

The Historical Evolution of Russia's External Cultural Policies and Enlightenment

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Abstract: External culture has a great influence on the development of a country. In history, Russia's policy towards external culture has experienced the evolution from the open and learning policy mode, to the cultural regulation mode and the compound policy mode. The model of open and learning policy in the imperial period changed the backward situation of Russia. But due to the limitations of the historical system, it caused greater cultural division among social strata. The policy mode of cultural regulation in the Soviet Union period embodies the unity of national will and the political system, but the strict and rigid cultural regulation is not conducive to the healthy development of culture. It is an inevitable trend for Russia to adopt the compound model in external cultural policies. The external cultural policy should seek the consistency of the whole country and the society, and maintain balance in all aspects.

1. Introduction

The existence of cultural diversity is the objective reality of today's international society. Any country, as long as it is not completely isolated from the outside world, will inevitably contact with and be affected by external cultures. Starting from the realistic interests of the country, external culture can bring double effects. On the one hand, a country needs to absorb excellent achievements from the external world to facilitate its own development. On the other hand, external culture may also bring challenges to the culture sovereignty and security of the country. These problems are not only national strategies, but also public issues. The policy should maintain a certain balance between national strategy and public demand.

Russia is a big country in the Eurasia and has an important influence in the world. Russia has experienced many fundamental changes, reforms and subversion in its history, including the local capitalist reform from the autocratic monarchy system, as well as the socialist revolution and construction. In the process of Russia's development, it constantly contacts and learns from cultures of surrounding countries, which endows Russian culture with both Western European features and Eastern Asian characteristics. Therefore, to investigate Russia's external cultural policy and summarize its characteristics and rules can provide scholars a case with sufficient conditions in the study of cultural policy evolution, and further enrich the theory of cultural policy. From a practical point of view, it can provide a historical reference for other countries in making cultural policies.

Based on above analysis, this paper sums up the government's treatment of external culture, as well as a series of institutional norms, objectives and requirements the country adopted to deal with external culture issues, into the group of "external cultural policies". What are the types and characteristics of Russia's external cultural policies in history? Which kind of enlightenment does the policy model brought? This paper tries to answer these questions.

2. Historical Evolution

2.1 The Empire Period: Open and Learning Policy Model

Peter the Great opened the process of learning from the West and laid the foundation of openness for the whole Russian Empire. On one hand, he introduced European customs and lifestyles to reform Russian customs and lifestyles. On the other hand, they introduced technology from Western

Europe and established western style cultural institutions and cultural systems. Under the reform of Peter the Great, advanced western civilization flew into Russia rapidly, and became the mainstream culture of the upper class.^[1] From the perspective of effect, Peter the Great's Europeanization policy is undoubtedly successful. The old social style of Russia was improved; the strong army and navy were established. These fruits proved the strength of Russia, and showed that the Europeanization policy of Peter the Great achieved its goal.

Peter the Great's Europeanization policy has following characteristics. First, the government (monarch) was a single driving force and played a decisive role. Peter the Great went to countries in Western Europe to investigate in person, and vigorously promoted the Europeanization reform with the government's mandatory policies. Second, the goal was clear and single. He wanted to change the situation that Russia lagged behind the Western Europe in all-round way by learning from Europe. Third, the policy implementation was compulsory. Peter the Great's Europeanization policy was carried out under the compulsion of the government. Peter's power not only enables him to prevail over all dissenting views and put forward policies, but also enables him to enforce the policy implementation. Third, the level of public participation was low. When the Europeanization policy was carried out, the ordinary people lacked the ideological preparation to accept or not accept the Western European culture. The people could only passively accept various requirements imposed by the government. At the same time, they could not obtain cultural services provided by the government.

However, the Europeanization policy not only promoted Russia to become a European power, but also produced the negative consequence of social stratum differentiation. The Europeanization policy served the state rather than the public. The government did not take the lower class as the beneficiary of Europeanization policy. Taking education as an example, Peter the Great advocated the implementation of compulsory education, but he believed that only the nobles and the court officials could enjoy the compulsory popularization.^[2] Under the government's decrees, since the 18th century, Russia's aristocracy was gradually separated from the public. They had unique and European-style surnames, speeches, behaviors, clothes as well as thinking modes.^[3] As a result, the gap between Russia's upper class and other classes, especially the peasants at the bottom, was becoming wider and wider. This split foreshadowed the social unrest and the October Revolution in Russia.

