

## **Impact of Sanctions on the Level of Citizens' Political Confidence in the Power in Russia: the Incentive Role of the Media**

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The study is based on the provision that citizens' confidence in power determines the stability of the political and social system and is a prerequisite for the development of the country. One of the objects of sanctions pressure on Russia is the interaction of the state and civil society. The purpose of the study is to identify the effectiveness of the influence of Western sanctions on the level of political confidence of citizens in the Russian power, as well as to establish the incentive role of the media in this process. The direct and indirect, immediate, and the cumulative effect of sanctions causes both emotional and rational attitude of citizens to them and has positive and negative effects. The article concludes that under modern conditions, sanctions are more likely to strengthen than weaken the power; moreover, they strengthen the confrontational worldview in society. However, the cumulative nature of the impact of sanctions, coupled with a deterioration in the lives of Russians and the accumulation of their egocentrism, reduces the level of political confidence in the power and increases the risks of a social explosion directed against the course of the reigning political elite.

**Keywords:** Media, political confidence, sanctions policy, interaction between the state and citizens.

The use of sanctions as a way of external non-military economic pressure often causes the desired results, but the deep goals of the sanctions' impact are political, and only in exceptional cases it turned to be successful. The political overarching goal of anti-Russian sanctions has always been to discredit and isolate the country's political leadership, change the political system and regime, and radically change the state's political course in all key areas. The intensity of this pressure in different periods of the development of the Russian state used to change, but its political goal, in essence, remained unchanged. The constant, as a rule, implicit was the vector of the impact of anti-Russian sanctions on the population. Since the relations with civil society ultimately are strategic in terms of public policy, the monitoring of the dangers for these relations and efficient response to them becomes the most important task for power. A kind of indicator of this interaction is the citizens' confidence in power. In turn, sanctions can play the incentive role for non-confidence / confidence of citizens in power. The media play an important role in shaping the attitude of the population towards sanctions.

A feature of the current stage of development of Russia is that some of the people treating the state with increasing non-confidence, and sometimes hostility, are embraced by anxiety about its activities and hidden fear of the actions of individual executive

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structures. One more distinguishing feature should be noted: “in the political discourse of the 21st century, a clear manifestation of society’s indifference to conventional public politics and an obvious deviation from conventional forms of political participation are observed” (Mayr, 2019, p. 27). At the same time, it is the interaction of the state and civil society that determines the conditions for the successful development of the country, its sustainable development (Ėepenaite & Kavaliunaite, 2013; Tvaronavièiene, 2018; Veebel & Markus, 2016; Chernova et al., 2017). Therefore, the impact of economic sanctions on the social sphere, a decrease in the quality of life of people can reduce the strength of this interaction. Hence the hypothesis of the study: *if the socio-economic policy pursued in the country does not meet the expectations of the majority of the population, then the sanctioning effect on the dynamics of citizens’ confidence in political power becomes significant*. In turn, an economically and socially effective state, coupled with a constructive dialogue between the authorities and society, creates a high margin of safety and minimizes the degree of influence of sanctions on the level of political confidence of citizens in power. Depending on the ideological orientation, the media can arouse non-confidence in power, or reduce it, to influence the cultural and worldview position of society (Yessenbekova, 2015, 2016).

Having defined the subject of this article as the influence of modern sanctions on the level of political confidence of citizens in power in Russia, and the goal as the identification of the degree of its effectiveness, the authors set the following research objectives:

- (i) the consideration of the political consequences of the economic sanctions employment;
- (ii) the identification of the factors contributing to confidence / non-confidence in the institutions of power;
- (iii) the identification of national characteristics of perception and counteraction to external pressures.

In modern literature, there are no special studies of the impact of sanctions on relations between the power and society, and in particular on the dynamics of citizens’ confidence in political power. The study of the mechanism of such influence and the role of the media in these processes under the conditions of the sanctions regime in a specific country (for example, Russia) may be of scientific interest.

