

# Postmaterialism in a Materialist Country

An ideal type analysis of the political culture among  
protesters in contemporary Russia

Amanda Bergland

# Abstract

The following thesis investigates political culture in Russia, focusing on the attendants in the protests for fair elections between 2011-2013. The study grounds in the ambivalent Russian youth that on the one hand are described as Putin's 'puppets', and on the other hand are the main actors in protests against electoral fraud and corruption. The thesis focuses further in identifying support for postmaterialistic values and beliefs expressed within the protest movement. To study political culture among the protesters two polar types have been used in terms of a postmaterialistic position and a materialistic position. An extensive postmaterialistic development in Russia would give support for a positive outlook for the future development of a strong civil society, which continuously is one of the keys to a stable democracy. The study shows that the political culture has postmaterialistic tendencies but also that the protesters were significantly carefully with explicitly express encouragement in their attitude towards democracy.

*Key Words:* Russia, political culture, democracy, postmaterialism, political activity

*Word Count:* 9734

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# 1 Introduction

The youth in contemporary Russia has repeatedly been defined as a generation colored by the increasing authoritarianism. A generation that for example “tends to reflect and support the values and aspirations expressed by Putin” (Gerber; Mendelsen, 2008 p. 131). At the same time the youth is the main actor in several protest movements expressing dissatisfaction with unfair elections and a corrupt system. During the nationwide protests for fair elections in 2011-2013 a third of the attendants were between 15 and 25 years old, and additionally a third between 25 and 34 (Sreda, 2012a).

The protests could with probability be interpreted as tendencies of that people, and especially the youth, have had enough of the increased authoritarian turn and were willing to take active stands to prevent it from further developing (Gabowitsch, 2016 p.65). Motivation for such extensive political protests are in general low in materialist countries as for example Russia (World Values Survey, 2011). The protests did nevertheless occur, and due to the size and the extent of the protests it becomes actual to imagine an emerge of a political culture with a rather large impact of postmaterialism, aiming beyond materialistic security towards postmaterialistic self-expression.

The thesis will to test a hypothesis of a strongly postmaterialistic protesting movement investigate to what extent the protest movement is a case of strong postmaterialistic tendencies. An ideal type analysis will be used in terms of two polar positions to expose trends in the political culture among the attendants in the protests. The two polar positions are *postmaterialistic political culture* which is politically active and with aim for freedom and the *materialistic political culture* that conversely is politically passive and aims for security. The positions are subsequently grounded in the idea of postmaterialism that when security is established the aim for self-expression develops (Inglehart, 1977 p 11). The material consists of 600 survey answers from the protesters in Moscow conducted by the non-profit research based organization *Sreda*. The results of the last World Values Survey (2011) will establish a reference point through which the tendencies of the protesters more easily can be acknowledged.

## 1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of the study is to create a wider understanding for the concept of political culture. Studies in political culture in Russia often compare generations to identify changes in values, beliefs and attitudes towards the regime. Seeing though to the short amount of time in history that Russia and Russians have been under direct influence of democracy the field of study in terms of generational analysis is rather limited. This type of study will instead investigate differences within political cultures in contemporary Russia to shed light on alternative movement in Russia and its potential development.

Considering the extensive protest movements combined with the high youth attendance it becomes actual to look on a minor political culture within Russia through the glasses of postmaterialism. The postmaterialistic approach can give a further hint of whether it is the secure circumstances (and the need of self-expression that follows) that have led to extensive protests or if they simply are random hyped events mistaken for liberal movements.

By analyzing the political culture of the typical Russian protester in the light of the political culture of the population in accordance to World Values Survey we can establish a new field of study which has not yet been remarkable explored. The study will contribute to studies of political culture in illiberal countries as well as a further study of the democratic future of Russia. The question the study will answer reads as follows:

- i. Are the “For fair elections”-protests in Russia 2011-13 to be considered a postmaterialistic movement, and if so in what aspects?

## 1.2 Disposition

The thesis is disposed in seven chapters including introduction and references. This chapter introduces the problem, limitations of the thesis, definitions of central terms and lastly previous science in the field of political culture in Russia. After the introducing chapter follows a historic chapter which closer describes the protests in 2011-13 and the political culture in Russia in general. Chapter three is a methodologic chapter where the method and material are further presented. Chapter three also presents the theoretic framework of the thesis, namely the theory of postmaterialism as well as a presentation of the polar types. The final chapters consist of the analysis, results and a discussion before conclusions are drawn in chapter six. The final chapter will also contain examples of further studies in the area.

## 1.3 Limitations

Postmaterialism is measured by seeing to several aspects of a country's culture, such as attitude towards religion, homosexuality, women's right and immigration just to mention a few. In total, the Worlds Values Survey from 2011 consists of more than 250 survey questions on which a conclusion of a country's postmaterialistic level can be drawn. The thesis can and will not take all the aspects of postmaterialism in account. This because it would be too much material to analyse but also because such data is not available from the protests in 2011-13. The choice of what aspects of political culture should be measured are therefore partly based on the availability. The choice has further on been made to measure the perceived most important *aims of country*, the respondents' *political activity* and their *attitude towards democracy*. These elements are also essential in measuring postmaterialism and will constitute a stable ground for identifying tendencies, specifically when focusing on specifically the political culture, which continuously is the central focus of the thesis.

In March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, there were anti-corruption protests triggered of the release of a film revealing how prime minister Dmitri Medvedev's expensive lifestyle directly benefits from the corrupted system. Data from the protests in 2017 will due to limited space not

be taken in consideration in the analysis, even though it would be interesting referring to the actuality of the protests. The study therefore relays on surveys solely from the protest movements in 2011-13, the so called “for fair elections” protests.

