

PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING

Public Opinion Monitoring of the State of the Russian Society

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

The following tables and graphs show the dynamics of several parameters of social well-being and socio-political sentiment of the region's population according to the results of the latest "wave" of the monitoring (December 2021) and for the period from February to December 2021 (the latest six polls, that is, almost a year).

We compare the results of the surveys with the average annual data for 2000 (the first year of Vladimir Putin's first presidential term), 2007 (the last year of Vladimir Putin's second presidential term, when the assessment of the President's work was the highest), 2011 (the last year of Dmitri Medvedev's presidency), and 2012 (the first year of V. Putin's third presidential term).

We also provide yearly dynamics of the data for 2018–2020².

In October – December 2021, the level of approval of the RF President's work did not change significantly. The share of positive assessments is 51–52%. The proportion of negative assessments is 33–34%.

Over the latest six polls (February – December 2021), the share of negative judgments about the work of the head of state has slightly increased (by 3 p.p., from 31 to 34%)³. The proportion of positive assessments has not changed (50–51%).

The level of approval of the work of the Chairman of the RF Government in February – December 2021 was 38%; the level of approval of the work of the head of the region – 36%.

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 1,500 people 18 years of age 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 information on the results of VolRC RAS polls is available at <http://www.vsrc.ac.ru/>.

² In 2020, four "waves" of the monitoring were conducted. Surveys in April and June 2020 were not conducted due to quarantine restrictions during the spread of COVID-19.

³ Hereinafter, the results of a comparative analysis of the data from the survey conducted in December 2021, and the results of a last-year monitoring "wave", conducted in February 2021, are given in the frame.

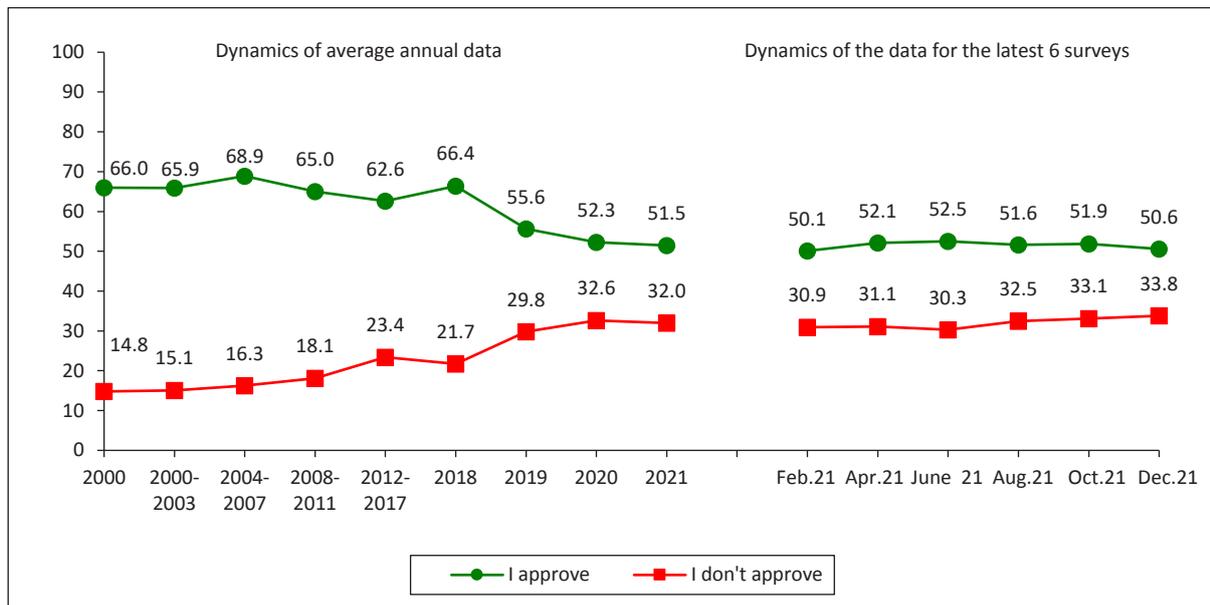
How do you assess the current performance of..? (% of respondents)

