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FOUNDATIONS OF RUSSIANS' VALUE CONSOLIDATION: TRADITIONALISM AND RENEWAL

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Abstract. The article presents first results of an analysis of the consolidating potential of Russians' value orientations. The empirical basis of the study is a survey of 2000 Russian citizens in September 2020. Following conclusions were drawn in analyzing the survey data. The level of support for the idea of civilizational originality of Russia is over 70% allowing us to conclude that this value benchmark has a high consolidation potential. This idea is for a majority of Russians a marker of their identity delimiting the Russian cultural, historical and even civilizational space. Orientation towards this value marker ensures cultural identity of contemporary Russians (including the youngest) with Russians of other historical eras. At the same time, an overwhelming majority of Russians is focused on a liberal understanding of the values of civic consciousness, which indicates an almost massive rejection of the ideological imperatives of the Soviet period. The process of renewal of the value orientations in civic consciousness is characteristic not only for young people, but also for older age groups, including those respondents whose civic consciousness has been formed in the Soviet era.

Ключевые слова: value orientations • value semantics • terminal values • traditionalist values • liberal values

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Working Concept of the Research. The peculiarity of the analysis of values in terms of their consolidation potential is that, given the great diversity of ethnic cultures that characterizes Russia, it is necessary to take such an approach to the research of value diversity that would allow us to assess the measure of commonality among Russians who hold different ethno-cultural standards in their vision, perception and evaluation of current and historical events. In the course of research in 2014–2018, such an approach was developed [Interethnic Concord ..., 2018: 217–244; Russian Society..., 2016: 86–104]. Its essence is that the *list* of values, their hierarchy in this or that cultural and historical community is recognized as relatively constant over time. In other words, if we build prioritized lists of values, we will every time get some “eternal” set: family, prosperity, work, health. But when analyzing such a set, we cannot see how the value of, say, a family for the Soviet people of the mid-1980s differs from the same value for today's Russians, or how this value for residents of a North Caucasian village differs from the value of a family for inhabitants of a Moscow metropolis. This question can only be answered by analyzing the content of these or other designation in this list of values. The temporal dynamics of change, the difference or similarity of the values of different ethno-cultural communities is manifested (and can be measured) at the level of the content of the concepts denoting social values, i.e. at the level of value meanings. These gradual changes in the content of this or that value can be placed between two poles which, following R. Inglehart [Inglehart, Welzel, 2011], can be conventionally designated as *traditional* and *modern* (or *secular-rational*) poles of interpretation of value concepts.

This approach can complement approaches based, for example, on distinguishing certain types of values – traditional, universal, modern [Globalization and Social..., 2010: 27] – and the

subsequent analysis of the combination of these types at different times and in different cultural contexts. In our approach, if we want to fix the current state of a given system of values or to compare different systems, we must determine the position of the value systems in question on the "traditional-modern" scale.

Here we must recognize that the choice of the term "traditional" may not be entirely acceptable for one of the poles, since it has many commonplace, politicized, evaluative interpretations. In populist discourse, for example, traditionalism is often associated with some "backward" archaicism or with what can be conventionally called "rut," i.e., some kind of social conformism. Traditionalism, as we understand it, is views on life, systems of evaluation, behavioral practices, etc., that constitute the social and cultural heritage of a given community, which is passed from generation to generation [Traditions and Innovations..., 2008: 18] but is constantly renewed. The process of integration of innovations into the traditional system can be defined as the *traditionalization of innovations*, which provides *legitimization* of innovations in the traditional consciousness [Aksenova, 2016]. Simultaneously with the traditionalization of innovations there is a process of *modernization of traditions*, which ensures their stability over time. Thus, within the concept of "reflexive modernization", one of the directions of tradition modernization lies in the fact that "traditions are preserved only to the extent that they are available for discursive justification and open dialogue not only with other traditions, but also with alternative modes of activity" [Giddens, 1994: 105]. In our research context of comparing outwardly different value structures, it is important to point out what is common to both archaic systems, where tradition is perceived as a given, as heritage, and to those in the process of reflexive modernization, where tradition is also present, but already as a reflexive and rationally grounded tradition. In our opinion, the common basis, the intention of the traditionalist pole of interpretation of value meanings is to ensure the preservation and continuity in time of this *community*, which is perceived, figuratively speaking, as the only environment for human habitation and reproduction not just the population, but human souls (in those socio-cultural definitions of this phenomenon which are characteristic for given community).