### 1.3.1 Four-Categories-Russia

The conducted surveys occurred exclusively among protesters in Moscow and since Russia is a country of extreme diversities between big cities and smaller cities it becomes relevant to mention how that may affect the result. The economist Natalia Zubarevich distinguish Russia through four different categories. She stresses the point that there are massive regional inequalities in today’s Russia, and due to that there might be problems if one does not take the differences in consideration while studying Russia. The differences themselves, she claims, is partly a reaction of an uneven modernization process (Zubarevich, 2015). Because of governmental dependence on all levels since the division makes it possible even in today’s globalised world for the regime to influence and control the citizens in a suitable way the division has negatively contributed to slow down the modernization process. The consequences can be more easily comprehended by the theory of a four-category-Russia where 1 consists of post-industrial cities, number 2 of blue-collar workers, 3 of rural and semi-urban population and 4 is the category of under-developed Russia (Zubarevich, 2012). When studying for example political culture it is crucial that one is aware of and take in account internal differences within the country. Measuring a postmaterialistic political culture in Russia by looking at surveys exclusively from protesters in Moscow will obviously not cover the entire spectra of political culture among oppositional youth. Anyhow, referring to Zubarevich, Russia 2, 3 and 4 do in a great extent not tend to get involved in politics and therefore also protests occur in a very small scale (2015).

## 1.4 Literature Overview

It is presently just over twenty-five years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the field of political culture studies in Russia under influence of democracy is just on the



verge. Not rarely do scientists divide people in post-Soviet generation and Soviet generations when studying political culture in Russia. Some research during the last ten years is focused on the authoritarian elements of the political culture also within the young political generation in Russia. Some studies have found a diversity among the youth in the question of whether democracy is desirable or not, and instead found support for that authoritarian tendencies seems to have grown (Gerber; Mendelson, 2006 p.88). The study shows one aspect of the political culture where authoritarian values are increasing contributing to a sustaining of conservatism and nationalism.

Other studies have found that the post-Soviet generation is more likely to support democratic values, institutions and a free market than previous generations. However, support was also found for that the post-Soviet generation also stands out since they especially seem to value economic reforms rather than political ones. A result that seems to give a hint of that the current young generation appears to be more interested in being an economic front power than they are interested in politics (Hahn; Logvinenko, 2008).

Dmitri Trenin discussed in an article from 2010 what he calls the 'conservative modernization' and stresses the paradox in trying to modernize with the use of conservative methods. Conservative modernization, he claims, "...aims to, among other things, diversify Russia's economy, strengthen the rule of law, and broaden media freedoms without bringing political upheaval." (Trenin, 2010). Another scientist Vladimir Gel'man brings in another article up the shortsighted achievements that Russia seems to aim for in terms of shortsighted economic rewards rather than the more long-sighted aim to try to change the political system (Gel'man, 2014).

Previous studies have also shown that a majority of the Russian youth are not interested in politics. They may not agree with the government in everything, but are not willing to take action to change the political situation. Distrust in the opposition is one of the main reasons for the passive political behavior. The distrust in the opposition continuously grounds in a distrust in the political system (Koristikov, 2014 p. 3). Such studies follow in line with the idea that rulers in illiberal democracies can't embrace anti-democratic ruling so instead they tend to focus on support an authoritarian development which also reflects further in the political culture (Hague; Harrop, 2010 p. 131).

The book "The politics of protest in hybrid regimes: Managing dissent in post-communist Russia" (Robertson, 2010) challenges the problematic view that Russians always are politically passive, by proving that oppositional movements, for example in terms of protests, are on the uprise but are constantly being repressed for example by

being challenged on a ground level by pro-regime movements and very limited attention in media. These are continuously both highly strategic moves from the regime to maintain an authoritarian culture (Robertson, 2010).

## 1.5 Political Culture

Political culture is the general pattern of values, beliefs and attitudes towards the political system. Political culture includes the preferences concerning politics in various political communities. For example, the opinion of democracy and how politics is being exercised (Hague; Harrop, 2010 p. 121). Within a country there are many different political cultures which diverges depending on several factors, such as age, economic situation and level of education. These factors are often connected to each other and lay out the ground for what values and attitudes the individual will have in politics and towards the regime. There is however also a dominant political culture, which is the general picture political culture which is transmitted through the mass media and continuously the picture you have of a country's political culture (Hague; Harrop, 2010 p. 121). A central way of understanding political culture is through measuring the level of postmaterialism in a country. Studies of postmaterialism in Western democracies have been done in an extensive range and even a second wave of postmaterialistic generations has been identified. Russia, with the bottom ranking on the postmaterialistic index of World Values Survey however seems to have a long way only to reach the basic level of postmaterialism. Instead Russia is one of the most materialistic countries of the countries involved in the World Values Surveys (WVS, 2011).

### 1.5.1 The Generational Aspect

Political culture is not a static condition and is rather something which is in constant change. Studying political culture through generational analysis is a commonly used approach in order to understand the changes over time (Hahn; Logvinenko, 2008 p. 1346). Generations are coloured different due to the historical aspect of which they grew up and

became politically aware which leads to that different generations will have different approaches to the politics.

An example of a political generation in Russia is Putin's generation, which is the post-Soviet generation who grew up and became political conscious under the regime of Vladimir Putin. Young people in contemporary Russia have therefore in some contexts been referred to as "the Putin Generation" (Gerber; Mendelsen, 2008 p. 131). According to Gerber-Mendelson definition, the Putin Generation "tends to reflect and support the values and aspirations expressed by Putin" (2008, p. 131). They build their assumptions on statistics where one clearly can see an increased support for the president, especially among the youth. This study will partly also challenge the Gerber-Mendelsen definition of the generation as a unilaterally pro-Putin generation by looking to recent events which will establish evidence for an updated definition from another perspective.

Generational analysis will thus not be the focus of this thesis. To do a proper generational analysis two different generations in the same stage of the life needs to be compared (Hague; Harrop, 2010 p126). A full such generational study is yet not possible since political culture under the influence of democracy is relatively new in Russia. Also, the protests "for fair elections" are the first significant protest movements since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 243), and there are not really any comparable data from earlier protests in the range of "for fair election".

