

**SCTMG 2021**  
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of  
Modern Globalism»**

**ACTORS IN THE PROCESS OF MANAGING THE SPHERE OF  
CULTURE: SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

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**Abstract**

Social management involves the interaction of many different groups and communities. The classification of groups proposed in this article is based on the social and professional division of labor of participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture. The results of a trend sociological study of the problems of the development of the sphere of culture made it possible to identify 4 groups of social actors, which, given the degree of involvement of the participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture in the production of cultural products, can be defined as mediated actors – government officials and consumers, and active actors – creators and employees from culture. The article demonstrates the transformation of the views of social actors regarding issues related to the quality of work of cultural institutions and their material and technical condition, as well as opinions on the problems of the level of culture of the population and culture in general. The dynamics of the views of the selected subgroups demonstrate a multidirectional movement in the representation of two subgroups, where the degree of involvement in the production of cultural products is singled out as a criterion. And culture is assigned a leading role in the organization of life and the development of society. The conclusion is substantiated that the optimal development of the sphere of culture is possible only if the opinions of all participants in this process are considered, together with the laws of self-development of culture.

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*Keywords:* Social management, social structure, actor, cultural sphere, culture, income



## 1. Introduction

In practice, we are constantly faced with a situation in which the results of certain actions do not coincide with the expected ones. At the same time, the objects and subjects of management, goals, and objectives, plans, and forecasts are clearly defined. It seems that this largely depends on the dynamic nature of management, the internal essence of the system, accounting or not accounting for which affects the application of management influences. The situation is further complicated by the fact that all these processes often occur simultaneously since management in a social system is not only a sequential chain of solutions being developed and implemented. The main thing that distinguishes management in social systems is the process of interaction of many social actors, the degree of perception and understanding of a particular task, each of which has its own, which generates many opinions, interests, and actions.

## 2. Problem Statement

Social actors in several management concepts are designated as starting points of reference for social systems and analysis of social phenomena since any social system exists only thanks to an actor who can support it and can change it (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). If earlier, according to, for example, the views of Parsons (2002), it was important to determine the "starting point", i.e. whether this actor directly occupies a central position in the reference frame or is an object for another actor, whom we take as a reference point, today it is extremely difficult to find and define this "reference point". For example, if in the traditional education system (we will call it traditional for the time being the system that existed before the 2020 coronavirus pandemic), no one practically had any questions about who plays a decisive role in the transfer of knowledge. This is a lecturer. It is he who is a lecturer who is engaged in "socially-oriented activities" and is the main social actor around which his assistants gather – laboratory assistants, assistants, programmers, etc. (Weber, 1990). One subject of management "actor-individual" becomes the head of the collective actor and directs its administrative influence on another subject of management – students who, within the framework of the value-rational approach, can both accept the transmitted information and be incapable of it. Once again – here he is a social "actor-individual" – a lecturer around whom all social action revolves, despite the recognized "subject-subject" approach.

Who is this "individual actor" today, at the time of distance education? Lecturer? A programmer who prepared "online" versions of the lecture? A technician who outputs this information to a university platform? A soulless provider providing the transfer of terabytes of information to multiple IP addresses? Probably, there will be much more questions in this context than answers. Moreover, over time, they will grow exponentially. Perhaps, anticipating a similar situation, Touraine (1998) suggested moving on to the analysis of social changes through the prism of social action, to investigate the social activity of a person – an actor. And maybe that is why today we need to talk about the equivalence of actors, both explicit and those who, at first glance, are not visible.

The study of the structure of various social fields of Bourdieu (1997) is fascinating. He reveals the relationship between individual and institutionalized positions, considering relative positions in the field of power. The specificity of the field of cultural production consists in the symbiosis of two main components: power and semantic relations. Power by Bourdieu is a competition and struggle for the

recognition and formation of the dominant subculture. Semantic relations are social relations that are built based on the opposition of styles, trends, forms of communication adopted in each field. Such a constant struggle leads to constant changes in the configuration of the cultural field (Bourdieu, 1997).

