

EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN RUSSIAN REGIONS BORDERING ON FINLAND

Igor Okunev (Vice-dean, Faculty of Political
Science, MGIMO-University)

Aleksey Domanov (LCSR assistant researcher,
master student at MGIMO-University)

Research question

- How does bordering position affect spatial identity?
- Spatial characteristic varies in intensity from city to city →
identities affected to different degrees
- Put aside: how identity affects political processes (e.g. via difference in voters' political culture and ideological preferences)

Critical geopolitics

- Space by itself does not shape a specific identity
- Mediator between space and identity – different interpretations of the same space
- In our case, one border area – different identities

In pursuit of an answer

October 2013 - expedition to three cities in a border area: St.Petersburg, Kronstadt, Vyborg



Funded by MGIMO-University Endowment Fund

Research questions for this area

- Can St. Petersburg be considered “our foreign area” (“наша заграница»)?
- Do Vyborg citizens feel living on “occupied territory”?
- Are Kronstadt citizens attached more to their locality than to Russia and Europe (what is more important for them)?

Answered also with a help of qualitative methods,
but we'll focus on conducted opinion poll

Theoretical framework

Factors of identity formation

- Exchange and transborder contacts (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009) – e.g. trade, visiting other countries
- Cognitive mobilization of citizens (Inglehart 1970). Fuchs 2003: information about members of in-group or about the territory – e.g. education. Discussion (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009) – e.g. discussing events there or communicating with people abroad

Theoretical framework

- Need to account for political (Duchesne and Frognier 2002) or civic (Bruter 2005) dimension of identity. Assessment of authorities can affect evaluative component of identity pointed out by Schild 2001
- Cultural links with in-group (e.g. music, historical memory) – to register influence on affective dimension of identity (Schild 2001). Know history → remember European roots

Hypothesis and method

European identity in the area is caused by

- trust in national authorities,
- consumer preferences (of European food, goods, music and trips to other European countries) and
- the degree of cognitive mobilization (education level, historical memory and frequency of discussion of events in other European countries)

Methods: ANOVA, correlation and factor analysis where possible

Dependent variable

- European identity of 185 inhabitants of St.Petersburg, Kronstadt and Vyborg

("Do you consider yourself European?" - "Считаете ли Вы себя европейцем?")

- Also registered attachment to locality and nation

("Who do you think you are in the first place?" – "Кем Вы себя ощущаете в первую очередь?").

Identities mixed even in the EU (Haas 1958), European identity “anchored” in national one (Díez Medrano 2003; Duchesne 2008). «Marble cake”: national in the EU contains "aspects of Europeanness” (Risse 2005) – maybe also on the Russian-EU border

Independent variables

- (accuracy of historical memory) "When did this locality become a part of Russia?" ("Когда эта местность вошла в состав России?");
- How often do you discuss events in other European countries with other people? ("Часто ли Вы обсуждаете с другими людьми события в зарубежной Европе?");
- Do you prefer going to foreign European countries or to other places in Russia ("Вы предпочитаете ездить в страны зарубежной Европы или по России?") - both for business and tourist purposes;

