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INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Public Sentiment After the Protests

Why the Kremlin is Winning the Battle for the
Average Russian

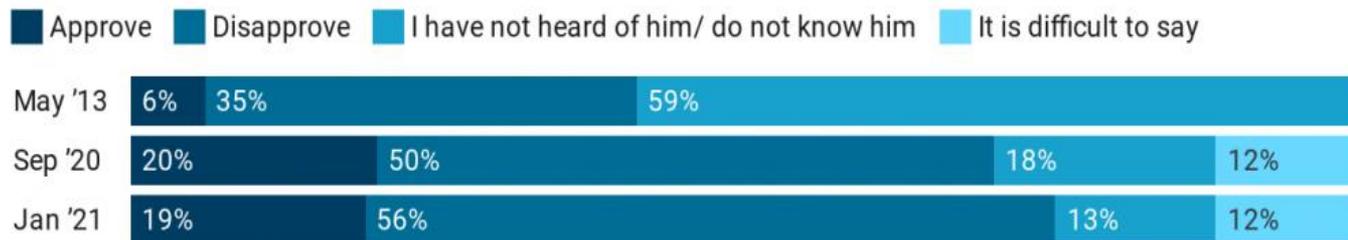
Andrei Kolesnikov

Attitudes Toward Navalny

- Navalny **pushes ordinary Russians out of their comfort zone**. He irritates the sensibilities of average Russian citizens.
- Russia's authoritarian regime benefits from mass conformism. That factor works **against him**.

Do you approve or disapprove of Alexey Navalny's activities?

as %% of respondents



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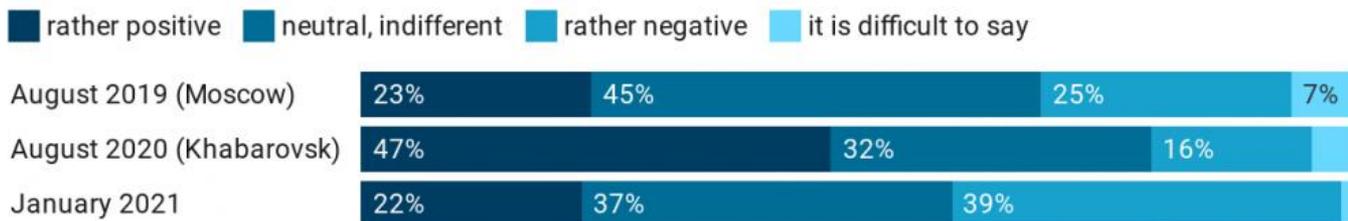


The Intricacies of Protest Sentiment

- Street protests, including those inspired by Navalny's arrest and mistreatment, don't trigger much popular support.
- That's because people know they're expected to conform. Anyone who doesn't display unity needs to be **marginalized**. Following the January 2021 wave of protests, such actions are now being **criminalized** as well.
- Average Russians display **more sympathy** toward protests that don't have a leader or clear labels. That also hurts Navalny.

What is your attitude towards people who attend the protest?

as %% of respondents



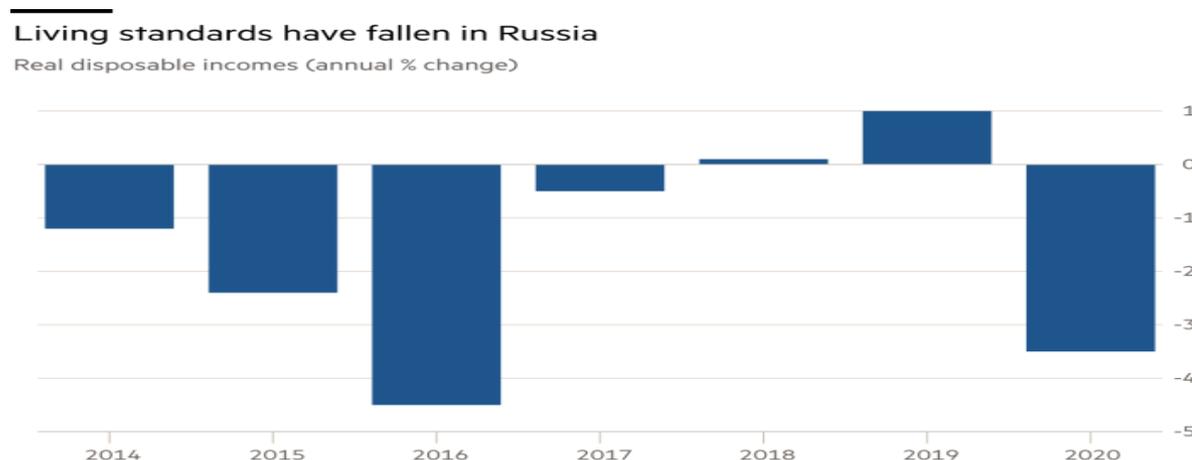
A Modest Slide in Putin's Approval Rating