In short, under the policy mode of open and learning, Russia changed its backward appearance and became one of the European powers. But the Europeanization policy lacked the attention to the common people. The aristocracy and other upper class obtained more cultural resources, forming a new differentiation in the cultural level. Under the premise of remaining monarchy and aristocracy in the basic political system, the cultural policy of open and learning can not really solve the problems of national development.

2.2 The Soviet Union Period (1917-1991): Policy Model of Culture Control

The transition from empire to the Soviet Union was a huge one. Generally speaking, the Soviet Union's policy towards external culture was influenced by two factors: the policy of opening to the outside world and the policy of culture.

In terms of cultural policy, after the establishment of the Soviet regime, the Bolshevik, without making a clear distinction between aristocratic and bourgeois culture, decided to treat them as the unnecessary legacy of the past. It is impossible for the state to maintain the external culture policy, especially the western culture policy of the imperial period. The cultural policy of the Soviet Union showed strong ideological and conservative tendency, and it was completely subordinate to politics. All cultural institutions, facilities and policies, including those dealing with external culture, were under the strong leadership of the Soviet regime. For the external culture, the Soviet Union established corresponding control and review system. The cultural and social groups in the society were gradually controlled by the government. They became official or semi official institutions, or being managed and restricted by relevant rules and regulations issued by the Soviet government.

In terms of opening-door policy, the Soviet Union undergone opening periods as well as closed

and conservative periods. Lenin advocated that leading cadres should “learn from capitalist culture and improve the science and art levels”.^[4] After the establishment and consolidation of Stalin's model, the Soviet Union's policy of opening up to the outside world gradually tended to be conservative. The government increased many restrictions on exchanges and studies abroad. In the mid-1950s, Khrushchev restored a series of cultural exchanges with foreign countries. However, these reforms did not fundamentally change the cultural control policy in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had strict restrictions on international exchange activities and conditions of personnel going abroad. Frequent activities abroad were also considered as “inappropriate” behaviors.^[5] Generally speaking, the Soviet Union's opening policy has obvious pragmatism features, which is similar to Peter the Great's Europeanization policy. However, the Soviet Union preferred external technology, experiences and other contents related to “hard power”. The state did not think that it lagged behind the West.

In a word, the Soviet Union's regulation policy strengthened the government's right to decide and control cultural policies, and ensured that the national will was always the decisive factor of cultural policies. Under the rigid system, the strict control policy can easily make the confrontations between the government's requirements with the public's needs, and with the normal exchanges of foreign culture. The essence of the Soviet Union's fault was that it failed to deal with its relationship with the external capitalist thought, as well as the relationship between its own cultural construction and the introduction of external culture. They could not distinguish cultural infiltration from normal cultural exchanges.

2.3 Contemporary Russia: the Formation of a Unified and Compound Policy Model

The collapse of the Soviet Union means, the political leadership and ideological control of culture completely stopped; the country entered a period of liberalism and pluralism. External cultures, especially western cultures in Europe and the United States, were introduced. There was a vacuum in the field of ideology, lacking a unified cultural value guidance.

Under the chaotic state, Russia urgently needed to restore order in all aspects and found the right direction for its future development. The Putin government implemented a series of policies to realize the transformation and reconstruction of Russia and restore the country's status of a great power. The order of Russian culture began to recover and rebuild. In 2016, Russia promulgated the *Strategy of National Cultural Policy of the Russian Federation before 2030*, marking that the Russian cultural policy was determined at the level of the federal government. A unified guiding national policy was formed in the federation.

The cultural policy of Putin government has following characteristics. The first feature is unity. The core idea and essence of Putin government's cultural policy is to build “unified Russian cultural space”; the overall goal is to form a clear and unified national cultural value orientation. The unity does not mean a single value orientation of cultural policy determined by the government. It aims to seek consistency of the whole country and form strong domestic cohesion. The second feature is coordination complexity. Under the premise of unity, it emphasized that economic, social and foreign policies should be consistent with cultural policies, so as to create an environment suitable for the implementation of cultural policies, and promote the consistency between cultural policies with economic and social development. It is clear that the main body of cultural policy is still government institutions, but social groups and organizations can also participate in cultural policies and activities as the main body of policy. The freedom of creation and cultural rights of citizens are guaranteed; the coordination between freedom of creation and social responsibility is emphasized.

