

PUBLIC AND LEGAL SUPPORT OF RUSSIA'S CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY AS A DEFENSE AGAINST CIVILIZATIONAL AND VALUE-BASED NEO-FASCISM

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Article info

Received –

2025 September 07

Accepted –

2026 March 20

Available online –

2026 June 20

Keywords

Cultural sovereignty, national security, Russia, state-civilization, traditional spiritual and moral values, civilizational and value-based neo-fascism

The subject of the article is the legal regulation of Russia's cultural sovereignty in the context of the axiological content and systemic relationship between concepts and priorities of youth education.

The aim of the study is to confirm or disprove the hypothesis that the public-legal support of Russia's cultural sovereignty becomes a key defense mechanism, the effectiveness of which directly depends on the systemic coherence and conceptual clarity of axiological priorities enshrined in strategic planning documents and sectoral legislation. It is even important under the conditions of the transformation of classical fascism into civilizational and value-based neo-fascism that employs "soft power" methods and informational-psychological influence to erode national identity.

The methodology is contest and formal legal analysis of research papers and Russian legislation.

Main results and conclusions. The ideology of fascism transformed into civilizational and value-based neo-fascism. The response to its destructive informational and psychological impact was the strengthening of the trend in legal regulation to prioritize traditional spiritual and moral values. At the same time, there is a lack of clarity in the conceptual framework and systemic relationship between the priorities of cultural sovereignty in strategic planning documents and legislation. The necessity of adopting a federal law on culture, taking into account modern geopolitical challenges, is substantiated.

1. Introduction

Globalization, which had its positive impact on international cooperation of states in the 20th century, starting from the economy and including the humanitarian sphere, is increasingly showing its downside, especially after the collapse of the USSR and the US leadership that has been slipping in recent years. In the context of the formation of a new world order, the principle of equality of states in international relations and the very concept of sovereignty, "our Western democratic partners" are actively trying to make less legally strict [1, p. 12]. Formally, under the guise of liberal slogans of the struggle for democracy and the protection of human rights, in fact, in the new geopolitical conditions, ideologically and practically, it seems that they are modernizing fascism, without distorting, in our opinion, its essence. In turn, the Russian political leadership is focused, firstly, on the basic traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, and, secondly, on the values that are in dire need of solving domestic and foreign policy problems in the complex conditions of the present [2, p. 61]. In this context, the study of cultural sovereignty as a legal phenomenon is of particular importance, as evidenced by contemporary research in the fields of constitutional law and cultural policy [3-7].

In our perception, while classical fascism was based on the concepts of racial superiority and physical violence, modern neo-fascism¹ promotes the civilizational

superiority of "universal" Western values, aiming to destroy the all-Russian state and civil identity through the Westernization of Russian traditional spiritual and moral values, the denial of Russian identity, and the discrediting of the idea of serving the benefit of Russia. In this regard, we consider it extremely relevant to analyze the public legal support for Russia's cultural sovereignty as a response to the ideology of civilizational and value-based neo-fascism.

2. Theoretical basis: the transformation of fascism into civilizational and value-based neo-fascism

In the theoretical understanding of modern geopolitical processes, the analysis of the evolution of ideological constructs that legitimize foreign policy intervention and information and psychological expansion is of key importance. Classical fascism of the first half of the 20th century, as is well known, was based on the doctrines of racial superiority, territorial revanchism, and direct physical violence, including genocide. However, in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, an ideological transformation occurred under the influence of globalization processes, the collapse of the colonial system, and the formal establishment of the principle of equality of states in international law.

In our opinion, this transformation led to the emergence of a phenomenon that we define as civilizational and value-based neo-fascism, which, while maintaining its core essence (the desire to destroy or subjugate other sociocultural systems), has changed its tools and justifications. Instead of racial superiority, the superiority of "universal" Western values (liberal democracy, human rights in their individualistic interpretation, consumer society) is promoted as the only legitimate model of development. Instead of direct military aggression

¹ Here and further, the author's original terminology is used, which does not take into account the established generally accepted and lexicographically fixed meanings of words. Cf. the definition of the word "neo-fascism" recorded by the Explanatory Dictionary of the State Language of the

Russian Federation: "Socio-political and ideological trend is also defined there as "a political trend based on the ideology of associated with the justification and revival of fascism" the cult of a strong personality, leadership, aggressive chauvinism (https://ruslang.ru/sites/default/files/doc/normativnyje_slovari/tolkovyj_slovar_chast1_A-N.pdf), whereas Fascism (https://ruslang.ru/sites/default/files/doc/normativnyje_slovari/tolkovyj_slovar_chast2_O-Ja.pdf). – Notable ed.

