

Public opinion monitoring of the state of the Russian society

As in the previous issues, we publish the results of the public opinion monitoring of the state of the Russian society conducted by ISEDT RAS in the Vologda Oblast¹.

The following tables show the dynamics of a number of parameters indicating the social feeling and socio-political sentiment of the Vologda Oblast population in June – August 2015, and also on average for the last six surveys (October 2014 – August 2015). These data are compared with the data for 2013–2014, and also for 2007 (the last year of Vladimir Putin's second presidential term, when the assessment of the President's activity was the highest, and for 2011 (the last year of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency).

Estimation of performance of the authorities

In June – August 2015, there was a continuing upward trend in the support of the RF President's performance: the approval level increased from 70 to 72%. The share of negative assessments increased from 16 to 18%, however, it remains much lower than in 2011–2013 (25–29%).

On average for the last six polls, the level of approval of federal authorities by the Vologda Oblast residents remains higher than in 2013 and 2014.

For reference: according to VTsIOM, in June – August the level of approval of the RF President's performance decreased from 88% to 86% (the proportion of negative assessments increased from 7 to 9%).

According to Levada-Center, in June – July 2015, approval of the President of the Russian Federation decreased from 89 to 87%, the proportion of negative characteristics increased from 10 to 12%).

¹ The polls are held six times a year in Vologda, Cherepovets, and in eight districts of the oblast (Babayevsky District, Velikoustyugsky District, Vozhegodsky District, Gryazovetsky District, Kirillovsky District, Nikolsky District, Tarnogsky District and Sheksninsky District). The method of the survey is a questionnaire poll by place of residence of respondents. The volume of a sample population is 1500 people aged from 18 and older.

The sample is purposeful and quoted. The representativeness of the sample is ensured by the observance of the proportions between the urban and rural population, the proportions between the inhabitants of settlements of various types (rural communities, small and medium-sized cities), age and sex structure of the oblast's adult population. Sampling error does not exceed 3%.

More details on the results of ISEDT RAS polls are available at <http://www.vscs.ac.ru/>

How do you assess the current performance of..? (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
RF President															
I approve	75.3	58.7	55.3	64.1	66.8	66.0	66.3	67.5	69.5	72.0	68.0	+4	+13	+9	-7
I do not approve	11.5	25.6	29.4	22.3	18.5	19.7	20.5	16.2	16.1	17.8	18.1	-4	-11	-7	+7
Chairman of the RF Government*															
I approve	-*	59.3	48.9	54.2	56.2	56.3	56.1	56.5	59.1	60.7	57.5	+3	+9	-2	-
I do not approve	-	24.7	32.8	27.6	23.9	24.7	24.7	20.5	19.5	22.5	22.6	-5	-10	-2	-
Governor															
I approve	55.8	45.7	44.4	40.1	39.7	39.3	38.3	37.1	40.5	41.5	39.4	-1	-5	-6	-16
I do not approve	22.2	30.5	33.2	38.9	39.6	37.0	37.4	37.5	35.4	35.4	37.1	-2	+4	+7	+15
*Included into the survey since 2008.															

The assessment of success of the President's actions in addressing the key problems of the country in the last two months did not change significantly:

– the share of the Oblast residents who think that the President successfully copes with the task of strengthening Russia's international standing remains at the level of 50–52% (the share of negative assessments is 30–32%);

– the share of those who positively assess the activity of the head of state in the field of restoring order in the country is 50–52%, and the proportion of negative judgements remains stable (37–38%);

– 40–43% of the Oblast residents believe that the President is successful in protecting democracy and strengthening citizens' freedoms (the opposite view is expressed by 38–42%);

34–36% of the population think that the President successfully copes with the task of economic recovery and growth of welfare of citizens (the proportion of negative judgments is greater and it remains at the level of 50–52%).

In general, the assessments given by the Oblast residents concerning the performance of the President on all the key issues remains more positive than in 2011–2014.

