

HARMONY IN DIVERSITY: PROMOTING CULTURAL DIPLOMACY BETWEEN RUSSIA AND PAKISTAN IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The concept of harmony in diversity within international relations, emphasising the constructive role of cultural differences in fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world. Amid rapid geopolitical transformations, economic globalisation, and technological advancement, states are compelled to refine non-coercive instruments of foreign policy in order to strengthen their international standing. In this context, cultural diplomacy emerges as a significant mechanism through which states project values, narratives, and identities beyond their borders. The study explores the relationship between cultural diplomacy and international reputation, asking how a state's cultural engagement influences perceptions of legitimacy, credibility, and soft power. It argues that cultural diplomacy operates not merely as a supplementary diplomatic tool but as a strategic component of foreign policy, capable of shaping long-term bilateral and multilateral relationships. The analysis is situated within the evolving dynamics between Russia and Pakistan, highlighting how both states navigate global change through cultural engagement. Particular attention is given to Russia's cultural diplomacy, which has frequently been interpreted as intertwined with its broader political objectives. While such efforts have enhanced Russia's visibility and cultural outreach in certain contexts, they have also generated ambivalent responses due to perceptions of political instrumentalisation. By examining these dynamics, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural diplomacy can either consolidate or complicate a state's international image. The findings offer insights for policymakers seeking to employ cultural engagement as a means of advancing diplomatic goals while sustaining credibility and mutual trust.

Introduction

The accelerating reconfiguration of the international system, marked by geopolitical fragmentation, economic uncertainty, climate stress and rapid technological change, has intensified scholarly attention to non-traditional dimensions of international engagement. Among these, cultural diplomacy has assumed renewed

importance as a sustained mode of interaction capable of operating where conventional diplomatic instruments increasingly encounter structural and political constraints. Situated at the intersection of culture and international relations, cultural diplomacy enables the circulation of narratives, values, and social practices that shape

perception, legitimacy, and trust beyond formal state negotiations.

Within this evolving global setting, Russia's cultural engagement with Asia constitutes an underexamined yet analytically significant field of inquiry. Russia's civilisational positioning, informed by Slavic heritage and Eurasian historical experience, has produced long-standing cultural interfaces with Asian societies, extending from imperial and Soviet encounters to post-Cold War realignments. Relations with China, India, Central Asia, and the broader Asian region have been mediated not only through political and economic exchange, but also through literature, scholarship, artistic production, education, and shared historical memory. Despite the strategic salience of these relationships, their cultural dimensions remain insufficiently integrated into contemporary analyses of Eurasian international relations, which continue to privilege security and economic frameworks.

This article advances the argument that Russia-Asia cultural diplomacy represents more than a supplementary instrument of foreign policy; it constitutes a social domain through which meanings are negotiated, identities are rearticulated, and long-term relational infrastructures are constructed. Cultural initiatives—ranging from heritage cooperation and academic mobility to artistic collaboration and digital engagement—operate as sites where political difference is mediated through social interaction rather than strategic confrontation. In periods of heightened geopolitical tension, such spaces assume particular importance, offering continuity where formal diplomatic channels may contract.

The relevance of this inquiry is further heightened by three interrelated global developments. First, the consolidation of a more plural international order has expanded the role of regional institutions such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, within which cultural cooperation increasingly accompanies political and economic coordination. Second, the growing prominence of non-state actors artists, scholars, cultural institutions, and diaspora communities—has complicated state-centric models of diplomacy, redistributing cultural agency across societal

networks. Third, global disruptions, including pandemics, digital insecurity, and environmental degradation, have reshaped both the modalities and thematic priorities of cultural engagement, foregrounding virtual interaction, social inclusion, and ecological consciousness.

