Political marketing of activism in Russia: Causes, peculiarities and results

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Abstract: Civil and political activism is not a monolithic, “one-size-fits-all” phenomenon. It is rather viewed as nationally unique, segmented political attempts to engage different groups of citizens into a civil movement. The paper explores the specifics and effectiveness of some types of Russian civil and political activism—female, youth, unofficial, religious. Based on a political marketing communications framework, the author argues that paradoxical specifics of civil and political activism in Russia tend to avoid political slogans, demands as well as content, adhering to the principle of neutrality which is the main idea in the contemporary Russian domestic policy. Despite the pronounced demand for activism and changes, people are unready to fight and revolt. Russians are not under a universal crisis of values and goals, which usually spurs negative political activism. Various analytical surveys, reports and official documents compiled by Russian official agencies and think-tanks in 2010–2018, support the author’s arguments.

Subjects: International Politics; International Relations; Political Behavior and Participation

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

For Russian citizens, it is not easy to make political protests and to participate in the political life of the country. In the article, those types of political activity of Russians are considered that the authorities cannot avoid and which are used by the opposition forces for their own purposes: young people, believers, middle-class representatives. It was found that, despite the fact that the specifics of the Russians’ public demonstration of their discontent with power is the fear of being accused, the public’s demand for political activity is constantly growing. However, this does not lead to the formation of revolutionary mood in Russia due to the attitude of the Russians to their country. The article describes in detail special features, the understanding of which will help to clarify the nature of the Russian national character, to adapt and improve the work of Western governmental and non-governmental organizations with Russian civil society and the authorities.
Keywords: political campaigns; civil and political activism; mobilization; Russia; relative deprivation theory (Davies’ J-curve); spiral of silence; “overwhelming majority” phenomenon

1. Introduction

The article launches the research in the civil and political activism in Russia and its impacts on the ongoing developments; its traits are defined, among others, by Russian society ethnos—people’s psyche and mental outlook as projected on the life-world and political system of the society. The article tackles the scientific challenges at three levels—theoretical, methodological, and empirical.

Adequate theoretical models are to be identified, which can elucidate the extent of activism influence on the political market; to specify typical features of its “product” promotion in the market of political services; to expose the roots of success stories and failures of Russian civil and political activism; to reveal the specifics and a potential window for strategic efforts to optimize it. Methodologically the aim is to find out an optimal approach to the subject matter. Given that, thorough detalization and operationalization of a tentative methodological scheme as a combination of “a practical pivot” in the modern social and humanitarian studies with the interdisciplinary ideas, will be elaborated in upcoming research. At the empirical level, the goal was to collect, process, consider, and select the illustrative material. It is reached, the “skeleton” of overall types of Russian civil and political activism formed, however without its rigorous classification, as the classification demands broader empirical studies, no less than 100 objects must be analyzed in detail.

Activists being a public interest group which wishes to offer its political services for the citizens, specify its “product” in the political market, define its characteristics against other competing products (candidates)

Our hypothesis is that despite the objective difficulties and the obstacles that are subjectively defined, Russian activism can affect the federal agenda, but does not lead to revolutionary actions. To confirm or disprove this hypothesis the article intends to find an answer the question, to what extent Russian political activism in the space of political marketing practically shapes the strategy of big deeds to be implemented at the federal level which aims either at the correction of the political course of the state or at the articulation of relevant social problems? How successful is it in stating the strategic parameters of smaller-scale stories to be implemented at municipal and rural levels aiming at the preservation of local communities’ unity? Do historically formed, handed down from generation to generation basic characteristics of Russian mentality—patriarchy, masculinity, militarity, and conservatism (Rachmaninova, 2012)—optimize or complicate the activity of the subjects of political actions?

To what extent do they impact the capacity of the subjects to take credit for the achieved goals and objectives? The peculiarity of the indicated problem lies in the search of an answer to the question if Russian civil and political activism not only wishes but does possess the will to implement its projects in practice. To what extent do the activists recognize themselves as independent actors of political/civil choice and action? In Russian political tradition and political culture, power has always been an initiator, author, and executor of a variety of political and social transformations and reforms. The population has perceived the status quo as a norm (Yasin, 2005)

In case of failed transformations, the civilian majority has, all the same, kept relying on the initiatives of power. Has the situation changed to-day? Has the paternalism vanished from the common perception? Has the inability of the society to assess the situation adequately died away; has the society and its political forces acquired the ability to rise above the moment, to self-determine and realize its own ideas skilfully interacting with other subjects? If this “disease of subjectlessness” has not been overcome yet, the process of statehood destruction which resulted...
in the collapse of the USSR can undermine Russia as well. On the other hand, the matter is if the society being tired of various problems and massively depoliticized, can offer its own alternative to the current course, organize “the protest movement”, turn it into a mighty social force capable to energetically impact the evolution and offer its own project of a new political process in the country.

As the first step, theoretical concepts such as activism—civil and political—are defined in the article, as well as political marketing. The research methodology is proposed. The roots of civil and political activism origin in Russia are identified; certain cases of empirical material are analyzed—youth, informal, civil, religious Russian activism. The key question of the research is stated in the article: if any chance exists for the emergence of the prerequisites of a revolutionary situation in Russia as a result of the functioning of principles of the relative derivation theory and the role of civil and political activists in it. The final sections of the article present the research results as well as the answer to the key question, and define the possibilities for future scientific study.

2. Political marketing
Political marketing is a sum of political technologies aimed at gaining mass support from the population to reach certain political goals. A successful political marketing is competent, adequate, and well-targeted exposure and concentration of different social, political, and national groups or individuals on the issues of their concern. In 1999, Newman defined political marketing as “the application of marketing principles and procedures in political campaigns by various individuals and organizations.” It means that the political marketing fundamentally is the political market whose subjects are political parties, politicians, voters—the institutions of production and distribution of political goods and services, the interest groups. As the political landscape gets more complicated, the number and specifics of the mentioned objects transform alongside. However, besides the objects per se, the political marketing implies as necessary the following: what is proposed, who is the target audience, and what is wanted in return. Conjointly it is expressed in the known marketing mark—4Ps (price, place, product, and promotion). Though this mark cannot be directly borrowed from the business without being adjusted to the peculiarities of the notion and reality of modern politics as “a product.” These factors are a straight determinant of permanent evolution of the political marketing notion, and revision of its volume and content (Savigny, 2008; Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2011; Johansen, 2012, 2012, p. 176).

Of importance in the research of political marketing is the study of intrapersonal processes influencing the motivation and behavior of people who are engaged or are being engaged in the politico-technological process. Political marketing can be understood as communication through conviction, communication as an exchange of values, as a process of political product generation. (Newman & Vercic, 2002; Steger, Kelly, & Mark Wrighton, 2006). Thus, it comprises public opinion shaping, “personal selling”, “promotional effort”, propaganda, etc.

In the long run, the political marketing identifies who is to speak, what and how, which pattern to choose communicating with those in power. In its turn, this points out the problems of shaping the political leadership, adjustment of “political marketing algorithm” which is instrumental in revealing how the goals, objectives, and functions of the system of political communication are implemented. (Cwalina et al., 2011) Especially relevant, it is for the countries of an emerging democracy where the interaction between the consumers of political services and their manufacturers has not acquired a balance yet.

