

Social and Cultural Threats to and Risks of Russia

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Abstract

Social and cultural security, risks of destroying cultural and social stability are paramount important for the discussion at the governmental and national levels. The present paper suggested a new instrumental system for assessing socio-cultural threats and risks of large territories. As a demonstration, an analysis of results of the all-Russian expert survey was presented making it possible to assess existing socio-cultural threats to the environment, the likelihood of emergencies, the riskiness of Russia's socio-cultural sphere, and the effectiveness of measures to maintain the social and cultural security. As a comparative analysis, new indices were empirically verified and proposed for measuring the socio-cultural sphere: the index of the probability of occurrence of socio-cultural threats and emergencies, the index of socio-cultural security, the index of social impact of threats on indices of the quality of life, and the index of the effectiveness of measures to improve and maintain the socio-cultural security. As a result of study, the structure of threats and risks of a habitat became clear, and the most effective countermeasures were determined.

Keywords: Habitat; Socio-cultural sphere; Habitat risks; Emergency situations; Social risks; Human dimension.



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1. Introduction

In terms of the socio-cultural environment, its processes, phenomena and characteristics, a modern researcher faces a choice of the operationalization of this concept - what position to choose to consider such a complex, immaterial and, in fact, unlimited formation. From the standpoint of sociology and related sciences (primarily pedagogy, psychology, political science, and perhaps history), the sociocultural environment is perceived very broadly, starting with the product (producer) of the characteristics of the territory (Alisov, 2006; Lapin, 2007; Soloviova, 2010), and ending with the basis for the development of spheres and social groups (Akunina, 2005; Ershova, 2007). Perceiving the socio-cultural environment among these definitions can indicate different levels of analysis, produce more and more influencing factors, assumptions and trends, risks and threats. In this regard, the socio-cultural sphere of the human environment is a field of reproduction and convergence of complex risks of various scales. (Abavisani and Sanchooli, 2018).

The research perspective for such an object as socio-cultural risks can become clear by analyzing scientific publications in Russia and abroad. Therefore, the phenomenon of socio-cultural risks for Russia implies the globalization in relation to the research object and subject, the territorial scale, the search for methodological principles and metamodeling (Anikin, 2016; Kudrin, 2016; Kukhto, 2014; Mukhin, 2018; Zubok and Chuprov, 2017). Foreign scholars consider socio-cultural risks in a narrowly applied aspect, as an explanation or a way of solving a particular problem in a small social or territorial locus. At the same time, the context of their research is clearly trans-disciplinary (as a rule, such studies are presented in interdisciplinary journals, or on the contrary - in journals about non-social problems). For example, the content search over the past 10 years revealed studies on a comparative socio-cultural analysis of the perception of the risk of carbon storage in the European Union (Karimi *et al.*, 2016), socio-cultural factors in disaster risk management (Dalisy and De Guzman, 2016; Kasdan, 2016), the displacement of children from social communications (Morcillo *et al.*, 2015), the socio-cultural aspects of climate change in specific areas, the socio-cultural impact on HIV transmission among gays in rural China (Koo *et al.*, 2014), the study of socio-cultural factors which act as mediators, facilitate and limit the health and empowerment of refugee youth (Edge *et al.*, 2014), etc. (Gibson *et al.*, 2005; Katz *et al.*, 2013; Leaker and Dunk-West, 2011; McCarthy *et al.*, 2014; Melinder, 2007; Rimaite and Rinkevicius, 2008; Villalobos Antúnez, 2009).

Such research concretization allows us to investigate the operational level of risk research, its perception as a set of specific factors that can be both studied and managed. Approaches to this kind of scientific convergence were All-Russian studies that allowed determining the weight of socio-cultural threats, the structure of socio-cultural risk, its impact and the reality of its onset, and to evaluate measures to prevent it (Zhmailo, 2008), (Pacheco *et al.*, 2017).

2. Research Method

This paper was conducted in 2015-2017 by the Center for Sociological Research of the Belgorod State National Research University. The research strategy included an all-Russian expert survey. The implementation of other tasks and comparative indicators of this study can be seen in the work by the Center team (Lomakin *et al.*, 2016; Shapovalova and Gozhenko, 2015; Shapovalova *et al.*, 2016; Shapovalova, 2017; Zubok *et al.*, 2016). The total number of experts participating in the expert survey was 120. Criteria for the selection of experts were the scope of activities, experience in the field, the ability (competence) to assess the situation and predict its development. Characteristics of the expert group - profile specialists of sectoral organizations, administrative workers and civil servants, employees of relevant departments of higher educational institutions and research institutes, experts of public organizations (Musiichuk and Musiichuk, 2015).

