

Andrey L. Anisin
Institute of Philosophy and Law,
Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Ekaterinburg, Russia
E-mail: anisin@bk.ru
SPIN-code: 5624-1912

Reconstructing the Traditional Value Framework of Russian Civilization

Abstract. The relevance of this study stems from the escalation of ideological, value-based, political, and economic confrontation between Russia and the West to a qualitatively new level. The object of research is the spiritual and moral culture of Russia's peoples, while the subject of philosophical reflection is the value foundations shaping the formation and development of an all-Russian civic identity and the unified cultural space of Russian civilization. Methodologically, it is essential to note that values are not derived from "what is" – rather, they reflect "what ought to be". The universal core of traditional values lies in human moral consciousness, while general ethical ideas acquire cultural-historical specificity within the values of a particular civilizational model. Three groups of traditional values are provisionally distinguished: *personal*, *societal*, and *state-oriented values*. It is argued that state-oriented and societal values are organically linked to the high personal value of spiritual freedom. When examining societal traditional values, emphasis is placed on *justice*, which in Russian culture is associated not with legal consciousness but with moral truth and religiously infused righteousness. A distinctive feature among traditional Russian values is the "primacy of the spiritual over the material." This value is of paramount importance as a necessary condition for overcoming the global crisis of our time. The value foundations of the Russian state are shaped by the fact that Russia has historically been built as a common place for numerous tribes and peoples. A defining characteristic of Russian patriotism is the dual unity of "Rodina" (*homeland*) and "Otechestvo" (*fatherland*): the sense of connection to native land and belonging to the national spirit are organically combined with the primacy of spiritual freedom and personal service. A key direction for further research on this topic could be the conceptual justification of value priorities in state-building and cultural policy in contemporary Russia.

Keywords: traditional values; is; ought; civilizational values; freedom; justice; ideational ethics; the value of family; spiritual foundations of the state; the value of service; Russian patriotism

The discourse surrounding Russia's "cultural code" traces its roots at least to the debates between *Slavophiles* (rus. *славянофилы*) and *Westernizers* (rus. *западники*); though earlier origins of these discussions may also be identified. However, in the 21st century, the theme of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values has gained particular urgency. This is undoubtedly linked to the intensification of ideological, value-based, political, and economic confrontation between Russia and the West, elevating it to a new level. The productivity of our response to this *civilizational challenge* – using Arnold Toynbee's terminology – will determine our historical future. This response must not only be articulated on the so called external front but also – and this is the only possible foundation for external success – through the reinforcement of the internal value foundations of our own historical existence.

It is no coincidence that shortly after the confrontation with the West entered a hot phase in February 2022, the Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 (09.11.2022) *On approving the Fundamentals of State Policy to Preserve and Strengthen Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values*¹ (hereinafter, referred to as the Fundamentals) was issued. The fourth paragraph of the Order provides a definition of traditional values, while the fifth enumerates them. For the purposes of a strategic planning document, these provisions are sufficient. The Fundamentals elaborate in detail and clarity on the goals, tasks, instruments, and expected outcomes of efforts to preserve and strengthen traditional values. However, a substantive unpacking and conceptual analysis of these values themselves could not fall within the scope of this document. The aim of this article is to clarify the philosophical foundations of the political-legal concept of state-building oriented toward traditional Russian spiritual and moral values. The object of study is the spiritual and moral culture of Russia's peoples throughout history and in the contemporary era, while the subject of philosophical reflection is the value-based foundations for the formation and development of an all-Russian civic identity and the unified cultural space of Russian civilization.

¹ *Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 from 09.11.2022 "On approving the Fundamentals of State Policy to Preserve and Strengthen Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values"*, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502> (accessed July 21, 2025). (in Russ.).

When undertaking a conceptual analysis of this topic, several key issues must be addressed. First and foremost, even within academic discourse, there is often a conflation of the terms *tradition* and *traditional values*. This problem frequently goes unnoticed, yet such confusion contributes to more visible and practically significant challenges in systematically understanding the essence, hierarchy, and interrelations among various “traditional Russian spiritual and moral values”.

