

Management of Political Interests and Depoliticizing of Social Conflicts

Oleg B. Ivanov

Director

Center of Social Conflicts Regulation
 Moscow, Russia
 collegiamo@gmail.com

Ahmad Kilani

PhD Student

People's Friendship University of Russia
 Moscow, Russia
 Ahmad.kilany@gmail.com

Abstract — this article examines and analyses the subject, object and causes of social conflicts as conditions for an effective management. This study will pay attention to the theoretical and methodological approach of protest activity in order to clarify and complement the existing conceptual apparatus of modern humanity. The authors examine the possibilities and effectiveness of managing political interests in social conflict, considers depoliticizing as a condition for effective management of social conflict. Political interests in social conflicts in modern Russia are determined by socio-economic factors. The emergence and development of the Internet has significantly increased the possibilities of political mobilization. The author argues that the successful management of political interests in social conflict must necessarily be technological and comes to the conclusion that it is necessary to change the positions of state structures in relation to the management of political interests in social conflicts. This would allow localizing such conflicts and solving the issue of depoliticizing social conflicts.

Keywords: *conflict management, depoliticizing, institutionalization of conflict, protest, political interests, social conflict, political mobilization, socio-political stability*

I. INTRODUCTION

The impact of politics on people's livings is a tendency towards the development of society in the 21st century. An examination of scientific sources on this issue reveals a shortage of studies considering political interests as an integral part of social conflicts. In modern Russia, the guidelines for Russian political development are formed, first of all, by the federal state in connection with which they should be considered as the leading actor in managing political interests in conflict situations.

It can be noticed that conflicts which are not taken measures to resolve leads to escalation in the confrontation, and ultimately end with the destruction of opposing social systems or subjects.

II. SOCIAL CONFLICTS: CAUSES AND MANIFESTATIONS

In Russian society, the perception of social conflicts from class point of view contributes to the resolution of contradictions by violent means. The destructiveness of the Russian social conflicts is due to the inadequate perception of the very fact of the conflict, the irrational behavior of the

parties that seek to avoid it, only aggravating the consequences, or to resolve with the use of violent measures. It is precisely in the escalation of violence lies the internal mechanism of potential conflict destruction.

The mass population of the country remains deprived from the interests rooted in the legitimate system of social action structures. They are objectively indifferent both to the reproduction of these structures and to their transformation, and all their interests tend to be realized through the creation of alternative (illegitimate from the point of view of the current government) social structures: shadow economy, politics, and social experience

The result of mass domestic protests of recent years has been conducted by the young population which has experience in such activities, and it acquired a nationalistic and ethnic character. The actualized problem of extremism and terrorism requires consideration from the young generation as a subject of conflict relations, especially given the fact that their marginalization increases the risks of involving in social conflicts.

A nationwide survey conducted by the «VCIOM Sputnik» on June 20-21, 2017, recorded a 90% of respondents to request the involvement of millennial in politics (despite the fact that in 2007 this figure was 75%). At the same time, more than 20% of the millennial do not consider they are patriots and would like to leave the country, which indicates a low level of loyalty to the existing system, which is dictated by the absence of a coherent national identity.

It is also necessary to take into account the modern phenomena that researchers of social conflicts face. One of them is the Internet and social networks, which in the shortest possible time made it possible to mobilize a huge amount of unrelated people among themselves. The Internet is recognized as an element of political mobilization; it compares favorably with traditional media, and allows people to work in real time. It is practically not subjected to targeted censorship, does not depend on geographic boundaries and is relatively cheap. In addition, it is increasingly being used for fundraising and crowd funding (collecting donations in cash for non-profit purposes).

Most millennials are recruited into virtual opposition network structures: men from 18 to 34 years old. The “digital protest movement” (“digital resistance”) is not just open to adolescents, but focuses on them, thus converting their protest sentiments into real political activity is a matter of the near future. The experts of the «Izborsk club» put forward a hypothesis: “The key mechanism of the realized global transformation is the Internet and network technologies. The Internet - both as a tool and as an environment - forms a special type of modern man and influences his world perception. The infantile idea of transferring the “network rules of the game” to real life and politics is the most important part of the new protest culture”.

Nevertheless, the importance of the Internet and social networks influence should not be overestimated. There are still a few people who are able to perform real actions, and not just generate content and respond to it on the Web. Most users are characterized by reactivity, not proactivity. Recalling the theory of slacktivism, which claims that social networks are an intellectual trap, it forms the principles of participation, but it doesn’t get as far as real participation. Social media seems to be a mirage of democratic institutions of freedom of speech, or even a well-organized form of oversight (Ushkin, 2015). The main causes of social conflicts in modern Russia are numerous. Firstly, there is the inefficiency of the system, the inadequacy of technologies and means of state management to the organizational and technological structure of society; secondly, the disorganization of society, and imbalances in the areas of its life; and thirdly, the inequality of social subjects, the gap in the level and quality of life in the majority of the population in comparison with the privileged classes [8].

These reasons are largely determined by the inability to manage political interests in social conflict. In Russia, social conflicts are resolved in the interests of the government and big businesses, and not in the public interest. This contradicts the essence of the state where it must be the property of society and should not follow the interests of one party and ignoring the other. Effective management of political interests in social conflict which aims at depoliticizing (eliminating the influence of political interests on the dynamics of social conflict), can reduce the sternness of social conflict, and diminish social losses.

Management of political interests in a social conflict is understood as the process of conscious, purposeful and strong-willed participation of the subjects of social interaction on the subject, object and causes of the conflict, provided that such influence is aimed at reducing the influence of the political interests of the subjects of social conflict (depoliticizing). Political interests in a social conflict are most often manifested in the form of political protests which are types of negative impact on the subject of social conflict and on the current socio-political situation or on specific actions of public authority.

