

Part I

Values of Legal Philosophy: Contexts of Reevaluation

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Sergei S. Alekseev: from Philosophy of Law to the Human Constitution

Abstract. The article is dedicated to the philosophical views of Sergei S. Alekseev, an outstanding Russian legal scholar and organiser of science. In particular, the discussion considers the question of lawful freedom and Alekseev's understanding of the purpose of law in achieving this freedom. The article discusses Alekseev's key philosophical views and ideas, which determined his general theory of law and understanding of the problems of constitutionalism in Russia. Alekseev's deep and systematic analysis of Kant's views on legal issues and demonstration of a holistic Kantian legal doctrine have a pre-eminent position in Russian legal science and an important global dimension. In developing Kant's ideas, Alekseev substantiated the value of law in modern society. To this end, he deeply rethought – in essence, reintroducing into scientific circulation – the categories of “pure right” and “human rights”. Thus, Kant's legal theory underpins Alekseev's advancement of a liberalist approach to law, which is manifested in the idea of human rights as objective rights, in the permissive nature of the law itself, and in the need to develop a rule-of-law society. The article also shows the organic connection between Alekseev's philosophical ideas and his notions about the constitutional process, which are expressed in his formulation of the concept of the Human Constitution.

Keywords: freedom; purpose of law; human rights; Kantian legal doctrine; Human Constitution

Alekseev Sergey Sergeevich was one of the most prominent Russian constitutional lawyers of the period spanning the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In addition, he is considered as an outstanding philosopher of law. At the theoretical seminars organised by Alekseev in his capacity as Director of the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Ural Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences), problems of jurisprudence were invariably discussed with the active participation of philosophers (Kazantsev, Rudenko 2024: 20-21).

The majority of Alekseev's legal theoretical works are presented on a rigorous philosophical basis. This philosophical foundation is inherent both in works on the general theory of law and in individual theoretical discussions of problems of general permissions and prohibitions, issues of state and law, the foundations of the constitutional system, as well as in works of a general ideological nature.

Alekseev's philosophical views underwent significant evolution from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. This involved an evolution from classical Marxist philosophical ideas, according to which the economic basis of society determines the superstructure, whose constituent parts are the state and law according to their class understanding, to more general and profound views on the origin and essence of law, based on the legacy of German classical philosophy, primarily on the works of Immanuel Kant¹. During the post-Soviet period of scientific creativity, Alekseev turned to a consideration of the general problems of human existence and the presence of reason in the universe.

It goes without saying that Alekseev's philosophical understanding of reality is most closely connected with problems of law. In his most philosophical, *The Most Holy Thing that God has on Earth. Immanuel Kant and the Problems of Law in the Modern Age*², Alekseev overcomes the Marxist dogmatic paradigm of "base and superstructure" to discover the foundations of law in contradictory human

¹ The most famous philosophical works of Alekseev include: Alekseev S.S. *The Most Sacred Thing that God has on Earth: Immanuel Kant and the Problems of Law in the Modern Era*, Moscow, Norma, 1998, 410 p.;

reason and human freedom. Following Kant, he shows that man is the only rational being capable of acting freely. However, the history of freedom as a work of human hands begins with evil through the abuse of one's own mind. In its striving towards the greatest possible freedom, human self-will results in constant antagonism between all members of human society, whose most abhorrent features are revealed in ingratitude, envy, and schadenfreude (Alekseev 1998: 37-44), leading to violence and lawlessness. In essence, Alekseev agrees here with Kant that ultimate freedom is an essential attribute of society, but with the important caveat that one's determination and maintenance of the boundaries of one's own freedom is inextricably linked with the freedom of others (Alekseev 1998: 44). For this reason, law is the antithesis of violence and the destructive rule of force; moreover, somewhat paradoxically, law is an antithesis without an alternative. A figurative expression of this paradox involves a hypothetical situation in which the entire nation would consist of devils: the desire for self-preservation entails the need for the supreme power of law (Alekseev 1998: 44).

Thus, the objective logic of the development of human society leads it to a legal state and the inevitability of law, whose main functions and purpose in providing for the ascending development of the human race is "the definition and preservation of the boundaries" of freedom (Alekseev 1998: 46). The purpose of law in Kant's understanding as interpreted by Alekseev is to "define for each their own and protect it from the encroachments of each other, where

Alekseev S.S. *Philosophy of Law, Collected Works. In 10 vols. [+ Reference vol.]*, Moscow, Statut, 2010, vol. 7, pp. 9–320; Alekseev S.S. The Universe and Man. An Attempt at Understanding (fragments), *Collected Works. In 10 vols. [+ Reference vol.]*, Moscow, Statut, 2010, vol. 9, pp. 260–267; Alekseev S.S. Selected Philosophical Notes, *Ibid.*, pp. 268–278; Alekseev S.S. Ascent to Law: Searches and Solutions, *Collected Works. In 10 vols. [+ Reference vol.]*, Moscow, Statut, 2010, vol. 6, pp. 8–553; Alekseev S.S. Two Names, *Collected Works. In 10 vols. [+ Reference vol.]*, Moscow, Statut, 2010, vol. 9, pp. 8–22.

² "The Most Holy Thing that God Has on Earth" is undoubtedly Alekseev's most significant philosophical work. It was here that he most clearly showed himself as a philosopher. First published in 1998, the book republished 15 years later. It is also included in Volume 5 of the Collected Works. Immanuel Kant was undoubtedly Sergei Sergeevich's favourite philosopher. For this reason, he considered the book connected with Kant to be his magnum opus.

the centre of legal regulation becomes what is determined by law and protected by law” (Alekseev 1998: 47). Therefore, freedom based on law is the meaning and purpose of law itself. These fundamental Kantian ideas came to express the essence of Alekseev’s philosophical quest – and, ultimately, his personal worldview. In this connection, we may note the following contributions made by Alekseev in the field of philosophy.

The first Russian legal scholar to systematically analyse Kant’s views on legal issues, Alekseev reveals philosophy of law to be one of the integral and defining elements of Kant’s organic philosophical system and in no way inferior to his writing on ethics. Alekseev’s substantiation of Kant’s legal doctrine was mirrored in the work of other prominent researchers. By the time *God’s Most Holy Thing on Earth...* was written, similar ideas had been expressed in the works of K. Ritter (Ritter 1971), G. Stolz (Stolz 1972), F. Kaulbach (Kaulbach 1982), W. Busch (Busch 1979), B. Ludwig (Ludwig 1988) and W. Kersting (Kersting 1984) (Aronson 2015: 7). However, there have also been many opponents of this approach. It is noteworthy that even today theoretical arguments advancing a refined Kantian concept of law, which underlies both moral and other laws of society, remain little studied in the extensive Kantian literature. As a result, new books on the topic may still be perceived as breaking new ground³.

Nevertheless, many compelling arguments in favour of the existence of Kant’s philosophy of law and its significance for the modern era can be found in Alekseev. Having briefly described the philosopher’s critical method, developed during the famous “Copernican revolution” in philosophy that took place at the end of the 18th century, Alekseev refutes the thesis that the Königsberg thinker’s fundamental philosophical ideas on legal issues are characterised by their absence, groundlessness, or vagueness. Contrary to the common characterisation of Kant’s statements on legal issues as incidental, Alekseev substantiates the directly opposite premise, namely, that Kant’s philosophy of law became the starting point for his subsequent writing of *Critique of Pure Reason* and other clas-

³ Thus, one of the comments on Eric Watkins’ book “Kant on Laws” claims that this book is the first monographic study entirely devoted to Kant’s theory of law as a whole (Abaci 2020).

sis works. According to Alekseev's thorough exegesis, the German philosopher reveals himself to be a master of the subtleties of legal terminology and Roman law. As Alekseev shows, while Kant's philosophy of law is not embodied in a special general work and only latently present in his three *Critiques*, it is presented explicitly in a series of special works devoted to this question. Alekseev's thorough characterisation of these works of Kant by means of three temporal and substantive layers (Alekseev 1998: 28-30) is of particular interest to legal scholars. According to Alekseev's summary, Kant's articles and treatises "contain a developed, integral philosophical concept of law, in which his ideas about the universe, reason, history and prospects for the development of the human race, the ideals of liberal civilisation were realised..." (Alekseev 1998: 30). Underestimated and not sufficiently understood to this day, the legal component of Kantian philosophy acquires a new significance for the development of modern society in which law becomes a central priority.

In his development of Kant's ideas, Alekseev demonstrated and substantiated the value of law in society, especially at the current stage of its development. To this end, he deeply rethought – in essence, reintroducing into scientific circulation – the categories of *pure right* and *human rights*. In terms of legal content, Alekseev considers pure right to be the most important product of pure reason and the highest expression of spiritual culture. "In the real, practical lives of people in society, there is only one institution in the sphere of regulation (management) that is capable of... making the mind correspond to the highest indicators, i.e. become pure. This is law..." (Alekseev 1998: 177-178). Thus, this category represents a kind of sacred ideal image that should serve as a model for practical action that embody the fundamental principles of law in the development of society. "Human rights" ("the rights of people") are, according to Alekseev, a category interconnected with "pure right", characterising law in civil society along with such institutional formations as the state, religious institutions, objectified forms of spiritual life, science, and art. "Human rights", in other words, are a phenomenon of the objective right associated with the law and legal consciousness, existing as an institutional formation centred on the social value of man and need to ensure his freedom (Alekseev 1998: 82, 211-221).

In Alekseev's legal-philosophical works, the phenomenon of freedom has a dominant meaning (Alekseev 1998: 218). Law is both the abode of freedom (Alekseev 1998: 54) and the regulator of the boundaries of people's freedom, correlated as it is with the freedom of all "others" (Alekseev 1998: 129). In his consistent pursuit of this philosophical idea, Alekseev recognises Kant as the thinker who gave the most profound philosophical justification to modern liberalism (Alekseev 1998: 110). This leads to an association of the prospects for the development of a modern society – both democratic and legal – with liberalism and its articulation of the idea of freedom. On many pages of his works, he focuses on "modern liberal civilisations" (Alekseev 1998: 78-79, 112) and "civilisational-liberal development" (Alekseev 1998: 178), characterising the modern historical stage of development of society as a "liberal era in the life of people" or "the era of liberal civilisation" (Alekseev 1998: 184, 215-217, 220, 240, 257, 331)⁴. In the second paragraph of Chapter 1 of *The Most Holy Thing That God Has on Earth...*, Alekseev vividly characterises the modern era as an era of liberal civilisations. Addressing the formulated question, "why Kant?", the author outlines the features of Kant's life that provide a background of the new era into which humanity had entered following the French Revolution. Thus, Kant's philosophy of law is analysed by Alekseev not so much in the context of German classical philosophy, but rather in its epochal European and global significance. Alekseev demonstrates the significance of Kant's ideas for past and contemporary liberal-oriented thought. In relation to law, it manifests itself in the idea of human rights as an objective right, in the permissive nature of the law itself, and in the consequent need to develop a legal society.

In his consideration of the problems of the legal state of society, Alekseev reflects on the coming "universal legal society" at the level of the world community (Alekseev 1998: 259-263). Much attention is paid to issues of the culture of freedom, along with the elevation of the legal status of a citizen through a gradual transition from legal support of his subjective rights to a more comprehensive and objective human right (Alekseev 1998: 253-258). The philosophical

⁴Alekseev mentions this many times in his fundamental work "Ascent to Law", as well as in other books and articles.

methodology he developed is also implemented in the examination of purely legal topics; thus, it is no coincidence that he pays great attention to issues of contract law and the problem of permissive legal regulation. It is noteworthy that he considers the permissive right to be one of the characteristics of liberal civilisations, referring to it as the right of modern civil society (Alekseev 1998: 240)⁵.

Nowadays, liberalism, neoliberalism and followers of liberal policies in Russia are frequently criticised. Indeed, liberalism is widely seen as the cause of failures in the social and economic spheres of Russian society. It seems important to note, however, that the liberal ideas themselves have not been discredited themselves in any way. Rather, it is the practice of implementing these ideas according to their subjective interpretation that can very often carry vicious consequences and experience consequent setbacks, as Alekseev himself frequently noted: “The most significant and sorrowful of such losses is the loss in people’s perceptions of the priority significance of the main, original category of freedom – the right and responsibility of a person to decide his own affairs and his own destiny” (Alekseev 1998: 351). The free activity of man acquired an ugly expression in pursuing in the desire for self-enrichment at any cost, while in the sphere of state building it found embodiment in the nomenklatura-clan system of relations, which is the antithesis of the ideal liberal model of government. Alekseev retained this kind of assessment of the practice of implementing the idea of the rule of law and the assertion of law as an absolute social value along with human rights and his other philosophical ideas until the end of his life. He wrote about this with some bitterness in his later work *The Collapse of Law* (Alekseev 2010: 497-514). As he predicted, the fate of liberal values in Russia will remain uncertain for a long time, including being subject to periods of backlash. However, he remained convinced of Russian society’s potential for a strong legal structure in the future (Alekseev 1998: 357-361).