In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?* (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
Strengthening Russia's international standing															
Successful	58.4	46.2	45.7	50.4	52.3	50.8	50.4	52.7	51.1	52.2	51.6	+1	+6	+5	-7
Unsuccessful	24.9	33.7	36.2	32.4	31.0	30.3	29.5	28.7	32.5	32.4	30.7	-2	-5	-3	+6
<i>Index of success**</i>	<i>133.5</i>	<i>112.5</i>	<i>109.5</i>	<i>118.0</i>	<i>121.3</i>	<i>120.5</i>	<i>120.9</i>	<i>124.0</i>	<i>118.6</i>	<i>119.8</i>	<i>120.9</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>+11</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>-13</i>
Imposing order in the country															
Successful	53.2	36.6	39.4	48.0	49.4	52.1	50.3	50.1	49.9	51.7	50.6	+3	+11	+14	-3
Unsuccessful	34.0	50.0	47.5	39.1	37.8	35.1	37.3	37.5	38.0	37.9	37.3	-2	-10	-13	+3
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>119.2</i>	<i>86.6</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>108.9</i>	<i>111.6</i>	<i>117.0</i>	<i>113.0</i>	<i>112.6</i>	<i>111.9</i>	<i>113.8</i>	<i>113.3</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>+21</i>	<i>+27</i>	<i>-6</i>
Protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms															
Successful	44.4	32.4	31.8	37.5	38.2	40.7	39.5	39.2	42.2	42.6	40.4	+3	+9	+8	-4
Unsuccessful	37.0	48.3	51.0	45.4	44.3	41.9	40.9	39.9	38.3	41.7	41.2	-4	-10	-7	+4
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>107.4</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>80.8</i>	<i>92.1</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>98.8</i>	<i>98.6</i>	<i>99.3</i>	<i>103.9</i>	<i>100.9</i>	<i>99.2</i>	<i>+7</i>	<i>+18</i>	<i>+15</i>	<i>-8</i>
Economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare															
Successful	47.2	30.7	31.3	34.8	33.9	37.6	34.4	34.7	36.2	36.6	35.6	+1	+4	+5	-12
Unsuccessful	39.1	56.1	56.8	53.4	54.4	50.8	51.5	49.9	49.9	52.6	51.5	-2	-5	-5	+12
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>108.1</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>81.4</i>	<i>79.5</i>	<i>86.8</i>	<i>82.9</i>	<i>84.8</i>	<i>86.3</i>	<i>84.0</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>+10</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>-24</i>
<p>* Ranked according to the average value of the index of success for the last 6 surveys. ** The indices are calculated as follows: the share of negative answers is subtracted from the share of positive answers, then 100 is added to the obtained value, so as not to have negative values. Thus, completely negative answers would give the total index of 0, and completely positive answers would give the total index of 200; the balance between the former and the latter expresses the value of the index 100, which is, essentially, a neutral mark.</p>															

The structure of the Russians' preferences concerning political parties in June – August 2015 did not see any significant changes: the “United Russia” is supported by 39%, KPRF – by 7%, LDPR – by 6%, the “Just Russia” – by 4%.

It should be noted that on average over the last 6 polls, compared to 2014, the proportion of the Oblast residents who believe that the “United Russia” expresses their interests, increased by 5 percentage points (from 33 to 38%).

Which party expresses your interests? (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Party	2007	Election to the RF State Duma 2007, fact		2011		Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact		2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
		2014	2013	2011	2007															
United Russia	30.2	60.5	31.1	33.4	29.4	32.8	35.5	36.7	38.8	38.2	40.3	38.5	38.0	+5	+9	+7	+8			
KPRF	7.0	9.3	10.3	16.8	11.3	9.7	9.3	8.3	7.7	7.8	6.8	7.1	7.8	-2	-3	-2	+1			
LDPR	7.5	11.0	7.8	15.4	7.2	7.6	7.3	7.8	6.7	6.1	5.4	5.9	6.5	-1	-1	-1	-1			
Just Russia	7.8	8.8	5.6	27.2	4.6	3.5	3.9	3.2	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.6	0	-1	-2	-4			
Other	1.8	–	1.9	–	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0	0	-2	-2			
No party	17.8	–	29.4	–	34.9	34.4	32.6	32.7	30.3	31.5	32.5	33.8	32.2	-2	-3	+3	+14			
It is difficult to answer	21.2	–	13.2	–	10.2	11.7	10.7	11.1	12.0	12.5	11.6	11.1	11.5	0	+1	-2	-10			

Continuous positive trends can be observed in the dynamics of assessments of the social well-being of the population.