Political communication is a core, an invariable, the most substantial resource of democracy. It includes two basic questions: (a) to what extent does politics impact the inter-communal solidarity, and eventually the activism of the society? (b) to what extent does social communication affect the stability of political structures and dynamics of political processes?
These questions bring about the degree of legitimation of political forces participating in the political communication. The success of communication depends on many factors, among others, (1) “person’s subjective understanding of things or what the person likes or dislikes about the politician” (Newman (1999, p. 93); (2) how the appealing ideas and images of our leaders will reach the potential clients; (3) how the citizens will be able “to pay.” Numerous business projects having a perfect product and potentially countless consumers, fail as they lack an effective system of distribution. It is true for politics as well. The major difficulty is to deliver his/her product to a client and to receive what you are interested in return. No matter what bright ideas come in human heads—it is a mere beginning of a lengthy way. To be heard, moreover for your position to be understood and accepted, you have to voice it. Communication and appropriate organization become the number 1 problem. In this respect the activism plays an exceptional role: it is one of the key factors shaping the political choice (Hoffman, Jones, & Young, 2013) and public opinion (Lees-Marshment (2009, p. 31). And the success of a political campaign relies directly on a skill to form a public opinion. What is more, the best way will be if in the long run it is fixed in an objective form, so the people have nothing to do but address the generally accepted opinion which plays the role of an objective criterion of legitimacy, ex., the religious activism in modern Russia which aims at the consolidation of “Putin’s factor” as a belief that none but he can be the President of Russia to-day. By the way, this testifies to the fact that the Russian political process is defined by personalities, not institutions thus embodying the effect of politics personification. An individual, as a rule, gives way to the pressure of public opinion. (Simon, 1985)

3. The international references on political marketing and the Russian “realities” of it

“In Russia, a characteristic feature of the political market is that it is ‘far from the model of the political market of ‘free competition’ and more likely tends to the command-administrative system of regulation of political resources” (Altukhova, 2002). The political market in Russia is subordinate to the state, the choice of political products is small, and often it is simply absent. It does not occur to citizens not only to be interested in the programs and concepts of parties and politicians but also to think that such programs exist, although they do exist. Due to the fact that the Russian political elite has withdrawn from the nomenclature and has remained it, citizens, in fact, have nothing to choose from, and hence the reluctance of the population to participate in the political process in general and in the electoral in particular. Entering the political market of activism can reverse the situation, contribute to the formation of a competitive political environment, and oppose the administrative resource of the authorities.

But Russian political marketing is progressing today. The objective demand exists for further clarification of methodology for forecast and control over electoral; as well as the need to study political identification and the role of free mass media in it. These calls are boosted by the political processes in the western states where the political landscape and system are changing, as well as by the processes in the post-Soviet states where such changes are minimal. To research the specifics of political market development in democratic and transient states is to-day imperative as never before.

4. Methodology

The common methodological platform for the research is “a turn to practice” or “practical turn” which emerged in the modern social and humanitarian studies in the middle of the twentieth century and was called by analogy with other turns—“sociological”, “anthropological”, “historical”, and “linguistic” (Eva & Nilkas, 2018; Stephen, 1994). Here, we mean the understanding of practice and individual practices as the medium via which the social is reproduced, translated, constructed, and preserved. A number of methodological approaches combined on this platform, having aggregately constructed the interdisciplinarity of the undertaken research, allowed us to examine the activism in the political marketing as a space where various practices of social action overlap, intersect, co-exist, and confront.
The notion of inter-disciplinarity proposed is as follows: the entities under study are heterogeneous. The social objects constituting it are multi-faceted. Thus, we need to identify its components for the study of which specific methods of certain numerous sciences fit the best and enable to get closer to the truth. In the given research, the conceptual framework estimation, on the one hand, is based on the analysis of classical political literature: the ideas of R. Michels on «organization logic» and «iron law of oligarchy»; Michels (1915); M. Olson on the logic of collective actions (Olson, 1963, 1971); James Davis on the theory of relative deprivation (J-Davis Curve, Davis J., 1962). The specific details discussed, the author addressed the notions of “social communication”. (Youmans, William Lafi and Jillian C. York, 2012).

On the other hand, accounting for the specifics of the theme under study certain techniques of the demographic, psychological, cultural analyses have been applied.

Case-studies method was also used to judge explicit and implicit components in the demands and programs of the activist groups “inside their real viability” when “the boundary between the phenomenon and the context are unclear” (Yin R.K., 23). The chosen cases are to a certain extent ideal-typical cases of activism in Russia.

Each of the chosen activist actions was considered with traditional “invent-analysis” (description of events) on the basis of four parameters: (1) a subject (initiator) of an impact, (2) an object of an impact, (3) a type of an impact, (4) time and place of an impact.

Moreover, a broad search over all sources was conducted with Yandex and Google (using such keywords as “activism”, “activists”, “orthodox activists”, etc.) which revealed basic websites and interest groups. The material was requested only in Russian. Following some additional background search and investigation the decision was made to base on the materials of the mass media which in the fullest extent are open, neutral, and in the most analytical way highlight the problems of Russian civil and political activism, participation and mobilization. “Vedomosti” and “Kommersant” were the key mass media. These newspapers are the most serious mass media; their authors are experts from leading Russian non-governmental think tanks with a high professional reputation. Of special interest were the articles by middle-aged experts from universities (their representatives are the most free in the intellectual space of modern Russia), whose political opinions are least committed with regard of norms, values, and political context. Among them: Yudin G., Apple N., Synitsin A. Apple. Other liberal mass media were identified as well (the conservative media do not cover the object under study or do it exceptionally in a negative format), where interesting data on political activism were published, ex. “Novaya Gazeta”, Latvian Russian-language internet-medium “Meduza”. However, the political prejudice as the critics of power is more evident in the materials of this medium. Background search has found other sources which are highly active in the social nets, primarily, they are various religious activists. Collectively the found materials gave the information about the events relevant for the control over political marketing.

However, in the inter-disciplinary approach, a basic discipline must be exposed anyway. In our case, sociology was used with the methods such as observation (in real sites) and initiative poll of the people in 2015–2017. The aim was to examine different social media, to understand the nature of groups of activists, and what motivates them in order to answer the main questions of the article—which groups through their actions express their political ideas, what their motives are or which political slogans are avoided in principle, realizing (consciously or unconsciously) non-political activism. Research is based on constant monitoring of data poll of “the big three” Russian leading sociological research centers—“Levada-Centre”, FOM, VCIOM. Maximal error does not exceed 3.5% at 95% probability.

The study rests on the methodological principles of verification (it assumes the theoretical findings can be verified empirically), axiological (it provides for the problem analysis from the
angle of different value systems), and developmental (it assumes the civil and political activism can be analyzed in dynamics).

4.1. Causes of civil and political activism in Russia (or how did this story come about)

Civil activism can be both political and non-political. Non-political activism focuses primarily on those areas that are associated with everyday life and the interests of citizens. One of the forms of civil non-political activism is protest activity, distinguished by its ability to independently form political discourse. As a study of a number of sociological studies shows, it can be argued that in Russia these two types of civic activism—political and non-political—are closely interrelated: the realization of citizens’ social rights, such as reducing social inequality, directly correlates with the expansion of opportunities for political participation broader population. “The overwhelming majority of respondents (79–81%) who participate in the activities of non-political public organizations are in one form or another included in the political life of the country” (Civil Activism: New Subjects of Socio-Political Action, 2014). Therefore, the question is what kind of activism most demanded by Russians: civil, political or non-political, is not the key (Ponomarev, 2014).

Civil and political activism emerges when big social groups shape their political self-consciousness based on the belief that the change of their position in the intergroup relations system—or political system of the society in general—is necessary, possible and legal. It constitutes the activity of groups and individuals—organized and formal, or non-organized and unofficial—whose aim is to fight for something, and which takes place in the public environment.

