

## **Genealogies, Imaginaries, and Genres of Popular Conservatism in Russia**

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This thematic section aims to explore, from a long-term historical perspective, the popular forms and mediations of political consent in Russia, from the imperial and Soviet periods to Putinism. Starting from a relational conception of hegemony and subalternity, the section interrogates the processes through which authoritarian and paternalistic arrangements are rendered culturally acceptable, affectively invested, and reproduced in everyday life. Through an analysis of continuities and transformations in motifs, figures, categories, and imaginaries, the section seeks to reconstruct the ways in which Russian culture has articulated – alongside languages of dissent and opposition – also languages of accommodation, with varying degrees of awareness, to the discourses, ideologies, and practices of state power. In this context, the notion of “popular conservatism” is adopted as an open-ended analytical tool, serving to relate forms of institutional production and ordinary appropriation that, in different historical-political conjunctures, have contributed to the stabilization of hegemonic configurations, social compromises, and shared value horizons.

Alongside established cultural traditions, the section invites contributions focusing on middlebrow and popular forms – from late imperial popular enlightenment, didactic and moralizing print culture to Soviet production literature and post-Soviet labor narratives, as well as contemporary commercial and genre fiction. These genres are approached as mediating devices between institutions and common sense, insofar as they have contributed to the naturalization of specific models of authority, violence, homeland, order, tradition, faith, identity, and belonging. Such forms are to be considered not only as rhetorical constructions, but also as socially situated practices, examined in relation to differences of class, gender, generation, and territory, as well as to the cultural and material asymmetries that have shaped their circulation and reception.

The section also welcomes contributions on cinema, television, the internet and social media, comics and graphic novels, popular music, folk traditions and religious practices, understood as domains for observing how consent is ordinarily incorporated, negotiated, and at times contested in everyday life. Here, the analytical focus is not primarily on messages or explicit ideological content, but on the processes that regulate the entry of these media into cultural routines, contributing to the formation of grammars of “popular conservatism” that emerge at the intersection of institutional apparatuses and social expectations.

Finally, the section encourages reflection on the historical and contemporary role of writers, intellectuals, and scholars in supporting or problematizing narratives of consent, rethinking the analytical limits of interpretive traditions that have conceived the relationship between the state and popular culture in polarized and reductionist terms.

“Genealogies, Imaginaries, and Genres of Popular Conservatism in Russia” seeks to:

- engage in dialogue with critical approaches that have put the epistemic role of dissenting languages into perspective, so as to extend the analysis to forms of active and passive adhesion across elite and popular cultures, and thus account for the conditions of their stability and reversibility;
- treat “popular conservatism” operationally – not as an identity-based or anthropological trait, but as a historical process and cultural phenomenon produced by specific and shifting material, symbolic, and institutional configurations;

- investigate cultural circulation between elite and popular milieus, reconstructing processes of simplification and “vulgarization” through which Russian conservatism as an intellectual tradition has historically spread and transformed, and conversely the ways in which popular motifs, knowledges, and imaginaries have been absorbed, reworked, or regulated by political and cultural elites;
- reassess middlebrow and lower-status genres, oral and semi-educated forms, often marginalized in literary and cultural historiography or, alternatively, romanticized as repositories of authenticity and resistance, by examining their role in the construction and diffusion of languages of consent;
- contribute to a non-binary reading of Russian culture, capable of historicizing essentializing categories and overly rigid oppositions (obedience/dissent, power/masses, high/low culture), in favor of a non-linear, stratified, and dialogical understanding of social imaginaries.

Authors are invited to express their interest by 20 April 2026, by sending a proposal (title, abstract, selected bibliography, and short biographical profile) to: [emilio.mari@uniroma1.it](mailto:emilio.mari@uniroma1.it)

Articles may be submitted in English, Russian, or Italian and should be between 25,000 and 40,000 characters (including spaces). All submissions will undergo double-blind peer review.

Full editorial guidelines are available on the journal’s website:

<https://www.rivistacostellazioni.org/norme-redazionali-scadenario>

Acceptance: 15 May 2026 | Full papers due: 10 January 2028 | Publication: 1 February 2029

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