## Artículo de investigación

# Features of the ideological mechanism of the modern Russian state

Особенности идеологического механизма государства современной России

Características del mecanismo ideológico del estado ruso moderno.

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## Abstract

Purpose of the study is to determine the range of ideological apparatuses used by the Russian state, the applied set of methods of ideological influence, as well as the features and causes of the ideological orientation of the ruling elite. The work analyses such ideological apparatus of the state as the mass media (newspapers, magazines, TV and radio channels); educational institutions (schools, state educational institutions of higher and secondary vocational education); political parties, public associations, trade unions; film industry (producing and distributing television and film), as well as people of art (filmmakers, writers, artists); church; press and PR services. The features of their relationship with the ruling establishment and the type and content of the used ideological influence are determined. For example, the majority of the media belongs to the media holdings, which in turn are controlled by the economic and political establishment (the state). In addition, there are examples of ideological influence in textbooks, films, public actions. It also briefly describes the "trolling"

### Аннотация

особенности Пель изучить статьи идеологического механизма современного российского государства. Проанализированы такие идеологические аппараты государства как средства массовой информации (газеты, журналы, теле- и радио-каналы); учебные заведения (школы, государственные образовательные учреждения высшего и среднего профессионального образования); политические общественные партии, объединения, профессиональные союзы; организации киноиндустрии (производящие и распространяющие теле- и кинофильмы), а также деятели искусств (кинорежиссеры, писатели, художники); церковь; пресс- и PRслужбы, информационные отделы государственных органов, использующие Интернет для достижения целей пропаганды, также специально созданные «троллинговые» организации. Определены особенности ИХ взаимоотношений правящей элитой, ТИП И содержание используемого идеологического воздействия.

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organizations ("troll factories"), whose activities are aimed at the consciousness of the Internet users. The ruling establishment actively and effectively uses all the possibilities of the ideological apparatus in their class interests. The reason for the lack of a clear and non-vague ideology (like the Soviet one) is, first, the social heterogeneity of the ruling establishment, which also gives rise to different ideological positions, and, second, the opposite situation would only aggravate the legitimacy crisis of the existing political regime. None of the worldview models of the modern ideological spectrum is able to ensure the legitimacy of the ruling establishment, on the one hand, and to eliminate the discrepancies between the declared and social practices, on the other hand.

Keywords: Ideology, ideological mechanism, ideological apparatus of the state, the ruling elite. К примеру, большинство средств массовой информации принадлежит медахолдингам, которые в свою очередь подконтрольны экономической и политической (государству). Или же между Русской православной церковью и правящей элитой, по-всей видимости, заключено налоговые соглашение: В обмен на преференции и субсидии церковь идейно обслуживает интересы элиты. Помимо указанного приведены примеры идеологического воздействия в учебниках, кинофильмах и при помощи публичных действий. Также кратко описана деятельность «троллинговые» организации («фабрики троллей»), чья деятельность направлена на сознание интренетпользователей. На основе проведенного исследования сделаны несколько выводов: властвующая элита активно и эффективно использует все возможности идеологического аппарата в своих классовых интересах; причина отсутствия четкой и не расплывчатой идеологии (по типу советской), во-первых, в социальной неоднородности правящей элиты, что также порождает несовпадающие идеологические позиции, а, во-вторых, обратное только усугубило бы кризис легитимности существующего политического режима, ведь ни одна из мировоззренческих моделей современного идеологического спектра не в состоянии, с одной стороны, обеспечить легитимность правящей элиты, а с другой - устранить рассогласования между декларируемым и социальной практикой.

Ключевые слова: илеология. идеологический механизм, идеологические аппараты государства, правящая элита.