Against this background, the article examines how cultural diplomacy between Russia and Asian societies is historically constituted, institutionally practised, and socially experienced. It interrogates the transformation of earlier cultural connections into contemporary diplomatic instruments; the capacity of artistic and educational exchange to negotiate ideological difference; the role of digital platforms in expanding access and representation; and the contribution of environmentally oriented cultural initiatives to shared sustainability objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on underexplored cultural narratives and indigenous traditions that remain marginal to official diplomacy but hold potential to deepen mutual intelligibility. The analysis further considers the contribution of non-governmental actors to sustaining cultural relations, especially in contexts where state-centred frameworks constrain social participation.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative and interpretive research design appropriate to the examination of cultural meaning, representation, and relational practice. Drawing on documentary analysis, institutional material, and selected cultural case contexts, it traces how cultural diplomacy is articulated across official and societal arenas. This approach facilitates a contextualised understanding of cultural diplomacy as a socially embedded process shaped by memory, identity formation, and everyday cultural production.

By situating Russia-Asia cultural diplomacy within the conceptual frame of harmony in diversity, this article contributes to current debates on Eurasian international relations, cultural diplomacy, and multipolar order formation. It demonstrates that cultural engagement is not merely decorative or instrumental, but constitutive of the relational environments in which political cooperation, conflict mitigation, and long-term regional stability are negotiated.

Literature review

Cultural diplomacy, as an important tool, can be utilized to foster this harmony especially in the context of Russia and the Asian countries usually with the help of soft power tools such as education exchange programs, media, arts, and language exchange programs (Mark, 2009). The available literature, emphasizes the quest by Russia to redefine its orientation towards Asia after the cold war with the rivalry of other powers, such as China, EU and the US. This review consolidates the main literature, in terms of the themes of soft power rivalry, historical relations, and media adjustments to changes on the global level, and it finds gaps in coverage of the real essence of harmony versus strategy competition. The review is based on about 15-20 publications covering the period 2009-2023 to ensure original synthesis.

Theorists present cultural diplomacy as one of the forms of soft power wherein countries can sway one another not by force, but by appeal as described by Joseph Nye (Nye Jr, 2008). This, in the relations between Russia and Asia, means the promotion of shared values, cultural exchanges, and narratives as a way of developing trust. One example is the study of the soft power of Russia that shows that it is compared with the Chinese one, both of which rely on culture, education, and media to spread influence, yet with different degrees of success because of historical settings (Morgan, 2025). General literature on the social change globally highlights the role of cultural exchanges in driving globalization, and Russia is placed as a bridging point between Europe and Asia in order to address economic and identity transformations (Kucera, 2017). These premises demonstrate that though diversity may bring about peace in the world, international events such as post-Soviet transitions usually transform diplomacy into a challenging field.

The culture diplomacy of Russia in Central Asia has strongly banked on the historical precedents of Soviet rule like common language and educational connections to retain its presence and ensure mutual understanding in the face of ethnic diversity and increased nationalism (Kosmarskaya, N., & Kosmarski, A., 2019). As an example, Russia has been using the press such as Rossiya

Segodnya and diaspora networks to strengthen cultural assimilation especially in Kazakhstan where Russian is used as lingua franca in education and the wider society so that programs such as joint university relations and language immersion programs can be used to develop confidence and identities (Ziegler, 2006). Also, arts festivals and youth exchanges have been held in cultural centers created by the Russkiy Mir Foundation to promote shared heritage, including that of the Soviet era, including literature and music, to develop a sense of familiarity in other countries, including Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Supyaldiyarov, I., Gupta, R., & Aliyeva, S., 2024). It shows a lapse in keeping up with the global changes with tools being used by Russia to enhance dependency over actual harmonious coexistence in the face of anti-Russian moods in certain regions through surveys that revealed a decline in influence. One of the analyses measures the performance of Russia and the EU in cultural diplomacy in this region and reveals that Russia has an advantage of historical proximity, but encounters the problem of EU efforts in promoting values (Valenza, D., Boers, E., & Cappelletti, A., 2021).