## Literature Review

Despite the prevalence of sanctions as an instrument of policy implementation in the 21st century and a significant amount of academic literature describing them, their essential characteristics lack a single point of view on the reasons of employment, the problem of legitimacy and effectiveness. In theoretical and methodological terms, most modern research is based on the work of G. Houghbauer, J. Schott, C. Eliot, and B. Oeg (Hufbauer et al., 2009, p. 13). The term “sanctions” is construed by them as the deliberate actions of the state (the initiating country), a coalition of countries or international organizations aimed at reduction, restriction or termination of the customs, trade or financial relations with the “target country” or “destination country.” It is estimated that only in the 20th-century sanctions were applied 174 times (USA-109, Great Britain-16, EU-14, USSR and RF-13, UN-20 times) (Hufbauer et al., 2009, p. 5). The objectives of these enforcement actions were classified as follows: moderate impact on the policy of the “opponent” (43 cases); regime change under the guise of “democratization” (80); the cessation of hostilities (19), the destruction of military potential (29), other significant changes in the political sphere (33) (Hufbauer et al., 2009, p. 17).

A few more notable publications should be noted. Thus, analyzing the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy, E. Ashford (Ashford, 2016) defines the strategy of their employment as “not very smart” and notes, that unlike small states, economic anti-Russian sanctions are unable to achieve their goal. She emphasizes that the sanctions turned to be insufficient for the political elite, since the political regime protects its associates, shifting the burden of sanctions to everyone else. It is difficult, however, to agree with the author's conclusion about the *unforeseen* consequences of the sanctions, which created difficulties for ordinary Russians. In this regard, E. Ashford rightly notes that sanctions create the effect of consolidating power, uniting Russians under the national flag because they blame the West for all their troubles.

The authoritarian nature of the political regime and its anti-Western propaganda, which governs the public perception of the nature of sanctions, are noted by Swedish researchers S. Oksenshtern and P. Olsen (Oxenstierna & Olsson, 2015). Based on case studies of sanctions against South Africa, Libya, and Iraq, they show that it takes a long time to achieve political goals.

Considering the perspectives of the sanctions against Russia, P. Harell, T. Kittinezh, S. Lane, and E. Rosenberg (Harrell et al., 2017), recognize that the strategic problems of foreign policy that underlie the employment of sanctions are long-standing. The researchers state that holding back the investments, the sanctions contribute to slowing down Russian economic growth. Of particular interest is the book by N. Gould-Davis (Nigel Gould-Davies *Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia*, 2018), which is focused on the economic effects, political impact and assessment of Western sanctions applied to Russia. First, his description of the possible objectives of the sanctions should be noted: (i) to determine future behavior, to prevent unacceptable actions, to restrain punishment; (ii) to change past actions, i.e., to form an attitude towards them; (iii) to change the regime, not only the politics but also the political power; (iv) to condemn certain violations of international law. Secondly, his notion that the sanctions against a democratic regime are more effective than the sanctions against the authoritarian regime should be noted. Thirdly, his discussions about the dependence of the effectiveness of the sanctions on the time of employment, support of the international community, the reality of the geopolitical isolation of the object of sanctions, should be noted.

The above academic works confirm that the research efforts of the scientists are mainly focused on the analysis of the effectiveness of anti-Russian sanctions in the field of economics, finance, and new technologies. There are practically no specialized academic works studying the intentional effect of sanctions on citizens' confidence in the power, although they are sometimes relevant. For example, T. Fry (Frei, 2017) proposes to overestimate the economic sanctions impact theory. Analyzing the policy of anti-Russian sanctions, he concludes that they do not directly affect citizens' loyalty to government policy, but they can weaken the degree of economic activity of the population in support of the government. J. Dresen argues in the same vein (Dresen, 2015), stating that even narrowly targeted sanctions make it possible to obtain a “cohesion effect.”

Russian science has its methodology for assessing the impact of sanctions on the economy. For example, S. Glazyev and V. Arkhipova (Glazyev & Arkhipova, 2018) propose to evaluate the effectiveness of the sanctions based on the dynamics of GDP, as well as on factors of crisis impact on the economy, on the change in the indicators of individual fields of activity for a given time. However, like Western researchers, they do not study the mechanism of the influence of sanctions on the interaction of the state and citizens. The authors emphasize that the impact of sanctions cannot be accurately measured, and the consequences of sanctions are dependent on economic policies.

The monograph edited by N. Nureyev (Nureyev, 2017, p. 52) describes the consequences of economic sanctions for Russia and Western countries. There is also no analysis of the impact of sanctions on citizens' confidence in political institutions, but the conclusions that sanctions have contributed to the growth of polarization of big capital and the bureaucracy affiliated with it, as well as the fact that the burden of economic anti-Russian sanctions for ordinary consumers affects the change in prices for goods, are worth noting (Nureyev, 2017, p. 72).