(although it is not excluded), priority is given to "soft power" and "hybrid methods": informational and psychological influence, cultural expansion, support for destructive non-profit organizations, distortion of historical memory, discrediting of traditional spiritual and moral values [8, p. 500].

From a methodological point of view, neo-fascism in this interpretation is an ideological construct designed to justify interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states under the guise of "democratization," "human rights protection," or "humanitarian interventions." As V.E. Bagdasaryan and S.S. Sulakshin note, "modern fascism disguises itself as liberal values, using them as a weapon against national sovereignties" [9, p. 45]. Examples of such camouflage include NATO's operations in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as its policy of double standards in assessing events in the post-Soviet space.

In our opinion, Russia is a key target of civilizational and value-based neo-fascism as a state-civilization that has its own axiological system that differs from the Western liberal model. As S.A. Pilyak notes, cultural sovereignty is not just a sectoral concept, but a fundamental factor of national security that requires systematic legal consolidation [10, p. 220]. The goal of this destructive influence is to undermine cultural sovereignty by imposing alien values (such as the rejection of the family as a union between a man and a woman, the cultivation of self-centeredness instead of serving the Fatherland), discrediting Russia's historical role in defeating Nazism, and dividing interethnic unity². As emphasized in the strategic

planning documents of the Russian Federation, unfriendly actors use extremist and terrorist organizations, foreign agents, and fake information to achieve these goals. The recognition by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation in 2024 of the "Forum of Free States of Post-Russia"³ as a terrorist organization, which openly declares the goal of dividing Russia, is an empirical confirmation of the existence of this threat. We believe that it is necessary to adequately address the challenges and threats facing Russia's sovereignty and the unity of its multi-ethnic people [11]. Therefore, we view neo-fascism not as a metaphor but as a real ideology that requires appropriate legal and political countermeasures, with the primary focus on strengthening cultural sovereignty. In theoretical terms, this issue is similar to Habermas's concept of the "post-national constellation," which warned about the erosion of national sovereignty under the pressure of supranational actors [12, pp. 58-62].

3. The legal nature and consolidation of cultural sovereignty in Russia

In Russian regulatory legal acts there is no separately allocated definition of the concept of "state sovereignty". However, its legal meaning is revealed in many regulatory legal acts, including strategic planning documents and, of course, is determined by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which ensures the unity of the political and legal space of Russia, legitimizing and sanctioning all areas of state activity. In particular, the constitutional and legal status of Russia as a sovereign state is emphasized in the preamble of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, and further specified in Articles 3, 4, 5, 67, 79, and 79.1, among others. According to the meaning of the articles of

³ suvierienitiet-kak-osnova-natsionalnoi-biezopasnosti-rossii (accessed: 02.08.2025).

² See: Voronova O.E. Cultural Sovereignty as the Basis of Russia's National Security. History of the Russian Federation. URL: <https://history.ru/read/articles/kulturnyi->

³ The international organization, established in the form of a public movement, "Forum of Free States of Post-Russia," has been included by Rosfinmonitoring in the List of organizations and individuals with information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism. – Note by the editors.

the Basic Law of Russia, sovereignty as a basic legal feature of statehood belongs to the state as a whole, and not to the state authorities. Moreover, Part 1 of Article 3 emphasizes that the sovereignty belongs to the multinational people of the Russian Federation. Although the Constitution of the Russian Federation does not specifically define the concept of "cultural sovereignty," it can be said that the addition of Article 67.1 to the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the amendments made to Articles 68, 69, 71 (paragraph "e"), and 72 (part 1: paragraphs "d," "e," and "f. 1") have expanded and clarified the constitutional recognition of cultural sovereignty as an integral part of state sovereignty.

