

SHIFTING MEANINGS OF “RUSSIAN” IN CZECH DISCOURSE: INSIGHTS FROM A RUSSIAN FILM FESTIVAL

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This article examines how the meaning of the term “Russian” (*ruský*) has evolved within Czech cultural discourse, using the film festival Seminar of Russian Films (1994–2021) as a long-term case study. Employing a discursive-historical approach combined with insights from festival studies, the research analyzes festival programs and catalogues, alongside comparative materials from the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, the National Film Archive, and Czech media discourse. The study traces a three-stage shift in curatorial labeling: (1) an initial period of post-Soviet continuity (1994–2004), where inherited practices presented productions from different Soviet republics under “Russian cinema”; (2) a period of semantic inconsistency (2004–2014), characterized by the overlap of “Soviet,” “Russian,” and emerging national labels; and (3) a final stage of heightened reflexivity (2014–2021), where post-2014 geopolitical shifts triggered a narrowing of the term “Russian” and a more explicit recognition of non-Russian identities. Ultimately, the study contributes to discussions on postimperial semantics, cultural memory, and naming practices, illustrating how cultural institutions can simultaneously preserve inherited categories and participate in their active transformation.

Keywords: Postimperial Semantics; Film Festival Studies; Seminar of Russian Films; Czech Cultural Discourse; Cultural Memory; Naming Practices; Post-Soviet Cinema

From 1994 to 2021, the Seminar of Russian Films (Seminář ruských filmů)—whose venue shifted over the years between several Czech towns, mostly within Moravia—represented one of a few long-term attempts to preserve systematic knowledge about Soviet and Russian cinema in the Czech Republic. It was based on the pre-1989

Czechoslovak tradition of educational film clubs and seminars¹ and continued series of noncompetitive screenings, focused on analysis and education, initiated by Czechoslovak film clubs in 1960 (Kastner and Czesany Dvořáková 2003).

Film clubs, whose idea was closely linked with the concept of art film, aimed to make artistically valuable films available outside the mainstream distribution system and to offer audiences a deeper understanding of cinematic art, where the overall goal was not only entertainment but cultural and educational development (Purzycki 2021). The seminars thus differed from traditional film festivals in their educative character; absence of a competition, awards, or industry programs; and their focus on in-depth film analysis. These film showings, typically situated in single-screen cinemas, also pointed to their educational nature by the very name of the events, for example, the "film viewer's school" or various thematic seminar sessions (Kastner and Czesany Dvořáková 2003).

Although named the Seminar of Russian Films, its program was not at all limited to Russian films (meaning films produced by the Russian Federation, which would not have been even possible in 1994, when the first seminar was organized, given the short existence of the new state after the fall of the USSR in December 1991). On the contrary, it included much broader context that touched other countries of the former Soviet Union. The event's name not only did not reflect this fact, but it wasn't even discussed at the time; "Russian" as a concept meant much more than a single nation or ethnicity. It still has an ambiguous meaning in the Czech context, as well as in English.

This study conceptualizes the changing meaning of "Russian" through the lens of postimperial semantic drift—a process in which an ethnonym formerly used as a metonym for an entire imperial space gradually narrows or fragments under new geopolitical conditions. Drawing on Ewa Thompson's notion of colonial naming practices and Edward Saïd's and Maria Todorova's insights into the power of language in con-

¹ The name *Seminář ruských filmů* can be understood within a recognizable Czech film-cultural tradition of using the term *seminář* for extended, educationally oriented film events. This tradition is particularly associated with the film culture of the town of Uherské Hradiště. Earlier examples include the *Seminář filmových klubů* (Film club seminar), established in 1964 and later transformed into the *Letní filmová škola* (Summer film school), as well as the *Seminář britského filmu* (Seminar of British film; established in 1995) or the *Seminář archivního filmu* (Seminar of archival film; established in 1998). The name refers to the original meaning of the word "seminar" as a "select group of advanced students associated for special study and original research under the guidance of a professor" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, "seminar" [n.², sense 1.a], accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.oed.com/>), where the audiences would be students, and film experts and other invited guests acted as professors. These events combined film screenings with lectures, expert introductions, discussions, and other educational activities. The term *seminář* should therefore not be understood simply as the Czech equivalent of the English "seminar," nor does it imply that the event was formally a seminar in the contemporary academic sense. Rather, it reflects a specific format situated somewhere between a film festival, an educational program, and a discussion forum for a small group of people. To preserve authenticity and clarity, I will continue to use "Seminar of Russian Films" in the text, although the nature of the event corresponds to the English word "festival," and that is why it is sometimes known internationally as the Festival of Russian Film.

structing cultural hierarchies, I argue that linguistic categories themselves participate in the reproduction and eventual breakings of imperial perspectives. Within this framework, film festivals and seminars are treated not merely as curatorial institutions but as active sites of meaning-making, where shifts in terminology become visible through program choices.

The article therefore asks two central questions: How has the term “Russian” functioned as a cultural and linguistic signifier in Czech discourse? How have the labeling and curatorial practices of film festivals—specifically the Seminar of Russian Films—contributed to the redefinition of this term in response to geopolitical and ideological change?

By addressing these questions, the article contributes to discussions of language, identity, and postimperial representation of Russia within Czech cultural space. It bridges linguistic analysis with festival studies, treating the semantics of national labels as indicators of broader social and political negotiation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analysis draws on a corpus of official festival program booklets, press releases, and web archives of the event throughout its entire period of existence, from 1994 to 2021; comparative materials from the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF) and the National Film Archive (Národní filmový archiv, NFA) from the same period; and selected Czech media discourse on the meanings and uses of the category “Russian” in relation to Russian culture. In these sources, the term “Russian” (*ruský* in Czech) appears in several roles—as an ethnic or linguistic designation, a civic or state identifier, an imperial metonymy, or an ideological symbol—and these contextual nuances form the basis for the interpretive approach used in this article.

The study uses a discursive-historical approach that places these terms in a changing political and institutional context, with insight into the perspective of festival studies, which examines how paratexts—catalogues, film synopses, and thematic framing—mediate collective understanding. This method allows us to track both terminological and curatorial changes: for example, how editions before 2014 loosely combined filmmakers from various post-Soviet countries under the label “Russian,” while later programs introduced greater specificity or thematized Russian identity as a subject of reflection. By combining linguistic, institutional, and contextual evidence, the analysis demonstrates that festivals can function as origins of semantic and ideological change.