The essentially liberal ideas of Alekseev remain relevant today. The ideas of Alekseev and other jurists with liberal views are

⁵ Similar ideas were expressed by Alekseev in 1989: the generally permissive order “is a direct and organic expression of the currently expanding deep social freedom, embodied in it at a new level of the universal and generally permissive principle” (Alekseev 1989: 132).

embodied in the interpretation of modern constitutionalism, whose essence is stated as follows: “Constitutionalism is a set of interrelated concepts, principles and practices that organise and thereby limit the power of government in order to prevent despotism” (Sajó, Uitz 2021: 16). This interpretation of constitutionalism finds expression in modern constitutions and theoretical models of constitutional structure, which are enshrined in the legal consciousness and in the practice of state building in many countries of the world. Modern constitutionalism finds its documentary design and normative consolidation in the texts of constitutions that embody the ideal of the “Constitution of Freedom”⁶. In the countries of Eastern Europe and in Russia, the need to achieve the designated ideal was articulated at the end of the 20th century, when it became clear that if the principles of constitutionalism are implemented, “the established relations form a system of restrictions in which ensuring the freedom of citizens comes first” (Sajó 2001: 12). In this sense, Alekseev can be considered as the herald of the idea of a constitution of freedom in Russia. The idea is enshrined in his jurisprudential terminology, in which he includes the concept of the Human Constitution. In developing the principles of constitutionalism, Alekseev substantiates the unacceptability of implementing in the constitution the principle of the priority of society and power over the individual, which was criticised as characteristic of all Soviet constitutions (Alekseev 2009: 7-8). He advocates for the fundamental ordering of state power to permit the development of the institution and culture of human rights (Alekseev 2009: 18). The meaning of his concept of the Human Constitution is associated with his hope that *“man with his high dignity and inalienable rights would rise above power and this would determine the essence and development of the entire state and legal life”* (Alekseev 2009: 17-18). The jurist devoted many years of his life to identifying and substantiating ways to implement this concept.

Thus, Alekseev’s philosophical ideas, including his concept of human rights, have been embodied in general ideas about constitutionalism and the possible development paths of the consti-

⁶ This model is explicitly presented in the fundamental work of Hungarian legal scholars András Sajó and Renáta Uitz (see: Sajó, Uitz 2021).

tutional process in the Russian context. This testifies to the multifaceted personality of the thinker and the organic interconnection of fundamental philosophical and legal ideas in his worldview.

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Sergei S. Alekseev: From Civil Law to Legal Theory and the Revival of Civil Law Scholarship

Abstract. The article explores the significant impact of Sergei S. Alekseev (1924–2013) – a distinguished scholar, legal expert, philosopher, publicist, writer, statesman, Doctor of Law, Professor, and Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences – on the development of Russian jurisprudence. It focuses on two main areas of his work: civil law and the theory of law. Alekseev's intellectual journey is traced from his engagement with Soviet civil law and Marxist-Leninist legal theory to his pursuit of innovative approaches in understanding law and the revitalization of civil law. His most notable achievement during the Soviet era was the creation of a comprehensive, systematic, and detailed general theory of law, encapsulated in the two-volume *General Theory of Law* (1981–1982). The article highlights the scholarly importance of Alekseev's post-Soviet research, which introduced new perspectives on law as an objective reality governed by its own logic. This work emphasized individual freedom, the protection of inalienable rights, and the presentation of law as a manifestation of Reason and core human values. Alekseev's contributions to civil law are particularly noteworthy. He played a pivotal role in the revival of private and civil law in Russia, especially in the development of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation. He initiated the drafting of the new Civil Code, provided strategic and scholarly oversight throughout its preparation, actively contributed as a member of the working group, and took on the ideological and organizational leadership necessary to transform the draft into law.

Keywords: Sergei S. Alekseev; system of general theoretical legal knowledge; theory of law; analytical theory of law; instrumental theory of law; civil law; private law; civil law; property law

A Century of the Jurist. This year marks the centenary of Sergei S. Alekseev (1924–2013) – Doctor of Law, Professor, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Honorary Doctor (honoris causa) of Paris-XII Val-de-Marne University, Honored Scientist of the RSFSR, and veteran of the Great Patriotic War. This occasion seems fitting to reflect on his scholarly journey and the profound impact he had on Russian jurisprudence.

Sergei Alekseev's stature is defined by his achievements as an eminent legal scholar and leader of Russian legal science from the late 20th century through the early 21st century. Renowned globally, his groundbreaking work in legal theory, the philosophy of law, constitutionalism, and private law enriched the field and shaped the perspectives of countless lawyers. His contributions were crucial to the development of Russia's modern legal system and, through their legislative implementation, positively impacted many lives.

Sergei Alekseev played multiple influential roles throughout his career, serving as a pioneer in the scholarly community by founding the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Research Center for Private Law under the President of the Russian Federation. His impact extended into public service as Chairman of the Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on Legislation, Legality, and Law and Order, Chairman of the Constitutional Oversight Committee of the USSR, and member of the Presidential Council. Beyond these roles, Alekseev also made his mark as a publicist and writer¹.

Yet, above all, Alekseev was a jurist and philosopher. His scholarly output includes over 500 publications on topics spanning state and legal theory, civil and constitutional law, and the philosophy of law, with more than 80 books to his name (excluding collaborative textbooks and related works). His writings, recognized internationally, stand as a significant contribution to legal scholarship, with over 10 of his books published abroad.

In the realm of jurisprudence, Alekseev's primary focus was on civil law (private law and private law scholarship) and legal theory, branching into the philosophy of law. These areas were the focal points of more than 60 years of his life, from 1949 to 2013.

¹For more on Alekseev's biography and work, see: (Kazantsev, Rudenko 2024).

Alekseev's academic journey evolved from the study of Soviet civil law and Marxist-Leninist legal theory to pioneering new theoretical approaches and revitalizing civil law scholarship.

Civil Law – The Beginning. In May 1949, Sergei Alekseev, then a fourth-year student at the Sverdlovsk Law Institute, was recommended by the university's administration to enter the postgraduate program at the Moscow Institute of Law of the USSR Academy of Sciences (now known as the Institute of State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences) in the field of legal theory. However, circumstances² prevented him from studying in Moscow. What seemed like a setback turned out to be a significant opportunity. Sergei Alekseev himself recounted this many decades later: "... the setback related to the prospect of going to postgraduate studies in Moscow, as sometimes happens in life, turned into an incredible stroke of luck: I stayed at my alma mater, was immediately accepted into the postgraduate program in civil law, and joined a formidable group of civil law specialists under the guidance of Boris Borisovich Cherepakhin. This largely determined my subsequent career, or rather – my destiny" (Alekseev 2012: 15).

At the Department of Civil Law of the Sverdlovsk Law Institute, he defended his candidate's dissertation on the acceptance form of payments (Alekseev 1951) and his doctoral dissertation on the subject of civil law (Alekseev 1959b) in 1952 and 1960, respectively.

In addition to the monograph on the subject of civil law (which formed the basis of his doctoral dissertation), Alekseev, still a relatively young scholar, managed to publish two more civil law books in a short time, both in the country's premier legal publishing house: *Civil Liability for Failure to Meet the Plan for Railway Freight Transport* (Alekseev 1959a), his first published monograph, and *Civil Law during the Period of Expanded Construction of Communism* (Alekseev 1962), which was a response to the 21st Congress of the CPSU that declared the Soviet Union's entry into an era of expanded communist construction.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, Alekseev had gained significant momentum in Soviet civil law scholarship. During this time,

² According to Alekseev himself, he did not have enough money for a ticket to Moscow (Alekseev 2012: 15).

he made a transition to legal theory, a move that was far from accidental.

Theory of Law – Continuation. Sergei Alekseev's passion for legal theory began during his student years. However, due to the circumstances previously mentioned, his academic journey initially focused on civil law. It was only after he took the helm of the Department of Theory of State and Law in 1961 that Alekseev was able to fully immerse himself in legal theory.

Alekseev demonstrated a unique approach to legal theory from the outset, with a strong emphasis on thorough and systematic analysis, along with a broad perspective. Alongside his deep monographic studies on specific theoretical legal issues (Alekseev 1961; Alekseev 1966; Alekseev 1971), Alekseev authored the comprehensive, detailed *General Theory of Socialist Law* in four volumes (Alekseev 1963–1966). Prior to this, no single author in the Soviet Union had published such an extensive (nearly 900 pages) general theory of law, as confirmed by the bibliography on the theory of state and law from 1917 to 1968 (Kulazhnikov 1969).

Five years later, Alekseev built on this achievement with the two-volume work *Problems of the Theory of Law* (Alekseev 1972–1973), which, in my estimation, became the most popular and frequently cited publication on general legal theory for many years, arguably among all legal publications.

Finally, another decade later, he published the two-volume *General Theory of Law* (Alekseev 1981–1982). This monumental work was the culmination of Alekseev's development of general legal theory over a twenty-year period³. As later became evident, it effectively summarized the progress of general legal theory throughout the entire Soviet era.

The Search for New Approaches to the Theoretical Understanding of Law. After the shift in political eras, and more specifically after his time in government, Alekseev returned to intense academic work, resuming his focus on the theoretical study of law, but now approaching it from a fresh perspective.

Starting in 1993, Alekseev began publishing a series of books in which he explored and developed new approaches to the gen-

³Due to space constraints, several monographs and numerous articles on legal theory had to be excluded.

eral theoretical understanding of law. These include *The Theory of Law* (Alekseev, 1993), *Philosophy of Law* (Alekseev, 1997), *The Holiest Thing God Has on Earth* (Alekseev, 1998), *Law: Alphabet, Theory, Philosophy* (Alekseev, 1999b), *Law at the Threshold of the New Millennium* (Alekseev, 2000a), and *The Theory of Law: The Search for New Approaches* (Alekseev, 2000b). The series culminated with the monograph *Ascent to Law* (Alekseev, 2001), which summarized his long-term work on the theoretical problems of law (this will be discussed further).

To assess Alekseev's contribution to legal theory, we must first examine his vision of the system of general theoretical legal knowledge. His views, which evolved most notably in the post-Soviet period, culminated in his monograph *Ascent to Law*. In summary, his vision is as follows.

The *comprehensive system of general theoretical legal knowledge* consists of two components: general theory of law and philosophy of law. The general theory of law includes two levels: analytical general theory of law and instrumental general theory of law. These two levels do not compete with each other or overlap; each occupies its own niche and rightful place within the system of general theory of law. Both are equally important, each in its own way, for addressing practical issues and understanding the law, its peculiarities, and "secrets". The philosophy of law represents the highest level of theoretical reflection on law, but it is not a part of the general theory of law. Thus, the theoretical study of law takes place at three sequential levels: first, at the level of analytical general theory of law; second, at the level of instrumental general theory of law; and third, at the level of philosophy of law.

The analytical general theory of law explores the fundamental elements of legal doctrine as a system of legal norms. It examines this system's internal structure, forms, and functioning of the norms, as well as the concepts that capture these "elementary particles" of law as a normative phenomenon. This theory uses common terms that apply across all legal disciplines. Positioned within the framework of legal positivism, the analytical general theory of law adheres to the principles of legal doctrine while avoiding the extremes found in some interpretations of positive law. For instance, it distances itself from claims that seek to elevate legal doctrine to the level of an ultimate "philosophy" of legal reality, as in Kelsen's theory of normativism.

The instrumental general theory of law uses an instrumental approach to uncover deeper aspects of legal matters, emphasizing legal certainty and utilizing a broad set of legal tools. It focuses on the relationships and dynamics among all elements of law, including its logic, structure, properties, mechanisms, and societal impact. This theory represents a new, advanced level of legal science, closely aligning with the philosophy of law.

The *philosophy of law* examines the role of law in human life, offering a worldview-based explanation of its meaning and purpose for individuals. It justifies law from the perspective of human existence and the underlying value system. As a key part of legal studies, the philosophy of law serves as the final link in the broader system of general theoretical legal knowledge. It builds upon and extends earlier insights, particularly regarding the logic of law, to address its own philosophical and legal questions (Alekseev 2010: 80-82, 309-310.)

