Department of Linguistics
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
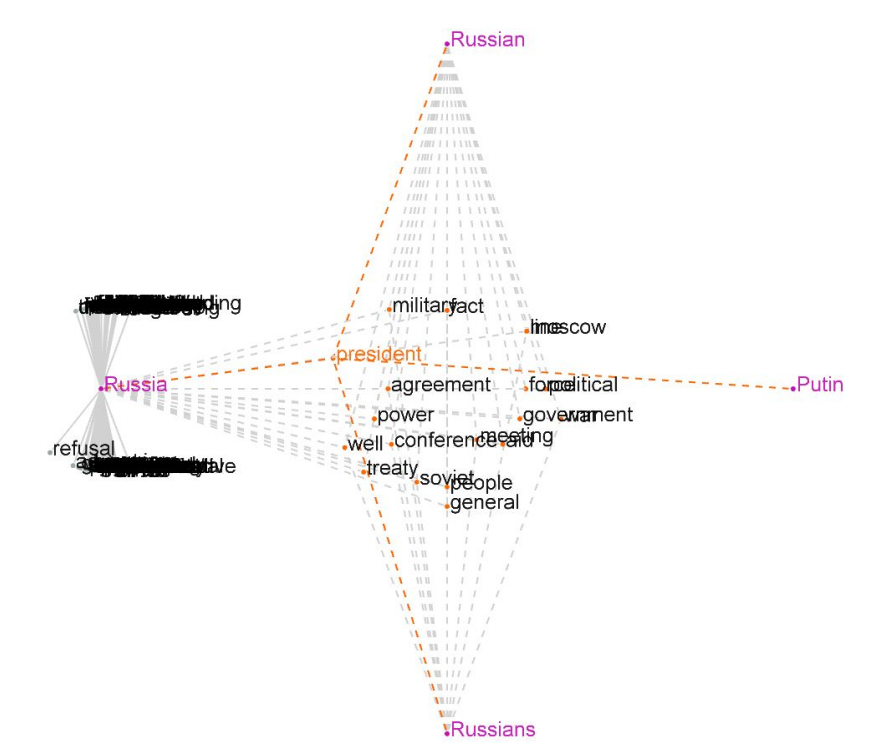**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

Russia is not Putin:
Collocational analyses of *Russia, Russian(s)*, and *Putin* in US Mass Media

Ulbossyn Parmanova

Introduction

❖ In the context of the ongoing war, as well as historical events linked to Russia-USA relations, the words *Russia, Russians*, and *Putin* have gained stereotypical interpretations and uncertain meanings.

❖ Multiple studies reveal a predominantly **negative representation** of Russia in Western mass media having "the image of the enemy," (Repina et al. 2018, p. 562).

❖ The metaphorical model of Russia as "enemy" in American press is based upon "the negative image of the Russian leader, the negative characteristics of Russia, [and] the negative characterization of relations between Russia and the United States," (Ilyushkina & Chudinov, 2019, p. 28).

❖ Research suggests an increase in negative perception of Russia in articles in the New York Times following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Smirnova et al., 2017).

Metric

❖ **The association measure:**
➢ Log-Likelihood (LL)
  ● LL is a combined metric that measures both frequency and content-related words (Baker 2006, p. 102).
  ● LL calculates both function and content words in a span;
  ● LL highlights "two main dimensions: frequency and exclusivity of the collocational relationship," (Brezina, 2018, pp. 71-74).

❖ **Span:**
➢ **a five-word window** to the left and right of a search term to get mostly the nouns/noun-like words

❖ **Tool:**
➢ PolmineR package (Blaette, 2020) in RStudio.