DEFINING “RUSSIAN” IN CZECH DISCOURSE

Many English-language publications on Russia explain the terminological problem in English and other European languages with respect to the definition of Russia and the term “Russian.” Ewa Thompson (2000), for instance, begins her publication *Imperial Knowledge* with a chapter titled “The Problem” where she specifically addresses terminological inaccuracies not limited to English. Thompson not only distinguishes

between ethnicity and nationality (*russkii* vs. *rossiiskii*) but also emphasizes nuances of content, arguing that "*russkii* . . . referred to Russians, whereas *rossiiskii* referred to Russians and other subjects of the empire—hence *rossiiskaia imperiia* or, in the post-Soviet period, *Rossiiskaia Federatsiia*." Thompson argues that since the words have the same etymology, "*rossiiskii* may seem to designate 'incomplete' Russians, Russians in the making, persons somehow naturally connected with Russia. The colonial nature of the empire is thus obscured by linguistic manipulation," and "ignoring [these distinctions] is a tantamount to concealing how massively Russian colonialism has engaged in de-naming nations and ethnicities" (2000:17–18; emphasis in original). Thompson also states that "with the exception of the Slavic languages, no European tongue distinguishes between *russkii* and *rossiiskii*" (18), which is not entirely correct: In Czech, similarly to English, no stable distinction exists between the different meanings subsumed under the adjective "Russian" (*ruský*), a situation paralleled in several other Slavic languages, including Polish, Slovak, and Slovenian.

In Russian two terms exist that are easy to differentiate: *russkii*, traditionally associated with ethnic and cultural Russianness, and *rossiiskii*, denoting affiliation with the Russian state regardless of ethnic background. This distinction is specific to the Russian language as it reflects historical and political developments: Before 1721 the state was known as the Tsardom of Russia (*Russkoe tsarstvo*); under Tsar Peter the Great and until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, it became the Russian Empire (*Rossiiskaia imperiia*), a consciously multinational imperial formation. The same political logic continued in the Russian Federation (*Rossiiskaia Federatsiia*), established in 1991, which likewise defines itself as a multinational state, distinct from ethnic and cultural Russianness associated with Russian people (*russkii narod*) or Russian culture (*russkaia kul'tura*). The meanings attached to the term "Russian" were not limited to the distinction between the Russian state and the Russian people. In different historical contexts, the term could also acquire political and cultural connotations. Among émigré and dissident circles during the Soviet period, for example, "Russian" (*russkii*) was often used to denote traditions perceived as distinct from, or not entirely aligned with, official Soviet ideology. Yet such usages did not necessarily resolve the ambiguity of the term. Rather, they frequently relied on similarly broad understandings of Russia that extended beyond narrowly national definitions and encompassed wider historical, cultural, and geopolitical spaces.

Whereas Thompson (2000) attributes this blurring of ethnic and state-related meanings primarily to Russian imperial practices, such as the historical promotion of a unified "Russian" (*russkii*) identity across the empire, the persistence of such terminology may also be understood through broader processes of cultural representation and categorization. Said's (2003) concept of Orientalism highlights how geographical and cultural regions are interpreted through externally produced frameworks of knowledge, while Balkanism, a notion developed by Todorova (1997), draws attention to the tendency for regions with heterogeneous ethnic and cultural composition to become condensed into seemingly self-evident cultural categories. As Todorova argues, such categories often acquire meanings that extend beyond geography and come to function as symbolic constructs that obscure internal diversity.

Similar mechanisms can be observed in the use of the term “Russia,” which has frequently operated as a broad cultural label encompassing diverse peoples, territories, and cultural traditions. The case of a film festival in contemporary Czech Republic examined in this article suggests that such understandings were reproduced not only through imperial narratives themselves but also through local practices of cultural classification and interpretation—often outside the borders of the empire.

In Czech public and cultural discourse, the non-Russian nations of the former Soviet space began to receive more attention after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While these developments provide an important context for the present study, they are not its primary focus. A related shift can be observed beyond the Czech context as well. For example, the exhibition *I Want to Outrun My Shadow*, dedicated to the Soviet filmmaker of Armenian origin Sergei Parajanov, whose life and artistic career were also closely connected with Georgia and Ukraine, presented at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Poland, between October 12, 2024, and January 12, 2025, included several works by the Ukrainian artist Jan Bačynskij / Yana Bachynska. One of these works featured an engraved metal plaque stating that without the war “the western world would not have realized that so many classics were Ukrainians, not Russians. It’s good, but not at such cost” (Zachęta National Gallery of Art, n.d.). The statement illustrates how questions of cultural attribution and the use of the label “Russian” have become increasingly visible in recent years. In Czech, the word “Russian” (translated as *Rus/Ruska* [for persons] or *ruský*) has for decades carried several overlapping meanings. It can refer to the historical East Slavic community of Rus’, to an ethnically Russian person, and to affiliation with the modern Russian state. Because of this semantic layering, *ruský* may denote either ethnocultural identity or state belonging. Because Russian language itself distinguishes between ethnicity (*ruskii*) and citizenship (*rossiianin*), lack of similar distinction in other languages (including Czech) produces ambiguity. Yet the ambiguity of the term is not limited to the distinction between ethnicity and citizenship. Depending on the context, “Russian” may also function as a broader cultural, historical, or civilizational category, often extending beyond ethnic Russians alone and referring to communities, traditions, and cultural spaces associated with the former imperial territory. The present article is concerned primarily with this broader metonymic use of “Russian” and with the ways in which it has historically functioned in Czech discourse as a label for heterogeneous imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet realities. Moreover, in Czech usage the term frequently substitutes for “Soviet” (*sovětský*). Publications commonly speak of “tsarist Russia” versus “Soviet Russia,” applying “Russia” to successive multinational entities—the empire, the union of Soviet republics, and the present federation. This reflects a metonymic tendency whereby the name of the dominant nation is often employed to designate larger multinational political entities, a pattern not unique to the Czech context: “Soviet Russia” was widely used internationally as a shorthand for the entire Soviet Union.

