Russia's Image in the Views of Young Adults living in Different Regions of the Country and the Problem of Civilizational Identity

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Introduction

In modern times, economic and information globalization has both boosted communication between countries and intensified conflicts between different civilizations. Modern researchers (Gushchin [2011], Platonov [2010], Sorokin[1992], Svitich [2018] and others) point out "the contradictions deepening between the two models and two ways of development, i.e. the Western and Eastern ones. According to Danilevsky N.Ya. [1997], Russia, being a civilization of the Slavic cultural-historical type is geographically and ethnically located both in the territories adjacent to those of the Western, i.e. European civilization and to those of Asian, i.e. Oriental civilization. Stepin V. [2017] describes "a third way of civilizational development" stimulating "the dialogue between cultures and the search for new sense of values". This way "may be based on the Russian civilization to be subsequently followed"(p.187). Likhachev D.S. [2006] would note that Russia acts as "a cultural bridge" between the peoples of the East and West. In general, since the 20s of the XIX century choosing the way to develop the country in the future has been extremely relevant for the philosophical thought of Russia. The choice depends on the civilizational identity of Russian peoples, that of young people living in different regions of the country being of utter importance.

Methodology

The data were processed by means of factor and correlation analysis for each region separately. The study used the psychosemantic approach based on the theoretical and methodological propositions of experimental psychology (C.Osgood et al. [1957]). The method allows studying the categorical structure of individual and group consciousness, identifying the hierarchy and dynamics of semantic representations and personally significant values. Within our study, we set the task of constructing private semantic spaces of the respondents' views on the image of Russia and the images of other countries. The respondents were the youth living in Novosibirsk, Khanty-Mansiysk, Perm and Moscow. During the scaling procedure, the respondent used a standard form with a set of the enumerated bipolar scales. Within the framework of the present study, a psychosemantic scale was specially designed. It consisted of 48 bipolar adjectives describing the image of the country and comprehensively characterizing the country in terms of its strength and authority in the international arena, activity in reformations as well as various aspects of the evaluation: danger/security, patriotism, uniqueness, the political system, spiritual and moral values, the cognitive component of perception, and the subjective social distance (native/foreign) and civilizational affiliation (Oriental civilization /Western civilization). The objects of evaluation were the images of "Russia-country" (the present Russia); "the future Russia" (Russia in the future), "the United Europe", "the USA", "China" and "Japan". The collected data of the psychosemantic scaling of these objects were mathematically processed using factor analysis, principal component analysis, employing further a varimax rotation. As a result, a model of the categorical structure of the representation of all the respondent groups of the studied field was constructed, positioning certain evaluated objects in it. It allowed judging their similarity and difference and analyzing the respondents' perceptions of the images of those evaluated countries. At the next stage, the psychosemantic scaling data were processed with the correlation analysis procedure, nonparametric statistics, using Spearman rank correlation coefficient, SPSS program, version 20. As a result, significant correlations of the respondents' images of the countries were identified.

Results and Discussion

By means of processing the data about the country image collected in the different regions of Russia, two categories were identified that could be correlated with the civilization identity of the youth living in the regions involved. These were the categories: 1) social distance ("native country – foreign country") and 2) civilizational affiliation ("Oriental civilization – Western civilization"), (Fig.1-4). The semantics of the descriptor set (binary oppositions) belonging to these categories indicates that the social distance category "native country – foreign country" combines the conceptions of moral and ethical in the country image ("merciful – cruel", "fair – biased", "kind – evil", "generous – stingy") and those of communication ("open – reserved") as well as those of the country area ("spacious – small") and the aesthetic conception ("beautiful – ugly"). In all the regions, the images of the future and present Russia are identified as "the native country". The image of "the future Russia" acts as an ideal for all the respondents. The category "Oriental civilization – Western civilization": the Oriental countries are perceived as "moral", "chaste", "spiritual", "responsible", "focusing on its values", "patriotic" and "pious", while the Western countries are perceived as "democratic", "individualistic" and "ruled by the authorities obeying the law". The results of the correlation analysis (Table 1) show that the image of "the Future Russia" in all the respondent groups combines the features of the countries of both Oriental and Western civilizations. Thus, the young adults expect Russia to choose "a third way of development" in terms of V. Stepin.