Answer option	Dynamics of average annual data									Dynamics of the data for the latest 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Dec. 2021 to Feb. 2021
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	Feb. 2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Avr. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021		
RF President																
I approve	66.0	75.3	58.7	51.7	66.4	55.6	52.3	51.5	50.1	52.1	52.5	51.6	51.9	50.6	+1	
I disapprove	14.8	11.5	25.5	32.6	21.7	29.8	32.6	32.0	30.9	31.1	30.3	32.5	33.1	33.8	+3	
Chairman of the RF Government*																
I approve	-*	-*	59.3	49.6	48.0	41.1	38.7	39.9	37.6	38.8	42.2	42.7	39.7	38.3	+1	
I disapprove	-	-	24.7	33.3	31.6	38.4	40.4	37.6	38.8	38.3	35.1	36.0	38.3	38.9	0	
Governor																
I approve	56.1	55.8	45.7	41.9	38.4	35.7	35.0	36.7	33.9	36.3	37.8	38.6	37.5	35.9	+2	
I disapprove	19.3	22.2	30.5	33.3	37.6	40.2	42.5	40.5	42.4	41.3	38.4	38.5	40.7	41.9	-1	

The wording of the question: "How do you assess the current work of ...?" According to the survey technique, sampling error does not exceed 3%, so hereinafter changes with a difference of 2 p.p. are not taken into account or are considered insignificant; they are highlighted in blue in the tables. Positive changes are highlighted in green, negative changes are highlighted in red

*Included in the survey since 2008.

How do you assess the current work of the RF President?
(% of respondents, VoIRC RAS data)



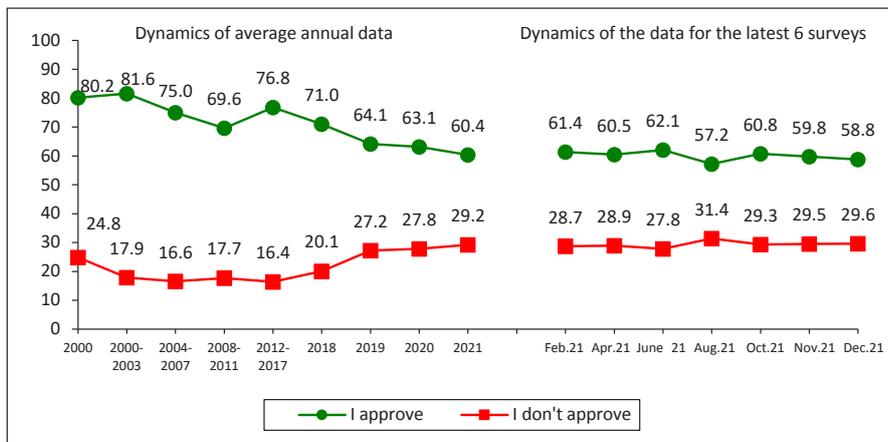
Hereinafter, all graphs show the average annual data for 2000, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, as well as the average annual data for the periods 2000–2003, 2004–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, corresponding to the periods of presidential terms.

For reference:

According to VTsIOM, the level of approval of the RF President’s work for the period from October to early December 2021 and in comparison with the beginning of the year (February) decreased by 2 p.p. (from 61 to 59%).

According to the latest data from Levada-Center*, the share of positive assessments of the President’s work from October to November 2021 has decreased by 4 p.p. (from 67 to 63%); the share of negative assessments has increased by 2 p.p. (from 33 to 35%). For almost a year (from February to November 2021), the share of positive assessments of the work of the President of the Russian Federation has decreased by 2 p.p. (from 65 to 63%), the proportion of negative assessments has not changed significantly (29–30%).

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of the RF President? (% of respondents; VTsIOM data)



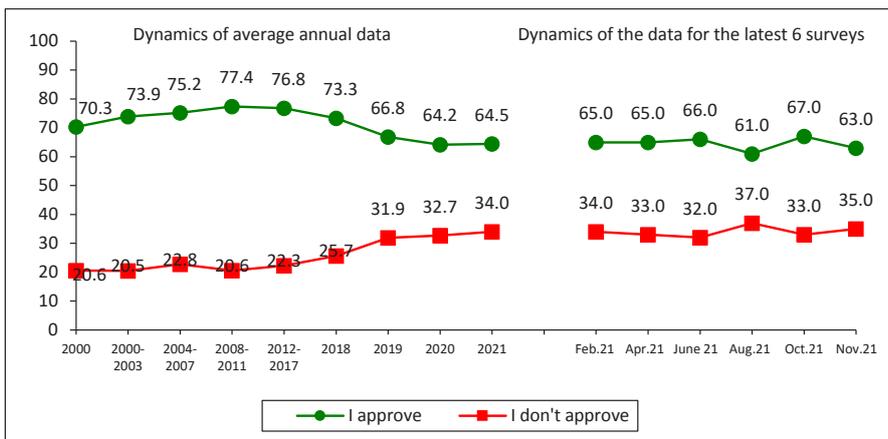
Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
I approve	-2
I don't approve	+1

Question: “In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of the President of the Russian Federation?”

