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**MOBILIZATION OF SOCIAL RESOURCES WITHIN POLITICAL
INNOVATIONS: NETWORK COMMUNICATION PRACTICES,
TENDENCIES, VULNERABILITIES**

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Abstract

The paper considers opportunities of application of sociological approach to identify mobilization of social resources within political innovations placed on on-line platforms. Formation and development of political innovations in the society is bound to resources' provision for new and adopted (transfer) projects. The complexity of such research is caused by vague characteristics and properties of the Internet users. There are conditions that likely influence the choice of participants/users of socio-political practices within the network community. The sociological survey deals with issues of resources mobilization in the region within financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), Grant 17-33-01108 Mobilization of initiatives of local population in solution of social territorial problems. The paper suggests both traditional and new mobilization forms of social resources application within political innovations. Domestic and foreign studies note high potential of modern information and communicative systems. In this regard, the Internet communication demonstrates an opportunity to unite communicative practices of its users in time or even space (virtual). Gaming technology and various visual design tools are distinguished among modern methodological approaches, which are successfully combined with information and communication media. Political innovations in the Internet foster mobilization of social resources in their new form, place (space) and quality of socio-political communication. The study of social resources of political innovations within the Internet communications is a new methodological field of sociological study, which is characterized by flexibility of research levels, depth of study, modern research methods and conditions of "place" and "time" of participating parties.

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1. Introduction

Possibilities of sociological diagnostics and maintenance of modern mobilization technologies within social communities remains a relevant topic, especially taking into account modern risks and vulnerable conditions of social and political development of the Russian Federation and dynamic international socio-political processes. There is a reasonable contradiction between available and attracted resources, which participants of innovative processes are forced to mobilize within a traditional field and to apply within new conditions that are at times different from routine social practices.

There have been many sociological studies devoted to consistent use of modern means of communication by citizens. “Modern politicians communicate with their electorate through media. Large elections and the majority of political campaigns in general became a television-wide phenomenon. Television replaces active participation and deteriorates local structures of informal public organizations (grass-roots); even more political attention is paid to remote sources of power and manipulation” (Oldenburg, 2014, pp. 127-128).

It is possible to distinguish two problems of the study devoted to resources of political innovations in conditions of modern network interaction. First, this includes the development of political innovations within network communications (large-scale governmental and international projects, massive network actions, etc.). Second, it is the formation of new communicative practices and social technologies due to transition of participants of socio-political interaction to “virtual fields”.

1.1. Features of social resources in virtual mobilization of innovations.

Modern practices of socio-political interaction show multiple communication structures, transformable schemes of social and political relations, diametrical alignment of public (personal physical participation or use of dedicated mass media and communication media channels) alongside with virtual methods of interaction. As a rule, routine practices represent consistent and expected series of events for every participant of social interaction within the system of network communication. “An event is a conceptual complex meaning unity corresponding to the act of observation. This conceptual complex includes fulfillment of tasks in space and time. The event is identified by an observer as something being fulfilled (i.e. happening), or as something having clear completeness allowing separating it from other events)” (Filippov, 2004, pp. 3-28).

Particular attention shall be paid to spatial remoteness of an event. Thus, one can assess the fulfillment of an event by observing something different around, i.e. within the area of direct sensual approachability, which may seem relevant. However, this importance is related to the development or use of means of communication (Gusserl, 1994). As E. Giddens noted the “depletion of time” in many respects is a prerequisite of the “depletion of space” since coordination in time serves the basis for control over space” (Giddens, 2011).

Social resources represent a pool of reserves, means, and potentials of social interaction, which are used (can be used) in society during social interaction and social events.

Sociologists show interest in the use of the Internet (World Wide Web) to study information and communication space of virtual communities due to specificity of the study object and an opportunity to

receive a fast response in comparison with traditional survey methods, to observe and maintain mobilization opportunities of certain citizens or groups almost in a real time mode.

Thus, it is important to emphasize that social resources maintain their primary qualities and properties in the Internet and perform the consolidating function in the system of socio-political relations at a modern level of interaction.

