

CULTURE AS AN ELEMENT OF “SOFT POWER” IN THE CONDITIONS OF GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

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In this article, culture is considered in the context of “soft power”, conditioned by the geopolitical competition of the two leading world powers. For modern Russia, a common sociocultural space of the country and a common Russian identity are very important, to preserve the wholeness of the state and national security. A conclusion is made about the principal meaning of culture and cultural policy to transmit the best national cultural achievements of the Russian society and the necessity of spreading of the Russian culture as an element of “soft power”. The importance of further research and clarifying of the mechanisms and the policy of “soft power” for their use in public diplomacy are considered. Projects of creating and transmitting of Russian “soft power” projects are examined, as an answer to the threat to national security that is so great in the conditions of geopolitical competition.

Key Words: Culture, cultural policy, “soft power”, geoculture, geocultural image, geocultural identity, geocultural projects, geopolitical competition, state image policy, national security, public diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

Geopolitical competition, taking place in different forms, is becoming the basis of the life in the modern world. In the post-bipolar world, international relations have become more complex and controversial, they have not fulfilled the wish to minimize the international tension after the end of the cold war, and, in the last two years, are in many respects characterized as a return to the policy of confrontation and even cold war between the USA and Russia. The geopolitic competition has given birth to many different cultural and civilizational conflicts in the world, when values of the Euro-Atlantic civilization contradict the values of regions that have other cultural, mental and religious traditions, and lead to confrontation. One of the main directions in the competitive struggle are the geocultural ones, the central factor of domination in the global fight. The main actors in the space of geopolitical competition are the USA that strives to preserve its status of a superpower and a “defender” of democratic values all over the world, and the countries, that try to pursue an independent policy (Russia, China and India).

During the last several years, especially in foreign European and American mass media, the image of Russia has become considerably more negative, which,

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in its turn, demands activation of informational and cultural policy. The growing competitive struggle and confrontation of value models of development of Euro-Atlantic and Russian civilizations actualizes the need in a realistic portrayal of the sources and the essence of the geo-cultural changes in the conditions of geopolitical competition. Indirect influence on the competitors is one of the main methods of “soft power” used to make value-oriented changes of the geo-cultural image according to given patterns. Geo-cultural images are a complex system of characteristics, including cultural and civilizational markers determining the development of countries in the global world. That is why an analysis of problems connected with cultural influence and using culture as an element of “soft power” in the conditions of geopolitical competition seems relevant and vitally needed to preserve the national identity and the safety of the country.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

As general scientific methods, to understand the category of culture as an element of “soft power”, the structural and functional, comparative, logical, system and other methods should be used. The structural and functional approach, also used in European research work, enables us to see the theoretic and methodological basis of cultural policy in a structuralized form in the development of cultural diplomacy and using technologies of “soft power”. The comparative approach makes it possible to analyze the functioning of the mechanism of the technologies of “soft power” in the sphere of culture in detail. The comparative method gives a possibility of detailed analysis of functioning of the mechanism of “soft power” technologies in the sphere of culture by means of examining of formal and informal cultural policy. Using the system method in examining the outer cultural policy helps us to clarify the relations of the “soft” cultural component of geopolitics with its other components; also to consider the interrelations of the state and the society in the context of cultural export for global cultural influence.

The principles of scientific objectivity and historicism, and the civilizational approach are the methodological basis helping to trace interconnections and differences between formal and informal directions of realization of the outer cultural policy of foreign countries and Russia, to study the process of their development, to define qualitative changes in close connection with definite conditions of a given historic period. Comparative analysis is important to define weak points in the realization of the Russian policy of “soft power” and the necessity of its correction according to foreign standards.

The XX century was characterized by epistemological turns that led to the appearance of interdisciplinary spheres of research: cultural studies, visual studies, memory studies. A cultural turn, a visual turn in epistemology became a convenient methodological unit to examine culture as an element of “soft power”. “Cultural studies” are aimed at understanding how meanings are formed and spread that are

connected with systems of power and management. "Cultural studies" also analyze cultural policy in the framework of a definite social model of development. In his work «Introducing Cultural Studies», S. Ziyadullin enumerates the main characteristics and aims of research of culture; he defines the study of cultural practices as and their relation to power, and points out the necessity of understanding of culture in all its complex forms, and the importance of analysis of the socio-political context, in which a culture exists [1].