Figure 1-4. Positions of the images of the countries in the space of the selected factors in the respondents living in:
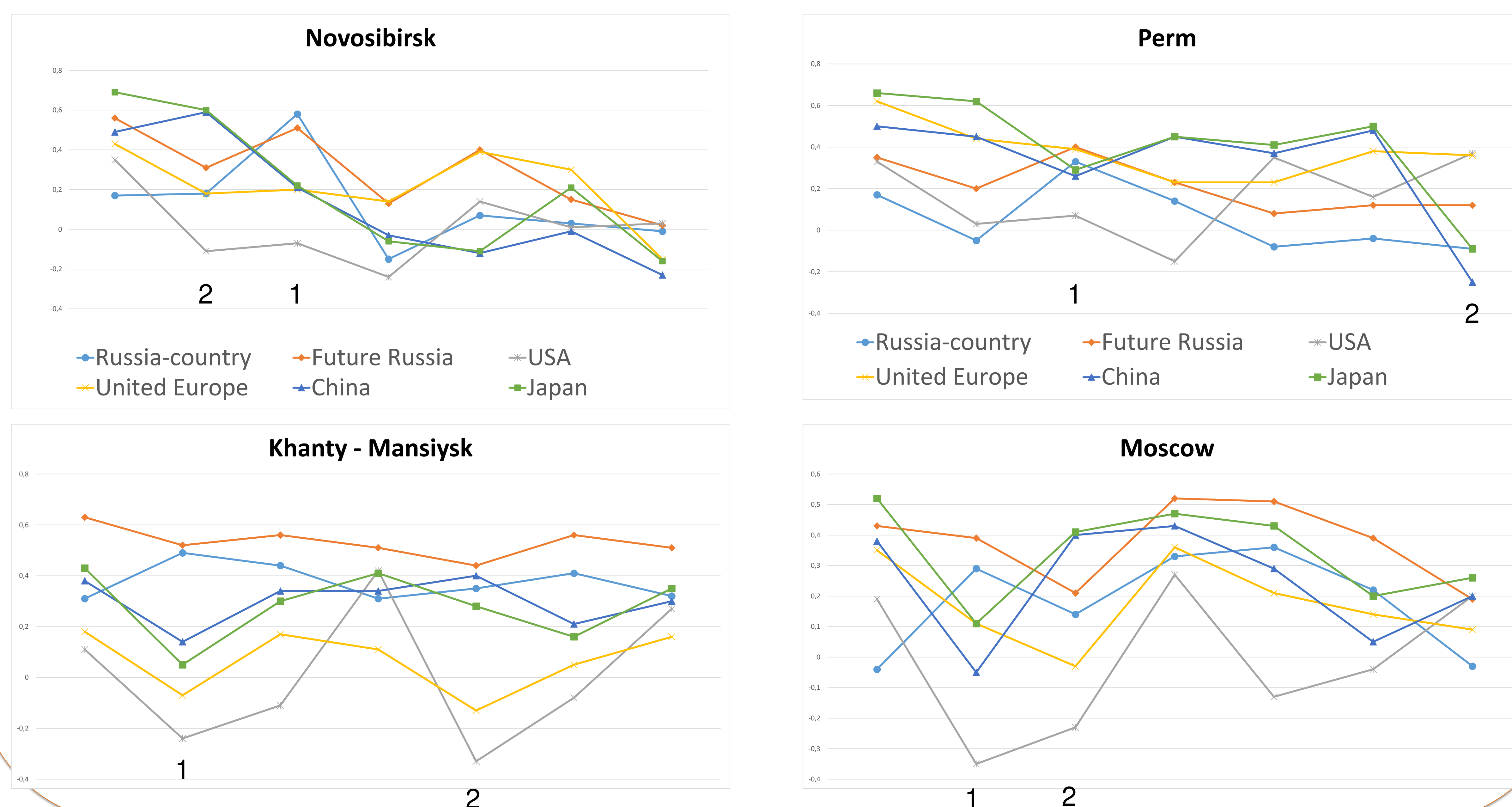

Table 1. Significant Correlations of Images of Russia (Present and Future) with Images of other Countries (Spearman's criterion)

Regions	Russia-country (for today)	Future Russia
Novosibirsk	China 0,398; Japan 0,383 P<0,01 United Europe 0,335 P<0,05	United Europe 0,781; Japan 0,657; China 0,507; USA 0,409 P<0,01
Khanty - Mansiysk	China 0,624; Japan 0,513 P<0,01	China 0,712; Japan 0,672; United Europe 0,382 P<0,01
Perm	United Europe 0,333; China 0,293 P<0,05	United Europe 0,750; Japan 0,582; China 0,548; USA 0,446 P<0,01
Moscow	Japan 0,338 P<0,05	Japan 0,726; United Europe 0,702; China 0,524 P<0,01