

Vilnius University

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Eastern European and Russian Studies Program

MA Seminar

ABIGAIL, WESTON

2<sup>nd</sup> Year

THE RUSSIAN FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR  
THROUGH CULTURE

Master's Thesis

Tutor. Dr. doc. Vladas Sirutavičius

Vilnius 2023

MASTER'S THESIS FLYLEAF

**Conclusions of the tutor of the Master's thesis (concerning the public defence):**

.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
(date)                      (name, surname)                      (signature)                      .....

**The Master's thesis has been submitted to the Commission of Defence:**

.....  
(date)                      (signature of the secretary of the Commission of Defence)

**Reviewer of the thesis:**

.....  
(name, surname)

**Evaluation of the Commission of Defence:**

.....

Head of the commission:  
Members of the commission:

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY

*Weston, Abigail: The Analysis of Cultural Impacts on FSB Behavior:* Master in Eastern European and Russian Studies program, Master thesis / Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science; tutor: Dr. Docent Vladas Sirutavičius Vilnius, 2023. – 70 pages

**Key words:** Security Services, FSB, Goals, Cultural Topography Method

**Summary:** This research explores, discusses, defines, and categorizes cultural attributes that have potential impacts, both positively and negatively, the FSBs behavior towards agency goals. These cultural attributes can be found using the cultural topography method through which cultural traits are categorized into identities, norms, values, and perceptual lens. Under this analysis, the identified cultural attributes will be applied toward the agencies three main goals in order to gain an understanding of the FSBs behavior regarding the maintenance of the agency's goals in both positive and negative aspects.

## Confirmation

I confirm that I am the author of submitted thesis: *THE RUSSIAN FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR THROUGH CULTURE*, which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania, or abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list which indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no un-used sources.

Abigail, Weston

Signature

### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

Cheka: All-Russian Extraordinary Commission

FAPSI: Federal Agency of Government Communication and Information

FSB: Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

FSKN: Federal Drug Control Service of Russia

GRU: Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

KGB: Committee for State Security

MVD: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NG: National Guard

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NKVD: The Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs

SVR: Foreign Intelligence Service

## Index

Introduction.....	7
Methodology.....	10
Literature Review.....	14
Political Contexts.....	15
Historical Contexts.....	16
Other Key Works.....	17
Chapter 1: Identity Traits.....	20
We are a continuation of our forefathers.....	20
We are the protectors of Russia.....	26
Chapter 2: Norms.....	33
Factionalism.....	33
Corruption.....	40
Chapter 3: Values.....	45
Veneration of World War II and its Veterans.....	46
Veneration of Yuri Andropov.....	49
Chapter 4: Perceptual Lens.....	53
Russia vs. West.....	54
Russia vs. Population.....	56
Research Conclusions.....	60
Paper Conclusions.....	62

## Introduction

Since the end of the Soviet Union many scholars, academics, analysts, and policymakers alike have written and spoken about the nature of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) in attempts to understand the organization. It is easy to conclude that the FSB is merely a product of a KGB legacy with perhaps some influences from Vladimir Putin scattered throughout. This view does not take into consideration the deeply influential strategic culture that is ingrained within the organization that has the potential to have significant impacts on the behavior of the FSB; especially when focusing on motivating behaviors and agency goals. It cannot be overstated that the impact of loyalties toward the current Russian President Vladimir Putin have a significant impact on the FSB, similarly the KGB had a profound impact, but these are not the only issues at play when discussing the FSB. It is through deep strategic culture analysis that we can ascertain important and impactful behavior of the organization that will be incredibly valuable in understanding the motivating forces behind the FSB.

The problem that this research will discuss addresses the concept of culture having an impact on the FSB including how to determine which cultural traits are impactful and where these traits originated from, and to determine the effect that these traits can have on the goals of the FSB. Though many learned authors such as Brian Taylor<sup>i</sup> and Mark Galeotti<sup>ii</sup> have written extensively about the FSB neither of these authors explain why the agency behaves in such a manner. Both authors do come close by analyzing specific actions taken by the FSB and then giving behavioral context towards those actions however they do not discuss the origins of this behavior, nor do they explain the cultural relevance of such behavior in relation to specific actions. Many well-known authors have done significant work towards documenting cultural attributes however delving into the long-term effects of an organizations culture is an area that has been neglected within academia. Rather, it is common to analyze the actions of the FSB without considering the historical or political background that is associated with the agency and has helped create culture. In addition, many of these works give quite brief behavioral conclusions rather than a comprehensive in-depth cultural analysis of the behavior. In tandem with this concept, the culture of the FSB should be considered an important aspect of knowledge as it may very well have an influence on the way in which the FSB maintains its agency goals.

An agencies goals can be both formal and informal with formal goals coming from state laws. One of the formal goals of the FSB laid out in Russian law is stated as follows in Article 12

of the Laws of the Russian Federation on the Federal Security Service of Russia “obtain intelligence information in the interests of safeguarding the security of the Russian Federation and enhancing its economic, scientific/technical and defense capacity”<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, the FSB also holds informal goals that may not be codified into law but are still important to discuss and understand. These informal goals can be found primarily through documented actions within academic work and through presidential direction. In essence, these informal goals can be boiled down to three main points: 1. Maintain the current security apparatus hierarchy with the FSB at the top<sup>2</sup>. As there is much competition and rivalry between security agencies within the Russian security apparatus it is important for the FSB to remain at the top of the hierarchy. 2. Maintain the current regime<sup>3</sup>; this goal can be seen as the agency wanting the regime that has given the agency an immense amount of power to remain in control of the Russian government. 3. Expand the power and influence of the FSB<sup>4</sup>; this goal is focused on the survival of the FSB through the use of power expansion into both other agency territories and, in some cases, into criminal territory in an effort to ensure that the FSB continually grows.

Each of these goals can be shown throughout the actions of the FSB in creating opportunities for itself and maintaining its own position throughout the years including the behaviors that the FSB exhibits. Within this context, this research will not only ascertain main cultural traits of the FSB, but it will also explain how those traits impact the goals of the FSB through behavior. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is as such: What are the cultural aspects that influence the FSB’s behavior and how do those aspects effect the FSBs informal goals? Thus, the goal of this paper is to understand what cultural aspects that influence FSB behavior and goals. To achieve this goal, we must first analyze the political and historical contexts and narratives that are common throughout the FSB. Second, we must categorize the data from the political and historical contexts into cultural traits. Third, we must apply cultural analysis towards the goals of the FSB with a focus on the behavior that is impacted by culture. At this point, it is important to

---

<sup>1</sup> European Commission For Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), “Federal Law on the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation”, <https://policehumanrightsresources.org/content/uploads/2016/08/Federal-Law-on-Federal-Security-Service-Russia-1995.pdf?x96812>, Strasbourg, 24 February 2012. (Accessed January 3, 2023)

<sup>2</sup> Mark Galeotti, “Putin’s Hydra: Inside Russia’s Intelligence Services”, *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2016.; Eberhard Schneider, “The Russian Federal Security service under Putin”, *Politics and the Ruling Group in Putin’s Russia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> President of Russia, “Federal Security Service Board meeting: The President held a meeting of the FSB Board”, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65068>, 24 February 2021. (Accessed January 3, 2023)

<sup>4</sup> Andrei, Soldatov, Irina, Borogan, “The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia’s Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB”, (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), E-book.



note the basic premise of this research resting on the assumption that all rationality is culturally encoded and therefore may hold preferred modes of behavior or decision making that can have both positive and negative impacts on an organization's goals.

This research is not only intriguing but also important though some might argue that this type of research does not have practical value as it is notoriously difficult to determine cultural characteristics and prove that they do have influence in behavior. However, those who view cultural behavioral studies in a mathematical data-oriented way will often disregard the human aspect of the research object. In this case, the FSB being the object of research for this thesis has its own unique characteristics and agendas as it is still run by people who have internalized cultural behavior and characteristics that may not be transferable to data analysis. In light of this type of analysis, it is important to allow the cultural patterns and data to guide the researcher rather than beginning with a rigid hypothesis and gathering data to support said hypothesis. Within terms of practicality, it is important to gain an understanding of FSB culture through guiding cultural patterns in order to understand the ways in which culture is impactful towards the agencies goals with attention drawn toward both the positive and negative impacts of such cultural attributes. As most written literature on the FSB does not explicitly note cultural characteristics this thesis will give a basis for further research in the area of both Russian security service studies and Russian strategic culture studies.

Theoretically, this research will have great value due to two specific reasons being the methodology used and that this work will be focused solely on the FSB and its culture. The method of cultural topography is unique in that it is a multifaceted and multifocal approach to cultural analysis. The methodology section of this thesis will discuss the methods in greater length and detail, but it will suffice to say that this approach requires an enormous amount of cultural data to be considered useful. Furthermore, this is one of the very few works that are dedicated solely to FSB culture as many works touch briefly on cultural elements but do not write fully about cultural aspects within their own right. Additionally, this work will analyze and discuss the efficiency and goals of the FSB within the context of culture aspects and the influences those aspects may have upon these goals. In this way this thesis has great theoretical value as it not only combines contexts of culture while discussing how those aspects effect the goals of the agency. In combining these two issues this work will not only be an in-depth cultural analysis of the FSB, but it will also provide insight into how culture can be an influencing factor in reaching and attaining agency

goals. Therefore, this research will be highly beneficial towards both cultural studies within this context and Russian studies.

### **Methodology**

This thesis can be analyzed using many different types of methodologies with each having merit and research value. However, in order to fully analyze and contextually understand the behavior and actions of the FSB on a cultural level this research will be using the multifaceted approach of the cultural topography method to find, categorize, and analyze the cultural, historical, and political traits that influence the behavior and decision making of the FSB. To begin we will briefly discuss the definition of strategic culture for the purpose of this research, then we will discuss the origins of this method and how it will be used to analyze this research. Strategic culture is defined by Dr. Jeannie Johnson as “that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives”<sup>5</sup> this encompassing definition will be referred to throughout the research as both strategic culture and culture.

Next, we will discuss the method through which the FSBs strategic culture will be analyzed: The Cultural topography method. The cultural topography method was originally developed within the American Central Intelligence Agency by Dr. Jeannie Johnson and Matthew Barret as an intelligence tool for analyzing impactful cultural elements within groups, states, and organizations using political, historical, narrative, etc. analysis. For the purpose of this research there will be a focus on both historical and political analysis as conduits for cultural attributes. While this method takes elements from several different types of cultural analysis building upon the works of Colin S. Gray’s<sup>iii</sup> strategic culture work and other authors works, in conjunction towards cultural analysis, this method focuses on the overarching cultural characteristics of an organization and the categorization of cultural aspects as well as these cultural aspect impacts towards behavior. This method can be used for entirely practical uses within an intelligence field

---

<sup>5</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, “STRATEGIC CULTURE: REFINING THE THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT”, *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum*, 31 October 2006.

and can be used for the purpose of targeted analysis. However, this process is a shortened version of the academic process therefore we will be using the lengthy process of academically categorizing cultural attributes.

In order to categorize such topics, the method focuses on the historical, cultural, and political contexts which influence the behavior and strategic decision making of a group, in the case of this research the FSB. In order to understand the impacts of the aforementioned contexts it is necessary to categorize these traits or characteristics into four categories: identity, norms, values, and perceptual lens. Each of these cultural categories have a specific definition that are designed to find impactful cultural elements that have influences on behavior. According to this framework identity is defined as the character traits the group assigns to itself, the reputation it pursues, and individual roles and statuses it designates to members.<sup>6</sup> Norms are defined as accepted and expected modes of behavior.<sup>7</sup> Values are defined as material or ideational goods that are honored or that confer increased status to members.<sup>8</sup> Perceptual lens is defined as the filter through which this group determines “facts” about others.<sup>9</sup> Each of these cultural aspects holds specific information towards understanding the greater cultural context of the research object as one cannot discuss only a few of these aspect without discuss all four as each of them link to each other and provide a better picture of the FSBs culture and the behavior attached to the organization.

In terms of gathering data for the cultural analysis in this research, the data gathering process consisted of both academic and non-academic sources. From the academic sources, the cultural data was gathered through documented behaviors of the FSB including narratives, normality’s, world views, historical legacies, historical impacts, etc... In these ways, the academic sources have documented much cultural data without attributing the data to a cultural influence or impact. The non-academic sources used for this research are primarily found within the FSBs own website or the agencies written works. These sources are considered non-academic due to their origin and the fact that these are not peer reviewed work neither are these works subjected to rigorous information standards. However, these sources will provide primary evidence for cultural attributes as the agencies is communicating cultural information without the filter of academia,

---

<sup>6</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, Matthew T. Berrett, “Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis”, *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 55, No 2. June 2011, 6

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 6

rather these sources show how that agency thinks of itself which is extremely valuable towards understanding the FSBs culture.

As the research object of this thesis is the FSB the methods of research will be focused on gathering data about the FSB. However, it is important to understand how this will be done through the analysis of culture, history, society, and politics. This data will be gathered using three specific types of analysis those being historical analysis, content analysis, and narrative analysis. All of these types of analysis are instrumental in the collection and interpretation of cultural data as each of these analysis focus on different cultural threads. In order to gather the cultural data these different types of analysis must be used as cultural data is processed through a multifaceted that can include history, narrative, and society in order to establish pertinent identities, norms, values, and perceptual lens. The historical analysis will focus on gather the historical data that influences the FSBs behavior. However, historical data will also be gathered using content analysis. History plays a very important part in how a group perceives a potential threat as well as potential allies. Both content and narrative analysis will be used to gather data on culture through the sources focused on the political contexts. The gathering of political data is extremely important to this research as political narratives are important in understanding security issues and in turn security agendas. This will be used in tandem with content analysis to better understand political influences on the FSB including that of the political climate surrounding the FSB. By using this variety methods in order to gather all the necessary data the research will be not only more thorough, but it will also give a more accurate analysis of the FSB using the cultural topography method.

The key literature used in regard to methodology includes the works of Jeannie L. Johnson and Matthew T. Berrett whose works lay out a comprehensive framework for the cultural topography method. This method is not only described in detail the work titled "Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis" but it also defines the terms' identity, norms, values, and perceptual lens. The second main work that is used is written by Jeannie L. Johnson titled "Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct". This work describes the use of cultural topography incorporated into the strategic culture method as a way to supplement strategic culture. This work also explains how cultural topography and strategic culture work together in order to refine research and analysis. While there may be a small pool of key literature, the works described are extremely comprehensive and thorough in the explanations of the methods and how to use them effectively.

There will still be limitations and difficulties despite the works methodology and structure. The first and main limitation will be finding open-source materials as much analysis of the FSB will have been conducted by intelligence agencies and are most likely to be classified. This limitation has illustrated the necessity for creativity within resource gathering which can be difficult. The second limitation is language as the FSB is a Russian agency and therefore sources written in the Russian language should be used as much as possible. Of course, these sources will bring their own difficulties as censorship about the nature of the intelligence services is still rampant. The final difficulty in this work will be the amount of time and effort that is attributed to the strategic culture method including the finding and categorizing of cultural characteristics. However, even with these limitations and difficulties there are many ways in which the difficulties can be counteracted leading to a full analysis.

