

УДК: 32.019.51

НАСКОЛЬКО ВОЗМОЖНА ОТМЕНА ПРИЗЫВНОЙ СЛУЖБЫ В РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ: ДИСКУРСА-АНАЛИЗ ИДЕАЛОВ РОССИЙСКИХ ПОЛИТИКОВ

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Статья посвящена дискурсивному анализу риторики известных российских политиков с конечной целью выявить их идеи относительно службы в армии. Автор полагает, что в силу давней традиции в СССР относить военную службу к «долгу» современные российские политики разделяют схожие идеалы, которые можно выявить посредством дискурсивной экспертизы. И именно поэтому полный переход на контрактную армию выглядит туманным.

В первой части статьи исследуются либеральная (современная Россия) и республиканская (СССР) концепции гражданства. Затем следует юридический анализ статей о воинской повинности советской и российской конституций. И, наконец, в статье исследуется дискурс президента Путина, г-на Пескова, министра Шойгу и бывшего премьер-министра Медведева. В заключении делается попытка ответить на вопрос, видят ли видные российские политики полноценный переход на контрактную армию в будущем.

Ключевые слова: военная служба, призыв на военную службу, дискурс-анализ, контент-анализ, Российская Федерация, военная политика России, идеалы гражданства

HOW POSSIBLE IS THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE CONSCRIPT MILITARY SERVICE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN HIGH-PROFILE POLITICIANS' IDEALS

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This paper is devoted to the discourse analysis of Russian high-profile politicians with the ultimate goal to reveal their ideals regarding military service. The author assumes that due to the long-existing tradition in the USSR of referring to the military service as a “duty” modern Russian politicians share similar ideals which can be exposed via discourse examination. And that’s why the full transition to the contract army seems vague.

The first part of the paper studies the liberal (modern Russia) and republican (USSR) concepts of citizenship. Then follows the legal analysis of the Articles referring to the military service of Soviet and Russian Constitutions. And finally, this paper examines the discourse of President Putin, Mr. Peskov, Minister Shoigu, and former Prime Minister Medvedev. The conclusion tries to answer the question of whether high-profile Russian politicians see the full transition to the contract army in the future

Keywords: military service, conscription, discourse analysis, content analysis, the Russian Federation, Russian military policy, citizenship ideals

Military service was for a long time an integral aspect of both republican and liberal theories of citizenship. From Ancient Greece to the Englishmen France any male citizen was obliged to protect his Motherland or polis. Even more, it was not so much an obligation as an honorable duty. Baggiarini (2014) mentions the existence of a soldier-citizen archetype. In his view, the state sacralized the image of the sacrifice made by the soldiers in order to deepen the national fervor. However, the times have changed and in the XXI century, these ideals do not seem to be quite sustainable. Moreover, states tend to rely more on contract army or mercenaries and wage aggressive wars which have nothing to do with the defense of the Motherland and the sacralized image of a soldier-defender. (Baggiarini, 2014)

Nevertheless, Russian public discourse still has a strong association with the civil virtue of military deeds. The cult of militarism can be seen in different aspects such as Media, public diplomacy (Sputnik, Rossotrudnichestvo), school education, especially in promoting bellicose national memory in history. Additionally, it is widespread in the discourse of high-profile politicians, exemplified in President Putin's address to the Federal Assembly in 2015 and in other public speeches by him or by other politicians. (Cancian & Newlin, 2020, p. 24)

That is one of the reasons why Russia still has more than 50% of conscript recruitment. According to the chairman of defense Victor Bondarev, the Russian army has only around 400,000 thousand of contract soldiers which is roughly 45% out of the whole number of the Russian armed forces. (Gavrilov, 2020) There are several possible angles on how we can look at the question of why Russia cannot fully rely on the contract army, they are economic, political, military. Although, this essay aims at providing an ideological approach to the matter connecting the remainder of the

conscript army with the Soviet legacy i.e. the remnants of republican citizenship views of high-profile Russian politicians.

The **research question** is “*How the Soviet republican citizenship ideals on the matters of military service are revealed in the discourse of Russian high-profile politicians?*” The **research tasks** are:

1. Define the liberal, republican and Soviet-republican citizenship models.
2. Examine how matters of military service were defined in the Soviet legislature.
3. Analyze the discourse of high-profile Russian politicians (namely, incumbent Russian President Vladimir Putin, former Prime Minister Anatoly Medvedev, Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, and Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu) by the Qualitative Content Analysis in order to find the references to the Soviet rhetoric.

