

## **Worldview Specifics of Supporters of the Western Path of Development for Russia in Mass Population Strata**

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*Abstract.* This article relies on the results of the all-Russian public opinion poll (2022) to reveal the specifics of worldviews of consistent supporters of the pro-Western development path for Russia in comparison to their opponents' positions and intermediary opinions. This research shows that the different attitudes of these groups toward the West are rooted in deeply different norms, values and views, as well as their socio-psychological specifics. These differences stem from orientation toward either the interests of the community (and the state) or the interests of the individual and, correspondingly, human rights. This conflict mirrors the dual nature of Russian culture, poised at the junction of individualistic cultures of the West and collectivist cultures of the East.

Usually, Westernizers can be found in "strong" social groups. However, even in the most prosperous groups (by age, settlement types, etc.) they are a minority. Westernizers constitute the majority only among urban young people, who have obtained the most prestigious forms of higher education and were raised in families where both parents also had higher education. At the same time, being in an alien normative and value environment makes them feel like strangers in their native country. As a result, they perceive the world pessimistically and largely mistrust not only power structures and civil society but also the people around them.

Meanwhile the conviction that Russia should follow its own path and not look to the West dominates in all mass social strata. The norms, values and attitudes of those who consistently share this conviction can be seen as a normative value system that is characteristic of Russian culture. However, this does not mean that the views of supporters of a Western path of development for Russia are alien to Russian culture. To evaluate the positions of these two groups in it, it is necessary to take into account not only their ratios in the

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This article was first published in Russian in the journal *Mir Rossii* (Universe of Russia). 2023. Vol. 32. No. 4, pp. 6-35; DOI: 10.17323/1811-038X-2023-32-4-6-35).

mass strata of the population (7% and 54%, respectively), but also a number of other circumstances – from their coexistence in Russia for more than a century to the presence of their members, although of varying proportions, in all strata and groups of Russian society.

*Keywords:* values, norms, mass consciousness, Westernizers, supporters of Western path of development for Russia, public consciousness.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.21557/SSC.94488909>

The discussion between supporters of a Western and an authentic (distinctive) path of development for Russia began some 200 years ago. Defined in the history of social thought as a debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers, it is going on unabated. The Special Military Operation (SMO) in Ukraine that began in February 2022, the sanctions war unleashed by the West and, later, partial mobilization in Russia added fuel to the fire of debate. Today, those who support the Western-oriented development path are frequently presented as just short of traitors. However, this simplifies the situation to a great extent. In view of the fact that this group is relatively big and that its members are citizens of Russia, it deserves a much deeper than usual analysis of the specifics of their worldviews and their normative and value systems.

That is why the purpose of this article was to identify the specifics of consistent supporters of the Western path of development for Russia, who declared their commitment to this course even under the conditions of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine, in comparison with the most consistent opponents of this course, who advocate an original path of development for our country, as well as an evaluation of views of intermediate groups.

### **Theoretical-Methodological Foundations and Empirical Base of Our Research**

The question of a desired and a possible vector of Russia's development was raised by representatives of Russian social thought in the 1830s and 1840s. It was clear from the very beginning that there were two trends each of which later acquired sub-trends. I refer to Westernizers and Slavophiles who insisted on two different civilizational choices. The former (Pyotr Chaadaev, Sergey Solovyov, and others) looked at Europe as an etalon of development. The latter (Aleksey Khomyakov, Ivan Kireyevsky and others) perceived Europe as a source of pernicious ideas and a territory of lost moral norms. They insisted on a specific development path for Russia. From the very beginning, their disagreements were caused by their different understanding of the correlation between individual and state interests. The Westernizers insisted on the priority of the rights and interests of the individual as opposed to the interests of the state. The Slavophiles treated the state as the

dominant structure while the individual was expected to serve its interests. This basic contradiction led to disagreements on certain instrumental questions. For example, Westernizers insisted on freedom of the press while Slavophiles accepted or even endorsed censorship if it served the interests of the state. Finally, the Slavophiles (unlike the Westernizers who attached lesser importance to religion as a consolidating factor) cherished the values of Christian Orthodoxy. Nikolay Danilevsky, prominent Russian sociologist and culturologist, who formulated the conception of cultural-historical types of societies (1871), was a Slavophile [4].

This means that from the very beginning, the ideas of both groups were fairly complicated and internally holistic ideological constructs based on norms and values chosen a priori. Later, in the 19th and 20th centuries, these ideas survived very complicated transformations to remain, on the whole, highly topical today. The Slavophile ideas served the foundation of Eurasianism as a new theoretical conception (Nikolay Trubetskoy, Pyotr Savitsky and others). It proceeded from the idea of Russia as a civilization on its own right, which not only differed from European societies and Asian countries but brought some of their elements together. The Soviet Union's disintegration and publication of the works of Lev Gumilev raised a new wave of interest in the ideas of Eurasianism. Today, this trend is actively developed by Aleksandr Dugin, prominent theoretician of neo-Eurasianism. Westernism as a trend of social thought was strongly affected by the specifics of Russian history in the 20th century. At first, many of its supporters emigrated (Pyotr Struve, Pavel Miliukov, Vladimir Nabokov, Vladimir Bukovsky, Sergey Dovlatov, Pyotr Vayl, Aleksandr Genis, Vladimir Pastukhov and others). Later, in the 1990s, the prominent supporters of the classical Western development model (Academicians Andrey Sakharov and Dmitry Likhachev) who had been its "public faces" during the Gorbachev perestroika were replaced as very prominent figures in the public field by such supporters of the Western development path as Anatoly Chubais and other neoliberals. As a result, the Western development model became associated with its neoliberal version, which discredited it to a great extent in public opinion. Despite the fact that the broad masses do not know these names, in Soviet times and Russia's recent history Westernism was developed in Russia. In this connection, we can name Mikhail Bakhtin, Yury Lotman, Vyacheslav V. Ivanov, Igor Klyamkin, Igor Yakovenko.