## 1.6 Operational Definitions

The study of political culture can be made through various aspects and a further definition of how this thesis aim to measure political culture is necessary to make sure the right elements are being measured without risking the validity of the measurement. This is further done by defining the indicators which will enable the term 'political culture' possible to measure (Teorell, Svensson, 2007 p. 55).

Based on the theoretical definition of 'political culture' some elements can be identified to play a central part in identifying different trends in political culture. The elements are rather easy comprehended and operationalises through general assumptions which can be considered viable also in other studies. All the elements will be measured

using data from surveys during the protests in 2011-13 (Sreda, 2012) and from World Values Survey (2011).

### 1.6.1 Aims of Country

Aims of country is identified through what tasks the respondents believe are of highest priority. The most suitable way to identify what people believe the most important tasks of the country is to look at a specific section from World Values Survey where the participants in the surveys are asked to rank what tasks or aims they considered to be the most important in their country. Thereby it is also possible to identify whether the tasks are of materialistic or postmaterialistic character. The result from World Values Survey will further on constitute the frame of reference to which tasks the protesters considered the most important. The results from the Sreda-surveys will also be interpreted and identified in terms of the of World Values Survey identified area of aims.

### 1.6.2 Political Activity

Political activity will be indicated by political activity through collective action. Meaning if and how frequent people takes active stands in politics by protesting or in other ways organize themselves to show dissatisfaction (or satisfaction) with the current politics. The Putin regime has as mentioned earlier a tendency of meeting such protest with pro-government protests. These protests are however arranged on a higher level and are originally not grass root-movements (Robertson, 2010). Yet it must be included in 'political activity' since it is extremely hard, if not impossible, to define what movements are based on actual beliefs or "staged" beliefs. And to even try to establish a such definition is a whole project in its own, and not within the frames of this thesis.

To further on measure political activity, the most appropriate way is to see how frequent people attend in political activities, as political protests or other meetings. Participation in elections and party affiliation will not be taken in account in this measurement of political activity.

### 1.6.3 Attitude Towards Democracy

Attitude towards democracy will be measured through how positive or negative people are towards a democratic system and how important they believe democracy is for a country. It will be identified through the level of importance of democracy, and importance of having a democratic political system but also the general attitude towards the concept of democracy.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Political Culture in Russia

Russia is defined as an illiberal democracy due to for example a lack of political pluralism in the electoral process and in the formal democracy and due to widespread corruption on all levels of society (Amnesty, 2016). The illiberalism furthermore, reflects largely in the political culture. The Putin regime, as well as in other illiberal democracies, unites the public opinion in areas as patriotism, coherence and a fear towards alleged enemies (Hague; Harrop, 2010 p. 126). That conservatism is on the vogue in Russia is common knowledge rather than a controversial claim and the dominant political culture in Russia is coloured by a pro-government approach thus an increase in authoritarian methods (Freedom House, 2017). Russia is in fact, of the countries included in World Values Survey one of the countries considered to be least postmaterialistic (WVS, 2011).

One could claim that Russia's incapacity to be a democratic country with democratic institutions and fair elections is because Russians, due to their authoritarian past, are unfamiliar with democratic behavior and values (Hahn; Logvinenko, 2008 p. 1347), which would explain the over-all low level of postmaterialism.

### 2.2 "For Fair elections" protests in 2011-2013

The book 'Protest in Putin's Russia' (Gabowitsch, 2016) has played a big part in understanding the nature of the protests "for fair elections". The author Mischa Gabowitsch goes on the depths exploring and explaining what happened in the 2011-13 protests, what led to them and finally what was to be followed (Gabowitsch, 2016). However, it was in this study not room for further analyzing of the book so it will unfortunately only play a subordinate role describing the essentials of the protests.

The opposition in Russia stands before a very dominant regime and is therefore vulnerable and easily manipulated. Widespread protests are a rather new occurrence in

Russia and it is constantly facing new challenges. Not least challenges related to the manual governing that characterizes the regime of Vladimir Putin. The manual governing refers to trying to affect people on grass root level by for example challenge oppositional demonstrations with pro-regime demonstrations and by not giving opposition movement media attention (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 54).

The protests in 2011-13 have been argued to be the first truly significant case of political mobilization in post-Soviet-Russia and thereby the first big step towards an active civil society (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 243). The protests started in connection to the duma election in 2011 and the presidential election in 2012. In December 2011 there were protests occurring somewhere in the cities of Russia during 21 of the total 31 days. The 10<sup>th</sup> of December over 100,000 people were gathered on Bolotnaya Square in Moscow (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 79). The demonstrations further on, went on and off between 2011 and 2013 until they gradually disappeared.

The aims of the protests were fair elections, the rule of law and for state institutions to work according to clear and impersonal rules (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 65). The protests can be interpreted as a natural reaction of for example of the systematic efforts to reveal corruption made by anti-corruption activists and politicians. This has consequently contributed to addressing corruption as Russia's biggest problem (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 65-66).

The protests in Russia 2011 to 2013 showed that people, and especially the youth, were willing to take active stand against the ultra-conservative turn of Vladimir Putin and the regime (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 1). The protests didn't however achieve the aims of changing the political system, instead the possibilities to organize authorized protests were minimized. It did though send a message to the regime that not all Russians were going to accept the authoritarian turn. In fact, a several hundreds of thousands showed their dissatisfaction in different ways during those years. The majority by protesting on the streets, but also on the internet the dissatisfaction was spreading among anonymous protest-supporters (Gabowitsch, 2016 p. 243).

The last couple of years since the protests in 2013 Russia has become even more authoritarian with an alarming corruption rate and sinking freedom score (Freedom House, 2017). Since the protests severe restrictions and repressive actions against protesters and activist have been performed, which have even contributed to an increased wave of emigration (Gabowitsch, 2016 p 241).