Noting the interest of the Russian media in the problem of sanctions and recording the fact that only in the period from March to December 2014, 92155 articles on this topic have been published in the central and regional media, which made this problem one of the most popular (for comparison: 54964 publications were devoted to the 22nd Olympic Games in Sochi). The researcher A. Kazun (2016, p. 258) analyzes the main strategies for the de-problematization of the economic sanctions and concludes that one of the possible reasons for the ineffectiveness of the sanctions is to switch the public discussion from analysis of the consequences to a discussion of current problems. One can agree with this conclusion since, in the situation of economic sanctions, a decrease in freedom is noted. Moreover, the public discussion may experience the influence of interest groups. Let us note the differing interest in sanctions among Russian social groups. While a business-oriented newspaper *Kommersant* published 1574 articles during the indicated period, 945 articles were published in the official and governmental newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 258 articles – in the weekly newspapers *Argumenty i Fakty* and 396 articles were published in *Novaya Gazeta*, reflecting the interests of the non-systemic opposition (Kazun, 2016, p. 256).

As a generalized conclusion, the authors note that due to the lack of a generally accepted model for the analysis of the impact of sanctions on citizens' confidence in the power, the above-mentioned works can be used as a methodological guideline to achieve the goals of this study.

## Methodology

The analysis of the impact of sanctions on the level of political confidence of citizens in the Russian power is carried out herein in the historical, legal, comparative, and socio-economic aspects. The authors proceed from the fact that confidence cannot be accurately measured and can be estimated by indirect indicators: the attitude of citizens towards political institutions and leaders, the political course; the electoral activity; the participation in the protest movement. The study is based on the statement of P. Shtompka (Shtompka, 2012, p. 369) that the acquisition of the citizens' confidence "is of value to the rulers, just because it immeasurably reduces the managerial costs.

The work is based on the following methodologically important characteristics of confidence as a property of politics and as a form of ontological security:

firstly, F. Tennis's statement that "at the heart of balance, our sense of security is the confidence in the regular and reliable, although very different functioning of the three large systems of social will, called order, law and morality" (Tennis, 1998, p. 211);

secondly, the idea of E. Giddens, that "confidence in systems takes the form of impersonal obligations in which faith is maintained through the functioning of knowledge in which a simple person, as a rule, understands nothing" (Giddens, 2011, p. 217);

thirdly, S. Ringen's conclusion that "the power provides in the best and rare case only control over the "others" who do not want to obey, but it is not able to lead them to voluntary cooperation with the government" (Ringen, 2016, p. 114);

fourthly, the provision of N. Luman, who defined confidence as a mechanism for minimizing the risks and as a certain sociocultural resource that contributes to the realization of the potential of an action (Ringen, 2016, pp. 183-184).

The author's model for the analysis of the impact of sanctions at the level of citizens' political confidence in the power in Russia is based on a systematic approach and proceeds from the possibilities of direct and indirect (indirect) effect of sanctions. The authors emphasize that the term "sanctions" herein means the activities aimed at restriction or influence the sovereignty and sovereign political course of Russia through economic measures, the attempts to destabilize the political system aimed at changing the political course of the state, political regime, fundamentals or individual components of domestic and foreign policy.

The model involves the consideration of the actually measurable consequences of economic sanctions employment: the decrease in real incomes of the population as a result of a sharp slowdown in all economic processes; the decrease in investment; the decline in revenues to the state budget; the growth of the black market, corruption, illegal business, inflation. The actions of a non-systemic opposition are regarded as a possible catalyst for civil discontent with the authorities. The media play an incentive role here. Depending on the ideological orientation, they can both arouse non-confidence in power and to scuttle it. The criteria for determining citizens' confidence in the power are the sociological data of polls published in Russia that establish attitudes to political institutions, government bodies, and political leaders, taking into account possible costs of sanctions employed.