Data for December 2021 – as of December 5, 2021.

Source: VTsIOM data. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/>

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia? (% of respondents; Levada-Center data*)



Annual dynamics (November 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
I approve	-2
I don't approve	+1

Question: “In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?”

Latest data – November 2021. Source: Levada-Center*. Indicators. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/indikatory/>

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

Over the past two months, there have been no significant changes in the dynamics of assessments of the President’s success in solving the country’s key problems. As in October 2021:

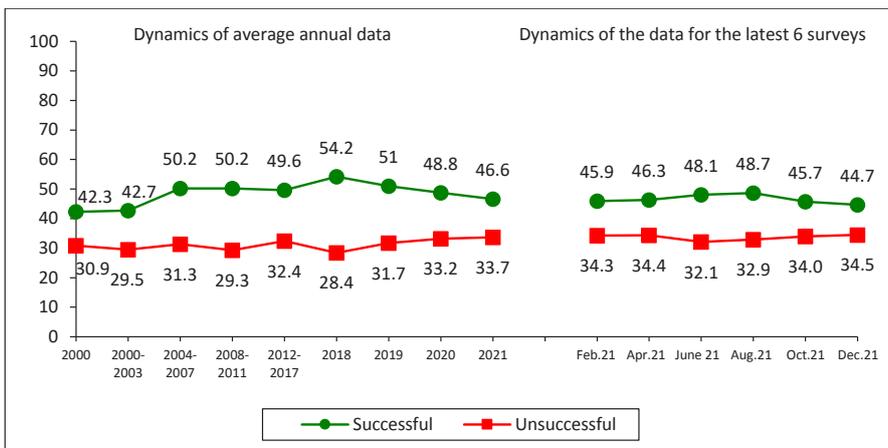
- ✓ 45–46% of Vologda Oblast residents positively assess the President’s efforts to strengthen Russia’s international positions;
- ✓ 41–43% support his work aimed at restoring order in the country;
- ✓ 33–35% consider the President’s actions to protect democracy and strengthen citizens’ freedoms as successful;
- ✓ 27% positively assess his work to boost the economy and increase the welfare of citizens.

We should note that in October – December 2021, the share of negative judgments about Vladimir Putin’s work aimed at improving the financial situation of the population decreased by 3 p.p. (from 63 to 60%). However, the proportion of those who share this opinion is still significantly higher than the share of Vologda Oblast residents who positively assess the work of the head of state in this direction (60% vs. 27%).

From February to December 2021, there have been no significant changes in the dynamics of assessments of the success of the Russian President’s addressing the country’s key problems.

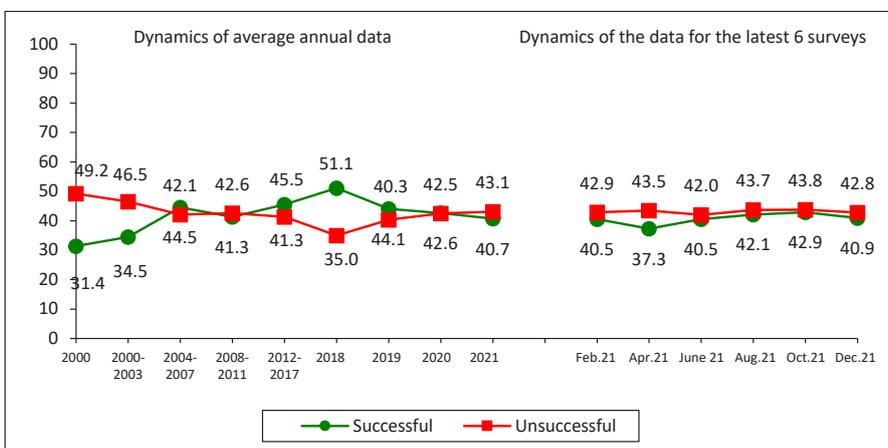
In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?
(% of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)