For instance, it is evident that Russia – understood broadly in accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Section 67.1 of the Russian Constitution – underwent two revolutions in the 20th century, each entailing radical changes in its political system and ideological foundations. However, to what extent is it accurate to claim that “the 20th century saw the collapse of old value orders and the emergence of new ones on our grounds” (Shaveko 2024: 67)? Undoubtedly, the Communist regime sharply opposed the old order of the Russian Empire, while post-Soviet democratic Russia, despite its legal continuity with the USSR, was largely built on a rhetoric of rejecting Soviet legacies. State-mandated historical narratives, contemporary assessments, and social norms underwent dramatic shifts throughout the 20th century – not only during these two revolutions but also across the Soviet era. Yet the critical question remains: *How deeply and how quickly did societal value orientations actually change?*

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that “Soviet upbringing and education often cultivated either distinctly bourgeois traits or virtues indifferent to high ideals” (Martyanov, Fishman 2020: 143). Continuity with pre-revolutionary Russia can be traced in the foundational principles of the Soviet state, and even in post-Soviet Russia, “the reproduction of stable social practices and interaction mechanisms has shaped the system’s functioning far more than structural reforms, leadership changes, or state programs” (Ilchenko 2011: 60-61). A shift in the state’s ideological direction does not automatically alter the value systems of the populace. Even profound transformations in lifestyle do not necessarily signify an abandonment of prior existential frameworks. Changes in value consciousness do occur, but they rarely synchronize with shifts in social practices or even folk traditions.

The meaning of the term *tradition* depends on the context and purpose of its usage, but in any case, it denotes a specific form

of social life characterized by the reproduction of cultural patterns – the deliberate and recurrent enactment of certain practices. The semantic range of this concept extends from “regularly performed activities” (within families, communities, or institutions) to sociocultural scripts and stereotypes. Regardless of the specific interpretation, *tradition* refers to something empirically observable – a recurring, socially embedded form of organized activity.

Values, however, possess a different ontological status. When the term *values* is used with theoretical rigor, it pertains exclusively to the transcendental dimension of existence. One need not fully endorse Neo-Kantian skepticism toward *things-in-themselves*, yet it must be acknowledged that the conventional dichotomy of objective versus subjective does not hold in this domain. Values represent both a mode of human self-actualization within being and a structuring principle of the cultural space in which this self-actualization unfolds – and which it simultaneously shapes. Frequently, these two aspects are conceived separately: on one hand, there is a pre-existing cultural framework that serves as the predetermined field for human agency; on the other, there is the act of self-realization itself, whose strategy is determined by free choice – albeit within the constraints of that given field. However, the axiological model of culture developed by Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert clarifies that no “objectively predetermined cultural field” exists as such. Rather, cultural space is constituted precisely through *value-reference* (ger. *Wertbeziehung*) – an active process of ascribing meaning and significance.

The conjunction of the *objective* and *subjective* dimensions of human existence in culture – or more precisely, their unified foundation – is secured by the category of *ought* (ger. *Sollen*). Beyond desires and possibilities, beyond pleasure and displeasure (which often monopolize attention), human beings possess an awareness of duty. Moreover, upon serious reflection, one must agree with Kant that this awareness occupies a central place in human life: “Man lives only out of a sense of duty, not because he finds any pleasure in life” (Kant 1965: 415). Similarly, Wilhelm Windelband observes: “The three fundamental philosophical sciences² reveal, across the three domains of mental life, an opposition everywhere between the

²Windelband means *logic, ethics and aesthetics*.

psychologically actual and the normative³, between the real and the ideal, between the temporally unfolding and that which possesses timeless validity. We see that our consciousness is subject to two legislations – neither fully reconcilable nor absolutely separable – between which there exists a necessary, inevitable, and inherent antagonism” (Windelband 2007: 303). The tension between “what is” (ger. *Sein*) and “what ought to be” (ger. *Sollen*) – or, in Windelband’s terms, between *norms* and *the laws of nature* – constitutes the core of human spiritual and mental life. The deepest characteristic of human existence is the assertion of the *ought* in opposition to *what is*.

Thus, phenomena that have always existed, continue to exist, and likely always will (such as various forms of evil) are declared *unjust* – stripped of their right to exist. Conversely, that which may never have been, certainly does not exist now, and may never be realized in reality (such as the complete triumph of good and love) is affirmed as “what ought to be” – not merely possessing the right to exist, but *obligated* to exist. This opposition between “what is” and the “ought” expressed in value systems reaches particularly sharp and unconventional formulations in Neo-Kantian value theory. Heinrich Rickert, for instance, asserts: “Not only is it impossible to understand cultural values as positive life-values, but culture must even be placed in a negative relation to life” (Rickert 1998: 410).