## Results and Discussion

The level of interaction between the state and citizens is largely determined by the decline in the prestige of the state that occurred in the Russian public consciousness at the end of the 20th-beginning of the 21st century. The ideas about the state change together with the logic of the relationship between the citizens and the power. The state is increasingly perceived by people as "a special, fairly sustainable political unit, representing an organization of power and administration separated from the population and claiming the supreme right to govern certain territories and populations, regardless of the consent of the latter" (Grinin, 1997, p. 20). The contents of cooperation between the citizens and the state in Russia it is implicitly defined by the genetically determined fear of the citizens before the government, the possible dangerous consequences of its decisions. These anxieties are not only related "to economic problems, despite they are superficial, but rather to a feeling of estrangement of the power from society, its injustice and self-interest, lack of moral basis" (Shestopal, 2011, p. 22-23). At the same time, the state itself, the ruling elite almost always experience an implicit fear of the population. As a rule, they proceed from the assumption that "the government has enemies who not only do not want to obey but oppose a social agreement. These people are dangerous, and disobedience is contagious" (Ringen, 2016, p. 272). Thus, the authors consider interaction as a two-way process that requires not only a citizen but also a state.

Let us outline the specifics of the sanctions applied against modern Russia. If during the Soviet period of state development, the main object of the Western sanctions policy was mainly the economic sphere, the goal was to inflict maximum economic damage, and the main directions were focused on the restriction of the natural resources exports and imports, then in the Russian period, the object of sanctions and their content are expanding. Currently, they affect not only the economic and financial spheres but also they

are directed against individual representatives of the Russian establishment and the military-political leadership. Moreover, they are also transferred today to the sphere of culture and the field of humanitarian cooperation.

The Western sanctions in 2014-2018 covered a fifth of Russia's GDP, 54% of the assets of the banking sector, 95% of the revenues of oil and gas companies and almost all defense industry enterprises. The sanctions annually result in the loss of one and a half percent of GDP growth by Russia (AKRA: Western Sanctions Have Affected 20-21% of Russian GDP, 2018). At the same time, the sanctions did not become the main constraining factor for the growth of the Russian economy. They did not create a crisis in Russia but reinforced the negative trends of the protracted process of transformation of the Russian economic model.

Assessing the results of the impact of the sanctions policy on Russia, first of all, the authors note that the awareness of the Russian population about the sanctions' impact of the United States and Western countries is mainly based on media reports and speeches of political leaders. Therefore, the employment of anti-Russian sanctions is perceived differently in the public mind. In a negative context, it is regarded as an aggressive act against the Russian state, as an act of political and economic pressure from the USA and European states. As a positive factor, it qualifies as an incentive for the development of the national economy; promotes the rise of patriotic moods; pushes the country to develop its technologies; reduces the dependence on international economic relations.

In turn, the attitude of the Russian population to sanctions is not constant. It is dynamic and complex. Three substantive states can be distinguished: (i) an emotional attitude that defines polar positions: one, mainly characterized by the feelings of anxiety and fear of the scale of the sanctions policy, and the other, on the contrary, ultra-patriotic, which does not allow any surrender in principle; (ii) indifference, negligence, explained by mentality, poor information and a certain distance from politics; and (iii) rational attitude, suggesting the search for alternative solutions in development.

Sociological studies show that in March 2014, the fact of the imposition of sanctions against Russia aroused concern among 53% of the country's residents (Russians on the Sanctions Employed by the United States and the European Union, 2014). This was facilitated by negative assessments of these discriminatory actions in the Russian media.

However, by the end of 2014, the tone of the media had changed: a statement about the insignificant impact of the sanctions on the life of Russians became a common refrain. Moreover, the media, reflecting the position of the power, began to promote their positive significance: the possibility of turning towards the development of domestic production, the reduction of the economy's dependence on oil, imported technology, and goods. A growing awareness is observed in the public mind that the actual reason for the sanctions attacks against Russia is not specific actions (Crimea, Donbass, Syria), but the hostile attitude of the West towards the sovereign position of the Russian state, which openly opposed the hegemonic aspirations and claims for US world domination.

The result is the adaptation to the sanctions, a decrease in the sense of concern and anxiety among the citizens of the country: in 2015 their number dropped to 41%, in 2016 – to 39%, and in 2017 – to 28% (Attitude Towards Countries and Sanctions, 2018). But by the end of 2018, the situation has changed. According to the Levada Center, in November 2018 the threat of sanctions and their employment caused concern among 43% of the population (Attitude Towards Countries and Sanctions, 2018). The reason for this change in social mood seems to be not only the low standard of living of a significant number of Russians but the expansion of access to alternative information. Hence, there is a gradual loss of confidence in the political course of the state, exacerbated by the costs in the domestic policy of the state, minimizing the degree of support for the population.