This method has a main focus on qualitative data rather than quantitative data as it is incredible hard to quantify cultural traits. However, this does not detract from the validity of this method as cultural aspects surround all societies and inevitably influence decision making and event processing. Many scholars would ignore cultural data as being “unscientific”, but I would argue that the analysis of cultural data is high risk with a high reward strategy. It is high risk as because the analysis of cultural data is often difficult and incredibly time consuming as one must often read articles several times through to ensure that all cultural contexts have been documented. Once this is done a situation can occur in which there is not enough information to give a proper solution to a research problem in this way this type of analysis can be seen as high risk. However, when one can find enough information and draw solid conclusions with this type of analysis it can give insightful new evidence of a cultural nature that can be used in not only an academic sense but also in a very practical sense. Therefore, this strategy can have a high reward and is worth using in the case of the FSB as per this research.

## Literature Review

For the purpose of this literature review the sources have been divided into contextual categories. This reasons for separating sources into contextual categories include the fact that the sources have been taken from a wide time period as it is important to show that cultural traits are not stagnant, rather they surface throughout the years and lie dormant for an extended period of time. Therefore, the categories of contexts within this literature review includes political contexts, historical contexts, and other works that remain as key sources but cannot be definitively placed within either the political or historical contexts. These contexts will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs. As stated previously the sources are from various different time periods that range from the late 1990s to the present day. The use of a variety of time periods is in fact a strength as it will be used to establish a pattern of culturally relevant behavior within the FSB from the creation of the new agency to the present in as much that the sources can provide accurate information within the present day. In addition, with a variety of time periods comes a fairly consistent timeline as key developments can be more easily accessed and understood in the context of the FSB organization. Therefore, the variety within many of the sources can be seen a strength within this research and should be considered as an important aspect within this research.

As we turn our attention toward the reasons behind separating the sources based on contextual categories. These sources will be divided into three separate contextual categories which will aid in showing the FSBs potential cultural attributes within different contexts as culture can be created within differential contexts. These three different categories are to be known as the political works, historical works, and other works. For the purpose of this research political works focus on the political influences and climate that surrounds the FSB. The historical works will focus on the influential legacies of the predecessors of the FSB. Finally, the category of other works will focus on key sources that do not fit squarely into the historical or political contexts but still hold valuable key information and data that can give an opportunity for further research within this thesis. Each of the contextual categories show the FSB in different forms of context which will be valuable in discovering the potential cultural aspects of the FSB that may become more prominent within these contexts. Each of these sources are regarded as key pieces of literature that have provided a significant amount of data within the context of this research. To begin this literature review will discuss the sources associated with the political context of the FSB and then

move on to the sources focusing on the historical context of the FSB; finally, this review will focus on the other works that are key to this research. After this robust discussion this literature review will turn to the limitations of these works focusing on the missing aspects of these sources that this research will have the opportunity to prove a solution.

### **Political Context**

For the purpose of this research the political context must be understood as the relationships between the Russian security services and the FSB. This context focuses on the tensions between the security services and how that might influence the culture of the FSB. The first main source that gives significant insight into the political situation is the article “Putin’s Hydra: Inside Russia’s Intelligence Services” authored by Mark Galeotti in 2016. In this work, Galeotti illustrates the tempestuous climate in which the FSB operates with significant detail into the breakdown of the individual tasks and duties each security service is charged with including an attention to the overlap in tasks and duties of all the security services. The article shows that there are extreme overlaps in duties, jurisdictions, and charges that have caused multiple turf wars between all the security services. This work shows that the political climate of the Russian security apparatus including the FSBs role within this climate being particularly close to Vladimir Putin and therefore have a precarious position as the top agency in the hierarchy. This work provides the basis for political contexts for the FSB which is extremely valuable as much of the FSBs culture can be seen to have been influenced by the political contexts that surround the organization.

The second work that is key to this political context is the article entitled “The Siloviki in Russian Politics” authored by Andrei Soldatov and Michael Rochlitz in 2018. This work gives insight into the internal and external politics of the FSB as on the internal side individuals within the FSB have their own agendas that do not necessarily line up with agenda of the organization. According to this work, the internal politics of the FSB provides an insight to the behavior of the FSB in terms of decision making. On the external side this work provides some examples of prominent narratives that are found within the upper echelons of the Russian security apparatus which are also shared within the FSB. These types of political narratives often focus on the West being a source of ire for Russia in conjunction with the idea that in order to be a great state Russia must have a strong central government. This work provides the basis for both the internal political situations within the FSB as well as external narratives that would be influential towards culture.

This work also provides additional basis for some of the norms that are found within the FSB in context with political climate and situation.

Both of these sources highly valuable towards political contexts provide the basis for political influences on the FSB. Therefore, both are very relevant toward this research and provide a prudent area in which to add new information via this research. However, these works do hold limitations within the scope of my research that is to say these works do not focus specifically on cultural aspects. These works do hold cultural value as the data and evidence that are given within these works can be analyzed within a cultural focus, but they do not explicitly state a data point as having cultural relevance. Therefore, there is a place for this new research to become pivotal within this topic and within the field of security studies.

### **Historical Contexts**

The sources that are important to understanding the historical contexts provide basic grounds for the historical legacies of the FSB. The first source that will be discussed is an article titled “The KGB and its Enduring Legacy” authored by Aaron Bateman in 2016. This source documents the impacting legacy of the KGB on the current Russian security services while also discussing the KGBs ancestors known as the Cheka. In addition, this source provides a robust discussion of other iterations of the security services between the end of the Cheka and the formation of the KGB. This background information will not be discussed in full detail for the purpose of this research, but it does show that the work is well rounded and detail oriented giving it more credence to being a key part of the literature. This work continues on by discussing the tasks of each agency including the aims and goals of each agency whether that be the grand idea of the safety of the state or simply detaining and exiling outspoken dissidents. This source also details the methods that previous security agency would use to accomplish the tasks and duties that were attributed to them. This work also touches on the influence these agencies would have on the FSB as it does describe the circumstances in the early 2000s that helped create the new agency under Boris Yeltsin. Due to the extensive and well researched overview of the Soviet security services this work provides a large amount of historical data that can also be analyzed from a cultural lens while providing the opportunity to continue research into the FSB specifically.

The next source that can be described as a key piece of literature within the historical context is an article titled “The Heritage and Future of the Russian Intelligence Community”



authored by Robert W. Pringle in 1998. One of the reasons that this source is a key piece of literature is that it is one of the oldest sources discussing the potential changes to the Russian intelligence community after the fall of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the KGB into nine different agencies including the FSB. This source also details the events that ultimately lead to the dissolution of the KGB in Russia as the agency had been instrumental in the putsch against Gorbachev in 1991. This incident did become highly influential to Yeltsin's decision to break up the KGB into separate directorates. In addition, this work includes the influence of the chaotic 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union on the newly made agencies including corruption, money laundering, and other criminal enterprises. This work provides proof to be important as a contemporary source being authored and published during the 1990s when many of these challenging situations that came as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union and which most likely can be seen to influence the FSB.

These two sources are very important in establishing the importance of historical legacy on the security services within Russia. In terms of cultural analysis, the impact of historical perception is incredibly important towards understanding an organization's culture. With these key sources we can see that there is credence to believing that the historical legacies of the Soviet security services have had an influence on the current FSB. Therefore, this type of data can be used to understand cultural aspects of the FSB, which is the goal of this research. While these sources do hold very important points, arguments, and data that shows that history is impactful, the sources do not give a satisfactory answer toward the cultural relevance of history within the context of the FSB. Therefore, the data within these sources is valuable as a starting point for cultural analysis in which one can research current data and new data in a way that is geared toward cultural significance. As this purpose of this research is to find and understand cultural attributes within the FSB, the data provided by these sources is valuable as a foundation of research.

### **Other Key Works**

The sources that are placed within this category cannot be placed within either the political or the historical contextual works. This is due to a variety of reasons including the fact that these sources are not written from a political or historical analysis perspective as well as the fact that at least one of these sources is an academic source. Rather, some of these sources come directly from the FSB in a non-academic context. These sources should not be excluded from being considered

as key sources due to the amount of cultural material that can be gained from such sources. For these reasons the following sources are categorized into a separate category from the other key sources as these sources will provide entirely different contexts surrounding the FSB and its culture which is very valuable for this research.

The first source within this category is an article titled “The FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian federal security service literature award competition, 2006-2018” authored by Filip Kovacevic in 2019. This work focuses on the literature competition held by the FSB which awards an honor to authors who write different types of literature that is satisfactory to the FSB. To begin, it is important to note that this source did not use either political or historical analysis as a basis of methodology rather the work is analyzed through content analysis of award winners. This source provides detailed accounts of the types of literature that the FSB wishes to promote especially those that are of fictitious nature but cast the FSB as not only a protagonist but one that is always justified. The author does not only focus on the winners of the competition but also on those who do not receive commendations with an especially close attention to the content written within those submissions. One of the most important aspects of this work is the fact that the data revealed by the content analysis can be seen as raw cultural data. As an important aspect of culture focuses on the way that an organization presents itself to the outside world and the idea that an organization would recommend works that are believed to be representative of the organization this source is crucial in providing the foundations for this type of cultural evidence. Therefore, this source is a valuable piece of literature in terms of finding and categorizing cultural data that will be potentially important to this research.

The second source is not an academic source, but it is key to giving extremely valuable cultural data and information as it comes entirely from an FSB perspective. This source is the FSB official website known under the web address <http://www.fsb.ru/> with this site documenting many different aspects of the FSB in both an official capacity and as an archive of many FSB documents and other important materials. This source provides a wealth of raw cultural data that has not been previously analyzed for the purpose of researching FSB cultural attributes. One of the reasons this source is so important is that much of the data that can be gathered is written in the words of the FSB as an agency meaning that much of the relevant cultural data can be gathered in a way that is most focused on the FSB. This source gives evidence towards many different cultural aspects though some would argue that this source is too biased to be used as a source. However, this is

untrue as culture is created due to a multitude of different circumstances and situations coming together there is no better source for understanding cultural aspects of the FSB than that of the FSB itself.

While all the literature above should be considered important towards this research there are areas in which my research can bridge a gap between the documented data and strategic culture analysis. Within the literature, it has been shown that the data that can be used within a cultural analysis has been well documented, but it has not been used in the capacity of strategic culture. The research provided within this thesis will gather this data and analyze it with the goal of creating a cultural study of the FSB. This will provide not only an in-depth discussion of the FSB culture, but it will also provide the data of goal-oriented behavior. While FSB behavior is also well documented it has, thus far, not been applied to the informal goals of the agency with most research focusing on very specific situations and actions taken by the agency rather than a broad overview of its informal goals. Therefore, this research will not only build upon previous works, but it will also provide insight into the ways in which culture can affect the goals of the FSB through culturally encoded behavior.

## Chapter 1: Identity Traits

In order to understand the complexities of these cultural aspects it is important to define the terms and explain how these aspects can be identified. Therefore, we will begin by first defining what an identity trait is and how these kinds of traits can be identified and categorized. As per the definition set out by Johnson and Barrett, identity traits are traits that a group ascribes to itself which give the group a sense of identity and belonging.<sup>10</sup> These traits are usually found within materials that illustrate or discuss how the group describes itself, it does not matter if the researcher believes what is being said about the group, it matters that the group ascribes these traits to themselves. That being said, identity can be carried through many different avenues of culture including other relevant contexts. When discussing the FSB, it is important to understand that many of the identity traits are carried through a historical context therefore much of the research within this section has historical connotations.

While there can be hundreds of identity traits found within one particular group this research will focus on two prominent traits for the sake of time and due to the limited number of resources that will be open to analysis. The two identity traits that have been chosen are not only the most prominent, but they also add insight into the behavior of the FSB. This is a good strategy due to the fact that there can be such a large amount of identity aspects that some are more influencing on behavior than others therefore it is best to focus on some of the ones that do influence behavior. The first identity trait that the research will discuss is the group assigned character trait of the FSB being the continuation and true successor of Soviet intelligence agencies namely the KGB and the Cheka. The second identity trait that this research will discuss focuses on the reputation that the FSB pursues being the protectors of the Russian state. Both of these identity traits are overwhelmingly influential towards the cultural behavior of the FSB and by thoroughly discussing these two traits this research will begin to make sense of the organization.

### **We are a Continuation of Our Forefathers**

It can be argued that history plays a large part in any organizations identity as it is common for cultural traits to pass through historical contexts. Both the historical and organizational continuity appear to be important for the FSB as its official website features a long list of every

---

<sup>10</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, Matthew T. Berrett, "Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis", *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 55, No. 2, June 2011, 6.

iteration of the intelligence organization starting with the Cheka and moving down to the KGB.<sup>11</sup> The timeline featured on the official website illustrates the prominence of continuity within the FSB along with the agency being concerned with the idea of historical legacy and the connections between the current organization and the Soviet past. It should be noted that the secret police forces of the tsars are completely absent from the historical timeline with an extreme focus on the soviet services. As the tsarist police forces were known to have imprisoned and persecuted the Bolshevik leaders and activists before the tsars were overthrown it is not a surprise that the FSB would focus on the Lenin's Cheka as its predecessor rather than the tsarist predecessors.

Based on the featured timeline it can be reasonably inferred that the Cheka holds pride of place within the FSB therefore it is not a great leap to infer that the Cheka has influenced the culture of the FSB. The other iteration that has had the most profound impact on the idea of continuity within the FSB is the KGB as it was the last organization before the FSB was formulated and it held the most political and social power within the Soviet Union in comparison to the previous organizations. The FSB website also claims to be the true successor of the KGB agency<sup>12</sup> which was broken up into nine different agencies after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Therefore, it would not be a stretch of the imagination to assume that the FSB continues to implement past KGB culture and agenda setting. In order to understand the identity trait of continuity we will examine the continuity in both agendas and fears that have been historically passed down from one organization to another which have ultimately been ingrained into the FSB by both the Cheka and the KGB.

We will first discuss the Cheka as it is the oldest direct organizational ancestor of the FSB being the first Bolshevik secret police force after the end of the tsarist regime. The Cheka was organized by Vladimir Lenin in 1917 almost immediately after the success of the 1917 revolution that expelled the tsars from the Russian throne. Originally, Lenin did not involve plans for a police force<sup>13</sup> let alone a political police force however with the Bolsheviks facing mass strikes as well as strong political opposition the need for an organized police force became necessary. The creation of the Cheka led to the mass repression of those who would oppose the shift to Bolshevism

---

<sup>11</sup> Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, "Story: History of Creation", *Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation*, 2022, <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/creation.htm>. (Accessed October 14, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Amanda M., Ward, "The Okhrana and the Cheka: Continuity and Change", *College of Arts and Science of Ohio University*, August 2014, 38.

in favor of both Mensheviks and the old tsarist regime. The organization soon became much more repressive and dangerous with hundreds being mass executed and thousands being sent to the Siberian wilderness for political crimes against the revolution.

Lenin charged Felix Dzerzhinsky “to establish a special commission to examine the possibility of combatting such a strike by the most energetic revolutionary measures and to determine methods of suppressing malicious sabotage”.<sup>14</sup> The organization that was formed in the wake of this charge being tasked with protecting the revolution by eliminating subversion and opposition forces through the use of terror and violence.<sup>15</sup> Effectively, the use of brutal methods of force was not only tolerated but it gave justification for the type of brutal force that created the Red Terror. Though within the scope of this thesis the Cheka’s actions during this time period will not be fully discussed within this thesis. The creation of a special commission with the specific agenda of eliminating subversion and opposition forces. This is an event that has a mirror image within the FSB as after its creation and the fall of the Soviet Union it was soon given special tasks and powers involving special commissions that did not necessarily fall within the main duties of the FSB. In terms of behavior, the FSB takes the idea of eliminating subversion and opposition through any means necessary is something that has stuck through the many iterations of the Cheka through to the FSB. This can be seen through the poisonings of both Litvinenko and Navalny as examples of how the elimination of opposition through any means is tolerated behavior. Both of these men had been extremely critical of the current Russian government with Litvinenko being an FSB defector and Navalny becoming a powerful opposition leader against President Putin. As per the concept of the FSB being a continuation of the Cheka the use of such brutal methods in order to suppress opposition is not a surprise and has been carried through the legacy of the Cheka.