Such groups and individuals are sensitive to what is happening around; they are ready to spend time and effort fighting for and creating something, or vice versa, destroying what they assume is unfair or wrong. Various reasons are behind their appearance in the public environment. Activists can stand for changes in the existing political regime and constitution, as well as against corruption and “wounding of feelings”, e.g. religious. They can search for the lost children, struggle against urban landfill, save rural graveyards, protect homeless animals, and deal with civic artistry, ex. host festivities. Actually, activists can securitize any object or any problem. Roots of activism rather stem from the need to realize one’s potential as well; however, such conditions absent, a social tragedy takes place. Consequently, individuals discover a new window of opportunities: they join social and political activities irrespective of how their convictions meet the spirit and goals of orchestrated or uncontrollable projects. Moreover, they start devising the motivation for activism themselves based on the mounting aspiration among people to be divided into “us” and “them” on different grounds, instigating “cultural wars”, becoming their soldiers. Sooner or later such activism becomes a means of terror (Khosrokhavar, 2005, p. 162). Then, the public space gets massively filled with marginal and easy-controlled groups, especially in the conditions of political and economic crisis, some being quite cannibalistic, e.g. dog-hunters, death groups (instigating teenagers’ suicides), nationalists, extremists.

In Russia, especially in the context of presidential elections 2018, which took place against a certain meaningful crisis of power, the study of civil and political activism provides the insight into the ways protests are mobilized and marketing parameters are shaped, including the images of candidates for the head of state. Contrary to 2010-2011 winter when definite stability of political preferences of activists could be seen—at least they called for the renewal of “state persona” list that was conveyed by “White Ribbon” movement (Volkov, 2012)—the year of 2017 lacked such clear-cut picture. A spectrum of interests is varied: the participants are keen on music, science, movies, and cyber-sport. Only 5–15% participants in civil and political rallies, who made themselves known in social networks, have revealed a stable interest in social and political publics. It means that political marketing in Russia suffers a sort of crisis, thus despite the high demand for activism its political component enjoys a modest niche. (Volkov, 2016; Kolesnikov, 2016)
Today in Russia “we are entering the social policy of the third stage. The first was in the 1990s, under the conditions of survival, the second—under the conditions of dividing the big pie, and the third—when social policy formed human capital which became a driver of economic growth” (Yaroslav Kuzminov, Lilia Ovcharova, Lev Yakobson, 2017).

In the 1990s, Russia social safety level grew into alarmingly dangerous. Threats were concerted around direct and feedback links between the social sphere and economy: the economy sent major negative impulses, and vice versa, the disastrous social sphere immediately imperiled the economy. A threat of a social explosion was high. As the situation developed, the social explosion was likely to evolve into local rebellions, riots, regional conflicts, or centrifugal processes in the regions (Pirogov, 1992).

Generally, the countermeasures guaranteeing social safety in the 1990s were assumed as a triangle: economic growth—balanced social policy—democratization of a state.

A commodity model of economic modernization kept the social safety in Russia extremely vulnerable. A model of self-reliance economic growth had to be adopted, i.e. to rely on the national industrial culture, on speeding up “a catch-up model” of modernization. The economic growth would ensure quickly expanding the taxable base and would resolve the chronic budget crisis. The growth was expected to be linked with an increased number of jobs and massive effective demand.

Social policy had to be carried out via three main directions: compensatory, amortization, and problem-oriented. In the first case, the state compensates the losses of economically deprived population, which recent developments in the economy caused. In the second case, a safety net protecting broad layers of the population from major social risks is established: it must meet an actual living standard in the country. The problem-oriented social policy aims at the most important social challenges emerging during the development process regarding youth, the downgraded, small, and mono-towns.

Democracy means a non-violent social life, public control over decision-making, political equality of citizens. Therefore, democratic governance of a state must be consolidated, primarily, at the local level and at the level of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors; and the gap between the principles of domestic and foreign policy must be bridged.

In 2014–2016 the economic and social policies changed places: the social one—“a trailer car”—was gradually becoming a locomotive of the society. Combined with the signs of business recovery from the “Dutch disease”, the chances elevated to develop the economy by means of non-resource sectors. First and foremost, the population was granted a new niche—investment in education: “This is the main challenge. If we miss to find a response to it, we have no future”, the experts from the Higher School of Economics (HSE) conclude. (People are the only advantage of the “post-oil” Russian economy, 2017)

So, countermeasures guaranteeing social security in 2010–2020, by and large, can be presented as a triangle: balanced social policy—economic growth—democratization of a state. Changed priorities transform the forms and context of political and civil activism.

Key question of the research: is realization of Relative Deprivation Theory (Davies’ J-curve) possible in Russia?
According to the theory (J-Davis Curve, Davis, 1962), revolutions occur when long-lasting tangible economic and social development is replaced by a brief period of sharp decline. There is no systematic adjustment of expectations. They continue growing, and by inertia, a gap between the expected and the real broadens, as a result—a revolution. Economic and psychological factors sum up. Thus, the basic concept of a universal consumer, who lives from one pleasure to another, is replaced by the basic concept of a broken consumer. Consequently, will a broken (frustrated, disappointed, therefore, ready to storm the Kremlin) consumer “hatch” in Russia?

4.2. Civil and political activism in Russia as a transitional society

However, engaging people in the process of social strategy development, achieving political goals is fraught with unpredictable consequences. Struggle and passion, which is part and parcel of political activism, can be directed against vital interests of the ruling political order in general, though in the end, against the activism itself. It happens due to the ambiguity of activism forms. Some inherent people’s spontaneous activity in liberal societies: rallies, pickets, referendums, and strikes, etc. Spontaneous activity in the authoritarian societies as a rule is directed against “enemies” of society. It is conveyed in all kinds of xenophobic actions, intensified language, mounting political libel, etc. Political and civil activism in transitional societies can acquire unexpected forms and be provoked both by spontaneous and orchestrated activity of people.

Empirical Record (some examples of Russian civil and political activism)

Today, civil engagement is an objective condition for the development of modern Russian society; it is the activity of a wide variety of social and political forces, including religious ones, pursuing various social, political, ideological, and economic interests.

5. Russian women’s political/civil activism

In Russia, the political/civil activism emerged in the late 1990s—early 2000s immediately after the collapse of the USSR. For example, women’s spontaneous political/civil activism manifested itself in the Soldiers’ Mothers movement initiated as early as the 1990s due to the “dedovshina” phenomenon in the army (bulling of younger conscripts). During the Chechen campaigns, this Russian women’s spontaneous political/civil activism gained the organized form. After the Chechen campaigns, women’s activism in Russia took on quiet non-political civil forms. A new surge occurred only in the 2012–2013s, the peak of which was the activity of the well-known “Pussy Riot” group, which distinguished itself through recognizable theatrical identity (Rachmaninova, 2012). To
a certain extent, the “Pussy Riot” endeavor was continued by Russian feminists. On 8 March 2017 six feminists making fires tried to hold rallies in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg. They came out with slogans “Power to Women”, “For Female President”, “For Female Patriarch”, and “We are Majority”. Theoretically speaking, the political statements of the groups could have been heard and their implications discussed widely, only the first and the second got lost in the careless and inadequate choice of expression: dances in the altar zone of the cathedral and unfolding the slogans over the grotto at the Kremlin wall in Alexandrovsky Garden.

The same can be referred to the Ukrainian movement “FEMEN” whose key method of attracting attention is to show naked breasts. Due to such ambiguous forms of protest in the actions like these, the groups’ performances can question even the possibility of any women’s political activism per se.