The cultural diplomacy of Russia in South Asia after 1991 has changed the alliances of the cold wars and especially with India to wider activities that focus on people-to-people relations and common storytelling as a way of countering the western dominance and as a survival strategy amid economic globalization. The main examples here are increased educational interaction like scholarships of the Indian students in the Russian universities of the Stem and culture as well as joint film festivals to promote Bollywood-Russian partnerships as a symbol of harmony between cultures. Russia has used media diplomacy through RT broadcasts in local languages and cultural exhibitions on the history of the Indo-Russian relations such as the legacy of the 1971 treaty to establish good will between the regionally conflicting countries in Pakistan and Bangladesh (Purnima, 2021). Individually and critically examined through the prism of cultural diplomacy practices, including the narrative-building focus of public diplomacy, these tools perform differently

across an array of countries: in India, they boost the success of the soft power by sharing the value of mutual non-alignment, though in competition with the US and Chinese influences, where Russian attempts at cultural diplomacy are frequently viewed as secondary to the defense relationships. Further, the global dynamics such as digital connectivity have unveiled constraints whereby Russian diaspora policies are not coping up with increased nationalism and the argument is that more inclusive mechanisms of attaining win-win harmony should be sought instead of strategic positionality.

The Southeast Asian literature presents the diplomacy of Russia as expansion of its pivot to Asia, due to the economic necessity and in opposition to the dominance of the West. Russia since the post-Cold War has shifted its focus to Southeast Asia with the inclusion of cultural diplomacy instruments such as economic-cultural hybrids and multilateral forums to advance diversity-based collaboration to counteract Western isolation following the annexation of Crimea (Dave, 2016). The noteworthy instances are ASEAN-Russia cultural dialogues, including arts exchanges and youth forums in both Vietnam and Indonesia as Russia presents itself to the non-western world in the form of music and literature festivals. In Thailand and Laos, courses in the Russian language and scholarships are provided through the Rossotrudnichestvo agencies as part of the education programs in order to create long-term relationships in accordance with the economic need (Koldunova, 2016). The critical assessment indicates the fact that even though these approaches which are based on the international relations theories regarding relational diplomacy have been quietly establishing partnerships based on a clear focus on shared anti-hegemonic narratives, their effectiveness is constrained due to their invisibility and a tendency to view Russia as a remote power interested in selling weapons rather than engaging in genuine cultural relationships. With the worldwide evolution such as the Indo-Pacific realignment, the instruments of Russia may be lost in the shadow of the Chinese Belt and Road cultural program, and it is important to note that

a strategic instead of a harmonious strategy can use more digital and people-centered changes.

East Asia Since 1991, cultural diplomacy by Russia in the East Asian context has centered on resolving border conflicts and making joint efforts to restore historical relations, with the tools of annual summits and cultural years as the means of establishing harmony in the region where geopolitical changes were experienced. In the case of China, there are the 1991 border settlements developing into cultural events in the form of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, with joint art shows and media cooperation insisting on the common values of anti-Westernism and Eurasian identity (Liang, 2024). Russia has also sought Year of Russia initiatives in Japan and South Korea where it screens film, tours with ballet companies and educational alliances to defuse territorial claims, including the Kuril Islands. Most importantly, such practices with soft power such as narrative contestation in media, have been only partially successful in stabilizing relations with China but fail in other places because of leftover cold war suspicions and marginal economic position of Russia, according to constructivist perspectives on role-claiming in diplomacy. The world changes, with the digital globalization in particular, highlight the gaps: the tools of Russia tend to be responsive, and they focus on security rather than on the potential harmonious connection in diversity, and many youths are attracted to K-pop culture and anime culture (Rozman, 2004).