Quantitative Results

```
> as.data.table(russia_coha_ll_dt)[word=="Putin"]
    word word_id count_partition count_coi count_ref    exp_coi    exp_ref       ll rank_ll
1: Putin 1978782      35         1     34 0.04188541 34.95811 4.455927    1706
> as.data.table(russia_coha_ll_dt)[word=="Russians"]
    word word_id count_partition count_coi count_ref   exp_coi  exp_ref       ll rank_ll
1: Russians  7636    2065         9   2056 2.471239 2062.529 10.22907     488
> as.data.table(russia_coha_ll_dt)[word=="Russian"]
    word word_id count_partition count_coi count_ref   exp_coi  exp_ref       ll rank_ll
1: Russian 11242    3673        56   3617 4.395575 3668.604 182.5841      18
```


'Russians' in COHA_NEWS by year

'Putin' in COHA_NEWS by year

218 | Ukraine . Last year ,   Putin   said of penetrating through any
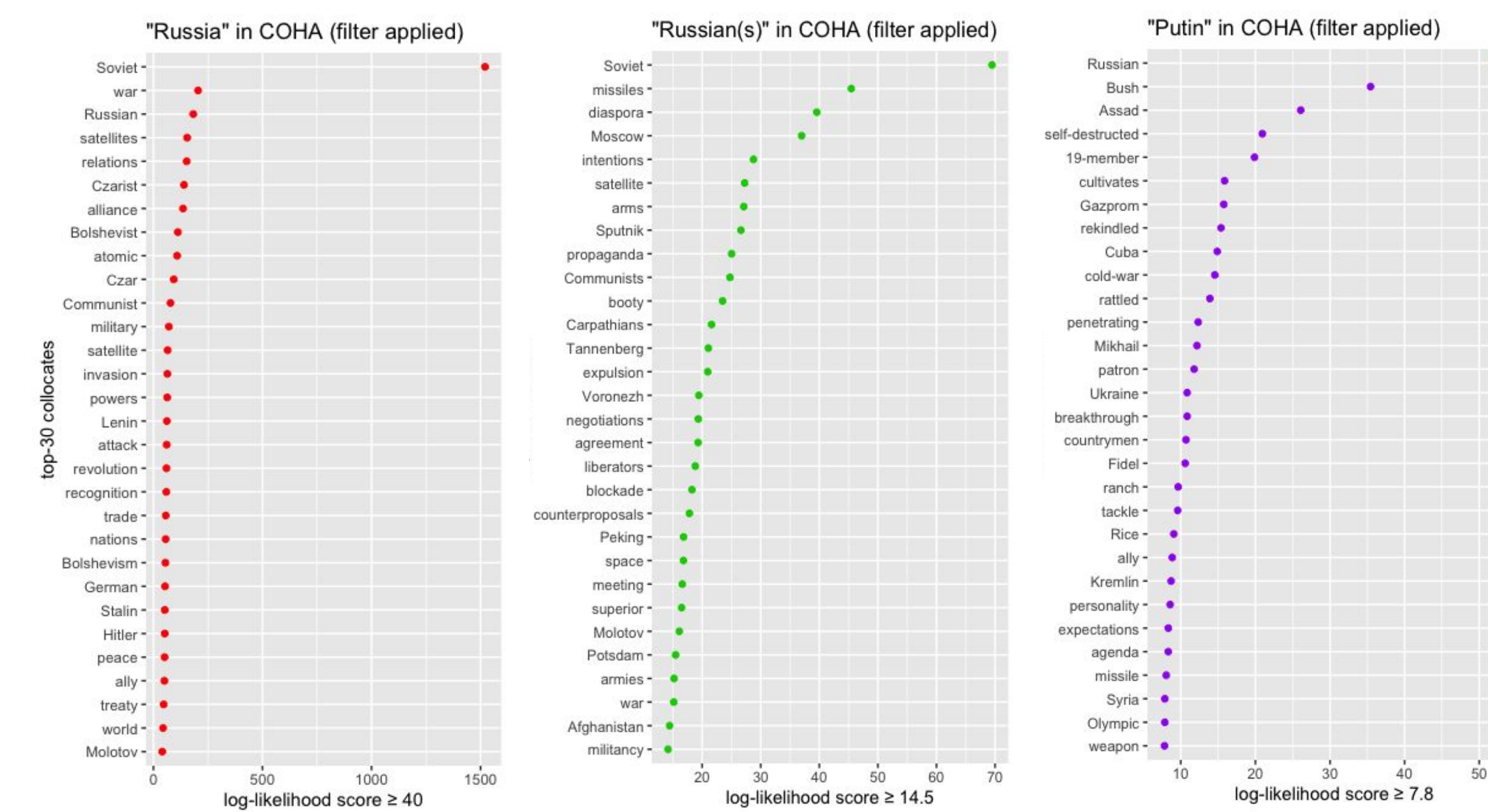
Research Questions