5.1. Russian youth’s civil and political activism

This type of Russian civil and political activism is highly confusing. In 2014 the strategy of youth policy in Russia was adopted. The document is called «Fundamentals of the RF state youth policy for the period till the year 2025» and describes in details the principles of Russian state youth policy identifying six priorities: formation of values’ system accounting for RF multinational foundation; enlightenment of young people, establishment of conditions for young people to realize their potential in the socio-economic field as well as implementation of “social lift” technology to create favorable conditions for young families, etc.¹

However, it did not work to the full. For example, the expert of Carnegie Center Andrey Kolesnikov believes that it is senseless to speak about social lifts within the system without free economic competition: «There are social lifts only for special youngsters and special children. The rest are artificial and moving nowhere. Much was said that the participation in “Young Guards” or “Nashy” is exactly a social lift; consequently, it worked only for some individuals. The same will be now: these social lifts have two buttons, “up” and “down”, but to make them work you must be at least a son of a member of the present-day political bureau». (Muhametshin & Churakova, 2017)

The renovated ideology of the Kremlin on the youth policy was declared in the annual address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly on 1 December 2016. Putin stated that he perceives the young generation as “Russia’s reliable and strong supporter in the complicated and exciting 21-st century”. “I believe that this generation is able to meet the challenges of the time as well as be engaged on par in devising intellectual, technological, and cultural agenda for global development.” Addressing the youth is important for two reasons: 1) a great number of those who did not vote before, will vote at the presidential elections in 2018. Though due to demographic reasons the youth as a social group is not big, it supports the current system more than others; 2) the youth is the least politically active group. Teenagers are critically disposed and perceive politics as a space of goals and targets alien to them, where they are objects of “patriotic upbringing” deprived of any possibility for self-realization. Teenagers seek for actions that are often coupled with risks and challenging the established order (subcultures of “roofers” and “hookers”).

This call fails to find a response in civil activity because the civil space is seen as strange and foreign (Apple, 2017). Therefore, opportunities should be created for political self-expression of young people. Some measures have already brought the first results. Interesting figures are given in the annual study «Russian Youth Value Preferences» compiled by the Federal agency of Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh)—a national state authority which activity focuses on the development of young citizens of Russia—in cooperation with the State University of Governance in a framework of annual report on the status of the youth and implementation of youth policy in Russia. («Russian Youth Value Orientations, 2017»). According to the head of the agency Alexander Bugaev, in 2017 a splash of interest to the youth policy took place. According to this study, 77.7% respondents stated that one of their main goals is to have their own family, 67.9%—to be well-off, 27% young people worry about unstable situation in the country. Among
the key values in our country, the respondents named justice (69.2%), patriotism (56.8%) and respect of traditions (55.5%). 17% respondents do not view themselves as patriots. («Russian Youth Value Orientations, 2017).

To be a patriot, in respondents' opinion, is to love Motherland (79.1%), feel pride for country's achievements (72.7%), be ready to defend the country (57.5%) («Russian Youth Value Orientations, 2017).

The fear of not being realized in life (49.6%) occupies the first place among the fears of modern young people. Over 38% are afraid to stay without friends (are afraid of loneliness), and only 15.2% of respondents named a control of a state among their fears. («Russian Youth Value Orientations, 2017). Half of the respondents said that they get interested in politics «occasionally», one in three said that he/she «is not interested in politics at all», but each sixth is ready to take part in protest actions in case of his/her rights violation, and as many respondents said that they are ready to join some party. The data indicate that the state needs new youth programs and the president's administration is ready to propose its considerations on the subject. In 2019, it is planned to hold the State Council on Youth Policy. Now at the level of the profile working group, there is an active preparation of proposals for solving the existing problems.6

By and large, Russian youth's civil and political activism theoretically speaking it can be divided into “pro-Kremlin” and so-called “pro-Navalny”.

5.2. Pro-kremlin youth’s civil and political activism
To that end the examples of “Nashy” and “Young Russia” seem interesting; their distinctive sign was their “dress code”—T-shirts with the logo “Nashy”—and equivocal actions, to say the least, which can be mildly called sordid provocations undermining the prestige of power, which it understands and tries not to repeat the mistakes anymore.

After the anonymous attack on journalist O. Kashin in 2010, “Nashy” Commissar Irina Plesheeva—the head of the Russian Youth Mass Media Development Center, a member of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation—said at a session that not to be murdered journalists must stop “provoking”.5

Maria Drokova, the federal speaker of the movement, became well known after an episode in her life, i.e. the meeting with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin during his visit to “Seliger” camp. She got so overwhelmed with emotions that she kissed him. The incident served a basis for the blatantly provocative anti-Russian movie called “Putin’s Kiss” by the Danish director Liza Pedersen in 2012. In 2017 “Yes-patriot” Maria Drokova obtained a US green card and published in her Instagram: “I’m so excited and grateful to receive a green card and get closer to the citizenship in my home country of USA”.6

Yet another example of that kind—the ex-leader of “Young Russia”, a State Duma ex-deputy and Tula region ex-deputy minister of interior politics Maksim Mishchenko. In March 2017 he was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison for fraud with grants abusing his official position.7

The political evolution of the movements “Nashy” and “Young Russia” once again proves the “iron law of oligarchy” formulated by Robert Michels: having started as a spontaneous political activity of the young, they turn into the organizations that create their own elite which finally lead them to a collapse (Michels, 1915).

Another interesting example of the mobilized political activism that was criticized on the major federal TV-channels is the group “Russian Officers”. They became famous after having actually deranged the
exhibition “Jock Sturges. ABSENCE OF SHAME” held late September 2016 in the The Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography in Moscow. The “Russian Officers” actions finally closed the show. 8

Interestingly, as “Pussy Riot” performed in short colorful dresses and balaclavas, “FEMEN” demonstrated naked trunk, “Russian Officers” similarly wore military uniform striped with the logo “Center for Crime Prevention” and “Youth Task Unit «Russian Officers»”. It proves that political behavior of the groups is fixed in the symbols which characterize them or in visual fancy marks at least.

One more extremely interesting example of the pro-Kremlin youth activism is the phenomenon of the All-Russia Military and Patriotic Movement “YouArmy”. 9

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu was its major mastermind. The Russian President Vladimir Putin supported the idea. Practically everywhere the “YouArmy” gained the backing of governors and heads of big military units. “The main goal of the movement is to arouse interest among the younger generation in geography and history of Russia, its people, heroes, outstanding scientists, and commanders. Any pupil, military and patriotic organization, club or searching group can join the “YouArmy”. In their free time, “YouArmy” members will work to preserve memorials, obelisks, be on watch at the Eternal Flame, work as volunteers, take part in cultural and sport events; they will obtain additional education and life-saving skills. (Where the Homeland Starts, 2017)

5.3. Pro-novalny youth’s civil and political activism
Alexey Navalny also relied on young people: they constituted up to 20% participants at the meetings he convened on 26 March 2017. This type of the youth’s political activism came to life through the functioning of “Good Machine of Propaganda” of Alexey Navalny devised as an agitation tool during the Russian election campaign of 2011–2012. “GMP” had two goals: to find information about the abuse of power to be spread via social networks. The working methods and forms that can be used were arranged in the priority order: posts in “LifeJournal” and Twitter, e-mails, forums, local networks, stickers, graffiti, traditional letters, postcards, car-stickers, street leaflets, postbox leaflets, videos, CD-disks with information thrown into postboxes, plates and signs in residential neighborhoods, newspapers. Common and cost-neutral actions allowed every “GMP” participant to embrace a “hundred people” minimum.

In 2017 “GMP” effect was extended by the movie produced by the Struggle against Corruption fund “He is not Dimon for you”.10 Alexey Navalny discovered a very correct format. The movie full of “memes”, “jokes”, and fair talk on par—that is what youth likes.

That is why youth often resorts to the “controlled chaos” technology in the form of the “peaceful rebellion” or flashmob—criminal carnival or “shopping rebellion” using social networks that collectively form “a clever crowd”. Noteworthy that in all types of the “clever crowd” activity, the population aged between 17 and 29 take part. These actions could be realized thanks to the increased informatization of the society (approximately from the early 2000s). Robotics, wireless communication, 3G, social networks (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), Skype, WhatsApp, spread of cheap gadgets have tied the society, made it “transparent”.

The “peaceful rebellion” is a political rally discussed beforehand in the social networks. The goal of such meeting is to impeach legitimacy and adequacy of the ruling elite in the people’s eyes. The unsanctioned meeting to support the information of the Navalny’s FSC was held late March, 2017 in Moscow. It is important to notice that this meeting was marked by the massive participation of youth, including senior high school students, that was unexpected both for the participants and for authorities.