There were no signs of additionally big demonstrations until the last weekend of March 2017 when a wave of mass protests again found its way through Russia. The protests were unauthorized since the regime as consequence of 2011-13 forbid the gathering of crowds with the purpose of demonstrating. The protests were the result of a film which revealed prime minister Dmitri Medvedevs' expensive lifestyle benefitting from corruption. Hundreds of thousands of people in Russia again took the streets to show their dissatisfaction in the corrupted system (BBC, 2017). The film was made by the Russian anti-corruption Foundation (FBK) where the founder, Aleksey Navalny, is one of the biggest names in the Russian opposition movement (FBK – The anti-corruption foundation, 2017). Navalny was also the one urging the demonstrations in 2011-13.



# 3 Theory & Methodology

## 3.1 Ideal Type Analysis

The thesis aims to through a postmaterialistic approach establish a view of the political culture among the attendants in the “For fair election” protests. An ideal type analysis will be used in terms of two identified polar positions, a *materialistic* and a *postmaterialistic* position. The two identified polar types are the counterparts on a hypothetical scale of political culture. The identification of the polar types is based on previous science within the area of political culture, and mainly in the theory of postmaterialism. To identify the strength of the postmaterialistic tendencies among the protesters in “For fair elections”, data from World Values Survey will be used as reference point. World values survey is based on well-established methods and the results are commonly accepted. According to the reference point strategy the use of a reference point is beneficial since legitimizes further evaluation on the same line as the original measurement (Esiasson et al. 2012 p.149-150).

There are a lot of positive aspects of analysing material through ideal types. For example, it contributes to clarify other often muddy areas. Ideal type analysis, and especially by using polar types, is also beneficial when you aim to expose gradual differences or a study objects’ distinctive characteristics (Esiasson et al. 2012 p.139). Fundamental, when using ideal types as an analytical tool, is that no value is given to the different identified ideals. Instead they must be seen as hypothetical constructions with the aim to understand a certain social structure (Bergström; Boréus, 2012 p.166). Continuously, it should be emphasized that the ideal types are not average but rather extreme positions (Eriksson, 1989 p.186), and nor are the ideals in any sense 'ideal' as perfect or desirable (Bergström; Boréus, 2012 p.166). The difference between ideal type analysis and ideal type analysis using polar types is that the last mentioned constitutes the two utter positions on a scale (Esiasson et al. 2012 p. 141). In this study they establish a pure postmaterialistic and a pure materialistic position on the scale of political culture.

The tendencies identified from the data will simply be placed in the scheme according to the prearranged directions. The polar types will make it easier to crystalize the trends in political culture and their actual potencies (Esaiasson et al. 2012 p.141). With the help of the polar types we may test the validity of the hypothesis that the political culture among the protesters in “for fair elections” has very strong tendencies of postmaterialism.

## 3.2 Postmaterialism

The concept of postmaterialism has for a long time been a common way of understanding political culture. The idea was developed in the 1970s by Ronald Inglehart. Inglehart is continuously the leading figure of the world-wide research project *World Values Survey* through which changes from materialism to postmaterialism can be identified. Postmaterialism builds on the assumption that when a generation grows up and become politically aware under more physical and economic secure circumstances than previous generations, their values shift from materialistic *security* to postmaterialistic *self-expression* (Inglehart, 1977 p. 140). One can from the concept of postmaterialism draw many parallels to Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs with physiological needs as food and shelter as the first priority and self-actualization as the final (Maslow, 1969). Inglehart however, instead focuses on the cultural aspect where people in a not so postmaterialistic culture tend to place the need of economic growth and safety alongside with the need of law and order as the most important in their country. When materialistic priorities are accomplished people tend to give higher priority to the ideal based on humanism such as citizen input in government decisions, personal freedom and individual improvement. Political action is also a value which is considered to have a lot in common with a high level of postmaterialism, since it implies a certain wish to influence politics (Inglehart, 1977 p. 16).

An increase in postmaterialistic values continuously naturally leads to better chances for democracy to develop (Inglehart, 1977 p. 16). There are four main reasons for change from materialism to postmaterialism. These reasons are physical security, economic security, education and information (Inglehart, 1977 p. 11). Following aims are according to the Inglehart-index considered materialistic;

- Fighting rising prices.
- Maintaining a high rate of economic growth

- Maintain a stable economy
- Maintaining order in the nation
- The fight against crime
- Making sure that this country has strong defense forces

Postmaterialistic aims;

- Seeing that people have more say in how things get decided at work and in their community
- Giving the people more say in important government decisions
- Progress toward a less impersonal, more humane society
- Protecting freedom of speech
- Progress towards a society where ideas are more important than money
- Trying to make our cities and countryside

(Inglehart, 1977, p 40-42)

Postmaterialistic theory was first developed to measure shifts of values in well-developed democracies. In countries where democracy is on an early stage there is however a lot left to discover in terms of changes from materialism to postmaterialism. Inglehart himself said about the case of absent postmaterialistic development in Russia that Russia is a special case and that the reason Russia is moving towards more traditional values and in some extent also towards survival values was that the collapse of communism in fact was a declining of security rather than a rise of security (Brym, 2016 p. 196).

### 3.3 The Polar types

The polar types are constructed through the previous theoretic discussion and the idea of postmaterialistic and materialistic values and attitudes. The construction of the polar types is continuously grounded in what elements a political culture consists of referring to the earlier definition of political culture as a general pattern of values, beliefs and attitudes towards the political system.

The scheme expresses the characteristics of the two positions postmaterialistic and materialistic political culture based on three elements – *Aims of Country*, *Political Activity*

and *Attitude towards democracy*. The first position of a *postmaterialistic political culture* is identified when a clear strive towards freedom above security can be found. A postmaterialistic political culture also has very active role in politics, fighting for liberal rights such as freedom of speech and a highly encouraging attitude towards democracy.