As the survey territory, 10 regions were selected and distributed into groups with different levels of environmental risk based on data from the EMERCOM Directorate of Russia. The regions of the Russian Federation with the maximum and minimum levels of environmental risk were identified: Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Krasnodar Krai, Amur, Bryansk, Kirov, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Saratov and Tver regions.

3. Results and Discussion

A general analysis of expert opinion on the likelihood of threats associated with socio-cultural emergencies indicated their most typical distribution across the analyzed territories. According to experts' opinion, the most frequent risks arise from the loss of historical memory by certain groups of population (26.7%). Separate manifestations of threatening situations are most often recorded in the zone of vandalism (70%) and the destruction of moral norms among the population (63.3%) (Table 1, columns 1, 2, and 3). The calculation of index of the probability of occurrence of sociocultural threats allows their ranking (see Table 1, columns 5, 6). Three most likely occurrence of sociocultural threats include the destruction of moral values among the population (0.70), loss of historical memory (0.64) and loss of cultural traditions (0.61). According to experts, the least likely situations are associated with unauthorized demolition of historical monuments (0.27). Thus, according to experts, one can expect the emergence of sociocultural violations from the mental orientations of Russian citizens, rather than from effective positions such as vandalism, the destruction of cultural objects, the creation of informal associations, etc.

Table-1. Expert Evaluation of Socio-Cultural Threats of Russia

Emergency situations	No threat, %	Individual manifestations of threat, %	Widespread threat, %	Probability of occurrence index	Rank by probability of occurrence	Socio-cultural security index	Socio-cultural security rank	Social impact index	Social influence rank
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Destruction of historical and cultural sites in the region	26.7	56.7	16.7	0.59	4	0.40	8	0.69	3
Acts of vandalism, abuse of historical monuments	30.0	70.0	0	0.52	5	0.51	4	0	9
Unauthorized demolition of monuments	66.7	23.3	10.0	0.27	10	0.42	7	0.67	5
Loss of historical memory in various populations	23.3	50.0	26.7	0.64	2	0.55	3	0.69	3
Change or loss of cultural traditions	26.7	50.0	23.3	0.61	3	0.63	1	0.66	6
The threat of a crisis of cultural identity in various population groups	40.0	40.0	20.0	0.50	7	0.38	9	0.73	2
The threat of the destruction of the cultural bases of the national-ethnic and religious identity of the population	36.7	46.7	16.7	0.51	6	0.40	8	0.78	1
Destruction of moral values and standards among the population	13.3	63.3	23.3	0.70	1	0.58	2	0.68	4

Manifestations of discrimination, violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens based on national and religious differences	36.7	53.3	10.0	0.49	8	0.46	6	0.54	8
The emergence of informal countercultural associations	50.0	43.3	6.7	0.39	9	0.48	5	0.60	7

Assessing the ratio between the permissible level of socio-cultural security and the economic opportunities to achieve it, 56.7.0% of experts considered it more likely acceptable, and only 10% indicated full acceptability. In total, 33.3% of experts noted an unacceptable level of sociocultural security. The calculation of the sociocultural safety index for specific emergency situations allows us to single out the groups of sociocultural situations that are the most dangerous from the point of view of the frequency and acceptability of their risk and rank the situations according to this indicator (Table 1, columns 7, 8).

According to indicators, none of proposed situations by experts can meet the really acceptable level of security; the index value rises above 0.6 only in the case of a situation of change or loss of cultural traditions. In most cases, the indicator drops below 0.5 indicating the real danger of such situations as the threat of a crisis of cultural identity in various population groups (0.38), the destruction of historical and cultural objects and the threat of the destruction of the cultural basis of the national-ethnic and religious identity of the population (0.40).

There are risks for each threat of the socio-cultural sphere. The most significant cases were scored by experts from 5 to 7 points. The risk factor clouds of emergencies in the sociocultural sphere are presented in Table 2. Its extreme column presents an indicator of the risk-related dependence index, calculated as a share of the cumulative effect of risks from the maximum possible risk-related effect.¹ The last line presents the status (risk force) on a seven-point scale.