The **theoretical framework** of the essay is the concept of citizenship within the Social Constructivism paradigm. The choice of *constructed citizenship* model was made primarily due to the lack of lustrations in post-Soviet time in Russia and the transition of governmental actors from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation power system. In that case, two ideological frameworks namely communist and liberal overlapped and evolved into a new peculiar to the Russian Federation citizenship concept which in the 2010s also partly adopted the religious agenda. (Lohr, 2014, p.10) Also, the social constructivism paradigm was chosen for the sake of application of content analysis as long as it studies the changes in citizenship via discourse.

The **timeline of the research** is from 2010-2020. This timeline is chosen because of two reasons. Firstly, the contract army reform was not in full swing in the 2000s. And secondly, due to the turmoils of the 2010s and acceleration of civil society participation in politics, the power actors

started to discuss publicly the matters of state more often and due to these reasons. Thus it will be easier to implement the Qualitative Content Analysis within the given timeframe.

The **method of the research** is Qualitative Content Analysis. In this essay, the main focus is on the manifest content which is revealed via texts and speeches. The research is conducted in a deductive manner. The suggested *main category* of the research is “Military service is a constitutional duty of Russian citizens and since then the idea of a fully contracted army is rejected.” Based on this presumed category I will unveil the discourse in order to find the *generic category* and the *sub-categories*. The *unit of analysis* in the case is the sentence which is at the same time the main category. (White & March, 2006)

1. Republican and Liberal Citizenship Concepts

Aristotle understand the concept of citizenship as participation in the life of a polis. He emphasizes that “a citizen is not a citizen because he lives in a certain place (by that Aristotle was rejecting jus soli), for resident aliens and slaves share in the same place.” (Ivic, 2016) To be a good citizen, according to Aristotle, is to obey or to rule wisely and contribute to the political life of a polis. The Greek tradition is then called republican, although it has not so much in common with modern republican citizenships stemming from the revolutions of late XVIII. In Roman Empire, the idea of citizenship was different from the Greek concept. Everyone had a right to be a citizen, even those who were not born in Rome itself. Thus the Roman law introduced a more universal concept of citizenship than the one that existed in Ancient Greece. Romans did not bind the citizens to political participation. The Roman view on citizenship was the origin of the liberal tradition. (Ivic, 2016)

But despite such a long-lasting background, these two concepts of citizenship were finally shaped as late as in the XVIII century. Ivic (2016) and Brubaker (1989) link the emergence of the

liberal citizenship concept with the Great French revolution of 1789. The main difference from the ancien régime these researchers see in the increased importance of law in defining the citizen-state relations. The four factors contributed to the process of creating liberal citizenship ideas the onset of the industrial revolution, national-building, territorial and administrative centralization, and the emergence of classes. (Brubaker, 1989)

But the most crucial aspect for the development of active voluntary citizens' participation was the codification of rights and obligations in the American Constitution of 1789 and in the Declaration of Man and Citizen of 1789. Thus, the liberal citizenship ideals are characterized by the formulation of egalitarian order, granting equal rights to all the citizens, involvement of citizens in the decision-making, and arranging the verbal rules, customs, and traditions into the written laws. (Brubaker, 1989)

The period of the XVIII-XIX century was not only marked by the emergence of liberal citizenship but also saw the rebirth of the republican model. It was somewhat different from the republican citizenship of Ancient Greek polis. The modern republican concept of citizenship shares some basic premises of the liberal concept such as equality of citizens before the law, non-violations of basic human rights while in some key aspects it differs from the liberal understanding of citizenship. The republican paradigm goes hand in hand with civic virtues. In order to be acknowledged as a citizen, an individual has to align with the nationally accepted norms and realize himself/herself through active participation in collective projects and institutions. Republican citizenship often entails the notion of civic duty which stands for the socio-economic responsibilities of an individual. (Ginsburg, 1983)

The best illustration of republican citizenship in the XX century is the USSR. Every Soviet citizen had rights and obligations, or to be more precise, obligations in case of fulfilling which a

citizen could be viewed as a citizen. (Ginsburg, 1966) The right and at the same time obligation to labor can be a good example of how duties and obligations were intertwined in Soviet law. If a Soviet citizen was employed (Constitution of 1977, Article 60) then he or she could receive a free apartment, free healthcare, free education for him/herself or the kids. However, if a Soviet citizen was unemployed and thus violating Article 60 of the Soviet Constitution he was subjected to the 209 Article of Criminal Law and was deprived of housing, healthcare, and other services, which effectively deprived him/her of the citizen status.

The Soviet model was also different from other republican and liberal models by rejecting the idea of a nation-state. It happened right from the start in 1918 when the Soviet power was established on the minor part of the Russian Empire. In the 1920s the Soviet Russia and then the Soviet Union launched a program of inviting workers and peasants from all over the world while restricting access to the ethnic Russians who immigrated abroad because of their bourgeois or noble origin. (Lohr, 2014, p.8) “Class enemies” despite their ethnicity could never be granted a citizen status of the “County of Workers and Peasants.”