LITERATURE REVIEW

The category of culture has been considered in a great number of research works in different spheres of social and humanitarian knowledge. We should not think that the idea of using culture as "soft power" to ensure a definite power in the society, is new. A. Gramsci's theory of "cultural and ideological hegemony" from his "Prison notebooks" of the 1930-s [2], can be considered one of the precursors of the concept of "soft power".

But the method of "soft power", introducing certain cultural values and using them to achieve global cultural domination has been elaborated and used in our cultural epoch. J.S. Nye, a professor of Harvard University and the author of the term "soft power", is the founder of a field in examining "soft" instruments of American power. His works define the difference between "soft power" and military and economic power, and why it is so important in the epoch of globalization and revolution in the sphere of Internet communication [3].

According to J. Nye's conception, "soft power" has three main resources in the USA. First, it is culture, spread all over the world, secondly, inner and outer political forces, thirdly, foreign policy, that looks legitimate and has a moral authority [4]. The history of the outer cultural policy of the USA as a problem of American "cultural imperialism" in its relation with the processes of globalization and in the aspect of exportation of the US mass culture, is being thoroughly examined by J. Gienow-Hecht and R. Pells.

Besides understanding culture as one of the determining elements of the geopolitical competition of the leading states, the term "cultural war" was introduced, that is semantically ambiguous. The term was introduced by Henri Gobard, French Minister of Culture, in 1979. He defined culture as a factor that is not only compatible with classical wars, but even outdoing them in its results. Gobard considered culture war as an expansion of American mass culture into the European cultural heritage [5]. Later his ideas were used by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari in their research of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Methods of research connected with the analysis of media influence on culture and cultural policy is developed in the theories of A. Bard, J. Söderqvist, M. McLuhan, D. Rushkoff, M. Castells, A. Toffler, F. Fukuyama, etc.

The development of methods of research of a geocultural image of a state is structured by D. Zamyatin, who defines three models of geocultural functioning.

They are: the model of sociocultural differentiation in the conditions of global domination of the Western (Euro-American) civilization; the model of local centers of sociocultural development, that are unable to communicate effectively on the global level, and the mediation model of sociocultural distancing, that means formation and developing of intercultural and inter-civilizational spaces, as the product of interrelation of cultures and civilizations [6]. On our opinion, the third model can be used to analyze the geo-cultural image of Russia that comprises nearly two hundred peoples with their different ethno-cultural and ethno-confessional characteristics.

Methodological approaches and methods considering culture as a “soft power” technology and an element of image policy of a state become more and more needed and meaningful, both in research work and in real politics. Cultural policy of globalism as “soft power” is an instrument transforming the value orientations of the modern Russian society. Using the aforementioned theoretical and empiric methods of research will enable us to examine culture as an element of “soft power” in the context of geopolitical competition and define the threats coming from the rapidly changing cultural behavior models in the world that is becoming more and more global.

RESULTS

One of the key elements of the term “soft power” is culture as a reflection of outer and inner political ideals of the state. The concept of “soft power” as an ability to get something that is needed from other people with the help of attractiveness, and not violence or bribery, has just recently become needed among the Russian public. The conception of “soft power” was first used in 2012, in the official political discourse, in the meaning of a complex of instruments that have to be studied and used in the framework of building the outer cultural policy of Russia.

The ability of the USA to offer and spread “soft power” practically all over the world, that includes mass culture and attractive models of socio-cultural life strategies and standards for various categories of citizens, has turned out to be important and effective. In his book “Sign and Signification” U. Eco viewed culture as means of structuring life experience with the help of sign microstructures and binary oppositions [7, p. 186]. This experience is embodied in the multi-layer mass culture. “Soft power”, in its turn, includes the mass culture of the country, understood as a set of values, standards, lifestyles and national achievements, meaningful for the society; also political ideology, transmitting the basic ideas of liberalism, models of market economy, interpretations of world and national history, popular diplomacy on non-governmental organizations and ordinary citizens. “Soft power” is based on attractive ideas that, in their turn, make it possible to control and to achieve the necessary result. It makes people respect the country, take its values and views; it makes people want to be connected with the culture of the leading country.