It should be recognized that the sanctions affect the population indirectly, holding back the pace of economic growth and thereby hindering the growth of real incomes of the population. According to the Federal State Statistics Service of Russian (Rosstat, 2019), the real incomes of Russians have been falling for five consecutive years since 2014, which coincides with the time of employment of anti-Russian sanctions. The last time real incomes of the population grew in 2013 by 4%. In 2019, Rosstat reported that 59.2% of young families and 57.9% of non-working pensioners could not afford durable goods; about 15% of families noted that their income is enough only to buy food. According to Rosstat, the poverty level in the first quarter of 2019 increased to 14.3% compared to 13.9% for the same period last year. Due to the decline in real products and rising food prices, 20.9 million Russians turned to be below the poverty line (More Than 14% of the Population Lives in "Absolute Poverty" in Russia, 2019). The inability of the power to solve the problem of poverty in the country over a significant number of years, of course, causes a negative attitude both to the political course and to representatives of the power.

Thus, it can be noted that the main source of tension in modern Russian society is the unresolved social and economic problems, insufficient protection of social rights of citizens, low living standards and poverty of a significant part of the country's population. The presence of these problems is exacerbated by the natural fatigue of the citizens from the inconsistency and incompleteness of reforms in Russia, from the arbitrariness of power, dishonesty and the facts of unpunished plunder of public wealth, violations of justice. Together with these circumstances, an unprecedented anti-Russian sanction pressure increases the risks of a social crisis. But as V. Zorkin accurately noted, the inherent in Russians "collectivism, formed by harsh nature, countless defensive wars, the need to unite many nations and nationalities with a common destiny on their land," confronts the sanction pressure (Hufbauer et al., 2009, pp. 1, 5).

According to various international agencies, the confidence of Russian citizens in political power is decreasing year by year. For example, an independent company Edelman in 2018, through an online survey in 27 countries, found that the Russians trust in public institutions least of all in the world. If the global confidence index in the world has grown by three points (from 45 to 49), in Russia the level of confidence in the power, media, NPOs and business has decreased by 7 points (from 36 to 29) (Confidence Rating for Public Institutions in the Countries of the World, 2019).

In modern conditions, the sociological studies carried out in Russia by different groups show inconsistent results and, it seems that they often do not reflect objective reality, and the use of their results can play a provocative role as a catalyst for social protest. For example, the data of the sociological poll performed by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center show that, despite the difficulties experienced, more than 50% of citizens are satisfied, to one degree or another, with the internal policies of the power, carried out under the conditions of the sanctions regime.

Table 1. The attitude of the citizens to the domestic policy of the current power (%)

Options	2Q 2008	4Q 2014	4Q 2015	4Q 2016	4Q 2017	4Q 2018	2Q 2019
Generally satisfied	32	48	53	48	43	28	26
Partly satisfied / Partly unsatisfied	47	36	29	30	33	34	33
Generally unsatisfied	16	3	15	18	21	35	35
Difficult to answer	4	4	3	4	3	3	6

Source: (Assessment of the Power, 2017).

The research team under the supervision of S. Belanovsky, claims based on the results of its surveys, that the consciousness of the inhabitants of the regions of Russia has changed not in favor of the power. The sociologists of this group make a radical challenge: "people want only one thing – to change the power." (Sociologists: Russians Are Ready to Change Power Through Revolution, 2019).

For the opposition political forces opposing themselves to legitimate authorities, the anti-Russian sanctions policy, creating maximum problems for the state, become one of the real ways to weaken it. The paradoxical political effect in the opposition's activity is that in modern conditions, sanctions weaken not the power, but the opposition, supporting the sanctions policy against Russia. This is due to the Russian nature, its national rebellious spirit. With the emergence of an external threat, sanctions lead not only to the unity of the people but also to the consolidation of the political system and society. Firstly, that there is a certain layer of society that unconditionally supports the leaders of the opposition forces. Secondly, that if the situation in the social sphere worsens significantly, and the distance between the government and the people does not decrease, then the populist rhetoric of unsystematic opposition may well find more and more supporters. The opposition of a different kind may appear inside the ruling class. The sanction policy against specific representatives of the political elite, family members, their assets may cause disappointment for some of its representatives in the chosen political course and ideals of the ruling elite.

