

# The Image of the Future of Contemporary Russia

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## Abstract

*The paper analyzes the images of the future of Russia, which exist in the conscience of representatives of the modern Russian society. We have developed a comprehensive humanitarian analysis (CHA), which allows us to find a common denominator of social expectations in sources of different types. We introduce into scientific research such groups of sources as scientific forecasts, government and political programs, opinion polls and works of modern Russian literature. The results of our study include a description of the image of the future, which we have designated as “its own way” and two options of this way.*

**Keywords:** Image of The Future, Futures Research, Complex Humanitarian Analysis, Modern Russia.

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## Introduction

For the study of society, both pre-existing and present, the image of the future can be used as an essential parameter, which allows us to trace a very important characteristic of its life – the inclusion of the society in the time perspective. Summarizing the ideas about upcoming events and making the assessment of their capabilities and desirability, the researcher reconstructs a subjective temporal background, prevailing in the society and culture of the time. The ideas of the present condition of the society depend on its image of the future. The study of the image of the future allows us to trace the values and objectives of individual social groups and society as a whole and to see the emerging priorities for its further development. Weak signals, which allow us to successfully build short-and medium-term forecasts, can be noticed on the base of the study of the image of the future. The objective of this paper is thus to reconstruct the images of the future of Russia from the views of its citizens of the present society.

The study of the image of the future of modern Russia is of great importance not only for Russians, but also for the entire world community. In the modern world, Russia is not only the largest territory and population, but also a very powerful force in political, military-strategic, terms with a huge cultural heritage formed

over centuries. A very significant natural (resource), intellectual, technical potential of Russia is undeniable and gives it the opportunity to play a big role in the life of the modern world and to be a profitable partner for different countries. Russia is fully involved in the world community and in international relations at various levels and directions, which has positive results for Russia itself and its international partners. For these relations to be continued and developed in mutually beneficial perspectives, it is necessary to take into account social expectations common in contemporary Russia. This study of the images of the future of Russia is a fixation of social expectations rooted in the present state of Russian society, in an actual social reality with its problems and achievements. Understanding the images of the future makes it possible to understand more adequately the processes occurring in both domestic and foreign policy of Russia, to make them more predictable.

## Theoretical Principles

The foundation of the concept of “image of the future” belongs to Fred Polak, who defined it as a fantasy about the future, which is thought as “The Other”, the world, fundamentally different from the real one (Polak, 1973, p.11). Polak evaluated the image of the future as an object of research and at the same time as a statement of the problem, considering the introduction of this concept into social Sciences as a conceptual apparatus will add diagnostic power to them (Polak, 1973, p.22). Polak’s subsequent work was uneven in the view of other scholars (Van der Helm, 2005).

Unfortunately, the question of the nature of the image of the future did not come to Polak’s attention. We argue that the image of the future is a manifestation of collective consciousness, we mean that it is presented in the minds of individuals, but not limited by it. The image of the future is a kind of median of social expectations and attitudes towards the future, which was called “social imaginary” by Castoriadis (Castoriadis, 1975). A similar concept of “holistic future consciousness” is suggested by Lombardo. According to him, it means a set of psychological processes that include our hopes, fears about the future, planning, futuristic visions and stories (Lombardo, 2015). An essential component of the image of the future is the emotional attitude of the citizens of society to the possible perspective: fear of the future or hope for it, active or passive attitude of the expected perspective, its evaluation as desirable or undesirable. The image of the future reflects our attitude towards the future, involving both emotional and rational features: assessments, projections, estimates and projects (Kaboli & Tapio, 2018, p. 33). At the same time, the image of the future should be recognizable, obvious and perceptible. From this point of view, the image of the future also contains components of the collective unconscious, conveying hidden fears and hopes, desires and dreams, fears and premonitions.