The other position is a *materialistic political culture*, where people values security over freedom and are not politically active. The position which is referred to as *materialistic* do not crave political change and is more likely to stick to conservatism and is recognised by giving a rather satisfied impression in political issue, where safety and security is highly valued. When expressing distrust in liberal and democratic development materialistic trends can be identified.

	<b>Postmaterialistic Political Culture</b>	<b>Materialistic Political Culture</b>
<i>Aims of Country</i>	Self-expression	Security
<i>Political Activity</i>	Active	Passive
<i>Attitude towards Democracy</i>	Encouraging	Sceptical

### 3.4 Material

Both primary and secondary material will be used in the analysis. The primary material constitutes of surveys from the protests made by the research organization *Sreda*. This material is strategically chosen and establishes our object of study. Data from relevant questions of World Values Survey will be used to get a reference point in terms of the sum of the political culture of the whole population. The survey results from the protests are conducted from three different occasions during the protests “For fair elections”. Secondary material will be in terms of Ronald Inglehart’s theory of postmaterialism.

### 3.4.1 Sreda – non-profit research based consulting

To make qualified statements attempting to answer the question of study, yet within the frames of a bachelor thesis, three surveys from the demonstrations in Moscow in 2011 and 2012 will constitute the analyse objects. The secondary data for this study is collected from the independent research organization *Sreda*, which through 600 surveys have identified the typology of the protesters in Moscow the 24<sup>th</sup> of December in 2011, the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2012 and March 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 (Sreda, 2012a). Each of the surveys contains answers from 200 participants. Sreda is a non-profit organization ordering surveys and conducting research into values, attitudes and religious preferences of Russians. The religious aspect of the surveys will not be taken into consideration in this study, but since the questions regarding the religious preferences are separate it will not constitute a significant problem for the validity of the result. One could also claim that the participating protester's answers are in strong influence by the surroundings and the purpose of the protest, fair elections. When carefully studying the questions the assessment was made that the circumstances did not constitute an insurmountable obstacle. In benefaction of the study's validity the surveys also took place during three different occasions within three months and the answers did not differ remarkable between the occasions.

The results of the surveys are presented in a free text, diagrams, and sometimes in prearranged in groups based on answers of the respondents. The groups were identified based on the following questions;

- In what ways are you willing to express your protests?
- Why did you attend the rally?
- Are you likely to participate in the protest movement in the future?
- From the following list, please choose THREE tasks you consider to be of the highest priority of the Russian government?
- What kind of civic engagement are you personally willing to participate in?

(Sreda , 2012a)

Other questions included, and which will be further used in the analysis, is those regarding the support for democratic and liberal values.

### 3.4.2 World Values Survey

Data from World Values Survey will be used as reference to compare with the data of the view of the protesters. It will in other words represent the sum of the entire population's political culture. The respondents of the survey are the national population of Russia, including all genders over 18.

The over-all result of Russia's World Values Survey result in 2011 witnesses about a very low support for postmaterialistic values. The results will again be used as a reference to the values of the protesters. On the scale between a postmaterialistic and a materialistic political culture its positioned towards a rather materialistic direction (WVS, 2011). In the analysis, the sum of the results will mainly be taken in account, meaning that age or gender will not be specifically mentioned if it is not something which is of larger relevance. Answers in following areas from WVS 2011 will constitute the reference frame:

V60-V66: Most important aims of respondent/country

V85-94: Political Actions

V130: Political System: Having a democratic system

V140: Importance of democracy

### 3.5 Discussion of References

The surveys used in the study are from a rather small research center, which minor size can have both positive and negative impacts on the study. The negative aspect is the relatively small amount of people (600) that participated in the surveys. However, considering the size and ambition of the thesis a survey based on 600 people constitutes a sufficient base. The positive aspect is that one can be rather sure that the results are trustworthy since it is not funded by a bigger organization or state that might have their own interests in the results. It can still be that even though its independency individuals might have interest in certain results, but the risk is not imminent and it is nevertheless a risk one must take when relying on results from earlier surveys. A consideration of using data from the bigger Levada research center was also made since Levada is the organization that for example collects data for World Values Survey in Russia. The choice

to use data from Sreda is anyhow motivated with that the data from Sreda creates a new, interesting perspective on the studies of protesters and political culture.

World Values Survey is a well-known database for measuring political cultures. And are one of the databases where level of postmaterialism is being measured. The choice of using the results from 2011 is partly since it is the most recent but also since the data was collected about during the same time as the protests occurred.

Continuously there are many strong influences that might have their own different interests in what path Russia might take in the future, and nevertheless in what path people *believe* Russia will take. The aspect of potential different interests needs to be taken in consideration when estimating the legitimacy of the sources used in the study. For instance, an active choice was made not to solely use information from freedom house data since they have been accused of giving Russia unproportioned high scores. Daniel Treisman, a political scientist active at UCLA, criticized freedom house for giving Russia unproportioned ranking in civil liberties in which Russia got the same ranking as Yemen. Treisman claims the absurdity in the ranking referring for example to the active use of Sharia law in Yemen (Shcleifer; Treismann, 2003 p. 20-23). Freedom house anyhow is considered a very much reliable source and the annual report 'freedom in the world' is used broadly of scientists all over the world. Yet the study will combine information from different sources when for example presenting background information to get an as fair and realistic picture as possible.

### 3.6 Further Reflections

The questions asked to the attendants during the protests are not identical to those asked in World Values Survey. To make the results comparable some additional interpretation of the presented results will be necessary. For example, Sreda presents some of the results in groupings based on the answers of the respondents. The prearranged groupings will be used to a certain extent, but the data will also be presented individual depending on what is most suitable. Also, the aims of the surveys were different. World Values Survey aims to measure the level of postmaterialism in a country, while Sreda aimed to measure the typology of the protesters. The ideal scenario would of course yet be that the questions were identical but the different questions should however not constitute an imminent

obstacle. The aim of the study is after all not to find the exact differences, but rather establish a hint of how large the postmaterialistic tendencies among the protesters are in the areas of central values, political activity and attitudes towards democracy.

