Russian-Ukrainian Border Region: Negative Cultural and Civilizational Risks of Integration

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ABSTRACT

The paper considers key risks of cultural and civilizational integration of the Russian-Ukrainian border region. Proceeding from the sociological surveys conducted, the following typical cultural and civilizational identities of the population of border regions of Russia and Ukraine are singled out: Russian, Ukrainian, Slavic, European, mondialist and Eurasian. The first of the risks found is discrete perception of social time and space. For the bulk of representatives of the regional communities, social time breaks down into parts acting like periods that are devoid of the shared logics and are contrasting towards each other. The second is associated with chronotope pattern structure consisting in the presence of cognitive and value-related dissonance which characterizes the consciousness of the population – this is expressed in acceptance of value attitudes not only mismatching but even opposing each other frequently. The third risk consists in incongruity and controversy of heterostereotypes that are emotionally colored set ideas of communication subjects about their counterparties. Irrelevance of ideas about the future acts as the last risk that is caused by asynchrony of social processes in the area which used to be united that is manifested both at interstate and regional levels.

Introduction

The interstate integration, including the border one, which is creation of transborder structures taking up the control of various spheres of its participants' interaction, belongs to the number of promising directions of development of the society. Various integration forms are being brought into life in the post-Soviet space. Until 2013-2014, they were more or less successfully implemented in the border regions of Russia and Ukraine.

However, the present-day Russian-Ukrainian border region has been one of the most unstable geopolitical formations of the contemporary world in the recent years. An unconditional and exceptionally illustrative example of this is the armed conflict associated with emergence of Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and the attempts (yet not successful enough) of the Ukrainian authorities to liquidate the so-called "self-proclaimed" republics in a military way, and Russia's mostly indirect participation in the unfolding events.

First of all, there is instability of social-economic and political relations between Russia and Ukraine which on the one hand cannot but be fulfilled due to historical relations between the states and, mainly, between their population and centuries old division of labor. Second, there is instability of social and cultural development the particularity of which is determined by another historical attempt being made in the modern Ukraine to form a state-nation that implies assertion of a system of new identities based on not positive but negative positioning of subjects: it is expressed by refusal from the past shared with the Russian (including the Soviet) culture and civilization and moreover from the present. Essentially, here it is the phenomenon of *the negative cultural and civilizational induction* that is artificially stimulated up to which mostly such patterns and symbols of the new nation are reproduced and proliferated in the elite and mass consciousness that are incompatible with the Russian-Soviet tradition – notwithstanding the fact they may contradict the universal human values and norms and the common sense at times.

Thus, both in Russia and Ukraine there are in progress the processes of forming the cultural and civilizational identities by which the authors understand a complex of ideas determining the correlation of a subject with a system of values and norms viewed as reflecting the uniqueness of the community in which the personality reckons oneself. As a rule, an ethnos or a religious denomination can be viewed as such a community.

Methodological Framework

Risks of border integration of Russia and Ukraine is associated by the authors mostly with the process of formation of new cultural and civilizational identities. With regard to this, cultural and civilizational identity is understood by them as the correlations of the social action subject with a certain system of values and standards that is expressed in its being interiorized and in the subject's readiness to defend it in communication with the counterparties. The dangers of failure to achieve integration goals related to the identification process are determined by the authors as risks.

Most frequently, it is stated that any risk is a combination of probability and consequences of occurrence of an unfavorable event acting simultaneously both as a certain characteristics of the situation implying indefiniteness of the outcome with compulsory unfavorable consequences and as a possible danger of the unfavorable outcome (Zubok, 2007; Chuprov, Zubok & Williams, 2003). In particular, a risk is treated in most cases as a probability of occurrence of not any kind but only a negative event due to a set of circumstances. However, the idea about both negative and positive risks existing in reality should not be ignored either. As V.I. Zubkov (2009) points out that a risk is undertaken with the hope for achieving a goal but it can bring both success and failure as a result.

