

# Prospects, Problems and the Role of Artistic Education in Ensuring Balanced Cultural Development

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the results of our own sociological survey designed to investigate the situation with the cultural sphere in contemporary Russia from a gender perspective. We demonstrate that there is a gender imbalance in this field, predicated, in particular, on the pay gap between male and female workers, and argue that this contributes to the vicious circle of culture remaining dominated by female labour, and lagging behind other major spheres of life in Russian society as underfunded and non-prestigious. We then discuss the dangers of such a state of affairs for the country as a whole and argue that, alongside state policies and state investment in culture, it is art and artistic education that are crucial for improving the current situation. Furthermore, we argue that, contrary to standard perceptions, it is, in fact, culture that is vital for the country's future and spiritual survival, while all the other spheres of life and economy are defined by it and effectively function as its corollaries.

**Keywords:** *Artistic education, Culture, Arts, The role of arts education, Gender imbalance, the sphere of women's employment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term "culture" is normally used very broadly. But no matter what we talk about, culture is always associated with economics. Max Weber famously wrote about the connection between the Protestant work ethic (which pertains to culture), with the development of capitalism [1]. By the same token, it is believed that the Orthodox Russian culture and Russian irrationalism still hinder the implementation of Western-style capitalism in Russia [2]. Academician V. Polterovich spoke about the impossibility of implanting Western institutions and economic mechanisms into the Russian economy due to significant cultural differences [3]. The work on the financing of culture [4] also argues that Western financing mechanisms are difficult to implement in Russia due to the lack of appropriate traditions.

At the same time, culture can be viewed as an economic resource. The American sociologist R. Florida demonstrated in his book the connection

between innovation in the economy and culture [5]. In both cases, achievement is driven by people's creativity. According to T. Abankina, "in a post-industrial society, culture is becoming a strategic priority of the modern economy of developed countries precisely because over the past decades it has managed to turn into a powerful conglomerate of creative industries" [6]. In the United States, economic growth is largely driven by the Culture sector. According to A. Senina, "Art brings the USA more money than agriculture" [7]. R. Florida argued the same [8].

The cultural potential of a territory, attracting tourists, changes the life of the local community, contributing to the development of the tourism industry. Investors willingly come to territories with a developed culture. There are many such examples of the connection between economics and culture.

Culture is closely connected not only and not so much with the economy, but primarily with the

spiritual state of society. It shapes the worldview of people, influences their values and behaviour. The experience of past generations is passed on through culture. On the other hand, the degradation of culture leads to the degradation of society as a whole.

In the state report of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation on the state of culture in the country, the following description of the concept of culture is given: "The culture of Russia is its literature, fine arts, architecture, music, arts and crafts, as well as cinema, if we talk about modern culture" [9].

In the state statistics, among various types of economic activity, culture is presented as one of the branches of the economy. The sphere of culture includes libraries, museums, theatres, publishing of printed materials, cultural and leisure organizations, zoos, and circuses.

Artistic culture is one of the varieties of culture. A dictionary entry on Culturology defines the term as a set of processes and phenomena of spiritual practical activity that creates, distributes and assimilates works of art and material objects with aesthetic value [10]. Art culture in the process of creation, distribution and consumption is directly related to such institutions as theatre, cinema, museums, publishing houses, production and restoration workshops etc., that is, with what is included in the "culture" industry as one of the branches of the economy. Therefore, we shall use the term "culture" to mean a branch of the economy that has a certain material capital and where a certain number of jobs are concentrated. In Russia in 2020, 2% of employees aged 15 and older worked in the "culture" industry [11]<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. CULTURE IS THE SPHERE OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT: GENDER INEQUALITY IN WAGES

In 2019, in Russia, 66% of women worked in the field of culture, sports, leisure and entertainment [12]. In some areas, such as

1. 'The structure of the employed population by type of economic activity in the main job, on average per year' (accessed on 06.08.2021). Note that in government statistics, the "culture" industry in different documents and different tables is most often presented as being combined with other industries. In this case, we are talking about activities in the field of culture, sports, organization of leisure and entertainment. The use of such cocktails in industry definition creates difficulties for the analysis of the cultural sphere.

librarianship, women make up a significantly larger percentage. In Astrakhan, a survey of library readers was conducted on librarianship as a profession. 93% of respondents answered that this is a female profession, and 95% did not want men from their family to work in this industry [13]. If we consider the museum business, then 82% of applicants for museum vacancies are women, although the share of men who have expressed a desire to work in a museum is growing, which is primarily due to the digitalization of museum work. If in 2014 women accounted for 88% of museum workers, then by 2018 their share dropped to 80%, which, nevertheless, still allows this industry to be considered female [14]. As the study shows, women are paid worse than men in any sphere (see "Table 1"<sup>2</sup>).

