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Editorial article / Редакционная статья

Ideas, Ideologies and Public Consent: Introducing the Issue

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Abstract. The concept of consent is essential for every society, affecting almost all its spheres — from everyday life to socio-political bases. Therefore, it cannot be considered accidental that both the idea itself and the diverse directions of its interpretation, dating back to the era of early modernity, today constitute one of the most priorities, intellectually saturated segments in modern socio-political theory. It is impossible to deny the appeal of the doctrine of personal consent (and the parallel thesis that no government is legitimate unless it acts without the consent of the governed). It has had a great influence on the political institutions of many modern states and has been a major factor in the direction that political theory has taken since 1600. In the second half of the 20th century, two approaches prevailed in political theory, within the framework of which the process of formation of the consensus tradition: personal and historical ones. The most impact to the theory is made by criticism of the unilinear model of consent analysis in the works of George Klosko, analysis by R.D. Bernstein of the problem of consent in the form of critical remarks on the philosophical position of R. Rorty, the concept of socialist “consent strategy” developed in the 1980s by E. Laclau and Sh. Mouffe, the controversy of the Canadian political philosopher James Tully with neo-Marxist theorists, the philosophical interpretation of consent by Jürgen Habermas as part of his analysis of the “rationalization paradox” etc. This theoretical and methodological frame becomes a basis for the thematic volume, where the articles on the history of socio-political thought are followed by the chapter devoted to the problems of Russia between cleavages and social harmony. Russian problems are blended with an international context, and the issue ends with an attempt to understand the ideological attitudes of modern youth.

Keywords: political idea, ideology, consent, political obligation, fairness, natural duties, common good, justice, consensus, rationalization, academic school

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Идеи, идеологии и общественное согласие: представляем номер

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Аннотация. Понятие согласия играет важную роль в любом обществе, затрагивая практически все ее сферы — от повседневной до социально-политической. Поэтому нельзя считать случайным тот факт, что и сама идея, и многообразные направления её интерпретации, восходящие к эпохе раннего модерна, и сегодня составляют один из наиболее приоритетных, интеллектуально насыщенных сегментов в современной социально-политической теории. Невозможно отрицать привлекательность учения о личном согласии (и параллельного тезиса о том, что ни одно правительство не является легитимным, если оно действует без согласия управляемых). Оно оказало большое влияние на политические институты многих современных государств и было главным фактором того направления, которое приняла политическая теория начиная с 1600 г. Во второй половине XX в. в политической теории превалировали два подхода, в рамках которых анализировался процесс формирования «традиции согласия»: «личного» и «исторического». Наиболее актуальные на данный момент подходы к интерпретации теории общественного согласия в современной политической теории: критика однолинейной модели анализа согласия в работах Джорджа Клоско, анализ Р.Д. Бернштейном проблемы согласия в форме критических замечаний к философской позиции Р. Рорти, концепция социалистической «стратегии согласия», разработанная в 1980-е годы Э. Лакло и Ш. Муфф, полемика канадского политического философа Джеймса Талли с неомарксистскими теоретиками, философская интерпретация согласия Юргеном Хабермасом в рамках анализа «парадокса рационализации» и др. Эта теоретико-методологическая рамка является основой представляемого номера, в котором работы по истории социально-политической мысли получают свое продолжение в блоке, который посвящен проблемам России между разделением и общественным согласием. Российская проблематика сменяется международным контекстом, а завершает этот номер попытка разобраться в идейных установках современной молодежи.

Ключевые слова: идея политическая, идеология, общественное согласие, естественные обязанности, общее благо, справедливость, консенсус, рационализация, научная школа