The criteria of what constitutes the “ought” are articulated at the social level in various ways – primarily through the moral consciousness of individuals and society, but also through social institutions such as the family, religious organizations (referred to here as *churches* in the broad sense, encompassing diverse doctrines and forms of belief), and the state. In this context, it is necessary to clarify the significance of formally declaring certain values in state legislation – and particularly, of assigning them the status of traditional values.

Lawmaking serves as a fundamental mechanism for establishing the “ought” and rectifying “what is” at the societal level. Legal norms, of course, do not invent values; rather, they (1) reflect them to varying degrees and (2) provide support and protection for those values – both within public consciousness and in social practice.

³Windelband means the requirements of norms, *normativity*.

Typically, legal regulation fulfills this axiological function without explicitly proclaiming the values it upholds, instead operating implicitly on their basis. However, in certain cases – particularly when the state and society perceive a destructive threat to their foundational values – such a declaration becomes necessary. Labeling these upheld values as *traditional* serves to emphasize the need to preserve historical continuity and cultural identity within societal life. Conceptually, it would be more precise to speak not merely of “traditional values”, but rather of “traditional value coordinates of cultural space”, where *cultural space* is understood as “the domain of values that generate the content of a society’s spiritual and material culture” (Kasatkin 2017: 145). Equally important here is the systemic-conceptual approach to interpreting *cultural space*, as advanced by a number of scholars (Khilko, Gorelova 2023: 28-29).

It is within this framework that the subject of value consciousness in general – and traditional spiritual and moral values in particular – should be examined. Methodologically, it is crucial to note that values are not derived from “what is” but are instead anchored in “the ought” – the concepts, convictions, and ideals reflecting the proper order of being. By turning to the concept of *duty*, one can elucidate the essence, status, and interrelation of both universal human values and civilizational values. The foundation of universal values lies in the awareness and experience of moral duty in its truest sense. Significantly, in defining traditional values, the Fundamentals identify “moral precepts”⁴ as their genus (rather than simply “life principles” or “worldview orientations”). The core of traditional values – their universal essence – resides in human moral consciousness, in the sense of *duty* perceived as the “voice of conscience”.

Indeed, this moral consciousness is shared across all humanity. Differences in customs, national mentalities, and social norms do not negate this underlying moral unity. Even “amid the global civilizational and values crisis leading to the loss of traditional spiritual and moral bearings”⁵ – this fundamental cohesion remains intact. However, the propagation of what is termed “a destructive ideology” (explicitly: “fostering of egoism, permissiveness and im-

⁴The Fundamentals, Section 4.

⁵The Fundamentals, Section 11.

morality, rejection of the ideals of patriotism, service to the Fatherland, the natural progression of life, the values of a strong family, marriage, raising multiple children, productive labour, and Russia's positive contribution to global history and culture, as well as the erosion of the traditional family through the promotion of non-traditional sexual identities"⁶) is paradoxically carried out under the banner of the very same – albeit perverted – absolute moral values. The higher the value, the more grotesque its distortion becomes. *Selfishness*, the first item listed and being a corruption of the true worth of the human person, inverts any moral value it touches, ultimately leading – through the assertion of self – to self-destruction.

Beyond universal values rooted in human moral consciousness, an essential role in culture belongs to civilizational values, which form the unique spiritual constitution of particular local cultures. These values are grounded in the awareness and experience of belonging to a people's historical existence and shared historical roots. It can be argued that within the values of a specific civilizational model, universal moral principles acquire cultural-historical substance and vitality.

Regarding the role of normative-legal activity in articulating, sustaining, and safeguarding such values, previous discussions have already touched upon this subject. In reference to Presidential Decree No. 809 (09.11.2022), the Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation, the Rector of St. Petersburg State University (Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences), and an Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at the same university have noted: "These Fundamentals are inherently linked to what may be termed an *absolute constitution*, one that defines the very existence of the core identity of Russian statehood and the multinational people of Russia" (Chuychenko et al. 2024: 161). To our knowledge, the term *absolute constitution* has not been used elsewhere and is likely an original conceptual innovation. The term carries significant theoretical potential: unlike the somewhat amorphous yet ostensibly universal notion of *natural law*, it expresses the unique spiritual foundations of a local civilization, endowing them with an absolute status – yet without any claim to imposing them upon others.

⁶The Fundamentals, Section 14.