The situations associated with unauthorized demolition of monuments (risk index vulnerability index 0.82), discrimination, violation of citizens' rights and freedoms based on national and religious differences (0.8), destruction of historical and cultural sites in the region (0.79) are mostly due to sociocultural risk factors. The least associated with exposure to external risk factors are acts of vandalism (0). It is worth noting that, apart from the latter group, all situations in the sociocultural sphere are highly associated with risks and have a pronounced dependence on external factors.

Table-2. Emergency Vulnerability Risk Index in the Socio-Cultural Sphere

Risks of socio-cultural environment	Associated with the change in time properties of cultural objects	Associated with the emergence of new cultural sites	Associated with the lack of information	Human factor	Insufficient governmental attention	Lack of attention to identity	Weak educational work at school	Propagation of samples of immorality	The influence of the technical sphere	The influence of natural factors	The state of legal and legislative framework	RISK DEPENDENCE INDEX
Emergency socio-cultural situations												
Change or loss of cultural traditions	4.43	3.71	4.00	4.57	4.43	2.86	4.14	3.86	2.71	3.14	3.14	0.65
Destruction of moral values and standards	3.71	3.86	4.71	5.00	4.86	3.43	5.00	4.43	3.00	3.14	3.71	0.71
Loss of historical memory in various populations	3.88	3.75	4.25	4.88	5.25	3.63	4.75	4.38	3.25	3.63	3.13	0.70
Acts of vandalism, abuse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
The emergence of informal countercultural associations	2.50	5.50	3.50	5.50	3.00	3.50	5.00	4.50	2.50	3.50	2.00	0.65
Manifestations of	4.33	3.33	6.00	5.33	6.00	6.00	5.67	4.67	3.00	2.67	4.00	0.8

¹Based on the identified 9 risk factors, the maximum risk-related vulnerability may be equal to 63 in a point equivalent (equal to unit in fractional equivalent).

discrimination, violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens												
Unauthorized demolition of monuments	5.67	4.00	4.33	4.67	5.67	4.67	4.00	5.33	5.00	4.67	4.00	0.82
Destruction of historical and cultural sites in the region	5.20	4.20	4.60	5.00	5.40	4.40	4.80	4.20	4.20	4.00	4.00	0.79
The threat of the destruction of the cultural bases of the identity of the population	3.00	4.20	4.40	5.20	4.40	4.00	4.80	4.60	3.00	3.20	3.00	0.69
The threat of a crisis of cultural identity in various population groups	3.83	4.50	4.83	5.33	5.33	4.67	5.17	4.50	2.83	3.67	3.17	0.76
RISK STATUS	3.65	3.70	4.06	4.54	4.43	3.71	4.81	4.04	2.65	3.16	3.01	

Assessing the effectiveness of measures to ensure and improve the level of socio-cultural security in Russia's regions, experts identified the improvement of methods of managing socio-cultural risks in the region as the least used measure (expressed by 23.3%). The most effective measures are often as follows: education of a cautious attitude towards the cultural heritage among high school students (60.0%), propaganda of tolerant, friendly attitude towards people of different nationalities and religions (44.8%), strengthening of public control at all stages of implementation of cultural policy (43.3%) and increased economic sanctions against enterprises that violate socio-cultural security (40.0%). The introduction of market mechanisms for regulating the socio-cultural sphere is often not mentioned as effective (46.7%).

Data was indexed and then ranked (Table 3) in order to obtain more reliable data on the effectiveness of the measures proposed for the evaluation.

Table-3. The Effectiveness of Measures for Improving and Ensuring Environmental Safety

Measures to reduce environmental risks	The measure has not been applied, %	Ineffective, %	Partially effective, %	Completely effective, %	Efficiency index	Ranking measures by degree of effectiveness
Adoption of new laws that increase the official responsibility for violations of socio-cultural security	16.7	16.7	53.3	13.3	0.61	10
Improvement of law enforcement practice under existing legislation	3.3	20	56.7	20	0.64	8
Strengthening of economic sanctions against organizations and institutions and their leaders that violate socio-cultural security	10	16.7	33.3	40	0.70	5
Strengthening of economic sanctions against violators	10	26.7	26.7	36.7	0.62	9
Toughening of administrative sanctions	3.3	26.7	40	30	0.62	9
Strengthening of public control at all stages of cultural policy implementation	10	13.3	33.3	43.3	0.73	4
Enhancing the role of artistic councils	16.7	20	40	23.3	0.62	9
Improvement of socio-cultural risk management	23.3	13.3	40	23.3	0.65	7
Introduction of market mechanisms for regulating the socio-cultural sphere	16.7	46.7	30	6.7	0.77	3
Cultivating respect for the cultural heritage among high school students	0	6.7	33.3	60	0.90	1
Propaganda of a tolerant, benevolent attitude among the population towards people with different national and religious cultures	0	10.3	44.8	44.8	0.78	2
Informing the public about the level and causes of sociocultural risks	13.3	13.3	50	23.3	0.67	6