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The idea and the very concept of “consent” play an important role in any civilized society, affecting virtually all its domains — from the everyday to the socio-political. Therefore, it is no coincidence that both the idea per se and various ways of its interpretation dating back to the early modern era (T. Hobbes, J. Locke, J.-J. Rousseau, etc.) constitute one of the most prioritized, intellectually rich segments in modern sociopolitical theory today. Political philosopher Alan D. Simmons observes, “Consent theory has provided us with a more intuitively appealing account of political obligation than any other tradition in modern political theory. At least since Locke’s impassioned defense of the natural freedom of men born into nonnatural states, the doctrine of personal consent has dominated both ordinary and philosophical thinking on the subject of our political bonds. The heart of this doctrine is the claim that no man is obligated to support or comply with any political power unless he has personally consented to its authority over him; the classic formulation of the doctrine appears in Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*. There is no denying the attractiveness of the doctrine of personal consent (and of the parallel thesis that no government is legitimate which governs without the consent of the governed). It has greatly influenced the political institutions of many modern states and has been a prime factor in the direction political theory has taken since 1600. But neither can we ignore the manifold difficulties inherent in a consent theory approach to the problem of political obligation, which have been well known since Hume’s attack on the social contract. When I speak of “consent theory,” I will mean any theory of political obligation which maintains that the political obligations of citizens are grounded in their personal performance of a voluntary act which is the deliberate undertaking of an obligation. Thus, theories which ground political obligations in promises, contracts, or express or tacit consent will all count as varieties of “consent theory”... There are views concerning political authority which are usually (but not always) conjoined with a consent theory account of political obligation. Most consent theorists also maintained that all de jure political authority arises from the same deliberate undertaking which generates the political obligations of each citizen. The community grants the government its authority; a government

which has not been granted authority by the consent or contracts of its citizens cannot be legitimate” [Simmons 1979: 57–58].

In the latter half of the 20th century, political theory was dominated by two approaches that analyzed the formation of the “tradition of consent”. Proponents of the first approach favored the principle of individual consent of each citizen, while the other group of theorists emphasized the principle of “historical consent”: it was argued that the political obligations of all citizens to the state are generated by the consent given by members of the first generation of the political community. All the theorists who wrote about the “original contract” usually referred to various versions of the theory of “historical consent” as presented in the treatises of Hobbes and Rousseau. As Simmons notes, the latter theory seems highly implausible, as D. Hume and later (and more reasonably) I. Kant clarified in their time. The obvious difficulty is that only under very particular circumstances can one individual’s consent bind another individual, even if the latter is a descendant of the former. Such circumstances arise when the individual who gave the consent was authorized by another person to act on his behalf in a particular matter. Thus, it seems clear that the historical line of argumentation within the consent tradition “leads nowhere” and only one line should be seriously considered, namely, “personal consent.” [Simmons 1979: 60–61].

“Consent theory, then, is not solely concerned with protecting the individual from injury by the state, although this protective function naturally takes a central position. Rather, the method of consent protects the individual from becoming bound to any government which he finds unpalatable, be it a good one or a bad one, one which injures him or one which protects him from injury. What is protected, then, is not primarily the individual himself, or his interests, but rather his freedom to choose whether to become bound to a particular government (commonly, the government of the country in which he is born and raised). The consent theorist demonstrates a preference for *individual commitment* over unavoidable benefits or protection of interests. It is this preference that marks consent theory as a *liberal* theory; for the priority of liberty over (forced) happiness is the hallmark of political liberalism” [Simmons 1979: 69].

The above unilinear reasoning of the proponents of either approach to analyzing the relationship between the concept of personal consent and the theory of political obligation has been sharply criticized in numerous works by George Klosko [see, for example: Klosko 2005; 2018; 2019]. The American political philosopher quite rightly stressed that scholars who doubt the existence of universal political commitments tend to criticize and reject theories of commitment based on individual moral principles, such as consent, honesty, or the natural duty of justice. A stronger position can only be achieved by combining the various principles within a single theory. Based on these premises, he develops a multivariate theory of political commitment based on the principle of honesty, the natural duty of justice, and what he calls “the principle of the common good”: The three principles interact in three main ways: “cumulation,” combining the separate state services that different principles cover; “mutual support,” combining the force of different principles in regard to the same state services; and simple overlap. The resulting theory is able to satisfy the main conditions for an adequate theory of obligation: demonstrating that all or nearly all inhabitants of society have

moral requirements to obey the law, and that these extend to the full range of state services. [Klosko 2004: 801; see also: Edmundson 2018: 372–383; Estlund 2018: 359–371; Tuckness 2018: 337–347].