If we look at Alekseev's scholarly work through the lens of his aforementioned ideas on the three-tiered theoretical understanding of law, we can identify two main *periods*: the Soviet period (1950–1991) was devoted to the development of the analytical general theory of law (which, in terms of time, corresponds to the Soviet theory of law⁴) while the post-Soviet period (1992–2013) included, among other things, the instrumental general theory of law and the philosophy of law.

Alekseev's *main achievement as a theorist of the Soviet period* was, arguably, the creation of a comprehensive, systematic, and intricately structured general theory of law in his four-volume *General Theory of Law* (Alekseev 1963–1966), followed by the two-volume *Problems of the Theory of Law* (Alekseev 1963–1966), and finally in the two-volume *General Theory of Law* (Alekseev 1981–1982). Alekseev's theory of law remains academically valuable today, extending its relevance beyond the Soviet era. Its final form – the two-volume *General Theory of Law* – represents the pinnacle of theoretical legal development in the Soviet period.

Alekseev's *contribution to theoretical and legal research in the post-Soviet period* lies mainly in his search for new approaches to understanding law. He achieved this by viewing law as an

⁴For more on Soviet theory of law, see: (Alekseev 2010: 38-42).

objective reality with an inherent logic that fosters human freedom, inalienable rights, and their protection. He regarded law in its highest form as the embodiment of human rights, describing it from a broad, philosophical perspective as a manifestation of Reason and the highest human values.

These findings are most thoroughly explored in his monograph *Ascent to Law*, which represents the culmination of over fifty years of scholarly work. It addresses theoretical legal issues and, according to Alekseev, reflects the peak of his academic, pedagogical, legislative, and literary-publicistic contributions. Following the first edition of the book (Alekseev 2001), a revised and expanded second edition was published in 2002, which was later included in the *Collected Works of S.S. Alekseev*, published in 2010 (Alekseev 2010). The main ideas of the monograph were presented in a concentrated and partly refined form in the author's 2011 lecture *Law and Its Purpose* (Alekseev 2011).

In his final book, Alekseev explores law through three consecutive levels of legal knowledge⁵. He begins with analytical general legal theory, or the dogma of law, progresses to instrumental general legal theory, and concludes with the philosophy of law.

At the level of instrumental general legal theory (we will focus here only on this level), Alekseev explores new approaches to law and, in implementing them, formulates new ideas in the scientific understanding of law. The most significant of these, in a summarized form (Alekseev 2010: 77, 91, 92, 99-101, 229, 232, 241, 281, 288; Alekseev 2011: pp. 5, 6, 9-11, 18, 23), are as follows.

The *key element of the new approaches to law* is the instrumental theory. The essence of the instrumental approach to law is that, first, the entire range of factual data in legal knowledge remains within the realm of law. The difference is that these data are not limited to legal norms alone but encompass the full diversity of legal (specifically legal!) phenomena that serve as tools of legal regulation. Second, this “instrumental” structure of law closely relies on the main characteristic of law – the quality of certainty. It has the ability to impose this certainty on all social life (mainly through legal constructs) and, perhaps even more importantly, to offer society an alternative to the state of “impending and, unfortunately,

⁵ Alekseev's ideas of these levels has already been outlined above.

inevitable anarchy”, which is expressed through violence and arbitrariness. Third, the instrumental interpretation of law serves as the foundation for characterizing the unique features of legal matter, its new essential characteristics, and, first and foremost, the distinctive logic of law. This logic gives profound social meaning to the above-mentioned qualities of law, based on its quality of certainty.

Law is an objective reality. The key to a scientific understanding of law is recognizing that positive law, or the law in force, is not merely an abstract concept. It is not just a collection of ideas, judgments about right and wrong, or arbitrary decisions by authorities about who is entitled to do what and how. Positive law is a concrete fact – an external, objective, and unchanging reality. It functions as a fundamental aspect of our lives, existing independently of individuals, social institutions, and society as a whole.

Legal matter. Law has its own distinct nature, with unique properties, life, and a logic of existence and development. This is not understood in a crude materialistic sense, meaning not as tangible or visible objects (though law does have such aspects – laws, legal sources, documents). Rather, law is seen as a social reality, largely “invisible”. At its core, due to its very nature, legal matter is centered around subjective rights.

Law as a form. Despite the exceptional importance of the economic, political, moral, and other substantive content of laws and legal norms in human society, in the field of jurisprudence, primary importance is given to form, particularly the internal form (which mainly constitutes the unique legal matter).

Logic of law. To describe law as a logical system, we need to go beyond the idea that it embodies the principles of formal logic and follows mathematical methods more than any other social phenomenon. Law also has its own unique logic – the logic of law. This logic of law consists of specific, mathematically oriented patterns inherent in law as a distinctive objective reality, relating to both legal norms and the entirety of legal matter.

Legal constructions. Legal constructions represent the most advanced level of legal matter. Arising from the standardization within the law, these constructions form the core content of the “body” of law in a well-developed legal system. The uniqueness of law as an objective reality is revealed through these constructions, particularly in their internal structure – the organization of their content.

Fundamental principle of science. Genuine legal science, which engages with real facts of the world around us, is only possible when we recognize that the subject of legal knowledge is not acts of power, ideological demands, or other illusions, but a solid, objective reality. In essence, it is a science similar to all other branches of knowledge. Furthermore, it is a science dedicated to both the practical and theoretical understanding of real facts that, to some extent, reflect certain ideal and humanitarian principles and values. This dual nature of jurisprudence – as both “natural-technical” and humanitarian – grants it a highly significant status in the field of knowledge.

Alekseev remained deeply convinced in the critical role of law in society. In the context of recent global events, this insight appears both timely and prescient. *To confront severe global challenges and avert catastrophic threats, humanity must prioritize modern law and uphold its authority. Only by placing the rule of law at the center of society can we prevent the dangers of growing anarchy, lawlessness, and rampant consumerism – even as we edge closer to what seems like universal prosperity* (Alekseev 2010: 522; Alekseev 2011: 66).

Return to Civil Law Scholarship. Alekseev returned to the subject of civil law in the 1990s – initially as a legislator, during his tenure as chairman of the legislative committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and later, after leaving government positions, as a scholar, though still closely connected to legislative work. During this period, he authored works such as *Civil Law in the Modern Era* (Alekseev 1999a), *Private Law* (Alekseev 1999c), and *Property Law: Problems of Theory* (Alekseev 2006, 2007, 2008). These works moved beyond Soviet civil law, aligning instead with contemporary developments in private law and its studies.

Alekseev regarded his book on the theory of property law as his most significant civilistic work of the post-Soviet period (it was published three times over three years with revisions and additions and was included in his collected works). In this book, Alekseev, in his own words, “attempted to base the examination of property issues on philosophical positions that *connect our worldview with the individual, with their reason and free will*, and from these standpoints, to substantiate a view of property (property law) as one of humanity’s greatest achievements and simultaneously as a tragedy of human existence that has sharply manifested in recent years” (Alekseev 2006, 2007, 2008: 5 – from the 2008 edition).

Alekseev's contributions to civil law were not limited to his scholarly works. He played a pivotal role in the revival of private law and its studies in Russia, approaching the field with remarkable thoroughness and precision. Here are his key contributions:

First, Alekseev led the program the "Formation and Development of Private Law in Russia". Approved by a presidential decree, this program not only set the stage for a reform but also reflected a national commitment to revitalizing and modernizing private law in the post-Soviet context;

Second, the creation of vital institutions like the Research Center for Private Law under the President of the Russian Federation, the Russian School of Private Law, and the Institute of Private Law in Yekaterinburg provided the necessary infrastructure to implement this broad initiative;

Third, the involvement of leading scholars such as Stanislav Khokhlov and Alexander Makovsky helped to bring academic rigor and intellectual depth to the program;

Fourth, the adoption of the new Civil Code was perhaps the most tangible outcome of these efforts.

Alekseev's contribution to the creation of Russia's Civil Code is colossal, unique, and multifaceted: he initiated the preparation of the new Civil Code draft; he also provided overall strategic and scholarly leadership in its development; in addition, he took an active part in the working group's preparation of the draft; and, finally, he took on the ideological and organizational responsibility for advancing the Code from a draft to a functioning law within government bodies.

Of course, Alekseev is better known as a legal theorist. He himself most likely saw himself primarily as a theorist. Nevertheless, he considered (and formally stated) the "revival of legal science, persecuted during the Stalin era – civil law theory" as the main work of his life.

Conclusion. Looking back on his life, Sergey Alekseev wrote in his unpublished notes:

"Perhaps – the main thing, in my understanding, of what I managed to achieve in life (maybe the most significant still being about property, 2006?). And this is not scientific titles and degrees, and even less so the positions and posts I held during the short and tumultuous period of my life in the capital. Nor even some real

actions from that time (although, in general, in the field of state affairs, I had the opportunity to stand at the origin of both parliamentary legislation itself – there is even a specific day and hour, July 31, 1989, when laws were created without the Politburo, to take the first steps toward constitutional justice – in the Constitutional Supervision Committee, and to be the initiator of creating the fundamental laws of the country – the Constitution, the Civil Code).

The main thing is that by the end of my life, I managed to reach an important, I believe – key – dimension of understanding the most important institution of society – law. And that this may, sooner or later, create an ‘explosive effect’ in science. And perhaps, I may assume, it will also affect the fate of people, the future of humanity. (And a little later, in 2006, another dimension – property law, where the concepts were only outlined” (Alekseev 1996–2007: 17).

Sergei S. Alekseev holds special significance for the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as its founder and first director. The Institute also played a key role in his career. His rise in Moscow as a statesman, along with his prominent involvement in the creation of the Constitution and the Civil Code, was facilitated by his election as a people’s deputy of the USSR. Nominated by the USSR Academy of Sciences, Alekseev’s candidacy for the position of director was unanimously supported by his colleagues. The Institute remains grateful to him and honors his memory.

...History will issue its verdict later. But it seems that even now it is clear: Sergei Alekseev is the most monumental figure in Russian jurisprudence of the last century⁶. And therefore, without exaggeration, Alekseev can be called a great legal scholar (a recognition

⁶ The already extensive literature about the scholar serves as clear evidence of this (see, for example: Tarasov N.N. Serving the Law. S.S. Alekseev (Notes on the Margins of a Biography), *Civilistic Notes: Inter-University Collection of Scientific Papers*, Moscow, 2004, vol. 3, pp. 3–14; Lawyer, Philosopher, Citizen: Four Interviews for the 80th Anniversary of Corresponding Member of the RAS S.S. Alekseev (prepared and conducted by I. Fan), *Yearbook of the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, 2004, Yekaterinburg, 2005, iss. 5, pp. 31–63. – Interviews with V.D. Perevalov, V.N. Rudenko, B.M. Gongalo, G.P. Orlov; Kazantsev M.F., Rudenko V.N., Surina E.M. *Sergei Sergeyevich Alekseev: Legal Scholar, Thinker, Publicist: Biobibliography: On the 85th Anniversary of the Scholar’s Birth*, Yekaterinburg, 2009, 466 p.; Lukyanin V.P.

that is already being made both verbally and in print), and the last century can be called the century of Alekseev.

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Unmasking the King: The Falsification of the Western Mainstream

Abstract. The mainstream of social sciences is associated with the formation of a normative picture of modern world societies. Thus, the mainstream belongs to whoever has the greatest influence and opportunity to promote and disseminate his views. In this context, it is difficult to separate any description of the social world and its regularities from the establishment of the very rules of its functioning. The current historical weakening of the West and strengthening of non-Western centres of power are redistributing spheres of global influence. While the non-West is rapidly gaining technological and resource autonomy, residual colonial thinking and imaginary global hierarchies remain more stubbornly intractable. A better world inevitably emerges from a conflict in which the parties lose their former illusions about themselves and their place in the world, take stock of their own resources, and adopt pragmatic negotiating positions on fundamental issues. In this context, the goal of socio-political theories is always not only the search for truth about society, but also the value-institutional leadership of the subjects of these theories in the interpretation of post-Western Modernity. One of the key issues in the global transformation of the mainstream of social sciences, cultural and political economic hierarchies is the legitimisation of long overdue changes in which non-Western participants in conflict interactions are increasingly invested. Consistent opposition to the West implies the role not of a habitually humiliated traditionalist opposition, but rather in an active contestation of Western hegemony in the interests of a broader, fairer and more global version of Modernity. Russian society currently has the capability to serve as a system-forming moral and political subject of such a version of Modernity.

