

## CULTURAL POLICY AS A FACTOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN MODERN RUSSIA

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This study explores issues related to cultural policy in modern Russia in the context of national security problems. Cultural policy is becoming a major factor of national security, as preservation and transmission of national cultural values have taken on crucial importance in the modern globalizing world. This study highlights the importance of cultural policy in preserving and promoting cultural achievements in society. We also emphasize the necessity of further research on the mechanisms and models of government policy on culture and discuss the media's manipulative influence on the youth as a threat to national security. The artificial values of the mass media are often said to have significantly deformed traditional Russian socio-cultural values. The following aspects are pointed out as threats to Russia's national security: a break with the traditional system of values demonstrated by a decrease in morality and the overall cultural level of the youth; harmful communications on the Internet; domination of kitsch and other low-brow manifestations of mass culture; a dramatic decline in the role of culture within society; cultural and religious spread of destructive foreign cults along with the emergence of self-professed "prophets" whose efforts to reshape their followers' minds go unpunished.

**Key words:** cultural policy, cultural activities, organization and management of culture, state control, national security.

### INTRODUCTION

Postmodernity and its challenges related to hyper-reality, simulacra, immoral public acts and consumer ideology are again bringing up, in the Russian society, issues concerning the development of our civilization and preservation of our national and cultural security. Cultural policy in society has taken on a new significance after the latest "colour revolution" in Ukraine which is perceived as a threat to socio-cultural ties within the "Russian world". The presidential decree "On the Foundations of the State Cultural Policy" defining strategic directions for Russia's cultural development in upcoming decades, aimed at preserving its national and spiritual identity, has become a major step in response to these challenges.

Russia's cultural space, including the traditional culture, Orthodox, Islamic and Buddhist spiritual cultures, elements of the Soviet and contemporary mass culture, has reached a state of latent or even conflicting tension. Therefore, issues related to moral values in modern culture, state cultural policy and cultural policy

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as a guarantee of national security, are of vital importance and require a thorough analysis.

The role of cultural policy is especially relevant for resolving a wide range of problems pertaining to civil identity (Bandurin *et al.*, 2015), historical memory (Frolova *et al.*, 2015), national integration (Lubsky *et al.*, 2015), management of polyethnic society (Bedrik *et al.*, 2015), (Bedrik *et al.*, 2016).

There has been significant research on “cultural policy” as a part of the Soviet culture building. In modern Russia, this concept was less in demand in the 90s and did not generate interest among scholars. The latest developments in culture and art revive interest in issues of cultural policy and require a revision of some concepts. A number of important research projects, discussing the topic of cultural policy from various methodological viewpoints, have been carried out in the past decades (A. S. Balakhshin, E. A. Baller, G. M. Birzhenyuk, L. E. Vostryakov, I. I. Gorlova, V. S. Zhidkov, N. V. Izhikova, A. P. Markov, K. B. Sokolov, S. B. Sinetski, etc.)

The problem of interaction between authorities and culture existed in various historical periods. The tradition of using literature and theatre as tools shaping social and political constructions goes back to Ancient Greece and Rome where they shaped the relationship between the state and society, and created state symbols and representations.

There are over six hundred definitions of “culture”. The notion of “cultural policy” is also among the most debated ones. It should be noted that, in the fields of Russian history, social philosophy and culture studies, understanding of this notion depends on various forms of empirical analysis and deeper levels of scientific abstraction. One of the aims of the scientific editions, entitled “Studies and Documents on Cultural Policy” and “Guidelines of Cultural Policy”, is to offer a precise definition of “cultural policy”. A website on cultural policy has been created and is actively maintained and updated.