It is its integrity that is important for the perception of the image of the future (Boulding, 1975), so the image of the future should be understood as a complete picture, relatively complete, which allows presenting not individual aspects of the development of social, political, economic, cultural spheres of society, and the life itself in the perspective. The image of the future reflects people’s ideas about the possible forms of development of the society in which they live and captures the probability of its future state. That is why the image of the future, functioning in a particular society, is rarely single. Images of the future are plural, they record expectations associated with the continuation of various current tendencies in the life of society, which often generate mutually exclusive pictures and contradictory answers to the question – what can be expected from tomorrow (Rubin, 2013).

The image of the future can be understood as a form of self-consciousness, self-determination of society. It forms in close connection with people’s assessment of their present. The analysis of images of the future of societies of the past shows that there is a fairly strong relationship between the way people see the future and the way they evaluate the present (Polak, 1973). In fact, ideas

about the future are formed by extrapolating to the future the tendencies observed in the present and deemed to be determinant (Kaboli & Tapio, 2018, p. 34). However, it is wrong to identify images of the future with all kinds of scientific forecasts: historical, economic, and political. Despite the fact that images of the future are supposed to be associated with the actual state of society, it, unlike the scientific forecasts, includes more than scientific calculation and rational assessment of opportunities and prospects. A significant influence on forming images of the future a subjective “acceptance” or “rejection” (collective blinding) of real tendencies and, accordingly, the inclusion or non-inclusion of them in the parameters of society that are worthy of continuation (Simandan, 2018, p.42). At the same time, the image of the future is not identical to a project or a long-term plan (Innes & Booher, 2015).

In this way, we can define the image of the future as the collective perceptions that exist in a particular society constituting a holistic and complete or relatively holistic and complete picture of the future of that society. This picture includes economic, political, social and cultural perspectives.

## Research Methods and Materials

As we have already noted, the image of the future is a phenomenon of social or collective consciousness, respectively; we do not really face the image of the future but its specific manifestations. The essence of our study is to form a generalized picture of the future, which is common to a certain culture of a certain time. At the moment, we cannot rely on the developed method of constructing a collective image of the future on the base of the sources in which only some of its individual sides are fixed. We believe that the method of selecting images of the future through Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), which is proposed by Kaboli (Kaboli & Tapio, 2018), is effective for identifying the vision of the future on the scale of the individual, but not on the scale of society. For our purposes, we have developed a comprehensive humanitarian analysis (CHA), which allows us to find a common denominator of social expectations in sources of different types. A comprehensive humanitarian analysis involves a number of stages. The first one relates to the search and identification of materials that contain ideas about the future. It is important for the sources of analysis to have a clear temporal, cultural and territorial localization. For periods of the distant past, sources of analysis will be almost exclusively literary and philosophical texts, journalism and epistolary heritage. The most representative sources of transmission of the contemporary image of the future are scientific forecasts, political projects, party and government programs, literature, cinema, philosophical works, fashion trends, – network games, groups in social networks, sociological surveys.

In this paper, we will consider various groups of sources. Firstly, we will consider scientific forecasts concerning the future of Russia, government and political programs, drawing on the prospects for the development of various spheres of Russian society. We will focus on sociological surveys that reflect the social expectations of Russians. In conclusion we will deal with the images of the future of Russia described in modern Russian literature.

Our choice is determined by the fact that these sources are directly devoted to the representation of pictures of the future. In the future, the range of sources is planned to be expanded due to the analysis of cinema, public introductions and statements in social networks of media persons (politicians, actors, athletes, economists) and Russian oligarchs.

The second stage of the CHA involves the consideration of individual groups of sources in order to highlight the main parameters of the future, distilling them by the similarity parameter. As a result of this technique, we found a leading tendency in the vision of the future within a certain group of sources – scientific forecasts, political projects, literary works, etc. The analysis carrying out at this stage takes into account the specifics of the studied group of sources. Its methods differ in terms of the degree of rationality of sources, the presence of associative and emotional components in them.

