

Preface

This thesis examines the relationship between government and society in shaping and manipulating perceptions – or even illusions – of culture and identity in contemporary Russia. Russia’s relationship with the larger world is arguably playing out in a revisionist post-Soviet era framework, particularly since Vladimir Putin first assumed the role of Acting President of the Russian Federation, following the resignation of Boris Yeltsin, in December 1999. Since, the Russian government has sought to create a perception of a healthy public space within representative democratic structure of government. This is a perception the government of Vladimir Putin is committed to maintaining.

This study examines the use of music to persuade, create support for, or marginalize or eliminate meaningful dissent and opposition to the agendas of power elites within the governing structure of the Russian Federation. The concepts of the “real” and the “assumed” in the relationship between contemporary Russian music and politics is examined to highlight the role of existing scholarship in exploring this issue as well as identify the perspective and approach taken in the study. Other aspects of this topic examined include the history and context of the use of music by power elites in both the Soviet Era and the current Federation era to identify and examine the consistent role of music in shaping Russian culture and identity to support the vested interests of Russian power elites, regardless of era, and the roles of individual illusory cultural actors in the relationship between Russian music and politics.

This thesis concludes that there is a consistent thread that connects the Soviet era and the current Federation era in Russia, in terms of the power structure's use of music to shape and manipulate perceptions and interpretations of the public space to support the vested political interests of power elites. Additionally, this shaping and manipulation has entered a new phase in which the facilitation of particular cultural actors, groups and expression is emphasized over suppression.