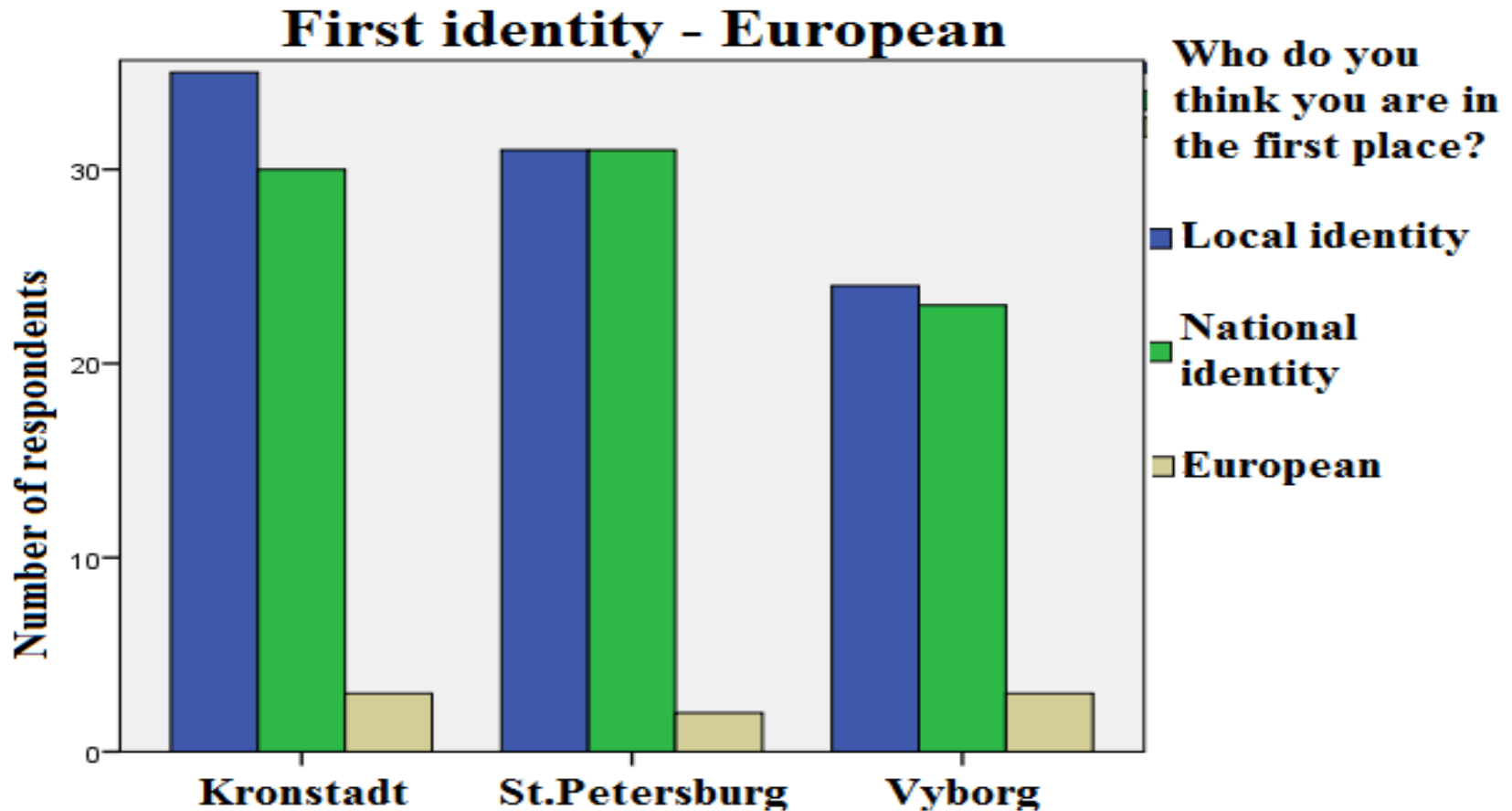
Independent variables (2)

- - do you prefer buying European or Russian food? ("Вы предпочитаете покупать европейские или российские продукты питания?");
- - || - goods? ("- || - товары длительного пользования?");
- - || - listening to European or Russian music? ("Вы предпочитаете слушать европейскую или российскую музыку?");
- - do you trust Russian national authorities? ("Доверяете ли Вы федеральной власти?");
- - do you have friends or relatives born or living in foreign European countries? ("Есть ли у Вас друзья или родственники, родившиеся или живущие в странах зарубежной Европы?")

Independent variables (3)

- Vyborg citizens were asked to name the former Finnish name of the city.
- Demographic variables - age (six-point scale), level of education and occupation

Descriptives



Placed European identity above others - **4,4%** , Russian – 46,2%,
local - 49,5%.

European mentioned (“consider myself European”) by **64,5%**.