For example, in this study we refer to such a group of sources as contemporary Russian literature. Among the novels published after 2000, narratives and short stories, we single out the most popular works that speak of the future of Russia. These works with a total circulation of 20 to 200 thousand copies, which are widely popular, screened and published in audio format, include two groups. The first one includes such works as “Kys” by T. Tolstoy, “Tales for idiots” by B. Akunin, V. Sorokin’s novels “Blue Fat”, “Oprichnik’s Day” (the novel was included on the short list of the International Booker Prize in 2013), “Sugar Kremlin”, “Tellurium.” In their plots there are such themes of the future of Russia that include the absolutism of power with the lack of a clear division of its branches, a significant influence of the church on ideology, the domination of the traditional way of life, the absence of democratic institutions, rigid class differentiation, resource-oriented economy with elements of natural economy. On this basis, we make a conclusion that in literary works one of the tendencies in the vision of the future of Russia is retrospective conservatism. The second group includes a series of science fiction novels “Zones of Death” by A. Livadny, R. Glushkov, V. Shalygin, A. Kalugin, and “Metro 2033” by D. Glukhovsky, in which pictures of the post-apocalyptic future are drawn with an emphasis on the adventures of the loner hero in the plot version “I Am a Legend” by Richard Matheson. However, since these pictures are present only in literary sources, and are absent in other types of documents, we leave these ideas beyond the scope of our consideration.

At the third stage of the CHA, there is a thematic grouping of elements of the vision of the future. In the whole complex of sources, we highlight a similar idea of certain areas of society: ideas about the future of the economy, politics, social relations, and culture. We formulate general tendencies of the future on the basis of the selected common ideas.

For example, at the second stage of the comprehensive humanitarian analysis (CHA), we found that in a number of scientific forecasts, the future of the Russian economy was estimated pessimistically, the preservation of the raw materials orientation of the economy with a gradual reduction of resources was predicted, another group of prognosticians believed that the future would modernize the economic system and increase economic development. In the government and political projects in the economic sphere, no major changes and no economic modernization are planned to be carried out. Non-governmental development projects of Russia focus on the political aspects of the future, without paying serious attention to the economy. Sociological polls demonstrate the two most common types of Russian expectations that related to the economic sphere – raising living standards and preserving the existing nature of the economy, which reflect the social expectations of Russians, and we touch upon the images of the future of Russia, described in modern Russian literature. Consequently, a common point in the presentation of Russia’s economic future will be stagnation, the lag and the absence of serious hopes for an economic leap or an innovative breakthrough.

At the final stage, the analysis is replaced by synthesis, and we combine all the common features into one or more images of the future, which are typical of the studied culture. A further article is devoted to the description of these images of the future.

## **Main Tendencies in The Vision of the Future of Russia in Different Types of Sources**

### **Scientific forecasts for the future of Russia**

In a rather long-standing, from the standpoint of the present, report of 2001, the experts of the Russian INDEM Fund identified four basic scenarios for the future of Russia, denoting them as “Sluggish Russia”, “Gloomy Russia”, “Smart Russia” and a catastrophic one, which was not named. The first variant of development of Russia assumed consolidation of the existing elite

groups with the only purpose-preservation of the existing arrangement of political forces. The goals of self-preservation of power prevailed in it over the needs of modernization of the economy and of strengthening the legal principles which were still preserved. The prognosis of “Gloomy Russia” also stemmed from the reluctance of power structures to lose the power, but unlike the first model, it assumed a split of elites and the establishment of dictatorship. The elite group that won the fight, as it was in the first case, focused on self-preservation and strengthening of its power. The third scenario of “Smart Russia” was focused on the existence of a political system that would be adapted to genuine political competition. In this scenario it was supposed to achieve a political consensus taking into account the interests of non-elite groups, strengthening the legal culture of all levels of society. The catastrophic scenario was not detailed by the authors of the report and assumed the collapse of Russia (Russia-2015).