The opposition between these two philosophical traditions has a long history; it came to the fore and retreated yet was remained on the scene of social life in Russia for at least two centuries. No wonder, the conflict crops up at the level of mass consciousness. As could be expected, these theoretical constructs acquired certain specifics, arguments, assessments and positions that differ from those typical for the theoretical level of discussion. They proceed, however, from the same normative-axiological priorities as the ideas of Westernizers and Slavophiles. Below I will try to demonstrate that this opposition is not an ideological conflict per se. It reflects the coexistence in Russia of two fundamentally different mentality types understood as a sum-total of norms, values, attitudes and corresponding assessments of reality and a certain number of other social-psychological specifics. As could be expected, on par with these polarized types of mentality and very specific worldviews there are other, intermediate forms.

It is no wonder that, given the persistence of this worldview conflict, all serious efforts to analyze the specifics of the normative-axiological systems of Russians have taken this fact into account to a certain extent. In their analysis of the sociocultural prerequisites of modernization of Russia's regions, Nikolay Lapin, Lyudmila Belyaeva and their colleagues identified three types of value systems – traditional, universal and liberal – that are typical of the Western model of modernity; the correlation between their supporters and opponents in different regions of Russia turned out to be very different [9]. Nadezhda Lebedeva and Aleksandr Tatariko compared the values of Russians with the norms and values of those who live in Western and Eastern Europe and China [11]. Ronald Inglehart, likewise, pointed at the specifics of values of Russians against the worldwide background. He included them in an Orthodox group of value systems, as opposed to those who live in Protestant and Anglo-Saxon countries and occupy an opposite place on the worldwide map of values [8].

Scholarly works discussed also the spread of “Western” and “authentic” norms and values of citizens of Russia through the optics of correlation of groups with different dominating normative and value systems in the country's population. Vladimir Magun and Maksim Rudnev revealed the specifics of values of Russian citizens against the background of those who live in the West and proceeded to discuss the correlation of groups with different types of normative and value systems in Russia and in other countries [12]. Natalia Tikhonova revealed the specifics of norms and values which regulate the relationships between Russian citizens and the state which correlate with many statements of Slavophiles [15; 18]. She analyzed the basic types of normative-axiological systems widespread among the citizens of Russia and demonstrated that public consciousness of Russians is not developing along the route of classical Western modernity [17]. Elena Danilova [5] and later Natalia Latova [10] carried out a normative-axiological positioning of Russia against the worldwide background within Geert Hofstede's ethnometric approach and analyzed the specifics of norms and values of social groups of students, professional workers and others. They demonstrated that despite certain differences between social groups the normative-axiological systems of all Russian citizens are obviously highly specific against the background of people who live in other countries. They do not interlock either with the values and norms typical for the countries of the collective West or with the normative-axiological systems of the countries of the conventional East. This conclusion can be applied to all studies in this sphere even if different authors differently define the place of Russia in the conventional mental space of the world. Inglehart, for example, looks at Russia as one of the poles of the value systems typical of the contemporary world. Others (the majority of Russian authors) define it as median in the dichotomy of axiological systems typical of the conventional East and the conventional West. All authors have deemed it necessary to point at the normative-axiological heterogeneity of our country's population.

The normative-axiological originality of Russia raises no doubts. Moreover, in social sciences, the question of its objective foundations has been studied in detail. Without going back to old history (the ideas of Marx of the Asian mode

of production or the already mentioned works of Eurasians) I will refer to the studies of contemporary Russian scientists – Leonid Vasiliev, Svetlana Kirdina, Rustem Nureev, Natalia Pliskevich and Ovsey Shkaratan who define the Russian development model as “Asian-etatist,” “neo-etacratic,” etc. These authors insist that its typical specifics can be described as personification of the interests of the community in the state, the activity of which becomes legitimately pervading as well as the maximal blending of the state-property relationships and the related specifics of its “institutional matrix.”

The question is: Are Russians aware of the specifics of their country as a civilization on its own right? In which respect do the proponents of the Western development vector differ from other Russians?

In the last decade, the problem range related to these questions attracted a fewer number of Russian scholars than the specifics of the normative and value systems of Russians per se. A group of scholars headed by Academician Mikhail Gorshkov, in particular Andrey Andreev, Vasily Anikin, Vladimir Petukhov and Pavel Sushko, deserves a special place among those who for several years studied the normative-axiological systems on the basis of sociological data. They pointed out that, on the whole, Russian citizens understand the civilizational distinctions of Russia as compared with the countries of the conventional West. More than that: in the course of time, Russians are growing aware of these distinctions [2; 3; 6; 7].

The traditional split of public consciousness [1] that is typical of Russia shifted, after a new turn of the exacerbated relationship between Russia and the West during the SMO in Ukraine, shifting the focus of attention of Russian scholars from interpretation of the specifics of Russian identity to an analysis of interconnections between the attitude to the Western vector of development and protests against what the Russian state was doing in Ukraine. These more applied studies have just begun [7; 14]; it is important in this context to mention sociological polls carried out by VTsIOM [19; 13].

We concentrated on a somewhat different aspect of the problem range: we wanted to find an answer to the questions, what are the worldview specifics of those who support the Western development path and to which extent is their worldview holistic, that is, was it a product of external influence or stemmed from deep mental attitudes.

The data were obtained during an all-Russian public opinion poll carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in March 2022. The sampling of 2,000 respondents from all federal districts represented their populations by gender, age and settlement type. In cases where data from other studies were used for comparison, information about them is provided along the way.

The starting point of the methodology of our studies presupposed construction of Index of Western Orientation (WO Index) successfully used by Pavel Sushko [14]. This allowed us to identify groups with different attitudes to the path of Russia’s further development: from consistent supporters of its uniqueness to those who supported the pro-Western course and were convinced that it could be implemented in Russia. Technically, this meant that we should take four variables into account:

(1) acceptance of the fact that individualism, liberalism and Western democracy are values that suit Russia (32% of the respondents agreed);<sup>1</sup>

(2) acceptance of the opinion that Russia should live by the same rules as Western countries (23%);

(3) acceptance of the opinion that Russia should be an active partner of the West (14%);

(4) acceptance of the opinion that the Western development model is highly efficient and that we should imitate it (5%).

Selection of each of the above statements was marked by one point; the results were aggregated.<sup>2</sup> Separately, we note that the variables included in the calculation of the WO Index played different roles in its formation (Table 1).

