

Russian Culture and Putin's National Governance Model

AN Zhaozhen^{[a],*}

^[a]Vice director, professor. Institute of Russian Studies, Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

Russian culture has both Eastern and Western cultural characteristics, and the internal structure of culture has distinct polarities. The main factors in the formation of Russian authoritarian culture are mainly the Russian economic system and ideological concepts. It is impossible to understand Russia with reason, cannot be measured by general standards, and there is something special there. During the Putin periods, the president's power was further strengthened and "Sovereign Democracy" was implemented. The choice of Russia's national governance model is followed by historical and realistic Russian cultural factors.

Key words: Russia; culture; Putin; "Sovereign Democracy"; Model

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Due to geographical and historical factors, Russian culture has formed a special nature in the long-term development, which is different from other countries in the world. Russian culture is constantly influenced by the East and the West in its development and incorporates this influence into its own culture. Russia is like a huge pendulum, constantly swinging between Eastern and Western cultures. The huge gaps in economic status and cultural level have created enormous obstacles to the country's modernization road. The "two polarities" and "polarization" of the Russian national spirits have led to

the subtle integration of authoritarianism, state supremacy and anarchism in Russians; indulgence, cruelty, violence and kindness, humanity, supply symbiosis; conservative religion of the ritual coexists with pursuit of truth, individualism, collectivism, and nationalism. Influenced by Russian traditional culture, Putin has established a new model of national governance with the characteristics of the times since he took office.

1. MAIN FEATURES OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

Russian culture is a historical and multi-faceted concept that includes facts, processes, trends, and has experienced long and complex developments in different geospatial and historical periods. During the European Renaissance, Maxim Grek (Максим Грек) moved to Russia at the turn of the 16th century and has an impressive Russian image in terms of depth and loyalty. She is a woman in a black dress, sitting thoughtfully on the road. Russian culture is also "on the road", and it is constantly looking for formation and development.

Most of Russia's territory is later established than the world's major cultural centers. In this sense, Russian culture is a relatively young phenomenon. Of course, Russian culture has developed under the influence of various cultures in the West and the East, which have surpassed Russia in history. However, by sensing and absorbing the cultural heritage of other countries, Russia has developed and developed its own unique Russian culture.

The long-term development of Russian culture is determined by the Christian-Orthodox Church. For many centuries, temple architecture, portraiture and church literature have become major cultural genres and have made significant contributions to the world of art treasures. Until the eighteenth century, Russia carried out spiritual activities related to Christianity. The specific

characteristics of Russian culture depend to a large extent on the “Russian character “ and “Russian thought “, “Faith–Knowledge“ and “Faith–Reason“, which have been resolved in different ways in Russia’s specific historical period, but the most common is to support faith.¹

Overall, Russian culture has the following characteristics:

First, “Intermediate” with both Eastern and Western cultural characteristics. The geographical distribution of Russia spans Europe and Asia. This unique geographical location puts Russia at the junction of Eastern and Western cultures. It is neither pure Western culture nor pure Eastern culture. It is a dual function of both East and West cultures. An independent cultural system of cultural identity. This is not only because Russia is located in Europe and Asia, but also has the characteristics of the East and the West in geography. More importantly, Russian culture is constantly influenced by the East and the West in its development process, and integrates this influence into its own culture. In short, Russia is like a huge pendulum, constantly swinging between Eastern and Western cultures. This position between the East and the West has given Russia the idea of acting as a bridge between East and West and thus playing a great role in guiding human unity. This sense of mission to the world is one of the important features of Russian culture. Second, the internal structure of Russian culture has a distinct “two polarities“.

The emergence of “two polarities“ in Russian culture and Russian Thought comes from the collision and struggle of Eastern and Western cultures in Russia, and on the other hand from the deep division between various sectors of Russian society. The huge gaps between urban and rural areas, the rich and the poor, economic status and cultural level, have created a huge obstacle to the modernization of this country. The cultural break has caused Russians having a series of divisions in character, habits, ethics and values. The “two polarities” and “polarization” of the Russian national spirit have led to the ingenious integration of various contradictions in the Russians: authoritarianism, state supremacy and anarchism; indulgence, cruelty, violence and kindness, humanity, suppleness; Conservative religious rituals and the pursuit of truth; individualism, strong individual consciousness and uncharacteristic collectivism; nationalism, self-promotion and prudence, all humanity, and so on (Lei, 2001, pp.43-44).