While the Cheka claimed to be holding the interests of the revolution at heart the protection of the revolution did not extend to the proletariat rather, the Cheka was known to serve only the leadership of the Bolshevik party while simultaneously viewing the Russian population as a threat that needed both subduing and disarming.<sup>16</sup> This is an aspect that is found within the FSB in terms of behavior as it is well-known that the organization is often focused on the protecting the political status quo. This includes maintaining the power of both the FSB and the institutions that help

---

<sup>14</sup> G.A., Belov, “Iz Istorii Vserossiiskoi Chrezvychanoi Komissi 1917-1921”, *Sbornik Dokumentov*, Moscow, 1958, 72.

<sup>15</sup> Aaron Bateman, “The KBG and its enduring legacy”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 29, No 1., 2016, 27.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

maintain the FSB as a security agency. In terms of how the FSB views the Russian population that viewpoint is nearly identical to the Cheka's view. As the FSBs' main task is to maintain domestic security the agency has taken upon itself to root out opposition and enforce harsh crackdowns on protest activities, especially protests that involve harsh criticism of the government. This concept goes hand in hand with the idea that the Cheka leadership had a paranoid world view that caused many to believe that subversive forces had infiltrated the country.<sup>17</sup> This type of deep paranoia can be found with the FSB as there is significant paranoia surrounding the influence of the West within Russian interest areas. This can also be seen in terms of the Russian population as needing to be kept under control within the context of political participation. It can be argued that this type of behavior is found within the KGB as well, this is true but the origin of it comes from the Cheka which has led to it permeating the security services especially the FSB.

The Cheka is not the only iteration of the FSB that has been formative, it is a fundamental basis for discovering cultural attributes as it is a point of origin. Through many different iterations of the Cheka the culture ebbed and flowed culminating in the last most powerful and influential of the Soviet intelligence agency known as the KGB. With this agency being the last intelligence agencies during the Soviet Union it would naturally be an extremely influential aspect on the FSB as it is the nearest predecessor to the FSB. This was easily done as Yeltsin failed to tear down and reform the old KGB rather current KGB officers simply became agents of the new FSB. These people instilled very similar identity traits within the new FSB as it was considered important that the new organization continue to have a "KGB mindset"<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, much of the FSBs individual culture can be shown to be highly influenced by the KGB as it was considered an important part of the creation of the FSB.

However, in a twist of clarity, the new government in Russia did have to contend with important and uncomfortable truths regarding the KGB. The first of these truths being that the KGB had been rather ineffective as an intelligence agency being the ideological guardian of the regime.<sup>19</sup> The second and more uncomfortable concept was the fact that the KGB had utterly failed to predict and prevent the end of the Soviet Union despite the knowledge that the USSR could not

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>18</sup> Robert W., Pringle, "The heritage and future of the Russian Intelligence Community", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1998, 182.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmet, Ates, "The transformation of Russian intelligence community after the cold war (1991-1993)", *Karcideniz Arasturmalari*, XVII, No. 66., 2020, 324.

continue on in its current state without much needed reform.<sup>20</sup> These two uncomfortable truths are unsurprisingly absent from the FSBs main narrative as it is can be seen to be embarrassing to both the agency and the predecessors that the FSB sees as heroic. In response to the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent putsch of Yeltsin instead of putting forth significant reforms within the FSB Yeltsin opted to put the organization directly under the supervision of the president<sup>21</sup> in order to keep a close eye on his intelligence subordinates.

During the Soviet era the KGB held a similar agenda to the Cheka being that the KGB must do everything in it power to uphold the Communist Party within the Soviet Union with their motto being “Loyalty to the party, loyalty to the motherland”.<sup>22</sup> The similarities were seen through training as well as new KGB agents were often trained using Felix Dzhherzhinsky’s training manuals.<sup>23</sup> The intimate link between the Cheka and the KGB is also felt through the brutal use of force in order to repress opposition forces often through the concentration camps first set up by the Cheka. However, the agenda of the KGB also continues the first Soviet traditions of the survival of the regime being the most important agenda. In terms of the FSB, there remains a strong sentiment of remaining loyal to government institutions which maintain the FSBs power and influence. In terms of remaining loyal to Russia, the FSB focuses on enemies of the state in the form western intervention, foreign spies, and domestic security. The FSB continues to uphold the qualities of both the Cheka and the KGB in terms how the organization views the state as well as the political climate surrounding the FSB.

It should also be noted that the differences between the Cheka and the KGB have profound impact on how the current FSBs culture has been developed. One of the main differences that separates the Cheka from the KGB was the number of foreign operations outside the Soviet Union. While the Cheka did have some amount of success with a few foreign operations such as the assassination of Trotsky<sup>24</sup> the KGB became infamous for its foreign operations. The idea that

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Michael McFaul, “Choosing Autocracy,” *Comparative Politics: Wither Russia? Twenty Five Years After the Collapse of Communism*, Vol. 50, No. 3, April 2018, 308.

<sup>22</sup> Mette Skak, “Russian Strategic Culture: The Role of today’s Chekisty”, *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2016, 328.

<sup>23</sup> Aaron Bateman, “The political influence of the Russian Security Services” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 27, 2014, 386.

<sup>24</sup> Robert W Pringle, “The heritage and future of the Russian Intelligence Community”, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 11, No. 2., 1998, 177.



foreign spies had infiltrated the upper ranks of the Soviet Union and foreign intervention was thought to be rife and it was the job of the KGB to find these foreign spies. This concept and its subsequent agenda did not end when the Soviet Union ended rather the FSB has taken it upon themselves to root out western interference. Discovering western spies was viewed as romantic and heroic giving the organization added gravitas.<sup>25</sup> The FSB has remained attached to the idea that the west, particularly the U.S., have been infiltrating Russia with the express intent of doing harm to the state. The FSB has been involved in many abroad operations including cyber-attacks, assassinations, and money laundering. The focus on foreign intervention may not have started with the KGB but the culminating effects came into fruition during the KGB era. The focus on the west is not a new narrative within the Russian security apparatus but is has been solidified within the FSB culture as the successor to the KGB. While there are other agencies who deal with matters of foreign intervention but as the FSB considers itself to be the true successor it can be inferred that the FSB only considers itself equipped to deal with matters of foreign spies something that it has inherited from its predecessor.

The FSB proudly presents itself as the successor of both the Cheka and the KGB often discussing the Soviet secret police's many achievements with great vigor while whitewashing any involvement in repression and terror. The unsavory side of these agencies have been written off as an unfortunate incident that was necessary to the safety and security of the state. The agency is shown quite often that it wishes to regain the former glory and prestige of the Cheka and the KGB through the use of specific historical narratives. The historical narratives can be seen through the lyrics of one FSB official hymn "Always at the front, Always at one's post, Don't touch Russia, A Chekist is always vigilante".<sup>26</sup>

If the FSB had an ideology, it would be focused on stability and order with the primary goal being the survival of the current regime through extrajudicial means if necessary. In terms of political goals, the organization has focused on the creation of a powerful state, which they understand as an alternative to democracy, in which the FSB holds a position of influence and power.<sup>27</sup> In terms of the efficiency towards this goal this cultural identity continues to drive the

---

<sup>25</sup> Aaron Bateman, "The KGB and its enduring Legacy", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2016, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Andrei, Soldatov, Irina, Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 93, E-book.

<sup>27</sup> Eberhard Schneider, "The Russian Federal Security service under Putin", *Politics and the Ruling Group in Putin's Russia*, Palgrav Macmillan, 2008, 49.

FSB towards the goal of maintaining state security due to the work of the FSBs former predecessors ingraining the idea that the state must be protected at all costs which soon turned into the party must be protected at all costs. In addition to this idea, it has been shown that the historical legacy impact the way in which the FSB perceives regime leadership as a priority towards stability. In particular, the idea of suppressing opposition voices in order to maintain complete control over the political system is a goal that has been met with extreme efficiency. In terms of maintaining the FSB position within the security apparatus these historical legacies that the FSB has connected to itself show that it is the successor of both the Cheka and KGB and therefore deserves to be at the top of the hierarchy as the historical legacy demands it. Finally, when discussing the FSB goal of expanding their influence and power this identity trait creates a precedence for the FSB to expand into other security and economic areas as their predecessors had coupled with the idea that the FSB should gain back and expand the powers that their agency once had as the KGB directorates. Overall, it can be argued that this identity trait is positively impactful on the FSB in fostering behavior that increases the agencies efficiency in meeting agency goals.

### **Protectors of Russia- We are the powerful protectors of the Russian state**

The second overwhelming identity trait that will be discussed is the concept of the FSB being the sole protector of the Russian state. It is important to note that the protection aspect of this trait is only open to the state not the general populace. While there are nine different agencies that make up the current Russian security apparatus the FSB considers itself to be the agency that holds the most responsibility towards protecting the Russian state and indeed with the greatest capacity for doing so. Being the protector of Russia is inextricably linked to the FSBs close proximity with the Russian president Vladimir Putin. In addition, this attitude seems to have increased since the addition of the Border Guards to the main FSB directorate, having previously been a separate agency, this has led to the subsequent expansion of FSB tasks and duties. The concept of protection can also be found within the productions that the FSB endorses through many different forms of media including television, film, and book productions. All of these events and issues contribute to the creation and maintenance of the protection identity trait.

Yeltsin's "reforms" of the KGB turned into the FSB in the 1990s giving the organization a new structure as the old KGB was split into multiple different agencies. Each new agency was

given the duties of an old KGB directorate with the FSB focusing on domestic security, something that many Russian and Soviet leaders saw as central to state security which has not decreased in Vladimir Putin's Russia. During the restructuring of the old KGB the new FSB was given no governmental oversight committee as it would have had during the Soviet Union rather the agency was placed directly under the supervision of the Russian president. This gave the FSB a new source of power as the organization had unlimited direct access to the president and was responsible for reporting directly to and advising the president. This position gave the FSB the means to foster the cultural narrative of being protectors of the nation as the organization was directly involved in advising the president on many foreign and domestic issues. This narrative was not entirely new as the KGB was often romanticized in popular Soviet culture as the great protector of the Soviet Union against western agents. In addition, the FSB was given a foreign directorate tasked with the keeping an eye on Russia's nearest neighbors.<sup>28</sup> The new directorate was established along the 'near abroad' geographical lines with its agents given the right to travel in order to ascertain threats and carry out missions.<sup>29</sup> The task of gathering intelligence on neighboring states had long been a duty of the KGB that should have been turned over to the new foreign security service (SVR) but it would appear that the FSB with its ties to the president was given preferential treatment. It would appear that the proximity to the president granted the agency more power as the agency began to take on more duties as well as incorporating other security agencies into the FSB. Both of these concepts gave rise to the narrative that the FSB is the most capable of the security agencies to protect the Russian state.

In 2003, Vladimir Putin announced that the Russian Border Guard Service would become incorporated into the FSB allowing the agency to become significantly more powerful. The takeover allowed the FSB to be given a broader role in oversight of other security and law enforcement agencies which included oversight of the army.<sup>30</sup> This gave the FSB legitimate access to these other agencies allowing the FSB to place agents within other institutions with the government backing to do so. The border guard inclusion was not the only incorporation that happened in the early 2000s as the FSB's main rival FAPSI (Federal Agency for Government and

---

<sup>28</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB, ( Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 24, E-book

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Andrei Soldatov, "From the "New Nobility" to the KGB", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 55, No. 2, March-April 2017, 135.

Communications and Information) had been broken into two parts with the FSB swallowing the larger part.<sup>31</sup> With the inclusion of FAPSI duties the FSB was granted access and influence over election campaigns and the election process.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that due to the FSB gaining election data access it could be used to benefit Vladimir Putin, considering the close relationship that is shared between the Russian executive branch and the FSB. Both of these incorporations gave the FSB powerful influences within the Russian government while also being charged with protecting election processes from interferences usually pinned as of western origin.

Foreign interference was not the only threat that the FSB had to protect the new regime against as it became heavily implied to Putin that there was a coup of oligarchs including one Mikhail Khodorkovsky. The FSB claimed that the coup sought to turn Russia from a presidential to a presidential-parliamentary republic a move that would have significantly deterred the power of the Russian president.<sup>33</sup> The subsequent arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky would become colloquially known as the Khodorkovsky Affair an event that marked the reality of the unspoken agreement between Putin and the oligarchs in a delicate power balance and the consequences of breaking that agreement. As the FSB were tasked with the investigation into the coup attempt and the arrest of Khodorkovsky the organization proved to the new Russian president that it would be the protector of the status quo while seeking out and apprehending those who would like to change the structure of the government. This event also showed that the FSBs expanding duties and tasks helped in creating a more powerful agency capable of protecting the new regime.

It was not just the new regime that the FSB became protector of as it inherited the guardianship of Russia's nuclear programs which remain an important part of Russian security. Originally, the NKVD, a previous iteration of the KGB, was the first security agency to protect the Soviet Union's nuclear secrets which was of course passed down to the KGB.<sup>34</sup> In the restructuring of the 1990s the FSB became the agency charged with guarding the nation's nuclear secrets. The FSB's most important missions in the nuclear area became counterintelligence, information protection, and antiterrorism.<sup>35</sup> The agency also became responsible for the security

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Eberhard Schneider, "The Russian Federal Security Service under Putin", *Politics and the Ruling Group in Putin's Russia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 43.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>34</sup> Oleg Bukharin, "The FSB and the U.S.-Russian nuclear security partnership", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol 10, No. 1, 2003, 138.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 139.

of defense facilities and nuclear industry.<sup>36</sup> The organization hold a great amount of power within this area of security as the counterintelligence policies and activities surrounding this security area had a direct impact on access to nuclear facilities and personnel<sup>37</sup> this included international inspectors from Europe and the U.S. This type of guardianship made it very difficult for the international nuclear scientists to inspect Russian nuclear facilities without having to jump through FSB bureaucratic hoops. While this was mildly annoying for foreign inspectors the FSB takes their role as a protector of nuclear secrets very seriously in relation to western influence and inspectors.

Nuclear doctrine is important within the Russian security apparatus at large as it is extremely important to the Russian state's ability to be a great world power. Therefore, the agency responsible for the protection of such an asset would be seen as both powerful and important. As nuclear security and prowess is prominent within the security apparatus, one could argue that nuclear power is central to Russian security, the FSB being the guardian of nuclear assets with Russia has powerful connotations. One of the main connotations being that the protection of Russian nuclear assets translates directly to the protection of the state as a whole giving the FSB the ability to say that it is the only agency that is capable of protecting the Russian state.