Table 1

**Comparative Role of the Components of WO Index in This Index, 2022 (%) and Indices of Spearman's Coefficient<sup>3</sup>**

Components of WO Index	Points according to WO Index (%)				Spearman's coefficient* (by module)
	0	1	2	3-4	
Disagreement with the statement: "Individualism, liberalism and Western democracy are values that do not suit Russians. Community, collectivism and the firmly ruled state are important for Russia"	0	60	78	94	0.759
Agreement with the statement: "Russia should live according to the rules accepted by the West" <sup>**</sup>	0	28	75	97	0.699
Agreement with the statement: "Russia should be an active partner of the West" <sup>***</sup>	0	10	39	90	0.572
Agreement with the statement: "The Western development model is highly efficient and Russia should follow it steadfastly" <sup>****</sup>	0	2	9	46	0.356

Notes. \*The interconnection between the value of WO Index and each of the variables included in it was verified. \*\*This answer was one choice between a pair of statements in which the alternative was: "Russia is a civilization on its own right that will never accept the Western lifestyle." \*\*\*This answer was part of a choice of three characteristics of the required image of Russia's future out of nine offered. \*\*\*\*This answer was part of a choice of three out of 12 offered lessons of Russia's history.

It goes without saying that the group with zero indices of WO Index that consistently rejects any possibilities and expediency of following the Western development path dominates in the mass strata of Russia's population. Its members who comprise 54% of the total population can be described as carriers of the type of worldview which dominates in Russian culture and which can be defined as a system of meanings, norms and values within which the opposition to the norms and values typical of the Western development model are deliberately articulated. Below it will be shown that this type of worldview contains the majority of features described by Slavophiles a century and a half ago as specific for the Russian civilization. Approximately a quarter of representatives of the

broad strata (27%) belongs to a group very close to the first where their attitude to the Western development model is concerned. It can be defined as a periphery of the group of consistent supporters of Russia's originality. Its members, however, admit that certain values are traditionally coordinated with the Western model. The groups of consistent supporters of Russia's unique and the pro-Western course of development (7%) stand in polar opposition to one another. The pro-Western group has a periphery of its own (12% of the country's population). Despite the fact that the main and the periphery groups support the pro-Western development path they differ in certain respects. Table 1 shows that even if representatives of the periphery group of pro-Western supporters prefer the Western development path, they do not treat the relationships between Russia and the West either as a lesson of the past or a desired future for their country.

### **Specifics of the Views and the Socio-Psychological State of the Group that Supports Russia's Western Path of Development**

When talking of specifics of the normative-axiological systems and, on the whole, the worldview of pro-Western Russians, we should pay attention to what they think about Russia's desirable future and how their ideas differ from those supported by representatives of mass strata who consistently oppose the Western path of development for Russia. Table 2 shows that the former, to a great extent, demonstrate attention to human rights and freedom of self-expression typical of the Westernizers of the mid-19th century, as well as an awareness that the role of the state should be minimized. At the same time, the latter, to a greater extent, think of Russia's future as a great power which unites different peoples and ensures the realization of the principles of social justice. They treat strong power as important; it should ensure law and order in the country and preserve time-tested national traditions. These attitudes, values and norms were described as specifically Russian by Slavophiles more than a century and a half ago. On the other hand, contrary to the Slavophile thesis about the role of Christian Orthodoxy in Russia, the absolute majority of Russian citizens have pushed aside everything related to religion, and the differences in the attitude to religious values of both groups are insignificant.<sup>4</sup> This means that the Westernizers of the time when the public discussion about Russia's development path was unfolding and their followers among Russia's contemporary population have preserved the core of their ideas practically intact; on the other hand, the Slavophiles who started the discussion and the contemporary opponents of the Western development course are fairly far removed from each other. In the same way, the contemporary versions of Eurasianism and classical Slavophilism are very different. Moreover (see Table 2), even the most consistent followers of the pro-Western development path have all accepted many elements of the normative-axiological systems of the classical Western development model (indispensable opposition, the right to defend one's ideas even if they contradict the positions of the majority, strikes and demonstrations organized to defend these ideas are allowed, etc.), even if not in its neoliberal variant.



Table 2 clearly demonstrates the specifics of intermediate groups: for both of them, adherence to the principles of social justice is much more important than for consistent supporters of the Western path of development. In this respect, they are closer to the consistent opponents of the Western course. The same applies to their attitude to reducing social inequalities and narrowing social gaps. On the other hand, the periphery of the group of consistent supporters of the Western path pays much more attention to observation of human rights, democracy and freedom of self-expression of the individual than to social justice. The periphery of the group of consistent opponents of the Western path is much more concerned about social justice as one of the desired characteristics of future Russia. The periphery of the group of consistent supporters of the Western path is interested to a much greater extent in the free market with minimal interference of the state; their demand for strong power is much weaker than in the periphery of the supporters of unique Russia.

Table 2

**Certain Specifics of Worldview of Russians with Different WO Index Points, 2022**  
(%; up to three answers)

Worldview specifics	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<i>Desired characteristics of future Russia*</i>					
Social justice is ensured	52	43	43	31	47
Strong power ensures order and development	50	40	21	5	40
Preserves national traditions and religious values	46	36	26	16	39
Great power which unites different peoples	43	33	20	4	35
Social inequality and social stratification are limited	18	17	16	9	17
Russians come first, that is, a Russian national state	9	9	9	1	8
Guaranteed free market and minimal state interference	12	28	35	45	21
Active partner of the West and modern developed states <sup>5</sup>	0	10	40	90	14
Ensures human rights, democracy and freedom of self-expression	30	41	58	67	39
<i>Acceptation of certain norms that regulate the relationships between the individual, society and the state</i>					
True democracy is impossible without political opposition	73	71	73	76	73
Each and every person should have the right to defend his/her opinion even if the majority thinks differently	88	87	84	88	87
Each citizen in any situation has the right to defend his interests through strikes and manifestations	62	64	76	81	66

*Note.* \*The positions chosen by 40% to 50% of the group members are indicated with a light background. The dark background shows that there is agreement among the majority of the members of the group.

