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# The Crisis in Russian Cultural Management: Western Influences and the Formation of New Professional Identities in the 1990s–2000s

Sofia Tchouikina

The transition from state socialism to capitalism brought changes to the Russian cultural sector. Previously entirely sponsored and controlled by the patron state, the cultural organizations had to cope with dramatically reduced budgets. While the state remained the principal sponsor and patron of cultural organizations, the new actors—foreign foundations—provided additional possibilities of funding and introduced a new discourse on arts administration. The foreign concept of “cultural management” became an alternative to a Soviet-type “cultural bureaucracy” and found its partisans among the active part of arts administrators who effectively profited from foreign grants and scholarships and tried their best to integrate into the international community. They are now promoting cultural economy and innovation and are striving for further liberalization of the cultural sphere. But the organization of culture inherited from Soviet times persists. This article provides analyses of interviews with Russian cultural managers devoted to their professional trajectories in the 1990s and 2000s.

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## INTRODUCTION

The years between 1990 and 2000 in Russia were marked by a crisis of the cultural sphere. This crisis was multidimensional and concerned all aspects of cultural production and distribution—ideological, financial, structural, and social. The first to manifest itself was an ideological change. Since 1985, the loosening of Party control and the transition to democracy not only offered new possibilities for artistic expression, but they also brought about new challenges, for instance, higher expectations of visitors searching for interesting interpretations. Financial crisis, a consequence of the state's budgetary deficit, soon followed. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, privatization of the economy, and the devaluation of the ruble stimulated liberalization of the cultural sphere, while inflation and impoverishment of both the state budget and of state employees rose. In spite of multiple efforts to preserve cultural organizations from decline, since the mid-1990s they have lost the high level of prestige and comfortable status they previously enjoyed. The state's monopoly in cultural production gave way to a greater diversity of cultural organizations: commercial and noncommercial artistic structures, as well as foundations (Sorochkin 2001; Council of Europe 1997; Valade et al. 2005). A number of the newly-formed institutions had existed in the underground in the form of loose networks, but seized the occasion to legitimize their existence.

The post-Perestroika years were marked by spectacular upward and downward mobility through professional and social reconversion, by forced resignation and retirement. The instability of the economic situation forced the population to change professions and eventually to start a career that did not correspond to their initial education. The professional structure became quite weak and the boundaries of professional corps became easy to traverse. The sphere of culture was not an exception. Some new professions appeared at that time and began to form their own educational patterns and requirements. The profession *cultural manager* was one such novelty. Born from a crisis, it is at the time being in the process of institutionalization.

While other authors have studied the coping strategies of traditional cultural institutions in the 1990s by putting emphasis on their organizational specificity and by highlighting both structural change and continuity (Chekova 2004; Gaav and Potapova 1996; Levshina and Orlov 2000), my article is devoted to the individual trajectories of the cultural professionals who either occupy managerial positions or combine artistic work with coordinating activities inside institutions in the spheres of visual or performing arts. I'll highlight specifically the impact of foreign support on the acquisition of new professional skills and the reception of the foreign concept of *arts management* in Russia. This article argues that foreign influences laid the basis for the integration of new elements in the Russian cultural sphere and contributed to a formation of new professional identities.

The research is carried out in a constructivist perspective and is based on a variety of sources: problem-oriented interviews and biographical interviews with cultural professionals conducted between 1999–2007 in several Russian regions, as well as documents and Internet publications.<sup>1</sup> Analyzing narratives of cultural professionals about their life and work in the 1990s and 2000s, I lay the emphasis on their subjective perception of the current situation in the cultural sector and study social reality as it is “imagined” by the individuals concerned.<sup>2</sup>

## FOREIGN INFLUENCES AND FOREIGN SUPPORT OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

Late-Soviet patterns of employment in the cultural sector presupposed a foreseeable career, often within one institution starting from lowest echelon and evolving slowly over a lifetime. Cultural professionals in the USSR, as in other Eastern European countries (Verdalle 2006) were state employees with fixed salaries and were guaranteed a stable position under conditions of ideological conformity. The employment in the sphere of culture was prestigious, but it was not easy to get in this sector, and informal ties and connections were widely used in order to gain employment in such a desirable workplace.

