

Vladimir Putin's Leadership Trait Analysis in Russia's Responses towards China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative

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Keywords: OBOR, EEU, Vladimir Putin, Foreign Policy, Leadership Characteristic

Abstract: The One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative initiated by Xi Jinping in 2013 is not only interesting because of its great vision, but also because of the international responses towards it. Russia, as a country that has traces of fluctuating relations with China and then shows a positive response on the initiative. Russia's response then mainly associated with the interests of Russia in the 20th century to reappear as a great country. The Chinese idea was answered with an ambitious notion: the integration of the OBOR framework with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) framework. The characteristic of the case makes the Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, the focus of the individual who is important to be analyzed in both the cognitive and psychological aspects, in which Putin is the central actor of the formulation of Russia's foreign policy. The data sources from this research are Putin's prepared statements from press, conferences, and international events, and Putin's spontaneous comments in interviews with Putin on television, press, to direct lines. Through Leadership Traits Analysis method, this article analyzes Putin's leadership characteristics through seven main components: individual beliefs in controlling the situation, the need for power and influence, conceptual complexity, self-confidence, task orientation versus interpersonal, suspicion or individual distrust of the other party's motives, and the bias level in the group. From the research that has been done, found that in this case, Putin classified as a reactive leader, where he focuses on assessing the possibilities of what is in a situation and what factors can make that possibility possible, and accommodative leader, where he focuses on reconciling differences and consensus building, empowering others, and sharing accountability in the process.

1 INTRODUCTION

"The state has to be strong, but it has become weak" (Putin, 2000). The above statement declared by Vladimir Putin when he occupied the presidential bench in 2000. Russia's foreign policy has been driven by the orientation to be recognized as great power. As is known, the condition of Russian geography does not provide a form of natural fortress. As a result, to ensure the safety of the state while protecting its national interests, Russia needs a strong hard drive. Consequently, the regime of the Russian government is personalistic and its institutional strength weakens, in which political power is centralized to one individual (Kotkin, 2016). Guaranteed by Articles 80 and 85 in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the centrality of authority can be seen from the design of government under Romanov, Lenin, Stalin, to Putin. Putin himself is committed to ending the chaos and corruption that rife in Yeltsin era while restoring Russia's position as

great power (Hutcherson and Petersson, 2016). This led to a contract with the public, that the absolute authority of the president must be paid with security for the security and welfare of Russian society (Braithwaite in Baldoni, 2016).

The initiative of One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiated by the President of China in boosting connectivity and cooperation between Eurasian countries, especially China, the state Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) state then raises the opportunity to Putin utilize the project to fulfill its commitment. Russia itself has a Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) project, which is the economic union of countries dominated by Northern Eurasia, Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Cooperation between China and Russia has been dominated by energy aspect. Both Russia and China have a great influence in Central Asia. The presence of OBOR especially SREB brings the idea to integrate it with EEU project. Russia's positive response was shown through Putin's

visits to China, his speech at the OBOR forum, as well as in interviews he conducted with the media. The centralistic nature of Russia's foreign policy makes analysis of Putin's leadership characteristics important. This paper will review what leadership characteristics Putin has shown in its responses to the OBOR initiative.

2 INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: LEADERSHIP TRAIT ANALYSIS

An important point of approach in the level of individual analysis lies in the fact that foreign policy is not always taken in vacuum conditions, and always involves the psychological and emotional influences of individuals in the policy-making process. The psychological aspect, according to Herman (1980) comes from social and environmental factors. Nevertheless, one of the main criticisms came from Simon (1957 in Baldoni, 2016) that basically not all individual policy-makers are rational. More precisely, their rationality is bounded in the sense that there is a tendency for individuals to simplify the choices made due to the limited information processed, cognitive ability, and time. Greenstein (2004) also explains that human characteristics are strongly influenced by the existing political environment, both at the national and international levels. That is why Breuning (2007) says that the significance of individuals in shaping foreign policy patterns is not equivalent in every situation.

Breuning (2007) explains there are at least three approaches in analyzing how the influence of individual characters in policy making, namely Operational Code, Presidential Character, and Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA). In this paper, the influence of Putin's characteristics on Russian foreign policy analyzed by the author through the LTA approach. There are seven indicators that need to be analyzed: individual beliefs in controlling the situation, the need for power and influence, conceptual complexity, self-confidence, task orientation versus interpersonal, suspicion or individual distrust of the other party's motives, and lastly the bias level in the group (Breuning, 2007). Of the seven indicators can then be used to draw understanding of individual characters more macro, such as motivation in overcoming problems and in relational activities (Breuning, 2007). The LTA method is chosen because the author assess this approach can draw a comprehensive understanding of

the different types of leadership traits in various aspects of Putin's influence in policy-making or in acting on behalf of Russia.