This is an obvious confirmation that today, very much as in the mid-19th century, pro-Western attitudes have appeared not because of “pernicious influences.” They stem from deeply rooted values and are the result of a special



type of worldview which explains why its carriers tend to the development course, which fits their values to a much greater extent. However, even the most consistent supporters of the Western path of Russia's development have in mind an idealized and mythologized Western model rather than the real West of our days.

The differences in the image of Russia's desired future are rooted in different ideas about the important and the desired in everyday life (different values and norms) and, therefore, produce different understanding of how the relationships between the individual, society and the state should be organized here and now. The sociocultural specifics of Russia are not reduced to its specific values; they include a special mechanism of social reproduction in which the key role belongs to the state. The important components of this mechanism are: understanding the functions of an opposition, attitude to law, freedom of speech (including absence of censorship), etc. The positions of consistent supporters of Russia's uniqueness and its pro-Western development path disagree on these points (Table 3) even though, as has been demonstrated above, this does not mean that there are no positions on which they agree (Table 2).

Table 3

**Disagreement with Certain Norms that Regulate Individual-State Relationship Among Russians Belonging to Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Norms	Points by WO Index (%)				Gap <sup>6</sup> between polar groups	Total
	0	1	2	3-4		
The state should always protect the interests of the entire people against the interests of individuals	12	23	30	54	4,5	29
If the media or bloggers violate the interests of the state, their freedom should be limited	26	41	57	74	2,8	37
The opposition should not criticize the government; it should help it	24	32	40	51	2,1	30
The law, even outdated, should be complied with always and in all cases	28	40	45	54	1,9	35
The government should have a possibility to directly influence judicial power, if this is required by the interests of the state	39	43	61	70	1,8	45
It is not very important whether something corresponds the law, fairness is more important	37	42	45	53	1,4	40

It has been demonstrated that the key component in different models of the relationships between the individual, society and the state is an understanding of whose interests the state should take into account in the first place: the interests of the community or of an individual [16]. In Russia, its citizens are convinced that the optimal model of the individual and the state relationships traditionally presupposes the priority of the interests of the community over the interests of an

individual. Personal freedoms and democratic forms of organization of social life within this model are important but not decisively important. From this it follows, in particular, that the state rather than groups of individuals should defend their interests in their struggle against one another. The state, which expresses common interests, should carry out a policy designed to improve the life of the country and its people. This explains the specific explanation of the role of the opposition not as an alternative force, which fights for power but as a “force that assists power,” i.e., “constructive opposition.” Due to the rights and obligations of the state to represent common interests, people should demonstrate maximal loyalty and accept the right of the state to interfere in their lives and even in the course of justice and introduce censorship. On the other hand, citizens still have the right to express their opinions including through strikes and manifestations. Today, the consensus nature of the model is one of its important and typical features. It presupposes that all citizens fulfill all obligations prescribed to them if the other side behaves accordingly. In other words, they are ready to sacrifice their personal interests for the common good if the state adequately expresses the interests of the country and takes into account the needs of its population. This is reflected in their opinion about what is going on as just or unjust.

This is the gist of the model on which, with certain variations, the implicit social contract of the last decades between the Russian state and its citizens has been traditionally sculptured. This model is highly stable; in 2022, the share of those who accepted the priority of the interests of the state was practically the same as in the early 2010s. On the other hand, the majority of the country’s population does not want planned economics back and has appreciated many democratic values. In mass consciousness, however, this coexists with the rejection of the Western development path – in the first place, because people understand “what is good and what is bad” differently than it is understood in the West. The Russians are not satisfied with this path, first of all, precisely because of the different understanding of “what is good and what is bad,” which differs from the Western one in the clearly expressed priority of the interests of society, the spokesman of which is the state, in relation to human rights.

The specifics of the ideas of consistent supporters of the Western path of development against the background of the ideas of their consistent opponents (the attitudes and norms that regulate the relationships between the individual, society and the state) become absolutely clear. The former are oriented to a fundamentally different model of these relationships and, correspondingly, to a very different model of social contract. This is related to their ideas about the key functions of the state, the correlation of the interests of the state and human rights, the right of the state to limit freedom of speech, influence the course of justice and about other no less important issues. More than that: the difference between these two models is gradually growing clearer. This is not only felt but also recognized by the broadest population strata; polarization on these issues is rising.

The worldview differences are not limited to the issues described above; they are present in practically all assessments of the country’s past and present. In short, this is a confrontation between groups with different worldviews. They

cannot agree on which lessons of history of the last century Russia should learn, they think differently about those of the social subjects that promote or obstruct Russia's development, about different aspects of the state of affairs in Russia, SMO in Ukraine, etc. They differ on many other issues also. Table 4 offers some of them, the opinions on which shared by the majority leave the other side in the minority.

Table 4

**Certain Specifics of Views and Assessments of Russians from Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)<sup>7</sup>**

Views and assessments	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<i>Lessons of Russia's history that it should learn*</i>					
Excessive concentration of power in the hands of one person should be avoided	9	22	32	57	18
Russia should live by its own wisdom, follow its own road rather than copying experience of other states	50	37	27	8	41
<i>Attitude to the country development vector</i>					
Today Russia is moving toward a dead end	16	27	63	76	29
Russia is moving toward positive results	84	72	37	24	71
<i>Demand for changes in the country's life</i>					
The country needs fundamental changes	43	53	58	76	50
The country needs stability	55	46	39	21	48
<i>Attitude to power</i>					
Current power should be changed no matter what	12	24	48	66	23
Its faults notwithstanding, current power deserves support	87	75	51	33	76
<i>Assessments of opportunity to express political views</i>					
Good	23	16	11	9	19
Satisfactory	64	58	50	38	59
Bad	13	26	39	53	22
<i>Assessments of spiritual and psychological atmosphere in the country</i>					
Favorable on the whole	15	12	8	2	12
Indefinite, contradictory	63	57	47	46	59
Unfavorable on the whole	22	31	45	52	29
<i>Attitude to those who served in law and order structures</i>					
<i>The military</i>					
Promote Russia's development	93	81	67	48	83
Prevent Russia's development	7	18	32	51	16
<i>Police and members of other law and order structures</i>					
Promote Russia's development	71	68	51	39	66
Prevent Russia's development	28	32	48	59	34
<i>Approval of Russian leaders' decision to carry out SMO in Ukraine, after its beginning</i>					
Completely or partly disapproved	10	22	41	72	21