To our mind, in terms of assessing the capacity of liberal theory to appropriately interpret the problem of consent (and related political practices), R.D. Bernstein's analysis of the problem of consent in the form of critical remarks to the philosophical position of R. Rorty, who, in his opinion, did not quite adequately seek “to gloss over what appears to be the overwhelming “fact” of contemporary life — the breakdown of moral and political consensus, and the conflicts and incompatibility among competing social practices” [Bernstein 2007: 245], without addressing the fundamental question of whether there is a connection, and tension, between democracy, as a moral ideal, and liberalism. “Even if Rorty thinks that claims about the breakdown of moral and political consensus are exaggerated, one would expect some *argument* showing why the “crisis mentality” of the twentieth century is mistaken — or, at least a clarification of what are the characteristics of the consensus that he thinks does exist among those who take themselves to be champions of liberal democracy. It is never clear why Rorty, who claims that there is no consensus about competing conceptions of the good life, thinks there is any more consensus about conceptions of justice or liberal democracy. Rorty also tends to downplay or at least circumscribe what has become a major problem for any internal defense or external critique of liberalism — the disparity between the “ideals” of liberty and equality that liberals profess and the actual situation in so-called liberal societies... I do not see any evidence that Rorty faces up to the *challenge* that Marx poses for us in his critique of ideology, namely, that the structural dynamics of bourgeois society systematically undermine and belie liberal ideals. But one does not need to appeal to Marx to make this point. It is made by Weber — in a different way — when he argues that the spread and institutionalization of *Zweckrationalität*, and the increasing disenchantment of the world (which Rorty favors and wants to further), has the consequence of undermining the very social conditions required for individual autonomy and freedom.” [Ibid; see also: The Pragmatic Century 2006: *passim*].

The concept of socialist strategy, developed in the 1980s by E. Laclau and Ch. Mouffe within a new paradigm of post-Marxist philosophical discourse, also remains a clear alternative to the liberal interpretation of the idea of consent. In “Hegemony and Socialist Strategy” they put forward a project of radical democracy based on “the principle of democratic equivalence,” which includes a process of agreement based on the formation of a new “common sense” that is a balanced tension of two mutually constitutive logics: “the logic of equality and autonomy.” [see: Laclau, Mouffe 1985: 184; see also: Howarth 2013: 81–82]. The concept of Laclau and Mouffe can certainly be regarded as one of the new versions of the theory of hegemony developed by A. Gramsci in the 1930s. In his detailed analysis of the specifics of the interaction between the state and civil society in pre-war Western Europe, Gramsci developed the idea of an “integral state”, combining both hegemonic and dictatorial aspects of political governance. Gramsci defined the integral state not simply as an instrument of class domination, but, above all, as “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance,

but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules” [Gramsci 1971: 244].

A distinctive response to neo-Marxist theorists was the book “Strange Multiplicity”, published by the famous Canadian political philosopher James Tully in 1995. In analyzing the new forms of politics that emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century, he elaborates on the forms of political challenge typical of the modern era, for example, “the claims of nationalist movements to be constitutionally recognized as either independent nation states or as autonomous political associations within various forms of multinational federations and confederations”; the pressure faced by states and empires to “adapt to larger, supra-national associations with powerful cultural dimensions,” etc. [Tully 1995: 2]. Among the new types of challenges and demands Tully distinguishes, first of all, those which he calls multicultural or “intercultural voices,” consisting of “hundreds of millions of citizens, immigrants, exiles, and refugees”, competing for forms of recognition and protection of the cultures they bring with them to established nation states; the demands of various feminist movements claiming national, supranational, and intercultural recognition of various minorities and, finally, the demands of millions of indigenous people in various parts of the world to recognize thousands diverse cultures, governments and environmental practices [Tully 1995: 2–3]. The philosopher also highlights the pursuit of self-governance, appeals of rethinking unjust laws and institutions in contemporary societies to accommodate the demands of cultural groups for self-governance and cultural heritage rights, and the fact that culture is an “irreducible and constitutive aspect of politics”. [Tully 1995: 5]. As D.R. Howarth justly points out, Tully’s picture neatly captures important aspects of the new politics of identity, but its logic and style can be extended. Others argue that the politics of cultural recognition can and should be expanded to include all oppressed cultural groups and lifestyles, as well as protean identities and forces that may remain below the threshold of public recognition. At the same time, these theorists argue that the ‘solution’ to these questions ought not to be focused solely on the constitutional level but should also involve changes in civil society and micro-politics. [Howarth 2013: 229].