In understanding Putin's character in these aspects, the author analyzes two types of data sources, namely prepared statements and spontaneous comments. The first type of data the author gets through Putin's official statement in other press, conferences and international meetings. Types of data sources of both author get from interviews to Putin by television, press, until the direct line. The difference between spontaneous and prepared statements is significant. Prepared statements are valid for analysis in assessing cognitive characteristics when policy-making is involved in making such questions. Hermann (2002) also revealed that spontaneous commentary, which emerged from interviews and abrupt questions, showed more valid results due to less control and less constraint. But in the case of the author, Putin is certainly not only involved, but may be a responsible actor full reply to each question, due to the centrality of authority possessed in Russia's foreign policy making. That is why the author collaborates both data derived from prepared statements and spontaneous statements in future analysis.

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 Belief in Controlling Situation

This character reviews how policy makers perceive their control over the situation. Putin has an expectation that participating countries can uphold the values of equality, openness, and consideration of their respective national interests and each other. That is, Putin understands exactly which program can provide benefits for Russia, as Putin said in a working visit in China on May 15, 2017

"Russia is not the country to fear anything. And there is no danger at all of China's actions being aimed at someday swallowing others." (Putin, 2017)

"We agree only to those proposals that benefit us, and if something benefits us and our economy, what is there to fear? It would be a shame not to make use of the opportunities this cooperation creates." (Putin, 2017).

Implicitly the statement above shows that Putin understands the possibility of a swallowing motif from China behind the OBOR initiative. But the assertion that Russia is not afraid and there is nothing to fear suggests that Putin believes it can control the direction of OBOR's development to keep it in line

with Russian interests, although it is not explicitly explained by what.

3.2 The Need for Power and Influence

Karakteristik kedua meninjau apakah suatu pemimpin memiliki perhatian dalam The second characteristic examines whether a leader has an interest in establishing, maintaining or restoring its influence on others. Putin's need for power or influence on others in which this case refers to Xi Jinping is demonstrated through Putin's dialogue efforts to collaborate on the idea of OBOR with an EEU project based on universal values and consideration of the developmental conditions of each of the countries involved.

"It is important that all of the existing integration structures in Eurasia and any initiatives be based on universal and generally recognised foundations. They must also take into account the specifics of the member states national development models and be developed openly and transparently." (Putin, 2017 dalam pertemuan meja bundar pemimpin Forum Internasional Belt and Road tanggal 15 Mei.)

While the need for power, the author refer to the political power is something natural for Putin, because to be able to control the situation, Putin need to survive a predominant leader. Putin's centrality of authority requires a less constraint situation from domestic. For that, Putin needs to get support from the Russian community to stay in his regime.

"I think that people are able to see that I am working hard, that I am striving openly, honestly and sincerely to achieve the results the results our country needs. I think that they are also able to see that not all goes well. Our people are smart and sharp-sighted." (Putin, 2016).

In an interview from Nippon TV and the Yomiuri Newspaper on December 23, 2016 over Putin's expectations in the 2018 election, Putin responded with emphasis that Putin knew what Russia needed, and Putin worked hard for it. Putin himself confirmed it will advance in the 2018 general election on December 6, 2017 (Pinchuk and Osborn, 2017).

3.3 Conceptual Complexity

This character looks at the way individuals describe or discuss a person, a place, a policy, and an idea. Putin demonstrated consistency in describing the initiative both in revelations prepared for high-level meetings and in media interviews with both positive and optimistic verbal gestures. An example is an interview from Cai Mingzhao, Xinhua news agency,

June 23, 2016, Putin said that Xi Jinping's initiative in the OBOR project is believed to be something appropriate, interesting and also promising.

"...President Xi Jinping has launched an initiative to revitalize the very idea of the Great Silk Road. We believe it is a very timely, interesting and promising initiative aimed at increasing cooperation with all countries of the world, but primarily with neighbours, because wherever the road goes, it first runs through neighbouring territories." (Putin, 2016). In answering media questions at the APEC Economic Leaders' meeting on November 21, 2016, Putin also brought the idea of a possibility with a clear determination and vision of its implications for the future of APEC and Eurasia.

"...we are discussing the possibility of aligning the EAEU and China's Silk Road Economic Belt initiative based on the ideas of the Chinese leadership and President Xi Jinping. This could be the first step" (Putin, 2016).