❖ Barwise & Perry (1983) claim that **names** have **no** referential properties, but associated properties (p. 167).

❖ Putin's proponents state "Putin is Russia. No Putin, No Russia" (Volodin, 2014).
  ● Are *Russia, Russian(s)*, and *Putin* negatively represented in the US press before 2010?
  ● Are *Russia, Russian(s)*, and *Putin* closely associated with each other? If *yes*, how strong?
  ● Who is Putin representative of?

Methods

❖ Association measures and keyword analyses of corpus data;

❖ Analysis of the **connotative meanings** of *Russia, Russian(s)*, and *Putin*, looking at their representation in the US press between 1860-2010.
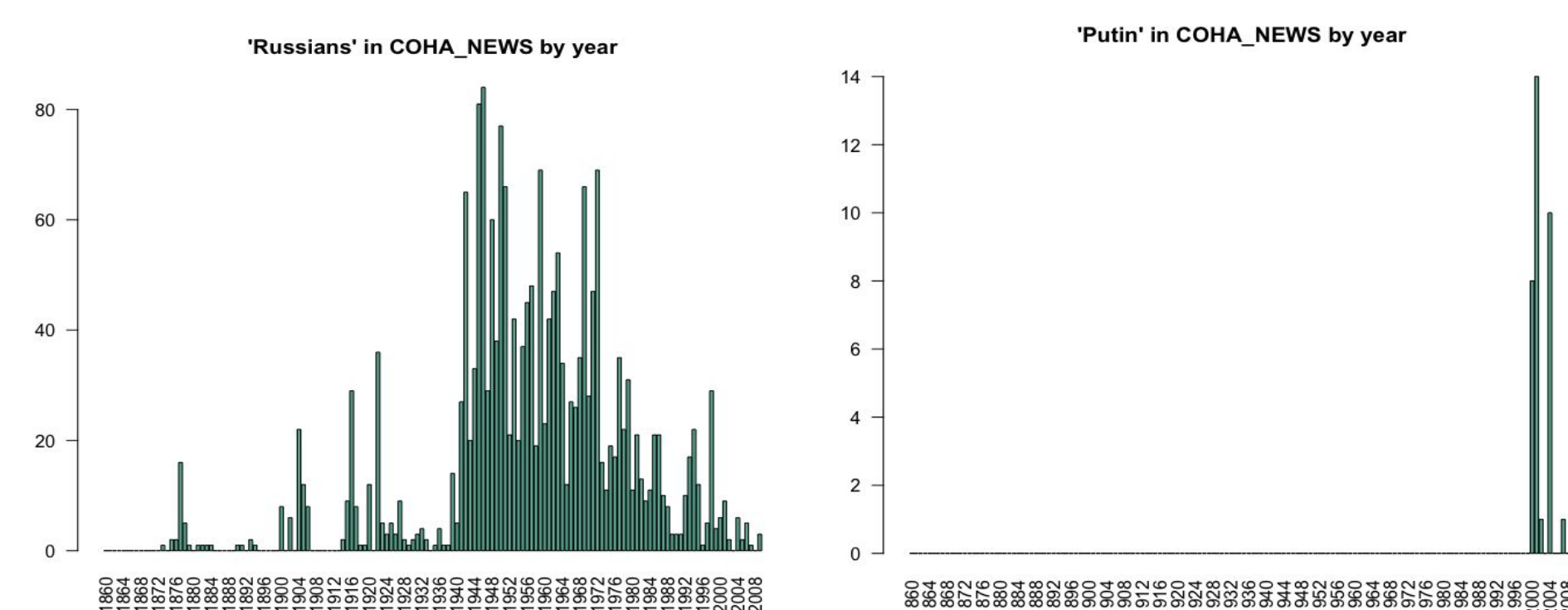
Descriptive Results