The particularity of the transition to capitalism in Russia as compared to other countries was that it did not provoke mass unemployment (Martynov, Avtonomov, and Osadchaia 2005). While the state was prepared to solve the problem of unemployment and bankruptcy, the labor exchange and unemployment pay system were established; in reality, the directors of enterprises as well as of public institutions avoided firing their staff. Economists explain this original phenomenon via psychological factors (i.e., Soviet mentality and Soviet work relations)—they were not based on efficiency and economic rationality, but rather on fidelity to the institution and on informal relations. This particularity explains to a great extent the coping strategies of the state employees in the 1990s. They could keep their jobs, but their salaries no longer corresponded to the real necessities of everyday life; by 1999 the standard of living of the population was 30% lower than in 1991. In those years some cultural professionals left their service in public institutions and moved to a private sector of the economy, while others stayed at their workplaces being poorly paid, looking for new possibilities of professional development and ways to earn additional money. The noncommercial cultural sphere became a female domain of employment. The young specialists with diplomas were often compelled to leave the cultural sector after having acquired some work experience. Senior specialists continued to work; even though their pensions were very low, they were able to combine their small salaries with small pensions. This situation has only slightly improved in the mid-2000s. Even though many economic and ideological

solutions have been tested in the last twenty years, cultural organizations do not enjoy the prestigious status they had in the Soviet period.

In the 1990s, foreign charitable foundations became important agents of change in the spheres of culture, science, and education because they provided additional support, both financial and intellectual. They explained their presence and activities in Russia by emphasizing the liberal mission of the promotion of democratic values, one of their objectives being the creation of civil society on Russian soil. Professional communities were considered by these foreign charitable organizations as a necessary part of civil society. The foundations were actively investing in Russian culture in the 1990s, while in the 2000s many programs were closed and, in some cases, local institutions replaced them. The charitable funds financed educational programs for cultural professionals in Russia and abroad, and organized grant competitions. According to sociological research devoted to foreign investment in educational programs for cultural managers, among the numerous charitable organizations, The Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) has invested the most in those programs—around 5,000,000 dollars, not counting other investments in grants and institutional development (Gerasimova and Karchavetz 2006).<sup>3</sup> This helps to explain the frequent mention of this institution among the respondents.

Seminars, trainings, and summer schools for arts administrators were organized to promote the acquisition of new skills such as fundraising, marketing, public relations, team management, time management, and strategic planning. The acquisition of these skills was backed by the assumption that cultural institutions would establish partnerships with other similar organizations and with business (be it local enterprises or big corporations); such partnerships would help overcome financial problems of the institutions and make possible the realization of innovative projects on local and regional levels. The long-term goal was to promote cultural economy and further liberalization of the sphere of culture in order to create independent consulting agencies linking culture and business; these agencies would become a part of civil society and would cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit of the arts administrators.

The familiarization of most active and curious cultural professionals with foreign traditions of cultural politics and with managerial skills produced a larger effect on the professional community. The British, American, Canadian, French, Dutch, Scandinavian, German, and Spanish experiences of cultural management were translated into Russian and disseminated and discussed during seminars, summer schools, training, and on Internet forums. Among the many different approaches, the British approach was more visible than others because the situation in the sphere of culture in the Thatcher era (Appleyard 1989) was seen by experts as similar to the Russian one. Two ideas developed in Great Britain since the Thatcher era were actively discussed in Russia: (1) the means of liberalization and modernization of traditional cultural institutions, implying a passage from

state-sponsorship and state-patronage to relative independence; and (2) the concept of cultural industries as a means to rehabilitate shrinking cities and reinvestment in abandoned industrial buildings.

But only some cultural professionals were positively interested in these foreign ideas. Indifference or hostility toward the foundations and their ideologies were also quite typical. Indeed, the notion of *cultural management*, as well as a related concept of *cultural industries*, is not politically neutral. Selective choosing of cultural industries as a strategy of economic development would be “a political challenge for Russia,” stressed Mikhail Gnedovskii, director of the Cultural Policy Institute and the author of many publications on cultural politics (Gnedovskii 2005). These approaches in the long run aim to transform the whole organization of the cultural sphere. In this sense they are revolutionary. Not surprisingly, there is a resistance to structural change on all levels, from the highest to the lowest echelons.

According to the interviewees, the perspectives on creating cultural economies in Russia and on developing liberal patterns of functioning of the cultural institutions are limited, mainly due to two facts: the vertical organization of power relations in the cultural sector and the weakness of business in the provinces. These systemic conditions impede the creation of partnerships between culture and business and, consequently, hinder the development of cultural management in nonprofit organizations as a profession enjoying full rights.

