes is broad, it can be observed that the meaning of democracy goes beyond a ballot box, national elections systems or citizen participation in the electoral roll. By now, democracy can be defined as a set of systems and virtuous practices of transparency that involve citizens' political education as paramount. One indicator that

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<sup>1</sup> Data Set 1: **European Social Research, The Russian Federation 2016, ESS8RU**. Available at: [https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=russian\\_federation](https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/country.html?c=russian_federation)

<sup>2</sup> White, S. (2011)

<sup>3</sup> J Garcia-Alande. 'Positive Psychology.' University of Valencia. ResearchGate Online Publications. June 2010. Pp. 524-525.  
Url: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262562184>

can show the state of Russia had a different path to democratisation can be cited to 1989, when the East Europeans have demised their communist leaderships the former USSR small states were more likely to be absorbed by the political models of their geo-political neighbours, as the Baltic countries did by joining NATO and the EU in the early 2000s. Unlike the former Soviet Union that experienced changes on their land's ownership and so on their national boundaries making it more difficult especially on political decisions to follow up patterns of transition. Thus, whilst a third wave of democratisation was deemed successful elsewhere, Russia is identified with a fourth wave, that arguably, bespoke of their resistance to democratic westernised models, as well as, of certain failure on achieving a competitive democratic model as many analysts would propose. Stephen White 2011, identifies the communist world lacked three main elements, the balance of political forces that translates on to a weak capacity for diplomatic negotiation, important in the setting up of new agreements and a set of rules and regulations that could have potentially improved the normative and provided more directional paths. Also mention the lack of symmetry in the distribution of power as the factor that allowed the dominant elite political party to impose a set of rules on its own interests, destabilising the processes of democracy and favouring the raise of autocracies, corruption, and business oligarchs whose influence over the Russian government is regarded as out of scope.<sup>4</sup> *Factors identified: voted on elections, trust in institutions and other political governments, trust in law bodies.*

During the 1990s, attempts to raise a new governing system were made, most remarkably by the intervention of Boris Yeltsin, regarded by some analysts as the first establishment of a political leadership model that arguably underpinned the politics of nowadays in Russia. The rise of Yeltsin characterised by conflictive reformation against the system was as defined by S White 2011, as an imposition that had to be assimilated by members of the state instead of an agreeable consensual decision by people in parliament. Consequently, the Constitution of the 1993, embedded in the study of Russian politics as namely 'the constitutional crisis' is without major objection, the closest attempt to embedding liberal policies in the Russian law, potentially a bridge to the rule of law in the international system. It emerged amidst civil confrontation involving the parlours and some military intervention, contentiously demonstrating that liberal policies sometimes needed to be imposed. The new 1993 constitution contains provisions on the separation of powers, property rights, and the liberal embedding of human rights, often contesting the prevailing socialist rights from previous simplistic and underdeveloped constitutions of the past times. The post-communist Russia was finally attempting to stabilise the Bolshevik political intricacies taking a turning point into democracy and political structure, but in support of a previous statement made earlier in this text, the meaning of democracy goes beyond a constitutional reform and structure, importantly tied to political behaviour and social values. Thus, implying behaviour and values are paramount to democratic participation.

Essentially the problem of the Russian constitution 1993 does not rely on its structure itself but on the way its legislations are embedded and practised within the normal function of its institutions and social interaction. At the conference of 'The constitutional crisis 25 years on, 2018'<sup>5</sup> The main issues are as in the lack of regulatory bodies ensure the compliance of legislations, on the incorrect interpretation of the law, on the appreciation of the effect over human rights and civil rights, and the lack of consideration of these clauses by government bodies and heads of states. It was observed people's behaviour follows the line of Soviet patterns, there is a lack of engagement with liberal policies that would prioritise for instance property rights over the rights of states, or human rights over

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<sup>4</sup> White (2011)

<sup>5</sup> WoodrowWilsonCenter (2018) *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Constitution.*

socialist rights. The problem of legitimisation of conservative repressive practices, often from the side of the authorities over civilians, is still a matter of contentious discussion for international analysis.<sup>6</sup>

From the above theoretical definition few substantial ideas or factors are found to be in line with the definition and practices of democracy and democratic processes in a rather reciprocal way. For instance, political participation would logically be affected by the fluctuations of human deeds, as head of states, that might create better political systems for public consensus. So, if there is an increasing public participation, the systems could appear more attractive to followers, and so certain trust appears as an important index of effective democratisation that could possibly imply a reciprocal relation of causation. The first hypothesis aims at measuring the strength of the relationship between political participation and trust in the parliament.