Nevertheless, the authors believe the idea about risk as an expected (positive or negative) result of activity in conditions of uncertainty and the inevitable choice associated with it to be quite justified. They determine the negative risks of forming the cultural and civilizational identities in the border regions of Russia and Ukraine, in their

turn, as the expected negative for the social action subject (actor) results of his choosing the value and standard behavior patterns in conditions of instability.

The suggested approach takes into account several circumstances.

First, the authors proceed from the evident fact of instability in the Russian-Ukrainian border region with instability being understood as a certain form of indefiniteness characterized by 1) the diversity of opportunities turning into reality; 2) the existence of relation, interaction between properties and conditions of phenomena leading to the absence of sharp borders between them (Gott & Ursul, 1971). In the situation of uncertainty, a risk becomes a universal characteristics of existence for both individual and society penetrating all spheres of life activity.

Second, the indefiniteness determines the identification process to a significant extent, especially in what concerns Ukraine, as the "individual's aspiration to identify oneself with this or that community arises when the traditional life mode where the need for self-identification in the social relations system is not actualized is destroyed (Yadov, 1994). It is this that characterizes the situation of the border region implying a constant need for the social action subjects to make their choice of behavior patterns.

Third, the content of risks emerging during formation of cultural and civilizational identities is determined by the effect of three main factors. The first one is the specific character of the border social space which is an objectively existing stable system of territorial relations between subjects of the society that manifests itself via communication of the activities of society forming phenomena.

Literature Review

Within the technical and economic approach, risk is viewed as uncertainty conditioned by the impossibility to foresee the future events precisely. F. Knight (1921) who placed special importance on the risks of losses and uncertainty of gains adhered to this treatment. Within his concept, a risk situation is always conditioned by the indefiniteness factor preventing one from precisely foreseeing the results of events development related both to occurrence of negative consequences of actions performed (or not performed) and to the new opportunities opening up.

Social and cultural approach to the analysis of risks suggests viewing them as a phenomenon with its roots to be looked for in the specific character of the culture and social systems. It is this approach that underlies the theory of "risk society" analyzed by U. Beck (1992), A. Giddens (1991), Yu.A. Zubok (2007), O.N. Yanitsky (2003) in Russia and the theory of perception of risk studied by M. Douglas & A. Wildavsky (1982), A. Wildavsky & K. Dake (1990).

According to U. Beck's (1992) concept, a risk society is established at the same time as certainties and habitual way of life characteristic for the industrial epoch are destroyed. During industrialization process, the worldview constants of the stable world that had consolidated social connections for centuries began to be shattered and put to doubt (Beck, 1992).

A. Giddens (1991), in his turn, also associates danger with risk, or rather with the person who takes risk acknowledging it. He introduces the notion of "risk man" into the scientific use thus determining an individual living in conditions of the modern society which on the one hand reduces the overall riskiness of some spheres and forms of social life and on the other brings about new parameters of risk that were not known to previous times.

The idea of risk, just like that of taboo and sin in earlier societies, performs demarcation between the acceptable and inacceptable, safe and dangerous, as well as

functional and dysfunctional. However, he thinks risk has to be distinguished from taboo and sin for three reasons: according to addressee of the warning (if the "rhetorics in the categories of taboo and sin is mainly aimed at supporting the community and protects it from the "bad behavior" of the individual, then rhetorics of risk is targeted at protection of the individual from the "bad behavior" of the community"); according to the applicability sphere (the regulatory function of sin and taboo was as a rule manifested in smaller communities, that of risk – in a large society with homogenized culture); and actually, according to grounds for legitimization (while taboos and sins being generally taken on faith, the notions of risk, just like that of danger, arises in a public dispute).

In turn, appearence and development of the concept "identification" is associated with the names of A. Adler (2011), E. Erikson (1996) and C.G. Jung (2009) who investigated the relationship of personal qualities and individual identification. In the works of Z. Freud (1936), A. Freud (1921) and D. Rapaport (1967) identification acted already as a central mechanism for the formation of the «I» ability. Forming a new understanding of the "self" J. Mead (1934) distinguished between its two components - «I» and «Me».