### 3.7 Hypothesis

Based on previous science and events one hypothesis can be recognised. The hypothesis grounds in an assumption that since the protesters were mainly young people which have grown up under secure circumstances they will hold much more postmaterialistic values than the total population. The hypothesis has support from a postmaterialistic perspective of security and self-realization. According to the hypothesis the political activity is of an active character and the protesters are thereby more politically active than the total Russian population according to Wold Values Survey. The attitude towards democracy will also be of a significantly more encouraging character than the attitude of the total population since the protests are in support for a change towards a more just and fair political system. The aims of the country, however is probably similar to our reference since both the protesters and the whole population obviously are under influence of the regime. An underlined word symbolizes towards which position the protesters should be pointing according to the hypothesis, which is

*The protest movement in 2011-13 will show strong tendencies of postmaterialism*

	<b>Postmaterialistic Political Culture</b>	<b>Materialistic Political Culture</b>
<i>Aims of Country</i>	Self-expression	<u>Security</u>
<i>Political Activity</i>	<u>Active</u>	Passive
<i>Attitude towards democracy</i>	<u>Encouraging</u>	Sceptical



# 4 Analysis

## 4.1 The Typology of the Protesters

75 % of the protesters were under 40 years old and one in three of the protesters were as young as 25 or under. The surveys conducted by Sreda recognized several different dominant reasons why people were protesting. A significant part of the protesters was defined as “students” and “car-owners” (Sreda, 2012a). Based on the answers the protesters were divided in four subgroups. 30-40 % of the protesters were labeled “*Sympathizers*”, which joined the rallies to defend civil rights and urge on the need for political reforms. These type of protesters, however, do not on a regular basis attend protests but were driven by the wave of dissatisfaction followed the presidential election. Another 30-40 % of the protesters were “*Activists*”, meaning that they frequently attend to protests, demanding reform and justice. This group of people is often involved in political campaigning, discussions and protests. Compared to the sympathizers this group will continue its active strive towards change in politics even after the protests “For fair elections”. Additionally 5-10 % attended out of pure curiosity, “*Fellow travelers*”. They do have interest in some social changes but do not criticize the authorities. The final group, “*Dissenters*” (5-10%), is the most extreme group in the way that they are willing also to take into physical action to defend their rights. This group very highly values freedom and they are the ones who most openly opposes the current regime (Sreda, 2012a).

Some additional facts concern the trust in authorities, which were central in all of the survey answers since it was remarkably low. The average trust in authorities was 2/10 and 6/10 in the opposition. Far from all the citizens associated themselves with the opposition (Sreda, 2012c).

The results of the protesters will further on be put in contrast to those of the whole population in the three previously identified elements of political culture. For clarity, the comparisons will be presented one element at the time before a final comparison.

## 4.2 Aims of Country

In World Values Survey the question of most important tasks are separated in three different questions with four different tasks for the respondent to rank in accordance to priority. Therefore, the answers must also here be presented in the different groups before it is evaluated and compared to the result of the protesters.

In the first list of choices the respondents placed “a high level of economic growth” and “seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities” as the most important tasks. The least important tasks among the four were “making sure this country has strong defense forces” and “Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful” (WVS V62-V63, 2011). The second most important task is an expression of postmaterialism since it witnesses about an aim of citizen engagement (Inglehart, 1977 p.40).

In the second group, the respondents placed “maintaining order in the nation” and “fighting rising prices” in top followed by “giving people more say in important government decisions” and “protecting freedom of speech” in the bottom (WVS V64-65, 2011). The top-priorities are both typically materialistic answers rather than postmaterialistic, and testifies of a physical and economic insecurity (Inglehart, 1977 p. 41). In this element of political culture, it seems relevant to also mention the younger generation of the respondents in World Values Survey since they responded a bit different than the rest of the population. Among the youth, “maintaining order in the nation” is still considered the most important task, while the second most important task instead was “giving people more say in important government decisions”. This is according to postmaterialistic theory a postmaterialistic aim and testifies further of needs of belonging and esteem (Inglehart, 1977 p. 40). Changes towards postmaterialistic values could be signs on that the more secure circumstances in the country also are reflecting on the values of the youth.

In the final list of choices, the results show that the most important task was “a stable economy” and the second most important task is “fight against crime”. Again, the two most important tasks are tasks considered postmaterialistic and again witness about lack of security. “Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society” and “progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money” were not considered as important (WVS V66-V67, 2011).

Further on when seeing to the results of the protesters, the most important tasks for the were ranked as follows; reform of the judicial system, (recount of the results of the presidential election) and fight with corruption (Sreda, 2012a). The second most important task is in parentheses since it applies for the specific purpose of protests and may not be considered as a general task if one do not understand it as “establishing fair elections”. Both the other tasks seem to be of a more materialistic than postmaterialistic character. The strive towards reforming the judicial system and fight against corruption most suitable goes under the aim of “maintaining order in the nation”. It is necessary though to again mention that the questions from the Sreda surveys and the World Values Survey are not identical, and the comparison can therefore be seen only as an indication. It is possible that if the protesters got the exact same questions the results might have been slightly different.

Anyhow, the surveys from Sreda did not show that protesters central values were significantly different from those of the whole population. This could at first sight seem rather surprising since one could assume that since the protesters are relatively young and seemingly aiming for democratic values in larger extent than the population as whole. At second sight one must take in account the big challenges Russia has in terms of establishing only the basic security in terms of physic and economic security. Not very surprisingly this leaves us with the assumption that postmaterialistic tasks in a wider extent won't be aimed for before materialistic security in the country is established.

### 4.3 Political Activity

The results from World Values Survey in political activity among the whole population shows that 12% have attended in peaceful protests, 22% might do and the most remarkable 63,5% would never do. Around 77% would never join strikes or boycotts, 17% might do and around 2% have done (WVS V85-94, 2011).