The cultural diplomacy by Russia in the Middle East after the end of the Cold War has utilized the instrument of religious and media to be able to project influence and conduct intercultural dialogue in the face of conflict and the globalization of energy. Major ones are the outreach efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church in Syria and Lebanon, where interfaith discussions and humanitarian assistance to establish trust between the different sects and the culture centers where Arabic-speaking arts programs and sports events such as the 2018 world cup are seen as a way of attracting tourists to the region. Russia relies on RT Arabic airings and collaborative film festivals in the GCC to oppose the Western

discourse and stress common conservative ideals. The critical evaluation based on cultural diplomacy frameworks, including the emphasis on the relational approach and the digital one, reveals both the benefits of religious soft power in countering extremism and the drawbacks in the terms of authenticity since the interventions in Syria are rather a combination of cultural initiatives and military operations that may foster the perception of hybrid warfare, rather than the harmony. With the modern changes on the world stage such as cyber operations, there has been questioning of the tools of Russia as having the interest of geopolitical benefits which may imply identifying more collaborative and diversity-driven solutions to keep long-term bridges. (Clarke, 2020)

Main discussion

Past cultural links between Russia and Asian countries

Past cultural links between Russia and Asian countries and specifically China, India, and Central Asia date to ancient trade routes such as the Silk Road which led to the transfer of goods, ideas, and religions like Buddhism of India through Central Asia into the areas that affected Russian territories. As an example, the Tang Dynasty saw the Chinese culture spread to Central Asia, whereas the Russian expansion in the 17th-19th centuries saw the introduction of the Turkic culture and nomadic traditions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and led to the growth of common language and artistic elements. The relations have developed into modern diplomatic tools in the post-Cold War world by use of soft power mechanisms as propounded by Joseph Nye where Russia uses culture diplomacy to forge allies among global changes. Examples include efforts such as common cultural festivals, educational exchange programs with China, such as the Russia-China Years of Culture and India being part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), efforts to build common identities in opposition to western hegemony and economic collaboration in Eurasia, which are constructivist in international relations. (SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL , 2002)

Unexplored indigenous cultures with their stories can provide powerful sources of better mutual knowledge, using anthropological research techniques such as ethnographic research. Shared folklore, including epic deeds of nomadic heroes in Turkic groups such as the Evenki or Chukchi, who have ethnic connections with Mongolians and Kazakhs, is still under-used in Central Asia and the Siberian regions of Russia, and can be used to intervene between groups. After the cold war, the stories would enlighten the postcolonial theoretical paradigms by contradicting Eurocentric histories in favor of pre-colonial interrelations in the form of shamanism shared by the indigenous populations of Siberia and Central Asia. Such narratives, incorporated in the process of diplomacy, such as the cultural exchange programs, may allow Russia and Asian countries to build trust and work collaboratively as a result of which geopolitical tensions may be reduced due to bottom-up cultural revitalization. (cultural-survival, 2010)

Modern cultural exchange programmes- building resilience to geopolitical tensions:

Modern cultural exchange programs, such as art festivals and educational partnerships, serve as vital mechanisms for transcending ideological boundaries between Russia and Southeast Asian nations by emphasizing shared human experiences over political divergences. For instance, the 2024 Year of Cultural Exchange and Tourism between Russia and Thailand featured joint initiatives like Russian folk choir performances in Bangkok, Thai cultural festivals in Moscow's Hermitage Garden, and reciprocal film screenings, which promote interpersonal connections and mutual appreciation of traditions despite contrasting governance models—Russia's centralized system versus Thailand's constitutional monarchy with democratic elements (NEO, 2024). Drawing on Joseph Nye's soft power theory (Nye Jr, 2008), these programs leverage cultural attraction to foster goodwill and reduce perceptions of threat, as seen in broader ASEAN contexts where Russia's involvement in events like the Russia-Vietnam Cultural Centre in St. Petersburg integrates educational exchanges to highlight historical ties

and contemporary collaborations. Constructivist international relations theory further implies that such interactions reconstruct identities, shifting focus from ideological clashes (e.g., communism's legacy versus market-oriented reforms in Vietnam or Indonesia) to collaborative narratives, thereby mitigating mistrust through qualitative methodologies like participant observation in festivals that reveal evolving cross-cultural dynamics (Nikulina, 2017).