It should be noted that the works of many recognized Russian sociologists are devoted to the analysis of the social structure of our society, while in Soviet times, the class approach was a dominant one. Modern Russian sociology, when analyzing the social structure, also considers various models built within the framework of the main modern approaches to social stratification. At the same time, there are the issues of social structure in the sociological literature, of social interaction of direct participants in the processes taking place in the cultural sphere; the correlation of their interests and needs are not fully discussed yet.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of this article is the social structure of the participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture, classified based on the social and professional status of its participants – actors.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this work is to identify the main social and professional groups in the management of the sphere of culture and to identify their general and specific concerning issues related to the development of the sphere of culture and cultural and spiritual values.

### **5. Research Methods**

With the direct participation of the author, under the guidance of professor R.T. Nasibullin in 2001–2017 a trend sociological study on the development of the cultural sphere was carried out. Two stages of the study (2001–2002 and 2016–2017), conducted according to a single program, methodology, and toolkit, allow analyzing the issues under study in dynamics with minimal losses. During sociological research. 1200 people were interviewed. Following the purpose of the study, the general population was made up of the population of Bashkortostan at the age of 14 to 65 years. The initial basis for constructing the sample was the data of the census of the All-Russian population censuses in 2000 and 2010, respectively. The sample was built according to the territorial principle; in its construction, both the geographical location of the republic's subjects and the qualitative composition of the residing population played an important role. The total sample size in each study is 1,200 respondents, of which 480 were from the one-millionth city of Ufa. The sample included 23 settlements, including 5 cities, 2 urban-type settlements, and 16 villages. The statistical error for the Republic of Bashkiria and separately for the city of Ufa does not exceed 5 %. All actions of the interviewer in the selection of households were strictly regulated and controlled. Also in 2020, an expert telephone survey was conducted on the development of the cultural sphere, in which 150 people took part. Our research made it possible to obtain not only formal information but also an analysis of the dynamics of processes, to reveal the nature of the relationship between the socio-professional groups designated by us.

## 6. Findings

In the sphere of culture, a fairly large number of established communities and groups can be distinguished, for “the social structure of society is very complex and variegated” (Aitov, 1993). In the proposed classification, the social and professional status of actors in the sphere of culture is taken as a criterion. In early works (Sagitov, 2002), it was proposed to subdivide into 5 groups of actors, which were designated as consumers, government officials, cultural bureaucracy, employees, and creators. This classification of actors incl. is since these groups are distinguished by autonomy in decision-making, recognition by another participant, and the availability of a resource base to achieve their goals (Tsygankov, 2007). Let us make a reservation right away that we adhere to the position when social management is viewed as a subject-subject process: all participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture influence each other, this is the specificity of the subject of social management and its social function, expressed in “... coordination, harmonization of the interests of individual communities, groups, individual individuals in the process of their life in society...” (Slepenkov, 1990, p. 43).

Research results 2016–2017 and especially the 2020 expert survey showed that the difference in responses between cultural bureaucracy and employees is becoming minimal, often within the sampling error. Therefore, in our further research, we will operate with 4 actors: consumers, government officials, creators, and employees from culture.

The first group includes consumers of cultural products – these are various social groups representing certain subcultures and, in aggregate, representing our entire society. The fact that this is the most massive and most diverse group in its composition does not require proof. Despite this, the share of representatives of this group in the decision-making process is not large. Moreover, it is often reduced to zero, which will be discussed in more detail below. As noted above, representatives of this group will be referred to as “consumers”.

The second group consists of civil servants who determine the strategic priorities for the development of the cultural sphere. Note that these are not only officials directly from the sphere of culture, but also representatives of other industries, whose decisions affect the development of the sphere of culture, the so-called “upper layer” (Zaslavskaya, 1997). In terms of its numerical composition, this social and professional group, which for convenience will be referred to as “government officials”, is the smallest. However, it has a significant number of resources, both material and administrative, for making a particular decision, which is reflected in the theory of social pyramids, according to which most of the resources belong to the smallest group of society, and vice versa (Nasibullin, 1997).