When examining traditional Russian spiritual and moral values as an *absolute constitution* of Russia, it is essential to classify them into three primary categories: those pertaining to an individual's personal life-world, those guiding societal priorities, and those underpinning the foundations of statehood. Though this division is somewhat arbitrary, it serves to clarify the systemic interconnection of these values. The enumeration of traditional values in Section 5 of the Fundamentals illustrates this interdependence, though it does not facilitate a substantive understanding. The sequence begins with personal values, abruptly shifts to state values, reverts to personal, lists several societal values, returns once more to personal, shifts again to societal, and concludes with state values.

Section 5 opens with the enumeration of values such as “life, dignity, and human rights and freedoms”. While these principles are undoubtedly rooted in universal moral consciousness, they acquire substantive meaning only within the framework of a specific cultural tradition. The concept of *freedom* warrants particular attention – unlike *life*, *dignity*, and *rights*, it is frequently subject to ambiguous, even contradictory interpretations, sometimes leading to a complete misapprehension of its essence. Indeed, a distorted notion of *freedom* forms the basis of most manifestations of what is termed “destructive ideology”.

Assessing the notion of *freedom* within the context of Russian culture and its traditional value system requires addressing the accusations levied against Russia by Russophobic propaganda. A recurring theme in such rhetoric is the alleged “slave mentality” of the Russian people, purportedly evidenced by the despotism of historical figures like Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Joseph Stalin, as well as Russian statehood more broadly. However, as Nikolai Lossky observed regarding the character of the Russian people: “One of the reasons why an absolute monarchy – at times verging on despotism – emerged in Russia is that governing a people with anarchic tendencies is inherently difficult. Such a people imposes excessive demands on the state” (Lossky 2005: 106).

The argument here is not merely that strong authority was necessary to suppress anarchic impulses but, more importantly, that the power of the state in some way responds to the very nature of this distinctive Russian anarchism. Much has changed since Lossky wrote these words (mid-20th century), both in practi-

cal life and in the value systems of the Russian state and people. Yet these transformations have preserved the historical continuity of Russia's civilizational model, leaving its fundamental value orientations intact. In this regard, it is crucial to emphasize that statist values in general – and the principle of strong state authority in particular – are organically linked to the high appreciation of *spiritual freedom* upheld in Russian culture. Authentic freedom is realized through the acceptance of responsibility, and genuine freedom in its highest spiritual sense is founded upon fidelity to moral duty.

“High moral ideals” of humanism, mercy, and justice, as outlined in Section 5 of the Fundamentals, may rightfully be classified as universal values. However, in the Russian context, they possess a distinct historical foundation. Russian life and history present a complex tapestry – marked by both the sublime and the ordinary, joy and sorrow – yet this does not negate the fact that the ideal of *Holy Rus'* (rus. *Святая Русь*) shaped by Christian dispensations, served as one of the defining spiritual forces in the formation of Russian civilization. Admittedly, the lived reality of the people often fell far short of this ideal of holiness – a fact readily acknowledged by any honest scholar of Russian history. Yet the term *rupture*, which might instinctively come to mind here, would be imprecise. In truth, Russian life never experienced a complete abandonment of this ideal; it persisted as a guiding presence, even when motives starkly opposed to it prevailed.

This duality is poignantly captured in the canonical words of Dmitri Karamazov (these are not theoretical musings but rather a confession of a passionate heart – *author's note*): “I can't endure the thought that a man of lofty mind and heart begins with the ideal of the Madonna and ends with the ideal of Sodom. What's still more awful is that a man with the ideal of Sodom in his soul does not renounce the ideal of the Madonna, and his heart may be on fire with that ideal, genuinely on fire, just as in his days of youth and innocence. Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower”⁷. For the novel's protagonist, this coexistence within a single soul – of the highest ideals of purity and sanctity alongside the most depraved

⁷ Dostoyevsky F. *The Brothers Karamazov*, New York, The Lowell Press, 2009, p. 131.

inclinations, elevated to the status of an ideal – is unbearable. Yet it remains, first, an undeniable reality, and second, the very precondition for his eventual moral redemption.