Today's Russian Federation has an important task: to create an image of the state attractive to the outer world, using elements of already developed methods and technologies of influence in the framework of "soft power" policy. As our country begins to use these technologies much later, and, in many respects, uses what has been developed before, we should consider two aspects of this policy. First, it is oriented at the outer space, to promote the positive image of the country, and transmission of great achievements of Russian culture, showing our point of view on the problems in controversial cases. Secondly, it is oriented at the inner space, to minimize the informational influence, reforming the minds of young people, that has been going on for the last twenty-five years.

In the time of cultural globalization and using of American technologies of "soft power", an analysis of the geo-cultural image of Russia, trying to preserve its civilizational image and cultural developmental code.

In modern society, traditional models of sociocultural being of a person (first of all, cultural identity) are being transformed. It is necessary to connect the study of Russian geo-cultural identity and modeling of this phenomenon in the certain historic and sociocultural context of the region, where culture should be an integrative factor [8].

The forming of collective civil identity, civil consciousness and behavior has become one of the most important directions of inner policy of the Russian state in the conditions of growing xenophobia, ethno-phobias, extremism and intolerance [22]. Considering these challenges of modern geo-civilizational development of our statehood, both megaprojects of constructing or revival of collective identity and local projects of creating regional identities should be developed and realized [23]. Comparing national cultures with alternative lifestyles and cultural cosmopolitanism, researches make the following conclusions: First, individual identities are changeable. Secondly, "people are wonderfully capable of creating new identities, using material from different cultural sources [9].

Scientists who research the civilizational and sociocultural identity of Russia, accentuate the necessity to analyze the problems in the context of Russia's search of its new place in the globalizing world. They mean understanding of the identity of the global world and the identities connected with traditional characteristics of states, peoples and cultures [10]. According to A.S. Panarin, we are witnesses of the problem of civilizational identity of Russia, its right to be unlike the West, have its own mission, way and traditions, becoming that of our right to exist, that of our national being [11].

1.1. Outer Cultural Policy. As we have already noted, using culture for geopolitic purposes has become active in the modern world. A number of projects are have been created and are being realized now: the American project, the project of the "Single Europe", the Chinese project. Thus, to preserve the independence

and self-sufficiency, our country needs creating a Russian project, on an attractive socio-cultural basis.

One of the projects, making for revival of the geo-cultural role of Russia in the globalizing world community, is the project of "Russian World" that started in 2010. It is intended to consolidate the Russian diaspora that has been spread all over the world because of tragic events connected with the crash of the imperial and the Soviet models of the Russian state. Special attention in this project is paid to structuring of the "Russian World" as a civilizational phenomenon, to developing and functioning of ethnic connections in the modern global world. The Russian diaspora of the countries of the near and far abroad is to become the basis of the "Russian World". The realization of the project implies creating a net of social, economic, cultural, informational and other connections. The constructors of such a system are: 1) the diaspora itself, as the nucleus of the "Russian World"; 2) the Russian state as a national corporation, naturally interested in the existence of such an ethno-cultural phenomenon [12].

The office of the President of the Russian Federation has bought a plot in the center of Paris to build a Russian spiritual and cultural center that is going to comprise a Russian Orthodox Church, a theological seminary, a library, a hall for meetings of the Russian community and acquainting Parisians with the principles of Russian Orthodox culture. Naturally, such a center will not only become an attraction for Russian and Russian-speaking French citizens; it will make for strengthening of good neighborly relations of our countries, getting rid of ethno-cultural controversies and overcoming ethno-stereotypes and ethno-phobias.

Such projects are already being carried out by other states that have already helped their diasporas and maintained connections with the cultural matrix. Such experience helps to connect geopolitical potentials of the Russian metropolis and its diasporas: first, in cyberspace, then on the level of culture.