"A second step could be the development of cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and other Asian associations. By acting in this manner, we can create a broad Eurasian cooperation association." (Putin, 2016).

"If we opt for this path, our organisation will be comparable to what is being created within the framework or in the zone of Pacific partnership." (Putin, 2016).

"However, I believe that if we want to effectively influence global economic processes there should be no closed associations. If such associations are created, they will not boost the development of international trade or the global economy as a whole."

Putin's low complexity gap and deterministic expectations have been basically built by Putin since the first meeting of the Supreme Economic Citalisation Council (SEEC) on May 8, 2015 since the EEU began, saying that the integration arrangements between the Eurasian economy and OBOR are important to conserve. The co-operation between China and EEU for Putin will increase investment flows, create jobs, and make Eurasian transportation more effective.

"...I think that in the future, we should also consider the possibility of a harmonious alignment of the Eurasian economic integration process and, as I already said, the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt initiative." (Putin, 2015).

"I am sure that close cooperation with Chinese partners will facilitate the flow of investments into Eurasian Economic Union, help create new jobs,

and allow us to develop the Eurasian transport potential more effectively.” (Putin, 2015).

“I am confident that these large-scale projects will result in intensive trade, modern production and jobs and the rapid development of Russian and Chinese regions.” (Putin, 2017).

“I have already mentioned Russia’s proposal to create an Asian Energy Ring. What could be bad about China, South Korea, by the way, and Japan all working together on a single major project? There is no doubt that this would benefit all these countries from both an economic and a political point of view.” (Putin, 2017).

In a journalist's direct line on July 15, 2017, Putin again emphasized his expectation that OBOR will not stop at the koporasi level within Eurasia, but also integrate it with the EEU framework.

“...I expect it to usher in a new stage of cooperation in Eurasia, and not only there. The main thing for us to do is to join our efforts within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union and China’s Silk Road initiative. Can this be done or not? I am confident it can...” (Putin, 2017)

“Greater Eurasia is not an abstract geopolitical arrangement, but, without exaggeration, a truly civilization-wide project looking toward the future.” (Putin, 2017 in International Belt and Road Forum, 14 May).

Putin's article entitled "The 25th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Danang: The Together Towards Prosperity and Harmonious Development" on November 8, 2018 above then confirms the importance of OBOR and EEU collaboration through the Greater Eurasian Partnership idea. GEP integrates the development of infrastructure, including transport, telecommunications, and energy. Russia considers that the future of Eurasian cooperation is not just limited to the relationship between the state and the economy, but also on the political aspects, including peace, stability, and well-being of Eurasia.

3.4 Self Confidence

This character looks at the self-importance of an individual in a situation. China itself is an economic giant that shows an ambitious vision through OBOR. In a question posed by journalists to Putin in Putin's working visit in China on May 15, 2017 concerning whether or not there was any concern about Russia's domination of China, Putin said Russia was not at all worried about the possibility of Chinese domination. During this time, Putin said that the relations between China and Russia were built by the considers of their respective national interests.

“Russia is not the country to fear anything. And there is no danger at all of China’s actions being aimed at someday swallowing others.”

“We agree only to those proposals that benefit us, and if something benefits us and our economy, what is there to fear? It would be a shame not to make use of the opportunities this cooperation creates.” (Putin, 2017).

Departing from these beliefs, Putin believes that OBOR will bring benefits to both Russia and China. The act of not taking a chance, even with full understanding of the possible negative possibilities, is considered a shame. Assessment of Putin's confidence in its policy towards OBOR can also be reviewed in the statement summarized in conceptual complexity, where the delivery of a statement uses words like i believe, no doubt, what could be bad, and i am confident. The author did not find any sentence like might, maybe, hope. probably, and the like. This demonstrates Putin's high level of confidence in his judgment behind OBOR's foreign policy process.

3.5 Task Orientation vs Interpersonal

This characteristic focuses the individual's focus on the policy in comparison to the individual's focus on interpersonal relationships in cooperation. In short, leaders with task characteristics indicate the leader's focus in policy-oriented achievement of specific objectives. While the pemimpin with interpersonal orientation focuses on achieving satisfaction from team members.

“Establishing closer ties with the People’s Republic of China, our trusted friends, is Russia’s unconditional foreign policy priority” (Putin, 2014 dalam wawancara dengan Media Tiongkok tanggal 19 Mei.)

“It is important that all of the existing integration structures in Eurasia and any initiatives be based on universal and generally recognised foundations. They must also take into account the specifics of the member states national development models and be developed openly and transparently.” (Putin, 2017 in leaders roundtable meeting of International Belt and Road Forum, 15 May.)