Kronstadt – “besieged fortress”

- Relatively low preference for trips to other European countries (Kronstadt - 31.3% vs. Vyborg - 50% and St. Petersburg - 61.3%) → low desire to go abroad even if people had resources (if the question was understood correctly)

Qualitative analysis confirmed that Kronstadt was still considered “Russian stronghold”

Effect of trust

- Expected: E.identity widespread among people unwilling to be governed by the current Russian authorities (like among Russian emigrants of the 20th century)
- No: *mentioned* by those who trusted national authorities (by 75.8% of those who trusted vs. 58% who did not trust, Chi-square sig. .075).
Even linear correlation (-.167; sig. p=.076)
- “*First order*” E.identity – same result, but poor significance due to small sample

Effect of consumer preferences

	Food		Goods		Music	
	Rus.	Euro.	Rus.	Euro.	Rus.	Euro.
European identity	1,9%	10,2%	1,9%	5,8% (.077)	2,9%	9,1% (.077)
Local identity	39,8%	63,3%	40,4%	54,8%	43,8%	52,7%

Percentage of respondents placing European and local identity in the first place

(significant on 5-percent level but for p coefficients in brackets)

Like European things → emphasize European or LOCAL identity
(forget about national?)

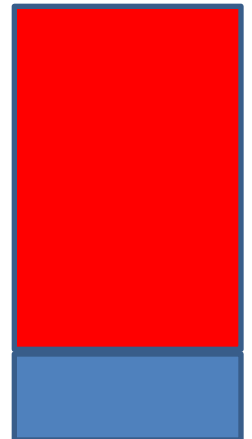
Effect of consumer preferences

Mentioning European identity:

Europeans were 87.5% of consumers of European food and only 61.3% of consumers of Russian food (sig. .017).

Hard to extract a uniting latent factor:

- little variance explained (20.34%);
- unequal loadings:
 - preference of trips: loading .463;
 - preference of goods: .522;
 - preference of music: .351.



Effect of cognitive mobilization

- Education level:
 - «*first order*» E.i.: 51,4% (full secondary) → 72,4% (higher);
 - *mentioning* E.i.: correlation $r=.174$ (sig. .057)
- Accuracy of historical memory:
 - Locality accession:
 - “first order” $r=.139$; sig. 049
 - mentioning $r=.152$; sig. .086
 - Vyborg Finnish name (Viipuri) remembered more by Europeans (64.1%) than by “non-Europeans” (35.9%)

Effect of cognitive mobilization (2)

- Frequency of discussing events in foreign Europe:

Considered European: 56,5% (among those who never discuss) → 70% (often)

The frequency itself is related to having friends or relatives in foreign Europe ($r=.112$) and to education ($r=.156$). SEM would let to assess indirect influences, but the small sample may give inaccurate results

Conclusion

- In this area European identity **caused by**:
 - trust (surprisingly, not *distrust*) in national authorities;
 - consumer preferences (of European food, goods, music and trips to other European countries) and
 - the degree of cognitive mobilization (education level, historical memory and frequency of discussion of events in other European countries).

(additional inverse causal links also possible)

Conclusion (2)

- Differences across cities by desire to go to other European countries (**subjective self-isolation of Kronstadt** confirmed by qualitative research)
- The tightest link with education level ($r=.174$), less tight – with trust in national authorities ($r=-.167$), less – with hist. memory ($r=.152$).

For policymakers: change education level (but complete impact assessment requires regression analysis on larger sample)

Acknowledgements

Other members of our expedition – students of MGIMO-University (helped with field work):

Darya Basova

Valeriya Bakhchivanzhi

Lidia Zhirnova

Nadezhda Manzhina

Sergey Savin

Polad Talybov

Thank you for your attention!
Looking forward to your fruitful
(as usual) comments!

Igor Okunev
Aleksy Domanov
(domanov.aleksey@gmail.com)

Bibliography

- Bruter, M. (2005) *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity*, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Checkel, J. and Katzenstein, P. (2009) *European Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Díez Medrano, J. (2003) *Framing Europe: Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Duchesne, S. and Frogner, A.-P. (2002) Sur les dynamiques sociologiques et politiques de l'identification à l'Europe. In *Revue française de science politique* : 355-373.
- Duchesne, S. (2008) Waiting for a European Identity ... Reflections on the Process of Identification with Europe. In *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 4: 397–410.
- Fuchs, Ch. (2003) Globalization and Self-Organization in the Knowledge-Based Society. In *TripleC*, 2: 105-169.
- Haas E. (1958) *The Uniting of Europe*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1970) Public Opinion and Regional Integration. In *International Organization*, 4: 764-795.
- Risse, T. (2005) Neofunctionalism, European Identity, and the Puzzles of European Integration. In *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2: 5.
- Schild, J. (2001) National versus European Identities? French and German in the European Multi-Level System. In *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2: 331-351.