In spite of those circumstances, the results of the foreign programs are nevertheless substantial and can be resumed in several arguments: (1) some new managerial skills proved to be useful and are successfully practiced by cultural professionals, while others seem to be inapplicable in a Russian context; and (2) foreign knowledge has created an ideological alternative to the traditional, more bureaucratic way of culture administration, but the latter is still dominant, especially in the provinces; (3) access to foreign knowledge has resulted in the formation of both a new professional identity, i.e., a cultural manager, and of a community of initiated cultural managers; and (4) the profession of a cultural manager has not yet been completely institutionalized, but the professionalization is in progress. I'll develop these points in the following pages.

## THE ACQUISITION OF NEW SKILLS IN RUSSIA AND ABROAD AND THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN PROGRAMS ON INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS

Sociological research analyzing tendencies in cultural politics in Europe and the U.S. in the 1980s and 1990s showed that the way culture is financed affects artistic contents, the programming of the events, and the audience concerned (Alexander 1996; Appleyard 1989; DiMaggio 1986). My research shows that foreign financial

support of Russian culture, even if that support was of relatively small account, has produced a systemic effect, affecting both individual careers and strategies of institutions.

Among the new skills acquired, project management, and especially grant writing, was judged by Russian arts administrators as one of the most important accomplishments. This skill was taught either by foreign experts, or by Russian experts who had obtained pertinent knowledge, and who began to disseminate it all over the country.<sup>4</sup> Museum professionals have an advantage in that matter as compared to those in the performing arts, due to the special attention that museums received from the Soros Foundation. In fact, one-third of the general amount of money invested in the Russian cultural sector was given to support museums (Muzei v epokhu peremen 2001, 4).

The art of grant writing spread from the cultural centers (Moscow, Petersburg) to the peripheries, from the bigger towns to the smaller ones, and from the managers of bigger institutions to their colleagues from smaller organizations. The guidelines of the foundations promoted collective projects, implying partnerships between institutions and the creation of networks and associations.

Tatiana R., a museum director from central Russia, remembers how she started to learn about grant writing in the beginning of the 1990s:

We have to thank The Soros Foundation and a group of experts from Moscow. They have done a lot to give us a “fishing rod.” They organized a very useful one-week seminar. It was around 1990, when The Soros foundation had just come here. What did they do? They invited the museum directors, and “locked” them in a tourist resort in the countryside. And we stayed there and worked on new programs and projects, and then later on we managed to write our first project proposals basing on this work. In fact, they analyzed a general situation of each of us and explained us how to write proposals. Later on I was able to explain to my colleagues, directors of smaller museums, how to write project proposals.

This “project thinking” was unknown in Soviet cultural activities where ideological pressure set limits (Sokolov 2007). This concept emerged in Russia during the 1990s and signified the readiness to propose original ideas for punctual action, to formulate them in concise project proposal, and to look for funding for those projects.

The use of new approaches and methods, such as project thinking, necessitated the revision of cultural politics at large. The redefinition of the role of cultural institutions as important actors for territorial development was directly or indirectly stimulated by the foundations’ guidelines. The ideas of the projects, unattended, were a little bit shocking, attractive, and playful; they often made use of local myths and stimulated the revival of original “brands” in the territories. This approach was in fact innovative, because the Soviet concept of the functioning of cultural

institutions had not presupposed such a “territorial” approach. During that time, all cultural institutions, in any town, were “looking to Moscow”; they were to promote social values and to show All-Union tendencies to the detriment of the local particularities. The latter had to be surpassed by the progress of socialism. Since the beginning of the 1990s, cultural institutions began to establish ties with the history of the town and to stress their implantation in the urban space and in the region. In that sense, the general tendency of the development of Russian cultural institutions is similar to what can be observed nowadays in other countries.

While the activities of the foundations based in Russia impacted both individuals and institutions, the foreign residencies were especially important for the individual careers of the mobile cultural managers and the construction of their professional identities.