As Aleksandra Salamurović (2020) notes, such metonymic usage functions as a shared cognitive code based on collective knowledge and memory. Through it, “Russian” activates familiar associations with the Soviet era and Russia’s historic domi-

nance in multinational space. The continued use of "Russian" instead of "Soviet" thus reflects a culturally rooted pattern of metonymic continuity, maintained from the formation of the Soviet Union throughout its existence and persisting into the post-1991 period, sustaining the implicit perception of an unbroken line from the empire to the USSR and on to the federation. This process shows a simplistic but stable mental model in which Russia comes to stand for the broader Soviet and post-Soviet space. One manifestation of this conceptual confusion is the frequent recollection of the Soviet Red Army as the Russian army and of Warsaw Pact troops—the multinational forces from states allied with the USSR—as Russian soldiers. Most commonly, public memory describes the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia as carried out by "the Russians," even though the operation involved units from several Warsaw Pact countries. For instance, in the online project *Paměť národa* (Memory of the nation),² which collects and preserves oral testimonies and life stories related to significant events in modern Czech history, references to "Russia" and "Russian" occur repeatedly in accounts of both the Second World War and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. They include expressions such as "Russian army," "Russian occupation," and other similar designations referring to Russia, Russians, or Russian forces. Such expressions appear both in the biographical profiles of eyewitnesses and directly in some testimonies and recollections (see, e.g., *Paměť národa* 2003, 2014, 2018). As scholars such as anthropologist Ivan Kalmar (2022) note, such connotations do not merely obscure regional diversity. In the case of "Russian," they reflect a specific semantic overlap in which the term simultaneously denotes a nationality, an ethnocultural identity, and the dominant state within the Soviet bloc.

In Czech such vague and inconsistent usage of the term "Russian" appears most clearly in journalism and social media, less in academic writing, and rarely in official documents. The pattern is not new: Even during the Soviet period, Czech discourse habitually referred to the USSR as "Russia." Early postwar texts already demonstrate this generalization. Writer Alexej Kusák noted that in 1945 the literary critic Václav Černý called for a "Russian orientation" of Czechoslovak culture, meaning alignment with the Soviet Union (1998:150). Historians Jiří Knapík and Martin Franc (2011) have observed that after the late 1940s, teaching of the Russian language was linked to the promotion of socialist ideology and Soviet realities and thus further associated the Soviet Union almost exclusively with the Russian language and culture.

The same ambiguity occurs also in other topics that Czech historians try to map, especially regarding emigration from the Russian Empire after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In historian Václav Veber's book on Russian and Ukrainian emigration to Czechoslovakia (1995), the opening chapter "Emigration from Russia and the 1930s" does not specify whether "Russia" means the empire, the RSFSR, or the USSR. At times "Soviet Russia" is contrasted there with "Soviet Ukraine"; elsewhere "Russia" alone denotes the entire Soviet state. Other publications on the topic (e.g., Tejchmanová

² *Paměť národa* (<https://www.pametnaroda.cz/cs>) is part of the pan-European Memory of Nations public digital archive, curated by the nonprofit organization Post Bellum, which has collected thousands of stories from witnesses of major events of the twentieth century.

1993; Nykl 2021) explicitly or implicitly demarcate Russian emigration on the basis of ethnicity (thus excluding other nations, including Ukrainians), although the term “Russian” is not clearly defined and therefore often used in more general and ambiguous sense.

Many publications also work with the term “Russia” (*Rusko*) to refer both to the country during the transitional period following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and to what is often referred to as “Soviet Russia” in Czech discourse, that is the USSR. While the distinction between “tsarist Russia” versus “Soviet Russia” precisely indicates what historical period is discussed, it also reinforces “Russia” as an ambiguous designation that relies heavily on context. Publications on emigrations also often mention the so-called Russian Aid Action undertaken by the Czechoslovak government in 1921 (Babka and Zolotarev 2012; Keln 2017; Lehečka 2023). The action was never limited to one part of the country—that is, Russia alone—but focused on exile communities from Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Caucasus. Some studies show growing awareness of these problems. For example, Petr Hlaváček and Mychajlo Fesenko (2017) in their discussion of “Russian emigration” in Czechoslovakia alternate between “Russian Empire” and “Russia” but still refer to the emigration as “Russian emigration.” Phrases such as “the catastrophe of the Russian (Ukrainian and Belarussian) exile” further blur the distinction between ethnicity and geography (Hlaváček and Fesenko 2017:17). At the biographical level, many of these “Russians” were born in non-Russian regions of the empire or in non-Russian families, revealing how complex identity boundaries were within a historically multinational state. By contrast, Karel Sládek’s study provides an explicit definition, describing the Russian diaspora as (former) “inhabitants of the Russian Federation, i.e. not only ethnic Russians” (2014:7–8). He distinguishes ethnic, cultural, and religious subgroups within the broader civic category. This clarity, however, remains rare.

Even publications striving for precision reveal the ambiguity of the term “Russian.” The volume titled *The 1968 Invasion: A Russian Perspective*, prepared with the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, frames its subject as a “Russian perspective,” yet it also refers more broadly to Soviet soldiers, Soviet journalists, and Soviet society (Pazderka 2011). Thus, while the title is not necessarily inaccurate, it leaves open the question of what exactly “Russian” denotes in this context: ethnic Russians, residents of Soviet Russia, members of Soviet society living in the Russian republic, or simply a perspective from the Soviet side. While the title may reflect the book’s focus on Russian actors and experiences, it can also reinforce the common tendency to associate the 1968 invasion primarily with Russians rather than with the Soviet Union, thus sustaining the widespread conflation of Russia and the Soviet Union in public memory.

Across these examples, the choice between “Russian” and “Soviet” depends largely on authorial intuition. Sometimes it denotes ethnicity, sometimes citizenship, sometimes all inhabitants of the former imperial territories. Such elasticity reflects more than linguistic laziness; it encodes the cultural memory of empire, where the majority nation becomes a symbolic shorthand for the entire political formation. The Czech case therefore illustrates a persistent metonymic habit: The use

of "Russian" as a universal signifier for heterogeneous spaces and identities, a habit reinforced by collective knowledge and memory.

RUSSIAN FILM IN THE CZECH ENVIRONMENT

In Czech discourse, the terms "Russian film" and "Russian cinema" have long been synonymous with "Soviet film." In recent years, however, there has been growing awareness that Soviet cinema was produced across multiple republics and that these films were not necessarily Russian in origin. Older publications—especially journalistic and critical articles published before the collapse of Soviet Union—almost invariably referred to Soviet productions as "Russian" and only rarely distinguished between the individual republics. Karel Teige's book on Soviet culture illustrates this ambiguity. He opens by declaring that "Russian cinema is the least known to Western Europe" (1927:31), and in the same chapter alternates between "Russian" and "Soviet" as though they are interchangeable: "Even today Soviet film does not need to be exported. The Russian people's imagination loves film as its art" (33). What might have been temporary terminological uncertainty in the 1920s soon became a durable convention.