Keywords: mainstream; West; Modernity; friend-enemy; centre-periphery; binary codes; transitology; legitimation; social change

According to Carl Schmitt's basic political distinction, full validity, autonomy, sovereignty and self-legitimation can be asserted only in the context of being recognised by other subjects as a friend or an enemy (Schmitt). It is just such an attitude that provides the criterion for political recognition by the parties of each other – that is, in terms of their relative equality. Otherwise, a hierarchical gradation of the relative statuses of subjects of political interaction occurs where one of the parties claims universality, generality and normativity, declaring the other to be a criminal and a marginal actor, in relation to whom neither agreements between equals nor conflict interaction in the form of war are possible, but only punishments and sanctions. Such an asymmetry can only be corrected by raising stakes and risks. At one extreme, this may be achieved by declaring a fully-fledged and total war on those who make such a declaration. In any case, the situation is invariably relative and mutually reflexive. A political subject that claims hegemony can *only* be a legislator and designate others as criminals *if* one of the opponents recognises itself as a criminal entity and acts as would be expected of a *criminal*, i.e., in such a way that this does not change this entity's marginal unequal status on a practical and symbolic level. For example, when the counterparty does not declare war, but limits itself to terrorism; does not introduce countersanctions, but limits itself to smuggling; uses someone else's value and conceptual-descriptive dictionary instead of developing its own, etc. Otherwise, such political statuses, assessments and decisions are null and void both in international law and in terms of internal politics. At present, the global world is undergoing a fundamental reconfiguration of friends and enemies, hegemons and satellites, as well as their coalitions, which trend is associated with a weakening of the West relative to other rising centres of power.

Historically, the rise of Europe/the West to achieve globally predominant influence was fuelled by a combination of advanced military technology, religious upheavals, and the emergence of progressive city-republics (from Venice and Genoa to Amsterdam and the Hanseatic League) in which the social technologies and institutions that came to characterise modern society were pioneered. Initially, the historical situation of capitalism was identified exclusively with the West. More precisely, with the totality of European metropolises whose practices were asserted as normative social

types for the “salvation” of the non-West. This type of society was laid at the foundation of the original European narrative underlying the social sciences, which set out to explain the patterns of the fundamentally new historical situation of Modernity that replaced the class-feudal Ancien Régime. However, it later became clear that the modern norms and institutions of Europe / the West are culturally and *historically unattainable* ideals for all other societies. Moreover, the ostensible practices of reproducing these values and norms in the rest of the world turned out to consist in extensive systems of oppression, exploitation, segregation and double standards, thus representing a systemic ontological denial of the normative self-description of metropolises when as addressed to humanity as a whole. Such an externally imposed and derogatory description of colonies reveals its increasing irrelevance under the conditions of the progressive collapse of Western colonial empires, the strengthening of liberation movements and the ongoing decolonisation of great cultures and world regions comparable to the West in terms of their influence (Go 2024). The problem that arises is that the object or concrete historical society is always ontologically correct. Therefore, the discrepancy that arises between the generalising schemes and reality testifies in the first place to the inadequacy of the theories rather than to the pathology of social facts, as is often asserted by the transitological or modernisation theories that inherit the colonialist discourses that are common to them. However, such contradictions can be seen to arise methodologically only with respect to the ideal type that sets out to replace concrete historical societies.

The key contradiction at the foundation of the social sciences lies in the insoluble duality of the task of self-description of modern society, which is associated, on the one hand, with variable scientific explanations of its patterns, and on the other, with contradictory normative judgments about the common good and the proper state of this society, which are initially presented as exclusively European / Western. On the one hand, one can observe attempts by the mainstream social sciences to imitate *natural science*, simulating principles, criteria and procedures of *pure science* that cannot in any case be applied to the social sciences, while, on the other hand, there is an endless process of struggle for the legitimisation and normalisation of the particular ethical and ideological views to

be applied to global society as a whole. In such a context, it becomes clear that the Western mainstream of social sciences as a set of dominant theories and concepts “should not be perceived as an objective reality determined by the entire course of development of modern civilisation, or even by human nature itself. Liberal political science and neoclassical economics would not have taken shape as the dominant paradigm of social science without the geopolitical successes of British and then American hegemony in the 19th and 20th centuries [which] ideologically elevate to the absolute the rather specific experience of the island and overseas outskirts of the West, which found itself successfully isolated geopolitically and at the same time located at the base of world trade routes” (Derlugyan 2009: 20-21).

Nevertheless, the West, as the undisputed winner of the *Cold War*, was able to free itself for a period of time from the need to prove its moral superiority; thus, it was not immediately noticed that the legitimising grounds for heralding the *end of history* and a *new golden age* had already started to collapse with the first military Western expansions of the 1990s. These military interventions led the collective West towards the deceptive impression that the present state of affairs always be the case. In this instance, it failed to consider the experience of all previous empires and hegemonies, the harbingers of whose decline were not so much their defeats in wars as an increase in their frequency. Wars could indeed be won, but only up to a certain point at which the empires’ forces and reserves began to be depleted. Thus, the presumption that one’s enemy will always be in an extremely humiliated and weak state does not stand up to criticism, nor does the expectation of his willingness to put up with humiliation forever. Since history knows no final victories, the sensible tactic in interactions between weakening hegemonies and rising centres of power is pragmatism based on compromise. However, it is precisely such a balanced and optimal strategy that is initially considered a weakness until the negotiating positions of the habitual hegemonies are adjusted according to a tougher scenario than they had previously experienced. In this context, while Russia is unlikely to restore its global level of influence to one equivalent to the Soviet Union in the foreseeable future, it can certainly no longer remain mired in the decline of the 1990s. A rebalancing of forces and centres of influence in the world is ongoing. And the Russian line of ar-

gumentation, connected as it is with the restoration of the natural area of security, dignity and sovereignty, national interests and the elimination of double standards, certainly seems more convincing to us than the Western aggressive rhetoric about Russia's non-compliance with certain concepts and standards, which the West itself is always ready to neglect in the event of these *immutable rules* contradicting its interests. In the context of resolving the existential questions of the Russian nation, the offensive and coercive rhetoric of the West, associated as it is with the axiomatic monopoly on the interpretation of history, democracy, the market, human rights, international law and the introduction of sanctions cases, is likely forfeit its normative influence. This situation is aggravated by the increasingly random and opportunistic nature of the latest trends and phenomena, interests and practices, ideas and values presented by the West as comprising a generally valid norm. The circumstances of *late* or *fluid* Modernity (Z. Bauman) are characterised by an eclectic scaling of the local, random, and situational, typically asserting its claims to universal significance with the pretentious prefixes post-, alter, neo-, meta-, hyper-, trans-, etc. However, as hastily conceived and precocious mainstream utopias reveal the limits of their universalisation, overinflated social expectations are quickly followed by disappointment.

At the present time, the necessary and overdue revision of the foundations of the West's cultural dominance is being overtaken by the rapid weakening of the West's military, technological and economic edge. This was predictable, since an exit from the semantic system of the hierarchical nomenclature of a number of interconnected concepts of the mainstream can be achieved only through by obtaining a view of it from the outside, which presupposes the development of alternative value-institutional coordinates and consolidating narratives. However, the problem that arises here is that "...even the most ardent opponents of the unilateral dominance of the historical West in world affairs" are unable to formulate their claims without relying on the basic values of democracy and human rights. Moreover, in the Russian context, reference to a Western norm continues to represent an almost compulsory element of any political decision, including those that are harshly criticised by the West. This fact indicates a critical degree of Russia's normative dependence on the West..." (Morozov 2013: 54-55). For as long

as the peripheries in the global distribution of resources and technological chains are dependent on the centre, the reasons for their backwardness can be interpreted in the Western mainstream of social sciences as purely *internal*, i.e., generated by their own defects, as well as their historical, cultural, political inferiority, according to which cultural differences from the West are interpreted according to a *discourse of backwardness*. At the same time, the reasons for underdevelopment that go beyond the periphery and are rooted in the peculiarities of the asymmetric structure of the world system itself remain outside the theoretical mainstream's field of vision since undermining the legitimacy of its centre as an achievable model.

Paradoxically, societies in the centre and periphery of the capitalist world system are increasingly discovering similarities in the terms of the directions of social change under the influence of common general background processes of urbanisation, secularisation, individualisation, democratisation, industrialisation, automation, robotisation, etc. (Derlugyan 2015). Variations in their effect on different countries are explained primarily by the historical non-simultaneity of these processes, which are gradually covering the entire world. In parallel, peripheral societies can be observed to be moving towards democracy, while *model markets* and *mature democracies*, for economic reasons, are strengthening internal protectionism, becoming imbued with populist and nationalist sentiments, and thus losing their previously developed potential for value-institutional universality (Fishman 2019). It is rare to hear arguments against the proposition that democracy is better than its absence; the idea that the market and competition can be an effective instrument for promoting the good of the people is similarly the subject of almost universal agreement. In openly declaring themselves to be democracies, most modern societies thus turn their focus onto the corresponding values, institutions and procedures. However, the centre-periphery structure of the world system generally saddles attempts to consolidate the hierarchical differentiation of democracies with negative adjectives (illiberal, authoritarian, hybrid, partial, façade, limited, etc.), resulting in an emasculation of the concept of democracy itself. Democracy becomes an empty signifier, either not applicable to any real society, or only applicable according to specific value criteria asserted by the small set of selected societies that form the centre of the world economy in the form of liberal democ-

racies. In the latter version, the figure of a hegemon, a progressor and an interpreter emerges, who begins to deny the democratic or market character of most non-Western societies, claiming that they are archaic, underdeveloped, and undemocratic: “Some subjects appropriate the right to speak on behalf of liberalism/market/democracy and the Modernity that generalises them, while others are artificially excluded from the framework of the liberal consensus. The specified intellectual focus is realised through social science classifications based on the binary principle, when the entire diversity of possible classifications is reduced to one opposition – norm/deviation; according to scientific modality, this becomes isomorphic to the dichotomy of truth/error. As a result, humanity, historically fully involved in capitalism and the narratives of liberalism, market and democracy that legitimise it, finds itself in a paradoxical situation in which, from the point of view of Western hegemony, the overwhelming majority of humanity finds itself outside of Modernity” (Martyanov 2021: 115).

The global decline of the Western mainstream is increasingly falling into the trap of the universal recipe of modernisation theory, according to which the *trajectory of progress* can be achieved through institutional copying of specific historical models of the market and democracy, which de facto demonstrate the exhaustion of development potential in Western societies. Therefore, the transitological terminology intended for *backward societies* in the format of *facade, illiberal, authoritarian, blocked democracies*, together with *limited, imperfect, oligarchic markets* etc., can increasingly be redirected to the Western societies themselves, which have taken on progressor functions: “While the era of American dominance is passing, it is resisting according to the old, well-known project-narrative canons. Both within Western societies and beyond, opposition to the “liberal” world order is declared autocratic, fascist, and subject to overthrow in the name of a better future” (Tsygankov 2022: 12).

An important part of the Western mainstream is comprised of transitological and modernisation discourses intended for the non-Western world, which are aimed at the intellectual legitimisation of Western hegemony. Such discourses set out to expose the flaws and ahistoricity of non-Western societies to showcase the virtues of Western equivalents in terms of serving as a universal ideal/model. With regard to Russia, the “axiom of transitology” was

applied to universalise a political theory that treated its subject as lacking her own logic of historical and socio-cultural development. Therefore, a “Russian political science”, based on the logic of differences, gaps, “specialness”, “one’s own path”, is simply unthinkable here” (Martyanov 2007: 35-36). In the intellectual foundations of *transitological concepts*, a well-disguised colonialism continues to dominate, reinforced as it is by the racial theories of Orientalism and anthropology. If the original colonialism of the Kipling type in its pure form assumed that “West is West and East is East” and that the civilisational difference between them will therefore remain forever, then the collapse of the colonial system introduced significant adjustments to this discourse of eternal superiority. Western social sciences have begun to suggest the historical possibility for non-Western societies to reach the same level of development as Western ones if the latter are taken as the only model and institutionally copied. And when many non-Western societies quite rapidly reached the military, economic, and cultural level of influence of the West, it turned out that the heuristic and legitimising potential of the transitological and modernisation concepts was historically exhausted. This occurs especially frequently in those cases where non-Western societies have achieved significant developmental successes despite the indicated theories and advice of Western experts. For example, the rising *Asian Tigers* used protectionism instead of free trade, which was disadvantageous to them, appropriating technologies and violating intellectual property rights in exactly the same way as many European countries had previously done during a previous period of rapid development (Chang 2018). However, the main problem with mainstream concepts of progress consists in the long-term and persistent underdevelopment of significant parts of the world. Theories that were sufficient for describing the processes occurring in the politics and economy of the West turn out to be impotent when explaining the effects of underdevelopment and failures of institutional transitions and transplants. From a comparative perspective, the selective nature and excessive reductionism of the Western mainstream is revealed in terms of its refusal to acknowledge the global connectivity of humanity, which does not require control by a small pool of societies at the centre of the capitalist world-system.