Strengthening Russia’s international position



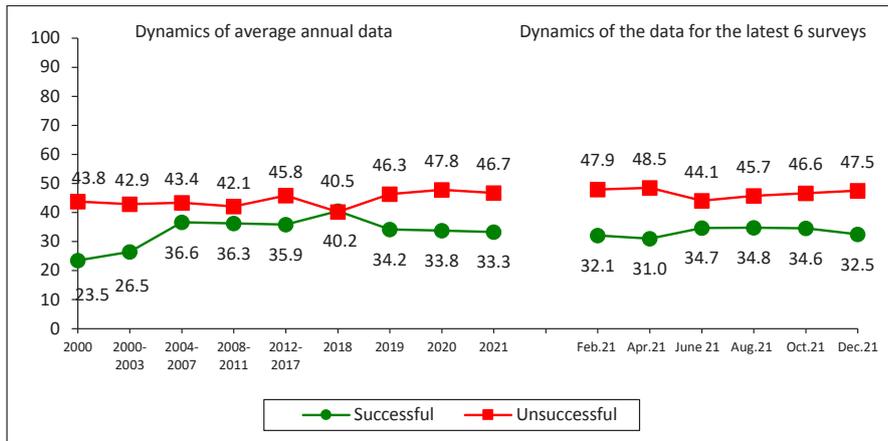
Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Successful	-1
Unsuccessful	0

Imposing order in the country



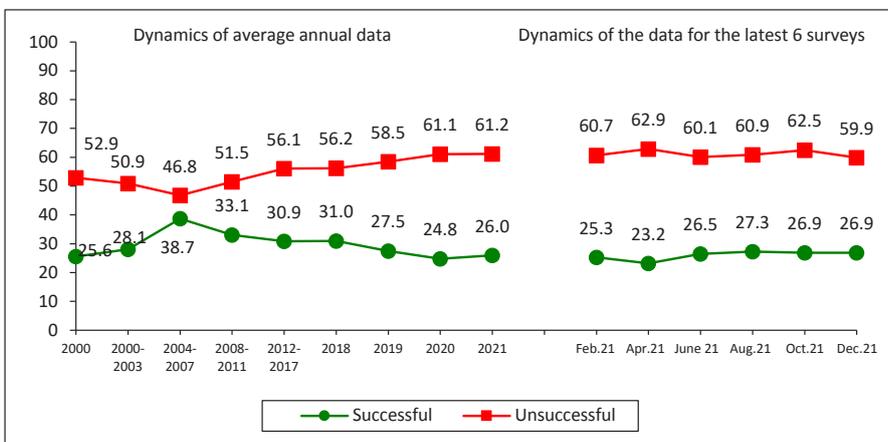
Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Successful	0
Unsuccessful	0

Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens' freedoms



Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Successful	0
Unsuccessful	0

Economic recovery and increase in citizens' welfare



Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Successful	+2
Unsuccessful	-1

There have been no changes in the structure of political preferences of the region's residents for the period from October to December 2021: the share of those whose interests are expressed by United Russia is 32–33%, KPRF and LDPR – 10–11% each, “Just Russia” – 6%.

Compared with the beginning of the year, in December we observe a slight increase in the share of Vologda Oblast residents whose interests are expressed by the Communist Party (by 3 p.p., from 8 to 11%).

Besides, from February to December 2021, the proportion of those who believe that none of the parties represented in parliament expresses their interests has significantly decreased (by 6 p.p., from 36 to 30%).

Which party expresses your interests? (% of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)

Party	Dynamics of average annual data											Data dynamics for the latest 6 polls						Dynamics (+/-)	
	2000	2007	2011	Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact	2012	2016	Election to the RF State Duma 2016, fact	2018	2019	2020	2021	Election to the RF State Duma 2021, fact	Feb. 2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Dec. 2021 to Feb. 2021
United Russia	18.5	30.2	31.1	33.4	29.1	35.4	38.0	37.9	33.8	31.5	31.7	49.8	30.5	31.5	32.1	31.7	32.7	31.9	+1
KPRF	11.5	7.0	10.3	16.8	10.6	8.3	14.2	9.2	8.8	8.4	9.3	18.9	8.3	8.7	8.1	9.3	11.1	10.5	+3
LDPR	4.8	7.5	7.8	15.4	7.8	10.4	21.9	9.6	9.1	9.5	9.9	7.6	10.1	9.9	8.5	9.9	11.2	9.9	0
Just Russia – Patriots for the Truth	-	7.8	5.6	27.2	6.6	4.2	10.8	2.9	3.4	4.7	4.7	7.5	3.6	2.6	4.1	5.3	6.3	6.0	+2
New People*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.3	5.3	-	-	-	-	-	2.3	-
Other	0.9	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	0.3	-	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.2	-	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0
None	29.6	17.8	29.4	-	31.3	29.4	-	28.5	33.7	34.2	33.9	-	35.9	36.4	35.4	34.1	31.7	29.6	-6
I find it difficult to answer	20.3	21.2	13.2	-	11.7	12.0	-	11.2	11.0	11.1	10.0	-	11.3	10.9	11.8	9.6	6.6	9.7	-2