Moreover, the Soviet law allowed acquiring the citizen status by *jus sanguinis*. However, the practices of naturalization, restricting access for foreigners, and the rules of domiciles narrowed down the option of acquiring a Soviet citizen by kids whose parents were Soviet citizens living abroad. (Ginsburg, 1983) Lambelet (1989) adds to the argument by defining the source of power and rights in the Soviet Union within the State, which is called the “perfect embodiment of the Soviet people.” Thus, a citizen could get rights i.e. become a citizen only through the state. Nevertheless, Shevel (2012) argues that the promotion of a supranational model of Soviet people over national as the basis for new Soviet citizenship by the Communist party is misleading because

in reality the Communist party “*provided a social, cultural, and ideological basis for the territorialization of ethnicity.*”

2. The Soviet Justification of Conscript Military Service

The obligation to serve in the Soviet Armed Forces was enshrined in the main legal document of the country - in the Constitution and also in the peculiar documents on military service. At the dawn of the Soviet state, only workers and peasants were recruited to the Army. (Presidential Library, n.d.) The law of 1930 “On the obligatory military service” continued the same class rhetoric, reflecting the official communist denationalized class approach of the state, limiting the scope of conscripts to the Red Workers’- Peasants’ Army by the representatives of those social classes (Presidential Library, n.d.).

However, a law adopted in 1939 “On the universal military duty” made no discriminatory class religious or ethnic regulations on the military service while the Constitution of 1936 established and reformulated the military service as a “sacred duty” of any Soviet male citizen (Constitution 1936, Article 133), defining the high treason such as “espionage,” “damage to the military power of the state,” and “reneging” as the “severe atrocity” (tyzhkoe zlodeyanie). The very name of the Armed Forces underwent dramatic changes, and in 1946 was changed into the “Soviet Army.” The evasion of the “sacred duty” was punished by a prison term of 1 to 3 years. (Law of 1958, Article 17) These changes mirrored the deferral from the idea of a World Revolution and attempts to build a socialist regime “in a single country” promoted by Stalin. These both domestic and international policy modifications also stand for the rise of a reborn national idea on the territory of the former Russian Empire but with a new Marxist basis. (Bolozkich, 2018)

Additionally, during Stalin's epoch, the practices of conscientious objections established by Lenin's Degree of 1919 were effectively canceled by the 1939 law and were not renewed until the collapse of the USSR. (Amnesty International, 1997)

The changes in the formulation of the duty were made in the Constitution of 1977 (Article 63) which pronounced that "*Military service in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the USSR is an honorable duty of Soviet citizens*". This article also did not provide the definitions of high treason as the Article of Constitution 1936 did. The punishment for the evasion from the military service was not changed and remained as in 1958 the prison term from 1 to 3 years.

Thus, after a short period of experiments in the early years of the Soviet state in the 1930s the military policy was dramatically changed. From the revolutionary army recruiting only the workers and peasants, the Soviet army evolved into a nation-state (Soviet) army with the obligation of all the male citizens to fulfill their sacred and honorable duty.

3. How the Military Ideals of Soviet Legacy are Reflected in the High-Profile Russian Politicians Discourse?

For the sake of this research, I chose the public speeches and interviews of high-profile Russian politicians including the incumbent Russian President Vladimir Putin, former Prime Minister Anatoly Medvedev, Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, and Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu.

In the realities of an autocratic regime, the official policy is often reflected in the discourse of high-profile politicians. In a political environment with a lack of competition what is said by the leaders is often translated into concrete policy. Since then, this essay is aimed at the analysis of the most influential Russian politicians only, without the subsequent Mass Media analysis as

long as this research assumes that the state-owned Mass Media merely reflect the official standpoint of the politicians as Guriev suggests in his work on informational autocracies. (Guriev & Threisman, 2019)

The sources represented in this chapter reflect the key points of the high-profile politicians' discourse. The full scope of the analyzed speeches is bigger than the ones presented here. It accounts for approximately 30 different speeches, addresses, and interviews, the key focus is given to the examination of President Putin's discourse.

Sub-category	Generic Category	Main Category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Military service ● Constitutional duty ● Absolute constitutional obligation ● Personal tragedy (lychnay katastropha) ● Fulfilment of constitutional duty ● Civil duty 	<p>1. The military service is the Constitutional duty of Russian citizens</p> <p>2. The Russian army will never be fully contractual</p>	<p>Military service is a constitutional duty of Russian citizens and since then the idea of the fully contracted army is rejected</p>

During his tenure in Presidency Dmitry Medvedev visited one of the military units where he gave an interview. He said, “*the one who is called to serve must understand that this is not some kind of Personal tragedy (lychnay katastropha), as some sometimes perceive it, but the **fulfillment of a constitutional duty in normal modern conditions.***” (РИА Новости, 2010) In this quote Mr. Medvedev appeals to the Constitution and the “duty” enshrined in law. Nonetheless, Anatoly

Medvedev made a deliberate or unintentional mistake calling the military service but not the “defense of Motherland” a constitutional duty.

Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov at the press conference in February announced that the conscript will not be canceled anytime soon because “*Military service is a **constitutional obligation** of citizens of the Russian Federation, it remains. Therefore, here, as they say, one can express a personal opinion, but at the same time one must proceed from the fact that this is an **absolute constitutional obligation** of citizens of the Russian Federation.*” (РБК, 2021)¹

In 2015 Shoigu similarly expressed himself saying that the army “*needs those who will **fulfill their civic duty**, undergo appropriate training and education.*” (Интерфакс, 2018)

However, President Putin’s position on the conscript army is not consistent and quite different from the mentioned Medvedev, Shoigu, and Peskov positions. In 2002 he asserted that “*We will **strive to recruit the army on a contract basis**, but the economy does not allow this quickly.*” (РИА Новости, 2002) Nevertheless, in 2008 he expressed his consent with the preservation of the conscript army “*The State Duma made an absolutely balanced, correct decision, reducing military service to 12 months, but at the same time **maintaining the draft***” (РИА Новости, 2008).

In 2017 the Russian President changed his position again and proclaimed that “*We must bear in mind that we are gradually **moving away from conscription service altogether**.*” (Rambler, 2017). Later in September of 2018 President repeated the position which he uttered 11 years ago “*Initially it was planned, there were ideas, to create an entirely contract army. Then we looked, analyzed the experience of many countries of the world, and nevertheless, **the draft remains in almost most countries of the world.***” (Интерфакс, 2018a) Two years later he reaffirmed the plans

¹ It looks like the confusion of which provision of Article 59 entails the wording “duty.” It is the “Defence of Motherland” (Article 59.1) but not the provision on the “conscript military service” (Article 59.2)

on moving away from the conscript army “*The draft is gradually becoming a thing of the past.*” (Интерфакс, 2019) In April 2019 Vladimir Putin again said that he does not dismiss the idea of a fully contracted army because of the increased complication of military equipment, and the need for professionals to manage it. (РБК, 2019b)

Nevertheless, in none of the examined sources, President Putin uses the word “duty.” He primarily refers to the economic and pragmatic need of keeping or dismissing the draft.

Conclusion

To sum up the research I would like to draw a parallel between the Soviet laws on military service and the current Russian laws. In the same way, Article 63 of the Soviet Constitution of 1977 formulated the obligation of Soviet citizens to serve in the Soviet Army the Article 59 of the Russian Constitution proclaims the Defense of Motherland to be a “*duty and obligation of any Russian citizen.*” Nonetheless, the military service itself is defined dryly as following “*A citizen of the Russian Federation carries out military service in accordance with federal law*” (Constitution of 1993, Article 59). This article also has a provision allowing conscientious objection. The Federal Law of 1998 on military service has references to the duty in the same places as in the Constitution specifically referring to the defense of the Motherland (Federal Law of 1998, Preamble & Article 4). Despite the legal mitigation, the criminal responsibility for the evasion of a military conscript is still in place (Article 328 of Criminal Law).

As this research shows, the ideals of Soviet republican citizenship are articulated in the discourse of high-profile Russian politicians. First of all, the common pattern observed in the speeches of Peskov, Medvedev, Shoigu is the swap of the wording “defense of Motherland” for the “military service.” It is hard to conclude how deliberate this change in wording is, however, the “defense of Motherland” is a duty of any Russian citizen, while the conscript is obligatory only

for males. That is an interesting mixture of Soviet republican ideals still alive in the discourse of examined politicians. Secondly, the wording “Constitutional duty” is repeated by the Mass Media (Pravda, Interfax, Rambler, Gazeta.ru, social media groups, etc.), not only state-owned but also private. I assume that this is a deliberate distortion of meaning aimed at forming the idea of “duty” among the population. It is early to come to any conclusions, however, the preliminary conclusion of this research is that the Soviet republican ideals on military service are deliberately fostered in the public consciousness. This conclusion does not reject the fact that the people who express these ideals personally believe in them due to their Soviet upbringing. At this point I came close to the issue of lustrations, that can be a potential direction for the expansion of this research.

An intriguing finding was the absence of the mentioning of the word “duty” in reference to military service in the discourse of President Putin. I think that such shifts in the discourse might be connected with the political rating and an ambition to gain public support. In order to check this hypothesis, another research should be conducted which would compare the results of public polls devoted to the draft and changes in President Putin's discourse. The subsequent changes in the political rating should also be kept in mind.

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