

Do the elections and opinion polling help to assess the level of popular support for the policies of Russian President Vladimir Putin, such as invasion in Ukraine? This paper argues that Russia under Putin represents an instance of plebiscitary democracy, a regime with a strong leader relying on popular legitimacy derived from the passive and disenchanting masses. In such a regime, both elections and polling function according to the principle of acclamation, validating the ready-made decisions rather than revealing the public choice. Historically plebiscitary democracies tend to engage in unprovoked and suicidal wars precipitating their demise. However, the temptations of plebiscitary design for contemporary liberal democracies should not be underestimated.