* The New People party was elected to the State Duma of the Russian Federation for the first time following the results of the election held on September 17–19, 2021.

Over the past two months, the proportion of Vologda Oblast residents who assess their daily emotional state as positive has not changed significantly (71–72%). Meanwhile, the proportion of those who believe that “everything is not so bad and it is possible to live, it is difficult to live, but it is possible to stand it” has increased by 3 p.p. (from 77 to 80%).

In general, there has been a steady upward trend in the assessments of the social status over the year. The share of people who characterize their mood as positive increased by 12 p.p. (from 60 to 72%) from February to December. The proportion of Vologda Oblast residents with a high potential for patience has increased by 10 p.p. (from 70 to 80%).

At the same time, we do not observe any positive changes in the dynamics of self-assessments of the financial situation either over the past two months or over the past year. The share of the region’s residents who consider themselves “poor and extremely poor” is 48–50%, which is significantly higher than the proportion of those who describe themselves as having an “average income” (40%).

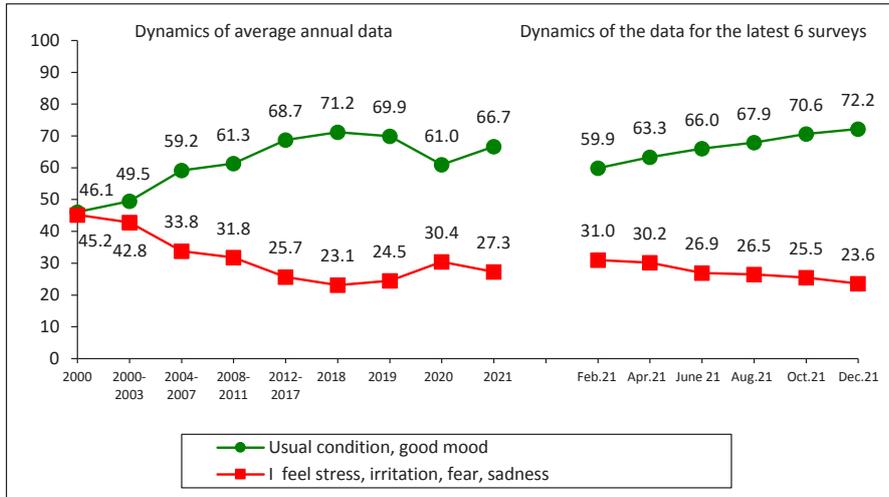
The consumer sentiment index also remained virtually unchanged from February to December 2021 (85–86 points). At the same time, we should note that the index value below 100 points means the predominance of pessimistic forecasts in the assessments of the region’s residents regarding the prospects for the development of the economy and their personal financial situation in the future.

For reference: According to the latest data from Levada-Center the nationwide consumer sentiment index from August to October 2021 decreased by 3 points (from 75 to 72 p.); compared to the beginning of the year – by 2 points (from 74 to 72 p.).*

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

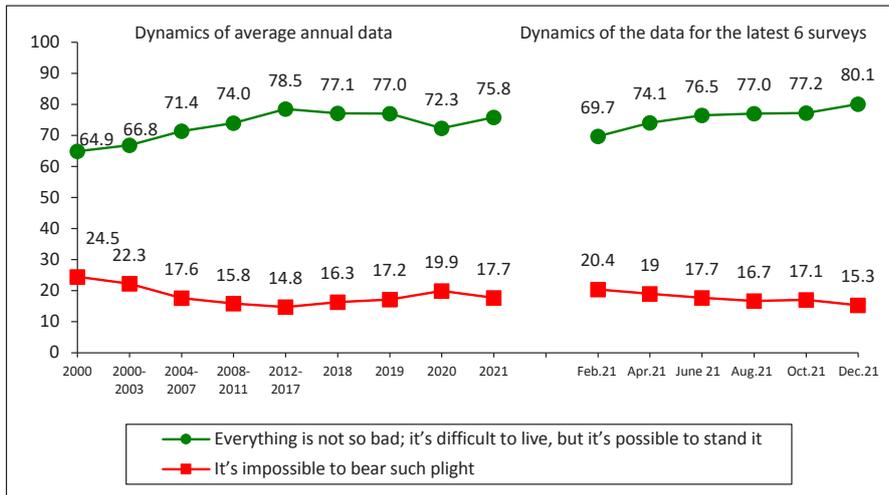
Estimation of social condition (% of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)