Views and assessments	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
Approved in some respects and disapprove in others	31	37	34	21	32
Completely or partly approved	59	40	25	6	46
<b><i>Whether SMO in Ukraine could have been avoided</i></b>					
It could or probably could have been avoided	10	24	45	66	22
Hard to say	31	29	31	25	30
It could not or probably could not have been avoided	59	47	23	9	48
<b><i>Attitude to the sanctions the West introduced against Russia when SMO began</i></b>					
Sanctions will bring very negative results for Russia	15	24	49	64	26
They will negatively affect Russia	50	52	39	27	47
They will produce no negative results	35	24	12	9	27

Note. \*Up to three answers out of twelve variants.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate that consistent supporters of a pro-Western path are especially concerned about human rights, democracy, freedom of self-expression and reject excessive concentration of power in the hands of one person. They assess the possibility of expressing one's own political ideas in Russia today as bad; the spiritual and psychological atmosphere in society as negative. In their opinion, the situation in Russia is unacceptable; members of the law and order structures are perceived as "support of the regime," hence their negative attitude to this group. No wonder that, on the whole they want radical reforms, regime change and a different vector of the country's development. They did not approve of the start of the SMO in Ukraine, which, it seems to them, could have been avoided; they fear Western sanctions and expect their extremely negative effects for Russia. At the same time, the entire set of these ideas is not quite popular even among consistent Westernizers. In fact, in each of the positions there is a considerable share (from 24 to 49%) of those who think differently.

The majority of consistent supporters of Russia's original path of development is convinced that Russia is moving in the right direction and that power deserves support. The possibilities of political self-expression are assessed by them as good or, at least, satisfactory. They are convinced that it was impossible to avoid the SMO in Ukraine; they support it even if expect negative, but not catastrophic, effects of Western sanctions. In this group, too, from 7% to 49% support points of view on all discussed positions that differ from that of the group.

This obvious difference between the two dominant opinions is caused not only by deeply rooted attitudes, values, norms, but also by such socio-psychological characteristics as the type of locus of control, time horizon, etc. This means that they are not only groups with polar worldviews but mental poles of the mass layers of Russia's society (Table 5). Their ideas about aims of life are also fairly different. The Westernizers treat self-realization (59%) and financial wellbeing (58%) as signs of a successful life, while those who support independent development path see the family and children (66%) and good health (55%) as the two most important aims in life. The specifics of answers of members of both groups to the question about the

correlation between personal and public interests are obvious. The majority (at least at the normative level) of those who support Russia's unique path of development believes that people should limit their personal interests for the sake of the interests of the state and society. At the same time, nearly three-fourths of the Westernizers treat personal interests as a priority. The answers to the question: "Should a person live in their native country or in a country they like?" are differently distributed in different groups. The periphery groups side with the main groups in their attitude to the dominant locus of control, in assuming responsibility for their own lives and corresponding specifics of the demands addressed to the state. Both of them, however, side with the consistent supporters of the Western development path in relation to the norms that can be described as individualist or even egoistical (priority of personal or public interests and the choice of a preferred country).

Table 5

**Certain Specifics of Norms, Values and Other Social-Psychological Characteristics of Russians from Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Indices	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<i>Main components of successful life*</i>					
Self-realization to prove oneself	41	43	53	59	44
Financial wellbeing	48	52	51	58	50
Family and children	66	53	54	39	59
Health	55	56	49	38	53
<i>Negative attitude to restrictions on personal freedom that became obvious during pandemic**</i>					
Limitation of trips to certain countries	17	29	42	58	26
Self-isolation	30	38	41	50	35
Introduction of vaccination certificates	36	42	51	60	41
Social monitoring (different control measures)	48	56	59	75	53
<i>Specifics of locus of control</i>					
Every man is the architect of his own fortune	45	49	54	60	48
Human life is affected by external factors to a much greater extent than by one's own efforts	55	51	46	40	52
<i>Demand for state support</i>					
Can support selves and families, do not need state support	33	43	57	61	41
They and their families cannot survive without state support	67	57	43	38	59
<i>Personal vs. Public priorities</i>					
People should keep their personal interests within certain limits, in the interests of the country and society	52	38	32	27	44
Personal interests are all-important	47	61	67	73	55
<i>Attitude to the freedom of choice of place of residence</i>					
One should live in the country he likes best	36	55	73	87	49
Man has only one homeland that should not be abandoned	63	45	27	12	50

Notes. \*Five answers chosen from among 21 options. \*\*Answers "positive" and "neutral" were allowed. Attitudes to 11 pandemic-related measures were tested.

In the context of the prevalence of individualistic attitudes among those who consistently support the Western development path for Russia, it is not surprising that they are much less willing to make any sacrifices for the sake of the sovereignty and security of their country (Table 6). At the same time, 37% in this group were not ready to make any sacrifices for the sake of the country in the spring of 2022, and another 34% were ready to make only one or two sacrifices out of ten. In the group of consistent supporters of authentic path of development, identical shares were 7 and 37% respectively yet the readiness to sacrifices was not absolute; only 9% of the members of this group were ready to accept lower living standards for the sake of their country's sovereignty.

Table 6

**Readiness to Certain Sacrifices for the Sake of Firmer Security of Russia and Its Sovereignty of Russians who Belong to Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Readiness for sacrifices	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<b><i>Readiness to reject durable goods produced in the West (gadgets, clothes, household appliances and computer technology, etc.)</i></b>					
Yes, we are ready	70	53	33	19	57
No, we are not ready	24	41	58	80	36
<b><i>Readiness to reject tourist and business trips to the EU countries and the US</i></b>					
Yes, we are ready	63	55	38	24	55
No, we are not ready	5	13	30	48	13
<b><i>Readiness to stop using Visa and MasterCard bank cards</i></b>					
Yes, we are ready	65	59	44	38	59
No, we are not ready	13	25	39	49	22
<b><i>Readiness to stop saving money in foreign currencies</i></b>					
Yes, we are ready	53	49	31	22	47
No, we are not ready	5	13	26	40	12
<b><i>Readiness to stop free using of the Internet and some sites of social networks</i></b>					
Yes, we are ready	45	33	18	11	36
No, we are not ready	46	59	74	87	56

Note. \*The option "I have nothing to do with this" (not shown here) was also allowed.