The next group of actors is creators. It includes people professionally engaged in the creation of spiritual values and directly implementing, introducing into the life of society one or another, certain and developed spiritual provisions for the development of the sphere of culture. At the same time, we agree with the position of Kogan (1969), who wrote that “reading fiction or scientific literature, the perception of music, theatrical performance or film is also creativity” (p. 31).

The fourth group “cultural employees” includes persons working in cultural and artistic institutions, both their leaders and personnel involved in ensuring the direct implementation of the provisions for the development of the cultural sphere, without being directly involved in their creation.

Considering the degree of involvement of the participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture in the process of production of cultural products, it is possible to define as indirect actors – government officials and consumers, and directly creating, transmitting cultural values, cultural products – creators and employees from culture, who were defined as active actors (Table 01).

**Table 1.** The social and professional structure of the participants in the management of the sphere of culture

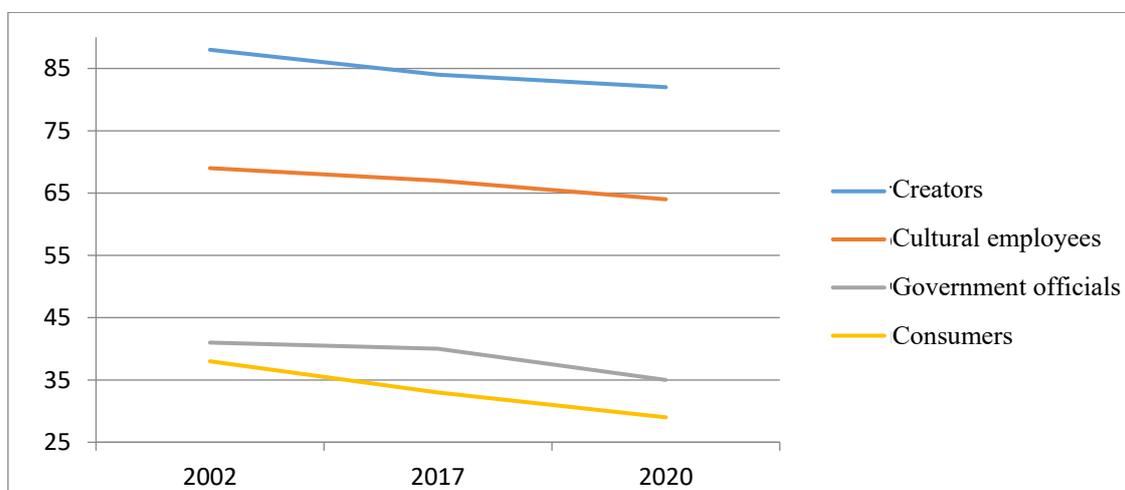
Mediated actors	Active actors
✓ Government officials	✓ Creators
✓ Consumers	✓ Cultural employees

This division is to a certain extent arbitrary, for the same person can act in several guises, while any representative of any group is a consumer of cultural products. But the presented dichotomy makes it possible to reach essential connections between phenomena in the processes occurring in the sphere of culture precisely from the point of view of the social and professional position, and the status of one or another actor in the decision-making process in the management process.

All participants in cultural life have their interests that coincide, do not coincide, or partially coincide with the interests of representatives of other groups. We largely agree with the concept proposed by Crozier, in which social actors, proceeding from their personal goals and at the same time to achieve general organizational goals, enter social actions. The social solidarity of actors in the process of interaction determines both the efficiency of work and allows each actor to satisfy personal needs. The interests of actors can also be declared and real. At the same time, it should be noted that the interests of social actors are not an established dogma. Research shows that changes in the life of society also entail changes in the position of actors on certain issues.