Besides the restructuring of the FSB maintaining the narrative of the agency being a protector of the nation the organization has funded many different forms of flattering media. In fact, this is explicitly state on the FSB website "In the course of the Competition, the best works of literature and are selected, in which a positive image of a security officer is created at a high artistic level, the activities of the security agencies are most objectively reflected".<sup>38</sup> This statement does hold an important contradiction that the concept of the security officer should remain positive while the activities of the agency should be objective as a way of distancing and justifying the role of the agency in opposition to the actions of individual security officers. As one of the main narratives of the FSB is a powerful protector the actions of individuals that could be damaging to this narrative are pushed away and often whitewashed through these kinds of competitions. This included books, films, and television shows all of which have many different flattering themes usually focusing on the FSB or its predecessors real and fictional exploits. One of the main ways that this identity trait becomes more visible is through both the FSB's literature awards and the

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, "Prize FSB Russia", <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/premiya.htm>, (Accessed October 28, 2022)

types of film and television by focusing on these types of media that are given the awards and then given a place on the FSB website or become acclaimed by the FSB. These awards had previously taken place during the Soviet Union with the KGB hosting a similar literature award. Many of the works that are given commendations focus on the idea that the FSB is a protector which is a narrative that the FSB has used to prop up a positive image of the FSB to the public.

The books chosen by the FSB to be represented on the official website must have certain qualities that allow the FSB to have a positive outlook on the activities and history of the agency. In fact, the majority of the first prize winners of this literature contest focus on historical fiction or are based on alleged real events<sup>39</sup> continuing to connect the FSB with its predecessors. Many of these plots focus on the defense of the Russian national interest and the traditional values of the state all of which are important to the narrative of the FSB being a protector. These books will often cast the protagonist as a heroic FSB or KGB agent who is usually a patriotic man willing to protect the state and often ends up saving the whole of Russian from the influence of the western consumerism or some other evil.<sup>40</sup> These stories not only show the FSB as being well meaning patriots descended from Soviet patriots while simultaneously setting up the narrative that both the past and future activities of the FSB are justified as means of protecting the state. This can also be seen in the type of books that do not get recognition despite also being based on historical events or alleged events but touch on subjects or themes that do not cast the FSB in a favorable light. For example, when a book focusing on corrupt FSB officers as protagonist this book was denied awards even though the author had previously been a first prize and second prize winner of the literature awards.<sup>41</sup> This example shows that these awards are not based on author favoritism but rather based on content and the reflection of the agency that the content providers of the agency as stated by the FSB website. This is especially true since accusations of corruption are often levied at the FSB creating a sore spot when discussing the idea that either the FSB or its agents have behavior that is less than honorable even when protecting the nation from threats.

---

<sup>39</sup> Filip, Kovacevic, "FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian federal security service literature award competition, 2006-2018," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 34, No. 5, 2019, 637.; Lyubov, Ruseva, "Esly Ne My, to Kto? Khronika "Vzrynogo" Otdela (If Not We Then Who? The Chronicles of the Demining Department)" *Granitsa*, Moscow, 2006.; Nikolay Luzan, "Operatsiy 'Mirazh', (The Operation 'Mirage')", *Veche*, Moscow, 2017. Roy Medvedev, "Andropov", *Molodaya Gvardiya*, Moscow, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 648.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 643-644.

The other main media that the FSB promotes is television programs as these types of programs can reach a larger audience and entertainment such as television can be used to impart implicit and explicit messaging regarding the agency. This idea is not uncommon especially within the Russian security services as the KGB often employed the use of propaganda films to show the public how the protectors of the nation operated. However, there are tensions between the past and the present that the FSB has to deal with when reforming a narrative or a public perception of the agency. During the first decade of Putin's regime the FSB developed many different propaganda films and television programs that presented the FSB the way that the organization wished to be perceived as, mainly as special agents that preformed heroic deeds.<sup>42</sup> Oftentimes, these performances depicted the foiling of a terrorist plot, an issue that holds prominence in Russian security<sup>43</sup>, or preventing the theft of state treasures.<sup>44</sup>

The use of media for maintaining an identity narrative is not entirely uncommon and it is used often by many agencies such as the FSB to portray the identities that the organization considers to be good. This is often used to curb public perception from an existing negative perception to either a positive or neutral perception of intelligence organizations. For the FSB, the identity narrative of being the protector of the state is also used for justification of both the present and future activities of the agency especially when those actions are based on the defense of Russian national interest and the 'traditional' values that are often defined by Russian security in opposition to Western liberalism.<sup>45</sup>

Now we will discuss how this identity trait affects the behavior of the FSB within the context of the goals of the organization. The first thing that needs to be understood is that the idea that the FSB as a protector is not only highly ingrained within the organization but that it also helps to maintain the agencies goals in a positive way. In this case, this trait continues to prop up the goals of maintaining the agencies place within the security apparatus and protecting current regime. In terms of the security apparatus, the FSBs identity traits as a protector push the organization towards the consolidation of their power as seen in the continued expansion of the

---

<sup>42</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 90, E-book.

<sup>43</sup> Oleg Bukharin, "The FSB and the U.S.-Russian nuclear security partnership", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol 10, No. 1, 2003, 137.

<sup>44</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 90, E-book

<sup>45</sup> Filip Kovacevic, "FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian federal security service literature award competition, 2006-2018," *Intelligence and National Security*, 2019, 648.

FSB capacities and duties consistently adding to the FSBs growing influence. It can be argued that as a protector the FSB can find justification in expanding their duties in order to maintain their capability to protect and in a way the agency seems to think that because they are protecting that the agency therefore deserves the glory and rewards that go with the image of being a protector. In terms of protecting the current regime, the FSB behavior is geared toward keeping the status quo within the Kremlin as currently the relationship between the FSB and the Kremlin remains quite close. Therefore, the identity trait dictates that the FSB should engage in behavior that will help maintain the power in the Kremlin or more specifically protect the Putin regime. Finally, this trait also motivates the FSB to continue to expand its own power and influence as this will give the agency a greater ability to continue to be the protector of the state. Overall, it can be shown that this identity trait has a positive impact on the behavior that is influenced of the FSB in effectively maintaining all three of its main agency goals.



## Chapter 2: Norms

The norms of an organization can give an important insight into the inner workings of an organization and therefore it can give insight into the cultural behavior of an organization. However, in order to fully understand this concept and the categorization of the traits therein we must first define the concept of a norm. For the purpose of this research norms are defined as accepted and expected modes of behavior.<sup>46</sup> These norms apply to both the organization as a whole and individuals within the organization even though in some cases norms can be seen as shameful. These norms can be found through the careful examination of the FSBs behavior towards other security agencies and the documented behavior of FSB agents and officers that have not been met with reprimand.

These norms are important to understand as they can give significant insight into the modes of behavior associated with the FSB that would be integral towards culture. It is true that norms can be hard to detect but with enough evidence one can see a pattern of behavior emerge. While the FSB has many different norms, but the research is limited to documented evidence which can be verified as such this research document two main norms that are integral to the FSBs culture. The first norm that must be discussed is the factionalism within both the FSB itself and between the FSB and the other security agencies. The second norm is the corruption that is found within the organization that has been passed through both the KGB and through Russian political culture both of which are filled with corruption. Understanding these norms is important to understanding the culture of the FSB as they guide the behavior of the organization.

### Factionalism

Factionalism is rife within the both the FSB and other Russian intelligence agencies that has led to two interlinked issues one of which being factional competition between the FSB against other Russian agencies and infighting with the FSB itself.<sup>47</sup> Both of these issues influence the behavior of the FSB in many actions and often impacting policy actions. Factionalism as a norm is not unique to the Russian intelligence agencies as it can be argued that infighting and factions can be found within many different intelligence agencies from multiple countries, including western countries, which leads to problems within any agency. However, in the case of Russia,

---

<sup>46</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, Matthew T. Berrett, "Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis", *Studies in Intelligence*, June 2011, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Kimberly, Marten, "The, 'KGB State' and Russian Political and Foreign Policy Culture", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2017,140.

factionalism has gone to the extreme in which the norm has become an extreme hinderance towards FSB actions through the behaviors of the organization. Therefore, it is worth discussing these two issues that have come into full fruition through the factionalism norm found within the FSB.

To begin we must first discuss the societal and political influences that have impacted the factionalism surrounding the FSB. To understand this norm, we must first cast our minds back to the fall of the Soviet Union and the creation of the FSB under the watchful eye of Boris Yeltsin. During this time, Yeltsin sought to curb the power that the previous KGB had gained by splitting the previous organization into nine different directorates.<sup>48</sup> One of the first instigations of rivalry between the agencies was the placement of the FSB under the direct supervision of the Russian president leading to the organization having the most access to the highest executive authority in Russia while being granted expanding influence throughout the years. In theory, each directorate would be responsible for a separate entity of the previous KGB and should have been able to work independently of each other however this did not become the case. Due to the coup attempt spearheaded by the KGB against Yeltsin the new Russian leader wanted to cripple the new agencies from being able to come together against the state this was done through actively pitting agencies against each other in spite of the instability and ineffectiveness this caused.<sup>49</sup> This can be seen in the very organization of the Russian security apparatus as many tasks and duties overlap between agencies. As shown in figure one there is an extreme amount of overlap between all agencies not just the FSB. This also includes some agency's sole role being shared by multiple agencies which can lead to turf wars and extreme competition with the security system. It can be noted that in recent years we could add more subsidiary roles to the FSB than are shown on the chart in a continuation of the factional cycle.

---

<sup>48</sup> Mark Galeotti, "Putin's Hydra: Inside Russia's Intelligence Services", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2016, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Andrei, Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 18, E-book.

## Roles of Russia's intelligence community

	Political intelligence	Economic intelligence	Military intelligence	Active measures	Counter-intelligence	Political security	Law enforcement
Federal Security Service (FSB)	●			●	●	●	●
Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU)	●	●	●	●	●		
Federal Protection Service (FSO)					●	●	●
Interior Ministry (MVD)					●	●	●
Prosecutor General's Office (GP)						●	●
Investigatory Committee (SK)						●	●
The Federal Anti-Drug Service (FSKN)		●					●
National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NAK)					●	●	●
Soviet KGB	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Main role  
 ● Subsidiary role

Figure 1 shows the Russian intelligence community's main roles as well as their subsidiary roles. This figure shows that all of the intelligence agencies intersect and/or overlap with at least one other agency. (Mark Galeotti, "Putin's Hydra: Inside Russia's Intelligence Services", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2016, 3.)

Factionalism between agencies has caused a number of problems with the effectiveness of the organization in both information gathering and sharing. Competition is strong between both the GRU and the FSB. The GRU having the main duties of military intelligence should in theory, have very little to do with the FSB however with the FSB gaining new duties that give the FSB powers that involve military oversight. With the expansion of powers within the FSB there have been reports and instances of turf wars. New overseeing bodies is not the only thing that the GRU and the FSB have cause for tension as there is a large dispute between the two agencies concerning the use of private military companies in organizational missions. This is due to the fact that the FSB as an organization is not in favor of using private military companies while the GRU are known to use them liberally.<sup>50</sup> This dispute has left both organizations fundamentally opposed to one another making FSB military oversight an insult to injury.

<sup>50</sup> Tor Bukkvoll, Ase G. Ostensen, "The Emergence of Russian Private Military Companies: A New Tool for Clandestine Warfare", *Norwegian Defense Research Establishment*, 2020, 9.

The GRU is not the only agency that has had significant quarrels with the FSB. In fact, these quarrels are often instigated and encouraged by Vladimir Putin who has taken on a similar attitude towards the security services as his predecessor Boris Yeltsin. It is known that Putin created the organization the National Guard (NG) that was expected to act as a sort of praetorian guard for Putin as it is a powerful and highly militarized agency.<sup>51</sup> This was done as a way to strike a delicate power balance between the security services as the new NG was being used as a tool to disarm the MVD while simultaneously overlapping significant duties with the FSB thereby creating a powerful rival. The amount of rivalry and competition between the FSB and other security services does not stop within the more domestically based organizations as the FSB has begun to be increasingly involved in foreign operations which has often been in opposition with the SVR.<sup>52</sup> This is usually to do with the foreign department of the FSB responsible for gathering information of the post-soviet countries which has caused significant issues among differing agencies.

With the FSB's power continuing to grow and the reach of the organization continuing to infringe on the duties of other agencies the factionalism within the Russian security apparatus has become a deeply entrenched norm that influences the behavior of the FSB. In some cases, much of the behavior of the FSB can be seen as spiteful towards their fellow agencies. In other cases, behavior has been geared toward the consolidation of power for the FSB within the security apparatus which is not entirely unique. Therefore, with this particular norm the FSB's behavior is focused on remaining at the top of the hierarchy while being able to pull down their competitors. Ultimately, each service is out to keep, maintain, and grow its own power and influence leading to an ineffective and often chaotic security apparatus.

Factionalism has not only infiltrated the FSB through the security apparatus, but it has also infiltrated the inner ranks of the organization. This can be found first in a generational way, as it was explained previously much of the upper ranks of the FSB were once Soviet KGB agents and officers. These persons have had the ability to gain footholds within lucrative companies and enterprises during the chaotic 1990s and as such hold differing loyalties between private interests and the interests of the FSB. As such there is a certain amount of friction that can be seen between

---

<sup>51</sup> Joss I., Meakins, "Squabbling Siloviki: Factionalism within Russia's Security Services", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2018, 238.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

the general officers and the mid-level officers as the practice of detailing staff members of both governmental structures and corporations.<sup>53</sup> It is becoming known that more often the young mid-level colonels of the FSB are more loyal as these people wish to continue within the organization and promote their careers while the generals who have received positions in large companies prefer to look after their own interests.<sup>54</sup> This issue was shown to be much more prevalent during the political crisis of 2011 in which many government agencies including the presidency came under fire from activists as being corrupt using issues such as the one discussed to prove their sentiments.<sup>55</sup> This type of situation is bound to create problems with the FSB effectiveness if their officers have factioned themselves off into two opposing camps of those who are loyal to the FSB and those who are not but remain tolerated for their usefulness or influence. It can be reasonably assumed that this type of environment is likely to have an impact on the behavior of the FSB.

As recently as 2018 there has been significant reshuffling caused by both anti-corruption cases against multiple prominent officials and the extension of some officials' powers in relation to reshuffling showing the precarious nature of being prominent within the FSB. It can be argued that the use of anti-corruption cases is a way of weakening the FSBs political rivals including personnel within the FSB. This can be seen through the fall of General Oleg Feoktistov who was instrumental in the liquidation of the FSKN in 2007 and was tasked with setting up an FSB directorate that would have wider powers giving rise to the 6<sup>th</sup> Service of the FSB.<sup>56</sup> This new department is an informal network of FSB employees that are given various powers and tasks that allow the FSB to widen their influence and power through informal means.<sup>57</sup> Even though Feoktistov was instrumental in creating this informal network he had made power enemies within the FSB leading his FSB colleagues to eliminate him from his power position within the FSB. Feoktistov left his position within the FSB in 2016 with many of his trusted compatriots losing their careers with the security services.<sup>58</sup> This episode is in conjunction of other prominent official within the FSB losing either their political influence or their positions. This type of behavior can be seen as common within the FSB as it is known that many different officials have been ousted

---

<sup>53</sup> Andrei, Soldatov, "From the "New Nobility" to the KGB", *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 55, No. 2, March-April 2017, 139.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Warsaw Institute, "FSB or Cheka 2.0" *Russia Monitor: Special Reports*, <https://warsawinstitute.org/fsb-cheka-2-0/>, 3 January 2018. (Accessed December 1, 2022)

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

based on dubious claims of wrongdoing. It can be argued that the cultural attribute of internal factionalism plays a significant role in this type of behavior within the organization.