**H1: Those with higher levels of political activity are likely to have higher levels of trust in public institutions.** This hypothesis will be tested in two parts H1.1 and H1.2 as follows,

H1.1

Dependent Variable: Trust in country's parliament (trstprl), ordinal, from 0-10 being higher numbers equal higher levels of trust.

Independent Variable: Able to take an active role in a political group (actrologa), categorical, from 1-5, being higher numbers equal to higher levels of political participation.

Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between actrologa and trstprl. There was a **positive** correlation between the two variables, **r (1993) = .066, p = .003 < .05.**

The results show a positive possible relationship of causation, although it is not strong on the rule of thumb of Spearman's rho correlation, the p-value is below the threshold, therefore the relationship between these two variables is statistically significant which means it affects each other.

H1.2

Dependent Variable: Trust in country's parliament (trstprl), ordinal, from 0-10 being higher numbers equal higher levels of trust.

Independent Variable: Signed a petition in the last 12 months (sgnptit), 1= Yes; 2=No, categorical binomial.

Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between trstlgl and sgnptit. There was a **positive** correlation between the two variables, **r (2062) = .010, p = .660 > .05.** Once again there is a possibility of causation between these two variables, but it is very small. The strength of the relationship is almost null, and so p value is above the threshold, therefore, signing a petition is not statistically correlated with the levels of trust in a country's parliament. Although Spearman's rho can say something useful, it would be more effective to apply an independent t-test of equal variances to find out the Mode of this relationship, and so its consistency briefly.

N= (Yes=232; No=2080), Sig= .379 > .05. Therefore, equal variances are assumed.

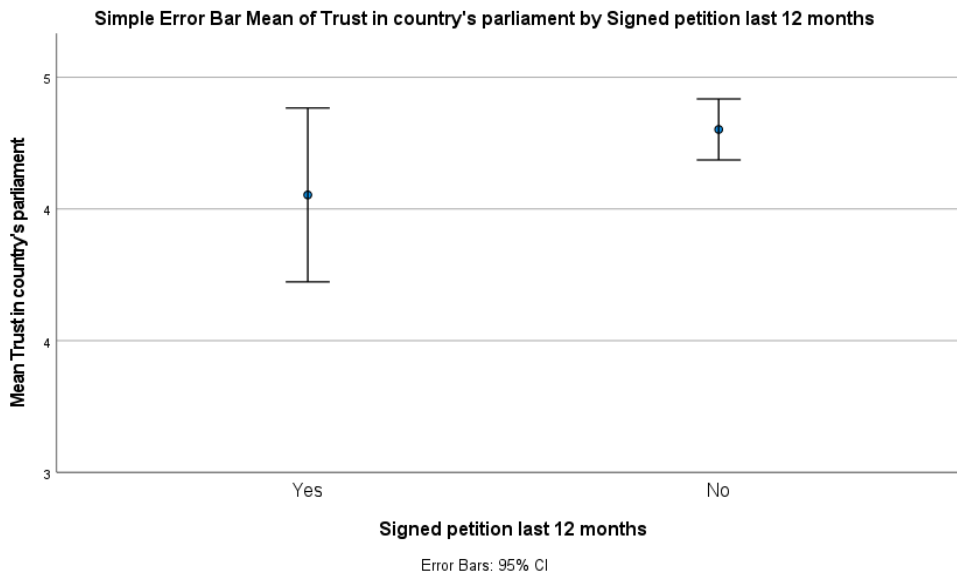
T (2312) = 0.90, p = .180 > 0.05, accept the null Ho.

The results of the t-test confirm there is not statistically significant relationship between signing a petition as a democratic behaviour, with the level of trust in a country's parliament. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>6</sup>WoodrowWilsonCenter (2018) 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Constitution.

Mode indicates (M = 4.27) almost half of the population signed a petition as a sign of parliament trust, but from a scale of 1 to 10, almost half does but not a 50%+.