The same specific answers are not available among the protesters since the questions they got again were not identical with the ones constructed of World Values Survey. But referring to the identified subgroups based on the answers of the attendants in the protests: *sympathizers, activists, fellow travelers and dissenters* two of the groups can be considered very politically active. The two groups that on regular basis attend to protest

activities, campaigning, political discussion or in other ways being politically active are the big group of activists (30-40% of the protesters) and the more extreme group of dissenters (5-10%). These are also the part of the protesters which at least partly on principle strive for changes in the government (Sreda, 2012a)

50 % of the protesters would only take part of authorized rallies and were not in that aspect willing to take law into their own hands. 21% of the protesters would put up resistance to law enforcement and “to man up the barricades” (Sreda, 2012b). The sympathizers are the ones who explained their presence in the protest by that they simply have had enough, that they were tired of the unfair political system. Thus, this group, which constituted about 30-40% of the respondents, is not frequently attending in political protests or in any other ways are frequently politically active. They can be considered been carried away of the large size of protest movement but can definitely not be considered the leading force of the movement. The smaller group of fellow travelers are even less normally involved in political activities (Sreda, 2012a).

This is the element of political culture in which the protesters contrast the most from the general population. Almost half of the attendants in the protests are somehow regularly politically active in terms of some type of collective actions. Among the whole population only a very small part can be considered frequently politically active. The protesters separate a lot from the whole population in the matter of political activity and a big step towards the postmaterialistic position can thereby be distinguished.

#### 4.4 Attitude towards democracy

Regarding the attitude towards democracy, 70,8% of the whole population believe it is important to live in a democratic governed country (WVS V130, 2011). The survey results from Sreda showed that 75% supported the idea of liberalism and democracy. On the question of whether the country’s political system needs serious change 69 % agreed (37% strongly agreed, and 32% agreed), 14% disagreed (4% strongly disagreed, 10% disagreed), 17% didn’t wanted to answer or thought the question was too hard to answer (Sreda, 2012a). About the same percent of the survey attendants in World Values Survey and Sreda surveys from “For fair elections”-protests thought it was important to live in a democratically governed country. The protesters instead of expressing their support for

democracy and/or democratic values preferred to express support for the need of change and for the importance of values as “justice” and “honesty” (Sreda, 2012a). Even though the majority of the protesters were supporting the idea of democracy, it is less than expected referring to the hypothesis.

Among the premade groups identified among the protesters the group of *fellow travelers* were quite representative among those who did not support the idea of liberalism and democracy. Moreover, some of the *sympathizers* that were dissatisfied of how the presidential election was governed and urged for juridical reforms but not exaggeratedly against the authorities as such, could be assumed not value the idea of liberalism and democracy as high as the more explicitly oppositional *activists* and *dissenters* (Sreda, 2012a).

Democratic and liberal values are deeply connected to the theoretic and the operational definitions of the position of postmaterialistic political culture. Since the results are quite alike regardless the circumstances the protesters are placed somewhere in the middle of the materialistic and postmaterialistic part of the scale. If anything, a small sign of postmaterialism.

#### 4.5 “For fair elections” on a polar scale

To refine the results of the comparison and to identify the tendencies in their fullness the results will be placed in the classification scheme, with a scale running from a postmaterialistic political culture to a materialistic political culture. The results are presented in the scheme by an underline of the utter trends towards which the protesting movement showed the most tendencies.

	<b>Postmaterialistic Political Culture</b>	<b>Materialistic Political Culture</b>
<i>Aims of Country</i>	Self-expression	<u>Security</u>
<i>Political Activity</i>	<u>Active</u>	Passive
<i>Attitude towards democracy</i>	<u>Encouraging</u>	<u>Sceptical</u>

Within the first element of political culture, *aims of country*, the protesters were colored by the materialistic value *security*. Protests in postmaterialistic countries are more likely to focus on the value of freedom and self-expression and thereby express postmaterialistic aims. Russia is in a very large extent a materialistic country (WVS Y002, 2011) and this reflects also in the protests in 2011-13 in the materialistic aims of ‘maintaining order in the nation’ in terms of the need of reforming the juridical system and fighting with corruption. Previous science and statistic have already shown that Russia is in a very large extent is a materialistic country, and the aims of the protesters reflects also in the aims of the whole population. The result in this element of political culture is consequently not surprising, and is also in accordance to the hypothesis.

The result of political activity among the protesters was also in accordance to the hypothesis, and did even shown very strong trends of political activity. Especially among the distinguished groups of activists and dissenters the will to take matter in to their own hands was strong. The protesters were in general very lawful and only the most extreme part of the protesters was willing to take law into their own hands. The majority, however, would not in any ways break the law in their political activity and wouldn’t for example attend to unauthorized protests.

The results over-all mostly corresponded to the hypothesis, except in the attitude towards democracy, which was lower than expected. The relatively low support among the protesters is remarkable considering it was protests for fair elections in support for a seemingly democratic development. The carefully encouraging view towards democracy witnesses about a lack of postmaterialism. The results show that democracy is of a rather high importance in both groups, 70,8% among the whole population think it is important to live in a democratic governed country. 75% of the protesters supports the idea of democracy and liberalism. The majority of the protesters were additionally not in support for a powerful state, or a so called “vertical power” but also few people identified the movement as a movement “for democracy” or as a “liberal political movement” (Sreda, 2012a).

Unceasingly the result illustrates that the protesters in “For fair elections” show some tendencies of postmaterialism. However, the result does not give full support to the hypothesis which claims that the protesters should have very strong tendencies of postmaterialism.

## 5 Discussion: Understanding the results

After comparing the data from Sreda and the protests “For fair elections” with World Values Survey 2011 there are evidence to talk about postmaterialistic tendencies in Russia, but not as strong as one could assume according to the hypothesis. The results of the analysis show *some tendencies of postmaterialism*. Are the protest movements then to be comprehended as signs of emerging postmaterialistic values or as isolated events that grew big due to ‘the spirit of the youth’ not likely to have any larger impact on the political culture in the future?