The gender gap is one of the most important characteristics for assessing adequacy in employment. The sphere of culture in this respect cannot serve as an example of good practice (see "Table 2"<sup>3</sup>).

It is clear from the above that the types of activities where women make up a significant majority are characterized by a large gender gap in favour of men. Here just a few examples are given, but more generally this is a fact described in [15], [16] and in many other works on gender. In 2016, Russia took 75th place in the global ranking of gender equality of the World Economic Forum and, in particular, 41st place in terms of gender economic equality [17].

Even more noticeable is the gap in wages, not only for different types of activities, but also for different groups of occupations (see "Table 3"<sup>4</sup>, source: Women and Men of Russia. 2020: Statistical collection / Zh56 Rosstat. M., 2020. Pp. 127-128, 132-133.<sup>5</sup>).

2. The gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the average earnings of men and women as a percentage of the earnings of men. Until 2004, an annual survey of organizations was carried out on a continuous basis. Since 2005, sample surveys of organizations have been carried out (once every 2 years).

3. Based on the data from a sample survey of organizations for October 2019.

4. Ibid.

5. Judging by the fact that in the statistical reference book culture was combined with social work and other related activities, it is obvious that, as in Soviet times, the authorities perceive culture as a "social and cultural life". The role of artistic culture is thereby diminished.

Table 1. Gender wage gap in Russia (%)

22001	22002	22003	22004	22005	22007	22009	22011	22013	2015	22017	22019
336.8	333.5	335.5	336.2	333.7	331.4	229.2	229.0	222.8	224.4	225.3	224.8

a Source: Rosstat. Decent Work Indicators. Table ind-dtr072021.xlsx

Table 2. Average accrued wages of women and men in 2019 (in roubles)

Type of activity	Wages of women (roubles)	Wages of men (roubles)	Ratio of wages of women to wages of men (%)	Share of women in total number of employees(%)
All activities	37872	52533	72.1	53.2
Activities in the field of culture, sports, leisure and entertainment	35079	47265	74.2	61.6
Education	31355	32949	95.2	79.9
Information and communication activities	53887	78980	68.2	43.8
Mining of minerals	61246	80663	75.9	18.3

Table 3. Average gross wages of women and men by groups of occupations in 2019 (in roubles)

Occupation group	Average accrued wages (thousands of roubles)		Ratio of women's wages to men's wages,%	Share of women in the total number of employees,%
	Women	Men		
Specialists of the highest qualification level				
Specialists in the field of law, humanitarian fields and culture	40.2	55.0	73.1	79.1
Information and Communication Technology Specialists	58.9	76.9	76.6	21.2
Intermediate level specialists				
Middle specialized personnel in the field of legal, social work, culture, sports and related activities	32.0	137.0	23.4	88.3
Information and communication technology (ICT) technicians	36.8	561.2	65.5	23.2

Conclusion: Female specialists at the highest level of qualifications in the field of culture are paid almost 27% less than men. But even more striking is the difference in pay between male and female secondary specialized personnel. Gender inequality is typical not only for organizations and institutions of the "Culture" industry, but also for new, Western-style, creative associations and platforms related to the creative industry. Empirical studies carried out by Western scholars have revealed that in this industry there are "large-scale persistent inequalities based in particular on gender differences" [18]. This is also mentioned in [19]. The gender gap in the "Culture" sector is combined with low wages for workers in general, which is directly related to the financing of culture on a leftover basis.

### 3. FINANCING OF CULTURE

Financing of culture is an indicator of the state's attitude to culture, and demonstrates the level of economic support of the state's cultural policy.

Most of the organizations related to the "Culture" industry are budget-financed. According to the data given in [20], their share is more than 80%: out of 122,000 cultural organizations, 108,000 belong to the public sector. Therefore, funding for culture is carried out mainly through the budgets at three levels: federal, regional, and municipal. It is more difficult for regional and even more so for municipal budgets to finance culture due to insufficient filling of these budgets.