In June – August 2015, the proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents who describe their mood as “normal and fine” rose from 70% to 73%. The proportion of those, who “experience stress, anger, fear, depression”, did not change in the last two months (24%), and in comparison with the beginning of the year it decreased significantly (from 31% in February to 24% in August).

The proportion of the Oblast residents who believe that “everything is not so bad; it’s difficult to live, but it’s possible to stand it” increased from 79 to 82% in the last two months. Meanwhile, the share of those who feels “it’s impossible to bear such plight” was 13–15% in June – August, and it decreased as compared with the beginning of the year (from 17% in February to 13% in August).

There still remains a significant gap between “the poor and extremely poor and the “people with average income”. According to the assessment of the Oblast residents, 51–53% include themselves in the first category, 38–40% – in the second category. However, it should be noted that this gap (11–13 p.p.) during February – August 2015 has not been increasing. Unlike the previous years’ assessments, in 2007 the share of the “people with average income” was higher than the proportion of the “poor and extremely poor” (6 p.p.); in 2011 it was roughly the same (with the difference of 1 p.p.); in 2013 the share of the “poor and extremely poor” exceeded that of the “people with average income” (by 3 p.p.), and in 2014 this gap increased to 6 p.p.

The Consumer Sentiment Index, which characterizes people's forecasts concerning the prospects of economic development and their personal wealth **after a significant increase in April – June (by 7 points, from 73 to 80 p.)** **decreased again and in August 2015 it was 78 points. It is considerably lower than in 2011–2014 (88–90 p.).**

Overall assessments of social sentiment and the stock of patience in August 2015 remain higher than in 2007–2014. The situation is reverse with regard to the residents' assessments of their financial position and forecasts of economic development – they are worse than in 2007–2014.

Estimation of social condition (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
	2014	2013	2011	2007											
Mood															
Usual condition, good mood	63.6	63.1	68.6	69.4	69.3	70.9	61.8	67.6	69.5	73.1	68.7	-1	0	+6	+5
I feel stress, anger, fear, depression	27.8	28.9	26.2	24.9	24.6	24.1	31.3	26.6	24.4	23.5	25.8	+1	0	-3	-2
Stock of patience															
Everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it	74.1	74.8	79.3	80.8	80.3	80.0	74.3	78.9	79.0	82.2	79.1	-2	0	+4	+5
It's impossible to bear such plight	13.6	15.3	14.2	12.6	12.1	13.6	17.3	14.9	14.7	13.3	14.3	+2	0	-1	+1
Social self-identification*															
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	48.2	43.1	43.9	43.2	43.5	42.3	38.3	36.7	39.4	39.9	40.0	-3	-4	-3	-8
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	42.4	44.3	46.9	49.1	49.3	51.0	53.3	51.6	48.0	50.5	50.6	+2	+4	+6	+8
Consumer Sentiment Index															
Index value, points	105.9	89.6	90.3	87.6	84.0	82.3	75.7	73.4	80.1	77.9	78.9	-9	-11	-11	-27
* Question: "Which category do you belong to, in your opinion?"															

Conclusion

The results of the August 2015 survey show that after a busy period of the late 2014 – early 2015 associated with the exacerbation of financial issues (rising prices, fluctuations in the exchange rate of the ruble, pessimistic expectations of the impact of the sanctions), the dynamics of assessments of public opinion by the Vologda Oblast residents has stabilized.

In the last two months there was a growing proportion of people who positively characterize their mood and who possess a high reserve of patience. There is no significant change in people’s assessment of their own revenues and in the forecasts of the development of the economic situation. From February to August 2015 the activities of the head of state find active support.

The improvement in public opinion is largely due to the information policy of the federal and regional authorities, the optimism of which is transmitted to the population through the mass media.

However, we cannot yet speak about the improvement in the dynamics of public opinion on personal welfare. The proportion of the Oblast residents who give negative assessments of their well-being remains stable and higher than in 2007–2013. The dynamics of consumer sentiment is also dominated by negative characteristics (the value of CSI is below the neutral level (100 points)).