“For Russia, the development of our Far East is a national priority for the 21st century.” (Putin, 2017 in his article “25th APEC Economic Leaders “Together Towards Prosperity and Harmonious Development”).

Basically, the OBOR project itself has several constraints, one of which is the uncertainty in the investment and the required material. In Putin's working visit in China on May 15, 2017, Putin

stressed that the collaboration between Russia and China would not only benefit the two countries, but also implicate global competition.

"...I do not have any doubt that we will work together and that this work will yield benefits for both the Chinese and Russian peoples. But not just us two, it will also impact global competitiveness." (Putin, 2017).

"The initiative of the Chinese leader deserves the closest attention and will be supported by Russia in every possible way." (Putin, 2017 in press statement regarding Russia-China dialogue, 4 July).

In Russian responses to OBOR above, it is understood that Putin demonstrates an interpersonal orientation, with bilateral and Chinese bilateral well-being emphases, the development of Asia and Eurasia, and the importance of inter-state collaboration to succeed OBOR's initiative by prioritizing the aspect of negotiation and diplomacy as base relationship. In addition, there is consistency between Putin's interpersonal orientations both in prepared statements, personalized articles, and in interviews with foreign media. In this case, it also shows that Putin is a leader of respect towards contrain, demonstrating readiness to support in any way to China's initiative.

3.6 Level of Personal Distrust

These characters review the tendency of individuals to suspect or doubt the motives of others. So far, the relations between Putin and China have been built on the value of equality, trust, openness, and consideration of their respective national interests as well as each other. The author did not find any idea from Putin that portrayed any doubt about Chinese motives and initiatives, either explicitly or implicitly. Putin's approach is more constructive by engaging in dialogue with Xi Jinping in developing the OBOR project. Putin's approach is m

In answering the question of Russia's fear of possible Chinese ambitions to dominate, Putin also replied that Russia is not afraid of anything, even including the possibility of Chinese motives in dominating other countries through OBOR. The foundation of trust between Putin and Xi Jinping is framed by a second agreement expressed by Xi Jinping in conferring the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle on 4 July 2017, namely:

"...Mr Putin and I fully agree that Chinese-Russian relations must remain free of external influence despite any changes on the international stage."

This is in line with a message Putin delivered at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on May 23, 2014:

"...Think about the benefits and possible dividends you would derive from working in Russia. Don't let the pressure and blackmailing prevent you from going your way, and you will succeed. And we will help you with that."

The above message is a form of process advice, whereby an individual internalizes the value owned to the other as a form of advice in addressing the situation (Andersen and Handelsman, 2010). From Putin's suggestion through the above statement it can be understood that that's what Putin values: high determination in achieving a goal without being affected by outside pressure or intimidation from blackmail. This is evidenced through Putin's statement in an interview conducted with the TASS news agency on September 1, 2015.

"I would not agree that the illegitimate restrictions imposed by certain Western countries against Russia have a negative impact on Russian-Chinese economic cooperation. On the contrary, this encourages our domestic business to develop stable business ties with China." (Putin, 2015).

Putin also showed the same attitude in the direct line with Channel One, Rossiya 1, Rossiya 24, Mayak, Vesti FM, and Radio Rossii on June 15, 2017. *"They (perpanjangan sangsi oleh negara Uni Eropa) have had an impact. Has this been fundamental in nature? I do not think so."* (Putin, 2017)

"Strange though it might sound, however, there have been advantages too. What are they? For a start, we were forced to concentrate our intelligence, talent and resources on key areas and not simply rely on oil and gas revenue. What result has this brought? We have seen real production growth in important and complex economic sectors." (Putin, 2017).

Putin confidently assumes that the economic sanctions afforded by Western and European countries to Russia are illegitimate and will not affect their projects or bilateral relations with China over the OBOR project. Although there is a perceived impact, but the restrictions are precisely Putin became an encouragement to constantly develop business ties with China. It also shows that Putin is a challenges to constraint leader character, in which case the constraint in this case refers to the external constraint.

3.7 Bias Level in Group

This character examines the significance of an individual group in influencing the individual's perception of the world. Trenin (2015 in Baldoni,

2016) explains that Putin is the only actor behind Russia's foreign policy and security policy. Trenin said that Putin's decisions were based on what he believed to be Russia's national interest and that his philosophical interpretations would be true and false. In essence, Russia's foreign policy orientation is not always harmonious when viewed in the inner circle level. In the period of Medvedev's presidency where Putin became Prime Minister, there was a contradiction of interest. Medvedev is oriented to using political and economic measures such as liberalizing the political system and privatization, to curb the power of powerholders as well as to expand Medvedev's space to maneuver. Another implication is that Medvedev's coalition has strengthened and opposition coalitions such as Gazprom have weakened (Kaczmarek, 2014).