In the context of current cultural policy, the Russian government has formed a certain system of external cultural policy. The external culture is included in the scope of cultural policy. The implementation object of cultural policy includes the international culture and human relations. The main objectives of national cultural policy include “openness and mutual integration with other nations and cultures”. Main tasks include the “task to establish and strengthen the ties with the world in culture and humanity”.^[6] The goal and task of safeguarding national cultural security embodies the attitude towards external culture, but safeguarding national cultural security does not

mean excluding external culture and self closing. It also emphasizes that Russia seeks to be consistent with the interests of all mankind. At the same time, expanding the influence of Russian culture in the world is one of its important goals. Based on this goal, Russia can't adopt an overly conservative policy towards the external culture. Cross-cultural exchange and cooperation are the inevitable choice.

At present, Russia's policy on external culture reflects the demands of national interests and the positioning of national strategic objectives. It integrates multiple policy subjects and objectives, which is a progress compared with the single policy model in the past. Of course, Putin government's policy on external culture has only been implemented for a relatively short time. In addition, compared with other policies, it takes longer time for the cultural policy to show its effects. It will take a long time to evaluate the effect of the current cultural policy. However, from all aspects, the current policy clearly learned the lessons from mistakes in history.

3. Characteristics and Enlightenment

3.1 Evolution from Single Policy to Compound Policies

On the whole, Russia's external cultural policy evolves from the single policy to a compound pattern. From the perspective of historical development, all single policy models have limitations, which is especially obvious in the later stage. During the empire period, the single Westernization policy resulted in greater cultural differences and class divisions. In the Soviet period, the opposition of ideology was emphasized and the normal needs of the public were ignored, which resulted in a greater chaos in the state and society. The external culture is influenced by multiple factors, such as the goal composition, the interest demand, the subject participation and the influence of the state. Therefore, the transformation from single policy to compound cultural policy is the historical necessity.

3.2 Change from National Attribute to the Coexistence of National and Public Attributes

Russia's policy on external culture has gone through a transformation from national attribute to the coexistence of national and public attributes. In the era of monarchy, Russia's external cultural policy reflects the will of the imperial monarch. Ordinary people can neither choose nor avoid. The external cultural policy of the Soviet Union still embodies strong national will and ideology, and lacks the coordination of the whole society. The external cultural policies lacking public participation cannot reflect the will of the public. It is difficult for these policies to protect the consistency of national interests and public interests. They can cause opposition between the government and society, and ultimately affect the development of the whole country. Today, Russia's cultural policy can no longer simply emphasize the will of the state and ignore the public demand. Today's policy lay emphases on the protection and promotion of Russian culture, on public cultural services of the government, and on foreign cultural cooperation and exchange. It reflects the intention of the state to seek the unity of the whole country and the society within the framework of cultural policy.

3.3 External Cultural Policies Need to Be Balanced in All Aspects

External cultural policy is not only a part of national foreign strategy, but also a public policy related to public interests. Therefore, the external cultural policy needs to seek certain balance between the state and the public to achieve the unity. The external cultural policy is a part of the foreign policy, which needs to seek a balance between control and opening up. The country can neither overlook and let the market and the public to play the role, nor adopt too rigid and strict control policies which will suppress the normal cultural exchange. The external cultural policy is also a part of the cultural policy, so we need to find a balance between the external culture and the local culture. The policy needs to introduce external culture reasonably, develop the normal cultural exchange and promote the absorption of excellent foreign culture. It also needs to maintain the dominant position of local culture and prevent the impact of external cultures on the local culture.

There are some differences in the public's needs, preferences and acceptance of external culture, so it is necessary to keep a balance between different subjects to prevent different subjects from differentiation or even opposition due to the influence of external cultures. The limitations of Russia's external cultural policy, as well as its negative consequences, are caused by imbalance among above relations.

4. Conclusion

With the development of globalization and the spread of cultural diversity, external culture is becoming more and more important for the future development of a country. After the long history, Russia in today has inherited advantages of the opening up and learning policy, and learned quite a lot of experiences and lessons. Today, Russia's policy on external culture is still deeply influenced by the overall development goal of the country; the government still holds the dominant power. However, with the improvement of public participation and the expansion of foreign cultural exchanges, Russia's policy on external culture will gradually become more mature and perfect.

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