Today, when Russia is at the epicenter of geopolitical conflict, Cicero's statement that a nation is "a community bound by agreement on matters of law and common interests" [13, p. 71] becomes particularly relevant. Patriotism and the preservation of traditional spiritual and moral values have always been inherent in the Russian multinational and multi-religious people, uniting us in both good and difficult historical times. However, as the great Marcus Tullius said, the key factor that unites people and forms a nation as a whole is the shared understanding and agreement on rights and laws [14, p. 146]. Moreover, world and Russian history has repeatedly demonstrated that it is the agreement on legal matters that serves as the legal foundation for statehood. Therefore, it is natural that in Presidential Decree No. 858 of November 25, 2025, "On the State National Policy Strategy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2036,"⁴ in Section I, Part 5, in

order to clarify the legal definitions of our "multinational people" and "all-Russian civic identity" (civic consciousness), it is once again emphasized that civic unity is the foundation of the Russian nation, united by a common cultural (civilizational) code and the recognition of state sovereignty.

Of course, the defense, political, economic, technological, and scientific potential serve as the guarantee of state sovereignty and the basis for ensuring national interests. However, without preserving and developing traditional spiritual, moral, and cultural-historical values as the system-forming factors of cultural sovereignty, it is impossible to ensure national security in general and all its components, state sovereignty, and the further sustainable development of Russia [15, pp. 603-604]. As M.S. Arkannikova rightly summarizes, cultural sovereignty in modern conditions has become one of the key elements of national security, as it is in the value sphere that the long-term ability of a state to preserve and develop itself is formed [16, pp. 87, 96-97].

The sovereignty of Russia in the field of culture is referred to in Article 5 of the Fundamentals of the Russian Federation's Legislation on Culture, which establishes sovereignty in the field of culture in a narrow sense, as the independence of our country in implementing agreements and other acts in the field of culture that regulate relations with other states and international organizations. In general, it can be said that the Fundamentals of the Russian Federation's Legislation on Culture do not meet the current priorities of strategic planning documents. An analysis of the legislative gaps in this area reveals the need for comprehensive legal regulation of cultural sovereignty.

It should be noted that the concept of "cultural sovereignty" as a legal definition was first introduced only in 2023. By Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 808 dated December 24, 2014 (as amended dated July 17, 2025) "On the

⁴ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 858 dated November 25, 2025, "On the Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2036"..

approval of the Fundamentals of the State Cultural Policy"⁵ In a certain sense, the first edition of this decree from 2014 can be considered a forerunner of the axiological justification of the cultural sovereignty of the Russian people and state, in which culture was first elevated to the rank of national priorities, the most important factors, and guarantors of the harmonization of social relations, socio-economic development, and the preservation of Russia's territorial integrity [17, p. 137]. Additionally, in Section IV of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (pp. 84-93), it is clearly emphasized that strengthening cultural sovereignty (p. 93.7) is one of the objectives of ensuring national security.

According to the legal novelty, "cultural sovereignty" is a set of socio-cultural factors that allow a nation and a state to form their own identity, avoid both socio-psychological and cultural dependence on external influences, protect themselves from destructive ideological and informational influences, and preserve their historical memory and adhere to traditional Russian spiritual and moral values. It seems that it would be more logical to define cultural sovereignty not through the concept of "aggregate", but as a system of factors, since the founder of the general theory of systems, L. von Bertalanffy, showed that systems are characterized by such properties as emergence and the mutual influence of all parts of the whole on each other [18].

An interesting point is that the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 229 dated March 31, 2023 "On Approval of

the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" emphasizes the national interests and strategic goals of Russia in the foreign policy sphere. On the other hand, for the first time, Article 4 legislatively establishes Russia's position in the world as a unique state-civilization that forms the cultural and civilizational community of the Russian world and carries out a historical and unique mission to build a multipolar international order. Among the national interests of the Russian Federation in the foreign policy sphere, Article 15, paragraph 8, consistently emphasizes the need to strengthen traditional spiritual and moral values and preserve the cultural and historical heritage of our multinational people, which is the foundation of cultural sovereignty. As S.Yu. Panteleev rightly notes, "Russia is neither Europe nor Asia, but a special self-sufficient world that contains elements of both, forming a unique Russian civilization that unites different nations and cultures on the basis of Russia" [19, p. 8].