The choice as the main object of the informational impact of young Russians who grew up in the Internet era, an attempt to present them as the main driver of destructive political processes also does not give the results expected in the West. The experts of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center have published the results of their study of social moods in Russian society: 58% of citizens aged 18 to 24 are happy with their life, 55% – in the age group of 25-34, 42% of respondents aged 18-24 expect future improvements (Data of a Study of the Social Mood of Modern Russian Youth, 2019).

The sanctions regime puts forward specific requirements for the mechanism of the political ruling, and especially for the political leader. Self-confidence, neglect of others, arrogance, optionality, inconsistency, and dishonesty destroy the confidence in a political leader. According to the Levada Center, the proportion of Russians who believe that officials lie about the state of affairs in the country reached 52% in 2018, compared with 37% of the previous year. Only 12% believe in the veracity of bureaucrats versus 20% (More Than Half of Russians Accuse Officials of Lying About the Situation in the Country, 2018). Considering that the political elite is one of the objects of sanctions, the authors present the data on confidence / non-confidence in the most famous Russian politicians (Table 2).

Table 2. Dynamics of assessments of confidence / non-confidence in Russian politicians (%)

Politician	Confidence				Non-confidence			
	20.05. 2018	23.09. 2018	20.01. 2019	19.05. 2019	20.05. 2018	23.09. 2018	20.01. 2019	19.05. 2019
V.V. Putin	47.4	37.2	32.8	31.7	2.3	5.8	7.5	6.6
S.V. Lavrov	20.8	16.1	13.4	14.8	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
D.A. Medvedev	16.6	11.2	13.1	13	17.9	27	25.7	23.4
S.K. Shoigou	9.1	9.5	9.5	8.8	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.7
V.V. Zhirinovskiy	12.5	7.3	7.8	7.6	33.2	28.6	24.6	22.9
G.A. Zjuganov	4.9	7.3	5.8	5.5	12.2	12.5	10.6	10
A. Navalniy	0.8	1	1.2	1.5	2.5	2.2	1.5	2.1

Source: (Confidence in Politicians. Ratings and Indices, 2019)

The greatest confidence is still enjoyed by V.V. Putin. The authors acknowledge that if the president's rating exceeded 40% until 2017, then starting in 2018, it fell to 32%. In accordance with the amended calculation method introduced by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center on May 2019, Putin's rating again exceeds 70%. Let us emphasize the extremely low level of confidence of Russians in the opposition. The growth of the critical attitude of the population towards the power and, directly to the president, is connected with the government's failure to fulfill its promise to restore the order in the country, disregard to justice, and disappointment in the government's activities. P. Mayr's assumption that "love or dislike of politicians, confidence or non-confidence in them, were a much less important problem than the impact they had on the real-life of citizens" is confirmed (Mayr, 2019, p. 21). Dissatisfied people are aggravated, firstly, by a frank demonstration of the growth of wealth of the officials at all levels, and, secondly, by the governmental decisions on the priority assistance to Russian businessmen who have been sanctioned in the face of not decreasing the level of poverty in the country.

## Conclusion

The results of the study led to the following conclusions:

The interaction of the state and citizens is the object of the strategy of the sanctions policy of Western countries against modern Russia. A kind of indicator of the interaction between the state and the citizen is the trust of citizens in the power.

The sanctions employed against Russia are considered as a threat to the Russian state and society and are morally unacceptable to Russian society. Anti-Russian sanctions set a significant number of Russians against the West.

Sanctions affect the population indirectly, holding back the pace of economic growth and thereby hindering the growth of real incomes of the population. The socio-economic policy pursued in the country, despite the existing problems, is supported by the majority of the population, the sanctions' effect on the dynamics of citizens' confidence in political power in these conditions is not significant. At the same time, the sanctions strengthen the existing negative trends in the country and lead to a worsening of the economic situation, respectively, they reduce real well-being, deepen social differentiation, intensify lobbying pressure on the power, and provoke political instability. The dissatisfaction of the citizens is gradually accumulating.

The media influence the formation of the attitude of Russians towards the employment of sanctions. The latter are perceived in the public mind both in a negative and in a positive context; the attitude of the Russian population towards sanctions is dynamic.

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