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The Problem of 'Modern' and 'Post-Modern' in EU-Russian Relations: non-Russian Scholarship

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The debate about modern and post-modern in EU-Russian relations has intensified at the turn of this millennium and continues to attract attention. On the one hand, this debate was stimulated by the nature of the European Union, its actorness, difference from states, based only on a part of the attributes (economic potential, normative power) but not military power. This contrasted sharply with the nature of Russian statehood, which focuses on traditional power, the importance of security and Russia as its guarantor. On the other hand, the debate about modern and postmodern was promoted by the growing popularity of constructivist research, as well as postpositivism in the social sciences.

As a result, the number of studies sharply increased, emphasizing the differences between modern Russia and the postmodern EU. The first is characterized by the desire for multipolarity, the status of a great power, the emphasis on power, whereas the second one pays attention to the transformation of the space around, norms as the basis of influence, and economic levers. Researchers started talking about Russia's inability to be integrated into Wider Europe, about two different Europes, about the differences in the identity of the two actors, which can not be eradicated. This contrasted sharply with the pastoral nature of the debate in the 1990s.

The views of Russia and the EU, the rhetoric of their leaders were subjected to close analysis in order to reveal the normative and ideological rivalry of the parties. It was demonstrated that many of the basic categories of Russia and the EU are interpreted in different ways. Examples

were multilateralism, trust, borders, human rights, sovereignty, reciprocity, liberalization, diversification. This discursive incompatibility was analyzed as not allowing for the socialization of elites, incl. prevented the rapprochement of the Russian elite with the EU elites.

The thesis about the normative power of the European Union, how it manifests itself in the dialogue with Russia, as well as the contradictions between the norms / values promoted by Brussels, and the interests that Moscow insists upon were widely replicated. These studies were naturally complemented by the study of Russia's normative challenge to the European Union. There was also a very interesting link with the EU norms, their promotion beyond the EU, the adoption of norms by Russia and how it was compatible with the EU's normative leadership.

At the same time, it was noted that the EU, in a dialogue with Russia, does not always follow the requirements as a postmodern force, but turns into a realistic (that is, quite modern) policy. Inconsistency of the European Union, as well as some other factors, including specifically Russian, were analysed as the reasons for the failure of the EU in Russia's reforms. It is also interesting to analyse what resources the EU uses as a post-modern actor (first of all, access to its internal and visa-free regime). Without denying the effectiveness of these tools, researchers rightly pointed out that Russia also (and on less arbitrary bases) provides these advantages. At the same time, it was studied how the new EU countries, as well as countries of the common neighborhood region, became victims of the normative rivalry between Russia and the EU.

The works of Russian researchers explaining the specifics of the Russian vision of the European Union, its normative power and postmodernity were present in a significant number in Western literature. Some interpreted extensive sociological data while others were based on the discourse analysis. Finally some authors analyzed the specifics of the perception of the European Union as an international actor in Russia.

Against this backdrop of modernity, postmodernity, normative power and its challenge, the problems of mutual constituting of Russia and the EU, a growing group of specialists increasingly called for pragmatic – non-integration – cooperation between Russia and the EU.