The above suggests that by spring 2022, the social-psychological state of supporters of the Western development path was fairly bad: 41% described the situation in the country as catastrophic (11% among the supporters of the country's authentic development path); only 9% described their social-psychological condition in positive terms (32% among members of the opposite group), and 38% spoke of apathy, irritation, bitterness, aggression (16% among members of the opposite group).<sup>8</sup> It should be said that only 19% of them believed in their future welfare; the same share described their feelings as fear, despondency and panic.<sup>9</sup>

The far from positive psychological state typical of supporters of the Western development path is exacerbated by their total mistrust of the world around them (Table 7). On the one hand, this state is connected with their rejection of the current

development course of Russia and the gap between their assessments and positions of power, civil society structures and the majority of population of Russia. On the other, it stems from individualistic attitudes, which they project, wittingly or unwittingly, to all other people. Only 79% of them trust members of their families; they trust their relatives, friends, colleagues or neighbors even rarer, although their activity in social networks is not lower than of other Russians, while the potential of these networks, on average, is slightly bigger. More than that: when answering the question: Do you think that people more often try to help others or to look after their interests? three-quarters (74%) of consistent Westernizers believed that people more often look after their own interests rather than helping others. The majority of those who support Russia's authenticity (52%) are of a different opinion.

Table 7

**Confidence in Different Structures and Persons in Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Attitude	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<b>Confidence in the President of the Country</b>					
Trust	86	71	48	25	73
Do not trust	13	29	52	75	26
<b>Confidence in the Government of the Country</b>					
Trust	69	55	43	21	59
Do not trust	31	45	57	79	41
<b>Confidence in heads of corresponding republics or governors of corresponding regions, territories</b>					
Trust	58	51	41	29	52
Do not trust	41	48	59	71	47
<b>Confidence in the Russian Army</b>					
Trust	87	72	58	34	76
Do not trust	13	27	42	66	24
<b>Confidence in the Church</b>					
Trust	64	58	49	28	58
Do not trust	36	42	50	71	42
<b>Confidence in relatives*</b>					
Trust	66	60	56	47	62
Trust partly or do not trust	34	39	44	53	38
<b>Confidence in friends</b>					
Trust	51	48	45	46	49
Trust partly or do not trust	49	52	55	54	51

Note. \*Confidence at the personal level was measured by a much bigger number of possible answers than confidence at the institutional level.



The fears of those who support the Western development path have their specifics. The majority has two permanent fears: exacerbation of the armed conflict in Ukraine and further degradation of the system of medical services; a fairly big number fears that travel to certain foreign countries might be directly or indirectly banned (Table 8).

Table 8

**Certain Fears and Apprehensions Related to the Situation in the Country and the World, Reported by Russians from Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Attitude to different threats	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<b><i>Further exacerbation of the armed conflict in Ukraine</i></b>					
Not bothered	6	9	5	4	<b>9</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	50	42	39	36	<b>46</b>
Permanently feared	44	49	56	60	<b>48</b>
<b><i>Banned trips to certain foreign countries for common Russian citizens</i></b>					
Not bothered	71	57	41	24	<b>61</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	23	36	46	54	<b>32</b>
Permanently feared	6	6	12	23	<b>8</b>
<b><i>Further degradation of the system of medical services</i></b>					
Not bothered	7	9	12	14	<b>9</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	53	54	48	33	<b>51</b>
Permanently feared	40	37	40	54	<b>40</b>
<b><i>Greater regional separatism and weaker federal center</i></b>					
Not bothered	42	46	45	51	<b>44</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	50	46	46	42	<b>48</b>
Permanently feared	9	8	9	6	<b>8</b>
<b><i>Infringement of rights and freedoms, establishment of authoritarian regime</i></b>					
Not bothered	33	24	1	11	<b>27</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	52	53	55	41	<b>52</b>
Permanently feared	15	23	28	48	<b>21</b>
<b><i>Bankruptcies of small and medium-sized businesses in the country</i></b>					
Not bothered	29	23	20	19	<b>26</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	56	57	56	41	<b>55</b>
Permanently feared	15	20	24	39	<b>19</b>
<b><i>Stronger Western sanctions</i></b>					
Not bothered	25	21	13	9	<b>21</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	57	57	57	49	<b>56</b>
Permanently feared	18	22	31	42	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Stronger U.S. influence in the world arena</i></b>					
Not bothered	25	26	29	43	<b>27</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	51	54	51	49	<b>52</b>
Permanently feared	24	20	20	9	<b>22</b>

Attitude to different threats	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<b>Sharp growth of unemployment</b>					
Not bothered	10	9	10	15	<b>10</b>
Bothered to a certain extent	51	51	49	36	<b>49</b>
Permanently feared	39	41	41	49	<b>41</b>

Note. \*We tested attitudes to 28 possible fears; only those of them that showed the most obvious differences are presented here.

General poor socio-psychological state affects the assessments of members of the two polar groups regarding their material status (Table 9). Objectively, the incomes of consistent Westernizers, the structure of their distribution and their assessment of their material situation speak of their slightly more favorable situation than that of average Russians. At the same time, they are much more doubtful of their social safety and the future of their country of which I have written above. These negative feelings are partly stirred up by their negative assessments of the dynamics of their material status in the last year caused by the SMO in Ukraine and the sanctions war waged by the collective West. Considering the relatively more significant role for members of this group of financial wellbeing, their general unwillingness to make sacrifices in the name of the interests of the country, as well as their concern about the complications of important foreign trips for them,<sup>10</sup> the increased anxiety about their prospects in this group seems quite logical.