### Resumen

El objetivo del estudio es determinar la gama de aparatos ideológicos utilizados por el estado ruso, el conjunto de métodos de influencia ideológica aplicados, así como las características y causas de la orientación ideológica de la élite gobernante. El trabajo analiza aparatos ideológicos del estado como los medios de comunicación (periódicos, revistas, canales de televisión y radio); instituciones educativas (escuelas, instituciones educativas estatales de educación profesional superior y secundaria); partidos políticos, asociaciones públicas, sindicatos; industria cinematográfica (producción y distribución de televisión y cine), así como personas de arte (cineastas, escritores, artistas); Iglesia; Servicios de prensa y relaciones públicas. Se determinan las características de su relación con el establecimiento gobernante y el tipo y contenido de la influencia ideológica utilizada. Por ejemplo, la mayoría de los medios pertenecen a los medios de comunicación, que a su vez están controlados por el establecimiento económico y político (el estado). Además, hay ejemplos de influencia ideológica en libros de texto, películas, acciones públicas. También describe brevemente las organizaciones de "trolling" ("fábricas de trolls"), cuyas actividades están dirigidas a la conciencia de los usuarios de Internet. El establecimiento gobernante utiliza activa y efectivamente todas las posibilidades del aparato ideológico en sus intereses de clase. La razón de la falta

de una ideología clara y no vaga (como la soviética) es, en primer lugar, la heterogeneidad social del establecimiento gobernante, que también da lugar a diferentes posiciones ideológicas, y, en segundo lugar, la situación opuesta solo agravaría La crisis de legitimidad del régimen político existente. Ninguno de los modelos de visión del mundo del espectro ideológico moderno es capaz de garantizar la legitimidad del establecimiento gobernante, por un lado, y eliminar las discrepancias entre las prácticas declaradas y sociales, por otro lado.

Palabras clave: Ideología, mecanismo ideológico, aparato ideológico del estado, la élite gobernante.

## Introduction

Due to the change in the socio-economic structure in the Russian Federation about 30 years ago and the constitutional legal prohibition of the state and mandatory ideology, currently, there is a widespread opinion (in the scientific community as well) about the absence or inferiority of the state (national) ideology and the ideological mechanism of the modern Russian state. As a result, it is possible to hear calls for the development of a national ideology, including from the highest-level state leaders (Minin, 2013), as well as the exact opposite – the national ideology has already been formed and nothing requires to be developed (for example, Messages of the President of the Russian Federation (Message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly, 1999; Message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly, 2000; Message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly, 2013). Without deepening into political and social reasons for such ambivalence, the following can be pointed out. First, this most likely reveals the ideological crisis of the ruling establishment, which cannot find a justification for the legitimacy of the existing political regime. Second, this gives rise to a very cautious attitude to the research of this topic, presuming its ideological and political engagement (in some cases this is true) and scientific frivolity.

As a result, the study of the ideological mechanism of the Russian state did not develop into a scientific research trend of sociology, political science, and public administration. We do not think that this topic is not being studied at all, but the consistency and degree of scientific elaboration in comparison with other problems of modern social science is unsatisfying.

In this regard, this work is an attempt to analyze, generalize and systematize the works devoted to the study of the elements of the state's ideological apparatus and a set of methods of ideological influence used by the ruling Russian elite. This generalization, as it seems to the

authors, will make it possible to determine the features and causes of the ideological orientation of the modern ruling elite of the Russian Federation.

In foreign science, the study of the ideological mechanism of the state was associated with neo-Marxism. In particular,

L. Althusser in his most famous work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (Althusser, 2011) identified two types of state apparatus: repressive and ideological (ISA). He attributed to the latter several of its types: the religious ISA, the school ISA, the family ISA, etc.

However, to a greater extent, foreign research interest was focused on the study of the relationship between ideology and social structure. Often, the ideological mechanism of the state in foreign countries was investigated to the extent that it concerned the ruling establishment and its use of ideology in the course of social interaction. For example, it was stated that the ruling classes sought to create ideologies that justified their power over the working people, and thus facilitated the management process. Even ideologies advocating "human relations" - friendly relations with workers, the need to consider their complaints, improve working conditions essentially express a veiled desire to win their support in order to increase productivity and strengthen the power over them (Bendix, 1974). In addition, the works of Mannheim K. (1994), Merton R.K. (1992a; 1992b; Kozyrev, et al. 2016) and Bourdieu P. (2018; 1985) can be mentioned as examples.