Some aspects of identification were considered in the framework of cognitive psychology by J. Moscovici (1984), J.C. Turner (1985) and N. Tajfel (1981). They determined identification as a logical comparison on a number of relevant parameters of concrete person with external groups mainly turning to the cognitive concept of M. Hogg (2014). In domestic science research on identity is mainly associated with the names of O.S. Anisimov (2012), Z. Bauman (2002), E.V. Golovnyova (2013).

Results and Discussion

For the population of the Russian-Ukrainian border region, just like for most citizens of Russia and Ukraine for the greater part of the XXth century, the Soviet identity was typical that retained its importance mainly among the older age citizens. The Soviet identity will be considered by the authors to be a traditional one with a certain amount of conditionality, as in many relations it represented the clash with the Russian system of values and standards, predominantly orthodox Christian culture and subcultures existing side by side with it (e.g. the Muslim one).

The identity forming in the Russian-Ukrainian border region can be considered new as compared to the Soviet one although in a number of cases these identities are basically the revived retro-antiquities in the form of pre-Soviet patterns.

Meanwhile, there arises a set of difficulties resulting from a high extent of indefiniteness of ideas about the identification objects, their ambiguity and, due to this, the impossibility to give them strict definitions in a number of cases. So, for instance, the idea about the Russian culture is ambiguous – in one cases, it is used to mean the Russian (orthodox Christian) culture, in other – some syncretic formation including the elements of various cultures developing within Russia. Given this circumstance, it is believed to be valid viewing the identification objects of the population of border regions as civilizational formations, with civilization understood as the society that is characterized by a particular understanding of world order, its historical evolution and one's place in it.

Taking into account such an approach, it makes sense to single out the following typical cultural and civilizational identities of the population of border regions of Russia and Ukraine:

⸺ the Russian one – it is the least definite from the point of view of its ethnic and cultural constituent and it is actually "attached" to the image of the state; within the Ukrainian geopolitical space it is usually perceived as the "Russian";

⸺ the Ukrainian one, targeted either at the Ukrainians as a special ethnos (traditional treatment) or as a state-nation (the new paradigm by the Ukrainian authorities);

⸺ the Slavic one, considering the citizens of the border region as a part of the "Slavic world";

⸺ the European one, based on the idea about Russia and Ukraine being included into the European civilization;

⸺ the mondialist identity, relying on the idea about the unity of the humanity regardless of the national, religious, and other specific character, a cosmopolitan view of man;

⸺ the Eurasian identity – it is even more blurred than the Russian one and it relies on the idea about the unity of European and Asian civilizations, with Russia acting as a center of it.

The sociological survey conducted by the authors in the border regions of Russia and Ukraine has allowed finding out that the most widespread identity type in the border regions of Ukraine is the mondialist one: here 24.2% of the respondents consider themselves as representatives of the world culture, 18.6% - of the European one, only 15.8% - of the Ukrainian one; 11.2% - of the Eurasian, 11.8% - of the Russian, and 4.2% - of the Slavic culture (Table 1). The survey was conducted by the chair of social technologies of Belgorod State National Research University in Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kursk regions of Russia and Kharkov, Sumy, Chernigov and Lugansk regions of Ukraine. Sampling (broken down to regions and quote one) – 1000 respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "To representatives of what culture do you refer yourself?" (Ukraine)

To representatives of what culture do you refer yourself? (Ukraine)	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Ukrainian	79	15.8%
European	93	18.6%
Eurasian	56	11.2%
World	121	24.2%
Not sure	70	14.0%
Russian	59	11.8%
Slavic	21	4.2%
No answer	1	0.2%
Total	500	100.0%