In most countries, there is multi-channel funding for culture. Sources of finance can be commercial activities, sponsorship, and various grants, etc. However, in Russia, there are many cultural institutions that do not have other funding channels except for the state budget. For example,

for libraries, budget money is 98%. In recent years, in connection with the modernization of libraries, extra-budgetary sources of funding have also appeared, but they do not play a large role as yet. Although government policy is aimed at commercializing culture, most organizations in this area cannot achieve commercial success. It is especially difficult to do in the provinces. Sponsorship and philanthropy are not developing as fast as in other countries due to unfavourable tax laws. Ordering customers play an important role in financing artistic culture. They can be not only individual patrons, but also corporations, banks, etc., for whom it is important to maintain their image, since they do not have tax preferences. Interestingly, the problems of financing artistic culture receive less coverage than financing of the entire industry. As written in [21], "In the general course of art history, the main emphasis is on the personality of the author or on the characteristic features of art of a particular period. The funding of art is only spoken of in passing". It seems that funding seems too small a topic for art and culture professionals.

In general, funding for culture in Russia is growing. But despite all the efforts of the state, in 2015, in terms of per capita spending on culture,

Russia lagged behind most European countries – its figures were 8 times lower than those of Denmark, 5 times than those of Finland, and 3.5 times than those of Germany [22]. An analysis of the funding situation for culture over the past 20 years leads to the disappointing conclusion that culture is still funded by the state on a leftover basis, and multichannel funding mechanisms are not working well. It is symbolic that culture occupies the last position even in the list of economic sectors. Despite certain successes in the field of culture, society evaluates its condition as rather average (51%). Cultural workers give negative assessments more often than Russians as a whole: 25% versus 14%. [23].

#### 4. SALARIES OF CULTURAL SPHERE EMPLOYEES

Insufficient funding cannot but affect the earnings of culture workers: librarians, museum staff, etc.

Let us consider earnings in the Russian cultural sphere for 2010–20 in comparison with the earnings for all types of activities and for financial activities (see "Table 4").

Table 4. Average monthly nominal accrued wages of employees of organizations by type of economic activity (in thousands of roubles)

Years	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All activities	21.0	34.0	36.7	39.2	43.7	47.9	51.1
Financial and insurance activities	50.1	70.0	80.3	84.9	91.1	103.7	112.7
Activities in the field of culture, sports, leisure and entertainment	15.4	32.0	34.7	38.2	44.4	47.0	48.4

a Source: prepared by the authors based on the volume "Labour and Employment in Russia 2019", p. 108, Table 8.12 and Rosstat data. URL: [https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor\\_market\\_employment\\_salaries?print=1](https://rosstat.gov.ru/labor_market_employment_salaries?print=1) Table t3.xlsx (accessed on 06.08.2021). The data of the Ministry of Culture, where culture is separated from sports, etc., show an even more dispiriting picture (see "Table 5").

Table 5. Average salary of employees of cultural institutions of all levels

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Average salary (thousands of roubles)	12.7	14.7	21.1	23.9	25.5	27.1	32.5	39.0	40.9

a Source: "Russian culture in figures and facts", RIA Novosti, January 27, 2020. URL: <https://ria.ru/20200125/1563824771.html> (accessed on 06.08.2021).

From "Table 5", we see that the earnings of workers in the field of culture, although they grow every year, still remain below the average for the Russian Federation as a whole. In 2020, wages in the cultural sphere were only 43% of finance workers' wages. The average salary in cultural institutions, according to data for January-September 2020, amounted to 40.7 thousand

roubles. Only in Moscow this figure is significantly higher – 75.4 thousand roubles. At the same time, in the Ivanovo region the average salary was only 22.8 thousand roubles, in the Ulyanovsk region 26.7 thousand roubles, and in the Vologda region 34.5 thousand roubles [24]. Consequently, there is no reason to talk about a significant increase in wages. Much depends on the category of cultural

institutions. According to the Ministry of Culture, in municipal institutions the average earnings of workers are 33.2 thousand roubles, in regional 46 thousand roubles, and in federal 70.5 thousand roubles [25].