In addition to the ousting of political rivals within the FSB it can be seen that those who remain in prominent positions begin to extend their own influence over their sectors. This can be seen in the example of Sergei Korolev, the head of the FSB's economic security department a position that he gained through the former department head resigning in much the same way Feoktistov was ousted.<sup>59</sup> In more recent years his influence within the FSB has grown as in 2018 he firmly controlled not only the FSB's Economic Security Service but also the FSB's Internal Security Board both of which are crucial for business and financial points of view within Russia.<sup>60</sup> He has also had the ability to build his zone of influence outside the FSB within other security agencies in order to gain influence and power to ultimately keep his current position. The behavior of Sergei Korolev in consolidating and extending his own power is not an uncommon story within the FSB it is simply one documented example of the opportunist nature that found within the FSB. This also leads to the concept of internal factionalism as loyalties can shift dramatically depending on current prominent people. However, it is important to note that this cultural aspect is not sustainable as it shows that climbing the political ladder of the FSB is a precarious position that is not entirely free from scrutiny and danger.

This particular problem can also be observed in the invasion of Ukraine which began in February 2022 by Russian forces in which some reporting suggests that in making this pivotal military decision Putin was not given all the pertinent information regarding Ukrainian forces or western backing for Ukrainian forces. This argument is usually backed by the inability of Russian forces to take the capitol city of Kiev in the early stages of the war and having forces being gradually pushed out of the eastern regions of Ukraine. This event sent shockwaves throughout the security apparatus causing the norm of factionalism to come full force as there has been multiple agencies placing the blame solely on the FSB as being ineffective and corrupt.<sup>61</sup> To this point, it has also been reported that within the individual FSB departments the blame is being placed on the foreign intelligence department for not disclosing the true nature of the situation in

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "Vicious Blame Game Erupts Among Putin's Security Forces", *New Nobility*, <https://agentura.ru/en/new-nobility/vicious-blame-game-erupts-among-putins-security-forces/>, (Accessed November 24, 2022)

Ukraine to Vladimir Putin.<sup>62</sup> These reports are important as they show the tandem effect of factionalism both within the FSB and within the security apparatus. It also gives greater evidence to the opportunism within the FSB and the surrounding agencies in conjunction with a high stress situation such as a highly scrutinized military operation that is facilitated by the cultural norm of factionalism.

If the premise holds that one of the goals of the FSB is to maintain their own position within the security apparatus, then it stands to reason that within this goal the norm of factionalism is effective within that context. The agency uses this accepted behavior as a way to justify the derailment of other agencies operations and structure for the sake of the FSBs own standing. This also reveals how precarious the position of being at the top of the security apparatus can be as the FSB must continually ensure that other agencies do not rise above the FSB. Therefore, within the context of external factionalism this norm helps aid the goal of maintaining the current hierarchy. However, this norm may not be sustainable to maintaining the current regime as the circle of spiteful political attacks and with the agency constantly on guard for political attacks may create new challenges as an intelligence agency. As turf wars can often lead to the end of information sharing along which is vital to the efficiency of an intelligence agency. With current factionalism, new intelligence challenges will become increasingly difficult to properly execute a plan to handle those challenges. Therefore, this norm could cause challenges to the FSBs goal of maintaining the current regime if threats are not communicated between agencies or intra-agency cooperation becomes more deteriorated.

It can be argued that both the internal and external factionalism have negative impacts on the FSB when focusing on behavior that will lead to greater goal efficiency. Within the goal of maintaining the FSBs place within the security apparatus external factionalism may be seen a short-term solution to maintain this goal. In the long term, external factionalism will continue to chip away at the ability of the FSB to remain at the top. Within the same vein, internal factionalism will not be beneficial towards the FSBs place within the security apparatus. Rather internal factionalism has the ability to destroy the agency from the inside allowing other security agencies to fill the void. When looking at the goal of maintaining the current regime in Russia factionalism will not only be dangerous to the FSB but it also has the ability to detract attention from the state in favor of agency survival. This will ultimately lead to the FSB becoming preoccupied with its

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

own rivalries rather than on the regime of the state. Finally, when discussing expanding the power and influence of the agency many of the objectives that could be associated with this goal become hampered if the FSB should continue to entertain factionalism to the level that it currently does so. While it can be said that competition and rivalry both internally and externally can be a motivating factor for some organization, in the case of the FSB this is not so as the levels to which factionalism has been allowed to rise do not allow the agency to use its resources to the fullest extent. It has been shown that this cultural trait creates a highly instable environment within the FSB which is not conducive towards expanding the FSBs power and influence in the long-term. Overall, it can be said that this cultural norm has a negative impact on all of the FSB three main goals as this type of behavior is self-destructive and does not contribute positively towards the efficiency of the FSB in maintaining agency goals.

### **Corruption**

Corruption is a norm that permeates all of Russian society and can be found in full force within the FSB passed through Russian societal culture as a traditional norm and is considered to be acceptable and expected within most government structures including the FSB. This norm can be found throughout many facets of everyday life within Russia but unlike having to bribe the mailman or embezzling small funds from work which might be normal for average Russian the FSB holds significant power with the ability use this norm to its fullest extent. This is also not a spontaneous norm within the context of the FSB as from the very beginning of the Cheka there were significant corruption problems that plagued the agency which included bribery, theft, drunkenness, and blackmailing.<sup>63</sup> It is also a well-known fact that the KGB had its own problems when it came to corruption with bribery, blackmailing, and smuggling becoming a common tool used for both securing confessions of traitors and lining the officers own pockets. Therefore, it is no surprise that this norm being found within both political and historical legacy is also found within the FSB on an exorbitant scale. Even though corruption might benefit the organization in the short-term when it can be seen to negatively impact the innerworkings of the FSB and the relationships between other security agencies leading to behavior that is self-destructive or spiteful.

---

<sup>63</sup> Amanda M., Ward, "The Okhrana and the Cheka: Continuity and Change", *College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University*, August 2014, 62.



Since the early 2000s, the FSB has expanded the criminal element of its organization that had once been KGB territory that was soon scooped up by the new directorates leaving the FSB without some resources in the beginning years. In recent years, the FSB has taken interests in natural resources, telecommunication, metals, aviation, forestry, and a host of other enterprises.<sup>64</sup> These interests have given the FSB power and an element of prestige throughout the security system in Russia. Smuggling is another practice that is common within the FSB as regional senior officers frequently work with organized crime syndicated in both China and Japan to smuggle contraband lumber, metal, and marine bioresources into those countries while smuggling counterfeit products and vehicles into Russia.<sup>65</sup> This actively is commonplace among the FSB as a way to supplement the income of many FSB officers as both moral and wages have been decreasing steadily throughout the past decade. Though the agency gives off an impression of a highly lucrative and successful employer which gives more opportunity for individuals to increase their monthly earnings without the worry of running afoul of other agencies as these people would have the protection of the FSB. This type of corruption has become a deeply entrenched norm that is both used to the benefit of FSB officer and to the benefit of the organization as a whole against other security agencies.

In terms of the working relationship between the FSB and the other security agencies corruption can lead to turf wars between the agencies which can ultimately snowball into larger and more challenging issues. Corruption within the FSB caused an extreme rift with the MVD causing a scandalous scene in the early 2000s which would come to be known at the “Three Whales Case”.<sup>66</sup> This event started off with a seemingly simple Russian furniture store that was under investigation for smuggling, money laundering, and gunrunning by the MVD. However, it was not known by the MVD that the furniture store and its activities had been sanctioned and were protected by the FSB in exchange for a cut of the profits from the illegal activities. This culminated into an all-out war between the two agencies after the MVD decided to raid and arrest those present at the furniture store. This led to multiple slights and arrests on both sides of the controversy. Eventually, the FSB arrested Denis Sugrubov, the head of the MVD’s Main Directorate for

---

<sup>64</sup> Eberhard Schneider, “The Russian Federal Security Service Under Putin”, *Politics and the Ruling Group in under Putin’s*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 52.

<sup>65</sup> Joss I., Meakins, “Squabbling Siloviki: Factionalism within Russia’s Security Services”, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2018, 242.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

Economic Security and Combatting Corruption, and his deputy Boris Kolsnikov.<sup>67</sup> These arrests effectively ended with charges of falsification of criminal cases and attempting to entrap an FSB officer during the furniture store raid. While the FSB effectively “won” the skirmish the event did lead to more investigations into large scale money laundering and tax evasion schemes that implicated the FSB of corruption and collusion with foreign states. This example specifically shows that the norms of corruption and factionalism work together in terms of the self-interest of each individual agency and oftentimes these interests are of an economic nature which is heavily impacted by the norm of corruption.

However, while corruption norm is beneficial in some aspects of the FSB, but it is something that the agency does not want to draw unwarranted attention. This attitude came into full view of the public eye during the 2011 political crisis in Russia with activists such as Alexei Navalny focused on institutional corruption throughout the Russian government, including the security services. While the political crisis focused on Putin himself as being an overly corrupt politician the protests did bring to light some of the normal corruption of the FSB and perhaps in some cases abnormal corruption. During this time period the corruptions of generals became a topic that was up for discussion within the security services. In previous years, this topic was known but it was not given to general discussion within the services, rather most officers and agents decided to let this corruption pass and enjoy the benefits. However, during this time the number of claims filed by FSB officers against the FSB leadership grew along with the secret dissatisfaction with perceived stagnation in the organization.<sup>68</sup> This can be taken as a sign that the norm of corruption does have limitations attached to it however as it is a norm within both the organization and society it can be reasonably assumed that it has become deeply entrenched into the fabric of the FSB.

Even though this norm is commonplace within Russia and the FSB it can be shown that the FSB dislikes being considered corrupt and tries to influence public opinion through media to portray the agency as virtuous. This can be seen in both the FSB literature awards and the television programs that the FSB funds and promotes towards the public. In the case of the literature awards it is not the authors that win award but those who do not due to the nature of the books that are

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Andrei Soldatov, “From the “New Nobility” to the KGB”, *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 55, No. 2, March-April 2017, 139.

written. It can be seen that any works that are written with a plot including the FSB having a corrupt nature or becoming involved in corrupt dealings are not given awards and are not mentioned despite being written by accomplished authors.<sup>69</sup> In addition, the television media that is associated with the FSB often shows the protagonist agents and officers as helping to crackdown on rampant corruption all while continuing to secure the country from domestic and foreign threats.<sup>70</sup> These examples show that the FSB is not only aware of corruption but it is also something that must not be perceived by the public. Instead, the FSB wishes to portray an image of themselves as heroes working toward the greater good of the nation rather than as just another corrupt government institution. However, as corruption is a norm within the FSB it is often an accepted and expected mode of behavior, but it is important that the agency can show itself in a more favorable light if only to placate itself rather than the populous.

The norm of corruption can be seen to have a positive impact on the individual but a negative effect on the agency as a whole. In the individual case corruption can allow officers and agents to supplement their incomes through money laundering and smuggling which can be seen as a net positive for those individuals. In this case, what some would call corruption these individuals would surmise as simply the normal and well-deserved thing to do. This outlook is not uncommon within Russia on multiple levels of society however it does not mean that this norm is wholly positive. As this research is focused on ascertaining the cultural impacts behind the behavior of the FSB it is important to not the negative effect of corruption has impacted the effectiveness of the organization and thereby the behavior associated with that characteristic. Corruption often causes intelligence gathering and operations grind to a halt as self-interest can cause intelligence gathering to break down. This is done through the selling of information to foreign factions or giving helpful tip offs to companies that might be involved in the FSB money laundering operations. In addition, the ineffectiveness caused by corruption is both linked and exacerbates the competition between the agencies within the security apparatus. This can be seen through the affairs of agencies become hyper focused on discrediting and slighting their counterparts rather than focusing on the gathering and analysis of pertinent intelligence information that may be more useful to authority figures within the Russian government. The

---

<sup>69</sup> Filip Kovacevic, "FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian Federal Security Service literature award competition, 2006-2018," *Intelligence and National Security*, 2019, 644.

<sup>70</sup> Roman Bäcker, Joanna Rak, "The Change of Russian Political Regime from the "White Revolution" to Presidential Election (2012-2018)," *Pzegląd Strategiczny*, 2018, 150.

behavior of the FSB in regard to this norm focuses on the self-interest of the organization rather than on matters of national security.

Within the context of FSB goals and how this cultural norm may affect those goals it can be argued that this particular norm does not increase the efficiency of the FSB nor does it contribute positively toward the FSBs goals. When it comes to maintaining the FSBs place within the hierarchy of the security apparatus corruption will inevitably cause damage as corruption charges are frequently used to remove authority figures from their positions. This type of behavior can cause internal chaos within the FSB which is not conducive towards a highly functioning efficient agency. Furthermore, with the amount of corruption that there can be found within the FSB it will not be likely to be helpful to keeping the current regime within Russia. This will most likely manifest in actions by the FSB to continually place their own safety as an agency over that of the current government. Finally, in terms of expanding the FSBs power and influence corruption, corruption is likely to aid this goal in the short term however the long-term effects of this cultural norm will inevitably cause greater damage to the FSB as an agency. As the FSB continues to grow its criminal element rather than focus on retaining its abilities as an intelligence agency it will inevitably fall apart with a new agency taking its place. This is in direct conflict with at least two of the FSBs main goals however it is unlikely that the agency will take considerable steps to curb corruption as it is highly beneficial to individuals at every level of the agency. Corruption is the invisible parasite that lurks within the FSB waiting to fully drain away any semblance of an intelligence organization.

### Chapter 3: Values

Now this research will turn its attention to the third cultural concept of values and the effects on behavior that these attributes may have. The concept of a value can have several meanings when discussing cultural research and can range from the expectations of a society to purely transactional goods. For the purpose of this research values are defined as material or ideational goods that are honored or that confer increased status to members.<sup>71</sup> These types of goods can be found in a variety of areas including honored positions within an organization, awards, and heroes of the organization, etc... The values that are associated with this cultural attribute are the most difficult to ascertain as often times the threads that can lead to a cultural value are not usually considered for academic works. Therefore, the primary sources about the FSB within the FSBs website will be of extreme value during this section as these sources hold extremely valuable cultural information. While this type of data would be considered to be highly biased within any other type of analysis in terms of cultural data it is of extreme importance as this type of data comes from a purely primary source by individuals who have primary knowledge. Some may criticize these sources as being merely propaganda from the FSB, but it can be argued that as these values do not promote outlandish claims of FSB hegemony, rather many values focus on internal processes, that these sources are still highly important towards understanding the FSBs behavior towards goals.

As stated, it can be highly difficult to pinpoint cultural values however, we can ascertain the values of an organization by who or what they consider to be honorable. The idea of honor may seem ludicrous in such an organization as the FSB but there are certain modes of behavior that are considered by the FSB to be honorable. The traits that are considered honorable can be found in differing ways. One of these is to ascertain celebrated people and their celebrated behaviors. In this case, these can be found first within the places of honor featured on the FSB website chiefly those who have took part in the Great Patriotic War and those who were killed in the service of the motherland during various battles. Second, these values can be found through the intense veneration of Yuri Andropov as the director of the KGB when it was at its greatest time

---

<sup>71</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, Matthew T., Berrett, "Cultural Topography: A New Research Toll for Intelligence Analysis", *Studies in Intelligence*, June 2011, 6.

of power. Both of these examples will prove to not only hold cultural values, but it will also aid in understand the type of behavior that members of the FSB should aspire.