At this juncture, it seems important to refer to the very nature of the competitive relationship between the authority

and the opposition. The essence of this relationship comes down to the fact that both sides transmit to society their own vision of reality, which is a substitute not only in relation to each other, but also in relation to reality. In this case, the parties use the same type of tools, including hidden disinformation and the creation of myths. Thus, the goals of managing political interests in social conflicts between the parties do not fundamentally coincide, and the key importance is attached to technologies: both the technology of organizing dissatisfaction in public space and the technologies of minimizing political protest among the public.

To understand the process of managing political interests in social conflict, the article considers the mechanisms of such management, by which will understand the interrelated set of norms, means and methods of management activities of the parties to the conflict to achieve the goals set. It should be noted that the goal of management is correlated with the subject of management and depends on it. Consequently, the analysis of management objectives will be correctly carried out with the definition of the subjects of management, as well as the methods used by them.

There are four categories of political protest actors: the authorities, protest leaders (organizers), protest sponsors (beneficiaries) and ordinary protesters. The last three categories are attributed to opposition forces (albeit with known reservations, especially with regards to protest sponsors). The power is represented by various subjects in their status. It can be the heads of state and local governments, the authorities themselves, pro-government social movements, law enforcement agencies and even large private enterprises, through a system of economic and financial interests associated with power. All of them share access to the power resources of the state, as well as the fact that the authorities, as a rule, play the role of the defending side.

Leaders of protest are the subjects responsible for developing an opposition strategy in a particular social conflict; hence they set the protest goals. Sponsors of the protest are responsible for the material and financial support that stimulates the activity of the leaders of the protest, yet they have their own goals in a specific social conflict. Ordinary protest participants represent the most massive and least organized category of actors, including from the point of view of a reasoned perception of their own political interests.

III. METHODS OF MANAGING POLITICAL INTERESTS IN SOCIAL CONFLICTS

Based on the specifics of the participants in a social conflict and their political interests, one can single out various methods of managing such interests which are management of suppression (MS) and stimulation management (SM) the development of political interests.

SM represents a developed group of methods. They can be divided into two groups; methods aimed at consolidating opposition protesters based on the commonality of their political interests and methods aimed at discrediting the

authorities. Incentive measures are described in detail in the scientific literature, while MS technologies are less studied. It is this group of methods of managing political interests in social conflicts that can be attributed to methods aimed at depoliticizing them and therefore of particular scientific and practical interest.

MS is a set of government bodies' actions, political and social movements supporting the power, or other participants in social conflict, aimed at reducing the activity of expressing political interests in social conflict on the part of leaders and, through ordinary participants. The totality of such actions, technologies, can be divided into manipulative, black (illegal) and power (administrative).

Illegal technologies mainly involve psychological pressure on social conflict leaders such as the use of compromising materials, threats, blackmail, etc. A feature of black technology is the anonymity of their initiators and performers. They make it possible to break the unity of the protest movement, since the resources of public trust in social conflicts plays a decisive role. However, in the modern information society, the use of such technologies, on the contrary, can rally the protest movement.

Administrative technologies are based on the right of the authorities to issue binding regulations. The authorities can influence the regulation of the dynamics of social conflict by issuing acts regulating protest activity, establishing sanctions for violating the accepted norms. The effectiveness of such technologies is obvious, but in the matter of managing political interests it brings only temporary success, and in the medium term leads to radicalization of protests and a qualitative increase in the influence of political interests on their dynamics, including attempts to go beyond the protest leaders.

From the point of view of potential effectiveness in the long term, manipulative technologies (based on the manipulation of the political interests of the participants in a social conflict in order to form effective mechanisms for managing the dynamics of social conflict) seem to be the most effective. In appreciation to such technologies, power can minimize the mass character of social conflict and its impact on public opinion. It is appropriate here to recall the Chinese army of bloggers, who allegedly get paid 50 cents each for the corresponding publications, in connection with which any negative feedback about the actions of the authorities is immediately mocked and refuted by them.

The Russian government does not demonstrate the ability to effectively use such technologies. This was demonstrated after attempts by regional authorities to counteract the involvement of young people in the marches of Navalny in 2017, which is summarized by a film demonstration exposing the opposition's motives, and attempts to put pressure on schools and universities administrations and individual students, who expressed support for the protest leaders. These events gave the opposite effect, because the content that submitted the stated message was not prepared in an interesting form for the audience, taking into account its specificity and value reference points. Instead of persuasion, administrative

command methods were used, while the argument in favor of a position loyal to the current government was given in an aggressive form. Content that the authorities are trying to promote on the internet in order to strengthen the pro-government attitudes of young people requires substantial rethinking and adaptation to the needs of the new generation.

IV. THE CAUSES OF DEPOLITICIZATION IN SOCIAL CONFLICTS

Considering depoliticization as the goal of managing political interests in social conflict facing the state, it is necessary to formulate its reasons. Firstly, depoliticization is led by finding effective means of eliminating the cause of social conflict. This happens when the government develops effective ways of responding, adapts the regulatory framework. Secondly, the loss of the cause of social conflict relevance can also lead to depoliticization. As a rule, this option can be observed as a result of the seasonality of political development, or as a result of the emergence of significantly more important and relevant issues for the relevant society. Thirdly, researchers talk about conscious or artificial depoliticization, when the authorities reduce the actual cause of the social crisis to the level of a purely legal, economic or technological problem. Thus, the management of political interests in social conflict is a technological process, and it is technological on both sides, therefore attempts to arbitrarily control political interests are doomed to failure.

V. CONCLUSION

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