1.2. Features of political innovations within network communications.

Specific nature and character of innovations offered to the society are not only limited to the imposed model of assimilating something new in the society. The processes of socio-political interaction include spontaneous innovations in their latent and explicit forms. Modern fundamentals of socio-political processes in the Russian society are linked to the fact that new political projects serve as an initiative imposed “from above”, while related resources are formed and used by participants of interaction “in situ” and often without regarding regional features, depth of issues of resource exchange in the absence of necessary reserves and their handling. Political innovations are understood as the operating set of relevant methods and means allocated for high-quality changes, transformation of existing practices of socio-political interaction in the society.

Researchers note that concepts of “resource mobilization” and “structure of political opportunities” (Achkasov, 2014, pp. 81-89) along with other communicative and activity approaches can define the quality and focus of political innovations in the society.

In general, civil/political actions are inclusive since they are capable to form new channels and methods of civil participation and in fact contribute to the enforcement of rights for a wider public, who in the past were not capable to identify and exercise their rights and interests (Filippova, 2011, pp. 286).

Similarly to M. Lipset’s approach, which is based not so much on policy and elections, but on examples of studying a “particular government” (Lipset, 2016), it is fair to assume the formation of new practices of socio-political interaction of a “particular virtual political office” of certain users and/or communities. With account of the general right for democratic participation, the Internet users begin to represent independent (as far as it can be presented within global information and communication network) and even autonomous communities with respect to information reproduction of the concerned audience. In its development, this user block can be transformed into an independent political innovation in the form of a virtual expert community or an element of political management.

The following conditions shall be identified among those influencing the choice of specific practices of socio-political interaction within network community by participants/users:

- openness/sensitivity of political processes on the territory (countrywide);
- social and political activity of the population;
- duration or length of interaction;
- availability of new ideas and projects within social development;
- availability of resources for socio-political interaction;
- information and communication transmission (political channels and communications, availability of feedback principle);
- number/scale of interaction participants;

- interaction languages (understandability, meaning, codes and symbols), etc.

In fact, mobilization of social resources of political innovations is related to a combination of traditional modern and advanced forms and methods representing a compromise between opportunities of innovators and public expectations (Fig. 01).

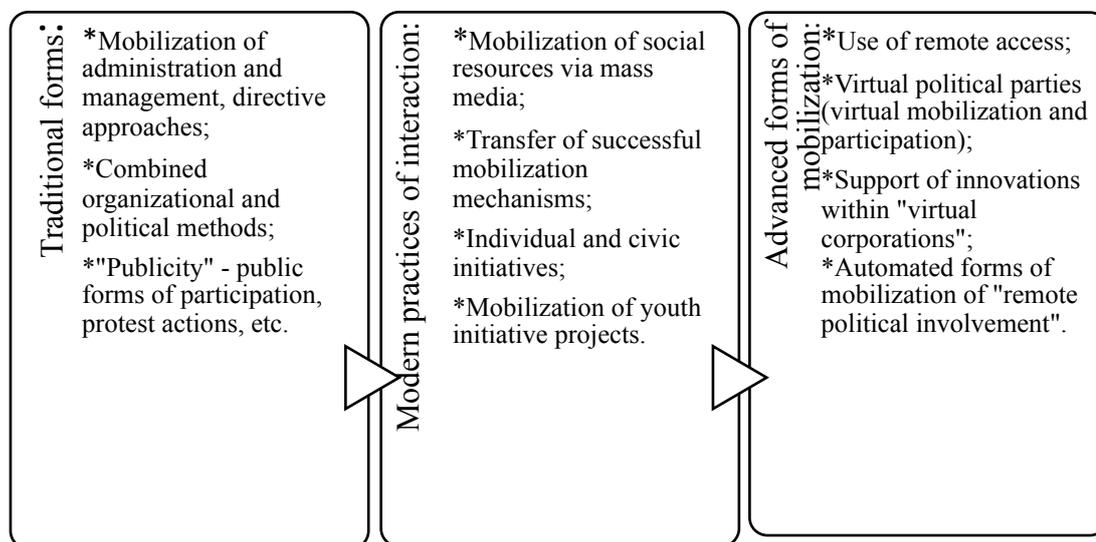


Figure 01. [Mobilization forms of social resources within political innovations]

New network models are initially based on the principles of a “dialog and equal communication between participants and serve as subject-to-subject relations” (Raskhodchikov, 2017, pp. 263-273).