In the Russian segment of the border region, other priorities can be seen. Here it is the Russian identity that prevails (70.8%); 9.2% of the respondents refer themselves to the world culture: 8.8% - to the European one and 2.6% - to the Eurasian one (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "To representatives of what culture do you refer yourself?" (Russia)

To representatives of what culture do you refer yourself? (Russia)	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Russian	354	70.8%

European	44	8.8%
Eurasian	13	2.6%
World	46	9.2%
Not sure	43	8.6%
Total	500	100.0%

Thus, an essential mismatch of identities structure in the border regions of Ukraine and Russia is clear. Citizens of the Ukrainian border region are more oriented to being included into the so-called world community, regardless of the variants of its construction while the Russians – to self-identification within their own state. Due to this divergence in the meaning of life intentions, the potential risks of integration appear to be extremely high.

Bearing in mind the statement about the dispositions of border region population being to a large extent determined by the dominating chronotope constructions that had been formed as a result of a complicated, at times chimerical combination of ideas borrowed from the past and stereotypes imposed by the mass media and mass culture, it makes sense to reveal the particularities of spatial and temporal ideas.

Discreteness of perception of social time and space

For the bulk of representatives of the regional communities, the social time breaks up into parts acting as time spans that have no shared logics and are contrasting towards each other. Influenced by the modern mass media and politically charged science, the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet are represented as stages virtually non-connected with each other. Although it has got some grounds, such an approach to history is unjustifiably hyperbolized, which provides fuel for manipulating the historical facts in the political and economic interests. Slightly less discrete the perception of social space is; however, it does not look integer either – at least due to the fact that even Russian regions are related seamlessly between each other far not always but are internally differentiated.

In the today's Ukraine, discreteness of space is manifested yet more significantly. The area of Ukraine within its modern borders formed as a result of a prolonged development at the boundary of the West and the East where under the influence of various external factors three geopolitical "platforms" had formed – the Western, the Eastern and the Southern Ukraine with their social and cultural particularities of the historical regions. The Ukrainian border region has always opposed the Ukrainian West and, within certain limits, the center.

As for Russia, its border areas are much closer related with the center and the perception of the specific character of the border region is expressed in the public opinion considerably less.

The discreteness of perception of the border space and time stimulates the destruction of the cultural and civilizational identity succession idea and leads to rendering the population to "Mankurts". The notion borrowed from Ch. Aitmatov's novel "The Buranny Railway Stop (The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years)" is used – it denotes a man having lost the connection with his roots and forgotten his kinship. It is in the border region that this opportunity is highest, as the comparative diversity of identification choices available initially disorients one, especially if one is not very keen on history and politics, and the connection of it to the state as the guarantor of cultural and civilizational unity is intentionally devalued. The latter circumstances can be seen both in Russia and in Ukraine more and more clearly.

With regard to this, it is telling that 76.6% of the Russian questionnaire survey participants feel pride for their country, with the main object of the pride being the historical heritage (46.8%). In Ukraine, it is only 63.8% of the survey participants that are proud of their country – with the main object of the pride being the victory of the Great Patriotic War. It can be supposed that the horizon of the positive historical memory is significantly narrower in the citizens of the Ukrainian border regions than in the Russians; therefore, the historical grounds for interstate integration are formed to a smaller extent.

Undoubtedly, the discreteness of the Russian-Ukrainian border region chronotope is also a source of a positive opportunity to open up for oneself the new prospects of cultural and civilizational integration. It is this opportunity that was enthusiastically embraced by the significant part of the Ukrainian population during the so-called "Euro Maidan". However, the analysis shows the potential supporters of the European integration idea still number less than 20% of the respondents in the Ukrainian border regions.

There are no grounds to think that the Ukraininan identity vector pointing to the West contradicts the prospects of cooperation with Russia in principle. Yet there are no grounds to deny that the integration model will be rivals to each other in conditions of a high competition for resources. With regard to this, a choice for one of them will be determined by not only political and economical but also and cultural and civilizational factors.