If you look at the salaries offered to specialists in cultural institutions, the numbers are not encouraging. Here is a list of vacancies for the personnel centre of the Department of Culture of the city of Moscow in 2021: accompanist at the V.D. Polenov Children's Art School is paid 35-45 thousand roubles; teacher of classical dance at the A.A. Alyabyeva Children's Art School up to 30 thousand roubles; guitar teacher at the Voronovskaya Children's Art School 20-30 thousand roubles. These salaries are almost at the level of a cleaning lady's salary [26]. And this is Moscow, where the average wages are the highest. Intra-industry wage differentiation is also great. The heads of cultural institutions can be on salaries of more than a million roubles [27]. But high salaries (from 200 thousand roubles) apply only to managers, their deputies and chief accountants. The salaries of ordinary employees remain extremely low, and not all of them may receive any kind of compensation or incentive payments. So, in the Novosibirsk region the salary of a specialist of the first category (lecturer, guide, restoration artist, cameraman, etc.) is only 10,500 roubles [28].

All this is a vivid demonstration of the priorities of the state and the attitude to culture in general, and to workers in the sphere of culture in particular. Such trends seem to be dangerous for the development of the country, because, as we have repeatedly stressed, there is an inextricable and very important connection between culture and economy, which is becoming more and more obvious in the modern world. Thus, Richard Lewis in his works notes that instead of the failed theories of economic and genetic determinism, we should have talked about cultural determinism [29]. In Russia, even at the dawn of perestroika, the writer and thinker Fazil Iskander never tired of repeating that the mistake of Marxism, against which he warned the new post-Soviet Russia, was the idea that "the economy is the basis, and everything else is a superstructure. The state which lives by this law, is doomed to destruction, it already carries the larva of death in itself. That is why the Soviet state perished" [30]. According to Iskander, "what is most important in a person is the main thing for both human society and the state," and "the main

thing in a person is conscience." At the same time, he emphasized that, paradoxically, "a state in which the economy is the basis, first of all, is doomed to perish economically," because "in such a state, the economy is controlled not by professional economists, but by ideologists from the economy" [31].

Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, state investments in culture are crucial not only for the spiritual development of society, but also for the economic one, and vice versa: neglect of the cultural sphere is a prerequisite for economic decline. In light of this, it becomes clear how strategically urgent is the involvement of young people in the sphere of culture and the equalization of the gender imbalance (pay gap) in this sphere. This should become one of the important government tasks. And it is necessary to solve this problem in a comprehensive manner - not only with economic investments, but also with special educational programmes.

If this does not happen, the situation will not improve, as the low incomes of cultural workers will continue to contribute to the reluctance of young people to devote themselves to this kind of activity. Moreover, in the absence of radical changes in public policy, gender imbalances such as those described above will be detrimental. As it stands, the prospects for smoothing gender inequalities in the cultural sphere are rather bleak, as revealed by our own recent opinion polls presented in the next section.

## **5. WILL CULTURE REMAIN A WOMEN'S INDUSTRY? STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO WORKING IN THE SPHERE OF CULTURE**

This section is based on the results of a sociological survey of students conducted by us in the 2018/2019 academic year in five cities of the Russian Federation: Moscow, Voronezh, Astrakhan, Tver, and Tyumen. The sample included 14 state universities. The total sample size is 816 respondents.

The purpose of the study was to identify the interests and preferences of students in relation to their future work. The first question was about the preferred type of work (see "Table 6")

Table 6. Students' preferences regarding the type of work they find most attractive (percentage of respondents who chose the appropriate type of work)

Type of work	Young women	Young men
Organizational	18.0	15.1
Analytical	7.5	9.9
Managerial	16.4	20.4
Scientific	21.1	5.0
Communication related (with clients, partners, etc.)	18.0	14.0
Related to technology and industry	2.6	15.4
Art related	10.8	8.5
Information technology related	5.0	10.7
Other	0.4	1.1

a Source: the results of our own study, as described above.

For girls, the most attractive work in comparison with boys is art-related work. This correlates with the fact that girls dream of interesting and creative work. This choice was made by 34.7% of girls versus 30.1% of boys. At the same time, girls, as can be seen from Table 6, do not strive to become leaders, but they like organizational and scientific work. When choosing a job after graduation, the most important thing for them is to be able to develop as a person. Also girls are more interested than boys in helping people.

Girls also prefer to spend their free time with a cultural agenda in mind, which includes going to the cinema, theatre, and exhibitions. This choice was made by 17.6% of girls and only 13.8% of boys. 9% of girls and only 7.4% of boys are ready to dedicate their free time to reading. All these characteristics concerning girls testify to the girls' suitability for working in the field of culture.