This ideological asymmetry has dealt a tangible blow to the Western mainstream, depriving it of the protective layer of transi-tological and modernisation concepts that are increasingly repudiated by the non-Western world. In losing the properties of *ideality*, Western societies have thus joined the *general series* of societies in the globalised world to experience approximately the same problems, threats and challenges along with a lack of any obvious value-institutional advantages for coping with them. As a result, the West is losing its characteristics of a *universal community*, becoming instead a *particular* or *special* example, which becomes progressively inapplicable for scaling up to apply to the world as a whole. From a comparative inter-country perspective, the possibility of direct transfer of the particular historical experience of the West is also increasingly unsupported.

The construction of global normative hierarchies implies a reliance on fundamental social, economic, and cultural advantages. Previously, the West could speak on behalf of *civilisation* by invoking the *burden of the white man*, who was the coloniser of *undeveloped lands*, the *subject of progress*, etc. However, in post-colonial times, this resource, when generalised in a monopoly on *exemplary Modernity*, ceases to possess any normative power. All the fundamental differences imagined at the dawn of the emergence of social sciences, which dealt primarily with European realities, turn out to be imaginary: in the current global context, there are more value-institutional similarities than differences between the methods of reproduction in Western and non-Western modern societies. In the context of the universally implemented basic values and institutions of classical liberalism representing original utopia of Modernity, the functional modes of the economy and the public sphere, the legitimisation and rotation of elites, the mechanisms and rituals of popular participation, the value preferences of citizens, etc., do not demonstrate any striking differences in a comparative inter-country context. Thus, the assertion of an *equal right* to speak on behalf of Modernity by all participants in global interaction negates the historical privileges and advantages of Western societies that previously used the instrumental resources of rhetoric about democracy and the market, modernisation and progress to legitimise their colonial and/or exclusively national interests.

The weakening of the normative monopoly on Modernity and failure of attempts to restore it are expressed in the compensatory intensification methods used to apply forceful pressure on adversaries. This can be seen in the transition from blackmailing individual sovereign countries to attempts to limit opportunities and coerce increasingly influential individual corporations and individuals in independent non-Western societies around the world. Attempts on the part of Western states and their alliances to continue their military, economic, and cultural expansion include extraterritorial application of their legislation. Such attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of other states include exerting control of other states' elites and technology, as well as manipulations of the global financial system in which the dollar/euro function as a dual reserve currency. Thus it is increasingly clear that the legal framework of non-market competition and vulgar rhetoric of sanctions, while presented as a struggle for peace and universal rules, or the market and democracy against autocracies, are in reality only a struggle to preserve Western hegemony. Such strategies are becoming an increasingly unconvincing cover for actions that, if committed by individuals, would qualify as elements of criminal behaviour such as blackmail, coercion, pressure, corruption, threats, collusion, abuse of a monopoly position, terrorism, extremism, etc. Attempts to control *free* global markets and resource flows by non-market and non-economic methods exclusively in the interests of the West initiate a negative consensus of leading non-Western countries, which are actively consolidating against such *viral management* (Mallard, Sun 2022). In the context of the realignment of the radical asymmetry of centres of power, demands for a return to legal certainty and multipolarity of international relations, linked by the limitation of double standards and mutual recognition of sovereignty and areas of influence by leading powers, are becoming louder.

Mainstream descriptions and methods of legitimising social orders, according to which some societies and classes represent a resource base for others – and in which the logic of *political realism* and the rhetoric of a *self-regulating equitable market* are not constrained by any morality – are becoming less convincing against the backdrop of strengthening non-Western actors, approaching capacity limits of global markets, and the transformation of the principles of class

interaction when justifying the criteria and volumes of access to the distribution of public resources (Fishman et al. 2019). Critics of the mainstream discover that market communications, no matter how *natural* or *universal* they are made to seem, are carried out according to rules that were developed outside the economic field. This occurs despite the claims of the economic mainstream not only to autonomy, but also to the authoritative definition of *universal laws* of social development (Efimov 2016: 135-149). Moreover, the Western version of the neoliberal political economy mainstream, which is associated with the *uncritical scaling of the market metaphor to all kinds of social facts, actions and institutions*, also had quite pragmatic tasks beyond pure science, as conditioned by the West's desire to "persuade postcolonial states around the world to follow the path of capitalism and stay away from communism" (Poskett 2024: 13).

Abstract divisions into *bad power over* (domination) and *good power for* (realisation of good goals), negative *freedom from* and positive *freedom for*, existential contradictions between *to have* or *to be*, and all similar all-encompassing binary oppositions, are in fact instrumental. They are intended to prove the moral superiority of the subject of the statement, who thus hypocritically asserts himself to be on the side of the privileged member of the opposition. This superiority is always relative, since other participants in the discussion can no less convincingly set out their moral priorities in a diametrically opposed way. As a result, understanding the *common good, universal values, democracy, freedom, justice, state interest, institutional rules, signs of progress* and other concepts involves an endless process of *interpretation* that can support different hierarchies of value preferences. Outside of such a legitimising context, power and influence are always one and the same: the realisation of the structural capabilities of subjects to act in their own interests, regardless of who, how, and according to what axiological (moral) perspectives these actions and their consequences will be subsequently interpreted. Thus, interpretation will always be potentially multiple and contradictory depending on the number of stakeholders involved and the vital importance of the decisions to be carried out.

The Western normative mainstream is simultaneously not only the language of science, but also the language of power, transmitting the ideas of the Western ruling class about a *normal society and*

the good for it, as well as the natural hierarchies necessary for its stable reproduction. Therefore, the fundamental decolonisation of continents and countries, cultures and peoples is inevitably linked to a critical revision of the place assigned to them by the West in its cultural-colonialist hierarchies. Moreover, mainstream Western theories exist not so much to understand the non-Western societies to which they are applied as to fit them into certain classifications in relation to *civilised societies* that serve as a target model. In such a context, an appeal to *universal norms/rules* and the *common good* is often nothing more than an additional resource for exerting pressure on opponents when making decisions concerning the distribution of resources and the legitimisation of political decisions. According to such an ideological perspective, the differences between specific, simultaneously coexisting societies are exaggerated by the Western mainstream in order to justify the moral, political, technological and other types of superiority of some societies over others. The criteria chosen for constructing basic binary oppositions are either ideologically biased, or subjective (expert opinion (Ivanov 2015)), or frankly secondary, such as those associated with the transient effects of historical non-simultaneity. At the same time, the West carefully avoids critical reflection on itself, forming something like a *blind* or *white* spot on the global research map of the social sciences. Any kind of close attention will easily discover in Western societies all the same vices and shortcomings that they discern only externally, but not in their own internal reality. It is obvious that the discovery of the *naked emperor* negates his authority and superiority, as well as his right to present certain truths to others as indisputable.

* * *

The technology used in constructing binary oppositions (market/plan, civilisation/savagery, reason/emotions, progress/backwardness, democracy/totalitarianism, modernity/archaism, competition/monopoly, extractive institutions/inclusive institutions, freedom/slavery, etc.) and subsequent identification with their privileged members in order to justify one's ideological and moral superiority is finally discredited in the situation of a general crisis of the usual metaphors and value hierarchies of the Western mainstream. They become a Procrustean bed of alternatives, in which the supposedly impersonal, natural and self-regulating laws

of the market and democracy are opposed to an evil political dictatorship/hegemony. It is obvious that no markets or democracies are *equitable* in themselves due to their reliance on an initially illegitimate pyramid of power; since any power presupposes hierarchy and asymmetry, “the dilemma masks and does not allow us to understand that markets are the same social constructs as [coercive – *author’s note*] hierarchies” (Orekhovsky 2020: 25). Moreover, being constructs, they presuppose in each specific case diverse and historically changing non-market conditions of their existence.

In a context of global turbulence, conventional explanations of social change are unable to cope with the growing shortcomings of market-liberal democracies as the ideal type of modern Western mainstream society under whose auspices all normative regulatory solutions are to be proposed. In the post-Western field of social sciences, topical discussions are unfolding on a wide range of issues: from the interpretation of progress, freedom and justice, or the comparative value of different cultures and traditions, to the scope of individual rights and responsibilities of citizens, the privileges of various ethnic, sexual, religious, and regional minorities, etc. A similar position arises in terms of the variable relationship between (self-)appointed and elected elites, civil liberties and responsibilities, individual and collective priorities, the dynamics of interaction between the majority and minorities, labour and capital, etc.

The exhaustion of the explanatory potential of the concepts and narratives of Western-centric socio-political thought, which are oriented toward a legitimisation of the perfection, universality, and ahistorical nature of a number of Western societies, determines the productivity of the search for development-capable categorical alternatives, including in Russia. The interconnected hierarchies of power, social knowledge and value systems of social regulation in a modern society can only change in a coordinated manner. Currently, there is a slow reassembly of the global conceptual vocabulary of the social sciences, which, in place of the rhetoric of free markets, fair competition and liberal democracy, increasingly involves approaches to the social regulation of modern societies based on the manifest realities of those societies themselves. Such discourse may refer to the ever-growing role of the state in the production and distribution of knowledge, technology and available resources (Mazucato 2021), the limits of capitalism (Wallerstein 2013: 26-27) or

the transformation of the social structure of the *labour society* (Martianov 2016). Here, the key issue becomes the description of the new regularities, mechanisms and resources of this society, as well as its subjects, who determine the corresponding value-institutional hierarchies.

It is clear that the subjects of new languages for describing society will simultaneously lay claim to a changing picture of the world and its normative social order, along with a consolidation of social practices, institutions and structures that are better aligned with the changing national and global reality, to ultimately construct the coordinates of a renewed social reality based on effective principles of social consensus.

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Modernity and Tradition – a False Confrontation?

Abstract. This article examines the confrontation between Russia and the West, often framed as a struggle between Modernity and Tradition. This perspective, however, risks ceding the monopoly on Modernity to the West while leaving us with an outdated understanding of modern values. In the absence of a clearly articulated concept of Modernity, this disorientation poses a significant ideological challenge. The article argues that this challenge stems from a rigid theoretical dichotomy between Modernity and Tradition. A more productive approach would be to view Modernity as a continuously evolving space of alternatives. This space emerges from the clash between socio-political entities – such as cities, states, classes, science, and religion – and various archaic communities that adapt to, resist, or evade the pressures of civilization. The study reveals that there are no substantial premises for a strict opposition between Modernity and Tradition. Modernity cannot be reduced solely to high modernism or the despotism of rationality and civilization; it inherently involves elements of Tradition at each historical juncture. Conversely, what is typically termed “tradition” cannot exist independently of its connection to high modernism. Together, they shape our current understanding of Modernity.

Keywords: alternative; high modernism; despotism; Modernity; progress; tradition; civilization

The confrontation between Russia and the West is often interpreted as a clash between Modernity and tradition – between modern societies, where tradition has become a memory, and a society still largely traditional. This trend is evident both in the works of Russian scholars, such as Kara-Murza (Kara-Murza 2004), some of whom are informally seen as near-official ideolo-

gists¹, and in the rhetoric of the country's top state officials. Many of Russia's and the Soviet Union's undeniable achievements are clearly tied to Modernity, while tradition supposedly plays a much smaller role in these achievements and is viewed with certain reservations. On closer examination, what is called tradition isn't exactly tradition, at least not the heritage of a so-called "traditional society": "Traditional values include life, dignity, human rights and freedoms, patriotism, citizenship, service to the Motherland and responsibility for its fate, high moral ideals, a strong family, creative work, the priority of the spiritual over the material, humanism, mercy, justice, collectivism, mutual assistance and respect, historical memory and generational continuity, the unity of the peoples of Russia"².

Despite official rhetoric strongly emphasizing tradition and condemning various modern trends (for instance, the Russian Orthodox Church criticizing humanism), we end up conceding Modernity to the West, allowing it to claim a monopoly on it. Meanwhile, we hold onto an outdated version of modern values – calling ourselves "true Europe"³ – which we mistakenly label as traditional. Without a clear understanding of the essence of Modernity, this approach becomes confusing and ultimately fails as an ideological strategy.