Pattern structure of the chronotope

A characteristic feature of the spatial and temporal images of the border region is non-uniformity of values underlying them. The study conducted by the authors gives grounds to maintain that the consciousness of most respondents is characterized by the cognitive and value-related dissonance that is expressed in acceptance of value attitudes not only mismatching but even opposing each other frequently. In particular, the Russian respondents evaluated such different in their content values as belonging to the group and submission to the shared norms almost similarly (score 6.5 in ten-point scale, with 10 being the top value) and independence, initiative – 7.1. The evaluation of tradition, keeping the habitual way of life, on the one hand (score 7) and the trend for change (6.5) had close figures.

Among the Ukrainian respondents, the significance of belonging to the group and submission to the shared norms was evaluated as 6 points, independence and initiative – as 6.6. In its turn, the figure of tradition significance, keeping the habitual way of life made up 6.5 here, and that of the trend for change – 5.9 points.

Mixing of dissimilar values is one of the reasons for mismatch of the identities which in essence should be correlating ones. In particular, it is illustrative that 70.8% of citizens of the Russian border region refer themselves to the Russian culture with only 43.2% feeling they are Russians first and foremost (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Who do you feel you are, first of all?" (Russia)

Who do you feel you are, first of all?	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
A citizen of Russia	216	43.2%
A representative of my region	23	4.6%
A citizen of my city/town, area	35	7.0%
A citizen of the world	31	6.2%
A Russian	147	29.4%

A European	14	2.8%
Not sure	31	6.2%
No answer	3	0.6%
Total	500	100.0%

It should be pointed out that the questionnaire survey was performed in the regions where the ethnic Russians make up an absolute majority. Nevertheless, judging by the data obtained, the ethnic identification far not always coincides with the cultural and civilizational one, and nowadays the latter proves to be much more important than the former. In particular, the cultural and civilizational identification is fulfilled with a clearly pronounced etatist subtext which makes the citizens keep strictly within the fairway of the state policy, including that concerning the integration prospects.

The situation in the Ukrainian border region is not less complicated. For the chronotope of its citizens, the mismatch of ethnic and cultural and civilizational identification is characteristic, although it can be seen only in relation to those who does not refer themselves to the Ukrainian culture. So, 45.6% of the respondents feel they are Russians (Table 4) but only 11.8% refer themselves to the representatives of the Russian culture. The identity of other representatives of this group is expressed in correlation of themselves with the world, European and even Eurasian culture.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents' answers to the question "Who do you feel you are, first of all?" (Ukraine)

Who do you feel you are, first of all?	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
A Ukrainian	65	13.0%
A representative of my region	60	12.0%
A citizen of my city/town, area	79	15.8%
A citizen of the world	30	6.0%
A Russian	228	45.6%
A European	17	3.4%
Not sure	21	4.2%
Total	500	100.0%

As Europe-centered and mondialist integration models are and will be the natural competitors of the Russian one, the identification processes oriented to the West will undoubtedly form the risk of lower competitiveness of the latter.

Under the conditions formed, the nonlinearity of integration has got negative consequences such as destruction of traditional cooperation forms. On the other hand, it expands the opportunities thereof. However, the integration vector in the Ukrainian social and cultural and political space shifts to the West more and more.

Mismatch of heterostereotypes

Heterostereotypes are emotionally colored set ideas of the communication subjects about their counterparts. In the cases when they are complementary, the favorable development of cooperation can be expected. When they do not coincide or even contradict each other, chances for success of the cooperation naturally go down.

The survey has shown that heterostereotypes of the Russians and the Ukrainians in the border regions are notably different. In the Russian regions, a greater accent is placed on the negative characteristics of representatives of the Ukrainian culture than on the positive ones, although it should not be overemphasized.

In particular, only 31.0% of the Russian participants of the questionnaire survey admit the absence of typical negative qualities that are peculiar to most representatives of the Ukrainian culture. The respondents consider aggressiveness (34.2%), laziness (22.8%) and stinginess (21.0%) to be the most significant of them. With regard to this, the range of quality evaluation varies from 6 to 34% - Table 5.