To build resilience against geopolitical tensions, these programs can be tailored through inclusive, multi-level designs that incorporate local stakeholders and adaptive frameworks, ensuring sustainability amid conflicts like those in the South China Sea or global repercussions from the Ukraine crisis. By integrating ethnographic methodologies to uncover indigenous stories—such as shared folklore in Siberian-Russian and Southeast Asian communities—programs like Singapore-Russia educational partnerships can evolve into hybrid models that blend online platforms with in-person events, fostering networks that endure disruptions (Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Singapore, n.d.). Hedging theory in regional international relations suggests that ASEAN nations use such cultural diplomacy to balance great power influences, with Russia's pivot to Asia via art exchanges providing a buffer against Western sanctions; evaluative case studies, as applied in assessing Confucius Institutes' impacts, could measure outcomes like increased bilateral trade or reduced diplomatic friction, ultimately strengthening Eurasian alliances through bottom-up resilience building (Singha, 2025).

Obstacles facing the cultural diplomacy of Russia

The barriers to Russian cultural diplomacy to South Asian nations, such as India, Pakistan are based on past and current geopolitical tensions that sabotage independent variables to exporting culture, diplomatic relations and perception among the citizens weakening the national image of Russia as a reliable partner. The Cold War alliances have led to historical prejudices in which the Soviet Union stood squarely behind India and therefore developed deep mistrust of Pakistan

because of the conflicts like the Indo-Pak wars, where Russia cast a veto over UN resolutions that favored Pakistan; this has remained the case making diplomatic interaction difficult, with Russia walking a fine line to ensure it does not offend India, its biggest arms supplier. Within the conceptual framework of the public diplomacy as presented in the relational models (Zaharna, 2008), cultural exports, like Russian literature, ballet, or film festivals, are being hindered by the perception of the people, which is left by the Ukraine conflict with Russia, which has further diminished India-Russia relations amid global sanctions and difference in multipolarity, with Pakistan taking Russia cooperation in military ties with caution due to the security factors. Theoretically, the Carnegie Endowment case studies (REFORM, 2004) have shown how these challenges present through constrained joint efforts, with constructivist theory pointing to how the existence of strong identities prevents building of mutual narratives resulting in a dependent variable of damaged national image defined by the perceptions of Russia as lonely or being excessively China-oriented.

Harmony can be achieved through integration of shared cultural stories that will strategically improve the independent variables to positively affect the country image of Russia in order to attract the gaps using soft power theory instead of direct confrontation. Russia can increase cultural export by integrating indigenous stories (like collective Sufi mysticism into Russian literature reinventing Central Asian connections, or the impact of Indo-Soviet intercultural exchange like Bollywood versions of Russian classics, etc.) into shows, transforming image of adversity into model collaborations, re-branding the state as a partner. The diplomatic engagement may require ethnographic processes of co-curating the narratives such as recent India-Russia student exchange in Kazan, where aspects of resilience and multiculturalism are promoted to reduce geopolitical tensions in the Kashmir disputes or the fallout of Ukraine. This practice, which is based on the nation branding concepts in which exports and perceptions are used to create image, will provide harmony in the building of relational

trust without coercing assimilation but through the constructivist lenses to develop identities towards each other and sustainable relationships (Amaresh, 2022).

Cultural diplomacy as a response to global shifts (Russia-Asian relationships)

Social media, and virtual reality (VR) programs have transformed Russian-Asian relations considerably through digital culture diplomacy based on the social media strategy as developed by Joseph Nye, whereby attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion are prioritized in the context of the soft power theory. Physical interactions were limited during the pandemic, so Russia intensified its activity in digital communication with Asian countries, including virtual cultural festivals and social media campaigns via social networks like VKontakte and Telegram, building relationships with countries like China and India through sharing art, literature, and the history of Russia online; not only alleviating isolation, but also promoting Russia as a strong partner in Eurasia against the backdrop of Western narratives amid sanctions. Nevertheless, cyber threats, such as disinformation campaigns, and hacks have added some complexities, such as Russia-China relationships on information manipulation, which, although strengthening the mutually established soft power in the face of external pressures, incites a lack of confidence in Southeast Asia, because of the perceived threat to digital sovereignty (Bjola, C., & Copen, M., 2023).