In Russian science, one can conditionally identify two areas of study of the ideological sphere and the ideological mechanism of the state. The first aims to develop any functionally loaded ideological concept, designated as national (or state) ideology, which should be able to solve many social problems of Russian reality



in general and government in particular (Volkov, 2000; Zinoviev, 2003; Kuznetsov, 2005).

Within this direction, it is also worth considering the study of scientists who criticize modern Russian ideology, which is used in the process of public administration, reproaching it with the fact that it prevents effective public administration and the acquisition of legitimacy of state power (Kulakova, & Kuznetsov, 2014).

Regarding the second direction, there are the works of scientists and publicists who consider ideology as an instrument of political struggle and state enforcement. Here, efforts are focused on disavowing of political subject texts (leaders of parties, groups and movements; persons holding public office, etc.), analyzing the suggestive and constructive properties of ideology, as well as identifying contradictions between state ideological practices and the current state of the spiritual sphere of Russian society (Kara-Murza, 2007; Martyanov, 2007; Martyanov, et al. 2016; Martyanov, 2005).

Studies devoted to the ideological mechanism of the Russian state are relatively rare. In this regard, the work "The scientific theory of ideology and the concept of the ideological apparatus of the state" by S.N. Nekrasov can be noted (Nekrasov, 2017). However, this study did not go beyond the theoretical review and did not receive a detailed elaboration.

### Methods

The research method is based on the following provisions.

First, any social group that seizes state power (even if it comes as a result of legitimate elections) seeks to impose its ideology on the others, using all the possibilities of the state mechanism. Legal, political, economic, and other restrictions do not eliminate this trend, but only drive it into a certain framework or (and) change the forms of manifestation.

Second, the achievement of absolute success, when the entire population of the country or the overwhelming majority of it shares the ideology of the ruling establishment in the long term, is impossible. The reverse can take place (with a number of reservations) only in relatively short periods of history with a low level of social stratification, developed as a result of large-scale collectivization. events (civil war. industrialization, etc.).

As a result, the contradiction between the imposed official ideology (used during state management) and the current state of the spiritual sphere of the citizens cannot be eliminated, just as social differentiation cannot be eliminated. These contradictions can only be smoothed.

In this regard, the main hypothesis of the study is that it is completely senseless to seek out some flaws in the official ideology that supposedly interfere with the normal functioning of the mechanism of the state. Any ideology can be used in the interests of the ruling establishment to an extent that circumstances permit. One can only raise the question of how effectively the ideological mechanism is used to protect class interests. This is the angle from which the features of the ideological mechanism of modern Russia state will be considered.

### Results and discussion

The ideological mechanism of the state in this work is understood as the ensemble of organizations and individuals implementing ideological influence on human behavior, as well as methods and tools of this influence used in the interests of social groups that have seized state power.

It is absolutely not necessary that the ideological impact is declared and fixed in legal acts as the goal of the organization's functioning. For example, the functionality of educational institutions, in accordance with the Federal Law of Education in the Russian Federation (Federal Law N 273-FZ, 2012), includes the mentoring of students. In contrast, the purpose of the media, mentioned in the relevant law (RF Law N 2124-1, 1991), is the dissemination of mass information. The impact exerted in this regard is not mentioned in this act as their goals, objectives or functions.

Based on the developments of Althusser (Althusser, 2011), the elements of the ideological apparatus of the Russian state, described here, include mass media (newspapers, magazines, television and radio channels); educational (schools, institutions state educational institutions of higher and secondary vocational education); political parties, public associations, trade unions; film industry organizations (producing and distributing television and film), as well as people of art (filmmakers, writers, artists); church; press and PR services, information departments of state bodies using the Internet to achieve propaganda goals, as well as specially created "trolling" organizations; etc.