Third, “authoritarianism” in traditional political culture. The famous Russian poet Chutchev once said, “You can’t understand Russia with reason, you can’t measure it with normal standards, and there are special things in it.” As an idea, a belief, and a value, authoritarianism is opposed

to liberalism. Liberalism is in line with rationality, individual independence, private property rights, and separation of powers. But authoritarianism is closely related to irrationality, collective taming, possession of property rights, and establishment of monopoly. The main factors in the formation of Russian authoritarian culture are mainly the Russian economic system and ideological concepts. First of all, the land system is centered on the village society system. It is the land system of Russia that shapes Russian authoritarianism. The uniqueness of the property rights system is the soil of authoritarianism in Russian traditional culture. In Russia, religious plots and anti-stateism directly or indirectly serve the strengthening of monarchy (Zheng, 2000, pp.48-50).

2. CULTURAL FACTORS OF RUSSIAN NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Russia has historically formed and developed a state system of centralized centralism, and the central government exerts strong control over the economic and political processes in various regions of the country. During the Soviet era, the monopoly control of the CPSU, together with the centrally planned economy and the national defense mobilization policy, led to the centralization of local management. During the Yeltsin period, the political system with the strong presidential system as the core was characterized by the formation of a president-centered, strong presidential weak parliament, authoritarianism and a strong political system. During the Putin periods, the president’s power is further strengthened and sovereign democracy is implemented. The choice of Russian state governance contains historical and historical Russian cultural factors.

2.1 Advocating Authority

From the perspective of historical traditions, Russia has experienced five periods of the Kyiv Principality, the Sovereignty, the Moscow Principality, Peter the Great, and the Soviets. These five periods are all centralized political systems except the Kiev Principality. The long-term feudal rule has accumulated the psychological tendency of advocating authority and obeying power among the national character of the Russians. Russians had always a tendency to personalize the country in history, making it easy for the Russian people to get used to the centralization of power. In the traditional consciousness of the Russian people, the concept of “Good Tsar “has been rooted in the deep ideology of the Russian people. The people are accustomed to solving disputes and conflicts in an authoritarian manner. Authoritarianism has profound historical roots in Russia.

2.2 Thought of Patriotism

The essence of “patriotism” is Russian nationalism. In the history of Russia, it is a multi-ethnic country with

¹ Особенности русской культуры, <http://diplomba.ru/work/89085>

130 ethnic groups living together. The formation and development of national self-consciousness is the deep ideological basis for the independence and development of the Russian nation-state. In the minds of most Russians, patriotism retains its original full positive meaning; patriotism is manifested in national pride and dignity; patriotism is the driving force for the people to create great innovations. Since Gorbachev, the "cosmopolitanism" prevailing in Russian society has caused a sense of lack of geography for the Russian people. During the Yeltsin period, the collapse of ideas and social unrest caused by the rapid political and economic changes led to the crisis of national identity in Russia. During Putin's periods, the banner of Russian nationalism was re-raised, satisfying people's desire to find spiritual homes and emotional belongings in a rapidly changing world, which satisfying the feeling of sharing a certain culture and security (Zhang, 2015, pp.129-130).

2.3 Pursuing a Dream of Strong Country

Russia's unique strong country consciousness is determined by its indivisible characteristics of geopolitics, economy and culture. In the entire historical process of Russia, the consciousness of a strong country determines the ideological tendencies of the Russians and the policies of the state. In the Russian consciousness, Russia was a great country in the past, and will be a great country in the future also. From the historical point of view, the world's most vast land area and geography make the Russians feel safe, realize the power of the nation, and form the consciousness that they are the center of the world. From the tsarist Russia to Soviet Union, Russia has always enjoyed the status of a world power and is accustomed to playing the role of a big country at the international level. The disintegration of the Soviet Union made the geopolitical space and political advantages obtained by Russia's expansion for more than 300 years almost disappeared. During the Yeltsin period, the entire Russian nation fell into confusions, questioning and reflection on the destiny of the country and the nation. Putin took the rejuvenation of Russia consolidating the status of a world power as a fundamental strategic goal, which let the Russian people see the hope of a strong country.

3. PUTIN'S NATIONAL GOVERNANCE MODEL

Since Putin came to power, after a period of difficult exploration, he had promoted the "Sovereign Democracy" model in Russia. In 2000, when Putin was elected president, he promised to the Russian people: "Give me twenty years and return you a miraculous Russia". Putin believes that a strong president can lead Russia to prosperity. Only when there is a strong presidential regime can Russia be stabilized and perfected in a multi-party system that has not yet been established. The

Russian Federation can only be preserved if it has a strong executive authority.

3.1 Connotation of "Sovereign Democracy"

The concept of "Sovereign Democracy" began to appear in the Russian media after Putin's State of the Union address in 2005. The connotation of Russia's "Sovereign Democracy": "Selecting the sovereignty of the development path and democracy in international relations." Putin said that Russia is a country that will choose the path of democracy only based on its own people. Russia has embarked on this path and will abide by all the universal democratic rules. Russia will make its own decisions that what ways can guarantee the realization of the principles of freedom and democracy, taking into account in this process Russia's own history, geopolitics and other characteristics. As a sovereign country, Russia has the ability and will independently decide the terms and conditions for Russia to move along the path of democracy (Yang, 2011, pp.9-10).