We refer to the alternative analytical pole of the scale of variation of value meanings as modern, or secular-rational. The dominance of modern value meanings is characteristic of postmodern communities with their attitude to members of society as individuals [Bauman, 2008: 37]. At the same time "individualization" consists in the transformation of human "identity" from "given" to "find" and in making individuals responsible for this task and for the consequences (as well as side effects) of their actions" [Bauman, 2008: 39]. In our opinion, the intention of modern pole of value meanings can be characterized as ensuring self-realization of separate individuals regardless of given social context. Thus, returning to the example of the variability of meanings of the value of "family", we can say that this value can occupy an equally high place in the hierarchy of values of both traditionalist and modernist types. However, in the first case the latent meaning of this value is reproduction of worthy members of this community (and, as a consequence, recognition of the family as a "basic unit" that ensures preservation of society), while in the second case the family can be understood as one of the platforms of personal self-actualization (and, accordingly, be considered as one of many forms of self-organization of individuals, equally significant with other such forms of self-organization).

Finally, following other researchers, we believe that value systems have a multilevel hierarchical structure from value imperatives of the abstract ideological level (in the tradition going back to M. Rokeach [1973], they can be designated as "terminal values") to a ramified set of principles of everyday behavior ("instrumental values", according to Rokeach)

According to the results of the studies of designated above period, a conclusion was made that the traditionalism of Russians is most vividly manifested in the broad support for the traditional interpretation of terminal values, and the process of modernization of the modern Russian public consciousness is most clearly manifested in the revision or rejection of the traditional interpretation of instrumental values. In particular, the set of instrumental value meanings of economic (labor) activity, which became traditional during the time of domination of the

Soviet distributive economic model and total collectivist ideology, is actively replaced by instrumental meanings more appropriate to the conditions of activity in the global market economy with its values of achievement and individualism.

Additionally, it is concluded that the modernization of value meanings at the instrumental level leads to the fact that the value imperatives of the generalized level gradually cease to perform the function of imperatives proper (prescriptions for action) and begin to function as a kind of markers, delimiting the Russian cultural, historical and even civilizational space. The orientation towards these markers-values ensures the identity of the Russians' awareness of themselves in historical time. The traditionalism in comprehending the markers of Russian cultural and historical space means the orientation on maintaining the stability and continuity in time of this space [Kuznetsov, 2017].

This article presents the first results of the next stage of the study of Russians' value meanings, the task of which is to trace the dynamics of change and determine significant relationships between the most supported terminal value meanings and a number of instrumental socio-political dispositions of Russians, which will eventually allow to determine the measure of their consolidation potential within the framework of the approach outlined above.

Empirical basis and instruments of the research. The empirical basis of the research was the data from the mass survey of the population of the Russian Federation, conducted during the first stage of the research project "All-Russian identity and inter-ethnic relations: social practice, public discourse and managerial decisions"¹. The survey was conducted in September 2020 using a representative all-Russian stratified quota sample. The sample size was two thousand respondents, representing the adult (18 years and older) population of the Russian Federation according to the parameters of age, gender, socio-professional status, education, and type of settlement.

In order to assess the consolidated potential of the terminal values, the respondents' attitudes towards two alternative statements characterizing the place of Russia in the global world in general and on the European continent in particular were measured. Respondents were asked to choose between the statements "Russia needs to strengthen its own historical traditions, moral and religious values" and "Russia needs to more actively implement the laws and values of the way of life accepted in economically developed countries". Agreement with the first or second statement was recorded on a four-point scale: 1 – agree with the first statement, 2 – rather agree with the first statement, 3 – rather agree with the second statement, 4 – agree with the second statement. Here the first statement is interpreted as reflecting a traditionalist view, which has quite deep historical roots, of the "special way" of Russia and the special mentality of Russians. This is reflected, for example, in Russian classical literature of the 19th century (N. Gogol, F. Dostoevsky)

According to Yu. Levada and his colleagues, such a perception already at the level of official ideology is typical for the Soviet period of Russian history as well: "The first of the fundamental characteristics of the "Soviet man" is the indoctrinated and perceived idea of his exclusivity, specialness, a fundamental difference from the typical man of other times and social systems". [The Soviet Commoner..., 1993: 13]. The other statement reflects an idea, alternative to the first one, of Russia as an integral part of the European mental and cultural space. This view also has deep historical roots, but it has become particularly relevant and demanded in the post-Soviet period of Russian history.

Three pairs of statements were chosen as alternative values reflecting different dimensions of civic consciousness. Moreover, statements reflecting the ideological collectivist characteristic of the Soviet period of Russian history act as the conventional traditionalist pole. The first pair of statements concerns the choice between tradition and innovation in everyday life: "The

¹ Program of scientific research related to the study of ethno-cultural diversity in Russian society and aimed at strengthening all-Russian identity (Instruction of the President of the Russian Federation No. PR-71 dated 16.01.2020).