Flashmob is a planned social action chatted in advance in the social networks also. A large group of people appears suddenly in a certain place, and having performed something, disappears the same way. Flashmob is characterized by the following: seeming unexpectedness of actions; nuanced
senselessness and chaos of a plan; a definite role of every participant; the actions must necessarily generate a positive attitude of the public. The examples of such youth flashmobs are dance flashmob or metro flashmob in Moscow and St. Petersburg (guys in rabbit masks jump over the turnstiles).

Classic flashmobs are in crisis now. Created at the peak of the “clever crowd” in 2003, most of the mobers’ communities in the social networks and in blogs are abandoned now. They were being dispersed regularly by the officials first in Belorussia, later in Russia. Law amendments about meetings and processions imply that “massive simultaneous people’s presence in public places” can be fined if it has entailed disorder (that is loosely interpreted).

Criminal carnival is arranged by means of organized mass disorder followed by pogroms, destructions, arsons of cars and infrastructure. This type of the youth’s activism is totally untypical of Russia.

Such seemingly sudden social bursts are the attractors in the social system that can lead to chaotization of the social structure. The structure of a “peaceful rebellion” is not as innocent as it could seem. Ten percent are the organizers who direct the crowd activity the way they need in real-time regime. Nearly 30% are recruits that perform for money, half of them being fighters. Their goal is to foment trouble to catch the attention of law-enforcement bodies. The rest (about 60%) are members of Internet communities who were in advance informed about such “meetings”.

Several differences distinguish the “clever crowd” and the traditional one: speed of formation (minutes against 3–6 h), way of organization (a “clever crowd” participant performs duty), way of supervision (continuous command for the “clever crowd”), numbers (a traditional crowd up to 20 thousand people, a “clever crowd”—several hundred). Hence appears the theory of “controlled chaos”, which combines the elements of destruction as well as of the creation of desired structures.

Taking into account all complexities of Russian youth political activism, parliamentary hearings on youth agenda were held in the Stated Duma in May 2017. President Putin signed an order on «childhood decade», which plan is to be drafted by the government in three months. During the St.-Petersburg forum, June 1–3, 2017, Putin identified the necessity of a youth section on the basis of the forum to be set up by 1 October 2017, since «it is the young generation who faces the future, they are the people who will have to build it and live in it. The participants of the section could analyze, form, construct the image of the future in their countries and civilization as a whole».

5.4. Unofficial non-political activism

The experts from Perm’ Centre of Civil Analysis and Independent Studies (GRANI) in cooperation with Charles Stuart Mott fund in 2012–2013 researched the emergence and peculiarities of unofficial activism in Russia. They studied nearly 150 unofficial activist practices of various scales at urban and rural levels in 20 regions of Russia. The unofficial activism practice was proved to have appeared in Russia due to such events as forest fires in the summer 2010, flooding in Krymsk in the summer 2012, and political protests in winter-spring 2011–2012. Under new circumstances in 2016–2017 these practices acquired fresh materialization which, among others, are natural disasters and dubious managerial decisions of Moscow authorities in February 2016: demolition of “unlawfully built constructions” called “the night of long shovels” in mass media. Activists got involved in urban civil creative work, i.e. street art—graffiti, hosting parties for street blocks and performances, arranging city spaces to disclose signs and symbols of city holidays, and to expose the principles of identification of territories through the perceptions of fairs’ spirit. In some cities, a so-called “partizaning” got popularity in the form of night renovation or unauthorized creation of a new street design. As examples, the researchers named the creative estate FreeLabs in Moscow, eco-club “Utopia” in Perm’, Volgograd dock and St.-Peterburg music project “Underground Front” in front of “Gasscraper”.

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5.5. Religious activism

Religious activism in modern Russia is a reaction to actions or phenomena contradicting, in the opinion of the activists themselves, the norms of religious morality (in this case, it does not matter which religion) and expressed in the form of direct action, are single and group pickets, protests, rallies (Nyrkov, 2018). Religious activism appears in the early 2000s, when for different reasons the state partially “outsourced” to “activists” its monopoly on violence fearing “a colour revolution”. (Mitrophanova, 2005) he “Pussy Riot” case followed by the law on believers’ privacy, has consolidated their positions. Though much has changed since then, the movements keep demonstrating their monopoly on the truth to the population and authorities.

“Orthodox activism” has become most widespread and showy. It is highly heterogeneous, being actually divided in organized and spontaneous—represented by the true pro-church citizens-in-arms bordering with religious extremism and the moderate movement of firm believers. Both enjoy moral support of clergy of Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), however, to a different extent and at different levels. For example, archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin came with an idea to set up orthodox brigades as early as in 2008. Almost simultaneously priest Daniil Sysoev started special courses of “street chaplains” (he was killed in 2009 allegedly because of his sharp statements on Islam).

Organized orthodox activism can be studied based on numerous examples. Let us consider a fairly respectable “People’s Sobor”, though many activists and its founders in the 1990s were the members of ultra-right unions, to start with almost fascist organization “Russian National Unity” set up in 1990 and partially transformed by to-day. “People’s Sobor” established the coordination center to protect ROC against attacks. Mass media representatives, lawyers, and a group of orthodox laity constitute it; they keep order during church services and sacred processions as well as patrol the streets. Yet another example—the notorious leader of the orthodox movement “God’s Will” which ceased to exist in 2016 Dmitry “Enteo” Tzorionov, a missioner, finished special courses of “street chaplains” and is the author of countless dirty tricks “to protect church”. He would force “a blasphemer” to take off a T-shirt with Holy Mother in balaklava; would come uninvited to the erotic’s museum. The activist devised “Ethic Code of Russian Rap” with which he plans to stop blasphemy on the Russian hip-hop stage. The code comprises three points: “Not to abuse another person’s parents. Not to insult the feelings of believers. Not to publicize narcotic addiction and sexual deviations”. In the Manezh the movement activists wreaked havoc at the 1960-1970s sculpture exhibition on 14 August 2015. They said that the show-pieces violated the feelings of believers; they damaged four works of sculptor Vadim Sidura. In 2017 during the search in Moscow theatre “Gogol Centre” and apartment of director Kirill Serebrennikov, Enteo announced that he would want to check not only Serebrennikov but Moscow Art Theatre after Chekov and director Konstantin Raikin for defiling orthodox values. Ivan Otrakovsky, an initiator of “orthodox patrol” and popular movement “Holy Russia”, and his colleagues set themselves the task “to increase the number of churched people from a million to 100 million”, and now they guard the orthodox cathedrals.

One of the recent developments related to the actions of orthodox activists is debates over the movie “Matilda” directed by Alexei Uchitel. The movie describes the love affair of the last Russian tsar Nicholas II and ballerina Matilda Ksheshinskaya. The debates were ignited by intransigent and quite fanatic position of the State Duma deputy Natalia Poklonskaya, a former Crimean prosecutor. In her opinion, the movie discredits the image of the Russian saint—Emperor Nicholas II.

The position of Poklonskaya is unique because it ipso facto presents an interesting example of a kind of official orthodox activism. In particular, it initiated the standing in prayer of “Matilda” opponents, which the activists held in protest against its rollout. The action took place on August 1 in Moscow Church of Resurrection in Kadashi. Nearly a thousand believers attended it; however, the deputy did not show pleading she was busy. Orthodox activists from other Russian regions joined Moscow church-goers, many setting one-man pickets.
Moreover, on 31 August 2017 arson was attempted at the office of “Rock” studio where the movie was done. Consequently, the façade was damaged, but a serious fire was escaped. The prosecution stated that a criminal case could be opened against the activists of “Christian State—Holy Russia”. Earlier several cinema theatres received hate mail which conveyed that “cinema theatres would burn” if “Matilda” is on. The authors speak of the likelihood of the revolution to be repeated in Russia, and in this case, the country would sink in chaos. Interestingly, deputy Poklonskaya did not condemn the arsonists, having said that the yet unscreened “Matilda” “provokes extremism”. Thus, she meant that the movie per se is to be blamed. She repeated the statement of Irina Pleshcheeva that the one guilty of murder is a man who provoked a killer.