When answering the question about what our respondents would like to do if they chose an entrepreneurial career, the girls opted, as their highest preference, for activities in the field of leisure and entertainment (24.8% for girls and 15.8% for boys). In the second place they put education (13.2% for girls and 4.5% for male respondents). Young men preferred stereotypically "male" types of activity: construction, car repair, and information technology.

Cultural and leisure organizations can be both non-profit and fully commercial. So girls who are focused on entrepreneurial leisure and entertainment activities can start organizing centres for the aesthetic education of children, tourist trips, craft houses, etc.

Girls in general showed a penchant for the humanities. So, when asked about their preferences in working with new technologies, 22.9% of girls chose socio-humanitarian technologies against only

9.2% of boys. But information technology turned out to be more preferable for young men.

If we assume that there will be no changes in state strategies in relation to the cultural sphere, then in the light of the above, we have to conclude that the cultural sphere will continue to be replenished by female employees in the future. This means that the bad tradition of gender pay gaps may persist.

## 6. CONCLUSION

According to a study by the NAFI Research Centre, women accept low wages more easily than men. Thus we have a vicious circle: women agree to low wages, so women's employment spheres become low-paid, and consequently highly qualified specialists do not want to go into this area, which therefore loses its prestige.

The reason for the gender imbalance in the cultural sphere, both in terms of the number of women and men, and in terms of the gender wage gap, is largely due to the traditional orientations of young people, which manifested itself in our study. Female students who are oriented towards work in culture, when making this choice proceed not only from the fact that this work is interesting and creative, but also from the fact that this work will provide an opportunity for a good balance between work and personal life. According to the results of our research, girls are more interested in this opportunity than boys (6 points out of 6 for girls versus 5.7 for boys). According to the conclusion given in the work of G.G. Karpova [32], girls also hope that a female team ensures informal relationships where they can find support and help more easily. That is to say that even those girls who are dreaming of creative work rather imagine work in cultural organizations as "female", and as such providing a good balance with personal, family life.

Culture cannot develop without the arrival of modern technologies in the field, without innovations and new creative approaches to its organization. Our research has revealed that college students have little knowledge of new technologies in general and are not eager to master new technologies or participate in the creation of new products. There are doubts about their willingness to do this in the field of culture.

Wages play an important role in the development of the culture industry. Their increase is necessary for attracting young people, IT specialists, etc. If salaries are raised only for managers and for certain "essential" specialists, the bulk of employees will pull the industry back in any case.

Much in culture begins with education. The task of the education system is to pass on to young people first of all the moral, cultural and spiritual values on which everything else in their life and work will be based. The education system must prepare youngsters to work in new conditions, to master new technologies, to understand what the gender imbalance leads to. But so far the education system has not been able to cope with this task effectively.

At the same time, the task of the state as a whole is to develop the cultural sphere, to support it with financial investments and to increase its prestige, because otherwise (again recalling the words of Fazil' Iskander), the state which does not understand that culture is the basis, is doomed to perdition, no more and no less. It suffices to recall the examples of the second half of the nineteenth century, when utilitarian attitudes reigned in art, and considerations of usefulness and expediency displaced the aesthetic component. This, with an ominous regularity, led to the extinction of the ethical component, for the ideas of beauty inextricably connect ethics and aesthetics as communicating vessels. In a certain sense, this ultimately led to the death of the entire state system, just as a century later the Soviet state, that relied on materialism and considered culture to be just a superstructure, perished as well. As another outstanding Russian artist and film director Alexander Sokurov said, "the humanitarian sphere is the main one for the life of any civilized state. The purpose of the existence of the Russian state is culture. There is no other purpose. Not the army, not the economy, not politics" [33].

One is thus left to hope that the attitude to culture will be revised in Russia and an

understanding will come that this industry is a key one, on which the harmonious development of all other industries depends. This means that, in addition to changing the budgetary policy in relation to culture, priority should be given to art education, which is the key to the cultural development of the nation, and which can increase the prestige of culture and art, thus ensuring an influx of personnel into this area, as well as equalizing the gender imbalance in wages.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Natalia Vinokurova contributed to the general idea and writing of the text, applied sociological approach; sociological survey and prepared statistical data. Olga Tabachnikova contributed to the general idea and writing of the text, applying Cultural Studies methodology and approach.

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