As a result of the transformations outlined above, the “politics of consent” in its new global dimension becomes, to a certain extent, exceptionally complex, almost unmanageable at the national level. The solutions proposed by socialist, neoliberal, and conservative theorists often acquire a pronounced utopian undertone.

In our opinion, at present the most reasonable way to avoid another theoretical stalemate in the solution of modern dilemmas, which the traditional paradigm of social consent faces today, is to return to those philosophical interpretations, which in their time emerged in the process of analyzing the “paradox of rationalization” articulated by J. Habermas [see: Habermas 1984]. According to many contemporary specialists, Habermas’ theory bridges the gap between the Weberian view of contemporary processes of rationalization on the one hand, and Marx’s view of historical progress on the other. The paradox of rationalization «would be that a rationalization of the life-world was the *precondition* and the *starting point* for a process of systemic rationalization and differentiation, which then has become more and more autonomous

vis-a-vis the normative constraints embodied in the life-world, until in the end the systemic imperatives begin to instrumentalize the life-world and threaten to destroy it... A criticism, as it is often put forward against “utopian rationalism” by philosophers with an Aristotelian or hermeneutic background, is that democratic legitimacy, although it must be conceived of as being based on a consensus of basic norms, institutions, and values, cannot be understood as being based on a *rational* consensus. The upshot of this criticism is that communicative action and rational discourse ultimately cannot generate legitimate institutions (legitimate power), but that only legitimate institutions (legitimate power) could set free communicative action as a mechanism of social coordination» [Wellmer 1985: 56, 59].

Perhaps the appeal of Habermas’ perspective lies in his apparently sincere conviction that the idea of consent “keeps on stretching into infinity” and that any theoretical claim to put a “fullstop” in its analysis is inherently set for failure.

As for the representatives of the Russian segment of political science, the topic of consent is still on the outskirts of their attention. This is illustrated by the Russian historiography of “consent” of the 21st century, most of which consists of graduate theses (PhD or doctoral dissertations) and several monographs, which, as a rule, discuss social consent as a way of avoiding conflicts in making any decisions by reaching consensus on essential and procedural issues and affirm the trivial thesis that consent in society is a condition for modern Russia: we need an attitude of consent, instead of one that is aimed at fueling and inciting conflict. It is important to note that, unfortunately, the authors of these works do not even try to consider the differences between Western and Russian civilizational experience of achieving social consent. They barely mention the historic and political context of the problem and the modern debates on the problem of social consent that have unfolded in foreign political science.

Based on this circumstance the thematic scope of our issue of the RUDN Journal of Political Science, as well as the choice of authors, most of whom were supported by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, the Expert Institute for Social Research, various scientific foundations, is quite justified. We would also like to note that the authors of the articles included in the issue represent various educational and scientific centers of Russia, China, and UK. Moreover, next to the names of distinguished scholars we see the names of novice researchers — postgraduate students and undergraduates. As always, the Editorial Board of the Journal strives to give the floor to both metropolitan and regional representatives of the scientific community and gives our young generation an opportunity to make their first steps in science.

The **first section** of the journal begins with the work of a scholar who has made a significant contribution to the development of the history of socio-political thought as a science and an academic discipline. In his article, *Sergey V. Perevezentsev* from *Lomonosov Moscow State University*, a developer of his original concept of the Russian spiritual-political school of thought, along with co-writer *Dmitry A. Ananiev* from *London School of Economics and Political Science*, made a convincing argument that despite the massive influence of Western European socio-political traditions on the Russian thought, the axiological foundations of the Russian statehood in the 18th

century remained just as traditional as those in the 10th-17th centuries. That said, the concepts of “truth” and “justice” continued to preserve their meaning as the essential spiritual-political categories of values until nowadays.