Analyzing the more relevant scenario of the future of Russia, Deputy Director of the Institute of history and policy of the Moscow state pedagogical University, V.L. Shapovalov allocates them in three groups: inertial, optimistic and catastrophic (Shapovalov, 2016, p. 101). The inertial scenarios of the future presuppose the preservation of the current ruling elite, the raw orientation of the Russian economy, the lack of high-tech production and the degradation of the social sphere: science, education, medicine. A variant of this type of scenario is the MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) forecast “Alternative scenarios of the Russian future” called “Russian mosaic” (2008). As the title suggests, this forecast plays out the possibility of a “mosaic”, decentralized Russia, in which people and regions will be given a chance to live “as they do.” In this situation, regions with successful commodity exports will expand their autonomy, and the economically weak ones will gravitate to the Federal center. In this forecast, Russia fits into the globalization process taking place “according to the Western model”, not always beneficial for it, but assuming the growth of the world economy. At sufficiently low oil prices, brain and capital leakage from the country will increase. In relation to the developed countries, Russia will clearly lose, but will maintain relative internal stability and the possibility of development in the even more distant future (Melvil & Timofeev, 2008).

Catastrophic forecasts for Russia assume “the disintegration of Russia or the loss of its sovereignty in the face of deteriorating external environment, the growth of existing and new external political and economic threats” (Shapovalov, 2016, p. 10).

Optimistic scenarios are based on the assumption that the socio-economic system of Russia and its armed forces will be modernized in the near future and the political elite will change (Kara-Murza & Patokov, 2010). A variant of this forecast is the “New dream” scenario, in which a new political coalition comes to power, supported by the most active part of the population; a truly legal state is formed, bureaucracy and its impact on the economy is significantly reduced. The main resources of the country are focused on internal modernization. Market mechanisms in the economy do not exclude social insurance system (Rudnickaya & Sagakova, 2016).

It should not be forgotten that the majority of experts agree that the relative stability of the Russian political system can be remained at least up to 2020, after which the explosion or disintegration of the system is extremely likely (Kulik, 2016, p.182).

### **Government programs and policy projects**

Since 2000, the Russian government has regularly published works, which define the strategy and direction of future development of Russia. Most prominent among them were the: “Strategy 2010 or Gref Program” (the program of social and economic development of the Russian Federation for 2000-2010, prepared in 2000), “Fundamentals of the policy of the Russian Federation in the field of science and technology for 2010, and future prospects” (2002), “Main directions of the policy of the Russian Federation in the field of development of innovative systems for the period up to 2010” (2005), “Strategy of innovative development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020”



(2011), “Forecast of scientific and technical development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 as a single platform for the development of long-term strategies” (2014). It is noteworthy that in all these documents the key role in determining the priorities of the country’s development and shaping the future of Russia is played by the President, which is enshrined in the Federal law, which is called “On strategic planning in the Russian Federation” (O strategicheskoy planirovani v Rossijskoj Federacii, 2014).

### **Non-governmental development projects of Russia**

Within the conversation about the future of Russia, in our opinion, it would be interesting to turn to two non-governmental projects of the development of the country which most fully reflect the dominant tendencies. These are a constitutional project, created on the initiative and support of the Institute of national strategy (2005) and the project ‘Russian doctrine’, created on the initiative of the Fund “Russian entrepreneur” under the auspices of the Center for dynamic conservatism (2008) (Kobyakov, Averyanov, & Kucherenko, 2010).

The project of the Institute of national strategy proposes to abandon the model of “state-nation” in favor of the model of “state-civilization” with a powerful center of authority – the President, who “exercises unified supreme power in Russia” and is unchecked by any state other bodies. Along with the institutions of state administration – the State Assembly of Russia (the Federation Council and the State Duma), the Government of Russia, the Supreme Council of the national unity, the courts of Russia, a special role is given to the Russian Orthodox Church, which, with state support, carries out religious and social services. The Supreme Council of national unity is, in fact, a representative supervisory body. It is formed from senior officers, representatives of traditional faiths, members of the Academy of Sciences, delegates from universities. The functions of the Supreme Council of the national unity include, inter alia, nominating a candidate for the election of the President of Russia; the issue of discharge of the President from office; monitoring the observance of freedom of speech and respect for public morality in the federal media; and monitoring the quality of educational programs and standards in Russia.

