

**THE CHANGING WORLD: CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR REALIZING
NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL
TRANSFORMATIONS**

At present, the world is experiencing unprecedented changes caused by technological revolutions, geopolitical shifts and the transformation of the information space. In these conditions, culture ceases to be just a sphere of intellectual life, art and traditions, it becomes a key element in implementing national interests. National interests are traditionally associated with territorial integrity, economic prosperity, and political influence.

The modern era of globalization and the digital revolution has radically changed the landscape of international relations, with the cultural factor to have acquired the significance of a strategic resource for national security. Unlike traditional forms of sovereignty, cultural sovereignty is an integrated multilevel system that includes historical memory, value standards, artistic traditions, and modern creative industries. The current moment is peculiar, since the cultural space has ceased to be a secondary element of state policy, having turned into the key field of geopolitical confrontation, where the struggle is primarily for people's minds and hearts.

In the era of globalization, cultural sovereignty directly affects the state's capability to maintain its identity and compete on the world stage. Today's deep-seated mechanisms of cultural influence are implemented through the complex system of interconnected channels, including educational programs, media space, digital platforms and entertainment industry.

Research indicates that the efficiency of the impact is determined by its gradual and systematic nature - from introducing individual cultural markers to generating a holistic worldview. The technology of "soft" cultural expansion, with its popular TV series, music videos, video games, etc. to broadcast values

and certain behavior models, is of particular danger. For example, according to the analysis of the content of leading streaming platforms, ideas contradicting many societies' traditional cultural codes are consistently promoted, and this is done under the guise of creative freedom and progressive views.

In terms of digitalization, the problem of algorithmic management of cultural preferences has got particularly relevant. Social networks and recommendation systems based on artificial intelligence generate so-called "filter bubbles"¹ that gradually change users' reference points.

Young people who spend a significant part of their time in the digital environment are particularly susceptible to this influence, which poses a threat of the intergenerational gap in the comprehension of national identity. It is noteworthy that the largest technology corporations that control these platforms often act in close coordination with the government structures of their countries, thus implementing strategies of "digital colonialism".

The phenomenon of strategic communications has appeared and constantly develops in both theoretical and practical terms. This concept covers all means of influencing the consciousness and behavior of masses of people. Strategic communications have become the most important tool for shaping public consciousness and managing social processes. The analysis of cultural aspects of these communications is of particular significance, since being the foundation of national identity, culture becomes the key field of ideological confrontation in the context of globalization.

The problem with the modern understanding of strategic communications is determined by their excessively narrow interpretation - only as PR and media tools. This approach ignores the deep-seated mechanisms of generating value reference points to be shaped via cultural codes and artistic images.

¹A filter bubble is a digital space, in which algorithms select the content, adapting to an individual user's preferences. Used on social media platforms and news aggregators, these algorithms aimed at maintaining users' interest by showing them what they want to see.

Underestimating the role of popular culture - music, fashion, and visual arts - in shaping youth worldviews is particularly alarming. It is these channels of cultural intervention that prove to be the most effective in the long run, as they influence on the subconscious level, bypassing the rational filters of critical thinking.

According to the historical analysis, interpreting the cultural factor as a tool of geopolitics is not new. Back in the 18th century, William Blake pointed out in his works the key role of arts in constructing and destructing empires. His prophetic words that “the foundation of any empire is arts and science”² are proven by modern realities. In the 20th century, this conception was developed in works by Antonio Gramsci on cultural hegemony³, as well as in the practices of the Cold War, when culture turned into the field of ideological confrontation.

Modern educational systems of the leading world powers demonstrate the increasing attention to training specialists in strategic communications. According to quantitative indicators, the United States, with its 36 educational programs and 790 graduates per year, set a high standard in this field. With its 28 programs and 450 graduates, China demonstrates its systematic approach to human resource development. India (14 programs, 310 graduates), the European Union (9 programs, 260 graduates) and the United Kingdom (3 programs, 75 graduates) also actively develop this area. The Russian education system in this area has been still in its infancy, which requires accelerated development of relevant educational programs, given national peculiar features and strategic interests.

A number of examples of cultural intervention, such as the Ukrainian case, demonstrate the high efficiency of complex impact through various

²Blake W. Songs of Innocence and Experience / W. Blake; translated from English by S.A. Stepanov. - St. Petersburg: Palmira, 2018. - 263 p. - Text: wording.

³Gramsci A. The Science of Politics. How to Rule the People / A.Gramsci; translated from Italian by G. Smirnov, V.A. Dmitrichenkov. - St. Petersburg: Algoritm, 2024. - 336 p. - Text: wording.

channels of popular culture. The technology of the step-by-step implementation of nationalist narratives deserves special attention: at first, through seemingly harmless elements - musical motifs, ornaments, folklore reminiscences, the new system of cultural codes is gradually formed. This is followed by the stage of active mythologization of history through comics, video products and social networks, where simplified but emotionally charged images of “friends” and “strangers” are created. The final stage is the political activation of the cultural space formed in this way.