Experts state growing intensification of cultural value exchange and interaction of national and regional cultures. As practice shows, to create a net of interconnections between Russia and its people, living in different countries of the world, a redistribution of state boundaries is not at all necessary. Socio-cultural worlds include not only representatives of a given ethnic group, but all representatives of a given culture; that widens the range of possibilities and really enables us to realize the project as a geo-cultural one.

However, the project "Russian world" has its critics and opponents. Among representatives of Russian Orthodox Church abroad there are those who accentuate the big sums of Russian taxpayers' money that are required for this project, and the pompous building of the "spiritual and cultural center" in Paris. In the framework of the program "Russian world" "exhibitions are held and concerts are given all over the world, that are not always self-sustaining, political and youth movements and schools are created. The first hierarch of Russian Orthodox Church abroad

points out to his congregation, that the program "Russian world" is a political program, aimed at creating a pro-Russian lobby, one of the main makers of which is Patriarch Kirill. More than that, the hierarch calls the project "secular" [13].

Of course, such a judgment can be explained by the competition that has long existed between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate. The statement about the concerts not being self-sustaining is more than just questionable. On the contrary, statistic data on the results of "years of cooperation" in the sphere of culture (Russia – France, Russia – Italy, Russia – Germany, etc.) show growing exchange between countries, growing commodity turnover. A part of these processes has stopped because of the sanctions against Russia due to the events in Ukraine.

Twin cities St. Petersburg and Paris strengthened their cooperation in the sphere of tourism. An agreement has been signed in the French capital on the opening of the first informational and tourist center in it. In the framework of "Petersburg meetings in Paris" various events are planned: an exhibition of works of painters, descendants of Russian aristocracy, master classes on children`s performing art, master classes on performing art for children of Russian origin; programs "Russian language for children of our compatriots", "Russian as a foreign language"; presentation of the electronic book "Cultural heritage of Russians living abroad", etc. The tourist center will work on the basis of the Russian center of science and culture. It is the first project of St. Petersburg city administration outside Russia. Opening of such centers was planned in other European capitals" [14]. All these concrete actions aimed at realization of the project "Russian world" showed that the modern globalizing world community is characterized by gradual disappearance of boundaries and establishing of productive cooperation inside the Russian geo-cultural space.

This year "Portland", a PR-agency in London, gave Russia the 27th place in the list of the most influential countries of the world by the criterion of "soft power"; that is, influencing not by weapons, but by culture and civil values [15]. This perplexed many Western journalists, because the image of the country has suffered a considerable damage lately, connected with the accession of Crimea to Russia and the Donbas events. Last year (2015) Russia was not even included into the list of the most influential countries of the world.

1.2. Inner cultural policy. In August 2013 the Russian Government ratified a federal target program (FTP) "Strengthening of the Unity of the Russian Nation and Ethno-Cultural Development of the Peoples of Russia in 2014 - 2020". The program is intended to coordinate the state national policy, the elaboration of regional strategies of ethno-cultural development, supporting the dialogue between the organs of the state and non-governmental national and religious organizations [16]. The document was elaborated by Ministry of Economic Development; it is going to help in the establishing of a single ethno-cultural space in the country and

to “reduce the damage caused by the international and inter-confessional stress”. With its help, the Government hopes to pass ‘from the situational and not programmed support of single events’ in regions to the “programmed and targeted method of complex realization of state national policy”. Among the tasks of the new FTP are making for strengthening of civil unity and harmonization of international relationships and ethno-cultural variety of peoples in Russia. Besides, efforts will be made to increase “the investment attractiveness of regions, including the Northern Caucasus” and improving “the ethno-cultural and social wellbeing of native people of Russia” [16].

These decisions seem to be very important, because we can overcome the risks of disintegration processes, actualized by inner and outer actors, interested in them, only by preserving of the single socio-cultural space.

One more important step to strengthen the geo-cultural identity of the country was the establishment of the Council of the Russian Language under the President of the Russian Federation. “The Council is a consultative body; its aims are considering key questions in the field of state support and development of the Russian language and elaboration of suggestions on improving the state policy in the given field” [17]. On the government website it is stated that making for realization of the state policy aimed at popularization of the Russian language, its support and development, and considering initiatives and programs of citizens and non-governmental organizations concerning the Russian language” [18].

