**Russians’ Perceived Consensus on Views and Values, Its Factors   
and Consequences**

**Marharyta Fabrykant, Leading Research Fellow, Laboratory for Comparative Studies of Mass Consciousness, Expert Institute, HSE University**

The study is dedicated to the perception of Russians that their views and values ​​coincide with the views and values ​​of the majority of those who live with them in the same country. We term it perceived consensus – in contrast to other dimensions of consensus, which do not necessarily include a person's subjective awareness of their similarities and differences from other persons’ views and values. The aim of this research is to find out what is the level of perceived consensus in modern Russia as a whole and in which categories of the population it is higher. This question is especially interesting, since, according to previously obtained results, the level of objective value consensus on some values ​​in Russia, in comparison with other European countries, was found to be very low, while on others, rather high (Rudnev, Magun, 2011).

We formulated the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. In today’s Russia, the level of perceived consensus is quite high.

Hypothesis 2. The level of perceived consensus is positively associated with the level of commitment to the country and the perceived closeness to people from different social groups.

Hypothesis 3. The level of perceived consensus is lower among younger people, people with higher education, higher income, and Moscow residents.

Hypothesis 4. The level of perceived consensus is positively associated with the level of objective consensus on widely discussed socially significant issues.

Hypothesis 5. Perceived consensus is positively associated with subjective well-being and trust.

Data and Methods. The research was carried out on the data of the Russian Social Research - 2014, conducted by CESSI (Institute for Comparative Social Research). This study contains a question aimed at identifying the level of perceived consensus: “It seems to me that most of those who live in our country share my views and values” with the answer options “completely agree”, “rather agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “rather disagree”, and “totally disagree.” Various indicators of commitment to the country and feelings of closeness to people from different groups were used as correlates. Predictors (in a regression model with perceived consensus as a dependent variable) were socio-demographic parameters and values ​​of objective consensus on various issues. The resulting variables (in models with perceived consensus as an independent variable) were indicators of subjective well-being and trust.

**Results.** The study showed that, as suggested in the first hypothesis, the level of perceived consensus in modern Russia is quite high, despite the high level of objective dissensus (divergences in views and values), which, in addition to the already mentioned results of other studies, is reflected in our obtained predominantly high values ​​of the index of fractionalization.

The second hypothesis was also confirmed: various indicators of commitment to the country and proximity to representatives of different social groups are positively associated with perceived consensus. However, this relationship is especially strong for those indicators that reflect the commitment to the country as a whole and is strongest for measurements that reflect a pronounced positive attitude towards their country. Those who are glad to be living in Russia, and not in any other country, are most inclined to see their compatriots as like-minded people. This connection reflects the general patterns of interpersonal attraction: sympathy arises on the basis of perceived similarity - and, conversely, those people who evoke great sympathy are perceived as close, including in their views and values.

The third hypothesis was only partially confirmed. As expected, a lower level of perceived consensus was found in younger adults and those with higher education. The first, in our opinion, may be associated with a request for a perceived consensus: for younger people, it is more important to define the external boundaries of their emerging identity and to defend their uniqueness, and for older people, with an already formed identity, to realize their plans, which requires a certain level of social integration and the search for like-minded people. ... The effect of higher education may be related in part to the higher criticality of thinking among more educated people, in part to the fact that for people with higher education, having views other than those of the majority may seem more acceptable and even more desirable. The supposed lower level of perceived consensus among residents of Moscow was found in comparison only with residents of other cities with a population of over one million. Apparently, it is the residents of large cities who see themselves as typical Russians to a greater extent than residents of smaller settlements, and this effect does not extend to Muscovites due to the perceived peculiarity of the capital. At the same time, no significant differences were found in the level of perceived consensus among people with different income levels: neither the poorer, nor the richer, nor people with an average income level consider themselves typical Russians to a greater extent than representatives of other income groups.

The fourth hypothesis was not confirmed: all statistically significant effects of objective dissensus on perceived consensus were positive. This means that the perceived consensus is higher for those whose views actually differ more from those of the majority of the population. It follows from this that the ratio of a high perceived consensus with a low objective one is observed not only at the country aggregate, but also at the individual level. In our opinion, this may be due to the effect of the "information bubble", when the bearers of views that differ from the views of the majority are more inclined to unite into groups of like-minded people, so that in their information field, precisely such views are represented to a greater extent, and in eventually, they begin to feel that such views prevail in society as a whole.

The fifth hypothesis was predominantly confirmed: all significant effects of perceived consensus on various indicators of subjective well-being and trust were positive. People who believe that their views and values ​​are shared by the majority of the population, as expected, tend to trust others more, because for them, this environment mainly consists of supposed like-minded people, and are more satisfied with their lives and the state of affairs in various spheres of life.