Both of the above-mentioned ideological strategies stem from an inadequate understanding of what Modernity actually is. In this view, Modernity is reduced, on the one hand, to "high modernism", and on the other, to individualism and its resulting self-destructive tendencies. This fragmented Modernity is contrasted with an abstract tradition that traces back to a schematic, ideal-typical traditional society. The latter is portrayed as almost unchanging and based on certain "eternal values". Those who use

¹ Chernov A. *Alexander Dugin spoke about traditional values in Russia. Dugin: Western civilization denies all traditional values*, 20 September 2023, available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2023/09/20/21327355.shtml> (accessed October 12, 2024). (in Russ.).

² *Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 dated November 9, 2022, "On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values"*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502> (accessed October 12, 2024). (in Russ.).

³ Karaeva E. *The real Europe has found refuge in Russia*, *RIA Novosti*, July 2, 2022, available at: <https://ria.ru/20220702/evropa-1799708503.html> (accessed October 12, 2024). (in Russ.).

such rhetoric are not bothered by the fact that when they attempt to define these values, the result is either blatant pseudo-esotericism (as seen among the so-called Western traditionalists (see: Sedgwick 2023) and their Russian followers) or something unmistakably modern, as found among contemporary Western right-wing movements and our official patriots. Clearly, these two aspects are difficult to reconcile in narrative terms, and in the political sphere, only one can be prioritized at the expense of the other, which prevents social consensus, intensifies conflict, and makes the resolution of both internal and external political crises difficult.

A more productive approach, in my view, is to consider Modernity primarily as a continuously reproducing space of alternatives. Within this space, “one can observe the simultaneous coexistence and overlay of reciprocal (gift-exchange, familial, clan) relationships, distributive and market relations in different spheres of life, as well as the gradual long-term historical shift in the balance of these relations in favor of the latter” (Martyanov 2022: 49). The space of alternatives in Modernity historically emerges from the clash of socio-political subjects, born from the products of “civilization” (the city, the state, classes, estates, science, religion, etc.) and “communities”, archaic collectives of various kinds that partly adapt to the pressures of civilization and partly resist or evade it. As J. Scott notes, in the civilizational discourse from which “high modernism” largely derives, the state and its practices, no matter how repressive and despotic they may be, are considered to be on the right side of history – on the side of progress. In relation to non-state ways of life, they appear advanced and developed. Moreover, they often thrive at the expense of the non-state periphery, extracting various resources from it, primarily potential subjects: slaves or more or less coerced migrants. The non-state periphery is brought into progress and civilization through exchange or slavery (Scott 2017: 21). “Its permanence is all the more remarkable in the light of evidence that ought to have shaken it to its very foundations. It survives despite our awareness that people have been moving, *for millennia, back and forth across this semipermeable membrane between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘uncivilized’ or the ‘not-yet-civilized’* (italics mine. – L. Fishman). It survives despite the perennial existence of societies that occupy an intermediate position socially and culturally between the two presumed spheres” (Scott 2017: 153).

Therefore, if the practice of civilization coincides with the practice of despotism, then the discourse on civilization initially draws attention to this fact. In Europe, this was well understood during the era of Enlightenment. From the perspective of Rousseau, Mably, and several other Enlightenment figures, civilization and progress in human history go hand in hand with despotism and moral corruption. This perspective is just as valid as the optimistic providentialism of Condorcet, which laid the groundwork for the “religion of progress”. It’s the same aspect of the “dialectic of Enlightenment” that Adorno and Horkheimer discussed, linking it to fascism – the trajectory of civilization and progress that leads “from Kant to Krupp” and to “reactionary modernism”. Understood this way, Modernity comes down to the “social logic of generality”, as Reckwitz puts it, which requires “standardization, formalization and generalization of all entities of society”, engages in the “universal generalization” and represents a “process of formal rationalization” that creates “large-scale complexes of predictable rules” (Reckwitz 2022: 23-24). The high modernism that underlies these complexes of rules and strategies is, to a large extent, the “discourse of civilization” – “rationalizing and standardizing what was a social hieroglyph into a legible and administratively more convenient format” (Scott 2005: 19). “The social simplifications thus introduced, J. Scott argues, not only permitted a more finely tuned system of taxation and conscription but also greatly enhanced state capacity” (Scott 2005: 19).

Consequently, high modernism reflects not so much a desire for freedom and individualism but rather an aspiration for progress and order. It often emerges as a despotic, state-driven, and centralizing alternative to the community, which imposes its own equally coercive social order on individuals. The practices and narratives that describe and legitimize this newly formed state of alternatives become the foundation for what is called freedom. The romantic revolutionary protest of the individual against progress, rationality, and order – drawing, among other things, on an idealized vision of the past – is part of Modernity that cannot be reduced to high modernism and the discourse on civilization. Importantly, early bourgeois revolutions were driven by religious fervor and legitimized through references to the truly Christian lives of previous generations, which were fundamentalist in spirit. In a secularized form, the return to true righteousness is replaced by the renewal of the broken

ancient social contract, a return to nature, in short, a return to traditional values trampled by despotism. In the romantic apologia for revolution of the early modern period, a significant role is played by the appeal to the revitalizing power of “barbarism”, which is meant to establish a realm of freedom and justice. This power stands in opposition to the barren rationalism of the classical period, which is more closely associated with despotism. In other words, revolution is a means to reproduce alternativity, so constitutive of Modernity. This alternativity must always be present or at least simulated as imminent but postponed revolution.

The space of alternatives created in this way serves multiple purposes. It becomes the foundation for the emergence of tradition, understood as a set of practices that offer an alternative to the despotism of civilization and progress, though these practices can be equally despotic. It also acts as a prerequisite for the establishment of freedom and individualism, allowing people to choose between different forms of despotism and creating conditions for development and progress. Additionally, it provides a starting point for political, philosophical, and religious discussions that aim to address the “moral collapse” associated with capitalism and Modernity (Martyanov, Fishman 2012) and to conceptualize these alternatives from various perspectives.

In other words, civilization, being understood in a broad sense as a combination of progress and calculative coercion along with tradition, creates a space of alternatives and freedom that constitutes Modernity. Ultimately, Modernity is a collection of attitudes, values, and institutions that have emerged from a situation of expanding choice – fundamental alternatives. A person of the modern era is a Kantian enlightened individual who has the capacity to take advantage of the availability of alternatives, because he managed to emerge “from his self-imposed immaturity” and to learn “to use one’s understanding without guidance from another” (Kant 1966: 25). In other words, a person of the modern era has learned to choose from what they perceive as tradition, selecting what is necessary and avoiding everything else, which shapes their perception of what they continue to *consider* tradition out of inertia. Therefore, the reproduction of Modernity is impossible without what is regarded as tradition at each specific historical stage. But what should be considered tradition that a person of the modern era wishes to appeal to? It is significant that

a modern individual deals with *a softened version of tradition that acknowledges the presence of alternatives*. Here, we are dealing with a situation similar to the one described by Charles Taylor for the realm of religion: belief in God in 1500 is not the same as belief in God in 2000, even though the doctrinal changes may be minimal (Taylor 2017: 17). The reason is that in 1500, religiosity virtually excluded any alternatives, whereas in 2000, it is one of the acceptable options for worldview. In the same way, the existence of communities that adhere to tradition within the “larger society” of Modernity alters both the content of tradition and the attitude toward it, smoothing over aspects that might have appeared off-putting in a situation of exclusivity. This situation, among other things, gives rise to romanticism as a worldview, which posits that “things were better in the past”. Since it is an extrapolation of a purified and tamed tradition into the past, such a past inevitably acquires the characteristics of a lost Eden. The reference to this semi-mythical past actively participates in the reproduction of the space of alternatives characteristic of Modernity up until a certain point.

For a long time, the classic example of a country embodying the most successful version of Modernity was the United States, with its unique combination of high modernism and local adherence to tradition rooted in the practices of Protestant churches and sects. Baudrillard considered America to be the original, vastly superior version of Modernity, a utopia materialized. However, the content of this utopia extended beyond “bourgeois” and Enlightenment ideals of rationality and progress. It was also a utopia of escaping civilization and culture in favor of a natural and partly archaic (what may also be referred to as “Indian”) alternative to them. This is why Baudrillard’s assertion that Europeans, unlike Americans, “do not have either the spirit or the audacity for what might be called the zero degree of culture, the power of unculture” is particularly telling (Baudrillard 2000: 153). In other words, to become genuine Modernity, one must combine the “zero degree of culture” with a certain degree of the utopian aspirations of high modernism, refracted through the fractures and heresies of tradition⁴. “The founders of New England, as Alexis de

⁴Baudrillard notices “how little the Americans have changed in the last two centuries – much less than European societies. ...the Americans kept intact – preserved as it was by a breadth of ocean that created something akin to temporal insularity – the Utopian and moral perspective of the men

Tocqueville wrote, were at the very same time ardent sectarians and impassioned innovators” (Tocqueville 1992: 53). But what, in essence, was the Protestantism of the denominations that originally populated America? It was a consequence of selecting that part of the spiritual heritage deemed acceptable for *modern* people, thereby laying the foundation for a private sectarian utopia on new land, away from the despotism of “civilization” and the coercion of orthodox church tradition. Thus, it involved religious and moral practices that became prerequisites for modern alternatives. Taken on their own terms, they may not have differed significantly from traditionally orthodox practices, and at times even exceeded them in terms of coerciveness⁵. However, when transported across the ocean, given the opportunity for utopian realization, and confronted with other like-minded practices, they formed a kind of exemplary space of modern alternatives – the American way of life and freedom.

All of this does not mean that America can serve as an example for those who wish to cultivate Modernity in a direct and simplistic sense – as a model from which to copy religions, political institutions, ideologies, and so on. In fact, the rather unimpressive success of such strategies has been recognized for some time. If we consider Modernity as the space of alternatives described above, then it makes sense to cultivate and maintain a *configuration of practices* that promote its reproduction, even though such practices may, in themselves, prove to be quite authoritarian. It goes without saying that this configuration will be unique each time due to the varying national and cultural heritage.

The above means that there are no compelling grounds for a rigid, highly ideologized opposition between Modernity and tradition. Modernity cannot be reduced to high modernism or the despotism of rationality and civilization; therefore, it is impossible without what is called tradition in each specific historical period.

of the eighteenth century, or even of the Puritan sects of the seventeenth, transplanted and kept alive, safely sheltered from the vicissitudes of history” (Baudrillard 2000: 166). This element of obsolescence, outmodedness, and backwardness in America – an “island in time” – is significant; yet it simultaneously positions America as the flagship of Modernity.

⁵ This fact was highlighted by A. de Tocqueville, who described some laws that were democratically adopted by communities as “bizarre or tyrannical”, pointing out that in these communities “the mores were still more austere and puritanical than the laws” (Tocqueville 1992: 51).

What we refer to as tradition simply does not exist outside the connection with high modernism, which together forms the relevant Modernity. If we reduce the current landscape to traditional values and contrast it with abstract Modernity, this will result in an unnecessary opposition between parts of an indivisible whole.

Therefore, the key task for those who are unwilling to part with the space of modern alternatives is to sustain this space by: a) resisting attempts to neutralize it, regardless of the source, and b) promoting positive alternatives in lifestyles, everyday life, and other manifestations of genuine freedom. At the global level, Russia currently plays this role by maintaining a space of choice for the greatest number of subjects in international relations. These external efforts must be complemented by internal ones that encourage civic initiative and innovation in various fields, rather than engaging in fruitless and disorienting opposition between “modernists” and “traditionalists”.

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Traditional Russian Values: Problems with Defining and Justifying Their List

Abstract. The concept of traditional values is widely used in Russian public discourse and legislation. However, to ensure that the protection of these values is normatively grounded, it is essential to clarify the concept by addressing several key questions. Without this clarification, traditional values risk being used opportunistically, often serving merely as an “empty signifier”, which diminishes the unifying effect of policies aimed at their protection. It is crucial to determine which tradition – Orthodox patriarchal or Soviet – we are referring to, and whether we seek to protect values from the past or present. Additionally, it is important to distinguish which values are worth preserving and which should be rejected, as every society harbors both values and what could be termed anti-values. Furthermore, we must consider whose spiritual and moral traditions are being protected: those of the Russian nation, or those of the populations of historical states that can be called Russian; the traditions of the elite, or those of the majority. Lastly, if the goal of protecting traditional values is to safeguard certain “civilizational” traits, additional justification is needed to protect values that are not only unique to Russians but also claim to be universal. In conclusion, while the protection of traditional values can be morally justified, it is essential to address complex questions about the nature and representation of these “Russian spiritual and moral values” referenced by political actors and legal documents in order to provide a solid foundation for their protection.