An important direction of the “soft power” is preserving interest to the Russian language in the countries of the former USSR, where it has been, to a large extent, replaced by English, and the acquaintance of the younger generation with the best examples of Russian culture has been minimized. The State Institute of the Russian Language, named after A.S. Pushkin, has recently created the project “Ambassadors of the Russian language in the world” with the aim of “popularization of the Russian language, culture and literature in Russia and abroad, developing and strengthening partnership between universities and nations and propaganda of cultural values, tolerance and organization of a dialogue of cultures”[19]. Last year volunteer students were ambassadors of the Russian language in several post-Soviet countries, this year such work is planned in Russian regions, in countries of Asia, South and North America, Africa and Europe.

The Russian language is still in demand in the world, as Russian and Russian-speaking diasporas, for example, in the USA, has more than 3 million people. In New York, Russian is actively used; it becomes one of official working languages, besides English, Spanish and Chinese. Accordingly, educational programs are needed to preserve the use of Russian and involvement of descendants of Russian immigrants into learning it.

In the framework of realization of the project of constructing cultural and historical identity of Russian citizens, we should accentuate several general Russian

multimedia projects, initiated by the channel "Russia". These projects showed both the controversies and the potential of forming of value and meaningful symbols, aimed at strengthening of the civil and socio-cultural unity of the country. These projects are "The Name of Russia" and "Russia 10". Initially the topic of voting was a choice of names of most outstanding historic personalities and their perception by the society; a choice of most meaningful cultural monuments to create a landscape "Park of Russia" in the Moscow area. It was not initially free of conflict, and, according to the idea of its organizers, the projects had to become an integrative instrument, an indicator of our multicultural identity. However, both projects not only demonstrated the results, that the organizers had wanted to achieve, but also became a litmus paper, showing and stressing psychic differences of Russian citizens and different approaches to the historic and cultural past of the country and to its monuments. In such cases, involvement of a scientific community seems important, that could elaborate and assess projects intended to be elements of "soft power" in the inner cultural policy.

One more project of network interaction in forming the geo-cultural identity and a geo-cultural image of Russia is the creation of the portal "Russia for everybody", where journalists and experts can unite and discuss "vital" topics. However, the website presents only 10 peoples of the 193 living in Russia, and the information is available mainly in Russian, which reduces the number of guests of the website.

Among the most important events forming the geo-cultural image of Russia, we should consider inner and outer tourism, as one of the elements of public diplomacy and "soft power". The aim of public diplomacy, attracting the public, becomes especially meaningful in the framework of complex Russian-European and Russian-American relations. It is well known, that actors of public diplomacy are both professional diplomats and non-governmental organizations, unions of citizens [20]. Consequently, interrelations of states can develop not only on the level of official representatives of states, as it used to be, but also on the level of their citizens. Using dialogues of citizens, including young ones, in the field of culture and intellectual tourism, we get supporters and allies; we humanize the image of our country or region. When states communicate on the level "citizens – citizens", it means that the process of cultural value exchange is direct and we avoid stereotypes and ethno-phobias. More than that, the acquired image of this or that part of the country will be more memorable, if it is connected with personal experience of communication of the participants. To create a positive image of Russia, public diplomacy in the form of realization of international projects with participation of young people, is the best method. It enables us to create for foreign youth a positive image of the region with its cultural and historic characteristics and an image of people living in it, who have their values, views and mentality.

DISCUSSION

Public diplomacy is an inseparable part of the policy of “soft power”, for working in the frame of which we should actively involve communities and non-governmental organizations, that are today`s transmitters of public diplomacy, along with the state. Today`s role of civil society as an institute of public diplomacy is definitely insufficient, and the civil society in our country is not yet built completely. The understanding of the fact, that without an active participation of the society, without public diplomacy we cannot change anything in international relationships, overcome today`s negative image of Russia, exists both on the level of the state and on the level of mass consciousness. Russia lacks behind many foreign countries in forming its image and transmitting a positive image of the country that cannot be created only by the state and the community of professional diplomats.