The analysis of scientific literature on this issue reveals an alarming trend: after the collapse of the USSR, fundamental research on the role of culture in ideological confrontation actually ceased. Два пробела Despite their ideological bias, works of the Soviet period, such as “The Ideological Struggle and the Modern Culture of the West” edited by I.V. Mlechin⁴ or “The Battlefield is People’s Hearts” by V. Anzikeev⁵, contained valuable analytical material. Modern studies, such as Frances Stonor⁶’s book on the CIA’s cultural activities or “Enemy Number One”⁷ by O.V. Ryabov, remain an exception rather than a systematic practice.

The situation in the music industry where, according to research, Western labels continue to dominate, determining not only commercial trends, but also value reference points is of particular concern. The similar situation has developed in relatively new digital content formats, such as “shorts” - short

⁴The Ideological Struggle and the Modern Culture of the West / [I. V. Mlechin, S.I. Belza, T.V. Balashova and others]; Ed. by I.V. Mlechin; the USSR Academy of Sciences, A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature. - Moscow: Nauka, 1988. - 293 p. - Text: wording.

⁵The Battlefield is People’s Hearts. Literature, Art, Culture: the Struggle of Ideas, Worldviews, Political Systems: [Collection of articles / Comp. V. Anzikeev]. - Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1987. - 333 p. - Text: wording.

⁶Stonor F. The CIA and the World of Arts. The Cultural Front of the Cold War: Frances Saunders / F. Stonor; translated from English by V.M. Krashennnikov, E.B. Loginov. - Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2020. - 416 p. - Text: wording.

⁷“Enemy Number One” in the Symbolic Politics of the Cinematographies of the USSR and the USA during the Cold War / Edited by O.B. Ryabov. Moscow: “Aspekt Press” Publishing House, 2023. 400 p. - Text: wording.

videos on social networks that are actually not subjected to serious scientific analysis, despite their enormous impact on the youth audience.

In the 21st century, development prospects for cultural sovereignty will be determined by states' capabilities to find a balance between tradition and innovation, between identity protection and openness to world experience. Scientific community to face the task of developing new interdisciplinary approaches to researching cultural processes, which combine the methods of culture studies, political science, digital anthropology and cognitive research, has a certain significance in this process. Only such an integrated approach will make it possible to create the efficient culture-security system meeting the challenges of our time.

Ultimately, cultural sovereignty is not just an element of state policy, but a condition for preserving civilizational subjectivity under global transformation. Countries that will be able to develop a balanced model of cultural development, combining traditional values with modern technologies, will gain a significant advantage in the new geopolitical reality. Culture does not cease to be a sphere of leisure and entertainment, but it has also turned a strategic resource, on the effective use of which nations' future in the digital age depends.

However, it is important to take into account that the cultural sovereignty protection should not be reduced to some primitive limitation of external influence. It is about creating conditions for the harmonious development of a national culture, making it capable of dialogue with other traditions, without losing its identity. The state cultural policy, which should be based on the profound understanding of modern sociocultural processes and digital trends, is of great importance in this process.

An effective strategy for cultural sovereignty seems to include several complementary areas. First of all, it is the support of national creative industries, from cinema and music to video games and digital art. Secondly, it is

developing the system of fundamental cultural education combining traditional values with modern media literacy. It is necessary to develop and improve educational programs that should not only train specialists in the field of strategic communications, but also form in future cultural figures the understanding of their responsibility for preserving national identity. Thirdly, developing research in the field of cultural studies, art criticism and media psychology, aimed at studying the mechanisms of cultural influence, are required, as well. Fourth, it is important to develop our own creative industries that could compete with their Western counterparts in terms of content quality, but one based on traditional values.

International cultural cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect and equality is of particular importance. In this context, a promising area is developing the inter-civilizational dialogue making it possible to find common ground between different cultural traditions without losing their uniqueness.

It is important to note that in the 21st century, cultural sovereignty is not a matter of isolationism or cultural autarky, but a condition for equal participation in the global dialogue of cultures. Countries that will be able to work out a balanced model of cultural development, combining identity protection with openness to innovation, will gain significant advantages in the new geopolitical reality. In the era of digital transformation, culture turns into a strategic resource determining not only the present, but also the future of nations.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that in conditions of the modern information society, cultural intervention is no less a serious threat to national interests than traditional forms of aggression. The answer to this challenge should be a well-thought-out, scientifically based cultural policy joining the protection of the national cultural space and the development of own creative potential. Only such an integrated approach will make it possible to preserve cultural sovereignty and ensure the sustainable development of society in the face of global challenges.