Even more radical changes in the entire state structure are proposed by the “Russian doctrine” project, which openly declares the need to abandon the consideration of democracy as the only political value. As an alternative, the authors of the project propose the “ideal of spiritual sovereignty and the ideal of social truth”, which combines autocratic and aristocratic principles. By analogy with the slogan “Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality”, the authors of the “Russian doctrine” offer a triad of self-consciousness “national – generic – individual”. The principle of democratic framework is partially preserved in the Zemsky Sobor, manifested in “public representatives” chosen by “electors of communities”, and performs the function of approving new laws. Legislative functions belong to the Senate, the formation of which comes from representatives of the aristocratic class. This institution, which is externally irremovable, consists in equal shares of representatives of the military-service class, representatives of the clergy, mainly of the Russian Orthodox Church, academic and University circles and members of the Senate appointed by the head of state. The Senate combines legislative, representative, executive, supervisory and partly judicial functions. The autocratic principle is embodied in the ruler, in whose hands all the fullness of power and the right to cancel the decisions of the Senate are concentrated. The Doctrine does not specify the principle of nomination of the head of state, as well as the name of the ruler. The candidacy of the head of state is nominated by the Senate and receives national support through the vote of the people’s councils, the approval of the Senate, the Military Council and the ROC (Russian Orthodox Church), and, if possible, should take into account the opinion of the last head of state expressed in the will or recommendation.

Thus, if political science forecasts and government programs, are compared the initially identified development options are moderately pessimistic. They anticipate strengthening the central

government, curtailing democratic governance mechanisms of society, the closure of the elite layers, their rigidity, the perpetuation of natural resource commodity exportation and, at the same time, the weakening of social guarantees to the population from the state. In this context, it is very interesting to turn to sociological surveys that reveal the expectations of citizens related to the future of Russia.

### **Sociological surveys**

A research by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences carried out in spring, 2012 showed that 76% of the Russians are in favor of strengthening the role of the state in all spheres of society in the future, 53% consider it possible to combine a socially oriented state with a capitalist economy, generally recognizing that justice is more important than freedom, and the consolidation of society is more important than personal wealth. At the same time, personal expectations of the Russian citizens are focused on improving welfare, security and stability. Social expectations of Russian citizens in the first place (45%) are associated with social justice, equal rights for all the citizens, a strong state that cares about its citizens. Approximately in equal shares, but with a significant lag (28%, 27%, 27%, respectively), the Russians are waiting for the protection of human rights, democracy, freedom of expression of the individual; stability; Russia's return to the status of a great power (Khalii, 2015). Analyzing the results of a poll of young people in Moscow, Vladimir Regnatsky says that young people imagine their lives on only a roughly two-year time horizon., and among the goals facing Russia over the next 10 years, they reflect a high level of pessimism about economic development – 27.6%, and the preservation of order in the country – 20.8% (Regnatsky, 2016, p.258).

Survey research from the Department of Sociology and Psychology of Politics of the Faculty of Political Science of Moscow State University conducted from June 2015 to March 2016 showed that 43% of the Russians expected that in the near future the borders of Russia would not change, 36% hoped that the borders would increase at the expense of the parts of the former Soviet Union, but 23% feared that the territory would decrease. According to the same source 90.9% of the Russians saw the US as an external enemy and 41.8% – the Ukraine; a strategic partner was associated with China (87.5%), Germany (25%) and India (25%) (Levashkina, 2016).

As we can see, the value preferences of the Russians fall into two vectors: the dominant one is the orientation to the values of the consumer society and the less distinct one – to the consolidation of the society. According to the above data, it is clear that the expectations of the population do not coincide with the government's plans and political programs in the field of social protection, but the population and the government are quite unanimous in the issue of strengthening the Central government. Literary works, the plot of which is somehow connected with the future of Russia, reveal the same vector of expectations.