Within the framework of the study, we found out to what extent the level of culture of the population is perceived by representatives of different groups-participants as a problem of today's life of Russians. The smallest share of those who are concerned about the level of culture among consumers, further in increasing order: officials, employees from culture, creators. The actors who are designated by us as active are more puzzled by the level of culture of the population than the representatives of the mediated groups. Besides, if at the beginning of the century the range of responses ranged from 38 % for consumers to 88 % for creators, then by 2017 the range was from 33 to 84 %, respectively. An expert survey of 2020 showed a general trend, according to which the level of development of the culture of the population is of interest to an even smaller number of respondents, both in their total number and in all the groups identified by us. On average, the fall was another 4 %. It is alarming that the number of those who are concerned about the level of culture of the population among the “consumers” has decreased; i.e. the population itself. And we are not sure that this happened since the level of culture of the population has risen. It is just that the priority problems that worry Russians, such as the fight against coronavirus, health status, general prosperity, the environment, the country's security (including economic), prevail today in the public consciousness. And this, to some extent, is natural, because most of the concepts of the hierarchy of needs indicate that a person's social needs are more actively manifested only with the satisfaction of the needs of existence (by the way, one should not forget one more principle, according to which, the less satisfying social needs, the more their action is enhanced). The descending curve

reflecting the opinion of social actors to the problem of the level of culture of the population is shown in Fig. 01.



**Figure 1.** The opinion of social actors on the problem of the culture level of the population

Studies have shown that the previously stated thesis has not lost its relevance that the “closer” the respondent is to the process of creating spiritual values, the more he is worried about the state of the population's cultural level because, in the formation of a sense of satisfaction, objective life successes and personal achievements are refracted both through external social norms are passed through internal standards (Stepanova, 2016). The answers of the actors of the cultural policy process to the question of assessing the satisfaction with the material and technical condition of cultural institutions can serve as a confirmation of our hypothesis.

Analyzing the opinions of various social and professional groups, one can also note a clear tendency here: among those respondents who represent an active group of actors, there is an increase in the proportion of those who are dissatisfied with the material and technical base of cultural institutions, and among those indirectly involved, there is an increase in satisfaction. Thus, we can observe a multidirectional movement in the representation of two subgroups, where the degree of involvement in the production of cultural products is singled out as a criterion. Of the general tendencies, we immediately note one more – the representatives of the first subgroup (creators, employees from culture) chose only the options of answers "satisfied" or "not satisfied", while consumers and officials in both studies chose the third option of the answer "I do not care", Which to a certain extent further emphasizes their indirectness in the ongoing processes in the sphere of culture.

In general, most of the respondents note that the material and technical base of cultural institutions has improved over these 15–16 years. If at the beginning of the century there were more than half of the dissatisfied – 54 %, satisfied – 33 %, and 14 % of the population showed indifference, while in 2017, 16 % of respondents identified themselves as indifferent to the state of the material and technical base (approximately identical to the first survey). At the same time, if the difference between “satisfied” and “dissatisfied” material and technical base is significantly reduced from 20 to 4 %. According to the results of the 2017 research, 40 % are satisfied with the material and technical base of cultural institutions and 44 % of respondents are not satisfied, who in our gradation simultaneously act as consumers of cultural

products. It seems that the trend towards an increase in the level of satisfaction is associated with the fact that in many theater and concert institutions, cinemas began to use modern equipment (for example, 3D), which was previously associated only with advanced countries or Moscow, and was completely inaccessible to the local population, although the opinion that the rural repertoire includes something that is not in the city or has long been out of fashion (Kravchenko, 2001) and has not lost its relevance today.