Meanwhile, another group of orthodox activists, though condemning the movie, sticks to fairly modest views. Thus, the orthodox public movement “Sorok Sorokov” is ready to provide body-guarding for the “Matilda” director, despite the fact that unknown radicals tried to explode its leader’s car exactly because of this. The other leader of “Sorok Sorokov” movement Andrey Kormukhin talked about the threats addressed to the members of his organization.20

In the context of political marketing the actions of orthodox activists identify the interrupted communication, ongoing split in the Russian society; and show that the law can be violated under some “moral” excuses, as it happened with the actions of “Officers of Russia” which closed the Sturges photo exhibition.

Islamic religious activism is as notable as orthodox. Chechen activists from the movement “Carthage” and the similar Tartar group TTM are well known. Activists call themselves “youth movement for purification of Nakh people”. Public “Carthage” describes its rules: “girls are banned to comment”, “other nationals are thrown in ban”. At the beginning of September, the administration deleted a group of nearly five thousand “other nationals”.21 “Carthage” posted the pictures of Chechen girls, but the activists marked that they were going to pay attention to Dagestan and Ingushetia. (Magomedov, 2018) Currently, the closed group comprises approximately 55 thousand people. The activists believe they have the right to bully girls placing their photos in social nets.22 They are in comfort with the fact that their activity can cause “honor killings” which are spread in the Northern Caucasus till now, though no official statistic is available, such deaths are not registered as murders; “a girl is buried or dug in a hole somewhere, the neighbours are aware but keep mum”.23

The first of September in Russia marks the beginning of a new school year, Day of Knowledge holiday, which collects school staff, children and parents together. Since the Soviet Union times, it is called “general line”. In 2017 this day concurred with the Muslim Festival of Sacrifice. In Moscow and St.-Petersburg abandoning in mosques the idea emerged to reschedule the Day of Knowledge. The secular authorities came up with the idea; the Muslin clerics opposed to it as they did not want to attract the attention by such strong and confusing steps. What is interesting is the motivation of the initiative: it stems not only from the fear to insult anybody or hurt somehow, though it exists. It has originated from the motion of religious activists. “That is the problem: in Russia religion can’t be criticized because it gets offended, but atheism can be demonized in every possible way because it is less vulnerable and unforgiving. Consequently, a dreadful distortion springs up: to deprive children of the holiday line due to the religious festival is a norm. Indeed, knowledge is not sacred. Knowledge does not promote a career progress, and religion easily does. Contrariwise, to somewhat minimize the scale of the religious holiday on the occasion of the Day of Knowledge is next to impossible. One can infuriate radicals, break the fragile balance.” (Bykov, 2017).

5.6. Program of compulsory resettlement from demolished houses
The initiative of Moscow authorities came as a bombshell. Muscovites gathered at a mass meeting to show to the Moscow government that they are categorically against the forthcoming program (Grigory, 2017). The resettlement of the houses chosen by unknown criteria in
the pre-election year angered many of those who had maintained neutrality. The “renovation” program is being discussed everywhere, and the meeting is a mere demonstration of the overdue protest. Though we must stress that Muscovites, in general, support the demolition of five-storey houses, however, the particulars present high risks of violation of their rights; they do believe that the program was initiated by the builders’ lobby, and that the federal authorities should intervene and take part in drafting the program.

5.7. Peculiarities and challenges of Russian political and civil activism
(1) Spontaneous for the most part
(2) A weak hope of success. “Over the past few years a legend about a protesting minority and an aggressive, assenting majority which is always ready to support the authorities, has taken root in Russia. Opponents of the resettlement program are already frightening each other that collective actions will bring nowhere, because most people still want resettlement. And if they do not want, they will be forced to do it. As a result, a frustrated Muscovite passionately convinces himself that the majority in Moscow are parasites,bums and drunkards who, as always, are looking for freebies”. (Grigory, 2017)
(3) Fear of a politician’s word. The meetings were declared as “non-political”. “The organizers asked participants not to use partisan symbols, and did not want ‘politicians’ on the stage. The evolution of the political system since the early 2000s has gradually led to the fact that either a legitimate possession of power or an illegitimate struggle for it was understood as politics. Accordingly, the monopoly on politics belongs to the Kremlin; the rest are either loyal or struggling against the existing state system (and must be punished). In this context, the fear of anybody protesting due to social and economic problems is understandable; it is the fear of the political connotation of a protest.

Some protests seemingly held under non-political slogans were a success. Under pressure of the townspeople, the construction of the Okhta Center in St. Petersburg, installation of the monument to The Holy Great Prince Vladimir on the Vorobyovy Hills, and commercial development of the Timiryazevskaya Academy land in Moscow were called off. Yet a different story is the transfer to ROC ownership of St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

5.8. E-voting system “active citizen”
The same situation sets a structural failure: standard political representation is absent in Russia, the dominant parties do not represent anyone, and the non-systemic parties cannot compete for power. Only a street turns out to be a tool to protect the interests of citizens, as well as the Internet and media. (Apple & Synitsin, 2017)

So, the Moscow government designed the e-voting system—“Active citizen”—as a form of political technology for instantaneous electronic plebiscite. Its aim is to show that Muscovites can express themselves outside the streets as well. However, it is interesting that votes of those who did not vote will be counted as votes in support of the resettlement program. Common sense tells us that if an individual does not present his/her opinion, he/she prefers to let the matter rest. But the Moscow authorities assume that the population supports any of their initiatives by default. “There are many demands regarding the system; first of all, it is absolutely out of control. If during elections an observer has at least a theoretical chance to catch ballot-rigger red-handed and make a result illegitimate, ‘Active citizen’ is totally controlled by authorities’. (Grigory, 2017) Similar e-voting projects are sure to be implemented at the federal level.

5.9. Can protest actions remain non-political?
A protest action cannot be non-political it is a political action. Its driving force is a request for political participation, for a public hearing, for interests of a citizen to be taken into account. Moscow meetings reveal a request for an effective administrative system which, in its present form, does not represent the interests of citizens.
However, as public discontent grows, so does the demand for real democratic institutions—public meetings and hearings, rallies and demonstrations, debates and discussions. The authorities will try to oppose them with their majority through electronic voting easily held. That is why the main principle of Russian politics is neutrality.

“The majority in Russia is not “for” or “against” on any issue—be it elections of authorities or backing of sanctions and counter-sanctions—the mainstream population is silent. The levels of turnout at elections testify for it: the last federal parliamentary elections gathered 48% according to official data (10–15% less if throw-ins are excluded), and the turnout for local elections has long been at an extremely low level. The situation with opinion polls is as bad—interviewers rarely manage to interview more than 30% of the estimated sample”. (Grigory, 2017) Russians do not want to be represented, do not believe that their votes can change anything, preferring their own business—and their passivity is completely understandable.

5.10. Is there a spiral of silence in the country?
Use of silent majority to its own benefit became the main strategy of Russian authority a long time ago. So the party «United Russia» has 76% of the seats in the parliament despite the fact that around a quarter of Russian voters supported it, even according to official information. Anyone who is convinced of the correctness of domestic politics loudly and confidently expresses his point of view because he understands that the authorities approve his thoughts. Those who reject or criticize domestic policy remain silent but do not feel isolated.

Therefore, the answer is pretty paradoxical: a Spiral of Silence exists, as well as a political consensus does. It can be argued that the fear of isolation is not the driving force that untwists the Spiral of Silence in the society. The dominating political outlook will curb the Spiral for the next five years, at least. No one doubts the current Constitution: neither the government nor the civil society and the opposition. The majority is unimagined, it is real.