It should not be confusing that many of these organizations are not state-owned or even positioned as independent of the state. They are such in their functions and consequences of their actions. The ruling establishment through, for example, the economic mechanism, can lead to submissiveness of almost any of the organizations described. For particularly independent, one can apply legal (or not) violence.

It should be noted that enforcement is not always presented. Many people support the ruling establishment because the state regime created by the latter allows them to take advantage that would not be available under other conditions.

In particular, such a mutually beneficial symbiosis of the state represented by the ruling establishment and non-governmental organizations can be found in the recent history of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which will be discussed below.

#### Mass media

The main feature of the media market in modern Russia is that the majority of the media belongs to the media holdings, which in turn are controlled by the economic and political establishment (the state). The activities of the media led by the economic establishment are aimed at reproducing the existing political and social relations. Therefore, even though there are conflicts between them, they do not lead to significant social metamorphosis and, accordingly, can be considered as the ideological state apparatus ("Who owns the media in Russia: leading holdings", 2014).

The main method the mass media is influencing a person is a conviction based on a person's understanding of the information received. However, incorrect methods from the point of view of rational thinking, are often used and are usually called methods of manipulating mass consciousness. They are based on infusion, on the uncritical perception of reality by an individual.

The main material, which the media manipulate, is information, or rather, its management. The methods of manipulation are investigated quite fully (Kara-Murza, 2007; Shvidunova, 2013) and there is no need to repeat them.

However, it should be noted that, according to a number of researchers, the media provide a relatively homogeneous communication environment, i.e. performing the role played by the church in medieval Europe (Martyanov, 2016). At the same time, the ideological promises of the Russian media cannot be called identical. There is a very large variety in interpretations and representations of certain events (Mokhireva, 2016). Most likely, this is not due to the diversity of needs and tastes of the recipients, but to the heterogeneity of political establishment, the interests of different groups of which often contradict each other and the political situation.

### **Educational institutions**

The ideological impact on a person is most effective at the stage of their socialization, intellectual and emotional maturation. A special position is occupied by primary and secondary schools, which are almost the first link in the process of educating citizens by the state.

In addition, the school is a social institution, which cannot be excluded for the majority of the Russian population in the current conditions. In what other cases can an ideological impact on a person be carried out for at least four hours a day five times a week (excluding additional paid classes) for eleven years (Nekrasov, 2017)?!

For the purpose of ideological influence, such disciplines as history, literature and social studies with one or another ideological "line" are mainly used. An example is a textbook on the national history by S.V. Alekseev, D.M. Volodikhin and G.A. Eliseev (Alekseev et al., 2006). The fact that the textbook is recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation can imply the realization of an ideological order by the ruling establishment (or its part) in this manual. S. Solovyov notes in it the following ideological messages.

"It can be stated that the monarchical-nationalist version of history took a prominent place in school textbooks... The authors agreed on the appearance of the Slavic linguistic community in the 3rd century BC, the Slavs, in their opinion, were known to the ancient Greeks. Pretentious and very far from being scientific, the story about the formation of "Russian civilization" with the obligatory branding of its opponents – from the heresy of the Judaizers by Peter I ("the one that broke one of the walls of the Russian house"), Novikov, Radishchev and the Decembrists – to the heretic Lev Tolstoy. The events of January 9, 1905, are depicted as "a clash of (workers) with troops and police," and not the shooting of a peaceful demonstration. In addition, the entire



Soviet period is called "inter-civilization gap", "the Red Empire, godless and devoid of healthy roots" (Solovyov, 2009).

It should be noted that most of the other history textbooks turned out to be much less ideologically biased than the given example. Apparently, the monarchical-nationalist interpretation of history is not absolutely dominant among the ruling establishment.