### **Veneration of World War II and its Veterans**

The effects of World War II, known as the Great Patriotic War, on Russian society and security culture cannot be overstated as the war brought such an incredible amount of destruction and loss of human life to the Soviet Union. During this time, the Soviet forces suffered in extreme conditions with very little support while to general population were left in equally extreme conditions. In light of this, it is not surprising that the events and the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War is not only remember by the FSB, but it has affected its culture in terms of values through the veneration of not only the war but those who fought in the many battles that happened throughout the boundaries of the Soviet Union. In the case of the FSB, the war and those who fought it have been memorialized as many of the then NKVD agents had become mobilized into different aspects of the war effort, and many were killed in action during the battles. This type of sacrifice is often referred to a patriotism within the Russian context with patriotism being going to the extremes in order to protect and preserve the motherland. Therefore, this research will examine the value system of the FSB pertaining to the concepts of World War II.

To begin, this portion of the research will mainly focus on the sources found within the FSB website centered around intelligence members who either served in World War II or were killed in battles for the Motherland. In regard to the reasons behind using the FSB website for this issue can be explained through the concept that cultural values can be found within the organizations own writings and publications therefore it is important to use the FSB sources that are readily available in this case being the FSB official website. Within the website there is a sectional webpage titled “Pogranichnik-Portrait of the Veteran of the Great Patriotic War”<sup>72</sup> which encompasses many different life sketches and accomplishments of mobilized members of the NKVD into the Red Army.<sup>73</sup> The people found within the texts are not just mobilized NKVD but also those civilians who contributed to intelligence work within the security agency during the war. These life sketches and accomplishments focus not only on those who served in an active-

---

<sup>72</sup> Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, “The Project of the Monthly Journalistic and Literary and Artistic Magazine Pogranichnik – Portrait of a Veteran of the Great Patriotic War”, *Story*, <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/pogranichnik.htm>, (October 2,2022).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

duty capacity, but it also entertains the idea that those who were not in combat roles also were of good conduct having preformed in duties of coding typists and secretarial divisions responsible for relaying orders to troops. It is important to note that non-combat personnel who were previously civilians are given as much respect as active combat personnel due to the fact that these civilians were working within the intelligence service, within the context of the FSB website. The people who are found within the dedicated webpage are often described as being heroic and honorable whether their roles were active combat or not suggesting that even menial participation in the war effort is to be honored and remembered. The website is very clear on the idea that there is an intrinsic honor and respect to be held for these people within the organization.

To this day, the heroism of World War II is often cited in official documents and remains within the public mind with the annual Victory Day parade held on Red Square being one of the largest in Europe dedicated to the end of the war in Europe. Certainly, the Second World War was the last major conflict to engulf Russia with many of the intelligence service branches of the NKVD becoming mobilized to protect the state. Those who served in this conflict are venerated by the FSB as people who sacrificed much for the protection of the state against the advancing Nazi divisions and therefore have earned the honors associated with having been a part of the war effort. The value trait that can be associated with this evidence is that of patriotism which within a Russian context has the meaning of fighting for the defense of the state against foreign invaders. Defending the state in such a capacity can be seen as something incredibly honorable and a worthy achievement by the FSB. This is especially true in the cases found of the website as these people are often described as self-sacrificing, heroic, and people who contemporaries would have aspired to be. Truly, the some of the most honored people within the FSB ranks are those who fought during this conflict. The FSB hold claim over these people as it claims to be the sole heir to the KGB with the KGB being the direct descendant of the NKVD therefore the people who sacrificed during the war are direct ancestors of the current FSB agents and officers. It can thereby be claimed that within the FSB it is honorable to fight in defense of the country and sacrifice for the country.

The idea of sacrifice for the country is not just found within the Portrait of a Veteran section of the website as there is a separate section entitled “Killed in the Battles for the Motherland”<sup>74</sup> this section outlines brief obituaries of security service personal who became mobilized during the

---

<sup>74</sup> Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, “Killed in the Battles for the Motherland”, *Story*, [http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/Pogib\\_v\\_boyah\\_za\\_Rodinu.htm](http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/Pogib_v_boyah_za_Rodinu.htm), (October 3, 2022).

Second World War and who died during that particular conflict. These texts often include the birthplace of the individual, the directorate of the NKVD that they were previously posted, and the battle in which they fought if it is known, if it is not known then the text simply writes that the person was killed in defense of the motherland.<sup>75</sup> Giving your life for the motherland in defense of the state is the ultimate sacrifice that one can make and one that is honored and respected by the FSB. The idea that this type of sacrifice is honorable can be seen in the short obituaries given of the men who were killed. Many of them are take care to explain where the person was killed and in which specific battle especially those such as Stalingrad which gained infamy after the war as a horrendous battle and a place of great patriotism.<sup>76</sup> These texts are meant to not only give the basic information about the person but also to show that these people were important for the agency as defenders and patriots. Patriotism plays a large role in the value system of the FSB as to be a true patriot one must dedicate their lives to the service of the state and, if necessary, one should sacrifice their life for the state. Though it could be said that individuals within the FSB would be averse to their own deaths for the glory of the state it does not detract from the fact that the organization promotes the values of sacrifice, patriotism, and state defense all of which are inextricably linked to the military and military services. Within the FSB value system focusing on the values of patriotism and the defense of the motherland both of which are often enhanced by the ultimate sacrifice for the motherland. All of these aspects fall into the value of patriotism giving the value trait added depth as it encompasses multiple aspects which can be categorized together. Throughout this discussion it has been shown that not only does World War II have a place of pride within the FSB mentality, but it also shows that the conduct of World War II veterans is something that is to be both strived for and thought of in reverence. Therefore, it can be said that the value of patriotism is something that can be impactful towards the FSBs behavior.

When focusing on the goals of the FSB and the effect that this value trait may have on those goals it can be said that this value trait effects the FSB in a positive matter. Much of the themes surrounding the values found within this section focus on the need for the state to survive with patriotism being beneficial to all of the goals of the FSB. There is point to be argued that the value traits within this section are used by the FSB as motivating forces for the agency. These motivations stem from the historical narrative attached to the FSB that it is their agencies

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.



predecessor that provided much needed support in World War II. Therefore, this value not only elevates and honors the people involved in the war, but it also elevates the status of the agency giving it legitimacy towards its goals. The idea of patriotism especially can aid in the FSB's goal of maintaining the current regime as it can be used to provide legitimacy towards protecting the current regime. This may also give FSB agents and officers a sense of pride for the organization in which they are employed and therefore they are more willing to do things that will ensure that the agency remains in a secure place within both the hierarchy of the security apparatus and as an agency that protects the current Russian governmental structure. However, this cultural trait does not contribute towards the goal of expanding the influence and power of the FSB as this trait is focused internally rather than a value that would promote expansion. Further research would be needed to fully expand upon the extent to which this. Despite this, the value trait of patriotism has the ability to have a positive effect on the FSB towards the efficiency of two of their main goals as it does not hinder the actions taken to achieve such goals while promoting behavior that would be conducive towards maintaining the current place of the FSB within the security apparatus and maintain the current regime.

### **The Veneration of Yuri Andropov**

These values are not just found within those persons honored for war achievements on the FSB website but also through the celebrated aspects of Yuri Andropov. In order to understand the reasoning behind the FSB's honor of Andropov we must first discuss some background information on the man. In 1967, Andropov was appointed to be the head of the KGB which soon led to the most prosperous era of the KGB as the organization soon gained a substantial amount of power, prestige, and influence over the political system.<sup>77</sup> Due to his personal experience of residing in Hungary during the violent protests of the 1960s Andropov became infatuated with the idea of ferreting out political dissidents within the Soviet Union. The hyper-focus on political dissidents came to a head in the creation of the dreaded Fifth Directorate, the branch of the KGB that handled political investigations.<sup>78</sup> He would go on to use the Fifth Directorate to hunt down and prosecute dissident activists throughout the Soviet Union while bringing the KGB into the modern world as

---

<sup>77</sup> Aaron Bateman, "The KGB and its Enduring Legacy" *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2016, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 51, E-book.

an intelligence agency with the ability to influence of policy decisions. He is also credited with influencing the public's perception of the security services through an article he wrote entitled "Fifty Years of Guard for the Security of the Soviet Motherland" which was widely printed in *Pravda* giving citizens widespread access to the information.<sup>79</sup> This report outlined the tasks and merits of the Soviet security including protecting the Soviet republic, fighting economic ruin, malfeasance, and fighting child homelessness.<sup>80</sup> This report reshaped the way that much of the general populous thought about and perceived both the security services and Andropov himself as true protectors of the state.

It was through this particular legacy that Andropov became immortalized by the FSB. Part of this can be explained by the humiliation of the 1990s when the FSB was stripped of most of its former powers as the KGB and became placed under the thumb of the president. A larger part of the immortalization comes from the accomplishments of Andropov as both the KGB director and through his advanced political career. This can be seen through the many commemorations of Andropov within the FSB system such as commemorative plaques, biographies, and continued mentions from authorities within the FSB. The legacy of Andropov holds many clues of the value traits that are highly praised by the FSB these traits can be found within the statements made about Andropov by FSB authorities and biographical material related to Andropov. However, it is important to note that the FSB and indeed much of the Russian leadership has glossed over the less savory aspect of Andropov's leadership during both his time as the leader of the Soviet Union and the Director of the KGB in order to preserve his legacy in a way that is suited to the new regime and the FSB. In order to do this, many of the biographies of Andropov focus on his time modernizing the KGB through the use of politics and science or they focus his prowess as politician.<sup>81</sup> In this way the FSB can continue to show Andropov in not only a favorable light but also by keeping Andropov's legacy useful to the organization.

To that end the FSB would prefer to show his legacy as a modest and highly intellectual person who had a firm grasp of economics and a man who fought hard against the corruption of the Soviet system.<sup>82</sup> This plays into the idea that Andropov completely understood the failing of

---

<sup>79</sup> Oleg Khlobustov, "Anniversary of Andropov: USSR KGB Chairman Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov", *Federal Security Service of The Russian Federation*, <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/yubiley.htm>, (November 25, 2022).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, "The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB", (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 81, E-book.

the Soviet Union and was the only person who could combat those failings, in essence this legacy portrays him as the sole defender of the state, a viewpoint that the FSB has in regards to itself. In addition, Andropov has been praised as a being notable for his “professionalism, faithfulness to the Motherland and the military, honor, being highly intellectual and culturally capable, having a strict respect for the law, and having close ties with the people” stated Nikolay Patrushev, a director of the FSB, all of which are considered to be highly valued by the organization. While this perception can be seen as a quite fanciful construction of Andropov’s legacy it does show some of the key aspects that the FSB wish to highlight about Andropov in accordance with the value traits that are found within the agency. Most notably being the idea that he held an extreme faithfulness to the motherland and the military both of which are featured prominently in the FSB value system that can be found on the FSB official website and written works. As the idea of faithfulness to the motherland has already been discussed in the previous section therefore, we will turn our attention to the other value traits that can be found in tandem with the Andropov legacy.

In terms of value traits, the FSB highlights the value of professionalism within the Andropov legacy. It is never truly defined within the FSB context, but the meaning found within written sources appears to be associated with a specific person. If a person is professional, he is dignified and intelligent as well as confident and reliable having a great amount of experience and skill. All of these things are found within the Andropov legacy making him the true professional. As such it is important to note that Andropov is credited with bringing new training and skills into the KGB in order to create an agency of professionals with remarkable skill sets.<sup>83</sup> He is claimed to be a highly intelligent man with the ability to connect to others both of which are needed to become a true professional in the FSB sense. In fact, Nikolay Patrushev wrote that an officer of the FSB tends “to keep the best professional, patriot values, formed by this uncommon person [Andropov], the professional politician-intellectual who created a structure appropriate to the need of the [times of Andropov]”.<sup>84</sup> This is evidence to the idea that the legacy of Andropov does influence the values of the FSB in terms of the traits that are honored and confer status. It is interesting to note that in this sense professionalism can become attached to multiple areas of status such as that of a politician, an intellectual, a patriot, and an officer. Each of these titles can be

---

<sup>83</sup> Oleg Khlobustov, “Anniversary of Andropov: USSR KGB Chairman Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov”, *Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation*, <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/yubiley.htm>, (November 25, 2022).

<sup>84</sup> Andrei Soldatov, Irina Borogan, “The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia’s Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB”, (Public Affairs, New York, 2010), 83, E-book.

attached within the description of professionalism allowing for the value to be transferred easily between ranks within the agency. In this way, the value of professionalism

The Andropov legacy introduces professionalism as something to be inspired by and emulate but we must consider how, if it all, it affects the FSB in goal achievement. While I believe that it would be unwise to prioritize this value trait over others that might have a more direct influence on FSB behavior, this value trait does have secondary influencing abilities and may be used as a motivating force for goals. When looking at the main goals of the FSB, professionalism can influence FSB behavior in a positive manner. In terms of maintaining the FSB's current position within the security apparatus this value could be an influencing motivator for the agency to remain at the top of the hierarchy. This could be due to the idea that the FSB deserves to be at the top of the hierarchy due to the legacy of Andropov and the professionalism that is valued within this agency. In terms of maintaining the current regime this value trait focuses on the improvement of the agency and its employees which, if taken seriously, can lead to higher efficiency in the agency's governmental priorities. This would also create new opportunities for the FSB to show the agencies professionalism in both maintaining their position and the current regime which could bolster the agencies abilities. The final goal of expanding the FSB's power and influence is impacted by this value trait as this value, if it is implemented with serious change in mind, could create new opportunities for the FSB to expand influence and gain power. Overall, this value trait has the potential to have a positive impact and influence on the FSB's efficiency and goals if the FSB chooses to use this value to its fullest extent.

#### Chapter 4: Perceptual Lens

Finally, this research will turn to the last of the four cultural aspects as laid out during the methodology section. This last cultural concept being perceptual lens which is defined as the filter through which this group determines “facts” about others.<sup>85</sup> In the case of the FSB, perceptual lens of the organization is often colored by the narrative that the West is trying to destroy Russia. But much like the other cultural concepts, there can be multiple conceptual lens at work at one time. To this end we will also discuss how the FSB distills threat perception which are often conceptualized through the ideas of internal and external threats. These three aspects of perceptual lens do much to influence the behavior of the FSB as the perceptual lens of this organization will have an impact on the policy decisions and actions of the FSB. This is because perceptual lenses are how the FSB distills facts about out-groups of people including both allies and enemies including how the FSB deals with each group and justifies the actions associated with both groups. Therefore, the concept of perceptual lens is very important to this research and should be thoroughly discussed in this section.

One of the most important aspects of the FSB perceptual lens that influences threat perception is a duality caused, in part, by siege mentality. As a concept, siege mentality is often used to describe the feeling of being assaulted on all sides which is a common theme throughout both Russian history and Russian security narratives.<sup>86</sup> In the case of Russia, the duality is found in the state’s threats coming from both internal and external sources. Internal sources of threats come from the population, as known by the Cheka in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian leadership is keenly aware that the population can have the ability to influence political change making it a necessity that these internal threats are found and suitably dealt with. In terms of external threats, these often come from outside groups which are usually opposing states and organizations that are associated with opposing states. The duality of threat perception is crucial to understanding the perceptual lenses of the FSB as we cannot discount the internal and domestic processes in favor of the more dramatic external forces.

---

<sup>85</sup> Jeannie L., Johnson, Matthew T., Berrett, “Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis”, *Studies in Intelligence*, June 2011, 6.

<sup>86</sup> Mark Galeotti, “A Short History of Russia: How the World’s Largest Country Invented Itself, From the Pagans to Putin”, *Hanover Square Press*, 7 July 2020, 145.