In the late-Soviet period, the exchange between Russian cultural institutions and foreign ones was extremely controlled and limited. Nevertheless, the cultural sector was one of the most internationalized and was potentially opened to foreign contacts. Since the end of the 1980s, the most active and entrepreneurial individuals immediately used the newly opened possibilities to go to study programs that were favorable to Russian participants. In principle everyone could apply for a scholarship, but in reality only a limited number of people had access to information about foreign residencies and could profit from them. The access to these programs was much easier for those who had mastered foreign languages. Among the managers interviewed, there were several who had not worked in the sphere of culture in the Soviet period, had not received any specialized education, and later on effectuated professional reconversion and began a career of a cultural manager of a new type due to a good knowledge of English.

Nadezhda S., currently a deputy director of the Opera and Ballet Theatre responsible for working with audiences, graduated from pedagogical college and started her career as an English teacher at secondary school. Then she changed occupations and began to work as a manager of a children’s theater. At the end of the 1980s, she established her first contacts with American theaters. In the mid-1990s, she went, for the first time, to a residential program for cultural managers to the U.S., where she was selected due to her excellent knowledge of English. She undertook this study visit to the Brooklyn Music Academy in New York, where she worked in the department of marketing learning how to enlarge the theater’s audience. She remembers that during her study visits she had the possibility to acquire various new skills: she learned to sell tickets via the computer, worked on an advertisement brochure, and tried to master specific marketing technologies. After having completed several foreign short-term educational programs, she became a valuable specialist in theater management in her hometown.

The participants of these foreign residencies recalled that they obtained a broader understanding of their function and of their professional vocation. Not

uncritical of Western approaches to management, they could develop their own identity by observing their colleagues in other countries whose methods of work were different and then elaborating their own style appropriate to Russian conditions. The way Nadezhda S. formulates this is rather typical: “Even if I can’t tell exactly, what kind of knowledge was especially useful and which one was not, it helped to feel myself freer under current conditions, at least to imagine my field of activities more widely.”

Tatiana R., director of a historical museum, also recalls that a 1995 study visit to the U.S. helped her to cope with economic and ideological crises. In the framework of that program, cofinanced by four foundations, she visited twenty-six museums in the U.S., where Russian participants attended lectures, master-classes, made oral presentations about their own museums, consulted their colleagues, observed technical equipment, and participated in psychological training. This visit gave her a lot of new information—for example, about grant technologies—but she stressed that it was especially useful because it helped her to develop not only a new kind of thinking, but also the qualities of visionary leader: “When I returned to Russia, I knew that I was ready to face any social change, and that no obstacles whatever could suppress me.”

So, according to interviewees, as a result of foreign programs active managers obtained a more optimistic vision of the perspectives of their work in a critical situation, acquired a better notion of the scope of their activities on local, regional, all-Russian, and international levels, started to establish new partnerships with other organizations, and revised their missions and segments of their audience.

They claimed nevertheless that not all educational programs were useful or effective. For instance, according to interviewees, American methods of work with sponsors that were actively promoted by foreign experts had very limited use in the Russian context because of the lack of potential sponsors and of appropriate legislation. Some lectures on cultural politics proposed by foreign colleagues seemed very far from Russian reality and they did not bring answers to actual questions, especially in regard to small towns; this produced an effect of disillusionment in foreign approaches. The specific attention to NGOs as agents of civil society by the foundations stimulated a creation of a certain number of short-lived cultural NGOs that closed their activities when their grants expired and whose utility can be contested.

Those who internalized the principles of arts management and became effective managers are often reflective and critical in regards to the foreign experience. In some ways, the Soviet model of functioning of the institutions had its positive sides that are in their opinion worth keeping. For instance, some cultural professionals became critical of the principle of individual grants because they stimulated egoism, introduced the principle of competition for innovation, and risked breaking a collectivist spirit in a cultural organization.

## STRATIFICATION OF CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS, “CULTURAL MANAGERS,” AND “CULTURAL BUREAUCRATS”

The construction of the new professional identity of “cultural manager” and the formation of a community of cultural managers are probably the most significant results of the acquaintance of Russian cultural professionals with Western ones. Antonina S., a young arts administrator from a Siberian town, remembers that after a memorable seminar in 1999 with experts from Holland, she and her colleagues “began to call themselves cultural managers.” Usually this identity is reinforced if the participation in these kinds of programs, seminars, and discussions becomes regular and results in the enlargement of professional networks. Our research shows that the notion of “cultural management” entered into active use later than the new managerial practices. This linguistic fact marked the transition that had already occurred. The processes that gradually began taking shape since the beginning of the 1990s led to a formation of a new community that spoke its own language by the beginning of the 2000s.