When Putin took office in 2012, Putin reshuffled this design and disempowered power holders such as Kudrin, Serdyukov, Surkov, and Medvedev was no exception. This movement then gives Putin full authority and also negates the significance of the role of inner circle, although the relationship between the two is always maintained (Kaczmarek, 2014). In Russia's response to the Chinese initiative, there is no indication of a group bias in the president's successful presidential documents. Kaczmarek (2014) states, that Putin's agenda to re-establish good relations with China post 9/11 did not experience significant domestic opposition. In contrast, OBOR is seen as a strategic opportunity for Russia to improve the welfare of Eurasia.

4 ANALYSIS RESULT

Table 1 : Character Analysis of Leadership: Putin in Case Response to OBOR.

Attitude towards constrain	Belief in one's ability to control events	High
	Need for power and influence	High
Openness to new information	Conceptual Complexity	High
	Self Confidence	High
Motivation	Task vs interpersonal	Interpersonal
	Distrust of others	Low
	Ingroup Bias	Low

Due to the limited amount of primary data collected in the analysis, the author use high to low parameters to describe the level of individual characteristics. From the analysis that has been done, it can be concluded that Putin has high confidence in his ability to control the situation. This is in line with the confidence they have, seen in the choice of words used are dominated by verbal who have a gesture of confidence and optimism. In the aspect of the need for strength and influence, Putin also pointed to a high need for strength. The strength of the author here refers to the political authority, because as it is known to be able to ensure control over the OBOR project and its collaboration with the EEU, Putin needs to return to being a predominant leader of Russia. In conceptual complexity, Putin demonstrates a rather good way of processing information in the presence of elaborative and visionary schemes in the answers and statements. Motivational orientation from Putin is interpersonal, through which answers and statements are given, there is much emphasis on common interests, welfare and regional development, and bilateral collaboration. From what was said, Putin showed no suspicion of any other party, which in the OBOR study refers to China in general and Xi Jinping in particular. Due to the centrality and harmonization of orientation between Putin and the government, there is not a bias that significantly affects how Putin is overseas.

Hermann (2005) explains that the leader's belief in controlling the situation indicates that they will tend to challenge constraints according to the arrangements they find most appropriate. Levels of conceptual complexity and self-confidence illustrate how their openness to information. Assessment of the group's bias level, distrust, and task orientation or interpersonal leaders then concludes what motivates leaders in policy. Departing from the approach, the results obtained are listed in table 2 below.

Table 2 : Putin's Leadership Style is related to Responsiveness, Disclosure to Information, and Motivation from Hermann's (2002) model.

Responsiveness to Constrains	Openness to Information	Problem Focus Motivation	Relationship Focus Motivation
Respect to Constraints	Open to Information	Reactive	Accommodative

An open character to information is determined through an assessment of the level of contextual complexity and level of confidence (Hermann, 2002). Departing from Putin's character who respects the constraint and is open to information shows that Putin is a reactive leader type that focuses on assessing the possibilities of what is in a situation and what factors can make that possibility possible. In OBOR, it is proved through how Putin through the OBOR collaboration idea with the EEU through the integration of railway and highway. In relational terms, Putin is an accommodative type of leader, in the sense that Putin focuses on reconciling differences and consensus building, empowering others, and sharing accountability in the process. In the case of OBOR, it is proved how Putin emphasized the use of diplomacy in problem resolution, bilateral visits, collective dialogue both in the OBOR and EEU forums, as well as aspects of pragmatism that prioritize the consideration of their respective national interests and each other, not cultural differences between the two.

5 CONCLUSION

It is understood that Putin in Russia's response to the OBOR initiative shows a leadership style that can at least be viewed in two ways: problem focus motivation and relationship focus motivation. In the first instance, Putin belongs to a reactive leader, while in the second side Putin is an accommodative leader. This conclusion appears based on an analysis of seven leadership traits used by Hermann. As pointed out in the introduction, the LTA approach is not intended to predict what policies individuals will take, but what leadership traits can be drawn from individual cognitive and psychological expressions. From the characteristics obtained then can help provide an understanding of how the profile of Putin as a leader. Understanding of leadership profiles is important to review and test, because the deeper the scope of individual analysis time is done, the relevance of the profile can also be proven. Thus, departing from the analysis that has been done then we can know when and how far later Putin, using the term Hermann, modulate his behavior in foreign policy related characteristics owned leadership, or assumed against it.

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