A lot of postmaterialistic values and aims were expressed during the protests, and only the fact that people were protesting showed a strong will to defend the freedom of speech which is to be considered a postmaterialistic value. Political activity is also the aspect in which according to postmaterialistic theory the protesters separate the most from the whole population. Considering the identified aims of country, one additional aim was expressed but not through the answers but rather through action – the protection of freedom of speech. Since people took the streets to protest for a fair political system it is also a direct defend of the freedom of speech. This in addition to the results within the other elements lead to an assumption that the protesters do have more postmaterialistic tendencies than the population in total. This has however, not been taking in consideration when presenting the results. Again, this is a tricky element since it requires the materialistic security to in a large extent be established on a macro-level and may be pretty much unattached of the respondent’s individual preferences. Therefore, the results are similar despite which group that answers. The problems on a macro-level are in other words in large extent independent of who the observer is. Of course, one could imagine that people with different individual economic and materialistic security would in some extent have different opinions on the priorities of the tasks, but in general the aims on a macro-level will within a country be rather unitary.

Further on, the big majority supported the idea of democracy, but the protesters in general can be considered carefully encouraging. The significantly careful attitude towards democracy could be an example of remains of the recent authoritarian past and the limitations that followed, both physically and psychologically. There are though other possible explanations. Firstly, the generational aspect becomes actual to take in account

also in this question. Not all the protesters were a part of a young post-Soviet generation and a possible explanation to the materialistic tendencies is that the elder part of the protesters were the ones who expressed skeptical views towards for example democratic and liberal values. Secondly, the attendants of the survey may have given attention the concept of ‘liberalism’ and did not identify themselves with the term of liberalism. If the question would have asked only for the attitude towards democracy, perhaps the support would have been larger. Thirdly, the protesters, alongside with Russians in general, also have an extremely low trust for institutions. They prefer expressing their opinion or reason for protesting as they are aiming for justice and in need of change in contrast to the perhaps vaguer strives towards ‘democratic’ and ‘liberal’ values. The protesters would in such case hold both democratic and liberal values but are skeptical towards the terms and mostly towards the implementation of the values since they do not trust either the government, the opposition or institutions over all. This finding agrees with previous science (Hahn; Logvineko, 2008) that Russians seems to be careful when explicitly expressing both liberal and democratic ambitions. Trust for democratic and liberal values are in general not so high even among the protesters in “for fair elections”, and the strive towards fighting against corruption and a just society seems to the protesters more appealing.

The desire for change was what triggered people to take stands and protest on the streets during the nationwide protests in 2011 to 2013. That “only” seventy-five percent explicitly expressed a positive attitude towards democracy does, with previous argumentation, not constitute an obstacle for a claim of a significant postmaterialistic development.



## 6 Conclusions

The study has focused on a protest movement in Moscow, and analyzed the attendants using results from surveys conducted by the research organization Sreda. A hypothesis was established that the protesters would show very strong tendencies of postmaterialism since they seemingly had the right prerequisites. The result showed that there were signs of postmaterialism among the protesters but that the tendencies were not, as the hypothesis suggested, very strong. Yet with the theoretical background and the empirical analysis there are evidence to talk about an emerging postmaterialistic protesting political culture, and then especially among the youth. The thesis has analyzed the postmaterialistic tendencies of the attendants in a large protest movement in Russia with the aim of opposing electoral fraud, corruption and an over-all unjust political system. By doing so the study has broaden the field of study in political culture in Russia and additionally created a further understanding for the protesting movement in Russia through a postmaterialistic approach. The use of World Values Survey as a reference point was crucial for the understanding of the results of the protesters and to make them viable in other contexts. The postmaterialistic approach is beneficial since it is applicable on political cultures everywhere and a common tool of measuring political culture.

The most remarkable result was the protester's attitude towards democracy, which showed very similar numbers as the attitude of the whole population which includes also, referring to Natalia Zubarevich's four-categories-model, second and third category Russia. It has gone more than twenty-five years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the one group of people who should have the best forecasts to develop postmaterialistic values in Russia is the group of young, educated people in the bigger cities as Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Yekaterinburg. The protests which the thesis have been focusing on occurred in Moscow, and among the protesters again two thirds were a part of the young Putin generation which in general have grown up during rather secure circumstances. People in smaller cities might have less opportunities to develop postmaterialistic values due to the extreme diversities in Russia caused by an uneven modernization process (Zubarevich, 2012). To continuously compare the results of this study with protests during the same time in other cities, and beneficially cities considered a part of second category Russia (Zubarevich, 2015) would also be a fruitful continuation

of the study on the political culture of protesters in Russia. One could also imagine further science comparing the political culture of protesters using a postmaterialistic approach by for example seeing to protesting movements in other illiberal countries.

The element of political culture which shows the most tendencies of postmaterialism is the political activity among the protesters. Many of the attendants frequently join various political activities in addition to attending to peaceful protests. The protesters though seemed very willing to follow the law and more than half were willing to support protests only in authorized rallies. A comparison between the anti-corruption protests in March 2017 would therefore be an interesting entrance to further study of postmaterialism in Russia. The anti-corruption protests were completely unauthorized and it would be interesting to see how the values shift, and if the protesters in March 2017 in a larger extent were moving towards what in the study has been referred to as a 'postmaterialistic political culture'.

Lastly, political culture is a complex concept and this thesis has shown one course of action to understand it, and to further on identify characteristics in minor political cultures. The study has also contributed with an increased understanding not only for the complexity of political culture, but also for the complexity of political culture in Russia and the importance of seemingly minor movements but with big possibilities of development. The nation-wide protests "for fair elections" were again considered the first major step towards an active civil society in Russia. The results of the study give further evidence in support for a positive outlook of a postmaterialistic development in Russia with a particularly trust in the outlook of political activity.

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