5.11. The “overwhelming majority” phenomenon as a key concept of the soviet/Russian politics
Historically, since the USSR times, the “overwhelming majority of citizens” has directly opposed the “civil society”, which today acts in all countries of the world as a symbolic alternative to a state—institutional, value-based, behavioral, yet unperceived economic. An effective mechanism of value-based mobilization was used, namely all its types—direct, indirect, explicit, secret, tabularized, etc.—in order to gather people into the “overwhelming majority of citizens” and to make it accountable for maintaining the existing system”. In general, it works consolidating the society, although it opposes the minority to the majority. This is the specifics of the Russian democracy.

6. Future research
The research presented is a sort of an introductory section to a vast variety of possible topics, not a final product. The ongoing developments in Russia expose broad perspectives for the examination of various forms of activism, its essence, and parameters for its application in the political marketing. For example, at the end of 2017, the information appeared that N. Poklonskaya, State Duma deputy, was asked to hand in a card of “Edinaya Rossia” party for her extreme religious activism. And after the street protests on 26 March 2017, the Ministry for Education and Science announced that they are vehemently against schoolchildren engagement in different actions of specifically political implication. In its turn, it has led to the 17.10.2017 statement by Timur Valiulin, the head of Department of Countering Extremism for Ministry of Internal Affairs, regarding the fact that youth participation in unauthorized actions is a serious problem: a number of protesting teenagers is growing, however, the age of participants is declining. Against this background, he suggested that not only the organizers of the actions should be held accountable but also the parents of the schoolchildren, as well as their teachers.24 Quite obvious is the fact that the power needs the young; President Putin...
speaks much about it recently. But where are they to be found? It is highly unlikely that they can be substituted by Xenia Sobchak, a TV anchor, who announced her participation in the presidential election in 2018 as a candidate.

Immediately after the presidential election, Russian sociological services held a public opinion poll. The Levada Center survey was carried out on March 23–27, 2018 among 1,600 urban and rural residents in 136 settlements from 52 regions of Russia (Levada Center, 2018). The statistical error does not exceed 3.4%. The survey showed that almost 90% of the Russians expressed their unwillingness to participate in any protests. About 75% of the respondents will unlikely protest because of the decline in living standards or just in defense of their rights. Only 17% of the respondents are sure that the protests are quite possible. Compared with December 2017, the expectations of protests in the country decreased (at that time 23% considered the protests to be quite possible and 70%—unlikely). Most people do not want to take part in social protests. Only 8% of the respondents are ready to attend different rallies, 86% of the Russians would not participate in them (in December 2017, these figures were 13% and 81% respectively). (Levada Center, 2018)

The respondents’ position to protest on political grounds is even less obvious. Eighty percent of the respondents are not eager to take part in any political campaigns (only 12% think it is quite possible for them), 88% would refuse to participate (against 6% who are ready to take part in them). Last December 19% agreed they are probable and 8% were ready to support them personally. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents declared that in the past two or three months they had not noticed protests in their city. Only 4% said that they had learned about them from local media, and only 1% admitted that they had taken part in them. (Levada Center, 2018).

The agency “Minchenko consulting” in the report “Sources and risks of protest activity in 2018” believes that in 2018–2019 period political protests are unlikely in Russia (“Minchenko consulting”, 2018). At the same time, the risks of protests increase due to environmental problems, toll roads, parking lots and deception of co-investors. However, in the regions, there may be spontaneous local protests that “may become critical for the federal government, since a permanent appeal to Putin has limited scalability” (Experts called the main protest risks for the authorities in the coming years, 2018).

Simultaneously, the all-Russian survey of VCIOM-Sputnik, which was conducted on April 29–30 and 2 May 2018 among 3,000 respondents over the age of 18 by telephone interviews, showed
that only 2% of the Russians believe that the country does not need transformations. At the same time, almost 90% of the population are open to changes. (VCIOM: almost 90% of Russians favor the transformation, 2018). Fifty-nine percent of respondents spoke out for changes in most of the spheres of social life, and this share exceeds 50% in all socio-demographic groups. About one-third of Russians believe that Russia needs changes only in some spheres. Nine percent of the respondents found it difficult to answer the question about the changes. (VCIOM:: almost 90% of Russians favor the transformation, 2018).

Does it mean that the political intrigue has died out, the controlled democracy has won, and the Russian activism, be it political or other, will withdraw into shadows of power as it used to in the past? Or will the semantics of the theme discussion be changed any way, and in the political market, where every man for himself, it will result not only in new forms of would-be activism but in the direct collision of public interests, which in its turn, will put the dilemma of a dictator point-black in Russia? The answers to these questions need further empirical investigations, deliberation of the transformation of the society, as well as of the process and results of the presidential election in Russia.

7. Conclusion
In conclusion, let us outline the two key points.

Firstly, Russia is an autocratic state in a democratic form, that is, with democratic mechanisms and certain procedures for the formation of representative government. That is why, political marketing of the political leaders in Russia is primarily developed, political marketing of ideas—secondarily.

And here opens a wide window of opportunities for activists to use political marketing to establish political relations with people. At the same time, due to the peculiarities of the Russian political culture and the current political regime, activists are mainly focused on the organization of political and civil companies that often arise spontaneously (civil companies, social protest companies, fundraising companies), as well as on the creation of public organizations and funds, the organization of targeted social projects (local and regional), various actions to assist citizens.

All these political technologies are ultimately aimed at making the reputation of certain political leaders and the political program they offer more attractive. Specificity of the Russian activism in political marketing is, first, a small share of propaganda and political advertising in it. This is due to the fact that they are often or simply banned or located outside the resource capabilities of activists.

But, the “sleeping” nature of the organizations and funds created, the sluggish nature of companies that at first glance are far from real politics. And they are not directly aimed against the government. This enables activists to involve people who are afraid of politics in companies, projects, and organizations, to attract the most diverse forces to them.

However, at a necessary time, when revolutionary moods are growing in the society, such organizations and funds become the basis for unfolding a powerful protest movement, as happened it with A. Navalny’s “Fund for the Fight against Corruption” or organizations of the Orthodox activists.

Together, all these features of Russian political marketing distinguish it in a number of nuances from the general literature on political marketing, specifying the paternalistic nature of the Executive power of Russia (“father”—the governor and at the same time the faithful “son” of the Kremlin), as well as the patriarchal-authoritarian and technocratic nature of its political culture.

Secondly, the paper has answered the question asked whether the Realization of the Relative Deprivation Theory (Davies’ J-curve) could be Possible in Russia? The answer is—no, it cannot. This
confirms our hypothesis that despite the objective difficulties and the obstacles that are subjectively defined, Russian activism can affect the federal agenda, but does not lead to revolutionary actions.

According to the Relative Deprivation Theory, a person who lives being permanently deprived of any chance to make some noticeable purchase is (regarding his style of life, his self-awareness) ready for negative political activism. It is so, but not in Russia. Russia is not Germany, although the power in Russia, just like in Germany, assumes responsibility for moral decisions. People, despite all the difficulties, are ready for activism, the request for it is huge, but this is not a request for a revolution. People will not fight they do not live in a global crisis of meanings and goal-setting.