Table 5. The opinion of Russian respondents about the typical negative human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Ukrainian culture

The opinion of Russian respondents about the typical negative human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Ukrainian culture. Three possible answer options were allowed.	Quality	
	Abs.	%
Laziness	114	22.8%
Aggressiveness	171	34.2%
Stinginess	105	21.0%
Intolerance	62	12.4%
Restraint	34	6.8%
Slow wits	65	13.0%
Rejection of traditions	43	8.6%
Absence of mutual assistance	44	8.8%
Servility	34	6.8%
Soullessness	51	10.2%
None	155	31.0%
Other	1	0.6%
All	2	0.4%
No answer	19	3.8%
Total	500	100.0%

The aggressiveness index should be paid attention to as a typical quality of most representatives of the Ukrainian culture. It must be a response to the events of the recent years related with escalation of the Ukrainian nationalism, military actions towards the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and sanctions against Russia. Especially since they keep stressing these actions in the Russian mass media.

The data obtained differ from the answers to the question about typical positive qualities of the Ukrainians. First of all, the share of those denying the qualities is 5 points more than in the case of evaluation of negative qualities. Second, the top limit of change of the evaluation range for certain qualities does not exceed 18%.

Table 6. The opinion of Russian respondents about the typical positive human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Ukrainian culture

The opinion of Russian respondents about the typical positive human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Ukrainian culture. Three possible answer options were allowed.	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Hard work	86	17.2%
Friendliness	91	18.2%
Generosity	74	14.8%
Tolerance	63	12.6%
Cordiality	82	16.4%
Intellect, quick wit	51	10.2%
Adherence to traditions	89	17.8%
Mutual assistance	34	6.8%
Love for freedom	47	9.4%
Spirituality	37	7.4%

None	181	36.2%
They cannot be evaluated now	2	0.4%
No data	20	4.0%
Total	500	100.0%

The citizens of the Ukrainian regions are slightly more tolerant towards Russian counterparts. Here 52.4% of the respondents deny the typical negative qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Russian culture. Among those admitting their existence, the most popular answer is laziness (20.2%). In particular, the figure of this quality exceeds the scores for any other quality twice or more.

52.2% deny the presence of negative qualities at all. The range of scores for individual ones makes 3 to 20% - see Table 7.

Table 7. The opinion of Ukrainian respondents about the typical negative human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Russian culture

The opinion of Ukrainian respondents about the typical positive human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Russian culture. Three possible answer options were allowed.	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Laziness	101	20.2%
Aggressiveness	48	9.6%
Stinginess	43	8.6%
Intolerance	46	9.2%
Restraint	40	8.0%
Slow wits	28	5.6%
Rejection of traditions	24	4.8%
Absence of mutual assistance	49	9.8%
Servility	42	8.4%
Soullessness	18	3.6%
None	262	52.4%
Lack of organization	3	0.6%
No answer	20	4.0%
Total	500	100.0%

Just 15.8% of the Ukrainians deny the existence of typical positive qualities in Russians. They consider hard work (39.4%), generosity (38.2%), and friendliness (36.4%) to be the most characteristic ones. The range of scores for certain qualities varies from 8 to 39% - see Table 8.

Table 8. The opinion of Ukrainian respondents about the typical positive human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Russian culture

The opinion of Ukrainian respondents about the typical positive human qualities peculiar to most representatives of the Russian culture. Three possible answer options were allowed.	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Hard work	197	39.4%
Friendliness	182	36.4%
Generosity	191	38.2%
Tolerance	104	20.8%
Cordiality	66	13.2%
Intellect, quick wit	119	23.8%
Adherence to traditions	66	13.2%
Mutual assistance	41	8.2%
Love for freedom	58	11.6%
Spirituality	51	10.2%

None	79	15.8%
Talent	2	0.4%
Cohesion	1	0.2%
All of them	1	0.2%
No answer	18	3.6%
Total	500	100.0%

The results obtained are most likely explained by the fact that the citizens of Ukrainian border regions tend to Russia culturally and civilizationally, and the recent events failed to level this attraction. Due to this circumstance, it can be stated that in the ideas of a great part of the Ukrainian respondents the orientation to Russian cultural and civilizational patterns that act as an important external factor of way of life is retained.