Table 9

**Certain Specifics of Material Status and Its Dynamics in Groups of Russians with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)<sup>11</sup>**

Indices	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<b>Average per capita income relative to the settlement median</b>					
Up to 0.75 of median	31	32	27	21	<b>30</b>
From 0.75 to 1.25 times median	43	39	38	37	<b>41</b>
From 1.25 to 2 times median	21	20	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>
Over 2 times medians	5	9	8	<b>16</b>	7
<b>Per capita monthly income of households</b>					
Per capita (rubles)	24,608	25,693	28,138	35,439	<b>26,081</b>
Median (rubles)	20,000	20,000	24,400	25,500	<b>20,000</b>
<b>Self-assessment of material status</b>					
Good	12	15	14	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>
Satisfactory	66	63	<b>64</b>	54	<b>64</b>
Bad	22	22	22	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Confidence in favorable personal future</b>					
Confident fully or practically fully	<b>50</b>	41	32	19	<b>45</b>
Unconfident practically fully or fully	49	<b>58</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>55</b>

Indices	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<i>Level of social protection in case of loss of job*</i>					
Good	9	10	6	5	9
Satisfactory	48	44	33	35	44
Bad	43	46	61	58	47
<i>How did your material status change in the last year?</i>					
Improved	8	11	13	14	10
Unchanged	48	46	35	32	45
Worsened	44	43	52	54	45
<i>How did the Western Anti-Russian sanctions affect you personally and your life?</i>					
To practically no extent	2	2	1	2	2
Negatively on the whole	27	25	16	14	24
Contradictory (both positively and negatively)	41	54	73	76	51
In no way	30	18	10	8	23
<i>How was you and your life affected by SMO in Ukraine?</i>					
Positively	26	15	8	4	19
Both positively and negatively	31	28	26	16	29
Negative influence	14	28	49	66	26
In no way	29	29	17	14	26

Note. \*This information was received from employed people.

This means that there are certain quite important differences between the carriers of the two mentalities widespread to the greatest extent in popular masses. According to data of regressive analysis in the Chaid program,<sup>12</sup> they are: different attitudes to the SMO in Ukraine in all its aspects (from the responsibility for the situation to its coverage by the media and the way it affected their lives); different assessments of the country's development as a correct or a dead-end path; presence/absence of confidence in the President, the army and the government; different attitudes to the demands of regime change; (un)readiness to stop buying foodstuffs and durable goods produced in the West; discontinued international tourism; different attitudes to the norm that man should live where he wants as well as different opinions about some of the foreign countries (the U.S., the UK, Canada and others); different perceptions of law and order structures; presence/absence of a conviction that power should be concentrated; different attitudes to limiting the freedom of bloggers and restrictions introduces during the COVID-19 pandemic; different assessments of the possibility to express personal political views; insistence on the priority of individual interests versus the interests of society and vice versa; different interpretations of the significance of observation of human rights as one of the main features of the required future and the tasks of current policies as well as certain others, part of which has been discussed above.

A natural question is: How does the composition of the polar groups objectively differ, not only in their attitude to the desired vector of development of the country, but also in the general mentality of the groups? Besides the already

mentioned, higher material status<sup>13</sup> created by other factors, age (the generation socialized totally or predominantly after the Soviet Union's disintegration), higher education and residence in the capitals of the country or of federation subjects increase a possibility of becoming a member of the pro-Western group (Table 10). Businessmen and the self-employed constitute 16% among Russian citizens with pro-Western orientation, as well as employees of newly created private (not privatized) enterprises (13%).

Table 10

**Certain Specifics of Groups with Different WO Index Points, 2022 (%)**

Indices	Points by WO Index (%)				Total
	0	1	2	3-4	
<i>Educational level of parents</i>					
Both with higher education	12	17	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>
One with higher education	18	17	25	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>
Both without higher education	<b>70</b>	66	55	44	<b>65</b>
<i>One's own educational level</i>					
Higher, including two undergraduate degrees	37	34	37	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>
Master or postgraduate course	3	4	6	6 <sup>14</sup>	<b>4</b>
Without complete higher education	63	66	63	59	<b>64</b>
<i>Place of residence</i>					
Moscow or St. Petersburg	13	8	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>
Regional, territorial and republican centers	28	26	26	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
Other cities	29	31	29	18	<b>29</b>
Countryside – urban type settlements and villages	30	<b>35</b>	28	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>Age</i>					
Up to 30 years	12	20	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>
31-40	22	26	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>
41-60	<b>42</b>	38	32	30	<b>39</b>
Over 60	<b>24</b>	16	12	10	<b>19</b>

None of these factors, however, predetermines belonging to the group of consistent supporters of the Western path of development. Only 14% of those whose parents had higher education belong to this group, along with 5% of those whose parents had no higher education. The same can be said about the 8-9% of those who live in big cities of different types. The higher share of supporters of the Western path can be found in all age groups up to 40 years; the biggest share (which, nevertheless, is only 19%) of them was found in the group below 25.

Obviously, at least some of these characteristics are interconnected. The young group mainly consists of people whose parents had higher education; people with higher education live mostly in big cities, etc. If we take this into account and identify a group of people who live in the capitals and centers of RF subjects, have two higher educations or completed postgraduate courses, grew up in families in which both parents had higher education we will find out that the

share of consistent supporters of the Western development path among them is nearly 25%. More than that: its share is 50% among the youngest part of Russians with identical characteristics.<sup>15</sup> This means that Western-oriented citizens of Russia (here we have in mind real, not statistically defined, groups) indeed have certain localization, which, however, does not coincide with the social groups traditionally identified by formal criteria and is typical of a very small group, yet one that is very important for the country (due to its cultural and human potential).

### Conclusions

The problem of choosing either a Western-oriented or authentic development path that has been present in Russia practically for two centuries is consistently reflected in the minds of the mass sections of the country's population. "Peaceful coexistence" between these groups may become opposition (as a rule, not violent) when the tension between Russia and the collective West increases. Thus, while in 2021 the discord between supporters of these two vectors of Russian development was named among the main conflicts of Russian society by only about 5% of representatives of mass strata,<sup>16</sup> in the spring of 2022 their number increased significantly, although even then it was less than 20% (most often, even at this moment, Russians mentioned among them the conflicts between rich and poor, officials and citizens who interacted with them, etc.).