Nevertheless, the situation is not quite unidimensional and simple. During the all-Russian youth forum “Territory of Senses” held on the Klyazma river in August 2017, the general director of the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) Valery Fedorov said that since the economic crisis has ended but a sweeping economic take-off has not started yet, a new phase called ‘economic insecurity’ is witnessed in Russia.29 The social demand for stability in Russia has moved to periphery and has given way to a demand for changes. According to the head of VCIOM, such phase is «dangerous», since «revolutionary sentiments do not appear during a crisis, but when it ends and the situation recovers. In such circumstances, people stop tolerating and start demanding.” (People are the only advantage of the “post-oil” Russian economy, 2017)

At the end of the 1990s, the decline in the standard of living was compensated for by the freedom of movement, end of deficit, and liberalization of foreign trade, which encouraged the entrepreneurial activity. But in 2014–2017 the effect of “compensation” in the form of territorial expansion was brief: ‘the euphoria of the population is gradually weakening, and the awareness of a long crisis is intensifying’. (People are the only advantage of the “post-oil” Russian economy, 2017).

Today over 70% of Russian population consider themselves Russians, not Europeans. Moscow “is stuffed with European techniques of broadcasting cultural pleasures and consumer practices. Here one can find all sorts of opportunities, not less than in Boston or in Hamburg. By the variety of cultural, behavioral, consumer, entertainment and other offers it is a huge metropolis, comparable in its capabilities only with London or Berlin” (Dondurey, 2013). In 2014 the households approached the new reality with a margin of safety economically and politically.

Russia enjoys unfamiliar cultural codes, historical survival skills, national political stereotypes, real practices of getting out of its own traps of predetermination, including “open mind” (an absolutely open, unbiased consciousness; an individual sees a solution where no one sees it, and uses as a resource what no one considers a resource); “spontaneous heroes” (Russian civilization has a large percentage of people able to reach the top in one generation); spontaneity and do-it-yourself activity (a Russian never delegates the decision-making either to a boss or to power; if he ever did, he could call it off any moment); “cross-your-finger mentality” (under extreme uncertainty an intuitive choice fits more than analytical, and under time pressure “a random choice” is more efficient than “a discussed one”; an ill-implemented decision is better than the one made by “the end of a season”).

That is why the reliance on one’s own forces deprived of any alternative is the basis of the trans-historic codes of the Russian political life “system”. It programs every action of any person in the society and any community in it.

People, despite all challenges, are ready for activism; its demand is enormous; however, it is not a demand for a revolution.

They will not fight; they do not survive through a crisis of values or goals. “For me, the right person is someone who works hard, loves his family, pays taxes, votes, and helps the weak. I myself try to be like this”—the speech of the video blogger Sasha Spielberg in the State Duma
on 22 May 2017. 24. (Video blogger Sasha Spilberg speech from the tribune of the state Duma, 2017). Therefore, the relative deprivation theory is ‘peanuts’ compared to the problems that Russia daily solves in infants’, penitentiary, gender, judicial, human rights, and bureaucratic spheres (Dondurey, 2013). And it does solve them because it has meaningful resources for it, which open up colossal positive prospects for activism per se.

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Notes
1. Order of the Government of the RF dated 29.11.2014 N 2403-p approval of Fundamentals of the state youth policy of the RF for the period until the year 2025 (2014)https://www.consultant.ru/law/hotdocs/39133.html?utm_campaign=hotdoc&utm_source=google.adwords&slnt_medium=cpc&slnt_content=16&clid=CO6CQywB_MBRcAABJLAKJEmQo_eBFZxTe2_2xxXnsyp-wMjn58gfepudFS68bWPjYcrmsBcaAsXeALlw_wDB (accessed: 13.08.2017).
2. The title “Young Guards” originates from the history of the famous youth underground organization which functioned successfully during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 period. This organization was founded on the 20th of July 1942 after a small Russian town Krasnodon had been occupied by Nazi Germany. At that important moment, a group of several young people decided on calling themselves the Young Guard. They led several military operations, were seized, brutally tortured and being still alive were thrown into the mine crater. In the history of Russia, they became a symbol of courage and invincibility. The notion ‘Nashy’ contradicts a notion of ‘Others’. The basic meaning of the term appeared during the Civil war of 1917-1919 and further on was adopted during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. In fact “Young Guards” and ‘Nashy’ is a pun.
3. President’s message to the Federal Assembly of the 1st of December 2016 (2016)https://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379 (accessed: 13.08.2017).
4. Tatiana Golikova took part in the expanded meeting of the board of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs//https://government.ru/news/36137/ accessed: 29. 03. 2019.
5. Journalist Oleg Kashin was brutally beaten on November 6, 2010 near his house in Moscow.
6. Kissing Putin’s former “nashistka” received an American green card//https://lenta.ru/news/2017/03/13/drokova/accessed: 29. 03. 2019.
7. Former leader of “Russia is young” Mishchenko received two years for fraud//https://lenta.ru/news/2017/03/17/mishenko/accessed: 29. 03. 2019.
8. Officers of Russia “closed the exhibition at the Lumiere Center. Photo Eugene Feldman//https://meduza.io/feature/2016/09/25/offisery-rossii-zakryly-vystavku-v-tsentre-lyumier-fotoreportazh-evgeniya-feldmana accessed: 29. 03. 2019.
9. “Your Army” is a denominative from the Young Army: the reduction “Yun” romanticizes the aim and mission of the organization. It also reminds the citizens of the events of the Civil War in Russia, symbolizes utter heroism, love to the Motherland and purity of thoughts.
10. He is not Dimon for you Palaces, yachts and vineyards—the secret life of Dmitry Medvedev//https://dimon.navalny.com/ (accessed: 28. 03. 2019).
11. Putin had proposed to create a youth section of the base of SPIEF//https://ria.ru/economy/20170602/149567856.html (accessed: 02.06. 2017).
12. Russian non-political activism. Sketches for the portrait of the hero 2017 http://www.grany-center.org/content/nonpolitical (accessed: 20.06. 2017).
13. Who tried to patrol the capital//https://www.komsmentr.ru/doc/272514/ accessed: 29. 03. 2019.
14. In December 2015, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church removed Chaplin and eliminated the structure headed by him—the synodal department for relations between the Church and society.//More on RBC: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/24/12/2015/567cfa29a79474d5c54109b8 (accessed: 29. 03. 2019).
15. Danil Sysoev’s murderer was found and killed (2010). https://www.interfax.ru/russia/128140 (accessed: 02.03. 2019).
16. The official website of the movement “People’s Sobor”//http://narodosobor.ru/accessed: 20.03.2019.
17. Russian police are not yet ready to take on the assistants of the Orthodox warriors. Gazeta.ru (2012)https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2012/08/22/4734697.shtml (accessed: 02.03.2019).
18. Dmitry “Enteo” (2017) https://vk.com/enteo?w=wall152509857_251029 (accessed: 02.03. 2019).
19. Orthodox activists smashed sculptures at an exhibition in the “Manage”//Interfax—[Electronic resource]—Access Mode—URL: http://www.interfax.ru/culture/460370 (accessed: 10.12.2016).
20. Poklonskaya accused the Ministry of Culture of extremism after the issuance of a rolling certificate for the film “Matilda”//Teacher//https://www.novoyagazeta.ru/news/2017/08/10/134306-poklonskaya-abviniela-minkulturny-v-eantremizme-po-vreetenity-film-matild-uchetelya (accessed: 29. 03. 2019).
21. Official website of the movement “Sorok Sorokov”//https://soroksorokov.ru/ (accessed: 28.03.2019).
22. Carthage.//https://vk.com/karfagenonen (accessed: 28. 03. 2019).
23. If I find out that the Vainakh family killed her daughter for a misdeemant, “I’ll stand up and slap him’. What do Chechen activists want to track
down girls in social networks? (2017) (accessed:10. 09. 2017).
24. Interior Ministry proposed to punish parents and schools for the participation of children in rallies// https://meduzia.ru/news/2017/10/17/mvd-predlozhiho-nalozhyvat-roditeley-i-shkoly-za-uchastie-dety-v-mitingah (accessed: 29. 03. 2019).
25. Russians want change, said the head of VCIOM. RIA Novosti//https://ria.ru/20170808/1499996500.htm l (accessed: 29. 03. 2019).

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