Experts in cultural politics who had been working with foreign foundations and became carriers of foreign ideas to Russian soil considered the formation of a community of liberal-thinking arts administrators as the principal goal of their seminars and trainings. This is the opinion of an expert in museum management from Moscow who promoted new approaches to cultural politics all over Russia: “The most important criterion of effectiveness of my seminars is the formation of a common language. There forms a group of people with whom I can speak the same language and who have the same logic as myself; they understand me, and I understand them. The most significant effect of educational programs, it is the formation of a milieu.”

The expansion of a community of cultural managers progresses slowly. It is nourished by educational programs, currently often organized by Russian experts, sometimes with the participation of foreign ones. For instance, the Volga Capital of Culture program, the analogue of a similar European program, which had been carried out on the territory of the Volga Region during 2001–2006, systematically generated seminars for arts managers. During these years, several towns (Ulyanovsk, Kirov, Nizhnekamsk, Cheboksary, Izhevsk, Dimitrovgrad and Perm) received the status of “capital” and created extensive cultural programs aimed at innovations and strategic reforming of the cultural sphere (Stranstvujushaia stolitsa 2007). According to the coordinators of that program who I interviewed, whenever a town became a “cultural capital,” ten to fifteen cultural professionals in that town profited intensely from new possibilities, obtaining new skills and a new consciousness and becoming effective cultural managers.

What is a “westernized” arts administrator? Being a cultural manager implies the capability to find creative solutions and strategies for cultural organizations or for cultural politics in the towns. This professional identity is constructed as a counterweight to the most typical attitude to arts administration inherited from the Soviet times, which can be defined as a “cultural bureaucracy,” where new solutions are not needed, where the roles and functions of everyone are defined “from above,” and where individual initiative is not stimulated by the system.

These differences in visions of professional vocation and of work relations sometimes provoke open conflicts between “cultural bureaucrats” and “cultural managers” of arts organizations. Many interviewees reported that the vocation of a cultural manager as an agent of innovation and change is contradictory with the rigid structure of organizations where they worked. Sometimes they were obliged to leave their workplaces in public institutions in order to be able to realize their managerial potential.

Indeed, some structural changes notwithstanding, the continuity with the Soviet-era structure of cultural organizations is striking, typified by rigid vertical relations in the cultural sector at all levels. The existing structural conditions—legal, economic, and political—put the cultural institutions in a position of near-total dependency on local officials. The internal structure of cultural institutions also represents a vertical arrangement of power. They are hierarchically organized and much depends on the point of view of its director who can easily forbid any independent activities of his collaborators. If the leader promotes the initiative, favors the horizontal ties, and stimulates new ideas and projects, the institution can develop a liberal style of functioning. If the director is conservative, the development of “project thinking” and “project activities” might not take hold inside the institution.

The professional biography of Alina U., roughly forty years of age, a prominent singer, and an experienced arts manager in the sphere of performing arts who has mastered two foreign languages, shows intensive mobility among various sectors of artistic and organizational activity and a conflict between her experience as an arts manager and the conservative structure of the cultural organizations in her hometown. This conflict forced her to leave state-sponsored cultural organizations forever and to create a noncommercial NGO that organizes festivals and competitions for young artists. This is how she describes that tension:

I saw in my own life a cleavage between the project management and the management of an organization. Because project thinking, it is a challenge, a change of frame and kind of a transformation of the ordinary. Not all higher level managers can accept it. I don't know how to solve that conflict. How can innovative projects survive in a big organization? I don't know how other people manage to adapt themselves to the old system with a new worldview. Our organizations of culture are not working as they should. All the methods of work are too old. We learn magnificent new things

during the seminars and then we come back to that hell. I don't have the possibility to change anything here, because of the authoritarian style of work that dominates. There is no team, every cricket knows his place."

Nadezhda S., a top-level theater manager who is successfully developing her career inside the traditional cultural organization draws a less dramatic picture of that conflict. But she complains, in her own turn, about the lack of initiative on the part of middle-level managers due to the conservatism of the organizations and poor salaries of the employees: "In general, mid-level cultural managers work like simple executors of orders; they fulfill the commands of superiors. Our system does not stimulate them to create and to propose new solutions. Maybe it is a consequence of low salaries, because they do not earn enough money with that. If someone has a good provider in a family, this person has a possibility to create, otherwise not really."