Keywords: traditional values; conservatism; civilization; national identity; Russian worldview

Since the early 2010s, the concept of *traditional values* has become increasingly common in Russian public discourse. It was widely used by the Russian authorities to justify a conservative

shift in domestic policy and to contrast it with the policies of Western liberal democracies. In 2012, during his Address to the Federal Assembly, Vladimir Putin for the first time referred to Russia as a “civilization-state” with its own unique experience¹. In his 2013 Address, where the President defended the need to protect traditional values, he for the first time described this stance as conservative². In subsequent speeches, he repeatedly affirmed his commitment to defending traditional values and conservatism. For instance, in 2021, at a meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, he described “reasonable” and “healthy” conservatism as the foundation of Russia’s political course³.

Meanwhile, Russian legislation had been evolving, with administrative liability introduced in 2013 for the “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors” (Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation). In 2015, the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation included, for the first time, a list of traditional spiritual and moral values⁴. The 2021 Strategy presented a slightly revised version of this list⁵. In 2020, amendments to the Russian Constitution authorized the Russian government to preserve traditional family values (Article 114), and characterized belief in God as a “heritage passed down from the ancestors of the Russian

¹ See: *Address of the President of the Russian Federation from 12.12.2012 (On the situation in the country and the main directions of the state’s domestic and foreign policy)*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/36699/page/2> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

² See: *Address of the President of the Russian Federation from 12.12.2013 (On the situation in the country and the main directions of the state’s domestic and foreign policy)*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/38057/page/3> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

³ See: *Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club*, October 21, 2021, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/deliberations/66975> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

⁴ *Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation No. 683 dated 31.12.2015 “On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation”*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40391> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

⁵ *Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation No. 400 dated 02.07.2021 “On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation”*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/47046> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

people” (Article 67.1)⁶. Finally, in 2022, by presidential decree, the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values⁷ were approved, once again listing these values. In 2023, Russia’s status as a unique “civilization-state” was reaffirmed in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation⁸ and in several of Putin’s speeches. Today, the Russian state continues its efforts to justify the historical and cultural unity of the Russian nation through the defense of traditional values.

But is there a theoretical or ideological justification behind the state policy promoting the dominance of traditional values? This raises several issues. In this article, I will pose key questions that, in my view, must be addressed to create a list of traditional values that reflects a coherent ideological stance, which in turn should underpin a consistent state policy. Each section of the article will be dedicated to one of these questions. However, it is important to clarify that, henceforth, “values” will refer to a very broad range of phenomena significant for the individual and society, while “traditions” will encompass any regular social practice from the past. Thus, the meanings in which these concepts will be used are close to their everyday understanding, and the issues related to their precise definition will remain beyond the scope of this article.

Values of the Past or Values of the Present? The first problem that arises when discussing traditional Russian values stems from the unique trajectory of Russian history: in the 20th century, old value systems collapsed twice, giving rise to new ones. After

⁶ *Law of the Russian Federation on the Amendment to the Constitution of the Russian Federation No. 1-FKZ dated 14.03.2020 “On the Improvement of the Regulation of Certain Issues of the Organization and Functioning of Public Authority”*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/45280> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

⁷ *Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation No. 809 dated 09.11.2022 “On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values”*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

⁸ *Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation No. 229 dated 31.03.2023 “On the Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/49090> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

seizing power in 1917, the Bolsheviks not only dismantled existing state institutions but also radically rejected the values that had prevailed in Tsarist Russia (such as the patriarchal extended family, Orthodox faith, monarchical rule, etc.). Supporters of the “old values” either left the country or faced persecutions. For several subsequent generations the foundations of the Russian Empire appeared as an anachronism. However, in the 1990s, the communist ideology and its associated values were also rejected. For the following generations the foundations of Soviet society (including the cult of productivity, the pursuit of radical equality, and excessive devotion to the collective) were as much an anachronism as Tsarist Russia was for the communists. While the communists, after seizing power, persecuted their ideological opponents, no such persecution targeted communists in the 1990s. As a result, the generational shift occurred more or less smoothly. However, this transition has led to a situation where the values prevalent in contemporary Russian society often differ from those of both Tsarist and Soviet Russia. In this context, the effort to preserve national identity can conflict with traditions that were rejected twice within a century. For example, modern Russians are significantly less religious than the inhabitants of the Russian Empire, yet, unlike most of the Soviet people, they also seldom embrace communist ideals. Additionally, research shows that contemporary Russians tend to prioritize individualistic values more than previous generations (Magun, Rudnev 2021; Magun 2023).

Thus, the first question to consider when formulating a theoretical basis for state policies aimed at preserving traditional values is: Are the values in question truly traditional, or are they, in fact, new?

Values and Anti-Values. The second question relates to the fact that every society possesses both positive and negative characteristics, and their classification as such is not always obvious. For example, when describing modern Russian society, researchers often assert such characteristics as a relatively high tolerance for corruption (Maksimenko et al. 2020)⁹; legal nihilism (Zakhartsev 2015);

⁹ See also: *Results of the 2018 HSE Sociological Study*, available at: <https://www.mk.ru/social/2018/10/16/issledovanie-pokazalo-chto-rossiyane-vse-uvazhitelnee-otnosyatsya-k-korrupcii.html> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

political passivity and apathy (Davyborets 2015: 59, 61); an underdeveloped civil society and private initiative (Vishanova 2017). These characteristics are often viewed as deeply rooted in the history and culture of the Russian people due to objective reasons.

If we turn to previous historical periods, there are other examples that could be considered. For instance, in the early 20th century, the Russian state came to a clear understanding of the inefficiency of the rural commune (*obschina*) as an economic unit and the need, for the sake of the country's normal economic development, to allow peasants to freely leave the commune (to move to a *khutor* or *otrub*¹⁰). However, many peasants rejected this reform, seeing the commune as a value worth preserving (Fedorov 2000: 264; Kozlov 2007: 22). In the Soviet period, many citizens valued the planned economy and distribution mechanisms, which hindered economic development and led to stagnation. Thus, traditional values can turn out to be outdated and may not need protection at all. Moreover, the very assessment of a tradition as worthy of continuation or, conversely, as outdated is linked to moral positions surrounded by significant disagreements in society. In general, values remain relevant only if they are constantly reinterpreted in line with new realities, and in this sense, tradition is continually being “invented” (Fishman 2023). So, which part of tradition do we want to preserve? Or, in other words, which tradition do we want to invent?

Nation's Values vs. People's Values. The next question can be phrased as: Whose traditional values are we talking about? In modern Russian political discourse, the term “Russian values” is used, but this could theoretically refer to either the values of the Russian nation or the population of the Russian state. In today's context, these two aspects are indistinguishable, as the permanent population of Russia constitutes the Russian civic nation. However, when we look at tradition, we must recognize that the history of the nation and the history of the state are not identical in content or chronology. Let's consider both of these perspectives.

¹⁰ An *otrub* and a *khutor* were plots of land given to peasants for individual use, meaning private ownership. The difference between the two was that with a *khutor*, the peasant could move their homestead, house, and all farm buildings to the new land. Wealthier peasants bought *khutors*, while *otrub*s became an alternative for poorer landowners.

When discussing the values traditionally shared by a state's people, we must also consider questions about the state's concept and legal continuity, as these help us understand its origins. For example, the modern Russian state was established on June 12, 1990, when the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the RSFSR was adopted. Later, on December 25, 1991, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic was renamed the Russian Federation. Russian authorities have frequently portrayed the state as the "successor" of the USSR, a position formally enshrined in the constitution since 2020 (Article 67.1). However, the Soviet Union's own status as the successor to the Russian Empire raises far more complex questions (see Tomsinov 2011 for details). These issues stem not only from differing interpretations of historical facts but also from the underdeveloped state of international law in the early 20th century. Additionally, public-political entities from the Ancient World and the Middle Ages may not align with modern definitions of a state. Therefore, when looking at traditional Russian values from this perspective, we must first establish that Kievan Rus, Muscovy, the Russian Empire, the USSR, and the Russian Federation can indeed be considered legal successors to one another.

Traditional Russian values can also be viewed as defining characteristics of the Russian nation, but this raises the question of when exactly this nation emerged. According to the constructivist approach, key factors shaping national identity include the spread of printing and literacy, language standardization, the creation of common markets, urbanization, voting rights, national holidays, and a shared understanding of history. Based on these factors, it can be argued that the formation of the Great-Russian nation (*Velikorossy*) took place between the 17th and early 20th centuries. However, even when non-Slavic ethnic groups that converted to Orthodoxy were included among the Russians (*Velikorossy*), they were still contrasted with non-believers (such as the Tatars). Under autocracy, the concept of a unified civic nation (*Rossiyanе*) had not yet emerged. When the Bolsheviks came to power, they began promoting the civic identity of the *Soviet people*. These new *Soviet people* united Slavic and non-Slavic, Orthodox and non-Orthodox populations of the RSFSR with the populations of other Soviet republics, leaving no room for the formation of a separate Russian identity. Only in the 1990s did the term *Rossiyanе* become officially

established as a political term¹¹, and the formation of a national civic identity came onto the agenda. It seems reasonable to argue that, despite the use of the term *Rossiiane* in various contexts since the 16th century, the Russian nation as such is only about 30 years old. If this is the case, then it may still be too early to speak of value traditions inherent to this nation.

Elite Values and Common People's Values. Discussion of traditional values inevitably leads us to history, whether it pertains to a people or a state. However, historical sources mainly reflect the cultural creations of the elite, making it difficult to confidently determine the values held by the majority.

For instance, Old Russian literature is thoroughly infused with Christian moral teachings. But does this mean that the majority of people in Kievan Rus in the 11th–13th centuries were not only baptized Orthodox Christians formally adhering to the rites but also genuinely embraced core Christian values (such as brotherly love even toward strangers, forgiveness and humility, and dedicating one's life to inner transformation and salvation)? The well-known phenomenon of *dvoeverie* (dual faith) (Zhivov, 2002) casts doubt on this¹².

In general, the elite serves as the driving force of society, shaping its direction of development, which is why their values often differ from those of the common people – a pattern clearly seen in Russian history. In the 10th century, Prince Vladimir adopted Christianity as the official religion; in the 15th–16th centuries, Moscow rulers began building an Orthodox state based on autocratic principles; in the 17th century, Patriarch Nikon altered formal aspects of the Orthodox faith dear to the common people; in the 18th century, Peter I made a decisive choice in favor of European culture and a regular state; in the 20th century, first the Bolsheviks led the masses toward a communist ideal, and later the liberals toward democracy and the rule of law. In all these cases, it was a matter of value choices. It is worth noting that the common people were often not only indifferent to these new values but also actively opposed

¹¹ Tishkov V.A. Russians, 29.11.2023, *Great Russian Encyclopedia: Scientific and Educational Portal*, available at: <https://bigenc.ru/c/rossiiane-7a69bc/?v=9156986> (accessed September 3, 2024). (in Russ.).

¹² In this context, *dvoeverie* stands for the preservation of pagan beliefs and rituals alongside Christian ones.

them, evidenced by The Schism of the Russian Church (*Raskol*) and Russian Civil War.

But the issue lies not only in the discrepancy between the values of the elite and the common people. After all, it is obvious that social inequality – whether by class, estate, or other forms – leads people to view the same social institutions and practices differently. Rather, the problem resides in the fact that there is significantly less historical information about the values of the common people than there is about the values of the elites. As a result, a cursory glance at history can completely overlook the traditions that were characteristic of the majority of a given community's members.

Thus, the question that we must answer is this: whose traditional values, from which social class, do we want to adopt and protect? And if we are referring to the broader masses (the common people), how well do we actually know the traditions of the distant past?

Civilizational Distinctions or Universal Human Values?

The final question that arises in connection with the policy of protecting Russian traditional values relates to how these values are positioned in the public sphere as civilizational, in other words, those that distinguish Russia from other civilizations and define its uniqueness.

The problems arise not only from a lack of consensus in academic circles about the concept of *civilization* and its heuristic value (Yakovenko 1999), but also from the interpretation of traditional values as unique and foundational to national civic identity. This perspective emphasizes values that distinguish Russia from other countries, often overshadowing universal human values that are also shared by Russians. While these universal values are equally significant, they do not fit neatly within this specific framework.

However, if we look at the lists of traditional values in the aforementioned National Security Strategies of the Russian Federation (2015 and 2021), we see that the overwhelming majority of traditional values are essentially universal human values, or at least can easily be interpreted as such. These include, first and foremost: life, dignity, human rights and freedoms, strong family bonds, creative work, service to the Motherland and responsibility for its future, patriotism, citizenship, high moral ideals, humanitarianism, mercy, justice, mutual aid, and mutual respect. Even the traditional values named by the President of Russia, such as the priority of the spiritual

over the material and collectivism, can easily be seen as universal human values, depending on how spirituality is understood and how the value of collectivism aligns with the value of human rights and freedoms. In any case, such features of Russian civilization as authoritarian rule and Orthodox faith, highlighted by well-known representatives of the so-called civilizational approach (N.Y. Danilevsky, O. Spengler, A.J. Toynbee, and others), are not mentioned in the strategies under consideration. On the contrary, these strategies emphasize Russia's traditional multi-faith nature, and the mention of human rights and freedoms among traditional values can be interpreted as a statement on the need to defend democratic principles.

