

Liberalism Unpopular Among Russians, Poll Finds

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 23, 2013

The  Moscow Times

A vast majority of Russians still believe that the government should have a strong protective influence on the economy, a public opinion poll found.

A Levada Center poll offered respondents six different political views to choose from. The most frequent answer, chosen by 34 percent of respondents, named the social-democratic economic model of state protection for the population under the conditions of a market economy as the optimal system.

The second-largest group of respondents, 17 percent, admitted being sympathetic to being ruled by a "strong hand," with a strong authoritarian leader.

Communism came in a close third with 16 percent of overall responses supporting a centrally managed economy. Proponents of an agrarian policy with strong state support for the agricultural sector trailed behind slightly with 15 percent.

Liberal ideas and nationalistic ideas were the least popular, each garnering 9 percent support.

People's bias towards a large state role in society is due largely to nostalgic feelings for the Soviet Union, Moscow State Institute of International Relations professor Valery Solovei told Kommersant. He added that new terms like liberalism and nationalism have negative connotations because of the economic uncertainty of the post-Soviet period.

While he said that Russian society can be characterized as moderately conservative, Solovey said that the current political system does not have a solid ideological foundation and uses elements of both liberal and conservative political models as instruments to consolidate its power.

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