The "bureaucratic" attitude to work relations is quite easy to "detect," especially at a high-level of management. A "bureaucratically-oriented" director of an institution would first of all try to avoid an interview with a sociologist, or if he or she accepts it, would try to say as little as possible. During my research in one big city, a chief responsible for culture refused to let his subordinate (a chief responsible for museums) meet me, under the pretense that she "talks too much." She told me herself in a telephone conversation that she is forbidden to give any interviews, be it to mass media or to other organizations. Most typical of bureaucratic administrators is the willingness to protect their institution from any external influences and to hide as much as possible the details about its functioning. In some cases, such administrators are corrupted and are not in touch with the mission of the institution, and run or effectuate commercial activities that are profitable for them personally. But this closeness can also result from the inability to act differently, from the habit of "nonpublic" management styles inherited from Soviet times. These bureaucratic administrators usually distrust their middle- and low-level collaborators who have external contacts and engagements and express negative attitudes toward foreign methods of management as inapplicable and useless.

The middle-level and low-level employees who feel comfortable in their subordinate position inside the bureaucratic administration accept interviews quite easily. In their vast majority, they are women. Typical for them is the lack of interest in an active career strategy, resulting in their acceptance of given work conditions where all their functions are defined by their chief. In their interviews, traditional gender orientations often manifest themselves. The respondents claim, for instance, that "for a woman work is not that important" and that "being ambitious is ridiculous." They voluntarily describe their activities in terms of obedience, often with humor, joking about their low salaries. When they compare themselves with the elder (Soviet) generations, they find that the work ardor typical for Soviet

times is absurd and that the willingness to work hard because of an allegiance to an institution or to a profession does not make sense; they claim that the most important thing is to create a happy family with a good breadwinner. In comparison with them, the “cultural managers” are generally more disobedient, pompous, and overemotional. They rarely talk about their gender and the “predestination” of a woman; they are willing to have a certain visibility in a professional milieu and to become a personality; and they are willing to create a career and are ready to eventually change their workplace, diversifying their activities by all means and often engaging in several projects for different organizations. Traditionalists always project their activities within their organization, while managers always try to externalize their effort and to enlarge their field of activities and their network.

The community of arts managers is rather heterogeneous. It is formed by representatives of different cultural spheres in the visual and performing arts who work in state and nonstate institutions, where women constitute a majority as in the cultural sector at large. Typical for all of them is a critical attitude to Soviet-type hierarchical relations in the cultural sphere and to the old traditional methods of work, an openness to new influences and ideas, both Russian and foreign, the capability to initiate new forms of work and new projects, liberal political views, and positive attitudes to the idea that culture has important social and economic functions and should serve toward the resolution of problems in a society. They are sociable, have a democratic manner of communication, travel a lot, consider any person as a possible business partner, have rather ironic and playful ways of oral expression, and are addicted to a flexible schedule. They talk a lot about “creativity,” “horizontal relations,” “partnerships,” and “projects.”

While the traditionalists believe that the Soviet model of functioning of culture represented a kind of golden age, the partisans of innovation claim that the cultural sphere needs restructuring and refreshment, and the decline observed since the 1990s can be explained not only by budgetary insufficiency, but also by the lack of innovation, of creative ideas, and of professional competence. While the “cultural bureaucrats” are persuaded by the arguments that culture must be entirely sponsored from the state budget, be free from material concerns, and ideologically correspond to state politics, the “cultural managers” think that it is necessary to promote collaboration between culture and business and to create foundations run by experts.

The reluctance of the state to changes appears in the discourse of arts managers as the major problem. Even if the state, represented by its ministries of culture both on central and regional levels, in theory is not hostile to the idea of the economic significance of culture, there is no political will to create greater possibilities for cultural industries or for partnerships between culture and business. The possibilities of cultural managers to influence the situation in the cultural sphere are limited, as is their possibility to realize their own creative potential and aspirations.

## CONCLUSIONS

My research shows that the “cultural logic” (Jameson 1991), observed in the economic development and the political choices of Europe and America, is only partly observed in Russia. But the transformation processes in the cultural sphere, in spite of structural resistance, seem to follow the same logic as in the West, from a socialist to a liberal model, but with twenty years’ delay.