International and local governmental meetings on issues related to cultural policy were regularly held in the 1970s. Summing up the results of the scholarly discussions on the notion of cultural policy, S. N. Plotnikov concludes that “... despite its many definitions, “cultural policy” was generally understood as the interaction between state authorities and culture, between politics and culture, including art” (Plotnikov, 1979). At the same time, “cultural policy” itself was studied only from the perspectives of cultural revolution and cultural building. Soviet researchers gave a more thorough analysis of “cultural policy” itself in the 1980s. It was E. S. Markaryan, a well-known philosopher, who provided a comprehensive definition of cultural policy. According to him, cultural policy is “a specific direction for the development of a state expressed in the systems of government and its legislative and executive authorities. Markaryan also observes that cultural policy should not be understood only in terms of relationship between “authorities and cultural productions, mostly, art” (Markaryan, 1983). Cultural

policy does not embrace only those areas of society that relate to specific branches of culture, it embraces the entire social life. In the 1990s, Russian researchers had this in mind, when they defined cultural policy as a policy in the field of culture and cultural life aimed at creating, maintaining and improving conditions of the artists, promoting cultural achievements and acquainting the general population (especially, the youth) with culture.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In our opinion, cultural policy means various mechanisms of state and culture management, aimed at the best possible functioning of cultural institutions, and also the transmission of cultural values, promotion of the best works of art in society. Comprehensive, socio-cultural and institutional methods are to be used as a methodological basis for studying cultural policy. These methods allow researchers to comprehensively analyse the specific nature of cultural policy and its trends in modern Russia. Adopting the comparative method makes it possible to examine its functioning in different historical periods of the state and society and to analyse cultural policy in times of crisis.

The interdisciplinary approach makes possible a meta-theoretical generalization of the knowledge accumulated in social and humanities fields related to cultural policy issues in Russian society. In particular, the results obtained in philosophical, cultural, historical and political studies cover the whole range of issues under investigation. The new universalism methodology is based on research approaches that aim to demonstrate the cultural pluralism that brings together global and national cultures. Cultural products become more and more universal, transcending national boundaries, which means that cultural “globalisation” is not always in the interests of a national state. Methodological approaches regarding culture as a “soft power” tool are taking on a new significance and are used more and more in research studies and real politics. Culture and cultural policy of globalism is a “soft power” tool used to transform the value system of modern Russian society. Adopting the above-mentioned empirical and theoretical research methods will make it possible to examine cultural policy in the context of Russia’s national security and to specify threats from rapidly transforming cultural behavioural models in the globalizing world.

### **RESULTS**

Cultural policy is becoming a major factor of national security, as preservation and transmission of national cultural values take on crucial importance in the modern globalizing world. Many researchers point at the crisis of moral and ethical values and even at the “spiritual lumpenisation” (Filyushkina, Volkov) of Russian society. Thus, issues related to the state cultural policy and management are of vital importance to the society.

A Y. Goloborodko maintains that state culture policy in the context of defining the management of values contributes to the formation of the united Russian nation and to the nation building project (Goloborodko, 2015). From the perspective of national consolidation and nation-building, this policy is a tool that contributes to reshaping of the nation's value system, restoring the common cultural space and activating culture's spiritual and intellectual potential. Preservation and development of historical memory is of utmost importance in this process, and it is realised by means of a complex system of educational activities carried out by government institutions, cultural, academic and educational institutions, as well as public agencies.

In Russia, culture traditionally relies on structures created by the state, and this is the main difference from foreign approaches to cultural policy, in which, as a rule, the individual and the individual expression are given priority. In Russia, cultural production and the formation of the value system originate from organisations, institutions and companies and also state and public entities, artistic unions that are directly linked to production, preservation, promotion and circulation of cultural and informational products and services.

Art holds a special position in any society's culture, since it represents a nation's spiritual quest and expresses its character, mood and hopes. Art and politics seem to be very far apart, at first sight. Indeed, politics is rational, pragmatic, specific. Art, however, defies logical analysis, goes beyond rationality and appeals to human feelings and spirit. Art has always been associated with freedom of human spirit and mind that emerges from a creative process. In Russia, the state government, as a rule, tried to limit this spirit of artistic freedom, creative work being perceived as a bold undermining of social foundations of the state. At the same time, both art and politics coexist, actively interact and sometimes intercross creating new trends. Their interaction is clearly seen in politicians' image-making, in elaborate mechanisms of psychological manipulation and in the use of artistic expressive means in the media.