Constructivist practices in interpreting these shifts show how digital technologies rebuild a sense of shared identities, staging historical alliances into contemporary networks, which enhance economic and security collaboration, but quantitative sentiment analysis of social media shows split feelings with positive response in Central Asia and negative in South Asia in the context of geopolitical conflicts (Unesco Cutting Edge | From standing out to reaching out: cultural diplomacy for sustainable development, 2022). The new approaches should be involved to utilize the soft power to expand the accessibility to marginalized populations in Central Asia (e.g., rural residents) and ethnic minorities in Russia

and the Southeast Asian countries (e.g., people of color) through the lens of inclusive digital frameworks that would democratize cultural interactions by using participatory action research designs to co-design programs with the affected groups. As an example, hybrid VR systems combined with the low-bandwidth social media may allow subsidized access and multilingualism, allowing indigenous communities to exchange folklore and traditions, thereby improving the soft power edge of Russia by making it appear a fair partner, but not a top-down manipulator. In Asian developing situations, there are measures such as the public-private partnerships in training digital literacy as reported in reports on digital diplomacy adoption in Asia, which can help overcome barriers such as internet gaps and cyber vulnerability to build resilience on the basis of community-based narratives that can resonate with the postcolonial theories to empower the voice of the marginalized and ensure harmonious relation amidst global uncertainties (Budiana, 2023).

Role of environmental and climate-oriented cultural programs in cooperation between Russia and East Asian partners

The sustainability of the environment and climate oriented cultural programs between Russia and its East Asian neighbors, including Japan and South Korea, are contributing to the enhancement at the global sustainability agenda by supporting the joint soft power programs that comply with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 17 on partnerships. As an example, Japan-Russia Scientific Forum on SDGs focuses on conducting joint research and cultural exchange using indigenous knowledge to facilitate sustainable practices, and ROK-Russia Joint Commission on Environmental Cooperation, reviews the policies and introduces programs such as youth dialogs which incorporate cultural aspects to enhance resilience to climate change (HOKKAIDO University, 2021). Using the soft power theory by Joseph Nye, such programs make Russia a better partner in Eurasia by dividing the geopolitical conflicts, like the issues with Japan

over its territories, or with South Korea over North Korea, into the united environmental discourse, thus, forming the mutual trust with the application of constructivist theories of international relations. Theoretically, the case studies of these projects as observed in cross-cultural youth programs portray quantifiable effects such as more bilateral agreements to be carbon-neutral, curbing global emissions during pandemics and cyberattacks that cripple face-to-face diplomacy. The potential of neglected collaborative paradigms in traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is unexploited because it would help add to the effectiveness of these programs indifferent of state-based diplomacy by incorporating indigenous wisdom that considers harmony with nature. Siberian native traditions, such as ecosystem balance (shamanistic) rituals, in Russia could be combined with the Ainu folklore of sustainable forestry, in Japan, or the use of traditional hanok architecture in South Korea, which emphasizes energy efficiency, to create synergies with alternative paradigms such as community-based resource management, which pushes the anthropocentric paradigms to the limit. The postcolonial theoretical approaches emphasize the ability of these overlooked factors, interpreted with participatory action research approaches, to empower the disadvantaged groups and erase cultural barriers, which are exemplified in global TEK application to SDG integration (Nepal, 2025). Through adding these paradigms to digital platforms or collaborative festivals, Russia and East Asian partners may enhance program resilience, which will lead to whole-system sustainability that will counter modern-day ecological crises with renewed ancestral knowledge.