The synonymy between "Russian" and "Soviet" was also present in Soviet discourse itself. David Zaslavskii, in his book *The World Significance of Soviet Art*, attempted to explicitly clarify that "Russian" now means "Soviet." He also stated that "true Russian film art was born in the Soviet Union and immediately marked a new, Russian chapter in world cinema" (1950:28). The logic might seem circular but revealing: "Russian" refers to everything that comes from the USSR, while "Soviet" ideologically legitimizes this art. Czech press publications followed the same pattern. Some film periodicals included sections that reviewed "Russian cinema" (*Český svět*, 1904–1929), which, in fact, presented the latest Soviet works. This linguistic shorthand reflected and reinforced the perception of Russia as the artistic and political center of the Soviet world.

Such treatment persisted through decades. The monthly magazine *Panoráma zahraničního filmového tisku* (Panorama of the foreign film press) described Ukrainian director Vladimir Denisenko's film *Insight* as an example of national cinema within the USSR yet in the same issue referred to other Soviet films broadly as "Russian cinema," without further explanation of what exactly it meant ("Přehled zahraničního filmového tisku" 1972). The following year, an article by Soviet filmmaker Sergej Gerasimov, reprinted in *Panoráma*, offered a canonical Soviet explanation of this terminology. For him, "Russian cinema," by its inspiring example, united the creative energies of all Soviet peoples; even when national schools existed, "Soviet" always came first because ideological unity outweighed ethnic specificity. Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) was described as an international socialist film, Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926) as distinctly Russian, and Oleksandr Dovzhenko's films and screenplays as both Ukrainian and Soviet (Gerasimov 1973:250–251). Gerasimov concluded that "Soviet cinema" was a broad, supranational category in which "Russian" naturally occupied the central symbolic position.

Although this reasoning aligned with the official ideology of the USSR, which proclaimed the principle of multinational equality, in reality cultural inequality began to deepen in the postwar period, with Russian culture increasingly occupying a privileged position within the Soviet cultural space (O’Keeffe 2022). In Czech film criticism, therefore, the continued use of “Russian film” functioned as a linguistic justification of hierarchy: Russia remained the metonym for the entire Soviet screen (Kopecký 1950:7–10). Occasional attempts to differentiate national cinemas appeared, but the habit of calling Soviet films “Russian” persisted well into the 1980s, reflecting the inertia of both language and political allegiance.

In summary, the Czech term “Russian film” embodies the same metonymic mechanism that shaped the broader semantic field of “Russian.” It compresses a complex, multinational cinematic landscape into a single dominant label, naturalizing Russia’s symbolic primacy within the Soviet and post-Soviet cultural imagination. The endurance of this label—even after the USSR’s collapse—demonstrates how linguistic tradition can outlive political structures and continue to shape perception within film discourse.

CASE STUDY: SEMINAR OF RUSSIAN FILMS AND REDEFINING THE TERM “RUSSIAN”

Film festival, as a regular event, can be understood not only as a place to screen films but also as a cultural event that shapes public opinion and contributes to public debate (Lee 2016). The Seminar of Russian Films, which brought together audiences, experts, and cultural institutions, also offered the public an interpretation of the broader cultural history of cinema, issues of identity, and cultural policy. The events became a space where, among other things, “Russia” was presented and reinterpreted in broader contexts, which also contributed to the significance of this label elsewhere in public discourse.

The following case study examines how the Seminar of Russian Films, held in the Czech Republic annually from 1994 to 2021, reflects the development of the semantics of the term “Russian” in postsocialist cultural discourse. This event provides a valuable diachronic corpus in which changes in terminology, curatorial framing, and institutional language can be traced over nearly three decades.

The seminar was established in 1994 through the collaboration of Marcel Řimák and film critic Galina Kopaněva, who helped revive the tradition of screenings Russian films after 1989. In subsequent years, the organizing and curatorial team expanded and changed, with Tomáš Hála and Kamila Dolotina becoming key figures in the seminar’s organization and programming. This changing group of organizers and curators provided continuity while also shaping the program in different periods of the seminar’s existence. The seminar, usually lasting three days and screening 10–20 films, combined the characteristics of a film festival, an educational forum, and an academic seminar. Its documentation—program notes and catalogues—provide valuable insight into how linguistic and ideological changes are reflected at the level of cultural practice. The analysis below is divided into three phases corresponding

to different ways of using and understanding the term "Russian" in the context of the festival. Each phase reveals how semantic conventions inherited from the Soviet period gradually transformed in response to geopolitical changes and public discourse.

1994–2004: THE SOVIET LEGACY

Retrospectives of national cinemas were among regular annual events at film clubs in Czechoslovakia. The Seminar of Russian Films continued the tradition of the existing national film exhibition, the Seminar of Soviet Film in the town of Cheb, held annually from 1976 until 1989. Originally part of the celebration of Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship, the event included film screenings, discussions, and meetings with Soviet delegates ("Klubová kronika" 1986). After the 1989 Velvet Revolution, the peaceful transfer of power that ended communist rule in Czechoslovakia, the Seminar of Russian Films was held in the town of Veselí nad Moravou in 1994 as a continuation of this tradition. The first edition of the seminar, which originally was not meant to be an annual event, proved very popular with the audience. The founder of the seminar, Marcel Římák, speaks of the unexpected interest that gave the seminar the possibility of becoming an annual event (Marcel Římák, personal communication, October 2024). Usually lasting three days, the event offered a rich program of film screenings, expert introductions, accompanying program events, such as exhibitions, musical concerts, and academic lectures on a particular film or on the festival's general unifying theme.

The first period, lasting 10 years, is, therefore, marked by a sense of continuity with the earlier Seminar of Soviet Film. The adjective "Russian" served as a neutral and widely accepted substitute for "Soviet," reflecting the new post-1989 reality, in which the Soviet Union no longer existed and the term "Soviet" had largely lost its immediate political referent. While one might have expected, based on the name, a change in the festival's focus from Soviet to Russian films, in practice this was not the case: The program consisted mainly of films produced during the Soviet period, including films from (other than Russian) Soviet republics, such as *Once Upon a Time There Was a Singing Blackbird* by Otar Iosseliani (1970), *Ashik Kerib* by David Abashidze and Sergei Parajanov (1988)—both made at Georgian Film Studio—or *The Sentimental Policeman* (1992) by Kira Muratova in Ukrainian-French coproduction (Seminář ruských filmů 1995, 1996). Copies of the films were mostly from the National Film Archive in Prague (films were shown in their original language with Czech subtitles), so most of the films in languages other than Russian were the dubbed Russian-language versions (during the early years of the seminar, the language versions of the films were not an issue, so information about them is not publicly available) (Marcel Římák, personal communication October 2024).