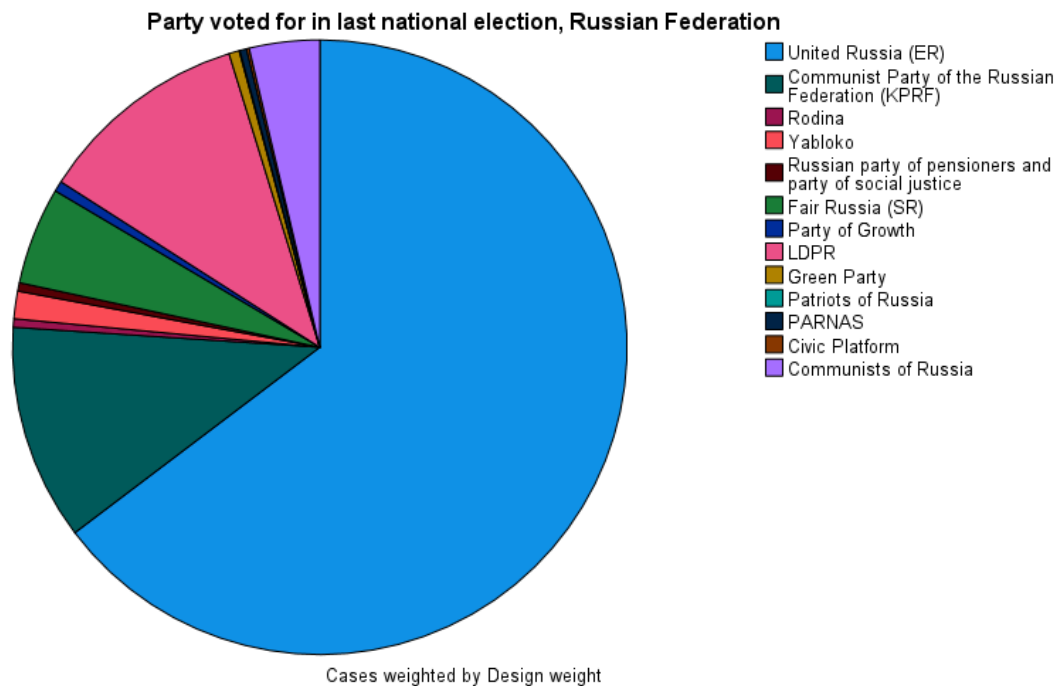


A: The results of test H1 apparently are not very optimistic, however, they are leading to interesting remarks. First, the confirmation that democratic practices as ‘able to contact a politician’ and the political values implied in the variable ‘Able to take an active role in political group’ with trust in parliament that could denote certain trust in democracy, are joined by certain causation. The fact that the strength of the relationship is indeed weak, as  $r$  values are close to ‘0’ means that no political activity is essentially correlated to trust in parliament, therefore there are other factors that motivates people participate in politics, thus trust factors is still unknown, political participation does not directly affect its fluctuation.

The rise of Vladimir Putin as a head of state has dominated the new millennium with a fourth governing term going on, and one term as Premier, Russia has grown in isolation from Europe and gained a reputation of being averse to the western world and institutions. Russia has not taken any major compromise with European institutions and an almost failed project in Eurasia, it seems to have conserved the values of the Soviet Union under a new brand of democracy. Although Russia has gained the reputation of being a great country, and had a robust collaboration in world affairs, the Putin foreign policy is characterised by participative military aligned in opposition to US participation elsewhere, as in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Russia's UN Security Council seat has been contradicted by their military intake elsewhere from Europe, and deemed, on the benefits of its own interests. When Vladimir Putin pronounced ‘Russia will not be a democratic model alike UK or US in the early 2000s, but it will consider their own geo-politics, their cultural diversity and set their own priorities’ clearly indicating their stand as a non-collaborative government, but a regime that will be up to impose its policies based on their own interests against a new world order. The post-communist Russia Federation did not have a strong Parliamentary System that would hold the government accountable, seen by some as the legacy of Yeltsin’s politics although in this instance, Yeltsin’s motivations could have been more justifiable than those of Mr Putin. So, the logical question is who

has voted for Mr Putin? Finding as an indicator the analysis of the Russian political parties and its relevance at their parliament.