### **External: The West vs Russia**

The antagonistic nature between the Western world and Russia is a very long historical narrative that can be traced through much of Russia's modern and imperialist history. It can be argued that the leaders of Russia in the imperial, soviet, and modern periods have always needed a foreign enemy whether that be the Mongols, Tatars, Japanese, Germany, or the United States. Of course, Lenin's Cheka focused heavily on the idea that western forces were always trying to subvert and destroy the Bolshevik Revolution and therefore the revolution needed to be protected against such subversive forces.<sup>87</sup> The focus on the West as a threat by Lenin set the tone for the rest of the Soviet period even with small thaws in-between, the Soviets would always see western powers as a threat. This narrative was extremely prominent during the Cold War with the term 'the West' becoming a thinly veiled euphemism for the United States rather than western Europe. With two nuclear superpowers poised at each other during this era it is no wonder that a historically antagonistic narrative took on new life as prominent fact of security service perception. However, during the 1990s after the fall of the Soviet Union the new Russian leadership was confronted by mass privatization that included some U.S. companies attempting to encroach on certain resources and industries leading many Russian oligarchs, who disliked the competition, to become distrustful of U.S. industry.

This theory continues to be thriving within the FSB in the present day as shown through the narrative being promoted by Russian leaders in both the political and military spheres. These narratives claim that the U.S. led world order should not only be met with skepticism but also puts Russia as a victim of Western arrogance and NATO hostility.<sup>88</sup> The idea that Russia is a constant victim of western hostility is a common concept tying into the idea that Russia has the capacity to be a truly great world power if only the West would allow it to do so. This feeling can be summed up by the Russian author Nikolai Luzan "Nobody wants a strong, flourishing Russia. Other countries see in us the appendage of the raw materials and the Russian people as a slavish, animal-like people predestined to serve their oil and gas needs. This is precisely why they impose on us alien, anti-family values, alcohol, tobacco, consumerist lifestyle. [ The rationale is] for us to destroy ourselves as a nation."<sup>89</sup> In this quote we can see that there is a stark opposition between

---

<sup>87</sup> Aaron Bateman, "The KGB and its Enduring Legacy", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2016. 31

<sup>88</sup> Martin Kragh, et. al., "Conspiracy theories in Russian security thinking", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2020, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Filip Kovacevic, "FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian Federal Security Service literature award competition, 2006-2018", *Intelligence and National Security*, 2019, 643.

Russia and the West as being nearly the exact opposites of each other. It also shows that the relationship between these two states is as exploitative as it is antagonistic with the Russians being exploited for their natural resources and being antagonized by having certain lifestyles imposed upon them. While the accuracy of such statements is up for debate the sentiment that they carry are not to be ignored as it shows that this kind of thinking and narrative is extremely common throughout the security services and is impactful toward FSB behavior.

This is not an uncommon claim within both the FSB and the Russian security services at large, this is especially true in recent years with the expansion of NATO which Russia has always perceived as a threat. In particular, this is a narrative claim that the preferred method of the U.S. to create a world system of ‘managed chaos’ meaning that the U.S. is directing and sponsoring local actors in other countries including NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and opposition leaders with the intent of creating instability that would be conducive for a regime change.<sup>90</sup> This idea can be found in action with the treatment of NGO organizations in Russia since 2012 and 2013. In 2012, the State Duma amended the treason and espionage laws that did not cover the activities of NGOs changing the law to include such organizations.<sup>91</sup> While this newly amended law should have prompted many foreign NGOs to register with the relevant governmental departments many NGO organization viewed this amended law as an act of grandstanding and therefore they did not take the relevant precautions.<sup>92</sup> In 2013, following a speech by Putin the FSB began to crackdown on NGO activities with the FSB being instrumental in the removal of many western NGOs from Russia.<sup>93</sup> As it is no secret that Russia views western NGOs as conduits of western governments it is perhaps no surprise that as relations between the West and Russia began to deteriorate in 2010s that the NGOs would be used as a way to express displeasure or amount some control over western oversight.

Within the context of the FSBs external threat perceptual lens traits, it can be seen that there is a positive effect on the FSBs behavior when it comes to the agency’s goals and the achievement of those goals. This is most obvious in the FSBs goal of maintaining the current regime as it is considered to be an important goal as such one of the ways this trait effects behavior

---

<sup>90</sup> Martin Kragh, et. al., “Conspiracy theories in Russian security thinking”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2020, 11.

<sup>91</sup> Freek Van Der Veet., “When They Come for You: Legal Mobilization in New Authorization in Russia, *Law and Society Review*, 2018, 302.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

is though the fear of western influences that have the potential to damage the Russian government. In light of this goal, it can be seen that the FSB uses the resources at its disposal to root out areas that may contain western influence or that may be carriers for western infiltration, this can explain the role of the FSB in ousting many NGOs from Russia. Even though many of these NGOs did not hold malicious intent toward the Russian government the organizations were a perceived threat to the current regime due to the prevalence of western countries backing many NGOs. This is not the only area in which this world outlook is helpful towards the FSBs goals as it can be used for positive impact in the area of maintaining the FSBs place within the security apparatus. By consistently being on guard for western infiltration and having been successful within the eyes of the Russian government, the FSB has been continually able to hold the title of being at the top of the security apparatus. This worldview also gives the FSB a sense of pride in protecting Russia therefore the FSB should be seen as the most deserving of being at the top due to a successful record of eliminating western infiltration. Finally, this cultural perception has a positive impact on the FSB expanding its power and influence as it allows the FSB to behave in such a way that would allow the agency to continually expand into other agencies duties.

### **Internal: The Population**

In some ways the concept of internal threats are much more important to Russian security than external threats. This is especially true in the case of the FSB as the organization is responsible for domestic security focusing on political dissent and espionage both of which are considered to be extreme threats to the security of the state. The idea that internal security should be a main priority of the security services is rooted within the security apparatus due to the historical context of Russian security history. This can be found within the tsarist Okhrana focusing on the population and dissidents sending many people to political exile and prison due to their opposition to the monarchy.<sup>94</sup> Lenin's Cheka picked up the lessons of the Okhrana easily as many of the main leaders of this new organization had been frequent prisoners of the tsarist political prisoner system.<sup>95</sup> That being said, the Cheka also understood that the Bolshevik revolution was not universally loved within the new Soviet state and the revolution had the legitimate threat from

---

<sup>94</sup> Amanda M., Ward, "The Okhrana and the Cheka: Continuity and Change", *College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University*, August 2014, 21.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.



being crushed from the inside. This mentality persisted throughout the Soviet period despite the fact that the Soviets reigned supreme, but it was understood that if political dissent was allowed to flourish it could lead to internal instability that had the potential to cause larger problems. Even the FSBs hero Yuri Andropov warned the elite members of the politburo that social explosions were more dangerous than imperialists and western conspiracies.<sup>96</sup> And as we have seen in previous sections the words and warning of Andropov are not to be ignored within the FSB.

The most recent event that could be thought of as a social explosion within Russia would have to be the political protests of Alexei Navalny as he was not only a well-known opposition leader, but he also became quite popular among Russian citizens. After the 2012, State Duma elections there was extreme public outcry against the Russian election system as a percentage of the Russian population did not feel that those election results were accurate. Coincidentally, this coincided with the amended foreign agents' law that forced western NGOs to register as foreign agents, it can be assumed that any NGO focusing on civil society or democratic stability within Russia was targeted by this law during the time of these protests.<sup>97</sup> The Navalny movement directed public attention towards the corruption of the elites and leaders of the country which sprouted protests across Russia.<sup>98</sup> The social unrest sparked by Navalny through social media and many protests was not immediately quelled with his arrest with protests against his arrest happening for many months after his imprisonment.<sup>99</sup> The amount of social unrest that Navalny was able to stir up was unsettling for the Russian government which in turn triggered a new wave of protest crackdowns which heavily involved the FSB. It is a known fact that the FSB was instrumental in detaining and imprisoning Navalny and many of his leading supporters. Therefore, it can be shown that the FSB is continuing the older KGB legacy of destroying opposition and dissident groups through forceful coercion as this continues to be a primary duty of the organization.

This type of social unrest is unsettling for the Russian leadership as both Putin and his inner circle want to maintain stability between the social cohesions of the Russian population and the

---

<sup>96</sup> Mette Skak, "Russian Strategic Culture: the role of today's chekisty", *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2016, 331.

<sup>97</sup> Freek, Van Der Veet, "When They Come for You: Legal Mobilization in New Authoritarian Russia", *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2018, 302.

<sup>98</sup> Roman, Bäcker, Joanna, Rak, "The Change of Russian Political Regime from the "White Revolution" to Presidential Election (2012-2018)", *Pzegląd Strategiczny*, 2018, 150.

<sup>99</sup> Alexandra, Odyanova, "Alexey Navalny faces prison sentence in Russia as thousands of his supporters are detained at protest", *CBS News*, 1 February 2021. (Accessed October 15, 2022)

political sphere. While it is correct to assume that civil society within Russia is incredibly weak this is due to the deliberate actions of the Russian leadership after the fall of the Soviet Union as many of the democratic processes that were partially implemented during the Yeltsin era have essentially been disintegrated by the Putin regime. These deliberate actions include the suppression of opposition parties, in this case opposition means not in line with the current regime's trajectory and this does not mean that all opposition parties, groups, or leaders are therefore more western. However, for the purpose of democratic processes and civil society opposition has a special place for creating new ideas and forcing debate of which the Russian political system does not have access. In terms of keeping the Russian population out of politics the FSB is instrumental in making an example of both high-profile opposition leaders but also normal citizens who happen to post unpopular political opinions in online forums. Though these people are more often to receive an informal chat with the FSB rather than a formal interrogation which can often dissuade many people from continuing any serious loyalties towards dissident groups.<sup>100</sup> This type of attitude toward the organization of civil society within Russia has been hampered by the activities of the FSB, which in the eyes of the Russian government is a completely normal and commendable practice.

While it may seem that all of these practices and legacies pertaining to the control of the population are not warranted as the lack of civil society and many years of political oppression has dissuaded much of the general population from caring about many political proceedings. However, this is not the perception that the Russian government and the FSB hold as according to these entities' practices and historical memory the population could be extremely dangerous to the sitting regime. This world view is also strengthened by the concept of siege mentality as we previously discussed the FSB having this mentality in connection to the West but in this case, it can also be applied to the mentality that the FSB is being assailed not only on every side in the external sphere but also the internal sphere. This mentality justifies the harsh political oppression and crackdowns in recent years giving a thin air of legitimacy towards the FSBs domestic actions. The perceptual lens through which the FSB views the population is one of both fear and the control. The fear comes from the historical contexts of the FSB and the danger that can be posed by social explosions. The need for control over the population is inextricably linked to the fear of the

---

<sup>100</sup> Freek, Van Der Veet, "When They Come for You: Legal Mobilization in New Authoritarian Russia", *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2018, 302.

population as control is one of the only ways that the FSB can keep the population sufficiently dissuaded from supporting political unrest.

This perceptual lens trait can have both positive and negative effects on the behavior of the FSB in terms of goals. Within the realm of the positive this perceptual trait can be used for maintaining the current regime as well as maintaining the FSBs security apparatus position. In terms of maintaining the regime the concept of controlling the population to the point of political apathy shows the FSB being highly effective in this goal. There has been a long campaign against civil society in Russia which has been spearheaded by the FSB that has resulted in disincentivizing political activity and extreme crackdowns on protests that could be destabilizing for the current regime. Therefore, the FSB has been so far successful in protecting the current regime from a possibly unstable population. In terms of maintaining the FSBs position with the security apparatus these domestic actions have become source of legitimizing power for the FSB. As in recent years the FSB has faced scrutiny within the security apparatus the behaviors that are spurred by this perceptual lens trait aid in not only creating legitimacy but also upholding other cultural traits such as identity traits. For example, these actions give greater credence to the idea that the FSB is the sole successor of the KGB giving the FSB the ability to find legitimacy within the security apparatus. Therefore, it can be said that this perceptual lens trait has a positive effect on the FSBs goals. In terms of expanding the FSB power and influence this perceptual lens also has a positive effect on the FSBs behavior by entrenching the FSB as the agency that that has the most domestic power while being able to handle unrest within the population. Overall, it can be shown that this perceptual lens trait has a positive impact on the achievement of goals within the FSB.

### **Research Conclusions**

During the course of this research two main conclusions have become apparent due to ample amounts of research. The first conclusion being that the FSB does have a culture that is separate from the Russian security apparatus as a whole. While it can be said that some cultural traits are found within both the FSB and the security apparatus it is extremely important that those cultural aspects do carry through to the FSB. It is too often assumed that certain cultural aspects will permeate into an organization simply because of the environment surrounding it without doing proper research into those claims they will remain assumptions that do not hold validity within academic and policy circles. This is one of the key reasons that the evidence and analysis encased within this thesis could be significantly beneficial towards the study of the Russian security services. By treating the FSB as an entity with an individualized agenda along with a culture that had developed within the events and issues that have been central to the FSB. As an organization with a personalized agenda that it wishes to accomplish the FSBs culture is also highly personalized from broader overarching organizational behavior to the behavior within the inner workings within the FSB. The evidence that has been presented within this research shows the FSB does indeed have cultural traits that do hold sway over the behavior of the organization.

The second main conclusion that can be draw is that these cultural traits can have an impact on the efficacy of goals. These impacts can be both positive and negative along with the knowledge that some of these traits may be more directly impactful with others having a secondary influencing role. When focusing on identity traits it can be shown through the research that both the cultural concepts of the agency being a continuation of the FSB predecessor as well as being the protector of the state have impacted goal behavior. Meaning that these cultural identity traits are positive towards goal achievement pushing the FSB, as an agency, toward behavior that would be conducive to keeping and maintaining the agency goals. However, within the cultural norms that are discussed it is shown that these norms can have an overall negative impact of the FSB goals. The difference between having overwhelmingly positively impactful identity traits and having negatively impactful norms is something that found often within cultures. This is due to the fact that culture does not have to have rational reasoning for a trait to occur and continue to be perpetuated this is one of the reasons that negatively impactful cultural traits continue to flourish. It is also important to note that if a cultural trait is harmful to the group as a whole but is highly beneficial for many individuals within the group then the harmful trait is more likely to remain.

However, this is not the case when focusing on value traits as the most prevalent value traits within the FSB are either positively impactful or at the least neutrally impactful. These cultural traits were also shown to have a more subtle impact on the behavior of the FSB when discussing goals. While subtle values are more difficult to discuss than overt values the subtlety of such things adds greater depth of understanding of the value system and can often hold much more intriguing consequences than overt value traits. Within this light, we can see that these traits served as more inspirational and motivational factors toward the agencies wider goals this is not to say that all FSB agents look upon these values with extreme reverence but that value traits do confer status. However, this should not take away from the fact that the subtleties have an overall positive impact on the main goals of the agency with further research the evidence of direct impact on goals in terms of goals may be concluded. These values are often highlighted within the FSBs written works as well as through the agency's own documentation therefore these value traits cannot be wholly discounted as simply FSB propaganda as the values discussed within this research do not add anything outlandishly positive to the FSBs overall image as propaganda often does.

Finally, the aspects found within the FSBs perceptual lens can also be counted as having both positive and negative impacts depending on which of the FSBs main three goals are of the highest priority at the time. It can be shown that for the majority of the FSBs goals the perceptual lens traits are adequate for aiding in the maintenance of the agency's main goals. However, it has also been shown that in conjunction with these traits being positive the traits can be neglectful towards some goals depending on the focus of the agency. This can be seen in the agency's tendency to hyper-focus on issues that could detract from the agency's ability to properly maintain all goals such as a focus on the general population and dissidents. Therefore, it can be shown that once again the culture of the FSB has the tendency to foster inefficient behavior toward goal achievement which has the potential to have negative consequences for the agency. However, this does not detract from the importance of understanding such impacts that these cultural traits have on the behavior of the FSB, rather these traits give added depth and understanding into how this agency functions both positively and negatively.