Table 1

Respondents' opinions about Russia's place in the global world
(percentage of respondents who answered)

The first statement: "Russia needs to strengthen its own historical traditions, moral and religious values. The second statement: "Russia needs to more actively implement the laws and values of the way of life accepted in economically developed countries".	%
Definitely agree with the first statement	37.7
Rather agree with the first statement	32.4
Rather agree with the second statement	22.7
Definitely agree with the second statement	7.2

main thing is to respect the established customs and traditions" or "The main thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new in work and life, even if you find yourself in the minority". The second pair concerns the choice between "opportunism" and active citizenship: "One needs to be able to adapt to reality, not waste its own energy fighting it" and "One needs to actively fight for its own interests and rights". Finally, the third pair concerns the choice of public or personal interests as a priority: "People should limit their personal interests for the sake of public interest and interests of the country" and "Ensuring personal interests is the main thing". Agreeing or disagreeing with any of the pairs of statements was also rated on a four-point scale.

The Consolidating Potential of Traditionalism. Data on respondents' assessments of the alternatives described above for Russia's place in the global world (Table 1).

A total of 70% of Russians have a traditional view of the need to strengthen their own historical traditions, moral and religious values. It is important to note that according to the results of long-term measurements of this (or similar) indicator, the level of support for the values in question has remained virtually unchanged for 20 years. Thus, in 2001 the share of support for this view of Russia was 68%, and in 2011 it was 67%. It was then, in 2011, that the opinion was expressed that "since the mid-1990s, the Russian society has been strengthening its own identity, when the originality of Russia is perceived not as a historical curse, but as a value" [Gorshkov et al., 2011: 156–157].

In order to establish how consolidating this value is for Russians, it is necessary first of all to consider the prevalence of the idea of civilizational originality of Russia in different socio-demographic groups. Our calculations show that there are no significant differences in support for this value among respondents living in different types of settlements, with different levels of education, different socio-professional status, who refer themselves to different ethnicities and to different groups in terms of material security. Significant differences in the support of the specified value are observed only in different age groups (Table 2).

Table 2

Opinion on Russia's place in the global world among respondents of different ages
(in %, the percent of those who agree and those who rather agree with the statement)

Answer options	Age group (years)				
	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	older than 61
Russia needs to strengthen its own historical traditions, moral and religious values	60.6	64.3	72.8	76.3	78.3
Russia needs to more actively implement the laws and values of the way of life accepted in economically developed countries.	39.4	35.7	27.2	23.7	21.7

Note. Pearson's chi-square $p \leq 0.001$.

Support for the traditionalist value increases with age, and the greatest difference in the degree of support is observed in the extreme age groups (18–30 years old and over 61 years old). If we take into account the fact that in both 2001 and 2011 the same regularity was fixed [Gorshkov et al., 2011: 156], then there are reasons to claim that differences in support for the opinion about the civilizational originality of Russia in different age groups are determined more by mental features of the respondents' age rather than represent intergenerational differences. Otherwise, i.e. if the differences were of an intergenerational nature, in dynamics we would observe a decrease in support for this pole among respondents of the same age in different years. In other words, if the low support of the opinion about Russia's civilizational uniqueness by respondents who were, say, 20 years old in 2001, was determined by the fact that they are people of another ("post-Soviet") generation, then we would record equally low support of this opinion of people who will turn 40 in 2021 (i.e. the former twenty-year-olds).

However, this is not the case. Thus, it can be said that age differences in support for the value in question are transient, and opinion about Russia's place in the global world changes towards the traditionalist pole with age.

Despite the differences noted above, even at the minimum the level of support for the view of Russia's civilizational uniqueness is over 60%, which allows us to conclude that the consolidation potential of this value is high.

Consolidation potential for the renewal of values of civic consciousness. As noted above, the broad support for traditionalist values at the terminal level by no means prevents active processes of modernization of the system of values at the instrumental level, in particular in the sphere of economic activity, which corresponds to the new economic realities [Interethnic Concord..., 2018: 231]. The current project tested the extent to which this conclusion can also be expanded to the instrumental values reflecting the realities of Russia's modern socio-political structure. The data we obtained indicate an active modernization of Russian civil consciousness (Table 3).