According to experts (L. Gudkov, A. Mukhin, N. Mironov, V. Khomyakov, etc.), the approval of performance of the authorities can increase up to 90–91%, “however, this will not have a crucial importance anymore. A 2–3% growth is within the statistical error. These fluctuations indicate that the rating has stabilized at the present stage”².

The President acts as the person who ensures safety. Another important factor is the “intensity of action on the part of the U.S.”: the greater the pressure, the higher the estimation of activities of the RF President, because different groups under external pressure “enter into a kind of armistice”. In addition, when there are no alternatives, people do not believe much in the chances of opposition”³.

In other words, the current President’s approval rating does not show the effectiveness of political system, economy and the Government. It is a kind of “rating of hopes”⁴. However, according to experts, the economic situation will determine the further dynamics of approval of the President. Today the President’s approval rating has virtually reached its peak. So, perhaps “its negative effects are not far off. A drop in the rating can be expected in about two years, and it will be slow and lingering”⁵.

Thus, the further dynamics of public opinion will depend primarily on what will form the basis of public trust in the authorities – “political necessity” or bringing macroeconomic policy “in line with the common understanding of the principles of social justice and truth, and to make it serve the interests of development of the production sector”⁶.

² Gorbachev A., Garmonenko D. Prezident i ego reiting [President and His Rating]. *Nezavisimaya gazeta* [Independent Newspaper], 2015, July 10. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/politics/20150710/1_president.html

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Andreeva Yu. Nadezhda na “reiting nadezhd” (Mnenie gendirektora Instituta prioritetnykh regional’nykh proektov N. Mironova) [Hope for the “Rating of Hopes” (An Opinion of Nikolai Mironov, Director General of the Institute of Priority Regional Projects)]. *Zavtra* [Tomorrow], 2015, no. 31 (1132.) Available at: <http://zavtra.ru/content/view/vtsiom/>.

⁵ Gorbachev A., Garmonenko D. Prezident i ego reiting [President and His Rating]. *Nezavisimaya gazeta* [Independent Newspaper], 2015, July 10. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/politics/20150710/1_president.html

⁶ Glazyev S.Yu. Zapredel’noe neravenstvo. Politika gosudarstva protivorechit interesam naseleniya [Outrageous Inequality. Governmental Policy Is Contrary to the Interests of the People]. *Zavtra* [Tomorrow], 2015, no. 29 (1130), July 23. Available at: <http://zavtra.ru/content/view/zapredelnoeneravenstvo/>

In-depth analysis of the dynamics of assessments of success that the RF President has in dealing with Russia's main issues and the in-depth analysis of structural components of the Consumer Sentiment Index

In June – August 2015, the proportion of those who believes the President is successful in strengthening Russia's international standing has increased mainly among people aged 30–55 (from 49 to 54%), among those with incomplete secondary and secondary education (from 43 to 49%), and among the poorest 20% (from 22 to 33%).

The decline in the assessments in the last two months is observed primarily among people with higher and incomplete higher education (from 64 to 58%) and among 20% of the wealthiest Oblast residents (from 68 to 61%).

Proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents who believe that the RF President successfully copes with the issue of strengthening Russia's international standing (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	58.9	45.4	44.6	47.9	48.3	49.2	49.2	51.6	49.9	51.4	49.9	+2	+5	+5	-9
Women	57.9	46.8	46.5	52.3	55.5	52.1	51.3	53.7	52.1	52.9	52.9	+1	+6	+6	-5
Age															
Under 30	60.3	46.1	45.3	50.7	56.7	52.7	48.7	49.8	53.6	52.8	52.4	+2	+7	+6	-8
30-55	58.7	47.0	46.4	50.3	51.2	49.9	48.5	53.9	48.6	53.5	50.9	+1	+5	+4	-8
Over 55	56.1	45.0	44.7	50.2	51.1	50.9	54.1	52.9	53.0	49.9	52.0	+2	+7	+7	-4
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	52.3	40.6	42.3	42.8	44.0	42.3	46.7	43.5	42.9	48.9	44.7	+2	+2	+4	-8
Secondary vocational	57.7	46.8	44.7	50.5	51.7	51.1	47.7	55.1	47.2	51.2	50.7	0	+6	+4	-7
Incomplete higher, higher	66.6	51.2	50.1	58.9	62.6	60.4	56.6	60.6	63.5	57.6	60.2	+1	+10	+9	-6
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	42.4	28.6	33.1	31.9	32.2	30.5	21.2	33.0	22.2	32.8	28.7	-3	-4	0	-14
60% of the people with middle-sized income	60.8	49.1	48.5	52.6	58.1	54.8	59.7	57.4	54.9	56.5	56.9	+4	+8	+8	-4
20% of the most prosperous people	71.2	57.2	54.3	65.9	65.5	66.5	63.9	63.3	68.4	60.7	64.7	-1	+10	+8	-7
Territories															
Vologda	56.1	47.0	44.0	50.0	52.8	50.9	49.6	56.0	52.6	50.4	52.1	+2	+8	+5	-4
Cherepovets	74.3	60.4	50.0	62.5	66.2	65.4	64.9	70.5	69.9	69.9	67.8	+5	+18	+7	-7
Districts	51.5	38.6	44.1	43.9	44.5	42.7	43.0	41.0	39.8	43.4	42.4	-2	-2	+4	-9
Oblast	58.4	46.2	45.6	50.4	52.3	50.8	50.4	52.7	51.1	52.2	51.6	+1	+6	+5	-7