The absence of clear demarcation for the term "Russian" in the seminar's programs proves its vague and fluid boundaries. Programming procedures and films' language versions indicate a smooth transfer of terminology from the socialist to the postsocialist era with minimal change, in this case only with a transition to a different name. The organizers themselves used the term "Russian" in a broad, inherited

sense, using expressions such “Russia film heritage” (*ruské filmové dědictví*) (Římák et al. 2018), which referred to the entire Russian-Soviet film heritage, indicating that the inclusion of non-Russian works was simply taken for granted rather than conceptually defined.

2004–2014: SEMANTIC INCONSISTENCY AND OVERLAP

The seminar’s second decade was marked less by reflexivity than by terminological disarray. The programs juxtaposed “Russian cinema” with sporadic references to “Ukrainian,” “Georgian,” or “Baltic” films, often within the same thematic blocks. Catalogue entries alternated between state, studio, and national labels without stable criteria. This inconsistency suggests that the organizers were still operating under inherited Soviet linguistic habits while lacking a coherent framework for naming the emerging post-Soviet film space. Rather than deliberate differentiation, the period reveals a semantic coexistence of old and new categories—Russian, Soviet, and national—treated as interchangeable or not being given much focus. The absence of any explicit discussion of these discrepancies underscores how deeply naturalized the old terminology remained in the Czech cultural field.

Thus, for example, the program offered films without a clear specification of their territory of production not only in the main annual theme, but also within small thematic clusters of two or three films, often framed as explorations of a “national cinema” other than Russian. In 2000 the block devoted to the national cinemas included two films: *The Stone Cross* (1968), made by Leonid Osika at the Dovzhenko Film Studio in Kyiv, and *Lăutarii* (1972) directed by Emil Loteanu and produced by Moldova Film (*Seminář ruských filmů* 2000). The films, in addition to having been made in other union republics, are also distinguished by the fact that they are about, and thus nationally specific to, the republics of Ukraine and Moldova, which probably played a greater role in their separation into the national cinema block. It should be noted though that in other cases national cinema has been part of the main program blocks of the seminar within such themes as *Generational Myths and Ideals of Russian Youth* (*Seminář ruských filmů* 2005), *Transformations of Russian Identity* (Dolotina 2014), or *The Unknown Russia* (Dolotina and Hála 2019). In all these cases, we can ask ourselves what actually was meant by “Russia” and “Russian.”

A first sign of a more explicit engagement with this question emerged in 2014, a year that represented a significant turning point following Russia’s annexation of Crimea, a peninsular in Ukraine. Given that the festival had been in preparation for some time, it is possible that the concept for the 2014 edition was developed before the annexation, which happened in the spring, but since the festival did not take place until the fall of 2014, it can be assumed that the program was adjusted to make its thematic framing more explicit, especially in terms of not relying on the previously taken-for-granted breadth of the category “Russian.” The 2014 edition still shows some instability in terms of concepts and program ideas, but there is already a noticeable increase in reflection on the issue of nationality and the designation “Russian.” For instance, the description of the 2014 seminar reads: “The main theme [of the festival is] the transformation of *Russian identity*.

Almost thirty years since the beginning of perestroika, which brought about a radical rethinking of the *Soviet identity*, it is necessary to ask what Russia is today and what it was before. There are now at least three completely different generations in Russia: the Soviet, Gorbachev-Yeltsin, and Putin generations, whose life experiences are almost unrelated" (Dolotina 2014:1; emphasis added). Rather than offering a single definition of Russian identity, the program presented it as a contested and fragmented concept. The selected films explored several interconnected layers of this transformation: the legacy of the Soviet project (*Earth*, dir. Oleksandr Dovzhenko, 1930; *Is It Easy to Be Young?*, dir. Juris Podnieks, 1986; *Revue*, dir. Sergei Loznitsa, 2008), the moral and institutional crisis of contemporary Russia (*Short Stories*, dir. Mikhail Segal, 2012; *The Geographer Drank His Globe Away*, dir. Aleksandr Velebinskiy, 2013; *Leviathan*, dir. Andrey Zvyagintsev, 2014), and the experience of individuals struggling to navigate the transition between different historical periods. The central position granted to the director Kira Muratova also emphasized the festival's interest in artists whose work examined the disintegration of social norms, collective values, and established forms of identity. The seminar organizers described Muratova, whose portrait appeared on the cover of the seminar's brochure, as "the greatest female director of Russian-language cinema" but also emphasized that she was a "Ukrainian director who lives and works in Odesa" (Dolotina 2014:18). Muratova's position actually complicates any straightforward national classification. Born in Moldova to a Jewish mother and Romanian father, studied in Moscow, and professionally associated with both Odesa Film Studios in Ukraine and Lenfilm in Russia, she moved across multiple cultural, linguistic, and institutional contexts throughout her career.

Significantly, the program extended beyond the borders of the Russian Federation to include Ukrainian and Latvian films, suggesting that Russian identity was understood within the broader framework of a shared post-Soviet cultural space. Viewed retrospectively, the edition appears particularly revealing: Held shortly after the annexation of Crimea, it captured a moment when the notion of a common post-Soviet cultural sphere was still largely taken for granted, even as the political and cultural divisions that would later reshape the region were already emerging.

What is important here, in my view, is not how Muratova was presented and what identity has been assigned to her in the accompanying texts, but that the organizers themselves began to articulate her position more explicitly, rather than leaving it to be assumed. Among other things, they felt the need to indicate her connection to Ukraine, replacing the usual "Russian director" that likely would have appeared in previous years. Likely influenced by Russia's invasion of Crimea, this was only the beginning of reflection on identities and national cultural heritages in connection with Russia, not yet as analyzed as they would be after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Today not only the name of the event itself but also the themes and generalizations such as "Russian identity" may seem strange, as the meaning of these labels has shifted significantly. Confusion and ambiguity are also found in the way filmmakers and actors are presented in the festival materials. At the end of the

program booklet, several pages are devoted to their biographies and work. The information provided, however, is not presented consistently. While most directors are identified only by their date of birth, some entries also include a place of birth, such as Tbilisi or Odesa. The selective inclusion of such information suggests that Russia remained the implicit point of reference, while filmmakers from other parts of the former Soviet Union were increasingly marked as distinct. At the same time this practice shows a gradual shift in festival's understanding of "Russian" cinema. While Soviet filmmakers had previously been perceived under a broader Russian category, the growing tendency to specify non-Russian places of origin points to an emerging distinction between Russia and the wider post-Soviet space.