Meanwhile, despite such broad support for the modern meanings of socio-political values across the board, the level of this support can vary significantly among different socio-demographic

Table 3

**Respondents' evaluation of alternative meanings
of socio-political values ((percentage of respondents who answered)**

Socio-political values	%
The first statement: <i>"The main thing is respect for established customs and traditions"</i> The second statement: <i>"The most important thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new in work and life, even if one finds oneself in the minority"</i> .	
Definitely agree with the first statement	10.5
Rather agree with the first statement	23.4
Rather agree with the second statement	33.9
Definitely agree with the second statement	32.2
The first statement: <i>"One needs to be able to adapt to reality, not waste its own energy fighting it"</i> The second statement: <i>"One needs to actively fight for his/her own interests and rights"</i>	
Definitely agree with the first statement	6.1
Rather agree with the first statement	25.7
Rather agree with the second statement	33.7
Definitely agree with the second statement	34.5
The first statement: <i>"People should limit their personal interests for the sake of public interest and interests of the country."</i> The second statement: <i>"Ensuring personal interests is the main thing"</i>	
Definitely agree with the first statement	6.2
Rather agree with the first statement	31.6
Rather agree with the second statement	34.7
Definitely agree with the second statement	27.5

Table 4

Estimation of the "tradition" – "innovations" alternative by respondents with different levels of material well-being (in %, the percent of those who agree and those who rather agree with the statement)

Answer options	Social stratum		
	High-income	Middle-income	Low-income
The main thing is respect for established customs and traditions	14.3	29.4	39.3
The main thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new...	85.7	70.6	60.7

Note. Pearson's chi-square $p \leq 0.001$.

groups of Russians, reflecting the different speeds at which the socio-political consciousness of various strata of Russian society is being modernized.

Differences in assessments for the greatest number of socio-demographic parameters are fixed for the value "traditions" vs "innovations". Thus, there are significant differences in the level of support for the traditional pole of this value among respondents living in different types of settlements. Moreover, the least support for this pole is recorded not by any means in metropolitan cities and large cities, as it would be logical to expect, but in small and medium-sized cities under district jurisdiction. Whereas in metropolitan cities and central cities of regions the traditional pole is supported at the level of approximately 33%, in small and medium cities it is 28% (Pearson's chi-square $p \leq 0.05$). Perhaps this is a reflection of the conflict between the need of the population of these cities (especially local youth) to practice new (assimilated, for example, through the global information network) models of everyday behavior and traditional systems of external social control over behavior that are quite preserved in these cities today (but already almost destroyed in large cities).

Even more significant are the differences in support for the traditional pole of the value "traditions" vs "innovations" among respondents who consider themselves to be high- and middle-income groups and respondents who consider themselves to be low-income. Among the former, the modernization of the meanings of the value in question is more rapid than among the latter (Table 4).

We observe the opposite picture when comparing the assessments of representatives of Russia's major traditional confessions (Orthodox Christians and Muslims) and atheists.

Modernization processes among atheists go faster than among believers of the specified confessions (for comparison: the traditional pole here is supported by 44% of Muslims, 36% of Orthodox Christians and 23% of atheists). There is also a tendency for ethnic Russians to modernize relatively faster than other ethnic groups in Russia.

In our view, the above differences in support for the traditional pole of this particular value among representatives of different strata of Russians can be explained by the fact that here we are talking not so much about overcoming the Soviet legacy, as about rethinking the imperative, which has very deep historical roots in the Russian socio-cultural matrix. We can cautiously assume, as a hypothesis for a more detailed research, that in this case we are dealing not so much with rejection as with a process of gradual renewal, rethinking of the traditional imperative "to live like everyone else" in relation to the new conditions for historical Russia. Perhaps gradually, as new generations come into active life, the criteria and examples of this "like everyone else" will change, but the principle itself will remain.

We already observe somewhat fewer differences in support for the traditionalist pole of the value "civic passivity" vs. "civic activism". Here, just as in the previous case, support for civic passivity is lower for respondents in small and medium-sized cities under district jurisdiction and higher for residents of metropolitan cities. The traditionalist meaning, i.e. the statement "One needs to be able to adapt to reality, not waste its own energy fighting it" is supported by 39% of residents of metropolitan cities and 26% of residents of small and medium-sized cities. Respondents who classify themselves as low-income also have more support for civic passivity. Unlike in the previous case, however, no differences were fixed between believing respondents

Table 5

Assessment by respondents of different ages of alternative meanings of socio-political values (in %, the percent of those who agree and those who rather agree with the statement)

Answer options	Age group (years)				
	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	older than 61
<i>“Traditions” vs. “innovations”</i>					
The main thing is respect for the existing customs and traditions	20.4	28.8	31.4	39.1	51.0
The main thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new...	79.6	71.2	68.6	60.9	49.0
<i>“Civic Passivity” vs. “Civic activism”</i>					
One needs to be able to adapt to reality, not waste its own energy fighting it	23.0	32.3	30.3	31.7	41.1
One needs to actively fight for its own interests and rights	77.0	67.7	69.7	68.3	58.9
<i>“Public interest” vs. “individual interest”</i>					
People should limit their personal interests for the sake of public interest and interests of the country	29.4	36.8	37.9	36.9	47.8
Ensuring personal interests is the main thing	70.6	63.2	62.1	63.1	52.2

Note. Pearson's chi-square $p \leq 0.001$.