In the past two months, the assessment of the President's success in imposing order in the country improved among people aged under 30 (from 53 to 59%), among persons with secondary and incomplete secondary education (from 41 to 49%), among the poorest 20% (from 19 to 34%) and among the residents of the Vologda Oblast districts (from 38 to 43%).

Negative changes are observed primarily among people with higher and incomplete higher education (from 60 to 57%), and among 20% of the wealthiest (from 65 to 62%).

Proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents who believe that the RF President successfully copes with the issue of imposing order in the country (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	53.4	36.0	37.6	46.0	47.3	51.3	51.2	48.4	48.9	50.4	49.6	+12	+12	+14	-4
Women	52.9	37.8	40.8	49.6	51.1	52.8	49.5	51.4	50.7	52.7	51.4	+11	+11	+14	-2
Age															
Under 30	57.3	38.0	38.8	48.2	51.4	51.4	49.0	49.8	52.9	59.1	52.3	+4	+14	+14	-5
30-55	53.5	36.5	38.8	47.9	49.6	51.6	52.1	51.3	48.3	50.4	50.6	+3	+12	+14	-3
Over 55	48.8	37.0	40.7	48.0	47.9	53.3	48.5	48.6	50.1	48.9	49.6	+2	+9	+13	+1
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	48.6	32.2	38.0	43.2	43.3	46.3	45.2	45.6	41.1	49.3	45.1	+2	+7	+13	-4
Secondary vocational	53.1	38.9	39.3	48.5	51.9	50.3	49.6	47.9	47.9	49.5	49.5	+1	+10	+11	-4
Incomplete higher, higher	58.7	39.9	40.9	52.8	53.8	60.8	56.2	57.4	60.4	56.9	57.6	+5	+17	+18	-1
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	41.9	26.3	30.5	33.1	32.2	31.6	28.6	31.9	19.3	34.4	29.7	-3	-1	+3	-12
60% of the people with middle-sized income	55.0	39.4	41.0	50.6	54.4	56.4	57.0	54.6	55.3	54.8	55.4	+5	+14	+16	0
20% of the most prosperous people	63.3	42.1	46.6	60.2	60.7	67.6	59.5	62.6	65.1	62.2	63.0	+3	+16	+21	0
Territories															
Vologda	52.0	39.4	34.8	45.6	44.9	49.1	48.9	54.5	53.1	51.2	50.3	+5	+16	+11	-2
Cherepovets	65.1	44.2	44.4	59.9	64.1	66.2	63.3	63.0	67.2	68.4	65.4	+6	+21	+21	0
Districts	47.7	32.2	39.0	42.7	43.8	46.0	43.9	40.4	38.4	42.7	42.5	0	+4	+10	-5
Oblast	53.1	37.0	39.4	48.0	49.4	52.1	50.3	50.1	49.9	51.7	50.6	+3	+11	+14	-3

In June – August 2015, the President's performance with regard to protecting democracy and strengthening citizens' freedoms was assessed more positively by people with secondary special education (from 41 to 46%), by the poorest 20% (from 18 to 31%), and by the residents of the Vologda Oblast districts (from 35 to 38%).