Supporters of the two radically different groups differ not only in their attitude to the West. Their differences are nothing but outcrops of much deeper mental differences: their ideological convictions, normative and value attitudes, socio-psychological specifics, etc. The key difference is their individualistic or collectivist orientation, that is, either orientation on individual interests (and the readiness to assume responsibility for one's future) or (at least at the normative level) on the priority of the interests of the community (people) that should be expressed by the state (normally accompanied by expectation of state support). Due to the ties of these normative attitudes with the readiness to assume or not assume responsibility for one's own life, these two polar groups differ in the types of locus of control, planning horizons, etc.

Supporters of the pro-Western development path are mostly found in the so-called "strong" social groups, which consist of highly educated people raised by parents with higher education and having wide access to labor markets and higher incomes. Many of them belong to younger generation groups that accumulate, to a great extent, these features and whose lifestyle is affected by developing globalization. However, in all educational, age and professional groups irrespective of the place of residence, the share of pro-Western supporters is minimal. A comparatively rare combination of these factors creates a group in which the individualist Westernizers are in the majority; they are young people who live in big cities, graduated from prestigious universities and were raised by parents with university diplomas. The population of Russia on the whole and all mass social groups insist on the priority of the interests of the community, and are therefore convinced that Russia should follow its own road.

Despite the fact that consistent Westernizers more often than not represent “stronger” social groups, their socio-psychological state is worse than that of the carriers of the dominant type of mentality. Feeling like strangers in their own country (which corresponds to reality, taking into account their objective opposition to the majority of the population and the political course pursued by the authorities), they look pessimistically at the world around them. The same can be said about what they think about their future and the future of their country; they do not trust not only the structures of power and civil society but also people around them.

The numerical correlation between consistent supporters and consistent opponents of the pro-Western path for Russia (1:8) as well as a relatively small number of the former (7% of Russia’s adult population) could have allowed the state to enforce on them certain rules of the game. However, reproduction of this value minority throughout many centuries, the systemic and holistic mentality of its members up to their deeply rooted psychological specifics, and their cultural and human potentials accumulated over many generations do not allow the state to ignore their specifics when choosing the country’s path of development. Moreover, this fairly small group has a periphery of 12% of the adult population of Russia. In total, there are tens of millions of citizens; their number will probably increase rather than contract due to the dynamics of spreading of certain basic norms and values of Westernizers. Certainly, this does not mean that their position should strongly affect political decisions of the country’s leaders, yet its number and other specifics of this group should be taken into account when formulating ideological, social and cultural policy of the state. It is even more important to understand the specifics of views of those who support Russia’s unique development path; they are as holistic as those of the Westernizers. They are far removed from what many of our politicians and political scientists think about them; today they rely on unconditional mutual responsibility of the citizen and the state, the individual and society, man and his closest circle. In some respects, they differ greatly from the traditional ideas of classical Slavophiles. This means that we need a new civil contract between power and society to replace the old one that existed during recent decades.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> It should be noted that agreement that these values are suitable for our country did not always mean that the respondent himself shares them.
- <sup>2</sup> The group that gathered, on the whole, four points on the WO Index constitutes less than 2% of the sample and, therefore, was added to the group that gathered three points. From a substantive point of view, this took into account that, in contrast to the first two indicators presented in the questionnaire as alternatives, indicators 3 and 4 represented positions in the fairly long list of possible answers to the main lessons of Russia’s 20th-century history and the ideas of its desired future. Correspondingly, the answers connected with the Western development path were selected by those only for whom the subject was especially important and even one such answer spoke of the problem’s importance for them.
- <sup>3</sup> Here and elsewhere the background means that there were over 50% of answers.
- <sup>4</sup> For example, among the supporters of Russia’s authentic development, 36% do not trust the Church. Moreover, among the main lessons of the past, even they selected “One cannot live without faith in God” only in 22% of cases, and they put this position in 6th place out of 12, ranking it below not only such lessons as “Russia must follow its own path, and not copy the experience of other countries” or “Russia can prosper only when it is led by a strong personality,” but also “Reforms in society should begin with the economy, and not with the political system,” and “Socialism suits Russia to a much greater extent than capitalism.”
- <sup>5</sup> Let me remind you that this indicator was included in the calculation of the WO Index.
- <sup>6</sup> Correlation between corresponding indices among Russians with pro-Western orientation and supporters of Russia’s authentic development.
- <sup>7</sup> Here and elsewhere, the sum of answers might be below 100% since the tables do not include the “undecided” answers.
- <sup>8</sup> All others described their social-psychological state as “anxious.”
- <sup>9</sup> Another 50% felt anxious, while the rest felt hopeful.
- <sup>10</sup> Nearly a quarter of members of this group spoke of travel as a sign of successful life; and every twentieth person named among such signs entertainment and pleasure. This was more than twice and three times higher, respectively, than similar indicators in the group that was polar to them.
- <sup>11</sup> Here and elsewhere, bold type is used to indicate the positions higher than the average by 3% and more.
- <sup>12</sup> The Chaid Program (Chi-square Automatic Interaction Direction) is one of the variants of regressive analysis. Normally, it is used to detect interconnections between big numbers of the variables and build up tree classifiers to find combinations of signs that affect the target variable to the greatest extent. Here we used the first function of this program to check the connection of belonging to different worldview groups with over 600 variables of the used dataset.

- <sup>13</sup> In all groups with the incomes not bigger than 1.25 times the settlement median, consistent supporters of the specifically Russian development path are in the majority (53-57%); there are only 39% of them in the group with 2 times median or more. It would have been wrong, however, to say that all high-income Russians are mostly pro-Western: there are only 16% of consistent supporters of the pro-Western path of Russia among them.
- <sup>14</sup> It should be said that the prestigious types of higher education – master or postgraduate course or second higher education – not only increases the possibility to find oneself among the Westernizers. Those with such types of education are the only group in which the share of supporters of Russia's original path of development is a minority (40%).
- <sup>15</sup> I should say that given the limited sample size, such quantitative estimates should be treated with caution, although the trend itself is undeniable.
- <sup>16</sup> Data of the all-Russian monitoring poll carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology, RAS, in March 2021; sampling 2,000 respondents.

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