According to results of indexing and ranking measures, “raising a respect for the cultural heritage among secondary school students” can be attributed to the most effective group (index 0.9); less effective but quite significant groups are “propaganda of tolerant, benevolent attitude among the population towards people with different national and religious culture” (0.78), “the introduction of market mechanisms for regulating the socio-cultural sphere” (0.77).

The least effective measures are “adoption of new laws that increase official responsibility for violations of socio-cultural security” (0.61), “toughening administrative sanctions”, “strengthening economic sanctions against violators” and “enhancing the role of artistic councils” (0.62, respectively).

The impact of each threat to the socio-cultural sphere on the quality of life of Russians and its social indicators was assessed in the conclusion of an all-Russian expert survey. According to results of the expert evaluation, the social impact index was calculated, which allowed determining the most significant threats to the socio-cultural sphere, those emergency situations that most likely cause the implementation of social risks of reducing quality of life, increasing protest activity, increasing migration and unemployment, etc. (Table 1, columns 9, 10). According to calculations, emergency situations have the greatest impact on the occurrence of social risks associated with threats of the destruction of the cultural foundations of the national-ethnic and religious identity of the population (0.78) and threats of a crisis of cultural identity in various population groups (0.73). The least affected are acts of vandalism and abuse of historical monuments (0.0). The overall index of the influence of the socio-cultural environment on social risks can be characterized as a value above the average (0.60).

4. Conclusion

As a result of study, we came to understanding of structure and significance of existing threats to the socio-cultural sphere in Russia. Thanks to the proposed and calculated analytical indices, it became possible to determine the perspective of managerial search and tasks in the socio-cultural sphere in the context of managing its risks and increasing the level of socio-cultural security. Therefore, the first tasks facing the administrative structures of Russian territories was to reduce the frequency of emergencies such as the destruction of historical and cultural objects in the region, the loss of historical memory in various population groups, the change or loss of cultural traditions, the destruction of moral values and moral standards among the population. The second task was also important covering an increase in the level of social security, ensuring a quick response to the eradication of the threat in the event of such situations as the destruction of historical and cultural sites in the region, the threat of destruction of the cultural bases of the national-ethnic and religious identity of the population, and the threat of a crisis of cultural identity in populations.

The third challenge of managing the social and cultural sphere was related to regulating the level of social influence, preventing a decline in the quality of life, social tension and dissatisfaction in the event of such social and cultural threats as destruction of historical and cultural objects in the region, loss of historical memory in various population groups, the threat of a crisis of cultural identity in various groups of the population, the threat of the destruction of cultural foundations of national-ethnic and religious identity of population.

The fourth task could be designated as the risk adjustment and management, especially in relation to such situations as manifestations of discrimination, violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens, unauthorized demolition of monuments, and the destruction of historical and cultural sites in the region. Control over risks with a high status of influence provoking the emergence of socio-cultural threats requires the special focus. In terms of status, we attributed to the human factor, insufficient state attention, and weak educational work at school.

The fifth challenge was to form effective programs to improve the socio-cultural security of the Russian regions, to take advantage of such measures as fostering respect for the cultural heritage of middle school students, promoting a tolerant, benevolent attitude to people with different national and religious cultures, and introducing market-based regulatory mechanisms for socio-cultural sphere and strengthening of public control at all stages of the implementation of cultural policy.

There is simultaneously a need to improve the effectiveness of the following measures: the adoption of new laws that increase official responsibility for violations of socio-cultural security; increased economic sanctions against violators; the improvement of law enforcement practice within the framework of existing legislation.

The conducted examination of the social and cultural environment of Russia, the revealed significance of its threats, risks and consequences of emergency situations lead us to an understanding of the importance of managing risk fields creating a risk map of Russian regions.

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