McLuhan compared the media to the Archimedean point, from which he would move the earth: "Archimedes once said, 'Give me a place to stand and I will move the world'. Today he would have pointed to our electric media and said, 'I will stand on your eyes, your ears, your nerves and your brain, and the world will move in any tempo or pattern I choose.' We have leased these 'places to stand' to private corporations." (McLuhan, 2003).

The mass media has been invaded by the "cult of violence", resulting in a sharp decrease in individual spirituality; negative information reaches 80-90% in prime time, creating anxiety and nursing a catastrophic worldview among viewers. According to research, carried out by V. Sobkin and T. Glukhova in the early 2000s, violent and erotic scenes come up 4,2 times per hour of broadcasting time. About 9000 scenes containing sex or sexual allusions are shown during prime-

time. An average child sees up to two hundred thousand scenes of violence before he is eighteen (Sobkin and Glukhova, 2001).

The artificial values of the mass media have significantly deformed Russian socio-cultural values. Various challenges in the globalizing world are pointed out as risks and threats to Russia's national security. The most evident of them are, in our opinion, the following: a break with the traditional system of values demonstrated by loss of traditional values and the overall cultural level of the youth; Internet communication, intentionally demonstrating illiteracy and breaking up Russian language norms; domination of kitsch and other low-brow manifestations of mass culture; a critical decline of the role of culture in society; cultural and religious spread of destructive foreign cults along with the emergence of self-professed "prophets" whose efforts to reshape their followers' minds go unpunished.

Sociological studies show that "stupid and flat stories in the press and on TV pose the biggest threat to Russian culture (51 per cent of respondents). 44,5% of respondents mentioned fall in quality of secondary education. Lack of financial resources to upgrade their education and enhance their general level of culture for the majority of the population comes third (41,2 %). Massive influx of illiterate migrants (39%), decrease in the number of cultural and recreational centres (32%), poor-quality movies and videos (35%), Russian state policy harmful to culture (31%) are also pointed at as threats to Russian culture" (Marshak, 2008).

In modern society, both in Russia and in the West, the mass media exerts an enormous influence on people's mentality and psychology, as confirmed by the studies performed at the Moscow Institute for Social and Cultural Programmes: 90,5% of respondents named the mass media as an important threat to cultural security (Marshak, 2008).

Many studies have been conducted about the role of mass media in manipulating the population. The cultural and information expansion of American popular culture has led to global moral emptiness, self-interest, neglect of universal and traditional cultural values. The boundaries between culture and anti-culture, the beautiful and the ugly get blurred. Considerable risks arise from the small group of the so-called creative elite aspiring to self-affirmation and self-expression by refusing and mocking the entire cultural heritage created by previous generations of Russian artists and scholars. This group even rejects the significance of Tolstoy's "War and Peace", rethinks and undermines scientific achievements by Mikhail Lomonosov, falsifies the history of Russian state and culture.

The replacement of true values by false ones, the imposition of a consumerist ideology, the cult of glamour actively imposed by entertainment programs on TV and advertising have led to a primitive worldview reduced to communication in blogs and social networks. The excessive obsession with selfie posts in social media has already led to tragic outcomes when young people die or get injured

trying to take a catchy selfie. New youth subcultures, centered on Internet communication and transmission of memes, have been emerging lately. The hipster subculture, made up of young people striving to maximum satisfaction of their material and other needs, proclaiming the cult of iPhone and consumption of fashionable novelties in all spheres of life, has spread in Russia recently.

One of the major problems related to informational and cultural safety of a person has become the problem of cyber-mobbing in social media, that is, psychological terror, bullying and persecution leading to real inter-ethnic, inter-religious and socio-cultural conflicts that fall under various articles of administrative and criminal legislation. Lack of communication culture in social networks among the young (and not only them) often leads to psychological injuries and conflicts in messaging that evolve into full-fledged bullying backed by real actions. Since social networks are also actively used by organized crime and terrorist groups to recruit young people, this issue should become the subject of interdisciplinary studies and should lead to the public scrutiny and activation of law enforcement to prevent and control this kind of illegal activities posing a threat to cultural and national security of the state. Proposed measures to block websites publishing illegal materials and to filter content in social media seem insufficient. It is necessary to work out a complex of measures in line with the recently adopted cultural policy strategy.