A decline in the assessments is observed among people with higher and incomplete higher education (from 50 to 45%), among 20% of the wealthiest (from 58 to 48%), and among the Vologda residents (from 43 to 39%).

Proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents who believe that the RF President successfully copes with the issue of protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	45.6	32.2	31.1	35.5	36.1	39.3	38.7	38.1	39.9	40.5	38.8	+3	+8	+7	-7
Women	43.4	33.4	32.3	39.1	39.9	41.8	40.0	40.1	44.1	44.3	41.7	+3	+9	+8	-2
Age															
Under 30	47.2	32.4	30.4	37.4	38.0	41.5	35.8	38.2	48.0	47.9	41.6	+4	+11	+9	-6
30-55	44.4	32.2	31.9	36.6	38.9	39.8	40.6	41.1	38.4	40.8	39.9	+3	+8	+8	-5
Over 55	41.8	34.2	32.6	38.9	37.3	41.3	40.1	37.3	43.8	41.9	40.3	+1	+8	+6	-2
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	39.8	27.5	30.7	34.1	35.0	33.7	37.7	33.7	35.6	37.5	35.5	+1	+5	+8	-4
Secondary vocational	45.3	34.4	30.6	38.2	39.8	42.4	38.9	38.4	40.7	45.9	41.0	+3	+10	+7	-4
Incomplete higher, higher	48.8	36.6	34.0	40.7	40.4	46.8	41.6	46.2	50.3	45.3	45.1	+4	+11	+9	-4
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	37.1	19.5	25.6	25.2	25.1	23.5	17.1	25.2	18.2	30.9	23.3	-2	-2	+4	-14
60% of the people with middle-sized income	45.4	35.4	32.2	38.5	41.9	42.7	48.1	41.5	45.1	45.2	44.1	+6	+12	+9	-1
20% of the most prosperous people	53.3	40.3	36.8	48.2	46.8	56.3	43.9	50.0	57.8	48.1	50.5	+2	+14	+10	-3
Territories															
Vologda	38.4	35.7	27.6	32.7	32.8	35.5	36.1	39.4	42.8	39.3	37.7	+5	+10	+2	-1
Cherepovets	54.9	40.4	32.4	47.9	50.0	52.3	48.5	51.4	54.1	53.7	51.7	+4	+19	+11	-3
Districts	42.0	27.7	33.6	34.5	34.7	37.1	36.4	32.3	35.2	38.3	35.7	+1	+2	+8	-6
Oblast	44.4	32.8	31.8	37.5	38.2	40.7	39.5	39.2	42.2	42.6	40.4	+3	+9	+8	-4

In June – August 2015 the positive assessment of success of the President's performance with regard to economic recovery and increasing the citizens' welfare increased mainly among the poorest 20% (from 15 to 29%), among people with secondary, incomplete secondary education (from 32 to 36%) and among people with secondary vocational education (from 34 to 38%) and among the residents of the Vologda Oblast districts (from 34 to 38%).

The decline in the assessments is observed among people with higher and incomplete higher education (from 43 to 36%), and among 20% of the wealthiest (from 49 to 38%).

Proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents who believe that the RF President successfully copes with the issue of economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	47.3	30.3	31.3	33.6	32.4	37.2	34.2	35.0	33.9	36.0	34.8	+1	+4	+5	-13
Women	47.2	31.1	31.3	35.8	35.1	37.9	34.5	34.4	38.1	37.1	36.2	0	+5	+5	-11
Age															
Under 30	51.6	31.0	29.9	34.8	32.1	37.4	30.0	33.7	39.2	39.9	35.4	+1	+6	+4	-16
30-55	47.9	29.6	31.6	33.4	34.4	35.4	36.1	36.1	35.3	34.9	35.4	+2	+4	+6	-13
Over 55	42.2	32.3	32.1	36.8	34.5	40.7	34.7	33.4	35.6	37.0	36.0	-1	+4	+4	-6
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	43.1	27.4	30.0	32.6	32.3	33.3	32.8	34.7	31.6	36.4	33.5	+1	+4	+6	-10
Secondary vocational	47.9	31.8	31.0	36.1	36.5	37.9	36.5	32.8	33.7	37.5	35.8	0	+5	+4	-12
Incomplete higher, higher	51.5	32.9	33.1	36.0	33.3	42.2	33.7	36.7	43.4	35.6	37.5	+2	+4	+5	-14
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	41.8	20.2	24.2	24.6	24.3	21.3	14.5	27.8	14.9	29.0	22.0	-3	-2	+2	-20
60% of the people with middle-sized income	46.6	32.3	31.8	35.7	36.8	39.5	42.9	35.6	38.9	37.4	38.5	+3	+7	+6	-8
20% of the most prosperous people	60.2	37.7	37.1	43.6	41.9	52.9	35.3	43.7	49.1	38.2	43.5	0	+6	+6	-17
Territories															
Vologda	41.1	31.2	27.3	30.5	27.3	33.2	29.8	34.4	33.3	31.1	31.5	+1	+4	0	-10
Cherepovets	58.4	36.7	32.1	40.2	38.5	40.9	36.4	38.5	42.9	39.5	39.5	-1	+7	+3	-19
Districts	44.5	27.5	33.0	34.2	35.2	38.2	35.8	32.7	34.0	38.0	35.7	+2	+3	+8	-9
Oblast	47.2	30.7	31.3	34.8	33.9	37.6	34.4	34.7	36.2	36.6	35.6	+1	+4	+5	-12

The Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI) is declining mainly because the Oblast residents make more negative assessments of their current financial situation. Since December 2014, the index of current personal financial situation has remained lower than all the other indices included in the structure of CSI. Meanwhile, in December 2014 – August 2015 it dropped from 77 to 72 points.

The second component that affects a decrease of CSI is the index of expectations for the development of economy in the coming year. In December 2014 – August 2015, it dropped from 82 to 75 points.

We should also note a marked decrease in the index of expediency of purchase of durable goods (from December 2014 to August 2015 – from 89 to 79 points), although its value remains higher than the values of the index of current personal financial situation and the index of expectations for the development of economy in the coming year.