- Two big drivers have hit Putin's approval rating more than anything else: **raising the retirement age in summer 2018** and the **pandemic**.
- Russians' attitudes toward government are more heavily shaped by their **psychological/emotional outlook** than more abstract ideas.
- **Critical Junctures for Putin's Approval Rating**
 - Before/after raising the retirement age
 - April 2018 – 82%
 - **July 2018 – 67%**
 - Before/after onset of pandemic
 - January 2020 – 68%
 - **April 2020 – 59%**
 - Most recent rating
 - **March 2021 – 63%**



Growing Dependence on the State

- Tougher socioeconomic conditions make people more reliant on state support. That **promotes loyalty**. The increased focus on **day-to-day survival** also bolsters **traditional conservative values**.
- The structure of Russians' incomes is also changing. The proportion derived from **entrepreneurial activity is now 5.2%** (vs. 15.4% in 2000) while the proportion derived from social payments is now 20.1% (vs. 13.8% in 2000).
- **Dependence on the state social payments** is higher now than it was during the Soviet period (16.3% in 1985).

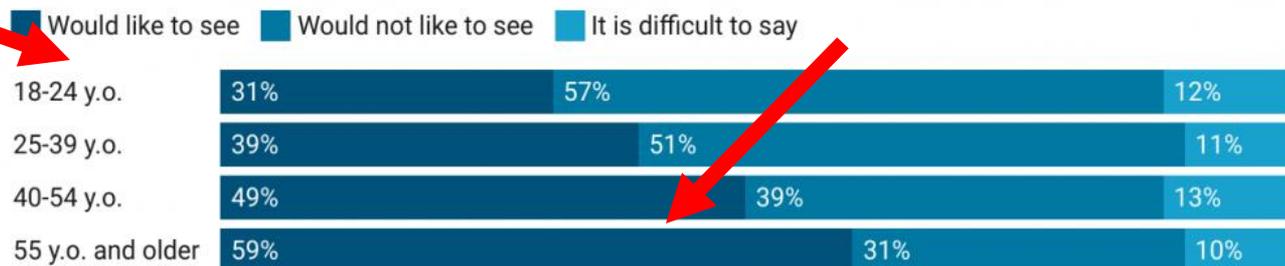


How Big is Russia's Generation Gap?

- A good litmus test for Russians' political outlook is their view of Putin's future, given that he is now the regime's main symbol.
- Half of respondents (48%) in a February 2021 survey say they would like to see Putin stay on as president after his current term expires in 2024.
- But the results among those aged **18–24** and those aged **55 and over** are almost exactly *inverse*.

Would you like to see Vladimir Putin as President of Russia after his current term expires, after 2024?

as %% at every age group

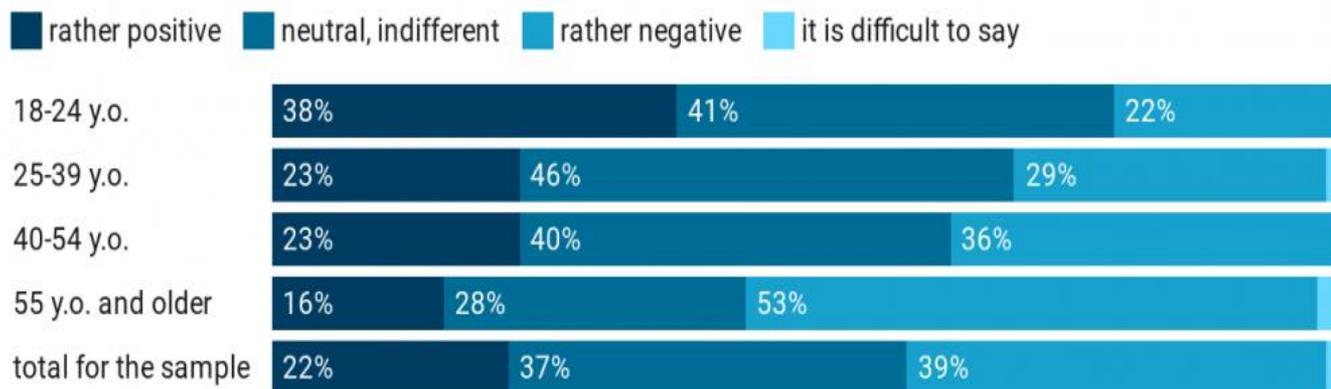


Russia Youth Attitudes on Protest

- In the 18-24 age group, 38% of respondents have a **favorable view** of the opposition protests held in January.

What is your attitude towards people who attend the protest?

as %% for each age group



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The Battle for the Next Generation

- Putin's battle for the next generation is continuing.
- Which will prevail?
 - The romanticism of patriotic games and the attractiveness of state support/attention?
OR
 - The allure of street protests and modern values?
- It is a battle between *modernization* and *archaization*.
- Some attributes of “modern” behavior in the younger generation may be visible. But they are not always accompanied by the crystallization of *modern values*, including human rights and individual freedoms.