In 2002, regarding the road of Russia's development, Putin proposed connotation of "Controllable Democracy". He believes that Russia should follow the path of market, state regulation and controllable democracy, rather than the oligarchy. This can be seen as a clear statement of Putin's form of democracy in Russia. In 2006, Putin proposed that Russia will become a sovereign and democratic country and will become a key force in exerting influence on world politics. As a free country, Russia will establish a just world order with other free nations, participate in the formulation of global justice principle.

3.2 The Focus of "Sovereign Democracy"

Putin believes that Russia was once a centralized state, and it should always be like this. Putin pointed out that Russia's only realistic choice is to be a strong country, one that does not oppose the international community, does not oppose other powers, but a powerful country that coexists with them. Putin promotes "Sovereign Democracy" and regards centralization as centralization Focus on establishing a vertical power system centered by the president. In 2005, after the change of the executive election procedure of the Russian Federation, Putin's vertical power system was basically institutionalized in Russia and began to become the sacred and inviolable game rule of Russian political life. In the face of Western countries' accusations of "Russian democracy", Putin has responded that the Russian government is striving to build a modern democratic system with Russian characteristics that is compatible with Russia's unique history, culture, multi-ethnic, and sparsely populated reality. Democracy is not a potato, it cannot be transplanted from one piece of land to another. After Putin served as the president of Russia, he adopted a series of measures to strengthen the state power and gradually formed a new ruling model with the president's centralization as the core.

3.3 Measures of “Sovereign Democracy”

First, strengthen the powers of the president and the federal central. The Russian historian Ryucheovsky once said, “What else is simpler than the Russian social structure? The supremacy of society is the supreme power of power. “ According to the Russian Constitution, the new Russia’s top leader, the president, is the core of state power. However, when Yeltsin was in office, he did not really build the highest authority of the president. The right to succumb to the regime’s interests, and the constant expansion of the power of local governments is also complete for the Russian Federation. After Putin came to power, in order to establish a strong state power system, Putin began to strengthen the state’s authority. The outstanding feature is that the political centralization has shown a trend of continuous strengthening. Its specific policies include adjusting federal relations and strengthening federal central authority. For example, the seven federal districts are divided, and the president’s plenipotentiary is established; the political party is nurtured and supported to serve the political power and promote the development of the political party system. Russia begin resolutely to safeguard Russia’s territorial and sovereign integrity, and combat terrorist activities that endanger Russia’s social, political, and economic order stability and the personal safety of its citizens.

Second, strengthen the leading role of the country. The most important manifestation of Putin’s politics is to strengthen the leading role of the state. Putin believes that as far as Russia’s national conditions are concerned, the role played by the state in people’s lives is irreplaceable. It is the advocate and driving force of all reforms, and it is the foundation for safeguarding the national order. At the same time, Putin stressed that the construction of the state power system plays a decisive role in the country’s rejuvenation and development. In order to strengthen the country’s control over social order, Putin gradually eliminated the actual power of Russia’s 83 federal regions, which was restricted by the central government and strengthened the president’s control over the locality. Putin successfully managed the Russian media agency and regained control of the media from the oligarchs. Under the premise of political stability, Putin regards the revitalization of the Russian economy as the focus of all

work, strengthens the guiding and authoritative role of the state in economic operations, and on the other hand continues to adhere to the main line of social development of the market economy. At the same time, Putin started to fight against oligarchy and monopoly groups, eliminate local market separatism, purify and unify the legal and economic space of the whole of Russia, implement nationally consistent economic policies and other measures to remove obstacles to economic development and improve the macro environment of economic operations.

Third, Advocating for powerhouses and patriotism. Like patriotism, powerhouseism is also a manifestation of Russian traditional thinking, and it is always Influence the Russians’ thinking and national policies. Putin put forward the “New Russian Thought” of strengthening the country and enriching the people: patriotism, the idea of a strong country, national consciousness, collectivism. Putin’s political wisdom lies in inspiring the Russian people to reinvigorate their pursuit of a powerful country. Since serving as president in 2000, Putin has used various occasions to continually clarify the necessity of strong country thinking and patriotism. He said that Russia as a big country should be a center of power in today’s world. To be a strong and confident country is Russia’s only realistic choice. In the 2003 State of the Union address, Putin pointed out that in the foreseeable future, Russia should be a truly powerful, economically advanced and influential country in the world, and all Russian policies will serve this goal.

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