Table 6

Assessment by respondents of different ages of the alternative “tradition” “innovations”, 2011* and 2020 (in %, the percent of those who agree and those who rather agree with the statement)

Statement	Age group (years)					On average
	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	older than 61	by sample
2011						
The main thing is respect for established customs and traditions	45.2	52.1	61.4	63.5	68.3	57.3
The main thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new...	54.8	47.9	38.6	36.5	31.7	31.7
2020						
The main thing is respect for established customs and traditions	20.4	28.8	31.4	39.1	51.0	33.8
The main thing is initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, search for something new...	79.6	71.2	68.6	60.9	49.0	66.2

Note. *Calculated on the basis of the survey within the framework of the All-Russian sociological research “Twenty years of reforms in the eyes of the Russians”, the survey was conducted in April 2011, the sample of 1750 people from 18 years of age and older [Gorshkov et al., 2011].

and atheists or between representatives of different ethnic groups in Russia. Finally, there are virtually no significant differences in socio-demographic parameters (with the exception of age) in the level of support for the traditionalist pole of the value “public interest” vs “individual interest”. Age differences in support for one pole or another are most revealing for all of the above-mentioned values of civic consciousness (Table 5).

Among young people, the process of renewing the meanings of socio-political values is more active than in older age groups, which is quite logical, given the age peculiarities. One of the central questions here is whether this process is related only to age or whether we are still dealing with a relatively massive change in the meanings of socio-political values. In order

to answer this question, it is appropriate to compare the data on age differences in assessment of the same indicator for different years (Table 6).

If we start by comparing the data on average for the array (Table 4) obtained in 2011 and 2020, we can see that over the past decade the value of renewal, an active approach to life that corresponds to contemporary Russian socio-political realities, has been firmly established in the public opinion of Russians. This applies even to people in the most conservative age group (over 61 years old). The attitude of representatives of this group to tradition and innovation in everyday life and work in 2020 is approximately similar to the assessments of the poles in question among young people aged 18–30 in 2011. This allows us to conclude that the differences in the assessment of alternatives to socio-political values fixed in 2020 are related not to the transient age-specific features of the respondents, but rather to sustainable *inter-generational* changes, i.e. they reflect a change in the socio-political values of Russians, their almost massive retreat from the ideological imperatives of the Soviet period.

In their assessments of the entire set of socio-political values, Russians overwhelmingly support statements that correspond to the new socio-political realities of Russia. The only exception is the group of respondents over 61 years old, i.e. those who had the main stages of socio-political socialization in Soviet times. But even representatives of this age group, albeit by a very slender margin, support statements that reflect the current socio-political realities. Thus, it can be said that the process of renewing the meaning of socio-political values of the Russians is massive in nature.

Main conclusions. The level of support for the opinion about the civilizational uniqueness of Russia is over 70%, which allows us to conclude that this value has a high consolidation potential. One of the manifestations of this consolidation is that the belief in the civilizational distinctiveness of Russia is an identity marker for the majority of Russians, which delimits the Russian cultural, historical, and even civilizational space. Orientation to this value marker ensures the cultural identity of contemporary Russians (including the youngest) with Russians of other historical eras.

Russians in the vast majority, i.e. consolidated, support statements that reflect the new socio-political realities of Russia. At the same time, the process of renewing the values of civic consciousness is characteristic not only for young people (which is quite logical), but also for older age groups, including those respondents whose civic consciousness was formed in the Soviet era.

We can say that the phenomenon of the “*Soviet common man*”, described in detail by Yu.A. Levada and his colleagues *Soviet Common Man...*, 1993], is a thing of the past. It also means that in relation to the current situation it would not be quite correct to talk about the majority of public opinion as a “silent” or “submissive” majority.

Finally, it should additionally be noted that the fact of support for the traditionalist pole of value meanings at the terminal level is quite compatible with support for the modernized meanings of instrumental values. These latter, being *instrumental* in their function, can meet the tasks of supporting both traditionalist and modernist values of the terminal level.

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