There are possibilities of development that have been developed in the process of discussions: propaganda of values through cinema (these must be films, that do not discredit Russia), television, radio, music, theater, tourism, communication through the Internet and other forms of social and cultural activities. Preparation of informational materials, including printed editions (magazines, books), audio- and video-production about the country, spreading it abroad through diplomacy and through the Internet. Creating and developing of instruments of communication and conviction, direct contacts between social institutes, mass media groups of people and people from different countries [21].

Another important thing is the necessity of developing and conducting of educational programs and round tables on the problems and technologies of public diplomacy and “soft power”, so that representatives of non-governmental organizations and state structures could be prepared for this kind of work. Coordination of activities of all structures is necessary, both state and non-state, engaged in public diplomacy, with defining of certain goals and competencies in the sphere of their work.

It is necessary to develop a long-time project, defining stages of its realization (as in the USA model) and gradually spread its influence over foreign states, so that not to remain in the situation of constant “catching up” development. We should use the available cultural potential of our country more actively, and prevent reforming of the consciousness of our young people according to the worst examples of American mass culture. The creation of funds “Russian cooperation”, “Fund of support of public diplomacy named after A.M. Gorchakov”, “Russian World”, TV channel RT, program “Ambassadors of the Russian language”, etc. make an important step in this direction, but this is not yet sufficient.

CONCLUSION

The leading place in the modern global competition of world powers is held not by the direct use of weapons, but by indirect influence on competitors, the so-called

method of "soft power", and an important role in it is played by its cultural component. The modern world is a complex system with a high level of global competitiveness. Tasks of preserving unity and wholeness of the country, cultural identity of its population, political and economic independence, trying to keep the status of a great power, that our country has had since the XVIII century, demand Russia and its people being competitive in the geo-economic, geopolitical, socio-demographic and geo-cultural spheres.

National security of the Russian state is facing considerable risks and threats from the rapidly transforming cultural models of behavior and life in the globalizing world community. New phenomena of Internet-communication actualize the cultural and informational safety of the person and the state. For several centuries, Russian culture has been influenced by Western European culture, which, on the one hand, made for its inclusion into the general European development tendencies. On the other hand, traditional Russian culture, that originally had been open to inner and outer borrowings and mutual enrichment, became subject to considerable modernist and post-modernist influences. This characteristic appeared again in the period of transformations in the Russian statehood at the beginning of the 90-s, when integration with European and American cultures took place, and Russia was included into global cultural processes.

To preserve independence and self-sufficiency of the Russian state, it is necessary to elaborate and realize cultural "soft power" projects, aimed at preserving of the cultural and civilizational uniqueness of the country and popularization of the geo-cultural image of Russia in the world. The projects are intended to demonstrate the real state of things in the country and minimize the negative components of informational war, caused by the geopolitical competition of the two leading world powers, and by the USA as the single superpower trying to preserve the unipolar world and the single power center.

Culture becomes an element of "soft power", more and more necessary, determining the national security of the modern Russian state in the conditions of geopolitical competition. Growing threats of the humanitarian crisis, connected with the growth of aggression, intolerance, depreciation of common values and atomization of society, have made preservation of common socio-cultural space of the country vital.

Developing universal cultural values, formed by mass culture, is aimed at influencing millions of people all over the world in the interests of the Euro-Atlantic civilization. Globalization and informational revolution actually mean uniting all the world in the interests of the USA, which does not always correspond to the needs of national states and to national cultures.

The Russian policy of "soft power" cannot be realized without using public diplomacy, and non-governmental organizations and representatives of civil society should participate in its realization. A positive and attractive image of the country cannot be created only by efforts of state institutes.

In general, even a short analysis of several projects in constructing a geo-cultural image of the country in the conditions of challenges of globalization and regionalization, makes it possible to conclude that much is still to be done to transmit our vision of current international problems. Our strategy and tactic of “soft power” can be created only on the condition, that the state and the civil society should unite and reject uncritical copying of Western examples.

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