### **Literary works**

Literary images of the future of Russia as a whole are rather pessimistic. Since 2000, writers turning to the image of the future of Russia, have very often used the past, archaic forms of life to describe the future. In Tatyana Tolstaya's novel "Kys", published in 2000, a return to the past is explained by the degradation caused by nuclear war. In this novel we see the world of mutants: plants, animals and people – the traditional patriarchal relationship in which the husband "clobbers" his wife, the authorities "teach" the common people beating them with hooks; the main source of information are rumors, and printed books are destroyed as the sources of radiation sickness. In the same year a popular Russian writer Boris Akunin published a collection of short stories "Fairy Tales for Idiots", which tells about an alternate reality where there was no revolution. Aristocratic power and a distinct class division of Russia coexist with new technologies; oligarchs and officials are traditionally corrupt; journalists are unscrupulous while terrorists are merciful and God-fearing. The future Russian reality is inert and hopeless.

Similar pictures of the future of Russia are created by the modern Russian author Vladimir Sorokin. The image of the Church as the most important element of the future of Russian society, tending to absolutism in domestic politics and isolationism in foreign policy, can be considered a kind of “calling card” of the writer. The novel “Blue lard” (1999) is the first in a series of novels about the future of Russia. Its story appeals to the future, as much as to the past. In this novel Russia in 2048 appears in the form of a phantasmagoric picture, which combines scientific breakthroughs – a time machine, cloning, cultivation of antientropic substance “blue lard” – the realities of Soviet everyday life of the mid-20th century and the allusion of the military-monarchical structure of society. In the novel “Oprichnik’s day” (2006), we see the implementation of the “great Russian idea” and the dream of a special way of development of the country with unique spirituality and unique social norms. In Sorokin’s novel “Oprichnik’s day” Russia by 2028 has returned to full isolation and is fenced off from the outside world by the Western wall, the owners of passports voluntarily burn them in Red Square, books that contradict the autocratic ideology and ideology of “Domostroy” (The Household Management Code of the Russian medieval times) are burned in Manezhnaya square in Moscow. The economy combines the features of subsistence farming and raw materials economy which makes Russia an appendage of Western countries. Income from gas exports allows a growing elite, officials and the military to exist on a grand scale of living standards. According to Sorokin, in Russia, 2028, the arbitrariness of officials of all levels and the Church clergy is flourishing. In this novel, Russia is still a centralized state, but it is obvious that the unified power and the law do not operate on its territory. Daily life includes a return to the traditional way of life with semi-criminal and openly criminal orders which is opposed to the Western way of life. The collection of stories “Sugar Kremlin” (2008) continues to develop the image of the future of Autocratic Russia of the mid-21st century. In this work the author focuses on certain aspects of life of the Russians: impunity of chiefs, obedience of ordinary people, the practice of corporal punishment, the ritualization of various forms of life and its strict regulation. The elite in isolated Russia is focused on Chinese goods; apartment buildings are heated with wood, while fuel is supplied to the hated West. Fragments of the “Sugar Kremlin”, a kind of sweetness, are issued on coupons given at people’s places of work. At the same time, in everyday life there is a number of “fruits of technological progress”: mobile phones, portable computers, fur coats with viviparous fur and cyborgized implants.

In the novel “Tellurium” (2013) some features of the image of the future of Russia are changing. Here we get acquainted with Russia, which is divided into separate areas: small monarchies, vast principalities, areas-patrimony, tyranny, oligarchy and even decorative Communist state, living due to tourism business. In this work Sorokin outlines Europe as a fragmented territory being permanently, with varying success, in a state of war with Islamic world under the leadership of new crusaders. In Russia, in the middle of the 21st century dwarves coexist with giants, zoomorphic beings coexist with chimeras – genetically engineered creatures. In addition, in the Russian reality of future created by the author, presidents fly on artificial wings to visit the shepherds, cooking pilaf on the fire, the machines work on potatoes’ fuel, and the universal computer gives advice on where it is better to get the bast for bast shoes. Fallen into several parts, the territory of Russia is united by servility, loyalty feelings among the people and old-fashioned Orthodoxy. And, quite unexpectedly, in Russia of the future, according to the author, there is sexual freedom.