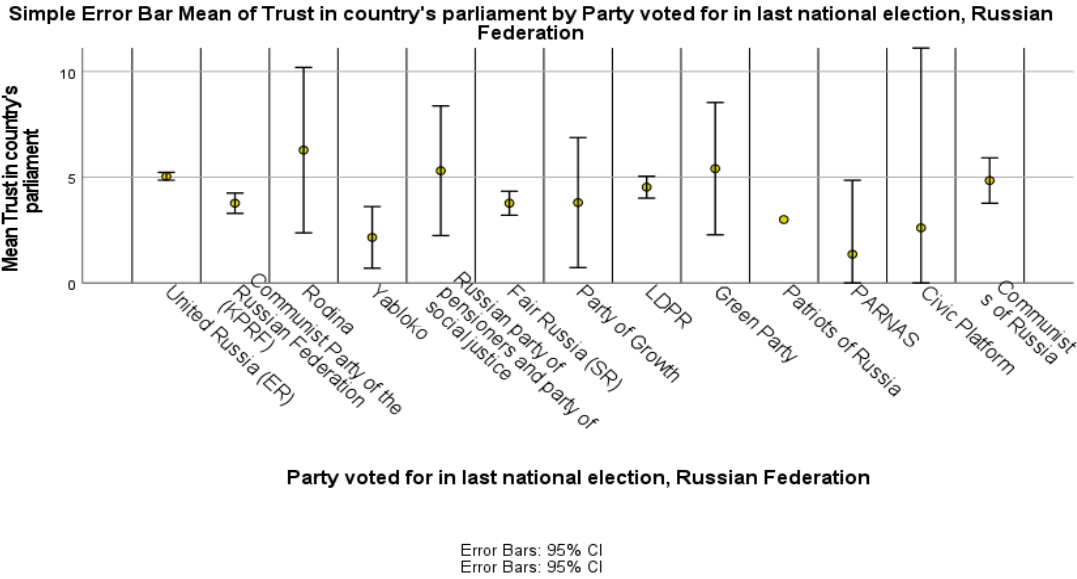
The above literature supposes the analysis of this part should be able to find out a valid definition of the elements that made possible the relevancy of people’s preferences in politics, for this I will make a quick analysis of the Russian political party distribution and how this relates to ‘trust in parliament’



A pie chart helps to visualise the distribution of votes in the last national election N=2430, with a valid N of participants = 1118, formed of people who voted (55.9%) and people who did not vote (44.1%). Being votes of the ER party 67.1% that has the majority of seats in Parliament.

Furthermore, an Anova test between variables DV: Trust in country’s parliament, and IV: party voted for in the last national election of the Russian Federation results shows a statistically significant level between people that voted for any party have different levels of trust which are not proportional to the percentage of voters (51.7%). Thus, the major party does not necessarily present voters with equal or higher levels of trust superior to any other party with less votes. Therefore, trust is not a decisive factor that makes people give their vote, but it affects the outcome, indicated by the p value.

$$F(12, 1063) = 3.079, p = .001 < .05 \text{ (Rejects the null } H_0)$$



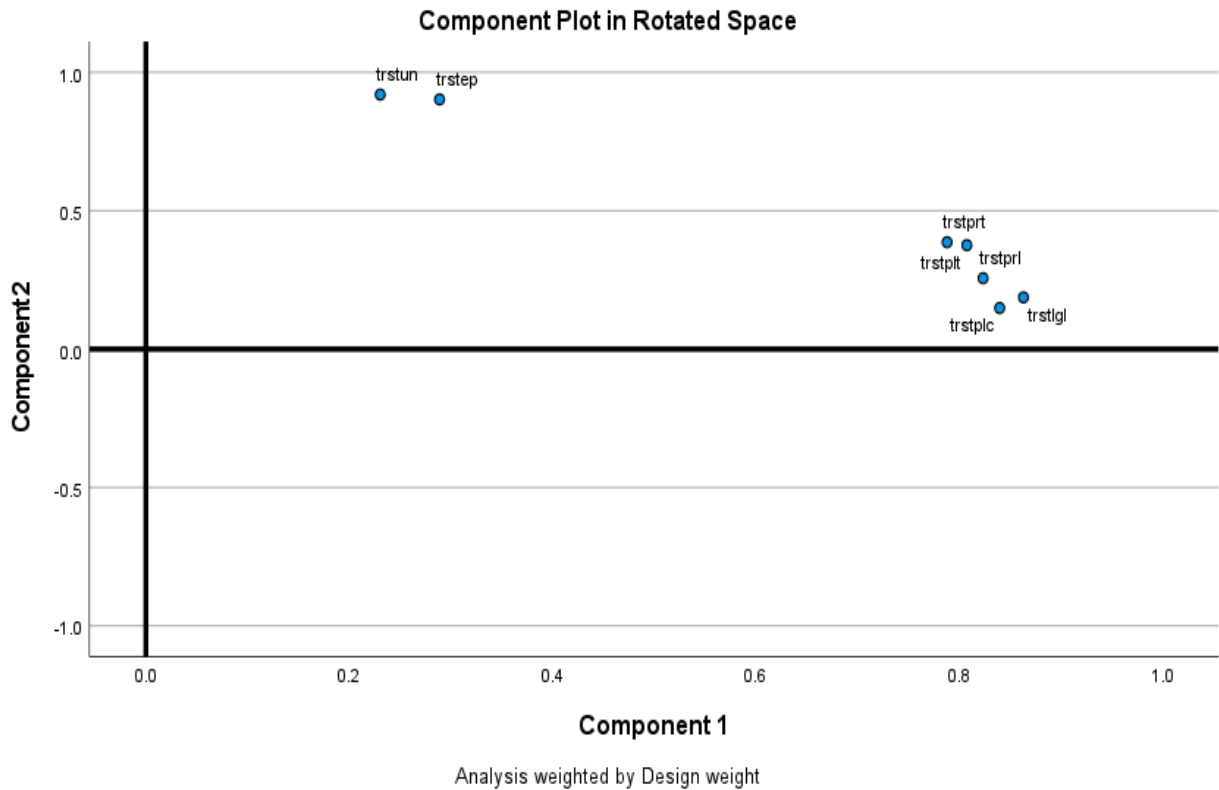
The ER or United Russia party of power dominating the current Russian Parliament is deemed to follow up with Soviet Union values, undermine the current Constitution 1993, and as an instrument of oligarchs to act on their own interests.