Furthermore, since 2004 the biographies of film directors in the brochure more consistently list the nationality that is not Russian, for examples "Georgian film director," "Ukrainian film director," or "Russian director of Georgian origin" (Seminář ruských filmů 2007), indicating a growing necessity to differentiate national identity different from Russian. This shift may also suggest that the term "Russian" was sometimes used in a broader, more inclusive sense—closer to the meaning of *rossiiskii*—to denote filmmakers connected to Russian-language or Soviet cinematic institutions rather than strictly to ethnic Russian identity.

From 2004 onward, both programs and films also began to list the studios where the films had been made, reflecting the need to respect the identity not only of the filmmakers but also of the films themselves. Instead of "USSR" and the year, films are now listed with a more precise location: for example, "USSR—Georgia, 1985" (Seminář ruských filmů 2004). The broader scope of the festival's program is also evident in its accompanying events, which never were limited to contemporary Russia. Since the Seminar of Russian Films did not focus exclusively on Russian cinema, its parallel programs likewise included topics and cultural contexts extending beyond Russia. This may be observed in the photography exhibitions that often accompanied the seminar. In 2000 the film festival was supplemented with an exhibition of J. Sladký's trip to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh (Seminář ruských filmů 2000); in 2005, Richard Navara's journey to Ukraine (Seminář ruských filmů 2005); in 2011, photographs from Russia by the photographer Libuše Rudinská (Čechová and Hála 2011); in 2017, "The Enchanting Greater Caucasus, Georgia and Armenia," an exhibition of photographs by Lucie Nováková, Vladislav Koubek, Tomáš Kleiber, and Petra Bukovská (Římák et al. 2017) This illustrates that the program spotlighted other states on the basis of their common heritage and their previous belonging to the Soviet Union. The term "Russian" thus acts as a connecting element.

The 2014 edition thus marked a transitional moment. While older habits of conflating Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet cultural space persisted, the program increasingly reflected on the instability of these categories and on the problem of defining Russian identity itself. Yet the ambiguities surrounding the category of "Russia" were not fully resolved. Although the festival exhibited a growing degree of reflexivity toward these questions, inconsistencies persisted, and expansive understandings of "Russia" continued to surface in the festival's thematic concepts and programming choices.

2014–2021: REFLEXIVITY AND REDEFINITION

This final period of the existence of the Seminar of Russian Films was characterized by increasing awareness of linguistic and symbolic complexity. After 2014 the term "Russian" was no longer used unreflexively but became the subject of subtle curatorial negotiation. The 2014 edition's theme *Transformations of Russian Identity* and later themes such as *The Unknown Russia* signaled the organizers' effort to rethink inherited terminology and to distance cultural discussion from politics. Catalogue notes drew attention to the heterogeneity of Russian-language cinema, while retrospectives highlighted transnational filmmakers such as Muratova, described both as a Ukrainian director and as part of "Russian-language film art."

The 2019 edition of the Seminar of Russian Films, titled *The Unknown Russia*, was based on the assumption that Russia has traditionally been perceived primarily through political and ideological frameworks. The introductory note of the program booklet stated that "*Russia is, and always has been, a country rarely viewed outside its political context. For this reason, its cinematic output, as well as its cultural production in general, has often been selectively curated, with titles that do not conform to prevailing ideological tendencies being left aside*" (Dolotina and Hála 2019:1; emphasis added). As a result, many films disappeared from public awareness not because they lacked artistic value, but because they did not conform to the dominant thematic, aesthetic, or political expectations of their time. The program therefore sought to recover forgotten works and alternative cinematic traditions that had remained outside established film-historical narratives. At the same time, the festival's dramaturgy reveals that the concept of Russia extended far beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation or even Russian national cinema. The inclusion of films such as Muratova's *Second Class Citizens* (2001) produced in postindependence Ukraine or *Dorogoi tsenoi* (also known by the title *The Horse That Cried*, dir. Mark Donskoi, 1957) further highlights this expansive curatorial logic. Film *Dorogoi tsenoi* (At great cost) was made at the Dovzhenko Film Studio and based on Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky's novella with the same title (first published in 1902)—a foundational work of Ukrainian literary modernism. The film's narrative, visual style, and thematic focus are deeply rooted in Ukrainian cultural tradition, even though it was shot in Russian (as was customary in Soviet cinema production). The seminar that year was also meant to reflect the broader context by means of a lecture by Hanuš Nykl, "an associate professor of Russian studies, an expert on the cultural, spiritual, and ethnic context of *this territory*" (Dolotina and Hála 2019:1; emphasis added); the program booklet, however, did not specify which territory in particular was being discussed. Consequently, the "unknown" dimension of the program operated on two levels. On the one hand, it referred to forgotten or marginalized films excluded from dominant interpretations of Russian cinema, often due to political pressures, ideological selectivity, or the sidelining of works whose stylistic experimentation—including films inspired by the New Wave—conflicted with Soviet cultural priorities. On the other, it exposed the unstable boundaries of the very category of "Russia," revealing a cinematic landscape that frequently transcended national, political, and cultural definitions.

"Russia" thus functioned less as an ethnic or national category than as a metonymic label encompassing a broader imperial and post-Soviet cultural sphere. The title *Unknown Russia* therefore simultaneously challenged supposedly dominant perceptions of Russia and reproduced the practice of subsuming diverse cultural traditions under the umbrella of "Russian" culture.

