

Explaining Putin's High Popularity Amidst Economic Turmoil

Research Question:

What explains the consistency of Putin's approval ratings during the current economic crisis?

Methodology

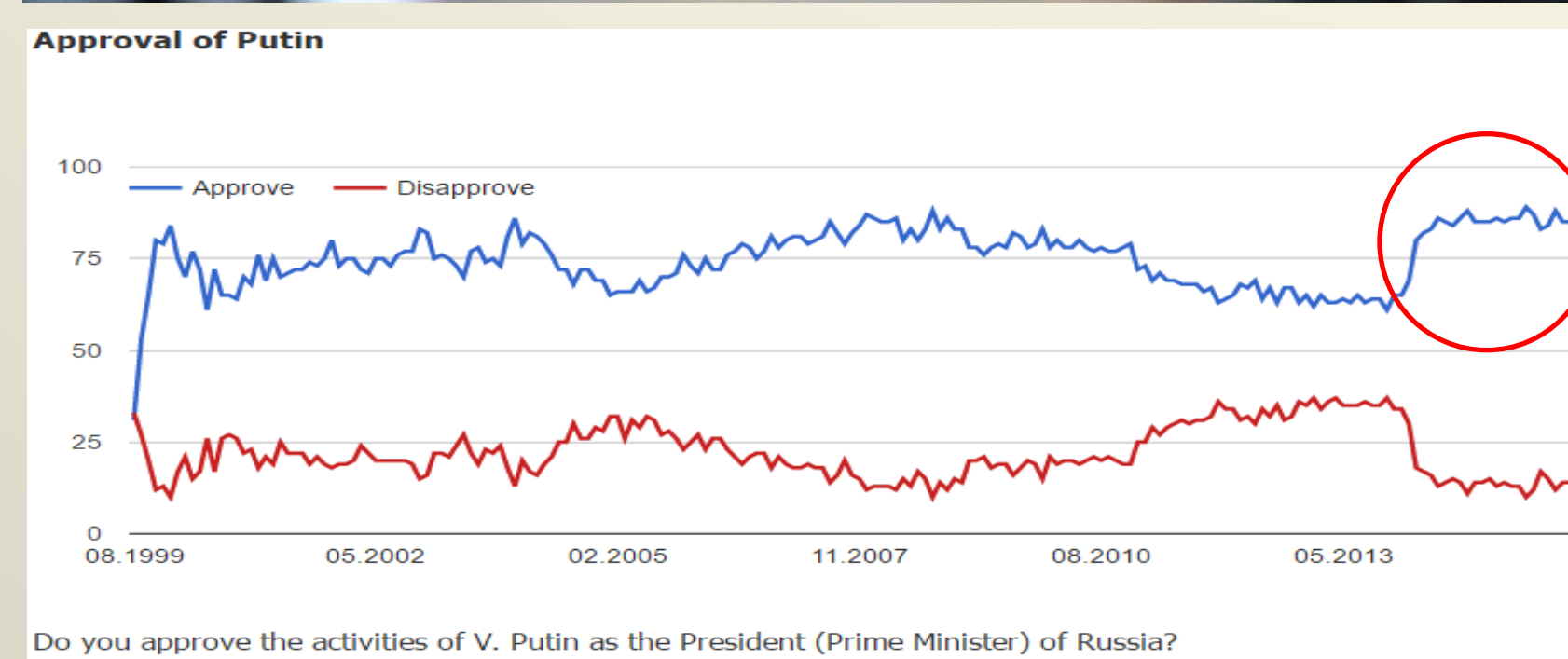
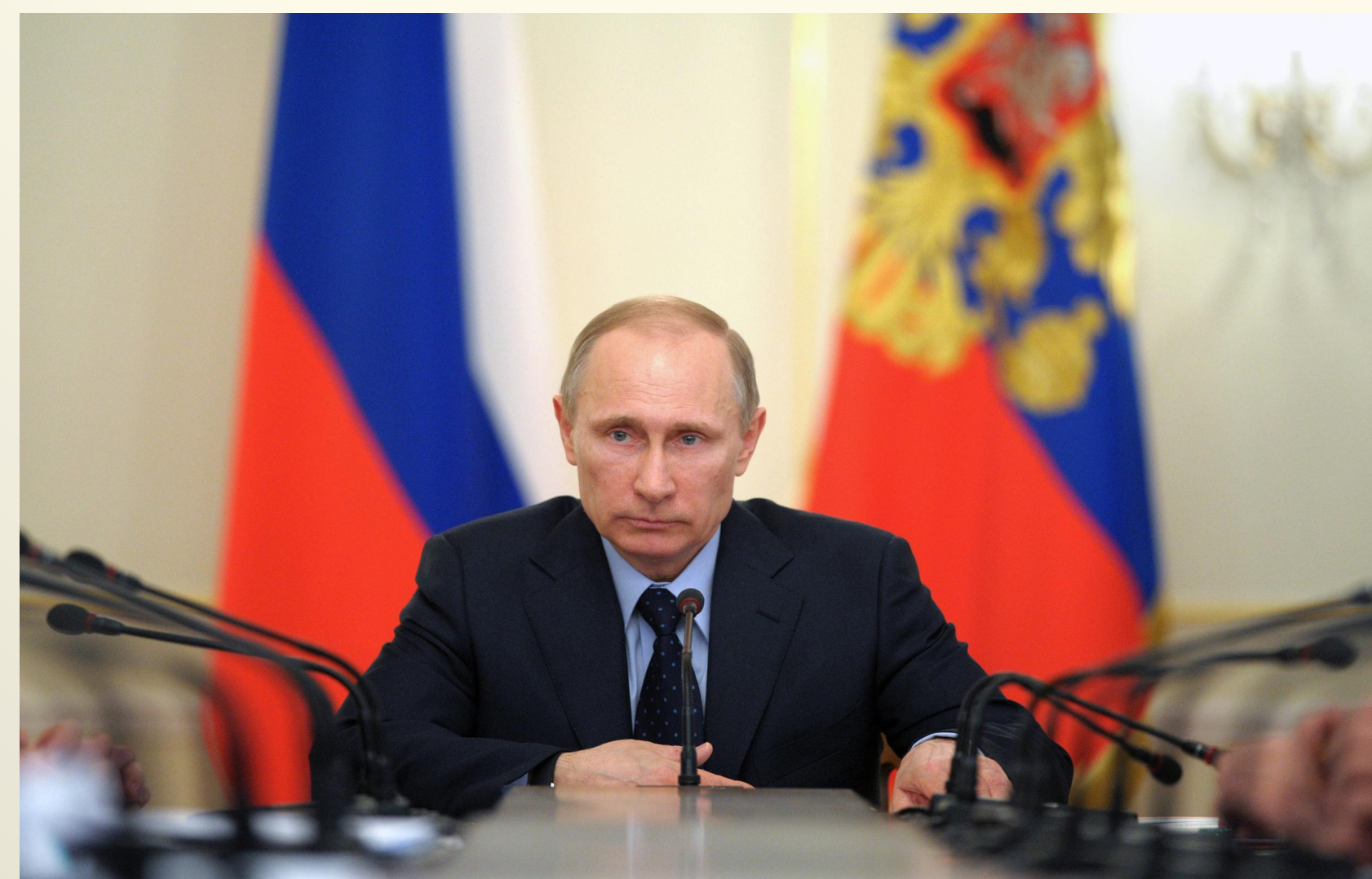
Small-n neo-positivist approach

Dependent Variable:

- Approval Ratings (%)

Independent Variables:

- Economic Conditions (good-moderate-bad)
- Presence of Cult of Personality (high-medium-low)
- Blame of External Forces (high-medium-low)



Background Information

- Early 2014: Putin's popularity around 69%
- Annexation of Crimea: March 18, 2014
- Sanctions imposed on Russia and dropping oil prices depress the economy
- Putin's popularity jumps to 80% and has remained there for over two years

Implications

- Shift from economy focus to ideology
- Blame of external forces as a tool to build up cult of personality
- Need for reevaluation of success of sanction policy

Findings

Economic Conditions: **Moderate**

- Objective indicators showed negative movements of economy
- Government confidence for future growth at a medium
- Despite setbacks of sanctions, investors voiced interest in being connected with Russian markets and business

Cult of Personality: **High**

- Lack of negative mention of Putin in the media
- Built up of leader charisma through mass media
- Crimea used to build up nationalism and the greatness of Russia, emphasizing Putin's role in this

Blame of External Forces: **Medium**

- Putin emphasizing the hope of rebuilding relations with the West
- Economic crisis cited to be in part the fault of the West
- Emphasis on Putin being the great protector of the Russian people