❖ The closest collocates of *Russia, Russian(s)*, and *Putin* were mainly related to wartime words

❖ The word **Soviet** appeared as the closest associate of *Russia*

❖ The attestation of *Putin* in `russia_coha` corpus ranked low (LL =4.4)

❖ Dispersion of the word *Russia* in the press texts became more prominent in the 1990s.

"Russia" in COHA (filter applied) — log-likelihood score ≥ 40

"Russian(s)" in COHA (filter applied) — log-likelihood score ≥ 14.5

"Putin" in COHA (filter applied) — log-likelihood score ≥ 7.8

Discussion & Conclusion

❖ Querying COHA for both Russia and Russian(s) retrieved collocates mainly related to the lexicosemantic group **WAR**. Although Russia, Russian(s), and Putin are nodes within a network of related lexical items, there was no strong relationship found between the words *Putin* and *Russia*.

Limitations

❖ Results from corpus-based analyses are limited and biased by the corpora considered. s_attributes: `news, fiction, non-fiction, magazines`.

❖ The results presented here are biased in that they are derived from news text of American English.

❖ The Log Likelihood metric assigns high scores to less frequent collocates (Evert, 2007).

Corpora

❖ **Data:**
➢ Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)
  ● the newspaper subcorpus
  ● 43,507,224 words, material between 1861-2007

➢ The Newspaper collection comprises *the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, USA Today, Washington Post, Associated Press, San Francisco Chronicle, CSMonitor*, etc.

➢ Subdivision of the NEWS corpus:
  ● `russia_coha`
  ● `russian(s)_coha`
  ● `putin_coha`

Statistical Analysis

```
> cohanews <- partition("COHA", text_genre = "news", regex=TRUE)
... get encoding: latin1
... get cpos and strucs
> size(cohanews)
[1] 43507224
```

❖ Query for Russia > '[word="Russia"%c & pos="np1|nn1|nnl1"]'; number of hits = 5206

❖ Query for Russian(s) > '[word="Russians?"%c]'; number of hits = 2075

❖ Query for Putin > '[word="Putin"%c & pos="np1|nn1"]'; number of hits = 31

```
> head(rus_country_coha_ll, 15)
     word word_id count_partition count_coi count_ref    exp_coi      exp_ref        ll rank_ll
1:  Soviet  644885     13260        336    12924 12.636339 13247.364 1568.2621       1
2:   China    9688      6393        141     6252  6.092316  6386.908  619.4628       2
3:      's     705    217255        640   216615 207.036793 217047.963  584.0744      3
4: Britain     555      8781        134     8647  8.368001  8772.632  494.2032       4
5: Germany   10769     10381        128    10253  9.892748 10371.107  428.8913       5
6:  France    6956      8459        112     8347  8.061146  8450.939  383.1103       6
7:  States       0     39221        169    39052 37.376309 39183.624  247.6096       7
8:     and       3    904844       1348   903496 862.286255 903981.714  239.2199      8
9:    with     179     21884        464    21420 208.549152 218633.451  233.1144      9
10:     in      85    715477       1092   714385 681.825798 714795.174  212.6775     10
11:  United     53      43303        165    43138 41.266320 43261.734  210.6039     11
12:  Poland   21466      1413         41     1372  1.346542  1411.653  201.9702     12
13:  Russia   12664      5182         62     5120  4.938274  5177.062  200.3212     13
14:     war     415     22752        110    22642 21.681900 22730.318  181.1765     14
15:      to      15   1022739       1409  1021330 974.636271 1021764.364  174.7727     15
```

Acknowledgment

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