## **DISCUSSION**

Cultural policy has only recently become a widely discussed topic in foreign social studies and humanities. Universities of Birmingham, Princeton and Chicago, among others, conduct extensive research on culture policy. The following definitions of this concept have been suggested in the proceedings of the conference “What is Cultural Policy?” and in the materials of the Princeton University Research Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies. Paul DiMaggio suggested to examine cultural policy across many different fields, comparing public and private policy in the arts with communications policy. He points at differences between direct policies, intended to shape cultural fields and indirect policies. Finally, policy means actions by the government and ignores significance of non-profit foundations and organizations. DiMaggio states that most academics and practitioners are the key players in discussions on cultural policy. This approach coincides in part with the one found in Russia which also sees the state as playing the leading role in realization of cultural policy.

The issues of implementing elite or mass cultural policy remains controversial. A clear trend towards a greater awareness of adverse effects of interference into foreign cultures has been emerging in international research studies since the 1980s. Theories by T. Adorno, P. Bourdieu, J. Ortega y Gasset, M. McLuhan, J. Habermas, M. Horkheimer, P. Sztompka’s concept of “cultural trauma” and many others played an important role in development of theoretical and methodological approaches to

this problem. Postmodernism theories taking up problems of uncertainty and the transitional nature of the contemporary state of social and cultural evolution hold a vast potential for analysing culture and cultural policy in today's globalized world (J. Baudrillard, G. Deleuze, J. Derrida, J. Lacan, J.-F. Lyotard, etc.).

Problems related to mass media's influence on society and state are discussed in works by A. Bard, J. Söderkvist, M. McLuhan, D. Rushkoff, M. Castells, A. Toffler, F. Fukuyama and others.

Qualitative developments and transformations in the knowledge-production methods occurred in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and these epistemological shifts resulted in emergence of new inter- and transdisciplinary areas in social studies and the humanities. Since these shifts take place, as a rule, outside a rigid disciplinary segregation, they influence various disciplines, inviting scholars to go beyond local limitations and to participate in new knowledge-production practices. New interdisciplinary research areas, such as cultural studies, visual studies, memory studies, emotion studies, have emerged. A cultural or visual shift in epistemology promotes research on cultural policy as a social security element. The aim of the cultural studies is to examine cultural practices in their relation to power and to analyse cultural policy in a specific society. In "Introducing Cultural Studies", Z. Sardar names five key aims of the cultural studies: examination of cultural practices in relation to power; the need for understanding culture in its various forms; importance of analysing the socio-political context of a culture, etc. (Sardar and Van Loon, 1994).

Foreign research studies on cultural policy in Russia usually concern periods of totalitarianism (I. Golomstock, S. Volkov, S. Plaggenborg) or are situated in the general context of historical and cultural research (S. Cohen, G. Hosking). In the early 2000s, Hosking made an interesting, but controversial statement: "A turbulent and contradictory creation of the Russian nation is taking place. I am sure that there will be a democracy in Russia, but it will be a Russian one" (Hosking, 2001).

The issue of moral values has always been significant in human history. It had a wider social and moral significance in crucial times of history when cultural traditions were depreciated, when previous ideological and ethical principles were subject to discrimination and were replaced by new ideals and goals.

In post-Soviet Russia, state cultural policy had two tendencies. On one hand, Russia's transition to market economy forced cultural institutions to solve the problem of financial independence and self-support resulting from a dramatic decrease in state funding and the need to create an entrepreneurial model of culture management. On the other hand, the Soviet model of culture management, largely dependent on state funding and maintaining paternalistic traditions of culture management, has been kept and is still functioning. Today's culture policy represents a reprogramming of the culture itself, taking into consideration social uncertainty and putting greater emphasis on values.