## Two Versions of the Image of the Future of Russia

The leading direction in the representation of the image of the future by modern Russians is the paradigm, which can be designated as “its own way”, and its two options “open” and “closed”, characterized by the presence or absence of alleged contacts with the outside world.



### **Common features of the “its own way” paradigm**

To begin with, let us consider a number of common points presented in two versions of the future. The image of the future, presented in the paradigm “Its own way”, has a distinct character, oppositional to the “European” one. This image of the future is based on the traditional Russian values such as refusal of absolutization of the elective principles in formation of authorities, recognition of existence of own traditions of organizing and functioning the power. The main political heritage, which the modern Russian society should return to, is the paternalism of the government, the willingness to significantly reduce civil liberties in exchange for guarantees of stability. The future of Russia is seen as the future of the state-civilization, not as the state-nation. Unlike the state-nation, state-civilization is based on the lack of traditional institutions of civil society and informal relationship between the government and citizens. Strengthening of the central authority is seen as a partial rejection of the principle of power-sharing in favor of the individual board and increasing the head of state’s authority, the actual removal of the head of the state out of the system of authorities’ mutual accountability. In this model of the future Russian, the society has a developed social hierarchy which reflects both the class and property principle of differentiation. On the growing role of the state in the economy and public life in general, the social sphere, however, becomes one of the few in which the state consistently reduces its participation, abandoning such social guarantees to its citizens as access to health care, education and assistance to the poor. In accordance with the “national traditions” voluntary donations, patronage and mutual assistance will have to provide support to representatives of the lower social strata. This image of the future presupposes the strengthening of the influence of the Church and the Army, both in politics and in the social sphere. At the same time, science, art and sport will be available only to the elite.

### **“Open” version of the image of the future of Russia**

The “open” version of the “Its own way” implies the preservation of Russia’s integration with other countries, but at the same time there is a decentralization of power within the country. In this version of the future, the Russian world preserves cultural unity and economic integration with political autonomy of individual regions (up to separation). In the event of the collapse of Russia, the post-Russian States or Autonomous entities in the system of a loose political whole are actively involved in the globalized world, open to both the West and the East in the field of trade and in the field of joint political projects. Centrifugal or centripetal forces, manifested in the Russian regions, depend on the degree of their economic efficiency, while the economy of most of them will remain resource-oriented. The above-mentioned principles of the organization of power remain relevant within the framework of individual political actors.

### **“Closed” version of the image of the future of Russia**

The “closed” version of the image of the future of Russia, as the name implies, is focused on foreign policy isolationism and the strengthening of Federal power. The phrase “Russia is the main thing for us” can be the slogan of this image of the future. This position is obviously shared by those Russians who perceive political decentralization as a national disaster. Power in this version not only has a high level of legitimacy, it also reveals a desire for totalitarianism, regardless of the policy. The principles of succession of authorities, accountability, election, limitation of powers almost completely leave this image of the future. If in the “open” version of “its own way” the strengthening of power was justified by the care of citizens, the supporters of the “closed” model choose autocracy, hoping to avoid the collapse of a unified state. The degree of government intervention in the non-government spheres, primarily the economy, allows us to talk about etatism in its worst manifestations as the principle of any equal distribution or integrated planning is not