The study of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) shows an increased level of threats and concerns of the Internet and mobile application users. For instance, it is noted that “31% of Russians faced unlawful acts connected to cellular communication and the Internet services. Among young generation (36% of 18-34-year-old people), there are active Internet users (38%), which is more than among elderly people (21% of 60-year-old and above), and those who almost do not search on the Internet. At present, 36% of Russian respondents feel secure against risks, whereas 58% feel vulnerable” (VCIOM, 2017).

Thus, the modern diversity of indices of social resources within political innovations is defined by different communicative methods and practices. Possibilities of resource mobilization can be limited to various threats and vulnerabilities of communications by ordinary users/participants, groups and communities, as well as social networks.

2. Problem Statement

Below, there is the list of problems related to resources provision within political innovations:

- resources of innovations are often provided following the principle of remote access using domain communications;
- ever increasing remote use of social resources;
- use of packet or program transfer mode of social resources;

- participants of political innovations do not fully consider “internal life”, communicative opportunities and dynamics of social networks.

“Although the Internet has generated a number of fragmentary movements, the independent voters remain its key force. They will hold many countries from rash actions and radical income redistribution, will create strong unions, free markets and values, which will help to overcome the problems of today” (Penn, Zalesn, 2009, pp. 209).

So, there are unconsidered practices of socio-political communication in the Internet. Their analysis can be made through additional or parallel measuring procedures.

2.1. New research approaches to mobilization of social Internet resources.

When studying a complex and intricate network of interactions that includes various relations, communications, norms, mechanisms and acts, sociologists face a number of difficulties.

The overwhelming number of Russians lack finances to participate in the political market. Therefore, they are forced to resign their rights in favor of any political movement or party. The agents, heading political movements, and power structures use the delegated rights to gain the political space (Kravchenko, 2010, pp. 57). “The distribution of gamification demonstrates the formation of a new social type of individual gamification in the modern society ... He accidentally creates references. In particular, such references can be presented as a membership in a game club; power is received through manipulations of public consciousness and supported by political shows and performances; capital is made through dirty games, etc.” (Kravchenko, 2008, pp. 256).

S.A. Kravchenko notes that the public life is full of self-organization of social actors (both individual and collective) thus marking innovative, active and pragmatic behavior of people and flexible performance of societal institutes. At the same time, there is a new social order, which is characterized by uncertainty and chaos (Prigozhin, Stengers, 2001).

“Gamification is a new type of hybrid rationality allowing entrepreneurship, politics, culture and even private life resisting consequences of nonlinear sociocultural dynamics, and thus becoming a chaos-based factor”.

Such practices as “To play life!” or “To play politics!” become ever more available to people through the Internet. Automated forms of mobilization hypothetically give the chance “to activate” resources 24/7 with a possibility of remote access, attraction of advisory and expert “on-line” and/or “off-line” systems. Besides, it is possible to save “the history” of socio-political interaction (Social and political mobilization: microsociological analysis, 2015).

3. Research Questions

New mobilization platforms will force participants to review traditional interactions (field / space).

The innovative cycle from an idea to implementation and routinization of innovation requires adequate resources. The study of mobilization of social resources of innovations on the Internet represents an independent methodology.

The analysis of indicators of use and reproduction of social resources within political innovations in the conditions of Internet communication.

4. Purpose of the Study

In general, mobilization of social resources of political innovations is attributed to the combination of traditional modern and advanced forms and methods, and represents a compromise between opportunities of innovators, public expectations and acts (unit act) of ordinary participants of network interaction. This paper considers innovations in relation to their resource component, which has a real social basis for its formation, reproduction and use. At present, the focus of sociology is to study the virtual level of formation and use of social resources in the conditions of innovations.