It is essential to examine the juxtaposed values of *mercy* and *justice*, particularly clarifying the “Russian” understanding of justice. At its core, *justice* implies a correspondence between merit and retribution: what one deserves – whether reward or punishment, fair compensation for labor or humane treatment – one receives, neither more nor less. The ambiguity arises from the inherent difficulty in determining *merit* objectively, as assessments remain largely subjective. Law, as an institutional framework for social order, is conceptually rooted in the ideal of *justice*. Yet, the Russian people have traditionally maintained a cautious stance toward its legal implementation, as epitomized in their proverbs: “The law is like a shaft (a wagon’s pivoting beam – *translator’s note*) – it can be turned wherever one wishes” or “Where there is law (or lawyers), there is grievance”. Numerous Russian proverbs similarly emphasize *mercy*’s superiority over strict *justice*.

Nevertheless, the concept of *justice* holds profound significance in Russian culture – not in its legalistic interpretation, but rather as a moral and religiously infused notion of righteousness. The idea of *social truth* (rus. *социальная правда*) and the aspiration to structure society *according to truth* (rus. *по правде*) encapsulate the distinctively Russian conception of justice, one that remains inextricably linked with *mercy*.

The priority of *the spiritual* over *the material* is a traditional Russian value. Though this phrasing may sound like a slogan, it genuinely reflects the deep-seated value orientations of Russian civilization. Moreover, the primacy of *the spiritual* is not merely a foundational principle of Russia’s civilizational model but also a necessary condition for overcoming the *crisis of our age* – a concept articulated by Pitirim Sorokin as early as 1941 in his most widely published and translated book, which bore those very words in its title. Drawing on an unprecedentedly comprehensive sociological analysis from his earlier work *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Sorokin observes: “Sensate ethics and law have once again entered a blind alley. This alley marks their *finis* for the present epoch. Without a shift towards ideational ethics and law, without a new absolutization and universalization of the values, the cannot escape from

this bling alley” (Sorokin 1941: 165). In Sorokin’s terminology, “ideational ethics aims not at an increase of sensate happiness or and pleasures of this world but at the union with the Absolute, which is supersensory” (Sorokin 1941: 135). Similarly, “The ideational code of law is viewed as given by God or the Absolute. ... Its norms are regarded as the commandments of God. As such they become absolute – not to be set aside for any utilitarian or other considerations” (Sorokin 1941: 146). There is little reason to hope that contemporary Western civilization will revive the religious foundations of life or surmount the multifaceted crisis described by Sorokin. Whether the Non-West will share this unfortunate fate depends on how effectively it upholds its traditional values. One source of optimism is the fact that the West – in ideological and value-based terms – has never regarded Russia (let alone the Global East and Global South) as part of itself.

The primacy of spiritual values in contemporary Russian cultural discourse may be subject to debate, particularly at the level of empirically observable manifestations. Nevertheless, this priority has historically served as a formative factor in the development of Russian culture and society, rendering it a fundamental archetype of value – even in light of pronounced instantiations of the “crisis of our time”, as conceptualized by Pitirm Sorokin, within modern Russian culture and social practice. From a historical perspective, it may be asserted that the expansion of the Russian people across the vast territories of the Eurasian continent would not have been plausible without an enduring capacity to subordinate material prosperity to higher imperatives.

Russian civilization was agrarian – an exceptional circumstance considering that two-thirds of its territory lies within the permafrost zone⁸, while much of the remaining third falls under the classification of so-called high-risk agriculture. Only 14% of Russia’s landmass possesses the optimal thermal and hydrological conditions necessary for sustained agricultural productivity⁹. In medieval

⁸ *National Atlas of Russia. Permafrost*, available at: <https://national-atlas.ru/tom2/240-242.html> (accessed July 21, 2025). (in Russ.).

⁹ *National Atlas of Russia. Economy and economic development. Natural conditions of agricultural activity*, available at: <https://nationalatlas.ru/tom3/317.html> (accessed July 21, 2025). (in Russ.).

Rus', the proportion of potentially arable land was somewhat larger, though these areas were largely infertile and heavily forested. Admittedly, harsh living conditions alone do not inherently engender a spiritual disposition. However, it is precisely the presence of such a value-based orientation that rendered possible the cultivation and settlement of vast, otherwise inhospitable territories.

Owing to these geographic and historical circumstances, certain sociocultural values – such as *creative labor*, *collectivism*, *mutual aid*, and *mutual respect* – have gained particular resonance in the Russian mentality. It is difficult to determine whether these values emerged through the process of territorial expansion or whether preexisting value frameworks enabled the Russian people to initiate and sustain this expansion. Most likely, we must recognize a deep synergy between the historical imperative of settling Eurasia (from the Arctic Ocean to the Great Steppe) and the innate ethical structure of the Russian worldview.