The second group that “showed” an increase in satisfaction in their assessments over the years is government officials. If unsatisfied in 2001–2002 where 71 % of representatives of this group, satisfied – almost a quarter and 5 % of officials showed indifference to the problem of material and technical equipment of cultural institutions, then in 2016–2017. the number of dissatisfied people dropped to 53 %, and those who were satisfied increased to 40 % (7 % of officials noted the option "indifferent"). Thus, the difference between dissatisfaction and satisfaction rates is 13 % today, while at the beginning of the century it was almost 50 %. Such a sharp increase in satisfaction among officials happens because they assess them mostly as consumers of cultural products. According to our survey, most often they visit cinemas and leading theaters of the capital of the republic, which improve their material and technical equipment. The process of modernization in libraries, palaces, and houses of culture (especially in rural areas) is not proceeding at such a pace and these are much less frequently visited by government officials, which does not allow them to give an objective assessment. Secondly, there is also a subjective factor, because in this way the official evaluates his work, his contribution to the development of the cultural sphere.

A diametrically opposite situation in the assessments of the material and technical condition of cultural institutions among groups directly involved in the process of creating cultural and spiritual values. If creators, according to research results, have indicators in 2016–2017. compared to 2001–2002 have not changed, then the level of dissatisfaction among employees from culture increased significantly: from 50 to 64 %. At the same time, it is among the creators who are most dissatisfied with the material and technical condition of cultural institutions – 88 %.

These results allow us to say that people who do not work in the field of culture are less concerned about this serious issue as the sphere of culture does not exist by itself, and is the most important part of the cultural and spiritual development of society. If there is no material-technical development then cultural institutions will cease to be interesting and attractive for the younger generation, which will lead to further anomie of society and will fill consciousness with pseudo-spiritual and pseudo-cultural values and destroy the spiritual and moral foundations of our society. The state of general anomie cannot last indefinitely, and social disorientation is replaced by normative and non-normative reactions (Panina, 2006). It is important to remember one thing at the same time – technological, technical development will not allow “creating a social system with an organically built-in internal mechanism that can respond on time to objectively emerging needs for innovation”. It is necessary to create conditions for social development (Nasibullin, 2014).

At the same time, one should not think that always and in everything the opinions of active actors and those mediated are fundamentally different. So, in assessing the quality of the work of cultural institutions, this dichotomy is not of particular importance. The only thing we can note once again is that when assessing the quality of the work of cultural institutions, the answer option “indifferently” was

again chosen by representatives of government officials and consumers, i.e., from the subgroup that indirectly influence the process of creating cultural products. Among the officials, there were 5 % of those (in the 2001–2002 survey there were no such figures), and among consumers, 14 %. Interestingly, among consumers and in the first survey, the share of those who were indifferent to this issue was identical. For the rest, we can state that the share of representatives of all actors who are satisfied with the quality of cultural products has grown over the years, additional confirmation of which is the growth in the dynamics of visits to these institutions. It should be noted that this question was not asked in the expert survey of 2020 due to the objective circumstances under which cultural institutions have not practically functioned for more than six months.

Additional confirmation of our hypothesis about the possible dichotomy of actors in the process of managing the sphere of culture on active and mediated participants is the results of our research in terms of their worldview, which can be attributed to one of the most important social criteria in typologizing the social structure of society. Thus, according to the survey results, the attitude to culture can be divided into three large blocks: more than half of society (55 %) perceives culture in the broad sense of this phenomenon, assigning it a leading role in organizing life and developing society; approximately the same proportion of those who assign culture either only an applied function, or those who believe that culture is not a subject for discussion and reasoning (20–22 % each).

The analysis, in terms of the attitude of social actors to this problem, demonstrates that the share of those who believe that culture is the basis of the life and progress of society, among active actors; there are much more people adhering to a similar point of view among mediated actors – 63–68 % versus 50–55 %. The next, but no less convincing proof of our proposal for the classification is that among the active actors there were no respondents who would choose the answer options “I’m at a loss to answer”, “I don’t care”, “culture is being replaced by the Internet”, “a waste of money”. At the same time, the answer options, which boil down to the fact that, in principle, you cannot pay attention to culture, among officials is 17 %, and among consumers – 22 %. Among the groups representing mediated actors, there is a fairly large proportion of those (about 1/5) who are indifferent to cultural issues, and among active actors, due to their direct involvement in the process of forming cultural products, there are none (Table 02). In general, it is gratifying that most representatives of society consider culture as a factor in the socialization of a person in society.