Dynamics of partial indices used for the calculation of CSI
(answers are given in % of the number of respondents, indices are given in points)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Apr. 2015	June 2015	Aug. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...			
												2014	2013	2011	2007
How would you assess your financial situation: is it better or worse than it was a year ago?															
Better	14.5	9.0	11.5	9.4	8.8	8.8	9.3	6.3	7.6	8.1	8.2	-1	-3	-1	-6
The same	60.5	53.6	53.4	52.7	47.9	45.1	40.9	40.5	43.5	43.2	43.5	-9	-10	-10	-17
Worse	13.4	27.2	24.5	26.4	28.0	31.7	33.5	37.6	32.8	35.8	33.2	+7	+9	+6	+20
It is difficult to answer	11.5	10.3	10.6	11.5	15.3	14.4	16.3	15.7	16.1	12.9	15.1	+4	+5	+5	+4
Index of current personal financial situation	101.1	81.8	87.0	83.0	80.8	77.1	75.8	68.7	74.8	72.3	74.9	-8	-12	-7	-26
In your opinion, will the next 12 months be a good, bad or other time for Russia's economy?															
Good	6.4	3.3	3.0	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.8	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.9	0	-1	-1	-5
Good, but not in every aspect	29.4	17.2	15.0	12.4	9.8	12.9	6.8	10.1	11.5	10.7	10.3	-2	-5	-7	-19
Not good, but not bad either	34.6	34.6	33.1	33.5	34.3	31.5	29.1	26.9	32.5	34.2	31.4	-2	-2	-3	-3
Bad, but not in every aspect	9.4	16.9	15.7	15.6	16.9	15.0	18.3	18.1	19.3	18.5	17.7	+2	+2	+1	+8
Bad	2.0	7.1	9.2	12.1	13.4	17.7	18.6	19.3	14.3	18.1	16.9	+5	+8	+10	+15
It is difficult to answer	18.2	20.8	24.0	24.4	23.1	20.6	24.4	24.3	21.5	17.1	21.8	-3	-2	+1	+4
Index of expectations for the development of economy in the coming year	124.4	96.5	93.1	86.8	82.0	82.5	72.7	74.0	78.9	75.4	77.6	-9	-16	-19	-47
In your opinion, will your financial situation be better or worse or about the same as now in a year?															
It will be better	15.0	10.4	8.9	7.7	5.5	6.5	4.9	5.3	4.7	4.8	5.3	-2	-4	-5	-10
It will be the same	46.4	43.0	45.3	41.4	38.4	35.3	29.2	33.9	38.3	37.5	35.4	-6	-10	-8	-11
It will be worse	11.4	19.8	17.8	20.2	23.0	26.9	32.5	31.1	24.3	25.2	27.2	+7	+9	+7	+16
It is difficult to answer	27.2	26.8	28.1	30.7	33.1	31.3	33.3	29.8	32.7	32.5	32.1	+1	+4	+5	+5
Index of expectations of changes in personal welfare	103.6	90.6	91.1	87.5	82.5	79.6	72.4	74.2	80.4	79.6	78.1	-9	-13	-13	-26
Speaking about the next five years, will they be a good or a bad time for the economy?															
Good	13.8	6.8	4.6	4.4	3.6	3.9	2.9	4.0	5.2	3.8	3.9	-1	-1	-3	-10
Not good, but not bad either	49.3	42.3	39.2	37.8	36.5	37.1	31.1	30.2	35.7	34.5	34.2	-4	-5	-8	-15
Bad	8.7	16.6	17.7	17.9	19.6	20.3	24.2	25.5	19.0	20.7	21.6	+4	+4	+5	+13
It is difficult to answer	28.3	34.3	38.6	40.0	40.3	38.7	41.8	40.3	40.1	41.0	40.4	0	+2	+6	+12
Index of expectations of economic development in the next five years	105.1	90.2	86.9	86.5	84.0	83.6	78.7	78.5	86.2	83.1	82.4	-4	-5	-8	-23
Speaking of major purchases for the home (such as furniture, fridge, consumer electronics, TV-set), do you think that now is a good or a bad time to buy most of these things?															
Good	15.7	12.3	14.1	15.6	13.3	12.4	7.1	6.5	9.1	7.7	9.4	-6	-5	-3	-6
Not good, but not bad either	44.6	43.6	43.6	41.6	40.9	45.1	44.9	37.0	42.5	45.3	42.6	+1	-1	-1	-2
It is difficult to answer	20.2	23.2	20.8	21.3	22.4	23.8	28.4	34.8	29.0	28.5	27.8	+7	+7	+5	+8
It is difficult to answer	19.5	20.9	21.6	21.5	23.4	18.7	19.6	21.7	19.5	18.5	20.2	-1	-1	-1	1
Index of expediency of purchase of durable goods	95.5	89.1	93.3	94.3	90.9	88.6	78.7	71.7	80.1	79.2	81.5	-13	-12	-8	-14

Conclusion according to the results of the in-depth analysis

The analysis of people's assessments of the success with which the President copes with the key problems of the country (strengthening Russia's international standing, imposing order in the country, protection of democracy, economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare) substantiates the hypothesis that the dynamics of public opinion is greatly influenced by the mass media. Deterioration of assessments is registered among the wealthiest inhabitants of the Oblast and people with higher education, that is, among those who, first, have a more critical approach to the information about the political and economic life presented by the mass media, and second, have greater access to alternative sources of information (e.g., Internet resources).

Improvement of assessments of the success of the President's activity is observed among people with secondary and incomplete secondary education and among the poorest 20% of the Oblast residents. These are the categories that are less inclined toward in-depth analysis of information provided by the mass media and that have fewer opportunities for comparing alternative points of view. Most likely, the majority of these people receive information from the "traditional" source, i.e. 3–4 federal TV channels.

The data obtained in the course of the in-depth analysis of the structural components of the Consumer Sentiment Index indicate that, despite stable and strong government support, people assess their financial situation as being worse and they have pessimistic expectations concerning the future of Russia's economy. Consequently, the level of approval of authorities "rests" on other pillars – propaganda, the impact of the "Crimean spring" and the absence of alternative political choice.

Information about the author

Vladimir Aleksandrovich Ilyin – Doctor of Economics, Professor, Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, Director, Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science Institute of Socio-Economic Development of Territories of Russian Academy of Science (56A, Gorky Street, Vologda, 160014, Russian Federation, ilin@vscc.ac.ru)