The foreign foundations gave start to this process, introducing new notions in cultural politics and in arts administration. My research shows that foreign support for managers of cultural institutions stimulated the formation of professional networks and associations, and generated the formation of a new type of professional community, surpassing the boundaries of cultural organizations and of the arts genres. The impact of foreign investment in the sphere of culture is, in this sense, different than in some other domains. For instance, Sarah Henderson (2002) claims that the sponsoring of NGOs by foreign foundations has impeded the formation of horizontal ties between them and a weakened Russian civil society. In the cultural sector, foreign investment in concrete projects, in infrastructure, and in educational programs, has provided an ideological alternative to a Soviet model, has provoked debates and cleavages inside the community of professionals, but has also had a network-building effect. The partisans of western-type cultural politics and cultural management are today in minority compared to traditionalists, and some islands of innovation are numerically insignificant on the scale of the entire country. Nevertheless, this minority is actively promoting itself, and thanks to the deep involvement in the cause and to the professional competence of its members, it has a rather big visibility.

Cultural management in Russia has not yet become a profession in full right. It is still possible to exercise managerial functions in the sphere of culture without a specialized education. But the cultural managers have done a lot throughout the 2000s to legitimize their vision and knowledge and to introduce their professional standards. They have created associations, information portals, and a virtual library, and BA and MA programs have appeared. I can describe their activities not only in terms of the construction of an “organizational field” as described by DiMaggio (1991), but also in terms of a formation of a profession in a context marked by a considerable weakness of a middle class—a situation which has analogues in Russian history of the late imperial period (Balzer 1996).

Cultural management acts as a carrier of a liberal ideology and as a motivating force for further liberalization of the Russian economy, politics, and culture. Unlike European countries and the U.S., this worldview is rarely criticized by leftists and anticapitalist activists. The leftist critique is voiced by some artists but it is much more marginal than in the other countries and is oriented

to foreign audiences. A debate that is often heard in the West (Chiapello 1998; Boltanski and Chiapello 2006; Jameson 1991; Jeudy 1999)—between, the critics of cultural capitalism who are partisans of the *critical function* of art, and the liberals who are partisans of the *social vocation, utility and profitability* of art is in Russia very marginal. (Chiapello 1998; Boltanski and Chiapello 2006; Jameson 1991; Jeudy 1999). The critical debate of public intellectuals focuses more often on the historical role of state bureaucracy and its influence on the art world.

## Notes

1. Problem-oriented interviews with managers of various cultural institutions, public and private, who work in the sphere of visual arts and performing arts was undertaken by myself in several towns of the Volga Region, and by my colleagues Katerina Gerasimova, Kira Karchavetz, and Zoya Solovieva from the Centre for Independent Social Research in other Russian regions—North West, Siberia, Moscow—during 2003–2005. These interview were done for the research project “Culture and transition: Evaluation of Effectiveness of International Professional Development Programs for Russian Art Managers, 1993–2003,” supported by The Trust for Mutual Understanding and coordinated by Katerina Gerasimova and Susan Katz. Interviews with directors of cultural institutions in St. Petersburg, with city authorities responsible for culture along with representatives of cultural NGOs in Saint-Petersburg, were conducted by myself during 1998–2003 in the framework of a research project “Saint-Petersburg: Post-Soviet Identifications,” headed by Professor Elena Hellberg-Hirn and financed by the Finnish Academy.

2. The names of the interviewees are fictional in order to preserve their privacy.

3. Other important donors were the U.S. Department of State, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, the Know How Fund (UK), the European Union, the Eurasia Foundation, the Council of Europe, the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Nordic Council, the German Foreign Office, the French Foreign Office, the Dutch foreign ministry, the World Bank, KulturKontakt Austria, the Faberge Arts Foundation, the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts, and the Danish Cultural Institute (Gerasimova and Karchavetz 2006).

4. The most influential institutions in Russia promoting new approaches to cultural politics and to new methods in arts management are: the Cultural Policy Institute from Moscow (<http://www.cpolicy.ru>), the Institute for the Professional Development in Culture “Interstudio” based in Saint-Petersburg (<http://interstudio.ru>), and the Laboratory for Museum Projecting at the Russian Institute for Cultural Research in Moscow (<http://www.future.museum.ru>). The Association for Theatre Professionals (<http://stdrf.ru>) and the

Association for Museum Professionals ([www.souzmuseum.ru](http://www.souzmuseum.ru)) are also important actors in the process of community building.

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