Turning to state-centric values (categorization remains somewhat artificial, for sure), among them are those enumerated in Section 5 of the Fundamentals: “historical memory, the continuity of generations, the unity of Russia’s peoples.” These values serve as a bridge between the spiritual foundations of society and the spiritual foundations of the state. Importantly, the preservation and reinforcement of national unity – a traditional Russian spiritual and moral value – is sustained precisely through historical memory and generational continuity. The sociopolitical foundations of the Russian state derive from its inception as a *shared homeland* for diverse ethnic groups. The Russian people themselves, despite retaining a robust and enduring East Slavic core identity, historically emerged from a confluence of Slavic, Turkic, Finno-Ugric, Uralic, and other ethnicities. Remarkably, nearly all indigenous peoples within Russia’s historical territory have endured within its borders. The model of coexistence advanced by the Russian state might be summarized as: “integration into a unified political community while preserving national, linguistic, and cultural distinctiveness”. Forms of participation and degrees of involvement varied widely – spanning economic ties, state service, and even participation in irregular military units.

Collective service to the state stands as the most significant factor in shaping a pan-Russian national identity. The multiethnic Russian nation – as the foundation of both the Russian Empire

and the Soviet Union – was rooted in the values of patriotism, civic duty, service to the Fatherland, and responsibility for its destiny. While these principles resonate with universal ethical norms, they hold a uniquely pivotal place in Russian civilizational consciousness. As contemporary scholars note: “In Russia, the mutual service of state to people and people to state – coupled with a recognition of human freedom and spiritual dignity – has long been regarded as an essential precondition for state ideology” (Rozhkovsky, Boeva 2024: 225). Although historical reality has frequently diverged from this ideal, it has nonetheless served as a vital organizing principle within the framework of “Russian ideology”.

The Russian conception of *statehood* finds profound expression in the works of Ivan Ilyin, who thought that the state constituted the organized communion of individuals bound by spiritual solidarity – a solidarity affirmed not merely through reason but sustained by the force of patriotic devotion, sacrificial will, and courageous action (Ilyin 1996: 238). He further elaborated that a true and healthy state was founded precisely upon those spiritual principles of the human soul examined in this study, referencing prior chapters *On Faith, On Love, On Freedom, On Conscience, On Family, On Homeland*, and *On Nationalism* from his famous book *The Path of Spiritual Renewal*. Thus, the authentic notion of the state is inseparable from the spiritual life of both the individual and the nation. At its core, the Russian socio-political paradigm rests upon the principle of reciprocal obligation between those with power and the people. According to Ilyin, the state may demand service and sacrifice from its citizens, but it must itself serve and sacrifice in turn. (Ilyin 1996: 247).

The unique character of Russian patriotism is also defined by the duality of *Motherland* (rus. *Родина*) and *Fatherland* (rus. *Отечество*) concepts. *Motherland* is associated with the nurturing earth, representing the spiritual womb of human existence – the sacred soil in which the roots of life are embedded. In contrast, the *Fatherland*, as previously articulated through the lens of Ivan Ilyin, denotes the state in its spiritual dimension, understood as a reciprocal bond of service between authority and the people. Within Russian patriotism, the profound attachment to one’s native land and the sense of belonging to the collective ethos naturally coexist with an emphasis on spiritual freedom and personal devotion.

To conclude this concise inquiry, it bears reiterating that the challenge of conceptualizing a society's *value constitution* arises from the fact that such a constitution cannot be artificially devised, nor can it be directly extracted from empirical social reality. Values are neither mere products of subjective arbitrariness nor entities that exist in a concretely verifiable form within this reality. Rather, the system of values (or significances) serves as the fundamental condition for the very possibility of meaning in culture – indeed, for all cultural experience as such. Culture does not consist of empirical facts but of meanings generated through reference to values. Consequently, scholarly attention must focus precisely on this process of meaning-making within culture when conceptualizing the axiological foundations of a given cultural tradition – in this case, Russia's.

The underlying hypothesis of this study is that the universal foundation of value consciousness finds its concrete manifestation within the context of distinct, localized cultures. The analysis undertaken here affirms the intrinsic systemic unity of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, which are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the Russian people, the various ethnic groups that constitute Russia's political nation, and the historical development of Russian statehood.

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