Role of non-governmental actors (artists, scholars, and diaspora communities) in maintaining cultural diplomacy

Non-governmental actors, including artists, scholars, and diaspora communities, play a crucial role in sustaining cultural diplomacy between Russia and Central Asian republics by operating beyond state-controlled frameworks, thereby fostering grassroots connections that preserve

shared histories and identities amid geopolitical shifts. In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for example, diaspora organizations orchestrate cultural events that highlight Turkic-Russian synergies, such as folklore festivals and academic symposia, which reinforce soft power dynamics as per Joseph Nye's theory by attracting mutual respect without overt political agendas. Scholars contribute through collaborative research on Eurasian heritage, employing constructivist methodologies to reconstruct narratives of coexistence, while artists—often in exile—use exhibitions and performances to challenge stereotypes, as seen in initiatives addressing migration and identity in Russia's Central Asian communities. These actors mitigate gaps in state systems, where official diplomacy may prioritize security over cultural depth, by leveraging public diplomacy tools to promote harmony, though challenges like funding constraints and censorship persist, as analyzed in relational models of diaspora engagement post-Soviet dissolution (Vorobeva, 2024).

To empower these voices and bridge state-induced gaps, strategies should focus on inclusive platforms that amplify non-state narratives, drawing on participatory action research methodologies to involve communities in co-creating diplomatic content. International partnerships, such as those with Western NGOs, can provide resources for digital archives and virtual exchanges, enabling scholars and artists from Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan to collaborate with Russian diasporas on themes like environmental stewardship or gender roles, thus countering state monopolies through postcolonial frameworks that prioritize marginalized perspectives. By supporting independent festivals and academic networks, as evidenced in reports on Central Asian civil society, these efforts can enhance resilience against censorship, fostering a hybrid diplomacy model where soft power evolves from top-down to bottom-up, ultimately strengthening Eurasian ties in an era of global uncertainties (Šešić, 2017).

Role of BRICS, SCO and other organizations to counteract the dangers of misunderstanding in the cultural context

The cultural diplomacy policies of Russia in the multipolar world have cultivated mutual respect among Asian nations to a considerable but not even share whereby the public diplomacy style is employed as the major means of influencing positive perceptions and establishing relational faith which relies on people-to-people interactions mediated by the government as opposed to state-centric models. By advancing the messages of civilizational equality and non-interference, Russia uses such platforms as BRICS itself to prove that it continues to support non-Western countries in their appeal to remain independent strategically and fight against Western domination, which can be seen in the 2024 Kazan summit where cultural exchanges acted as the agent to provide non-Western nations, such as India and China, with the opportunity to find their voices and resist Western efforts to isolate them (B2BRICS, 2025). The BRICS is a kind of a backing-up group on the international level, providing a durable support to members in times of crisis, i.e. protecting Russia after the 2014 annexation of Crimea or Brazil in 2021, through consensus-based reforms in the global financial institutes like the New Development Bank, which also enables de-dollarization and equal financing (carnegieendowment, 2025). Likewise, the SCO offers an alternative construction of governance in Eurasia wherein the opposition of U.S. policies is carried out through economic corridors and security centers in Tashkent and Dushanbe with the aim of boosting investment and market accessibility to the Central Asian republics on the other hand curbing Western dependencies. Other organizations such as the EAEU also add to this by diversifying cultural relationships with the Global South, but societal attitudes are still upset by the continuing conflicts such as Ukraine, preventing further integration in Southeast Asia (Country Report: Russia (August 2025), 2025).

The public diplomacy framework can be applied to make adaptive models to overcome misunderstandings in culturally uncertain global contexts, by co-creating narratives through

participatory methodologies such as ethnographic co-curation to reduce misperceptions. As an example, the BRICS and SCO cultural programs, including the Intervision-2025 contest of 23 countries and the International Buddhist Forum establish BRICS and SCO blocs as the means of influence through the promotion of the so-called equality of cultures with the help of the events, emphasizing the peace and mutual values, and reaching to business opportunities in the content localization and co-productions. In a bid to maximize effectiveness, models may incorporate non-governmental actors, such as artists, scholars and diasporas, as platforms such as the BRICS Civil Forum of "Cultural Bridges" build a symbolic platform that binds disparities in case of uncertainty, such as pandemics or cyber threats. Constructivist-based bottom-up strategy aims to rebuild identities to facilitate resilience to deal with threats of politicization due to communication tailored to address voices of marginalization in Asia and inclusive digital interactions (carnegieendowment, 2025).