Presidential Decree No. 809 of November 9, 2022 establishes the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values, which are an integral part of the national priority "Protection of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values, Culture, and Historical Memory." This strategic document is also recognized as a key element of the national security system of the Russian Federation and represents a logical continuation and refinement of the provisions outlined in Presidential Decree No. 400 of July 2, 2021 "On the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation." The Strategy, in particular, in Article 91, lists 17 basic spiritual and moral values of Russia, emphasizing their fundamental importance for national identity and cultural sovereignty. According to the Strategy, threats to national security and the country's interests primarily involve attacks on cultural heritage, including attempts to destroy traditional Russian values and historical memory.

⁵ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 808 dated December 24, 2014, "On Approval of the Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy" (as amended and supplemented).

It is particularly important to note that the 2020 amendments to the Russian Constitution, in Article 67.1, paragraph 3, emphasize the importance of protecting historical truth, while Article 67.1, paragraph 2, highlights the significance of faith in God among our traditional values, which has played a crucial role in preserving the continuity and historical unity of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Russian state throughout our more than thousand-year history. Article 6 of Presidential Decree No. 809 of November 9, 2022, "On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values," once again emphasizes the "significant influence of all religious denominations and the special role of Orthodoxy in shaping Russian traditional values that are common to both believers and non-believers." Another example of the requirement to treat religions with respect, which is an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of Russia, is the amendment to Article 3 of the Federal Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations in 2025. The new paragraph 6.1 of Article 3 establishes the protection of images and symbols of traditional Russian religions from distortion in any way of reproduction, taking into account the historical period.

Russia is a secular state, but the aggressive attacks on the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine, the Baltic states, and other countries are not just a violation of the rights of Russian compatriots living abroad, but, from our point of view, a manifestation of Western neo-fascism aimed at discrediting traditional religions in Russia. An important milestone in the protection of traditional religious

denominations was the recognition by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation of the International Satanism Movement as an extremist organization on July 23, 2025⁶, and the prohibition of its activities in Russia.

In the new geopolitical conditions, the results of surveys conducted in 2023-2025. The VTsIOM Analytical Center confirms that the overwhelming number of Russians express a high degree of agreement with the value-normative framework of the basic spiritual and moral values listed in the legislative and regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation. In particular, the survey of July 8, 2025 on the values of Russians confirmed that the key traditional value for all generations is a strong family – as a union of men and women⁷. As a confirmation of the importance of family values, we can also mention the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 15, 2025, No. 615-r, "On the Strategy for Implementing Family and Demographic Policy and Supporting Large Families in the Russian Federation"⁸. Against this backdrop, countries that have been declared unfriendly are trying, as we see, to unreasonably accuse Russia of violating human rights and freedoms, restricting democracy, and criticizing the ban on LGBT propaganda and involvement in the LGBT⁹ movement, which is

⁶ The International Satanism Movement (International Satanist Movement) is included in the List of organizations and individuals with information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism. – Note by the editor.

⁷ Survey on the Values of Russians, July 8, 2025. VTsIOM Analytical Center. URL: <https://wcim.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/tradicionnye-cennosti-ozhidanie-i-realnost> (accessed on August 31, 2025).

⁸ Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 615-r dated March 15, 2025 "On Approval of the Action Strategy for Implementing Family and Demographic Policy and Supporting Large Families in the Russian Federation until 2036" // SPS ConsultantPlus.

⁹ The International LGBT Public Movement and its structural units have been included by Rosfinmonitoring in the List of organizations and individuals in respect of whom there is information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism. – Note. ed.

recognized as extremist under the laws of the Russian Federation. Although, in fact, by denying traditional Russian values, they are trying to undermine the cultural sovereignty of the Russian Federation.

According to VTsIOM surveys, the second place among the values of Russians is occupied by patriotic attitudes: love for the Motherland, historical memory, and the unity of the peoples. Patriotism is the foundation of the sovereignty and spiritual and moral unity of the Russian people. Today, it is especially important that patriotism is not only a political principle, but also a social sense of personal responsibility for the fate of the Fatherland and a value for all Russians, regardless of their nationality. Or, as Peter the Great once said, "A Russian is someone who loves Russia and serves it."

On November 5, 2025, in his speech at a meeting of the Presidential Council for Interethnic Relations, Vladimir Putin supported the idea of Ataman of the All-Russian Cossack Society, Vladimir Kuznetsov, to declare 2026 as the Year of Unity of the Peoples of Russia¹⁰. The President of Russia emphasized that patriotism can serve as an alternative to the ideology of the USSR and as the foundation for Russia's state sovereignty as a civilization.