When analyzing the main aspects of cultural policy, it is worth mentioning their continuity in different historical periods. Zhidkov says that “cultural policy, that can be proclaimed in different ways and can be implemented by government with varying degrees of intensity, aims at forming a more or less identical value system/worldview, shared by the population, that guarantees social unity and the stability of the state” (Zhidkov, 2003).

Today, a shift towards conservative values and traditionalism is evident in the state cultural policy and in the mass consciousness, a shift that has not been influenced by external factors, but results from the socio-cultural experiments of the 1990s. This tendency is reflected in the presidential decree “On the Foundations of the State Cultural Policy” that defines priority directions and goals of the state cultural policy and emphasizes traditional values (Decree of the President of Russia, 2014). The “National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation”, adopted on December 31, 2015, defines the following strategic objectives for national cultural security: preservation and promotion of traditional Russian moral values as the basis of Russian society; citizenship education among children and youth; preservation and development of a shared citizenship identity among the peoples of the Russian Federation and of a common cultural space; consolidation of Russia’s role in the humanitarian and cultural space of the world” (Decree of the President of Russia, 2015).

Cultural production and formation of the moral value system is carried out by organisations, institutions and companies, state and public entities, artistic unions that are directly linked to production, preservation, promotion and marketing of cultural and educational products and services. The following words of A. Y. Fliehr, the Russian thinker and cultural specialist, have never been more relevant: “The less money the ruling elite invests in culture now, the more money it will have to invest in the police, the legal and the penitentiary system tomorrow” (Fliehr, 1998).

S. B. Sinetsky is absolutely right to evaluate cultural policy’s efficiency on the two main criteria: “The first criterion is based on a stable replicability of the required cultural norms and values within the region specified by cultural policy. The second criterion refers to an individual’s conscious will to reproduce the best behavioural models accepted in society. The continuity in intellectual and behavioural practices between the past and the future, that is, the possibility to rely on the past when planning the future and the awareness that current activities create tomorrow’s heritage is a major indicator of the effectiveness of cultural policy (Sinetsky, 2012).

## **CONCLUSION**

Cultural policy is increasingly in demand as an essential part of modern Russia’s national security. The rising threat of a humanitarian crisis resulting from a growth of aggression and intolerance, devaluation of universally shared values, atomization



of society has shown the importance and the necessity to preserve the unified socio-cultural space of the Russian state.

Major European countries have had a considerable influence on Russian culture for several centuries, and this trend continued during the transitional period in Russia since the early 1990s, when Russian culture integrated into European and American cultures and, thus, became involved in global cultural processes.

Deformations in the post-Soviet cultural life and a break from traditional cultural system triggered the reverse processes of restoring the cultural and civilizational matrix and awakened interest in preserving and transmitting cultural values that include the rich Russian culture and the cultures of numerous peoples living in Russia.

State cultural policy in modern Russia reflects a quest for the state's new role in culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is related to new challenges. Certainly, cultural policy requires improved management mechanisms. We think that the scientific management of cultural processes could mitigate and neutralize many negative conditions that hinder cultural development and could help find the right solutions to any contradictions. Indispensable for the modernisation process in Russia, cultural policy must be managed by both state authorities and the society, in general.

Rapidly transforming cultural and behaviour models in the globalizing world pose considerable threats and risks to modern Russia's national security. New Internet communications highlight the need to ensure the cultural and informational security of an individual in light of the mass media's impact on the cultural life of the country and its national security. Therefore, it seems appropriate to adopt the decree "On the Foundations of the State Cultural Policy" as a core document aimed at protecting Russia's civilizational identity. However, effective cultural policy mechanisms need to be elaborated in every region, taking into consideration expert scholarly opinions to ensure their successful implementation. National cultural security strategy and tactics can only be developed by joined efforts of the state and society along with the rejection of the harmful left-over funding principle in culture and cultural studies.

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