Social mood



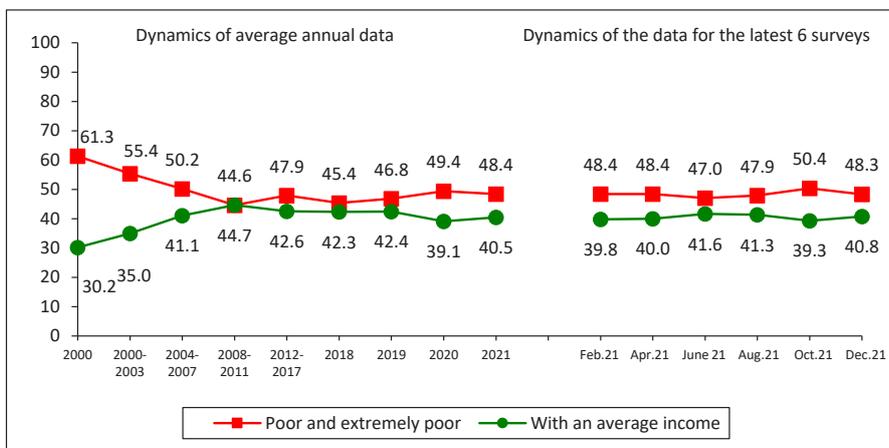
Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Usual condition, good mood	+12
I feel stress, irritation, fear, sadness	-7

Stock of patience



Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
Everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it	+10
It's impossible to bear such plight	-5

Social self-identification

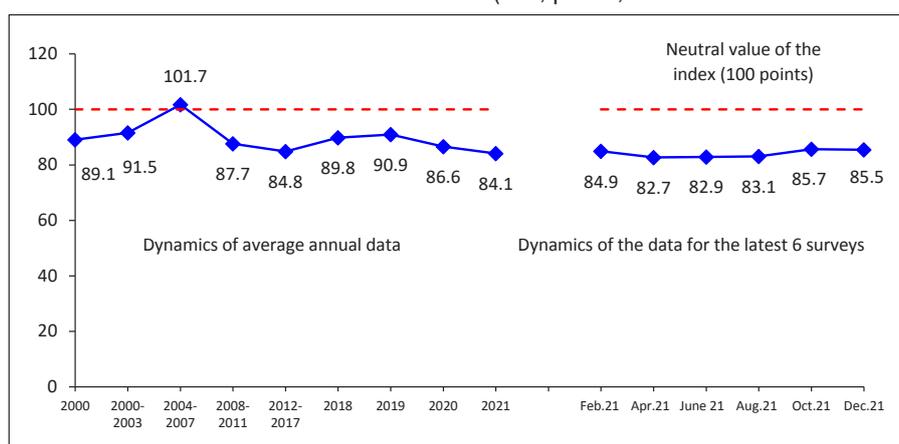


Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ / -)
People with average income	+1
Poor and extremely poor	0

Question: "Which category do you belong to, in your opinion?"

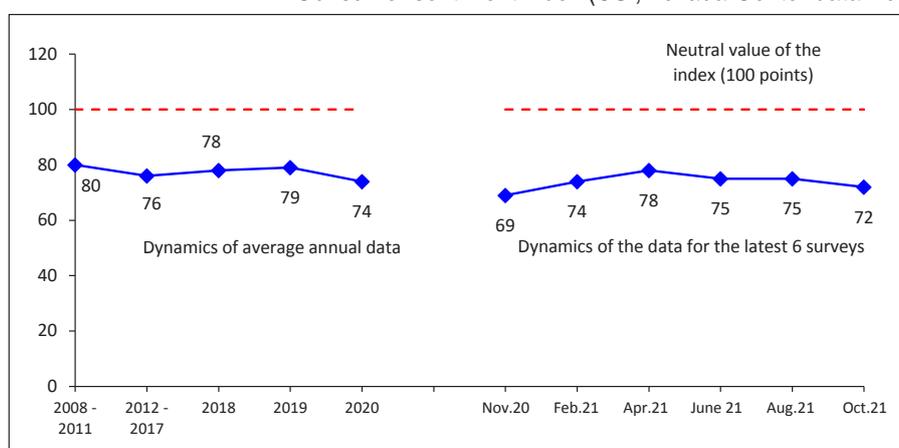
* Included in the register of foreign agents.