5. Research Methods

Mobilization of social resources in the virtual environment makes it possible for any interaction to become official, regulated and, at the same time, public act performed in front of “many others”. There is a possibility of one-stage collective discussion and visual support (for example, photo and video resources, infographics and ontography, methods of social mapping). Besides, researchers note the existence of uneven development rates of modern information technologies by population and authorities. This, in turn, leads to risks and vulnerabilities of “powerless” forms of socio-political interaction of citizens.

Besides traditional sociological methods of mobilization of social resources within political innovations, there is a method aimed to analyze the Internet audience and to attract socioengineering technologies. Some “soft” forms of mobilization of social resources within political innovations are likely to have a certain potential.

An interesting approach includes the combination of survey methods and qualitative analysis of the Internet resources (free / available publications and messages) following the innovative trajectory. Unique assessments, judgments and suggestions can be hidden in information and digital content being relatively new to Russians.

6. Findings

At first sight, the emerging politicization of the Internet indicates “simplification” of traditional forms and methods of socio-political interaction when participants of the virtual political strategy or simulation are more likely to demonstrate the tactical level of “political games”.

“Apart from crisis periods, the monopoly of professionals includes the generation of politically efficient and legitimate forms of perception and expression” (Bourdieu, 1993, pp. 184).

Being the closest in their definition to new socio-political practices, political innovations are subject to risks and vulnerabilities. The author suggests considering at least three directions of mobilization of social resources within political innovations taking into account potential virtual facilities. Firstly, it is mobilization of social resources on the Internet following a traditional pattern of organizational and administrative political support (existing methods and mechanisms used in real routine

social and political practices). Secondly, virtual mobilization space is life in the network (virtual political parties, closed communities of users propagating their political interests and views, “political residents”, “political trolls”, etc.). Thirdly, attention shall be paid to emerging possibilities of a virtual space to create earlier unknown hybrid products within socio-political context.

Due to the growth of new network practices of socio-political interaction and the increase in the number of innovative projects in various spheres of life, it is necessary to turn the focus towards implementation of real social and political initiatives. The study conducted in 2015 at the Department of Social Sciences of Kemerovo State University (600 people from 6 cities of Kemerovo Region were interviewed) revealed the main resources used by initiators of innovations. In particular, borrowings: 13.5% of respondents name foreign political technologies in the Russian practice, while 13% indicate the information impact of media on image formation of political innovations. 10.7% of respondents note new ideas and unique knowledge of Russian scientists as new sources, while 9.2% mark the importance of life experience of senior generation in perception and assessment of innovations in modern society. Among resources, which initiators of innovations need to take more advantage of in the future, respondents name the following: knowledge and abilities of scientists – 14.3%; reliance on youth – 11.8%; experience and possibilities of the senior generation – 10.3%. Thus, the key element is the advanced mobilization resource model focused on knowledge and the scientific approach, youth potential supported by earlier successfully implemented socio-political practices.

Advanced technologies have certain unpredictability, but the combination of traditional methods and technologies with innovations is even a bigger problem (Dyatlov, 2008, pp. 24-40). Frequently, already tested routine methods may prevent the promotion of something new. The following may restrict the application of this approach: complexity of filtration of “clear” (social) and promotional messages (posts) within communities; relative procedural intensity and time-consumption (if temporality of the Internet users is taken into account).

7. Conclusion

The concept of the Internet space that ensures social resources for political innovations has not been developed yet within the social science. In particular, there is no systematic acknowledgement of mobilization networking aspects providing social resources for new socio-political projects, and not enough studies devoted to the role of ordinary users of social networks in the formation of socio-political interactions.

Roles of social resources within anticipated political innovations can remain flexible with regard to participants of political innovations, communicative practices and private characteristics of virtual environment (namely its participants). The use of a new communicative platform will force participants of interaction to review traditional schemes and to form new adaptable socio-political technologies, as well as information and communication practices that will benefit from socio-political interaction.

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