

Olga Velikanova
University of North Texas, Denton, TX, USA

Continuity of Soviet-Russian Mass Political Culture (1936-present)

I compare major characteristics of Soviet political culture revealed in the popular comments to the constitution in 1936 with the main conclusions made by sociological and historical studies regarding the postwar Soviet period and modern Russia.

Various sources – secret police and Soviet organs reviews, memoirs, diaries of the 1930s, Harvard Interview Project of the 1950s, and modern sociological surveys - show that some general patterns of the Soviet popular mind have remained reasonably constant through all periods: lack of social solidarity, high levels of dissatisfaction with material conditions and the inability of the regime to fulfil its promises, us–them thinking, favor for the welfare provisions, veneration of the leader, and the myth of a besieged fortress in relation to foreign affairs. Statist code of culture is reflected in popular belief that the common or state interests should prevail over individual rights. Such characteristics as an uncompromising stance and distrust persisted through the twentieth century in Russia. Mass political culture showed continuity under various regimes and conditions.