On the other hand, it is safe to say most voters voted for the dominant party ER. To find out the validity of this hypothesis, a set of independent variables have been chosen against the DV of those who voted in the last national election.

Factor analysis will show us to what extent the items of a scale correlate to each other and so if they are reliable. On the following table I have run a factor analysis for the variable trust, to uncover the underlying factors that might be affecting its correlation with observable variables as political participation in H1, or Party voted in the last national election as in picture n.4, the simple error bar mean (as above) shows.

Communalities	Extraction	Rotated Component	
		1	2
Trust in country's parliament	0.744	0.824	0.256
Trust in the legal system	0.780	0.863	0.187
Trust in the police	0.727	0.840	0.149
Trust in politicians	0.793	0.808	0.376
Trust in political parties	0.771	0.788	0.387
Trust in the European Parliament	0.898	0.289	0.903
Trust in the United Nations	0.899	0.231	0.920
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			

Simple Component Analysis, Kaisers' index >.6 which to an excellent indicator. Effectively, there are two underlying factors behind Trust variables transformed onto Trust 11 and Trust2 respectively.



Another point of analysis that can be considered relevant on finding who voted for Mr Putin is the relationship between those who voted for the ER Party and Conservative values. It would be useful to run a correlation that will indicate if these items are correlated with factor analysis. Two components are found on the following table.

ER Party Conservative Values related, finds two different underlying components belonging to more dramatic behaviours. Conservative11, and Conservative2. Although, only one variable meet the Kaisers' criterion to an optimal index (.850 > .6).

Communalities	Component		
	Extraction	1	2
Government should reduce differences in income levels	0.425	0.545	-0.356
Ashamed if close family member gay or lesbian	0.562	0.712	0.234
Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce	0.850	0.071	0.919
Gay and lesbian couples right to adopt children	0.564	-0.749	0.050
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			

On the above table it can be observed Conservative factors do not meet the Kaiser’s criterion, which might not be effective in representing a true sample of the population, however, in consideration of the population sample N=2430 this assumption could be succeeded.

Considering the above indicators, a second hypothesis can be formulated:

**H2: Those that voted for Putin are likely to stand for conservative values, which is just reminiscent of Soviet Union communism.**

To find out the validity of this hypothesis, a set of variables will be considered. The **dependent variable** is the percentage of people that voted in the last national election, a **binary variable of 1=Yes, 2=No**, that will be set as a dummy variable to only 1=Yes answers, that accounts as shown earlier for the (51.7%) of the vote shares, from a population of N=2186. As well as independent variables: trust2 (trust in domestic politics), what it is considered a measure of those who voted for conservative values (Conservative11 and Conservative2), and ‘able to participate in politics (actrologa)’ seen in H1. All data is set to ‘nominal value.’