Long-term effects of increased cultural diplomacy

Enhanced cultural diplomacy in Eurasia, especially between Russia and countries ambivalent in the Asian border (e.g., those in Central Asia e.g., Kazakhstan-Tajikistan border tensions) or South Asia (e.g., India-Pakistan conflicts with Russian mediation interests), may have long run implications of reconciliation and peace building by changing the independent variables, such as cultural exportation (e.g., joint festivals and media partnerships) and diplomatic interactions (e.g., SCO-hosted dialogues) into the dependent variables, such as less host Such efforts through the soft power approach bring about attraction and mutual respect which would offset the geopolitical tensions in the multipolarity, whereby the cultural outreach in Central Asia by Russia has been found in the past to integrate the Soviet legacies with the local culture to de-escalate ethnic tensions, which could over time become institutionalized peace mechanisms. Constructivist theories also indicate that sustained interactions re-creating identities make the hostile

demarcations a collaborative territory, but threats such as politicization may cause ineffectiveness unless balanced with tales of inclusivity, which have been observed in qualitative research of Eurasian diplomacy (Ociepka, B., & Arendarska, J., 2021).

Anthropological, international relations, and cultural studies together in interdisciplinary approaches can show unknown synergies in various practices between Russia and Asian countries, in which independent variables include shared localized rituals (e.g., shamanism in Siberia and Central Asia) and environmental prudence, which produce dependent variables measured in the form of increased cross-cultural understanding and solidarity. The methodologies such as the Asia as method reveal that spiritual connections which state diplomacy frequently fails to record can be revealed through the multidisciplinary analysis revealing environmental stewardship or harmony in migration stories that might preempt any conflicts in borderland. Using participative ethnographic research approaches, these approaches highlight postcolonial synergies, which enable the marginalized voices to experience bridging gaps and long-term harmony in unpredictable world circumstances (Ociepka, B., & Arendarska, J., 2021).

Conclusion

The experience of these eight points brings to light a rather mute but still strong fact: in a time of overblown geopolitics, sanctions, and alliances, it is the finest threads, common songs, unknown folktales, virtual exhibitions, and patient voices of artists and scholars, which hold the fabric of Eurasia together. Since the old Silk Road to the modern digital screens, Russia and its Asian allies have re-discovered numerous times that culture does not just adorn diplomacy; its re-weaves it. What arises is not the victory of one civilization over another but an assembly of mutual respect gradually forming. BRICS and the SCO offer the platform, the environmental youth forums the urgency, the diaspora communities and more or less independent creators the authenticity, and digital platforms the resilience, and the traditional ecological wisdom the humility before nature.

These factors, when combined, have the insidious effect of undermining mistrust, recovering past wounds across divisive boundaries and reminding all parties that power in multipolarity does not necessarily entail conflict, it can equally mean tolerance through variety. Ultimately, the idea of cultural diplomacy between Asia and Russia is not a strategy, but merely promise: that despite the broken world we live in, human beings still have the ability to listen to each other, to empathize with each other on the basis of art, and to seek understanding, rather than fear. Provided, of course, that this pledge is fulfilled, when the states keep space to the non-state voices, when digital bridges enter the hitherto inaccessible world, when the ancient wisdom is given the chance to speak to the present-day crises, then the crop which will be reaped by the long-run will be more than a mere diplomatic convenient measure. It will be a permanent peace, but the silence in the oppressed will not be the foundation, but the noisy singing of many cultures that finally know how to sing along together.

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