Undoubtedly, the upbringing of patriotism and humanistic values continues to be a key task both within the framework of family upbringing and in the education system. The Federal Law "On Education" emphasizes that the educational process should be aimed at the benefit of the individual, society, and the state, contributing

to the strengthening of cultural sovereignty.

Since 2020, the formation of spiritual and moral qualities in children has become an integral part of the educational process, replacing the previous model of providing "educational services."

In 2023, there was a significant terminological transformation: the concept of "spiritual and moral values" was replaced with "traditional Russian spiritual and moral values," which contributed to a clearer definition and strengthening of cultural foundations. In 2024, the Federal Law "On Youth Policy" was supplemented with provisions emphasizing the importance of patriotic and spiritual and moral education, highlighting their strategic significance for shaping the younger generation. However, despite the stated priority of patriotic education, there is a certain contradiction with the provisions of the National Security Strategy, which requires detailed analysis and resolution.

Spiritual and moral education is a complex process that encompasses a wide range of values that shape an individual's personality. In this context, patriotic education serves as an integral and important component, fostering a sense of responsibility, pride in one's country, and a willingness to defend it.

In the cyber-digital era, it is impossible not to mention the influence of mass culture products (movies, video games, etc.) and social networks on the preservation and development of value-civilizational attitudes and norms, which can have both positive and destructive effects on national cultural identity and sovereignty. The West has long been using such technologies to discredit our country. For example, paradoxically, some Western authors view the popular Russian cartoon "Masha and the Bear" as a tool of hybrid warfare. According to some publicists, the bear is associated with Russia and, being initially "evil and treacherous," is allegedly disguised as kind and gentle in the animated series, i.e., it acts as a means of non-military intervention [20].

¹⁰ Putin supported the proposal to declare 2026 the Year of Unity of the Peoples of Russia. URL: <https://ria.ru/20251105/putin-2053063622.html> (accessed on 09.12.2025).

Hundreds of Western films, which we consider to be propagandistic and Russophobic (for example, “The Red Sparrow,” “Five Days in August,” “The Shape of Water,” etc.), demonstrate that the Cold War did not end even with the collapse of the USSR. Western video games, such as The Sims, destroy the model of a normal Russian family in a few simple steps. It is obvious to us that the West, which has long and, it seems, unreasonably labeled Russia as an aggressor that does not share “democratic” values, and which recognizes and practices double standards of ideological interpretation of facts as the norm, is unable to think differently.

In the context of geopolitical tensions, the state has the right to restrict or prohibit any destructive activities by all actors (foreign and domestic) that conflict with Russia's spiritual, moral, cultural, and historical values as a civilizational state [21, p. 5]. This includes strengthening control over the dissemination of materials that discredit or promote the denial of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values through mass culture and the Internet. In this regard, the adoption of Federal Law No. 324-FZ of July 31, 2025, “On Amendments to Articles 10-5 and 10-6 of the Federal Law ‘On Information, Information Technologies, and Information Protection’ and to Articles 5 and 5-1 of the Federal Law ‘On State Support for the Cinema of the Russian Federation’,” which comes into force only on March 1, 2026, is relevant.

4. Conclusion

Thus, it can be stated that in the current conditions, fascism has transformed into neo-fascism – value-civilizational expansion of the West using “soft power”. Under the slogans of democracy, unfriendly countries seek to destroy traditional values and divide Russia [22, p. 17]. In response, the protection of

cultural sovereignty becomes particularly relevant. The most effective tool here is the state in unity with civil society. However, an analysis of the legislation reveals the terminological vagueness of the axiological foundations, which leads to inconsistencies in education and youth policy. A federal law on culture is necessary for systemic counteraction to Westernization, which establishes the conceptual framework and mechanisms for protecting cultural sovereignty [23].

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Chuksina V.V., Glazunova I.V. Public and legal support of Russia's cultural sovereignty as a defense against civilizational and value-based neo-fascism.

Pravoprimerenie = Law Enforcement Review, 2026, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 15–24. DOI: 10.52468/2542-1514.2026.10(2).15-24. (In Russ.).