Nevertheless, heterostereotypes currently prevailing in the Russian segment of the border region cannot be considered as favorable for the development of integration. Moreover, these stereotypes are a factor which further stimulates consolidation of the etatism-oriented model of cultural and civilizational identification in the Russian mass consciousness.

Irrelevance of the idea about the future

Asynchrony of social processes within the area which used to be a single one became a natural consequence of establishing a border between the former Soviet republics. This manifests itself both at interstate and at regional levels. So the distinctions existing between the neighboring areas in the Soviet region have undergone significant transformation and have become more profound.

In the Russian society, the idea about Russia and Ukraine having to exist as independent states in the future gets more and more rooted, being neutral states for a comparative majority of citizens. It is only for 16.8% of the respondents that restoration of the united state is desirable (Table 9).

Table 9. Distribution of answers to the question "What would you like to see Russia and Ukraine in the future?" (Russia)

What would you like to see Russia and Ukraine in the future?	Quantity	
	Abs.	%
Independent allied states	146	29.2%
Independent neutral states	185	37.0%
A united state	84	16.8%
Not sure	84	16.8%
No answer	1	0.2%
Total	500	100.0%

Actually, this means that the majority of Russian citizens of the border regions are ready to accept as given the probability of further mismatching of paths of cultural and civilizational identification in the two states.

In the Ukrainian border region environment, a more pronounced vision of prospects for preservation of the united state exists. Here 35.6% of the questionnaire survey participants are oriented to the united state (Table 10).

Table 10. Distribution of answers to the question "What would you like to see Russia and Ukraine in the future?" (Ukraine)

What would you like to see Russia and Ukraine in the future?	Quantity

	Abs.	%
Independent allied states	127	25.4%
Independent neutral states	158	31.6%
A united state	178	35.6%
Not sure	35	7.0%
Other	2	0.4%
Total	500	100.0%

Obviously, the Ukrainian population of the border region is much less optimistic about the prospects of social and cultural separation.

The wish to see the prospects of Russia and Ukraine in the future as co-existence of independent neutral states is relevant to the trend of forming the new cultural and civilizational identities rather little depending on each other. Nevertheless, it in itself does not create obstacles for integration, and forms favorable conditions for it in the Ukrainian segment of the border region, being combined with the preserved significant rudimentary orientation to uniting. Yet, just like in other cases, the political context can deform the prerequisites dramatically, transforming the ideas about independence into confrontation attitudes.

Conclusion

Thus, the interstate integration in the Russian-Ukrainian border region is currently seen as an opportunity for its development. The probability of such a scenario being fulfilled depends on many factors of both historical and social and political nature. However there is no deny that integration oriented in a humanitarian manner, that is one not working for the interests of the corporate elites, is only possible as a consequence of complementarity of disposition of its mass (civil) participants. In the marginal cultural environment of the border region, such complementarity is closely connected to the content of dominating identification of counterparties on either side of the border. And, while so recently as thirty years ago the problem of identification was not relevant with the absolute majority of the border region citizens identifying themselves (voluntarily or forcedly) with Soviet values, today new identities are being formed.

The study demonstrates that these models current in the Russian-Ukrainian border region though having clear distinctions do not initially create any essential integration risks in the root. Notably enough, in the Ukrainian segment of the border region, they are aimed at interaction to an even greater extent than in the Russian one. However, influenced by the unfavorable political climate, the distinctions revealed can put to doubt the integration prospects. Hence it is already today that integration risks management has to be developed and implemented, which necessitates a strategically oriented approach and technologically wise solutions.

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