expected. Class structure in a situation of isolationism affects the level of consumption—extremely low for some and exponentially abundant for others. In this image of the future, Russia tends not only to the police, but also to the paramilitary state. The approach of the power structures to elite positions is explained by the lack of social guarantees and the general decline of the cultural level of the Russians. Both “open” and “closed” variants “of the way” are clearly retrospective and focused on the idealization of a strong power, the imperial claim, the justification of severe social differentiation and, finally, the active intervention of the Church in public social sphere. In fact, this image of the future is a militarized version of the monarchical social ideal of pre-revolutionary time in Russia, one of the weakest images of the future.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have turned to the study of the image of the future, which is interpreted as a median of social expectations presented in a certain period in a certain society or a part of it. We argue that the image of the future is a phenomenon of social (collective) consciousness presented in the minds of individuals, but is not limited by it. It is obvious that the image of the future acts as a factor which unites the society, as if it is spilled in individual minds, manifesting itself in the works of fiction, in scientific, philosophical and journalistic literary texts, cinema, folklore and in the other great variety of sources. Introduction of the concept “image of the future” to social studies can be seen as a continuation of the process of considering such a phenomenon as society through the use of concepts that have an existential meaning: “disease”, “sexuality”, “death”, “old age”. On this basis J. Bataille, J. Deleuze, M. Foucault, J. Baudrillard analyze the vertical sections of society and trace their dynamics. The introduction of these parameters replaces the theoretical modeling of the society as a whole, reproducing the anthropological aspect of social life. Within the framework of this tradition, the analysis of the image of the future allows us to identify the world outlook priorities of the society, its value orientations and targets. It is important that the study of the image of the future, in our opinion, allows us to notice even minor changes in the perceptions in the society, which in the future can determine the direction of its development.

To work with the images of the future, we proposed the use of a Comprehensive Humanitarian Analysis (CHA), comprised of four stages. At the first stage, there is a search and identification of materials representative of a particular time and society ideas about the future. At the second one, a separate groups of sources are analyzed in order to highlight the main parameters of the future, which will be united by their similarity. At the third stage of the CHA, there is a thematic grouping of elements of vision of the future, ideas about the future of politics, economy, culture, social relations. At the fourth stage, there is a synthesis, which combines all the common features in one or more images of the future which are characteristics of the studied culture. In this paper we presented the image of the future “Its own way”, which is relevant for modern Russia and contains extrapolation into the future of two trends of the present: the growth of liberalization in the social sphere and the strengthening of the state’s influence on the economy. “Its own way” as an image of the future of Russia involves the recognition of the country’s own traditions of the organization and functioning of power, including paternalism of power, the willingness to significantly reduce civil liberties in exchange for guarantees of stability, partial rejection of the principle of separation of powers in favor of the individual rule and increase of the powers of the head of state, the actual removal of it from the system of mutual accountability of authorities. Within the framework of this image Russia is considered as a society with a developed social hierarchy reflecting both the class and property principles of differentiation. This image of the future presupposes the strengthening of the influence of the Church and the Army both in politics and social sphere.

The “open” version of “Its own way” implies the preservation of Russia’s integration with other countries, both Western and Eastern ones in the field of trade as well as in the field of joint political

projects. At the same time, centrifugal or centripetal forces presented in the Russian regions depend on the degree of their economic efficiency despite the fact that the economy of most of them will remain resource-oriented. The “closed” version of the image of the future of Russia is focused on foreign policy isolationism and strengthening of the Federal government.

However, this image seems to us to be unstable, there is high probability of its rapid change. The fact that their elements are actively present in political projects, that is, they are purposefully created by politicians, speaks in favor of the short duration of the described options for the future, while opinion polls demonstrate low personal interest of Russians in the future, beyond two years they plan their future less than 8% young people (Regnatsky, 2016, p.257). Increasing the interest of Russian citizens in their future will not be reflected in their image. Many Russian researchers believe that there is no image of the future in modern Russia (Kulik, 2016, p.181), but there is only an order for its formation (Mukhametshina & Urakova, 2017). Such an assessment indicates that the images of the future of modern Russia are poorly discernible, imperceptible, because they are not clearly expressed. The predominance of retro features in the image of the future, as it happens in the images we describe, suggests that popular self-perception is not focused on the future, but on the past. But this is not a characteristic state for it. Finally, the conclusion about the instability of the images of the future, which we have described, may have been influenced by the fact that we do not share these future pictures and hope for a different future for Russia. The image of the future is the self-perception of the present, the assessment by the society of what is considered at the present to be continued in the future and how it will affect the society if the tendencies estimated as dominating today find the continuation tomorrow.

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