It can be argued that culture is one of the more neglected aspects of research when discussing Russian security agencies though one could perhaps learn of agency specific culture through years of contextual readings it is important to gain deep knowledge within the subject

itself rather than making vague contextual assumptions. This research has shown that the culture of the FSB is unique to the agency while having an impact on the efficiency of goal achievement that is important to understand. This research has shown that not only does the culture have an impact on behavior, but it also does not necessarily mean that these traits have a positive impact on the agency's goals. It can be argued that the FSB should reform the cultural traits that are negatively impactful as quickly and efficiently as possible however culture is highly resistant to change and while it can begin to shift it will take significant steps within both the agency's leadership and the whole of its agents and officers to truly begin to make cultural changes. Therefore, it is important to understand that a culture can be both a driving factor towards an agencies overall ability while simultaneously becoming a force of hinderance if not properly understood and guided.

### **Paper Conclusions**

**FSB Cultural Aspects:** Within the research of this paper, it has been shown that the FSB has an agency culture that can be broken down into four cultural categories and analyzed as cultural traits. Within the research, it can be shown that the FSB attempts to exemplify both identity traits, norms, and perceptual lens which are prevalent throughout the data. The traits found within these two categories were more documented as opposed to other forms of culture data. Therefore, it can be concluded that the cultural attributes found within these categories may have more of an impact towards behavior than other cultural traits. However, within the cultural category of values the cultural data was sparse and in need of much interpretation rather than being well documented. Therefore, it could be concluded that while cultural values are important, they may impact the FSBs behavior to a lesser degree than that of norms and identity.

**FSB Goals Within a Cultural Context:** When focusing on the FSBs goals within a cultural context this research shows that not only does the FSBs culture this culture is significantly impactful towards informal goals. As these informal goals are not codified within law it is important to understand that they are an conglomeration of multiple authors goal point boiled down to the three main informal goals within the research. It has been shown that the informal goals of the FSB are impacted by its culture and the behavior that is fostered by the FSB. The research shows that these

culture traits have both a positive and negative impacts on the FSBs behavior towards its focused goals. In positive terms, the FSBs culture can help in maintaining agency wide goals while reinforcing the idea that the FSB remains a relevant and powerful agency. However, within the negative impacts this research shows that the FSB has cultural tendencies that can be seen as self-destructive and harmful toward long term goals. Overall, the FSBs culture has the ability to influence the agencies behavior and its abilities to maintain its agency goals with efficiency.

## Bibliography

- Adamsky, Dmitry, “Russian Nuclear Orthodoxy: Religion, Politics, and Strategy”, *Stanford University Press*, 2019.
- Andrew, Christopher, Julie, Elkner, “Stalin and Foreign Intelligence”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 2003.
- Ates, Ahmet, “The Transformation of Russian Intelligence Community After the Cold War (1991-1993)” *Karadeniz Arasturmalari*, XVII, No. 66, 2020.
- Bäcker, Roman, Joanna, Rak, “The Change of Russian political Regime from the “White Revolution” To Presidential Election (2012-2018)”, *Przegląd Strategiczny*, Issue 11., 2018.
- Baev, Pavel, “From Chechnya to Syria: The Evolutions of Russia’s Counter-Terrorism Policy”, *Russie.Nei.Visions*, Ifri, April 2018.
- Bateman, Aaron, “The KGB and its Enduring Legacy” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2016.
- Bateman, Aaron, “The Political Influence of the Russian Security Services”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 27, 2014.
- Belov, G.A., ed. “Iz Istorii Vserossiikoi Chrezvychanoi Komissii 1917-1921” *Sbornik Dokumentov*, Moscow, 1958.
- Bukharin, Oleg, “The FSB and the U.S. -Russian nuclear security partnership”, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2003.
- Bukkovall, Tor, Ase G., Østensen, “The Emergence of Russian Private Military Companies: A New Tool for Clandestine Warfare”, *Norwegian Defence Research Establishment*, The Royal Norwegian Naval Academy, 2020.
- Doroszczyk, Justyna, “Consolidation of the Influence of Federal Security Service in the Perspective of Russian Anti-Terrorist Laws from 2016”, *Polish Political Science Studies*, 2018.
- Doroszczyk, Justyna, “Russian Active Measures in Psychological Warfare”, *Polish Political Science Yearbook* 47, no.3 (August 2018)
- European Commission For Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), “Federal Law on the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation”, <https://policehumanrightsresources.org/content/uploads/2016/08/Federal-Law-on-Federal-Security-Service-Russia-1995.pdf?x96812>, Strasbourg, 24 February 2012.
- Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, “Killed in the Battles for the Motherland”, *Story*, [http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/Pogib\\_v\\_boyah\\_za\\_Rodinu.htm](http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/Pogib_v_boyah_za_Rodinu.htm), 2022.



Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, “The Project of the Monthly Journalistic and Literary and Artistic Magazine Poganichnik – Portrait of a Veteran of the Great Patriotic War”, *Story*, <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/history/pogranichnik.htm>, 2022.

Fedor, Julie, “Russia and the Cult of State Security: The Chekist Tradition, from Lenin to Putin”, *Routledge*, 2011.

Galeotti, Mark, “Organized crime and Russian security forces: mafiya, militia and military”, *Conflict, Security, & Development*, 2001.

Galeotti, Mark, “Putin’s Hydra: Inside Russia’s Intelligence Services” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2016.

Galeotti, Mark, “A Short History of Russia: How The World’s Largest Country Invented Itself, From the Pagans to Putin”, *Hanover Square Press*, 7 July 2020.

Gormsen, Jesper Hasseriis, “The Secretification of Russian Politics”, *The XVII Nordic Science Congress*, 2017.

Gray, Colin S., “OUT OF THE WILDERNESS: PRIME TIME FOR STRATEGIC CULTURE”, *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, 31 October 2006.

Gray, Colin S., “Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back”, *Review of International Studies*, Issue 25, 1999.

Johnson, Jeannie L., Matthew T. Berrett, “Cultural Topography: A New Research Tool for Intelligence Analysis”, *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 55, No. 2, June 2011.

Johnson, Jeannie L., “STRATEGIC CULTURE: REFINING THE THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT”, *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, 31 October 2006.

Kazantsev, Andrei Anatolyevich, “Reform of security sector and securitization: contradictions in Russian policy in 2000-2011”, *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, 2011.

Kovacevic, Filip, “The FSB Literati: the first prize winners of the Russian federal security service literature award competition, 2006-2018”, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol 34, No. 5, 2019.

Kragh, Martin, Erik, Andermo, Liliia, Makashova, “Conspiracy theories in Russian security thinking”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2020.

Kramer, Mark, “The Soviet Legacy In Russian Security Policy”, *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security*, 2019.

Lago, Jessica M., "Government and the Intelligence Community: A Case Study on Russia and the United States Government's Effect on Intelligence Systems", *University of Central Florida*, 2018.

Lenin, Vladimir, I., "Collected Works Volumes 1-45" *Progress Publishers*, 1965.

Nikolay Luzan, "Operatsiy 'Mirazh', (The Operation 'Mirage')", *Veche*, Moscow, 2017.

Maddrell, Paul, Christopher, Moran, Ioanna, Iordanov, Mark, Stout, "Spy Cheifs: Intelligence Leaders in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia", Volume 2, *Georgetown University Press*, 2018.

Meakins, Joss I., "Squabbling Siloviki: Factionalism within Russia's Security Services", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2018.

Marten, Kimberly, "The Intelligence Agencies and Putin: Undermining Russia's Security?", *The Routledge Handbook of Russian Security*, 2019.

Marten, Kimberly, "The 'KGB State' and Russian Political and Foreign Policy Culture", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2017.

McFaul, Michael, "Choosing Autocracy", *Comparative Politics: Wither Russia? Twenty-Five Years After the Collapse of Communism*, Vol. 50, No. 3, April 2018.

Medvedev, Roy, "Andropov", *Molodaya Gvardiya*, Moscow, 2006.

Petrov, Nikolay, Michael, Rochlitz, "Control Over the Security Services in Periods of Political Uncertainty: A Comparative Study of Russia and China", *Russian Politics*, 2019.

President of Russia, "Federal Security Service Board meeting: The President held a meeting of the FSB Board", <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65068>, 24 February 2021.

Pringle, Robert W., "The heritage and future of the Russian intelligence community", *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1998.

Odynova, Alexandra, "Alexey Navalny faces prison sentence in Russia as thousands of his supporters are detained at protest", *CBS News*, 1 February 2021.

Ruseva, Lyubov, "Esly Ne My, to Kto? Khronika "Vzrynogo" Otdela (If Not We Then Who? The Chronicles of the Demining Department)" *Granitsa*, Moscow, 2006.

Shneider, Eberhard, "The Russian Federal Security Service under Putin", *Politics and the Ruling Group in Putin's Russia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Skak, Mette, "Russian strategic culture: the role of today's *chekisty*", *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2016.

Soldatov, Andrei, “From the “New Nobility” to the KGB”, *Russian Politics and Law*, Vol. 55, No. 2, March-April 2017.

Soldatov, Andrei, Irina, Borogan, “The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia’s Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB”, (Public Affairs, New York), 2010.

Soldatov, Andrei, Irina, Borogan, “Vicious Blame Game Erupts Among Putin’s Security Forces”, *New Nobility*, <https://agentura.ru/en/new-nobility/vicious-blame-game-erupts-among-putins-security-forces/>, 2022.

Soldatov, Andrei, Michael, Rochlitz, “The Silovki in Russian Politics”, *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin’s Russia*, Washington: Brookings Institution, 2018.

Tatarko, Alexander N., Anna A., Mironova, Aikaterini, Garbi, Fon J.R., Van de Vijver, “The Relationship Between Human Values and Acceptability of Corruption in Russia and Greece”, *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, 2020.

Taylor, Brian D., “The Russian Siloviki & Political Change”, *American Academy of Arts & Sciences*, 2017.

Van Der Veet, Freek, “When They Come For You: Legal Mobilization in New Authoritarian Russia”, *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 2018.

Ward, Amanda M., “The Okhrana and the Cheka: Continuity and Change”, *College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University*, August 2014.

Warsaw Institute, “FSB or Cheka 2.0” *Russia Monitor: Special Reports*, <https://warsawinstitute.org/fsb-cheka-2-0/>, 3 January 2018.

## SUMMARY

This research focuses on exploring, discussing, categorizing, and analyzing the culture of the FSB emphasizing behavior that may impact the agencies informal goals. This thesis seeks to gather cultural data from a variety of sources and then analyzing that data through cultural analysis in order to determine whether or not the data gathered has an impact on the FSBs ability to maintain goals. Additionally, this thesis will determine whether the data gathered, that is determined to have influence, has a positive or negative effect on FSB behavior. Therefore, this thesis is concerned with understanding the cultural aspects that influence the FSBs behavior and goals.

The purpose of this research is to bridge the gap between researching the FSB with a focus on actions and understanding the cultural aspects behind the agency's behavior. While many authors have written about and discussed the FSBs behavior in conjunction with specific actions this research aims to understand how the FSB attains and maintains its informal goals. Informal goals being the goals that are not codified by Russian law but are vital for the FSB to maintain in order to remain relevant within the Russian security apparatus. The informal goals that will be analyzed for the purpose of this research are as follows: 1) Maintain the current security apparatus hierarchy with the FSB at the top; 2) Maintain the current regime; 3) Expand the power and influence of the FSB. Each of these goals can be found throughout the texts detailing FSB actions and should be considered informal but highly important in understanding the FSBs culturally encoded behavior and how this behavior effects the agencies informal goals.

The method used for this research is the cultural topography method as way to analyze strategic culture. This method categorizes cultural data which can be gathered through both academic and non-academic sources and includes narratives, normality's, world views, historical legacies, historical impacts, ideational goods, etc... This data is then categorized, according to the method, into four separate cultural attributes: identity, norms, values, and perceptual lens. After categorization the data will be analyzed according to its category to determine whether or not the data has an impact on FSB goals and whether that impact is positive or negative. Then the data will be reported within each paper section with the results of either positive or negative impacts towards behavior and goals.

The conclusions of this paper show that the cultural data does have an impact on the FSBs behavior and therefore it has an impact on the goals of the agency. The research shows that these impacts can be both positive and negative when focusing on the FSBs ability to attain and maintain

agency goals. Positive impacts include the cultural trait being used as a motivating force for these goals. As well as having a cultural priority towards some goals that ensure the FSB will be resourceful when focusing on the accomplishment of those goals. However, some cultural traits have negative impacts on FSB goals; this can be due to a number of reasons including short-term benefit, distraction, and hyper-focus. At times, the culturally encoded behavior of the FSB is not beneficial towards the agencies goals and can be seen as weaknesses.

---

<sup>i</sup> In the article authored by Brian Taylor “The Russian Siloviki & Political Change”, written in 2017 outlines the Russian elite within the security service and their role in political change within Russia. This article discussed multiple security agencies due to the siloviki being spread throughout the security apparatus rather than being concentrated within one specific agency. Taylor does describe many FSB actions in detail however he does not explain the behaviors behind those actions through a cultural analysis. Rather, he focuses on the premise that the siloviki is the driving force behind the agency and should be focused upon for research. Therefore, the idea that culture can contribute to behavior is not discussed and does not hold significant relevance toward the area of culture studies. Overall, while this work does provide some data that can be interpreted through a cultural analysis it does not give a comprehensive cultural analysis of the FSB neither does this work provide an explanation for behavior based on cultural claims.

<sup>ii</sup> Mark Galeotti has written extensively on both the Russian security apparatus as well as Russian history however his more notable work when discussing the security apparatus is “Putin’s Hydra: Inside Russia’s Intelligence Services” written in May 2016. In summary, this work focuses on the Russian intelligence agencies campaigns that support the Kremlin’s wider geopolitical goals, espionage, and competitive environment. In conjunction with Taylor, this work does give detailed information about the actions of the FSB and while Galeotti does discuss the idea of motivations these conclusions are brief. Though brief the conclusions remained detail however, they do not give credence towards cultural influences in behavior. Instead, this work focuses on specific actions taken by the FSB and then using those actions to work backwards toward possible motivations. This work does not explain the possible origins for these behaviors and does not give an in-depth analysis towards behavior.

<sup>iii</sup> Within Colin S. Gray’s work, it can be seen that he subscribes to the realist idea of international relations, this theory being that states wish to keep their power and influence therefore state decisions are highly focused on gaining and maintaining power. However, Gray has made concessions within this theory towards strategic culture studies and regards these studies as highly beneficial towards understanding state behavior. This can be seen in his 1999 article entitled “Strategic culture as context: the first generation of theory strikes back” written as a response to criticisms of previous strategic culture works. Within this article Gray explains that culture is comprised of socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are fairly specific towards specific security communities. He also goes on to express the idea that a particular community may contain more than one strategic culture that are subject to change over time. Gray explains that it is important to understand culture within the dimensions of strategy as nearly everything within a security community is an example of culturally effected behavior. Gray goes on to explain that strategy hinges on cultural concepts, ideas, and mindsets. This article is one of many in which Gray defends the use of strategic culture and cultural studies in general as he recognized

---

the great importance and need for such study as well as the pushback from academia towards these types of approaches.