The article of two scholars of the *Lomonosov Moscow State University* *Anna V. Myrikova* and *Boris A. Prokudin* is dedicated to Pan-Slavism, the idea-political complex of which includes various doctrines, theories, concepts, and ideas. These were headed by the purpose of cooperation and unity in action in terms of cultural and political relations of congenial (by blood, language, religion, domestic culture, historical memory, territory) Slavic and close to them peoples and nationalities. Pan-Slavism has taken up many forms in the history of politics and thought. F.I. Tyutchev was an example of a political apologist of Pan-Slavism, while F.M. Dostoyevsky rather advocated cultural Pan-Slavism. The former believed that Germanification and Turkification of the Slavic peoples posed a threat to Russian state interests and called for the liberation, unification, and russification of Slavic countries (the idea of a Slavic empire). The history of the past two decades demonstrates that the idea of a “Slavic reciprocity” has played a significant role in politics. And it seems that today the ideas of Pan-Slavism, cultural and political, may become relevant again. Once Russia manages to bolster its influence in the world and adopt a course of dynamic economic development, Slavic states between Russia and the West cyclically shift their vector of friendly ties, will take a more favorable stance towards us.

At his height, Alexander S. Panarin, whose texts were somewhat a combination of philosophical essay-writing and conceptual thought, has brilliantly demonstrated in various essays the advantages of “discourse in the language of humanistic political science”. *Kirill M. Anderson*, Professor at *Lomonosov MSU*, independently of Panarin and under the influence of prominent Soviet scholars Boris F. Porshnev, Alfred E. Shtekley, Gennady S. Kucherenko, came to the same conclusion. He is known for writing his theses in a language of humanistic political science of high sophistication and adheres to the maxim, “If you want to be read, write to be read”. His essay, co-authored with *Maria S. Zvereva* will be quite the reading material.

The legal and philosophic regard adds the political science approach in the article by *Anton D. Ukhanov* from *Vladivostok State University* who proposes to compare the views of Hans Kelsen and Karl Schmitt on the nature of legal force and the hierarchy of normative legal acts. As Schmittian concepts and approaches are regaining increased research interest the RUDN Journal of Political Science could not just walk away from it.

The **second section** opens with an attempt to examine the evolution of ideas designed to consolidate Russian society and transmitted within the framework of the post-Soviet discourse of Russian identity. *Andrey N. Iokhim* together with *Maria A. Laguzova*, both representing *Lomonosov Moscow State University*, overview the 30-years-old story of search for Russian national idea and achieving social harmony. The authors arrive at the conclusion that the need to eliminate the deficit of consent in the 1990s was the starting point of the search for a consolidating national idea and a new macropolitical identity, and the most viable model of public consent was developed within a conservative great-power identity discourse, which is based

on the narrative of the “continuation state” and patriotism as a consolidating political value.

Alexander B. Shatilov, Zinaida I. Volkhonskaya, Daria D. Osinina — the group of scholars of the *Financial University* — are worried by threat of losing the national and cultural identity of Russians. They attempt to comprehend the value foundations of the essence of Russian statehood, summarize historical experience and determine the civilizational chronotype, which they call ‘Russian genetic code’. This article is a vivid example of the discourse widely shared in a part of Russian academia and public opinion, a sample of the Othering.

The following paper was the result of collaboration between scientists united by the desire to study the possibilities and features of the formation of worldview in the digital environment. *Sergey V. Volodenkov, Sergey N. Fedorchenko, Nikolai M. Pechenkin* — a collaboration of political scientists from *State Academic University for the Humanities, Lomonosov Moscow State University, National Research Nuclear University* and *Financial University*. They attempt to study the phenomenon of public consent in the context of the formation of digital polymentality. Its results clearly demonstrate the fact that the nature of the digital worldview is not the only one. This circumstance requires in-depth political scientific research and the formation of scientifically grounded models to counteract the formation of digital worldview and value-meaning splits in society.

Mariya A. Mayorova and *Alina I. Sbitneva* from the *INION Institute* consider the foreign influence on the Turkic-speaking territories of the Russian Federation through economic and humanitarian spheres within the framework of the pan-Turkism ideology and the idea of a “Turkic world”.