The limited nature of the mass media and educational institutions is that they practically do not involve people in mass political actions. They become only spectators of the political performance and consumers of propaganda. These restrictions are overcome by political parties, public associations, trade unions.

In modern Russia, the functions of the ideological state apparatus are carried out by the political party "United Russia", the All-Russian youth public political movement "Nashi", the All-Russian social-political youth organization "Molodya gvardiya Edinoy Rossii", the public movement "Vserossiysky narodny front" and others.

These public associations prompt citizens to participate in governmental elections, marches, pickets, protests and demonstrations and other events.

So in 2007, representatives of the "Nashi" held a six-day rally at the Estonian Embassy in Moscow, protesting against the decision of the Estonian authorities to remove the Bronze Soldier from the center of Tallinn ("Nashi" tried to abort a press conference, 2017), and also tried to abort a press conference of the Estonian Ambassador to Russia, thereby, among other things, they additionally attracted the attention of the media.

An example of an artist, particularly a filmmaker, who is far from having neutral ideological positions and as a result acting as an ideological agent of the state is V.I. Khotinenko. The TVseries "Smert Imperii" [The Death of the Empire] filmed by Khotinenko (he was the director and one of the screenwriters) in 2005 is a technically professional work, but at the same time, this work can but be considered ideologically biased. The Bolsheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, and their supporters are presented exclusively in a negative light, as spies of the German general staff, vile, disgusting subjects, trash and boors ("Do not chop, man, do not chop", 2005). In contrast to them, counterintelligence officers of the Russian Empire, and then of the Russian Republic, are shown only as positive heroes selflessly devoted to serving their homeland in its defense against the encroachments of internal and external enemies.

Such a "monarchical-sovereign" line is one of the mainstream the ideological of establishment, which, apparently, was adopted by the company "TRITE", engaged in the production of such films and television films. It should be said that he, apparently, is not absolutely dominant. Another film "Nezhny Vozrast" [Tender Age] (directed by S. Solovyov), produced by the same company, is endowed with several other ideological connotations. Here, there is a latent nostalgia for Soviet society, the disappearance of which immediately gives rise to meanness, selfishness, cruelty, hate.

#### Church

As a rule, ministers of worship of any religion seek to find support from the state. Otherwise, even having a broad social base, it does not organizationally extend beyond the sect with a very short historical period of existence. If a creed is a danger to the existing political regime, then it becomes persecuted. In most cases, sectarian movement can be curbed or completely destroyed. Some are happy to avoid such a finale, but only if they find themselves in some sense the state church with corresponding changes in the formula of the faith.

The price of state support for the church is the incorporation into the mechanism of the state as one of the elements of the ideological apparatus. In modern Russia, this element is the ROC. It has been said a lot about the preferences granted to it by the state. We can mention the tax benefits: exemption from land tax on land with buildings for religious and charitable purposes; exemption from property tax used for religious activities; exemption from income tax on income received in connection with the performance of religious rites and ceremonies and from the sale of religious literature and religious objects.

According to the RBK publishing house, in 2014, the income of the ROC that was not subject to income tax amounted to 5.6 billion rubles. In addition to this, according to the same publication, in 2012-2015, the ROC and its related structures received at least 14 billion rubles from the state budget and state organizations. The ROC also does not shy away from commercial activities. The interests of the ROC include medicine, jewelry, renting conference rooms, as well as agriculture and the funeral services market (Reyter et al., 2016).

The ruling establishment does not remain in debt and actively uses the doctrines of the ROC for political purposes, i.e. ideological services are being provided by the church to the interests of state power. Orthodoxy itself (naturally, in its respective interpretation) becomes the ideological basis of the state (Zhdanova, 2011).