Changes also happened in the organization of the festival. For 2012–2018 the seminar moved from Veselí nad Moravou to the nearby town of Hodonín. Due to a reconstruction of the Hodonín cinema, the following edition was held in Prague at the Ponrepo Cinema (the National Film Archive). In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow the twenty-seventh edition to take place, so instead of an extensive program only a few online screenings happened. But after the pandemic, the twenty-eighth edition was held in three different Czech towns—Prague, Olomouc, and Uherské Hradiště. The official Facebook account of the seminar explained this unconventional form by unfavorable political sentiments. The organizers stated:

Originally, the 28th SRF was to be the event to open the newly renovated cinema Svět in Hodonín. It was at the Seminar that it was once agreed to convert an outdated and unsatisfactory hall into a modern two-screen cinema. But times change and so do the opinions of politicians, and so after a quarter of a century in South Moravia, we were fired from Hodonín. Russian cinema is not a lucrative enough commodity for the city administration now ;-([sic] Therefore, we are heading to the near opposite corner of the country, for a year for now, and then we shall see. (Seminář ruských filmů 2021)

The opening part took place in August during the Summer Film School in Uherské Hradiště, a town not far from Veselí nad Moravou and Hodonín, and the following two screenings were held in October and November in Prague and at the Konvikt Art Centre at Palacký University in Olomouc under the patronage of the Department of Slavonic Studies. After 2021 the festival tradition has continued in the form of occasional screenings at the Edison Filmhub cinema in Prague in a cycle called *Eastern Promises* (curated by the film publicist and one of the seminar organizers Kamila Dolotina), which also serves as a continuation of the popular section at the Summer Film School in Uherské Hradiště. However, its focus is not only on Russian films but on films from Eastern European countries in general (Edison Filmhub, n.d.).

The mentioned Facebook post, shared on the seminar's official website, reveals a shift in social mood and Czech-Russian relations. The name of the seminar, Seminar of *Russian* Films, did not pose problems for a long time, nor was it a topic of discussion among the participants, journalists, or critics. The main reason for the change might have been the fact that the seminar screened not only Russian films (meaning films made before the 1917 revolution or in contemporary Russia) but also several Soviet films that today can no longer be described as Russian due to the fact that they were made in other Soviet republics. Since 2019 communication on festival's social media reflected growing caution. The festival's Facebook statement about the loss of city funding, half-ironic and half-resigned, acknowledged that "Russian cin-

ema is not a lucrative enough commodity now," pointing to shifting public sensibilities but avoiding any polemic. The subsequent rebranding under the broader label *Eastern Promises* marked the culmination of this reflective stage. Although *Eastern Promises* originated in 2020–2021 as a film cycle developed in Edison Filmhub building on an earlier section of the same name at the Summer Film School in Uherské Hradiště, from 2021 onward it also effectively assumed the role previously played by the Seminar of Russian Films. By adopting an "Eastern" rather than "Russian" frame, terminological dilemma was resolved: The category "Russian" was no longer rejected but absorbed into a broader, more inclusive regional context. In 2021, when the seminar was no longer able to continue in the Hodonín cinema, the organizers founded an association called Festival of Russian-Language Films, which was to take over the organization of any future events (Kamila Dolotina and Tomáš Hála, personal communication, September 2024), although none have happened. This name change reflects mounting public pressure and suggests that the seminar was unlikely to continue under its old name.

Across these three stages, the Seminar of Russian Films traced the uneven process through which concepts inherited from the socialist era gradually lost coherence and legitimacy. The first decade maintained a stable but unexamined linguistic model; the second exposed its fragility through inconsistency; and the final period witnessed open politicization and eventual retreat from the label "Russian" altogether. This trajectory reflects broader efforts within the Czech context to find linguistic precision for a postimperial reality that no longer fit the inherited vocabulary of "Russian culture."

REDEFINITION OF THE TERM "RUSSIAN"

Seminar of Russian Films, held in the Czech Republic in 1994–2021, provides a clear example of the transformation of the meaning of the term "Russian," from more expansive to narrower, more specific. Throughout its history the Seminar of Russian Films used the label "Russia" not as a stable national category but as a flexible cultural framework through which Czech audiences encountered Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, and other post-Soviet cinematic traditions. Since 2014, that is since Russia's annexation of Crimea, the term has gradually become more politically loaded and nationalized, starting to be associated to a much greater extent specifically with contemporary Russia. At the same time, Czech public discourse has increasingly portrayed Russia as a potential threat to the international order and liberal values, further establishing the association of "Russian" with the contemporary Russian state. What previously had not been discussed by the general public, media, or the organizers in terms of identity and national designations slowly leaked into the Seminar of Russian Films' program since approximately the second half of the 2000s. Since media events are highly sensitive to geopolitical changes, the annexation of Crimea and the subsequent war in Ukraine changed the symbolic meaning of the festival and forced organizers and viewers alike to reevaluate what the category "Russian" might mean.

A similar reevaluation of what constitutes “Russian” culture can be observed beyond the Czech context. The changes in the meaning can be noticed in the Russian Film Festival in France that took place in Taverny in 2024. Although the festival had already been running for a decade, the screening of Parajanov’s film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1965) prompted a formal protest from the embassy of Ukraine in France and drew attention in the media. The film, produced at the Dovzhenko Film Studio in Kyiv and made in Ukrainian language, is widely recognized as a key work of Ukrainian national cinema. Although Parajanov himself was born in Georgia to an Armenian family and worked across several Soviet republics, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* is firmly rooted in Ukrainian cultural heritage. The festival was publicly criticized by the Ukrainian embassy for presenting the film as part of a Russian program, accusing the organizers of cultural appropriation and of symbolically “claiming” a Ukrainian classic for Russian cinema (Dmytriieva 2024; Hodunova 2024). Essentially, we can observe the shifting meaning of the term—“Russian” no longer has a broad meaning but narrows down primarily to that associated with contemporary Russia, and extending this concept to other nations is seen as a continuation of colonial policy.

Although in more recent publications and references the distinction between the terms “Russian” and “Soviet” is more consistent, in the past it was much less so. For example, the website of the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival lists some Soviet films with Russia labeled as their country of origin. In the 2004 edition of the festival, in the section “Tribute to Sergei Paradjanov,” his 1969 film *The Color of Pomegranates* (known also by its original title *Sayat Nova*) was credited as Russian (Karlovy Vary IFF, n.d.-a). Several films by Ilya Averbakh, whose retrospective was part of the 1995 KVIFF, were also labeled as having their country of origin be “Russia”: *Monologue* (1973); *Other People’s Letters* (1975); *Confession of Love* (1978); *The Voice* (1982). All of these films were made in what was then the Soviet Union (at the Lenfilm studio in Saint Petersburg, in what is now the Russian Federation), and for the Karlovy Vary festival they represented Russian productions in the program (Karlovy Vary IFF, n.d.-b). This may be connected to the technical decision to present the films under the present name of the country (in the case of the USSR, the republic where the films were made would be the determining factor); however, this would not justify the presentation of *The Color of Pomegranates* as a film from Russia—because it was made at the Armenfilm studio in Yerevan. Rather, this shows that until the recent years there was no consensus on how to assess film in relation to the Soviet Union and Soviet oppressive imperialism: whether to take into account the country of origin, its current form, or the language (although a large number of films made outside of Russia were dubbed into Russian after their release). A shift in “placing” Soviet films can be noted in recent years; for example, a few years ago the National Film Archive in Prague, instead of labeling films as from the USSR, began to list, under their current names, specific (former) Soviet republics that participated in the film’s production. For example, the NFA website lists *The Color of Pomegranates* and *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* under, respectively, “USSR—Armenia” (NFA, n.d.-a) and “USSR—Ukraine” (NFA, n.d.-b).