The **third chapter** of this volume considers ideas and ideologies in the international context. In every field of knowledge there are novice researchers taking their first timid steps in science, and there are established scholars whose name in the title of an article or book is a guarantee of the quality and high professionalism of the latter. The article by *Liubov A. Fadeeva* from *Perm National Research University*, is not just relevant; it is deeply substantiated, methodologically competent, written in a good literary language, illustrated with interesting examples, easy to read and stimulates reflection. The article suggests that national unity and social harmony, formed, among other things, with the social ‘chronotope’, which connects society by historical, socio-cultural, and spatial links, can be destroyed in a relatively short period by simplified myths that divide everything into black and white, ‘our peoples’ and ‘aliens’. Indeed, myth — i.e. an interconnected and complete system of beliefs that needs no justification other than its own assertion and no logic — is, on the one hand, a specific psychological reality that represents a consistent chain of images; on the other, it is a deformed, objectively unrelated to reality intellectual interpretation that has an explicative function and mobilizing power. These properties of the myth, as it was well demonstrated in the article, manifested themselves in the process of nation-building of modern Ukraine, turning it into “anti-Russia”.

The Middle East dimension is represented by *Vladimir A. Avatkov* together with *Danila S. Krylov* from *INION Institute*. They notice the interest of the cross-regional

actors of the Middle East to the promotion of Russian ideologies and a certain identity in its foreign policy. They also state the coincidence of the ideological and value spaces of Russia and the countries of the Middle East.

Svetlana S. Makkaveeva and her supervisor, professor *Dengxue Huang* from *Shandong University* investigate the relations between Russia and Western countries against the background of the Ukrainian crisis through the lens of Chinese political expertise with quite pessimistic conclusion for international peace and rather optimistic view on Chinese economy and geopolitics.

Chinese regard is followed by *Leonid G. Abdrakhimov* from the *RUDN University* who studies the value core — ‘Chinese Dream’ — of China’s system of state policy and national security, which predetermines the paradigm of China’s development.

We consider the Western dimension of contemporary ideas and normative discursive practices with the concept of political correctness in UK studied by *Mikhail S. Golovin* from *Chelyabinsk State University*. This concept is essential for the modern politics and social life in Europe and US which is seriously challenged by far-rights nationalist agenda.

The focus of *Alexey V. Mikhalev* from *Banzarov Buryat State University* is resource nationalism, a set of ideas that justify the monopoly of a nation (whose legitimate representative is the state) over the country’s natural resources or the profits from their extraction. In certain cases, this set of ideas can act as a political doctrine of this or that ‘mineral nation’, implying the achievement of public agreement on a fair distribution of the profits from the extraction of minerals. Resource nationalism has a great influence on political decision-making, as it does in contemporary Mongolia, although its prospects for becoming the country’s state ideology are uncertain.

The **last chapter** of the volume is traditionally dedicated to the youth policies. As any discipline political science has theoretical and applied edges. Their distinction can be drawn by analogy with the delimitation between the procedures of explanation and calculation. In other words, some groups of scientists tend to consider political problems in the context of solving general problems — ontological, gnoseological, epistemological, axiological, etc., while others focus their attention on solving problems and issues of a more ordinary, applied nature. However, there are fortunate exceptions when sociological research is oriented toward solving serious problems of a fundamental nature. A striking example of such a case is the work of the *Lomonosov MSU* professors *Tatyana V. Evgenyeva* and *Antonina V. Selezneva*, together with postgraduates *Nikolay S. Skipin* and *Dinara D. Tulegenova*. This article sums up some of the results of political-psychological research into the perceptions of the state among contemporary Russian youth. Analyzing the materials of this empirical study, the authors conclude that modern Russian youth are characterized by paternalistic orientations. Young people perceive the state as a source of welfare, support, and protection.

Younger scholars *Irina I. Andriiv* and *Anna D. Puzanova* from *St Petersburg State University* with their serious literature review believe to find the universal methodology for measuring the political trust of young people as a basis for the interaction of this social group and the state.

Dmitry A. Kazantsev, Tatyana A. Aseeva, Dmitry A. Kachusov from *Altai State University* beware national youth policy from the total standardization and unification under the patronage of the federal movement “Yunarmia” which strongly contribute to the formation of a statist model of patriotism among youth but cannot deal local and ethnic identities.

It is certainly difficult to comprehensively cover such a multifaceted phenomenon as social consent. The overview of studies of consent presented in our issue is mosaic and partial. Rather, it is a momentary glimpse of the trends of such studies in Russian political science and demonstrates that the topic of public consent requires further efforts to study historical facts from the perspective of the civilizational approach, as well as to make critical sense of the theoretical arguments of Russian and foreign scholars in this field.

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