Thus, the question arises: should we protect only those traditional values that express the uniqueness of Russia and the Russian nation, or also those values that are shared by all of human civilization?

Conclusion. In this article, I take as a point of departure the thesis that values can and should be subject to state protection. The assumption that memory politics can be employed to overcome the identity crisis was also not disputed (Gaponenko 2020). However, in order to provide an ideological foundation for the policy of protecting traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and to make this policy consistent, it is necessary to provide well-reasoned answers to several questions:

1. If tradition has been interrupted and modern values contradict traditional ones, should priority be given to the revival of traditional values?

2. Should we adopt and protect all spiritual and moral values inherent to a particular (modern or historical) society, or should some be rejected as "incorrect"?

3. Whose traditions should we continue and protect: those of all residents of the Russian state (regardless of their identity) at different stages of its history, or the traditions specific to the Russian people or the unified Russian nation (from the moment of its emergence)?

4. On the traditions of which social stratum should we rely, considering that a turn to history often reveals a value-based antagonism between the elite and the common people, with the values of the latter not always being well-known?

5. Should we only protect values that express Russia's uniqueness and the identity of the Russian nation, or also those that have the status of universal human values?

In conclusion, it should be noted that if the protection of traditional values is intended to ensure the formation and refinement of a national civic identity, then it would be appropriate to seek answers to the above questions through broad public discussions, including the participation of decentralized value-driven actors (Pankevich 2023). The establishment of traditional values through presidential decrees leads to the very questions listed above remaining unresolved. As a result, the concept of “traditional values” is used opportunistically, often merely as an “empty sign”, and the unifying effect of the policy of protecting traditional values turns out to be weaker than it could have been.

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Transformation and Reconstruction: Traditional Russian Values and Russian Modernization

Abstract. This paper aims to outline a theoretical and socio-psychological foundation behind Russia's modernization. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the rapid pace of social transformation created a need for new spiritual guidelines. In this process of change and reconstruction, traditional Russian values emerged in response to contemporary challenges, with their theoretical roots grounded in autocracy, collectivism, the idea of salvation, and hierarchy. The paper argues that the revival of neoconservatism and neo-Eurasianism, through their interconnectedness, will shape the future trajectory of Russia's transformation, influencing the role of traditional values in modern society.

Keywords: traditional values; modernization; Orthodoxy; morality; neoconservatism

The Necessity of Transforming Traditional Russian Values.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by the decline of Marxist values, followed by a rapid erosion of Western political and cultural ideals, which paved the way for the resurgence of traditional values rooted in Orthodox ethics. These values serve as a spiritual foundation, transcending religious boundaries, and play a key role in various aspects of state and public life in Russia. However, the core of Orthodox ethics comes into conflict with modern concepts, hindering Russia's modernization process.

From the perspective of social values, it can be argued that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian people, facing significant hardships, turned to Orthodox values as a way to restore order and address the crisis of faith in the country. Orthodox ethics, which includes humanism, patriotism, spiritual importance, and other core elements of traditional Russian culture, played a crucial role in the early restoration of social values in Russia. However,

these values often clashed with modern cultural values, market economies, and democratic political ideals, which hindered economic development.

Orthodox ethics emphasizes the purity of the soul, asceticism, the inseparability of spiritual and secular morality, as well as unrealistic religious ideals and apocalyptic aspirations. These features distinguish it from Western Christianity. Unlike Catholicism and Protestantism, Orthodox ethics is less focused on practicality and secular concerns in daily life, instead emphasizing transcendent values and downplaying the pursuit of practical goals. Additionally, it tends to oppose rational thinking and rejects the ethic of self-control valued in the West.

This spiritual orientation of Orthodox ethics sharply conflicts with the “spirit of capitalism”, as described by Max Weber. Capitalism is rooted in the concepts of vocation, strict rational calculation, and the belief that material wealth is a means to achieve personal value goals. As such, Russia’s modernization required a more pragmatic social value system – one that would foster a cultural environment conducive to democratic politics and a market economy.

In terms of economic development, Orthodoxy is the least adaptable of the three main branches of Christianity, remaining most committed to ancient dogmas. Throughout Christian history, Catholicism and Protestantism have continually updated and adjusted their doctrines, while Orthodoxy has made little effort to reform its teachings. Unlike Protestantism and Catholicism, Orthodox economic ethics is less conducive to economic development.

Orthodox ethics places a strong emphasis on monastic aspirations, often neglecting the practical concerns of daily life. This makes it less pragmatic in addressing real-world issues. Additionally, Orthodox ethics does not distinguish between monastic and secular morality, with all believers directed toward the monastic ideal. This view impacts the laity’s perception of economic activity, stripping it of religious justification and fostering confusion, as poverty is often equated with moral or spiritual virtue. In contrast, Catholicism clearly separates monastic and secular ethics, while Protestantism views wealth as a sign of divine favor, in direct opposition to Orthodox teachings.

Furthermore, when it comes to scientific knowledge, Orthodox ethics tends to oppose science, whereas the Catholic Church established a respect for science as early as the 1st century. Protestantism, similarly, has been closely associated with literacy and the embrace of new technologies. It is clear that the emphasis on knowledge and science in Catholicism and Protestantism has significantly contributed to economic development. Overall, Orthodox ethics does not align with the current needs of Russia's modernization, particularly in the context of fostering economic growth and embracing scientific advancement.

Thirdly, in terms of national policy, Orthodoxy has played a crucial role as a spiritual pillar in the creation and strengthening of the centralized Russian state. However, amidst significant historical shifts in both the Russian state and the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill's revival of the "symphony" concept in 2009 reflects these evolving dynamics. He spoke of a traditional model of "harmonious interaction between the state and the church", which redefines their relationship by emphasizing the spiritual precedence of the church over the state. This concept can be seen as a response to democracy, but it does not align with historical realities or modern ideas of statehood in Russia.

In an era where the separation of church and state is increasingly seen as an irreversible trend, Russia cannot return to a traditional theocracy. The country's modernization will be more successful within the framework of a democratic state governed by law. Furthermore, Kirill's vision of "symphony" has an imperial nature: the full integration of the state and church, modeled after the Byzantine tradition, is not an ideal solution for managing church-state relations and fails to align with the progress of history.

Conceptual Framework Behind Traditional Russian Values. Traditional Russian values have endured throughout history, primarily within the framework of conservative thought.

First, autocracy and paternalism form the foundation of traditional Russian value theory. The Orthodox religious-political doctrine, viewing power as theocracy, imbued Russian absolutism with a sacred status. According to this doctrine, the monarch, representing the state, was directly accountable to God and served as an instrument of divine will in the secular realm, embodying order, morality, and faith. Even after the collapse of the Russian

monarchy in the early 20th century, conservatives continued to hope for the rise of a “strong leader”, even if that leader had to come from outside the traditional system.

Second, collectivism is a core element of traditional Russian values. Russian collectivism is deeply connected to the unique system of the rural commune and the Orthodox concept of *sobornost* (a spiritual unity based on a commitment to Orthodox values). The spirit of *sobornost* harmonizes the autonomy of the rural commune, state authority, and individual rights, fostering the development of Russian collectivism and its integration into the broader “Russian spirit”.

Third, the idea of salvation forms the basis of the imperial ideal rooted in traditional Russian values. The Orthodox concept of salvation and the idea of “Moscow – the Third Rome” are central to the anti-Western mindset and imperial aspirations. Within these beliefs, Russians are viewed as God’s chosen people, tasked with saving the world and continuing God’s mission on Earth, and thus Russia is granted spiritual and moral superiority over the West.

Finally, hierarchy is a fundamental principle that ensures the stability of traditional Russian values. The hierarchical system assumes that individuals at different social levels have distinct responsibilities, statuses, and rewards. This structure is crucial for preserving the conservative monarchy and maintaining social order. Conservatives support a strict hierarchy, believing that it safeguards political power and ensures social stability.

Amid social shifts influenced by liberal ideology, the traditional values that Russian conservatism seeks to preserve include autocracy, paternalism, collectivism, the idea of salvation, and hierarchy. These values form the foundation for creating a unique civilizational paradigm, providing a distinct path that counters the disruptive effects of Westernization on Russia. Within the broader spectrum of political conservatism, Russian conservatism contrasts with the classical Western model, yet their goals align: both seek strong governance and structured freedom, with meaningful limits and reasonable boundaries on elitism in political democracy. This approach reflects the revival and development of Russian conservatism after the collapse of the Soviet Union and outlines the goals Russia is pursuing as it adapts its traditional values to the demands of modernization.

Reconstruction of Traditional Russian Values. For over thirty years, traditional Russian values have been reinterpreted and adapted through various philosophical movements in response to social transformations. Each movement, following its own logical progression, has explored ways to implement the modern transformation of these values. Today, as Russia finds itself at another crossroads of social change, the revival of neoconservatism and neo-Eurasianism is shaping the future direction of the modernization of traditional Russian values. The primary goal of this revival is to rethink Russian civilization and redefine the state's role in the contemporary world.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the resurgence of “Russian thought”, the revival of Orthodoxy, and the rise of conservatism have mutually influenced each other in the realms of public values, religious faith, and political practice. This process gradually led to the reconstruction of traditional Russian conservatism and the emergence of neoconservatism, or modern conservatism. On the one hand, neoconservatism emphasizes the need to understand new aspects of modern civilization and integrate reasonable ideas from other movements. From the mid-1990s to the present, neoconservatism has coexisted with new Orthodox ideas, patriotism, neo-Marxism, and other intellectual currents, particularly absorbing elements of Orthodox consciousness, neo-Eurasianism, and nationalism – ideas deeply connected to traditional Russian values. Its goal is to blend tradition and modernity, renewing the foundation of Russian values. On the other hand, neoconservatism not only explores philosophical theories and reevaluates values but also manifests itself in political campaigns and the activities of political parties. In the era of globalization, the key mission of neoconservatism is to develop a philosophical methodology for rethinking approaches to the new world order.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the renewed recognition of the cultural heritage of Russian emigration, the philosophy of Eurasianism was revived in modern Russia. Amid social turbulence, this revival gave rise to a new form of Eurasianism that directly influenced social thought, politics, and Russia's international relations. Eurasianism, grounded in geopolitics and ethnology, seeks to address the uncertainty surrounding Russia's civilizational identity through the theory of Eurasian civilization.

With a solid philosophical foundation, Eurasianism advocates for the reconstruction of Russian civilization and the establishment of a new world order. It tackles fundamental questions about the nature of Russian civilization, its developmental trajectory, and its place within the global order. By uncovering Russia's philosophical essence, Eurasianism aims to build a value-based foundation for the Eurasian community and resolve the long-standing debate between the *Slavophiles* and *Westernizers* regarding the divide between Western and Eastern civilizations. It also emphasizes the unity of diverse civilizations in the global historical process, underscoring the interdependence of East and West while asserting the uniqueness of Russian-Eurasian civilization as a key pole in a multipolar world. This distinctive civilization offers an alternative model to globalization and a non-Western approach to modernization, rooted in historical, cultural, and ethical values. Ultimately, Eurasianism seeks to reimagine Russia's future development and establish a new world order, challenging Western civilizational dominance, liberal ideology, and the traditional political order led by the U.S. and Europe.

In conclusion, the modern reconstruction of traditional Russian values may unfold in two main directions: on the one hand, the synthesis of neoconservatism and neo-Eurasianism could foster a unique Eurasian identity, providing both a theoretical and secular foundation for rebuilding a "New Russia" and adopting a multipolar approach to challenge the dominance of Western civilization. On the other hand, by combining Orthodox ethics with neoconservative philosophy in a new cultural, philosophical, and political context, Russia could strengthen its historical continuity, highlight its Eurasian identity, and emphasize traditional values such as the spiritual primacy of Orthodoxy, collectivism, and patriotism. This approach aims to reconstruct Russia's "spiritual world" and potentially offer an alternative to Western values like freedom, democracy, and human rights, challenging the existing international order and pursuing a political mission to create a new world order.

While a clear and systematic new value system has not yet emerged in Russia, it seems likely that it will eventually take shape, rooted in tradition but distinct from it.