As Jan Gallo (2026) has demonstrated in his analysis of Slovak media discourse, representations of Russia are not neutral reflections of reality but are actively shaped by mass media outlets and individual authors through processes of selection, interpretation, and framing that influence public perceptions of the country. A similar perspective can be applied to film festivals. Festivals do not merely screen films; through curatorial choices they produce discourses that frame how national, cultural, or political categories are understood (Rastegar 2016) and participate in the construction of cultural meanings by determining which films are presented, how they are contextualized, and under which categories they are grouped. The analysis presented in this article demonstrates that the term "Russian" has historically functioned in Czech discourse as a remarkably flexible and murky category whose meaning extended far beyond the borders of the contemporary Russian state. Depending on the context, it could refer simultaneously to ethnic Russians, citizens of the Russian state, the Soviet Union as a multinational political entity, or more broadly to the cultural space of the former empire. As a result, "Russian" frequently operated as a metonymic designation through which diverse peoples, territories, and cultural traditions were grouped within a common interpretive framework.

The case of the Seminar of Russian Films provides a particularly revealing example of this phenomenon. Throughout much of its existence, the festival employed "Russian" as an umbrella category encompassing not only Russian national cinema but also Soviet and post-Soviet cultural production more broadly. The programs demonstrate how Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian, Latvian, and other cinematic traditions could be presented within a framework labeled "Russian," often without explicit reflection on the implications of such classification. At the same time, the festival's later editions reveal a gradual shift in understanding, as questions of national attribution, cultural identity, and the relationship between Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet cultural production became increasingly visible.

Viewed through the analytical framework of festival studies, these developments illustrate how festivals function not merely as exhibition platforms but as active participants in the production of cultural meanings. Festival studies emphasizes that festivals are not neutral events but independent cultural actors involved in transnational areas of politics, culture, and identity (Wong 2011; Iordanova 2013; De Valck et al. 2016). From this perspective, the Seminar of Russian Films can be seen as a tool of cultural diplomacy and, later, as a disputed cultural case. On one hand, the event supported postsocialist cultural exchange and, under the banner of "Russian cinema," presented films from across the former Soviet republics, making it possible to promote the cultural output of the former Soviet Union countries regardless of the political situation. On the other hand, by presenting Ukrainian, Georgian, or other Soviet republics' works as part of "Russian cinema," it unintentionally contributed to the long tradition of absorbing minority identities into dominant national categories.

The findings also suggest that the persistence of the category "Russian" cannot be explained solely through imperial naming practices. While Thompson's (2000) observation that Russian colonialism contributed to the "de-naming" of nations and ethnicities remains highly relevant, the Czech case demonstrates that such catego-

ries were also sustained through local habits of cultural classification and interpretation. In this sense, the category “Russian” functioned not simply as a linguistic designation but as a cultural framework through which diverse historical and cultural realities were organized and understood.

The changing fortunes of the festival after 2014 further demonstrate that these categories are neither fixed nor politically neutral. As public debates increasingly questioned inherited understandings of Russia, the broader post-Soviet space, and the cultural legacy of the Soviet Union, the seemingly self-evident meaning of “Russian” became subject to scrutiny. The case therefore illustrates the historical durability of such categories as well as their capacity for transformation. More broadly, it suggests that film festivals offer a productive lens through which to examine the relationship between cultural institutions, political change, and the shifting boundaries of national and postimperial identities.

At the same time, the findings point beyond the examined case. The processes identified in Czech discourse raise broader questions about how categories such as “Russian,” “Soviet,” and “post-Soviet” have functioned in other linguistic and cultural contexts and whether similar mechanisms of cultural categorization can be observed elsewhere. The article also invites consideration of comparable dynamics beyond the field of cinema, particularly in institutions involved in the classification, preservation, and presentation of cultural heritage, including museums, archives, libraries, and publishing. More broadly, the study highlights the potential of film festivals as sites for examining the negotiation of national, imperial, postimperial, and geopolitical identities. By tracing the changing meanings attached to “Russia” through festival programming and discourse, it demonstrates how cultural institutions participate in wider processes of cultural diplomacy, symbolic appropriation, and the politics of cultural attribution.

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МЕНЯЮЩИЕСЯ ЗНАЧЕНИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ «РУССКИЙ» В ЧЕШСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ: НАБЛЮДЕНИЯ С ФЕСТИВАЛЯ РУССКОГО КИНО

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Публикация стала возможной благодаря целевому финансированию, выделенному в 2024 году Министерством образования, молодежи и спорта Чешской Республики Университету Палацкого в Оломоуце на проведение конкретных научных исследований (№ IGA_FF_2024_014).

В статье на примере кинофестиваля «Семинар русского кино», проводившегося в Чехии в 1994–2021 годах, рассматривается эволюция значения термина «русский/российский» (*ruský*) в чешском культурном дискурсе. Используя дискурсивно-исторический подход в сочетании с методами фестивальных исследований, автор анализирует программы и каталоги фестиваля, сопоставляя их с другими материалами, например, с каталогом Международного кинофестиваля в Карловых Варах, источниками Национального киноархива и более широким чешским медиа-дискурсом. Исследование фестиваля прослеживает трехэтапную эволюцию кураторской терминологии: (1) начальный период постсоветской преемственности (1994–2004 годы), когда унаследованные практики представляли разнообразные произведения бывших советских республик под общим названием «русское кино»; (2) период семантической несогласованности (2004–2014 годы), характеризующийся пересечением понятий «советский», «русский» и национальных обозначений; и (3) заключительный этап повышенной рефлексивности (2014–2021 годы), когда геополитические сдвиги после 2014 года привели к сужению значения термина «русский» и более открытому признанию нерусских идентичностей. Исследование вносит вклад в дискуссию о постимперской семантике, культурной памяти и практиках наименования, иллюстрируя, как культурные институты могут сохранять унаследованные категории и одновременно участвовать в их активной трансформации.

Ключевые слова: постимперская семантика; исследования кинофестивалей; чешский культурный дискурс; культурная память; практики наименования; постсоветское кино