Consumer sentiment index (CSI, points; data of VoIRC RAS for the Vologda Oblast)



Annual dynamics (December 2021 to February 2021)	
CSI	Dynamics (+ / -)
Index value, points	+1

Consumer sentiment index (CSI; Levada-Center data* for Russia)



Annual dynamics (October 2021 to February 2021)	
CSI	Dynamics (+ / -)
Index value, points	-2

The index is calculated since 2008.

Latest data are as of October 2021. There are no data for the period from April to August 2020.

Source: Levada-Center* data. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/indikatory/sotsialno-ekonomicheskie-indikatory/>

Over the past two months, the proportion of people who positively characterize their daily mood has increased in 4 out of 14 socio-demographic groups: among people under the age of 30 (by 6 p.p., from 75 to 81%) and those aged 30–55 (by 4 p.p., from 71 to 75%), in the group of people with secondary and incomplete secondary education (by 6 p.p., from 64 to 70%), as well as among people who, according to self-estimates of their own income, belong to the category of 20% of the least affluent residents of the region (by 4 p.p., from 60 to 64%).

Negative changes in social mood for the period from October to December 2021 are noted only in one group – among people over the age of 60 (the share of positive assessments decreased by 3 p.p., from 68 to 65%).

In general, over the past year (from February to December 2021), positive changes in social mood are observed in all major socio-demographic groups, especially among people under the age of 30 (the share of positive assessments increased by 21 p.p., from 61 to 82%) and among people who, according to self-estimates of their own income, belong to the category of 20% of the least affluent citizens (by 20 p.p., from 44 to 64%).

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

Social mood in different social groups (respond option “Wonderful mood, normal, stable condition”, % of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)

Population group	Dynamics of average annual data									Dynamics of the data for the last 6 polls						Dynamics (+/-), Dec. 2021 to Feb. 2021
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	Feb. 2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021		
Sex																
Men	50.1	65.9	64.5	69.1	72.8	70.1	60.8	65.7	60.8	61.3	65.1	65.6	70.0	71.5	+11	
Women	43.3	61.7	62.0	65.8	69.8	69.6	61.2	67.4	59.2	64.9	66.7	69.8	70.9	72.8	+14	
Age																
Under 30	59.1	71.3	70.0	72.3	80.0	81.1	67.6	73.5	60.9	67.4	73.0	82.3	75.3	81.9	+21	
30–55	44.2	64.8	62.5	67.9	72.6	71.2	61.8	69.5	64.4	65.5	70.0	71.4	70.8	75.1	+11	
Over 55	37.4	54.8	58.3	62.1	65.2	63.3	57.4	60.5	54.1	59.1	58.3	58.1	68.3	65.2	+11	
Education																
Secondary and incomplete secondary	41.7	58.4	57.4	57.2	64.8	63.2	56.1	62.1	56.2	56.9	62.5	63.2	64.1	69.7	+14	
Secondary vocational	46.4	64.6	63.6	66.7	72.2	72.7	63.5	66.7	60.9	64.3	66.1	68.5	70.4	70.1	+9	
Higher and incomplete higher	53.3	68.6	68.3	77.0	76.8	73.4	63.3	71.5	62.7	68.7	69.7	73.0	77.1	77.6	+15	
Income groups																
Bottom 20%	28.4	51.6	45.3	51.5	57.3	53.2	43.4	54.6	44.3	49.8	54.2	55.0	60.4	64.0	+20	
Middle 60%	45.5	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	71.4	62.6	67.3	60.1	65.8	67.0	68.9	70.9	71.1	+11	
Top 20%	64.6	74.9	75.3	81.1	82.9	81.8	75.6	79.9	76.0	70.8	76.5	86.7	84.2	85.3	+9	
Territories																
Vologda	49.2	63.1	67.1	73.6	71.0	68.6	60.9	60.3	55.8	57.0	59.4	59.7	64.0	65.7	+10	
Cherepovets	50.8	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.8	71.2	60.4	71.0	64.4	68.1	70.8	72.3	75.2	75.1	+11	
Districts	42.2	61.6	57.1	59.8	68.7	69.8	61.4	67.8	59.7	64.0	67.1	70.1	71.5	74.2	+15	
Oblast	46.2	63.6	63.1	67.3	71.2	69.9	61.0	66.6	59.9	63.3	66.0	67.9	70.5	72.2	+12	

RESUME

The results of the monitoring for 2021 as a whole (from February to December) demonstrate rather contradictory dynamics of public opinion assessments.