Applying Binary Logistics methods:

- (DV)Voted last National Elections:
- (IV) and creating a Coefficient Table

		Variables in the Equation					
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	Homophobics and believing government should adjust income inequality	-0.026	0.032	0.661	1	0.416	0.975
	Males should be given priority of jobs when crisis	-0.063	0.044	2.089	1	0.148	0.939
	trust in international institutions, indicator of democratic models.	0.008	0.013	0.334	1	0.563	1.008
	trust in domestic politics	0.038	0.006	43.299	1	0.000	1.039
	Able to take active role in political group	0.191	0.057	11.050	1	0.001	1.210
	Age of respondent, calculated	0.031	0.004	72.164	1	0.000	1.031
	Constant	-1.912	0.303	39.910	1	0.000	0.148

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Homophobics and believing government should adjust income inequality, Males should be given priority of jobs

Classification Table <sup>a</sup>					
Observed		Predicted			Percentage Correct
		vote=Yes	Yes		
Step 1	vote=Yes	.00	366	337	52.1
	Yes		228	672	74.6
Overall Percentage					64.7

a. The cut value is .500

From the above table it can be inferred that



- The new variable 'Homophobic and believing the government should adjust income inequality' is negatively related (-.026) with those who voted. The probability that when the new variable increases the number of votes decreases by 98% unit but as the odds ratio is  $< 1$ , the event is unlikely to occur.
- Same as the above is the inverse relation between those who voted and the new variable 'males should be given priority of jobs when economic crises happen in line with conservative values, the probability decreases by 94%.
- There is no statistical significance to say these, as above new variables, affect votes, perhaps are more related to minority of voters as p values are above .05.
- The other variables represent a proportional directional correlation, which means they move onto the same direction; however, these variables denote democratic values, are related to democratic participation at both domestic and international levels, those are the ones that voted. So those who voted conservative do have a really stronger sense of democracy than those who voted for any other party, as the ER party has the major stake of votes 51.7%.
- Thus, the variable Trust in International Institutions and global democratic models can be observed to be not significant  $p=.56 > .05$ . This supports the earlier political analysts' comments on Russia not following regular patterns of democratisation as a process. Russia as observed, has grown in isolation and it is averse to westernised democratic models and US hegemonic influence. Russia does not trust the international community to a considerable extent as shown by the p value.
- However, it can be observed the new variable Trust in Domestic Politics has a p value =  $.00 < .05$ , supporting again with world analysts' views that qualify Russia as a country that not only participate in politics but that has a statistically significant trust on their domestic politics than on the global tendencies of governance, therefore, the support to Putin's policies is great.
- Although, according to the table there are almost unperceivable homophobes in Russia, the most appropriate would be to associate the last mentioned new negative values with the Communist Party for which a dummy variable for this should be created. However, this party is not a majority in the Russian Parliament and the supporters of Putin are not concentrated in this group, which amounts to a bunch of shared values with the ER party.
- Age coefficients can show there is a tendency for older people to belong to the ER party and so, political participation increases with age.
- Therefore, in answering the question who voted for V. Putin the answer relies on those voters that are rather responsible for taking political participation, around 58% of the total population of voters, who are not necessarily homophobes or inclined to the soviet union's society, standardly democrats that do trust more in their domestic politics than on the international politics, or those that mainly confined democratic participation to fill in a ballot box. Thus, Putin's support lies among the democrats of Russia.
- The omnibus test of model coefficients shows a p value (.001) which means the model is statistically significant.
- The Nagelkerke's R square = .127, it can be said 12.1% change on the criterion variable can be accounted for by the predictor variables in the model.
- The classification table indicates the model has a chance of 64.7% at predicting the outcome.
- In the analysis of the allegation of the wrongly formulated constitution that does not make a strong and effective separation of power as excludes Mr. Putin from the Executive of parliament. It can be concluded as well that part of the support of Putin's policies is due to the lack of regulation on accountability. As, regardless of having a democratic structure, the Russian PM, or head of state, as in the past of Tsars, has privileges to take decision without parliamentary consensus, unleashing a proclivity for autocratic decision that can drive the

country of Russia onto important decisions without adequate consensus in parliament such as invading Ukraine.

- Specificity or the true negative, those who will not vote in the last general elections that might not have conservative values is 52.1%
- Sensitivity 74.6% or the true positive are those deemed to have conservative values that voted in the last Russian general elections.

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