**Table 2.** The opinion of social actors on the importance of culture in the life of society

	Consumers	Officials	Creators	Employees
The basis of the life of society	45	46	54	56
The engine of progress	10	4	9	12
Leisure element	23	33	37	32
The Internet is replacing culture	4	2	-	-
Waste of money	2	3	-	-
I do not care	4	8	-	-
I am at a loss to answer	12	4	-	-

Another argument in favor of the proposed classification with distinguished groups in active actors and mediated participants in the process of managing the sphere of culture is their income. In our repeated study, along with the questions about personal income and average monthly income per family member,

we also asked the question of what the respondent's monetary income is enough for. In connection with the volatility of the ruble, growing inflation (and its difference in official sources and on store shelves), the jump in oil prices, and the consequences of the sanctions imposed on Russia, we consider it expedient to investigate the question of the possibility of respondents spending their income, without reference to a specific amount in rubles. The results of the survey show that most respondents (42 %) declare that “there is enough money for clothing and food but buying household appliances and furniture causes difficulties”. In second place (29 %) is the answer option according to which “there is enough money for food, but buying clothes causes difficulties”. Every eighth respondent says that “there is enough money for household appliances and furniture but buying a car causes difficulty”. The remaining three answers were chosen by less than 10 % of the respondents, among which 8 % chose the answer option “there is enough money for everything except buying an apartment”, “there is not enough money even for food” – 7 %, and “there is enough money to buy an apartment or at home ” – 1.5 % of the respondents. Considering that the total number of respondents in our gradation are representatives of such a social actor as a consumer, we can say that more than 40 % of consumers spend their earnings enough for clothing and food while buying household appliances and furniture causes difficulties. Among officials, this level of spending is in the first place and with almost the same indicator – 41 %. Note that between the first and the next spending options, consumers have 13 %, and officials – 19 %, while if consumers have a situation in which they have enough money for food, officials have enough money for household appliances and furniture (the situation is quite understandable). We can say that in the ranking of expenditures of funds, the level is defined quite clearly. And between the first and third options, the difference is 25–30 percentage points. The last three variants of answers (the minimum possibility of spending funds and the 2 maximum ones) are identical in their ranking not only for these two groups but also for representatives of active actors. At the same time, the situation for creators and employees is strikingly different from culture. The maximum number of representatives of these groups can spend their funds only on food (39–43 %). Buying clothes, not to mention household appliances or larger spending is difficult. Among both creators and employees, there is a direct relationship from a culture between the possibilities of spending funds and increasing the quality of expenses (the only exception is “there is not enough money even for food – 5th place out of 6). Thus, not only the worldview of social actors participating in the process of managing the sphere of culture but also a fairly "countable" indicator, such as the spending of earned funds, makes it possible to distribute social actors into two subgroups in the social and professional structure of participants in managing the sphere of culture, which we have designated above – active actors (creators and employees from culture) and mediated actors (consumers and officials), depending on the degree of involvement in the production of cultural products.

## 7. Conclusion

Our research, the results of which are based on the analysis of works devoted to cultural issues and on the results of our sociological research, allow us to draw the following conclusions:

- culture is a self-regulating sphere of public life, which has its logic of development and inherent internal intentions, while the management of the sphere of culture will be productive if it does not interfere with the internal self-realization of cultural life;

- the social structure of the sphere of culture can be subdivided into active and mediated actors, each of which has its specific ideas about the development of culture and art, expressed in all kinds of programs, concepts of development.
- since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a clear trend, according to which the level of development of the culture of the population is of interest to an ever-smaller number of respondents, both in their total number and in all the groups of actors identified by us;
- on most of the issues we have analyzed, there is a multidirectional movement in the identified subgroups (mediated and active), in terms of assessing the development of the cultural sphere, which makes it necessary to consider the opinions of all social actors of the process, as its equivalent participants, when making an appropriate decision.

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