According to some researchers, the essence of the "Orthodox political ideology", which to some extent is used by the modern Russian ruling establishment, has the following features:

- "Holy Russia" and "Orthodox people"
   (the first is understood as the higher concentration of good, truth, and significance as a value system, as the spiritual dominant over the material; the second emphasizes the fate of Russia, the "Russian civilization", the Orthodox-oriented God-bearing people, etc.; accordingly, the ROC claims the leading role among other traditional denominations in Russia);
- The sovereign religious messianism, claims for the role of arbiter in the dialogue of civilizations (when the culturological interpretation of the term "civilization" is replaced by a political and legal one);
- 3) The use of the "image of the enemy" in the interests of strengthening the position of the ROC (as such, on the basis of the binary approach, the images of communists, liberals, Americans, sectarians, ecumenists, etc.) are used according to the situation;
- 4) The substitution of the national by the Orthodox, the introduction of the complex of "Orthodox patriotism" (identification of patriotism with the "religion of the majority, the extension of the idea of "Orthodox patriotism" to the sphere of existence of all Orthodox peoples);
- 5) Anti-Western attitude, a critical attitude towards globalization (it is argued that Orthodox civilization must protect its identity from the expansion of the secularized liberal West);
- 6) Anti-liberalism and anti-democracy;
- Religious limitations in understanding human values, human rights, and freedoms;

8) The "symphony" of the ROC and the state seems to be the ideal form of church-state relations (Osmachko, 2014).

With the appearance of such mass media as the Internet, the list of ideological devices and state agents should be supplemented with all kinds of press and PR services, information departments of state bodies charged with the ideological support of the latter in the global network. The created "trolling" organizations or organized groups of the Internet users are to be attributed to this category of the ISA.

A feature of political Internet communication is that a user on the Internet can be a source of propaganda information for the majority. The propaganda effect is carried out according to the viral principle at the level of horizontal dissemination of information via Internet communication channels from user to user, in contrast to the classical vertical translation schemes of ideological content (Volodenkov, 2016).

An example of such an ideological impact is the activities of the Agency of Internet Research. The media associate the organization with the Russian billionaire Y.V. Prigozhin, who has the nickname "Putin's Cook" (Yakoreva, 2017). The duties of the employees of the Agency of Internet Research include writing posts, comments on articles, etc. of a certain ideological orientation (Garmazhapova, 2013). The main topics are the support of the current government, criticism of the opposition (especially liberal), patriotism, a characteristic positive view of the Soviet period and others (Polyanskaya, 2003).

# Conclusion

The analysis performed confirms the hypothesis that the ideological orientation of the ruling establishment is utilitarian. It is actively maneuvering in the ideological field, not disdaining an alliance with the church or Internet trolling. The effectiveness of this approach, in our opinion, in modern Russian conditions is very high.

However, it is hardly appropriate to explain ideological relativism and utilitarianism solely by the conspiracy of the Russian ruling establishment. It seems that the current situation is influenced by the characteristics of the social structuring of modern Russia.



First, the establishment is not socially homogeneous. The political sphere (and, accordingly, ideological) is the scene of the clash of various elite groups with different interests and nonidentical social positions. In particular, among the higher bureaucracy, there are "power", "financial and economic" and "social" blocs (Kozyrev, 2017). In addition to this, one can single out the economic elite, which, undoubtedly, is connected with the political leadership, but is not identical to it. Under such conditions, ideological positions will also not completely coincide.

Second, imposing a clear and not vague ideology (like the Soviet one) would only aggravate the crisis of the legitimacy of the existing political regime. None of the ideological models of the modern ideological spectrum is able, on the one hand, to ensure the legitimacy of the ruling elite, and, on the other, to eliminate the discrepancies between the declared and social practices. Therefore, those in power have to constantly maneuver ideologically, symbolically hinting at continuity either with the Russian Empire or with the USSR, using innuendo, while flirting with nationalism, liberalism, and social democracy.

A real and public consensus about basic ideas and values is also possible only after a significant change in the social structure of modern Russia. However, current trends say that the social worlds of social classes not only do not converge but eventually diverge further and further, increasing both the social and the ideological distance.

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