On the one hand, there is an obvious tendency toward improving the characteristics of the emotional state and psychological climate. Moreover, we should note that this applies not only to people with a high level of welfare or representatives of young age groups; the same can be said about socially vulnerable groups: pensioners, people with low incomes.

On the other hand, the improvement of the emotional state in society does not seem to be associated with any changes in the dynamics of the standard of living and quality of life. The results of our study indicate the following:

✓ The proportion of people considering themselves “poor and extremely poor” remains stable and very high (almost half of Vologda Oblast population of the region, 48%);

✓ The consumer sentiment index remains below 100 points (83–85 p.), which indicates the predominance of negative forecasts in people’s assessments of the future of the Russian economy and their personal financial situation;

✓ The share of Vologda Oblast residents who believe that the President of the Russian Federation is not very successful in coping with the problem of economic recovery and with enhancing the welfare of citizens is twice as high as the proportion of those who share the opposite viewpoint (60% vs. 27).

Perhaps the contradiction that has developed (between the positive trend of improving the characteristics of the emotional state and the lack of positive changes in the dynamics of assessments of the standard of living and quality of life) explains the fact that people's opinion about the work of the authorities themselves is wary, for the time being.

There are no significant changes in the assessments of the work of federal and regional government bodies for the period from February to December 2021. However, a slight increase in the share of negative judgments concerning the President's work (by 4 p.p., from 30 to 34%) still hints that the stability that has developed in people's estimates is more of a negative and tense nature.

Level of approval of the RF President's work according to various research centers (proportion of positive assessments, % of respondents)

Research centers	Data dynamics in 2021			Dynamics (+ / -)	
	February	June	December	June to February	December to June
VoIRC RAS	50.1	52.5	50.6	+3	-2
VTsIOM*	61.4	62.1	58.8	+1	-3
Levada-Center**	65	66	63	+1	-3

* The latest data are as of December 5, 2021.
** Included in the register of foreign agents. The latest data are as of November 2021.

We should note that some decline in the dynamics of the level of approval of the President's work (both according to VoIRC RAS regional monitoring and according to the results of all-Russian studies of VTsIOM and Levada-Center*) is observed in the second half of the year (from June – August). Perhaps the seasonal factor makes its “contribution” to this trend, when alongside the end of summer vacation and the increase in utility tariffs, people face the seasonal growth of viral diseases, including a new wave of the COVID-19 epidemic, as well as the widespread introduction of QR codes that, in a sense, limit (for the prevention of morbidity) the freedom of citizens.

However, official statistics convincingly prove that the ongoing tense situation concerning coronavirus and the quarantine restrictions imposed out of necessity cannot be considered the only reason for people's negative perceptions of the dynamics of the standard of living and quality of life and for the lack of positive trends in the assessment of the work of the authorities.

According to the results of the third quarter of 2021, the level of real wages decreased by 4.8% compared to the second quarter. The real disposable income of Vologda Oblast residents decreased by 1.4% in January – September 2021 compared to the corresponding period of 2020. At the same time, the consumer price index in the fourth quarter increased by 2.2% compared to the third quarter of 2021, in October 2021 – by 8.6% compared to October 2020⁴.

These data suggest that against the background of coronavirus infection, which is a relatively new and still unfamiliar enemy, it is “the low incomes of our citizens that were and remain the main enemy and threat to stable development”⁵ (as the President of the Russian Federation pointed out); and the further dynamics of public sentiment, including people's attitude toward the work of the authorities, will depend on the effectiveness of management decisions in this field.

Materials were prepared by M.V. Morev, E.E. Leonidova, I.M. Bakhvalova

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

⁴ *Socio-Economic Situation in the Vologda Oblast in January – October 2021: Report*. Vologdatastat. Vologda, 2021. Pp. 53, 76.

⁵ Vladimir Putin's speech at a meeting with deputies of the State Duma of the eighth convocation. *Official Website of the President of the Russian Federation*. October 12, 2021. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/66905>